Queer and Posthumanism Interpretations of Newfoundland Fairylore

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To Carol,
dilly dilly.

Abstract

Newfoundland fairylore has been extensively researched and documented since the early 1960s. In addition to the collection of thousands of archival materials, two canonical texts published in the early 1990s have been written on the subject. Additionally, numerous graduate theses have covered the topic since the publication of these two volumes. Each of these interpret the tradition differently. This thesis suggests that alternative interpretations to the tradition can be extrapolated though queer and posthuman theories. Such re-readings allow for alternative disciplinary trajectories that support and reveal queer and BIPOC interpretations of our historical archives. Relying on the works of queer theorists, the first interpretation suggests that a queer re-reading understands fairy encounters as sites of queer experience and potentiality. The second interpretation demonstrates how elements of these encounters reveal the fairies to be an example of queer posthuman ontology. My goal is to offer a queer interpretation of this tradition in order to fulfill a recent call to queer folkloristics made by Kay Turner (2021). In fulfilling this call, I demonstrate how the discipline of folklore can be more closely aligned with the trans- and interdisciplinary approaches of queer and posthuman theories.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that the lands on which Memorial University's campuses are situated are in the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous groups, and I acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit of this province. It is also with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to speak the praises of all of the individuals who have helped and supported me along this journey. There is no "first and foremost" among friends, because you have all been present in so many ways that I doubt they could ever be fully enumerated. Thank you to my supervisor and friend, Dr. Cory Thorne. Your example and encouragement to always test the boundaries of knowledge and to not shrink from experimentation will guide me the rest of my life. I have mentioned in the past what it has meant to have a fellow queer scholar to guide and support my work and thinking. You have demonstrated the excellence of queer family to support one another and I hope, one day, to do the same for others. This work would have been impossible without the help of Pauline Cox, MUNFLA's resident archivist. Pauline, thank you so much for your kindness and trust in me with these materials, and for your care and attention to maintaining the lives and voices of countless folk through your expert care of our archives in the face of decades of economic hardship and limitation—truly a feat of perseverance and an investment of care that, too frequently, has gone unremunerated. I also owe an immeasurable amount of thanks to my friend, Dr. Joy Fraser, for your expert ability to catch BS and argumentative gaps in my writing—as well as for your seemingly inexhaustible friendship. I also must thank Dr. Sarah Gordon for encouraging my theoretical drive, and for your gentle reminder to temper theory with the data at hand. I also want to thank Margie

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> To stand our ground with those who look us in the eye, to wait for that glimmer of recognition to pass between us, to let the force of our being penetrate the other with gentleness. Touching is an act of making love, and if political touching is not made with love no connections, no linkings happen. (Gloria E. Anzaldúa 2015, xxviii)

> What unfolds here is not meant to prove but to play on the meaning of what folklore studies was, is, and can queerly be. (Kay Turner 2021, 14)

1.1 Positionality

Before we dive into this work, allow me to offer a little background about myself that may, one hopes, clarify a number of my choices in writing this particular thesis. I was born in a small town in East Texas. My family moved around quite a bit in my early childhood, usually about once every one to two years. This regular shifting and resettling instilled in me a sense that life, friendship, and community were essentially transitory. Even before I had formed an understanding of what it meant to be gay, my behavior and tastes were markedly effeminate. My brother, sister, and I had a chest of clothes for playing dress-up. I would frequently don a ruffled black sequined dress, perch on my little blue stool, and "sing opera" to an invisible audience in my bedroom. It was during one of these operettas that my father walked in, eyes bulging, demanding to know what I was doing. I remember responding, unfazed and unaware of his particular frustration, that I was "singing opera." He promptly exited the room, leaving me with a vague sense of self-consciousness that I couldn't quite understand. I took off the dress and put it back in the box. I remember overhearing my parents argue about it, my father's position being "He's gonna be a sissy!" It was also during that argument that our telephone became

firmly lodged in the trailer wall. I remember holding my Raggedy Andy doll in my lap and feeling a fluttering sensation of anxiety over how my fondness for Andy might somehow make me different—all while my father pointed his finger back and forth from me to the doll, from the doll to me, shouting to my mother. Later that week the dress was burned, melted into a plastic stain on the earth, the potential contamination of my gayness leaving the fabric as a pillar of black smoke. In that moment, my body, mind, and behavior began their process of policing, first from my father, then from myself.

Almost all of my life has been lived at some place of oddness, of queerness, of weird or other, both outside and marginal to the communities in which I've found myself. This thesis is an intimate study of existence in that space of the close other. Within these pages I question the lenses through which we have looked and interpreted meaning from the safety and security of the center, of the normative, and consider the ways that strictly normative interpretations of cultural phenomena serve to reiterate oppressive ontological praxis. I'm not trying to romanticize queerness and marginalization—though I don't think such a perspective would be unwarranted or lacking in benefit—nor am I trying to shame people for being their normatively oriented selves. Being forced to the edge of not-so-polite society under the unfortunate labels of sissy, gay, faggot, queer, fairy, pedophile, groomer, weirdo, pervert, girly, princess, and all the rest, will make you look elsewhere for meaning, community, and purpose. Being culturally shunned has guided me to the place where the power to transform myself is found—the place of choice. Queer theory and posthuman philosophy have allowed me to unpack some of the near-constant self policing that is part of daily queer life and to engage that self-directed urge more critically (Ahmed 2004, 2014, 144–167). These theories ask that we

understand the world differently, that we trouble the middle, and they suggest that everything is essentially queer and that we are all some form of posthuman—sooner or later.

There is no doubt that I have a vested interest in the application of these theories to diverse fields of thought, including every corner of folkloristics. I have a stake in their theoretical claims because my life is a queer life and, as such, a posthuman ontology. I have applied these theories to myself, a bit of personal experimentation with my own identity. Writing and research in a queer feminist tone requires a vulnerability and honesty (self-reflection) from the researcher to assess personal positionality and bias, and to argue that personal stakes are valuable and necessary in this interpretive mode. My own positionality and experience in early life certainly frame my overall decision to apply queer and posthuman perspectives to folklore. Both queer and posthuman theories speak to me, they create a doorway from the overcrowded hegemonic domains of humanist thought to spaces in which I, and others, can move and breathe.

At the margins, in the queer, we have so much power. Queer communities continue to expand, and will continue until eventually everyone will have a place at our collective table. There is no return, no place of rest and safety for us among the normative—and soon there won't be for anyone else if our political and environmental trajectories remain unchanged.

1.2 Argument

This is a thesis about becoming, about the potential for folklore to inform how we might live in the world, a politics of self, in a queer tune. I have two primary arguments, these are 1) that the fairies of

Newfoundland can be understood as a site of queer ontology and 2) that such an ontological perspective is an example of posthuman becoming.

The understanding of ontology which I use throughout this thesis is developed from the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. In his introduction to Deleuzian philosophy, Todd May unpacks precisely what Deleuze means by "ontology": "...*ontology* has several different meanings in philosophy. In the analytic tradition, it means 'the study of what there is,' either in general or in some specific area. [...] In Continental thought, ontology has come to mean 'the study of being (or Being)'" (May 2005, 13). At first glance, the latter appears to be simply an example of the former! However, there is a difference: "Analytic philosophers are interested in the beings of which the universe is constituted. [...] Continental philosophers often see a question of being that cannot be addressed in terms of constituent beings" (May 2005, 14). Meaning, analytic approaches are concerned with the classification of what already exists, what can be *discovered* "out there." The alternative, a Deleuzian approach, is not interested in *discovering* discrete phenomena but rather in *creating* "an ontology that answers to the question of how one might live rather than dictating its limits" (May 2005, 17). This idea is central to our understanding of queer identity and queer posthuman thinking because it challenges our conception of existence as structurally or archetypally defined.

At a basic level, the idea that identity is a creative, or fluid process allows us to challenge the assumption that existence is discretely organized into categories of homo/hetero, female/male, man/woman, human/nonhuman, rational/emotional, reality/fantasy, or culture/nature, to name a few. This means that we can create ontological categories (i.e. identities, ways of being) in excess of normative binaries or in ways that are utterly different from them. To a greater degree, this allows us to

understand Deleuze's formulation of ontology as not the study of "being"—a fixed category that, once defined, remains the same—but as a study of trajectories of identity that are always in movement and developing. This means that existence and experience are states of constant shifting, not states of "being," but states of "becoming" that are developed through the conceptualization of ontological difference. This is also quite similar to the concept of the assemblage, which I use to explore the fairy category in the chapter on posthumanism, and a central theoretical concept to Deleuzian philosophy.

May explores the concept of *becoming* as follows: "If the question is how might one live, the way to approach it is with another ontology, one that offers possibilities as yet undreamed of, one whose soil is richer than those plants to which it has yet given rise" (May 2005, 23). This statement aligns well with what José Muñoz (2019) was suggesting in his concept of queer utopia, and is precisely how we explore the fairy realm and encounter as able to effect ontological change in/for the individual. If we interpret the folklore narratives of Newfoundland's past as representing a way of being that is outside the human/white/male/Christian constructs, then our striving (desire) toward that way of being—the fairy state, for example, as: sexually liberated, liberated from domestic servitude, non-conformist, "contaminated," queer—allows us to shift, ontologically, toward that state. This is how we can understand non-human beings, such as the fairies, as sites of ontological potential, as domains of experience which, when engaged, shift the boundaries of what it means to be human, to be morally "pure," etc.

Deleuze's understanding of philosophy supports this "messy-ing" of ontological categories, as May explains: "[Philosophy] does not put everything in its place. It does not tell us who we are or what we ought to do. Philosophy does not settle things. It disturbs them" (2005, 19). This means that

ontology, from Deleuze's perspective, is developed by breaking away from cemented structural categories of self toward a fluid process of *becoming*. Later in his text, May further expands on *becoming*:

> What if there were no enduring being, only becoming? What if the only thing that is real is becoming, the changing and fluid character of that which is? Nietzsche believes this to be the case. 'If the world had a goal, it must have been reached. If there were for it some unintended final state, this also must have been reached. If it were capable of pausing and becoming fixed, of "being," if in the whole course of its becoming it possessed even for a moment this capability of "being," then all becoming would long since have come to an end…'" (2005, 59)

But what does all of this talk of ontology and philosophy have to do with a thesis on Newfoundland fairylore? One of my main frustrations with fairylore scholarship up to this point is that we have explored the fairy from within a normative perspective. We have considered how the fairy narrative functions to reify normative behaviors, moralities, and identities. By considering the fairies to be a site of non-normative ontology, through a Deleuzian approach, they become the means by which we question the normative. According to May, philosophy for Deleuze:

> …is not about seeking the truth beneath divergent opinions. Philosophy is about ontology, and ontology is about concepts of difference, and concepts of difference are not seeking to articulate a truth; they are creating a perspective on what there is. What motivates this perspective is the question of how one might live. (May 2005, 22)

It is through the concept of difference that we are able to better understand the limits, or boundaries, of the normative. In truth, the fairies can be considered through any number of ontological positions. However, I have chosen to consider them within the domains of queer and posthuman theories in order to challenge precisely what is meant by, or what can be understood of the categories of the normative (non-queer) and human that we rely on as a central and unquestioned category. Queer

ontology, from a Deleuzian perspective, is a domain in which the world and oneself are understood as queer (in every sense of the word).

My second argument: that such a perspective is an example of posthuman *becoming*, means that fairy experience can represent or inform experience as a permeable process of identity formation that develops in concert with non-human modes of existence. I say the fairies "*can be* understood" as queer because, as has been demonstrated by numerous scholars over the last few decades, fairylore need *not* function as a site of queer potentiality or ontology to hold interpretive water.[1] Quite the contrary. Much of the scholarly interpretation of Newfoundland fairies has demonstrated their capacity to regulate the normative moral, physical, temporal, ethnic, and economic boundaries, among others, of the folk community. My suggestion in no way undermines these interpretations. Rather, I'm suggesting that queer and posthuman interpretations are yet another possible orientation among many.

My idea for this thesis did not come out of thin air. I am responding directly to Kay Turner's (2021) call to queer folkloristics by recognizing and acknowledging the queer and queer adjacent figures, those "third-party figures we study and analyze, worship and adore" that densely inhabit our traditions and archives (15). I am also expanding on the correlation, identified by Peter Narváez, between fairies of folklore tradition and the term "fairy" used as a pejorative sobriquet for homosexual men (1991, 336).

In her discussion on queer/deep folkloristics, Turner situates queerness through the language of place: "Those between-worlds are the very places where a queer folkloristics works at troubling

[1] See, for example, the canonical works of Barbara Rieti (1990) and Peter Narváez (1991), or the various graduate theses offering various interpretations of Newfoundland fairylore traditions by Magdalyn Knopp (2022), Kathleen Fleming (2021), or Tara Simmonds (2005); or similar works on ontology and folklores of the other: Daze Jefferies (2018), Cory Thorne (2018, 2021), Guillermo De Los Reyes (2021).

conventional notions of how relationships and communities are formed, for whom, and for what purpose" (2021, 15). This particular verbiage is not coincidental. Turner's call to identify queer family, to "between-worlds," and to "places" situates her argument not only in the archival material or the archives themselves, but also within the common call toward situational, lived contexts that hallmark folkloristics more broadly. This implies that queer folkloristics is also primarily invested in understanding and interpreting lived *experience*, in the qualities of lore that inform life and being, rather than being a merely interpretive or theoretical move. A study or interpretation of a queer folkloristics, then, is not an abstract conceptual framework but is a study of and for queer lives and experiences. I am not suggesting that tradition bearers are, themselves, necessarily queer. Rather, reading queer experience into archival material allows us to see queer potentiality in narratives that are otherwise considered normative. It is a form of play, of experimentation. Theory and ethnography are mutually co-constructive to our discipline, and archival documentation can be understood as an artifact of fieldwork among multiple contexts—those contexts being the archive itself, each item being connected to every other object within the archive, and the folk and the folklorist whose input and output form archival flows. What queer/deep folkloristics allows us to do with our ethnography (of the past as well as the present) is to critically examine the normative assumptions that suffuse folkloristic interpretations. As Turner puts it, "[t]he heteronormative absolute is questioned and found to be fundamentally questionable" (2021, 15). This is the work herein. I not only question the normative assumptions that have accompanied folkloristic interpretations of Newfoundland fairylore, but I trouble notions of the human-being at the center of our entangled relationships with environment and

culture, becoming and being, and folklore and folklorist in an attempt to understand how we can apply the non-normative ontology of fairy encounters to our understanding of folklore and self.

1.3 Theoretical Approaches

To support my claim that fairies can function as a site of queer ontology, and that such a position is an example of posthuman becoming, I rely on a number of queer theorists and posthuman philosophers. Rather than offer an overview of these vast and expanding fields here, I will explain the relevant elements of each in relation to fairylore within each chapter. I also take to heart Dorothy Noyes's (2008, 2016) call to humble theory in folklore research, and thus I have attempted to firmly root my work in archival materials collected in various fieldwork efforts over the last century and the folklore scholarship which has arisen from it by constantly referring back to manuscript and survey card materials for context.

> When discussing theoretically driven work, we [folklorists] quite frequently apply the pithy aphorisms of "top-down" or "bottom-up" to the position of theory in relation to other aspects of folkloristic research—such as ethnography. This is an attempt, no doubt, to prevent overly grand and decontextualized theoretical conclusions that have little or no bearing on our communities. This language has developed in response to Dorothy Noyes's *Humble Theory* texts (2008, 2016). Noyes's suggestion was that theory, or theoretically driven research, should be "grounded" (likely the source of the phrase: "bottom-up") in ethnographic documentation, in the data—whether of the present or past. Invoking "top-down" and "bottom-up" verbiage can easily hierarchize what Noyes refers to as "the trinity" of ethnographer, practitioner, and theorist or archive, public practice, and academic

program in relation to one another. Noyes was suggesting that we consider our approach to theoretical application laterally:

> The ethnographer, the practitioner, and the theorist are mutually dependent and mutually constitutive: they cohabit, to different degrees, in singular folklorist bodies. We tend to forget this and too often moralize the differences between these three tasks because historically they have informed three different types of institution: the archive, the public practice, and the academic program. (2008, 39)

Noyes's call to humble theory was to be content with the degree of theoretical interpretation that arises from the cohabitation of ethnographer, practitioner, and theorist that are within each of us to differing degrees, not to favor greater or lesser theoretical bents. Her call was that we need not be perturbed if our work is not engaged with grand theory, but it was not a call to abandon grand theory as a discipline. I feel urged to clarify these points because my own theoretical preferences have been questioned numerous times by referencing Noyes's work as an apotropaic to theory. I do not disagree that we should be careful that our theoretical applications are matched with a diligent analysis of source material, but to avoid theory outright is to cut off our nose to spite our face—it is called *grounded* theory, not *buried* theory. Michel Foucualt, by way of Jack Halberstam, makes a similar suggestion to all of us working in theory:

> In place of the "all-encompassing and global theories" that the university encourages, Foucault exhorts his students to think about and turn to "subjugated knowledges," namely those forms of knowledge production that have been "buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations". These forms of knowledge have not simply been lost or forgotten; they have been disqualified, rendered nonsensical or nonconceptual or "insufficiently elaborated." Foucault calls them "naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity"—this is what we mean by knowledge from below. (Halberstam 2011, 11)

This is precisely what we seek as folklorists, it is also precisely how we understand queer and BIPOC experiences in colonial and heteronormative contexts.[2] That said, it would be impossible to develop a queer folkloristics that has not arisen directly from the material itself, and even though queer folkloristics may seem heavily theoretical, it is not meant to further obscure itself but is vested in an understanding and exploration of lived queer experience.

I should also note that my theoretical interpretations are, after all, just that—interpretations—and so do not preclude the interpretive work of others in any way, even if those interpretations are normatively centered. Rather, queer interpretations reveal the potential of fairylore—and folklore more broadly—to be understood as queer ontology; likewise, posthuman interpretations reveal the potential of folklore to function as a site of ontology beyond the "human." These are personal and political interpretations. Kay Turner reminds us of the capacity of folklore to work bidirectionally: "Even if folklore forms generally ratify the heteronormative (and there's no doubt about that), we've still got all those shape-shifting boundary and binary transgressors on our side as well" (2021, 16). This does not suggest that folklore forms ratify some inherent heteronormativity, but that they are capacious enough to hold multiple and conflicting interpretations simultaneously. This internal tension/paradox is a common quality of cultural assemblages. After all, folkloric assemblages are composed of multi-generational concepts that continually test and reshape the boundaries of other and self.

Queer and posthuman interpretations of folklore can often reveal limitations in representation and voice that would otherwise remain unchecked in normatively grounded structuralist and humanist

[2] Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color.

approaches. Due to this, such interpretations can (and often do) confound the truth claims of structuralist and modernist frameworks. Queer theory is a field of poststructuralist thought, and posthumanism expands the subjectivity and agency that queer theory claims. At first glance the theoretical work laid out here can seem quite daunting, but rest assured—theory need not be an arcane knowledge, nor need we feel unwelcome in applying it to our own areas of study. I urge readers to delve deeper into both queer and posthuman scholarship as spaces of experimentation and intellectual play that delight in exceptions and exclusions. I hope you will find, as I did, that the application of theory to folklore and folklore to theory is astonishingly clarifying.

1.4 Scope

The scope of a project is often quite difficult to define at the outset. This is mainly because defining scope at the beginning implies that answer(s) precede questions. This seems counterproductive to good research, yet it is often how we present our work to the world. Conversely, defining scope in and along the process of writing a master's thesis is meant to prevent research sprawl and lack of direction or clarity of purpose; fortunately, I am writing this introduction at the end of that process.

The first chapter, "Fairylore and Queer Theory," principally relies on the work of Barbara Rieti (1990) and Peter Narváez (1991), as well as a handful of folklore survey cards (FSCs) from Memorial University's Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA). Mid-way through the research process I tried to limit the scope of survey card materials to those collected in the 1990s, but this proved to be both time consuming and not essential to perform a queer re-reading or posthuman interpretation of the fairy tradition. The survey card materials of the early nineties are generally undergraduate student

fieldwork materials collected from the eighties and earlier and often reference transgenerational narratives and memorates from the 1930s and before that are similar, if not identical, to examples from across the survey card collection from earlier decades. The discrepancy between collection and cataloging is mainly due to protracted limitations in resource allocation for the archive. That said, the archival materials I use in this thesis span decades and communities across Newfoundland. This somewhat unintentional dispersion of materials is actually quite beneficial to my overall interpretation, since fairylore from across Newfoundland (temporally and spatially) appears amenable to queer and posthuman interpretations generally. A list of folklore survey card materials and their transcripts is available in Appendix I. I have also included a few notes on queer and posthuman elements after a handful of these transcripts. The second chapter, "Fairylore and Posthuman Theory," is principally a theoretical expansion on the work done in the first chapter. I also briefly explore the notion of contamination and explain a few essential posthuman philosophical concepts.

1.5 Methodology

Because this research is archival, interpretive, and theoretical, it can be classified under a mixture of methodologies. These are principally: qualitative, exploratory, and interpretive. The archival materials (Folklore Survey Cards and Manuscripts) are referenced for their qualitative data and are used to support interpretive claims. The use of these materials in exploring new theoretical applications to the discipline means that the research is also theoretical and exploratory. I would argue that the conceptual and theoretical work can also be considered applied humanities research because it is transferable to

other aspects of our own and adjacent disciplines and to cultural discourses on ontology, political thought, and environmentality.

The archive is chockablock with examples of Newfoundland fairylore in all shapes and sizes that have been waiting for interpretation and application, and so it seemed appropriate to begin digging into those materials in support of new(ish) theoretical applications to the discipline. Performing queer interpretations of archival records demonstrates the point made by Kay Turner (2021) in *Advancing Folkloristics*, that folklore is full of queer beings and experiences and that we should plumb the depths and ephemera of our archives to find those voices and beings.

1.6 A Note on Terminology

There are a few terms which have been used to describe the folk encounter with fairies; these are usually words like "supernatural," "magical," or "otherworldly." There are also common terms used in the social sciences to discuss manifestations or symbols of cultural knowledge such as "imaginaries" or "constructs." I'm not completely satisfied with any of these. "Supernatural" is too closely linked to superstitious, it also defines an experience as non-rational, and pits "The Supernatural" against "The Scientific/Rational"—this is not a new argument in belief studies, though it is still frequently a central discourse. "Magical" does pretty much the same thing as "supernatural," as does "otherworldly," all imply a fictive quality to lived experience. I have no desire to trivialize the experiences of the folk, or to begin my research from a skeptical position in relation to lived experience. So, I will avoid using these terms altogether. I do rely on the term "assemblage" to discuss the quality of the fairy as a multiply

nuanced object/subject/being, but not to imply that the experience is fabricated, fabulated, or unreal. Whether the fairies are "real" or not doesn't actually matter for the work at hand.

It's important to note, even if only briefly, that terms like "superstition" and "belief" are constructed by scholars for the purpose of scholarly analysis.[3] In narratives of fairy encounters, for example, the choice of language among the tellers is generally quite matter of fact. The language we use to discuss the unexplainable in scholarly terms is often fraught with passive judgments about the reality or veracity of such experiences. Folklorists are not blind to this struggle with language. Take, for instance, what Diane Goldstein says on the subject: "Belief functions on the basis of evidence, and no matter how strongly belief scholars might argue that such notions are 'popular fallacies,' 'irrational ideas,' or 'odd human quirks,' our informants know otherwise" (1991, 27). There have been numerous studies on folk belief in Newfoundland, the most notable of which are probably David Hufford's (1982) *The Terror that Comes in the Night* and Barbara Rieti's (1991) *Strange Terrain*, and these are worth exploring for studies of folk/vernacular belief. [4] That said, this thesis is not an exploration of belief or belief studies.

Throughout this thesis I frequently use the terms "queer," "desire," and less frequently, "queer desire." "Queer," in the sense that I use it in this work, means not only the sexually "deviant," those of the 2SLGBTQ+ acronym, but also the experience of the uncanny, eldritch, haunting, and otherness of the unexplainable and obscure. Queer, in this sense, cannot be reduced to a quality determined by

[3] Smith, Jonathan Z. 1988. *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
[4] For further reading on common issues in folklore belief studies see Goldstein, Diane E.. 1991. "Perspectives On Newfoundland Belief Traditions: Narrative Clues To Concepts of Evidence." In *Studies in Newfoundland Folklore: Community and Process*; or the Introduction to Bennett, Gillian. 1987. *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*.

one's sexual desire alone. Additionally, "desire" is not denotative of merely sexual or libidinal desire. Desire in this sense is, to use the words of Rosi Braidotti "not just libidinal desire, but rather ontological desire, the desire to be, the tendency of the subject to be, the predisposition of the subject towards being," a driving force, a force that serves to repel and to attract, a desire to become (2002, 22). "Queer desire" is the drive, the force, to fulfill a queer ontological longing, to move along trajectories of the queer—in every sense of that word—to seek flight from the normative, as consolidation from the rupture of trauma, an ontological trajectory of the unassimilable, the neither/nor, to be driven by an episteme developed through queer ontological experience or trauma. Desire and queerness are not destinations, neither are they single aspects of a trajectory of experience. They are potentialities, lines of flight, trajectories, they are the absence of destinations, the absence of fixed states, they are movements.

Formulating queerness in this way is not new to folkloristics. In his (2015) work on Charles Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty," Lewis Seifert formulates queerness similarly to Lee Edelman: "queerness marks the excess of something always unassimilable that troubles the relentlessly totalizing impulse informing normativity" (Edelman in Dinshaw et al. 2015, 189). This is the same conceptualization from which Turner and Greenhill develop the foundation of their work *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimm's*. Seifert's work, specifically, focuses on fairy-tale temporality as an example of a breakdown in chrononormativity as it leads to the unlikely "happily every after" outcome of the fairytale. Seifert states his purpose: "By deviating from the ordered sequence of chrononormative time, fairy tales can open a space for imagining other ways of being and desiring" (2015, 4). This is similar to what I perform by re-reading the fairy encounters in Newfoundland lore through a queer lens. My argument is that the fairy encounter, specifically in Newfoundland lore, creates a temporal and spatial breakdown

of normative space, time, and being that is queer. These encounters, being experiences of queer time and space, can be interpreted as sites of queer potentiality for understanding queer ontology and queer epistemologies at *this* end of history.

1.6.1 A Note On Archives and Archival Research

Archives compost the past. Foucault put it succinctly when he said "museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time never ceases to pile up" (1984, 7).[5] An archive is both a library and a museum that is synergistically and simultaneously more than and less than either of these. Even as time continually "piles up" in them, archives cannot be separated from the colonial and erasive foundations upon which they're built. Thus, the research they produce, if unconscious of these foundations, will form yet another iteration of oppression and coloniality (Sringgay et al. 2020). What sort of time continues to pile up depends on our interpretive work at this end of history. Discussing this ethic has been the work of queer theorists and feminist scholars such as Stephanie Springgay, Anise Truman, Sara MacLean, Ann Cvetkovich and others. According to Niamh Moore "thinking in terms of heterotopia opens up for inquiry the existence of peripheral but resonate spaces within which the dominant is disputed and its hegemony undermined" (Moore et al 2017, 17). I like this concept, if only for the notion that time piles up over time (time piling up on itself). It is also a helpful counterpoint to archival coloniality, since it is in the collection of these relatively "heterogeneous elements" that we identify precisely what (and whom) is left out!

[5] Foucault's heterotopias are "spatial entities of heterogeneous elements that are part of hegemonic spaces, 'but in such a way that they suspend, neutralise, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented by them'" (Moore et al 2017, 17).

As I mentioned earlier, many of the survey cards and manuscripts on fairies in Newfoundland are from undergraduate student projects. As a collection they reveal trends in the development of our discipline and pedagogical changes over time. They are also clearly composites of the conceptual terrain of Newfoundland's educated youth in regards to their own cultures and frequently contain quite a bit of metafolkloric content, value statements, and scrutiny. It is easy to identify shifts and changes in departmental structure and focus by changes that occur in the survey card collections year over year. This demonstrates that faculty decisions, departmental and institutional restrictions, and course enrollment have actively created the history of the discipline, not the other way around (Springgay et al. 2020). The ethnographer and academe affect the lore, we cannot help it. We are intimately entangled. In years when the department took a genre-heavy approach to folkloristics, the bulk of materials remain couched in the specific genres or subgenres (tales, riddles, jokes, colloquialisms) of each course option. As faculty and research interests changed over time, so too did courses, and so too did the creation of the folklore archive. We can see in the survey card materials from the late eighties and early nineties that courses on jokelore, colloquialism, and *blason populaire* were common in the department though these are nearly completely absent from contemporary courses. During the same period there is a significant downturn in survey card materials referring to supernatural others that were much more prominent only a handful of years prior. None of this should come as a surprise. However, it should cause us to carefully consider our role as folklorists in the development of folklore itself.

The archives can easily become a representation of departmental foci, rather than of a diverse and changing community. I am not arguing that folklorists should not affect the folk or their

lore—such a suggestion would be impossible anyway. Rather, I'm suggesting that our work should, first and foremost, be cognizant of this affective pressure, and instead of avoiding the boundary-blurring tendency, that we should approach it with ethical considerations and self-reflexivity in mind. Contemporary archival scientists have also noted the close relationship between the archive and "history": "history and memory are shaped by the actual practice of archiving" (Springgay et al. 2020, 898). Archival representations of the history of folklore in Newfoundland are, thus, curations of curricular, departmental, and institutional expectations and the essentially amateur collection of undergraduates. I am not arguing that the archive loses value by this curation. Rather, I'm suggesting that the archive, regardless of its breadth, is better understood as a form of curation, an iteration of experiences that is inherently limited in its representational capacity. This is not a problem, but is where queer archival interpretation and creative re-reading becomes an avenue for disciplinary, departmental, and archival futures.

Folkloristics, as with most early anthropological fields, was not always cognizant of its role in marginalization and erasure, and though many may disagree with me on this point, all I need do is point to our archives as evidence. The process of demarcating the limits of folk groups by scholars is a practice in boundary marking, of creating margins of inside and outside, often argued as an attempt to define scope. The bounding of folk groups by the folk themselves reveals marginality as defined by that community and can be useful to scholars in understanding the places where exclusion occurs. However, when scholars create such boundaries out of an obligation to disciplinary constraints they become compoundingly problematic as those demarcations persist through time. This returns us to the issue of defining scope in advance of research. How can we know the breadth of our research or

community *before* we've engaged in research? Aren't both research and community necessarily in a state of near-constant flux? Does this not suggest that we enter research knowing the answer before the question? Fortunately, archives nip this approach rather quickly in the bud since it is impossible to know exactly a) where to find specific answers to specific questions of cultural documentation within the archive and/or b) what other experiential or curatorial force will present itself in the process of research that will necessarily alter our research trajectories. What becomes clear, however, is that discipline-specific organizations of knowledge will always contain a multitude of exceptions and it is in the exceptions that the future of our discipline derives. There are archives within archives in the archive that can only be found by putting one's hands and mind to the collection.

Aside from containing voices and experiences of the past, archives contain value in what they lack, and in how they change over time to reveal disciplinary blind-spots. Archives are human curations—curations of personality and bias. Curation evokes emotion out of the intentions and emotions from which it is (often unconsciously) built. Springgay et al. describe a queer archival curation as one that dives unabashedly into emotional and traumatic histories in the interpretation and development of archives.[6] Consider Springgay's description:

> Although the materials and documents that constitute a traditional archive or a queer archive can be similar, a queer archive of feeling does not fulfill an institutional or official function. A queer archive of feeling is a form of counter-knowledge production, as a dynamic that unlocks, or liberates the archive. As an archive, it is not rooted in a fixed notion of a past but rather a futurity and urgency, shifting between fields of destruction, subversion, and regeneration. A queer archive of feeling seeks to share the affective tone of a process or event rather than relay strict chronologies or typologies of identification. (Springgay et al. 2020, 899–900)

[6] This was also one of Ann Cvetkovich's (2003) primary points in *An Archive of Feelings*.

This sentiment is reminiscent of Kay Turner's description of queer/deep folkloristics as a "unbounded, penetrative, absorbed tradition that cannot be defined as much as it must be felt, sensed, traced, alluded to" (2021, 9–10). Recognizing the emotional precedent embodied in the act of curation is not what Springgay and her colleagues were referring to here. However, my interpretation of their words is that we should approach archival collections with an understanding that they are curations of emotion and memory, and that an emotional response to them is also part of the process of research-creation that is "located in the act of bringing forth and honoring embodied feelings and experiences that were often traumatically hidden" (Springgay et al. 2020, 901). Rather than reading our archives as authoritative histories, queer and posthuman approaches ask that we interpret them as collections of emotion, traumas, becomings, and ontologies,[7] that we recognize them as sites of future potentiality, rather than as collections of unchanging pasts. Springgay was referring specifically to the processes of counter- and anarchiving, but any interaction with archival collections can be understood on the basis of how they affect the researcher and discipline, as well as how they are affectively built or curated in the first place—consciously or not. Recognizing that archival curation is necessarily defined by personal emotion helps us spot coloniality and erasure, because we understand that the archive is built upon the emotional histories and biases of the folk, curators, collectors, and archivists and is therefore not entirely authoritative. This understanding shifts how we comprehend archives, and allows us to feel less conflicted about interpretive play in our archival research and scholarship. There was never any "real" objectivity in the process of collecting, documenting, and archiving, so why should we interact

[7] A titillating idea in my opinion: a library of ontologies. How differently we would approach the archive if we conceptualized it as a collection of emotional experiences that can transform the future of our discipline. Rather than being dusty stacks of paper and artifacts, they come alive! I argue for a consideration of this type of vibrant, vital materiality in the second chapter.

with the materials in a way that presumes such objectivity? We may continue to find our archival collections problematic in what information they contain and in how that information reflects a particular worldview, but their problematic origins no longer limit us from using, experiencing, interacting with, and expanding them—the materials shift from impersonal, static objects toward personal, active subjects. Queering our approach to the archive means accepting that the archive has existed as an iteration of the colonial that is not predicated on an erasure of this coloniality, but relies on an awareness and ongoing re-interpretation of the archive that raises subsumed experiences to the surface. It is in raising these silences—the gaps—to the foreground of our research that we establish anti-colonial and counter-hegemonic futures for our discipline.

1.7 Structure

This thesis is divided into two large chapters. In the first I open with a very brief description of Newfoundland fairies and a review of the canonical texts written on the subject in the early nineties. I then connect excerpts from archival materials to queer theories of temporality and ontology to demonstrate how Newfoundland fairylore offers an exemplary domain for the interpretation and application of queer theory to folklore. Specifically, I look at theories of queer utopia, death drive, temporality, domesticity and wildness, and morality.

In the second chapter I review recent publications on posthuman folklore and then proceed to demonstrate how Newfoundland fairylore—and folklore more broadly—allows for posthuman interpretation and ontology. I consider Newfoundland fairylore through the posthuman theory of vital materiality—a new materialist theory that posits an essential vitality to material phenomena. I use

the vital materiality concept to consider the extra-human agency that folkloric assemblages possess as well as what such an implication would infer about archival collections and how we might reconceptualize them. I also consider that fairies, by representing a site of queer ontology are simultaneously an assemblage of posthuman *becoming* and a representation of the posthuman body.

I struggled to decide which chapter to put first, mainly because the discussion on posthumanism offers an explanation of numerous concepts used by queer theorists to discuss ontology and becoming. However, the queer theory in the first chapter helps to ease us into discussions that stretch "beyond the human" by working to support posthuman thinking more readily. The queer theories of chapter one and the posthuman philosophies of chapter two are intimately related, as queer theories induce a deeper comprehension of posthuman theories and vice versa, and separating them into distinct sections feels a bit like taking the salt out of salt water. Regardless, both theoretical domains ask that we reconsider conceptions of the normative, and so either chapter can be read first, depending upon your interest, as they will support one another in different ways.

Finally, I conclude with a summary of ideas for further research in queer posthuman folkloristics that germinated while I was working on this thesis, I then discuss potential methodological limitations, and end with a call to action.

Chapter 2: Fairylore and Queer Theory

> Certain subject positions, such as racial minorities, women, and members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community, do not have the luxury of being granted the full personhood to claim authenticity. They can and often are the objects of a projected authenticity, but they do not hold the institutional power to be the sources of its verification or legitimization. Too often, the (re)construction of an authentic past or tradition is built on the violent subjugation of these groups as inherently flawed, fragmented, or suspect in regard to full subjectivity. (Solimar Otero 2021, 83)

2.1 Introduction and Objectives

In this chapter, I critically examine the fairylore of Newfoundland and the scholarship on the subject through a queer theoretical lens. I argue that the fairy realm is a space of queer potentiality and interacting with that realm is a means to develop a queer ontology.[8] Queer theory helps us identify imbalances of power and oppression in social contexts. The most central of these imbalances is the construction of "normal" as "natural"—where "normal" refers to white, Christian, Euro-American, heterosexual, and male perspectives and experiences. The goal of a queer theory application to fairylore is to identify and break down these tacit normative perspectives in our folkloristic interpretations and to suggest alternative ways that we can understand this lore. This type of reinterpretation is called queer reading. queer *re*-reading, or simply *queering*.

[8] Queer potentiality, utilized by Jose Muñoz, and a Deleuzian queer epistemology, approach the idea of queer experience, knowledge, and knowability from a different angle. Queer potentiality is principally concerned with the imminent possibility of becoming queer: "Unlike a possibility, a thing that simply might happen, a potentiality is a certain mode of nonbeing that is [imminent], a thing that is present but not actually existing in the present tense" (Muñoz 2019, 9). Queer potentiality contests the normativizing experience of daily life and cultural production to imagine a queer future that is yet unrealized in social, political, or cultural expression. A Deleuzian queer epistemology would understand knowledge as an assemblage, as a process of negotiation (becoming) between ontological states and is more concerned with reorganizing *how* we *think*, than in how we know (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, "Rhizome" pp. 1–25).

Queering scholarship and archival narratives on the fairylore of Newfoundland also helps us define an emergent and ethical approach to folklore studies, archival documentation, and research by reconceptualizing historically derived cultural phenomena in a way that supports queer experience. In addition to demonstrating inclusive interpretations from which scholarship can develop, performing queer readings of traditional lore reclaims queer and non-normative narratives from colonial, white, cis-het perspectives that erase the history and diversity of queer experiences and "queer beings." Queer readings are not novel to the discipline of folkloristics. Over the last twenty to thirty years, Kay Turner (2012, 2015), Pauline Greenhill (1995, 2012), Cory Thorne (2018), and numerous others have demonstrated the utility of queer theory driven approaches to advancing the field of folkloristics.

Turner has specifically urged us to dig into archival collections to find queer beings and voices and to bring them to the forefront of our discussions on the archive as well as our conceptualizations of folklore and folk worldviews more broadly. We accomplish this by acknowledging the deeply rooted and often hidden expressions of queerness that make up many of our folklore traditions:

> Here's one way to advance folkloristics: claim folklore's central queerness and get on with it, not only through ethnography but also through ontology. Queer lives and queer being, queer things and queer ways are sedimented in folklore, layered in the deep, waiting to be unearthed by a folkloristics committed to all the excesses and ecstasies of social and cultural flow. Long overdue, a "queer" folkloristics plumbs hidden, unknown, ignored, uncategorized, and ephemeral facets of deep folklore. Condemning the stigma as it unlocks deeper meanings of difference, exposing the pains as it upholds the advantages of marginality, a queer turn demystifies the purities and dangers associated with social-sexual transgression at the same time it raids social barricades, investigates the margins, and advocates for the marginalized who live outside the gate, either by prescription or proscription. (Turner 2021, 10)

Some may argue that finding queerness in the archive or stating that folklore has some centrally queer quality is merely ahistorical interpretation to fulfill some political goal at this end of history. Others

may point to the history of folklore scholarship on fairies and other such beings and state that this discourse is principally one of belief and does not belong under the purview of socio-political queer theory. In response to these I would ask: First of all, what folklore scholarship is *not* interpretive? Secondly, why do we assume that folklore or folkloric beings are *not* queer? Further, why is the prescriptive rule that all phenomena must reflect a heteronormative societal configuration simply because that is how we have always interpreted and documented it? In fact, because the discipline of folkloristics has historically been interested in protecting and preserving the "common" or folk, it has also preserved the chaotic, unruly, perennial "other" in the process. Why must historical folkloric phenomena be continually rendered white, colonial, and cis-het,[9] and male? Feminist folklorists have been combating this framework for a number of years. It's true that historical documentation has often privileged such normative perspectives and experiences, leading to the erasure of queer and BIPOC experience, but this does not imply that we should continue to rely on such perspectives for our interpretation, utilization, or approach to folklore going forward.

José Esteban Muñoz describes "queer" as something that is always coming and never here, something on "the horizon," which we can only see through a critique of the past and which cannot exist in the present moment.[10] Queerness is a striving, a becoming, something we reach for in our recognition of the stifling, suffocating nature of the present, normative, and straight. Muñoz does not mean that those of us who identify as queer are therefore unable to be queer *now*, but that this queerness is defined through an ongoing process of always *becoming* queer. Queerness is not a fixed

[9] Cisgendered–heterosexual. Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds to their biological sex, as assigned at birth.

[10] There is a bit of irony in this statement when considered in against the "always going and never gone" metafolkloric concept that accompanies much of fairylore the world over (Rieti 1990).

state; fixed states are the strivings of the normative and do not actually exist (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Butler 1990). Additionally, fixedness is not a luxury that the queer can afford. In other words, queer is a trajectory, a turning, a "line of flight."[11] At first glance, a discussion on "becoming" can seem like a conceptual exercise in discourse, and some have argued that describing a queer aesthetic in abstract terms is not the same as being or becoming queer (Edelman 2022, 263–267). I do not disagree with this sentiment, since any idea of a "universal" queer aesthetic that can be discovered amid cultural pasts irrespective of one's personal experiences would be conforming queerness to a normativizing standard—thus rendering it not-queer. Further, queerness need not be understood as an externally marked quality in order to function at the individual level, and so a queer aesthetic is entirely possible, just not universalized. The realm of discourse is often the first place in which queerness is able to germinate—in how ideas become part of ourselves: "Discourse is corporeal because we are enfleshed versions of the speech that constitutes us from culture without and from self-regulation or identification within" (MacCormack 2004, no page numbers given).

2.2 Methods

As mentioned in the introduction, my method is a queer interpretive rereading of archival materials and scholarship on Newfoundland fairies. I approach this by reviewing the scholarship on the fairy traditions of Newfoundland and then offer an overview of a number of queer theories by applying them to fairylore. Much of queer folkloristics has been a call to more ethical and inclusive discourse, as was Kay Turner's call, quoted earlier, and so my work is also a call to action. The work here is also a call

[11] I explore Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of *becoming* and *lines of flight* in the next chapter.

in a different way, or to a different community. In addition to queering folkloristics, I call to all queer individuals to discover themselves in folklore and the archives.

The queer theories I use in my approach to fairylore are those on *queer utopia* by the late José Esteban Muñoz and its counterpositions—the theories of *antisociality*, *death drive*, *queer failure*, and *antifuturity*, most prominently supported by Lee Edelman,[12] as well as the theories on *queer temporality*—introduced by Jack Halberstam (2005), Elizabeth Freeman (2010), Jaclyn Pryor (2017) and others. I'll introduce each of these below.

2.3 The Fairylore of Newfoundland

Before we dive too far into theory, I should describe the specific folk beings to which I'm referring—the fairies of Newfoundland. Newfoundland fairies share a number of similarities with their European cousins, such as diminutive size and tricksterish behaviors, but they possess a number of distinct qualities that are especially important to our work here. I would not be able to offer a more comprehensive description of Newfoundland fairies than what has already been given by Barbara Rieti in her *Strange Terrain: The Fairy World in Newfoundland* (1991) or by Peter Narváez's *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays* (1991). I can, however, offer a brief description of their physical appearance and general behavior from archival materials to help ground us in the local tradition.

The most common physical descriptions of Newfoundland fairies are not the small winged creatures that we might correlate with popular depictions of the fairy. Rather, they are more often described as "little men about two feet tall, who wore red suits" (FSC 70-25/79) or as "wearing red

[12] Queer antirelationality is originally attributed to Leo Bersani's (1995) text *Homos*.

stocking caps, sweaters, pants and boots" (FSC 91-331/10). These depictions are surprisingly similar to the Scandinavian household spirits (Lindow 1978). Though the fairies most frequently appear as these "little fellows" (FSC 70-25/82) in the Newfoundland tradition, they are not limited to this specific form. Rieti references a collection of fairy stories from St. Mary's Bay by Michael Fagan[13] in which the fairies appear in a number of forms: "as bees the size of chickens, glass alleys (marbles), ordinary people and in assorted other guises, they wreak havoc on some people, are ignored or defeated by others, and give a handsome reward to one" (1990, 89). They have also frequently appeared as a singular woman dressed in white who enchants men, leading them to walk great distances before disappearing (FSC 91-98/36), as young girls, or very infrequently as "little creatures with wings" (FSC 91-331/7). The narrative of the "woman in white" seems to be quite common, though is often placed adjacent to ghost stories in student collections. Part of Rieti's work on the fairy narratives was in parsing through euphemistic language that is used as an indirect reference to the fairies:

> Although individuals may be quite specific about the nature of the fairies, on a general level "fairies" is a very broad and elastic concept. Given this expansiveness, together with the avoidance and euphemistic aspect of fairy traditions, it is not always immediately apparent when someone is talking about "the fairies." Familiarity with patterns, language, and motifs, rather than explicit identification is usually what makes it clear. (1990, 92)

In my experience digging through the archives, explicit references to fairies as little folk are fairly consistent when narrative encounters are relayed. The comfortability of discussing "fairies" rather than relying on euphemism to discuss them may simply be due to a change in attitudes since the time of Rieti's collecting. Alternatively, this comfort could be an artifact, left by the presence of folklorists, in

[13] Fagan, Michael. 1967. "Ten Tales of the Fairies from Riverhead, St. Mary's." ENG 340 Essay, Winter Semester 1967, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

which the fairies have become what Gerald Pocius refers to as a "nativistic object" for the tellers (1988). I can't say that Rieti was incorrect in suggesting that the term "fairies" was a broad concept. However, we might be better served by considering other (non-fairy) folk beings closely related to the fairy but representing different aspects of the close social other in the cultural imagination rather than expanding the umbrella of "fairy" to include more and more otherwise unclassified folk beings.

Fairy encounters in Newfoundland are often marked by two specific factors that repeat across experiences. The first of these is location. Fairy encounters happen most frequently in either "the woods" or in areas of where wild berries (blueberries, bakeapples, partridge berries) grow and are harvested—such as near marshes, in valleys, or adjacent to wooded areas (Tye and Greenhill 2020, 101). Significant portions of archival materials on the fairies begin with a comment on the location in which fairy encounters are to be expected, such as "the woods," before relaying the fairy encounter. A few examples of this preemptive localizing are as follows:

> " a good friend of my great-grandmother's [...] went many miles into the woods berrypicking" (FSC 64-5/232)
>
> "It was a beautiful sunny day and the woods looked inviting so I decided to start exploring" (FSC 66-7D/66)
>
> "He followed them further and further into the woods" (FSC 67-14F/100)
>
> "As children we were always warned not to go in the woods because the fairies would carry us away" (FSC 70-12/100)
>
> "we knew them as the little people in the woods" (FSC 91-98/36)

> "Anyway, the reason why we thought he was a fairy was that at night, he would take his binoculars and look towards the woods" (FSC 91-348/24)
>
> "one day she went berry picking up in the woods" (FSC 97-42/11–12)

The theme of encountering fairies in wooded or undomesticated spaces is certainly not exclusive to Newfoundland fairylore traditions. It is often in the spaces away from the safety of the domestic realm, places of wildness or wilderness, that folk others are encountered. That said, changeling narratives almost exclusively occur in locations other than "in the woods," though the children are often protected from the fairies through similar ritual apotropaics like placing bread in the crib. See this example from a survey card collected in St. Mary's Bay:

> Around St. Mary's Bay and Placentia Bar, there is a superstition that a baby being brought to the church to be baptised would be protected from the fairies if a piece of bread was put some place in the clothing of the child. By so doing the fairies would take the bread and not the child. The bread was known as Company-Bread. (FSC 64-5/221)

Since changeling narratives often occur directly under the roof of the home or between the home and other spaces of moral and communal importance (the church), this means that even though fairies are often encountered in non-domestic, wild, terrains, or even in transitions between the internal domestic and sacred spaces, those familiar zones are by no means free from fairy influence. We see this trope in numerous folklore traditions as well as in poetical and literary works such as those of Yeats's *The Stolen Child*, quoted at the beginning of Narváez's chapter:

> "Come away, O human child!
> To the waters and the wild
> With a faery, hand in hand,
> For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand." (W.B. Yeats)

Or the rather more elicit (and arguably sexual) *The Goblin Market* by Christina Rosetti:

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry. (Rosetti 1979, 13; lines 87–104)

The second consistent factor across fairy narratives in Newfoundland is the experience of "getting lost in," or being "taken" or "led astray" by the fairies. The most common apotropaics are carrying homemade bread in one's pockets,[14] turning an article of clothing inside out, or spelling one's name backward (FSC 70-25/81). Being taken or led astray is *the* principal experience that the individual attempts to avoid (through the use of apotropaics) in encounters with the Newfoundland fairies. The presumption is that if you encounter the fairies you will either invariably be taken by them, have to use

[14] A foodways tradition of its own in Newfoundland, and one worthy of consideration in relation to fairylore. Folklorists have, no doubt, engaged in extensive work on homemade bread making, but I would be particularly interested in unpacking the sacral relationship of women to their bread. In this tradition the woman of the house, often a mother or grandmother, prepares the bread by 'blessing' it by making the sign of the cross over it. This act of blessing transforms the food into 'blessed bread,' a preeminent protection against fairies. The consequences of a vernacular belief in the power of women to create sacred objects that so closely resemble the Eucharistic bread is most intriguing—a ritual normally reserved for religious authority (that usually being men) that crosses (no pun intended) into the domestic domain, under woman's power. The medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* discusses a similar concept that occurs in hagiographies of female saints from the middle ages. There are a number of such vernacular religious aspects to Newfoundland fairylore that would be worth unpacking. Another of these is the 'fallen angel' etiology of the fairies.

a method in order to escape their grasp, or both. Being taken or getting lost in the fairies is often described as a trance-like state in which the individual person loses all consciousness of real-world time and space (Narváez 1990, 343–344). During this trance-like state, the individual can move a distance of several miles from their last known location in a short period of time, or can even lose days, weeks, or years worth of time before becoming conscious again of the "real world." At other times they can be lost for hours or days only to be found in a daze a few feet from where they were "taken." If the individual manages to apply one of the many apotropaics at the first signs of a fairy encounter, they often manage to wiggle out of the fairies' grasp before too much time is lost:

> he felt "compelled" to investigate, strangely. Previous to this happening [he] had no fear or belief in fairies or any thing connected with the supernatural. When he started following this pathway, the voices would go back further and further, so that they always seemed the same distance away from [him]. He continued, as if under a spell, to follow them until he realized that he was but a few feet from a dam. Coming to his senses he stopped and thought that perhaps this could be the fairies. He turned as if to go then took from his lunchbox a piece of bread and threw it ahead of him and took a pair of rosary beads from his pocket and made the sign of the cross. As he went to turn around he felt a strong tugging and pulling at his pants legs and he had to run with all his might to get away from the spell. For the first and only time in his life he felt sheer terror. When he got home his wife said he was actually gray in colour. (Excerpted from: FSC 67-3C/34)

Those who fall prey to the fairy realm do not often return to the human world without external intervention from the community. Once a person has become lost in the fairies, the community will frequently gather a search party to go looking for them, combing the woods and areas around where they were last seen. There are times when the person is found in a trance, as in this brief memorate collected in the 1970s in Bishop's Cove:

> This is the supposedly the [sic] true story of a man who went trouting one day. It grew late and he had not returned home. Others went to look for him. They found him walking along an old grassy road. He seemed to be talking to little fellows around him. It was no use to talk to him so

> one man smacked him in the face. He came out of it but didn't remember what he had done. He was said to have been "in the fairies." (FSC 70-25/82)

Most trances are not as easily undone as this, more frequently the person is found with their clothes ripped to shreds, variously bruised, or sometimes having completely lost their minds. We'll take a closer look at such experiences below.

2.4 Reviewing Scholarly Perspectives on Newfoundland Fairylore

Peter Narváez opens his chapter on Newfoundland fairies by discussing the images which the term "fairy" conjures in Newfoundland:

> Contemporary visions of "fairies" invoke images of either quaint folkloric figures, oftentimes associated with a popular children's literature based on folktales, or stereotypes of male homosexuals. In the first instance the figure is regarded as fantastical, while the second 'straight' view of "fairy" is deprecatory, connoting malignance and provoking an anxious response to ambiguous identity. The kind of ambiguous identity associated with this latter and more modern usage, one which poses the threat of potential immorality and bodily harm, has made the fairy of tradition a powerful community figure in the folk cultures of Newfoundland's past. (1991, 336)

It was Narváez's correlation of the fairies to male homosexuals that originally piqued my interest in fairylore as a germane intersection for queer theory and folklore. Being called "fairy" or "tinkerbell" seems to be a relatively commonplace experience for gay Newfoundland men in their youth.[15] Narváez discusses fairy encounters as social regulators (scapegoats) to sexual deviance and sexual trauma. His work looks at fairy encounters through a lens of morality, "temporal continuity," and the advancements of technology to confront, contest, and transform/conform wild spaces into extensions of the domestic (Narváez 1991, 354). His chapter, "Newfoundland Berry Pickers 'In the Fairies'," is a

[15] Personal conversations. 2022–2023.

useful starting point for applying queer perspectives because his interpretations involve frameworks on space, time, and community. Each of these are frameworks within which queer theory has offered alternative ontological perspectives. Narváez suggests that the experience of "being taken" or of "getting lost in" the fairies demonstrates a moral (and existential) breakdown, for the individual, relative to the "absolute morality" of their community (1991, 353–355). Narváez states that fairies function "as folkloric mechanisms for the erection and maintenance of spatial and temporal boundaries" (1991, 336). Meaning, spatial and temporal regularity become indications of *right* or "absolute" morality—the person who has not encountered queer experience is identified as having maintained the moral code of behavior understood by the community. When the individual breaches spatial and temporal boundaries, by entering the fairy realm or by experiencing gaps in linear temporal order, the presumption is that they have therefore experienced (intentionally or unintentionally) a breakdown of this absolute morality.

The "spatial and temporal boundaries" to which Narváez refers mark the fairies as "other," or as outside of normative space and time, and as correlated with individuals "outside" normative (or communally defined) *sexual* morality. Such a perspective centers the normative as an unmarked category and reifies normative perceptions that mark the fairies and those who encounter them as other, queer, dangerous, unusual, and/or morally impure, corrupt, or ambiguous. This is not an "incorrect" position from which to develop a theory, it is merely situated in a normative moral ontology. In a similar vein, Rieti states that her interlocutors are "successful, active members of their community, who can in no way be considered "marginal" or even unusual; they enjoy and support each other's narratives; and, they are kind and hospitable people" (1990, 280–81). Such a statement

emphasizes an interpretive and theoretical position that is based squarely in normative paradigms and that places traditional authority on the fairies with "normal" folk. Rieti (1990) states that her approach to fairylore contains two central thematic perspectives: explicit and implicit. Explicit themes refer "to overt content and narrative type, such as stories of changelings or going astray" (1990, 5). These are the narratives themselves, those that we must all rely on for our interpretations. Implicit themes, or "subtexts" "are those which…can be discerned underlying Newfoundland fairylore as a whole, which reflect cultural concerns and help explain its functioning independent of genre and belief" (1990, 5–6). Rieti describes two implicit themes: "One is the human relationship with nature" (6), and the other "revolves around interpersonal relationships, specifically around knowing, not knowing, and being known. The fairies are the ultimate strangers, and serve as metaphor for all that is strange not only in nature but in other people" (8). Implicit themes are interpretations of explicit themes. Both Rieti and Narváez interpret fairy narratives from a perspective that centers the normative within the communal context, and so their research relies on the normative judgments, presumptions, and standards of tradition bearers on the fairy encounter and conceptualizes fairies in light of normative moral, temporal, and ontological constraints. However, we can interpret the fairies from their own ontological position by utilizing queer and posthuman theories, and thereby offer an interpretation of fairy encounters that serves to reveal cultural, sexual, and moral "others" in non-problematic and non-moralizing ways. When we interpret encounters through a queer lens, the narratives reveal normative life as a stultifying experience to queer/fairy ontology.

The assumption in both Narváez's and Rieti's work is that we must think about the fairies from *outside* the queer or unusual, from the perspective of the "normal," rather than from *within* the

experience of fairies and/or queerness itself. This is where a queer re-reading becomes possible, and the space in which we're able to play with historical discourses to creatively reimagine collective histories.

José Muñoz suggests that queer re-reading is meant to extrapolate alternative perspectives from traditional materials and to offer avenues by which the queer community can access, create, and reclaim collective histories from systems in which they have been erased, divested, and marginalized. To re-read Narváez with this in mind means reframing his positions on morality (1991, 354–355), temporality (344–54, 355–58), and space (358–59) to reveal the normative presumptions in which the experiences of queerness are marked as "other," impure, or dangerous (337–38) and then to problematize them. Rieti's work was both archival and ethnographic, and so contained both the strengths and limitations of each method, and her field work enabled her to gather narratives from tradition bearers. In folkloristics we often mean the people from whom we gather narratives—but these people do not often have lived experience of the event. I realize that there are multiple discourses on authenticity that could be broached here, but we do not have the space or time to expand on them. Ethnography is one of the principal methods of folkloristic research. However, it also poses a number of limitations. First of all, field work is limited by time, material resources, and individual social networks. If the ethnographer has limited time to gather materials, they are likely to seek knowledge from a limited number of interlocutors. If, instead, the ethnographer is focused on a particular element of the tradition, they are likely to only seek out individuals who have knowledge of that specific aspect of the tradition. Dorothy Noyes puts this rather succinctly when she states, "As fieldworkers we necessarily construct a holistic account centered at our point of involvement and responsive to the immediate concerns of our interlocutors. As professionals we work in institutions and public discourses molded

by the postwar culture concept that imputes bounded worldviews to performances of identity" (2016, 131). Indeed, we do not have a dedicated ethnography of fairy non-believers, for example, nor do our archives abound with *explicitly* queer or BIPOC voices. I discussed Noyes' second point—that we are responding to an institutionally bounded notion of folklore and ethnography—in the introduction. Archival materials also suffer from constraints, since all archival objects were, at one point or another, gathered through field work and continue to be housed and organized within the academy and according to institutional standards that are grounded in colonial, patriarchal histories. However, the strength of the archive is in how it both reveals *and* suppresses knowledge. I speak to this in the introduction, but it is worth repeating here.

Liz Stanley discusses archival silences as "structured at four crucial junctures," (Moore et al. 2017, 34) defined in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1995) *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*: "The moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history)" (35). Archival silences can occur quite easily at any of these junctures. Stanley goes on to reiterate how archival work is often frustrated by gaps and silences, and that reading and listening attentively is the key to identifying these gaps and raising them for discussion, as well as for "formulating better research questions" (Moore et al. 2017, 35).

In order to rethink scholarship on Newfoundland folklore traditions through a queer perspective, however, we must first learn to think from inside the perspective of the "other"—in this case, the fairies. In reference to Trouillot's four junctures, this means that retrieval and retrospective significance (or interpretation) become the intersections in which queer interpretation can be applied

to the historical record. The act of queer interpretation then *becomes* a new "moment of fact creation" that is then added to the archive, which in turn transforms the archive into a queer (or queer inclusive) archive. For members of the queer community, identifying queer voices in collected histories is often quite simple. We understand the interpretation of folklore as queer, and with the ontological significance of fairies as queer beings, because we recognize similar experiences and characteristics within ourselves. Such an affective understanding of queer aesthetics is often "felt and traced in the history of our interests"—to call Kay Turner back onto the subject once again (2021, 13). However, this does not mean that everyone will feel or understand queer interpretation without diligent analysis. We can facilitate the sharing of this aesthetic knowledge by reviewing queer theory and by identifying coded (though at times only thinly so) instances of queerness in our archival collections and/or folklore. Once we know what we're looking for, the process of queer re-reading becomes clear and relatable, regardless of whether we self-identify as queer.

2.5 Queer Theory and the Fairies of Newfoundland

2.5.1 Utopia and the Death Drive

José Esteban Muñoz posited that queer experiences and documentation from the past can be used as a critique of our present socio-cultural situation to establish trajectories for queer futures (2019, 11–13). His position, or one of his positions, was that the climate of 2SLGBTQ+ discourse at the time of his writing was stuck in an untenable association with hetero- and homo-normative ideas of success and being. To quote him directly:

> A posterior glance at different moments, objects, and spaces might offer us an anticipatory illumination of queerness. We cannot trust in the manifestations of what some people would call queerness in the present, especially as embodied in the pragmatic debates that dominate contemporary gay and lesbian politics. (2019, 27)

Muñoz's request was that we consider the "performative force of the past" (19) as a critique of the normative, or "straight," present. Meaning, queer "moments, objects, and spaces" remain a trajectory from the past that can performatively demonstrate a queer way of being that has yet to *become*, but which our cultural ideas of queer may be currently spanning. Such moments in our collective pasts represent disruptions in the expected flow of time and lives, and in so doing represent for us—scholars and queer individuals at this end of history—an opportunity to identify alternative ontologies of queer experience. This is one way in which we can think of fairylore traditions, and is actually supported by Peter Narváez's work on the fairies as mechanisms for the erection and maintenance of (normative) spatial and temporal boundaries (1991, 336). Narváez's concept that the fairies function to sustain socio-cultural boundaries can also be understood from the position of the fairies. In this sense, the fairies and their "realm" also function to maintain a continual space of "otherness," that is, a space of alternative sexual, moral, or existential experience with standards of its own. In so doing they [the fairies] simultaneously create an ideal space in which the non-normative (or queer) other can exist in a way that is protected from normative absolutisms. The normative (person, morality, etc) may not cross the boundary between the world of the normative and this "domain of the other" without risking contamination, punishment, or death. Muñoz suggests a trajectory of queer potentiality can be identified from the past in order to inform queer ontological development going forward. His concept of a queer utopia is one of future possibilities and of a growing capacity to exist and function queerly.

Different from queer theories of sociality and utopia are those of antifuturity and antisociality. Lee Edelman, likely viewed as *the* contemporary voice on queer antisocial theories, speaks to the tension between the existence of queer bodies and beings and the reproductive futurism that sustains heteronormative society. Edelman suggests that the presence of the queer—a negation, through its very existence, of reproductive futurity as foundational to existence—destabilizes the very concept from which it is derived as a negation—that is, reproductive futurity itself as a foundational cultural concept. In later work, he speaks against the investment in queer aesthetics as one that must necessarily subvert the actualities of lived experience in favor of an aesthetic, and universalizing, imagination: "The aesthetic, in other words, frees us precisely by freeing us *from* the actual, and it loses…its aesthetic status once harnessed in the service of reality, even if that instrumentalization intends to alter the reality we know" (2022, 265). His position also suggests that queerness thrives due to the numerous antagonisms it faces. I find it difficult to disagree with Edelman's statements, not because I think Muñoz is incorrect, but because I understand Edelman and Muñoz to be speaking to different valences of queer experience. Where Edelman is speaking to the experience of queerness within a normative social context that defines the future as inseparable from reproduction, Muñoz is speaking to queerness from within a social context that is not predicated on reproductive futurity. Edelman's argument that utopian theories are more concerned with aesthetic experience than with lived experience is addressed by Muñoz as follows:

> To critique an overarching "here and now" is not to turn one's face away from the everyday. Roland Barthes wrote that the mark of the utopian is the quotidian. Such an argument would stress that the utopian is an impulse that we see in everyday life. This impulse is to be glimpsed as something that is extra to the everyday transaction of heteronormative capitalism. (2019, 27)

I would suggest that the utopian and antisocial approaches to queer experiences are not actually at odds with one another, at least not when read in the context of fairylore. Rather, both of these theories can be easily demonstrated in the fairylore traditions of Newfoundland because experiences of anti-sociality and the death drive are not inherently different from a utopian perspective when considered from the perspective of the fairy realm—that is, from a queer (or posthuman) perspective. Edelman's arguments make sense for the queer individual who has returned from the fairy realm—they are unable to reincorporate and instead suffer under the experience of becoming an insider-outsider. Their bodies and selves have become the utter negation of normative temporality and thus futurity. Muñoz, on the other hand, makes sense for the individual that is still experiencing communality within a queer ontological domain—i.e. in the fairies.

Let's look at an example of a fairy narrative. The following is excerpted from a local legend on Gull Island:

> K...she used to go berry picking often. She was only a young girl...About eighteen, nineteen. Well, she could have been older than that. I don't know. She wasn't married, and her parents used to always try to...keep her from like going out around anywhere. They let her go berry picking because a gallon of berries then was five cents, so that's all she was allowed to do. And she went berry picking one time.... They were picking blueberries, and there was a lot of blueberries and K was the kind of person, she'd roam off by herself.... She used to go—there was a place we used to call "Gallus Wood Ridge" and not too many people would go there along....And K, well you know, "I gotta go try it," right? She did....She left on a Monday...morning. She went berry picking because they used to pick berries down there for the minister.... The minister used to let them take a day off to go berry picking and whatever money you got when you sold your berries you come back and give it to the church.... So K did that and she went in and she was berry picking for at least...an hour and a half and nobody could find her. They said, "K's gone again. She's gone off by herself." ... She was missing for about two days.... And they said, "Well Jesus," you know, "where's she gone?" So they called in the RCMP from Harbour Grace and they had dogs out from St. John's and everything like that and "God! Where's K gone?" Well...K was a pretty little girl, really pretty and she was about nineteen, twenty years old.... You may not believe this but if you ever go to Burnt

> Point…look at her picture…. You'll see that…within four days after they found her, she turned into a fairy…really a fairy too because her face and everything where she was lost…she looked like she was about eighty years old…. She was found in…Little Gull Pond down behind Gull Island…laid down…in the grass under a spruce tree…. It was about…four miles from where she was berry picking to. And she had a little bucket of blueberries and she had…a small bucket of partridge berries…. She told everybody…she was walking along and…like she fell asleep. She said that the only thing that she remembers…was when someone woke her up when they found her under the tree…. And the little girl had to go for fifty years, live like an eighty year old woman. (Narváez 1991, 349–350)

Narváez lists the largest chunk of his narratives consecutively, organizing them under subtitles by way of explanation, and then follows this with his interpretation. Thus, metadata for each narrative is listed in an endnote, and these do not always offer the clearest trail back to the source materials. K's particular narrative, for example, was under the section title "Led Astray, Returns and Transforms into Fairy."

If, rather than assuming that K was comfortable in normative society (or with her parents), we read her as queer—perhaps as lesbian—then her experience in the fairies serves to liberate her from both familial/parental and heteronormative domestic restrictions. This is especially true if her parents' prohibition to do anything but go berry picking was based on a fear of sexual/moral promiscuity before marriage—truly a heterosexual construction of morality. By prematurely aging, K would no longer be a hetero-capitalistic (meaning: producing children) *object* of desire, and she would retain freedom from marital pursuit for the rest of her life. Further, having "to go for fifty years […] like an eighty year old woman" liberates her from age-oriented systems of control and destabilizes a linear timeline of life progression. Narváez notes the relatively common theme of familial, parental, and communal constraints across fairy narratives:

> In keeping with the traditional gender alignment of berry pickers, over two-thirds of the protagonists in these stories are women and only four of the narrators are men.[16] When age is mentioned or alluded to, it is clear that most of these women are young and subject to parental authority and community norms regarding sexual morality. (1991, 355)

We don't need to assume that K was gay to make our claim to queer experience. K's trip to the fairy realm, from a queer perspective, can be read as liberating from the normative, productive, and reproductive constraints of heterosexual life and communal expectations on her body and desires: marriage, childbearing, and domestic servitude. Instead, she bypasses all of these and remains independent. Her experience "in the fairies" actualized both a queer version of utopia—one in which she was able to retain her freedom from normative social demands through premature aging—and simultaneously fulfilled the queer death drive by subverting the reproductive constraints of normative social relations—also through premature aging. Queer utopia was fulfilled by her exiting the normative social domain and entering the fairies, and the death drive by returning to the normative from the fairies. This seems to be the critical juncture at which the two theoretical schools (utopian and anti-social) are able to function together: existence in the fairies supports the ideas of queer utopia, returning *from* the fairies supports the theories of anti-sociality. Of course, this is entirely interpretive, but that is the point of queer re-reading and demonstrates that non-normative experience, when understood as queer volition, can be liberating, even if it does not conform to normative interpretations of liberation or bliss.

For the sake of unpacking our normative biases, it's worth considering how we might push against interpreting this experience as queer. Queer theory is not only a discussion of queerness, it is

[16] That is, in Narváez's selection.

also a recognition of tacit bias. For example, why would we assume that K was, in fact, heterosexual? Why did the informant feel the need to comment both on K's good looks and her unmarried status? According to the narrator, K was "About eighteen, nineteen," legally old enough to take control of her own life, to work, and to maintain social relations. We are also told that "her parents used to always try to...keep her from like going out around anywhere. They let her go berry picking because a gallon of berries then was five cents, so that's all she was allowed to do." We also know that K's disappearance was not the first instance of her independent behavior: "They said, 'K's gone *again*. She's gone off by herself'" (emphasis mine). These are not irrelevant details. That the informant mentions K "wasn't married," was either because it was a quality unique to K, or because it was abnormal in the social contexts in which the story was told. The informant does *not* say "K wasn't married *yet*," and so the assumption is that K wasn't married because she didn't desire marriage. It may also be that "going out [and] around" while being unmarried was abnormal for young women, or interpreted as a sign of sexual promiscuity (since this is, effectively, what Narváez's chapter is suggesting). We may also argue that these elements are merely a result of cultural contexts at the time of collection. To argue with this perspective is not the work of queer re-readings. Rather, a queer re-reading is just as it sounds: to re-read the narrative from the perspective of the queer, or to re-read the narrative under the assumption that there are queer elements.

Comprehending premature aging as an experience of queer liberation/utopia might be difficult to grasp at first glance because our assumptions about sexual liberation or utopia come from a normative concept of pleasure, existence, and success. Fortunately for us, we have the work of queer

theorists whose writing deals specifically in this area. In their text on queer failure, Jack Halberstam describes lesbian ontology under normative societal constraints:

> [...] queer bodies function within a psychoanalytic framework as the bearers of the failure of all desire; if, in a Lacanian sense, all desire is impossible, impossible because unsustainable, then the queer body and queer social worlds become the evidence of that failure, while heterosexuality is rooted in a logic of achievement, fulfillment, and success(ion). (2011, 94)

The "failure of all desire" is vividly portrayed in the narrative structure of the above story. Our narrator, a man, begins by describing K's body (as an object) repeatedly as: "young," "pretty little girl," "really pretty," and then "like she was about eighty years old." K's premature aging is a perfect example of queer failure, which means the failure of the queer body to conform or fulfill the expectations of the normative, not to fail itself.

We may also find it surprising that an individual would rather risk death than continue to "live" under normative social control by voluntarily entering the fairies (like K did). This is also an element of queer failure—that the queer individual divest themself from notions of success, including the success of their future—i.e. through living or through progeny (Halberstam 2011, 129–130). As Edelman states:

> If the fate of the queer is to figure the fate that cuts the thread of futurity, if the jouissance, the corrosive enjoyment, intrinsic to queer (non)identity annihilates the fetishistic jouissance that works to *consolidate* identity by allowing reality to coagulate around its ritual reproduction, then the only oppositional status to which our queerness could ever lead would depend on our taking seriously the place of the death drive we're called on to figure and insisting, against the cult of the Child and the political order it enforces [...] We choose, instead, *not* to chose the Child... (2004, 30–31)

Rather than presuming K to have *suffered* by the premature aging of her bodily appearance, we can understand the experience as one that, as I mentioned, freed her from heteronormative, domestic,

reproductive responsibility. Indeed, the narrative doesn't say she suffered, nor does she imply that her experience was unpleasant. Further, why would K want to reproduce the culture in which the child (herself) is trapped in a system of strict parental control? As Edelman suggests, since it is not possible to consolidate queer identity under normative cultural structures, there is no point in reproducing it. Indeed, how could a non-person, which is the queer within normative society, ever hope (or want) to produce a future within which they are not allowed to exist freely? We don't know K's perspective on the subject, but we do know she willingly entered a known space of fairy encounters—"I gotta go try it." K is (purportedly) unable to remember her time among the fairies, all we know is that she returned looking much older. My argument that Narváez and Rieti's interpretations are situated in normative paradigms is also clearly revealed by the incongruence between personal memories of being in the fairies and discourses had about the fairies from outside memory. Why do some individuals recall their fairy encounter vividly while others do not? Why, too, when people recall their experience, it is quite a pleasant memory? We don't see remembered fairy experiences in which the individual is tortured or made to suffer, quite the contrary, the fairies frequently aid the individual. Perhaps their food and company are yet another example of queer failure? (Failure to meet a normative expectation?)

Antisociality and death drive are pervasive in fairylore—when the person disappears, dies, or loses their mind, ability, or interest in functioning within normative capitalist and reproductive futures after interacting with the fairies. However, "death" in the fairy sense can be understood as merely an experience of *human* (or normative) death. Meaning, the death of either the person's corporeal form or mental capacity alone does not predicate death as a totality, merely death from the human (or normative) experience of life. What becoming "lost" in the fairy realm means, when interpreted as a

queer aesthetic ideal, is both a utopian hope for a protected queer communal future *and* an antifuturity in which capitalist productivity, generational re-productivity, and normative sexual, moral, and temporal designations no longer determine whether one is able to exist or what such an existence must resemble. Upon entering the fairy realm the individual is freed from the suffering and oppression of human social demands and absolute moralities and instead exists in the presence (community) of the fairy (queer). The idea that one's existence must be based on a normative notion of "living" should alert us to an epistemological bias that dwells in a normative mode. More specifically, why must "living" be dependent upon existing within normatively defined social relations?

We might wonder whether the fact that the fairy realm exists in Newfoundland folk culture means there is space for queerness to exist alongside or within normative society, or whether the creation of this realm is an excision of queerness from the normative. I believe this is where Muñoz would begin his discussion—at the site of an historical and adjacent queer world that is both outside of normative time and at the edge (interpreted as the horizon) of either a coming future or a vanishing past. This is also the conflicted space in which queerness is often historically defined and experienced. Does the presence of a fairy realm alongside the "real" mean that a queer communality is yet to come? Or, does the fairy realm function as a space (like a closet) into which all the weirdos, queers, and perverts can be thrown and forgotten? Perhaps it's a little bit of both, and perhaps how the fairy realm functions depends on those of us who compose it. Meaning, if the queer other remains "outside," then we continue to formulate the queer as problematic to the flow and function of heterosocial norms.

Let's consider a few more examples from the archive. This narrative was collected by Kim French from the area of Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland:

> About twenty-five years ago a woman from Clarke's Beach went in over the "Earth Hill" as it was called to pick blueberries and when six o'clock came she wasn't home. It was dark by this time so a group of men went to look for her. It rained in torrents that night so the men returned without the missing woman. In the morning the search continued and this time they were successful in finding her. She was across a big river which would have to be crossed by a boat and there was no boat in sight. They found her between two rocks. She was not wet and she said she was in a beautiful house all night with lots of food and lots of company. She said she was in a beautiful house all night with the fairies in the heart of the woods and had no explanation of how she got across the river. (Narváez 1991, 350)

This is a perfect example of the fairy realm as a utopian space of plenty. We are not led to believe, from the description of her experience, that the woman was in any way uncomfortable among the fairies. If, instead we look at the other "characters" of the story, we realize there is a bit of an imbalance between the woman's experiences and the conclusions of her "rescuers." In many narratives there is the presumption that the person "lost" in the fairies *must* desire to return "home." Why would they want to stay in the fairies—this perspective is not considered in a single narrative. This is also where I see the hegemony of normative desire—in the notion that no one could possibly *want* to enter the fairy realm of their own accord or that they would ever want to remain there. This is paralleled in the problematic idea that the homosexual could not desire to remain homosexual if they didn't *have* to do so.

As mentioned earlier, there has been an ongoing debate between queer theorists proposing utopia and those proposing anti-sociality. There is something delightfully slippery about Edelman's notion of queerness-as-negation that counters the logic of existence yet is entirely workable within fairylore. In his most recent monograph, *Bad Education*, Edelman states:

> To 'be' queer, after all, is *not to be*, except as a catachresis of the Swiftian "*Thing which is not*." Queerness is the limit of ontology, the exclusion containing (in both senses of the word) the negativity—the no, the not—that generates being: the rupture, itself libidinally charged, in the logic of survival. Radically opposed to the normativity of the order of identity, it confounds the notion of being as being at one with oneself. (2022, 161–162)

Though I can't claim to understand Edelman entirely, it strikes me that his theory relies on the notion that queerness is the limit of ontology relative to the normative as *real*, substantive, central, or thing-ish. In this sense, queer as "not" simply means, essentially, always at the outermost edge of comprehensibility to the non-queer, or as a negation of an identity of the "self"—a form of esoteric un-knowability that is based on an exoteric definition of itself. Queerness is both experienced as an ontological extreme against the normative while simultaneously challenging the very insistence of the normative as what it claims to be. Edelman's point, I believe, is that the very presence of the queer being, by exemplifying even the possibility of "the not," challenges the idea that the normative *is* real, substantial, and not merely gestural. Of course, I risk over simplifying Edelman's position out of a lack of deep understanding. Edelman's "no future" is not, of course, a call to isolationism. Rather, it is a critical assessment of the ways in which normative society defers hope, value, and possibility into the image of "The Child," the Progeny.

Implied in his argument is an abandonment of deferred potential, responsibility, pleasure, etc to some future state that must be experienced *now*, since, in queerness, there is no deferral to "the Child." This is yet another delightfully queer space in which the fairy traditions can be read! In changeling lore "The Child" is swapped out with a fairy child, an imp, a supreme transgression of reproductive futurism instantiated by the body of the queer. The parents, priest, and others may not recognize the switch (though they usually do) and in so doing place their progenitive hopes, power, lineage, blessings, and care into a queer body, thus negating them! How subversive, tricky, and perverse those fairies are!

A number of scholars have positioned their work against Edelman's "no future" theories. Specifically, I'm called to mention Jaclyn Pryor's statement:

> I am skeptical of the white and ablest privileges embedded in discourses of radical antifuturity, and I question the virulently antifuturist sentiments of queer studies. I, like many queers, want a future for us all, and I am alert to the ways in which radical antifuturism is a privileged discourse for those whose lives are not deemed "expendable" in the first place. (Pryor 2017, 15)

Of course, Pryor and others are not disregarding theories of antisociality and antifuturity out of hand, nor is Pyror saying that we should all consequently jump on the utopian bandwagon. I find the inclusive perspectives of queer-of-color scholars to be more tenable to ongoing, interdisciplinary discourse, and so, reading archival materials through the perspective of the "pro-social theories" of Muñoz seems, generally, more forward leaning (no pun intended). Regardless of where we stand in relation to Edelman's theories of negation or the Muñozian utopian school of thought, we find that fairylore does actually yield to them both. Apparently queer folklorists can have their cake (or bread) and eat it too. Let's look at a few more examples. The following folklore survey card was collected in October of 1965 by Leslie Ayre. In the narrative we can identify both utopian and antifuture sentiments:

> On the lower end of Mereshee [sic] Island living alone are a family called T. There is the father and mother, three sons and a daughter. The place where they live is called Little Brule(y) which comes from the French word brule meaning a burnt out place but they mean a field or a meadow. They're rich as anything because they pay no doctor or no/dues to the priest. They have all their own medicines. You go in the kitchen and you see all their cures, essence of ginger and liver pills and olive oil and all that. They have two houses all fitted out and if they've been baking or something and the house gets too hot they just go over to the other oneand [sic] they don't have to bring anything because every thing is all over there. None of them can read and if they want to offer you some jam with your bread she says what color do you want and so I ask what color do you have and she'll say yellow meaning marmalade and red for raspberry and green for lime. She told me about her sister who was right smart in school she even knew all about pounds and ounces. She said her husband got a radio and now he even knows the days of

> the week. Her daughter is married to a fella who live in Placentia but the brothers turned him out of the house.[17] Her son "dim P" is never there when we come around but you see him hiding behind the door or running off up to the woods. Once I told her I had to meet him, I said I was taking the census for the bishop so she brought him in. He's about 32 and he's ordinary but he always wears a skirt made out of canvas like you'd make sails with or you'd wear splitting fish. No pants underneath but the big boots and a shirt and this skirt. He's right odd but quite intelligent to speak to and he can fish and make little boats that his brothers sell for him. People say he's a changeling and the fairies took the real one away, there [sic] always saying that about the odd ones. They dress the young ones up in dresses to fool the fairies. I wore onetill [sic] I was 6 or 7 till I had enough sense to get into pants. Mrs. T said that she bought medicine for her feet and he drank it an he's been odd ever since.
>
> Word for word from father C.[18] (FSC 66-1D/15)

Truly a narrative full of contradictions, and ripe with references that we can unpack in a queer tune! Initially, we see a number of "oddities" in domestic space, productivity (and re-productivity), and socialization. The home is reflected by the presence of another home, the surrounding domain a "burnt out place" that also, enigmatically, means "a field or a meadow." Even the language is contradictory to itself. The two homes are like the fairy and non-fairy realms lodged in fixed space. Is the T's land, perhaps, the fairy realm accidentally left amidst "reality"? Further, we must also consider the position of the teller, a priest, as an authority on normative (absolute) morality whose bias clearly enters the narrative. Rather than detail each of the oddities in the narrative, we should consider how this family can be understood within a queer world. The family, as a whole, is not explicitly marked as "lost in the fairies," though their behavior is certainly not "normal." Further, the priest says only that "dim P" was considered a changeling, though we can also see the discrepancy between the family being "rich as anything because they pay no doctor or no/dues to the priest" while the priest foists himself on

[17] There is something to be said here about the family members' queer relationships with one another that is reminiscent of Jeana Jorgensen's (2012) work on queering kinship.
[18] A priest.

their charity under false pretenses. There is also an interesting metanarrative happening within the text—that is, the correlation of priests and doctors with poverty, made by the priest himself. One wonders whether a further discourse analysis would uncover unspoken cultural paradigms against clergy or learned professionals. Interesting, too, that even though P is called "dim," father C describes him as "quite intelligent to speak to." Father C also describes how people would "dress the young ones up in dresses to fool the fairies," marking it as one of P's oddities. Surely the family wasn't lacking resources for new clothes. Rieti references this same survey card in her discussion of changelings and states a number of reasons she found for the wearing of skirts or dresses in a footnote to the card:

> ...This is one of those customs the true explanation of which is quite hard to judge; probably, like most fairylore, it varies as to belief...Estyn Evans says it was done "to mislead the fairies," noting that boys were "preferred and cherished"; he also suggests the fact of their biological inferiority (being more susceptible to illness and death than girls) as reasons for the fairies' desire for them...(I have heard no statement to the effect that the fairies prefer boys in Newfoundland, and there seem to be an equal number of each sex "taken.") (Rieti 1990, 160–161)

The decision to don certain attire is, perhaps, uneventful to those of us looking back from this end of history, since clothing has become an ever elevated marker of queer identity and non-conformity. However, the priest notes the oddity at the time, and offers metacommunicative context relating to his own experience. P is intelligent, dextrous (making boats and fishing), but shy. He flees to the woods—where the fairies dwell—when frightened by the presence of outsiders, or perhaps to avoid persecution from a figure of normativized (religious) morality and authority. A queer perspective would suggest P as a member of a collective queer ancestry. Additionally, we could argue that the entire T family represents a queer utopia all on their own, or that by P finding community in the woods is also utterly divested from the idea of continuing a lineage through procreation, social contact, or

prescriptive models of maturity. Indeed, the whole family can easily be understood as more of a queer kinship that breaches expectations to normalcy within the dominant social group of Merasheen Island by their disinterest in consuming from or investing in the community outside of their family. When such an "outsider" was introduced to the queer community he was "turned out of the house" (the brother-in-law).

Under Muñoz's queer utopian gaze we're asked to consider what a queer rendering of the past might critique in the current moment. His work contests the heteronormativizing experience of a sterile, policed, and boring present through past examples of queer ecstasy. In *Cruising Utopia* Muñoz references the memoir writings of John Giorno as a call for an ecstatic sexual utopia by recalling the experience of public gay sex in the toilets of the Prince Street station.[19] Muñoz relies on Giorno's work in order to critique the "crushing presence" of heteronormativity in daily life.[20] Giorno's work and Muñoz's theorizing about it are both extremely enjoyable to read and speak amply to what I'm suggesting in our fairylore discourses. According to Muñoz:

> Giorno functions as a disseminator of [gay] public sex culture. The idealization that his prose enacts is, within the scope of my analysis, an example of the way in which a rich remembrance of sexual utopia feeds a transformative queer politics. The excess that Giorno's text produces is indeed more than simple sexual bravado. The space of the Prince Street toilets and the practices of public sex that are rendered in his narrative engender a certain transformative possibility.
>
> [...] I see world-making here as functioning and coming into play through the performance of queer utopian memory, that is, a utopia that understands its time as reaching beyond some nostalgic past that perhaps never was or some future whose arrival is continuously belated—a utopia in the present. (Muñoz 2019, 36, 37)

And later:

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[19] Giorno, John. 1992. *You Got to Burn to Shine*. New York, NY: High Risk Books / Serpent's Tail.

[20] In an earlier draft I'd included a longer excerpt from Giorno but removed it out of fear of scandalizing readers. That said, it is definitely worth a read, even the small section that Muñoz gives. The excerpt can be found in Muñoz, José Esteban. 2009. "Fucking Keith, Remembering Utopia." In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, pp. 35–40.

> After this scene in the Prince Street toilet, Giorno runs out and catches a train in the nick of time: "I said goodbye and I was out the door in a flash, onto the train going uptown." Once on the train he feels himself once again overwhelmed by the crushing presence and always expanding force field that is heteronormativity: "It always was a shock entering the straight world of a car full of grim people sitting dumbly with suffering on their faces and in their bodies, and their minds in their prisons." This experience of being "shocked" by the prison that is heteronormativity, the straight world, is one that a reader, especially a queer reader, encounters after putting down a queer utopian memory text such as Giorno's. I think of my own experience of reading *You Got to Burn to Shine* at some predominantly straight coffee shop near where I live, looking up after the experience, and feeling a similar shock effect. (Muñoz 2019, 39)

Muñoz's statements: "being 'shocked' by the prison that is heteronormativity" and "reading *You Got to Burn to Shine* at some predominantly straight coffee shop near where I live, looking up after the experience, and feeling a similar shock effect," were exactly what I experienced at the time of reading this passage *and* perfectly matches the shock that I associate with the return to a normative social space after having been lost in the fairies (39). My initial notes on reading Muñoz and Giorno were of deep gratification and a feeling that my existence as a queer individual was validated—opening my spatial awareness of the world around me to an ongoing critique of a world in which our (queer) lives are mandated under a coercion to be normative and non-magical. No doubt reading something like Giorno's writing, wherever one is, will make us a bit prickly with agitation simply because of its raciness amid our flaccid, gray day-to-day. This moment of shock, which was essential to Muñoz's point, is important to recall in queer readings, because the feeling itself is an experience of a queer aesthetic. This feeling is also often how queer ephemera are realized in art and archives.

But, let's consider what Muñoz is saying here in relation to fairylore. Perhaps the "return" to the world of the normative is what leads to a stupefying incoherence of one's continued existence in that state, especially relative to the ecstatic bliss of sexual pleasure that could be posited as happening in

the fairies.[21] The idea that being lost "in the fairies" is a scapegoat for sexual deviance belies the potentiality of sexual bliss for the sake of some normative construction of sexual morality. Due to the often traumatic nature of being taken by them, the fairies are simultaneously understood as a warning against deviance and promiscuity and the potential dangers of sexual assault while berry picking or in the woods (Narváez 1991; Tye and Greenhill 2020, 101–102).

Adjacent to the idea that experiences in the fairies can represent a form of queer existential pleasure is the possibility that such experiences are actually traumatic sexual encounters instead. This idea was often associated with fairy encounters in my day-to-day discussions with Newfoundlanders, since many individuals return to the "normal" world in an extremely deteriorated state that can be easily read as an effect of physical violence. Let's look at an example of this from Narváez's material that suggests some of these elements:

> I have been told, when I was a little child, [that my aunt was] taken by the fairies. The story that my father told me was that she was sliding one day—well, actually my father was with her, as well, and my uncle, who was older than my aunt. And my uncle returned, but my aunt didn't, and my uncle said, "She won't come down off the hill. She's calling out that she's taken by the fairies." My father ran to the hill, found her. The snow was coming down on her face and she was rolling around in a bit of a trance and kept repeating, "No, let me stay, I don't want to go." And he had to carry her body and bones down off the hill. When they got her home, she was still in a trance and would not come out of it, would not eat, and they put her to bed and...they had to go for the doctor in a neighboring community. When the doctor examined her, he said that she was pregnant. My aunt didn't have a child. As a teenager she certainly didn't. My father just said, "I knew that was not the case when I came downstairs and he [the doctor] said she's pregnant." He [my father] said, "No she isn't. She was taken by the fairies. (Narváez 1991, 357)

Or another example:

[21] And is, by Narváez (1991).

> Mrs. [B], the fairies came and took her. They brought her back when she was dead. I often heard old [M] talking about things she used to do. Old [B] was a real fairy all right. She was sick in bed for a long time. She was paralyzed and everything. One day her brother was up in Riverhead. When he went back [she] was on her mattress out in the yard, dead. She looked right different – just like her real self. (FSC 67-4G/66)

In these moments it is possible that returning to the world of normative social organizations is traumatizing in itself, especially if that world is dictated under moral absolutisms—how can the person ever fully process a traumatic sexual encounter (rape) to members of a normative community in which such an encounter functions as a breakdown in understandings of morality? Their life would be unutterably changed if they did, and so the trauma becomes compounded within the realization that they are no longer fully part of the normative community nor fully part of the fairy realm—instead they are always partly in both. What if they are traumatized to such an extent that the memory is repressed or the trauma causes serious illness? This yields to the idea that the fairies "call back" the person at regular intervals, times in which they are unable to resist, either through reliving trauma or through a queer desire. We see a similar example with stories related to D of Bell Island:

> A young fellow D by name is reported as having been taken by the fairies. He was missing from his home one day and was found the next day in the woods, unconscious and quite disfigured. He had twigs in his nose, his body was slashed and bruised and ever afterwards although he was very intelligent and quite normal formerly, his speech was impaired, his intelligence seemed to have diminished and he became hunchbacked. He was afterwards however renowned for his beautiful penmanship, the like of which no one had ever seen. He became a recluse and as he walked along the street children would whisper around him, "There goes D, he was took by the fairies." D died about five years ago, at the age of about fifty. (FSC 67-3C/37)

D is repeatedly cited in Narváez's work, and a study of his life as a queer ancestor would be well worth a volume of its own. There is another narrative of D that is worth including for the sake of our argument:

> [...] D forgot the bread. One night some time later some friends of his asked him where he was going and he told them about the time he went into the woods without the bread and the fairies took him. He told them the fairies said he had to come back in the woods every night at twelve o'clock. Well this night his friends held him and wouldn't let him go. The next night he went and never came back for three days and three nights. After he returned he could only say a few words and appeared to have gone "silly." People then believed that the fairies had really taken him and up to the time he died a few years back they always said that this was the reason for his changed appearance after he came out of the woods. (Narváez 1991, 351) (FSC 71-22/30)

The fact that D's disfigurement was attributed to the fairies in this narrative, rather than to his friends, is quite interesting—since it was due to being prevented from returning to the fairies that caused his disfigurement as punishment. We see the compulsion that the fairies have over D to return to their company. Not many individuals in Newfoundland who've entered the fairies are called to return to them, though this is a common element in other fairylores. Either way, the space of the fairies functions as a critique of a normatively temporal, moral, and spatial existence because it is often difficult to return to after having experiences outside of the normative construction of daily life.

I realize that discussing sexual violence can be quite traumatic in itself and is, therefore, not something I approach lightly. That said, I lack any formal training in the domains of trauma and recovery, and so I am unqualified to expand these ideas any further here. I include them because this is often a conclusion to which Newfoundlanders, scholars, and colleagues have arrived at in casual conversations over the topical nature of this thesis.

2.5.2 Temporality

As mentioned earlier, perhaps the most germane intersections at which fairylore and queer theory align are in discussions on queer temporality. We have already seen examples of this in the small handful of

materials we've encountered thus far. In *The Good People*, Narváez demonstrates how getting lost or being taken by the fairies functions to regulate a normative "absolute morality." Narváez was arguing that experiences of non-linear temporality (gaps in time) re-regulates the individual's social standing in relation to communal notions of morality—i.e. that being lost in or taken by the fairies functions as, essentially, a scapegoat for "immoral" behavior such as sexual promiscuity and deviance and allows the individual to remain among the community without losing face. Time in the fairies falls outside of normative, linear, familial, and capitalist time, but in so doing reinforces the sense of order that *is* normative time.

Narváez describes the experience of "being lost in" the fairies as "an awareness of a dreamlike, psychic presence which caused pickers to lose their sense of time and get lost by being "taken astray" or "led astray," "fairy-led," or by being "in the fairies" [...] For any of these states time was a variable and often imperceptible dimension" (1991, 343–44). The general experience of "losing time," or of being in a trance-like state when "in the fairies" is perfectly aligned with queer and/or traumatic experiences of time as non-linear. One manuscript, cited in Narváez, describes this danger while berry picking:

> Although berry picking sounds safe enough, it does have its hazards. There were cliffs, foxholes, upturned roots, but by far the most dangerous were the "fairies."... Once they had you in their powers they could keep you in a trance for days. Sometimes you would wander around aimlessly or sit on a rock by the stream.... Even though no one can remember "being in the fairies," many can remember being one place one minute then someplace else the next and never being the wiser of how they got there. There were many instances of "fairy-taking" in my town and when I was a youngster my parents were always worried this could happen to me. (Narváez 1991, 343–44)

Narváez demonstrates how berry picking became a necessary supplement for additional family income during "the unemployment of the 1930s" (342). In addition to making jam or other household

comestibles, berry picking also allowed the family to supplement their dependency on the mercantile industries of the fisheries by bringing in a little cash (Tye 2011, 187).[22] We catch a glimpse of this in K's narrative as well: "[Her parents] let her go berry picking because a gallon of berries then was five cents" (Narváez 1991, 349). Berry picking was part of both familial and capitalist endeavors, even if these look differently to us today, and so a disruption in relation to those resource-rich domains (berry grounds) would have also been a disruption in the family's relationship with money and credit as well as with food reserves.

Jaclyn Pryor introduces the concept of *time slips* ("slips" being both noun and verb) to the idea of queer temporality. In the introduction of her (2017) monograph by the same name she states, "this book adopts the view that the notion of strictly linear time—the sequential progression of past, present, and future—begins to come undone when considered in the context of trauma and survivorship…survivors of trauma bear a complex relationship with time" (2017, 4). Pryor's argument speaks against the concept of linear and capitalist (re)productive timelines—which can be understood as oppressive for the socially deviant or subaltern individual. Some might wonder whether Pryor's notion of trauma is exclusively defined by the experience of sexual assault—an oft touted "explanation" for fairy encounters, discussed above—it is not. Rather, Pryor considers trauma to extend to the ontological experience of the abject as a state of "non-being" in relation to a central, normativized identity:

[22] For a posthuman environmental discussion on the credit industries of Newfoundland's fisheries at the turn of the twentieth century see Banoub, Daniel. 2020. "Black Monday, 1894: Saltfish, credit, and the ecology of politics in Newfoundland." *Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 17(2), pp. 227-243, DOI: 10.1080/14788810.2019.1666646

> U.S. culture is often invisibly and sometimes visibly organized around the identities and lifestyles of certain citizen-subjects, as if being human were synonymous with being Christian, white, male, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, neurotypical, and class-privileged. In this current system, non-Christians, people of color, [I]ndigenous people, immigrants, women, transgender and gender nonconforming people, queers, the disabled, and the poor are rendered unhuman, their lives and deaths therefore ungrievable. They are what philosopher Judith Butler, following Julia Kristeva, has called the *abject*: the subject that is not even a subject—unreal, illegible, unrecognizable to the state. (2017, 6)

We can combine Pryor's perspective with those of Halberstam and Muñoz to suggest that reinterpreting fairylore narratives as experiences of queer time, space, and being allow for the interpretation of a grievable queer collective history, our "unreal" queer historical narrative. Let's look at a couple of examples. The first is taken from Peter Narváez's chapter in *The Good People* (357–58), originally excerpted from Gail Weir's (1989) work on the miners of Wabana (Bell Island):

> Myself and me buddy were working on the buckets one day, you know. We had to wait for the ore to come up and dump it. It's getting on in the morning and he says to me at about eleven o'clock, "Tom, will you cover for me for ten minutes. I gotta go down in the woods for a while." I said, "Okay, Jim." So he goes on down in the woods. Time goes by. Half an hour, hour. Still no Jim. I says to meself, "That son-of-a-bitch is down there sleeping." So I rounded up a couple of me buddies and we went down for him, but we couldn't find him. So we came back and told the foreman on the job and he goes and tells the big boss. I can't remember his name now. Anyway, this is something big now, you know, cause Jim was never one to run away from work. The boss comes and forms a search party of about fifty men and we still couldn't find him. Then he sent someone to get the police. It wasn't the RCMP then. It was the local fellows. My son, we searched high and low. Had people come from town and everything but, you know, we couldn't find Jim. This kept up for two or three days. Then one day when I was back to work, up walked Jim out of the woods, a-beaming like an electric bulb. I says, "Where have you been?" He says, "Where have I been? I been down in the woods. That's where I been. Sorry to be so long, but Jesus, no need to be mad. I was only gone an hour. I just met the nicest little people. You go on to lunch now and I'll take over." "Take over," says I. "You son-of-a, where have you been this past three days? We was all worried to death over you." "What are you talking about?" says Jim. "'Tis only twelve o'clock. Listen. There goes the whistle." And so it was twelve o'clock but three days later. Jim was telling me later that he met a whole pile of little people and they had food and beer, and danced and played the accordion. Real friendly, he said. Well, it was some going on when everyone found out he was back 'cause we all thought he was dead, you see. After falling off the back of the Island or something. Yes sir, he was the only

> one that was ever treated that good by the fairies. But people always thought him a little queer after that. And you know, he swore that was the truth right up until he died. And you know something else, I believe him. (Narváez 1991, 357–358)

This excerpt is included in a section titled, "Fairies as Agents of Embarrassment and Threatening Disruptors of Continuous Time" (355–58), and is one place in which "queerness" is clearly marked by members of the community as a result of having been in close contact with the fairies. In a queer re-reading we would refer to this three-day "blip" in time as an example of queer temporality because it occurs against the grain of capitalistic, productive, and gendered orientations of temporal experience and order. Pryor refers to such temporal gaps as ruptures in "straight time" (2017). By "straight" time, Pryor means both the linear timeline in which we organize temporality in a chronological sense, but also to concepts of time which organize our lives in dependence upon cultural demarcations (rituals) of heteronormative success. Examples of the latter are rituals such as marriage, college graduation, starting a family, raising children, having and advancing in a career, finding community based on these experiences, retirement, having grandchildren, and death. Queer timelines don't often follow such prescriptive linear organizations, often because queer individuals are simply not able to follow them, or because they experience them in a different order—even death is often a premature experience for queer individuals that negates the possibility of experiencing the others. This is not essentially different from any examples of subaltern ontology.

Re-reading this narrative allows us to consider Jim's experience in the fairies as one of queer temporality, as a connecting point with a queer, trans-temporal community (a queer utopia), and as rejecting a capitalist temporality in favor of the present (antifuturity). The point in performing a queer re-reading is not necessarily to argue that Jim was, himself, queer or sexually "deviant" (though

queerness is already posited by Tom), but rather to suggest that this and other narratives of queer experience create a history by which the queer community *today* can connect and reconceive collective histories and experiences from the past. These histories are often erased, oppressed, or entirely lost (through the AIDS epidemic, for example), and so even the capacity to process communal trauma, loss, and multi-generational grief [23] is experienced as a similar rupture in linear organizations of temporality—how do we grieve when there's no community to grieve *with*, except through brief moments of memory? Or, how do we grieve queer, intimate connections with others that are not recognized in heteronormative relational structures? Further, if we posit that queer temporality represents an alternative ontological position entirely—i.e. that queer individuals experience gaps in temporal normativity because their lives are not segmented neatly into normative categories of productive and re-pro cycles of hetero-capitalist rituals—we understand that Jim's experience is representative of the disjointure between *lived* queer experiences of time and "*productive*" organizations of time as linear. Linear, segmented, and demarcated organization of time in the narrative being evinced by the lunch whistle, a capitalist organization of time upon the individual body into "productive" units. This also means that queer experiences of space and time (or simply queer living) are subversive to hetero-capitalist, neoliberal structures.

We have other examples of queer temporality in relation to the fairies that are actually quite common even in non-Newfoundland fairylore traditions (Rieti 1990, f17). For example, one way to

[23] For more on the documentation, erasure, and re-discovery of queer trauma see: Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

ensure the fairies did not punish people for talking about them was to re-instantiate a normative temporal order before entering into discussion:

> Mr. Dwyer's grandmother, who reared him, believed in the fairies and their powers although she had never seen them she had a good collection of stories concerning them which she and the other neighbours would gather together to discuss after tea when it was dark. However the fairies did not like being discussed and would punish anyone who told stories about them. She would in opening the conversation say "This is Sunday, Monday (whatever day it was) and the fairies won't hear us." This statement would prevent the fairies from hearing the ensuing conversation. (FSC 67-3C/33)

We might ask why stating the day was necessary to prevent the fairies from hearing us. In Seán Ó hEochaidh's *Fairy Legends from Donegal* he states: "When the old people were talking of these wee gentry they used to say: 'Today is Monday, they won't hear us!' And the strangest thing is that it did not matter whether it was Monday or not" (Ó hEochaidh 1977, 374). The presumed danger of even talking about the fairies is a common thread in Newfoundland fairy narratives. What's interesting here is that in order to safeguard their discussion, and to protect themselves from an attack by the fairies, the participants must either freshly re-conceptualize time as normative nor non-normative among themselves. If we consider time a performative act of subjective worldmaking, rather than an objective truth—much how Butler considers gender—then we are forced to ask whether there is any such thing as *real* "straight" time at all. If there was, then time would organize itself in a linear progression without the need for ritual demarcations. Rather, what I'm reading here is that time is subjective, and that not all subjective (i.e. queer) experiences of time work along capitalist, productive, and normative "straight" lines.

There are multiple discussions on queer temporality that frame the experience of time as subjective and therefore organized around personal experience rather than around communal or along

familial rituals of space, time, and morality (Halberstam 2005). I argue that time in the fairies is an experience of queer temporality. But, what do I mean? Fairy time is a queer thing, yes, but gaps in ordered time are also correlative to the lived experience of life as a queer individual. Jack Halberstam describes queer time and space as follows: "Queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. They also develop according to other logics of location, movement, and identification" (2005, 1). Halberstam's framing of queer temporality as "unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing" is useful for considering experiences in fairylore, as fairy encounters often disrupt various normative social and temporal organizations—familial, heterosexual, and capitalist/productive patterns (2). For example, let's consider a narrative through Halberstam's concept that queer time and space develop in oppositions to these various normative institutions:

> Aunt G, [...] went across the brook to pick a dipper of berries to make a pudding for supper. This was around two p.m. When her husband and two sons came in from fishing, the pot was on the stove cooking for supper but no sign of "Mother." They asked neighbors and someone had seen her going with her dipper. By dark, when she hadn't returned, a search party of neighbors went looking for her. They found her about two o'clock in the morning on a big rock, five miles away, singing "Jackie Walsh's songs." She had never sang in her life and she couldn't remember anything after she crossed the brook, although her dipper was full of berries. It's claimed that the fairies took her. She was none the worse for her ordeal. (Narváez 1991, 347)[24]

First, let's consider the statement "but no sign of 'Mother'." Keep in mind that this is a *queer re-reading*, meaning we are happy to trouble cultural standards such as labels that carry an implicit normative construct (i.e "Mother") as well as any form of kinship. "Mother's" duties and responsibilities were left behind, or interrupted, by her experience in the fairies. We could argue that

[24] Wall, Ursula Marie. Conception Bay, NL. MUNFLA 83-309 Manuscript, page 9.

the moment G left the responsibilities of "mother," her duties to the various aspects of herself that are not-mother also resumed—singing for pleasure, experiencing and expressing longing and emotion, abandoning any responsibility to domesticity or the deferment of personal desires to the welfare of others. I say longing, even though we don't know exactly what song G was singing, because Jack "Jackie" Walsh's (1914–1969) theme song was "My Little Yoho Lady," a verse of which is as follows:[25]

> "...It seems when we met all my dreams had come true
> I gazed in those beautiful eyes oh so blue
> Your smile keeps lingering like a golden memory
> Of a beautiful yoho valley..."

I find it interesting that G, a married woman with two sons, was singing a song of roaming and loneliness, of meeting a long lost (female) lover in some lonely valley just as she, herself, was roaming a valley (berry ground).[26] It's highly doubtful that Jack Walsh, a Newfoundland country musician with a popular radio program in the 1930s on VONF, the Voice of Newfoundland, ever sang romantic songs directed toward other men (Varga 2009, 168). Walsh's theme song (written by Wilf Carter) is one of love and longing. G's encounter with the fairy realm not only disrupted her relationship to domestic life (a.k.a. "mother" ontology), but also served to disrupt ontological constructions under which she was known to her family—having "never sang in her life." G's encounter with the fairy realm removed her from domestic responsibility and interrupted normative, heterosexual relationships in doing so. This perfectly aligns with Halberstam's definition of queer time as developing, "at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" (2005, 1). It is difficult to express how readily this and other narratives align with Halberstam's work on queer time and space

[25] (https://bluegrassnl.wordpress.com/music-pioneers/jack-walsh/)
(https://www.cowboylyrics.com/lyrics/carter-wilf/my-little-yoho-lady-16866.html)
[26] Likely a place in which many women from across the community would have gathered."

without quoting them at length. Suffice it to say, queer time disrupts notions of time that are tied to capital accumulation in any of its multiply nuanced aspects: "And yet queer time [...] is also about the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing" (Halberstam 2005, 3).

It's worth perhaps stating the obvious: that queer temporality is closely connected with queer utopia and antifuturity, since both theories discuss queer experience in ways that contest normative understandings of queer selves in relation to the past or future.

2.5.3 Domesticity, Wildness, and Desire

Let's briefly turn our attention to concepts of domesticity, desire, and wildness/wilderness. Narváez offers a discussion on space in his chapter in which he concludes that the transition of the domestic *into* the wild extends the protective cultural understanding of domesticity into spaces of danger in a way that, essentially, sanitizes them of dangerous and immoral elements (such as the fairies). We'll take a look at his points below, and consider them in contrast to what Halberstam says on the subject of wildness and queerness. But first, let's look at an example from the survey card collection in which domestic (heteronormative) relationships are disrupted by a sojourn among the fairies. This particular card is taken from a collection of materials gathered in 1974 at Mount Carmel:

> Mr. [N] informed [sic] that a woman living next door to him and his family left to come to his house one evening for a bottle of oil. Before she reached his house apparently, the fairies took her. She was missing for 9 days and on that 9th day the search party rescued her. She was unharmed and returned home safely. She was commenting on how the fairies treated her very well. (FSC 74-102/38)

This folklore survey card does not offer any exceptional metanarrative discourse or explicit definitions of queerness, nor does it explicitly mention the experience of "being lost" [27] but is an excellent example of the power of queer re-reading for that reason. The woman, who is unnamed, is taken by the fairies but not necessarily "lost" among them. The card speaks clearly to the idea that being taken by the fairies disrupts the flow of heteronormative, domestic relationships—a queer experience closely aligned to the arguments in Halberstam and the previous section on temporality. We see a discrepancy between the woman's comments on her own experience and those of the people who "rescued" her—demonstrating that our understandings of fairy encounters are based on exoteric, rather than esoteric understandings. The woman gives no indication that she experienced any degree of suffering or mistreatment among the fairies, but expresses, on the contrary, that she was "treated very well." Rather than experiencing suffering in this queer temporal rupture, she was liberated from a moment of domestic responsibility and treated well in the meantime—similar to Aunt G's experience in the previous narrative.

There are a number of encounters documented in the survey cards in which the human returns having lost something of value (an article of clothing, physical health, time, their mind), or even examples of the human repeating in a daze "Take me back, take me back." We can interpret such narratives containing such losses, or those in which partaking of the enjoyment, food, or drink of the fairies traps or permanently disables the individual within the fairy world as examples of irreconcilable queer trauma (see: 74-129/38). To stretch this a bit further, we could interpret the individual's

[27] Another common element of fairy encounters is that the experience of getting lost among the fairies is never described as an intentional act. In K's narrative we saw that she voluntarily entered a space well known for such encounters, but we were not given any indication that she willingly entered the fairy realm itself.

inability to leave the fairy realm as a final relief from the gendered, morally puritanical, and grueling experiences of a normative life into one of a timeless, ungendered, non-reproductively defined queer paradise. This last idea is perfectly aligned with Muñoz's queer utopia.

Early in his chapter, Narváez offers a brief theoretical description of the concept of liminality that divides space into the following three primary categories: the purity of known space, the liminal space of berry picking grounds and forests, and the danger of unknown space—which is not clearly defined. Narváez describes wilderness, the places in which the fairies dwell, as liminal space. His conclusion is that once liminal space becomes known space, through technological or other advances—which allow the comforts of known space to be carried with the person into these "other" spaces—those spaces traditionally belonging to the fairies cease to be liminal and are culturally domesticated, the boundaries of normative space are thus expanded through the advancement of human material (and technological) culture:

> The matter-of-fact acceptance and faith in the mechanisms which shape our sense of space and time has been of concern in the preceding discussion of how fairies in the berry grounds of Newfoundland have played a spatial and temporal role in the remembered past. The greatest threat posed by fairies to the folk cultures of Newfoundland was that in a cultural world of contractile space where the absolute morality of continuous time was revered, the appearance of a fairy might rupture and invalidate it. As a boundary market and bogey, therefore, the fairy played positive roles in spatially and morally integrating a society against pernicious external forces. [...] Until relatively recently, fairies in Newfoundland have been realities because news of them circulated in a vigorous oral tradition and firsthand evidence of their activities was readily available. Now that we have domesticated space and dismissed fairies from our view we are left alone to ponder our own technological devices. (Narváez 1991, 360)

Though Narváez argues that being "in the fairies" forms a social barrier to sexual promiscuity from being part of the normative social order, his work does not explore these spaces (the woods, marshes, and berry grounds) as sites of subcultural existence. The idea that, as domestic technology improves,

wilderness becomes a site of an extended domesticity is alternatively read as the advancement of the heteronormative policing of queer bodies and sexualities. The scrutiny of normative moral absolutisms extend into the queer as the fairy becomes a known object, rather than an independent, agentive subject. Just as wilderness becomes domesticated, so too do queer bodies come under the domain of normative judgements and moralities.

The concept of an absolute morality also implies homogeneity in the folk community. Rather than assume homogeneity, however, queer theory asks us to speak to the exceptions and exclusions that must be removed from conceptual formations of the social group in order to make the group cohesive. In queer theory, we are interested in these exceptions and exclusions. Narváez's framing of space as either pure or dangerous is taken from Mary Douglas's (1966) work on the subject.[28] According to Judith Butler, "Douglas suggests that all social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and that all margins are accordingly considered dangerous" (1990, 180). Douglas's framing is useful to Narváez's work, but presupposes the notion that social and moral purity are defined in relation to a singular, central idea—what Narváez calls "the known," movement away from which (either spatially or figuratively) graduates a decline in the moral purity of the individual. I find this formatting problematic because it defines moral "purity" as a singular state, or as homogeneously understood. Queer experience, or experience in/at the margins of normative society, requires a fluidity in one's understanding of morality—otherwise queer bodies remain ceaselessly impure and dangerous, even to the individuals inhabiting them. The organization of morality into pure–liminal–dangerous, as found in Narváez's work, does not allow for a queer perspective containing its own systems of morality and

[28] Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Taylor and Francis.

"purity." For the fairy, or for the queer, the human and normative realms are often dangerous and destructive. Further, systems of morality and purity are often based in some religious belief that remain oppressive and exclusionary to those unable to conform to the normative moral condition—there are no exceptions to absolute religious, moral rule, and so failure to conform is religious, or moral, failure.[29]

Jack Halberstam's (2020) work on wildness and desire speaks particularly well to a queer fairy ontology. Coincidentally, Halberstam's work is closely aligned with the posthuman theories of the next chapter, and so a brief discussion of their work on wildness is a helpful segue to posthuman thinking. Halberstam carefully parses through histories of sexual identity and ends with a challenge to the normativizing quality of siloed binaristic identities of homo/hetero that we experience today. They argue that desire contains an essential disordering quality to it that will necessarily destabilize neat categorization:

> We can stretch this sense of untimely desire, disorderly bodily expression, and untidy identities out of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth. At stake here is not periodization per se so much as finding vocabulary, narratives, and figurations for the inevitable *disorder* of things, the ways of being that resist expert knowledge, that fail to resolve into identity forms, and that find expression in the practices of runaways, spinsters, eccentrics, and recluses. The unruly lives of the lost, the lonely, and the lunatic call their hellos from what Foucault calls "the other side of all the things that are." (Halberstam 2020, 14–15)

The disordering of desire is precisely what we see in the fairies as well. It is as if the fairies, or perhaps any folkloric other, is shouting and waving at us from behind and within our cultural forms to see their

[29] In the case of fairies, they are frequently understood, etiologically, as fallen angels (FSC 67-4G/58), or as the "unwashed" children of Eve.

queerness, to admit to the disorderly bodies that we so carefully sequester from our discussions of ourselves. On wildness, Halberstam states:

> Wildness [...] is a realm of the monstrous, excess, extravagance, freedom, unspeakable desires, death, life, and illegible territories in between. The wild, for contemporary culture, is a fast-evaporating concept, a terrain that barely exists, a category of life lost to knowledge and a disintegrating future horizon of potential. As in other moments of cultural and political and ecological crisis, we have fashioned monsters to embody what we cannot name, to frame what we have come to fear, and to banish what we cannot tolerate. (2020, 147–148)

This is perfectly aligned with the folklore of the other, not only the fairy but all monstrous creatures that we must comprehend as separate from normative society. Calling in the queer to the space of wildness is not to suggest that queerness is inherently monstrous, but that cultural sites of illegibility are those in which the queer can, and often does, germinate and thrive. Wildness is also very closely correlated with cultural ideas of the environment—that is, of non-human or non-domesticated space. It is also at these places that the fairies dwell, and in which they are encountered, and it is in the space of wildness that identities (and bodies) are disordered in fairy encounters. This disordering is seen in narrative when the individual returns to the human realm permanently (physically or mentally) altered, or when their bodies are badly bruised, scraped, or otherwise.[30]

Since the human body can enter the unknown space of the fairies and return to the known space of domesticity, productivity, and community without having retained a conscious knowledge of the unknown, there will always be unknown and unconscious ruptures into queer space and time that

[30] In addition to the narratives we've seen thus far, there is also a tradition of contamination associated with the fairies in Newfoundland called "the blast." Barbara Reiti discusses this in depth in both her (1990) dissertation as well as in her chapter "'The Blast' in Newfoundland Fairy Tradition" in *The Good People*. We saw a sample of this in D's narrative (FSC 67-3/37), given above: "He had twigs in his nose, his body was slashed and bruised". Often the contamination happens at a more internal level, having forest materials erupt at some later date. The idea of contamination, however, is certainly not how many would prefer to think of ontological becoming!

exist within the normative (subconscious/subcultural). These ruptures are the places in which we can understand the capacity of the fairy realm to function both ontologically and epistemologically for the queer individual. In the narrative of Jim from Wabana, he (Jim) is treated very well by the fairies, and then returns to the human world unharmed. The narrator explains "...he was the only one that was ever treated that good by the fairies. But people thought him a little queer after that." Narváez and others (usually interlocutors) consider folks who have returned from the fairies with marked physical alterations or odd behaviors to have become fairies themselves. I argue that anyone who has encountered the fairies is, at least partly, fairy. Reworking Narváez's argument allows us to flip the spectrum of human—liminal—fairy to see from within the perspective of the "other," that is, the fairies as queer beings, and to trouble the idea that there is any hard and fast separation between human and fairy states. This has been the work of this chapter, to ask that we trouble neat categories of central identity. Queer theory asks us to question linearly organized dichotomies in which two forces stand in opposition to one another. The point underlying the poststructuralist breakdown is that such binaries are, in fact, purely cultural constructs. Meaning, they can both be *de*-constructed.

In Newfoundland fairylore we see an almost constant imbrication of human and fairy ontologies—the fairies bring their infants and exchange them with unbaptized human children because they are more beautiful or less sickly; they steal people away from domestic and capitalist activities, sometimes offering them reprieve from the demands of their social responsibilities or, at other times, causing them to permanently unsettle their place in "normal" society; they offer humans food and drink, only to capture them in an eternal dance—and so, the compulsion to define fairies as truly

separate from the human domain seems impossible.[31] Considering fairylore from the perspective of marginalization reveals an underlying fear and tension in the human community which plays out among a number of narratives. Narváez's work on morality is one of these examples, fears of the racial other also ring rather poignantly, or indeed—as I'm suggesting—fears of the sexually and/or morally deviant. Indeed, any deviation from the cultural norm, which itself is a constantly changing and amorphous signifier, can be understood in the context of the non-human agentive folk being (fairy, mermaid, troll, witch, etc).

2.6 Conclusions

The discipline of folklore has historically been interested in spotting patterns and of parsing through variation. I turn my attention to a recent call by Rachel V. González-Martin (2021) to reassess our position within the academy:

> Tradition is a racialized tool. The academic concept of tradition is an organizational device that undervalues racialized communities in our contemporary Western, White supremacist society, where Whiteness is synonymous with "unmarked" and tradition is part of a validation of a community's capacity to historicize its existence in place and time. Tradition is a set of practices that hold both literal and symbolic values, values that are mobilized in different ways but also received socially and culturally in different ways depending on subjective positionality. (González-Martin, "White Traditioning and Bruja Epistemologies," in *Theorizing Folklore from the Margins*, Otero and Martínez-Rivera 2021, 36)

[31] This last point (fairy food) is a common theme among many fairy traditions the world over, and this is also the case in Newfoundland fairylore. Consider the following brief narrative:

> They said they had seen a fairy. They said it was a little boy without hair. [...] He had offered them a mug but no one would take it. If they had taken the mug, the fairy would have taken them away. If he didn't take them away there would be something wrong with them for the rest of their lives. (Narváez 1991, 350)

The food taboo is a common element across fairy traditions: that is, where the individual is not meant to partake of "fairy food," at the peril of their sanity or health. (ATU C200–C299) Adjacent to the polemic against consuming fairy food is the idea of bread as apotropaic.

Though González-Martin is focused primarily on the racial politics of "tradition" that maintain white patriarchal supremacy within the academy at large, I take her approach as a central tenet in discussions on folkloristics as a discipline, on our interpretive traditions as scholars, and on research developing from the historical archive across unmarked categories. The premise of her work is that we must invest our energies in identifying the gaps in representation—those voices of the erased subaltern—to build a different future for the academy and discipline alike. So, too, do the writings of the late José Esteban Muñoz, a queer scholar of color, hold a central role in the development of a queer folkloristics that takes form here.

The term queer is also an interesting one, in that it has been used to both describe a specific group of individuals based on deviant sexual and gender identities, but has also been used as a blanket term for all things non-normative. Often the broader notion of queerness includes the subaltern, non-normative, non-white, and non-Euro-American. I have no qualms with the inclusive use of this term insofar as queerness does not preclude the compounding experiences of greater degrees of marginalization and oppression. My call to interpret folklore through a queer lens is primarily to create a more ethical, inclusive space in the archive and in the discipline. My hope is that by doing so other queer individuals who have found themselves without space, who have felt as if *not* belonging was central to their existence, can recognize themselves in both the scholarship on folklore and in the folklore itself. My call is also aligned with Kay Turner's call "to claim folklore's central queerness and get on with it" (2021, 10). Too frequently our disciplinary history has drawn on normative paradigmatic interpretations of the world, and on structuralist social categories instantiated by, essentially, old dead white men. I am happy to say that we are gradually moving past this tendency.

Performing queer readings of historical scholarship and archival materials creates space for more than normative potentiality in which individual experience can be identified regardless of one's place in relation to normalcy—whatever the hell that is.

I hope that it has become clear by now how easily the fairies of Newfoundland can be interpreted as sites of queer potentiality. We did not overly discuss ontology in this chapter mainly because defining ontology was not necessary to combine the fairylore to the various queer theories we explored. However, in the next chapter we will look at queer and fairy ontologies in more depth, and having an understanding of what the fairy realm and the fairies themselves might represent can help us to understand how they can be utilized to explore ontological categories.

Chapter 3: Fairylore and Posthuman Theory

> Fantasy is not the opposite of reality; it is what reality forecloses, and, as a result, it defines the limits of reality, constituting it as its constitutive outside. The critical promise of fantasy, when and where it exists, is to challenge the contingent limits of what will and will not be called reality. Fantasy is what allows us to imagine ourselves and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it brings the elsewhere home. (Butler 2004, 29)

> This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 161)

3.1 Introduction and Objectives

In the last chapter I critically examined the fairylore of Newfoundland through a queer theoretical lens. I argued that the fairy realm is a space of queer potentiality and that interacting with that realm is a process of queer ontology. In this chapter, I will perform a similar re-reading, but through the lens of posthuman theory, which will allow us to play with the boundaries of the human. This chapter will argue that understanding the fairies as a site of queer ontology is, itself, an example of posthuman becoming. This is a lot to unpack. First of all, what *is* posthumanism and how is it related to queerness or folklore? Further, what does "becoming" mean? Finally, why is posthumanism important to queer folkloristics? I'll answer these questions and many more in the coming pages.

3.1.1 What is posthumanism?

Posthumanism is a broad philosophical tradition that covers a wide range of sub-fields. A few of these are the studies of ethology (the study of animal cultures), multispecies ethics, new materialisms,

environmental posthumanities, ahumanisms, monster theory, death studies, and queer posthumanism. In the following pages I principally rely on the theoretical works of new materialist, queer posthumanist, and environmental posthumanist scholars Rosi Braidotti (2002, 2006, 2013), Patricia MacCormack (2004, 2009, 2014), and Jane Bennett (2010) respectively. Bennett is interested in troubling the notion that life, vitality, and agency belong only to the human or biotic and her work blurs the boundaries of the human body and environment; Braidotti explores the process of becoming monstrous from the feminist political perspectives of Luce Irigaray; and MacCormack explores the intersections of the posthuman, queer identity, and ideas of perversion. MacCormack describes posthuman as:

> a direct challenge, not to the former human, but what it means corporeally and discursively to be, or more correctly to count as, human [...] Like queer, the posthuman does not seek to exchange or go beyond toward a set goal. Both interrogate the arbitrary nature of systems of power masquerading as truth. Through a negotiation of alterity within self and an address to oppressed entities, queer theory and the posthuman mobilise and radicalise the here and now through desire, pleasure and pure potentiality. (2009, 112)

Where queer theory questions the normativized cis-hetero, white, and male perspective as a central, or natural, perspective to ontology, posthuman theory questions human superiority and centrality as normal.[32] We can see how the queer re-reading of the last chapter could fit readily within the discourses of posthumanism—as a "negotiation of alterity within self" is precisely what queer theory asks of us

[32] There is also a great deal of discourse on *desire* that is foundational to both of these theoretical traditions, that I do not have the space to explore at length here. We can catch a glimpse of the mobilizing affect of desire in the above quote by MacCormack, but there is no way to put it simply without being grossly reductive to the rich philosophical traditions from which it derives. For more information on the philosophies of desire that have generated queer and posthuman theory see: Lyotard, Jean-François. 1993. *Libidinal Economy*, translated by Iain Hamilton Grant. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press; Hocquenghem, Guy. 1972, 1978, 1993. *Homosexual Desire*, translated by Daniella Dangoor. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; and Irigaray, Luce. 1977, 1985. *This Sex Which Is Not One*, translated by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

when unpacking the queer other from within folklore traditions (112). If the fairies are examples of queer and non-normative identity, or if they're sites of queer experience and potentiality, then interaction with the fairies, or folkloric transformation *into* the fairy (which we saw in a couple of instances), becomes an example of queer posthuman ontology and the posthuman body. Meaning, the individual's body and identity, through interaction, spans ontological categories of both human and fairy, and begins to exist as part of both while simultaneously failing to exist as solely one or the other. This newly formed, hybridized comprehension of self disturbs precisely what it means to be human or non-human, and thus upsets the perceived boundaries of human identity and body through their co-mingling with the fairy. I'm not arguing that "the body [...] perform super-human feats of transformation" *into* fairies, which MacCormack argues is *not* the point of Deleuzian/posthuman becoming at any rate, but that such a transformation suggests "an encroachment on the limits of the body to push the body further out into its potentials" (MacCormack 2004). Extrapolating posthuman ontology from fairylore is a call to question the limits of what it is to be human, to dwell within a human body, to question "human" understandings of temporality, and to therefore question normative moralities and qualities of acceptability. Posthuman ontology asks us to push the boundaries of the human—this is what is meant by *becoming*.

This framing can easily present as problematic in a colonial context in which the contaminated hybrid-human self/other is treated as monstrous, yet this is also precisely how the queer body exists in western social contexts. A queer posthuman ethic asks that we lean into this difference as revelatory to social tensions, to the reconceptualization of social orders, cultures and subcultures, and moral codes to explore the outer edges of the human body and self—not as a means to stretch human superiority

until it covers all objects and subjects, but as a means to test and sometimes break normative (absolute) moralities and to resist oppressive social and cultural systems. This can also be read as an immanently privileged positionality, since many bodies and beings forced to the outer edge of "what is human" are often those of black and brown people, indigenous people, women, and queers who simply desire to exist without contestation over their bodily autonomy or personhood. However, it is from the particular experience of marginalization, monstrosity, and perversion that their very unknowability by the normative and their capacity to contest the absolute and finite that posthuman ontologies derive their power.

MacCormack's statement that the queer and the posthuman work "through a negotiation of alterity within self and an address to oppressed entities," speaks to the work on queering the fairies we saw in the previous chapter because the fairies are identified as the queer other that is simultaneously inseparable from the community itself. Such an approach is deeply rooted in an attention to the voices and experiences of the subaltern, and it questions whether present and historical constructions of "human culture" are derived from an actual representation of humanity or merely a privileged intellectual position that functions to define the entire trajectory of our knowledge of selves (Spivak 2012, 58). As the internalized queer and sexually deviant "other" in Newfoundland lore, the fairies mobilize the queer interiority of the person in fairy encounters to enter the fairy realm by either embracing their queerness or by rejecting it. In reading the narratives as queer at this end of history our queer desire is also mobilized and stirred to identify queer perspectives from the past, and to create queer narratives that continually contest the subsuming of alterity into an unmarked idea of human selves.

MacCormack's comment that neither the queer nor the posthuman "seek to exchange or go beyond toward a set goal" indicates that we are not interested in exchanging normative binaries of ontology—whether hetero/homo, man/woman, nature/culture, human animal/non-human animal, or biotic/abiotic nor is *becoming* an ontological change that leads to a final formulation of a static identity. Instead of binaries and fixed states of "being," queer posthumanism is an attempt to recognize the entangled multiplicities of complex, nuanced, transversive, and challenging subjectivities. Again, queer posthuman identity allows us to trouble precisely what it means *to be* human, and in so doing to unmask the unmarked and problematic categories and privileges behind the term.

I will also explore the environmental turn in posthumanism. This is relevant to a discussion on fairylore because, as we saw in the introduction to the last chapter, fairies are frequently associated with specific natural environments in Newfoundland. If the fairies are conceptualized as an environmental assemblage, or even as anthropomorphized versions of the local environment, then becoming–fairy is also undifferentiated from becoming–environment. This is a posthuman ethic. *Becoming*, in this sense, is a breach, or encroachment of the boundaries of body and self in relation to and interaction with a nuanced fairy/environmental assemblage.

When we apply posthuman theory to folklore we are aiming to consider the "other" of folklore narratives as a site for expanding identity, not only as an experiment in ontology, but also to contest the limits of a cultural self. By unpacking such entanglements further, we're able to dissolve stiff, normative, definitions of the self and critically examine our definitions of "the folk."

In the following sections I will briefly review how posthumanism has been applied to the discipline of folklore in the work of Tok Thompson (2019). After this I will discuss the concepts of

assemblage and *becoming* to allow us a better grasp of the principles from which posthuman thought derives. I will then turn to a discussion of posthuman bodies, utilizing Halberstam's (2020) work on wildness, and will connect this to Jane Bennett's posthuman environmental perspectives on assemblages to explore the concepts of vibrant/vital material and *actants*. Finally, I will contextualize these ideas within a queer posthuman perspective.

3.2 A Review of Posthuman Folklore

Posthuman folklore is not new. A small number of folklorists have been writing at this turn for several years, and it is helpful to start with a brief review of this work.[33] Specifically, I'll review Tok Thompson's (2019) monograph, *Posthuman Folklore*. It is also important to acknowledge that a number of non-folklorists have been working with folklore materials to explore posthumanism for some years. For example, Jason Wallin's contribution to *The Animal Catalyst* compares elements of the Hessian tale of the wolf-child to the violence of "civilizing" anthropocentric pedagogies (2014). Pablo a Marca, of Brown University, is exploring metamorphosis in fairy tale alongside the Deleuzian becoming–animal theory, and is currently working on a dissertation at the intersections of folklore, ethology, and environment. So, regardless of where we are currently as a discipline in relation to posthuman applications, folkloristics is well suited to the discourse.

Thompson defines posthuman folklore as "two connected things: the folklore regarding posthumanism, and folklore from beyond the human" (2019, xiii). Thompson also succinctly

[33] Tok Thompson actually opens his (2019) monograph with reference to Jay Mechling's "'Banana Cannon' and Other Folk
Traditions Between Human and Nonhuman Animals" from 1989, indicating that posthuman frameworks have been part of our intellectual zeitgeist to us for some time.

describes the part of posthumanist thought that is most compelling to the work laid out here: "Posthumanist approaches include [...] epistemological and phenomenological studies in questions regarding identity, agency, and action" (xii). Thompson also clarifies that posthuman theory "is not mere academic sophistry, but rather [...] is increasingly being recognized and enacted by widespread vernacular performances by everyday people in their everyday lives" (xiii). This last statement was a helpful springboard for early conceptual work on the subject in which I thought to test posthuman theories of an agentive environment against historical folklore data. In Newfoundland folklore we see an environment filled to the brim with non-human, thinking, sentient beings.

Thompson introduces us to two posthuman theoretical domains: those of animal studies, or ethology, and the evolution of digital technologies that extend the corporeal and ephemeral constraints of the human—i.e. cyborgs. These two areas of posthuman thinking are easy footholds for entry into posthumanism more broadly, but they are not a comprehensive representation of the subject. Animal studies ask us to more closely question whether culture is strictly a human activity, and if not, to consider the implications that such an outcome would have on our discipline specifically. In his work on ethology, Thompson turns to Indigenous worldviews as a prolepsis to recent scientific discoveries in animal language and cognitive ability. I agree that some Indigenous knowledge supports posthuman thinking and the concepts of animal language and culture. However, I feel the urge to tread carefully when considering Indigenous understanding as more aligned with animistic worldviews—mainly due to my lack of expertise, but also out of an abundance of caution to not universalize or presume tacit colonial perspectives that evolutionize Indigenous views against a European scientistic perspective or that flatten Indigenous perspectives into a singular knowledge domain. Halberstam struggles with a

similar concern when working with the concept of "wildness," and they trouble the term introduced in colonial Euro-American contexts. Thompson's "digital turn" in posthuman thinking deals with things like cyborgs and the advancement of technological intelligences (AIs).

My frustration with Thompson's work is in his construction of posthuman folklore as an evolution/devolution of "the human being." Halberstam and Livingston actually anticipate this difficulty in their work on posthuman bodies, and clarify that "The posthuman does not necessitate the obsolescence of the human: it does not represent an evolution or devolution of the human. Rather it participates in re-distribution of difference and identity" (1995, 10). Thompson's work, though leaning toward a discourse on hybridity, does not deeply challenge the ontological centrism of the human, but instead refers to a human relationality to animals or technology that continues to instantiate an "us" and "them" paradigm. Further, his work on sexuality skims only the most problematic levels of public discourse and inadvertently reaffirms the status of "non-normative" sexualities under the term "un-natural," meaning "non-reproductive" (2019, 66–70). I highly doubt that it was Thompson's goal to reaffirm problematic conceptualizations of sexuality. Nonetheless, to introduce such definitions of the marginalized body demands a critical examination of those definitions, without which the work remains unacceptable. However, Thompson does admit that his work is only a sampling of posthuman thinking, and so, we can be grateful that there is a text on posthuman folklore in the discipline at all!

Posthuman perspectives are meant to generate changes in thought and behavior, and in how we live in the world. In this sense, they are meant to be *applied*. This is also true for their place in the discipline. In folkloristics, this application affects our interpretive methods by troubling the idea of

independent categories of ownership, meaning-making, and affect.

3.3 Terminology: *Assemblage* and *Becoming*

Before I dive into the analysis I should explain a couple of key terms that frequently occur in discussion on queer and posthuman theories. These are the concepts of *assemblage* and *becoming*.

Central to the ideas of relationality, entanglement, and enmeshment that pervade posthuman thought is Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *assemblage*. Though Deleuze describes assemblage variously, one helpful definition is as follows:

> What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a "sympathy". It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind. (Deleuze and Parnet 1977, 1987, 69)

An assemblage perspective asks that we reconsider the solidity and separability of objects and beings (including the human body) as, instead, multiply constructed rather than individuated: "The mutual interdependence of bodies [...] also marks a radical critique of anthropocentrism in favor of the recognition of the entanglement of material, bio-cultural and symbolic forces in the making of the subject" (Braidotti 2006, 27). Interpreting folklore through an assemblage framework is something we already do, and numerous folklorists have applied the framework to their research—though not necessarily through a posthuman lens. Kay Turner's work on women's home altars and her use of Schapiro's *femmage*, or "women's artistic process of collecting and joining seemingly disparate elements into a functional whole" (1999, 98); Holly Everett's (2002) work on roadside memorials as

vernacular assemblages of meaning and commemoration; Jack Santino's (1994) work on holiday displays; and even Simon Bronner's (1986) work on architectural bricolage are all examples of assemblage studies in folkloristics. As folklorists, we also understand that folk knowledge is necessarily formulated through a web of interlocutors—making them assemblages—the formulation of which occurs via the transmission (performance/lines of flight) as well as through the construction of a singular object. The means by which folklore develops orally is another example of how assemblages function and are formulated. Orality transfers knowledge that simultaneously changes in the moment of its transfer. Such knowledge is neither the preceding knowledge nor the proceeding knowledge, but is both and much more than just both; this knowledge then changes again and again as the folklore is passed on, always adding to the folkloric assemblage that is the cultural knowledge while simultaneously shedding parts of itself that are forgotten or excluded. Folklore is always in a state of becoming, alway transforming.

Assemblage theory is not focused on the homogeneity of objects as singular entities possessing their own individual and inherent meanings, but in the composition of relations and entanglements that compose the meanings that then manifest as the assemblage. The fairies are an assemblage in a number of ways: as a collection of encounters documented on slips of paper; as folk beings; as a relationship with the natural environments of forests, berry grounds, marshes, fog and the like (Simmonds 2005); as units of worldview that perform a multitude of functions in regulating the social dynamics of morality, sexual desire, and moral contamination (Narváez 1991); as sites of queer ontology; as a system of folk belief and praxis with the dead (Rieti 1991)—the list goes on. In an assemblage framework, all of these positions are congruent and related, as are current and future

interpretations of the fairies. This is also part of the *jouissance* of queer and posthuman approaches—they delight in the multiplicity of interpretative potential. Offering alternative interpretations of folklore, from an assemblage perspective, does not diminish previous interpretations but *expands* them so that the assemblage is always in excess of what it is or was. This is also where the languages of flows, ruptures, intensities, and the like come from in queer and posthuman folkloristics.[34] Such an approach is interested in how connections affect each other, how leaning-into the queer and posthuman can affectively and effectively alter disciplinary trajectories toward more ethical domains, and in how identity can be understood as centered in the space of exchange rather than in a singular definition of group, genre, or self.

Becoming is another foundational concept of posthuman and assemblage theories. We frequently use the verb *becoming* in queer folkloristics, yet do not often outline the thinking behind the term. The relationships within and between assemblages are what Deleuze calls "lines of flight": "immanent movement of deterritorialization that at once allows there to be a territory and destabilizes the territorial character of any territory" (May 2005, 138). Territories, in this sense, are molar and molecular subjects, or, mutable and immutable formulations of subjects (selves, nations, ideas, assemblages). It is within and along the lines of flight, the relationships within and between assemblages, that we experience *becoming*.

We might wonder, since we're discussing *becoming* under a larger conversation on queerness and posthumanism, whether *becoming* is an experience exclusive to queer individuals. Even striving for

[34] See: *Theorizing Folklore from the Margins* (Otero and Auanda Martínez-Rivera, eds. 2021) for examples of this language applied to folkloristics. Framing experience through this language is helpful in understanding and conceiving non-Eurocentric understandings of knowledge production because it assumes knowledge to be decentralized and not predicated on ownership, dominion, or subjugation.

a normativized conceptualization of identity (e.g. a cis-man striving to be masculine) is a trajectory of *becoming* because the individual is driven by a desire to alter their current state (which is already mutable) toward another. However, an individual in this particular pursuit does not necessarily experience a marked conflict between their goal (a more masculine man) and the normative cultural assumptions regarding their gender and the constructed qualities with which that gender is associated. In a normative cultural context, the correlation of "man" to "masculine" is viewed as inherently or naturally occurring—they are viewed as mutually constructive qualities and so remain unmarked and unquestioned. Queer theory has, for many years, demonstrated how this construction is, in reality, entirely fabricated. However, unless we have encountered this argument—and not always even then—it is not likely that we will be able to parse these two qualities as distinct and related through conceptual formulation.

For the queer individual, however, *becoming* is often marked by a rupture in the processual arc of lived experience, either through trauma inflicted from without, or from the dislocating experience of realizing one's difference from an expected norm. In the experience of traumatic rupture the identity, body, or one's very life no longer reflect the larger, apparently heterogeneous, whole. This rupture is often explicitly violent when experienced in relation to an external trauma such as harassment or assault of any kind. However, even internal ruptures in one's cohesive ideas of self arise from the experience of a deep cultural violence held toward the queer and obscure. Certainly, many queer and trans individuals will understand the concept of *becoming* through direct, personal experience—the fluidity between identities from which we run and toward which we strive, never fully settling, never fully content with a limited category of identity. Yet, as far as lived experience goes, we often get stuck

at one end of a binary, or as Guattari would put it, at a "molar" concept of *being*.

Instead of considering ontological difference as problematic, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize it as the catalyst of *becoming*. Todd May, in his introduction to Deleuze's philosophy, defines difference as follows:

> Difference is not a thing, it is a process. It unfolds – or better, it is an unfolding (and a folding, and a refolding). It is alive. Not with cells or with respiration, but with vitality. [...] If living is a matter of the unfolding of a vital difference, then the one that lives can be either less or more or other than a person. It can be a mouth, a gesture, a style, a relationship. It can be a group or an epoch. (May 2005, 24)

Accepting the experience of difference, moving along the trajectories which it defines, flowing into the rupture of identity, *is* becoming. Striving to span or cross the difference between ways of being, living, and understanding the world is *becoming*. It is informed by a desire for the other that is also self. The philosophical concept here relieves us of the idea that life, identity, and existence must be prescriptive or firmly defined by others and demonstrates that identity is, instead, "concerned with experimentation" (May 2005, 25).

The point of Deleuze and Guattari's work, or of the subsequent posthuman philosophy that arose from it, is not to propel us into a final state of *being*, as they consider "being" to refer to a(n *imagined*) fixed state, but to remove the bracketed ends of identity so that we might experience an ontological transformation of all categorically defined phenomena, including one's self, as always in movement. As we said earlier, we are not trading one end of a binary for the other. MacCormack offers a clarifying note on the concept: "Becoming is an aspiration for change in thinking the material self. Becoming deterritorialises subjectivity, mobilising rather than reifying the way we think self" (2004).

3.4 Posthumanism and the Fairies

I will now turn to Newfoundland fairylore under a posthuman perspective. To do this, I will consider the idea of a posthuman body through contamination narratives of the "fairy blast" tradition, as well as through a few of the examples we've encountered already. Following these I will turn to Bennett's work on the posthuman environment, exploring actants and vital/vibrant materiality, and then return to queer posthumanism.

3.4.1 Posthuman Desire, Contamination, Environment

The contaminating, crossing, and hybridizing of human bodies with the environment is most easily recognized in Newfoundland's "fairy blast" tradition, in which the person's bodily form is contaminated in the fairy encounter—usually as a result of the human intruding on a fairy domain or causing the fairies some general upset. Rieti lists the following two narratives in her section on "the blast" tradition. Both were collected by Michael Fagan in 1967, in Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay, Newfoundland.[35] The first survey card lists the event as having taken place approximately sixty years previously (~1900–1910):

> Aide Lee went up to turn down the cows one evening — on the hill, just behind his house. He got astray for a while, and you know there was nothing right about that. On the way home his legs felt kind of funny. He got away from them*, but the poor man was crippled for the rest of his life.
>
> *them; the fairies (FSC 67-4G/60)

The second narrative is also about Aide Lee, but with slight variations:

> A resident of Riverhead, [St. Mary's Bay], very narrowly escaped capture by the fairies while

[35] Rieti also lists a third version of this tale, in a manuscript of stories collected in Stephenville, approximately thirty miles from Riverhead, with significant differences—a detail on which Rieti comments (1990, 140–142).

> picking berries alone near his home. He became lost for a while, but soon found his way home. His becoming lost was caused by the fairies, trying to lure him away. He did not escape them entirely, however. They sent an infection into his leg, and the swelling rose to almost the size of your head. When, after more than a year, the swelling broke, berries, particles of moss, straw, pieces of shrubbery etc., were taken from the sore. (FSC 67-4G/62)

These narratives are a bit different from those we saw in the last chapter. They demonstrate the permeability of the human and fairy realms through the medium of the human body and speak to physical and ontological contamination through interaction. Thinking through contamination as a posthuman experience allows us to explore the domains of desire in a way that is still aligned with Narváez's work on the fairies and morality. Rather than consider contamination a destructive force, however, in posthuman thought it becomes an alternative trajectory of relationality between the individual and the community. The human body is contaminated in such a way that it becomes a human body that also contains elements of either the environment or the fairies. The body itself becomes ground-zero for contesting human and non-human territories. The body in these narratives is closely aligned with Braidotti's interpretation of posthuman becoming as "shot through with relational linkages of the contaminating/viral kind which," she argues, "inter-connect it [...] to a variety of others, starting from the environmental or eco-others and include the technological apparatus" (2013, 193).[36] Rather than instantiating desire as antagonistic to morality, posthumanism defines desire as expansive to one's sense of self because it is formulated as a catalyst for alternative ontological trajectories that can only be defined, in discourses dominated by normative morality, as a queer and unknowable other. Such a desire forgoes normative moralizing constraints entirely because the

[36] Braidotti's numerous works on posthumanism are excellent sources for exploring the concepts of sexuality, monstrosity, and animality.

posthuman body that develops from it can only be conceived as a non-thing. Braidotti explains posthuman-becoming as "a process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary…" (2013, 193). This explanation clarifies that even though posthuman becoming need not be an extreme change in the body or self, neither is it a merely symbolic gesture. It is a pivot toward entangled, feminist, and ethical relationality across multiple real-world contexts.[37] The fairy-blast narratives also clearly encapsulate what is meant by the permeability of posthuman subjects and, through the contamination of the human body that occurs in those narratives, destabilizes the idea of a knowing and knowable human subject in favor of an entangled subject that can only ever be understood by those who have experienced ruptures in normative ontology—i.e. the subaltern. In these narratives, the fairy realm is understood as a site of alterity that is both different and simultaneously inseparable from the bodies and minds of the folk; the wild external world enters the internal world of the body and self—at times changing the body temporarily, at other times permanently. There is a useful tension in the idea that though contamination appears to arise from an external force, it is actually an internal quality manifested when normative temporal, spatial, or ontological orders are breached. This is based on the conceptualization of the fairies as cultural assemblage. These narratives demonstrate that the human is deeply enmeshed and entangled with the fairy realm—even if that realm is understood as a constructed assemblage—and is therefore also enmeshed with the queer other and with wild, libidinal, and posthuman desires. The fairy is part of the folk ontological makeup of the human, and therefore necessarily vice versa, but so is

[37] Posthumanism helps to destabilize privileged views of self and in deconstructing the intellectual history of rationalism. Braidotti notes this: "This non-essentialist brand of vitalism reduces the hubris of rational consciousness, which far from being an act of vertical transcendence is rather re-cast and pushed downwards in a grounding exercise of radical immanence. It is an act of unfolding the self onto the world, while enfolding the world within" (2013, 193).

the fairy in excess of such an ontology insofar as it extends the idea of the human temporally, spatially, or even bodily or mentally. Encountering the fairy, then, functions to redefine the boundary of the human in a way that reveals the self as enmeshed with the queer other and the environment.

Jack Halberstam and Ira Livingston discuss the posthuman body in a way that correlates, almost directly, to the disjointed temporal experience of being lost in the fairies:

> Posthuman bodies do not belong to linear history. They are of the past and future lived as present crisis. This present, this crisis does not glide smoothly along a one-dimensional timeline but erupts or coalesces non-locally across an only partially temporizable realm of meaning. (Halberstam and Livingston 1995, 3–4)

This speaks to both the onto-temporal hybridity of fairy-human interaction that we saw in the last chapter as well as to the notion of bodily permeability and contamination in Newfoundland fairylore that we saw in the "fairy blast" tradition. Their statement also agrees with Muñoz's queer utopian frameworks in the sense that it recognizes the queer posthuman body as one composed of cultural traumas spread across domains of meaning and relationality. Halberstam's (2020) work on the queer body and wildness also troubles the boundaries of the body and environment to deterritorialize the queer body from one that must conform to neatly demarcated patriarchal, colonial, and heterosexist organizations of desire. Queer desire, in Halberstam's work, is chaotic, multidirectional, and unstructured:

> Recognizing the ways in which the wild has been ascribed to evil, to some colonial notion of primitive personhood, and to a form of chaos that civilization comes to tame, Taussig offers a new relation to wildness that "tears through the tired dichotomies of good and evil, order and chaos, the sanctity of order, and so forth." [...] Queer theory after nature necessarily comes down on the side of chaos and remains in productive tension with "the grotesque and the destructive," and in this way, it stays monstrous. (2020, 41)

Queer/wild desire is important to discussions on posthuman ontology because it is through such desire

that queer selves are mobilized toward ontological change—the desire to interact with, to collapse differentiation between bodies and selves, to change, to become.

In the folklore scholarship on fairies we often define both the physical locations in which they're encountered and the beings themselves as "liminal" (Rieti 1991, Narváez 1991). One explanation for this is that liminality functions as a conceptual organization in which to describe the other as ineffable to the knowable cultural domain of the normative. Defining fairy realms (domains of the the queer and monstrous) as liminal pushes those environments into an unreal margin out of a need to sequester the obscure and dangerous to the space of an only partially knowable "other" to maintain the normalcy ordinary space (Narváez anyone?). However, what if there was more to unpack from this framing? What does "liminalization" or othering imply, and what does it accomplish?

We saw in the last chapter how the not-quite normative/linear domain of the fairies allows for the distortion of time and space in a way that reflects queer lived experience. However, what if this "space of the other" is not actually "other" at all? What if the fairy realm, the woods and marshes, *and* queerness, are not marginal or other at all, but are instead extensions of, or entanglements with, the normative? Such a framing demonstrates that the queer, as well as formulations of externality and wildness are not oppositional to ideas of homogeneous culture or group. Christine Daigle states that "The humanist perspective in environmental thinking [...] radically separates the human from the nonhumans and posits nature as this radical other..." (2022, 8). In contrast, posthuman perspectives consider no firm constitutive difference between human, non-human, and environment.

In Newfoundland communities where fairylore has been well documented, there seems to be an unconscious understanding that the fairy realm was not somewhere *else*, but was adjacent to one's

daily experience. Take, for example, the following narrative from St. Vincent's, collected by Tina Kielly in 1988:

> A lot of people believed that fairies existed in earlier years. My friend's grandmother told me a story of how her son, [C], was taken by these little creatures. One evening, as she was preparing supper, [C] and his brothers were playing in the garden. [C] got tired and fell asleep by a tree. The other boys continued to play. When [his mother, D,] called them to come in for their supper, the boys looked but could not find [C] near the place where he fell asleep. They looked for about two hours but could not find him. By then it was dark and everyone was worried. So [D] got some men together to look for [C]. They searched until the break of dawn, passing the tree where [he] fell asleep several times. At about 6:00AM [he] was found sound asleep by the same tree where he originally dozed off. Everyone was puzzled by [his] story of how he woke up near the water with all these little men dancing around singing songs. And then could not remember anything else. He thought he was only dreaming but the others knew that only one thing could have happened — the fairies must have taken him. (FSC 91-326/17)

Though the fairies were well documented as residing primarily in undomesticated spaces, they occasionally crossed the boundaries of "human" spaces into houses as changelings, or across roads, over bridges, through gardens, etc. This narrative demonstrates the permeability of known and unknown physical environments, other than the body, in the fairy narratives and troubles the idea that space was clearly demarcated into known/safe–liminal–unknown/dangerous. Certainly we can see that fairies themselves profane or pollute the safety of known (normative) space through their mere presence. This suggests that the fairies can be both everywhere and nowhere, not only in the spaces of wildness or wilderness. This means that the fairy assemblage, with all its concomitant meanings, is also part of a constant tension within normative organizations of body, space, environment, and time that is waiting to cause a rupture in such organizations of community at any moment. Meaning, rather than an isolated fear of violent desire, sexual promiscuity or liberation, breaches in absolute morality, or death existing only in particular environments, these experiences are even present in the quotidian and

mundane. This also means that, rather than the queer/posthuman fairy other existing in a separate domain, these function as subcultural within the folk group. Rieti states: "Nature—in the general sense of uncultivated wilderness—is one of [the fairies'] salient characteristics. [...] John Lindow calls [it] 'the other world,' while pointing out that it is nevertheless 'essentially the one in which the tradition-bearers live'" (Rieti, 27). We can read this to mean that fairy ontology, or queer ontology, is not a regression of cultural normativity, nor an evolution *beyond*, or *outside* of it. Becoming-fairy (or queer, or posthuman) is just that—a *becoming*—becoming part of the environment, a "redistribution of difference and identity" (Halberstam and Livingston 1995, 10). This distribution of identity cannot take place from within normative perspectives of the "other," but must take place in the interstitial between the two (those who have entered into the fairies and returned: i.e. those who have experienced queer life).

There are a couple of other ways in fairylore that we can interpret posthuman bodies that are not based in contamination narratives, but that reveal desire and becoming in other ways. Consider the following examples from the archive. This narrative was collected by Gloria Hawkins in 1966, Carbonear:

> As a child I was terribly frightened of fairies and I remember the incident which caused my fear. When I was about 7 years old I was visiting with my Aunt in her Summer home near Carbonear, Conception Bay. It was a beautiful sunny day and the woods looked inviting so I decided to start exploring. My Aunt saw me leaving and told me to be careful or the fairies would carry me away. I had something on red that day and she said that the fairies especially went for people who wore red clothes. She scared me so much that I decided to stay near the door rather than go into the woods. I never forgot what she said and I always thought of it whenever I was alone anywhere like the country. I imagined fairies as horrible little things who liked to carry little children away. (FSC 66-7D/66)

The child's wonder and awe at the natural environment was replaced, through social conditioning,

with a fear of expansiveness, the environment, and self-discovery. The message to stay away from the woods developed into a fear of expression beyond the close edges of the human community (physically and figuratively): "I never forgot … and always thought of it whenever I was alone anywhere like the country." For our purposes, we can understand the girl's unrestrained desire for freedom, play, and discovery to be a line of flight, a trajectory, that would have led her to experience fairy ontology, a becoming–animal—hence the admonition from her Aunt. It is not the experience of freedom, exploration, and play that is inherently fearful—rather, it is the negotiation of normative ontological expression against individual desire that causes either a rupture in normative ontology, or an instantiation of it. This next example was collected by Michael Fagan in 1967, from around St. Mary's Bay:

> Lizzie Point, a point on the coast of St. Mary's Bay, is shown on most maps; it is locally known as Liz's Point. There is a fairy story connected with the origin of the name. According to my informant the event took place 70 to 80 years ago.
> 'Liz Fagan, who lived down at the Graven Bank (shown on maps as Graven Beach) was missing for two or three months. The fairies had her. One day she appeared in the kitchen door. "O now I have you," her mother said. "No you haven't, mother" she said "not now or ever." If she didn't speak she'd get her. She chased her out the landwash as far as Liz's Point; that's where she lost her. People used to see her there after that, sitting on a rock, late in the evening.' (FSC 67-4G/61)

A posthuman interpretation of this narrative would conceive of Liz's experience similarly to the K's experience in narrative we read in the previous chapter—a fairy ontology that rejects domestic constraint. Liz's posthuman becoming–fairy is a desire for freedom from constrictive ("now I have you") familial relationships. Becoming–fairy offered Liz an escape from what would be described as a normative ontology for a young girl and daughter living with her mother. This reading is very similar to the queer re-reading we did in the previous chapter—and that is the point. Because her desire has led

her to become–fairy or environment it is a posthuman desire and a posthuman becoming. As a subaltern figure, a posthuman ontology provided Liz with a line of flight—literally and ontologically—just as a queer re-reading calls forth queer bodies and experiences from the past, posthuman readings offer alternative ontological trajectories of identity of and for the subaltern.

3.4.2 Fairies as Vibrant Matter

Posthuman perspectives on the environment also trouble the notion that agency can only arise from within the human. Instead, agency is understood as a force of influence. According to Christine Daigle, a scholar of posthuman environmental theory, posthumanism rejects "the anthropocentrism, human exceptionalism, and hierarchical thinking at work in humanism" (2022, 2). Posthumanist discourses problematize the narrative of human superiority, exceptionalism, and epistemology to suggest ahuman, non-human, and other alternative-to-human approaches to environmental issues that have too frequently arisen from or are compounded by the idea of human superiority—issues such as environmental pollution, devastation, excessive resource extraction, or the mass extinction of non-human species. This means that, in addition to discussions on non-human ontologies, or animal ethics and animal-thinking like those of Thompson, a turn toward abiotic and non-sentient materials as agentive subjects is also possible within posthuman theory. This becomes especially interesting when considered alongside assemblage theory.

Jane Bennett's work on "vital" or "vibrant materiality" is also of particular interest here. In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Economy of Things* (2010), Bennett reconceptualizes our relationship with the environment in a way that challenges traditional notions of agency. Her work is helpful in

reworking the folklore assemblage, and in how we interact with, create, and negotiate the assemblage in the field, text, and archive. Her work relies on Bruno Latour's theory of *actants*, which she defines as follows:

> *Actant* ... is [...] a source of action; an actant can be human or not, or, most likely, a combination of both. [...] "something that acts or to which activity is granted by others. It implies no special motivation of human individual actors, nor of humans in general." [...] is neither an object nor a subject but an "intervener" (2010, 9)

Bennet describes vital or vibrant materiality as founded in troubling the firm distinction between "life" and "matter" (2010, vii). She is interested in "the agentic contributions of nonhuman forces (operating in nature, in the human body, and in human artifacts)" (2010, xvi). Each of the nonhuman forces in this last quote are useful to conceiving fairies as actants because, as we've seen, fairies operate in nature, in the human body—via contamination, and are human cultural artifacts. Fairies are often experienced in the woods, marshes, or berry grounds and so can be understood as a cultural assemblage representing the human relationship with those environments. We have seen how the fairies function to disrupt linear temporal and spatial ontologies and the how fairy interaction can blur the boundaries of the human form. Fairies can also be understood as agents, or catalysts for the experience of non-normative, or deviant, sexual relations—as detailed by Narváez (1991). We can also see that the fairies possess a form of agency in how the folk describe how they "take" the human or "send" infections into their bodies.

Bennett would argue that each of these capacities to affect can be understood as a form of agency—possessed by the fairy/folklore assemblage. Thus, assemblages, like the fairies, are actants insofar as they possess the capacity to alter other phenomena. Even applying the apotropaics of placing

bread in one's pocket or turning an article of clothing inside out can be understood, through a vital materialist theory, as examples of the fairies' agency. If the fairies, and all of their symbolic meanings (danger, impurity, etc), did not exist, there would be no need to apply apotropaics, or to fear encounters with them. If, as many claim, fairies were seen as mere stories, but not part of a system of vernacular belief, and instead functioned similarly to ballads, for example, there would be no apotropaic to apply because the fairies would not form a vernacular conceptualization of other-than-human agency. The folk do not carry bread or turn their clothes inside out when singing *Tam Lin*—so, the fairies must carry a different degree of agentive capacity.

We can take this a step further. Consider how parts of the fairy assemblage might not only affect the folk, but also how, as it grows and changes, the assemblage begins to affect the environments in which the fairies are found or within which we place representations of the assemblage. For how long will the bronze fairy statue—in the community garden at Cupids, NL—drip microscopic mineral elements into the earth beneath it? How many days of sunlight and wind, or the uncountable brush of hands across its surface, or the falling of rain from miles and miles away, will make this metal body, once again, invisible? Will our photographs of the metal figure continue its life even after it has been slowly melted away by time? Or, what of an errant wheat grain left on the forest floor from some pocketed blessed bread from a century ago? What of the yeast cultures that must have, undoubtedly, flourished in the mossy substrate across Newfoundland's berry grounds? We can consider the fairy assemblage from countless angles. More than twenty years ago Henry Glassie suggested a similar opening in our construction of material culture studies when he said:

In exchange with nature, men and women make things, tracks in the mud, scud missiles. Those

> are the things of material culture. [...] They are, those works, so filled with the human that, as Robert Plant Armstrong argues, we encounter them as affecting presences — as subjects, not objects — wondering, as Micahel Baxandall argues, how they came to be. (Glassie 1999, 41–42)

Glassie was suggesting that material cultural objects become filled with something that we have identified as subjective, with the power of affect—something the humanist defines as exclusive to the human. Posthuman scholars think along a similar vein, but consider how we might remove the subject from being "filled with the human" while still retaining this vitality, this vibrancy.

Fairies provided the folk with a fear, as Narváez demonstrated, not of sexual assault, but of the danger of sexual assault, and of disconnection from their social community, or of insanity, death, or loss of cultural identity. As these assemblages transform or disappear from the folk cultural imagination is there also a change in sexual assault in proportion to the decline of fairy narratives? Is there a freedom from domesticity that reduces constraint upon traditional domestic hierarchies? Queer posthuman approaches to folklore or other narrative traditions are not beholden to historical fact as a measure of authenticity, and instead of trying to answer these questions or to find new questions that we think can, or should, be asked we are able to utilize the posthuman assemblage to explore and play. Folklore does not live in the world as a collection of dry, limited scopes, but is magical, emergent, and lateral to daily life. It is binding "folklore" to colonial, institutional definitions and outcomes that drains the life from the folklore by various prescriptions and proscriptions to what "it is" or what "it can be." If we truly want to explore the folklore of the folk, rather than the folklore of the folklorist, we must cease striving for rationalist, formulaic constructions of folklife that fit neatly into institutional categories and instead dive into the undefined, expansive domains that develop from an open

mindedness to boundary-breaking and blurring of selves and communities that is the queer, posthuman, and subaltern—or really, that is folklore.

Does framing the fairy assemblage as vibrant materiality disavow the idea that the fairies are a site of queer potentiality? Certainly not. We are approaching fairylore through two different conceptual models. One in which we consider the space of the fairy and the encounter with the fairy to be a space of queer potentiality, and another in which we adopt a vibrant materials perspective.

3.4.3 Fairies and Posthuman Ontology

From a Deleuzian position, a posthuman ontology is meant to alter the ways in which we live in the world. When we combine posthuman ontology to our interpretation of fairylore as queer potentiality, we are utilizing queer interpretations of that lore to critically inform the ways in which we can live in, interact with, and question the centrality of "the human" within the world. The queer temporality of the fairy realm allows us to reconsider the linearity of our temporal constructs, to question the rituals which so readily demarcate normative lives, and to critically examine the human hubris that predicate the structure of our lives and interactions with the so-called non-human other. A Deleuzian perspective asks that we relinquish the idea that we are, that anyone is, or that anything is ever in a fixed state of being. Rather, we remain, at all times, in an ontological flux.

> To embed the concept of living in people is to commit the error of humanism, the error of believing that the proper perspective for understanding the world is centered on the viewpoint of the human subject. [...] As a question of ontology, it [the unfolding] concerns the creation of concepts of difference that allow us to consider living at different levels. Among these levels we may find a variety of understandings of ourselves, and this variety of understanding may open up a variety of futures to be lived. (May 2005, 24)

May's statement that: "To embed the concept of living in people is to commit the error of humanism,

the error of believing that the proper perspective for understanding the world is centered on the viewpoint of the human subject," provides us with yet another point for the application of posthuman thinking to the discipline (24). Folkloristics is a humanist and social science field, and thus our central tenets spring from the idea that human knowledge and experience are valuable and worth documenting. This is not what posthumanism is rebuffing. Rather, posthuman approaches ask us to think beyond the *centrality* of the human in critical discourse.

To tie this discussion back to an example of the fairylore, MacCormack discusses the experience of madness as "simply a failure to navigate society within [its] system of logic and value" (2009, 123). This is perfectly aligned with the experience of "madness" that frequent the reintegration of persons after being "lost in the fairies." MacCormack lucidly calls attention to the oft maligned status of the queer, sexual, or outspoken other: "Strong or resistant women, racial others, homosexuals historically have had their difference classified as forms of madness, analysed and 'cured' psycho-medically," further strengthening the connection of fairies to the queer other (124). Halberstam's work on wildness and queer desire approaches this discussion from the perspective of bewilderment:

> Bewilderment holds the wild within it; emerges out of precolonial notions of space, orientation, and navigation; and refers to an immersive sense of being lost or of standing outside of a system of knowing or of merging with other systems of space and time that linger in the background to those we have selected as meaningful in the contemporary world. Bewilderment probably shares in the kind of magical/delightful/scary forms of unknowing that we also associate with enchantment/bafflement/confusion… (Halberstam 2020, 66)

What this line of thought also implies is that the idea of "human" that we find in these and other folklore traditions stretches beyond conventional understandings of the state of being human. If the

human can encounter, interact with, live within, return from, or discorporate into the fairies then human ontology must also be a site of multiple entanglements with the world of the non-normative other and with the environment: "Posthuman ethics makes everything nonhuman by troubling the very viability of the term [human] itself" (MacCormack 2009, 117).

3.5 Conclusions

One of the struggles that often accompanies posthuman thought is the idea that we must "go beyond" or "outside of" the human—seemingly impossible, since we're all human reading this. Yet, the post in the posthuman is not in expelling all humans from the conversation but in identifying the unmarked qualities that attend that term, critically examining those qualities, and then playing with the shape and edges of the term. The fairies do this particularly well when interpreted as queer beings, since their presence functions to blur the boundaries between normative construction of the human, of culture and subculture, of the environment, and of the self. If we apply Deleuze's ideas on ontology, we realize that this redefining simply means identifying ontological differences and then striving toward those other ontologies. Meaning, we affectively shift our identity as "humans" through incorporating the qualities of the ontological other. I'm considering a queer posthuman ontology in relation to Newfoundland fairylore, but we can also apply this to other folk beings such as mermaids, vampires, werewolves, ghosts, aliens or even to "non-animate" phenomena that share folkloric space such as fog, forests, mines, artificial intelligences, and even ballads or material cultures. This is still a process of understanding the social dynamics of folk to lore, but a process that leans into the difference as a site of connection, rather than suggesting the difference divides or separates human ontology from the other,

or that differences demarcate an unknowability or an inability to incorporate the odd-other.

The posthuman perspective, like that of the queer, is vested in the *process of becoming*, not the site of being (which is always in flux anyway). This means that the fairy or any other "other" is simply a site of becoming, there is no insistence on hierarchical ontologies in which any identities are superior or central. Additionally, to take one of these two positions (the queer or the posthuman) is not to take the "oppressed" or "lower" side of a binary or hierarchy and fight against a perceived opposite—this would be missing the point of both theories and investing in a reified view of fabricated binaries. In taking a queer and/or posthuman position, we are, instead, divesting completely from the falsehood of constructed binary and hierarchy as "truth." The human that is separated from all other phenomena does not exist, it is a social construction built from a perspective that can only see the world from the human, a system "of power masquerading as truth," the normative is the same—it is a mask.

Posthuman perspectives allow a greater analytic breadth to our collection and interpretation of folklore. In the last chapter we considered how the fairies of Newfoundland could be understood and interpreted through various queer theoretical positions to reveal queer experience and ontology. In this chapter I suggested that fairies can also be understood as both an assemblage and a site of posthuman ontology. Where a queer re-reading of fairylore allowed us to think through non-normative forms of communality, temporality, and success, posthuman re-readings allow us to consider the fairy-assemblage as an ontology of its own—one possessing agency—and in that sense allows us to cultivate posthuman ideas of self in relation to the fairies.

I'll be honest, posthumanism is a bit of a bear, especially when attempting to connect it to new interpretations of folklore, to conceptualizations of the environment, and to statements on folkloric

ontology. The queer theory work done in the last chapter already demanded alternative, though still human-centric, interpretations of our lore, and while queer theory allowed us to push our discourse beyond the margins of the normative, posthumanism asks that we push them still further—that is, by reconsidering the tacit presumptions that accompany our ideas of the human. Posthumanism asks us to destabilize the notions of human centrality and superiority as a species among species, but also as an object among objects (matter among matter). This is not an easy task, and these concepts can often seem extremely complex. In addition to this, their immediate application to our discipline can, at times, seem irrelevant. I will admit a certain degree of frustration when arriving at conclusions for this section. However, we need not abstract our thinking too much to apply and benefit from posthuman thinking to the folklore we already have at hand. More than pushing our discipline into unfamiliar terrain, however, I hoped that folklore could ground theoretical approaches in posthuman theory and that posthuman theory could assist us in more critically examining the presumed source of our materials—that is, the human.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored the fairylore of Newfoundland, collected in folklore survey cards and manuscripts from across Newfoundland over the last sixty-odd years; I have reviewed canonical scholarship on Newfoundland fairylore, and have explored queer interpretations of the Newfoundland fairy tradition to demonstrate that it supports various queer theories of temporality, failure, utopia, and antifuturity as well as queer ontology. The queer interpretive work was a response to Kay Turner's (2021) call to queer folkloristics—that is, to make our discipline more queerly oriented and to mine our archives for queer lives and beings. I then turned to posthumanism to demonstrate that both the queer fairylore interpretation, as well as fairylore more generally, supports posthuman thinking and becoming. I also considered the place of fairylore within a posthuman environmental perspective to demonstrate how folklore can ground contemporary theory in documented historical perspective.

4.1 Disciplinary Contributions

These interpretations define several contributions to folkloristics, queer theory, and posthumanism.

First of all, the thesis adds two distinct interpretations to the Newfoundland fairylore tradition, a queer interpretation and a posthuman interpretation. Both expand and disrupt the scholarship of the last thirty-odd years and reveal how folkloristics can work alongside social and political theories of self and community—unsurprising when we consider how deeply folkloristics is invested in context—to speak to the subaltern and unvoiced in historical archives.

The work demonstrates the utility of folklore to think through complex contemporary and poststructuralist theories. The application of specific queer theories on temporality, space, utopia, and antifuturity demonstrate the utility of folklore to speak more broadly to queer experience and to ground queer theory more firmly in our discipline and archive. In addition to demonstrating that posthuman and queer theory can be applied to folklore, the thesis demonstrates that the relationship between theory and ethnographic data form a bidirectional relationship. Meaning, folklore can be used by queer theorists, cultural comparatists, or philosophers to test their domains against folklore's vast corpus of ethnographic data—rather than only literature, popular media, or art. Because folkloristics is so invested in documentation, we have decades upon decades of material from which other scholars are able to pull. This means that folklore ethnography is given new life as well, since any ethnographic work we do now can be utilized by scholars well outside of folkloristics. This is a further example of the inter- and trans-disciplinary nature of our discipline.

Additionally, this thesis reveals that there are (truly) countless queer and posthuman voices and beings waiting patiently in our archives for their time in the limelight. One hopes that demonstrating the applicability of archival materials to theory, and vice versa, will open numerous avenues for further archival exploration and research. The work also demonstrates that archives can be understood as vibrant and vital materialities in the process of storytelling and story-creation.[38] Meaning, archives can also be sites of play and experimentation in research–creation—they are not only receptacles of the known, but producers of knowability. My hope is also that I have effectively demonstrated Kay

[38] Halpert's Ghost is another example of vibrant material—an assemblage within our own departmental culture.

Turner's point—that our archives are full of queer voices and beings—and that we will continue to discover more and more.

4.1.1 Alternative Methodologies

We might wonder how this work would appear differently if approached through performance studies or ethnography. At first glance archival research and performance ethnography can appear quite different. However, each method contains a number of similarities to the other, and each contains a number of similar limitations. In her chapter on performance, Deborah Kapchan defines the connection between performance (the act) and ethnography (the record): "Ethnography, like performance, is intersubjective, depending on an audience, community, or group to which it is responsible, however heterogeneous its members may be" (Feintuch 2003, 136). Who's to say that the audience, those to whom our work is responsible, need be corporeally present at the current temporal cross-section of time in which we find ourselves now? A queer re-reading an intersubjective experience spanning time, space, and community. Thus, the performance of queer re-reading in the archive is, itself, an experience of queer transtemporal and transpatial communality. Further, contexts exist within the materials themselves: In how they're stored, cataloged, and curated, and in how they change over time. Kapchan suggested precisely this when she said:

> In their function as either preservers or reshapers of tradition, social performances are indexes of social transformation. Freezing the frames of such performative moments and comparing them to one another over time, it is possible to understand how individuals and collectivities create their local or national identities... (Feintuch 2003, 122).

In this sense, archival research, which is the study of temporally and spatially iterative ethnographic accounts, is not essentially different from performance ethnography. Performance *becomes* archive in

the moment that the camera shutter is clicked, in the moment pen touches paper—whether anything is written or not. In many ways, archival research is an excellent pressure point for limitations in fieldwork because we can perform further ethnographic research to address specific contextual gaps as they arise.

One of the qualities of archival collections that we seek to document in the performance itself is the *ephemeral*. In the archive, side notes, marginalia, and "coincidence" become central to a comprehensive understanding of the performance. These are archival ephemera because they are not often documented in the archiving process, but appear when encountering the materials first hand. Distance or closeness to other archival objects, physically or through curatorial praxis, are also continued performances of documented experience. Performances continue across time and texts in the archive. My own research depends on the ethnographic documentation of numerous others—without which there would be no basis for the work produced herein. In addition to the documentation on individual survey cards or in manuscripts, the author's decision to place certain materials alongside others, their choice to exclude certain performances or records, side notes, personal opinions about the materials written (physically) around the narratives, the (now deceased) faculty member's corrections written in red pencil over and around the texts, the student's "misspellings," these are all qualities of performative curation, continued retellings of Newfoundland Fairylore in a Newfoundland context, in the words of the Newfoundland youth. Contexts are written on the page and in the margins, even if by accident. Those of us who have performed deep archival digging have also embodied these curations, we are the embodied receptacles of years of performance tradition, we have become bodies of knowledge and we rely on other bodies of knowledge to inform our own

conclusions and experimentations. To argue that performance methodologies are either more or less capable of capturing nuance is to misunderstand the relationship between performance and documentation. Performance is ephemeral, and this ephemerality becomes manifest in the yellow color and vanillin smell of the paper on which a slice of performance is documented.

4.1.2 Additional Considerations

Gerald Pocius's (1988) work on mummering and cultural nativism demonstrated how academic foci on specific regional cultural practices can create an over-representation of that practice in the local cultural imagination. This can lead to the folkloric object becoming a "nativistic object" for the community, meaning it becomes a site of cultural identity and differentiation that is disproportionate to the object's historical place in the cultural imagination. In relation to fairylore, we don't actually know the spread or frequency of fairylore traditions in Newfoundland, or whether the tradition was a *tradition* in a culturally homogeneous sense, or whether it was simply a practical aspect of a small handful of individual lives. What we have formulated as a fairy tradition appears ubiquitous to Newfoundland life in the early twentieth century because we (folklorists) have documented it extensively. However, archival frequency doesn't correlate to real-world frequency. I mentioned something similar in the introduction to this thesis—that folklorists create the history of folklore through our archiving. Many of these survey cards are recorded from parents' or grandparents' memories from their own parents and grandparents; meaning, the archive does not represent current fairylore practices and beliefs. Ethnographic accounts of fairylore practices, such as the very recent works of Magdalyn Knopp (2022) and Katie Fleming (2021), reveal current trends in fairy practices

among Newfoundlanders and demonstrate how these traditions have become incorporated into contemporary life, identity, and practice—even if they no longer resemble the tradition as it was in the early 1900s. An archival approach is, necessarily, working within an historical appearance and perspective. However, queer and posthuman readings are not meant to reflect a dominant cultural paradigm in the present day, but to question and play with normative paradigmatic social organizations to reveal alternative perspectives and experiences. I make no claims to representational veracity in my interpretations, and so I am less concerned with how fairylore is used today than I am with reconceptualizing it to understand queer experience.

4.1.3 Folklore and the exploration of ontology.

One nagging question I continually ask about this work is "So what?" So what if fairies can represent a site of queer ontology? So what if the cultural assemblage can be understood as agentive or vital? What does this mean to our discipline? How is this applicable to further folkloristic interpretation? The lines of flight that we take in the process of becoming–fairy, the discursive spaces that ask us to reconsider the world as full of agentive capacities—are, themselves, the point. This is enough. Understanding both how and where to identify queer or posthuman ontologies in our folklores and other cultural narratives is not merely a discourse in theory, nor is it meant to lead us to some pragmatic utility in which we can better pinpoint the queer in diverse things. The queer can be seen by the queer, we see ourselves. The work of queer re-reading is one of representation, of challenging a normative paradigm in which we assume that all our folklore must speak back to a heteronormative view of cultural

existence. Queer and posthuman approaches also ask that we carefully consider our role as folklorists in the production of knowledge, and that we should do so with a critical eye toward ourselves.

To be able to identify beings and experiences that are similar to one's own in the diverse folklores of the "other" means that queer individuals, and eventually all individuals, have access to worlds of, often fantastical, experience that challenge oppressive normative ways of being. These are deeply political discourses. I call these worlds fantastical because the experience of freedom from oppressive systems—whether sexual, marital, capitalist, or other—that occurs in folklore narratives is something we are still striving for in daily life! We have still not found liberation from these states. We [queers] continue to police ourselves through clothing, mannerism, speech, fear. We have not fully gotten lost in the fairies! Consequently, there remains something utopian about the liberation from the madness of daily life through fairylore. Of course, the fairy realm can also feel like a trap, especially if entry into that realm—the process of queer becoming—also risks upsetting our place in "polite society." This loss of place (or of face) is also a queer experience.

The real liberatory experience of the fairies (or queer-ness) is had when we enter the fairy realm (queer life) and fully dedicate ourselves to it, deciding never to return to our policed, oppressed selves. Personally, I have not accomplished this—especially living in the Southern US—though I have experienced brief moments of reprieve from it. There is affective, political meaning in how, and where, we find ourselves in our folklore traditions.

4.2 Future Research

There are multiple tangential ideas that I was not able to fit within the scope of this thesis. These include lengthy discussions on any of the excellent works of queer theorists like Elizabeth Freeman, Pauline Greenhill, Eve Sedgewick, and others that I crossed in my reading. Fortunately, their thoughts, even if not cited directly, are referenced in my bibliography, which serves as an intellectual map to future research. A deeper discussion of folkloristics alongside the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Guy Hocquenghem, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Tim Ingold, Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Grosz, Jean-Luc Nancy, Ann Stoler, Rosi Braidotti, Neil Badmington, Patricia MacCormack, Bruno Latour, and etc, would also prove extremely fruitful for expanding our discipline further. Many of these philosophers are foundational to contemporary work on 2SLGBTQI+ issues and philosophy. However, I feel that to discuss their works would take not only a thesis several times this size or multiple volumes, but a lifetime of cultivation. To tie the works of these philosophers into folklore would not be an onerous task, especially since many of the more contemporary philosophers (e.g. MacCormack and Braidotti) are pushing the edges of philosophy to overlap with folklore already—getting into our discipline from a side-door. Our discipline has long arms, and so most everything will eventually be within grasp. There are also the posthuman folklores of advancing technologies that are now circulating in popular culture due to the advent of large language model AIs. Even though these technologies have only just entered public discourse there are already multiple folkloric discourses circulating about them.

I did not expect either queer or posthuman theories to lend themselves so readily to folklore, yet I found that they fit neatly together. Clearly the fairylore of Newfoundland has the capacity to speak to queer theoretical positions, and queer theory cannot be separated from queer experience and ontology. Additionally, queer theoretical applications have proven useful across numerous folklore genres: Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill have expertly demonstrated the application of queer theory to the Grimm's tales in *Queering the Grimms*; so too have Cory Thorne and Guillermo De Los Reyes looked at queer art and artography. Seeing oneself in folklore is a magical experience, and magical thinking is a common tool among queer scholars of color to raise lost or silenced narratives from the past and to think outside of the oppressive racialized systems of the colonial academy (Gonzáles-Martin 2021).

The queer posthuman turn in my research has also introduced me to the conceptual domains of the folkloric macabre, situating it as a site of both queer failure and queer joy, and though I don't know precisely how this will develop in my work and research, it will be an exploration of self, rest assured.

Close to the work done here are studies of desire and emotion that are common to posthuman language that would be a germane springboard for research. For example, instead of performing an ethnography of traditions, objects, or genres, we could approach ethnography as a study of emotion—this is the study of aesthetics. Approaching folklore from such a perspective would be studying context within contexts, and could prove a differently fruitful representation of lived experience than studying a single, often thinned out, folkloric tradition.

4.3 A call to action

Our colonial heritage continues to limit our access and understanding to queer, posthuman, or other non-normative understandings of folklore because a colonial organization of knowledge demands that it remain sequestered, siloed, empirical, and objective. The specific aspects of coloniality that remain embedded in our theories and methods are those that prevent us from re-conceptualizing our discipline as trans-disciplinary and boundary-cutting. Charles Briggs and Sadhana Naithani spelled this out for us some years ago:

> One [prevalent tendency] clings to reifications of the discipline's object of study, projecting its woes as resulting from the failure of many folklorists to zealously participate in boundary-work—rejecting revisionist perspectives, poaching by non-scholars, cross-disciplinary promiscuity and objects of study that are "not folklore". (2012, 264)

Briggs and Naithani are pushing us to acknowledge that our existential fears as a discipline have foreshortened our epistemological capacities in the past. Our discomforts with pushing or breaking disciplinary boundaries has led to a sequestered study of tradition, group, and genre. This fear is also apparent in metadiscourse on theory in the discipline. Américo Paredes called folklorists out on this as well:

> In urging folklorists to address issues of coloniality, Paredes [...] suggested that when folklorists erase issues of power, hegemony, conflict and resistance from their work, they curtail its scholarly power by becoming complicit in the reification of existing social categories and hierarchies. (Briggs and Naithani 2012, 265)

These issues are precisely what we address in queer re-readings, and they are precisely what we question in the application of posthuman theories to our discipline. Posthumanism does not need to be as wacky as the work I endeavored here. On the contrary, there are many fields of contemporary folklore

that a posthuman bent would allow us to study and challenge in great depth—many of these have to do with technology and the politicization of the self. However, it is in the recent works of BIPOC and Queer folklorists that we see the greatest challenge to the discipline's foundational colonial praxis because they not only seek the subaltern but develop "practices that are imbued with sincere collaborative intention and that have a reciprocal transformative effect in all those who participate in the project" (Otero and Martínez-Rivera 2021, 11). Essential here is the idea that the folklorist is affected by and affects the folklore and the folk together. A study of folklore, in whatever way that is conceptualized, is part of a politics of self, an expression of entanglement. Many folklorists already push quite forcefully against this colonial de rigueur.

In addition to demonstrating Kay Turner's call to queer the discipline, I also call to action my fellow folklorists. I encourage us, as Turner does, to develop a more queer folkloristics, but I also encourage folklorists to test seemingly incongruent theoretical interpretations against our discipline to see what they produce! We need not remain so stiffly grounded in data and facts that we forget to play and explore the boundaries, the dusty corners, the deep forests of our discipline. I have often felt unsure about writing this thesis, wondering whether anyone else would consider it folkloristics. I still worry about this, even now that it's written! But, if we know that our disciplinary traditions are going to be questioned anyway, held up against the long shadow of a colonial heritage, then why not challenge every imaginable (and imaginary) boundary anyway? Who's to say that we must define our discipline based on where it has *been* instead of where it can potentially go?

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Appendix I: Folklore Survey Card Transcripts

The archival materials listed below were, for the most part, found by searching through a digitized collection of the survey cards which MUNFLA's head archivist was kind enough to allow me to borrow. However, I did not always have this digitized collection in my possession. Many hours, over several semesters, were spent perusing the yellowing papers of the physical archive, drying out my hands and bloodying my cuticles! In this sense, archival research is also a posthuman becoming—we share and shed our very bodies with the materials. I was initially interested in locating mermaid lore but found that such material was sparse and difficult to locate by hand. Fairylore, on the other hand, seemed pervasive among the materials, especially in the survey cards from the sixties and seventies. Relying on the digitized collection, I spent several months locating those entries relevant to fairylore. In the process I discovered a number of other interesting Newfoundland folklores, a few of which I noted in my personal notes for future work, and a handful of entries that I noted as relevant to my colleagues' work in other areas of Newfoundland lore. There are also a couple of survey cards about queerness or homosexuality, simply to demonstrate that queer, gay, and homosexual have been part of the folk vernacular for some time. The transcriptions that follow were hand-picked from across this digitized collection; a few of them appear in the body of the thesis in their entirety or in small excerpts. There are numerous (countless?) materials in the collection that are not part of these transcripts! Regardless, this list need not be comprehensive to formulate a thorough knowledge of Newfoundland fairylore traditions. The citational practice for these materials is as follows:

> Collector's name (surname first). Year written. MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card (or FSC), Accession Number/Serial Number.

This citational structure is not the *easiest* way to locate survey card material in a long list, I will admit, because each card is located or cited in the text by its accession and serial numbers, not by the collector's last name. To that end, I have organized the following list by accession and serial number, as they would be accessed in the archive. I heartily encourage any and all to dive into the survey card materials for their own research. They are a rich resource for new avenues of research and there are thousands upon thousands of them readily at hand—in the digitized file collection there are a total of 106,522 individual cards (many of these on weather lore, folk cures, recipes, or jokes). If you find a reference of personal interest or would like to find more materials by a particular student author you can easily access these materials directly in MUNFLA. The accession and serial numbers listed in the citation are all you should need to locate any card in the physical collection. Beyond the folklore survey cards are numerous manuscripts by a number of these collectors as well as collections from retired folklorists; the archivists are expertly capable in finding connected materials should you require it. Following a few of the transcripts below I have included my own notes, *in italics*, to connect the entry to a relevant section of the thesis. Finally, when given names appear in the transcription they have been altered or shortened (except for those that appear in other full-length texts), out of an abundance of caution, and to protect the identity of individuals. Name changes, which are my own, are given in square brackets, like so: [CB].

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Power, Iris. 1964. MUNFLA FSC, 64-4/52.

Driving around the bay we often used to see barns with a white circle, about 4 to 6 inches in diameter, or a white heart painted in the centre of each barn door. A farmer told us that these would bring good luck. I've also heard the explanation that these symbols would keep the fairies away, but from some other source, I can't remember who it was.

McGettigan, Hugh W. 1964. MUNFLA FSC, 64-5/221.

Around St. Mary's Bay and Placentia Bar, there is a superstition that a baby being brought to the church to be baptised would be protected from the fairies if a piece of bread was put some place in the clothing of the child. By so doing the fairies would take the bread and not the child. The bread was known as Company-Bread.

Relevance: An example of the company-bread tradition as an apotropaic to changeling encounters. Concepts of liminal space before baptism, between home and church.

Murphy, Carl. 1964. MUNFLA FSC, 64-5/232.

About 15 years ago or more a good friend of my great-grandmother's a Mrs. B, went many miles into the woods berrypicking. She lost her way and wasn't found till late the next day. This woman was well into the 80's. When she was questioned she said that the fairies had kept her company all night. This story was even in the papers at the time, and many of the older folks around Conception Hr. really believed the story.

Relevance: Example of the fairy encounter as not dangerous, metacommunicative context about woman's age, notions of communal belief.

Ayre, Leslie. 1965. MUNFLA FSC, 66-1D/14.

This girl down on the Cape Shore was fairy led. She was only ten or eleven and she was gone from home for seven or eight days the fairies took her off in the woods and when she came home she was teched (crazy). She was perfectly normal when they took her away. That's the truth, everyone was talking about it and it was in the papers and everything.

Relevance: Losing one's mind, contamination, trauma.

Ayre, Leslie. 1965. MUNFLA FSC, 66-1D/15.

On the lower end of Mereshee [sic] Island living alone are a family called T. There is the father and mother, three sons and a daughter. The place where they live is called Little Brule(y) which comes from the French word brule meaning a burnt out place but they mean a field or a meadow. They're rich as anything because they pay no doctor or no/dues to the priest. They

have all their own medicines. You go in the kitchen and you see all their cures, essence of ginger and liver pills and olive oil and all that. They have two houses all fitted out and if they've been baking or something and the house gets too hot they just go over to the other oneand [sic] they don't have to bring anything because every thing is all over there. None of them can read and if they want to offer you some jam with your bread she says what color do you want and so I ask what color do you have and she'll say yellow meaning marmalade [sic] and red for raspberry and green for lime. She told me about her sister who was right smart in school she even knew all about pounds and ounces. She said her husband got a radio and now he even knows the days of the week. Her daughter is married to a fella who live in Placentia but the brothers turned him out of the house. Her son "dim P" is never there when we come around but you see him hiding behind the door or running off up to the woods. Once I told her I had to meet him, I said I was taking the census for the bishop so she brought him in. He's about 32 and he's ordinary but he always wears a skirt made out of canvas like you'd make sails with or you'd wear splitting fish. No pants underneath but the big boots and a shirt and this skirt. He's right odd but quite intelligent to speak to and he can fish and make little boats that his brothers sell for him. People say he's a changeling and the fairies took the real one away, there [sic] always saying that about the odd ones. They dress the young ones up in dresses to fool the fairies. I wore onetill [sic] I was 6 or 7 till I had enough sense to get into pants. Mrs. T said that she bought medicine for her feet and he drank it an he's been odd ever since.
[Handwritten below: "Word for word from father W C."]

Ayre, Leslie. 1965. MUNFLA FSC, 66-1D/16.

If passing a church yard at night it is customary in St. Mary's to carry bread to feed the fairies. This is thrown on the ground at any place where there is any sign of a fairy (a sounds or a moving shadow) A small number of people practice this religiously but more often it is used as an excuse to get a guest to take home a piece of cake or a treat of some kind– "Take this with you to feed the fairies."

Relevance: Fairies enmeshed with ideas of the dead, to be respected. Fear of contamination by the dead — posthumously posthuman.

Ayre, Leslie. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 66-1D/29.

As I went over slippery gap
I met a man with a little red cap
I cut his throat and drank his blood
And threw his body in the woods.

Ans. A bottle of wine.

Relevance: Oddly close to a description of the fairies.

Ayre, Leslie. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 66-1D/30.

I heard the informant tell this riddle to his 3 yr. old son. Who had obviously heard it before as he shouted out the answer and got his penny.

As I went over slippery gap
I met a man in a little red cap.
With a stick in his hand + a stone in his belly.
Tell me this riddle and I'll give you a penny.

Answer - A cherry.

Relevance: Another riddle that is close in description to the fairies.

Hawkins, Gloria. 1965. MUNFLA FSC, 66-7D/65.

Another threat used by my girlfriend's mother to get her to behave was "Stop that or the fairies will come and get you!" This was said by the mother while she shook her finger. This frightened my girlfriend and then she would be good. The fairies were thought of as little people by Fay (the informant), something on the idea of elves or leprauchons [sic].

Hawkins, Gloria. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 66-7D/66.

As a child I was terribly frightened of fairies and I remember the incident which caused my fear. When I was about 7 years old I was visiting with my Aunt in her Summer home near Carbonear, Conception Bay. It was a beautiful sunny day and the woods looked inviting so I decided to start exploring. My Aunt saw me leaving and told me to be careful or the fairies would carry me away. I had something on red that day and she said that the fairies especially went for people who wore red clothes. She scared me so much that I decided to stay near the door rather than go into the woods. I never forgot what she said and I always thought of it whenever I was alone anywhere like the country. I imagined fairies as horrible little things who liked to carry little children away.

Relevance: Desire for discovery, prohibitions about too much freedom in community.

Hawkins, Gloria. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 66-7D/67.

G [the informant] also believed in bad fairies when she was young. Her mother always told her that if she put on her clothes inside out or put her shoes on the wrong feet then the fairies would have her. G seems to remember this being told to her when she was leaving to put on her own shoes and clothes and her mother using this as a sort of warning for her to put them on the right way. I asked G how she pictured the fairies when she was young. She pictured them as small people with wings and a magic wand, the typical story book fairy image.

Donovan, Kerry. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-3C/33.

Fairies on Bell Island

Mr Dwyer's grandmother who reared him believed in the fairies and their powers although she had never seen them she had a good collection of stories concerning them which she and the other neighbours gather together to discuss after tea when it was dark. However the fairies did not like being discussed and would punish anyone who told stories about them. She would in opening the conversation say "This is" Sunday Monday (whatever day it was) "and the fairies won't hear us."

This statement would prevent the fairies from hearing the ensuing conversation.

Donovan, Kerry. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-3C/34.

Mr. [TD] of Bell Island was coming home late one night (about twelve-thirty) walking along the railroad track when by a small path to the side of the track he heard strange voices rather high pitched as if of two people fighting. Mr [TD] thinking that it could be a man and his wife who lived nearby and who were a little bit "queer" and always fighting decided to investigate. He says he felt "compelled" to investigate, strangely. Previous to this happening Mr. [TD] had no fear or belief in fairies or any thing connected with the supernatural. When he started following this pathway, the voices would go back further and further, so that they always seemed the same distance away from [him]. He continued, as if under a spell, to follow them until he realized that he was but a few feet from a dam. Coming to his senses he stopped and thought that perhaps this could be the fairies. He turned as if to go then took from his lunchbox a piece of bread and threw it ahead of him and took a pair of rosary beads from his pocket and made the sign of the cross. As he went to turn around he felt a strong tugging and pulling at his pants legs and he had to run with all his might to get away from the spell. For the first and only time in his life he felt sheer terror. When he got home his wife said he was actually gray in colour. Mr [TD] wanted the two men at the house to go back and investigate but they just refused. Mr Dwyer passed that spot about the same time a number of other times but he never after heard or saw anything like that.

Relevance: Apotropaics (bread, prayer), fairies not only disrupt person's route home, but also appear to the man as a married couple fighting. Explicitly marking individuals, and therefore the fairies, as "queer."

Donovan, Kerry. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-3C/35.

Mr. [N] of Bell Island is reported to have seen a group of fairies when he was in the woods on Bell Island about twelve thirty one night. The area was called Scotia no 1. The fairies were about two and a half feet high and they surrounded him and his female companion and jumped up and down around them. They did them no harm. Shortly either before or after this event in practically the same spot by an old public well a young girl was assaulted and murdered and thrown in the well. My informant could not tell me if the two events were linked in any way but she figured that somehow the fairies might have been trying to tell them something.

Donovan, Kerry. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-3C/36.

A woman Mrs. B who lived up on Signal Hill Rd. went up to Cabot Tower and thereabout picking berries and was missing for a couple of days because a heavy fog rolled in. When she was found she was quite simple minded, where before she had been quite normal. All that she could ever say was that the fairies had taken her. [She] died about ten or twelve years ago.

Relevance: Losing one's mind.

Donovan, Kerry. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-3C/37.

A young fellow [D] by name is reported as having been taken by the fairies. He was missing from his home one day and was found the next day in the woods, unconscious and quite disfigured. He had twigs in his nose, his body was slashed and bruised and ever afterwards although he was very intelligent and quite normal formerly his speech was impaired, his intelligence seemed to have diminished and he became hunchbacked. He was afterwards however renowned for his beautiful penmanship, the like of which no one had ever seen. He became a recluse and as he walked along the street children would whisper around him, "There goes [D], he was took by the fairies." [D] died about five years ago, at the age of about fifty.

Relevance: Central character, fairy-man. Physical traits and skills acquired while 'in the fairies.'

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/20.

At midnight on New Year's Eve, my grandfather, i.e. my mother's father, threw a loaf of bread at the door (from the inside) several times, saying each time, "Get out hunger." This was supposed to ward off hunger during the coming year.

As far as I can learn, this is not practised any more.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/58.

I asked my informant who the fairies were. He replied "Oh they're the fallen angels. They rose up against God and He drove 'em out of Heaven."

I asked him why there weren't any fairies today. He said, "I don't know boy, I suppose they're all gone. Maybe they're after doing penance and got back into Heaven."

Relevance: Etiological narrative for fairies. A common etiology across fairy traditions, and one that marks the fairy as immoral or amoral.

Fagan, Michael J. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/59.

If someone became suddenly ill, or suddenly began acting in a particular manner, it was often suspected that they had been taken by the fairies. (Nobody knows why the fairies might want to capture a human being) The person was supposed to be stolen away, and a fairy, in the

resemblance of the individual, left in his place. To find out if such a transfer had actually occurred, a shovel was heated until it became red, and then brought near the body of the victim. If he were a fairy, he would show violent reaction or hastily retreat. The fairies, knowing then that their plot had been discovered, would soon return the person.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/60.

Aide Lee went up to turn down the cows one evening – on the hill, just behind his house. He got astray for a while, and you know there was nothing right about that. On the way home his legs felt kind of funny. He got away from them*, but the poor man was crippled for the rest of his life.

Written shortly after I heard it, and as close to the words of my informant as possible.
*them; the fairies

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/61.

Lizzie Point, a point on the coast of St. Mary's Bay, is shown on most maps; it is locally known as Liz's Point. There is a fairy story connected with the origin of the name .According to my informant the event took place 70 to 80 years ago.

'Liz Fagan, who lived down at the Graven Bank (shown on maps as Graven Beach) was missing for two or three months. The fairies had her. One day she appeared in the kitchen door. "O now I have you," her mother said. "No you haven't, mother" she said "not now or ever." If she didn't speak she'd get her. She chased her out the landwash as far as Liz's Point; that's where she lost her. People used to see her there after that, sitting on a rock, late in the evening.'

Not dictated, but as close as possible to words of informant.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/62.

A resident of Riverhead, S.M.B., very narrowly escaped capture by the fairies while picking berries alone near his home. He became lost for a while, but soon found his way home. His becoming lost was caused by the fairies, trying to lure him away. He did not escape them entirely, however. They sent an infection into his leg, and the swelling worse to almost the size of your head. When, after more than a year, the swelling broke, berries, particles of moss, straw, pieces of shrubbery, etc., were taken from the sore.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/64.

I was taking the horse to the Crossing Place (summer pasture) one day. I got tired of walking, and nearly down to [B]'s place I got on her back. She wasn't used to having anyone on her back, and she went mad. On the way back I went into [B]'s. She told me about seeing a fairy that morning riding a horse. She said only a fairy could ride like that. "He went like the mill tail o' hell," she said.

Dictated form informant.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/65.

Fairies are said to take horses from the stable and ride them all night. Evidence is seen in that the horse's mane and tail are pleated in the morning. My father recalls such an occurrence with his horse about 25 years ago. I asked him if someone might have been using the horse hauling wood at night, and plaited its main and tail to place the blame on the fairies. "heavens no," he said, "nobody would do that." I asked him if the fairies really used the horse, and he said he didn't know.

Fagan, Michael J. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/66.

Mrs. [B], the fairies came and took her. They brought her back when she was dead. I often heard old [M] talking about things she used to do. Old [B] was a real fairy all right. She was sick in bed for a long time. She was paralyzed and everything. One day her brother was up in Riverhead. When he went back [she] was on her mattress out in the yard, dead. She looked right different – just like her real self.

Not dictated, but close to words of informant.

Relevance: Living among the community as a fairy.

Fagan, Michael J. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/67.

The idea of being "taken by the fairies" was very prevalent in the areas surrounding St. Mary's up to about thirty years ago. It is interesting to note at this time that there are no ghost stories of recent origin. With the reason given by the older people, who still take these things seriously, for the asbense [sic] of ghosts and fairies in recent times is that "there are so many priests and nuns, and so much prayers being said."

Fagan, Michael J. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 67-4G/84–85.

About 30 years ago four or five families lived in the 'Nord-East Pon.' Although the extreme end of the road is not a half mile from Riverhead, the people began moving their homes up to the main road in Riverhead. One old man, however, was very determined not to leave the 'pon', but his wife played on his fear of ghosts, and particularly of fairies, that, as residents put it, 'she frightened poor ole Buddy out a' the pon.' e.g. if he were in the yard sawing up firewood she might ask him 'Who were all them saucy little young ones that were here throwin' yer wood around?' He didn't see anybody, and she concluded they must have been fairies. Another day she might ask him who was the strange man that came down the road with him. He would assure her that he was along, but with a sad or frightened voice she would say, 'O that must be poor ole [JM], the Lord have mercy on him.' When the old man was almost frightened out of

his wits by fairies and ghosts (of his wife's making) he finally built a new house on the main road.

Jackson, Susan. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-8D/9.

If you had to go out after dark on Red Island, it was essential to have your coat inside out and carry some bread to be safe from the fairies, who were hiding in all dark places.

Jackson, Susan. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-8D/10.

On the head of the Pond near Point La Haye there is a mound where one can see 3 little men dancing at night. The place is called Fairy's Bottom.

Jackson, Susan. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-8D/11.

When my informants returned from a walk from Bull's Cove to Brigus, Aunt [PP] was terrified that they had dared to venture to Bull's Cove: "This is where the fairies live who spoilt all my cabbages last year ~ took all the cherries from the tree."

Relevance: Fairies as disruptors to food security, domesticity.

O'Brien, Catherine. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-14F/100.

[J] — was on his way one evening to a scoff in the next village where he also was going to see his girl. On his way he met the fairies. They were having a feed and they got [J] to come with him [sic]. He followed them further and further into the woods. Then they left him. He could not find his way home. The next day friends went to look for him. They found him only a few yards from the road in a daze. His clothes were torn in small strips and he could hardly walk. This man would not pass this place alone afterwards. He believed that if the fairies took him again he would never get back home.

Relevance: Disruption in heteronormative relationships.

Vavasour, Paul. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-20C/137.

Mermaids mentioned in class, Jan. 17th, 1967, made me think of a piece of a story from, I believe, the Fermeuse or Renews area of the Southern Shore. I don't remember who told me the story.

The Story concerns a ship, sail –I believe, which was trying to make for Fermeuse at dark. For some reason the ship entered a cove next to the Fermeuse harbour and was left aground on rocks. The story said that mermaids opened the cove, and enticed the sailors into the wrong harbour. I don't remember how they were enticed in:--lights are from another story I think; and I think that the calling of mermaids may have come not from this particular story but from written sources I have read.

I think that this story was heard by me some years ago — about 1955, but it is a big [sic] hazy.

Verge, Jean. 1966. MUNFLA FSC, 67-21G/2.
Prohibitions following childbirth

I have heard my mother say that a woman should not make bread until she has been churched; and I am certain that my brother's wife refrained from bread-making until she had received the "Churching of Women." I do not know the reason for this prohibition, but I have always had the impression that the "Churching" service was regarded as a cleansing.

My sister-in law is from Upper Island Cove. She is approximately 23 yr. old, and her baby was born in 1962.

Relevance: Liminality of mother *between childbirth and ritual re-introduction into religious community. Birth, in this sense, is considered an externalizing or marginalizing process to the community—likely since it is close to the danger of death.*

Verge, Jean. 1967. MUNFLA FSC, 67-21G/7.
If you had a hole in your clothing, you were told not to go out, because the jays would have you.

McCarthy, Thomas. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 69-19/41.
The other day when we were talking my uncle mentioned the fairies. The fairies would steal babies but sometimes instead of stealing babies they would switch them, that is take the baby and put a fairy baby in its place. A sure sign that this had been done was a very cross baby. The way to get the right baby back would be to bring a shovel in the house and put it into the fire until it got red hot. You were then to take it out and say that you were going to lay it on the baby. The baby would supposedly stop crying immediately showing that the right baby was back. The fairies would bring it back because they did not want the fairy baby burnt. Apparently he had heard his grandmother say this. In Terrenceville many of the old people used to believe in fairies very much so. For this reason they would carry a piece of bread in their pocket to keep the fairies away.

Relevance: Threat as apotropaic to changelings. We see similar 'remedies' for retrieving people who've been switched for fairies.

Bartlett, William B. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-10/104.
The fairies would often put curses on people in the Georgetown area and this was done in many different ways. My grandfather told me about several people who had been deformed by fairies and this is one of the stories.

Mr. [BK], up in Marysvale, was out to Fosters Pond one day cutting some wood. A woman came along to him and hit him in the side of the face and the way his face was moved that was the way it stayed. He said he had never seen the woman before and never saw her again. Mr.[BK]'s face is still thrown to one side today and it was not like that before this happened. I have never seen this man! *

Marysvale is an R.C. Irish community.

Relevance: Contamination/deformity through fairy encounter, physical transformation.

Bartlett, William B. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-10/105.

There was suppose [sic] to be a lot of fairies around the Georgetown area. People had ways of keeping them away from their children because it was children that they liked to bother the most.

My grandmother, [...] would not even go out to the clothes line, without putting a Bible under the head of a child who might be left behind in the house.

Also my mother said that before you could leave a house to walk anywhere alone the woman of the house would give you a piece of bread to put in your pocket to keep the fairies away. Mom said that she would always eat the bread when she got away from the house.

Myself I have never seen a fairy but I would sure like to!

Fillier, Bobbie. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-12/100.

Fairies, Green People

As children we were always warned not to go in the woods because the fairies would carry us away. There was suppose [sic] to be a girl in our family who had been carried away for the whole winter with these people, her father found her the next spring one evening when he went trouting. Her name was [D]. The interesting thing about this is that every family had a boy or girl who had been carried away by these green people but were always returned.

The green people were supposed to do you no harm. You would become small like them and in the spring you would return to your normal size. There is a hill home called, Manuel's Hill where these people were supposed to have lived. Nobody dared to go near that hill themselves for they would, without question, become a part of these small people.

The people of Englee has a mixture of National Origin example.
Fillier - Jersey
Brown - Mainland Canada
Macdonalds - Irish
Mrs A. Canning? = Irish (Protestant)

Relevance: Fairies as 'green people,' a possible transition in fairylore toward fairies as aliens.

Peddle, Edward E. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-25/79.

Fairies were supposed to be little men about two feet tall, who wore red suits. They usually led night walkers away on a parade in which the fairies danced around the person as he walked. [[told by mother]]

Peddle, Edward E. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-25/80.

When I [the informant] was about twelve years old we were skating on a pond (marsh). There was always talk of things being seen there. For some reason or other I had to leave my friend alone for a while. Upon returning I found that he had fallen down and couldn't get up. He fell on his stomach. He said that someone whipped him on the back. Sure enough there were about a dozen whip marks across his back and they are there today. His parents and other said that it was the fairies who did it. It is very strange and unexplainable. Even a bruise would disappear after eight years. He is English descent.

Peddle, Edward E. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-25/81.

I [the informant] remember when I was young that when I went to some friends home and stayed late I would be afraid to go home. Then my friend's mother would put a piece of bread in my pocket. This would prevent the fairies from getting me. The fairies were supposed to be little men who took control of a person's mind and led him astray. I do not believe in this but it gives one a certain confidence and makes him a little more brave.
Correction: She is English descent..

Peddle, Edward E. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-25/82.

This is the supposedly the [sic] true story of a man who went trouting one day. It grew late and he had not returned home. Others went to look for him. They found him walking along an old grassy road. He seemed to be talking to little fellows around him. It was no use to talk to him so one man smacked him in the face. He came out of it but didn't remember what he had done. He was said to have been "in the fairies."

Peddle, Edward E. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-25/94.

A woman told me one time of an incident in her childhood which she will never forget. She and one of her friends were laughing at a poor old man who lived in an old house. One day he ran after them and her friend fell. She injured her leg and a doctor was called. An operation was made on her leg and bones (fish) and straws of grass were taken out of it. That woman is now in the mental but this happened long before she entered the hospital.

Correction: How the stuff got into the leg is unknown. The old man was then believed to be behind it.

Relevance: Bodily contamination with fairy/environment.

Flynn, Paula. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-34/83.

[MB] + her friend went "mash-berry" (marsh-berry) picking near their home when they were 5 yrs. old. A circle of fire surrounded them + then gradually closed in around them. Mrs. [MB]'s legs were deformed after the incident. She attributes this misfortune to bad fairies. To this day, she believes that the "fairies" did this to her because she did something bad, or naughty. (Personally, I think the whole affair was in her imagination, as a 5yr. old child does have a vast capacity for imagining things. She probably fell + injured her legs on the marshy area.) She told this story to my friend + swears it is true.

P.S. The (thoughts) remarks in parenthesis are my own personal thoughts on the subject.

Flynn, Paula. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-34/84.

Children in the community of Tilting, Fogo Island were cautioned never to go over the marshes or into the forest alone. A firm belief in the existence of fairies or supernatural "little people" explains this. If a child should lose its way it was assumed he had been taken by the fairies. An interesting point concerning Tilting fairie [sic] belief is that there are no charms or tokens that are carried against the fairies, rather a priest's blessing is employed. This mixture of superstition and sacred religion never ceases to puzzle me.

Flynn, Paula. 1969. MUNFLA FSC, 70-34/86.

Mrs. [F] + her brother were walking home from a partridge berry-picking trip. When suddenly, to their amazement, the scenery about them seemed completely reversed; the village, towards which they were walking, seemed to be behind them. Confused, they turned around + started to walk towards what they thought to be the village. They then met a friend; upon greeting each other the "spell" was broken, + everything was reversed back again. In fact, they were walking over the marshes, towards the sea – the same route they had formerly walked. This type of experience is referred to as being "in the fairies". To this very day, both parties sincerely believe that their perception of the landscape was reversed or altered by some supernatural force, the purpose of which was perhaps to lead them astray. Both testify to a strange feeling of isolation, of being in non-natural surroundings during their experience.

Relevance: Changes to physical domain, human realm altered. Queer experiences of space and time.

Flynn, Paula. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 70-34/85.

Fairy pinches:

A friend of mine awoke one morning and found a strange lot of bruises on his arm. His grandmother assured him this [sic] it was alright, for they were merely "fairy pinches". She

explained that, at night, mischievous fairies enter a room in order to upset, or annoy, the sleeper. She told him not to worry. The boy, having no reason not to, believed her, and still does; he told me "I guess the fairies really did pinch me."

Bourgeois, R. Marie. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-9/28.

([Informant's] mother died 6 years ago + she was 90 when she died) One day when [informant's] mother was walking across the barren to bring dinner to her husband (who worked on the railroad line) She stopped to pick a few strawberries. (It was strawberry picking time.) Anyhow, when she looked up she saw the fairies with their babies. They were running across the barren. The fairies were dressed in beautiful clothes which had many bright colors. [Informant's] mother was very frightened but since she had her rosary beads with her she started to say it + the fairies left. The expression she used when she retold the story was. "I said to myself - the fairies won't get me this time."

[Informant] told me that all the family believed that her mother had been bending too long + that when she looked up suddenly she was actually seeing something through blurred vision - not really fairies. However [the informant] said that to her dying day her mother always insisted that she had seen the fairies + actually had saved herself from them.

Leonard, Ellen. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-22/29.

I asked Uncle [S] if he knew any fairy stories and he looked at me and said 'no'. Aunt [L] who was behind him nodded her head to say that he did and so I told Uncle [S] about a story that I had heard previously. When he saw that maybe I believed he told me that one time he had gone into the garden and as he was crossing a path that he usually crossed he saw trees that were never there before.The trees were about 50-60 ft. high. He went down the road a ways and then went back again. He did this three times and the third time he went back, everything was back to normal. He told me that the "Little Johns" must have been there.

Relevance: Fairy encounter transforms known space.

Leonard, Ellen. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-22/30.

About 40 years ago [D] (aged about 70) went into the woods on Middleton Ave, Bell Island to go berry picking at this time the people believed that if you went into the woods you had to bring some bread with you to feed the fairies so they wouldn't bother you. Well [D] forgot the bread. One night some time later some friends of his asked him where he was going and he told them about the time he went into the woods without the bread and the fairies took him. He told them the fairies said he had to come back in the woods every night at twelve o'clock. Well this night his friends held him and wouldn't let him go. The next night he went and never came back for three days and three nights. After he returned he could only say a few words and appeared to have gone 'silly.' People then believed that the fairies had really taken him and up

to the time he died a few years back they always said that this was the reason for his changed appearance after he came out of the woods.

Relevance: Losing one's mind. Same person that is said to have always been quite intelligent with beautiful penmanship.

Power, Mary. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-26/45.

Fairy Tunes

Years ago an Irishman moved to Branch. he settled, however, a few miles from the place, in a place that came to be known as Dick's Path. This man must have been a musician, or at least he knew many unfamiliar songs for the people believed that he learned these songs from the fairies. He let them believe that the fairies talked to him and his songs came to be called "fairy tunes."

I asked my father about this afterwards. He said he remembered his uncles and other older men requesting the fiddler of the place to play 'fairy tunes'. These were tunes that were passed down from father to son but had been first learned from Dick, the Irishman.

This story interested me greatly - I had learned many ghost stories from older people but I was unfamiliar with fairy stories. They are never told as ghost stories are - I never heard any fairy stories until I started collecting information for this course.

I doubt if any musicians know any 'fairy tunes' now. Most of the men who used to play the fiddle are dead. I never heard of these fairy tunes until this man my father told me about them less than a month ago. Most of the other stories I had heard of before so these fairy tunes must be almost forgotten.

Dalton, Velma. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-37/34.

The man whom I asked about this Incident was reluctant to talk about it. He kept saying "It's not true, it's only his old lies" [JS] went down on the Labrador fishin' one Summer, Down to Battle Harbour fishin' with the Fowlows. (40 or more yrs ago) He was out in the row boat one day + rowed up along side an island + what should he see perched on a rock but a Mermaid. She beckoned for him to row up to her. This he did + the mermaid asked him to make 3 wishes. (He would never tell me what the wishes were). When he had finished she said goodbye asked him to shove her off the rock. He didn't want to do this but he felt he had to so he pushed her off + he never saw her again. He claimed his wishes came true.

She had long hair, with a 'paddy' (pretty) round face. Apparently he was fascinated with her tiny white hands. From her waist down she was only a fish.

Sometimes a few men would ask him to tell about his mermaid (Jokingly) He would only come out + talk about it when probed; never if he felt you were only laughing at him. He is one of those types about whom numerous stories + jokes circulate.

Mermaid pronounced maremaid

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/19.

The following account was given to me by a Christian Brother from Upper Island Cove. He recalls hearing stories like these when he was growing up (1955–1965).

These people believed that if the fairies "took you" their expression was "flipped by the fairies," one of your limbs would become wooden instead of flesh and bone. He never knew of any cases where this had occurred (even though the belief was common) because he said the people in Island Cove were smart enough to always carry a piece of bread in their pocket to ward off fairies.

Relevance: Physical contamination/transformation. Posthuman body.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/20.

The following story was related to me by Mrs. [PR] who grew up in St. John's, Southside Hill (1942–1960). Her parents firmly believed in fairies and [she] remembers from the time she was at least 5 years old (1947) they would put her to bed (if they were going out) and they always put a piece of bread in her cot with her. At this time [PR] was the only child.

One evening they returned + [she] was gone. They couldn't find her anywhere, and her father told her afterwards, that he searched frantically all around the hill with a piece of bread in his hand to appease the fairies, whom he was sure had taken her.

About two hours afterwards, his wife came running out to tell him she had found [PR] rolled up in a blanket asleep under her cot.

In spite of this [PR's father] still believes in fairies. [PR] doesn't.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/21.

My father told me the following story concerning fairies. A man he knew personally when he lived in Fortune Harbour, disappeared for two days. A search was organized on the first night of his disappearance but he couldn't be found. He turned up the next night, with no teeth and no hair. The people believed he had been taken by the fairies. I saw this man in Buchans years afterwards; he was still bald, but he had a denture.

My father really believes the fairies took him and treated him badly. I think he must have been suffering from some disease. I just can't believe in fairies.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/22.

A friend of mine was told this by her mother.

If a small child, an infant, is taken outdoors after dark, the fairies will take it. However, if you made sure the child had a piece of bread with her, the fairies wouldn't bother to take the child.

The mother believes this but my friend thinks it's just a part of the Irish superstition which many Newfoundlanders received from their ancestors.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/23.

My mother told me this experience she had in Fortune Harbour around 1925.

She was walking home from school one evening when a few feet ahead of her on the path she saw a little man sitting on a pile on [sic: probably "of"] green boughs. He looked very old but he was only about 2 or 3 feet tall. She kept on walking, but as she walked, the little man seemed to get farther + farther away from her, at the same time not seeming to move. My mother said finally she couldn't see him any longer and she walked home rather frightened. She firmly believes that this man was a fairy but for some reason or other didn't want to harm her. Just in case, thought, she took a piece of bread in her pocket every day after that.

My reaction to this story is that it was her imagination. I don't think fairies exist. People just created them to explain things that had happened before science could offer explanations.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/24.

My father told me this story last August, 1970.

One day he was returning from an errand and he took a path through the woods. Suddenly he came upon a strange looking dwelling which was shaped something like an Eskimo Igloo, but made of boughs. There was a little opening in the front so being of a curious nature, my father went in. The inside was bare except for a wooden bench which circled the dwelling. He said he could see nobody in there, but he felt as if people were watching him. A strange stillness hung over the place giving it a different atmosphere from the woods outside. Suddenly he remembered stories his father had told him about fairies living in the forest and he ran out and never stopped until he reached home.

His father became very upset when he related his experience, told him he had been in the house of the fairies and had been in danger of being taken. My grandfather questioned him over + over as to whether he felt alright, and even sent for the priest to bless him. He was warned never to go in the woods again without bread in his pocket and especially never to go inside a "house" in the woods.

My father still believes in fairies but says they only live in country places far away from cities. Some of my friends around the ages of 26–30 years of age were listening to this story but, although we didn't say so, not one of us believed it was the fairies' house.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/25.

A lady in Ferryland, S. S. [South Shore] went berry picking one day in the woods surrounding the settlement. She was wearing a white sweater, but as it was very warm she took off the sweater and hung it on a tree. She went further into the woods and about an hour later she came back to get her sweater and it had turned from pure white to a deep red. Very upset, she hurried home with the sweater and was told by her parents that the fairies had done it.

My informant did not remember the lady's name, nor could she tell me what happened to the sweater afterwards. She herself, believed that the fairies had taken the sweater and changed its color.

I think someone could have been playing a joke and changed the sweater for another but my informant assured me that the red sweater was the white sweater.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/26.

The following account was related to me by a person who personally knew the lady involved:

Mrs. [T] from Bristol's Hope, a settlement between Harbour Grace + Carbonear was walking from Harbour Grace to her home one November evening about sixty years ago. She never reached her home until four days later. When she returned she reported that because she neglected to put a piece of bread in her pocket as a protection against "the fairies," they captured her + brought her to their home. They treated her well, but she could not remember having eaten or slept. She said she remembered reaching "Ryan's Hall" an area which the people believed was a haunted place. She felt no ill effects of this experience.

The informant told me that when she was growing up she believed this story, but now she attributes the experience to amnesia or some medically explainable experience.

Relevance: Lost time and space.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/27.

Story:

[MJS] from Salmon Cove, Carbonear, left her home to visit her daughter in Carbonear. She had travelled this road for forty years, so when she didn't reach her daughter's house people felt that she couldn't be lost, but something must have happened to her. Maybe the fairies took her. She was found that evening, late, on the top of Salmon Cove Ridge - going around in circles and mumbling. Several hours afterwards she came to and said she had spent the evening

and all day walking and talking with little people. After this the people looked at her with awe and she was regarded as someone special.

My informant said this occurred around 1910 and the story has been told over + over again. She knows very well the children of this lady.

Mooney, Sister Catherine. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-41/28.

The following account was given to me in writing by a Sister who learned it from her father in Renews.

A young man on his first fishing trip was told the following story.
The first time that he would travel around the Cape Race, the Neptune of the Sea would find him, capture him and shave him. The truth of the matter was that one of the older men dressed in "oil clothes," put a rope around his neck, masked himself and came to the young man.

Mr. [G] said it usually couldn't be carried out fully because the young man became too frightened.

Sister asked her father if there was any reason why a young man was told this story, and she understood from him that it was probably a part of being initiated into the life of a fisherman.

Price, Coleen. 1970. MUNFLA FSC, 71-43/45.

Mermaid
Around 11 years ago when my father was on fishing boats, after every trip the crew would get together at our house to drink. While they were drinking they would talk about various things. Me and my brothers and sister would curl up on the daybed and listen to them until mother made us go to bed. One particular night they were talking about mermaids. One of the men whose name I can't remember said that he saw a mermaid once. He was on a different dragger [trawler] then and he said she was sitting on a rock. The boat got as close to her as they could and someone threw a net at her. He said that the mermaid plunged into the water and got away. He also said that he has seen her several other times but she would disappear when they got close.

I don't know if there's any more to it as my mother made us go to bed soon after. It was the first time we had ever heard of mermaids and we could scarcely believe it.

I can't recall if he described the mermaid.

Whalen, Betty. 1970. MUNFLA FSC 71-46/37.

Aunt [L] was berry-picking in the area around Grate's Cove in approximately 1910 and she got lost. She was approximately 75 years old at the time so upon discovering that she was lost most

of the local people were concerned. They thought that she would not be able to last too long alone in the woods because it was late fall and the area was always relatively cold & windy. For a whole week they looked for her and at the end of the week they found her still alive and abnormally well considering. She was later asked how she had survived this period and her answer was that someone had been taking care of her. The local people were supprised [sic] at this and asked her what she meant. She said that she didn't see them but she felt them, at which point the locals seemed to understand. My grandmother says that opinions on the source of this 'care' were divided. Some, most, thought that the fairies were the source, while the remainder thought that she was taken care of by those who had been praying for her. It was themselves, they thought that she had felt but couldn't see. Those who had thought she was saved by the fairies did not change their opinion of the old lady because of the event. The fairies were evil & might have changed the old woman for the worse or they might have thought she was wicked for them to want to save her in the first place.

Grave's Cove in Trinity Bay (really on the point between Trinity & Conception Bay). Most of the people there had either an English or Irish tradition.

Relevance: Contested notions of religious or fairy power in protecting a person. Demonstrates a tension between religious and vernacular beliefs.

Whalen, Betty. 1970. MUNFLA FSC 71-46/38.

[M], a lady from Brigus went marsh berry picking with a friend. They had been there for quite a while when suddenly a circle fire appeared and seemed to be overtaking them. The circle came nearer until eventually it surrounded Margaret. There it stayed for a small amount of time then it left. When it left, however, her leg was deformed. This I heard from 2 separate sources, therefore I assume that if the story is not entirely true, it does have some basis in fact. [My informant] did not know of any local explanation. I think many of the people just accepted it because such occurrences had been heard of before.

Although [my informant] only heard the story from one source, his mother, he thinks, it came up in a discussion about fairies—however did not state any specific connection between the two, i.e. a __ circle of fire.

Brown, Clifford. 1971. MUNFLA FSC, 71-86/22.

Fairies

When my mother-in-law (now 50) was a child she heard her parents refer to an old gentleman who attended the Salvation Army in St. John's of whom it was said that wherever he was at midnight he would have to leave because the fairies called him or had some claim on him. It seems that he did not claim this himself but people said it because he had some strange ways, was tiny and elf-like in appearance, and was frequently noticed leaving the church services at odd times. He played the violin in the Salvation Army services.

My father-in-law's brother, Mr. [BH], of St. John's confirms that such things were said of this man, [...], and he also adds that the man was partly blind, and was often seen to go and sit on a certain stone in a certain field. This stone was known, at least to children, as a fairy stone.

Miss. [E], (age 50 approx, housekeeper, St. John's) says that this man was believed to have been changed into the short elf-like mane that he was, when he went into the woods one day and the fairies got him. His appearance before this had been quite normal.

Dwyer, Sister Geraldine. 1971. MUNFLA FSC, 71-95/19.

Fairies

This story was told about an old lady from Plate Cove.

A certain Mrs. [D] would disappear in the wood and would remain there for two or three weeks or even a month. When she would return she was well and unharmed and the people were curious to know how she lived during this time. People could never find her in their search for her. They used to say the fairies had taken her. They begged the priest to find out from her where she was and what she ate but he did not succeed. He told her the next time she went she would not return and it happened exactly this way. After the priest's visit the next trip to the wood was her last one but her body was not found until three years later by her nephew and [my informant] said it was just over a hill down between two rocks, a place where people had been many times.

Informants reactions. [He] said he did not believe in fairies it was that woman's mind. He explained her state by say [sic: saying] she had had an illegimate [sic] child and it those day [sic] especially in a small community this was a disgrace so it affected her mind. He couldn't explain where she could have been, or what she lived on while she was missing from the community.

My reactions. I felt [my informant] feels he should not believe in fairies but at the same time wonders if there is not something to the belief in fairies.

Warren, Ann Marie. 1972. MUNFLA FSC, 73-40/15.

[AA] seemed to delight in telling stories about the "good people"—fairies. (The name is ironic as these fairies were generally evil.) [AA] believed the stories she told me and tried to convince me to believe them also. She told the stories to me when she was living at our house in Dunville, Placentia Bay.

(1) She told me about a little girl named [P] who was gone all night from her home up in "Western Cove," a section of Chapel Arm where the Roman Catholics lived. The next morning she returned, very ill. She grew six feet tall and three weeks later she died. The child was four years old at the time.

(2) One evening a woman of Chapel Arm went out to gather together her cows and lead them home for the night – she was led astray and become lost. She was led astray into the woods by fairies. However she did as her mother had formerly instructed her and found her way back to the path. She did it by turning her coat in "the sign of the cross" (inside out). Thus she found her way home.

(3) A Mrs. [SS] once saw a little girl left alone at sunset at the edge of the woods outside Chapel Arm. When the mother returned to the child there was a change in her appearance. The child appeared as an old woman. No longer did [sic] play with her toys, and refused to associate with anyone and hardly ever talked to her family.

I believe that some similar incidents might have happened, but I don't believe in fairies, nor the extra-ordinary happenings as sudden changes in appearance and growth.

Dalton, Gordon. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-153/26.

This belief I also learned by listening to older people esp my mother talk about the past. This can often be very amusing.

To this day many of the older people in my community still believe in the existence of fairies. Unfortunately little is said about them now since these older people resent being laughed at by younger non-believers. My mother, however, is still a firm believer in the fairies. For example if something strange happens to her say she becomes confused she will say, "I think I'm in the fairies." The older people who believed these things can give various evidences of strange occurrences that were blamed on the fairies. However, one must always be prepared for the fairies, by carrying something that they can eat. If you happen to meet them you throw this article at them and they will go away. Even now, when my nieces and nephews come to visit and stay with small children until after dark, my mother will put a little piece of bread in the child's pocket. If it's an infant you will find a piece of bread in its blanket. The bread is for the fairies and if you meet them throw the bread at them and they will leave you alone.

One such tale of the fairies is told in my next card.

Dalton, Gordon. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-153/27.

My mother claims that one day during a berry picking expedition on which my father and her took all the family berry picking, one of the members of my family narrowly escaped being taken by fairies.

The child {now deceased} wandered off beneath the hill to pick alone. Suddenly a great gust of wind shook the trees that surrounded the child and she cried out in fright. My father racing down the hill flung his basket of berries into the path of the wind and shouted. "Take these in the name of God, and leave us alone." The trees stopped swaying and my father took the children and quickly returned home, where they all knelt in prayer to thank God. Needless

to say, the family never returned to that spot. Mother says: "We must have been pricking on some old path that the fairies used."

Dalton, Gordon. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-153/28.

My mother claims that long before her time people in her family had cause to believe in fairies. A child [unsure of name] was once taken by the fairies and kept for 3 days. Her father after searching for 3 days found her in a state of confusion. She had been overtaken by a strong wind one day while picking berries, and led away by strange voices. Because she would not eat nor drink what they gave her, she was not an assest [sic; not sure what the word is] and was left alone. It is alleged that the child was left and indeed lived the rest of her life with a speech defect that she had not had, when she had been taken.

My source claims that had she eaten what they gave her they would have kept her, but they didn't want people in their group who couldn't obey their demands.

Dinn, Anna M. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-157/3.

Fairies were supposed to inhabit marshes and swamps. Near Mobile on the Southern Shore is a large marsh and strange sounds and lights could be heard there every night. If people had to cross this place after dark they would bring "bread" with them, because bread was supposed to keep the fairies away. Some children were playing in that area one day, and one of the children strayed away and was not found until the following morning. A week later the child died. While the child was dying cries and lights could be heard and seen all around the house. People said that these noises were the fairies waiting for him to die, so that they could take him back to the marsh with them.

Smith, Nina. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-179/22.

The following is a story told to me by a woman who actually believes she saw a fairy.

She was going in over the hills in Upper Island Cove to look for her son, her daughter was with her. They went till they got down in the valley. There they met a little boy with his dog who didn't know her son. While she was there a little boy came along who told her that her son was in by the post office so she decided to go home. It was now started to get a little dark and it was very dull and a bit foggy. As she was going over the hill she said she saw a little man about three feet high with a straw hat a red shirt, a pair of red pants and a white cane. She kept going and then she saw him dance around then he disappeared. Her daughter said she also saw him but they haven't seen one since.

Smith, Nina. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 73-179/23.

When men were going into the woods they use [sic] to take bread in their pockets because they believed that this would keep the fairies away.

Bursey, Marsha. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-1/12.

Fairies:

My informant says that all of his family is superstitious - that's the word he used - that his father is especially. He said that he was not very superstitious but as he put it "with all these stories it would make you think, wouldn't it?" My informant also said that his father loved to tell stories, and when he had some "brain-lubricant" he had a very vast repertoire. It took a little incentive though to get him started telling stories because he is afraid someone will think he is silly and believing that fairies came and lead people away etc.

This even happened about twenty years ago down in the Mount Scio Road area. It happened to my informant's grandfather. My informant said that his grandfather was lead away into the woods by fairies. He was fone for an afternoon but the fairies released him. When he returned home my informant's grandfather was in shock. When he was "alright" again he told his grandson, my informant, that he had been lead away by little people, was taken to the middle of the woods, where they made him play the accordion for them while they danced.

Bursey, Marsha. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-1/14.

Fairies

This event happened in New Melbourne T.B. [Trinity Bay] about fifteen to twenty years ago. It involved a woman, and my grandmother thinks her name was Lucy Harris but doesn't really remember. This woman was supposed "lead away" by fairies in to the woods in the late fall, at a time in the season when extreme exposure to the elements would cause death. My grandmother said that the woman was gone for several days and after this length of time was found deep in the woods, sitting up against a tree trunk, unbelievably, alive. She had been frost bitten though and as a result lost a limb, either an arm or a leg, my grandmother doesn't remember this either, and said she wouldn't guess because she didn't want to give me any false information. The story that this Lucy Harris told was that she was lead away by the fairies maliciously into the woods until she was lost. Then when it became cold and couldn't find her way out of the woods Miss Harris said that the fairies took pity on her, changed their attitude, and hovered around her keeping her as warm as they could until the search-party found her several days later. Miss Harris said that they were little people but my grandmother does not remember how they were supposedly dressed.

My grandmother said that when she was growing up in Carbonear there were many stories of fairies in the area but my grandmother never saw any herself. My grandmother said that they were always told as children that fairies were little people and were friendly and would protect you. My grandmother said that in her childhood-days they would tell stories of fairies as we would tell stories of space men. In this way she made a parallel between space-stories of modern day and the stories of a few years ago. She said that in her day, as today, the stories were only that, stories, but could be based on fact and experiences of people who supposedly have seen such things.

I elliceted [sic] this event in an informal atmosphere and my grandmother was very willing to help.

Bursey, Marsha. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-1/16.

Fairies

After my informant had given my [me] the fairy stories, very willing and with great exuberance, he said he had to make one point very clear, and that was that his father always told him that fairies were litte [sic] people and that they were ugly not cute.

Clowe, Edwina. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-2/13.

Threatening Figure

Fairies

One of the many ways of keeping children quiet and to get them in early at night was to tell them about the Marsh Fairy. This fairy lived on the marsh on the way into the woods around Ferryland.

Then my sister and I never wanted to come in from playing until after dark. When mom wanted us to come in for the night she would say "If you don't come in, the Marsh Fairy will have you." Although we'd say we didn't believe in the Marsh Fairy, we usually were doubtful and afraid. I usually expected to see such a fairy at any minute. Although nobody ever said the fairy was bad, we assumed that it must be. The fairy was a woman and according to everyone, wore a long black dress. If she caught a boy or girl she would take him or her with her to the marsh and the child would never be seen again. She usually came after dark to take her victims.

Relevance: Fairy with alternative physical traits.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/21.

While talking to my father last month I asked him why fairies lead people away and he answered that he was always told it was because they are lonely and wanted companionship. I then asked him why did some people taken by the fairies die in the woods and he said it was probiolly [sic] because the fairies got tired of playing or because that person refused to help the fairies aso they let him/her die. He said that when fairies are lonely they find a human to keep them company and to shower their affections upon.

Relevance: Interesting conceptualization of fairies as lonely, rather than bad or good.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/22.

My father told me the reason fairies lead people away i[s] not because they want to do them harm but simply because they are lonely. He said that when fairies are lonely they find a human to keep them company and also to shower their affection on.

Relevance: Interesting conceptualization of fairies as lonely, rather than bad or good.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/23.

My father told me that one night, in 1950 or 1951, after delivering equipment to Bonavista he and a friend left to return to St. Johns. This was before the Trans-Canada Highway was built and the road they were using was barely wide enough for two cars to pass. He said that it was a dark night but every so often the moon would shine through the clouds and would brighten things up. At about 11 o'clock they stopped the truck near a brook, not knowing where they were, to get water for the radiator. My father went for the water while his friend checked out the engine. As my father was approaching the truck, with the water, he heard children singing, he looked around and saw a group of children holding hands going round in a circle singing "Ring a round [sic] the Rosie." He pointed this out to his friend and they reached the conclusion that they must have made better time than they thought and decided to ask the children where they were. As they approached the spot, where they had seen the children, the children were not there but a little further down the road, when they reached this spot the children were still further down the road. My father said that he and his friend thought the children were running away from them so they decided to drive faster to catch up. He said that all of a sudden before either of them realized it the children were right in front of the truck and before they could stop they had driven straight through them. They got out of the truck, thinking they had killed all of them, and found to their surprise the children still holding hands and singing in a circle. It was at this point that they realized these were not children at all but fairies so they got back in the truck and didn't stop again until they reached Clarenville.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/24.

The following was told me by my father who had been told it by his mother when he was only a small child and was confirmed by my grandmother on my mothers side who lived in the same area. My grandmother said she can remember hearing the story when it was supposed to have happened. The story is that whenever there was a dance a fiddler would be called in to play. One chap who was a very good fiddle player would be called upon often to play but would always insist on leaving before 12 o'clock at night so he could go to the woods to play for the little people. One night several of the dancers wanted to continue dancing past midnight so they locked the fiddle player in a small room with a very small window. My grandmother said it was thought impossible for anyone to get through the little window but when the people returned for the man he had gone. The following night he turned up to play again as requested and again said he had to leave before 12 o'clock. He was asked why and said that at one time he had been lost in the woods and had promised the little people that if they would show him the way out he would come each night to play for them, this is why he had to leave each night and

go into the woods to play. My grandmother said she saw the man in question and he insisted that he did play for the little people when in the woods.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/25.

When I was growing up I, as well as all the other children in the area, was always told that I should never follow the sound of music while playing in or near the woods. We were told that the reason for this was because the fairies were making this music as a means of attracting our attention and if we were to follow it we would be lured into the woods and become lost. Parents as well as children sincerely believed in this. I can recall many instances when older people would tell us about a young girl who had been lured into the woods this way and had remained there, lost, for six months. When she was found she had to lose both her legs because of frost bite. When this girl, who was supposed to be 12 or 13 years old, was asked how she managed to live for so long (I believe it was from September to February) she simply said that the little people had cared for her. These little people had brought her food and kept her covered with leaves so she wouldn't freeze. My parents as well as many older people in the area today still believe in this. The girl in question was named Lucie Harris and is still supposed to be living.

Relevance: Fairies using music to lure, appears in a few transcripts.

Connolly, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-99/40.

My grandmother told me that a small roadway leading from the Battery Road to Walshs [sic] Square in St. John's East was, in her childhood 1896–1910, frequented by ghosts. She told me that the ghosts in this area seem to have had something against her family and some members of other families as well. She told me that she was one of the younger members of her family and as such wasn't allowed out at night but her older brothers + sisters were. Two of these older children had strange experiences while passing this lane late at night. She said that on many occasions her brother [B], and other people as well, while passing the lane late at night would be showered with stones at a time when no other people were in the lane. She said people in the area thought this maybe was someone or a group of people just having fun but they became convinced it was ghosts when her sister [S] received a BLAST when she passed the area late one night. She said her sister received, what felt like, a hard smack on the left side of her face while passing this lane. She said the following day her sister's face was swollen and very sore. A few days later it was seriously infected. Several days later (she couldn't remember how many) the infection broke and pieces of old cloth, rusty nails, needles and bits of rock and clay were all taken from her face. This was the Blast and was believed to have been caused by her walking across the path of a ghost. She said her sister had a scar on the side of her face from that time until the day she died in 1970.

Relevance: Fairy blast, contamination.

Decker, Donna. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-101/41.

About six years ago my cousin's mother disappeared into the hills one afternoon and she was never seen again. Many of the old people who believed in fairies said that the fairies took her away. Her red sweater was found and they said that they left this as a sign that she was taken by them. We believed that she fell over the cliff and was taken out to sea because her body was never found.

Decker, Donna. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-101/42.

Mom told me that when she was small, whenever she and her friend used to go berry-picking they would always wear their coat or sweater inside-out so that they wouldn't be carried off by the fairies. She didn't know if anyone had been carried off but they weren't going to take the change.

Decker, Donna. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-101/43.

Mom told me that her aunt, when her children were babies, used to put them out in the carriage for air. Everytime she put them out she would put a Bible in the carriage near the baby so the fairies wouldn't carry him off. She really believed the fairies would take him if the Bible wasn't there and even today she will warn us to put a Bible there.

Fowler, Maureen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-102/37.

I remember, whenever it came to that particular time of the year – the berry-picking season – we all wanted to go pick our share of berries in a wooded area not [far] from our home. My mother always warned us not to go too far or we'll get lost. We would always ask "What if we do get lost?" She replied: Take off your jacket, put it on inside out. You'll arrive home safe and sound. We never really had the chance to do this, but yet we still believed it. I was around 13 at the time mother told me this & my brothers and sisters were even older.

I was never given any hint, except that we would always find our way home if we turned jacket [sic] inside out. It was a superstition held whenever anyone went in the woods.

Fowler, Maureen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-102/38.

Mrs. [SN] informed me that while she would be out during the summer months making hay a "gang of fairies" would come and take her stack of hay and spread it all over the meadow. She said today people in around home do not refer to it as such but they call it a whirlwind.

Fowler, Maureen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-102/39.

Mr. [SN] informed [me] that a woman living next door to him and his family left to come to his house one evening for a bottle of oil. Before she reached his house apparently, the fairies took her. She was missing for 9 days and on that 9th day the search party rescued her. She was unharmed and returned home safely. She was commenting on how the fairies treated her very well.

Relevance: Disruption in domestic relationship/responsibility.

Fowler, Maureen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-102/40.

There was a family of [H] living in Mitchel's Brook (a community very handy mine). Mrs. [H] was hanging out clothes on her new line, while leaving her baby in the cot. When she came in she was terrified to see that a monkey had replaced her baby. Apparently she kept it but immediately she sent after a man in Holyrood to come in because she was after hearing that this man had been taken by the fairies and he knew how to cure such things. After a few days he returned to her home and he saw the monkey. But he said there was nothing he could do as it was too late. He said that she should have reddened her shovel, put the baby on it and throw it over her shoulder, and she would get the baby back.

However, she reared this monkey who grew up to be very mischievous. He died when he was around 25 years old.

Fowler, Maureen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-102/41.

[SN] told me this fairy story about another man [with the same name as the informant] (no relationship to him). It was in 1914 when in a little community called Colinet, a girl around 3 years old was out playing with her mother and other sisters and brothers. When it came time to go in and have supper the mother missed the 3 year old — [M]. They searched and searched but nobody found her. A man who had been coming home from the United States had to pass through Colinet to get to Whitbourne where he was to pick up his luggage. While he was passing through Colinet road he heard a baby's cry. He went to look and he found in a sand-pit the little girl who was missing. She had been there nine days. There was very bad weather during those days (rain) but the child didn't appear to be wet nor was she hungry. He brought her home and everyone rejoiced at her rescue. Everyone says up to this day that the fairies had her.

Healy, Marigold. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-11/15.

Fairy Ring

Years ago people were always afraid they would be caught in a fairy ring while walking in the woods. My father said once he and his father were up in the country cutting logs. Late in the evening, before dark they left off and started for home. My father walked ahead and thought his father was coming behind. He sat on a rock to wait for him when he saw that he wasn't behind him. He waited and waited but he didn't come. Finally he went back to look for him calling out as he went. Then he saw his father, he was walking around and around. He called out again and this time his father saw him and came. His father said it was like he was in a ring and couldn't get out. He would walk around and end up in the same place he started. He said then [sic] he often heard people talking about fairy rings but it was the first time he got caught in one. When my father called out to him he was able to walk out of the ring.

Healy, Marigold. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-11/16.

Fairy Story

Many years ago in a little Catholic community a small child disappeared. The little girl was last seen playing near the woods at the top of the meadow. The people searched and searched for her. All that night and the next day they looked but there was no sign of her. On the second day she was found under some bushes not far from the meadow. She was dead and her side had been cut open. The people of the community was [sic] certain that the fairies had done this.

My mother said people were terrified of fairies in those time [sic]. If anyone got lost in the woods people always said the fairies took them.

Healy, Marigold. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-11/17.

Fairy Story

There was a story told about a man here at Marystown, P. B. [Placentia Bay] some years ago. This man went berry picking and didn't return home for a whole week. No one could find him or knew of his where abouts [sic]. So after a week this man came home out of the woods, just as good as if he were home all week. He said he didn't know where he was but the fairies had him. He said they were good to him and he was well treated. They kept him for a week and then when the week was up they told him he could go home. Then it all came back to him where he lived. He was happy to get back home to his family. Everyone agreed that the good fairies had him.

People believed in those times that there were good and bad fairies. But there were more bad fairies than good ones.

Healy, Marigold. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-11/18.

Mermaid Story

Before the tidal wave struck Nfld. in 1929 a woman from Lanceo (Lancy oh) saw a strange sight. She lived on a rocky cliff close to the sea. Her nearest neighbour was about a mile away. This day she was looking out of her window and saw a stream of mermaids swimming towards land. They swam towards the cliff and some of them rose out of the water. After a while they left the cliff and swam back to sea. She knew that something terrible was going to happen. Not too long after the earth began to shake. Of course she and others thought it was the end of time.

This woman was deeply religious and always swore by the Bible that she really saw the mermaids. There were others around who reported seeing mermaids at the time too.

Healy, Marigold. 1973. MUNFLA FSC, 74-11/19.

Mermaids

One time people believed in mermaids. Mermaids were only seen before a disaster. A crew on one ship saw a mermaid sitting on a rock combing her hair near the shore. One man pointed a

gun at her. She screamed and took to the sea. After, some of the men were lost when their ship was dashed on rocks in a storm.

Kirby, Edward. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-113/29.

Crossing fairy marsh after twilight

Mrs. [R's] sister [E] lived in Clarke's Beach and was eleven years old when this story happened. Every evening she would have to cross the fairy marsh to get water. It was believed that it was safe to cross the marsh before twilight but if you had to cross it after twilight then you had to put a piece of bread or salt in your pocket for the fairies so as to keep them away. However, one evening, [E] forgot to put the bread or salt in her pocket. She was gone a long time and when she returned she said that she had been on a merry-go-round with lovely people. Then she giggled and laughed continuously. During her laughing, her mouth kept going up until it reached her ear. The next morning her parents took her to the doctor in Spaniard's Bay and he said it was definitely the fairies who had caused this. He then cross her mouth. Her parents had to bring her for this treatment nine days in a row. On the ninth morning her mouth returned to normal and no further treatments were necessary.

Kirby, Edward. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-113/30.

Fairies use music to spellbind children.

My source said that his mother told him that when they went berry picking not to stray too far away or the fairies would take them. However, it appears that the fairies wouldn't actually take the child but would spellbound [sic] the child by music. This was an effective method of keeping the children in eyesight when they were in the woods with their parents and because of the fear the children weren't likely to stray from the parents and get lost.

Kirby, Edward. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-113/31.

Fairies abduct child

[DB] lived in Clarke's Beach and he was six [?] at the time the story took place. One evening [he] went into the woods to go berry-picking. As he was gone a long time a search was undertaken for him. The search party found him lying under a tree and took him home. When they brought him home he sat behind the stove and began to eat kindling wood. This situation lasted nine days and on the ninth day the boy died. People in the area believed that the fairies were responsible for his death.

Kirby, Edward. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-113/32.

Long ago people believed fairies existed everywhere and that they often carried people away. However, it was believed that the fairies couldn't carry you across water. One evening [JK] went to play in the woods. When she was gone for a long time her parents went looking for her. They found her lying by the edge of a river. Her fair was neatly combed and her dress was neither rumpled nor dirty. They took her home and put her to bed. Nine days later she died. It was believed that the fairies had carried her away and had caused her death.

Kirby, Edward. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-113/33.

Fairies, bread in pocket

My source said that once she had a friend who lived next door to her. This friend would often come to her house and have supper with her. When she came to supper she would bring her two young children with her. After supper the woman would chat for awhile [sic] and upon leaving she would ask my source for two pieces of bread to put in the children's pockets. This was so that the fairies would take the bread and leave the children alone. Under no conditions or circumstances would the woman leave without the bread in her children's pockets.

Mooney, Katherine. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-117/50.

Fairies are cast away souls from Heaven

I was visiting Mr. [H] and I was attempting to get some information from him. I asked him if he knew any stories in relation to fairies.

He said he couldn't recall any stories but he said to him and the people of his community, they always felt that fairies were cast away souls from heaven.

Mr. [H] said this very seriously as if he still believed it. When I asked him if he did, he was hesitant to answer but reluctantly said "No."

Mooney, Katherine. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-117/51.

Fairies lead away child

I was telling one of my girl friends about fairies as we had discussed it in class that day.

She then told me a story about her grandmother's sister.

One day this girl (grandmother's sister) and her mother and father went berry picking when the girl wandered away from her parents. Her parents feeling that their daughter had returned home, left and went home. Upon arriving home they found that their daughter had not returned. They then got a group of people and went searching for her.

They never found her until the next day and when they did she was all scratched and beaten up. Upon her parents questioning her, she said she had been led away by this small woman whom she thought would take her home.

[M] (my girlfriend) said that the people said that this was a fairy and the people who knew about it still believe it.

The girl that was lost is still alive today.

Smith, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-123/35.

The man next door to me [sic] home told me of an experience his uncle had. He was tossing his hay one evening down in Argentia. he heard some funny noises and when he looked around he saw about 50 little men dancing around a pile of hay. They were about 6 inches tall, dressed in red suits with a black belt around it. The language was a foreign one. He ran to get his wife to show her the fairies and when they came back the fairies were gone but all his hay was dry and stacked in piles. [...] my informant says the story is true.

Smith, Wayne. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-123/36.

My mother often told me of an incident which happened to my father's grandfather down in Argentia. He was coming through the woods in the winter on a horse and slide. It was in the early afternoon and he had a load of wood on the slide. The ground was covered in snow. Shortly, he was coming along and all of a sudden the snow all disappeared. He was in a green garden and there were summer flowers, birds, and many things you would see in the summer in the garden. He could not find his way out of the garden. He heard music being played and walked toward the music and in the woods where the music was coming from he saw a band of fairies having a party. He went back to his horse and several hours later the snow re-appeared and he found his way back home. "Black Har," as he was called, unloaded some of his wood and he picked some grass before the snow came and when he got into the town the grass was gone from his pocket and when they went to look for the wood he dumped off, they couldn't find it. This was supposed to be a true story.

Watkins, Owen. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-129/38.

While my mother and I were sitting around last Friday, March 22, I asked her if she knew a story associated with fairies. She told me that about thirty years ago, a ten year old boy was supposedly been taken [sic] by the fairies. He was taken on the fairyland it was called then, but now is called the pond path. He was brought back in the same place. After his return, a story was told that the fairies had given him some funny looking bread. If he ate this bread he would become one of them.

Fairy stories are not too popular in Comfort Cove but the older people are aware of the above story. If you ask them wether [sic] or not they believe, they say 'I don't know,' as my mother replied. Some laugh and others say, 'you can never be sure.'

Woodrow, Norah. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-132/39.

Our neighbor, [WB], remembers hearing a story from Marysvale C.B. He was not certain of the date, but says it was at least thirty years ago (1944).

According to the story a small child about 8 months old was left alone in the house while his parents went next door to visit. The body was safely asleep in his crib.

When the parents returned however they found the child deformed and ugly — almost "half animal." It was like it had aged in the short period of time that the parents had been gone. The child never recovered, but died shortly afterwards (several weeks). No one knows what happened, says [WB]. Some say that something frightened the baby, and more say that the fairies took the real child in order to punish the parents for leaving it alone.

Woodrow, Norah. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-132/40.

This is a story which our neighbor, Mr. [WB], remembers hearing from one of his friends from Bristol's Hope C.B. It took place about 1946 or 37.

The friend and another man both from Bristol's Hope worked at the time at Archibald's Farm. Mr. [WB] is not sure, but he believes that this was a government-sponsored farming project. The two men had to walk about 5–9 miles across bogland to reach their work. A rough gravel path led to the farm.

On this particular morning, they set out as usual about 5:00 in the morning. The friend described what happened as "something coming over them." They fell into a trance and were walking on a paved highway. They were forced to walk and walk and couldn't get off this highway. When they finally came out of this trance, they were a long way from the farm and didn't reach it until one o'clock that day.

The men believed that this strange incident had been caused by the fairies who were trying to "lead them astray."

Woodrow, Norah. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-132/41.

Our neighbor [WB] remembers an incident which happened at Old Perlican CB about 40 miles from Harbour Grace C.B. He is not certain of the date but thinks it was around 1939–40.

A small child named Lucy Harris became lost in the woods while she was berry-picking with her family. Searchers looked for her for days but could find no trace. Weeks later (47 days) the girl was found by the roadside not too far from where she disappeared. She was healthy, well-fed and her clothes were neat and clean. The child said that "little people" took care of her while she was in the woods. People believed, says Mr. [WB], that she was "looked after" by the fairies.

He says he is not certain of all the details. He can remember people talking about Lucy Harris and is almost certain that the story was written up in the newspapers at the time.

Murray, Ann Marie. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-212/05.

Often in outport communities when a child was born retarded this occurrence was blamed on the fairies. The people would say that during the night the fairies came and took their normal baby, and left their own imperfect one instead. This was the people's way of explaining something they couldn't understand.

Murray, Ann Marie. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-212/06.

People from Bay Bulls believed if children went off on their own to the woods to pick berries, the fairies would take them away unless they kept a piece of dry bread in their pockets. This bread would ward off the evil fairies.

Murray, Ann Marie. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-212/07.

In outport communities, people valued their livestock which they kept in a barn at night. To protect the animals from the fairies or evil spirits they often painted a heart on the door of the barn. This was supposed to frighten away the fairies who might harm the animals.

Smith, Graham. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-218/22.

"Don't whistle in the forest. If you do you're sure to have bad luck." Whistling was supposed to attract fairies that inhabit the woods. These fairies were supposed to lead you astray. Since there was so much talk about fairies my grandfather strongly believed in this and still does. Years ago two men were led astray for this reason. When they were found they were supposed to be fairy-flicked.*

* - sort of hypnotism.

Smith, Graham. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-218/23.

If a child is going away from home for a while be sure to put some bread in his pocket. This will keep the fairies away from him. They will take the bread and leave the child alone. This has been done to me several times as a young boy by my grandmother who truly believes in it.

Smith, Graham. 1974. MUNFLA FSC, 74-218/24.

Before you go in the woods put a hold in a nickel and tie it around your neck to keep away fairies. The fairies will see the bright nickel and be frightened away. This was not believed by my uncle. As a boy he would wait behind a rock for some young person to come along. He would steal their nickel.

Smith, David. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-144/25.

My mother told me this story when I was very young. She said in Victoria much of the area is heavily wooded in one particular spot the [sic] is a large open space with a huge boulder in the centre. This rock is referred to by the people in the community as the "fairy rock." They say because of the rocks great weight it cannot be moved and the fairies live under it. They also say that at night the fairies come out from under the rock and dance around it.

Devereaux, Brenda. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-179/37.

The people thought that the fairies lived in Stony River, Back River, Bar River, and St. Shott's (all outside Trepassey), and came to Trepassey at night. Many of these superstitions disappeared with the coming of electricity.

Devereaux, Brenda. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-179/38.

There is an old man in my community who insists that he has been taken by the fairies many times and has been brought home at midnight by them. However, this man likes to drink and people say that this accounts for his trips.

Devereaux, Brenda. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-179/39.

People believed that there was a Fairies Field on the Lower Coast because some mornings when they went to this field the wood was platted [plotted?].

Devereaux, Brenda. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-179/40.

If you were travelling alone at night you should turn your coat inside out and this would keep the fairies away.

Grant, Mary. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 75-262/24.

Story: One woman in the community became a cripple at the age of 35. She explained that it happened one evening while she was weeding a cabbage patch. She was struck in the legs by a straw. The straw was carried by a fairy.

Fairies were small creatures, wearing full tail dresses, they were found on marshes. Their presence was felt by a strong gust of wind and straw blown around by the wind. People say they went around in a circle making a hissing noise.

Today the older people still believe in fairies.

Hiscock, Peggy. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-112/12.

There is a road in Carbonear called "The Fairy Run." It is believed that this name was given to this particular road because people had said they saw fairies running on it.

Drover, Nina. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 76-128/51.

While we were talking about believes [sic] my mother mentioned how people believed in fairies. She told me how once she took her sister's little girl out after dark and she put bread down in her bosom so that the fairies wouldn't take her. But as the child was old enough to know about it she cried for it and she had to give it to her to eat and she found that the child was just as safe without it.

Drover, Nina. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 76-128/52–53.

One night my aunt was visiting and she started to tell me a story about one time she was looking for her son. She said it was in July and it was a hazy, foggy type day. Her daughter was with her. Here is the story in her words. "We were walking up Bryants Cove Rd. look [sic] for [J] (her son). As we walked we heard some people and dogs. We went farther down in the valley and asked someone if they saw him but they said no. Farther on we met a little boy and his dog, he was [GC]. I asked him if he saw [J] but he said he saw him earlier in the day he saw him at Neddie Smith's pond. So then we left and went back. As we went we saw this little man. My daughter wanted to know who he was but I wouldn't let her say anything. He was about 3 feet high and had on red pants, red shirt, straw hat and had a whip in his hand. When we got farther down the road I looked back and he was whipping his whip in the air. I could see he had big ears right down on his shoulder. We went right on home without looking back." I tried to

tell her that she really didn't see such a person that she only imagined it but there was no way I could convince her that she was wrong.

Drover, Nina. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 76-128/54.

[My informant] also told me if you were taken by the fairies you're supposed to talk backwards to they'll let you go. He didn't really believe this but he had always heard it.

Drover, Nina. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 76-128/55.

By this time several of the others were getting interested in what we were talking about and started adding to what we were saying. [My informant] said that if you're going in the woods you're supposed to turn your jacket inside out so the fairies won't take you.

Drover, Nina. Year not given. MUNFLA FSC, 76-128/57.

There are also beliefs about faries [sic]. My father told me if you go in the woods to take a lunch but don't eat all of it because the fairies will get you. He also told me that if he himself went in the woods now he'd probably bring back some of his lunch. He's not sure where he heard this but he thinks it was from his father.

Penney, Eleanor D. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-140/1.

Two women from Perry's Cove while berry picking became lost. They came upon a wide brook with garden's on both sides. They claim to experience a strange feeling. They finally found their way home. However they never again found the brook + gardens. They say they were "Fairy led"

Penney, Eleanor D. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-140/2.

A resident of Perry's Cove, along with his two brothers went berry picking late one afternoon. They went to a place called "the droke." This one brother saw three women, whom he at first thought were members of the community. Upon getting closer he knew he had never seen them before.

They were strangely dressed and were singing a hymn "Abide with me." They were holding hands and dancing in a circle. He had even remember [sic] that the soles of their shoes were white. Since then he has always sworn that he had seen fairies.

Power, Elizabeth. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-143/18.

I remember my mother telling me this form of superstition. When going on a long journey it was always customary to put a piece of bread in one's pocket. Apparently it had the power to protect one from evil spirits at night.

Power, Elizabeth. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-143/34.

The following incident I experienced as a child. I remember skating out on the bogs and marshes. 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 folk tale from our ancestors.

Clarke, Dave. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-25/29.

In the community of Victoria, not to [sic] far from my house, in the woods there is a big rock with a large crack in it. I was told that this was the fairy rock and that every night fairies came out through this crack and danced around the rock. I was also told that if any children were to go around there at night they would be carried away by these fairies.

Labelle, Ronald. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-79/5.

Legend

Mme. [D] didn't say if she knew about the fairies or "lutins" when we first asked her about them but after her son told us something about them, she said that she had heard old [NC] tell stories about the fairies to her husband [B]. [NC] came over and said: "My horse has a braided mane in the morning when I go into the stables." She didn't say whether she believed the stories or not.

Labelle, Ronald. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-79/6.

Legend

Mme. [D's] son [L] has a strong belief in fairies. He said he saw himself horses with braided manes. He says they're big as mosquitoes. They make fine braids all along the mane. The horse's owners use big combs to untie the manes. There are special years of fairies. They don't come every year. It may be every seven years. And they don't go anywhere, only to certain places.

Labelle, Ronald. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-79/7.

Legend

When I asked Mme. [D] if she knew about the "Lutins" that went into stables and tied the horse main [sic] into knots. She said the little "fairies" did that. They went into barns and tied the horse's main [sic]. It was like braided hair. The "fairies" are as small as mosquitoes. People said they went into people's houses. They were also called "le petit monde."

O'Brien, Audrey. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-82/4.

"The blast"

Years ago when people walked around at night alone they would get the blast. That is, they would get a pain in the arm or the leg or some other part of the body and could be crippled for life. For this reason people should have something with them for protection.

O'Brien, Audrey. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-82/38.

Years ago it was a custom to take off your coat, and turn it wrong side out, if you met fairies in the woods. If you did this then the fairies would not lead you away.

O'Brien, Audrey. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-82/39.

"Dolladadas" [spelling?] This refers to fairies. They are little men often seen by people years ago. These dolladadas often try to do you harm or lead you away. They move very quickly so it is impossible to follow them.

O'Brien, Audrey. 1975. MUNFLA FSC, 76-82/40.

Years ago it was a custom to take a piece of bread with you when you went into the woods. You would give this bread to the fairies so they would do you no harm.

Kelly, Patrick G. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-295/3.

The following is a story which was told to me by my Aunt [MS] of Fox Harbour. We always call her Aunt [MC] to distinguish her from our other Aunt[s]. I remember, as a child, I was told by my Aunt [MC] that she was once taken by the fairies. I donot [sic] remember all the details because it was so long ago. She claims she was in the woods picking beeries [sic] when she was captured by a group of fairies. She claims she was held in the woods overnight and found herself on the path back home the next morning without remembering how she got on the path.

Kelly, Patrick G. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-295/7.

The following story was told to me by my father. Dad said that years and years ago when he was a boy that hunters and berry-pickers and anyone who went in the woods for anything usually carried a piece of bread in their pocket for protection against fairies and other creatures. The bread was supposed to be blessed in the sense that it resembled the sacred Host.

Lee, Mike. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-296/31.

Children were always being warned to stay away from the woods. This was so they wouldn't get lost. To keep the children from wandering parents warned them that if they went close to the woods the fairies would take them. Rumor has it that the fairies took one young boy for a period of two weeks.

Noseworthy, Olive. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-311/44.

Bread in Pockets

This is an old belief. Years ago when hunters went into the woods, they were told to always have bread in their pockets. This was an assurance that they would always return home should they become lost in the woods. The bread in their pockets would prevent the fairies from capturing them.

My informant's comment was that the bread was a token of good luck.

Noseworthy, Olive. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-311/55.

Fairy Story

Once there were two young men who had humps in their backs. One of them decided that he would go picking blueberries one day. While he was blueberry picking, he was singing a song. It went like this, "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday too!" Two fairies overheard the song so the[y] decided to take away his hump as a favour. This young man told the other young man what had happened to him. The other young man decided he wanted to get rid of his hump so he went picking berries and singing too. The song went like this, "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday too!" The fairies heard him and they realized he had spoiled their nice song so they gave him another hump. The hump they took away from the other man.

Power, Bridget. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-315/06.

About 70 years ago Dick [...] lived in a small log cabin in the woods about 10 miles from Branch. Because he was the only person living there, the path through this woods was called "Dick's Path." (It's still called that.) Anyway Dick was a very good tin whistle player and often played for local dances. Dick claimed that one night as he was getting ready for bed some fairies entered the cabin. One of them took Dick's whistle from its place above the door and played a lively tune. Then the fairies departed. Dick took his tin whistle, tried the tune and found he could play it very well. From then onwards Dick often played this tune. It was called "The Tune Dick Learned From The Fairies." This tune is played today by Mr.[PJ] of Patrick's Cove and still bears the same title.

Power, Bridget. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-315/30.

There is a family in our community who carries a bread crust in their pockets when they go out at night. The bread crust keeps them safe from fairies.

Smith, Barry. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-322/38.

Many years ago it was believed that a person could be possessed by the fairies. One man [HS] was led away by the fairies and he wasn't found for three days. When the local people found him he was naked from the waist up. He had gotten hungry and eaten his sweater.

Smith, Barry. 1980. MUNFLA FSC, 80-322/39.

Many years ago before electricity came to Bishop's Cove it was believed by the local people that the fairies lived on a hill call the "Tolt." One night a thunder bolt fell and the Tolt split and rocks were sent hundreds of feet in the air. The people believed that this thunder bolt was sent from God to destroy all the fairies. Fairies have not been seen since this event in 1910.

Smith, Brent. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 88-311/9.

Fairy

My father said that the fairies are real. They are little green men that dance in the air. He said that the fairies had caused war in heaven and was forced to leave. They are on earth so that they can harm people and bring them bad luck.

Gray, Pamela. 1976. MUNFLA FSC, 91-98/35.

The fairies...we knew them as the little people in the woods...There was a bachelor man [name removed at collector's request] who was gone for 28 days on Bruley, Merasheen Island, just across from where we lived at Spencer's Cove (Long Island). And this is true, mind you...The whole community was looking for him. I was one of the crowd of 36 who looked for two days for him. But he came back himself, after 28 days. A woman in white was leading him astray every time he was going home. (How did he finally get away? 'I suppose the woman in white got tired of stopping him!')

[He's] is still living, it's true. I know him myself. He went trouting that day, you just call it fishing but it's not just fishing, and he got astray and the fairies led him around. No one was working on the island that time of year. His sister came one day and told us he was back. She said, '[he]'s come.' The first thing he said was 'bring me some bread, I'm starving!' He was in good shape, hale and hearty. I don't know how he was all right. We went to see him, and his wife said, '[he]'s come.' And he asked for some drink, and we got him some, and then he asked us to sing him two songs, and we did. Oh, his beard was a bit long. That was the beginning of the style today, you know, the whiskers and all.

Gray, Pamela. 1976. MUNFLA FSC, 91-98/36.

I had an Aunt, Aunt [M]; she was nearly 80 (she lived to be 87), and she went berry picking one day. She didn't return the whole night. Someone found her the next day and she didn't know where she was (had been). She had no shoes when she returned and they never found the shoes, even though they went and looked for them. I don't know whether they ever found her saucepan or not. She was taken to hospital and nothing was found wrong. She's the only one I knew that was led astray by the fairies.

Butt, Brian R. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-304/15.

Newfoundlanders are very superstitious people. A humourous [sic] example of this is the practice of putting bread in one's pocket or turning one's clothes inside out as a protection from fairies when the fog rolled in over the barrens or the woods. I was informed of the custom by my parents. As a child this was important advice for most children are afraid of fairies. They told me this because they didn't want me in the woods anyway. The traditional belief probably came about because it was very rare to see fog roll in the woods, therefore people believed there was something strange going on. People felt very weary [sic] when this happened and therefore made up the stories of fairies.

Butt, Brian R. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-304/20.

My great grandmother came to our house one night for supper. As she sat around talking about the old times; she told about the time my father was born. She acted as the midwife, and when my father was born he was very small and premature. Something had to be done or he would die. They ended up taking the baby and putting in a show box, wrapping the box in a blanket, and putting the box in the oven. To the old people this was a type of incubator which worked fairly well obviously.

Camden, Lisa. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-310/06.

When my grandfather was a young man, there was a widespread belief in Newfoundland in the existence of fairies. People belived [sic] that fairies would lead you astray in the woods.

My grandfather had a friend, Sandy Harnett, who was an excellent woodsman. He had lived on Fogo Island all his life and knew every path in the area. He claimed not to believe in fairies but there was one event which he felt had no other explanation. He had been going along a path to ge to his house and it seemed like something was leading him astray. He was led in five different but would always end up in the same place. It went on for a couple of hours until suddenly, whatever it was disappeared, and he knew where the path was. He told my grandfather this story several times over the years but he couldn't find any explanation of it. My grandfather is not a superstitious man, but he tends to believe the event really happened.

Dwyer, Paul. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-313/14.

Old Newfoundlanders believed in fairies and that they lived in the woods. They would not go in the woods after dark because they thought the fairies would take them. One night [LP] was out getting wood from hid [sic] wood pile in his yard in Spaniard's Bay. While there, he says the fairies tried to get him and he never went out after dark by himself again. He believed in the fairies until he died in June, 1988.

Hanrahan, Rob. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-318/3.

When you are in the woods a way to get rid of fairies is to spell your name backwards. This drives the fairies away from you.

Hanrahan, Rob. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-318/11.

If you turn your jacket inside out when you are lost in the woods then this should bring you good luck and get you found.

Hanrahan, Rob. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-318/14.

In order to keep fairies away from you when you are walking in the woods late at night, you can carry a piece of hard bread in your pocket, to drive the fairies away from you.

Hollahan, Sandra. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-320/9.

On a camping trip that happened one May 24th weekend, a group of friends and I played a trick on another friend of ours, [M]. [He] is a gullible character who will believe almost anything. We decided to tell him that the woods were filled with fairies and if he did not wear his clothes inside out and put bread in his pockets, they would come and take him away. [He] went around like this all weekend and was afraid to go to sleep because he thought that the fairies would come to take him away.

Kielly, Tina. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-326/17.

A lot of people believed that fairies existed in earlier years. My friend's grandmother told me a story of how her son, [C], was taken by these little creatures. One evening, as she was preparing supper, [C] and his brothers were playing in the garden. [C] got tired and fell asleep by a tree. The other boys continued to play. When [his mother, D,] called them to come in for their supper, the boys looked but could not find [C] near the place where he fell asleep. They looked for about two hours but could not find him. By then it was dark and everyone was worried. So [D] got some men together to look for [C]. They searched until the break of dawn, passing the tree where [he] fell asleep several times. At about 6:00AM [he] was found sound asleep by the same tree where he originally dozed off. Everyone was puzzled by [his] story of how he woke up near the water with all these little men dancing around singing songs. And then could not remember anything else. He thought he was only dreaming but the others knew that only one thing could have happened — the fairies must have taken him.

Kielly, Tina. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-326/18.

I was talking to a friend of mine and he told me a story about his younger sister. One day she went in the woods chasing a rabbit and by the time she realized where she was she could not find her way back home. As it began to get dark her family became worried as to where she was. The family and some of their friends set out to look for her and found her miles away from home huddled near a tree stump. The girl had to be carried home and as she lay on the day bed she told the story of how she was taken by these little creatures with wings, what she called "fairies". When she finished her story she died. The family never knew what actually happened.

Miller, Tina. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-331/7.

"When people went berry picking they'd fill their pockets with bread crumbs. If they saw any fairies they would take out the crumbs and make the sign of the cross, hence frightening the fairies away. Other people when going in the woods or on the barrens would turn their clothes inside out and wear it that way to keep away the fairies." This is an old belief that was held by the inhabitants of Rushoon. The people would always follow these practices if they planned to stay in the woods until evening. My father, in particular, was a strong believer of this practise. He told me about the time he was in the woods and he said he could hear whispering coming from afar. Soon this whispering got closer and closer. Then he said he could see the fairies. They were wearing red stocking caps, sweaters, pants and boots. He said he was afraid and then he turned his jacket inside out. The fairies disappeared but he could still hear the whispering in

the distance. From now on whenever my father goes into the woods he always turns his jacket inside out.

Miller, Tina. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-331/10.

As a child, my mother would use many threats to make my brothers and I behave ourselves. Some common threats include, "You better be good or the boogieman will get you." If we stuck out our tongue she would say "If you don't stop, your face will freeze like that." If we were bad on Sunday or did something we were not supposed to do mom would say that God would put us in the moon because that's how the man in the moon got there." If we didn't want to go to church she would say "If you don't go to church the devil will have you." "If you are bad you'll be put in the dark hole." Mom had a way of making us come in when it was getting late outside by saying "Come in before dark or the Black man will get you" or "the fairies will take you away if your not in before dark."

Power, Lynette. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-334/3.

My sister and I were talking about nonsense things one day and I mentioned "the boogie man." She started then telling me about the fairies when my sister was a child and we lived near the woods, my mother would tell her that if she went handy [sic] to the woods after dark, the fairies would get her. She said, "so, I can run away," but my mother told her that they were so small that you'd never see them coming at you. If you had bread in your pocket or were spelling your name backwards continuously, then, they wouldn't get you. My sister told me that apparently, an elderly lady, our neighbour a few years ago, had lost her mind after returning home having been caught by the fairies. I thought it was totally ridiculous but I'm beginning to think that my sister believes it all.

Saunders, Elizabeth. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-337/23.

Accidentally one night, I went to bed with my nightgown on inside out and I slept that way all night. The next morning, I realized what I did and I told my grandmother who lived with us. She said, 'The fairies are going to take you away.' I laughed because this incident had happened before and my grandmother told me the same thing, but she fairies did not come for me.

Snelgrove, George F. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-340/23.

Children of Trinity / Port Rexton area would turn their coats inside out before going into the woods. This was to protect them from the fairies. Mrs [E] who told me of this, lived in this area as a school girl before going to university. Her father was the medical doctor for the area.

Young, Judy. 1988. MUNFLA FSC, 91-348/24.

In the area where I lived on Bell Island, there was this neighbour who we thought was a "fairy." He was really creepy, he did all kinds of tricks, and we were all afraid of him. Even his youngest son and daughter, who were my friends, wondered if he really was a fairy. One thing that must be mentioned is that we live close to the woods. My house is in front, then it's the neighhbour's

house, then on back of that is the woods. Anyway, the reason why we thought he was a fairy was that at night, he would take his binoculars and look towards the woods, as if expecting to see something. Then he would leave the house and go out in the woods. Nobody knew why he would go out there or what he was doing. We were all too afraid to ask. With that, and the way he looked and the tricks he did, made him look creepy and we were all afraid of him. Although I don't believe in this today, he still gives me the creeps when I see him.

Burke, Brian. 1992. MUNFLA FSC, 95-439/2.

This is a story about the ferries [sic], often discussed in Newfoundland Tales. He stated:

"One night when my mother was young, she heard a knock at the door. When she answered all she saw was a pair of legs, she looked up and saw the ferry which appeared to be 12 feet tall and dressed in a black suit. She slammed the door and when she opened it again, the ferry was gone. This all occurred on the dark stormy night of Hallow's Eve. Another time she was out near Freshwater with friends, when they saw a white, glowing box. They followed it and watched it disappear over the side of the cliff. This is how fairies [sic] work, they appear in many forms."

Burke, Brian. 1992. MUNFLA FSC, 95-439/5.

This is about the Devil's Rock in Carbonear. "It occurred long ago in Carbonear. It was a meeting between a man and the Devil. It was near a large rock. They argued about the taking of the man's soul. During this argument the man slammed his hand on the rock, followed by the Devil slamming his huff [sic, meaning "hoof"] into the rock. Both impressions were burned into the stone. To this day, the man was never seen or heard from again, and both impressions are still in the rock.

Burke, Brian. 1992. MUNFLA FSC, 95-439/7.

Everyone gathered in a group around the center of a field. In the middle of the group one of the officers began to sing the following song:

"Beware! Beware! Beware the humming queerrr!
Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm, Hmm Hmm Hmm
Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm, Hmm Hmm, Hmm Hmm."

Then the next verse began:

"Beware! Beware! Beware the whistling queer!"
Whistle the same as the Hmm.

This continued with 3 more verses, with different sounds and then it ended. The group of us consisted of 10 people from our hut, Bell Island group. We all used to sing the song everywhere we would go after hearing that song.

Sharpe-Taylor, Christine. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 95-511/2.

One time [HB] was out and he was twisting his mouth up making fun at another man whoes [sic] face was twisted, I really don't know why his face was twisted, and anyway later that night

[HB's] face twisted the same way. Some people say that the fairies did it to him to get him back for poking fun at the old man. Even to this day his face is still a little twisted.

Connors, Rob. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-78/10.

My friends and I were having a discussion one day about a particular man in our community. Apparently the man is homosexual and has been seen several times with other gay men. However, nobody seems to know for sure if he is gay or not. So as the conversation went on I said to [my informant], who was not saying much about the issue, do you think [J] is really a queer. [My informant] looked at me with a straight face and said "No, I don't think [J] is queer, he's [sic] boyfriend is." We all busted a gut laughing.

Harris, Tracy. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-42/11–12.

Supernatural narrative: The fairies.

My mother [...] told me a story about the fairies. I do not know to this day if it is true or if she just told it to me so I would not wander off at night.

She said that one day she went berry picking up in the woods across the tracks in front of her parents house, a place she usually went every year for berries. However, this particular day that she went berry picking, something strange happened to her. When she started heading back home for supper on the same route she always took, she would end up right back to where she started. After three attempts, my mother started to get really scared so she began running the route. It was not until the fifth attempt that my mother managed to get out of the woods. When she told her father what happened, he told her that the fairies had her. According to her father, the fairies are invisible creatures that grab hold of you before dark, and play with your mind making you disoriented. Then they get bored with you and eventually let you go.

I can remember being very scared after she told me this story, and for a long time after that I would not go anywhere by myself.

Mackey, Charlene. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-48/11.

Mrs. [S] (Nan's mom) My Nan always use [sic] to tell my Nan (grandmother [M]) to put a piece of bread underneath her children's pillows. This was so the fairy's [sic] would eat the bread and not steal the children while they were sleeping.

Nan [M] also told me that if you are laughing and carrying on, that you would be wailing before the night is out.

Manuel, Gina. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-4/9.

When my father was younger his parents would tell him stories about fairies so he wouldn't wonder [sic] too far from home. He was told that if his sweater and socks were turned inside out the fairies wouldn't bother him. Therefore, safe from harm.

Brown, Joanne. 1996. 97-493/15.

Every year the Anglican Church choir would go up to Mint Brook camp which is outside of Gambo Nfld.The camp leader told the choir members that there was a bush outside the canbins [sic] that had fairies in it. The children/adults would walk through the bush in suspence [sic] and they swore that when they got to the middle of the bush something would grab their feet and hold them in their place for a few seconds. They looked down and saw no stick to hold them there so they explained it to be fairies. I don't think the camp leaders said this to scare the members it was just a legend that was passed down to them. The girl who told me this never went threw [sic] the bush because she was too scared.

Fudge, Lloyd. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-496/3.

It was told to me that over the years fishermen had been catching mermaids in their nets. They were seen by many fishreman [sic] but as they were considered bad luck to keep they were always released.

Fudge, Lloyd. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-496/4.

She would tell us not to go in the woods without having a piece of bread in our pocket. If we met a fairy then we would have to give it the bread so it wouldn't carry us away. There is still an older man in St. Jacques who firmly believes and who is said to have seen fairies and who will not go in the woods alone without taking a piece of bread.

Fudge, Lloyd. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-496/5.

If you went in the woods and met fairies they would take you and put you in a daze and try and tow you into the water. The only way you could break the daze was to call the person's name backwards repeatedly. She reported that such an incident had happened with her aunt.

Mugford, Heather. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-503/5.

While listening to a couple of elders talk, I found what they were saying to be interesting. They were discussing the disappearance of a man many years ago. They said that he followed the fairies into the woods. They said that once you done this that you would never return because once you followed them, you became one of them, and no longer had a desire to return to your family. This is what was told to anybody who never again heard from their loved ones, who vanished in the woods.

Mugford, Heather. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-503/6.

Earlier this year my sister was talking [to] a friends grand-mother about an assignment she was doing on fairy. Mrs. Pinhorn said that when a baby was born with something wrong with it, that the fairies came while the mother was pregnant and the changelings took over the healthy baby's body, and took the health so to keep the fairies tribe alive.

Newhook, Steve. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-504/16.

A folk legend of Paradise, Placentia Bay was that of the fairies who lived in the woods and fields. It was told by mother's grandfather who cautioned her at night not to go out for if the fairies got you they would "take you away." Her grandparents were superstitous [sic] but it is uncertain if the story was believed by the Grand parents or only used to keep her near at night.

Reid, Charlotte. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-506/12.

It was believed that if you kept a penny in your shoe, the fairies would stay away.

Rixon, Wanda. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-507/17.

My mother recalls an unbelievable story about the famous fairies of Foxtrap. Her and her friends often played in the woods next to their homes and got lost. Mom claims that every time she heard nan call her for supper the famous Foxtrap fairies would come and guide them out of the woods. Today, people claim these fairies are still roaming Foxtrap, However the younger generations feel its simply a figment of their imaginations.

Rose, Anthony. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-508/8.

Backcove Fairy

In St. Jacques there is a story about the backcove fairy. If you are out to backcove by yourself or late at night it is said that you should carry a piece of homemade bread in your pocket or you will be lead [sic] away by the whistling of the fairy, because it is said to put you in a trance.

We passed on this story because it has been passed down to generation to generation. My wife had it told to her by her grandmother and her grandmother told her.

Rose, Nikki. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-509/9.

Supernatural Legends: (pixies)

You wouldn't let your kids go out after a certain hour because you were afraid the pixies would come out of the trees and steal them.

Sharpe, Renée. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-510/17.

At Pelly's Island, many of the older people have a strong belief in fairies. Years ago, people would wear their cloth's [sic] backwards to scare the fairies away. This would keep them safe from the fairies. At present, this practise is no longer carried on by the elderly in the community.

Toropainen, Tuija. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-514/5.

Fairies: Some people believed that if you'd get lost in the woods the fairies would come and get you. One could protect oneself by turning ones clothes inside out, or wear different pair of shoes or wear ones cap backwards.

Walsh, Cindy. 1996. MUNFLA FSC, 97-515/13.

"I was walking down to my mother's house around 10:00pm, it was Saint Patrick's day, anyway I heard someone scream at me, so, I turned around to see who it was. There was a little man about 3 feet tall laughing at me. Then, I started running, he came beside me (with his green clothes on) and laughed again and ran ahead of me a crawled under a log." I told my mother what I had seen. Then, she told me that fisherman [sic] have saw the same thing. Only, the 3 foot green clothes man is sitting in there [sic] boats on Saint Patrick's day. People believe this story about the 3 foot man because they can't explain it.