

AN OCCUPATIONAL FOLKLIFE STUDY OF WOMEN'S HOUSEWORK IN ST.
LUNAIRE-GRIQUET, NEWFOUNDLAND

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet, Newfoundland and Labrador, through the lens of occupational folklife and feminist folkloristics. I argue that despite many social, technological, and economic changes, women consistently remain responsible for housework in the community. In examining the women's contemporary cleaning using McCarl's concept of canon of work technique, I trace the "work" of housework both spatially and temporally, documenting the daily, weekly, and annual/semi-annual tasks in each room. I argue that housework requires a complex system of conceptual planning that dictates what I call the hierarchy of chore importance. I also examine personal experience narratives women tell about their housework, arguing that their narratives position women within a framework of gendered labor, maintain social relationships, and contribute to their sense of self and occupational identity. I end by presenting my concept of the Clean Continuum, a useful tool in conceptualizing the positive and negative connotations evidenced by their housework that get associated with women, and the greater implications for the community.

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the occupational folklife of women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet, Newfoundland. In particular, it queries the multi-faceted ways that women's mastery of, and attitudes toward, housework shapes both their sense of self and social position within the community. Similarly, this thesis examines the temporal and spatial considerations women must negotiate when completing their housework, ultimately considering how socially accepted ideas about cleanliness influence women's approach to their housework. Potential regional differences in housework tools, techniques, and attitudes make a wide-scale examination unrealistic. As such, this study is limited to the community of St. Lunaire-Griquet, a former fishing village of approximately 660 residents on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, Canada.

As a child growing up in St. Lunaire-Griquet, I recognized from an early age the importance placed on keeping a so-called clean house. Many of my earliest memories are of my mother, who worked full-time outside the home, spending her Saturday mornings sweeping, mopping, scrubbing, cooking, and caring for three small children. My father, though he worked seasonally and was often unemployed in the winter months, contributed very little to the cleaning chores. I was introduced to these as being a woman's responsibility when I turned eleven or twelve and was given my first chores. Although my mother willingly fulfilled gender role expectations, I was also keenly aware that housework was something that she despised. That a considerable portion of her precious free time in the week was spent completing unpaid work she did not enjoy but nonetheless felt she had to do suggests that housework can offer important insights about women's work and, in particular, unpaid domestic work. This study, then, analyzes

housework from an occupational folklife perspective. Relying on analyses of women's folklore and occupational folklore—two sub-genres of folklore that offer a complex understanding of housework—my goal is to draw attention to women's housework as a rich area of analysis in women's lives. The central research questions I seek to answer in this thesis are: How do women learn to clean? When do they clean and how do they prioritize individual tasks? How do established routines/practices change and adapt over a woman's life cycle? In St. Lunaire-Griquet, what constitutes a clean home? Further, why is it important to keep a clean home? Finally, how does a woman's mastery of housework—as evidenced through the presentation of a clean home—affect the dynamic and complex interplay between community values and commonly held expectations and assessments of particular women?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Occupational Folklore

The field of occupational folklife was born out of folklorists' move away from the collection of artifacts and texts—research goals that had come to define the field until the mid-twentieth century—to identifying the ways people and groups create, organize, learn, and share folklore (Sims and Stephens 2011, 24-25). As folklorists began moving away from collecting and towards interpreting texts, they began to question the relationships people had to the folklore texts, as well as how cultural groups use folklore to shape and maintain their identity. The folklife studies movement identified that there were other forms of expressive culture beyond the oral genres, which had dominated the field. This movement towards studies of folklife culture, which involves, as Don Yoder explains, “the analysis of a folk culture in its entirety” (1963, 25), gained popularity through the

second half of the twentieth century. Yoder's work, largely focusing on the Pennsylvania Dutch, was complemented by the burgeoning sub-group of folklife studies that had as its goal the orientation "toward holistic studies of culture regionally delimited and toward 'life,' the life of the society under study and of the individual within that society" (Yoder 1990, 45).

This is not to say that folklorists had ignored the workplace up to this point. Rather, the earliest scholars interested in occupational folklife were interested in collecting oral folklore such as the ballads sung and stories told by those (most often men) working in occupations of extreme conditions with an element of danger and adventure. The earliest works of John Lomax (1938) and George Korson (1927), whose collections of cowboy and coal miner ballads, respectively, offered glimpses into the working lives of the folk, were foundational studies that scholars interested in occupational folklife studies would later return to. Yet the sub-genre lacked a theoretical framework throughout the early twentieth century. Scholars in the late 1960s and early 1970s had begun to argue that workplaces, and particularly industrial and non-traditional workplaces, were sites of expressive culture.

One of the first texts to offer a comprehensive definitional and theoretical framework of occupational folklife was *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*. Edited by Robert H. Byington, this 1978 text brought together key scholars to establish occupational folklife as a rich and varied pursuit of folklore study. According to Archie Green, "The factory, as a place, is an appropriate folkloric field, and ... work, as process, is a field within which folklore emerges and is altered" (1972, 238). The concept of work as a dynamic process shaped many ensuing studies that

offered folklorists a useful framework by which to study occupations. Rather than seeking merely to collect oral folklore in the workplace, folklorists turned towards understanding how occupational groups understood their workplace identities. With the turn to folklife studies came occupational studies that considered the complex interplay between work process and lore. In addition to Green, ethnographic fieldwork and folkloristic methodologies used in Robert McCarl's PhD research on the occupational folklife of New Jersey firefighters, and Betty Messenger's study of industrial linen production in Northern Ireland continued to shift focus towards what McCarl defined as "the complex of techniques, customs, and modes of expressive behavior which characterize a particular work group" (1978, 3).

The burgeoning literature, however, focused almost exclusively on male-dominated workplaces. Richard Dorson (1981), for example, was interested in the folklore of the heavily industrialized Calumet Region of northwest Indiana, focusing primarily on male industrial workers. Similarly, Holtzberg-Call (1992), Lloyd & Mullen (1990) as well as Green (1972) contributed to the growing research on occupational folklife with analyses of largely male-dominated outdoor and industrial occupations. That these were the industries of interest and, further, that they were available to researchers is perhaps unsurprising, considering folklorists' prior presence within these work sites. In offering strategies to hopeful folklorists interested in occupational folklife in contemporary urban and industrial contexts, Byington warned that to gain access to a work site, the fieldworker must be conscious of management levels as well as how their presence will affect the workers (48-53). It is little wonder then that as the field was

developing, most interest was placed on the occupations folklorists may have had easier access to.

More recent studies have queried the complex interplay of gender and class within the workplace, offering nuanced understandings of the workplace as a site of possible cultural change, tension, and interpersonal behavior. In addition, these studies have used the ethnographic case study as the mode by which to understand workplace expressive culture. Influential studies such as Peter Narváez's examination of send off parties at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation continue to expand the scope of occupational folklife to examine the contradictory emotional system of intragroup relations (1990). Similarly, work by several students within Memorial University's Department of Folklore reflects a move towards non-traditional occupations and job sites as diverse areas of inquiry. For example, Cynthia Boyd wrote an article exploring the occupational folklife of female cab drivers in St. John's, Newfoundland (1997); John Bodner's master's thesis examined tree planting in Ontario (1998); Leone Nippard focused her master's research on salmon fishing guides in Labrador (2011); and Andrea Antal wrote her master's thesis on a female caterer and the ways that food is a powerful, gendered, fluid creation (2011). Heather Gillett studied male brickmakers in New Brunswick (2008). These studies not only bring attention to a diverse range of occupations, they offer new modes of thinking about the workplace as a site of contested identities and a multiplicity of meanings for employees. Not only must workers in the twenty-first century adapt to a changing workplace, they are increasingly part of a globalized economy. Current occupational folklife studies prioritize the workers' voices and narratives and use ethnography to address today's workplace.

My study of women's housework builds on this literature; it likewise contests some of what has been written about the workplace, namely the tendency of other scholars to focus on the work group. Women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet is most often done alone. Likewise, whereas workers in other many other occupations must leave home, housework is completed within one's own house. As such, some might question my inclusion of housework as occupational folklife. However, when analyzing the work patterns and routines women employ to clean their houses (explored further in Chapter Three), it is clear that the work of housework depends on what McCarl describes as the tools and techniques required to get the job done (1978). By integrating myself as the researcher into the work environment—at once worksite and home—I identified that housework requires consideration of time, energy, and familial relationships in order to successfully complete the work. Finally although the work may be completed individually and there is no “work group” as such, the narratives about housework explored in Chapter Four suggest that women's individual work culture and values are not confined to the home. In this way, the occupational folklife study of housework offers a unique understanding of how unpaid, solitary work contains patterns, tools, techniques, and expressive culture typical of other work environments.

2. Women's Folklore and Feminist Folkloristics

The second theoretical framework that this thesis draws on is feminist folkloristics. My documentation of women's housework and my examination of the women's lived experiences of their work align with feminist folkloristics' goal to draw attention to women's experiences. In this section, I briefly trace the scholarship on women's folklore and position my work within the literature.

Feminist folkloristics as a theoretical and methodological framework has its roots in second-wave feminism. As scholars began to draw attention to the lack of women's voices and experiences being included in the literature, as well as championing for women's rights, feminist folklorists followed suit. Claire Farrer's 1975 edited collection *Women and Folklore* was one of the first works to draw attention to the othering of women in folklore scholarship, questioning the role of folklorists in documenting women's expressive forms. As Farrer writes in her introduction, "Female expressive forms either fit the male mold or they are relegated to a non-legitimate, less-than-expressive category" (xvi) despite these forms being patterned and rule-governed. Farrer's volume included several essays from scholars who considered women's voices and lived experiences in their scholarship.

From the mid-1980s and early 1990s, feminist folklorists have problematized the "conscious and unconscious gender biases that pervade the discipline" (Hollis, Pershing, and Young, 1993, x; see also Tye and Greenhill, 1997). As Liz Locke writes in the introduction to the *Encyclopedia of Women's Folklore and Folklife*:

Despite often negative evaluations of women's culture by academics and in the social mainstream, the centrality of women is evident in folklore. Women's traditional and popular culture is found in, and pertains to, both public and private spheres of society, and is as diverse as the women who create and maintain it. Women's folklore is characterized by multiplicity of meaning, as evidenced in feminist coding, as well as ambivalence about and resistance to patriarchy. Some distinctive aspects of women's folklore include collaboration, assemblage from diverse elements, and recycling. Much feminist or women-centered scholarly research also has the latter qualities (2008, 1).

As such, the analysis of women's or feminist folklore is often a method of identifying the conscious and unconscious gender biases that both the researcher and those they study

may have about their folklore. It also purposely draws attention to women's experiences and the gendering of folklore. The multiple meanings implicated by women-centered texts continue to broaden our understanding of women's folklore, and, by extension, about the intersections of folklore and gender more broadly.

My work adopts Judith Levin's (1993) argument that housework, though largely neglected by folklorists, is complex and, when analyzed from a folkloristic perspective, represents a potentially rich and diverse area of scholarship. I explore women's domestic labor through linkages made to occupational folklife by scholars both within and outside the field of folklore. Diane Tye (2010), for example, analyzed her mother's role as a homemaker and minister's wife and argued her recipes were a part of her canon of work technique. I also look to update the work of scholars such as sociologist Meg Luxton (1980), whose in-depth study of generational variation in housework represents a foundational study, and sociologist Marjorie Devault, who studied women's work of caring and nurturing through their feeding the family (1991). This study builds on these analyses and draws connections to the perspectives, techniques, and approaches observed by other scholars in researching feminist folkloric topics. Yet within feminist folkloristics, women's domestic labour and housework has not been paid a great deal of attention. As such, I aim to bring attention to the dynamic, complex relationships women have to their housework as observed through an occupational folklife and feminist folkloristic lens.

Finally, this study also extends the work of a group of interdisciplinary scholars who have examined intersections of women's work with their social and cultural roles in Newfoundland and Labrador. Hilda Murray's (2010) exploration of women's work in

Elliston over their life cycles grew out of an MA in Folklore. Linda Dale (1982) argues that women in rural Newfoundland organized their homes to suit their tastes and need for work spaces, but that this arrangement was also influenced by social and economic factors. Willeen Keough (2012) explores the historical association of work ethic to constructions of womanhood in Newfoundland within the traditional fishery and how these concepts connect to their status and authority within fishing communities. Building on Barbara Neis (1993), Linda Cullum (1995; 2006), Marilyn Porter (1985; 1991), and Elke Dettmer (1995), who primarily focused on women's paid labor, my analysis of women's unpaid labor aims to expand understandings of women's occupations and their positions within rural communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

HOUSEWORK: WORKING DEFINITION

The literal implication of the word "housework" implies all work associated with the house. To some extent, I accepted this definition when approaching this study. Yet as I began exploring women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet, I realized that there is a difference in the end result when housework produces *something* for the household rather than the act of *maintenance*. To better illustrate the difference, consider the end result of preparing meat and potatoes for dinner versus the end result of cleaning up and washing the dishes after dinner. By literal definition, both these tasks are work contributing to the household and, as such, are housework. Yet I argue that the cultural and social implications of a woman's mastery of the former suggest meanings that differ from the latter. As such, I have limited my understanding of housework to maintenance; I include all household tasks that are completed within the house and involve the cleaning, tidying, or manual manipulation of restoring culturally defined acceptable levels of cleanliness

and order within the home. Thus while washing the dishes and tidying away the kitchen are included as housework in this study, meal preparation, childcare, and the outside purchasing of household goods are not included. This is also because those tasks are judged and held to a different standard than for cleaning. Thus, a woman in St. Lunaire-Griquet can be recognized as a good cook but as a poor housekeeper. Further, each of these assessments suggests different meanings and values.

Of course, when studying unpaid domestic labor/housework, one must acknowledge that women do not clean their houses without carefully negotiating all other aspects of their lives. Where necessary, I will consider how tasks which fall outside of the definition of housework, such as childcare and food preparation, impact the completion of housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

RESEARCH GOALS

Although, as noted above, there has been impressive work done in both occupational folklife and feminist folkloristics, little attention has been paid to women's unpaid domestic labor as a complex form of work requiring an intimate knowledge of tools and techniques. This thesis seeks to fill that gap in existing literature by acknowledging the housework women in St. Lunaire-Griquet do. My goals, then, are first to document housework as a form of occupational folklife from a feminist folkloristic perspective. Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying the women's canon of work technique, defined by McCarl as the body of informal knowledge needed to complete a job (1978). Secondly, I wish to draw attention to the gendered division of labor in St. Lunaire-Griquet, and rural Newfoundland and Labrador more broadly. Thirdly, I wish to examine how women exert control and agency over their homes

through their housework. Finally, I intend to explore how the presentation of a clean home influences community assessments of aspects of a woman's character such as her morality and work ethic that, by extension, are linked to community values such as industry and sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this study was comprised of two inter-linked parts. Over a period of six weeks in the summer of 2014, I returned and lived in St. Lunaire-Griquet where I both observed and participated in women's housework. I interviewed eighteen women comprising three generations, which made up a large portion of the study's research. As St. Lunaire-Griquet is my hometown, I was cognizant prior to starting my fieldwork that I would have to carefully balance what I already knew about housework, as a female former resident, and the information I was looking for in this study that I did not previously know. As well, the several years I spent away as a university student in the province's capital city 1200 km away created some distance between me and the women in the community who had watched me grow up. How, then, was I to gain their trust and respectfully learn as much as I could about their housework beliefs, rituals, and work technique?

My first task was identifying which women I would interview. My awareness that St. Lunaire-Griquet's women hold housework to a high standard and judge one another's competence meant that I did not want my interviewees to be publically identified. I did not want anyone to misunderstand my research intentions and think I would potentially gossip about the information I collected from them. Thus, I spent an afternoon with the local telephone directory and identified the primary family surnames in the community.

From there, I separated potential informants into three generational categories. These were, roughly, women in the following age ranges: (1) 20-35; (2) 35-60; and (3) 60 and older. I then telephoned everyone on the list and briefly explained who I was, that I was researching women's housework, and that I was interested in interviewing them. This introduction was often met, depending on how well I knew the woman, by either confusion about why I would want to spend precious time talking about housework of all things, or a joke playfully teasing about why I would think to ask for her help.

It is important to note that every woman I phoned agreed to being interviewed. My initial joy in this fact soon shifted when I realized just how difficult it would be to schedule interviews with certain women. I could appreciate that many of the women I spoke to had children and worked outside the home. For this reason, scheduling was sometimes an issue, and I was unable to interview some women who were willing simply because we could not reach a mutually agreeable time. Often, I was told how busy she was and asked to phone back at another time. Sometimes my request was met by, "Sure, but I am only free right now. How soon can you get here?" In total, I successfully interviewed eighteen women who have all agreed to their names being included in the study.

The interviews I conducted typically took place in the women's kitchens. I carried a small piece of paper with some prompting questions but generally referred to it only when I ran out of questions that arose from the conversation. I asked questions from three thematic categories I was most interested in. Each discussion of a woman's housework began with my asking about her earliest memories of housework. From there, the conversation would move through the woman's life and to her current housework

techniques, rituals, and beliefs. Finally, I would steer the conversation to the woman's more general attitudes about the community women's cleaning practices. I would ask: How has cleaning changed in your lifetime? Do you think women in the community place as much importance on cleaning now as they used to?

One of my final questions would always delicately attempt to steer the conversation to narratives about known bad housekeepers, or women rumored to have so-called dirty homes. This was perhaps the most difficult part of my interviews and the most challenging to negotiate. I did not want to make anyone uncomfortable or make her feel I was promoting negative gossip. Thus, if a woman answered yes when I asked if they knew of any women in the community that did not keep clean homes, I would wait until the interview was over and my recorder was shut off before bringing the subject up again. I gathered several interesting narratives in this way, which were then recorded in my field notes as soon as I left the women's houses. These particular accounts that offer perspective on how housework maintains the community's social structure are discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

The second portion of this study was to work side-by-side the community's women and document their cleaning techniques and processes. All eighteen women I interviewed agreed to me being present while they cleaned. When I returned for my second stint of fieldwork in August 2014, I called my informants to set a date but had great difficulty scheduling cleaning times. I could appreciate my presence as an intrusion for some women, as a task that would perhaps take just twenty minutes to complete would likely turn into a much longer event with me being there. Women who balance their housework with other responsibilities were reluctant to invest this substantial

amount of time, and thus I was never able to complete my participant-observation of their cleaning.

Additionally, I suspect many women did not feel fully comfortable with me observing them clean. This may be due to the personal, intimate nature of cleaning. I had to ask myself: would I want someone I know only as an acquaintance watch and document my cleaning of my family's so-called dirty bathtub? Agreeing to let a virtual stranger enter into such private matters must not be easy. Therefore, after a couple of attempts, I did not continue to pursue the women who had already provided me with much oral information during our interviews and instead, focused on what was available to me.

Fortunately, I was able to work with two non-family members and three family members to complete the valuable participant-observation portion of my research. As mentioned, I lived in the community for the duration of my research. For most of that time, I lived with my older sister Jennifer Carroll (Jenny). At the time, Jenny was working two jobs and finishing up a Diploma at the College of North Atlantic nearby in St. Anthony. As such, she was often exhausted in the evenings when she was not only responsible for the house, but for her three-and-a-half-year-old son. As Jenny and I caught up on each other's day, we often began completing housework tasks. On one occasion, we folded clothes together. On another, I swept the floor while she mopped. Although these occasions were not formally defined at the time as fieldwork, my experiences with my sister provided me with considerable insights. After all, at 25, her ability to negotiate her need for rest and leisure with her perceived need to be a good

mother and housekeeper is impressive. My work with Jenny offered me a firsthand introduction to the joys and frustrations implicit in housework.

I was also fortunate to work side-by-side with both my mother, Wanda Carroll, and my maternal grandmother, Violet Loder. During my fieldwork, both women worked outside the home five days a week, leaving just two precious days in the week for housework and leisure. I tried to spend as many of these days with Mom and Nan as I could. I asked them to pretend I had never participated in housework before and to teach me both what they were doing and why they chose to do it that particular way. This proved to be both entertaining and frustrating at times; my family members wanted to help me in my research pursuits but their comfort level with me being there meant they often completed their tasks so skillfully that it was difficult for me to fully document their skills.

Additionally, I worked side-by-side with two informants I had interviewed in my first research trip. Wendy Burden permitted me to document her cleaning of her family bathroom on a beautiful Saturday morning, answering my questions and allowing me to take photos. Similarly, Idella Hillier worked with me through the cleaning of an entire house. These experiences complemented my interviews tremendously and I am especially grateful to the patience of my informants during this project. Like my family members, both women had just one or two days off a week from paid labour, and their allowing me to join them was very appreciated.



Fig. 1.1: Map of St. Lunaire-Griquet

INFORMANT BIOGRAPHIES

It would be misleading to suggest that housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet is a uniformly approached job. The conversations, interviews, and other experiences I had during the course of my fieldwork revealed that while the outcomes of women's housework are often nearly the same as, if not identical, to those of her peers, the attitudes, beliefs, and emotions associated with continually (re)producing clean is experienced by different women in different ways. Where suitable and possible, I have

identified my informants within the text of this thesis to provide the reader with context and a greater sense of the complexities inherent in unpaid domestic labor.

Below are here brief biographical notes for each of these eighteen women who generously gave me their time and shared their expertise. They are offered alphabetically with information about their earliest years, marriage and children (if any), and current paid employment and lives.

1. Lois Burden

Lois was born in 1963 to parents Fred and Louise Bussey of Garden Cove, St. Lunaire-Griquet. The second child of three, Lois's earliest memory of housework is complaining that her older brother did not have cleaning chores because he was a boy. Her earliest chores were keeping her room clean and helping with dishes. Upon completion of high school, Lois moved to St. John's and successfully pursued a Bachelor of Education. She taught in Lodge Bay, Labrador, for several years and moved back to St. Lunaire-Griquet in 1998 when she married Neil Burden. Their house, located in St. Lunaire-Griquet, was built around that time. It has two floors and a finished basement. The main floor, which I was shown, includes a TV room, a dining room, bathroom, and kitchen. Lois currently works with the School Board. Although she and Neil do not have children of their own, they are especially close to their nieces and nephews. Lois enjoys spending her time off in her vegetable garden. She is also very interested in cooking and baking and published her first cookbook in 2013, *A Few Of My Favorite Things*.

2. Miranda Burden

Miranda was born June 22, 1978 to parents Rebecca and Herman Burden. Miranda is the third of four children. Her earliest memory of housework is watching her

grandmother clean her house. She remembers most vividly Mrs. Burden scrubbing the floor with a scrub brush and Sunlight soap. Miranda's mother and grandmother taught her to complete her earliest chore, making her bed, at age seven or eight. Miranda and her now-husband Melvin Burden had their first son when she was 16. They lived with Miranda's parents for several years while their son was young. They now live in St. Lunaire-Griquet with their son and Alexis, their five-year-old daughter. Their house was built from a pre-fabricated design in 2012 and is a modern, open-concept house with hardwood flooring throughout.

3. Wendy Burden

Wendy was born September 14, 1975 to parents Vianne and Ezra Saunders. At twelve years old, the family moved to St. Lunaire-Griquet where both her parents worked outside the home. Wendy is the second of three children. Her earliest memories of housework are washing dishes and tidying her room. At eighteen, Wendy married Kerry Burden of St. Lunaire-Griquet. She currently lives in St. Lunaire-Griquet with Kerry and their two children. Her house, a three-bedroom bungalow with a finished basement, overlooks St. Lunaire Harbour. Wendy works several days a week at the local post office, and works one day a week at Sears, operated at Burden's General Store, her father-in-law's business. In her spare time, Wendy is passionate about paper crafts. She runs a successful online business where she sells her products.

4. Louise Bussey

Louise was born November 6, 1943 to parents Phoebe (née Hedderson) and Jacob Hill of Gunner's Cove. Louise is the second youngest of fourteen children (eleven of whom survived to adulthood). Her earliest memory of housework was from six or seven

years old, and it is of washing dishes. Louise's mother helped her father with his fish, so all the children had to pitch in. She married Fred Bussey at 18 years old. They had three children together. Her son, Larry, no longer lives in the community. The eldest daughter, Lois, married and continues to live not far from her parents. Louise's younger daughter, Lynn, has Down Syndrome and continues to live an active life with her parents. Louise has a knack for sewing and, at one point, had her own business selling jackets. Today, the basement portion of her and Fred's house includes considerable space for her sewing activities.

5. Jennifer Carroll

My sister, Jennifer (Jenny) was born on July 6, 1989 to parents John and Wanda (née Loder) Carroll. She spent her earliest years living in Dark Tickle, part of Lower Griquet, until her family moved to St. Lunaire-Griquet in 2003. From an early age, Jenny had a keen interest in housework. As the oldest child in a family of four, she was given her first chore responsibilities at age 11 and 12. The successful completion of her chores allowed Jenny to spend time with friends and a small allowance. She first left home at 16 and moved in with her then-boyfriend, where she was responsible for housework. At the same time, she also helped her elderly grandmother with cleaning and tidying. At 21, Jenny had a son, Noah. At the time of my research, Jenny was a single mother living with Noah in a newly renovated, two-bedroom bungalow at White Cape Harbour.

6. Danalee Earle

Danalee was born in 1986 to parents Cynthia and Lloyd Earle. The oldest of three children, she took on her first chore responsibilities at 11 and 12. Her mother, who unfortunately passed away several years ago, was a very particular housekeeper and

taught Danalee how to complete cleaning tasks. At 18, Danalee was living with her younger sister and was responsible for the housework while her sister cared for Danalee's nephew. At the time of this research, Danalee's daughter, Bre, was 16 months old. Danalee, her partner Tom Humby, and Bre all live at White Cape Harbour. Tom works as a fisherman and is away from home five days of the week. Danalee also works outside the home in homecare work in addition to raising Bre and caring for her house.

7. Judy Earle

Judy was born October 28, 1968 to parents Bridgette (née Carney) and Freddy Bartlett. For the first several years of her life, she lived in the mostly Roman Catholic community called Fortune, several miles by boat from St. Lunaire-Griquet. She was one of eleven children. Her earliest memory of housework is from when she was seven or eight. She remembers the precise way that chairs were cleaned every Saturday morning. Upon completion of high school, Judy moved with her sister to Alberta, where she was employed in housekeeping at a hotel. She returned to St. Lunaire-Griquet at 21 and married Boyce Earle at 25. Judy and Boyce had two children, Gabrielle and Shannon. Judy was a stay-at-home-mother until her youngest child turned 12. Since then, she has been employed outside the home. Their house, located in St. Lunaire, was built by Boyce and has two bedrooms on the main floor and one in the finished basement. Currently, Judy works as a cashier at Hedderson's Store in Lower Griquet.

8. Idella Hillier

Idella was born March 17, 1968 in Baie Verte to parents Millie Collins and John Hurley. She moved to St. Lunaire- Griquet at age three. At age eight, she moved in with Madonna and Ern Pilgrim, the parents of her best friend, Lana. Idella's earliest memory

of housework is “doing it all.” At 14, she started babysitting and housecleaning. She married Jim Hillier at age 27 and their son, Dylan, was born in 1995. Their one-story house in Lower Griquet has two bedrooms with the master bedroom, which was added to the original design, being located off the porch entry way. Idella’s husband unfortunately passed away in 2012 and, since then, she has cleaned houses for community members. She also works seasonally at the local café at the Dark Tickle Shop in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

9. Mavis Hillier

Mavis was born July 9, 1958 to parents Mary and Lesley Snow, both of St. Lunaire-Griquet. Mavis was just eight years old when her father died, leaving her mother with nine children to care for. Her mother did the majority of the family’s housework, but Mavis still remembers the amount of cleaning done on Saturdays. Everything was moved and cleaned. Mavis left home for the first time during the summer at 15 years old and began working in the retail industry in Goose Bay. She married Tobias Hillier of St. Lunaire-Griquet at 25 and the couple has lived in Dark Tickle ever since. Their house, which originally belonged to Tobias’s parents, has been extensively renovated. All the flooring was replaced and several of the rooms were enlarged in what is today a three-bedroom bungalow. Although they did not have children of their own, Mavis and Tobias are very close to their nieces and nephews. Mavis is an active member of the Anglican Church and is the chair of the committee that oversees the Parish Hall in Dark Tickle. She worked in retail and, most recently, at the Heritage Shop at the National Historic Site in L’anse aux Meadows for several years. A severe allergy to chemical scents unfortunately forced Mavis to leave her job a couple of years ago.

10. Sybil Hillier

Sybil was born November 5, 1943 to parents Elma Bessey and Quilma Hedderson. Sybil's earliest memory of housework is learning from an early age that everyone was responsible for pitching in. At 12 years old, she had to quit school after her mother tragically passed away and she became responsible for caring for three sisters as well as cleaning and cooking. She lived with her family in Hay Cove until the age of 16 when she moved to nearby St. Anthony to work in the hospital, first as a maid and then as a nurse's aid. After two years, she left her position to marry Alec Hillier of St. Lunaire-Griquet. They lived with his parents until 1967 when they moved into their own house. Together they had four children. Mr. Hillier passed away several years ago and today Sybil lives in their home with her adult grandson. The house, a three-bedroom bungalow, has been renovated since it was first built, to make the bedrooms and kitchen bigger and to remove the carpet that used to be throughout the main part of the house.

11. Violet Loder

My grandmother Violet was born February 5, 1945 to parents Thomas and Stella Earle. She was the fourth of fifteen children, thirteen of whom survived to adulthood. Her earliest memory of housework is when she was about seven years old and having to help her mother with difficult chores such as scrubbing clothes on a scrub board. Violet married Arthur Loder at age 16 and moved in with him and his mother and father in Dark Tickle. They had four children that Violet stayed at home with until 1972, when she first began work on the fishing plant. She also worked in the boat with her husband cod fishing for several years prior to the 1992 Newfoundland cod moratorium. For the past fifteen years, she has worked as a Heritage Interpreter at Norstead, a living history village

in L'anse aux Meadows. Violet and her husband live in a two-bedroom bungalow with a finished basement in Dark Tickle.

12. Beverly Manuel

Beverly Manuel was born in 1976 to parents Allan and Beatrice (née Earle) Manuel. She is the youngest of five children. Her earliest years were spent in Dark Tickle, a part of Lower Griquet. Her earliest memories of housework were her mother's high standard of cleanliness. When she turned 10, she was first given chores such as dusting and making her own bed. Taught by her mother, Beverly learned a love of cleaning that served her well when she moved to Devon, Alberta at 21. She worked in housekeeping at a hotel and was admired by her co-workers and superiors for her attention to detail. Her daughter, Tynika, was born in 1996. Both Beverly and Tynika returned to St. Lunaire-Griquet in the early 2000s where they have lived ever since. Today, they live in Beverly's parents' home, a one-story home which has had all new flooring and had a ramp built on for Tynika, who uses a wheelchair.

13. Joyce Patey

Joyce was born November 30, 1934 to Alice and William Earle. The tenth of fourteen children, Joyce remembers her family being very close. Her earliest memory of housework is her not wanting to help with dishes when she was a child and her older sister complaining she was too lazy to help. After marrying her husband, Noah Patey, the young couple lived with Joyce's mother- and father-in-law for a while before building their home. Joyce had ten children, many of whom still live nearby in St. Lunaire-Griquet. Their house has had one major renovation. It is a mainly one-level house with three bedrooms. Framed photos of Joyce's extended family adorn walls and coffee tables,

and newcomers to her home are often greeted by the smell of fresh baked goods that Joyce enjoys making in her kitchen. Today, she continues to live in St. Lunaire-Griquet and remains an active community and church member.

14. Sadie Peyton

My Aunt Sadie, my father's sister, was born April 23, 1972 to parents William and Laura (née Byrne) Carroll. The family lived at Alcock's Point, an approximate twenty-minute walk by footpath from Dark Tickle. Due to the Carroll family being the sole household at Alcock's Point, it was not connected to electricity, and the family depended on a small generator when they needed electricity. This meant Sadie and her eight siblings were often responsible for hauling water from a nearby brook, where it was stored for family use. From an early age, Sadie was responsible for several chores around the busy house. At 15, she moved in with her boyfriend (now husband) and his parents at White Cape Harbour. Sadie's first son was born in 1990, and two years later she and Bud moved into their own home, which was extensively renovated and was previously owned by Bud's grandparents. Their second son was born in 2001. Sadie completed an Office Administration program several years ago and has worked outside the home since 2004.

15. Sheri-Lynn Peyton

Sheri-Lynn was born September 26, 1986 to parents Morgan and Ruby (née Taylor) Peyton. Her earliest memories of housework are when she first became a teenager and had chores like dishes and sweeping the floor. Sheri-Lynn has one younger brother, Matthew, who had different sorts of chores as they grew up, due to the difference in their gender. At 17, Sheri-Lynn had her first of now three children with her partner, Brian Bridger. Kobe, age 10, Kylie, age 5, and Kaden, a bright-eyed baby who was just 3

months old at the time of this research, keep Sheri-Lynn busy, especially when Brian, an offshore fisherman, works away.

16. Eileen Pilgrim

Eileen was born August 11, 1964 to parents Violet (née Hill) and Carl Hillier. She has one older sister. Eileen grew up in Dark Tickle. Her earliest memory of housework is at about nine or ten when she would help her mother dusting furniture and making beds. She left home at age 17 and moved to Toronto with her sister for a couple of years. The family started their own business with cabins in 1992. She married Shawn Pilgrim in 1985, and they have two sons. One of her sons currently works in Alberta, and the other is married with two young daughters and lives in St. Anthony. The family sold their business in 2011, and Eileen currently works seasonally at a local bed and breakfast. She and Shawn live in Griquet in a new open-concept house they built together in the 2000s.

17. Marshall Pilgrim

Marshall, or Marsha as she is often called, was born to parents Alice and William Earle on May 17, 1928. She was named after the (male) doctor who delivered her during a difficult birth. Her earliest memories of housework involve helping her mother, especially while the elder woman was pregnant. At around 9, Marsha began helping make bread for the family. She also remembers the amount of work involved in the spring of the year with scrubbing hooked mats by hand. Marsha married her first husband as a young woman and together they had twelve children. The family lived at White Cape Harbour for many years. After Mr. Pilgrim's death, Marsha remarried and lives with her husband, Lou, in Griquet. Together, Lou and Marsha have done several renovations to

their house, a three-bedroom bungalow. Floating floor and ceramic tiles go throughout the length of the house.

18. Renee Pilgrim

Renee was born October 30, 1982 to parents Sandra (Pilgrim) and Joseph Bartlett. She lived primarily with her maternal grandparents growing up and is the oldest of three children. Renee developed an enjoyment of housework at an early age. She began babysitting as a young teenager, and later in her teen years did some paid housework and spring cleaning for other community members. Renee currently works as a cashier at St. Anthony Pharmachoice and continues to live with her grandparents in Griquet. Their house is a renovated traditional Newfoundland-style saltbox house with the kitchen, dining, living room, and bathroom on the main floor and bedrooms upstairs. Renee spends much of her time with her active nephew, Cole. In addition, she is active in the Pentecostal Church.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study analyzes the multi-faceted meanings of housework in women's lives in the context of one Newfoundland community. Chapter Three focuses on the tasks and techniques women employ in their housework. In other words, it identifies their canon of work technique. Here, I consider how their housework is organized both spatially and temporally, and present a room-by-room analysis of the daily, weekly, and annual/semi-annual housework women do. I argue that this organizational patterning, complemented by women's cleaning skills, demonstrates a sophisticated mastery of housework that continually works towards an orderly, controlled, and cleaned house.

Chapter Four analyzes personal experience narratives about cleaning shared by the women I interviewed and argues that narrative is the tool by which St. Lunaire-Griquet women judge their and their peers' social positions. Here, I analyze their narratives within three inter-linked categories and examine what is implicated by each. These categories are narratives about learning housework for the first time, narratives about doing housework with/for other women, and narratives about so-called bad housekeepers. Together these narratives shape and re-shape what Santino (1983) and others have identified as occupational and personal identity.

Chapter Five offers discussion on the larger implications of what I call the "Clean Continuum," which is loosely the inter-linked set of positive and negative attributes associated with perceptions of clean and dirty. Here, I explore how this continuum is reinforced by the community's values and the extent to which women are expected to maintain clean homes as a way to maintain the community. I conclude by suggesting possible limitations to this study as well as future research necessary to our understanding of women's unpaid work in rural Newfoundland.

First, however, I provide an introduction to St. Lunaire-Griquet. In the next chapter, I offer a brief overview of the community's history and a general outline of its geographical divisions. I then review housework as women's work, positioning St. Lunaire-Griquet women's housework within its historical and cultural perspective.

CHAPTER TWO: GENDERED HOUSEWORK IN ST. LUNAIRE-GRIQUET

INTRODUCTION

When I began to share my research findings with my academic colleagues, it was essential to provide background information about St. Lunaire-Griquet's history and contemporary place in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. During one conversation, myself and several (female) graduate students in the Department of Folklore chatted about our mother's housework. As the only person present who was born and raised in rural Newfoundland, I was left with a sense that the cleaning done by my mother differed considerably from my friends' mothers. For one, several of these women paid other women—previously unknown—to do their housework. Often, their families had lived in areas that had electricity and indoor plumbing at least a couple of decades longer than St. Lunaire-Griquet. Finally, housework did not seem to be exclusively their mothers' responsibility and, further, these women did not seem to be held under community scrutiny for the level of cleanliness in their homes. Why do the experiences I recount about my mother's cleaning differ so notably from those of my non-Newfoundlander friends?

This chapter contextualizes St. Lunaire-Griquet and offers the reader a fragmentary understanding of the community's history, contemporary cultural and social fabric, an introduction to the people who live there, and how their work is gendered. I begin by tracing St. Lunaire-Griquet's relatively young history, placing particular attention on its employment history. From there, a clearer picture of the community's historical and contemporary gendering of labour is more easily drawn. As will be argued in several areas throughout this thesis, housework has been, and still is, women's work.

The assumption that housework is women's work, while not ideal for many women (and especially so for those that dislike the work, as does my mother), is rarely openly challenged in the community. By drawing on feminist literature that has chronicled, documented, and challenged women's unpaid labour in North America since the 1960s, I ultimately argue that the gendering of housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet as primarily women's responsibility has contributed to the complex, patterned, and organized rituals and routines the community's women continue to rely on today.

ST. LUNAIRE-GRIQUET: A BRIEF HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT

All the women interviewed for this study have lived the majority of their adult lives in St. Lunaire-Griquet. Located on Route 436 at the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula, the community is positioned approximately 20km south of the UNESCO World Heritage Site at L'anse aux Meadows and 30km north of the area's central hub at St. Anthony. Local historian Solomon Bussey writes, "St. Lunaire and Griquet were fished by the French for over three hundred years in the summertimes, until 1904 when they had to give up their right to fish on the French Shore" (1968, 1)¹. As Bussey notes, St. Lunaire-Griquet was located on the French Shore, which historian Sean Cadigan refers to as the portion of Newfoundland's coast from Cape Bonavista to Point Riche where French fishermen held fishing rights from as early as 1713 (2009, 56).

¹ Bussey's text was owned by many of my informants. I borrowed my copy for this thesis from Judy and Boyce Earle. To my knowledge, it is now out-of-print.

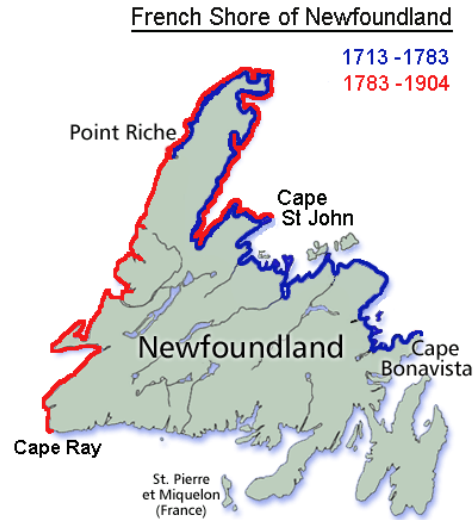


Fig. 2.1: French Shore of Newfoundland 1713-1904

The British and Irish ancestors of today's residents would not have settled in the area until after 1904, when the French were no longer fishing in the communities. According to Bussey, the first fishermen to settle permanently in the community were John and Thomas Patey; other founding settlers were the LeDrews, Busseys, Burdens, Comptons, Colbournes, Curlews, Humbys, Husseys and Saunders in St. Lunaire and Alcocks, Hilliers, Elms, Snows, Smiths, Manuels, Tuckers, Bridgers, Youngs, Tompsons, Hynes and Carrolls in Griquet (3, 16). These families would have come from other parts of Newfoundland such as Conception Bay and Trinity Bay; originally, either they or their parents emigrated from Ireland or England. Most of these family names remain in St. Lunaire and Griquet, which became amalgamated as one town in 1958.²

St. Lunaire-Griquet has never been a largely populated community. At its peak—roughly the period between 1968 through to the cod moratorium in 1992—there were about one thousand people in the community, peaking at twelve hundred people. Bussey

² Any time this thesis makes reference to St. Lunaire separately, it is referring to the vernacularly understood region within the community of St. Lunaire-Griquet; see the detailed community map in Figure 1.1.

notes that this population comprised about two hundred families; in 1935, the year the Pentecostal Church (today the most prominent church affiliation) moved into the community, Bussey notes the population “was one hundred eighty-seven persons in forty-three families. The Anglican church had eighteen of those families, the Methodist thirteen families, the Salvation Army seven families and the Roman Catholic had five families” (20). Geographical portions of the community, outlined on Figure 1.1 on page 16, were populated based largely on family and religious ties. Generally, the families in St. Lunaire and Upper Griquet were Methodists, Church of England, Salvation Army, and Pentecostal. At Lower Griquet, there were several Anglican and Roman Catholic families. Each of these denominations would have had their own church.

The community was settled as a fishing community, with the majority of the families involved in the cod fishery. There were several ideal fishing grounds accessible to fishermen who settled there, and plenty of land to build houses and outbuildings close to the water. Bussey lists at least sixteen fishing banks used by the local people throughout the community, grounds that would have been plentiful at the community’s start. In addition to the fishermen and their families (which comprised the majority of the community’s settlement pattern), several families operated merchant businesses, collecting fish processed by the fishing families and providing provisions and supplies.

HISTORY OF ST. LUNAIRE-GRIQUET EMPLOYMENT

This section provides an overview of St. Lunaire-Griquet’s employment history, with special emphasis placed on the gendered division of labor. From the community’s earliest days and through to today, there is a clear gender division in labour that impacts how housework is approached and completed.

Prior to 1965, St. Lunaire-Griquet was not connected by roads to any other communities, making travel difficult and isolation the norm. The main occupation was with the cod fishery, with families relying on a merchant structure whereby they were advanced fishing supplies prior to the fishing season and “squared up” at the end of the season. This squaring up involved them paying their debts and receiving credit for food and other necessary supplies over the winter season. Upon the bay thawing, cod traps would be set between late May and mid-June, occupying the fishermen until early September, the end of the season. As Bussey writes:

Putting away the fish was a job in which the women could get to work at as well. On a windy day the men would stay ashore and help by putting away as many as 40-50 quintals. In those years, all our fish would have to be lightly salted and dried in the sun for five or six days before we could sell it (49).

While it was primarily the men who fished for cod, women and children were also an integral part of the labour process once the boat crew returned to shore. On shore, women processed the fish, splitting and preparing it to be laid on flakes where it was salted and dried under their supervision. This process was not unique to St. Lunaire-Griquet and, indeed, many outports of the early twentieth century would have been characterized by this work system. Importantly, women’s involvement in this process granted them agency and authority over the family’s fishing enterprise. Much has been written about women’s involvement in shore work and its importance for the work process. As Willeen Keough writes, “Women saw themselves as full participants in a family enterprise in which they held an equal stake; the broader fishing community also recognized the value and dignity of their work and perceived them as essential, skilled workers in the fishery” (2012, 539). What this meant was that women’s role in the fishery was valued and essential. As

Marilyn Porter writes, many of them were the “skipper of the shore crew,” women with admirable responsibility for processing fish (1985). These scholars point out that although there was a sexual division of labour in Newfoundland, this did not necessarily mean women were without agency or power; in fact, women’s participation in the family fishery bestowed them with a great deal of power.

In St. Lunaire-Griquet, as in other Newfoundland communities, Confederation with Canada in 1949 introduced many changes in the fishery and industry in general and in turn impacted employment. Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland’s first premier, envisioned a modern, industrial Newfoundland freed from the family fishery. Many of the multi-faceted changes that would be introduced in St. Lunaire-Griquet—the introduction of roads in the mid to late 1960s, automobiles, electricity, and indoor plumbing—were part of the Smallwood government’s broader goal of modernization. As Cadigan writes, “First, he wanted to improve provincial living standards by increasing the population’s ability to consume private goods and public services. Second, he wanted to build an industrial economy that would support such expanded consumption” (242). This meant a decline of salt fish production—and thereby, women-led shore processing—in favor of fresh/frozen processing plants that employed women as wagedworkers. At the plants, women would have been introduced to factory, assembly-line style work but, more importantly, they would have received regular wages rather than working on credit. Cash wages meant access to modern goods that would have been more readily available at this time, provided their husbands’ earnings were sufficient. As Cadigan argues, “Federal fisheries policies assumed that such women worked merely to supplement the ‘real’ wage of male breadwinners” (ibid). As women began working in fish plants, men

continued to fish. The community's employment pattern began to mirror a large, industrialized model.

This work model largely continued until the early 1990s. Technological advances that allowed fishermen to catch cod more easily were not met by fishing quotas and policies that reflected the dwindling stocks. By 1992, the once plentiful cod were now nearly extinct, leading the federal government to establish a cod moratorium, which was “a series of moratoria on ground fisheries” (Cadigan, 280). This policy resulted in mass unemployment in St. Lunaire-Griquet and Newfoundland more generally. Programs put in place by the Federal Government through the 1990s—the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP), the Atlantic Groundfish Adjustment Program (AGAP), and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS)—allowed those economically displaced by the fishery to complete a high school level education and to retrain in other areas. In St. Lunaire-Griquet, The Fishermen's Center, which was administered by the Food, Fisheries and Allied Workers Union (FFAW), offered Adult Basic Education. Upon receiving their GED, some of those people then retrained in other areas such as trades, tourism, and administration at the College of North Atlantic, Memorial University, Academy Canada, and other post-secondary institutions.

Fortunately for St. Lunaire-Griquet, the designation of nearby L'anse aux Meadows as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978 allowed community members to expand into the tourism industry. While some became employed in the spin-off industries of hospitality and restaurants, others worked at the National Historic Site or at Norstead, a living history village opened in 2000. My grandmother, Violet Loder, was one of two dozen local residents retrained as a Heritage Interpreter at the College of the North

Atlantic as part of the TAGS program. These students were trained in Norse history and culture with employment at Norstead the goal. Violet began working at Norstead in 2000 and continues to do so seasonally today.

Other local business people adapted to the collapse of the fishery. Fish merchant Graham Burden continues to operate a successful multi-venture business. Although he has now mostly retired, his family continues to run a successful business in St. Lunaire-Griquet, called Burden's General Store, as well as an ice plant in Garden Cove and a trucking business. At peak season, they employ between fifty to eighty people. Gwen Knudsen, the daughter of former fish merchant Ford Elms, and her husband, Steve Knudsen, took over Ford's business in St. Lunaire-Griquet. In the 1990s, they also took over Lewis Elms' (Gwen's uncle) business in St. Lunaire-Griquet and ran it as a grocery store until the late 1990s. Eventually, the business became The Dark Tickle Company, a manufacturer of products made from local berries. The Dark Tickle Company purchases from local berry pickers and, at its peak, employs about ten seasonal workers. Finally, Francis Hedderson ran a convenience store in Lower Griquet in the mid-1970s. His son, Terry, purchased the business in the early 2000s and continues to operate it today. Terry also owns a seasonal restaurant, The Daily Catch, in St. Lunaire-Griquet. At peak, he employs about ten people.

Some of those residents who do not work in the community are employed at the near-by service hub at St. Anthony. In addition to the hospital—a major employer in the area—St. Anthony has several fast food, retail, and service businesses. Others, like my mother, who works with Service Canada, are government employees. Finally, some residents continue to work in the seafood industry at the shrimp processing plant in St.

Anthony or in offshore fishing enterprises. The 2006 Canadian Census indicates that the community's median income was \$47,718 (Statistics Canada 2006).

Of course, this description of employment breakdown does not account for those who commute outside the area and/or province to work, or those who rely on social assistance. Several men and women in the community commute to Alberta to work. In this study, several women moved away from home at one time to find employment. With the exception of one (Eileen Pilgrim, who still occasionally spends time working in Alberta), all participants now live in the community year-round. Of those participants who are not yet retired, all but three women work outside the home. Their labour breakdown is as follows:

Type of Employment	Number of Women
Healthcare related work	3
Tourism work	3
Service and Education sector (e.g. cashier, administrative work)	5
Retired	4
Not employed outside the home	3

Fig. 2.2: Women's Labour Breakdown in St. Lunaire-Griquet

In its approximately one-hundred-year history, employment in St. Lunaire-Griquet has changed drastically. Settled primarily as a fishing community, the majority of its residents were employed in the fishing industry, first in the family fishery and later processing fish in fish plants. The 1992 cod moratorium introduced many changes in the community's industry, with the remaining residents largely having diversified their employment in the tourism industry.

ST. LUNAIRE-GRIQUET BUILT LANDSCAPE

To provide the reader with an understanding of the community's built landscape, and particularly the houses women clean, this section outlines the basic types of dwellings found in the community as well as a tour through the community's important structures at present day.

Shane O'Dea characterizes Newfoundland architecture by its "simplicity in style and survival in structure" (1983, 4). By this, he refers to a slow adaptation of newer house styles and a continuation of architectural features. Of their design, he writes: "Outport houses generally always have a center-hall plan, although the main door is seldom used ... The principal entry is through the back porch into the kitchen which, in most cases, was the most used room of the house" (ibid, 8). In St. Lunaire-Griquet's earliest houses, these characteristics were likely shared. However, as I soon discovered during my fieldwork, few old houses remain in St. Lunaire-Griquet. The salt box house, a common architectural dwelling found in Newfoundland architecture characterized by a two-storey, center hall and parlour plan with a flat roof, continues as the oldest house type in the community, but even these are few. Of the ones who remain, all have been extensively renovated to incorporate electricity, have larger room sizes, and are finished with new windows and vinyl siding. After the introduction of electricity and the availability of modern design features in the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of residents elected to build new houses. In many cases, it was cheaper and preferable to build a new house rather than undergo extensive renovations; this was the case for my grandparents, who built their current house in Dark Tickle in the 1970s. Their older home, originally my great-grandparent's, was poorly insulated, and so Pop Loder, with the help of other

local men, built a new house for his young family. Their house resembles traditional Newfoundland houses in that it has a center hall that leads to the kitchen. The living and dining rooms are to the right of the center hall and the four bedrooms and bathroom lie to the left. A stairwell off of the center hall leads to the finished basement, where Violet has a sewing room and the laundry and furnace are located.

Other houses, despite being newer dwellings, continue to reflect traditional patterns of spatial use. In Judy and Boyce Earle's house, built twenty-six years ago, I was intrigued to learn that they normally enter the house through a lower-level porch Boyce built onto the structure about fifteen years ago rather than through the original front door entryway that leads to the main house. Similarly, Sadie and Bud Peyton's house at White Cape Harbour, which they believe to date circa 1910-1920, had been extensively renovated prior to 1992 when they moved into the house. The two-storey saltbox house was jacked up, all new windows and vinyl siding were added, partitions for the inside spaces were moved, cupboards were added to the main floor kitchen, and a pantry was removed. Upstairs, the master bedroom was extended and a bathroom was added. A porch leading to the basement was added circa 2000-2010. Despite these extensive changes, the entryway to the house remains through the back porch and directly into the kitchen, a feature observed in many houses in St. Lunaire-Griquet that is traditional to Newfoundland vernacular dwellings (see O'Dea 1983; Kalman 2000).

Other dwellings in the community are wood framed with vinyl siding and modestly sized with two or three bedrooms. In 2011, there were approximately 250 dwellings (Statistics Canada 2012). Structurally, they most often model modern bungalow and ranch styles with an exterior, raised structure entry vernacularly called a

bridge. The 2006 Canadian Census values the average dwelling at \$64,949. Of my informants, Miranda and Melvin Burden's house was the newest. Built less than five years ago, it was designed from a book of plans and is larger than many other houses in the community. Nonetheless, as in other houses in the community, the entryway opens into the kitchen, which remains the central room of sociability in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

In addition to the physical nature of their houses, another factor influencing how women complete their housework is the number of people who live within the dwelling. I have organized my informants' living situations in the following table:

Living alone	Living alone with children	Living with partner/family but no children	Living with partner/family and children
-Idella Hillier	-Beverly Manuel (daughter age 17) -Jennifer Carroll (son age 4) -Sybil Hillier (lives with grown grandson)	-Lois Burden -Violet Loder -Marsha Pilgrim -Joyce Patey -Eileen Pilgrim -Renee Pilgrim (lives with grandparents) -Mavis Hillier -Judy Earle	-Miranda Burden -Louise Bussey (grown daughter lives with her and Louise's husband) -Sheri-Lynn Peyton -Danalee Earle -Sadie Peyton -Wendy Burden

Fig. 2.3: Informants' Living Arrangements

Several women who live alone with their partners have grown children who visit or have lived with them as adults. These are: Violet, Marsha, Joyce, Eileen, and Judy. These five women in particular offered an interesting perspective, as they have, for the most part, experienced living alone with their partners, then raising children, and living alone with their partners again. The changes in their housework as related to their life cycle will be considered in the next chapter.

Integrated with the community's dwellings are several businesses and community buildings. Although at one time there were up to five church buildings in St. Lunaire-

Griquet, today there remains the Roman Catholic Church in St. Lunaire, the Pentecostal Church in Upper Griquet, and the Anglican Church in Dark Tickle. Similarly, in addition to those businesses listed above (Hedderson's Store, The Daily Catch, Burden's General Store, and The Dark Tickle Shop), St. Brendan's Motel is located in St. Lunaire and Snow's Take Out is in Lower Griquet. Finally, the Post Office, Town Hall, and Fire Hall are located in St. Lunaire. These constitute the community's built environment and the women's work spaces.

WOMEN'S HOUSEWORK

The remainder of this chapter seeks to contextualize the nature of women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet within the community's history. In this way, I draw attention to the work tradition of women's housework as it has been developed and maintained today in terms of the routines and rituals to be explored in Chapter Three. I begin by discussing the history of housework in the community, using the experiences of the women I interviewed to generalize trends in women's housework that have persisted to today. In assessing women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet, it is important to point out that this work is today as deeply gendered as it ever was, despite the many technological and economic changes in the community. The daughters and granddaughters of the women who were engaged in the family fishery in years past are as responsible for housework as their mothers were.

In positioning housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet within the history of women's housework more broadly, it is important to point out that women's sole responsibility for housework grows out of the separation of the home and the production of goods that occurred after the Industrial Revolution. As Susan Strasser writes, "No static conception

of the function of housework in the economy will provide the theoretical basis for a clear historical picture” (1982, 4). Her research considers the Industrial Revolution as the historical factor that has constructed housework as women’s work. This is because, as she argues, whereas the household was a center for reproducing goods and services used by the family prior to the Industrial Revolution, upon the mass influx of factory work, these same goods and services were mass-produced, marketed, and ultimately separated from the home sphere. In turn, housewives, instead of participating in the productive work of making goods for the family, had to negotiate the family’s consumption. Importantly, these changes to the home and for housework arise from what Meg Luxton argues was not a need from within the household but rather “from the requirements and concerns of capitalist production” (1980, 118). Similarly, modernization changed the way women organized their family schedules and domestic work. As Strasser writes, “Households had to adapt to industrial workers’ new schedules; natural cycles of light and dark could not dictate routine when some family members lived by the clock” (5). Women were required to negotiate their housework responsibilities within their husband’s work schedules. This negotiation required “a set of priorities, sequences and time allocations” (Luxton, 118) that by and large continues today. As such, by the time St. Lunaire-Griquet was settled in the early twentieth century, the responsibility for housework would long have been women’s.

During St. Lunaire-Griquet’s early years (i.e. settlement in the early twentieth century through to Confederation in 1949), house cleaning was arduous and depended on intense physical labour. Building materials for houses would have been limited; indeed, many homes would have been constructed entirely from wood cut and prepared by the

male members of a family. Interior finishes that would later cut down on cleaning time, such as paint and linoleum flooring, would not have been available. This meant that dwelling structures would have been demanding to keep clean, especially since women relied on limited supplies available to maintain cleanliness. Women made their own cleaning soap out of seal fat, wood ashes and lye. Alternatively, Sunlight soap—small lemon-scented cakes of soap—would have been available for purchase by the turn of the twentieth century (Stephen 1991) and remained a popular cleaning product in the community until the late 1960s. In fact, Sunlight soap was one of the staple goods purchased. An overview of sales records from the Co-op grocery store in nearby St. Anthony lists Sunlight soap next to other staples such as molasses, sugar, and tea, indicative of its prominence in the local area (Patey 2013, 5). In addition to soap, women would have had access to scrubbing brushes, repurposed fabric torn into scrubbing rags, and a scrubbing board and washtub for laundry.

For those earliest women in the community, the fishery greatly affected the ordering of their housework tasks. Particularly for fishermen's wives who worked for many hours in the summer spreading and making fish, housework had to be negotiated within her husband's fishing, her role in the family fishery, and providing meals for the family while maintaining a clean house. Even the few women who did not participate in the fishery would have had to negotiate their housework according to their family structure and their husbands' work schedule.

In assessing the gendered division of labour in St. Lunaire-Griquet's earliest days, it is important to point out that while women were an integral part of the outdoor work of processing fish, berry picking, and tending to vegetable gardens, men by and large did

not have responsibilities inside the home. As such, housework was—and continues to be—understood primarily as women’s work. As Hilda Murray writes about the slower winter season in the Newfoundland community of Elliston, men “were mainly responsible for getting the year’s supply of firewood from the ‘country,’ whereas the women were extremely busy indoors with carding, spinning, knitting, sewing, mat hooking, etc. About the only job a man did indoors was the knitting of twine ... during the late winter or early spring” (2010, 45). Additionally, women in St. Lunaire-Griquet normally would not have helped cut firewood, nor would they have helped with the many preparations for the next year’s fishing season, such as boat building and repairs. Neither would most men have washed dishes, done laundry, or mopped. Both men and women understood that there was a distinction between women’s and men’s work.

During modernization in the late 1960s, women were by and large still responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of housework and meal preparation despite their having entered the work force at the fish plant. This may have meant a woman would work a twelve-hour night shift but still would have needed to do housework upon her return home, as was the case for my informant Violet Loder and for Sadie Peyton’s mother. Sadie remembers her mother returning to their house at the very end of Dark Tickle—a distance of over a kilometer from the nearest road—after working a long and physically demanding work shift:

I can remember her going out to the clothesline, even in the night. Like she used to get off in the evening and by the time she’d get all the clothes washed, it’d be dark. And that’s one scary thing that I didn’t like as a child was going out to the clothesline in the night and holding the flashlight up for Mother to help her pin the clothes on the line (Peyton 2014).

Considering fish plants were mainly open in summer, a time when the sun does not set until later in the evening, it is noteworthy that this woman would have done considerable physically demanding work for perhaps sixteen hours a day. Yet what is also striking is the role played by Sadie, a young child bravely shining light on her mother's housework. As one of the elder sisters in her large family of nine children, Sadie had several responsibilities to help her mother, consistent with other young girls in the community. At as young as nine and ten years old, female children would have been expected to help their mothers with housework and food preparation, such as bread making. The oldest female child, like Sadie, would have had the most responsibility, and as she would marry and move out, that responsibility would be passed to the next eldest daughter. Considering many families would have had up to twelve or fourteen children, having daughters was essential for a woman to be able to complete all her domestic work in addition to working outside the home. Sons would not have been responsible for the same chores as their sisters.

As electricity and indoor plumbing were introduced in the area in the late 1960s, cleaning began to change dramatically but the gendered divisions of household labour persisted. The introduction of electric washing machines meant clothes no longer needed to be washed by hand with a scrubbing board and washtub. Linoleum flooring and the mop decreased the time required to clean floors because women no longer needed to scrub their wooden floors with a scrubbing brush. There was also an increased availability of cleaning products, the most popular being Mr. Clean and Javex. Of course, every woman would not have adapted their housework to include these new materials. Many of my informants noted mothers or grandmothers who continued to insist on

scrubbing floors by hand with a scrub brush rather than a mop. Other women were skeptical that an electric machine could properly clean their clothes and instead continued to use their scrubbing boards. Nonetheless, as times changed, so too did houses and cleaning materials.

When considering modernization's impact on housework, the introduction of indoor plumbing is a fruitful area of study. As Rosemary Nearing writes:

By the end of World War I, almost every city house in Canada had running water and most had indoor bathrooms with toilet, sink, and bath. The urban housewife's tasks were changing accordingly. In the country, though, housewives still relied on kerosene lamps, wells—or streams and lakes—and the outdoor privy. The housekeeper's task in the city, it seemed, had never been easier. Yet rising expectations and larger houses kept cleaning tasks at the centre of the housewife's life. Cleanliness was still next to godliness in many a commentator's mind, and godliness was still important in twentieth-century Canada (2005, 100).

Due to most houses in St. Lunaire-Griquet not having indoor plumbing until the late 1960s, the changes to housework that urban housekeepers incorporated after the First World War would not have been available for at least fifty years. My oldest informants described their housework pre-indoor plumbing by emphasizing how essential water was for their work. A powerful example of water's centrality to housework is in laundry. Marsha Pilgrim recalls the work involved in her weekly wash as a young mother prior to indoor plumbing in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

I'd have to have the water first and rinse them, you know, the bad diapers, the ones that's really dirty. That was, that wouldn't so good. But that was a bit easier. Then, they'd come home from school and have to bring a barrel of water. We had a big old barrel I'd call a water barrel and fill it up every day (Pilgrim 2014).

To fill the barrel, either Marsha or her school-aged children would walk to their local water supply carrying a hoop frame with one bucket attached to either side. They would

carry the water back to the home and porch where the water barrel was stored. As such, when Marsha needed to do laundry, she would first have to ensure she had enough water, and then heat the water on the woodstove to rinse and soak the heavily soiled diapers, before finally moving to scrubbing the clothes itself. Of course, washing was just one portion of the work; the clothes would then need to be pinned out (i.e. attached to a clothesline using specifically designed clothespins) until dry, ironed, folded, and put away. None of this work would have been possible without the water barrel being adequately filled.

Marsha's description of her experience likewise emphasizes the intimate knowledge of the workspace (i.e. the house) a woman must have, as well as the advanced planning required in order to successfully complete her housework. Prior to her washday, Marsha would need to take account of several connected factors such as the amount of water she had, the weather, and her family's schedule for the day. Her experience of this chore is consistent with Murray's explanation of how the weekly wash was completed in Elliston, in which she argues: "Before a housewife could even begin a major chore like the weekly wash, she had to make proper preparations. First of all, she had to make sure she had lots of water on hand, and she might have to bring this from a distance of half a mile or more" (2010, 164). Water, the primary element required for most major chores (e.g. mopping, laundry, dishes) was incorporated in a woman's cognitive map of her housework. Before beginning any chore, she was required to skillfully prepare for what that chore requires.

My secondary purpose in including Marsha's narrativized experience as a young mother in St. Lunaire-Griquet is to draw attention to the many technological changes

women in the community have witnessed in their lives that have greatly affected their housework. When I asked Marsha what it was like when she first had access to running water, she laughed and replied, “Oh my, what a relief! I didn’t know what to do. You had to get used to it like? But to see that water come through the tap? Wonderful!” (Pilgrim 2014). Offering a beautiful image of a young mother watching water run through the tap for the first time in her life, Marsha helped me conceptualize the impact technological advancements have had on women’s lives in St. Lunaire-Griquet. Today, the community’s women likely take for granted the impact running water has on their housework, and yet, together with the introduction of electricity, these developments have drastically changed the approach and techniques to cleaning.

CONTEMPORARY HOUSEWORK AS GENDERED WORK

Today, women’s housework is almost unrecognizable as compared to previous generations. Cleaning and building materials have changed drastically, reducing both the time and the physical effort required to maintain homes. Other changes that have impacted housework is the general reduction in family size, the removal of wood furnaces as the main heat source, and the cessation of indoor smoking. An examination of the hundreds of cleaning products and tools available in the area can be quite overwhelming; in St. Lunaire-Griquet, as in many North American stores, women are able to purchase cleaners specifically designed for their soap scum, stainless steel, leather furniture, toilets, windows, mirrors, ovens, bathrooms, and kitchens. They can select from literally dozens of scented dish liquids, laundry detergents, fabric softeners, air fresheners, stain removers and multi-purpose cleaners. Still other women research non-chemical cleaners, relying on vinegar, baking soda, and bubble bath. Finally, they can

purchase microfiber cloths, so-called magic erasers, Swiffer sweepers, cleaning buckets, sponge mops, grout scrubbers, steel wool, and even toothbrushes for hard-to-reach areas. Relying on the commercialized availability of products to make their housework easier, women produce and re-produce clean homes. Yet despite the many changes in housework technology, one variable that has remained constant is the fervor with which many women engage in their housework. Importantly, continually producing clean is achieved by the work skills and routines that they learn at an early age. As will be noted in several parts of this thesis, the women interviewed for this paper all identified housework as being their responsibility and as such, it is work they complete on a regular basis.



Fig. 2.4: Cleaning Supplies at Burden's General Store

In St. Lunaire-Griquet, the contemporary gendering of housework is most obvious in examining the types of work done by men and women. Put simply, women are still responsible for indoor work and men are responsible for outdoor work. This broad statement, of course, does not account for gray areas of acceptable women's work in male outdoor spaces, and vice versa. The tending to flower gardens, for example, is an example of a predominantly female responsibility outside the home space. This simplistic binary, of course, must be clarified by noting that in some interviews, women noted they "help" with outdoor work (e.g. shoveling, mowing the lawn, handling firewood), and conversely, men "help" with indoor work (e.g. laundry, sweeping, dishes). However, that their work is described as "help" is telling, and implies the primary responsibility for the work is gendered. Additionally, there is a clear distinction between what is housework and what is outdoor work. Thus, when asked about the work their husbands do within the household, married women often responded similarly to Wendy Burden, a married mother of two teenage children:

[KC: Does [your husband] ever do any housework?]

No. He doesn't do a thing. Well, take out the garbage but that's all he still does. Well he does do wood, like bring in the firewood and just out around the door, mowing the lawn and stuff like that but other than that he doesn't (Burden 2014).

Here, the initial response was to immediately distinguish between the kinds of work done within the home and that done outside it. When defining the parameters of what housework means to her, Wendy considers only garbage removal as comparable to the kind of work she alone is responsible for. She indicates that although her husband does everything "out around the door," everything inside the house must be maintained and organized within her schedule. Even though she has asked him to become involved in

housework, Wendy's husband does not feel he is responsible for what he sees as women's work, especially considering he feels he maintains the outdoor work. This description reflects the gendering of home spaces in St. Lunaire-Griquet, typical for most households as well. Other scholars have noted similar gendered separations of indoor and outdoor work; Meg Luxton found that in the Northern Manitoba community of Flin Flon, women's responsibility for indoor work remained constant despite modernization (1980, 37). Similarly, although she found that men and children may help with the work, in no way did this replace women's responsibility (ibid, 142).

The following description provided by an unmarried woman in her early 20s reflects on the work done by her mother and father within their home. Prior to this comment, the young woman, who was not one of my listed informants, explained that her mother works full-time, Monday to Friday, while her father works seasonally in the seafood industry. When I asked if she remembers her father doing housework during the winter when he is unemployed, she replied that he never does because he considers it to be women's work and, as such, her mother's responsibility. Upon my prompting, she elaborates by offering:

Yeah Dad and Mom had specific roles that separated gender wise I think and he always did things outside and never inside. In the winter, he still cuts his own firewood, and he is the only person to shovel our driveway or mow the lawn. When he would do something inside like mop the floor, we would always be shocked and make foolish remarks like 'better get the camera.' He would only do it if it really needed to be done- not because it was helping out or it was the time of the week to do it. And he usually only did the area that required to be done like the kitchen and would leave the living room even though he already had a bucket of water (Generation III)³.

³ In addition to the eighteen women with whom I conducted in-depth interviews, I collected narratives from additional sources within the female community—former and current residents alike—of St. Lunaire-Griquet. Due to the sensitive nature of these particular narratives, names have been omitted but demographic information included for context.

This description offers an insightful critique on the gendered experience of housework. First, that this young woman's father doing housework inside the home is not typical and, further, perhaps worthy of ridicule or, at the very least, not met with much encouragement by his children. Second, it implies a perceived failure of the mother's responsibility; if the father mops the floor "only if it really needed to be done," and outside his wife's typical routine ("it was the time of the week to do it"), it suggests the dirty floor is not truly his responsibility. Later, the young woman noted that her father often complained when her mother had not completed housework, suggesting his mopping is a criticism. Finally, this narrative suggests the father's lack of intimate knowledge about the workspace. As the daughter aptly points out, he has a bucket of water but mops just the one area of floor—she implies the right way would have been to mop the entire area, as likely she or her mother would have done. In a way, his "incorrect" or insufficient effort mirrors Leslie Bella's discussion on men's gender roles during Christmas. She argues that women's work of preparing for Christmas—buying presents, planning and preparing meals, decorating, etc.—which she calls the "Christmas imperative" could be threatened by men, whereby "men agree to help, but try to simplify rituals so the work is lessened. To women, this can threaten the integrity of the whole Christmas enterprise" (1993, 35). Men may also approach cleaning tasks in the same way, working to achieve a different, lesser standard than women set for their homes. Several women who noted their partners may, at one time, have "attempted" cleaning the bathroom, but their less-than satisfactory end result led to women reassuming the complete responsibility for the task, alluded to this possibility.

The preceding narrator suggests that in the community, gender influences how housework is approached. Her comment is supported by every interview I conducted; of the eighteen women I worked with, seventeen of them assume complete responsibility for the housework in their home. The other woman, in her early 30s, is unmarried and lives with her grandparents. She indicated that while she does a great deal of housework, her grandmother is mainly responsible. This means that women are in charge of the planning and preparing for the work and assume the ultimate responsibility for it to be completed. That women assume responsibility does not necessarily mean the complete exclusion of men from their housework; a third of the women indicated that their partners/husbands “help” with housework under their ultimate authority. Sadie Peyton, for example, who works full-time outside the home, noted that while her husband would not voluntarily assume the responsibility, she is able to telephone home to him on her lunch break and, upon her asking, assume he will willingly begin the laundry, providing she has all the required preliminary work complete (e.g. sufficient supplies and the laundry is sorted into her preferred loads). As she says:

KC: He helps out a bit, I guess, at home?

SP: Oh yeah, he do. He does most of the cooking. I hardly know how to cook anymore [laughs] and if there’s any dishes in the sink throughout the day, he’ll wash them up, have them washed up before I come home from work. And the same thing with laundry. If I tell him to put in a load of laundry for me, as long as I have it sorted, he’s fine. He can go and throw it in, throw it in the dryer or whatever (Peyton 2014).

The distinction between “help” and “ultimately responsible” characterize the gendered experience of housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

As can be imagined, a major consideration for successfully completing one’s chores is the time required for each task. For the women in St. Lunaire-Griquet I

interviewed, even when they admitted housework was not enjoyable work, they rarely opposed their status as the primary housekeeper in their house. This suggests a complex understanding of the “duty” of housework versus the need for leisure and, in particular, how housework tasks must be structured according to an intimate understanding of the interplay between each room’s cleanliness importance and the amount of time spent completing those tasks.

Defining parameters around concepts such as those suggested by terms like “housework” and “women’s work” is problematic because that work is often variable, depending on many intersecting facets of a family’s life. As Marjorie DeVault argues, that we lack language adequate for talking about women’s experiences is unsurprising given the priority with which men’s experiences are rooted in culture (1997, 5). She suggests, for example, that our understanding of the terms work and leisure “emerge from the kind of paid labor that has become typical for men in Western industrial societies” (5). In talking about housework, then, it is important to consider the various tasks that intersect with many aspects of a woman’s life. Additionally, we must also recognize that much of the work is literally invisible, in that it includes the preparation and advanced planning required for the work to be done successfully, as evidenced by Marsha’s early experiences doing housework without indoor plumbing. Today, women do not have to consciously think about acquiring the necessary water for their work⁴, but there is still considerable preparation required for their work. Without proper planning that ensures she has sufficient laundry detergent, for example, a woman will not be able to do her

⁴ Indeed, the responsibility for ensuring water is available has shifted to the municipal level in St. Lunaire-Griquet. In considering the shifts in the division of labor, it is remarkable that in such a short period of time, such work has shifted entirely from women’s unpaid work to the mandated, publically funded municipality. Issues with water availability are now almost entirely controlled by male public workers.

family's laundry. As such, women must continually take note of the spaces within the home where her work takes place and notice what needs to be done (e.g. the purchasing of products) prior to the work starting. This planning, too, is gendered work and is reflective of the complex relationship women have to their homes that are spaces of both work and leisure. Ultimately, the work process suggests the experience of the home differs from family member to family member. Those who do not partake in housework (e.g. children, husbands) are not required to negotiate their leisure time in the house with their housework responsibilities (though they may negotiate it with other household tasks that are not cleaning related).

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the intersecting patterns of social relations inherent in housework. As sociologist Scott Coltrane argues, "Housework cannot be understood without realizing how it is related to gender, household structure, family interaction, and the operation of both formal and informal market economies" (2000, 1209). Offering multi-faceted, macro influences on the way housework is situated within culture, Coltrane rightly suggests that a family's housework is contextualized within a complex system. A decade later, Coltrane added to his previous work by examining gender equality, offering insight "about how housework is related to systems of gender inequality and suggest[ing] some ways to conceptualize micro-macro links" (2010, 793). Here, he argues that by recognizing all the intersecting influences on how housework is organized and completed—and particularly how these intersections relate to gender inequality—we may identify how individual, micro practices contribute more broadly to overarching social patterns. In addition, it is important to point out that not all women experience housework in the same way. As Jane Collins and Martha Gimenez

write, “How much domestic work women do, and what kind, depends on their level of income and on their social class” (1990, ix). I believe this is partly why studying St. Lunaire-Griquet offers an interesting perspective on the occupational folklife of women’s housework. With notable exceptions, in a community with income levels that are more consistently uniform than not, the majority of women are of the same social class. As such, the patterns of strategies, routines, and rituals developed to do housework are approached in similar ways. Further, analyses of women’s housework are complemented by ethnography and by understanding women’s lived experiences of their work. In this way, we can examine how housework re-produces gender and creates meaning for those who do it. By closely examining the tools and techniques women use to clean their homes and the ways housework contributes to their conceptualizations of womanhood, we can comment more broadly on gender performance and, by extension, perceptions of gender (in)equality. The ways in which women do this comprise their canon of work technique, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: DAILY, WEEKLY, AND SEMI-ANNUAL HOUSEWORK: ORGANIZATIONAL CYCLE OF IMPORTANCE

INTRODUCTION

Houses in St. Lunaire-Griquet are a fascinating locale for the study of gendered space and work. While some of a woman's time within the home involves her enjoying leisure time, hobbies, and sociability, much of a woman's time is dedicated to housework. In making the transitional switch from home as place of rest to home as workplace, women become workers. Whereas in other professions outside the home where the transition from self to employee is more pronounced, in the home space, women's conceptions of their identity as self and worker are constantly in flux. The spaces throughout the house continually shift from static spaces to work spaces. Cleaning is a transformative act that initiates that shift. This chapter focuses on the routines, scheduling, and techniques associated with women's housework. It considers when and how women clean. Examining the daily, weekly, and semi-annual/annual chores that women do, I ask: How do women conceptually organize their cleaning? In what ways do they develop a hierarchy of chores that dictates what gets cleaned and how regularly? What comprises their canon of work technique?

I frame this chapter using Robert McCarl's concept of canon of work technique. As McCarl writes: "Each occupation demands an ability to do something ... In each case, the worker must make decisions and manipulate objects to produce the desired result and it is in the manner and appropriateness of the manipulation (its technique) that the occupational network is born" (1978, 147). Here, an emphasis is placed on the manual techniques and movements that a worker relies on in completing the job. In addition,

work technique includes shortcuts or “tricks” that make the job easier and more efficient. These may be personally learned on the job or shared between workers and are generally informally learned. McCarl’s concept of work technique considers solely the physical aspects of work. In this chapter, I expand that definition to include the conceptual planning of tasks. This is because unlike other jobs that may have supervision and planning of tasks by an employee with more seniority, in housework women are responsible for the completion of all the tasks and so the conceptual, more mental task of organizing the work schedule is part of the canon of work technique. Archie Green writes: “Work is but one of the many human activities in which traditional symbols and codes are generated, altered, and perpetuated” (1978, 98). Interestingly, because most of the workplaces studied by folklorists have focused on non-domestic, social workplaces, the study of housework’s canon of work technique must take into consideration that women generally work alone. When Robert McCarl writes about technique as it is the “pattern of manipulations, actions, and rhythms which are the result of the interaction between an individual and his or her work environment and which are prescribed by the group and used as criteria for the determination of membership and status within it” (1978, 7), he clearly is considering social workplaces where there is a hierarchy of workers. In individual households, women are both worker and supervisor. Notable exceptions are during a young woman’s learning period and when women clean together, the resulting narratives of which are considered in the next chapter.

Of course, community and individual standards exist and dictate work behavior by pressuring women to maintain levels of cleanliness in the home. Here though, I focus on the individual household and consider the women who clean these spaces.

Part of what makes women in St. Lunaire-Griquet remarkable housekeepers is their ability to prioritize their cleaning tasks in relation to their time. During my fieldwork, I quickly learned that the most successful cleaners carefully organize their cleaning tasks according to a daily, weekly, monthly, and semi-annual/annual schedule. Some chores are performed more regularly, while others require less frequent effort and attention. The goal of cleaning during each temporal sub-section is to work towards and maintain the aesthetics of an orderly, disinfected, clean house. Similarly, individual rooms within the house require varying levels of work and cleaning depending on the calendar cycle and the frequency with which one or more members of the family use the room. As discussed in Chapter Two, women are the principal cleaners in their houses, meaning they constantly must observe and take note of the work that must be completed. As such, a woman's housework is organized both *spatially* and *temporally*. By spatially, I refer to the individual rooms within a house; housework is organized mainly by room and is often completed room-by-room, depending on the hierarchy of chore importance. The temporal concerns of housework correspond to the calendar cycle and, specifically, the length of time each chore requires. Together, these patterns intersect and contribute to a woman's success in keeping her house clean.

The remainder of this chapter considers the intersection of spatial and temporal cleaning patterns. I consider daily, weekly and semi-annual/annual chores and offer a room-by-room analysis of the women's work.

DAILY CLEANING

The work of daily cleaning is primarily concerned with the maintenance of a woman's established standard level of cleanliness that she constantly works towards. It is

what I would consider sustainable work in that it sustains the house's level of cleanliness until time is available for a more intense cleaning day, discussed later in this chapter. This means that, in terms of room aesthetics, tidying is the main goal. By this, I argue that whereas more elaborate cleaning produces cleaner rooms, the efforts exerted on a daily basis sustain the appearance of clean; while the area may be tidy, women recognize they are not working towards the same level of cleanliness as they are during the more elaborate cleaning sessions.

Although there was some variation in the amount of time and effort spent by different women, all of them indicated they do some cleaning every single day, from the minimum of forty-five minutes to an hour to a maximum of approximately three hours per day. Their reported cleaning time is significant because it indicates that not only are women expending considerable daily energy to clean their homes, but that for portions of their day they negotiate the house as home versus the house as workplace. This work requires women to remove and/or to tidy objects/materials within the home that have been deposited by other people. As Iris Marion Young argues, through housework "the homemaker acts to preserve the particular meaning that these objects have in the lives of these particular people" (2012, 191). In this way, daily cleaning continually brings the house back to a more or less static equilibrium where women maintain the family's meaningful objects and spaces.

Daily tasks differ from weekly chores in complexity, effort, and required time for completion. Yet they are essential chores that play a key role in negotiating the totality of a woman's workload. As such, a useful place to begin is with those chores essential to women's daily, lived experiences in St. Lunaire-Griquet. As identified in Chapter Two,

there is a commonality in how houses are laid out in the community; most houses, for example, have the following rooms: porch, kitchen/dining room, living room, bathroom, and bedroom(s). Here, I consider daily chores as they take place in each room, with particular attention to the techniques used, the planning required, and/or the aesthetic standard worked towards.

1. Bedroom

On a daily basis, the bedroom requires minimal cleaning but signals the beginning of the day's cleaning tasks. For most of the women, their cleaning day begins as soon as they wake in the morning. Prior even to leaving the bedroom to use the washroom, for example, Louise Bussey makes sure her bed is made. For women who consistently do this chore—most ardently Generation I and II women—it takes less than five minutes, depending on the condition of the bedclothes from the night before. If they are particularly tangled and rumpled, it will take longer to straighten them out and may require all the bedclothes being removed from the bed. Sometimes, the sheets and blankets can be pulled up and smoothed out without having to remove them from the bed. Beds have the following bedding: fitted and top sheet, (optional) warm blanket, top comforter/quilt, one or more pillows, one or more throw pillows, and (optional) a small blanket/quilt at the foot of the bed. In bed making, the goal is to end with bedclothes that are straight and unwrinkled. Skilled women know that this is easiest to achieve when all the bedclothes have been removed from the bed and each layer is made wrinkle-free prior to moving to the next. However, on a day-to-day basis, the presentation of the top comforter as unwrinkled and smooth can suffice for some women.

Other daily chores in the bedroom may consist of the removal of laundry and/or clothes from the bedroom floor or laundry basket, to be placed either in the laundry room or to be packed away. Some general tidying may also occur, such as adjusting toiletries and personal items from furniture such as dressers.



Fig. 3.1: Violet Loder's Neatly Made Bed

2. Kitchen/Dining Room

The kitchen receives the most cleaning attention on a daily basis. This is due in part to the kitchen being tied to the most regular “work” of family living: the preparation, consumption, and cleaning up of meals. Although meal preparation was not included in the purview of my research, it is intimately tied to a woman’s housework. Here, I focus on the end result of a family’s meals: dishes. A consistent, regular daily chore is the washing, drying, and packing away of dishes. Typically, families in St. Lunaire-Griquet follow this meal schedule: breakfast (sometimes without the table set) in the early morning, dinner (with the table set if there is more than one person home) at noon, and supper around 5:00 p.m. Some households will also set the table in the late evening at around 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. for lunch, which vernacularly refers to a small snack before bed. After each of these mealtimes, dishes are an essential component that requires a decision be made about their mode of being cleaned. About half the women I worked with have dishwashers they use on a regular basis. Upon completion of a meal, the dishes will be put in the dishwasher with or without a preliminary rinse and added to throughout the day or over a couple of days until it is full and set to run for a cycle. Typically, this includes glasses, plates, bowls, and silverware. Some women may include Tupperware (plastic re-usable containers for food storage), while others wash these items by hand. Few women will put pots and pans in their dishwashers, electing to wash these items by hand.

For women who wash all their dishes by hand, the addition of scented dish liquid to the sink prior to turning on the water spreads the suds evenly throughout the water, thereby getting dishes clean sooner. Following this, there is an established order that

dictates when each type of dish is washed. Danalee Earle noted that she first learned this order from her mother, who would wash in the following order: glasses, mugs, plastic Tupperware/bowls, plates/bowls, silverware, and pots (2014). Although she now has a dishwasher she uses on a regular basis, Beverly Manuel noted a similar order she used to adhere to: glasses, cups, silverware (which had been soaking in the bottom of the sink), plates, bowls, plastic bowls, pots (2014). A dishwashing cloth immersed in the water is manipulated and scrubbed over the dishes until all visible food particles are removed. By adhering to their established dish order, women extend the cleanliness of the soapy water, as the dirtiest dishes are washed last.

As the dishes are washed to an acceptable standard, the wet dishes are moved to a second sink (if present) or a drying rack. They will be dried by the woman herself, one of her children, or will be left to dry on their own. Finally, they are returned to their place within the cupboard, in an established pattern a woman maintains throughout the week as closely as possible. The glasses and cups, for example, will always be put back in the same cupboard. Finally, at some point during the dish washing, the dishcloth will be wrung out and used to clean the table, countertop, and microwave (if necessary). Some women do this immediately prior to the wash, using the time it takes to fill the sink with suds and water. Other women wait for the principal dishes (i.e. glasses, mugs, plates/bowls, and silverware) to be completed, while others will wait until the very end.

This is the case for Joyce Patey:

For the cabinets, the kitchen cabinets and that right, you do that almost every time that you're over washing the dishes. I'll say- well, I'll take the water out now, I'll just take the cloth and some Sunlight and go over that. It's almost like an everyday chore, right? For to do. But it's not hard work, not like that (2014).

This chore returns the cabinets and appliances dirtied during the food process to a clean standard, free of food particles and clutter. The finished result looks as though no food preparation had happened there.

In addition, an important daily chore in the kitchen is sweeping the floor. Due to the frequency of meal preparation, consumption, and family interaction within the space, dirt and food particles routinely end up on the floor. This chore is completed either once daily, once every second day, or after every meal. As Marsha Pilgrim jokingly replied when I asked her how often she sweeps her kitchen floor: “Every second day I suppose. It’s all according to how many crumbs I got around [laughs]!” (2014). Marsha’s response suggests that necessity dictates how regularly this chore is completed. While she had children living at home with her, for example, she likely completed this chore more often because she would have, as she put it, more “crumbs” around. The broom of choice (some women prefer angled bristles while others prefer straight-cut) is held by both hands with the non-dominant hand often placed higher on the handle while the dominant hand pulls the broom across the floor, moving the dirt towards the self. Another motion is to switch the handgrip and push the dirt across the floor. Combining these two techniques, all the dirt and crumbs are moved to one large pile where they are swept into a dustpan and disposed of.

Finally, small appliances may be lightly cleaned on a daily basis when spills, crumbs, or untidiness are visible. This can include a non-intensive wipe-down of the toaster, kettle, microwave, and, less commonly, the refrigerator and oven.

3. Bathroom

Perhaps the only room that receives as much cleaning attention on a daily basis as the kitchen is the family bathroom. Used by all members of the family for bathing, waste removal, and personal grooming, the bathroom can quickly show signs of use. Toothpaste stains, soap scum, flecks of water, speckles of human waste, soiled towels, and hair are just some of the “evidence” of human living that gets left behind in the bathroom on a daily basis. Women in St. Lunaire-Griquet spend some time every day removing that evidence, working to maintain a standard of cleanliness and hygiene until the weekly cleaning when a more thorough cleaning is paid. For some women—and particularly those living with several other people—this room requires more time spent on a daily basis than for others. Common chores include replacing used towels, wiping the sink basin, vanity, and shower/bathtub out with a cloth (with or without the aid of a cleaning product), and wiping over the toilet seat with the aid of a cleaning product if there is any visible human waste present on or underneath it. Sometimes the garbage pail may be emptied if it is more than halfway filled with trash. Ultimately, the goal is to remove all evidence of waste and personal hygiene routines; this is easily judged by sight. Disinfecting, deep scrubbing and intense cleaning are not required on a daily basis.

4. Living Area

Several chores may be completed on a daily basis in the living room, a room that may also be called the family room, TV room, or rec room. Keeping in mind that the goal of daily chores is to sustain a level of cleanliness until a set-apart, more intense cleaning day, the work required in the living room is variable based on the type of activity that happens within it. Most days, for example, Miranda Burden uses a Swiffer Wet on her

hardwood floors, a cleaning tool that removes any dust while simultaneously cleaning the floors (2014). Depending on the activities her four-year-old daughter, Alexis, has engaged in that day, Miranda will return things to their proper place once Alexis has gone to bed. This can include toys, electronics, books, or anything that has been used by a family member throughout the day. Similarly, once Jenny Carroll's four-year-old son is gone to bed, she restores order to the living room. She returns toys to the toy box and removes any dishes from her son's snack time, leaving a tidy room that appears neat and orderly. Other women may have very little work in their living rooms on a daily basis. Typically, the floors are swept and/or mopped daily or every second day, a task that may or may not include the hallway and porch with the main living area.

5. Non-room-specific chores

Finally, some work is done on a daily basis that is not limited to one particular room. Laundry in particular is a chore that can originate and end in several rooms throughout the house. Depending on family size, laundry may or may not be done on a daily basis. Women with children living at home (roughly one third in this study) must complete this task on a more regular basis than women who either live alone or only with their partner. Marsha Pilgrim, for example, typically does laundry once per week, or as she says, "When I can save up enough to do a load" (2014). Other women have full loads of laundry every day in their houses, requiring them to plan their daily work and leisure around laundry.

The work of laundry begins at the place where clothing is discarded; clothes must first be collected from bedrooms, bathrooms, or wherever they have been deposited, and then moved to the laundry room. Some women are able to skip this step with the clever

placement of a laundry chute in their bathroom that leads to the laundry facilities.

Nonetheless, once it has been collated in the laundry room, laundry must be sorted into suitable loads. While there is some consistency in these loads based on the color, type, and function of the clothes—separating linens and towels from everyday clothes, for example—women ultimately choose how their family’s clothes should be sorted, a choice that may differ from other women. Some women choose to separate linens and towels entirely from the rest of the laundry, some women wash undergarments separate from other clothes, and some women may choose not to sort clothes at all. Upon sorting, the load is deposited in the washing machine and washing suds are added, completing the preliminary work of laundry.

After the wash has finished, it must be removed from the washing machine. Depending on the weather, it may be pinned outside on a clothesline to dry. Again, there is some variation in how clothes are pinned out in terms of the placement of the garments and the pins (for example, some women pin sheets with the loose ends free to blow in the wind, while for others the opposite pattern is observed). Generally, the most observable pattern is the keeping together of garments whereby all like items—such as undergarments, socks, t-shirts—are pinned together. Alternatively, the wet clothes can be transferred to the electric dryer, where a fabric softener sheet is optionally added and the machine is turned on. If there is more than one load of clothes to be washed, another can be added to the washing machine while the now-clean load is drying.

The penultimate step in laundry is to remove and fold the dry clothes. This step can be completed in the laundry room, or alternatively can be accompanied by more leisurely activities such as watching television. Here, it is folded according to a woman’s

personal preference, and sorted based on garment type, and ultimately by owner. Most women have a desired aesthetic achieved while folding clothes that dictates the process of folding and tucking. T-shirts, for example, may be folded lengthwise in half and then again, or the two sides may be folded in and then the shirt folded three times so that the collar is completely visible. Aesthetically, symmetrical, consistent folding is ideal so that the finished product will be one or more piles of folded, clean clothes. Finally, these piles must be distributed to their appropriate room in the house—kitchen towels to the kitchen, bath towels to the linen closet/bathroom, and each individual family member’s clothing to their bedroom— and packed away.

As can be anticipated—and as anyone who has ever done laundry will know—this chore can be unrelenting and difficult to keep on top of, because as Wendy Burden notes, her two children “are changing their clothes probably four times a day” (2014). For women like Wendy who are responsible for a great deal of laundry, they must negotiate their daily routines to ensure it is a manageable task. One way this is successfully done is by combining laundry with other aspects of the daily routine. Prior to leaving for work in the morning, for example, Danalee Earle will pin out a load of clothes that had been put in the washer the night before, adding another load to the washing machine. On her mid-day, one-hour lunch break, she takes in the now-dry load, removes the wet clothes from the washer, adds another load to the machine, and pins the wet clothes out. When she returns home at the end of the workday, she repeats this step, eventually ending with a load in the washer for the next morning (2014).

DAILY CHORES: FINAL COMMENTS

It bears noting that daily chores differ from weekly chores in their thoroughness. While she does sweep and mop her floors every evening, Sadie Peyton will not move all her furniture or approach these chores with the intention to re-set the house's cleanliness to its utmost standard. Instead, the daily goal is to get the floors to an acceptable level of clean, ultimately lessening her workload on Saturday, her set day for deeper cleaning (2014).

A woman's daily cleaning on a regular day—meaning a day that is not the set deep cleaning day—depends on her living situation and her work. For women with young children, cleaning chores must be negotiated with the work of mothering. As such, daily cleaning is a careful balance. In order to successfully complete the day's chores, women must have at least a partial mental map of their children's routines and how they intersect with her own routines. For example, Sheri-Lynn Peyton knows her children enjoy watching certain television shows in the morning. This allows her anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour during which she will be relatively uninterrupted. By the time the children begin to watch their programs, she has already taken the time to consider which tasks need to be done that day and, as such, she can skillfully begin her work while still supervising the children. She typically begins by putting a load of clothes in the washing machine. Next, rather than wash the children's breakfast dishes—a chore that will take up precious time for just a few dishes—she will sweep and, every second day, mop the main floors in the house: the kitchen, porch, and living area (Peyton 2014).

Other women who work outside the home face different challenges. Due to their being away from home for several hours during the day, upon their return, they must

complete the cleaning chores they feel are essential within a limited time. Sadie Peyton estimates she spends about two hours every evening doing her daily housework:

I come home in the evening now, I get home like quarter after five or so. And if my supper is not ready- if Bud [her husband] doesn't have supper cooked, well, I'll just skip supper and I'll get something later on but ah, if it's not, well I'll just go on and the first thing I grab is the broom, and then flick it around with the mop. And I'll go up and go over my washroom. And well I make the beds before I leave in the morning, and if there's any clothes to wash, I'll stick in a load of clothes while I'm doing all that and then by, I don't know, seven thirty or so I'm finished (2014).

In Sadie's description, it is clear that her daily cleaning, while still taking up a considerable amount of her evening, is meant to sustain the house until the day she does her weekly cleaning. Here, it also bears noting that the amount of time spend on daily cleaning also depends on each woman's individual ideas about what an "acceptable" amount of cleaning is required until the set, more elaborate cleaning day. Both Sadie Peyton and Beverly Manuel sweep and mop every day because they feel they must in order to maintain the level of cleanliness in their houses that they want, especially considering both women have family pets that shed fur. Other women may elect to sweep every single day, while others may sweep every second day. Ultimately, while the individual tasks a woman completes on a daily basis may differ from her peers, each woman does some work every day to sustain her house's cleanliness.

Importantly, daily housework is essential to the whole work process. In addition to their daily cleaning tasks contributing to their standard of cleanliness, these chores help cut down on the total cleaning time required on a weekly basis. This temporal organizing of housework is continually implemented on a daily basis because skilled women know that it positively contributes to the overall quality of their work. Although the tasks may

not, as Meg Luxton observes, require intense concentration due to their repetitiveness (1980, 159), the conceptual planning and scheduling of inter-linking tasks demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of the workplace and the work technique that becomes increasingly apparent during times of more intense cleaning.

WEEKLY CLEANING

Although there is some variation in the amount of cleaning each woman does on a daily basis, every woman interviewed for this study has a designated, more elaborate cleaning day about once per week. In this section, I again present the house's rooms and the cleaning work that happens within each. Here, I integrate my interviews with my experiences observing Idella Hillier, Wendy Burden, Jenny Carroll, and Violet Loder clean, as well as my experience cleaning with my mother, Wanda Carroll. The result is a set of detailed descriptions of weekly cleaning, which I see as an elaborate, well-organized and orchestrated process.

Traditionally in St. Lunaire-Griquet, weekly cleaning always took place on Saturdays; this corresponded to other tasks of preparing for the traditional Christian rest day on Sunday, such as weekly bathing and preparing meals and desserts. For years, Saturday was the day of intense cleaning followed by Sunday, a day where no cleaning took place (except dishes in some households). This is consistent with other Newfoundland communities (Murray 2010, 168; Pocius 94). In many ways, Saturday's cleaning physically and symbolically prepared the house for the Sunday. In a community with strong religious affiliations (the small population sustained several churches over the years), women's work preparing for the Sabbath is a powerful example of the importance of women to the sacred and spiritual aspects of family life.

While Saturday is still a popular cleaning day, it is no longer the only time for scheduled weekly chores. Often, women choose the day based on their work schedule. For women who work outside the home, this day is often the first day they have off. Depending on their schedule, some women also choose to do this cleaning at the end of their work rotation, leaving them their entire day off to be free of cleaning. This is the case for Sadie Peyton, who notes:

If I come home from work on Friday evening and if I got any energy, I'll do my Saturday's cleaning then so I can have Saturday and Sunday to myself to do things with Kristopher [her son]. But other than that, usually I get up early Saturday morning while Kristopher is still in bed and I'll do it then and by noon, I've got it all done (2014).

Sadie's comment emphasizes the necessity of negotiating cleaning activities around the family's schedules. Knowing that she will want to spend her day off with her son, Sadie does her weekly cleaning either Friday evening or prior to him waking up on Saturday morning. In this way, Sadie balances the work of mothering with the work of housework, navigating both roles with careful consideration of the intricacies involved with each.

Weekly chores have as the ultimate goal the resetting of the house to a very clean, organized, and aesthetically presentable place. While daily chores may not be as thorough and may be concerned with tidying, weekly chores build on their preliminary work, thereby lessening the time and physical energy required. This is not to say that weekly chores do not require admirable physical effort; in fact, these tasks are detailed and extensive. Nonetheless, they are aided by daily chores. As Renee Pilgrim explains:

Saturdays normally was where you move your furniture every week and you did your full housework. Like, you clean everything on Saturdays. Every other day of the week was kind of touch and go. You might sweep here one day and next day you might not. But Saturdays was what you called a dig out day and still is. You move the furniture. You get behind it

and every little thing, like cleaning your cupboard doors. Everything was done on Saturdays. Saturday was your day for work (2014).

Renee's comment emphasizes how the "touch and go" work throughout the week is flexible; it can differ in complexity and type on a day-to-day basis. Weekly cleaning follows a more consistent pattern, as there is time specifically dedicated to it. Ultimately, though, the process and techniques employed during daily cleaning are built on and may be included in the descriptions that follow. This makes sense, as cleaning is a project of meaningful patterns (Devault, 132) whereby the established routine of cleaning tasks often follows a consistent schedule. These routines, as well as the work process completed room-by-room on the weekly "dig out day," is considered next.

1. Bedroom

Several tasks are completed in the bedroom during the weekly deep cleaning. First, the bed sheets are removed and replaced with clean ones. The bed can be re-made with another set of sheets right away, or this chore may be completed after the original set of sheets has been washed and dried (either in the dryer or on the clothesline). In one sense, this important chore removes the human evidence of sleeping—the smell and sight of drool, sweat, and dust—and replaces it with clean sheets that have been previously stripped of that evidence. Whereas daily cleaning involves making the bed (thereby hiding the evidence), weekly cleaning ultimately resets the bed to a relative absence of human waste. As with daily cleaning, though, the ultimate aesthetic is a wrinkle-free, orderly bed.

Another important chore is dusting the furniture. Many women noted that dust quickly builds up on furniture that is not necessarily used every day. Whereas surfaces

such as the bathroom vanity are wiped down every day, one's clothes dresser does not receive this attention. As such, a dusting cloth or a wet scrubbing cloth will be used to carefully wipe off all surfaces and personal items. Any mirrors in the bedroom will likewise be cleaned off with the same cleaning tools or with Windex. Here, the goal is to remove the appearance of dust and to return mirrors to a streak-free, shiny aesthetic.

Bedroom floors receive the final cleaning attention on a weekly basis. Although they may be swept or dusted with a Swiffer sweeper throughout the week, they are paid more attention and approached more attentively during this cleaning. Particular attention, for example, is paid to the area underneath the bed, a place that accumulates many "dust bunnies" on a weekly basis.

Other bedrooms in the house may or may not be the woman's weekly responsibility. Likely she will see that the bed sheets are changed and be responsible for laundering them. Otherwise, individual family members often take responsibility for their own bedrooms. Generally, though, women do not assume responsibility for cleaning their children's bedrooms once they have reached an age where they are able to do it themselves (approximately ten to twelve years of age).

2. Kitchen/ Dining Room

Because the kitchen receives a great deal of cleaning attention on a daily basis, these chores vary little during the weekly clean; dishes will not be approached with any additional thoroughness, for example. This trend speaks to the kitchen as a functional workspace for women on a daily basis. Due to it being so routinely cleaned, the weekly cleaning varies little.

One task that does receive increased attention is the kitchen floor, which gets a thorough cleaning. Several women I interviewed do not clean their kitchen floors with a mop and elect to do this chore by hand. As Wendy Burden noted:

I just think that the mop pushes dirt into the corners. I just feel that way, that the mop, you're not getting it clean enough, not for me. So I want to get down on my hands and knees so I can get down and see where every little peck of dirt is or every little drop of juice or whatever to get it off (2014).

For women who follow this technique in cleaning their kitchen floors, the established routine follows a consistent, well-devised process. They may or may not start by using a broom to get the larger pieces of dirt. Similarly, some will use a Swiffer sweeper along the floor edges to capture any dust that has built up along the corners or baseboards. Adding their favorite disinfecting cleaner, such as Lysol, Pinesol, or Mr. Clean, to a plastic scrubbing bucket, the work begins. Next, they will typically adhere to the following process Wendy learned from her mother:

She had to wring the cloth out not completely first and just go all over it in patches too, you had to do a certain amount, you didn't just go all over the floor but you do it in patches and clean it with a slightly wet cloth. And then you go over it again with like, wring the cloth out more and just make sure you get all the dampness off the floor and so it's cleaner (2014).

Following this technique ensures the woman gets a close look at her floor and she is able to, as Wendy notes, remove all dirt, dust, and food particles. Perfecting the variations of cloth wetness is a learned skill that requires practice in leaving the appropriate amount of water in the cloth. From Wendy's description, the level of intimate knowledge women have of their workspaces is clear. This is an intense chore that can take more than an hour

from start to finish and, as such, is one of the primary chores often completed first in the routine.

Other women begin by sweeping their floor and follow by mopping using a mop or a Swiffer Wet. The chore may also be extended to the rest of the main living area and porch to transfer efforts in one spatial room to others. The same process as outlined above is followed in the dining room, with one notable exception: for women who have hardwood flooring in this area, they must be extra careful that their scrubbing cloths are well wrung out. As Louise Bussey noted, hardwood flooring must be cleaned with extra care and attention, as well as an intimate understanding of the cleaning technique. She has learned to use Murphy's Oil in a bucket of warm water and uses a damp cloth wrung fairly dry (meaning no water readily drips from the cloth) to gently clean over the floor (Bussey 2014). This must be done with considerable attention to ensure no water gets in the hardwood seams, which has the undesirable effects of floor swelling and darkened seams.

Regardless of technique used to clean the kitchen and dining room floors, this is an important chore to have completed during the weekly clean.



Fig. 3.2: Wendy Burden's Kitchen

3. Bathroom

The bathroom is extensively cleaned during the weekly cleaning. Although it is cleaned every single day of the week, there is at least one day a week that a woman will spend a considerable amount of time cleaning it. My informants noted that everything is cleaned in the bathroom on a weekly basis, whereas on a daily basis, only what is absolutely needed is cleaned. Generally, women begin by filling a bucket with a mixture of hot water and a multi-purpose cleaner. Some women will put the vanity's functional items, such as the toothbrush holder and soap dish, in the bucket. They will then spray

their bathroom cleaners of choice (typically a disinfecting spray, a soap scum cleaner, and a toilet bowl cleaner) in and around the bathtub, on the sink basin, toilet seat, tank, and in the toilet bowl.

Most of these cleaners require about ten minutes before they can be wiped off. This time can be used to clean those functional items that had been added to the bucket, or else to empty the trash bin and to clean the mirrors with Windex. Similarly, the doorknobs, walls, baseboards, and windowsills are wiped off with a scrubbing cloth soaked in the scrub bucket and wrung out. This cloth is returned to the bucket for the same process as at various stages through the cleaning process. The decision to freshen the cloth is made at crucial time-saving opportunities such as when a spatial area is finished or when the cloth begins to lose heat from the water.

Next, with the aid of the scrubbing cloth, the deep cleaning begins. Generally, the sink basin and bathroom vanity are cleaned first. As Idella Hillier noted, a sophisticated level of cleaning knowledge may be required here, as a less experienced cleaner would likely not know that a toothbrush can be used to successfully remove all soap scum from the sink faucets (2014). While cleaning this area, the key is to remove all soap scum, water, hair, and ultimately to leave a fresh scent and a shine.

Next, the bathtub is cleaned. Typically, the same scrubbing cloth will be used, again to remove all soap scum, water, and hair. Here, the water can be turned on and the woman can manipulate the cloth inside the tub so that the dirt is washed down the drain. This is a good opportunity for one to rinse their scrubbing cloth as well, removing any hair or materials that could interfere with the rest of the cleaning. After the tub is clean, the tub kit (loosely the wall around the bathtub where personal items such as shampoo

and soap are placed) must also be wiped down with the same goal in mind. Some women will remove all the product bottles from this area while others simply lift them up and wipe underneath. Finally, a dry cloth can be used to shine up the bathtub and surrounding area. The goal is that there be no visible soap scum, dirt, hair, or water, and that the tub will be shiny and smell of cleaners.

By and large, the least favorite chore in the entire house now follows: cleaning the toilet. Typically, women begin by using a toilet brush or scrubbing cloth to scrub out the inside of the toilet bowl, attentively ensuring all waste is removed. This chore may require the toilet be flushed one or more times with extra cleaner being added. The scrubbing cloth is then wrung out and used to wipe over all other visible parts of the toilet: the flush handle, the tank, the seat, and down along the sides.

Finally, most women will clean the bathroom floor during this time. The dry scrubbing cloth will now be added to the water and used for the floor while the other cloth must be laundered before it can be used again. Cleaning the bathroom floor follows a similar technique as that outlined above in the kitchen. Some women spray extra disinfectant on the floor around the toilet, because as one woman joked: “When you got boys, men in the house, you don’t know where that pee is going to sprinkle!” Working from the back of the bathroom to the front, the bathroom is deemed clean once the floor has been cleaned. After the floor has dried, the fixtures will be replaced along with fresh towels.

4. Living Area

The living area also receives quite a bit of cleaning during the weekly deep clean. The first task is often to sweep, moving all the furniture and couches to ensure the entire area is swept. Next, a bucket of water and scrub cloth can be used to dust all the furniture and entertainment appliances such as televisions and game consoles. The work process here also requires a sophisticated level of knowledge about cleaning. As Sadie Peyton noted, “If you dust before you sweep, you’ll get dust all over the furniture again” (2014). As such, the goal is to remove the dust and dirt rather than transfer it from the floor to the furniture again.

Windows and mirrors also get cleaned with Windex, a vinegar-water solution, or simply hot water and a scrubbing cloth. Here, fingerprints are added to the list of things to get removed. If a house has carpet, it will be vacuumed. Finally, the floor is mopped, an area that, like during the daily cleaning, includes the porch and hallways. Once the floor is mopped, the positioning of furniture may be returned to the exact same place, or this may be an opportunity to move things around. During the eight weeks I lived with my sister while doing fieldwork, I noted she moved her furniture twice during her weekly cleaning. Each time, this was done after she had moved all the furniture to the middle of the floor, swept and mopped the entire area, and then chose to put things back in a different aesthetic order.

Overall, the end goal while cleaning the living room is restoring order. As a room that may quickly become filled with toys, electronics, and personal items, during the weekly clean all items are returned to where they belong. Similarly, any dust, dirt, smudges, and fingerprints must be removed.

5. Non-room-specific chores

A full description of the laundry process was offered in the preceding section. I include laundry in this category as well because a more concerted effort to do several loads, intermittent with other chores, takes place on this day. It also bears noting that although, as stated, food preparation is not part of this study, a considerable amount of attention during the weekly cleaning is placed on food preparation, such as bread making and cooking a large family meal for dinner/supper.

WEEKLY CLEANING: FINAL OBSERVATIONS

An important observation I made during my fieldwork is that the weekly cleaning requires both a sophisticated level of knowledge about cleaning tools and techniques, and an organized, well thought-out process. Each woman I worked with has a set schedule they follow for their weekly housework; some women begin with their floors and end with their bathrooms, while others observe the opposite routine. Regardless of the ordering of chores, it is clear that finishing these chores in a timely manner does require advance planning and careful scheduling. A deviation from that schedule, for example missing one weekend's deep cleaning, can quickly create an unmanageable workload for the following week. The following excerpt from my field notes demonstrates this:

I came to visit Mom and help her with some housework. She was in Labrador last weekend so as she said, it is now “piled on top” of her. When I arrived, we talked about how to divide the tasks. There were a lot! I estimate she had eight loads of laundry in her laundry room— too many for one day—but I began by changing over the clothes from the washer to the dryer, re-filling the washer with another load, and then folding the newly dried clothes. Thus far, I have repeated this process twice. I then began sweeping the floor. I began upstairs, sweeping the entire area with a brief pause to make the bed in Mom's bedroom with fresh sheets. I then used a Swiffer over the floor to get any dust. While I was doing that, Mom

cleaned the one full bath and two half bathrooms (she had “sprayed them down” with cleaning solution prior to my arrival). We then took half an hour break. I dusted the furniture in the upstairs family room. Then, Mom took the mop and bucket upstairs to mop the area I had swept. I continued by sweeping the living room, hallway, porch and kitchen on the house’s main floor. Quite a bit of dirt had accumulated. After this task, Mom hooked up the vacuum cleaner and its attachment for me so I could vacuum the carpeted stairs going up to the upstairs portion of the house. Meanwhile, she took a “break” and got supper ready to put on. While I vacuumed, she mopped the area on the main floor I had just swept. It is now 2:23pm and I believe we are nearly done for the day; however, it’s clear there are enough tasks here to keep a woman completely busy for the entire day.

This long excerpt was written while reflecting on the day’s work I had done with my mother in a relatively short amount of time. While I was finished with housework after writing this excerpt, Mom had to finish cooking, serving, and cleaning up from supper. Her day’s work—including the homemade bread she had made and baked early that morning—was a heavy workload for what is her “day off” from her full-time paid job. As I questioned her about her day’s heavy workload, she noted the frustration she often feels at not being able to always finish all her housework during her day off. Other women in the community share her sentiments. While she may not feel she is able to successfully complete all her work, the above excerpt suggests she does indeed complete a great deal of work during the day, providing evidence that a scheduled routine is a necessity in weekly housework.

From these weekly chores, it is clear that a hierarchy of chore importance dictates the amount of time spent in each room during the “Saturday scrub day” or during the weekly cleaning. The bathroom, which receives the most attention on a daily basis, is also the primary room to be cleaned on a weekly basis. Similarly, the kitchen (and

particularly the kitchen floor) must also be cleaned during this cleaning period. Together, these two tasks are universally the most important ones to be kept on top of. The kitchen is traditionally a public space in Newfoundland (see Pocius 1991), likely because it is an area that is used frequently by both family and outsiders alike; the bathroom, while used privately, is a public space in that it may be accessed by anyone who enters the house and, as such, this room is also used frequently. Considerable cleaning attention is placed on these rooms because of the frequency with which they are used (and thereby are dirtied), but also because they are the most likely to be judged by outsiders. As Lois Burden noted when responding that these two rooms are the most important for her to have cleaned: “Now upstairs, might the laundry be overflowing with laundry sometimes? Yes, it might be. But I mean, nobody is going to my upstairs bathroom because they’re going to the bathroom down here” (2014). Her comment suggests that the hierarchy of chore importance is informed by the room’s public/private purpose. While this hierarchy impacts cleaning on a daily basis, it is of utmost concern during the weekly clean.

SEMI-ANNUAL/ANNUAL CLEANING

Daily and weekly cleaning, while still thorough and demanding work, are complemented by a period of intense cleaning at some point during the year that lasts several days. Colloquially known as “spring cleaning,” the term I will use in this section, at least once per year a woman’s house gets cleaned from the ceilings to the floors. Locally, women describe this cleaning as being done from “top to bottom.” Here, the goals of daily and weekly cleaning are combined: tidying and deep cleaning. The freshening of space, as well as organizing and replacing personal items, is also paid attention to with a level of care that goes beyond daily and weekly cleaning. By and

large, spring cleaning requires detailed knowledge of all spaces within the house as well as appropriate methods for cleaning them. It also requires a great deal of time to complete; some women complete their spring cleaning in the evenings or during their time off from their paid jobs. Depending on their work schedules, other women work consistently over the span of several days. In years past, Lois Burden, for example, completed her spring cleaning during the several days she had off for the school's Easter break (2014).

This section follows the same spatial organization as the previous two, considering the cleaning tasks that take place in each room. Here, it is valuable to point out that while all of my informants do this at least once per year in the late spring or early summer, many follow up in the autumn with a slightly less intense deep cleaning in preparation for Christmas. One informant, Miranda Burden, has four deep cleanings per year—once at the beginning of each season (2014). As such, when using the colloquial “spring cleaning” to describe this temporal cleaning time, I also recognize that for some women in St. Lunaire-Griquet, it may be referred to as semi-annual or annual cleaning.

1. Bedroom

Most women begin their spring cleaning in the bedrooms. Here, closets and drawers are sifted through, with clothes/accessories/items that are no longer needed being removed. As Lois Burden noted, “That’s a good time to purge too so then I do a big ol’ purging of clothes, right? You get rid of clothes you don’t want anymore at the same time or things you don’t want” (2014). This is also a useful time to organize drawers and closets and to repurpose these spaces. Similarly, light fixtures are taken down and cleaned out. Curtains are taken down, bedding (such as quilts, comforters, and bed skirts)

is removed, and any decorative cloths are removed. All of these fabrics are laundered with the conscious goal of line-drying them.

Beds are also taken apart at this time and all the furniture gets a thorough scrubbing, as does the windows and windowsills. Finally, walls and ceilings are scrubbed with a scrubbing cloth and water scented with a multi-purpose chemical cleaner or bubble bath. For women who cannot wet these surfaces (such as those with stucco ceilings or special paint), a dry dust cloth will be used, such as a Swiffer. If any painting needs to be done in the bedroom, it will be done during spring cleaning. Some families repaint every few years, with one of my informants noting that painting happens every single year at her house.

These tasks are completed in each bedroom in the house.

2. Kitchen

The kitchen is often the final room in the house to be cleaned during spring cleaning. Lois Burden suggested this is because the kitchen is used frequently and is often positioned spatially and conceptually at the front of a house (2014). Spring cleaning typically follows a pattern of starting from the back, in the bedrooms, and working forward along the hallways, bathroom, living area, and thereby ending with the kitchen. Another reason this room is cleaned last is that it can take upwards of two weeks to be completely finished. As with all other rooms in the house, all the walls and the ceiling in the kitchen are washed down with a scrubbing cloth and a bucket of water (water and either a chemical cleaner or bubble bath). In addition, several tedious but nonetheless deemed important tasks take place, typically beginning with the removal of all dishes and

other items from kitchen cupboards to be sorted, organized, washed, and returned. Lois

Burden explains some of the work she does during spring cleaning in her kitchen:

You take everything out of your cupboards and you clean your cupboards out and re-arrange—not re-arrange but arrange because you know how, I don't know if you have a cupboard where all your plastic containers go in? Sometimes they're just thrown in and after a while they start almost coming out through the door so everything gets arranged the way it's supposed to be because it's a funny thing how we take things out and lots of times we don't put them back the way we took them out. So that's usually what I do. Everything comes out of the cupboards and everything is back. The fridge is cleaned out. I usually also unplug my freezer side and take everything out because I find it goes, with the ice machine, I find the freezer burn smell. I even take things out, like if there's bread there in bags, I'll take it out and put it in a new bag. Like anything that's in a plastic bag, I'll take it out because the smell is on the bag in those freezers and I'll just put the food in a new bag and throw the bag away so the smell is gone from the fridge (2014).

Although she does not wash every dish that comes out of the cupboard, as do many people in the community, Lois approaches her spring cleaning in the kitchen with the goal to re-set it to her ideal standard. She methodically approaches each task in a ritualized, routine manner that she has carefully developed over the years since first moving into her house.

Other tasks involved in spring cleaning the kitchen include taking down and cleaning light fixtures, changing the filter in the range hood, and moving out and cleaning behind/underneath appliances. It is also a useful time to make small aesthetic changes in the kitchen, like incorporating a new tablecloth or new curtains into the room. In the fall of the year, during the second “spring” cleaning of the year, it is also a time to begin Christmas preparation. When Judy Earle takes all of her dishes out of her cupboards and washes them, they will be replaced with her Christmas dishes, which will stay in the

cupboards for the duration of the holiday (2014). Similarly, Lois Burden cleans off the top of her cupboards and adds Christmas décor (2014).

Ultimately, because parts of the kitchen are cleaned daily and weekly, the tasks completed here during spring cleaning require women to conceptualize their space; in other words, they must have a conceptualization of what their kitchens overall and the individual spaces (such as the Tupperware cupboard) should look like, and their cleaning works towards this vision. Alternatively, spring cleaning can be a time to change those same spaces by incorporating new décor or by moving dishes from one cupboard to another.

3. Bathroom

In contrast to other rooms in the house, the bathroom does not get considerable attention during spring cleaning. This is likely due in part to the bathroom occupying a relatively small area within the larger house. In addition, because it receives a thorough, intense cleaning on a weekly basis, there is little work to be done during spring cleaning that would set it apart from what has already been described in an earlier section. The walls and ceilings get a thorough cleaning, as do the light fixtures and any linen closets/storage spaces. Otherwise, the bathroom is left out of spring cleaning.

4. Living Area

The living area may be one room where considerable attention is placed during spring cleaning. During the first spring cleaning of the year, most of the work is focused on cleaning the walls and the ceiling. Similar to the work done in the bedrooms, all curtains are taken down and laundered, all light fixtures are taken apart and cleaned, and all furniture gets a thorough cleaning. For living areas that still have carpet, it will get

shampooed. If any repainting is to be done in the living area, it will be done during spring cleaning. As all the furniture is moved and cleaned, it may be put back in a different way to play with the space and to change the feel of the living area and to reflect the work that has been done.

During the last spring cleaning of the year, which takes place sometime prior to Christmas, preparation will begin for the holiday. Women often remove things such as cloths, framed pictures, and seasonal decorative items from the area, and replace them with Christmas décor. For many, this particular cleaning can signal the start of the Christmas season, a time of celebration, family, and of women's work. As Leslie Bella writes, women often take up the work that enables the family's leisure time (1992). Particularly during Christmas, women work to produce and reproduce the family's rituals. I see the spring cleaning done prior to Christmas as the beginning of that work for women. Although it may contribute to these women enjoying the holiday, it is still work, and remains part of the larger context of women's unpaid labor within the home.

5. Non-room-specific chores

A few chores may not be exclusively located in a room. Painting, which has been noted within several of these sections, is a task that does not necessarily always get done in specific rooms. Similarly, when it is a year for painting, it can be done in every room in the house. In Renee Pilgrim's house, painting occurs every year during spring cleaning. As she explains:

Nan has been known every spring or summer—when I was younger, it used to always be in the spring—Nan has got to paint everything every year. Everything has to be painted. A lot of people around here wash walls and dust ceilings. We paint everything every year from upstairs to down. The baseboards and everything. And years ago it used to be the window

sills and everything. The cupboards. We keep colors maybe every two or three years (2014).

This work can include men's involvement in both the painting and in any small renovations that may need to be done. When a wall is freshly painted, it does not need to be washed down. As such, this chore has an impact on all other chores that will be done during spring cleaning. The paint colours must be selected and purchased, and the rooms must be prepared for painting. Similarly, the purchasing of new furniture or décor items is most likely to occur during spring cleaning. This is part of the goal of restoring and re-imagining order in the home. These tasks are a further example of how women carefully negotiate the totality of their cleaning work within a complex system of decisions. Prior to beginning spring cleaning, women must consider each step of the work process and the end result.

SEMI-ANNUAL/ANNUAL CLEANING: FINAL OBSERVATIONS

An overarching trend in spring cleaning is the freshening up of a space and cleaning all areas of the house. Particularly at the end of the winter—often a difficult season in St. Lunaire-Griquet—spring cleaning is a physical and symbolic opportunity to enact change within the house. In the community's recent history (i.e. prior to the cod moratorium) this time was especially alive with meaning. As many women indicated while reflecting on their mother's spring cleaning, this cleaning period took place after the challenging winter but prior to the start of that year's fishing season. Although it requires a great deal of work expended over a relatively long period of time, the end result is typically a satisfying feeling of renewed cleanliness and order within the home that may not always be present after the daily and weekly cleaning. Similarly, the

prominence of re-arranging furniture and decorative items exemplifies a way women exert control within their home spaces. As Lois Burden noted about her spring cleaning: “It’s usually a time if I want to do any re-arranging, that’s when I’ll do it. When everything is out and you want to re-arrange it, I’ll bring it and do it that way” (2014). This woman strategically combines the work of spring cleaning with that of re-purposing the room’s existing aesthetic features to create a new display. As Gerald Pocius writes in *A Place to Belong*, replacing furniture every year during spring cleaning is economically infeasible. Small renovations and moving furniture or decorative items inside the house enable larger changes within the house. As he writes: “A woman may not do all of the physical work, but she is in charge of choosing pattern and color and deciding when a change is necessary. Men may have initially built the house, but women constantly rebuild it from the inside” (1991, 97). This constant rebuilding allows women to exert authority and influence over the physical areas of house.

While St. Lunaire-Griquet women may approach spring cleaning with an admirable intensity, they are not alone in their efforts. Throughout the nineteenth century, spring cleaning offered women throughout North America an opportunity to remove filth such as soot and dust accumulated over the cold winter. As Susan Strasser writes: “Despite the disruption and the colossal labor, spring housecleaning had regenerative qualities ... the annual ritual cleansing of the filthy by-products of nineteenth-century lighting and heating signaled the onset of spring” (1982, 63). Certainly in St. Lunaire-Griquet’s early settlement and throughout much of the twentieth century, women would likewise have faced considerable dirt from wood stoves, indoor smoking, and crowded

houses. Spring cleaning physically and symbolically removed the stagnant winter air and dirt, allowing women to feel in control of their houses and spaces.

Today, spring cleaning is a tradition that remains popular in the community. Although they do not have near the physical dirt to visibly rid the house of during this time, many women feel that the house has accumulated hidden dirt since the last spring cleaning and that some spaces have built up clutter or personal items no longer necessary. In this way, by following their established spring cleaning routines and rituals, women work to achieve equilibrium and regeneration within the home; they renew their conceptual mapping of the entire interior space and take inventory of the family's personal possessions, leaving a clean, organized house they feel in control of.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As has been explored in this chapter, a woman's canon of work technique is detailed and extensive. By acknowledging the work that women do on a daily, weekly, and annual/semi-annual basis, it is possible to recognize the lived realities of those women who successfully do all this work throughout the calendar year. Regardless of their individual interests and jobs, their housework continues to be done according to an established routine and ritual that constantly adjusts to all other facets in their lives. Here, I have argued that the mental planning and organizing is part of their canon of work technique because it is one of the most important skills women must develop in order to be successful at their work. Further, the complexities of the temporal and spatial ordering of housework suggest that women develop a sophisticated, intersecting patterning of tasks.

In working towards a clean, ordered, controlled house, all three temporal sub-sections have an integral function. Daily cleaning, which includes maintenance and tidying work, lessens the weekly cleaning's workload, which is focused on more intense, deep cleaning. However, women in St. Lunaire-Griquet have learned that this amount of frequent cleaning does not re-produce the clean aesthetic they seek for their houses. As such, spring cleaning (done on a semi-annual or annual basis) draws on the work done previously but brings it one step further. It ends with a re-envisioning, re-imagining, and ultimately, a re-claiming of the space.

Additionally, the intense effort required for these three temporal cleaning blocks challenges notions that today's housework is largely mechanized and therefore women need not exert much physical or mental energy in its completion. In reflecting on the technological changes observed in Flin Flon, Manitoba in the early 1980s, Meg Luxton argues that housework, because it requires less physical labor, has become increasingly discrete and "do[es] not require intense concentration; [chores] are repetitive and easily resumed if interrupted" (1980, 159). Her sentiments are shared by several feminist scholars who observe housework as monotonous, relentless, and oppressive (Malos 1995; Collins & Gimenez 1990; Treas & Drobic 2010). In recounting the "work" of women's housework and how those tasks are completed, this chapter has demonstrated that it is not always experienced in this way. Rather, housework requires conceptual planning and a sophisticated level of technique and skill. It is work that, as Levin notes, creates an aesthetic not readily acknowledged by Western understandings of productive work, where senses such as touch and smell contribute to the worker's "sense of creation, of

transcendence, of mastery” (1993, 291). Housework, rather than simple, mindless work, is actually quite complex and challenges our understanding of women’s work.

The great deal of work required to maintain a clean house is admirable. While community members may not spend considerable time discussing the work individual women complete on a regular basis, women’s housework is readily observable for critique. The following chapter considers personal experience narratives women tell about their housework and the social components of housework.

CHAPTER FOUR: HOUSEWORK: NEGOTIATING OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION

In St. Lunaire-Griquet, having a clean house matters. More than by any other quality or character attribute—such as kindness, generosity, or loyalty—being known as a good housekeeper is the highest compliment granted to a woman. The previous chapters traced the historical gendering of housework as women’s work in the community and detailed the tools and techniques women use to successfully do that work. This chapter considers the social aspects of housework and how oral folklore influences and impacts women’s housework. In particular, I consider personal experience narratives women in St. Lunaire-Griquet share about housework and assess the extent to which these narratives critique and reinforce master narratives of womanhood in the community. I consider three categories of personal experience narratives I collected about housework: narratives about learning housework, narratives about doing housework with others, and narratives about bad housekeepers. Through sharing these narratives, women not only learn how to be proper housekeepers, but proper women. They also learn and reinforce community values, such as the importance of having a strong work ethic and, by extension, are engaging in community sustainability, the focus of the next chapter.

HOW DOES HOUSEWORK CREATE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES?

While living in St. Lunaire-Griquet in 2014 for the first time since leaving home for university several years earlier, I was re-introduced to the intricate nuances of gendered housework in the community and women’s ultimate responsibility for its completion. As outlined in Chapter Two, housework as gendered work has been

maintained in the community's history, first because of the fishery's structure and later due to tradition and gender performativity. What has also continued is the understanding that housework is women's work. In beginning my research, I had three goals: the first, reflected in Chapter Three, was to gain an understanding of how women learn housework and continually reproduce clean homes. The second and third will be considered here: to understand how the mastery of housework, as evidenced through the presentation of a clean home, constructs and reinforces shared notions of femininity; and to collect stories about women's housework and assess how those narratives comment on vernacular understandings of cleanliness. By sharing their stories with me, my informants told me how they first learned the skills necessary to complete housework, how housework has changed over the course of their lives, and finally, the impact and influence it has over their current lives. In their narratives also emerge broader patterns of their learning, through housework, what it means to be a woman today in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

It is not surprising that housework provides women with a body of narratives. When considered from an occupational perspective, in workplaces, narratives help shape and make sense of identities. As Jack Santino argues, occupational groups can use narratives "as a creative, adaptive mechanism" (1983, 411). In turn, these narratives create what Santino calls one's occupational identity. This identity is often complex, and as is the case for some occupations, combines ideas about gender performance with occupational identity. Ann Ferrell, for example, in her examination of tobacco farmers in Kentucky, drew connections between the traditionalized performance of masculinity the farmers engage in through their work, and the narratives they tell about their fathers' work, as a comment on "tobacco man masculinity" (2014, 51). The farmers' identity and

understandings of masculinity were intimately tied to their work, and in several places throughout Ferrell's article, it becomes clear that the tobacco farmers' narratives say as much about gender performance and work identity as they do about teaching others the proper way of completing one's work.

Similarly, personal experience narratives in the workplace have been documented and explored as a mode of teaching proper behaviour on the job. Importantly, these stories are not told as the work happens, but rather are shared during breaks or when the work is over (Santino 1978, 201). In this way, workplace narratives are set apart from the actual work. They help workers make sense of their jobs and of how they see themselves in relation to their work. Thus, making sense of one's housework through personal experience narratives belongs to a framework whereby workers from diverse occupational backgrounds narrate their work lives. Interestingly, these stories may be of interest only to those that have an intimate knowledge of housework. In other words, it is mainly women who choose to narrativize their housework and share those stories with other women.

I observed that when and where these narratives are shared depends largely on the social context. At the most basic level, they are told to others—and especially family—to provide an understanding of inter-generational housework. I heard stories from my mother and grandmother, for example, about their earliest experiences completing housework. These stories were offered to illuminate the difference between the housework I did as a teenager from their own experiences, and perhaps to motivate me to complete my assigned chores. Other narratives are shared cross-generationally or among one's peers. Friends may discuss their first visit to a new house, for example,

commenting positively on the house's cleanliness. Still other narratives are shared about bad housekeepers and so-called dirty houses on occasions when a narrative is called for to prove the judgment.

Importantly, these narratives are always informal and conversational, and are often generalization narratives (see Greenhill 1992). As such, they often are not fully formed narratives and require the listener's intimate understanding of housework, whereby they borrow from the larger master narrative about women's work to fill in the gaps. The point or lesson of the story is already present within the master narrative and does not always need to be included. As folklorist John Robinson writes, conversational narratives can be unremarkable—or familiar, routine or expected—depending on their context and function (1992). In this chapter, I offer both fully formed narratives and some descriptions I characterize as narratives that are, by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky's definition, comments, critiques, and discussions (1967). Yet I believe they function as personal experience narratives because the narrator relies on the intimacy created with the listener and the master narrative of women's housework; in other words, what is not said in what I present as a narrative does not need to be said because the listener, who knows the master narrative, does not need those things to be said in order to understand the point.

What do women's narratives about housework achieve? Put another way, what is their function? First, they comment on a woman's day-to-day work experiences and the way she must negotiate the whole range of her household tasks, helping women make sense of their work lives. Second, they help justify women's inability or unwillingness to complete "essential" work within the home. In other words, women using these stories

connect with each other because, as Michael Bamberg writes, “aligning with the moral values of others requires the navigation of how and to what degree we are the same and simultaneously different from others” (2012). Finally, other personal experience narratives exist about housework that comment more broadly on the interconnectedness between women and their evaluation of themselves and others as women through their housework. What follows are three categories of collected narratives that necessitate greater explication.

NARRATIVES ABOUT LEARNING HOUSEWORK AND GENDERED IDENTITIES: HOUSEWORK AS GATEKEEPER OF SOCIABILITY

My earliest memory is at seven or eight. Every Saturday, we would clean the chairs. I can remember—you had to tip the chairs over and clean the bottoms of the chairs and clean the bottoms of the table. Everything had to be done (Judy Earle, born 1963).

The most prevalent narratives collected from women in St. Lunaire-Griquet are those about their earliest memories of housework. In general, these narratives are often not fully formed in structure; often, the chronological and/or historical reference is unclear and the narrative is presented factually and without humor. In many, the difficulty with which houses were cleaned in their past is juxtaposed by contemporary modern cleaning materials that have greatly reduced the workload. Together, these narratives instill the sense of learning the responsibilities of housework at a very young age. My open question, “What is your earliest memory of housework?” was most often met with a narrative about the narrator’s own earliest chores. Rather than recounting seeing their mothers or grandmothers completing housework, the response I initially believed I would get, my informants consistently shared a short narrative about their own personal experience of doing housework for the first time. In their narratives emerge their

changing conceptualizations of housework, whereby housework is no longer invisible work; it is their own. They are narratives that signal the beginning of a rite of passage to womanhood.

Of my eighteen informants, eight of them remember having their first chores at ages 7 to 9, three remember being ages 10 or 11, and the remaining seven were 12 or 13. It is again important to note that my informants represent three generations in St. Lunaire-Griquet. All seven informants who began housework at the latest age were second and third generation informants. The most common chores for children and young adults are dishes (both washing and drying), dusting, sweeping, and cleaning their own bedrooms. Variations in my informant's own chores depended on their family size, generation, and if their mothers worked outside the home. One of my eldest informants, for example, was the fifth of fifteen children and responsible for the physically demanding chore of scrubbing the floor with a brush at 7 years old. In contrast, a woman in her late 20s remembers less physically demanding chores such as dishes and sweeping the floor when she became a teenager in her family of two children. She would not have been expected to mop or clean the bathroom until she was much older. Additionally, seventeen of my informants explained that their mothers taught them how to clean but did not elaborate on the specific work process, prioritizing instead the totality of their work. As such, this section considers accounts of first chores but does not include narrativized memories of actually learning to complete those chores.

As women begin learning the necessary skills of housework, they are similarly taught that housework is their work as women. Consider the following narrator's

realization that she alone would be responsible for helping her mother with dishes in their house:

My earliest memories of housework was Mom making me do it when we lived home because when we lived home ... we had a rule in our house that whoever got home first cooked first or did whatever. And so, my earliest memory is crying because I was the one who had to do the dishes with Mom after so if I didn't want to do them, I always had a little cry. And I'd say I started doing that—maybe I was only 11 or 12. So my responsibilities were to do the dishes, to keep my room clean, even as a teenager, so me and my sister had to keep our room clean but my brother didn't (Generation II).

This woman, now a married working professional, grew up in the 1960s and 1970s in a nuclear family consisting of two parents—who both worked outside the home in non-fishery occupations—and two siblings (one male, one female) close in age. Her mother was methodical about her housework, spending every Saturday morning completing a consistent routine of ritualized tasks and chores. The children were literally and figuratively cut off from areas of the house during the weekly cleaning; to ensure the children would not step on the newly washed and waxed canvas kitchen flooring, for example, her mother would position the dining room table against the kitchen door so that no one could enter. As such, surely the narrator has memories about housework that date before her early pre-teens. Yet in responding to my asking about her earliest memories of housework, she offered what was presented as a humorous story—that of having a little cry—set in the larger context of her accepting that her elder brother would not share her new responsibilities.

This woman's experience growing up in the 1960s and 1970s is consistent with other women in Newfoundland. As Marilyn Porter writes, "The allocation of tasks to girls and boys, and their training as children is a fruitful area in which to examine the

causes and development of the sexual division of labor” (1991, 5). Young girls, such as the one above, would have been allocated tasks similar to their mother’s while young boys in St. Lunaire-Griquet in these decades would not have had housework responsibilities. Instead, they would have had chores consistent with the work their fathers did outside the home. This sexual division of labor continues today in St. Lunaire-Griquet. As Sheri-Lynn Peyton (born 1986) recounted, both she and her brother had chores, but the work differed:

KC: You said you first started to have chores when you were a teenager.

Would that have been on Saturdays too?

SP: Kind of, pretty much I guess everyday. Because well obviously you would make your bed and clean up your room but like help Mom with the supper dishes and stuff like that. Kind of like almost everyday kind of thing. But now on Saturdays you would help out more I guess.

KC: Did your brother have chores too?

SP: Oh yeah. He would have to do his room and stuff too. Probably his chores would be more like if the wood had to be brought in or stuff like that rather than actual housework or cleaning whatever (2014).

As both children grew up well after the family fishery that necessitated hard work by men, woman, and children for every generation that preceded theirs, this woman and her brother had separate, gendered chores. The distinction between women’s and men’s work is clear. Although the brother would have been responsible for keeping his room tidy, his work more closely mirrored their father’s responsibilities. In asking parents of teenage children about their current chores, women indicated that they are more lenient with their boys than girls. As one woman noted, “I know I shouldn’t be but I’m a bit more lenient with [my son] because he’s a boy.” Although women acknowledge their sons and daughters should be treated equally in the policing of housework, daughters are consistently granted fewer leniencies. In their connecting of indoor and outdoor work to

women and men respectively, the women I interviewed reveal their understanding of housework to be part of women's gender performativity (see Butler 1990).

These narratives are also representative of a system of reward or punishment whereby housework acts as a gatekeeper of sociability. As Judy Earle pointed out, "The faster you got it done, the faster you were allowed to go out and play" (2014). Different families interpret the extent and nature of children's chores depending on a variety of factors, including the family size and whether or not both parents are employed outside the home. Similarly, for families that assign chores to children, leniency is often granted more often than punishment for non-completion, whereby women will do the work themselves. It is fair to say teenagers in St. Lunaire-Griquet have fewer chores than their parents and, further, that there are fewer repercussions for not completing the ones they have. However, for some children, and particularly those from a generation or two ago, completing one's chores earned a parent's permission to enjoy social and leisure activities. Consider the following narrative:

My first memories of housework was when I was a child, maybe 7 or 8. Saturdays were and will always be scrub day at my mother's house. The housework had to be done before anyone had the privilege of going outside to play. I always took the living room dusting and vacuuming chore. At such a young age I felt sort of important to be big enough to help my mom out. My sister, being older, loved to sleep in on Saturday morning so of course that would lead to many arguments when she did get up and want to go out and play, or later out with friends as a teenager. I always felt bad for my sister. The many yelling sessions, the screaming 'you're lazy' (Generation II).

Here, the narrator, a former resident of St. Lunaire-Griquet, recounts a nuanced, complex introduction to housework. The sense of pride and importance she feels at being old enough to help her mother is juxtaposed by the pity she feels for her elder sister who, it seems, does not share it. In many ways, the young women being "forced" to privilege

housework over social time or leisure as pre-teens and young adults mirrors the reality for many women in their current lives. The narrator suggests several important values inherent in her earliest work; having an industrious, good work ethic is a salient lesson here, especially as compared to her “lazy” elder sister. Similarly, the narrator’s sense of importance suggests she is comparing her work to her mother’s. Her mother sacrifices leisure time—and thereby prioritizing family interests ahead of her individual interests—and the narrator similarly recognizes her own involvement as important to maintaining the home. Interestingly, these values are connected to evaluations of “clean” and “dirty,” explored more fully in the next chapter.

Finally, these narratives doubly function as first experience memories that help women contextualize the multiple meanings implicated by their earliest work. As Robinson writes, first experience memories can take the form of personal experience narrative, elaborating on the memories of the first event in a successive pattern of events in a person’s life (1992, 223). In the following narratives, offered by two women a generation apart, there emerges a sense of the many responsibilities that converge in one memory. Both women were one of the older children in large families. Neither grew up in houses with indoor plumbing or electricity, necessitating physically demanding housework and many chores:

It was non-stop. There were nine of us kids and then mother and father and our uncle lived with us. Now we couldn’t do much when we were in school but I know when we’d get home from school we used to have to make the beds and do the dishes and sweep and mop the floor and emp[ty] the pail [laughs] because we didn’t have no toilets then. And I can remember going down to the beach and washing out the mop in the salt water. So we’d have a nice clean mop for each day. Washing clothes and stuff too and helping with cooking and stuff. We had many more chores to do besides that. I used to help milk the cow (Generation II).

My earliest memory is about when I was 7. I had to, well I was one of the older children so I had to do housework to help out, you know, help Mom out, wash, scrub clothes on the scrubbing board. A big old wash tub and a scrubbing board, scrub it on the board and pin it on the line outside to dry and scrub the floors and make bread (Generation I).

These women's first accounts of housework highlight the amount of responsibility each had as children. In their personal histories, it seems their narratives about developing domestic skills help organize their memories, which, as Robinson argues, are "also utilized in retrospective and prospective evaluations of self and experience" (1992, 223). Rather than offering one unified, fully developed memory of a particular event, these narrators present all their earliest chores in retrospect of the totality of work they did as children and young adults.

The multiple meanings implied by narratives about women's earliest housework responsibilities present a connected narrative about learning one's place within the family and, later, within the community. For women with brothers close in age, their first chores function first to teach them the necessary values and skills to complete the work they will do as adults, and second to teach them the labor division of men's and women's work in St. Lunaire-Griquet. As adults reflecting on their earliest housework, my informants suggest the acquisition of skills was in conjunction with the acquisition of knowing housework as women's work. Further, this category of housework narratives comments more broadly on the construction of femininity in St. Lunaire-Griquet whereby housework is connected to gender performativity. These narratives indicate several desirable qualities of St. Lunaire-Griquet women that are communicated through housework: prioritizing family work ahead of one's own leisure time, having a strong work ethic, and knowing one's role in the family's work responsibilities.

NARRATIVES ABOUT DOING HOUSEWORK WITH/FOR OTHERS

All the sisters, we used to go down after we got married, all of us, and used to go back and clean Mom's house. We would all do it together (Louise Bussey, born 1943).

In reflecting on her mother's kitchen space, Diane Tye writes: "The space is cramped with one person, let alone more. Later in my life, I will reflect on how the design of kitchens with enough room for only one person sentences women to lone service" (2010, 1). Here, I will assess how housework, most often solitary work, changes when done with and/or for others. Houses in St. Lunaire-Griquet today certainly allow more space for women to work together in the house, and yet housework does not regularly seem to be social work. Instead, housework is often a barrier to leisure time and social gatherings. Even though children (and sometimes husbands/partners) help women with chores, often the individual tasks are done alone.⁵ In describing their housework, women consistently reported that they primarily work alone and, moreover, prefer it that way. For many women, and particularly those with young children, this alone time is welcomed as a time to complete one's work without distraction. As single mother Jenny Carroll said, "I like to be alone when I'm cleaning. I turn up my music and enjoy no one being around" (2014). Having usually been taught by their mothers the skills necessary to complete housework by their teenage years, women in St. Lunaire-Griquet (after they leave their childhood home) do the majority of their housework alone. Social housework, then, provides a rare opportunity for women to combine sociability with their domestic labor.

When I asked my informants if they had ever done any cleaning outside their homes, the majority indicated that they had done very little that was not paid work. Mavis

⁵ Albeit, some chores—especially dishes—accommodate more than one person.

Hillier (born 1958) and Louise Bussey (born 1943), both actively involved in their churches, described a social gathering to clean their church or Parish Hall:

It's just women. Well if we're doing anything, like that need a man, he'd be there ... We do the windows, and we do all the pews, and we probably see if there's any spots on the walls. We don't usually do the walls like you know but if there's either spot around or anything like we clean it. [KC: How many women would you say are there?] There are probably six or seven of us. We go down and we cook our dinner and we does our work (Bussey 2014).

Right now we have to do it my way because I'm the Chair and where I can't be in chemicals. If I can only clean with vinegar, we do the same. We just buy gallons and gallons and when we're cleaning the floors we use a gallon, probably two gallons ... Usually all the ladies go, ten of us. We just pick a day and just go in and do it. We usually take a day and make a social. And when we go in like at one o'clock and we'll have supper and invite our men in for supper like make it a little social too (Hillier 2014).

Importantly, both these women hold leadership positions on the women's committees responsible for maintaining the buildings and organizing social events for the members. Although I did not ask them to elaborate on who delegates the tasks, I suspect the Chair plays an integral role, particularly in the advanced planning and preparation for the cleaning days. Both these women and their peers negotiate their cleaning responsibilities by creating a social event whereby each woman still relies on her own labor for the task assigned to her, but the totality of their work contributes to the maintenance of important structures within the community. Descriptions such as these suggest a powerful way women contribute essential work to sustain their places of worship and sociability, as well as exert their agency over important community structures. Their labor within these buildings often mirrors their work at home whereby their responsibility is for cleaning activities. Similarly, men's absence from the cleaning events (providing there are no tasks requiring a man's work) creates a female-exclusive space whereby cleaning skills get

transferred to the community for the greater good. Thus, their communal cleaning represents an important manifestation of women's household work outside the home in arguably the most important community social buildings.

Women extending their domestic labor beyond the home for community good have been observed in other areas. In the early twentieth century in Flin Flon, for example, Luxton notes women worked together to initiate change for the community's good (1980, 31). Hilda Murray observed that women in Elliston, as in St. Lunaire-Griquet, were responsible for giving the church a yearly thorough cleaning (2010, 198). As in many communities, women's collective labor has many positive outcomes. Yet cleaning, what I consider to be valuable, time-consuming work women complete at home, is most often not group work. In considering that most paid labor done in St. Lunaire-Griquet in the past (fishing, processing fish, working on the fish plants) would have been done with other people, the solitary nature of housework is noteworthy, particularly considering that women find it preferable to work alone. Although Mavis and Louise's women's groups enjoy the social aspect that comes after the day's cleaning, they did not indicate that the actual cleaning was something they enjoyed doing together. Another informant noted that she and another group of women clean another church in the community but that there is no social bonding afterwards; in her words, they "get in, get it done as quick as possible, and get out." As such, I am not surprised that this category of narratives comprised a small section of my findings. Despite social cleaning offering women an opportunity to combine sociability with housework, this opportunity may not be sought out or desirable.

Within private homes, housework can, at times, be a way to negotiate new social relationships and adjust to new situations. This was particularly the case for newly married women who lived with their husband's family for the first couple years of her marriage, shadowing her mother-in-law and learning how to do housework in an apprenticeship role. This practice is consistent with other parts of Newfoundland whereby in earlier generations, a newly married couple lived with the husband's parents until their own house could be built. As Ann Marie Powers and Diane Tye write about Placentia Bay, a place where it was customary for a bride to move to her husband's community, the new wife relied on a mother-in-law as she provided mentorship in gender performativity in a new setting (2011, 59). For the women I interviewed who had experienced this situation, they spoke of it as largely a positive experience where they were treated fairly and they later were better able to organize their own households:

KC: So when you were with your mother-in-law, did you help her clean the house too?

Oh yes. Yeah, my mother-in-law, well she had [my husband's sister], right? So she was home, she wasn't married. And [another sister] is another one that was home, she lives in Springdale now. And [my husband's brother], I think [he] was born too, anyway. They was—she was really good to me. I used to help her with whatever, make breads, we'd take turns making bread, me and the other two girls, and cleaning Friday and Saturday just cleaning the walls around, doing all the scrubbing on Saturday.

[...]

KC: What was that like to finally have your own place and you had to do all the housework yourself then?

Yeah well it was different, you know, because you had a bigger responsibility and when you had his mother, you had someone to tell you what the next thing to do? Like clean or scrub or—now it's your turn to make bread ... So it was different. But I managed (Generation I).

This woman and her mother-in-law appeared to have a good relationship and it is clear she appreciated the older woman's structure and organization. This narrative speaks not

only to the positive social and hierarchical relationships negotiated through housework, but also reaffirms the importance of order while completing household tasks. Here, it is clear that the mother-in-law was the ultimate authority and delegated the chores based on her own routine and what she felt was the correct way to complete housework. By showing the young wife an order of tasks that works for her, she is effectively teaching her to be a good housekeeper, and thereby a good woman. In some situations, control was exerted by the mother-in-law to negotiate the new social relationship, and the new bride ultimately deferred to her authority. These experiences nonetheless would have been lessons in gender performativity as Powers and Tye observed in Placentia Bay (2011). Other married women have had to negotiate situations whereby they perceived a difference between the way they kept house and their mother-in-law's household:

She wasn't a dirty woman but she was more for outdoors. There was lots of clutter around, piles of comic books and things. And that wasn't the way I was used to living so I did a lot of cleaning. And I remember one day [my neighbor] came over and she said, 'My, this is the cleanest I've ever seen this house.' I never forgot it (Generation I).

[My mother-in-law] had her arm broke so I used to go in then and do her floors and she showed me what she wanted done and I did it exactly how she wanted it done which was probably a lot of unnecessary work but it was what she was expected to do. She'd use Sunlight soap with the scrubbing brush.

KC: The first time you helped her, were you nervous?

Oh yeah, and she was mad because she couldn't do it she had her arm broke and she was really upset about that she couldn't do her bread, she couldn't do her regular stuff that she would normally do and she didn't want anyone cleaning her floors! She probably felt useless. Well I've actually heard her say that, 'I wish I could do that, I don't want anyone to do that for me, I wish I could do it myself.' So she was really upset that someone else had to come in and do her cleaning for her (Generation II).

These narratives suggest a process of navigating a new social situation. In the first case, the newly married woman seeks to make her new household life as close as possible to

her standard of cleanliness. Although she did not mention how the more “outdoorsy” mother-in-law reacted to her cleaning, I suspect the difference in their standards had to be negotiated. In the second, a younger woman must learn how to complete work at her mother-in-law’s house to a much different standard. Her mother-in-law exerts control over the situation by the younger wife conforming to her way of cleaning even though she felt it to involve lot of unnecessary work. Interestingly, both of these descriptions suggest that a woman’s individual cleaning process and techniques are not always open for criticism in situations of power differentials. Although the woman in the first description exerts agency in her new home through her extensive cleaning, she does not openly critique her mother-in-law’s (lack of) housework. Instead, her cleaning implies her criticism, which we can only assume was transformative considering it solicited such a memorable comment by the neighbor. Similarly, the woman in the second narrative reinforces her mother-in-law’s opinion of her as a clean woman; rather than asking a daughter, for example, the mother-in-law chooses her. As such, by adopting her mother-in-law’s technique and process, she strategically provides proof that she knows how to clean to her mother-in-law’s standard. Further, this proof is significant because although her mother-in-law would likely visit her house and know her to be a clean woman, opportunities to observe the cleaning process that achieve the clean house are rare. These examples notwithstanding, the majority of a woman’s housework will be done alone in her own home. Thus, when women come together to clean with/for others, the resulting narratives comment more broadly on the maintenance and negotiation of social relationships. In addition, women’s combined efforts to clean and maintain important social structures suggest ways women exert agency and control, ultimately contributing

their work to the community's essential buildings for sociability. Due to the majority of women I worked with not having cleaned with other women in memorable ways that elicited narratives, this category of narratives about housework were less prevalent than the other two elaborated on in this chapter. As such, the descriptions I did collect offer valuable insights on the way social relationships are negotiated through housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

NARRATIVES ABOUT BAD HOUSEKEEPERS: THE OCCUPATIONAL ANTI-HERO

Every time Mom would come home from work and our house looked lived in, she would say, 'Susie White's⁶ or Betty's was never so dirty!' Saturday was cleaning day at our house, from top to bottom everything had to be done and then Mom would come home from work and do it all over because it wasn't done good enough (Generation II).

While growing up in St. Lunaire-Griquet, I perceived a difference in how women with so-called dirty houses fit into the community. Although there are women who are viewed as being extremely, and perhaps unnecessarily, clean, narratives about these women are not widely circulated. Conversely, I remember several narratives I had heard about dirty or rumoured-to-be dirty houses. Thus, when I began my fieldwork, I would delicately try and lead my interviewees to share these narratives I remembered and perhaps gather ones I had not heard before. The narratives presented in this section were gathered both from my interviews and from my questioning people I knew would share them. I must also point out that some of these narratives detail very personal information about people still living in the community and, as such, I struggled to represent them in a way that minimizes the risk of offending anyone.

Typically, narratives about so-called dirty housekeepers are told in small, intimate groups. By extension, they distance the members within that group from the perceived

⁶ All names in this section have been changed.

dirty behavior. That is, by sharing personal experience narratives about a reputedly dirty housekeeper, that person and their confidantes are essentially confirming their own cleanliness. Consider the following narrative whereby a group of the narrator's teenage classmates obtain "proof" that their friend's mother did not regularly clean her house:

I just remember the boys talking about how dirty this house was and that it was never cleaned so they wanted to prove it with a test and decided to put a piece of bologna in the entertainment center cupboards, which was one of the side coffee tables that matched actually, and it was during the summer when both parents were gone but closer to the end and even once they came back, the bologna was still there and it went super bad before it was even discovered, which proved nothing was cleaned there for a few months or so (Generation III).

This narrative is interesting because although someone who was at the house when the event took place recounts it, her (male) peers were the ones to obtain "proof" of their friend's mother's poor housekeeping. Similarly, no moralization or overt criticism is expressed; in fact, the narrator went on to talk about how unfair it was that the mother, a woman who works full-time outside the home, received the most criticism for being dirty. As such, the listener must, as Robinson suggests, extrapolate the intended meaning and interpret it within the context of other narratives told about housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet (1992).

Certain women carry the label of "dirty housekeeper," although it does not necessitate their exclusion from the community's social network. Some do, of course, stand out for years and invoke a series of narratives detailing the extent of their dirt:

I always think about, when you're talking about dirty housekeepers, I always think about this lady, this older woman and you always, everyone always talked about how her house was dirty. And she died, this lady, and the clergy went to her house and they says he sat—and there was a rumor going around in town that before she died, that she had cockroaches. So they said the clergy went in and set in the house and he looked on the wall,

on the chair that he was going to sit on and the cockroaches was crawling up the wall (Generation III)⁷.

In those times, cleanliness was next to godliness. Everyone knew there were families that were dirty—like Susie White—and she was just plain dirty. One time someone was there for lunch and she was going to heat up a can of beans and Susie went to get the pot from under the stove and the cat was in the pot. She took the cat out and put the pot on the stove and heated up the beans without cleaning it out. Now I call that dirty. Another time we were up cleaning the school and after we had done all the scrubbing with the mud, Susie said, ‘Well there’s no use letting a good bucket of water and suds going to waste.’ And she picked up her dirty scrubbing cloth that she had cleaned the floor with and washed down her old face with it (Generation I).

Coming from a house where scrubbing was a well-known weekly chore it was certainly a shock to my young system to be faced with Betty’s house. The house was old, an eye-sore. Dirty curtains in the windows, the windows that had curtains anyway. The interior wasn’t much more attractive. Old worn out floorboards that had long seen a piece of linoleum bigger than a deck of cards and in desperate need of a good cleaning. Dirty dishes littered the cabinets ... cabinet doors missing, a broken, rundown old and dirty sofa opposite the kitchen table. And there is just something about the smell of a house that has never seen a good scrubbing that when you walk in it, you can never forget it. And even at the young age of four, I recall thinking how lucky I was to live in the house I lived in. And even though I was so young I somehow understood why I would never want to be ‘worse than Betty down there’ (Generation II).

These women, long dead, were featured in several personal experience narratives I collected, doubly functioning as local character anecdotes (see Tye 1989). They evoke the antithesis of what any “clean” woman in the community would want to be identified as. In other words, within the community’s occupational folklife of housework, they represent the anti-hero.

Much has been written about occupational folk heroes and their role in occupational lore. As Annie Oakland writes, the occupational folk hero is “a heroic,

⁷ Cockroaches are not native to Newfoundland. To my knowledge, they have never been in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

larger-than-life figure, usually a male, who represents the skills, values, and beliefs of an industry, trade, or occupation” (2001, 191). In considering male-dominated workplaces, such as the industrial mines, sailors, and fisherman, it is little wonder that these figures often embody positive—albeit exaggerated—attributes, mixed with elements of danger and the unknown. They comment on what it means to be a good, successful worker and, by extension, a good man. Certainly in St. Lunaire-Griquet, some women can, and do, bolster their social positions by being good housekeepers, the nuances of which I consider in the next chapter. Yet there are few Paul Bunyans in the narratives told about St. Lunaire-Griquet houseworkers. Rather, a much different narrative emerges, one that suggests narratives about bad housework become a tool by which women evaluate not only other women but also themselves. I suggest the anti-hero also represents the skills, values, and beliefs about housework, but through the social distancing that occurs. As one woman aptly realizes at such a young age, she would never want to be compared to “Betty”.

While these tales are what I consider occupational narratives, they similarly function as cautionary tales. In particular, they function to teach women about how not to behave. Of the occupational cautionary tale, Jack Santino writes: “Their function is similar to the parable—they teach. They do not simply document the unusual accident; but they suggest a system wherein the reason for the accident can be determined, and, if the lesson is properly learned, similar accidents can be avoided in the future” (1978, 203). When comparing the occupational narratives about bad housekeepers listed above to other cautionary tales, it is worth pointing out that these stories are more about “social” accidents than physical. The lesson to be abstracted from these narratives is that you must

not have a dirty house; by drawing attention to unusual behaviors of so-called dirty women, women learn that to avoid becoming an occupational anti-hero themselves, they must maintain a level of cleanliness in their houses. These narratives suggest that a level of conformity to the community's cleanliness standards is encouraged to avoid being the subject of gossip and ridicule. I see this conformity as maintaining social ties, as essential in St. Lunaire-Griquet culture as Pocius observed in Calvert (1991, 272). Although the everyday lives of people no longer depend on shared labor as would have been the case during the fishery, there remains a sense of uniformity and community interaction that dictates certain behaviors—cleanliness especially so.

CONCLUSION

In researching women's housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet, women narrativized their work in helping me understand their attitudes and beliefs. However, this was not their only purpose. Personal experience narratives about housework also help women make sense of their experiences and slot them into the cultural framework of what it means to be a woman in St. Lunaire-Griquet and in their society more generally. One of the most prevalent types of narrative women tell is their first experience of doing housework. These narratives help situate their awareness of women's work as well as of accepting a socially constructed responsibility that will largely be theirs for the duration of their adult lives.

Similarly, the less common narratives about women doing housework with/for other women comment on the way housework helps negotiate new and existing social relationships. This class of narratives also comments more broadly on women providing essential work to the maintenance of integral community buildings.

Finally, narratives about bad housekeepers critique the behavior of what I see as occupational anti-heroes, while simultaneously teaching proper behavior and distancing the narrator and audience from the perceived uncleanness. Underlying these narrative categories is the valuations of what it means to be clean or dirty in St. Lunaire-Griquet, explored more fully in the next chapter. Together, a woman's repertoire of narratives about housework positions her within a framework of gendered labor, maintains her social relationships, and contributes to her sense of self and occupational identity.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CLEAN CONTINUUM: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF HOUSEWORK

Building on the findings presented in earlier chapters that consider who cleans, what they clean, when, and how, this chapter attempts to answer why housework holds such value for women in St. Lunaire-Griquet. As such, the following discussion underlies all other findings in this thesis and is offered here.

DISCUSSION: THE CLEAN CONTINUUM AND COMMUNITY VALUES

As Patricia Sawin writes, “Stories are crucial for making sense of experience, but recipients must think critically about their origins, circulation, transformation, and intended audience and the claims they are being used to bolster in current contexts” (2014, 8). In the preceding chapter, stories about bad housekeepers offered valuable information about acceptable behaviors in St. Lunaire-Griquet, as their intent is not to stain someone else’s character but to articulate community norms. Why do these stories remain in circulation? In this chapter, I argue that closely tied to evaluations of houses as “clean” or “dirty” are the vernacular beliefs about cleanliness. Significantly, many values are connected with, and expressed by, cleanliness. As such, what the community members value and perceive as being clean and/or dirty, and the respective valuations connected to both, underlie all other discussions of housework in this thesis. In identifying several aspects of cleanliness that emerged during my fieldwork, I offer the following diagram displaying what I call the Clean Continuum in St. Lunaire-Griquet:

ST. LUNAIRE-GRIQUET CLEAN CONTINUUM

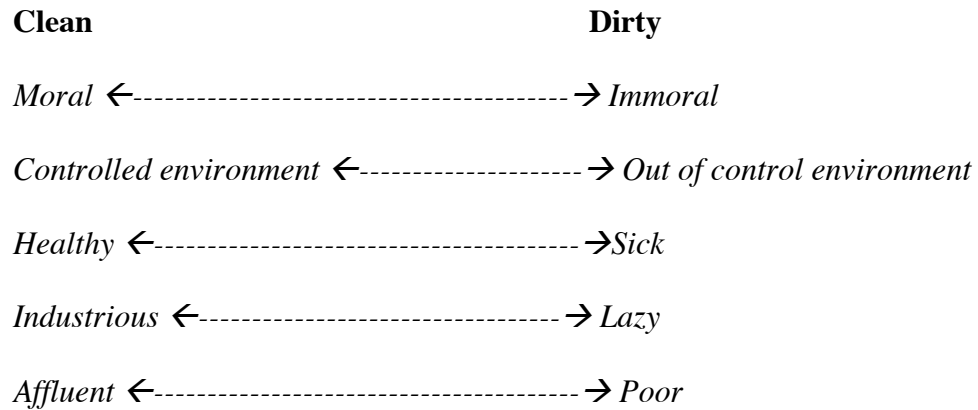


Fig. 5.1: The Clean Continuum

The attributes associated with clean are reflective of positive qualities required for the community's sustainability. Conversely, those traits associated with dirtiness threaten the community's survival. I have created this continuum to reflect the complex relationship between the physical environment and the women who clean it. Each set of binary traits align with community assessments of cleanliness. As such, being labeled as either "clean" or "dirty" denotes a related set of attributes that are perceived as either positive or negative. Importantly, there are linkages between each positive and negative assessment that speak to the complex, dynamic notions about cleanliness.

The meaning of clean is socially and culturally constructed and situated in time and place. As Katherine Ashenburg writes, "In almost every religion, water and cleansing are resonant symbols—of grace, of forgiveness, of regeneration" (2007, 8). Ashenburg, who traces an impressive cultural history of Western understandings of clean from the Middle Ages to today, argues, "The evolution of 'clean' is also a history of the body: our attitudes to cleanliness reveal much, occasionally too much, about our most intimate selves" (13). Although her research deals primarily with body hygiene, many of her

arguments can be extended to the house. In many ways, our houses reflect our value and belief systems. In our daily lives, our bodies constantly interact with the spaces around us; activities such as bathing, eating, and even entering and leaving the house can leave behind the evidence of those activities. The fervor with which we clean these spaces and rid (some of) the evidence of human living suggests our acceptable levels of life within the home. As such, the way we maintain houses through cleaning similarly suggests what we value.

A useful place to start in exploring the Clean Continuum is the moral/immoral category, which, I argue, underlies all other positive and negative assessments of cleanliness and is directly connected to the controlled/out-of-control environment category. Marja-Liisa Keinanen, writing about pre-modern rural Russian Orthodox Karelia through women's household work, argues: "In the Karelian symbolic system, the house, which has commonly been seen as representing a micro-cosmos, stood for cleanliness and order while micro, the profane world outside, represented disorder and filth, even immorality" (2012, 26). Gaining prominence in the Victorian era, the idea of the home as controllable and sacred and the outside as uncontrollable and immoral impacted cleaning. In North America, which saw a period of immigration and the adaptation to new living situations, women were expected to maintain that control and order within the home. The dirty, disorderly outside world is mediated inside the house when it is cleaned (i.e. control is exerted over it).

In Newfoundland, a powerful symbolic example is the vigor with which women cleaned their porches and entryways. As Hilda Murray writes, "A major 'job' was scrubbing the wooden bridge which led to the backdoor of every house. This got

extremely dirty in muddy weather and had to be scrubbed frequently” (169). My oldest informants spoke of similar experiences as children whereby importance was placed on cleaning this area of their homes. Violet Loder, for example, remembers the physically demanding work involved in cleaning the entry way:

I remember we had the deck that was built onto the house. They didn’t—it wasn’t painted. I don’t ever remember it being painted. So every Saturday, I would have to get a bucket of water, Sunlight soap, a scrubbing cloth, and a scrubbing brush, and scrub that old bridge until it was right white!
(2014)

In this way, the entryway symbolizes the transition from the outside to the inside. The meticulous, careful effort required to scrub a dirty, unpainted deck or “bridge” metaphorically sets up the house as a clean zone free of the impure outside. Today, due to technological advances, outside bridges are not as highly prioritized in cleaning routines. Yet the connection to clean spaces as controlled (and thereby moral) remains.

By having a dirty house, a woman raises questions about her sense of morality, as was expressed by the following Generation III woman:

I think if you can go about your day and volunteer and so on and still have a clean house, I think it says a lot about a person. I think you’re a good person. And if you’re leaving your house in a mess and going out and doing this other stuff, you kind of feel like, well maybe you should take a day and stay home, clean up your own mess before you go out and do stuff for others. I think a clean house is very important.

Here, a clear connection is drawn between being considered a good person and having a clean house. To be dirty is essentially to be in opposition to the positive community values of morality, which are deeply entrenched. In addition, this discussion is also connected to personal hygiene, whereby having either a perceived dirty body or dirty house is tied to not having removed or washed away evidence of human living.

Interestingly, this translates within housework to dictate what I identified in Chapter Three as the hierarchy of chore importance. Cleaning the rooms that come in contact with the most human waste and evidence of human waste are often seen as the most important priority. This is even more important for those rooms that anyone outside the family may use, such as the bathroom and kitchen, as also explored in Chapter Three.

Another powerful category represented by the Clean Continuum is that of health/sickness. Connecting cleanliness to disease is, as Ashenburg argues, relatively recent within the Western world (240). Germ theory, which began to be regarded with seriousness at the turn of the twentieth century, instilled a sense that dirt not only included what can be seen, but also germs not visible to the human eye. As germ theory became connected to health policies dedicated to disease prevention, the connection between dirtiness and sickness gained popularity. Rural Newfoundland was an area that, at the turn of the twentieth century, was in grave need of medical care due to “the dangerous occupations at sea and in the woods and chronic low incomes” which led to malnutrition and disease (Cadigan 168). Wilfred Grenfell, an English doctor, established hospitals in St. Anthony and in several communities on the Labrador coast. At this time, tuberculosis contributed to many deaths, and in 1908 the Association for the Prevention of Consumption (APC) was founded. As William Knowling writes, part of the Association’s work focused on preventing spread of the disease in the outports. Proper hygiene, they argued, was essential in disease prevention, and the APC sent volunteers to the outports to instruct in proper and “simple hygienic laws” (1996, 84-85). Policies and public opinion in St. John’s reflected the perceived connection between hygiene and tuberculosis prevention when, in fact, Knowling argues, more resources should have been

distributed to the poorest members of the community (ibid, 104). This connection between sickness and dirtiness persisted and continues today. As one of my informants noted:

KC: Is it important to keep a clean house?

Definitely. A dirty house means more sickness. To me, it means more sickness, more germs around really (Generation III).

The remaining two Clean Continuum categories are most readily evidenced by the narratives in the previous chapter. The category of industriousness/laziness is particularly salient. In order to fully understand why having a clean house connotes such positive values, it is important to understand the deeply entrenched evaluation of work in St. Lunaire-Griquet. In hearing my informants and older community members discuss their experiences growing up in the community during the cod fishery, the prevailing theme is that one must work if one will live. As one woman pointed out, “Back then, if you didn’t work, you didn’t survive.” As noted, at least until the 1960s, regardless of a woman’s involvement in fish production, wages were credited to men. To be recognized as a hard-working person ultimately meant community members were working to survive and, by extension, were maintaining their community. Women worked hard—more than fifty percent of the total workload, as Hilda Murray’s informant argued (2010)—and were recognized for it, but importantly, everyone in the community worked hard. As such, keeping a clean house constructs women not only as proper women but also as proper citizens. One woman remembers that long after her grandmother had passed away, she was told that the older woman “wasn’t much for housework but her wood box was never empty.” This telling statement suggests that ultimately, her grandmother’s lack of

housework skills was made up by her demonstrating work ethic in an equally important way.

Of course, stating that everyone worked hard may be an over-simplification of a complex time in St. Lunaire-Griquet and Newfoundland's history. It is clear, though, that while it is difficult to comment on the totality of the work done in generations past, the perception remains that people worked harder than they do today. Every woman I interviewed argued that women do not keep their homes as clean as they used to and that, in addition, they themselves do not keep their houses as clean as their mothers did. I suspect that rather than comparing their current homes to their mother's in terms of the end result, they instead perceive that they exert considerably less physical effort to achieve clean. In judging work ethic, one's physical effort is an important consideration and, as such, it seems women perceive their mothers as having kept cleaner houses partly due to their perceiving that their mothers worked harder than they do.

Finally, the connection between affluence/poverty is important. I do not intend to grossly misrepresent the community by ignoring class-based inequalities. While there is generally uniformity in income levels in the community, there are notable exceptions. Especially in families that rely solely on a male breadwinner, women have little control over their family's access to wages and purchased goods. As such, women in less privileged households have less opportunity to purchase cleaning products and to renovate old and worn out parts of the house. This means their control and agency within the home—their work space—is considerably challenged as compared to more affluent women. Keeping a clean house is one of the few ways they are able to demonstrate their

work ethic, as evidenced by the following description offered by a woman who no longer lives in the community:

When I think of housecleaning the thing that always pops into my mind is mom saying, ‘Being poor is no excuse for being dirty. Just look at [your Aunt].’ [My Aunt’s husband] was an alcoholic. As such, they had nothing. The house they lived in down over the hill didn’t even have carpet or lino. But mom always said you could still eat off her floors—and a very proud statement that was. I remember my aunt would call down on a Saturday for a can of milk or something and Mom would send me up there with it. There was always a strong smell of cleaning detergent and bleach. She was often scrubbing the wooden floors on her hands and knees when I showed up. That’s a vivid memory from childhood (Generation II).

Here, the narrator vividly remembers the overpowering scent of cleaning products as evidencing her aunt’s cleaning. Her aunt, a stay-at-home mother, would have had little control over incorporating modern features in the home like linoleum and carpet, features that would suggest to others that the family is affluent enough to maintain home renovations. As two of my informants suggest by the following comments, once design features like flooring get worn and are unable to be replaced, they look dirtier than newer flooring regardless of the physical effort exerted in cleaning them:

Maybe it’s not that they’re less picky, it’s that their houses are a lot older so it’s kind of harder for them to keep it clean or to make it *look* really tidy. Older houses seem, once it’s worn, I guess you could say, it’s harder to make it look really clean (Generation II).

You do have your high-class people that nothing is good enough for them anyway. People that have the big houses and lots of money. Someone with a lot more money is more able to keep their houses up to, I guess you could say today’s standard, so it’s much easier for them to keep clean. If you’re doing renovations every couple years then things are almost like new. So it’s easier to keep it clean that way (Generation III).

Women who cannot afford to have their homes renovated regularly are unable to “prove” their house is clean as easily as someone with newer, less worn-out features. Using

strongly scented cleaning products, then, provides powerful, sensory proof that the house is clean. As such, women who are poor—or viewed as being poor due to their house features—are able to overcome other negative evaluations such as immorality or laziness by being clean women. After all, the narrator’s mother uses her sister as a positive example of cleanliness despite poverty.

The Clean Continuum offers a useful tool in conceptualizing the important positive and negative connotations associated with women as evidenced by their housework. To be known as a “good, clean woman,” the ultimate compliment in St. Lunaire-Griquet, is to be seen as a moral, industrious, healthy, financially stable woman in control of her environment. These positive traits are useful in the community. They ensure its survival because citizens with these qualities work towards maintaining the community. They contribute to its sustainability by having the positive qualities the community believes are necessary for it to remain healthy. Conversely, immoral, lazy, sick, and poor women who do not have control of their environment threaten its survival. Rather than consciously adding to the good of the community, they take away from its resources; these women are seen as not properly contributing to their community’s needs. Interestingly, women who lack in any of these categories, such as women who are not financially advantaged, are able to compensate in other categories, such as industriousness, by being known as good housekeepers. Ultimately, the Continuum begins to explain why housework is so important to the community.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

During one of my more lively and enjoyable interviews with an elderly woman in the community, there is a brief, forty-five second pause in my recording when she exits the kitchen to grab her bathroom cleaner to tell me its proper name. In that time, her husband, a kind man who poured me coffee within five minutes of entering their home, struck up a conversation with me and ultimately questioned my interest in housework. Prior to his wife returning, he noted in a half-joking, half-serious manner: “See what you have to look forward to someday?” At the time, I laughed at his comment, as I believe it was meant to draw attention to my being a young woman, and ultimately that I will be fully responsible for my own housework someday. Yet I returned to his throwaway comment many times throughout the course of this thesis because I believe it accurately reflects women’s lived realities in St. Lunaire-Griquet. Whereas my partner and I share domestic labor at our apartment in St. John’s, this pattern is not typical for couples in my hometown. As such, this thesis draws important attention to women’s lives in rural Newfoundland.

Within the sub-fields of occupational folklife and women’s folkloristics, this study legitimizes housework as an occupation that has rituals, techniques, beliefs and expressive forms. This lends credence to other studies into unpaid work. Similarly, this thesis considers the gendering of housework in rural Newfoundland, offering a nuanced account of the lived realities of these women. I believe it has use for future studies in the gendering of work in the province.

Of course, no study is without its limitations. Although I purposely chose to only interview women for this study, I recognize that research about housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet must also include men's experiences. Further research would benefit from their participation, especially comparing how men's varied participation in housework has been slow to change over generations in the community. How does outdoor work that may not be as prevalent in communities outside of Newfoundland (such as gathering wood) contribute to the gendering of domestic labor in rural Newfoundland? Similarly, the changes women observe in their housework over the course of their lives would have been fascinating to consider more thoroughly. In observing three generations of female relatives in the community clean, each faced different challenges related to their life cycle.

My initial inspiration in choosing this topic, the conversation with fellow female graduate students recounted in Chapter Two, made me think about paid housework. In St. Lunaire-Griquet, there is currently one woman who does paid housework for other women in the community. This would have been unheard of until more recent times. In fact, I collected a narrative from a woman who was not part of this study. In reflecting on her childhood in the community (circa the 1970s), she spoke of a woman who hired another woman to do housework for her. This woman was scorned and rumoured to be too lazy to do her own housework, whereas her housekeeper was viewed positively as a hard worker. Unfortunately, other priorities in this thesis did not allow me adequate space to discuss the fascinating progression of paid housework in St. Lunaire-Griquet.

This thesis began with an introduction to women's housework and how it is a fruitful area of study when analyzed within the lens of the sub-fields of occupational

folklife and feminist folkloristics. My literature reviews legitimized women's houses as a workplace and argued that despite being unpaid, solitary work (characteristics atypical in other occupational folklife studies), housework requires conceptual planning, sophisticated techniques, and is a site of expressive culture typical of other work environments. Chapter One also included a working definition of housework as all household tasks that are completed within the house that involve the cleaning, tidying, or manual manipulation of restoring culturally defined acceptable levels of cleanliness and order within the home. Finally, my research goals, methodology and informant biographies were recounted.

In Chapter Two, my aim was to provide an introduction to St. Lunaire-Griquet. I traced the community's settlement history as well as extensively detailed its employment history as a fishing village comparable to other rural Newfoundland communities. In addition to the physical layout of the community, an introduction to its built environment was also included to contextualize the contemporary standard of living. In tracing the historical gendering of work and housework, I argued that there has always been a clear gender division in labor that impacted, and continues to influence, how housework is approached and completed. Finally, considerable attention was placed on exploring the technological advancements that have impacted women's housework. Changes such as the introduction of indoor plumbing, electricity, and roads, as well as the greater availability of commercialized goods have made today's housework almost unrecognizable as compared to previous generations. I argued that despite the many changes in industry and technology, women consistently remain responsible for housework.

In Chapter Three, my attention shifted to women's contemporary cleaning, with particular emphasis on McCarl's concept of canon of work technique. Observing the temporal and spatial ordering of their work, I traced the "work" of housework on a daily, weekly, and annual/semi-annual basis as it takes place in each room in the house. Routines, work process, and aesthetic standards were recounted for each spatial room. In addition, this chapter argued that housework requires a complex system of conceptual planning that dictates what I call the hierarchy of chore importance. This hierarchy influences which tasks are completed and how regularly. In their constantly relying on the hierarchy of chore importance and their individual standards of cleanliness, women's three temporal sub-sections have an integral function of constantly re-envisioning, re-imagining, and re-claiming their interior spaces.

Chapter Four analyzed personal experience narratives women tell about their housework. Three categories of narratives I collected were discussed. Narratives detailing first experience memories of learning housework, the most prevalent narratives I collected, suggest the changing conceptualization of housework as women's work. They also recount women accepting the socially constructed responsibility for housework that will remain theirs throughout their adult lives. The second category, narratives about cleaning with/for other women suggested ways that housework can be a method of maintaining and negotiating social relationships. Although the least prevalent narratives I collected, this category commented more broadly on how women provide essential work for maintaining integral community buildings. Finally, narratives about reputedly bad housekeepers, what I call the occupational anti-hero, were argued to function as cautionary tales, teaching women how not to behave. This chapter argued that narratives

about housework position women within a framework of gendered labor, maintain social relationships, and contribute to their sense of self and occupational identity.

Finally, Chapter Five presented my concept of the Clean Continuum and assessed how positive and negative attributes are associated with assessments of clean/dirty. Each evaluative quality connected to cleanliness (morality, controlled environment, healthiness, industriousness, and affluence) was explored as it is connected to housework. Ultimately, those positive assessments are seen to contribute to the community's sustainability, while negative assessments (the opposite of each listed above) are seen to threaten it. I argued that women who, through circumstances outside of their control, are unable to demonstrate cleanliness by some of the Clean Continuum attributes (e.g. affluence) are able to remain known as clean women by working harder on another aspect (e.g. industriousness). Narratives were offered to contextualize each of these categories. Ultimately, the Clean Continuum was offered as a useful tool in conceptualizing the important positive and negative connotations associated with women as evidenced by their housework and the greater implications for the whole community.

The process of researching and writing this thesis allowed me to work closely with women in St. Lunaire-Griquet that I have come to admire a great deal. It is my hope that my research draws attention to the essential work they do for their families and community and that it inspires more researchers to continue the important work of documenting women's lived experiences. I remain fascinated by housework and look forward to future research into this valuable and important area of study in the lives of women in rural Newfoundland.

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