"Male and Female. In a Pair":

The Emotional Atmosphere Following a Death

And Its Intersection with Gender and with

Public and Semi-Public Space

In Newfoundland through the

1960s and 1970s

By

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Abstract

This thesis considers the emotional atmosphere in the first few days following a death and the customs that expressed and partially created that atmosphere in Newfoundland, during the twentieth century, up through the demise of the house wake. Geographically, the thesis focuses primarily on the areas where I did fieldwork, St. John's, the Bay Roberts area, and two Northern Peninsula communities, Conche and St. Lunaire-Griquet.

I examine solemnity, sorrow, and revelry, which were important components of the emotional atmosphere, and focus on one particular custom for each: the funeral procession for solemnity, crying and lamentation for sorrow, and party behaviours at wakes for revelry. I analyze the ways in which these customs intersected with gender and with the use of public or semi-public space. In St. John's and sometimes in the Bay Roberts area, one of the most public aspects of death rites, the funeral procession, excluded women. In many rural areas, however, both sexes were included, and the structure of the procession often highlighted the participation of both genders.

Similarly, there was considerable variation in how much expression of grief was acceptable. In St. John's stoicism was valued, but in rural areas intense emotional expression was often expected. No matter what the local customs, women usually had more leeway than men to express grief. Emotion might be expressed both in semi-public areas, such as the home during a wake, and in common areas in the community, such as the church and graveyard. When women were excluded from the procession, they thus were also excluded from the most public expressions of sorrow.

Typically, both men and women took part in wakes, but they sometimes behaved quite differently. In communities with significant revelry, men were more active participants in some aspects of partying. They appear to have often been the most dominant and noticeable participants in the semi-public context of the home wake during the night.

The gendered variations of these customs reflected differing ideas about not only appropriate demeanour and emotional expression, but also men's and women's roles in society, particularly their places in the public sphere.

Acknowledgements

ourselves. Although, as a classicist and medievalist, Maura's expertise is in areas where ethnographic fieldwork is not possible, she has good ethnographic instincts and was thus able to make useful suggestions and observations. Later in the project, she helped me track down a relevant quotation from the early medieval period, which I had found in a murder mystery, with no attribution other than the name of its author.

One of my fellow Folklore students, Gary Lundrigan, gave me information about an area of Conception Bay which played a role in that part of Newfoundland becoming one of my study areas.

Ruth Green, who I interviewed for an earlier project, referred me to relatives in St. Lunaire-Griquet, who at that time rented out cabins in the community. Two of those relatives, Doris and Eileen, were helpful in answering questions and providing useful information. Mary Bromley, with whom we boarded in Conche, was also helpful.

Carol and Gary Gleeson very generously let me stay at their house during most of my fieldwork trips to Bay Roberts. This made it possible for me to do considerably more fieldwork in Conception Bay than I otherwise could have. Carol and Gary's daughter, Bev Gleeson, who has an undergraduate degree in Folklore from Memorial, was instrumental in making the introduction that made that possible. In addition to providing a place to stay, Gary suggested a number of possible informants, and Carol took me to many different cemeteries, so that I could photograph them.

Many, many people referred me to potential informants or told me interesting things about death rites. In retrospect, I wish I had taken better notes so that I could give credit to more people. I do, however, particularly remember that Walter Peddle provided useful suggestions before I did fieldwork in Conception Bay and that Father Jim Robertson was helpful when I did research in Conche.

Library and archival staff at a number of institutions provided assistance at various stages. Due to the number of items used and the amount of work required to produce them, my special thanks go to the staff at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, and, particularly, to Patricia Fulton and Pauline Cox at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive.

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List of Abbreviations

MUNFLA   Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and
Language Archive

Encyc. of N & L   *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*

Chapter One: Introduction

Death can generate an enormous number of different emotions. In a recent book

on festivity in conjunction with death rites, folklorist Jacqueline Thursby says,

> The bereaved need to find a balance between restorative solitude, continued social
> interaction—*communitas*, and validation at the time of a death. That can easily
> challenge a sense of appropriateness. Each person affected must find a balance
> between personal response and public demeanor under strained and socially
> dictated circumstances. The question is about how to locate the congruous
> behaviors and relationships within these various events and circumstances. (2006,
> 4)

In a similar way, the bereaved and the communities in which they are embedded need to

find a way to balance different emotional responses at the time of death. That balance

varies not just from person to person, but from context to context, depending, in part, on

religion, class, ethnic background, and region. This thesis explores how the "balance

between personal response and public demeanor" that Thursby describes was negotiated

in Newfoundland until roughly the 1960s or 1970s.

Thursby identifies three reactions to death that appear side-by-side during death

rites: "grief," "the joy that results from festive reunion and celebratory activities with

close family and friends," and "ritual responses to death" (2006, 30). The focus of my

thesis is on a similar set of reactions to death. Specifically, I examine sorrow, revelry, and

solemnity. "Sorrow" refers to the grief that most people feel when someone they care

about dies; "revelry" is the term I use for the festive aspects of death rites; and

"solemnity" covers a large array of formalized approaches to death, as well as the

deliberately-induced sombre ambiance that is often part of death rites. In addition to the

emotional atmosphere itself, I explore the customs that express and create it. Some

customs can be linked easily to specific emotions. For instance, the public display of

intense grief can be an expression of sorrow. Other customs, such as revelry at wakes or solemn religious practices at funerals, may enact emotions in a less obvious way.

Emotional expression around death is neither random nor completely idiosyncratic. As I will discuss in more detail later, it includes a significant cultural component. In particular, it is often gendered, with some forms of emotional expression and behaviour appropriate for women and some for men. Emotional expression is also determined largely by what behaviour is considered appropriate in particular contexts. In the material quoted from Thursby above, she refers to the need for an appropriate "balance between personal response and public demeanor" (2006, 4). Another way to think about this is to consider what is deemed appropriate in the public sphere and what is deemed appropriate in the private sphere. Culturally this has varied with time and place. This thesis explores gendered responses to death in relation to public and private spheres in several communities in Newfoundland.

This study builds on a small body of research on death and death customs in Newfoundland. It extends this literature in its examination of the interconnections between death customs and gender, as well as its discussion of the emotional atmosphere following a death. It also provides a new way of looking at solemnity, significantly expands previous work that has been done on the customary expression of sorrow in Newfoundland, and situates revelry more firmly within the larger emotional context. In addition, this thesis looks at St. John's in greater detail than previous work on death in Newfoundland, which allows for in-depth examination of customs that were significantly different than those elsewhere in the province.

These contributions notwithstanding, I am all too aware that there are gaps in my work and that I may have made errors. Due to the small number of people I interviewed in each community, this work is not and cannot be definitive. Instead, my goal is to

identify trends and begin a conversation about how emotion and gender interact with death customs in Newfoundland. Once a conversation has been started, it becomes easier for other scholars to investigate a topic, add to it, and, where necessary, make corrections.

1.1 Development of Thesis Project

The impetus for this project dates back to the fall of 2001, when I was in the second year of the doctoral program in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland. One of my courses, a class on public sector folklore, required an internship at the Newfoundland Museum. I was asked, for that internship, to interview a woman who had donated some family belongings, an undertaker's outfit and funeral pictures, to the museum. Before the interview, I did some preliminary research into funeral customs in St. John's, since both the undertaker's outfit and the photographs were from that city.

Although my initial research was inconclusive, I developed the impression that women did not participate in funerals or funeral processions in St. John's until well into the twentieth century. This was unexpected, both in terms of what I knew about the world generally, and in terms of what I already knew about funeral customs elsewhere in Newfoundland. I was intrigued and, since I have longstanding interests in both death and gender, decided to learn more about gender roles in relation to death customs.

For a while, I thought that male-only funerals took place just in St. John's. Then, one of my fellow students, Gary Lundrigan, told me that in the part of Conception Bay his family came from there used to be a type of funeral called the "gentlemen's funeral." His mother grew up in Spaniard's Bay and remembers gentlemen's funerals from that community and from nearby communities close enough to be reached by buggy or sleigh

(Jan. 30, 2011 and Jan. 31, 2011).[1] Like funerals in St. John's, only men participated, but, in Conception Bay, this form of funeral was linked to the class of the deceased. This variation on the procession was practiced by the upper classes. The name may refer either to the gendered arrangement of the procession or to the class of the deceased or both.

As my project developed, I decided to focus my research on three different areas of Newfoundland. Two of them were St. John's and Conception Bay, where I knew that male-only funerals had occurred. Since I was also interested in mixed gender funerals and they appeared to be standard in most of rural Newfoundland, I decided to do fieldwork on the Great Northern Peninsula, an isolated and sparsely populated region. On the Northern Peninsula, I chose to focus on one Catholic and one Protestant community. Research in this range of communities allowed me to examine differences in gender roles in relation to religion, as well as to a community's relative urbanization.

As it happened, the informant I had interviewed for the Newfoundland Museum project had relatives in St. Lunaire-Griquet, a Protestant, Northern Peninsula community. Her relatives, conveniently, rented out some summer cabins, so I made arrangements to stay in one of the cabins and do research in that community. Finding a suitable Catholic community was more difficult, as there are relatively few Catholic communities on the Northern Peninsula. I did, however, identify a number of communities with predominantly Catholic populations and eventually settled on Conche.[2]

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[1] Neither Lundrigan nor I have particularly good memories of our original conversations, which probably occurred in 2001 or 2002, so the information about his mother is based on recent e-mails about what he currently remembers. Initially, however, I ended up with the impression that this custom was practiced along much of the stretch of coast between Bay Roberts and Carbonear and that Lundrigran's information came from more than one relative. Lundrigan thinks I am probably right about the last part, but feels he can only vouch for the information about his mother (Jan. 31, 2001).

[2] At this point, my memory of why I chose Conche is not at all clear. I suspect that the existence of previous folklore work on Conche (including George Casey's Master's thesis) was a factor. The relatively high proportion of Catholics in Conche, as

Locating a suitable community in Conception Bay was a little more difficult. I contacted various churches located in several larger communities to ask them to run an announcement about my project in their parish bulletins. The notice described my project briefly and asked people to contact me if they were willing to be interviewed or knew someone who might be a good person to interview. I also got in touch with Walter Peddle, a local resident with a professional background in museum work and strong ties to the Folklore Department at Memorial. The result of that preliminary work was that I indentified two potential informants. One lived in Bay Roberts and the second in Port de Grave, a small community quite close to Bay Roberts.[3] Accordingly, when the time came to pick a specific Conception Bay community in which to base my research, I chose Bay Roberts.

The rest of this chapter sets the context for my thesis. I briefly discuss the history of Newfoundland, with particular attention to the development of the funeral industry and to the communities where I did fieldwork; describe my fieldwork and introduce my informants; and examine the use of space and gender roles.

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reported by the 1991 census, may also have contributed to my decision (see Statistics Canada, 1994).

[3] My memory of how exactly I made those connections is a bit vague at this point, but I think that David Caravan in Bay Roberts responded to the announcement run in his church bulletin and that Walter Peddle suggested Coral Sheppard of Port de Grave.

1.2 History of Newfoundland

1.2.1 Immigration to Newfoundland

Newfoundland's recorded history begins in the 1400s with European fishing. English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Jersey, Dutch, and Basque ships fished off the Newfoundland coast (Andrews 1997, 2; Keough 2001, frame 2, 85, footnote 12; Peere 1992, 54). Initially, ships from other countries outnumbered English ships. Towards the end of the 1500s, Portugal, France, and Spain could no longer send as many ships and could not catch as much fish as the inhabitants of those countries wanted to buy. This decrease in ships from other countries resulted in an increase in the number of English ships and fishermen, as English fishing operations filled in the gap. The English employed a method of drying fish involving the use of beaches and they also built facilities on land (Andrews 5; Keough frame 2, 85, footnote 12). The decline in ships from other countries may also have led English fishermen to be more forceful about their rights in Newfoundland. In any case, they "asserted" some authority of an "administrative or quasi-judicial" nature in St. John's even prior to Sir Humphrey Gilbert's 1583 claim of Newfoundland for England (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

For well over two centuries, there was considerable movement between the British Isles and Newfoundland, most of which did not result in permanent settlement. Initially, there was no reason for the fishermen to live in Newfoundland. The supplies they needed to fish and to sustain themselves had to be imported from Europe, while the fish were sold in Europe. As well, the captains of the ships and the merchants – or those people who organized and funded the fishing – were residents of Europe (Peere 1992, 54). Cultural geographer John Mannion classifies migration to Newfoundland as "seasonal, temporary and permanent." The annual summer fishing trips were "seasonal,"

whereas staying over for at least one winter was "temporary." Both temporary and seasonal migration sometimes led to settlement in Newfoundland (1977, 5).

At least initially, overwintering was related to the fishery. According to local historian Gerald W. Andrews, as of 1600 the fishing operations had developed substantial physical plants, "such as wharves, stages, cookrooms, and flakes" (1997, 8). In folklorist Isabelle Marie Peere's view, there were relatively few places in Newfoundland with the right combination of a harbour that was sheltered and reasonably accessible from both land and sea, as well as adequate flat land near the shore for the necessary structures. Thus, fishing operations which had found good spots did not want anyone else to claim them (1992, 54). For this reason, as well as their investment of effort and time to develop the sites, fishing operations sometimes hired "'winter crews'" or "guardians" to stay through the winter and look after the property (Peere 1992, 54; Andrews 8[4]). The other avenue for early immigration was overt and direct attempts at colonization, which resulted in the founding of small communities in the early 1600s in different areas of the Avalon Peninsula, including Conception Bay, the Southern Shore, and possibly St. John's (Mannion 1977, 5; Handcock 1977, 16).

The settlers came primarily from England (specifically the southwest) and Ireland (specifically the southeast) (Mannion 1977, 5).[5] Some scholars make a sharp distinction between these two ethnic groups along religious lines, equating the English with Protestants and the Irish with Catholics (e.g., see Faris 1972, 13), and Mannion asserts

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[4] Both quotations appear in Andrews; Peere also uses the phrase "winter crews."

[5] Neither the rate of immigration nor the proportion of Irish and English settlers was consistent throughout the period of migration. The Irish did not start to arrive in large numbers until the late 1600s. The rate of immigration from Ireland to the southern Avalon picked up in the 1700s and particularly large numbers of Irish arrived in Newfoundland in the periods 1811-16 and 1825-33 (Mannion 1997, 5-7; Keough 2001, frame 1, 2).

that in Newfoundland the "Protestant:Catholic ratio" is "virtually synonymous with "English:Irish" (1977, 7). Other scholars, however, think this may be an oversimplification. Geographer Gordon Handcock points out that while this correlation seems likely, it has not been well backed up with "empirical evidence" (1977, 24) and folklorist Gerald Pocius argues that the connection between ethnicity and religion is not straightforward (1975, 149-50).

Certainly, there are a number of known exceptions to the general rule. Mannion notes the presence of "Irish Protestants" in some originally Irish Catholic areas close to St. John's (1974, 24, footnote 24) and historian Willeen Keough says that during the 1700s there were a number of "Irish-Protestant mercantile families" on the southern Avalon (2001, frame 3, 183). Several of the first and most influential Methodists in Harbour Grace were Irish, including Lawrence Coughlan (Greene 1999, 15-16). Due to his ability to speak Gaelic, Coughlan was able to win over Catholics who were ethnically Irish (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave"; Pocius 1975, 118).

Conversely, some Newfoundlanders with some English ancestry are Catholic. On the Southern Shore, Irish immigrants who moved into the existing English communities intermarried with the English. Although the Irish were the latecomers, the English, to a large extent, assimilated into this group. Protestants, over time, tended to convert to Catholicism and people in this area may report "Irish ancestry," despite having English last names (Keough 2001, frame 2, 171-72; Pocius 1975, 130-31[6]). Exceptions of this sort notwithstanding, there appears to have been some correlation between culture and religion; historical geographer Kevin Whelan asserts that in Newfoundland Catholicism had, by the beginning of the last century, developed very much along Irish lines (1968, 244).

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[6] The quote is from Pocius (1975, 131).

Despite the establishment of colonies and ongoing immigration, population growth was very slow for the first two hundred years (Mannion 1977, 5; Handcock 1977, 20). In addition, the area was seriously disrupted and the population dropped during the end of the 1600s and the beginning of the 1700s, when the French, who, as discussed below, also had settlers in Newfoundland, made multiple attacks on English Newfoundland settlements (*Encyc. of N & L*, 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "History"). Handcock suggests that the impact on some communities was so severe that permanent settlement may have had, in a number of cases, to start anew (1977, 18). This temporary chaos notwithstanding, the permanent population continued to grow in the 1700s (21). An increasing focus on economic activities (such as sealing and building ships) that, unlike fishing, could be carried out in Newfoundland in winter, helped the establishment of this population along (18).

Mannion implicitly suggests that long-term settlement was dependent on the presence of women (1977, 5). Handcock quotes and paraphrases an early observer, "a Dartmouth merchant," who ties the increase in the number of permanent settlers in St. John's specifically to women brought to that city as household servants, who eventually married men living locally and stayed on (1977, 19).[7] Women residents were so important for population growth that Handcock suggests that the "permanent population" can be better estimated by looking at the number of women and children present, using the formula "2F + C, where F is the number of females and C the number of children," than by looking at the "total numbers of seasonal populations." Handcock calculates that the number of permanent residents was only a quarter of the number of total residents in

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[7] The document Handcock cites is the 1793 Great Britain, House of Commons 10 (1785-1801), *Report from the Committee on the State of the Newfoundland Trade*, testimony of Peter Ougier, 405.

the 1670s,[8] with women comprising just 12% of inhabitants (1977, 19). Similarly, Andrews estimates Newfoundland's female population as no more than 10% through most of the seventeenth century (1997, 16).

In addition to the English and the Irish, smaller numbers of other ethnic groups also immigrated to Newfoundland. Some French settlement occurred more or less simultaneously with English settlement. Placentia (then called Plaisance) was officially settled in 1662, but there is a record of people wintering over there no later than 1610 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "France").[9] As of 1687, there were roughly 15 communities inhabited by the French between Trepassey and Hermitage. These communities had about a thousand residents, but only forty families (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "Settlement"). Plaisance did not survive particularly long as a French colony. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht specified the removal of French settlers and "evacuation" took place in 1714. The community was taken over by the English (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "France").

At least in theory, all of Plaisance's residents relocated to either France or to Louisburg in Cape Breton. There is evidence, however, of unofficial French residents near Port aux Basques on the west coast as of 1734, as well as of fairly early French settlement in Port aux Basques itself. Immigrants from France also arrived later, as did Acadian immigrants from Nova Scotia. These groups settled on the west coast, in the Bay St. George's area, on the Port au Port Peninsula, and in the Codroy Valley, during the 1800s (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "France").

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[8] Specifically in 1675 and 1677, when censuses were taken (16, 19).

[9] The record is John Humphreys' *Plaisance: Problems of Settlement at this Newfoundland Outport of New France, 1660-1690*, pub. in 1970 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "France").

Other immigrant groups included Mi'kmaq from the Canadian mainland and the Welsh. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the most important such group is Scottish immigrants, since it appears that Scottish customs may have influenced the St. John's variant of one of the traditions in which I am interested. Scottish immigration, for the most part, took place relatively late. Initially, it grew largely out of Scotland's trade with Newfoundland. An *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* article suggests that the 1720s is the earliest likely beginning date for this initially "sporadic trade." In 1776, Hunters and Co. launched "a regular trade," which involved shipping goods to St. John's and to Trepassey.[10] Other firms joined it. In St. John's, Scottish merchants established thirty-seven "trading companies" in the years from 1794 to 1835 alone. As of the 1830s, some Scottish traders were operating in the outports. Scottish settlement, like English and Irish settlement, started out as "migratory," but had by the 1830s largely become permanent (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "Scotland").

Later, in the 1890s, people with Scottish ancestry arrived from Canada as employees of Robert Reid, who was himself Scottish and had been hired to take on construction of the railroad. Some of these employees settled in St. John's, due to the location of the headquarters of the Reid Newfoundland Company there in 1902. Both groups of Scottish immigrants to St. John's were largely Presbyterian and from Lowland backgrounds (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "Scotland").[11]

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[10] It is not clear from *The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador's* account whether the Trepassey branch of the firm opened in 1776, at the same time as the St. John's branch, or later (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "Scotland").

[11] Another group of Scottish immigrants arrived in Newfoundland, mostly from Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, between the 1840s and the 1860s, but settled on the west coast. Members of this group typically spoke Gaelic and were Catholic (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "Scotland"). The part of the west coast where they settled is at some remove from all of my fieldwork areas and this group probably had little or no impact on the customs in those areas. Anyone studying death customs in the Codroy Valley or the Bay St. George's area, however, would want to consider its influence.

1.2.2 Political Status of Newfoundland

Newfoundland is currently a province of Canada, but, during much of the time period covered by this thesis, it was not. The political status of Newfoundland, specifically the degree to which it has or has not been independent, has changed considerably over time, with much of the change occurring in the twentieth century. Newfoundland became an independent country in 1855, but in 1934, as a by-product of the Depression and related problems, Britain took responsibility for Newfoundland again. A commission replaced the legislature and took over its work. After World War II, serious attention was paid to Newfoundland's political status. The end result was two votes on Newfoundland's future in 1948. The option that finally received the most votes, becoming part of Canada or "Confederation," was implemented in 1949 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "History" and vol. 5, 1994, s.v. "St. John's"). For many Newfoundlanders, Confederation is a time marker used to date other events and to signify the beginnings of a significant cultural shift, which, among other things, had an impact on funeral and mourning customs.

1.2.3 Development of Funeral Industry in Newfoundland

A full-fledged funeral industry, with funeral homes responsible for wakes, the organization of the funeral, and the preparation of the body, was slow to develop in Newfoundland. Folklorist Peter Narváez says that "the traditional house wake" continued to be practiced in Newfoundland through the mid-twentieth century "and on rare occasions even into recent decades" (1994, 263). The archival manuscripts I consulted, many of which had been written in the 1960s or 1970s, often discussed customs that were still ongoing or that had been practiced until the fairly recent past. The old-style funeral with a wake in the house, a walking funeral procession, and, in rural areas, intense

expression of emotion was well within the living memory of most of my informants. Even so, a funeral industry had, to varying degrees, already started to develop in some of the more populated areas of Newfoundland, before or during the period covered by my thesis.

Services that would be provided by community members in smaller communities were commercially available in St. John's at a relatively early date. Sociologist Ivan Emke describes the funeral industry as developing in a parallel manner to the funeral industry elsewhere in rural Canada, in that the original undertakers typically juggled a number of occupations.[12] He describes Gilbert Carnell as "one of the province's first undertakers" and says that his business, established in 1780, began with him working as "a wheelwright and carriage builder." His involvement in the funeral industry started with the making and delivery of coffins. He eventually, in response to requests, took on an organizational role in the funeral, particularly in relation to the transportation of the body (1998, 19-20).

Folklorist Richard MacKinnon, in his thesis "Carriage-Making in St. John's, Newfoundland," describes in a similar way how carriage-makers diversified their businesses, although he dates the beginning of the process about a century later. In the case of "the larger companies – Carnell's and Oke's," diversification included taking on the role of undertaker during the late 1800s. MacKinnon says, "Not only did this include the activities of embalming and organizing wakes and funerals, but also making coffins and the vehicles used in funeral processions" (1982, 27). MacKinnon reports that the oldest St. John's record of a hearse dates from 1862 (164).

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[12] At the time of these initial, early developments, Newfoundland was, of course, not actually part of Canada.

Mercedes Ryan, writing about St. John's around the turn of the 1900s, also reports that undertakers did not work full time in that capacity; rather they were wheelwrights or carriage builders who built coffins "on the side" (1967, MUNFLA [Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive] ms 68-019D/p. 23, endnote 7). The undertaker would make the coffin, with "his helpers," but was not involved in the preparation of the corpse (16). He closed the coffin, after the service in the house. If the undertaker had employees, they would take the coffin from house to hearse. If he did not, neighbours took on this task. The undertaker was responsible for lining up the funeral procession in the right order and for leading the procession (19-21).

The sale of funerary goods in St. John's was not limited to large pieces of hardware. According to Mercedes Ryan, habits (the robes in which Catholic bodies were often dressed) were typically "purchased from a store (usually run by a woman) which specialized in making them" (MUNFLA ms 68-019D/p. 15). The production and sale of habits was not necessarily formal. During an interview, Mrs. Northcott said of them, "But I never saw those, but they did have them, when I was a child, because, as I said, I remember seeing, sign outside a house and they'd have, 'habits for the dead,' I had to ask what they were" (Oct. 18, 2004). In this case, it sounds like someone was probably running a small business from home, as an adjunct to housekeeping. Similarly, Folklorist Hilda Chaulk Murray's informant Marie Pike reported buying a habit, not from a store, but from an individual: "A woman on George's Street made them. I don't know what her name was but it was down on George's Street that I went to with my sisters to buy Aunt Mary's" (2002, 199). Relatively informal or not, the selling of habits was an early indication of some degree of commercialization, as was the existence of professional undertakers.

According to Emke, "mortuary rooms" (and, presumably, the entire process of embalming) did not become part of Carnell's operation until 1902. Andrew Carnell had, at that point, "become the first licensed embalmer in Newfoundland," following his graduation from a specialized program located in Chicago, the United States School of Embalming (1998, 20). Margo Dobbin, writing about St. John's, indicates both that the undertaker "would come and arrange the body" and that either the local midwife or the local barber prepared the body and was paid a dollar for his or her services (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-011D/p. 7). Similarly, Elizabeth Suzanne Lang's discussion of a death in St. John's in roughly the early 1950s describes preparation of the body as occurring in two parts. A nurse who lived in the neighbourhood came to the house and "closed the womans [sic] eyes, with money, bound her mouth shut with bandage." Afterwards, however, the undertakers took the corpse away, presumably to do more significant preparation. They returned it to the house some hours later (1966-67, MUNFLA 67-012A/p. 3).

Mrs. Northcott described the procedure of removing the body and bringing it back as "sort of halfway between the olden days, when you had to do everything at home. Quite often, the nurse who looked after the old person, they'd get somebody, some woman to come in, too, and they'd prepare the body. Yes. If you could afford it. If you didn't, the family would just [?]" (Oct. 18, 2004).

Even in St. John's, wakes continued to be in the home until after the mid-point of the twentieth century. Although commercialized funeral services were, to some extent, already available, funeral home wakes were late in developing. Philip Field, an informant quoted by Murray, says, "They [funeral homes] were the place where you bought the casket. It was the funeral conductor's office, his business." According to Field, Carnell's was among the earliest funeral homes to offer a place where wakes could be held. Murray

reports that a son of Geoffrey Carnell credits him with starting this funeral parlour in 1956 (2002, 203-04).

In any case, funeral home wakes caught on fairly quickly, but not instantly. Mrs. Kearney told me that her mother's wake took place at home in 1962. She thought that the opening of the funeral home by Carnell's did not occur before her mother's funeral, but instead, "Between nineteen sixty-two, nineteen-seventy, somewhere in there." Mrs. Kearney's father's funeral, however, which took place perhaps six or eight years after her mother's was in a funeral home (Nov. 17, 2004). Gerald Duggan, writing in 1968, reported that some wakes were still being held in the home and that, when they were, the funeral director removed the body to the funeral home, but brought it back within "a few hours" (MUNFLA ms, 68-005C/p. 3-4).

Bay Roberts also had professional funeral services at a fairly early stage. As was the case in St. John's, a full range of undertaking services developed slowly. Wilbur Sparkes told me in an interview, "Well, there was an undertaker here. My grandfather died in 1944, if I take him as an example. But there was an undertaker, here, at that time, a longstanding family, actually, Robert M. Patterson[13] and Son. And after his father died, Nathan carried on until a few years ago. He was the one who had the first funeral home. And, if you wanted a body, as far as I can remember now, when my grandfather died, if we had wanted, say, Mr. Patterson to come down and do the necessary, he would have done it." Nevertheless, it was more likely that community members, often non-professional specialists, would prepare the body (Sept. 26, 2002).

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[13] I have used pseudonyms for members of this family. The son was still alive when I was doing fieldwork, but denied any knowledge of funeral customs when I contacted him. Since he was clearly not interested in discussing this topic, it seemed best not to name him.

When I asked Mr. Caravan if he thought that the existence of a funeral home in Harbour Grace, another good-sized community in Conception Bay, had influenced the development of a similar facility in Bay Roberts, he replied,

> I don't think so, because, well, there's not a lot of social contact with Harbour Grace, but, I think here, it was a natural continuation from the work done by Nathan Patterson, who always attended funerals, who was a supplier of caskets and officiated at the funeral, long before any funeral homes came about. So he predated the funeral homes. And then when they started to become accepted or become part of the normal function, he was one of the – now he might have a little later than some others, but once he started, then it was just a natural continuation from the past to continue with him.

I suggested, "Because he was basically adding services to something he was already doing?" and Mr. Caravan agreed. He said, "And I think that was the way that most people looked at it. And, of course that also coincided with, say, central heating in homes and just the general change in culture" (Nov. 18, 2002).

When I asked Mrs. Hunt when the local funeral home started, she said, "I really don't remember. I would say about twenty years ago. But it wasn't the present funeral home, we have now, which is a very nice one. The first one was sort of converted from a garage into a funeral home and I would never give permission for my children to bring me . . . down to that funeral home. Nor would I take my husband there. But that I would wake him at home. But, now, they do have a decent one here." When I asked her about the first one, she estimated that it had opened fairly soon after her mother-in-law had died, roughly thirty-five to forty years previously (or between 1962 and 1967) (Sept. 27, 2002). Similarly, Wilbur Sparkes said that his wife's grandfather had been waked in that funeral home in 1968 and estimated that it had been started between thirty and forty years previously (Sept. 26, 2002).

In contrast, Coral Sheppard was not sure when the funeral home started, but her estimate or endpoint was much further back in the past. She said, "Oh, I don't really know. I suppose that practically everything changed after Confederation, but before that it was, some people still used their own homes. Yep. But nothing of this happened before Confederation, which was in 1949, of course, but gradually after, that's probably a few years, that people got into them" (Sept. 27, 2002). Despite her relative vagueness about dates, she was able to give me a little history of the funeral industry locally. She said, "Well now, there has been a funeral home in Bay Roberts for a long time, I don't know how long, because Patterson used to have one. But now, when he retired, Moore's had one in Clarke's Beach, so he bought premises in Bay Roberts and he operates two, one in Clarke's Beach and one in Bay Roberts" (Aug. 26, 2004).

The Moore in question was probably Clarence Moore or possibly one of his heirs. Like many other undertakers, Clarence Moore started out doing other work, although, in his case it is not clear from the information I have what the connection, if any, was between undertaking and his previous occupations. Over the course of a number of decades, he was involved in several businesses, beginning with a general store in 1941. Afterwards he was involved in "trucking and wholesaling," but was running a funeral home as of 1980 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Clarke's Beach). The two branches of Moore's seem to be the only funeral homes currently operating in the immediate area.

A different pattern existed in smaller communities, where access to the funeral industry was likely to be minimal or non-existent. According to Emke, the province had approximately fifteen funeral homes as of the mid-1970s. As a result, "many small communities were either without funeral assistance at all (or could get limited help from funeral operators in the larger centres)." Other people were thus responsible for "care of the dead" (1998, 20). There was often a taboo on family members doing work related to

death, so other community members performed such tasks. Typically, such services would be provided for free, although those people who performed them might (if male) be given alcohol, as a matter of custom.

In small communities, some death-related goods might be made or bought in advance by the deceased; this was not at all unusual for coffins or "burial clothes," for instance (Peere 1992, 132). Such goods might also be provided by community members. Mrs. Northcott reported that a friend of hers, who, by context, was probably from Bay Bulls, said of habits that "her grandmother made, she really made them for her family. And then an occasion would come, somebody would die suddenly, so she'd give them the one she'd made for herself or her husband and make another" (Oct. 18, 2004). Peere reports a rather different pattern, in which "shrouds, habits and coffins" might be lent to the deceased's family, on the understanding that replacements would be provided to the lender (133).

The people I interviewed on the Northern Peninsula were not very sure about when exactly the funeral homes were started there, but it was well within living memory. Mrs. Hillier of St. Lunaire-Griquet suggested, "It hasn't been open very many years, might've been twenty-five years, perhaps?" All she was certain of, however, was that the funeral home had not yet been started during the period (1944-47) that she lived in St. Anthony (June 14, 2002). Similarly, Mrs. Hurley in Conche said, when asked when the funeral home opened, "I don't know, but I think it was, maybe fairly recently. Like I have no idea, you know, how many years now, but I don't think it's that long. Like for this area" (June 24, 2002).

Death rites take place within particular contexts, which shape them and structure their meanings. The material culture related to death is part of those contexts. So is the formal or informal infrastructure that provides the material culture and the organization

of the rites. The context for death rites is not, however, limited to aspects of culture

directly related to death. The history, demographics, and individual circumstances of

particular communities contribute to the specific forms that death rites take, as do local

attitudes, beliefs, gender roles, and understandings of space.

1.3 Communities

1.3.1 The Great Northern Peninsula: Conche and St. Lunaire-Griquet

I made one fieldwork trip to the Great Northern Peninsula on the west coast in

June of 2002. The peninsula is three hundred kilometres long (Sinclair and Felt 1992,

59), but has a population of only 15,000 people living in "sixty small communities"

(Omohundro and Roy 2003, 106). St. Anthony, which is close to the tip of the peninsula,

is a relatively large community, with a population of 2,730 in 2001 (Statistics Canada

2004, 575). It is a "service centre" (Sinclair and Felt 1992, 59) and was the site of the

first funeral home in its general area.

Most of the Northern Peninsula (including both the communities in which I did

fieldwork) was part of the French Shore, under two treaties defining and redefining this

area. The 1713 Treaty of Utrech gave England jurisdiction over Newfoundland and

required France to stop fishing along the south coast (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v.

"French Shore"). Migratory fishermen from France retained access to the area between

Pointe Riche and Cape Bonavista (Thompson as qtd. in *Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol.2, s.v.

"French Shore"[14]). They had, however, to leave when the fishing season was over and build no structures other than those they needed to catch and process fish. According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, "French fishermen enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the Treaty Shore" for some time following this treaty. The 1783 Treaty of Versailles redefined the French Shore as the coast between Cape Ray and Cape St. John (1984, vol. 2, s.v. "French Shore").

Settlement on the French Shore took place relatively late. In some ways it was similar to settlement elsewhere in Newfoundland, but the rights the French held in this area, the political situation related to those rights, and the impact of that situation on settlers complicated the process (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "French Shore"). Sociologists Peter R. Sinclair and Larry Felt attribute late settlement to France's right under treaty to fish this area without competition, but acknowledge evidence of a small amount of settlement in the late 1700s (1992, 59). The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* puts the date of settlement somewhat earlier, in the middle of the 1700s. Some settlers became guardians and took care of French fishing property. Others simply kept away from the French. During the Seven Years' War and later the American Revolution, settlement increased more rapidly, as the French did not engage in the migratory fishery during those wars. Despite the delay in settlement, the population of the French Shore had reached more than 3,000 by 1857 and 13,000 as of the 1890s (s.v. "French Shore").

According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, fishing by Newfoundlanders on the French Shore started in the mid-1800s, with many of the fishermen coming from Conception Bay (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet"). France

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[14] The document the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* cites is F. F. Thompson's 1967 *French Shore Problem in Newfoundland* (orig. pub. 1961), App. 191. It appears that the original language came from Article 13 of the Treaty of Utrecht.

was adamant through the late 1700s and much of the 1800s that the French Shore fishing should be reserved for fishermen from France. Britain was, at least at times, reluctant to agree. The French sometimes took action to remove Newfoundland fishermen living and/or fishing in this area. These and related issues were a source of tension between France and Britain and, eventually, between both countries and the colonial government of Newfoundland. Repeated negotiations to address these concerns took place over a period of years. In part because France's migratory fishery to Newfoundland was declining, anyway, France, England, and Newfoundland were finally able to reach agreement on local fishing rights in the 1904 Anglo-French Convention. The French still retained some fishing rights, but the agreement made explicit that their rights were not exclusive (*Encyc. of N & L* 1984, vol. 2, s.v. "French Shore").

The relative slowness of settlement in this area and the area's ambiguous status may have contributed to its situation in more recent times. Sinclair and Felt describe the Northern Peninsula as "one of the least privileged areas of Newfoundland," characterized by "numerous indicators of marginality, such as low incomes, high dependence on welfare and unemployment insurance, a restricted labour market, low levels of education, loss of youth who migrate in search of work opportunities, and minimal access to social services." Although Sinclair and Felt's article is based on research done in 1988, it is unlikely that many of these "indicators" have changed for the better since the imposition of a fishing moratorium in the early 1990s, following the decline of northern cod stocks (1992, 61).[15]

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[15] The initial imposition of a moratorium on cod took place in 1992, due to a decline in fish stocks that had been ongoing over several decades (Power 2005, 38-39; 41). When the Canadian government first imposed the moratorium, it applied only to certain areas and was expected to be temporary. Over the next several years, however, the moratorium expanded to cover all sea areas close to Newfoundland and most species of groundfish. By 1993, the moratorium's length had become "indefinite" (41-42).

The focus of the fishery changed after the moratorium, with shellfish, especially snow crab and shrimp, increasing in importance. According to a 2006 report by the Great Northern Peninsula Fisheries Task Force, shrimp then made up about "60 percent of total inshore landings" (66). Similarly, by 2000, snow crab accounted for almost a quarter of the value of the entire inshore catch (29). The peninsula's total "fish landings" were close to those before the moratorium by the early 2000s. The total value of the fish landed was higher than it ever was before the moratorium (38).

Nevertheless, the local impact of the moratorium was huge. Many fishermen and many employees of fish processing plants were not in a good position "to find gainful income or employment from other species fisheries." Those fishermen involved in the area's "many small boat enterprises" focussed on cod had especially little flexibility in this regard (Great Northern Peninsula Fisheries Task Force 2006, 38). The total number of jobs in fish processing decreased from more than 2000 before the "groundfish collapse" to about 900 in 2004. Some fish plants shut down and large amounts of snow crab and shrimp were sent to be processed in plants in other areas (54-55). The same was true of groundfish and pelagic fish (36). Unemployment remained high: "the regional unemployment levels on a seasonally adjusted basis, is [sic] approximately twice the provincial average of 15%." The population dropped 24% between 1986 and 2001 (66).

Anthropologist John Omohundro and environmental scientist Michael Roy assert that the economy of the Northern Peninsula lacks complexity compared to other parts of Newfoundland. They identify "the only industries" as mining, fishing, and cutting wood. Those occupations were not exclusive. Many fishermen worked as loggers once the fishing season ended for the year. At one point, 22% of workers were involved in the three major industries, but, at the time of Omohundro and Roy's writing, only the logging industry was doing well. It was growing, but mining no longer took place. Fishing was

still more financially important than any other form of industry, but, due to the cod moratorium, brought in less income than it had previously. Omohundro and Roy say the growing tourist industry "has shown signs of becoming an important supplemental industry" (2003, 106-08).

In addition to paid work, many local residents engage in various subsistence activities, including gardening, berry picking, hunting, and cutting wood, to supplement their incomes. Although their lives in many ways resemble the lives of other Newfoundlanders, Omohundro and Roy assert that people on the Northern Peninsula rely more on subsistence activities and are not as financially well-off, at least as measured by household income (2003, 106-07).

1.3.1.1 St. Lunaire-Griquet

St. Lunaire-Griquet is on the eastern coast of the Northern Peninsula, about a forty-minute drive from St. Anthony, on a main road connecting it to several nearby communities. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* describes it as "the service centre for several smaller communities to the north" (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet"). In my estimation, St. Anthony was a more significant service centre, but St. Lunaire-Griquet did have a post office and a convenience store or two, as well as the local secondary school, with the local library housed in the same building. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* gives the distance between the two communities as only twenty km (s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet"), but the road is not particularly direct.

Historically, use of the harbour started well before settlement. Fishermen from Brittany were based in Griquet Harbour and the neighbouring harbour, St. Lunaire Bay, by 1534. Until the middle of the 1800s, the French used these two harbours as "fishing

stations" (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet"). Apparently not much is known about early settlement of either community, but the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* speculates that their early history probably resembled that of the rest of the French Shore, in that the first residents of English ethnicity were responsible during the winter for fishing property belonging to the French, and, consequently, were granted access to fishing areas that otherwise only the French could use.

The earliest information is evidently based on oral history; the *Encyclopedia* reports, "The first settlers are said to have arrived by 1849." The 1857 census gives more official information. At that time, eighteen people were living in Griquet and ten in Fortune, a now-resettled area of Griquet Harbour. St. Lunaire had twenty-two residents. The population grew to 174 by 1874, with many settlers coming from the vicinity of Cupids and Port de Grave in Conception Bay. The French had not been using Griquet for some time, as of 1872. Construction of a combined Anglican school and chapel took place in 1885. The *Encyclopedia* describes it as "the first public building." Construction of a combined Methodist school and chapel followed shortly thereafter. A Pentecostal church was built in 1935. St. Lunaire-Griquet reached a significant size, by local standards, in 1935, when it had roughly five hundred residents (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet").

According to Canadian census information, in 2001 the population of St. Lunaire-Griquet was 822, an 11.5% decline since 1996, when 929 people lived in the community (Statistics Canada 2004, 575).[16] St. Lunaire-Griquet was overwhelmingly Protestant;

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[16] Many figures from the Canadian census are approximations, rather than exact numbers. Judging by available information on the derivation of estimates, the numbers given for very small subsets of people may not be particularly accurate. See the *2001 Census Handbook* for information about differences between the short and long forms (Statistics Canada 2002a, 3, 20), the methods for calculating estimates for total

census figures show 775 Protestants, 30 Catholics and 15 people with "No religious affiliation" (578-79). The census was less effective in identifying the ethnic backgrounds of the residents; well over half the population (590 people) identified themselves as "Canadian." Other responses suggest the population was mostly of British descent. 185 residents reported being ethnically English, 30 Irish, 20 Scottish, and 15 Welsh. Thirty people identified as Norwegian and fifty-five as Métis (576-77).

St. Lunaire-Griquet is not particularly complex economically. Writing about the late 1900s, the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* describes tourism as "an important supplement to the fishery" (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. Lunaire-Griquet). Implicitly, most wage earners worked in one or the other. Since the collapse of the fishery, tourism has probably become more important. At the time I was there, the community had a set of rental cabins, a motel, and a nice restaurant.

My fieldwork experience in St. Lunaire-Griquet was frustrating. While I had done fieldwork before, I had never gone into a community unfamiliar to me nor conducted fieldwork under fairly tight time constraints. Not only had I never been to St. Lunaire-Griquet before, but I had almost no previous experience with rural Newfoundland. In addition, I am shy enough to make it difficult to contact and meet with strangers. While this was a problem to some extent during all my fieldwork, in St. Lunaire-Griquet, the newness of the experience intensified my difficulties. Communication was a challenge in other ways. To call potential informants, I had to use a pay phone on the porch of the

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populations based on the long forms (20-21), and the use of rounding for the purpose of preserving confidentiality (24). These methods probably also account for the occasional anomaly in census figures, as when Statistics Canada reports that 815 people in St. Lunaire-Griquet said they used a single language at home, but 820 of them said the language in question was English (2004, 577).

building housing the office and store that served the cabins. My lack of familiarity with the local accent caused problems in both interviewing and transcription.

The interview questionnaire I prepared before fieldwork was lengthy and wide-ranging. As the project developed, I began to focus more specifically on certain areas of interest, but those areas had not yet emerged at the time of the St. Lunaire-Griquet interviews. The result was that the information from those interviews was less relevant to the final version of my topic than information from later interviews.

Despite a number of leads that did not work out, I interviewed two informants. One, John Bridger, was in his mid-sixties. Raised in St. Lunaire-Griquet, he had attended school through Grade Three. He was retired, but had in the past worked as a cod fisherman, gone sealing, and occasionally done roadwork. His wife, who was also retired, had worked with severely disabled people in St. Anthony and as a babysitter. Mr. Bridger was an Anglican.

Mr. Bridger had considerable involvement, both past and present, with the work that takes place in a community following a death. This included setting up rooms in the local churches for wakes, coordinating grave digging, acting as pallbearer, sitting up at wakes, and washing bodies. In addition, he had assisted in making coffins. Mr. Bridger's wife also did community work related to death. Through her church's women's group, she was involved in the preparation of meals for bereaved families and she once went with her husband to prepare a body (June 17, 2002).[17]

Minnie Hillier was also born in St. Lunaire-Griquet. Eighty-five at the time I interviewed her, she lived with one of her sons and his wife and child. She had been twice widowed and had thirteen children. Her first husband had been a fisherman and the

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[17] This was at least nominally an exception to local norms Mr. Bridger articulated in the interview, whereby men would prepare male bodies and women female bodies (June 17, 2002).

second husband a labourer who worked on the roads. For the most part, she was a housewife, but after her first husband died, she and the children of her first marriage moved to the orphanage at the Grenfell Mission in St. Anthony, where she worked in the sewing room. Mrs. Hillier had spent most of her life in the community, but she had also lived out of province for a while. She belonged to the Salvation Army. I interviewed Mrs. Hillier twice while I was in St. Lunaire-Griquet. I attempted a follow-up interview by phone, but the tape for that interview did not record and Mrs. Hillier was not willing to do another interview.

Over the course of her lifetime, Mrs. Hillier was involved in some of the tasks female community members performed after a death. For example, in the past, she and her sister made paper flowers to decorate coffins and she reported that she and the daughter-in-law with whom she lived would cook food for bereaved families (June 18, 2002). Mrs. Hillier told me that her mother had prepared bodies regularly and that one of her husbands had done so "once or twice." She, however, had a personal distaste for the task and had not learned exactly what it involved. Her husband had also made many coffins and her mother had made shrouds (June 14, 2002; June 18, 2002). Mrs. Hillier and one of her husbands had at least once cared temporarily for children in a family that had lost another child (June 18, 2002).

1.3.1.2 Conche

Conche, like St. Lunaire-Griquet, is on the east side of the Great Northern Peninsula, but significantly further down the coast, on the other side of St. Anthony. It is relatively isolated even from other Northern Peninsula communities and access is by a long, gravel road. Conche is relatively homogenous and had a population of 263 in 2001.

This was a significant drop (of 23.8%) from the population of 345 in the 1996 census (Statistics Canada 2004, 535).

Folklorist George J. Casey, who grew up in Conche, describes the community as consisting of nine different areas or "geographical settlements" (1971, 1), but the two main subdivisions are Conche proper and Crouse. These two areas of Conche face different harbours (20-22) and the physical separation between the two areas is obvious (even to someone unfamiliar with the area) in a way that divisions between other areas of Conche are not. With the exception of part of Crouse, the inhabited areas of the community are on the Conche Peninsula (19), which the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, describes as "T-shaped." The main area of Conche (where I did all my interviewing) is to the southwest of the harbour it faces and south of the isthmus connecting the peninsula to the mainland. Crouse is on the other side of the isthmus (1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche").

Conche has a long history as a known location with a name. It appears on a 1613 map documenting the 1612 explorations of Champlain (Casey 1971, 24; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche"). Fishing by French and English fishers may have taken place from this site for a hundred years or more prior to first settlement. There are records of fishermen of both groups using Conche Harbour and Crouse Harbour at various times between 1764 and 1792 (*Encyc. of N & L*, s.v. "Conche").

When permanent settlement in Conche finally took place, it initially involved "Irish settlers," whom the French hired as guardians to take care of "fishing gear and property" during the winter (Casey 1971, 32; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche"[18]). The first family to live in the community arrived no later than 1800. Conche had grown to sixteen families comprising 101 residents by the time of the 1857 census,

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[18] The quotes are from Casey (1971, 32).

the first to count the community. According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, they were "all Irish Roman Catholics." This may not be strictly accurate, as the *Encyclopedia* also says that one of the early settlers (who, judging by his last name, still has descendents in the community today) was from Jersey in the Channel Islands. The population swelled during the summer, due to the migratory fishery. In 1858, there were 244 fishermen from France in the community. The French built a Catholic chapel in the community and the priest who led services there was based at Cape Rouge (which is now Crouse) (vol. 1, s.v. "Conche"). The French continued to fish in the area until around 1900 and the French navy maintained the graves of fishermen from France up through the time of Casey's 1968 fieldwork. Casey reports that some previous Conche residents had been "bilingual" and that the death of the final resident to speak French well occurred in 1961 (1971, 36-37).

As of 1901, the population had risen to 298. Although a school initially opened in Conche around 1860, its operation was somewhat sporadic until 1890 and it did not have its own building until 1883. Other additions to the community's infrastructure during the 1900s included a telegraph office in 1912, a nursing station in 1960, and a government wharf in 1981 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche").

The salmon fishery became less important and the cod fishery more so after 1900. Nevertheless, the fish processing facility located in the community during the 1920s canned salmon, as well as making cod-oil. Residents also engaged in sealing. During the early years of the twentieth century, some Conche residents participated in the Labrador fishery. From 1950 on, Conche residents mostly fished inshore, but around 1968 they re-engaged in the Labrador fishery. By the 1960s there was another fish plant in the community (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche").

Conche was incorporated in 1960. At this point, it was growing, in part because of resettlement from other communities. Most significantly, when the Grey Islands were resettled, nine families (including eighty-four people) moved to Conche. The 1966 population was 624, a significant increase from the 1961 population of 552 (Casey 1971, 47-48; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche").

Construction of a road to Conche did not take place until 1969 (Casey 1971, 23). Omohundro points out, however, that there was increasing contact with the outside world by, for instance, radio, snowmobiles, and "bush planes" prior to the road going through (1994, 74). Conche also had coastal steamer service through 1969 (Casey 23; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Conche"). Casey reports that it was possible, between 1965 and 1969, to travel by road to Englee and then to Conche by fishing boat. No method of transportation was reliable all year long, however. In the spring, thawing meant neither snowmobiles or dogsleds had enough snow. The airstrip was also not usable then. Nor was the harbour, if there was "loose drift Arctic ice" in it (23-24).

Casey describes the "original permanent settlers" as being "Irish and Roman Catholic" (1971, 2) and Omohundro says that Conche "maintained an Irish Catholic subculture" (1994, 60). Two of my informants told me that the community was either entirely Catholic or, even more specifically, entirely Irish Catholic (Bromley, Aug. 10, 2004; Dower, Aug. 19, 2004). Nevertheless, the 2001 census shows a somewhat more complicated picture. In addition to Irish ancestry (145 people), residents of Conche also reported English (105), Scottish (35), French (45) and Welsh (25) ancestry. As in St. Lunaire-Griquet, a large number (ninety-five) gave their ethnicity as "Canadian" (Statistics Canada 2004, 537). Since these numbers total considerably more than the population of the community, what many residents actually reported must have been mixed ancestry. The community was strongly Catholic, but, according to the census,

roughly thirty-five Protestants were also in residence (539). The attitudes of my

informants towards Catholicism ranged from devout through irreverent and perhaps

somewhat angry, but none appeared to be simply disengaged. In Newfoundland,

education was historically denominational (Elliott 1998, 1),[19] which, in Conche, meant

that everyone attended a Catholic school.

Casey reports that at the time of his 1968 fieldwork, class divisions were not

important in Conche. He perceives, however, that this was less true in the period 1860-

1930, when there was a division between fishermen (and, implicitly, their families) on the

one hand and a small number of professionals (such as the priest, teachers, merchants,

and medical specialists) who had more connections to "the outside world." The group of

fishermen was not monolithic; Casey identifies four separate "sub-groups." Membership

in these groups depended partly on economic status, but other factors, such as how

hardworking a fisherman was perceived to be, were also involved (1971, 54-57).

At the time I visited, there was a fish plant in the community, as well as two small

general stores, a post office, a small restaurant, and at least one bar. A small museum

opened while I was there. Residents had, however, to go to nearby Roddickton for health

services, gas, and major grocery shopping. In other ways, Conche was self-sufficient.

Despite a relatively small number of children, in 2002 the community had its own K-12

school. It not only had its own church, but was the seat of the local Catholic parish and

the residence of the parish's priest. The priest said regular weekday masses and a regular

Saturday evening mass in the church in Conche, while visiting churches in other

communities in the parish on a rotating basis.

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[19] This changed with the 1997 passage of a referendum making the education system non-denominational (Elliott 1998, 3).

I found fieldwork in Conche much easier than fieldwork in St. Lunaire-Griquet. No doubt, this was partly because I was learning how to do fieldwork in unfamiliar communities. Strategies that I had tried in St. Lunaire-Griquet, but that had not been particularly effective there, worked considerably better in Conche. For instance, the community council and the parish priest were both very helpful when I contacted them trying to find informants. I interviewed four Conche residents and talked to two others who were not comfortable with signing a consent form.

I interviewed Gerard Bromley in person on June 23, 2002 and again by phone on August 10, 2004. Mr. Bromley was in his mid-fifties. Born in Conche, he had spent much of his life there, although he attended university in St. John's and lived in some other Newfoundland communities. A retired teacher, he was still doing some substitute teaching and sometimes fished with his brother. At home, he did much of the housework and cooking, while his wife was a nurse with an administrative position. Like all my other informants in Conche, he was Catholic.

Austin Dower, a retired school principal, was in his early 50s when I interviewed him. He had lived most of his life in Conche, but had spent about four years in St. John's during his childhood and early teens. He returned to St. John's to attend university, where he earned a Teaching Certificate 4. He had also spent a summer in Corner Brook. Mr. Dower worked as a teacher for more than twenty years, but after his retirement took a number of odd jobs, including carpentry, working at one of the local game lodges, and working in the fish plant. His wife had been a teacher and then a housewife. I interviewed Mr. Dower once in person and again by phone in August of 2004.

Betty Gould is the pseudonym for an informant her late sixties, who had spent most of her life in Conche. She had, however, also lived in the Grey Islands, off the coast of the Northern Peninsula, for ten years after her marriage. The Grey Islands were

resettled in 1963 (Casey 1971, 47-48), and she returned to Conche. Mrs. Gould, at the time I interviewed her, spent winters in St. John's. She attended school through Grade 10. She was retired at the time of the interviews, but had earlier worked at the post office and the fish plant and had been a housewife. Her husband was also retired. I interviewed Mrs. Gould twice while I was in Conche.

Jean Hurley, a pseudonym, was in her early fifties when I interviewed her. Mrs. Hurley was born in Conche and spent much of her early life there, but lived away from the community, in St. John's and Toronto, for a period of time as an adult. In 2002, she owned one of the small general stores in Conche and she had previously worked as a cashier, bank teller, and bookkeeper. Earlier, she taught for three years. Her husband was the owner of a trucking company. I interviewed Mrs. Hurley twice during my visit to the community.

1.3.2 Bay Roberts and Nearby Communities

Located in Conception Bay on the Avalon Peninsula, about an hour away from St. John's, Bay Roberts is larger than Conche and St. Lunaire-Griquet and much less isolated. There are a number of other communities nearby, including Port de Grave and Clarke's Beach, where I also did fieldwork. Bay Roberts is now one of the more prominent communities in its general area. This was not always the case, however, and the historical sources I have used are sometimes more focussed on other communities. In particular, one of the most useful sources I found for the history of Conception Bay (Andrews) is about Port de Grave. For this reason, I discuss the history of this entire area as a unit.

Port de Grave is a short distance away from Bay Roberts to the south, on another peninsula. There are a number of small communities on the Port de Grave peninsula,

which visually are much more distinct from each other than St. Lunaire and Griquet or the small neighbourhoods that make up Conche. One of those communities has been called "Port de Grave" (or some variant of that name) for well over two hundred years. The name was originally used, however, not just for that community, but for the entire bay to the peninsula's southeast (now known as "Bay de Grave"). Probably for this reason, even once the name was attached to a specific community, it continued, simultaneously, to be used to refer to a greater or lesser part of the surrounding land area. Currently, the name "Port de Grave" is used for both the community of Port de Grave and for a large part of the peninsula, including the communities of Hibbs Cove, Blow Me Down, and Ship Cove. The communities on the end of the peninsula closest to the mainland are not considered part of Port de Grave (Andrews 1997, 2-4; *Encyc. of N & L*, 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave").

English fishers used Conception Bay in large numbers on a seasonal basis during the last part of the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth. Port de Grave was one of "the early centres of the English shore-based fishery in Newfoundland" (Andrews 1997, 5-6). Fishing boats from England started to arrive annually in Port de Grave no later than the 1590s. Most came from South Devon, but "some of the fishing crews" were from the Channel Islands and from Bristol (8). The ancestors of some Port de Grave residents came from Jersey and Bristol (36).

The Port de Grave peninsula was probably among the first areas of settlement in Conception Bay, with some evidence pointing to a date as early as 1595 for initial settlement by one family and dates in the first half of the seventeenth century for two other families (Andrews 1997, 9, 30; *Encyc. of N & L*, 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de

Grave").[20] In 1610, an early attempt at formal colonization took place at Cupids on the other side of Bay de Grave. Andrews calls this community "the first official British colony" (9) and the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* says that it was "the first systematic attempt at English settlement" (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's"). Cupids had a rocky history and lost its "official" status no later than 1628. A number of the colonists' surnames did not disappear with the colony, however, but continued to be used in Conception Bay, including, in some cases, in Port de Grave (Andrews 12-15).

Andrews thinks that the choice of Bay de Grave for the location of this colony is an indication that the bay was "a focal area of the ancient English fishery" (1997, 15). Conversely, the founding of the colony also had a lasting impact on the relative importance of this area; it "helped to establish the west side of Conception Bay, with Port de Grave at its centre, as the lead area of stable English settlement." In addition, the colony's founding sped up the transition from "the migratory ship fishery" to "a resident fishery" (15). Since a resident fishery cannot exist until there are resident fishermen, by implication the colony's founding also increased the rate of settlement in the area.

More and more fishermen became land-holding settlers or "planters" from 1620 on. Port de Grave was one of several communities in Conception Bay where some planters settled early. Additional planters established themselves in Port de Grave later in the century. The planters, although not as transient as seasonal fishermen, were, on the whole, a relatively mobile lot. Some remained for the rest of their lives, but the greater

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[20] The evidence for these "tenuous claims," as Andrews refers to them in his chart "Founding Families: Earliest Family Arrivals in Port de Grave," may not be particularly reliable (1997, 30). Andrews gives the source for the 1595 settlement as "a document at the Registry of Deeds" (9). Elsewhere, however, he identifies this document as the 1755 "Fisherman's Plantation Book," which credits George Daw with asserting that his family had owned its property for 160 years. Andrews admits that this family's surname does not appear in any other records concerning Port de Grave until 1706 (29-30).

number eventually moved elsewhere. While acknowledging that the number of "resident fishermen" was often quite large, Andrews estimates the "permanent population" of Conception Bay at no more than several hundred throughout the 1600s (1997, 16-17).

In 1697, Port de Grave had the second largest population of men, 116, in Conception Bay. As of 1698, Port de Grave and Hibbs Hole between them had a population of eighteen planters and eighteen women residents. There were forty children in the area by 1702 (Andrews 1997, 21), when the population also included thirteen women. The result was that the ratio of women and children to men was higher in this area than it was anywhere else in Conception Bay (23). According to Andrews, "In this period, Port de Grave possibly had more ingredients of a stable population than any other settlement in Conception Bay" (21).

Donald Badcock, the author of a student paper on Bay Roberts reports that, according to "elderly residents of Bay Roberts," Bay Roberts East was also inhabited before the establishment of the colony at Cupids. He thinks the original settlers were likely fishermen from Jersey. Badcock suggests that overwintering by a small number of people, "to protect the crews [sic] gear from the French, Spanish, and Indians," may have begun in the first decade of the 1600s. Permanent settlement, in his judgement, probably took place between roughly 1650 and 1700 (1968?, 2-3). Nevertheless, as of 1675, there were only twenty-eight residents. They worked in the inshore fishery (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981 vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts").

Andrews reports two additional waves of immigration in Port de Grave: from 1725 through 1770 (1997, 37) and from 1770-1805 (44). During the first period, there was a shift in the origins of the immigrants, as well as the community's economic connections, with Devon becoming more important (36). Despite this immigration, as late

as 1750, there were a maximum of twenty families living in Port de Grave and Bare Need (45). By the end of the century, however, the population was close to a thousand (48).

Bay Roberts also experienced growth, although much of it was at a later date. According to Badcock, there were roughly a thousand residents in 1800.[21] Fifty years later, there were about three times as many. Immigrants from Ireland and Western England contributed to this jump in population (1968?, 5-6).

Perhaps partly as a side-effect of growth in Newfoundland generally, governmental structures in the area became more complex. Bay Roberts became part of the Carbonear Judicial District in 1729, when the system of judicial districts was initially set up. Early in the nineteenth century "three of the oldest and most respected inhabitants" were given authority for "settling trivial disputes" (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). Port de Grave was, as of 1835, the site of a district court. It had a "resident magistrate" up through 1865 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave").

Fishing continued to be important in Port de Grave (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave"), but the community started to diversify economically. Andrews reports that "artisans, merchants and clerics" were able to make their living locally no later than 1800 (1997, 49). The community had a doctor prior to 1760 (*Encyc. of N & L*, s.v. "Port de Grave"). Mercantile trade also developed in Port de Grave. Some people acted in at least a limited way as merchants, starting at the end of the 1600s, when boatkeepers who had to make a yearly trip to England for their own business arranged to also sell the fish of other people in the community and buy supplies for those people with the proceeds (Andrews 49). In 1780 a "fisheries supply and trading outfit" set up shop in

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[21] Badcock includes in the 1800 figure the populations of Coley's Point (with about fifty residents) and North Waters, a community that was "on the [same] neck of land" as Bay Roberts and whose inhabitants later relocated to Bay Roberts (1968?, 5-6).

Port de Grave (*Encyc. of N & L*, s.v. "Port de Grave"). Changes in the market resulted in the development of the credit system in the late 1700s. This allowed merchants to pass some of their risk onto individual fishermen who hired and headed fishing crews (Andrews 50).

Richard and William Newman and Co., a branch of "the vast and eminent Newman commercial empire," opened in Port de Grave in the middle of the 1700s. This branch was Newman's Conception Bay headquarters (Andrews 1997, 52). Newman's was a significant contributing factor to Port de Grave's relative importance during the last part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Some of its agents eventually set themselves up as merchants and founded their own companies. Several people in the community served as middlemen between the fishermen and merchants. Andrews describes Port de Grave as "the commercial heart of the region" during this time (54-55). From roughly 1760 to 1840, the Port de Grave mercantile families had an impact beyond the strictly economic. This group included almost all those who had any amount of formal education, as well as most of "the social and cultural leaders of the area." Its members founded schools, ran religious education, took on various roles in government, were sometimes involved in politics, and, overall, were highly involved in community service (71-72).

Andrews reports that, in the long-term, none of those families remained in Port de Grave. He thinks that their departure correlated with commercial decline (1997, 72). Port de Grave's financial prominence in the region began to fade. Newman's left the community in 1806 (54). Nevertheless, there continued to be merchants in the area even if, at least in Port de Grave, they were not of the same calibre as this particular group, and a social distinction between the merchants and the working class members of the community persisted.

Commerce also began to develop in Bay Roberts. Merchants were working year round in Bay Roberts in 1810, at the latest, when Robert Pack founded a business there (Badcock 1968?, 7; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). During the 1800s, it was one of two communities in this general area to become "major shipping ports" (Andrews 1997, 22-23).

The local fishery diversified to include the seal fishery, as well as a migratory fishery to Labrador and parts of the northern coast of Newfoundland (Andrews 1997, 89; *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). This change in the fishery resulted in financial and manufacturing changes. The more important merchants in Port de Grave had acquired roles in the Labrador fishery by the 1820s (Andrews 95). In addition, the large boats needed for both the Labrador and sealing fisheries could be, and sometimes were, used for trade with foreign countries. The need for such ships stimulated ship construction in Port de Grave (97). At a somewhat later date, boat-building also became a significant industry in Bay Roberts (Badcock 1968?, 8; *Encyc. of N & L,* s.v. "Bay Roberts"). In Port de Grave, all of these changes resulted in increased class complexity (Andrews 97). Although Andrews does not discuss this, it seems likely that similar developments took place throughout this area of Conception Bay.

Changes in the size of the ships used for both sealing and the Labrador fishery made the ships too large for Port de Grave's harbour. As a result, the number of sealing ships based there decreased during the last half of the 1800s. There were none left as of 1900. Many Port de Grave residents continued to be involved in the fishery, but the ships they worked on were, for the most part, based either in Harbour Grace, another Conception Bay community, or in St. John's (Andrews 1997, 88). A long-term side-effect of the development of the sealing and Labrador fisheries was a shift in local residential patterns. The attributes that made Port de Grave well suited to an inshore fishery

prosecuted by small boats were not important to local residents who had become

involved in other occupations, and land in Port de Grave was inadequate in both quantity

and quality. As a result, starting no later than 1840, a number of people moved away

from Port de Grave to other communities, including Bay Roberts, Coley's Point, and

Clarke's Beach (99). Immigration to more distant areas also occurred, with some Port de

Grave residents moving to my other research areas. Port de Grave was becoming less

important economically, less important politically, and less important as a service centre

(101).

Semi-formal religious activity was occurring in the area by the late eighteenth

century. Starting in the 1780s, a Methodist group in Port de Grave met outdoors or in

private homes (Andrews 1997, 148). In 1791 a visiting "Wesleyan evangelist," the

Reverend William Black, reported the presence of thirty Wesleyans in Bay Roberts. A

Methodist "resident missionary" was assigned to the general area in 1816. The Methodist

minister lived, to begin with, in Port de Grave, but Bay Roberts acquired a Methodist

minister who lived within the community in 1877. The construction of an Anglican

church began in 1824 and the construction of a Methodist church took place about the

same time (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). An Anglican church was

built in 1826 in Ship Cove, one of the small communities within the broader Port de

Grave area (Andrews 138).

Protestants were not the only religious group starting to organize. Catholics had

built a chapel on the Port de Grave peninsula as of 1775 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4,

s.v. "Port de Grave"). Bay Roberts had Catholic residents no later than the early 1800s

(*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts). In the Conception Bay area, however,

there was considerable tension between Protestants and Catholics (Pocius 1975, 121).

These religious differences affected settlement patterns in Conception Bay. Initially, Irish

settlers moved into the existing English communities, but, as conflict grew, they were segregated into specific areas of those communities or "were forced to move up the bays" (129). Tensions of this sort resulted in almost all the Catholics in Port de Grave leaving the community during the 1800s. The last remaining Catholic in the community died in 1901 and the Catholic chapel was torn down soon after his funeral was held in it (Andrews 1997, 123, 127-28).

More religious diversification of the area took place around the turn of the twentieth century. In 1887, a Salvation Army Corps, one of the earliest in Newfoundland, was established at Bay Roberts. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* article on "Bay Roberts" does not give the dates of establishment for other religious groups, but does say that as of 1980 Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists were active in the town (1981, vol. 1). At the time I did my fieldwork there were two different kinds of Pentecostal churches locally.

Local schools were started in the 1800s. According to Frederick W. Rowe, a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel school opened in 1818 in Bay Roberts and was relatively good-sized (as quoted in *Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts).[22] The Newfoundland School Society established a school in Port de Grave in 1823 and a Methodist school opened there in 1845. Catholic Port de Grave children went to a school in Northern Gut (now "North River") starting in the 1840s (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave").

Clarke's Beach may have been settled relatively late. According to the 1857 census, it then had a population of 280. This was the first census to count it, but "there are indications that the area was settled" prior to 1857. A number of settlers had

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[22] The work of Rowe cited is his 1964 book, *Development of Education in Newfoundland.*

previously lived in communities on the Port de Grave peninsula. Although fishermen did live in Clarke's Beach, they did not fish locally, but instead were engaged in the migratory fishery to Labrador. During the 1890s, the number of people who fished in Labrador dropped, but, at around the same time, farming became more important and sawmills started to operate within the community. Possibly due to the presence of the sawmills, a company that made "fish casks and drums" was operating in Clarke's Beach around 1920 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Clarke's Beach").

Although participation of Clarke's Beach residents in the Labrador fishery dropped, other people in the region continued to be active in it. In its article "Port de Grave," the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* says, "it has been estimated" that over a quarter "of the area's population"[23] were involved in the Labrador fishery as of 1884 and over 30% as of 1901. This fishery, however, died out during the 1920s (1993, vol. 4).

Bay Roberts became a communications centre, when a cable office was established there in 1910. Badcock describes it as "the largest and fastest transmitting station in North America." Since a cable running across the Atlantic served this station, Bay Roberts residents were the first North Americans to hear news from Europe, up until 1945 (1968?, 10-11). At the same time, the local economy continued to grow in other directions. For a while, a wood-working plant, which had just under 150 employees, operated in the community. The Avalon Coal and Salt Company was another local firm (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). As of 1938 a minimum of six taxi

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[23] The *Encyclopedia* is not specific about which "area" it means, but given that the article is on Port de Grave, the reference is presumably, at a minimum, to that community, and possibly to that whole area of Conception Bay (1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave").

companies and three "general trucking concerns" provided transport for people and goods to and from St. John's (Badcock 10).

Despite economic diversification, the fishery was the most important industry in Bay Roberts through the 1930s. There was, however, a noticeable decrease in fish in the Conception Bay area starting in the 1920s (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"; *Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave"). Port de Grave residents, beginning in the 1950s, mostly fished for cod at some distance from the community. The focus of the local fishery changed to turbot and snow crabs, starting in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the crab fishery crashed in 1984 and 1985, leading to the closing of Port de Grave's crab processing plant (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave").

Although Port de Grave was initially more economically diversified and more important in the region than Bay Roberts, this has long changed. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* reports, "Bay Roberts has for some time been an important business and commercial centre of Conception Bay." As of 1965, there were a number of businesses in Bay Roberts, including banks, insurance companies, and supermarkets, as well as "ten wholesale concerns." A large poultry farm produced 12,000 eggs each day. Fish was still significant at this time, if not as centrally important as it had been in the past. The *Encyclopedia* says that Bay Roberts was "the largest salt-fish producing centre in Newfoundland" as of 1965. There were two fish plants in the community (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts). Not all enterprises that had been established in the community continued to flourish. At the time of Badcock's writing, the cable office, for instance, was down to three employees and not likely to be open much longer (1968?, 12). Overall, however, Bay Roberts had a fairly mixed economy.

Bay Roberts was incorporated in 1951. In 1965, it underwent geographic growth, when it absorbed Coley's Point, the community on the peninsula across the bay to the

south, as well as the greater part of the nearby area of Country Road and the greater part of Shearstown (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Bay Roberts"). As of 1992, Bay Roberts "had become the main service centre for the area" (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Port de Grave"). According to Badcock, "the town has been classed, in recent years, as a wholesale and distributing center for Conception and Trinity Bays" (1968?, 10).

Bay Roberts is a relatively large community. Its population was 5,237 in 2001, a decrease of 4.3% from the 1996 population of 5,472 (Statistics Canada 2004, 15). Most residents of Bay Roberts self-identified as Canadian (3,505), with relatively smaller numbers indicating English (1,840), Irish (585), Scottish (150), German (100), or French (85) descent. A number of people identified themselves as belonging to any of several other ethnic groups, none of which had more than thirty-five members (17). A large majority of Bay Roberts residents were Protestants (4,535), but there were also 585 Catholics, 70 people who claimed "no religious affiliation," and 10 Buddhists (19).

Census Division No. 1, Subdivision L includes Port de Grave, as well as nearby areas (Statistics Canada 2002b). In 2001, it had 1,004 residents, an 8.5% decline from the 1996 population of 1,097 (Statistics Canada 2004, 74). 725 residents self-identified as Canadian, 310 as English, 100 as Irish, 55 as Scottish, 15 as French, and 15 as German (76). Roughly 975 residents were Protestant and 10 Catholic, with 15 residents reporting "no religious affiliation" (78).

Clarke's Beach is roughly 20 km from Bay Roberts (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Clarke's Beach"). It had a population of 1,257 in 2001(Statistics Canada 2004, 35). In this community, more than half the residents (680) said they were Canadian. Most remaining inhabitants indicated an English background (495). Smaller numbers of residents had Irish (145), Scottish (35), French (40), or German (10) ancestry (37).

Protestants were the largest religious group, with 975 residents so identified. There was also a good-sized Catholic minority of 210 (39).

I made several fieldwork trips to Bay Roberts. My first took place in September of 2002 and I returned in November 2002, June 2003, August 2003 and August 2004. I was lucky enough, at the end of my first trip, to run into a young woman who I knew slightly from Memorial University (where she had recently earned an undergraduate degree in Folklore). She and her mother offered to let me stay at their house for future fieldwork trips, which made it easier to make multiple trips. During those trips, I interviewed eight people who lived in or near Bay Roberts.

The Reverend Joseph Burton was a retired United Church minister then living in Clarke's Beach. At the time of the initial interview, he was seventy-two years old. He had been born in Glovertown, NL and spent much of his early life there. He had also lived in a number of other places, including Saskatchewan and Alberta. Within Newfoundland, he had lived in Burin, King's Point, Twillingate, and Bay Roberts, where he worked for seventeen years before retiring and moving to Clark's Beach in 1992. His wife was a housewife. I interviewed the Rev. Mr. Burton twice in person, once in August of 2003 and once in August of 2004.

David Caravan was a retired schoolteacher in his mid-sixties. He was born in the Country Road area of Bay Roberts and lived there at the time of the interview. He had also lived in various other places in Newfoundland and Labrador, including Fogo, St. Anthony, Lewisporte, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Wabush. He had a Master's in Education. Mr. Caravan's wife, Sadie Caravan, made a number of helpful comments during the interviews. I eventually asked her to sign a consent form, so I could use the information she contributed. Mrs. Caravan was born and grew up in Gambo in Newfoundland, but had also lived in Lewisporte, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Wabush.

Like her husband, Mrs. Caravan had been a teacher, but only for a few years. She had spent most of her life as a homemaker. Both the Caravans were members of the United Church. I interviewed them on September 26, 2002 and November 18, 2002.

Mary Hunt, a pseudonym, was born and grew up in Argentia. In 1940-41, the community was resettled, so that an American naval base could be built there (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, "Argentia"). As a consequence, Mrs. Hunt moved to Bay Roberts. At the time of the first interview, she was seventy-nine and had lived in Bay Roberts for over fifty years. At various points in her life, she had worked as a secretary, been a housewife and mother, and had run a flower shop. Her husband, who was deceased, had run a wholesale business, done roadwork, and been a construction project foreman. They had thirteen children. Mrs. Hunt was a Catholic. I interviewed her on September 27, 2002 and June 21, 2003.

Ernestine Jones spent much of her life in St. John's, but, when I interviewed her, had been living in Bay Roberts for about twenty years. Accordingly, I asked her about both St. John's in the past and Bay Roberts in the present. Since my thesis topic later narrowed specifically to the past, the material about St. John's turned out to be much more useful. Mrs. Jones turned 76 shortly after the first interview. She was retired, but had worked as an x-ray technician and, for a short period of time, as a stenographer. She had been widowed at least thirty years previously, and her husband had worked as an electrician. She did not practice any religion, but had been raised in the United Church. Although she had experienced several family deaths, including those of her husband, both parents, and several siblings, Mrs. Jones thought that her experience with death and death rites had been fairly minimal and that, in particular, her knowledge of death customs during the time that funerals were "from a home" was rather sparse. She suspected that her father may have had experience with funerals of which the children were unaware

(June 22, 2003; Aug. 23, 2003). My first interview with Mrs. Jones took place on June 22, 2003. We started to do another interview on August 21 of the same year, but were interrupted at a very early stage, so rescheduled for August 23, 2003.

Coral Sheppard, a pseudonym, was a resident of Port de Grave. She grew up in Hibbs Cove in the larger Port de Grave area. Except for summer fishing trips to Labrador, she has lived in the same area all her life. Mrs. Sheppard was in her early eighties at the time I interviewed her. Her prior work experience included jobs with Statistics Canada and the post office. Mrs. Sheppard's husband had worked as a carpenter, but she was widowed at an early age, while their five children were all under the age of thirteen. Interviews with Mrs. Sheppard took place in September of 2002 and August of 2004. Mrs. Sheppard gave her religion as Anglican.

Wilbur Sparkes was seventy-three at the time I interviewed him. He was born in Lynn, Massachusetts of parents from Bay Roberts and lived in the States during his first few years, but later returned to Newfoundland, where he spent most of his life. His family evidently lived in Bay Roberts for at least part of his adolescence, as one of the stories he told me took place when he was in Grade 11. Later he lived in St. John's for six years and he also spent some time in Port aux Basques. For the forty-eight years prior to the interview, however, he had been resident in Bay Roberts. Mr. Sparkes had both a B. A. and a B. A. in Education. He was a teacher for thirty-eight years, but also had some other work experience, including fishing and raising cows. His wife had been a stenographer and homemaker, who had also taken care of elderly relatives. Mr. Sparkes was a member of the United Church. I interviewed Mr. Sparkes once, in September of 2002. I would have liked to do a follow-up interview, but that did not work out. If that interview had taken place, I probably would also have asked Mrs. Sparkes to sign a consent form, as she made some contributions to the material, which, unfortunately, I felt I could not use.

Finally, I interviewed the Reverend James Min in August 2004. He was then the United Church minister based at Bay Roberts. The Rev. Mr. Min had been born in South Korea fifty-nine years previously and later lived for long periods of time in Toronto and Montreal. When I spoke to him, he had been living in Bay Roberts for four years. Since the Rev. Mr. Min was a relative newcomer to Bay Roberts, I interviewed him about funeral customs in the present only. Unfortunately, this meant that when I narrowed my topic to focus on the past, the information I collected from him, while useful in developing my general knowledge of Newfoundland death customs, was no longer relevant to the thesis.

1.3.3 St. John's

St. John's, the capital city and largest city of Newfoundland, is located on the Avalon Peninsula, on the eastern side of the island. The known history of St. John's begins in the sixteenth century.[24] During the first part of the century, St. John's began to appear on maps. Fishermen from Europe were aware of this harbour and used it. St. John's became a traditional gathering place at the end of the fishing season for ships that expected to be crossing the ocean as part of a group. At this stage, no one lived in St. John's year round, except for English "winter crews" (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

In 1613, the total population was only sixty-two, but the 1600s and 1700s were a time of growth According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, by the time St. John's population reached roughly 700, during the early eighteenth century, it

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[24] The harbour is commonly thought to have been discovered a little earlier than this, in 1497, by John Cabot. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* describes this story as "popular legend" and adds that no one really knows the location of Cabot's landing (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

was most likely the biggest Newfoundland community. The port was still a major focus of the migratory fishery, with roughly a thousand additional men resident in St. John's over the summer (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

Fishing continued to be carried out in St. John's after settlement, and quite a few people were involved in it. Over time, St. John's developed economically in other ways. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* credits St. John's with, over a considerable period of time, being "the major link between the outports and the outside world." Even in the early 1700s, when the population still numbered in the hundreds, the city had developed some economic and occupational complexity. According to the *Encyclopedia*, the residents "consisted primarily of mercantile agents, artisans, labourers and fishermen." Some of the planters no longer fished, but engaged in "petty trade." The city had a "commercial centre" (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

Government also started to develop during these years. The British government appointed a governor for Newfoundland in 1729. The first governor approved a system of magistrates who could deal with civil issues throughout the year and "St. John's became the administrative and judicial centre for the Island." At the same time, a local system for government over the winter by justices of the peace was set up in St. John's (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

The population of the city continued to grow during the 1700s and had reached 3,000 as of 1795. St. John's was becoming somewhat more ethnically diverse at this time. In the early eighteenth century, most residents were English. Although immigration from England continued, there was also substantial immigration from Ireland, to the extent that in 1795 people of Irish ethnicity made up two-thirds of the city's population. Occupation and class were, to a large extent, linked to ethnicity. Merchants tended to be of English or Scottish background. Those people involved in the trades, as well as the proprietors of

stores and public houses, were largely Irish (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

By the turn of the century, St. John's, which already had a history of economic importance in Newfoundland, was becoming even more economically crucial (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's"). The city developed into the "commercial centre" of Newfoundland by the late eighteenth century (Andrews 1997, 48). Between 1790 and 1811, the percentage of the "shipping trade to Newfoundland" that went through St. John's rose from about 43% to 78% (*Encyc. of N & L*, s.v. "St. John's").

The city's central role in Newfoundland government expanded in the first half of the 1800s; Newfoundland's Supreme Court was founded in 1824 and its legislature in 1832.[25] In addition to its responsibilities for Newfoundland as a whole, the legislature also functioned as local city government. The city's infrastructure and the systems for supporting it became more complex during the mid-1800s, with the establishment of several companies providing gas light, water, and fire fighting services. Legislation enabling property taxes, to be used for a sewer system, was passed in 1864 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

The city continued to grow during this period. The population had reached 29,007 by 1891. St. John's also continued to become more economically complex, with a significant number of people employed by relatively large factories, biscuit bakeries, and iron foundries. In addition, a dry-dock which could handle both Newfoundland ships and those from other places started business in 1884 (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St.

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[25] The legislature was based in St. John's from its beginning (*Encyc. of N & L* 1981, vol. 1, s.v. "Colonial Building"). The *Encyclopedia* does not specifically say that the Supreme Court was located in St. John's, but this is implicit in context (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

John's"). St. John's became the Labrador fishery's commercial centre before the end of the century (Andrews 1997, 95).

Governmental functions for St. John's, including responsibility for utilities, parks, streets, and fire fighting, were handed over to an elected city council in 1888. The city had streetcars, run by the Reid Newfoundland Company, as of 1901. That company also provided electricity to the city. Along with its other functions, St. John's took on an educational role in 1925, when what was then Memorial University College opened (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

The 1920s and the Depression were hard on St. John's, but World War II caused a significant turnaround. Both Canada and the United States established military bases in the town and there was a significant military presence of more than ten thousand additional people resident in St. John's as of 1944, not including those military personnel passing through in convoys. In addition, people from the outports moved into town to take jobs building the bases. The population increased from 39,886 in 1935 to 44,603 in 1945. These additional people and projects had a positive impact on the city's economy. In addition, according to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, "North American military personnel greatly influenced the city's social and sporting life" (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

Confederation had a major impact on the city's economy. St. John's, which for a long time had been Newfoundland's "export centre," was no longer in a position to fill this role. According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, "Confederation had a devastating effect on secondary industries, while greatly enhancing the city's role as a service centre." The nature of trade in St. John's changed significantly in the last half of the twentieth century, when exports of salt fish dropped. Instead, importation of merchandise from mainland Canada became more important. Simultaneously, "some of

the larger mercantile establishments became major retailers and wholesalers." Most of the growth in the economy after 1949 was related to the government and to educational facilities (1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

Figures from the 2001 census show a population of 99,182, a 2.7% decline from the 1996 population of 101,936 (Statistics Canada 2004, 135). By local standards, St. John's is relatively mixed, religiously and ethnically speaking. In 2001, the vast majority of the population was Christian, with 52,200 people identifying as Catholic and 38,565 as Protestant. Various other Christian and non-Christian groups had no more than 675 members each. Five thousand people indicated they did not belong to any religious group (139). Aside from the 42,960 people who self-identified as Canadian, the two largest ethnic groups were the English and Irish, with 43,390 and 31,830 members each. Significantly smaller numbers of people identified as Scottish (8,100), French (4,625), German (1,845), Native American (1,170), or Welsh (850) (137).

St. John's is the site of the main campus of Memorial University, as well as of several branches of the College of the North Atlantic. The city has two good-sized malls, several box stores, and some other shopping areas. Starting in the 1960s, "industrial parks" were built in and around St. John's "to house both manufacturing and wholesale" operations (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

Since I live in St. John's, I did not need to concentrate my St. John's fieldwork into short, specific periods of time, but could conduct it when convenient. This made my fieldwork in St. John's much more relaxing than fieldwork in the other communities. I interviewed three people who were living in or near St. John's between June and November of 2004. In addition, as mentioned above, Ernestine Jones, one of my Bay Roberts informants, had lived much of her life in St. John's, and much of the material I collected from her was about St. John's.

Philip Hiscock is an Associate Professor of Folklore at Memorial University. He has also worked as an archaeological assistant, linguistic researcher, electrician, and archivist. When I interviewed him, Dr. Hiscock was in his early fifties. He had spent his whole life in St. John's. He is an atheist, but was raised by Anglican parents. I interviewed Dr. Hiscock in his office on June 10, June 18, and July 12 in 2004.

Margaret Kearney was in her late seventies and retired when I interviewed her. She was born and raised in St. John's, but spent some of her young adult years in Gander and in the United States. She thought that significant change took place during the time she was away and more after her return (Nov. 17, 2004). She now lives in a small community outside St. John's. Mrs. Kearney joined the armed forces in 1944 and later worked in broadcasting. Her husband worked as a watchmaker. Mrs. Kearney had four children. I interviewed Mrs. Kearney on June 29, August 16, and November 17, 2004. The first and final interviews took place in a restaurant close to the university. The middle interview took place in her home.

Marie Northcott was ninety-two when I interviewed her. Aside from two years in Montreal, she had lived in St. John's her entire life. Mrs. Northcott had a bachelor's degree and had worked as a teacher. She had also been a housewife and had done volunteer work. At the time of the interview, she was widowed. She was an Anglican.

1.4 Fieldwork Process

Although I have briefly described my fieldwork in each of the areas where I interviewed, some aspects of my fieldwork require a more general description. For instance, the use of names may require some explanation. I gave the people I interviewed the choice of whether they wanted me to use their names or wanted to be anonymous.

One of the people who preferred to be anonymous requested a specific pseudonym that had particular meaning for her. For the others, I chose what I thought was an appropriate pseudonym. In Newfoundland, specific last names tend to be concentrated in particular areas and particular communities. I tried to choose a last name that was local to the general area where the informant lived. Outside of St. John's, however, I avoided last names present in the informant's community. I was afraid that if I used a community last name with a randomly picked first name, that I might inadvertently name another person in the community.

Since surnames are also strongly identified as being either Catholic or Protestant, I tried to choose a last name that was religiously appropriate for the informant. I am not personally knowledgeable about which last names are deemed to be Catholic or Protestant, so I used two basic strategies to assign names. I relied on phone books for local names and assumed that an English name (or one that sounded English to me) was probably Protestant. The other, more complex, strategy involved using census data to identify nearby communities whose dominant religion matched the religion in which I was immediately interested, using phone books to identify surnames in those communities, and then using E. R. Seary's *Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland* (1988) to check that the ethnicity of the surname was appropriate.

Although I have focussed primarily on my interviews, interviewing was not the only activity I engaged in while doing fieldwork. I visited a number of cemeteries and took many pictures. Since the Bay Roberts Heritage Society maintains notebooks of information about individual local cemeteries, I also spent some time there. To a limited extent, I participated in community activities; I attended church services in Conche and Bay Roberts and went to a meeting of a women's group in Bay Roberts with my hostess. While these activities had very little direct effect on my thesis, I think they were useful in

giving me a general sense of issues related to death, as well as a better understanding of my research areas.

I supplemented my fieldwork with research in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), where I read approximately eighty student papers about death rites. Since the individual papers focussed on many different Newfoundland communities, they allowed me to broaden my discussion beyond my fieldwork areas. This material helped me sort out what was common and what was unusual, so that I could identify general trends. It also helped me to piece together an overview of the funeral industry as it developed in Newfoundland.

1.5 Public and Private Spheres in Newfoundland

One of the focal points of my thesis is emotional expression in relation to public and private spheres. In Chapter Two I will discuss in more detail the ways in which scholars often discuss this issue, but, for now, will simply provide some background on what those spheres looked like in Newfoundland in the past and how they interacted with gender roles. Rural Newfoundlanders had a complicated understanding of public and private space. Houses as a whole did not fall strictly and easily into the private sphere, although certain parts of houses did. Community norms in rural areas were for the kitchen to be public space and other rooms in the house to be private space.

Kitchens, although part of houses belonging to particular families, were readily open to all members of the community. Anthropologist James C. Faris describes them as the location of "visiting, eating, and most daily interaction" and thus connected to "everyday normal outport life" (1972, 154). More recently, Pocius describes the kitchens of houses in Calvert as easily accessible to "neighbors and relatives," who can come and

go via the back door, which is generally not locked, without knocking. The residents of the house also use this room heavily (1991, 228-29). The kitchen is central (G. Butler 1982, 29).

On the other hand, rural Newfoundlanders used a room that was often called the "parlour" much less.[26] According to Pocius, in Calvert this was true even at the time he wrote, and the use this room did get was highly specific. He says, "The parlor is devoted largely to the stranger, to the outsider, to the visitor," and implicitly contrasts this category to community members. In addition to using this room to entertain outsiders, Calvert residents had also formerly used it for events like Christmas and weddings, as well as, as Pocius's informant Kitty Vincent Sullivan points out, for wakes (1991, 238-39). In Faris's description, "only strangers are entertained in the inner part [a local name for this room] (it being a serious breach of conduct to enter the inner part without being specifically invited)." Faris asserts that this room "is associated with formality, reserve, and fear" (1972, 154).[27] Folklorist Gary Butler notes that, with the exception of the association of the parlour with fear, which he thinks may be an idiosyncrasy of Faris's research area, Faris's discussion of the ways in which kitchen and parlour are used is parallel to other accounts. The parlour was very private space, which the inhabitants of the house used only infrequently and other people in the community rarely, if at all (1982, 29).

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[26] This room also had other names. For instance, it might also be called the "inner room" or the "living-room" (G. Butler 1982, 29).

[27] Austin Dower of Conche agreed with the rather limited range of uses that the parlour had. He said, "And downstairs you had a little living room or a little 'parlour,' some people called it. And when the house was built, that was furnished, and then the door was locked. And apart from storing your bit of Christmas goodies in there, nobody got in there, unless someone in the family got married and you were having a wedding, you served a meal in there, if you needed an extra table" (June 24, 2002).

General patterns notwithstanding, the room in use was not the sole determining

factor in how public or private a specific event was. Folklorist Gerald Thomas discusses

"a public tradition" and a "private or family tradition" of a specific genre of folklore in

his book *The Two Traditions: The Art of Storytelling amongst French

Newfoundlanders*.[28] It was not the location in which storytelling occurred that determined

whether it was "public" or "private." According to Thomas, the two traditions were

carried out under identical circumstances, so far as space and time were concerned: "the

same kitchen context, the same winter nights" (1993, 43). Instead, what varied was "the

human context" (46).

A public storytelling performance involved a "well-known storyteller," who was

the focus of the audience, which might be a fairly good size and would consist of adults

and possibly the children living in the household where the event took place. The

audience paid close attention to the storyteller, but, at least when a storyteller was

considered a "virtuoso," did not do anything "which might in any way be considered

disrespectful" (1993, 46).

Thomas describes storytelling of the "private" tradition as taking place in a family

setting, with "the mother, a few older relatives, sometimes the father" doing the

storytelling. Alternatively, "two old friends" might share stories (1993, 43-44). In private

contexts, the number of people involved might be very small, but it could also be

relatively large. Thomas points out that families often were quite large and grandparents

might be present. Given that, according to Thomas's informant Emile Benoit, there might

be twenty or thirty people at a "public" performance (114); it seems likely that larger-

sized family *veillées* might take place in a context with as many people present as

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[28] Thomas bases his discussion of these traditions in part on Edward Ives' 1977 article, "Lumbercamp Singing and the Two Traditions," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 5:17-23.

smaller-sized public *veillées*. Not only were children in attendance in this family context, but the storytelling might be performed for their benefit (43). Whether the family *veillée* was large or small, it tended to be less formal than the public *veillée*. People moved in and out of the room and it was acceptable to make comments or otherwise interrupt the storyteller. When larger groups were present, some of the people present might not listen to the storyteller in anything more than a passing manner, while other people might pay close attention (46). While the kitchen was a public area of the home, an event that took place there was not necessarily intended as a public community event. No doubt other community members did, from time to time, enter the kitchen while a family storytelling event was taking place, but the event was not geared towards those community members.

It is not clear to what extent the division of space described by G. Butler prevailed in St. John's, which in some ways had very different customs than the outports. The only hint in the material I have looked at comes from Murray's *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday*, a book about, not the city, but the farming areas in and close to it. Murray says that the card-playing that sometimes took place within houses "might be classified as semi-public," which might suggest that the part of the house in which they took place was also semi-public, at least for the duration of the card game (2002, 229).

The division of gender roles into public and private spheres in Newfoundland was no more straightforward than the division of space. As Keough, writing specifically about Irish-Newfoundland women in the outports of the southern Avalon from 1750 to 1860, points out, while the concept of a division between public and private spheres, as well as "feminine ideals of domesticity and passivity," did have an impact on Newfoundland, the differences between the "local realities" of the working class on the southern Avalon and "middle class constructions of femininity" were large enough so that these concepts were not readily incorporated into the working class understanding of the world (2001, frame

5, 423). Irish, southern Avalon, working class women were active in the public sphere (frame 4, 331). The same seems to have held true for much of rural Newfoundland until well into the twentieth century.

In sociologist Marilyn Porter's analysis, women operated within "'separate spheres'" and had "autonomy, control, and authority" within their own domain. The areas, which they controlled, were not, however, identical with the private sphere, as generally understood. A different division of space was applicable. Porter suggests that there was a dividing line at the "shoreline or 'landwash,'" with men responsible for the work related to the fishery on the ocean side of that line and women responsible for the work on the land side. Women were in charge of the kitchen, but, as discussed previously, the kitchen, at least in rural areas, was, practically speaking, a "'public'" area of the community. Porter describes it as the "centre" of the community. Community business was often dealt with in kitchens, with women present (1995, 44).

1.6 Gender Roles

I will address gender roles in relation to death rites in later chapters. To provide a larger context for that information, in this chapter I discuss gender roles more broadly. M. Porter and fellow sociologist Sinclair have both pointed out that scholars writing about Newfoundland have expressed different opinions about the status of women. Sinclair indicates that some scholars credit women with significant power. They point to women's work in the fishery, their "control of their sphere of action," and the fact that they were on their own when their husbands were away for extended periods of time for work. Sinclair, however, indicates that this is not the only point of view expressed about women's roles. According to other authors, "men worked less hard, were served first by

women, took the key economic decisions, inherited fishing places and property, and generally expected women to move to their home village" (2006, 237-38).

M. Porter, in her article "'She was Skipper of the Shore-Crew,'" made a similar point two decades before Sinclair did,[29] but, unlike Sinclair, links the divergence in opinion in part to gender. She says that "male anthropologists" tended to emphasize "women's heavy work load, male authority in the family, male-biased inheritance rules, and the practice of exogamy." She credits "feminist studies," on the other hand, with portraying rural women in Newfoundland as "relatively independent, politically and economically, and . . . in possession of a vibrant and positive women's culture" (1995, 34).

In the rest of this section, I will closely examine women's roles and status in a several different areas. In particular, I will look at women's work roles, which have been particularly well-documented and well-analyzed, and two other areas of particular relevance to death: women's participation in religious practice and in performance genres.

1.6.1 Work Roles

Keough asserts that women had important work roles in their homes and in fishing: "In both family and community, they held considerable status and authority. They not only performed vital reproductive work for their households, but also became essential shore workers in family work units in the fishery, and were visible in various other capacities in the economic life of the area" (2001, frame 1, v). While this may have

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[29] Although the version of Porter's essay that I used was published in 1995 in *Their Lives and Times*, Porter points out in a note preceding the text that it had previously been published in 1985, in *Labour/LeTravail*.

been particularly true of the southern Avalon between 1750 and 1860, to a large degree, it was also true of much, probably all, of rural Newfoundland.

It has been well documented that women had significant responsibilities to their households and to their communities that took them outside the house. Their work included not just housework, cooking, and childcare in their homes, but also gardening (Murray 1979, 17-19), haymaking (19), berrying (21-23), and processing fish (13), as well as work, such as cleaning schools and churches, that contributed to the community as a whole (61-62, 140). Even tasks that women with access to modern appliances would think of as home-based might, in rural Newfoundland in the past, have included significant outdoor components. M. Porter points out that the first step in washing clothing was to fetch water and chop wood (1995, 39).

According to M. Porter, much of the work of women in Newfoundland, specifically the "domestic activities," was similar in scope to the work done by women in the American and European countrysides, generally (1995, 37). The factor that makes women's experience in Newfoundland different was their significant responsibilities for the fishery (39-40). Although women did not usually take part in the actual fishing, they were highly involved in the processing of fish. In fact, women tended to handle "the final curing processes" more than men, as men might be fishing at the time such work was done (Murray 1979, 13-14). When fishing was at its busiest, women (along with children) did almost all of "the curing of fish." Keough states that this processing was understood to be the work of both sexes; "women were not merely 'helping' on the flakes and beaches" (2001, frame 3, 222). In the case of the "trap fishery," it was a woman, "the fisherman's wife," who was responsible for the overall work of processing, "including the hiring and supervision of labour" (M. Porter 1993, 47).

Nonetheless, the processing of fish was not an exclusively female task. M. Porter points out that this work was not as heavily identified with women as, for instance, baking (1993, 47). Murray, in her book about Elliston in Trinity Bay, says that some tasks involved in fish processing, such as removing the heads, were deemed to be men's work, but also says that sex roles in relation to fish processing were relatively flexible (1979, 13).

Murray reports that in Elliston there was a principle guiding what work was done by whom, but it was not a straightforward assignment by gender, but rather by gender in combination with season. Children of both sexes did "outside" work, but at different times of year. Girls would go to the root cellar to fetch vegetables in summer, but boys did in winter. Milking animals was a job for females, whether adults or children, in summer, and a job for males in winter. According to Murray, the reason for this division of labour was the much more brutal weather in winter. She says, "If a job involved brute strength or physical hardship such as braving snow, cold, or high winds, it was considered boys' work; otherwise it was girls' work" (1979, 33).[30]

In Keough's analysis, the "outdoor/indoor" schema is too rigid to describe how work was actually carried out. Labour involved "rhythms of complementary work routines," based on what worked best (2001, frame 3, 210). Work was divided up with

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[30] Some of the people I interviewed also talked about women's work roles partly in terms of outside and inside work. Mrs. Hillier in St. Lunaire-Griquet, for instance, told me about making hay and picking berries, both of which are obviously outdoor tasks done in the summer or fall. She also reported being involved in the processing of fish: "If you was big enough to carry a fish, you've have to be on the flakes, spreading the fish. [So?] the women be in the stage, cleaning the fish and everything." She told me about making hooked rugs for the Grenfell Mission, but added, "We didn't do nothing like that summer, now, because all the outside work" (June 14, 2002).

Other women I interviewed understood the outside and inside work system differently. Mrs. Kearney (who, despite being an urban woman, was clearly discussing the outports in this part of the interview) said, "men do the external things" (June 29, 2004). As discussed in more detail later in the text, Mrs. Sheppard saw the gendered division of labour much as Mrs. Kearney did.

considerable "flexibility," but some tasks, such as ocean fishing (for men) and childcare (for women) were strongly gendered (frame 3, 251-52). Other work was less gendered. For the most part "expedience and availability" determined who did what garden work. Some tasks were gendered seasonally. Women, for instance, were usually responsible for milking year round, and, during the summer, tracked down the free-roaming animals at the end of the day, but men dealt with "the stabling and feeding of animals for the winter." The gendered "division of labour" was partially based on how much "physical strength" was required for the task (frame 3, 230-31). In gardening, for instance, "digging and trenching" were typically men's work (frame 3, 228). Even when a task was considered to belong to one gender, some parts of the task might be done by the other gender (frame 3, 253).[31] Women did most of the work of caring for chickens, but men might butcher them (frame 3, 231). When it was deemed necessary, members of either sex might do the work of the other, but "women more often assumed men's duties than the reverse." In particular, when men were away for the seal hunt or the bank fishery, "women were responsible for the entire management of all family work at home" (frame 3, 254).

Keough suggests that, in her context, women often preferred outside work (2001, frame 4, 327). The point of hiring "servant girls," when a family could afford to do so, was to allow the female head of household to concentrate on "more important family enterprises," rather than domestic work. Keough says, "most women did not aspire to 'escape' outdoor work and immerse themselves in housewifery" (frame 3, 233). Other members of the community reacted with "pity or scorn," if a woman could not engage in

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[31] Similarly, Murray indicates that in Elliston some tasks were shared by both genders (1979, 17-20). Despite the evidence that some tasks were shared, however, not everyone agrees that the gendered division of labour was flexible. Even though, as discussed above, M. Porter mentions that both men and women processed fish, she perceives work-related gender roles in Newfoundland to have been "extreme" (1995, 41).

"outdoor work," either for health reasons or because she thought herself "'too grand'" (frame 4, 327).

In addition to work for their households, some women on the Southern Avalon worked for pay. Many worked as servants (Keough 2001, frame 3, 256). Some were "fishing servants" (frame 3, 257) but more frequently, such women worked in the home (frame 3, 260). Women might also take in sewing or laundry (frame 3, 266), sell produce (frame 4, 280), hire themselves out to do farm work (frame 4, 280), take in boarders (frame 4, 288), keep shops (frame 4, 289), or run public houses (frame 4, 288). Sometimes they were paid for nursing or midwifery (frame 4, 300, 304).[32] Some women worked as teachers (frame 4, 312).[33] Some of these jobs could be done in the women's own homes, but others called for greater involvement in the community. For women who taught or who ran shops or public houses, community involvement would have been significant.

Gendered work varied by class. At the same time that working class women on the southern Avalon were leading productive and vigorous lives both inside and outside their homes, middle-class women focussed on "domesticity" (Keough 2001, frame 3, 233). Keough notes that there was a significant difference between the understanding of femininity held by the Irish-Newfoundland population on the Southern Shore and "the middle-class feminine ideals of domesticity, fragility, and dependence that increasingly circumscribed the lives of English gentry women in the area" (frame 1, vi). From the

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[32] Keough points out that, when done for other local residents, rather than "transient fishermen," nursing was over time incorporated into "networks of reciprocal exchange," and payment, if any, was "in kind" (2001, frame 4, 302). For the most part, midwifery was also paid in kind, but court records do document midwives' fees (frame 4, 304).

[33] There were quite a few female teachers on the southern Avalon at this time, but this was not necessarily typical of Newfoundland as a whole (Keough 2001, frame 4, 314).

mid-1700s through the mid-1800s, the stigma attached to the performance of "outdoor work" by middle-class women grew and these women's primary tasks narrowed to raising children and overseeing servants (frame 4, 326). In very bad financial circumstances, middle-class women did have limited job options. For instance, they might run an inn or teach (frame 7, 621). The "most acceptable" way, however, for middle-class women to provide for themselves was to marry (frame 7, 624).

The limitations Keough describes for middle-class women's work may have been local to the Southern Shore, as a few such women ran businesses during the 1800s in Port de Grave. Andrews gives two examples of women who took over the running of their husbands' mercantile firms when the husbands died or were ill (1997, 57, 59). Andrews describes one of these women, Jane Furneaux, as "an energetic business woman." Furneaux, along with her daughter, later ran a store, as well as the first local post office (59-60).

In other ways, however, women in Conception Bay may, at least at a later time, have been less involved in work outside the home. Mrs. Sheppard in Port de Grave in Conception Bay referred to the inside/outside system for classification of work, but in her view the work itself was gendered differently. She said, "The men done men's work outside. They had cattle to tend to, they had nets to look after." She said that men did most, but not all, of the work in any small shop the family had. She added, "but the women looked after the house, all the cooking, the children, their clothes, she mostly made most all of it. That was women's work and the men did the outside work" (Sept. 27, 2002).

Women's contribution to the work of the community did not necessarily consist solely of participation in the work itself. Anthropologist Dona Davis reports that the division of labour in regards to the fishery in a community she calls Grey Rock Harbour

relegated to women the task of worrying about the safety of the fishermen. She says, "It is the Harbour women who actually deal with the risk and uncertainty of fishing. Worrying is one of the jobs a fisherman leaves to his wife." Consequently, Grey Rock Harbour women worried a lot and this was seen as part of women's role in this community (1988, 217). The fact that women had taken on this task, allowed the men to do the work, while downplaying its danger (1986, 138). According to Davis, "Worry is a status enhancing moral duty of women. Symbolically it is the woman's worry that keeps her husband's boat afloat" (1988, 217).[34]

Not only did women have important roles to play in their communities, but their contributions were often recognized. Murray quotes a male informant, Josiah Hobbs as saying, of the fishery, "The woman was more than fifty percent" (1979, 12). From M. Porter's description, his attitude was not unique: "Whenever they are asked, Newfoundland men unhesitatingly credit women with at least half the work of the family. There is an air of something like awe in the folklore descriptions older men give of the women of their youth" (1995, 41). Keough quotes one of her informants as saying "'Women did it all.'" Respect was due a woman who, in addition to doing her own work, took on "a man's work when necessary" (2001, frame 3, 255). The work women did was valued and thought to require as much skill as the work men did (frame 4, 326).

In the St. John's area, there was a greater range of variation in women's lives. Gendered work roles in the farming areas in and near the city were substantially similar

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[34] The pattern Davis reports was not characteristic of all Newfoundland communities. Faris noted that women in Cat Harbour were reluctant to answer his questions about the upcoming seal fishery, whether they addressed relatively pragmatic concerns ("how they thought the men would do") or potentially more emotional issues ("what they thought about their husbands partaking of such a rigorous and dangerous task"). Faris's confusion about the lack of response was resolved by the explanation from one of these women, "'You don't dare say anything, cause if it goes bad, they'll say you witched it'" (1972, 73). In this community, unlike Grey Rock Harbour, it was not admirable for a woman to express emotional interest in her husband's fishing activities.

to those in the outports, in terms of their overall flexibility, the involvement of women in work outside the home, and the distinction between inside and outside work. Murray, in *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday*, says, "The men did the heavy work and, often, work that took them away from the farm, while the women looked after the household duties and helped with farm work outside the home when needed" (2002, 84). The phrase "when needed" included a range of circumstances under which women and girls did a significant amount of the farm work.

Men did more of the work that involved leaving the farm and/or interaction with the public. Murray says that between 1900 and 1950, "farm men appear to have been more socially active than farm women. In most cases it was the men of the family who represented the farm to the customers, to the business world, and to fellow farmers" (2002, 223-34). They also delivered milk (99). Their greater involvement with the outside world extended to buying groceries (although Murray quotes Philip Field, as saying that in his family, his mother made out a list and his father got exactly what was on the list) (225).

While women's duties kept them closer to home than men's did, they were by no means entirely restricted to the house. Outside tasks that might be typically done by women included raising vegetables, removing rocks from the fields, "working at the grass"[35] (Murray 2002, 85), and taking care of chickens (128). Murray describes berry-picking as a task that adult women were more likely to engage in than adult men. In addition to being an outdoor task, berry-picking, judging by Murray's description, was at least sometimes done away from the farm (93-94).

Murray thinks that men, on the other hand, generally did none of the inside work and suggests that her informant Iris Dillon's description of her husband is probably

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[35] I suspect that this activity is probably making hay, rather than lawn care.

typical of men of this time and place: "He was an outdoors man. Once he came in the house 'twas 'get me,' and 'hand me,' and . . . expected to be waited on hand and foot in the house. That's how it was then" (2002, 84, ellipsis points in original).

Gender role flexibility was necessary on "small and medium holdings," where typically the husband had a job off the farm, with the result that other members of the family were responsible for much of the work. Under those circumstances, the wife became "responsible for the day-to-day running of the farm." In such cases, the fact that women generally did not have jobs away from home made them available for what, under other circumstances, might be considered men's work. Murray says, "The woman was the cornerstone, always there." Talking about a specific female informant whose family was in this situation, Murray points out that this informant's experience was roughly similar to that of girls raised in fishing families (2002, 86).

In some cases, the particular circumstances of individual families required flexibility in gender roles. Murray describes families with only female children, in which "the girls had to do what was normally considered boys' work" (2002, 89). Murray also discusses two farm families in which the husband had died and the wife continued to run the farm on her own after the death. Murray points out that both widows had young children and did not have income "from an outside job." The stakes were high for these families. Gerald Kelly, whose mother was one of those widows, reported, "We didn't have to go to an orphanage" (94-95). It seems likely that any social disapproval this arrangement might have generally occasioned was mitigated by the fact that the mother was keeping her family together.

Men did sometimes do work that was typically female. One reason for such flexibility might be desperation in an emergency situation. Murray's informant, Mary Collins, describes how her husband took unusual (if temporary) responsibility for

childcare when seven of her children had whooping cough, and then had measles and German measles, as well as jaundice. She reports that, although her husband worked a full-time job off the farm, when he arrived home and had eaten, he would take over care of the sick children until 2:00 a.m., so that she could get some sleep (2002, 186-87).

Murray mentions several men and boys who raised chickens. In all the cases she describes, however, the focus of the male participants seems to have been different from that of the typical female raiser of chickens. According to Murray, although women did sell eggs, the primary point in raising chickens was to produce eggs for the household, and most households did not have many chickens. The male chicken farmers she describes typically raised large number of chickens, usually (perhaps invariably) for commercial purposes (2002, 128-31). Murray also notes that while growing flowers in a front garden was usually women's work, her informant Robert Halliday reports that one of his uncles took care of the flowers on the family farm and another male member of the family also paid attention to them (81).

In addition to housework and farm work, farmwomen sometimes did work that brought in some extra money. For the most part such work could be done from home. According to Murray, it was not uncommon for women to sell eggs. Her informant Mary Collins described how two days a week her mother transported not only eggs, but milk and butter, into St. John's by horse and cart to sell them (2002, 128). Farmwomen also sometimes provided catering services or ran tearooms, on either an ongoing or occasional basis (168-69). Mary Aylward, as a young, unmarried woman living on a farm, brought in a little extra money by sewing. Later, she had at least some involvement with a store she owned with her husband; Murray quotes her as saying of it, "We fixed that up before we were married and made a nice job of it" (2002, 193).

The relative gender flexibility of these farms notwithstanding, public and private spaces were much more sharply separated in St. John's and the division between them was much more rigid, with women generally more strongly restricted to the private sphere. In historian Nancy Forestell's article, "Times Were Hard: The Pattern of Women's Paid Labour in St. John's Between the Two World Wars," she says that women did work outside the home, but generally ceased such work when they married. A large proportion of unmarried women workers worked in the domestic sphere, as paid servants. Those unmarried women in St. John's who worked were still tied to their family homes (1995, 82). Over half lived at home and a little more than a third lived as servants in the home of their employer (79). Living at home was partly a matter of economics, but also reflected parental desire to retain control over young women, as the fact of working outside the home was, in and of itself, thought to make them more vulnerable "to the dangers of sexual immorality" (82). It was not unusual for married women to bring in some income, but (as was the case with the farm women discussed above) it would be through work they could do at home (76-77).

Even so, women's participation in the work force was increasing at this time. Historian Carla Wheaton, in her article "Women and Water Street: Constructing Gender in the Department Stores of St. John's, 1892-1949," points out that from World War I on, more women started to work and that this is reflected in advertising for "smocks and uniforms for a variety of acceptable female occupations." She notes that the options were "largely limited," but the list she gives includes not only domestic service, but also a range of unskilled, semi-skilled, and professional jobs outside the home: "maid, office or shop clerk, beautician, waitress, nurse and teacher." Women's employment increased again in the 1940s, while World War II was in progress (2006, 112).

There was one significant way in which, during at least part of the 1900s, women were relatively mobile and men more attached to the home. According to folklorist Debora Kodish, a common pattern in rural Newfoundland, as of the 1910s, was for young men to stay in their communities and fish, but for young women of the same age ("early teens") to go elsewhere, with the expectation that they would care for themselves. They were "on their own" at an early age (1983, 139-40).[36] Similarly, Murray's informant Mary Aylward reported that in her parent's generation it was customary for women to marry fairly late in life, at least as compared to her own generation. Her mother had not married until she was thirty-three, but as a young woman in her late teens had gone to the States. Although Aylward does not give the specific reason for her mother's short-term emigration, she makes a parallel with the situation on the Southern Shore, where it was common for young women to go to the States to work as domestic servants, while several of the male children in a family might stay home and fish (2002, 191). While women, at least in theory, led a life centred very much on home, they sometimes had the opportunity for wider experience prior to marriage.

1.6.2 Religious Roles

Women also played important spiritual roles. On the southern Avalon, this was probably, in part, because up until the mid-1800s there was a great shortage of priests. Much of what women did spiritually was family-based, but, at least at a fairly early stage, they also took on "religious authority" in more public ways (Keough 2001, frame 4, 349-50). Bishop Fleming wrote that prior to the 1780s, when official Catholicism was first able to establish itself in Newfoundland, "The holy Sacrament of Matrimony debased

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[36] Kodish does not specify how these very young women supported themselves, but most likely many of them went into domestic service.

into a sort of 'civil contract,' was administered by captains of boats, by police, by magistrates and *frequently by women*" (qtd. in Keough, frame 4, 349, emphasis hers).[37] Women also had important roles in folk belief, or what Keough calls "an alternative belief system" (frame 5, 427).

Protestant women might also have public spiritual roles. Davis describes how a particular woman, "Aunt Lydia," would be "chosen to lead a prayer at prayer meetings" at times when fish were hard to find. This was supposed to invariably have increased the availability of fish by the next day. The efficacy of this woman's prayers was thought to stem from her character; she was "so good and kind" (Davis 1988, 217).[38] Methodist William James Button, a merchant of New Melbourne, Trinity Bay reported in his 1921 diary, in a brief summary of who led which Sunday church service, "service cond. by wife in the a.m." (May 15). This was not usual in his context. In the course of work for the Maritime History Archive, which houses them, I have transcribed all of the Button diaries in the collection. In some of them, Button frequently mentions who conducts various religious services, but this is the only time that he reports that his wife (or any other woman) has done so. In fact, I am not sure he did not make an error in this entry. Nevertheless, his wife had at least one other fairly public religious role. In 1920 and 1921 he reports a number of times that she taught the Sunday school.[39]

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[37] It is not entirely clear in context what source Keough is quoting. A likely possibility, however, is the 103 series of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese Archives, St. John's, Bishop Michael A. Fleming Papers, 1829-50. Keough does give the date of the document as the 1830s (frame 4, 349).

[38] As a result of the Reverend Harvey Moses's publication of this story as *How the Fish Came to Hant's Harbour in 1868*, it became quite widespread (*Encyc. of N & L* 1993, vol. 4, s.v. "Pelley, Elizabeth"). My thanks to Philip Hiscock for noting the story's legendary aspect and pointing me to appropriate sources.

[39] See, for instance October 31 and December 12 in 1920 or March 13, April 3, April 17, April 24, and May 8 in 1921.

Women also had spiritual influence in smaller, more private contexts and this was probably more typical. Folklorist Anita Best, writing about a group of communities in the vicinity of Clattice Harbour, Placentia Bay, in the relatively recent past, reports that women ran the religious life of the family and were the priest's "most serious and useful allies in any given community."[40] They took responsibility for the participation of other family members in various religious activities, such as attending Mass and taking part in various Lenten obligations. They also fended off "various calamities, real or imagined" by means of "'blessed candles'" and St. Anne's oil (1988, 12). Best asserts that women "in spiritual and psychological terms . . . were completely in charge of community life." Their pre-eminence in those areas was, "in a subtle and complex" way, recognized within the community, even though, "Men might occasionally grumble" (9-10).

1.6.3 Performance Genres

Their contributions in other aspects of community life notwithstanding, women seem to have seldom participated in public performances of some local art forms. In Thomas' description of "public" and "private" traditions of storytelling among French-speakers on the Port-au-Port Peninsula, he says the participants in public storytelling were mostly male (1983, 42). Male gender was not, in Thomas' understanding, an absolute requirement, however (42, 62). At the time of Thomas' research, those people who told stories in private contexts were usually women (50), although they could be of either sex (57).

Other folklorists have documented similar patterns for folk singing in Newfoundland. Kodish reports that typically men took part in "public display of songs,"

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[40] Anita Best has graciously given me permission to make use of her unpublished paper.

usually at "'times' or parties." Women engaged in "private display" via "ballad books," consisting of the words of songs, which the owners of the ballad books either clipped from other sources or wrote out. Such books could be used in a number of ways. Their owners might look at them "for their own pleasure," but might also show them to others "to entertain." The books might also serve as reference material, to be consulted should a disagreement arise or a singer need words. Kodish discusses the background of a particular complier of ballad books, Mary Caul. Although Mrs. Caul had acquired a good-sized repertoire during early adolescence, she only rarely "sang in front of others" at that time and, later, following her marriage, stopped performing at all. Kodish suggests that any singing she did in those years was done privately, while working. Much later in life, in addition to compiling the ballad books, she resumed singing (1983, 132-34).

Gerald Pocius writes about a married couple in Calvert who both had a strong connection to the singing tradition. The husband was known in the community as a singer (1976, 110-11) a status that, in Newfoundland, usually correlates with public "performance at community events, such as concerts at the local school or church hall" (109). In Pocius's estimation, however, the wife's voice "had much more depth" and she had likely had in the past a more extensive repertoire containing a broader range of material (111). She had also mastered her husband's repertoire and could prompt him if he did not remember a word or two of a song, but, when she sang a song in Pocius's presence, the husband could not do the same for her (113). The wife was not, however, acknowledged by the community as a singer (111).

Pocius attributes this to several factors, including "her duties as a married woman." He points out that the wife, who had lived in St. John's prior to her marriage, came to Calvert as an "outsider." He suspects that this, in combination with the potential "conflict with her husband's status" also worked against her acknowledgement as a

singer. This particular woman's situation notwithstanding, it was evidently also possible in Calvert (or, at least, had been in the previous generation) for a woman who was an outsider to be recognized in the community as a singer. Both the husband's parents were acknowledged as singers, even though, like the wife, they were initially outsiders to the community, having moved there from Argentia in Placentia Bay (1976, 111-12).

The degree to which women participated in the public sphere varied, according to which aspect of life was involved. Women had significant work roles outside the home. Their involvement in religion was also significant, but, while women did have leadership roles in this area, it was less common. They also, at least in some geographic areas, had fewer opportunities for participation in local performance genres.

This variability may be related to the fact that there were other cultural forces working both for and against women's visibility and participation in the public sphere. "Middle-class magistrates/administrators," who were often merchants or related to merchants, perceived "the working woman" as "an economic necessity." Encouraging women to restrict themselves to the home did not make economic sense to them (Keough 2001, frame 7, 601-02). The Catholic Church, on the other hand, exerted pressure for "respectability" (as defined by the middle class and by the church) on all its members. Women, specifically, were the targets of Catholic pressure towards "feminine ideals of domesticity and dependence" (frame 4, 366). To a large extent the working class was not amenable to this pressure; the Catholic Church's model of femininity was simply too far removed from "the realities of plebeian women's lives." Nevertheless, no later than the 1830s, this pressure did result in some changes (Keough 2001, frame 7, 611-12). Although I know most about pressure from the Catholic Church, there were almost certainly other forces pushing towards "respectability," as well. As will become clear

later in the thesis, at least in St. John's, such pressures seem to have strongly impacted not just Catholics, but Protestants.

1.7 Development of Ideas

When I went into the field, I was not sure what aspects of gender and funeral customs I was interested in, other than, in a very general way, the presence or absence of either sex at various death rites. During the project's early stages, I hoped to compare past and present. It became clear as I wrote, however, that I had not collected sufficient relevant information about the funeral procession in the present. This was partly because I had been thinking about the funeral procession as taking place on the roads in the community and failed to connect it with the procession in the church. In addition, I was so focussed on male-only funerals that I did not realize until fairly late in the development of my ideas that exclusion of women was not the only gender issue related to the procession. Retrospectively, I should have asked questions about whether the arrangement of modern funeral processions is in any way gendered, not just questions about whether women are included. Without that information, a good comparison of past and present processions was not possible. In addition, the information I had collected about sorrow in the present was not very detailed. I think my informants may have taken the expression of sorrow in their local contexts for granted and not thought it necessary to describe it in much in depth. In retrospect, I wish I had pushed a bit more for information on this topic.

From the broad range of questions I asked and the diverse material I collected, it became clear to me that, at least in some contexts, death rites included strong elements of both sorrow and revelry, which were embedded in a ritual structure that gave some parts

of the proceedings an air of solemnity. The exact balance between these elements, which varied depending on a number of features, including religion and the community, intrigued me. These components of the emotional atmosphere and their interconnections with gender roles emerged as the focus of my thesis.

In Chapter Three, "British Death Customs," I look at solemnity, sorrow and revelry as practiced historically in the British Isles. The next few chapters examine solemnity, sorrow, and revelry as they are expressed in Newfoundland. In Chapter Four, "Solemnity: 'The Whole Tone of Everything was Black; the Coffin was Draped in Black; the Hymns Sounded Black,'" I explore solemnity, with a focus on one specific custom, the funeral procession. I discuss the arrangement of the procession and the different ways in which it was gendered. I also consider the gendering of the role of pallbearer. Chapter Five, "Sorrow: 'Some People Get Very Distraught, but Others Don't,'" looks at the various ways in which residents of Newfoundland expressed their sorrow following a death and discusses the gendered range of emotional expression in different geographic and religious contexts. Chapter Six, "Revelry: 'You . . . Made Your Own Fun, Whether It was Living or Dying," discusses wake revelry. Here I explore differences between wake revelry in Ireland and Newfoundland, contrast the wake customs of rural areas and St. John's, and examine gender in relation to wake revelry. Finally, in Chapter Seven, "Conclusions," I draw together the various pieces of my thesis and finish my analysis. To lay the foundation for this work, however, in this chapter I look at aspects of the historic, demographic, and cultural contexts of Newfoundland and the specific communities where I did fieldwork. In the next chapter I turn to a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of my thesis. I begin by discussing post-structuralism and rites of passage. I then address scholarship on emotional expression, including scholarly understandings of solemnity,

sorrow, and revelry in death rites cross-culturally. I wrap up the chapter with another, more cross-cultural examination of public and private space.

Chapter Two: An Overview of Literature and Theoretical Approaches Relevant to a Folkloristic Study of Emotions Following Death

Building from the general introduction to my thesis provided in the last chapter, here I introduce the theoretical approaches that shape my consideration of the emotional atmosphere following a death. This thesis focuses on the intersection of emotional expression with custom, specifically rites of passage. Hence, in the earlier part of this chapter, I discuss structural approaches to rites of passage. Later I discuss theories that inform my thinking on emotions, their expression, and their performance; previous work on the division of culture into public and private spheres; and Goffman's conceptualization of front and back regions in relation to performance. I will start, however, by discussing post-structuralism, a theory that can be applied to all aspects of my study.

2.1 Post-Structuralism

Post-structuralism is an underlying theoretical approach of this thesis. According to feminist and critical and cultural theorist Chris Weedon, post-structuralist theory is based on linguist and structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure's idea that "language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us. Neither social reality nor the 'natural world' has fixed intrinsic meanings which language reflects or expresses" (1998, 22). Post-structuralism builds from Saussure's concept of the "'sign.'" Signs have two components – a word, which may be written or spoken, and is called the "*signifier*" and the "meaning" of that signifier, which is called the "*signified*" (23, emphasis in original). The relationship between signified and signifier is not inherent in

the qualities of either component of the sign; Weedon describes it as "arbitrary." The different signs have meaning only in relationship to other signs. They are meaningless in isolation (23).

The difference between Saussure's approach and post-structuralism is the understanding of the meaning of signs. Saussure saw "meaning" as lying in the structure (i.e. the set of relationships within language), which he understood to be "'fixed.'" Post-structuralist approaches, however, perceive that the meaning of the signifier can and does change. As Weedon points out a signifier may mean multiple things (some of which may appear to be in opposition to each other) and those meanings are not necessarily static in the long term. The meaning of a particular signifier changes with the "discursive context" in which the signifier occurs (1996, 24-25). An important concept in post-structuralism is "subjectivity," which Weedon defines as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (32). Since, according to post-structuralism, our subjectivity is not inherent in who we are, genetically speaking, then it is instead "socially produced" (21). It is also complex: it is not stable, but changing, and it contradicts itself (32-33).

Mark Fortier, in *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction*, suggests that scholars using post-structuralist approaches tend to apply them to "quirky, off-balanced, incomplete or ambiguous works." Post-structuralism, in other words, is a useful approach for dealing with material that appears contradictory or that does not seem to fit together cohesively. Fortier frames this issue as a question: "Are abstraction, pattern and system the best way of looking at culture, or is it composed of fragmentary, singular and peculiar elements that call for more ad hoc analysis?" (2002, 58). Because broad aspects of culture (such as genres of folklore) are the products of many people, they are likely to be much messier

than a well-structured work of art produced by one person. Thus, on Fortier's terms, post-structuralism is a good approach to such aspects of culture.[1]

In discussing post-structuralism's relevance to archaeology, Bjørnar Olsen makes several points that could apply to the study of folklore, generally, and custom, in particular. In order to make the case that a theory used in literary criticism could be relevant to archaeology, even though, superficially, the two areas do not have much in common, he argues that literary criticism and archaeology are actually similar in a number of ways. First of all, experts in both archaeology and literary criticism work towards "interpretation of 'texts'" (1990, 164). Although Olsen does not make this clear immediately in context, from his slightly earlier discussion of the expansion of "the textual" (163) and from his second and third points, it appears that he uses the term "texts" to refer both to the physical objects about which archaeologists usually write and the works they produce about those objects. Secondly, Olsen suggests that it is possible to view material culture and text as "analogous." Most importantly for immediate purposes, this means that one can interpret material culture in the same way that text is interpreted. In addition, material culture, like text, can be understood in ways that do not necessarily have much to do with the goals of the creator/author. Thirdly, material culture needs to be translated into language to be "archaeologically conceivable." Although material culture can be seen as a "text" in and of itself, archaeologists also use written or spoken words to communicate about material culture, and thus use "text" in a more literal sense (164).

The study of custom is also, to a large extent, the study of "texts," both because custom can be interpreted in much the same way as a written text and because, like

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[1] This does not mean that structuralism is an inappropriate approach. As Fortier points out, post-structuralism grew out of structuralism: "There would be no post-structuralism without a structuralism to build on" (2002, 173-74). In addition, it is useful to know what is the same in a cultural context, before examining in detail what is different and what does not appear to make sense.

archaeologists, folklorists communicate through language (whether the material about which communication takes place is verbal or not) and thus produce "texts." Further, folklorists and their informants generally communicate largely through language. Interviews can be seen as text in a relatively literal sense; transcriptions are certainly a text. Even though custom consists largely of action (in which words may or may not be involved), much of the study of custom is based, in one way or another, on spoken or written texts.

A few scholars have looked at the use of post-structuralist theory by folklorists. For instance, Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, in *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*, devote a significant portion of their chapter on "Approaches to Interpreting Folklore" to post-structuralist methods of interpretation. They include a number of theories under that general approach, including *"feminist interpretations, reciprocal ethnography* and *intersectionality."* According to Sims and Stephens: *"Post-structuralist approaches* look beyond the organization of elements in a text, or the order of events in a performance, or the belief that a single principle or idea provides the answer to what something means. The interpretations seek wider connections to other kinds of texts and events and acknowledge that there may be more than one possible meaning, depending on cultural and social contexts" (2005, 193, emphasis in original).[2] Sims and Stephens describe a range of work by folklorists as post-structuralist (193-95, 197-98, 199-200).

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[2] This explanation of post-structuralism contrasts in some ways with Weedon's explanation. Weedon is concerned largely with the multiple understandings within an individual's psyche, whereas Sims and Stephens are concerned with multiple meanings more generally. Weedon sees multiple understandings as inevitable, but Sims and Stephens see them as a possibility. Nevertheless, both works associate post-structuralism with a flexibility or ambiguity of meaning and the way in which meaning is understood.

Not all folklorists see post-structuralism positively. Simon Bronner agrees that post-structuralism recognizes multiple meanings for a work, but he sees this as a drawback: "Influenced by the conception of their reflexive roles as part of the performance, poststructuralist folklorists increasingly took the subjective position that inevitably a plurality and instability of meaning are at work. They left meaning to the intention of the performer or the reception of the audience, thus denying or evading the relation of empirical method to theory" (2006, 407). In Bronner's perception, the use of post-structuralist approaches has "had the consequence of limiting use of method associated with the production of hypotheses and generalization as a hallmark of the scientific advancement of knowledge." In his opinion, the adoption of post-structuralist approaches "did not advance the discipline," but instead has resulted in "self-doubt" and anxieties about its state (404-05).

According to Bronner, folklorists, as a group, chose post-structural over structural approaches "at a critical time in their intellectual history" (2006, 405). Implicitly, he sees post-structuralism as the dominant trend in the field, although he acknowledges that adherence to post-structuralist approaches is often not explicitly stated. He says, "Although many folklorists might not confess to being post-structuralists, a number of performance and other theoretical approaches appear to move away from method implying a sequential operation resulting in a definite conclusion" (407-08).

Since I have acknowledged post-structuralist leanings, it should come as no surprise that I do not agree with Bronner's rejection of post-structuralism. Nonetheless, I think there are fair criticisms that can be made of the theory. Historian Willeen Keough, who uses both post-structuralist and empirical approaches (2001, frame 1, 59), acknowledges post-structuralism's value in inaugurating "new avenues of exploration in history" (55) but also warns that post-structuralism can be applied in an unbalanced way,

with "exclusive concentration on discourse analysis" and consequently too little focus on "experience" (58).

Similarly, literary theorist Terry Eagleton points out that post-structuralism may be taken too far, with the side effect that "the classical notions of truth, reality, meaning and knowledge" have been called into question. In fact, in "Left academic circles," the use of such words became questionable and the preferred philosophy was "the dogma that we could never know anything at all" (1983, 143-44). Eagleton attributes a particularly extreme approach to Paul de Man, who, he said, "has been devoted to demonstrating that literary language constantly undermines its own meaning" and who thinks that this self-undermining is the "'essence' of literature" (145).

I agree with Eagleton's call for a more balanced approach. He refers to the work of philosopher and post-structuralist Jacques Derrida and asserts that Derrida "is not seeking, absurdly, to deny the existence of relatively determinant truths, meanings, identities, historical continuities; he is seeking rather to see such things as the effects of a wider and deeper history" (1983, 148). That point of balance, where meaning is neither entirely fixed nor completely fluid, is my preferred approach to post-structuralism; interpretation of "texts" (whether defined narrowly or broadly) may potentially be varied, but still must arise from the text itself and its context. Like the work of other scholars using post-structural approaches, my work recognizes that various cultural forms (in this thesis, specifically custom) may have more than one meaning and be understood in different ways by different people. Nevertheless, the range of possible meanings is not infinite. Rather, meaning is grounded in the actual customs, as practiced, and the cultural understandings through which people view those customs.

2.2 Rites of Passage

Much of the early work on rites of passage is structuralist, rather than post-structuralist, but remains important in the study of custom. Arnold van Gennep, in his groundbreaking work on such rites, points out that transitions between "profane" and "sacred" (or vice versa) must be acknowledged by "going through an intermediate stage" (1960, 1).[3] In Van Gennep's understanding, what is sacred and what is profane varies according to circumstance. Some groups of people are inherently "sacred," but individuals within those groups may be more or less sacred than other people in their group (12).

People's relative sacredness may change over time. Van Gennep asserts, for instance, that women are inherently "sacred to all adult men," but that a woman's pregnancy results in her being also sacred in relation to most other women. Ritual purification following birth returns a woman to a profane state with respect to other women, but not with respect to men. Similarly, a traveller who leaves home, leaves a life that is profane and, from the perspective of people to whom he is a foreigner, becomes sacred. According to van Gennep, rites of passage are important, because movement from one state of being to another results in the same person perceiving the same thing as sacred or profane at different times. This is sufficiently disturbing, not just for the

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[3] Van Gennep perceives that the sacred is interwoven with a much larger proportion of the cultures in societies he considers "least advanced" compared to those he considers more so. As will be seen in some of the material cited in this chapter and others, van Gennep's theories are now considered applicable to modern cultures. In particular, the part of van Gennep's analysis that attributes a strong focus on different "social groups," including "age groups," specifically to "semicivilized" cultures is somewhat outdated. The translators of the version of *Rites of Passage* I used, Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, helpfully provide a footnote pointing out that van Gennep, who lived in Europe and whose book was originally written in 1908, was not in a position to be aware of the sorts of "age distinctions" to which Americans at the time of the mid-1900s translation were accustomed (1960, 2).

particular person involved, but for the culture as a whole, that ritual must be performed to minimize the impact (1960, 12-13).

Van Gennep gives a list of possible transitions of this type that might occur in one life, from a male perspective: "birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death," as well as a list of many of the associated rituals: "ceremonies of birth, childhood, social puberty, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, fatherhood, initiation into religious societies, and funerals." According to van Gennep, the point of these rituals is assisting transition "from one defined position to another which is equally well defined." Since these rituals have the same basic focus, they tend to be similar in some ways (1960, 3).

Van Gennep gives the term "*rites of passage*" to this type of ritual. Such rites are made up of "*rites of separation, transition rites*, and *rites of incorporation* (1960, 10-11, emphasis in original). To explain his terminology, van Gennep makes an analogy to traveling between countries or regions (15). He says that in the past and in areas where the population is, in his estimation, "semi-civilized," adjacent countries did not share a common boundary, but were separated by "neutral" territory. Movement between two countries, in these circumstances, would put one temporarily "between two worlds." It would also, from the point of view of those in the two countries involved, put one in "sacred" space, but, from one's own point of view, as an occupant of the neutral area, the two countries would be "sacred" (17-18). Travel between different countries involved "various formalities" dealing with both the sacred and profane levels of life (15). In fact, travel between or to much smaller geographic units (down to and including individual houses) also involved similar rites, although the neutral territory decreased with the size of the geographic unit in question. With smaller units, it might be as small as "a simple stone, a beam, or a threshold" (19).

There are several ceremonies that might be involved in crossing an in-between area or threshold, real or symbolic. They start with "rites of separation from previous surroundings" or "*preliminal rites,*" which van Gennep describes as "'purifications'" involving "washing, cleansing, etc." "Transition rites" or "*liminal (or threshold rites)*" are those that take place actually at the threshold (1960, 20-21, emphasis in original).[4] According to van Gennep, in houses the door separates "the foreign and domestic worlds" and in sacred buildings it separates "the profane and sacred worlds." For this reason, "to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world." Finally, there are "rites of incorporation," which may, for instance, involve eating a meal with other people or a gift of salt (20-21).

Van Gennep does not assert that all rituals associated with life passages are solely "rites of passage." Rather, the different types of life passage have various additional purposes. For example, van Gennep mentions that "defensive rites" are often connected to funerals and "fertility rites" to weddings. Nor, according to Van Gennep, is there a similar balance of rites of separation, transition, and incorporation for all life passages. On the contrary, he says that certain types of rites tend to predominate when certain life events are marked (1960, 11-12).

In the case of funerals, "rites of transition" are important, both in terms of their length and the degree of elaboration. "Rites of incorporation" (in particular, those rites by which the deceased transitions to "the world of the dead") are even more so.[5] It is not

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[4] As anthropologist Victor Turner points out, "*limen*" is a Latin word meaning "threshold" (1969, 94).

[5] Earlier in *Rites of Passage*, van Gennep asserts that "rites of separation" are particularly emphasized at funerals (1960, 11). He seems, however, to have rethought this by the time he got to his chapter on funerals. There he asserts that while it is natural to imagine that "rites of separation" would be important in relation to death, the data shows

only the dead who must experience this rite of passage, but also those who survive them. In the case of the bereaved, the liminal phase is the period of mourning; rites of separation precede mourning and rites of incorporation follow mourning. The period of mourning sometimes parallels the period of transition for the deceased person. Both the deceased person and his or her relatives exist "between the world of the living and the world of the dead." The closeness of the relationship (as understood in a particular culture's kinship system) determines when particular relatives can leave the liminal state, but the spouse of the deceased generally must undergo the longest period of mourning (1960, 146-147).

Robert Dinn applies van Gennep's model, as developed by Victor Turner and other anthropologists, to the death rites of Bury St Edmunds during the period between 1439 and 1530.[6] These death rites, judging by Dinn's description, seem to have been, in broad general outline, fairly typical of Western, particularly Catholic, death rites up through the introduction of the funeral home. Dinn places in the category of "the ritual of separation" those rites which occurred either right before the death or right after it, including all the rituals that took place before the body was removed from the house (1992,153-54).

Dinn's "liminal phase" covers the movement of the corpse from the home to the grave. In addition to the funeral service in the church itself, it includes the processions from the home before the service and to the cemetery after it (1992, 154). Given that the

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that there are actually relatively few rites of this type connected to death and they are not very complex (146).

[6] Dinn does not actually credit van Gennep with this theory, but refers to it as "the three stages which anthropologists have found typically to constitute a rite of passage" and cites Turner's work and that of several other scholars (1992, 166; see endnote 10).

concept of liminality relies on the metaphor of travel from place to place, this phase appropriately includes the process whereby the corpse is literally in transit from one place to another and symbolically from one state to another (i.e. living person in home to dead person in grave). This period is also central to the rites, both temporally (in a very broad sense) and, arguably, in general importance.

Finally, in Dinn's understanding, "the ritual of integration" included the burial of the body and the death rites following it. Among these might be a funeral feast or a distribution of food to those in need (1992, 156-57). Although Dinn does not make this explicit, the marking of specific periods of time following the burial (i.e. the seventh day, thirtieth day, or anniversary) may also fall into this category (160). Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage is readily applicable to medieval Bury St Edmunds and, by extension, to other Western contexts.

E. R. Leach building, in part, on van Gennep's work, diagrams and describes the pattern of time at festivals in relation to the passage of time generally. "Phase A" of Leach's schema is "the rite of sacralization or separation," whereas its opposite, "Phase C," is a "rite of desacralization or aggregation" corresponding to van Gennep's "rites of incorporation." Either may be marked by particularly formal behaviour or by its opposite, "celebrations of the Fancy Dress type, masquerades, revels." Leach asserts that at many festivals Phase A and Phase C mirror each other, so that if one is formal, the other may well be a "masquerade." Another form of "ritual behaviour" is "role reversal." Leach thinks this occurs infrequently, but, when it does, is a marker of "Phase B," "the marginal state," which corresponds to van Gennep's "transition rites"; this is the liminal period. In the same way that "Phase A" and "Phase C" are often the opposite of each other, "Phase B" is the opposite of "ordinary secular life." Leach believes that behaviour of this sort is

connected with various sorts of endings: "with funerals or with *rites de passage* (symbolic funerals) or with the year's end" (134-36).

2.3 Relationship between Emotion and Ritual

Post-structuralism and structuralism are broad, general approaches that inform my study, but, in order to address the specific content of my thesis, I also draw heavily on literature that specifically looks at emotions, and, especially, emotional expression in relation to death.

2.3.1 Emotion and Culture

Although it is clear that there is a connection between emotion and culture and, specifically, between emotion and ritual, scholars do not uniformly agree on what form that connection takes. Overall, they have usually concentrated on either the biological component of emotion or the cultural component. Proponents of the biological approach think that emotion is "universal," while those who perceive emotion as cultural, believe it to be "variable and culture specific" (Milton 2005, 25-27). Several different scholars have attempted to bring the approaches together (28-29). According to Anthropologist Kay Milton, one possible way to deal simultaneously with both biological and cultural components of emotion is to differentiate between "feelings" (which she defines as the "universal and biological" part of emotion) and "meanings" (which she describes as "constructed and culture specific"). Another approach is to understand emotions as "*social phenomena*" (27-28, emphasis in original). There is more than one variation of this approach, but the broadest maintains "that emotions are generated by and in social relations." Alternatively, some scholars understand "emotions" as inherently "ways of communicating" (28).

Milton, who is interested in human attitudes towards nature, usefully expands this basic premise, by arguing that emotions arise not only out of social interactions, but out of interaction with the world more generally. In her view, emotions are best understood not as "social," but as "ecological," although she acknowledges that social interactions make up a large part of the world as humans experience it (2005, 35). Milton asserts, "it makes no sense to say that feelings are biological while meanings are cultural, for feelings and meanings both shape and are shaped by an individual's developmental engagement with their environment, an environment which is partly, but not wholly, human, social or cultural" (37).

Milton is interested in emotion in relation to learning. Her discussion of this is based in part on psychologist William James's "model of emotion," in which emotion consists of both an initial "physical response" and "the subjective experience of that response." Milton suggests ways in which both the body's reaction and the interpretation of the reaction may be learned. As an example, she points to the body's learned response to a particular "stimulus." She describes developing a fear of snakes in Africa, while doing fieldwork, which resulted in increased tension in the muscles in her legs "whenever [she] walked through long grass" (2005, 36).

The same physical response, when experienced in different circumstances, can be understood differently by the person experiencing it. When tears are culturally appropriate both at funerals and at weddings, participants "do not get confused when their bodies react in this way; they have learned to perceive some tears as joy and some as sorrow." In Milton's understanding, what we feel physically is subject to culturally based interpretation. Emotional expression is also learned: "we learn to express our emotions in different ways, and sometimes to hide what we feel." What is appropriate varies by culture and context (2005, 36). The physical/biological component of emotion

notwithstanding, Milton perceives that our emotional reactions, as well as the way we express those reactions, are largely culturally learned.

Some ideas about the relationship between emotion and culture, in general, have also been applied specifically to the relationship between emotion and ritual. For instance, Anthropologists Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington argue, "the relationship between ritual and emotion is not casually determinative in either direction, but rather cybernetic" (1991, 4). They note, however, that their own position on that relationship had been criticized, on the one hand, by anthropologists "Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (1982) [who] see the connection in directly causative terms, and privilege the role of ritual" (1991, 2) and, on the other hand, by anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, who "lays heavy emphasis on the power of emotion and is contemptuous of mere ritual form" (2-3).[7]

2.3.2 Relationship between Emotion and Death Rites

Such scholarly differences of opinion also apply to death rites. Metcalf and Huntington summarize in some detail the approaches of sociologist Émile Durkheim and anthropologist A. R. Radcliffe-Brown to mourning in two different cultural contexts. Durkheim describes mourning among the native peoples of Australia. His understanding of their customs, which involve considerable violence directed both towards the mourner

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[7] The work edited by Bloch and Parry is *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The work by Renato Rosaldo is described in the parenthetical citation as having a publication date of "1984, republished in abbreviated form 1989" (1991, 2-3). There are two possible candidates for this work in Metcalf and Huntington's bibliography. It is not clear whether they are the two editions referenced in the parenthetical citation or if only one such edition is represented and the other bibliographical entry is for something else. The earlier work is the 1984 article "Grief and the Headhunter's Rage: On the Cultural Force of Emotions," in *Text, Play and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Self and Society*, ed. E. Bruner, Washington, DC: American Ethnological Society. The 1989 work is *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Boston: Beacon Press.

him- or herself and other people, is "that the emotions that develop and are amplified by participation in the funeral rite initially are feelings of sorrow and anger" (1991, 49-50). Durkheim does not assume that there is no emotional response to the death prior to the culturally appropriate ritualized reactions to the death. Rather, the death impacts the family and "other members of society feel moral pressure to put their behavior in harmony with the feelings of the truly bereaved" (51).[8]

Radcliffe-Brown perceives that ritual provokes a rather more complex emotional response. Among the Andamanese, weeping is expected under a number of different specific circumstances, including three different points during death rites. Radcliffe-Brown's understanding of this custom and its context is that emotion arises from the act of "wailing at the prescribed moment and in the prescribed manner." In addition to the emotional response directly related to the death, "a negative sentiment of sorrow and loss," this ritualized act, like every form of ritual, also generates "a positive emotion of social bonding" (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 46-47).

Whatever the precise relation between emotion, on the one hand, and ritual and culture, on the other, culture does, to a large extent, govern the expression of emotion. In *Grief and Mourning in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Paul C. Rosenblatt *et al.* say, "All grief behavior by adults will, of course, be patterned, modified, and perhaps even coerced by culture" (1976, 2). The authors take a functionalist approach to the question of why cultures shape emotional expression. They note that death is disruptive to the emotional state of individual mourners and also impacts the way in which they behave. Hence mourners must resolve the loss, so that they can function more or less normally as workers and as social beings. Customary acts help mourners with the resolution: "The

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[8] The relevant work of E. Durkheim is *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 1965, trans. and ed. R. Needham, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (orig. pub. 1919).

working-through process is at least partly channeled and facilitated by custom." In some cases, custom may make the difference between successfully resolving the loss or not. In other cases, it may lead to a fuller or easier resolution (6-7). Death is also disruptive to the group as a whole or, as Rosenblatt *et al.* put it, "a threat to group solidarity." A loss of solidarity is particularly problematic after a death, since the death might result in "such potentially disruptive dispositions as anger and unwillingness to cooperate." Accordingly, emotional states of this type "may have to be channeled in less disruptive directions and limited in intensity." In the view of Rosenblatt *et al.*, such structuring of emotion is a cross-cultural constant (8).

Rosenblatt *et al.* point out that, in addition, it is by no means unusual for death rites or, for that matter, rites of passage of any type, to have functions beyond those directly related to the rite of passage itself. For instance, these rites:

> may serve to renew ties and reinforce them (cf. Hickerson 1960),[9] to provide an opportunity for marriages and other alliances to be established, to entertain, to promote exchanges of valuables, to remind people of obligations, to enable people to test whom they can trust and whom they cannot, to transmit news, to transmit information of survival value, to increase intake of animal protein, and to accomplish many other things. (1976, 86-87)

Custom also helps structure social relationships at the time of death and this may have long-term effects. Custom may require that other people help the bereaved in various practical and ritual ways related to the death and may require the bereaved to accept their help. In the event that the helpers need assistance in the future, the bereaved will be more likely to help them (7).

While Rosenblatt *et al.* have some reservations about the usefulness of death rites for some mourners, on the whole, they seem to think that such rites are more helpful than

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[9] The reference is to Harold Hickerson's 1960 article, "The Feast of the Dead among the Seventeenth Century Algonkians of the Upper Great Lakes," *American Anthropologist* 62:81-107.

not.[10] Metcalf and Huntington, on the other hand, are dubious about the efficacy of death

rites in helping individuals to work through the feelings arising from a death and to adapt

to the fact of the death. Their perception is that while death rites may, in fact, help some

individuals with those tasks, that the process is hit-and-miss; death rites may hinder other

individuals and the two outcomes may happen about as often (1991, 62).

Metcalf and Huntington think that emotion in and of itself is inadequate to

account for "the remarkable richness and variety of funeral rituals." For this reason, they

devote a number of chapters of their work to "the meaning of these rites in social terms"

(1991, 62). Similarly, historian Craig Koslofsky notes that one approach to the study of

death is to look at "society's *use* of death as an opportunity to represent or reconstruct the

social order through ritual" (1995, 317). Many other writers also examine death rites,

including the expression of emotion, from the point of view of what those rites mean

symbolically or socially in their cultural contexts. Much of the material discussed below

that addresses specific components of the emotional atmosphere falls in this category.

Given that this thesis focuses on the expression of emotion in particular cultural

contexts, it will not attempt to resolve the issue of the relationship of emotion to culture

and to ritual. Nor will it determine whether death rites, as a whole, serve practical or

symbolic purposes or both (although it may offer insight into the balance between

practical and symbolic purposes in a few places at a certain time). Suffice it to say that

my underlying assumption about how emotion and culture interact is that emotions are, to

a great extent, generated by the larger environment (which, as Milton suggests, includes,

but is not limited to, the cultural context), but that individual human minds (which have

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[10] Rosenblatt *et al.* think that customary behaviours practiced after a death are not equally helpful for every mourner. Sometimes the required behaviours may not be relevant to the mourner's needs. Rosenblatt *et al.* say, "It may be that in many cases custom coerces behaviors that are unneeded—for example requiring crying and self-injury of persons who if anything are relieved that the death occurred" (1976, 6-7).

different basic hard-wiring and have been impacted by different life experiences) react in different ways to the same general larger environment.

The psychological literature (as described in more detail below) suggests that people experience a very broad range of emotions in response to death, and that multiple emotions may be felt simultaneously. My sense, based on that literature and on my own experience, is that, following a death, emotion may, especially initially, be inchoate and rather vague. Ritual may, among other things, help structure emotions, highlighting some and downplaying others. This characteristic is not, however, unique to ritual; other activities that might structure emotions include therapy, journal writing, re-enactment of relevant issues through play (by children), and any number of individual or family customs which might or might not be categorized as ritual, depending on the classification system in use.

Some emotional responses to death and their physical manifestations may be largely innate. There is also a large cultural component to emotion and its expression. Crying in response to death may, as described below, be very widespread, but even in · Newfoundland and its parent cultures there has been (and to some extent still is) significant variation in how crying was structured, whether and how people were allowed or expected to cry, and which people were allowed or expected to cry. Since folklorists study culture, this thesis will focus for the most part on the cultural, rather than the biological, issues related to emotion. This emphasis does not mean, however, that the biological component of emotion is unimportant in Newfoundland or elsewhere.

Like Rosenblatt *et al.* I am interested in functions, or what death rites accomplish within a culture. I, too, suspect that death rites are, for the most part, useful in helping people process the emotions arising from death, but I also acknowledge that some of the functions of death rites are not directly related to death. Like Metcalf and Huntington, I

am interested in symbolic issues, or what a culture expresses through death rites. Hence, much of my discussion will focus on the symbolism of the customs and their meaning in the social contexts in which they take place.

2.3.3 Emotional Responses to Death

Both emotional reactions and cultural expression take complex and varied forms. In *Grief and Mourning in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Rosenblatt *et al.* evaluate seventy-eight cultures for both emotional and cultural reactions to death (1976, 2-3). Of course, what the authors really examine is not particular emotions, but expressions of those emotions, or, in their words, "signs of emotional distress." As they point out, the nature of the ethnographic data they use as sources is such that they can look at emotional expression only in "crude outline" (14-15), but that is adequate to provide some context for the discussion that follows, including some consideration of the meaning of relevant terms.

Rosenblatt *et al.* differentiate between "grief" and "mourning." They define "grief" as "the sorrow, mental distress, emotional agitation, sadness, suffering, and related feelings caused by a death." In other words, grief is the internal, emotional component of the reaction to death. Rosenblatt *et al.* define "mourning" as "the culturally defined acts that are usually performed when a death occurs."[11] Rosenblatt *et al.* point out that grief and mourning cannot be precisely separated, however. When adults express grief, the way in which they do so is partially culturally defined. Conversely, grief's emotional and bodily aspects can impact the way in which mourning is carried out. These aspects of grief might affect "any mourning act" (1976, 2). For instance, the customary

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[11] Rosenblatt *et al.* note that these terms have been used in English in this way since, at the latest, 1915, when Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* was originally translated (1976, 2). The version of this work used by Rosenblatt *et al.* was published in New York by MacMillan.

practice of lamentation, which occurs in many cultures, is likely to be partly based upon the fact that people who are recently bereaved often cry.

   As indicated above, this thesis will focus on the emotional atmosphere during the several days immediately after a death. The emotional atmosphere is made up of two interrelated components very similar, if not exactly identical, to those described by Rosenblatt *et al.*: the emotions people feel at the time of death and the ways in which people express their emotions. There are, however, some differences in scope between Rosenblatt *et al.*'s focus and my own. While they define the range of emotions encompassed by the word "grief" rather vaguely, it appears, from the definition given above, that their concentration is exclusively on unpleasant emotions. Elsewhere, they say the emotions experienced at the time of death "could be labeled sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, loneliness, numbness, and general tension." While they acknowledge that people might sometimes be "relieved" by a death (1976, 6-7), they do not identify relief as a possible component of grief. The forms of emotion and emotional expression they explore in their book are "crying" (15), "anger and aggression" (18), and "fear" (20). Emotions and behaviours related, for instance, to revelry are not a significant focus of their discussion. Technically, revelry may fit into Rosenblatt *et al.*'s definition of mourning, but it does not conform with the practices they actually describe in relation to mourning, nor do some of the emotions connected with it fit into their definition of "grief."

   A more complex understanding of the emotions connected with grief can be found in psychologist Terry L. Martin and gerontologist Kenneth J. Doka's list of "affective responses" that may be felt in conjunction with death. These include:

   · sadness
   · anger
   · guilt

- jealousy
- anxiety and fear
- shame
- feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness
- relief
- feelings of emancipation

Martin and Doka point out that these are not the only emotions that a bereaved person might feel; "virtually any feeling" might occur in conjunction with death. A bereaved person may have multiple feelings at any one time and it is possible for some of those feelings to be at odds with each other (2000, 17-18).

Metcalf and Huntington, writing from an ethnographic perspective, also spell out a variety of possible feelings and reasons for them:

> Surely one of the most prominent aspects of death is its potential for intense emotional impact on the survivors. The reasons are as numerous as they are obvious. There is the simple but often searing fact of separation from a loved one; the realization that he or she will no longer enjoy the fruits of life; the suddenness with which death strikes. There can be fear for one's own life, and fear of the power of death in general. There may be anger, directed diffusely at the deceased, or at the persons or powers held responsible. Finally, there are various strong reactions to the corpse itself. (1991, 43)

2.3.4 Gender and Emotional Expression

Not only does expression of grief vary according to culture, but it may vary by gender within the same culture. Martin and Doka refer to J. Stillion and G. McDowell's survey of "a random sample of counselors and educators" about differences in how men and women mourn.[12] These professionals perceive that women both feel grief more deeply and express it more visibly. Women are also more likely to turn to other people for support. Men are not as emotional (at least in the way they present themselves), but might display anger. Instead, they often rely on thought processes about the death and on

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[12] The source is "Women's Issues in Grief," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Death Education and Caring, Washington, DC, June, 1977.

"distractions, such as work, sex, play, or alcohol." Men are likely, in the view of these professionals, to work through the grief process more quickly than women. Although those surveyed think that men's and women's different approaches to grief are roughly as effective, they identify different problem areas. Women are thought to be in danger of getting stuck in their grief, while men are thought to be in danger of "complicated grief reaction," due to failure to grieve. Interestingly, the professionals reported people having different social reactions to male and female mourners. Women are offered "emotional support," but are less likely to receive invitations to a normal round of social activities, since "their grief made them more of a social risk." Men are thought to be less in need of consolation and hence are not offered it. They are, however, the recipients of social invitations more often than women, as they are not thought to be at risk of breaking down emotionally (Martin and Doka 2000, 100-01).

Research on grievers supports the idea that men and women are apt to grieve differently. Women rely on "self-help groups" more than men do. This may be in part for practical reasons, as men feel they have duties connected to the male role that may not be compatible with being given support. Men are likely "to be more private, intellectual, and introspective in their grief," but also tend to deal with it through action (Martin and Doka 2000, 105).

Martin and Doka have identified two main patterns for expressing grief, which they call "the instrumental and intuitive styles" (2000, 29). Instrumental grievers and intuitive grievers feel grief differently and act differently while grieving. An "intuitive griever" has a mostly emotional response to grief and prefers to deal with his or her emotions through tears and through discussing his or her feelings with other people. An "instrumental" griever has a much more "cognitive" approach to grief. Emotional aspects of the loss are relatively muted and the grieving process is centred in thoughts and

possibly activity. In lieu of discussing emotions, instrumental grievers might prefer to talk about problems (31). This is presumably because dealing with problems that arise from the death is one of the ways in which instrumental grievers mourn (46). Mourners may also grieve in "a blended pattern," which involves features of both intuitive and instrumental approaches (31).

Men are often instrumental grievers, whereas women tend to be intuitive grievers. Martin and Doka stress, however, that gender is not the only influence on a specific person's approach to grieving (2000, 99-100). Other factors, including personality, also have an impact (87). More generally, culture has a significant influence both on how people mourn and on the ways in which mourning is gendered (113). In Martin and Doka's view, people are more likely to be intuitive grievers in "affectivity expressive cultures" and more likely to be instrumental grievers in cultures stressing "affective restraint" (118).

While ethnographers do not generally use Martin and Doka's model or terminology, studies of cultures, both comparative and specific, show both significant similarities and differences in the expression of emotion cross-culturally. Some of these differences and similarities have to do with the gendered expression of emotion. In the next section, as I discuss particular aspects of the emotional atmosphere which were particularly important in the context I studied, I look at the ways in which those components have been enacted cross-culturally and how scholars have understood their cultural significance.

2.3.5 Specific Components of Death's Emotional Atmosphere

As indicated above, there are many possible emotional responses to death. The ethnographic literature on death makes clear that there are also many possible customary

ways of expressing those emotions. As mentioned in the introduction, however, my research on Newfoundland identified three aspects of the emotional atmosphere following a death that were particularly important in this area in the not-so-distant past: sorrow, revelry, and solemnity. I turn next to a discussion of some of the voluminous literature on these specific components of emotional expression. In this chapter, I focus primarily on general information and cross-cultural examples that establish the recurring nature of certain aspects of mourning. For the most part, information about British customs, the probable antecedents of Newfoundland death rites, appears in the next chapter. I have, however, made the occasional exception for theory about British customs that appears relevant.

2.3.5.1 Solemnity

In this thesis, "solemnity" broadly describes both the formal or ritualistic elements of the proceedings, as well as customs that contribute to a subdued tone. I use the word to refer to 1) formal ritual, such as the funeral procession, the funeral itself, and ritual aspects of the wake, such as saying the Rosary or holding formal prayers; and 2) customary practices and behaviour that create a sombre or gloomy atmosphere in key places at key times, such as the custom of relatives wearing black and the custom of quiet and subdued demeanours at the wake (or certain parts of it). The term does not include overt emotional expression incorporated into formalized rites. If, for instance, crying took place during the wake or during religious services, I treat it separately from solemnity, even if the crying occurred at specific times or was done in certain ways. Of the three components of the emotional atmosphere considered in this thesis, solemnity is the least directly connected with emotional expression. Nevertheless, solemnity, as well as the formality and sombreness that make up a large part of it, are significant aspects of the emotional atmosphere.

As anthropologist Mary Douglas points out, "ritual" (a term she uses very broadly to refer to formalized cultural responses of various types) is the structure necessary for various aspects of culture to exist and express themselves. This applies to both religion and to social interaction, but Douglas perhaps best describes it in relation to the work necessary to maintain a long-distance friendship: "Without the letters of condolence, telegrams of congratulations and even occasional postcards, the friendship of a separated friend is not a social reality. It has no existence without the rites of friendship. Social rituals create a reality which would be nothing without them." She denies that "social relations" can exist without "symbolic acts." Douglas's comment on religion, while not as specific, is equally clear: "It is a mistake to suppose that there can be religion which is all interior, with no rules, no liturgy, no external signs of inward states. As with society, so with religion, external form is the condition of its existence" (1996, 77-78).

The aspects of cultural expression that I identify as "solemnity" provide a similar structure for the cultural response to death. Solemnity consists, in part, of the formalized acts or rituals that follow a death and, to a large extent, create the framework within which emotional expression takes place and the other components of the emotional atmosphere find expression. As the particular aspect of solemnity that I focus on in this thesis is the funeral procession, in this section I will look at some of the ways in which scholars have understood or interpreted the funeral procession and, to a limited extent, some of the other forms of solemnity connected to funerals.

As discussed above, some scholars are interested in what a community expresses or symbolizes through its death rites. The funeral procession is particularly well suited for conveying symbolic messages. Dinn describes the procession in the context he studies as "the most public aspect of the funeral." It was also "highly visual"; it included clergy (sometimes multiple clergy of several types) and possibly people who were carrying

candles and dressed in a special way (1992, 155). Some of the specific characteristics of a Catholic funeral procession in a medieval English town do not carry over to other contexts, but in almost any community, a walking funeral procession would be both highly visual and highly visible. The body itself, as well as the bier, coffin, or hearse by which it was transported, would have been a significant marker of the nature of the event. In addition, the participants were generally arranged in some order. In some cases, they may also have been dressed in a specific way. The procession's visibility and its movement through the community would have ensured maximum exposure to any messages conveyed by the procession.

Judging by the recurrence of this theme in the literature, the funeral procession and, to some extent, other aspects of solemnity, are often used to demonstrate status. For instance, historian João José Reis, writing about Bahia in Brazil during the early 1800s, says that one of the ways "the living" employed the funeral was "to display their status." He emphasizes the "pomp of funerals" and describes them as "true spectacles" and as an occasion for showing off "social status" (2003, 118-19). Wills of people from diverse social groups requested "funeral pomp" (136). Reis notes that fewer testators specified funereal simplicity, and that frequently their wishes were ignored (141-42).

Koslofsky, in his article, "Honour and Violence in German Lutheran Funerals in the Confessional Age," describes how status display was overtly highlighted. While previously the reason for funerals had been "intercession for the dead," in Protestantism such intercession had become irrelevant. In some Protestant contexts, the response to this major shift was to either do away with the funeral completely or to make it simpler, but Lutherans were not only willing "to maintain the social functions of the funeral," including "the consolation of the living and the display of honour," but, in Koslofsky's opinion, to give the latter function a theological justification. Koslofsky quotes Luther as

saying, "For it is meet and right that we should conduct these funerals with proper

decorum in order to honour and praise that joyous article of our faith, namely the

resurrection of the dead, and in order to defy Death." Luther went on to list specific

elements of death rites, including some that arguably are primarily about status display,

but suggested that they function to impress the idea of resurrection on the participants.[13]

Koslofsky points out that, emphasis on resurrection or not, keeping "the traditional

concept of the 'honourable funeral'"[14] meant keeping status display "as a central feature"

(1995, 318-19). He argues that in the account of a particular funeral, the honour due the

deceased completely overshadowed religious doctrine (322).

Metcalf and Huntington, writing about the Bara of Madagascar, report status

display during another element of death rites, the "gathering." This is an event in honour

of the deceased that takes place, not immediately after the death, but later, at a specific

time of year. Metcalf and Huntington describe it as "essentially a conspicuous display of

wealth." The cattle and the rum to be consumed at the event are first "paraded" for

admiration by the participants and the amount of money spent on each category of

expense is proclaimed. Display is not limited to the organizers of the event: "Girls

dressed in their finest clothes parade before the crowd" (1991, 119).

In some cases, the display of status is problematic. In his discussion of issues

related to burial, historian Keith Luria touches on funeral processions in France during

the 1600s. He indicates that status remained a factor in Protestant funerals, albeit a

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[13] Koslofsky's source for this quote is *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe,* 1883-, vol. xxxv, Weimar, 478-83, "Die Vorrede zu der Sammlung Der Begräbnislieder 1542." His translation is adapted from Jaroslav Pelikan and H. T. Lehman, eds., 1955-, *Luther's Works,* vol. LIII, St. Louis, Missouri, 326-27.

[14] The phrase "honourable funeral" may come from the preface Luther wrote for his 1542 "collection of funeral hymns," which Koslofsky had just cited (318).

relatively muted one, due, in part, to government restrictions limiting the size of Protestant funeral processions, the types of people who could participate in them,[15] and the times when such funerals could take place. While it is not clear how closely these prohibitions were observed, Luria notes that governmental regulations of this type externally imposed on Protestants a funeral simplicity that, at least in theory, was called for by their doctrine (2001, 201).[16]

The procession and other elements of death rites may display aspects of human life and culture other than social and economic status. For instance, among the Bara, the funeral procession, while largely focussed on other things, does display the physical prowess of the young participants. The young men take turns carrying the coffin and run with it, with the result that they and the young women, who travel with them, end up far ahead of other participants (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 117). In the meantime, the young women try to interfere with the burial. They may try to take the coffin away from the young men to return it to the community, resulting in "a tug-of-war" over the coffin; they may also attempt to block the path (128). During a break in the procession, the entire group comes together again and the young men participate in "cattle wrestling" with cattle that are forced to run in a circle centred on the coffin. This game "consists of leaping up onto the hump of one of the members of the stampeding herd and holding on as long as possible" (118).

What is most interesting in Metcalf and Huntington's account is not the description of this display, but what it means in the symbolic system at work in the Bara

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[15] Only relatives and friends or, in some cases, only relatives could attend (Luria 2001, 201)

[16] Luria notes, however, that governmental regulations were more extreme than any restrictions by Protestant authorities (2001, 201); hence, to some extent, the values enacted by death rites were not those of the community.

funeral. In their analysis, the authors identify two fundamental principles, "'order'" and "'vitality,'" that between them are responsible for life continuing. Each of these principles is associated with a number of other concepts. Most significantly for immediate purposes, order is associated with death and with dying, whereas vitality is associated with birth. These principles are also connected to gender, with order associated with men and the male parent, while vitality is associated with women and the female parent (1991, 113-115). In the Bara's perception of the universe, death "involves an imbalance in the components of human life," with order in ascendance, and it is crucial to restore the balance (122).

In the long-term, this means appropriate disposal of the body (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 128). In the period immediately after the death, however, the Bara deal with the imbalance through an intensification of vitality (122). This takes place via a variety of means, some of which will be discussed in more detail below, under revelry. Some expressions of vitality, however, are directly tied to the funeral procession. Young Bara males see the "snorting, panting, and bucking" of the running cattle as expressing vitality to an extreme. In addition to the vigour of the physical behaviours, cattle are perceived to be inherently full of "the force of life" (125). Although Metcalf and Huntington do not overtly make this connection, the running of the young men and women, although it has additional cultural meanings, is also an expression of vitality (128).

As in the case with the Bara, cultural attitudes towards gender and gender roles may be displayed through death rites, generally, and the funeral procession, specifically. For instance, according to anthropologist el-Sayed el-Aswad's discussion of death rites in an Egyptian village, women do not take part in the funeral procession, because they are "not allowed to" do so. The community's oral history maintains that roughly fifty years

prior to the research, women did take part in the procession, although they walked in a separate group, "almost ten meters" behind the male group. Although changing religious and cultural practices no longer permit this, the "women, motivated by strong emotions toward the dead," still attempt to participate: "They follow the procession for a few yards, but men order them to return to the house" (1987, 218-19).

In Lutheran funerals in Germany between the middle of the 1500s and the end of the 1600s, both sexes took part in the funeral procession, but they walked in separate groups. According to Koslofsky's description of one funeral, relatives of the deceased led both groups. Judging by the account of the order of the women's group, other participants may have been arranged at least partly by social rank (1995, 321-22).[17] In Koslofsky's view, "The funeral procession, united in song and ordered by estate, age and gender, is the ideal self-representation of the community" (327).

Among the French Protestants described by Luria, a complex interaction between the ideals of different religions, government regulations, and local traditions resulted in varying forms of funeral customs. In its idealized Protestant form, the participants in the procession were "only relatives and friends of the deceased, dressed in black, marching two by two with a meditative air, first the men (perhaps with the consistory elders leading) and then the women" (2001, 196-97). Protestant authorities shaped the funeral to represent and enact their cultural values.

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[17] Koslofsky's description of this funeral is based on Philip Agricola's 1588 pamphlet, *Deploratio vel Querimonia/Kläglich Klaggedict und/Lamentatio/Uber des Edlen und Ehrentvesten, Achbaren und Hochgelarten/Herrn Laperti Distelmeiers. . . . Neben klaerer beschreibung der darauff begangenen und des 16 tages Octobris dieses lauffenden 88 jahrs gehalltener Sepultur*, published in Berlin "im Grawen Kloster durch Nocolaum Voltzen." A reprint of this pamphlet appeared in 1897 as Friedrich Holtze's "Ein Leichenbegängnis zu Berlin im Jahre 1588," *Schriften des Vereins für die Geschichte Berlins*, XXXIII, 1-13. Some of the information I use comes from Koslofsky's direct (albeit translated) quotes from the original.

The synods that set policy struggled, however, with a conflict "between local custom and the desire to restrict processions." At least one of the disputed issues involved gender. The synods objected to the custom of people similar to the deceased serving as pallbearers: "they disliked having corteges of wives carry the bodies of wives, children carry children, and unmarried women carry unmarried women" (Luria 2001, 198). While Luria does not spell this out, it appears that, from the point of view of many participants in the synods, the preferred pallbearers were adult men.

2.3.5.2 Sorrow

Although solemnity contributes to the emotional atmosphere and provides the structure for it, in some ways it is not the most obvious component of the emotional atmosphere following a death, since it is not a direct form of emotional expression. At least for people in North America, that component is sorrow, with crying being its most overt expression. Crying and a related form of emotional expression, lamentation, are widespread cross-culturally.

2.3.5.2.1 Crying

Rosenblatt *et al.* found that crying in response to death was very common. It occurred in seventy-two of the seventy-three cultures for which they were able to find adequate data to make a determination (1976, 15).[18] In addition, the authors had two raters assess the cultures for how often crying occurred. For sixty-nine of those cultures, there was adequate information for both raters to feel that they could evaluate frequency. In sixty-seven cultures, the two raters agreed that crying was "at least frequent" and they

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[18] In the remaining culture, Bali, the evidence they used for their initial decision suggested that crying did not take place after death. One of the researchers went to Bali for a few weeks to investigate and turned up information that allows for a more complicated or ambiguous understanding, but the authors do not attempt to definitively answer this question (Rosenblatt *et al.* 1976, 15-17).

both rated fifty-six cultures as having "'very frequent'" crying (1976, 15). Rosenblatt *et al.* also evaluated the frequency of crying by each sex. They determined that of the sixty cultures for which they had enough information to judge, men and women cried about the same number of times in thirty-two. Women cried more than men in all of the remaining twenty-eight cultures (22).

Grief and Mourning in Cross-Cultural Perspective focuses on cross-cultural commonalities, in the interests of supporting the argument that people of different cultures feel roughly the same way when people die (Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1976, 13-15, 17). The authors acknowledge that "elements of uniqueness" also exist (17), but their approach, in general, tends to minimize differences that, when viewed from other angles, are important. The word "crying," for instance, covers a lot of ground. At one extreme, crying can be muted or suppressed in public. At the other, crying can encompass lamentation or keening and occur in conjunction with other intense emotional expressions. Unfortunately for the purposes of this thesis, Rosenblatt *et al.* do not specifically look at lamentation. The material they quote from other studies suggests they encountered a number of examples of lamentation in their research, but lumped it in with crying in general.[19] Despite the inclusion of these examples, Rosenblatt *et al.* provide no

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[19] See, for instance, examples on p. 13 (qtd. from George Thomas Basden, 1966, *Niger Ibos*, London: Cass [orig. pub. 1938], 270); p. 17 (qtd. from H. A. Junod, 1927, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, London: Macmillan, 143), pp. 17-18 (qtd. from Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1964, *The Andaman Islanders*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe [orig. pub. 1922], 110 and Jules Henry, *Jungle People*, 1964, New York: Vintage [orig. pub. 1941], 66), pp. 22-23 (qtd. from Elisabeth Tooker, 1964, "An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615-1649," *U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 190*, 133; Roy Franklin Barton, 1946, "The Religion of the Ifugaos," *American Anthropological Association, Memoir 65*, 172; and F. Gero, 1968, *Death among the Azande of the Sudan* by F. Giorgetti, trans. by W. H. Paxman, Museum Combonianum 22, Bologna: Editrice Nigrizia, 26). Rosenblatt *et al.* also include what may be an example of poetic lamentation on pp. 1-2 (qtd. from Rafael Karsten, 1935, *The Head Hunters of Western Amazonas*, Helsinki: Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten, 7, 457).

information specifically about the existence or sex role distribution of the more structured, public, and ritual forms of lamentation. A number of other scholars have, however, addressed this topic.

2.3.5.2.2 Lamentation/Keening

Like simple crying, lamentation or keening is an expression of sorrow, but it is more poetic and/or more intense than simple crying. According to the *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*'s article on "Mourning Songs," there is considerable variety in the complexity of laments. They can be "little more than howls and screams" or they can be artistically highly developed, both musically and verbally. The mourning traditions of a particular culture can encompass both types, but the two different types are emicly understood to be different entities (M. Leach 1950). Folklorist Angela Bourke also divides lamentation into two main types, but implicitly expands the first category to allow for a more subdued performance; she says this category consists of "ritualised wailing and groaning." She sees the second category, however, much as *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary* does (1988, 287-88).

Lamentation has a long history. *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* describes it as "age-old and world-wide" (M. Leach 1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). It is traceable at least as far back as the ancient Greeks. In her article "Lament Ritual Transformed into Literature: Positing Women's Prayer as Cornerstone in Western Classical Literature," Batya Weinbaum argues that women's lament poetry is a significant source for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In her estimation, such poetry was not new at that time. She dates the practice of this mourning tradition back to the early 1000s B.C. Lament for the dead is a truly ancient expression (2001, 20).

In addition to being about as old as anything else we know about in Western culture, lament is cross-culturally widespread, having occurred in Africa, the Americas,

Australia, and Polynesia, as well as in a number of areas in Europe and Asia, including China, Ireland, Corsica, and Russia (M. Leach 1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). Brazilian folklorists documented the "wailing women" (*"carpideiras"*) who announced deaths. Reis points out that this custom was also practiced in the Mediterranean, in Africa, and by the indigenous inhabitants of Brazil (2003, 91).

Depending on cultural context and circumstances, performers of lament may or may not be relatives of the dead. In *Oral Poetry*, anthropologist Ruth Finnegan notes that the recruitment of people who are good at lament to participate in death rites is a fairly typical pattern cross-culturally. In those cases, the lamenters might well be relatives, but sometimes they are not (1992, 195-96). Finnegan divides oral poets into three categories, depending on how much official status they have, the permanency of their employment, and the degree to which they are professional (188-200). The least professional category is "more occasional poets." Other people in their cultural contexts perceive that they are skilled, but most of their livelihood derives from activities other than poetry. Performance at life passage rituals is a common role for this category of oral poets (195-96).

Despite their not-fully-professional status, poets of this type do, in many cultural contexts, receive some kind of reimbursement for their work at ceremonies. Typically, this might be "some small fee, or, at the least, generous hospitality" (Finnegan 1992, 196). In particular, there is a long history of paying lamenters in a number of different cultures. This practice has, for instance, been carried on for hundreds of years in the Near East, as well as Russia and China. Other groups that have practiced paid lamentation include the Corsicans, the Maltese, the Abyssinian Bedui, the Chiriguanos in South America, and the Mandan and the Gros Ventres in North America (M. Leach 1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). Finnegan does not mention whether or not the *nyatiti* singers among the Luo are directly compensated by the deceased's family, but does mention that they

"make a collection" from the typically "large and admiring audience" at the funerals at which they perform (196). According to Reis in both Portugal and Brazil, "a well-mounted funeral" required paid lamenters (2003, 91).

As was the case in ancient Greece, lament is often associated specifically with women. Finnegan, for instance, states that women often take the major role in the composition and performance of songs connected with rites of passage. This is particularly true for two categories of song, one of which is laments (1992, 198).[20] *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* states even more strongly that lament singing "is generally a function of women" (M. Leach 1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). As is described in more detail below, other groups among whom lament is or has been primarily associated with women include modern Greeks, Awlad 'Ali Bedouins, rural Egyptian Moslems, and the Nigerian Bura. This widespread connection of women with lament may arise from the cross-cultural tendency for women to cry as much as or more than men in response to death.

Whatever the reason for this association, there are exceptions to the general rule. In some cultures, there is some leeway for men to participate in lamentation practices. Cultural groups in which men might not only participate in lament singing, but might have the most important role are the Kaffirs, the Chinese, and the Dahomeans (M. Leach 1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). In Finnegan's brief discussion of East African Luo *nyatiti* singers, who sing laments at funerals, she uses the male pronoun generically, thus suggesting that many or all members of this group are men (1992, 196).

In some cultural contexts, both sexes may be allowed to cry, but women bear more of the responsibility for this role. A particular example comes from Koslofsky's analysis of Philip Agricola's account of a sixteenth century funeral in Berlin, in which the

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[20] The other category is wedding songs (Finnegan 1992, 198).

sorrow expressed by the women is emphasized: "They are described as crying and wailing so mournfully that the onlookers also burst into tears" (1995, 321). This does not mean the men expressed no sorrow; in fact, according to Koslofsky, they are "described as grieving bitterly," but the mourning of the women is stressed more. He thinks this indicates that to "display grief to the onlookers" was a female task (331).

Lamentation by men in other cultural contexts is less typical or less culturally supported. Marios Sarris writing about Greece, where, as described below, gendered emotional expression in relation to mourning is particularly differentiated, states that, even in this extreme context, gender divisions are not hard and fast. Men who are by themselves may mourn through crying and even lamentation. Sarris is not sure to what extent this is an accepted cultural pattern and to what extent it reflects the specific responses of specific men (1995, 21).

Folklorist Zainab Haruna discusses somewhat similar practices among the Bura of Nigeria. In this culture, there is also extemporaneous creation of dirges by relatives of those who have died. This is primarily a female responsibility. Women are expected to cry, but men are expected not to do so. There are, however, some men who not only cry, but who also participate in the extemporaneous creation of dirges and their performance (1998, 109), although this is very atypical (158).

As these examples demonstrate, one scholarly approach to lamentation has been the examination and analysis of gender roles. This focus is not particularly surprising, given the gendered nature of the custom and the fact that this is an area of life in which women are often both visible and highly audible. Some scholars discuss lament as a site of tension or disagreement between the sexes. In the Egyptian village studied by el-Aswad, male members of the community "object" to the practice of lamentation by women. In el-Aswad's analysis, however, their disapproval is due to "social etiquette"

and is not backed up by the use of male authority to stop the lamentation (1987, 216). Men perceive that their behaviour during death rites is more in accordance with "Muslim principles and practices," in part because the women lament, but the men read from the Koran and take on the formal, religious parts of death rites. Men think that their typical demeanour during death rites, "being solemnly silent," is more appropriate than the women's noisier approach. According to the men, women "wail, shriek and talk and gossip." Men see themselves as self-controlled in their response to death, but see some of the women's behaviour (for instance, tearing clothing) as "irrational." They perceive women's lamentation as evidence that women are intellectually and religiously "inferior" (236-37).

According to el-Aswad, women are in substantial agreement with (or, at least, "do not object to") the male perspective on different gendered approaches to death rites. Their understanding of their own behaviour is, nonetheless, slanted slightly differently. Women think that they are weaker than men, as a result of Allah's choice to use a "crooked rib" to make them. Consequently, they have less control over their emotional response; this is particularly true when someone close to them dies. Women also feel social pressure to demonstrate their sorrow through lamentation. They are concerned that a failure to lament would be interpreted by others (including men) as a failure to feel appropriately sorrowful (1987, 237).

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod describes encountering similar attitudes. The lamentation practices of Egyptian Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women are also deemed inappropriate by official religion, which, in their context, as in that of the village described by el-Aswad, is Islam. Abu-Lughod perceives that such lamentation is one of a set of "discourses" that deal with death within this community and that all the "discourses" need to be examined in connection with one another. The relevant

discourses are the official religious "discourse," "songs of loss," and stories told concerning the deaths of specific people (1997, 528). Although lamenting and singing are emicly seen to be quite different, "of all the discursive genres in this community, laments and songs sound most similar." "Songs of loss," however, are not sung at funerals. In fact, they are often sung for the benefit of the woman herself (531).

L. Abu-Lughod asserts that in this particular context, official religion is not necessarily the most important of the various discourses (1997, 529). It is, however, in sharp distinction to the two women's song traditions regarding death. In this particular community lamentation is viewed as inappropriate for those women who have gone to Mecca. Abu-Lughod states that she is unaware of any such women who refrained from lamentation, but notes that other people intervened when they lamented. In addition, official religious documents speak out against "lamentation and extravagant shows of grief" in general (534).

In this context, religious faith is supposed to be more important than worldly attachments, including those to other people. Lamentation can be interpreted as a refusal to resign oneself to "God's will," as he is believed to have decided when each person will die (1997, 534). In addition, in L. Abu-Lughod's understanding, lamentation is about specific attachments between sets of two people, whether that attachment is between two individual living mourners or between the mourner and a dead person (537). She connects the fact that men are perceived to be better at following the practices of Islam than women with the fact that there is no cultural leeway for men to participate in either of the singing traditions (534).

L. Abu-Lughod contends that particular messages are conveyed by the behaviour of Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women, when they mourn in a context where lamentation and other women's mourning practices are not considered religiously appropriate. She says

that lamentation, the singing of songs related to the death, and other mourning customs are an assertion that the emotional impact of the loss is more significant (at least in practice) than a woman's religious faith (1997, 537). She suggests that, given that women also participate in the religious discourse, women's mourning practices cannot simply be seen as "counterdiscourses" that privilege different values than the dominant male culture. She contends that, instead, these women essentially ritualize or "enact" the culturally-based idea that they are not as good as men in a moral sense or, by implication, as good as men in a broader sense (546). Although in superficial conflict with official religion, at a deeper level the mourning practices work together with official religion to express certain cultural beliefs about the relative worth of men and women.

Like L. Abu-Lughod, Sarris perceives that mourning customs following a death ritualize the culture's views of male and female roles. Men's and women's mourning behaviour is significantly different in Greece. While the women are engaged in intense expression of grief, including lamentation and behaviour, such as scratching themselves, that would be perceived as self-abusive in North America, the men congregate elsewhere in or near the house. They engage in low-key conversation and smoke (1995, 14). According to Sarris, both sexes behave in character, men by not expressing grief and women by expressing it (19-20). The ideal man is supposed to be aggressive and brave, but also pragmatic in his approach to family issues. Sarris says, "Greek-Cypriot men's view of themselves as the stronger sex requires them to be supporters and comforters of their wives at times of misfortune and hardship . . . and the concept of male strength (*dynami*) is reflected in the belief that men are physically and psychologically stronger than women" (17). Men, in fact, are at danger of being less well thought of if they mourn in overt ways (20).

In this context, as in the Egyptian contexts, ideas about the relative engagement in religion by the two sexes plays a role, but gendered expectations are different in Greece. Men are not expected to be as religiously inclined as women. Women, in contrast, are perceived as being much more emotional and religious, as well as "psychologically weak." This emotionality and weakness are thought to account for the intensity of their mourning (Sarris 1995, 17-18). These personality traits are much the same as those attributed to women in the Egyptian cultures, but, here, instead of being a demonstration of how women are less guided by religion than men, these traits are assumed to correlate with women's greater religiosity.

Sarris draws on G. Bateson's concept of "schismogenesis," which describes a process whereby the behaviour patterns of two different groups of people react to each other, with each pattern of behaviour becoming more pronounced in relation to the other behaviour pattern.[21] Sarris believes that this process accounts for the extremes of Greek mourning practice and that behaviour in this context does not necessarily reflect what each gender naturally feels. Instead, men try to keep their emotions in check, whereas women deliberately try to stimulate emotion. Sarris, in fact, thinks that many of the intense mourning customs actually create sorrow. From his perspective, these customs are not an indication of how much individuals of each gender feel a loss, but the degree to which feelings are acted out (1995, 20-21).

Another site of conflict, or, at least, discussion, in both contemporary accounts of lamentation and scholarly analysis, is the motivations and reactions of the mourners, especially those not related to the deceased or those hired to mourn. Reis, for instance, in his discussion of death rites in Bahia, quotes contemporary accounts that commented negatively on paid mourners. In 1832, for instance, Father Lopes Gama remarked on the

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[21] The source is Bateson's 1980 *Naven*, 2nd ed., London: Wildwood House.

ability of such mourners to cry for people they had never met. Another writer, in an 1857 article for the *Jornal da Bahia*, wondered how the women would support themselves without their mourning work. This writer accuses the women of insincerity (or "of little caring for the tears they shed") and also charges them with varying the amount of weeping according to the amount of money they thought they would be paid, rather than the moral status of the dead person.[22] Reis says that both official religion and secular sources criticize paid mourning (2003, 91). He contrasts the paid mourners with unpaid mourners, such as the deceased's kinswomen and neighbours. To these, he attributes real emotion, "the pain of loss or solicitude for another's pain." He points out, however, that these women were not completely different from professional mourners. Instead, both groups were involved in "displaying obligatory feelings and performing a ritual obligation" (2003, 91).

L. Abu-Lughod offers another perspective. She suggests that the expression of grief by lamenters not related to the deceased is sincere, albeit not necessarily connected to the specific person who has died. Such mourners call instead on a dead relative of their own. She quotes one of her informants as saying: "Do you think you cry over the dead person? No, you cry for yourself, for those who have died in your life" (1997, 537).

2.3.5.2.3 Minimal or Hidden Public Crying

Crying occurs in all or almost all cultural contexts, but in some lamentation or even public crying is discouraged. Metcalf and Huntington note that while "expression of strong emotional response" is typical following a death, some cultures favour a much more subdued response. As an example they cite Clifford Geertz's discussion, in *The Religion of Java*, of family members' response to the deceased's daughter, "who was

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[22] Reis gives very little citation information for the material he quotes here. The only additional source information he gives is that Father Lopes Gama was in Pernambuco when he wrote his text (2003, 91).

crying slightly" during the rites following the death.[23] These family members "hushed her into a show of composure," in part by saying that her ongoing participation was contingent on her ceasing to weep. In addition to this threat of a social penalty, the relatives also gave a spiritual reason for her to stop crying; they asserted that the dead person would have more difficulty reaching the grave if she did not. In this cultural context, crying, at least during the death rites, is not an acceptable response to death (1991, 60).

Even when a culture allows the expression of sorrow, it may deem it inappropriate in some circumstances. Reis describes children's funerals in Brazil in the early 1800s as "tearless." As discussed in the next section, such funerals also included elements of revelry. It appears from the material Reis quotes that children were thought to go directly to Heaven; under those circumstances grief was probably thought to be beside the point (2003, 119-20).[24]

Martin and Doka suggest that cultures often evolve so that men are responsible for instrumental grieving and women for intuitive grieving. As an example, they give the Russian Old Believers, among whom "men make the caskets and tell stories while women weep and wail" (2000, 106). This understanding is problematic in certain ways. In particular, no matter how emotionally expressive poetry may be, remembering or improvising poetry on the spot has strong cognitive elements. In addition, while men may

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[23] The publication information for Geertz's book is 1960, New York: Free Press.

[24] The material quoted comes from M. J. Arago's 1840 *Souvenirs d'un aveugle: voyage au tour du monde*, 3rd edition, vol. 1, Paris: Gayet et Lebrun, 102-03; Daniel P. Kidder's 1845 *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil Embracing Historical and Geographical Notices of the Empire and Its Several Provinces*, vol. 1, London: Wiley and Putnam; and Luís da Câmara Cascudo's *Anúbis e outros ensaios*, 1983, 2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro: Funarte/Instituto Nacional do Folclore/Achiamé/Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, chap. 24.

make coffins in many cultural contexts, this does not mean that women have no responsibility for hands-on work. In much of North America, they might, for instance, have sewn shrouds or done the cooking necessary for death rites. Finally, both practical tasks and lamentation may be outsourced to people other than the primary mourners. That said, Martin and Doka's assessment has some validity. While it may be an oversimplification to describe the crying and lamenting that follows a death as "intuitive grieving," lamenting does superficially appear to be about emotion. Even if there are significant cognitive aspects to lamentation and even when the specialists who perform the laments barely know the deceased, crying and lamentation work to highlight the emotional response to grief. Very often, that overt expression of grief is particularly associated with women. At the same time, men often engage in activities that are much less overtly emotional.

2.3.5.3 Revelry

For many North Americans, crying and lamentation are understandable reactions to death, whereas revelry, which incorporates a range of practices usually associated with fun, social events, may not be an obvious response. Despite this, revelry comes up repeatedly in the literature on death. While it is not in and of itself an emotion, it does, when part of the customary behaviour immediately following the death, affect the emotional atmosphere. Depending on the cultural context, revelry may include a variety of different activities; folklorist Ilana Harlow lists "feasting and drinking, dancing, singing and music, storytelling, riddling, and games" (2003, 84). Courtship is another recurring aspect of revelry at death rites. In some contexts, practical jokes or other relatively physical forms of humour are practiced.

Revelry is known to occur in death rites in various parts of the world. Harlow, for instance, says that it took place in "much of Europe," starting no later than the medieval

period (2003, 84). Revelry, according to van Gennep, also occurred in Africa, where "'a period of license'" occurred as part of the rites after "certain petty kings" died (1960, 148). Metcalf and Huntington describe nighttime partying at funerals among the young people of the Bara (1991, 116-17) and "drinking and socializing" among guests at Berawan funerals in Borneo (64).

Among the Berawan, "horseplay" at funerals is typical behaviour for the young. This may be flirtatious, "as when a teenage girl attempts to rub pot black on the face of a young man." Incidents of this type can escalate into "chases up and down the longhouse, and melees involving dozens of people" (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 124). In some cases the physical humour involves the corpse. As described in more detail below, anthropologist Kathleen Barlow reports the practice of a humorous dance during the death rites of deceased women among the Murik in Papua New Guinea, when the participants attack the bier (1992, 75). Games involving the body also took place in "sub-Carpathian Russia." Petr Bogatyrev describes a prank in which the corpse's hand was moved by means of a string (as quoted in Harlow 2003, 96).[25]

Revelry is no less complicated than sorrow, in that the expressive behaviours associated with humour and with revelry more broadly may or may not have anything to do with what participants actually feel. Anthropologist Nigel Barley, in his book *Grave Matters*, while discussing laughter and joking behaviours, points out that, like crying, "smiles and laughter" may not directly correlate with "internal states" and "are not necessarily universal signs of joy" (1997, 34).

Like aspects of solemnity and sorrow, some forms of revelry are required. In their summary of Godfrey Wilson's description of Nyakyusa burial customs, Metcalf and

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[25] Harlow's source is Bogatyrev's 1977 "Ritual Games in the Funerals of Sub-Carpathian Russia," *Folklore Forum* 10:141-159.

Huntington paraphrase Wilson on the "obligatory pattern" by which grief in each culture is expressed: "One *must* dance and flirt at a Nyakyusa funeral just as one *must* wear black and be solemn at an English funeral" (1991, 53; emphasis in original).[26] A closer look at their description makes it clear that the emotional atmosphere at Nyakyusa funerals is more complex and that dancing and flirting are only obligatory if "one" is male. Emotional behaviour is largely gendered. As Metcalf and Huntington say later, "the women wail and the men dance" (54). This is still a rather simplified summing up, but gives more of a sense of the range of emotional expression in this context.

Behaviour at Nyakyusa funerals depends not just on gender, but on age and relationship to the deceased. Women do wail, especially the elderly and "the 'female owners of the death,'" who are presumably the relatives and other women recognized as having a close tie to the deceased. Men may also lament, but no more than once (Wilson as qtd. and paraphrased in Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 54). A long description of a particular burial excerpted from Wilson's account describes several male relatives lamenting with the women early in the morning of the day after the deceased's death. Two of those male relatives, however, join the dancing – or at least its preliminaries – at a fairly early stage. Initially they do not appear to enjoy themselves. In Wilson's description, they "dance with grief in the looks, calling out 'alas!' as each shakes his spear." By late afternoon, most of the crowd appears to be "lively and excited," with one of the male relatives who had been wailing earlier in the day "laughing gaily as he dances" (59).

Some women who are not related to the deceased (Wilson, as qtd. in Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 59) participate in the dancing, but not as dancers. Instead, they "move

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[26] The work cited is Wilson's 1939 article, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies* 13:1-31.

about among the dancing youths, calling the war cry and swinging their hips in rhythmic fashion" (Metcalf and Huntington, 55). Dancing is not the only aspect of revelry that takes place at Nyakyusa funerals. Other activities that might fall into this category include eating (54), fighting, and courtship (56-57).

Elements of revelry in death rites sometimes occur only in relation to certain deaths. Due to the belief that baptized children who died young were transformed into angels at the time of death, death rites for such children "bordered on festivities" in Brazil (Reis 2003, 103). A "joyful, participatory atmosphere" prevailed at funerals for children during the early 1800s in Rio de Janeiro. In an area of the Brazilian state of Ceará, if a newborn died, outright celebration, involving "gunfire and skyrockets, food, drink, and music" took place into the 1900s (119-120).

As is the case with sorrow and solemnity, scholars who have written about revelry in relation to death have discussed its functions. Martin and Doka, for instance, briefly explore humour in relation to death and suggest that it performs a number of important roles. It can help people to bypass difficult emotions associated with the death. As a short-term thing, this is good in and of itself. When the humour comes from stories about the person who has died, it allows attention to aspects of the dead person not immediately associated with his or her death. Another helpful function is "tension relief." Partly because of this function, people may be more inclined to provide support to survivors who show some trace of a sense of humour than to survivors who are totally grief-stricken. In addition, "Humor can offer a sense of perspective that allows us to laugh at our fears and difficulties." Finally, there is some evidence that humour is physically good for us (2000, 137-38).[27]

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[27] Nevertheless, Martin and Doka point out that humour may have a negative, rather than positive impact, if it is overdone or "used insensitively" (2000, 138).

Barlow, writing about the Murik in Papua New Guinea, analyzes the functions of a specific type of humour in a specific context. She reports a ludic display directed at a female corpse by certain groups of classificatory female relatives. Barlow describes how these women enter the house where the corpse is:

> calling the dead person's names and making a great commotion that shakes the entire house. Kicking the bier and goading the dead woman to get up and dance with them, they try to revive their partner from her passive and asocial state. The inertness of the body in comparison to the vigor with which the living would respond to such taunts is ludicrous and strikes many onlookers as funny. . . . They [the dancing women] shout angrily and strike at the bier with hatchets normally used to chop firewood. (Barlow 1992, 75)

This initial display takes place "during the first day of mourning." On subsequent days, as additional women in the appropriate classificatory kin categories arrive from other villages, more displays of this general type take place (75-76).

The context for this behaviour is that the specific categories of classificatory kin involved have a particular culturally defined relationship with each other. They are "joking partners" in "joking" relationships (Barlow 1992, 58). A woman's appropriate behaviour towards living women in these categories includes a significant amount of aggressive mockery, often with a physical element (66-71). The obligations of one of the groups of classificatory relatives, however, also "include real assistance and protection" of various practical and ritual types (65-72).[28]

According to Barlow, the dance around the corpse "to revive the dead woman [is] met with shrieks of cathartic laughter from the assembled women and children made nervous by proximity to death." People closely related to the deceased, however, have a different response. Their appropriate reaction to the death, generally, is to "wail and weep

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[28] Both groups of classificatory relatives have significant additional obligations in relation to the death. Much of the work they do at this time is practical, but they also honour the deceased in a more direct way. Although the dancing starts out in a ludic mode, it quickly "becomes formal and honorific" (Barlow 1992, 74-75).

over [the deceased's] body." When the dead person's joking partners arrive to perform their dance, the near relatives draw back. They either "turn away or gaze impassively at the performance" (1992, 75). Barlow thinks that the degree to which they are "emotionally involved" in the death forestalls laughter. Those people who are emotionally impacted by the death, but to a lesser degree, can, through the dance, "participate in and observe their own distress, relieving it with laughter" (84, endnote 20).

Barlow cites Mary Douglas' paper "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception,"[29] in which Douglas asserts that at funerals clowning behaviour highlights the "contrast between social structure" on the one hand and "*communitas*" on the other. The keening that is part of formalized mourning in Murik culture emphasizes the deceased as someone who filled specific kinship roles, but does not mention her by name. The performance by the classificatory kin (which, as mentioned above, does involve the use of the deceased's names), "confirms the absolute death of the individual." It also surfaces "*communitas* among the bereaved," with the exception of the near relatives, who are at this point set apart from the rest of the community. In Barlow's analysis: "The clowns make them laugh as a chorus of voices, and in that tenuous moment their performance highlights the immediate and unstructured bonds among them" (1992, 78). The audience members experience both emotional release and social bonding as a result of this dance.

Barley has a somewhat different analysis of joking relationships, generally, in the context of death. In his opinion, "seemingly cathartic 'jokers' may not cause hilarity in the objects of their attentions." In fact, such jokers may be hoping for "payment" to stop "such intensely annoying behaviour." Barley is dubious that such joking has any positive benefit, but suggests that, if it does, it is largely because the behaviour acts as a "counter-

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[29] This paper was published in 1968 in *Man* 3:361-76.

irritant" (1997, 40). He acknowledges, however, that at the time of death a mix of practical assistance and rough humour is typical of joking relationships. People in such relationships with each other are, in Barley's description, "those at the outer edges of kinship." They are not close relatives, but cross cousins, in-laws, and people whose relationship with the deceased may be culturally acknowledged, but is not based on biological kinship (35).

In *The Ritual Process*, Turner, elaborating on van Gennep's theories, suggests that "life-crisis rites" generally are *"rituals of status elevation"* (1969, 168-69). In Turner's view, people undergoing such rites are typically subjected to various forms of abuse and mistreatment, as well as deprived of whatever status they may have in ordinary life. Such people are, during this time, "reduced to a condition that, although it is still social, is without status or beneath all accepted forms of status" (169-71). Dinn says this theory does not apply to death rites in medieval Bury St Edmunds, where the dead person's status "was explicitly and constantly reaffirmed throughout the funeral ritual" (1992, 159). This theory, in fact, does not work well when applied to the solemn aspects of death rites, especially the funeral procession, since, as is discussed in some detail above, the procession is often the locus for display of status. Some of the humorous interactions with or pranks involving the corpse that take place in conjunction with wake revelry, may, however, function as the type of levelling humour that Turner describes.

This theory may, for instance, apply to the Murik. Although the deceased and the women who engage in the clowning performance after her death have always had a joking relationship, from Barlow's description, the performance at the time of death is particularly intense: "This is the moment of greatest antagonism from the joking partners and the moment when their efforts are most futile" (1992, 75).

In their discussion of Nyakyusa funerals, described above, Metcalf and Huntington attribute various aspects of revelry that are part of the funeral to a desire "to confront death with an assertion of life" (1991, 57). They perceive that this is a common response to death cross-culturally. Their sense is that the participants want to stop dwelling on death and instead shift their attention to "a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk and to the eating of great quantities of meat" (Wilson, as qtd. in Metcalf and Huntingon 57[30]). Participants in the dancing have the opportunity to act out "their virility and courage." The dance performed at the funeral has another cultural context and meaning; it is a war dance. Since war is becoming less important in the lives of this group, however, the emphasis of the dance is changing, with its sexual aspect increasing in importance (55).

The Nyakyusa themselves have a different perspective on some aspects of their burial customs. Fear constitutes a significant part of their reaction to death and one of the things of which the Nyakyusa, especially women, are afraid is spirits. According to the Nyakyusa, the rites following the death are intended to banish those spirits (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 54-55).

As is the case for solemnity and sorrow, it is possible for display to be part of some aspects of revelry, although this appears to be less common. El-Aswad reports that in the Egyptian village he studied, the bereaved pay attention to, among other things, how much food different guests provide for the gatherings of men that take place both during the rites closely following the death and at memorial rituals later (1987, 228-29). El-Aswad says, "Visitors show their social status and wealth by the quality and quantity of food they display." There is an element of competition in food provision (230).

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[30] The quote comes from Godfrey Wilson's 1939 article, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies* 13:1-31.

Conversely, in some circumstances serving food to participants in death rites might have a directly practical function. For instance, Reis attributes the provision of "food and drink, even liquor" to the people keeping vigil at the wake to the need for them to go "through the night with exalted spirits." Their "prayers and other gestures" protected the soul of the deceased against "evil spirits" by fortifying it (2003, 112).[31] Extra calories and nutrients may be helpful at any event where it is deemed important for participants to be up all night.

Thursby suggests a number of functions for the meal following the funeral. Implicitly, one of those functions is to cheer up the survivors. She says, "It is difficult, if not impossible, to enjoy a good meal and company when one is sad, and post-funeral meals, usually sumptuous and comforting, are no exception." Through its act of memorialization, the post-funeral meal "renews the living," as do all the other acts that memorialize the dead (2006, 3). In addition, food is connected with renewal in its own right; it is "a giver and sustainer of life" (8). In Thursby's conception, the meal after the funeral is Janus-like, in that it is an occasion to both "look back" and "look forward." What is anticipated from the future is "joy and success" (5).

As noted above, Rosenblatt *et al.* identify a number of different functions performed by death rites, some of them overtly social. Given that context, it is not surprising to find elements of revelry enmeshed in death rites. It seems clear, however, from Rosenblatt *et al.*'s account that there is one function that revelry at death rites probably does not serve. Although there might be any number of reasons for people unrelated to the deceased to fail to attend death rites, the presence of such people appears, nonetheless, to be helpful both for themselves and for the relatives. For this reason,

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[31] Here Reis appears to be speaking generally, rather than about Bahia, since the available evidence for Bahia suggests that food was not served (2003, 112).

Rosenblatt *et al.* suggest that cultures might provide built-in incentives to go to death rites. While they say that these incentives could consist of either "a source of pleasure for attending or a source of pain for not attending," in practice their list of such incentives consists almost entirely of pleasurable activity: "feasting, gaming, dancing, sexual liberties, provision of alcoholic drink, and (at final ceremonies) the holding of a single ceremony for several deceased persons" (1976, 95).

Their examination of these variables did not, however, support their theory. Nine of their incentives did not correlate with attendance rates at death rites.[32] Of the remaining two, one (having only one set of rites for multiple people who had died) cannot reasonably be defined as a form of revelry. Both this incentive and the one presumably pleasurable incentive for which they were able to find a correlation, "sex liberties (such as an orgy)," occurred infrequently, resulting in a sample that Rosenblatt *et al.* thought too small for drawing definite conclusions (1976, 95).[33]

While attracting people to death rites does not appear to be a significant function of revelry at death rites, there could conceivably be a correlation between the demographics of attendees and party-type behaviours at wakes. Specifically, if there is likely to be dancing and drinking and other forms of revelry, the participants might be considerably younger than if the event is dedicated to prayer and hymn singing or the local equivalent. There might also, for some party behaviours (drinking, for instance) be a

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[32] There is a discrepancy in Rosenblatt *et al.*'s text. Their list includes only six incentives, but in the next paragraph they refer to "eleven inducements" (1976, 95). I suspect some of the elements in the shorter list may have been broken down into two or more categories for analysis.

[33] Rosenblatt *et al.* speculated that there might still be a subtle effect on attendance. In cultures where there was fear of either the body or of ghosts, "inducements" to attend the ceremonies might offset the effects of the fear and encourage participation by people who might otherwise be reluctant to attend (1976, 95-96).

correlation with gender, especially if the activity in question is allowed for one sex, but not the other.

In addition to performing different practical functions, festive elements within death rites may reflect, symbolize, or enact the values of a society. From a symbolic point of view, for the Nyakyusa, dancing is a way of enacting cultural gender roles: "male strength and courage is emphasized in contrast to female fear and trembling" (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 55). Similarly, as described above in the section on solemnity, the death rites of the Bara are imbued with symbolism strongly linked to gender, which equates order with maleness and vitality with femaleness (114). This symbol system pervades not only the funeral procession, but also the period between death and burial. During the day, there are two foci of activity. One is the "female house," where the corpse is kept. This is where the women spend their time and engage in "periods of loud ritual weeping." The other is the "male house," where the atmosphere is very different. Metcalf and Huntington refer to the "formality" in the way the men talk and where they sit. Planning for the burial and "stylized expressions of condolence" take place there. Metcalf and Huntington see this sharp division of atmosphere and activities as emblematic of the division of the deceased into his or her "'male' and 'female' components" at the point of death (116-17).

During the night, the young people of both sexes come together in the courtyard and engage in various forms of revelry, including dancing, singing, eating, drinking, and "a close, almost licentious relationship between males and females" (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, 117). There is a marked "chaotic" element to the activities. Metcalf and Huntington assert that the purpose of serving rum is to generate "disorderly conduct" and refer to a song sung by the young women that exhorts the young men "to act crazy, unrestrained, and shameless." The incest taboo is somewhat relaxed (127). In the

description of Metcalf and Huntington, "the burial is a ritual of extremes. The sexes are almost absolutely separated by day and enjoined to an obscene, boisterous togetherness by night" (117). To compensate for the imbalance between order and vitality that occur at the time of death, massive amounts of vitality must be generated (122). This is achieved through the "various excesses" that occur during death rites (128). Chaos is associated with vitality (127), as are some of the acts of revelry associated with funerals and the themes articulated through those activities (122).

Other scholars make different connections between revelry and death rites. Thursby perceives that for Americans of the present day, ritual, to a large extent, is linked to festivity and that this does not change when the occasion for the ritual is death (2006, 4). According to Reis, religious activity in Bahía included some festivals that focussed on death and incorporated elements of death rites, such as the funeral procession, but that "were also celebrations of life." Reis thinks these festivals were a strong influence on funerals in Brazil, which he calls "true spectacles." He equates "the pomp of funerals" with "funerary festivities" and says it "anticipated the happy fate imagined for the dead, and, by association, helped make it happen" (2003, 118). Although the "pomp" Reis refers to seems, in terms of my classification system, to be largely or entirely solemnity rather than revelry, his discussion suggests that funerals had joyous undertones. To some extent, revelry may be an aspect of funerals, simply because of the general nature of ritual in a particular culture.

In scholarly analysis, revelry may also be seen as a reaction to other aspects of death rites. As mentioned in the introduction, Thursby sees "*communitas*" as one of the competing needs of the survivors (2006, 4). Like Turner, Thursby is interested in "instances of diminished social stratifications" that take place during rites of passage, times when "the participants and the audience become one in understanding and

purpose."[34] Thursby sees such moments as connected to revelry, albeit indirectly. In her

opinion, the instinctive response "in our archetypal psyche" to the experience of

communitas is "solemnity," but such experiences may be quickly followed by more

overtly social and festive connection (7).

Although I have, for the most part, discussed various emotions and behaviours

connected to the period after death separately and although these emotions and

behaviours sometimes appear to contradict each other, they are, in point of fact, all

interconnected in the cultural context in which they occur. In some contexts, they may

even occur at the same time and place. For instance, folklorist Angela Bourke gives the

following description of lamentation at Irish wakes:

> The lament poem was only one part of a total performance, and the audience
> witnessing it was complex and variable. The whole community was expected to
> be present, but the center of activity shifted as the body was brought from the
> place of death to its "laying out" for the wake in a house or barn and from there to
> the church and the graveyard. A wake lasted up to three days, during which
> people came and went. Besides the clamour of lamenting immediately around the
> body, there were competing attractions of games and other activities. It was a
> major social event, especially for women. (1993, 164)

In Bourke's understanding of the Irish wake, lamentation and revelry were in immediate

physical and temporal proximity to each other. The juxtaposition of these particular

components of emotional expression is not true of all cultures. In Newfoundland, for

instance, revelry, when it took place, generally occurred at different times than the overt

expression of sadness. Nevertheless, where both revelry and lamentation are part of the

customs immediately following death in a given culture, the two speak to and inform

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[34] Superficially, this appears to contrast with the viewpoints of a number of the
other authors quoted in this chapter, who bring attention to elements of status display, but
Thursby does not deny that such display takes place during death rites. In fact, she points
out that for some subgroups within the larger American context, funeral processions are
"an important symbol of status" (2006, 41).

each other. The same is true of the interaction of solemnity with both revelry and lamentation.

2.4 Public and Private Spheres

Scholarly work on emotional expression following a death focuses, to a large extent, on the emotional behaviour people exhibit. I turn next to writing on public and private space, to address what emotional behaviour specific people can engage in, where they can do it, and what the implications for that behaviour are. In this model, the "public sphere" has been identified as "rational, active, individualistic, masculine" and the private sphere as "emotional, passive, dependent, feminine" (Keough 2001, frame 4, 330).[35] In her book *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880,* historian Mary Ryan credits Michelle Rosaldo with raising the issue of public and private space in the context of "feminist theory" (1990, 4). Rosaldo, in her essay "Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview," asserts that women, because they "give birth to and nurse children," and also do much of the work of raising children are associated cross-culturally with the private or "domestic" sphere. This leaves the more "public" aspects of human life in the hands of men (1974, 23-24). The division "between domestic and public orientations" has a profound impact on a number of aspects of human culture (24-35). Men and the activities deemed gender-appropriate for them are cross-culturally valued more highly than women and their activities (19).

As Mary Ryan points out, Rosaldo's basic underlying idea is not new in Western thought. The separation of "social space" into public and private spheres, as well as the

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[35] As is discussed in slightly more detail below, understandings of the public and private spheres have not been static over time. Keough attributes this particular understanding to "Enlightenment thought" (2001, frame 4, 330).

association of women with the private sphere and men with the public goes back a long way (1990, 4). Classicists Wm. Blake Tyrell and Larry J. Bennett, writing about Athens of the fifth century B.C., discuss both women's theoretical confinement to the private sphere, and their actual engagement in a wider life: "Ideally, women were watched constantly, but in everyday life men were engaged in their own activities away from the house, and women left their houses for many reasons. Women worked in fields and vineyards, sold goods in the agora, participated in funerals and festivals, visited relatives, and gossiped with friends in the neighborhood and at fountains" (1999, 49).

Around the turn of the fifth century, John Chrysostom said in a homily: "Our life is customarily organized into two spheres: public affairs and private matters, both of which were determined by God. To woman is assigned the presidency of the household; to man, all business of state, the marketplace, the administration of justice, government, the military, and all other such enterprises." After enumerating some of women's perceived weaknesses, along with their compensating abilities within the house, Chrysostom adds:

> She takes care of all other matters of this sort, that are neither fitting for her husband's concern nor would they be satisfactorily accomplished should he ever lay his hand to them—even if he struggled valiantly!
> Indeed, this is a work of God's love and wisdom, that he who is skilled at the greater things is downright inept and useless in the performance of the less important ones, so that the woman's service is necessary. (1983, 36-37)[36]

Chrystostom's words usefully reflect a number of the elements Rosaldo discusses: the separation of the world into public and private spheres, the association of one sex with each of those spheres, and the higher valuation of the public sphere and men's work (in this case, even as Chrysostom insists on the necessity of women's work).

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[36] Elizabeth Clark, the editor of the book in which this material appears, gives the source of this material as Chrysostom's sermon, *The Kind of Women Who Ought To Be Taken as Wives*, as found in *Patrologia Graeca* 51.230.

Rosaldo, in later work, acknowledges that the idea of public and private spheres and their association with the different sexes dates back to the Greeks, but emphasizes a later set of thinkers, the Victorians, because she sees them as "our most relevant predecessors in this regard" and because they understood the public/private divide differently than earlier thinkers had, with a greater emphasis on "maternity and biology" (1980, 401-02, footnote 20). Victorian ideas about public and private spheres imbued the thinking of "turn-of-the-century social theorists" who produced the foundational work for "most modern social thinking." This group took for granted the existence of separate public and private spheres, and universally assumed that women belonged in the domestic sphere (1980, 401-02).

During the early 1900s, there was some rethinking of theoretical bases. This time period "saw a rejection of earlier schools of evolutionary thought in favor of a search for functionally grounded universals." Implicitly the concepts that were rejected (or at least set aside for further consideration) included the idea of public and private spheres. The process of rethinking required a certain amount of grappling with difference, as well as with universals. As a side-effect of thinking about the different forms that kinship takes, anthropologists returned to the concept of separate spheres, "although in somewhat less gendered and considerably more sophisticated terms" (Rosaldo 1980, 405).

"Modern thinkers" (or, presumably, those more or less contemporary to Rosaldo's 1980 article) rejected some of the other claims about the nature of human life that were tied up with the idea of public and private spheres, but perpetuated the idea of public and private spheres itself (404-05). The public and private realms were, as of Rosaldo's writing, not generally directly characterized as male or female, but the underlying assumptions with which they were discussed were, nevertheless, gendered. The basic concept was refined into a division between "domestic and jural-political"

(406). As significant areas of culture (such as trading, art, religion, education, and health care) do not necessarily fall neatly into one category or the other, at least superficially this reconceptualization implies that in those areas there may be considerable variation between cultures.

According to Mary Ryan, during the 1970s, the theory about public and private spheres put forth in Rosaldo's 1974 essay was influential among both feminists and scholars, in part because it articulated a useful approach: "To subvert sexism one need simply (in theory if not politics) vault the barricade between the public and the private." This approach was in line with what feminists of the time had been doing anyway. Issues of concern to women that had previously been in the private realm were at this time highlighted in public ways. At the same time, scholars investigated women's history and the extent to which it did and did not relate to the private realm. The result of all this political and scholarly activity was that "the distinction between private and public" ceased to appear clear cut and it became evident that there were significant interconnections between public and private realms. In fact, the whole idea of separate spheres came into question; they "were sometimes dismissed as fictions constructed by a patriarchal culture" (1990, 5-6).

Rosaldo took part in this overall change. Even in her original essay, she acknowledges that her basic argument does not mirror real world complexity. For instance, she points out that the nature of the private realm and the degree to which it is separated from the public realm vary widely (1974, 35). She notes that there are some cultures in which men are relatively more involved in the domestic sphere and suggests that in those cultures women have more access to the public sphere (41) and the public and private realms are relatively integrated (36). In addition, in many cultures, there are ways in which women can participate in the public sphere. They may do so, individually,

by taking on roles that are usually considered male. This option generally involves only a small number of women. Women can also create female-oriented public space. Rosaldo says of "traditional American woman," "in everything from charities to baking contests, she may forge a public world of her own." In some cases, this female public space may have an impact outside the immediate group of women involved. This would, for instance, usually be the case with charities, and would also be true of some of the other examples Rosaldo gives of women's organizations that might exist in different cultural contexts: "trading societies, church clubs, or even political organizations, through which they force men into line" (37).

Rosaldo's thinking about public and private spheres continued to develop. In 1980, six years after the essay in which she had initially laid out her ideas about public and private space, she problematized those ideas. She was by that point uncomfortable with the dualism and essentialism of the concepts and with the rather simplistic view of women's lives inherent in that dualism and essentialism (399-400). She asserts that "sexual asymmetry" occurs in all cultures. There are, however, enormous differences in the specific details. Some of these variations have to do with the degree to which women are confined to the private sphere: "For every case in which we see women confined by powerful men or by the responsibilities of child care and the home, one can cite others which display female capacities to fight back, speak out in public, perform physically demanding tasks, and even to subordinate the needs of infant children (in their homes or on their backs) to their desires for travel, labor, politics, love or trade" (394-95).

In this article, Rosaldo does not, however, want to get rid of the distinction between public and private spheres completely. She admits ambivalence to the basic concept: "I find much that is compelling in this universalist account; but at the same time I am troubled by some of what appear to be its analytical consequences. In probing

universal questions, domestic/public is as telling as any explanation yet put forth." From her perspective, the questions that arise in relation to gender roles are not truly "universal," except in a very broad sense. Rosaldo suggests that there is a level at which gender roles cross-culturally have enough in common that there does seem to be a "universal common base." Nevertheless, there is another level at which they are sufficiently different so that no one "universal cause" can account for them (1980, 399). Instead, Rosaldo asserts, a number of different factors determine gender roles (401).

Focussing too much on one particular perceived cause of gender differences forecloses other approaches to the question, so that "we fail to school ourselves in all the different ways that gender figures in the organization of social groups, to learn from the concrete things that men and women do and think and from their socially determined variations." Rosaldo thinks that studying gender should involve looking more broadly at the particular community under study and analyzing it "in political and social terms." In her view at this time, "physiological facts" should not be considered adequate explanation for gender differences (1980, 400). Too much emphasis on such facts does not allow for human agency. Assertions that "family shapes women" ignore the role that individuals of both sexes have in shaping families, as well as the amount of variation that exists in family form, depending on "particulars of social context" (415-16).

Rosaldo states that she does not "reject" the theory in her previous essay as "wrong." It "made sense," however, for reasons that were cultural and academic, not factual. The approach grew out of "the categories, biases, and limitations of a traditionally individualistic and male-oriented sociology" (1980, 415). In other words, she was working with a category that was deeply rooted in her immediate scholarly context (and in Western culture generally) and it resonated for that reason, even if, to some degree, it did not work.

Some writers see division of space as more complex than simply public or private. In an article on the use of space in Moslem cities, sociologist Janet Abu-Lughod problematizes the Western "bi-fold" use of space. She suggests that in Islamic cities, space is understood as "tri-fold," with a separation into "private, controlled semiprivate and public" areas. This pattern emerged from the way that cities were created. Groups were granted land collectively. These groups generally had something in common; the examples Abu-Lughod gives are "kinship, descent, common origin, or function." Effectively, this pattern of land grants established separate neighbourhoods, which included housing, paths that led only to that housing, and "limited commercial and service functions." Most public services were either in the spaces between the neighbourhoods or along or close to a small number of major roads transversing the city (1983, 65-66).

J. Abu-Lughod attributes the importance of "semi-private space" (i.e. the residential neighbourhoods) in this context to the specific "pattern of sex segregation" among Moslems. Unlike Hindus, whose concern with keeping the sexes separate is primarily familial (i.e. keeping distance between a woman and the men in her husband's family), Moslems' major concern is keeping the sexes separate "outside the kin group, i.e. vis-à-vis strangers." Abu-Lughod contrasts the private sphere, which is "safe and secure," with the public sphere, "which is completely unsafe and must be eschewed by females." She states, "the 'social invention of what I have called semi-private space is an attempt to create a protected area outside the dwelling unit itself within which kin-like responsibilities (and freedom) govern" (1983, 66-67).

Mary Ryan also has a more complex understanding of space than a simple division into public and private. American cities, no later than the 1870s, had developed a set of amenities that Ryan calls "semipublic places." These amenities included "public

parks, shopping districts and sanitized public amusements." Because such places were more "regulated" than ordinary public places and because they were used in relatively specific ways, they were regarded as comparatively "unthreatening" (1990, 62).

Mary Ryan argues that although the words "*private*' and '*public*'" may be problematic, it still makes sense to use them and, implicitly, the terms "public sphere" and "private sphere." The words are "charged with value," even if their specific meanings are hard to pin down. Given that women are not fully equal participants in the public domain, the word "public" continues to be helpful when looking at gender differences. Ryan identifies several important ways in which feminist theorists continue to use the word "*public*'": "as a reference point for critical values, as a crudely serviceable classification of social behaviour, as a space denoting especially blatant gender asymmetry and inequality, and as a center of concentrated power" (1990, 7-8, emphasis in original).

In this thesis I will be using the terms "public sphere" and "private sphere" in a way that is loosely similar to the way these feminist theorists do, but also somewhat different. I will not be using the term "private sphere" to refer simply to domestic space and "public sphere" to refer to all other space. Rather, I will be using "public sphere" and "private sphere" (as well as intermediate terms, such as "semi-public") as, in Mary Ryan's words, a "crudely serviceable classification" of different types of space and the ways in which they are used. I will pay particular attention to the use of space in Newfoundland cultural contexts during my study period. Based on those uses, I will try to identify the "critical values" Ryan refers to, including, to some extent, "gender asymmetry and inequality." Conversely, however, I will also discuss evidence of relative gender symmetry and equality in some contexts. To a limited extent, I will also address issues of "power" and status in relation to the use of public and private space.

Problematic as the division of space and gendered lives into public and private spheres might in some ways be, the concept is still useful. It makes sense to acknowledge that some space is more public than others and that the extent to which people use (or are allowed to use) different types of spaces and the ways in which they use them is, in part, gendered. Beyond that, the gendered uses of space reflect both function and symbolic values.

Space can also be looked at through a different, but somewhat related, lens. Sociologist Erving Goffman, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, conceptualizes self-presentation to other people as "performance." He defines a "'performance'" "as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (1959, 15). One of the characteristics of a performance is that it generally takes place in a "'setting' involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it" (22).

The term "setting" does not include the physical location of the performance. Instead, Goffman uses another term to describe space. According to Goffman's definition, a "region" is "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception." The barriers in question may not cut off perception entirely. In fact, they may allow people who are physically outside the region to see it, but not hear anything that goes on inside it, or vice versa. Goffman gives "the thick glass panels" of "broadcasting control rooms" as an example of the first type of barrier and "beaverboard partitions" separating offices as an example of the second (1959, 106).

Goffman's term for the region where a performance takes place is the "front region." Certain sorts of behaviour are expected in any particular front region. Goffman divides these expected behaviours into "politeness," which has to do with how a

performer interacts with the audience, and "decorum," which has to do with how a performer behaves even while not directly interacting with the audience members, but when he or she can be seen or heard by them (1959, 107).

The opposite or correlate of the "front region" is the "back region," which Goffman also calls the "backstage." One of the characteristics of performance is that performers highlight a particular portion of their overall behaviour. Other parts of their behaviour, however, could conceivably "discredit the fostered impression" of the performance and are accordingly "suppressed." In Goffman's definition, a back region is "a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course." The back region serves as a preparation area for the performance, including the creation of "illusions and impressions" and any practicing for or arranging of the performance that needs to take place in advance. It also serves as a storage area for props for the performance. In addition, the back region is the place where performers let down their guard (1959, 111-12).

The back region is often located quite close to the front region, but is separated from it and is generally off limits to members of the audience (1959, 113). According to Goffman, in middle-class homes, bedrooms and bathrooms serve as back regions for the work involved in preparing one's body for presentation and the kitchen as a back region for preparation of food (123).[37]

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[37] Goffman thinks that this is not true of working-class homes. He says, "It is, in fact, the presence of these staging devices that distinguishes middle-class living from lower-class living" (1959, 123). This may be a somewhat culturally specific observation. In typical (which is to say poor) rural families in Newfoundland in the early through mid-twentieth century, for instance, bedrooms might be shared by many people, but they were in a part of the house off-limits to other community members and might quite reasonably be understood as a back region.

Some areas can, depending on time or circumstance, function either as a front region or a back region. Goffman points out that an executive's office is the site of display: "his status in the organization is intensively expressed by means of the quality of his office furnishings." In this way, it is a front region. The executive can also relax in the office in ways that would not be possible elsewhere, by, for instance, removing or loosening some clothing or by entertaining other executives "in a chummy and even boisterous way." Similarly, according to Goffman, on Sunday mornings, an entire house may be treated as a back region, in that the inhabitants engage in a "relaxing slovenliness in dress and civil endeavor." In some cases, the area that serves as front region while a performance is in progress functions as a back region between performances. Among Goffman's examples is a restaurant shortly before its daily opening (1959, 126-127).

Goffman's division of space intersects with the concept of public and private spheres, but is not identical to it. Both theories assume a more public area and a more private area, but the nature of those areas varies. For instance, one of Goffman's examples of a back region is the teachers' "common room" in a school. This clearly meets Goffman's basic definition; it is where teachers can go to relax and behave informally during their downtime (1959, 132). Another of Goffman's examples is the room where the undertaker prepares the corpse and "creates the illusion that the dead one is really in a deep and tranquil sleep" (114). Again, this area meets Goffman's basic criteria, in that it is the preparation area for a performance or display. Both areas are part of the public domain, in that they are outside of the home and part of the world of work. Both areas are, however, in some sense also private. Conversely, a living room is in a home and thus, as usually understood, part of the private domain. If, however, the residents of the house host a party, the living room and, perhaps, other rooms, may, at least temporarily become semi-public areas that are, to some degree, more open to

outsiders than either the teachers' common room or the undertaker's work area. Both theories look at relatively public space vs. relatively private space, but they evaluate the publicness and privateness of the space by different criteria. Both are applicable to the complexities of death rites in Newfoundland.

2.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have introduced the scholarly literature that informs my work: post-structuralism; theories concerning rites of passage; theories concerning grief, mourning, and various components of the emotional atmosphere following a death; and theories concerning the division of human life into public and private realms. Post-structuralism and structuralism provide a broad, basic foundation for my thesis. Post-structuralism allows me to explore and interpret my material in a variety of ways. Many scholars, including a number who have written about death rites in Newfoundland, have drawn on structuralist approaches to rites of passage. Their work has informed mine in useful ways.

The core of my thesis is the material on emotion. There is a good scholarly foundation from several fields on the nature of emotions in general, the type and range of emotions felt following a death, the ways in which those emotions are expressed cross-culturally, the rites of passage that mark death in various cultures, and the ways in which those customs are gendered. There has also been some scholarly interest in cross-cultural trends in these customs and their gendering.

The particular components of the emotional atmosphere following a death on which I focus in this thesis are all widespread; solemnity, overt expression of sorrow, and revelry occur in many cultural contexts. So do the particular customs on which I focus, the funeral procession, lamentation and crying, and wake revelry. There are some cross-

cultural trends in the way in which these customs are gendered. Lamentation and crying are perhaps most strongly gendered, as in many cultures women engage in them, at least in public, more and more intensely than men do. The gendering of funeral processions does not seem to be as strongly specific. Various gendered arrangements of the funeral procession exist in different cultures. When, however, there is an issue about one sex's taking part in the procession, so far as I am aware, it is women, rather than men, whose participation is controversial. Wake revelry has been gendered in various ways in various contexts, as well, but if there is a cross-cultural pattern to that gendering, I have not been able to identify it from the material I used.

Scholars examining death rites often look at either their functions or the ways in which they symbolize and enact cultural values. These approaches to analysis have been applied in various ways to solemnity (and the funeral procession in particular), crying and lamentation, and revelry (whether at the wake or during other parts of death rites). One recurring theme is the association of display with the funeral procession. Often, this takes the form of status display, but scholars have also identified the display or enactment of other aspects of culture through the procession. Display is not, however, limited to the procession or to other forms of solemnity. Revelry is also occasionally identified with display. So, in another way, is lamentation; cultural discourses on the sincerity or insincerity of lamentation are largely about whether lamentation is an authentic or inauthentic display of sorrow.[38]

While information on some topics was readily available, there are, judging by my reading, large areas where more work needs to be done. Some research has been done on the interaction of the components of the emotional atmosphere following a death. For

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[38] This may be more evident in the material presented in the British history chapter and the chapter on sorrow in Newfoundland than it is in the material in this chapter.

instance, as will become evident in the next chapter, scholars looking at Irish death rites have explored the connection between revelry and lamentation. It appears, however, that less work addresses the relationship between either of those aspects of the emotional atmosphere and solemnity. Nor has much attention been paid to public and private spheres in relation to death customs. Finally, scholarship on death rites focuses on some geographic areas and some time periods more than others, leaving the overall picture incomplete.

In the introduction, I briefly discussed the public and private spheres in relation to the use of space in rural Newfoundland. Now, with J. Abu-Lughod's work to draw on, I would like to suggest that, as is the case in Moslem cities, much of the space in Newfoundland outports of the past was, using Abu-Lughod's term "controlled semiprivate," rather than public or private. This would have been true of the kitchens of individual houses, as well as the outdoor regions of the community, especially areas like gardens and the landwash, where women routinely worked, and buildings like churches and schools, which people of both sexes attended. Parlours, in contrast, were usually private space, off-limit to community members, but, at the time of death, they became part of the controlled, semiprivate category. Although these areas were all, at least some of the time, "controlled semiprivate," where each area fell on the scale between public and private varied. Kitchens, although effectively open to the community, for instance, were probably felt to be and experienced as more private than the major roads in the community.

In the introduction, I also discussed gender roles in relation to public and private space in Newfoundland. As the discussion in this chapter on this topic cross-culturally makes clear, Newfoundland was not anomalous. There has been considerable variation in the degree to which women in different cultures have been confined to the domestic

sphere or to work of the type that has, in North America of recent years, been identified as stereotypically feminine. As appears to have been generally true, women in rural Newfoundland had primary responsibility for the domestic sphere and spent more time in it than men did, but as was also true in many cultures, women also did significant work outside the house.

This chapter provides the underpinnings for my interpretation of the material; the next chapter creates the underpinnings for the material itself. In it, I look at how the customs focussed on in this study have been enacted in the British Isles, the area from which most of the immigrants to Newfoundland came. In the course of the discussion, I address some of the same themes that arose in this chapter. At the end of Chapter Three, I return to the literature on death rites in Newfoundland, this time paying attention to themes highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Three: British Death Customs

In the last chapter, I reviewed theories and literature relevant to my topic. In this chapter, I consider the roots in England, Ireland, and Scotland of the Newfoundland customs that are the subject of this thesis. I have included Scotland, because while Scottish immigration was not as important as English and Irish immigration, one variant of the funeral procession in Newfoundland is particularly close to Scottish forms of the procession. My focus is on customs that were practiced in the countries of origin at the time that Newfoundland was settled, but I have also, as appropriate, included information from other time periods. At the end of the chapter, I begin my discussion of the customs that developed in Newfoundland, by examining work previously done on Newfoundland death rites.

3.1 Death Rites in Britain

3.1.1 Solemnity: The Funeral Procession

Many forms of solemnity were practiced following death. In the British Isles and later in Newfoundland, solemn customs included formalized patterns of visiting to view the corpse and console the family, the service in the home, the procession to the church, the funeral service, the procession to the graveyard, the final service at the graveyard, and the wearing of black. Solemnity included some sectarian customs, such as the saying of the rosary, but many customs were secular or were shared (possibly with minor differences in detail) by people of different religions. Out of the various forms of solemnity, I focus here on the funeral procession, since gender roles in relation to the

funeral procession in Newfoundland were, from my perspective, both unexpected and interesting.

Beyond the practical function of transporting the body to the place of final disposition, the funeral procession had religious and secular functions. According to historian and archaeologist Christopher Daniell, "The funeral was a formal occasion, and through the processions, services and procedures the order and hierarchy of the community was both defined and reinforced" (1997, 56-57). My discussion focuses partly on gender roles, one of the aspects of "the order and hierarchy of the community" demonstrated through funeral processions. Since participation in the funeral procession is related to participation in death rites more generally, I also discuss gendered aspects of the funeral and burial services. Historian David Cressy says that the body moved "from domestic to sacred space," while other participants engaged both in "respectful mourning and social display" (1997, 435). The funeral procession, as described in the last chapter, was cross-culturally often a way of displaying status and this seems to have been true in Britain, as well. Thus, I start by examining status display and the related issue of class differences.

3.1.1.1 England

In England, women's participation in public death rites varied by time and class. It appears that, for the most part, women attended funerals during the Middle Ages. The will of York merchant John Shaw specified that "a white gown" was to be given "to a poor woman" expressly so that she would dress in it for his funeral (qtd. in Daniell 1997, 55).[1] Historian Rosemary Horrox, writing about 1150-1380, does not say if women took

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[1] Shaw's will is in Probate vol. 9, 26r, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York. Daniell gives the date as 1513 in the text and 1515 in his bibliography. In context, it seems likely that the first date was when the will was written and the second when probate took place.

part in the procession, but does indicate that women were expected not to be "bearers," as it was deemed "improper" (2000, 102). Presumably, if it were similarly "improper" for women to participate in the procession, Horrox would have mentioned this as well.

Cressy, in his book about rites of passage during the Tudor and Stuart years, draws on material from Henri Misson, whom he describes as a "French-Swiss observer of William III's England" (453), to describe the structure of the funeral processions of "'middling people.'" Typically, family members followed the body, and were, in turn, followed by "'all the guests two and two'" (qtd. in Cressy, 1997, 454-55[2]). Discussing funerals of this period more generally, Cressy is unequivocal about gender: "There is no evidence that women were excluded from the ritual." In fact, women were sometimes ritually visible. At this stage, the term "pallbearer" did not refer to someone who helped carry the coffin, but rather to someone who "held the pall." The people who were given this task were men or women who either belonged to the bereaved family or were the dead person's "close associates." Pall bearing was gendered, according to the sex of the deceased, but Cressy believes that female pallbearers at a woman's funeral left the heavy work of transporting the body to men (1997, 435-37).[3] On the other hand, Clare Gittings,

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[2] The work that Cressy quotes is *M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England*, 1719, a translation of the original, *Memoires et Observations Faites par un Voyageur en Angleterre*, 1698, The Hague.

[3] Cressy's theory about this is somewhat problematized by an illustration (a woodcut from the period in question) on the same page of his text, whose caption says, "The bride's burial, with women coffin bearers." The picture itself is ambiguous. It shows three women walking beside a coffin (with shadowy traces of another three women on the far side) and probably holding either the edge of the pall or the coffin itself (1997, 436). If the women are holding the pall, either the coffin is levitating by itself or the coffin bearers are invisible. Of course, neither option makes sense as a depiction of real life, but if Cressy is correct that, at this point in time, the task of carrying the coffin was delegated to paid employees, the picture may be a reasonable representation of social

in an article covering part of the same period, 1558-1660, claims that women did sometimes serve as bearers for young, unmarried members of their own sex (2000, 157).

Due to their apparent impact on Newfoundland customs, I am particularly interested in the class differences in England during the 1800s. Historian Ruth Richardson argues that in the Victorian era, there were "distinct class-bound death cultures" and suggests that the 1830s were a particularly significant time in the formation of different attitudes about death in different classes (1989, 262). Historian Pat Jalland, in *Death in the Victorian Family*, says that her work "supports" that of Richardson, insofar as there were major differences in the ways the different classes dealt with death. She says that there were significant "material and cultural" differences between the classes and that their "attitudes and customs relating to death" were distinct (1996, 1).

Jalland gives a detailed and nuanced description of women's participation in death rites in the "middle and upper classes" in the 1800s and the first part of the 1900s (1996, 1). She finds that women in these classes did not typically go to funerals during a significant part of the Victorian era, as "allegedly they could not control their feelings." The custom was written into at least one etiquette book, which was aimed at a particularly elite group, the court.[4] Jalland gives examples of women who did not attend

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reality, particularly the relative importance of the pallbearers, as compared to those paid to carry the coffin (1997, 436-37).

[4] Jalland gives the source as Charles Mitchell, 1849, *Court Etiquette by a Man of the World*, 82.

funerals (221) and several other authors report that Queen Victoria herself did not attend the 1861 funeral of her husband.[5]

Not all women refrained from funeral attendance, however. The etiquette book previously mentioned made provision for "'eccentric people'" who might refuse to follow this custom. It advised that such women refrain from taking part in the procession, but, instead, go to the church prior to the funeral service (Mitchell[6] as paraphrased and qtd. in Jalland 1996, 221). Even among the classes in which Jalland is interested, there seem to have been a fair number of "eccentric" women. While discussing the comfort that some mourners derived from attending the funeral and related rites, Jalland gives examples of no fewer than four women. One of them participated in the service in the graveyard and also took part in the "'walking funeral'" for her father, "near the front of the family procession" (letter by Sarah Acland qtd. in Jalland 218[7]). It is not clear if the other women participated in the procession, but they did at least go to the funeral service (218).

Jalland mentions women's attendance at other funerals. One woman was distressed by her father's funeral, but still felt obligated to attend: "Sophy Horsley commented that she would always wish to fulfill such a duty towards those she loved, 'but excepting witnessing their death I can conceive nothing so painful'" (1996, 219).[8]

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[5] Arnstein 2003, 109; Darby and Smith 1983, 7; Feuchtwanger 2006, 138; and Weintraub 1987, 306.

[6] Charles Mitchell, 1849, *Court Etiquette by a Man of the World*, 82.

[7] The letter was written December 9 (probably in 1866) to Acland's son, William A. D. Acland, and is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, MS Acland d. 42, fos, 386-8.

[8] Horsley's mother, however, did not attend, as she was "feeling exhausted" and 'unequal to it in mind and body', especially as the heat was so intense" (1996, 221). Jalland's sources for the quotations are letters of June 16, 1858 (from Sophy Horsley to

Another woman, "a female friend of the deceased sang" a hymn at an 1892 Quaker

service following a burial (220). With two exceptions, these women took part in death

rites during the part of the Victorian era that Jalland describes as most rigid about female

participation.

The custom of women not participating started to change no later than the 1870s,

with a "compromise" which allowed a widow to go to the church, but not the graveyard,

if she refrained from talking to other participants (Jalland 1996, 221). Jalland describes

an 1872 funeral attended by only four women, who were in the church's gallery, spatially

separated from the men, "where they could see little beyond the altar." Conversely, they

were presumably at least partially hidden from the male mourners. They did not attend

the burial (219). Another etiquette writer, Lady Colin Campbell, writing in 1893,

acknowledged increasing participation by women and approved it, contingent on an

appropriate emotional state: "If they feel strong enough, and can keep their grief within

due bounds, let not the thought of what is customary prevent them from following their

lost one to the grave" (qtd. in Jalland 221).[9] According to Stanley Weintraub, a few

female relatives attended Queen Victoria's funeral procession in 1901, but he comments

on the irony of the fact that even though the funeral was for a "woman sovereign" the

female participants could not be seen, but instead rode in "closed carriages" (1987, 639).

James Stevens Curl's description of women's participation in Victorian death rites

is much like Jalland's, but is neither as nuanced nor as specific about change over time.

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her sister, Mary Brunel, Horsley Papers, MS Eng c. 2200, fo. 25) and June 18, 1858
(from Elizabeth Horsley to Mary Brunel, Horsley Papers, MS Eng. c. 2200, fos. 24-25,
33). The Horsley Papers are at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[9] The source is Campbell's *Etiquette of Good Society*, 213.

He says, "women would not necessarily attend the interment but might be present at the religious ceremony in the church or chapel" (1972, 6). The reason for this was that "the weaker sex" was deemed unable to deal with "the rigours of both the climate and the experience." Curl depicts women's exclusion from some death rites as part of a division of sex roles that gave women prominence in another area; "women would dominate the proceedings" at the feast which normally occurred before or after the funeral (12).

Jalland questions the feast as a component of death rites among those she studied. In "professional and upper-class families," participants usually dispersed quickly once the funeral was done. Generally the "chief mourners" would be given something to eat first, "but these seem to have been quiet, restrained affairs which received little notice." The idea that women's primacy at the feast balanced out their lack of participation elsewhere does not hold up very well in this context, especially since feasts did take place among the working class (1996, 223) and one of the class differences of this time period was a "tendency among the poorer classes for female relatives to attend funerals" (221). As we will see later, however, this idea might be applicable in other contexts.

Other authors confirm working class women's participation in funerals during the 1800s and early 1900s. Richardson describes the aftermath of the discovery in Manchester that the head of a dead child had been stolen. The crowd present at the second burial included hundreds of people, with women and girls making up about seventy-five percent of the group (1988, 228-29). Women's presence is implicit in a description of the funeral procession following an 1838 mining disaster that killed twenty-six child workers, which says, "Several of the mothers were so heart stricken that they had to be supported between two relatives" (qtd. in Gallop, 2003, 116-17).[10]

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[10] According to the material Gallop quotes, all twenty-six children were buried at the same time, with one long funeral procession (2003, 116). Gallop's work appears to be

Women's participation in death rites in the early 1900s is also documented, sometimes with details of the procession's arrangement. Sociologist David Clark describes how in Staithes, Yorkshire people of the same sex walked together.[11] The men were in one group, and the women followed in another (1982, 131). Some accounts describe participants walking in pairs, which, at least sometimes, ideally consisted of a man and a woman. An informant from Coningsby, quoted in oral historian Maureen Sutton's book about Lincolnshire between the 1930s and the 1950s, says, "You used to see a long line of people all dressed in black, a man and a woman together all along the line in pairs, always an even number, never an odd number or the odd number or the odd one out would soon join up with the dead person to make a pair" (1992, 173). This description is explicit that the mourners were arranged into opposite-sex couples. Folklorist Roy Palmer says that the custom of Macaulay's Claybrook at an unknown time was for the relatives to process "'two and two of each sex, in order of proximity'" (1985,

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well researched, but is not, strictly speaking, an academic work. Fictionalized accounts of the lives of one of the dead children and his family are interspersed through the text and citation is not at the level required of academic works. Gallop gives the source of this quotation as the *Northern Star* of July 14, 1838, but gives no additional citation information. This particular article is not mentioned in the bibliography, but I suspect that the version Gallop used came from a source he does list, the *Burland Annuals*, which he describes as "a rare book containing a fine collection of newspaper articles about everyday life in nineteenth century Barnsley" (223). This source is in the John Goodchild Collection, Central Library, Drury Lane, Wakefield, WF1 2D2 England.

[11] Clark actually gives two descriptions of the procession, which have somewhat different emphases, but, confusingly, appear, at least superficially, to contradict each other in some details. The other description appears, overall, to suggest that those people who did not have specific tasks in relation to the funeral were divided up by closeness of relationship to the deceased, rather than by gender (1982, 130). Clark's later brief discussion of the procession in one of the modern variants of the funeral may, in its description of the three-way breakdown of the procession, resolve this apparent contradiction (140).

65).[12] Rather less specifically, Ethel Rudkin, writing originally in 1936, reports a contemporary belief "on the Trentside" in Lincolnshire that there absolutely had to be an even number of people "in the funeral party," or otherwise "soon the dead will call for a companion" (1976, 15). This suggests that the mourners may have been arranged in pairs, but does not indicate whether the pairs were based on gender.[13]

In some instances, women or girls served as pallbearers. In Staithes during the early 1900s, women were the pallbearers for women and men the pallbearers for men. There was a strong preference for close relatives in this role (Clark 1982, 129). Sutton reports that children's pallbearers would be children of the same sex. One of her informants said, "I can remember when kids would carry their class mate if one of them died. Boys would carry boys and lasses would do the same" (1992, 164).[14] Palmer reports the opposite for Macaulay's Claybrook: "A young man being buried had six young

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[12] My sense is that this account is probably from some time in the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries, in part because it is mixed in with other material from those time depths. It is not clear what Palmer quotes here. From context, it may be material from an informant.

[13] Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland are all in the same general area of England, so the custom of arranging the mourners in pairs, which were at least sometimes gendered, might possibly have been regional, rather than widespread. The example of a paired arrangement from Cressy given earlier does not include any geographic information.

[14] Enid Porter gives a probable, but less obvious, example: "In many East Anglian villages young girls were carried to their graves in white-painted coffins borne by their white-clad, white-gloved school fellows." The gender of the pallbearers is ambiguous in this example, but the author goes on almost immediately to note that the pallbearers for boys, "young boys themselves, wore black gloves, their darkest clothes and black sashes draped over one shoulder and tied at the waist." In further contrast to the funerals of girls, the coffin for boys was black (38). It is theoretically possible that the pallbearers for girls were boys clad in white, but the overall contrasts in this paragraph seem to point in the other direction.

women dressed in white as pall-bearers. A young woman had the same number of young men, wearing black, but with white gloves and hatbands" (1985, 65).

A major shift in the degree of emphasis placed on status took place in England during the 1300s. Until then, burial customs were "communal and largely undifferentiated," but afterwards, they began to focus on "the individual's status, power and wealth" (Fry 1999, 157). Funerals (implicitly, by context, those of the upper classes) from the middle of the Medieval period to its end, exhibited "a grander, more splendid and formalized ritual" (89-90).

An extreme example of status display during the late medieval and early modern period in England was the rigidly structured "heraldic funeral," which was imposed on a particular elite group: those people "who had the right to a coat of arms" (Daniell 1997, 206). Although relatively few people had such funerals, they were probably, because of their pomp and the status of the people commemorated, particularly visible and might thus have influenced the way in which other funerals were carried out. For this thesis, an important aspect of heraldic funerals was their gender roles. The rules governing these funerals allotted to the deceased, based on rank, a certain number of "mourners of the same sex and rank" (Gittings 1999, 159).

During the Tudor and Stuart period, the deceased's family members took care to abide by "gradations of honour and status." Such marks of status indicated not only what the dead person's "social identity" had been, but that his or her identity did not, despite the death, completely disappear. Both for others' benefit and their own, the survivors demonstrated the depth of their loss through their behaviour (Cressy 1997, 449).

Funeral display eventually spread to the middle classes. From roughly the 1730s to the 1830s, commercial funeral services directed towards this group started to develop, leading eventually to the emergence of "the 'respectable' funeral." Options for display

became more complex. In Richardson's view, "the funeral came to be the rite of passage *par excellence* by which to assert financial and social position" (1989, 272). Nevertheless, Richardson says that, for the most part, the funerals of working class people were "very simple affairs." To the extent that they indicated "avoidance of death on the parish," they may have been occasions for material display. Imitating people of higher classes was not, however, the point (275).[15]

Gender was often an important element in English death rites, but the specific form of gendering varied according to time, class, and place. People of different sexes might walk in different groups in the procession or be paired together in couples. In some times and places, women might, given specific circumstances, act as pallbearers. In heraldic funerals, the sex of the deceased determined that of the mourners. For the most part, in Victorian England, only working class women participated in the funeral or, in particular, the procession. During the Middle Ages, status display became a significant aspect of elite funerals. Display eventually spread down the social scale, but may not have become a significant factor in the death rites of the working classes.

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[15] There is disagreement on the extent of display among the Victorian working classes. Julie-Marie Strange, like Richardson, thinks that display was not a significant element. Her take on this contradicts earlier views, which stress the expenditure in relation to the family's other needs. As Strange points out, however, the custom of neighbours visiting the house to look at the body ensured that they could assess the deceased's family "long-term financial and domestic circumstances" by a more accurate method than judging "any funeral procession or expensive casket." Strange thinks that costs associated with working class funerals had to do with "wider notions of respectful rather than respectable internment: the fulfilment of burial and mourning rites testified to the dignity and identity of the dead while facilitating expressions of loss, respect and condolence" (155-56). Curl, however, perceives that working class people tried to imitate expensive middle class funerals and, as a result, "could be ruined" (1972, 8). Membership in friendly societies, whose functions included providing money for members' burial expenses, were one way for working class people to balance finances and their standards for appropriate funerals (Cordery 2003, 12-13).

3.1.1.2 Ireland

Based on the information I have, women usually attended funerals in Ireland, but there was some variation in the gendered organization of the funeral procession. In *Death, Burial, and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650*, historian Clodagh Tait does not, for the most part, discuss female participation directly, but she includes several examples of women taking part in the church service. For instance, she twice quotes from Alice Thornton's apparently first-hand account of her father's funeral including her description of keening at that funeral.[16] Given the gendered nature of keening (as described in more detail in the section on sorrow) this suggests she was not the only woman present (2002, 37, 42).

In Tait's discussion of political conflict at funerals, she mentions several incidents in which women were either perpetrators or victims of violence. In one case, men did not go to a particular funeral "'for fear of the English'"; the participants who objected to the "English minister" so strongly that they started to inter him in the grave were all female (2002, 55, first quote comes from O'Sullivan Beare[17]). In another instance, roughly eighty-odd women attacked the minister before the funeral service, as he was "comeing forth to meete the corpse" (qtd. from either Brady or *Calendar of the State Papers*

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[16] Tait's source is *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, 1875, ed. C. J., N.p.: Surtees Society. Tait does not give a specific page number for the quote about keening, but, in general, she relies on pp. 19-26.

[17] Tait describes this author as "rather less reliable" than the source she cites immediately prior to this quote (2002, 55). The work cited is O'Sullivan's *Ireland under Elizabeth*, 1970, ed. M. J. Byrne, New York, pp. 45-46. Elsewhere, Tate gives the author's name as P. O'Sullivan (2002, 174, endnote 15).

Relating to Ireland, 55).[18] In another case, both the minister and his wife were assaulted at the site of the funeral (Lomas, qtd. in Tait 55[19]). Tait's lack of comment on the presence, rather than the behaviour, of women suggests their participation in death rites was probably standard.

Most material I have seen about Ireland during the 1800s and early 1900s suggests that women participated in funeral processions and that the arrangement of the procession was based partly on gender. In at least one area, the general order of the funeral depended on the marital status of the dead person. Hugh Dorian, writing about Donegal during the 1800s, indicates that if the deceased had been married, the women were at the front of the procession, followed by the men on foot and then the horsemen, but that the procession was otherwise unordered (2001, 316-17). Folklorist Kevin Danaher similarly describes an arrangement based both on gender and on mode of transportation. Here the men preceded the women "if any of them wished to walk." Vehicles of various types followed the walkers. Finally, came those men on horseback and, after a certain point in time, men on bicycles. The pallbearers were male (1962, 178).

Women took part in the procession on the Great Blasket Island, where the body had to be transported to the mainland. In a 1931 letter, Eibhlís Ní Shúilleabhán writes, "All the canoes here go in the funeral and the canoe with the coffin will be the first and the rest after it then. Also women and young girls go, one in every canoe nearly,

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[18] The full citation information is: J. Brady, 1952, "Funeral Customs of the Past," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 78, 331-32 and *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland 1615-1625*, 429-30.

[19] The source is Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, I, p. 33.

sometimes" (36). These processions were not segregated by sex. If anything, the preference may have been to have people of both sexes in the boats.[20]

While most of the relatively recent material I have read about gender and the funeral procession concerns rural areas, reporter Joseph O'Connor describes women's participation in a child's funeral in Dublin: "Children supported by capacious mothers leant out of the cab windows, jocular conversation went on between the occupants of one car and another, old women gossiped and laughed" (qtd. in Pearl 1969, 69).[21] Women attended at least some urban funerals.[22]

One of the suggested questions for interviews about funerals in folklorist Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook of Irish Folklore* is "Did women ever act as coffin-bearers?" (1942, 229). The wording of this question implies that it was most typical for men to carry the coffin, but by no means unheard of for women to do so. Other material confirms this. At one point, Dorian refers to the pallbearers generically as "men," but he also says that at a funeral for an unmarried person, the funeral procession consisted largely of either boys or girls, depending on the sex of the deceased. These participants were

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[20] Micheál O'Guiheen, also of Great Blasket Island, also records women in the boats returning from a specific funeral procession. O'Guiheen's focus, however, is on the bad weather the villagers encountered on the way home. At that point, the presence of women was, at least for the moment, controversial, but the issue was not that they were participating in a funeral procession, but that they were in the boats. According to O'Guiheen, one of the other men said, "Any boat that has women in it is sunk, but the blame wasn't on them but on ourselves, that we didn't leave them behind on the quay" (1982, 111).

[21] Pearl does not give the date or page number of his source. He does, however, give the notation "(Heblon)" after the reporter's name, which might indicate that O'Connor used that word as a pseudonym.

[22] It is not clear what class the family was, but O'Connor said that the deceased was "possibly well insured," which suggests that, despite the number of carriages involved, the family might not be particularly well-off (qtd. in Pearl 1969, 69).

arranged in pairs and carried the coffin in relays, with boys carrying unmarried males and girls unmarried females (2001, 317).

Although the pallbearers might rotate, according to some writers there was a preference for close relatives to take that role at certain key points. In Mary Delaney's description, "the four nearest of kin" were the first to carry the coffin (1973, 176). Similarly, Danaher says "the four nearest kin" carried the coffin at the beginning of the procession, the arrival in the church, the departure from the church, and the arrival at the graveyard (1962, 181).

Status display was also a factor in Irish funerals. Fry, while writing about display, says that English and Irish funerals were undergoing similar developments in the mid-1400s (1999, 92). Among the borrowings from the English was a focus on "ceremonial splendor" (158). Nevertheless, Irish funerals, as far as Fry can determine, were never as "opulent" as some English funerals were during this time (92).

Historian Raymond Gillespie discusses death rites, including the procession, as the occasion for display of both the status of the deceased and of the values of the culture, during the early 1600s. In particular, the heraldic funeral, an honour granted for status at the time of death, rather than the deceased's early history, was particularly well suited for "the display of new-found wealth and status."[23] This was important in an era with significant increases in "the number of peers, knights and gentry" (1985, 86). In addition, heraldic funerals were "a public demonstration of the passage of land and honour from one generation to another" (90).

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[23] Although in some parts of this article, Gillespie appears to be talking about funerals generally, it is evident from the overall context that his focus is heraldic funerals. See, for instance, his comments on the difference between heraldic and non-heraldic funerals on p. 88.

Based on the small amount of relevant information I have, it seems that heraldic funerals in Ireland were similar to those in England in their treatment of gender. In Tait's description of the funeral of Sir Jenico Preston, the official "mourners" who followed directly behind the coffin were all male (2002, 41-42). Tait suggests, however, that people who were not official participants came at the end of the procession and attended the funeral. Certainly, as described above, Alice Thornton (and likely other women) were probably present at her father's funeral, which (as is evident in the context of Tait's discussion) was a heraldic funeral (2002, 42, 45). Tait also argues that the provision in the will of the fifth Earl of Thomond, Henry O'Brien, for mourning clothing for a number of his female relatives suggests that they "were expected" to attend his funeral. She notes that, due to their sex, those relatives could not have participated in "the front of the procession." In context, the implication is that they would, instead, have been at its unofficial end (45).[24]

In Ireland, women seem to have participated in public aspects of death rites, with the exception of the procession of the heraldic funeral.[25] Since I have essentially no information about funerals of the middle and upper classes during the Victorian era, however, I am not sure if the women of those classes took part in funerals and funeral processions or if, like their peers in England, they were usually excluded from that part of

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[24] This does not necessarily follow. In Victorian England, two years of wearing mourning clothing was standard for widows (Jalland 1996, 300), but, as discussed above, this did not mean that they were expected to attend the funeral. As the same discussion also indicates, it was also quite possible to attend the funeral, but not participate in the procession.

[25] If the heraldic funeral functioned the same way it did in England, with some heraldic funerals being held for women, presumably the converse was sometimes true and at women's funerals men were not able to participate as mourners. The information I have on heraldic funerals in Ireland, however, is entirely about the funerals of men.

the death rites. Male pallbearers seem to have been most typical, but in some instances women had this role. As in England, status display was sometimes an important element of the funeral.

3.1.1.3 Scotland

In Scotland, unlike England, male-only funerals were not confined to the upper classes, but instead were ubiquitous in some areas. An account written in 1876 asserts that women had not gone to funerals in Scotland for quite some time, but that in 1715, their participation was universal. At that time, men and women walked in different groups (Simpkins qtd. in Vallee 1955, 124).[26] According to F. G. Vallee, women, at the time of his writing, did not take part in the procession, except "in a few Catholic communities" (1955, 124, footnote 2). Similarly folklorist Margaret Bennett's book, *Scottish Customs from the Cradle to the Grave*, documents that it was common for women not to participate in some aspects of death rites and that this custom persisted in at least some areas until well into the twentieth century. Bennett does not specifically address class, but some of the relevant material concerns the funeral of her grandfather, who she describes as a "crofter-fisherman" (224), and none of her informants suggests that the custom was specific to certain groups within their communities.

Women might be able to participate in the funeral, but not go to the graveyard. While interviewing Iain MacLean about her grandfather's funeral, Bennett herself says, *"Growing up in our tradition I would never have been allowed to go to the graveside as a child, or even as a woman – only to the church"* (1992, 227, emphasis in original). Iain

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[26] The source is John Ewart Simpkins' 1914 *Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Fife with some Notes on Clackmannan and Kinross-Shires*, County Folk-Lore 7, London, 171. Vallee's quotation from this book comes originally from another source. Vallee says the author was "an authority on customs in Fife and environs who wrote in 1876," but does not otherwise identify author or source (endnote 2, 124).

Johnston, a grandson-in-law of the deceased, said about the burial of the same man, "The women didn't go to the graveside. It was only the men." When asked if anyone had explained this custom, Johnston said, "No, just the done thing." He added, when Bennett asked him about the women's whereabouts, "The women went up to the house to prepare a meal. That's just the way of it" (231). Several of Bennett's other informants also told her that women typically did not go to the graveyard and some of them said that they cooked instead.[27]

Sometimes, women also did not participate in the funeral. Bill Douglas, in another interview, says, "there were no women went to funerals" (Bennett 1992, 242).[28] Douglas Neally's 1992 interview of people in Lewis includes a long description by the interviewer of the general form of the funeral. Women do not take part in the procession. Instead, while the men are away, "they usually stay at home and prepare a big meal for the men coming back, and they look after the children" (Bennett 215-16).

In other communities, at least at some times, women routinely took part in the procession. Edward Burt, in a 1776 account about Inverness, gives a fuller description of the procession itself: "The men go two-and-two before the bier, and the women, in the same order, follow after it" (1992, 256). John Lane Buchanan, in his 1872 account of

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[27] See for instance, Bennett's 1988 interview with Charles and Gladys Simpson (1992, 193), her 1992 interview with Rosie and Dougald Campbell (219), and her 1991 interview with Hugh Hagan of Port Glasgow, which, judging by other material in the interview, was probably about an Irish immigrant community in Scotland (245). In addition, the Reverend James Napier's 1879 account of the post-funeral gathering says: "relations and near neighbours returned to the house, where their wives were collected, and were liberally treated to both meat and drink" (1992b, 258). This suggests that women did not go to the graveside; it is not clear whether or not they attended the funeral service.

[28] The interview was conducted by Emily Lyle.

funerals in the Western Isles, describes women's behaviour in the graveyard, which suggests that they probably participated in the procession (1992, 243).

In Vallee's description of funeral customs in the mid-1900s in a cluster of Gaelic-speaking Scottish islands collectively known as Barra, both men and women participated in the procession, but they walked in different groups and were arranged differently within those groups. The men preceded the coffin in pairs. The "chief mourner" (as Vallee terms "the closest adult able-bodied male relative" [1955, 122]) had a special position close to the coffin, but otherwise the men did not arrange themselves in any given way. The women followed the coffin, with the "closest female relative" directly behind it. The other women, in "a rough but spontaneous sorting out" grouped themselves by how closely they were related to the dead person, with those who were near kin at the front of the group. This placed "elementary family units" together, "e.g. mother walking with daughter, or sister with sister" (124).

Vallee believes that the arrangement of the procession reflected the social structure of the community. The different patterns in which men and women walked reproduced gendered social realities. The social lives of women largely revolved around their relatives. Men, on the other hand, had broader social circles and "male solidarity in the community as a whole is stronger than female solidarity" (1955, 129).

Sometimes women's participation in the procession in Scotland extended to acting as pallbearers. In the northeast, it was common for women to be the first to carry the coffin (Vallee 1955, 124, footnote 2). Similarly, the Reverend Walter Gregor, writing in 1874 about the past, reports that in Highlands funeral processions, women were the first to carry the coffin and that the coffin bearers for "a young unmarried woman" would be "her young companions" in some Scottish fishing communities (1992a, 197).

What little information I have about display of social status in the procession in Scotland comes from Vallee's analysis. He thinks that social status, which was relatively unimportant in Barra, did not enter into the arrangement of the procession. He says, "Most Barramen are almost aggressively egalitarian in their attitudes toward community relations." While residents of Barra do have some concepts about "social rank" and how to assess it, "there is no clear-cut structure of distinct social groups" (1955, 129-30). The funeral procession may be a way of enacting and displaying the structure of the community, but social status, as such, is not part of what is displayed.

In Scotland, at least in much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in many places women did not go to the burial. Sometimes they also did not go to the funeral or take part in the procession. When both sexes did walk in the procession, at least in the examples I am aware of, men and women walked in separate groups. In Inverness both sexes and in Barra the men, at least, walked in pairs.[29] The information I have on status display is minimal and may well be atypical.

Women's participation in death rites varied according to time and place. In all three countries, there were male-only funeral processions, but that pattern seems to have been strongest in Scotland and weakest in Ireland. The gendered arrangement of the funeral procession also varied by country. Processions in which men and women walked in separate groups occurred in all three countries. So did arrangements of participants into pairs, but that pattern seems to have occurred rarely in Ireland and more commonly in England and perhaps Scotland. Only in England did I find evidence of pairs of the opposite sex. In all three countries, women might, in some times and places, carry the

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[29] From Vallee's description, it is not entirely clear if the women walked in pairs or not, although he does, as described in the main text, speak of the close relatives in sets of two. Since the men acted as pallbearers in rotating sets (1955, 124), it would, however, be functional for them to be in pairs.

coffin, but on the whole this seems to have been atypical. Status display could be a significant element of the funeral procession in both Ireland and England. It is not clear, based on the minimal information I have, if this was also true in Scotland.

3.1.2 Sorrow: Lamentation, Crying, and Lack of Overt Expression

In all three countries, there were conventions for the expression of sorrow. Among the Irish and Scottish, lamentation or keening was an important, highly visible, and socially sanctioned form of mourning. Expression of grief among the English, while it varied highly according to time, place, and class, was generally more subdued.

3.1.2.1 England

When I started the work out of which this chapter developed, I thought it surprising that Protestants in Newfoundland, given their presumably largely English cultural background, mourned as dramatically as my research indicated was sometimes the case. My understanding of appropriate English expression of grief was similar to Jenny Hockey's description of modern customs: both genders are supposed to mourn in a way that is characterized by subtle physical self-presentation, rather than overt expression of emotion. For instance, the mourner's eyes can be red (105).[30] Hockey asserts, however, this physical self-presentation is supposed to indicate that mourning is, in fact, in process, but that its expression is happening behind closed doors (90). Implicitly crying is not supposed to take place in public.

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[30] In her article, Hockey uses the words "British" and "Britain," rather than "English" and "England." All of the examples and studies she cites from the British Isles whose location is indicated took place in England, however. It is not clear whether she has overgeneralized English trends to Great Britain or whether the dynamics she describes have indeed become typical of the entire island. For immediate purposes, however, it does not much matter, as her article is clearly applicable to England.

There were some assumptions embedded in my initial idea that I now think are not entirely tenable. While it is largely true that Protestants in Newfoundland are of English descent, this is, as described in the introduction, not entirely straightforward. Similarly, while, overall, English mourning historically has often been relatively restrained, especially in comparison to historic Irish mourning customs, it was, and continues to be, diverse and complicated.

Sociologist Tony Walter, in his discussion of responses to the 1989 deaths of ninety-five Liverpool football fans in a disaster at a stadium, tackles differences in English approaches to death by looking at geographic location, related ethnic factors, and class (1991, 601). In Walter's understanding, there are, among white residents of the United Kingdom, "two cultures: an English reserve and a Celtic expressiveness" (607). The "Celtic" approach contrasts with what Walter describes as "the stiff upper lip at English funerals" (608). Judging by the material I have found, however, "Celtic expressiveness" may have been the most dominant mode for death rites at a very early time period and continued to be a significant mode during much of England's history.

Medievalist Victoria Thompson rather tentatively suggests that "sorrow" was "woman's work" among late Anglo-Saxons, primarily because many grieving women appear in "Anglo-Saxon vernacular literature" (2004, 11-12). This makes sense in light of what appears to have happened later in England, as well as cross-cultural trends. Thompson also argues, based on material included in Bodley Laud Miscellaneous 482, a text dating from the middle of the 1000s (57), but that to a very large extent was put together from earlier work (67), that crying is a reaction to both the personal loss caused when friends die, and to one's concern about the friends' souls (75). It seems clear from the material she cites that tears were taken for granted as an appropriate and even positive

response to death, but it is not at all clear what the customary practices were for either expressing or suppressing grief in public or semi-public contexts.

Daniell notes somewhat contradictory attitudes towards grieving later in the Middle Ages: "weeping" was typical and not necessarily limited to the close relatives. Following the sudden accidental death of a boy, "the spectators shed many tears and the parents grieved by wailing, tears and much noise." Nevertheless, grief was also thought to show "a lack of faith in the deceased's salvation" (1997, 54). Horrox's discussion of the same period may clarify these complexities. She describes two modes of expressing emotion linked to different points during death rites. Intense expression was probably typical of wakes, as a particular genre of stories, those about "miraculous revivals from death," might contain "descriptions of friends and neighbours wailing around the corpse."[31] Based on the little known about behaviour at funerals, Horrox thinks that "expressions of grief which would be acceptable in private" would be "considered a breach of decorum at the funeral." The clergy thought that too much display of emotion was inappropriate (2000, 106).

The early modern era is marked by a certain degree of complexity, both in what actually happened and in scholarly understanding of it. Although lament is not generally associated with England, *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, says it persisted there until the 1600s or roughly the beginning of this period (1950, s.v. "Mourning Songs"). Bettie Ann Doebler, a scholar of the literature of the 1600s, discusses a genre she calls "lament" or "lamentation," but which differs from most of the lamentation discussed in this thesis, in that it consists of formal writing

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[31] Horrox acknowledges that such scenes had a dramatic role to play in the unfolding of the stories, but points out that, nevertheless, the stories had to "seem credible to their audience" (2000, 106).

(1994, 219-20). Although different from oral traditions of lament, it shares some similarities with them.

According to Doebler, for the most part, "understatement" is a distinguishing mark of "English culture," but this particular genre at this time was an exception. The approach to "the articulation of mourning and comfort" was such that readers of our time "are inevitably struck by the intensity of some of the language of grief." In Doebler's understanding, in some areas of Europe, including England, there was a shift at this time in the balance between language and ritual, with language becoming the more important of the two. Thus, a change in approaches to dealing with loss was necessary. The English of this period employed "the full range of emotional language" to address grief and death via articulation "of all the conflicting feelings and thoughts" (1994, 219-20).

Other writers have different understandings of the expression of grief around this time. In *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman*, Lucinda M. Becker suggests that one's own death was supposed to be approached through the "masculine virtues of strength, determination and pious public speech" (2003, 1). She later comments on "concern over excessive female grief and uncontrollable, irrational emotion," which indirectly suggests that the same "virtues" were also thought to be the appropriate ones for dealing with the death of other people, but that these virtues were not always practiced (138).

Cressy thinks that mourners were supposed to avoid extremes. Others could interpret too much grief as "weakness and lack of control," but too little as "cold and heartless." Cressy draws on a number of contemporary authors, diarists, and letter-writers who either re-affirm the appropriateness of tears as a response to death or mention tears as an actual response to a specific death. Some of these writers specifically mention

funerals as an appropriate or actual place for tears. Almost all of Cressy's examples are male (1997, 393-94).

The Victorian era was another period when expression of emotion was culturally appropriate, although the degree to which this was true changed over time. Jalland, writing about the middle and upper classes during this time, describes complex and changing gendered values regarding the expression of sorrow. Romanticism and the Evangelical movement influenced "early and mid-Victorians." Both encouraged greater familial affection than previous generations had experienced, as well as the free expression of emotion by both sexes, at least within the family. Jalland says, "Men, as well as women, expressed the intensity of their grief in weeping together without shame." By the 1870s, however, these movements had less impact, and men were influenced "by the ethos of the public schools with their cult of manliness and masculine reserve" (1996, 4-5). Implicitly, men were less free to mourn overtly by the end of the Victorian period.

Relative emotional expression by men notwithstanding, Jalland notes that there is less material in her sources (archival records for fifty-five families) about how widowers grieved than how widows did. Jalland thinks this pattern "suggests that the men were more restrained in describing their feelings of loss, especially towards the end of the century when they were socially conditioned to believe that strong men controlled their emotions" (1996, 252).[32] Jalland's sense is that, "at least in public," repression of emotion was the appropriate male response (264). She gives examples of widowers who, for the sake of their children, were either praised for emotional control or exhorted to

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[32] Jalland acknowledges that the fact that men generally only took a short break from work after a death probably played a part (1996, 252).

engage in it (252, 260).[33] Ideally women also exercised emotional restraint and a woman

who did so was praised for it. In this regards, however, lower expectations for women

prevailed (252).

Some sources describe public expression of grief among the Victorian working

classes. The contemporary account quoted in Gallop of the mass funeral for children who

died in an 1838 mining accident refers to the "weeping and bereaved parents and

relatives" and their "audible expressions of grief." As described above, some bereaved

mothers required assistance from other participants, as they were overcome with grief.

Expression of emotion extended to the onlookers: "scarcely an eye of the spectators that

thronged the village churchyard, but was moist with the sympathetic tear" (116-17).[34]

Jalland quotes *Cassell's Household Guide* as opposing working class women's

participation in the funeral, on the grounds that they lacked emotional control: "This

custom is by no means to be recommended, since in these cases it too frequently happens

that, being unable to restrain their emotions, they interrupt and destroy the solemnity of

the ceremony with their sobs, and even by fainting" (1996, 221).[35]

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[33] Jalland quotes from Roundell Palmer's June 27, 1839 letter to the Reverend W. J. Palmer, his father (Selbourne papers, MS 1878 fo. 53) and Lady Lewis's Mar. 14, 1863 letter to William Harcourt (MS Harcourt, dep. 631, fos. 45-47). The Selbourne papers are at the Lambeth Palace Library. The Harcourt papers are at the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

[34] Gallop gives the source of this quotation as the *Northern Star* of July 14, 1838, but provides no additional citation information. This particular article is not mentioned in the bibliography, but I suspect that the version Gallop used came from a source he does list, the *Burland Annuals*, which he describes as "A rare book containing a fine collection of newspaper articles about everyday life in nineteenth century Barnsley" (223). This source is in the John Goodchild Collection, Central Library, Drury Lane, Wakefield, WF1 2D2 England.

[35] Jalland gives the publication information for this source as 1869-71, iii, 344.

The general trend during the 1900s was for the bereaved to "become less expressive about their grief in public" (Walter 1991, 606). Historian Julie-Marie Strange's article about expression of grief among the working class from 1880-1914 documents early indications of these trends.[36] She describes subdued and subtle expression of grief. In her opinion, "grief was managed," so that the bereaved could carry out necessary tasks, but people found ways to engage in "reflection, sorrow and anger in isolated moments and spaces" (2002, 150). During the First World War, a significant shift occurred in the amount of time people were expected to mourn. As of the middle of the century, the idea was "to get back to normal as soon as possible" (Walter 606).

General trends, aside, however, British mourning was never monolithic; there were significant "class, ethnic, gender and regional variations" (Walter 1991, 606-07). Walter perceives class-based trends in response to death, with the classes out of synch with each other and moving in different directions at different times in the twentieth century (623). Visible grieving seems to have never entirely faded out. Clark reports that during his fieldwork in Staithes, at a particular point in the service at the graveside, "loud weeping and vocalisations from the bereaved" are not uncommon (142). Hockey, writing even more recently, says that sometimes women fail to conform to current British cultural standards and express grief in some way not considered acceptable. For instance, a minister interviewed by Hockey described a funeral at which: "one girl started crying and

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[36] Strange herself does not, however, see it this way. She and the writers she cites make connections between poverty and emotional inexpressiveness which are at variance with descriptions of the sometimes quite vigorous expression of grief among poor people at a slightly earlier time in England, as well as in Ireland and in rural Newfoundland.

the girl next to her started crying and by the time I'd finished I was dealing with this hysterical crowd of girls" (1997, 104-05).[37]

Although Clark, Hockey, and Walter write about modern contexts, the trends they describe reflect the general history of English mourning. The tendency (in England or elsewhere) for women to be more emotionally expressive than men is not new. Nor are class or regional differences. Those aspects of culture that cause variation in modern England were also present at the time of significant English migration to Newfoundland and very likely had an impact on expression of emotion there.

3.1.2.2 Ireland

Both forms of keening discussed in Chapter 2 took place in Ireland. Poetic lamentation was important there, but has little relevance to what is known about emotional expression following a death in Newfoundland. In this section, I discuss both (while focussing as much as possible on the simpler keening), in part because historical information about the two kinds of lament often does not distinguish between them. I also review some of the theory written about poetic lamentation, as some of the issues addressed are applicable to Newfoundland.

Fry suggests that keening originated before the Christianisation of Ireland (1999, 85). It was certainly present in the relatively early Middle Ages. Lament is central in a poem dating from the 700s (Lysaght 1997, 66). The "Old Irish Penitential," written around 800,[38] lays out "specific penances" for keening, with the severity of the penance

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[37] For this quote, Hockey cites her 1993 article, "The Acceptable Face of Human Grieving? The Clergy's Role in Managing Emotional Expression during Funerals," in *The Sociology of Death*, ed. D. Clark, 129-48, Oxford: Blackwell, 143.

[38] Fry also discusses another work "the 'Bigotian penitential,'" which may or may not have been written in Ireland and hence may or may not be directly relevant. It dates

inversely related to the deceased person's status (Fry 85). Various other religious and secular accounts throughout the Middle Ages depict or refer to keening. At this time, keening seems to have been either exclusively or largely women's work (86-87, 116). Rachel Bromwich says that "fictitious" keens embedded in Fenian ballads and sagas depict women keening in response to death as far back as the 1100s (1947, 248). Documentation by cultural outsiders began around the same time (Lysaght 65). Friar John Clyn describes, "the wailing of many" at a funeral for seven members of the same noble family in 1335 (as qtd. in Fry 91).[39]

In *Irish Wake Amusements*, folklorist Seán Ó Súilleabháin describes lamentation in some detail (1969, 26).[40] He says that in Ireland, both crying for the dead and creating laments for them were done by two different classes of people; close relatives (130-34) and professionals who seem to have been mostly, but not exclusively, women (134-38).[41]

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from the late 600s or early 700s and displays "an accommodating attitude" towards keening (1999, 85).

[39] The full citation information is: *The annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn and Thady Dowling, together with the annals of Ross*, 1849, ed. Richard Butler, Dublin: Irish Archaelogical Society, *s.a.* 1335, 26 (English trans., p. xxvi).

[40] Ó Súilleabháin discusses lamentation of both the past and his mid-twentieth century present. I have chosen to focus on the past, as it is more relevant and described in more detail.

[41] In a number of places, Ó Súilleabháin specifies that the keeners are "female" or refers to them as "keening women" (1969; 135, 136, 137, 141, 143). In addition, some of the church documents that Ó Súilleabháin summarizes, from his description specifically condemned "female keepers" (138). Ó Crualaoich describes "the special 'keeners'" in County Cork as "old women" and says that unrelated "old women" also keened in County Galway (1999, 182-83). Specialist keeners were not always female, however. The 1748 regulations of the Diocese of Leighlin refers to the employment of both "men and women" to lament (qtd. in Ó Súilleabháin 139). W. K. Sullivan, describing the keeners at wakes, states, "Sometimes one or more, or even all the principal singers, were men." The

Much of the lamentation of relatives consisted simply of crying and talking to the dead person. As such, it fits into Bourke's first category of lamentation, as described in the last chapter. Although both men and women participated in such crying, according to Ó Súilleabháin, "The women folk were much more demonstrative than the men and less restrained" (130-31). In addition, family members performed poetic lamentations, usually extemporaneously, at both wakes and at funerals (131-34).

The expression of grief by relatives was structured in specific ways. It was customary to refrain from public demonstrations of grief until the body had been prepared. Then the relatives collected around the body and lamented. Crying was not allowed to continue indefinitely. Neighbours would intervene and take the relatives from the room when the initial outburst was over. If a relative who had not been present for the first episode of weeping came later during the wake, another episode took place. Relatives wept again during events that were transitional from one stage to the next of death rites: the end of the wake, the beginning of the funeral procession, and the covering of the grave in the cemetery (Ó Súilleabháin 1969, 130-31).[42]

Ó Súilleabháin says the practice of hiring "female keeners" mostly died out in the late 1800s, although some areas retained the custom longer (1969, 143). According to Bourke, poetic lamentation persisted "in remote areas" through the early 1900s (1993,

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generic English term that Sullivan gives for this category of singer, however, is "professional mourning women" (1873, cccxxiv). Even though men and women might both participate in keening, whether as family members or as professionals, women generally had pre-eminence in this area of mourning.

[42] I am indebted to Diane Tye for the observation (during class discussion on March 25th, 2002) that these specific moments were moments of transition, rather than times of closure.

161-62). Danaher reported in 1962 that the practice was still ongoing, but not in many areas. In a larger number of places, the custom had been dropped in the not-too-distant past (174). Vestiges of keening continued to surface from time to time towards the end of the 1900s (Bourke 162; Lysaght 1997, 67).

Despite keening's popularity and endurance in folk culture, official culture was strongly against it. Protestant and Catholic authorities, as well as the government, attempted to suppress it (Tait 2002, 36). Following the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church in Ireland tried "to reshape the religious and moral life" of its adherents (Lysaght 1997, 67). Various Synods of the Catholic Church put out a number of orders between 1631 and 1686 that tried, through one approach or another, to prevent keening (Ó Súilleabháin 1969, 138-41). The diocesan regulations for Leighlin of 1748 recommended penances of "prayers, fasting, alms and such like wholesome injunctions" for people of either sex who keened at funerals (139).[43] In Lysaght's analysis, this document objects to lamentation, in part, because arranging for the dead person to be "generously lamented" could be a way to improve the family's status or, in slightly different words, was a form of status display (67). Lament's perceived insincerity was another problem area. Lysaght says that priests in Ireland objected to it due to "the insincere and excessive grief displayed" (1996, 50), while Ó Súilleabháin says they disliked "such artificial sorrow and lamentation" (136-37).

Both Bourke and Ó Súilleabháin make strongly worded comments about how shocked foreigners often were that some of the keeners were specialists hired for the occasion. Bourke says that often such foreigners "were scandalized" and Ó Súilleabháin says they thought the practice was a "national disgrace" (Bourke, 1988, 288; Ó

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[43] Ó Súilleabháin gives the citation information as Comerford, *Collections*, 81-.

Súilleabháin, 1969, 136). According to Tait, Richard Stanihurst, who, as a "Dublin Old English commentator," was resident in Ireland, but not ethnically Irish, thought keening "was of no use to either the living or the dead, and cited the hypocrisy of those who lamented so passionately the deaths of people they cared nothing for" (2002, 35-36). Nevertheless, not all recorded voices from this general period – even those of cultural outsiders – spoke against keening. Tait notes that Alice Thornton "proudly comments," when writing about her father's funeral in 1640, "Such was the love that God had given to the worthy person, that the Irish did sett up their lamentable hone, as they called it, for him in the church, which was never knowne before for any Englishman don" (37).[44]

Lysaght identifies a number of factors that contributed to keening's eventual decline. The attitudes the Church and outsiders held towards professional keening eventually spread to other people in Ireland. Changes within the Catholic Church in the 1800s may have energized opposition to wake practices generally. Upward mobility among lay people during the last part of the 1800s resulted in newly middle class Catholics, who were overall "conservative" and inclined to adopt the values of the "Protestant elite" (1997, 67-68). Clergy were becoming similarly Protestantized and wanted to dissociate themselves "from less sophisticated elements of their religious heritage" (Connolly, qtd. in Lysaght 1997, 68).[45] Other contributing influences were the

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[44] Tait does not give a source for this quotation, but it is probably *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, 1875, ed. C. J., N.p.: Surtees Society, which she cites elsewhere. Tait credits Thornton's relative open-mindedness to her gender, which may have resulted in her not being "threatened by this very female activity." In contrast, Tait thinks, "the male clerics and administrators who sought to stamp it out certainly felt uncomfortable" (37).

[45] The source is Seán Connolly's *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 1987, Studies in Irish Economic and Social History 3, Dundalk: Dundalgan Press.

Great Famine and, during the 1900s, "the forces of modernisation," and the lessened importance of Gaelic in Ireland (67-68).

The persistence of this custom over centuries, despite the condemnation of clergy, is a gauge of how deeply "ordinary people" felt about its practice (J. Butler 2008, 118; Lysaght 1997, 76[46]). There were strong feelings on both sides. Clergymen and lamenters sometimes engaged in altercations with each other, which from time to time became physical.[47] Folklorist Jenny Butler suggests that conflicts of this type were not only about "power dynamics between church authorities and laity," but also about "male and female authority" in relation to death (119). Bourke suggests much the same (1993, 161).

Keening was important in Ireland for more than a millennium, including the time during which most Irish immigration to Newfoundland occurred. In Ireland, intense mourning was not only acceptable, but expected. Keening was, however, largely a feature of folk culture. Various institutions of official culture, notably the Catholic Church, were opposed to it. Among the objections were that keening was perceived not to be sincere and that it could function as a form of status display.

3.1.2.3 Scotland

Emotional expression in Scotland also varied according to time and place, but, at least in some parts of Scotland, appears to have had more in common with Irish than English practice. Burt mentions the practice of hiring keeners as of 1726 (1992, 255).

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[46] The quotation is from J. Butler (2008, 118).

[47] Ó Súilleabháin gives two examples of this sort of conflict. In one, the exchange is completely verbal, with the keening woman, at least initially, more aggressive in her statements than the priest. In Ó Súilleabháin's other example, however, the priest stopped the keening by whipping the lamenters; this is supposed to have effectively ended the practice locally (1969, 141-43).

Buchanan, writing about the Western Isles in 1872, reports keening by women who knew the deceased. He describes how "the women sing the praises of the dead, clasping the coffins in their arms, and lie on the graves of their departed friends." Chance-met strangers along the route of the procession also keened (1992, 243).

Keening persisted into the twentieth century. Bill Douglas, in an interview conducted by Emily Lyle, described keening at a wake in the 1930s. The dead man's mother, under the influence of considerable whiskey, was "wailing: 'Conn, Conn, fye did ye die, to leave your old mother to weep and to cry?' and this going on continuous" (Bennett 1992, 242). Bennett reports that in 1964 Anne Ross recorded some keens from Nan MacKinnon, a resident of Vatersay in Barra. According to Bennett: "Usually at the death of one of the clan chiefs or a member of his family, the women wailed and beat themselves against the ground, and eulogized the dead" (1992, 255, footnote 248). The emotional expression Vallee describes for Barra is not quite as intense. People expressed sorrow when the coffin was shut and at the burial (124). Expression of grief was gendered. When the grave was covered, "It [was] expected that female relatives should weep and sob, but males should not" (126). Keening did not take place during the wake (123).[48]

At least in recent times, grief can be much quieter. Bennett describes overt, but fairly subdued, expression of grief at a funeral in 1989. During the singing of a song that the deceased's mother had particularly liked, "though the hankies were out dabbing more

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[48] The differences between Ross's description and Vallee's are probably due to either a change in the local context or differences in the specific circumstances of the death. According to Bennett, "She said that keening stopped in Barra when the MacNeils sold their land" (1992, 255, footnote 248; it is not clear from context if "she" refers to Ross or MacKinnon). Vallee's fieldwork may have taken place after this cultural change or he may not have had the opportunity to attend the funeral of a clan chief's relative.

than a few eyes, everyone raised the most magnificent chorus" (1992, 269). Evidently, the participants were not completely overcome by their emotions.

The information presented so far often depicts women mourning more intensely than men. The Reverend Donald Sage, however, left an account of intense emotional response by a man in the late 1700s. He describes how, at the age of three, he went into the room where his father was sitting with his mother's body. Sage says, "He had, previous to my coming in, been indulging his grief in silence, and giving vent to the 'bitterness of the heart' in half-audible sighs. My sudden and heedless entrance seemed to open up the flood-gates of his grief. . . . He sobbed aloud, the tears rolled down his face, his frame shook, and he clasped me in his large embrace in all the agony of a great sorrow" (1992, 268). It is not clear if this behaviour was exceptional or whether, as in Victorian England, men of this time and place could express emotion within the family.

Less dramatically, in her account of the 1989 funeral, Bennett describes the deceased's brother's emotional response: "His hankie was still on his lap, having dabbed a few tears from his eyes" (1992, 269). Bennett does not address differences between male and female expression of emotion at this funeral, but her account makes clear that at least one man present gave some overt signs of grief.

In at least some areas of Scotland, as in Ireland, keening and intense expression of emotion was customary. In some places, keening continued to take place into well into the twentieth century. From the limited material I have used, keening appears to have been strongly gendered, but there are some records of male expression of sorrow.

In all three countries, there was some variation in expression of grief over time. Expression also varied in accordance with other factors, including gender, region within the country, and class. Emotional expression, overall, was much more intense and dramatic in Ireland and probably in Scotland than it was in England, where mourning

tended to be more restrained. Nevertheless, there was (and continues to be) a highly emotional strand in English mourning.

3.1.3 Revelry: Wake Customs

According to Bourke, "Funerals are characterized by marginality and can accommodate behaviour not normally tolerated, but what goes on at them is always highly structured and vividly remembered" (1993, 160). In context, her comment applies most directly to lamentation, but it also has obvious application to the revelry often incorporated into death rites. Although to modern minds revelry appears to be at odds with the general focus of the funeral, it was widespread and expressed in a variety of ways in British death rites. In particular, customs involving alcohol and sometimes food were common. The form of revelry that I focus on in this thesis is the party behaviours often incorporated into the wake, which might range from telling riddles through playing pranks involving the corpse. There were significant, but not entirely consistent, differences in wakes and wake revelry across the British Isles.

3.1.3.1 England

Both wakes and wake revelry occurred in England, although they seem to have disappeared earlier than they did in Ireland and, perhaps, to have been less common to begin with. In addition, there were a number of watching and visiting practices[49] that

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[49] Richardson, in her brief history of wake and watching practices distinguishes between "watching" and "waking." She quotes B. H. Malkin for a description of watching. In Malkin's understanding, the custom consisted of never leaving the body unattended, until it was actually buried. Although Malkin's account is about Wales, Richardson clearly thinks that the meaning of the term is more broadly applicable. Richardson describes wakes as "more of a social occasion" and specifies that they occurred "on the eve of the funeral" (1989, 22). It is not clear which of the two sources by Malkin that Richardson cites in the bibliography is the one she uses here. The two

involved sitting up with the body or viewing the body while visiting the family.

Thompson, writing about the Anglo-Saxon era, mentions several festive elements of the

wake, including "horseplay, eating and beer-drinking." Some wake activities may have

been counterhegemonic; Thompson suggests that they may have included "parodying the

actions of the churchmen" and that "lively singing and beer-drinking may have been

enacted as an anticipation and inversion of the solemnities of the funeral mass" (2004,

84).

During the period 1150-1380, wakes consisted of the body, prior to removal for

burial, being "watched over by family and friends" in the home. Religious organizations

were dubious about aspects of this tradition. The "regulations of the Palmers' Guild of

Ludlow" (produced in the 1200s) indicated that attendance at "night-watches" was, in

and of itself, acceptable, but that there were several wake practices that were not.

Participants might not "venture to summon up ghosts, make rude jokes about the body or

its reputation, or play other indecent games" (Horrox 2000, 101).[50] Ó Súilleabháin quotes

from regulations put out by a fourteenth century Synod in London, which asserted that

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choices were *Account of a New Tour in Wales* and *The Scenery, Antiques and Biography of Wales*. Both were published in London in 1804.

Richardson says that viewing customs have a history of three hundred years or more. To some extent, they were still ongoing at the time of her writing. As the name suggests, the custom involved people going to visit or look at the body (1989, 24; based partly on material quoted from Peacock's "Traditional [sic] and Customs relating to Death and Burial in Lincolnshire," 1895, *The Antiquary*, [Nov.]: 23-24).

[50] Horrox's source is L. Towline Smith, ed., 1870, *English Gilds*, Early English Text Society, o. s. 40, 194, but she notes that she translated the material.

the purpose of wakes, when they began, was prayer for the dead person, but that they had become "occasions for thievery and dissipation" (1969, 156).[51]

Daniell provides two examples of contemporary references to the wake or "night watch" at a somewhat later period. Both involve York residents. One indicates only that Robert de Crosse asked for a wake in 1395. In the other, R. Olyver said that he did not want a "'revel of young folks'" to take place during his wake. At least in York, the wake sometimes included a party at this time (1535) (1997, 42).[52]

Wakes sometimes took place in post-Reformation England. At least one occurred in Cambridge in 1618. Up until the Civil War (and perhaps longer) there were wakes in Lincolnshire. In Yorkshire, wakes, like many Catholic customs, continued to be practiced even later (Gittings 2000, 153-54). A wide range of boisterous and rowdy behaviour is sometimes reported for English wake and watching practices. John Aubrey, writing during the late 1600s, reports that in Yorkshire those who watched the body might engage in a variety of activities, including drinking, smoking, playing games, or praying. The games could have unpleasant elements. Aubrey describes one in which "a simple young fellow" was made judge for the game. Other participants then smeared the black residue from the underside of a pot on his face (qtd. in Barley 1997, 38).[53] "Hot cockles," was, in Barley's description, "apparently a game involving one person being blindfolded

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[51] Ó Súilleabháin gives the relevant "Statute or Canon" of this document as "number 10" (1969, 156). His source for this quote is J. Brand, 1841, *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, vol. II, London, 140-41.

[52] Robert de Crosse's will is in Probate vol. 1, 83v, in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research at York. R. Olyver's document is in RI vol. 28, 168 at the same institution.

[53] Barley gives the source as Aubrey's 1881 *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, London: Stachell, Peyton and Co., 30.

while others struck at his private parts" (38). Gittings, writing about the mid-sixteenth century through the mid-seventeenth century reports that there were "food, drink and lights" at wakes and that wakes "sometimes involved horseplay of a ribald nature." She suggests that this sort of game may have functioned to reduce "the tension aroused by death," and also have "countered the threat of annihilation with jokes about procreation" (2000, 153). Party behaviours at wakes were sometimes condemned by "reformers" (Cressy 1997, 428).

In England during the Tudor and Stuart period, "watching" a body was customary among all classes, but was not always practiced with equal seriousness and some people who died were not watched. So far as Cressy can determine from inadequate information, it was more likely to be practiced in the northern areas of England, as was what Cressy describes as the "Celtic" practice of holding wakes (1997, 427).

Watching became specific to class over time. Cressy cites Henry Bourne's distinction, in the early 1700s, between the watching conducted by the "vulgar," which took place in conjunction with festive behaviour, and the custom practiced by what Cressy calls "politer society," which consisted, in Bourne's words, "of locking up the corpse in a room, and leaving it there alone" (427).[54] Similarly, Richardson suggests that there was, by 1725, a significant "social gap in the meaning and practice of this ritual" (1989, 12). As Richardson understands it, by the 1800s, wakes were not typical in England. Viewing customs were also at one point widespread and not restricted by class, but lost favour with the upper classes around 1900 (23-24). Watching, visiting, and

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[54] The reference is to Bourne's 1976 *Antiquitates Vulgares or the Antiquities of the Common People*, Newcastle, 16.

viewing customs, at least in some areas, continued into the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries.[55]

Richardson suggests some functions of waking and watching practices. They were a way of being reasonably certain that the deceased had, in fact, actually died rather than, for instance, being "in deep coma." She asserts, however, that "more frequently" it is reported that light and noise keep "evil spirits" away from the corpse. In addition, Richardson, who is interested in involuntary dissection, points out during that time in history when theft of the corpse might take place, wake and watching customs provided some (although not absolute) protection (1989, 22-23).

Wakes also created room "for the expression of heightened emotion," potentially including not only the "obvious grief," but also "religious intensity, fear or good-natured fun" (Richardson 1989, 23). Richardson asserts, "The gamut of human reactions to death – ranging from black humour to the dark night of the soul – seems to have had legitimate expression on these occasions." She thinks that "cathartic expression" might have helped people learn to live with the loss, as well as creating "a healthy basis for the social acceptance of bereavement." Some customs (such as the telling of scary or death-related supernatural stories, as well as practical jokes involving the corpse) contributed to a complex discourse about "mortality and spirituality" (23).

The functions of visiting were, in Richardson's opinion, rather different. It served as both a condolence visit and "a last respectful visit to the dead" (1989, 24). In addition, Richardson perceives that, along with the related custom of touching the body, visiting was "a deliberate breach of the pollution barrier surrounding the corpse" (26). As such, it

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[55] Clark writing about Staithes, Yorkshire (1982, 128); E. Porter writing about East Anglia (1974, 36); Richardson (1989, 23); Roberts writing about Lancashire (1989, 198-99).

helped people figure out how to deal with both the particular death and with death more abstractly. Visiting customs may also have been another form of status display. Richardson suggests that the ballad *The Unfortunate Fair; or the Sad Disaster* expresses "pride in the number of people" visiting (25-26).[56] Elizabeth Roberts' informants for her article, "The Lancashire Way of Death," felt that visiting was a way of "showing respect." Although they did not mention this, Roberts thinks that it was probably also comforting for the family (1989, 201).

Curl thought that one element of wake revelry, the provision of significant amounts of alcohol by the hosts "in many districts" during the Victorian era, had a dual purpose. On the one hand, it allowed the hosts to demonstrate hospitality. Practically, it also helped in "fortifying the mourners against the odour of decay and the often inclement weather at the interment" (1972, 13).

Based on the literature, wakes and wake revelry seem not to have been as important in England as they were in Ireland. In some times and places, however, they did exist. Related watching, visiting, and viewing customs seem to have often persisted longer than wakes and wake revelry. Some of these customs eventually became linked to class, with the upper classes becoming less likely to practice them.

3.1.3.2 Ireland

Irish wakes, which are known for their revelry, are the most obvious direct ancestor of revelry at Newfoundland wakes. Details in the historic records of what happened at early wakes are sparse, but there is limited indication of revelry. Fry, based on one source from roughly 1300, discusses "funeral games" as a possible feature of

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[56] This broadsheet ballad was published around 1800. A copy is now at the British Library.

wakes and connects those games to the wake games played in Ireland until the last century (1999, 88).

Fuller information exists about the 1600s. According to Tait, quite a number of people might attend wakes, which, she perceives, "were as rowdy as their later counterparts." She describes a wake custom in an unidentified city that involved tradesmen setting aside money to supply alcohol to other tradesmen at their wakes (2002, 34-35).[57] A little later, mayors of Kilkenny were forbidden by resolution to consume food or drink at wakes (Ó Súilleabháin 1969, 17).

The Catholic Church started to formally oppose wake revelry around this time. Ó Súilleabháin provides a number of summaries of church documents prohibiting various behaviours at wakes (1969, 19-22; 146-154), starting with a statute put out by the Synod of Armagh in 1614, which "declared that the pious feelings of devout people were outraged by the singing of lewd songs and the playing of obscene games." Statute 20 put out by the Synod of Tuam in 1660 "ordered all who attended Catholic wakes to abstain from excess in drink and food, from merry-making, from games and from illegal mispractices which had been introduced to lead people astray" (146-47). Starting in 1660, this sort of condemnation of some wake practices "became increasingly regular" (Tait 2002, 35).

Tait asserts, "It would perhaps be dangerous to assume continuity" between the wakes of the time period she studied and those of the 1800s and 1900s. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that there were most likely significant similarities "in spirit" (2002, 304). Certainly, as Ó Súilleabháin's summaries of church documents demonstrate, there was

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[57] Tait's source, which she both quotes and paraphrases, is Christopher Hollywood, as quoted in E. Hogan, 1894, *Distinguished Irishmen of the Sixteenth Century*, Dublin.

considerable continuity, not only in condemnation by the Church of wake practices in Ireland between the early 1600s and the early 1900s but, at least generally, in the type of practices condemned (1969 19-22; 146-154).[58] There is also a fair bit of congruence with this material and what is known from other sources about wakes at the later end of this time period.

Ó Súilleabháin brings together considerable material about wake customs, including a range of party behaviours, in *Irish Wake Amusements*. Some such customs, including storytelling (1969, 26-27), singing (28-29), and riddling (32) were, at least potentially, relatively tame and restrained. Other party activities, such as rough games and fighting, were wild, brutal, or disruptive.[59] Ó Súilleabháin also mentions several types of wake pranks involving the corpse (67). Packie Manus Byrne gives some other examples, such as fiddling and the custom of stealing a fowl from one of the neighbours, to make soup for a late-night snack (1992, 58). Some authors mention smoking (Dorian 2001, 313; Ó Súilleabháin 17-18). Alcohol featured strongly in the old-style wake and this, in combination (according to Ó Súilleabháin) with environmental features, such as crowded houses with inadequate air circulation, often led to many participants becoming drunk (16-17).

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[58] Ó Crualoich, judging by his language, perceives that the wake, or at least the way church documents describe it, was less consistent that I understand it to be; he refers to "the changing nature of the terms in which these edicts were expressed" (1999, 173). The only significant change in customary behaviour that he references in his discussion, however, concerned the wearing of mourning clothing by "the common people." He does acknowledge that clerical prohibitions of "immodest behaviour" were, for three centuries, "constantly repeated" (174).

[59] See for instance, pp. 79, 84-85, 103, 106, 107, 108, and 71-72.

Ó Súilleabháin devotes five entire chapters and part of a sixth to the huge range of games played at wakes (1969).[60] The games were varied in type and mood. Ó Súilleabháin says there is "ample evidence" for card playing, a fairly mild entertainment. A set of relatively tame games involved looking for a hidden person or article, but even these might have rough features (116-23). For instance, anyone who the blindfolded player managed to catch in "Blind Man's Buff" would suffer some penalty, such as the marking of his or her face with soot (117).

Some games were straightforward contests. Ó Súilleabháin contextualizes these with comments about the degree to which strong men have been looked up to cross-culturally (1969, 33). Comments by folklorist Peter Narváez on wakes in Newfoundland may throw further light on this particular phenomenon. Narváez points out that the traditional wake in Newfoundland included courting practices and that the pranks played at wakes were often performed by "young men trying to impress young women" (1994, 280). Since courting also took place at the Irish wake (Ó Súilleabháin 92), a similar desire may have been one of the underlying motivations for these contests.[61]

Many of the wake games Ó Súilleabháin describes were very aggressive and "rough." In fact, he reports hearing that some participants never fully recovered from injuries received at wakes (1969, 68). In one game, "Cutting the Timber," a man was held vertically over the threshold by two opposing teams of two players each. The game was played like tug-of-war. The resulting motion resembled sawing and they continued playing "until one pair proved too strong for the other" (82). Other games, such as "The

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[60] Mercier gives the total number of "specific wake games" in *Irish Wake Amusements* as 130 (1969, 50).

[61] This may not always have been a factor, however, since, as described in more detail below, at least in some areas, women were partially or completely excluded from wake activities.

Drunken Man" (81-82) and "Downey" (86-87) involved the beating of some players with a rope or strap.

Many games were not only rough, but also included unpleasant surprises for participants. In "The Kiln on Fire," some players would represent a miller and his employees, while others were sacks of grain. The "sacks" were piled on top of each other and then "turned," so as to redistribute the players who had been on top to the bottom and vice versa. Finally, one of the players would announce that the kiln had caught fire, and the supposed mill workers would soak the "sacks" with water (1969, 79).

Other writers report games of this general character. Danaher gives two detailed examples of wake games. One involved beating or other physical maltreatment of players who did not adequately perform tasks assigned to them. In the other, most of the players unexpectedly drenched the remaining participant (1962, 175). "The roughness and horseplay" accompanying a very widespread wake game known as "Faic" or "Hurry the brogue" is supposed to often have come close to knocking the body off the table (Ó Crualaoich 1999, 187). In addition to the relatively structured rough games described above, "the 'fine boys" would bring small bits of turf with them to throw at other people (185). In County Galway, men threw not only turf, but small pieces of the clay pipes provided at the wakes, with such force that the missiles were potentially hazardous (187).

Games and other aspects of revelry had additional oppositional elements. Echoing the 1614 Synod of Armagh, Bourke says that people describing wakes often perceived that a large number of the games were "obscene" (1993, 163). Clerical denunciation of wake behaviour deemed "inappropriate" was ongoing for several centuries and the Catholic Church was still trying to ban "immodest behaviour in the presence of the corpse" as of the 1927 Synod of Maynooth (Ó Crualaoich 1999, 174). In addition, the more complicated games might parody "solemn ceremonials" (Bourke 163). The church

particularly objected to "games in which the officers and offices of the church were mimed and mocked—especially the sacrament of marriage" (Ó Crualaoich 175).

Pranks were another amusement at Irish wakes. In some cases (as when pranks were incorporated into games) they were directed at other wake participants. At other times, they were directed toward the body. For instance, sometimes "tricksters" attached ropes to the body, so they could pull it "into an upright position in the middle of the night." This frightened other people at the wake. The response of the "people of the house" to this sort of prank varied. They could be "extremely angry." Alternatively, they would "not mind." Pranks involving the body were "half expected" and members of the host family might be inclined, opportunity permitting, towards similar pranks (Ó Crualaoich 1999, 185).

Fighting was a frequent feature of the wake. Some fights probably arose out of the various games and tricks played. In addition to more or less spontaneous fighting, there were also fights between "factions." Groups who had been attacked at one wake would seek revenge at the next wake, and particular factions would take advantage of wakes to physically punish men who had turned down the opportunity to join them. Ó Súilleabháin asserts that sometimes there was no obvious cause for a fight and suggests that some altercations may have been deliberately instigated just for something to do. The following story, however, suggests something more complex. Ó Súilleabháin describes a funeral that had been free of physical conflict, until a bereaved son yelled out: "This is a sad day, when my father is put into the clay, and not even one blow struck at his funeral." He promptly remedied this situation by striking someone standing near him, thus sparking fighting throughout the graveyard. Ó Súilleabháin gives no source for this account and describes it simply as a "story" concerning "the funeral of an old man in the northern part of Leinster" (Ó Súilleabháin 1969, 71-72). I suspect it is a legend, rather than a factual

description of an actual event, but it is very revealing of community norms and concerns; apparently the survivors did not feel that the funeral had been appropriately carried out if there had been no fighting.

Danaher reports that in the area where he grew up, the term "wake" referred only to the nighttime vigil. Women and children, as well as the "very old," visited the house in daytime hours, but wake participants were almost exclusively men (1969, 78). In County Cork, while old people and women would go to the "corpse house" right after it became known that the death had taken place, young men would typically not go until dark (Ó Crualaoich 1999, 178). Similarly, in Wexford Town the usual time for women to go to the wake was during the day. Women did go at night, but would not generally remain overnight, unless they were there specifically to help out. Wakes were loosely segregated by sex, with women mostly congregating in the wake room and men in the kitchen. This was not cast in stone; young women might spend some time in the kitchen, participating in games, during the evening (Ó Muirithe and Nutall 1999, 187).

Wake behaviour was also at least somewhat gendered. In Danaher's context, the fact that only men attended the wake meant that only men took part in wake games (1969, 78). Ó Crualaoich specifies that in County Galway, the people who initiated "boisterous behaviour" at wakes by throwing things were invariably male (1999, 187). In his discussion of turf-throwing in County Cork, Ó Crualaoich uses gendered terms such as "'fine boys'" to describe the participants (185). J. Butler reports gendered differences in the use of tobacco, a significant part of the wake, which was accompanied by prayer for the deceased. Women used snuff, whereas men smoked pipes (2008, 112).

So far, wakes sound largely male-dominated. J. Butler, however, asserts that since the majority of the customary behaviour associated with death occurred indoors, it was under the purview of the "'woman of the house,'" who was culturally responsible for "the

domestic domain" (2008, 109). In regards to the wake, this meant "important responsibilities," such as ensuring ample provisions to feed guests and greeting wake participants (112).

Irish wake revelry has been much analyzed, with interpretations ranging from the simple reporting of emic understandings through to complex analyses of wake revelry's place in the larger culture. Here I briefly discuss some of the analyses relevant to Newfoundland. Ó Súilleabháin, based on conversations with former participants in "wake-amusements," came up with a number of functionalist and social reasons for participation in wake revelry. It was deemed both traditional and harmless. In a number of areas it was "widespread," which created an implicit social pressure for people hosting wakes. The activities gave participants something to do, while they kept vigil for hours on end, and also kept them awake. Ó Súilleabháin acknowledges that his informants' explanations are logical, as far as they go (1969, 166-67) and that participants "felt better" precisely because they had behaved traditionally and in accordance with the desires of "their deceased forefathers" (172). As described below, however, he himself favours a more complicated and more spiritually based explanation.

Scholars also discuss the importance of wake revelry to participants. As was the case for lamentation, the length of time this custom persisted, even as the Church routinely condemned it, indicates its significance as far as "ordinary people" were concerned (J. Butler 2008, 118; Ó Crualaoich 1999, 173[62]). Both Danaher and Ó Súilleabháin agree that the survival of the custom of playing wake games, during centuries of attempts by the church to suppress it, was at least partially due to the extent it was, in Ó Súilleabháin's words, "deeply rooted" (Ó Súilleabháin, 1969, 157; Danaher,

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[62] Quoted material from Butler.

1969, 81). Wake revelry was important both functionally and symbolically. In addition, it was an important way of expressing "resistance—or at least reaction" to the increased clerical and governmental regulation which started in the early modern period (Ó Crualaoich 173).

Clerical condemnation of wake games, including charges that they were "'disrespectful," notwithstanding, Danaher argues that they "were never meant to show anything other than respect for the dead in the ancient way" (1962, 176). He asserts that they were considered "a necessary part of the wake – to omit them would be an offence to the dead person's memory" (1969, 78-79). Danaher argues that the proper measure for judging wake games is the standards of the time they took place (1962, 176). People did not perceive a conflict between wake games and the various functions (religious and otherwise) of death rites. Danaher also asserts that, given belief that death was a "passage" "from this world to a very much better one," there was nothing inappropriate about celebrating it (1969, 77).

As was the case with some non-British cultures discussed in the last chapter, some scholars suggest that issues of life arise in conjunction with death rites. Ó Súilleabháin, for instance, reports that one of his informants thought festive wake activities "were a kind of defiant gesture," which emphasized that participants, in contrast to the corpse, "were still 'alive and kicking'" (1969, 167). Ó Súilleabháin himself thinks that wake revelry arose from fear of the dead, because people thought the dead might return to either avenge themselves on the inheritors of their property or to take others with them to the otherworld. The wake's purpose was placation of the dead. The deceased's anger would be deflected if the living behaved as if "the dead person was still one of them" and "bid a last farewell" to him (or her) (170-71).

As the wake first developed, in Ó Súilleabháin's understanding, the "sympathy" it expressed was directed not towards the relatives, but towards the deceased. The dead person was the "one and only guest," who "had to be assured of his popularity and of his continuing presence as one of the company." Thus the corpse was sometimes included directly as a participant, by such overtly physical means as inserting a pipe into its mouth, placing cards in its hands, or dancing with it. Ó Súilleabháin admits that "untoward behaviour or disrespect towards the corpse" sometimes occurred, but believes that this was because people no longer clearly remembered the purpose of a wake. Although Ó Súilleabháin does not spell out what "untoward behaviour" meant, it seems likely it included pranks involving manipulation of the body that, in his opinion, went beyond that necessary for the inclusion of the dead person in the gathering (1969, 172-73).

S. J. Connolly attributes "an important psychological function" to the wake, because of its assertion of "the vitality of the community even in the presence of death," as well as "the continuity of social life," despite the "sudden social rupture" caused by the death of a particular person (paraphrased and qtd. in Ó Crualaoich 1999, 195[63]). Ó Crualaoich points out, however, that there is a significant problem with this theory: those deaths that probably were accompanied by the greatest "anger, social wounding, and sudden rupture" (i.e. those of young people in good health who died abruptly, as well as the overlapping class of deaths understood as "fairy abduction") were followed by wakes at which there was little or no revelry (195).

A number of writers focus on the "fertility" aspects of the wake. J. Butler says that "fertility" is frequently an aspect of death rites, in general, and of Irish wakes, in

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[63] The reference is to Connolly's 1982 *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845*, Dublin, 152. The first quote is from Connolly and the others from Ó Crualaoich.

particular. In Ireland, wakes were culturally understood to be an occasion for young people of both sexes to come together and there were sexual elements in some of the games, dances and mimes performed at wakes. Butler suggests that both elements of this type and the overall "carnivalesque" mood might "be a figurative way of reinforcing fertility and vibrancy of the community in the face of the mortality" of which the dead body was emblematic (2008, 112-13). Bourke describes wakes including revelry as "carnivalesque," in that "images of fertility and new life" appeared side by side with "images of death and decay." Neither was uncomplicated, but instead they were dealt with "ambiguously and ambivalently" (1993, 163). Lysaght focuses on revelry's role in "reasserting continuing vitality and the potential for renewal in the community," rather than fertility as such (1997, 69). Vivian Mercier suggests that the "fertility" elements of some wake practices both "make fun of reproduction" and "celebrate it" (1969, 52). He sees a connection between sex and death, which runs two ways. "Sex implies death," in part because, without death, it would be unnecessary for people to reproduce. Conversely, "death, as we have seen in the wake games, implies sex and offers an incitement to reproduction" (56).

Ilana Harlow gives some reasons why "practical jokes involving the animation of corpses" were acceptable in Ireland. In her understanding, such pranks "were congruent with the behavioral norms of wakes" (2003, 83). They were also congruent with the norms of humour, generally, especially the humour in "paradox" and Irish humour, as described by David Krause (cited in Harlow, 104-05).[64] In Harlow's observation, Irish humour includes a strong tendency towards "wanting to provoke a response in others" (107). In addition, she perceives that wake pranks, which can be understood as "*seeming*

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[64] Harlow gives the source as *The Profane Book of Irish Comedy*, 1982, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

revivals of the dead," fit in with some recurring Irish cultural themes, which occur in a number of forms of folklore: "'the revival of the *seemingly* dead' and 'resurrection'" (83, emphasis in original).[65] These forms of folklore include legends about grave robbers who are frightened when their potential victim turns out not to be dead (86); mummers' plays (88); another "folk drama," enacted at wakes, with a similar death-and-revival sequence (89); and the song "Finnegan's Wake" (90).

Harlow says that practical jokes appear "to parody" the "theme of 'the revival of the seemingly dead'" (2003, 85). Based on Mercier's assertion that understanding parody requires awareness of its relationship with the original "work or . . . genre," including "the inherent tendency to absurdity [in the original] which made the parody feasible" (1969, 2), Harlow suggests that parodic versions of returns from death arise, because, although people may want to be resurrected, the concept seems "absurdly impossible" (88).

Harlow cites Wylie Sypher's idea that "resurrection" is a comic theme (2003, 88).[66] Resurrection, in Harlow's understanding, is not entirely comic, however. She notes that some scholarly interpretations of the mummers' play have suggested that either the performance was meant to cause the return of the spring or that resurrection was a metaphor for this seasonal change. Harlow thinks that the mummers' play may also reflect the Christian story of the Resurrection. These themes connect this play to "serious realms of the cosmos" (88-89). Such juxtaposition of serious religious themes and comic playfulness is a common aspect of Irish humour. To explain this, Harlow refers (89) to

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[65] It is not clear why Harlow used quotation marks in this material. She does not give a source, so they may be a way of emphasizing her terms.

[66] The source is Sypher's "The Meaning of Comedy," 1956, in *Comedy*, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 220.

Mercier's comment that "ambivalence towards myth and magic—and sometimes towards Christian rites and accounts of miracles" is a feature of Gaelic "comic literature" (Mercier 1969, 9).[67] Both religious stories involving resurrection and parodies operate simultaneously in Irish culture. This reflects "differential belief" in the culture as a whole, as well as variance in the beliefs of particular people (Harlow 89-90). Similarly, the existence of wake pranks involving the corpse depends on differential belief. The people who committed the pranks "apparently were *unafraid* of the dead," but the success of the pranks depended on the fear of other people (99, emphasis in original).

Harlow points out that considerable "literature support[s] the view that jokes are subversive of dominant structure and denigrate dominant values." She cites Monica Morrison's idea that wake pranks "serve an anti-ritual function of relieving the solemnity of the event."[68] Harlow herself, however, suggests that "subversion alone" is not sufficient explanation for wake pranks, given that they involve themes that also appear in other aspects of Irish culture (2003, 96-97). In addition, she points out that movement of a dead body may be seen as funny, whether or not a practical joke has caused the movement. She attributes this to the fact of motion in something that is actually not alive: "the appearance of life triumphs over the reality of death" (92).

Wake revelry was a key feature of Irish wakes that continued in some places into the twentieth century. While some aspects of revelry were, at least potentially fairly quiet, others, such as fighting, many wake games, and wake pranks, were rowdy. Although

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[67] I have given a slightly longer quotation from Mercier than Harlow incorporates into her text.

[68] In Morrison's 1974 "Wedding Night Pranks in Western New Brunswick," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 4:285-97. According to Harlow, her analysis is of Newfoundland wake pranks, specifically (2003, 96).

women may have had important roles as hostesses, in at least some areas the nighttime guests involved in the rowdier wake activities were disproportionately male.

3.1.3.3 Scotland

Wake revelry also took place in Scotland and was also subject to religious condemnation. Without giving details of time or place, Ó Súilleabháin reports that there was clerical opposition to some wake practices in Scotland (1969, 156). In Aberdeen, the church put out regulations against song and dance at funerals during the 1200s (qtd. and paraphrased in Fry 88).[69] The Presbytery of Penpont, in a 1736 document, condemned various funeral practices, particularly excessive drinking (qtd. in Wood 1992, 211).[70]

Drinking was a recurring aspect of Scottish wakes. The bill for expenses for a 1651 wake for Sir Donald Campbell of Ardnamurchan shows large amounts of food and alcohol, as well as tobacco (qtd. in MacKay 1992, 249). Wood gives two similar lists of expenses for funerals in the 1700s.[71] Both include alcohol specifically for the watching (1992, 208-09). Drinking and other festive behaviour did not stop in the eighteenth century. Neil MacGregor's informant Lewis Grant said of wakes his grandmother attended "they had ceilidhs round the remains, men and women." These wakes evidently involved a great deal of alcohol: "they sat all night, drink, drink, drink" (Bennett 1992, 238). In Emily Lyle's interview with Bill Douglas, he said, "Now the wake was just

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[69] The source is "General Provincial Statutes of the Thirteenth Century," which can be found in the 1907 *Statutes of the Scottish Church 1255-1559*, Scottish Historical Society LIV, Edinburgh, 42.

[70] Neither Wood nor Bennett gives further bibliographic information for this document.

[71] Wood describes one of the lists as "drawn from a Wigtownshire farmer's book of expenses in 1794." The other is the account of the funeral of John Grierson, a son of the Laird of Lag, in 1730.

similar to a wedding, the bigger the wake the more you were thought of." At a particular wake he went to in the 1930s, alcohol was available in quantity; Douglas says, "And this went on long enough until they got that drunk they didn't know what they were doin." This wake involved a meal of potatoes. The participants eventually started throwing potatoes at the corpse and tried to knock from its mouth the pipe that had been placed there earlier (Bennett 241-42).

Alcohol was present at wakes in Barra. Nevertheless, Vallee says, "Contrary to popular opinion in many parts of Britain, these wakes [were] not drunken parties" (1955, 123). Indeed, as Vallee describes them, the other activities at the wake sound fairly quiet. In addition to conversation and snacking, periods of prayer took place in the "death room" several times in the course of the vigil. Vallee specifies that singing did not occur (123-24).

Another party activity at wakes was dancing. Captain Edward Burt, writing in 1726, reported that not only was there dancing at wakes, but that it was customary for relatives to participate: "If the deceased be a woman, the widower leads up the first dance; if a man, the widow." Although he describes this as a "Highland custom," Burt also encountered it "within less than a quarter of a mile of Edinburgh," when his next-door neighbour, a Highlander, died (1992, 254).

Gregor, writing in 1874 says that the wake was sometimes the occasion for practical jokes intended to convince others that the body had returned to life. The prankster lay on the bed next to the corpse "and, when those on whom the trick was to be played had entered the house and taken a seat, he began to move, at first gently, and then more freely, and at last he spoke, imitating as far as possible the voice of the dead, to the

utter terror of such as were not in the secret" (1992b, 239).[72] Dancing and games,

including "musical chairs," also took place at much more recent wakes (Bennett 242[73]).

There was considerable geographic variation in the degree to which wakes were

"subdued" or "raucous." Bennett notes that while quite a number of the writers of the

1800s "suggested that the wake was virtually a thing of the past, there is plenty of

evidence throughout the twentieth century that old-fashioned wakes were (and are) still

held" (commentary on Gregor 1992, 240). Some writers assert that wake revelry ceased

fairly early. According to Richardson, "religious opposition" brought an end to it and the

emotional energy fuelling it was rechanneled into "religious fervour." When intense

religiosity went out of fashion, wakes also mostly disappeared (1989, 23). Hugh Miller,

writing during the mid-1800s, suggests that wakes had changed considerably over the

previous century: "It is not yet ninety years since lykewakes in the neighbouring

Highlands used to be celebrated with music and dancing; and even here, on the borders of

the low country, they used invariably, like the funerals of antiquity, to be scenes of wild

games and amusements never introduced on any other occasion." In Miller's analysis, at

that time, participants "made their seasons of deepest grief their times of greatest

merriment; and the more they regretted the deceased, the gayer were they at his wake and

his funeral" (1992, 237).[74]

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[72] Gregor also describes very subdued wakes, in which the participants took it in turn to read from the Bible and any talking "was carried on in a suppressed voice" (1992b, 239).

[73] This information comes from Emily Lyle's interview of Bill Douglas.

[74] Even at Miller's time and place, traces remained of revelry. When he and a friend arrived at a wake, they were given "glasses with spirits" (1992, 238).

Other writers describe quiet wakes. John Lane Buchanan says of wakes in the Western Isles in 1872: "They seldom display much mirth at late wakes, as they do in many parts of Scotland; but sit down with great composure, and rehearse the good qualities of their departed friend or neighbour" (1992, 243). The Reverend James Napier, writing in 1879 about his youth, asserts that "the unseemly revelries" of the past did not occur at wakes then. These wakes did involve the telling of stories (usually about ghosts), as well as courtship and a modest amount of eating and drinking (1992a, 235). More recently, Iain Nicolson said very little about what actually happened at home wakes, but, gave the usual number of participants as two (Bennett 1992, 222).[75]

Wake customs and related visiting customs were sometimes gendered. John Firth of Orkney, writing in 1920 about an unknown earlier time, reports that young adults in equal numbers of men and women "were chosen" to participate in the wake. This, in Firth's view, naturally encouraged "flirtation" (1992, 241). In Barra, the participants in the overnight wake were largely male; they consisted of "male relatives and friends and the closest adult female relatives." The people who watched the corpse in relays were almost invariably male. The men otherwise spent their time in the kitchen "discussing male topics – seamanship, fishing, sheep, etc." The women were, for the most part, occupied with getting "snacks" ready and "cleaning up about the kitchen." Women usually came to visit the family during the day, whereas men typically came in the night or evening (Vallee 1955, 123-24).

In Scotland, as in England, wake revelry seems, at least in the last two centuries, to have been regional, rather than universal. Overall, however, it appears to have been more important in more places over a longer period of time than it was in England.

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[75] Nicolson was interviewed by Margaret Bennett and Thomas A. McKean.

Conversely, in comparison to Ireland, wake revelry seems to have been less widespread, to have fallen out of favour earlier in many places, and to have been overall less important. The rather limited information I have suggests that aspects of wakes and wake revelry were gendered in some places.

3.2 Previous Work Done on Death in Newfoundland

Once death rites from Britain arrived in Newfoundland, they continued to develop. Consequently, although Newfoundland death rites have much in common with their British antecedents, there are also some obvious differences.

One theme to emerge in the modest literature on death rites in Newfoundland is that of the "sacred" and the "profane," with authors often drawing on Arnold van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* or work by Émile Durkheim. Anthropologist James C. Faris's book, *Cat Harbour: A Newfoundland Fishing Settlement*, for instance, does not explicitly reference these sources, but addresses similar themes. Most overtly, Faris says, "Kinsmen who are 'mourning' are in a polluted or sacred state, engaged in an activity which places them in a special category characterized by special behaviour, and excluded from participation in other activities." Faris also contrasts the kitchen and the parlour (whose different uses have already been discussed in Chapter One) and notes that the corpse was kept in the parlour (1972, 154).

While Faris does not discuss the rooms of the wake house in terms of the "sacred" and "profane," his work is a source for folklorist Gary Butler's paper, "Sacred and Profane Space: Ritual Interaction and Process in the Newfoundland House Wake," which does use that vocabulary. Butler draws on Durkheim's work for these "concepts" (1982,

27).[76] As described by Butler, Durkheim's understanding of these terms is very similar to van Gennep's. Butler divides the various elements of wakes into "sacred" and "profane" and argues that the wake, by the use of these sacred and profane elements, symbolically transfers the person who has died from the category of "profane" to the category of "sacred." Butler argues that therefore "the wake process must be viewed as a single entity, rather than a juxtaposition of two opposed and contradictory types of activity" (31).

In particular, Butler applies the terms "sacred" and "profane" to space in the house. The wake room, where the body was placed, was typically the parlour. Butler identifies this space as "sacred," both in general and during the wake. Visitors in this room observed "a highly structured and formally rigid procedure." In contrast, the kitchen was normally "profane space" and the activity conducted there during the wake was "profane." Butler describes it as having "a more relaxed atmosphere." Social behaviour in that room was close to what it would be "under normal circumstances" (1982, 29-30).

Anna-Kaye Buckley and Christine Cartwright's article, "The Good Wake: A Newfoundland Case Study," builds on the idea that the wake is divided into sacred and profane components[77] and identifies additional sacred and profane wake elements. Buckley and Cartwright divide not only space, but time, by these criteria. They contrast

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[76] Specifically, he uses *Durkheim on Religion: A Selection of Readings with Bibliographies*, 1975, ed. W.S.F. Pickering, London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 113-14.

[77] Buckley and Cartwright credit not just Butler, but several other authors, with the division of the wake's "activities and domains into sacred and secular (or 'profane') categories" (10; 15, endnotes 9-11). Specifically, they cite Seán O Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*; Philippe Ariès, 1974, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press; and Lloyd Warner, 1959, *The Living and the Dead: A Study in the Symbolic Life of Americans*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

the sacred "daytime (until 10 p.m.)" with the profane "all-night vigil." As discussed in more detail below, they also classify various social activities as "sacred" or "profane" (1983, 10).

Folklorist Peter Narváez sets the context for his article, "'Tricks and Fun': Subversive Pleasures at Newfoundland Wakes," by referring to G. Butler's theory that the use of space in the house "has assisted in resolving the sacred-profane tensions inherent in the dead's movement from worldly to otherworldly status" (1994, 263). Narváez sees the "sacred" and "profane" as blended by the festive behaviours at the wake. He asserts that various forms of wake revelry "have merged sacred spaces with profane collective pleasures into festive-carnivalesque states." The combination of the two modes, in Narváez's estimation, arises from conflicting "social needs of keeping the dead alive and removing the dead" (264-65).

Folklorist Contessa Small's article, "The 'Passing' of the Newfoundland Wake: A Case Study of the Funeral Home Industry and Its Influence on Traditional Death Customs," briefly lists several customs which, in her perception, "help[ed] to define and separate the sacred space of the parlour from the profane space of the house" (1997, 21).

A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland, folklorist Gerald L. Pocius's ethnography of a community on the Southern Shore, does not make specific reference to the sacred and the profane at wakes. Like many other authors, however, Pocius describes a spatial separation: "close family and friends sit in this room [i.e. the "front room"], while more distant relatives and community members chat in the kitchen after paying their respects, usually being offered drink and soup by the relatives" (1991, 181). While Pocius does not address the atmosphere in the wake room, implicitly, the atmosphere in the kitchen was, at the time of his fieldwork, relatively relaxed.

"Social Order within the Disorder at Newfoundland House Wakes," an article by Kieran Walsh, focuses on Catholic wake customs, especially revelry, as practiced in the past (2001). Walsh also draws on Butler's division of space into "sacred" and "profane." While acknowledging the usefulness of this model, he adds, "instances arise where the rules that govern the designation of the sacred and the profane are broken." He suggests that future work could profitably address "when the sacred is not sacred" (95-96).

The identification of life cycle rituals as rites of passage and discussion of the structure of such rites is a second aspect of Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* (and possibly similar work) referred to in work on Newfoundland death rites. "Ars Moriendi in Newfoundland: A Look at Some of the Customs, Beliefs and Practices Related to Dying and Death in Newfoundland,"[78] an unpublished paper written by Mount St. Vincent University student Kay Bradbrook, overtly applies van Gennep's work and identifies rites of separation, transition, and incorporation (1976, 15, 19, 20). Bradbrook also connects the fact that "the chief mourners" were not involved in "the practical, physical activities" related to the death with van Gennep's description of such mourners as "isolated from society" as they go through a rite of passage of their own (20).

Other authors use similar language and concepts, while not specifically referencing van Gennep. The heading for anthropologist Melvin Firestone's section on life cycle rituals, in *Brothers and Rivals: Patrilocality in Savage Cove*, is "The Rites of Passage as Family Rituals" (1967, 75, underlining in original). G. Butler refers to "Rites of Separation" for the dead person, as well as the need for the mourners to be incorporated back into the larger community (1982, 30-31). Small, following Butler,

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[78] This paper is in MUNFLA's "photocopied articles" files. As such, it does not have an accession number.

comments on the custom of "touching the forehead of the corpse" as a "rite of separation" (1997, 22).

Another recurring theme in Newfoundland literature is the connection between death rites and festivity. Faris connects funerals in the community he calls Cat Harbour with "times" or festive events. He points out that both were included in the category of "'occasions'" and asserts that they "ha[d] certain basic structural features in common, and even share[d] the same colour symbolism" (1972, 153). Folklorist Isabelle Marie Peere, in her dissertation, "Death and Worldview in a Ballad Culture: The Evidence of Newfoundland," while making a similar point, mentions Cat Harbour, but adds, "and, it appears, elsewhere in Newfoundland" (1992, 135).[79] Peere identifies the wake as a "'farewell party'" for the dead person. Specifically, it "was meant as a celebration of the deceased's 'good life'" (136). According to Peere, "Death, indeed, was exorcised through a communal celebration of life." She quotes student author Ann Bennett, who describes funerals as "hav[ing] a somewhat diluted value as a 'time' or social event" (135).[80] Folklorist George J. Casey similarly makes a connection between death rites and festivity, albeit a rather different one. He asserts that, in Conche, because death rites and the yearly garden party were "dominated by the church," and thus, "uniform throughout the community," they were both forces "toward community integration" (1971, 16).

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[79] It is not entirely clear in context, but Peere may be drawing on and possibly quoting from Wilfred Wareham's 1982 Ph.D. thesis, "Towards an Ethnography of Times: Newfoundland Party Traditions, Past and Present," University of Pennsylvania, as well as his 1982 article, "Aspects of Socializing and Partying in Outport Newfoundland," *Material History Bulletin* 15:23-26.

[80] The quote is from Bennett's 1979 paper, "'My, he looks just like himself': An Analysis of Newfoundland Funerals," 16, in Dr. Nemec's collection at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

A related theme is analysis of wake revelry. In fact, so many authors analyze revelry (including some whose approach to other aspects of death rites, such as the expression of sorrow or the funeral procession, is mostly descriptive), that it appears that revelry is often deemed to be in particular need of explanation. Some analyses are largely functionalist. For instance, the Reverend Lewis Amadeus Anspach, writing about the early 1800s, notes the consumption of alcohol at some wakes and says the purpose is "to revive their spirits and keep themselves awake" (1819, 472-73).

Casey describes how people at the wake would initially talk and tell stories about the deceased, then possibly tell a story that the deceased had particularly liked, and finally progress to "general story-telling," with an emphasis on the supernatural. In Casey's analysis, such "story-telling sessions" helped "to pass the time," and this was particularly the case for those participants who were there overnight. In addition, storytelling resulted in the substitution of "public or group fear" for "individual fear of death and the supernatural" (1971, 232).

Peere builds on Casey's concept and suggests that, similarly, pranks, including humorous mishandling of the body, had to do with "'communal fear'" becoming "'communal fun'" (1992, 214-15). In her analysis, "the traditional home wake offered specific remedies to the fear caused by the actual presence of the corpse" (210). Peere also argues that wake revelry was part of an exchange, whereby the bereaved were allowed to remove themselves from the wake at night, in order to rest and deal with emotions related to the death, and the "nightwatchers" were reimbursed by implicit permission to engage in "licence" (135).

Bradbrook suggests that the wake prank of smearing soot on the hands of sleeping wake participants may have been "a necessary relief from the prevailing sadness," although she also thinks that alcohol played a role in the "levity" of wakes. As she sees it,

the wake in general allowed participants to console the bereaved, as well as "to express respect for the dead, [and] their own grief and sorrow" (1976, 15-16).

Clara J. Murphy, in "Fall Asleep and I'll Blacken Your Face: A Discussion of Traditional and Modern Irish Newfoundland Catholic Wake and Funeral Customs," describes attending a particular wake where she "became the object of some lighthearted flirting which amused the participants and quickly passed the night" (1986, MUNFLA ms, 86-159/p. 3). Her comments on death rites as a whole suggest that laughter functions to relieve the tensions and stresses of the situation. She describes the unintentionally humorous behaviour of a four-year-old relative at the funeral mass as "comic relief" (117) and elsewhere says, "Despite or because of the gravity of the situation, jokes soon surfaced" (7). Pocius's account of revelry at home wakes in Calvert, is more descriptive than analytic, but, includes a quotation from one of his informants, Kitty Vincent Sullivan, who describes the smoking of TD pipes, which had been an integral part of the wake, as necessary to cover the smell (1991, 181-82). Peere points out that funerals were a change in the usual routine and also quotes Bennett as saying that they "provide[d] an opportunity to release emotions and partake in alcoholic beverages"[81] (1992, 135).

Small's article comments on wake revelry in traditional contexts, as part of a discussion of the effect of funeral homes on traditional customs (1997). In her analysis, the purpose of many aspects of wake revelry, including eating, "games, story telling and tricks played on the corpse," was "to keep people awake." In addition, games, pranks, and drinking "helped relieve some of the tension and psychological discomfort associated with staying up during the night time with a dead body" (23). In historian Willeen Keough's analysis, "such rituals and jokes" "had important functions in helping mourners

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[81] Ibid.

cope with the loss of loved ones and, in a broader sense, re-affirming life, even in the face of death" (2001, frame 4, 362).

Although G. Butler spends very little time on revelry as such, his division of space into the "sacred" and "profane" (as discussed above) sets out the underlying conditions that gave the Newfoundland wake a particular shape and made wake revelry possible. The "profane" kitchen was the site of festive behaviours (1982, 29-30). Buckley and Cartwright's interpretation of socializing during the wake applies the concepts of "sacred" and "profane" more broadly. In a chart, Buckley and Cartwright separate various aspects of the wake into these categories, with sacred "visitors condoling the family" and "visits to the wake room" opposed to profane "general visiting" and "visiting, gossiping, and eating together," which presumably take place in the profane kitchen. They put "the overall atmosphere of sacredness in the wake as a whole" in the chart's sacred column, but list certain festive and social aspects of the wake, "courtship, drinking, eating and general visiting," as profane. Finally, Buckley and Cartwright contrast highly serious issues with levity; "dangers to and power of the soul" are sacred, whereas "pranks and jokes by watchers at the night vigil" are profane (1983, 10).

In this classification, there is an implicit balance between sacred and profane aspects of the wake, even as sacred aspects of the wake are deemed to be dominant. The activities associated with revelry are categorized as profane, as are the time and place in which most wake revelry took place. Cartwright and Buckley make a point of saying, however, that there were still sacred aspects to the vigil; for instance someone was always with the body. Further, the festive behaviours, so long as they did not contravene community standards, "were not felt to be a violation of the wake room's sacredness, but part of the nighttime version of that sacredness, which was more complementary than antithetical to that of the day" (1983, 11).

K. Walsh's interest in the wake is mostly in what transpires in the "profane" part of the house. He argues that, rather than being "out of control and disorderly," the behaviour in profane space functioned to increase order: "Social order within the community was actually solidified within the disorder experienced during the house wake" (2001, 84-85). Walsh divides wake participants into three sets, the deceased him- or herself, those people who were close to him or her, and the rest of the community. His interest is in the impact of the wake on the social roles of the final group of people. He asserts that, other than going to church, wakes were the only events in which everyone in the community participated.[82] For this reason, wakes would automatically be the locus of attempts "to establish order and status among the ranks" (2001, 91).

Narváez builds from the work of several authors, including G. Butler and Buckley and Cartwright (1994, 264). He also draws on van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* to discuss how different cultures sometimes juxtapose "mourning and license" (256). Finally, he makes use of O Súilleabháin's *Irish Wake Amusements* for the theory of placation of the dead (266-72) and Gearóid Ó Crualaoich's article, "Contest in the Cosmology and the Ritual of the Irish 'Merry Wake,'" for the theory that wake revelry was a counterhegemonic maintenance of pre-Christian "sacred practices" in the face of opposition from "official religion" (272-73).[83]

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[82] If strictly accurate, this situation may be specific to Ferryland. Communities in Newfoundland often had garden parties, Christmas concerts, or the like. One of Walsh's informants asserts that even marriages were conducted "privately" at the "priest's house" (2001, 90), but this was, again, not necessarily true in other parts of Newfoundland. Firestone, for instance, describes weddings and the social events that followed them in some detail (1967, 76-78). Communal events, other than wakes and church services, may have been rare occurrences in much of Newfoundland, but they were generally not atypical or non-existent.

[83] The article in question was published in 1990 in *Cosmos* 6:14.

Narváez acknowledges that the latter two theories are applicable to Newfoundland (1994; 267, 275). Overall, however, he thinks that they cannot fully account for Newfoundland wake revelry, because they do not allow for participants' explanations of the "manifest social functions and *intentionality*, that is the conscious purposes for engaging in particular activities" (273, emphasis in original). Thus, they are inadequate to explain the persistence of these customs. Narváez suggests, instead, that "*pleasure*" was a significant motivating factor (274-75, emphasis in original). Pleasure, however, brings his argument eventually back to counterhegemony, as "an oppositional spirit framed the pleasurable qualities of these practices" (285).

Small provides an emic explanation for revelry. According to one of her informants, the wake was celebratory in Ireland, because the dead person was assumed to have gone to heaven, and this was the source of the custom of drinking at the wake. Small perceives that this underlying attitude resulted in people's seeing drinking in this context as acceptable, rather than "disrespectful" (24).

Drawing upon Diane Tye's work on "local characters,"[84] K. Walsh proposes that such people were particularly likely to be involved in pranks (2001, 91). He divides local characters into two types, one which was more likely to perpetuate pranks and one which was more likely to be the victim of them. As described in more detail in Chapter Six, he sees prank playing as a way of working out status issues (94) and as beneficial to the local "social order" (85).

In addition to proposing a new function for wakes, Walsh also refers back to Narváez's discussion of wake functions. He agrees with Narváez that O Súilleabháin's theory about "placation of the dead" is likely applicable to Newfoundland, as is

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[84] "Aspects of the Local Character Phenomenon in a Nova Scotian Community," 1987, *Canadian folklore canadien* 9, no. 1-2:99-111.

Narváez's argument that people take part in wake revelry because it is fun. He thinks, however, that Ó Crualaoich's theory that wake revelry is a reaction against "the hegemony of official religion" does not work in Newfoundland (2001, 88-89).

Some writers discuss differences in the wake behaviour of different groups of people. Hilda Chaulk Murray, in *More Than Fifty Percent* briefly addresses gender roles in relation to the wake in Elliston (1979, 137-38), as does Keough, looking back to the period 1750-1860 on the Southern Avalon (2001, frame 4, 361). Murray's book about farming communities in and near St. John's, *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday: Agricultural Life in St. John's*, contrasts Catholic and Protestant wakes and describes revelry at Catholic wakes (2002, 196, 199). Murray also discusses change over time in Catholic wake revelry (199).

Some authors, writing about specific local contexts, either minimize wake revelry or do not mention it. Firestone does not address revelry in Savage Cove directly, but his succinct description of wake activities ("Hymns are sung") suggests a religious, rather than festive emphasis. In fact, attendance may, in some cases, not have been large enough to generate and support revelry. Firestone writes that "many people" participated in the early evening, but the overnight fire tending duties were handled by "at least one person" who did not belong to the family (1967, 78). Murray's book about Elliston describes the relative absence of wake revelry, with some nuanced description of variation in the behaviour of the participants (1979, 137-38). In *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday*, Murray mentions the "solemn" atmosphere of wakes on Topsail Rd., which was largely "Scottish and Presbyterian" (2002, 197).

Writers on Newfoundland devote relatively little attention to expression of emotion or to the funeral procession, but some do address these topics briefly. Keough perhaps gives the most space to emotional expression, although much of her discussion is

of keening's Irish roots (2001, frame 4, 362-63). She suggests that keening in Newfoundland functioned "to mourn the departed, placate his or her spirit, and mark his or her transition to the afterlife." She adds that however odd the custom appeared to other people, "it was an accepted and effective mechanism for expressing grief within the Irish community" (frame 4, 362). Buckley and Cartwright discuss gendered differences in emotional expression generally, but with some nuance (1983, 9, 11, 12). Murphy (1986, MUNFLA ms 86-159) similarly includes brief, but thoughtful, information about emotional expression. Peere, based on examples from a somewhat later time period than the one on which I am primarily focussed, sees a relative stoicism in practice, counterbalanced by a tradition of "tearful sentimentality of song," in which sorrow is more overtly expressed (1992, 270-71). Other writers, including Anspach (1819, 472-73) and P.K. Devine ([1936?]) describe emotional expression briefly, with little or no analysis.

Some authors discuss the funeral procession. Casey gives a particularly detailed description (1971, 302-03) and Faris describes variations in the form of the procession under different circumstances (1972; 68, 155-56). In *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday: Agricultural Life in St. John's* (2002), Murray looks at gender issues related to the burial and the funeral. This book is the only published source of which I am aware that spells out that women did not participate in funerals and funeral processions in St. John's. Murray contextualizes this custom within the larger pattern of gender roles in the farming areas around St. John's. She also suggests "weather conditions" and the amount of walking involved in the funerals were contributing factors. Murray briefly describes the order of the procession (201-02).

Most of the information other writers give about the procession is brief and descriptive (see for instance, Anspach 1819, 471; Buckley and Cartwright 1983, 11-12;

Murray 1979, 139-40). Analysis is limited, although Buckley and Cartwright do describe "the structure of the kinship system" as "physically displayed in the procession." For this reason, participation in the funeral (and implicitly the procession) was important; failure to take part was cutting oneself off from family ties (13). Murray says relatively little about the funeral procession in Elliston itself, but does briefly address gender in relation to funeral attendance and pall bearing (139-40). Similarly, Keough does not address the funeral procession as such, but refers to pressure from the Catholic Church for women not to attend the burial (2001, frame 4, 362).

Some authors focus to some extent on folklore related to death as an expression of worldview. Christine Cartwright's article, "Death and Dying in Newfoundland" (1983) is primarily a brief review of work on death-related topics. Cartwright's introduction to the article, however, suggests that aspects of worldview can be inferred from a community's folklore. A significantly greater emphasis on worldview appears in Peere's thesis (1992). She applies the categories from Philippe Ariès's L'homme devant la mort[85] to a number of narrative, musical, and customary genres in some way connected to death, as a way of structuring and thinking about aspects of worldview related to death. She also uses David's Buchan's work on taleroles in ballads as a model for analyzing the corpus of classical ballads collected in Newfoundland that address themes of death. In the process of doing this, Peere includes significant information on death rites.

Sociologist Ivan Emke, continuing the focus on change, wrote several papers about death rites in Newfoundland in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Emke's interest in

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[85] Peere describes L'homme devant la mort as "Ariès's definitive and extended version of" two of his earlier works, the 1974 *Western Attitudes toward Death: from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) and the 1975 French edition of the same work, *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident: du Moyen-Age à nos jours*, Paris: Seuil (1992, 34, endnote 4).

death rites, as such, is largely indirect and he focuses primarily on the point of view of professionals, rather than of lay participants. He does, however, incorporate into some of his papers some useful material about the past. "Into the Breach: The Professionalization of the Funeral Industry and Changes in Traditional Funeral Practices in Newfoundland," examines the interaction between the development of the funeral industry and changes in death customs (1998). Another in this series of papers, "Why the Sad Face? Professionalisation, Secularisation and the Changing Function of Funerals in Newfoundland" also looks at changes in the funeral industry and the interrelationship of these changes with broader shifts in attitudes towards death and death rites (2002). Emke's other papers address topics even less relevant to this thesis.[86]

Diane E. Goldstein and Diane Tye's 2006 article, "'The Call of the Ice': Tragedy and Vernacular Responses of Resistance, Heroic Reconstruction and Reclamation," describes the community response in Pouch Cove to the deaths of three teenagers by drowning in 2001. While this work focuses on a later period than the one in which I am interested, Goldstein and Tye make a theoretical point relevant to my thesis. They note resistance at one of the funerals to the restrictions the local priest placed on its format, as well as resistance to aspects of "funerary tradition" (239-40) and to the strictures of the Coast Guard on the search for the teenagers' bodies (234). Goldstein and Tye suggest that

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[86] "Ceremonial Leaders and Funeral Practices" (1999) examines the relationship between clergy and funeral professionals in Newfoundland, including conflict (or, more typically, the lack of it) between clergy and funeral professionals over death rites. It also, to some extent, looks at the interaction between families and clergy. "Contemporary Funeral Practices and Rituals: A Survey of the Experiences of Clergy in Newfoundland and Labrador," a paper based on the same survey as the previous paper, consists mostly of charts of the data. In addition to the topics covered in "Ceremonial Leaders," this paper includes information about other topics relevant to clergy and their handling of death rites (2000b). "Career Paths and Caring for the Dead" addresses the professionalization of the funeral industry in Newfoundland and various related issues (2000a).

while there has not been much ethnographic work on this type of "contestation of socially established meanings of dominant discourses that define the situation and how it should be managed," traces of such behaviour can be found in some work (240-41) and propose that acts of this type may be necessary when "coping with disaster" (250). As indicated above, resistance to official religious strictures is at least sometimes an aspect of wake revelry.

There is some other academic material related to death in Newfoundland, but much of it is about topics (such as cemeteries and grave decoration) that are not directly relevant to the period immediately following the death. Similarly, Violetta Halpert's paper, "Death Warnings in Newfoundland Oral Tradition," which deals primarily with the period leading up to death, was not directly useful. Halpert was influential in another way, however. The Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) has significant information related to death rites. MUNFLA's collection includes a variety of different types of material, but for purposes of this thesis, I drew upon student papers, most of them undergraduate papers written for classes. As I understand it, Halpert's interest in death was one factor in instructors' choice of paper topics for those classes. While, for the most part, these papers are mainly descriptive, rather than analytical, they include a wealth of information about death rites in many different parts of Newfoundland.

3.3 Conclusion

One Irish account reports that at the same time as the "women of the household" wept and recited poetry around the corpse, the men, sitting in different groups, but within the same room, chatted, joked, and "banter[ed] each other." The keening went on throughout the night, but not continuously. In between bouts of keening, there might be

"silence," but, sometimes, the young engaged in "'small plays'" and the older "or more serious" in "tales" (Hall and Hall, qtd. in Lysaght 1997, 75).[87] In many contexts in the British Isles, solemnity, lamentation, and revelry all occurred in response to death. In some cases, as in the account just cited or in the quotation from Bourke about the atmosphere of the wake given in the last chapter, two or more of these components of the emotional atmosphere of the wake occurred in conjunction with each other.

A number of writers have looked at revelry and lamentation together. O Súilleabháin implicitly suggests a relationship between the two by including a chapter on keening in a book entitled *Irish Wake Amusements*, which otherwise mostly focuses on various party behaviours (1969). Lysaght says outright that keening and revelry should be "considered in conjunction with" each other (1977, 68). Both she and Ó Crualaoich, based on their readings of van Gennep, identify lamentation and revelry as invariably being aspects of death rites in "traditional cultures" (Lysaght 69; Ó Crualaoich 175-76[88]). While this interpretation of van Gennep is open to question,[89] lamentation and revelry, as demonstrated in this chapter and the last chapter, appear in many cultural contexts, sometimes in conjunction with each other. This suggests that these elements can be related and may speak to each other.

Connections between solemnity and the other two components of the emotional atmosphere are considered less often. Jalland, however, (as described above, in the

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[87] Lysaght's source is Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall's 1841-3 *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character &c.*, vol. 1, London: How and Parsons, 222-4.

[88] The quoted material appears in both texts.

[89] As mentioned in Chapter Two, Van Gennep does indeed acknowledge that "license" occurs after deaths, but, assuming I have identified the appropriate passage correctly, only in certain very limited circumstances (1960, 148).

sections on solemnity and sorrow in England) links the failure of Victorian women in the middle and upper classes to participate in the funeral, as well as disapproval of working class women's participation, to women's perceived tendency to be emotional.

Overall, English-speaking Westerners operate in a cultural context that takes solemnity in death rites for granted, but that is made anxious by overt displays of emotion and is surprised, if not mystified, by revelry. Consequently, whether any given scholar writes from the point of the dominant culture or, counterhegemonically, from the point of view of less dominant groups, he or she may perceive that lamentation and revelry require in-depth explanation, precisely because many people do not expect them or are not comfortable with them. The same scholar may see solemnity as an expected part of the background, even when the details in a particular cultural context are somewhat unexpected. Hence, he or she may describe and interpret specific forms of solemnity, without necessarily subjecting solemnity to the same scrutiny. Nevertheless, solemnity deserves the same depth of explanation as revelry and lamentation, as does solemnity's relationship to expressions of sorrow and to revelry. While revelry and lamentation speak to each other, they also speak to solemnity, which reciprocally speaks to them.

Customs from the British Isles had a strong influence on the death rites of Newfoundland. As geographer John Mannion documents in *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada*, however, culture is not necessarily transferred intact when people move from one country to another (1974, 19-20). Certainly death customs, as well as the ways in which the different components of the emotional atmosphere were expressed and interacted with each other, changed in their new context.

Given that the customs in the countries of origin changed over time, not just the mere facts of geography, but the specific period of immigration would have determined what customs the immigrants brought with them. In the case of English settlement, which

likely started in the late 1500s, the customs initially imported were those of the early modern period. This is the earliest stratum of death rites in Newfoundland and thus also the earliest possible point of divergence from the death rites of the regions of origin.

Later immigrants would, of course, have brought the customs of their own time period and, since initial population growth was so slow, in theory the customs of later immigrants could easily have overwhelmed those of earlier immigrants. Even after the period of major immigration was over, Newfoundland had ongoing ties with Britain and was, no doubt, impacted by that contact. Nevertheless, as I will discuss in more detail later, I suspect that the layer of culture initially established by the English had a long-lasting impact on the way that death rites developed in Newfoundland.

The next three chapters focus on particular customs, as they were practiced in Newfoundland. Since solemnity determines the overall structure within which revelry and sorrow are expressed, I begin by looking at solemnity and the funeral procession.

Chapter Four: Solemnity: "The Whole Tone of Everything was Black; the Coffin was Draped in Black; the Hymns Sounded Black"

Previous chapters dealt with the general historic background of Newfoundland, death rites cross-culturally, and the British antecedents of the customs under consideration. In this chapter, I move from the larger context to an examination of the Newfoundland customs themselves. The focus of this chapter is on solemnity, one of the chief contributors to the emotional atmosphere of the time immediately following a death. Solemnity is not an emotion in and of itself, but the incorporation of solemnity into funeral rites can both contribute to the emotional atmosphere and be an indirect way of expressing or channelling emotion.[1]

Like all other parts of the emotional balance that the recently bereaved had to try to find, solemnity was expressed differently in different parts of Newfoundland at different times. This chapter provides a brief, general background on solemnity during that part of the twentieth century characterized by walking funerals and home wakes. I then focus in on one particular aspect of solemnity, the funeral procession. I examine the overall structure of the funeral procession, and then look at gender roles, both in the funeral and among the pallbearers. I also consider gender in relation to other death rites closely related to the procession, the funeral itself, and the burial. For all of these aspects of the procession, I discuss variation between different areas of Newfoundland.

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[1] As an example of this sort of indirect expression of emotion, when I asked David Caravan how people expressed their grief when someone died, he said, "You know, that's a difficult question. In the community, the grief was expressed more by the lowering of blinds, the flying of flags at half-mast or the wearing of [corporate?] clothing, dark clothing." He went on to acknowledge that there were also "the normal ways of expressing grief, like weeping and so forth," but his initial response was about the ritual acknowledgement of death, rather than overt and obvious expression of grief (Sept. 26, 2002).

4.1 Expression of Solemnity

During the period under consideration, some funeral and mourning customs were highly structured. Dr. Hiscock says of funerals in St. John's during a slightly later period: "I think they were much more formal, stiff occasions, occasions that everybody knew precisely what had to be done. You know, that at every step there was a certain response and if you didn't know, then you stood back and someone showed you what had to be done and what the order of service, as it were, was at the time" (July 12, 2004).[2]

Folklorist Gary Butler, who gives a good description of "the underlying pattern" of the wake in the home in the early 1980s, has addressed the specific structure of some of the more formal aspects of death rites. Although Butler's focus is on a relatively late time period, his material corresponds well with what I know, from multiple other sources, about house wakes earlier in the century. Butler identifies seven features that he thinks that these wakes generally have in common. Some of these features, such as "an almost formulaic pattern of interaction between the deceased's immediate family and the visitors" and "the performance of rites aimed at facilitating and ensuring the separation of the deceased from the world of the living" are examples of formal ritual (1982, 28).

In his discussion of the first concept, the "almost formulaic pattern of interaction" (28), Butler describes the behaviour of people who visited the home of someone who had died as "highly structured and formally rigid." Such a guest would go to the wake room upon arriving at the house. There he or she was expected to do certain things in a certain

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[2] As seems to have been customary in St. John's, Dr. Hiscock did not attend funerals "as a young boy," but he thought he had enough awareness of funerals at that time (perhaps the late 1950s and early 1960s) to comment on them (July 12, 2004). Based on other descriptions and the general direction of change, however, his remarks probably apply equally well to the earlier part of the century.

order: offer condolences to the surviving relatives, look at the body, pray,[3] make

appropriate comments (with variation, which depended in part on the deceased's age) on

the body's appearance and the life of the person who had died, make condolences to the

relatives once again, and go to the kitchen for food and socializing (30).

Butler's description of "the performance of rites aimed at facilitating and ensuring

the separation of the deceased from the world of the living" (1982, 28) focuses on folk

customs practiced during the wake, rather than expressions of official religion. He

describes the practice of keeping a window open in the wake room, in order "to permit

the deceased's soul free egress from the house" and appropriate procedures for taking the

coffin out of the house, so that the soul would not be left behind. A custom that was more

formally ritualized than Butler's other examples was the touching of the corpse by

visitors to prevent encountering the dead person in dreams or while awake (31).

What Butler says about the standardization of the wake also applies, to a large

extent, to formal religious customs observed during the wake, as well as to the other

death rites, generally. The formal religious elements included prayers and the service at

the end of the wake, immediately before the body was carried out of the house. A funeral

procession accompanied the body either to the church (where another service was held)

or directly to the graveyard. If the body went to the church first, the funeral procession

would, after the service, continue to the graveyard (assuming that the graveyard was

separated from the church by any distance).[4] In the graveyard, yet another service took

place prior to the burial. Finally, the relatives (especially if they were female) were

expected to observe formal mourning for some period of time. This took the form

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[3] This part of the process was, however, in Butler's description, apparently either not as rigid or not as universal as other actions (1982, 30).

[4] Alternatively, according to Mrs. Kearney, the procession escorted the body to the train station, when it "was being shipped by train" (Nov. 17, 2004).

primarily of wearing black, avoiding social events, and keeping the window blinds of the house where the deceased had lived closed.

As Butler says, "the underlying pattern" notwithstanding, the details of the wake differed from community to community (1982, 28). This was also true of other features of death rites, including other aspects of solemnity. The details also varied, sometimes quite significantly, by religion. An obvious example is that saying the Rosary was and, at least in Conche, continues to be a significant part of the Catholic wake, but was not part of Protestant wake tradition.

In addition to various ceremonies and ritualized actions, there were a variety of customs that created a subdued or gloomy atmosphere or, perhaps, in some cases, simply a more formalized one. For instance, as mentioned in the last chapter, the wake usually took place in the parlour. Additionally, as will be described in greater detail in Chapter Six, which explores revelry, several of my informants reported that during the day the atmosphere in the wake house was very subdued. To give a brief example, one of the people I interviewed in Conche, Mrs. Hurley, told me that daytime speech was kept very low. She said, "I mean you wouldn't dare crack a smile if you were at a wake" (June 22, 2002).

Not just the type and volume of sound, but the visual atmosphere was affected. Mr. Dower described the set-up of the wake room in Conche as follows: "usually, you know, the room, sheets were pinned up around the walls, right? Everything was all done with white sheets and candles would be lit and crucifixes hung over where the coffin was to be placed" (June 24, 2002). Blinds were drawn throughout the house.[5] Mr. Bromley said that in Conche, "it seemed like, in years gone by, when anybody died, everything

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[5] Mr. and Mrs. Caravan thought that the blinds in the kitchen would be left up, but they seemed a little uncertain about this (Sept. 26, 2002).

was darkened. The blinds were all hauled down, drawn over the windows. And if you passed by, you knew that somebody was wakening there, because the windows were all closed and darkened. The blinds were all drawn" (June 23, 2002).

Speaking of more formal religious services, Mr. Bromley said, "with respect to the church, well, years ago, the funerals, the priests wore black vestments. Everything was black. You know, at a death. I guess . . . this was a sign of mourning for the deceased" (June 23, 2002). Similarly, Mr. Dower said of the general mood of the funeral, "everything was black. The coffin was draped in black, the hymns sounded black" (June 24, 2002).

The mournful tone of the hymns and the generally sad atmosphere was not limited to Catholic funerals. According to the Reverend Joe Burton, "Used to be the custom to choose funeral hymns in the service, you know, always a tradition of funeral hymns. Sad, melancholy hymns. That weren't altogether reflective of the Christian, I guess, hope" (Aug. 22, 2003). Similarly, Dr. Hiscock said, "I grew up in an Anglican family, and funerals in our family, seems to me, have always been very, kind of, by-the-bookish things, they're funerals in which there's a limited amount of frivolity, a limited amount of good times to be had in it, you know, this is not meant to be a good time, this is meant to be, you know, a sad time with doing our duty to the dead and our religious duty and all that" (June 10, 2004). This quotation is couched in the present tense, but other things Dr. Hiscock said make it clear that there have been changes in his immediate context, with the wake becoming more festive than it had been in the past. That said, even communities in which there was more "frivolity," such as wake revelry, engaged in solemn aspects of death rites.

4.2 The Funeral Procession

The particular form of solemnity on which this chapter primarily focuses is the

funeral procession. Through roughly the middle of the twentieth century, a style of

funeral procession in which the participants walked was an important part of death rites

in Newfoundland.[6] As some of my informants pointed out, walking was the most

common form of local transportation. According to Mary Hunt, "everyone walked, you

know, when I was young, everybody walked. We walked to the church all the time. Well,

we didn't have a car, some elderly couple would go in a horse and gig or a horse and

carriage. But we always walked. And we would walk to a funeral also. Yup. No matter

that, if it was a mile or [pause] so or you would walk" (Sept. 27, 2002). Mr. Bromley

said, "Years ago, you had to walk, of course, it was a lengthy process to the church." Not

only that, but "the pallbearers would most of the time probably carry the coffin, from the

home to the church, because there were no vehicles here at the time" (June 23, 2002).[7]

Similarly, Mrs. Sheppard in Port de Grave said, "And everybody walked. And because no

cars, anyway, they had no, two, three cars in the place, when I was young" (Sept. 27,

2002).

4.2.1 Arrangement of Procession

The earliest description of a Newfoundland funeral procession I uncovered

appears in the Reverend Lewis Amadeus Anspach's *History of the Land of*

Newfoundland. He says, "The procession, proceeded by the clergy who march before the

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[6] The walking procession persisted longer in some areas of Newfoundland than others. Dr. Hiscock, who grew up in St. John's, said, "I've never been to a funeral where there is a walking procession, any distance, of all the funerals I've gone to, they've been, you know, motorcars carrying the hearse, or carrying the coffin and so on" (June 18, 2004). Conche informants of a similar age did remember walking.

[7] The alternative, which was not always "available," was "a horse and cart, in one part of the community" (Bromley, June 23, 2002).

corpse, proceeds to the place of burial attended by the relatives two and two, and followed by the friends without any order" (1819, 471). This basic pattern – the paired relatives, with clergy and/or other important people walking before them and other participants following behind them, unarranged – seems to have continued to be the standard form of the procession throughout most or all of Newfoundland, as long as walking funerals persisted. Funeral processions were highly structured in ways that highlighted particular forms of relationships. They emphasized some aspects of the deceased's personal connections and identity, while downplaying others. What was displayed and what was downplayed, however, varied according to the specific geographic area and the form of the procession used.

In some cases, the relationships displayed were based on status within the community or the professional (or semi-professional) roles of a few participants. Often people who had a special role in the proceedings, or who were particularly important, led the procession. For instance, someone such as the priest (G. Bromley, June 23, 2002) or minister might walk before the coffin.[8] In Mr. Sparkes' description of the funeral in Bay Roberts, "The bearers, the four bearers, walked ahead, and then the hearse, and then the funeral procession behind" (Sept. 26, 2002). According to Mrs. Sheppard of Port de Grave, it was necessary to find "six or seven men, prominent people of the community, to

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[8] The impact of official religious practice and of written literature of various types is, for the most part, beyond the scope of this thesis. Some aspects of the funeral, including the arrangement of the procession, were, however, dictated by official and semi-official religious documents and/or encouraged by other publications, such as etiquette books. Among Anglicans, for instance, *The Order for the Burial of the Dead* specified that "Ministers and Clerks" should precede the body, although it also assumed that those officials would not be part of the procession for the entire journey from the home, but instead join it at "the entrance of the church-yard" (n.d., 3). *The Parson's Handbook*, also directed at Anglicans, includes the same information, but adds, "The order of the procession should be—servers, priest, choir, the coffin followed by mourners" (Frowde1909, 490). Other denominations likely had similar codified procedures.

walk before the corpse" (Sept. 27, 2002). She described their role as "sort of a honour guard, I suppose" and their general position in the community as, "Probably merchants, so. [Pause] Some nobility and other. Some respected person of the place, in other words." She said that such people would invariably be male (Aug. 26, 2004).

In a general way, the procession emphasized not just the status of other community members, but also the status of the deceased and his membership in particular groups. At least in some contexts, the number of people participating in death rites was taken as evidence of status. Anspach observes that "funeral ceremonies are generally conducted with some parade, and attended by a large concourse of people, in proportion to the regard entertained by the public for the deceased" (1819, 471). In a similar vein, Mrs. Kearney said about St. John's: "All these people who were going to the funeral would be walking behind it. And, of course, it was a mark of how important you were, as to how many men [?] coming behind you" (June 29, 2004).

According to Mrs. Sheppard, if the deceased had belonged to a society (for instance, the Orangemen's Society, the "Fishermen's Society" [presumably the Society of United Fishermen], or a religious society), the members of the group "walked before the corpse. When you left your home. The societies they lined up ahead of you" (Sept. 27, 2002). Mrs. Kearney provided a specific example of such a funeral from Kelligrews, where she spent summers as a child: "The various church organizations, too, would be involved in funerals. I think I remember, a church, a funeral in Kelligrews, and they must have been members of the Masonic Order. Because the men were attending the funeral, and it seems to me they had the, I think the members of the Masonic Order wear an apron. They had their aprons around their waist, going up the road in Kelligrews" (Aug.

16, 2004). Similarly, James R. R. Hornell reports that societies marched as a group (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-365A-B/p. 15).[9]

Although the hearse, the pallbearers, people who had ceremonial roles in the death rites, and other prominent people might come first, considerable attention was paid to that portion of the procession which included relatives. As is attested by several writers and my informants, the pattern used to arrange the mourning relatives could be specific.[10] According to Buckley and Cartwright, the family was, in the procession, "roughly arranged in order of relationship to the deceased; with the spouse and children walking closest to the coffin, followed by his or her parents, then brothers and sisters. All kin members often walked in pairs, a man and a woman side by side" (1983, 11-12).

Firestone, writing about the Strait of Belle Isle on the Northern Peninsula gives a slightly more detailed version:

> The surviving spouse
> The children of the deceased
> The spouses of the above
> The parents of the deceased
> The grandparents of the deceased
> The brothers and sisters of the deceased
> The spouses of the above
> The grandchildren of the deceased

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[9] In context, it is not clear if this was the case only if the deceased had belonged to the society in question or generally. In the same paragraph, however, prior to any comments about society membership of the deceased, Hornell says that society members arranged and covered shifts at the wake, which may suggest that they did this for all community members. The material about societies marching in groups, however, follows the comment that "if the deceased were a member of one of the societies, a special closed service for members only, would be held at the home" (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-365A-B/p. 15).

[10] Etiquette books might possibly have had some influence in starting or, more likely, perpetuating this custom. For instance, Amy Vanderbilt, in an etiquette book published in the United States, specifies that among Catholics, "the family . . . follows up the aisle in the order of relationship to the dead when the casket is carried into church." She does not specify the standard order, if any, of Protestant mourners (1959, 134).

> The children and siblings of the deceased walk in order of their ages in their respective groupings with the eldest preceding. The spouses of the siblings follow the siblings as a separate grouping but are arranged in the same order as their spouses. (1967, 80)

Firestone notes some variation. This order was followed in two local communities (Green Island Cove and Sandy Cove) "and perhaps in the Straits generally" (80). In Savage Cove, the community where Firestone actually did his fieldwork, however, the spouses of children and siblings walked with them, rather than following them separately. Throughout the area, those children who had not yet married, would likely "walk first with the surviving spouse," even though that disrupted the theoretically preferred arrangement by age. Additional relatives might participate in the procession, if the people who made up the list saw fit (80-81).

Folklorist George Casey gives a particularly full description of the arrangement in Conche, on the other side of the Northern Peninsula. He indicates, "The mourners usually followed a set pattern with some minor modification." Evidently gender and marital status impacted the form, as he specifies that the example given would be for a "married woman":

> First   -   the husband and the oldest daughter
> Second   -   the oldest son(s) and the next oldest daughter(s)
> Third   -   the oldest brother(s) and sister(s)
> Fourth   -   grandchild(ren) down to ten or twelve years of age
> Fifth   -   oldest first cousins
> Sixth   -   daughter(s)-in-law and son(s)-in-law
> Seventh -   godparents and an exceedingly close friend.
> In any of these ranks, if there were no person of one sex to fill the position, the next closest kin moved up. For example, if there were no sons, brothers or male first cousins moved up to the position with the daughters. (1971, 302-03)

James Faris discusses the organization of the procession in Cat Harbour from a somewhat different angle. He agrees that the mourners were arranged "in order of kin reckoning to the deceased," but also says that both the exact order and the specific

relatives included in the procession depended on a number of factors related to the "circumstances and structural position of the" dead person. Among the factors Faris mentions are the composition of the family at the time of death, the nature of the death, and the age of the deceased. The participation of different types of kin varied according to the occasion (1972, 155). In Faris's analysis, the patrilineally related family always participated, but in-laws of various types would not participate if the deceased was a child or had committed suicide (68).[11] Other relevant factors included whether or not the deceased had been married and whether Cat Harbour had been the deceased's home community (155).

During my own collecting I heard about ordering of the procession by the closeness of the relationship and by age. Mr. Dower in Conche reported, "Well, it depended on [pause] like if it was an old person who died, okay, a grandparent . . . then any sons or daughters, that he had [pause] would be behind [pause] the casket" (June 24, 2002). Betty Gould from the same community gave a more detailed description. Both men and women participated in the funeral procession. She said, "First would be the pallbearers, and then would be the family members, with, you know, the oldest woman

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[11] Faris is rather contradictory on this point. Elsewhere, he gives specific information for several funerals that occurred while he was there. Two of these funerals (that of a thirteen year old girl and a man who had committed suicide) fall into Faris's categories of people whose in-laws would not normally walk for them. The third person who died did not fall into such a category and his wife's patrilineal relatives did indeed take part in the procession, but a comment Faris collected in regards to this suggests that such participation was not seen as typical: "I was told that normally a wife's kin would not be included, but 'Uncle Peter had no one at all besides his cunny kin'" (1972, 155). ("Cunny kin" was an emic term in Cat Harbour referring to certain categories of in-laws [68].) The basic principle that some categories of kin might or might not be included, depending on specific circumstances, still holds, however.

Judging by Faris's description of the processions he saw, it sounds like Cat Harbour residents did indeed pay some attention to order by relationship, as, for instance, he lists the parents of the dead child before her siblings, and states the widows and children of the deceased men paraded before other relatives (1972, 155).

[oh?] would walk first and then right on down the line. Then be the brothers and sisters and the daughters and sons and the uncles and aunts, that's the way it would go on down." She also described how the procession was arranged: "Let's say now, if my mother was dead, would be someone there, the one side call out, like, say, Betty Gould and, say, Clarence Bird, we were brother and sister or, just, we were the son, the daughter of that, whoever, well, they'd call our name and, as they were calling names out, we'd come out behind and line up behind that" (June 26, 2002).

Mr. Bromley said, "Somebody would stand outside of the home, and as the relatives all came out, they called out the members of the family who were to walk together in the procession" (Aug. 10, 2004). In his description of the order of the mourners, "if it was the wife, probably her brother or, you know, somebody belonged[12] to, a brother of the deceased or vice versa, you know. They would all line up, with the closest members of the family first and with [most?] sons and daughters next and whatever and then right down the line to friends. . . . They would be called out. They would have a list of them" (June 23, 2002).

Mrs. Hurley gave a similar account: "they would also have a list of mourners where they would call the family and that has died out over the years. Like say, if it were now and my mother died, well probably, well my sisters and I would be called to walk with my father and then the next brother and the sister; people would be called right down the line as a list of mourners and they would go next, I think, to the casket after the pallbearers." Mrs. Hurley rather tentatively indicated that she thought that children were not included in the line-up. Talking about the formally organized mourners, she said, "I

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[12] Newfoundlanders often use the word "belong" to indicate family membership. For instance, the phrase "someone belonging to you" means "a member of your family."

think they probably started with the family and maybe with some of the aunts and uncles or [his?] closest relatives" (June 22, 2002).

The funeral procession in Port de Grave seems to have been arranged in a similar way. Mrs. Sheppard said, "The married person would be there. And then the children or grandchildren or in-laws, according to their [pause] closeness to the person." Mrs. Sheppard also stressed age, this time in relation to the grandchildren. If I understood her correctly, the grandchildren were lined up by their own ages, rather than the relative ages of their parents (Sept. 27, 2002).

The Rev. Mr. Burton, speaking of his childhood in Glovertown, described the order used by the woman who helped families out after death: "She had them all written, all the members of the family, all the relatives, starting with the immediate family and on to the distant relatives. She'd have them paired out. The husbands walking with the wives and the sisters walking with their brothers and that, going two by two" (Aug. 22, 2003). Again, the degree of relationship is important to the order.

I heard less in St. John's about how the funeral procession was arranged, quite likely because the people I interviewed were either the wrong age or the wrong sex to have actually participated in the procession in the old days. Mrs. Kearney did, however, tell me, while describing how the coffin used to be taken up the steps of the Basilica, "Now, of course, the immediate family was behind it." We clarified that the family was not just following the coffin, but right behind it (June 29, 2004). In addition, Mercedes Ryan's paper gives some specific information about the arrangement of the procession around the turn of the 19th century. She says, "The undertaker would call out the names of the chief mourners who would fall in in order behind the hearse. The sons of the deceased would be called first, then the brothers, and then near relatives" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/p. 20).

The adherence to a strict pattern for family members notwithstanding, not everyone present was included in the ordered part of the procession. The ordering did not extend to non-relatives. According to Mrs. Sheppard of Port de Grave, "When they finished calling the names, see, they would say, 'Any other one here, please fall in line'" (Sept. 27, 2002). Similarly, in Conche, the names of other community members were not called, according to Mrs. Gould (June 26, 2002). Such people, in fact, were apparently not really considered to be participants and followed the relatives in a less ordered way. Mr. Dower of Conche said, "usually, family members would take priority, right, and then others would fall in behind, but the family members, you know, were close as they were to the front of the procession " (June 24, 2002). Mr. Bromley described those people who were not relatives as typically following in threes and fours, "just a group of people" (June 23, 2002). George Casey, also discussing Conche, says that there was no "set pattern" for such participants, but that they typically "grouped themselves according to age and sex" (1971, 303).

Although there are some exceptions, the archival papers I used generally were not as specific as the published material or my informants about the arrangement of the mourners. Nevertheless, this material, overall, broadly confirms some parts of the arrangement, including the ordering of relatives by closeness of kinship, the place of relatives in the general order of the procession, the calling of the names of the mourners, and the arrangement of the mourners in pairs.[13]

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[13] Bartlett 1968-1969, MUNFLA ms 69-001E/p. 14; Butt 1988, MUNFLA ms 89-017A/p. 15 (although, as described in the text of this chapter, Butt stresses arrangement by age); Canning 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 30; Combden 1968, MUNFLA ms 69-007D/p. 9; Hamlyn 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-010C/pp. 10-11; Keefe 1984, MUNFLA ms 85-018/pp. 30-31; Norman 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-015C/p. 8; C. O'Brien 1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-014/p. 4; Park 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-017D/p. 10; Skinner 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-020C/p. 25; Tilley 1977, MUNFLA ms 77-245/pp.

4.2.2 Importance of Procession

The procession had an importance beyond sheer necessity. In at least some parts of Newfoundland, it appears to have become emblematic of the funeral as a whole. When I asked the Rev. Mr. Burton, who had lived and worked in a number of Newfoundland communities, if there were any circumstances under which people might not attend a funeral, he said, "I've known cases where there's been a falling out in the family and, as a result of the conflict or the falling out between members of the family, one person has said, 'I don't want you to come to my funeral. Don't walk, don't walk for me, don't walk behind my casket,' right? That kind of a thing? 'Don't come to my funeral. Don't mourn for me. When I die, you stay away'" (Aug. 25, 2004). Perhaps the visibility of the procession and the fact that (as described below) it was so carefully arranged explain why it became symbolic of the proceedings.

In the Bay Roberts area, the order of the procession was taken very seriously. Getting the order correct took a certain amount of effort. Mrs. Sheppard said, "It was a tedious job, getting them all right, I tell you, it was a full night's work" (Sept. 27, 2002). The list of people in the procession was tied in with a system of invitations to the funeral, which had to be delivered to individual participants. According to Mr. Sparkes, the creation of the list was a high priority. He said, "Of course when things settled down, first thing you had to do was sit down and make a list of all the relatives. That was first." He described the process of getting the list and invitations together, from the perspective of someone who had gone in to help the family:

> I know we at that time, just sat down with her, but she knew all the relatives. We would have someone in the family, a couple of people in the family, who would know all the relatives, yeah, and they will put them down, brothers, sisters, aunts

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7-8 [as hand counted, starting with the first page after the title page]; Williams 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-027B/p. 62.

and uncles and whatever they, you know, the arrangement. . . . And they would make the lists, yeah; they probably would have the lists made up before we went in. And you'd sit down and write out everyone with the invitation. (Sept. 26, 2002)

In addition to being a high priority, the arrangement of the procession seems to have been extremely emotionally loaded, with a rigid order to be followed and, potentially, long-term consequences if that order was violated. David Caravan said, "That list, of course, had to be very well chosen, because you didn't want to slight any individual. So it was in order of family membership" (Sept. 26, 2002). Mrs. Sheppard commented several times on the necessity of getting the order right. In her words, if "you happened to put the youngest child ahead of the older one, you were in for controversy" and "because if you put Sarah ahead of her older sister, one of the other sisters, they could very well kick up a fuss over it" (Sept. 27, 2002). She mentioned the need, "to be particular and have the next of kin in right order" and noted that if the order were wrong, "some people would get nettled about it " (Aug. 26, 2004). Mr. Caravan thought there was also a concern with the order of more distant relations and that the perceived closeness of the relationship could be modified by factors other than the degree of kinship. He said, "With cousins, as first cousins as against third cousins or something of that nature. Because there could be, if somebody was, not as immediate in the line, but living next door, they would be taken as closer, even though they were further removed" (Nov. 18, 2002). A comment from Wilbur Sparkes on the process of making the list goes a long way to explain the attention paid to this issue. He said, "And the one thing about it, you'd better get it right. 'Cause there was a good many who was insulted for a lifetime, I suppose, after, because they weren't put in the right place, they weren't sitting in the church the right spot, or they weren't in the funeral" (Sept. 26, 2002).

Mr. Caravan told me that arrangements for funerals were made fairly often and this made the task easier. In addition, other events, especially weddings, involved a

similar model (Nov. 18, 2002). This shifted my overall perception of the difficulty of the task. Nevertheless, people said enough to me about the importance of the order that I eventually started asking if this was the sort of issue that caused family fights that lasted twenty years. Mr. Caravan's response was, "Well, it could happen. Because it was a formalized thing and similarly in the seating in the church, the seating arrangement also reflected the relationship to the person who died." Mr. Caravan's wife, Sadie Caravan, added, "It's a good thing that policy went out" (Nov. 18, 2002). The Rev. Mr. Burton's response was, "Yes, that's right. They would really feel, and it hurt, if they were a mere [pause] relative and if he or she had to stand a long way from the casket, say, or walk along way behind the casket. Right. So you had to be very careful what you were doing" (Aug. 25, 2004).[14]

Archival material also includes some references to tension centred on the procession and invitations. Heather Renee Butt, writing about two other communities in Conception Bay, Broad Cove and Salmon Cove, says:

> The list of mourners would normally be drawn up by the most educated person in the community, usually the school-teacher. He or she would meet with the family to discuss who would go in the line. The mourners were listed by age, oldest to youngest. Many times this has created quite a confusing situation resulting in bad feelings among family members. The line once made up could not change and people would actually get into rows or arguments over this. If there was a twin they would have to get in line- first one born first would go ahead of the other one. The confusion is easy to see. (1988, MUNFLA ms 89-017A/pp. 4-15)

Bernice Bartlett focuses on Catalina, but she mentions funeral invitations in Bay Roberts in passing. Bartlett attributes an equally high importance to the invitations themselves. Citing informant Robert Maunder, she asserts, "People in the community who did not receive one felt slighted" (1968-1969, MUNFLA ms 69-001E/p. 8). This

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[14] Given the range of communities he had lived in, the Rev. Mr. Burton may have based this opinion on parts of Newfoundland other than Bay Roberts.

does not precisely match what my informants said about funeral invitations, but does pick up on the undertone of anxiety that seems to have been attached to the combined process of making up the funeral invitations and creating the list of mourners.

Not everyone in the Bay Roberts area indicated this level of tension about the order of the procession. Mrs. Hunt, when asked if people were arranged in a specific order, said, "I think they were, at one time. Arranged as to walk. Yeah, it was usually two by two." Her response to another question about order was focussed on where participants sat in the church, but the basic arrangement of the funeral procession can be inferred: "the mourners would be up in front. The family. Would be up in front. And the pallbearers are on the other side, they're up in front, too. But, then, other, you know, friends or associates or whoever walked would sit down lower in church" (Sept. 27, 2002).

Mrs. Hunt's responses sound remarkably low-key, compared to the other information I collected on this topic. Mrs. Hunt, however, although a long-term resident of Bay Roberts, grew up not in the Bay Roberts area, but in Argentia. In addition, of the people I interviewed in the Bay Roberts area, she seems to have been most personally impacted by the prohibition on women, in at least some circumstances, participating in funeral processions. Mrs. Hunt was likely less exposed to and, thus, perhaps less aware of, customs governing the funeral procession in Bay Roberts, than most of my other Bay Roberts informants.

I have some evidence of similar concerns in other parts of Newfoundland. Based on his childhood in Glovertown, Bonavista Bay, the Rev. Mr. Burton said, "And that was very important in those days, you know? As to who walked immediately behind the casket and who came second and who came third, who came fourth, all that stuff" (Aug. 22, 2003). H. Boyd Trask, writing about Elliston, in Trinity Bay, the bay next to

Conception Bay, suggests a fairly high level of concern about the procession in that community. He lists necessary decisions concerning the funeral: "Who would be the bearers? Who would walk with the minister? Just exactly who are the mourners? What are their walking positions behind the hearse?" (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-024E/p. 33).[15] It is not clear, however, whether the order of the procession in Elliston was potentially a major emotional issue or simply a logistical one.

My impression is that in the other areas I interviewed the order of the funeral procession was not nearly as fraught as it was in Bay Roberts. It is quite possible that I am wrong about this. I may not have asked the right questions in other communities. Alternatively people in the other areas where I did research may have been more reticent about this aspect of community life.[16] Since several of my informants in Conche seem to have been relatively young at the time the on-foot funeral procession faded out, it is possible that they were unaware of some of the social and emotional issues attached to the procession. Similarly, as mentioned above, my St. John's informants were all either the wrong sex or the wrong age to have participated in walking funeral processions. In Griquet, I collected very little material about the procession at all. Nevertheless, my impression is that people in the Bay Roberts area felt particularly strongly not just that the deceased's family connections should be displayed, but that a particular model of those relationships should be emphasized.

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[15] Trask also gives two questions about unrelated issues, but the focus on the procession in his brief list of questions is very strong (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-024E/p. 33).

[16] In one of those communities, however, there did not seem to be any particular reticence about discussing another, ongoing aspect of death rites about which there were strongly differing opinions within the community. I suspect that I would have heard about it, if people in that community had (or were aware of) similarly strong feelings about the funeral procession.

What information I did collect suggests that in Conche, either the precise order of the procession was relatively unimportant or its former importance has been largely forgotten. Mr. Dower's discussion of the procession suggests that there was some work involved in arranging it, but that, from an emotional perspective, it was fairly low-key. When I asked him if anyone was responsible for arranging the procession, he said, "Not that I know of, but, still I seem to recall, like, one thing that had to be set up right, if you're walking in twos, who is going to walk with who? And usually some of the women looked out to that, too" (June 24, 2002). Mr. Bromley had somewhat more specific ideas about this. He said, "That would be done with the family, somebody in the family who would know. They'd make sure they got all the different people in who would want to, who would be there. But immediate family, right?" He added that the family members involved would figure out "who would walk with who" (June 23, 2002).

Mr. Bromley perceives that it was important to include certain people, but his account does not suggest that this issue was emotionally intense. When I pushed him on this topic, he said, "it was important that the wife or the husband of the deceased would probably go with, you know, the oldest daughter or something like that and it was, I think it was, these are very close relatives in front and probably the cousins or the uncles or aunts, probably, farther down the line. So, what I'm saying is, I would agree with that." When I pushed further, pointing out that I had been told in Bay Roberts that getting people in the wrong order was a serious social error that could cause problems, Mr. Bromley said, "Well, now, Anne, I cannot say much about that. I'd never have the experience of that happening" (Aug. 10, 2004).

Emic and etic interpretations of the funeral procession echo analyses, discussed previously, of the procession's reflection and enactment of community values and community structure in other cultures. In the analysis of Mr. Caravan, the ordering of the

procession was an expression of the form the family took in Newfoundland. He said, "And it partly reflected a lot on extended families, because Newfoundland was a place where you had small communities, and extended families ran right through the community. And were very, fairly close, it wasn't like people were living far apart, so it probably grew out of that close association of people" (Nov. 18, 2002). Similarly, Buckley and Cartwright argue that the funeral and the structure of the funeral procession say important things about families: "For a kin member to absent himself from the funeral was tantamount to leaving the family, and the structure of the kinship system physically displayed in the procession" (1983, 13).

Similarly, Firestone's report of emic explanations for the different orders of the funeral in communities in the Strait of Belle Isle suggests the highlighting of somewhat different relationships in accordance with local values. The reason given for the order of the procession in which the spouses of the dead person's children and siblings walked with them "is that one of the early settlers used to say that when a person was in trouble his spouse should be with him." The explanation for the pattern by which the in-laws walked separately behind appropriate groups of blood relatives was "that those who are most concerned should be first" (1967, 80).

While the prescribed order varied in different places and sometimes according to different circumstances (such as the exact understanding of the nature of the family), the overall sense that there was a hierarchy of importance among various family members, as well as many of the details of the arrangement, existed in many, if not most, Newfoundland communities. Family ties were considered important and the funeral procession was a way of displaying and emphasizing those relationships. The arrangement of the procession was not random and not incidental. It had meaning in its

cultural context. Hence, the various gendered arrangements of the procession can be assumed to be meaningful, also.

4.2.3 Gender and Participation in the Procession and Other Death Rites in Public Places

4.2.3.1 Procession

4.2.3.1.1 Arrangement of the Relatives

The funeral procession reflected specific ideas not only about family, but about gender roles. Despite the emphasis on family, the deceased's female relatives might or might not be included in the funeral procession, depending on the area and, to a lesser extent, on social class. In St. John's, invariably, and sometimes in the Bay Roberts area, only male relatives walked in the procession, so that the deceased's female relatives effectively were invisible. At other times in the Bay Roberts area, as in many other Newfoundland communities, funeral processions included both men and women and thus stressed a more inclusive view of the deceased's family connections. In Conche and in Griquet, it seems to have been taken for granted that both genders participated in the procession.

According to folklorist Hilda Chaulk Murray, the male-only funeral procession was customary in St. John's up through the mid-1900s. Like those writers quoted earlier on the composition of the funeral procession, Murray reports that kinship was important in the arrangement of the procession, but her description includes only male relatives. She specifies that in the farming areas at the outskirts of St. John's, relatives were arranged "in order of closeness to the dead person – husband, sons, grandsons, male cousins, etc." (2002, 201-02).

In at least one family in these farming areas, the Cowans, funerals took place in the home as late as the first part of the 1960s and only men participated in funeral

processions. The Cowans at that point had a century-long tradition of burials from the home. Presumably female relatives (or at least those living in the house) were able to attend the funeral, but even though, at the end of this period, the procession was by car, women did not participate (Murray 2002, 197).[17]

Those of my St. John's informants who were above the age of seventy agreed that funeral processions were, in the past, male only. When Mrs. Northcott described the procession, she said, "the immediate family walked behind, but they were all men, women didn't walk then on the roads. Not in St. John's" (Oct. 18, 2004). Similarly, Mrs. Kearney said, "Well, women never walked in the funeral procession in those days. Not done. Even the wife of the dead, wouldn't walk in the funeral" (June 29, 2004). In another interview, she elaborated, "As one of the men said to me this morning [this is a reference to a conversation at a gathering at MacDonald's] 'No,' because, he said the women were expected to stay home" (Aug. 16, 2004). Mrs. Jones also said that only men walked in the processions: "women didn't go to the funerals, you know, especially when they were walking . . . I don't ever remember a woman walking, to a funeral" (June 22, 2003).

Some archival material covers similar ground. M. Ryan says, "Of course, no women took part in the funeral ceremonies." In her description of the formation of the procession, only men lined up (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019/p. 20). Robert Jesso, writing about a later period, within the memory of his grandfather who had moved to St. John's around 1929, also reports this (1993, MUNFLA ms 93-320/p. 14). Marina Agnes Ramsay's informant, Mary Wylie, who was born around the turn of the century, said, in

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[17] In 1981, however, the wake of a member of this family took place at Barrett's Funeral Home and the funeral at St. Andrew's Church. Murray reports, "The congregation was fully integrated and all who wished to go, male and female, went to the cemetery" (2002, 197).

describing who goes to the funeral, "All friends and the family go, in the outports even the women went, but they don't in the city" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-032A/p. 13). The present tense suggests this custom was still ongoing – or recently had been - in at least some circles in 1968.[18] She also said, "The male members of the family went first - if your mother died, your brother and father would walk first and then the rest of the relatives" (12-13).

Women's lack of participation in the funeral procession does not mean they were uninterested in it. Mrs. Northcott remembered that she and her mother "looked out" from the house at the procession for her father's funeral (Nov. 4, 2004). According to M. Ryan, interest in the procession solidified into a semi-formalized role in at least one part of St. John's. A woman known as a "'spotter'" kept track of who showed up for the funeral procession and passed that information on to the family (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/p. 20). Given that the men, who participated in the funeral procession, probably had a fairly good idea about who else took part, this woman was likely acting mostly for the benefit of the women in the family.

In the area of Bay Roberts another system prevailed. There were some funeral processions that were limited to men and others that included both genders. Social status likely had the most impact on who attended funerals, as the male-only form of the funeral procession seems to have been practiced only by the upper classes. Mrs. Hunt thought that the social status of the deceased at least partially determined the gender composition

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[18] This paper is problematic in some other details, however. Much of the interview sounds completely in line with what I know about funeral customs in St. John's, but it also includes some surprising information on "chief mourners" or "pall bearers" who were supposed to have been hired to greet people at the wake. The informant appears (rather ambiguously) to attribute this custom only to the relatively well-off, so the problem may be that I do not have much information about the class in question (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-032A/pp. 8-9).

of the procession.[19] Nevertheless, she perceives that male-only processions were the norm in Bay Roberts about fifty years ago. She said, "That's the way it was, when I came here first. That women didn't [attend funerals]. They certainly didn't walk, whether they went to the church beforehand or what, I'm not quite sure. But they didn't walk, because men walked behind the funeral hearse. And attended the funeral. And went to the graveyard after." It was only when asked if that was the way all funerals were or just some, that she said, "most, well, it was all according to how important a person was had a lot to do with it" (Sept. 27, 2002).

In nearby Port de Grave, funerals were usually attended by both sexes. According to Mrs. Sheppard, "Families went, the women and children, was hardly big enough to walk." Occasionally, however, a "gentlemen's funeral," to which women did not go, took place.[20] Mrs. Sheppard reported that such a funeral would take place, "if they thought that somebody that had a higher station in life." We clarified that this would include merchants and politicians. Gentlemen's funerals were apparently dressy affairs, as the participants wore top hats. Mrs. Sheppard thought that such funerals happened infrequently: "I know that it has happened, because once or twice when I was quite young, they'd say it was a gentlemen's funeral, but that was something that was unusual, very rare." She said, "But with the other funerals, men and women, husband and wife lined up" (Sept. 27, 2002).

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[19] When we first started talking about this tradition, there was some initial confusion, with Mrs. Hunt first answering yes to my question about whether both men and women used to participate in the funeral procession. It was only when we progressed to the funeral itself that she said that there had been a time when participation was limited to males (Sept. 27, 2002). I suspect the apparently contradictory statement refers either to her childhood in Argentia or a somewhat later period in Bay Roberts.

[20] I inquired if Mrs. Hunt was familiar with the term, "gentlemen's funeral," but she was not (Sept. 27, 2002).

Mrs. Sheppard remembered that neighbours had been invited to a gentlemen's funeral the year that her son was twelve and thus was able to date that funeral specifically to 1959. She suggested, however, that Confederation had been the beginning of the end for this custom: "But it gradually went out, see, after Confedera-, that was the start, and they got, by the time they got the Canadian rules into it" (Sept. 27, 2002). In the second interview, she indicated that her own experience with having seen them was in the even more distant past: "I've only saw one or two and that's years and years ago, I was only a child" (Aug. 26, 2004). Given her birth date of 1921, those funerals were probably in the 1920s or 1930s.

Like other informants in the Bay Roberts region, Mrs. Hunt mentioned invitations (Sept. 27, 2002). All funerals in this area involved invitations, no matter if they were restricted to men or not. Nevertheless, whatever other functions invitations had, they might also have served as a partial measure for restricting attendance, at least by relatives, to the desired gender.[21]

Despite his residence in Bay Roberts, Mr. Caravan had no awareness of male-only funeral processions. When I asked him if both men and women participated in the funeral procession, he replied, "Yes. You know, husband and wife and children, involved with that procession" (Sept. 26, 2002). When I asked specifically about male-only funerals, he said, "No, there was nothing of that kind. That I knew of. I can't think of a reason why

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[21] The connection between invitations and who attended may be implicit in Mrs. Hunt's discussion; she mentioned invitations immediately after discussing the difference in women's participation in funerals in her hometown of Argentia and Bay Roberts and giving another reason for that difference (Sept. 27, 2002). Similarly, Mrs. Sheppard, although she felt she knew very little about most aspects of the gentlemen's funeral speculated, "Oh, I imagine it's all of the same thing, they were notified, they were requested to go to the funeral, I think they would be, but you know that, how else would they know? That they expected to go, oh, how else would they know, they were expected to be there? They sent out to the men. I'm pretty sure of that" (Sept. 27, 2002).

that would be, because at no time do I remember anything where there was only just one group of people." When I ran a brief description of the gentleman's funeral by him, Mr. Caravan said, "it was not in this area" (Nov. 18, 2002).

Mr. Caravan's area of residence may, in fact, have impacted his knowledge of this custom. As described in the introduction, the current community of Bay Roberts has been amalgamated from a number of smaller communities, including Country Road, where Mr. Caravan lives. This area, while within the modern boundaries of Bay Roberts, is a little removed from the Bay Roberts peninsula. It is possible this community had customs that were somewhat different from those of nearby communities. In addition, Mr. Caravan is younger than Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Sheppard, so it is also possible that male-only funerals had largely died out before he became aware of funerals generally. Finally, unlike Mr. Caravan, the informants who described male-only funerals were women; it is possible that those people who were excluded from significant parts of death rites were more likely to remember their own exclusion than people who were not excluded.

In Conche, according to two of the people I interviewed and Casey (1971, 302), as quoted above, the inclusion of women was not just expected, but part of a gendered pattern in which participants were paired with someone of the opposite sex. According to Mrs. Hurley, "You would usually go, like, the woman linked in to the man's arm" (June 22, 2002). In response to my question about whether men and women were arranged in pairs, another Conche resident, Mr. Bromley, described this pattern using the words "In a pair. Yeah. Male and female. In a pair" (June 23, 2002). This phrasing has biblical resonance. In particular, it calls to mind the Biblical verse from Genesis about the creation of human beings: "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (King James Version, 1:27, emphasis in original). It also echoes some of the phrasing in the story of the Flood, especially

Genesis 7:8-9: "Of clean beasts and of beasts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth./There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah" (emphasis in original). The purpose of including the paired animals was to repopulate the world.[22]

The use of the term "male and female" imparts primal overtones to the procession and suggests a worldview that sees both men and women as building blocks of the world. This arrangement may, at some deeply ritual level, also have been symbolic of the process through which new human beings are created, and thus acted as a reminder of life and of human continuity. Granted, it was unlikely that anyone was consciously thinking about the symbolism of procreation during the procession itself, given that most participants would have had more immediate emotional concerns, the procession quite clearly enacted other forms of social connection, and many of the paired couples would have been quite closely related. Symbolism, however, can resonate on multiple levels simultaneously. The fact that the procession was symbolic of family relations, at a fairly conscious level, does not necessarily rule out other kinds of symbolism.

This arrangement of opposite-sex couples was not unique to Conche. Buckley and Cartwright, as cited above, mention this arrangement as typical of the procession. Edward Cokes, writing about Head Bay D'Espoir also reports that the mourners processed "in pairs of a man and woman" and that the deceased's relatives were arranged in order of the closeness of their relationship to him or her (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-006D/p. 46). Although Claude Bishop does not specify whether or not the arrangement of the procession was gendered, the details he does include suggest that gendered pairs might have been the norm. He says, "Two married brothers, or sisters would never walk

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[22] Thanks to Diane Tye for reminding me of the relevance of the story of the Flood.

together; neither would a son and his wife walk together. There is usually a married son and his sister in law; or if the sons are not married, the son walks with sister, and so on." Judging by this information, the preference seems to have been for mixed-sex couples that were not married to each other. Bishop, however, carefully spells out twice that "no set pattern" is followed (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-002D/p. 74).

Similarly, although I did not specifically discuss the arrangement by gender of participants in the procession with the Rev. Mr. Burton, the examples he gives in the selection above about the funeral procession are both of mixed-sex pairs: "The husbands walking with the wives and the sisters walking with their brothers." This contributes to my overall impression that mixed-gender pairs, while not necessarily always obligatory, were, at the least, the preferred arrangement or the arrangement presumed to be more or less normative in significant parts of Newfoundland.

I have little information from my informants on the precise gendered arrangement of mixed-gender funeral processions in the Bay Roberts areas, but Mrs. Sheppard of Port de Grave did make some useful comments. Although pairing by opposite gender was not as strongly pronounced in that community, there does seem, at least in her eyes, to have been a preference for married couples as the ideal pair. When she talked about the order of the procession, she gave examples of couples being called to come take their places: "'Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So and wife, can ye go out?' Course 'Mr. So-and-So, Porter, and wife,' would be next. 'Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So Kennedy.' Or 'Mr. Kennedy and wife,' whichever you [might?], to call 'Mr. and Mrs.' or 'Mr. and wife'" (Sept. 2, 2002).

When I asked specifically about unmarried people, however, she gave a different set of examples: "Oh, they called them on up, or 'So-and-so or a daughter' or 'So-and-so

and friend' or 'So-and-so' and calls [those?] names. Name is 'Coral Sheppard'[23] and Miss Anne Lafferty.'" As we continued talking about this topic, she added, "Or 'Mr. So-and-So and his daughter,' if he didn't have a wife. Or two sisters or two grandchildren." I checked that people who were not in married couples would be arranged in pairs and she confirmed that (Sept. 27, 2002). From Mrs. Sheppard's examples, it seems that gender was not particularly important in the pairing of single people. Nevertheless, the preference for pairs consisting of married couples expresses a view of the world in which both sexes are visibly important, and, perhaps, as a quote from Firestone above indicates, one in which spouses support each other in adversity.

Although archival papers occasionally describe the gendered arrangement of the procession this is atypical. More often, this material does not specify whether or not women participated in the procession. Some of the authors do, however, indicate women's presence in less direct ways. As described below, Langdon mentions their presence in the graveyard (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-013C/p 8). A. O'Brien and Sheehan both describe the clothing of female mourners in a context suggesting that women were present for the procession and funeral service (A. O'Brien, 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 14; Sheehan, 1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-015A/p. 2).

4.2.3.1.2 Pallbearers

Pallbearers formed one particular subgroup within funeral processions. Like all other participants in the funeral procession, they operated in the public sphere, but they were particularly visible and central to the proceedings as a whole. Although participants in the funeral procession may, in the past, have been either all male or mixed, pallbearers were almost exclusively male. Quite a number of the people I interviewed told me that

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[23] The informant used her own name in her example and I have replaced it with the appropriate pseudonym.

they had no awareness of women having acted as pallbearers in their communities at this time period.[24] Mr. Bridger, for instance said, quite emphatically, that in his context pall bearing was an exclusively male task: "Always, all men. Always men, all men, pallbearers, yeah. Always had men. [Ingressive:] Yeah. And never, never had any women around these parts, always men carries them" (June 17, 2002).

Several archival sources specified that pallbearers were male.[25] Lisa Banfield's account backs up my general sense that, for the most part, women pallbearers were unthinkable. According to her informant, Clyde Banfield, in a small community where "only two men" were in residence at the time of a death, the community's solution was not to recruit women pallbearers, but to request another community to send additional men to take on this task (1989, MUNFLA ms, 89-106/p. 20).

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[24] Mr. Bromley (June 23, 2002), Mr. Caravan (Sept. 26, 2002), Mr. Dower (June 24, 2002), Mrs. Hunt (Sept. 27, 2002), Dr. Hiscock (June 18, 2004), Mrs. Jones (Aug. 23, 2003), Mrs. Kearney (November 17, 2004), Mrs. Northcott (Oct. 18, 2004), Mr. Sparkes (Sept. 26, 2002). There was also a rather ambiguous reply. I asked Mrs. Hurley if pallbearers were "generally men or women or both" and she replied, "Well, generally men." Taken literally, this could mean that women occasionally served as pallbearers, but, in context, it seems more likely that Mrs. Hurley was just picking up on my wording. When I followed up with a question about whether there were any exceptions, she may have been confused, as, rather than answering the question, she asked for clarification. My example (of a child's death) turned out not to be helpful (as by Mrs. Hurley's era, infant mortality was low) and I then changed the topic immediately, so ultimately, she did not directly answer the question (June 22, 2002). Other evidence from Conche suggests that female pallbearers were unthinkable. When I asked Mrs. Hurley if pallbearers in the present would generally all be men or might sometimes be women, she similarly said, "Mostly men," but could not think of any examples of women pallbearers (June 24, 2002).

[25] Bartlett 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-001E/p. 11; Canning 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 20; Keefe 1984, MUNFLA ms 85-018/p. 30; Williams 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-027B/p. 61-62). In Tilley this is implicit; she indicates that the people who carried the coffin from the house were typically "brothers or sons" (1977, MUNFLA ms 77-245/p. 7 [by hand count, starting with the first page after the title page)].

There were some limited exceptions, however. I turned up five possible accounts of female pallbearers from the past, three of which are problematic. The two accounts that are reasonably straightforward come from written sources, one published and one archival. Murray reports that in Elliston certain tasks, including acting as pallbearer, were always or almost always specific to men, but mentions one exception to the general rule of male pallbearers. At the Salvation Army funeral of a two-year-old girl, the pallbearers were "four little girls" (1979, 139).

Andrea Loveless reports about Seal Cove in Fortune Bay, "The pall bearers could be of any age or gender, although they were usually adult men. . . . If a young girl died, several other girls her age may be chosen as pall bearers. If it was a young boy who had died, several young boys his age or older may be asked to serve as pall bearers" (1993, MUNFLA ms 93-324/pp. 13-14). In this community, the pattern of male adults being pallbearers could be modified if the deceased was young. According to Loveless, all members of this community belonged to the Salvation Army and the church was central to community life (5).

Two of the problematic instances come from my fieldwork, when I failed to pick up on cues that might have prompted me to ask better questions. The Rev. Mr. Burton said, when I asked him who would have carried the coffin: "Usually the relatives. If it's a father and if he has enough sons or grandchildren, you know, and if you were a member of a lodge or a society like that, sometimes they'd appoint people from the lodge to do it, you know? One of the brothers, right? Or the sisters in the lodge, will do. Usually, it's relatives are involved" (Aug. 25, 2004). In this case, it is not entirely clear from the language of the example whether the lodge sisters might have carried the coffin themselves, or simply found people willing to carry the coffin. Further, the involvement of lodges or societies in this task is presented as exceptional, rather than normative. Also,

although I asked the question in the past tense, judging by verb tenses, the answer probably refers at least partially to the present.

Mrs. Sheppard in Port de Grave provided another example, "It was mostly men, male bearers, although when my aunt died, a couple of the grandchildren, I think was assisting the bearers, girls, but the rest was – but that was just a preference of the family" (Aug. 26, 2004). It is, unfortunately, unclear what the approximate time for this funeral was, so it is hard to gauge whether this story reflects the continuation of old customs or the development of new ones.[26]

Another unclear example comes from Cathy Denice Kippenhuck, who says, in regards to pall bearing, "And then it would be, brothers, sisters, whatever, carrying the coffin to the graveyard" (1989, MUNFLA ms 90-230/p. 18). Her paper is based on material collected from Robbie Cooper, a young man who had spent his early years in Newfoundland and later lived in Ontario for several years. When interviewed at age nineteen in 1989, he had returned to Newfoundland and was attending university. He belonged to the Salvation Army (2-3). Although this paper is not particularly specific about the locations where the particular customs discussed took place, it appears that at least some of the information collected, including some of the material about funerals,

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[26] An example that is somewhat similar in terms of the issues with timing, but that I decided did not belong in the main text, appears in *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday*. Murray's informant Mary Aylward insisted, despite disapproval from both within her family and from the church, on acting as her brother's pallbearer, after a car accident killed several members of her family and a related family. Murray does not say exactly when this took place, but does say that it was "years" after another family death in 1945. My sense of this event, however, is that it probably took place after women in St. John's started attending funerals regularly. For this reason, I am inclined to see it as an example of new developments in the custom of pall bearing, rather than the carrying out of an old custom (2002, 205-06).

probably pertains to Newfoundland.[27] The funeral customs described came up in response to a question about "the traditional Practices in your family when someone died" (17). It is unclear whether Cooper experienced these customs himself (in which case, they were probably extant between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s) or relied on information heard from others about older practices. At the later end of the possible time range, this could have been either an old custom in the informant's context or an early indication of the development of new traditions.

Those cases where girls or women may have carried the coffin seem, judging by the examples, to be largely limited to a few contexts: Salvation Army funerals, lodges, and/or the funerals of girls. According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, in the Salvation Army, "women were eligible (and indeed encouraged) to become officers (clergy), at least in theory on an equal footing with men" and in Newfoundland such women officers had a significant impact in the Salvation Army's growth (1994, Vol. 5, s.v. "Salvation Army"). Since adherents of this religion were relatively used to seeing female members take on visible roles in ritual, they may have been particularly open to their taking additional ceremonial roles.

In addition, all these funerals (with the possible exception of the ones described in the Kippenhuck paper that might have been in Toronto) took place in rural Newfoundland. This makes sense, both because of the exclusion of women from funerals in St. John's generally and because, until relatively recently, there were in St. John's no

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[27] This is not evident from the title, "Folklore Collected from Robbie Cooper from Toronto, Ontario," but the paper is a wide-ranging effort that includes information about games Cooper played as a child (Kippenhuck 1989, MUNFLA ms, 90-230/pp. 5-6) and his parents' courtship practices (10-12). Much of the material appears to come from the period before Cooper moved to Ontario, so likely refers to Newfoundland. In addition, the funeral customs, which involved waking the body in the church (17-18), seem unlikely to be typical of Toronto in the 1980s, when Cooper lived there.

pallbearers in the sense of friends and/or relatives appointed by the family.[28] Rather, members of the funeral industry handled the lifting and carrying of the body. Mrs Kearney said of pall bearing, "That's a new thing, that, well, when I say 'new,' it's recently in the past forty years. When I was younger, there was never any pallbearers. There might have been in the Anglican or the Methodist church, I don't know. It certainly was never so in the Catholic Church" (Nov. 17, 2004). In another interview, she indicated that the custom of the coffin being carried by pallbearers, rather than funeral home employees, developed "probably since Confederation days" (Aug. 16, 2004).

Dr. Hiscock, who was raised in an Anglican household, agrees with Mrs. Kearney on this point. He said, "Well, in my experience, it's entirely in the age of funeral homes, and the coffin has been **mainly** carried by men from the funeral home" (June 18, 2004). Mrs. Northcott was a little less certain about this, but thought that pallbearers, if they existed, paid no substantive, practical role. She said, "I don't think we had any special pallbearers. And even if you did, they were sort of honorary; the funeral home people actually **carried** the coffin. Now the others could have walked beside it, but I don't remember any of that" (Oct. 18, 2004).

The number of women (or girls) who actually carried coffins may have been quite small, but this does not mean that women had no involvement in pall bearing at all. When I asked Mr. Dower whether the family members who picked out the pallbearers were men or women, he said, "Usually, a lot of these little things, a lot of these tasks, well, they end up becoming the responsibility of the woman" (June 24, 2002).

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[28] This may reflect customary practice in other parts of the world during at least part of the twentieth century. Vanderbilt, writing in the mid-1900s, asserts that, at least in Christian contexts, there were pallbearers at very few funerals, specifically "only at large funerals of distinguished *men*" (emphasis in original). Even at those funerals, the position had become "honorary"; the official pallbearers almost never performed the physical labour of transporting the casket (1959, 133).

4.2.3.2 Funerals

The gendered situation with the funeral service itself was more complicated. The fact that, in some contexts women did not process to the church implicitly suggests that they did not attend the funeral service. To a large extent, this was true, but there seems to have been some flexibility about this. The taboo on women's participating in the more public death rites seems to have been strongest when applied to the funeral procession. Several of the people I interviewed told me that they thought it would have been all right or might have been all right for women to go to the church, even if the procession was limited to men, although my impression was that that was, at best, unusual. For instance, when I double-checked with Mrs. Hunt in Bay Roberts my understanding about this, she replied, "You could go to the church, but they walked, and, it was men who walked" (Sept. 27, 2002).

On the surface this information appears to contradict the information from Mrs. Hunt given above that women did not go to funerals (and specifically, may not have gone to the church). Mrs. Hunt's statements do, in fact, seem, overall, to be contradictory. At one point she said, "One time, it was only men went to the funeral. Only men went to the funeral. And women didn't go." As quoted above, however, elsewhere in the same interview, she indicated that, while quite sure that the procession was male only, she was less certain that that meant that women did not attend the service in the church (Sept. 27, 2002). Perhaps the term "funeral" was more heavily identified with the procession than with the service itself.

Similarly, Mrs. Sheppard, when asked about attendance at church and at the graveside for gentleman's funerals, said, "Oh, the women could go, but they didn't go in that procession. Oh, no, they want men only." Although this part is not as clear as I would like it to be, Mrs. Sheppard seemed to think that women mostly did not go to such

funerals. She added, "But if there's somebody, just went to sit in the back seat or anything like that, you know, I don't think they were prohibited" (Sept. 27, 2002). In the other interview, she felt less clear about whether women attended the burial itself; when asked, she said, "I don't know, because the only one I know of, I was only a child and I don't know either which. I don't know. Won't say anything about it, I just don't know" (Aug. 26, 2004).

Mrs. Kearney was clear that women did not attend funerals at all (June 29, 2004). Despite this general rule, she, as a child did observe some funerals or at least parts of them. She reports, "I went to school at Mercy Convent and out of curiosity, believe me, not out of spirituality, we'd go over to the church to see what was going on." When I expressed confusion about the apparent contradiction between the non-participation of women and her presence in the church during a funeral, she said, "We were only schoolchildren." When I suggested that that meant that she and her friends in some sense did not count, she confirmed this interpretation. She elaborated, "We were only schoolchildren. I'm talking about coming out of maybe Grade Three, Four, Five, or Six." This experience of observing funerals in the Basilica, as well as seeing processions on the street, is probably the basis for Mrs. Kearney's statement, "I never saw a woman at a funeral" (Aug. 16, 2004). In another interview, Mrs. Kearney was less sure about the participation of women in the funeral, as opposed to the funeral procession: "That's an interesting question. I don't, in my youth, I don't remember women being at the church for the funeral service" (June 29, 2004).

In contrast, in Mrs. Northcott's experience, it was standard for funerals to take place not in the church, but in the home. She said, "But most people, in the olden days,

the service was in the home. You know, all denominations, I think."[29] When I asked Mrs. Northcott if women attended the service in the house, she said, "Just the family" and then added "And not always that, sometimes it was just the men." Her initial thought about gender in relation to her parents' funerals was, "I was the only woman there," but when she considered it further, she decided that the housekeeper and a female friend had also attended (Oct. 18, 2004). These funerals probably took place in the 1950s or perhaps the 1940s.[30] Apparently attending funerals even for family members outside one's own home was unusual for women. Mrs. Northcott said, "I didn't go to my father-in-law's funeral. We stayed home. Andrew [her husband] went." This was not (or at least not entirely) due to the fact that it was an in-law who had died, as Mrs. Northcott's brother, who was even more distantly related to her father-in-law than she was, went to the funeral and she thought her son (who was roughly twelve at the time), did not (Nov. 4, 2004). From the way that Mrs. Northcott discusses funerals, it is clear that she assumes that most participants were male. She said, "when you had the funeral at home, the men came inside and stood in the living room and the hall, if there was room enough for them all in the living room, and then they carried the body out to the hearse and the men lined up behind and off they went" (Oct. 18, 2004).

Mrs. Jones also remembers funerals in the house, but is less sure that women attended them. She says, "usually everything was, that was it, at the funeral at the house, at your own house, then, the men all went to the funeral and then stood around the grave

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[29] There were some exceptions. Mrs. Northcott added, "Now, if you had a state funeral, it would be different. That sort of thing or the very important person or maybe a clergyman, that would be in the church" (Oct. 18, 2004).

[30] Mrs. Northcott was born in 1912 and she says, "I was old before [in?] my parents died, well, I was thirty, they lived until I was forty, I was over forty, uh, forty, when I went to the service in the house" (Oct. 18, 2004).

and that was it. If there was any men in the house, now, they went to the funeral. But I don't think that's any women, not that I know of. Not that I know of. They might've, but I might not have took notice, but I don't think so" (June 22, 2003). In my other interview with her, Mrs. Jones sounded more certain about this. She said, "women didn't take part in funerals. Not that I know of, it was always the men" (Aug. 23, 2003).

Mrs. Jones nevertheless had some awareness of funerals in the church. When I asked whether women attended the funeral itself, as opposed to the funeral procession, she leaned towards a male-only event, but did suggest that it was possible that women attended the church service. She said, "Far as I know, it was only men. [Pause] It was only men, as far as I know, my dear. We never went, I know. . . . But, now, prior to that [i.e. processions by cars], I don't think you've seen a woman. They might have gone to the church, but that's probably as far as they went" (June 22, 2003). By implication, women conceivably did attend the church service, but certainly did not go to the cemetery.

St. John's resident Elizabeth Lang does not specify the rules governing participation in the procession or funeral attendance, but does describe who did or did not attend specific funerals. Her information generally supports the idea that women did not attend funerals in St. John's until fairly late. For instance, a baby of Lang's own died before going home from the hospital. Only the priest and male relatives (her husband and father) attended the funeral (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p. 6). When Lang describes what happened following the death of a former classmate, she discusses attending the wake and sending a wreath, but does not mention the funeral (7). In her description of how people generally respond when someone in a neighbour's family dies, she focuses on practical actions, rather than attending any related events. Finally, among the appropriate actions to take when a co-worker dies, she includes visiting "either the home

or the funeral chapel." Given that she mentions the uncertainty as to whether or not a relative of the deceased would be there "at the time of your visit" (8), it is pretty clear that the trip to the funeral chapel would be for the wake, not the funeral.

In the outports, women generally did go to funerals. According to Mrs. Hunt, who grew up in Argentia, women attended the funeral there. She thought the fact that they did not in Bay Roberts had to do with the relative size of the communities. She said, "Argentia was different, because, well, it was a smaller community and you're all living together, you're closely knit neighbours and, and relations, so they all would go" (Sept. 27, 2002). The Rev. Mr. Burton, who had worked in a number of areas of Newfoundland, also took it for granted that women attended funerals. He said, when I asked whether both men and women attended funerals, "Oh, yes, yes, yeah. Funerals would be very well attended" (Aug. 25, 2004).

Although my impression is that women participated in funerals in most rural areas, the male-only funeral was not strictly limited to larger communities. Gerald Combden, writing about the Barr'd Islands, says, "There never seemed to be any restrictions against females attending – but at Greenspond, just South of us, women were not allowed to attend funerals until quite recently" (1969, MUNFLA ms 69-007D/p. 8). A friend of Mrs. Northcott from Bay Bulls told her that in that community the funeral had also taken place in the home there and eventually been moved to the church. When I asked about women going to the graveside, Mrs. Northcott reported, "No, she said they didn't go to the grave. Not in the olden days" (Oct. 18, 2004). In the follow-up interview I asked specifically about funerals, and Mrs. Northcott reported that the Bay Bulls friend said that women had not attended funerals (Nov. 4, 2004).

Zita Johnson, writing in 1968 about Renews, another Southern Shore community fairly close to St. John's, reports that gendered attendance at funerals had changed in the

fairly recent past, at the same time that the "funeral service" formerly held for the dead was replaced by a funeral Mass. Of the services she said, "The mourners knelt in front. These usually consisted of men since it seems women did not attend funerals." She specifies that "only the pallbearers, male relatives and friends" accompanied the body to the cemetery (1968, MUNFLA ms 68-011D/p.29).

Catherine O'Brien reports a more limited exclusion of women in Salvage, Bonavista Bay. She says, "The female members of the immediate family were not expected to attend the funeral. Women who did attend usually wore black tulle over their faces" (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-014A/p. 4). Limited gender-based exclusions did not impact only women, however. Frances Catherine Hartery's informant, Sarah Carew of Cape Broyle, said that in the event of the death of a family's first child, the father would refrain from attending the funeral, so as not to cause the death of the next child (1971, MUNFLA ms 73-013/p. 37).

Attendance at the funeral itself, for St. John's funerals and for those Bay Roberts funerals in which women did not participate in the procession, seems not to have been as strictly taboo as participation in the procession. My impression is that in practice, however, adult female friends or relatives of the deceased rarely, if ever, attended a funeral, when participation in the procession was limited to men. There was some correlation between women's attendance at funerals and the size of the community, but it was not absolute.

4.2.3.3 Graveside

It is not surprising that people who did not participate in the procession and did not attend the funeral also did not go to the cemetery. Going to the cemetery, however, seems to have continued to be taboo for longer than attendance at church. The St. John's women agreed that women did not go to the graveyard. Mrs. Northcott said, "You didn't

go to the cemetery. No. [Pause] It's only of **our** generation, that women went to the

cemetery and went to funerals, you know, in the church" (Oct. 18, 2004).[31] When I asked

Mrs. Jones if she thought women went to the graveside, she said, "Nope, I don't. I don't

think." After mentioning that she went to the graveside for later funerals, she added, "But

see, that was in the sixties and the seventies, these things changed. Now prior to that, my

dear, I don't think you'd find a woman, anywhere" (June 22, 2003). Mrs. Kearney

unambiguously said, "It was only the men who went to the graveyard" (Nov. 17, 2004).

Dr. Hiscock is substantially younger than my other St. John's informants and his

impressions were thus probably formed during the transitional period between the old

style funeral procession and modern customs, in which women routinely attend both the

church service and the service at the graveyard. He thinks that women went to the funeral

itself, but not the cemetery. He said, "When first I started going to funerals, there was still

a sense that only men should go to the graveside, so this was a matter of controversy,

even as late as the 1980s. Or not so much controversy as discussion, you know. And

women saying, 'No, no, I'm not going to go,' and someone else, 'Oh, come on, come on,

there's no real reason why you shouldn't go,' so" (June 18, 2004).[32]

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[31] When I interviewed Mrs. Northcott in 2004, she was in her early nineties, so
her generation would effectively consist of the oldest people still alive in the city.

[32] At least in St. John's, however, there is, according to Dr. Hiscock some residual
impact, if not on behaviour, on internal attitudes. He said, "Yeah, I think there is [some
hesitation] among those who are of sort a middle generation, my generation, who know
about the earlier ban or whatever it was. Among the younger ones, they don't even know
about it, so, I don't think there's any hesitation at all." He added, "I'm sure there are
people of the middle generation who think about it every single time, you know, 'Is it
appropriate this time or isn't it?' I don't know that I've been to any funeral where women
haven't showed up at the graveside, certainly not in the past [well?] fifteen or twenty
years, anyway." In Dr. Hiscock's perspective, however, while some older women may
still have doubts about the appropriateness of their own participation, for the most part,
others would be in favour of it (June 18, 2004).

Some archival papers about St. John's also suggest the pattern whereby women went to church, but not to the graveyard. An ambiguous early example, from Edwina Foran's work on the early 1920's, reports that "everyone went to the church," but that "the men walked in solemn procession" on the way to the cemetery. Given language usage at the time the paper was written in the 1960s, combined with the fact that the informant for the material was male, it may be that "everyone" was not necessarily intended to include women (1967, MUNFLA 68-006D/p. 4). Gerald Duggan says more clearly: "In recent years the women also go to the graveyard but formerly the women went home after the church service." By this time, although there was still something of a procession from the house to the church, it sounds as if the main procession went from church to cemetery and consisted of cars (1968, MUNFLA ms 68-005C/p. 6). Tracey Tilley reports that women went to the funeral in the church. They went to the graveyard, however, only exceptionally. Pregnant women, in particular, avoided the graveyard, lest they have stillbirths (1977, MUNFLA ms 77-245/p. [8][33]).

In Conche, women's participation at the graveside seems to have been uncontroversial. In response to my question about members of the community going to the graveside, Mrs. Gould told me, "Oh, yes, everybody used to go to the graveside, most everyone goes even now." When asked specifically, she agreed that this included both men and women (June 26, 2002). Similarly, Mr. Bromley thought that almost everyone who had been at the funeral service in the church went to the graveside and, when I checked, confirmed that this meant "Both men and women, yes" (Aug. 10, 2004).

Mrs. Hurley was somewhat less certain, but her memory is that even when she was relatively young, women did go to the graveside. She said, "I don't know actually,

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[33] Tilley's paper does not have page numbers. The number given is my count and starts with the first page after the title page.

but I remember going there, like, when we were teenagers, going to the gravesite. But I don't know, exactly now, if there was more men than women or, you know, what was the case. I suppose a lot of the men went, because the men were responsible then for filling in the grave and, you know, things like that, and helping out, taking the caskets. Lowering the casket to the gravesite" (June 22, 2002).

Presumably, when women did not attend funerals in the Bay Roberts area, they also did not go to the graveyard. When, however, I asked Mr. Caravan, who, as noted above, had no awareness of male-only funerals, whether it was customary for at least some members of the community to accompany the body to the graveside, he said, "Yes, just about everybody." He agreed, when asked to clarify, that that would include both men and women (Sept. 26, 2002). In the other interview, he speculated that in the event the weather was such that the burial had to take place quickly, the funeral might be held at night and in that case women might be absent (Nov. 18, 2002).

Women did not go to the graveside in some other areas. David Courtney, writing about Kilbride, an area close to (and now incorporated into[34]) St. John's, says, "Women did not until recently go to graveside" (1968; MUNFLA ms 69-009D/p. 12). Considerably further afield, Margaret Walsh's paper on Corner Brook, one of the larger Newfoundland communities, describes how her mother decided to forgo attending the burial of a neighbour, in favour of helping out in the deceased's household: "My mother didn't go to the graveyard; (she told me later that often women don't go.) She came back to [the bereaved family's] to tidy up, and to prepare things for the family's return" (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-025F/p. 16). Murray reports a more limited exclusion in Elliston.

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[34] Kilbride became part of the city in the 1980s (*Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's").

People of both sexes went to funerals, but, for the most part, a woman would not "attend the burial of her husband or child" (1979, 139).

To varying extents, women did not participate in public death rites elsewhere on the Avalon. As described in more detail above, women did not attend funerals in Renews or Bay Bulls on the Southern Shore. In another community, they, at one point, went to church, but not to the graveyard. Eileen Mary Colbert, writing about Tors Cove, also on the Southern Shore and, by her description, roughly thirty miles away from St. John's (1970, MUNFLA ms 70-011A/p. 49), says, "usually only the men and boys went to the graveyard, while the women remained at the church" (54).

Historian Willeen Keough, in her thesis *The Slender Thread: Irish Women on the Southern Avalon: 1750-1860*, attributes pressure to partially exclude women from death rites to the Catholic Church, but thinks that communities in her study area were largely resistant to this pressure. She says, "Both women and men attended at the mass for the dead and the prayers at the graveside; although as the 19th century progressed, women's presence at the actual burial was being discouraged by the Catholic church (with limited success on the southern Avalon) as being an unsuitable activity for the 'gentler' sex" (2001, frame 4, 362). Given that exclusion of women from death rites seems to have been more prevalent on the Southern Shore (which is part of the southern Avalon) than in many other rural areas of Newfoundland, it is clear that "limited success" is not the same as "no success."

The discrepancy between the archival material and Keough's work may result from the geographic emphasis of Keough's study. Although Keough's work was on the southern Avalon generally, some aspects of her study focussed in on an area of the southern Avalon not particularly near to St. John's. She conducted her oral history interviews, which were likely a major source of information on death rites, exclusively on

the stretch of coast between Brigus South and St. Mary's, and the court records she drew on were mostly from the same area (2001, frame 1, 76-77). The archival examples of women's exclusion from death rites all come from the Southern Shore, a region of the southern Avalon that is relatively close to St. John's. It makes sense, overall, for those communities closest to St. John's to have been most impacted by the customs of the city. It is also possible that women's overall participation in public death rites decreased after the end of Keough's study period, in 1860, although the oral histories she collected would probably have reflected this change.

4.3 What Do These Patterns Mean?

There are both practical and symbolic reasons for the development of different forms of participation by women. One of the more significant practical reasons both for participation by women and exclusion of women has to do with emotional expression. As will be described in more detail in the next chapter, women were generally more emotionally expressive in response to grief than men. Attitudes varied in different parts of Newfoundland about the degree to which emotional expression was appropriate and those attitudes appear to have impacted the degree to which women's participation in public death rites was or was not welcome.

Another practical reason for exclusion of women was the protection of those people deemed least hardy from long walks and local weather conditions. As described in the Chapter Three, James Steven Curl suggests weather was a factor in Victorian women's not participating at the graveside in England. Given Newfoundland's harsh climate, with long winters, considerable precipitation, and frequent high winds, it is not surprising that some local sources make similar suggestions.

Murray, who writes not about St. John's itself, but the farming areas in and near

it, thinks that "weather conditions" in conjunction with "the great distances that had to be

walked to the church and then to the cemetery" probably largely account for the

persistent exclusion of women from the procession in the St. John's area. In her specific

example, the walk from a particular farm would have been seven miles (2002, 202).

When Mrs. Kearney talked about why women did not participate in the

procession, she referred to weather and the unpleasantness of walking in bad weather

conditions. She said,

> Because remember, all these men were on foot. Now, they go in cars. And I'm
> thinking, when I saw those funerals go up Military Rd., these guys would have to
> go to the funeral service and they'd walk back to the funeral home [which in this
> context would be the house where the deceased had lived]. It was a ten-minute
> walk from the church to my house. That's great on a summer day. But in winter,
> in March, with fog, rain, drizzle, slush, it was some hike. (Aug. 16, 2004)

My reading of this passage has changed a little over time, but in my current

understanding of the material, I do not think that Mrs. Kearney is saying that the bad

weather was the reason for women's non-participation in the procession. Instead, I think

she is using the weather as supporting evidence for the argument that women instead

stayed home and prepared food for those people who had been walking outside. Given

what some writers have to say about weather, though, it is interesting that she brings it up

in this context.

Robert A. Jesso also stresses difficulty in walking due to distance. He speculates

on differences in the participation of women, as reported by two different informants.

One, Robert Grouchy, said, "Usually only the men would go to the burial site." The

other, Mike King said, "everyone would go to the graveyard" (1993, MUNFLA ms 93-

320/p. 14). As suggested by the author's subtitle, "A Generational Analysis," their

perspectives are probably age-based; according to the Biographical Information Sheets

with the file, Mr. Grouchy was born in 1915 and Mr. King in 1940. Both arrived in the

St. John's area in their teens (4-5). In Jesso's analysis, "One possible explanation for this

difference may have been the geographical distance from the church to the graveyard, as

in St. John's, where Mr. Grouchy speaks of, the distance was sometimes great, and

perhaps the women didn't want to walk that far, whereas in the communities around the

bay [or the rural areas of Newfoundland], the distance was a lot shorter." He also thought

that the greater number of cars "in Mr. King's generation" might have had an impact on

"who went to the graveyard" (14).

Mrs. Jones approached the issue from another angle and made a direct connection

between the fact that funeral processions now involve driving, rather than walking, and

the fact that women have begun to attend funerals. She said, "I know when my brother

died back in, when did he die? Sixties. We were to the funeral, but we drove then. . . . I

think once when people were driving, it was different altogether, you know. They set in

the cars and that was it, but they didn't walk. Women didn't walk to funerals. At least I

don't remember seeing any." Later in the interview, she said, "they [women] probably

went when the hearse was a motorized one and they followed in cars . . ." (June 22,

2003). In Mrs. Jones' view, the use of vehicles changed the nature of the funeral enough

so that women could begin to participate.

Another practical reason for women's non-participation in death rites was a

division of labour whereby the different sexes did different things in response to death.

Curl addresses this issue in material summarized in Chapter Three. Murray has a similar

idea about the farming areas in the vicinity of St. John's. She suggests, "the 'inside' work

for a funeral, such as preparing the body and refreshments, was done by the women and

all 'outside' work was done by the men" (2002, 202). Mrs. Kearney thought that

something much the same happened in her own context. While we were discussing

women's lack of participation, she told me, "I would guess that they, you know, the household where the, funeral went from, well, then there'd be a lot of tidying up and organizing to do, but for the most part, then, the women were expected to turn around, tidy up, and get a meal ready, again, for those of them that went to the funeral. The men would come back then for food. [Pause] That makes sense. And, that's what would happen" (Aug. 16, 2004). Similarly, in material cited in more detail above, M. Walsh describes how her mother took on practical work in the home of the deceased, rather than attend the funeral.

A minor practical reason for the form of the procession that involved opposite-sex pairs is that it may have simplified seating in church. Mr. Dower told me that "in many places, small communities and everything" (implicitly including Conche) men and women typically sat on different sides of the church (Aug. 19, 2004). When a funeral procession composed of opposite-sex couples entered the church, each side of the procession could peel off to pews on the appropriate side easily and with minimal confusion.

In addition to practical reasons, there were also symbolic or expressive reasons for the variations in gendered participation. According to Ivan Emke, "for many who study funeral customs (whatever their disciplinary name tag) the rituals around death can illustrate the structure and fundamental assumptions of a culture" (1999, 1). By extension, the way in which a culture handles gender during death rites may be illustrative of its understanding of gender. The absence or presence of women in the procession in different parts of Newfoundland superficially appears to reflect different worldviews and understandings of gender across the island.

A partial explanation may be found by applying ideas from Sidney Mintz and Richard Price's *Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past* to Newfoundland.

In comparing different West African cultures, Mintz and Price suggest that they tend to share a set of "values" or "unconscious, 'grammatical' principles" which affect the behaviour of people in those cultures. They may pay particular attention to "similar kinds of events." This does not mean that all the groups respond to such events in the same way. The Igbo, for instance, respond to the birth of twins through infanticide, whereas the Yoruba heavily ritualize the twins' "lives and death." Mintz and Price think that even though those reactions are very different, "both peoples appear to be responding to the same set of widespread underlying principles, having to do with the supernatural significance of unusual births" (1976, 5).

Judging by what Mintz and Price have to say, the cultures of different West African tribes vary more than the cultures of communities in Newfoundland during the time period in question (1976, see pp. 4-5). In particular, death rites across Newfoundland had considerable similarity and significant aspects of the arrangement of the funeral procession were very much the same. Gender, however, was both an area of significant difference and often an important element in the arrangement. In some contexts, women were left out of the procession altogether. In others, the procession consisted specifically of men and women in opposite-sex pairs. In at least one community (Port de Grave), the limited information I have suggests that the pairing of people by gender was not as important, but that there was still a preference for the pairs to, where possible, consist of married couples. The principle of paying attention to gender in the context of the funeral procession was consistent in many, if not most, communities, even as the form of attention paid to gender changed.

Conche and many other small communities seem to have found it important for the funeral procession to model a world that included both sexes. In St. John's and among

the mercantile classes in at least part of Conception Bay, however, it was more important to enact a human social world that was segregated in certain ways.

4.4 Conclusions

The funeral procession in Newfoundland highlighted the family connections of the deceased, but did so in different ways, depending on the area. In many communities, both men and women were included and the deceased's connections to relatives of both sexes were highlighted. In this model, women participated in the public sphere. In St. John's and some other areas, most of them relatively close to St. John's, only men took part in the procession and/or other death rites outside the home. Some funeral processions (and probably funerals) in the Bay Roberts area also involved only men. In addition to restricting women's participation in death rites to the private sphere, this model effectively de-emphasized the deceased's relationship with female relatives, while stressing those with male relatives. The different types of funeral procession discussed in this chapter enacted and displayed varying understandings of gender roles. In Bay Roberts, the male-only funeral was also largely a way to display social status.

At present it is not entirely clear what the origins are of the different gendered arrangements for Newfoundland described by my informants. In particular, while the paired opposite-sex arrangement was known in England, it is not clear how widespread it was and I found no evidence of it in the geographical area from which most immigrants to Newfoundland came. The male-only funeral is easier to explain; it probably started as an upper class and Scottish custom, which spread from relatively small local groups to other populations in St. John's, but in the Bay Roberts area remained an upper class custom. Upper class and official pressure for women's exclusion from some parts of

death rites might partially explain the spread of the procession to the lower classes in St. John's and in some other areas of Newfoundland.

Solemnity may provide the structure for emotional expression, but it is not the only component of the emotional atmosphere. Sorrow and revelry were also significant aspects of reactions to death in Newfoundland. The next chapter looks at variations in the expression of sorrow.

Chapter Five: Sorrow: "Some People Get Very Distraught, but Others Don't"

Solemnity creates the structure in which the other strands of emotional response can be expressed or enacted. At least in North America, the emotional response to death that is most widely recognized is sorrow. Everyone is aware that people grieve in response to the deaths of those to whom they are close. Sorrow itself is an internal response, but people express sorrow outwardly in different ways, which, as discussed in Chapter Two, are, at least in part, culturally determined. What is deemed appropriate or inappropriate varies according to the cultural context, as do the behaviours in which mourners actually engage.

As sociologist Tony Walter points out, all cultures have "conventions and rituals" governing emotional expression in response to loss (2000, 101). In Newfoundland, these were not uniform across the island. Instead, customary expression of grief varied enormously, with gender and area of residence being significant factors. (The most significant geographic differences to emerge in the study were between St. John's and the outports as a whole, but there were also differences in emotional expression between different rural communities.) Religion and ethnicity also impacted the way in which sorrow was expressed, but, at least in the areas in which I did my fieldwork, did not seem to be as important as the other variables.

Culture and the specifics of gender, religion, class, time period, and geographic location had a significant impact on how emotion was expressed, but did not entirely determine emotional expression. In historian Julie-Marie Strange's article about the British working class between 1880 and 1914, she says, "The circumstances of death were always particular to an individual, as were the responses of those who grieved for them" (2002, 147). Similarly, as discussed in more detail below, several times the people

I interviewed reminded me that expression of grief varied from individual to individual and that differences in the circumstances of the death influenced emotional expression.

This chapter explores the range of expression of sorrow in Newfoundland, with attention to differences between St. John's and rural areas, as well as differences by ethnicity and religion. The structure of the chapter reflects this; I have divided it into sections on rural and urban expression of emotion, each of which includes subsections on religion. When I have sufficient information, I also address variation within particular groups. Before I begin the main part of the chapter, however, I discuss some problems I had with the collection of information on expression of sorrow and briefly cover previous scholarly writing about the expression of sorrow in Newfoundland

Sorrow turned out to be a problematic area to discuss. Often accounts of the expression of sorrow, whether from my fieldwork or from archival sources, are vague to the extent that it is impossible to assess whether, for instance, emotional expression consisted of a few tears at one or two key points during the funeral or of hysterical crying throughout the entire period from death to burial. For instance, Gary P. Marsh writing about Grand Falls, states, "Immediately after the death there are no set rituals followed. Everyone just vents his emotions in his own way" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-014A/p. 4). Here we are not given any direct indication of what forms that venting of emotion might take. Claude Bishop says, "The carrying out of the casket seems to [most?] people the most emotional part of the funeral" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-002D/p. 73) and elsewhere states, "Death means grief and in many cases prolonged sorrow and mourning" (67). He does not specify, however, how (or even if) people expressed their emotions, either when the coffin was carried out or in the long term. Much archival material was similarly vague.

Likewise, the people I interviewed did not always provide much depth of detail. For instance, when I asked Mrs. Gould how the mourners used to express grief, she said, "Oh, they would be really upset and do a lot of crying and everything" (June 26, 2002). Overall, I had better luck with interviewing than with archival papers, in part because I could ask follow-up questions. I was often able to fill in some of the gaps from other statements by the same informant or from statements made by other informants in the same community. For instance, while the quoted statement from Mrs. Gould is rather vague, other things she said about sorrow included more detail. Since I did not focus in specifically on emotional expression until after I had finished interviewing, however, I probably missed some opportunities to collect fuller information.

Another problem in writing about sorrow was that it sometimes was unclear whether specific comments referred to the past or to the present. Impressionistically, this was more of an issue for sorrow than it was for my other areas of focus. I think that perhaps my questions about solemnity and revelry elicited responses that focussed on specific customs, whereas questions about sorrow resulted in responses on not just emotional expression, but also on the nature of the emotion underlying that expression. In addition, while most of my informants were clearly aware that there had been changes in the expression of sorrow within their lifetimes, I suspect that they often perceived the nature of grief to be, at least in some ways, timeless and thus used a universal present tense to discuss it

Issues of vagueness and time-depth notwithstanding, it is clear that overt expression of sorrow was (and, to a lesser extent, continues to be) taken for granted in much of rural Newfoundland. In fact, I suspect that some of the vagueness of interviews and archival material results from the assumption that crying was (and is) such a normal and expected reaction to death that there is no point in elaborating on the details.

Although I understand that culture influences the expression of sorrow, and, possibly, how sorrow is internally experienced, like my informants, I assume that there has been significant similarity over time in the internal aspects of grief in these cultural settings. Consequently, I sometimes thought that material about the experience of sorrow was applicable, even when the time-depth was unclear or when I was quite sure that the context was the present or very recent past. When I have used such material, however, I have indicated, either in the text or in an endnote, that this is what I have done.

There has been limited discussion of the expression of sorrow in previous scholarly work or historic accounts on death rites in Newfoundland. In his *History of the Land of Newfoundland*, the Reverend Lewis Amadeus Anspach gives a rather derogatory description of keening. He says, "The practice of 'waking the dead' is pretty general in Newfoundland, particularly among the natives of Irish extraction, who, in this respect, most faithfully adhere to the usage of their fathers in every point, as to crying most bitterly, and very often with *dry* eyes, howling, making a variety of strange gestures and contortions expressive of the violence of their grief" (1819, 472-73, emphasis in original).

Folklorists Anna-Kaye Buckley and Christine Cartwright, in a paper based on a Protestant rural community, but also informed by archival papers on other Newfoundland communities, report a fairly emotional atmosphere. In their gendered analysis, women, overall, were more overtly expressive in their grieving. They say: "The mode of expression for grief varied somewhat between men and women: though anyone might weep, men sometimes showed grief through sitting by the corpse and talking to it, or through getting drunk, or simply through spending time quietly in the wake room. Weeping, especially during the times of prayer, was somewhat more common among women" (1983, 9).

Other scholarly work downplays emotional expression in Newfoundland death rites. For instance, while anthropologist James C. Faris does not spell out the degree to which sorrow was or was not overtly expressed in Cat Harbour, he does report the prevalence of "rather rigid and highly formalized behaviour" in that community, generally, and argues that this formalization of behaviour continued "even during the periodic 'occasions'" when, from an outsider perspective, people acted in ways that were "topsy-turvy and totally different from what one might expect." Faris includes funerals among such events (1972, 152-53).

Faris says of mourners that they were "regarded as being in a state of ritual pollution." The state of mourning was perceived as "highly emotional" and thus "dangerous, tabooed and polluting" (1972, 141). Implicitly, however, he suggests that expression of sorrow was often channelled into acts that, under my classification system, were forms of solemnity. While acknowledging that grief, which was often real and in many cases long lasting, resulted from death, he asserts, "what is interesting sociologically is the extent to which the expression of grief, however motivated, is subject to rigid rules, and the extent to which it is formalized." As illustration, he discusses the lowering of the blinds in response to death and the gradual raising of them later. He notes that this is "the way in which the Cat Harbour moral order requires that it [grief] be expressed" (153-54).

Since Faris does not address overt emotional expression directly, it is possible I am reading too much into his other comments on mourning behaviour. Folklorist Isabelle Marie Peere, however, explicitly identifies "emotional restraint" as typical (1992, 270). My understanding of expression of grief in rural areas of Newfoundland in the past is very different from that of Peere and probably that of Faris. As described in more detail below, my interviews and archival material, as well as historical information, suggest that

overt and often intense expression of grief was widespread, albeit not universal, in rural Newfoundland.

If my interpretation of Faris is correct, he was probably accurate about the community in which he did his research, but may have overemphasized the general connection between a relative lack of emotional expressiveness and the formality of other community responses to death. As discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis, even intense, outward expressions of grief can be formalized, in the sense that they are culturally expected, perhaps even required, and take culturally specific forms. In addition, many Newfoundland communities had both intense expression of grief and complex, well-developed forms of solemnity in death rites. Accepting and imposing a very specific order for the funeral procession, for instance, was not incompatible with strong expression of grief. The juxtaposition of highly formalized, solemn customs for dealing with death and intense expression of sorrow in many Newfoundland communities makes it unlikely that the only or primary purpose of formalized behaviour during death rites was the sublimation of more direct expressions of sorrow.

Peere's analysis is broader and, in theory, directly applicable to more communities, but I think it is based in part on misreadings of two of her sources. For instance, Peere sees "willful control of emotion at least in public" in folklorist Clara J. Murphy's description of her initial interaction with her mother following her father's death (1992, 271). Murphy's paper, as discussed in more detail below, does, indeed, present the expression of grief in her context as sometimes quite subdued and notes appropriate limits on it, as well as attempts to keep it in bounds (1986, MUNFLA ms 86-159/pp. 8, 11, 16). Murphy, however, also acknowledges that crying occurred at the funeral and explicitly states that quiet crying falls within acceptable limits of emotional expression (16). She also presents the emotional response of other relatives as more overt

than that of the next of kin (11). My reading is that Peere has overemphasized elements of restraint in Murphy's account, while de-emphasizing more emotional elements.

Similarly, I think Peere may have misunderstood an informant's account of her daughter's response to a family death. The daughter was initially very stoic, but, after the funeral was over, went back to the church. When she returned, she was "in floods of tears." From the mother's account, however, it appears that both she and other people present thought the daughter's initial restraint was odd. The mother's wrap-up comment, in fact, was, "It broke, whatever was wrong with her, she broke" (1992, 271). The degree to which the daughter restrained her emotions seems not to have fallen within the cultural norms of the community, or at least of her family.

While I disagree with Peere's interpretation of these two sources, she is by no means altogether wrong in her analysis. Peere's analysis of Murphy's paper may miss some of the complexity of the account, but this paper suggests less emotional expressiveness, overall, than the accounts of many of my rural informants and many archival papers. This is probably because both Murphy's paper and Peere's work were done at a later stage than most of the period about which I am writing and expression of emotion had, in fact, decreased over time. Further, some evidence suggests that while, in some parts of Newfoundland, expression of sorrow was overt and very strong, in other places, including some rural communities, it was, at least ideally, restrained.

Sometimes material on sorrow is very brief, with little or no analysis. In those cases, I have generally incorporated the material into the appropriate geographic and religious sections of this chapter.

5.1 Rural Newfoundland

In this section, I discuss emotional expression in rural areas, with attention to religion and to gender. Expression of emotion appears, for the most part, to have been expected in the past in rural Newfoundland, but the range of emotional expression was significant. It differed by gender, although the degree to which this was true seems to have varied by community. There may also have been some variation by religion and ethnicity, but, for the most part, these influences are not as clear-cut. Nevertheless, I have separated discussion on expression of sorrow into Catholic and Protestant contexts.

While there was usually greater expression of sorrow in rural Newfoundland than in St. John's, the extent of rural emotional expression ranged from fairly subdued to highly dramatic. An anonymous[1] paper about a family funeral implicitly expresses a preference for restrained emotional expression, at least given the specific circumstances of the particular death, and indicates that most of the relatives present lived up to the author's ideals: "I should say here, that except for my aunt, the youngest (about 35) of grandfather's family, all his children held up very well. They all realized that he was old and while lying in bed, barely alive, he was only Suffering. The mutual feeling was that it was a blessing" ("Death and Burial" 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-001G/p. 16). Later in the paper the author describes limited expression of grief at the graveside: "There was little display of emotions in the cemetery; only when the casket was lowered into the grave did my mother and my aunt (mentioned before) give vent to tears, while my two uncles just stood there looking solemn" (17). The expression of emotion was, apparently, largely limited to a specific time (one which seems to have often been particularly emotional in

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[1] The paper's author expressed a preference that no names be given ("Death and Burial" 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-001G/p. 1), so I have not used his name, the name of the community, or the general area in which the community is located.

Newfoundland), and appears to have been gendered, with women more able to express emotion than men.

There are also reports from rural Newfoundland of intense expressions of public grief. Bernice Bartlett, writing about Catalina, for instance, reports a stressful event at a burial that resulted in a particularly extreme emotional response.[2] Due to an accident that took place while the coffin was being lowered, it fell headfirst into the grave. According to the author, "Many of the relatives fainted" (1968-9, MUNFLA ms 69-001E/p. 16). Writing about Head Bay D'Espoir, Edward Cokes reports a similar reaction on a more regular basis: "On many occasions I've seen people, most of them women, faint at gravesides after the coffin had been been [sic] lowered into the grave" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-006D/p. 51). He also describes more direct expression of emotion by crying at several points during death rites (35, 48-51).

H. Boyd Trask reports an intensity of grieving that, judging by his language, he may have felt to be extreme; he describes it as "the most dramatic funeral I know of." It was for a teenaged boy who had died in a drowning accident and took place in Harbour Grace. According to Trask:

> [The boy's mother's] cries could be heard all the way up the long lane that lead [sic] to the house. The service in the house was inaudible because of her cries. As the bearers picked up the casket to proceed to the church, [the mother] threw herself across it, thus preventing them from taking it into the hall and through the front door. The funeral was delayed. A doctor was summoned, and it was only after [the mother] had been given a sedative that the procession was able to get moving. (1967-68, MUNFLA, ms 68-024E/pp. 35-36)

While the mother's behaviour may have been extreme in context, in other communities, as described below, it might have been more or less normative.

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[2] Given the reference in the paper to a "minister" walking between the casket and the relatives in the funeral procession (Bartlett 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-001E/p.13), I assume that the context is Protestant.

5.1.1 Catholicism

I interviewed Catholics in two rural communities, Conche, which was primarily Catholic, and Bay Roberts, where I had one Catholic informant. To fill out my understanding of how rural Catholics mourned I have also drawn on archival and library material.

Historian Willeen Keough, in her thesis, "The Slender Thread: Irish Women on the Southern Avalon, 1750-1860," briefly mentions keening, which, in the area she studied, was largely, but not exclusively, practiced by women. Here, however, keening disappeared earlier than other death customs, because of the Catholic Church's opposition to it, part of attempts by "Catholic clergy to impose middle-class standards of respectability on their Irish congregation, particularly Irish women" (2001, frame 4, 364). In this time and place, opposition to keening seems to have been effective.[3] According to Keough, "ritual keening was increasingly being represented as self-indulgent caterwauling" as of the mid-1800s. This attitude impacted laypeople's evaluations of the practice; Keough says, "One male informant, when asked about the role of women's keening, told me, 'Yes, some of them were real bawlers'" (frame 4, 363-64).

Archival material also alludes to keening. Zita Johnson's paper about burial customs in Renews discusses apparently contradictory information about the role of women at funerals in the past:

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[3] The effectiveness of such opposition should not be taken for granted. Keough points out that keening was only one of a number of "ancient customary practices" which the Catholic Church tried to suppress in Newfoundland during the 1800s and also tried to suppress in Ireland. Overall, the Church met with an initial lack of success; it found that the sanctions it could impose, up to and including outright excommunication, did not work, unless "the congregation was willing to reinforce them through the shunning of non-compliers. Until the people themselves wished to abandon the ancient system, it would persist; the clergy, meanwhile, could only lead the people where they wanted to go" (2001, frame 4, 364-65).

Although I've said that it was not customary for women to go to the graveyard, it must have been done at times. I've heard that some made horrible scenes and fusses at the grave-side with much screaming and wailing. However the person who told me this said most of the people were Irish descendants and it was a custom in Ireland to weep and wail and even hire mourners, so maybe this custom in Renews originated in Ireland. (MUNFLA ms 68-011D/p. 30)

Johnson recounts a story she heard from her mother about "one such wailing mourner":

A Mrs. Finny she was. When her husband died she went to the funeral and at the grave side made a terrific fuss. She wailed and cried, screaming 'Let me down, let me down with him' and attempted to jump into the grave. An old man, Mr. John Coady, was standing on a hill overlooking this pitiful sight. Knowing Mrs. Finny and knowing that neither her tears nor lamentations were sincere, called out to the crowd 'Throw her down, and be God damned, throw her down' [sic] His disgust was obvious for as she continued to scream he said 'Ah, a bellowing cow soon forgets her calf.' Anyway, this just shows that there must have been more fuss at a burial in those days (60-70 yrs) than there is today." (1967, MUNFLA ms. 68-011D/p. 30)

It appears that in Renews, as elsewhere on the Southern Shore, a formerly accepted practice had been devalued.

The expression of grief in Conche, as well as the vocabulary for talking about it, seem to have been at least partially determined by the Irish ancestry of many community members. Of the two forms of keening discussed in Chapter Two, the more conscious and musical form probably died out in Conche many years ago, if it ever existed there in the first place. The other form of keening, which folklorist Angela Bourke calls "ritualised wailing and groaning" (1988, 287), may have persisted in some form until within living memory. Mr. Dower, when asked how people expressed their grief said, "In some cases, it would be a very, very sad event. Family members would be sitting around, keening and moaning and crying and wailing, and most of the men would look pretty solemn." Mindful of the fact that the word "keening" could mean more than one thing, I asked Mr. Dower what he meant. He said: "kind of wailing and moaning like [very drawn

out:] 'Oh my, oh my'" (Aug. 19, 2004). This sounds very like Bourke's description of the less formal variety of keening in Ireland.

As might be inferred from Mr. Dower's description, expression of grief in Conche may have been intense. When I asked Mrs. Gould how the wake has changed over the years, she said: "Well, for one thing, they don't break into howls, anymore, the wakes in the funeral homes, or in the small community here, in the church" (June 20, 2002).[4]

Mrs. Hurley's overall description of the expression of sorrow, on the other hand, sounds less intense. She said, "Well, most have I seen was just people crying" (June 22, 2002). She also told me, however, that she had heard from her father that he had visited a family whose wife and mother had died prematurely and that the family members were "all screeching and crying." Since this event took place shortly after she had moved to Toronto, she was able to date it to roughly 1969. Mrs. Hurley did not specify how long after the death the visit occurred, but other information in her description suggests a date after the funeral (June 22, 2002).[5]

In addition to being intense, expression of grief also was deemed necessary. A statement about the present may give some sense of how vital this emotional expression was. Mr. Dower said of the staff of the funeral home: "I'm sure then, they're well-trained, in case that no one shows up from the family, they're even trained to cry, I

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[4] In Conche, as in other communities without their own funeral home, wakes currently take place in the church, although a funeral home located in another community first removes the body for preparation and then returns it.

[5] Specifically, Mrs. Hurley mentioned that there was no one present to help the family members deal with their emotional distress. Everything else I know about death customs in rural communities suggests that there would be many visitors between death and burial. Also, Mrs. Hurley thinks that in the past (and, for that matter, in the present) the community would be involved in emotional support only until the burial (June 22, 2002).

suppose." Although this statement is facetious, it reflects a sense that expression of grief is necessary. Given that emotional expression in the present is relatively subdued compared to the past, it is very likely that Conche residents felt the need for emotional expression to be enacted even more strongly in the past. In fact, Mr. Dower suggested that in some cases the grief so strongly expressed was not sincere. He described "everyone line up outside the church, dressed in black and bawling their eyes out, and cry all the way through church, even if they're crocodile tears" (June 24, 2002).

The insincerity was linked to gender-based social pressure. Like most of my Conche informants, Mr. Dower thought that the expression of grief was gendered. When I asked him if men and women expressed their grief differently, he said,

> I would probably think so, going back to the old tradition of the image of women. Basically, whether they felt like it or not, I think they were expected to cry and to really express their emotions, express their grief and, there'd be a lot of that, a lot of sad expressions seen. The men generally gathered in groups and talked about it and probably sneaked off to the side and had a little drink or two to give them a little bit of courage to stay around and talk a little longer. (August 19, 2004)

Drinking may have been an option available to men, but it appears that women were expected to cope without the help of alcohol. It may, however, have been precisely because they could express emotion that women could do without alcohol's support. Mr. Dower told me, "I remember years ago, I don't know if I ever saw a man cry" (August 19, 2004).

Mr. Bromley also thought that strong expression of emotion was gendered:

> It appears that women were more sympathetic maybe or more emotional than men would be. Back in those days, you know, it was considered, I think, wimpish for men to cry, for example. And they would, I guess, even though they probably would have been better off, you know, expressing their emotions than hiding them, they would not be seen crying, not in public. A lot of them wouldn't, now, I'm not saying all of them, but, you know, it was unusual. Whereas women didn't mind expressing their emotions, I think, more so. (June 23, 2002)

Although Mr. Bromley recognized some variation in gendered behaviour in the past, he

thought that women were much more likely to cry publicly.

Mrs. Hurley gave a detailed example of gendered difference in response to grief.

She said:

> I had a nephew who was killed in Grand Prairie, Ontario, and he was twenty-one.
> I mean, my brother and his wife, he had thirteen children and she, my sister-in-
> law, was really upset and expressed her grief, but my brother didn't show any
> sign. I guess he just kept it all to himself. Now, maybe he expressed it when he
> was alone. But she didn't. She was different. I mean that she cried and, well, it
> was hard to get her to have a cup of tea. The other children, she didn't even notice
> that they were there. You would think, that she had only one child and he was
> dead. (June 22, 2002)

When I asked Mrs. Hurley if she thought that was fairly typical, she said:

> It seems like mostly with men, that that was the case. That the men, that they
> didn't express it. Kind of, maybe they're just trying to play tough, you know, or
> men think that they're tougher than women and they can take it. Or, I don't know,
> maybe some people just indifferent to it. I don't know if there's such a thing as
> being indifferent to death. You just accept and say, "[Why? ?], we're all going to
> die. (June 22, 2002)

Alternatively, Mrs. Hurley suggested that mothers might be more susceptible to grief,

because, due to the mother's pregnancy with the child, "there's a stronger bond." She

acknowledged that men may be "bonded with their children," but said, "but I don't think

it's the same as it is for a mother" (June 22, 2002).[6]

Mrs. Gould disagreed with my other Conche informants about whether grief

varied by gender. When I asked her if male and female mourners expressed their grief in

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[6] This idea probably originated with something Mrs. Hurley's sister-in-law had
told her, but this is not particularly clear in context (June 22, 2002).
   This material is rather problematic, in terms of its placement in time. The initial
question was in past tense, but both the informant and I wandered in and out of present
tense. The specific event the informant gives as an example is clearly in the past, but it is
not clear if it is the recent past or the past of a generation ago.

the same way or if they expressed it differently, she said, "No, no, they expressed it in the same way, yeah" (June 26, 2002). This opinion notwithstanding, Mrs. Gould thought that grief was especially difficult for bereaved mothers. She said, "nobody has the feeling for a child or even a dead like the mother do. . . . Like, she's always draw on the nearer, nearer to her heart" (June 26, 2002).

Formal religious ritual could elicit the expression of sorrow. According to Mr. Dower, "We always used to have a choir in the church, but they used to have these real tear-jerkers, you know, and they would, they'd almost make you cry, right, now even if the deceased person was not related to you, it would make you, you know [pause] feel closer to the rest of the family, it would put ye in a kind of a mood yourself, as if you were becoming more part of it" (June 24, 2002). The choir and the songs it sang were, under my system, a form of solemnity, but the emotions elicited through the songs were clearly a form of sorrow. Mr. Dower's contention that the songs "almost" elicited tears is interesting. Since Mr. Dower is talking from a male point of view and since men in Conche, evidently, did not feel as free to cry as women did, it is a fair guess that at least some of the women did cry in response to such songs.

In Bay Roberts, Mary Hunt described a possible range of emotional reactions and her perception of the reason for variation. She said, "Well, it varies, I suppose. You know, it varies a bit with people. That some people get very distraught, but others don't. But that varies with the personality, you know. Mostly, well they would probably be crying and all this sort of thing, but mostly people are in control of their emotions." When asked if this had changed in the last forty or fifty years, Mrs. Hunt said, "No, I wouldn't say that there was any change. It's all that, how the person really felt. Yes. I don't think there's any change at all in how the person was feeling" (Sept. 27, 2002).

In Mrs. Hunt's view, not just personality, but the particular context for each death influenced the reaction. In a statement focussed on both context and personality, she said, "If that person has been very sick for a long time, sometimes, it's a relief, like people dying of cancer and stuff. It's a relief. That the person is no longer suffering, but it varies, and some people think they have to screech and bawl and roar and some people don't" (June 21, 2003).[7] This variability in what people feel, as well as the variability Mrs. Hunt describes in personal attitudes about appropriate expression of grief, might reasonably result in a range of ways of expressing grief, rather than one standardized way, and, at least in Bay Roberts, that seems to be pretty much what happened.

Archival material suggests that varying intensity of expression of grief also took place among rural Catholics in other areas. Philip Gaultois from Stephenville Crossing reports that when he was young his father did not permit him to attend funerals, because the atmosphere of the home at the time of death was so emotional that he thought it to be inappropriate, even damaging, for children: "He said that it was no place for children to be going since there was a lot of sadness in the house. He told me it wasn't nice for children to see people so sad and crying and he didn't want me to go and then come home and have nightmares afterwards" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-008C/p. 4).[8]

Clara J. Murphy describes the expression of grief at her father's funeral with a bit more complexity. She reports, "Although crying is not unacceptable, silent weeping is

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[7] This quote comes from a part of the interview focussed on the present tense, but seems likely to also apply to the past.

[8] Since the home, rather than the church is mentioned, I suspect the reference in this quote is probably actually to death rites, generally, and perhaps the wake in particular, rather than to the funeral itself. Although Gaultois is Catholic (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-008C/p. 7), Stephenville Crossing is a mixed community and Gaultois indicates that Catholic and Protestant wake customs were substantially similar (12).

definitely preferred to wailing and/or uncontrollable outbursts. Again, the familiarity of the service, the sight of so many of his friends young and old, plus the beauty of our added touches kept the facade intact. However, there were tears in the Church as there had been in the house when the coffin was closed" (1986, MUNFLA ms 86-159/p. 16). Murphy also says, "the grandchildren wept silently throughout the service particularly when the priest noted the pride their grandfather had taken in them" (16-17). Of a nephew, she says, "his grief was more public than that of the immediate family," although it is not clear how he expressed his grief, as he did not come to the wake and "was emotionally unable to act as pallbearer." She adds that the spouses of her father's children also "more openly expressed their sense of loss" (11).

In the material quoted above, Murphy describes grief as overt, but not noisy. She discusses ways in which, in her context, expression of grief was minimalized or discouraged. She said, "Mom's tears for Dad stopped when she heard of the death of a young man and his daughter by fire the night after Dad's death. 'I cried until I heard about that poor fellow,' she said, 'It was so much worse there was no need to cry.'" Murphy also describes how her father had participated in death rites in the recent past without expressing emotion openly. Both he and her mother brought pressure on Murphy to stop crying, after several people important to her died during a short period. They had thought, "I should 'stop carrying on. Crying doesn't help'" (1986, MUNFLA ms 86-159/p. 11).

Murphy's description, overall, suggests that in her experience there was a wide range of emotional response to death and that much of it was considered appropriate. Strong expression of emotion was, however, frowned on, especially when it continued over time. The type of grieving Murphy presents, while visible, is less passionate than that described for a number of other rural Newfoundland contexts. This may be partly

because most of Murphy's paper is about a death that occurred fairly late, in 1985. It may also be a reflection of the emotional style of Murphy's family. The fact that more distant relatives were more emotionally expressive than the immediate family may suggest that the immediate family was relatively reserved for its context. Finally, the emotional response in the particular community in which the family was based, Colliers, might have been relatively quiet.

Highly or even moderately emotional responses to death were not necessarily appropriate in all Catholic rural contexts. According to William Cooper (based on information collected from George Best) there was relatively little emotional expression among Catholics in Merasheen.[9] Cooper says people attending the wake, "All expressed sympathy with the family, and quickly got on to another subject. To make too much of one's grief would probably result in being accused of shedding 'crocodile tears.' There was certainly no keening, at the wake or at the funeral" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-008C/p. 7). In this context, at least in Best's perception, the death would be only briefly acknowledged even during the period immediately following it.

There was a considerable range of emotional expression following deaths among rural Catholics in Newfoundland. It could be intense or virtually non-existent, depending on gender and geographic area. At least for women, emotional expression might be expected, to the extent that there was social pressure to weep. Conversely, there could be social pressure to keep grief under tight control. As will become clear in the next section, this is similar to the expression of grief among rural Protestants.

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[9] Best was a member of the Church of England. In a reflection of Best's overall context, however, Cooper focussed the paper on Catholic customs (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-008C/p. 2).

5.1.2 Protestantism

Expression of strong emotion in rural areas was not limited to Catholics. My interview material suggests that crying was a common occurrence among rural Protestants, as well as Catholics, and, if anything, may have involved more people and a more communal sharing of emotion. This impression, however, is based largely on my interviews with one particular informant, albeit one who had, in the course of his career, officiated at a number of funerals and lived in a number of places in rural Newfoundland. Given that this man was unusually articulate about these aspects of mourning, it may simply be that none of the Catholics I interviewed was quite as interested in detailing the expression of grief, rather than that there were significant differences in how Protestants expressed grief.

Discussing the family deaths he had experienced during his childhood, the Rev. Mr. Burton said, "As I was growing up, I lost my oldest sister and then I lost two brothers and my father. And, you know, you were expected to cry. And if you didn't cry [pause] it was almost as if something was wrong, right?" (Aug. 25, 2004). Not at all surprisingly, in his context, weeping seems to have started fairly soon after a death. He describes entering his home immediately after having been informed by his minister of his father's death: "I went in the house and there was mother crying and my grandmother was there" (Aug. 22, 2003).

There are also archival accounts of strong expression of grief among rural Protestants. A particularly detailed example comes from Lillian Dredge, writing about Anglicans[10] in Pigeon Cove, as of roughly 1970:

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[10] According to Dredge, most community residents belonged to either the Anglican Church or the United Church, but her paper looks exclusively at Anglican practices (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A/p. 3).

> This first keening would take place while the body was laid out on the boards, before it was put in the coffin.
>
> There were no well-known keeners in the area. There would be different keeners depending on who had died. The family of the deceased person would be the main keeners.
>
> Excessive or insufficient keening was not considered wrong. However, it was considered a mockery if a person really became upset and made a fuss at the wake and funeral and then about 2 or 3 days later went to a dance or a party. (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A-B/pp. 22-23)

Dredge says that relatives were the only participants in "the first keening" and that this initial outburst was short (21).

Dredge's bibliography includes Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *Irish Wake Amusements* and *Handbook of Irish Folklore* (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A-B/p. 32). Thus, it is not surprising that her description reads as if she is implicitly comparing "keening" in Pigeon Cove to a model for keening that she had encountered outside her home community, in particular, the pattern whereby specialists not related to the deceased take on much or all of the responsibility of keening. This would explain why she not only specifies that there were no local specialists in keening, but also carefully points out twice that the primary participants were relatives. This awareness of "keening" from an etic point of view, raises the question of whether "keening" was actually the emic term for the practice used in Dredge's home community. Given that this is the only overtly Protestant Newfoundland context to which, so far as I am aware, the word has been applied, I suspect that it was not. Nevertheless, Dredge appears to have correctly identified the mourning behaviour she describes. There is very little difference between Irish and Irish-Newfoundland descriptions of the simpler form of keening and descriptions of emotional expression in Pigeon Cove and some other Protestant communities.

Dredge includes additional information about how people in this community expressed grief. People of both genders and a range of ages cried. Other expressions of

grief included "wringing their hands, putting their hands through their hair and rubbing their stomach." Some mourners "would throw themselves on the corpse and screech" (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A/pp. 20-21).

Rosalind Drodge, writing about Little Heart's Ease in Trinity Bay, also discusses intense expression of grief:

> It is generally here at the graveside that there is a big emotional scene. Certain people who were near and dear to the deceased have had to be taken away from the service because they got weak from crying and/or had other emotional reactions. Especially touching is when they lower the casket into the grave, a fact which can be proven by looking around the grave-yard and seeing very few dry eyes." (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-004C/p. 5)

As in Pigeon Cove, the expression of grief was so intense that sometimes other people had to exert control over the excesses of some mourners. Drodge describes the sharing of grief in a way that is loosely similar to the Rev. Mr. Burton's description.

Christina Bradley, the informant for James R. R. Hornell, described the first funeral she attended, at the age of five, as, in his words, "a horrifying occasion." A babysitter who was caring for her and her sister took them to the funeral. According to Hornell, "Miss Bradley remembers everyone crying around the grave and finally a lady noticed the young girls [sic] displeasure and escorted them home" (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-365A-B/pp. 16-17). While the exact extent of emotional expression is not further described, it would probably have required a fairly dramatic display (rather than, perhaps, a few quiet tears) to make such a strong impression.

Crying was evidently not, however, always intense and continuous. Warrick Canning, writing about Williamsport, a community on the Northern Peninsula that was resettled in 1965, but that had been Protestant and ethnically English prior to that (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/pp. 1-2), describes how, after a death, the couple heading the household in which the dead person had lived was woken up by a relative. The female

head of the household responded to news of the death with "some sobbing, and crying," but then took out the "burial clothes" and "'winding sheets'" (5). At least for this woman, emotional expression was subordinated to practical issues fairly quickly.[11]

In addition to weeping, the relatives might engage in physically demonstrative behaviour towards the corpse. The Rev. Mr. Burton said, "And people used to linger a long time over the remains, over the casket, leaning in and touching and kissing and that kind of thing, because of a very close relative in the family" (Aug. 22, 2003). Such behaviour was pronounced right before the coffin was closed: "When the time came for people to, say to, close the casket, even after somebody lying there three days and so on, in the heat of the summer, all members of the family would go to give a final embrace or a final kiss, or something like that." Nevertheless, the Rev. Mr. Burton thought that, to a large extent, the emotions had been worked through by that time. He said, "After the third day, people were pretty well reconciled to the death, right? Yeah. Except for that moment on the lid on the casket, would have to be closed and it used to be a very emotional time" (Aug. 25, 2004).

In the Rev. Mr. Burton's experience, it was not only appropriate for grief to be displayed, but its expression could be communal: "But neighbours were so understanding, you could come to grieve, too. Grieve with us. Used to weep! Oh, my, yes, so much weeping!" Of his family itself, he said, "And I used to weep with my mother. Of course, I was the oldest child" (Aug. 22, 2003). Elsewhere he describes "the neighbours coming in. And, sharing your grief, and some of them, you know, coming to cry, as soon as they came through the door, they would start crying, too, and then

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[11] From internal evidence in the paper (Canning 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 5), it seems likely that this woman was the deceased's daughter-in-law, rather than closer kin, but this is not spelled out.

everybody else would start crying in the fam-, because it was the thing to do, right?" (Aug. 25, 2004). Similarly, Jeanette Williams' description of the funeral in Greenspond in Bonavista Bay, suggests that most participants, rather than just a few, wept. She says, "Thus we Can See in the graveyard a crowd of tear-stained faces" (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-027B/p. 63).

Jesse Fudge, discussing Grole in Hermitage Bay, perhaps gives some insight into the emotional triggers for communal weeping. During the funeral procession, "The mourners following the corpse, feeling very sad, were thinking only of how they were going to miss their beloved. Their tear-stained eyes made many people feel as if they were losing someone, as everyone in the little community had some little feeling towards the others" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-007C/p. 8). Similarly, Oliver Langdon reports that visitors in Seal Cove in Fortune Bay uttered "words of comfort" to the family member who took them to see the corpse during the wake and "there was often an outburst of tears from the relatives" in response (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-013C/p. 5).

In the eyes of Jabez Norman, writing about Port Union in Trinity Bay, an aspect of official death rites also impacted emotional expression. He attributes expression of grief during the funeral to the nature of the sermon, but thinks the sermon varied according to the qualities of the dead person; it "may be short and impersonal or it can be long and very emotional causing the mourners to weep openly. This, of course, will depend entirely on the character of the deceased person" (1967-68, MUNFLA, ms 68-015C/p. 9).

Crying seems to have at least sometimes been obligatory or close to obligatory. In some Protestant rural contexts, intense emotional expression was not just allowed, but expected. The Rev. Mr. Burton reported the deliberate stimulation of sorrow by members of the community. He said, "sometimes, some people who were not immediately

involved, not connected with the family, would feel that it was their duty to say something to, I mean, evoke or provoke tears." He also said, "That was something I have often noticed, in those early days, people felt that they would have to do something to enhance or further the grief. You were supposed to cry" (Aug. 22, 2003).

The Rev. Mr. Burton commented on the social consequences of failing to mourn in a visible fashion: "And they'd say, 'Why, she never cried at all at the funeral. How strange. I expected her, you know, to just screech and bawl'" (Aug. 22, 2003). Interpretation of the mourners' behaviour did not necessarily stop with bemused, but relatively neutral, speculation. According to the Rev. Mr. Burton, "if you didn't mourn, you didn't cry or make much of an ado, someone would say, 'Wow, she didn't care very much for that person or she didn't care much for him,' and, you know, 'It's almost if she was pleased to see him go,' and that kind of a thing, right? So there were times when people really wailed and cried, I think, because it was expected of them" (Aug. 25, 2004).

I asked the Rev. Mr. Burton if he felt that perhaps people might have felt obligated to mourn in this way, as if they were not giving someone a good send-off unless they did. He agreed, but added, "But that's not to underscore the terrible sadness of a death in a family." He said of the deaths of children, an occurrence with which, as described above, he had family experience, "But, oh, my, children died. They were terrible experiences. Terrible for the family and very upsetting and heart-wrenching" (Aug. 25, 2004). Although he thought that sorrow was at least sometimes enacted in a dramatic way to meet community expectations and individuals' own sense of what was appropriate, he also thought that grief was very real.

The Rev. Mr. Burton elaborated on the difficulty of presiding over the funeral service while people expressed grief intensely. He said, "And for the minister, it used to be an awful experience, trying to get people to stop crying in those days, because they felt

they had to do the customary thing, it was expected of them" (Aug. 22, 2003). He

commented on the earliest funerals at which he officiated,

> And first when I began my ministry, I used to dread funerals, for the fact that
> certain people were very emotional and I'd say, 'My goodness, I don't know how
> you're going to get through that funeral today, because, you know what they're
> like. They're going to screech and bawl at the funeral, sir, right?' And I remember
> that happening. I remember that happening, so much so, that, standing in the
> pulpit, say, to proceed with the ritual, sometimes I'd be unable to proceed it. I'd
> have to wait until somebody stopped crying and, you know, that kind of a thing.
> (Aug. 25, 2004)

According to Canning, emotional expression occurred at particular key points.

Immediately following the death, a son of the dead man "began to cry and wail: 'Poor Da

is gone!'" (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 4). Later, "there were some crying and

lamenting among relatives of the deceased," during the service that took place at the

house before the procession to the church (29). At the end of the church service "there

was a fair amount of crying done" (33). Finally, at the graveside, as the coffin was

lowered, there were "varied expressions of grief by the bereaved" (35). Canning also

comments on the absence of emotional expression at one particular time: "There was no

crying during the coffining of the body, simply because no relatives were present in the

room while the corpse was being put into the casket" (17). This is interesting, in and of

itself. In rural Newfoundland, it was often taboo for relatives to be involved in the

practical aspects of caring for the dead, but in this context the physical separation might

suggest the exertion of community control to contain emotional expression at this time.

As a number of my informants pointed out to me, expression of grief was not

uniform throughout a community, but varied with individual mourners and individual

circumstances. For instance, Mr. Caravan said, "usually there was a lot more grief

expressed with young children." In addition, should the body of someone who had

drowned not be found, than "those people would probably be in a longer mourning period than anyone else" (Sept. 26, 2002).

According to Mrs. Caravan, "the type of personalities involved" was also a factor. Mr. Caravan made a similar point, with somewhat more detail: "And, of course, with the different way that people accepted grief or loss, some people were not as demonstrative as others" (Sept. 26, 2002). Mrs. Sheppard of Port de Grave provided extended discussion of how variation in expression of grief played out in her own life and family and attributed the differences to the personalities of the individuals.[12] She said, "I mean you're very stricken in some cases, and some is more emotional than others. Some just keep it on the inside and [pause] personally speaking, form a big lump in your stomach, well [pause] some can cry and some can't. I'm one of the ones that finds it difficult to cry at a time like that, but my sisters was just all tears. Just a matter of your own emotions and just the way you're built, I guess" (Aug. 26, 2004). In another interview, Mrs. Sheppard focussed more specifically on the personal attributes that determined how grief was expressed. She said, "Don't it [depend?] on the strength of the person, I suppose, or the character of the person? Some can cry at anything and some just holds it back. And some will bawl and shout and the others [pause] will think you haven't got any heart" (Sept. 27, 2002). She pointed out that the different mourning styles of different people could be mutually incomprehensible: "because you can't speak for anyone else's feelings, you know, they don't understand me, I don't understand them, some of them. . . . Who's to say, how anyone would fit? I couldn't say" (Aug. 26, 2004).

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[12] Both the information here and the information from the same informant below came in response to questions asked in the past tense. Mrs. Sheppard answered in a sort of eternal present, but her answers are grounded in examples that are at least partly in the relatively distant past.

    While Protestants in rural Newfoundland expressed grief largely through variations of crying and weeping, sometimes grief was expressed more subtly. When I asked about anything that might have kept people from attending the funeral, Sadie Caravan of Bay Roberts told me, "Some family members were just, probably too overcome with the emotion to go" (Sept. 26, 2002). Mr. Caravan also described less overt ways of handling emotions. As I describe in an endnote in the last chapter, when I asked him how people expressed their grief he first discussed outward, customary signs of mourning. While he did eventually refer to more overt grief, he did not stress intensity of expression (Sept. 26, 2002).

    Crying and weeping were not always public. Mrs. Sheppard discussed in some detail her reaction to a particular death, which did involve some weeping, but only in private:

> If you want an example, my father died; I was on my way to my son's wedding. Grand Falls. And I came home and look at me; I never shed a tear. After the [?] the funeral's the only time I broke. Now, mother was the same. . . . And just before I buried [them?], I think the next day, I felt like I was going to have a little cry and went out by the garden fence, up to South River, no one around, and just had my little what-do-you-call-it. (Sept. 27, 2002)

    Mourning behaviour was, in the opinion of the people I interviewed linked to gender. Mr. Caravan said, "Well, I think women were more inclined to cry before the funeral and during the funeral, whereas men were not. . . . At least not in public" (Sept. 26, 2002). The Rev. Mr. Burton said, "Well, the men were more in control of their emotions. It was the women that used to cry, mostly, right?" (Aug. 25, 2004). Since, as discussed earlier, he described himself weeping in response to death, however, and seemed quite unselfconscious about this, it seems likely that, in the context where he grew up, men – or, at least, boys – had significant latitude for overt expression of emotion.

Archival papers also describe behaviour that varied by gender. Trask says about a

particular death in Elliston, "My mother and her sister shared great, genuine sorrow; their

brothers tried to keep up for their sakes(the [sic] customary way of saying it)" (1967-68,

MUNFLA ms 68-024E/p. 31). We are not told here precisely what either attitude

involved in the way of actual behaviour, but Trask mentions his mother's weeping a few

pages later (34). In that context and in terms of what often seemed to be expected of men,

one might guess that "keep[ing] up for their sakes" meant avoiding emotional expression.

Langdon also describes gendered emotional behaviour, although, in his account, some of

the men are not particularly stoic. He says that in the graveyard, "The women then, feel

pretty bad. They can hardly look at what the undertaker is doing. Some of the men are

just the same. They cannot keep back the tears" (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-013C/p. 8).[13]

Dredge, in her discussion of Pigeon Cove, reports that the practice of the bereaved

casting themselves upon the corpse "was done more so by women than men. The men

sometimes would literally have to take the women away from the corpse." The greatest

outbreaks of grief occurred immediately before the closing of the coffin (1984,

MUNFLA ms 84-282A/pp. 20-21). In this context, both sexes, as described above,

expressed grief, but women did so somewhat more dramatically than men and men were

expected to restrain the grieving of women should it become excessive.

The Rev. Mr. Burton thought that weeping was functional, in that it helped

resolve the grief. He said, "and consequently they were able I think to better handle their

sorrow. Somebody says that tears are the safety valve on the human personality, right? So

that it lets off the pressure" (Aug. 22, 2003). In contrast, Mrs. Sheppard felt that a degree

of self-restraint was functional. She said, "But one thing I do know, if you go through an

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[13] My assumption that this community is Protestant is based on references to a minister (Langdon, 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-013/pp. 7-8).

ordeal, it strengthens you, makes you stronger, if you can control your feelings more. I

know that, personally" (Sept. 27, 2002).

Despite his understanding that weeping could be helpful, the Rev. Mr. Burton was

also ambivalent about it, for religious reasons. He told me,

> Now, sometimes the mourning was excessive, I guess, in view of the fact that
> most of them were Christians, you know. Though they believed in the afterlife
> and resurrection and so on, and that someone had gone to be with the Lord and
> gone to heaven, they let the fact of the reality, the finality of death overshadow
> their faith, right? Right. Which is human, it's a human thing, isn't it, that it's hard
> to part with people we love. (Aug. 22, 2003)

Despite his understanding that grief, at least when carried to excess, was contrary to the

religious traditions of the people whose grieving he observed, the Rev. Mr. Burton

understood why they reacted in this way and acknowledged the emotional difficulty

inherent in loss.

In rural Protestant contexts, as in Catholic contexts, it was often expected that

people cry. Crying was actively encouraged, people gossiped if someone who had been

bereaved failed to cry, and weeping was intense enough and noticeable enough to cause

problems for the minister during the service. Expression of emotion varied by gender,

with women generally more emotional than men, but the degree of difference in

expression between the sexes in rural communities seems to have been inconsistent.

There was also individual variation, with some people much less emotionally expressive

than others. In general, rural Protestant mourning appears to have been at least as intense

as rural Catholic mourning. If anything, the evidence I have, which may be incomplete,

suggests more mourning among Protestants. I am not aware of any rural Protestant

community in which overt expression of grief was considered inappropriate (although, in

some places, such expression of grief may have been limited to women). Similarly, I

have no evidence for the sort of communal weeping (involving not just the immediate

family, but other community members) among Catholics that the Rev. Mr. Burton and some archival evidence attest was common among Protestants.

5.2 St. John's[14]

One of the important differences among geographic contexts in Newfoundland in relation to death rites was the extent to which emotional expression of sorrow following a death was either shared or not shared. As has been discussed in the last section, in many parts of rural Newfoundland, crying in front of other people was common. This pattern contrasts strongly with emotional expression in St. John's, at least among Protestants. Based on the information I have, however, it is less clear what happened among Catholics.

5.2.1 Catholicism

Historically, there may have been quite overt expression of grief among Irish Catholics in St. John's. The one author of whom I am aware who has published a description of poetic lamentation and professional keening in Newfoundland gives St. John's as the location.[15] In *Ye Olde St. John's*, P. K. Devine describes a particular area of

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[14] While there are a few urban areas other than St. John's in Newfoundland, I have very little information on funeral and wake customs in any of them. Thus I am not in a position to make generalizations about urban customs as a whole. These cities are all much smaller than St. John's, and I suspect, although I can not prove it, that during my study period, mourning customs in those communities had more in common with rural customs than with those in St. John's. For this reason, I have rather arbitrarily incorporated the information in this category that I use in this thesis (a small amount of archival material about Corner Brook) in the rural category.

[15] Keough notes that Anspach's contemporary account, described earlier this chapter, does not mention the "ritual eulogizing" component of keening (or, by

St. John's, called "Kerry Lane," where Gaelic was still used after it had died out

elsewhere locally and where "the Irish custom of the homeland" was retained.[16] One of

Kerry Lane's residents, Mrs. Sheehan, was a specialist in keening. Devine describes her

keens as "moving lamentations" and adds, "The good deeds of the deceased were

recounted and the feelings of the relatives and friends expressed through this medium"

([1936?], 90).[17] Devine's description suggests the more complex and artistic form of Irish

lamentation, rather than simple crying. His account was not contemporaneous with the

practice of keening, however. At the beginning of the book, he indicates that his interest

is in the period between seventy and eighty years prior to his writing, or roughly the

1850s and 1860s (7). Unfortunately it is not clear what Devine's sources were or how

reliable they were.

It is also not clear how Catholics expressed grief after the mid-1800s. As it

happened, the information I collected included very little on the expression of grief

among St. John's Catholics in that part of the twentieth century characterized by the

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implication, the eulogies' musical and poetic characteristics), but hastens to add, "which
is not to say that it did not occur in Newfoundland" (2001, frame 4, 362-63).

[16] Devine had previously published the material in this book as a series of articles
in the *Daily News*, with the title "Old St. John's." The first article in the series was
published on June 13, 1935 (4). The particular article in which material on keening
appears is in the July 5, 1935 edition of the paper (4). The articles were published under
Devine's initials, P.K.D. I am grateful to Cory Thorne for giving me Devine's full name,
which allowed me to track down his book.

[17] In his original article, Devine is a little more tentative about this assertion; he
begins the sentence with the words "I think."

home wake. In addition, almost none of the archival material I used included information on the expression of grief among Catholics in St. John's.[18]

What information I did collect was largely indirect. One of my Protestant informants, Mrs. Northcott, thought that expression of grief varied by ethnicity. She credited, "the Irish" with having been able to "give way to their feelings more often," something she considered "far more healthy" (Nov. 4, 2004). As discussed in Chapter Three, there is a strong, although not absolute, link between ethnicity and religion in Newfoundland, so this probably means that, in the perception of at least one outsider living in St. John's, Catholics were, at that stage, more emotionally expressive than Protestants.[19]

Mrs. Kearney, my sole Catholic informant in St. John's, happens to have Irish ancestry.[20] Rather ironically, given the context of the above paragraph, she effectively evaded my questions about expression of grief by giving answers about practical and consoling activities engaged in by various groups. When I asked a general question about how people express their grief, she responded by talking about the giving of Mass or sympathy cards and flowers. When I narrowed the question down to relatives, she talked about the assistance, in the form of "support" and "food" that would be offered to the family and then went off on a tangent about older members of the family who "hold

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[18] Saint and Thistle do say about St. John's, "Professional keeners were sometimes hired to cry aloud at wakes and funerals" (1974, MUNFLA ms. 74-184/p. 15), but their information comes, not from fieldwork, but from the *Daily News* article by Devine described in an earlier endnote.

[19] It is not, unfortunately, clear in context, whether Mrs. Northcott had in mind Newfoundland Catholics generally or St. John's Catholics specifically.

[20] She was sure her ancestors on her father's side were Irish, but less sure about her maternal ancestors.

court" during the wake. When I, yet again, narrowed the question down to how the family itself expressed grief, she said:

> The immediate family is terribly caught up, prior to the death, in the fact that this death is going to occur. And as soon as that death occurs, then the funeral arrangements have to be made. And with Catholic families, then the Mass has to be organized. Who's going to say the Mass? Who's going to sing the Mass? Who's going to do the readings? I would imagine, it's probably the same in the Anglican Church and in the United Church, and then they probably go home for a few hours sleep before they have to go to the funeral home and at the funeral home, then, they're on the spot, for the next two and a half days. A minimum of two and a half days. And then there's the funeral. And the reception, somewhere, either at somebody's house or, in some cases, Pius the Tenth. And by the time the funeral's over, they are bloody well exhausted. I mean that. They're drained.

In this informant's conception, any expression of grief is overshadowed by the need to deal with practical arrangements and the resulting exhaustion (Nov. 17, 2004).[21]

In another interview, when asked about expression of grief in the past, Mrs. Kearney approached it from a somewhat different angle and focussed on a less practical customary action, the way in which the mourners were supposed to dress. She said, "They wore black for six months" (Aug. 16, 2004). Again, she answered by talking about something other than the overt expression of emotion.

This pattern of response may suggest that, anyone else's impressions of the Irish notwithstanding, Catholics in St. John's, like St. John's Protestants, were emotionally less expressive than people in many rural areas of Newfoundland. Alternatively, this pattern may reflect Mrs. Kearney's individual approach to thinking about and discussing grief

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[21] This set of questions was largely focussed on the present and the responses appear to be entirely in the present. Since what I was interested in here was the pattern of avoiding discussion of emotion, it probably does not much matter. Also, as I confirmed after the last of these questions, relatives would not have been any less drained by the end of the funeral in the past. As will be discussed in more detail in the revelry chapter, the Catholic home wake in St. John's was, at least in Mrs. Kearney's context, very wearing for the relatives.

and thus serve as an example of one of the themes of this chapter: that there is variation in the emotional responses within specific cultural contexts.

5.2.2 Protestantism

I have clearer information about Protestant St. John's. Grief was supposed to be subdued, if not outright suppressed. When I asked Mrs. Northcott how people expressed their grief, she said: "Well, you weren't supposed to. You kept a stiff, upper lip. And people that cried at funerals, [if?] they tried to do it quietly. You weren't supposed to show your feelings at all." Expression of grief was supposed to be private. Her perception was that this was true of any feelings at any time. In the case of grief, "when you were home, you could burst into tears, if you wanted to, but not in public" (Nov. 4, 2004).

As might be expected, given the above quotes, communal weeping of the type sometimes practiced in rural Newfoundland was not, from her description, evident in Mrs. Northcott's context. She said, "Even in your own home, if people came in, they talked about **other** things. So, they'd say, 'I'm so, so sorry to hear about your father's death or your mother's death' or whatever it was or [somebody?], 'She had a wonderful life,' you know, and if she'd been ill, 'Well, she's better off now,' that kind of thing, and then they'd talk about the weather or something" (Nov. 4, 2004). After the initial acknowledgement of the death, the topic was avoided.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the constraints on emotional expression, there was, according to Dr. Hiscock, an emotional tone to Protestant funerals. He described them as characterized by a "dull, throbbing, intense sense of mourning." Dr. Hiscock's description is of the somewhat more recent past, when wakes had moved to funeral homes, but it seems likely that that phase was a transitional one bridging an earlier time when his family's Protestant funerals were, if anything, more markedly "dull" and

"intense" and a present in which they have become, in Dr. Hiscock's phrase, "very cheery events," similar to the Catholic funerals of his wife's family (June 10, 2004).

Mrs. Jones thought that mourners expressed grief for near relatives. She said, "I suppose if it was a close family member, you'd probably cry. I know when Al died, I was broken-hearted there." Unfortunately, I did not ask her about the contexts in which crying took place, so it is not clear whether they were private or public, and it is thus very difficult to compare her account to those of other informants. Some comparison can, however, be made to grief for people outside the immediate family. Mrs. Jones said, "it's not as sad when it's [pause] somebody you just known for a short period of time and you probably went to the funeral or something, like, you know, pay your respects. But when it's a close family member, it's a different story altogether" (June 22, 2003).

While the material I collected from Mrs. Jones may be ambiguous on this topic, other information bears out my impression that mourning of Protestants in St. John's was very subdued. Elizabeth Lang notes the absence of strongly expressed emotion following the death of her grandmother.[22] She said, "I do not remember any crying or deep despair" (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p. 5). A bit earlier in the paper, writing specifically about the wake, she says, "Nobody cried and nobody kissed the corpse" (4). Regardless of the reasons why grief was not enacted, there appears to have been implicit recognition on the part of the family that the author's mother (the daughter of the deceased) was experiencing some emotional distress after the death. Lang says, "We were all especially kind to mother for some long time afterwards" (5).

As was true in many rural areas of Newfoundland, emotional expression in St. John's was gendered. Mrs. Northcott's sense was that although very little expression of

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[22] Judging by the religion of the minister who presided at the service in the home, the grandmother was presumably Anglican (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p. 4).

grief was considered appropriate, women were given some leeway. She said, "women were allowed to cry, in a nice, genteel way, but men did not, at all. They were all supposed to be held back." She also said, "women were allowed to grieve, but men, they weren't supposed to" (Nov. 4, 2004).

Judging by the contrast in her own personal experience and the behaviour she described for men, Mrs. Jones also thought that there were differences in male or female expression of grief. When she answered a generic question about how people grieve, she said, as described above, that she thought crying would be typical, but when asked specifically about gender differences, she said:

> Well, men didn't cry. Men didn't cry. My father cried, but first time ever we seen him cry was when my brother died, but you see, he was the first member of the family gone, and like I said, I was, working around the bay and they called me in and when I went in, he was sitting there and I was saying 'I've never seen him cry in my life, never.' But I never seen him cry after. . . . Women cried, mother cried her eyes out. And see Dad there, crying, that was the first member of the family to go and you know, so. And a son like that.

She added, "And I don't believe he even cried when my mother dies [sic]" (June 22, 2003).

Dr. Hiscock had some ideas about the emotional self-restraint of mourners in St. John's today, which might also apply to the past. Although emotional expression in St. John's is more overt than it used to be, there are still limits on what is appropriate. Dr. Hiscock's explanation of why mourners adhere to those limits was:

> In a way, what they're doing, I think, is trying not to intrude upon the others. The others aren't there to experience the excruciating pain of the mourners; they're there for other reasons. And when you see someone screeching and bawling and all that, banging their head off the coffin or whatever they're doing, which may seem to many people to be overboard, you know, too much, "She doth protest too much," that kind of thing, if you don't see it that way, than you see it as very painful, and it is really very, very painful, to see others mourn. (June 18, 2004)

The restraint of the mourners protects other people.

Total restraint of emotion, however, seems not to have been the case for all deaths among Protestants in St. John's. Lang reports going to the wake of an old schoolmate of hers, who died at the age of 26.[23] She says that not only the deceased's mother, but "several other younger women," were weeping (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p. 7). In this case, the circumstances of the death, specifically the very young age of the deceased woman, may have led to both heightened emotion and heightened emotional expression. The circumstances of the death may have impacted the expression of emotion in another way when Lang's grandmother died. Although the described reticence seems to fit the general pattern of behaviour for St. John's Protestants, it is possible that, as Lang implies, the fact that the deceased had been ill for six months might have contributed to her family's relatively subdued mourning (5), as might the fact that she was considerably older than Lang's schoolmate. Finally, there may have been a change in social norms in St. John's between the two deaths. Assuming that the schoolmate was more or less Lang's age, her death took place roughly twelve years later than Lang's grandmother's death, which occurred in roughly 1952, when Lang was 14 (3).

Emotional expression following a death among Protestants in St. John's was, for the most part, ideally private and, failing that, very quiet. Women were allowed very modest emotional expression and men, apparently, none at all. Exceptions appear to have been quite limited.

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[23] Although Lang does not explicitly state that the young woman who died was Protestant, given that Newfoundland had separate denominational school systems when Lang was a schoolgirl, it seems likely that most of Lang's school friends were Protestant.

5.3 Conclusions

In Chapter Three, I discussed how expression of grief was historically handled in England, Ireland, and Scotland. Since emotional expression following death in Ireland was fairly intense, it is not surprising that that intensity carried over in at least parts of Catholic Newfoundland.

Protestant emotional expressiveness in some contexts requires a little more explanation, but it is quite possible to argue that it, also, was at least partially rooted in the customs of the home country. The initial English settlers immigrated during the early modern period. As I discussed in the Chapter Three, during this time period there seem to have been different strands of thought and practice concerning proper mourning behaviour. One of those strands, which is likely to be the older one, perceived that expression of grief was appropriate, assuming it was not excessive. It appears that at least some of that grief was publicly demonstrated. The other strand, which seems to have been newer, placed more emphasis on emotional restraint. This strand eventually became more dominant in public discourse, although the first strand seems to have never vanished entirely.

At the time the first settlers left for Newfoundland, the newer, more restrained approach to mourning had probably not yet entirely taken hold. Perhaps for this reason, in at least some rural areas of Newfoundland, the dominant mode of mourning initially established among Protestants may have been the older, more emotional approach. The newer, subdued approach seems to have been adopted unevenly, with some groups documented as having relatively vigorous expression of emotion until well into the twentieth century. In England, the more emotional approach may have been subordinate, but it never entirely died out and, in fact, experienced a resurgence in the early 1800s. As a result, this strand was probably familiar to later English immigrants and they may, as a

result, been reasonably receptive to it. Finally, there was probably some influence from the Irish tradition of mourning, as some Newfoundland Protestants were ethnically Irish, had Irish neighbours in Newfoundland, or interacted with Irish Newfoundlanders in other ways.

There was tremendous variation in how much overt weeping was allowed in different parts of Newfoundland. Whether direct expression of grief was dramatic or almost entirely inhibited, however, the overall pattern appears to be that women wept more than men. A man in Pigeon Cove might have been allowed (or expected) to engage in more overt display of emotion following a death than a woman in St. John's would have been, but, overall, men in Pigeon Cove were less expressive than women in Pigeon Cove, and women in St. John's could, albeit in a limited way, express emotion more overtly than St. John's men.

There appears to be a connection between the degree to which the expression of sorrow was acceptable and the gendered make up of the funeral procession. In St. John's, where emotional expression was strongly suppressed, women were effectively banned from participating in those parts of death rites that were conducted in the public domain. As described in Chapter Three, the discourse on women's attendance at funerals in Victorian England focussed partly on how emotionally expressive women were likely to be. It would not be surprising if inhabitants of St. John's had similar concerns, especially since the emphasis in the city was on not expressing emotion.

In rural Newfoundland, however, the expression of sorrow was often vigorous. In some areas, it was so integral a part of death rites that participants felt obligated to engage in it, there was community pressure to take part in it, and there was gossip about participants who failed to meet cultural expectations about noticeable mourning. In much of rural Newfoundland, women's participation in the funeral procession was taken for

granted. In fact, in some communities it was structurally built into the procession. This was likely, in part, because expression of grief was expected and women, in general, grieved more intensely than men, even in those communities where male expression of grief was appropriate. It was undoubtedly also related to rural women's greater participation in the public sphere (or, at least, in Janet Abu-Lughod's language, in the "controlled semi-private" space of their communities).

Sorrow and the overt expression of sorrow formed an important part of the emotional atmosphere surrounding death. Neither sorrow nor sorrow in combination with solemnity made up that entire atmosphere, however. The next chapter focuses on the flip side of sorrow, revelry.

Chapter 6: Revelry: "You . . . Made Your Own Fun, Whether It was Living or Dying"

Sorrow is an obvious and expected part of the emotional atmosphere in the time period following a death. Its flip side is the incorporation of revelry or party behaviours into death rites. To many people in North America at this time, revelry as a part of death rites may, at least superficially, appear counterintuitive. In many ways it is the aspect of death rites that is hardest to understand. As I described in Chapters Two and Three, however, revelry in conjunction with death rites is a normal and expected response in a variety of cultures. In part, no doubt, because this includes, to varying extents, those cultures that have contributed most significantly to the culture of Newfoundland, party behaviours have been (and to some extent continue to be) part of death rites here.

This chapter focuses on wake revelry, a significant context in the past for party behaviours in conjunction with death rites in Newfoundland and one of the best-researched aspects of Newfoundland death rites. In his article "'Tricks and Fun': Subversive Pleasures at Newfoundland Wakes," folklorist Peter Narváez says that many, although certainly not all, wakes in Newfoundland in the past involved "disorder, ridicule, and laughter." The activities engaged in included "smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, eating, talking, storytelling, singing, dancing, fighting, pranking ('tricks'), and playing games" (1994, 264-65). A number of additional writers, including folklorists George Casey (1971), Anna-Kaye Buckley and Christine Cartwright (1983), Isabelle Marie Peere (1992), Contessa Small (1997), and Kieran Walsh (2001), have discussed revelry at wakes in Newfoundland. From time to time, it is also mentioned in works not explicitly focussed on revelry or on death rites at all.

Before addressing revelry itself, it is important to clarify the structure and characteristics of the wake. K. Walsh's definition of "wake" (in reference specifically to

Catholic wakes in Newfoundland) is "the period during which the corpse was placed on display (in this case, within the home) in order to allow family and friends to come and pay their last respects. It lasted until the body was removed from the house and transported to the church for the funeral." He adds, "anywhere from four or five up to twenty" participants "would stay awake all night with the corpse" (2001, 85-86).

As already discussed in Chapter Four, folklorist Gary Butler describes "the underlying pattern of the [house] wake" in Newfoundland. He sees this pattern as substantially similar, throughout those parts of Newfoundland where "the traditional Newfoundland wake" was still practiced at that time (1982, 28).[1] Butler notes that an "almost universal practice" was that people stayed up overnight in the house. At least one of those people would, at any given time, be with the body, while the others were in the kitchen (30). Butler does not specify that visiting customs are part of the wake; rather, he assumes that they occur and, as described in more detail in Chapter Four, describes the specific form that they take. Based on my own fieldwork, archival research, and reading, I think that Butler's pattern is applicable not only to the communities which still had home wakes in 1982, but to almost all areas of Newfoundland, with the exception of Protestant St. John's, prior to the replacement of the home wake by the funeral home or church wake.

This does not mean that wake customs were identical in all communities. As G. Butler points out, there was substantial variation in wake practices (1982, 28). In

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[1] Nevertheless, in some communities, "wake" was not an appropriate emic term for the community's own customs. Student paper writer Chesley Skinner says, "The setting up period was not called a wake. A wake, I was told once, was what the Catholics had when someone died and it was always a booze party" (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-020C/p. 28). In keeping with the general usage of folklorists, however, and for the sake of general consistency, I will use the word "wake" to cover all customs that involve a combination of visiting by other community members and some people staying up all night to watch the corpse.

particular, the degree to which party behaviours were or were not incorporated into Newfoundland death rites and the ways in which they were practiced depended on a number of factors, including religion, location, and the exact moment in history. Some writers have explicitly associated wake revelry with Irish ethnicity and/or Catholicism. The Reverend Lewis Amadeus Anspach, in his particularly early account, says, "The practice of 'waking the dead' is pretty general in Newfoundland, particularly among the natives of Irish extraction." While his brief description of the wake is largely focussed on lamentation, he also mentions one aspect of revelry, "drinking to revive their spirits, and keep themselves awake" (1819, 472-73). Narváez notes that reports of wake revelry were especially likely to concern "Roman Catholic communities," although his phrasing suggests that such reports were not limited to those communities (1994, 264). He implicitly suggests an Irish origin for the festive wake in Newfoundland, when he describes it as a "variant" of a particular wake that Irish folklorist Seán Ó Súilleabháin went to in 1921 and describes in *Irish Wake Amusements* (Narváez 265; Ó Súilleabháin 1969, 9-11).

Similarly, K. Walsh suggests Irish origins for "many of the customs" carried out at Newfoundland wakes (2001, 88). Since Walsh discusses only Catholic house wakes, however, it is not clear what his opinions are on the origins of wake revelry at Protestant wakes. C. Small also links important aspects of wake revelry to Catholicism and Irish ethnicity. She identifies "Games, story telling and tricks played on the corpse" as "part of the Irish and Roman Catholic wake tradition" (1997, 23) and describes drinking as an aspect of "the Irish wake tradition" (24). Small is primarily focussed on Catholic traditions and does not directly compare them with Protestant traditions. Her language, however, implicitly suggests that she does not think of revelry as being an aspect of Protestant or English wake customs. Peere also associates drink with Catholic wakes. She

perceives that Protestants had "more 'serious'" wakes, which, "apart from a few pranks allowed little entertainment other than talk" (1992, 136).

Although many writers identify wake revelry with Irish ethnicity and/or Catholicism, there are also some indications in previous work that the association between wake revelry and religion or ethnicity was more complex. The material quoted above from Anspach suggests that although religion did correlate with the practice of party behaviours at wakes, the correlation was not absolute. Similarly, Narváez states that accounts of fun or prankish behaviours on his list of wake activities (1994, 268-271) come from "a variety of Newfoundland informants from predominantly Catholic communities" (268). This language suggests that party behaviours, while strongly associated with Catholic communities, were not exclusive to them. He also points out that wakes held for people who died relatively young (implicitly including Catholic wakes), tended to be "solemn events" (264).

Elizabeth Lang demonstrates both that she had a clear sense that Catholic and Protestant death customs were different, but also that, in practice, there was not a sharp dividing line between the two sets of customs. She notes that custom in Wesleyville was to cook whatever meal the dead person had liked best on the night prior to the funeral and ask that person's friends to come to the meal. In addition, large quantities of "home made" alcoholic beverages were consumed, although Lang adds that that custom became less prominent after Mounties were stationed in the community. She is apparently puzzled by such customs in this context, however, as she adds, "The wake, with eating and drinking, is usual in Catholic settlements, but as far as I know, there is no Catholic congregation in Wesleyville" (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p.11).

Buckley and Cartwright look at death rites in "the late 1960s" in the unnamed community where Buckley grew up (1983, 6), but also use MUNFLA material to fill out

their information and make it more generally applicable. From their description, most residents of Buckley's community were Protestants and ethnically English (6), but some were Catholics (9). Buckley and Cartwright are interested in general patterns (6), but do, from time to time, mention specific Catholic and Protestant customs or religious observances (8, 9, 12, 13). In their discussion of the wake, however, Buckley and Cartwright mention no religious differences. Although, given their article's focus, the wake customs they discuss were probably practiced largely by Protestants, Buckley and Cartwright describe a number of party behaviours. They say the meal generally served at the wake was typically "merry" and describe drinking, courting, storytelling, playing pranks, and joking as occurring at wakes (11).

It appears to be true that Catholic wakes were, on average, more festive than Protestant wakes, but revelry at wakes existed on a continuum. Depending on the situation, party behaviours were sometimes pronounced and included drinking and pranks involving the corpse. In other situations, they were limited, consisting, for instance, of some chatting and storytelling. In yet other contexts, party behaviours seem to have been almost non-existent. In rural Newfoundland, both Catholic and Protestant wakes covered a large part of the continuum.

In St. John's, the division between the different religious groups seems have been more pronounced than it was in rural areas taken as a whole. Although wake revelry among Catholics had largely died out before the wake moved to the funeral home, judging by archival material and comments from some informants, it was a significant feature of the wake until some point in the twentieth century. In contrast, at least in some circles, it was not a Protestant custom to have wakes.

Like the relationship between wake revelry and religion, how Irish the Newfoundland wake actually was, even among Catholics, is open to question. While

there is no doubt that Irish wake revelry was a significant contributor to the form that wake revelry took in Newfoundland, there seem to have been significant differences between wake revelry in Ireland and wake revelry in twentieth century Newfoundland. Some Irish wake customs were likely much less important in Newfoundland and this undoubtedly affected the mood of the wake.

In the interest of clarity about the form wakes took in Newfoundland, I will begin this chapter by contrasting Irish and Newfoundland wakes. I will continue with a comparison of wakes in Catholic and Protestant contexts in both urban and rural areas. From there I will focus in on gendered differences in wake attendance and participation in various aspects of the wake.

6.1 Differences between Irish and Newfoundland Wakes

My archival research and fieldwork suggest that some of the party activities with strong antecedents in Ireland may have occurred much more commonly in Newfoundland than others. Some may have taken place infrequently and, even when they did occur, seem to have been qualitatively different than they were in Ireland. The best example is probably fighting, an activity which, as described in more detail in Chapter Three was, according to Ó Súilleabháin, at one time common at Irish wakes. It also appears on the lengthy list of wake activities included in Narváez's article. Judging, however, by my archival research, the material from my interviews, and the fact that Narváez provides only one reference for it (1994, 269), fighting at wakes was, at least during my study period, very uncommon.

I collected no information at all about fighting in my interviews. Possibly this was because I did not ask about it. I suspect, however, that if fighting had been a significant feature of wakes in any area where I interviewed, I would have heard about it. Archival

material included slightly more information. Karen McDonald paraphrases a story from Frank English, one of her informants, about a fight that broke out at a wake in St. John's, after one of the participants "went over to the coffin and knocked it over and the corpse fell out of the coffin underneath the window." The informant and the people he was with apparently took this in stride; they "left and waited until the fight was over so they could return to the wake" (1983, MUNFLA ms 84-122/16-17). Their nonchalance about this incident might or might not suggest that fights at wakes were almost expected.

Rather more ambiguously, Glenda Christine Saint and Beverly Ruth Thistle, writing about St. John's, say, "During the early 30s, Catholic wakes could degenerate into a brawl given temperament of the people, their social status, and amount of liquor available." In the overall context of this paper, however, it is not clear if the word "brawl" actually means a fight or a particularly wild party (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 8). Similarly, William Cooper in his discussion of party behaviours at Catholic wakes in Merasheen, Placentia Bay comments that they included "even arguing and brawling on occasion," a phrase which implies physical fighting without, perhaps, quite confirming it (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-008C/p. 9). In addition, Narváez gives an example of fighting from his own library research, although that instance took place during the mid-1800s (1994, 265).[2] In some of these cases, it appears that "brawling," by whatever meaning of the word, might have been culturally expected, but given the paucity of information, perhaps only in a few communities.

The apparent difference in amount of fighting at wakes may be linked to other cultural changes. Ó Súilleabháin thinks that some of the fighting in Ireland grew out of "the rough character of some of the games" (1969, 71), but, as described in more detail

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[2] The location of the wake is also not quite clear. Narváez's source is Thomas Bredin, ed., 1969, *Recollections of Labrador Life by Lambert de Boilieu*, Toronto: Ryerson Press, but Narváez places the wake itself in Newfoundland (1994, 265).

below, wake games, especially the rowdier and more violent ones, were less important in Newfoundland. As already mentioned in Chapter Three, Ó Súilleabháin attributes some of the violence at Irish wakes to faction fighting. While there is evidence of faction fighting in Newfoundland, none of the information I have about it involves wakes and none is more recent than the 1800s.[3] If faction fighting ever took place at Newfoundland wakes, it seems to have vanished long ago.

Game playing, as described in Chapter Three, received voluminous attention in Ó Súilleabháin's description of Irish wake behaviour. In contrast, relatively little material about games came up in my interviews, and I found only a few instances of game playing in archival material. While my research in MUNFLA was extensive, however, it was not exhaustive and Narváez found a number of references to different types of games in the MUNFLA archival material he used (which overlapped only minimally with the material I used). Some additional information exists in the published literature, but the quantity of the material pales beside the information available on Ireland. This may be partly a reflection of what writers thought important and, for the archival information, what was stressed by the professors teaching the classes for which the papers were written.[4] Nevertheless, it seems likely that game playing was probably much less common in Newfoundland than in Ireland.

Not only does it appear that games may have been played less frequently at Newfoundland wakes, but the nature of the games also seems to have been different. In Ireland, as previously discussed, games were often very rough and frequently involved

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[3] Keough 2001, frame 5, 389-91; *Encyc. of N & L* 1994, vol. 5, s.v. "St. John's," citing material partially quoted from D. W. Prowse's 1895 *History of Newfoundland*; John FitzGerald as quoted in Trew 2005, 59. (The quotation from FitzGerald comes from an interview conducted by Trew.)

[4] Thanks to Martin Lovelace for pointing this out to me.

tricks played on some of the players. Although my sources are somewhat contradictory, my sense is that in Newfoundland there was less emphasis on the more brutal games and the ones involving disagreeable tricks.

At least half the references to games in the archival material I looked at involved card playing, something Ó Súilleabháin mentions, but to which he gives much less attention than he does to more active games. As described in more detail in Chapter Three, Ó Súilleabháin is rather ambivalent about just how common card playing was, but suggests that it was likely to happen at wakes with certain characteristics, including a relatively smaller attendance.

In contrast, information about Newfoundland suggests that, to the extent games took place at wakes at all, card playing was relatively important. The archival material I used describes card playing at wakes in several Newfoundland communities, including Grand Bank (Hornell 1984, MUNFLA ms 84-365/p. 15), Joe Batt's Arm (Trask 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-024E/p. 32), Kilbride (Courtney 1968, MUNFLA ms 69-009D/p. 11), and St. John's (Foran 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/p. 3 and possibly Trask 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-024E/p. 32[5]). Narváez gives the references for two additional MUNFLA accounts, without mentioning which communities were involved (1994, 269).[6] K. Walsh, drawing upon a MUNFLA paper about St. John's,[7] also mentions card playing (2001, 88).

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[5] Trask indicates he heard someone "from St. John's" talk about his father's experience with card games at wakes, but does not spell out where the father was from (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-024D/p. 32).

[6] MUNFLA ms 71-43/p. 36 and MUNFLA ms 71-44/p. 67.

[7] Betty Stratton's *Catholic Funerals in St. John's*, unpublished research paper, MUNFLA ms 68-022D/p. 13.

Interestingly, my informants, when guessing about wake behaviour of which they were not quite certain, focussed on cards, rather than other games. Gerry Bromley, for instance, when asked specifically about games, said, "Not that I'm aware of. They could've, of course. But any wakes, I stayed up to a number of wakes in my days. Stayed up all night up and that. But I don't remember anybody playing cards or anything like that, during the wake" (June 23, 2002). Ernestine Jones knew very little about wakes from direct experience, but speculated, in response to a question about gendered participation in wakes, that after the women had left, "the men would be up there, probably playing a game of cards" (June 22, 2003). At an intuitive level, card playing may, to these informants, have seemed to either be appropriate for wakes or, at least, be more likely than other possibilities.

Casey provides some information about games in Conche, although he sets them in the past, "about the turn of the century" (1971, 298). He describes one game in some detail:

> Another game which was played when he [Casey's informant] was a youth involved passing the fire tongs. Each person would take the tongs which were by the fireplace and tap the floor and say in a chanting manner, "He's a fool, she's a fool, that can't do this, this, this." The sayer would then pass the tongs on to the person seated next to him. The game involved the passing. If, in tapping the floor, the right hand was used, the tongs had to be moved to the left and then passed on. "They were passed right around the house and perhaps there'd be no one see the catch in passing it."

Casey says this game is much like the "catch-games" found in Ó Súilleabháin (299).

Casey identifies "Who got the button?" as another game played in Conche (1971, 299). I found three archival papers about St. John's that report a game with a similar title, "Hide the Button," in which participants tried to guess who had possession of a button.[8]

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[8] Ó Súilleabháin includes a description of an Irish version of "Hide the Button" in *Irish Wake Amusements* (1967, 116-17).

McDonald says, "The way this game was played was one person would have a button in his hand and he would go around to everyone else in the circle . [sic] The idea was for everyone to guess who had the button and whoever guessed right it was then their turn to hide the button" (1983, MUNFLA ms 84-122/p. 17). According to Saint and Thistle, this was a kissing game; "the man who got the button had to kiss the ladies" (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 15). Edwina Foran reports a story that her father, Edward Foran, "hid it [the button] in the corpse's joined hands. No one succeeded in finding it so the corpse was buried still clasping the botton [sic]. He claims such incidents were quite common" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/p. 3). Narváez also reports an archival example (1994, 269).[9] K. Walsh, drawing on a MUNFLA paper about St. John's,[10] discusses "pass the button," a similar game. In his description, a wrong guess might be penalized by "some sort of interaction with the dead body, such as biting the corpse" (2001, 87).

K. Walsh gives some other examples of games, including the general category "games which promoted physical contact between the living and the dead." Another game, "spin the bottle," was presumably linked to the courting that sometimes took place at wakes (2001, 87-88). These games might, in some instances, be socially awkward, or, when touching the corpse was involved, downright unpleasant. Like most of the games already described, however, they sound much gentler in spirit and execution than many of the Irish games Ó Súilleabháin describes. Most games played at Newfoundland wakes did not, so far as can be told from their descriptions, feature roughness or violence. Instead, relatively gentle games seem to be more typical.

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[9] MUNFLA 64-13 (C45).

[10] Betty Stratton's "Catholic Funerals in St. John's," MUNFLA ms 68-022D/p. 13.

While rough games or those involving unpleasant surprises were relatively
uncommon in Newfoundland, they did take place. Mary E. Byrne reports a game of this
type, "Forpets," from St. Brendan's, a Catholic community in Bonavista Bay (1988,
MUNFLA ms 89-018A/p. 22). Probably "forpets" is a variation on or a misunderstanding
of the word "forfeits." According to Byrne, "forpets" players were required to forfeit
"some personal article," if they failed to respond promptly when addressed by arbitrarily
assigned nicknames. Afterwards, they were given a task they had to carry out before
retrieving their property (22-23). Byrne says that these tasks were "always something
scary." Her examples include touching the corpse and circling the outside of the house at
night. According to Byrne, another participant would invariably find some way to make
the task more frightening than it inherently was, such as "jump[ing] out at" someone
walking around the outside of the house or causing the corpse to move, if the task was to
touch the corpse. Despite the scary features of the game, participants generally enjoyed it.
Byrne reports, "Most remember it as being great fun and a great way to pass the 'staying
up' period" (23-24).

The several variations of "forfeits" that Ó Súilleabháin describes are similar to
"forpets," but involved tasks that were not frightening in the same way (1969, 121-22).[11]
Although the exact Irish antecedent(s) for the game as practiced in St. Brendan's are
unknown and, as would be expected with any kind of folklore, there was probably
significant variation in this game beyond what Ó Súilleabháin could include or (was
necessarily even aware of), it is possible that the game became somewhat scarier and

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[11] Ó Súilleabháin's examples include tasks that might involve social
embarrassment and might have social consequences(1969, 121-22). For many people,
especially those who were at all shy, they might therefore be frightening. Nevertheless,
the scariness of these tasks is not as central as it is in the examples from St. Brendan's.

physically rougher than it had been in Ireland. If that was the case, however, this example appears to be an exception to the general trend.

Narváez's list of wake activities does include a number of games with unpleasant penalties. It is possible to identify another game, "Sheep," as likely having had an unpleasant penalty, since Narváez says that it is a "variant of 'Clean Sheep, Dirty Sheep,'" as described by Ó Súilleabháin (1994, 269). In Ó Súilleabháin's version, some players were "sheep," but two players were granted the power to label individual sheep as either "clean or dirty." Dirty sheep were forcibly "'cleaned,'" either by immersion in the cesspool or by drenching with "dirty water." According to Ó Súilleabháin, the players empowered to decide who was in which category based their decisions on their personal feelings about individual players (1969, 69). To the extent that this attitude was usually true of this game, "Clean Sheep, Dirty Sheep" cannot be categorized as a particularly vigorous form of good fun.

With other games, it is less clear how rough they were or whether they involved disagreeable surprises. Narváez, for instance, found two archival examples of "Forfeits."[12] As described above, different versions of this game may or may not have included scary and rough elements, in addition to those that were simply discomforting. Narváez's list also includes a "kissing game," which the author of the archival manuscript[13] describes as "something like Forfeits." The game from *Irish Wake Amusements* that Narváez identifies as similar, however, is not Forfeits, but "Frumso Framso" (1994, 269). As Ó Súilleabháin describes this game, it was a kissing game, but, in Ireland, at least, the kissing was not necessarily consensual. Reluctant participants were forcibly brought to the person who had named them (1969, 94-95). Presumably the

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[12] MUNFLA 64-013 (C45) and MUNFLA ms 73-175/pp. 24-25 (1994, 269).

[13] MUNFLA 71-44/p. 10 (1994, 269).

level of roughhousing or outright violence in this game depended on how many participants (if any) were reluctant and how much they struggled. With games of this sort, it is impossible to determine without more information how rough and unpleasant they really were and how they varied between Newfoundland and Ireland.

Although Narváez found rather more archival material about games at wakes than I did, that material is concentrated in a total of five MUNFLA accessions. The games with unpleasant penalties are even more concentrated. The three distinct disagreeable penalties for wake games that Narváez refers to all appear in the same paper.[14] Since they are all listed as appearing on the same two sequential pages, it is quite possible that all three penalties are part of the same game or set of related games. One of those penalties also appears in one other paper.[15] "Clean Sheep, Dirty Sheep" is described in this second paper.[16] These papers also list other games, including some which, as discussed above, may or may not have rough or unpleasant qualities (Narváez 1994, 269).[17]

Narváez is one of the better sources about wake games, so the relatively small number of sources he relies on for this topic, in combination with the general lack of information about games, especially those with rough qualities or unpleasant elements, suggests that wake games may have been taken place in a relatively small number of communities and that games involving violence or highly unpleasant aspects were even

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[14] MUNFLA ms 73-175/pp. 24-25.

[15] MUNFLA ms 71-44/p. 10.

[16] MUNFLA 71-44.

[17] MUNFLA 73-175 is also one of the sources for "Forfeits" and MUNFLA 71-44/p. 10 also mentions card playing and the kissing game. The other MUNFLA accession that mentions "Forfeits," MUNFLA 64-13/C45 and C49, is also the source for information about "Hide the Button." A total of two other accessions, MUNFLA ms 71-42/p. 36 and MUNFLA 64-12/C42, mention one game or type of game each (Narváez 1994, 269).

rarer. It seems likely that game playing in Newfoundland was a less important feature of wakes than game playing was in Ireland and that, overall, games in Newfoundland were not as vigorous, aggressive, or as unpleasant for unwitting participants as games in Ireland. Newfoundland wake activities, especially as practiced by Catholics and those of Irish descent, no doubt derived, in large part, from Irish wake activities. Nevertheless, even among Catholics, the Newfoundland wake had important differences from the Irish wake.

Given that fighting and, probably, rough games, were, for the most part, not significant elements of Newfoundland wakes, the atmosphere was probably much calmer than the atmosphere at Irish wakes and attendance at Newfoundland wakes, especially for men, the primary participants in the rougher activities, less physically dangerous. Nevertheless, among the other party behaviours that Newfoundland wakes retained, there was one significant genre that shared an important aspect with many of the Irish games. While unpleasant surprises seem to have been a much less important element of Newfoundland wake games than of Irish ones, this feature did not disappear from Newfoundland wakes altogether. Unpleasant surprises were a central component of wake pranks and wake pranks are much better represented in Newfoundland material than games are.

6.2 Wakes in Newfoundland

Since use of space is integral to wakes and wake customs in Newfoundland, I begin my discussion of wakes by building and elaborating on the material on space presented in Chapter Three. As described in that chapter, G. Butler discusses the wake and the wake room in terms of Durkheim's ideas about "sacred and profane worlds." Butler paraphrases Durkheim's description of "the profane" as "that world wherein

interaction between individuals, and between individuals and other animate and inanimate objects, is governed by purely human considerations." In contrast,

> In the sacred world, the rules of human interpersonal conduct are negated. The inhabitants of this world are non-human, supernatural beings. The sacred world is not immediately perceivable by humans, but its nature and structure can be made known to them by sacred human intermediaries, such as priests or prophets. . . . The sacred then may not be directly experienced or perceived but is conceptualized in terms of concrete metaphor and expressive symbolism, that is, in humanly meaningful terms. (1982, 27)

As G. Butler describes Durkheim's system, there is no real connection between the categories of sacred and profane, "the two having in essence nothing whatsoever in common." The different realms do, however, communicate with each other. It is not possible to avoid "interaction" between these spheres. Further, it is possible for profane things to evolve into sacred objects. Butler perceives that what is sacred and what is profane depends upon the specific culture, as do "the rules for interaction between the profane and the sacred" (27-28). Death disrupted the relationship between the sacred and the profane, as the dead person was "suddenly neither profane nor sacred." The wake re-established the balance between the two aspects of life. From Butler's perspective, it "literally puts things in their proper place" (31). It brought together and "integrated" a number of oppositions: "the physical and the abstract, the profane and the sacred, the social and the religious" (28). Due to its integrative qualities, the wake has to be considered as a whole, not as two different "types of activities" that, despite occurring side by side, are "contradictory" (31).

G. Butler notes that houses are among the objects that may move from the category of "profane" to that of "sacred" (1982, 27). In his understanding, rooms within houses may also be perceived (and used) as either sacred or profane space. As described in Chapter Three, Butler identifies the kitchen and the activities that took place there as

profane, whereas the parlour was sacred. That is why the corpse was typically waked in the parlour; following the death, the deceased person was in transition away "from the profane world of the living" and was in some sense a "stranger." Locating the body in the parlour physically acknowledged that change and started the process by which the body itself was removed from the profane space occupied by the community (29-30).

G. Butler argues that use of the parlour during the wake did not negate the usual "rules that dictate[d] that the kitchen [was] the place where normal interpersonal relationships occur[red]," because, as he sees it, entertainment is not what happened in the parlour then. He perceives that at the wake community members "join[ed] with the family in sacred relationship to the deceased and to each other" (1982, 29). The parlour, which was a special room to begin with, became during the wake "a purely sacred space," which also "symbolize[d] the sacred space which [was] now the domain of the deceased" (30).

Visiting in the wake room was highly ritualized. As described in Chapter Four, from G. Butler's description, it appears that only a small number of behaviours were appropriate for visitors in the wake room and most of those behaviours were expected. According to Butler, "the wake room [was] the ultimate sacred space." People had to behave in accordance with ritual norms in this room. Anything else "would be to behave in a profane manner." In contrast, the kitchen, where visitors typically went after their visit to the wake room, was a very different sort of environment. Butler describes it as having "a more relaxed atmosphere." While people might talk to some extent about the dead person, for the most part, conversation became more general. Food was available in the kitchen and possibly alcohol.[18] While the wake was in progress, the kitchen was the

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[18] The actual word Butler uses is "drink," which is ambiguous (1982, 30). There is, however, ample evidence from other sources that alcohol was available at some Newfoundland wakes.

permissible setting for profane behaviour. In fact, "a lively affair" might take place there during the latter part of the evening (1982, 30).

For immediate purposes, the interesting thing about this is the way in which the relation of this room to public and private space shifted during the wake. Both at normal times and during the wake, the parlour was arguably one of Janet Abu-Lughod's "controlled semi-private" areas, but in different ways. As described in Chapter One, in Newfoundland, the parlour was generally used rarely and was neither fully public nor fully private, in the sense of being reserved for family members and their intimates. The use of the parlour shifted during the wake. Other people living in the community could enter it, whereas "strangers" could not (G. Butler 1982, 29). Given the extensive visiting, during wakes the parlour shifted substantially closer to the public end of the public/private continuum, but was still not fully public. This use of the parlour was parallel to the use of the kitchen that folklorist Gerald Thomas describes for two different "traditions" of storytelling, as discussed in Chapter One. It was not so much the particular space itself, as the way in which it was used at any given time, which made the space – or the events that took place there – relatively public or private.

As described in more detail in Chapter Three, appropriate behaviour was different in the kitchen and parlour during the wake. Behaviour in the parlour or wake room was more constrained than behaviour in the kitchen. In particular, revelry was usually off limits in the parlour. For instance, one of Richard Moriarty's informants for his paper about Renews reports that in the past, "no one would joke or laugh in the room with the corpse." Such behaviour was permissible elsewhere in the house, however. Smoking in the same room with the corpse was also deemed inappropriate, but by the time of Moriarty's paper, these constraints had loosened (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-211/p. 57).

The categorization of space within the wake house as sacred or profane is not necessarily entirely clear-cut. Jean Meadus, drawing on Durkheim, suggests that the parlour is actually liminal space that exists between the sacred and the profane (1992, MUNFLA ms 94-212/ pp. 8-9). K. Walsh, as noted in Chapter One points out that sometimes the "rules" that govern which space is sacred and which profane "are broken." Some wake activities may involve "interaction between the living and the dead." Implicitly these activities (or some of them) are ones that might be more appropriate in "profane" than "sacred" space.[19] Walsh's example is the type of "interaction" with the dead that might occur during games like "pass the button" (2001, 95).[20] Presumably Walsh would also include outright pranks involving the body in the general category of activities that blur the boundaries of sacred and profane, since such pranks could not occur without the use of the wake room by pranksters. Revelry not directly dependent upon the corpse might also, on occasion, take place in the wake room; according to David Courtney writing about Kilbride, "Liquor was drunk in the wake room as well" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-009D/p. 10).

A solution to this apparent contradiction may lie in Buckley and Cartwright's division of time at the wake (as discussed in Chapter Three), into sacred and profane. Under their system, daytime is sacred, whereas night-time and the more overt party activities sometimes engaged in at night are profane. They suggest that "pranks and

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[19] Walsh appears not to be including in his discussion such routine and traditional "interaction[s]" as the living touching the corpse or praying for the deceased, in the presence of the body.

[20] An even better example is Foran's account, discussed earlier, of how her father hid a button "in the corpse's joined hands" during a game (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/p. 3). It is hard to imagine how he would have managed this if the game had taken place anywhere other than the wake room, whereas, from Walsh's description, the game could have taken place in the kitchen, with participants being sent into the wake room to carry out their penalties.

drinking," so long as they did not violate community limits, "were not felt to be a violation of the wake room's sacredness, but part of the nighttime version of that sacredness, which was more complementary than antithetical to that of the day" (1983, 11). In addition, the family typically left the public areas of the house around ten or eleven at night (9), so were excluded from the night-time activities. K. Walsh points out that the absence of near kin when wake activities involving the corpse took place is relevant to the discussion of "when the sacred is not sacred" (2001, 95-96).

The parlour was neither fully public nor fully private at any time, but became more public following a death. While the parlour served as the wake room, it and the activities that took place there (with limited exception) were sacred. The kitchen, however, was profane space. A range of other activities was allowable there and depending on a number of factors, some of those activities might be forms of revelry.

6.2.1 Geographic Differences

Although scholarly attention has mostly focussed on differences in wakes according to religion, differences between wakes in St. John's and wakes in rural areas was also significant. Further, there was significant variation, for both religious groups, in rural wake practices. In this section, I examine wake practices by geographic area and by religion.

6.2.1.1 Rural Newfoundland

Interviews with Catholic and Protestant informants, backed up by archival research, suggest that for rural wakes the difference between Catholic and Protestant wakes was a matter of degree, not of kind. At least some Protestant wakes incorporated some party behaviours. Conversely, Catholic wakes could be no more raucous than Protestant wakes. On average, cultural constraints and limits on party behaviours at

wakes may have been more restrictive in Protestant communities, but they existed in Catholic contexts as well.

6.2.1.1.1 Catholic Wakes

Catholic wakes demonstrated considerable variation in terms of festivity. Mrs. Hunt, a Catholic who had lived in Bay Roberts most of her life, but who had grown up in Argentia, described wakes as being fairly subdued. She said, "they would just probably eat a bit and chat among themselves and, probably read or something like that, but they would stay awake all night." This account may not have been based on direct knowledge, however; this informant told me that it was generally men who took on the task of staying up and I do not think she ever attended a wake herself (Sept. 27, 2002). Even though she characterized the wake as pretty quiet, Mrs. Hunt was aware of stories about pranks (June 21, 2003).

Wakes in Conche were at least sometimes more festive. Mr. Dower said:

> Although, I do remember, to hear people say that a long time ago, they wouldn't have any kind of a celebration after a funeral, but the way they would celebrate at a wake, they'd say, "A wake was as good as a wedding," you know? And people just used it as an excuse for to take time off from their hard work for a couple of days and stay up all night and yarn and have a few drinks and tell a few stories and a few jokes and have a few laughs, and not out of no sign of disrespect for the dead, but, you know, rather than just go and sit down and look at a dead person all night long, I mean that, that can get pretty depressing. [laughter]

Austin also discussed the meal made up for the wake and playful antics involving the corpse (June 24, 2002).

Mrs. Northcott did not have direct knowledge of rural Catholic wakes, but passed on information about such wakes gleaned from a woman with personal knowledge of Bay Bulls: "They weren't supposed to be occasions, it was a party, almost, [?] and they'd all

tell funny things they remembered about old so-and-so and then they'd laugh at that"
(Nov. 4, 2004).

Andrew O'Brien, in a student paper about Cape Broyle, describes a context
which, judging by the description of saying the Rosary at the wake, appears to have been
largely or entirely Catholic. He asserts "Most wakes in Cape Broyle are quite solemn, but
there have been those which could be labeled jovial" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 6).
This author, however, has a rather broad view of what might be considered "solemn." As
O'Brien describes a typical wake, it included joking and storytelling, as well as,
frequently, the consumption of rum (5-6). Before his time, practical jokes, some of them
involving the corpse, also took place (pp. 11-13).

The nature of pranks was one of the most significant differences between Catholic
and Protestant wakes. There are reports about wake pranks from both Catholics and
Protestants, but in Catholic tradition, some of these stories are about pranks involving the
body, an element that is missing in accounts of Protestant wakes.[21]

All my Conche informants had something to say about wake pranks. Mr. Bromley
told me about a situation that happened during his high school days, when high school
students often used to "stay up" at weekend wakes. He said:

> And of course, the boys were always up to all kinds of jokes and that and pranks,
> so, on this occasion, they went and got a piece of line, and a small fine line, a
> fishing line, and they tied it on the arm of the corpse. So, in such a way, they put
> it out through the window. So they went outside, then, after a while, and when
> there was no one in the room with the deceased, only the girls, they were having,
> you know, chatting, laughing and things like this, you know. And all of a sudden,
> the boys would pull on the string and the corpse would start to move and, of

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[21] Both Catholics and Protestants do, however, tell stories about things that
happen to the body by chance. In one instance, Mr. Sparkes, a Bay Roberts Protestant,
told me a story about something that he initially presented as a chance occurrence, but
later recontextualized as a prank, after I specifically asked about pranks (Sept. 26, 2002).
This is the one exception to the general rule of which I am aware.

course, everybody started to scream and left the room kind of thing. (June 23, 2002)

Mr. Bromley also told me that he was aware of stories about a pipe being put in the mouth of the corpse and he thought these stories were likely to be true (June 23, 2002).

Mr. Dower described how his grandfather "got Mr. Delaney's crooked stem pipe and put it in the corpse's mouth. And then tied a string to him. And every now and then he'd pull on the string, and sit him up and [get?] in the coffin now, haul him up for a look and let him back in" (June 24, 2002 [deceased's name changed]). Mrs. Hurley said, when we were talking about stories she had heard from "older people" about pranks,

> I just heard a few like where people would, I don't know if this in the summertime, well, this man died once, and some people, well, I think they were coming from a dance or something was going on in the community, and the window was up in the house where the person was being wakened, and they had managed to get a line around his neck, and the people were inside [? out?], they started pulling him up from outside [laughter], and somebody else had set somebody up in the casket and put a pipe in his mouth. (June 22, 2002)

Although I found Mrs. Gould's description of wake pranks a little difficult to follow on the tape, it seems to involve pranksters attaching a cord to the corpse's wrist and pulling on it until the hand rose. Since it sounded like she was attributing the pranks to "the older people" and saying she had no direct knowledge, I asked if she had personally experienced pranks and she said she had not (June 20, 2002).

Although Mrs. Hunt in Bay Roberts was aware of stories about wake pranks, she was not quite sure whether those stories should be taken literally. She was, however, sure that such pranks would not be considered appropriate in her circles. When I asked her about pranks, she responded, "I haven't witnessed any of that, but I know I heard about it going on. But I've never seen it. And it would be frowned on in any of my dealings with wakes and funerals, but I know that I've heard yarns, whether it happened or not, I

suppose it did, but, they would play pranks on people in the funeral home. Or in the home, if there, but I haven't seen it" (June 21, 2003).[22]

6.2.1.1.2 Protestant Wakes

Rural Protestant wakes also varied, although not to the same degree. Some do seem to have been quite subdued, with no party elements except food. David Caravan of Bay Roberts described the wake as "just a quiet time of being there. His wife, Sadie Caravan, added, "just normal conversation. And paying respect to the deceased, I guess." Mr. Caravan also said, "It was usually a very serious time and, of course, coming from a Methodist tradition that was a very reverent affair." He did say, however, that there was food for the people at the wake (Sept. 26, 2002). Similarly, when I asked Minnie Hillier of St. Lunaire-Griquet about what generally happened at wakes, she said, "Sometimes they would sing hymns and later in the night they would talk among themselves, perhaps tell stories." Mrs. Hillier did not mention specifically celebratory aspects of the wakes, but did say, "they used to have food, then, for them to eat, while they was waking up all night" (June 18, 2002).

Nevertheless, some of my Protestant informants told me about fun activities at wakes. For instance, although John Bridger, a St. Lunaire-Griquet resident, said that a religious activity (hymn-singing) was a wake custom he particularly enjoyed, expressed strong disapproval of drinking at wakes, and sounded pained when asked about wake pranks, he nevertheless thought that the secular and fun custom of telling stories at wakes was acceptable. He described another man as "a wonderful fellow to stay up to a wake,

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[22] It is surprising that Mrs. Hunt mentions funeral homes, which do not generally feature in stories about pranks. Although Dr. Hiscock thought there was theoretically some potential for pranks not involving the body or bereaved relatives to take place in modern contexts (June 10, 2004), most stories and information about pranks come from the era of the home wake.

eh? Really good, like yarns and talk and telling stories and stuff like that." Mr. Bridger

also mentioned smoking at a particular wake and indicated that tea, coffee, and snacks

such as cookies and cake were available (June 17, 2002).

Wilbur Sparkes, who was from another area of Bay Roberts than Mr. Caravan,

remembered a somewhat livelier wake tradition. He said of wakes, "Those were nice for

stories and you imagine now, the stories that were told and whatever, you had to keep

talking to stay awake." Nevertheless, he thought of wakes as tedious or difficult: "And

that was a chore, you know. To go probably to a house ten o'clock and leave the next

morning, probably six or seven o'clock, when daylight came," Mr. Sparkes was aware of

more festive wakes in other areas, but contrasted those with wakes in his area. He said,

"I've read where people looked at it as a time of merriment. That the person involved has

passed on and was going to his reward and whatever and now this is a time to celebrate.

His pain was over and whatever. So, you've got those, too, but around here, presumably

is a time for respect and, like I said, bringing your condolences and whatever to the

families" (Sept. 26, 2002).

Retired Protestant minister Joe Burton who had worked in Bay Roberts and a

number of other places in Newfoundland, said of expected wake behaviour: "You

wouldn't do anything at a wake, except go in and look and sit down. And then, leave a

card or something." His discussion of eating and drinking, yields a more complex picture,

however. He said, "You wouldn't eat at a wake or have anything to drink. Except

possibly the men. Maybe the men would go out in the shed, and where some member of

the family would have a bottle of rum or whiskey or something and they'd have a swig,

as you say, have just a little drop" (Aug. 25, 2004).[23] Behaviour that seems to have often

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[23] The information from the Rev. Mr. Burton may be not directly comparable to
the other information given here, as his comments sound as if they were primarily or
exclusively about the daytime wake, when people visited the family, rather than the

been carried on openly at Catholic wakes was at least sometimes carried on clandestinely at Protestant wakes.

The Rev. Mr. Burton denied knowledge about pranks at wakes, but said, "Now, as you know, there are some jokes about things like that, right, but I don't recall any of them now, but if there are, I think they are purely jokes without any basis in reality, you know? And yet, I guess there were instances where people made light of it" (Aug. 25, 2004).

Another Protestant informant, Mrs. Sheppard, who was born in Hibbs Cove and now lives in Port de Grave, told me that games were not played at wakes, because wakes were "serious," and described hymn singing as a wake custom. She also, however, discussed courtship at a particular wake, as will be discussed in more detail below, and summed up this part of the discussion by saying, "You lived in your own community and made your own fun, whether it was living or dying" (Sept. 27, 2002).

Like my fieldwork, archival materials present a mixed picture. Some Protestant wakes are portrayed as subdued. Chesley Skinner, writing about funeral customs in Richard's Harbour in Hermitage Bay, for instance, says that the nights during which people "'set up'" featured hymn singing and talking, as well as a meal. Topics of conversation could include "nearly everything," but some of the talk centred on the family connections of the person who had died (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-020C/p. 23). Similarly, in the Protestant community of Twillingate, the primary reported activity was

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night-time wake, when people stayed up with the corpse, but the sharing of alcohol, whether practiced in daytime or night-time, is a feature of revelry.

Interestingly, Bradbrook, based on a MUNFLA source, 70-11, says something similar about Anglican wakes in the community of Foxtrap; people were aware that "alcohol was frequently present but it was seldom visible" (15). Conversely, according to one of Moriarty's informants, in the mostly-Catholic community of Renews, the alcohol was often kept upstairs, "because of the large numbers downstairs in every room." If I understand this account correctly, people would be individually invited to partake of it (MUNFLA ms 74-211/p. 53).

conversation (Stockley 1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-021E/p. 9). Lillian Dredge reports a very austere wake, where "there would never be anything served." There was no alcohol in the house while the wake was in progress and no fire, with the result that not even tea could be made (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A/pp. 14-15).

Other Protestant wakes, such as the one described above for Wesleyville, had significant festive elements. John Dollimount helpfully provides a rather full description of the sorts of revelry that could take place at an Anglican wake in Francois. Dollimount, however, presents wakes with this sort of revelry as somewhat unusual. He says: "Cases are known and I have experienced a couple of these myself when the 'right bunch' is struck to 'have a whale of a time' in such a circumstance especially if the corpse was a 'ball of fun' during his life. At those times the 'sitting up' sessions take on a more relaxed social setting with practical jokes being played on one another." Such pranks included marking someone who had fallen asleep with soot and putting pieces of paper "in her hair." Dollimount goes on to describe a fairly rambunctious atmosphere, in which the body might be called to a meal or food might be brought to it (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-003E/p. 9).

Moriarty, writing about Renews, asserts that Catholic and Anglican wakes were much the same, with what differences did exist being primarily religious: "The priest wouldn't say public prayers at an Anglican wake." Among the elements reported as shared by the two religious groups were food and alcohol, which suggests there was a festive aspect to the wakes of both religions (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-211/pp. 27-28).

6.2.1.1.3 Limits on Wake Revelry

In both Protestant and Catholic communities, there were limits placed on party behaviour at wakes. This was very clear, for instance, in Conche, where wakes involved

eating and at least occasionally drinking, the telling of ghost stories, jokes, and pranks involving the body. These party activities did not, however, directly involve the family. My informants described a very solemn atmosphere during the daytime wake. Party behaviours were limited to the late night hours. Mr. Bromley, for instance, after telling me at some length about the wake prank involving movement of the corpse added, "Now, the immediate family would be all gone to bed by this." In contrast, during the daytime, when the family was around, the atmosphere of the wake would be very restrained. Mr. Bromley said, "You were very respectful when the immediate family were around, you wouldn't dare to laugh and things like this, you know, years ago, when somebody was dead, because there would be people crying most of the time" (June 23, 2002). Similarly, Mr. Dower said, "When the family members were up and around the house, well, out of respect for them, right, things was kept pretty much to a murmur or a whisper and everything was pretty low-key [right?]. But once the family members and everything went to bed, and usually people got in a little bit of a more jovial mood" (June 24, 2002).

Mrs. Hurley, also of Conche, thought that it was the exception, rather than the rule, when a wake became a party, but agreed with other informants that party behaviours occurred after the family went to bed. While acknowledging that there was a festive aspect to at least some wakes, she pointed out that her own perception of them was very different. She said, "I'm sure a lot of the older people can tell you a lot of things, but for me, you know, it seemed like, whenever you there, it was dead, complete silence, it was very solemn thing" (June 22, 2002).[24]

When I asked Mr. Dower about the tension between having people upstairs mourning and people downstairs partying, he said, "I don't think it would be a cause for

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[24] Mrs. Hurley said that in the past she had been fearful when there was a death in the community and my impression is that she may have avoided the night-time wake and that her perceptions are thus based on the daytime wake (June 22, 2002).

tension, between the people, because I think it was taken for granted. Especially among Irish-Catholic people, right? And their two big celebrations, you're having your wake and your wedding. And lots of old people would say, 'Now, boy, when I go, give me a good send-off'" (June 24, 2002).

A. O'Brien reports that in Cape Broyle outright party behaviours were engaged in when the relatives were not present. He says, "During the night when the relatives were asleep some of the men who were staying up would begin to carry on" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 11). Similarly, Jesse Fudge, the author of a paper about Grole in Hermitage Bay, says, "Sometimes they would have a gay old time providing that no relatives of the corpse were around" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-007C/p. 6).

As described above, the custom of waiting until the relatives were no longer present to start the revelry seems to have been typical in Newfoundland. Buckley and Cartwright give 10:00 p.m. as the end of the "sacred" daytime wake and, implicitly, the beginning of the "profane" "all-night vigil," when party behaviours took place (1983, 10-11). Other writers describe similar patterns. K. Walsh agrees that party behaviours usually took place after the relatives had gone to bed, but gives a somewhat later starting time, midnight (2001, 87). An informant of Lori Keating's describes how the younger people partied after the people living in the house had retired and the "older people" had gone home (qtd. in Narváez 1994, 281[25]). It is not clear if the difference between night-time and daytime behaviour at wakes was always as sharp as it was in Conche, but the division itself was evidently widespread and did not depend on religion.

There was, however, some variation in this overall pattern. For instance, the constraints on wake behaviour among Protestants in the Port de Grave area appear to

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[25] In his bibliography, Narváez indicates that this source was an unpublished interview done by Lori Keating with Frank Ryan of Torbay in 1992.

have been rather different. Mrs. Sheppard told me that hymn singing would not go on all night and the explanation she gave was, "Could be people sleeping in the house" (Sept. 27, 2002). Instead of the wake participants becoming rowdier when the residents went to bed, they became quieter. Claude Hamlyn, writing about communities in White Bay, says that wake customs, as described by his father-in-law,[26] included two nights when "friends and neighbours" sat up with the body and joking and storytelling took place. The relatives were present the final night and activities consisted of "every-day conversation" and hymn singing (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-010C/p. 9).

The division of the wake into different periods that accommodated both grieving mourners and partiers was not the only constraint on wake revelry. Both published material and some archival papers report the direct imposition of social constraints by wake participants. A. O'Brien, writing about Cape Broyle, for instance, reports a situation in which one of the wake participants interfered with a prank involving the corpse. This participant observed the prank taking place from outside the wake room and, despite being amused, intervened. In O'Brien's words, "Putting on a stern face the lady went in and asked what was going on. She pointed out that wakes should be times of sorrow" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 11). Even in a context in which party behaviours were permissible, this woman felt that some limits needed to be placed on their practice and she enforced those limits.

Buckley and Cartwright suggest that it was common for a specific individual to be present at the wake for the purpose of keeping the behaviour of other participants within reasonable bounds. The purpose of this was not, however, to prevent any and all party behaviour. From Buckley and Cartwright's account, this individual was typically "one of

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[26] This man was presumably a resident of Jackson's Arm, as Hamlyn's mother-in-law moved there when she married and apparently lived there for some time (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-010C/p. 2).

the more easygoing adults" and he or she might provide much of the entertainment, in the

form of storytelling (1983, 11). The rather loose nature of the control exerted by these

individuals notwithstanding, according to Narváez other participants were not necessarily

pleased that these people were present and thus might play pranks on them (1994, 281).

Warrick Canning describes in detail how the enforcement of constraints by a

particular individual worked at a Protestant wake in the community of Williamsport,

White Bay and also describes a prank played on that person. Canning says that the group

present at the wake consisted of three young men, aged about eighteen, and an older man,

aged roughly fifty. He adds sarcastically, "I mean, you couldn't let three young fellows

stay up alone; you never know what they'd do!" (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 21).

Judging by this writer's description the older man did, indeed, restrain the behaviour of

the younger men. During the night, the young men stole some vegetables from a garden,

with the intent of cooking a meal (23). The older man, however, convinced the others not

to actually prepare the meal, by pointing out that the bereaved family would notice the

smell of the cooking food (25-26).[27]

The same principle governed the acceptable noise level. Canning reports that,

although the wake participants applauded the singing and spoon playing of one of the

men, they were careful to keep the noise level lower than they would have preferred, "for

fear we might disturb the people sleeping upstairs" (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-

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[27] In this particular community, the recently bereaved relatives living in the wake house were expected to refrain from household chores, including cooking. Children stayed with friends during the wake and other people in the community fed "the children's parents" and, presumably, any other adult members of the family at their own houses. According to Canning, "If relatives had cooked in the wake house during the wake, other people in the community would think that they 'thought nothing about' the deceased and were celebrating his death by scoffing her up!" (1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/pp. 10-11). In that context, any cooking smells in the wake house would have been very noticeable. In addition to potentially distressing the family, such smells could conceivably result in unkind gossip.

005D/22). After mentioning singing and storytelling, Canning says, "Generally wake activities like this were regarded by the community as okay, but they were usually kept sly from those who were bereaved, although they knew that such things were very likely going on, anyway" (p. 26).

The younger men were willing to let the older man enforce his interpretation of community standards. They, however, also had standards for wake behaviour that they wanted to enforce and they did so, albeit rather sneakily. When the younger men returned from stealing vegetables and discovered that the older man had fallen asleep, Canning sprinkled pepper on the stove in order to create unpleasant smoke and wake him.[28] The stated reason for the prank was that the three young men "had decided among [them]selves, that nobody was going to be allowed to sleep a minute during the night" (MUNFLA ms 69-005D/pp. 23-24). Since they consulted with each other, but not the older man, he was effectively set up to violate this rule (or perhaps simply was the person that the three young men suspected would be most likely to fall asleep). Given that the older man did not veto the cooking plan until after the younger men had played the prank, the prank cannot be seen as direct revenge for this action (24-25).[29]

In other cases, the mere presence of a person with a particular type of personality at a wake may have been enough to keep the revelry under control. As indicated above, Mrs. Hurley's direct experience with the night-time wake seems to have been minimal or non-existent, but she did have some ideas about how they worked. As we were trying to sort out the apparent contradiction between the need to be utterly subdued and respectful

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[28] The older man thought that the stove was smoking on its own and apparently was never told differently (Canning 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 25).

[29] Indeed, the younger men were in agreement that the family should not be made aware that cooking was taking place: "Of course, that was the last thing that we wanted to happen" (Canning, 1968-69, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/26).

during the day when the family was around and the partying that sometimes went on at night, she said:

> I wouldn't say that they were at something all night long. I'm sure they prayed rosaries and everything in between, because more than likely there was somebody there that was serious; they weren't all those light-hearted people. And I'd say, if somebody serious was there, they will probably get upset by it. And then they probably didn't do it, when it was somebody serious there. I mean that didn't happen at all the wakes. That was probably just the occasional one. (June 22, 2002)

In these cases, restraint was externalized in the form of one or more members of the community who were responsible for enforcing limits. A. O'Brien, writing about Cape Broyle, reports an instance in which restraint was apparently expected to have been internalized and the violation of community standards can be tracked by community reaction after a particular wake. O'Brien says, "About two months ago a very old lady passed away. I did not attend the wake but, according to reports, beer, rum, etc., flowed freely and many got quite drunk. On this particular occasion the women's [sic] sons went on the beer, much to the horror of more pious mourners" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 6). In this instance, some people (but not everyone) were shocked, not because of the excessive consumption of alcohol in general, but because close relatives of the deceased were drunk.[30]

In general, Catholic wakes in rural Newfoundland seem to have been rowdier and more festive than Protestant wakes, but both Catholic and Protestant wakes could be sombre or festive to varying degrees, depending on the community, the circumstances of the death, and probably other factors. In both groups, cultural constraints kept festive behaviours within bounds, although appropriate limits varied with the community and the

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[30] As mentioned earlier, although the community's religion is not specified in this paper, judging by references to the Rosary being said as a matter of course, most or all residents must have been Catholic (A. O'Brien 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/pp. 5, 13).

situation. As the example of Conche demonstrates, even when considerable festivity was acceptable, it was not allowed to dominate the wake as a whole.

6.2.1.2 St. John's

The pattern of wake revelry in St. John's in the past differed from that of rural areas. In the city, within the living memory of my informants, Protestant wakes, to the extent that they existed at all, were quiet affairs. Although more social than many Protestant wakes, Catholic wakes were also quite subdued, in the memory of my sole Catholic informant from St. John's. That said, archival material, written literature, and the memory of my Protestant informants all suggest that Catholic wakes in St. John's were lively earlier in the century.

6.2.1.2.1 Catholic Wakes

Catholic wakes in St. John's underwent significant change in the twentieth century. Margaret Kearney, my Catholic informant in St. John's, describes wakes as restrained, although in a very different way than Protestant wakes and other visiting customs in St. John's were restrained. Judging by Mrs. Kearney's description, the atmosphere of the wake was similar to the atmosphere of the daytime wake in Conche. In fact, when I told her that in Conche I had heard that the family would have been really offended if anyone laughed or smiled in front of family members, she said, "I think they're quite right. Yes, they're quite right." She added, "That would be universal." About the atmosphere during the period following the death, she said, "In my youth, it was such a sombre, sombre, sombre event. The blinds were down, you didn't talk out loud, and as they told you in Conche, you **certainly**, didn't laugh, you simply didn't. And you wore black, except when I mean, who's smart enough to say 'Don't do it.'[31] And the

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[31] This is an oblique reference to a story about how her dying mother instructed family members not to wear black (June 29, 2004).

blinds were all drawn in the house. They were all drawn in the neighbourhood." Mrs.
Kearney said about behaviour at wakes, "There would be absolutely no frivolity of any
kind. It would be out of the question" (June 29, 2004).

In the case of Mrs. Kearney's mother's wake, there would have been no
opportunity for guests to party in the absence of the relatives, as the family felt obligated
to receive visitors day and night. Mrs. Kearney said, "We were on our feet twenty-four
hours a day. There were people coming to visit mother all the time. They came at seven
in the evening, they came at three in the morning, to pray, say the Rosary." She added
later, "We were basket cases, on our feet, all the time, for those three days." Although the
atmosphere of the wake itself was muted, the visiting practices Mrs. Kearney described
were much more extensive than was the case for any version of the Protestant wake in St.
John's of which I am aware (June 29, 2004).

A contributing factor in attendance may have been availability of food (in the
form of "tea and sandwiches and cakes"). Mrs. Kearney reported "There were people in
St. John's, who went to every funeral," at least partly because, "It was always a chance to
get a cup of tea and a sandwich. [Pause] They were known as funeral junkies." The
amount of food served was considerable. Mrs. Kearney said, "Years ago, I think funerals
were always associated with food." Of her mother's funeral, in particular, she said,
"There was an enormous amount of food floating around." The presence of food does
not, in this instance, seem to be particularly related to revelry, however. Mrs. Kearney
suggested that behaviour of this type is a form of nurturing: "A funeral is a time for
caretaking, and caretaking to a lot of [funerals?] means providing food" (June 29, 2004).

Food was the one element of wakes and funerals in Mrs. Kearney's experience
that might be considered festive, but for the most part, she was unaware of other festive
customs. When I asked her specifically about games, she said, "I never knew it."

Similarly, when I asked about pranks, she said, "I would think not." About courtship, she said, "No. No. It was sombre. Sombre. Sombre." She was aware of the stereotype of drinking taking place at Irish wakes, but had trouble matching it to her own experience. Without first having been asked about either drinking or revelry more generally, she volunteered, "you hear a lot about Irish wakes. I don't remember alcohol. I truly don't."[32] There was some social interaction at this type of wake, but it was of a relatively quiet type. Mrs. Kearney described it as, "Sit and chat and chat and sit. I remember with Mother in 1962, they would come in the living room and sit. Then they'd go out [pause] in the den and have a cup of tea or a sandwich and go back and sit" (June 29, 2004).

Mrs. Kearney was dubious about the existence of pranks, and thought that even if pranks had happened, they would not have been discussed:

> Never known it. Never, ever, ever, gone to a funeral, where there wasn't the utmost respect. The utmost. Well, I've never known that. Now, something might have happened in the outports, Anne, that I would never hear of, and if happened in an outport, I doubt very much if it would be talked about. I would think Newfoundlanders, all of them, I don't care what creed they come from, would have enormous respect for the dead. [Pause] Ever to play a prank. (Nov. 17, 2004)

Mrs. Kearney perceives that wake pranks, if they occurred at all, would be so shameful that no one would discuss them.

Gerald Duggan, writing a few years after the funeral of Mrs. Kearney's mother, describes wakes, implicitly including Catholic wakes, that were similarly subdued, albeit in a different way.[33] Although at this point the funeral home wake was gaining ground,

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[32] Mrs. Kearney was, however, aware that drinking might occur in other Newfoundland communities. She said, "And I would imagine [pause] that particularly, in the outports, I don't remember at my Dad's funeral, there would probably be a flow of rum" (June 29, 2004).

[33] Duggan's paper appears to be about wakes generically, but he is clearly aware of what happened at Catholic wakes, since he incorporates information about Catholic customs. For instance, he mentions that, "friends arrange[d] for a Mass," when the dead

with more than half of wakes taking place in this new setting, some wakes were still held in the home. Duggan reports that whereas funeral homes generally closed at ten or eleven at night, wakes at home went on for a bit longer. The exact time varied, but the author reports "Usually the majority of people have left the house by twelve o'clock and only the closest friends and relatives remain longer." For the most part, bedtime for those in the house was at one or two in the morning, but, at the discretion of the family, someone might remain awake: "It depends on the relatives themselves if they want to have someone stay up all night" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-005C/pp. 4-5). In contrast to Mrs. Kearney's experience, Duggan indicates that commonly people would leave at a reasonably early hour and that the family would be able to go to bed not too long after that.

Those people who were in the house late, whether because they were staying up or simply were present, were typically served "a small lunch."[34] This meal was almost the only trace of festivity at the wake, however. Conversation, after a brief initial focus on the dead person, quickly became general, "except that the laughter and gaiety of the normal social situation [was] not heard out of respect for the deceased" (Duggan 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-05C/p. 5). Duggan returns to this point and draws in outside authority to support it in a supplement to the paper. He says, "There is a lack of gaiety at all wakes that I have attended & my mother also told me that drinking & gaiety etc. is not common as far as she knows" (7). A subdued style, similar to that described above for both Catholic and Protestant contexts at this time, was deemed suitable.

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person was Catholic, and that Mass cards were displayed at Catholic wakes (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-005C/pp. 3-4).

[34] In Newfoundland, the word "lunch" is often used in the same way that most North Americans would use the word "snack."

This very restrained style of wake was probably a fairly recent development among Catholics in the St. John's area, however, as considerable archival evidence suggests an earlier, more festive wake. For instance, Mercedes Ryan, writing about St. John's at the turn of the 1900s describes drinking, storytelling, and "telling jokes, often 'off-colour' ones" (MUNFLA ms 68-019D/pp. 18-19). Similarly, Foran, in her description of funeral customs among Catholics in St. John's East of the 1920s, says that a number of party behaviours, including game playing, eating, drinking, and joking, took place (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/p. 3).

One of McDonald's informants, Mr. English, reported that St. John's wakes involved "a big scoff" consisting largely of "cheese and biscuits" (1983, MUNFLA ms 84-122/p. 16). Among the activities he reported for these wakes were conversation, joking, and the telling of "old stories." McDonald also mentions pranking behaviour, such as putting soot on the face of someone who dozed off. In one instance, Mr. English reported, "The brother of the dead man was sitting by the coffin and when his sister came in the brother took the hand of the corpse and started to wave the hand and he said to the sister, 'look he is waving at you.'" According to McDonald, this distressed the sister, but "everybody else present" was amused (17).

At least some people were highly motivated to seek out wakes. McDonald says, "From what I can understand from my informants the best times[35] people had were usually at wakes. People would go to wakes for something to do and as a way of making new acquaintances." She quotes English's description of how his group of friends would go out of their way to attend the wakes of people with whom they were not personally acquainted: "Two or three friends of mine would look in the paper for wakes. We would not know who was dead and we did not care who was dead. We would go to the house

[35] "Time" is a local dialect term loosely equivalent to "party."

and you were never turned away from a wake" (1983, MUNFLA ms 84-122/p. 16). Similarly, Saint and Thistle assert that some wake visitors attended Catholic wakes solely for the social aspects, as well as food and drink (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 1). They add, "There was always a character who attended all of the wakes just to enjoy the alcohol and entertainment, and he was usually the last person to leave." They provide an example of a man who, around 1900, "made it a rule not to leave the wake-house until at least 3am" (15). Mercedes Ryan reports that alcohol attracted more participants than might otherwise be involved: "The number of men who stayed all night varied. This would depend upon how the 'glory' or liquor was going. If the liquor was free-flowing, a good crowd would stay; but if the liquor was limited, generally only relatives and close friends would remain" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/pp. 23-24).

As in the outports, there seem to have been constraints on the behaviour of participants. After mentioning drinking and smoking, Foran says, "It was never heard of though that anyone drank too much" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/p. 3). Judging by other evidence, this was an ideal, rather than an absolutely factual statement. Saint and Thistle, for instance, suggest that while the point of alcohol was not inebriation, it could be used for that purpose: "Rum was served in order to calm mourners, but there were those who over-indulged themselves" (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 15). Foran's insistence on moderation on the part of wake attendees, however, implies that, at least in the particular social circles in which her informant moved, there was a minimal standard to which participants were expected to adhere.

Information from archival papers suggests that there may at one point have been less of a separation between a sombre daytime wake and night-time partying in St. John's than there was elsewhere. Mercedes Ryan reports that drinking started before "the woman of the house" went to bed (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/p. 18). Although, as

described in more detail above, Saint and Thistle include information about some visitors staying late at wakes, they also present material, possibly from another time depth or social group, about attendance after the midnight Rosary consisting of only "a few of the relatives" (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/pp. 14-15). This contrasts with the custom described from other contexts of the relatives going to bed, while other people stayed up and partied. Saint and Thistle also report the telling of "stories and jokes" (15), as well, as described in more detail above, other festive behaviours. Judging by the placement of this material in their paper, these activities likely took place at least partially after midnight, but this is not made explicit. Saint and Thistle say, "The immediate family of the deceased was not so inclined to participate in the 'wake party' as were the visitors. That is to say that they usually did not drink excessively or behave rowdily. If they did, it was for the purpose of forgetting" (17). This suggests both that the party behaviours happened when the family was present, but that the cultural norm (albeit one that was not always adhered to) was that the family did not take part. This again contrasts with the custom of a temporal separation, whereby the wake was solemn during the daytime hours, when the family was around and festive at night, after the family had retired.

Folklorist Hilda Chaulk Murray's informants from the farming areas around St. John's describe drinking at Catholic wakes that took place within their memories (2002, 196-99). Courtney, writing about Kilbride, one of those areas, briefly contrasts Catholic and Protestant wakes. As in Saint and Thistle's paper, the point of contrast had largely to do with food and drink. Courtney says, "No big meals were held at Protestant wakes, but at Catholic wakes food and liquor were plentiful" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-009D/p. 10).

Murray thinks, though, that, at least among the Catholics she interviewed, this type of wake had begun to change by 1951. One of her informants, Mary Aylward, describes how her family did not serve alcohol at a funeral that year and also decided to

shut the doors at ten o'clock at night. Aylward said that her brother had made the decision at least in part because "he was worried about Mother [the widow] because she was exhausted. She could hardly stand up. She couldn't be hostess" (2002, 199).

Nevertheless, a few years later, in the early sixties, Mrs. Kearney's family, as described above, felt that the house had to be open day and night, whether the family members were tired or not. Given that both in the outports and, earlier, in St. John's, people other than the relatives took on most or all of the work of staying up with the body, I suspect that at this wake, Mrs. Kearney's family stayed up all night as another strategy for controlling party behaviours.[36] In a context in which subdued behaviour was expected in front of the relatives, the family's constant presence in the public rooms of the house would have been an effective, if tiring, way of keeping wake behaviour within polite bounds. Based on the evidence I have, wake revelry of the most overt type appears to have been going out of fashion at this time, so it would not be surprising if different families or social circles in and around the city were trying out different ways of keeping wake behaviour fairly subdued.

Catholic wakes in St. John's in the late 1800s and first half of the 1900s appear to have been as festive as many rural wakes. This began to change around mid-century, when many festive elements were dropped. Nevertheless, the Catholic wake continued to be social and food remained a significant part of the event. One of the contributing

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[36] When Mrs. Kearney discussed this wake with me, she took it for granted that staying up all night was expected behaviour for relatives at wakes (June 29, 2004). She seemed unaware of alternatives used at other wakes, such as going to bed and leaving other people to party or closing up early. Since Mrs. Kearney had, however, been in Gander and then the States from 1949 (or possibly 1948) until shortly before her mother's death in 1962, her recent experience with St. John's wakes had been rather limited (June 29, 2004 and Aug. 16, 2004).

factors in change may have been reluctance on the part of the relatives to host large, all-night parties.

6.2.1.2.2 Protestant Wakes

The most significant deviation from G. Butler's pattern for the Newfoundland wake (as described earlier in this chapter) occurred among Protestants in St. John's. So far as I can tell from informant interviews, there was a period in the twentieth century in St. John's when, at least in some circles, Protestant wakes did not exist. Visiting customs were very limited and the practice of watching the corpse non-existent.[37] There are some reports of the practice of wake customs among Protestants in the middle of the century, but Protestant wakes were less social than Catholic wakes. In this section, I look at relevant St. John's Protestant customs of this period and discuss likely changes.

Mrs. Northcott, who was in her early nineties when I interviewed her, said, "I don't know much about wakes. Because I was brought up in Church of England and they didn't have wakes. I mean, even if a body was in the sitting room, everybody went to bed. Nobody came in and sat with it." She specifically contrasted this with Roman Catholic custom: "But a Roman Catholic wake, there was always somebody there. You never left the body alone." Mrs. Northcott also saw the whole complex of visiting customs as essentially Irish. When I asked if the people from the funeral home who prepared the body brought it back for the wake, she said, "They brought it back and put it in the living room. And then, people, neighbours would come in, to pay their respects, but not so much, that was more of an Irish custom." In her circles, visiting was limited to kin: "a relative would come in, maybe, but it was just a family affair" (Oct. 18, 2004). In our

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[37] As described in more detail in Chapter One, at the time G. Butler wrote (1982), wakes in St. John's had transitioned to funeral homes a number of years previously.

second interview, she specified again that wakes were limited to the Irish and that there was in her context "no general visiting," although relatives did come by (Nov. 4, 2004).

Mrs. Northcott also compared the presence and absence of festive activities: "There wasn't anything extra done in the way of cooking or anything like that, except in the Irish wake. And that was really, that was like a party, almost." I asked her if she thought that was true in St. John's, as well as in the outports, and she replied, "It was probably a bit more subdued, [they? ? no?], people went in and they had a drink, you know, for poor old Patty" (Oct. 18, 2004).

Mrs. Jones, who was raised in the United Church and was 75 the first time I interviewed her, reported similar information from a somewhat different angle. She agreed that wakes generally took place before funerals. She went on to qualify her answer, however, in a way that suggests that, in her perception, Protestant wakes were not actually "wakes," because they were not as lively as Catholic wakes: "I've never been to a real wake, as they say the Catholic families, there, I can remember one time somebody came, and they had a ball. A person was buried from the house, they had all kinds of drinks, there, it wasn't just soup they had either. 'Jesus,' I said, 'We don't do that in our church,' [laughter], dear. But I mean, you go to the funeral or to the home, and pay your respects and that was it" (June 22, 2003). It is not clear from the information I have if visiting was limited to the relatives, as was the case in Mrs. Northcott's circles, or whether anyone stayed up with the body.

Whatever may have happened in Mrs. Jones' family, however, there is some archival material referring to Protestant wakes in St. John's. Saint and Thistle write mostly about the period between 1900 and 1950, but pay some attention to later wakes. In their description, Protestant wakes implicitly exist, as they briefly contrast them with Catholic wakes, the primary focus of their paper. They write, "Although we recognize

that Protestants hold wakes as well, we must also recognize that their wakes are not the same." In their analysis, "At a Protestant wake, the visitor came to view the corpse and express his sympathy; but he did not linger long." In contrast, "While a visitor to a Catholic wake came to express his sympathy, he also came to talk, drink, and eat with old friends" (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 1).

Lang's description of a family wake that took place at home in approximately 1952 and ended with a service conducted by an Anglican minister[38] contrasts with Mrs. Northcott's experience. There were a number of visitors, both related and not. Time spent at the wake was short, with most people greeting her parents and staying for about five minutes of conversation. Food was available, but Lang says, "Nobody ate except those who had come from around the bay[39] during the day of the funeral service." Apparently people outside that category did not feel free to actually eat the available food. Bedtime for the family and those people staying in the house was about midnight, and the coffin was covered and left alone at night (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/pp. 3-4).

Philip Hiscock, who was considerably younger than either of the Protestant women I interviewed about St. John's, grew up at a time when Protestant wakes were apparently a norm and went to wakes in his teens and twenties (June 10, 2004).[40] While he does not remember these wakes in detail, his description of the atmosphere (as given in Chapter Five) is not the least bit festive. Like Mrs. Northcott, Dr. Hiscock was raised as an Anglican, so his memories of wakes probably suggest a change of custom among

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[38] Lang uses the word "waked," but puts it in quotation marks, which may suggest that she is not quite comfortable with it (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-012A/p. 3).

[39] This term refers to rural parts of Newfoundland.

[40] Dr. Hiscock's memory of this is not entirely consistent. Earlier on the same tape, he said that he did not start attending wakes until his "late twenties or early thirties" (June 10, 2004).

this group in St. John's. Another significant change of custom may have contributed. Dr. Hiscock says, "When I was a kid, funeral homes in St. John's, that was the place that dead bodies went to. When my grandfather died in 1957, so I wasn't quite five, he died in May of 1957, he was waked, somewhere, but being a child, I wasn't taken out to, I was kept from that" (June 10, 2004).[41] Although, as some of the archival material indicates, Protestants had started to have wakes before the switch to the funeral home, the change in venue may have encouraged this trend.

What evidence I have suggests that at least some Protestants did not have wakes in the early part of the century. I am not sure whether different Protestant groups within the city had different customs or whether the Protestant house wake was a relatively late development, but I suspect the latter. Protestants wakes, once they began, seem to have been less social than even the relatively subdued Catholic wakes of the equivalent period.

6.2.2 Gender and Gendered Behaviour at Wakes

There was considerable variation throughout Newfoundland, but in many contexts significant aspects of wake behaviour were gendered. Men and women might attend at different times or gather in different areas. The behaviour of the two sexes might also differ. Men were more likely to engage in some party behaviours, like drinking and playing pranks, while women tended to be less raucous and more practically and religiously focused.

6.2.2.1 Gender and Wake Attendance

Although generally both men and women attended wakes, there was some variation in attendance patterns. For one thing, both sexes did not necessarily attend the

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[41] As described in more detail in Chapter One, other information suggests that, even in St. John's, the transition to funeral homes for the wake had barely started at the time of Dr. Hiscock's grandfather's death and was still ongoing until well into his teens. Evidently, in his circles the change to the funeral home took place fairly quickly.

wake in equal proportions at all times of day. Cooper, writing about Merasheen, reports that men came to the wake "mostly at night," but women might be there "at anytime." Once at the wake, however, people did not segregate themselves by sex (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-008C/p. 7). Dredge, writing about Pigeon Cove, states, "The men and women would attend the wake together" (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-282A-B/p. 13) and adds that there was no sex segregation at the wake (15).

It can be inferred from accounts of wakes that in many places both sexes attended the overnight vigil and sometimes this is specifically stated. For instance, Byrne, writing about St. Brendan's in Bonavista Bay, reports "Both men and women often stayed up" (1988, MUNFLA ms 89-018A/p. 22). The vigil could also be gendered, however. In response to a question about whether it was mostly men who stayed up at wakes, Mrs. Hunt said, "Mostly men. Some women would do it, too, if there was nothing else available or if they wished to do that. It was possible, that, if they wanted to. But usually, to my memory, it was always a couple of men" (Sept. 27, 2002).

Occasionally, the gender of the people staying up varied with the gender of the corpse. Canning, in his paper about Williamsport in White Bay, reports, "The rule was that men, young or old, stayed up at the wake of a man and women stayed up to the wake of a woman" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-005D/p. 21). Alice Klein, writing about Long Cove, Trinity Bay, indicates that the people who were there to "watch over" the body "and to let visitors in to see" it were male at the funeral of a specific male corpse, but would have been "one or two women and a man," if the deceased had been female (1967, MUNFLA ms 67-011A/p. 2).[42]

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[42] It is possible that the author misunderstood something about this situation. In the case of a specific death, Klein says that the same two men stayed with the corpse "for 3 days and 2 nights," which seems relatively unlikely (1967, MUNFLA ms 67-011A/p. 2).

Mercedes Ryan, writing about St. John's gives specific information about the temporal gendering of the wake. She says that "usually only women" attended the wake during the day. Both men and women went to the wake in the evening. The rosary would be said at midnight, with all participants involved and then everyone who was not spending the night at the wake left. Most of the people who stayed were men (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/pp. 17-18). Tracey Tilley asserts about St. John's that those people who stayed overnight were generally men, specifically those "who could still handle a few more drinks before dawn and were still awake" (1977, MUNFLA ms 77-245/p. [6][43]).

As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Jones had very little personal experience with home wakes. When I asked her about participation in terms of gender, she did, however, have some tentative ideas. Her description was similar to Mercedes Ryan's. She said, "No, I have no idea. I think it was mostly men. To be honest with you, no, I don't think the women were involved too much in any of that." A little later she said, "Women probably stayed maybe till eleven or twelve o'clock and then they'd go on to bed." The overnight participants, as she understood it, were male. When asked whether both men and women went to wakes, however, she said, "Oh, they went to the wakes, you know, they went to the wakes" (June 22, 2003).

Judging by what A. O'Brien says about Cape Broyle, it is possible that gendered attendance at wakes might have changed in the same community over time. He discusses both wakes that he had actually been involved in shortly before his 1967 paper, as well as wakes that "the old folk" described to him (MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 2). O'Brien states unambiguously about those wakes that were contemporaneous to him, "It is the custom

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[43] Tilley's paper is not numbered. The page numbers I have provided are hand counted, starting with the first page after the title page.

for a number of men to remain with the corpse during the night, each night it is waking." Further references in O'Brien's work to the vigil at this particular time are again all to men (5-6). When writing about the past, however, O'Brien says, "Sometimes only men would stay up, sometimes only women, sometimes both" (11). Historian Willeen Keough, writing about the southern Avalon, which includes the Southern Shore community of Cape Broyle, describes a similar pattern. She says that in some cases all wake participants were of one gender or the other, but that it was more typical for people of both genders to be at a wake (2001, frame 4, 361).

Different sources express varying opinions about whether, once at the wake, men and women usually mingled or whether there was some degree of gender segregation. When I asked if men and women generally stayed in the same room or if they tended to congregate in different rooms, Mrs. Gould in Conche said, "Oh, no, no, they stayed in the same room" (June 20, 2002). Mr. Dower in the same community, however, said, "I can't really answer that, but I got a feeling that they'd be segregated. The women would be by themselves and the men would be by themselves, doing their own thing" (June 24, 2002).

Foran, writing about St. John's of about the 1920s, describes sex segregation at wakes, although the amount of separation varied. For the first part of the wake, the majority of the men were in the kitchen, whereas the women were in the room with the corpse. Both sexes gathered near the coffin for the midnight telling of the rosary and both sexes then shared food in the kitchen. The women, however, ate in rotation, so that the corpse was never left unattended (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-006D/pp. 2-3). This is substantially similar to what Mercedes Ryan says about St. John's at roughly the same time, although Ryan says it was the men who watched the corpse, at least at night (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019D/p. 19).

Margo Dobbin, also writing about St. John's, asserts, contrary to the other information I have, that women did not attend wakes during "the early 1900's," but would instead visit the family later. Perhaps she had the night-time wake specifically in mind, however, since elsewhere she says that married couples arrived at the wake together, but that men and women congregated in different parts of the house (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-011D/pp. 9-10).

One of the informants for Moriarty's paper on Renews reports a temporary and occasional form of sex segregation. He said, "Women didn't sit apart from the men although they sometimes did stick together for a chat" (1974, MUNFLA ms 74-211/pp. 67-68).

The gathering – and segregation by sex – was not necessarily limited to the house. When I asked Mr. Dower about gendered behaviour at wakes, he said, "Most of the time, you'd find the men gone outside and hanging around to smoke or talk or something. Whereas the women tend to do more, to be quieter and sit around more, and chat with each other, you know?" (June 24, 2002). James R. R. Hornell, writing about Grand Bank, reports, "It was not unusual for large groups of male visitors to wait outside the house in the front yard" (1984, MUNFLA ms 84-365 A/B/p. 4). Margaret Walsh describes a similar situation at a specific wake in Corner Brook. She says, "Outdoors, on the corner of the street, near the house, was a crowd of young fellows (mostly teen-agers) who were friends of the family's teenage son. They were hesitant about going inside, but they came in later, in two's and three's" (1967-68, MUNFLA ms 68-025F/p. 9).

According to some of the people I interviewed and some archival material, not only did people of both genders go to the night-time wake, but the attendance of both sexes was sometimes one of the attractions. Mrs. Sheppard of Port de Grave near Bay Roberts told me "didn't matter" when I asked her if men or women or both attended a

wake. She, however, described courtship at one wake as follows: "One night there was an old lady died out next door and there was four or five of us girls and the boyfriends was there. Because they were down that particular night. They were back and forth [?], stayed all night. Young fellows. Men." When I asked this informant specifically about courtship, she added:

> Sometimes, you know, if a fellow wanted to be with a girl, he didn't care whether it was a wake or a wedding, as long as he was with her. [Laughter] I know we were back and forth that night. That was in 1939, believe it or not. My sister's boyfriend, [I know with ?] and my two sisters' boyfriend would be down there that night. And this, cousin's the other end of the house and then, and there was two more girls out where the wake was. (Sept. 27, 2002)

Similarly, Mrs. Gould of Conche reported that a wake might be an opportunity to spend "all night up with your boyfriend" (June 20, 2002). Other informants had no awareness of such practices. Mr. Dower, although like Mrs. Gould a resident of Conche, said, when asked about courtship, "It might have, I don't know. I didn't witness any" (June 24, 2002).

A more general interest in people of the opposite sex might also draw participants. One of McDonald's informants reported, while describing wakes in St. John's, "A lot of girls would go to the wakes and after the wakes were 2 to 3 hours old the fun would begin" (1983, MUNFLA ms 84-122/p. 16). According to Courtney, citing informant Anita MacDonald, "young single girls" would go to wakes with the hope of finding a man to eventually marry. Courtney gives a relevant saying in the community: "if you meet at man at a wake whom you [?] and he [?] you – a sure match" (1968, MUNFLA ms 69-009D/p. 10).

Some of the activities at a wake were driven partly by the desire to attract the attention of people of the opposite sex. Mr. Bromley of Conche said, "You tell all the ghost stories you knew, at a wake, to pass the time and to frighten the girls." He thought that it was possible that some story-tellers would also want to frighten "the fellows," but

indicated that part of the point of scaring young women was that they might then want an escort when they returned home through the "pitch black" community without streetlights (June 23, 2002).[44] Dollimount's paper about Anglican wake practices in Francois reports the same custom with the same results (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-003E/pp. 9-10). Similarly, according to Narváez, a primary motivation for wake pranks was the impact that they would make on the opposite sex. He thinks that, typically, pranks were perpetrated by "young men trying to impress young women by making them laugh and/or by frightening them" (1994, 280).

6.2.2.2 Gendered Behaviour at Wakes

Assuming that people of both genders attended wakes together, they might do different things or behave in different ways. For instance, women often took on the practical tasks of preparing and serving food. Mr. Bromley of Conche, for instance, said, "it wasn't unusual for some of the women to be there at the wake and, of course, a certain time, maybe, they would set the table in night-time and prepare a lunch for everybody. Whatever was there, yeah. And clean up afterwards. They would stay around for that purpose" (June 23, 2002). Mr. Dower, of the same community, had a different perspective on food preparation. He said, "Whoever happened to be around there would help out," so, to his mind, cooking this meal was not gendered (June 24, 2002).

Dr. Hiscock of St. John's also talked about the different roles that he thought men and women had probably played, although, he self-consciously referred to a constructed past, rather than one he necessarily had personally experienced. Again, women took on a

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[44] Mr. Bromley talked about the telling of ghost stories at wakes more than once during this interview. At the time he made the comments on the darkness of the community, the gender of the frightened listeners who might want company on the walk home is, while probably implicit from the larger context, not spelled out. Later, however, he refers specifically to men telling ghost stories perhaps partly from the hope of being able to walk "girls" home (June 23, 2002).

practical role. Men, however, indulged in revelry. He said, "And then, when there's liquor to be had, I think, you know, that unnamed period called 'tradition' and 'traditional times,'" it would have been the men who provided the liquor and no doubt shared it. It would never have gone to women, unless, you know through some subterfuge. But, on the other hand, the women were providing the food and whatever else was necessary" (June 10, 2004).[45]

Certainly, when the information I have about drinking at wakes mentions gender at all, it almost always seems to be the case that men drink and women do not. As mentioned earlier, the Rev. Mr. Burton said that men would sometimes go out to a shed to drink during wakes. Women did not participate in this behaviour; in fact, in response to my question, he confirmed that they were not supposed to be aware that drinking was going on (Aug. 25, 2004). Mr. Dower agreed that drinking was a male activity. When I asked about the sex of people who played pranks, he said they were mostly committed by men and attributed that partly to alcohol consumption. He said, "In a traditional Irish-Catholic setting, if there was any way for the men who went to a wake to get a few nips, they did. And that put the devil in them. And they'd be carrying on a bit" (June 24, 2002).

As Dr. Hiscock suggested, this pattern may reflect a general trend in the culture whereby women did not drink. James Faris, in his ethnography of Cat Harbour, which was based on fieldwork done in 1964 and 1965, notes that at certain sorts of parties in Cat Harbour, if alcohol was present, the men drank, but women, for the most part, did not (1973, 162). At the time he finished up his fieldwork, in fact, only two women "were known to sometimes drink" (74).

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[45] Elsewhere, Dr. Hiscock was a little more tentative about his knowledge of the past. When I asked about gendered wake behaviour in the present, he said, "That probably changed in my generation." After a brief discussion of the stability of some wake customs since he became aware of them, he added, "What was true before [then?], I don't know" (June 10, 2004).

In contrast to my other sources, Tilley indicated that drinking was done by both sexes: "After a short time the house was full of people, all eating their full and drinking." Like Dr. Hiscock, she also thinks that women played a practical role; they "provided the friends and relatives of the deceased with all the best food" (1977, MUNFLA ms 77-245/p. [5] [46]).

A close look at Mercedes Ryan's paper about St. John's suggested another possible role for women at wakes. Previously, I mentioned that most of the people who stayed overnight in the context she describes were men. Ryan adds, "However, a few women remained to help with the meal, and to keep things under control in the kitchen" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-019/p. 18). On the surface, this sounds pretty straightforward, in light of the responsibilities women had for cooking and serving food at wakes. When I considered, however, that at any given time most of the men would be in the kitchen and that they were drinking, I started to wonder what – or whom – the women were "keep[ing] under control." This becomes a particularly pertinent question given the cultural tendency for some people to be responsible for keeping behaviour at wakes within the bounds considered appropriate by the community. In this context, I wonder if an additional role for women at wakes might have been setting some limits to the revelry.

Women often engaged in quieter activities than men did during the wake and also participated more strongly in the religious aspects of the wake. Mercedes Ryan says that in St. John's women prayed and talked, but the men became fairly boisterous, as a by-product of alcohol consumption (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-19D/pp. 18). Mrs. Sheppard in Port de Grave told me that "mostly women" led hymn singing when it took place at

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[46] This manuscript is not paginated; the page numbers given in the text are based on my count, starting with the first page after the title page.

wakes (Sept. 27, 2002). Mr. Dower commented on women's general demeanour during a wake, as opposed to men's: "The women tended to take things more seriously. You know, they were more subdued about a wake, right?" (June 24, 2002).

In addition to overtly practical tasks like preparing food, there is occasional mention of women taking on semi-practical or semi-ritual tasks related to the wake, such as the hymn singing just described. Catherine O'Brien, writing about Salvage in Bonavista Bay, reports "Visitors to see the dead were usually admitted by a friend of the family, usually a woman" (1966-67, MUNFLA ms 67-014A/p. 4). At least some of my informants thought that women were more likely to say the rosary. When I asked Mrs. Hurley of Conche about the behaviour of the different sexes and gave saying the rosary and playing pranks as examples, she said: "Yeah, I think mostly it would be women that would probably pray the rosary. And I think it was mostly the men that played pranks." She modified this initial statement slightly by saying, "But everybody would usually pray the rosary. If there was a rosary, well, everybody was on your knees for the rosary. But I'd be more inclined to think that it was women who suggested having the rosary, more so than a lot of the men" (June 22, 2002). Mr. Dower thought that the "women [were] more involved than the men" in saying the rosary (June 24, 2002).

This is not to suggest that men never participated in the Rosary, which seems, in fact, to have involved just about everyone present at Catholic wakes. I also turned up several instances of men leading the rosary and have the sense that this was typical in some contexts (A. O'Brien, 1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/p. 5; Saint and Thistle, 1974, MUNFLA ms 74-184/p. 15; Mr. Dower, June 24, 2002). Nevertheless, men tended to party, where this was more or less acceptable wake behaviour.

In addition to being the primary drinkers, men also took the lead in pranks. Narváez states that men tended to be the perpetrators of wake pranks, whereas women

and older people were frequently the victims (1994, 272). Keough does not mention the elderly, but makes the same gender analysis (2001, frame 4, 361). The evidence, including the examples given above, bears out the pattern of male perpetrators. To give another example, A. O'Brien says, "At wakes years ago, the young men would make plans to either frighten those who were present or otherwise provide a very comic situation." He recounts a story about a wake at which all the people staying up with the corpse were women, but a group of men took advantage of the women's temporary absence from the wake room to slip in and set up a prank, hiding the body under the bed and replacing it with one of their own number, who scared some of the women, when they came back, by groaning and moving" (1967, MUNFLA ms 68-016C/pp. 11-12).

Very rare instances of women acting as pranksters did occur, however. Narváez quotes interview material about a prank in which the person who actually tied string to the finger of a corpse was female (1994, 281).[47] An informant of K. Walsh's told him about a woman who walked about a yard wearing a habit (the garment in which bodies were often dressed in Catholic contexts) (2001, 93-94). It is not, however, clear from context whether this prank occurred at a wake or at some other time.

The gender of the living participants may not have been the only influence on the mood of the wake and the activities that took place. Mr. Dower suggested that the presence or absence of revelry might depend in part on the characteristics of the deceased. He said that the funeral was sometimes "a very, very sad event," with considerable expression of sorrow, "but on other occasions, depending on the person who died, I guess, whether it was a man or a woman or, even their personality, if you like, of the man, in some cases, they would hold what we used to call an Irish wake, when there

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[47] Narváez's source for this material was Wendy Milley's "Interview with Eileen Power of Angel Cove," a 1991 manuscript which had not been published.

wasn't too much grief expressed at all" (Aug. 19, 2004). Similarly, Peere asserts that "music, singing and dancing" would take place only if the deceased were "an elderly man," usually one who especially like music (1992, 136, main text and footnote 5), and Small says that pranks were played only on male corpses, specifically those of "older men who had a timely death" (1997, 23).

In order to understand the dynamic by which male corpses were the appropriate targets for pranks, it is useful to consider Narváez's discussion of "the placation-of-the-dead argument," especially in regards to "social interactions" at wakes involving the deceased. He argues that in Newfoundland the approach to placation was "simply behaving in an ordinary manner, as though the deceased was alive and a member of 'the crowd' participating at a party." Thus wake participants took part "in participatory activities that either directly or indirectly animated the inanimate corpse." In other words, they treated the dead person much as they would treat a living person. This included engaging in "humorous attacks and teasing" directed at the corpse. Narváez points out that in Newfoundland "passivity" is the appropriate social response to "humorous attacks" (1994, 267). Implicitly, therefore, the dead automatically responded in a socially correct way to pranks played on them.

Narváez, however, goes on to suggest, that, with some exceptions, it was generally not the dead who were victims in these pranks. Rather, "*the corpse was an active participant in an alliance with prankster-protagonists*, usually men" (1994, 272, emphasis in original). In accordance with this understanding, Narváez's list of wake activities is arranged according to which of the participants appear, in a broad sense, to be the instigators of the activity. Narváez includes a lengthy section on the actions that "*Corpse Protagonists*" seem to undertake (269-70, emphasis in original). Such actions look in some sense, as if the corpse has performed them, although they clearly must have

been arranged by the living. For instance, with an activity such as "corpse smokes pipe or cigarette," it may appear that the corpse is smoking, but it can reasonably be assumed that the corpse did not place the pipe in its own mouth. In addition to activities such as "corpse humorously dressed" and "corpse says, 'Get me my pipe and tobacco,'" this category includes outright pranks, such as causing the corpse to sit up (269-270).

In Narváez's view, as mentioned previously, the real victims of pranks in which the corpse appeared to move or speak were older people and women (1994, 272). The performance of wake pranks, even those which appeared to be directed at the corpse, was a form of male bonding, in which younger men bonded with each other, at the expense of women and older men.

K. Walsh looks at issues of hierarchy and status in relation to wake pranks from another angle. He discusses the role of local characters in pranks, both as victims and perpetrators. Local characters who are perpetrators of pranks "are recognised in the community as those who will do, and can get away with, anything." Other members of the community need to watch out for them. People in this category "keep everyone else in check," because they do not exempt people of high status from their attentions (2001, 94).

The second type, the likely victim of the prank, Walsh describes as having "some shortcoming in his character." Of this type, Walsh says, "Whether he/she does or not, they really would be expected to spend much of their time on the defensive." The actions of pranksters point up the personal deficits of such characters. When those deficits are emphasized, the relative "normalcy" of the pranksters is also emphasized. In contrast to the prank's victim, pranksters are of "higher status" (2001, 94). Walsh asserts that this sort of behaviour strengthened the community: "Social order within the community was actually solidified within the disorder experienced during the house wake" (85).

Although the victims Walsh focuses on are different from those Narváez considers, the underlying dynamics they describe are similar. When the victims were women and the elderly, "social order within the community" would have been "solidified" in the same way that it would have been when people who were of low status for other reasons were targeted. The pranks, at least from the point of view of the perpetrators, put women and elderly people in their places, in the same way that low-status victims were put in their place.

Although there is considerable evidence that in many contexts there was at least some difference between men's and women's behaviours at wakes, not all my informants agreed that wake behaviour was gendered. When asked if men and women did the same things or different things at wakes, Mrs. Hillier in St. Lunaire-Griquet said, "same thing" (June 18, 2002). This perception might have arisen, in part, from the fact that wakes in St. Lunaire-Griquet involved relatively little revelry, one of the more significant areas for gendered differences.

6.3 Conclusions

In the past, revelry was one of the significant features contributing to the emotional atmosphere of the first few days following a death in Newfoundland,[48] but the balance between revelry and other customary practices that shaped that emotional atmosphere differed across time, place, and religious groups.

While there were considerable areas of overlap, overall, Catholic wakes in Newfoundland were relatively more festive than Protestant wakes ones. In fact, in at least some Protestant circles in St. John's the wake did not exist. Emic and etic opinion alike

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[48] In fact, revelry still is a part of death rites in some contexts, although it has largely shifted from the night-time wake to other settings.

credit the Irish wake with being the antecedent of the Catholic wake. While it is undeniable that Newfoundland wake revelry, especially among Catholics, had much in common with Irish wake revelry, there are indications that the origins of Newfoundland wake revelry were more complex. For one thing, the Newfoundland wake probably did not exactly duplicate the Irish wake. Certain aspects of wake revelry that appear to have been important in Ireland were likely much less so in Newfoundland. Since the customs in question were often very rough and brutal, de-emphasizing them must have significantly changed the atmosphere of the wake. Conversely, rural Protestant wakes, while overall less raucous than Catholic wakes could be, often included some aspects of wake revelry.

Although Irish wake revelry was a significant antecedent of Newfoundland wake revelry, wake customs from England and Scotland probably also had an impact. As discussed in Chapter Three, although wakes were not held as commonly in post-Reformation England as they were in Ireland, there were English wake customs, as well as related visiting and watching customs. While wake revelry, as such, seems to have been less widespread than it was in Ireland, there is some evidence of wake revelry in England at about the same time that the settlement of Newfoundland began.

Given that customs in the countries of origin changed over time, not just the mere facts of geography, but the specific time period of immigration may have had an impact on what customs the immigrants brought with them. In the case of English settlement, the customs initially imported were those of the early modern period. This is the earliest stratum of death rites in Newfoundland and also the earliest point when the death rites of Newfoundland could have begun to diverge from those of the regions of origin. Later immigrants would, of course, have brought the customs of their own time period and, since initial population growth was slow, in theory, the customs of later immigrants could

have overwhelmed those imported with immigrants of earlier times. Nevertheless, I suspect that the layer of culture established by the initial English settlers may have had a long-lasting impact on the way that wake customs developed in rural Newfoundland. Since, as is described in Chapter Three, home wakes, in their fullest possible extravagantly messy glory, were an important aspect of Irish culture during the period of extensive Irish immigration, that immigration and the consequent importation of Irish wake customs would have re-enforced any elements of festivity that were already part of the Newfoundland wake.

While wake revelry was an aspect of English death rites, however, it seems to have been a relatively weak one, which was largely dying out during the period of English immigration. The limited emphasis on wake revelry in England seems to have also impacted Newfoundland wakes. For instance, it probably explains why Protestant wakes were generally less festive than Catholic wakes. Even in Catholic contexts, English influence may partially account for the significant differences between Irish and Newfoundland wakes, including the apparent downplaying of some particularly raucous Irish wake customs in Newfoundland.

The lack of English wake revelry may also explain the almost complete disappearance of the wake in at least some Protestant circles in St. John's, but this particular pattern needs further explanation. Since the custom of watching went out of favour with the upper classes in England, it is not surprising that it also lost ground in St. John's. One of the consistently recurring themes to emerge, as I have worked on various aspects of death rites in Newfoundland, is that St. John's was more greatly impacted than the outports by British middle class and upper class ideals for appropriate behaviour at the time of death. This is probably, in part, because St. John's had more direct and frequent contact with England than other parts of Newfoundland did, due to its

importance in both government and business (although it should certainly not be assumed that the outports had no contact with England). This pattern may also reflect the fact that St. John's had, proportionally, much larger middle and upper classes than most outports.

In the case of wake customs, British middle and upper class ideals impacted Protestants much more than Catholics, something that is not true for the other customs I have looked at. I suspect that Catholics' largely Irish cultural heritage, with its strong emphasis on wake customs, to some degree protected the Catholic wake in St. John's from British middle class cultural influences. Even though by mid-century the Catholic wake in St. John's had shed many aspects of traditional Irish wake revelry, the custom of serving food persisted. Judging by the evidence reported earlier in this chapter, this encouraged people to visit the mourners and, once in the house, to linger.

Although, in most cases, both men and women had some involvement with wakes, they had different roles. The specifics varied from community to community, but, at least sometimes, the time of day that people went to the wake or the areas where they gathered while there were gendered. The behaviour of men and women was also different. Although both men and women might be involved in both fun and serious wake activities, women were more likely to take on practical or sometimes religious roles, whereas, when community standards allowed it, men were more likely to be involved in serious partying.

The gender issues of revelry were different from those surrounding lamentation and the funeral procession. Those two customs had to do, to a large extent, with what it is considered appropriate for women to do in public. Although, in some contexts, both men and women might cry and lament, women generally had a larger role in this activity. When crying and lamentation in public were not considered appropriate, women suffered greater consequences. There was no issue concerning male participation in the funeral

procession; only women's participation was sometimes deemed inappropriate. When there was a taboo on female participation in the procession, limits were also effectively placed on women's public lamentation.

Typically issues concerning revelry are more often discussed in terms of religion than gender. Nevertheless, revelry was to some extent about what it was appropriate for men to do in public and what men could get away with in public. Although both sexes participated in revelry at wakes, men tended to do so more than women. They took the lead role in revelry, especially in pranks and drinking, which were probably the most controversial aspects. Male participation in revelry was, among other things, a form of display or a way to show off publicly. In some cases, the goal was to get the attention of young women or to frighten them enough so that they would want a male escort when they left the wake house. Another aspect of display, however, had to do directly with raw status. Pranksters, who were primarily men, through their pranks asserted their superiority over the women and older men frightened by the pranks.

In the next and final chapter, I move from close examination of gendered performances of the different aspects of the emotional atmosphere surrounding death and look at the larger picture.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

As I hope I have shown through this study, death rites in Newfoundland are a particularly rich and interesting area of focus. Here, as elsewhere, the structure and content of death rites can illuminate other aspects of culture, including gender roles.

Since the areas of Newfoundland in which I interviewed were, of necessity, limited, there is considerable room for similar research to be done in other regions. Conversely, more in-depth study of some topics could be done in my research areas. The gentlemen's funeral is, for instance, a particularly interesting topic, but I just barely touched on it. Assuming adequate information can be found, a truly in-depth look at that custom and its larger social context would be both useful and rewarding. More interviewing in Conche, with an in-depth focus on wake pranks, would also be very interesting.

While my focus was on customs associated with solemnity, sorrow, and revelry after a death, I did in-depth examination, especially for solemnity and revelry, of only a narrow range of the associated behaviours. Solemnity, which had many complex forms, was a particularly complicated aspect of Newfoundland death rites. For instance, even when women relatives did not take part in the funeral procession, they were not necessarily supposed to completely exclude themselves from semi-public forms of solemnity related to death. Instead, they were (with the exception of at least part of Protestant St. John's) expected to receive visitors during the wake, an activity which, although it took place in the home, involved interacting with large numbers of people. Other customs associated with solemnity (such as religious expression at the wake and the service at the graveside) and with revelry (such as the provision of alcohol to people providing certain services related to death) should be examined more closely, both in the past and present.

While I covered a larger proportion of the public and semi-public behaviours associated with sorrow, more research could be done on relatively private behaviours, such as what family members did with each other in the weeks and months following a death, or what close friends, who may have had less license to mourn publicly, did to express their grief. The issues associated with those customs are likely to be different than the issues associated with the specific customs I have examined. Thus a complete picture of the emotional atmosphere following a death and the customs contributing to that atmosphere cannot be put together until more customs have been examined carefully.

Although the specific components of emotional expression discussed in this thesis seem to have been the primary ones structuring death rites in Newfoundland, there are traces of other emotions surfacing after a death. Mrs. Hurley in Conche said, "I always thought of wakes as, they were scary," and added, "if somebody died, I always had the sense there was somebody creeping up behind me, you know, if you were out walking, anywhere, if somebody died, I had this eerie feeling" (June 22, 2002). Another Conche informant, Mrs. Gould, said that she had gone to relatively few wakes, because they were "too creepy" (June 20, 2002). At least in this community, fear seems to have been part of the emotional response to death.

As is the case in areas other than Newfoundland, anger could also be a response to death. Mrs. Gould also told me that "animosity" towards people in the community might arise after a death, if family members were unhappy with the way that those people had carried out certain kinds of tasks related to the death. In fact, Mrs. Gould felt that an advantage of community members no longer being involved in "sick time" and "dead time" was the avoidance of this problem (June 26, 2002).[1] As has been discussed in

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[1] Implicitly, the reason for this change was that hospitals and funeral homes had replaced the involvement of community members.

Chapter Four, anger was recognized in the Conception Bay area as a potential response to arrangements of the funeral procession that were deemed inappropriate. The information I collected about either anger or fear was minimal, however. Since I was primarily interested in fairly structured patterns of behaviour and did not ask specifically about expressions of fear or anger, it is likely that someone addressing those issues directly might find more information.

Notwithstanding these and many other possible directions for future study, this examination of the emotional atmosphere following a death in twentieth century Newfoundland up to the 1960s or the 1970s offers significant insights into and interpretations of customary practices, in general, and gender roles, in particular. While there were strong similarities in death rites throughout Newfoundland, there were also considerable differences in practice between St. John's and rural areas, as well as differences between religions, regions, and, in the Bay Roberts area, social classes. As a result, there was significant variation in acceptable ways of expressing sorrow, taking part in revelry, and participating in some of the solemn aspects of death rites. Most importantly for purposes of this thesis, each of these three components of the emotional atmosphere was gendered in significant ways.

One of the results of this variation was that there were important differences in the public and semi-public presence of people of each gender, but particularly of women, during death rites. The funeral procession and the rites performed at church and graveyard were the most public aspects of death rites. In Newfoundland, the procession displayed various aspects of family and community structure, including community understandings of gender and gender roles. The form of the procession varied significantly in relation to gender and the variation reflected major differences in local understandings of gender roles and of women's place in the public sphere.

The variation in local patterns for the funeral procession reflected differences in local attitudes towards gender. How each area (or group) included (or failed to include) women relates to a larger pattern of gender roles in that area (or group). Inclusion of women in the procession (as well as other aspects of death rites that took place outside the home) was standard in most rural communities. In those locations, women's work typically included significant contributions outside the house and those were acknowledged. Forms of the funeral procession in which the standard or preferred arrangement of relatives was opposite-sex pairs highlighted the complementary roles of men and women in a very visible way. Women's presence and contributions were overtly displayed.

Exclusion of women from the procession in St. John's enacts a worldview in which women were deemed to not have a major role in the public sphere and a reality that, to a large extent, reflected that worldview. Given, however, that women were, in day-to-day life, not totally absent from the public domain and had some important roles (such as paid work by unmarried women) in it, the form of the procession displays an ideology that was more rigid in concept than in application. The absence of women from the procession (and other public aspects of death rites) made their participation in the larger community, during the period following death, effectively invisible. In at least some Protestant contexts, this trend was compounded by the fact that the wake, as such, did not exist and thus there was not even a semi-public venue for women's participation. Depending on one's point of view, in St. John's either there was no acknowledgement of women's participation at all or women's participation was implicit (but not public), in that they handled death-related work in private contexts before, during, and after the procession. In either case, women's participation was not made obvious through the form of the procession.

Much the same can be said for the gentlemen's funeral in the Bay Roberts area. Conception Bay seems to have been another part of Newfoundland in which women were relatively uninvolved in work outside the home. In addition, if Conception Bay was similar to the southern Avalon, as described by Keough, middle class women were usually focussed on the house, rather than outside work. In this case, however, the display of social status was more of an issue than it was in most Newfoundland funerals. The gentlemen's funeral may have, among other things, been a way for men of the upper classes in that part of Conception Bay to announce publicly that their women did not have to work outside the home. The relative absence of women from the public sphere, did not, however, result in the exclusion of lower class women from the procession, as it did in St. John's. In other areas of Newfoundland, especially parts of the Southern Avalon, where women were excluded from the funeral procession and/or other public aspects of death rites, while still having a significant involvement in outside work, the subtexts are less clear. In part, this pattern seems to reflect an imposition of middle class notions of respectability on a working class population whose lives in most ways simply did not reflect that ideal. It is not clear, however, why most rural Newfoundland communities rejected this approach to death rites, while a very few embraced it. Relative proximity to St. John's may be a partial explanation.

In Chapter Two I discussed how different scholars view funeral customs as either performing practical functions or reflecting the social realities of their communities. The gendered variations in Newfoundland of the funeral procession reflected the gender norms and gender ideologies of the different communities. Indirectly, they also reflected attitudes towards appropriate expression of sorrow. The varying forms of the procession had practical functions, as well, but, for this custom, at least, ideology seems to have been the main determinant of which custom(s) were practiced in which areas. Most of the

practical reasons could apply to any location, but the form of the funeral procession nevertheless changed. In this particular instance, metaphor trumps function.

While expression of sorrow and wake revelry were important aspects of death rites in Newfoundland, they were not equally important in all communities; they were de-emphasized in some and allowed full rein in others. Public expression of sorrow ranged from almost non-existent to intense. Similarly, the amount of permissible revelry at wakes varied from low-key forms of entertainment to full-scale partying. As in Ireland, men were largely responsible for wake revelry and women for the expression of sorrow. Whether the topic under discussion is revelry or sorrow, however, in at least some communities both sexes participated. In other communities, overt mourning by men was rare. In some contexts, women were relatively unlikely to participate in the night-time wake at all, let along participate in wake revelry. In communities where either wake revelry or the public expression of sorrow was minimal, neither gender had much opportunity to participate. Women were culturally barred from participation in not just expressions of sorrow, but also in the funeral procession and other public aspects of death rites, in St. John's, where expressing sorrow was particularly frowned upon,. This is probably not coincidence, but instead related to the strong association of women with the expression of sorrow.

In areas where weeping was acceptable, much of it took place in semi-public areas of the house and, in many communities, in even more public areas, such as church or graveyard. This gave women and women's role in death rites a high degree of visibility. Similarly, in communities with significant wake revelry, men's participation, in the semi-public contexts of the wake house's kitchen and sometimes its parlour, were quite visible. As discussed in Chapter One, men were, in at least some parts of Newfoundland, considerably more involved, in general, in the public performance of

various artistic genres, including storytelling and singing. In some places, these genres were incorporated into wake revelry. Men were also the usual participants in the more extreme forms of partying at wakes, such as drinking and light-hearted maltreatment of the corpse. Wake pranks were a particularly public and attention-drawing activity within the semi-public context within which they took place, so their occurrence (as well as discussion of pranks, as personal experience narrative or legend) highlighted male presence at the wake and male participation in wake activities.

The degree to which differences in participation in wake revelry were gendered would, of course, have depended partially on which activities were acceptable at wakes in particular communities. In communities with fairly quiet wakes, gender differences in participation may have been considerably less pronounced than they were in communities where wakes turned into parties.

Certain patterns of behaviour, including formalized or sombre actions, the expression of sorrow, and aspects of revelry, recur in many cultures in response to death. Nevertheless, the forms these modes of behaviour take in different contexts are highly variable. The differing forms express the values of the cultures in which they take place, including those related to gender. Death rites, like other forms of culture, enact a culture's understanding of men's and women's places in society, as well as its sense of what gendered behaviour is appropriate.

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