"What are ye, little mannie?": The Persistence of Fairy Culture in Scotland,
1572-1703 and 1811-1927

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a chronologically comparative study of fairy culture and belief in early modern and Victorian Scotland. Using fairy culture as a case study, I examine the adaptability of folk culture by exploring whether beliefs and legends surrounding fairies in the early modern era continued into the nineteenth and early twentieth as a single culture system, or whether the Victorian fairy revival was a distinct cultural phenomenon. Based on contextual, physical, and behavioral comparisons, this thesis argues the former; while select aspects of fairy culture developed and adapted to serve the needs and values of Victorian society, its resurgence and popularization was largely predicated on the notion that it was a remnant of the past, therefore directly linking the nineteenth century interpretation to the early modern. In each era, fairy culture serves as a window into the major tensions complicating Scottish identity formation. In the early modern era, these largely centered around witchcraft, theology, and the Reformation, while notions of cultural heritage, national mythology, and escapist fantasy dominated Victorian fairy discourse. A comparative study on fairy culture demonstrates how cultural traditions can help link vastly different time periods and complicate traditional conceptions about periodization. Ultimately, this thesis reveals how issues of class impacted the popularization and persistence of fairy culture across both eras, reflecting ongoing discussions about Scottish identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

On the morning of his death in 1692, Rev. Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle in central Scotland, was walking along a local hill when he collapsed, seemingly dead. Though a funeral was held and a tombstone erected, the death of the minister and the circumstances surrounding it soon came into question, for that locals widely associated that particular hill with the fairies. According to Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott, born eighty years later, "the unenlightened took [it] for death, [but] the more understanding knew it to be a swoon produced by the supernatural influence of the people whose precincts he had violated."[1] The Highland reverend had devoted much of the later portion of his life to gathering and compiling information for a treatise titled *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies*. In it, Kirk attempted to describe and explain the appearances and customs of the fairy race, as well as the phenomenon of Second Sight. Many feared that the fairies abducted Kirk that day as punishment for divulging so much information about the fairy realm. Scott recounted the story of the events following Kirk's mysterious collapse in a letter:

> After the ceremony of a seeming funeral, the form of the Reverend Robert Kirke appeared to a relation, and commanded him to go to the Grahame of Duchray, ancestor of the present General Graham Stirling. 'Say to Duchray, who is my cousin, as well as your own, that I am not dead, but a captive in Fairy Land; and only one chance remains for my liberation…[At the upcoming baptism of my child,] I will appear in the room, when if Duchray shall throw over my head the knife or dirk which he hold in his hand, I may be restored to society; but if this opportunity is neglected, I am lost for ever.[2]

As the legend goes, an apparition of Kirk did appear at the baptism, but, overwhelmed by his surprise, Duchray neglected to throw his knife in time. Adding to the dramatic effect, Scott lamented, "it is to be feared that Mr. Kirke still [remains trapped in] the Elfin state."[3]

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[1] Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, Addressed to J.G. Lockhart, Esq.* (London: John Murray, 1830), 160.

[2] Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 161.

[3] Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 161.

The story of Robert Kirk is an ideal example of how fairy culture and belief can serve as a link between the early modern and Victorian eras—a connection I seek to emphasize in this project. The fact that Kirk, a highly educated Highland minister with degrees from the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews, felt the need to pen such a treatise at the end of the seventeenth century emphasizes the relevance that fairy culture had in early modern Scotland. His *Secret Commonwealth* capped a continuous discussion about the nature and function of fairies that took place throughout early modern Scotland. But in addition to essentially closing the early modern conversation about fairies as the eighteenth century ushered in the Scottish Enlightenment, Kirk's treatise played a large role in prompting a revival in fairy culture that flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though he was unable to publish *The Secret Commonwealth* before his collapse in Aberfoyle, Kirk's manuscripts survived into the modern era. The treatise was discovered and published in the nineteenth century by prominent authors and folklorists Sir Walter Scott and Andrew Lang. The curious reverend even earned some new nicknames from the Scottish Romantics that continue today. In his 1893 reprint of Scott's initial 1815 publication of Kirk's treatise, Lang included a dedication to "The Fairy Minister," complete with an original poem explaining how Kirk became "Chaplain to the Fairy Queen."[4] Kirk's treatise on fairies and second sight links the early modern and Victorian eras, supporting this project's intention to use fairy culture as a window into changing world views about cultural identity formation, Christianity, and modernity in Scotland.

To investigate those cultural links across generations, this thesis offers a chronologically comparative analysis of Scottish fairy culture in the early modern and 'long' Victorian eras—more specifically, 1572-1703 and 1811-1927. It seeks to investigate the adaptability and

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[4] Robert Kirk and Andrew Lang, *The secret commonwealth of elves, fauns & fairies: a study in folk-lore & psychical research* (London: D. Nutt, 1893), vii.

persistence of folk culture, while also considering how elites has discussed folk culture over time. Using popular beliefs in fairies as an avenue for examining folk culture, this project examines how beliefs and legends surrounding fairies in the early modern era continued into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a single cultural system, rather than conceiving of the Victorian fairy revival as a separate form of fairy culture. While fairy culture in these two vastly different time periods may appear distinct on the surface, they featured prominent similarities that link them together. Though it is true—and to be expected—that the nineteenth century revival of fairy culture in Scotland developed to serve the needs and values of Victorian society, its resurgence and popularization was largely predicated on the notion that fairy culture came from their past. Based on their research on Scottish fairy belief in the early modern period, Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan argue:

> The pantomime question annually roared at laughing children, 'Do you believe in fairies?' would have baffled people in pre-industrial societies; everybody did, for the contrary was unthinkable. The only dispute concerned what fairies represented, [and more specifically,] questions of whether the guid neighbours were manifestations of divine providence or the legions of hell.[5]

It may be true that early modern Scots would question their descendants' uncertainty over whether fairies truly existed, but belief is an almost impossible sentiment to quantify in any society across any era.[6] With this line of reasoning, Henderson and Cowan minimize the facets of fairy culture that are more easily comparable across time periods and ultimately ignore the fact that those same people from pre-industrial societies would find a number of similarities in how their nineteenth century counterparts characterized fairies. To suggest that Victorians

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[5] Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 1.

[6] Carole Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Silver attempts to uncover physical "evidences of fairy existence" (36). This goes to far and places far too much emphasis on the issues of belief and true existence. In fact, it makes little difference whether people truly believed in fairies or whether the creatures existed at all. What matters instead is the interest and debates fairies provoked, and the cultural influence these debates had.

presented a distinct sort of 'neo'-fairy culture would undermine one of its most appealing qualities—its connections to a past that many Victorians viewed with a sense of nostalgia and authenticity. Thus, I conclude that while discussions about fairies changed and evolved to reflect the tensions of these two distinct eras, the fact that fairies found and maintained relevance in both demonstrates how folk culture can be both malleable and resolute. It also reveals the role that cultural systems can play in forging connections between how societies conceive of both the past and present.

This project emphasizes thematic and disciplinary collaboration involved often in cultural studies. Though founded in the historical approach, this project draws from work in anthropology, literary criticism, and art history to maintain a contextual balance. Even within the realm of 'cultural history', this project's exploration into folk, popular, and elite culture reveals some of its many nuances. A comparative investigation into Scottish fairy discourse and culture also provides insight into issues of religion, heritage, nationalism, and memory, emphasizing how popular culture contributes to numerous academic discussions. Fairy culture is simply one avenue into exploring how different disciplines combine to create a more holistic image of the past.

This is especially important for studies on supernatural culture, which is often referred to as 'superstition' and relegated to the category of 'popular culture'. Instead, we should move discussions away from the sort of judgmental narrative that comes with the term 'superstition', which educated elites—whether early modern magistrates, Enlightenment philosophers, or contemporary scholars—have used to describe beliefs, rituals, or customs they deem unnatural or ignorant. This sort of narrative is unproductive and detrimental to the growth of the field, as investigations into beliefs in magic and the supernatural provide unique insights into how

societies perceived and negotiated the world around them. This is absolutely true with fairy culture in Scotland, and this project demonstrates how societies centuries apart, in increasingly modern eras, find relevance in discussions about magic and the supernatural.

Moreover, by examining the approximately 120 years on either side of the Scottish Enlightenment, this project complicates traditional concepts of periodization. Common tropes paint the Enlightenment as Scotland's transition from a somewhat archaic, even barbaric kingdom plagued by the Reformation, to a more progressive, highly literate, and innovative nation fueled by reason.[7] I contend, however, that this narrative is both outdated and oversimplified. While this project focuses on the eras that bookended the Enlightenment, its comparative approach places Scotland's intellectual renaissance at the heart of this discussion. The fact that Scots in the centuries before and after the Enlightenment found reason to continue talking about fairies suggests that the push toward science and reason failed to wipe out these popular cultural systems. Further study into the existence and nature of fairy belief during this era would also be an extremely productive avenue for future research, although few relevant primary sources have been identified as of yet. However, this comparative approach reveals substantial cultural links between the early modern and Victorian eras, and suggests traditional concepts of periodization may be minimizing connections between societies generations apart.

Each chapter, divided thematically, will piece together two separate, holistic descriptions of Scottish fairy culture during the time periods under investigation. The first chapter examines context within which Scots were discussing fairies in the early modern and Victorian eras, with an emphasis on why people cared about fairy culture enough to talk about it. It reveals the theological impact fairy culture had in early modern Scotland by analyzing its relationship with

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[7] R. H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner. *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment: Essays* (Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1982).

the witch-hunt phenomenon. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, discussions about fairies took two forms; they contributed to Victorian pursuits for escapist fantasy by emphasizing the supernatural elements surrounding fairies, and they helped develop a sense of cultural heritage and nostalgia by solidifying associations between fairies and the Highlands.

The second and third chapters closely compare how these vastly different sources from each era characterized fairies. The second features a physical comparison of both the fairies themselves and their realm, often referred to as either Fairyland or Elfland. It considers how the appearance and existential nature associated with fairies helped distinguish them from humans and describes popular traditions, such as 'the Fairy Raid,' or ride. The final chapter presents a behavioral comparison, with specific emphasis on the morality ascribed to fairies in each time period. Both chapters reveal how Victorians enjoyed an adapted, but connected form of early modern fairy culture that had developed to reflect the values and tensions of their time period while still remaining rooted in its preindustrial origins.

<center>*What is Fairy Culture?*</center>

In Scotland, allusions to a belief in the race of creatures known as fairies can be traced back to the early medieval era, and it continues to exist in some areas today.[8] According to Henderson and Cowan, fairies were "as real to people as the sunrise, and as incontrovertible as the existence of God" in the medieval and early modern eras.[9] Even today, almost every burgh in Scotland has an area named for fairies—whether hills, glens, trees, or wells—and while this does not necessarily indicate a continuation of fairy belief, it certainly suggests a continued awareness

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[8] Based on conversations I had during a research trip to Scotland, (May 2014)
[9] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 12, 14-15.

of fairy culture.[10] These lingering namesakes serve as contemporary spatial connections to a cultural past and help promote a sense of heritage. In this project, the term 'fairy culture' refers to the discussions, debates, and contexts within which fairies appeared.

In Scotland, a number of terms were used to describe the same race of creature; fairy, elf, troll, wee man, good neighbor, Browny, fauns, People of Peace, fair folk, or the Gaelic '*sith*' were among their many names. Some of these terms were specific to region, as the northern islands in particular commonly used the term '*trow*,' or troll. However, popular tradition suggests that by calling fairies by their various names, one invokes a particular temperament associated with each one. On of the *Popular Rhymes in Scotland* published by Robert Chambers' 1826 collection described the importance of naming when it came to the fairy folk:

> Gin ye ca' me imp or elf,
> I rede ye look weel to yourself;
> Gin ye ca' me fairy,
> I'll work ye muckle tarrie;
> Gin guid neibour ye ca' me,
> Then guid neibour I will be;
> But gin ye ca' me seelie wicht,
> I'll be your freend baith day and nicht.[11]

This rhyme emphasizes the importance that naming has in determining the relationships between humans and fairies. The fairy in the poem warns humans about the dangers that can result from interacting with them, and emphasizes how important it is to be aware of how they speak about the fairy folk. In author Andrew Lang's fairy tale, the children's nurse recites a version of the same rhyme, but "in English, not Scotch as she spoke it."[12] She warned young Randal and

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[10] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 9.

[11] Robert Chambers, *Popular Rhymes in Scotland* (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1870), 324; Translated from the Scots by Julian Goodare in "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," *Folklore* 123 (2012): 198, "If you call me imp or elf/ I advise you to look out for yourself/ If you call me fairy/ I'll cause you much trouble/ If you call me good neighbor/ Then good neighbour I will be/ But if you call me seely wight/ I'll be your friend both day and night."

[12] Andrew Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1895), 259. Lang's 'English' rendition reads, "If ye call me imp or elf/ I warn you to look well to yourself/ If ye call me fairy/ Ye'll find me quite contrary/ If

Jeanie, "you must always call the 'good neighbours' or 'good folk,' when you speak of them" to avoid insulting them and falling prey to their mischief.[13] This emphasis on naming having influence over fairies' temperaments was clearly not just a Victorian construct. Rev. Robert Kirk speculated that his early modern contemporaries often referred to fairies as "the good people…it would seem, to prevent the dint of their ill attempts," thereby confirming the belief that they were prone to unkindly acts.[14] This preoccupation with terminology and naming demonstrates the fear and risk humans associated with fairies, but also suggests humans may have had some level of power in determining how their interactions with fairies might go. Moreover, it reinforced the moral ambivalence ascribed to fairies—discussed fully in the third chapter—solidifying the notion that one would be better off avoiding any encounters with them altogether.

The term 'Browny,' missing from the rhyme above, actually refers to a specific type of fairy in Scotland, rather than a temperament. In the twenty-first century, we might liken Brownies to elves or hobgoblins, but University of Glasgow philosophy professor George Sinclair concisely summed them up in 1685:

> Browny was a Spirit, that haunted divers houses, (familiarly) without doing any evil, but doing necessary turns up and down the house, and frequently was found working in the Barn, threashing the corn in the night time, who appeared like a rough hairy man.[15]

In essence, early modern Scots believed that Brownies lurked near residential areas and engaged in various household chores in exchange for various offerings from their patron family. Whether we consider them a separate breed or simply a defined group within the fairy realm, Brownies seem far more predictable than their brethren. The subsequent chapters offer more detailed descriptions of Brownies, including the appearances and behaviors associated with them.

good neighbour you call me/ Then good neighbour I will be/ But if you call me kindly sprite/ I'll be your friend both day and night."

[13] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 259.

[14] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns & Fairies*, 5.

[15] George Sinclair and Thomas George Stevenson, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (Edinburgh: Th. G. Stevenson, 1871), 214.

However, identifying the different terms used to reference fairies indicates just how in-depth and nuanced Scottish fairy culture was in both eras—adding it to the many aspects of early modern fairy culture that continued into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Methodology and Sources

As a cultural study, this project draws from a wide selection of primary sources—a variety necessary to accommodate the two different time periods. These include literature, poetry, folklore, witch trial testimony, theological treatises, images, and travel narratives. This diversity among primary sources helps corroborate the conclusions, which are the results of a variety of perspectives. However, it also forces comparisons between unlike things. For example, because witch trials in Scotland ended by the early eighteenth century, it is impossible to compare the testimony gathered from early modern witches with anything similar in the nineteenth century. That said, some of this project's source-bases, such as literature, do overlap across both time periods, demonstrating some degree of continuity. This thesis' thematic structure also means that each chapter utilizes the same sources—simply focusing on the different aspects relevant to each one—adding another element of stability for the diverse primary source selection.

The table below lists the types of primary sources used throughout the project, splitting them across the two eras for comparison. Evidence for the early modern era will be drawn largely from witch trial testimony and theological treatises; images, literature, and folklore collections will be more relevant for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to the undatable nature of most popular ballads, I have decided to use most of them in the Victorian section, which is when they were first compiled and published. The two exceptions—*Tam Lin*

and *The Elfin Knight*—have been traced back to the early modern era in manuscript form, making them more easily datable than those that presumably existed in oral tradition for centuries but were never recorded until the nineteenth century.[16] Travel narratives, popular literature, and poetry will be important in both eras, though the latter two became a booming source for fairy culture in the Victorian era. Of course, the sources used in this project are not exhaustive, especially when it comes to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which produced countless folklore collections and works of fiction that feature fairies. Still, those used here offer insight into the range of source types relevant to a study on fairy culture and begin a more chronologically comparative investigation on the subject.[17]

Table 1: Primary Source Types

Early Modern Primary Sources	19th and early 20th c. Primary Sources
Witch trial testimony	Images (illustrations and paintings)
Theological treatises	Folklore Collections
Travel Narratives	Travel Narratives
Literature/poetry	Literature/poetry
Two datable ballads	

Drawing from some of these source bases—specifically witch trial testimony and collections of folklore—can often raise concerns about their credibility in historical scholarship. Such issues are common when dealing with oral testimony that has been recorded by a third party, rather than the person testifying. In the case of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Scottish witch trials, the testimonies of those individuals accused and tried as witches were recorded by court magistrates or clergymen—depending on whether the government or the

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[16] Emily B. Lyle, *Fairies and folk: approaches to the Scottish ballad tradition* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007); Edward J. Cowan, *The ballad in Scottish history* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000).

[17] As important and influential as Henderson and Cowan's *Scottish Fairy Belief* is in instigating a serious conversation about fairy culture in Scotland, its chronological considerations are vague.

church was overseeing the trial.[18] Due to the political and religious agendas behind the witch hunts in Scotland, critics question the likelihood that the witches on trial actually made the claims recorded in their testimonies; and even if they did, the frequent use of torture to elicit confessions in Scotland casts doubt over the conditions within which confessions were often delivered. Such arguments are certainly valid, especially as it relates to information about dealings with the Devil, which Reformation-era magistrates were highly interested in as reflected in the line of questioning most accused witches faced.

Yet recorded testimony relating to fairies is likely very credible in terms of reflecting the claims of those accused. Investigators, keen on information about demonic pacts and baptismal renunciations, were not looking for stories about encounters with fairies, making it highly unlikely that they would have fabricated fairy-related testimony. According to historian Emma Wilby, "Because the prosecutors had no vested interest in a spirit being called a fairy, in the significant minority of witches' confessions where fairies are mentioned directly we can hazard that the references came from the witches themselves."[19] In fact, during the trial of Isobel Gowdie, now famous for its unique detail about fairies, the magistrate wrote "etc" on several occasions. The fact that these omissions only occurred during Gowdie's descriptions of the fairy realm suggests he found such information too irrelevant or disinteresting to transcribe, at least in large quantities.[20] As literary critic Diane Purkiss put it, confessions about fairies would not have

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[18] For more on the organizational structures in place during the Scottish witch hunts see: Julian Goodare, "The Framework for Scottish Witch-Hunting in the 1590s". *Scottish Historical Review.* 81 (2002): 240-250; Julian Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Act". *Church History.* 74 (2005): 39-67; Brian P. Levack, *Witch-hunting in Scotland: law, politics, and religion* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Ronald Hutton, "Witch-Hunting in Celtic Societies". *Past and Present.* 212 (2011): 43-71.

[19] Emma Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," *Folklore* 111 (2000): 285.

[20] Diane Purkiss, *At the bottom of the garden: a dark history of fairies, hobgoblins, and other troublesome things* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 88.

been something witch-hunters wanted to hear, and instead likely left "most members of the

élite…struggling to wring meaning [in such accounts]."[21]

Similar criticisms arise when dealing with folklore collections. While Romantic and

Victorian-era folklorists often claimed to offer recorded versions of centuries-old pieces of oral

tradition, historians traditionally disregard folklore as viable sources for historical inquiry,

largely because they are not sure how to use them. Folklore collections may provide links to the

early modern and medieval eras, but the undatable nature of folklore often makes historians

uncomfortable. Some have made the mistake of either including or excluding folklore but simply

ignoring its problematic aspects—to the detriment of their conclusions.[22] To be fair, uncertainty

about how to employ and examine folklore is not unique to historians; it has plagued its own

discipline of Folkloristics as well.[23] In his 2004 Presidential Plenary Address for the American

Folklore Society, folklorist Alan Dundes observed a worldwide disappearance of stand-alone

folklore programs at universities, pointing to "the continued lack of innovation in what we might

term 'grand theory.'"[24] To avoid both delving into this disciplinary identity crisis as well as the

pitfalls of simply ignoring the historical issues surrounding folklore, this project will regard these

sources as products of the eras in which they were recorded and published. Addressing some of

the limitations that can come with using these types of sources and how they relate to this project

can help boost their credibility and maximize their utility.

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[21] Purkiss, *At the bottom of the garden*, 88.

[22] Henderson and Cowan's *Scottish fairy belief* treats ballads as medieval and early modern sources, ignoring the fact that the transcripts they quote were not recorded until the nineteenth century and only a couple have been officially dated to those earlier time periods.

[23] For more on the field of folkloristics see: Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005); Alan Dundes, *Folklore matters* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Jill T. Rudy and William A. Wilson, *The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore* (Utah State University, 2006).

[24] Alan Dundes, "Folkloristics in the Twenty-First Century (AFS Invited Presidential Plenary Address, 2004)". *Journal of American Folklore*. 118 (2005): 387.

In addition to the various textual sources employed throughout this project, this project also lends itself to the use of images. Unfortunately, this is one of the instances that results in comparing unlike sources, as I have yet to encounter any visual sources that depict fairies in early modern Scotland. It is, however, crucial to address the various visual representations of fairies that emerged in Victorian and twentieth century Scotland, as they offer direct interpretations of many of textual descriptions referenced throughout the project. Moreover, ignoring visual images and relegating them to realm of art history would exclude the cultural context within which the Victorian fairy revival flourished, as paintings and illustrations were a prominent outlet for the increasing popularization of fairies.

The shift toward cultural history to some extent pushed historians toward a shift—or at least an awareness—toward interdisciplinary approaches to their topic of interest, including anthropology, material culture, literary criticism, and art history. The latter helped bring about a 'visual turn' in historiography, which encouraged historians to place equal emphasis on visual sources, rather than focusing solely on textual documents.[25] Mark Moss emphasizes the role that media plays on the way cultures and societies conceive of remember the past.[26] Though Disney's Tinker Bell certainly widened and fueled the contemporary representation of fairies with it's 1953 animated film, *Peter Pan*, the foundations of that image began by the mid-nineteenth century in Scotland.

Yet the purpose of employing visual material is not simply to depict textual information—even in the cases of actual published illustrations. Peter Burke asserts that "When

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[25] For more on the 'visual turn' see: Walter Werner, "'What Does This Picture Say?' Reading the Intertextuality of Visual Images". *International Journal of Social Education.* 19 (2004): 64-77; Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2001); Martin Jay, "Cultural Relativism and the Visual Turn," *Journal of Visual Culture.* 1 (2002): 267–278.

[26] Mark Howard Moss, *Toward the Visualization of History: The Past as Image* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008).

they do use images, historians tend to treat them as mere illustrations…without comment,…[or else] to illustrate conclusions that the author has already reached by other means, rather than to give new answers to ask new questions."[27] Burke urges historians not to ignore cultural impact images have and include them equally among their textual sources. Even when images are associated with a specific text or myth, they are not necessarily intended to simply present a visual representation of that text, but to offer their own interpretation of that narrative. Like documents, all images cannot be 'read' the same way. Audience and medium are among the many factors to consider. This project employs numerous images associated with textual or mythological narratives, such as Sir Joseph Noel Paton's paintings of Oberon and Titania— characters from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—but can also stand alone and offer cultural insights outside the context of those textual narratives.

Beyond helping to depict physical representations of fairies, images—and the fact that they exist exclusively in the modern era within the framework of this project—will also play a role in the overall argument about memory, heritage, and nationalism. As Burke argues, "The uses of images by historians cannot and should not be limited to 'evidence' in the strict sense of the term…[as they also] allow us, posterity, to share the non-verbal experiences or knowledge of past cultures."[28] Rather than passive illustrations, images can serve as agents of history that help to shape and inform cultural and historical consciousness. Images, and their creators, carry a degree of power, as they can both project and develop how people imagine the past.

I hope to insert this thesis into the growing historiographical discussion about magic and superstition. Keith Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic* was the marquee study that effectively brought magic and the supernatural into the historical discussion, embracing the shift

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[27] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images As Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 10
[28] Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 13

toward social and cultural history. Thomas' exploration revealed the practicality and function

that magic and supernatural beliefs played in everyday life during the early modern era, claiming

that people used it to for "explanation and relief of human misfortune."[29] An expansive body of

literature has since become devoted to studies on magic and supernatural beliefs, with particular

emphasis on witchcraft and the witch-hunts.[30] While this project is focused on fairy beliefs,

rather than attitudes toward witchcraft, this is an important sub-conversation, as one of my

avenues into uncovering fairy beliefs involves drawing from witch trial testimony. Apart from

this side field, several historians have begun turning to issues of magic and the supernatural to

add a cultural element to the social history approach, both in the early modern and modern eras.[31]

Many of them, including Ronald Hutton, Éva Pócs, and Lizanne Henderson have managed to

discuss the historical importance of magic and the supernatural by drawing substantially from

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[29] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 5.

[30] Select works on witchcraft across Europe: Carlo Ginzburg, *The night battles: witchcraft & agrarian cults in the sixteenth & seventeenth centuries* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987); Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Michael David Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); , Michael David Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature". *American Historical Review*. 111 (2006): 383-404; For works on the Scottish witch-hunts specifically: Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, and Joyce Miller. *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland* (Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000); Brian P. Levack, *Witch-hunting in Scotland*; Emma Wilby, *Visions of Isobel : magic, shamanism & witchcraft in seventeenth-century Scotland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2009).

[31] For works on the early modern era: Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *The occult in early modern Europe: a documentary history* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Ghosts: a history of phantoms, ghouls, & other spirits of the dead* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006); Lizanne Henderson, *Fantastical imaginations: the supernatural in Scottish history and culture* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009); Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Robert W. Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the "Disenchantment of the World". *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 23 (1993): 475-494; Sarah Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief, and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); For works on the modern era: Glennis Byron and Jennifer Walters, *Magical Revival: Occultism and the Culture of Regeneration in Britain, C. 1880-1929* (University of Stirling, 2007); Susan Greenwood, "'Wake the Flame Inside Us': Magic, Healing and the Enterprise Culture in Contemporary Britain". *Etnofoor*. 8 (1995): 47-62; Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

sources of folklore.[32] These studies emphasize the historical and cultural insights that research into magic and supernatural beliefs can offer.

Narrowing from the broader conversations about magic and the supernatural, I will insert this project into the much smaller historiographical sub-field that focuses specifically on fairy beliefs. The most influential work in developing this project is Henderson and Cowan's *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History*.[33] They investigate the nature of fairy belief in Scotland, but focus only on medieval and early modern eras. Their book concludes as they trace its decline leading up to the Enlightenment, neglecting to consider its modern revival as an authentic continuation of the same belief system. Moreover, their pre-Enlightenment focus is vague, as they group medieval ballads, early modern sources, and modern folklore together with little attention to chronology or dating. Meanwhile, Carole Silver's *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* offers some insight into this later time period, but limits her studies to the Victorian era and includes all of Britain, which, while tempting, ends up blending the increasingly distinct cultures of Britain's kingdoms.[34] By maintaining a national focus, I hope to provide this project with the foundation needed for its chronological range. One of the values in this project is that it will transcend the figurative wall that is the Enlightenment, which usually serves as the chronological start or end points for historical analyses—both about fairies and more broadly. While several art historians, literary critics, and anthropologists have discussed

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[32] Ronald Hutton, *Blood and mistletoe: the history of the Druids in Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the sun: a history of the ritual year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Éva Pócs, *Between the living and the dead: a perspective on witches and seers in the early modern age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999); Éva Pócs, Gábor Klaniczay, and Eszter Csonka-Takács, *Christian demonology and popular mythology* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006); Henderson, *Fantastical imaginations*; Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief*; Joyce Miller, *Magic and witchcraft in Scotland* (Musselburgh: Goblinshead, 2004).
[33] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief.*
[34] Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples.*

fairy lore more broadly, it is a fairly limited body of literature.[35] This shortage is especially true in terms of strictly historical studies.[36] Connecting early modern and Victorian Scottish fairy culture, while also accounting for its development and adaptability, contributes to conversations about the changing functions of fairies in Scotland and help link some of the chronologically separated studies that already exist. Furthermore, it offers a new, cultural avenue for examining how Scots perceived and negotiated the society they lived in. Through the development and perseverance of Scottish fairy culture, we gain insight into the tensions and desires that contributed to Scottish identity formation in each respective era.

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[35] For fairy-related works in English and literary criticism see: Diane Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*; Peter Narváez, *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays* (New York: Garland Pub, 1991); Katharine Mary Briggs, *An Encyclopedia of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and Other Supernatural Creatures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Katharine Mary Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck; An Examination of Fairy Beliefs Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1959); Katharine Mary Briggs, "The Fairies and the Realms of the Dead". *Folklore*. 81 (1970): 81-96; Alaric Hall, "Research Article: Getting Shot of Elves: Healing, Witchcraft and Fairies in the Scottish Witchcraft Trials". *Folklore*. 116 (2005): 19-36; For fairy-related works in art history see: Nicola Bown, *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jeremy Maas, *Victorian Fairy Painting* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1997); Richard Schindler, "Joseph Noel Paton's Fairy Paintings: Fantasy Art as Victorian Narrative." *Scotia* 14 (1990): 13-29; Christopher Wood, *Fairies in Victorian art* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2000); John Kemplay, *The paintings of John Duncan: a Scottish symbolist* (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994); John Morrison, *Painting the nation: identity and nationalism in Scottish painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); For fairy-related works in anthropology: W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* ([New Hyde Park, N.Y.]: University Books, 1966); For fairy-related works in folklore studies: Canon J.A. MacCulloch, "The Mingling of Fairy and Witch Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland." *Folklore*. 32 (1921): 227-244; Stewart Sanderson, "A Prospect of Fairyland". *Folklore*. 75 (1964): 1-18; Juliette Wood, "Filming Fairies: Popular Film, Audience Response and Meaning in Contemporary Fairy Lore". *Folklore*. 117 (2006): 279-296.

[36] For fairy-related works in history see: Erin M. Ritz, *Faery Folklore: Its Effects on Irish-British Relations, 1800-1922; a Thesis* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston, 2010); Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland."; Alex Owen, "'Borderland Forms': Arthur Conan Doyle, Albion's Daughters, and the Politics of the Cottingley Fairies". *History Workshop Journal*. 38 (1994): 48-85; Helen Nicholson, "Postmodern Fairies". *History Workshop Journal*. 46 (1998): 205-212; Michael Hunter and Robert Kirk, *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science, and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland; a New Edition of Robert Kirk's 'The Secret Commonwealth' and Other Texts* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).

<u>Chapter One:</u>

Witchcraft, Fantasy, and Heritage: the changing nature of fairy discourse in early modern and Victorian Scotland

Introduction

This chapter will examine the nature of fairy discourse in early modern and Victorian Scotland to reveal the contexts and themes within which fairies were relevant during each era. Before delving into exactly what Scots said about fairies in each era—the pursuit of the second and third chapters—we must first consider the causes and tones behind those discussions to understand why people found them relevant for discussion at all. I will argue that in the early modern era, these discussions occurred primarily in a religious framework, as the impact of the Protestant Reformation provoked questions and debates about where fairies belonged on the theological spectrum. By the nineteenth century, however, the revived interests and conversations about fairies had changed. These discussions emphasized the mythological and fantastical elements rife in fairy stories as ideal escapist entertainment. Victorians also began framing fairy culture in conversations about Scottish heritage and nationalism, capitalizing on a nineteenth century trend to conceptualize folklore along national lines. These two seemingly separate aspects of revived fairy discourse may have even combined, perhaps adding a fantastical component to Scotland's mythology and heritage and suggesting that in fact Scotland's own past, uncontaminated by industrialization and modernity, was the ultimate destination for escapist fantasy. Combining these elements of fantasy, nostalgia, and heritage helps bring these two avenues for Victorian fairy discourse together and put them in conversation with one another.

Despite these stark differences, early modern and Victorian discourse concerning fairies also shared similarities. Sources from both eras indicate that discussions about fairies often

occurred along demographic lines, emphasizing certain types of people most commonly associated with fairy culture. These demographic affiliations were based on class, generation, and region in both eras and serve as another connection between the two time periods. Though the sources in this project come exclusively from the elite class, they almost unanimously associate fairy culture with the lower class. This trend is apparent in both eras, serving as an elite commentary on class culture that suggested fairy belief could only be the product of the lower class, which is presumably less educated and more gullible. Moreover, writers in both eras tended to preface their conversations about fairies with the notion that such fantastical beliefs and stories were something that originated in the past; because fairies did not fit within the Reforming or industrializing framework promoted by elites in each respective era, they must therefore be remnants of previous generations. Finally, both early modern and Victorian discussions about fairies often featured a regional association that linked fairy culture with the Highlands. While this connection became far more widespread in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some early modern accounts hint at this growing trend. All three of these demographic trends combine to support the claim that the Victorian revival of fairy culture was predicated by a growing sense of nostalgia and cultural heritage.

Unlike the subsequent chapters, which compare specific elements, qualities, and motifs associated with fairies in the early modern and Victorian eras, this chapter focuses on the contexts in which people discussed them. By investigating the nature and motivations behind these conversations, we can understand why fairies kept their relevance in two, vastly different eras. Just as Claude Levi-Strauss found animals "good to think with," so too are fairies.[37] Levi-Strauss argued that studying (non-human) animals would actually help reveal human mentalities and worldviews. In the same way, I argue that a study on (non-human) fairies offers a similar

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[37] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 89.

degree of insight into conceptions about identity and humanity. These discussions about fairies

can become a window into the tensions and anxieties Scotland faced in both eras and reveal how

cultural systems such as fairy lore played a role in developing a sense of Scottish identity,

whether Christian or national.

The Nature of Early Modern Fairy Discourse

Fairies as Contextualized by Witchcraft and Christianity

The nature of the primary sources available from each era offers the most revealing

information about the types of discussions fairies appeared in. The fact that most of the early

modern information about fairies comes from records of witch trials and theological treatises

already emphasizes the religious undertones present in these discussions. In Scotland, it was the

Protestant nobility that championed witch-hunting, as they sought to complete their top-down

Reformation by weeding out Catholic heretics and rituals.[38] Throughout the late sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, many Protestant elites produced theological treatises arguing for the

existence of witches, demons, and other spirits, with King James VI's *Demonologie* among the

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[38] When trying to pinpoint the arrival of the Scottish Reformation, historians have traditionally pointed to the Protestant victory in ousting the Regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, and to the successful establishment of the 'Reformation parliament' that followed. Even prominent accounts of the time, such as lead Reformer John Knox's *The History of the Reformation*, highlighted the 1559-60 rebellion as the successful establishment of Protestantism in Scotland. However, recent scholarship suggests that the early conversion and enthusiasm for the new religion among high-status nobles and elites did not represent the more gradual process of change that took place across the majority of Scottish communities.

[38] Alec Ryrie, *The Origins of the Scottish Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), Ryrie emphasizes the more gradual nature of the religious shift, arguing that "for more than a century, [noble] religious revolutionaries in Scotland and elsewhere would be inspired by what had been started in 1559-60 and would try to bring it to some kind of completion." (2-3) He asserts that while the events of 1559 and 1560 certainly served as a catalyst and significant step towards Scottish Protestantism, it took over a century before the Covenanting elite accomplished a full-scale conversion. For works on the top-down Scottish Reformation: Margo Todd, *The culture of Protestantism in early modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Linda J. Dunbar, *Reforming the Scottish church: John Winram (c. 1492-1582) and the example of Fife* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2002); Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant: the story of the Scottish Church in the years of the Persecution* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975).

most famous.[39] With all this interest and concern about the pantheon of the spirit world during the push toward Calvinism—and ultimately, Presbyterianism—it is not surprising that fairies make an appearance in the theological and trial records of early modern Scotland.

Even sources that were not obviously religious in nature, such as poetry and travel narratives, tended to frame their discussions about fairies in relation to Christianity and the Reformation. Prominent poet, Alexander Montgomerie, initially earned King James VI's tolerance for his Catholic sympathies due to his sheer talent as a court poet. In the famous "Flyting betwixt Montgomery and Polwart," Montgomerie referred to his poetic rival, Patrick Hume of Polwarth, as "half ane elph, [and] half an aip" and detailed the insult with a description of the Fairy Raid.[40] However, his alleged involvement in escalating political and religious tensions by the end of the sixteenth century eventually made Montgomerie an outlaw.[41] Col. William Cleland, who wrote about fairies in his *Effigies Clericorum*, was a devoted Covenanter and even helped put down the first Jacobite Rising.[42] Finally, Rev. John Brand, who detailed lingering aspects of fairy culture in his *Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland, Pightland-Firth &*

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[39] James VI/I, and Robert Waldegrave, *Daemonologie, in forme of a dialogue,: diuided into three bookes* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Walde-graue printer to the Kings Majestie, 1597); Though none were widely published until the Victorian era, other theological treatises written in early modern Scotland include: Robert Law and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, *Memorialls; or the memorable things that fell out within this island of Brittain from 1638 to 1684 ... edited from the MS. by C.K. Sharpe* (A. Constable: Edinburgh, 1818) was written in the late 1680s; Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* was written around 1685; Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth,* was written around 1691.

[40] Alexander Montgomerie and James Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie* (Edinburgh and London: Printed for the Society by W. Blackwood and Sons, 1887), 143-44.

[41] R. J. Lyall, *Alexander Montgomerie: poetry, politics, and cultural change in Jacobean Scotland* (Tempe, Ariz: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

[42] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 33. The Covenanters were members of the hardline Presbyterian movement in seventeenth century Scotland that helped launch the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. For more on the Covenanters, see: Raymond Campbell Paterson, *A land afflicted Scotland and the Covenanter Wars, 1638-1690* (Edinburgh: J. Donald Publishers, 1998); Ian Borthwick Cowan, *The Scottish Reformation: church and society in sixteenth century Scotland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); The first Jacobite Rising (1689-92) saw the Jacobite forces' first attempt to restore the Catholic King James VII to the throne after he'd been deposed by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange in 1688.

Caithness, was a minister educated in the divinity school at the University of Edinburgh.[43] The backgrounds of these authors, along with the witch trial testimonies and theological treatises, suggest early modern discussions about fairies were deeply entrenched in debates about Christianity, Calvinism, and Presbyterianism popular at the time.

From a theological perspective, most discussions about fairies were afterthoughts in much more serious debates about witchcraft. Poet Robert Sempill was among the Protestant activists, as his 1583 poem "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe" mocked Patrick Adamson, the archbishop of St. Andrews, for turning to witchcraft to cure his ailments.[44] Sempill's poem recounts the bishop's involvement with Alesoun Pierson, who was convicted of witchcraft in 1588 and confessed to associating with fairies. The popularity of witch-hunting among the Scottish Protestant elite came to the national forefront in 1597, when King James VI of Scotland published a personal treatise on demonology. Like the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the King's tract sought "to convert doubters to a belief in witches and to urge the punishment of witches."[45] James, son of the Catholic Mary Stuart, had been separated from his mother at a very young age and raised with strictly Protestant ideals. He developed a keen interest in witchcraft that bordered on obsession after attending the high-profile North Berwick witch trials in 1590. These trials charged over a hundred people with using witchcraft to set terrible storms against the ship that carried James and his new bride from Denmark to Scotland. With his *Demonologie*, James brought witchcraft to the forefront of Scottish consciousness and highlighted its importance within both the religious and political spheres.

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[43] John Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland, Pightland-Firth & Caithness* (Edinburgh: Printed by George Mosman, 1701).

[44] Robert Sempill, "The Legend of the Bishop of St. is Lyfe," in *Satirical poems of the time of the reformation*, ed. James Cranstoun (Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by W. Blackwood and sons, 1891).

[45] Normand and Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 332.

Organized in the form of a dialogue, James' *Demonologie* is split into three books. The first concerns magic, which he believed was slightly different from witchcraft, though no less damnable. To James, "magic is...a tragic fall of knowledge and scholarship," for he considered magicians to be learned men who allowed their curiosity to be tempted by the knowledge of the Devil.[46] The second book focuses on "the description of sorcery and witchcraft," which he claimed to be dominated by women.[47] James argued that the Devil sought out desperate or disparaged women and persuaded them to enter into his service:

> [After] being easily obtained…[the Devil] makes them renounce their God and baptism directly, and gives them his mark…[through which] he could hurt and heal them, so all their ill- and well-doing thereafter must depend upon him.[48]

James then confronted the question of whether witches had power over their trial judges by claiming that "[if the magistrate] will be diligent in examining and punishing them, God will not permit their master to trouble or hinder so good a work."[49] The final book within his *Demonologie* served to provide a "description of all these kinds of spirits that trouble men or women," including demons, ghosts, werewolves, and fairies.[50]

James devoted an entire section of his third book to the conception of fairies and displayed the cultural links between the classes. Despite his high-ranking status, he was very much in tune with the popular perceptions of elfin culture, and provided a more than adequate description of fairy life that echoes the characterizations laid out by the medieval ballads:

> How there was a king and queen of fairy, of such a jolly court and train as they had; how they had a teind and duty, as it were, of all goods; how they naturally rode and went, and drank, and did all other actions like natural men and women.[51]

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[46] Normand and Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 343-45.
[47] James VI/I, "Demonologie," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches*, ed. Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 379.
[48] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 383.
[49] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 398.
[50] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 403.
[51] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 418.

Based on this summary—as well as the early modern physical and behavioral characterizations of fairies outlined in chapters two and three—it seems clear that the King had a firm understanding of the cultural folk belief systems of his people, at least in terms of fairy lore.

However, by tapping into popular perceptions about fairies, James evidently sought to reshape the framework of fairy culture by arguing that fairies were merely the product of illusion. Literary scholars Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts point out that according to Protestant ideologies, "all apparitions of spirits could only be illusions or diabolical manifestations."[52] This is a concept that existed well before James published his Demonology, but his emphasis on reasserting it shows that he realized it was not the common perception among the masses. In this section, James dismissed their existence as "one of the sorts of illusions that was rifest in the time of the papistry."[53] With this statement, he demonstrated the syncretic relationship between the Church and folk culture prior to the Reformation. Rather than perpetuating the notion that fairies were real creatures that lived among humans, James stressed the idea that fairy belief should be associated with Catholicism, and that both should be regarded as antiquated systems of the past.

In fact, James considered fairies to be the sinister product of delusions perpetrated by the Devil. According to James, "the devil illuded the senses of sundry simple creatures in making them believe that they saw and heard such things as were nothing so indeed."[54] When asked how so many witches could have told similar stories of being taken away to fairy hills and introduced to the Fairy Queen, James responds that "with their senses being dulled and...asleep, such hills and houses [were] within them, such glistering courts and trains, and whatsoever suchlike

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[52] Normand and Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 347.
[53] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 418.
[54] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.

wherewith he [the Devil] pleaseth to delude them."[55] James took efforts to emphasize the power

of the Devil, and by characterizing fairies as manifestations of the Devil, he was countering the

pre-Reformation conceptions that fairies were religiously independent beings with an ambiguous

moral standing.

Considering his conclusion that fairies were illusions manifested by the Devil—and

therefore a threat to Christianity—it is understandable that James would set forth a set of

parameters concerning how his magistrates should deal with witches who had associations with

fairies. Though he acknowledged that many purported witches, clouded by illusion, believed

their encounters with fairies to be real, he discouraged courts from granting them leniency to

prevent future witches from using that as an excuse to escape punishment.[56] Instead, he urged

magistrates not to have mercy on witches who did not realize the fairies they encountered were

simply manifestations of Satan, even though "he deceives the witches by attributing to himself

diverse names, as if every diverse shape that he transforms himself in were a diverse kind of

spirit."[57] Again, while the initial topic of interest for this section is on fairies, King James

continually turns the conversation back to issues of witchcraft and the Devil, emphasizing the

extent to which early modern fairy discourse was caught up in discussions about witchcraft and

Protestant theology.

James' concern for the threats fairy belief posed to Protestantism was so great that he

even proved hesitant to discuss them at length in his *Demonologie*, for fear that too much

information on the subject could inspire sinful curiosity. In his dialogue, the character

Philomathes pointed out that he has "heard many more strange tales of this fairy [creature]"

which Epistemon—the voice of James—had yet to tell him about. James' response to the query

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[55] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[56] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 125; James VI/I, "Demonologie," 420.
[57] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 420

for further information about fairies emphasized both the purposes behind his *Demonologie* and the religious context that framed fairy culture in early modern Scotland. He reminded Philomathes—and the readers—that the purpose of these discussions were to answer questions about whether witches and spirits existed and what sort of powers they had, if any. Feeling that he had sufficiently answered those questions, James refused to delve:

> ...any further in playing the part of a dictionary to tell whatever I have read or heard in that purpose, which both would exceed faith, and rather would seem to teach such unlawful arts nor to disallow and condemn them, as it is the duty of all Christians to do.[58]

He did not want to offer anymore information on the subject of fairies than was absolutely necessary because he was concerned that, rather than disproving their existence, humoring readers with multiple fairy stories would only promote more interest in 'such unlawful arts.'[59] Moreover, his response solidified his intention that his *Demonologie* serve mainly to prove the existence of witches, and thereby justify their hunting. As Normand and Roberts put it, "the first aim aligns James with theologians and pastors; the second with inquisitors, lawyers and judges," for as "king he saw himself as both instructing and judging."[60] For James, both goals had to merge for him—and his kingdom—to play a more prominent role on a European stage preoccupied by the Reformation, especially as he eyed succession to Queen Elizabeth's heirless English throne. Still, it seems that James was both aware of and concerned about popular cultural systems such as fairy culture, and believed they posed a real and dangerous threat to the Protestant nation he wanted to rule.

Almost a century later, another theologian echoed King James' sentiments on the existence fairies. In his 1685 treatise, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered,* University of Glasgow philosophy professor George Sinclair sought to "prove the existence of devils, spirits, witches,

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[58] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 421

[59] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 126.

[60] Normand and Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 332.

and apparitions." The fact that he included fairies among these reinforces the connection King

James sought to forge between fairies and the Devil ninety years earlier. On the topic of fairies,

Sinclair argued:

> It were unseasonable and tedious to rehearse all the Stories, which have been told of
> Brownies, and Pharies, commonly called our Good-Neighbours, how there was a King
> and Queen of Pharie, of such a Court, and train, as they had, and how they had a teind
> and dutie, as it were, of all corns, flesh, and meale, how they rode and went along the
> sides of hills, all in Green apparel. I verily believe many have seen such spectres, but
> what were they? Nothing but the delusion of the Senses of sundry simple people, who the
> Devil made believe they did see and hear such things…Such then was the ignorance of
> many, that they believed their house was all the sonsier that Browny was about it. As K.J.
> Says in his Demonology.[61]

Based on Sinclair's comments, discussions and beliefs about fairies were apparently still

common nearly a hundred years after the King tried to put them to rest. Apart from attempting to

solidify the position of fairy culture within discourse on witchcraft and the Devil, Sinclair

inadvertently hinted at how entrenched fairy culture had become in Scotland. Not quite as

dismissive as James had been in 1597, Sinclair acknowledged that many Scots believed they had

encounters with fairies. However, he echoed the King's conclusion that fairies were not a

separate race of spirit, but simply manifestations created by the Devil. The fact that elites

apparently still had to explain fairies links with the Devil more than 120 years after Scotland

officially adopted Calvinism hints at a widespread reluctance to accept this interpretation of fairy

culture. This persistence of traditional fairy culture and its religious autonomy may account for

its ability to adapt and continue to persevere in both the post-Reformation and post-

Enlightenment eras.

However, theological discussions about whether fairies actually existed were not

exclusively negative or doubtful. Rev. Robert Kirk's manuscript on fairies and second sight

argued that fairies were real, and described the various customs associated with their race. Kirk

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[61] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 214.

was born around 1644 in the Highland town of Aberfoyle, and was the seventh son of his parents. It seems almost fated that he would go on to study the fairy realm, as many Scots believed that seventh sons harbored the gift of 'second sight,' which allowed them to properly see fairies—and often involved an aptitude for prophecy as well. As a young man, Kirk studied theology at the universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews. However, Kirk's scholarship was largely in Scots Gaelic—the Celtic language that was entrenched in the Highland heritage. After inheriting his father's position as Minister of Aberfoyle in 1685, Kirk's devotion to both religion and his Highland culture inspired him to translate the Psalms into Gaelic. This project drew attention from prominent officials in London, and when Protestant officials considered the possibility of publishing the entire Bible in the Highland vernacular, they named Kirk the best man for the task. After accepting the assignment, he traveled to London in 1689 and stayed for several months formalizing the details of the project. However, the diary he kept while in London suggests the biblical translation was not the only project on his mind, as he was already developing what would become an iconic work—*The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies*. [62] He finished this more intriguing project in 1691, and though it was not published before his untimely death in 1692, it survived in the form of several manuscripts. In Kirk, we find a Highlander who promoted and scientifically studied the existence of fairies while Lowlanders and their English counterparts had all but relegated such beliefs as antiquated things of the past.

Like King James VI, Kirk's motives behind writing his treatise stemmed from his growing concerns about the theological direction in which Scotland was heading. Unlike James, however, Kirk's concerns prompted him to confirm the existence of fairies, not deny it. For Rev. Kirk, this treatise allowed him to speak out against Atheistic sentiments that he feared were

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[62] Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory*, 12-13; Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 172-176.

encroaching on the newly built Presbyterian kingdom. On the surface, a Protestant minister advocating 'pagan' superstitions may seem incongruous. However, Henderson and Cowan argue that "Kirk did not perceive a dichotomous relationship between Christian doctrine and folk belief, a polarisation that had been so rigorously asserted by the reformed church during the past century and a half."[63] He viewed his treatise as a way "to suppress the impudent and growing Atheism of this Age," which he considered a rising threat against Protestantism.[64] Indeed, Kirk wanted "to shew that [second sight and fairy belief are] not unsutable to Reasone nor the Holy Scriptures."[65] In the wake of the declining witch-hunts, and perhaps in anticipation of the Enlightenment, Kirk was concerned that people were taking notions of rationalism too far. In his opinion, all aspects of the supernatural were interconnected as part of a broader theological spectrum that made up the spirit realm. Thus, doubt in the existence of fairies transferred into uncertainty over the reality of witches, demons, the Devil, and ultimately, a cynical attitude toward God.[66] He argued, "much is written of Pigmes, Fairies, Nymphs, Syrens, Apparitions, which tho not the tenth Part true, yet could not spring of nothing!"[67] For Kirk, the decline of fairy belief signified more than simply a dismissal of his native Highlands' cultural heritage; it was a significant and dangerous step along the path toward Atheism. While his reasoning certainly differed from King James', a century later Rev. Robert Kirk had the same interests at heart—to preserve and advocate Protestant values in Scotland.

In his *Secret Commonwealth*, Kirk characterized the lifestyles, customs, and religious affiliations of fairies in an almost scientific, anthropological context. According to him, Fairyland featured a social hierarchy made up of several "Tribes and Orders" operated under the

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[63] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 176.
[64] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, i.
[65] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 62.
[66] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 171-177.
[67] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 26.

Fairy Queen. His account described the fairies' appearance and physical nature, as well as their affinity for mischief. He seems to have approached his description of fairy life with an attitude of scientific observation, as if he were recording the culture and habits of people from a foreign country, rather than a foreign realm. His decision to delve into Highland communities and collect first-hand accounts to compile his description of 'the secret commonwealth', or realm, of fairies suggests an almost ethnographic approach, far more explorative than his predecessors.

Yet like King James and George Sinclair before him, Kirk also revealed the religious undertones prevalent in early modern fairy discourse by suggesting it manifested itself in fairies' behaviors toward Christian symbols. He echoed their interest in fairies' place within the religious spectrum, asserting that fairies "are said to be of a middle nature betwixt man and Angell, as were daemons thought to be of old."[68] Kirk also noted that they had "no discernible Religion, Love or Devotione towards God the Blessed Maker of all," and in fact, "they disappear whenever they hear his Name invoked, or the Name of Jesus…nor can they act ought at that Time after hearing of that sacred Name."[69] Beyond his position as a Highland minister, Kirk's descriptions maintain an emphasis on fairies as largely relevant within broader theological and demonological debate.

However, Kirk is not the early modern only source to recount fairies' unfavorable reactions to Christianity and the Reformation. Bessie Dunlop testified in 1576 that she discussed these matters with her fairy contact, Thom Reid. According to her, when she asked Thom what he thought about the new Reformed faith spreading throughout Scotland, he replied, "this new law was nocht gude; and that the auld fayth suld cum hame agane, but nocht sic as it was

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[68] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 5.
[69] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 16.

befoir."[70] Meanwhile, in 1616 Elspeth Reoch claimed a "farie man" had "bade hir leave Orkney…becaus this countrey wes Priestgone." He went on to tell her that the Reformed faith had brought "over mony Ministeris" to Orkney—and perhaps Scotland in general—and warned that if she delayed leaving "she wald be hurt."[71] It is unfortunate that this evidence proves the fairy man right, as Reoch was executed for her crimes of witchcraft. It also suggests just how aware people may have been of the new, potentially fatal risks the Reformation posed to folk culture and folk beliefs in Scotland.

Several other accounts describe fairies' unfavorable reaction to elements of the Reformation, or to Christianity in general. For example, both Brand's and Martin's travel narratives recount stories of how Brownies began to sabotage the household chores they used to help with when their human partners began reading and reciting the Bible.[72] Similarly, George Sinclair recorded a woman's claims that mischievous fairies had thrown her Bible into the fire "among the Ashes."[73] The displeasure and anger members of the lower class often attributed to fairies when fairies encountered religion suggests that these lay people were acutely aware of the theological battle waged by elites against fairies and other aspects of supernatural culture. Moreover, these accounts depict fairies taking part in that fight, likely in the name of self-preservation—perhaps the fairies' gift of prophecy warned that the elite Calvinist Reformers would wrap them up in the crusade against Catholicism and Paganism. Thom Reid's assertion to

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[70] Trial Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 56. Trans: "this new law was not good, and that the old faith should come home again, but not [exactly] as it was before."

[71] Trial of Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, volume II (Edinburgh: 1840), 190. Trans: "he told her to leave Orkney…because the country had become 'priestgone'…[meaning there were] too many priests…[and if] she delayed her departure she would be hurt."

[72] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney*, 169; Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Containing a Full Account of Their Situation, Extent, Soils, Product, Harbours ... With a New Map of the Whole ... To Which Is Added a Brief Description of the Isles of Orkney, and Schetland* (London: Printed for Andrew Bell, 1703), 392.

[73] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 62.

Dunlop may have been true on multiple fronts; Scottish Protestantism was "nocht gude" for the persistence of fairy culture, nor for those humans who believed in them.

Fairy Discourse based on Class Demographics

Apart from the theological undertones behind most early modern discussions concerning fairies were issues of class. Though all the sources originating from this era come from the educated elite, they almost exclusively ascribed fairy belief and related cultural systems to the peasant class, which is undoubtedly why the majority of these sources condemn such beliefs as ignorant superstition. Even the witch-hunts, which serve as the major source-base for early modern information about fairies, could be considered class-based. Though elites served as the prosecutors against witch trials, the testimonies offer at least a glimpse into non-elite culture. There were a number of high-status witch trials in Scotland—namely the widely publicized North Berwick trials, which prosecuted upper-class women for using witchcraft as part of a political conspiracy and were attended by King James VI—but they were not representative of the majority, who usually ranked among the bottom half of the socioeconomic ladder. According to the data collected by the University of Edinburgh-sponsored *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft* published in 2003, of the cases whose socio-economic status was recorded, 29% fell into the category of very poor or landless, 64% fell into the middle class range, and only 6% were upper-class, which included lairds and nobility.[74] Though these numbers are now a decade old, and recent research has unearthed more information about several Scottish witches, the gaping chasm between the accusation and trial of upper class versus middle- and lower-class remains in tact. While the majority of Scotland's witch trial records do not provide specific information on socio-

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[74] Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, 'The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft', http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/ (archived January 2003, accessed 2014).

economic status, those that involved prominent members of society certainly did, and it follows

that an absence of this information signified an individual was middle class or lower. Of the

thirty witch trial cases examined in this project, none involve upper-class defendants, solidifying

the notion that fairy culture was largely ascribed to the non-elite.

The Scottish Witchcraft Act of 1563, championed and passed by the newly Reformed

Protestant nobility, claimed that witches, as well as those who sought the help of witches, should

be brought to trial and punished by death.[75] Though its wording was brief and simple, the

motivations behind it were far more complex, especially considering Scotland's initial resistance

to the witch craze when it swept across the Continent fifty years prior to the Reformation.

Historian Julian Goodare outlines what may have prompted the Scottish Protestant elite—who

dominated the Parliament in 1563—to create and pass an act on witchcraft, despite the lack of

any widespread panics over witchcraft in Scotland. As Protestantism was founded on the concept

that one should look to the Bible—rather than a living person, such as a Pope—to determine how

to lead Christian lives, it may have simply been the phrase from Exodus 22:18 that triggered the

law: "Thou shalt not suffre a witch to lyve."[76] It could also have been a reaction to the passage of

an English law against witchcraft just months earlier—though the act's English counterpart was

not nearly as strict, calling for violators to be imprisoned rather than executed.[77] However, the

Scottish Witchcraft Act lacks a true definition of witchcraft and any mention of the Devil in the

Scottish act, and instead features terms such as "superstitious" and "abusand [i.e., misleading]

the pepill." Based on these observations, Goodare suggests that the act was actually "conceived

as a [Protestant] weapon in the struggle against Catholicism."[78] Because the majority of the

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[75] Levack, *Witch-hunting in Scotland*; Goodare, *The Scottish Witchcraft Act*, 39, 51.
[76] Exodus 22:18 (Coverdale Bible); Note: read 'lye' as 'live.'
[77] Goodare, *The Scottish Witchcraft Act*, 49-51.
[78] Goodare, *The Scottish Witchcraft Act*, 52-53, 59.

Scottish nobility had converted to Protestantism, this act can largely be seen as a way to flush out Catholic heresy from the laity. The tolerance and religious syncretism that many pre-Christian cultural folk systems enjoyed for centuries under the papacy quickly became swept up in the religious crusade against witchcraft—fairy culture among them.

With his publication on demonology, King James VI firmly inserted himself among the cohort of Protestant elites who had advocated for the witch-hunts. Henderson and Cowan contend that, through James' *Demonologie*, "folklore was politically and culturally manipulated not only by the Church but also by the State," adding that his "redefinition of fairies as demonically inspired hallucinations, as actually agents of the Devil's work, ensured that all who believed in them were potentially in danger of their lives."[79] It is unclear the degree to which the Scottish Protestant elite considered fairy culture a threat. The fact that there is no official mention of it in the early stages of the Reformation, including in the 1563 Scottish Witchcraft Act, suggests that Reformers did not necessarily intend to target fairies. More likely, they sought to manipulate religious belief by discrediting Catholic philosophies, and folklore—such as fairy belief—occasionally got swept up with Catholic superstitions due to its syncretic nature. Yet James's decision to devote an entire section of his *Demonologie* to fairy belief suggests that the Reformers may have underestimated the popularity of fairy narratives among the laity. Normand and Roberts point out that James' "description of belief in a fairy king and queen and their court seems to record popular Scottish belief," suggesting that King James was very much in touch with the cultural beliefs of the folk.[80] However, Henderson and Cowan assert that his "assault on folk culture…[caused t]he gap between elite and folk concepts of the nature of reality [to]

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[79] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 138.
[80] Normand and Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 348.

undoubtedly widen in this period."[81] Yet in addition to using his *Demonologie* to assert himself among the most prominent Protestant theologians in Europe, Normand and Roberts argue that James' "aim to instil [sic] right belief in a lay audience is characteristic of the homiletic nature" of the publication. Thus, his choice to use vernacular language and an easy-to-follow dialogue structure was meant to appeal to the laity in Scotland and thereby instruct them about the true nature of witches and spirits.

The fact that George Sinclair felt he needed to repeat the theologically-backed arguments King James made nearly a century earlier—and almost word for word, at that—also highlights elite authority and the overall disjointedness between the classes. Though educated elites, such as King James, George Sinclair, and the witch trial magistrates, found the matter of fairies an unimportant distraction from the true theological issues surrounding witchcraft and the Devil, the subject of fairies still maintained some degree of prominence among the laity. So much so that educated men like Sinclair and Kirk found themselves addressing it almost a hundred years after King James—albeit with different perspectives. This, along with the continued appearance of fairies in witch trials throughout the seventeenth century, supports the notion that despite the fervent crusades led by Scotland's Protestant elite to disseminate Reformed ideals throughout the country, the conversion process was an extremely gradual one.[82] Henderson and Cowan argue

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[81] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 138.

[82] For generations, historians traditionally pointed to the successful establishment of the 1560 'Reformation parliament' that took place in Edinburgh when trying to pinpoint its arrival. Even prominent accounts of the time, such as the tract recorded by lead Reformer John Knox, highlighted the 1559-60 rebellion as the successful establishment of Protestantism in Scotland. However, recent scholarship suggests that the early conversion and enthusiasm for the new religion among high-status nobles and elites did not represent the more gradual process of change that occurred within most Scottish communities. Among these, historian Alec Ryrie adds to the revisionist approach and emphasizes the more gradual nature of the religious shift, arguing that "for more than a century, religious revolutionaries in Scotland and elsewhere would be inspired by what had been started in 1559-60 and would try to bring it to some kind of completion." Ryrie and his contemporaries—including Margo Todd, Linda Dunbar, and John Spurr—assert that while the events of 1559 and 1560 served as a catalyst toward Scottish Protestantism, a full-scale conversion took over a century. In examining the phenomenon of the Scottish Reformation, scholars have begun to shift the focus from the ruling elite to the common masses, and in doing so, have begun to question the traditional conception of a quick and sudden social and cultural transformation.

that "as the worldviews of the learned and the peasantry became increasingly polarised, large areas of what had once been accepted belief were stigmatised under the catch-all phrase of 'superstition', so contaminating and blurring the distinctive roles of witches and fairies [within Scottish communities]."[83] However, based on the continued relevance fairy culture maintained throughout the end of the early modern era, it seems the top-down push toward Reformation—no matter how gradual—failed to dispel some of the pre-Reformation cultural systems popular among the masses.

Fairy Discourse based on Generational Demographics

In addition to attributing fairy culture and belief to the middle and lower folk classes, later accounts also frame it as a lingering, archaic product of the past that was successfully stamped out by the Protestant Reformation. King James prefaced his chapter on fairies by remarking that they were "the sorts of illusions…rifest in the time of papistry."[84] This attitude remained popular among the Protestant elite, even as they observed a decline in fairy beliefs toward the end of the seventeenth century. Before echoing King James VI's attitudes toward the true nature of fairies, George Sinclair prefaced a section on Brownies in his 1685 treatise with this:

> In the time of ignorance and superstition, when the darkness of Paganism was not dispelled by Gospel light; Spirits kept a more familiar converse with families, and

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Traditional interpretations of the Scottish Reformation include: Ian Borthwick Cowan, *The Scottish Reformation: church and society in sixteenth century Scotland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); T. C. Smout, *A history of the Scottish people, 1560-1830* (New York: Scribner, 1970); Gordon Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960). Revisionist interpretations favoring a 'long Reformation' that took hold gradually include: Todd, *The culture of Protestantism in early modern Scotland*, 122; Ryrie, *The origins of the Scottish Reformation*; Dunbar, *Reforming the Scottish church*; John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 1603-1714* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2006); Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[83] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 120.

[84] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 418

even in the time of Popery, what was more frequent in houses than Brownies whom they employed in many services.[85]

Sinclair's analysis attributed fairy belief to Scotland's pagan roots, and condemns the pre-Reformation church for allowing such ideas to continue even after the conversion to Christianity. Meanwhile, in a travel narrative to Orkney and other Scottish islands, Rev. John Brand proclaimed:

> Now I do not hear of any such appearances the Devil makes in these Isles, so great and many are the blessings which attend a Gospel dispensation: The Brounies, Fairies, and other evil Spirits that haunted and were familiar in our Houses, were dismissed, and fled at the breaking up of our Reformation (if we may except but a few places not yet well reformed from Popish Dregs)…[86]

Like Sinclair and presumably countless others before him, Brand associated fairy belief with paganism and popery—between which most Protestants saw little difference—and credits the Reformation for stamping out such notions. However, while William Cleland's 1697 poem, "Effigies Clericorum," also attributed the downfall of Scottish fairy culture to the Reformation, it also suggested the conditions under which it might return:

> For there and several other places
> About mill dams and green brae faces,
> Both Elrich, Elfs and Brownies stayed,
> And Green gown'd Farries daunc'd and played.
> When old John Knox, and other some
> Began to plott the Baggs of Rome
> They suddenly took to their heels,
> And did no more frequent these fields.
> But if Romes Pipes perhaps they hear,
> Sure for their Interest, they'll compear
> Again, and play their old Hells Tricks.[87]

This portion of the poem hints at the extent to which fairy culture was entrenched in Scottish folk culture, as it emphasized the need to maintain the values and effects of the Reformation in order to keep the creatures from resurfacing—whether figuratively or literally. In championing the

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[85] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 213.
[86] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney*, 170.
[87] William Cleland, "Effigies Clericorum" in *A Collection of Several Poems and Verses, composed upon various occasions* (1697), 59-60. Trans: "compear" means to appear in assembly

Reformation's relative success at expelling fairy beliefs from the Scottish laity, these writers also revealed the depth to which the non-elite classes held these beliefs.

Author Martin Martin also discussed the relationship between fairy culture and the past in his 1703 travel narrative of the Scottish islands. He assessed that "There are several Instances of Heathenism and Pagan Superstition among the Inhabitants of the Islands related here, but I would not have the Reader to think those Practices are chargeable upon the generality of the present Inhabitants."[88] Like the sources quoted above, he went on to assure his readers that "These Practices are only to be found, where the Reform'd Religion has not prevail'd; for 'tis to the Progress of that alone that the Banishment of Evil Spirits, as well as of Evil Customs is owing, when all other Methods prov'd ineffectual."[89] Though these comments dutifully echo those of his predecessors, his observation that "only a few of the Oldest and most Ignorant of the Vulgar are guilty of [these beliefs]" introduces a generational component to this narrative.[90] Over one hundred pages later, Martin elaborated on this idea after recounting popular stories of Brownies:

> There was scarce any the least Village in which this Superstitious Custom [of making offerings to Brownies] did not prevail, I enquired the reason of it from several well meaning Women, who, until of late had practiced it, and they told me that it had been transmitted to them by their Ancestors successfully, who believed it was attended with good Fortune, but the most Credulous of the Vulgar had now laid it aside.[91]

Though other sources mention oral tradition and the frequent passing of stories within communities as practices that stimulated fairy culture and other 'superstitious' belief systems, Martin appears to be the only one to connect those practices to the older generations. In doing so, he foreshadowed an element of fairy culture that would become more widely discussed in its

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[88] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, preface.
[89] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, preface.
[90] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, preface.
[91] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 110.

Victorian revival. In its early modern context, Martin's inquiries reveal an issue that plagued the Reforming elite as they tried to disseminate Protestant ideals throughout the Scottish masses: people seemed more likely to value and retain information they received from their elders—who raised them—than from the nobility, who visited their villages only to champion theological nuances or persecute members of the community for witchcraft. This likely played a substantial role in the survival of Scottish fairy culture in the early modern era, despite the Protestant elite's attempts to eradicate it from the Scottish mentality.

Fairy Discourse based on Regional Demographics

Finally, several of the sources published at the turn of the eighteenth century mark the growing associations between Scottish fairy culture—and supernatural 'superstitions' in general—with the Highlands and Islands. Kirk never published his treatise—due to his untimely and mysterious death in 1692—but his diaries reveal that he had discussed many of the subjects and ideas set forth in *The Commonwealth* during his stay in London from 1689 to 1690. Though it might be assumed that members of prominent London circles would have scoffed at such topics and labeled them superstitious—especially with the rise of English philosophers like John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Thomas Hobbs—Kirk's diary suggests the contrary. It seems the concept of second sight in particular drew a considerable amount of interest and discussion, especially with Edward Stillingfleet, the Bishop of Worcester.[92] Though Stillingfleet evidently affirmed that he did not believe in fairies or second sight, he appears to have devoted a significant amount of time to engaging Kirk in regular discussions about the supernatural.[93] Perhaps because such belief systems had long since vanished in the London metropolis, these

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[92] Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory*, 18.
[93] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 174; Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory*, 19.

Scottish topics sparked a curiosity and interest, especially coming from "an antiquarian point of view," as Henderson puts it.[94] Upon Kirk's death, several copies of *The Commonwealth* had already been circulated in manuscript form, further emphasizing the fascination that the subjects drew during that time. Though most of those who discovered his work in the late seventeenth century likely would have argued or disputed his points—potentially seeing it as a regression away from either Protestantism or the push toward an increasingly rational age—the fact that it attracted such interest suggests these debates concerning the supernatural had not fully disappeared, and proves that interest and curiosity existed beyond the Scottish Highlands.

Brand and Martin's travel narratives also signal this regional shift, as they chronicled journeys into the more remote areas of the Western Highlands and Islands specifically. Rev. Brand commented that "tho this restraint put upon the Devil [and the evil spirits he commands, such as fairies] was far latter in these Northern places than with us, to whom the Light of a Preached Gospel, did more early shine, yet now also do these Northern Isles enjoy the fruits of this restraint."[95] A graduate from the University of Edinburgh, Brand took the increasingly common Lowland mentality that characterized Lowlanders as more advanced than their Highland counterparts. This mentality often carried sentiments of condescension and judgment against Highland and Island culture. While these late sources only begin to hint at a regional element in discussions about fairy culture, they serve as indicators for a growing trend that came to characterize Victorian and early twentieth century fairy culture.

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[94] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 174
[95] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney,* 170-171.

The Nature of Victorian and early twentieth century Fairy Discourse

As in the early modern era, the nature of the sources themselves helps reveal how Victorian discussions about fairies were characterized. Where witch trial testimonies and theological treatises revealed the strong religious debates that often defined early modern discussions about fairies, folklore collections, literature, and visual sources reveal the more mythological, heritage-based interpretations of fairy culture. Literary and visual sources often offered opportunities for escapist entertainment, and the popularity of fairies within those media emphasize the appeal that such fantastical and mythological elements had in Victorian Scotland. Meanwhile, the continued appearance of fairies among countless folklore collections demonstrates their more historical relevance within Scotland's cultural memory. The prominence of fairies in folklore and a few later travel narratives reveals the extent to which they were associated with Scottish heritage. Finally, unlike the condemnation with which most of the early modern sources discussed fairy culture, the complete opposite appears true for Victorian and early twentieth century sources. The literary, folkloric, and visual sources from this later time period presented fairies in a more celebratory and romantic tone. Even in cases where folklorists discussed fairy culture with an air of condescension, they did so in a nostalgic, amused fashion. Thus, the shift in source types discussing fairies between the early modern and Victorian eras also signifies the shift in how those discussions were characterized in each period; where the early modern sources revealed religious and theological undertones, Victorian sources present fairies in a more entertaining and heritage-based context.

Fairy Discourse as Escapist Fantasy & Belief

In Scotland, the nineteenth century fairy revival was often incorporated into broader notions of entertainment and escapist fantasies. J.R.R. Tolkien once said, "Escape is one of the main functions of fairy-stories." While Tolkien was English rather than Scottish and published in the post-war era just outside the chronological framework of this project, he notably delivered these remarks in a 1939 presentation "On Fairy-Stories" at the University of St. Andrews—Scotland's oldest and highly prestigious university—as that year's Andrew Lang Lecturer.[96] Nicola Bown argues that Victorians "made the fairies into imaginary versions of themselves," and they "shaped fairyland into the negative image of their own disenchanted world. In short, she contends fairies "gave them back the wonder and mystery modernity had taken away from the world."[97] Wood similarly asserts, "Victorians desperately wanted to believe in fairies, because they represented one of the ways they could escape the intolerable reality of living in an unromantic, materialistic and scientific age." [98] The tension between modernity and Romanticism, which seems to have plagued Victorian society, is clearly manifested in the revival of fairy culture and the escapist narratives often associated with it during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The role of fairies in facilitating these escapist fantasies existed in works targeting children and adults alike. In "The Little Land," one of the original poems Robert Louis Stevenson included in his 1885 *Child's Garden of Verses*, the narrator describes the mundane, unimaginative aspects of reality, and contrasts them with the magical realm of fairies:

> When at home alone I sit
> And am very tired of it,

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[96] Considering Andrew Lang was one of Scotland's most prominent fairy tale writers of the nineteenth century, the circumstances in which he delivered these remarks seem relevant to the scope of this project.
[97] Bown, *Fairies in nineteenth-century art and literature*, 1.
[98] Wood, *Fairies in Victorian art*, 8.

I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies—
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the Little People are;

The poem goes on to remark on the wonders of fairy life, but ends with the narrator's

disappointment in realizing that he cannot truly embark on such fairy adventures:

When my eyes I once again
Open, and see all things plain:
High bare walls, great bare floor;
Great big knobs on drawer and door;
Great big people perched on chairs,
Stitching tucks and mending tears,
Each a hill that I could climb,
And talking nonsense all the time—
O dear me,
That I could be
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,
A climber in the clover tree,
And just come back, a sleepy-head,
Late at night to go to bed.[99]

In this poem, Stevenson characterized Fairyland as an idyllic place, free from the constraints

imposed by an increasingly modernizing Victorian society. Allusions to a sailor and a climber—

two adventurous occupations—already suggest a level of escapism, while the fantastical

miniature size of fairies adds a magical element to a traditional escapist narrative. Based on the

sentiments of this poem, combining conventional escapism with aspects of the supernatural—

such as fairy culture—makes for an ideal destination for Victorian children seeking escapist

fantasies.

Yet it was not just children that became swept up in the escapist qualities fairies offered.

The nineteenth century saw an artistic explosion in mythology-based subjects, and 'fairy

painting' became an incredibly popular sub-genre among Victorians. The most popular Scottish

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[99] Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* (London: Longmans & Co, 1885), 84-87.

contributions to this sub-genre include Sir Joseph Noel Paton's *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* (1847), *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania* (1849), and *The Fairy Raid* (1867), while John Duncan took up fairy subjects in the early twentieth century with *The Riders of the Sidhe* (1911) and *Merlin and the Fairy Queen* (undated). Victorian art expert Christopher Wood explains, "Under the influence of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, [fairy painters] tried to paint fairies realistically and accurately, with the greatest possible attention to detail."[100] Perhaps by painting fairies with a strong sense of naturalism, these artists helped Victorians negotiate the fantastical subject matter, creating an ideal world that was magical but still recognizable. The rich mythology surrounding Fairyland made it the perfect destination for Victorians looking to escape the mundane realities of post-Enlightenment, industrialized Scotland. J.M. Barrie's 'Neverland' is the epic amalgamation of several popular escapist settings, as it features not only fairies, but pirates, natives, and mermaids, as well.

Fairy discourse included debates about belief in both eras, so it is worthwhile to compare discussions on the subject from both time periods. While early modern sources placed the question of belief in a theological context, Victorian sources reveal a cultural element that often revolves around issues of fantasy, imagination, and nostalgia. Among travel narratives and folklore collections, questions of belief were generally attributed to generations past; but unlike the early modern sources, these discussions of belief were not necessarily framed with attitudes of condescension. Many simply attributed fairy legends as means to explain previously misunderstood phenomena. For example, in his analysis of Highland 'superstitions', J.P. Maclean concluded, "When a reasonable or plausible cause could not be assigned for a calamity it was then ascribed to the operations of some invisible evil spirit," like fairies.[101] Poet Alexander

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[100] Wood, *Fairies in Victorian art*, 11.
[101] J. P. Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland* (Franklin, Ohio: 1917), 9.

Smith recorded a landlord's analysis about the true nature of fairies in his 1865 travel narrative,

A Summer in Skye:

> The fear of Nature is common to all races, and…as each race advances in civilisation the terror dies out. The kelpie [a type of water fairy], for instance, always lives near a ford— bridge the stream and the kelpie dies. Build a road across a haunted hill, and you banish the fairies of the hill for ever. The kelpie and the fairy are simply spiritual personations of very rude and common dangers—of being carried away by the current when you are attempting to cross a river—of being lost when you are taking a short cut across hills on which there is no track. Abolish those dangers, and you at the same time abolish those creatures, Fear and Fancy.[102]

This account offers a more rationalized take on the practical reasons behind popular fairy traditions, but stops short of condemning the popular tales as early modern sources often did. Instead, Smith revealed one man's interpretation concerning the purposes of fairy culture in generations past, and his assertion that Scots no longer needed such supernatural explanations in the post-Enlightenment era. Meanwhile, after describing the three traditions associated with the famous Fairy Flag, Rev. Macleod noted, "It is though probable that the banner was really brought from the East by some valiant crusader."[103] Yet despite providing this more reasonable disclaimer, he seems to value the cultural impact the flag's fairy stories have on the identity of the Clan Macleod. Perhaps it was this lingering sense of cultural value and heritage that prompted Alexander Macgregor to state, "Among the various spiritual beings to whom the credulity of mankind has given an imaginary existence, the fairies occupy a prominent place, and are specially worthy of notice."[104] While Smith's landlord may have been correct in claiming that Scotland no longer needed to believe in fairies to help explain natural phenomena, perhaps

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[102] Alexander Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol. 2* (London: Strachan, 1865), 202-203.

[103] R. C. MacLeod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan from the Time of Leod to the End of the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: Priv. Print. for the Clan MacLeod Society, 1927), 199.

[104] Alexander Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions Connected with the Druids, Fairies, Witchcraft, Second-Sight, Hallowe'en, Sacred Wells and Lochs, with Several Curious Instances of Highland Customs and Beliefs* (Stirling: E. Mackay, 1901), 18.

he failed to consider a newly forming force behind fairy culture that applied directly to his modernizing society.

In the genre of children's literature—which became widely popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the issue of belief was even more nuanced, as some authors chose to leave open the possibilities of wondrous events to expand children's imagination and protect their innocence. In the preface to *My Own Fairy Book*, titled "To Children," Andrew Lang described the origins of the fairy stories in that specific publication and concluded with, "the Author leaves to the judgment of young readers his *Own Fairy Book*."[105] Meanwhile, J.M. Barrie cast subtlety aside in his discussions of children and fairy belief in *Peter Pan & Wendy*. When Wendy first meets Peter Pan, he explains to her where fairies came from; Barrie, as narrator, acknowledged that she found the subject of fairies "tedious talk" but also revealed how "Wendy had lived such a home life that to know fairies [as Peter claimed to] struck her as quite delightful."[106] Peter explains to Wendy, "You see children know such a lot now, they soon don't believe in fairies, and every time a child says, 'I don't believe in fairies,' there is a fairy somewhere that falls down dead."[107] Of course, this foreshadows the famous scene where Peter demonstrates how that paradigm works both ways, after the faithful Tinker Bell drinks poison meant for him:

> Her voice was so low that at first he could not make out what she said…She was saying that she thought she could get well again if children believed in fairies. Peter flung out his arms. There were no children there, and it was night time; but he addressed all who might be dreaming of the Neverland, and who were therefore nearer to him than you think… 'Do you believe?' he cried. Tink sat up in bed almost briskly to listen to her fate. She fancied she heard answers in the affirmative, and then again she wasn't sure… 'If you believe,' he shouted to them, 'clap your hands; don't let Tink die.' Many clapped. Some didn't. A few beasts hissed. The clapping stopped suddenly; as if countless mothers had

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[105] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*., xiv.
[106] J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 23
[107] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 23

rushed to their nurseries to see what on earth was happening; but already Tink was saved.[108]

With these passages, Barrie used Tinker Bell, and fairies in general, to provide a commentary on the importance of imagination and the dangers of over-rationalization, especially among children. Barrie and Lang are among scores of writers who helped create an international golden age of children's literature from the mid-nineteenth century through World War I. These authors, inspired by Romantic ideals, shifted the genre from cautionary tales laced with moral lessons, replacing them with fantastical stories of adventure, magic, and imagination.[109] For Scottish children's authors like Barrie, Lang, Stevenson, George MacDonald, and others, the fairy stories passed down over centuries by their ancestors offered ideal frameworks upon which to reestablish notions of childhood.

Fairy Discourse as Heritage based on Generational Demographics

Similar to their early modern predecessors, Victorian Scots contextualized their discussions about fairies as a cultural belief system or mythology associated with the past. A number of nineteenth and early twentieth century sources emphasize this concept by framing their fairy stories as originating from members of the oldest generations. Geologist Hugh Miller prefaces his fairy stories by claiming to "have conversed with an old woman, who, when a very little girl, had seen myriads of them dancing," and "with a still older man, who had the temerity to offer one of them a pinch of snuff at the foot of the cascade."[110] Similarly, when poet Alexander Smith asks his host Malcolm whether the fairy associated with 'The Fairy Bridge' on the Isle of Skye is seen frequently, he replied, "Not often. It's the old people who know about

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[108] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 78-79.

[109] For more on the Golden Age of Children's Literature, see: James Holt McGavran, *Time of beauty, time of fear the Romantic legacy in the literature of childhood* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012).

[110] Hugh Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone: Or, New Walks in an Old Field* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1851), 205.

her…[and] indeed, I never saw or heard her myself—only that is what the old people say."[111] In Andrew Lang's children's tale, *The Gold of Fairnilee*, the young boy, Randal, asks his nurse if she ever saw a fairy. Her response begins, "Not myself, but my mother knew a woman…"[112] As popular as discussions about fairies were in the Victorian era, it seems they were constantly prefaced as products of older generations. Perhaps the disclaimer allowed Victorians to enjoy the fantasy and romance associated with fairy stories while dodging questions about true belief and proof that would oppose the rising influence of science and rationalism.

<center>*Fairy Discourse as Heritage based on Regional Demographics*</center>

The nineteenth and early twentieth century sources discussing fairies in Scotland often did so within a spatial framework, associating them largely with the Highlands and Islands. Though this regional connection began at the end of the early modern era with travel narratives and Rev. Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth*, Victorians furthered the affiliation between fairies and the Highlands. Sources like Alexander Smith's *A Summer in Skye* and Rev. Macleod's *The Macleods of Dunvegan* are based on the premises of revealing Highland culture and customs, specifically on the Isle of Skye, so their discussions of fairies are already within that regional framework.[113] The same is true for collections of folklore that explicitly ascribe their contents to the Highlands by using the term in the titles of their collections.[114] By the nineteenth and early twentieth century, links between fairies and the Highlands typically characterized discussions

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[111] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol. 2*, 68.

[112] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 259.

[113] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vols. 1 & 2*; Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*.

[114] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*; John Gregorson Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in The Highlands and Islands of Scotland: Roles and Traditions Collected Entirely from Oral Sources* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1902); Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*; John Gregorson Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow: MacLehose and Sons, 1900); *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich* (Inverness: John Noble, 1891), 46-48; John Francis Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, vols. 1-4* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860-63).

about fairies, and this regional framework provided fairy culture with a new level of heritage and authenticity.

The sense that Highland culture represented cultural authenticity is not surprising, as the landscape lends itself to such perceptions. Mountains often represent a physical marker by which people separate the industrialized working class from the pre-industrial folk. The idea that these rural, preindustrial, folk cultures were protected by the mountainous landscape from the corruption of modernity and progress support the common perception that the societies and cultures in these areas are more authentic.[115] Anthropologist Paul Basu asserts, "David Lowenthal's observation that 'the locus of memory lies more readily in place than in time' is certainly borne out when considering the relationship between landscape and memory in the Scottish Highlands."[116] According to cultural analyst Raymond Williams, "the contrast of the country and city is one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society."[117] In this case, it may be useful to extend Williams' conclusion to consider the particular conditions in Scotland. The distinct landscape distinguishing the Highlands from the Lowlands in Scotland provides a more definitive separation between 'the country' and 'the city.' Rural farmlands in the Lowlands were not targeted for industrialization in the same way as the urban and port areas, but they were still connected in some degree to that modernizing culture. The Highlands, on the other hand, were decidedly separate. After all, as geologist Hugh Miller admits, "There is a natural connection, it

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[115] For more on the links between mountains and folk culture, see: Jane S. Becker, *Selling tradition: Appalachia and the construction of an American folk, 1930-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain gloom and mountain glory; the development of the aesthetics of the infinite* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959); Paul Basu, *Highland homecomings genealogy and heritage tourism in the Scottish diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2007), 149-158.

[116] Basu, *Highland homecomings genealogy and heritage tourism in the Scottish diaspora*, 149.

[117] Raymond Williams, *The country and the city* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 289.

is said, between wild scenes and wild legends."[118] These regional distinctions undoubtedly

factored into conversations and 'crises' about the direction of Scottish society in the nineteenth

century.

Any issues relating to Highland culture or society in the nineteenth century—whether in

terms of the fairy revival or more broadly—must be considered within the context of the

Highland Clearances. Eric Richards defines the Highland Clearances as "the radical

transformation of the economic and social foundations of the region during which a large

proportion of the population was displaced, usually to make way for very large sheep farms in

which they had no function or place."[119] Jacobitism roused political interest in addressing the

problems and dangers Highlanders could pose to the unity and development of the British realm.

While these political and social tensions surely created momentum for the Clearances, the

economic gains ultimately turned the tide for the aristocratic landlords. It simply became far

more profitable for landlords to forcibly evict all the crofters from their land and invest solely in

sheep farming. The Clearances occurred in several waves during the mid-eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries as they forced Highland farmers to emigrate with their families to Ireland,

North America, and Australia.

The Highland Clearances are considered among the most contentious issues in all of

Scottish history. At best, the Clearances evoke regret over the costs of modernity and capitalism;

at worst, charges of cultural genocide. Richards laments that the "old Highland society—a

distinctive and, to foreign eyes, a rather exotic and remarkable culture—went into decline, some

of it into exile."[120] A recent article by Juliet Shields places the Highland Clearances in a

framework of nostalgia and Romanticism, suggesting that after the Clearances Highlanders

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[118] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 205.
[119] Eric Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 6.
[120] Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances*, 6.

became "both objects of and participants in British Romanticism."[121] Laurence Gouriévidis

agrees, stating, "the romantic appeal of the region's purported 'wilderness' grew as fast as it was

haemorrhaging its people [through the Highland Clearances]."[122] Shields also asserts that English

poetry and Gaelic songs reveal a sense of Romance about Highland emigration, which she sees

as a major player in how nostalgia helped transform Highland culture into something "to be

indulged [in] and even cultivated."[123]

Interestingly, some sources suggest that with the emigration of the Highlanders, so too

came the withdrawal of Scotland's fairy folk. In the footnotes of his 1851 geological treatise—

one of the most unique Scottish fairy sources—Hugh Miller describes what Carole Silver calls

'The Fairies' Farewell':[124]

> On a Sabbath morning, nearly sixty ago, the inmates of this little hamlet had all gone to church, all except a herd-boy and a little girl, his sister, who were lounging beside one of the cottages; when, just as the shadow of the garden dial had fallen on the line of noon, they saw a long cavalcade ascending out of the ravine through the wooded hollow. It winded among the knolls and bushes; and, turning round the northern gable of the cottage beside which the sole spectators of the scene were stationed, began to ascend the eminence towards the south. The horses were shaggy, diminutive things, speckled dun and gray; the riders, stunted, misgrown, ugly creatures, attired in antique jerkins of plaid, long gray cloaks, and little red caps, from under which their wild, uncombed locks shot out over their cheeks and foreheads. The boy and his sister stood gazing in utter dismay and astonishment, as rider after rider, each one more uncouth and dwarfish than the one that had preceded it, passed the cottage and disappeared among the brushwood, which at that period covered the hill, until at length the entire rout, except the last rider, who lingered a few yards behind the others, had gone by. 'What are ye, little mannie? And where are ye going?' inquired the boy, his curiosity getting the better of his fears and his prudence. 'Not of the race of Adam,' said the creature, turning for a moment in his saddle; 'the People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland.'[125]

Miller's account, which he claimed to have collected first-hand from the herd-boy in the story,

suggests that the fairies decided to leave Scotland at near the start of the nineteenth century.

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[121] Juliet Shields, "Highland Emigration and the Transformation of Nostalgia in Romantic Poetry," *European Romantic Review* 23 (2012): 765.

[122] Laurence Gouriévidis, *The dynamics of heritage history, memory and the Highland Clearances* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), xi.

[123] Shields, "Highland Emigration and the Transformation of Nostalgia in Romantic Poetry," 766.

[124] Silver, in *Strange and Secret Peoples*, 194.

[125] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone* (1851), 207

Another source describing 'The Fairies' Farewell' comes from Scottish poet James Telfer. It was written in the first half of the nineteenth century and published in Sir George Douglas' *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales* collection in 1901. Like Miller's, Telfer's account contends that the fairies were leaving Scotland, though he goes on to suggest that they relocated to "shadowy side" of the moon, where their "gambollings renew!"[126] Both stories fail to definitively state why the fairies decided to leave Scotland; perhaps the push toward modernity and industrialization threatened their hillside homes, or undermined a level of human belief required for survival—as described in *Peter Pan and Wendy*. Or maybe the decreasing Highland population meant the fairies could no longer engage in aspects of their lifestyle that required mortals, such as abduction, changeling exchanges, protection, and general mischief-making. Whatever the reasons, discussions about the fairies' departure from Scotland appear to coincide with the onset of the Highland Clearances, and their causes for leaving appear equally applicable to the emigrating Highlanders. As Highlanders struggled to find their sense of place and relevance in Scotland and internationally, so too did the fairies.

The concepts of nostalgia and Romanticism are essential to understanding the fairy revival and its role in Victorian and early twentieth century Scotland. According to literary scholar Svetlana Boym, "[Nostalgia] is not necessarily opposed to modernity and individual responsibility. Rather it is coeval with modernity itself. Nostalgia and progress are like Jekyll and Hyde: alter egos. Nostalgia is not merely the expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into 'local' and 'universal' possible."[127] Under Boym's paradigm, the onset of modernity inherently breeds nostalgia. With the rise of science, rationalism, and industrialization, sentiments of regret were bred over the

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[126] George Douglas, *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales* (London: W. Scott, 1901), 151.
[127] Svetlana Boym, *The future of nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi.

cultures and traditions that get lost along the way, such as fairy culture. As a result, the push

toward modernity was met with an equally powerful campaign for preservation and revival.

The nostalgia and romance associated with the Highlands by the mid-nineteenth century

helped determine the cultural symbols that would come to define Scottish national identity in the

modern age. Perhaps ironically, the collection and celebration of Highland culture—which many

characterized as archaic—helped forge a more unified identity that encompassed Scotland as a

whole. With the heavy decline in the Highland population, the sense of heritage associated with

Highland culture united Scots who were traditionally marginalized by their region, whether

Highland, Lowland, coastal, island, etc. That this occurred in the nineteenth century is

particularly relevant, as it was a century characterized by the rise of nationalism in Europe.

According to Benedict Anderson, nations are "*imagined* because the members of even the

smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them,

yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[128] Anderson goes on to discuss

Ernest Gellner's arguments about nationalism and emphasize his own take on the term:

> With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that
> 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations
> where they do not exist.' The drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so
> anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates
> 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'. In this
> way he implies that 'true' communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to
> nations. In fact all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact
> (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their
> falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.[129]

Anderson's claims seem particularly relevant to the development of Scottish national identity in

the nineteenth century, especially when framed in conjunction with these notions of nostalgia

stemming from the Highland Clearances.

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[128] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

[129] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 6.

A number of scholars have already discussed the so-called 'invention' of Scotland that

took place in the nineteenth century, especially as it relates to Highland and Celtic culture. In *The*

Invention of Tradition, Eric Hobsbawm contends, "'traditions which appear or claim to be old

are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented."[130] In a chapter from the same

collection, Hugh Trevor-Roper examines the true history of iconic Scottish symbols, like the

tartan and the bagpipes, and concludes, "the whole concept of a distinct Highland culture and

tradition is a retrospective invention."[131] More recently, Trevor-Roper emphasized the special

role that myth—particularly political, literary, and sartorial myths—has had in the development

of Scottish identity, and places it in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon culture in England, which he

claims has not developed and utilized myths in this way.[132] In his study on how the Highland

Clearances impacted Scottish memory and heritage, Gouriévidis asserts, "That Highland symbols

have enjoyed more than an inordinate part in the construction of Scotland's imagery and heritage

needs little demonstrating—its sartorial iconography, or its haunting and majestic landscape are

just two examples of a phenomenon which gathered momentum at about the same time as the

Clearances were in full swing."[133] Much has been written on the sartorial tradition that perceived

Highland culture helped popularize, which is certainly understandable considering the

undeniable sense of 'Scottishness' that has come to define tartan-patterned kilts since the

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[130] E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of tradition* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1. According to Hobsbawm, "'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past." His asserts that the term "includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and datable period—a matter of a few years perhaps—and establishing themselves with great rapidity," the latter of which seems particularly relevant to the case of Scotland.
[131] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of tradition*, 15.
[132] H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The invention of Scotland: myth and history* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2008).
[133] Gouriévidis, *The dynamics of heritage history, memory and the Highland Clearances*, xi.

nineteenth century.[134] However, I argue that kilts and tartanry are only a single example in a widening trend that used cultural symbols for national identity formation in Victorian Scotland. After all, cultural nationalism and heritage breed tourism, so it is to be expected that the development, or 'invention', of Scottish tradition would be layered.[135]

This interest in the local coincided with a new trend that saw folk and fairy tales as tools for nationalism. According to Emily Satterwhite, "the use of 'the folk' to inform the nation-building project dates to at least the mid-nineteenth century."[136] Simon Bronner credits the Grimm brothers as the first to embark on "a professional pursuit of folklore…along national lines" and goes on to commend Washington Irving for employing his *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in such nationalizing terms for the United States.[137] In Scotland, these pursuits involved folklore and fairy tales intended for both adults and children. Folklorists like John Francis Campbell, Alexander Carmichael, John Gregorson Campbell, and Francis Child scoured the Highlands and Islands for folk tales and compiled them in numerous collections, offering readers a sense of heritage and the past. Meanwhile writers such as Andrew Lang, George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson, and J.M. Barrie presented new fairy stories—albeit inspired by popular folk ballads and oral tradition—to Scotland's youth. These writers and folklorists are easily likened to the Brothers Grimm, among others, as their collection and publication of folk tales—a number of which prominently featured fairies—helped define Scottish culture and connect it with the past.

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[134] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of tradition*; Trevor-Roper, *The invention of Scotland*; Ian Brown, *From tartan to tartanry: Scottish culture, history and myth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2010).

[135] For more on heritage tourism, see: John Arnold, Kate Davies, and Simon Ditchfield, *History and heritage: consuming the past in contemporary culture* (Donhead St. Mary, Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1998); Lotte Jensen, Joseph Theodoor Leerssen, and Marita Mathijsen, *Free access to the past: romanticism, cultural heritage and the nation* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Katherine Haldane Grenier, *Tourism and identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: creating Caledonia* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005); Gouriévidis, *The dynamics of heritage history, memory and the Highland Clearances*.

[136] Emily Satterwhite, "'That's What They're All Singing About': Appalachian Heritage, Celtic Pride, and American Nationalism at the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival," *Appalachian Journal* 32 (2005): 306.

[137] Simon J. Bronner, *Folk nation: folklore in the creation of American tradition* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2002), 9.

Some of these writers and folklorists were more obvious about this than others. In her *Book of Highland Minstrelsy,* Mrs. D. Ogilvy explains how "Gael[s] clung to [the fairies] for many years after all other nations had abandoned them as fictitious delusions" and "had invested them with all the accompaniments of his own rude habits, so that the Highland fairy was as truly national as the Highlander himself."[138] Meanwhile, in the dedication for his fairy story *The Gold of Fairnilee*, made out to Jeanie Lang presumably living in Australia, Andrew Lang calls it a "little tale of our own country," and adds, "Are there Fairies…in Australia? I hope so."[139] Thus, the links between fairies and the Highlands eventually expanded beyond regional terms, instead operating on a broader, nationalizing scale.

In addition to its isolated mountain setting, perhaps one of the most important elements of Highland culture that contributed to its popularization and nationalizing qualities was the notion that it derived from a Celtic culture. By attributing the Highlands' Celtic roots to all of Scotland, the nation became far more distinct from its English neighbors, even though Lowland Scots often shared more in common with the latter. Still, the onset of the Highland Clearances and rise of Scottish nationalism likely contributed to the emergence of a Celtic Revival in the late nineteenth century; this revival swept through Ireland and seeped across the sea to Scotland. The Celtic Revival influenced literature and art, and also brought attention to the Irish and Scottish variations of the Gaelic language.[140]

Like other aspects of perceived Highland culture, fairies became a point of interest for Celtic Revivalists. Dundee-born painter John Duncan, part of the pre-Raphaelite movement and

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[138] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 46.
[139] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 234.
[140] Michael McIntyre, *The revival of Scottish Gaelic through education* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2009). McIntyre emphasizes the importance of language in both identity formation and the development of heritage (38-40, 60-61), and while his work pertains specifically to the revival of Scottish Gaelic, the same concepts apply to the Scots (sometimes referred to as Lowland Scots) language as well.

among Scotland's most famous Celtic Revivalists, helped forge that link between fairy culture, Celticism, and the Highlands. *The Riders of the Sidhe,* which dates to 1911 and was among his most famous pieces, depicts the fairy folk riding across a rugged, coastal terrain.[141] John Kemplay explains how each of the four riders "carries a symbol of age-long Celtic tradition"— the tree of life for wisdom, the Grail for love, a sword for active will, and crystal of prophecy for passive will.[142] According to art historian John Morrison, *Riders* "is an eclectic inventory of Celticism…[which] celebrates not the nationalism of independent Scotland but the country's broader British and, here, European heritage."[143] For Morrison, the distinct qualities Celticism offered Scotland were not a way to create cultural separation between Scotland and England, but instead "could form a useful Scottish contribution to the collaborative state of Britain."[144] This argument may also apply to another of Duncan's paintings, titled *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*.[145] Though the piece is undated, we can estimate it was painted after *The Riders* and before his death in 1945. By depicting a meeting between the Fairy Queen, an iconic Scottish figure, and Merlin, the wizard from Arthurian tradition—which is equally iconic in Wales—Duncan is explicitly combining popular mythologies from two of Britain's Celtic nations.

Yet Duncan is not the only Scottish painter to draw connections between fairy culture and Celticism. Even before the onset of the Celtic Revival, Sir Joseph Noel Paton's 1867 painting, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying Off a Changeling*, prominently displays three standing stones on the ridge as the fairy troop passes by.[146] Here, Paton uses landscape to blend Highland, Celtic, and fairy motifs, creating a more definitive spatial identity for the fairies. By incorporating the

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[141] John Duncan, *The Riders of the Sidhe*, 1911.
[142] Kemplay, *The paintings of John Duncan*, 50-51. For more on the art historical perspective of Duncan's *The Riders of the Sidhe*, see: Morrison, *Painting the nation*, 206-207
[143] Morrison, *Painting the nation*, 206.
[144] Morrison, *Painting the nation*, 192.
[145] John Duncan, *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*, undated.
[146] Joseph Noel Paton, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying Off a Changeling*, 1867.

standing stones, Paton makes the scene decidedly Celtic, which probably makes the setting either

Scotland or Ireland. The stones also add a substantial sense of history to the scene, as myths

about Druids, paganism, and ancient rites often accompany such formations.

In addition to the Enlightenment, industrialization, and the Scientific Revolution,

eighteenth century Scotland also saw the rise and fall of the Jacobite Risings, which sought to

restore the ousted Scottish king, James VII/II, to the thrones of England and Scotland. In the

nineteenth century aftermath of the Jacobite failure, as the new realm of Britain flourished, Scots

continually looked to Highland and Celtic culture for a sense of heritage and identity. At a time

when communities across Europe were preoccupied with forging national identities, Scots sought

to embrace the cultural qualities that made them Scottish, rather than English. Whether this

distinction was meant to emphasize a sense of cultural separation or connection between the two

nations is unclear, and likely varied; but it certainly helped inform conversations on what it

meant to be both 'British' and 'Scottish.' Like tartan, bagpipes, and the Scots and Gaelic

languages, the revival and popularization of fairy culture helped establish a stronger sense of

cultural heritage and kinship among Scots, which ultimately translated into a cultural form of

Scottish nationalism.

Conclusion

This investigation into the nature and motivations behind fairy discourse in the early

modern and Victorian eras offers cultural insight into issues of theology and heritage-building in

Scotland. The comparison reveals the different forces behind Scottish identity-formation in these

time periods and emphasizes the roles class, region, and ancestry played in forging those

identities. The differing contexts within which discussions about fairies occurred emphasize the

contentious debates that defined each time period: religion and the Reformation in the early modern era, nationalism and modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of course, these issues were widespread throughout Europe—if not globally—during each era, respectively. By examining fairy culture, however, we find a window into considering how Scots grappled with these international trends within the context of their own societal frameworks. Thus, fairies serve as a portal that helps us understand how Scots in both eras negotiated changing worldviews and their impact on identity formation.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates the value cultural studies have in developing our understanding of the past. In this chapter, issues of religion, politics, emigration, economics, and nationalism are all discussed through the lens of fairy culture—a cultural system that managed to transcend the changing perspectives brought on by the Reformation, the Union of the Crowns, the Enlightenment, the Scientific Revolution, and Industrialization—to name a few. And while fairy culture clearly adapted to the various trends that accompanied each push toward modernity and progress, it continued to remain relevant, reflecting the changing perspectives, anxieties, and interests of Scottish society.

*"Not of the race of Adam": the physical characterizations of fairies in early
modern and Victorian Scotland*

Introduction

On September 29, 2005, Great Ormond Street Hospital in central London unveiled a

newly commissioned, seven-inch addition to its iconic bronze statue of Peter Pan. Next to the

four-foot representation of the boy who famously refused to grow up, British artist Diarmuid

Byron O'Connor placed the well-known likeness of Tinker Bell, Peter's faithful—though

mischievous—fairy friend. First introduced in Scotsman J. M. Barrie's 1904 three-act play *Peter

Pan, or the Boy who Wouldn't Grow Up*, Tinker Bell—with the help of Walt Disney

Productions—has come to characterize contemporary conceptions of fairies. Tinker Bell's iconic

image has spanned more than a century and has continually been reinforced in print, on film, and

through art. This statue perpetuates these modern notions about fairies' appearance, presenting

Tinker Bell as very small—her head similar in size to the thimble in her outstretched hands—

winged, attractive, and female. While O'Connor's statue, and the Tinker Bell character, certainly

embodies one interpretation of how fairies appear, her physical likeness is not universally

representative of how Scots have depicted fairies over time. Though similarities exist, physical

depictions of fairies in the early modern era are distinct in several elements. Moreover, the image

of Tinker Bell cannot even be generalized as characteristic across the modern, post-

Enlightenment era and instead must be considered part of a separate physical interpretation of

fairies intended for children. Understanding how Scots visualized fairies across generations

requires consideration of the Tinker Bell-esque interpretation, portrayed in O'Connor's statue,

but also demands that consideration take place within the context of the other fairy likenesses popular before and during the golden age of children's fairy tales.

This chapter will examine the physical depictions of fairies in Scotland during the early modern and Victorian eras, respectively. It will draw from various primary sources from both eras to analyze descriptions of fairies' size, clothing, and general appearance. This investigation into appearance also reveals debates over fairies' existential nature, which I argue hinged on the idea that they lived in a constant, multi-faceted state of liminality. The chronological comparison reveals and accounts for select differences in how people described and portrayed fairies between the pre-industrial and post-Enlightenment eras. However, it also demonstrates the numerous core similarities that continued into nineteenth century depictions of fairies'. The fact that Victorian and early twentieth century physical depictions of fairies were simultaneously similar and distinct reveals the extent to which modern fairy culture was inspired by and connected to its early modern predecessor, while also adapting to reflect the issues and discussions relevant to Scottish society two centuries later.

This chapter will also address one of the major complications associated with investigations into Victorian fairy culture, as it cannot always be characterized as a single homogenous entity. In Scotland, the expansion and popularity of children's literature and artwork focused largely on fairy tales, which sometimes created a division based on the author's or artist's intended audience. While this issue of audience recurs in several aspects of nineteenth and early twentieth century fairy culture, it is most drastic in analyses of their physical likenesses, as descriptions intended for children portrayed fairies as substantially smaller, more frequently female, and with insect-like wings for flight. In terms of appearance, modern fairies like Tinker Bell were distinct from their early modern counterparts. However, the prominence

and popularity of these images often overshadow other physical interpretations of the period. Folklorists and artists targeting adult audiences, for example, generally upheld the early modern physical interpretation of fairies. This trend invoked a deeper sense of heritage and developed notions about Scottish mythology that enhanced the Victorian fairy revival's connection with the past.

Physical Representations of Fairies in Early Modern Scotland

Appearance

Descriptions about the physical appearance of fairies in early modern Scotland are generally consistent. According to the extant textual sources, most of the fairies that humans encountered in that era were male, with the important exception of the Fairy Queen and her maids. Size was a negligible trait, as almost none of the early modern sources comment on the relative size of fairies. Their clothing was often similar to the typical Scottish attire of the time— descriptions of plaids were not unusual—and their clothes were usually green. Early modern descriptions of fairies almost exclusively depict fairies as traveling by horse; none of the early modern sources discussed here suggest that fairies had wings. The general uniformity in how early modern accounts described the physical appearance of fairies suggests a clearly defined physical profile existed for Scottish fairies during that era.

The context in which humans described encountering fairies is important when considering their gender breakdown in the early modern era. In almost all the accounts involving humans who encountered a single fairy on their own, the fairy was male. During her 1572 witch trial testimony, Janet Boyman described seeing a fairy man emerge from a great whirlwind.[147] Alesoun Pierson claimed in 1588 that "thair come ane [fairy] man to her," while Isobell

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[147] The Trial of Janet Boyman (1572), NAS, JC26/1/67 *Edinburgh Justiciary Court Records*. Note: special thanks to Julian Goodare for unpublished testimony transcription.

Strauthaquhin described her mother's relationship with "ane elf man" during her 1597 trial.[148] In their respective trials, Isobel Haldane, Elspeth Reoch, and Isobel Gowdie also recounted how they had met male fairies.[149] Yet witch trial testimonies are not the only early modern source-base to recount human encounters with male fairies, as the ballads "The Elfin Knight" and "Tam Lin" both feature male fairies and their exploits with young human women.[150] Finally, the few early modern depictions of Brownies—which are recorded toward the end of that period—are also male. In *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, a travel account published in 1703, Martin Martin recounted popular Highland tales about Brownies, who "always appeared in the shape of a Tall Man."[151] The variety in these types of sources detailing how the fairies that confronted humans were almost exclusively male suggests how widespread this perception was in early modern Scotland.

In accounts that involved groups of fairies, as opposed to encounters with individuals, a more balanced breakdown in gender exists. Bessie Dunlop, tried for witchcraft in 1576, claimed that Thom Reid frequently visited her from Fairyland—discussed in the following section. Reid, who had died in the Battle of Pinkie twenty-nine years before her trial, apparently lived among the fairies and later introduced Dunlop to them, noting that one group of fairies included "aucht wemene and four men."[152] Like Dunlop, Alesoun Pierson also met with "mony mene and

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[148] Trial of Isobel Strauthaquhin, John Stuart (ed.), *Miscellany of the Spalding Club, vol. 1* (Aberdeen, 1841-52), 177-182; Trial of Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2: Robert Pitcairn (ed.), *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1833), 163.

[149] Trial of Isobel Haldane: Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*; Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*; Trial of Isobel Gowdie, in *Visions of Isobel Gowdie: magic, shamanism & witchcraft in seventeenth-century Scotland*, ed. by Emma Wilby, (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2009), 43; Gowdie described how "elf boyes" help the Devil produce elf arrows, which will be discussed in chapter three.

[150] Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1962).

[151] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 110; In *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, George Sinclair also describes Brownies as male (214).

[152] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1; Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 52.

women" who accompanied her male fairy contact at least once.[153] The Highland Reverend

Robert Kirk's theological treatise, *A Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies*, also

reflects a more equally gendered fairy race. According to Kirk, "ther Women are said to Spine

very fine…[while] there men travell much abroad."[154] His note that it was fairy men who more

frequently left Fairyland may account for the higher likelihood of early modern humans

encountering male fairies; it could also offer insight into why female fairies—apart from the

Fairy Queen—were never encountered alone in the early modern era, but only in mixed-sexed

groups. This trend may reflect common gender roles in early modern Scotland.[155]

These gender breakdowns for fairies may also be related to the fact that a majority of

people tried for witchcraft in Scotland were women.[156] Accounts of sexual relationships between

witches and the Devil—or his demonic minions—were not uncommon in trial testimonies, and

perhaps the frequency of male fairies in various early modern accounts allowed this carnal trend

to continue among the typically female witches. A number of ballads also emphasize the powers

of seduction held by fairies. Both *The Elfin Knight* and *Tam Lin* depict stories of young women

seduced by male fairies, while the popular story of *Thomas the Rhymer* suggests young Thomas

fell under a similar enchantment in the presence of the Fairy Queen.[157] In one of the few Scottish

witch trials to feature a male defendant, Andro Man echoed the plight of True Thomas when he

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[153] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 163.

[154] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 14-15.

[155] Elizabeth Ewan and Janay Nugent, *Finding the Family in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008); R. Mitchison and L. Leneman, *Girls in Trouble: Sexuality and Social Control in Rural Scotland, 1660-1780* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1998).

[156] On gender in the Scottish witch-hunts, see: Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: the witch-hunt in Scotland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1981); Julian Goodare, "Women and the witch-hunt in Scotland". *Social History.* 23 (1998): 288-308.

[157] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads.*

famously confessed to having a long-standing sexual relationship with the Fairy Queen.[158] This trend may account for why people usually encountered fairies of the opposite sex.

One of the most notable differences in fairy description between the two eras lies in discussions of size; where Victorians were fascinated with the notion of pocket-sized fairies, early modern Scots offered little insight into fairies' stature. In Martin Martin's travel narrative, he described Brownies as having "the shape of a Tall Man having very long brown Hair."[159] However, it is unclear whether the Brownie's height in this passage is unique to that particular Browny, applies to Brownies in general, or is representative of the whole fairy race. Apart from this minor reference, however, early modern sources offer little else on the subject of size. This may suggest that size was not considered a distinguishing characteristic among early modern writers, perhaps because fairy size varied in that era. Or perhaps they were considered relatively human-sized, and thus needed no specific comment. It seems likely that if early modern Scots visualized a miniature fairy race that could be measured in inches—like those promoted by some of their Victorian descendants—they would have noted such a substantial height difference along with their other descriptions. Whatever the reason, it is clear that size was deemed a negligible factor not worth detailed discussion during the early modern era.

If size was not often mentioned as a characteristic by which to distinguish a fairy from a human, it appears clothing was even less so. According to Rev. Kirk's treatise on fairies, "Their Apparell and Speech is like that of the People and Countrey under which they live: so are seen to wear Plaids and variegated Garments in the Highlands of Scotland, and Suanochs therefore in

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[158] Trial of Andro Man, John Stuart (ed.), *Miscellany of the Spalding Club,* vol. 1 (Aberdeen, 1841-52), 119. Trans: "carnal dealings with that devilish spirit, the Queen of Elfland, by whom you begat several children, who you have seen since."

[159] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*,110.

Ireland."[160] Almost a century earlier, Andro Man supported Kirk's findings in his 1598 witch trial testimony when he described how fairies had "schapes and clatthis lyk men."[161] Similarly, when testifying about her encounter with a group of fairies, Bessie Dunlop explained how "the men wer cled in gentilmennis clething, and the wemene had all plaiddis round about thame."[162] It is worth noting that in mimicking 'the people and countrey under which they live,' the fairies appear to opt for plaids—common only in the Highlands—rather than the trousers traditionally seen in Lowland Scotland. These details about the fairies' clothing offer another connection between fairy culture and the Highlands—an association that developed in the early modern era and solidified during the nineteenth century.

The descriptions of fairy clothing also reveal an affinity for the color green. In his 1697 'mock poem' entitled *Effigies Clericorum*, Col. William Cleland described how "Green gown'd Farries daunc'd and played."[163] Similarly, Alesoun Pierson claimed during her witch trial that a fairy man approached her "cled in grene clathis."[164] Meanwhile, Isobel Gowdie testified that each witch in her coven "has a sprit to wait wpon ws." It is not clear whether or not these are fairy spirits, especially because Gowdie's interrogators were keen on attributing demonic influence to her sorcery, but it was likely a mixture of numerous types of spirits. Still, she described how the first of the thirteen spirits "is still clothed in grass grein," while the third is dressed "in sea grein" and the fourth is "a yowng lyk divell clothed still in gras."[165] Despite limitations of the recorded confession, it is likely that some of the spirits assigned to each witch in Gowdie's coven may have been fairies, based on their green clothing. Emma Wilby's recent

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[160] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 14.
[161] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.
[162] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1; Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 52-53.
[163] Cleland, "Effigies Clericorum," 59.
[164] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 163.
[165] Isobel Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie,* 42.

research reveals "the particularly close links between the fairy and the witch's familiar" in early modern Scotland and England, and also notes the prominent associations between fairies and the color green.[166]

The links between fairies and the color green were widespread and may offer several insights into how early modern Scots perceived fairies. John Hutchings argues that the color green can symbolize a number of feelings or characteristics, including nature and healing. [167] Both of these are fairly self-evident, as the fairies' hillside dwellings solidify their associations with nature, while healing was among their most famous magical skills. However, Hutchings also emphasizes the color green's links to luck, both good and bad, citing fairy mythology as one of the major reasons for this association but emphasizing that these links are specific to Scotland and Wales.[168] From a theological perspective, the consistent depictions of early modern fairies as wearing green may have served as an easily identifiable characteristic by while to distinguish fairies from demons. In most of the Scottish witch trial testimonies, confessions about the devil or his demonic minions almost exclusively describe him as a black man—whether by clothing or skin color is unclear. Perhaps by specifying the fairies as wearing green, accused witches sought to distance themselves from ecclesiastical charges, which were much harsher in Scotland than secular crimes.

In addition to these early modern accounts of average and often nameless fairies, there are several references to one in particular: the Fairy Queen. The Queen of Fairies, also referred to as the "Quene of Elfame," is mentioned in a number of early modern sources.[169] In the third

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[166] Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 283.
[167] John Hutchings, "Folklore and the Symbolism of Green," *Folklore* 108 (1997): 55-63.
[168] Hutchings, "Folklore and the Symbolism of Green," 57-60.
[169] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 162; Jean Weir (1670), 11; Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 342; Note: The Dictionary of the Scots Language (www.dsl.ac.uk) defines 'Elfame' as "Fairyland."

book of his 1597 *Demonologie*, King James VI of Scotland acknowledged how numerous people were claiming to have been abducted to Fairyland, where they "saw a fair queen."[170] While beauty was almost always associated with the Fairy Queen, Andro Man's testimony reveals her power and influence as well. He asserted that the queen "is verray plesand," has the ability to change her age when she pleases, and has carnal relationships with whomever she wants."[171] The Fairy Queen was also described as more splendidly dressed other fairies, further distinguishing her based on appearance. In terms of her clothing, Gowdie confessed, "the qwein of fearie is brawlie clothed in whyt linens and in whyt and browne cloathes etc."[172] Though her description was cut short in the manuscript, it is clear that the Queen was extravagantly dressed. Yet the Fairy Queen's elegant clothing should not come as a surprise, as Kirk explains:

> [Fairy] Women are said to Spine very fine, to Dy…and Embroyder: but whither it is as manual Operation of substantiall refined Stuffs, with apt and solid Instruments, or only curious Cob-webs, impalpable Rainbows, and a fantastic Imitation of the Actions of more terrestricall Mortalls, since it transcended all the Sense of the Seere to discerne whither, I leave to conjecture as I Found it.[173]

Kirk may be suggesting that the brilliance and splendor surrounding some fairy garments—which would generally be worn by the Queen—could be an illusion caused by magic or trickery. Kirk's opinion may have been in the minority during the early modern era, but such perceptions would resurface more prominently during the Victorian period as applicable to the entire fairy realm.

The Fairy Ride is one of the most iconic and recurring images associated with early modern fairies, as this procession usually featured both the Queen and her troop of fairies. Prior to the Enlightenment, Scottish fairies were commonly associated with travel by horseback. As

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[170] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[171] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.
[172] Isobel Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie*, 40; Note: The Dictionary of the Scots Language (www.dsl.ac.uk) defines 'braw' as "Fine, elegant, beautiful"
[173] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 14-15.

mentioned above, Montgomerie's *Flyting*, alludes to how the Fairy King and Queen "ryddand that nicht," while King James VI and George Sinclair condemned popular beliefs about "how they rode and went" to and from Fairyland.[174] Several descriptions of the Fairy Queen understandably depict her "on horseback," including Andro Man's testimony, which asserts that "the Quene of Elphen was their, and vtheris with hir, rydand vpon quhyt haiknayes."[175] Similarly, when Janet met Tam Lin in the forest, "there she fand his steed standing."[176] After they fell in love, Tam Lin explained that the only way she can rescue him from Fairyland is by pulling him from his horse "when the fairy folk will ride."[177] With widespread descriptions of the fairy ride, these accounts suggest another way that early modern fairies "were like natural men and women."[178] This adds to the notion that in the early modern era, the appearance ascribed to fairies would not have made them immediately distinguishable from their human counterparts. The lack of clear physical markers may have contributed to the confusion about what fairies were and whether they existed, and likely fueled perceptions that fairies often lived near human communities and could easily interact with or influence their day-to-day activities without being noticed by those they were not directly dealing with.

Fairyland

When describing those nearby fairy dwellings—often referred to as Fairyland or Elfland— early modern sources are limited, but extant. Descriptions of Fairyland itself are limited in the early modern era, but there are still several references to its existence, as well as

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[174] Montgomerie and Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, 144; James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419; Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 214.

[175] Sempill, "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe," 365; Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121; Note: "quhyt haiknayes" refers to 'white horses.'

[176] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 341.

[177] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 342.

[178] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.

the extravagance and splendor associated with it. Most sources suggest that the fairies lived underground, inside the mounds of hills. George Sinclair refers to popular Highland stories, in which fairies "rode and went alongs the sides of hills."[179] Less than a decade later, Rev. Kirk discussed the same issue, stating that "There be many Places called Fairie-hills, which the Mountain People think impious and dangerous to peel or discover."[180] *The Elfin Knight*—a ballad eventually published by folklorist Francis Child—hints at the potential dangers, as the title character "sits on yon hill" blowing his horn to lure young human maids.[181] Often there are specific hills that are associated with fairy activity. Andro Man testified to meeting the Fairy Queen and riding with her company until "thay com to the Binhill, and Binlocht, quhair thay vse commonlie to convene."[182] Likewise, a travel narrative by Rev. John Brand contends, "[t]here is Fritta Hill where they say the Fairies are frequently seen, it is the highest hill in all the Northern Isles of Orkney."[183] While some hills may have more frequent fairy sightings, Kirk explains that fairies were nomadic: "They remove to other Lodgings at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year, so traversing till Doomsday, being imputent and…[incapable of] staying in one Place."[184] This notion makes it possible for all the accounts of fairy sightings on various hills to be accurate, and adds to popular sentiments that the fairies could be nearby any human community at any given time. Kirk's conclusions also account for the frequent descriptions of the Fairy Ride, which would process every time the fairies relocated to a new hill.

While there is a consensus about hills serving as the fairies' lodging, the terminology is nuanced, as several other sources suggest the fairies lived underneath or inside hills, not on top

[179] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 214.
[180] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 23.
[181] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 15
[182] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.
[183] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney*, 57.
[184] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 7.

of them. King James VI discussed how numerous witches had claimed "that they have been transported with the fairy to such a hill which, opening, they went in, and there saw a fair queen."[185] Several witch trial records reveal those exact claims, as Isobel Haldane described being "carrit to ane hill syde; [and] the hill oppynnit and sho enterit in."[186] Other witches confessed to similar experiences; Isobel Gowdie claimed, "we went in to the downie hillis, the hill opened [to Fairyland]," while Jonet Drever was found guilty of fostering a child with a fairy man inside one of their hills.[187] Similarly, the abducted Tam Lin described how "the Queen o Fairies she caught me, In yon green hill to dwell."[188] It is within these hills that Fairyland exists. Save for a few hints as to its extravagance and bountifulness, however, early modern sources offer very little insight into what such a space looked like inside. The perception that fairies lived inside hill mounds, rather than on top of them like humans might, may have added a decidedly supernatural dimension to early modern fairy culture. It likely also rationalized why people could not easily travel to Fairyland of their own accord, without being escorted—whether by choice or force—by one of its inhabitants. The frequent associations between fairies and hills add to the overall consistency of early modern fairy belief and represent one of numerous liminal qualities ascribed to fairies.

Liminality

One of the most unique aspects related to the physical nature of fairies is their liminal existence. Referring to the straddling of boundaries or thresholds, anthropologist Victor Turner revived Arnold van Gennep's concepts of liminality when he examined the "interstructural

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[185] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[186] Isobel Haldane, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 353.
[187] Isobel Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie,* 47; Jonet Drever, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 167.
[188] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 342.

situation" that humans encounter during the transitional periods of various rites of passage or initiations.[189] In the years since, the definitions of 'liminality' have broadened both in terms of whom and what it can include.[190] Henderson and Cowan argued for a spatial interpretation of van Gennep's concept of liminality in regards to the landscapes associated with fairies.[191] However, I argue that investigations regarding liminality in fairy culture should be extended beyond spatial considerations to include temporal and ontological interpretations as well. In Scotland, fairies enjoy a state of fixed liminality in all three of these areas, which I attribute to a combination of cultural othering and cautionary tales.

The temporal liminality ascribed to fairies meant people usually claimed interactions with them between night and day or on specific holidays that marked the changing of seasons, with Halloween being especially common. The associations between fairy activity and hills also evoke a sense of liminality; hills are the thresholds between populated valleys, while the forests that often cover them represent the unsettled fringes of community boundaries.[192] The liminality ascribed to Scottish fairies even extended to their very nature, as many sources described them as existing on the threshold of life and death itself—neither corporeal nor spirit. Their capricious nature also placed fairies in the liminal space between good and evil—a particularly interesting quality to have in a kingdom caught up in the throes of the Reformation. Perhaps the varied and widespread liminality Scots associated with the fairy realm helped establish these curious creatures as definitively unearthly, fully separating them from humans in ways that their physical appearances did not.

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[189] Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967).

[190] Bjorn Thomassen, "The Uses and Meaning of Liminality," *International Political Anthropology* 2 (2009): 5-28; Lucy Kay, Zoë Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, *Mapping Liminalities: Thresholds in Cultural and Literary Texts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007); Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts, *Liminal Landscapes: Travel, Experience and Spaces in-Between* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[191] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief,* 39-40.

[192] Nicolson, *Mountain gloom and mountain glory*.

The times when early modern Scots most frequently claimed to encounter fairies varied slightly, but almost always occurred in the liminal time between days. The midnight hour, which marked the official change from one day to another, was one such time. Tam Lin explained to his human lover, "Just at the mirk and midnight hour The fairy folk will ride," while Bessie Dunlop confessed to being visited by her personal fairy familiar, Thom Reid, around midnight.[193] Stein Maltman, another accused witch tried in 1628, described a ritual that protected against fairy mischief that frequently took place at "nyt at ellevin or twell houres."[194] Sunrise and sunset, which are equally liminal times as they could not be fully considered either day or night, were also popular for fairy activity. For example, Alesoun Piersoun testified to seeing the fairies just "before the sone rysing," and Montgomerie's *Flyting* suggests, "our goode nichtbouris ryddis…[in] the twie licht."[195] Though there may be some disagreement about when exactly the fairies are most active, all of these times represent the blurry boundaries between days.

In addition to these designated times of day, fairies were also known to come out at specific times of year, in specific hilly or forested places. The wooded fairy hills associated with Fairyland represent physical boundaries that existed on the edge of human communities, while festival days such as Halloween, Beltane, Christmas, or the Quarter Day marked the liminal space between the seasons. Kirk described how the fairies "remove to other Lodgings at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year," which would account for a ritual that seeks to recover a stolen child by burying the fairy changeling on Quarter Day in hopes that passing fairies would switch them back.[196] Other accounts suggest that fairies were seen on—or just before—

[193] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 342; Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1; Pitcairn, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 52.

[194] Stein Maltman, NAS, CH2/722/5..

[195] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 163; Montgomerie and Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, 144.

[196] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 7; Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 118.

Christmas, which is also called Yule in Scotland.[197] Unsurprisingly, Halloween is the seasonal holiday most frequently associated with the fairies. Janet Boyman and Andro Man both confessed to meeting fairies on Halloween; Boyman explained "the guid nychtbouris rysis that day and ye had mair acquentace with thame that day nor anie uther."[198] Several other accounts agree that the Fairy Ride typically occurs on Halloween.[199] Yet while Scots may have seen fairies more frequently on Halloween, it was not the only time of year they appeared

Even the very nature of fairies' existence could be described as liminal, as they "are said to be of a midle Nature betuixt Man and Angel."[200] According to Kirk, their "bodies of congealled Air" were usually "best seen in Twilight."[201] The fact that they were more easily seen during Twilight may be a simple factor behind why people associated that time of day with increased fairy activity. Accused witch Andro Man also had a sense of their intermediate existence, as he described how "thay ar bot schaddowis, bot ar starker nor men."[202] The fact that their bodies were somewhere between corporeal and spiritual may be linked to their associations with the human dead, as confusion about whether fairies are human ghosts is common. According to several witches, many of the fairies they encountered claimed to have died decades, or even centuries, earlier. Thom Reid, Bessie Dunlop's fairy contact, supposedly died at the Battle of Pinkie twenty-nine years before her 1576 trial.[203] Similarly, Alesoun Piersoun communed with Mr. William Sympsoune, her deceased uncle, while Elspeth Reoch met with Johne Stewart, who was killed on a hill "and therfor [was] nather deid nor leiving bot wald ever

[197] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 62; Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club,* 189.
[198] Janet Boyman (1572): NAS, JC26/1/67; Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.
[199] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 342; Montgomerie and Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, 144; Sempill, "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe," 365.
[200] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 1.
[201] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 1-2.
[202] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.
[203] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 51.

go betuix the heaven and the earth."[204] Similarly, Andro Man confessed that "sindrie deid men [were] in thair cumpanie," including "the kyng that deit in Flowdoun and Thomas Rymour."[205] In 1583, poet Robert Sempill contended that Fairy Queen "names out nytboris sex or sewin, That we belevit had bene in heawin."[206] Yet other accounts suggests humans who were abducted by the fairies would live amongst them while trapped within their realm.[207] Still a number of sources refer to unnamed fairies that were likely never considered human, as is certainly the case for the Fairy Queen. It seems as though the inhabitants of Fairyland varied so greatly that perhaps the fairies themselves could not fully categorize their existence—content instead with hovering on the threshold.

Though more work into the myriad liminal qualities associated with fairies would be helpful, these qualities seem to have equipped fairies with a more mysterious, albeit ambiguous nature. Their links with hills and temporal thresholds like midnight and twilight can be interpreted as cautionary tales, as popular stories warning about the dangers that might befall those who encounter fairies could symbolize some of the more human dangers also associated with such times and landscapes. Their ontological liminality helped muddle any official definitions of fairies, allowing people to interpret them as they saw fit. Thus, it was likely easy for King James and George Sinclair, among others, to associate the fairy folk with the Devil because there was no definitive tradition that proved them wrong. However, that existential ambiguity probably also helped prevent James' interpretations about the nature of fairies from taking hold among the masses, for fairies were characteristically indefinable. Along with the

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[204] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 162; Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 189; Note: a "doune" is a hill, suggesting because Johne Stewart was killed on a hill, he was condemned to joining the ranks of the fairies.

[205] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121.

[206] Isobel Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie,* 43; Sempill, "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe," 365.

[207] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 342; Christian Lewingstoun, JC2/3, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 25; Fairies' abductions of humans will be discussed further in chapter two.

similarities in likeness and clothing, this ontological quality likely also contributed to the difficulties in easily distinguishing fairies from humans based on appearance, with their spatial and temporal liminality—and behavioral qualities—serving as the major qualities that separated fairies and humans.

Physical Representations of Fairies in Nineteenth and early Twentieth c. Scotland

Appearance

Unlike the male-dominated gender breakdown popular in early modern fairy culture, several Victorian accounts feature female fairies on their own. Scottish poet Alexander Smith's travel narrative, *A Summer in Skye*—one of the Scottish islands—tells the story of a female fairy that sits on hills near the local "Fairy Bridge" and often accompanies passing travelers.[208] Andrew Lang—one the of Scotland's most renowned children's authors—depicted fairies as exclusively female in, *Prince Prigio*, a fairytale published in 1895.[209] Meanwhile, two versions of the popular stories surrounding the prized "Fairy Flag" kept at Dunvegan Castle—home to the chief of Clan MacLeod on the Isle of Skye—attribute the flag as being a gift from a female fairy.[210] The Fairy Flag, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, was supposedly given to the Macleod chief by the fairy folk for protection and could be waved to save the clan during three separate times of need. The most famous female fairy of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is likely J.M. Barrie's fictional fairy character, Tinker Bell.[211] But Barrie's 1911 story offers more than just a prominently female fairy. After Tinker Bell states that

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[208] Smith, *A Summer in Skye v.2*, 68.
[209] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 8.
[210] Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*, 196-199.
[211] Although the character of Tinker Bell was first revealed to the public at 1904 play in London, followed by 1911 novel adaptation also published in London, Barrie's Scottish heritage and upbringing likely helped inspire many of the fantastical elements in *Peter Pan*. See: C. N. Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994).

she is Peter's fairy, not Wendy's, Peter explains, "You know you can't be my fairy, Tink, because I am a gentleman and you are a lady."[212] This line emphasizes not just that Tinker Bell is female, but that gender lines prevent her from 'belonging' to Peter Pan, a male.[213] It may be that the increasing feminization of fairies during this time period reflects gender dynamics and anxieties prevalent toward the end of the Victorian era. The fact that Tinker Bell's manners were not often ladylike suggests she could be still considered a lady without necessarily ascribing to the genteel, 'Angel in the House' mentality.[214] This mid-nineteenth century poem by Coventry Patmore presented a Victorian feminine ideal, which portrayed women as mothers and wives devoted primarily to fulfilling the needs and happiness of their husbands and children. While Barrie depicts Tinker Bell as immensely devoted to Peter Pan, her behaviors otherwise are not very genteel, and she frequently places her own devotion to Peter above his interests, namely Wendy. The consistency of these more recent narratives likely helps fuel conceptions that fairies are traditionally female, even today.[215]

Even stories about Brownies, which appeared to be exclusively male in early modern narratives, could not escape the feminine transformation that swept the fairy realm in the Victorian era. In Alexander MacGregor's 1901 publication on *Highland Superstitions*, a section entitled "Smaller Superstitions" explains how "Some years ago, if not even still, many in the Western Isles believed in the existence of the 'Gruagach,' a female spectre of the class of Brownies to which the Highland dairymaids made frequent libations of milk."[216] Sixteen years later, J.P. MacLean's *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland* also made

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[212] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 24.
[213] On gender roles in *Peter Pan and Wendy*, see: H.E. Shipley, "Fairies, mermaids, mothers, and princesses: Sexual difference and gender roles in peter pan," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 13 (2012): 145-159.
[214] Coventry Patmore, *The angel in the house. The betrothal* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856).
[215] Even in her introduction to *At the Bottom of the Garden*, literary scholar Diane Purkiss accepts and perpetuates this modern gender stereotype by using the term 'she' rather than 'he' or 'it' when referring to fairies,.
[216] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 43.

reference to these female Brownies, known as the 'Gruagach.'[217] However, the increased

attention to these female Brownies in the Victorian era did not render their male counterparts

completely obsolete. Lang's fairy tale, *The Gold of Fairnilee*, features an old nurse who told

stories "that nobody believed any longer, about Brownies." According to her, a Brownie "was a

kind of fairy-man" that enjoyed doing household chores.[218]

Yet despite this increasing conceptualization of the fairies as female, a number of post-

Enlightenment sources echo the earlier, male-dominated fairy narratives. The popular ballads

The Wee Wee Man and *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight,* which were published in Francis Child's

nineteenth century ballad collection, each feature a small fairy man reflective of the traditional

early modern portrayal. Joseph Train's poem, entitled *The Witch of Inverness: a legendary tale*,

describes encounters with a male fairy, while a treatise on *Highland Fairies* published with

Train's poem in 1891 explains how male fairies often abducted mortal women to serve as their

wives and lovers.[219] Lang's *The Gold of Fairnilee* also portrays the mixed-gender groups found

in early modern accounts, as the story's main character encounters "a noble company of gallant

knights and fair ladies," while John Graham Dalyell asserts that fairies "were of both sexes…like

mankind" in his work on *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*.[220] These sources indicate that

while overall there is a great increase in the presence of female fairies during the post-

Enlightenment, some textual sources from the post-Enlightenment era maintain the gender

patterns popular in the early modern era. Thus, while the male-dominated gender motifs popular

in the early modern period still remain in the Victorian revival of fairy culture, it also underwent

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[217] MacLean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 16-17; Of course, the fact that I did not find any early modern mentions of this female breed of Brownies in the research for this project does not necessarily mean they did not exist, but they were clearly not as popularized.

[218] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 255.

[219] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahuric*h, 16, 47.

[220] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 292; John Graham Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland, Illustrated from History and Practice* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes; [etc.], 1834). 536.

a considerable feminization process that saw female fairies become much more prominent in the fairy realm—especially within children's literature. Indeed, in many instances, the more drastic differences in Victorian physical depictions of fairies come from authors and artists targeting children, while folklorists and painters producing for an adult audience more closely portrayed the early modern image of fairies.

Another shift between early modern and Victorian fairy descriptions involved their size. Unlike the near-silence about fairy size during the early modern period, extant sources feature widespread discussions and references to height and proportions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This suggests sizing had evolved to become a significant component in Scotland's revived fairy profile; perhaps because size was such an easily distinguishable characteristic in separating them from humans. In works of folklore and pseudo-academic accounts, the term 'diminutive' is very commonly employed to describe fairies.[221] The very title of the nineteenth century-recorded ballad, *The Wee Wee Man*, hints at the size of the fairy man featured in the story. The second stanza offers an indication of just how small he was:

<div style="text-align:center">

His legs were scarce a shathmont's length,
And thick and thimber was his thigh;
Between his brows there was a span,
And between his shoulders there was three.[222]

</div>

In *Peter Pan and Wendy,* Peter laments "If only one of us had a pocket…we could carry her in it," to prevent the gleaming light surrounding Tinker Bell from betraying their position.[223] Later, Barrie commented further on Tinker Bell's size compared to her human counterparts, noting how

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[221] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 541; Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 207; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 21.

[222] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, .330; According to the Dictionary of the Scots Language (www.dsl.ac.uk), a 'shathmont' is "the distance between the knuckle of the little finger in the closed fist and the tip of the extended thumb, taken as roughly six inches," while 'a span' can be "contrasted with [an] inch."

[223] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 35.

Peter's "head almost filled the fourth wall of her little room."[224] Robert Louis Stevenson's 1885

children's poem, titled *The Little Land*, is predicated on the size difference between fairies and

humans, suggesting that it was one of their most captivating and romantic characteristics:

> …To the fairy land afar
> Where the Little People are;
> Where the clover-tops are trees,
> And the rain-pools are the seas,
> And the leaves like little ships
> Sail about on tiny trips.[225]

Stevenson's poem romanticizes the land where "Little thoughtful creatures sit," in contrast to his

own, which features "High bare walls, great bare floor; Great big knobs on drawer and door;

Great big people perched on chairs."[226] This poem suggests that their miniature, pocket-sized

stature is part of their fantastical charm. Whether charming or not, the explosion of interest in

fairy sizing during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be ignored.

Again, while there is a clear consensus among nineteenth and twentieth century sources

that fairies were decidedly smaller than humans, the most extreme examples of that quality

appear to come from sources aimed at children. Perhaps authors and illustrators sought to forge a

connection between fairies and children, and emphasizing the fairies size difference served as a

way to help children identify with the fairy folk. The popular revival of fairy stories and the rise

so-called "cult of the child" in the Victorian era were not coincidental, as nineteenth century

Romantics valued the imagination and spiritual authenticity they ascribed to childhood

innocence.[227] Opting to present fairies in such substantially smaller terms reflected the

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[224] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 78.
[225] Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 85.
[226] Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 85.
[227] McGavran, *Time of Beauty, Time of Fear*; Judith Plotz, *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

imaginative, fantastical elements cherished among children, and offered a physical distinction

akin to that between children and adults.

In terms of apparel, Victorian fairies were almost exclusively portrayed in green apparel,

making it one of the most consistent physical elements ascribed to fairies across the two eras in

this study, In his 1834 description of *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, John Graham Dalyell

asserted that fairies "have been seen…dressed in green," as does Lang's children's tale, *Prince

Prigio*.[228] In the ballad *The Wee Wee Man*, the twenty-four fairies surrounding the Fairy Queen

"were a' clad out in green."[229] Barrie's Tinker Bell is "exquisitely gowned in a skeleton leaf, cut

low and square"—a line that comments both on clothing and size.[230] In Stevenson's poem, "The

Little Land," "Some [fairies] are clad in armour green," though he goes on to say that others "are

pied with ev'ry hue, Black and crimson, gold and blue," suggesting that while green may be their

favorite color, it is not their only option.[231] Meanwhile, geologist Hugh Miller's depiction is

reminiscent of Kirk's claims about fairy clothing resembling the country in which they reside, as

he described how they wore "antique jerkins of plaid, long gray cloaks, and little red caps."[232]

Though Miller's description does not mention any green attire, it still links to early modern

portrayals that depict fairies in Highland clothing, and emphasizes the regional connection in the

nineteenth and twentieth century revival fairy culture.

Other sources reveal the extent to which fairies favored the color green and hints at their

often jealous and fickle behavior, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. According

to an excerpt on Highland fairies from Eliza D. Ogilvy's *Book of Highland Minstrelsy*:

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[228] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 535; Lang, *My Own Fairy Book* 8, 260, 284.
[229] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 330.
[230] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 20.
[231] Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 86.
[232] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 207.

> It was a popular belief that the elves, having chosen green for their own especial use, were highly offended at anyone who presumed to wear that colour—an indignity which was sure to fix their malicious observation on the unlucky transgressor…[233]

Similarly, J.P Maclean warned that fairies "dressed in green, and took offense at any mortal who ventured to assume their favorite color," which caused "certain clans and counties" in Highland Scotland to consider the color unlucky.[234] Randal, the young boy featured in Lang's *The Gold of Fairnilee*, experiences the hazards that come with wearing green first hand, despite his sister's warnings:

> "But, oh Randal, you've got your green doublet on!"
> "Well! Why not?"
> "Do you not know it angers the fair—I mean the good folk—that anyone should wear green on the hill but themselves?"[235]

Refusing to heed her warnings, Randal continues up the hill wearing green, and is ultimately abducted by the fairies. Of course, this was the boy's mission all along, as he dreamed of meeting the beautiful Fairy Queen. The persisting associations between fairies and the color green may reinforce the Victorian connections with the Highlands; the color green may be reflective of the lush Highland landscape that remained untainted by the black soot and smog associated with industrialization. It likely solidifies the fairies connections to the land, as the hills and forested areas they were most commonly associated with would also have been green.

Randal's determination to wear his green doublet in hopes meeting the Fairy Queen is not surprising, as a number of nineteenth and twentieth century sources reveal the interest that surrounded Fairyland's most mysterious and prominent figure. Some of the sources just briefly mention the Fairy Queen, as if only to acknowledge her continued place in fairy culture.[236] In *The Wee Wee Man*, the queen is simply referred to as "a lady fine," as readers—or listeners—of

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[233] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 48.
[234] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 12.
[235] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 264.
[236] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 22; Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 359.

the ballad were expected to know the lady's identity.[237] Several Victorian sources reflect the description of the Fairy Queen popularized by the ballad of Thomas the Rhymer, which was published in the 1880s but popular in its oral form for centuries before:

> True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
> And he beheld a ladie gay,
> A ladie that was brisk and bold,
> Com riding oer the fernie brae.
>
> Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
> Her mantel of the velvet fine,
> At ilka tett of her horse's mane
> Hung fifty silver bells and nine
>
> True Thomas he took off his hat,
> And bowed him low down til his knee:
> 'All hail, though mighty Queen of Heaven!
> For your peer on earth I never did see.'[238]

Though she quickly corrected him, stating, "I am but the queen of fair Elfland," it is clear that Thomas was awed by her splendor.[239] Her skirt upholds the traditional associations between fairies and the color green, but the silk and velvet materials highlight her prominent status. In *The Gold of Fairnilee*, Lang echoes the ballad's portrayal of the Fairy Queen when the nurse describes her to her young charges, Randal and Jeanie:

> …and there's the Queen of them all, that's as beautiful as the day. She has yellow hair
> down to her feet, and she has blue eyes, like the sky on a fine day, and her voice like all
> the mavises singing in the spring. And she is aye dressed in green, and all her court in
> green; and she rides a white horse with golden bells on the bridle.[240]

Lang's description incorporates the splendid green dress and decorated horse featured in the ballad, but also adds his own interpretation of what the Queen looked like. Folklorist Alexander Macgregor also added to the image of the Fairy Queen in *Highland Superstitions*. In a reprint of the ballad stanzas quoted above, Macgregor added that "the saddle of this visionary beauty's

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[237] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 330.
[238] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 323.
[239] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 323.
[240] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 260.

steed was of ivory, inlaid with gold" and that "She had a quiver of arrows at her back, with a bow in one hand, and the other led three beautiful hounds in a leash."[241] His additions reinforce the beauty, extravagance, and power associated with Fairyland's matriarch.

Among descriptions of the Fairy Queen's splendor, several sources made reference to her white horse, suggesting that early modern descriptions of the Fairy Ride did not disappear after the Enlightenment. In addition to the Fairy Queen's horse, a number of other nineteenth and twentieth century sources refer to fairies traveling by horse. Joseph Train's poem mentions "A troop o' Fairies riding by," while Alexander Macgregor asserted, "they rode upon milk-white steeds."[242] Meanwhile three of the Child ballads associated with fairies—*Thomas Rhymer, The Wee Wee Man,* and *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*—feature the main character riding off to Elfland with a fairy.[243] Hugh Miller's footnoted account of the fairies' departure from Scotland describes "a long cavalcade" of fairies, whose "horses were shaggy, diminutive things, speckled dun and gray."[244] Similarly Paton's 1867 interpretation of *The Fairy Raid* and John Duncan's 1911 painting of *The Riders of the Sidhe* reinforce the notion that fairies still traveled by horseback in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These continuing references offer another example of how fairies reflected the people they interacted with and serve as another link between early modern and Victorian fairy culture.

Yet horses were not the fairies' only means of transport by the Victorian era, as several sources suggest that fairies had wings that allowed them to fly. In *A Child's Garden of Verses*, Stevenson contended that "some [fairies] have wings and swift are gone" in one poem, and

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[241] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 20.
[242] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 13; Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 19.
[243] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 55, 323, 330.
[244] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 207.

referenced "flying fairies" in another.[245] The fairies in Lang's *Prince Prigio* could also fly, as he describes "a sound like the rustling of the wings of birds" as fairies arrive at the King's palace.[246] In J.M. Barrie's famous novel, not only could Tinker Bell fly, but her pixie dust could help human children fly off to Neverland along with her. Though due to her tiny, lightweight size, "she could not fly so slowly as they, and so she had to go round and round them in a circle."[247] Winged fairies were almost exclusively depicted in images created for children as well. Miniscule fairies sporting insect or butterfly-like wings were usually embossed on the covers of Lang's twelve-volume collection of 'colored' fairy books, and appeared as illustrations in countless children's books.[248] Apart from Lang's fairy books, a select few include those in Mary MacGregor's *Stories from the Ballads told to the Children*, Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy*, and Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Paton's Shakespeare-inspired paintings, the 1847 *Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* and accompanying 1849 *Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, appear to be among the lone exceptions to this rule.[249] These paintings show scores of fairies in a forest clearing, a number of which have wings. Despite this outlier it is notable that winged fairies were largely found in children's tales.

It is unclear why Scottish children's authors and illustrators so unanimously decided to give fairies wings when the tradition of the horse-drawn Fairy Ride had clearly remained popular in folkloric sources. It may have to do with creating further separation between the fairy and human realms, thereby solidifying its appeal as the ideal destination for Victorian escapist

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[245] Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 76, 86.

[246] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 8.

[247] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 34.

[248] Andrew Lang's "colored" Fairy Books were collections of fairy stories published in twelve installments between 1889 and 1910. The books were titled by color and included, *The Blue Fairy Book*, *The Red Fairy Book*, *The Green Fairy Book*, *The Yellow Fairy Book*, *The Pink Fairy Book*, *The Grey Fairy Book*, *The Violent Fairy Book*, *The Crimson Fairy Book*, *The Brown Fairy Book*, *The Orange Fairy Book*, *The Olive Fairy Book*, and *The Lilac Fairy Book.*

[249] Joseph Noel Paton, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*, 1847; Joseph Noel Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, 1849.

fantasies. After all, a land accessible by horseback may not seem as mystical and exotic as one

that requires flight. The new associations between fairies and flight may also reveal a Victorian

commentary on childhood innocence. According to Barrie's *The Little White Bird*, a 1902

fantasy novel that first introduced the character of Peter Pan, "the moment you doubt whether

you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it." He goes on to note, "the reason birds can fly

and we can't is simply that they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings."[250] This

emphasizes the value ascribed to children during the second half of the nineteenth century—

often referred to as 'the golden age of children's literature.'[251] Perhaps by giving fairies wings,

children's authors and illustrators were creating a visual marker by which to measure innocence.

Fairies, uncorrupted by the confines and realities of an increasingly modernizing society, had the

freedom to believe in magic and wonder, earning them the ability to fly. Children, the pinnacle

of innocence and curiosity, were the only ones worth marketing this concept to, as adults were

far too bogged down by their imposed limitations to ever truly believe they could fly. Perhaps for

them, the traditional stories of fairies processing on horseback through the glens were

imaginative enough to suspend disbelief for a small respite from reality.

Fairyland

Unlike the early modern era, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries feature a several

accounts describing Fairyland. The hillside and subterranean locations of Fairyland remained

prominent in these descriptions, while the splendor and extravagance only hinted at in the early

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[250] J.M. Barrie, *The Little White Bird* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902), chapter 14.

[251] Select works on children's literature in the Victorian era: McGavran, *Time of Beauty, Time of Fear*; Jane Yolen, *Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie & Folklore in the Literature of Childhood* (Little Rock: August House, 2000); Alison Lurie, *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children's Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990); On the meaning and evolution of 'the fairy tale,' see: Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

modern sources is emphasized in more vivid detail. Yet some Victorian sources suggest the lavishness ascribed to Fairyland and its inhabitants was simply an illusion, meant to lure humans to their court. Illusion or otherwise, nineteenth and twentieth century sources offer significantly more insight into how Scots envisioned Fairyland.

The textual sources used in this project almost unanimously mimic their early modern counterparts in suggesting that Scottish fairies typically live underneath—or inside—hills. Alexander Macgregor explained how "They live under ground, or in little green hills, where the royal fairies held their courts."[252] He add that on the Isle of Skye "and in the Hebrides in general, the fairies dwelt in green knolls or hillocks, called 'sitheanan,' and there is hardly a parish or district which has not its 'sithean,' or fairy-hill."[253] One such locally known hill in Inverness, called Tomnahurich, is a "curiously shaped hill…[and f]rom time immemorable it has been accounted the haunt of the fairies; hence it is often called 'The Hill of the Fairies.'"[254] While it is difficult to determine whether the visual sources used in this project depict fairies on hills, most of them are set in densely wooded areas with mountainous landscape in the background.[255] These images reinforce the outdoor, forest-covered settings so often associated with fairies and accentuate the physical separation between where fairies and humans lived.

This notion that fairy hills would somehow open up to permit entry was popular in the Victorian period as well. According to antiquarian John Graham Dalyell, "fairies dwelt in subterraneous abodes, in separate hillocks on plains, which emitted gleams of light and

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[252] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 19, 22; A similar statement is found in *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*), 46.

[253] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 19, 22.

[254] This quote is from a footnoted commentary on Joseph Train's original poem, which claims that "lang 'bout Tamnahoorich [the fairies] dwell'd." *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 11-12.

[255] Paton, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*; Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*; Paton, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying Off a Changeling*;, Mary Macgregor and Katharine Cameron (illus.). *Stories from the Ballads Told to the Children* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1908); Duncan, *The Riders of the Sidhe*; Duncan, *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*.

melodious sounds: or the side of a hill opened to expose them to view."[256] This seems to be a fairly common element in the revived fairy culture and is referenced in sources meant for adults and children alike. In an attempt to rescue her brother from Fairyland in Lang's *The Gold of Fairnilee*, Jeanie tried walking "nine times round a Fairy Knowe…because then it was fancied that the hill-side would open, like a door, and show a path into Fairyland."[257] Though she did not gain entry, several other humans did. Alexander Smith tells of a man who saw a fairy hill open, "and he beheld the under-world of the fairies," while legends from Clan Macleod recount how another man, upon seeing a fairy mound open, foolishly decided to follow the returning fairies into it.[258] Finally, in another story about Tomnahurich, a fairy man invited two fiddlers to play for the court and revealed the entrance to Fairyland by opening the hillside.[259] Almost all of the nineteenth and twentieth century references to fairy lodging in this project agree that fairies live inside hills, with the exception of Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy*, which suggests that they live "high up among the tree tops."[260] But even Barrie's interpretation placed Fairyland in a wooded area, separated from human communities. The popularization of these hill locations for Fairyland offers another link between early modern and Victorian fairy culture. It also adds to the sense of fantasy and escapism popular in the modern era. Finally, the preservation of the fairies hillside dwellings helps solidify the regional associations ascribed to the revived fairy culture, as these rugged, mountainous landscapes were characteristic of the Highlands.

Once inside the fairy hills, most nineteenth and twentieth century descriptions of Fairyland focus on its impressive lavishness. Perhaps Macgregor summed up Fairyland's exquisite appearance best: "In their places all was beauty and splendour. Their pageants and

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[256] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 538.
[257] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 275-276.
[258] Smith, *A Summer in Skye*; Macleod, *The Macleods of Dunvegan*, 44.
[259] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 27.
[260] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 97.

processions were far more magnificent than any that Eastern sovereigns could get up or poets

devise."[261] Yet his assertion that its magnificence was essentially indescribable did not stop

authors and folklorists from trying. The fiddlers that entered Fairyland through Inverness'

Tomnahurich had a lot to take in:

> …a great hall as if of some palatial building, filled with dazzling brilliancy of light that
> bewildered them…Glancing round…[they] saw tables…of pure diamond as they glittered
> before their eyes, placed in niches of crystal around the vast hall, and these tables were
> profusely laden with viands, fruits, and liquors of every description that the Strathspey
> men knew not the name of. The walls of the building appeared as a mirrored sheet
> reflecting a thousandfold the various objects, while the arched roof seemed to them as a
> sky of burnished gold supported by fluted columns and pillars sparkling with countless
> numbers of precious stones.[262]

The narrator of *The Wee Wee Man* also described the beauty upon the fairy man's house in

Fairyland, "Whare the roof was o the beaten gould, And the floor was o the cristal a'."[263] Even

Tinker Bell's treetop apartment was lavishly decorated, according to Barrie's description.[264] Yet

Joseph Train's poem about Tomnahurich paints a far more sinister, though still extravagant,

image of Fairyland:

> The gates o' adamantine strong
> Flew open as they push'd along';
> The tapers were (before them blue)
> Men's fat, who never women knew;
> The wa's were picture'd wi' their sins,
> The floor was conver'd wi' their skins;
> The furniture was o' their banes,
> An' platters held their hearts and brains.[265]

Perhaps Train intended for his description to recall the danger traditionally associated with

fairies—discussed further in the next chapter. Though equally extravagant as some of the other

descriptions of Fairyland, Train's poem depicts the fairy realm as morbid, rather than cheerful.

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[261] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 19.
[262] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 27-28.
[263] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 330
[264] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 49.
[265] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of* Tomnahurich, 17.

This more dreary interpretation of Fairyland may have influenced an increasingly popular notion that the fairies' extravagance was simply an illusion, intended to hide their true melancholy nature. Such suspicions may hearken back to Kirk's claims that what appeared to be finely crafted fairy garments may have simply been "curious Cob-webs, impalpable Rainbows, and a fantastic Imitation of the Actions of more terrestricall Mortalls."[266] For example, Macgregor's version of Thomas the Rhymer suggested that as soon as Thomas entered into the Fairy Queen's service, "She became changed into a hideous hag, yet he was [still] compelled to follow her." However, once they reached Fairyland, "the lady resumed her former dignity and stateliness."[267] Perhaps this notion that the magnificence and splendor often associated with the fairy realm was simply an illusion masking a far bleaker reality offers some insight into how Victorians negotiated nostalgia in an industrializing world.

Based on Macgregor's description, it could also be that the Fairy Queen and her court were powered by the magnificence of Fairyland, and could only maintain a reflection of that splendor for a limited time in the human realm. This notion emphasizes the importance of physical space in maintaining the fairies' existence—a literal interpretation that can apply figuratively to the regional connection between fairy culture and the depopulation of the Highlands. Lang also explored this concept of false fairy beauty in his fairy tale, *The Gold of Fairnilee*. Unlike Macgregor, however, Lang extended the illusion to encompass Fairyland as well. When young Randal was first trapped in Fairyland, he too saw the extravagance described by so many others. But upon touching some magical water to his eyes, his view quickly changed:

> Now this water had the power to destroy the 'glamour' in Fairyland, and make people see it as it really was…He saw that nothing was as it seemed. The gold vanished from the embroidered curtains, the light grew dim and wretched like a misty winter day. The Fairy Queen, that had seemed so happy and beautiful in her bright dress, was a weary, pale

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[266] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 14-15.
[267] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 20-21.

woman in black, with a melancholy face and melancholy eyes. She looked as if she had been there for thousands of years, always longing for the sunlight and the earth, and the wind and the rain. There were sleepy poppies twisted in her hair, instead of a golden crown. And the knights and ladies were changed. They looked but half alive; and some, in place of their gay green robes, were dressed in rusty mail, pierced with spears and stained with blood…All were dressed strangely in ancient fashion…And their festivals were not of dainty meats, but of cold, tasteless flesh, and of beans, and pulse, and such things as the old heathens, before the coming of the Gospel, used to offer to the dead…[268]

By revealing their true nature, Lang presented a far different image of Fairyland. The wonder and beauty so frequently associated with the fairy realm transforms into something much more mundane, and the fantastical elements become all too recognizable. By stripping the Fairyland of its "glamour," Lang depicted a land that was far less desirable, far from the ideal location for escapist fantasies. Like Macgregor, the description implies a connection between the physical space of Fairyland and the fairies—or beings—that inhabit it. In this case, however, Lang was suggesting that fairies were simply the ghosts of human dead, miserably trapped outside the confines of time in a realm separate from Heaven and Hell. Through the realization of young Randal, Lang may have taught his readers that Fairyland was not as wonderful as it was often made out to be—a disappointing lesson likely applicable to most things they would encounter on the road to adulthood.

Liminality

In addition to preserving the spatially liminal concept of fairy hills, Victorian sources also maintained the temporal liminality associated with the fairies. By this time, however, their temporal liminality was focused on the time of day, with Halloween emerging as the only major seasonal change identified with fairy activity. During his *Summer in Skye*, Smith "was told that the fairy sits at sunset on the green knolls" next to the locally-known 'Fairy Bridge,' and though he failed to see it on his own trip across the bridge, he conceded, "Perhaps the witchery of the

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[268] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 293-294.

setting sun was needed."[269] Miller described how one old woman saw the fairies dancing "as the sun was setting," and reveals that even their departure from Scotland occurred "just as the shadow of the garden dial had fallen on the line of noon."[270] Lang suggested that Fairyland itself existed in a constant state of temporal liminality, explaining that "it was never dark night, nor broad daylight, but like early summer dawn before the sun has risen."[271] Similarly, all three of Joseph Noel Paton's fairy paintings, as well as John Duncan's *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*, appear to be set at either dawn or twilight.[272] Each shows an orange hue over the horizon, but a darker sky, either blue or purple, overhead; Paton's paintings even feature an evening star, supporting the notion that the scenes took place at either twilight or sunrise. Meanwhile, Maclean described a common protective ritual that some Highlanders performed at sunset on Halloween, as the combined temporal and seasonal liminality likely posed an even greater threat.[273] It seems that Halloween became a particularly powerful day by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Macgregor contended, "It was the night for the universal walking abroad of all sorts of spirits, fairies, and ghosts, all of whom had liberty on that night."[274] In fact, apart from Halloween, there are very few nineteenth and early twentieth century references to increased fairy activity during seasonal changes.[275] This suggests that the liminal times in the day, rather than the year, became more closely associated with fairies in this period.

Victorian descriptions of the existential nature of fairies are vague, suggesting fairies maintained an ontological liminality as well. Dalyell echoed Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth* when

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[269] Smith, *A Summer in Skye*, 68, 72.
[270] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 205-207.
[271] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 292.
[272] Paton, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*; Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*; Paton, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying Off a Changeling*; Duncan, *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*.
[273] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 27-28.
[274] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 56.
[275] Hugh Miller mentioned fairy encounters during a full moon, which can certainly be considered the liminal threshold between the lunar phases, in *The Old Red Sandstone* (205).

he explained how "their substance is denser than air; too subtle to be pierced, and reuniting when divided."[276] One of the legends Rev. Canon Macleod recorded about Clan MacLeod's Fairy Flag described how, "Without any difficulty [a fairy] passed through several closed doors," but then baby moments later picked up a sleeping. The account suggests fairies somehow had an ability to be both corporeal and ephemeral whenever they chose.[277] It seems that it may have been easier to define what fairies were by ruling out what they were not. When a young boy asks a fairy man what he is, the fairy replied that he was "Not of the race of Adam."[278] The editor that republished Joseph Train's poem about *The Witch of Inverness* footnotes the first mention of fairies, commenting that "Fairies…are supposed to be a kind of beings, neither gods, nor angels, nor men, nor devils."[279] This may have been a sort of 'othering' via process of elimination, where fairies were not just 'the other' in relation to humans, but in relation to a number of more easily definable beings. It also reinforces the notion that fairies enjoyed an ontological liminality that likely added to their mystique and popularity. The fact that there were still several stories of humans—including Rev. Kirk—being abducted and trapped in Fairyland further complicating their nature, as it was unclear whether those people were ghosts or somehow remained alive during their time among the fairies.[280]

Perhaps one reason why it was often hard to distinguish between true fairies and deceased or abducted humans is because time seems to move differently in Fairyland. In cases where humans that entered Fairyland were able to return home, most returned years or decades later, despite spending only a few days away. Macgregor explained how "At the end of what he

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[276] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 535.
[277] Macleod, *The Macleods of Dunvegan*, 196.
[278] Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 207.
[279] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 11.
[280] Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 160; Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*.

thought a short time, the queen told [Thomas the Rhymer] that he had been seven years in the castle." Meanwhile, Hugh Miller recorded a tale of a man who stopped on a hill to listen to fairy music, only to find that "instead of having lingered at the edge of the dell for only a few minutes—and the time had seemed no longer—he had spent beside it the greater part of the night."[281] According to two similar stories, human men entered a fairy hill for music and revelry, only to find that they were gone much longer than a night. One returned "a gray-haired man, for into one short afternoon and evening had been crowded a hundred of our human years," while two others returned to find that "their wives and children…had been dead for a century or more."[282] Again, however, a piece of children's literature thwarts this concept by suggesting that fairies' lifespans are significantly shorter than humans'. Upon reuniting with Peter Pan decades later as a grown woman, Wendy discovers Peter has no recollection of Tinker Bell. According to Barrie, "fairies don't live long, but they are so little that a short time seems a good while to them."[283] Whether lengthened or shortened, there seems to be a general consensus that time moved at drastically different rates for fairies and humans. This difference only further muddles our understanding of fairies' existential nature, except to say that they were clearly distinct from humans.

Conclusion

In general, this chronological comparison of how fairies' physical characteristics were described in the early modern and Victorian eras reveals a number of core qualities that persisted into the nineteenth century fairy revival. Accounts from both the early modern and post-Enlightenment eras emphasized the prominence of the Fairy Queen, as well the fairies' hillside

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[281] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 21; Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 206
[282] Smith, *A Summer in Skye*, 180; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 30-33.
[283] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 98.

abodes, affinity for the color green, and ambiguously liminal nature. They both alluded to the extravagance and splendor that exists in Fairyland and referenced the Fairy Ride. Victorian and early nineteenth century sources offer far more detail about these characteristics than their early modern counterparts, yet even their limited discussion indicates that several aspects of fairy culture persevered across the Enlightenment.

The most pronounced differences in the physical depiction of Victorian fairies occurred within the sub-genre of children's literature, emphasizing the value and attention children garnered among nineteenth century Romantics. Children's authors and illustrators presented increasingly feminized fairies and shrunk them to miniscule, pocket-sized proportions that would likely have been more appealing to their young audience. These child-friendly fairies also sprouted insect- or butterfly-like wings, allowing them to dart through the skies and rendering horses unnecessary for travel. These seemingly stark differences highlight the role of audience in the Victorian fairy revival and demonstrate the nuanced source-bases that contributed to its popularization.

Yet these findings suggest that while some elements were decidedly different within the two eras, nineteenth and early twentieth century fairy culture cannot be viewed as a distinct or unique form of fairy culture unrelated to its early modern roots. Those differences that did exist reflect the changing values of Victorian society and allowed fairy culture to find new relevance in an industrializing world. The somewhat transformed fairies of children's literature presented a more obviously fantastical physical interpretation of the elusive creatures that appealed to Victorian notions of childhood innocence, imagination, and escapism. Meanwhile, the fact that so many physical qualities and motifs remained the same across the two eras demonstrates the links between early modern and Victorian fairies, suggesting a singular—albeit adapting—form

of fairy culture successfully transcended the Enlightenment into the modern era. These physical connections helped forge a sense of cultural heritage and national mythology that contributed to the search for a specifically Scottish identity during the golden age of the homogenizing British Empire.

<u>Chapter Three:</u>

"Thro weel or woe as chance may be": moral and the behavioral motifs ascribed to fairies in early modern and Victorian Scotland

Introduction

  This final chapter will examine the behavioral depictions of Scottish fairies in the two time periods, with particular interest in their moral nature. It addresses the benevolent, malevolent, and morally neutral behaviors Scots often ascribed to fairies, arguing that fairies were prone to all three. A number of popular traditions and behaviors associated with fairies were prevalent in both the early modern and Victorian eras. Benevolent interactions with humans included healing, protection, prophecy, and general service to humans, while malevolent activities included bringing disease to humans and livestock with elf-shot, abducting humans to Fairyland, and the swapping of human babies for fairy changelings. Beyond these behaviors, which are predicated on fairy interactions with humans, this chapter also addresses the broader affinities for merriment and revelry associated with the fairy folk. Moreover, the liminality ascribed to Scottish fairies seems to have extended beyond their physical nature to characterize their moral and behavioral nature as well. Their unpredictability may have helped add to the mystery of the fairy folk and reinforced the cautionary tales associated with their domains. Alternatively, it may demonstrate that in both eras—a Reformation culture increasingly defined by good and evil and a Victorian society that suppressed individualism in favor of genteelism— the idea that some creatures existed stubbornly outside those confines drew widespread attention—both positive and negative.

Though not quite as obvious as the previous chapter on physical characterizations, this behavioral comparison also highlights the similarities between early modern and Victorian fairy culture. While all the fairy behaviors listed above existed in both eras, some were more or less important in their respective time period. This is to be expected, as Scots would have placed more emphasis on the aspects that were most relevant to their own social climate. Generally speaking, Victorian fairies appear to have been slightly more benevolent—or else passively neutral—while their early modern counterparts were more dangerous by comparison. That said, those moral leanings are far less dramatic than twenty-first century fairy tales suggest, and their propensity for fickle, capricious mood swings were prominent in both eras. Unlike the previous chapter, children's literature does not appear to skew these conclusions or force us to consider children's sources as a separate, child-friendly faction within the Victorian revival. Instead, it compliments nineteenth and early twentieth century visual and folkloric sources, and helps create a more unified interpretation of fairy culture not dependent on the age of the audience. Perhaps the need for Romantic authors and illustrators to adapt early modern fairy culture to appeal to younger audiences only required a physical transformation, as the fairies' traditionally fickle temperaments would have already attracted children—who J.M. Barrie referred to as "gay and innocent and heartless."[284]

The similarities between these behavioral elements reveal the extent to which the frameworks of Scottish fairy culture persisted across the two eras, while demonstrating the shifts and changes in focus it underwent to remain relevant in such different time periods. As social and cultural climates changed, so too did the relevance of fairies. In the early modern era, discussions of fairy activity helped people explain the unknown, especially as it related to the contraction and healing of illnesses. Victorian and early twentieth century discussions, on the

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[284] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 103.

other hand, demonstrate the medical and scientific strides made by the Scots during the eighteenth century as their interest in the disease-oriented fairy motifs waned. Instead, these nineteenth century sources reveal the Scottish struggle to negotiate modernizing advances with traditional fairy mythology, which likely paved the way for the more protective characterizations popular in this later era. The fact that sources from both time periods address the capricious and festive nature associated with fairies suggests a continued preoccupation with such qualities among Scottish societies in both eras. Building on previous chapters' claims about the nature and context fairy discourse, this behavioral comparison emphasizes how fairies were part of both a continued memory and an evolving sense of cultural heritage in early modern and Victorian Scotland.

Behaviors ascribed to Early Modern Fairies in Scotland

Benevolence

The purpose of this chapter is not to determine where fairies fall in the theological spectrum, but instead how testimonies and other sources reveal the behavioral patterns commonly ascribed to fairies in each era; the sharing of magical knowledge is paramount in that exploration. From the mid-sixteenth to late-seventeenth centuries, the framers of the Scottish witch hunts targeted people with known—or perceived—magical abilities, despite the benefits these popular magical practitioners, often called 'cunning folk,' provided to their communities. Magistrates sought to determine the origins of these magical skills, especially when they extended beyond the common practice of healing towards something more nefarious. Because most Scottish Reformers sought to link seemingly supernatural abilities to anti-Christian liaisons with the Devil, most, such as King James VI, were content with arguing that "the devil alluded

the senses of sundry simple creatures in making them believe that they saw and heard such things [as fairies] as were nothing so indeed."[285] Yet even with these assumptions, a number of the confessions referenced fairies specifically as the source of magical knowledge. For example, Isobell Strauthaquhin testified in 1597—the same year that James published his *Demonologie*—that she had learned her magical skills from her mother, who had been instructed by "ane elf man."[286]

One of the most common virtues ascribed to fairies in the early modern era was their ability to heal people and animals, and their tendency to teach the skill to humans. Several Scottish witch trials mention this quality specifically. Bessie Dunlop explained that when people in her community would come to her for help, she would ask her fairy contact, Thom Reid, "Quhat mycht help thame?" and Thom would teach her how to collect special herbs and make them into a salve that could heal people.[287] In 1588, Alesoun Piersoun also confessed to seeing "the guid nychtbouris" gathering herbs at sunrise and mixing them into salves for treatments.[288] In addition to their herbal knowledge, Piersoun's observation further emphasizes their associations with liminal times of day. She went on to describe how her fairy contact, Mr. Williame, "tauld hir of ewerie seiknes, and quhat herbis scho sould tak to hail thame, and how scho sould use thame."[289] Legends surrounding Piersoun's experience working with her most famous patient, the Bishop of St. Andrews, inspired poet Robert Sempill in 1583, and though he wrote about Piersoun's skills—"A thowsand maladeis scho hes medit"—he did not leave out her

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[285] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.

[286] Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 177.

[287] Bessie Dunlop NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 53. Trans: "When various persons came to her to seek help…she went and asked at Thom, What my help them?" and "Thom gave her, out of is own hand, a thing like the root of a beet and told her to boil it and make a salve/ointment out of it…and give it to seik persons, and they would mend."

[288] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 163. Trans: "she saw the good neighbors make their salves/ointments…and that they gathered their herbs before the sun rises."

[289] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 164. Trans: Mr. Williame told her of every sickness, and what herbs she should take to heal them, and how she should use them."

fairy familiar and the supernatural support she benefited from.[290] Forty years later, Stein

Maltman was asked where he learned his healing skills from, to which he "Confessed that he had

[learned] thame of the fairye folk."[291] All of these testimonies, and several others, suggest that

many encounters with fairies yielded positive results for people plagued by illness–including

family members and livestock.[292]

In addition to—and sometimes in conjunction with—healing, many early modern Scots

believed fairies had the gift of prophecy. In King James' *Demonologie*, which takes the form of a

Socratic dialogue, the character Philomathes asks about accused witches "foretelling the death of

sundry persons" after their associations with members of the fairy realm.[293] Though James again

dismissed the true existence of fairies, arguing that "the devil may prophesy to them when he

deceives their imaginations in that sort," several witch testimonies credit fairies, rather than the

devil, for their knowledge and foresight.[294] Thanks to their fairy contacts, Christian Lewingstoun

could foretell the gender of unborn babies while Issobell Haldane foretold the term of people's

lives.[295] Bessie Dunlop recalled how disease once plagued her family, and Thom Reid warned

her that her baby, cow, and two sheep would die, but that her husband would recover fully from

his illness.[296] When Elspeth Reoch met two fairy men near a loch, one told her "he wald lerne

her to ken...only thing she wald desyre," while the Fairy Queen promised Andro Man that he

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[290] Sempill, "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe," 365. More from Sempill on Pierson's healing: "Ane Williame Symsone, hir mother brother/Whome fra scho he's resavit a buike/For ony herb scho lykis to luike/It will instruct hir how to tak it/In sawis and sillubs how to mak it/With stones that mekle mair can doe/In leich craft, whair scho layis them toe/A thowsand maladeis scho hes medit/Now being tane and apprehendit…"; For comparisons between fairies and familiar spirits, see: Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Brighton [England]: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 283-305.
[291] Stein Maltman, NAS, CH2/722/5.
[292] The trials of Janet Boyman, Issobell Strauthqhuin, Christian Lewingstoun, and Isobell Haldane also make reference to healing.
[293] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[294] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[295] Christian Lewingstoun, JC2/3, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 26; Issobell Haldane, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 353.
[296] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 52.

"suld knaw all thingis."[297] Besides foretelling the outcomes of disease, Thom also used his skills

to help Dunlop locate lost items.[298] In bestowing their magical knowledge on these people, the

fairies were helping them in several ways. Most directly, their healing and prophecy skills helped

their human contacts prevent or foresee their own illnesses and those of their family. Less

obviously, however, these fairy skills allowed women and men to develop reputations as cunning

folk, a title that signified a specialized knowledge for healing and earned them a living amongst

the members of their community who sought help. These reputations as magical practitioners

often spread beyond their communities and lead to dangerous accusations of witchcraft and

sorcery.

Despite those long-term consequences, the fairies in these trial testimonies do appear

generally helpful in nature, and witch trial confessions are not the only early modern sources that

show fairies offering services to humans. Indeed, Brownies interacted with humans under this

system of reciprocity. According Rev. John Brand's 1701 travel narrative describing his trip to

the Orkney Islands:

> Not above 40 or 50 years ago, almost every Family had a *Brouny* or evil Spirit so called
> which served them, to whom they have a Sacrifice for his Service; as when they Churned
> their Milk, they took a part thereof and sprinckled every corner of the House with it for
> Brounies use, likewise when they Brewed, they had a stone which they called *Brounies
> Stone*, wherein there was a little hole, into which they poured some Wort for a Sacrifice
> to Brouny.[299]

Rev. Brand detailed the mutually beneficial relationship between humans and Brownies.

Traditionally, Brownies would help with household chores in exchange for food or a portion of

whatever they help produce. This does, however, appear to be more common among the Scottish

Highlands and Islands, as George Sinclair's 1685 treatise, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*,

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[297] Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 188; Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 119.

[298] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 55.

[299] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney,* 168-169. An almost identical Brownie description appeared two years later in Martin's travel narrative, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 391.

rhetorically asks, "what was more frequent in [Highland] houses than Brownies who they employed in many services."[300] In the case of Brownies, however, their generosity only extends as far as their payment; for once their patrons stopped providing them with sacrifices and offerings, they "vanished quite."[301] Thus, Brownies offer insight into a very practical and methodical sort of fairy morality in which the fairy and human are equal partners in a system of *quid pro quo*. Interestingly, Brownies offer humans a more physically tangible form of benevolent exchange than most fairies do; cleaning can be viewed and measured, unlike healing, which cannot always been seen and is therefore difficult to prove one way or the other. Like humans, however, this predictability practiced by Brownies did not necessarily reflect the behavioral qualities of the wider fairy population.

Rather than a continual system of reciprocity, Andro Man's encounters with the Fairy Queen resulted in reward. In the case of Andro Man, his small service to the Fairy Queen resulted in substantial rewards and continued relations with the fairy realm:

> …a woman, quhom thow callis the Quene of Elphen…was delyverit of a barne [at thy motheris hous]…at quhilk tyme thow being bot a young boy, bringand in watter, [and] that devilische spreit, the Quene of Elphene, promesit to the, that thow suld knaw all thingis, and suld help and cuir all sort of seikness…and that thow suld be well interteneit…[302]

Man's willingness to help the Fairy Queen in her time of need earned him her gratitude and favor, which she repaid in kind. After that, Man reported several other encounters with the Fairy Queen—which will be discussed later—but reported that the Fairy Queen "promeist to do him gude."[303] In addition to rewarding humans with magical abilities, several sources suggest that

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[300] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 213.
[301] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 391.
[302] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 119. Trans: "…a woman, whom you call the Queen of Elfland, was delivered of a child [at your mother's house]…at which time you being but a young boy, brought in water, [and] that devilish spirit, the Queen of Elfland, promised that you would know all things and would help and cure all sorts of sickness…and that you would be well entertained…"
[303] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 119. Trans: "promised to do him good."

they may even offer protection for those in their service.[304] Even King James VI argued, "to the witches [who serve them], [they may] be a colour of safety for them that ignorant magistrates may not punish them for it."[305] This suggests that James, an avid proponent of witch-hunting, believed that a number of witches managed to avoid persecution because they were under the protection of the fairies—or more specifically, the Devil—despite the already devastating tenacity behind the Scottish witch hunts. Unfortunately, any fairy protection afforded to the witches studied in this project did not extend far enough to save them from the hangman's noose. Most of the witches used in this project were hanged in front of a crowd before their bodies were burnt to cleanse them of their sin, as early modern links between fairies and the Devil meant they were punished for religious crimes in addition to common *malifices*.[306]

Yet despite the various benefits fairies often brought, patterns behind early modern encounters between fairies and witches suggest fairies also had self-serving interests in forging relationships with humans. In this pre-Enlightenment era, accounts detailing initial encounters with fairies reveal that the approach was almost always instigated by the elusive creatures, rather than by humans. In his *Demonologie*, James VI discusses "whether these kinds of spirits may only appear to witches, or if they may also appear to any other," which suggests that the fairies

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[304] Issobell Watsonne, CH2/722/2; Issobell Sinclair, *Marwick Collection* D31/4/3; Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 142.

[305] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.

[306] Both Christina Larner and Brian Levack place considerable emphasis on this distinction. The use of witchcraft in a secular, or "popular," crime usually involved the use of magic or sorcery to cause *maleficia*, or wicked deeds, such as the illness of people, crops, or animals, within a witch's neighborhood. This type of crime deeply concerned the laity, who suffered the results of such deeds. But rather than immediately putting the offender on trial simply for maleficia, the leaders of the Kirk often tried to find further infractions and raise the stakes. Clergymen would attempt to use these deeds as evidence by which to make accusations for religious, or 'educated,' crimes. This type of crime was much more serious to the Kirk, which tended to play a role in most witch trials. Religious crimes ostensibly involved the subject renouncing their Christian baptism and entering into a pact with the Devil, whose biddings they would then carry out. Though both types of witchcraft crimes were punishable by death, magistrates usually sentenced secular criminals to be hung, while they often called for religious criminals to be burned after their hanging, so as to absolve their body of sin. In this case, as was common in the early modern era, the concerns of the higher-class clergy regarding witchcraft proved to be more important than those of the average laymen. For more on this see: Levack, *Witch-hunting in Scotland*; Christina Larner and Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft and religion: the politics of popular belief* (New York, NY: Blackwell, 1984); Larner, *Enemies of God*.

have the power to reveal themselves only to those of their choosing.[307] The selective nature of this ability emphasizes their power in determining not only which individuals they associate with, but also the conditions and parameters under which those encounters occur. A number of the witch trials used in this project feature either the exact words, "thair came to yow [or her] a man…" or else something very similar indicating that it was the fairy who somehow instigated the initial encounter.[308] Historian Emma Wilby argues for strong similarities between the two types of spirits, suggesting, "there must have been considerable confusion between the two…particularly on a popular level."[309] While I would contend that this 'confusion' over terminology is a result of lumping together the English and Scottish witch trials—which were very different in nature and revealed distinct religious and cultural identities—Wilby still reveals intriguing patterns about the nature of fairy encounters. She observes how the initial encounter "is often described as spontaneous," but goes on to reveal that the individual was usually "in some sort of trouble, when the spirit suddenly appeared and offered to help."[310] Of course, this suggests that though the encounter may have seemed spontaneous to the individual experiencing it, it was clearly well timed by the fairies. They often took advantage of vulnerable humans and in a moment of need—whether related to health, finances, or something else entirely—provided an enticing solution.

However, as Wilby explains, by accepting their help people sometimes entered into a contractual relationship with the fairies, whether explicit or implicit, which required some services in return. These may include spiritual demands such as renouncing their Christianity and/or offering their soul to the fairies—both of which emphasize the religious underpinnings

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[307] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.

[308] Among the trial records that invoke these, or very similar phrases, are: Janet Boyman (1572), Bessie Dunlop (1576), Alesoun Pierson (1588), Man (1598), Elspeth Reoch (1616), and Issobell Haldane (1623).

[309] Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 283.

[310] Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 288.

and conflict within early modern Scottish fairy culture. The latter may also help account for the prominence of deceased humans in Fairyland—along with the differences in how each realm perceives and experiences the passing of time, as discussed in Chapter 1. The contractual nature of many fairy-human relationships places further significance on the fairies' ability to reveal themselves to humans whenever they chose, as it allowed them to capitalize on individuals in their times of need to serve their own interests. While this pattern of vulnerability is not true among all the witch cases involving fairies, it certainly affects the context in which we should interpret the benevolent services they provide. Henderson and Cowan assert that "there was [usually] a price to pay for these gifts, and what initially might have seemed a welcome boon [sometimes] turned into a dangerous liaison."[311] Despite the benefits that associations with fairies could bring, such encounters risked unpredictable and often precarious outcomes.

Malevolence

Beyond wanting to avoid any debts to the fairies, most early modern Scots knew they were just as likely to incur the fairies' wrath as they were to garner their favor. For example, despite the many benefits Alesoun Piersoun enjoyed from her associations with Mr. William Sympsoune, her fairy contact–and by extension the fairy realm– she had to beware of the consequences of displeasing the fairies. In 1588, Piersoun confessed to being fearful of the fairies, for when she told others of her encounters with them, they grew upset and punished her, leaving her bedridden for twenty weeks. During that time, they would come visit her in her room, and "promesit taht scho sould newir want, gif scho wald be faithfull and keip promeis; bot,

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[311] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief*, 84.

gif scho wald speik and tell of thame and thair doings, thay sould martir hir."[312] Piersoun's

mistake in revealing her knowledge about the fairies to others incurred their vengence, and she

was not the only one to discover how easy it was to offend early modern Scottish fairies.

Legends surrounding Rev. Robert Kirk's death—or disappearance—also suggest that he was

punished by the fairies for revealing their customs and qualities in his treatise, *A Secret*

Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies, which existed in manuscript form at the time of his

death but would have likely been published had he lived longer.[313] Furthermore, when Bessie

Dunlop's fairy contact, Thom Reid, invited her to go with him to Fairyland, where he "suld make

hir far better nor euer sche was," she turned him down, explaining that she could not leave her

husband and children.[314] Upon hearing this, "Thom began to be verrie crabit with hir, and said,

'Gif swa sche thoucht, sche wald get lytill gude of him.'"[315] These are just some of the

descriptions of how people invoked punishment or abuse from the fairies for making decisions

and actions that went against the fairies' desires.

Meanwhile, Rev. John Brand and Martin Martin's respective travel narratives describe

what often occurred when the Brownies' mutually beneficial relationships with Scottish families

went sour. In each account, the individuals stopped offering their Brownies any sacrifice when

the creatures voiced their displeasure about the new Reformed religion that had swept across

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[312] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 163. Trans: "…they become very fearsome sometimes, and terrified her severely, and she cried when they'd come…and when she told others [of her last encounters with the fairies], they came to her and scolded her, saying she should be worse handled than before; and that after that they took the [not sure what 'haill poistie' means], in such a way, that she was bedridden twenty weeks afterward: And that many times they would come sit beside her [in bed], and promised that she would never want [for anything], if she would be faithful [to them] and keep that promise; but, if she continues to speak and tell [others] about them and their activities, they would kill her…"

[313] Some sources that reference these legends: Sir Walter Scott, *Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830), 160; David Baird Smith, "Mr. Robert Kirk's Note-Book," *The Scottish Historical Review* 18 (1921): 237; Stewart Sanderson, "A Prospect of Fairyland," *Folklore* 75 (1964): 3-5.

[314] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 53. Trans: "…should make her far better [i.e., happier, and more powerful/skilled] than she ever was."

[315] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 53. Trans: "Thom began to become very angry with her, and said, 'If that's what she thought, she would get little good [and help] from him."

Scotland. Though the Brownies in both accounts eventually left the families they had served, presumably to find work elsewhere, they did so in vengeful protest:

> …[an old man, feeling he was] being better instructed from that Book [the Bible], which was Brounies Eye-sore and the object of his wrath, [decided] when he Brewed, he would not suffer any Sacrifice to be given to Brouny, whereupon the 1st and 2nd Brewings were spilt and for no use, tho the Wort wrought well, yet in a little time it left off working and grew cold…"[316]

Martin's narrative depicted similar sabotages, but according to both sources, the Brownies could not sustain their punishments without any sacrifices, and eventually "vanished quite [completely], and troubled them no more."[317] Thom Reid also punished Bessie Dunlop when she refused to renounce her baptism and "denye hir Christindome."[318] Though she still "promeist to be leill and trew to him in onye thing sche culd do," Thom became "sumthing angrie with hir that (sche) wald nocht grant to that quhilk he spak," making it unclear whether he was more outraged at her refusal to abandon her Christian faith, or her general disobedience and disregard for his wishes.[319] Either way, fairies were a force to be reckoned with, and quick to not only revoke whatever help they offered humans who disobeyed or wrongfully crossed them, but to rebuke those humans as well. Recent scholars like Diane Purkiss, Lizanne Henderson, and Edward J. Cowan have emphasized the malevolent characteristics of early modern fairies, and while they may be right to do so, these particular patterns of vengeance and retribution suggest that fairies' emotions in many ways mimicked those of humans.[320]

Early modern accounts of fairy activity also proved the commonly held conception that any person, or being, which had the power to heal and remove illness, also had the power cause

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[316] Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney,* 169.
[317] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 392.
[318] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 52.
[319] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 52. Trans: "[she] promised to be loyal and true to him in any way she could…[but Thom was still] extremely angry with her that she would not grant what he asked of her."
[320] Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*; Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief.*

it. This notion stemmed from beliefs that health, like fortune, operated on a spectrum, and could not disappear into thin air. Under this ideology, for illness to be removed from one living thing, it had to then be relocated to another. This is one of the notions that caused many witch-hunters to target healers just as fervently as those more openly associated with dark magic. The early modern sources describe how Scottish fairies were often just as likely to cause people—or their livestock—illness, as they were to heal them. When intending the former, fairies were notorious for employing special arrows known as 'elf-shot.' Robert Kirk provided one of many early modern descriptions of elf-shot:

> Their Weapons are most what solid earthly Bodies, nothing of Iron, but much of Stone, like to yellow soft Flint Spa, shaped like a barbed Arrow-head, but flung like a Dairt, with great Force. These Armes (cut by Airt and Tools it seems beyond humane) have something of the Nature of Thunderbolt subtilty, and mortally wounding the vital Parts without breaking the Skin; of which Wounds I have observed in Beasts, and felt them with my Hands.[321]

Kirk's narrative goes on to tell the story of a man who wrestled with some fairies. Thinking he had the upper hand, the man began to laugh "since there was no appearance of Danger…when unexpectedly his Enemy leapt in at his Side, and stab'd him with their Weapons…usually said to be [called] Elf-shot."[322] Thirty years earlier, in her 1662 testimony, Jonet Morisone described the effects of elf-shot and explained the differences between that and another fairy power known as 'blasting' or 'elf-blast':

> Againe being inquired quhat difference was betwix shooting and blasting sayes that quhen they are shott ther is no recoverie for it and if the shott be in the heart they died presently bot if it be not at the heart they will die in a while...and that blasting is a whirlwinde that the fayries raises about that persone quhich they intend to wrong and that tho ther were tuentie present yet it will harme none bot him quhom they were set for...and that all that whirlwind gathers in the body till one place if it be taken in time it is the easier healed and if they gett not meanes they will shirpe away.[323]

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[321] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 19-20.

[322] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 21.

[323] Jonet Morisone, *Highland Papers*, 27. Trans: "Asked again what the difference was between 'shooting' and 'blasting' [Morisone] says that when someone is shot there is no recovery/remedy for it and if the shot is in the heart they die immediately but if it is not in the heart they will survive for a while but they will ultimately die from it, while blasting is a whirlwind that the fairies raise around whomever they intend to wrong and even if there are

Several accounts mention the whirlwind associated with fairy blast. For example, in 1572 Janet Boyman claimed that she had "sene twentie tymes the evill blast, [which brought a] quhirland about the [target]."[324] Stein Maltman, a charmer who had learned healing techniques from the fairies, confessed in 1628 to having treated those who "had gotten ane blast of evill wind."[325] He also recounted having placed an elf arrow into boiling water as part of ritual to prevent the effects of elf-shot.[326] Elf-shot or fairy blast are mentioned in the majority of the witch trials that reference fairies, emphasizing the hazards that fairies posed as well as the level of awareness about these dangers that existed among the popular communities.

Perhaps the most common and seemingly malevolent behaviors associated with fairies was their propensity for abducting humans and taking them away to Fairyland. It is important to note that not all of the humans who ventured into Elfland in the early modern era did so against their will. Some people journeyed there on purpose. Issobell Gowdie testified that she went into "the downie hillis, and got meat ther from the qwein of fearrie mor then I could eat."[327] Of course, in Gowdie's case she was already in full service of both the fairies and the Devil, so it is not surprising that she would have traveled to Fairyland of her own accord. Others, like Bessie Dunlop, were invited—or strongly encouraged—by fairies, but were not actually abducted. Though Thom Reid expressed displeasure when Dunlop chose not to join him in Fairyland that

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twenty people present it will only harm the person it was intended for, which can be healed two ways either with herbs or by charming, and the whirlwind gathers in the body in one place so if it's caught and treated in time it's easier to heal but if not they will wither away and die from it."

[324] Janet Boyman (1572): NAS, JC26/1/67. Trans: "[she had] seen the evil blast twenty times, that is to say the wind with such a manner that it caused a whirlwind about the (either 'stray person' or 'straw') and at which time there is [always] an evil spirit or wicked thing nearby"

[325] Stein Maltman, NAS, CH2/722/5.

[326] Stein Maltman, NAS, CH2/722/5. Trans: "he brought in some south-running water and (boiled?) it in a pan and put an elf arrow stone in the water because it was a remedy against the fairies' elf-shot"

[327] Issobell Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie,* 40.

resulted in her punishment, he did not resort to capturing her and carrying her there by force.[328] It

is unclear why Dunlop was allowed to refuse a visit to Fairyland, unless her case is interpreted

through a more Reformation-influenced lens, in which case perhaps the fairies represented the

temptations employed by the Devil and his minions to coax wandering souls away from God.

Still, while Dunlop's case certainly has religious undertones, it was likely not a good enough

reason to spare her from the fairies' more typically proactive approach. Considering Dunlop was

among the first witches persecuted in Scotland, her reluctance may have helped prompt the

fairies to employ more forceful methods in their efforts to bring humans to Elfland.

In fact, Dunlop's fate appears to be among the outliers, as most early modern sources

suggest that the fairies took people away to Fairyland without giving them any choice. Christian

Lewingstoun, for example, "affermit that hir dochter was tane away with the Farie-folk," while

Alesoun Pierson confessed that "scho could nocht say reddelie how lang scho wes with

thame."[329] Still, in these cases the captured humans were eventually returned home; the same

could not be said for everyone, as Piersoun claimed that "scho had freindis in that court quhilk

wes of hir awin blude, quha had gude acquaintance of the Quene of Elphane," and had spent

some time away in Fairyland with them.[330] Her testimony makes it unclear whether these

relations of hers are ghosts or still alive, and whether or not they are in Fairyland against their

will—though their good rapport with the Fairy Queen may offer a hint. While these accounts

seem harmless, the popular ballad titled "Tam Lin" presents one of the more dangerous

outcomes for those captured by fairies: becoming a human sacrifice. Though the ballad was not

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[328] Bessie Dunlop, NAS, JC2/1, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 53.
[329] Christian Lewingstoun, JC2/3, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 352-353. Trans: "affirmed that her daughter was taken away with the Fairy-folk"; Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 162, Trans: "she could not readily say how long she was with them."
[330] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 162. Trans: "she had friends in that court who were of her own blood [relations], who were well acquainted with the Fairy Queen, and [she would spend] some time with them [in Fairyland] and other time away [from Fairyland]."

recorded until 1792, it was popular in oral forms as early as the mid-sixteenth century. In the

story, the young Janet stumbles upon the fairy man Tam Lin in the forest and falls in love with

him. He explains that he was actually "an earthly knight" who was abducted by the fairies, and

explains that life among the fairies is not so bad except for one thing:

> 'When we were frae the hunting come,
> That frae my horse I fell;
> The Queen o Fairies she caught me,
> In yon green hill to dwell.
>
> 'And pleasant is the fairy land,
> But, an eerie tale to tell,
> Ay at the end of seven years
> We pay a tiend to hell;
> I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
> I'm feard it be mysel.[331]

Popular early modern conceptions held that the fairies had to pay a tithe, or tax, to the Devil

every seven years. According to Alesoun Piersoun, her fairy contact Mr. William Sympsoune

warned her not to allow herself to be "tane away with thame agane; for the teynd of thame gais

ewerie yeir to hell," and he clearly did not want Piersoun to be used to pay it.[332] Some Reformers

argued that this narrative provided further links between fairies and the Devil, ultimately

reinforcing the notion that he was their patron. Alternatively, perhaps the sacrificial tax was what

allowed the fairies to maintain their autonomy from the Devil. Though he did not reference the

Devil specifically, King James VI also mentioned, "how they had a teind and duty, as it were, of

all goods."[333] Whatever the reason, the fairies apparently preferred to pay that tithe with a

human, rather than sacrificing one of their own.[334] Henderson and Cowan describe the growing

resentment the Scottish laity had toward the tithe that required ten percent of everyone's income

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[331] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 342.
[332] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 164. Trans: "taken away by them again, for their teind to Hell is required every year."
[333] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 418-419.
[334] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief,* 81.

be donated to the increasingly bloated Church coffers. They suggest "the idea that the fairies had to sacrifice one tenth of their kind to the fiends of Hell on an annual basis was therefore one which would strike chords of sympathy and terror alike in the hearts of the human population."[335] While many Scots may have identified with the fairies' predicament, they were likely in no hurry to lend a helping hand, for in addition to being separated from family and community for a time, fairy abduction also offered the dangerous possibility that one might be sacrificed to the Devil. Perhaps these stories about fairies capturing humans served as cautionary tales, as these victims were often out alone, usually at liminal times or places.

Fairies also abducted people if they needed a human's service, and while this sometimes included men, early modern popular tradition suggests that the fairies more frequently needed the services of women—particularly new mothers. According to Rev. Robert Kirk:

> Women are yet alive who tell they were taken away when in Child-bed to nurse Fairie Children…but she nather perceaves any Passage out [of the fairy child's chambers], nor sees what those People doe in other Rooms of the Lodging. When the Child is wained, the Nurse dies, or is conveyed back, or gets it to her choice to stay there.[336]

In 1647, Barbria Parish claimed that when her neighbor would not agree to go with the fairies, who needed someone to nurse one of their offspring, the fairies punished her by killing or abducting her infant child—it is not immediately clear which.[337] Literary scholar Carole G. Silver emphasizes how "women were especially vulnerable as brides or after childbirth, as they underwent periods of liminality or transition."[338] There are no firm explanations as to why the fairies needed humans to nurse their children rather than doing it themselves, but Kirk's account emphasizes the extent to which the fates of these women were at the complete discretion—or

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[335] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief*, 81.
[336] Kirk and Lang, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 13.
[337] Barbria Parish, CH2/467/1.
[338] Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples,* 167.

whim—of their fairy captors. This paints a greedy and dispassionate image of the fairy folk, and their added magical abilities amplify these characterizations.

Some scholars, like Emma Wilby, argue that fairies abducted people in order to capture human souls, and consider it part of the contractual agreement humans enter into in exchange for fairy help.[339] This concept parallels similar bargains with the Devil—or his demonic minions—that commonly appeared in witch testimonies, contributing to some of the religious undertones in early modern fairy culture. The differences in how time passes between the fairy and human realms make it difficult to say, but it appears that fairy abductions consisted of joining the fairy ranks as a ghost after death—such as Bessie Dunlop's fairy Thom Reid, or Alesoun Pierson's Mr. William Sympsoune, among others—or spending a certain amount of time in Fairyland while living. While there are similar motifs between demonic and fairy encounters, as well as evidence that suggests fairies had a keen interest in hijacking human souls, I have not found evidence specifically linking these abductions with any sort of contractual obligation. Such a contractual agreement might erase the need for forceful abductions. Perhaps the fairies opted for forceful abductions under the assumption that their human partners would not willingly fulfill the bargain—or possibly they did so for the sake of convenience.

Recent research proposes a third category in consideration of early modern visits to Fairyland—those that occurred in a mental and spiritual sense, rather than physical. Inspired by Carlo Ginzburg's work on shamanistic cults—specifically the "*benandanti*" in northern Italy and their battles against witches, revealed through records from the Roman Inquisition—Julian Goodare has recently observed a similar folk custom in early modern Scotland.[340] According to Goodare, a cult identity existed in Scotland known as the "seely wights"—translated as "blessed

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[339] Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," 290.
[340] Ginzburg, T*he Night Battles*; Goodare, "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland."

beings" or "magical beings"—who "engag[ed] in spirit…rituals involving flight to, or with, uncanny beings."[341] He asserts that "there were women in early-sixteenth-century Scotland who believed themselves to enter into trances and to fly out at night, on swallows, to join the 'seely wights'…[who were] female spirits of some kind…not fairies, but probably rather like them."[342] Pulling from several witch trial testimonies, theological treatises, and poetry, Goodare analyzes the themes associated with the seely wights to reveal how "ideas about trance experiences and nocturnal spirit flights were a matter of shared cultural knowledge" in early modern Scotland.[343]

Several of his sources are used in this project, including several witch trial testimonies, poetry from Robert Sempill and Alexander Montgomerie, and King James VI's *Demonologie*, which alludes to "sundry witches…[claiming] they have been transported with the fairy…[with] their senses being dulled and, as it were, asleep."[344] Piersoun, for example, confessed that "scho wald be in hir bed haill and feir, and wald nocht wit quhair scho wald be or the morne," while Issobell Haldane testified that, "lying in hir bed, scho wes taikin furth…[and] wes caryit to ane hill syde…[which] oppynnit and scho enterit in."[345] Goodare also offers several possibilities about the duration of the cult and its apparent decline, but his revelations about the associations between the fairies and the seely wights—though distinct beings in the early modern era—may very well have merged over the centuries and are perhaps responsible for the nineteenth-century perceptions that fairies could fly.[346] Whether or not the seely wights are responsible for fairies sprouting wings in the Victorian era, Goodare's work certainly sheds light on a common motif associated with early modern fairy culture. In addition to revealing another perceived method of

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[341] Goodare, "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," 198.
[342] Goodare, "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," 204.
[343] Goodare, "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," 216.
[344] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 419.
[345] Alesoun Pierson, NAS, JC2/2, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland,* 162; Issobell Haldane, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 358.
[346] For Goodare's discussion on the 'duration of the cult,' see "The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland," 213-216.

abduction, his findings offer yet another instance where fairies and their activities assume an air of liminality, as they are both similar and dissimilar to the seely wights. The notion of traveling with the seely wights—among the many terms for Scottish fairies—during trances also suggests a sort of liminal experience between mental and physical boundaries.

One of the most iconic and legendary aspects of fairy culture emerges from these popular stories about the dangers of fairy abduction, with a sole focus on the abduction of children, rather than adults. Henderson and Cowan allude to "something of an obsession with the phenomenon of changelings, [that is to say,] of human babies stolen by the fairies who left fairy children in their place." They added that in the early modern era "such beliefs were among the most commonly held and widespread of traditions, found not only throughout Europe but all over the world."[347] The term changeling is often used interchangeably to refer to both the stolen human child residing in Fairyland and the fairy replacement left in the human world. The nuances of these semantics can make it difficult to differentiate, but it is clear that notions about changelings were rife in early modern Scotland, even permeating into the ranks of the nobility. Alexander Montgomerie, one of King James VI's favorite court poets, echoed the worries of many parents when he described a night-time fairy jaunt on Halloween, which included witches and demons, and revealed that the community "fand ane monstour on the morne."[348] Montgomerie's *Flyting*, like his patron's *Demonologie*, appears to reflect some of the beliefs and fears common among the Scottish masses.

Exhibiting a proactive approach among the laity, many sources reveal ritual practices used to either cure or prevent changelings in the community. In 1572, Janet Boyman was accused of "continually promoting yourself for approximately the last 23 years as a wise woman

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[347] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief*, 95.
[348] Montgomerie and Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, 144.

who could heal various sicknesses, specifically babies that are abducted by fairies [and replaced with changelings]."[349] It seems that several early modern Scottish communities found themselves in need of healers who specialized in changelings, as Issobell Haldane confessed that several mothers "askit [her to] help [their] bairne[s] that wes ane scharge."[350] In terms of preventing and curing changelings, Stein Maltman's 1628 confession described one of the rituals employed for this purpose:

> He counselled David Ewin…to tak the bairne out in the nyt at ellevin or twell houres and lay his hand upon the bairnes head and directed him to draw his sword and schaik it about the bairne for said Stein the fairye wold not cume [quhair] they saw drawin sworid[is].[351]

Maltman's ritual incorporates the temporal liminality associated with fairies and is not harmful to the child because it is a preventative measure. However, in his 1703 travel account on the *Western Islands of Scotland*, Martin Martin explained a custom requiring that fire be carried around women after they give birth, and "likewise about Children until they be Christened."[352] Historian Keith Thomas observed that these notions of changelings actually reinforced both attentive parenting—lest the child be snatched away during a moment's neglect—and religious rites, as many considered children most vulnerable to abduction in the liminal period between birth and baptism.[353] Though Martin assured readers that the practice is in decline, he still chose to record the purpose behind these rituals:

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[349] Janet Boyman (1572): NAS, JC26/1/67. Original Scots: "continewalie be in the space of xxiiij yeiris bypast or thairbye gevin your self forth ane wyiss woman That culd mend diverss seiknessis and namelie bairnis that ar tane away with the farye."

[350] Issobell Haldane, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 354. Trans: "asked [her to] help [their] children that was sickly/shriveled" Note: the term 'scharge' is defined in the Dictionary of Scots Language (http://www.dsl.ac.uk) as meaning "shriveled from infirmity," "sickly child," and "tiny mischievous creature." This term is often identified as being synonymous with 'changeling,' which Henderson and Cowan explain in *Scottish fairy belief*, 96.

[351] Stein Maltman, NAS, CH2/722/5. Trans: "He counseled David Ewin…to take his child out at 11:00 or 12:00 at night and his hand upon the child's head and directed him to draw his sword and shake it over the child, for Stein said the fairies do not come where they see drawn swords."

[352] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 117.

[353] Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic*, 731.

[Those residents] that were of a more agreeable temper, told me the fire-round was an effectual means to preserve both the Mother and the Infant from the power of evil Spirits, who are ready at such times to do mischief, and sometimes carry away the Infant; and when they get them once in their possession, return them poor meager Skeletons; and these Infants are said to have voracious Appetites, constantly craving for meat. In this case it was usual with those who believed that their Children were thus taken away, to dig a Grave in the Fields upon Quarter Day, and there to lay the Fairy Skeleton till next Morning; at which time they Parents went to the Place where they doubted not to find their own Child instead of this Skeleton.[354]

Like others, Martin's account also reflects the seasonal shifts popular within fairy culture. While the preventative 'fire-rounding' ritual is not immediately harmful to either the mother or human child, most of the rituals prescribed to oust the fairy changeling after the exchange has been made are.

There are several accounts of infants who were considered changelings having to undergo harmful, and sometimes-fatal rituals. For example, Margaret Dicksone would pass the child over or through fire several times to identify changelings, one of whom she claimed was "ane hundredd yeare[s] old."[355] Meanwhile, Issobell Watsonne claimed her child had been exchanged for a changeling after she refused help from the fairies. In an attempt to get her own child back, she opted to starve the changeling, throw it over the fire, and eventually promised her personal service to the fairies if they returned her child.[356] Though some of these rituals certainly resulted in the child's death, Henderson and Cowan remind us "the expectation [and ultimate goal] was that the shock would drive out the fairy and restore the human infant."[357] Devastating as these stories are, they emphasize the extent to which these early modern communities believed these babies were actually fairies, as well as the lengths they would go to rescue their own children from Fairyland.

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[354] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 117-118.
[355] Trial of Margaret Dicksone, CH2/185/5.
[356] Issobell Watsonne, CH2/722/2.
[357] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief*, 99.

Similar to traditions about fairy abductions in general, several theories have emerged about why people in this era believed fairies targeted babies and young children so frequently. However, these theories come mainly from contemporary scholars, as the early modern sources do little in the way of suggesting why fairies took children so often. This suggests that early modern Scots were more concerned with figuring out how to prevent and cure this phenomenon, rather than determining the purpose or motivation behind it. This likely reflects early modern Scots' unwillingness to become so inquisitive about the fairy folk that it invoked their wrath. Instead, early modern Scots opted to accept changelings as a possible outcome and search for ways to avoid or fix it.

Notably, many scholars have argued that notions of changelings allowed early modern Scots to explain physical or behavioral deformities that could not yet be explained by science. Susan Schoon Eberly, a medical scholar, notes that the emotions of denial, guilt, and anger associated with having a child with some sort of physical defect—which physicians still observe today—lend themselves to the changeling narrative. These feelings of denial create the belief that "This can't be *our* child; our child [must have been] stolen away," while a combination of guilt over the loss of *their* child and the anger at the forces responsible for the exchange are often "rationalized into an attempt to either force the changeling to reveal its true nature, or to force its fairy parents to return the original child."[358] More recently, medical historians C.F. Goode and Tim Stainton also emphasized this "bereavement model" in their research suggesting that in addition to physical defects, intellectual disabilities also play a role in changeling mythology.[359] Eberly also mentions the guilt, both internal and external, that historical and contemporary

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[358] Eberly, "Fairies and the Folklore of Disability: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy," 61.
[359] C. F. Goodey and Tim Stainton, "Intellectual disability and the myth of the changeling myth," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Science*s 37 (2001): 224.

parents alike often experience with the arrival of a child with such defects.[360] Although now this

guilt is typically linked to a woman's health-related practices during her pregnancy and the

genetic make-up of both parents, Henderson and Cowan explain that in the early modern era,

common theological views held that "such children existed…due to the sins of the parents."[361]

Though discussions about changelings shifted from theological to medical by the Victorian era,

Purkiss concludes that "fairies [and changelings] were a way of thinking and talking about child

health and child illness, and the powerful feelings of ownership, love and fear that such ill

children could cause" in the early modern period.[362] The changeling tradition also contributes to

the idea that fairy culture served as cautionary tales, in this case warning against leaving

newborn babies unattended and therefore vulnerable to abduction. Whatever social and societal

forces reinforced the changeling phenomenon, the abduction of children was the most sinister

and feared malevolence associated with early modern fairies.

Merriment and Mischief

While these abducted children and adults were separated from their loved ones during

their time in Elfland, they often got to partake in some of the merriment and opulence famously

prevalent among the fairies. Descriptions of Fairyland in Chapter 1 hint at the lavishness that the

fairies enjoyed, and it is clear that such an affinity for splendor stems from their culture of

merriment and revelry.[363] King James VI described how many Scots believed in "such a jolly

court" where the fairies frequently held lavish banquets, and Issobell Gowdie confessed to

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[360] Eberly, "Fairies and the Folklore of Disability: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy," 61.
[361] Henderson and Cowan, *Scottish fairy belief*, 95.
[362] Purkiss, *At the bottom of the garden*, 109.
[363] In *Scottish fairy belief*, Henderson and Cowan discuss 'Activities and Pastimes of the Fairy Folk' (61-65).

participating as well.[364] Meanwhile, Martin recounted stories about how musically gifted

Brownies were, and how they could influence the talent of human musicians.[365] Of course, a love

of music went hand-in-hand with a love of dancing; Andro Man revealed how the fairy folk

"have playing and dansing quhen thay pleas," which is what drew Agnes Cairnes to go away

with them on occasion.[366] Others described the frequent dancing and festivities popular among

the fairies.[367] Diane Purkiss points out one of the appeals that this fairy lifestyle posed for

humans, stating, "they turn peasant scarcity into abundance."[368] The merriment and jovial

freedom exhibited by the fairies was likely an incredibly tempting lifestyle to the lower class

Scots who, unlike the nobility, may not have gotten the opportunity to partake in such festivities.

This appreciation for mirth sometimes extended beyond Fairyland, leading to stories

about fairies committing mischief within the human realm. For instance, Martin Martin's travel

records include stories about a Browny who would "make a shew of carrying an old Woman that

say by the fire to the door, and at last seem'd to carry her out by neck and heels, which made him

laugh heartily, and gave occasion to the rest to conclude he was mad to laugh so without

reason."[369] Meanwhile, Glasgow University professor George Sinclair recounted a tale in *Satan's*

Invisible World Discovered of villagers who frequently heard drumming at night that they

attributed to fairies. They claimed that the fairies engaged in countless other "trouble-some

tricks," including scattering an old man's clothes across the room, hiding one woman's Bible in

the fireplace, and even throwing the servant's own shoes at his head.[370] These stories emphasize

the extent to which Scots associated fairies with trickery and mischief. While these activities

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[364] James VI/I, "Demonologie," 418-19; Issobell Gowdie, *Visions of Isobel Gowdie,* 40.
[365] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 310.
[366] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 121; Agnes Cairnes, JC10/1, JC10/15/3.
[367] Cleland, "Effigies Clericorum," 59; Brand, *A Brief Description of Orkney,* 96.
[368] Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 146.
[369] Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 333.
[370] Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 61-62.

may seem malevolent on the surface, the tone of the sources suggests a more playful sort of rabble-rousing. Unlike the wicked motivations behind elf-shot and abduction, Martin and Sinclair reveal generally harmless pranks that seem primarily geared toward providing entertainment for the fairy.

Given their free-spirited nature, it is no surprise that early modern sources also reveal that fairy revelry sometimes carried over into their relationships with humans—in a sexual manner. In 1597, for example, Isobell Stauthaquhin claimed that her mother learned magical skills from "ane elf man quha lay with her."[371] Her confession is unclear about whether this occurred often, or just once, as well as whether the fairy man taught her mother fairy magic in exchange for a sexual relationship. However Elspeth Reoch's tale is less ambiguous. According to her, an encounter with two fairy men earned her the gift of second sight, but one of them returned for two nights "and wald never let her sleip [and constantly] persuading hir to let him ly with hir."[372] Though she refused at first, he struck her "dum"—or mute—for her insolence and she finally agreed. Reoch's case clearly reflects the contractual relationship that often occurred between fairies and humans, and proves that sex was among the humans' bargaining chips.

However, not all of these cases had such grim undertones, and some even produced offspring. Jonet Drever was convicted in 1615 "of the fostering of ane bairne in the hill of Westray to the fary folk…and in haveing [a] carnall deall" with them.[373] Moreover, these carnal dealings were not predicated on gender, for Andro Man famously confessed to having a long-standing sexual relationship with the Fairy Queen. According to his testimony, for thirty-two years Man had "carnall deall[s] with that devilische spreit, the Quene of Elphen, on quhom thow

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[371] Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 177.
[372] Elspeth Reoch, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 189.
[373] Jonet Drever, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 167.

begat dyveris bairnis, quhom thow hes sene synsyn."[374] Man's confession reveals his continued

devotion to the Fairy Queen, and suggests that his physical relationship with her had emotional

foundations. Though the children he fathered with her appear to have remained in Fairyland with

their mother, his testimony suggests that he was able to come and go from that realm as he

pleased, giving him frequent opportunities to see them. Purkiss argues that the fairies could

sometimes serve as avenues for talking about child abandonment in early modern Scotland.[375] It

seems the same argument could be made for discussions about illegitimate children. She also

asserts that having offspring with humans may have been a simpler method than abducting

changelings, though if this were the case there would likely be far more accounts of sexual

relations between fairies and humans, and far fewer of changelings.[376] It seems more likely that

the sexual impulses and promiscuity associated with early modern fairies is simply another

aspect of social freedom that is not only acceptable in the fairy realm, but encouraged.

Finally, there are some instances where human encounters with fairies in early modern

Scotland were passive in nature, further emphasizing the moral range ascribed to these evasive

creatures. Janet Drever, for example, confessed in 1615 to simply "haveing conversation with the

fary xxvi yeiris bygane."[377] One year later, Katherine Jones-dochter claimed that she had seen

"trowis"—'troll' was the term often used for fairies in the Scottish islands—rise out of the kirk

yard at Yule-time, but did not elaborate any more about their activities.[378] Meanwhile, though it

appears the fairies abducted Issobell Haldane, she only stayed with them three days, after which

time a fairy man "brocht hir furth [home] agane"—making her encounter far less nefarious than

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[374] Andro Man, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 119. Trans: "[you] had carnal dealings with that devilish spirit, the Queen of Elfland, by whom you begat several children, who you have seen since."
[375] Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 93-94.
[376] Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden*, 135.
[377] Jonet Drever, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, 167. Trans: "having conversations with the fairies for the past 26 years."
[378] Katherine Jones-dochter, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 106.

many.[379] Many of these anecdotes maintain the fairies' liminal nature, as a kirk yard represents a physical landscape that serves as a threshold between life and death while Yule, a non-Christian festival day celebrating the winter solstice, represents the temporal threshold between two seasons and the 12:00 hour—whether midday or midnight—serves as the transitional time between days.

Even at the height of the witch-hunting movement, some testimonies support the notion that their encounters with fairies were neither good nor evil. In 1650, Finwell Hyndman simply claimed that she went "away," presumably with the fairies, for one full day every quarter, while Grissell McCairtney testified to getting lost in "some eldridge place unknowin to hir where she saw a compne of weemen."[380] Though she acknowledged that she also saw "one cold black uglie greusome man," which is likely reference to the Devil, her encounter appears to have been completely benign despite the pressures she likely experienced from her inquisitors at a time when the witch-hunts were becoming an increasingly zealous method of Presbyterian activism. These types of cases, which only demonstrate fairy encounters and not fairy morality, are particularly important because they emphasize that fairies could—and should—not be defined by some sort of socially or religiously contrived sense of morality. These tales of moral ambiguity place the emphasis on their existence—that is, the fact that people claimed to encounter them—and less on religious affiliations, which was likely problematic for theologians like King James, who sought to demonize fairies unequivocally.

Despite the binary model of good and evil prevalent among many Protestant reformers, it appears that in the early modern period Scottish fairies could not be categorized so neatly. This

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[379] Issobell Haldane, *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, 353. Trans: "stayed there three days, from Thursday until Sunday at 12:00 (either noon or midnight, unclear which)…[after which time a fairy man] brought her back home again."

[380] Finwell Hyndman, CH2/219/1; Grissell McCairtney, JC26/26.

analysis of the various behaviors associated with the fairy folk emphasizes a broad continuum, suggesting that at any given time fairies could be helpful, harmful, or completely benign. Perhaps the capricious and enigmatic nature of early modern fairies offered people a spirit more like themselves. In a time when things were often dubbed good or evil, it is possible that the most appealing—or at least intriguing—aspect of early modern fairy culture was that people could identify with the fairies' moral range in ways they could not with other spirits, like angels and demons.

Behaviors ascribed to Victorian and early twentieth century Fairies in Scotland

Benevolence

Though nineteenth century sources reveal that the majority of the behavioral themes and elements popular in the early modern era continued into the post-Enlightenment era, some of the specialized skills associated with early modern fairies are almost completely absent in accounts from the Victorian era. Healing, probably the most common of these, is referenced only a couple times. In his 1834 description of *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, John Graham Dalyell notes briefly that fairies "were believed to be skilful in the medical art, which they sometimes imparted to mortals."[381] Sir Walter Scott, widely known for his works of historical fiction, including *Ivanhoe*, *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*, and *The Lady of the Lake*, referenced healing only in passing, as something past generations attributed to fairies.[382] While there are accounts that mention how people once believed fairies could heal a variety of diseases, it is clear that healing power was no longer a major facet in the characterizations of Victorian fairies; even where it was brought up, accounts referred to the association as something belonging to the past. Perhaps

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[381] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 538
[382] Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads* (Edinburgh: Longmans, 1821), 457-460; Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 47-50.

healing was no longer a primary concern in an age where Scots had made substantial scientific and medical progress during and after the Enlightenment. Purkiss asserts that "[b]odily health was something commonly negotiated through stories about fairies in almost every culture which had such stories" during the early modern era.[383] It seems likely that medical advances may have rendered that aspect of fairy lore irrelevant by the nineteenth century. Though there is clearly a generational memory that acknowledges that healing was once a strong motif in the canon of fairy culture, the focus had clearly shifted toward some of the other fairy elements.

The same appears to be true for notions of prophecy and second sight. Again, Sir Walter Scott referenced the skill as it related to the pieces of folklore and ballads he discussed. Nevertheless, his resolve for both printing and interpreting these stories was considerable, with Thomas the Rhymer among his most famous.[384] He links the popular tale of True Thomas, as he was colloquially called, to the historical figure Thomas of Erceldoune, and in the version printed in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Thomas is rewarded by the Fairy Queen with the gift of prophecy after he serves her for seven years:

> Syne they came on to a garden green,
> And she pu'd an apple frae a tree:
> 'Take this for thy wages, True Thomas,
> It will give the tongue that can never lie.'[385]

Apart from folkloric discussions of Thomas the Rhymer, however, nineteenth century references to prophesy within discussions about fairies was uncommon. In Andrew Lang children's fairy tale, "The Gold of Fairnilee," "an old woman remembered many tales that she had heard about some charm known to the fairies, which helped them to find things hidden, and to see through walls and stones," but this appears to be the extent of these links.[386] Perhaps, like healing,

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[383] Purkiss, *At the bottom of the garden*, 119.
[384] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 483-490.
[385] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 488.
[386] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 304.

prophecy was no longer as relevant to fairy culture because it had become part of different debates by the nineteenth century. By the middle of the century, Britain had imported Spiritualism from North America. Combined with exotic methods of fortune telling that originated in the East, this opened up new avenues for discussions about prophecy-making and clairvoyance that perhaps rendered fairies unnecessary.[387] It is possible that the decline of both the healing and prophetic motifs are linked, as Victorian Scots may have become more comfortable with the unknown in an age where illnesses were not as fatal. Whatever the reasons, these elements were not as prominent in Victorian fairy culture as during the early modern period.

However, early modern descriptions of the mutually beneficial relationship between humans and Brownies persisted in stories of the nineteenth century. Through the character of the children's nurse in "The Gold of Fairnilee," Andrew Lang explained how "a Brownie was a very useful creature to have in a house" who was "a kind of fairy-man…[that] never did anyone any harm, but he sat and warmed himself at the kitchen fire" and often tidied any mess that was left. Lang appears to have broken from early modern tradition, however, by stating "if anybody offered the Brownie any payment, even if it was only a silver penny or a new coat, he would take offence and go away."[388] Perhaps it is the ambiguity in Lang's use of the term 'payment'—it is unclear whether he referred only to monetary forms—but early modern conceptions of Brownies did involve a sacrificial offering on the part of the human patron in exchange for the fairy-man's services. Reading Lang's description, one might get the impression that the Brownie decided to help the family clean up out of the goodness of his heart, rather than as a service that required equal compensation. It may be that this nuanced interpretation of Brownies, along with his

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[387] In *At the Bottom of the Garden*, Purkiss briefly mentions the relationship between fairy culture and the rise of Spiritualism (286-287).

[388] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 255-256.

lamentation about what "a pity [it is that] there are no such bogles now!" seemed relevant at the

turn of the century when ideologies and practicalities of having household servants began to

shift. Meanwhile, folklorists J.P. Maclean and Alexander Macgregor maintained the traditional

traits associated with Brownies, as the latter noted that "even still, many in the Western Isles

believed in the existence of the 'Gruagach,' a female spectre of the class of Brownies to which

the Highland dairymaids made frequent libations of milk.[389] Yet, these publications' agenda to

reveal the antiquated 'superstitions' of Highlanders lends itself to revealing a traditional narrative

of Brownies, among other subjects.

While some beneficial elements traditionally ascribed to fairies become less important,

the Victorian proponents of fairy culture did seize on the protective motifs that King James VI

mentioned in the early modern era. Interestingly, this practice seems evenly distributed among

children's literature and sources intended for adults—overturning the notion that the creatures

were being turned into fairy godmothers for the purpose of appealing to and comforting children.

One of Andrew Lang's fairy tales, "Prince Prigio," does feature a king informing his wife of

such service:

> 'They are very old friends of our family, my dear, that's all,' the king said timidly.
> 'Often and often they have been godmothers to us. One, in particular, was most kind
> and most serviceable to Cinderella I., my own grandmother.'[390]

However, the fairy godmother symbol aimed at children is certainly not the only case of

Victorian-age Scots finding protection from the fairies. For example, Alexander MacGregor's

1901 publication on *Highland Superstitions*, describes how "the fairies were said to be very

fierce and vindictive when altercations and differences took place among themselves, and

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[389] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 16; Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 43.

[390] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 7. Here, Lang was clearly trying to tap into the increasingly popular European canon of children's fairy tales with his reference to Cinderella. It's unclear whether this was meant to be the same Cinderella made famous by Frenchman Charles Perrault in 1697 and revived in the nineteenth century by the Brothers Grimm of Germany, but it seems likely.

particularly so when enemies injured or assailed those with whom they were on friendly terms."[391] Though this comment emphasizes the fairies' vindictive nature, it explains that sometimes their vengeful behaviors were out of protection for their allies. One of the most vengeful and protective fairies in popular culture is Barrie's Tinker Bell, who was known to give Peter Pan "a loving little pinch" on occasion and saved his life by drinking his poisoned medicine—famously prompting him to call for audiences to save her by clapping their hands.[392] Though Tink's mischievous and vindictive behaviors will be addressed shortly, Barrie ascribed the pocket-sized fairy a level of devotion to her human friend that was likely unthinkable in the early modern era, but held a romantic appeal for Victorians.

One of the most famous, legendary, and hotly debated examples of popularized forms of fairy protection in Victorian Scotland lies in the Isle of Skye's Dunvegan Castle, seat of the Clan Macleod. The Fairy Flag, as it is commonly referred to, is among the clan's most treasured possessions, and the nineteenth and early twentieth century saw a slew of writers describing the flag and the various legends about its origins and how the clan came to possess it. In a history of the clan published in 1927, Rev. Canon R. C. Macleod explained, "the fairy flag is now a piece of brown silk, square in shape, and measuring about eighteen inches each way…[and] is very fragile and requires careful handling."[393] He asserted that there are three different stories about the flag, but "all agree that it was given by the fairies, with a promise that on three occasions the waving of the flag should bring the aid of the donors to save the clan in great emergencies."[394] In his two-volume account about his summertime visit to Skye, Scottish poet Alexander Smith recounted what one local man told him about the fabled flag:

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[391] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 24.
[392] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 34, 78.
[393] Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*, 195.
[394] Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*, 195.

> Well, the old people say that one of the Macleods fell in love with a fairy, and used to meet her on the green hill out there. Macleod promised to marry her; and one night the fairy gave him a green flag, telling him that, when either he or one of his race was in distress, the flag was to be waved, and relief would be certain. Three times the flag might be waved; but after the third time it might be thrown into the fire, for the power would have gone all out of it.[395]

This account roughly resembles the first one detailed by Rev. Macleod. The second story involves a member of the clan trying to cross a river, when a "fairy maiden rose from the water and opposed his passage…[and a]fter a severe struggle he overcame her, and made good passage over the river." Following his safe passage, he befriended the fairy and she ended up giving him the gift of the Fairy Flag as a banner of safety. The third tradition, and among the most popular, describes the events surrounding the birth of a new heir to the clan chief:

> There were great rejoicings at Dunvegan, and the nurse, anxious to join in the festivities, left her charge quietly sleeping in a remote and quite chamber in the castle. The blanket which was laid over the child fell off, and he awoke crying with the cold. No human help was near, but a host of fairies hovered round his cradle. They brought this fairy banner and wrapped him in it…[Later, when the nurse was sent to get the boy,] she brought him down arrayed in this mystic robe, and then as men gazed in wonder on the child and the garb he wore, their hearts were thrilled by the fairies' song which filled the room with melody, and set forth the mighty power of the flag which should save the clan three times in days of dire need.[396]

Each of these stories features several common fairy elements, including the liminal meeting places on the hill or river and the fairy music, which appears in the first and third versions. The most intriguing, however, is the complete reversal of the popular changeling motif in the final tale. The story sets itself up with all the usual elements of changeling tales, but instead of stealing or swapping the momentarily neglected child, the fairies comfort and protect it, then extend that protection to the entire clan.

Popular tradition holds that the flag has been waved twice over the centuries, though there are debates over when those instances occurred. Consensus remains that the flag may only

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[395] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol. 2*, 96.
[396] Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*, 195.

be waved one more time. Smith's tour guide, Malcolm, evidently recalled that "at the time of the

potato failure, when the people were starving in their cabins, it was thought that he should have

waved it and stopped the rot," but he chose not to.[397] Some popular stories suggest that the clan

chief faced enormous pressure to wave the flag during both world wars, while others claim that

though he would not wave it, he gave each of the clansmen who left to fight on the Continent a

small piece of the flag in hopes that it might keep them safe. As Malcolm pointed out, "Macleod

can only wave it once now; and I'm sure he's like a man with his last guinea in his pocket—he

does not like to spend it."[398] Whatever the true origins and nature of the flag, it is known widely

as a gift of protection from the fairies, and its prominent display in Dunvegan Castle symbolizes

this protective element of modern fairy culture to all its visitors. Unlike the popular fairy themes

of healing and prophecy, this is an example of Victorians grasping at a motif that occurred far

less frequently in the early modern period and enhancing its prominence. Perhaps this protective

element was more suitable to the agenda of revivalists, who sought to develop a sense of cultural

heritage and national mythology by linking fairies with Scotland and vice versa. It is possible

that for some Scots, their attempt to protect the idea of fairies from the threats of science,

rationalism, religion, and industrialization, meant reminding their countrymen that fairies could

in turn serve as protectors for them.

Malevolence

Even with the surge of benevolent traits regarding Victorian conceptions of fairies, the

fairies still maintained their potential for dangerous and malicious behaviors. According to J.P.

Maclean, Highlanders believed the fairies were easily offended, which prompted them to conduct

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[397] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol. 2*, 97.
[398] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol. 2*, 97.

numerous protective rituals "as a charm against all injuries from fairies and spirits."[399] In an

excerpt from Mrs. D. Ogilvy's *Book of Highland Minstrelsy* on Highland fairies—selected and

published by John Noble in 1891 as part of a collection about *The Witch of Inverness and the*

Fairies of Tomnahurich—Ogilvy also remarked on the fairies' sensitivity, and noted that "the

first opportunity was embraced to avenge themselves for the insult."[400] In the ballad of "Thomas

the Rhymer," the Fairy Queen rewarded True Thomas for his service to her with the gift of

prophecy, but also gave him a strong warning about the consequences for revealing the fairies'

activities:

> 'But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
> Whatever ye may hear or see,
> For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
> You will neer get back to your ain countrie.'[401]

Like their early modern predecessors, it appears Victorians knew the dangerous repercussions

traditionally associated with speaking too much about the fairy race. A number of other

nineteenth and early twentieth century sources reference cases where fairies punished humans for

perceived transgressions against their race.[402] Among the most notable of these is Barrie's

jealous Tinker Bell, who constantly tormented Wendy to punish her for commanding too much

attention from Peter Pan.[403] However, despite Tink's numerous vindictive, near-fatal offenses

against Wendy, Barrie defended the small fairy's actions:

> Tink was not all bad; or, rather, she was all bad just now, but, on the other hand,
> sometimes she was all good. Fairies have to be one thing or the other, because being so
> small they unfortunately have room for one feeling only at a time. They are, however,
> allowed to change, only it must be a complete change. At present [however,] she was full
> of jealousy of Wendy."[404]

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[399] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 26.
[400] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 48.
[401] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 325.
[402] Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol.2*; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*; Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*; Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*; Macleod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan*.
[403] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*.
[404] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 35.

Barrie's explanation seems to use fairies' size, which became increasingly smaller in nineteenth and twentieth century children's literature, as a way to both perpetuate and justify the moral ambiguities of the fairy folk. The argument that such a capricious nature was due to size would have been easy to understand, especially for children. Beyond that, Barrie perpetuated the notion that fairies could be either good or evil at anytime, and that they were always whole-heartedly so until they changed. Across the early modern and Victorian eras, sources show fairies continually doing whatever they pleased and acting without inhibition—a trait that likely appealed to peasant or middle-class Scots during both time periods who dreamed of escaping to a realm where they could behave similarly without the risk of real-world consequences.

Elf-shot remained one of the more popular forms of fairy punishment in the Victorian era. Alexander Macgregor recorded that when fairies become "offended, they are wantonly mischievous, and hurt severely, and perhaps kill with their arrows…[which] are of stone, like a yellow flint, and shaped like a barbed arrow-head."[405] Macgregor's description of fairy arrows is very similar to those of his early modern predecessors, suggesting that both the elf-shot motif and its purposes continued into the post-Enlightenment era. In a mid-nineteenth century poem about the fairies and witches associated with Tamnahoorich—a well-known hill near the Highland capital of Inverness—antiquarian Joseph Train recounted the malicious exploits of a mischievous changeling child, claiming that "wi' their little viewless darts, Racking, an' tearing human hearts."[406] During one of her fits of jealousy when Peter becomes preoccupied with looking after Wendy on their flight to Neverland, the vindictive Tinker Bell speeds ahead of the group and tricks Peter's loyal band of Lost Boys into enacting her revenge. She cries out to them, "Peter wants you to shoot the Wendy," which the boys dutifully obey using their bows and

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[405] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 22.
[406] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 14.

arrows.[407] Though Tinker Bell does not shoot Wendy herself, and there is no suggestion that the boys' arrows are true elf arrows forged by the fairies, Barrie offered an interesting variant on the traditional stories of elf-shot. His version played more on the fairies' ability to trick or persuade humans to unwittingly do their sinister bidding, while selecting bows and arrows as the weapons of choice is strongly reminiscent of the elf-shot motif.

Yet allusions to elf-shot were not only associated as means of punishment against human insolence. For example, Scottish lawyer and antiquarian John Graham Dalyell explained how "Animals from the [humans'] flocks or herds, shot with elf arrows, serve for their banquets."[408] Dalyell's description is comparable to the dangers elf-shot frequently posed to animals and livestock in the early modern era, while tying in the common motifs of opulence and feasting associated with fairies in both eras. The popular ballad, "King Orfeo," which likely dates to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries in various forms but was not published until folklorist Francis Child did so in the late nineteenth century, also mentions elf-shot. The story is an intriguing amalgamation of the ancient Greek Orpheus and Eurydice myth and fairy mythology. Rather than having to travel to the Underworld to rescue his lover, as in the original Greek myth, the title character must figure out how to rescue her from Fairyland. According to the version Child collected, Lady Isabel was abducted by the fairies after "da king o Ferrie we his daert, Has pierced your lady to da hert."[409] In this instance, it seems the elf arrows served to stun the lady so that the fairies could take her away with them more easily. These accounts reveal that the elf-

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[407] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 41.
[408] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 535.
[409] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 217. Trans: "the King of Fairies with his dart, Has pierced your lady through the heart."

shot motif still existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but suggest that it may not have been as feared, or even as literal, as it was in the early modern era.[410]

Of course, in addition to its mention of elf-shot, the ballad of *King Orfeo* features the most common fairy motif of all: abduction. Fairies' propensity for abducting humans and taking them away to Fairyland continued into the Victorian era. Whether or not Victorians truly believed this could happen to the extent that early modern Scots did is ambiguous, but the element remained popular in literature and folklore in the nineteenth century. The most famous of these abduction stories is likely that of Thomas the Rhymer, who was taken by the Fairy Queen herself after encountering her "by the Eildon Tree":[411]

> 'Now, ye maun go wi me,' she said,
> 'True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
> And ye maun serve me seven years,
> Thro weal or woe, as may chance to be.'[412]

But True Thomas and King Orfeo's lover were among many humans swept away to Fairyland, according to Francis Child's collection of ballads. When the narrator of *The Wee Wee Man* encountered a fairy man, he told her "'My dwelling's down at yon bonny bower; O will you go with me and see?'"—an offer the narrator accepted, and together they rode off to Fairyland.[413] Similarly, in one of the stories John Noble collected about the fairies of Tomnahurich near Inverness, a fairy man propositions two begging musicians and leads them back to the fairy hill so they could play for the fairy court.[414] Though Carole G. Silver maintains that people believed fairy abduction still posed a real threat in Victorian Britain and Ireland, the literary and folkloric

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[410] In *Strange and Secret Peoples*, Silver argues for a profound belief in fairies among Victorians, noting that "Rural folk still collected elf-shots or fairy bolts (prehistoric flint shards or arrows), as well as fairy pipes…but so, too, did folklorists." (36) This revelation would fit into the argument for a continued awareness of the elf-shot motif presented in this section; however, she cites no primary evidence supporting this claim.

[411] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 488.

[412] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 488.

[413] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 330.

[414] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 25-28.

sources seem only to suggest that they remained aware of this element in the popular revival of fairy culture, as none claim first-hand accounts of fairy abduction similar to those in the witch trial testimonies.[415]

Yet while abduction remained a widespread motif within nineteenth and early twentieth century fairy culture, the fact that almost all these stories ended in recovery was the major component that differed from most of the early modern accounts. After seven years of service to the Fairy Queen, Thomas returned to Earth, with the gift of prophecy to boot.[416] She also promised such safe return to the nurse in *The Queen of Elfan's Nourice*, once she had weaned the Queen's own child.[417] King Orfeo convinced the Fairy King to return the Lady Isabel to him by entertaining the Fairy King's court with his pipes, while the fairies of Tomnahurich generously paid the two poor musicians they enlisted to play for them and encouraged them to go home once the festivities were finished.[418] If we consider Neverland as related to Fairyland, we see that Peter Pan and Tinker Bell return Wendy and her brothers to their home in London after their various adventures, and Barrie's epilogue suggests that Peter continued this practice with Wendy's daughter and grand-daughter.[419] These are among a number of Victorian accounts that offer a happy ending to those humans taken by the fairy folk.

That almost all the Victorian descriptions of fairy abduction eventually result in recovery—an outcome that was not very common in the early modern era—significantly diminishes the sense of malice previously associated with this motif. Instead, it turns abduction into a sort of respite from the monotonies and constraints of the human world. Abduction to

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[415] Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples*, 167-172.
[416] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 325.
[417] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 359.
[418] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads*, 217; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*.
[419] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*.

Fairyland, suggests Bown, offered time in "an enchanted world in which there are no cares, no responsibilities, no social divisions or conventions, and no bodily limitations."[420] The biggest risk associated with visits to Fairyland became the unpredictable passage of time between the two worlds; a few nights of revelry among the fairies translated to decades in the human world. Still, it appears the Victorians thought this either an inconsequential or worthwhile risk, as textual and visual depictions of humans going to and ultimately returning from Fairyland are plentiful.

Considering how widespread references to changelings were in the early modern era, it is not surprising that descriptions and discussions about this fairy phenomenon raged on in the Victorian era. Macgregor explained the fairies' continued reputation as "a dexterous child-stealer" and confirmed that "at birth many covert and cunning ceremonies are still used to baffle the fairy's power, otherwise the new-born child would be taken off to fairyland, and a withered, little, living skeleton of a child laid in its stead."[421] J.P. Maclean also described how "the greatest precautions had to be taken…in order to prevent them from spiriting away mothers and their newly born children."[422] Macgregor noted the early modern importance of baptism in the fight against changelings, and the vulnerability of the child between birth and baptism, by describing the fire-round ritual from that time period. Joseph Train's poem about "The Witch o' Inverness" is based on the premise that a young mother must seek the help of the witch when her newborn child gets exchanged for a fairy changeling. Train devotes an entire page to describing the changeling's disruptive, mischievous, and generally uncouth behavior, echoing the accounts of early modern changeling sources.[423]

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[420] Bown, *Fairies in nineteenth-century art and literature*, 96.
[421] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 22-22.
[422] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 12.
[423] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 13-15.

Unlike their early modern predecessors, some nineteenth and early twentieth century

Scots began to engage in conversations about the origin and purpose of the changeling motif.

This new interest demonstrates the advances that Scots made in medicine and scientific inquiry

during and after the Enlightenment, as they sought to confront the mysteries and stigmas

associated with changeling children. In Andrew Lang's fairy tale, "The Gold of Fairnilee,"

Jeanie and Randal's old nurse tells them the story of a woman her mother once knew:

> '…She had a bairn, as bonny a bairn as you ever saw. And one day, she went to the
> well to draw water, and as she was coming back she heard a loud scream in her house.
> Then her heart leaped, and fast she ran and flew to the cradle; and there she saw an
> awful sight—not her own bairn, but a withered imp, with hands like a mole's and a face
> like a frog's, and a mouth from ear to ear, and two great staring eyes.'
> 'What was it?' asked Jeanie, in a trembling voice.
> 'A fairy bairn that had not thriven,' said nurse; 'and when their bairns do not thrive,
> they just steal honest folks' children and carry them away to their own country.'[424]

Lang's description of the changeling supports the growing notion in the Victorian era and

beyond that the changeling motif served to explain why children were born with, or developed,

physical deformities.

Yet in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published at the start of the nineteenth

century, Sir Walter Scott condemned that "Various monstrous charms existed in Scotland, for

procuring the restoration of a child which had been thus stolen; but the most efficacious of them

was supposed to be, the roasting of the supposititious child upon the live embers, when it was

believed it would vanish," and the original human child would be restored.[425] Scot went on to

question "if this experiment could now be made without the animadversion of the law" and

argued that the rituals "prescribed in the following legend is rather too hazardous for modern

use."[426] While Victorians may not have been able to diagnose the various afflictions that these

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[424] Lang, *My Own Fairy Book*, 259-260.
[425] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 467.
[426] Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 467.

children might have had, they began to associate the popular changeling motif with disease and rebuke the abusive treatments that this fairy narrative often inflicted.[427]

Two of Sir Joseph Noel Paton's mid-nineteenth century paintings imagine the perspective of the kidnapped human child, a perspective absent in the early modern era. Rather than focusing on the disfigured and malevolent fairy changeling and the human parents' reaction to the exchange, Paton's interest in representing the fairies in their natural forest environment prompted him to consider how kidnapped human children would fit into the scene. In his 1849 painting, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, Paton offers a visual interpretation of the famous scene in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the King and Queen of fairies fight over the custody of a human child.[428] The child is shown hiding behind Titania as the Queen protects her from Oberon, suggesting a personal relationship and attachment between Titania and the child. The human is shown as almost completely naked, which, along with her playful smirk, implies that she has assimilated herself into the culture and society of the fairies.

Another of Paton's paintings, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off a Changeling, Midsummer Eve*, combined the motifs of changelings and the 'fairy rade,' or procession.[429] The Fairy Queen is shown mounted on her horse, this time wearing green, holding the newly captured changeling baby. Here again, the human children are barely clothed, which in this case stands out because the majority of the fairy troop is wearing robes or armor. At the foot of the queen's horse is a small group of human children old enough to walk, but although they appear to be dancing

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[427] For more on the evolving medical interpretations and theories behind changelingism, see: Mitzi Waltz, "From Changelings to Crystal Children: An Examination of 'New Age' Ideas About Autism," *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 13 (2009): 114-128; C. F. Goodey and Tim Stainton, "Intellectual disability and the myth of the changeling myth," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Science*s 37 (2001): 223-240; Joyce Underwood Munro, "The Invisible Made Visible: The Fairy Changeling as a Folk Articulation of Failure to Thrive in Infants and Children," in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narváez (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997); Susan Schoon Eberly, "Fairies and the Folklore of Disability: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy," *Folklore* 99 (1988): 58-77.

[428] Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*.

[429] Paton, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off a Changeling*.

merrily amongst themselves, the chains around their ankles signify their status as captives. This change in perspective gives the excuse for a fanciful imagining of the fairy life and culture that captured children could be part of, rather than dwelling on the grim details of congenital disorders and abuse that often accompany changeling stories.

In her *Book of Highland Minstrelsy*, Ogilvy argues, "Infants were more easily recovered, probably because their sinless purity gave them somewhat of an advantage over the fallen spirits who had seized them."[430] Perhaps, rather than their 'sinless purity' allowing them to be 'more easily recovered,' children maintained other qualities that made them more appealing and better suited for Fairyland. If we again consider the story of Peter Pan as a converted version of the changeling motif, where Peter serves as the liaison and invites young children to come away with him to Neverland, Barrie informed his readers that "so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless," they will remain targets of the fairies—and will likely go away with them willingly.[431] Perhaps it is the unmitigated combination of curiosity, selfishness, and undeveloped inhibitions that made children so susceptible to fairy capture, in a Victorian era that increasingly oppressed these qualities by adulthood.

Neutrality, Merriment, and Mischief

Perhaps this temperamental compatibility between fairies and young children helps highlight why one of the most common characteristics associated with fairies—their mischievous and mirthful nature—persevered into the Victorian era. According to John Dalyell, fairies "are addicted to merriment: they have been seen dancing" and feasting in a general state of revelry.[432] In describing the *daoine shi*, which is the Scots Gaelic term for 'fairy people,' J.P. Maclean

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[430] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich,* 47-48.
[431] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 103.
[432] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 535.

claimed, "in these secret [subterranean] retreats many persons have been entertained, were received in the most splendid apartments, and regaled with sumptuous banquets, where the most delicious wines were served. However, should a mortal partake of their dainties, then he was forever doomed to the condition of *shi'ick*…[whose] banquets and all the paraphernalia of their homes were but deceptions."[433] Macgregor explained that many Highland hills where tradition held that "with much splendour, they held their nightly revels," still bore names associated with the fairies.[434] A number of these post-Enlightenment sources reference the music and dancing that seems to have been one of the most popular past-times among the fairies.[435] Carole Silver points out that the fairies' affinity for music and dancing often meant musicians were particularly susceptible targets for abduction.[436] This was the premise of one of the stories printed in John Noble's collection on the fairies of Tomnahurich in Inverness, as it details how a fairy man lured two poor fiddlers to their hill to play for the fairy court.[437] Silver also argues that the propensity for descriptions of dancing in Victorian sources linked them to popular images of sex-crazed women, for "medically, the love of dancing was sometimes diagnosed as a form of hysteria; ethnologically it was linked to savagery or barbarism…[as physicians and new anthropologists asserted that] rhythmic movement *is* primitive movement."[438] Perhaps this assessment serves as the connection between descriptions of dancing and merriment, which were commonplace in the early modern era as well, and descriptions of sexual endeavors, which were not.

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[433] Maclean, *An Epitome of the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 10-12.
[434] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 28.
[435] Child, *The English and Scottish popular ballads,* 330; Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone,* 205-206; Smith, *A Summer in Skye, vol.1*, 180; *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, title page, 12; Paton's complimentary paintings, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* and *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, also depict some fairies dancing or frolicking merrily in the forest.
[436] Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples*, 168.
[437] *The Witch of Inverness and the Fairies of Tomnahurich*, 20-37.
[438] Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples*, 176.

Like their early modern counterparts, who recorded a few examples of carnal relationships between fairies and humans, Victorians also implied such relationships occurred. For example, Dalyell explained that in addition to perpetuating their race in a traditional fashion, amongst themselves, fairies' "offspring descends also of their intercourse with mortals."[439] Beyond a simple sexual encounter, Victorian renditions of the story of Thomas the Rhymer are often suggestive of a romantic relationship between True Thomas and the Fairy Queen. Though this added layer to their iconic relationship is not explicit, it is implied in both textual and visual sources. For example, in her 1908 illustration that accompanied a book of traditional ballads targeted at children, Katherine Cameron shows Thomas kneeling before the Fairy Queen with a look of devotion and loyalty that seems to border on romantic attraction, and the queen even seems to reciprocate his tender gaze.[440] Diane Purkiss notes that the story "begins as one of the generic markers of the romance of adventure, one of the defining stories of knighthood and chivalry," but later adds that it exemplifies how "encounters with the queen both define and reduce masculinity."[441] Perhaps the popularization of the Thomas the Rhymer ballad, and its development of romantic undertones, provides a window into the tensions surrounding Scottish masculinity in the modern era.[442] The Victorian interpretation of the carnal relationships between humans and fairies featured a more nuanced focus on masculinity and female empowerment, countering the early modern preoccupation with rape, or sex as a bargaining chip in a contractual exchange for magical aid.

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[439] Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, 535.

[440] Macgregor, and Cameron, *Stories from the Ballads Told to the Children*.

[441] Purkiss, *At the bottom of the garden*, 68, 134.

[442] Maureen M. Martin, *The mighty Scot: nation, gender, and the nineteenth-century mystique of Scottish masculinity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009). Martin argues that "Scotland could be narrated as Britain's masculine heartland," (p.3) as the primal form of masculinity associated with Scotland due to the valiant Jacobites provided "relief from the softening effects of modern life." (p.17) However, she points out that, like most popularized aspects of Scottish culture in the nineteenth century, this form of masculinity only reflected Highland culture, which left middle-class Lowland Scots without a strong sense of identity or what it meant to be a Scottish man.

However, the Victorians ventured into new, more sexualized territory by depicting such carnal relationships and exploits among the fairies themselves. Perhaps the fairy paintings of Sir Joseph Noel Paton display this shift in focus most successfully, specifically in his 1847 *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* and the 1849 follow-up, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*. Both works—part of the growing pre-Raphaelite sub-genre of 'fairy painting'—depict scenes from playwright William Shakespeare's famous comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and feature the King and Queen of the fairies in a forest clearing surrounded by scores of other fairies. These nameless fairies—rather than Titania, Oberon, or the human subjects—reveal the decadent, often lewd conduct associated with Victorian fairies, as many appear to be wrestling and engaging in sexually explicit behaviors. Moreover, almost all the fairies are either entirely or nearly nude, adding to this focus on sexuality.[443] Victorian art expert Christopher Wood explains that among "the chief attractions of fairy painting for the mid-Victorians was that it made possible highly realistic and erotic picture of female nudes."[444] However, he also notes that "the presence of quite so many naked females [in Paton's two most famous fairy paintings] generates a highly erotic charge, and it seems amazing that mid-Victorian prudery did not condemn Paton for this."[445]

Even children's stories could not escape this more sexualized characterization of fairies, as J.M. Barrie narrated in *Peter Pan and Wendy* that after Peter fell asleep, "some unsteady fairies had to climb over him on their way home from an orgy," adding that had it been "any of the other boys obstructing the fairy path at night they would have mischiefed, but they just tweaked Peter's nose and passed on."[446] With this passing comment, Barrie alluded to both the

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[443] Paton, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*; Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*.
[444] Wood, *Fairies in Victorian art*, 8.
[445] Wood, *Fairies in Victorian art*, 88.
[446] Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, 48.

sexual and mischievous exploits that had come to characterize Victorian fairies. Both these sources were extremely well received by critics, who either chose to ignore the more amorous elements altogether, or accepted them as belonging to another, non-human world. As Wood put it, "Obviously such erotic scenes were thought permissible in the fairy world," and were thus not condemned within the human world. Art historian Nicola Bown explains how the Victorian notion that "elves give themselves wholly over to erotic pleasures…[in the] beautiful, unspoiled playground" of Fairyland served as "the counterpart of anxieties about the effects of industrialization on the human body and the world."[447] These more erotic depictions of fairy life likely created an outlet for the Victorians' repressed sexuality, as they portrayed the fairies as a race without sexual inhibitions. This likely would have only reinforced the appeals of Fairyland as the ultimate destination for escapist fantasy.

Some nineteenth century sources depict relatively neutral encounters between fairies and humans. For example, in Macgregor's account of one clergyman's abduction, he emphasized that after the fairies carried him for many miles, he became "sufficiently convinced of the reality of their existence, [and] they let him down at the door of his own house, where afterwards often recited to the wondering circle, the marvellous tale of his adventure."[448] In this case, it seems the fairies sought only to prove their existence to the man, "whose faith was more regulated by the scepticism of philosophy, than by the credulity of superstition."[449] In an era when questions about belief and rationalism encircled discussions about the fairy folk, Macgregor's story displayed all the hallmarks of the abduction motif without any of the dangers. John Duncan's early twentieth century painting of *Merlin and the Fairy Queen* also ascribes a sort of neutrality

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[447] Bown, *Fairies in nineteenth-century art and literature*, 96.
[448] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 60.
[449] Macgregor, *Highland Superstitions*, 60.

to the fairies.[450] Though Merlin appears guarded and distrusting in her presence, the Fairy Queen appears placid and unthreatening. Her gaze, distant and certainly not focused on Merlin, also adds a level of separation between the members of the fairy and human realms. There is very little written on this particular painting, but perhaps like Macgregor, Duncan was simply trying to portray the fairies' desire to be seen in order to prove their existence. These attempts could reflect those of their Romantic proponents, who sought to preserve and revive Scottish fairy culture. Their goal was likely to foster attitudes of celebration and nostalgia for fairies among their Scottish countrymen, ultimately developing a sense of cultural heritage and national mythology. However, the first step of that process would have been to simply promote a general awareness about the existence of fairy culture.

Conclusion

Across the early modern and Victorian eras, and into the twentieth century, accounts of the elusive fairy folk emphasize their moral unpredictability and suggest that the humans they encountered were often at the mercy of their whims. This behavioral comparison also reveals the fairies' continued affinity for revelry, which manifests itself in lavish feasts filled with music and dancing, as well as mischievous pranks and trickery. Sources from both eras show strong similarities in the thematic range associated with fairy morality, with discussions about fairies passing powers or skills to humans, protecting them from harm, punishing them for disobedience, abducting them 'away' to Fairyland, swapping their children out for changelings, and engaging in general merriment. These conclusions all support the argument that the nineteenth and early-twentieth century revival of fairy culture in Scotland was strongly reminiscent of its early modern predecessor.

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[450] Duncan, *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*.

Yet while sources from both eras reference similar behaviors, some are more prominent that others in each respective time period. The wide moral range associated with fairies exists throughout both time periods, but the early modern leaned more toward malevolence—or at least risk and danger—while the Victorian tended toward benevolence or moral ambivalence. Early modern fairy encounters tended to bring disruptive, sometimes harmful outcomes, and even helpful endeavors were often conditional. These trends likely reflected the dangers and uncertainties prevalent in the early modern period, and were probably perpetuated by the Reforming elite, as malevolent fairies would have been easier to demonize. Meanwhile, though nineteenth and twentieth century fairies could be spiteful, they seemed to be slightly more benevolent in nature—a behavioral shift that was perhaps necessary in marketing fairy culture as a valuable piece of Scottish heritage. Yet some Victorian sources did not ascribe specific moral leanings to fairies one way or the other, opting instead for a more passive portrayal of fairies that focused more on reminding society of their existence, cultural relevance and tradition. Still, the strong similarities between behaviors ascribed to fairies during both time periods emphasizes a continued awareness and perpetuation of core fairy motifs—healing, protection, punishment, abduction, changeling exchange, sexual promiscuity, and general merriment—that transcended the Enlightenment and found renewed relevance in the Victorian era.

Conclusion

Comparing fairy culture in early modern and Victorian Scotland offers a new perspective on traditional narratives about the Reformation, modernity, and national identity formation. This thesis argues that while Scottish fairy culture certainly developed and adapted to remain relevant to a Victorian society with changing worldviews, it largely maintained its foundational characteristics prominent in the early modern era. The persistence of these fairy motifs demonstrates the depth and adaptability of popular and folk culture, even across vastly different generations, and emphasizes the power that heritage, mythology, and nostalgia have in cultural production.

The most substantial difference in early modern and Victorian fairy culture lies in the contexts within which Scots discussed fairies. Early modern fairy discourse occurred largely within the context of the Protestant Reformation, which had spread to Scotland by the mid-sixteenth century. Fairies became wrapped up in debates about witchcraft, theology, and even atheism, revealing another window into the major tensions of the time. By the nineteenth century, however, fairy discourse shifted. Rather than witch trial records and theological treatises, fairies appeared predominantly in literature, folklore, and images that prompted conversations about escapist fantasies, cultural heritage, and national identity. Again, the adaptable nature of fairy culture offers insight into some of the social, political, and economic issues of the day. In both cases, fairies serve as a lens through which to view Scottish identity formation—the early modern era along largely Presbyterian and demonological lines, and the Victorian era along increasingly national lines. Yet despite these seemingly distinct types of fairy discourse, the latter is significantly predicated on conceptions of the former. Presenting the revived Victorian fairy culture within discussions about heritage and nationalism means that it

had to be associated with a sense of history and the past. By suggesting that fairy belief was a cultural remnant of the past, in need of both preservation and celebration, folklorists, authors, and artists solidified the connections between the two eras.

Examinations into how Scots characterized fairies in each era adds a narrower approach to the broad contextual analysis on fairy discourse and supports the claim that fairy culture was adaptable yet resolute. Comparisons between the physical, behavioral, and moral qualities Scots attributed to fairies in both eras reveals more about the anxieties and desires of the humans describing them than it does about fairies. In terms of appearance, early modern and nineteenth century fairies are surprisingly similar, developing immediate connections between the two eras and supporting attempts to use the Victorian fairy revival as a cultural form of national heritage-building. The only real differences occur when considering the intended audiences of Victorian sources; images and literature targeting children depict fairies as significantly smaller, winged, and almost exclusively female. I attribute these differences mainly to developing the fantastical, magical elements fairy culture offered, as authors and illustrators sought to appeal to their young audiences and foster imagination. Yet even in the realm of children's literature, some popular physical qualities remained, maintaining the genre's position within the broader canon of Scottish fairy culture. Apart from this faction, however, early modern and Victorian Scots seem to have had similar notions about the appearance and physical nature of fairies.

The comparison of the behavioral and moral nature ascribed fairies in each era compromises between the two previous lines of inquiry—it is not as immediately similar as the physical comparison, but not quite as distinct as the contextual comparison of discourse. A number of popular motifs and traditions remain relevant in both eras, including abduction, changeling exchange, the image of the Fairy Raid, or ride, and the notion that fairies exhibited

various magical powers or abilities. The differences lie in how these traditions were discussed. For example, early modern Scots often described changelings as a very real threat, while nineteenth and twentieth century Scots often rationalized the concept in medical terms. The types of magical powers fairies displayed also varied in prominence, likely reflecting the hopes and fears of the two respective societies; where early modern Scots placed emphasis on gaining knowledge about healing and prophecy from the fairies, Victorians seem more preoccupied with protective magic.

The morality ascribed to fairies is decidedly capricious in both eras, and their fickle, unpredictable nature appears to be among their most captivating qualities. Fairies in both time periods had the ability and conviction to both help and hurt humans, and the people they encountered were often at the mercy of the fairies' whims. However, direct comparisons revealed that early modern fairies were slightly more dangerous to encounter, while nineteenth and early twentieth century fairies were more likely to behave either benevolently or neutrally toward humans. Again, I consider this an example of the adaptability of fairy culture. Considered alongside the context of Victorian fairy discourse, which often sought to preserve an apparently threatened cultural system, it's no surprise that fairies became better tempered in nineteenth century. Kinder or passive fairies would have been much easier to preserve and promote, while more malevolent and vindictive fairies would have been easier for Protestant Reformers to demonize. Still, the general similarities between the popular traditions and activities associated with both early modern and Victorian fairies suggests a single form of fairy culture, rather than a separate reconstructed form, continued and adapted into the nineteenth century.

This project presents fairy culture as a way to connect the early modern and Victorian eras—two largely distinct time periods—demonstrating the impact culture can have on forging

those connections. It challenges traditional conceptions of periodization by placing the Enlightenment at the center of its temporal considerations, rather than at the start or finish. Positioning the Enlightenment this way discouraged any temptation to overemphasize the differences often prevalent in historical inquiries—which tend to be predicated on notions of change over time. Ultimately, this chronologically comparative framework helped uncover similarities between the early modern and Victorian interpretations of fairy culture, as well as between the societies of each era. While differences certainly existed—and expectedly so—this structure allowed for a more comprehensive study.

Beyond its comparative value, this thesis sheds light on the adaptability and persistence of folk culture, with special attention to how issues of class contribute to maintaining its relevance over time. While different motivations and goals fueled fairy discourse in each time period, both comprised of elite commentaries on a cultural belief system they ascribed to the lower, folk class. While the nature of the sources only show one side of this cultural dialogue between the classes, it seems evident that such a dialogue existed. Elites from each era viewed fairy culture as an avenue by which to connect with the folk and spread their respective agendas among the masses. For early modern elites, these agendas were largely theological, as the newly Reformed nobility sought to spread Calvinism—and eventually, Presbyterianism—throughout Scotland. By the nineteenth century, Romantic folklorists, authors, and artists saw Fairyland and the lore of its inhabitants as an ideal location for escapist fantasies, as it offered a magical, uninhibited refuge against the mundanities and pressures of industrializing Victorian society. Seeking to preserve potentially endangered cultural systems, Romantics also embraced fairy belief as one of several traditions they could combine to create an increased sense of heritage and national mythology. In each era, fairy discourse served as a cultural reflection of the tensions

predominant in the formation of Scottish national identity. Notions about Scottish identity, especially how it opposes, contributes to, or generally complicates British identity, have been contested and recurrent for centuries and continue to be relevant, as Scotland faces an upcoming referendum on independence.

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APPENDIX A: IMAGES

1. Joseph Noel Paton, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*. 1847.

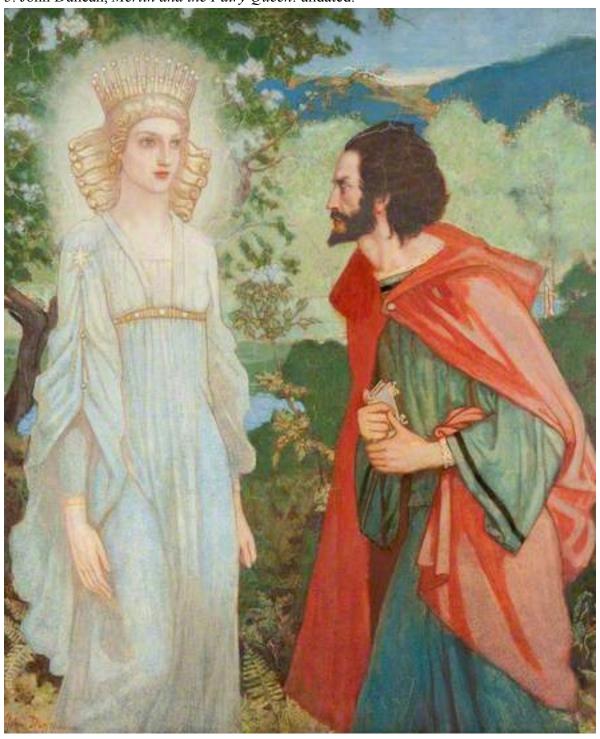2. Joseph Noel Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*. 1849.

3. Joseph Noel Paton, *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off a Changeling.* 1867.

4. John Duncan, *The Riders of the Sidhe.* 1911.

5. John Duncan, *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*. undated.

6. Katherine Cameron, *Under the Eildon tree Thomas met a lady*, 1908.