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In this issue

Sam George and Bill Hughes, 'Guest Editors' Introduction'	4
'The origin of the sprites: The Folklore Society's late-Victorian fairy science', Francesca Bihet	9
“Human passion - fairy power”: Gothic rewriting and queer subversion of the Melusine legend in Letitia Elizabeth Landon's “The Fairy of the Fountains”, Greta Colombani	27
'A 19th-century influence of Gothic Faerie: The fairy tree, fairy lover, fairy art, and fairy revenge in Clay F. Johnson's poem “A Ride Through Faerie”', Tatiana Fajardo	43
' <i>The Ballad of Isabel Gunn</i> as 'The Daemon Lover' / 'Tam Lin': The economic migrant and enchantment as a recruitment strategy', Catherine Greenwood	57
'Prisoners of the gods: The captivity narrative in fairy lore', Jeremy Harte	79
'Fairyland's Gothic offspring: The Maid of the Alder Tree as an arboreal femme fatale in George MacDonald's <i>Phantastes</i> (1858)', Michaela Hausmann	91
'Fairies in Ann Radcliffe's “The Glow-worm”: The communal aspect of art', Györgyi Szirákiné Kovács	107
'Ill met by moonlight': Gothic Fairy flash fiction	121
A review of <i>Fearsome Fairies: Haunting Tales of the Fae</i> , B.C. Kennedy	128
A review of <i>The Boggart: Folklore, History, Place-names and Dialect</i> , Katherine Langrish	131
About the contributors	134
Submission guidelines	139

Peter Rindisbacher, 'A drifting Iceberg strikes the ship in the night of June 29, 1821'.



The Ballad of Isabel Gunn as 'The Daemon Lover' / 'Tam Lin': The economic migrant and enchantment as a recruitment strategy

Catherine Greenwood

Described as 'one of the most curious cases of cross-dressing in Canadian history', the story of a Scottish woman who secured employment in Canada's early fur-trade by presenting herself for hire in male-drag is notably depicted in Scottish-Canadian poet Stephen Scobie's long documentary poem *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn* (1987).¹ Following the poem's publication, it has been variously regarded in terms of feminist, postmodern, and post-colonial criticism that emphasised Scobie's engagement with literary theory; it has received only passing mention of its debt to the ballad and scant notice of its fairy-tale antecedents.² In the *Ballad*, Scobie has hybridised form to create a historical Gothic narrative of a mythical frontier environment and its taxing effects on indentured migrant workers.

Principally set in remote regions such as Labrador, the poem might be read as a specimen of Can Lit 'wilderness Gothic', but a very particular sort of wilderness is discovered.³ As Diane Purkiss notes in her cultural history of fairy lore and literature, *Troublesome Things*, fairies are associated with locales beyond familiar boundaries, and fairyland as a fictive site was remapped in concert with the pace of exploration in the New World. In Scottish minister Robert Kirk's 17th-century treatise *The Secret Commonwealth*, for instance, the notion of a 'fairy kingdom, a space alongside but outside the homely, the idea of two societies living side by side, was a paradigm for the colonial situation.'⁴ Rearticulating Charles Taylor's conception of a secular social imaginary in the early modern period, Diane Long Hoeveler says, 'it became possible to believe simultaneously in both the realms of the supernatural and the natural, the enchanted and the disenchanting, at the same (uneasy) time.'⁵

Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec ascribe a similar-sounding notion to post-19th-century conceptions of 'space', that is, space as the 'relations among sites' in our 'epoch of simultaneity', and propose the term 'heterotopology' for understanding the 'simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live.'⁶ My analysis of Scobie's *Ballad* includes an application of the Foucauldian construct *heterotopia* to the

fairyland (or secret commonwealth, to borrow Kirk's apt term) wherein, with subtle transparency, the poem's narrative is placed – an otherworldly realm contiguous with and mirroring the seductive utopian notion of Canada held by the migrant labourers recruited by the Hudson's Bay Company. A close reading of the *Ballad's* engagement with key Gothic motifs such as otherworldly landscapes, thresholds, the grave and other features inherited from folklore, romanticism and Scottish poetry and song will reveal a Scottish fairy ballad stealthily masquerading as a Canadian documentary poem.

Stephen Scobie is a poet and critic who 'cherishes Robert Burns' and 'writes at the intersection of Scottish tradition and the radically displaced perspectives of European modernism', but it is perhaps not surprising that the critical reception of *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn* pivoted toward contemporary literary theory; after all, Scobie so successfully melded the documentary and ballad forms that critics either ignored, minimised, or rejected the poem's titular form.⁷ Peter Jaeger, applying to it Linda Hutcheon's term 'historiographic metafiction', is somewhat more receptive to the notion that Scobie's *Ballad* is what it purports to be, 'albeit in a highly adapted fashion':

Scobie's designation 'ballad' is significant inasmuch as the poem carries on the traditional ballad's continuous narrative structure, while simultaneously expanding that form to include prose texts quoted verbatim, lyric verse, and visual reproductions. The formal structure of the ballad mirrors the actions of Isabel, for just as Isabel crosses genders, Scobie adapts his text to straddle conventional and contemporary forms.⁸

This fusion of genres is not unlikely as it might seem. Traditional ballads such as those collected by Thomas Percy, Walter Scott, and Francis James Child in the 18th century and Romantic period are rooted in 'folk and working-class conditions', and the 'art form most integrally connected to the ballad is ... song and, more broadly, the oral tradition'.⁹ An emphasis on working-class concerns is also typical of the 20th-century documentary poem. The term was coined by Canadian political poet Dorothy Livesay, who determined that the generic Canadian long poem was neither narrative nor historical epic but 'documentary' – specifically, a work of research based on topical historical and geographic data composed of 'descriptive, lyrical and didactic elements'.¹⁰ Scobie's own understanding of the form's structure, content and voice – usually, according to his findings, a book-length narrative of 'historical happenings' that 'focuses on a single character who took part in these events' – seems in sympathy with characteristics ascribed to traditional Scottish ballads.¹¹ As described by Alan Riach, the Border ballads are 'stories in song' whose 'form arises from oral delivery, extemporisation and extension of story through the immediate engagement of an individual performer'.¹²

The happenings in these song-stories originate from what Lowry Charles Wimberley, in *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads* – his ‘exhaustive survey’ of customs, beliefs, magic and religion in traditional English and Scottish balladry – describes as a world of primitive thought.¹³ With the disclaimer that ‘incidents found in ballads may not reflect’ the actual practices of those voicing them, Wimberley emphasises that the ballads nonetheless ‘give a bona fide record of the stuff of actual tradition’, citing Francis B. Gummere’s tantalising assertion that ‘[t]he worst stories come directly from life, and ballad or tale simply follows fact – a hint for the too eager discoverer of a literary origin for every narrative in verse’: for Gummere, the ballads depict ‘a kind of obsolete reality’.¹⁴ The ballad does bear a resemblance to the documentary in its impetus to relay a type of testimony: as Emily Lyle puts it, though the ballad singers ‘would often have thought that their stories were true’, their narratives convey ‘emotional truths’.¹⁵ As far as length is concerned, the determining factor for both genres rests upon the story being told: a ballad’s extension, according to Riach, varies to accommodate ‘the event and its moment’, while the documentary poem, according to Scobie, is governed by the central character’s ‘biography’, which ‘provides the structure of the book’.¹⁶

spiriting away, as clean as any seal in fact or legend, into Canada¹⁷

Isobel Gunn’s biography is rich with the ‘mysterious travels, mythical locations, grim portents, potent images and narrative tension’ that ‘animate the ballad’.¹⁸ In the *Ballad’s* acknowledgements page, Scobie lists various sources for the pattern of events that unfolds in his fictionalised version of Isobel’s life, and details preserved in parish records, company archives and local lore are summarised in articles readily available online.¹⁹

A distillation of the record portrays an Orcadian woman named Isobel Gunn, also known as Mary Fubbister (her stepfather’s surname), born in Orkney in 1780 or 1781. At the age of 25, disguised as a man under the alias ‘John Fubbister’, she signed a three-year contract with the Hudson’s Bay Company (the HBC) to work in Rupert’s Land, now Canada, for £8 per year (other than the Indigenous women employed at their fur-trading posts, the HBC prohibited the hiring of European women, yet relied on a supply of male labourers from Orkney who were valued for their ability to endure the harsh living conditions).²⁰

Whether Isobel was following a lover to Canada or simply seeking lucrative work remains open to speculation, but in 1806 aboard the *Prince of Wales* she set sail for Labrador, part of empire’s floating labour pool. She spent two years working ‘at anything and well like the rest of the men’, undertook several supply delivery expeditions to remote outposts and endured a brutal winter on the Red River, the first European woman to set foot in that region.²¹ Near the end of her term – in both

senses – while working in Canada's northern territories, 'John' Fubbister was outed when s/he gave birth to a boy. The baby was baptised John Scarth, and his namesake was a long-time employee of the HBC who had departed Orkney on the same voyage as Isobel. Demoted to washerwoman for the remainder of her employ, 'Mary' Fubbister returned to Orkney in 1809 on the same ship she'd boarded three years earlier. In 1861, at eighty years of age, she died in Stromness and was buried as Isobel Gunn, an impoverished subsistence knitter.

In the *Ballad*, Scobie follows the chronological trajectory of Isobel's known journey, while making good use of his dictum that in documentary poems factual history is frequently embellished with 'purely fictional incidents'.²² Actual historical documents used as intertexts, such as photos of archeological sites in Orkney, HBC illustrations depicting ships and remote trading forts, copies of archival receipt-books and journal excerpts, are supplemented with invented letters written to the illiterate Isabel by her estranged lover Scarth and read to her by one James Brown, another real-life HBC hire whose role as Isabel's go-between is entirely invented.

Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie

***It's who will answer what he's wrocht?*²³**

Another invention, germane to the specific ballad templates Scobie is working from, is a love triangle involving a charming young shipbuilder's son: a labourer from Fife named David Spence Junior to whom Isabel privately assigns her son's paternity. Balladry has its own tradition of intertextuality, deriving 'elements from various sources, from medieval literature, from chronicles, from classic sources, and from tradition, sacred or otherwise', and the *Ballad's* intertexts include several familiar-sounding folksongs.²⁴ Isabel introduces her romantic predicament by inviting the reader – 'You know the old song?'²⁵ – to summon to mind one of these approximations, a tune called 'Dainty Davie':

He gives me kisses one two three
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie
And swears by the moon that he'll marry me
My ain dear dainty Davie²⁶

Modeled on an 'old song' that was also the source for later versions popularised by Robert Burns, Scobie's appropriation participates in a cycle of self-reflexive revisions, and this ballad-within-the-ballad performs, via its own checkered history, a winking cultural shorthand for illicit sexual relationships and unwed pregnancy.²⁷ The 'polite' version Burns published in the *Scots Musical Museum* c.1797 is itself 'an improvement and extension of an earlier song' called 'The Gardener wi' his paidle', and is suggestive rather than explicit in its nature-inspired imagery of springtime fertility:

The crystal waters round us fa'
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blow
A wandering wi' my Davie.²⁸

Scobie's gloss is embedded in Isabel's reverie, as she awaits Davie's return and the 'final harmony' of his laughter:

At last it was pure lyric, rowing the Red
in the late August sun, with the banks slipping by
to the silver notes of the slender birch
like a line of descant, tossed in the breeze²⁹

After a year of leading a 'double life' with two identities and two lovers, Isabel submits to a brief period of happiness as she is 'doubled again' by the growing 'life inside' her, and she simultaneously voices and inhabits the lyric in a romantically pregnant transcendence adumbrated by a simple statement: 'The song / was all around me.'³⁰

The short-lived season of Isabel's joyous relationship with Davie is interrupted by the reappearance of John Scarth. The invented love triangle, as Kenneth Hoepfner reads it, serves both dramatic and thematic functions: 'to even the account with Scarth for his infidelity ... Isabel thinks the image of exchange: "Trade-goods were all we lived by"':³¹ Hoepfner's point regarding images of exchange merits further attention. However, there is another purpose of Scobie's invention to consider first – that is, the way that Isabel carries inside an unborn Dainty Davie, so the folksong is set within a larger narrative, and the deep structure governing the *Ballad* is the template of a traditional supernatural ballad called 'The Daemon Lover', overlaid by the fairy-tale plot of another, 'Tam Lin'.³²

***his soul was claimed away from me, John Scarth,
as if by a horn-book devil***³³

Known variously as 'James Harris' (or 'Herries'), 'The Carpenter's Wife', 'The Distressed Ship-Carpenter', 'The Daemon Lover', and 'The Banks of Italy', and in America as 'The House-Carpenter', the evolution of what the folktale and ballad collector Peter Buchan called 'this curious and scarce legend' is meticulously traced by Francis James Child in his five-volume study *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.³⁴ The original broadside upon which subsequent revisions are based, variant A in Child's catalogue, appeared in print as early as 1685, and introduces an ominous theme that inheres in the eight ballads collectively called here, for ease of reference, 'The Daemon Lover'. Instructively titled, the full heading of the broadsheet A, as published in the Pepys Ballads in 1689 and reprinted in Child, encapsulates the basic plot:

A Warning for Married Women, being an example of Mrs Jane Reynolds (a West-country woman), born near Plymouth, who having plighted her troth to a Seaman, was afterwards married to a carpenter, and at last carried away by a Spirit, the manner how shall presently be recited.

The supernatural nature of the Seaman is depicted in varying degrees, and this 'revenant', as characterised by Child, ranges from A's 'Spirit' to what he describes as the 'even tamer' mariner in B (apparently mortal as he drowns with the woman); the vengeful cuckold in C and an ambiguous (yet equally vengeful – he throws the woman overboard) 'weird seaman' in D. Identifying him as a daemon lover in their titles, E-G imbue the mariner with an 'eery personality' and, with what Child terms 'a sort of vulgar rationalism, turn him into the devil.'

Isabel is a knowing metatextual interpreter of the legend she inhabits; hearing the siren-like 'silkie singing' a 'song . . . meant for [her]', 'it scarcely mattered who he was, John Scarth'.³⁵ Ideal HBC material, Scarth is 'reliable, solid, and dour,' one of those men who can 'wait out winter . . . / dull inside themselves like bears',³⁶ and more animal than demon. Nonetheless, 'all the tales he'd told to woo' Isabel of a frigid Canadian winter (and the impressive 'thirty-two pounds a year' he is paid to endure it) have an unanticipated effect when she wants to sail away with him;³⁷ this seduction echoes 'The Daemon Lover' and Scarth's embodied animalism subtly references the shapeshifting motif found in variant A:

When he had told her these fair tales,
To love him she began,
Because he was in human shape,
Much like unto a man³⁸

Utopias, per Foucault, are 'fundamentally unreal spaces' in which real sites are 'simultaneously represented, contested and inverted'.³⁹ John Scarth's romanticised tales of Canada are reminiscent of the instances in which the Daemon Lover tempts the woman by offering to 'show [her] how the lilies grow / On the banks o' Italy';⁴⁰ the inducements for the woman to come away with him and leave behind her 'young ship-carpenter' and 'little son'⁴¹ include seven ships laden to the brim with gold, velvet-lined gold slippers, a chair of gold, music and mariners to wait upon her, limitless wealth and, in C, the prospect of a stopover at 'Rose Isle' before venturing to the 'far countrie'.⁴² Isabel is yet to meet her own ship-carpenter, but the faraway land is metonymy for all such enticements: 'on a map, James Bay / hangs from the southern end of Hudson, an udder from a cow'.⁴³ Canada, in this pragmatic homespun metaphor, is figuratively and literally a resource to be milked, and the utopian imagery hints at its heterotopian counter site: milk, according to Diane Purkiss, is the preferred food of fairies, often given in payment for services rendered.⁴⁴

Evocative of the Daemon's 'Beautiful to behold' spell upon the woman in which he 'cast[s] a glamour oer her face' that shines 'like the brightest gold',⁴⁵ Isabel's seducer himself succumbs to an enchantment:

on the desolate shores of the Davis Strait
his soul was claimed away from me, John Scarth,
as if by a horn-book devil: at night I could see
the tall green curtains of light in the sky
dance in his eyes like a midsummer's fire.⁴⁶

In another inversion, Isabel claims her own agency in an adamant refutation of 'all the stories' that will have told how she was 'seduced' and 'debauched'⁴⁷ – stories implicitly drawn from 'The Daemon Lover', where the woman is 'delud[ed] away' from home by the revenant mariner.⁴⁸

As in 'The Daemon Lover', where after sailing 'a league but barely three' the woman observes his 'cloven foot,' dismal countenance, and 'drumlie ee', prompting her to weep 'right bitterlie',⁴⁹ the estrangement between Scarth and Isabel begins soon after their departure from Orkney:

with his hands so hard on the ship's cold rail
his bones stood white as that ice-bound coast
at which he stared and stared
with a look in his eyes I did not
as yet understand: but was later to learn
quite simply, was love.⁵⁰

Isabel attributes their sleeping apart on ship to Scarth's revulsion now that she has 'become a man'.⁵¹ In the midst of her first bleak Canadian winter she learns that this emotional abandonment, which he rationalises as a 'snow-blind' infatuation with Canada, is less fancifully explained by the existence of a Chipewyan wife. After reading aloud his Dear John (that is, John Fubbister) letter, Scarth's reluctant ventriloquist James Brown provides a blunt interpretation:

I do not know her name. He has had her
for three years now. That is why he returned
from Orkney. They had two children, boys,
but both died young, within their first winters.
She watched his hand as he wrote your letter.
He smiled at her when he fixed its seal.⁵²

This account of the 'country wife' mirrors an obverse 'Daemon Lover story', that of the *other* other woman, a kind of Jane Eyre moment grounded in historical reality: such cohabitation between Company men and Indigenous women is characterised by Dorota Filipczak as a 'pattern in the imperial colonies spawned by western fantasies of power translated into sexual terms'.⁵³

After this shocking revelation comes a hard season among men 'dangerous as bears' and hibernating 'like animals' – dreaming of Orkney, Isabel awakes with 'the tear-drops turning / to splinters of ice stabbing into [her] skin'.⁵⁴ The following March brings 'two great events': her short-lived fling with David Spence Junior, and her tense reunion with John Scarth.⁵⁵ Alan Riach notes that in the Daemon Lover tradition 'the pain and consequence of too ready trust and absolute betrayal cut deep', and in A and B it is the distressed ship-carpenter whose grief is emphasised:⁵⁶

He beat his breast, he tore his hair,
The tears fell from his eyes,
And in the open streets he run
With heavy doleful cries.⁵⁷

In the *Ballad* it is Isabel's ship-carpenter, the 'coin' paid against the demon John Scarth's 'account', who will leave *her*, but not before roaring with laughter at Isabel's disguise of face-blackening and fur when they first meet.⁵⁸ It is 'laughing Davie' who writes 'John' Fubbister ('how hard [he] laugh[s] to write it') with the alluring offer of a marital home in Québec 'grander by far than anything seen in Fife or Orkney', and advises her to 'forget that surly brute' Scarth.⁵⁹ And it is David Spence Junior who will drown when a river boat overturns, leaving Isabel disconsolate, pregnant and alone.⁶⁰

***a kind of tax for living here, you pay
with parts of your body***⁶¹

The ballads serve a 'didactic purpose' in their portrayal of enduring human truths, and this didacticism is another element shared by the documentary poem.⁶² In Dorothy Livesay's original conception of the genre, these narratives 'are not told for the tale's sake or for the myth's sake: The story is a frame on which to hang a theme'.⁶³

Here, a central theme is 'labour': labour as work, as childbirth, and as commodity. To return to Hoepfner's point that Isabel conceptualises her sexual relationships with images of exchange, Davie Spence – whose surname is an amalgam of 'spend' and 'pence' – in this construct is an emotional commodity hedged against John Scarth's infidelity. When Davie leaves her, 'the charge / could be repaid by flipping that same coin', but her bitter reunion with Scarth offers diminishing returns and their intercourse is a form of indenturedship: 'We laboured at making love, like miners / bound to a dangerous, ill-paid job'.⁶⁴

In another of the *Ballad's* inversions of 'The Daemon Lover' template, Scarth makes good on the promised gold, paying a fine void of emotional capital when Isabel gives birth to a son they both know is not his:

But now that I was a woman again
the story required a seducer, a man
who had made me his victim: so for his shame
and mine, John Scarth laid down
a purse of coins beside my bed, and went.⁶⁵

Constrained by the economy of the ballad world, their exchange is modeled upon the bargain struck by the Daemon Lover who offers the woman wealth to come away with him then defaults on the deal: 'What, weep you for my gold?' he said, / 'Or do you weep for my fee?'⁶⁶ The use of 'fee' here is ambiguous, but the ultimate tariff is the woman's life when the ship sinks and she drowns. In this context, 'fee' can be classed with other instances of 'tribute' to the devil found in balladry. Wimberly traces the function and origin of 'human sacrifice' in the ballads 'Tam Lin' and 'Thomas Rymer':

As a consequence of having at stated intervals to pay this tax, tithe,
or teind to hell, the fairies, so it was formerly believed in Scotland,
were accustomed to abduct earthly folk, whom they offered up as
a tribute to the fiend.⁶⁷

One of the documents included in the *Ballad* is an image from the actual HBC account books of 1806 that records a payment of one pound and four shillings from John Fubbister to James Brown. This minor character shares qualities with one of the 'significant types' of fairy in Diane Purkiss's classificatory system:

1. Brownies, hobs and familiars; live in one house or serve one person, and overlap with
2. Fairy guides; often dead; conduct a person to fairies and/or teach them fairy lore.
3. Fairy societies; seen in fairy world or on ride; include king and queen.
4. Poltergeist/demon fairies, eventually melt down into tricksters; overlap with 1.⁶⁸

If Scarth meets the criteria to be classed as a demon fairy, Brown the brownie qualifies as a benevolent one – as Purkiss explains, 'Scottish fairy guides are usually kin to the person they guide', and brownies, 'like slaves, did household and farm

chores in exchange for enough food to stay alive'.⁶⁹ Isabel's 'countryman' Brown is her protector and messenger, and for his service the environment exacts a toll, 'three toes / [lost] to the frostbite' that John Scarth will 'throw into the Eastmain River'.⁷⁰ Isabel makes compensation with what remains of her own wages: 'A guinea for carrying the letters, / I thought, and a shilling for each of his toes'.⁷¹ The gruesome offering tossed into the river foreshadows the drowning to follow, and in keeping with tradition, where 'the fiend prefers one who is fat and healthy', Davie Spence is the tithe paid to hell, and a tax on the Hudson's Bay Company, human capital the cost of doing business.⁷²

**Winter became our world, the enclosure
of cold that knew no outer limit but the wind⁷³**

Isabel herself, inducted into the Company and passing by virtue of her ability to work like a man, appears to be a 'Type 3' fairy. Of the various heterotopias Foucault identifies, colonies are 'extreme types'; he instances Puritan and Jesuit religious communities in the first wave of colonisation that functioned as partitioned 'heterotopias ... of compensation', terrestrial spaces partitioned from disorganised sites of human life.⁷⁴ Though the *Ballad's* colony of HBC men is transient, its partitions are tenuous but real:

When the winter comes, you mustn't sleep
with your head to the wall; the wall is where
outside begins.⁷⁵

In religious heterotopias, orderly regulation of life functions as the compensatory element, and, in the company, such compensation appears in the rhythm of labour. The disappearing warmth of interior space, an inhospitable Arctic realm where sheets freeze hard as boards and the factor's wine turns to red ice, has shifted inside from the autumnal outdoors; there, the men sing a work anthem around their temporary hearth, a campfire 'inside the great dark': 'But we'll shoot red deer and we'll eat their tongues / Haul away, there's nothing better'.⁷⁶

Again, the song borrows from an older one, 'Johnie Cock': 'And he has taen out of that dun deer / The liver bot and the tongue'.⁷⁷ Despite Johnie's drinking the deer's blood, Wimberley says of this ballad that there's nothing to see here 'of the supernatural;' yet adds the suggestive afterthought that in Norse balladry blood-drinking 'effects restoration of enchanted mortals to human form'.⁷⁸

The *Ballad* offers other clues that the HBC voyageurs are trapped inside Fairyland. Scobie's repeated use of animal motifs to depict this society continues a time-honoured trend of hirsute fairies: as Diane Purkiss describes it, 'there's something quite hairy about fairies, they're often described in hairy terms'.⁷⁹ David MacRitchie,

in his euhemeristic 1890 anthropological study of fairies, *Testimony of Tradition*, would concur, as the term 'shaggy' as applied to a 'race' of hairy people featured in Highland lore 'is a synonym for a "brownie"'.⁸⁰ Celtic fairies are particularly associated with hunting deer, and MacRitchie recounts a folkloric theme wherein fairy troops are 'privileged' hunters with exclusive land rights, often for periods ending on Halloween.⁸¹ The HBC have claimed a similar privilege in their fur-trapping enterprise, and that the shivering men are all robed in heavy pelts makes it easy for Isabel to hide among them:⁸²

We huddled in furs, gathering round us
the skin of our commerce. Marten and fox,
beaver and mooseskin: small fortunes in London
we wore on our backs.⁸³

Interleaved in this image of humans wrapped in animal skin is a more sinister implication: Purkiss has noted a strand of ballad lore wherein a sense of ownership regarding fairy captives reveals a 'thin to vanishing point line between human and cattle' with 'mortals being the fairies' cattle'.⁸⁴ Stephen Scobie has tapped into a vein of fairy literature that, according to Purkiss, proliferated in the 16th century just as the English slave trade began: like the slave, 'the fairy advances his master's social position by apparent sleight of hand; the wealth he produces is unearned'.⁸⁵

Of the men who left Orkney to work for the HBC, the Reverend Francis Liddell wrote:

Instead of offering an honourable service to their King and
country, or staying at home to cultivate their lands, and protect
their wives, their children, and their parents, for the sum of £6 per
annum hire themselves out for slaves in a savage land.⁸⁶

This 'savage land' in the *Ballad* is figured as an otherworldly Arctic hell and the 'slaves' as enchanted mortals:

boys who left home without even a beard
and returned with three hard winters driven
into their skins by the Hudson's Bay.
We called them the Nor-wasters, and their eyes
had turned into the vacant blue of ice.⁸⁷

The three-year terms undertaken by these 'Otherworld itinerants' – to use Wimberly's apt descriptor – who have been emptied rather than enriched by their

indenture, reflect standard contractual language of the ballad tradition in describing 'periods of service, absence, penance, and so on'.⁸⁸ Isabel, who herself leaves Orkney as a beardless boy – 'a strong and sturdy lad' who speaks in 'whispers' – enters such a contract by making 'his mark on the line, a deeply scratched X / beside his name: John Fubbister'.⁸⁹

***Then Geddes welcomed the boy aboard,
shaking my hand so hard I nearly cried***⁹⁰

Wimberley observes the balladry's preservation of a universal primitive belief that a person's spirit, personality or power is 'bound up with' and 'present in' his or her name.⁹¹ Further, names have power to enchant or charm, and the example provided by Wimberley is of the ballad hero Tam Lin, who is cut off from his home when abducted by elves and assigned an 'unearthly' name:

'First they did call me Jack,' he said,
'and then they called me John,
But since I lived in the fairy court
Tomlin has always been my name.'⁹²

This name magic holds Jack/John/Tam Lin under an enchantment yet also grants him status as 'a naturalised member of the fairy community'.⁹³ Isabel, likewise, is initiated into the male world of the HBC when she boards the *Prince of Wales* and signs on as 'John' – a historical happenstance that, along with other striking congruencies between 'Tam Lin' and the documented facts of Isobel Gunn's life, Stephen Scobie deftly parlays into an echoing narrative of entrancement, unwed pregnancy, adventure and disenchantment.

As with 'The Daemon Lover', there are numerous iterations of the ballad commonly known as 'Tam Lin' mustered under that collective heading in Volume I of Francis James Child's compendium. And, as with 'The Daemon Lover', the narrative comes with a warning, aimed in this instance at *unmarried* women. In six of the nine Child versions, a caution dispensed in the first verse expressly forbids all maidens to come or go 'by Carterhaugh' (A, B, H, and I; 'Chaster's wood' in D or 'Charter's woods' in G) where young Tam Lin is waiting to collect their 'wad', or pledge; the cost of defying this prohibition will be "their rings, or green mantles, / Or else their maidenhead".⁹⁴ The poem then introduces a feisty young woman named Janet, Jennet, or Lady Margaret, who, insistent on her right of access, does exactly that and falls pregnant after the inevitable sexual encounter with Tam Lin, which is depicted in terms ranging from suggestive to explicit. In C, E, and F, the warning is retrospectively implied, and the seduction or rape scene elided, with the action commencing when Janet

revisits Carterhaugh ('Kertonha', 'Charteris ha', or 'Chester wood', respectively) to be reunited with her lover Tam Lin.

The story, in essence, is that Tam Lin has been captured by the Fairy Queen and the looming expiration of a seven-year stint in these 'pleasant' elfin lands means the obligatory tithe to hell is coming due: 'I am sae fair and fu o flesh, / I'm feard it be mysel!'⁹⁵ This danger precipitates his bargain with Janet, that if she helps him regain his human identity – one of privilege and title – he will be her worldly mate. The variants adhere to a consistent recipe for his release: Janet must wait at a specified hour – typically midnight, sometimes on Halloween – for the fairy host to ride through a crossroads (usually Miles Cross but in other instances Blackning Cross, Blackstock, or Chester Bridge). Here, she must pull Tam Lin from his milk-white steed and hold him tightly as he metamorphoses through a series of shapes – bear, greyhound, adder, wolf, etc., even a red-hot iron bar – until he is himself again, a 'naked knight' or 'mother-naked man' (A, B).

The plot's emphasis on entry tolls and exit spells demonstrates another principle of Foucault's heterotopology, that heterotopias operate under a 'system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable'; unless entry is compulsory, such as imprisonment, '[t]o 'get in one must have a certain permission' and in some cases 'submit to rites and purifications.'⁹⁶ In 'Tam Lin', ingress requires either defloration or abduction, and the charm for egress requires a ritualistic process:

First dip me in a stand of milk,
And then in a stand of water;
Haud me fast let me na gae,
I'll be your bairnie's father⁹⁷

In A, B, G and I, Janet's return trip to Carterhaugh is prefaced by a dramatisation of the court's anxiety about the unborn child's paternity, as voiced by one of her father's retainers, in A an 'auld grey knight': 'Alas, fair Janet for thee / But we'll be blamed a.'⁹⁸ That same anxiety is neatly grafted onto Scobie's riff on 'Dainty Davie': '*It's who will answer what he's wrocht?*'⁹⁹ In the song, Davie swears he will marry the singer, and his *Ballad* counterpart David Spence is cast in dual roles, that of the ship's carpenter in 'The Daemon Lover', and as an avatar of his progenitor Tam Lin.

As 'an earthly knight',¹⁰⁰ and the bonniest or bravest of the company, Tam Lin enjoys renown among the fairies, and informs Janet he is of noble birth – heir to an earl's, knight's or laird's wealth – but before helping him escape the elfin lands Janet makes him swear that he is who he says. In G, the question 'What pedigree are you?'¹⁰¹ is precursor to a something like a peerage review:

O I hae been at gude church-door
An I've got Christendom
I'm the Earl o' Forbes eldest son
An heir ower a' his land.¹⁰²

This version includes a negotiation, with Tam Lin assuring Margaret that he is a human man of status, and promising that their unborn child if a 'knave-bairn' will be his 'heir', and if a 'lass-bairn' will receive 'red gowd'.¹⁰³

David Spence writes to Isabel with an offer echoing Tam Lin's: after 'one winter more' of 'God-forsaken ice and bogs' he'll start a business in Quebec and build a grand house fit for a 'wife and family'.¹⁰⁴ Isabel, like Janet, has also done a background check:

Davie was sent to school
and meant to be a minister, but that could never
have been his way, for all that he wore
neat saint waistcoats, kept his linen clean
even on Hudson Bay. Oh, he could drink
...
but yet there was a delicacy in him:
he paid me court as if I were a lady
as fine in crinoline in any banker's niece
or a boat-builders daughter.¹⁰⁵

David Spence, like Tam Lin, is cut from a more gentlemanly cloth than his fellows. However, unlike Tam Lin, David Spence is blithely unaware of the tax on his head, and his plotline ends prematurely when his boat overturns – a dip into dramatic irony – with his own repatriation to the mortal world taking the form of a riverbank burial. Among his effects, a 'parcelled up ... satin waistcoat' is shipped home to his father in Scotland, a pyrrhic marker of class among a cargo of animal hides.¹⁰⁶

In *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn* it is the elderly retainer – John Scarth, veteran Company man – who grudgingly answers to fathering Isabel's son. And it is Scarth, the demon lover, who takes Isabel's toll in the form of her maidenhead, but it is the recruiter Geddes – proxy for the Royal HBC, which in turns stands for the Fairy Queen – who collects her pledge and transports her to Canada.

When you sail the North Atlantic You sail a sea of ice¹⁰⁷

Another 'extreme' form of heterotopia is the ship, 'heterotopia par excellence' – in 'civilisations without boats', claims Foucault, 'dreams dry up'.¹⁰⁸ *The Prince of Wales* is

a floating synecdoche for the Crown, sailing into a 'vacancy' where the 'land-locked shapes that determined [Isabel's] life' have disappeared.¹⁰⁹ Nested inside what she disdainfully terms the "'princely'" ship's 'claustrophobic enclosure' is the intimate space of Isabel and Scarth, simultaneously 'closed as a seashell, yet / as vast and grand as Canada'.¹¹⁰ As Wimberly observes, 'Otherworld itinerants must cross some sort of water barrier, a river or the sea'.¹¹¹ This particular ship is an extension of, and a bridge to, the new world's 'ice-bound coast'.¹¹² In 'The Daemon Lover', apart from the initial seduction of the married woman by the mariner, the poem is set entirely onboard and the ship is the site of dreams, disillusion, and death. On the voyage the woman spies a mountain 'dreary wi frost and snow' and the mariner spitefully advises her that this (and not the promised utopia of Rose Island) is their destination, 'the mountain of hell'.¹¹³

Isabel is headed for the same place. Fort Albany in summer is a mirage-like palisade, visible upon approach 'as if through a haze, a shimmering grey / distortion in the air': the instant Isabel and her fellow conscripts step ashore under a sun 'already fading at noon' they are beset by biting sand-flies until their skins run with blood; bleakly jesting about biblical plagues, 'we laughed', Isabel reports, 'as best we could, like souls / on their first day in hell'.¹¹⁴ They have arrived at Company Headquarters, known in the ballad realm as the Fairy Court. The idea that the heterotopia 'is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place ... several sites that are in themselves incompatible' neatly coheres in the title of the first published version of 'Tam Lin'.¹¹⁵ Thus, among versions A through I – variously named for the hero 'Young Tam Lane', 'Tomaline', 'Tam-a-Line the Elfin Knight' or 'The Knight of Faerylande', etc. – it is C, Herd's 1769 fragment 'Kertonha, or The Fairy Court', that foregrounds a geo-spatial simultaneity of the real and the supernatural.¹¹⁶

Substituting *Canada* for the uncannily assonant placeholder *Kertonha* creates an equally on-point alternate title for *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*. In 'Tam Lin', the liminal or wild zone Miles Cross is the designated site of disenchantment, and the most *unheimlich* moment in the *Ballad* occurs when Isabel, realising she is pregnant, leaves the warmth of the campfire and walks inland to a 'barren waste / of rock and muskeg, melting snow'.¹¹⁷ Here, in this interior no-man's land distant from the transient dwellings of the fur-traders, Isabel comes to the crossroads that precipitates her own retransition to female form. The process commences with a lament that references a similar crisis point in 'The Daemon Lover':

'O gentle death, come cut my breath,
I may be dead ere morn!
I may be buried in Scottish ground,
Where I was bred and born!'¹¹⁸

Isabel indulges in the same immigrant's nostalgia for the old country, its permanence symbolised by her memory of Orkney's immovable 'standing stones'; in an extremity of homesickness, she scrubs her face with dirt – 'the earth / that was not Orkney'¹¹⁹ – as if attempting to literally *ground* herself. The 'land-locked shapes' that previously informed her identity have literally and metaphorically 'disintegrated'.¹²⁰ In theorising 'place-identity', Harold Proshansky *et al.* observe that an individual's 'environmental past' provides data for validation of 'his or her own continuity' via 'stability of place and space'.¹²¹ Germaine to a reading of Isabel's deranged demonstration of grief and her unsettling interaction with an Indigenous family who appear in the barrens, then, is the relevance of the unstable liminal space she has entered, the 'or' between *Canada* and *Fairyland*.

***I had stepped outside all scope of pity,
I had become unnameable***¹²²

In the remote wasteland where Isabel retreats to contemplate the predicament of her pregnancy, the actual ground is 'melting' beneath her feet and is as unstable and unnameable as Isabel/John has now become. Smearing her face with earth is symptomatic of an existential disorder, and Isabel's *dérangement* repurposes that of Janet in 'Tam Lin': looking 'pale and wan' and ceasing to 'comb her yellow hair,' the cause of Janet's 'sair sickness' is soon construed by the court, that she has 'been with some leman'.¹²³ It is in this *unsettled* state that Isabel becomes aware of the ghostly Indian family silently regarding her and likens the dirt on her face to 'warpaint'.¹²⁴ Despite Isabel's masculine disguise of buffalo robes, 'the woman [understands her] sickness'¹²⁵ (which sickness, though? and what kind of understanding? Isabel's morning sickness is also *mourning* sickness, and the family's spectral fading away images a comparable loss of place-identity due to settler colonialism).

The idea that geospatial data informs one's sense of selfhood is key also to Foucault's conception of the 'mirror' function between heterotopias and utopias, a coeval junction between 'real' and 'absolutely unreal' sites where the self is reconstituted: 'Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself ... where I am'.¹²⁶ When Isabel cries out *Stromness!* – a place instead of a name – this strange utterance might be construed as a battle cry, a statement of solidarity (she, like the family observing her, is indigenous to a space impacted by empire), or the magic word that releases her from an enchantment: by invoking the name of her birthplace, Isabel dispels her seducer John Scarth's hold over her: 'the contest between us was over'.¹²⁷ It is in the heterotopic mirror, *Fairyland* reflected in the failed utopia of *Canada*, that she returns to herself.

***This blankness, this despair, this final
Canada***¹²⁸

In the *Ballad* the metamorphosis story is displaced onto Isabel, whose de-transition puts a new spin on Tam Lin's restoration to a 'mother-naked man'. When her labour pains start, Isabel must 'escape from / the Company' and departs fairyland for the 'mortal snows' of Pembina, where she gives birth on the floor of the astonished Factor's residence.¹²⁹ Mr Henry's florid description of Isabel's dis/clothes/ure might have been lifted directly from Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796): the 'poor, helpless abandoned wretch, who was not of the sex I had supposed . . . opened her jacket, and displayed a pair of beautiful, round white breasts.'¹³⁰ The final step of disenchantment here is not a ritual dip in milk but Isabel's demotion to laundry woman and 'washing for all hands, / which indeed she is no Witch at.'¹³¹

Isabel is now a 'freak', the 'object of salacious' stories,¹³² and this ontological disenchantment is not a rebirth; the 'mortal snows' signify a human realm, and a realm of death. When she returns to Orkney – on the same ship she set out on three years earlier – she returns a revenant, much like the mariner of 'The Daemon Lover':

Mother and child turned vagabond
on the roads of Orkney: no kin to receive me,
James Brown gone south in search of work
and every eye closed on me like a door.¹³³

The society open to Isabel Gunn, and where she reclaims her true name (the one that will appear on the real Isobel's death certificate in 1861), is located 'inside the walls of the Maes Howe tomb' where she shakes hands and speaks with unseen spirits who lived there 5,000 years earlier.¹³⁴ This site exemplifies what Foucault calls a 'heterochrony', a heterotopic space that breaks with traditional time, for instance, 'the cemetery' – a 'quasi-eternity in which [the individual's] permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance.'¹³⁵

If David MacRitchie's architectural drawings and pseudo-anthropological surmises in his 1890 *Testimony of Tradition* are to be credited, the Maes Howe Mound is as much a fairy habitat as the green hill where Tam Lin dwells. That a burial mound can be a fairy heterotopia is fitting, for as Diane Purkiss says of 'ancient' archetypal fairies, they 'have links with the dead, and some are the dead'.¹³⁶ Isabel is now one of the icy-eyed Nor-wasters who returns from the otherworld ordeal impoverished rather than enriched, a revenant recognised only by otherworld citizens like herself. Stephen Scobie's innovative iteration of 'The Daemon Lover' / 'Tam Lin' demonstrates how actors constrained by the economy of the ballad world are mirrored in colonial history, and how the didactic function of the ballad is borne out, with Isabel's story serving as a warning.

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Catherine Greenwood

Notes

1. Alan R. Knight, 'Steve and Isabel and Colin and Kurt: Local and Not So Local Heroes', *Essays on Canadian Writing* 41 (1990): 50-8 (28); Stephen Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn* (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1987).
2. For example, see Knight, 'Steve and Isabel and Colin and Kurt'. See also Kenneth Hoepfner, 'Secret Lettering', *Canadian Literature* 121 (1989): 135-7; Peter Jaeger, 'Theoreographic Metawriting: *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*', *Canadian Poetry* 34, no. 34 (1994) [no pagination], <http://canadianpoetry.org/volumes/vol34/jaeger.html>, accessed 30 June 2020; and Smaro Kamboureli, *On the Edge of Genre: The Contemporary Canadian Long Poem* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
3. Faye Hammill notes that a 'prevalence of wilderness motifs in the national literature was the basis for the earliest critical accounts of Canadian Gothic' and the 'vast, sparsely-populated forests of Labrador; Quebec and Ontario, or the frozen areas further north, are the classic setting for Canadian Gothic texts' in "'Death by Nature': Margaret Atwood and Wilderness Gothic", *Gothic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2003): 47-63 (47).
4. Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin, 2001), 204.
5. Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 4.
6. Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowicz, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-7, doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/464648> (22-4).
7. Laurie Ricou, 'Scobie, Stephen (1943-)', in *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*, 2nd edn, ed. E. Benson and L.W. Conolly (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), <https://www.proquest.com/encyclopedias-reference-works/scobie-stephen-1943/docview/2137926828/se-2?accountid=13828>, accessed 17 January 2022, paras 1, 4. Smaro Kamboureli acknowledges that the poem includes 'many ballad elements' but argues that the 'specification "ballad" is somehow at odds with' Isabel's synchronic relationship to her poetic personae; furthermore, Kamboureli argues that 'Scobie's own act of entitling the poem *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn* creates an 'ideological distancing' similar to that found in his previous long poem *McAlmon's Chinese Opera* (Kamboureli, *On the Edge of Genre*, 93).
8. Jaeger, 'Theoreographic Metawriting', para. 3.
9. Doug Thomson and Wendy Fall, 'Gothic Chapbooks and Ballads: Making a Long Story Short', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Gothic and the Arts*, ed. David Punter (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 259-70 (265).
10. Dorothy Livesay, 'The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre', in *Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 267-81 (269), cited in Smaro Kamboureli, *On the Edge of Genre*, 43.
11. Stephen Scobie, 'Amelia, or: Who Do You Think You Are? Documentary and Identity in Canadian Literature', *Canadian Literature* 100 (1984): 264-85 (269).
12. Alan Riach, 'Scottish Gothic Poetry' in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. C.M. Davison and M. Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 75-88 (76-7).
13. Lowry Charles Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads: Ghosts, Magic, Witches, Fairies, the Otherworld* [1928] (New York: Dover, 1965), vii.
14. Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*, 6, 17; Frances B. Gummere, cited in Wimberly, *Folklore*, 8, 13.
15. Emily Lyle, Introduction to *Scottish Ballads*, ed. Emily Lyle (Edinburgh: Cannongate, 1994), 9-19 (18; original emphasis).
16. Riach, 'Scottish Gothic Poetry', 77; Scobie, 'Amelia', 269.
17. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 8.
18. Riach, 'Scottish Gothic Poetry', 78. I use 'Isobel' to denote the historical woman and 'Isabel' the character as named in Scobie's poem.
19. See Scobie, *Ballad*, 61. For comprehensive accounts, see HBC Heritage, 'Isobel Gunn', Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/people/women/isobel-gunn>, accessed 3 July 2020; and Sigurd Towrie, 'Isabel Gunn', Orkneyjar: The Heritage of the Orkney Island, <http://www.orkneyjar.com/history/historicalfigures/isobelgunn.htm>, accessed 13 January 2022.

20. Towrie's Orkneyjar website provides this data: 'In 1799, of the 530 men working in the Hudson's Bay Company post in North America, 416 were from Orkney.'
21. Hugh Heney (1807?), cited in Emily Gwiazda, 'Isobel Gunn', in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2018), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/isobel-gunn>, accessed 3 July 2020.
22. Scobie, 'Amelia', 269.
23. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 36.
24. Wimberley, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*, 21.
25. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 35.
26. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 36.
27. James Barke and Sydney Goodsir Smith (eds), *Robert Burns: The Merry Muse of Caledonia* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964), 10.
28. Alexander Whitelaw (ed.), *The Book of Scottish Song* (Glasgow, Edinburgh and London: Blackie and Son, 1843), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:The_Book_of_Scottish_Song.djvu/116, accessed 5 July 2020, 98.
29. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 45.
30. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 40, 45.
31. Hoepfner; 'Secret Lettering', 136.
32. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. (1892; New York: Dover Publications, 2003), Kobo book [no pagination]. The excerpts cited from 'The Daemon Lover', 'Tam Lin', and 'Johnie Cock' are from Child's compendium and are identified by their variants' letter, stanza and line number.
33. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 20.
34. Peter Buchan, cited in Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Scobie would almost certainly have been aware of Bob Dylan's version 'The House Carpenter', recorded in 1961. According to Ricou, Scobie's 'favourite twentieth-century balladeer is Bob Dylan, about whom he has written both a serial poem, *and forget my name* (1999), and a biography *Alias Bob Dylan* (1991; rev. 2001)' (para. 2).
35. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 9.
36. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 10.
37. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 10-12.
38. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.27.
39. Foucault and Miskowicz, 'Of Other Spaces', 24.
40. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, C.16.3-4.
41. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, B.4.3-4.
42. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, C.19.3-4.
43. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 21.
44. Purkiss notes that 'One of the standard fairies of English folklore is the brownie, or hob, a household spirit that helps housewives, or more often servants, with their work in exchange for food, usually a bowl of milk or cream. A striking number of witches' helpers also demanded milk as payment for their services' (*Troublesome Things*, 153).
45. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, E.8.
46. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 20.
47. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 11-12.
48. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, B.13.4.
49. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, F.10-11.
50. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 19.
51. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 21.
52. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 29-30.
53. Dorota Filipczak, 'Transvestite M(other) in the Canadian North: *Isobel Gunn* by Audrey Thomas', *Text Matters* (Lodz) 8, no. 8 (2018): 431-40 (432).
54. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 33.
55. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isobel Gunn*, 34.
56. Riach, 'Scottish Gothic Poetry', 78.
57. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.30.

58. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 36.
59. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 41.
60. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 46.
61. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 29.
62. Riach, 'Scottish Gothic Poetry', 77-9.
63. Livesay, 'The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre', cited in Kamboureli, *On the Edge of Genre*, 43.
64. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 36-7.
65. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 51.
66. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, B.9.3-4.
67. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 323-4.
68. Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 8.
69. Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 155, 213.
70. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 29.
71. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 30.
72. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 325.
73. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 27.
74. Foucault and Miskowicz, 'Of Other Spaces', 27.
75. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 27.
76. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 26.
77. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.8.3-4.
78. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 74.
79. Diane Purkiss, 'What is a Fairy?', keynote address for "'Ill met by moonlight': Gothic encounters with enchantment and the Faerie realm in literature and culture', Open Graves, Open Minds conference, University of Hertfordshire, 8 April 2021.
80. David MacRitchie, *The Testimony of Tradition*, Project Gutenberg (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890), 159, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40290/40290-h/40290-h.htm>, accessed 23 September 2022.
81. MacRitchie, *The Testimony of Tradition*, 98-9.
82. Purkiss notes a folkloric motif of 'the English hob's fondness for animal-skin clothing, and for suits of leather; also an animal hide' in *Troublesome Things*, 155.
83. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 27.
84. Purkiss, 'What is a Fairy?'
85. Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 210-11.
86. Reverend Francis Liddell, *Old Statistical Account (1799?)*, cited in Sigurd Towrie, 'The Hudson's Bay Company', Orkneyjar: The heritage of the Orkney Islands, <http://www.orkneyjar.com/orkney/stromness/hbs.htm>, accessed 17 January 2022.
87. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 8.
88. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 108, 329.
89. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 13.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 84.
92. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, D.9; 'Tomlin', cited in Wimberley, 88. (Tam Lin is variously known as Tomlin, Tam-a-line, or Tam Lane.)
93. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 88.
94. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.1.3-4.
95. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.2.4.5-6.
96. Foucault and Miskowicz, 'Of Other Spaces', 26.
97. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, B.34.
98. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.11.3-4.
99. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 36.
100. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, A.29.

101. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, G.23.4.
102. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, G.24.
103. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, G.20.
104. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 41.
105. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 35.
106. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 46-7.
107. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 17.
108. Foucault and Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', 27.
109. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 17.
110. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 18.
111. Wimberley, *Folklore*, 110.
112. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 1.
113. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, F.13.
114. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 25.
115. Foucault and Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', 25.
116. The 'Tam Lin' composers would likely have understood that Carterhaugh is a real place: 'Carterhaugh is a plain at the confluence of the Ettrick with the Yarrow, scarcely an English mile above the town of Selkirk, and on this plain they show two or three rings on the ground, where, they say, the stands of milk and water stood, and upon which grass never grows' (Glenriddell MS, cited in Child, n. pag.).
117. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 39.
118. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, C.18.
119. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 39.
120. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 17.
121. Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff, 'Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3.1 (1983): 57-83 (66).
122. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 53.
123. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 1.12-13.1.
124. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 39.
125. *Ibid.*
126. Foucault and Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', 24.
127. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 39.
128. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 53.
129. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 50.
130. *Ibid.*
131. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 53.
132. *Ibid.*
133. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 57.
134. Scobie, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn*, 58. Tom Muir, 'The Unknown Isobel Gunn', Orkneyology.com, <https://www.orkneyology.com/isobel-gunn.html>, accessed 23 September 2022.
135. Foucault and Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', 26.
136. Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*, 48.

About the contributors

Francesca Bihet

Francesca Bihet is an independent scholar based on the Channel Island of Jersey. She completed her PhD in folklore at the University of Chichester in 2020. Her thesis *Folklore and Fairies: The History of Fairies in the Folklore Society from 1878 to 1945* explores the changes in the academic treatment of fairies by Folklore Society members over this period and how far these reflect wider folkloric and cultural trends. Among other articles, she has published the chapters 'Pouques and the Faiteaux: the Channel Islands', in *Magical Folk: British and Irish Fairies 500 AD to the Present* (2018), and 'Death and the Fairy: Hidden Gardens and the Haunting of Childhood', in *Uncanny Ecogothic Gardens in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2020). She has a longstanding interest in the Gothic, as well as witchcraft and the supernatural. She is currently researching the folklore of the Channel Islands.

Greta Colombani

Greta Colombani is currently a PhD student at the University of Cambridge, King's College, where she is working on an AHRC-funded research project about representations of communication with the Other World in British Romantic poetry. She previously completed her studies at the Scuola Normale Superiore and the University of Pisa, where she received a master's degree in Euro-American Literatures and Philologies in October 2018. In September 2017, a reworking of her BA dissertation was published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht under the title *A Gordian Shape of Dazzling Hue: Serpent Symbolism in Keats's Poetry*. Greta's research interests focus on British 19th-century literature – in particular Romanticism, Gothic literature and the supernatural – as well as on applications of literary theory and communication theory to textual analysis.

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Tatiana Fajardo is studying a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of the Basque Country, focusing on Patrick McGrath's narratives. She completed her MLitt in the Gothic Imagination at the University of Stirling, writing her dissertation on Patrick McGrath. Tatiana presented her study of McGrath's *The Wardrobe Mistress* and *Last Days in Cleaver Square* at the IGA conference in July 2022. Her essay on McGrath's *Ghost Town: Tales of Manhattan Then and Now* was released by Luna Press Publishing in 2021.

Sam George

Sam George is Associate Professor in Research and the Convenor of the popular Open Graves, Open Minds Project at the University of Hertfordshire. Her work with OGOM has led to a number of co-edited books with Dr Bill Hughes: *Representations of Vampires and the Undead* (2012); *In the Company of Wolves* (2020); *The Legacy of John William Polidori*

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Catherine Greenwood

Scottish-Canadian poet Catherine Greenwood is a PhD candidate in Creative Writing Poetry/Gothic Studies at the University of Sheffield, working on a dissertation titled *Gothicising a Poetics of Displacement: Immigrants/Effects*. Her article 'Defrosting the Gothic: Arctic Poetry in a Melting Sublime' is forthcoming in *Gothic Nature Journal*. For her MA thesis at the University of New Brunswick, she wrote a neo-Gothic adaptation of Matthew Lewis's novel *The Monk*.

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Jeremy Harte is a researcher into the overlap between folklore and archaeology, with a particular interest in sacred space, tales of encounters with the supernatural, and the traditions of Dorset, where he grew up. He has published widely in popular and scholarly journals, and is reviews editor of *Time & Mind*, the journal of archaeology, consciousness and culture. He is a member of the Council of the Folklore Society and has organised its annual Legendary Weekends since 2005. His books include *Cuckoo Pounds and Singing Barrows*, *The Green Man*, *English Holy Wells* and the award-winning *Explore Fairy Traditions*, as well as a paper in *Magical Folk*. He trained as a museum professional and is curator of the Bourne Hall Museum at Ewell in Surrey. He has been described by the *Independent on Sunday* as 'the most passionate yet abstruse lecturer I have ever seen since Geoffrey Hill'.

Dr Michaela Hausmann

Dr Michaela Hausmann received her PhD at the University of Vechta, Germany, where she also worked as a research assistant. She has also taught courses in English literature at the Universities of Vechta and Leipzig. Her particular research interests include poetry and narrative theory, fantasy and Gothic literature, and literature from the 19th to the early 20th centuries. In 2020, Michaela's first monograph appeared with Routledge: *'Music Makers' and World Creators: The Forms and Functions of Embedded Poems in British Fantasy Narratives*.

Dr Bill Hughes

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Katherine Langrish is the author of a number of historical fantasies for children and young adults including the critically acclaimed trilogy *West of the Moon*, and *Dark Angels* (HarperCollins). She studied medieval literature at University College and Kings College, London. Her short stories have appeared in various collections; she has published book chapters on Mervyn Peake and Alan Garner, and is folklore consultant to the journal *Unsettling Wonder*: www.unsettlingwonder.com. Her most recent publication is *Seven Miles of Steel Thistles*, a book of essays on folklore and fairy tales based on her blog of the same name: steelthistles.blogspot.co.uk.

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