



THE SECOND DAY OF FRASER'S *FOLKLORE OF NOVA SCOTIA*

FOLK 211 – Atlantic Canadian Folklore

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Popular superstitions

- Remnant of a “primitive” or “heathen” past
- “degeneracy” (cumulative) misunderstanding of “proper” religious belief
- Provides a judgment on the nature of belief
- Deviates from “official” religious practice

Religion

- A matrix of practices, proscriptions, requirements, rooted in an originating narrative. Often, a central authority that determines “proper” practice for particular rituals, etc.
- “Folk religion” as the localised manifestations of membership within that faith community, influenced by other folk group identities (ethnicity, region, occupation, etc.)



Ritual:

- A re-enactment of particular episodes within the sacred narrative by members of the community
 - Either to demonstrate a shift in status within that community (rite of passage)
 - OR to reaffirm position within that community (Rite of intensification)



Drama/performance

- Rituals are moments of sacred time that occur in sacred spaces
- That transcend the distance between the present space and time and the first occurrence of that event
- More than merely reproductions or imitations, they are new incarnations thereof (participations)

Magic:

- Something that is not subject “rational” explanation
- The ability to manipulate objects/people, etc. for a desired outcome
- James Frazer: “Sympathetic magic”
- Objects are understood to act on other objects distant to them)
 - Either because they are similar in form (homeopathic magic)
 - Or because they have been in contact (contagious magic)



Superstitions (belief practices)

- Efforts at exerting a control over something over which we would not normally have control through the manipulation of “forces” (or the intervention of same)