

ROOMER

The Newsletter of the Traditional
Drama Research Group.

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AN EARLY TUP?

Tom Pettitt

Of the various animals associated with English traditional drama a distinct group are characterised by a particular construction: "A skull or carved wooden head is fixed on a pole, and the operator crouches behind, covered with a cloth attached to the base of the head".(1) Such mast-animals (adapting Cawte's term, 'Mast horse') include the Old Tup and Old Horse of the North Midlands, the Kent Hooden Horse and the Wild Horse of the Cheshire Soul-cakers. In none of these cases does it seem possible to trace the tradition back much earlier than the nineteenth century: a situation which more or less applies to English traditional drama in general.(2) The 'Derby Ram' song associated with the Old Tup custom is referred to in 1739 and, a song rather like that on the Old Horse, 'Poor old horse, poor old horse', may lie behind a Christmas begging-song written by the Scottish poet William Dunbar in the early sixteenth century.(3) It is likewise to Scotland that we must turn to what may be the earliest reference to a mast-animal (and in a dramatic context), in Sir David Lyndesay's Morality Play, Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis. This play has a somewhat complex textual and performance history, being first composed and performed as an indoor interlude in the Banqueting Hall of Linlithgow Palace on Twelfth Night, 1540. No text of this version survives, but we have a fairly lengthy account supplied to Thomas Cromwell by a Scottish courtier. The play was extensively revised and enlarged by its author for out-door performances at Cupar in Fifeshire and Edinburgh in 1552 and 1554, respectively. The performance at Cupar was advertised in advance by a 'Proclamatioun' which, in addition to announcing the time and place of the performance, arouses the interest of the public by offering a short farce performed by several actors. This piece has already attracted the interest of folk-drama scholarship as its main action, in which an Old Man, a Courtier, a Merchant and a Fool take it in turns to woo a young wife (Bessy), parallels closely the Multiple Wooing Plays recorded in Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century.(4) A sub-plot in the farce concerns the blustering of a braggart soldier, 'Fynlaw of the Foot-Band', whose cowardice is finally demonstrated by the Fool. The latter informs the audience of his intention:

I tak on hand or I steir of this steid
This crakkand cairle to fle with ane schein heid. (11.140-141).⁵

('fle' is evidently used here in the transitive sense, 'to put to flight'). This he duly achieves in the concluding action of the performance. Fynlaw enters with a boasting speech worthy of a Hero Combat play:

Now is nocht this ane grit dispyte,
That nane with me will fecht nor flyte.
War goliath in to this steid

I dowl nocht to stryk of fis heid.
 This the swerd that slew gray steill
 Nocht half ane myle beyond kynneill.
 I was that nobill campoun
 That slew schir bews of sowth hamtoun.
 Hector of troy; gawyne, or golias
 Had nevir half sa mekle hardiness (11.238-47).

but then:

Heir sall the fuile cum in with ane schein
 heid on ane staff and fynlaw sall be fleit. (11.247.1-2)

Here we have precisely the construction of the modern mast-animal, with the head fixed to a pole: there is no mention of a blanket or cloth covering the Fool, but it would help to motivate Fynlaw's terror, and may be suggested by his calling this apparition a "gaist" (1.252).(6) Like the Tup, this creature may also have had a hinged jaw, as Fynlaw, in the course of his lengthy expression of terror, exclaims, "He gaippis, he glowris" (1.258). Subsequent lines suggest that the beast attacks, perhaps provoking a chase or a scrimmage, a behavioural characteristic not yet bred out of the mast-animals(7):

Na, now he cummis evin for to sla me;
 For godis saik, schiris, now keip him fre me. (11.266-7)

Appropriately, Fynlaw exits with a reverse application of the mummers' entry formula:

Wow, mak me rowme and lat me gae.

NOTES

1. E. C. Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise (Cambridge, 1978), p.8.
2. Cawte's earliest reliable references to the various mast-animals are: Hooden Horse, 1807 or perhaps 1736 (p.87); Old Tup, 1845 (p.117); Old Horse, 1840s (p.123); Wild Horse, 1819 (p.130).
3. Cawte, pp.117 and 123-4, respectively.
4. C. R. Baskervill, "Mummers' Wooing Plays in England", MP, 21 (1923-4), 225-272. For discussion see Richard Axton, "Popular Modes in the Earliest Plays", in Medieval Drama, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, XVI, ed. N. Denny (London, 1973), p.15; C. R. Baskervill, The Elizabethan Jig (Chicago, 1929; rpt. New York, 1965), pp.251-2.
5. The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount 1490-1555, ed. Douglas Hamer, Vol. II, Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh & London, 1931), "Proclamatious maid in cowpar of ffyffe".
6. Hamer, ed. cit., Vol. IV (1936), p.166, takes Fynlaw's response to suggest "that the staff also bore a flowing white drapery".
7. Most of the modern mast-animals indulge in some kind of violent interaction with the audience or other performers. For a chase, see Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise, p.140 (Old Ball, Lancashire).



TRADITIONAL DRAMA 1984

The 7th annual conference
on Traditional Drama Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
6th OCT 1984

For details:

The Centre for English Cultural Tradition
and Language • University of Sheffield
SHEFFIELD • S10 2TN.

In 1978 the first conference solely devoted to Traditional Drama was sponsored by the Division of Continuing Education and The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield. The papers and discussion sessions over the past years have suggested a wide range of innovative approaches to this area of study and the 1984 meeting will again follow in this tradition. In addition to the Conference an exhibition of photographs is to be mounted and film sessions are scheduled. If you have any publicity materials you wish to distribute please feel free to bring them along.

VENUE

Saturday, 6th October, 1984 (10.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.)

Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language,
Endcliffe Exhibition Hall, 605 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield. (Tel: 0742-681270)

Fee: £4 (including refreshments)

PROGRAMME

10.00 a.m. - Coffee

10.30 a.m. - Georgina Boyes, The Man-Woman Figure in Traditional Drama

- Emily Lyle, The Place of 'Langue' and 'Parole' in Calendar Studies and a look at the Twelve Days of Christmas

- The Puppet Play from Bartholomew Fair - A video introduced by Sandra Billington

1.00 p.m. - Lunch (available in nearby restaurants and pubs)

2.30 p.m. - Craig Fees, Looking over the Obvious

- Morebattle Guisards - A video introduced by Emily Lyle

- Traditional Drama Studies : A Critical Discussion - Chaired by Steve Roud

- Film Session introduced by Doc Rowe

A B S T R A C T S

THE MAN-WOMAN FIGURE IN TRADITIONAL DRAMA

Georgina Boyes

This study presents an examination of the different interpretations of the commonly recurring man-woman figure in Traditional Drama.

LOOKING OVER THE OBVIOUS

Craig Fees

This paper provides a further critique of some prior scholarship looking through some open doors at what everyone has seen: the recent origins of the mummers' play and the mumming play as propaganda.

THE PLACE OF 'LANGUE' AND 'PAROLE' IN CALENDAR STUDIES AND A LOOK AT THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Emily Lyle

The distinction between 'langue' and 'parole', familiar in linguistics, may be helpful in clarifying the point that two different approaches to calendar studies, both of which have engaged my attention, are essentially complementary. The more familiar functional approach is comparable with 'parole', the language as spoken at a particular place and time by a particular community, while the semiotic approach which looks at the total design of a specific calendar structure is comparable to 'langue', the internal structuring of a language. The semiotic approach adds a new dimension to the study of the period of chaos before the start of a year and offers a fresh interpretation of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

TRADITIONAL DRAMA STUDIES : A CRITICAL DISCUSSION

Chaired by Steve Roud

In Roomer 3:1 (1983), 5, Sam Richards commented:

"Judging by the contents of Roomer I may perhaps be forgiven for thinking that Traditional Drama consists entirely of matters surrounding St. George, Mummers, Fools, Robin Hood and chapbooks, etc. Do specialists in Traditional Drama include any of the following in their studies?

1. Local pantomimes.
2. Punch and Judy.
3. Street theatre, past and present.
4. Toasting Contests (as with black DJs).
5. Some of the more elaborate party games which involve role-playing, disguise, or representation of animals.
6. Children's games which basically involve play acting, playing house, or any of the goodies and badies mänge. These, after all, are improvised plays which follow patterns.
7. Monologues, especially those requiring dressing up.

If not, why not?"

This comment is presented to the conference for open discussion.

In addition, the discussion will explore the notion that little can be gained by studying the vast legacy of printed and manuscript descriptions of traditional plays.

AUGUST HARTMANN'S "FOLK PLAYS COLLECTED IN BAVARIA AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY"
A SUMMARY

Peter Millington

Despite having been published over a hundred years ago, this book is still one of the most cited works on German folk plays. It principally comprises about fifty play texts and descriptions, and is therefore roughly equivalent to R. J. E. Tiddy's (1923) The Mummers' Play. In addition, the twelve page 'Vorwort' provides; a) brief terms of reference for the book, b) a review of play types and previous work arranged according to the different provinces of Bavaria and Austria-Hungary, c) an explanation of the dialect notation, and d) acknowledgements regarding the musical scores.

Hartman was based in Munich and most of the plays come from a circular area which encompasses Munich, Innsbruck and Salzburg. The most notable exception is a group of plays from Ofen (i.e. Budapest) in Hungary. A number of locations had repertoires of several plays; sometimes form different festivals, sometimes from different performing groups or sometimes just for variety.

TRANSLATION OF THE CONTENTS PAGE OF AUGUST HARTMANN'S,
VOLKSCHAUSPIELE: IN BAYERN UND ÖSTERREICH-UNGARN GESAMMELT

- I Play of Christ-Child from Ofen [Budapest]
- II Play of the Three Magi from Ofen
- III Other plays and Christmas Customs from and around Ofen
- IV Whitsun King Riding around Ofen
- V The Landst nd Play ['Landst nd' = Elected body representing a provincial diet]
- VI The Untersbergers [The People from the Untersberg]
- VII Theatre of the Laufen Boatmen
- VIII Adam and Eve Play from Laufen
- IX The Cain and Abel Play
- X The Goliath Play
- XI The King Solomon Play
- XII Shepherd's Play from Laufen
- XIII Other Customs from Laufen
- XIV Play of the Inn [Bethlehem] or Advent Play from Hallein
- XV Shepherds' Play from Hallein
- XVI Play of the Three Magi from Hallein
- XVII Judas or Lent Play from Hallein
- XVIII Durrenberg Betrothal
- XIX Sword Dance and other Customs from Hallein
- XX Saalfelden Passion
- XXI Shepherds' Play from Traunstein
- XXII Shepherds' Play from Palling
- XXIII Drischellegspiele [Threshing Plays?]
- XXIV Das Anrollen [The Rolling?]
- XXV The Four Seasons
- XXVI The Old and New Fashions
- XXVII Hans Nord
- XXVIII The Stupid Builder
- XXIX The Oil-Carrier's Confession
- XXX Jo'l and Pretty Tresl
- XXXI The Prodigal Son
- XXXII The Chicken's Confession
- XXXIII Shepherds' Play from Halsbach
- XXXIV The Jew and the Pastor Play
- XXXV The Shepherd's Play from Brixlegg
- XXXVI Shrove Tuesday Plays from Tirol
- XXXVII Plays from Schwaz
- XXXVIII Shepherds' Play from Angerberg
- XXXIX Plays from Thiersee
- XL Christmas Play from Oberaudorf
- XLI Oberaudorf Passion
- XLII Christmas Play from Erl
- XLIII Passion Plays from Erl

XLIV	Plays from Rosenheim
XLV	Plays in the Isar and Ammer District
XLVI	The Wild-Man's Dance
XLVII	Christmas Play from Oberpfalz
XLVIII	Neumarkt Passion
IL	Christmas Play from the Bavarian Forest
L	"The Sufferings of Christ" from the Bavarian Forest
	Glossary

Most of the plays have religious themes. Usually they dramatise events associated with the relevant festival, notably Christmas and Easter. Two particularly popular plays are those dramatising the adorations of the shepherds (Hirtenspiele) and the Three Magi (Dreikönigspiele). Other Biblical plays (e.g. The Prodigal Son, Cain and Abel, etc.) seem not to be attached to any particular festival. The non-Biblical plays, although they may be less serious, often also have allegorical or moral themes. These include "The Four Seasons", "The Jew and the Pastor", "The Stupid Farmer", etc.

The plays are all in rhyme. Many include songs and some dances (usually linked sword dances). Dialect seems to be an important feature, since it is often used for comic effect or to distinguish characters. This explains the preoccupation with recording texts in correct dialect. The number of characters varies considerably. At one extreme there are plays which are dialogues between just two characters - as with English dramatised ballads. At the other extreme, the larger Passion and Christmas plays can have upwards of fifteen characters. The average number however is about seven (as with English folk plays).

The circumstances of performance also varied. Many were taken from house to house. Sometimes they were performed in just one place in the village - usually in a large room. Interestingly they were also sometimes performed semi-professionally by itinerant bands of weatherbound tradesmen (e.g. the boatmen of the Laufen near Salzburg).

Hartmann's book has been very influential in the study of German folk plays. Many authors have copied his style (e.g. the emphasis on dialect), and even L. Schmidt's (1962) indispensable Das deutsche Volkschauspiel could be regarded as a much expanded and updated version of the foreword. Hartmann's book is still useful today, if only because it provides a large representative sample of play texts. This provides a better picture of German folk drama than for instance, L. Schmidt's (1965) Le Théâtre populaire Européen, which only gives one text for each of several play types. Incidentally, L. Schmidt's (1962) Das deutsche Volkschauspiel reproduces not one play text.

It is not easy to obtain a copy of the book. Although it was reprinted in 1972, it is now out of print and no British libraries appear to hold copies. Eventually I managed to borrow a copy of the first edition from the National Bibliothek, Vienna through international library loans.

REFERENCES

- A. Hartmann (1880) Volkschauspiele: In Bayern und Osterreich-Ungarn gesammelt. Leipzig, Breitkopf und Härtel, 1880, xvi + 608pp.
- A. Hartmann (1972) Volkschauspiele: In Bayern und Osterreich-Ungarn gesammelt. Wulluf, Sändig, 1972.
- L. Schmidt (1962) Das deutsche Volkschauspiel: ein Handbuch. Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1962, 516pp, 18 plates.
- L. Schmidt (1965) Le théâtre populaire Européen. Paris, G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1965, 506pp.
- R. J. E. Tiddy (1923) The Mummers' Play. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1923, 257pp.

BIOGRAPHIES

TRADITIONAL DRAMA RESEARCH GROUP - RESEARCH GUIDE 2

This guide is intended to suggest relevant areas to examine when compiling personal biographies. As such the guide is not meant to be used as a questionnaire but rather it has been designed as a basic checklist of topics which can be explored as and when required. Consequently the guide is not all embracing but should be used as a reminder of the sorts of things that may be relevant.

The reasons for compiling biographies are many and varied. However, their main use is in helping us to understand the influences which have shaped an individual's past life and so, in turn, played a major part in structuring his or her current attitudes and behaviour. Biographies therefore help us place an individual's actions in perspective. Since folklore is essentially the result of individuals interacting with one another in specific ways the questions we need to ask, in order to further our understanding, must reflect this.

With this in mind, it is important to remember that biographies may have to be compiled for not just the person we have talked to but also individuals that have influenced their lives - for instance parents, relatives, friends, etc. and, in particular, relevant tradition bearers.

The answers to many of the points I have listed here will crop up in general conversation or in the form of reminiscences and anecdotes. Direct questioning should be avoided wherever possible - as should the prompting of replies.

The Guide is designed to operate at three distinct but related levels. The first section reminds us what we need to note to enable us to accurately identify individuals at a later date. It then moves on to present a simple outline of the major influences that shape all our lives and so the way we put into practice our cultural traditions. The final section outlines specific areas of the individual's life which may have proved highly relevant in shaping the way they personally put a tradition into practice.

What is considered 'relevant' information will, of course, vary depending on the nature of your investigation. Consequently it is up to the researcher to give the question of biographies considerable thought before embarking on a particular project. In some instances we may perhaps only need to identify particular individuals. However, if biographies are being compiled for archival purposes it is obvious that the fullest possible coverage should be aimed for - the need being to satisfy a wider range of questions which may be asked at a later date.

The applications for this guide are many and consequently it has not been designed solely for use in interviews. It could equally well be used where information is being abstracted from printed items or manuscript collections.

For an expansion of the topics covered in this guide see Paul Smith, Biographical Data, CECTAL Research Guide No.4 (Sheffield: CECTAL Publications forthcoming)

A. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS

The following details will help in accurately identifying individuals we may have talked to. This may not seem particularly important when you first set out to do this type of work. However, as time goes by you discover there are an awful lot of John Smiths in this world.

- Surname/Forename(s)/Maiden Name/Nickname(s)
- Present or last known address and telephone number
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Date deceased
- Obtain a photograph of the individual

B. BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

These topics provide a simple outline of the major influences which shape the lives of each and every one of us. In turn they mould the way we practise all cultural traditions. This section can obviously be developed further and tailored to suit your project.

- Ethnic/cultural group
- Language(s) spoken
- Nationality
- Birthplace of parents and the year(s) born
- Religion
- Current marital status
- When married (prepare a separate outline for the spouse).
- Number, age and sex of children
- Current occupation
- Usual/preferred occupation
- Assessment of social status
- Level of educational achievement
- Outline their role as a tradition bearer in the community
- Outline any commercial interest they may have in Folklore, etc.
- Summarise the key point in the individual's life
- Gather any media information which exists on the individual's life

C. MAJOR FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

In certain cases further vital relevant areas of life history may also need to be examined. These topics should be explored as and when appropriate.

- Aesthetic judgement
- Character/personality outline
- Community type (cover the social, cultural, religious, political, etc. make-up of the community where lived)
- Educational history
- Employment history
- Habitation history (include where lived, type of residence and reasons for periods of absence)
- Income/wealth
- Kinship network (cover at least immediate and significant relatives)
- Leisure activities
- Medical history
- Membership of organisations, clubs, etc.
- Political interests/affiliations
- Religious affiliations and involvements
- Social contacts (include all significant friends, neighbours, colleagues, etc.)

(See Roomer 3:5)

Although unlikely to affect Michael Preston's analysis and conclusions, I would nevertheless like to correct some inaccuracies in his list of references given in 'A Key to the KWIC Concordance of British Folk Play Texts', Roomer 3:5 (1983).

The list for Staffordshire gives Astbury, Rode and Lawton. These three villages are in fact in Cheshire, not Staffordshire, although they are close to the border. Also given in this county list is Knotty Ash and West Derby. These two places are now suburbs of Liverpool, and consequently in Lancashire. No reference is given for Keele; I would be interested in hearing from anyone who knows what the reference is.

Whether or not the reference for Knotty Ash and West Derby and also Mow Cop is to a play, rather than just a song, is debatable, and certainly no play as such is referred to.

KATHARINE BRIGGS FOLKLORE AWARD

The Folklore Society is pleased to invite entries for the 1985 Katharine Briggs Folklore Award. The Award is open to all books on folklore receiving their first British publication between 1 June 1984 and 31 May 1985. The prize is named in memory of the distinguished English folktale and literature scholar, Katharine M. Briggs. It will be awarded to the author of the book which, in the opinion of the judges, has made the most outstanding contribution to folklore studies during the year.

The term 'folklore studies' will be taken to embrace all aspects of traditional and popular culture, narrative, beliefs, customs and folk arts, including studies with a literary, anthropological, linguistic, sociological or geographical bias. It does not include reprints or folktales retold for children. In addition to the Award, the winning author (or authors) will receive a cheque for £50 and an engraved goblet, which will be presented at the reception following The Folklore Society's annual Katharine Briggs Lecture, held at University College London each November.

For further details and entry forms please contact Derek Froome, Honorary Publicity Officer, The Folklore Society, University College London, Gower Street, London. WC1E 6BT

ROOMER: THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TRADITIONAL DRAMA RESEARCH GROUP

ISSN 0262-4095

Research in any field is, as often as not, hampered by the lack of communication between individual researchers, and Traditional Drama is no exception. We are acutely aware that there are many people doing valuable work who have little or no contact with others in this field and, consequently, no opportunity to compare notes or air their views.

ROOMER then is designed to fill this gap by providing an informal forum. It includes notes and queries, details of publications, out-of-the-way texts, information on work in progress, in fact anything that may be of interest to those working in the field of Traditional Drama. As such it relies heavily on participation by subscribers. Therefore, if you have any potential contributions we would be most grateful to receive them.

Back volumes of the newsletter are currently available at the cost of the annual subscription. For further information regarding ROOMER and the work of the TRADITIONAL DRAMA RESEARCH GROUP contact:

Steve Roud, 9 Albert Carr Gardens, London. SW16 3HD (01-677-9393)
Paul Smith, Laburnum House, Main Street, West Stockwith, Doncaster. (0427 890042)

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TRADITIONAL DRAMA RESEARCH GROUP - GUIDES

Enclosed with this issue of Roomer is a copy of the second Traditional Drama Research Group Guide: Biographies. Devised by Paul Smith, the guide aims to provide an introduction to the range of topics that need to be covered when compiling biographies. Although it has been prepared with traditional drama in mind the guide will also be of relevance to other areas of folklore research.

Guides currently available:

1. Basic Questions to Ask by Peter Millington
2. Biographies by Paul Smith

Forthcoming guides include:

Tracing Photographs

Surveys through Newspapers

Copies of these guides are available, on receipt of an A4 s.a.e., from Traditional Drama Research Group, c/o The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, S10 2TN.

CORRESPONDENCE

JOHN FLETCHER AND THE OBSERVER

E. C. Cawte

(See Roomer 2:4 pp.23-25)

I can add a little information on the people mentioned in this article. The R.J.Sharp MSS are divided between the libraries of the Folklore Society and the EFDSS. Each has a bound set of photocopies. This includes the carbon copy of Sharp's letter 2 i (photocopy pp.58-61). I cannot trace the originals of any other letters, or add anything useful about the other writers, but there are cuttings of 4 and 5 in the Eric Swift collection.

There is a letter from T.Fisher Unwin (1 Adelphi Terrace, London W.C., 3rd February 1914) to T.F.Ordish in the Ordish papers (box 6, photocopy VI 46), which throws some light on letter 3 i:

"With regard to what we in Sussex call the Tipteerers Play. I might call your attention to the version in Stead's little Penny 'Poets Christmas'.....I am afraid I cannot put my hand on the original one that we took down some years ago; at present we use the one in Stead's little book and it is to be performed in our village on the 13th. of this month. It has been performed in other villages in Sussex at Christmas time and in one or two places I believe it is a direct continuation of old times, but in our case it is only a revival".

The evidence is nicely balanced as to whether Unwin had collected an authentic text or not, and who were 'we'? Presumably 'our village' is Heyshott, mentioned in letter 3 i. As the publisher corresponded with at least two writers on plays, and with at least one with a view to publication, it might be worth seeing if the firm still has any information in its archives.