

TRADITIONAL DRAMA STUDIES



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A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NORTH AMERICAN THESES ON TRADITIONAL DRAMA AND RELATED TOPICS

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Over the past several years, I have been accumulating references to American and Canadian M.A. and Ph.D. theses which have traditional drama as their focus. In an attempt to consolidate this research, I have recently undertaken a systematic search for relevant material - initially using the following sources:

- My personal bibliographic files; some of these entries have already been listed in Roomer.
- A computerized database search of Dissertation Abstracts.
- Alan Dundes. Folklore Theses and Dissertations in the United States. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976.
- Michael Heisley. An Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Folklore from the Southwestern United States. Los Angeles: Centre for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, 1977.
- Fredric M. Litto. American Dissertations on the Drama and Theatre: A Bibliography. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1969.
- Sue Samuelson, ed. Twenty-five Years of the Department of Folklore and Folklife of the University of Pennsylvania: A Dissertation Profile. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Department of Folklore, 1983.

In searching these sources, some one hundred and sixty-two references, spanning approximately seventy-seven years, have so far been identified. In the main, these theses were generated within departments of English - although work has also emanated from such departments as Anthropology, Theatre Arts, Romance Languages, French, Spanish, and Political Science.

The earliest thesis located was by Marie Caroline Lyle, "Relation of the Lucifer Traditions in the Literary Compositions of the Middle Ages to the Story of the Fall of the Angels in Mystery Plays"

(1912). The most recent were produced in 1989 - one by Max Richard Harris, "Theater, Colonization and 'The Conquest of Mexico': Performing the Other's Text as a Mode and Model of Cross-Cultural Dialogue," the other by Richard Reyes Flores, "Los Pastores: Performance, Poetics, and Politics in Folk Drama."

As can be seen from the titles listed, I have interpreted traditional drama in the broadest sense and have also included a number of related topics - such as the manifestation of folk themes in literary drama, as well as areas in which literary and folk traditions have had some interplay. Consequently, while covering the "Mummers' Plays" of the British Isles (e.g., Lichman 1981), the bibliography also includes studies of "Mumming" as it has evolved in North America (e.g., Richardson 1976; Welsh 1968). Likewise, studies of forms of indigenous North American traditional drama have been included - such as studies of American Indian traditions (e.g. Christensen 1956; Snow 1934). However, by far the largest group of studies of indigenous North American traditional drama plays are those on "Los Pastores" (e.g. Barsun 1938; Brewer 1956; Hunter 1940). Also incorporated are theses which explore forms of traditional drama found in other parts of the world, such as Europe (Cook 1964; Deming 1944), Africa (Essien 1985), and the Philippines (Herandez 1955). Furthermore, I have listed studies of traditional religious dramas (e.g. Bobe 1938), traditional puppet plays (e.g. Goldbergelle 1984) and the use of items of folklore in a variety of forms of drama (e.g. Barrett 1938, Byron 1938, Gaskins 1934; Klein 1937). Also covered are examinations of American "Folk Drama" (e.g. Just 1936; Lewis 1939; Stephenson 1984). This is primarily a literary genre, prevalent before the Second World War, which utilised local themes, dialect, and actors in socially relevant community-theatre style productions.

To help to bring out some of the different areas of concern addressed by these theses, I have initially divided the bibliography into two main sections - depending on whether the main emphasis of the thesis is on traditional performances or literary themes/genres. Both these categories have then been further subdivided, and a "catch-all" category of "Miscellaneous" has also been included.

Traditional Performance

- 1: British/American Traditions;
- 2: European Traditions;
- 3: Asian and African Traditions;
- 4: Los Pastores and Spanish-American Traditions;
- 5: American-Indian Traditions.

Literary Themes/Genres.

- 6: Medieval and Renaissance Theatre and Drama;
- 7: Folklore Themes and Literary Drama;
- 8: "Folk Drama" and Community Theatre;
- 9: Miscellaneous.

It is not always apparent from the title into which category a thesis should go. Rather than wait the two or three years it would take me to check each such thesis, when in doubt, I have assigned it to what seems to me to be the most likely category and "flagged" that entry with an asterisk (*), so as to indicate that I regard this as a provisional placement. If, by any chance, you have an opportunity to examine any of these flagged theses to ascertain whether it is appropriately placed or not, I would be most grateful to hear from you.

The regrettable realization must be that, for one reason or another, this bibliography probably just records a fraction of what has actually been produced. As is always the case, the main problem is tracking down relevant materials. And in the case of theses, this is not always easy - particularly as not all North American universities participate in the Dissertation Abstracts program. Consequently, many items just never get listed. I am sure that there are numerous relevant theses lurking out there, crying out, "You missed me; you missed me!" To that end, if you do come across any pertinent items which I have not listed, please do get in touch.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland for their assistance in locating materials, and with the computerised database searches. Thanks must also go to Craig Fees for reading an earlier version of this essay and for offering many helpful suggestions.

TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE

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RESEARCH, OR JUST COLLECTING?*

E.C. Cawte

Vulgar rites and popular opinions have indeed travelled down to us through a long succession of years, and the greatest part of them, it is not improbable will be of perpetual observation. The strongest proof of their remote antiquity is that they have outlived the general knowledge of the very causes that gave rise to them.

So wrote John Brand in 1777 when he first put forward his Observation that "Christian, or rather Papal Rome, borrowed her Rites, Notions, and Ceremonies, in the most luxuriant abundance from ancient and heathen Rome." From this he developed his thesis of Popular Antiquities, that customs of the people were of pre-Christian origin. His work appeared in five editions under his own name in the next hundred years. Customs were recorded in The Athenaeum and the Illustrated London News, William Thoms coined the word folk-lore to describe these notions, and soon after started Notes and Queries, which was, among many other things, a journal of folklore. One hundred and one years after Brand's first edition the Folk-Lore Society was founded, and in 1946 its title was still "The Folk-Lore Society for collecting and printing relics of popular antiquities." Brand's thesis lived on in this title, and we should also note the emphasis here on "collecting".

The "Great Team" described by Dorson came, and went; the County Folk-Lore series started, and petered out. Additional societies were formed for Folksong, Folk Dance, and Folk Life, and yet the year in which the Folklore Society celebrated its centenary, one looked in vain for a reasoned, factual account of many of the customs which interest me, and which ought to interest anyone who is interested in traditional drama. Nowhere is there an expert study of the customs of Plough Monday, or May Day (both of them briefly described by Brand from his own observation). Nowhere is there a study of the old customs which might throw light on the origins of the more recent