THE ENGLISH MUMMERS' PLAYS

AS

MAGICAL RITES OF PASSAGE

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Grace Moore

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PREFACE

The relationship between the mummers' plays and magical ceremonies has been given only broad general coverage by previous researchers. For this reason, I believe that my attempt to specifically identify play elements as those underlying rites of passage is a contribution to original knowledge.

RÉSUMÉ

Le but de cette thèse est d'isoler des éléments spécifiques des textes des pièces, et les relater à leur structure fondamental d'un rite magique de passage.

Soixante-seize textes étaient examinés. Une liste de ces textes, indiquant le type, la date, l'emplacement, la saison de représentation et la source est attachés au Chapitre I. Les textes qui sont catalogués dans l'index géographique de English Ritual Drama, par E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm et N. Peacock sont catalogués à part de ceux qui sont seulement présents dans des autres sources.

Le type des textes comprennent les trois catégories de combat d'héros, pièce de danse des épées et pièce de cour. Ces catégories sont pleinement considérées au commencement du Chapitre II.

Le corps principal du Chapitre II s'occupe de l'isolement de trois fonctions rituelles, présentes dans tous les textes et vues à répresenter des segments du rite de passage au-dessous toutes les pièces. Ces fonctions sont le combat ou sa variante l'exécution, la guérison et le mariage. Tous les éléments majeurs des pièces sont compris sous ces trois fonctions. Le combat peut comprendre l'engagement des soldats, la présentation des équipes exécutantes et l'allocation de la culpabilité pour la mort de la victime et des rites d'enterrement, suggérés ou actuels. Le mariage comprend la cour, la présentation d'un bébé, une quête communal, le festoiement et la gaieté plus général.

Les trois fonctions des pièces correspondent aux fonctions fondamentaux de la séparation, la transition et l'incorporation.

Le Chapitre III tente une corrélation des fonctions généraux et détaillées des pièces, à la séparation, à la transition, et à l'incorporation.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is to isolate specific elements of play texts and relate them to their underlying structure as a magical rite of passage.

Seventy-six texts were examined. A list of these, indicating type, date, location, season of performance and source is appended to Chapter I. Texts listed in the geographical index of English Ritual Drama, by E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm and N. Peacock are listed separately from those present only in other sources.

Play type includes the three categories of hero-combat, sword dance play and wooing play. These are considered fully at the beginning of Chapter II.

The main body of Chapter II is concerned with the isolation of three ritual functions, present in all texts and seen to represent segments of the rite of passage underlying all plays. These functions are combat or its variant execution, cure and marriage. All major play elements are subsumed under these three functions. Combat may include enlistment of soldiers, introduction of executing teams and guilt assignment for slaying. Cure includes lament for the victim's death and suggested or actual burial rites. Marriage includes wooing, the presentation of a baby, a communal collection, feasting and more general merriment.

The three play functions correspond to the underlying functions of separation, transition and incorporation. Chapter III attempts a correlation of general and detailed play functions to separation, transition and incorporation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter I. The Mummers' Plays as Magical Seasonal Rites.

My hypothesis is that the English mummers' plays are magical rites of passage, seasonal in occurence and structurally analogous to earlier magical ceremonies. This hypothesis will be tested by means of an examination of seventy-six play texts and of the identification of their elements as those of seasonal rites of passage.

The plays have been classified into three basic types, which contain elements similar to those of other ceremonies but also have specific identifying features. These will be considered in more detail later, as will the underlying structure of all plays as seasonal ceremonies.

The relationship between the plays and structurally analogous ceremonies has been briefly considered by E.C. Cawte et al.[1], E.K. Chambers, and Alan Brody. Cawte points to the appearance of the Festival at the same time as the Epiphany, when most English plays appear. He also mentions a sacred marriage, analogous to folk marriages, as one of the rituals in the annual cycle of Dionysus.[2] Chambers postulates an original European ludus from which all plays are derived, but does not present factual evidence for its appearance.[3] Brody isolates the two identifying features of the plays as being their seasonal nature and the fact that all contain a death and resurrection somewhere in the course of their action. These features are also present in the ancient Greek Dionysia,[4] the carrying out of Lent in pagan Europe,[5] and Christian observances of Easter.

(a.) Magical Seasonal Rites.

Seasonal ceremonies have been identified by Van Gennep as magical rites of passage, designed to effect a change in both natural and social events. As rites, they are actions both re-done and pre-done with special magical intent. The actions are intelligent in that they are purposive rather than indiscriminate. Their seasonal repetition is designed to shape future events on the basis of historical experience. Their highly elaborate structure serves to characterize them as rituals, which for the purpose of the present study will be understood as simply elaborate rites.

The ceremonies recur annually, at time periods which mark seasonal changes. In late European history these are the Christian Christmas and Easter. In early Europe there are only two seasons. Winter begins with the driving home of cattle from the pastures and summer when they are driven up again to the hills in March. In early Greece there are again but two seasons or Horae, the fruitful and fruitless ones. The word Hora seems at first to have been almost equivalent to weather, suggesting seasonal changes which have more to do with climatic conditions than simply with time periods. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that early seasonal ceremonies reported by Harrison and by R.F. Willetts occurred octennially, or every nine or seven years, rather than annually. Even more clearly than do later annual ceremonies, those involve transfer of political power. They may be based on the life cycles of totem animals represented in the ceremonies. Such animals are ones in which man participates by means of magical identity. They may be based on some other natural phenomena than

the astronomical and vegetative changes which determine later time periods.

In considering the plays as magical rites, it is appropriate to examine the structure of magic. J.G. Frazer's attempt[12.] to reduce it to a simplistic Newtonian system seems anti-historical and inadequate. Anthropologically, human religious development parallels human material development, as is illustrated in the opening chapter of E.O. James' Seasonal Feasts and Festivals[13.]. Societies based on hunting and fruit-gathering differ considerably from those based on agriculture and herding, in magical and religious expression as well as in practical organization.

For the purpose of this study, the identifying feature of magic will be seen to be not mechanism, but a phenomenon described by Jane Harrison as methektic participation.[14.]

Frazer assumes that magic treats spirits objectively as inanimate objects, so that under it all personal beings, human and divine, are subject to impersonal forces. These forces are seen to be themselves controlled by magicians who know how to manipulate them. Their exact nature is, however, not specified. They seem to originate in Frazer's personal desire to see magic as analogous to science rather than in an objective analysis of magic itself. While magic does entail belief in vague spiritual substances such as the mana of the Melanesians,[15.] these substances bear no resemblance to the Newtonian laws believed in the European enlightenment to govern the material universe. They are essentially primitive metaphysical entities, on which magic

is performed as a methektic participation in them. Such participation is defined by Harrison, in contrast to mimesis, as the expression of a common nature participated in, rather than the imitation of alien characteristics. All rites, including the seasonal ceremonies, can be seen to consist of methektic participation in magical substances similar to mana.

In contrast to Frazer, Harrison describes the fundamental presupposition of magic as similar to the Stoic conception of the world as a living animal, not to be coerced and restrained, but reverently wooed. It is known not by external experimentation on it, but by psychological initiation into it. The importance of seasonal ceremonies in magical practice illustrates the changing nature of the magical world.[16] This world is characterized by periodicity, or the recurrence of times of special tension and interest. It includes tabu as the negative counterpart of magical attitudes toward mana.[17] Tabu consists of avoidance rather than active participation. Yet it shares with magic a methektic nature, in that it is a negative approach to mana, which could not exist if identification with mana were not originally recognized.

The period of Greek religion in which the ritual plays giving rise to later drama are found is its most primitive one, described by Gilbert Murray as the Eustheia or Age of Ignorance. Modern anthropologists and explorers have found parallels for this period in every part of the world. Murray sees it as characterized by religious dread, magical ceremonies producing strange emanations of themselves, and a divine or sacred animal. This analysis may be somewhat romantic, for comedy or joyous ecstasy may be argued to characterize early religious periods at least equally as much as does fear.[18]

Up to this point I have been careful to avoid using the term religious to describe phenomena involved in magical practices. But it is difficult to avoid confusion, since other researchers are frequently guilty of it, and since magic can be understood as simply one form of religion, the form which Murray describes as characteristic of the first of five stages of Greek religious development. Yet magic is distinguished from later theological developments in that these are based on conscious metaphysical premises, whereas magic is characterized by the direct methektic participation of man in his external universe. When magic and religion are considered as different, magic is identified with direct spiritual action on a given environment, whereas religion is identified with spiritual action which is mediated through beliefs in abstract gods.

(b.) English Mummers' Plays.

The English mummers' plays are specific examples of seasonal ceremonies.

The earliest substantial collection of the plays was made by R.J.E. Tiddy,[19] who in 1920 published The Mummers' Play, containing thirty-three printed texts from a variety of English counties. The Mummers' Play also contains a seventy-six page introduction which includes, along with some questionable assumptions regarding folk literature, some accurate observations regarding specific play elements. The most important of these are nonsense humour, especially as it is seen in journeys to the Land of Cockaigne, and the characters of Beelzebub and the man-woman, Dame Jane.

In 1933, E.K. Chambers published The English Folk-Play, containing only six printed texts, used for illustrative purposes. One of these is a fabricated archetype of a typical hero-combat. Chambers presents a fairly systematic classification of the plays in general into three basic types, hero-combat, plough play, and sword dance. Local deviations, such as the Dorsetshire Old Bet plays, are also considered. There is thorough coverage of specific play elements, as they exist in multiple versions, for a wide variety of texts. An attempt to relate the texts to more primitive European ritual is also undertaken. This suffers from a reductionist tendency to look for a single underlying performance from which all plays are derived.

In 1967, E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm, and N. Peacock published English Ritual Drama, a geographical index of 1186 mummers' play texts and fragments, categorized according to the three basic types, hero-combat, sword dance, and wooing or bridal play, rather than plough play. The index covers England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, The Isle of Man, The Leeward Islands, Canada, and the U.S.A. It contains a brief discussion of the plays' relationship to analogous rituals.

Folk-lore journals, particularly Folk-Lore and Folk-Lore Record, have regularly published both individual and collected versions of mummers' play texts. Roughly half of the texts used in this study come from these periodicals.

Recent coverage of the plays can be found in Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, published by H. Halpert and G.M. Story

in 1969. This source concentrates on mumming performances in general, many of which are not plays and not meaningfully connected to seasonal ceremonies. The performances are also specific to Newfoundland. Yet three standard play texts are published, along with commentary integrating them into both Newfoundland culture in particular, and the general pattern of seasonal performances outlined above.

Also in 1969, Alan Brody published The English Mummers and Their Plays, the most thorough theoretical work appearing on the plays to date. Brody employs the categories of Cawte, Helm and Peacock, favoring them as more precise than those of Chambers. He pays considerable attention to the magical relationship of the plays to myth and ritual and to the origins of drama in magical practices involving fertility-daimons. Attention is also paid to the prevalence of animals, particularly horses, in at least some of the plays. Their presence is seen to illustrate totemistic practices. The major shortcoming of Brody's work appears to be an inadequate consideration of magic as a system of practices. Brody's preoccupation with fertility daimons seems to reflect a search for personified absolutes rather than the actual structural categories of the plays.

Of the seventy-six texts examined in this study, fifty were included in the Cawte index and twenty were not. Listings of texts present and not present in the Cawte index are given below. Abbreviations for play types are the three basic ones used by Cawte,

H - hero-combat
S - sword-dance play
W - wooing play

For texts present in Cawte, abbreviations are those listed in Cawte on pages 94-132. These usually consist of the first few letters of the publisher's last name, plus one or two letters from the title of the publication. The reason for using these abbreviations is that they are shorter than foot-notes and frequently refer to repeatedly used sources. For texts not present in Cawte, sources are given in standard foot-note format.

The date given for each text or fragment is the date of performance in the collected manuscript, wherever this is available. Otherwise it is the date of publication of the manuscript, or occasionally the date of oral or written communication, or collection of the manuscript. Whenever this is the only date available, it is an approximate date in the editor's life. The exact nature of each date is indicated by the abbreviations:

Per - Performance
Pub - Publication
OC - Oral Communication
WC - Written Communication
C - Collection
App - Approximate

Play locations and seasons of play performances are given as

information peripheral to the main concern of the thesis, though sometimes valuable in the illustration of specific points.

Six of the seventy-six texts examined were of the wooing play variety, four of them of the sword dance variety, and the remaining number were hero-combats.

The disproportionate number of texts belonging to the hero-combat category is representative of the proportions present in Cawte's index. These proportions result in a more detailed examination of the hero-combat than of the other two types. Yet the central importance of magical elements in the other types will be thoroughly considered, despite the relative lack of abundance of texts.

Texts Listed in Cawte:

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	-	Standford-in-the-Vale, Berkshire	-	PigL.
H	-	Camborne, Cornwall	Christmas	TidP.
H	1849 (Pub.)	Derbyshire	Christmas	HalE.
H	1921 (Pub.)	North-east Derbyshire	Christmas	TidP.
H	-	Bovey Tracey, Devonshire	Christmas	TidP.
H	1884 (Per.)	Bow, North Devon	-	BroL.
H	1880 (Per.)	South-west Dorsetshire	Christmas	UdaR.
H	1800 (Per.)	South-west Dorsetshire	Christmas	UdaR.

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
S	1860 (Per.)	Gainford, County Durham	-	OrdC.
H	1894 (Per.)	Gainford, County Durham	-	OrdC.
H	-	Cinderford, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1925 (Per.)	High Spen, County Durham	Christmas	CawC.
H	Nov., 1901	Highnam, Gloucestershire	Christmas	GatL.
H	-	Icomb, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1868 (Pub.)	Kempsford, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1905-06(Per.)	Longborough, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1914 (Pub.)	Sapperton, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1864 (Pub.)	Weston-sub-Edge, Gloucestershire	-	TidP.
H	1908 (Per.)	Burghclere, Hampshire	-	TidP.
H	-	Burghclere, Hampshire	Christmas	TidP.
H	-	Bursledon, Hampshire	"Christmas	TidP.

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	1896 (Pub.)	Islip, Oxfordshire	Christmas	DitC.
H	-	Leafield, Oxfordshire	-	TidP.
H	1885 (WC)	Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire	-	TidP.
H	-	Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire	-	TidP.
H	1914 (C.)	Waterstock, Oxfordshire	-	TidP.
H	Dec.27, 1822 (Per.)	Keynsham, Somerset	Christmas	HunP.
H	-	North Somerset	-	TidP.
H	-	Cocking, Sussex	Christmas	TidP.
H	1884 (Per.)	Steyning, Sussex	Christmas	SawL.
H	-	Great Wolford, Warwickshire	-	TidP.
H	-	Ilmington, Warwickshire	-	TidP.
H	1899 (Pub.)	Rugby, Warwickshire	Christmas	RouL.
H	-	Pillerton, Warwickshire	-	TidP.

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	1858 (Pub.)	Otterbourne, Hampshire	Christmas	YonP.
H	-	Overton, Hampshire	-	TidP.
H	1837 (R.)	Romsey, Hampshire	Christmas	LaBM.
H	-	Cark, North Lancashire	Easter	WEML.
W	-	Bulby, Lincolnshire	-	TidP.
W	1914 (Per.)	Jerusalem, Lincolnshire	Christmas	RudC.
W	-	Kirmington, North Lincolnshire	-	TidP.
S	1779 (Per.)	Revesby, Lincolnshire	-	BMad.
H	-	Badby, Northamptonshire	-	TidP.
W	-	Clayworth, Nottinghamshire	-	TidP.
H	-	Clayworth, Nottinghamshire	-	DitC.
H	-	Bampton, Oxfordshire	Christmas	DitC.
H	1914 (OC)	Cuddeson, Oxfordshire	-	TidP.

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	-	Malvern, Worcestershire	-	TidP.
W	-	Ampleforth, Yorkshire	-	ChaP.
H	1909 (WC)	Heptonstall, Yorkshire	Easter	TidP.
H	-	Bragganstown House, Dundalk	Christmas	JonL.
H	1894 (Per.)	Bragganstown House, Dundalk	Christmas	JonL.
H	1840 (Pub.)	St. John's, Newfoundland	Christmas	WhiT.
H	1899 (Per.)	Change Islands, Newfoundland	Christmas	MosN.
H	1900 (Per.)	Salvage, Newfoundland	Christmas	MosN.

Texts Not Listed in Cawte:

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	-	Berkshire	Christmas	P.H. Ditchfield, Old English Customs Extant at the Present Time, Redway, London, 1896, 12-13.
H	-	Mylor, Cornwall	-	Chambers

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	-	Cornwall	Christmas	Tiddy, pp. 144-47.
H	-	Dorsetshire	-	Thomas Hardy, The Play of St. George (New York, 1928), pp. 15-23.
W	-	Bassingham, Lincolnshire	-	Chambers, pp. 92-98.
H	-	Bassingham, Lincolnshire	-	Brody, pp. 145-47.
H	-	Staffordshire	-	I.Gatty, " The Eden Collection of Mumming Plays ", pp. 23-26.
H	Nov.29, 1899 (Pub.)	Rugby, Warwickshire	Christmas	F.Bromwich in Gatty, pp. 21-22.
H	-	Netley Abbey	-	Brody, pp. 131-36.
S	-	Greatham	-	Brody, pp. 137-44.
H	1788 (Pub.)	Newcastle	-	Alex Helm, The Chapbook Mummers' Plays (Ibstock, Leicester, 1969), pp. 40-46.
H	1900 (W.C.)	Broadwell	Christmas	I.Gatty, pp.32-34.
H	-	Belfast	Christmas	Tiddy, pp. 141-43.

Type	Date	Location	Season of Performance	Source
H	-	Cumbria	Christmas	F. Warriner " The Mummers' Play: Alexander and the King of Egypt ", Word-Lore, III, Dec. 1938, pp. 137-41.
H	-	-	Christmas	Henry Slight, Christmas: His Pageant Play (n.p., n.d.), pp. 176-83.
H	-	-	-	R.S. Loomis (modernized version), pp. 27-36.
H	-	-	Christmas	Gatty, pp. 27-28.
H	-	-	-	Juliana Horatia Ewing (compiled text), " The Peace Egg and a Christmas Mumming Play ", Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, n.d., pp. 47-58.
H	-	-	-	Chambers, pp. 6-9 " normalized text ".
H	-	-	-	Helm, pp. 47-54.

Foot-Notes

Chapter I.

1. E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm and N. Peacock, English Ritual Drama (London: The Folk-Lore Society,1967) ,p.30.
2. E.K. Chambers,The English Folk-Play (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933) , p.211.
3. Alan Brody, The English Mummers and Their Plays (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969) , p.3.
4. E.O. James,Seasonal Feasts and Festivals (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p.277.
5. Chambers, p.159.
6. Arnold Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p.178.
7. J.E. Harrison, Themis (Cambridge: The University of Cambridge Press, 1912) , p.43.
8. Harrison, pp.184-85.
9. Harrison, p.507,p.426.
10. R.F. Willetts, Cretan Cults and Festivals (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,1962), p.96.
11. Harrison, pp.123-24.
12. J.G. Frazer,The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion (London: Macmillan and Company,Ltd.) , quoted from the abridged edition (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1954) , pp. 48-60.
13. James,pp. 15-43.
14. Harrison, p.125.
15. Harrison, p.67.

16. Harrison, p. 184.

17. Harrison, p. 76.

18. Harrison, p. 39.

19. R.J.E. Tiddy, The Mummers' Play (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923) .

20. H. Halpert and G.M. Story, Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1969) .

Chapter II. Diegesis of the Mummers' Plays.

The plays belong to the general category of rites designed to effect a change in seasonal phenomena and identified by Van Gennep as rites of passage.

Rites of passage are themselves subdivided[1.] into rites of separation, transition and incorporation. Separation consists of cutting off from a previous time state. Transition is equivalent to transfer from one state to another. Incorporation involves entry into a new time state. Three major play functions, combat, cure and marriage, can be isolated as roughly representative of separation, transition and incorporation, according to the following diagram:

Play Function	Corresponding Rite
Combat	Separation
Cure	Transition
Marriage	Incorporation

The categories are by no means absolute and overlap will be evident. The three forms of ritual activity occur in time and are conceived of as relative to previous time states. Separation fades into transition and transition into incorporation.

Mummers' Play Types

Three basic play types have been established by Chambers[2.] and Cawte, Helm and Peacock.[3.] These are hero-combat, sword dance, and wooing or plough play.

The hero-combat has a death which results from hand-to-hand combat between two men, and this is followed by a resurrection of the slain man by a comic doctor. The victim may occasionally be an old man or a woman. Multiple combats, slayings and revivals are frequent. One text has a dragon as one of several victims.

Chambers has constructed, from constantly recurring play formulas, a " normalized " hero-combat.[4] This is not meant to be just like any real historical text, nor is it to be seen as an archetype from which all existing texts are derived. It is believed to represent the general succession of incidents and run of dialogue which conceivably lie behind the widely variant play versions. The normalized hero-combat consists roughly of a presentation, combat, lament, cure and quête. The pattern, though sketchy, does provide an outline for most of the texts studied. The combat, which usually results in death, represents ritual separation. At least some elements of the quête are analogous to rites of marriage or incorporation. The lament is included with the cure as a transition rite, assisting change from death to new life.

English sword-dances are characterized by the presence of one or several locks,[5] formed as each dancer presses the hilt of his sword under the point of his neighbour's, meshing them tightly together in the form of a star.[6] This star may be anything from a pentagon to an octagon, depending on the number of dancers. It is placed round the neck of a victim, who falls down dead as the swords are withdrawn. The doctor is called for, and a cure performed. Wooing or feasting may precede or succeed the execution and cure.

Execution by means of the lock is sometimes referred to as hanging the " Betty " , a man-woman figure who also appears in other play contexts. The victim is usually one of the minor play characters, often a clown. In an old account of a Durham dance he is actually or by impersonation the parish clergyman.

The sword dance execution is the transition rite for this play type. Play wooing and feasting are rites of incorporation. Play cures are transition rites.

The main feature of the wooing or plough play is the wooing, often by a fool, of a young lady. This usually consists of a series of rejections by the lady, followed by the fool's persistence and final success. There may be several suitors, and one of the courtships may be comic, involving an old man. A recruiting sergeant may replace the fool as the major contender for the lady's hand. A frequent play figure is Dame Jane, an old woman who carries a bastard child whose fatherhood she tries to assign to the fool. The plays usually, though not necessarily, have a combat and cure. The combat resembles those of hero-combats. Cures are usually complex.

English wooing plays are often also called plough plays, though the plough, as Brody[7.] notes, does not always appear in them. It is not present in any of the wooing texts examined for this study, though it is suggested by the usual identity of actors as ploughboys in them. One of the actors may even boast of his ploughing ability. As the plough is closely tied to agriculture, it may bear some relationship to the early prominence of women, also necessary to wooing, in that activity.[8.] The prominence of ploughs in some wooing plays distorts the perspective, articulated by Brody,[9.] which sees these plays as the oldest of the three play types. While Beelzebub and Dame Jane do appear to be truly ancient, and possibly related to octennial cycles, the plough is necessarily more modern than the horses of the hero-combat. These are used merely for riding. While plough, plough-horses and riding horses are all possibly totems,[10.] the use of horses in riding precedes their use in agriculture and appears

as the earlier form of this totem. On the basis of this, and of the prevalence of hero-combat horses, it is difficult to say which of the two types are older, and it is possible neither is, both containing material from a range of historical periods.

Douglas Kennedy[11] distinguishes plough plays from other mummers' plays on the grounds that the other plays show only death and resurrection but no sexual involvement, as does the plough play. It is for this reason that he sees Beelzebub and Dame Jane as essential to the plough plays even when they have only minor appearances in them. They are believed to represent the clubman and reproducing female seen as essential to a fertility cult in which the plays originate.

For the wooing plays, wooings and presentations of Dame Jane's baby are incorporation rites. Combats are separation rites and cures transition rites.

Play Functions

A. Combat

Combat will be seen to include the events leading up to hero-combats. These are considered separately by Chambers[12] as play presentations. The introduction of dancing teams in sword dances[13] will also be considered in this context, as will the appearance in wooing plays of the recruiting sergeant, ploughboys and farmer's boys.

The hero-combat and its sword dance variant, execution, are the most obvious examples of play combat. References to

house destruction are reminiscent of similar events in early ceremonies, where they are directly related to the central play conflict.[14] The guilt assignment of sword dance plays results directly from these plays' executions. Burial or suggestion of burial may follow death, but is often paradoxically associated with the play's cure. This paradox is resolved through an understanding of the magical nature of burials.[15] Their intention is to continue life in another form, or to produce new life, not to merely decoratively end life. For this reason, burial rites, and the wills which often accompany them, will be considered under the play function of cure rather than combat.

The opening activities of the hero-combat are usually short, and carried out by an individual actor, described by Chambers as the presenter.[16] This actor is commonly Father Christmas, but he may be simply the foreman, headman, caller, leader or first man. The presenter is sometimes a woman, commonly Molly or Mother Christmas.

The actors as a whole may be introduced or may introduce themselves as a group of merry men.

The hero-combat is usually between Saint or King George and the Turkish Knight, though a variety of other fighters are also found. These include the King of Egypt, the Black Prince of Paradise, Bold Slasher and the Valiant Soldier. The victim is occasionally a figure more familiar in other play contexts, such as Beelzebub, Father Christmas, a dragon or a woman. There may be repeated combats with multiple victims.

The combatants enter with blustering self-introductions which are both boasts and challenges to their opponents. The boasts do not result from a causal plot or external development of events, but are ritualistic. The fight in which they result is undertaken for magical reasons, not caused by psychological motivations of individuals. It bears a paradigmatic relationship only to the changeover of the seasons, mimicking this through its transfer of human power.

St. George's boast is usually that of having killed the dragon and won the King of Egypt's daughter. These feats justify his daring to challenge the Turkish Knight. The Turkish Knight boasts of his physical invulnerability, claiming that his head is made of iron and his body of steel. These boasts are shared by Slasher, to whom Chambers attributes them solely.[17.]

The Turkish Knight may refer to his conqueror as his only son and heir.[18.] He is himself often the son of an older character, who may be Father Christmas or some other figure in some way representative of time.[19.] This older character is often also the presenter.

The Turkish Knight or his counterpart is commonly, either in reality or for ritual purposes, from a foreign land.[20.] The land is usually Turkey or Turkish Land, though it is on one occasion America. If the foreign identity is actual, then the literal identity as George's father is open to question. This identity problem is not resolved in the play texts, where the slain man is presented as having both characteristics, with

no apparent contradiction. The lack of contradiction reflects the ritualistic nature of the plays. Their action is not a portrayal of a slice of life, but a set of rather abstract deeds, based on previous historical deeds of a similar nature and believed to have practical magical effectiveness. The identity as stranger is consistent with capture of a foreign tyrant and exogamous marriage of the capturer to the tyrant's daughter. Such capture seems to have been present in some early ceremonies.[21] The father and son relationship may be ceremonial rather than actual, resulting from succession in the office of kingship.[22] In Thai classical drama the identity problem is easily solved, in that the victim is the victor's father-in-law, not biological father.

At Overton, Hampshire, Father Christmas laments the loss of eleven children and calls for a doctor to cure two slain sons. The systematic loss of children is a common feature in another play context, where it is used to justify the taking of a collection. Brody[23] suggests that the " folk figure of the diminishing sons " is very likely connected to the loss of the months of the year. Such a pattern would follow that of the seven to nine attendants in the processions of old octennial festivals.[24]

The same Overton play that has reference to eleven sons also has King George entering with his whole tribes and Britons by his sides. He is rather unusually announced as the hero, whose tribe is his noble train. The accompaniment of a ritual hero by male figures who are essentially lesser shadowings of him has been described by Jane Harrison in her analysis of the

25.

structure of the young warrior-deity, Zeus. The hero is a communal projection of the ideal of male behaviour. His followers, Harrison's " daimones " , are less perfect embodiments of the same ideal.

The Overton play also has repeated slayings. There may be some significance to the fact that George's followers appear here in a text which has both such slayings and systematic loss of a least two children in them.

The play has another male leader in the figure of Twing-Twang, the recruiting sergeant; who is more prominent in wooing plays, where he has more elaborate roles. His presence suggests that a male military leader may once have been central to the hero-combats. It reinforces political aspects of the ritual. The Overton Twing-Twang is the last of the ritual victims killed by King George, who then laments the killing, announcing " All hear I sits on that is his. " This suggests he may be claiming Twing-Twang's throne, or power and possessions. Transfer of political power from one group of men to another has been seen to be a common feature of early ceremonies. The announcement is followed by a request for offerings, which in this context are suggestive of taxes, since transfer of power may mean conquest of citizens as well. In his lament for Twing-Twang's death, King George refers to him as his poor Old Father, Abraham Brown, indicating a father and son relationship between victim and conqueror.

Twing-Twang has earlier introduced himself as both head-man of a press gang and little Johnny Jack, who carries his wife and family on his back. The identity as leader of a press gang is one frequently assumed, particularly in wooing plays. Little Johnny Jack usually appears as a separate play figure, whose significance will be considered later. His identification here with Twing-Twang constitutes a union between the figures of an aging married man and an older military leader, ceremonially killed by a younger king. Such unity is in keeping with the play's ritual nature, for the early king is also a potentate whose power to produce children may be, as it is in the case

26.

of the king of the Shilluks, one of the bases for his continuance in office. Annual ceremonies require the death of old potentates and their replacement by new ones.

In hero-combat texts from Ovingdean, Sussex; Romsey, Hants; and Netley Abbey, Twing Twang is a press gang leader. He may boast, as is consistent with his rank, that he is " best man of them all " . He does not, however, engage in combat.

Occasionally a minor figure may fight on behalf of one of the major combatants. Little John fights for Robin Hood and at Shipton-under-Wychwood is kill[illegible], while at Kempsford he defeats Arthur Abland. In Yorkshire and Derbyshire the King of Egypt is defended by Hector, who fights and is wounded, but not slain. Hector is on several occasions replaced by Sambo, who vows bravery, then excuses himself on the grounds that his sword point is broken. This irresponsibility lends a comic nature

to his loyalty, and as such is somewhat suggestive of the behaviour of Jack Finney, the doctor's assistent in cure sequences.

In a brief text from Clayworth,Nottinghamshire, Beelzebub does not boast of valour, but simply asks " Don't you think I'm a nice old man ? " . The rather innocent question is disputed by King George, the men fight, and Beelzebub falls.

Where the dragon appears as a combatant he is more frightful and more predatory than most other fighters. Unlike theirs,his boasts more obviously invoke fear than humor. The object of his attack is the food his victims will provide. His predatory nature is reflected in the Giant who enters at the end of a Bovey Tracey performance, threatening to tear the flesh " from off thy nose " . The nose has a common phallic significance, particularly in Elizabethan comedy. It may be related here not merely to predation, but to some more general masculine practice. Circumcision, in which the foreskin is torn from the penis, is suggested.

At Devon, Father Christmas is one of the multiple victims of St. George's attacks. He differs from other victims in that, unlike them, he cannot rise after taking a dose of the doctor's medicine. He does so only with the aid of his wife, Dame Dorothy.

Three Dorsetshire texts have multiple slayings with standard blustering victims. These are followed by a final " combat " in which Old Bet is the victim of onslaughts by her husband, Father Christmas, also known as Jan. Bet and Jan argue over the preferred method of cooking a jack-hare Jan has caught while hunting. One text

also has an argument over a quid of baccy Jan thinks Old Bet is hiding from him and this is the central quarrel from which the death results. The stealing vaguely suggests the crimes for which sword dance victims are executed. The jack-hare dispute occurs later in this text, after the doctor's cure of Old Bet. It is resolved not by death, but by Father Christmas riding off on a hobby-horse Bet fetches him.

At Rugby and at Gainford, County Durham, the combat is referred to as a game. King George, with sword and pistol by his side, at Gainford " hopes to " and at Rugby " is bound to " win it. Items carried by the side find an echo in the Overton play mentioned earlier, where King George has not his weapons, but his " whole tribes and Britons " by his sides. Calling the combat a game suggests the Olympic Games and their derivation from ceremonies similar to those underlying mummers' play performances.[27] It is also reminiscent of the nonsense of the Feast of Fools,[28] a feast on one occasion given as the title of the play's activities. On another occasion the actors are introduced as a " pack o' fules " . The game referred to is a military one, again emphasizing the political nature of combat ritual.

Several texts have, in addition to their central combat or combats, arrangements made for another combat to be fought at a later time, in a different place. The arrangements usually include one of the combatants boasting that he will defeat his opponent with a few men, though the latter be accompanied by a multitude. The boast is reminiscent of the " Seven Against Thebes " myth and may indicate a ritual origin of it. Small, well

organized armies have certainly proven capable of defeating more numerous, though poorly organized ones. The central concern of the boast is that of military organization rather than bravery. Combat arrangements may be made for either a second fight between central play combatants, or for a fight between minor combatants. Bargaining over place and hour is common. At Highnam, near Gloucester, the arrangements are between the Valiant Soldier and the Turkish Knight, who suggests that his opponent hide himself in a holy bush. Concealment in such a bush may constitute a magical participation in a vegetation deity. The " Seven Against Thebes " theme is present at Highnam in a boast by the Valiant Soldier. He claims that only he and seven others fought and killed eleven score of marching men, " men of war " . Earlier, Billy Whittle has asked for room on the grounds that after him come " men so cruel, marching men, men of war " . These men appear to be the actors in general. What is suggested here is again that military organization is of significance to the combat action of the play. The cruel marching men are not so much individual soldiers as they are a stereotype of appropriate behaviour, possibly equivalent to that invoked in the form of the Greek Kouros and his attendants.

29.

Ancient octennial rituals include the destruction of real or imitation dwellings of a tyrant or king. There are two references to similar destruction in the hero-combat texts examined. The Highnam play considered above has one of these, in a vaunt made by the conquering Valiant Soldier to the Turkish Knight who is his victim. The Turkish Knight is asked to

" stand and behold " his old house. This is the only reference in the texts studied to the victim's possessing a house. The reason the Valiant Soldier calls attention to it could be his intention to destroy it.

The peculiar figure of Old Dives also seems to bear some relationship to house destruction. Though this character never actually appears in any play, he is repeatedly referred to in speeches which introduce play activities. Along with the king and the doctor he is referred to as one of the three major play actors. He may well be the third play figure who is generally of central significance, that is, the victim. Old Dives is a miser, a figure familiar to classical comedy. He either lends or refuses to lend gold, and if he lends it comes to poverty, a condition in keeping with the transfer of his power to a new king. Such transfer has been seen to be a prominent feature of the early octennial festivals. The relationship which Old Dives may bear to house destruction may be found in the fact that the word dive is still a colloquial expression for a decrepit or disreputable building, particularly a public one. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as an illegal drinking-den, or other disreputable place of resort, often situated in a cellar, basement, or other half-concealed place, into which frequenters may " dive " without observation. The old king may once have been magically identified with his old house, as possessions were generally believed to be magically connected to their owners. Upon the king's loss of power with age both he and his house may have become disreputable.

30.

Sword dance presentations usually take the form of long narrative speeches. The introduction of the team of male dancers who will form the lock may also be considered as part of these presentations.

At Gainford, the clown's opening song, and the introductory speeches of the dancers, are all sung to the children's tune of " Nuts and May " . This tune is also found in children's games and in May-day ceremonies. Sword dances are performed out of doors and may have once been May ceremonies as well as Christmas ones. The nuts of the " Nuts and May " may be Nuts
31.
or Locks of swords as well as actual nuts from trees.

The Gainford play begins with the brief nonsense instruction to crack a bottle, for " that fellow " has had no supper this morning or breakfast last night. The order may be some form of signal to begin feasting after fast. As such, the cracking of the bottle would resemble the jar-opening of the ancient
32.
Anthesterion , on the first day of which wine-jars were opened. The topsy-turvy humour of the order is of the variety to be examined more fully later, in connection with trips to an earthly paradise of prepared food. The introduction appears more related to feasting or marriage than to combat. Such humour is also found in the third section of the Ampleforth play, when the clown sings at the king's insistence that he do so or lose his head. Here it is used as a response to a threatening and potentially combat situation. To the great annoyance of the king, the clown sings both his songs incorrectly.

The king finally corrects the second song himself. The meaning of both songs is essentially lost to modern understanding. One laments the difficulties of being merry and wise. The second is a love song about murder.

At Revesby, the actors come over the mire and moss, as do the wooing play ploughboys to be considered later. They are introduced by the fool as brave, jovial lads, come for bread and beer. They dance a Hobby Horse who, along with a Dragon and a Wild Worm, enters at the beginning of the performance. He and the fool fight about the room and Chambers[33] describes this fighting as a combat. He also sees the dragon as perhaps identical to the Wild Worm, on the grounds that though it is clear the Wild Worm enters, it is not clear that a separate Dragon does. The Wild Worm may also be a manifestation of the early serpent god.[34]

The Ampleforth and Greatham plays begin with long introductory speeches, by the king and by Rantom Tom respectively, in which room is requested for the actors who are about to enter. Rantom Tom, a clown, ends his speech with a boast and a strike at the air with his sword. The king introduces his jovial lads who are wooing bound. He has no boast. Rantom Tom introduces his bonny lads and also recounts the severity of the anonymous master who has sent him. If this master finds his instructions not carried out, he will thrash Tom thoroughly. The king has no master.

In contrast to the general introduction of actors described above, the male dancers who form the sword dance lock are usually introduced individually as members of a team. The number of dancers in a team varies from five to eight. Ampleforth and early Sleights[35.] performances have two dancing teams.

At Gainford, the dancers are introduced by the king, who is one of them, as six clever lads who have never danced before. Besides himself, they include a spark from France, Mr. Bold, Mr. Wild, a Prince of noble fame, and a squire's son. The king is himself introduced by the clown who is about to be executed.

At Greatham, the king is introduced by one of his sons, Mr. Stout. He then calls on all his men, in the order of Mr. Sparks, Mr. Stout, the Squire's Son (also Mr. Wild) , and the Prince of Noble Fame. The Prince of Noble Fame says he is the last dancer, but Rantom Tom, the first clown, denies this, claiming that position for himself. A second clown, True Blue, who will later be executed, then enters, having clean forgotten he was one of the crew. The victim's membership in the team is appropriately tenuous.

At Revesby, the fool calls on the " team " of his five sons, Pickle Herring, Blue Britches, Ginger Britches, Pepper Britches and Mr. Allspice.

Ampleforth's double set of teams is called on by the clown who is specifically not this play's victim. One team consists of King Henry, his general Progallus, a gentleman from Cork, Hickman, Jerry and little Diana. There is no indication whether Diana is male or female. Usually the teams are entirely male.

This team has fought against Napoleon and sent him to St. Helena. The second team consists of a handsome young man, a bashful youth, a spanking lad whose father is a Squire, a rakish youth, and a brave young man who also fought at Waterloo. The introductions of the two teams are followed by the playing of 36.
" T'aud Wife of Coverdill " , a tune reported as a favorite for sword dance ceremonies. The tune accompanies a communal dance which ends in the killing of an anonymous man.

The lock is present as Revesby, Greatham, and Gainford, County Durham. It does not appear at Ampleforth, which has merely a killing at the end of " the dance " referred to above. Neither this dance nor the killing is further described. The identity of the victim remains unclear throughout the play, though he is specifically not the clown. Swine-stealing, a crime of which the executed victim is often accused, is present at Ampleforth, but the clown accuses the king of it. The accusation does not lead to execution, but merely to the king trying to knock the clown about with his sword. The interlude of comic singing described earlier follows. The king invites his young men to try their rapiers on the clown. They rattle their swords but do not perform an execution. This trying of rapiers may be a form of military initiation. It occurs in other sword dance plays and generally precedes the formation of the lock and execution.

Gainford has a simple lock and a clown as victim. The clown is Captain Tom, who describes his dress in a formula vaguely

like the iron and steel boasts of hero-combat victims, though it mixes psychological qualities with clothing in an unusual manner. Tom's waistcoat and coat are of mohair, his breeches of standoff and his stockings and shoes of refuse. At the end of his boast, the dancers dance round him and place their swords round his neck. They draw them and he falls. The king announces that " Our Hector " is dead. Early in the play, in the midst of the introduction of dancers, Captain Tom insults the king by accusing him of swine stealing. He is threatened with hanging as a result, but several other actions occur before the execution is carried out.

At Greatham, a clown who is also both Hector and True Blue is executed by means of the lock, apparently as a punishment for sheep stealing. He initially insults the king by accusing him of swine stealing and the king retaliates by leading the dancers in the clown's " trial " , or execution, for sheep-stealing. These mutual insults resemble the boasts of valour which precede hero-combat slayings. One purpose of both forms of vaunt is to increase aggression, from which death results as a logical conclusion. As at Ampleforth, the king invites his young men to try their rapiers on the clown. The dancers make the lock about the clown loosely. He asks time to say his prayers, is given it, and proceeds to recite his will, which will be discussed in more detail under the play function of cure. When the will is finished, the lock is tightened round the clown's neck, the dancers draw their swords, and he falls down dead.

The Revesby lock, formed with swords in the usual fashion, is also a fine large looking glass or mirror, a feat thing and a very pretty thing. Though no execution ever occurs in this text, the lock is formed several times, and the fool repeatedly told he must die. The reason for this is not theft, but something closer to stupidity. It is to be found in an extensive conflict between the fool and his oldest son, Pickle Herring. . The object of this conflict is the glass or lock itself. It seems the fool doesn't take the glass seriously enough. He even has to be told what it is, a fine large looking glass. Pickle Herring argues that as his father is older than him he should be the one to know most about the glass, but the fool disputes this.He looks through a small hole in the glass and sees a fool resembling Pickle Herring. But Pickle Herring replies that this is merely the fool's own face in the glass. The fool excuses his mistake. Whose reflection actually does appear is not finally resolved, and possibly this was the original intention, particularly if the two men are successors to the same office, as are the ritual victim and victor.

The central conflict develops as the fool asks Pickle Herring how much he paid for the glass. Insisting he could have gotten a better bargain, he attempts to prove Pickle Herring's foolishness. To do this, he flings the glass on the floor and jumps on it, with the result that each dancer withdraws his own sword. This angers Pickle Herring, who takes the fool by the collar and informs him of the group's intention to cut off his head. The fool appears to have lost his senses, or at least a

sense of what is important to the group. While, because of his age and experience, he may well have gotten a better bargain than Pickle Herring, he has quite forgotten what the object of his purchase, the glass itself, is. His condemnation of Pickle Herring, who understands the glass quite well and values it, is inappropriate. The destruction of the glass is clearly the fool's most serious offence. It triggers the destruction of the communal action by means of which the glass was formed. The swords become unlinked and the community of dancers separates into a number of isolated individuals. The fool appears to have lost any sense of how to be a leader. His action serves to fragment the community rather than bind it. It is at this point that Pickle Herring begins to assert his responsibility to follow his father in office.

The linked swords are twice placed round the fool's head. On the first occasion he falls on the floor, but rises to his knees as Pickle Herring stamps his foot. He asks for another " squeak " for his life, and is told he may have many. The lock is placed round his neck again. Pickle Herring tells him he must die and he begins to recite his will. The dancers walk round him with their swords in their hands, as Pickle Herring stamps his foot. The fool requests one of Pickle Herring's best songs, and all five sons then sing to him of how they will kill him for his estate. He falls and they sing of how they have killed him, but he rises again, saying they are mistaken and calling for a dance. The manner of this revival suggests certain wooing play cures, to be considered later. The dance begins a wooing sequence and

neither the glass nor threats of execution have any further appearance in the play.

In none of the four sword dance plays examined is the lock used for hoisting aloft as in Cawte's German dances.

At Revesby, nonsense humour occurs in the fool's complaint, with swords round his neck, of the ungratefulness of his children. The learning institutions in which his children have been educated have nonsense names, Coxcomb Colledge and the University of Loggerheads. The fool has himself nonsensically examined his children " one by one, altogether for shortness."

At Ampleforth and Gainford, guilt for the sword dance execution is systematically determined. Such guilt-assignment is also a common feature of the early Greek Bouphonia, where an axe is eventually declared responsible. At Ampleforth, guilt is eventually accepted by the king, the other dancers having all absolved themselves from it. It is passed from the first dancer to the second to the third and to the fourth, who claims his eyes were shut when the man fell. The fifth dancer disputes the truth of this and the sixth claims the king is responsible. The king admits guilt rather nobly. Gainford has a similar guilt-assignment pattern, but here the blame is accepted by the fifth dancer. There is no sixth dancer. Blame is accepted matter-of-factly, on grounds of being last, and then pardon is asked of the king.

37.

At Ampleforth and at Gainford, the king and the clown lead up to accusations of swine stealing with boasts which include the clown's wish to see the king dance. This wish appears

somewhat outrageous to the king. The Ampleforth clown is clown of " this noble town " , suggesting that " clownship " may be a form of political office. The Gainford clown is ragged.

The iron and steel boast of the hero-combat victim occurs at Ampleforth, where it is by the clown. A vaguely similar boast has been seen to occur at Gainford, where it belongs to the clown and precedes his execution. There is again reference to articles of clothing. Greatham has a boast which is almost a repetition of the Gainford one. At Revesby, a related formula occurs in the song by the fool's sons about how they will kill their father for his estate. Here it is the fool's bracelet, not his body, which is of iron and steel. This bracelet could be the lock or glass of the play.

Sword dance executions appear to involve more local conflicts than do hero-combats. They are more concerned with punishment of real or assumed crimes than they are with military organization and conquest.

The wooing play combat resembles hero-combats. Five of the six wooing plays examined in this study have combats which result in a slaying. The sixth play, one of two from Bassingham, has merely the appearance of Saint George, who boasts but does not fight anybody. The fool repeats Saint George's final boast, indicating himself as victim.

A second Bassingham play has almost identical boasts and repetition by the fool, but here these are followed by a fight in which the fool falls. At Kirmington, the recruiting sergeant knocks down the Indian King. At Clayworth, the sergeant kills old Eezum-Squeezum, a character quite similar to Beelzebub,

who will be considered more fully later. At Jerusalem, a similar Eezum Squeezum clouts and knocks down Ribboner, who has the iron and steel boast familiar to the hero-combat victim. At Bulby, Beelzebub knocks down and kills Old Jane, who also has the iron and steel boast. In other wooing plays, Jane is often threatened with death if she refuses to stop annoying the fool with claims that he is father of her bastard baby.

Wooing combats appear to be of lesser significance than are hero-combats. There is no father and son relationship between victim and victor, and no foreign identity for the fallen man. Military organization is, however, prominent, in the appearance of the recruiting sergeant with his enlistment orders.

The actors are introduced by the fool or clown as boys and girls, or pretty boys and girls.

In one of the Bassingham plays, initial wooings of the lady are by a " team " of suitors, the Eldest Son, the Farming Man, and a Lawyer.

At Kirmington, where the recruiting sergeant is present, the lady enters with a speech about how her lover has left her to enlist as a soldier. A similar speech is present in all wooing plays in which the sergeant appears. Paradoxically, the sergeant may also offer the favors of women as one of the rewards for enlistment.

The Kirmington lady is wooed by the sergeant, who offers her riches but is refused on the grounds that all she wants is a nice young man.

At Jerusalem the recruiting sergeant and the lady's speech about opposition between love and war reappear, but here the lover has not already enlisted. He will enlist if the lady refuses him. The recruiting sergeant does not woo the lady. The fool is her only successful suitor.

Clayworth also has a recruiting sergeant and a lady, who is again faced with the choice of either marrying or having her lover leave her. There is again a brief successful wooing by the clown, and this results in a decision to wed the next day. Again, the recruiting sergeant does not engage in wooing.

At Bulby, an unidentified character, who seems to be the lady, enters and talks of how her lover will enlist if she doesn't marry him. There is no wooing. A lengthy Dame Jane sequence follows.

38.

A manuscript of a wooing play, owned by Professor Baskervill, is entitled " Recruiting Sergeant " . Here, untypically, the lover is finally scorned by his lady as a " looby " and follows the sergeant's advice to enlist.

At Bulby, the recruiting sergeant has orders from the King. At Clayworth and Jerusalem they are orders from the queen. At Kirmington he is his own agent. The orders, or intentions, are to " list " , or at Bulby " test ",all men who follow horse cart or plough, and also tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors or almost any men engaged in a trade or occupation. In some cases, the listing appears related to the attainment of some form of office. The fool or clown may state an inclination to march away to the sergeant's music, possibly as a recruit. The sergeant

may himself threaten to march away if the fool doesn't dance, sing or play for him. The sergeant may dance to a fiddle. At Kirmington he has come to see a fool dance, while at Jerusalem the fool has come to see him dance. At Kirmington, the fool sings for the sergeant, but performs badly and is rebuffed. Interludes between the sergeant and the fool precede either the wooing or, at Kirmington, the combat. The Bulby sergeant promises young men certain rewards for enlisting. These are hats decked with ribbons and a pretty fair maid. The Kirmington sergeant is leader of the boys and girls he announces.

Bulby has a Farmer's Boy , who follows the entrance of the sergeant and boasts of his ability to control horses, apparently for ploughing purposes. Clayworth has both a Farmer's Boy and a Ploughboy, both of whom follow the sergeant's entrance. The Farmer's Boy bids the clown not to march away to the sergeant's music, but to wait for the appearance of the lady. To do this he uses the expression " woa " , which, at Bulby and elsewhere, is used with horses. The Ploughboy calls himself " the Farmer's Man " . He has come to plough the land and like the Bulby Farmer's Boy, he boasts of controlling his horses for this purpose.

The actors as a group are poor plough boys, poor ploughlads, or country plough lads. They plough through mud and mire, at Clayworth for little wage.

B. Cure.

The hero-combat is usually followed by a short lament, which is placed with the cure as a transition rite, since it assists transfer from death to re-birth.[39] Harrison describes the ritual lament as a threnos, or clash of contradictory emotions, the death of the old being also the triumph of the new. Though it may be articulated by a single individual, it is a response of the general community of actors. The hero-combat lament consists of a reproach, an apology, and a call for the doctor. Someone, often Father Christmas or the presenter, reproaches the victor for having slain his victim. The victor then apologizes for his deed, or justifies it on the grounds of having been challenged.[40] In some Scottish plays the conqueror attempts to throw blame on a bystander, suggesting the guilt-assignment practices, considered earlier, of sword dance plays. The king who accepts guilt in the Ampleforth sword dance does so with a lament for both having slain the victim and caused war.

The presenter, or occasionally one of the other play characters, calls for a doctor to cure the fallen man. The victim is frequently now identified as the lamenter's son. The victor may call for the doctor after first boasting of his conquest to the community. In wooing plays the caller is often the clown or fool, who may be the presenter as well. In some wooing plays there is bidding for the doctor at this point, the lamenter offering money for him to come and the conqueror matching his amounts with offers to keep away. Frequently there is no reproach or apology but merely the call.

The hero-combat lament is followed by a cure which occurs almost universally. It is usually effected by a comic doctor and takes the form of either tooth-pulling, the administration of medicaments, or a combination of the two methods. On occasion more bizarre methods appear.

In a text from Berkshire and in one from Burghclere, Hampshire, the final cure is not by the doctor but by his assistant, Jack Viney. The doctor has already cured wounds, but refuses to restore the dead victim to life. To prove his own curing abilities, Jack offers a characteristic magpie boast. He cures by means of medicine and by tooth-pulling as well, though less frequently.

The doctor is almost universally present. He is frequently simply the doctor, though he may be Dr. Good, Dr. Lamb, Dr. Hero or Dr. Brown. Occasionally he may have more complicated titles. In sword dance plays his name is generally given in a long nonsense formula, which includes his frequent identity as the son of a seventh son or a person of similar ancestry. Such persons were believed by folk tradition to possess special powers.[41] The doctor often resents the title of quack, though he may sometimes agree to it.[42] At Heptonstall, Yorkshire he is the great head and little wit who will be discussed more fully later.

Upon entering the play, the doctor engages in conversation with at least one other character, frequently the presenter. He is led to defend his abilities through tales of his travels and skills, and is offered a fee, which is frequently not

accepted without a certain amount of haggling. It is occasionally settled at the caller's initial offer. In some wooing plays the doctor is bid for as has been described earlier.

With respect to his fee, the doctor may be generous or grasping. Bargaining is frequently elaborate and accompanied by threats to leave if his amounts aren't agreed to. The fee may include a bottle of wine, or food for the doctor's horse.

The doctor's travels are to a variety of foreign lands, frequently France, Spain, Italy and Sicily. Either he or Jack Finney may have journeyed to an earthly paradise of prepared food, to be considered more fully under the play function of marriage. Shorter nonsense journeys, such as one from bedside to fireside and from fireside to my mother's cupboard,[43] are common. Repudiation of the charge of quack may take the form of a list of travels, which provides the necessary qualifications. Cure boasts may include a list of curable diseases, or descriptions of spectacular cures. The list of diseases includes such nonsensical complaints as itchy pitchy polsh of a golsh, and the hipigo limpigo no go at all.[44] More familiar items, such as rheumatism and corns, also appear.

Several texts boast the ability to revive a woman dead seven years, or to render an old toothless woman young. Seven years has been seen to be the period between some early octennial ceremonies. A Cumbrian text has a vaguer boast, about making an ugly, dirty brute fitting to pass by. The brute is female. A Berkshire performance combines the dead woman with the toothless

theme, making the presence of a tooth necessary to the cure. The significance of the tooth as an agent of magical revival will be considered later. A Dorsetshire text boasts the ability to render a dead woman not only alive, but able to bear a twin. Fertility is clearly an object of this cure. Power over young women, animals, birds and the devil may also be claimed.

The most frequently occuring boast of an animal cure is that of a magpie or jackdaw with a tooth-ache. It usually belongs to the doctor's man Jack, of whom it has been seen to be characteristic. The cure is nonsensical, consisting of the instructions to but the magpie's yud off and throw his body in the ditch. Yud appears to mean head, and the cure suggests decapitation and burial, sometimes the fate of play victims as well. The cure's nonsense format explains why Chambers describes it as the magpie " joke "[45], but its original significance, as is the case with most magic, may have been as serious as it was comic. Early weather deities are known to have bird forms.[46]

Power over devils or similar figures is frequently claimed. In Staffordshire the devils are replaced by their earlier mythological counterparts, serpents. Rugby has a mere vague somebody, whom the doctor promises to fetch out of the slain man.

Tooth-pulling is one of the more frequent methods by which the fallen victim is actually cured. It generally involves Jack Finney as either medical assistant or horse-boy. He brings the instruments and may help with the pull. He has

been seen to occasionally effect the cure himself upon the doctor's hesitation to do so. He generally resents being addressed as Jack, preferring the title of Mr. Finney. At Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire he is also great head and little wit, who often has an independent play appearance as a musician. He plays a tin whistle, on which he accompanies the singing and dancing of the group. At Waterstock, Oxfordshire Jack has a bladder from the old hurdy gurdy gee of a hog his father has killed. He appears quite attached to this, for when asked if he will sell it he answers no, since he and old bladder have had many battles together. Hurdy gurdy is a term now commonly used to describe a musical instrument, rather than a hog's anatomy. Jack's speech suggests his bladder may also be an instrument of battle, and there is evidence that the same instruments may once have served both military and musical purposes.[47] Waterstock's Jack may be a military musician, somewhat suggestive of the recruiting sergeant of wooing plays.[48] Chambers suggests that Jack Finney may be related to the Johnny Funny and similar characters whose function in the plays is to collect money (possibly taxes). He also indicates a similar relationship to the Humpty Jack and related characters who appear in play texts with wife and family on their backs. Their general significance will be considered later, under the ritual function of marriage. At Chesterfield, Fat Jack, with his wife and family, replaces Jack Finney in the cure.

The tooth drawn may be a horse's or other animal's. The horse tooth occurs at Icomb, Drayton and in Berkshire.

Weston-sub-Edge has a wolf's tooth, though John Finney organizes a team of actors as horses to pull it. At Icomb, Highnam and Longborough the tooth resembles one of an elephant. At Longborough it is also like a camel's tooth. Pillerton, Warwickshire has a donkey's tooth and Hardwick a cow's tooth. At Islip, Oxon there is a tooth as long as a two-inch nail, with roots like a poplar tree. It is drawn from Molly, King George's wife, who is also the presenter. At the end of a communal dance she falls down and groans. Her complaint is diagnosed as toothache. The manner of her fall suggests the Ampleforth sword dance killing, which also follows a communal dance. Her groaning suggests labour pains. Molly's cure is preceded by a more standard cure of the slain Northumberland, by means of a pill. In R.S. Loomis' " modernized " hero-combat,[49.] a piece of brass is drawn from the mouth of Mussolini.

At Ilmington, Warwickshire, the tooth is again drawn from Molly. The pulling occurs between the slaying and revival of King George and may serve to assist the revival in some way. King George remains on the ground after the doctor has bid him rise, and it is at this point that Molly pretends to cry and wants a tooth drawn. A team of four actors tries to pull the tooth, and all fall, Molly showing her breeches under her petticoat. This exposure suggests both bawdiness and the man-woman figure. Molly's entrance into the action concerning King George suggests some form

of unity between male and female victims, perhaps similar to that present in the bisexual deaths of the ancient Thargelia.[50] This unity reappears in the Devon text in which Father Christmas is revived with the help of his wife, Dame Dorothy. The team required to pull the tooth is reminiscent of the team of " horses " organized by Jack Finney at Weston-sub-Edge.

Waterstock, Oxfordshire has a small tooth, with twangs enough to ruin any man. Jack refuses the doctor's suggestion that he fry it for his supper, claiming the tooth has a maggot in it. The suggestion of frying is vaguely reminiscent of the jack-hare dispute in the Old Bet plays, for in these frying is one of the contested cooking methods. Maggots also appear in hero-combat puddings, made from a hog killed by the actor's father or mother. Fat has dropped out of these and maggots crawled into them. Their ritual significance will be considered more fully under the play function of marriage.

The magical significance of tooth-pulling as a cure is an area which has not been investigated, though a certain line of reasoning suggests the most likely possibilities. The purpose of magical slayings, real or pretended, is always that of obtaining the desired mana, or other magical substance, believed to inhabit the animal or human slain.[51] Communal feasts, with magical eating of a slain victim's body, were one way in which mana could be acquired. The victim's more durable parts, such as his teeth in this case,[52] could be worn

close to the body as charms or ornaments to ensure more permanent union.

The frequent connection between teeth and women, along with the possible obscenity in one of the tooth-pullings from a female, suggests another association. The tooth-pullings may originally have been in some way representative of a birth, and the onslaughts on the female equivalent to copulation. Mimic birth and intercourse are found in some ceremonial practices.[53] The tooth may have a phallic significance. Harrison describes it as a symbol and supposed vehicle of reincarnation.[54]

Apart from tooth-pulling, cure methods most frequently involve the swallowing of liquid medicine or pills, or the external application of liquids. If the cure does not involve medicaments, these are still often carried by the doctor, as part of his standard equipment.

The doctor's pills are alternately small pills, soft pills, pills out of a golden box, tic tolurene pills, Tic Doloureux Pills, a grill, silver pills, a small box of pills called the Junipers, wimple-pimple pills, Jupiter pills, virgin pills, the best Dutch pills, and Scotch pills. At Waterstock, Oxfordshire, the pills and liquid medicine together constitute a raming Bottel Box of Pills. Liquid medicine is most frequently elecampane,[55] a remedy well known in the seventeenth century. It is also elocome pain, Elegant Paint, Hallecumb pain, champagne, Elegumpane, alicumpane or helly com pain. Longer titles are oakham smokum altigam pain, okum pokum drop, icum spicome spinto of Spain, hokum smokum clicampane, hocus pocus pic and pin, im-cum-curum, hocum slocum

aliquid spam and nixum naxum pixum praxum with i-cock-o'-lory. The medicine may also be hokey pokey, Hoxy Poxy, Hoxy Croxy, balsom, balsam, Jerusalem balsam, pepble liquid, golden drops, Golden Gloster drops, golden foster drops, drip drop, a bottle of Drops, galvanic drops, Golden Slozenger drops, frosty drops, dicky whip, nip nap and stuff in my bottle that my grandmother left me 199 years. The liquid's total formula may be given. An example is one pennyworth of pigeon's milk mixed with the blood of a grasshopper and one drop of the blood of a dying donkey, well shaken before taken.

Lower Hayford, Oxfordshire has some unusual medicaments. Two pills are administered to the fallen man. The first of these will go down his throat like a wheelbarrow, strike against his heart like a pick-axe, and come from him like a coach and four. The second is a turned up ploughshare. These pills suggest certain wooing plays, to be considered later, in which the swallowing of a horse and cart is diagnosed as the cause, not the cure, of the victim's ills.

In a Dorsetshire play, Old Bet is cured by her husband, Father Christmas, according to the doctor's instructions to bleed her in the eye vein. Father Christmas goes to Old Bet's feet and then to her head to bleed her feet. Bleeding as a cure is also present in an Ampleforth wooing play, where it is applied to a male victim and complements other techniques.

The Cambourne, Cornwall doctor cures the Turk once with helly com pain, but when a second cure is required he feels the Turk's foot for his pulse. He then shakes his head, announcing that the Turk is dead. In an alternate ending to

the same play, the doctor feels both the Turk's nose and his big toe, but finds no pulse. In neither ending is the Turk revived. Feeling of the pulse is common in wooing play cures, to be considered later. In these as well, it is also often questionable whether the victim finally revives.

At Kempsford, Gloucestershire, cure is by means of a bellows which an unidentified " Missus " hands to the doctor from the fire place. With it he blows into the mouth of the victim, causing him to rise.

The revived victim may have a speech, which varies from simple expressions of terror to lengthy descriptions, in one instance quite poetic, of strange lands. These lands may be over or under the earth.

Expressions of shock follow some variation on the formula

" Oh horrible, terrible, the like was never seen,
A man drove out of seven senses into seventeen." [56.]

Whose senses undergo this increase is not made clear, but it appears they are the victim's. The phenomenon is often deemed miraculous in that it has never been seen or done before. It appears to be a magical accompaniment of the transformation from death to new life.

Netley Abbey has no increase in the number of senses, but it does have reference to a horrid floor, which appears to be the ground. This same ground is also seen to save the victim, through catching him as he falls. The horrible is also beneficient. The identity of the ground as saviour suggests the legend of Pantagruel, who though repeatedly slain on each

occasion rose with new life gathered from his mother, the earth. As legend and myth are often the explained content of ritual, Pantagruel's revival may be analogous to the revival of the ritual victim.

A Derbyshire text has two revivals, each accompanied by a summoning trumpet. Increase in the number of senses is part of the first revival, but missing from the second one. Both victims exit pointing the way down under. This indicates a land of the dead which is under the earth. Reincarnation theory supports the existence of such an earthly paradise. Its appearance in other play contexts will be considered later.

In direct contrast to the Derbyshire exits is the journey of an Irish victim, who is half puffed and huddled in the sky. Moons and stars have caused him to die. The land visited is clearly celestial. A Newfoundland text unites both directions through naming the devil as agent of a celestial trip. The Isle of Man provides an animal agent, a little devil of a rabbit, for the uplift.

A Mylor play has elaborate poetry, begun by the fallen Turkish Knight and continued by the victor, St. George. It includes mention of Elysiums, possibly the Greek Elysian Fields that were resting places for dead heros. The land described is one of splendid natural order, quite different from the earthly paradises, which are dominated by nonsense humour and the abundance of prepared food.

Two separate paradises, earthly and celestial, may have been common. As in the Newfoundland text, they may also have

been united.

Another unusual land is described by Old Bet in a Dorsetshire play. This is the land of Nod, which is also known in fairy-tale as a land of sleep, especially for children. As such, it may have a female or earthly association. For Old Bet, it is a barren place, where there's " devil man, nor dog, John " . Dorsetshire's Father Christmas also has a journey, to a peaceful land where little birds build nests in old man's beards. Both these lands may be eventual resting places for the old married pair. Reports of visits to them occur after the revival of several play victims but before the final attack by Father Christmas on Old Bet.

Hero-combat cures may include the performance of burial rites or analogous ritual. Burial played an important role in
58.
early seasonal ceremonies. As feasting was one magical means of preserving mana through taking it back into the community, so burial was a means by which the mana of the dead man's bones lived again in the crops for which they provided fertilizer. A rather elaborate burial sequence occurs in an alternate ending to the Cambourne, Cornwall hero-combat. Father Christmas organizes a procession in which two men take the Turk's feet and two take his arms. They carry him out to the tune of a burial hymn. This hymn includes a rather nonsensical reference to " 120 pound beef " , which will be discussed more fully under the play function of marriage and in connection with a similar sword dance psalm.

In several less elaborate processions, a dead body is

carried off in a highly organized manner, though burial is not mentioned as its destiny. The carrying out of a dead body was common to the Elizabethan stage,[59.] and it may also be related to the ancient classic dictum that no horrendous events should occur on stage. Such events may have once included the ritual disposal of the slain god through cooking,[60.] burial or other means. In sword dance ceremonies a man may be borne aloft by the whole community,[61.] and this bearing aloft has alternately aspects of a burial procession and of a hero's triumph.

In a Cumbrian play, Prince George orders the removal of the King of Egypt's body. At Devon, Nelson's body is carried out. At Bovey Tracey, the actors carry off the slain Turkish Knight. In sword dance plays, burial of the slain victim is often suggested, but usually abandoned in favor of a cure. Carrying out of a dead body does not occur in any of the sword dance plays examined here. Neither is it present in the wooing play texts.

Other play figures related to burial are the Giants and their equivalents. These had a frequent appearance in early ceremonies, where they were believed to be possessed of the souls of dead ancestors,[62.] come to life on festive occasions. The Giant who enters at the end of a Bovey Tracey performance has long teeth and scurvy jaws,[63.] resembling those of play dragons. They also resemble those of a dead man from whom flesh has decayed or been eaten. The giants are earthmen,[64.] who rise from their underground homes to attend seasonal ceremonies. The Bovey Tracey Giant comes from " the Giant's rest " , possibly the tribal burial ground or

some other land of the dead. A Cumbrian text has reference to a giant in a speech by Prince George. Again there is a resemblance to the dragon, though in this case not through his physical characteristics, but through common identity as an opponent whom George has already slain, thus proving his valour. In this same play, reincarnation may be represented in Beelzebub's identity as Old Harry Sloan, known to everyone, and placed in the cornfields to flay away crows. Scarecrows, familiar to us in their " rag-doll " construction from sticks and clothes, had early parallels in stuffed hides of animals sacrificed to a deity.[65] Their erection in the cornfields was for magical as well as practical reasons, the hides being believed to still possess the spirits of their former inhabitants. These spirits both scared the crows and guarded the young crops. Beelzebub's identification with the scarecrow seems to indicate that it, like the dead ancestor or god it once embodied, has come alive for this special occasion.

Reincarnation may also serve to explain the mysterious existence of Old Joe in an unlocated text recorded by Ivor Gatty.[66] Joe, one of Saucy Bet's many dead children, has a crumpled toe, suggestive of an agent of fertility. While the other children have all gone to heaven, Joe's location is unknown. Some folk say he is still with them.

In sword dance plays, the victim frequently has a will, in which he may account for the disposal of both his possessions and his bodily parts. Such a will occurs in the hero-combat of Great Wolford, Warwickshire, where it is not by the victim,

but by a minor character, Fidler Wit. Fidler is also the musician Big Head and Little Wit. The will ends the performance, possibly as a song. The items granted are property of little value. They are not bequeathed, but recounted by Fidler as having been left to him by his father.

The Revesby sword dance play has no killing or cure. The Gainford play has two possible endings, each involving a fairly simple cure. The doctor may merely bid the clown arise, or he may give him medicine from a bottle. In the first case the clown gets up, saying he has been asleep but is now awake. 67. Like the fool at Revesby, he calls for a dance. In both endings there is haggling over the doctor's fee, with threats by him to leave. In both, the doctor boasts of travels through England, France and Spain. In the second ending he gives his birthplace as " itty titty " , a nonsense land resembling the hero-combat land of plenty. Itty titty has neither wood, house, land nor city, but a wooden church with leather bells and black puddings for bell ropes. These items are edible, as are land of plenty houses, thatched with pancakes. The doctor also gives his name in a long nonsensical formula, " high van, low van tin tan tarravan tatten, leavy, high jany, low jany, dead man's bones Pitch and tar, hog's tar, beeswax and honeycombs. " The clown's illness is diagnosed as his having fallen upstairs and broken his neck, but this is changed to downstairs upon the doctor's remark as to its stupidity.

At Greatham, the diagnosis and doctor's objections follow those of Gainford. The doctor again comes from Itty Titty,

which here also has little dogs and cats running about with knives and forks stuck in their paws, shouting " God Save the Queen " . These animals resemble similar pigs of the hero-combat land of plenty. The doctor's travels include nonsense journeys from the fireside to the bedside and to the cheese and bread cupboard. There are also vague trips far and near, and much at home. The doctor gives the clown a drink of his medicine and then scours him over and over. The clown rises and sings that he has been sleeping but is now awake. He calls for a dance and for payment of the doctor. The dance ends the play. At one point in the cure sequence the doctor is curiously addressed as " Dame Doctor " by the king. This is the only instance I have found in which the doctor has a female identity. It occurs in the king's expression of incredulity at the doctor's accounts of some fantastic cures.

The Ampleforth play has a complex cure, initiated by the doctor but finally effected by the clown. The doctor enters with a horse, for which he requests food as part of his payment. The request is later abandoned in the haggling which occurs over his fee. This haggling is typical, with the doctor threatening to leave but being convinced to stay. The doctor's travels are to fifty-five kingdoms, much at home, and to Itty Titty. He boasts the ability to cure a variety of diseases and conditions. His name is " Ivan-Lovan-tanaman-laddie, Seven Son of a new-born doctor. " He feels the dead man's pulse, says it is raging, and pretends to give the man a

pill. Conversation follows until eventually the king comments that the man is a long time coming to life. The doctor decides to bleed the man, gives the King the man's arm to hold up, and runs at them with his sword. The king falls and knocks his knee cap off, and the doctor puts it right again. He than bleeds the dead man. More conversation follows until the king repeats his comment that the dead man is a long time coming to life. He then takes his sword and pulls it down the man's middle. The man jumps up, saying that he has been asleep but is now awake. As at Revesby and Gainford there is a call for a dance. The cure is somewhat surgical, suggesting a similarity in function between slaying and operating. Feeling of the pulse will be seen to be common in wooing plays, where cures generally have a somewhat anatomical nature. The slogan " God Save the King " appears at the end of the doctor's description of his trip to Itty Titty. This slogan has been seen to be God Save the Queen at Greatham and to be replaced in hero-combats by animals requesting to be eaten. In a plough performance from Askham Richard it is " God Speed the Plough " .

At Revesby, Greatham and Ampleforth, the clown gives his will. The Ampleforth will is short and succeeds the death of the victim, who is not the clown. It resembles a prayer rather than a bequeathal. No property items are disposed of, but the man's soul is dedicated to heaven and his bones to the churchyard. A man holding the clown's sword will take the victim's wife and bairns. This man may once have been the king or victor himself, who often assumed, as a result of his political conquest, responsibility for his victim's wife and children. At the end of

his will the clown hands his sword to another man.

The Greatham will, recited by the clown as the swords are placed round his neck, includes four specific bequests. These are of both property items and parts of the victim's body. The bodily parts are to be made into musical instruments. Following the bequeathals of the first two items, the actors answer the clown with " So I will, Dad " and " So will I Dad " , respectively. A father and son relationship between the victim and the other actors is thus indicated.

At Revesby, there are five bequests, of animals, to the fool's five sons. These are followed by two extra bequests, to Pickle Herring and to the second son, of clothing. The remaining three sons are named as executors of the fool's estate. The fool's soul is submitted to God, and his bones to Mareham churchyard. The bequests are made as the fool kneels with the swords round his neck.

At Ampleforth and at Gainford, burial of the dead man is suggested, but abandoned in favor of cure by the doctor. The Greatham play merely has a cure with no suggested alternative. Revesby has no killing, cure or burial, but the clown does engage Pickle Herring in a conversation about burial preferences.

At Ampleforth, the actors all kneel round the dead man as the clown sings a burial " psalm " over him. This psalm is actually a rather earthly tale about a King Henry who once ruled the land and stole barley meal with which to make a pudding. The King, Queen and gentlemen all ate this pudding. The lines of the psalm are periodically repeated by the dead

man's mourners. The psalm reappears at Gainford, where it is merely a song sung upon the victim's revival. The rather curious phenomenon of food preparation being included in a burial ceremony has earlier been found in the Cambourne, Cornwall hero-combat, which announces " 120 pound beef " as the place where the group will find a burial hymn. The Ampleforth pudding suggests the maggotty puddings of some hero-combats. An association between feasting and the victim's death may be implied. The psalm is followed by the clown's will and then by a decision to seek a cure rather than bury. The doctor is sent for so that the group as a whole may " escape a halter " . They seem to fear sharing the fate of the executed man, if they neglect to seek a cure for him. Such fear would be in keeping with the magical principle of contagion, whereby properties of an object or a person are believed to easily spread to near-by ones.

At Gainford, the king suggests a private burial of the clown, but this is opposed by a second clown, who favors calling for a doctor. He is called for by the king.

At Revesby, the fool insists on deciding where he will be buried. Pickle Herring asks where this will be but in the churchyard with other people, but the fool prefers Mr. Mirfin's ale cellar, where he can drink when they come to fill the quart.

The doctor and his cure are present in the five wooing play texts in which there is a slaying. The cure always involves feeling of the pulse and there may be some disagreement as to the part of the body in which it is located. On several occasions the patient is diagnosed as having swallowed a horse and cart.

The doctor is called for and presents a list of cures, which is generally short. Specific examples of his skill are present only at Bulby and Jerusalem, in both of which cases an old Mrs. Cork from York is cured of a grazed shin after having tumbled upstairs. Falling upstairs has been seen to occur in some sword dances, where it is diagnosed as the victim's illness.

In all wooing texts but the Bulby one, the doctor lists his travels which, except at Jerusalem, include nonsense journeys of the " fireside to bedside " variety. These are short, however, and the land of plenty does not appear. The doctor does not haggle over his fee, but at Kirmington, Bulby and Jerusalem he is bet for, as described earlier. The caller increases his initial bid, arguing that the doctor must come in a case like the present one. In one of the Bassingham plays old Dame Jane calls for the doctor with an offer of five pounds, which is not further discussed.

At Bassingham, the doctor feels the fool's pulse, gives him medicine, and bids him rise, saying he is not dead but in a trance.

At Kirmington, the doctor feels the man's stomach for his

pulse. This procedure is questioned by the fool, but validated by the doctor on the grounds that the stomach is the strongest part of a man's body. The doctor announces that the fool is not dead but in a trance. He diagnoses his condition as that of having swallowed a horse and cart, of which he can't get rid of the wheels. Calling the fool Jack, he then bids him jump up and dance. Whether he does so or not is not indicated. The command is followed by the entrance of the recruiting sergeant, but the fool is apparently cured, for he reappears later in the play to announce his wedding to the lady.

At Jerusalem, the doctor begins to feel the victim and is questioned by the fool as to whether the area he is feeling is the strongest part about a man. He replies that it is the strongest part about a woman. The victim is given medicine and pronounced not dead but in a trance. The doctor comments that if the victim can't dance, the group can sing, and requests the actors begin. They all sing and ask for money and beer. There is no indication whether or not the victim finally rises.

At Bulby, the doctor feels Jane's pulse and the back of her neck. Tom Fool objects to this, saying the doctor should have felt back of the neck beneath the elbow. The doctor feels again and comments that Jane is in a very low way. She has been trying an experiment in which she swallowed a donkey and cart, but didn't digest the wheels. Calling Jane a young woman, he bids her rise and dance, saying she's not dead, but only in a trance. If she can dance, the group can sing. The

doctor instructs the group to rise her up and begin. All sing and ask for something in their box, and beer. There is again no indication whether the victim actually does rise.

Raising up of the victim by other actors occurs twice in the wooing plays, though it is not found in the other play types. The fact that the victim has to be raised by others suggests that the cure may not really have been effective. It is reminiscent of both the raising aloft of German sword dances, and of certain burial processions. It suggests the stuffed hides of oxen and other ritual animals. It may also bear a relationship to the ancient bringing-up of the earth-maiden, Semele.[68.]

At Clayworth, the doctor feels Eezum Squeezum's heel for his pulse. As usual, the clown objects, arguing that the doctor should have felt " back of the head, against the elbow " . The doctor apologizes for his mistake, which the clown claims is a great one. He then announces that the man is not dead but in a trance, and diagnoses his condition as having swallowed a wheelbarrow, of which he can't get rid of the wheel. The victim is asked to cough and his cough is faint. He is given medicine. The doctor then produces a box of pills, at the sight of which the clown requests he stop and read the " resurroction " on them. This resurrection resembles a prescription in that it both identifies the pills and gives instructions for their use. Whether they are administered to the victim is unclear. An unidentified character, possibly the clown, announces that as the man can't dance, they'll all sing.

He requests that the victim be raised up so that they can begin. As at Bulby and Jerusalem, the actors then sing and ask for a Christmas box and beer. Again there is no evidence of the victim rising through his own power.

In contrast to sword dance victims, wooing play victims do not call for dances, but are themselves requested to dance by another character.

C. Marriage.

The combat and cure stand out as the decidedly central features of hero-combat performances. There are, however, a number of other regularly occuring play features of greater or lesser significance. The most important of these Chambers lumps together as belonging to a " quête " [69.], to which he attributes a definite form in his construction of a normalized play text. This lumping together is somewhat misleading. Quête literally means collection, only one of the many activities engaged in by the play figures Chambers describes. The quête is given a fixed temporal occurrence at the end of the constructed text. While it is true that quête activities often occur at this time, appearance of them at other times is by no means unusual. Chambers' construction suggests a fixed series of events, occurring rather meaninglessly, though in a regular pattern. The meaning, rather than the simple appearance, of the minor play types is clearly related to the play's underlying structure as a ritual. It involves wooing, marriage, the occasional construction of a marriage

house, frequent feasting, less frequent burial, and finally the quête or collection itself. With the exception of burial, considered earlier under the function of cure, these activities can all be subsumed under the function of marriage.

Ritual wooing and marriage is usually between a young victor and his equally young bride.[70] The marriage house is built for this couple. In wooing plays the feast is their wedding feast, though in hero-combats it appears as more general merriment. The collection is of food, drink, money, or some combination of these. Its intention is to provide for children who are starving, or to ease bad natural conditions, such as those of the roads the actors have had to travel to get to the performance. Collections of money resemble political taxes.

Hero-combat wooings are quite rudimentary in comparison with their counterparts in wooing and in some sword dance ceremonies. Wooings, or references to them, occur at the end of hero-combat texts.

A play from Keyncham ends with the wooing of a shepherdess by a prince. Except for the fact that it is unresolved, it is quite similar to the central wooings of wooing plays. There is an initial refusal by the shepherdess and persistance by the prince, but the play ends with this persistence. The shepherdess is not finally won, as the lady generally is in wooing plays. It is likely she may have been were the sequence complete. She is called on by Father Christmas, who seems to metamorphose into the prince, for he speaks of once having been a shepherd courting his shepherdess. Such a

metamorphosis would be consistent with the frequent
71.
metamorphoses of deities in myth.

Though wooing or marriage is not mentioned as their destiny, the captain and his wife enter at the end of a Newfoundland text. The captain leads the way for his men and also speaks of blame being borne by the champion. The meaning of this is unclear, but it suggests the guilt-assignment sequences of some sword dances. The captain's wife has no speech or actions. The wren collects an offering and sings about a maiden who has lost her love in war. She wishes she were a bird so that she might fly to caress the body of her dead lover. Similar antagonism between love and war has been seen to occur in wooing ceremonies, particularly when the recruiting sergeant appears in these.

A Rugby hero-combat ends with a comic wooing song by Big Head and Little Wit. This tells of the courtship of a young lady by an old man. After many refusals she eventually marries him, but he dies the morning after she has taken him to bed. In ritual, the young victor is usually the only appropriate groom. Comic wooings by old men are also present in wooing plays, as will be seen later.

A Camborne, Cornwall text has no wooing or marriage, but does include the building of a house for St. George and God. This is built by the mason, Tom Tarter, who takes St.George by the hand and walks him out. The action resembles the leading of a hero in triumph. The house appears to be a temple rather
72.
than the marriage ones of early rituals. A Christian influence

may be at work here, or the building of temples to abstract deities may also have been a part of earlier rituals. The bride herself may once have been God, though with a small " g " and as only one manifestation of him. This house-building is the only one present in the hero-combat texts examined in this study. The possible formation of marriage houses in sword dance ceremonies has been considered earlier.

Food and feasting have a common appearance in the hero-combats. They may be related to the quête, for the requested offering is often of food. The collected items may not be consumed immediately and may serve some purpose other than simple gratification. Collections are carried out by a single actor, who may be The Wren, Judas, Little Judy or Molly. Collections by Beelzebub, little Johnnie Jack, or their counterparts, are also common.

Chambers isolates Humpty Jack and a separate " Sweeper " as collectors of money,[73] relegating Jack to the southern and the Sweeper to the northern half of England. But this isolation is rather arbitrary and artificial. First of all, the object of the collection need not at all be money. Secondly, Humpty Jack figures frequently occur when there is no collection. What most accurately identifies them is their humped back, usually caused by the carrying of a wife and family on it.

At Longborough, Gloucestershire Hump-backed Jack, with wife and family at his back, is also big head and little wit, the musician. He carries a hurdy gurdy gee made from an old tin cannister his father left him. In a performance at Islip, Oxon,

Old Fat Jack has his wife and family at his back. He takes no collection, but brings a rattle, to please everybody. Rattles, now familiar as children's playthings, were once adult musical instruments believed to possess magical powers. Fat Jack's wife is big and his family is small. Her bigness may be due to pregnancy, for immediately upon Jack's entrance there is a dance in which she falls and has a tooth drawn. The relationship of the tooth to fertility has been considered earlier. Magical rattles were believed to have power over the weather,[74.] and possibly over other natural phenomena such as childbirth.

An unlocated text, collected by Ivor Gatty, has a female Humpty Jack. She is Saucy Bet, who carries her family at her back. Like Father Christmas and Burghclere's little Johnnie Jack, she recounts the loss of her children, ending, unlike them, with a hint of reincarnation for one of them.

The importance of feasting to the hero-combat is reflected in the fact that the performance is on one occasion called The Feast of Fools. The actors travel the street and fight for their meat. Travel has been seen as a reason for collecting. A fight for meat could well result in a feast. With a little imagination it could easily be a hunt.

A frequent boast by one of the combatants is that he will send his opponent to Jamaica or elsewhere to make mince pies. At Cocking, Sussex Mince Pie actually appears as a combatant, slain by St. George and revived. He boasts of sending George to the kitchen to make a mince pie. Food names also appear in the Revesby sword dance, where they are those of spices and are given to the

fool's sons.

Christmas, the time of the plays' performance, is also the time to cut up green goose pies. These pies may have once had religious significance, perhaps related to bird-magic and the sky-god.

At Broadwell, Beelzebub vows that if he comes that way another year he'll bring a brace of rabbits to make a pigeon pie of. This appears to be nonsense, unless understood in the context of mythology, where it is not uncommon for deities to undergo metamorphoses from various plants, animals and humans into others. Bird deities are old and numerous.

Trips to an earthly paradise of prepared food may form part of feasting ritual. In hero-combats they are often lengthy. They may be undertaken by John Finney, Tom the Tinker, a good old dummun, Beelzebub, Old Hind-before, or the doctor. They are usually described in a variety of nonsense humour that Tiddy calls topsy-turvydom, due to the fact that it finds its effect through incongrous juxtapositions of opposites (for example, I went up a straight crooked lane) or simple inversion of ideas (I met a bark and he dogged at me). Much of this humour does not appear meaningful to modern understanding, and Tiddy suggests it may be a form of magical incantation, like saying the Lord's Prayer backwards.[75.] [76.] Though Chambers dismisses this explanation as far-fetched, much early comedy, particularly satire, is known to have a direct magical intent.[77.]

In a Weston-sub-Edge hero-combat, the land of plenty has roast stones, plum puddings, houses thatched with pancakes

and little pigs running about with knives and forks stuck in their backs crying " Who'll eat me, who'll eat me ? " . John Finney announces that the group as a whole has come to this land. Though the land is fantastical, it is not described in the brand of nonsense humour considered above. But such humour is used in Beelzebub's tales of other adventures which lead up to the arrival at the land.

At Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire, the journey to the land of plenty is combined with other nonsense episodes not related to food. Both types of nonsense humour are evident, though inversion of ideas is dominant. The land of plenty is not isolated for special attention, but merely run into the context of a generally incredible tale. This is told by a good old dummun. She went down a long broad short narrow lane, where she met a pigstye tied to an elder-bush, built with apple-dumplings and thatched with pancakes. She knocked at the maid and the door came out. She continued to encounter many similar adventures.

At Kempsford, Gloucestershire, Tom Pinney comes from a country where pigsties are thatched from pancakes, horse shoes knit, and steel iron bars spun.

Nonsense episodes excluding mention of prepared food may be given by other characters and may frequently include a dispute amongst kitchen utensils. This is most often narrated by Beelzebub, though it is also told by Little John, Molly and Tom Pinney. It usually occurs at the end of the play, though it is sometimes found at the beginning. The grid-iron

acts as a justice in the dispute, vowing to settle it. The frying pan, with his long tail, often threatens to send everyone to jail. The events of the dispute vary. At Weston-sub-Edge the pot lid kicks the ladle and spit jack swears to fight the dripping pan. At Shipton-under-Wychwood the pot lid beats the ladle.

The ritual eating of parts of a slain god has a common occurrence in early religious practice. Researchers often prefer to study this God where he occurs in animal rather than human form. Yet there is every evidence that human sacrifice did have a fairly routine occurrence, not due to sadism or other psychological abberations, but as a socially sanctioned practice in which the victims may have consciously participated, the dedication of their lives to the deity being seen as an affair of great honor.[78.]

A hint of human sacrifice occurs in the Camborne, Cornwall hero-combat, when the death of the Turkish Knight is followed by the entrance of Bealzibub with a fire to which he will put the Turk. Two possibilities for this fire are cremation and roasting. Its appearance is unique to the mummers' plays examined in this study. The carrying off of the Turk is suggestive of burial rites. There is no indication that the Turk is actually cooked, though given the cannibalistic nature of some earlier feasts, this possibility should not be ruled out. It may be significant that the play is exceptional in having no final revival of the Turk. An alternate ending to the one with fire consists of a more explicit burial ceremony.

Beelzebub has a frequent appearance in hero-combats, usually entering just after the revival of the victim. He carries a club and a frying pan, often also called a dripping pan. In Staffordshire it is a kegin pan, and at Clayworth, Nottinghamshire a wetleather frying pan. I have found no satisfactory meaning for the word kegin. Nor do I understand the significance of wetleather as applied to a frying pan.

The club and pan suggest functions related to hunting and cooking, respectively male and female occupations. The pan reinforces the possibility that his intention at Camborne is to roast the Turk.

In a Derbyshire play, Beelzebub may be replaced by Slip-Slop, a man with blacked face dressed in woman's clothes. This figure is an example of the man-woman or Bessy described earlier. She has been turned out by her mother for stealing mop, a crime which resembles the thefts for which sword dance executions are carried out. The suffragette of a Heptonstall play carries clogs over her shoulder in the position usual for Beelzebub's club. At Longborough, Gloucestershire, Beelzebub is both the doctor's horse and an old woman dressed in a frock. In a Cumbrian play he is the scarecrow, Old Harry Sloan.

Beelzebub's carrying off of the Turk at Camborne suggests the Humpty Jack figures with their wives and families. There are several other instances in which Beelzebub appears as a hump-backed figure. The Beelzebub who collects money at Cinderford has a hump on one shoulder. Tiddy describes an

appearance of Beelzebub as Old Humping Jack, with pack and

dripping pan. Unlike the central Humpty Jack figures, however, Beelzebub never carries a wife and family. His humped-back and semi-female nature are the only characteristics which link him to the other Humpty Jack types.

Beelzebub is alternately belzey bob, Belsey Bob or Bells Abub. At Sapperton, Gloucestershire Belsey Bob wears a sheep bell and Morris bells. In a Derbyshire performance bells ring all through Beelzebub's part. It is possible that Beelzebub's name is derived from those bells, and that he may have at one time had an identity more related to music than to evil. Such identity is reinforced by the fact that in a Berkshire performance Beelzebub has no club and pan, but ends the play in the character of Big Head, the musician. He plays a fiddle to which the group dances.

Big Head has a frequent independent appearance in the plays. He generally sings, plays, dances, or performs some combination of these activities. He is usually " I that never come yet " and may say he has " muckle " head or wit. Big Head is often female, and at Rugby sings the comic wooing song which in wooing plays belongs to the lady.

In a second Rugby play Little Dick enters as all head and no wit. He sings of nonsense journeys, ending with a request for money. This role of collector is rather unusual. Though Big Head often ends the plays he usually does so through music rather than through collecting.

A North Lancashire text has the peculiar " I Nevercomeyet, Big head and little wit " . He claims that though his wit is

small he and his pompy will leather them all. The meaning of both pompy and leather seems lost to modern understanding.

A Newfoundland play has a mere suggestion of Big Head in the figure of Dim Dorothy, with her fair face and fat commarity. She claims she is biggest bully of them all. The meaning of commarity is unclear. The identity as bully suggests the man-woman.

Elaborate wooing sequences are present in the sword dance plays of Revesby and Ampleforth. At Greatham, there is a mere reference to wooing in the introductory speech by Rantom Tom. He recounts how he went courting to Susie Perkins, but the dogs and cats made such a fuss he was unable to speak to her. A similar complaint occurs in the introductory speech by the king at Ampleforth, but here there are two ladies, Miss Madam Molly and Susannah Parkin. The wooing of Miss Parkin is again accompanied by the barking of dogs.

Ampleforth wooings cover two of the five parts into which this play is divided. In the first part, which Chambers[80.] believes to be largely pieced together from scraps of Congreve's Love for Love, the Queen Susannah is unsuccessfully wooed by the King Ben. Recognizing his lack of skill at wooing, Ben engages the aid of the clown, who prepares the way for his advances. Yet he remains crude, and upon actually encountering the queen insults her considerably, so that she eventually sends him off, stamping her foot. In the second part of the play a clown competes with the king in the wooing of another queen, Rose. The king bids Rose to banish the clown, but she

refuses to do so, preferring to encourage both men. Eventually, she leaves to obey her father, requesting her suitors to remain in peace until a future meeting. The episode ends with comments by the two suitors concerning the beguiling ways of women.[81] Brody argues that these final comments are best understood as literary references, but they may well have been present in original rituals. In these, both male and female characteristics were recognized as having magical significance. In wooing play wooings there is commonly competition amongst suitors, though the persistent victor usually wins the bride. It may be possible that the bride's consent once could not have been given until the competition was first settled amongst the men themselves. The ritual bride is usually awarded to the victor of a combat. Rose's nature is beguiling only to the men, not to herself. Her encouragement of both men may be not so much duplicity as stalling for a favorable result. The Ampleforth wooings occur in the first two sections of the play, before the death of the victim in a communal dance. This death occurs at the end of the fourth section.

At Revesby, the fool and his five sons compete for the hand of Cicely, whose final consent ends the play. The sons are Pickle Herring, Blue Britches, Ginger Britches, Pepper Britches, and Mr. Allspice. The fool and Pickle Herring are the major contenders. The fool begins his wooing with a request that the other men be driven out so that he can talk to Cicely. She reproaches him for driving them away so soon. He then promises

to bring them back, but the talk ends with insults on both sides and the fool boasting that he is a valiant soldier. He has sword and buckler by his side, ready to fight, and leaves the stage bidding all whores and gluttons come forth. Cicely's rejection of him as lover seems to lead to this warlike behaviour, suggesting wooing play sequences in which the lover threatens to enlist if his lady won't marry him.

After the fool leaves, all his sons enter. All but Allspice introduce themselves and state their desire to win Cicely. There is dancing after each entrance, and finally Pickle Herring engages in an extensive wooing. Cicely rejects him on the grounds that he is too old. He offers her riches, leisure and power, but she remains unmoved. The fool then enters and is welcomed by Cicely, but Pickle Herring bids him stand back, calling him a silly old swain. Pickle Herring approaches Cicely but she remains aloof, merely stating that he is as welcome as the rest, and calling him a braggart. He offers gold but is again refused on the basis of age. It seems there is some confusion here, for in the earlier part of the play Pickle Herring is clearly a young man, though the fool seems old. The fool and Pickle Herring insult each other and boast, the fool commenting that Pickle Herring's nose stands like a Maypole tree. There may be a phallic meaning here, with nose having its usual magical associations with the penis. This would suggest a youthful, sexually potent, nature for Pickle Herring.

Ginger Britches attempts to sway Cicely in favor of Pickle

Herring, but before he can she announces her engagement and fidelity to one she loves. She bids Pickle Herring stand next to her, addressing him as " Old Father " and apparently arranging her wedding party. In this, a man with a weapon stands after Pickle Herring. Cicely's groom is the hind man of the three. The fool now also calls Pickle Herring Old Father, and discredits his offer of gold, moralizing that the soldier shall have no sway. He then announces himself as Cicely's successful suitor.

Pickle Herring, though he appears young, is quite obviously considered an old man for much of the wooing sequence. Cicely's choice of the fool is rather oblique, so that it is quite possible he was originally not the favored suitor. Though he is never directly called old during the wooing, the fool's wooing behaviour is clearly that of an old man. The reason for Cicely's choice appears moral, and this may well explain the confusion. Pickle Herring is rejected on the basis of his soldierly characteristics, which are of positive value in pagan plays, but less easily reconciled with Christian morals. The fool, though incompetent, is less warlike, and constitutes no such threat to Christianity. But what favors later morals serves to detract from the ritual meaning of the ceremony, in which marriage always involved a young warrior king.

Five of the six wooing play texts examined have lengthy wooing sequences. The Bulby play, whose substantial Dame Jane sequence serves to classify it as a wooing play, has only a rudimentary suggestion of a wooing. An unidentified character, who seems to be the lady, enters and talks of how her lover

will enlist if she doesn't marry him.

One of the Bassingham plays has a central wooing of a lady by an old man, who is rejected, and then by a fool, who is also first rejected, but finally accepted. The text is short and has only a rudimentary combat. Wooing begins as the old man approaches the lady. He is rejected and begs to be kicked out of the room and hung over the kitchen door. This peculiar request suggests an identity between the old man and an ancient deity, whose embodiment, in some vegetative form, was frequently hung over primitive doorways.[82] Primitive head hunters also hang heads of their victims over doorways.[83] A request to have one's head so hung suggests an awareness on the part of a ritual victim of his divine fate.

After the old man has made his request, St. George enters and appears to fight the fool, though this part of the text is fragmented and its action unclear. The fool woos the lady, offering her riches, which she refuses. He retaliates by calling her proud and scornful and bidding her leave, for he can find another. At this she relents a little, advising him not to hurry away, but to stay and be ruled by reason. She suggests things may improve with time. The fool then rejoices that the girl who once refused him now comforts him regularly. Apparently his bride has been won.

A second Bassingham play has initial wooings of the lady by three suitors, the Eldest Son, the Farming Man, and a Lawyer. All are rejected, the Eldest Son because he merely admires the

lady's clothing, not her, the farming man because he speaks too clownish, and the lawyer for no reason. Wooings by an old man and by the fool occur later in the play. They are almost identical to those of the other Bassingham text, except that here the fool's successful wooing is followed by his invitation to everyone to attend his wife's wedding. The fool gives his own preferences in food for the wedding feast, then asks the guests to each bring the food they like, since he cannot tell everyone's tastes. He and his lady then sing about the coming celebration.

At Kirmington, the lady is wooed by the recruiting sergeant, who offers her riches, but is refused on the grounds that all she wants is a nice young man. The fool does not woo the lady, but late in the play he briefly announces himself as the nice young man she wants. He procedes to invite everyone to his and his wife's wedding, again requesting that the guests bring whichever kinds of food they prefer to eat. The lady's preference for a " nice " lover may reflect a late, sentimental influence. In more primitive ceremonies, material wealth and moral respectability would not necessarily have been opposed.

At Jerusalem, Lincolnshire, the recruiting sergeant and the lady's speech about love and war reappear, but here the lover has not already enlisted. He will do so if the lady refuses him. The recruiting sergeant does not woo the lady. After her speech she is briefly wooed by the fool, whom she readily accepts, setting the wedding date for the next day. All dance and the fool gives his wedding invitation. In this he describes the food he will himself prepare, and follows this with the usual request that guests bring their preferred dishes.

At Clayworth, the lady is again faced with the choice of either marrying or having her lover leave her. Again there is a brief successful wooing resulting in a decision to wed the next day. The clown is the only suitor. The wooing is followed by rejoicing, but there is no wedding invitation.

In addition to the fool's request that his guests bring food to the wedding feast, five of the wooing plays examined also have requests by the actors as a whole for Christmas boxes and beer. These are to compensate for the wet deep mire they had to cross to get to the performance. At Jerusalem a collection box is sent round. Kirmington has an individual collector, Bold Tom, who begs ale and pork on behalf of the group.

Old Dame Jane is present is all wooing texts except the Clayworth one, though in rudimentary appearances at Kirmington and in one of the Bassingham plays. At Kirmington, she is Lame Jane, who drives the actors out in order to sweep the floor. This is possibly as a preparation for the fool's wedding, which immediately follows her appearance. In one of the Bassingham plays, Jane has no speech and is not actually listed as present. The fool, however, has his usual rejection of her baby, along with threats to attack her if she doesn't leave.

In the second Bassingham play old Dame Jane offers the fool her bastard baby, which he refuses, boasting of his valour and threatening her with assault if she doesn't stop tormenting him. Jane later reappears as an old witch, who calls for the doctor to cure her husband, the slain fool.

At Bulby, Old Jane hands Tom Fool a wooden doll, which she calls his " Charlie " . He denies he is father of it, but pointing out its resemblance to him, she insists he take a spoon and feed it. At this, Tom orders her out of his sight. Beelzebub enters, seeking an old woman who can stand before him. Jane meets his challenge with the iron and steel boast of the hero-combat victim. They fight, and he knocks Jane to the floor, killing her. The conflict is the central one of the play.

At Jerusalem Jane again carries a doll, which she hands to the fool, telling him to take his bastard. As at Bulby, she points out its resemblance to him. There is then a rather curious turn of events, as the fool asks Jane whether the baby is " He male or Shemale " . At the reply " Shemale " , he counters " All mine are Hemale " , telling Jane he has nothing for which to thank her. This strange conclusion may be in some way related to male and female magic, and perhaps to either military iniation or that second birth from the " male womb ", described by Harrison.[84] In primitive societies only male children are in any way raised by their fathers. Females stay with their mothers until marriage.

Foot-Notes

Chapter II.

1. Van Gennep, p.11.

2. Chambers, p.89, p.123.

3. Cawte et al. , pp. 37-38.

4. Chambers, p.6.

5. Chambers, p.129.

6. Cawte et al. , p. 24.

7. Brody, p. 4.

8. James, p. 36.

9. Brody, p. 61.

10. Brody, p. 80.

11. Brody, p. 61.

12. Chambers, p. 13.

13. Chambers, p.125.

14. Harrison, p.426.

15. Harrison, pp. 291-94.

16. Chambers, p. 13.

17. Chambers, pp. 33-34.

18. Chambers, p. 22.

19. Chambers, p. 39.

20. Chambers, p. 27.

21. Harrison, p. 427.

22. Cawte et al., p. 29.

23. Brody, p. 53.

24. Willetts, p. 96.

25. Harrison, p. 12.

26. Cawte et al., p.30.

27. Harrison, pp. 212-59.

28. E.K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, Vol.1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903), pp. 274-335.

29. Harrison, p.12.

30. The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol.3, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 547.

31. Chambers, p.129.

32. Harrison, p.275.

33. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.121.

34. Harrison, p.267.

35. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.125.

36. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.126.

37. Harrison, p.142.

38. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.99.

39. Harrison, pp. 342-43.

40. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.39.

41. Chambers, p.51.

42. Brody, p.55.

43. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.53.

44. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.53.

45. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.59.

46. Harrison, pp. 114-15.

47. Harrison, pp. 23-24.

48. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p. 68.

49. Thomas Hardy, The Play of St. George (New York: Samuel French, 1928), pp. 30-31.

50. Willetts, p.96.

51. Harrison, p.156.

52. Harrison, pp. 272-73.

53. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p. 207.

54. Harrison, p.439.

55. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.55.

56. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.56.

57. Harrison, pp. 292-93.

58. Harrison, pp. 307-16.

59. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.61.

60. Harrison, p.140.

61. Cawte et al., p.25.

62. Harrison, p.17.

63. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.30.

64. Harrison, p.452.

65. Harrison, p.143.

66. Ivor Gatty, " The Eden Collection of Mumming Plays ", Folk-Lore, 59 (1948) , p. 21.

67. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.112.

68. Harrison, p.420.

69. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, pp. 63-71.

70. Harrison, p.233.

71. Harrison, pp. 115-16.

72. Cawte et al., p.30.

73. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, pp. 63-64.

74. Harrison, p.79.

75. Tiddy, pp. 84-85.

76. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, pp. 48-49.

77. R.C.Elliott, The Power of Satire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) , pp.3-48.

78. Willetts, p.96.

79. Tiddy, p.77.

80. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p. 149.

81. Brody, p.87.

82. Harrison, p.503.

83. Garry Hogg, Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1958) , p.125.

84. Harrison, pp. 34-35.

Chapter III. Play Functions as Elements of Seasonal Rites.

Combat and execution are rites of separation, serving to cut the victim off from participation in the living community. They also involve transfer of kingly power, and this cuts the community as a whole off from a previous time state, the annual cycle over which the old king reigned. Loss of children in combat may be equivalent to loss of months of the year, another separation involving time. The military conquest of foreign tyrants or lands constitutes a separation in terms of space. The predatory nature of dragons and giants reflects the destructiveness of separation.

Father Christmas' attack on Old Bet has sexual overtones. It effectively cuts the woman off from her rigid preoccupation with cooking methods.

The male teams who form the lock of sword dance plays belong to the execution they will eventually perform. The lock itself, often specifically of new rapiers, is an effective cutting agent for the separation it carries out. Separation is suggested in threats by the sword dance king to have the clown's head cut off if he doesn't perform for him. The harsh discipline of Rantom Tom's master may be a similar form of punishment.

Recruiting sergeants organize separation by enlisting soldiers for combat. Through tearing up or cutting the land, ploughboys may also be engaging in rites of separation. Boasts of valour and accusations of theft or other crimes lead up to slaying or execution. The guilt-assignment of some sword dance plays has

been seen to directly result from these plays' executions. House destruction is that of the house of the victim, and may be magically included in his fate. Under magic a man is not separated from his possessions, even in death and burial.

Cure is a transition rite, transforming death to new life. Whether or not the victim is actually believed dead and brought back to life, he is succeeded in office by his youthful conqueror. This succession involves possession of the predecessor's qualities, so that the victim's spirit lives on in his conqueror, whether or not he is himself revived. Erection of the victim's stuffed hide has been seen to be a means through which magical continuity of life is maintained. The hides are believed to possess magical powers, similar to those of the victim when he was alive. They are not conceived of as lifeless, but as altered states for perpetually living beings. The raising up of the victim, apparently without his own participation, in certain wooing plays, resembles such erections.

Cures by means of tooth-pulling appear to involve extraction and rejuvenation of the life-giving agent, the tooth. Cures by medicaments involve administration of potions or magical compounds. Bleeding, feeling the pulse, and other anatomical cures, appear to be primitive forms of surgery. Animal cure boasts and animal teeth are possibly totemistic. Boasts of the ability to revive an old woman may include her bearing children, obvious representatives of fertility. The horse and cart swallowed in certain wooing plays may also be

agents of fertility. Jack Finney assists the doctor's cures and may actually perform cures himself. Lament for the victim is transitional in that as well as mourning death it also anticipates revival.

Burial has been considered as more closely related to cure than to death. Van Gennep[1] identifies it predominantly with transition, and incorporation of the deceased into the world of the dead. In early ceremonies, burial aims to promote new growth through fertilization of the earth with the dead's organic remains. The fertilization purpose is largely missing from the plays, though the food described in burial hymns and psalms suggests a future nourishing function for the victim's remains.

Hero-combat processions in which a dead body is carried off appear more separation than transition oriented. The accounts by revived victims of journeys to strange lands suggest that such lands may play a role in the victims' transitions from death to re-birth. Van Gennep[2], however, sees the purpose of similar journeys as being primarily incorporation into the world of the dead. Giants and other phenomena involving reincarnation represent transition from the state of ancestral death into the state of reincarnation. Play wills dispose of the victim's property, bodily parts, and sometimes also his soul. Those items are carefully distributed, so as to assure their believed magical effectiveness within the state of being into which the victim is entering. The distribution assists the victim's transition to new life.

Beelzebub and Dame Jane have been considered in chapter two under the ritual functions of combat and marriage respectively. They have also been mentioned as a pair viewed by Douglas Kennedy as essential to an early fertility cult. In such cults, overlap in separation and revival rites is prominent, as is evidenced in death monuments with clearly phallic dimensions.[3]

As old people, Beelzebub and Dame Jane are easily related to separation, in that they will soon die naturally, if they do not happen to be victims of combat. They frequently are such victims, but just as frequently have a completely independent existence. Beelzebub's club and pan have been seen to suggest hunting and cooking, possibly for play feasts. These have been considered under the play function of marriage.

Beelzebub may be to at least some degree identified with the fertile Humpty Jack, who bears wife and family on his back. Old Dame Jane produces a baby, the most obvious example of human fertility. Beelzebub and Jane never directly engage in wooing and marriage. Perhaps they are too irreversibly old for it? In wooing plays, Jane usually indicates the fool as her husband or the father of her baby, though he commonly denies the charge and later marries the young lady. Jane's approach to the fool may be equivalent to comic wooings of the lady by an old man.

Successful play woolngs are usually between a young suitor and his equally young bride. What Beelzebub and Jane seem to represent is not so much fertility as an absolute

as the continuation of fertility. The young married pair are future representatives of fertility, who will hopefully produce offspring during the coming year. Beelzebub and Jane present their baby and then retire, frequently as ritual victims.

Old fertility representatives, commonly Humpty Jack and Molly, rather than Beelzebub and Old Jane, may take the play collection or quête. This gathering together of communal wealth is often part of the wedding feast. It may also be in some other way used to support the new pair, who, as king and queen, may have responsibility for the community as a whole. The old married pair ensures them with enough material goods for a healthy beginning to their new responsibilities. Marriage is a rite of incorporation into the sexual production of children. The quête is an incorporation into general communal well-being. Its collection by the old fertility representatives is easily related to endogamy. Occasionally, the quête is by a young conqueror and may have the appearance of being a tax on defeated subjects. This practice may be related to exogamy. In wooing plays, collection is commonly by the group of actors, suggesting communal responsibility.

Play feasting involves the human intaking of natural produce. In early ceremonies, feasting is also the eating of parts of a slain god. Roasting has already been mentioned as the possible fate of the victim in a Camborne, Cornwall hero-combat. Feasting is a rite of incorporation of humans into the substances eaten. Contact with these substances

constitutes human participation in divine material. Possible relationship of ritual foods to animal deities has been considered earlier.

Van Gennep[4] sees rites of eating and drinking together as examples of incorporation which constitute physical union or communion. Offering of feasts to the dead was common in some early ceremonies, where it was clearly related to belief in life and death as a continuum.[5] Buried ancestors were believed perpetually alive, though in altered states of existence. The prepared food of burial hymns and psalms has been considered as related to fertilization of the earth. Similar food is prevalent in hero-combat lands of plenty, which have been seen to be frequently visited by either Beelzebub or an old woman. It is possible that these lands are burial grounds or future resting places for the old married pair, in the same way that lands visited by hero-combat victims have been considered as resting places for the dead.

The two kinds of feasting, involving marriage and the dead, differ in orientation. Marriage feasting is directed toward the future and new life. Feasting the dead seems to celebrate the past. But the ritual future is based on the ritual past. Whether it is for the dead or for the living, feasting involves contact, and hence incorporation rather than separation. Contact with dead tribal ancestors helps shape the future in patterns initiated by them.

Big Head, the musician, is with difficulty classified as belonging to either separation or incorporation. Male military

leaders, such as Twing Twang and other recruiting sergeants, are frequently musicians. Music is also a common accompaniment of wedding feasts. The generally cheerful nature of Big Head's music suggests a closer relationship to feasting and incorporation than to the military and separation.

The house built for St. George at Camborne, Cornwall has been described as possibly a marriage one. As such it would serve to assist the general incorporation rite of marriage.

Foot-Notes

Chapter III.

1. Van Gennep, p.146.

2. Van Gennep, p.165.

3. Harrison, pp.396-406.

4. Van Gennep, p.29.

5. Harrison, pp. 307-16, pp. 291-92.

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