



**‘Rise Up Dead Man and Fight Again’:
Reviving and Defining Mumming in County
Fermanagh**

Threase Chrisdina Finnegan-Kessie

**A dissertation presented by Threase Finnegan-Kessie to
the Department of Anthropology in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology**

Maynooth University

Department of Anthropology

October 2015

Head of Department: Dr. Mark Maguire

Supervisor: Dr. Steve Coleman

Table of Contents

List of Figures	iv
List of Abbreviations	vii
Declaration	viii
Abstract	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Prelude: Is this mumming?	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	16
Introduction	16
Aim of thesis	17
Overview of chapters	17
Conclusion	20
Chapter Two: Literature Review	21
Introduction	21
Mapping the process	21
Irish mumming in an academic context	22
Impact of literature on the thesis: Methodology, perspective and the concept of time	31
Conclusion	34
Chapter Three: Methodology	36
Introduction	36
Theoretical perspective	36
Research methodology	40
Data analysis	45
Ethical considerations	46
Conclusion	47
Chapter Four: First impressions of mumming	48
Encountering mumming	48
Summary of the content of Mummers, Masks and Mischief	52
Understandings of the film	54
The use of Irish language	57
The symbolic use of flags	59
Christian and pre-Christian symbols	62
Conclusion	66
Chapter Five: Conflict, the audience and mumming	68
Introduction	68
Explaining the context of the conflict	68

Speaking of conflict through silence.....	71
Speaking about conflict.....	77
Audiences affirming their identity	86
Conclusion	88
Chapter Six: The impromptu revival of mumming in County Fermanagh.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Jim’s role in mumming	90
From the Mummers’ Festival to the Mummers’ Foundation.....	100
The impromptu nature of revivals.....	101
The Mummers’ Festival and Competition	104
Conclusion	106
Chapter Seven: The museum and innovation in mumming	107
Introduction.....	107
Advertising the Mummers’ Museum.....	125
The Mummers’ Museum and the mumming tradition	129
Conclusion	135
Chapter Eight: Dominant functions of the mumming mask	137
Introduction.....	137
The evolution of the mask.....	144
Pre-revival masks: To conceal and mark time	151
Revival masks: False faces, the distortion of “true reality” and symbolism.....	154
Post-revival masks: The mummer, the character and creating a mask with power	156
Conclusion	157
Chapter Nine: Mumming, music and the musician’s role.....	159
Introduction.....	159
A musician dressed in straw.....	159
From pre-revival to post-revival: The role of the musician	172
Conclusion	176
Chapter Ten: The audience and the mumming performance	178
Introduction.....	178
Make way for the ‘free’ mummers	178
All Invoices, No Cash: Performances for the tourist audience	194
The audience and mumming: Ritual and theatre.....	199
The role of the audience in a performance.....	202
The impact of the audience on the performance	204
Conclusion	207

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion	208
Appendix A: Schedule of interviews and events attended.....	217
Appendix B: Sample topic guide	219
Appendix C: Consent forms.....	220
Bibliography	222

List of Figures

All photographs, sketches and maps by the author, unless otherwise stated

Figure 1: Aughakillymaude Mummers following their performance at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in County Cavan. © Mummers' Foundation.....	1
Figure 2: Aughakillymaude Mummers' Captain.....	8
Figure 3: Jenny Wren (Right) with a mummer bearing a torch.....	9
Figure 4: The dancers. © Mummers' Foundation.....	10
Figure 5: Prince George and Prince Patrick fight while Captain Mummer looks on. © Mummers' Foundation.....	11
Figure 6: The Doctor administering Ally Campaign to Prince George. ©Mummers' Foundation.....	12
Figure 7: Aughakillymaude Mummers parading off stage. ©Mummers' Foundation.....	15
Figure 8: Diagram explaining the use of the terms pre-revival, revival and post-revival from 1965 to present.....	33
Figure 9: Aughakillymaude Community Mummers. ©Mummers' Foundation.....	40
Figure 10: Mummers' Foundation Logo. ©Mummers' Foundation.....	41
Figure 11: Aughakillymaude Community Centre and Mummers' Museum.....	41
Figure 12: A wren boy at the Listowel festival.....	44
Figure 13: A Dingle wren boy collecting money.....	44
Figure 14: View of Knockninny hill from the road to Aughakillymaude.....	48
Figure 15: Mummers walk around a bonfire, next to a pre-Christian burial mound on top of Knockninny Hill in opening shot of Mummers, Masks and Mischief. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	51
Figure 16: Captain Mummer asking permission to enter the house. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	58
Figure 17: County Fermanagh flag in the background of the shot, between the two sets of dancers. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	60
Figure 18: Bagpiper displaying County Fermanagh flag in foreground. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	61
Figure 19: Prince Patrick (Right) with Celtic cross on shield. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	62
Figure 20: St Patrick in Mummers, Masks and Mischief. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	63
Figure 21: Newgrange passage grave in Mummers, Masks and Mischief. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	64
Figure 22: Entrance stone to Newgrange in Mummers, Masks and Mischief. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association.....	65
Figure 23: Map showing the areas in County Fermanagh where conflict related deaths occurred.....	70
Figure 24: A Permit issued to a group of mummers during the conflict (NFC 1859:202)	81
Figure 25: Jim Ledwith (Bottom-centre) with National Geographic photographers taking photographs of the Aughakillymaude Mummers.....	91
Figure 26: Aughakillymaude Mummers staging Gordon Johnson's guard of honour.....	93

Figure 27: Blue string attached to the mummers' costume, rather than 'Hairy Ned'	94
Figure 28: Map of County Fermanagh showing locations of mumming groups during the 1980s revival	98
Figure 29: John Barleycorn figure which is burned in early winter	100
Figure 30: Banner used during the Mummers' Festival	104
Figure 31: Kitchen scene in the Mummers' Museum	111
Figure 32: Aughakillymaude Mummer with a hunting horn	113
Figure 33: Biddy Funny model	114
Figure 34: Captain Mummer model	115
Figure 35: Beelzebub model	118
Figure 36: Jim showing the White Horse of Benaughlin costume during a tour of the Mummers' Museum	118
Figure 37: Sardinian goat skin mumming costume	119
Figure 38: Belt of bronze bells	120
Figure 39: Hall set out for straw mask workshop	121
Figure 40: Step one for making a straw mask	121
Figure 41: Step two for making a straw mask	122
Figure 42: Step three for making a straw mask	123
Figure 43: Patrick Murphy finishing a mummers' mask. ©Mummers' Foundation	124
Figure 44: Cover of the Fermanagh Folklife calendar. ©Mummers' Foundation	126
Figure 45: The Aughakillymaude Mummers' White Horse of Benaughlin costume. ©Mummers' Museum	138
Figure 46: How a mummer operates the White Horse of Benaughlin mask	139
Figure 47: Aughakillymaude Mummers and the White Horse of Benaughlin parading during the International Masked Festival in Lisbon, Portugal. ©Mummers' Foundation	140
Figure 48: A young mummer wearing a cap instead of a mask. ©Mummers Foundation ..	142
Figure 49: A straw mumming mask near completion	145
Figure 50: An Aughakillymaude mummer throwing a straw mask onto a bonfire. ©Mummers' Foundation	147
Figure 51: Plastic masks are still used in some folk performances, such as the Wren Boy parades in Dingle, County Kerry	147
Figure 52: Aughakillymaude mummer searching through a costume box	160
Figure 53: Dessie Reilly playing the bagpipes with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. ©Mummers' Foundation	170
Figure 54: Musicians playing accordions with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. ©Mummers' Foundation	171
Figure 55: Bagpiper leading the mummers into the performance	181
Figure 56: Captain Mummer reciting the opening rhyme with the sign in his hand	182
Figure 57: Gary playing the accordion for the audience	182
Figure 58: Beelzebub	183
Figure 59: Jenny Wren	184
Figure 60: Bauld Slasher	184
Figure 61: Prince Patrick	186
Figure 62: Prince Patrick and Bauld Slasher beginning to fight	186
Figure 63: Prince Patrick killing Bauld Slasher	187
Figure 64: Ladies in the background laughing at Captain Mummer examining Bauld Slasher	187
Figure 65: Nurse examining Bauld Slasher	188

Figure 66: The Doctor after taking blood	189
Figure 67: The Doctor administering Ally Campaign to Bauld Slasher	190
Figure 68: Old Dolan	191
Figure 69: Lady in red body warmer (centre-left) swayed hands along with the dancers' steps	192
Figure 70: Prince Patrick shaking hands with an audience member.....	193
Figure 71: Layout of performance at Belle Isle for American tourist audience	194
Figure 72: Mummers parading with torches	195
Figure 73: How to make the torches used by the Aughakillymaude Mummers	196

List of Abbreviations

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Questionnaires.....	UFTMQ
National Folklore Collection.....	NFC
Manuscript.....	MS

Declaration

I hereby state that this dissertation has not been submitted in part or in whole to any other institution and is, except where otherwise stated, the original work of the author.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Abstract

This study focuses on how the tradition of mumming in County Fermanagh is defined. Several factors have contributed to the processes of redefinition mumming has been subjected to. The violent conflict, which is agreed to have erupted in the province of Ulster in 1969, played an integral role in the severe decline of mumming around this period. In the 1980s, it was revived and mumming groups became a common sight around Christmas time, in local towns and villages. This continued until the 2000s. However, at present there remains only one mumming group practicing the tradition in Fermanagh: The Aughakillymaude (ACK-LA-MAD) Mummers. This thesis explores how mumming has been redefined by both the mummers and the audience.

Throughout the thesis, it is argued that while social practices are viewed as possessing longevity and immutability both time and context act to change and define them. Mumming exists on the margins of Irish cultural activity. There are no academic departments established to study it, no dedicated archives to store its history, nor are there rules or regulations to bind its existence. Its continuation depends on those involved redefining the tradition. The mummers eke out a space for it through touristic and non-touristic avenues, by framing the tradition as unconventional and marginal. The study challenges notions of the audience, the commodification of tradition, masking, the ability to speak about conflict, reviving a tradition, and the musician. By doing this, it examines how a tradition which exists without any formalities to govern it continues to be redefined and practiced on the margins of Irish cultural activity.

Acknowledgments

This thesis could not have been written without the mummers from County Fermanagh. I sincerely thank each person I interviewed for their time and sharing their experience of the mumming tradition with me. I also wish to thank Jim Ledwith; his passion for mumming is infectious and stirred my interest in the tradition. Without his guidance, connections with other mummers throughout Ireland and belief in my ability as a researcher and writer, this thesis would never have come to fruition. Similarly, I wish to thank the Aughakillymaude Mummers; for welcoming me into your community and allowing me to see the enjoyment you all attain from being a part of the mumming tradition.

I am grateful to my supervisor throughout this project, Dr Steve Coleman. His insightful advice helped me consider the mumming tradition from a variety of Anthropological perspectives. My sincere gratitude is expressed to the Irish Research Council for their generous financial support in the form of a Government of Ireland postgraduate scholarship (2012-2015).

I wish to thank the staff at the various libraries and archives I researched in over the duration of my field work: Roger Dixon and Peter Carson at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Archives, Ron Shuttleworth of the Morris Ring Folk Play Archive, and Sarah Mc Hugh and Sinead Reilly of Enniskillen Castle Museums. In addition, I am extremely grateful to Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh of the National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin, who invited me to explore his research for the *Room to Rhyme* collection. Additionally, thanks to Aoife Granville for her assistance with information on the Dingle wren boys.

My thanks are also extended to the staff at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, Maynooth University Library, the Irish Traditional Music Archives, Dublin and Ballinamore Library, County Leitrim. My gratitude is also expressed to Alison Farrell from the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Maynooth University; for your guidance, assistance and friendly words of advice during the project.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. At one point or another during research for this project you all took part in mumming. You dressed up in straw costumes, played music, and assisted my, sometimes obsessive, interest in the topic. My mother, Martina; thank you for lovingly encouraging me and giving me the motivation to keep going, even when I had no belief in my own abilities. My father, Michael; thank you for your endless support, encouragement, and providing extremely honest feedback on each draft of this thesis. My siblings, Sarah, Clare, Harriet, John and Emma; thank you all for your advice, love, patience when I was frustrated, and giving me belief in my abilities. My husband, Matthew; thank you for the patience you have shown as I was engulfed into the world of mumming, and the love, support and comfort you have given me from the beginning to the end of this project.

Prelude: Is this mumming?

The first time I saw the mumming play performed was in August 2012. Mumming is a heavily masked form of folk drama. The Aughakillymaude Mummers from County Fermanagh were performing at the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in Cavan town. They were performing on the ‘Gig Rig’, essentially the trailer of a lorry decorated with promotional banners and bunting. I had begun my field work on mumming with this group in May 2012 and I was extremely excited to see them stage the mumming play (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Aughakillymaude Mummers following their performance at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in County Cavan. © Mummers' Foundation

Jim Ledwith, the coordinator of the Mummers' Foundation, an organisation which is also based in the town land of Aughakillymaude, had 'landed' this 'gig' for the Aughakillymaude Mummers. "This is a big one now today, Finnegan," said Jim to me as we packed up the straw costumes for the performance. Jim always called me by my surname, a practice he seemed to reserve for people he knew quite well, or spent a lot of time with.

“This is going to be seen by fellas from all over. I’m telling you, if they do this one right, who knows how far they could go,” he said, hastily shoving a straw mask into a costume box. Jim was excited about this performance, as the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil provided an audience from all over Ireland and abroad. His excitement at the prospect of staging an impressive performance for this audience was highly infectious.

The performance was scheduled to begin at 6.30pm. Jim and I travelled from the Aughakillymaude Community Centre in County Fermanagh to the Egg Market in Cavan town, and arrived at about 5pm. This was where the Gig Rig for the festival was set up. As popular Irish traditional music acts and musicians such as Dervish, Lúnasa and Sharon Shannon had performed on this stage I was excited to be part of this mumming performance.

Having spoken to the stage director and watched a group of young musicians performing on the stage, Jim and I began to unpack the costume trailer which was attached to his car. “It’s a good job you’re here, Finnegan. Otherwise I’d be doing this all meself,” he said, hoisting a White Horse costume out of the trailer. I smiled and continued to lift the heavy boxes of costumes out and placed them next to the portable toilets, from which there was a foul smell. There was a large crowd gathered in front of the stage. An audience of about 600 or 700 people were present; a light drizzle fell onto them from the grey sky above.

Once all the costumes were unloaded, it was about 5.50 pm. There was no sight of the Aughakillymaude Mummers. At around 6 pm one by one, they began to arrive. From what I gathered during my field work the Aughakillymaude Mummers group consists of two types of members: core members and secondary members. The core members seem to be people who have physical or familial attachments to the town land of Aughakillymaude. There appeared to be nine members of this core group. This observation is limited to my direct encounters with the mummers and there may be other core members whom I simply did not come in contact with. Five of the core members of the group are male, and two are female. All are aged between fifty and seventy-five.

The first of these core members is person, who performed as Captain Mummer during my field work, was TP Owens. TP is a farmer whose family has been based in Aughakillymaude for generations. As Captain Mummer, TP took the bookings from Jim and

called around the core and secondary members of the group to pull together some performers for various events. His extended family, including his wife and two young children frequently performed with the Aughakillymaude Mummings. Additionally, his children participated in the junior Aughakillymaude Mummings during the revival period.

Brian McManus is another long serving member of the Aughakillymaude Mummings. Living next door to the Aughakillymaude Community Centre and Mummings' Museum, mumming seems to be an important part of his life. Being the long standing chairperson of the Aughakillymaude Community Association, he is actively involved in the running of the museum and community centre and the development of the site. Additionally, he plays the character of the Doctor in the Aughakillymaude mumming play. Brian's sister, Trisha, is also one of the core Aughakillymaude Mummings. While Trisha no longer lives in Aughakillymaude her connection to the area has continued through her involvement with the Mummings. Interestingly, both Brian and Trisha have their own specific characters, the Doctor and the Irish Cailin. While other mummings may perform as different characters in the play, Brian and Trisha always performed these two roles.

Dessie Reilly is another core member of the Aughakillymaude Mummings. An electrician by trade, he also makes some of the group's straw costumes. He also shares bag piping duties with the Gunn twins, Sean and Brian. The Gunn family has a long connection with the Aughakillymaude Mummings which is continued through the twin's involvement in the tradition.

Like Trisha and Dessie, Betty is another core member of the Aughakillymaude Mummings who no longer lives in the town land of Aughakillymaude. While living in the local village of Derrylin, Betty plays an extremely integral role in the endurance of mumming in the locality. She has been involved with the Aughakillymaude Community Association and the Mummings since the revival period and continues to perform and assist with the running of the centre.

Two other members who form part of the core Aughakillymaude Mummings are Michael McBarron and John Murphy. Michael was formerly Captain Mummer, but now holds a place as a mummer and helped train the junior Aughakillymaude Mummings during the

revival period. John's family also has a long, continued connection with Aughakillymaude with himself and his own children being involved in both the Mummers and Community Association. These people presently form the core of the Aughakillymaude Mummers'. However, not all performances are made up of these core members. Other mummers, from what I have termed the secondary members of Aughakillymaude, were equally important when it came to putting together groups of mummers for performances.

At important occasions, such as the performance at the All-Ireland Fleadh in County Cavan detailed earlier, the nine core members and many other mummers from the locality and further afield were called upon. Usually, mumming performances contained between three and six core mummers. To make up the numbers for the performances members of the secondary mummers were called upon. Local musical families are included in this secondary group of performers, such as the Fitzpatrick's and the Cathcarts. Another accordion player, Gary Curley is often called upon when additional mummers are required. The age range of these secondary mummers is considerably younger than that of the core mummers, ranging from eighteen to fifty years old. During my field work with the Aughakillymaude Mummers there were many more locals who were called on from time to time to perform. However, these people were consistently present and involved in the mumming tradition and the Mummers' Museum in Aughakillymaude.

One thing which struck me was that not every performance of the Aughakillymaude Mummers' play was made up of the same performers. It was very rare for the same group of people to repeatedly perform together. The performance was constantly changing which meant there was little consistency from one staging of the mumming play to the next. Each performance offered something different depending on the blend of performers present. The constant fluctuation of performers meant that there were no play rehearsals and all performances were ad-libbed.

Returning to the performance at the All Ireland Fleadh, the Aughakillymaude Mummers were unimpressed with the lack of dressing room facilities. "We can't change here. We need to be inside. We need somewhere to change," said one of the mummers abruptly. He lifted one of the costume boxes and walked towards the stage. The other mummers who had gathered at this point chatted amongst themselves. They seemed quite anxious and nervous.

“I’ve never performed in front of this many people. And I don’t know what part I’m playing,” exclaimed one of the ladies, to which the rest of the assembled mummers laughed.

Once the young musicians had finished playing on the Gig Rig, they took their equipment from the small portable cabin which was set up behind the stage. Some of the mummers carried boxes of costumes from outside the toilets to the back of the stage. “Now, we can bring all the costumes behind the stage and get ready,” said Jim while lifting one of the boxes. Some mummers walked to the cabin empty handed, whilst the more willing volunteers carried the boxes.

As all the costume boxes were brought into the cabin behind the stage, I was beginning to feel that this performance would not be as ‘magical’ as I had expected. Three mummers, aged between 45 and 65 were engaged in a heated discussion over who would play the character of Captain Mummer; essentially, who was going to be in charge of the whole performance. I listened to the ‘debate’ unfold while I watched some of the other mummers try and recite their lines for the performance.

“Aughakillymaude Mummers. Yes?” asked and answered the stage director, a tall and slender man with a clipboard in his hand. “Yes, yes,” came the response of the man who had won the battle to be Captain Mummer. “You’re on at 6.30. Are you nearly ready?” asked the stage manager, looking at the group of sixteen or so people dressed in their everyday clothes. “No. We had nowhere to change. We can’t be expected to be nearly ready when we had nowhere to get ready now, can we?” snapped Captain Mummer. “Right, well the cabin is free for you now. You’ve fifteen minutes until you go on,” said the stage manager, seemingly unsurprised by ‘Captain’s’ short temper.

What ensued following this can only be described as absolute chaos. The drizzle-soaked mummers crowded into the cabin and began to change into their costumes. The three people who had argued over who would be Captain Mummer, shouted instructions across the chatter of the people gathered in the room. They delegated characters at this point by simply handing each mummer a costume, failing to ask if the recipient knew the rhyme which accompanied it.

I stood at the door of the cabin for a little while and waited for a costume to be passed in my direction. Someone passed costumes out for myself and the other musicians who were changing outside the cabin in the drizzle; probably my least fond memory of doing field work with the mummerns. I felt like an outsider to the group, which I presumed was how an anthropologist should feel when participating in something like this.

The chaos continued once the mummerns were in their costumes. It was 6.30 pm and the musicians had not decided on the tunes they would play at different parts of the performance. As the Mummerns did not have enough musicians for the event, Jim invited along several musicians, including some of my family members. Aughakillymaude's musicians were trying to decide on tunes that all the musicians would be able to play together. This was to the dissatisfaction of one of the dancers with the group. "Can you not just play the tunes you always play? Sure it doesn't matter if them others can't play them," said the dancer, looking towards some of the musicians who had been brought into the performance.

One of the musicians brought in for the performance was my sister, Harriet. Aged twelve at the time, she was quite nervous about going on stage and performing with a group of people she was unfamiliar with. A few minutes before the performance, Jim shouted across the sea of panicking mummerns: "Can anyone séan nós dance?" Harriet hesitantly put up her hand. "Good woman yourself. You'll go on at some point," said Jim, tapping a straw-clad Harriet on the shoulder and smiling at her.

Harriet began to practice some steps for the dance. I played the flute for her as she discretely tried to get ready to perform. Captain Mummer stopped her preparation mid step, saying, "Are they the only shoes you have?" Harriet looked down at her sparkly purple and silver trainers, looked back up at Captain Mummer, and nodded. "You can't wear them on stage. They'll be seen a mile away. Have you not got a pair of brown brogues?" he snapped. "She's just here to play music for yous. She wasn't meant to be dancing," I said, a little confused by his abruptness. "I'm just trying to make this professional," he replied, before turning and walking back into the cabin.

At about 6.40pm the stage director came running around the back of the stage to talk to Captain Mummer. "Right, you will have to wait to go on for a while. We've got John Joe

Nevin coming in, so you will have to wait,” he said, seeming slightly panicked by the prospect of an additional performer being added to his running order. “This is a joke. An absolute joke,” said Captain Mummer to the stage director. “Well, I’m sorry. But John Joe has to go to another event this evening, and if he doesn’t go on stage now, we won’t be able to get him to come back. Everyone’s looking forward to seeing him,” said the director, not waiting on Captain Mummer’s response before he walked off.

John Joe Nevin, a Mullingar based boxer had won a silver medal in the 2012 Olympic Games, and was duly welcomed on stage by the stage director. The audience gathered in front of the stage cheered and clapped when John Joe walked on, his silver medal hanging around his neck. The audience clung to his every word, as he explained his route to winning the medal.

As John Joe continued to talk and some of the audience made their way onto the stage to get photographs with the Olympian, time ticked on. The mummies became increasingly nervous. They waited anxiously and fidgeted behind the stage until the crowd erupted, cheering when John Joe left the stage. I could hear the stage director on the microphone saying, “And now, a little later than we had promised, please put your hands together for the Aughakillymaude Mummies, all the way from County Fermanagh.”

One of the musicians suddenly began to play the bagpipes when leading the mummies up the steps and onto the stage. Each note the piper played was more out of tune than the last. Captain Mummer pushed his way to the front of the group of performers and walked up the steps at the side of the stage. We all followed him on to begin the performance.

Jim, who was dressed as Prince George, shouted as we walked onto the stage. “Stamp the feet,” he shouted. We all stamped our feet and the stage shook from side to side. The bag piper continued to play and the mummies followed him as he marched around the stage seven times. Once the bag piper finished playing, we stopped marching. We stood in the middle of the stage, unsure what to do next.

“Go on, get back there,” said Captain Mummer, ushering the mummies to stand at the back of the stage. He walked towards the microphone stand at the front of the stage, stumbling as he tripped over a wire running across the ground. The audience of 800 people, who had all gathered to see John Joe Nevin, laughed - presumably thinking this was a part of the performance.

Captain Mummer lifted the microphone from the stand, and attempted to move it to the right hand side of the stage. The wires tangled around its base made it impossible to do this. He pushed the stand to one side and began to speak very loudly into the microphone, saying:

Here comes I, Captain Mummer
And all me merry men and women.
Room, room gallant people,
Give us room to rhyme.
And we'll show you some activity,
For this is celebration time.



Figure 2: Aghakillymaude Mummies' Captain

“We’ll act the young,” shouted Captain Mummer into the microphone, skipping slightly. “We’ll act the old,” he said, hunching his back. “The like of which has never been seen on any stage. And if you don’t believe in what I say, enter in Jenny Wren and she’ll clear the way,” said Captain Mummer, turning to the group of performers gathered on the stage behind him. “Come on, come on,” he shouted, beckoning a young girl who was dressed as Jenny Wren to come forward (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Jenny Wren (Right) with a mummer bearing a torch

Jenny Wren moved forward slowly. While she was walking to the front of the stage, I looked through the bars in my straw mask, to the sound booth, which was in the back of a lorry opposite the main stage. The people inside were frantically waving their arms, trying to catch Captain Mummer’s attention. Some were gesturing to move the microphone away from his mouth, as it was not possible to hear what he was saying. Captain Mummer did not see them and continued to talk extremely loudly into the microphone. “Right, come on now,” he could be heard saying over the sound system. Jenny Wren began to speak:

Here comes I, Jenny Wren,
Queen of the birds.
I am little but my family is great,
Rise up landlord and give us a treat.
If you don’t believe what I say...

Jenny Wren looked towards Captain Mummer, who in turn looked to the group of mummers. “The dancer,” he said abruptly. “Enter in the dancer and they’ll clear the way,” said Jenny Wren. Two dancers walked forward and tried to push the wires, which were lying across the stage, out of their way. “Music, come on,” said Captain Mummer pointing to the musicians. I turned to look at the musician next to me, but realised I could not see their face. One of the flute players began to play the *Kerry Polka*. I joined in as the dancers held hands and started to dance. They moved around a small space on the stage, afraid they would trip over the wires which were running across it (Figure 4).



Figure 4: The dancers. © Mummers' Foundation

As I held my head up to the play the flute, I looked out to the audience. Half of them seemed to have disappeared. About 400 people remained standing in front of the stage, some people clapping their hands along with the out-of-time dancing. Once the dancers finished, a few people applauded their performance. “All right, the dancer there,” said Captain Mummer, banging one hand off the microphone, which produced a deep booming noise. A small child in the front of the audience began to cry loudly. Captain Mummer continued his performance. “OK now, who’s next up,” he said over the microphone.

Prince Patrick stepped forward. He snatched the microphone from Captain Mummer and began to speak his rhyme:

Here comes I Prince Patrick,
Dressed in armour bright.
Amn’t I a noble champion,
And a gallant knight.

The audience remained relatively silent when Prince Patrick recited his lines. Jim, who was dressed as Prince George stepped forward from the group of mummers. He walked up to Prince Patrick, who handed him the microphone. Imitating an English accent, Jim said:

Here comes I, Prince George,
From England I have lately sprung.
For England's right, and Ireland's wrong.
Show me the man before me stands,
And I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.

Captain Mummer took the microphone from Prince George and walked to the other side of the stage. "Oh, what do you think's going to happen now?" he said to the audience. The audience remained relatively quiet. Prince Patrick and Prince George clattered swords and shields and began to fight on the stage. When the fight began one of the musicians next to me began to play *The Congress*. The two Princes fought for about a minute while moving in a small circle around the stage. Captain Mummer continued shouting into the microphone. "Go on. Go on," he shouted, encouraging Prince Patrick. The audience was getting smaller and smaller as people slowly walked away (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Prince George and Prince Patrick fight while Captain Mummer looks on. © Mummers' Foundation

Prince Patrick killed Prince George, who lay on the stage. He was laid on the ground, breathing heavily after the fight. "Come on Ireland!" shouted Captain Mummer into the microphone. He then walked over to Prince George and put his foot on his stomach. "He's dead," said the Captain. "Is there a Doctor out there in the audience?" he asked, to which no

one replied. "I'm the Doctor," said one of the mummies. His exclamation was difficult to hear, as he did not have a microphone. He walked, with a briefcase in hand, over to Captain Mummer.

"Well, what can you cure, Doctor?" asked Captain Mummer. He then handed the microphone to the Doctor who replied by saying:

I can cure many things.
The big plague, the wee plague,
The plague within, the plague without,
The pip, the poe, the palsy and the gout.
But for this man here I have something called Hocus Pocus Ally Campaign.

The Doctor reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a small brown bottle. "Here it is now," he said showing it to the audience. "We'll give him some of this," said the Doctor bending down to give the medicine to Prince George. "Hocus pocus, Ally Campaign. Rise up dead man and fight again," said the Doctor. Prince George's legs began to shake as he was revived by the medicine (Figure 6).



Figure 6: The Doctor administering Ally Campaign to Prince George. ©Mummers' Foundation

Prince George came to his feet and stumbled around the stage. Some of the audience clapped when he was revived. Both the Doctor and Prince George walked back to the group of mummies. “A big hand for the Doctor,” said Captain Mummer into the microphone. A few of the audience clapped on his instruction. There were considerably less people in the audience at this point, with about 200 standing and watching the play unfold.

“Now who’s next?” asked Captain Mummer. The mummies remained still and nobody moved forward. “Em, who’s next. Ah, the Irish Cailín,” he said, pointing to the woman who was playing the character. She stepped forward, and was handed the microphone by Captain Mummer. Lifting it to her mouth, she said:

Here comes I, the Irish Cailín,
I’m the sweetest wee lass you’ve ever seen.
If you don’t believe what I say,
I’ll sing a song to please you all.

The Irish Cailín then began to sing a song which I did not recognise. It was sung quite slowly and seemed to be extremely long. The singer held the microphone too close to her mouth and there was some feedback from the speakers. I looked up to the people at the sound desk again, who were shaking their heads and appeared to be shouting at one another. Some audience members began to walk away. I realised the singer had been singing for about five minutes.

Once the Irish Cailín finished singing some of the remaining 150 or so audience members clapped. Captain Mummer took the microphone from her hands. “That’s the singer. Wasn’t that good?” he asked the audience. Again, they remained silent. “Who’s next? What about another dance? Where’s that séan nós dancer?” he asked, trying to find Harriet in the crowd of mummies. Harriet stepped forward and stood in the middle of the stage. I began to play *The Tamlyn Reel* and the other musicians joined in. Harriet danced as some of the remaining audience members clapped along.

“Now, the last one now. Who’s up now? The, oh that’s right, Biddy Funny. Where is she now?” he said, turning to face the mummies. “Come on then,” he said as the character of Biddy Funny walked towards him. She was dressed in a straw outfit like the rest of the

mummers. She carried a leather bag in one hand and a cane in the other. He handed her the microphone and she began to speak her lines:

Ah here comes I, auld Biddy Funny,
I'm the one who holds the money.
All silver and no brass,
Bad ha'pennys won't pass.
And if you don't give us money,
I'll steal your auld ass.

The audience laughed. She added life and personality to the Biddy Funny character, which made her lines quite funny. "Right now," said Captain Mummer, taking the microphone from her. "I'll tell you a wee story and then we'll be on our way." Captain Mummer began to tell a lengthy story about a man who lived in Aughakillymaude. As the story continued, the audience began to dwindle.

I looked over to the sound desk again. One man was standing frantically waving his hands, trying to get the attention of the stage director, who was standing in the wings. The man in the sounds desk ran his index finger horizontally across his neck, suggesting that the performance had gone over time. Captain Mummer continued his story, which went on for about eight minutes, speaking rapidly and loudly into the microphone. I noticed how cold I had become standing still for such a long time.

Once Captain Mummer made it to the end of the story, he said, "Well that's us. We're not the daily beggars that go from door to door, we're the Aughakillymaude Community Mummers and you've seen us all before." He placed the microphone back in the stand. The bag piper began to play the same tune as he did upon our entry. The mummers marched around the stage three times and were led down the steps by the piper. Some of the audience members applauded when we walked off the stage, but others stood silently. By the end of the performance, there were about 100 people in the audience. I was extremely glad to get off the stage, and even more relieved that I was wearing a mask and unrecognisable (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Aughakillymaude Mummets parading off stage. ©Mummets' Foundation

While the mummets were changing out of their costumes, I asked Captain Mummer how he thought the performance went. “It was good. I thought it was very good. Aughakillymaude through and through,” he said, laughing. Asking some of the audience members their opinions on the performance, one woman said, “They were OK. I wouldn’t go and see them again though. They don’t practice. That was pretty obvious.” Another man said, “Ah it was alright. I wouldn’t want to be a mummer after that. It didn’t look like they were having much fun.” Another person described it, saying, “It was funny because it was so unorganised.”

I drove home that evening, freezing cold, with straw in my hair, replaying the performance in my head. I thought about how the mummets interacted with each other, the chaotic change into the costumes and how little enjoyment the audience seemed to get from the performance. “Is this mumming?” I asked myself several times on that journey, trying to make sense of what I had just taken part in. I concluded that much research would be required before I could claim to have some understanding of the tradition let alone present a coherent study on the practice.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

My decision to conduct research on the social practice of mumming as it currently exists in County Fermanagh was motivated by my desire to understand how Irish traditional music is weaved into other traditions. This interest in music and mumming began during the second year of my undergraduate degree in Anthropology at Maynooth University. To complete my undergraduate thesis, I was required to conduct a short stint of fieldwork and write it up in a 3,000-word dissertation. After deciding on my field site, I began reading the American folklorist, Henry Glassie's book on mumming in County Fermanagh, titled *All Silver and No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming* (1980). His eloquent description of the people involved in the tradition and his ability to tell the stories of those involved quickly drew me into the tradition.

Following this, I met Jim Ledwith and the Aughakillymaude Mummers at the Mummers' Museum in Aughakillymaude and became enthralled by the tradition and the people who practiced it. I completed my undergraduate dissertation on mumming and music in County Fermanagh, which ended up being 7,000 words longer than the prescribed word limit. I remained in contact with Jim and the mummers, with the hope of conducting more research on what I saw as a complex and fascinating tradition.

From this I knew there was much more which could be uncovered about the tradition. As such I decided to apply for funding from the Irish Research Council to conduct research for my PhD dissertation on mumming in the region. Attaining this funding meant I was able to dedicate my time to developing relationships with the people in the area and trying to understand the tradition. While I was aware of the fact that mumming groups existed throughout Ireland, in counties such as Armagh, Wexford and Sligo, it became evident that conducting research on mumming in one county in Ireland would be all-consuming. As such, I became engrossed in collecting people's understanding of the tradition and their experiences with it. Indeed, it was not until I began analysing the data that I attempted to attain an understanding of the complexities of the tradition as I observed it.

Aim of thesis

The aim of this thesis is to understand mumming as it currently exists in County Fermanagh, which will involve exploring how it has changed over time. Directly related to this aim, the thesis will argue that time and context act upon social practices to change and define them even though such practices are viewed as possessing both longevity and immutability. It is my hope that the research presented in the following pages will contribute towards a clearer understanding of how a social practice changes in order to endure through time. Additionally, my ambition has been to document the mumming tradition as it currently exists in Aghakillymaude and how it has come to exist in its current form.

Overview of chapters

As my first engagement with the mumming tradition was through literature on the topic, it seems fitting that I begin this thesis with a review of literature on the topic. Chapter two will present a discussion regarding the current literature which exists on mumming in Ireland. It will examine how mumming has been previously studied and interpreted by various scholars. It will also explain the interpretation of the concept of tradition which is used throughout this thesis.

Chapter three will explain the various methodologies used to collect data for this thesis. It will detail how I attained access to the research site and the types of research methods used. It will also detail the data analysis methods I employed and the ethical considerations I was faced with throughout this research project.

The thesis will then move to present the finding of my research. The format of the subsequent chapters has been adapted from the layout of Glassie's *All Silver and No Brass*. Glassie dedicated the first half of the book to the unmediated memories of the mummers. The second section of the book was formed by teasing apart the mumming tradition using various academic theories. Drawing on Glassie's work, each of the following chapters is divided into two sections. The first section of each chapter presents the ethnographic details on topics such as masking, public advertising of the mumming performance and the wearing of a mumming costume. The second section of each chapter unpicks the ethnography and engages it in a theoretical discussion.

The chapters are arranged to show how mumming has come to exist in its present-day form. They will also reflect the constant debate between the mummers and the audience to define the tradition. Chapter one will present a detailed analysis of how the Aughakillymaude Mummers currently define mumming. This will be done by conducting a content analysis style examination of the film they produced, which is titled, *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*. By exploring the various symbols used to connect mumming with present-day Ireland and pre-Christian Ireland, an understanding of how these mummers define the tradition will be presented.

Chapter four will explore the notion that the mummers are not the only group who influence the definition of the tradition. Focus will be given to the impact of the political and religious conflict, which began in the 1960s, on the mumming tradition in County Fermanagh. By exploring how people speak about the conflict, the intention is to show that a tradition cannot be isolated from the society in which it is performed. It will examine the role of the audience in defining mumming during this period, and the tradition's eventual decline after the conflict.

Chapter five will focus on the revival of mumming in County Fermanagh, which began in the 1980s. Attention will be paid to Jim Ledwith, the coordinator of the Mummers' Foundation, and his role in this revival. By exploring the form this revival took, it will become evident that during this period of mumming activity, the mummers, not the audience, defined the tradition. It will explore the informal and impromptu nature of this revival, and will suggest the malleable nature of the liminal tradition of mumming.

Chapter six will present one of the challenges the Aughakillymaude Mummers and the Mummers' Foundation faced when the mumming revival was in decline: how to preserve the memory of mumming in the past. It will explore their creation of the Mummers' Museum, and how visitors engage with it. In addition, the notion that museums do not signal the death of a tradition will be presented. This will be done by exploring one of the new forms of mumming performances which have emerged as a direct response to the presence of the Mummers' Museum. It will be argued that by creating the museum, the mummers defined mumming as it existed in the past.

Chapter seven begins the analysis of three elements of the mumming performance which have always been at the centre of mumming, even when it underwent processes of redefinition. It will focus on the mask, and the central role it plays in the tradition. Attention will be paid to how the mask has been altered in line with both the events occurring in the society surrounding the tradition, and the needs of the audience. It will be argued that masks are not simply forms of disguise, but can both protect and represent a wearer's identity. What I will define as the slipperiness of the mask can be seen as symbolic of the indefinable nature of mumming.

Chapter eight will focus on the second element of the tradition which has remained at the centre of mumming, even when it was redefined: music. Firstly, previous musicians' experiences of performing with a mumming group will be presented. I will then contrast these accounts with my own performance experiences as a musician with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. From this it will be suggested that while music has always been at the conceptual centre of mumming, it is only in the post-revival period that it has come to the physical centre. It will also be argued that while the musician and the mummer now occupy the same physical space during the performance, they both have considerably different performance experiences.

Chapter nine will examine the role of the third element of the tradition which has been consistently at the centre of mumming: the audience. It will present two performances which represent the Aughakillymaude Mummers' in the post-revival period. Particular attention will be paid to how the audience react to the performance, taking into account their enjoyment and contribution to it. I will argue that the audience do not simply watch a performance, but actually change how it unfolds and, as a result, contribute to defining the mumming tradition.

Finally, chapter ten will present the conclusions arrived at from the research which has been conducted. It will focus on providing a concise analysis of all the aforementioned chapters and how they help us understand how social practices, such as mumming actually change over time. It will analyse how mumming is presented and defined by various players in the tradition, such as the mummers themselves, and the audience members. From this, it will be possible to see how, even when a tradition is perceived to possess longevity and immutability, both time and context do indeed act upon it to change and define it.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the research which will be presented in the following pages. It has offered a synopsis of how I initially became involved in the mumming tradition and as such, the influences on conducting research into this social practice. The aim and argument of the thesis have been explained. Having introduced the thesis, attention will now be paid to the literature which currently exists on mumming in Ireland.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will chronologically document and comment upon the current writing published on the topic of Irish mumming. While there is a body of social commentary on Irish mumming, the review will focus on academic publications on the topic. Through this review it will become evident that to date, no researcher has conducted a study solely focusing on the Irish mumming community and examining the experience of participating in the tradition. Additionally, the review will show that a current documentation of the state of the mumming tradition in County Fermanagh does not exist; let alone one which challenges the notions of how time and context act on a social practice to change it. To begin, a brief overview of how the review of literature was conducted will be presented.

Mapping the process

The process of reviewing and analysing the literature published on Irish mumming for this thesis was undertaken in a semi-formal manner. No specific guidelines for reviewing the literature published on the topic of mumming in Ireland were followed. Rather this literature review has grown out of my own curiosity on the topic and my need to know more about the tradition in order to understand the mumming performances I was exposed to in Aughakillymaude during my field work. The process of ‘reviewing’ the literature began with a thorough search through the Maynooth University’s library catalogue and revealed a couple of the texts I came to rely upon when forming my own understanding of mumming. These included such as Henry Glassie’s *All Silver and No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming* (1983[1975]) and the book of conference paper contributions titled *Border Crossing: Mumming in Cross-Border and Cross Community Contexts* (2007).

Having studied these texts thoroughly, I worked through the references used by the authors in order to attain an in depth understanding of the tradition. This meant researching backdated issues of local, national and international academic journals. In addition to this, I spent eight weeks in the National Library of Ireland searching through their texts relating to Irish mumming. This rather sporadic approach to creating my own knowledge of the mumming tradition, meant that I was exposed to literature written on mumming and other folk customs in various regions, mainly the United Kingdom, Eastern Europe and Canada. However, for the purpose of this review I have chosen to limit the discussion of the literature to that published

on Irish mumming. This is in order to present a sense of where the thesis fits into the discussion on the topic. In order to create a clear understanding of the evolution of the discussion of mumming in an academic context I have chosen to present the following literature review in chronological order. As such, it will begin by detailing the first reference to Irish mumming within academic scholarship.

Irish mumming in an academic context

Generally, it is agreed that Irish mumming does not have a clear point of origin in Irish history. Its past is unclear and ambiguous. As a result, much speculation exists regarding its origins or roots in the country. However, the following account is the earliest known written record of a mumming performance in Ireland:

Last evening there was presented the drollest piece of mummery I ever saw in or out of Ireland. There was St. George and St. Denis and St. Patrick in their buffe coats, and the Turke was there likewise and Oliver Cromwell and a Doctor and an old woman who made rare sport, till Belzibub came in with a frying pan upon his shoulder and a great flail in his hand thrashing about him on friends and foes, and at last running away with the bold usurper, Cromwell, whom he tweaked by his gilded nose – and there came a little Devil with a broom to gather up the money that was thrown to the Mummers for their sport. It is an ancient pastime, they tell me, of the Citizens. [Gailey 1969:8]

This description of a mumming performance in Cork city dates to 1685 (Gailey 1969:8). While mumming has been present in Ireland since at least the 17th century, it was not until 1946 that the first academic study of Irish mumming was conducted by E.R.R. Green. Green's *Christmas Rhymers and Mummers* (1946) reports and analyses a number of Irish mumming play texts. These texts were acquired from the Irish Folklore Commission. In line with the scholarship produced on English mumming by E.K. Chambers (1903) and R.J.E. Tiddy (1923), Green suggested that the mumming play originated in the Balkans and that, "The death and revival [in the mumming play] symbolises the death of life in winter and its resurrection in the spring" (Green 1946:3).

Green drew on the similarities between the Irish mumming play and other Balkan performances with the theme of life, death and rebirth to suggest a connection between the two. It was concluded that Irish mumming plays were a continuation of agricultural fertility rituals (Green 1946:3). The speculative nature of this suggestion emphasises the main area of contention within mumming scholarship: the history of mumming. The lack of evidence

documenting the origins of the mumming play means it is difficult to prove or disprove any origin theories.

Green attempted to place a date on the creation of the English mumming play by linguistically analysing the text. Through the linguistic analysis of terms used in the play such as “Room, room” and “activity,” Green traced its origins back to sixteenth century Elizabethan England (Green 1946:6). Green’s linguistic analysis of English mumming play texts showed that the mumming play did not originate in Ireland. Rather, it was formed in England and brought to Ireland during the early 17th century. It was shown that the play originated in England, by examining the links between mumming in specific regions of both Ireland and England.

Green explored the similarities between the Irish and English mumming plays by comparing the characters in each. For example, Green noted that Father Christmas was the leader of a mumming group in an area of west County Tyrone. Green suggested that the practice of having Father Christmas as the leader of the group connected mumming in County Tyrone with the practice in the midlands of England (Green 1946:7).

By examining the unique characteristics of mumming plays in Ireland and comparing these with English mumming plays, Green attempted to show the English regions Irish mumming derived from. By comparing the linguistics and conventions of the mumming play Green was able to explore the connections between Irish mumming and specific English mumming play texts. This type of analysis relies heavily on examining written mumming plays and exploring the similarities between them. However, as the academic study of Irish mumming continued, it shifted away from solely examining the words of the mumming play text. Folklorist, Seán Ó Súilleabháin emphasised understanding mumming by engaging with the people who practiced it.

Originally published in 1963, Ó Súilleabháin’s *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (1970 [1963]) is used to this day as a guide for collecting accounts of Irish culture. Included in this book is a section on how to research and document local variations of mumming. In order to document the mumming tradition for future generations, Ó Súilleabháin suggested posing some of the following questions:

Was mumming carried on locally at any time?... Of what did it consist (the recital of pieces of prose or poetry by masked player to the accompaniment of suitable actions)?... Where was the matter recited obtained? Was it transmitted orally, by manuscripts, or through the medium of print?... By whom were the pieces [mumming plays] written?... How was the play rehearsed? Where? Were the players “coached” by some expert? [Ó Súilleabháin 1970:691]

These questions may reveal the information which Ó Súilleabháin valued in relation to Irish mumming. They place an emphasis on mumming in the context of the community. Posing questions which address issues such as the transmission of the play, the author of local play texts and the rehearsal of the play, Ó Súilleabháin turned the focus from exclusively considering the written mumming text, to also engaging with the mumming community. Rather than simply reporting the text of local mumming plays, Ó Súilleabháin suggested that the network of people involved in the tradition of mumming should also be documented. This emphasised the role of the community in the mumming tradition. Following from Ó Súilleabháin’s suggestion to focus on the people who practice the mumming tradition, Alan Gailey adopted this approach when researching Irish mumming play texts.

From 1967 to 2011, Gailey drew on the knowledge of the people who practiced Irish mumming when analysing play texts from Ireland. As the director of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Gailey conducted a survey of the mumming tradition in communities throughout the province of Ulster. This study took the form of an open-ended questionnaire which was completed by residents of towns and villages where mumming was practiced.

The responses to these questionnaires fed into Gailey’s understanding of the regional distribution of the mumming play. In addition, Gailey collected mumming play texts from all regions of Ireland. Out of this research Gailey compiled *Irish Folk Drama* (1969). This book has remained the most comprehensive text on the history of mumming and other forms of folk performance in Ireland.

Gailey’s work was the first to directly state that mumming came from England to Ireland during the plantations of the 17th and 18th centuries. While Green explored the relationship between Irish and English mumming plays, it was not stated that the tradition of mumming was brought to Ireland during the plantations. Explaining the introduction of mumming into Ireland, Gailey stated:

The general distribution of mumming within Ireland suggests influence from across the Irish Sea. In the case of the northern examples [of the mumming play], this must have been during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and even in the case of Wexford it can have been little earlier. English scholars suggest a sixteenth, or even seventeenth-century origin for the known mummers' play texts in England; and since the plays are very widely known in that country, and in a greater variety of forms than in Ireland, they cannot have originated as texts in Ireland. [Gailey 1969:11-12]

This is an important statement regarding the origins of Irish mumming. It makes clear Gailey's view that mumming does not possess Irish origins. As the mumming play exists in more numerous and varying forms in England, Gailey deduced that the play does not have its origins in Ireland. Gailey's attempt to decipher the history of mumming did not stop at uncovering the link between the tradition and the plantations. He continued to suggest that mumming was a pre-Christian fertility rite (Gailey 1969:7).

Up to this point it has been shown that both Green and Gailey focused on the mumming play text to construct a history for the tradition in Ireland. However, this focus was shifted when folklorist, Henry Glassie, conducted field work in Ballymenone, County Fermanagh in the 1960s and 70s. Through Glassie's work, the value of further engaging with the people who remembered and practiced the tradition of mumming was revealed.

Glassie's contribution to the study of Irish mumming comes in the form of *All Silver and No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming* (1983 [1975]). In the small village of Ballymenone in west County Fermanagh Glassie uncovered a world of mumming in the memories of its residents. From the beginning of the book, Glassie established *All Silver and No Brass* as different from previous work on mumming:

The older scholars [of mumming] had not asked the questions that interested me. They had studied texts of the plays but had largely ignored the players. They had used texts as prods to speculation about the early history of drama and ritual, but they had paid little attention to the play as performance, as the embodiment of intention, the vehicle for meaning. Their probing had been too shallow and narrow. They had not given the play or its people their due. [Glassie 1983:xii]

Noting that previous work on mumming had explored the mumming play as an object separate from its performers, Glassie conducted research for *All Silver and No Brass* in a different manner. Glassie explained that his intention was to put the mummers and their

experience of the tradition at the centre of the book. Unlike Gailey's *Irish Folk Drama*, Glassie did not report mumming plays in the form of a script.

It should be noted that mumming was not practiced in Ballymenone during Glassie's field work in the area. The cessation of mumming during this period was due to the conflict in the region which began in the 1960s. As a result, Glassie did not report observed mumming performances, but focused on the memories of those who practiced the tradition. These memories are presented in the first section of *All Silver and No Brass*. Glassie's interviews and interactions with five residents of Ballymenone are documented in this section. There are no academic theories weaved into the words of the interviewees. Rather, their voices and memories are presented without interruption.

Glassie placed each of the interviews he conducted in a physical setting. For example, Glassie set the scene for an interview conducted with Michael Boyle, a former mummer from Ballymenone, in a local hospital (Glassie 1983:38). By explaining the context of the interview Glassie showed the importance of mumming in this mummer's life. Throughout the first section of the book, Glassie depicted the practice of mumming in Ballymenone prior to the eruption of the conflict in the 1960s. Following the presentation of each interview, Glassie proceeded to interpret the mumming tradition from a theoretical perspective.

The second section of *All Silver and No Brass* focuses on building a theoretical understanding of the function of Irish mumming. According to Glassie, previous work on the tradition focused on the mumming play text in isolation from the people who practiced it. As Glassie stated the mumming text became separated from the "peasant" actors (Glassie 1983:58). As a result, the true function of the mumming tradition remains unknown. Glassie noted that in previous studies of mumming, the mummers were not consulted with relation to the history of the tradition. The mumming play stood in place of the mummers and theorists attempted to derive the function of the play from the text (Glassie 1983:58).

In addition, Glassie suggested that previous mumming scholars believed mumming possessed a deeper meaning than solely being a form of entertainment. This notion, of mumming as entertainment, was explored by Glassie when attempting to understand the function it served within local communities (Glassie 1983:125). Glassie proposed a shift away

from considering mumming as a pre-Christian fertility ritual, and suggested that the function mumming holds is unique for each community who practice it. For the residents of Ballymenone, Glassie concluded that, “mumming functioned to hold a fragmented community together” (Glassie 1983:128).

All Silver and No Brass made an important contribution to the academic study of Irish mumming. Glassie placed those who practiced the tradition and their experience of it at the fore of the study. Their contribution to the book is unmediated and remains a dedication to their memories of the mumming tradition. The second section of the book suggests that mumming is not a form of fertility ritual, but that it is unique for each community who practice it. Remaining to this day as the only field work based book dedicated to the tradition of Irish mumming, Glassie’s work shows the importance of the researcher knowing and understanding the community with whom they conduct field work. While Gailey and Green explored how the mumming play text can be used to understand the distribution of mumming, Glassie showed that it is not possible to rely on only the play text to comprehend the function of mumming within a community.

Nine years after the publication of *All Silver and No Brass*, Tómas Mac Anna contributed to the academic study of Irish mumming in the form of the article *Mummers and Mumming* (1984). Mac Anna began this article by attempting to unravel a connection between the mumming tradition and pre-Christian Ireland, stating that, “the folk-drama of the mummers has come down to us, crude and fragmentary... [from] ‘Na Drúithe Ríoga’ or ‘Royal Jesters’” (Mac Anna 1984:28).

In contrast with the work of both Gailey and Green, Mac Anna suggested that mummers and the mumming play originated in pre-Christian Ireland. Though, Mac Anna also asserted the possibility that mumming was influenced by the medieval miracle plays of Europe (Mac Anna 1984:30-31). It is not possible to pin down the precise link between the mumming play and European miracle plays. However, it is generally accepted within mumming scholarship that there is a connection between these two types of performances (Millington 2002:37).

What we may draw from Mac Anna's article is that it is very difficult to determine the actual origin of the mumming tradition. There is such an abundance of speculation in regards to the origin of the mumming play it is challenging to place mumming in a specific historical context. Mac Anna's article shows just how unclear the origins of the mumming tradition are to this day. In doing so it contributes to the need to preserve current, accurate records of Irish mumming so that future generations of mumming scholars will have access to a more complete history of the tradition.

Following Mac Anna's *Mummers and Mumming* there was a considerable break in the scholarship produced on the tradition. During the conflict in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the practice of mumming declined throughout the province of Ulster. However, in the mid-1980s, the tradition was revived, especially in County Fermanagh. During this revival mumming was used as a means for gathering money to fund the development of community halls and charitable causes. As a result of this revival, scholars began to take a new perspective on the mumming tradition.

One scholar who examined the presence of mumming during this revival period was Seamus Ó Catháin. Ó Catháin's *Mummers and Mumming* (2003) examined how the English mumming play was adapted into Irish communities where other forms of masked traditions were already popular. This builds on the argument made by Gailey in *Irish Folk Drama* (Gailey 1969:91). Ó Catháin stated that mumming is an example of how a tradition can be adopted into another society (Ó Catháin 2003:133).

In this work Ó Catháin acknowledged that the mumming play originated in England and aspects have been added to it by Irish communities. As Ó Catháin explained, these 'Irish' aspects have not been explored in an academic context. However, Ó Catháin spent little time on this topic and instead focused on the future of Irish mumming.

Following the revival of the tradition in the 1980s, Ó Catháin noted that some mumming groups shaped the mumming tradition to fit a more modern society. To do this, Ó Catháin presented the example of the Armagh Rhymers and how they have continued to practice mumming in a changed environment. Ó Catháin explained how this group of mummers successfully adapted mumming to fit into modern Irish society. This involved

making the mumming performance interactive for all types of audiences (Ó Catháin 2003:133).

Ó Catháin suggested that it is only when mummers recognise the need to adapt the tradition that mumming can continue to hold a place and meaning within society. Thus the mummers are responsible for ensuring the continuity of mumming. As the first report written on the condition of mumming following the revival of the tradition in the 1980s, *Mummers and Mumming* presented some of the adaptations which were made to the Irish mumming tradition. In addition, it was the first article to address the notion that mumming may not hold relevance within modern Irish society. As such it is very important for this thesis.

Ó Catháin worked as part of a team of researchers at the National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin. In 2001, they established the Room to Rhyme project (Mac Cárthaigh 2007:147). The aim of this project was:

to document contemporary performances of the Christmas mummers' play and to bring together all known printed and archival sources relating to mumming in the selected area of study [which was]... the province of Ulster and adjoining parts of the province of Connacht. [Mac Cárthaigh 2007:146]

The main researcher for the Room to Rhyme project was Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh. The goal was to contribute the items collected through the project to the National Folklore Collection and thus to preserve elements of the mumming tradition, as it was practiced in the past. The project collected a wide breadth of interviews with mummers from Ulster and Connacht, video recordings of mumming performances and mumming play scripts. In addition, the Room to Rhyme project hosted a conference in 2003 titled, *Mummers in Cross-Border and Cross-Community Contexts*. The conference brought together scholars from around the world with an interest in the mumming tradition.

The proceedings of this conference were published as a book, titled *Border Crossing: Mumming in Cross-Border and Cross-Community Contexts* (2007). Published in 2007, the book entered the discipline of Irish mumming studies when the tradition was in severe decline, especially in County Fermanagh. It is the last book-length work to be dedicated, in part, to the

Irish mumming tradition. For the purpose of this thesis, the works of two scholars in *Border Crossings* are of particular relevance: Ray Cashman and Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh.

During the 1990s Cashman, a student of Glassie's, conducted field work for his doctoral dissertation in the Aghayarn region of west County Tyrone (Cashman 2007:40). Like Glassie, it was not Cashman's intention to study the mumming tradition in the area. In *Mumming on the Irish Border: social and political implications* (2007) and *Mumming with the Neighbours in West Tyrone* (2000) Cashman revealed that his field work focused on the role of storytelling in communities divided by politics and religion. However, Cashman stated that mumming can also be seen as a method for dissolving "political and religious" boundaries between people (Cashman 2007:41).

Like Glassie, Cashman did not collect the mumming play texts from the region. As the tradition was revived around the mid-1980s, mumming was active in County Tyrone during Cashman's field work. As such Cashman was able to engage in mumming with his neighbours. According to Cashman, the context of the mumming performance helps to dilute the religious identities people place upon one another (Cashman 2007:52).

The interaction between the Catholic mumming group Cashman performed with and the Protestant audiences they sometimes performed in front of, led Cashman to conclude that identity is not a rigid structure which is completely unchangeable. Rather, identity is constantly changing and depends on the social contexts people find themselves in (Cashman 2007:54-55). Cashman seemed to imply that mumming can lessen the intensity of religious identity.

The context of the mumming performance provides a space where people may bond through the perceived differences in their identity; that the mumming performance could be a solution to bridge the divide between people separated by religion or politics. However, Cashman warned against arriving at this conclusion:

Community was an everyday reality of people attempting – if not always achieving – hospitable, neighbourly relationships through both work and play...Mumming alone is not the cure to society's ills. At its best, however, mumming serves as nothing less than the resurrection of a battered though resilient and crucial ideal. [Cashman 2007:55]

As Cashman stated the practice of mumming cannot unite communities which are divided by religion or politics. By simply staging a mumming play, the memories and division caused by the conflict cannot be erased. Rather, Cashman suggested mumming is seen as a representation of older ideals, such as community involvement and cooperation. By adapting these ideals into modern society Cashman believed that communities may become increasingly united. Cashman's work is evidence that engaging with the mumming performance can offer an insight which cannot be attained by simply reading the mumming play text.

The second essay in *Border Crossings* which is of relevance for this thesis is Mac Cárthaigh's *Room to Rhyme: Irish Christmas mumming in transition* (2007). In this essay, Mac Cárthaigh focused on some of the changes which mumming has undergone over the past thirty years. According to Mac Cárthaigh factors such as, "growing urbanisation and rural depopulation... improvements in transport... [and] growing economic prosperity" have all impacted the relevance mumming holds in modern society, throughout the provinces of Ulster and Connacht (Mac Cárthaigh 2007:157).

Mac Cárthaigh's understanding of the literature on Irish mumming and the documentary sources relating to the tradition, have added to the historical timeline of mumming activity during the 20th century. Mac Cárthaigh engaged with numerous sources to compile a timeline of mumming activity and inactivity in the provinces of Ulster and Connacht. As is evident through Mac Cárthaigh's analysis, there are three periods in the 20th century where mumming declined significantly due to various social factors, namely: The Second World War, emigration, and the conflict during the 1960s, 70s and 80s (Mac Cárthaigh 2007:153). Mac Cárthaigh was able to develop this timescale by tracing the social activities which occurred during the 20th century thus emphasising the importance of the time and context in which a tradition exists.

Impact of literature on the thesis: Methodology, perspective and the concept of time

The style of writing in this thesis has been influenced heavily by Glassie. It adopts a somewhat conversational tone, in order to reflect the experience of actually 'being there' and doing ethnographic research with these people. It also possesses some similarities to the work

of Rosemary Harris (1972) in that it closely reflects upon the interactions between various members involved in the mumming tradition. Glassie and Cashman's work greatly influenced the methodological approach I took to researching mumming in County Fermanagh. While this will be discussed in more detail in chapter three, it is necessary to discuss the reasoning behind this here. Both Glassie and Cashman produced studies of mumming based on their focus on individual communities. Through my focus on the mumming tradition I was able to attain an insight into the role mumming played in the lives of those who practiced it. By focusing on studying the tradition of mumming I was able to make connections with other mummies from County Fermanagh, not solely residing in Aughakillymaude. This allowed me to gain access to a county-wide body of mumming knowledge.

As was explored through Ó Catháin's work, distinctly Irish elements have been added to the mumming play. However, these elements have gone unexamined until now. During my field work, I attained a unique view of the mumming performance; from the perspective of the musician. This thesis will explore some of the unique 'Irish' elements of the mumming tradition. Specifically, focus will be given to the inclusion of Irish traditional music in the mumming performance. However, the impact of the literature on the thesis was not limited to the methodology employed to conduct the ethnographic research. It has also motivated the way time is structured with relation to the continuously changing state of mumming in County Fermanagh.

With relation to mumming in County Fermanagh time has been divided according to Mac Cárthaigh's understanding of the presence of the tradition in the region at different periods during history. Throughout the thesis, three time periods will be referred to: pre-revival, revival and post-revival. The following annotated diagram explains the use of these labels throughout the thesis (Figure 8).

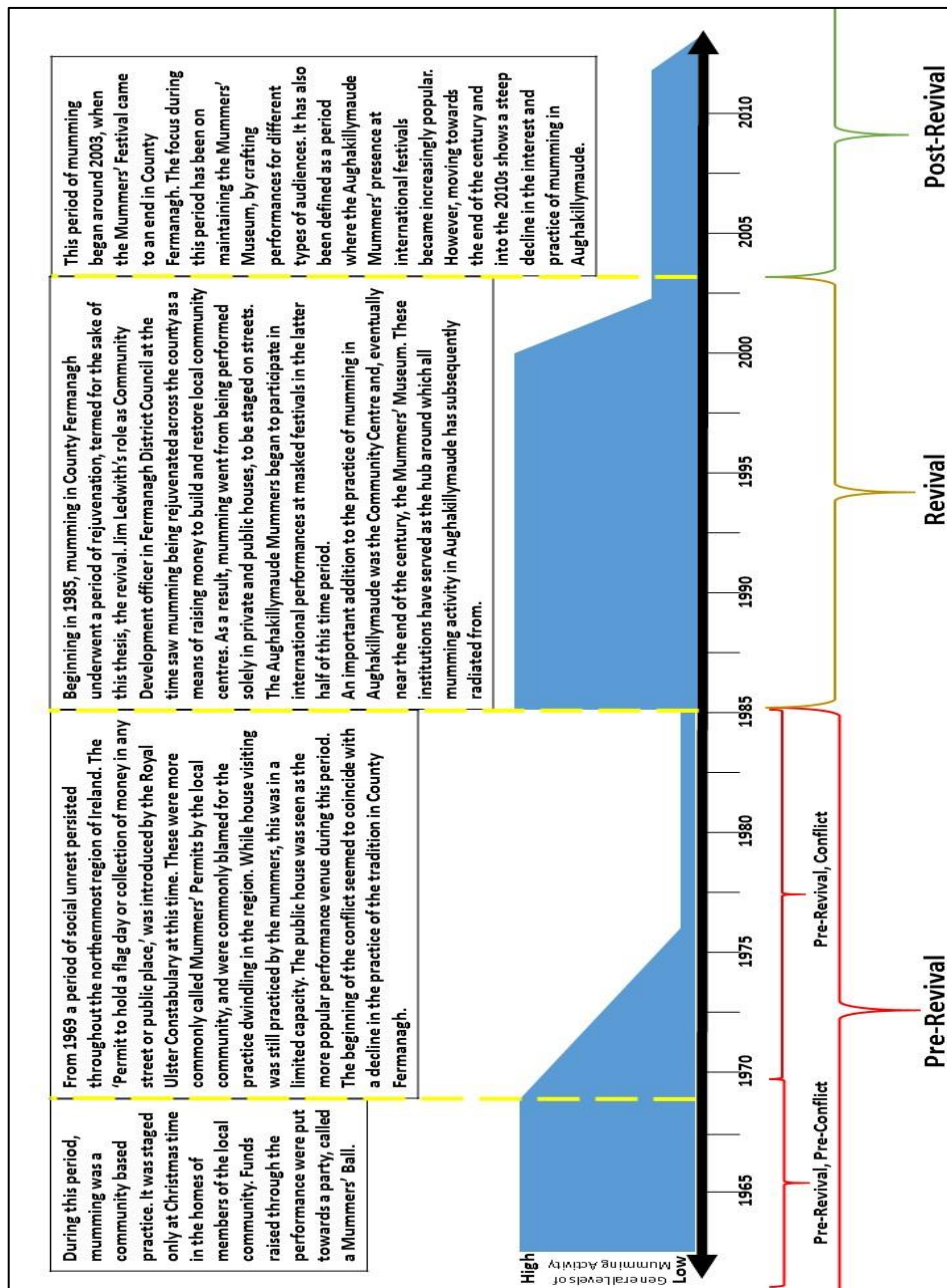


Figure 8: Diagram explaining the use of the terms pre-revival, revival and post-revival from 1965 to present

In relation to mummings in County Fermanagh, the term ‘pre-revival’ denotes the practice of mummings prior to the mid-1980s. This period will be contextualised by referring to it as a time when mummings was performed in the kitchens of rural houses. Following from the pre-revival period is what will be termed the ‘revival’ period, which stretches from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s. This period will be contextualised by referring to the performance venues of the time as the public house and the street. During this period, the Mummies’ Museum in Aughakillymaude was formed. The creation of this museum is central

to the manner through which mumming has been practiced in County Fermanagh since the revival period. Its presence has influenced people's perception of the tradition and their understanding of the presence in County Fermanagh. While the museum might be seen to hold little consequence at this point, it will become evident that the museum forms the very core of mumming in County Fermanagh as it currently exists, with all other elements of the social practice radiating from it.

Additionally, the use of the term revival in this context implies somewhat of a period of stagnation prior to the revival. However, it should be clarified that revival does not necessarily mean that the tradition has ever been in a state of complete death in County Fermanagh. Nor does it imply that mumming throughout Ireland has been through the same life cycle as mumming in County Fermanagh. As such, the term revival is very much specific to the geographical, temporal and cultural context of County Fermanagh. The following section will contextualise this revival and suggest how the Mummies' Museum in Aughakillymaude, which was developed in the late 1980s-early 1990s, is absolutely central to the whole practice of mumming.

Following the end of the revival period in the mid-2000s, mumming has continued to be practiced in a sporadic fashion, with groups such as the Aughakillymaude Mummies and the Armagh Rhymers forming the mainstay of the tradition. This timeframe, from the mid-2000s to present, will be termed the 'post-revival' period.

Conclusion

By examining the work of previous scholars of Irish mumming, it is evident that they have focused on two aspects of the tradition: the origins, and the function of mumming. While these approaches to studying the tradition are important for placing mumming in a social and historical context, this thesis will change the course of Irish mumming studies. It will not simply report the facts relating to how the mumming play unfolds. Nor will it try to uncover the history or function of the mumming tradition within Irish society. It is the aim of this thesis to change the direction of Irish mumming studies by examining how the liminal tradition of mumming, practiced on the margins of Irish cultural activity, is defined. It will be argued that while social practices are viewed as possessing longevity and immutability, both time and context act to change and define them.

Up to this point, focus in mumming scholarship has been on why mumming exists. While I will engage in this debate to a certain degree, it is the intention of this thesis to show that mumming should not solely be studied to understand its presence within society. If we take its existence as given, what can we learn from becoming part of the tradition, and from those who practice it?

The thesis will shift the focus from understanding the function of the mumming tradition, to exploring the impact of engaging in the mumming tradition on and in those who practice it. It will present the views of past mummers, current mummers, and my own experience as a researcher, to understand the dynamics of the mumming tradition in the community setting. By straying away from relying on the mumming play text and becoming immersed in the mumming community of County Fermanagh, this thesis will bring a new perspective to the process of studying Irish mumming. In addition, it will provide a much overdue account of how a tradition is adapted to suit a changing society and the attitudes towards this adaption of the tradition. It will also offer an understanding of the contemporary experience of being part of the mumming tradition in Ireland.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodological approach taken to the completion of this thesis. This will involve explaining the theoretical concepts which have motivated the approach taken to the study. Following on from this discussion, it will then detail the research methods employed to collect data for this thesis. The research site and data analysis procedure will also be explained at this point. Finally, the ethical considerations faced during the research and writing of this thesis will be explained. By detailing this methodological approach, it will become evident that much consideration has been given to all aspects of the project, from the data collection to the decision not to name participants at certain points throughout the thesis. This has been done in order to present a reliable and interesting interpretation of mumming as it currently exists in County Fermanagh. To begin, the theoretical ideologies underpinning this thesis will be explained.

Theoretical perspective

It is necessary to explain the theoretical stance from which the research was conducted. This will assist in understanding the interpretation of the mumming tradition presented and research methods used for the collection of data. Throughout the research process, and as a result in the thesis itself, value is placed on the interactions between various players within the mumming community. Namely, it focuses on the interactions between the mummies and their audiences, and the ongoing competition between these two parties to define the tradition of mumming and the actual performance. As such, the thesis adopts an interactionalist perspective to help understand what is occurring within the tradition.

As Ulf Hannerz has explained, the interactionalist approach to society hinges on the notion that “people shape social structure and meanings in their contacts with one another... and societies and cultures emerge and cohere as results of the accumulation and aggregation of these activities” (Hannerz 1992:15). This means that society is not constructed of arbitrary actions and rules. Instead it is built from the interactions between people and as such is constructed in a way that is meaningful to them.

Additionally, Ulf Hannerz' social categories of the centre and periphery are important when attempting to understand how and why mumming has been passed through generations. Hannerz explains that categories such as the centre and periphery are part of "cultural flow," where things move in and out of importance within society over time (Hannerz 2014: 11). Hannerz also explains that social categories such as the centre and periphery are not simply reflections of the politics and economics of any given society (Hannerz 1992: 219). There is more to understanding a social practice such as a tradition, than just understanding the political and economic influences upon it. It is vital to examine the human elements of the tradition. Such human elements include the way it is passed on from one generation to the next, the reason it is passed in a particular form and the preconceptions people possess of that tradition. This notion of interactionalism feeds into the understanding of tradition presented in this thesis and the idea that communication between people, both mummers and audience members, is essential in order for a tradition to be attributed a place and a meaning within a particular society at a given time.

It should be noted here that this section will not summarise the many theories of tradition which have faded in and out of popularity in the discipline of Anthropology. Rather, it will detail theories of tradition which have helped to inform the interactionalist understanding of the mumming tradition presented in the following thesis. As the argument of this thesis hinges largely on the notions of tradition, time and immutability, it is necessary to look at theories of tradition which focus on time as an important aspect for the creation of a tradition.

A basic understanding of the concept of a tradition can be drawn from the work of A.L. Kroeber (1963). As Kroeber stated: "the culture of today is always largely received from yesterday: that is what tradition or transmission means; it is a passing or sending along, a "handing – through" from one generation from the next" (Kroeber 1963:64). Here, it seems that Kroeber aligns the notion of 'tradition' with 'transmission' over time. From Kroeber's perspective this could mean that the very process of passing something from one generation to the next makes it a 'tradition'. Indeed, this notion of passing an activity between generations continues to be seen as a common requirement if a social practice is to be seen as a tradition.

As Edward Shils stated in 'Tradition' (1981) a "pattern... [should] last over at least three generations - however long or short they are – to be a tradition" (Shils 1981: 15). If both Kroeber and Shils' notions of generational longevity are taken together it seems that time and exposure of a 'pattern' of a social activity to a chain of people connected through time is fundamental to that activity being dubbed a 'tradition.' As Kroeber explained this transmission of a tradition over time contributes to the sense of "real continuity [and] genuine value" being associated with the society in which the tradition is maintained (Kroeber 1963:65). This notion of the transmission of a tradition over time is an integral part of defining a social practice as a tradition has endured into recent literature on the topic (Graburn 2001:6). Following on from this notion that traditions are created through their passage and continuity over a period of generations, they are also seen as a source of pride for those who continue to practice the tradition.

Just as transmission is seen as an important element in the creation of a tradition, the notion of time seems to be an equally vital aspect. According to Eugenia Shanklin (1981) "a 'tradition' in the anthropological literature often means a time honoured custom" (Shanklin 1981:71). Indeed, one scholar of Irish mumming, Henry Glassie, stated that tradition and time are interrelated concepts: "tradition is a temporal concept, inherently tangled with the past, the future, with history" (Glassie 1995:399). As is evident from Glassie's perspective a tradition is linked with all aspects of time. This can be taken to mean that the past plays a role in defining how a tradition currently exists. The present is where the tradition actually does, or does not exist. Additionally, the future is important as it is not possible to know whether a tradition will continue to be practiced and the form it will take.

Like all social activities, traditions are not as easily categorised and understood as may be hoped. The concept of the tradition is complex, with many differing perspectives contributing towards any understanding of it. As theories of tradition have advanced they have strayed away from the notion that it is simply something stagnant being passed from one generation to the next. Theorists such as Richard Bauman (1992) have suggested a broader understanding of the concept.

As Bauman stated: "Tradition... is coming to be seen... as a symbolic construction by which people in the present establish connections with a meaningful past and endow particular cultural forms with value and authority" (Bauman 1992:128). This means that tradition is not

simply performed to ensure its continuity. Rather, people continue to engage in traditions to feel connected to previous members of their own society. However, as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger explain in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), social practices which might seem to have a distant past and be connected to previous members of their society may not be as archaic as they may seem.

While there is a possibility that mumming does have a long, unrecorded and ancient history, it can also be approached from the perspective of Hobsbawm and Ranger. As Hobsbawm explained in the introduction to this text, traditions which may seem to have a long and pre-historic past are sometimes more recent inventions which have quickly gained popularity. These are what Hobsbawm and Ranger term “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:1). As Hobsbawm explained, an invented tradition “includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and datable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:1).

Additionally, as Charles Briggs (1996) has explained, traditions are invented to suit the needs of the people who create them: “traditions are created in present, thus reflecting contestations of interest more than the cultural essence of a purportedly homogenous and bounded “traditional” groups” (Briggs 1996:435). This means that a tradition is created by a group of people to reflect their own society and desires. As such, a tradition can be seen to represent the society and people who formed it. This understanding of the invented tradition can help comprehend the evolution and popularity of mumming. It will also assist in interpreting the perceived longevity which the mumming tradition is believed to possess. However, it is not suggested that mumming is an ‘invented tradition.’ Rather, it will help to make sense of some elements which have been shaped into the mumming tradition, particularly in Aughakillymaude, which may have given it a sense of immutability. While it is not possible to definitely say that mumming is an invented tradition with a recent history and rapid growth, it is necessary to understand how such concepts have influenced the understanding of the mumming tradition presented in this thesis.

Having discussed at length the theoretical concepts which influenced the perspective from which the data for this thesis was collected and the ideas presented throughout, we will now turn to examine the methods of data collection utilised during the research phase of this project.

Research methodology

Research for this thesis was conducted from a qualitative perspective. Participant observation, a method for “collecting data in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/ or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002:2) was at the centre of the data collection for this research. Semi structured and unstructured group interviews were equally important in the data collection process. The methodology used to collect data for this thesis allowed me to engage in the mumming tradition and explore it from the perspective of the mummors.

Participant observation was conducted alongside qualitative, semi structured and unstructured interviews with mummors from the County Fermanagh locality. A detailed outline of the schedule of the research schedule for this project can be found in Appendix A. My field work was centred in County Fermanagh, in the town land of Aughakillymaude with two organisations: The Aughakillymaude Mummors and the Mummors’ Foundation (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9: Aughakillymaude Community Mummors. ©Mummors' Foundation



Figure 10: Mummers' Foundation Logo. ©Mummers' Foundation

The majority of the field research for this thesis was based in the Aughakillymaude Community Centre and Mummers' Museum, located on the outskirts of Derrylin, County Fermanagh (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Aughakillymaude Community Centre and Mummers' Museum

Initially, I was invited into the Aughakillymaude Mumming community by Jim Ledwith, coordinator of the Mummers' Foundation, as a musician. Having played the flute since a young age, I found a space for myself within the Aughakillymaude Mummers as a musician. This reflects Kelly Askew's (2002) notion that being a musician and a researcher can allow the researcher access to areas which may be out of bounds for someone who is a researcher, but not a musician. My abilities as a musician gave me access to the experience of participating in the performance of the mumming play. As a result, I could build up relationships with other performers backstage and in other performance contexts. I possessed a unique vantage point from which to view mumming, one which would not have been accessible to me had I not been able to play music.

In addition to interviewing mummers from defunct mumming groups, I became involved with the Aughakillymaude Mummers and their performances. Being a flute player, I was invited to perform with the mummers at parades, weddings and mumming plays for various audiences. This gave me a unique insight into how the mumming performance is organised and unfolds. I conducted the vast majority of my participant observation while participating in these performances. I paid close attention to both the mumming performance and the people involved in it. I spoke with both mummers and audience members, which allowed me to examine the performance dynamic between these two groups, and from both of these perspectives.

I recorded the experiences of participating in these events using the "one notebook fits all" approach, as explained by Raymond Madden (Madden 2010:127). This involved recording personal reactions to events I attended and performances I participated in, and the details of the actual event in one 'notebook'. Doing this allowed me to create a more accurate picture of the event when I was in the process of reviewing my field notes. It also allowed me to consider the link between my own personal self and the relationships I had with people in the field, my experiences of taking part in events and interactions with various people which shaped my understanding of the tradition.

Following on from this involvement with the mummers, Jim invited me to work as an archivist on a project which documented the memories of mummers from County Fermanagh and its hinterlands. I spent fifteen months conducting semi-structured interviews with people from County Fermanagh who were involved in a mumming group at some point during their

life. As the semi-structured interview is seen as “the most systematic opportunity for the collection of qualitative data,” (Schensul et al. 1999:164) they were central to developing an understanding of how mumming changed over time, which I present in the subsequent pages. Topic guides, as explained by George Gaskell (2000:40) were written to accompany the interviews I conducted. These semi-structured guides allowed for the interview to maintain a clear focus, while also giving the mummery space to elaborate and tell their own stories (See Appendix A for an insight into the interviews conducted during the field work and Appendix B for a sample topic guide used during an interview). Travelling to interview these mummery made me familiar with the vast County Fermanagh countryside, through which the mummery once roamed. Additionally, I conducted ethnographic content analysis (Altheide 1987: 74) of a film produced by the Aughakillymaude Mummery, the details of which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter four.

In addition to being involved with the Aughakillymaude Mummery, I also established a mumming group in Carrigallen, a small village in County Leitrim. With the help of my sister, Sarah, we staged mumming performances at local events during the summer of 2012. We re-wrote the mumming play to suit the local audience, while also designing costumes and arranging music for the performance. Organising this mumming group allowed me to see how much effort and dedication is required to stage a mumming performance, even on a small, amateur scale.

Developing an understanding of other forms of masked performances which occur in Ireland was an important part of this research. I spent four months at the end of 2013 researching the wren boy tradition in Munster. Wren boys are masked performers who possess some similarities to mummery. They stage a performance on St Stephen’s Day (December 26th) which originally involved travelling to local houses dressed in costumes made of straw and rags. The wren boys would sing songs, play music and recite a rhyme about the wren bird, in return for some money from the householder. This performance, which was once practiced throughout Ireland, has since faded. It is now mostly limited to small pockets of the province of Munster.

Researching the wren boy tradition involved attending carnival-esque wren boy performances, which were in stark contrast to mumming in County Fermanagh. In 2013, my husband, Matthew and I travelled to several wren boy festivals; to the annual wren boy festival,

which is held during the Listowel races in September, and to Dingle on St Stephen's Day, to record the groups of wren boys performing in the pubs and on the streets (Figures 12 and 13).



Figure 12: A wren boy at the Listowel festival



Figure 13: A Dingle wren boy collecting money

My research on mumming was not limited to participant observation and interviewing. I spent six months conducting archival research in Irish archives which held information on mumming. The Room to Rhyme manuscripts, housed in the National Folklore Collection proved extremely useful for contextualising my own research in County Fermanagh. The Room to Rhyme archive, National Folklore Collection and Schools Folklore Collection were examined to explore how mumming was practiced in the past. The person-centeredness of these records, consisting mainly of diary-like recollections of various elements of the tradition and the transcripts of semi-structured interviews allowed for the person-centred nature of this research to remain at its core. In addition, I researched in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's archives. Through this, I was able to access Gailey's original questionnaires on mumming. My research also involved working with Fermanagh County Museum, helping to archive the collection of local folklorist, Johnny Mc Keagney.

The decision to conduct research in these archives was influenced by Mac Cárthaigh's work on the social and historical events which influence the presence of mumming in a community. Mac Cárthaigh's work showed that it is necessary to have an understanding of the context in which a tradition exists, in addition to understanding the tradition itself. As such, I felt that combining these methodologies would give an accurate insight into why the tradition of mumming exists in its present form in County Fermanagh.

Data analysis

Once the field notes, interview transcripts, content analysis and notes from the archival research were collected, all of the data was analysed using a grounded theory approach. This approach to the data analysis was guided by the work of Barney Glasser and Anslem Strauss (1967). Glasser and Strauss suggest that:

The constant comparing of many groups draws the sociologist's attention to their many similarities and differences. Considering these leads him to generate abstract categories and their properties, which, since they emerge from the data, will clearly be important to a theory explaining the kind of behaviour under observation [Glasser and Strauss 1967:36]

Working from Glasser and Strauss' interpretations of the different groups or categories within the data, I began by reading through the data I had collected. By finding different categories within the data, I was able to build up an understanding of the holistic pattern within the mumming tradition in County Fermanagh and throughout Ireland in general.

The coding process was completed manually, in an “open coding line by line” fashion, as detailed by Kathy Charmaz (2003:94). While coding the data in hard copy format was time consuming, it allowed me to cross reference items with ease and in a way which made sense to me. Viewing the connections build up between the interview transcripts and field notes allowed me to actually see each of the chapters of the thesis coming to life. Once the data was coded and arranged into different sections it was then possible to link up the ideas and discuss them with relation to various theoretical concepts. Finally, I arranged the data collected in a logical sequence which allowed for the argument to flow throughout the thesis.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Social Research Ethics Subcommittee at Maynooth University. Two forms of consent were obtained from research participants: formal signed consent and informed consent. The former of these related mainly to interview settings where I recorded interviews with the mummars. In these instances, interviewees signed a consent form which confirmed they were satisfied with the information being used for the research and with being recorded (see Appendix C for consent form used). Informed consent was obtained from people whom I was in repeated contact with, namely the mummars and those whom I interviewed more than once.

One ethical consideration it is necessary to mention is the decision to name participants in the thesis. All mummars involved in the project were offered the option to be referred to using a pseudonym. None of the people I spoke to or interviewed wished to be referred to under a different name. However, in chapter two, relating to the social conflict in the region and mummars’ involvement with this, I chose to use pseudonyms for both the people and the names of the mumming groups they were associated with. This was done as I felt it necessary to protect their identity when discussing their connection to the conflict in the local region.

The ethics committee at Maynooth University granted permission for me to retain the information collected following the conclusion of the research. Information recorded during field work is currently stored in a locked filing cabinet, to ensure the safe keeping of the information. With the permission of the individuals involved this will allow me to disseminate

the information and bring this research on a tradition which is gradually fading from public consciousness, to academic and public audiences.

Conclusion

The interactionalist theoretical perspective from which the research for this thesis was conducted and analysed has been explained in this chapter. Additionally, the understanding of tradition which guides its use throughout the thesis will assist when discussing its ability to change over time. This has allowed for both context and perspective to be given to the ideas put forward in the following chapters. Having detailed the methods through which data was collected for the thesis and in turn analysed, it is now possible to present the findings of this data collection and explore how mumming is currently practiced in County Fermanagh and why it exists in its current state.

Chapter Four: First impressions of mumming

Encountering mumming

My first encounter with mumming came in the form of a visit to the Aughakillymaude Mummies' Museum on the shores of lower Lough Erne in County Fermanagh. On my initial visit to the Museum, I was not to know the important role it played in the continued presence of mumming in County Fermanagh. This was something which only became apparent as I got more involved with the mummies, and is a fact that will be continuously referenced throughout the thesis. However, on the May morning in 2012 when I first visited the Mummies' Museum I was oblivious to this. I accompanied a group who participating in a cross-border project coordinated by Cavan County Museum on their visit to the Mummies' Museum. On this particular morning, there were about twenty people in the group, eighteen women and two men. It was composed of members from two different community organisations: Cavan Positive Age and the Cavan branch of the Afro-Caribbean Forum. The group travelled from Cavan town to Aughakillymaude by bus.

We turned off the main road from Derrylin to Enniskillen, down a narrow lane. As the road zigzagged through the fields, I gazed at this unfamiliar countryside. The gentle sloped mountain, which I later learned was Knockninny hill, dominated the landscape (Figure 14).



Figure 14: View of Knockninny hill from the road to Aughakillymaude

As we drove along the road, I noticed the quarry which had been cut into the mountain face. The perfectly dug channels in the mountain revealed the pale rock underneath the rich, green grass. As we continued along the road, Lough Erne became visible through the trees which made the left hand verge. We stopped outside a small building which was perched on a

high bank, overlooking the lake. This small building, the Aughakillymaude Community Centre and Mummers' Museum, clad in pale sandstone was to be the hub from which I conducted my research.

The view of Lough Erne in this beautiful setting caused some of the members of the group to pause outside and admire it before they ventured into the museum. We entered the museum through the front door which led into the oldest part of the building: the main hall. A table on the left side of the hall had been set out with tea and scones. The group gathered around the table, and began to chat with each other.

“You’re Finnegan,” said a man, not much taller than myself. He approached me with his hand out. I extended mine and we shook hands. “I am,” I responded. “Well, what’s the angle you want to take for this study?” he asked quite bluntly. While we had not met before I presumed from his knowledge of my interest in mumming, that this was Jim Ledwith, coordinator of the Mummers’ Foundation. “The music is what interests me,” I replied. “That’s a good angle. You know, when the mummers used to dance in the houses, on the flag stone floors, they’d crack red-headed matches and throw them on the floor. Then when they danced, the sparks would fly from their shoes. That’s something you won’t read in a book, Finnegan,” said Jim. I was fascinated by Jim’s story. As I went to ask him more about it, it seemed as if he suddenly remembered the crowd of elderly people swarming in the small hall and he suddenly interjected, saying “I’ll talk to you more about it later. Sure come on the tour of the museum and you’ll see what we’re all about here.” Jim turned to face the group who were gathered around the table of refreshments.

It was not until much later in my field work that I uncovered how Jim originally became involved with mumming in the area. Indeed, it was quite late in my research when I realised that he was my “gatekeeper,” as Johl and Renganathan (2010: 42) might term it, into the world of mumming in County Fermanagh. While I did not learn this until later on in the research I feel it is necessary to inform the reader of his background at this point, in order to understand the motivation and influence he provided for this thesis.

Jim never identified himself as a mummer even though he worked in the Mummies' Museum, arranged performances and appeared on stage alongside the Aughakillymaude Mummies. He frequently declared to me, in his usual dramatic fashion, that he was not a mummer. Since he did not identify as a mummer, it seems necessary to explain a little bit about his background and how he became involved in the tradition.

Jim was first introduced to mumming while working as part of the Community Development team of Fermanagh District Council in the 1980s. Part of his duties in the Council was to assist towns and villages socially divided by the conflict of the latter half of the twentieth century and restore a sense of community in their locality. Jim helped town committees source funding for the development and restoration of community halls throughout the county. In the later years, this funding came in the form of monies from the European Union locally termed "Peace Money" (Atashi 2011:215). This was money given with the intention of creating 'peace' in areas divided by conflict.

However, prior to the availability of this 'Peace Money,' the local community groups Jim worked with were required to raise some of their own funds to contribute to the establishment of these local community centres. It was here that Jim suggested local community groups came together and restored the local tradition of mumming to raise funds for the development of these community halls. As Jim continued in this role, he met the Aughakillymaude Community Association and saw their talent and interest in the local mumming tradition. These two parties worked together and developed a Mummies' Museum and a corresponding programme of folk-based activities for schools and tours groups. Jim's involvement in mumming will be returned to in chapter three when his role in the revival of the tradition will be discussed in greater detail. This brief summary of how Jim became involved with the Aughakillymaude Mummies should be sufficient to provide the reader with an insight into one of the people who was fundamental to this research.

Returning to my initial visit with to the Mummies' Museum, once Jim told me the story about the dancers, he asked the group to go to the opposite end of the hall for the beginning of the tour. Some of the more elderly members carried chairs to sit on, while Jim began his semi-formal speech to welcome them to the museum. Everyone gathered at the end of the hall, still chatting to each other. Jim was facing a television, which was neatly encased in a wooden box and fixed to the wall. He pressed play on a DVD player which was sitting

underneath. “Here now. Just watch the introduction bit of this. It’ll show you what we’re about here and what you’re going to see today,” said Jim.

The group went quiet as a DVD began to play. The television screen turned black for a few seconds. Then a voice declaring the word, “Oh,” in an ascending melodic tone was heard. The screen slowly turned from black, to an aerial shot of a large bonfire on top of a mountain. Beside the bonfire were remnants of a pre-Christian burial mound. In this shot mummies who were dressed in their straw costumes moved slowly around the bonfire in a circular fashion.

At this point, another “Oh,” was declared by the singer. A bodhrán began to beat a jig rhythm while the camera zoomed out and captured a lake in the background of the shot (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Mummies walk around a bonfire, next to a pre-Christian burial mound on top of Knockninny Hill in opening shot of *Mummies, Masks and Mischief*.

©Aughakillymaude Community Association

The bodhrán continued to beat this haunting rhythm as another prolonged “Oh,” was sung. As the camera focused on the faces of the mummies walking around the bonfire, the singer began to sing a song, titled *Féach*. The audience were completely silent as the film continued. Some of them sipped on their cups of tea while they watched the mummies jump over a bonfire on the television screen.

The title of the film, *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*, appeared in white writing about one minute into the viewing. Jim allowed the film to play for about ten minutes before pressing ‘Stop’ on the DVD player. He then explained how their visit to the museum would be structured. Half of the group would be given a guided tour of the exhibition, while the other half would be participating in a straw craft workshop. The group then split into two and continued their visit to the museum.

During field work in the Mummers’ Museum, I learned that Jim showed this video to every group before they went on the tour of the Mummers’ Museum. Sometimes only ten minutes was shown, whereas other times the film was put on a loop and played for their entire visit. While I will return to discuss what occurs during the remainder of a visit to the Mummers’ Museum in chapter seven it is necessary to pause here and analyse what the visitors to the museum actually saw in this film.

Summary of the content of Mummers, Masks and Mischief

The film begins by showing some shots of the Aughakillymaude Mummers engaged in the mumming performance in Enniskillen and at festivals in Bulgaria. Throughout the film it is impossible to escape the implication that that mumming is an ‘ancient’ fertility ritual. There are several images of the mummers marching around bonfires and jumping over them in straw costumes. Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, coordinator of the Room to Rhyme project, and the mummers themselves explain where they believe Irish mumming originated.

The mummers are then filmed visiting an old cottage. Mac Cárthaigh narrates this section and explains what happens when the mummers visit a rural house. This is not original footage, but was staged for the sake of the film. As Sean Maguire, the person who plays the ‘man of the house’ in the film told me, “Well, we went up to an auld [old] cottage and cleaned it up a bit and decided to film that bit of the film in there” (Maguire, Sean. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie). The rhymes recited by the characters, dancing, music and costumes are all shown in this section of the film.

The fight between Prince Patrick, the ‘hero’ and other ‘villainous’ characters such as Prince George, the Bauld Slasher and the Turkish Champion is depicted in several different outdoor settings. Once Prince Patrick kills all of the villains mentioned above in the shots, the Doctor is then shown reviving them using the medicine ‘Ally Campaign.’ The film then introduces a White Horse character, known in Aughakillymaude as the White Horse of Benaughlin. Some time is spent discussing the perceived meaning of the horse as a fertility symbol.

The Aughakillymaude Junior Mummers are then introduced. At this point the audience is shown these young mummers getting ready for their performances and short interviews with these children are also included. Following this, the film moves to a section which is titled, ‘The Cycle of Nature.’ Here, the connection between mumming and pre-Christian Ireland is implied suggesting extreme longevity of the tradition. One commentator in the film states that there is a direct connection between the mummers and mountain top pre-Christian burial mounds. Connections are then made between other forms of folk traditions, such as English Morris dancing and Bulgarian mid-winter rituals, and Irish mumming.

Following this section, the use of straw in the mumming performance is detailed. Patrick Murphy, the straw mask maker for the Aughakillymaude Mummers is shown transforming a sheaf of straw into a mummers’ mask. The Aughakillymaude Mummers are then shown recreating a straw boy performance at a modern wedding reception. The straw boys were not ‘mummers’ in the sense that they did not perform the usual life, death and rebirth play. These were masked performers who faded from the countryside around the middle of the last century. Straw boys performed music, dance and some rhymes at country wedding parties. The final section of the film shows several mummers taking off their masks to reveal the face of the person underneath.

The tone of the film is light-hearted. The comical elements of the mumming play, such as the antics of the White Horse of Benaughlin, the fight between the Bauld Slasher and Prince Patrick, and the character of Biddy Funny, are focused on. While the film does possess a light-hearted nature the section, ‘The Cycle of Nature’ is discussed in a matter-of-fact manner. While this section may seem brief, all of the points mentioned above will be returned to in greater detail later in the chapter. This short summary is to allow for a more informed insight into viewers’ perceptions of the film, which will now be presented.

Understandings of the film

I viewed this film many times throughout my field work; during tours of the Mummings' Museum, showing it to family and friends when they asked about my research topic and when snipping sections out to use in presentations on the mumming tradition. However, it always interested me that this film was, for many people, including myself, their first encounter with the mumming tradition. During my field work in Aughakillymaude, I asked Jim about the film, its meaning and why he chose to show it at the beginning of each group's visit to the museum:

Well, in 2010 we got some funding from O.F.M.D.F.M. [Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister] and the National Lottery and a few others to make this film. Basically, it just tells the story of mumming and how it used to be done. So we set up an old cottage and put on a play in it. And recorded that. And recorded bits and pieces from us performing in Bulgaria and the likes. And Chris [Crístoír Mac Cárthaigh] did a few bits in it too. About the history and origins and that. Mummings, Masks and Mischief we called it. Cos them boys [mummings] they were always up to mischief. Well the film [at the start of the tour of the Mummings' Museum] shows them [the visitors] what mumming's really like. And the older people like it too. It reminds them of the things they used to do. There's only so much they can imagine from the models in there. It just brings it to life for them. We sell it on DVD so they can bring that home with them. [Ledwith, Jim. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

The inclusion of the Aughakillymaude Mummings' views in the film, with relation to the origin of mumming, the costumes and the characters, show the audience how this group of mummings actually define the tradition. However, as I spoke to visitors at the Mummings' Museum and academics who had viewed the film, I began to question what audience this film was actually made to appeal to.

One afternoon, a group of elderly tourists from County Antrim visited the Mummings' Museum. They were shown the *Mummings, Masks and Mischief* film before they were taken on a tour of the museum. Jim had asked my sister Sarah and I to provide some music for the tourists as they enjoyed their lunch. The group sat outside in the afternoon sun while Sarah and I entertained them. I talked with some of the elderly men and women about the film and if they remembered taking part in any of the events it depicted? One elderly man replied, saying:

Oh now, it was a very entertaining film. But I have to say now, I don't remember the fires on the mountains. From when I was a wee'un [child]. And I was in mummings too you know? When I was small. Not these mummings here [Aughakillymaude Mummings], but ones down home. As far as I can remember now, we wouldn't have

done anything. Not in midsummer. There wouldn't have been a lot of straw hats made. Sure there was no straw to make them with. Not at that time of year. Not in the summer. No, no, we just did the Christmas mummers. The rhymers we called them. [Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

The presence of the straw costumes in the film was something another one of these elderly tourists picked up on when I asked them about the film. She explained that straw costumes, such as those seen in the film, were not used in the type of mumming performances she was familiar with:

I don't remind [remember] them sorts of costumes. I think the mummers I saw when I was young was just with the straw masks. And they just had their jackets on. Auld [old] farming jackets. They'd just throw them on. They wouldn't have fancy straw outfits. You couldn't use all that straw to make the things for the mummers. Sure what about the cattle? They'd go cold if they hadn't the straw for the winter. [Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

Speaking to these people made me reconsider who this film was aimed towards. While I originally thought elderly people who participated in or remembered mumming from their youth were the main audience for the film, it was obvious that the topics covered in the film did not resonate with them. While they generally enjoyed the film, they did not seem to identify with the activities the mummers were engaging in. If it did not resonate with those who used to practice the tradition and remembered it from their youth, then who was supposed to identify with it? I carried this question with me as I continued my field work and research on mumming in County Fermanagh.

As I began to disseminate my research I presented a paper at the Mummers' Unconvention in Gloucester, England in December 2013. As part of the presentation, I showed a clip from the *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* film, where the White Horse of Benaughlin chased a young boy down the street, as he screamed with fear. I talked about how the Aghakillymaude Mummers had added elements to the tradition, to try and keep audiences interested in it. Following my presentation, one renowned academic in the field of English mumming explained his opinion of the *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* film:

I do agree with you, Threase, that traditions can have things added and taken away to make them more meaningful today. But, that clip you showed from the film the Aghakillymaude Mummers made. I have one problem with that film. They try and make it appear that these additions they've made to mumming, like the horse and the bonfires on the tops of mountains, all those unusual things. They try to make it look like they were always part of mumming in Ireland, which is wrong. They added those

bits in. It's wrong because it's misleading for the people who watched it. [Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

This comment speaks to the notion that social practices such as mumming are often presented as possessing a historical longevity which is ultimately questionable. This type of observation made it evident that the film was not aimed at this type of audience. It does not reflect the advancements made by English scholars with relation to the origin theories of the tradition, which have pushed away from seeing it as a fertility rite and as such questioning the longevity and immutability it is seen to possess. If this film does not resonate with the people who once practiced mumming, and it is not for the academics that try and make sense of the tradition, then what audience are the Aughakillymaude Mummers trying to appeal to? To determine the audience this film is aimed at, it is necessary to explore the ways through which the mummers attempt to form their own definition and understanding of mumming in the film.

One thing I noticed about the film as I watched it repeatedly was the distinct sense of 'Irishness' it presented. I began to see the film as less of a documentary which accounted for the evolution of the tradition in County Fermanagh and more of a representation of what the mummers thought the tradition was. To try and understand how the mummers produced their understanding of the tradition, I counted instances of the appearances of different symbols and Irish based references, conducting somewhat of an ethnographic content analysis (Altheide 1987:74). I began to question, in Erving Goffman's terms (1959), what was "giving" the film this distinct sense of Irishness (Goffman 1959:14).

In the film, the term 'Irish' is only used four times in association with the mumming tradition; the term 'Celtic' is used three times, to attribute an Irish heritage to the mumming play. While these words do link the tradition of mumming to Ireland, their infrequent use throughout this twenty-two-minute film cannot have given the film the distinct Irish identity it possesses. I began to look at symbols with an Irish connection which were used throughout the film.

As I examined this film closely, it became obvious that symbols associated with Ireland were used much more frequently than terms such as 'Ireland,' 'Irish,' or 'Celtic.' These symbols of Ireland used in the film include the Irish language, the shamrock, local flags, St

Patrick, the Celtic cross and pre-Christian burial sites. Whereas terms with Irish connections were used in the film seven times, these symbols of Irishness were used a combined total of forty-seven times. To explore how these symbols of Irishness help to create an illusion of longevity and an Irish identity for the Aughakillymaude Mummerys attention will be paid to “the emotional charge which they [the symbols in the film] carry... [and] the complex web of associations attached to them” (Morris 2005:2).

The use of Irish language

Throughout the film Irish language is spoken at three points. The first instance occurs when the opening song, titled *Féach* is sung in Irish. Using the Irish song at the beginning of the film gives the audience the impression that what they are viewing is linked to Ireland. For members of the audience who comprehend the Irish language, using this song to open the film may serve to locate the images they are viewing in an Irish context. While not all audience members may be able to speak Irish, “it is not essential to understand the words in order to understand the message” as Camille O’ Reilly stated with reference to the use of Irish language on political murals in Belfast (O’ Reilly 1998:56). It does not matter that the audience member may not understand Irish, but they may understand the Irish identity this song gives to the contents of the film.

The second point where the Irish language is symbolically used occurs four minutes into the film. Crístóir Mac Cárthaigh is filmed seated in a room which appears to be lined from the floor to the ceiling with audio and video cassette tapes. Mac Cárthaigh describes how the mummery performance would have unfolded in the kitchens of rural houses prior to the conflict in the 1960s. The film shifts to a clip of the Aughakillymaude Mummerys in the dark of night, walking up a narrow lane to a thatched cottage. Mac Cárthaigh’s commentary on how the mummery play unfolds is audible over the scene.

At this point in the film, Captain Mummer knocks on the cottage door three times with a long stick. The householder opens the door. Captain Mummer stands up straight and asks: “An bhfuil chead againn dul isteach?” In English, this means, “Do we have permission to go in?” To this request, the householder nods his head and moves aside to let the mummerys in. Captain Mummer cheers loudly; the bagpiper begins to play a march and they enter (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Captain Mummer asking permission to enter the house. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association

This is the first time in the film a mummer is heard speaking. Indeed, it is the first encounter the audience has with the actual mumming play. The use of the Irish language at this point may imply that the mumming play is performed through the Irish. However, as this scene of the film continues we see that the rest of the play is spoken in English.

The usage of the Irish language in the film occurs eleven minutes in, while Mac Cárthaigh explains the introduction of the White Horse of Benaughlin character into the Aughakillymaude mumming performance. Mac Cárthaigh uses the Irish term ‘Láir Bhán’ to refer to the ‘White Horse’ character:

The wren boys in County Kerry always carry a white horse. The white mare. An Láir Bhán they call it. And it appears to have a very old European basis. The idea of a hobby horse that you carry about with you. And there is evidence for it. The Ederney mummies, for instance have a horse that they include in the play. And so that is an essentially Irish element that has been added to the play. [Mummies, Masks and Mischief 2010]

Mac Cárthaigh states that the white horse is a character used in mumming and wren boy performances throughout Ireland. It is also suggested that the white horse is not necessarily an Irish character, but it has European connections. However, the presence of the Láir Bhán in other Irish traditions such as the wren boys and at Irish summer festivals, may lead to it being deemed ‘Irish’ (Gailey 1969:89). Such suggestions may also be seen to imply that elements of the tradition have ‘always’ existed and have not changed through time. As

such the use of the Irish term ‘Láir Bhán’ is symbolic of the integration of mumming, a play which would have been written in English, into Irish communities.

The use of the Irish language in this film is not solely a method used by the mummers to convey information about the play. Language is much more than simply a means of communication (Wilkinson 2003:219). It does not only serve to help the audience attain an in-depth understanding of the mumming tradition, but it is “a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity” (Gibson 2004:1). The use of the Irish language in the film shows the Irish identity the mummers place on mumming, and as a result the audience place on the tradition. Its usage may also be seen to connect the mumming play to a period on Irish history where Irish was the main language in the country, suggesting a certain longevity for the tradition. This use of Irish language is not the sole symbol which has influenced the sense of longevity and immutability the film associates with the mumming tradition. Local flags are other symbols which is presented throughout the film.

The symbolic use of flags

Flags are visual symbols employed in *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* to denote to the audience the regional identity the Aughakillymaude Mummers. A green and white County Fermanagh flag, popularly associated with Gaelic games, appears twelve times throughout the film. Another County Fermanagh flag, coloured blue, white and green with ‘Fermanagh’ written across it, appears three times. In total, flags are flown on fifteen separate occasions throughout the film.

The flags are mostly seen in the background of outdoor events. Such events include the mountain top bonfire on Knockninny hill at the beginning of the film, a performance of the mumming play in a public square in Bulgaria and at the Mummer’s Festival on Enniskillen Diamond. While the County Fermanagh flag is flown during the performances, the connection between mumming and the flag is never verbally mentioned (Figure 17).



Figure 17: County Fermanagh flag in the background of the shot, between the two sets of dancers. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association

Of the fifteen times the County Fermanagh flag is seen during the film, the flag is in the background of thirteen of these shots. However, the flag is not banished to the background for all of its appearances in the film. In two instances, the County Fermanagh flag is brought to the foreground of the shot. The first of these instances occurs twelve minutes into the film. In this shot a young mummer, about eight years old, tells the audience his favourite part of participating in the mumming performance: “Well, you get to dress up in costumes and you get to go places. And people clap for ya. And you get lots of treats” (Mummers, Masks and Mischief 2010).

During this shot the boy holds a green and white County Fermanagh flag across his chest. The flag is visible for the entire duration of the boy’s interview. In the background of the shot there are other young children who have presumably taken part in a mumming performance. They are rummaging in packets of crisps and taking large gulps from small bottles of fizzy drinks. The children talk loudly, while the young boy speaks of his love of treats given to them after they perform the mumming play.

The second point where the flag is brought to the foreground of the shot occurs nineteen minutes into the film. At this point two bagpipers, Brian and Sean, are filmed standing side by side on Enniskillen Diamond. They wear black caps on their heads which slightly obscure the view of their faces. One piper has the handle of the green and white Fermanagh

flag tucked into his belt. The flag hangs loosely and remains visible for the entire shot (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Bagpiper displaying County Fermanagh flag in foreground.

©Aughakillymaude Community Association

Much as language can be symbolic of identity, equally, flags represent the people who use them. Indeed, flags are often flown in the background of everyday society. When used in this way, flags are symbols of what has been termed “banal nationalism” (Morris 2005:8). This means that the flag, which physically represents the existing state of political and social affairs, blends into the background. They are only brought to the foreground of everyday society when people use them to emphasise their own identity.

This notion of banal nationalism may be related to the flying of the County Fermanagh flag in the background of the mummery performances. When the flags are flown in the background they transform the mummies from an unidentifiable group of people, to a group of County Fermanagh mummies staging a mummery play. The flag in the background gives a County Fermanagh identity to those who perform in front of it.

The process of bringing the flag to the foreground in two instances in the film shows that the mummies consciously reflected on the meaning of this symbol (See Daniel 1987:29 for a discussion of conscious reflection of the meaning of a symbol). The two instances where the flags formed part of the foreground were staged directly for the audience of the film. The

young boy held the County Fermanagh flag across his chest during his interview. In addition, the bagpiper hung the County Fermanagh flag from his belt and looked directly into the camera. They stood still so the camera could capture their image. It is evident that these shots are intentionally staged for the benefit of the film audience. They give the film audience the impression that what they are viewing is linked with County Fermanagh, as a geographical location for the mumming tradition. The flags are the Aughakillymaude Mummers' way of asserting locality, not solely nationality. Additionally, the use of the flags could be seen to root this unusual 'archaic' practice in County Fermanagh history. Indeed, when the symbolism of this flag is considered in association with the symbols of Ireland as detailed in the following section, their role in giving mumming a sense of longevity and immutability is evident.

Christian and pre-Christian symbols

In an attempt to represent the longevity of mumming both Christian and pre-Christian symbols appear frequently throughout the film. One symbol of Christian Ireland which is seen twelve times in the film is the Celtic cross. However, it should be noted that the presence of this symbol does not appear to be intentional. As it appears on the parts of the mummers' costumes, it is featured frequently in the film (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Prince Patrick (Right) with Celtic cross on shield. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association

Another symbol of Christian Ireland used in the film is the character of St Patrick. While St Patrick only has a minor role in the Aughakillymaude mumming play he is seen a total of twelve times throughout the film. Dressed in a green and white robe, wearing a mitre, and carrying a crosier, St Patrick is quite a visibly unique character (Figure 20).



Figure 20: St Patrick in *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*. ©Aughakillymaude Community Association

While the frequent appearances of St Patrick and the Celtic cross seem unintentional, they are subsequently linked to the pre-Christian symbols which are used in the film. In total, pre-Christian burial mounds are featured ten times throughout the film. The most interesting point at which the burial mound is seen occurs at thirteen minutes. At this point, focus is moved from discussing mumming within the youth community in Aughakillymaude, to a section titled ‘The Cycle of Nature.’

This section of the film begins with slow motion footage from the Mummer’s Festival on Enniskillen Diamond. It shows the Doctor pressing firmly on Bauld Slasher’s stomach. The Bauld Slasher is lying flat on the Diamond’s cobbled ground. Each time the Doctor presses on his stomach, the Slasher’s legs fly into the air, adding an element of visual comedy to the scene. At this point, the narrator speaks over this slow motion footage, stating:

In staging a miraculous return to life, the mummer’s play, typically performed mid-winter, celebrates the victory of life over death. [Mummers, Masks and Mischief 2010]

A slow air is played on the uilleann pipes to accompany this section of narration. The Doctor succeeds in reviving the Bauld Slasher. The slow air continues to play as we see the Bauld Slasher rise from the ground and re-join the other mummers. The film suddenly cuts to

focus on a triskele which is carved on a stone surface. The camera pans out to show the Newgrange passage grave in the Boyne Valley, County Meath (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Newgrange passage grave in *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*.

©Aughakillymaude Community Association

Showing people visiting the tomb and steadily keeping the grave in focus, the slow air being played in the background becomes slightly louder. At this point, the narrator states:

This cycle of nature was celebrated by our ancient ancestors who built this passage grave in Newgrange over five thousand years ago. It is only in the darkest depths of December that light enters Newgrange, marking an end to the death and decay of winter and a time to look forward to growth and rebirth in nature. [Mummers, Masks and Mischief 2010]

The shot then moves back to the entrance of the tomb where it focuses on the long entrance stone lying on the ground. The following text is narrated as the camera focuses on a triskele carved into the stone:

Could this carved tri-spiral [triskele], a clear precursor to Saint Patrick's shamrock, symbolise the mystery of the continuous cycle of life, death and rebirth? [Mummers, Masks and Mischief 2010] (Figure 22)



Figure 22: Entrance stone to Newgrange in *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*.

©Aughakillymaude Community Association

The narrator mentions several iconic ‘Irish’ symbols. On five separate occasions throughout the film the term, “the cycle of life, death and rebirth” is noted as a fundamental part of the mumming play. Using these specific terms to refer to the artwork on the Newgrange passage grave suggests that there is a link between pre-Christian Ireland and the mumming play.

In addition, both St Patrick and the shamrock are mentioned in this statement as being connected to the Newgrange passage grave. Having already seen St Patrick several times with relation to the mumming play, this suggests a connection between this pre-Christian burial site, St Patrick and the mumming tradition. The film makers do not say: “there is a connection between mumming and pre-Christian Ireland”; the use of symbols allows the viewer to come to this conclusion.

The inclusion of these symbols emphasises the views of the mummers; that the tradition is continuous from the pre-Christian period to the present day. By connecting the mumming tradition to Irish heritage, an attempt to authenticate the tradition is made. The wording of the narrator’s statement, along with the symbols used in the film show how symbols and words can be used together. When words and symbols are used in conjunction they are even more powerful than when they are used on their own (Morris 2005:31).

This process of associating the mumming tradition with older, more established elements of Irish society can be seen as an example of traditionalization, as defined by Richard Bauman and explained by Tom Mould (2011). As Mould stated: “Traditionalization is a conservative move, reifying the past as a means of borrowing its authority for one’s own performance” (Mould 2011: 1204). This means that social practices with a somewhat unclear history can be attributed a sense of ‘traditionality’ by associating it with other more concrete elements of society. Through this, it is evident that the film attempts to create a sense of longevity and immutability for mumming in County Fermanagh.

Conclusion

The Aughakillymaude Mummers present an understanding of the mumming tradition through the *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* film. They focus on creating a clear connection between mumming and Ireland. In addition, it suggests a connection between the tradition and pre-Christian Ireland; giving it somewhat of a mystical identity. They emphasise the regional importance of mumming and how the tradition was seen to be integrated into Irish society.

As was evident from speaking to elderly people and academics, the film did not reflect their memories or views in relation to the origins of mumming. So if the film is not aimed at these two audiences, then who was it created for? The film represents the views and beliefs of the Aughakillymaude Mummers and their notions of the tradition by suggesting it has longevity within Irish history. Being an important part of the tour of the Mummers’ Museum, and also a commodifiable product which is sold to visitors, my suggestion is that the film is for anyone who is unfamiliar with the history of mumming in Ireland.

It glorifies the connection between Ireland and the mumming tradition, while also mystifying it and making it appear more archaic than it actually is. The film may give the viewer who is unfamiliar with the tradition a sense of longevity through the impression that it is intrinsically linked with pre-Christian Ireland. The film presents what the mummers themselves believe the mumming tradition is. It shows the value they place on the connection between mumming and an Irish identity, while also stressing the presumed connection between the tradition and pre-Christian Ireland. It sells an idea and a belief about what the mumming tradition is to those who pay to see it.

The Aughakillymaude Mummers created *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* to define and explain the identity they placed on the tradition. It allowed them the opportunity to express their own understandings of mumming and the role it played in their community. One thing this film does suggest is that mumming has not changed through time, but serves as a glimpse into Irish history. To an extent, this approach to the tradition does not account for the influence both time and context have on how social practices change and as a result are defined. One social event which had tremendous impact on how mumming was performed was the conflict which erupted in the region in the 1960s. Prior to the revival of mumming in the 1980s, the mumming tradition was not defined by the mummers themselves. Rather, in the context of the conflict in the region, the audience played an integral role in defining the tradition, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Conflict, the audience and mumming

Introduction

As I engaged in participant observation during field work, performing in the mumming play as it exists presently in County Fermanagh, I questioned what had influenced the form the tradition now takes. Speaking with mummers who had practiced the tradition in the past (whose names I have changed in the following pages), it became evident that mumming was highly influenced by the social events which occurred around it. This brought me to examine the presence of conflict in the region and its influence on the mumming tradition.

From 1969 to the 1990s, a period of conflict, conventionally defined through religious and political differences, persisted throughout the northernmost region of the island of Ireland. This conflict greatly impacted people's lives, and changing how they lived and socialised with one another. To conduct a study of mumming and avoid examining the influence of this conflict on its existence would be to ignore context. The conflict itself was one of the main reasons why mumming faded from existence in the County Fermanagh countryside. This chapter will examine the actual impact of the conflict on the mumming tradition. It will draw on the experiences of the mummers from County Fermanagh in order to construct an understanding of how a social practice is influenced by the context it exists in. It will be argued that during periods of social unrest social practices are subject to redefinition. To begin this chapter a brief insight into the history of the conflict in the region will be offered.

Explaining the context of the conflict

It is not the intention of this section of the chapter to unpick the history of the conflict in the northernmost region of Ireland, which is widely agreed to have 'begun' in 1969 (McKittrick 1999:30, Killworth 2000:149). However, as Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan (2006) explained it is not possible to write an ethnography of the region without referencing the conflict in some way (Wilson and Donnan 2006:27). In other words, to present a discussion of mumming in County Fermanagh during this period without giving some form of interpretation of this conflict would be to ignore context. Additionally, with 110 conflict related deaths occurring in County Fermanagh between 1969 and 1999 the conflict has had a lasting presence in the region (McKittrick 1999:1501).

Firstly, it seems necessary to explain the terminology used to refer to this period of social unrest. Throughout the thesis the reasoning behind referring to the violence which occurred during this period as 'the conflict' rather than the commonly used term 'The Troubles' needs to be explained. This decision has been motivated by the work of Paul Stokes (2006), namely his perception that: "the term 'the troubles' ...is itself a semiembarrassed euphemism for a bloody and vengeful conflict, the full reality of which the term tries to suppress" (Stokes 2006: 17). By referring to the conflict which occurred during this period as 'the Troubles' it downplays the dramatically life-altering aftermath it had on the people directly affected by it. As such, I have chosen not to identify this thesis or any of the discussions throughout with this term. Having clarified this point, a concise history of the conflict in the region will be offered.

Some might see this social unrest which began in 1969 as a "tribalistic conflict between Protestants and Catholics in the province, a conflict that had always existed" (Killworth 2000:149). However, a much deeper history is suggested to be responsible. The geographical division of the region and the creation of boundaries are seen to be at the heart of the conflict (Millar 2006). While the conflict was generally seen to come to the fore in the late 1960s scholars such as Adrian Millar (2006) suggest that it had its origins in the Plantation of Ulster, which took place in the early 17th century (Millar 2006:5). The eruption of conflict suggests that resentment built up between the 'Planters' - descendants of the English settlers, and the 'Planted' - the Irish descendants in the region.

As Ed Cairns and John Darby (1998) note the reason for the conflict can be very bluntly interpreted as "a struggle between those who wish to see Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom and those who wish to see the reunification of the island of Ireland" (Cairns and Darby 1998:754). The former of these groups mentioned by Cairns and Darby are Unionists, and the latter, Nationalists. However, religious divide has in some cases become synonymous with the conflict. Some commentators have used religious and politically terminology interchangeably to identify the two main groups involved in this conflict. For example, in *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (2000) the conflict in the region was defined as occurring between "Protestant/Unionist [and]... Catholic/Nationalist" groups (Deutsch et. al 2000:7). While religion came to be seen as a factor in the conflict, using political and religious terms interchangeably undervalues the complexity of the relationships between these political and religious groups, as Fintan Vallely has explained (Vallely 2008:18).

The city of Belfast, County Antrim, was commonly seen as the focus of the conflict. Databases such as the 'CAIN web services: Malcolm Sutton – An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland' (from here this will be referred to as 'CAIN') suggest that 1,616 people lost their lives in Belfast city during the conflict. Physically, the conflict in the region was evident with makeshift barriers and road closures a common sight throughout the city (McKittrick and McVea 2012:56). However, the intense conflict was not limited to Belfast. It stretched out into the surrounding towns, villages and countryside. Residents of County Fermanagh were not shielded from its force. Evidence of the conflict could be seen throughout the physical landscape of County Fermanagh. Both permanent and illegal checkpoints were set up on border roads in County Fermanagh into the neighbouring counties of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan (McKittrick 1999:467).

Additionally, if the information found in McKittrick (1999) relating to the number of conflict related deaths in County Fermanagh is compared with a search of CAIN between 110 and 112 conflict related deaths occurred in County Fermanagh. In order to understand how this conflict was spread across the county and would have affected the lives of its residents the following map has been compiled which notes the approximate locations where conflict related deaths occurred in County Fermanagh. This shows the spread of the conflict across the county and subsequently how much it would have impacted everyday life for the people in the region. Every effort has been made to ensure the locations on the following map are correct. However, due to the inaccuracy of some death records, some have been noted on the map with relation to the nearest town (Figure 23).

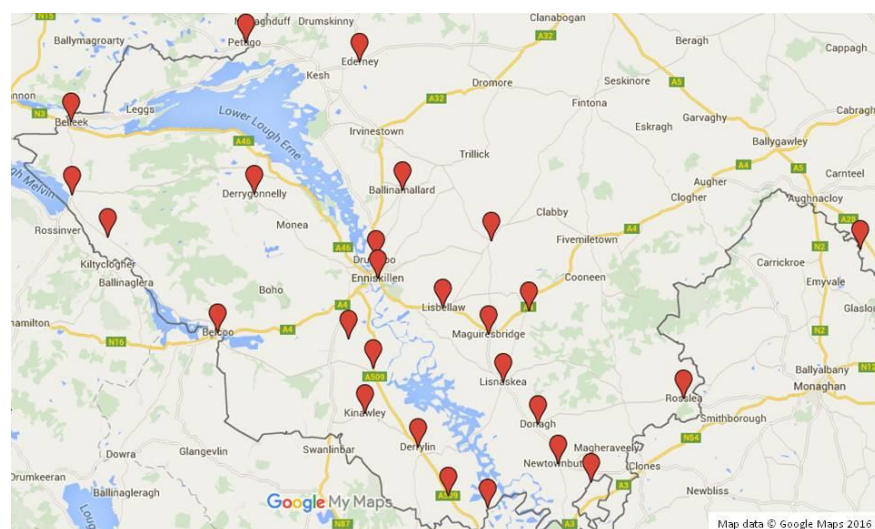


Figure 23: Map showing the areas in County Fermanagh where conflict related deaths occurred

In 1998, the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement, commonly known as the Good Friday agreement, was signed by Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern on behalf of the British and Irish governments respectively. This agreement “declared that Northern Ireland in its entirety remains part of the United Kingdom and shall not cease to be so without the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll” (The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement 1998:3). It instigated the conclusion of the conflict in the region. While this conflict is commonly believed to have concluded, it is important to understand the wide reaching effects it had on those who lived through it. One way these effects can be seen is through an examination of how people engaged with the mumming tradition during this period. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to understanding how mummers practiced the tradition and the affect the conflict had on their ability to engage in this social practice.

Speaking of conflict through silence

It was never easy to speak about the conflict with the mummers in County Fermanagh. Even as my relationships with them developed over time, I found it difficult to discuss how it impacted the practice of mumming and, in turn, the mummers themselves. This was something I encountered early on in my conversations with mummers. My age, sex, accent and geographical origins made me very aware of the fact that I was different from the elderly men with distinct County Fermanagh accents, I spoke to on a daily basis. I began to think that these factors would hinder my ability to uncover what mumming was during the conflict. Discussing this dilemma with Jim Ledwith, he said, “You can’t push people to talk about it [the conflict]. If they don’t want to, you have to just say, ‘Fair enough.’ You’re an outsider, Finnegan. You’re not one of them.”

In retrospect, my own shyness probably impacted on my interactions I had with people with relation to the conflict. My inexperience as a researcher, with this being my first fieldwork project, made me very wary of broaching topics which I thought people would not want to discuss. Additionally, I recognised that I did not have an overtly in-depth knowledge of the conflict and was unsure what I ‘could’ and ‘could not’ ask. I constantly feared being challenged on my opinion, understanding and interpretation of it, which may have limited my willingness and ability to engage with people directly about the topic. While this was the case, the information I did obtain from people gives a clear representation of how the conflict impacted on their everyday lives and as such how mumming was defined during the period.

Continuing my research on mumming in the region, I realised that I could not, and in some sense was not willing to force people to speak about the conflict with me. However, even when I did bring it up with people and when people avoided speaking about it, it was still possible to understand something about its impact on what mumming was during the period. This was something I noticed when I met with a husband and wife, Áine and Francis, who were involved in mumming during the revival period. I sat opposite them when we met, as they chatted about their mumming group. I listened and interrupted every now and again with comments and questions. I was amazed at the joint story telling ability they had, constructing their stories together.

As their mumming group was based close to the border of counties Cavan and Donegal, I was interested to know how the differing political and religious groups in the area accepted or rejected mumming in the community. I asked them whether they were always made welcome by the audiences they performed for?

“Oh yes,” replied Áine. “People were watching out for us,” she said, looking over to Francis. “I never knew any place we weren’t welcome,” he said proudly. They paused. I stayed silent to allow them some time to recall their memories. “But we never went to places we thought we wouldn’t be wanted,” said Áine quite softly. “But even the other community, the denomination. They were very, very welcoming to us as well. And we went to Barnes [village in County Fermanagh] and all. There was a mixed community there,” said Áine. The register of her voice dropped when she began to speak about Barnes, a village composed of people from Catholic and Protestant faiths.

“Oh aye, a mixed community,” replied Francis. “We done all houses. We would be Catholics ourselves, but it didn’t matter what side of the divide they were. We would be mainly of course nationalists. But then you know, unionist people, we went to their houses just the same and we were welcome,” said Francis, pausing between his sentences. I stayed quiet, as he shuffled in his chair. He began to explain the structure of their mumming group.

“There was a few union, Protestant fellas too in our mumming group. Oh indeed there was. Sure Phil Edwards, a great dancer, a Protestant man. Poor man’s dead. And wasn’t the Brocks or some of those fellas as well?” Francis asked Áine. Áine paused momentarily,

seemingly engrossed in her own thoughts. “Oh gosh, sure we weren’t we to be on television too one time. Do you remember when we went to that old house?” replied Áine hurriedly.

Francis paused for a second. His train of thought seemed to be lost following Áine’s sudden change of topic. “Oh that’s right,” he said, still seeming a little dazed. She paused for a second, waiting for Francis to continue talking. His confusion seemed to frustrate her. “Williams’. That was a Protestant house. An old listed building. And they weren’t living in it. They decided to tidy it up and the television cameras were to come. And we [the mummers] performed there,” said Francis excitedly. He leaned back in his chair again saying, “I know the history of that old house.”

“It was an old landlord agent’s house,” he said, placing his hands on the table in front of him. “I’ll tell you who it was addressed a big gathering there in the field. Charles Stewart Parnell. In the Land League times. Back in the Land League days,” said Francis, taking a breath to continue talking. “But anyway,” said Áine quite loudly, interrupting Francis’ discussion. She continued to explain the television performance and the mummers’ involvement in it.

Áine told the story of their performance for the television programme. Eventually they began to discuss the mummers in their group who had passed away. I had forgotten about Francis’ discussion of the religious affiliations of the mummers’ in their group, which preceded Áine’s discussion of their television performance. Talking about one of the Protestant members of the group who passed away, Francis said, “He was fabulous. There’s no doubt about it. Oh he could.” Áine quickly interrupted Francis at this point. “Well, tell me this, is there anything more we could do to help you?” she asked me.

I regained my train of thought following her interruption of Francis’ speech. “Well that’s grand for today,” I replied, pausing while I shuffled through my notes. “What else have you down on that?” laughed Francis, pointing to the topic guide which sat on the table next to me. “That’s pretty much it. You got to them all,” I said leaning forward to turn off the recorder. “I could remember bits of that better than I could remember something that happened a few years ago,” laughed Francis.

I laughed in response and lifted the recorder into my hand. Slowly, Áine leaned forward in her chair. “But there was happy memories at that time. Even though we had the troubles [the conflict] there at that time,” said Áine quickly. She paused. “Aye, yes. The troubles,” replied Francis. “It was dangerous but, we always made sure that everyone would be safe. We had to lead the way,” said Áine. “If there was an army checkpoint or anything and we’d explain that we were away to entertain,” she said, sitting back in her chair. I nodded, thanked them for their time and for sharing their memories with me.

I thought little of this interview until I began to transcribe it a few days later. While I heard the words spoken by Áine and Francis, I consciously listened for those which were not spoken. The backward and forward negotiation of the topic of the conflict intrigued me. As Francis began to discuss the interaction of Protestant and Catholic people through mumming, Áine changed the direction of the interview, or switched “footing” (Goffman 1981:126); she began to discuss a performance they recorded for a television programme.

Again, when Francis brought up the Land League, which functioned around one hundred years prior to the beginning of the conflict in the area, Áine switched footing again. I would have thought this event would have little impact on the way people spoke about conflict. As such I was surprised that Áine interrupted at this point, in what might be perceived as an attempt to end the discussion of the Land League. This may have been because of the political dimensions the conflict held, and as such could be seen as an attempt to stop Francis speaking about previous conflict in the region. However, the couple’s side-stepping around a discussion of the conflict itself might be perceived as an avoidance of discussing that which is seen as a topic of “cultural silence” (Rosaldo 1984:82).

As I continued field work, the mummers were sometimes a little more direct about their desire not to speak about the conflict. This was something I learned through my relationship with Joe, an elderly mummer from County Fermanagh. In July 2012, I arrived at Joe’s home in the very early hours of a dull summer morning. Joe took part in mumming during the pre-revival and revival periods. He was keen to share his wealth of knowledge on mumming in County Fermanagh with me. Stating that his mind functioned better in the first few hours of daylight, we sat in his dimly lit living room at 8.30 in the morning. We talked about his involvement with several different groups of mummers from around the county.

Aware that Joe would have participated in mumming during the conflict, I was eager to know how it impacted the tradition. I asked him why he thought mumming had declined in popularity in County Fermanagh. He paused, shuffled in his arm chair and replied:

With the troubles [conflict] here you see, they [the householders] didn't know who was going to come to the house. They wouldn't answer the door. Of course the mummers could be re-enacting the play and maybe come along and plant something maybe at the back door. Or maybe come back and take your life. [Joe. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. July 3, 2012]

He paused after uttering the final sentence. I did not interrupt him as I thought he may have been recalling a memory of the conflict to share with me. In an instant, he changed our footing from discussing the conflict, to the straw masks used by the mummers. At the time, I paid little attention to this, and we continued to spend the morning, and most of the afternoon, talking about mumming in County Fermanagh.

Once we finished up, I turned off my recorder and packed it into my bag. Joe slowly lifted himself out of the armchair, where he had been seated for the entire day. He walked me to the front door, all the time forecasting the weather we would get over the summer. As I turned to thank him for his time and say goodbye, he placed his hand on my shoulder. Whispering softly, he said, "As long as you don't bring up religion and politics again, sure we could chat all day." I laughed nervously, thanked him and left.

Leaving his home, I walked across the street to my car, which was facing the wrong way up a rather steep hill. I felt slightly defeated at this point and hastily scribbled some notes about the interview while sitting in the car. A few days later, I returned to the recording of the interview to transcribe it. Like in the interview with Áine and Francis, Joe changed footing away from speaking about the conflict. However, unlike Áine, when he did return to speak about the topic this was to inform me that he did not wish to talk about it. In retrospect, I might have been a little more forward and enquired as to why he did not want to discuss it. However, being my first encounter with someone who did not want to discuss a certain topic in the field, I thought it best to 'leave well enough alone.' Should I have encountered this later on in my field work, I think I would have been more direct and enquired as to why he did not want to discuss this topic. However, I found a way to work with this encounter and the information it provided. While I was initially disappointed that Joe did not wish to discuss the impact of the

conflict on mumming, and I was not forward enough to enquire as to why this was, it was not until much later that I understood the value of this encounter.

On revisiting the notes I took after my interview with Joe it could be suggested that fear was present in this encounter. Firstly, Joe explained how the householders feared the mummers and refused to allow them into their homes. Secondly, it was clear that Joe was afraid to discuss this topic. While I met Joe several times after this we never discussed the conflict and its role in the tradition.

As Joe's short comment on the conflict suggested, fear may have made it difficult for mummers to stage their play in the traditional venue: the rural kitchen. However, being a local tradition, where the householder more than likely knew the mummers, it may be the case that fear alone did not motivate mummers to stop performing in local houses. Other factors such as transport may have been a motivating force. Prior to this, mummers walked and cycled between performances. This meant it would have been difficult, tiresome and time consuming to cover a large distance.

As transport improved mummers were able to travel further distances and as a result perform in new venues such as the public house. Such performance venues offered the opportunity to make more money for performing their play. Instead of walking and cycling to their performances, groups of mummers began to use large vans, flatbed lorries and cars to travel between venues. Groups of mummers began to travel to pubs in towns and villages around the county. This change in performance venue influenced the mummers' decision to find alternative means of transport.

As the mummers changed their means of transport, from foot to motor vehicle they often travelled across the border and into the neighbouring counties of Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan. However, as the conflict heightened so did the security on the roads leading from County Fermanagh into these counties. These roads were subject to a great deal of violence in the form of car bombs and ambushes on vehicles. As a result vehicle checkpoints, manned by the British Army and the police forces, were introduced to these roads. These checkpoints reminded people of the violence and conflict in everyday life (Scheper-Hughes 2014:8). They also placed civilians in the position of suspect as they travelled through the checkpoint. A

hierarchical distinction existed between the checkpoint guards, who possessed the power to allow or prevent the traveller going through the checkpoint, and those travelling on the roads. For County Fermanagh mummerys travelling throughout the countryside during this period, the roads sometimes became sites of confrontation between mummerys and these security forces which will now be discussed.

Speaking about conflict

One group of mummerys from the border region between counties Fermanagh and Tyrone held many stories about their experiences of mummery during the conflict. The night I travelled to speak to these mummerys a heavy frost had set down over the long, winding mountain road I drove on. I feared I would not make it to meet the mummerys alive, as my car slipped along the surface of the road, at one point narrowly missing a tall tree in the hedgerow. Seeing a few cars parked outside a large grey house, I stopped with the hope I was in the right place. I stepped out of my car and my foot slipped from under me. A dog barked furiously on hearing my pathetically high-pitched scream as I thumped to the ground. I picked myself up quickly, hoping nobody had seen me, and walked to the front door.

Welcomed inside by the former coordinator of this group of mummerys, I sat amongst 15 men, aged between 50 and 85 years old. I was fascinated by the decor of the room, which had been specifically built by one of the members of the group. It was purpose built as a space where they could meet, play cards and music, chat, and reminisce about times gone by. The room was an echo of the past, where events such as these gathering of the local men occurred every evening once the day's work was complete. The walls were adorned with framed newspaper clippings of local interest, different types of gas powered lamps and a stuffed red squirrel, the origins of which I did not enquire into.

At the heart of the room was a large boiler stove, more modern in style than the AGA range, which was simply a showpiece in the corner. The stove was stuffed with off-white sticks, smouldering away as the evening turned into night. The concrete floor and wooden ceiling meant that everyone's voice possessed an odd echo. The group of mummerys fondly recalled memories of their involvement with the mummery tradition as the night unfolded. The aching in my leg following my earlier fall disappeared, as photographs and old masks were pulled out to give life to the stories the mummerys told.

From their description of the members involved in the mumming group, it was evident that the group was composed of Catholic and Protestant members. However, the Protestant membership in the group was much smaller than the Catholic membership. It should also be noted that none of the Protestant members of the group were present at the interview. While it seemed that all the members of the group got on quite well with each other one of the mummies explained that one of the Protestant members of the group, Eddie, never travelled across the border to participate in performances. As Darragh, seemingly the coordinator of this group of mummies explained:

But Eddie wouldn't go to Ellenroe [Name of town in County Donegal]. Never went. No. As soon as Ellenroe was mentioned he'd say "Some of yous leave me home. I've a cow calving." He had to go home. Wouldn't matter if it was 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock wouldn't matter. [Darragh. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. January 14, 2013]

It is difficult to understand why this mummer may not have wanted to cross over the border and perform. Being in a mask and costume, his identity was concealed. It might have been the case that fear played a part in his decision; fear of being a Protestant mummer in what might be deemed 'Catholic' regions. However, this is of course difficult to tell. One factor which may have motivated his decision not to cross the border may have been the presence of checkpoint guards on these roads and the possibility of conflict. One of the mummies, Mark, spoke about an encounter between the group and a checkpoint guard.

Speaking in a gentle but solemn tone, Mark recalled an evening where the mummies were stopped at a checkpoint while on their way to a performance:

Remember the night we were stopped. And the boy [checkpoint guard] said "What have you in the back?" [of the van] I said "There's a few men in there, they're not fancily dressed or anything." He opened the door and here there was I suppose ten of them [mummies] in the back there. And the boy jumped and he ran back, and there came another half dozen of them [police men]. Only one man out of the whole thing knew what we were. The rest of them didn't know a thing. [Mark. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. January 14, 2013]

Once Mark finished telling this story he began to laugh, accompanied by the other mummies. I was surprised to hear the mummies laughing about the fear they obviously struck in the checkpoint guard. However, I joined in, not wanting to seem rude or like I did not know what was happening. As they continued their discussion, it became clear that the mummies

spoke about and reacted to other forms of altercation during the conflict quite differently, namely that between the mummers and the audience.

While the mummers seemed to be somewhat amused by the incident between the mummers and the checkpoint, they did not find conflict between themselves and the audience as entertaining. One of the other mummers in the group, James, explained how the mummers were received one evening when they entered pubs mainly frequented by Unionists:

It'd [mumming] be a Fenian tradition and they'd [Unionists] see it like that. I mind [remember] us going in one night, into the hotel in the town. I was the first man [in] and I remember I heard them saying, "Here comes the Fenians." And then after the performance they said, "Give the fuckers punts." Give the fuckers punts. Jaysus we were glad to get out of it. Aye you weren't wanted. No you were not at all. You were not. The ones that was saying, it we knew them all. We were covered, masked. They didn't know us. We knew them though. [James. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. January 14, 2013]

Following James' story I asked him how he knew the audience members that were in the pub on this occasion. He replied, saying: "Ah I knew him from the mart and I'd see him on the street. He'd say 'Well, how are ya?' as nice as anything." It should be noted here that identity projection within public houses is not limited to mumming performers. Public houses are always risky places for identity, whether mumming is involved or not. For example, Tom Gibbons (2011) explained that in the English football scene public houses were "key socialising spaces... [and] sites for identity displays (both local and national) and some have been at the centre of battles between rival hooligan firms" (Gibbons 2011: 62). This means that the identity based encounter this group of mummers had was not unique to the situation, but simply a part of performing in a public house.

However, the encounter between the mummers and the audience in this story told by James seems unusual. As the mummers were in costume, the audience were free with their comments. They categorised the mummers in terms of what they believed were their political beliefs. They were not seen as individuals when masked and in costume. Rather, they became representations of political and religious ideologies.

Following this interview, I continued to explore how the conflict shaped mummers' experiences of the tradition. One mumming group from County Fermanagh who formed during the late 1980s were particularly willing to share their experiences of mumming during

the conflict. On a dark evening in February 2013, I made my way to meet this group of mummers. The twisting mountain roads were sprinkled with frost. Driving slowly through the hills and valleys of the countryside, I absorbed its beauty in this dusky light.

Nestled in a valley between two stout mountains was a small, community centre, partly funded by the money collected by these mummers. The mummers from the local area, aged between 55 and 90, had gathered here to discuss their mumming experiences with me. From our conversation, it became evident that the group was composed of both Protestants and Catholics. The majority of mummers in the group were from a Protestant background. However, in contrast to the previous mumming group discussed none of the Catholics attended this interview. The group of mummers were extremely enthusiastic to be gathered together. “How long has it been since we were all in the same place at the same time?” laughed one of the mummers on entering the room.

The group spent four hours recalling their involvement in mumming during the revival period. They played video cassette tapes of recordings of their performances, showed me the trophies they won at the Mummers’ Competition which was held in Enniskillen town during the revival period, and re-enacted scenes from the play. One man brought along a black bin liner filled with the costumes the mummers used to wear, which had been stored in his attic. One of these was a tartan suit, with the name of the character he played, ‘Old Sandy,’ embroidered on the back.

The enjoyment the mummers gained from recounting their tales of mumming was infectious. As we came towards the end of the evening, they began to speak about practicing mumming during the conflict. The group mentioned some direct impacts of the conflict on the mumming tradition, such as the introduction of what is termed in the County Fermanagh mumming community, the ‘Mumming Permit.’ The permit itself was not specifically introduced to monitor mumming groups in the area. As the title of the permit suggests, ‘Application for a permit to hold a flag day or collection of money in any Street or public place,’ the function of these permits was to monitor the collection of money in public spaces. Groups wishing to perform and collect money in public spaces were required to obtain this written permission from the Royal Ulster Constabulary and produce it to any authority figures who requested it.

For the mummers in County Fermanagh, it was the responsibility of one member of the group to apply for the permit in sufficient time before the Christmas season began. This gave the mummers permission to travel around the countryside and collect money. The fact that these permits became locally known as ‘Mumming Permits’ may suggest that their introduction had particular impact on the practice of mumming (Figure 24).

Form No. 24

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT TO HOLD A FLAG DAY OR
COLLECTION OF MONEY IN ANY STREET OR PUBLIC PLACE

(1) Name and Address of Society or Body of persons responsible for the collection or sale. *GLEN MUMMERS, DOOISH, DRUMQUIN.*

(2) Names and Addresses of the three applicants for the Permit who will be jointly responsible for the collection or sale. *BRIAN McNABB, 19, DOOISH RD, DRUMQUIN
EUGENE McAROE, COOEL, DRUMQUIN
DECLAN McNABB, 19, DOOISH RD, DRUMQUIN*

(3) Name of Secretary of Charity or Fund which is to benefit and address of administrative centre. *THE BLIND & (BRIAN McNABB 19, DOOISH RD, NEWCHAPEL IN DRUMQUIN, DRUMQUIN)*

(4) Objects of the Charity or Fund. *CHARITY*

(5) Date upon which it is desired to make the collection or sale. *DATES BETWEEN 27/11/76 & 20/12/76.*

(6) Locality within which it is desired to make the collection or sale. *DRUMQUIN & DRUMORE VILLAGES & ADJOINING TOWNLANDS.*

(7) Method to be adopted in making the collection or sale. *DOOR TO DOOR COLLECTION. SHORT RECEIPTS GIVEN BY GLEN MUMMERS AS THEY PROCEED.*

(8) Disposal of receipts. Are the whole of the receipts to be paid over for the benefit of the Charity or Fund, or will any deduction be made for the expenses or any other purpose. If any deduction is to be made, state for what purpose and give an estimate of the sum which would be deducted. *NO EXPENSES TO BE DEDUCTED.*

(9) Signatures of the three persons making the application. *Declan Mc Nabbs
Eugene Mc ArOE
Brian Mc Nabbs.*

(10) Date of Application. *24-11-76*

(11) Address to which Permit (if granted) is to be sent. *Brian Mc Nabbs
19, DOOISH ROAD, DRUMQUIN.*

Figure 24: A Permit issued to a group of mummers during the conflict (NFC 1859:202)

Incidentally, many mummers blamed the introduction of these permits for the decline of mumming during the conflict. As a haphazard and impromptu tradition, many people would have started up a mumming group during Christmas with little preparation or planning. However, the introduction of a license which permitted the collection of money in public spaces meant the mummers had to be prepared and organised before the Christmas season began.

While speaking about the different venues the mummers performed in during the conflict, one of the mummers, Aileen, explained how the performers once rebelled against the checkpoint guards while travelling to a performance:

Artie was driving the car. I was in the car and the two Allens, were in the back. We waited at the [checkpoint] lights and we waited. “Ah,” says Artie “I’ll go on anyway.” And like that up went the spikes. Out gets Artie, to the two soldiers. Artie in the straw skirt. I thought we’d have all been lifted [arrested]. I was sure we’d have been lifted. Out he got and he started to tongue [argue]. The two Allens were in the back of the car. They had got some refreshments [alcohol] in the [nursing] home. Me and Artie went to Ian’s house to phone the other ones in the group who had gone on ahead. We left the pair of boys in the back of the car. The soldiers had to shift [move] this car then off the middle of the road. And this soldier got into the car. He couldn’t get the handbrake off in the Merc [Mercedes], because it was underneath. And I’ll never forget. Hugh Allen said to the young soldier, “Well you’re some boy standing with a gun when you can’t even get the handbrake off a car.” I thought we would have all been lifted [arrested] [Aileen. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. February 15, 2013]

The mummerns all laughed when they heard this story. “We thought you were crashed. Picking thorns out of yourselves,” laughed one of the mummerns. “They were some boys them Allens,” laughed another mummer. Again, I was surprised by this reaction, as I thought some of them would have disapproved of Artie and the Allen brother’s altercation with the guards. I laughed in response, drawn in by their enjoyment of this encounter.

Following this story, one of the mummerns, Ronald, took a tin helmet out from under his chair. This was part of the group’s iconic Prince George costume. “Many’s the night I had this on me head,” he said, tapping its dull, battered exterior. He then recalled the reaction the audience had to this character during a performance in a pub which was frequented by Nationalists:

Then of course Prince George came in. I came in as Prince George. “Here comes I, Prince George. From England I have lately sprung.” And with that this fella lets out a shout. He says “Get back the fuck then.” And I swung round and I went straight down for the edge of the crowd that was standing round you see. But I kept saying away at the rhyme the whole time. I was shaking. By Christ, I was sure the boy was going to come at me. [Ronald. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. February 15 2013]

Ronald did not laugh after telling this story. Indeed none of the other mummerns sitting alongside him during the interview seemed amused by it, as they had been when they heard the story about the checkpoint guard. A few seconds of silence ensued following Ronald’s conclusion of the story. “That’d be the like of that crowd though,” said one of the other mummerns, meaning that this type of behaviour was expected from the audience in this pub.

The mummers sat solemnly for a few seconds until I changed the footing away from the conflict, to the costumes worn by the mummers.

The stories all of these mummers told, with relation to their experience of the conflict, showed the role it played in how mumming was practiced. Speaking with mummers from different groups throughout County Fermanagh, it became obvious that both Catholic and Protestant majority mumming groups had similar experiences of performing during the conflict. Both were subject to identity-based confrontation in public houses, they both had encounters with security forces and they were all subject to the hassle caused by the introduction of the 'Mumming Permit.' Therefore, while mumming groups may have had differing ideologies, as a whole, their experiences of performing during the conflict were very similar. However, it was not simply the context of the conflict which made it difficult to practice the tradition. The audiences who viewed the play were also responsible for defining and representing the attitudes towards the tradition during this period. From here, closer attention will be given to the presence of the local audiences in mumming performances during the conflict.

Mumming, the conflict and the audience

Prior to the conflict, mumming was a locally based practice. It was staged by local people in the homes of locals. As such, the local residents would, more than likely, have known who the mummers were. As such, it does not make sense that the conflict itself stopped locals from accepting other locals, whom they probably knew into their homes. As explained earlier, other factors such as improved methods of transport may have equally impacted where mumming was performed. However, there may have been a chance that the mummer arriving on the householder's doorstep was not the person they knew, but may have been a person using the disguise of a mummer to gain access to their home and commit some form of violent act. While there is no record of this having occurred in County Fermanagh, Joe's story detailed earlier in this chapter reflects the fear which may have been held by some householders.

As such, in the context of the conflict the audience played an integral role in how mumming was defined. With relation to this notion of fear induced by conflict, Linda Green (1994) has stated:

Fear destabilizes social relations by driving a wedge of distrust within families, between neighbours, among friends. Fear divides communities through suspicion and apprehension not only of strangers but of each other. Fear thrives on ambiguities. [Green 1994:227]

This understanding of fear speaks to the dilemma presented here: if local people knew who the mummers were why would they stop letting them into their homes to perform the mumming play? With over one hundred conflict related deaths in County Fermanagh from 1969 to 1999, some of these at rural country homes, fear of death became a very real part of the conflict (Mc Kittrick 1999:286, 1501). This fear worked against the very nature of the house visiting tradition of mumming. By its nature, mumming is ambiguous. It is not possible to know who is hiding under a straw mask, or what weapons they may conceal under their costume. As Setha Low has explained, fear, lack of familiarity and ambiguity are constant elements of conflict (Low 2001:47). While there is no evidence to suggest that mummers committed crimes such as murder during the conflict, the fear of this happening may have been enough to stop the householders answering their doors to the performers.

The notion that mummers committed acts of violence during the conflict has been dramatised by Vincent Woods in the play *At the Black Pig's Dyke* (1998). The play is set during the conflict on the border between County Leitrim and County Cavan. It depicts a group of men disguised as mummers, murdering a young Protestant girl. During its performance in County Derry in 1993, a group of protestors caused, what was called a 'riot,' in objection to the portrayal of mumming and the people behind the mumming masks.

A group of protestors believed that, "the play depicted IRA resistance to British rule and Nationalistic communities as being tainted by a kind of endemic pathology which was... expressed most obviously through mumming" (Ó Caomhanach 1998). After the performance of the play, the protestors "jumped on stage and attempted to perform the short scenario they had written to satirise the political intent of Woods' play" (Ó Caomhanach 1998). The morning after the performance of the play the protest was "condemned by Derry City Council and described by the various newspaper reports as a 'riot'" (Ó Caomhanach 1998). Such depictions of mummers present a fictional account of their involvement in the violence during the conflict, as there is no proof to suggest they ever committed such acts.

Whether the fear felt by the householders was the reason the house visiting tradition of mumming faded it is difficult to definitively say. However, it is reasonable to assume that fear would have featured as part of mumming during the conflict. There are two possibilities here; either the householders stopped allowing mummers into their homes or mummers simply stopped performing in houses due to the hassle of travelling, the desire to make more money for their performances or fear of being turned away at the householder's door.

Whatever the reason, the mummers found new venues to stage their play. Mummers began to stage their plays for the audiences of public houses around the region. However, travelling from one performance venue to the other was not an easy task. Checkpoints on the roads became sites of confrontation between the mummers and the checkpoint guards. However, the majority of mummers did not fear these encounters with the guards. When people told stories of these altercations during my field work, the mummers who were gathered in the room with them laughed in response, finding the "fun" in the conflict (Buckley and Kenney 1995:152). While the mummers gained amusement from these altercations, they were important encounters which allowed the mummers to express their own identity.

While the checkpoints hindered the mummers' ability to move throughout the countryside, they became spaces where the mummers could affirm their own identity against the audience: the checkpoint guards. The altercations may have been a means through which the mummers' defined their own identities. They established a difference between the two groups, showing that the mummers were different from their 'audience.'

The altercations between the mummers and checkpoint guards were not only attempts to express dominance. As Allen Grimshaw (1990) stated with regards to altercations during conflict, they may be seen as a means for expressing and projecting identity (Grimshaw 1990:280). The mummers defined their own identities through the differences they perceived with their audience. While the mummers used this audience of the checkpoint guards to express their own identity, these encounters still incited fear in some of the mummers.

At these checkpoints it seemed that the mummers were unsure whether they had crossed what Green has defined as the "arbitrary line" in conflict centred altercations (Green 1994:233). They knew the punishment for aggravating a checkpoint guard was to be placed

under arrest. Some of the mummers felt fear during these types of altercations. However, for the mummers, it seems that fear during the conflict was mostly induced by the audiences in the public houses.

Audiences affirming their identity

Mummers were often received negatively by their audiences when they performed in public houses during the conflict. The negative reception offered to the mummers, mainly based around their perceived political ideologies may have been a way for the audience to define mumming as opposing their own identity. As Victor Turner (1982) stated with relation to the process of performance, “Through the performance process itself, what is normally sealed up, inaccessible to everyday life, is drawn forth” (Turner 1982:13). When the mummers performed in different public houses they were subjected to comments which would be seen as inappropriate outside of the performance context.

The pub as a performance space was an influential factor in the way groups of mummers were received by their audiences during the conflict. The space itself helped to define the manner in which the altercations between the audiences and the mummers unfolded. The notion that space contributes to the unfolding of a performance has been discussed by David Wiles (2003) as follows, “the space perform[s] as much as it makes the actors perform” (Wiles 2003:1).

In the case of these encounters in the public houses, the space and the audience decided what was socially acceptable. They functioned together to create an impression of the mummers. The audience may have been attempting to create “social organization” through verbal aggression (Grimshaw 1990:28); they may have been letting the mummers know they were not welcome in the space through verbal confrontation. The context of the mumming performance in these spaces allowed the audience to express their “sealed up” identity (Turner 1982:13). These encounters between the mummers and the Nationalist and Unionist audiences may have been “more ‘truthful,’ more ‘real’ than ordinary experience” (Schechner 2003:xix). If Richard Schechner’s (2003) logic is applied to the mummers’ encounters with audiences in the public house during the conflict, were these encounters in the performance space more “real” than those they would have in everyday life? Of course in these types of altercations it

is not possible to ignore the fact that the comments offered by the audience may have been motivated by the fact that a mask obscured the identity of the people underneath.

The audience created an identity for the mummers through the presence of the mask. Conventionally, the disguise is seen to give the performer a degree of license; to allow them to express their innermost feelings. As Eli Rozik (1997) stated, “the mask endows him [the performer] with freedom, which he thoroughly enjoys” (Rozik 1997:187). In addition to allowing the performer underneath to act in whatever manner they like, the mask also gives the person the freedom to say whatever they wish; things which would be “impossible to utter, unmasked, in public” (Ottenberg 2010:341). However, what occurs when it is not the performer who is given freedom when wearing the mask? The mask does not only give those who wear it the power to do and say as they please. It may also be seen to give the people who observe the mask similar powers.

In the context of mummers’ performances in public houses during the conflict, the masks hid the identities of the mummers. This allowed for the audience to make comments which would otherwise be seen as inappropriate. However, the presence of the mask gave them the power and opportunity to release their feelings towards the mumming tradition, and as a result, express their own identity in opposition to that which they placed on the mummers. This can be seen in both James and Mark’s accounts presented earlier, where the audience defined the mummers as either representing Nationalism or Unionism. Hence, the audience opposed the mummers to their own political beliefs.

When the mummers put on their masks and performed in the venues frequented by Nationalists and Unionists they lost what Ray Fogelson (1982) defined as their “personhood” (Fogelson 1982:87). By placing the masks over their faces, the mummers were no longer individuals. Rather they became representations of political ideologies. Therefore, the mask does not only give the wearer power of anonymity, but can also pass this power on to the audience.

As has been indicated throughout the chapter it was not possible for mumming to continue in isolation from the conflict. The societal and cultural impacts of the conflict were reflected in the mumming tradition through how it was performed and staged. Setting up a

mumming group was once a relatively simple thing. One person gathered together some friends and neighbours, threw together some costumes and went out performing for a few nights.

However, the presence of the conflict changed it; mummers needed to formally apply for permits which may have seemed laborious and time consuming, especially if the group was set up in a 'last minute fashion.' The relatively easy task of driving from one performance venue to the other became difficult due to the presence of checkpoints on local roads. Such checkpoints may have motivated fear within some groups of mummers. Additionally politically motivated altercations within public houses changed both audience members and mummers' perceptions of the tradition during this period.

Conclusion

Unlike the immutable tradition of mumming presented in chapter four this chapter shows how social context actually acts to change and redefine a social practice. As the ethnographic vignettes presented earlier in the chapter showed, speaking about a topic of cultural silence such as the conflict is difficult for those involved in mumming. However, even when the mummers 'said nothing,' they still revealed something about its impact on their lives.

When the mummers did speak directly about the conflict and its impact on mumming, this revealed how the context of the conflict actually altered the tradition. While the mummers did try to project their own identity in altercations with checkpoint guards, it became evident that the mummers themselves did not define what mumming was during this period.

The audience and the context of the conflict defined and essentially changed the tradition. The conflict dictated how mummers were to prepare for the season, through the introduction of mumming permits. In association with advances in vehicular transport, the audience influenced where the mumming play was allowed to be performed. In public spaces such as the public houses the mummers were perceived as a threat; representing an identity opposing that possessed by the audience. Therefore, the meaning and understanding of a tradition can never be separated from the social context it is performed in and the audience it is staged for.

As the conflict continued the audience retained control over how mumming was defined. The lack of control mummies had over the identity they presented during the conflict may have contributed to the tradition fading from existence in the early to mid-1970s. However, in response to this decline the mummies seemed to 'take back' the tradition, from being defined by the audience. The reshaping, reviving and redefining of the tradition by the mummies took the form of the mumming revival, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six: The impromptu revival of mumming in County Fermanagh

Introduction

Following the period of conflict discussed in the previous chapter, mumming was forced to change. These changes led to the tradition fading from existence in County Fermanagh. However, in the mid-1980s the Aughakillymaude Mummers and Jim Ledwith, currently the coordinator of the Mummers' Foundation in Aughakillymaude, were at the heart of the revival of the tradition which continued into the 2000s. In this chapter attention will be paid to Jim's role in the revival of mumming in County Fermanagh and how the meaning of mumming changed as a result of this intervention.

Jim's role in mumming

Jim has a passion for all things folk drama related. During my field work he became my main contact. He introduced me to the members of defunct mumming groups, helped me get involved with the Aughakillymaude Mummers and shared his vast knowledge of all types of folk drama from around the world with me. Part of my field work in Aughakillymaude involved working with Jim at the Mummers' Foundation. While working with this organisation, I witnessed how he dedicates his time to the preservation and continuation of mumming in County Fermanagh. I observed the reality of keeping the Aughakillymaude Mummers and the Mummers' Museum functioning in the present day. This involves compiling reports for funding bodies, meeting with funders and running various projects and events to advertise their presence (Figure 25).



Figure 25: Jim Ledwith (Bottom-centre) with National Geographic photographers taking photographs of the Aughakillymaude Mummers

Jim's understanding of mumming, its history and place within Irish society, was informed by reading an overwhelming collection of literature on Irish and Celtic history, folklore and mythology. He did not see mumming as one part of Irish heritage. Rather Jim saw mumming as being linked to life in rural Ireland in previous centuries. Jim recognised the interconnectedness of the farming year and Irish heritage and traditional practices. For Jim, mumming was just one small part of a whole calendar of similar folkloric practices, such as celebrating St. Brigid's day by making crosses from rushes, marking May Day by the performance of May Boys and the May Queen, and celebrating the midsummer solstice atop mountains near ancient burial tombs.

Jim saw these performances as things to pass the time in rural Ireland and something for the hard working rural population to look forward to. More directly, with relation to the actual history of mumming, he believed that Irish and English mumming, and variations of the same tradition across Europe, all have some Celtic, or pre-Christian origin. Jim's own understanding and interpretation of the history of mumming largely influenced the style of mumming revival which unfolded and the subsequent calendar of folk life events which was coordinated by the Mummers' Museum. This belief and understanding of the social practice

of mumming has largely influenced the sense of longevity and immutability the tradition is currently seen to possess.

It is not possible to accurately describe in writing the absolute passion Jim has for mumming. He should be observed daily, making endless phone calls to funders and performance venues, organising events and documenting the mumming tradition in the locality. He is dedicated to keeping activities running in the Mummies' Museum for schools, cross-border groups and tourists.

Watching Jim help the mummies prepare for performances is one way of seeing his absolute commitment to the tradition. His attitude towards the staging of mumming performances is professional and only the best will meet his standards. One instance where I observed this was when Jim was preparing the mumming costumes for a guard of honour.

I arrived at the Mummies' Museum and community centre in Aughakillymaude very early on a bright July morning. Jim's dog, a grey schnauzer called Coco, sat on the wall outside. She barked furiously on seeing my car. I stopped the car next to the centre, opened the door and stepped out onto the dry road. It was dusty from the lack of rain over the past couple of days. Coco stopped barking once she saw my familiar face.

I walked up the steps to the centre and onto the cobbled stone pavement. A 'Beleek Pottery' box, which had been pressed into service to hold the straw mumming costumes, was sitting on the paving in front of the centre. The box was half open. I peered into it, noting how unusual all the tied up straw looked when it was packed into it. Jim was beginning to prepare for the guard of honour the mummies were staging for Gordon Johnson. Gordon had made the life sized mumming models which took pride of place in the Mummies' Museum (Figure 26).



Figure 26: Aughakillymaude Mummers staging Gordon Johnson's guard of honour

Suddenly, a shout from inside the centre broke the early morning silence. I walked into the centre through the entrance at the side of the building. The sound of Jim's footsteps pounding on the wooden floor echoed throughout the room. He must have heard me enter, as he shouted at the top of his voice, "Bloody mice, Finnegan." I went into the hall and saw him lifting the costume boxes out of the storage room near the entrance. "Bloody mice," he declared again. "The little bugger's chewed through the boxes," said Jim, lifting up a costume box and carrying it across the room. "Take them outside and tip them out. Only way to make sure the little bugger's gone," he said, walking past me and out onto the pavement.

We carried all six costume boxes outside into the cool morning air. The two giant yew trees at the community centre's gate rustled as the breeze from Lough Erne blew through them. We tipped out the costume boxes one after the other. "We'll have to fix these up for the funeral this morning. Nothing but the best for today," said Jim, lifting a mumming skirt up by the blue bailing twine attached to it.

Nodding in agreement with Jim's statement, I picked up a costume box. I emptied its contents gracelessly onto the cobbled ground. Shocked, I jumped back when I saw a fat-bellied grey mouse lazily scuttle out from under the assortment of straw masks on the street. Jim began to laugh, presumably at my foolish reaction to such a small creature. "There's the boy-oh now," said Jim excitedly, watching the mouse slowly plod across the street. "Look at the big

belly on that greedy wee fella. He's been munching away on the seed in the straw," said Jim, turning over another box of costumes to make sure there were no other mice hiding amongst them.

Having tipped out all the boxes onto the street Jim suggested we organise a costume for each of the mummers who would be attending the guard of honour. "Right, seven of everything," he said lifting up a straw skirt and examining its belt. "Just the very best looking ones. No auld tatty ones," said Jim, throwing the skirt to one side. It fell to the ground and rustled as it hit the cobbled stone pavement.

Jim made a pile for each section of the mumming costume. He laid each part on top of the other so he could see the quality of each piece. Picking only the costumes with full, golden straw, he threw the old, tattered ones to one side. Once we had arranged the costumes, Jim turned and went back into the centre. Presuming we were finished sorting, I began to put the costumes into a separate box to bring to the guard of honour. He arrived back a few minutes later with a reel of Hairy Ned, a coarse brown string used to tie the costumes together, and two pairs of scissors. "Ah Jesus, we're not ready for that yet Finnegan," he said, handing me a pair of scissors. He tipped out the box of costumes I had just packed. "See all the ones with the blue rope. We need to replace it all with Hairy Ned. Couldn't have that auld blue stuff hanging off them," said Jim, placing the reel of Hairy Ned on the ground between us (Figure 27).



Figure 27: Blue string attached to the mummers' costume, rather than 'Hairy Ned'

After about half an hour we had replaced all the blue rope on the skirts with Hairy Ned. It was quite a fiddly job. We worked silently and listened to the wind rustling through the yew trees. "Now they're ready for the box," he said, beginning to pack the skirts and straw jackets into the costume box. He stopped half way through packing and turned to the pile of mumming masks on the pavement. "But the hats," he said while lifting up a straw mask. "We need to trim these boys up. Make them nice and tidy," he said, beginning to snip away at the strands of straw which were poking out of the mask.

I lifted up a mask and nervously began to chop away at its delicate structure. Once we finished trimming all the masks, I began to add them to the costume box. Jim stood back from the box and went silent. I continued to pack the costumes away, while he stared at the box without blinking. "Gaiters!" he declared after a few seconds. "The bloody gaiters. Can't forget them," he said, turning quickly to go into the hall and search for the final part of the costume.

Jim returned dragging a sack which was woven from a red plastic-like material. He dropped it onto the ground next to the Hairy Ned. "Take four for each mummer. Make sure they're the good ones too," he said, pulling a gaiter out of the bag by the blue rope which was attached to it. "And we'll have to change these as well," he said pulling on the rope. Jim picked his scissors up off the ground and cut the rope.

We searched through the bag for the best looking gaiters with thick golden straw. The string was replaced with Hairy Ned for all the twenty-eight gaiters being used for the guard of honour. Once this was done we finished packing up the costume box. Jim brought the box down to the small white costume trailer which was attached to his car. While he slid the box into the trailer, I began to tidy up the remainder of the straw costumes which were strewn around the street.

Jim shouted to me from the trailer. "What shoes have you on, Finnegan?" he asked. "Just these," I said, lifting up my leg and pointing to my foot. "Plimsolls!" shouted Jim beginning to laugh. His reaction contrasted that which was offered to Harriet during the Aughakillymaude Mummies' performance at the All Ireland Fleadh. "Some mummer you are Finnegan. I've boots here. You can wear them," he said, lifting a pair of mud encrusted black boots with thick brown laces, from the back of the trailer. "I'll bring all the boots with us. We

all have to look the part,” he said as he grabbed the trailer door and pulled it down to close the costumes in. We travelled to Enniskillen, where the funeral was being held. Jim’s nerves before this performance were quite evident, as he was quieter than normal as we travelled along the road.

Later in the day, while we staged the guard of honour, I watched Jim organise the mummers who were taking part. He was committed to ensuring every element of the performance was perfect; from the way we tied our costumes on, to our march up the street as we led the funeral procession to the hearse. Jim’s commitment to the mumming tradition was evident at all the mumming performances he organised. However, he has not been involved with the tradition since his youth, unlike most of the other mummers in Aughakillymaude. His interest in mumming began in the 1980s.

Jim has been involved with the mumming tradition in County Fermanagh since the 1980s. While he did not ever state it, he played an integral role in instigating the revival of mumming following the impact of the conflict, as detailed in chapter five. As a result, he highly influenced the way mumming has been perceived throughout the county. I tried to learn as much about this revival from the video recordings of mumming performances and newspaper articles which reviewed the annual Christmas Mummers’ Festival he established. However, I decided the only way to understand how and why the revival unfolded and his attitude towards the practice of mumming was by interviewing Jim.

After about a year and a half of field work with Jim and the Aughakillymaude Mummers, I decided I would ask him for an interview. “You want to interview me?” he asked, sounding slightly surprised by the prospect. I explained to him my interest in the mumming revival and his role in it. I was a little wary about conducting a ‘formal’ interview with Jim. We usually discussed mumming in a much more casual way: over our lunch breaks and in the car on the way to and from funding meetings. “Well sure if you think you need it, then that’s alright,” he said, still sounding quite apprehensive.

We arranged the interview in the kitchen of the community centre. A familiar and comfortable setting for the both of us, this was where Jim and I usually discussed mumming in its various forms. I set up the interview with one chair opposite the other. Jim sat down in

front of me, while Coco the dog lapped up some water out of a metal bowl next to the kitchen door.

Unsure how to begin a formal interview with someone I usually spoke to in a much less formal setting, I began quite abruptly. Turning the recorder on, I said, “Alright Jim, tell me about how you got involved with mumming.” Jim paused momentarily. I had decided not to plan any questions for the interview and hoped it would flow naturally.

His lengthy pause at this point made me panic for a second, as my brain scrambled to think of another question. Just as I had formed the question in my mind, he began to speak. He shifted from side to side in the felt lined chair, crossing his feet and arms. Leaning back, he began to explain his role in the mumming revival:

I was in a pub for a community function, for Scouts. And in land these boys unannounced causing ructions round the tables. Orderly tables, but these boys caused ructions. And these were mummers. All in straw get-up. I says to meself this was good. This is good craic, this is different. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October, 15, 2013]

Jim paused again. Coco began to scratch at the kitchen door looking to get out and bound around the community centre for a little while. Jim rose from his chair and opened the kitchen door. Coco scurried out, her nails clicking off the stone floor. He let the door slam closed and returned to his seat. Without a question as a prompt, he began to speak again:

I was just starting out in a council job at that time. Mid-eighties. Mid to late eighties. And my job was going round different rural areas trying to get communities organised into doing something for themselves. And I found out that an awful lot of the mumming tradition in areas was dormant. They hadn't been out for about twenty years or ten years. There had been a break from, I would say from the troubles [the conflict]. It [mumming] had all died down, died a death then during the early parts of the seventies and so on. And it had really gone into dormancy you know. A lot of these community groups needed money to raise for community hall building projects for example. And what better way of doing it than restoring the tradition of looking for money. Mumming. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 15, 2013]

Jim placed one of his hands on the kitchen counter and wiped away some breadcrumbs which had gathered on it during our earlier lunch break. Brushing the remaining crumbs from his hands, he continued:

So one thing led to another. I was community organising in the council. I used the position to also provide a focal point for the mumming tradition by organising a gather up of mummers, or a mumming festival each Christmas in Enniskillen. So, through that fact that there was someone there in the council, that was ready and willing to help out with mumming, get straw, get outfits made, organise them, get them psyched up for a competition. That incentive. That acted as incentive for others [mumming groups] to join in. So I remember one time in the early nineties, I had twelve mumming troupes in the Diamond in Enniskillen. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 15, 2013] (Figure 28)

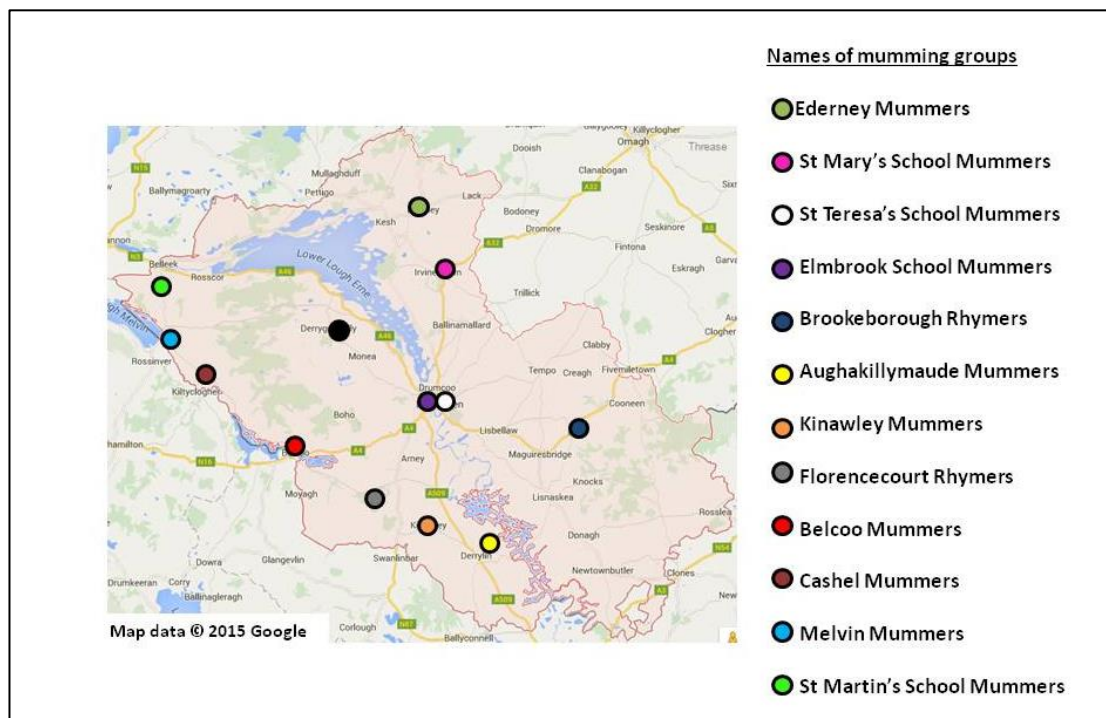


Figure 28: Map of County Fermanagh showing locations of mumming groups during the 1980s revival

I was curious to find out exactly when this revival took place. I asked him, “And when did that [mumming competition] run from?” “Oh Jesus,” he said lifting his hand to scratch his head lightly. He continued to explain the life span of the mumming revival:

It ran from, for about seven or eight years in the early nineties. Up to the mid-nineties. Jesus it was mighty craic. And people came in from all over, up to see it. Cos they knew that on the first or second Saturday in December there was a gather of mumming

troupes to be found in Enniskillen. And that was the place to go for something traditional at Christmas. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 15, 2013]

I paused to consider my next question. “Then there was nothing really going on before this competition started? There was no mumming?” I asked. Jim seemed understandably confused by my poorly phrased question. He paused, presumably trying to make sense of what I had asked and continued by explaining how the competition came to be held on the street:

You see what I was trying to do Threase was get it held in the theatre. I said to the ones in the theatre, Look there’s mummies out there I think we should have a festival. [Banged fist on counter] Falling on deaf ears. It wasn’t a thing that struck a chord with them. And so I says, ‘Fuck it.’ It shouldn’t be in the theatre anyway. It should be out in the open for people to see and touch and feel and have a laugh. Shoppers spent a bit of time set aside watching the mummies. And then a course the mummies knowing who the people were. They were shopping and they [the mummies] would insult them and be poking and jibing and joking and all of that. So that’s where it took off the early, the early mumming. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 15, 2013]

Jim remained silent as I took in what he said. During interviews with members of defunct mumming groups, I had spoken to those who participated in the Mummies’ Festival and Competition. I asked Jim whether the mummies enjoyed the competition element of it. Jim replied:

Oh Jesus aye. They enjoyed watching each other. They were learning tricks off each other. And one [group] would try to do each other better from year to year. For example, the Aughakillymaude ones came in with a mobile door frame. As if they were battering a door coming into a house. So this door frame was set up in the Diamond within a couple of minutes and they were rapping the door as if they were entering in and demanding entry. Eventually after about four or five of these annual mumming competitions, well some of them says, ‘Look, Jim, we like the mumming festival, but we don’t like the competitive edge of it.’ I had to accept that because that was the ethos of mumming. That yes, there was rivals in mumming but the actual fact of awarding prizes or giving rewards for best outfits or for best performances, it was an unnecessary competitive edge to it. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 15, 2013]

Following this discussion, Jim then explained some of the element he was responsible for adding to the Aughakillymaude mumming tradition: the White Horse of Benaughlin character, the midsummer fire festival and the burning of John Barleycorn to celebrate the end of the summer season. He also explained that he played an important role in establishing the Mummies’ Museum and Mummies’ Foundation in Aughakillymaude (Figure 29).



Figure 29: John Barleycorn figure which is burned in early winter

From the Mummers' Festival to the Mummers' Foundation

Following the conclusion of the Mummers' Festival in the early 2000s, Jim established the Mummers' Foundation; a charity which encourages the preservation and continuation of mumming. Through funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, International Fund for Ireland and European based Peace funding, Jim coordinated activities throughout the calendar year which were connected to Irish folklore and folk drama, from the early to late 2000s.

Securing funding for these types of projects has recently been difficult for the Mummers' Foundation. As it has no permanent source of funding, the Mummers' Foundation relies on grant aid and appealing to the criteria of various funders in order to run projects for the public. Much like the mumming tradition, the Mummers' Foundation suffers from peaks and troughs depending on their ability to secure this funding.

While attaining funding for projects has recently been quite difficult, Jim's important role in the revival of mumming following the conflict is undeniable. It should be noted that I do not suggest Jim single-handedly revived mumming following the conflict. The Aughakillymaude Mumpers themselves played an equally important part in the revival. Additionally, there were individuals responsible for coordinating each of the mumming groups who emerged during this period. However, Jim recognised the need for a new outlet where groups could meet annually and perform. This took the form of a Mumpers' Festival. While most groups who emerged during the revival have since faded, Jim has remained dedicated and passionate about helping the Aughakillymaude Mumpers continue performing and maintaining the tradition in County Fermanagh.

Both the revival of the mumming tradition, the founding of the Mumpers' Foundation and the creation of the Mumpers' Museum have greatly impacted on mumming as it exists in County Fermanagh today. They helped to shape the means through which people interact with mumming and continue to practice it. They also function to present a particular understanding of mumming; one which aligns with that possessed by the Aughakillymaude Mumpers and Jim and emphasising the longevity and immutability of the tradition. However, it should be noted that this entire revival, which hugely influenced how mumming was changed and defined during the period, unfolded without the presence of formal revival documents or criteria.

It was an impromptu revival, which relied on the people practicing the tradition to motivate it, not a formal governing body. As a result, the mumpers who were involved in the revival of the tradition contributed to the meaning of mumming during this period. In order to see how the mumpers influenced how mumming was defined during the revival attention will now be paid to the unfolding of the revival in this informal way.

The impromptu nature of revivals

The mumming revival which occurred from the mid-1980s to the 2000s was unwittingly sparked by Jim. However, Tamara Livingston (1999) suggests that the revival of a tradition is a formulaic process where rules and guidelines are followed, stating that, "Revivals do not happen randomly" (Livingston 1999:68). Livingston suggests that revivals are not random, but there is an obvious structure to their existence. While I agree that revivals

do not occur randomly, it will be argued that they do not necessarily take the form of formulaic action. Rather, the revived tradition meets the needs of a community at a specific moment in time.

Jim's involvement in the mumming revival is evidence that revivals are not always carefully considered events. He came to revive mumming in County Fermanagh by complete coincidence. As he explained, he was unfamiliar with mumming until he began to work as a community development officer, helping people improve their rural communities. As such Jim may be what Ann-Kristen Ekman (1999) has defined as an "enthusiast" (Ekman 1999:289).

According to Ekman, individual enthusiasts involved in the revival of a tradition, can help a group of people develop an interest in their own culture. This notion of the enthusiast can be related to Jim's involvement in the mumming revival. However, he did not revive the tradition in isolation. As John Blacking (1976) explained, revivals are not the result of an individual, but involve "collective effort that is expressed in the behaviour of individuals" (Blacking 1976:106). This means that Jim was aided by the local community groups in his efforts to revive the mumming tradition.

By suggesting that local community groups use the mumming tradition to raise money for building community halls Jim unwittingly motivated the revival of mumming in the county. In relation to performing rituals for financial gain, Davydd Greenwood (1977) suggested that the meaning of a tradition is lost when it is performed for financial gain (Greenwood 1977:135). However, when this approach to staging a tradition for money is applied to the revival of mumming, it is more appropriate to say that the meaning of the tradition changes, rather than disappears entirely.

Collecting money has always been an important element of the mumming tradition. During the pre-revival era, mumming was staged to collect money for a Mummers' Ball. This was a party which was hosted by the local mummers at the end of the Christmas season. All the local people who contributed to the mummers' performances were invited to attend. However, during the revival, instead of making a collection to stage a Mummers' Ball, money was collected to fund the development of local community halls.

While money did play a role in the revival of the mumming tradition, the interpretation of this revival should not be limited to the financial reasons for its emergence. The evolution of the Mummies' Festival and Competition shows that financial gain was not the sole reason for the revival. To understand other meanings attributed to the tradition during the revival and how they acted to change and define mumming, the social context from which it emerged must be mentioned.

The revival of the mumming tradition in County Fermanagh in the 1980s did not occur in isolation from the social and cultural events which preceded it. It was not separated from the conflict which began in the 1960s and persisted into the 1990s. It was difficult to practice the tradition during the conflict, as explained in chapter two. So why would the tradition be revived if collecting money was its only function? Money could be collected in a much safer manner. The meaning of the mumming revival then was more complicated than this. In Ray Cashman's (2007) terms, mumming, "invite[d] otherwise divided people to resurrect and enact an older, ideal vision of community" (Cashman 2007:40).

As discussed in chapter five, mumming had confused political associations during the conflict. It was performed by members of both Nationalist and Unionist communities. Being practiced by both of these communities, mumming could be perceived as a shared tradition. This notion of a shared tradition involves recognising that, "shared symbols, [and] a shared history contribute to a collective sense of belonging (Ekman 1999:291).

Ekman's statement suggests that shared traditions can have the effect of blurring divisions between groups of people. The tradition can hark back to a time when the groups who practiced it were not divided by politics or religion. As such the tradition can create an understanding of the shared heritage which exists between communities. The Mummies' Festival and Competition were the most important elements of this revival. They gave people who would otherwise be divided, a public space where they could physically meet and interact with one another (Figure 30).



Figure 30: Banner used during the Mummerns' Festival

The Mummerns' Festival and Competition

Staging the festival on the street allowed for large numbers of people to interact with the mumming performance. As “sites of everyday life” (Jarman 1998:93), the streets are similar to the rural kitchens, where the play was staged prior to the conflict. The kitchens in rural Ireland were not seen as private spaces. They were public spaces, where members of the community met and socialised (Coleman 1999:89).

Much as the kitchen was a public space in these rural homes, the street is publicly accessible. It is a “simple space that can be transformed into almost any form of stage” (Pickering 2005:158). The mummerns could utilize it as they wished and interact with the audience members who surrounded them. Staging the mumming play on the street may be seen as a compromise. It was no longer acceptable to stage it in rural kitchens. The social changes which occurred during the conflict, along with changes to the decor of the private home, helped transform the kitchen from a public to a private space. Therefore, the street can be seen to represent the public nature of the mumming performance. Such changes in performance venue reflect how time and context actually function to change a social practice such as mumming.

As Jim explained, the Mummerns' Competition was an important part of the revived mumming tradition. It allowed people to see mumming in action, while also bringing those who practiced it physically closer together. As Livingston stated competitions, “are

fundamental to a revival's success for they supplement what can be learned from recordings and books with lived experience and direct human contact" (Livingston 1999:72).

Competitions and festivals are important in the revived tradition as they allow for interaction between groups of people. However, they also encouraged rivalries and boundaries to develop between the mumming groups. As Rachel Fleming (2004) has stated with regards to competitions in Irish traditional music, "set standards for performance because they are judged by certain criteria... [and] create social tension among musicians competing for recognition" (Fleming 2004:242).

The competition was judged by a committee which usually consisted of invited guests, namely some elderly local mummers and mummers from other countries. The group's performance was scored by each of the judges in categories such as costume, rhymes, acting ability, music and humour. The judges' scores were collated and the group with the highest score won the competition. The fact the performers were ranked above each other in a competition can lead to people losing interest in the tradition. Indeed, the presence of a competition between mumming groups during the revival of the tradition led some competitors to become unhappy. While this competitive element was always part of the mumming tradition, it took a different form in the post-revival period.

Prior to the revival of the tradition local mumming groups had rivalries with one another. These rivalries mainly existed in relation to the geographical area each group could cover and, as a result, the amount of money they could collect. However, the presence of a somewhat 'formal' competition during the revival created division and rivalries between the mumming groups. It counteracted the implicit ideology of the mumming revival; to bridge the political and religious divide between participants. Unlike other Irish traditions which were revived in the 20th century, like Irish traditional music, mumming did not possess a formal revivalist code (see Henry 1989 for a discussion of the Irish traditional music revival). This lack of a formal code meant that the form the revival took could be altered to suit the needs of the people who participated in it, hence reflecting the ability to change and redefine a social practice depending on the context it is performed in.

Conclusion

Jim's role in the revival of mumming, and indeed the presence of mumming in County Fermanagh today cannot be denied. His understanding of mumming as a Celtic tradition has largely influenced how mumming was revived in the 1980s. While his involvement in the revival was unintentional, Jim helped ensure the tradition did not completely fade from existence in County Fermanagh. The lack of formalisation and the impromptu nature of the revival of mumming in County Fermanagh in the 1980s, suggests that mumming exists on the margins of cultural activity. Mumming does not possess any formalised rules or boundaries. This allows it to shift from one form to another. It is in a constant state of liminality, always moving and adjusting to suit the immediate needs of the people who practice it. The lack of formalised rules and boundaries show that mumming is not as immutable as it may seem; people and the context it is performed in act to change and redefine it.

From a financial perspective, mumming served to help fund the development of local community halls. The Mummies' Festival and Competition were adjusted to suit the needs of the mummies themselves. The revival of the tradition was motivated by the desire to create a space where people from a variety of political and religious backgrounds could interact. As mumming was practiced by members of the Nationalist and Unionist communities, it allowed for interaction and cooperation between otherwise divided groups of people.

It is evident that the needs of the mummies dictated the meaning mumming possessed during the revival. While the audience created the meaning for the tradition during the conflict, in the revival period the mummies defined the meaning and purpose it held. While the revival remained strong into the late 1990s, the appeal of the Mummies' Festival died off around the early to mid-2000s. Older mummies were beginning to pass away and the memories of the mumming as it was practiced in the past were being lost. Jim and the Aughakillymaude Mummies were faced with another challenge: how to retain these memories which influence the longevity mumming is believed to possess. In response to this need to maintain the memories of previous mummies, Jim and the Aughakillymaude Mummies worked together to establish the Mummies' Museum. This will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: The museum and innovation in mumming

Introduction

The Mummers' Museum played an important role in my experience of mumming in Aughakillymaude. Participating in the tours of the museum was something I regularly took part in during my field work. In this chapter, closer attention will be paid to the pivotal role this museum plays in the mumming tradition as practiced in Aughakillymaude and in the perception of mumming presented to the general audience. The Mummers' Museum is not simply a place to exhibit and display the history of mumming in the region. The museum was central to the very logistics of the revival period. Today, its connection to the international performance and festival circuit is central to the creation and maintenance of a local mumming tradition. Drawing on these ideas, the chapter will argue that the image of longevity and immutability of the mumming tradition presented in the Mummers' Museum is underpinned by the desire to keep the social practice of mumming active in Aughakillymaude.

The Mummers' Museum

The Mummers' Museum was opened in 2000, receiving initial funding from the International Fund for Ireland and Peace Funding. The Museum does not have a permanent source of funding to coordinate activities or to keep the building open. It has worked through various stages of Peace monies and National Lottery Heritage Funding. For the 2010s, the majority of the Museum's funding came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and was sufficient to pay one full time staff member to oversee the coordination of the Museum. It also helped pay for members of the local community to conduct weekly activities for local school children, such as straw mask making workshops. This funding also covered the general running costs of the museum, such as electricity and heating bills. However, the funding alone has never been enough to support the everyday running of the Museum. The Aughakillymaude Mummers and Mummers' Foundation conduct additionally fundraising to keep it open.

Fundraising for the Museum has always been quite sporadic. The Aughakillymaude Mummers do not seek out avenues for performances, but wait to be contacted and requested to perform. As such, following the decline of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund there has not been a steady source of funding. Performances could be as frequent as twice a month, or once every two months.

Advertising the Museum was undertaken at local events, such as the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum Tourism Exhibition. However, the Museum mainly relies on bookings from word of mouth recommendations, or by people searching on the internet for the Mummings' Museum. Visitor numbers fluctuated during my field work with the Mummings. There were no specific 'Opening Hours' for the museum. Potential visitors showed up at the museum and hope someone was there to show them around. Young families, couples and groups of friends on holidays frequently dropped into the Museum unannounced especially during the summer months.

Admission into the Museum was charged at £3 per head, with most visitors purchasing a *Mummings, Masks and Mischief* video or a calendar. Larger groups organised a set price for their tour and refreshments served in the museum. The museum was busiest from May through to September with the main visitors being school groups and elderly tour groups. During my field work visitors were mainly elderly tour groups. School groups mainly came from the local Fermanagh and Cavan regions. Elderly groups came from further afield, including Cavan and Fermanagh, but stretching to the larger cities of Belfast, Derry and Omagh.

Occasionally, visitors were invited to attend the museum from other countries such as England, Bulgaria and Sardinia. On one occasion, two of the organisers of a Portuguese masked carnival were invited by the Mummings' Foundation to spend a few days around Aughakillymaude during the mid-summer festival.

The Mummings' Museum is intrinsically linked to the international masked festival circuit. The Museum was established at the same time as Jim and the Aughakillymaude Mummings became involved in performing at masked festivals throughout Europe and America. Jim explained how the Mummings initially became involved in this performance context.

I was in Bulgaria, skiing. I was getting some Christmas cards to send home. And I noticed this masked mummer on one corner [of the card]. Small minute corner of the Christmas card. Nothing would do but I got the tourist rep. Tourist rep got in touch with somebody else and I met him on Christmas week. And I says "what's this lad [the mummings on the Christmas card] here?" "This is us this is mummings. This is our mummings," he said. And I said, "I didn't know you had them." So one thing led to another. I applied for and got a grant for myself and Brian McManus to do an expedition out to Bulgaria to see what was going on out there in mumming terms. We were put with a travel agency to the local ethnographic museum in Sofia. So one thing

led to another. I knew there was mummings. And the more you opened your mind then one thing led to another. There was a world of mummings out there you know. But it was all very well that, handy and dandy, knowing that there's mummings out there but what do you do about it? So I thought right, Ledwith, I applied for Peace II programme. Peace II monies to bring Protestants and Catholics together on paper. And explore differences and all the rest of it. So got money from the Peace II funding to do exchange visits of mummung troupes abroad, within Europe. And the condition of it was that I had to get troupes from both side of the community and join them all up. Showing that we can reconcile our differences through the common folk drama of mummung. And out and show off to Eastern Europe and then they come back here. [Ledwith, Jim. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October, 15, 2013]

Having stumbled upon the masked festival circuit in Europe Jim worked with the Aughakillymaude Mummings to apply for Peace monies and gather Protestant and Catholic mummings from the locality to work together and perform at these international masked festivals. This began the Aughakillymaude Mummings' involvement in the masked festival circuit. For the following eight or so years Jim arranged for the groups of mummings to attend these festivals which displayed masked performers from around Europe and America.

These types of masked festivals are very much visual in nature. All of the groups place much emphasis on the physical appearance of their performers. The actual performance of a piece of folk drama seems to come secondary to the visually stunning spectacle of the parade of folk performers through local towns and streets. It should be noted that not everyone who takes part in the masked festival is necessarily a mummer. Not all groups perform the play which is centred on life, death and rebirth. Some masked performers simply stage fertility rituals.

At two of these European masked festivals I attended, one in Lisbon, Portugal and the other in Gloucester, England, there was a varying emphasis placed on the performance of the play. In Gloucester a parade of mummings around the city pre-cursed the staging of mummung plays in various alcoves and streets around the city. It was unstructured and a little chaotic, with mummung plays being performed in unusual locations during this one day festival. At the masked festival in Lisbon the performances were much more structured. The groups were scheduled to perform their play in specific locations around the main street. These two days of performances were followed by a parade of masked performers on the final day, displaying their magnificent costumes and musical talents.

Performance at these masked festivals is by prior arrangement only. A group of masked mummers cannot turn up on the day and grab a spot in the parade. For the Aughakillymaude Mummers to be part of the festivities Jim maintained a relationship with the festival organisers. Some years the group may have been invited to one festival. Others years they may receive no invites. The mummers were not paid for performing at the event. Rather, it was seen as a source of prestige if they were invited to the event.

Jim always ensured that the mummers received publicity in local and national press before and after participating in these events. “That’s what keeps me going. The thought of getting back out there to have the craic. That’s what keeps me doing this,” Jim would say when things in the Mummers’ Museum got difficult and he reminisced about taking part in these festivals.

When I conducted my field work in Aughakillymaude the Peace II funding which had helped the mummers fund their travel to these festivals had run out. However, the mummers still received invitations to these festivals, which they duly accepted. As I continued my field work in Aughakillymaude it became clear that the Aughakillymaude Mummers and Mummers’ Foundation’s involvement in the international festival circuit served two purposes. Firstly, it helped to unite members of the Catholic and Protestant communities in County Fermanagh through folk drama. Secondly, participating in these masked events strengthened the Aughakillymaude Mummers’ understanding of the tradition and how they represented it in the locality. Both the museum and the international festival circuit intensified the way mumming was performed by the Aughakillymaude Mummers and how it was presented to visitors in the museum, as will now be explored.

As explained in chapter four the first section of these tours of the Mummers’ Museum involves viewing *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* which presents an overview of the mumming tradition according to the Aughakillymaude Mummers. Following the viewing of this film, Jim Ledwith guides the visitors through the exhibition spaces, which were added onto the original Aughakillymaude school house in the early 2000s.

The Mummers' Museum is divided between two exhibition spaces. Downstairs there is a large open space where a kitchen scene has been recreated in one corner. The kitchen is set in rural Ireland, between the 1940s and 50s, immediately presenting mumming as something rooted in the past. Life-sized models of mumming characters have been placed in such a manner as to imitate the unfolding of a mumming play in this space. In the kitchen, there are also models of a family sitting back, watching the performance unfold. In addition to the kitchen scene, some mumming characters have been placed along the walls of the exhibition space (Figure 31).



Figure 31: Kitchen scene in the Mummers' Museum

The second exhibition space is located upstairs. It is filled with mumming costumes and paraphernalia from the English, Sardinian and Bulgarian mumming customs. Framed newspaper cuttings and photographs showing the Aughakillymaude Mummers participating in international performances are hung around the walls.

During the spring and summer months, Jim could host six tours of the museum every week. However, the winter months were much quieter. Very few groups arranged tours in the museum from October to March. While conducting field work in Aughakillymaude, I occupied a small work space over the kitchen exhibit. The space was once used for the storage of old costumes and parts of the exhibition which no longer functioned. From here it was always

possible to hear Jim giving tours of the museum. His ‘one man mumming shows’ and the laughter of his spectators were regular sounds during the spring and summer months.

One morning in early July, I decided to accompany a group of visitors participating in the Cross Borders project, on their tour in the museum. The group’s tour began in the usual manner as described in chapter one; they were greeted with tea and scones, and invited to watch the beginning of *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*. Once Jim stopped the film, he welcomed the group to the museum, explaining why and how mumming was still practiced in Aughakillymaude.

Once Jim finished his introductory speech he rushed into the exhibition room. The group began to rise from their chairs, waiting for him to return and continue their tour. He came back into the hall holding a conical object made from a dark brown metal. He placed the smaller end of the cone against his lips and let five sharp breaths of air into the object. The sound it released was high pitched and sharp. Some of the members of the group, who were engrossed in their own conversations, jumped when the sound of this object reached their ears.

“Does anyone know what this is?” asked Jim. There was a pause while members of the group looked to each other and giggled. “A hunting horn,” said an elderly lady in a timid voice. “You’re a bright one,” said Jim, to which the lady smiled. “And what’s it made of?” he asked, waving the hunting horn above his head for the group to see. A long pause ensued as the group debated what it was made from. Michael, the leader of the cross-community group, interjected with the answer. “Brass and copper,” he said, to which Jim declared “Spot on!” Jim continued by explaining how the hunting horn fitted into the mumming performance. “The hunting horn was used to let the people in the house know the mummers were coming. And they’d drive the dogs mad! Every dog around would be barking when they heard it,” said Jim (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Aghakillymaude Mummer with a hunting horn

The group laughed in response. He then flung open the door to the downstairs section of the mumming exhibition. The men and women in the group made their way through the narrow doorway into the downstairs exhibition space. As soon as they entered the room there were many gasps from the people on seeing the looming life-sized models of mumming characters. Some members of the group congregated in the middle of the floor while others walked around to each mumming model.

They gathered in front of the kitchen scene. A straw rope hung from one wall of the kitchen to the other. This deterred entry into the space. A small, metal sign hung from the straw rope which read, "NO ADMITTANCE." Some of the group pointed at the characters and items in the kitchen. They pulled faces of shock and delight as they looked closer and saw more fascinating objects scattered around the scene. The volume of chat between the members of the group increased. The unusual spectacle of the models that appeared to be frozen in time performing the play, were the source of much laughter.

The members of the group touched the model's clothes and hands. Some people inspected the model's faces, as they do appear very life-like. The model maker had paid immense attention to detail when making these life-sized models, down to including the hairs on the backs of their fingers. On sight of the life-sized Bidy Funny character behind the door,

one lady let a slight scream. She then laughed at the comical appearance on the model's face. The lady moved closer to Biddy Funny. She examined the character's comical expression, tattered clothes and worn out boots which formed the model's costume (Figure 33).



Figure 33: Biddy Funny model

Once everyone was gathered in the exhibition space Jim interrupted the group by beginning the tour. "OK," he shouted, loud enough to catch everyone's attention. "The space you are now standing in was built onto the old school building you were just in. Out here, we have the only mumming museum in the whole of Europe. Each of these creepy looking fellas around the room was characters in the mumming play," said Jim. He walked around the edge of the group to stand next to the Captain Mummer model (Figure 34).



Figure 34: Captain Mummer model

The group turned to Jim, as he began to explain this character. “See this fella. This was Captain Mummer. And it was his job to lead the other mummers round the roads and fields to people’s houses. He always had a big stick, like this one here,” he said. He pointed to the stick in Captain Mummer’s right hand with a ram’s horn attached to the top of it. “When the mummers made it up to a house, this boy would knock the door three times with the stick. Always three times. And then he’d let a roar to the ones inside. ‘Any admittance for Captain Mummer and his men?’ he’d ask. If the man of the house said ‘Yes,’ well the mummers could plough on in. But if the man said ‘No,’ the mummers were meant to just walk away. But a few bucks would cause some chaos. They’d frighten the dog or something. I know over in Marlbank [County Fermanagh], if you didn’t let the mummers in, they’d bury the wren on your doorstep. I heard that from a man. Ninety years of age he was,” said Jim, pausing to allow people to respond. “Oh that’s very cruel,” said one woman. This was accompanied by a chorus of approval from the other group members. “Well that’s just what they did,” said Jim.

As described in the methodology chapter, wren boys would have entertained the residents of the countryside, reciting rhymes, playing music and carrying a wren bird with them on their rounds of local houses on St Stephen's Day. Live and dead wrens were carried by the wren boys in various types of cages. The dead wren was carried in a coffin. In County Mayo one such wren coffin was reportedly made from a hollowed out, blackened turnip (NFC 1089:95-95). In other areas, such as Ballymore in County Galway, the wren was also buried on the doorstep of audience members who made no financial contribution to the wren boys. It was believed that burying the wren on the doorstep "was a bad omen and brought bad luck" to the people in the house (NFC 1089:24). The practice of burying the wren on people's doorsteps, which Jim reported, shows a blending of the mumming and wren boy customs.

Returning to the tour of the Mummies' Museum, Jim tapped the lamp in Captain Mummer's left hand. "And now, walking around at night it was dark. So the Captain Mummer's job was to carry a light. Can anyone tell me what kind of lamp this is?" asked Jim, tapping his finger on the lamp's glass bulb. "That's a tilly lamp. We used to have one of those," said an elderly lady standing at the back of the group. "I'm sure you did," replied Jim. "We all had them back then. That was the light in them days," said another woman standing nearer to the front of the group.

"Aye. The Tilly lamp. Or another name for it was the hurricane lamp," responded Jim. "That's right. That's what we called it. The hurricane lamp," said a different woman. "Aye. Sure there were lots of names for it. But anyway, that was what the Captain did. Now this fella here was Saint Patrick," said Jim, turning to face the Saint Patrick model, which was standing next to Captain Mummer. Jim worked his way around each of the characters along the walls of the exhibition. The group followed closely behind him. They had fallen completely silent apart from the odd question and their laughter as Jim revealed unusual facts about the mumming tradition.

Once he had explained the role of the characters along the walls he moved back to the kitchen scene. The group followed behind him. They gathered in front of the straw rope with the 'NO ADMITTANCE' sign attached. Some people at the back of the group stood on their toes in an attempt to see above those standing in front. The group began to chat amongst each other, discussing the items placed around the kitchen.

Jim stepped over the straw rope and into the kitchen scene. He walked around the models. It was strange to see a person moving around this completely stationary and silent scene. Jim stood next to the Doctor and Bauld Slasher who were in the middle of the kitchen floor. “This kitchen here is based on the kitchen of the auld woman who used to live out on the island in Lough Erne. Celia Maguire was her name. And she was the last person to live on Inishlaroo Island. So when we were making this place the mummings thought it would be a nice way to remember her. For this to be like her kitchen. This is what a kitchen would have looked like anyway. Do you all remember kitchens like this?” Jim asked. A chorus of approval met this question.

“So, the mumming play was always put on in the kitchen. That’s where everyone would have been gathered. Around the fire. That was the only light in the house. The fire. There was no electricity. So they’d [the mummings] come in the front door and frighten the life out of the childer [children],” said Jim. He walked around each of the characters in the kitchen and explained their role in the play. He focused on the Doctor administering medicine to the Bauld Slasher, who was lying on the ground.

“Now this boy here was the Doctor Good and Sure. A quack doctor he was. He’d tell you he could fix whatever was wrong with you. He had a big list of medicines and all the things he could cure. He’d rhyme them all off. The pip, the palsy and the gout. And the medicine was all things like the eyeball of a newt and it was all mixed up in a wren’s bladder with a cat’s feather. All nonsense talk like that,” said Jim, to which the group laughed.

Moving to the edge of the kitchen scene, Jim stood next to the Beelzebub character. “Look at this boy-oh,” said Jim, to which the group laughed. “He was a bad fella,” he said pointing to the devil’s tail made from straw which was attached to Beelzebub’s shirt. “I wouldn’t want to get on the wrong side of him,” said one of the elderly ladies, giggling (Figure 35).



Figure 35: Beelzebub model

Jim bent down and picked up a straw mask. He handed it out to the group, who passed it around. “That there, that’s the Fermanagh hat. With just the straight straw and no plaits. That would have covered their faces so you hadn’t a clue who was coming in the door,” said Jim while bending down to pick up another item made from straw. Once he finished, he stepped across the rope to stand amongst the group. In one hand he carried the White Horse of Benaughlin costume (Figure 36).



Figure 36: Jim showing the White Horse of Benaughlin costume during a tour of the Mummies' Museum

Moving into the middle of the group he threw the head of the costume on to his shoulder so everyone could see it. “This is the White Horse. We call it the White Horse of Benaughlin. Because you see it was thought that a White Horse lived on Bin [Benaughlin]

mountain. And it was said that he stole childer [children]. So you'd often hear the mothers saying to their young ones 'Come down from the mountain before the horse gets you.' So that's why we have the horse. He's something local," said Jim, turning to make sure the entire group saw this unusual costume.

Placing the White Horse costume back behind the straw rope Jim asked the group to follow him up the stairs to the next room of the exhibition. There was a very distinct, pungent smell lying heavy in the air when we got half way up the stairs. Some of the ladies waved their hands in front of their noses to try and waft the smell away. Once we entered the room, we saw the cause of the smell stretched out on the carpeted floor. The sunlight from a window in the ceiling was beaming onto a goat-skin costume. The smell was overwhelming and many of the group stood a few feet away from it, while everyone made their way into the room. Our noses slowly became acquainted with the scent of warm goat skin (Figure 37).



Figure 37: Sardinian goat skin mummie costume

Once everyone had gathered in the room Jim explained that mummie was not only present in Ireland, but exists throughout the world. He pointed to the costume on the floor and said, "Sure this here. It's a Sardinian mummie costume. Made from goat skin." On hearing

this, some of the women pulled faces of disgust. “Well, that’s something. I didn’t know there were mummers anywhere else but here,” said one woman shyly.

“The Sardinian mummers, they sent this to us when we met them at a mumming festival. Pure goat skin. Some of the mummers would wear these bells too with their goat skins. In Bulgaria they wear a black goat skin and have these bells all over them,” said Jim. He turned to a table behind him and lifted a belt with several large bronze bells attached. “See here. There’s cow bones in the bells. The bones make the noise when they hit off the bell. The fellas all dress like this and they jump up and down. I’ll tell you it’s some noise they make when they’re all together,” said Jim, lightly shaking the belt of bells (Figure 38).



Figure 38: Belt of bronze bells

For the final part of the tour Jim told the group they were free to look round the photographs which were hung on the walls. The group split into several smaller ones, as they made their way around the room. He explained to some of the smaller groups what was happening in each of the photographs. Others wandered back downstairs to the main exhibition.

After about five minutes looking at the photographs Jim told the group there would be a straw mask making workshop in the main hall. The hour long tour of the museum had sparked excited conversation between the members of the group. They trailed slowly behind Jim, lost in their own conversations about the exhibits in the museum and their own

experiences with mummers. Some of the group stopped at the downstairs exhibition to take in the kitchen scene. One woman pulled a camera from her bag and took some photographs of the models. We went back into the main hall where Patrick, the straw mask maker for the Aughakillymaude Mummers, had prepared the hall for the mask making workshop (Figure 39).



Figure 39: Hall set out for straw mask workshop

The group slowly gathered around a long table which had been set up in the north facing end of the hall. As they waited for Patrick to finish laying out the golden yellow straw on the table, they chatted quite loudly with one another. I squeezed my way into the group which had gathered around the table. Patrick stood at the head of the table. He instructed that we hold two handfuls of straw, one over the other. The group were far from silent at this point. They helped each other hold the straw, which resulted in much laughter as some were unable to get this step right (Figure 40).

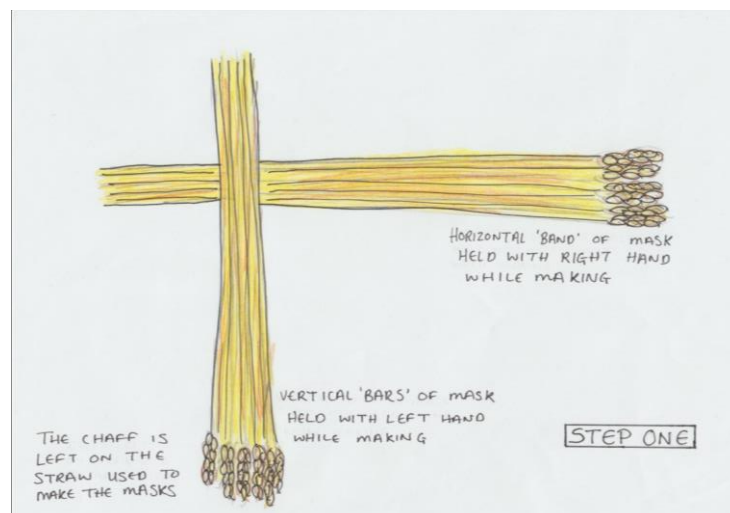


Figure 40: Step one for making a straw mask

Patrick waited patiently for the group to catch up so he could move to the next step. As the following instructions were quite intricate, he repeated them several times until we understood what to do. Many of the group, including myself, took a couple of attempts to get this right. Patrick made his way around everyone, showing them how to make this complex turn in the straw. He worked on each mask quite slowly, but with a confidence developed over years of weaving them together (Figure 41).

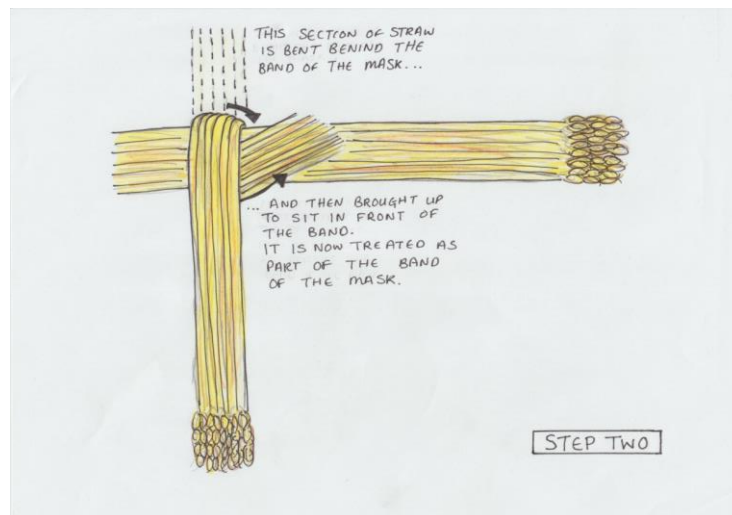


Figure 41: Step two for making a straw mask

His large hands gripped handfuls of golden straw, while his nimble fingers pulled the straw up and around the band of the mask. “Pull it t’oast ya,” were Patrick’s instructions when demonstrating how to get the straw bars of the hat to remain in a stable position. Initially, I was unsure what this instruction meant, as I fumbled gracelessly with a large handful of straw. After Patrick repeated this instruction several times, I realised that ‘t’oast’ was a local pronunciation for ‘towards.’ Slowly, it became easier to repeat this step, though many of the women found this quite difficult. After repeating this about twenty times, everyone was left with an item that resembled a Hawaiian hula skirt (Figure 42).

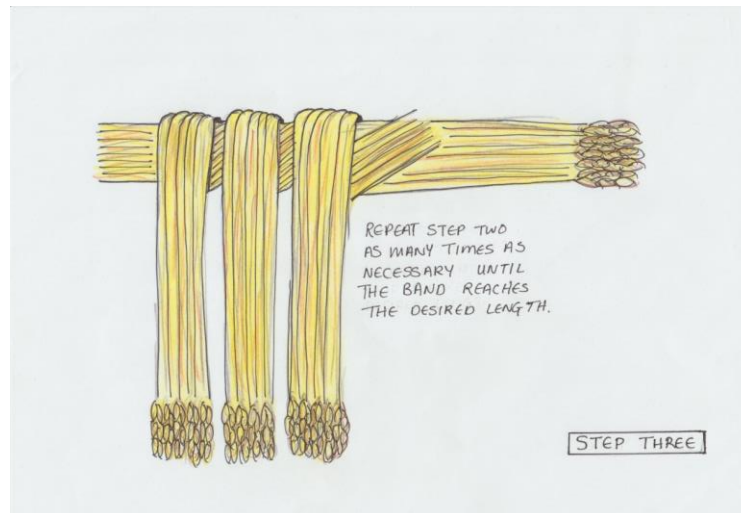


Figure 42: Step three for making a straw mask

It was important at this point to keep holding the end of the mask where the last turn of straw had been made. This was to ensure that the mask did not unravel, as each new turn of straw locked the previous one in place. The various speeds at which the members of the group worked meant that people completed their masks at different times. This allowed Patrick to show everyone individually how to finish off their mask. “You got the hang of that then,” laughed Patrick, when I handed him my mask. Tightening up the turns of straw with his hands he made sure that it would not fall apart when he began to tie it together. To tie the ends of the mask together, Patrick split a strand of Hairy Ned in two pieces. Wrapping one piece of the Hairy Ned around the ends of the mask, he tied them together tightly, bringing the mask into a circular shape. Each time he tied the string he closed his eyes tight and pulled it until it made a creaking sound.

Taking the loose ends of straw at the top of the mumming mask, Patrick grabbed them into a bunch and tied them about thirty centimetres from the top. This gave the mask its iconic conical shape. Quite suddenly, the straw skirt had transformed into a very rough mumming mask. It was clear at this point that Patrick was in an extremely focused state of mind. The loud chatting and laughter of the people surrounding him did not disturb his focus on the mask.

He split the top few strands of straw above the Hairy Ned into four sections. “Now, you can plait these here for the horns,” said Patrick, beginning to make a plait. Handing the mask back to me he gently fixed the plait on the top of the mask to stick out at a right angle.

“When you’ve plaited them all then you can give it a haircut,” said Patrick, handing me a small pair of scissors. “But don’t cut too much. You want to leave the ears with the seeds on. Just these bits here,” he said, snipping at some of the loose pieces of straw on the mask (Figure 43).



Figure 43: Patrick Murphy finishing a mummings' mask. ©Mummings' Foundation

This is the standard tour which is offered to all groups who book in advance to come and see the Museum. For groups and individuals who do not book in advance, there is no straw mask workshop. These groups are only offered the tour of the museum. Heritage based projects and tourist groups such as the Cross Borders project run by the Cavan County Museum, are frequent users of the museum. Tour companies, who specialise in organising days out for elderly people, often choose to visit the Mummings’ Museum. The unique nature of the mumming tradition and the fact that the museum is easily accessible by bus makes it a popular destination for these types of groups. They pay a fee for visiting the museum, which is put towards the upkeep of the centre.

While Jim coordinates the Mummings’ Museum the Aughakillymaude Mummings are also involved in its day-to-day operations. During my field work, the Mummings’ Foundation secured a substantial amount of funding to build a straw craft centre on the Aughakillymaude community centre site. There was much debate between the two groups over this new initiative. Keeping the museum open was difficult enough, as the electricity, phone and oil bills all had to be paid from the museum’s takings. At times it seemed as if the museum and

the projects run by the Mummers' Foundation were unnecessary hassle for the Aughakillymaude Mummers. They seemed satisfied to keep staging the odd performance here and there, without the financial burden of keeping both the museum and straw craft centre open.

Advertising the Mummers' Museum

As with any tourist attraction, people do not simply come to visit the Mummers' Museum. The Mummers' Foundation commits much effort to publicly advertising its presence. One way they advertise the museum is by participating in tourists exhibitions. During my field work I participated in one of these exhibitions which was organised by the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum.

On an overcast February morning, the Mummers' Foundation occupied a stand for the Mummers' Museum at the Fermanagh Lakeland Tourist Exhibition. It was early morning, about 9.15 am. My sister Harriet and I arrived early to the sports hall in Enniskillen town, where the exhibition was being held. Jim had asked us to help set up the display stand for the Mummers' Museum. We were tasked with pinning photographs of the museum and straw love knots onto the stand.

The sports hall was filled with about 200 stands each one exhibiting a museum or tourist activity unique to the county. The exhibition had been arranged to allow tour operators and individuals planning trips to County Fermanagh, to come and see what types of activities were on offer. On the Lakeland Forum's brochure for the event it was advertised that the Aughakillymaude Mummers would perform during the day. As I had not taken part in one of these events before, I presumed the mummers would be staging the mumming play at some point during the exhibition.

Jim had invited the Aughakillymaude Mummers' regular musicians to provide music at the event: the Fitzpatrick's, the Cathcarts and Gary Curley. My sister Harriet and I were also invited to play music. The musicians were tasked with entertaining the crowds of people as they entered the exhibition, and as they visited the Mummers' Museum stand. Jim split the group of eight musicians in two. Five musicians were to play at the entrance to the sports hall:

the Cathcarts, Gary Curley and Harriet. The two Fitzpatrick's, Gary, Emma, and I were asked to perform next to the Mummerts' Museum stand in the main sports hall.

By about 10.30 am hundreds of elderly men and women had arrived at the exhibition. The car park outside was blocked with coaches, which had brought people from the cities and large towns around the area. The first group of musicians played in a marquee which had been set up at the main entrance. Everyone entering the exhibition has to pass by these musicians. They played music and Harriet danced to entertain the crowds.

Once the people entered the hall they made their way around the various stands. They wandered around the exhibition, chatting with the stand holders about the activities they had to offer. For two hours constant chatter filled the hall. There were so many people packed into the sports hall, our music did not travel well. We had no amplification. Only the people standing next to us were able to hear it.

Jim was frantically busy during these two hours. He handed out brochures about the Mummerts' Museum, their tours and the activities they offered to groups. He also sold about twenty *Fermanagh Folklife* calendars. The calendar, which Jim and I produced together, showed photographs of people engaged in traditional customs at the Mummerts' Museum (Figure 44).



Figure 44: Cover of the *Fermanagh Folklife* calendar. ©Mummerts' Foundation

At about 12.30 pm Jim took a break from his work and spoke to Gary, Emma and I. “Right. Now. Costumes,” he said, hurriedly getting back to his feet and walking off to get the other musicians. I was a little confused at this point as I thought the Aughakillymaude Mummers would need the costumes to perform the mumming play. Gary and Emma had much experience with these types of performances and explained what was going to happen. “A parade,” said Gary. “We stick on the straw [costumes], parade about and play a bit of music,” he said.

Gary took apart his flute. He placed the individual pieces of it into their pre-assigned slots in the instrument’s box. “No way I’m playing the flute,” he said. “You might put yours away too. With this amount of people around it will only get bumped into. Have you a whistle?” he asked, producing two silver tin whistles from his flute box. I nodded and took my whistle out of my bag. “Aye that’s the best thing. Last thing you want is the end of your flute going missing,” laughed Gary, tucking the box under his arm.

All the musicians gathered in the sports equipment storage room at the far end of the hall. Jim had lined out the mumming costumes for us on top of the various sports equipment which was strewn around the floor. The musicians took up every spare inch of space in the room. We donned the heavy straw costumes as usual. The process of putting them on was made more difficult by the badminton poles, goalposts and basketball hoops which were crammed into this dimly lit room. Harriet was getting accustomed to fitting her own costume having taken part in quite a few mumming performances. I was still fumbling with my straw skirt while she seemed to gracefully glide into each item of the costume, one after the other. All the musicians were ready when Jim came in looking for the White Horse costume.

Jim pushed past the array of goalposts and straw clad musicians to retrieve the costume. With little effort he threw this up onto his head and let the material which was attached to it drape down to cover his body. He pushed his way back to the door of the storage room. While I was trying to fish my tin whistle out from a tangled mess of football nets, Gary tapped me on the shoulder. “Father Kelly’s OK with you?” he asked, referring to the tune we would play for the parade. “Sure,” I said, pulling the tin whistle free and rubbing the dust off its shiny black exterior.

The straw clad musicians gathered behind Emma who was going to lead the parade around the hall. “OK. Come on, come on,” said Jim while adjusting the mask on his head. At this request, Emma hit the drumsticks off the drum skin several times. Its high pitched roll resonated throughout the hall. The drum roll startled some of the people standing near the entrance to the storage room. We all remained in the room, waiting for Jim to give the signal for us to exit.

Gary began to play *Father Kelly’s Reel* in time with Emma’s drum beats. He was joined by the rest of the musicians on the repeat of the first part. As we began the second part of the tune, Jim, dressed as the White Horse, trotted out of the equipment room. Emma led the musicians into the main hall. While Jim moved in and out of the crowds of people gathered in the hall, the musicians marched in a more structured manner. Following Emma’s lead, we paraded through the aisles of stands.

Although the volume of eight instruments being played in unison was loud, it did not drown out the several hundred men and women chatting around the sports hall. It seemed that only the people standing next to the parade of musical mummers reacted to our presence. The attention the audience paid to our parade varied. Some people clapped in time with the music. Others laughed and pointed. Two or three people tried to pull cameras and smart phones out of their bags and pockets, to take photographs of this unusual sight. In contrast, at one point, a stand-holder turned up the music on their CD player as we paraded by.

After around fifteen minutes we had reached the opposite end of the hall. “Right, go back the way ye came, through the stands. Back where ye got changed. And keep up the music,” said Jim. “Maybe we’ll go for the Merry Blacksmith this time,” shouted Gary from the back of the line of musicians. A couple of nods from the others saw Emma start up the drum beat again.

We paraded back through the hall. The audience were less interested in the parade this time around. Only some people clapped along with the music and turned to see what was happening. Others ignored us completely and continued to chat with each other and the people at the stands. We paraded back to the equipment room where we removed the straw costumes. The rhythmic beat of the tenor drum rang in my ears long after we had stopped playing.

This mumming parade was unusual. It was advertised that the Aughakillymaude Mummings would perform at the event. However, what actually occurred was that the musicians dressed up in the straw costumes and played music for the crowds at the exhibition. While the musicians physically looked like mummings, they did not stage the main part of the mumming performance: the mumming play. As this musical parade was staged to advertise the Mummings' Museum, attention will now be paid to how the museum's needs were central to the creation of this performance. This will show the meaning the museum creates for the mumming tradition.

The Mummings' Museum and the mumming tradition

The central point in the town land of Aughakillymaude is the community centre and Mummings' Museum. There are no shops, pubs or office buildings in the area. As such, the museum and community centre play an important role in defining the town land. This is something Michael Ames (1986) has discussed, stating that in small towns, museums contribute towards a sense of "self respect" (Ames 1986:73).

In relation to local museums, Ames stated that they function to preserve practices which are no longer engaged in by the community. They serve as a space in which local people can pay their respect to customs and traditions which helped to form the society in which they live. This perspective of the local museum, which sees it as a place of preservation, suggests that they are places where 'old,' 'unpopular' traditions are stored. However, it will be argued throughout the remainder of the chapter that museums do not simply preserve, store and display, but their presence has much more of an impact on defining the actual living tradition.

Placing traditions in the museum setting has been widely discussed within Anthropology. Moving a tradition to be exhibited in the museum is seen to allow "memories [to be] ... transformed into exhibited objects" (Debarry 2004:131). This means that a tradition no longer solely remains in the memories of those who practiced and encountered it. Rather people's memories of the tradition are changed into physical objects, which the museum audience can observe and interact with.

Indeed, this was one of the functions of the Mummers' Museum, as established by the Aughakillymaude Mummers and the Mummers' Foundation. On asking Jim why the museum was founded, he responded by saying:

Look, Finnegan, we won't be around forever. And you know what, it's important we do what we can to preserve this thing [mumming]. We have a responsibility to those who did the mumming in the past. We have to preserve it. And if the young ones ever want it, its here, saved for them. So that's why the museum was set up. [Ledwith, Jim. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

While the mumming play text is recorded in written form, mumming is a largely oral tradition. The conventions of mumming have been left largely undocumented. It exists in the minds of the people who once practiced it. The Mummers' Foundation recognised that when people who hold these memories inevitably pass away, their knowledge of the mumming tradition would be lost. As a result, the Mummers' Foundation and the Aughakillymaude Mummers decided to establish a museum, to house these memories and pass them on to others.

By approaching the Mummers' Museum as simply a place to preserve and present the longevity of the mumming tradition, its function is over simplified. While a museum does allow for the storage and re-creation of memories, a different approach is taken when a tradition, such as mumming, is placed in the museum setting. The 'museumification' of a tradition is perceived as a sign, indicating that the tradition no longer holds relevance in modern society. Ames suggested, with reference to the work of Edward Shils (1981) that nostalgia, a sentimental desire for the past, influences people's decisions to place traditions in museums (Ames 1986:73).

As time continues, societies are inevitably changed by those who live in them. People embrace technological and societal advancements. As a result, distance develops between the current society and the values and practices of the past. While these beliefs and practices from the past are still remembered, they are not seen to hold any relevance for the advancement of society.

However, Ames implied that the people in present day society feel a responsibility towards the traditions and values which have faded from relevance. Their nostalgia for the past impacts their decision to dedicate them a space within society: the museum. People can go to

a museum and see how others lived in the past. The museum can also offer an insight into why a society exists in its present state.

Establishing a museum to preserve a tradition is seen as a sign of respect. However, it can also suggest the 'death' of that tradition. The museum is often perceived as a graveyard for the past (Debarry 2004). It represents the activities people 'used to' engage in. Once a tradition is visible in a museum, it is commonly believed that it must not be popular within the current society. Indeed this notion has been discussed by Octave Debarry (2004) who stated that the museum serves as the final "resting place" for traditions (Debarry 2004:123).

This notion of paying respect to a tradition which is no longer popular has been discussed by David Buckley (2003). In relation to the process of placing musical history in the museum setting, Buckley stated, "'Museumification', apart from carrying with it complicating notions of ossification, brings a kind of respectability to a cultural form" (Buckley 2003:29).

According to Buckley, when a tradition is placed in a museum it gains a certain respect from those who view it. When creating a museum from a performance based tradition Paulette Dellios stated that, "in the interpretive medium of museumification, everything is a potential 'artefact'" (Dellios 2002:1). With reference to the mumming tradition, this "everything" Dellios mentions may relate to the costumes, the history of the tradition and even the memories of the mummers. These items gain respect from the people who view them.

The tradition within the museum setting attains respect as it is seen to have served a function within society. It is now preserved in a place where people can appreciate the purpose it once fulfilled. Interestingly the death of a tradition is not solely seen to be represented by its inclusion in a museum. Traditions are also perceived to be 'dead' when they undergo processes of innovation. As Nelson Graburn stated: "Just as life has death as its opposite, so tradition is often said to be opposite to innovation" (Graburn 2001:6). However, this understanding of the museum and the tradition it preserves becomes confused when we consider the Mummers' Museum in Aughakillymaude.

While mumming has changed dramatically since the revival of the tradition in the 1980s, it is still practiced in Aughakillymaude. It is no longer performed in people's homes to collect money for a Mummers' Ball. It is now staged on streets and in pubs. One function it fulfils is to collect money, for both charitable causes and to keep the Aughakillymaude community centre open. In light of this contrast between pre-revival and post-revival mumming, it is possible to comprehend the contribution the Mummers' Museum in Aughakillymaude makes to the definition and meaning of the tradition in the area.

Indeed, the manner in which Jim spoke about mumming during the tour which was explained earlier, suggested that he was referring to the pre-revival practice of mumming. He focused on what each character "used to do" suggesting the longevity of the tradition. Each character is given a permanent, stationary model to display what their costumes "used to look like" implying the immutable elements of the mumming tradition. The only character who did not have a dedicated model was the White Horse. In order to show the visitors the physical appearance of this White Horse, Jim used the Aughakillymaude Mummers' current costume to display the character. It was not fixed in the museum in the form of a model. Indeed the costumes used by the present day Aughakillymaude Mummers are not displayed in the museum. Rather, photographs of them participating in various performances throughout the world are displayed.

As a result, the role of the museum can be perceived as follows. Pre-revival mumming has been placed in the museum setting. However, the post-revival mumming tradition is represented by the White Horse costume. The White Horse is not fixed in the museum. It represents the need for a costume which can be worn by the mummers during their performances. As such this White Horse costume and the photographs of the mummers engaged in mumming performances, represent the continued life of mumming in Aughakillymaude. Such less permanent features in the Museum show how both time and context act upon social practices to change and define them.

As discussed earlier, the tour of the Mummers' Museum also consists of a straw mask making workshop. This workshop engages visitors in an important part of the mumming tradition. Involving people in the custom in this manner allows the visitor to experience an element of the tradition. As Victor Turner stated (1982), as Anthropologists we should "understand other people and their expressions on the basis of experience" (Turner 1982:18).

It is through experience that others people's behaviours and reasons for engaging in certain activities can be understood. Mask making workshops, such as the one described earlier can help the visitor understand the tradition from the perspective of the mummer. This notion of the visitor being engaged in the museum has been discussed in detail by Claudia Bell (2015).

The Mummers' Museum does not solely serve as a place for preserving and presenting the mumming tradition to its visitors. As the leader of the Cross Borders project explained to me, bringing this group to the museum allowed people from different social, political and religious backgrounds to see the heritage they shared with one another. This notion suggests that the museum is a "socialising institution", that both represents and presents cultural assumptions, as well as social and aesthetic values to young and old alike" (Jeffers 2003:107). It shows that museums are not only exhibition spaces but are also areas where people can interact over a common part of their heritage.

The Mummers' Museum in Aughakillymaude serves to preserve the pre-revival mumming tradition and engage people in some practices associated with mumming. However, the impact of the museum on the tradition does not end here. The post-revival mumming tradition has been influenced by the presence of this museum. The impact of the museum on the tradition can be understood through the concept of "cultural involution" (Geertz 1963 in Xie 2003:6). This concept suggests that when a tradition is shaped to appeal to a tourist audience a new interest is created in that tradition (Xie 2003:6). In addition, the tourist version of the tradition and the 'true' tradition can become so involved with each other that it is not possible to pull them apart. This notion of cultural involution helps to understand the creation of the music centred mumming parade performance, as presented earlier in the chapter.

In order to keep the Mummers' Museum open it must attract visitors to pay its overhead costs. To attract tourists to the museum, the Mummers' Foundation engage in many forms of public advertising. However, the most interesting form of advertising engaged in by the Mummers' Foundation comes in the form of the music centred mumming parade. This performance has been developed to catch people's attention at large scale events such as the Lakeland Forum Tourist Exhibition. This new performance, however, is based around the music and costumes of the mummors, rather than the mumming play. The concept of folklorization will help to understand why music and mumming costumes have come to be used as advertising tools for the Mummers' Museum.

The practice of choosing specific elements to represent a tradition as a whole has been termed 'folklorization.' According to Michelle Bigenho (2007) folklorization involves a group of performers recognising that their performance is in some way distinct. In addition, Mark Rogers (1999) stated that folklorization involves "a social group fix[ing] a part of itself in a timeless manner as an anchor for its own distinctiveness" (Rogers 1999:58). Once a group see that their performance is unique, they make the decision to emphasise these distinct elements. They choose to bring them to the fore of the performance to attract a fee paying audience. These distinct elements which "anchor" the performance may be anything which stands out from what is already on offer to tourists (Rogers 1999:58).

Music features as a central part of the folklorization process. As Peter Wellington (2003) has stated, music often becomes the element within a tradition, which is folklorized (Wellington 2012:18-19). Wellington suggested that folklorization is usually conducted by isolating the musical element of a tradition. Music is often seen as a "mirror" which "reaches deep into... our personalities" (Ruud 1997:3). As such, it may have been used to present some deep embedded element which makes the mummies unique.

Once the musical element is isolated it is performed to represent the tradition as a whole. The suggestion that music comes to the fore when a tradition is folklorized may help understand the evolution of the music centred mummying parade. In the case of this parade the 'mummying' performance was moved from one context and placed into another. This is what Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (1990) termed recontextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990:75).

The music and costumes were seen as the unique parts of the mummying performance, somewhat immutable parts of the mummying tradition. They came to represent the mummying tradition, especially in the context of attracting the attention of a tourist audience. The music centred mummying parade combined all the unique aspects of mummying in the recontextualized setting of the tourist exhibition, to make a performance which advertised the Mummies' Museum. The evolution of this type of performance derived from the need to advertise the museum. If there was no museum, there would be no need for this type of performance. As such, museums can stimulate evolution within a tradition. While museums are commonly seen as indicating the death of tradition, this is not the case for the Mummies' Museum in Aughakillymaude.

Museums should not solely be viewed as places of rest for traditions, but also have the possibility to be a space where innovation, which encourages the continuation of a tradition, occurs. The museum itself serves to preserve the pre-revival mumming tradition and at the same time encouraged a new type of mumming performance to evolve. From this new type of performance, a new performance venue was also discovered, namely the international masked festival, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Through the vignette of taking part in a tour of the Mummies' Museum an insight was offered into how traditions are placed in the museum setting by attributing them a sense of longevity and immutability. By focusing on previous work produced on museums it was deduced that the Mummies' Museum in Aghakillymaude is not conventional. The museum does not solely serve to preserve the tradition of mumming as a whole. Rather, it preserves the pre-revival tradition. Out of the presence of the Mummies' Museum, the mumming tradition in Aghakillymaude has been changed and redefined. A new type of performance developed: the music centred mumming parade.

The vignette of the music centred mumming parade in the recontextualized setting of the tourist exhibition, showed how much this type of performance differs from the mumming play. Through work on the concept of folklorization, it was evident that unique elements of a tradition which may be seen to give the social practice a sense of longevity, are extracted and staged when attempting to appeal to a tourist audience. The evolution of this music centred mumming parade is a direct result of the presence of the Mummies' Museum.

Therefore, museums do not simply serve as a resting place for a tradition. Rather, they can encourage the redefinition of the social practice to suit the new environment it finds itself in. As such, the museum gives the tradition a different meaning. During the revival the mummies dictated the form it took. However, in this post revival setting, the demands of the audience are seen to influence the meaning and purpose of mumming.

While mumming has inevitably changed as it is defined and redefined by different groups, some aspects of the tradition have remained relatively immutable. The definition of mumming may change while elements of the performance, such as the mask and costume, play a constant role. However, as the tradition shifts from being defined by the mummer, to the audience and back again, the physical appearance and function of the mask also changes, as will be explored in the following chapter. This exploration of the changing role of the mask will be conducted by examining its use in a variety of settings, including the international masked festival.

Chapter Eight: Dominant functions of the mumming mask

Introduction

Wearing a straw mumming mask is an odd experience. The first time I put on one of these masks I was extremely excited. One afternoon when Jim had left the Mummies' Museum for a while, I wandered down from my study space to the kitchen scene in the museum. A straw hat lay on the floor, just behind the 'NO ADMITTANCE' sign which prevented the public entering the exhibit. I leaned over the rope and picked up the mask. Pulling it into shape, I placed it over my head, feeling the loose pieces of straw brush against my forehead. I rested it on my shoulders and took my hands away.

Wearing the mask was unusual because the plaits of straw did not appear as plaits from this perspective. They were simply thick black vertical lines in my vision, obscuring my view of the kitchen scene which lay before me. I marched around with the mask over my face for a few seconds; the stationary mumming models my only audience. Fearing someone would come in and see me parading around in such a foolish manner made me remove the mask and return to my study space and continue transcribing an interview.

While my first encounter with a mumming mask occurred in private, each time I wore it after this was a much more public event. One such event where I wore the mask and witnessed its powers was at the International Masked Festival in Lisbon, Portugal. As explained in the previous chapter the presence of the Mummies' Museum led to new performance venues being sought. With new audiences to appeal to the mummies began to make new additions to the costumes they wore for these performances. One such addition was the White Horse of Benaughlin costume and character which was added to coincide with the Mummies' involvement with these international masked festivals.

The character of the White Horse of Benaughlin is loosely based around a number of folkloric and dramatic influences. These influences include the Hobby Horses used by other folk performance groups such as the wren boys in County Kerry, and the mummies in both England and Bulgaria. The character is connected to County Fermanagh through its similarities with the legendary white horse which is believed to live on Benaughlin Mountain.

The mask which was created for the White Horse character is visually striking. It stands out from the other straw clad mummies as distinctly unique and different. It is highly detailed with two glass eyes and a set of false teeth punctuating the face (Figure 45).



Figure 45: The Aughakillymaude Mummies' White Horse of Benaughlin costume.

©Mummies' Museum

The horse's head is made from bandages and plaster of Paris over a wire frame. This is placed on top of the wearer's head. A white sheet is attached to the bottom of the mask. This hangs down to cover the performer's face, body and arms. The sheet usually reaches the mummies' shins, which leaves their feet uncovered. A wooden pole, made from the handle of an old axe is attached to the inside of the mask. This is rested on the mummy's left shoulder. The pole is supported underneath by the left hand which ensures it can be kept steady on the head. The mummy can move the horse's jaw by pulling the metal pole attached to the base of its mouth (Figure 46).

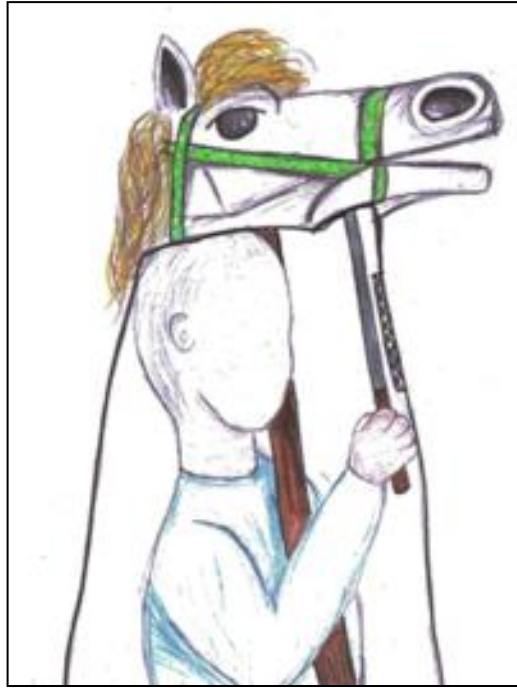


Figure 46: How a mummer operates the White Horse of Benaughlin mask

As part of the International Masked Festival in Lisbon, I accompanied the Aughakillymaude Mummers as a musician. The week-long carnival saw the mummers perform their play in Rossio square in the centre of the city, every day at around one o'clock. In the evenings, the musicians provided musical entertainment for the carnival goers in the form of staged concerts. The highlight of the event was a parade of seventy or so mumming groups from around Europe, on the final afternoon of the festival.

In preparation for this parade, groups of masked performers gathered in the town hall on Praco do Comércio square. Each mumming group was assigned a chaperone who was in charge of leading the mummers up Rua Augusta for the parade onto Rossio square. The chaperone carried a placard which displayed the name of the mumming group. The Aughakillymaude Mummers ordered themselves into two lines for the parade. The mummers were led by Prince George and Prince Patrick, who battled with swords and shields as they walked up the street. Following this was the White Horse of Benaughlin. On this occasion a young man named Ciaran was playing the White Horse character. Once we reached Rossio square Prince George and Prince Patrick would perform the mock fight on the stage in front of an audience of several thousand people (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Aughakillymaude Mummets and the White Horse of Benaughlin parading during the International Masked Festival in Lisbon, Portugal. ©Mummets' Foundation

The mummets marched the length of Rua Augusta. Several simple polkas were performed by the musicians as we marched in time with the music. The heat of the Lisbon sun was intensified by the heavy straw costumes which covered our bodies. I could feel the sweat rolling in streams down my face, which was partially covered by the straw mask.

As we marched up this street the White Horse broke away from the front of the group of mummets. It bolted ahead of us and snapped the mask's movable jaw at the audience members. Many covered their faces and laughed in reaction to the horse's antics. High-pitched screams from people being chased by the horse echoed between the walls of the tall buildings which lined the street. Lowering himself to allow the children to rub his snout the White Horse made neighing sounds, much to their delight.

Suddenly, the horse ran from the children towards a police officer who was overseeing the parade. Using the mask's movable jaw, the White Horse lifted the police officer's hat off his head. As the horse was about two feet taller than the officer this was not difficult. The police officer looked to his colleague, a stout, short man with droplets of sweat gathered in his thick black moustache. They both began to laugh and spoke to each other in Portuguese. The

police officer petted the horse on the snout and said something to him in English, which I could not hear. He pulled the hat out of the horse's mouth. The White Horse continued to gallop down the street through the crowds of people gathered on the footpath.

After the performance of the fight between Prince George and Prince Patrick, we retreated back down the street to the town hall. Once we reached the town hall the Aughakillymaude Mummers removed their straw costumes and packed them back into the boxes ready for another performance later that evening. I helped Ciaran remove the White Horse mask. Taking the mask off his head, he placed it into my hands. I positioned it upside down on the concrete floor.

Ciaran was soaked through with sweat. He stretched out his neck and rubbed his shoulder where the handle of the mask had rested. He looked physically exhausted; his slouched posture showing his tiredness. I asked him what the police officer said when he took his hat. Rubbing his hand across his brow, Ciaran replied, "They [the police] always arrest people when someone takes a police officer's hat, but he said he would let me go because he knew it was only a joke." Ciaran had committed an arrestable offence by removing the hat from the police officer's head. However, as he was wearing the White Horse mask in the context of the carnival, the police officer did not arrest him. Ciaran could not be seen as responsible for the behaviour of the White Horse.

This function of the mask was not only visible at these newer international, festival style performances. It also existed in the local performances which were staged in towns throughout County Fermanagh. As I observed at most of the mumming performances I participated in, the mask often led the wearer to behave unconventionally. Shy people often transformed into loud, boisterous characters when they performed in the mask. The mask gave the people the courage to participate and forget their inhibitions. However, unlike Ciaran, some young mummers did not engage with the mumming performance with the same intensity. They refused to wear the mask which, in turn, affected their ability to perform. One such performance where this occurred took place in Enniskillen in the lead up to the Christmas season.

The performance venue for the mumming play changed during the 1980s revival of the tradition, as discussed in the previous chapter. It went from being staged in the kitchen to being performed on the streets and in front of audiences in local public houses. As mumming changed again following the 1980s revival, it began to be staged in new venues. Street performances became even more popular than they were during the revival period. In one instance in the lead up to Christmas, the Aughakillymaude Mummies staged a mumming performance on the Diamond in the centre of Enniskillen town.

The mummies changed into their costumes, as usual, next to the Lakeland Forum, about a five minute walk from the Diamond. The cold December wind which blew off Lough Erne was punctuated with specks of freezing drizzle. Some members of the group were cold and seemed unwilling to change into their costumes. Brian Mc Manus, chairman of the Aughakillymaude Community Association, Jim Ledwith and I unloaded the costumes from the trailer as the other mummies looked on. I was particularly aware of a young man, aged between seventeen and nineteen, who had joined the group for this performance. He was loud and cheerful while chatting with the mummies; finding a space for himself in this otherwise tightly knit group of people.

He dressed in the straw outfit, with a hessian tunic underneath. However, he refused to wear the straw mask. The mummies did not appear to be concerned by his refusal to wear this part of the costume. He pulled a grey cap from the pocket of his coat and put it on his head. "I'll pull this down a bit, you won't know me then," he said to nobody in particular. The mummies were too busy getting themselves ready for the performance to pay attention. He stood to the side, with his cap in his hand and waited on the other mummies to finish changing into their costumes (Figure 48).



Figure 48: A young mummer wearing a cap instead of a mask. ©Mummies Foundation

As I observed throughout field work with the Aughakillymaude Mummers, younger mummers from their mid to late teens, quite often refuse to wear the straw mumming mask. They declared that the straw is “too itchy” and they “looked like a fool” when they wore them. Even if they do wear the mask, they usually do not pull it over their faces. They leave it to sit on top of their heads, like an elaborate conical party hat. Having said this, not all younger mummers refuse to wear the mask. Some, like Ciaran who played the White Horse in Lisbon, enjoy the prospect of dressing in this unusual costume.

We were performing the play on the Diamond in the middle of Enniskillen town. On our walk to the performance, the young man was drafted in to play the characters of Beelzebub and Old Dolan. He willingly volunteered to play both roles, which made me presume he was familiar with the rhymes recited by each of the characters. However, when he stepped forward as Beelzebub during the performance, he seemed quite nervous.

The young man walked quickly, and banged on the frying pan he had in his hand with a short stick. He began to speak the character’s rhyme, rushing through the words:

Here comes I, Beelzebub,
In my hand a club,
And a pan,
And enter in next, little Jenny Wren.

He spoke his lines rapidly and did not vary the pitch of his voice, which is often done when performing this role. It was difficult to decipher the words, as he spoke so quickly and quietly. He hurried to get out of the performance circle and back into the crowd of mummers. While the character’s appearance was notably shorter than usual, Captain Mummer did not react to this. He simply ushered Jenny Wren into the circle, and the performance continued.

After the fight between Prince George and Prince Patrick, the young man was called on again to perform as Old Dolan. Neither his mask nor costume changed from one character to the other. This time, the young man slouched his back. He hung his head to one side; the cap causing a slight shadow on the side of his face. Hobbling to the centre of the group of mummers, he spoke Old Dolan’s rhyme:

Here comes I, Old Dolan,
I've an ass on the brink of foalin',
I've a layin' hen,
And a clockin' duck,
And sure I wish yous all the best of luck.

While speaking, he imitated the voice of an elderly man and the performance was filled with confidence and charisma. He was not shy, as he was as Beelzebub, but was funny, and convincing as an elderly character. While this local performance staged on the streets of Enniskillen did not call for masks to be worn by all the performers, this has not always been the case in the mumming community.

My experience participating in these performances allowed me to see the different purposes fulfilled by the mumming mask today. I was interested to explore if the various purposes the mask holds in the present day mumming performance were the same in the pre-revival and revival periods. To do this, I spoke with several mummers from defunct mumming groups around the country. It became clear that in pre-revival and revival mumming, the mask served a much different purpose showing how both time and context act to change and define a social practice.

The evolution of the mask

Prior to the revival of the mumming tradition in the 1980s, the straw mask was the most popular form of facial disguise used by mummers throughout County Fermanagh. As farming was the main occupation engaged in by rural Fermanagh families, straw was always readily available. Groups of mummers would arrange to meet in their Captain Mummer's barn a few days before the Christmas mumming season began. Here, each mummer would construct their own mask for the mumming performances. The dense mesh created by the straw meant these masks were the perfect means for concealing a person's facial features (Figure 49).



Figure 49: A straw mumming mask near completion

Disguise was a very important element of the mumming tradition, especially prior to the 1980s revival. In small rural areas everyone was familiar with their fellow community members. There was no anonymity in these regions, unlike in larger towns and cities. As such, part of the evening's entertainment was guessing who was beneath the mask. However, the mask did not solely function to disguise the wearer in these rural communities where everyone knew each other. This was explained to me by Gilbert, a mummer from west County Fermanagh who was involved in the tradition during the pre-revival period.

As the following story told by Gilbert shows, the mask could serve different purposes depending on the audience for which the performance was staged. In the context of the visit to the rural house, the mask concealed and changed the mummer's identity:

Frankie [the Captain Mummer] was rolling for [keen to go to] this house. There was a man named Johnny Edwards with us that night. Anyway we went to this house and see Johnny had fallen out with this family. He wasn't too great with them. And poor Johnny didn't want to go in. "Oh Christ," he says, "I can't go in there." Frankie says, "Why wouldn't ya? Ya have a straw hat on ya. Them boys will not know a hate." So Johnny went in anyway. And we did the play. Johnny was a singer. So we stayed in the house and had some refreshments after we had done the bit of mumming. Frankie was well lit [drunk]. He wasn't fit to stand up nearly. And Frankie says real loud for everyone to hear, "Ah Johnny Edwards will you give us a song?" And Johnny was fit

to be tied behind the straw [mask]. [Gilbert. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. February 15, 2013. Pseudonyms used]

As Gilbert explained, Johnny was originally apprehensive about mumming in a venue where he had fallen out with the householder. The audience could not have recognised Johnny as his face was covered by the straw mask. However, once Captain Mummer was drunk he revealed Johnny's identity by calling his name out loud. This function of the mask as a form of disguise is an obvious one. It prevented the wearer from being recognised and allowed the performance to continue. It transformed the wearer into someone else. However, the function the mask served was not only to conceal the mummer during the performance. It also held a symbolic meaning in the mumming tradition.

Following the conclusion of the Christmas mumming season, groups of mummers were left with an assortment of straw masks which had been used for their performances. Straw was easily accessible in the pre-revival period. In addition, all members of the group were able to 'turn up,' or construct, a mask. As such, it was not necessary to keep these from one mumming season to the next.

As a result, the masks were usually burned, either on the final night of mumming performances or when the mummers held their Ball. In either case, the burning of these straw masks was not a private event. They were burned at rural crossroads, late at night, with the unmasked mummers present to witness their destruction. As one mummer named Hubert stated burning the masks at the end of the mumming season was a celebration:

You always left your own area to the last night. You finished up [mumming] on the last night and generally went to the crossroads up above where I live there. And the hats were burned there. There was always a sort of a diamond in the middle of the road, a kind of a green [grassy] area. And that's where the hats would be burned. If it was a good frosty clear night, there'd be great celebrations at the finish. Well one night we did very well. Got a lot more money than we intended to. We bought a couple of bags of sweets and we sat at the crossroads. It was a beautiful moonlit night. The stars were in the sky and we burned the hats and ate the sweets. [Hubert. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. September 25, 2012] (Figure 50)



Figure 50: An Aughakillymaude mummer throwing a straw mask onto a bonfire.

©Mummers' Foundation

Burning the straw masks at the crossroad became a celebration which marked the end of Christmas. It was not only a way of destroying the masks, but also gave the mummers a chance to celebrate the success of their mumming season. However, the revival of the tradition in the 1980s saw these ‘disposable’ straw masks replaced with other forms of disguise. Plastic masks and other culturally loaded forms of masking became popular.

With the revival of the mumming tradition during the 1980s, County Fermanagh’s society had undergone many changes. The kitchen was no longer a public space. The advancement of industrialisation meant that mass produced items were cheap and readily available in the shops of larger towns, such as Enniskillen and Lisnaskea. The presence of mass produced plastic masks, or “false faces,” as mummers called them, emerged during this period (Figure 51).



Figure 51: Plastic masks are still used in some folk performances, such as the Wren Boy parades in Dingle, County Kerry

While straw masks were still used during performances in the revival period, the convenience of the ready-made plastic mask appealed to many mumming groups. In one mumming group active during the revival, Beelzebub was disguised in a bright red devil's mask, with black horns and curly red hair. Masks of famous television characters, such as Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy were also included in one mumming group's performance.

While these masks were popular during the revival, they were often received negatively by those who participated in the annual Mummies' Competition, which was held in Enniskillen. As Brian Mc Manus from the Aughakillymaude Mummies explained, the plastic masks became a hindrance during the performances:

We started to use those false faces. You know with various types of ugly looking faces. Then we got involved in competition and there were judges. And I remember one of the judges making a comment that the rhyme couldn't be heard through the false face. And we found that ourselves and knew that it was not right. So we immediately got rid of them. And even today you still find mummies with those masks. And they may look funny and all the rest but they don't really do anything. They muffle the voice and stuff. [Brian Mc Manus. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. November 21, 2013]

As these false faces began to creep into the mumming performances, the organisers quickly outlawed them from the annual competition. As Jim Ledwith explained, their 'untraditional' nature meant they were not seen as appropriate additions to the mumming performance:

The threat in that time during the revival of mumming was the handiness of resorting to plastic bloody masks. The rubber masks. And mummies complained of other mumming troupes because they were wearing them and they couldn't hear what they were saying. Muffled rhymes in behind these masks. So I tried to ban any wearing of rubber masks. Because they [mummies] were appearing in monkey masks and any sort of bloody mask. Because they couldn't be arsed [bothered] going and using natural cloth or ribbons or things that they should have been wearing because that was tradition in the area. They were just grabbing something handy out of the bloody shop. And you keep that on and it wouldn't be long before there was feck all [very little] straw being used at all in it [mumming]. [Jim Ledwith. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

Jim's obvious contempt for the presence of plastic masks in the revival of mumming shows the value which was placed on not only performing a 'traditional' mumming play, but also appearing in what was deemed as an acceptable costume by the competition's committee. The presence of these modern false faces also impacted the sense of longevity and

immutability the mummers were trying to create for the tradition. This improvisation of the masks worn by the mummers during the revival was not limited to plastic masks. The pre-existing social divide in the area also contributed to the changes in masking during this period. Masks were influenced by the conflict which had unfolded in the region.

During the conflict, suspicion hung around groups of masked people roaming country roads late at night. This suspicion surrounding mumming groups continued into the 1980s, when the tradition was revived. As explained in chapter [insert], the conflict led to the mummers being attributed varying political identities by the audiences who viewed their performances.

These identities given to the mummers depended on the views of the audience present in the performance venue of the public house. However, it was not always the case that the audience created the identity for the mummers in the new performance setting of the public house. In the case of the following mumming group, the mummers themselves controlled the identity the audience created for them.

On an icy December night, I travelled to interview a mumming group, with mainly Protestant members, who had formed during the revival period in the 1980s. The ice and frost which covered the rural roads throughout the countryside delayed some of the mummers considerably. I arrived early to the hall where I was going to interview the group of mummers. As I walked in the door, a banner of King William the third on horseback greeted me. Walking past it into the main hall, I noticed the concrete plaques fixed into the walls, dedicated to various local members of the Loyal Orange Lodge. The entrance space made visitors aware that they were entering an Orange Lodge Hall.

I had seen a similar plaque in a hall in Newtowngore, County Leitrim. This was where I learned to play badminton when I was young. Noticing the white lines painted on the wooden floor, I realised they formed a badminton court. I looked up to the stage at the end of the hall, seeing a few Lambeg drums beside the black stage curtain. "Hello?" shouted someone from a room behind the main hall. "I'm in here," she said, her voice echoing around the hall. I walked through the hall and entered the kitchen where she was standing slicing a loaf of currant bread.

She offered me a cup of tea while we waited for the other mummers to arrive. “Are you from around?” she asked, presumably knowing my answer from my lack of a Fermanagh accent. “No. I’m from Carrigallen, in Leitrim,” I replied. “Oh. Carrigallen. That’s a lovely place. I know it well. Do you know the Reverend down there? She’s a lovely woman,” she asked. “No. No I don’t think I do,” I replied, presuming my lack of local knowledge about the Protestant community in my home town must have seemed ignorant. “Oh. I see,” she said, looking into her cup of tea. We sat in awkward silence for what seemed like an eternity but was probably only a few seconds. Reflecting on this encounter I was probably overly conscious of the ‘differences’ I perceived between us. My novice status as an ethnographer and indeed my own youth made me feel like I needed to find common ground for conversation.

“I see you play badminton,” I said, bringing the conversation to something I was familiar with. “Oh yes. Do you play yourself?” she asked. “Yes. I used to play down in Newtowngore,” I replied, hoping we had hit upon some common ground. “You did not!” she exclaimed excitedly. “I can’t believe it. We only played them here last week. In the league,” she said, becoming more excited as we continued talking. We continued to talk about the people from Newtowngore we both knew, until the other mummers arrived. When I consider the direction I took this conversation in, I wonder why I did not say I played badminton in Ballinamore or Carrigallen, other villages where I would have learned to play the sport. I probably chose to tell her I played in Newtowngore to try and let her know that I did in fact know members of the Protestant community from my own locality. Mentioning the name ‘Newtowngore’ seems to have been an attempt on my part to save face after confessing that I did not know of a person who lived less than fifteen minutes from my own home.

When the other mummers were all gathered together in the kitchen, we talked about the group’s involvement in the revival of the tradition and the history of mumming in the area. When we began to discuss the costumes used by their mumming group, the coordinator produced a photograph album from a bag underneath her chair. She flicked through the album, pointing to the different characters and explaining each of their costumes.

Noting a character in one of the photographs I did not recognise, I asked her who it was. To this, she responded, “That’s me. I was the Doctor. I was very dapper. I had a suit and a bowler hat. And I had a wee moustache, white shirt and a dickie bow.” She flicked through the remaining photographs, explaining how the group performed in public houses throughout

the county raising money for charitable causes. As the interview continued we began to discuss the musical instruments used by the group. The usual instruments were mentioned, such as the tin whistle and the accordion. However, one mummer explained that the group often borrowed fifes from the local Orange Order band for their mumming performances.

When I began to transcribe this interview later in the week I noticed the connection between the bowler hat used to conceal the Doctor's face and the fifes borrowed from the Orange Order band. Both items served to identify this mumming group, who had a Protestant majority population, as having a connection with the Orange Order. This meant that when the group entered a pub the audience immediately knew that they were associated with this cultural institution. The bowler hat was not used to shield the identity of the person underneath. It created an identity for the entire mumming group, rather than allowing the audience to form an identity for them. While it could be argued that the bowler hat was worn in a mocking context, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the hat was worn by mummers with close connections to the Orange Order, and in public houses where audiences would have known this particular mumming group's connection to the organisation. Therefore, it does not seem that the mask was worn to make a mockery of the Orange Order, rather was worn as a form of identification.

As became evident through my engagement in mumming performances and by speaking with previous mummers, it is difficult to find a common purpose for the mumming mask. As mumming has moved through the different periods of existence and has wavered over time, the mask has possessed different functions. Attention will now be paid to understanding each of these functions of the masks in the contexts they were used in.

Pre-revival masks: To conceal and mark time

As explored through the words of the mummers and the ethnographic vignettes, the mask has always been an integral part of the mumming performance. As the ethnographic vignettes in the first section of the chapter show, masks used in the mumming tradition have changed as it has moved from the pre-revival context through to the post-revival context. While it is interesting to see how the mask has physically changed through time, this is only part of the analysis of the role the mumming mask plays in the tradition.

The function and role the mumming mask plays from the pre to post revival periods should be explored from the perspective of the performer. While the visual appearance and physical composition of the mask is important, the mask's function in specific social and temporal contexts is centred on the interaction between the performer and the mask. This approach towards understanding the function of the mask has been developed by Elizabeth Tonkin (1979). As Tonkin stated, the relationship between a mask and its wearer may show how it functions, not only on the performer, but also on the audience (Tonkin 1979:240).

Tonkin stated that masks can be understood from two different perspectives. The 'mask,' signalled by the lower case 'm' is simply an object which covers the performer's face. This may be related to the straw mumming mask. When the mask is observed in a costume box, it cannot reveal anything about the purpose it serves in the mumming performance. It is simply a structure of plaited and knotted straw which is given life and purpose when worn by a mummer.

It is only when the wearer places the mask over their face and becomes conscious of the concealment of their own identity that it can have an effect on the performer. However, the 'effect' the mask has is not the same for all people who wear it. Indeed it is not 'the same' when worn in different performance contexts. The mask not only functions on the performer but draws its function from the social and temporal context it is used in.

While Tonkin stated that the function of the mask should be explored in conjunction with the wearer, the power the mask itself represents should not be underestimated. According to Tonkin, the performer often sees the physical mask as a form of power (Tonkin 1979:246). The mask is seen as an object which holds the power to potentially transform the identity of the wearer. Indeed this belief of power 'in' the mask was seen with relation to the pre-revival mumming performance. As explained earlier, Johnny did not wish to perform in a particular house, as he had fallen out with the householder. The Captain Mummer persuaded Johnny to go into the house by stating, "Ya have a straw hat on ya. Them boys will not know a hate." The straw mask had the power to conceal and alter the wearer's identity.

In this sense, the mask is a means of transformation which “help[s] the performer make her/himself into another person or being, existing at another time in another place” (Schechner 2003:191). Schechner explained that this transformation does not only change the identity of the wearer, but also locates them in another time and place. To view the mask simply as a way for the performer to transform into someone or something else, does not take into account the dynamic between the performer and the audience. This relationship is vital when considering how masks function in small, rural societies.

As Tonkin suggested the mask gives the wearer a completely new identity: the identity of the mask itself (Tonkin 1979:240). An audience member may be aware of the fact that underneath the mask is a person. However, the mask prevents the audience from seeing the person’s face; the audience can only see the mask. As a result, the audience may identify the wearer with the mask.

To return to Johnny’s use of the mask it is possible to say that he was not ‘Johnny’ during the mumming performance. Rather, he became a ‘mummer’ in both his own eyes and the eyes of the audience. Johnny’s identity was transformed by the mask. This change of identity allowed him to perform in front of an audience who would otherwise make him unwelcome. It was not until Captain Mummer called upon the mummer as ‘Johnny’ that he became ‘Johnny Edwards’ again. The fact that Johnny became annoyed once his true identity was revealed implies that he believed his identity was transformed by wearing the mask.

In the context of pre-revival mumming, communities were close and everyone was familiar with the members of the social group. As a result, the mask allowed for the performance to continue even in situations where the performers and audience members had fallen out with one another. Therefore, in this social context, the mask functioned to transform the identity of the wearer. However, the mask cannot solely be understood with relation to the role it serves in the mumming performance. Its position and value in the pre-revival mumming tradition as a whole should also be considered.

While the masks used in the pre-revival period served to transform the wearer's identity, this was not their sole function. The mumming mask was also used during this period as a marker of time. Creating these "living masks" at the beginning of the mumming season indicated that Christmas was approaching (Winter 2000:284).

The straw mask was 'born' when plaited together in the barns of Captain Mummers throughout the county. Once the mumming season concluded the masks were burned or 'killed' in a ceremonial fashion. They were not simply thrown to one side and forgotten about, but their disposal was part of the mumming tradition. This process of killing the mask has been explained by Richard Schechner (Schechner 2003:42).

The killing of the mumming mask in such a splendid fashion marked the end of the Christmas season for the mummers. The mumming mask holds in it the importance people placed on the tradition. The masks must be made new each year to reignite the value which is placed on the tradition. Therefore, the mask in this social context is not simply burned to be disposed of, but represents the continuity of the tradition. However, as the social context in which mumming was staged changed, so too did the purpose the mask held within the tradition.

Revival masks: False faces, the distortion of "true reality" and symbolism

As mumming was revived in the 1980s, the mask did not lose the functions it served during the pre-revival period. However, it began to physically change in response to the social contexts the mumming performance found itself in. The revival of mumming in the 1980s brought with it new forms of masks. The first of these was the plastic, shop bought mask.

As explained earlier mummers themselves decided not to wear these masks, as they hindered the performance of the play. This hindrance took the form of an alteration to their voices, a trait which Anthony Sheppard (2001) noted was present in most masked performances (Sheppard 2001:32). However, this was not the issue Jim believed was most problematic with the inclusion of these masks in the mumming performance. Jim expressed his strong dislike for the plastic masks. His attitude towards them seemed to be based on the principle of using something other than the 'traditional' materials to mask the face.

The straw mask may be seen to represent the old, traditional way of engaging in mumming; making the masks by hand and travelling to perform the play in rural kitchens. The wearing of the straw mask also serves to instil a sense of longevity to the social practice. However, the plastic mask functioned to represent what Ray Fogelson (1982) has termed the “true reality hidden behind the mask” (Fogelson 1982:75). When it was revived in the 1980s, mumming was a tradition struggling to survive in the face of a society still in the midst of social division. Therefore, it was not the plastic mask which Jim took issue with, but what that plastic mask represented; the decline of ‘traditional’ society. However, the changes to masks used during the revival period did not solely represent industrialisation. They also served as markers of social division.

One mumming group in County Fermanagh which was formed during the revival of the tradition in the 1980s used a bowler hat as a mask for their Doctor character. The hat as a symbol has been discussed by Anthony Buckley (1998), who stated that, “even today, no one buys a hat innocently” (Buckley 1998:6). The use of the bowler hat in the mumming performance staged during the revival may be overlooked as mere coincidence. However, the wearing of this hat in the context of the conflict should be considered.

The bowler hat is generally agreed to be a symbol of affiliation with the Orange Order, a Loyalist organisation. As Dominic Bryan (2000) explained, when bowler hats are used in conjunction with the Orange Order parades, they are universal symbols which “represent the Ulster Protestant to the rest of the world” (Bryan 2000:17). By a Protestant mumming group wearing this hat in the context of the conflict suggested an affiliation between the mumming group and the Orange Order. Its use in the performance was not a coincidence. By examining the materials from which this mask was constructed, it is possible to understand the “culture” of the person underneath (Nunley and McCarthy 1999:17).

Masks have the power to inform the audience of the wearer’s identity. Therefore, the wearing of the bowler hat in the context of the conflict in County Fermanagh displayed the mumming group’s affiliation with the Orange Order. The hat did not conceal or transform the identity of the person who wore it. Rather, it affirmed the association between the wearer of the mask, the mumming group and the Orange Order. As such the mask does not only function as a form of disguise, but can place the wearer into a predefined social category.

Post-revival masks: The mummer, the character and creating a mask with power

As mumming moved from the revival to post-revival period, the attitudes towards masks changed. Younger mummers sometimes exhibited a negative attitude towards wearing the straw mask. Other forms of mask, such as the cap, were used in their place. While the cap itself did not cover the mummer's face it still served as a mask, in the sense of Donald Pollock's (1995) definition of the minimal mask (Pollock 1995:584-85).

The mask, then, does not necessarily have to conceal the wearer's face. It can modify a person's behaviour by simply being present. The cap worn by the young man performing with the Aughakillymaude Mummers in Enniskillen did not conceal his identity, but it functioned as a mask. As such, the cap was seen to have transformative powers, not by covering the wearer's face but by being seen as a form of mask. This poses the question, why then did the young mummer perform one character more 'successfully' than the other when wearing the same cap?

The cap, as a mask, seemed to be linked to the character the mummer was performing as. The mummer may have been unfamiliar with Beelzebub's lines or uncomfortable performing without his face being concealed. He may have been nervous when performing the first character. For whatever reason, masks do not work in isolation of their wearer. They rely on the dynamic between the mummer and their character to function. Did the young mummer understand the character of Old Dolan better than Beelzebub, therefore the cap made sense? As such, power does not only reside in the mask, but also in the actor's perception of the mask.

Masks can possess the power to allow people to behave in ways which would be seen as unacceptable in 'normal' circumstances. Specifically, in the post-revival carnivalesque mumming performance, masks are vitally important elements. Eli Rozik (1997) noted that in the context of a carnival the mask allows performers to express themselves in a manner which is not deemed appropriate in everyday society; the wearer is "other than himself" (Rozik 1997:187).

Wearing the mask in the context of the carnival is only a temporary state of existence. Very few consequences exist for the masked performer engaged in a festival (Ottensberg 2010:341). Concealed by the White Horse mask in Portugal Ciaran was allowed to behave in a way which would not usually be permitted. This notion may help understand Ciaran's ability to steal the Portuguese policeman's hat without the conventional consequences. To fully understand the role played by the mask in this setting, this encounter should be considered without the presence of a mask or the festival atmosphere.

Without either the context of the festival or the mask, Ciaran would have been arrested for stealing the policeman's hat. The mask and festival setting together, functioned to create the "power" of the mask (Tonkin 1979:246). In the context of the festival the White Horse mask gave Ciaran the power to defy convention and escape without any repercussions. This new post-revival context for the mumming performance challenges the notion that the mask actually transforms someone's identity. Rather, it seems in this situation that the mask shielded the individual's identity. Ciaran was not changed by the mask, but was protected by it. In this context, the mask served to protect, rather than transform the individual.

Conclusion

This chapter explains how time and context act to change individual elements of a social practice, such as the masks worn by the mummers. These factors do not only change the physical appearance of the masks, but they also change how the masks are used, and what they stand for in terms of the audience's perception of this item of the mummers' costume. Changes in the masks used in mumming were not made in isolation from the social context in which the performance is staged. The mask was altered in response to political events, social movements, changes in performance venues and the desires of the audience. Masks are not stationary objects, remaining the same throughout time. Much like the mumming tradition, they are adapted to suit, and as a result, reflect the society in which they are used.

As the society surrounding the tradition changed, so too did the masks used in the mumming performance. They went from being a means of disguise to a means of representing a connection between present day mumming and that which was practiced in the past. The mumming mask does not solely transform and disguise the wearer's identity. It can both define and protect the identity of the person underneath depending on the context it is used in.

The mumming mask does not possess one singular function from the pre to the post-revival periods of mumming activity. Different functions become dominant depending on the social setting and environment in which it is used. The role of the mask in mumming is constantly changing. It is not possible to tie down exactly what a mumming mask does. In the context of the mumming performance, the mask is a slippery concept. It is symbolic of the indefinable meaning of mumming and the constant shift in its definition between different times and social contexts.

The mumming mask has always played a central role in mumming. Despite the tradition being defined by different groups as it has continued to be practiced, the mask has always been at the centre of the performance, both physically and conceptually. However, as mumming has undergone continuous bouts of redefinition, other elements of the tradition have come to the fore to represent the perceived longevity and immutability of the social practice. These elements include the music which accompanies the performance, which will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Nine: Mumming, music and the musician's role

Introduction

Written representations of mumming, such as play scripts and analyses of performances, contain very little information on the role of the music in the play. However, as a musician I was always curious to see how the musician was integrated into the mumming performance; from their experience of performing music with the mummers, to their position in the social group of performers. Having read several descriptions of the play prior to engaging in field work, I was under the impression that I would have very little to do at the mumming performances I participated in with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. I was wrong.

Musicians were an essential part of every mumming performance I attended. They did not fade into the background, but their role in the performance was always evident. As I continued through my field work, I began to wonder whether the musician had always played a central role in the performance or was this something which had been added as mumming was redefined? To answer this question, I will present some of my experiences of participating in the Aughakillymaude Mummers' performances as a musician. This will help to show how as time and context change the role of the musician also changes.

A musician dressed in straw

As I learned during my field work, one aspect of being a musician involves coming to terms with wearing the cumbersome straw costumes, which are an iconic part of the post-revival Aughakillymaude mumming performance. The first time I wore a straw costume while performing as a musician with the Aughakillymaude Mummers was at the International Masked Festival in Lisbon. Stood in a dimly lit hall amongst masked performers from all over Europe, I gazed at the large, battered 'Beleek Pottery' cardboard boxes, in which the mumming costumes had been transported from Ireland. The edges and corners of the boxes had been hastily taped together with brown packaging tape before they were shipped to Portugal (Figure 52).



Figure 52: Aughakillymaude mummer searching through a costume box

Gary Fitzpatrick, a flute player with the Aughakillymaude Mummers, ripped through the brown tape on the top of the cardboard box. He had taken control of distributing the costumes, so I presumed he was used to participating in these types of events. “Here we go,” said Gary with a slight smile, as I looked on with anticipation. As he opened the box a strange musty smell came from inside. The contents appeared to be a box of brown cloths, each folded into a square, about nine inches long and wide.

Gary took out a handful of these neatly folded brown packages and began to give them to the mummers who were standing around, chatting to each other. The handing over of these square shaped packages seemed to be the cue for people to cease talking and begin transforming themselves into mummers. I put my hand into the box and pulled out one of the neatly folded brown squares. The material was coarse to the touch. As I lifted it out of the box, the square lost its shape and took its true form. It was a long tunic made from hessian. All the tunics were uniform in size. This meant that they appeared larger on the smaller mummers, than they did on the taller people.

The hessian tunic serves as the base for the straw costume. It covers the mummies' own clothes and, as a result, the group are uniform in appearance. Being fashioned from hessian, the sack is incredibly itchy against bare skin. I pulled the tunic over my head and let it fall down my body. Wearing a vest and trousers under the hessian, I was not to know of the angry red rash it would leave on my shoulders for the rest of the week, after rubbing against them for two hours.

Once the hessian tunic was donned, I looked to the other mummies and decided to follow their example. They had wrapped a hessian belt around their waists to keep the tunics in place. I lifted out a long belt; its coarse texture felt strange against my clammy palms. Placing the belt around my waist, I became conscious that I had to play the flute while dressed in this costume. I tied the belt around my stomach rather than under my ribs, like the other mummies were doing.

As I tightened the knot on the belt, I realised I was moving much slower than the other mummies. Their many years of experience in putting on and taking off these costumes, meant they were accustomed to changing at speed. Gary, who was busy helping another mummy tie their skirt, paused to throw me the next part of the costume: the straw jacket. "Sorry. There's just small ones left," he said, as he turned his attention back to tightening the mummy's skirt.

The jacket was fashioned from wheaten straw. It consisted of a straw belt, from which several plaits hung to partially conceal the hessian tunic underneath. Following the example of the other mummies, I threw the jacket over my right shoulder and tied it under my left arm. It felt a little tight over my chest but I paid little heed. I was very conscious that I was much slower at putting on the costume than the other mummies. At this moment, Gary interrupted what had become a very stressful process by asking, "Are you left handed or right handed? You know, when you play the flute?"

"Right handed," I replied, as I lifted my hands up to mimic the action of playing the flute. As I did this, the jacket moved tight against my bare neck. The jacket's plaits sat on top of my right arm as I moved it upwards. Gary smiled, seeing my frustration at this. "Put it over the other shoulder. See those mummies, they don't have to think about playing the flute," he laughed, helping me untie the jacket and place it over my left shoulder.

Once the jacket was tied under my right arm, Gary, who looked quite comical in a long hessian tunic tied at the waist, lifted up a straw skirt from one of the costume boxes. I took it into my hands, surprised by its heavy weight. The skirt is quite similar in structure to the jacket. However, the straw dangling from the band was unplaited and remained in a loose form. This covered my lower body and legs. I wrapped it around my waist and tied it up, paying little attention to how loose the knot was.

I began to walk over to another costume box and felt the skirt slip down; my hips prevented it from falling to the ground. I opened the knot and pulled the skirt up to my waist, tying it tightly. As I pulled the knot together, the band of the skirt dug into my soft, fleshy stomach. Once I finished tying the knot I took in a deep breath, mimicking one I might take when playing the flute. As my body changed shape when my lungs filled with air, the skirt squeezed uncomfortably tight on my torso. Sighing, I let out the deep breath and loosened the knot on the skirt.

I learned, as I dressed in this costume many times after this occasion, that the straw skirt is an unpopular part of the costume for other musicians. One banjo player, who accompanied the Aughakillymaude Mummers on several mumming performances, had a particular antipathy for this skirt. He always adjusted the strap of his banjo, so its head was not resting on the band of the skirt and pushing into his stomach. As a result, the head of the instrument was too far up his body for his fingers to comfortably reach the strings. He was forced to bend his elbows in an unnatural manner in order to pluck them.

I was slacking behind the other mummers at this point as they were fully dressed and had begun to rehearse tunes for the performance. Gary, in his wonderfully mild manner, saw me frantically searching for the next part of the costume. He came bearing two items, both identical in size and shape. "These are the wee gaiters," he said, giving them a shake. This made the straw rustle slightly and little specks of white dust flew from them. "Just put them around your shins. The others have them up here," he said, pointing to his upper arm. "But us flute players don't wear them that way," he said.

I placed one of the gaiters around my shin and Gary bent down to tie it in place. It was quite difficult to move when the straw skirt was on my body. He tied the gaiters on by wrapping the Hairy Ned around my shin several times. Once both the gaiters were tied on, Gary turned to a costume box, rustling through it for a mask. As I stood stationary while waiting for Gary to return I felt the gaiters slip a little. I paid no attention, as I did not want to bother Gary any more than I already had. He was still unready for the performance, only wearing a tunic and belt.

Gary arose from his crouched position over the box of costumes with a straw mask in his hands. This straw mask was not the same as the ones I was familiar with from books and old photographs of mumming costumes. It had lost its conical shape. It was flat, but quite sturdy. The mask was entirely plaited, unlike the usual County Fermanagh mumming masks, which are made from unplaited straw. Gary pulled it into shape, as it had been flattened to transport it from Ireland to Portugal.

“Now, put this on. But you’ll be on the flute too so you can’t pull it down over your face like the rest of them,” said Gary. He placed the mask over his own head to demonstrate. “See, just rest it here and tilt it up. You’ll get the hang of it,” he said, lifting it off and placing it in my hands. I smiled in acknowledgement, as he turned to dress into his costume. I placed the mask over my head as Gary had shown and began walking to get my flute.

Within my first three steps the mask tumbled backwards off my head and hit the ground, rustling as it came in contact with the concrete floor. Bending down to pick it up, I was hindered by the straw skirt. I decided to hold the mask in my hands until I had my flute and was ready to practice this balancing act. Bending down again, I opened my wooden flute box. The bright green cloth lining inside the case became speckled with straw, a familiar sight throughout my field work with the mummers.

Throwing the mask over my head I put my flute together. Placing it on my chin with my lower lip ready to play, I felt straw from the mask irritate my eye. Using my right hand I brushed it away and moved the flute back to my mouth. I decided I would try to walk and play the flute at the same time, which is what the parade was going to entail. I practiced for a few seconds, until Jim yelled loudly over the chatter of a few hundred masked performers. “That’s

it! We're ready," he declared. He led us through the crowds of people and onto the courtyard, ready for the parade to begin.

As I learned through my field work, the musician must take into consideration their own requirements when putting on the straw costume used by the Aughakillymaude Mummers. It is never possible to put the mumming costume on 'correctly.' The more frequently the costume is put on and taken off, the easier it becomes to adjust it to your needs, as a musician. However, there will always be a part of the costume which will fall down or be too tight. A piece of straw will undoubtedly irritate your face, eyes or neck and cause a distraction. The imperfect nature of this costume reflects the haphazard and chaotic traits of the mumming performance itself.

On this occasion, being a musician as part of this performance was quite easy. The mask nearly topped from my head a couple of times but I managed to catch it before it fell to the ground and revealed my face. However, not all the mumming performances where I participated as a musician went so smoothly. During one performance which was recorded for BBC television, being a musician with the Aughakillymaude Mummers was an uncomfortable experience.

This event took place on a windy September afternoon in 2012. The Aughakillymaude Mummers were being recorded for a BBC television series titled *Towns with Nicholas Crane*. The mummers changed into their costumes at the Fermanagh House, a short walk from the Diamond in the centre of Enniskillen town, where the play was being recorded. The film crew recorded the mummers on their walk from Fermanagh House to the Diamond.

We walked along the footpath of the main road leading into Enniskillen town centre. The straw clad mummers were filmed walking past several shops, including a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, and a pet shop. The mummers looked a little out of place in this urban setting. We stopped at the traffic lights next to the pet shop. Waiting at the traffic lights for the little man to turn green and allow us to walk across the road, it struck me how distant this performance was from those staged in rural kitchens prior to the mumming revival. As the man on the traffic lights turned green, the group of twelve or so mummers and musicians trudged across the main road to a steep alleyway which led onto the Diamond. The film crew

stopped the parade of mummers in this alleyway and ran to set up their cameras to record the mummers' entrance.

The mummers were led up the alleyway and onto the Diamond by Dessie on the bagpipes. We were instructed by the director to circle around the camera as we entered onto the Diamond. Once the cameras had recorded our entrance, they were turned off. At this point, the director explained to the mummers what he required. These requirements meant that the performance unfolded in an unusual fashion. Clip on microphones were attached to the mummers' straw costumes to ensure their lines were audible.

Several sections of the play were recorded numerous times to improve the quality of the acting. There was a crowd of fifteen people gathered around the Diamond, who had taken time out of their shopping to watch this unusual spectacle unfold. The audience on this occasion consisted of a few elderly women carrying transparent plastic shopping bags, some teenage school children laughing and mocking the spectacle they saw in front of them, and a young Polish couple with a tiny baby in a pram. Such a diverse audience was a distant cry from the families gathered in rural kitchens who would have been the main audience in the pre-revival context. The very small audience meant that the atmosphere was dull. There was little interaction between the two groups, as the focus was on recording the mummers' lines.

It took about forty minutes for the crew to record the sections of the mumming play they needed for the programme. The director then asked to film the musicians: Gary and Luke on the accordions, Maeve on the bodhrán and I on the tin whistle. The musicians had been standing near a bench at the edge of the Diamond for the entire performance. In addition to the straw costume, I wore a pair of fingerless gloves to keep my hands warm and fingers limber. However, they had done little to combat the cool September breeze which swirled around the Diamond. The tips of my fingers had become cold and stiff, not ideal for playing the tin whistle.

Gary and Luke sat down on the bench to play their accordions, with much difficulty. The straw costumes are not very pliable and did not adjust to either the shape of the bench or the position of the musicians. Maeve and I stood either side of the bench. Our instruments did not need to be rested on our knees, unlike Gary and Luke who needed space to push and pull

the bellows of their accordions. However, this arrangement did not suit the director's vision for the shot.

"I think it would work better if they all sat on the bench," he said to the cameraman. The cameraman gave a slight nod to the director and the musicians. We took this to mean that we were to sit on the bench with Luke and Gary. Maeve and I took our places at either end of the bench. The cumbersome costumes made it difficult for the four straw-clad musicians to sit together. I sat with one leg over the edge of the bench, in an attempt to make more room for Luke and Gary to play. Being sandwiched between Maeve and me, it was difficult for the accordion players to play in a fluid motion. The director shouted, "Action," much to the musicians' surprise. Luke began to play *The Ship in Full Sail*. We all joined in on the repeat of the first part.

Unintentionally, the tune was played in quite a choppy manner. On every eighth note Gary would push his elbow into my side in an attempt to make a little more space for him to play. To make this experience a little more bearable, I decided to close my eyes while I played. While playing the tune, I held my head quite low to ensure the brim of the mask did not interrupt the air flowing over the blade of the tin whistle. My fingers had become stiffer while playing. It was difficult to keep up with the pace of the tune, which was getting steadily faster as we continued playing.

The rapid pace at which we played seemed symbolic of our desire for this disastrous performance to end as soon as possible. Coming to the end of the tune, it became clear that none of the musicians were sure whether we should repeat the tune a third time, or begin another tune and make it into a set. We crashed to a finish. I went to repeat the tune a third time but realised both Gary and Luke had stopped playing. Maeve stopped playing once I took the whistle from my mouth in the middle of a bar. After what may only be described as a disastrous performance, I opened my eyes. I was quite shocked to see a video camera and boom microphone directly in front of me.

A gust of wind picked up at this point and blew through the square. This caused the boom pole's fluffy grey exterior to flutter momentarily. The cameraman looked to the director. "Yep. That'll do," he said, turning to walk back to the centre of the Diamond. The cameraman

closed the screen on the video recorder and followed the director. Thus ended a particularly poor performance.

The costumes worn by the musicians and the instruments we chose to play greatly hindered our ability to perform on this occasion. We were not only physically uncomfortable during the performances, but our musical abilities were hindered because of the combination of the instruments and straw costumes. However, the cumbersome costumes and instruments with awkward requirements were not always part of the mumming tradition. As mumming has moved from the pre to post-revival period, the instruments played during the mumming performance have changed dramatically. Again both time and context have acted on mumming to change and define it, as will now be examined.

Social trends and the advancement of industrialisation stimulated the changes in music which accompanied the mummers. In pre-revival mumming, the instruments used to accompany the mummers changed quite rapidly. As I learned through interviews with County Fermanagh mummers who were active during the pre-revival period, there were many ways of providing music for the performance.

Lilting was one simple form of music production which popularly accompanied pre-revival mumming. It involves the manipulation of the mouth and vocal chords to imitate the sound of various musical instruments. As a method of music making, it was popular because it was not paid for, like a more formal instrument. While musical instruments were sometimes costly, lilting was a means of producing music without incurring a financial expense (Vallely 1999:215). As a cheap and portable means of producing music, it was quite popular within the custom of mumming, as Dessie Reilly from the Aughakillymaude Mummers explained:

If somebody was dancing and you had no instrument you lilted for them to dance. That's Puss Music. You often heard tell of somebody saying, "I'll give you a slap in the puss." In the mouth, you know. [Reilly, Dessie. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. November 21, 2013]

There is immense skill in producing rhythmical musical phrases using "nonsense words [and] meaningless syllables [such as] 'dithery-didle', dahm-tee-damtery'" (Vallely 1999:215). As Dessie stated, lilting was used when more 'formal' instruments were

unavailable, or there were no musicians present to play music. However, this form of ‘innovated music’ as I term it, was not limited to liling. It also involved using everyday items such as the comb and paper to provide music for the mummers.

The comb and paper was a popular method of music making within the pre-revival mumming community. Composed of two pieces of everyday equipment, a hair comb and a piece of waxed paper, it was a cost-efficient instrument to produce. A former mummer from the Cavan-Leitrim border of County Fermanagh named Hubert explained how the comb and paper would have been made and played by a musician:

Comb with the paper over it. Aye the brown paper. Put that over the comb. And play the comb, d’ya see. Play a tune on the comb. [Mc Morrow, Hubert. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. September 25, 2012]

This type of improvised instrument would have been an extremely popular means of producing music during the pre-revival period, when people could not afford to purchase musical instruments. However, it was not as successful in large, open street performances, as Ron Shuttleworth, curator of the Morris Ring Archive in Coventry, England, explained to me.

Ron stated that the comb and paper would not have been audible in noisy locations, where there was passing traffic and other sources of noise (Shuttleworth, Ron. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie). As such, it was not used by outdoor performers in England, such as the Morris Men. However, the comb and paper suited small, indoor performance venues, such as the houses visited by mummers during the pre-revival period. Improvised forms of music, such as liling and that produced by the comb and paper, were not the only method of music making available to mummers in the pre-revival period. Cheap, mass produced instruments were also popular.

The Jew’s harp was used by some groups of mummers. As an affordable instrument, the popularity of the Jew’s harp, also termed the Trump or French Fiddle in County Fermanagh, persisted into the mid-1900s. Many mummers from County Fermanagh reported that it was used in local mumming groups. Being a cheap and transportable instrument, the Jew’s harp allowed the mummers musical accompaniment wherever they went.

The Jew's harp was viewed by some as an instrument played by people with little disposable income and it was commonly believed that the players had little discernible talent for music (UFTMQ: C6909). Many other cheap instruments were viewed with a similar mindset, especially in relation to their use in the pre-revival mumming performances. One such instrument was the mouth organ.

The mouth organ was similar to the Jew's harp as it was cheap and mass produced in Ireland (Irish Press 27/01/1962:7). Its music is more note-based, unlike the Jew's harp, where producing music involves manipulating the mouth to create notes. Mouth organ music was often credited by County Fermanagh mummers as the best music to dance to. Peter McManus, a former mummer from Kinawley, County Fermanagh, explained to me the perceived status of the mouth organ as an instrument, and that of the mouth organ player:

In earlier times, I remember my father saying that the mouth organ, it was the poor man's instrument. Because they were cheap to buy. Thrupence at that time in the 1930s. They would have been about five or six pence in old money. So it was the poor man's musical instrument. Every house or every child could afford to buy one of those. It was great music though. [Mc Manus, Peter. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. October 25, 2012]

The mouth organ was cheap to purchase and, as such, was accessible to people with little financial means. This is how it got the name as "the poor man's instrument." As the mass production of instruments continued, other types of instruments began to be shipped across from England to Ireland. Such instruments found their place in the pre-revival mumming performance.

Unlike the mouth organ and Jew's harp, the tin whistle was not manufactured in Ireland. It was produced in England and became exceedingly popular within mumming groups. As Francie Doherty from the Kinawley Mummers in County Fermanagh explained, the tin whistle was the ideal instrument to bring along with the mummers, as it was easy to transport and required little maintenance:

When you go out on the road, you wouldn't bring the pipes with you. You'd bring the tin whistle. The Clarke's tin whistle. That's the old black whistle. You wouldn't see too many of them now. [Doherty, Francie. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. October 25, 2012]

Being originally quite an expensive instrument, the mass production of the tin whistle led to its affordability. Its popularity in mumming may have been due to its cheap price and ease of transportation from one performance to the other. The tin whistle could be put in the musician's pocket and pulled out whenever it was needed. This was in contrast to instruments such as the bagpipes which needed constant care while out on the road. Some mummers even carrying hot water bottles to keep the pipes in tune (Colton, John. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. January 14, 2013; Figure 53).



**Figure 53: Dessie Reilly playing the bagpipes with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. ©
Mummers' Foundation**

Instruments such as the mouth organ, Jew's harp and tin whistle were made more affordable when they were mass produced. As the mass production of musical instruments continued, other instruments such as the accordion and fiddle became popular in mumming groups during the pre-revival period. With people spending "the price of a farm of land," on musical instruments such as the Paolo Soprani accordion, protecting these expensive pieces of equipment during the mumming performance was important (Maguire, Sean. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Enniskillen, Fermanagh. June 30, 2012; Figure 54).



Figure 54: Musicians playing accordions with the Aughakillymaude Mummers.

©Mummers' Foundation

Due to the costly nature of the accordion, it was vital that the instrument was protected from the elements when walking from one house to another. Rain, snow and cold could harm the reeds and bellows of the instrument, causing irreversible damage. As Hubert McMorrow explained, musicians always protected their instruments when it began to rain during the mumming season:

You see a very great problem then was too if the night got wet. And trying to save the accordion. Was a huge job you know? And a fella would be trying to keep it inside of his jacket. [Mc Morrow, Hubert. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. September 25, 2012]

However, there were often instances where expensive instruments did not survive the cold and wet endured during a night of mumming performances. As Sean Maguire, a musician with several mumming groups during the pre-revival period explained, fiddles often fell apart after being in contact with adverse weather:

Many the ones of them [fiddles] would come to the wall [get destroyed]. Of a bad, wet night and no case on the fiddle. The fiddle the next day would fall asunder. And when she'd be brought home and dried to get the heat, you'd get up the next morning and she'd be in a pile on the table. [Maguire, Sean. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Aughakillymaude, Fermanagh. November 21, 2013]

If the instruments used in the context of today's post-revival mumming performances are considered, fear of the impact of the weather on musician's expensive investments still persists. At the first sight of rain, musicians refuse to take their fiddles and accordions out of their cases. I remember participating in one parade with the Aughakillymaude Mummers on a particularly grey afternoon. I never played my 'good' flute or tin whistle with the mummers, for fear of it getting bashed, wet or too cold at outdoor events. I relied on my black Susato concert whistle, which was light and easy to carry around.

However, some mummers played their pricey flutes, accordions and fiddles at all the mumming performances. At this particular performance on a grey afternoon, the combined value of the three flutes being played was around €7,000. When the skies opened and the rain soaked the mummers, it began to plop onto the deep black wooden exterior of these flutes. Swiftly, each of the flute players cloaked the instruments with their arms; huddling together to protect them.

Little has changed with regards to the musician's attitudes towards their musical instruments. There is still fear of them getting damaged and ruined by the weather. While this fear felt by the musician has not changed much from the pre-revival to post-revival period, changes have been made to the role the musician actually serves in the mumming performance.

From pre-revival to post-revival: The role of the musician

During pre-revival mumming, musicians were pushed to the physically liminal spaces of the performances. When the play was staged in the kitchen they were not at the centre of the performance, but faded to the edges. This allowed the mummers to form the centre of the performance. As Sean Maguire explained, musicians usually occupied the doorway of the kitchen during these pre-revival mumming performances:

I was the musician, I was always playing. He didn't come in until last. He played outside until everybody came in. And then he'd come in, he stood with his back again[st] the door. [Maguire, Sean. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Enniskillen, Fermanagh. June 20, 2012]

The musician previously occupied the physically liminal space in the performance, wavering between the periphery and the centre. As mumming has moved into the post-revival period, the physical location of the musician has come to reflect the musician's central role in the mumming performance. The musicians, and indeed the music they perform have moved

to the centre of the mumming performance, both physically and conceptually. As the social contexts have changed there have been significant changes to the perception of music in the tradition. When we compare this reception of the changes in the musical elements of the tradition to those explained in the previous chapter on masking, some differences can be observed.

In the previous chapter, it was explained that the plastic mask was not looked upon favourably when it was added to the mumming tradition. However, if we consider additions to the musical element of the tradition, such as the new types of instruments used, it can be seen that these were willingly accepted. One reason for this may have been that musicians are now seen as so integral to the mumming performance that the musicians are allowed to play whatever they choose. This can be seen through the following statement from Jim. Throughout my field work, Jim was adamant that musicians were the most important part of the mumming performance. “If there’s no musicians, there’s no mummers,” he would say, every time a mumming performance was being organised. The musicians are different from mummers. As Jim explained, “anyone can get up and say a few lines in the play. But to play music, you have to be a musician. Not everyone can do that.”

Another reason these new instruments may have been accepted into the mumming tradition is because they tie in with the sense of longevity which some mumming groups try and emphasise. The traditional music played on these new instruments may have been seen to hold a connection to the past. However, a plastic mask bought from the local costume shop may not lend itself as easily to creating a sense of longevity for the mumming tradition.

The notion that the music actually being part of a performer is something I have defined as “the tunes existing in a very real sense in the musician” (Finnegan 2011:49). However, in the case of the post-revival mumming performance, the relationship between the musician and the music they play does not end here. The instrument also becomes a part of the musician, somewhat of an extension of the body.

The implication that a musical instrument actually becomes part of the musician’s body during a performance is a relatively popular one within organology and ethnomusicology. As Luc Nijs, Micheline Lesaffre and Marc Leman (2013) explained the

musical instrument can feel like an addition to the musician's anatomy during a performance. The musical instrument actually becomes "integrated in the bodily coordination system" (Nijs, Lesaffre and Leman 2013:3).

As a musician straps on their guitar, holds the flute to their mouth or places the fiddle on their shoulder, the person's body changes. The musician becomes aware of the instrument and treats it as part of their body. They physically accommodate it. The musician's "softer body... must conform to the harder instrument" (Morgan 2008:12). The human is the more pliable form, so they must alter the position of their head or change how they hold their arms and legs, in order to play an instrument. However, for the musician in a mumming group, they must adapt their body again to account for the presence of the straw costume. This shows how the context of the performance changes even the most essential element of the mumming play: the human performer.

The musician must not only alter their body to suit the musical instrument, but they must also take into account the presence of a large, coarse straw costume covering their entire body. As I learned from being a musician with the mummers, the presence of the musical instrument is always on the musician's mind. The major concern is how best to place the costume on the body to cause the least hindrance for the playing of the musical performance. The musician feels the instrument on par with another limb on their torso.

However, the instrument is not a permanent addition to the body during the musician's mumming performance. It can easily be placed on the ground or a bench, and be physically separated from the musician. Yet, the physical changes which the playing of the instrument force upon the musician are still evident even when the instrument is taken away. For the flute player, the mumming mask still rests on the back of the musician's neck. For the banjo player, the mumming skirt is tied further up their body than anyone else's.

The hassle of carrying around the instruments whilst wearing the heavy straw costumes in baking sun, freezing cold and blustering winds still remains in the memory of the musician. The memory of desperately trying to tilt my head and strain my neck to keep the mumming mask on while parading and playing the flute, is one which I will not forget from

performing with the Aughakillymaude Mummers. While the instrument may not be physically attached to the body, it leaves an impact, both physically and psychologically, on the musician.

Once a musician becomes accustomed to the physical way in which they must adjust their body to play a musical instrument, performance becomes slightly easier. When the balance between the physical presence of the musical instrument and the performance situation is met it is possible to engage in a more comfortable performance. This state of comfort has been defined as “flow experience” (Nijs, Lesaffre and Leman 2013:6).

Flow experience is the musician’s total engagement with a piece of music. In order for it to occur, the musician should be of sufficient capability to assess the performance situation and suit their performance to its demands. In addition, the musician must know what is expected from them as they play. They should be aware of what their performance should attempt to achieve. As such it should be “goal directed” (Dawe 2010:110).

This means that playing music is directed by the goals the musician wishes to achieve. Whether these goals are learning a new tune, putting on a performance for a half-full local theatre or performing at an international concert, there is always a goal at the heart of playing. When there is no goal, or the goal is unclear, the result can be an inability to achieve “flow experience,” during the musical performance.

It is sometimes difficult for the musician to experience flow during their performance, especially when dressed in a mumming costume. It was painfully obvious during the mumming performance for the television programme presented earlier, that the musicians did not experience flow. We could not cope with sitting on the bench together and playing in unison. Being squeezed onto the bench in cumbersome straw costumes meant there was little room for us to physically adapt our bodies to play to the best of our abilities. The musicians did not cooperate and the result was far from an ‘in time’ performance. The context of the recorded performance defined how we were to behave.

There was no obvious aim for this performance. We were unsure of what was required from us; to stop playing after a single repeat of the tune, or to continue until the director asked us to stop. While I was positive that our musical performance was subpar on this occasion, it turned out that it was not significant for the resulting television programme. When the programme aired about five months later, there was only a small segment of our music included in the final edit.

The narrator spoke over what little of our musical performance was used. The tune was barely audible and I wondered why I had worried about the quality of our musical performance. The unique sight of these straw clad bodies playing musical instruments was the focus of the shot, not our musical abilities. Our poorly played rendition of the jig faded into the background. As John Blacking (1976) stated, “Musicians know that it is possible to get away with a bad or inaccurate performance with an audience that looks but does not listen” (Blacking 1976:10). The music was not important. It was not necessary for it to be perfect as the visual spectacle was at the centre of this performance.

Conclusion

As mumming has moved from the pre-revival to post-revival period, changes to the musical instruments and role of the musician have occurred. While music has always possessed a central role in mumming, the experience of being a musician has changed over time. The changes to the musical instruments used in mumming performances show how industrialisation and mass production influenced the manner through which musicians provided music for the mumming performance. While the instruments played by the musicians have changed, they still have the same desire to protect them during the performances.

However, the experience of being a musician for the mummers has changed significantly in line with the performance contexts. Where the musician once occupied the liminal spaces of the performance, they have now come, both conceptually and physically, to the centre. This can be seen in the form of the parades where the musician is the main focus of the event. While the musicians have come to occupy the space which was once reserved for the mummers, their experience of performing here can be understood from a different perspective.

The musicians do not experience performing at the centre of the mumming performance in the same manner as the mummers. Unlike mummers, the musician's costume does not hide their own identity. If anything the costume heightens the musician's sense of their own role. They must adapt the costume in a specific manner to perform as a musician. As a result, musicians and mummers do not experience the mumming performance in the same ways. The mumming performance allows for mummers to relax their social roles and responsibilities. However, through the chaotic and haphazard nature of the mumming performance, the musician's own sense of their role within society, that is, to be an entertainer, intensifies.

Finally the role of music and the musician in the mumming tradition, adds to the interpretation of how mumming can be defined. While the music has always been at the conceptual centre of the mumming performance, it is only in the post-revival period that the physical space they occupied in the performance came to reflect this. This shift shows that while the meaning of mumming has changed from the pre to post-revival periods, music has functioned to ground the tradition while these changes occurred.

Music and disguise are only two of the elements of the tradition which have remained at the centre of mumming as it has been redefined. Another important element of the performance which has consistently occupied the centre of the tradition is the audience. They are the reason the play is staged and, as will be discussed in the following final chapter, they influence how and why mumming is staged differently depending on the context it is performed in.

Chapter Ten: The audience and the mumming performance

Introduction

Participating in mumming as both a musician and a mummer allowed me to understand what it is like to be a performer with the group. While performing at an event in Enniskillen Diamond, an audience of thirty or so people were gathered around. At one point, the White Horse of Benaughlin snapped his mouth at a small child standing close to the performance. The child began to cry, holding onto his mother's leg while she stroked his head and laughed at his reaction. At this point it dawned on me that my understanding of the mumming performance was coming from one perspective: that of the performer.

From this point, I made a conscious effort to understand the performance from the view of the audience. I had become so engaged in performing the play and playing the music, it was a little strange when I refused to put on a straw costume and participate in the performance. The performer inside me itched to be involved in the staging of the performance. However, by standing back and viewing the performance from the perspective of the audience, I came to develop an understanding of the important role they play in influencing how the mumming play is staged and defining its purpose in different performance situations. As a result of this insight the following chapter will argue that the audience play an integral role in defining the meaning of mumming in different contexts.

Of course, it was not always possible to just stand back and let the mummers perform. Sometimes, when they were short musicians or needed someone to fill a part in the play, I always volunteered. However, in these instances, I watched the audience's reactions from behind the mask. This final chapter will be dedicated to exploring the mumming performance as seen by its various audiences and how their presence influenced the very performance which was staged.

Make way for the 'free' mummers

I sat in my car outside the Tilery nursing home in County Fermanagh on New Year's Day. It was about one o' clock. The Tilery was the first stop on the Aughakillymaude Mummer's New Year's Day tour of County Fermanagh nursing homes. The ground was still covered with last night's frost, and the sun seemed to have no intention of melting it. The

heating system in my elderly Opel Corsa was broken, so the chilly January air crept into my car.

The nursing home is not what would be termed a ‘traditional’ performance context for the mummers. It is only in the last twenty years or so that they have begun staging their plays in this setting. This tour of the nursing homes on New Year’s Day seems to have replaced the pre-revival tradition of house visiting, and the revival tradition of visiting local public houses. By performing for nursing home residents in the community the mummers seemed to be recreating memories of times gone by for these elderly people. By performing something the elderly community identified as being from their youth the mummers reinforced the sense that mumming possesses longevity.

Dessie Reilly was the first Aughakillymaude Mummer to arrive. He pulled his car up next to mine. I opened the passenger door of Dessie’s car and sat into the seat. “Well a happy New Year to ya,” he said, smiling and welcoming me into his car. “You haven’t been on this round with us before, have you?” he asked. I shook my head. “We usually do about seven homes in the day. I’ll cross over myself twice or three times before I make it home!” he exclaimed.

Brian Mc Manus, the chairman of the Aughakillymaude Community Association, was next to arrive. He was driving a minibus to transport the mummers around County Fermanagh for the day. Attached to the bus was the costume trailer. Brian parked it a few metres away from Dessie’s car. Once the engine stopped, the mummers in the back of the bus opened the door and climbed out. They exchanged very little conversation with one another. Everyone seemed intent on getting the performance started as quickly as possible.

Brian stepped out of the driver’s seat of the minibus and slammed the door shut. The mummers waited patiently for him to open the trailer. They stood with their hands in their pockets. Their breath turned to steam as they shuffled from one foot to the other, trying to keep warm. T.P. Owens, Captain Mummer for this performance, began to unload the costume boxes from the trailer. The mummers swiftly dug into the boxes and pulled out their costumes.

“You going to play today, Threase?” asked Brian, offering me the hessian tunic in his hands. On this occasion, I wanted to experience the mumming play from the perspective of the audience. “No. Not today. I’ll just watch,” I replied. “Right so. If you’re sure,” said Brian, turning back to the mummers to oversee their preparations for the performance. I decided to go into the nursing home and see where the mummers would be performing.

The nursing home’s receptionist showed me into the day room; the stage for the mumming performance. “They’re all excited. They’ve been looking forward to this since Christmas,” she said, speaking on behalf of the nursing home residents gathered in the room. She turned and walked back to her desk at the front door.

I stood in the doorway of the day room. There were about sixteen elderly women and one man seated along the walls of the brightly lit room. The watery January sun shone in through four long windows, which faced out onto the nursing home car park. I tried to predict the direction the mummers would face for the performance and I tucked myself behind two tall wooden chairs, in which two elderly ladies were seated.

The sound of inflating bagpipes suddenly filled the air. Their unmistakable squeal made several of the elderly women look up from their magazines. Two ladies sitting near the window turned their heads to look into the car park. “Oh it’s the mummers,” exclaimed one of the ladies. “I used to be so scared of them when I was a wee nipper [child],” she said. No one responded to her comment. The other people moved in their seats, straining their necks to see the mummers following the bagpiper across the car park. The usual character who took the second place position in these types of parades was the White Horse of Benaughlin. However, on this occasion, the newly created White Horse did not feature.

Captain Mummer followed after the bagpiper and carried aloft the Aughakillymaude Community Mummers’ sign. On reaching the nursing home entrance he pressed the doorbell. The receptionist opened the door and the bagpiper entered into the hallway. He paused in the hall, as he fixed his bagpipes and played a march while entering the room. The mummers followed him in and marched around the room in time with the music (Figure 55).



Figure 55: Bagpiper leading the mummies into the performance

Some women in the audience clapped along with the music while others sat and watched the mummies intently. One woman tapped the shoulder of the lady sitting next to her, who appeared to be asleep. She opened her eyes momentarily, and closed them again. Once the music finished the mummies retreated to the hallway where they waited to be called to perform. Dessie stood next to a window in the day room while Captain Mummer strided with a purpose to take his place at the centre of the room.

Captain Mummer began the play by reciting his rhyme. He threw one hand out wide, while holding the ‘Aughakillymaude Community Mummies’ sign in the other. Wandering around the room, he loudly reciting the following words:

Here comes I, Captain Mummer,
And all me merry men and women.
Room, room gallant people,
Give us room to rhyme,
And we’ll show you some activity,
For this is festive time.
We’ll act the young,
We’ll act the old,
We’ll act what was never acted on any stage before.
And if you don’t believe in what I say,
Enter the accordion player and he’ll not be long clearing the way (Figure 56).



Figure 56: Captain Mummer reciting the opening rhyme with the sign in his hand

Captain Mummer swung around to face the hallway where the mummies were waiting. He invited Gary, the accordion player into the room by waving his hand. Gary pushed his way through the other mummies into the room. He entered with his accordion slung over his left shoulder. In his right hand he carried a small four legged wooden stool. He walked at a slow pace to the centre of the room, placed the stool on the ground and sat down.

Gary played a set of reels I had not heard before. They were fast and lively. Some of the women tapped their feet along with his playing. One elderly woman swayed from side to side in her chair. She swayed slowly, out of time with Gary's playing. Another woman's legs were covered by a yellow and brown patchwork blanket, which jumped up and down as she energetically tapped her feet along with his music (Figure 57).



Figure 57: Gary playing the accordion for the audience

Once Gary finished playing, some of the audience applauded his performance. Others sat silently staring out the window or sleeping in their chairs. Gary slung his accordion over his shoulder, and returned to the hallway to join the rest of the mummers. He took his seat and Captain Mummer gestured to the hallway again. From the group of mummers, a character in a straw costume and a grey cap rushed to the middle of the room. In his hands he carried a short stick and a battered frying pan. He banged the pan four times with the stick and began to recite his rhyme:

Here comes I, Beelzebub,
And under my arm I carry my club.
And in my hand a frying pan,
Amn't I a jolly wee man.
If you don't believe in what I say,
Enter Jenny Wren and she'll clear the way (Figure 58)



Figure 58: Beelzebub

Beelzebub paused for a few seconds before calling upon Jenny Wren. After calling on the character, he rushed back into the hallway and pushed himself to the back of the group of mummers. A young woman entered the room upon his exit. She moved from one foot to the other, while flapping her arms up and down. She was covered by a yellow hooded cloak with tassels hanging from the arms. As she moved around the room she recited her rhyme:

Here comes I, wee Jenny Wren,
Queen of all the birds,
Although I am so little my family is great,
Rise up good landlord and give us a trate,
Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
Nine or ten bob to bury the wran (Figure 59).



Figure 59: Jenny Wren

Once Jenny Wren finished, she stopped flapping her arms and walked quickly back to the hallway. Without an introduction, Brian Gunn entered the room. He carried a shield made from a circular metal bin lid and a wooden sword. Banging these together, he startled one of the sleeping ladies. She opened her eyes, mumbled something under her breath and closed them again (Figure 60).



Figure 60: Bauld Slasher

Brian's body was covered by a hessian tunic, hessian trousers and a black cap on his head. He strode over to Captain Mummer and began his rhyme by declaring, "Oh yes! Here comes I, Bauld Slasher." As Jim informed me, the word 'Bauld' is the local pronunciation for 'Bold.' "Oh no," exclaimed one of the elderly ladies. She quickly covered her mouth with her hand and looked around the room to see if anyone heard her. Bauld Slasher walked over to Dessie, who was standing next to her.

Dessie wore a silver sequin vest, which imitated chainmail armour, and a metal helmet. He also carried a wooden shield and a mace. The shield had a green background and a white Celtic cross painted on it. Bauld Slasher hit Dessie's shield with his sword. The ladies sitting around Dessie jumped, and then laughed. Bauld Slasher strode to the centre of the room and continued his rhyme by shouting at Dessie:

I will sort you out.
I'm the strongest man you've ever seen.
Me body made of iron,
Me head made of steel,
There's not a man here to make me kneel.

Dessie walked away from the women and stood in front of Bauld Slasher. "Here's a man here will sort him," said one of the ladies. Wielding a mace over his head, Dessie began his rhyme by saying, "I am Prince Patrick, and I am the man to make you kneel." Prince Patrick and Bauld Slasher were face to face at this point. "Kneel," shouted Prince Patrick, pointing his mace towards the ground. The elderly man in the audience clapped his hands together at this point and leaned forward in his chair. Bauld Slasher pushed his shoulder against Prince Patrick and responded by saying:

Who are you but Saint Patrick's stable boy?
You fed his horse on oats and hay for seven days,
Then you ran away sir.

Some of the audience laughed on seeing Bauld Slasher circle Prince Patrick while imitating a galloping horse. Prince Patrick spread out his hands, a mace in one and a shield in the other. He spoke loudly while strolling around the room:

I am Prince Patrick,
Dressed in armour bright,
Amn't I a noble champion,
Likewise a gallant knight.
Champion of all Ireland,
Many's the many a year,
And I have come here today sir,
To show you no fear (Figure 61).



Figure 61: Prince Patrick

Prince Patrick and Bauld Slasher were again face to face in the centre of the room. Everyone in the audience was silent while watching the characters argue with one other. Bauld Slasher laughed. In a condescending tone, he said, “You’re nothing but a liar Sir!” Prince Patrick began to circle around Bauld Slasher, saying, “Take out your purse and pay Sir!” Bauld Slasher lifted his sword and held it up to Prince Patrick, challenging him to a fight:

Take out your mace and fight Sir,
Or I’ll run this rusty sword through your heart,
And make you die away Sir (Figure 62).



Figure 62: Prince Patrick and Bauld Slasher beginning to fight

Prince Patrick lunged and clattered his mace against Bauld Slasher’s shield. Once the two characters began to fight, the elderly man in the corner shouted, “Go on! Go for him!” Two of the ladies giggled at the man’s excited exclamation. Gary began to play a jig on the

accordion. Some of the ladies clapped along with the music as Prince Patrick brawled with Bauld Slasher.

Prince Patrick began to dance in time with the music while swinging the mace above his head. Some of the women in the audience and the nursing staff who had gathered in the hallway laughed at this comical fight. Prince Patrick eventually hit Bauld Slasher on the head with the mace. He cheered when Bauld Slasher's body lay lifeless on the floor. Gary stopped playing music once he had been killed (Figure 63).



Figure 63: Prince Patrick killing Bauld Slasher

Captain Mummer ran over to Prince Patrick who was dancing around the dead Bauld Slasher. "You brute. You brute. Get away out of that," shouted Captain Mummer. Prince Patrick strode back to take his place by the window. Captain Mummer lifted up Bauld Slasher's leg. The elderly man and two ladies laughed as he let the leg fall and hit the ground (Figure 64).



Figure 64: Ladies in the background laughing at Captain Mummer examining Bauld Slasher

“Not much life in him. He’s dead, he’s dead. Is there a doctor in the house?” asked Captain Mummer. He walked around the audience. “Is any of yous a doctor?” he asked, stopping at a group of three elderly ladies. They laughed and shook their heads. One lady covered her face when he approached. Captain Mummer ran out into the hallway and returned holding a nurse’s hand. “You’ll do. You’re a nurse,” he said. The nurse laughed and covered her face. “Well, what’s wrong with him? Is he dead?” asked Captain Mummer. The nurse laughed again and clapped her hands together. She leaned over Bauld Slasher and placed her hand on his stomach. “He’s dead. No, no. He’s dead,” said the nurse, laughing and rushing back into the hallway. “Have we another doctor in the house?” asked Captain Mummer (Figure 65).



Figure 65: Nurse examining Bauld Slasher

The Doctor, played by Brian Mc Manus, emerged from the hallway. Dressed in a black suit, white shirt and grey top hat, he walked up to Captain Mummer. He recited his rhyme confidently as he stood in the middle of the room:

Well I’m the Doctor Sir,
My name sir is Doctor Good and Sure,
And this man here sir of his deep and deadly wounds I’ll cure.
Why I can cure the big plague, the wee plague,
The plague within, the plague without,
The pip, the poe, the palsy,
And even that blasted gout.

The Doctor pushed past Captain Mummer and examined Bauld Slasher. He lifted his foot up in the air and sniffed it. “Oh, I think its foot and mouth he has Sir,” said the Doctor, holding his nose with his fingers. The audience did not react to this. “He needs a blood

confusion. Sorry, a blood transfusion,” said the Doctor, reaching for his briefcase. From the case, the Doctor removed a novelty syringe. The syringe could fill with fake blood when the plunger was pulled upwards. “I’ll have to get a wee drop of blood from someone,” said the Doctor. Some people laughed as he walked around the room, wielding the syringe at the audience. He walked over to a woman in a purple cardigan who had been watching the performance intently.

The Doctor took the woman’s hand and placed the syringe on her arm. As he pulled the plunger the syringe filled with a dark red liquid. The lady giggled and smiled at the Doctor. She looked to the lady next to her, who was also giggling. “That should be enough,” he said, walking back to Bauld Slasher (Figure 66).



Figure 66: The Doctor after taking blood

He pushed Bauld Slasher onto his side. The Doctor rolled up his sleeves. Taking a run up, he injected the syringe into Bauld Slasher’s buttocks. The room erupted with laughter. Bauld Slasher tried to stop himself from joining in with this laughter. “The poor fella,” said the elderly man over the room of laughing women. Once the laughter subsided the Doctor continued.

“Not worth a damn,” he said. He opened his briefcase and threw the syringe back into it. Putting his hand into his jacket pocket, he pulled out a small brown bottle. He began to speak to Captain Mummer while holding the bottle in his hand:

We may go back to the auld cure Sir.
In my possession I hold a tiny bottle.
Called Hocus Pocus Ally Campaign.

“Does it work?” asked Captain Mummer. “Never fails me man!” replied the Doctor. He bent over and opened Bauld Slasher’s mouth. Placing the bottle on Bauld Slasher’s lips, the Doctor began to recite the following rhyme:

Hocus pocus, Ally Campaign,
Rise up dead man and fight again.
Once you were dead, and now you’re alive,
From this day on, you’ll live and thrive (Figure 67).



Figure 67: The Doctor administering Ally Campaign to Bauld Slasher

The Doctor put the bottle back into his jacket pocket. Bauld Slasher began to moan and grumble. He stood up slowly and began to rub his neck. “Me head. Oh me head,” he said, stumbling back into the hallway to join the other mummies. Some of the audience clapped after seeing Bauld Slasher revived. Others remained still and silent, but with their eyes firmly fixed on the mummies.

As the mummies returned to the hallway, the audience chatted quietly with each other about the fight scene. It took a few minutes before the next character entered the room. Without any introduction a woman playing Jack Straw entered. The audience went silent as she rushed to take her place. She began to speak Jack Straw’s rhyme. Imitating a male voice, she said:

Here comes I, Jack Straw,
All the way from Lisbellaw.
Meal, flax, hemp, toe,
Pay up the mummies or out yis’ll go.

A few second later another young man pushed his way through the crowd of mummers, into the room. He carried a tall stick in one hand. Using his stick as a walking cane he hobbled around the room. Placing one hand on his back and crouching as he walked, he recited the following rhyme:

Here comes I, Old Dolan,
I've an ass on the brink of foaling,
I've a laying hen and a clocking duck,
And I wish you all the best of luck.

Some people laughed at Old Dolan's nonsensical rhyme. He walked towards the doorway until he was called back by Captain Mummer. "The best of luck? That's not much use. I wonder would he have a wee song in him?" asked Captain Mummer. Some of the audience nodded their heads, approving the request for a song (Figure 68).



Figure 68: Old Dolan

Old Dolan nodded and slowly walked to the centre of the room. He placed both his hands on the top of the stick and began to sing. The song, which ended in a husband killing his wife, received a lengthy round of applause from some of the audience members. On conclusion of the song, the performance appeared to be over. The audience chatted with each other and some even returned to reading their magazines.

Captain Mummer returned into the room a minute or so later. “Any chance of a few steps?” he asked Dessie. While Dessie was acquiring a partner, the accordion player set himself up. The audience grew quiet as Gary pressed some buttons on the accordion while waiting for the dance to begin. Dessie returned with one of the nurses. The audience laughed at the sight of him, dressed as Prince Patrick, holding her hand. Once Dessie and the nurse had prepared themselves to dance, Gary started to play a waltz.

It was obvious that both Dessie and the nurse were experienced dancers. Some of the audience hummed the tune; their eyes followed the dancers’ every movement around the floor. One lady swayed her hands from side to side, in time with every step. The dancers finished and bowed to the audience, some of whom offered a lengthy applause. The nurse laughed and put her hand on Dessie’s shoulder (Figure 69).



Figure 69: Lady in red body warmer (centre-left) swayed along with the dancers' steps

The final character of the play emerged immediately after this. She was dressed in a tattered back dress, old boots and a shawl. She carried a black bag with some coins in it, which rattled as she walked. The audience went silent as she began to recite her rhyme:

Here comes I, Biddy Funny.
Pay up! All fivers and no brass,
If you don't give me money,
I'll steal your ass.
We're not your daily beggars,
Who go from door to door,
We're the Aughakillymaude Community Mummies,
You've seen us all before.
With our pockets full of money,
And our barrels full of beer,
We wish you all a happy and bright New Year.

Once Bidy Funny finished the rhyme, some of the audience began to applaud the performance. The character did not collect money from them, as the rhyme suggested she would. Rather, Bidy Funny returned to the hallway to join the rest of the mummers. The bagpiper started up again and led the mummers in single file around the room. Captain Mummer, the Doctor and Prince Patrick walked to each of the seated audience members and shook their hands. Once the mummers left, one of the nurses entered the room. “Well, what did you think of them mummers?” she asked. “Best thing I’ve seen all year” said an elderly man quietly. He chuckled to himself, as he looked out the window and the mummers clambered into the minibus (Figure 70).



Figure 70: Prince Patrick shaking hands with an audience member

This performance reflects the conventional mumming play script followed by the Aughakillymaude Mummers. However, I was intrigued by the fact that the mummers did not collect money in return for their performance on this occasion. The presence of the character of Bidy Funny shows that collecting money is actually a part of the mumming performance. I spoke with Jim about this, who explained that the Aughakillymaude Mummers received no financial gain from the New Year’s Day performances in the nursing homes:

Nobody is telling the Aughakillymaude Mummers to go out and do the rounds of old people’s homes there on New Year’s Day. Jesus Christ they should be taking it easy. But there’s tradition of going out on New Year’s Day. They don’t get any money whatsoever for doing the rounds of the old people’s homes. They just do it for tradition and having done it. And it’s good for the old people that we visit them and they expect us to come. [Ledwith, Jim. Personal communication with Threase Finnegan-Kessie]

While the Aughakillymaude Mummers performed for free in the nursing home it should be noted that they do not ‘give away’ all of their performances. They are also booked to perform for fee paying audiences. In order to present an accurate account of the types of

audiences who view the mumming play the following ethnographic vignette presents the mumming performance as it is staged for a fee paying audience.

All Invoices, No Cash: Performances for the tourist audience

It was a dark November evening in Fermanagh. Jim had invited me to watch the Aughakillymaude Mummers perform their play for a group of American tourists at Belle Isle Castle. They had been booked to perform for the group by a tour operator who was organising the tourists' trip around County Fermanagh. Payments for these types of performances are received a few weeks after the event. I parked my car in the yard which was surrounded by old, rusty hay barns near the entrance to the castle. The barns enclosed a large grassy patch, from which there was a beautiful view of Lough Erne. Figure 71 shows the layout of the yard and the space used for the performance of the mumming play.

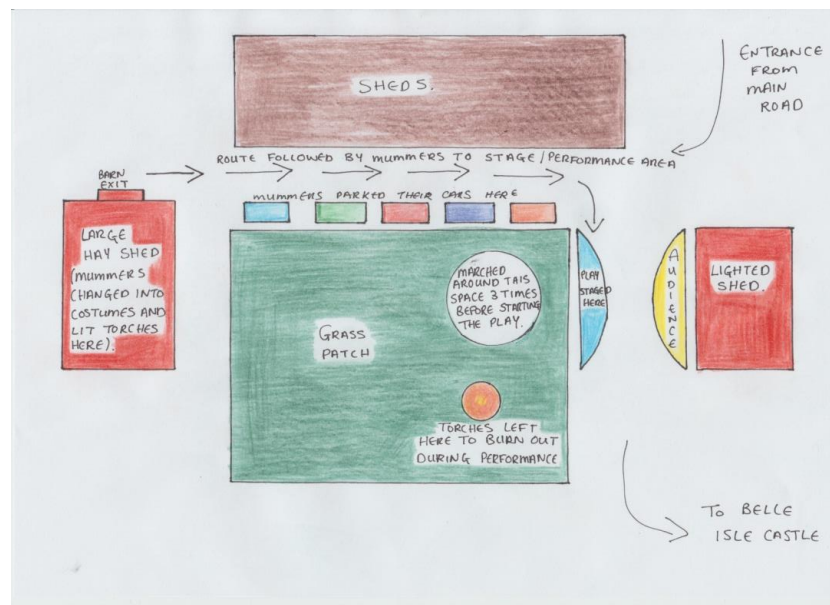


Figure 71: Layout of performance at Belle Isle for American tourist audience

As it was just approaching 8 o'clock, it was dark out. The only light in the area was coming from the windows of the castle a few hundred yards away. I waited in my car for the mummers. Dessie was the first to arrive, followed swiftly by Jim. They both got out of their cars and began to talk to each other. I opened my car door to join them.

Setting one foot on the ground, I was met by a worried shout from Jim, “Finnegan, please God say you have that flute with you.” I stepped out of the car and leaned my hands on the roof. “I thought I was just watching tonight?” I asked. “No time for standing around scratching yourself tonight, Finnegan. We’re short a musician so you’ll have to play,” said Jim. I walked over to the costume trailer where Jim and Dessie were standing. “Sure we’ll get these costumes into the shed first. By the time we do that, the rest of them will be here,” said Dessie, beginning to unlock the padlock on the trailer.

At around ten past eight, all the mummers were gathered in the barn. The performance was scheduled to begin at half past eight. The mummers slowly got themselves into their costumes. They debated between each other who would play each character. At about nine o’clock the mummers were ready to begin the performance. They were led in the parade by four musicians. However, instead of playing music, we carried flaming torches (Figures 72 and 73).



Figure 72: Mummers parading with torches

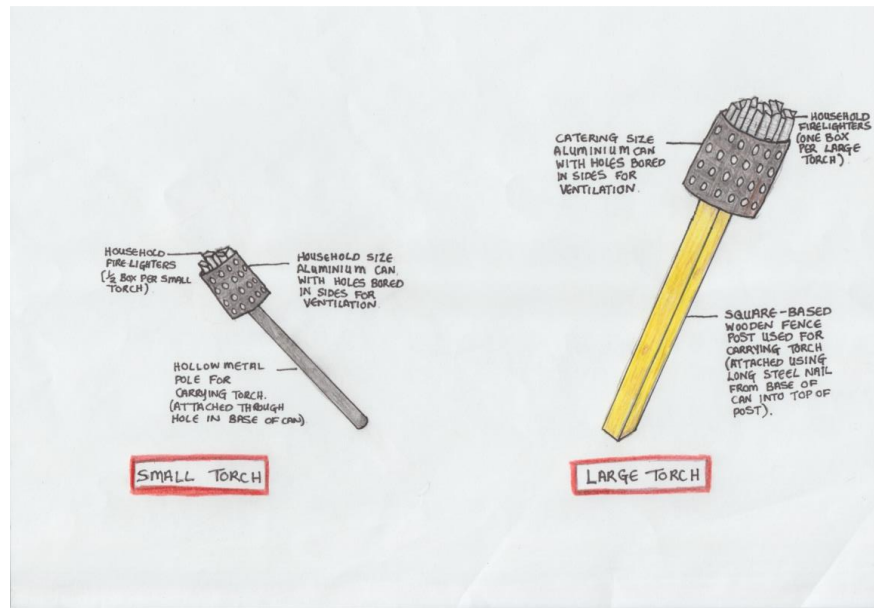


Figure 73: How to make the torches used by the Aughakillymaude Mummies

Trying to keep the torch steady and not set my straw costume alight, I watched the audience's reaction to our entry into the performance space. The audience were silent as we walked towards them. This group of about twenty American tourists, aged between forty and seventy, stood next to an open-sided hay barn. Two bright lights had been turned on inside the barn. This meant that the audience were illuminated and the mummies would perform in darkness. As we paraded towards the group with our torches in hand, I noticed three shining white lights at the audience's eye level.

Moving closer to them, the shining white lights began to take their shapes. They were three glowing apples on the back of three iPads. The audience members who were recording the performance with their iPads did not look directly at the mummies as they paraded out of the barn. Rather, they focused on their iPad screens, making sure they were recording the spectacle.

Once we reached the audience, the musicians led the mummies in a circle around a patch of grass. This seemed to be a process of marking out a stage for the performance (Pickering 2005:158; Bouissac 2010:14-15). The mummies arranged themselves in a line at the back of this imaginary circle to face the audience. We dropped our flaming torches onto the ground a few metres away from the 'stage'.

After Captain Mummer began the play, the Irish Cailín was called upon to perform. “Oh lovely,” said one of the ladies in the audience on seeing the character step forward. The Irish Cailín was dressed in a white dress, black shawl and wore a straw mask on her head. The mask did not cover her face, like the other mummies’ straw masks. Instead it appeared more like a hat, with two straw pigtailed hanging from the top of it. The Irish Cailín stood in front of the audience and spoke her rhyme:

Here comes I, the Irish Cailín,
I’m the sweetest wee lass you’ve ever seen.
And if you don’t believe in what I say,
I’ll sing yous a song to clear the way.

Following this rhyme, she sang a song titled *The Town of Swanlinbar*. As she sang, one of the three audience members recording the performance popped his head above the screen and watched her. He smiled as he watched, all the time holding his iPad up to record it. Once the song was finished, the entire audience, excluding the people recording the performance, applauded.

As the Irish Cailín moved back into the row of mummies, Bauld Slasher strode forward to begin the fight scene. Prince Patrick and the Bauld Slasher fought to the tune of *The Bucks of Oranmore*, which was played by the four musicians. The fight came to an end by Prince Patrick killing Bauld Slasher. While falling to the ground Bauld Slasher roared loudly. This startled many of the audience members who laughed when they saw Prince Patrick dancing around the dead body.

The Doctor moved forward from the crowd of mummies, carrying his briefcase in one hand. Reciting his usual rhyme to the Captain, he then reached into the case and took out the fake syringe. He announced that Bauld Slasher needed a blood transfusion. Rolling Bauld Slasher onto his side, the Doctor held the syringe in the air for the audience to see. As the Doctor was running up to inject Bauld Slasher, one man in the audience interrupted the action. “Oh no! He’s gonna poke him in the bottom!” declared the man, to which the rest of the audience laughed.

The Doctor injected Bauld Slasher and the audience began to laugh hysterically. One man laughed so much he wiped tears from his eyes. The three people holding the iPads laughed along. However, when one man realised he was no longer recording the performance, but was actually recording the ground, he stopped laughing and straightened his iPad to focus on the mummers.

Following the fight, there was a delay in the performance. Prince Patrick and Captain Mummer had rushed back to the barn. This meant that there was no one present to inform the crowd what was going to happen next. The audience began to chat with each other about their reactions to the fight scene. Prince Patrick and Captain Mummer returned from the barn with a wooden door. The audience began to whisper to one another. Some pointed at the door which was being carried into the performance area. The mummers lay the door flat on the ground.

There was no introduction for the following section of the performance. One of the four musicians placed his accordion onto the damp grass. He stepped forward onto the door. Dressed completely in straw the spectacle of this person walking in the dark of night was quite eerie. The dancer's high pitched footsteps were created by the taps on the soles of his shoes meeting the wooden door. One woman in the audience seemed intrigued by the source of these unusual sounding footsteps. She looked to the man standing next to her and pointed to the dancer's feet. "For dancing," the man mouthed silently to the woman.

The other accordion player in the group suddenly began to play *St Anne's Reel*. Neither the flute player nor I were ready for the tune to start. We hurriedly lifted our flutes to our mouths. I watched the dancer settle himself on the door as I began to play the tune with the other musicians. The dancer bowed his head down, so the conical straw mask was almost parallel with the ground. One by one, the iPad holding audience members moved closer to the dancer. Other audience members took out cameras and phones from their pockets to take photographs of this unusual sight.

The dancer danced along to the reel in a séan nós style. Some of the people in the audience clapped with the music. Others clapped when the tempo of the music increased. On the repeat of the second part, the tune was completely out of time with the dancer's steps. The audience clapped along with the music regardless. The first time the dancer lifted his leg

reasonably high, one audience member responded by shouting, “Woo hoo.” Each time the dancer lifted his leg after this the entire audience exclaimed, “Woo hoo.” On conclusion of the dance, the audience clapped and whistled, to which the dancer bowed.

Following this the accordion player began to play another reel, which I was not familiar with. The audience clapped along with the tune as the mummers formed a haphazard line behind her. We marched around the imaginary stage three times, as the audience clapped along with the music. As we began to walk from the performance space back to the barn, some of the audience waved goodbye. They continued to clap along with the music until we disappeared into the barn to change out of our costumes.

The performance reported above represents a ‘typical’ play for the fee paying audience. There are plenty of visual spectacles, provided by the flaming torches and dancing on the wooden door. The response the fee paying audience have to the mumming performance usually depends on a number of factors. These include the age of the audience, their understanding of the humour used in the performance and the physical space in which the play is staged. Having presented these ethnographic vignettes which detail how the mumming performance unfolds in post-revival performance settings, attention will be paid to the role the audiences play in defining the mumming tradition.

The audience and mumming: Ritual and theatre

Previous scholars of mumming have focused on the purpose of mumming and the perceived results it has for the audience who observe the play. This discussion has mainly taken the form of defining mumming as a ritual, rather than theatrical performance (Tiddy 1923; Baskervill 1924; Coote Lake 1931; Dean-Smith 1966; Gailey 1969; Buckley 2007; Creed 2011).

The definition of the term ‘ritual’ in this discussion is drawn from the work of Victor Turner (1987). Here Turner states that his understanding of the concept of a ritual is markedly different from those definitions suggested by Richard Schechner and Erving Goffman. Schechner and Goffman see the ritual as being “a standardized unit act, which may be secular

as well as sacred” (Turner 1987: 5). However, Turner states that a ritual is not one act, but rather is a:

complex sequence of symbolic acts. Ritual for me, [as Ronald Grimes puts it]; is a "transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes. [Turner 1987:5]

This means that while a ritual may seem like one singular act, there are many connections within the performances. These connections tell us something about the society in which the ritual is performed. With this definition and understanding of the ritual in mind, we will now turn to examine how the mumming play has been previously been defined as such.

As a ritual, the mumming play was supposed to impact the lives of the audience members. The categorisation of mumming as a ritual rather than a play was discussed by Alex Helm and E.C. Cawte as follows:

Although the word “play” has been used... its use gives a false idea of the true nature of the [mumming] custom. A play suggests a theatrical performance complete with stage, scenery and actors... Better words than ‘play’ are ‘Ceremony’, ‘Action’, or ‘Ritual’... for the traditional performers [mummers] did not set out to bring characterisation to the parts they played, and indeed their anonymity made them for a brief spell, the ‘medicine men’ of the community. [Helm and Cawte 1967:4]

Helm and Cawte suggested that the mumming performance should not be termed a ‘play’ as it devalues the supposed ritual properties of mumming and its impact on the audience. According to Helm and Cawte the mumming ‘ritual’ impacted the audience by bringing them luck (Helm and Cawte 1967:4). While a theatrical performance is staged for the audience’s enjoyment, the ritual is believed to actually impact the audience’s life. The notion that mumming is a ritual staged to bring luck is not limited to the scholarship on English and Irish mumming.

While discussing mumming in Bulgaria, Gerald Creed (2011) saw the tradition as a form of ritual whose categorisation was dependent on the public’s interpretation of it. Some Bulgarians believe that mumming “explicitly aims to promote fertility, abundance, health...

longevity [and] good luck” (Creed 2011:58). However, this function of mumming as a luck-bearing ritual has been challenged with relation to Irish mumming.

Henry Glassie (1985) suggested that previous scholars romanticised the ritualistic origins of Irish mumming (Glassie 1985:58). Recent scholars such as Anthony Buckley (2007) have suggested moving away from considering mumming as a ritual which brings luck to its audience. Buckley suggested that mumming be perceived as a ritual which possesses similar traits to theatrical performances. As Buckley stated, “the mummers play, as the phrase suggests, can be taken as a piece of theatre, but it is better to see it as a comic, frivolous ritual” (Buckley 2007:19).

Buckley’s suggestion that mumming is a form of trivial ritual dismisses the belief that it brings luck and ensures fertility of agricultural crops and the continuity of the seasons. Having dismissed this common interpretation of mumming, Buckley strived to uncover a new purpose for this ‘ritual.’ Rather than mumming bringing the audience luck, Buckley suggested that it is a ritual which simply “asserts that it is indeed Christmas” (Buckley 2007:27).

Buckley’s suggestion that mumming is a ritual which informs the audience of the season is one of the most recent attempts to explain the function of Irish mumming. It seems likely that mumming is a ritual performed to assert the time of year. However, the notion that mumming is also a form of theatrical performance should not be dismissed. While Buckley believed it was “better” to consider mumming as a ritual rather than theatrical performance (Buckley 2007:19), I suggest that doing this may limit the ability to interpret the actual mumming performance.

Up to this point in mumming scholarship attention has mainly been paid to how the mumming ritual impacts its audience; the relationship between performing mumming and the continuation of the life cycle. However, in line with the argument set out in this thesis I suggest that we examine this dichotomy between mumming and its audience from a different perspective. Rather than exploring the impact the mumming performance has on the audience, this will be explored from a different perspective. Attention will be paid to the impact the audience has on how mumming is staged and performed. This discussion draws on Richard

Schechner's statement in relation to performance, that "changes in the audience lead to changes in the performances" (Schechner 1985:16).

The role of the audience in a performance

The audience are an integral part of a performance. As William O. Beeman has stated, "Theatrical forms have no purpose without the audience" (Beeman 1993:379). However, it is not possible to examine the impact the audience have on how a performance is staged without an understanding of the concept of the audience. One interpretation of the audience suggests that when a group of people gather together to watch a performance they all experience the exact same emotions and reactions. This has been expressed by Paul Bouissac (Bouissac 2010:49).

Not only did Bouissac see the theatrical performance as possessing the same meaning, but also suggested that all the audience members felt the same emotions during the performance (Bouissac 2010:94). Bouissac perceived the audience as one singular entity, with each person experiencing the exact same emotions during the performance. It is unlikely that all audience members 'feel' the same way at the same time while watching a performance. As I observed during the mumming performance at the nursing home, each member of the audience experienced the performance from an individual perspective. Not all audience members applauded the performance at the same time. Nor did everyone clap along with the music in unison.

This was also true of the American tourist audience at Belle Isle Castle. Some audience members watched the performance first hand. However, others watched it on the screens of their iPads as they recorded it. These audience members experiences of the mumming performance, was as Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno (2002) term it, "passed through the filter of the culture industry" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002[1944]:45). While they were physically present at the performance, their viewing of it was altered by the presence of their iPads and desire to retain their own version of the mumming performance. Each audience member's experience of the performance is different depending on the individual who views it.

Therefore, the audience should be seen as a collective of individuals rather than one mass entity. Being part of a group influences some individual's reactions to a performance. The audience can "take on a life of its own greater than the sum of its parts" (Langellier 1983:35). Indeed during the performance for the American tourists, the audience did "take on a life of its own," (Langellier 1983:35). This occurred when the séan nós dance was staged. Initially, one audience member declared "Woo hoo," when the dancer lifted his leg. On the second occasion the dancer lifted his leg, three or four more audience members joined in and shouted "Woo hoo." Each subsequent time this occurred the entire audience shouted "Woo hoo." This shows that while the audience is made up of individuals, their reactions to the performance are not always individually motivated.

The initial exclamation was one individual's reaction to the dancer lifting his leg. However, the subsequent reactions to the dancer were not necessarily individual reactions, but were motivated by being part of a group. Therefore, audiences are more complex than Bouissac suggested. The audience do not possess one reaction, and experience the same emotions. Audiences are a complex tangle of interactions and reactions, which all stem from the individual. However, audience members do not solely influence each other's reactions to a performance. They can also influence the performance itself; how it is staged and its purpose.

When a performance is staged in different performance contexts with relation to both time and space, it inevitably changes. However, a different performance setting can produce a different 'type' of audience member. To understand this notion Richard Schechner's work (2003) on the audience will be drawn upon. According to Schechner, there are two different types of audiences in the theatrical performance setting. They are defined by their interest in the performance and how they came to be a member of the audience.

Firstly, Schechner explained the accidental audience as "a group of people who, individually or in small clusters, go to the theatre" (Schechner 2003:220). Schechner suggested that the accidental audience "choose" to go to a performance (Schechner 2003:220). They actively pursue the performance, pay money to attend and "pay closer attention" as it unfolds (Schechner 2003:220).

With relation to the mumming performances presented in the ethnographic vignettes, the American tourist audience falls closest to Schechner's category of accidental audience. However, as mumming differs from the conventionally staged theatrical performance, there are some differences between the accidental American tourist audience, and Schechner's definition of the concept.

Firstly the American tourists did not choose to attend the mumming performance. Rather their tour operator organised for the mumming play to be staged for them. Secondly, there was no money exchanged between the tourists and the mummers. The tour operator paid the mummers. In relation to the accidental audience's focus on the performance, they did pay immense attention to the play as it unfolded. They recorded the performance, clapped along with the music and intently watched the action throughout.

According to Schechner the second type of audience is the "integral audience" (Schechner 2003:220). This category is defined as "one where people come [to a performance] because they have to or because the event has special significance for them" (Schechner 2003:220). The integral audience are involved with the performance and are often integrated into the social scene surrounding the theatre (Schechner 2003:220).

In relation to the mumming performances detailed earlier, the nursing home audience have similarities to the integral audience. However, the nursing home audience did not travel to see the performance. Rather, the performers travelled to the nursing home to stage the mumming play. On New Year's Day, the mummers specifically travel to nursing homes; they visit the older generation in County Fermanagh. This is because the majority of the nursing home residents remember the mumming tradition from their youth. The nursing home audience are integrated into the social scene surrounding the mumming tradition. The mummers recognise that this audience have a unique connection with mumming and as a result, bring the performance to them annually.

The impact of the audience on the performance

Performing for the accidental and integral audiences has recently been explored with relation to Irish folk drama by Aoife Granville (2012). The dynamic between the folk

performer and two different forms of audience, the local and international, has been discussed by Granville:

The event [Wren boy performance] is only truly meaningful when it is performed before a local audience, and that audience understand, acknowledge and approve the activities. When the group participated in Fasnacht [a masked carnival held in Switzerland], in front of an unfamiliar audience, there was no impact. [Granville 2012:156]

If we put this statement in Schechner's terms, Granville suggested that the performance can only have "meaning" and "impact" when it is staged for the integral audience (Granville 2012:156). While the performance may not have an impact on the accidental audience, it should be considered that the audience, both accidental and integral, can impact both the manner in which it is performed and the actual meaning of mumming.

The presence of the different audiences at each of the mumming performances presented earlier, impacted on the level of audience participation which occurred during the performance. Audience participation during a staged performance can be "hazardous" (Horton and Anselm 1957:581). There is a risk when including a member of the audience, as they may become over-involved in the performance. The level of audience participation in the two mumming performances presented earlier in the chapter differs significantly. Indeed, if this notion is related back to the performance the Aughakillymaude Mummers staged at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in County Cavan, detailed in the prelude to this thesis, it is evident that audience participation does not work in this performance setting.

The physical separation between the stage and the audience meant it was difficult for the mummers to invite audience members onto the stage to participate. In addition, the reaction this audience offered to the performance contrasted dramatically with those offered by the audiences in both the nursing home and at Belle Isle. This suggests that mumming should be performed on the same level as the audience; the performance space and the audience's space should blend into one.

During the nursing home performance there was much more interaction between the performers and the audience. The Doctor "drew blood," from one of the ladies in the audience. One nurse was called on to check the vital signs of Bauld Slasher after the fight, and another

was included in the dance at the end of the play. There was a reasonable amount of feedback from the audience. Some people encouraged the performance by clapping, while others verbally expressed their anguish at different points during the play.

In relation to the staging of the mumming play for the American tourists, there was considerably less involvement between the audience and the mummers. Even though the Doctor used the syringe in the same part of the performance as he did in the nursing home, he did not “draw blood,” from an audience member. No audience member was invited to sing or dance as part of the performance. Instead, it was entirely based on the mummers performing for the audience.

While the mummers engaged in less audience participation with the tourists, they added elements of visual spectacle to impress them. They carried flaming torches to lead them into the performance. When the mummers performed for the nursing home audience they did not provide such visual spectacle. Of course, the venue in which each performance was staged may have influenced the choice to use the torches. Therefore, in this case both the context of the performance including the performance venues and the audience changed the way the mumming performance was staged.

Performing for the integral and accidental audiences also altered the presence of financial reciprocity, which is usually a part of the mumming performance. While the exchange of money is an important part of the mumming tradition, scholars such as Andreas Friedrich have stated that “traditions should be carried out to awaken joy, and not for vanity and greed’s sake” (Friedrich 1985:59).

When the play was staged for the tourist audience the mummers received a fee for their performance. However, when the same play was performed for the nursing home audience no collection was made. In this case, performing the play was not for financial gain. The mummers brought the performance to the integral audience who were located in a liminal space, the nursing home. The aim of bringing the mumming play to the nursing home was not to make a financial gain from the performance. Rather, creating a sense of community for these isolated individuals was the reward for staging the play. It allowed for those in the nursing homes to have “face-to-face contact” with the mummers and create a real, rather than

“imagined” community (Anderson 1983:6). Therefore, the audience altered not only the performance of the mumming play, but also its definition.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is possible to say that audience dictates not only how a mumming performance is staged, but their physical presence also impacts how mumming is defined. The type of audience present at a performance, dictate the level of interaction between the mummies and the audience. In the case of the integral audience, the performers interacted with the people and encouraged audience participation. However, for the accidental audience, interaction between the mummies and audience was non-existent.

While influencing the way the play was staged, the different audience also motivated the alternative functions the play came to hold. For the accidental audience, the mumming performance involved staging an element of local custom for the tourists and attaining money for the upkeep of the Mummies’ Museum and Community Centre. They did not need financial reciprocity. They simply performed it to bring cheer and enjoyment to the nursing home resident’s Christmas. However, the performance for the integral audience held a different function. It functioned to provide entertainment for the audience members.

The mumming performance, when staged in the liminal space of the nursing home for the integral audience, helped to collapse an imagined community and allowed for interaction and engagement. Indeed, this can also be seen with relation to the Aughakillymaude Mummies’ performances at the All Ireland Fleadh in County Cavan and the music centred mumming parade detailed earlier in the thesis.

The needs of the audience, not the mummies, dictated how and where these performances were staged. Therefore, mumming does not possess a pre-defined function in the post revival era. Nor does it possess a pre-defined meaning or form. Rather its function is defined by the audiences it is performed for.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

As I have presented in this thesis, mumming is a difficult tradition to define. It cannot be confined by one singular definition. As it has been altered from the pre to post-revival periods, both the mummers and the audience have battled to define it. However, I think this is part of the nature of mumming. It is a liminal tradition. There are no set rules to govern mumming, so it can change to suit the social context it is staged in and the needs of the people who require the tradition. As such, it is evident that even when notions of longevity and immutability are placed upon the tradition, time and context still act to change and define it.

Previous scholars of Irish mumming focused on two areas of the tradition: the origins, and the function of mumming. I have touched on these topics in this thesis, as they helped to place the tradition in a social and historical context. However, in this thesis attention has been given to what it was like to be a mummer during different periods of social activity in County Fermanagh; from the pre-revival period, through the mumming revival, and to the post-revival period. Examining the experience of being a mummer during these periods has allowed me to focus on whether the tradition of mumming can actually be defined.

The existence of mumming was taken as a given for this thesis. Intentionally, I did not present an in depth history of how mumming came into existence in Ireland. Other scholars such as Alan Gailey and Henry Glassie have already completed this work, showing that the tradition has links with the Plantations. While previous scholars have focused on why mumming exists, I was interested in exploring what can actually be learned from becoming part of the tradition, and from the mummers themselves?

Understanding the function of the mumming tradition within a community has played a minor part in this thesis. In this respect, it is distinctly different from Henry Glassie's work on the topic. It has presented the views of past mummers, current mummers, and my own experiences as a researcher, in an attempt to understand why the definition of mumming is constantly shifting.

While I have presented the text of the Aughakillymaude Mummers' play over the course of the thesis, it was not to unpick the words which were spoken by the mummers or the history of these characters. Rather, these accounts of the mumming performance allowed attention to be paid to how the play was staged in different locations, the interaction between the mummers and the audience and, as a result, how mumming might be defined. It focused on how the control over defining mumming has shifted between the mummers and the audience during different periods of social activity.

Firstly, to contextualise the study, I presented a view of how the present day Aughakillymaude Mummers define the mumming tradition. This was done by exploring the film they produced, which was titled, *Mummers, Masks and Mischief*. They defined what they believed were the origins of the tradition by creating a clear connection between mumming, present day Ireland and pre-Christian Ireland. They defined mumming as a regional tradition through the symbolic use of flags, language and pre-Christian iconography.

The reactions of various audience members, including academics and elderly people, showed that the film did not reflect their understandings of the origins of mumming or their memories, respectively. While these audiences enjoyed the film, there was something that did not 'sit right' about it for them. The film itself featured as an important part of the tour of the Mummers' Museum. As such, it can be seen as a commodifiable product which is sold to visitors. Therefore, one audience it may appeal to is the tourist audience.

However, the film does have a deeper meaning than simply being a commodity. While this is definitely one function of the film, in order to understand why it was created, the social context in which it was formed should be understood. *Mummers, Masks and Mischief* allowed the Aughakillymaude Mummers to create a definition for the mumming tradition. However, it was not always the case that the mummers could define it. Prior to the revival of the tradition in the 1980s, mumming was not defined by the mummers. In the context of the conflict in the region, the audience played an integral role in defining the tradition. This ultimately led to it fading from existence in the County Fermanagh countryside, from the 1960s onwards.

Exploring the conflict, a topic of cultural silence in County Fermanagh, was quite difficult. The mummers who were active when the conflict was rife in the area were often uncomfortable discussing the topic. They sometimes refused to speak to me, an “outsider,” about it. However, even when they ‘said nothing’ about the impact of the conflict on the tradition, they revealed something of the impact it had both on mumming, and their own lives.

When the mummers spoke directly about the conflict it became clear just how dramatically this social event actually altered the mumming tradition. While mummers attempted to continue practicing the tradition during this period, the introduction of formal permits by the police forces led many groups to cease performing. Altercations between the audiences and the mummers during this period took many different forms. The mummers used their altercations with the less formal audience of the checkpoint guards to project their identity. However, when the play was staged for the more formal audiences in the public houses, the audience expressed their own identity through their interpretation of the political ideologies represented by the mummers.

The audience defined the mumming tradition in the social context of the conflict. They were largely responsible for the change of performance venue which occurred during this period. The ambiguous nature of the tradition meant the mumming performance was pushed from being staged in the traditional country kitchen to the public house. While the performance went from being staged in one public space to another, the reception the mummers received in the public house was much less reserved than if the play was staged in a kitchen.

Even in the public space of the public house, the mummers at times represented an identity which opposed that possessed by the audience. As such, the meaning and understanding of a tradition can never be separated from the social context it is performed in. The social events, specifically the conflict, manifested itself in the mumming tradition. However, it is interesting that in this case, where the mummers adapted the performance to suit the audience, it was not the mummers who defined the tradition. The audience dictated how it was defined.

During the conflict the mummers had little control over the identity they exuded during performances. The audience dictated how they were defined. This contributed to several County Fermanagh mumming groups' decisions to stop practicing the tradition in the early to mid-1970s. In response to this decline, in the 1980s the mummers seemed to 'take back' the tradition. It went from being defined by the audience to being defined by the mummers again. The reshaping, reviving and redefining of the tradition took the form of the mumming revival.

The revival of the mumming tradition was completely unintentional. It began as local communities required funding for their community halls. Through this initiative, Jim Ledwith became involved in the tradition. The lack of formalisation and the impromptu nature of the revival pointed towards the existence of this tradition on the margins of cultural activity. As the tradition does not possess any formalised rules or boundaries it can easily shift from one form to another. It is in a constant state of liminality, continuously adjusting to suit the requirements of the people involved in it.

The needs of the mummers dictated the meaning mumming possessed during the revival. From a financial perspective, mumming served to fund the development of local community halls in each of the mummers' communities. The Mummers' Festival and Competition were altered according to the requests from the mummers. While the audience created the meaning for the tradition during the conflict, they did not feature so intensely in the meaning of mumming during the revival. While the audience were still an integral part of the performance during this period the mummers were ultimately in control of the meaning it held.

The revival of mumming groups and the tradition continued into the late 1990s. However, the death of the more elderly members of these groups led to the Mummers' Festival dying off in the 2000s. The death of these mummers contributed to another issue: how to store the memories of these older mummers and emphasise the influence they have had on present day mumming. The Mummers' Museum was established by Jim as a means of both preserving and defining mumming as it was practiced in the past. The tour of the Mummers' Museum presented an insight into how traditions are placed in the museum setting. The impact of previous mummers on how mumming is currently practiced, are kept in the museum. The

museum does not preserve the entire tradition of mumming. Rather, it retains the pre-revival tradition.

By placing some of the characters in the form of stationary mumming models, the mummies preserved what “used to be” involved in the mumming tradition. However, the use of the current Aughakillymaude Mummies’ costumes, and photographs of the performers engaged in events, shows that mumming is still active in the area. Specific elements which relate to the form mumming took in the past are preserved. The museum did not simply preserve and store elements of mumming. It also spurred the development of a new form of mumming performance: the music centred mumming parade.

The music centred mumming parade was presented in the recontextualized performance setting of the tourist exhibition. Firstly, this account showed how the performance of this parade differs dramatically from the conventional mumming play. However, the evolution of this type of performance did not occur in isolation from the needs of the Mummies’ Museum. The parade served to help advertise the Museum.

Examining this performance through the lens of the concept of folklorization, it became evident that unique elements of the tradition were extracted from mumming. The music and costume came to the physical centre of the performance, while the mumming play faded into the margins of the tradition. These mumming parades were explored to show how the mummies used them when they attempted to appeal to tourist audiences.

From this, it was concluded that museums do not represent the death of a tradition. They also stimulate evolution within the tradition and the creation of a new performance. In this post-revival setting, the audience influenced the meaning and purpose of mumming. However, they did not completely define it. The needs of the mummies, namely a place to preserve the history of mumming in the locality, also helped define the tradition.

While mumming underwent change through the different periods of activity, some aspects of the tradition always remained at the centre of the performance. These elements, masks and costumes, music and the musician, and the audience, have grounded the mumming tradition as it has undergone periods of redefinition. Masks and costumes have played a consistent part in mumming as it has moved through the various time periods. However, even though masks and costumes have remained at the centre of the performance, they have undergone both physical and symbolic change.

The various types of masks used in mumming, from the pre-revival to post-revival periods show that masks cannot possess one universal meaning. The mask was altered in line with the political events, social movements, changes in performance venues and to appeal to the audience. The mask has not stayed the same as the mumming tradition has been redefined from the pre-revival to the post-revival period. Much like the mumming tradition, masks were adapted and redefined as it was moved from one performance setting to the next. As the masks were adapted they came to reflect the events occurring within society.

The mumming mask is much more than a disguise. In the pre-revival period, the making and burning of masks was symbolic of the continued life of mumming and its revival every Christmas. The revival period presented a different function of the mask. Forms of masks used during this period, such as the bowler hat, were symbolic of the social unrest in the surrounding society. However, during the revival period, plastic masks were seen as symbolic of a declining tradition. In the post-revival period, masks also worked in a symbolic manner.

The masks represented the freedom which could be attained by the mummer. Through the analysis of the mumming mask, it became evident that different functions of the mask were dominant in alternative social and performance settings. Their meaning and function are derived from the mummers who wear them and the audience who view them.

The mumming mask has always played a central role in mumming, both physically and conceptually. However, other elements of mumming have come to the centre as the tradition has been repeatedly redefined. Music is another element of mumming which has kept the tradition grounded as it has undergone processes of redefinition. While music was always

a central part of mumming, it was only in the post-revival period that it came to the physical centre of the performance. Much like the change in the musical instruments used to accompany the mummers the experience of being a musician with a mumming group has changed significantly.

While the musicians have always occupied the conceptual centre of the performance, they mainly occupied the physically liminal spaces of the performance prior to the post-revival period. However, as mumming was shaped to suit a new performance setting and a new form of audience, music came to the physical centre of the performance. In post-revival mumming performances, musicians and mummers both occupied the same space in the performance: the centre. However, their performance experiences differed considerably.

While the mummer may feel that their social role is relaxed during the performance, the musician does not have this same sense of disguise or freedom. The shifting of music and the musician to the centre of the performance shows that mumming does not have a rigid structure. It is flexible and allows for improvisation depending on the group who perform it or the audience who view it.

Music and disguise are two elements which grounded mumming as it was redefined from the pre-revival to the post-revival period. The third element of the tradition which has remained at the centre of the tradition is the audience. The various audiences at post-revival mumming performances dictated how mumming was both performed and defined. The mummers' attitudes towards the different audiences influenced the amount of audience participation and direct engagement they allowed with the performance. It was argued that there were two types of audiences who viewed the mumming performances in the post-revival setting: the intentional and the accidental.

The different audiences not only dictated the level of interaction with the mummers. They also motivated how mumming was defined. The integral audience were the residents of the nursing home where the mummers staged the play on New Year's Day. When mumming was performed for the integral audience, it might be defined as members of a local community performing the tradition, not for financial gain, but just to bring something entertaining to these people. These performances in the nursing homes on New Year's Day were so touching. I was

moved by the generosity of the Aughakillymaude Mummers in this instance. While they paid money to go out mumming for the day, in the form of fuel and food, the mummers did not ask for any financial reciprocity. I admired what they did; bringing enjoyment and excitement to the people in the nursing home, simply for the sake of having done so, and to instil a sense of community.

Even when the performance was staged for the accidental fee paying audience, the reaction they had to the mumming play was also quite moving. Their laughter, enjoyment and desire to retain a copy of the performance showed how the mumming play impacted on them. When I think of these two performances, and then back to the one which was staged at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in County Cavan, there is a dramatic difference between them.

At the nursing home and in Belle Isle, the audiences were both connected with the performance in different ways. However, at the Fleadh Cheoil performance the audience were uninterested. Why was this so? It seems that mumming ‘works best’ when staged in liminal spaces: in a nursing home, outside on the street, or in the shadows of a dimly lit hay barn. The formal stage does not suit mumming. When the formal structure of the stage is forced over mumming, much like when the straw costume is placed on the flute player, it does not quite fit correctly.

This brings me back to the discussion of the meaning of mumming and how it can be defined. The choice to revive mumming in the 1980s, and the immense success of this revival, helps us to understand the value which people placed on mumming. However, as the Aughakillymaude Mummers and the Mummers’ Foundation continued to operate after this revival had ceased, I was curious with regards to why both groups continued to practice and encourage the mumming tradition.

One question I always had when I spoke to Jim and the Aughakillymaude Mummers was why did they keep practicing the tradition? Why would they bother to continue when they ‘get’ nothing from it? This question often frustrated Jim. His usual answer was, “So what, Finnegan?” However, when I asked him why the Aughakillymaude Mummers perform for free on New Year’s Day, he responded, saying, “Aughakillymaude do it because they have a loyalty towards their community and towards each other.”

Indeed this was something the Aughakillymaude Mummers themselves recognised. They understood that mumming held a value to the audiences they performed for. This was often difficult to define: the connection the mummers recognised between the audience and the mumming tradition. However, one evening when I asked this question to John Murphy from the Aughakillymaude Mummers he paused for a few seconds, thinking about his response.

As I listened to the following response, I realised that mumming can be defined as much more than just the performance of a folk play, with music and costume. It becomes embedded in those involved in the tradition. While it may be difficult to define the tradition, it is not difficult to recognise the meaning it possesses for some people. I will conclude with the words of one of the Aughakillymaude Mummers, and his understanding of how mumming can be defined and why mumming continues to possess a place, no matter how liminal, in Irish society:

How can it be defined, Threase? Why do we keep doing it? Well now I can't answer them, I'm sorry. But I remind [remember] this one time when we were in Skea [Lisnaskea] with the mummers. And there was this man, auld John Drumm. He had gone blind, Threase. He would have been a mummer in his days gone by. Anyway, New Year's Day it was well dark outside. It was probably half past five or so. But from ten past two that day, John had this five pound note in his hand. He was waiting for us. Waiting for the mummers. Every year he looked forward to that. When we came in that evening, he was going with the music. Tapping his feet and laughing at the play. He couldn't see, but he was partaking in his mind. John was so delighted when we went around. But he had this fiver to give to Brian [Mc Manus]. And when Brian went over to say goodbye to him once we were done, John handed him this fiver. Sure it was wrapped up and soaking with sweat. And of course Brian took it. He didn't want to offend him. Because it meant something to John, you know. I don't know if I've answered what you asked, Threase. It wasn't about giving him money. This thing, this play meant something to him. It really meant something to John. [Murphy, John. Interview by Threase Finnegan-Kessie. Fermanagh. November 21, 2013]

Appendix A: Schedule of interviews and events attended

(Note: This does not include daily activities engaged in at the Aughakillymaude Mummings' Museum, but references the more formal, organised events)

Date	Type of event
13/6/2012	Help Patrick Murphy fix straw hats for Midsummer festival
20/6/2012	Interview with Sean Maguire, Enniskillen
21/6/2012	Perform with Aughakillymaude Mummings during wedding in Belle Isle castle, County Fermanagh
23/6/2012	Attend Midsummer festival at Mummings' Museum
2/7/2012	Interview with Jimmie Magee, Enniskillen
4/7/2012	Interview with Roscor Mummings, Enniskillen
16/8/2012	Perform with Aughakillymaude Mummings at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann, County Cavan
18/8/2012	Perform with Aughakillymaude Mummings at wedding on Lusty Beg island, County Fermanagh
6/9/2012	Attend corn harvesting at Leonard Percival's farm, Brookeborough, County Fermanagh
7/9/2012	Attend 'Sharon's Grave' play, Virginia, Co. Cavan
8/9/2012	Perform music for harvest open day at Mummings' Museum
11/9/2012	Interview with Marlbank Mummings, Blacklion, Co. Cavan
13/9/2012	Attend launch of the Armagh Rhymers Mummings' Ball project, Armagh District Council
17/9/2012	Interview with members of 'Sharon's Grave' play
21/9/2012	Stage 'Carrigallen Mummings' Play' at Leitrim Culture Night
22/9/2012	Attend Aughakillymaude Mummings' performance in Enniskillen Diamond
25/9/2012	Interview with director of 'Sharon's Grave' play and friends
28/9/2012	Submit Peace and Reconciliation application for Mummings' Foundation to Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs
8/9/2012	Participate in Aughakillymaude Mummings' guard of honour for local model maker
17/9/2012	Attend Reminiscence workshop, Belfast
18/9/2012	Attend funding training day for Rural Development Programme, County Fermanagh
25/9/2012	Interview Kinawley Mummings, County Fermanagh
2/11/2012	Attend Irish Central Border Area Network funding workshop
3/11/2012	Participate in performance at Belle Isle Castle for Ulster American tourist group
14/11/2012	Presentation on mumming for Historical Society in Carrick on Shannon, County Leitrim
17/11/2012	Launch 'Fermanagh Folklife' calendar in Mummings' Museum
27/11/2012	Review 'Cleamairi' recording of mummings' performance at wedding
28/11/2012	Attend Reminiscence workshop, Belfast
4/12/2012	Begin working with Fermanagh County Museum's 'Johnny McKeagney' Folklore collection
10/12/2012	Interview with Florencecourt Mummings, County Fermanagh
1/1/2013	Attend Aughakillymaude Mummings performances at local nursing homes
14/1/2013	Meeting with Teresa McKeagney, wife of folklore collector Johnny McKeagney

14/1/2013	Interview with Ederney Mummers, County Fermanagh
28/1/2013	Meeting with Blacklion Mummers, County Cavan
2/2/2013	Attend Traditional Music Session in Mummers' Museum
8/2/2013	Attend session in mummers' home, County Leitrim
9/2/2013	Attend and perform at Fermanagh Lakeland Forum Tourist Exhibition, Enniskillen
9/2/2013	Attend Mummers' Ball, Aughakillymaude Mummers' Museum
15/2/2013	Interview with Cashel Mummers, County Fermanagh
22/2/2013	Attend excavation of crannog in Enniskillen
1/3/2013	Began researching mumming in Leitrim in Leitrim Count Library, Ballinamore
23/3/2013	Attend Spring Equinox festival, Aughakillymaude Mummers' Museum
2/5/2013	Interview with Finnish masked heavy metal band
24/5/2013	Stage Carrigallen Mummers' Play in Carrick on Shannon, County Leitrim
31/7/2013	Contact Fingal Mummers, County Dublin
4/6/2013	Begin researching in National Library of Ireland, Dublin
4/6/2013	Begin researching in National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin
1/8/2013	Begin researching in Irish Traditional Music Archive, Dublin
4/8/2013	Attend traditional music session in mummers' house
23/8/2013	Attend 'At the Black Pig's Dyke' play in Sligo
30/8/2013	Conduct content analysis of 'Mummers, Masks and Mischief' video
14/9/2013	Perform with Aughakillymaude Mummers at local Ploughing Competition
20/9/2013	Attend Wren boy competition in Listowel, County Kerry
15/10/2013	Interview with Jim Ledwith
18/10/2013	Begin research in Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's archives
26/10/2013	Attend conference on Irish mumming at the Naul cultural centre, County Dublin
12/11/2013	Attend funding meeting for the Mummers' Museum and Mummers' Foundation
13/11/2013	Begin researching in Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's sound archives
15/11/2013	Interview Paddy Murphy, Swords Mummers, County Dublin
21/11/2013	Interview Aughakillymaude Mummers
30/11/2013	Interview with Dara Vallely, Armagh Rhymers
13/12/2013	Attend Mummers' Convention and Festival in Gloucester, England
26/12/2013	Attend Wren Boy festival, Dingle, County Kerry

Appendix B: Sample topic guide

Interview with Sean Dan (20 June 2012)

**Instruments: Banjo, Fiddle, Keyboard,
Mumming groups: Teemore and Aughakillymaude**

Strawboys in Teemore:

- How did you get into them?
- What did you do in the mummers?
- How was mumming viewed in the community?
- Mumming and music (banjo, fiddle):
- Pre Aughakillymaude mumming- where did you meet to practise in Teemore

Entering houses:

- How did you choose which houses to go to?
- Was there a traditional manner to enter the house?
- What sort of reception was mostly received? Was the reception different in houses that knew you?
- Reciprocation: what did you get in return?

Mumming at weddings:

- How was it viewed to have mummers at weddings?
- Was it just ordinary people, or did the rich also have them
- Wedding receptions in houses and hotels- ever in hotel for reception? What sort of things did you do? Dance, break bread...

Mummers Ball/Spraoui:

- Where, locally
- Who hosted them and funding
- Mulshcross Spraoi- 2 brothers fought?

Appendix C: Consent forms

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PhD RESEARCH PROJECT:

‘COUNT ME IN: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW COMMUNITIES ON THE PERIPHERY OF SOCIETY CONSTRUCT AND VIEW THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH MAINSTREAM SOCIETY, THROUGH FOLK DRAMA AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC’

Researcher:

Threase Finnegan,

c/o Anthropology Department, Rowan House, NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare

Email address: threase.finnegan.2009@nuim.ie

Research Supervisor:

Dr Steve Coleman,

Anthropology Department, Rowan House, NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare.

Phone number: +35317083932

Email address: steve.coleman@nuim.ie

Name of participant:

Date of interview (if applicable)

Address:

Telephone number: _____

Date of birth: _____

Do you wish to be made anonymous for this research in the notes and final thesis of the researcher?

Yes

No

Do you wish to be associated with your mumming group in the notes and final thesis of the researcher?

Yes

No

By signing the form below, you give your permission for your name, any tapes, notes and photographs made during this project to be used by the above researcher for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations. You also give permission for this data to be retained for the above researcher's research purposes, with no intention of destroying the data. Bear in mind that all data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be safe guarded by the above researcher. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.

I, _____ (name) agree to the above statement, except for any restrictions, noted below.

Participant's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature:

_____ Date: _____

Restriction description:

Please retain the copy of this consent form given to you by the researcher, for your own records. Any queries about this research project should be submitted by **email** to the researcher: **threase.finnegan.2009@nuim.ie**. Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0) 1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Bibliography

Abrahams, Roger D. (1968) 'Pull Out Your Purse and Pay': A St George Mumming from the British West Indies. *Folklore* 79(3):176-201.

Adorno, Theodore. (2001[1991]) *The Culture Industry*. London: Routledge.

Altheide, David. (1987) Ethnographic Content Analysis. *Qualitative Sociology* 10(1):65-77.

Ames, Michael. (1986) *Museums, the Public and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.

Anderson, Benedict. (2006 [1983]) *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

Arensberg, Conrad M. (1968 [1937]) *The Irish Countryman*. Illinois: Waveland Press.

Askew, Kelly (2002) *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Assmann, Aleida. (2010) Re-framing Memory: Between individual and collective forms of constructing the past. *In Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in modern Europe*. Karin Tilmans, Frank Van Vree and Jay Winter, eds. Pp. 35-50. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Atashi, Elham (2011) Peace Dividends: The Role of External Aid in Peacebuilding. *In Building Peace in Northern Ireland*. Maria Power ed. Pp 209-227. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. (1968) *Rabelais and His World*. H el ene Iswolsky trans. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Barker, Joshua. (2009) Introduction: Ethnographic Approaches to the Study of Fear. Theme Issue, *Anthropologica* 51(2):267-272.

Baskervill, C.R. (1924) Mummies' Wooing Plays in England. *Modern Philology* 21(3): 225-272.

Bauman, Richard

(1971) Differential Identity and the Base of Folklore. Theme Issue: *The Journal of American Folklore* 84(331):31-41.

(1975) Verbal Art as Performance. *American Anthropologist New Series* 77 (2): 290-311.

(1992) Contextualization, tradition, and the dialogue of genres: Icelandic legends of the *kraftasklád*. In *Rethinking Context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*. Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin eds. Pp 125-146. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs. (1990) Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59-88.

Beeman, William

(1993) The Anthropology of Theater and Spectacle. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22:369-393.

(2002) Performance Theory in an Anthropology Program. In *Performance Studies as a Discipline*. Nathan Stuckey and Cynthia Wimmer, eds. Pp. 85-97. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Bell, Claudia. (2015) Tourists Infiltrating authentic domestic space at Balinese home cooking schools. *Tourist Studies* 15(1):86-100.

Bendix, Regina. (1989) Tourism and Cultural Displays: Inventing Traditions for Whom? *Journal of American Folklore* 102:1131-146.

Bernard, H. Russell. (2011 [1940]) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Plymouth: AltaMira Press.

Bernstein, Michael André. (1994) *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bigenho, Michelle. (2007) Bolivian Indigeneity in Japan: Folklorized Music Performance. In *Indigenous Experience Today*. Orin Starn and Marisol de la Cadena, eds. Pp 247-272. Oxford: Berg.

Blacking, John. (1976) *How Musical is Man?* London: Faber and Faber.

Blommart, Jan. (2006) Applied Ethnopoetics. *Narrative Enquiry* 16(1):181-190.

Bouissac, Paul. (2010) *Semiotics at the Circus*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.

Bregenhoj, Carsten. (2007) It has come to nothing: Perishable mumming. In *Border Crossing: Mumming in Cross Border and Cross Community Contexts*. Anthony Buckley ed. Pp 1-18. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press.

Briggs, Charles

(1984) Learning how to ask: Native Metacommunicative competence and the incompetence of fieldworkers. *Language in Society* 13(1):1-28.

(1996) The Politics of Discursive Authority In Research on the 'Invention of Tradition'. *Cultural Anthropology* 11(4):435-469

Brody, Alan. (1970) *The English Mummers and their Plays*. London: Routledge and Kegan Press.

Bryan, Dominic. (2000) *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control*. London: Pluto Press.

Buchanan, Ronald. (1963) Calendar Customs: Part 2 Harvest to Christmas. *Ulster Folklife* 9:61-79.

Buckley, Anthony

(1988) Collecting Ulster's Culture: Are there really Two Traditions? *In The Use of Tradition: Essays Presented to G.B. Thompson*. Alan Gailey ed. Pp 49-60.

(2007) Rise Up Dead Man and Fight Again - Mumming, the Mass and the Masonic Third Degree: Border Crossing – Mumming in Cross Border and Cross Community Contexts. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press.

Buckley, Anthony, ed. (1998) *Daring us to Laugh: Creativity and Power in Northern Irish Symbols*. Symbols in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Queens University Press.

Buckley Anthony and Mary Kenney. (1995) *Negotiating Identity: Rhetoric, Metaphor, and Social Drama in Northern Ireland*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Buckley, David. (2003) Halls of Fame/Museums. *In Continuum Encyclopaedia of Popular Music of the World, Volume 1: Media, Industry and Society*. David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver, John Shepard and Peter Wicke, eds. Pp. 29-31. London: Conituum.

Cairns, Ed and Darby, John. (1998) The conflict in Northern Ireland: Causes, consequences, and controls. *American Psychologist* 53(7): 754-760.

Carson, Ciaran. (1998) *Last Night's Fun: In and Out of Time with Irish Music*. New York: North Point Press.

Cashman, Ray.

(2000) Mumming with the Neighbours in West Tyrone. *Journal of Folklore Research* 37(1):73-84.

(2007) Mumming on the Irish Border – Social and Political Implications. *In* *Border Crossing – Mumming in Cross Border and Cross Community Contexts*. Anthony Buckley, Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Séamus Ó Catháin and Séamus Mac Mathúna eds. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press.

Cass, Eddie and Steve Roud. (2002) *An Introduction to the English Mummers' Play: Room, Room, Ladies and Gentlemen*. London: English Folk Dance and Song Society.

Chambers, Edmund Kerchever. (1933) *The English Folk-Play*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Clark, Samuel. (1971) The Social Composition of the Land League. *Irish Historical Studies* 17(68):447-469.

Charmaz, Kathy. (2003) Grounded theory. *In* Smith, J.A. (ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, pp. 81-110. London: Sage.

Cohen, Anthony. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge.

Coleman, Steve

(2010) Mobilized Sound: Memory Inscription and Vision in Irish Traditional Music. *Irish Journal of Anthropology* 13(1): 23-30.

(2012) “Non-Synchronism”, Traditional Music and Memory in Ireland. *In* *Memory Island: Diaspora and Memory Practices, Volume 2*. Oona Frawley, eds. Pp. 161-170. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann

(2009) Bunreacht. http://media.comhaltas.ie/docs/CCE_Bunreacht_English.pdf. Accessed 21/1/13.

(1972) A Continuing Concern. *Treoir* 4(2):1.

Coote Lake, H. (1931) Mummers' Plays and the *Sacer Ludus*. *Folk-lore* 42(2): 141-149.

Creed, Gerald. (2011) *Masquerade and Post socialism: Ritual and Cultural Disposition in Bulgaria*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Daniel, E. Valentine. (1987) *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way*. London: University of California Press.

- Dawe, Kevin. (2010) *The New Guitarscape in Critical Theory, Cultural Practice and Musical Performance*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Dean-Smith, M. (1966) An Un-Romantic View of the Mummers' Play. *Theatre Research* 8(2): 89-99.
- Debary, Octave. (2004) Deindustrialization and Museumification: From Exhibited Memory to Forgotten History. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595(1):122-133.
- Dellios Paulette. (2002) The Museumification of the Village: Cultural Subversion in the 21st Century. *The Bulletin of the Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies* 5(1):1-16.
- Deutsch, Morton, Coleman, Peter and Marcus, Eric. (2006) *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- DeWalt, Billy and DeWalt, Kathleen (2002) *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Doyle, Lynn. (1921) *An Ulster Childhood*. Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts Ltd.
- Ekman, Ann-Kristen. (1999) The Revival of Cultural Celebrations in Regional Sweden: Aspects of Tradition and Transition. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(3):280-293.
- Ernst, Earle. (1956) *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii.
- Feldman, Alan. (1991) *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Finnegan, Threase. (2011) Creating Reciprocal Relationships within the Mummung Community. *Irish Journal of Anthropology* 14(2):46-49.
- Fleming, Rachel. (2004) Resisting Cultural Standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Éireann and the Revitalization of Traditional Music in Ireland. *Journal of Folklore Research* 41(2):227-257.
- Flynn, Arthur. (1998) *Irish Dance*. Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company Inc.
- Fogelson, Raymond. (1982) Person, Self and Identity: Some Anthropological Retrospects, Circumspects and Prospects. *Psychosocial Theories of the Self (Path in Psychology)*: 67-109.
- Freidrich, Andreas. ed. (1985) *Folklore und Tourismus*. Sekretariat der Nationalen schweizerischen UNESCO-Kommission: Bern.

- Freshwater, Helen. (2009) *Theatre and Audience*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Frith, Simon. (2011) *Music and Identity*. In *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, eds. Pp. 108-128. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gailey, Alan
- (1969) *Irish Folk Drama*. Cork: The Mercier Press.
- (1974) *Chapbook Influences on Irish Mimmers' Plays*. *Ulster Folklife* 85(1):1-22.
- Gaskell, George. (2000) *Individual and Group Interviewing*. In *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook*. Martin Bawer and George Gaskell eds. Pp. 38-56. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Geertz, Clifford. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gibbons, Tom (2011) *English National Identity and Football Fan Culture: Who Are Ya?* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Gibson, Karri. (2004) 'English Only Court Cases Involving the U.S. Workplace: The Myths of Language Use and the Homoginization of Bilingual Worker's Identities'. *Second Language Studies* 2(22):1-60.
- Gilmore, David. (1998) *Carnival and Culture: Sex, Symbol, and Status in Spain*. London: Yale University Press.
- Giovine, Di Michael. (2009) *The Heritage-Scape: UNESCO, World Heritage and Tourism*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Glaser, Barney and Strauss, Anselm. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago:Aldine Publishing Company.
- Glassie, Henry
- (1983[1975]) *All Silver and No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming*. Kerry: Brandon Book Publishers.
- (1985) *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- (1995) *Tradition*. *The Journal of American Folklore* 108(430): 395-412.
- Goffman, Erving

- (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- (1981) *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Graburn, Nelson. (2001) What is Tradition? *Museum Anthropology* 24(2-3): 6-11.
- Granville, Aoife. (2012) “We Never Died a Winter Yet: The Sraid Eoin Wrenboys of Dingle”: Music, Community and Identity. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Ethnomusicology, National University of Ireland, Cork.
- Green, ERR. (1946) Christmas Rhymers and Mummers. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 9:3-21.
- Green, Linda. (1994) Fear as a Way of Life. *Cultural Anthropology* 9(2):227-256.
- Greenwood, Davydd J. (1977) Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization. *In Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. Valene L. Smith, eds. Pp. 129-138. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishers.
- Grimshaw, Allen. (1990) *Conflict Talk: Sociolinguistic investigations in Conversations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gumperz, John. (1992) Contextualisation and understanding. *In Rethinking Context: Language as an interactional phenomenon*. Alessandro Duranti, ed. Pp 229-252. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Halewood, Chris and Kevin Hannam. (2001) Viking Heritage Tourism: Authenticity and Commodification. *Annals of Tourism Research* 28(3): 565-580.
- Hall, Reg. (1996) Heydays are short lived: Change in music making practice in rural Ireland 1850-1950. *In Crosbhealach an Cheoil 1996: The Crossroads Conference. Tradition and Change in Irish traditional music*. Fintan Vallely ed. Pp78-81. Dublin.
- Hall, Reg, ed. (1998) *You Lazy Lot of Bone-Shakers: Songs and Dance Tunes of Seasonal Events*. The Voice of the People, vol. 16. London: Topic Records Ltd.
- Handler, Richard and Jocelyn Linnekin. (1984) Tradition, Genuine or Spurious. *The Journal of American Folklore* 97(385)273-290.
- Hannerz, Ulf. (1992) *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Harlow, Ilana. (1997) Creating Situations: Practical Jokes and the Revival of the Dead in Irish Tradition. *The Journal of American Folklore* 110(436):140-168.
- Harris, Rosemary. (1972) Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A study of neighbours and 'strangers' in a border community. Manchester University Press: Manchester.
- Helm, Alex and E. C. Cawte. (1967) *Six Mummings Acts*. Leicestershire: Guiser Press.
- Henry, Edward. (1989) Institutions for the Promotion of Indigenous Music: The Case of Ireland's Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann. *Ethnomusicology* 33(1):67-95.
- Hill, Jane. (1995) The Voices of Don Gabriel: Responsibility and Self in a Modern Mexicano Narrative. *In* *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim, eds. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrence. (1981) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horton, Donald and Anselm Strauss. (1957) Interaction in Audience-Participation Shows. *American Journal of Sociology* 62(6): 579-587
- Hymes, Dell. (1975) Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth. *The Journal of American Folklore* 88(350): 345-369.
- Irish Press. (1962) New Factory Site Blessed. January 27:7.
- Jeffers, Carol. (2003) Museum as Process. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 37(1): 107-119.
- Johl, Satirenji and Renganathan, Sumathi (2010). Strategies for Gaining Access in Doing Fieldwork: Reflection of two Researchers. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*. 8(1):42 -50.
- Johnson, Henry M. (1995) An Ethnomusicology of Musical Instruments: Form, Function, and Meaning. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 26(3):257-269.
- Johnson, Richard. (1596) *The Seven Champions of Christendom*. London: Knight and Son.
- Jones, Bryan. (1916) Christmas Mumping in Ireland. *Folklore* 27(3):301-307.
- Kaul, Adam. (2007) The limits of commodification in traditional Irish music sessions. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13:703-719.
- Kelly, James. (2010) *Mummings, Masks and Mischief*. 22 min. Feenish Productions: Fermanagh.

- Killworth, Paul. (2000) A Risky Cease-fire: British Infantry Soldiers and Northern Ireland. *In* Risk Revisited. Pat Caplan ed. Pp133-155.
- Kirby, ET. (1971) The Origin of the Mummers' Play. *The Journal of American Folklore* 84(333):275-288.
- Kirke, John. (1638) *The Seven Champions of Christendom*. London: J. Okes.
- Krippendorff, Klaus. (1980) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Krober, A.L. (1963 [1923]) *Anthropology*. New York: Harecourt, Brace and World Inc.
- Livingston, Tamara. (1999) Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory. *Ethnomusicology* 43(1):66-85.
- Low, Setha. (2001) The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear. *American Anthropologist* 103(1):45-58.
- Mac Anna, Tomás. (1984) Mummers and Mumming. *Tréoir* 1:28-31.
- Mac Carthaigh, Cristóir
- (2002) An Alternative Mummer's Play from Donegal. *Bealoideas* 70:199-205.
- (2007) Room to Rhyme: Irish Christmas Mumming in Transition. *In* *Border Crossing: Mumming in Cross Border and Cross Community Contexts*. Anthony Buckley ed. Pp146-170.
- Madden, Raymond (2010). *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Mazorati, Roberta. (2013) Imagined Communities and the othering processes: The Discursive strategies of established Italian residents in a Milan city neighbourhood. *Journal of Language and Politics* 12(2):251-271.
- McCann, May. (1995) Music and Politics in Ireland: The Specificity of the Folk Revival in Belfast. Special issue, "Presented to Peter Cooke", *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 4:51-75.
- McDowell, John H. (2010) Rethinking Folklorization in Ecuador: Multivocality in the Expressive Contact Zone. *Western Folklore* 69(2): 181-209.
- McGowan, Joe. (2005) A Visit from Sligo's Christmas Mummers; also Strawboys: What are they? <http://www.sligoheritage.com/archmummers.htm>, accessed March 23, 2014.

McKittrick, David et al. (1999) *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women and Children who died as a result of the Northern Ireland troubles*. London: Mainstream Publishing.

McKittrick, David and McVea, David. (2006) *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: New Amsterdam Books.

Millar, Adrian. (2006) *Socio-ideological fantasy and the Northern Ireland conflict*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Miller, Daniel. (1998) *Material Culture: Why Some Things Matter*. London: University of London Press.

Millington, Peter

(1989) *Mystery History: The Origins of British Mummers' Plays*. *American Morris Newsletter* 13(3):9-16.

(2002) *The Origins and Development of English Folk Plays*. Ph.D. dissertation, National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, University of Sheffield.

(2007) 'This is a Mummers' play I wrote': modern compositions and their implications. *In* *Border Crossing: Mummung in Cross Border and Cross Community Contexts*. Anthony Buckley ed. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press.

Modan, Gabriella and Amy Shuman. (2011) *Positioning the Interviewer: Strategic uses of embedded orientation in interview narratives*. *Language in Society* 40:13-25.

Morgan, Deidre. (2008) *Organs and Bodies: The Jew's harp and the Anthropology of Musical Instruments*. MA dissertation, The Faculty of Graduate Studies (Music), University of British Columbia (Vancouver).

Morgan, Gareth. (1989) *Mummers and Momoeri*. *Folklore* 100(1):84-87.

Morris, Ewan. (2005) *Our Own Devices: National Symbols and Political Conflict in Twentieth Century Ireland*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Mould, Tom. (2011) *Traditionalisation*. *In* *Folklore: An Encyclopaedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art, Volume one*. Charlie Mc Cormick and Kim Kennedy eds. Pp 1202-1204. Oxford: ABC-CLIO.

Nijs, Luc, with Micheline Lesaffre and Marc Leman. (2009) *The Musical Instrument as a Natural Extension of the Musician*. Paper presented at the Fifth Conference of Interdisciplinary Musicology, Paris, October 26-29.

- Nunley, John W. and Cara McCarty. (1999) *Masks: Faces of Culture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
- Ó Caomhanach, Ruairí. (1998) Irish Folk Drama. <http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/drama.htm#pig>. Accessed January 25, 2012.
- Ó Cathain, Seamus. (2003) Mummers and Mumming. *In* *Traditional Crafts of Ireland*. David Shaw-Smith ed. Pp. 130-133. London: Thomas and Hudson Ltd.
- Ó Danachair, Caoimhín. (1965) Distribution Patters in Irish Folk Traditions. *Béaloideas* 33:97-113.
- Olsen, Daniel. (2003) Heritage, Tourism and the Commodification of Religion. *Tourism Recreation Research* 28(3): 99-104.
- Ó Súilleabháin, Seán. (1963 [1970]) *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*. Detroit: Singing Tree Press.
- Ottenberg, Simon. (2012) Humourous Masks and Serious Politics among the Afikpo Igbo. *In* *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*. Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen Lubkemann and Christopher Steiner eds. Pp335-347.
- Parle, James. (2001) *The Mummers of Wexford*. Baldoyle: Colour Books Ltd.
- Pasquier, Dominique. (2015) The Cacophony of Failure: Being an Audience in a Traditional Theatre. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 12(1): 222-233.
- Patterson, Thomas G.F. (1945) The Christmas Rhymers. *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society* 11(1): 43-51.
- Pickering, Kenneth. (2005) *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pollock, Donald. (1995) Masks and the Semiotics of Identity. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute* 1(3): 581-597.
- Proschan, Frank. (1983) The semiotic study of puppets, masks, and performing objects. *Semiotica* 47(1/4):3-44.
- Rogers, Mark. (1999) Spectacular Bodies: Folklorization and the Politics of Identity in Ecuadorian Beauty Pageants. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 3(2): 54-85.

- Rosaldo, Renato. (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rozik, Eli. (1997) Mask and Disguise in Ritual, Carnival and Theatre. *South African Theatre Journal* 11(1):183-198.
- Ruud, Even. (1997) Music and Identity. *Nordisk Tidsskrift Musikkterapi* 6(1): 3-13.
- Sapir, Edward. (1949) Culture, Genuine and Spurious. *In Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality*. David G. Mandelbaum ed. Pp 308-331. London: University of California Press.
- Schechner, Richard
- (1985) *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- (2003) *Performance Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schensul, Stephen, Schencul, Jean and LeCompte, Margaret. (1999) *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires*. AltaMira Press: Oxford.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. (2014) The House gun: White writing, white fears and black justice. *Anthropology Today* 30(6):8-12.
- Shanklin, Eugenia. (1981) Two meanings and uses of tradition. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37(11): 71-89.
- Sheppard, W. Anthony (2001) *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*. London: University of California Press.
- Shils, Edward. (1981) *Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stokes, Paul. (2006) 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland, 1968-2005: A Case of Humiliation. *Social Alternatives* 25(1): 17-21.
- Tannen, Deborah. (2005) *Conversational Styles: Analysing Talk among Friends*. North Carolina: Oxford University Press.
- Tannen, Deborah, ed. (1993) What's in a Frame?: Surface Evidence for Underlying Expectations. *In Framing in Discourse*. Pp: 14-54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement*. 10 April 1998: 3.
- Tiddy, Reginald John Elliot. (1923) *The Mummings Play*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Tillis, Steve (1990) Towards an aesthetics of the puppet. MA dissertation, Department of Theatre, San Jose State University.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth. (1979) Masks and Powers. *Man* 14(2): 237-248.
- Turner, Victor
- (1967) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, Victor and Turner, Judith. (1982) Performing Ethnography. *The Drama Review* 26(2):33-50.
- (1982) Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology.
- Vallely, Fintan. (2008) *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*. Cork: Cork University Press.
- Vallely, Fintan ed. (1999) *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*. Cork: Cork University Press.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. (1960 [1908]) *The Rites of Passage*. Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle Caffee, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vaz de Silva, Francisco. (2012) Tradition Without End. *In A Companion to Folklore*. Regina Bendix and Galit Hasem-Rokem eds. Pp 40-54. Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Walker, Joseph. (1788) An Historical Essay on the Irish Stage. *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 2:75-90.
- Wellington, Peter. (2012) Folklorization and Afro-Ecuadorian Music in Esmeraldas: Discourses of Verguenza and Projects of Revalorization. MA dissertation, Department of Music, University of Illinois.
- Wiles, David. (2003) *A Short History of Western Performance Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkinson, Desi. (2003) "Celtitude," Professionalism, and the Fest Noz in Traditional Music in Brittany. *In Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*. Martin Stokes and Philip Bohlman eds. Pp 219-256. Oxford: The Scarecrow Press.
- Wilson, Thomas and Hastings Donnan. (2006) *The Anthropology of Ireland*. Oxford: Berg.
- Winter, Joseph, ed. (2000) From Earth Mother to Snake Woman: The Role of Tobacco in the Evolution of Native American Religious Organization. *In Tobacco Use by Native North*

Americans: Sacred Smoke and Silent Killer. The Civilization of the American Indian Series, 236. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Woods, Vincent.

(1998) At the Black Pig's Dyke. *In* Far From the Land: Contemporary Irish Plays. John Fairleigh ed. Pp 1- 61.

(2011) At the Black Pig's Dyke and Other Writing: Crossing Borders of Art and Tradition. *In* The Individual and Tradition: Folkloristic Perspectives. Ray Cashman ed. Pp 483-498. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Xie, Philip. (2003) The Bamboo-Beating Dance in Hainan, China: Authenticity and Commodification. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11(1):5-16.