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## Barter and Games Economics and the Supernatural in Danish Legendry

TIMOTHY R. TANGHERLINI

While a great deal of legend study has focused on psychological, structural or functional features of the accounts, little scholarly effort has been devoted to an examination of narrators' use of legends as a means for exploring aspects of day-to-day life (Honko 1965; Dundes 1971; Pentikäinen 1976; Fine 1980; Brunvand 1981). In a society such as rural nineteenth-century Denmark, in which daily subsistence was frequently a struggle for members of the lowest classes, it is likely that these economic concerns would find expression in stories (Tangherlini 1994:54; Holbek 1987:58f). Yet, despite this expectation, one does not find a preponderance of such stories in folklore collections. People, however, do not tell stories about mundane exchanges, transactions or events but rather tend to narrate extraordinary happenings (Robinson 1981:61; Tangherlini 1990). Accordingly, legends about surprising interactions, such as those between human beings and supernatural beings, are ubiquitous in Scandinavian folklore collections. Indeed, nearly seventy percent of all the legends collected by Evald Tang Kristensen include allusion to some sort of supernatural encounter (Tangherlini 1994:137). While the appearance of supernatural beings may be exceptional, the actual encounter, more often than not, correlates well with less surprising normal human encounters.

In a large portion of these legends, narrators refer to economically motivated interactions between human beings and anthropomorphic supernatural beings such as trolls (*trolde*), elves (*ellefolk*), and mound dwellers (*højfolk* or *bjergfolk*). At times, the interaction between the two groups revolves around theft – one group steals something from the other group. These legends confirm the somewhat antagonistic relationship between the world of humans and the world of threatening outside supernatural beings. Among the best known of these stories are those that detail the theft of the drinking horn from the mound dwellers (*ML* 6045).

At other times, the interaction between the two groups includes a voluntary economic transaction. Here, transactions are taken to be "sequences of interaction which are systematically governed by reciprocity" (Barth 1966:4; Hecican 1986:101). The transactions are either based on barter or the exchange of monetary instruments and, in these legends, the concept of payment for services rendered often acts as the organizing principle of the account. Perhaps the best known of such accounts is the mound dwellers' baking (*ML* 5080). In these stories, the human actants either acknowledge the transaction by accepting the payment from the supernatural beings, or they ignore the transaction by rejecting the payment. In the first scenario, a sense of economic balance or gain ensues, while in the second

scenario, a sense of economic disruption ensues. The resolution of the legend often reveals the economic ramifications of the positive or negative valuation of the transactive setting played out on the body of the human actant. Interestingly, the resolutions of the accounts differ substantially, and suggest that tradition participants use the stories as an endorsement or rejection of potential strategies in economic interactions.

### Barter and the Gift

The legends which Inger Boberg studied in her thorough examination of the Scandinavian oikotypes of the legends about the mound dwellers' baking represent some of the clearest examples of economic transactions between humans and anthropomorphic supernatural beings (Boberg 1938). A typical variant of the legend, in this case told by Sören Hansen, reads as follows:

I gamle dage var der en mand i *Bjerre* herred, som havde hans mark lige hen til en stor banke, hvori en bjærgmand boede. Dette vidste manden meget godt og en dag han pløjede tæt ved den, lå der en røge oven på banken, som var i stykker. Så satte han skaflet godt fast med en kile og lagde røgen igjen. Bjærgmanden var nemlig ved at bage, og om eftermiddagen, han igjen kom ud at pløje, lå der på samme sted en lille kage til ham. Den skulde han have, fordi han dannede røgen i stand (Kristensen 1980(1892):98).

In the old days, there was a man in *Bjerre* district who had his field right up to a large mound in which a *bjærgmand* lived. The man knew this well and one day when he plowed close by it, there was an oven rake lying on top of the mound and it was broken. Then he set the shaft tightly back on with a little metal pin and put the rake down again. The *bjærgmand* was baking you see, and that afternoon when he came out again to plow, there lay a little cake for him in the same place. He was to have that because he had repaired the rake.

Here it is quite clear that the interaction is an economic transaction. The human, out tending to his normal duties – plowing a field – encounters broken domestic tools – the mound dweller's baking implements – and repairs them. In exchange for this service, he receives payment in the form of bread. Slightly less than one half of the legends reprinted in Kristensen's two published legend collections end with the completion of the transaction.<sup>1</sup> The remaining legends include the result of eating (accepting the payment) or not eating (rejecting the payment) the bread offered by the mound dwellers. Thus, in nearly one quarter of the legends, the human eats the bread and benefits from it.<sup>2</sup> In the remaining legend variants, one of the humans refuses to eat the bread and suffers grave consequences from that refusal – either illness or death.<sup>3</sup> Often in these variants, one of the plowers eats the bread and benefits from it.

Normally, one would never consider eating the offered bread, since the food of the "Other" is harmful to humans (Boberg 1938:56). In her evaluation of these stories, however, Boberg suggests that the food is a "gift" from the supernatural beings, thereby explaining its innocuous or even beneficial nature when consumed (*ibid.*:61, 75). Marcel Mauss, in his influential work on gift giving in archaic societies, opens with the assertion that, "In Scandinavia and many other civilizations, contracts are fulfilled and exchange of goods are made by means of gifts. In theory

such gifts are voluntary but in fact they are given and repaid under obligation" (Mauss 1954(1925):1).<sup>4</sup> According to Mauss, the gift acts as a total prestation – it is not a simple exchange of goods, since the goods exchanged are representative of the entire cultural construct in which they are exchanged (*ibid.*). Consequently, refusal to engage in the exchange of gifts is a refusal to recognize social hierarchies and obligations.

Mauss continues, noting that, "Among the first group of beings with whom men must have made contracts were the spirits of the dead and the gods. They in fact are the real owners of the world's wealth. With them it was particularly necessary to exchange and particularly dangerous not to ..." (*ibid.*:13). One can speculate that the *bjærgfolk* of Danish legendry are at least in part guardians of the land, and therefore guardians of the agricultural product that the rural populace depended on for their economic well-being. Michael Taussig adds that, "imagery of ... the fertility spirits of nature dominates the ethos of labor in the peasant mode of production", and his comments further help to explain the link between *bjærgfolk* and rural Danish production (Taussig 1980:13). If the interaction portrayed in these Danish legends is in fact an exchange of gifts, then the positive and negative results of acceptance and rejection respectively would make sense in light of Mauss's evaluation of the dangers inherent in gift exchange between humans and the supernatural. But the questions remain: is the interaction an example of total prestation and is the food a gift?

Rather than interpreting the proffered cake as a gift, an understanding of the persistence of these stories through the late nineteenth century may be closer at hand if the cake is interpreted as part of a barter transaction.<sup>5</sup> Mauss suggests that "barter arose from the system of gifts given and received on credit, simplified by drawing together the moments of time" (Mauss 1954(1925):25). While this may serve as an explanation for the development of barter over time, barter in nineteenth-century Denmark had very little to do with gift exchange (Humphrey 1985:52). In general, gift exchange involves the transference of inalienable objects of the same kind passing between people already bound together by social ties, whereas commodity exchange, or barter, involves a transference of alienable, unlike objects passing between people acting as free agents (Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992:7). With this clarification of the difference between gift exchange and barter transaction, it becomes apparent that the transaction between the humans and the supernatural beings in these legends is a barter relationship.

First, the exchange between the human actants and the mound dwellers is one that the human actants enter into voluntarily. The transaction is one based on free agency, without any sense of coercion. Because of the locus of the activity – outside of the closely circumscribed domestic space, but still in the domain of normal economic endeavor – the exchange falls within the boundaries of normal economic interaction. Second, the objects transferred are not inalienable – the labor can be divorced from the laborer and the bread can be divorced from the supernatural being. The alienability of labor, in fact, underlies the success of the burgeoning capitalist industrial economies of late nineteenth-century Scandinavia. Third, the objects passing between the two groups are unlike – labor is exchanged for food stuffs. Finally, there is no suggestion of social ties between the humans and the mound dwellers. In fact, just the opposite appears to be true. Although an argument

can be made that the relationship between a farmer and a *nisse* is one that involves social ties, the same cannot be said of the relationship between a farmer and the mound dwellers.<sup>6</sup> Böberg herself proposes a similar analysis, in direct opposition to Hans Ellekilde's attempt to view the mound dwellers as positively inclined toward the farmer: "The point of departure here is completely different. It is not that the mound dwellers ... particularly those at one's own farm are fundamentally more friendly-minded toward people than other strange beings and their food less dangerous, as H. Ellekilde for example ... would contend" ("Udgangspunktet er nemlig her et helt andet. Ikke at højfolkene ... specielt dem ved ens egen gård, oprindeligt er mere venligsindede mod menneskene end andre mystiske væsener og deres føde derfor mindre farlig, som f. ex. H. Ellekilde ... vil hævde.") (Böberg 1938:60). Instead, the two groups live parallel but separate lives, with little chance for interaction. When the two groups do interact, it is almost exclusively on an individual level and, as such, the concept of total prestation is absent (Mauss 1954 (1925):3). Therefore, it appears that in these legends the narrators speak not of the rules of gift exchange but rather of barter exchange and, by extension, economic organization in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agrarian Denmark.<sup>7</sup>

Ethnographic sources reveal that barter transactions were a common part of nineteenth-century Danish rural life. For example, Kristian Kristensen Norge recounts that farm workers were often paid in grain for their work during the harvest: "Their harvest wages were a portion rye and a portion corn, since there was no money" ("Deres høstlön var vis rug og vis hyg, for penge var der jo ingen af.") (Kristensen 1891–94, 1:48). This and other accounts suggest that the rural economy of Denmark in the late nineteenth century closely parallels George Foster's formulation of Kroeber's classic definition of peasant societies: "rural peoples living in relation to market towns" (Foster 1960–61:174).<sup>8</sup> While the market towns and larger land holding classes of nineteenth-century Denmark were undoubtedly commercialized, the lowest classes of the rural population from whom Tang Kristensen collected lived primarily in a monetized system. This population, known in Danish as the *almue*, can be classified as a peasant class, albeit one experiencing significant and rapid economic change. As Taussig notes, however, it is precisely in these periods of substantial change in economic organization that people turn toward narrative expression as a means for examining the potential outcomes of behaviors in new or redefined economic situations (Taussig 1980:19).

Even though the use of money was well established in Denmark by the time these legends were collected, low-level economic interactions among the Danish rural population were often based on barter. In barter, "the objects exchanged have direct consumption values for the participants" and the computation of the value of the items exchanged is mutually independent and individuated – if a person thinks he got a fair deal, then he got a fair deal (Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992:7f). Lars Djernes describes trade at the market in Lerup parish, emphasizing the prevalence of barter and the individual component of such trade:

They had a market in Lerup parish, they called it Lerup market, now it's called Skråm market. They held it for eight days, and all sorts of things went on there... The market guests didn't have any money, and so they traded 2 for 1 or 1 for 2, or whatever else they could figure out to trade. It often ended in fist fights.

De havde et marked i Lerups sogn, de kaldte Lerups marked, nu kaldes det Skråm marked. Det holdtes forhen i 8 dage, og på det sted foregik der mange ting... Markedsgæsterne havde ikke penge, og så byttede de 2 for 1 og 1 for 2, og hvordan de ellers kunde hitte på at give i bytte. Tit kom det også til slagsmål. (Kristensen 1891–94, 5:25)

An exchange between two members of the same community often precipitates an attempt to make the deal as fair as possible, since future transactions are highly likely. In general, a strategy of "tit for tat" predominates in these situations. In contrast, economic transactions with unknown, extra-community members are more risky, since the likelihood of future transactions is not necessarily great. Caroline Humphrey mentions that "one reason for the elusiveness of the sort of activities which could be described as 'barter' is their capacity to incorporate different meanings held by the two sides, a condition which is especially marked in the case of barter across ethnic frontiers" (Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992:14). If it is especially marked across ethnic frontiers, then it is probably even more marked across the human/supernatural frontier. Since the barter exchange in the legends discussed here is not one between two sides from the same community and is, at the very least, one between two sides from different ethnic groups, the value of the goods exchanged is hard to distinguish. This difficulty resides in the different meanings and therefore values, incorporated into the exchanged goods by the two parties to the transaction. Due to these differing values, it is not surprising that the recipient of the bread is at times reluctant to eat it. That the bread, when eaten, gives exceptional strength or wealth underscores the differing values between the two communities. In these inter-group transactions, what one group considers to be of trivial value has exceptional value for the other group.

John Lindow, in an article on Swedish legends of buried treasure, considered Foster's concept of limited good as a motivational factor for the performance of those legends and suggested that the inability of the treasure diggers to get the treasure reflects the peasant belief that the economic pie was of limited size (Lindow 1982; Foster 1965). In contrast, the extra-community transactions in the legends of the mound dwellers' baking provide, in part, a means for exploring the accumulation of wealth that does not negatively affect other members of the community. Foster notes that "an individual can achieve economic success by tapping sources of wealth that are recognized to exist outside the village system" (Foster 1965:306). This approach appears to obtain in these legends. Here the willingness to expand the pie by going outside the community is narratively lauded. Furthermore, the legends suggest that such transactions should be entered into informed by community standards of equitable exchange. The hope is that the other party to the exchange will bring the same attitude. Thus the legends of the baking with positive resolutions provide a model for exchange. Conversely, the legends with negative resolutions provide an opportunity to comment on the harmful ramifications the breakdown of the barter economy would have on peasant life.

To understand the role of barter in these legends, it may be helpful to examine closely several variants of the legend. A structural map of the legend, first proposed by William Labov and later refined by W. F. H. Nicolaisen, helps in delimiting the areas of choice for the legend teller (Labov 1972; Nicolaisen 1984, 1987). Legends, according to this structural scheme, include an orientation, in which the legend

actants are introduced and the initial conflict is presented, a complicating action, in which the conflict is brought to a head, and a resolution, in which the conflict is resolved. The resolution can be either positive, in which the social or economic status of the central legend actant(s) has been enhanced; negative, in which the social or economic status of the central actant(s) has been diminished; or neutral, in which the *status quo* obtains. When a narrator tells a story, he can choose who will act in it, the type of conflict, and how that conflict will be resolved. Since the inner reality of the legend closely mirrors the outer reality of the legend teller, one expects the narrator to choose conflicts which are close to those of his everyday life. The resolution of the conflict thus stands as a narrative negotiation of the contingencies of particular actions given the presented conflict.

In the orientation of the mound dwellers' baking, the narrators often mention that a man is out plowing a field. This description is hardly surprising since plowing was a male-coded activity on the Danish farm (Kofod 1984:8). Accordingly, the vast majority of human actants are men (Boberg 1938:33). Occasionally, the man is accompanied by a boy and other times, it is simply two farm hands out plowing. In a small number of variants, a girl accompanies the plower (*ibid.*:35). In short, the orientation presents a farmer and his help engaging in a normal economic endeavor the goal of which is to increase the prosperity of the farm or, at the very least, maintain its integrity as an economic unit. This emphasis on the normal, daytime economic activity of the farm contrasts sharply with the legends of theft from the mound dwellers which almost exclusively take place at night, a time when no economic activity normally occurs. Thus, with the orientation of the account, the legend has already signaled its intent to focus on the normal economy of the farm.

The discovery of the broken baking tools, the complicating action of the legend account, is most frequently accidental and the request for their repair is both tacit and anonymous. For example, Sofie Lund recounts: "He saw an oven rake and a peel board which were both broken" ("Han så da en ovnrage og en skåde, som begge dele var i stykker.") (Kristensen 1980(1892):99).

Numerous variants, however, include the appearance of the supernatural being who explicitly requests the repairs, as is the case in S. Kristensen's wife's story: "Plowman, plowman, fix my rake then you'll get a warm cake! That's what a *bjærgmand* said who was baking" ("Plovmand, Plovmand, far min Rag, saa skal du faa en varm Kag"! Saadan sagde en Bjærgmand, der var ved at bage.") (Kristensen 1928:80).

While in the first instance the contract is implicit, in the second instance the contract is explicit. In either case, there is a strong sense that the contract is entered into freely.

The complete lack of legends in Kristensen's collections relating the coincidental discovery of baking tools without any further interaction supports the idea that these legends concern the contractual interaction between the human community and the outside supernatural beings. Both communities, then, are engaging in economic activities. The inability of one community to successfully complete an important domestic economic task leads to their appeal to the other community for help. Interestingly, this situation is among the normal motivations for human barter exchanges. It is also amusing to note that while the humans are "away" from home,

and thus engaged in extra-domestic tasks, the mound dwellers are within the bounds of the home, and thus engaged in domestic tasks. On the level of narrators, one finds that women tell the story with the same frequency as men, a somewhat surprising finding given female informants' propensity for telling stories about domestic activities (Tangherlini 1994:147, 153).<sup>9</sup> An explanation for this distribution may be attributable to the mound dwellers' baking. Not only does the legend address the threat to those out plowing, but it also addresses the concerns of those who bake, namely that the endeavor could be disrupted by an unfortunate equipment failure.

The resolution of the legend consists of the repair and return of the broken baking tools and the subsequent receipt of payment in the form of bread. Unlike the original contract, the payment is usually implicitly referred to as such. Morten Rosenkjær recounts the following: "A later time when he plowed by the mound, the rake was once again pushed out of the mound and this time there was a little cake on it for him" ("En senere gang, han pløjede forbi højen, blev ragen atter rakt ud til ham, og den gang var der en lille kage på til ham.") (Kristensen 1980(1892):108).

Generally, the payment is a baked good – bread, cake or the like (Boberg 1938:49). The exchange, therefore, mirrors an expected human exchange. In return for helping with the baking, a person receives part of the product as payment. The final decision which has to be made after the receipt of the bread is whether or not to eat it. This choice does not pose a problem in human-human transactions, but it does pose a problem in human-Other transactions since, as it has already been noted, the food of the Other is often considered to be dangerous.

In these legends, however, the acceptance of the bread/payment has almost exclusively positive results. Conversely, the rejection of the payment has either negative or, occasionally, neutral results. The most frequent result of eating the bread is an increase in strength or wealth, as in A. C. Nielsen's story: "He ate the cake then and drank what was in the pitcher, and they were good enough. Then it was told that the man became so strong that there was nobody who was equal to him" ("Han åd så kagen og drak det, der var i bægeret, og gode sager var det nok. Der blev da fortalt, at manden siden efter blev så stærk, at der hverken var lige eller mage til.") (*ibid.*:101).

In such cases, the economic productivity of the farm is positively affected by the transaction. Since the human actant has helped the supernatural community complete an important domestic economic task, and therefore guaranteed their ability to survive, payment which allows the human community to prosper in its agricultural endeavors is only fitting. While on the one level the human performs a minor service for the members of another community and receives minor payment (a piece of bread) in return, on a second level the human has guaranteed the economic success of the other community and they reciprocate in kind, guaranteeing the economic success of the human community.

The most frequent result of refusing payment is a substantial decrease in health and wealth, often manifesting itself as death. Anna Larsen tells one such tale:

There were some mound dwellers in a little mound on Spjellerup Town field, Marvede. A man plowed near by the mound and the servant boy drove the plow for him. Then a troll came out and asked if he could borrow an axe to repair his peelboard, since it had broken.

The man threw the axe to him, and he disappeared into the mound. A little later, he came out with a freshly baked bread and asked them to eat it. The boy ate quite a bit of it, and he became unusually big and strong. The man, on the other hand, didn't dare eat any of the bread, and he died shortly thereafter.

Der har været Bjærgfolk i en lille Høj paa Spjellerup Byes Mark, Marvede. En Mand pløjede tæt ved Højen, og Tjenestedrengen kjørte Plov for ham. Da kom en Trold ud og bad om at maatte laane en Øgse til at lave sin Gridsel med, for den var gaaet i Stykker. Manden kastede Øgsen hen til ham, og han forsvandt i Højen. Lidt efter kom han igjen med et nybagt Brød, som han bad dem spise. Drengen spiste ogsaa dygtig deraf, og han blev nu saa ualmindelig stor og stærk. Manden derimod turde ikke spise noget af Brødet, og han døde kort Tid derefter (Kristensen 1928:86).

In these cases, the economic productivity of the farm is negatively affected not by the transaction but rather by the refusal to acknowledge the transaction.

It has already been established that the economic transactions between human beings and supernatural beings closely mirror those of the tradition participants in their day-to-day lives. The barter exchange between the human actant and the mound dweller in these legends provides the narrator an opportunity to explore the risks associated with inter-group barter transactions in which the value of the goods exchanged is not always easily discernible. While anthropologists may "simplify their explanations by constructing models of riskless choice", the Danish peasants explored the risks of the transactive setting through narrative performance (Hedican 1986:101). Barter always includes the possibility of exploitation of a weaker or less informed individual by a more powerful or better informed individual. In the legends with positive resolutions, there appears to be an implicit suggestion that a willingness to enter into barter exchange, even across community boundaries, has the potential for unprecedented economic gain. But this potential for economic gain is entirely dependent on the willingness of the community member to take the risk of such a transaction.

### Theft and the Devil

In legends with negative resolutions, one of the plowers refuses to eat the bread and this leads to his demise. The refusal to acknowledge the transaction can be linked to the concept of theft, a transactive setting in which one of the parties is not willing to acknowledge the transaction, or in which one party has been coerced into a non-reciprocal interaction.<sup>10</sup> Generally, theft of goods by either community constitutes an extremely dangerous interaction. Certainly the mound dwellers steal goods from human farms, confirming the belief that these outside supernatural beings are a significant threat to the integrity of the farm. For example, Nik. Christensen recounts: "At one place, they always had the impression that every time they baked there was one less cake when they carried them up to the loft than when they took them out of the oven. These dwarves had their place right under the mill" ("Et sted syntes de al tid hver gang de bagede, at der var en kage mindre, når de blev bårne på loftet, end når de blev tagne ud af ovnen. Deher dværge havde deres gang ned under kværnen til deres bolig.") (Kristensen 1980(1892):130).

In other stories, the mound dwellers are less antagonistic, and return borrowed goods: "In the old days, some mound dwellers lived in a mound near Sallinge, Hillerslev parish. They often came into town and borrowed all sorts of things from the townsfolk, but they were always very prompt with returning the loaned goods" ("I en banke ved byen Sallinge, Hillerslev sogn, boede der bjærgfolk i gamle dage, som ofte kom ind i byen og lånte alt slags tøj af beboerne, men de var al tid meget redelige med at bringe det lånte tilbage igen.") (*ibid.*:124).

Frequently the return payment is significantly more substantial than the amount borrowed, a clear parallel to the case of the repaired baking tools, as Stine Kjærgård tells: "One Christmas Eve, a mound dweller came in to Nørre-Tang and asked the woman for some bread. It was old Peder Tang's mother. When he got it, he promised her incredible wealth which would last for the next four generations, but then there would again be some backsliding" ("En juleaften kom en bjærgmand ind i Nørre-Tang og bad konen der om brød. Det var gamle Peder Tang hans moder. Da han fik det, lovede han hende sådan rigdom, og det skulde blive ved i fjerde led, men så skulde der komme tilbagegang igjen.") (*ibid.*:122).

At other times, the return payment is more in line with the negative evaluation of the mound dwellers. Søren Vistisen tells the following: "In Nollund, the *tattere* had their abode under the people's bed. That's what my grandmother called the mound dwellers: They were these little people, and they came and borrowed the beer keg. They weren't supposed to look into it when it was brought back, but once when the farmer's wife looked into it, it was full of spider webs" ("I Nollund have æ tatterer deres bolig under folkenes seng. Sådan kaldte min oldemoder bjærgfolkene. Det var sådan små folk, og de kom en gang og lånte folkenes øltønde. De måtte ikke se i den, de bragte tilbage, men da konen en gang så i den, var den fuld af spindelvæv.") (*ibid.*:123).

Although the original repayment in stories of this type is usually completely out of line with the original assistance – a bottomless beer keg for instance – once the human questions the transaction, the original repayment evaporates – gold turns to coal, food turns to worms, wealth quickly disappears. Accordingly the loan of goods turns into a *de facto* theft as, in this case for example, the farm loses both the initial repayment as well as the use of a valuable domestic implement, namely the beer keg.

In other legends, humans steal from the mound dwellers. In most of these legends, there is a retributive aspect to the outcome of the legend. For example, even when the drinking horn of the mound dwellers is successfully carried away by the young farm hand, his horse suffers from the exploit:

Halehøj lies a little bit north of Grinderslev Abbey and west of the road. A manager from the farm rode by there one night and saw a woman with long breasts. He asked for something to drink and she came with a silver cup. He rode with it due east toward Hvalpsund. He was lucky to ride over running water at Halevads Bridge, because she was so close to him that she snapped the tail off the horse.

Halehøj ligger et lille Stykke nord for Grinderslev Kloster og vesten for Ladevejen. En Forvalter paa Gaarden red der forbi en Aften og saa en Kone med lange Bryster. Han forlangte noget at drikke, og hun kom med et Sølvbæger. Det red han med lige øst efter Hvalpsund. Han var heldig med at komme over rindende Vand ved Halevads Bro, for der var hun ham saa nær, at hun snap Halen af Hesten. (Kristensen 1928:149)

While the thief manages to get free in a majority of stories, some narrators choose to tell legends with grisly resolutions. For example, Rasmus Hornbæk tells the following account:

At a manor farm in Skåne, there's a flute and a drinking horn. A farmhand had managed to get them, and many others had tried before him; but they had drunk from the cup and they were bewitched. This farmhand didn't drink, and threw the drink behind himself. And then he asked for the flute too. When he got it in his hand, he rode away and rode right across some fields... When the farmhand got home, the manor lord said that he should stay in his room until daybreak, since the trolls would probably meet in the farmyard. The farmhand didn't listen to the farmer and went out, but then they took him and tore him to pieces. They kept the flute and the drinking horn at the farm...

Paa en Herregaard [Lyngby] i Skaane er en Fløjte og et Horn. Det havde en Karl taget sig paa at skaffe til Veje, og flere havde forsøgt det; men allesammen havde de drukket af Bægeret, og saa var de blevne fortroldede. Denher Karl drak ikke, og smed Drikken bag over sig. Saa forlangte han at se Fløjten ogsaa. Da han fik den i Haanden, red han derfra og satte tværs over nogle Ager... Da karlen kom hjem, sagde Herremanden, at han skulde blive ind i hans Kammer til Dag, for Troldene vil nok møde i Gaarden. Karlen adlød ikke sin Husbond og gik ud, men saa tog de ham og rev ham ihjel. Hornet og Fløjten beholdt de paa Gaarden... (*ibid.*)

In this account, the punishment meted out to the young farmhand is surprisingly similar to the punishment suffered by those who make alliances with the Devil.

Numerous legends concerning contracts with the Devil are common in Danish tradition. Indeed, nearly five percent of all legends in the repertoires of Tang Kristensen's best legend informants make some reference to the Devil (Tangherlini 1994:139). Interestingly, while mutually beneficial economic transactions with the nature beings generally serve to increase the wealth of the community by going outside the community to increase the size of the economic pie and thus eschewing Foster's concept of "limited good," contracts with the Devil focus exclusively on the accumulation of individual wealth, often to the detriment of the community and, as such, these contracts are intimately linked to the concept of theft (Foster 1965). Similar to the tales of stealing from the mound dwellers, tales of individuals who act to increase their own personal wealth through alliances with the Devil most frequently end in horrible and bloody death:

There was also a manor lord at *Søby Søgård* who had made an agreement with the Evil One that he would indulge him for a while and therefore he could later have possession of him with skin and hair. Now when the time approached when the Devil was supposed to come get him, he didn't have the slightest idea how to get free. Finally he came up with the idea of covering his entire room with comforters. Now when his time had run out, the Devil came sure enough and it only helped a little bit that the soft comforters could cushion the sinner, because now he danced around the room with him so that soon there wasn't a whole stump left of neither the comforters nor the manor lord. The blood, which splattered about on the walls, can never be cleaned off and can even be seen now.

Der har ogsaa været en herremand på *Søby Søgård*, som var bleven enig med den Slemme om, at han skulde føje ham en vis tid, og derfor skulde han så have ham med hud og hår. Da

nu tiden nærmede sig, at Djævelen skulde hente ham, vidste han aldrig sit levende råd for at slippe fri. Endelig fandt han på at lade sine værelser beklæde med dyner overalt. Som nu tiden var udløben, kom Fanden ogsaa rigtig, og det hjalp kun lidt, at de bløde dyner skulde tage af for synderen, ti nu blev der danset således omkring i stuen med ham, at snart var der ikke en hel stump tilbage enten af herremanden eller af dynerne. Blodet, som stænkede omkring på væggene, kan aldrig udslettes og er altså at se endnu. (Kristensen 1980(1900):45)

The similarity between the Devil contract and the stolen drinking horn is not surprising since, as in the Devil contract stories, the farmhand engages in an economic activity that is not geared toward maintaining the farm's integrity or increasing its productivity, but rather subjects it to direct interaction with threatening outside groups.

The proceeds of the theft of the mound dwellers' drinking horn, like the proceeds of the Devil contract, represent ill-gotten gains. As with most Devil contracts, the theft of the horn occurs at night – a time when people should be inside. Acquiring wealth at night already marks the action outside the realm of normal economic endeavor. Furthermore, the wealth obtained is not a result of work and accordingly cannot be used in a productive manner. Taussig notes that, in Central America, money earned from a contract with the Devil is barren: "It cannot serve as productive capital but has to be spent immediately on what are considered to be luxury consumer items, such as fine clothes, liquor, butter and so on. To invest this money to produce more money ... is to invite ruin" (Taussig 1980:94). Indeed, in many legends, the drinking horn cannot be used by the individual, but rather must be surrendered to the community or used to build a church, as is the case in a legend told by Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter:

[And] then one came out and offered him a gold drinking horn and told him to drink. He took it but threw it behind himself... Now he rode off as fast as he could, and the little people came after him with the hag in front... When he now had escaped from her so well, he used the drinking horn to build Hornslet church, and that's where it gets its name.

[Og] da kom der én og bød ham et guldhorn og bad ham drikke af. Han tog imod det, men kastede det bag over sig... Nu red han, alt, han kunde, og de små folk efter ham og kjællingen i spidsen... Da han kom nu så lykkelig fra hende, brugte han det horn til at bygge Hornslet kirke for, og deraf har den navnet. (Kristensen 1980(1892):211)

However, it is interesting to note that, as in the stories of the mound dwellers' baking, different narrators offer competing strategies for interacting with outsiders, and some of these thefts are surprisingly successful, the stolen drinking horn having no ill effects on the thief or the community. In one variant, the horn is even offered as a wedding gift (*ibid.*:213).

Nevertheless, theft, unlike a transaction based on positive reciprocity, is an attempt to forcefully undermine the rules of economic exchange and threaten the well-being of a community or household. Since a great deal of legend tradition focuses on the expression of the economic organization of the tradition community, theft almost always results in retributive action of some sort. In contrast, the legends of the mound dwellers' baking focus quite specifically on extra-domestic economic exchanges in which both parties enter freely into an agreement, implicit or explicit,



Photograph of Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter (from Dansk folkemindesamling). Kirsten Marie, another prolific tale teller, was the daughter of a smallholder who eventually managed to purchase his own farm. For a detailed examination of her storytelling, see Tangherlini 1994:249–276; also, Holbek 1987:128.

with the expectation that goods or services offered by one party will be exchanged for goods or services offered by the other party. The successful completion of the exchange has positive economic ramifications for both sides of the contractual agreement. The unsuccessful completion of the exchange, much like legends concerning theft, results in retributive action.

### Games and Strategy

In her evaluation of the variation in the legends of the mound dwellers' baking, particularly the resolution of the accounts, Boberg suggests that, "the different forms simply represent different developmental stages and will, because of the legend's primitive nature – connected with a similarly primitive, ingrown folk belief – be encountered throughout the area where the legend is found at all" ("de forskellige former repræsenterer sikkert blot forskellige udviklingstrin og vil på grund af sagnet's hele primitive karakter – i pagt med en ligeså primitiv, indgroet folketro – i hovedsagen alle kunne træffes overalt indenfor det område, hvor sagnet overhovedet findes") (Boberg 1938:13). This evaluation of variation ignores the important role of the tradition participant in performing these legends. Rather than sweep the differences under the rug as Boberg does by ascribing them to developmental steps in the superorganic life of the tale, it may be far more fruitful to examine possible reasons for the variation in legend resolution.

As noted above, similar stories can progress in markedly different manners. Thus one finds legends with clearly positive resolutions, such as Jens Pedersen's account, that clearly endorses the acceptance of the proffered bread:

The farmer from a farm in Bjærgsø was out in his field, plowing with four horses. By mound lay there, now it's been leveled since people have taken gravel from it for so long, so it has completely disappeared. As he was plowing by it, there was a peelboard lying there and it was broken. So the man repaired it and when he came back, there was a warm muffin lying there for him and his farmhand. They ate it and found themselves well off because of it.

Manden fra en Gaard i Bjærgsø var ude paa hans Mark at pløje med fire. Der laa Byghøj, som nu er jævnet, da der er taget Murgrus i den saa længe, til den helt er forsvunden. Som de nu kom om ved den, laa der en Gridsel og var i Stykker. Saa gjorde Manden den i Stand, og da de kom tilbage, laa der en varm Skoldkage til ham og Drengen. De spiste den og befandt dem vel ved det. (Kristensen 1928:83)

One also finds legends with clearly negative resolutions, such as Jens Peter Pedersen's account, that endorse the same strategy, and impose a punitive measure for those who do not follow the strategy:

There was this one guy, who was called Svend, and he lived at a farm in Lørslev, it's gone now. One day he was up here near Ilbjærge plowing, and he had four animals before the plow. The boy drove two of the animals and father, he was plowing. When they had plowed for a while, the boy says, "Hey, Father, Father." – "What's up?" says the father. "Is there fire where there's smoke?" – "Yes there is," says the father. "Well then there's," boy could he ever swear, "fire in the grey nag." They plow another two or three times across the field again, and when they come past a little mound that was out on the field – it's called Byghøj,





Photograph of Jens Peter Pedersen (from Dansk Folkemindesamling). Jens Peter was a spinner and a pensioner who lived alone as a widower in Ilbjærge, Hjørring amt. He loved to tell stories and was one of Tang Kristensen's most prolific legend tellers. For a detailed examination of his storytelling, see Tangherlini 1994:283–312.

but it's been practically plowed under and it'll soon be gone. A hand reaches up from the mound with a broken peelboard. The man had his plow axe and some nails and so he took it and repaired it. When it was done, he puts it down where he'd gotten it and it immediately disappeared. He goes home at noon and comes back in the afternoon. Immediately, a hand pops up out of the mound, with a white plate with a fresh warm piece of buttered bread, and he took it and ate it. But the boy wouldn't eat any. It was good for the man, but the boy became thin and died before the autumn.

Der var en, der hed Svend, han boede i en Gaard i Lørslev, der nu er væk. Saa var han en Dag her oppe efter Ilbjærge til at pløje og havde fire Bæster for, Drengen kørte da de to, og Faderen pløjede. Da de havde pløjet noget, siger Drengen, "Hør, Fader, Fader." – "Hvad godt?" siger Faderen, "Er der Ild der, som det røger?" – "Ja, der er," siger Faderen. "Saa er der," som han kunde bande, "ogsaa Ild i det graa Øg." De pløjer en 3, 4 Omfald paa Ageren igjen, og da kommer de for en lille Høj, der var paa Agrene, de kalder den Byghøg, men den er nu pløjet og snart udslett. Da rækker der en Haand op af Højen med en Skaade, der var i Stykker. Manden havde jo hans Plovægse og Søm, og saa gjorde han Holdt og gjorde det i Stand. Siden den var saa færdig, lægger han den hen, som han havde faaet den, og saa blev den strags væk. Han tager hjem om Middagen og kommer igjen om Eftermiddagen. Strags kommer der en Haand op af Højen, og den har en hvid Tallerken med en varm ny Smørrebrød paa, og han tog Holdt og gav sig til at spise af den. Men Drengen han vilde ikke spise. Manden bekom det godt, men Drengen svandt helt hen og døde inden Efteraaret. (*Ibid.*:85f)

In contrast, one finds other legends in which the narrator tacitly resists the dominant strategy of acknowledging the transaction as in A. Chr. Sørensen's account:

One time, a farmhand plowed near *Fuglehøj* on *Visborg* farm field. Then a woman came out of the mound with a peelboard, which was broken. She asked the farmhand to repair it and then place it back on the mound. Then she disappeared. The farmhand searched his pockets and found a few nails and, with the help of a stone, he hammered the board back together. Then he laid it down on the mound. He plowed along and, after a little while, he went to see if the board was still there, but it had disappeared. In its place there was a freshly baked loaf of bread. The farmhand thought that the bread was probably for him, but didn't dare take it. A little later, it had also disappeared.

En gang gik en Karl og pløjede ved *Fuglehøj* paa *Visborggaards* Mark. Da kom der en Kvinde ud fra Højen med en Ovnskaade, som var itu. Hun bad Karlen gjøre den i Stand og derefter lægge den paa Højen. Dermed forsvandt hun. Karlen ledte i Lommen og fandt en Del Søm, som han slog Skaaden sammen med ved Hjælp af en Sten. Derefter lagde han den ved Højen igjen. Han pløjede videre, og da en lille Tid var gaaet, vilde han hen for at se, om Skaaden var der endnu, men den var forsvunden. I Stedet for laa paa Højen et nybagt Sigtebrød. Karlen tænkte vel, at det var til ham, men turde dog ikke tage det. En Tid efter var ogsaa det forsvundet. (*Ibid.*:81)

These differences in the resolution of the accounts do not simply reflect random and inexplicable variation, but rather suggest choices made by the storytellers offering narrative endorsements of competing strategies in the given situation.

Seen in this light, game theory may offer useful insights into the reasons for the variation within the tradition. As Walter Goldschmidt observes, "the general conceptual apparatus of game theory is useful ... as a mode of determining what the values actually are in a given society. By examining the strategies that the

ethnographer finds to be regularly employed, he can determine where the payoff is, and what the values are" (Goldschmidt 1969:73). In many of the Danish legends, it appears that the primary pay-off is the maintenance of social integrity. Consequently, one may consider that legend telling acts as an exploration of strategies and an evaluation of possible pay-offs resulting from the implementation of those strategies given a particular economic interaction. Delineating the game(s) which comprise the interaction sheds light on the areas of choice within the story, and the potential outcomes of those choices.<sup>11</sup> The plowman encounters the first game when he discovers the broken baking tools. The farmer has two clear choices: (a) ignore the tools or (b) acknowledge the tools and repair them. In the first case, the farmer can expect the *status quo* to obtain (no pay-off) while, in the second case, the farmer must see the possibility for some pay-off however small. There is, of course, potential for catastrophic consequences with either action given the unpredictability of the mound dwellers' reaction to the plowman's "move." Interestingly, the predominance of stories include the repair of the tools and accordingly suggest a cultural emphasis on that strategy, namely, that it is better to risk the interaction with the outside beings than ignoring them entirely and thus precluding the possibility of a significant pay-off. The second more significant game follows the repair of the tools. Once the tools are repaired, the mound dwellers' reaction is always to offer food, which leaves the farmer with several choices – ignore the bread, eat the bread or refuse the bread. In a few cases, the farmer ignores the bread and it later disappears with no ill effects – no pay-off and only a minor loss in the form of time lost from plowing. A degree of uncertainty concerning the possible pay-off from accepting the bread nags at the farmer and thus deciding which strategy will maximize the pay-off – or perhaps minimize the potential loss – becomes difficult.<sup>12</sup>

In the above legends, the three tellers offer two competing strategies for dealing with the interaction: (a) acknowledge the barter transaction and accept the payment or (b) not acknowledge the barter transaction and refuse the payment. While the first and second account endorse strategy "a", the second account seems more forceful in its endorsement with its suggestion of a punitive deterrent to following strategy "b". By way of contrast, in the third account, following strategy "b" has no ill effects. Presumably, the strategy endorsed by the majority of the tradition participants would also appear in the largest number of stories. Over the course of multiple retellings, the tradition would tend toward a preponderance of stories which align with general norms in the given situation. In the case of the mound dweller's baking, the vast majority of stories laud the acceptance of the bread and the acknowledgment of the barter arrangement with an outside group. This dominant strategy would therefore also reflect the social norm of conduct in the given situation, here that barter arrangements with groups outside of the circumscribed community (where the strategy of "tit for tat" cannot be used to guarantee cooperation as it can in frequent inter-group transactions), is the preferred strategy.

### Conclusion

Economic exchange was an everyday concern of the nineteenth-century Danish peasant. A great deal of low-level, interpersonal transaction at the time was based on barter – free agency exchanges of alienable, unlike goods. Transactions ideally were based on a sense of equitable exchange, with both parties benefiting from the interaction. Inter-group exchanges included the added risk of differing values and accordingly, the potential for inequitable exchange from the perspective of the in-group member was greater. If the system of barter exchange were to persist, the concept of equitable exchange, even across group boundaries, would have to inform the majority of transactions. These concerns – the need for barter and the potentially risky nature of such transactions – became incorporated into the legend expression of the Danish tradition participants.

Taussig's evaluation of the rise of devil belief narratives in two South American populations – that "societies on the threshold of capitalist development necessarily interpret that development in terms of precapitalist beliefs and practices" – may be useful in understanding some of the motivations for the performance of the legends discussed here (Taussig 1980:11). With the land reforms of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the rural Danish peasantry found themselves moving quickly from a precapitalist economy towards a capitalist economy. As such, the rules and goals of transaction were also changing. In a capitalist economy, the individual strives to maximize exchange-value through transactions, while in precapitalist economies, the individual strives to maximize use-value. In these narratives, one sees the focus on both use-value and exchange-value. On the level of use-value, the farmer receives the bread as payment for his services. The bread has a direct use or consumption value. On the level of exchange-value, the bread the farmer receives provides strength, leading to increased agricultural production which can be sold at market. The bread, therefore, also incorporates a degree of exchange-value. In this manner, the legend narratives also provide the narrators with a means for negotiating the ramifications of the changes in the nineteenth-century Danish economic organization. Interestingly, the repair of the tools constitutes an interruption in the rural economy and a turn toward a manufacturing process for unknown, extra-community consumers, a surprising parallel to the change in economic organization in late nineteenth-century Denmark.<sup>13</sup> Transactions with the supernatural – the unknown, extra-domestic, extra-community, ambiguous, at times frightening, at times helpful beings – provided the peasant narrators and their audiences the opportunity to mediate through narrative their fears and aspirations concerning the changing rules of economic transaction, and the increasing need to go outside the community for transaction. In nineteenth-century Denmark, engaging in transactions with the supernatural was always dangerous, but it could have the most delicious rewards – at least according to the dominant narrative strategy.

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## Abbreviation

ML Christiansen 1958

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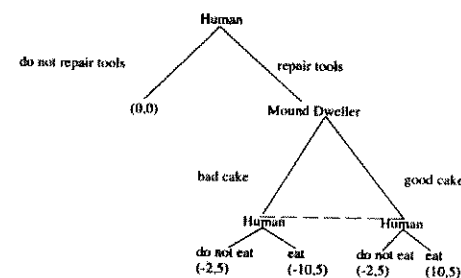
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- 1 Of the seventy-two variants in these collections, thirty-two end with the completion of the transaction, or some other entirely neutral ending.
- 2 Of these seventy-two variants, seventeen have a clearly beneficial result with no negative consequences for any of the humans.
- 3 Finally, of these seventy-two variants, twenty-two have some form of negative resolution. In many of these variants, the person who eats the bread benefits while a companion suffers illness or death.
- 4 For other, more recent evaluations of gift giving, see Gregory 1982; Strathern 1988; Weiner 1992.
- 5 Folklorists generally agree that, for narratives to persist in tradition, the performance of the stories must produce meaning for the tradition participants. For an in-depth evaluation of "meaning" in folklore, see the essays in volume 40 of this journal (Abrahams 1984; Brown 1984; Honko 1984a, 1984b; Röhrich 1984).
- 6 The relationship between a farmer and the guardian spirit, the *nisse*, although still a contractual relationship, seems to include a concept of social ties, as the *nisse* is nearly as bound to the farm as the farmer. In this sense, stories of giving the *nisse* new clothes may indeed speak of gift exchange between humans and the supernatural beings. In these cases, however, the proffered gift rarely has good results. Rather, the *nisse* stops working, afraid of spoiling his new clothes. Unlike Mauss's hypothesis of gift exchange between humans and the preternatural protector spirits, these legends seem to suggest such exchange is not a good strategy. In stories of the *nisse*'s porridge, a fulfillment of the contractual relationship between the farmer and the spirit, the *nisse* reacts quite severely to a perceived breach of this contract, and these stories reinforce the concept of inequitable – and unforeseeable – valuations in exchange explored in greater detail below.
- 7 Detailed discussions of economic organization in rural Denmark can be found in Bryld & Haue 1982; Busck, Christiansen & Jepsen 1974; Hansen 1974; Haue 1981; Henningsen & Nicolaisen 1981; Skrubbeltrang 1952–54. General historical information on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Denmark can be found in Rerup 1989. General ethnographic texts detailing the lives of the Danish rural populace can be found in Kristensen 1891–94 and 1900–1902. Scharling (1869) provides an interesting view on money and economics in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 8 For more detailed discussions of such economic organization, see A. V. Chayanov's (1966) important work on peasant societies which has informed a great deal of the scholarship on the anthropology of peasant economies. For more on Chayanov and peasant societies, see Durrenberger 1984. Gamst (1974) provides an evaluation of peasant classes in changing economies. Also see Shanin 1990. For detailed work on economic anthropology, see Dalton 1971; and Firth 1967.
- 9 Of the seventy-two variants, forty-seven are told by men, eighteen are told by women, and five are told by unidentified informants. One must remember that Tang Kristensen collected from nearly three times more men than women and, when this is taken into consideration, the distribution of legend variants across genders is nearly identical. For a more in depth discussion of the statistical evaluation of repertoire and gender, see

Tangherlini 1994:67ff, 145–162.

- 10 Marshall Sahlins (1965:148f) suggests the concept of "negative reciprocity" to describe endeavors such as theft. He includes barter under this rubric as well, describing it as the "most economic" form of negative reciprocity, in which "the participants confront each other as opposed interests, each looking to maximize utility at the other's expense" (*ibid.*:148). This negative evaluation of barter should be seen as one of several possible evaluations of the interactive setting. I would suggest that barter has the potential to be a negatively reciprocal interaction, but is not necessarily so. Indeed, barter can be evaluated on a sliding scale, from a positively reciprocal interaction (both sides win) to a negatively reciprocal interaction (one side loses a great deal while another side wins a great deal). The legends of the mound dwellers baking are part of the process of evaluating the desirability of barter, particularly out-group barter. Also see Sahlins 1972. Lévi-Strauss (1964) also provides an analysis of the importance of reciprocity in social interaction.
- 11 I would like to thank Prof. Andrew Kydd, Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, for helpful discussions concerning the games found in this legend. Also, Prof. Robert Cooter, Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley, and Prof. James Fearon, Department of Political Science, The University of Chicago, engaged me in interesting discussions concerning the applicability of game theory to the analysis of legend.
- 12 A graphic representation with possible pay-offs for both the human and the mound dweller in the legend is drawn below. Each node represents an area of choice. The dotted line shows that the human cannot know whether the proffered cake is good or bad:



In the above scheme, the human pay-off is given first, and the mound dweller's pay-off is given second. If the human chooses not to repair the tools, the mound dwellers do not offer any cake, and the *status quo* obtains. If the human chooses to repair the tools, the mound dweller then decides whether to bake a good cake or a had cake. Since the mound dweller is already baking, there is little extra energy expended in making either cake. An assumption in the above pay-off schemes is that the mound dwellers are neutrally inclined toward humans (i.e., the mound dweller is not positively inclined toward making either a good or bad cake for the human); accordingly, their pay-off is the same regardless of the human's actions. In the case where the human does not eat the cake, he simply loses the time it took to repair the tools. It is irrelevant whether the cake is good or bad in these cases. In the case of eating the bad cake, the human suffers a significant loss. However, if the human eats the good cake, he receives a significant reward. In the above model, there are two equilibria to the game. The first equilibrium occurs with the following strategies: Human: repair, eat; Mound dweller: good cake. There is another equilibrium

at: Human: do not repair, do not eat; Mound Dweller: bad cake. This second equilibrium is not Pareto-efficient since both parties in the game can be made better off, and thus a less likely solution to the interaction. The pay-off scheme is slightly more complicated than presented above since, in many of the legends, refusal to eat good bread has disastrous consequences while the payoff from eating the good bread is significant. Indeed, part of the legend tradition can be seen as attempting to discern the pay-off schemes and possible strategies for these games which describe out-group barter transactions.

- 13 I would like to thank Prof. Andrew Kydd for this insightful analysis of the stories and their relation to the emergence of industrial production in late nineteenth-century Denmark.

## The Tragic Mistake Transformations of a Traditional Narrati

VÉRONIQUE CAMPION-VINCENT

### The Tragic Mistake

The story of *The Tragic Mistake*, also called *The Murdered Son* – but several titles have been given: *Killing the Returned Soldier*,<sup>1</sup> *The Murderous Parent (Mordeltern)*, *The Liverpool Tragedy* – appeared in the early years of the seventeenth century, in illustrated chap-books, ancestors of our popular newspapers that “curious and interesting events”. It was first published in London:

Newes from Perin in Cornwall of a most bloody and un-exempld Murther ve committed by a Father on his owne Sonne (who was lately returned from the Indy instigation of a mercilesse Step-Mother, Together with their severall most wretched being all performed in the month of September last. Anno 1618. (Kosko 1966:40)

A month later, a similar brochure was published in Paris:

Admirable and prodigious story of a Father and Mother who murdered their own Son recognizing him. Happened in the city of Nismes in Languedoc, in the month of 1618.

Histoire admirable et prodigieuse d'un Père et d'une Mère qui ont assassiné leur pr sans le cognoistre. Arrivée en la ville de Nismes en Languedoc, au mois d'Octobre 1618. (*Ibid.*:62)

Three years later, in 1621, *Diversitez historiques: ou Nouvelles Relations de 4 histoires de ce temps* was published in Paris, a compendium of short stories, by l'abbé Jean Baudoin<sup>2</sup> following the fashion of *Histoires Tragiques* that then after the important success of François Rosset's book.<sup>3</sup> The fifth story was our story, located in Ulm on the Danube and titled:

Heinous act of an avaricious and unnatural Father, who after having killed his Son himself: hence the tragic death of his Wife and of a Daughter of his.

Acte abominable d'un Père avare et desnaturé, lequel après avoir tué son Fils s'étra même: d'où s'en suit la mort tragique de sa Femme et d'une sienne Fille. (*Ibid.*:66)

In the same year, in a moralizing anthology published in Latin in Flanders Jesuit Antoine de Balinghem used our story as an *exemplum* of the lack of hos