

Folk Horror, Ostension and *Robin Redbreast*

Diane A. Rodgers (Sheffield Hallam University)

'Folk horror' is a relatively newly-defined phenomenon in film and television, most often used to describe narratives featuring folkloric elements such as paganism, witchcraft, stone circles and ghosts. Such narratives are often presented on screen within pastoral settings and remote communities. A progressively broad revival of interest in texts like these, centred on folklore and contemporary legend, is gaining increasing attention from both cult and academic audiences and film and programme creators alike, and has won 'folk horror' clear status as a subgenre. Acknowledging *folklore* as central to folk horror, however—how it evolves and is communicated by mass media—is something that folklorists and screen studies scholars are only just beginning to explore.

Admirers of folk horror are consistently drawn back to British film and television of the 1970s when television narratives involving folklore accounted for many hundreds of hours of programming, including documentaries such as the BBC's *The Power of the Witch* (1970), children's programmes such as *Children of the Stones* (1977) and darker intellectual drama aimed at adults such as *Robin Redbreast* (1970). The initial swathe of such folkloric television texts in the 1970s was catalysed by the occult revival in the late 1960s, which Chris Evans, a Jungian psychologist described as 'so rapid and so far reaching' that interest in the occult had 'enthusiastic support from people in all walks of life - from astronauts and cosmologists to housewives and dustmen' (1976: 10).

Therefore, as folklorist Ronald Hutton notes, 'the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the second great wave of interest in folklore and folk culture of the modern period' (1999: 283), resulting in many writers and directors turning to folkloric texts for inspiration. Robert Wynne Simmons, writer of *The Blood on Satan's Claw* (Piers Haggard, 1971) describes the

enduring fascination with folklore: 'The folk tale will never die, and horror is an element of the folk tale' (pers. comm. 2017). With a more recent revival of interest in folklore, the allure of folklore remains strong amongst post-2000 'folk-horror revivalists' who regularly use folkloric themes in their work. Such revivalists include, amongst others: Mark Gatiss (*The League of Gentlemen*, 1999 – 2002; *The Tractate Middoth*, 2013); Reece Shearsmith (*The League of Gentlemen*; *Inside No. 9*, 2014 –); Ben Wheatley (*Kill List*, 2011; *A Field in England*, 2013); Richard Littler (*Scarfolk*, blog, 2014); and Jim Jupp (Ghost Box Records, founded 2004). Jeremy Dyson too, frequently uses folkloric narratives in his work, from *The League of Gentleman* (1999-2017) to *Ghost Stories* (2017), and echoes that folk tales 'have universal appeal, there's a big crossover with religion and people *can't not watch*' (pers. comm. 2018).

British writers and directors most consistently return to 1970s onscreen representations of folklore for their own inspiration. In particular, it is more often than not *television* of the 1970s that is cited as a central influence upon those 'revivalists' who are producing the folk horror and hauntological media texts of today (Gallix 2011). Ben Wheatley cites 1970s television as tremendously influential upon his current work. Wheatley states, 'Seventies shows...[were] really impactful in a way that drama doesn't seem to be any more. You felt your mind being scarred and you were never the same again afterwards' (in Bonner 2013). This visceral reaction resonates with other writer-directors, like Ashley Pharoah (*Life on Mars* 2006-7, *The Living and the Dead*, 2016) who cites many of the same 1970s influences, noting that 'the BBC Christmas stories' particularly left strong impressions upon him (Mellor 2016). The *Inside No. 9* series includes a number of folk-horror offerings including 'The Devil of Christmas' (2016), set in 1977, which is about the making of a television drama and based upon a folk legend; it even employs 'vintage tube-based studio

broadcast cameras and period lamps to give the studio an authentic 70s atmosphere' ('Inside No. 9' 2016).

Modern folklore theory argues that contemporary and non-oral forms of folklore are worthy of serious academic consideration; Alan Dundes helped expand the definition of 'folk' and folklore beyond traditional rural storytelling to include 'the cultural texts of groups of all socio-economic backgrounds' (Gürel 2006: 4). If we are all folk and if folklore is, in part, 'man's attempt to bring enjoyment to his leisure through the art of storytelling' (Thompson 1977: vii), then those who create television are of course worthy of study. Recent interviews with directors like Piers Haggard and Lawrence Gordon Clark show that they indeed consider themselves storytellers, first and foremost. Haggard states that 'film is like telling a story, it certainly is in our culture, it's about telling a story... the most important thing is the *story*' (pers. comm. 5 June 2017).

Folklore scholars Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi's original appropriation of the notion of ostension in their seminal article 'Does the Word "Dog" Bite? Ostensive Action: A Means of Legend-Telling' (1983) cannot be underestimated as a critical contribution to modern folklore studies. The word 'ostension' itself derives from the Latin 'ostendere', to show, and was used by semiotician Umberto Eco to refer to non-verbal communication when people substitute actions for words, such as raising a finger to the lips indicating a need for quiet. Dégh and Vázsonyi's notion of ostensive action describes behaviour based on, or influenced by, folklore and legend—legendary tales being those which, whilst they might not literally be true, have the *possibility* of truth. This behaviour, in turn, can create or perpetuate folklore. Ostensive action or behaviour, then, is based on a tale. The tale, presented in action, thus becomes reality, as action and belief affect and influence one another: 'not only can facts be turned into narratives but narratives can also be turned into facts' (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1983: 12). Ostensive action is to behave in a certain way or alter one's actions as a

consequence of belief in folk myth or legend. An example Bill Ellis gives is not allowing your child to trick-or-treat out of a fear they will be given an apple filled with razor blades: this is ostensive action - whether the apple exists or not is less significant here than the *acting on belief* (2003: 162). In our own response to folkloric tales in television or film, we may have pulled the duvet tight or slept with the lights on because of stories of witchcraft or ghosts and, in such cases, we too are acting on some level of belief, carrying out ostensive action.

Amongst the first scholars to develop the concept of ostension in relation to popular film and television as forms of folklore were Sharon Sherman and Mikel Koven. Sherman states, 'Looking at film as a way of conducting folkloristic research is a new conception, one which folklorists can use for a reflexive stance about their own practices'. The concepts they have developed help to describe how films illustrate 'a folklore that either does not exist in real life or is entirely taken out of context' (2005: 158). Sherman asks, in an attempt to urge modern folkloristics (the discipline of folklore study) toward a more serious consideration of popular culture: 'Does popular cinema become folklore? If so, how? And how might popular cinema create, reflect, and refract folkloristics?' (2005: 161). Historical folklore is often reframed, reworked and represented onscreen alongside purely fictional notions created by writers and directors and, therefore, the manner of presentation can create an entirely new version of folklore which audiences may accept as real. Because popular culture is so widely consumed, the communication and presentation of folklore in this way, ostension through film and television, can thus create new forms of folklore. This can, therefore, be of broad cultural significance: where audiences may accept the plausibility of such narratives, it has the possibility of affecting generally accepted cultural beliefs.

To date, much of the study of film and folklore focuses on US media, not surprisingly since folkloristics is taken more seriously as a discipline in the US than in the UK at present.

To engage in folkloristic study of British television drama is thus breaking new ground. Koven's work offers a useful conceptual framework. He suggests that the narrative dramatisation of a legend, or the presentation of folklore within onscreen action, is a kind of ostension in itself. This type of 'cinematic ostension', he writes, 'implicitly recognises an audience by encouraging some form of post-presentation debate regarding the veracity of the legends presented'. He continues that, whether 'believed or not, such veracity is secondary to the discussion of their *possibility*; which I would argue is an essential aspect of the legend in general (2007: 185). While there are several permutations of ostension, the one I am taking as a framework within which to study film, television and folklore is Koven's notion of 'mass-mediated ostension' (2008: 139). Koven recognises that 'mass-mediated ostension' might be a more useful term to employ than 'cinematic ostension', as it can be extended beyond film to include television and the convergence of folklore and popular media in general. As he puts it, to use 'an ostensive methodology' in looking at a television series 'can be considered a form of ostension' (2007: 183). Koven notes that 'Dégh and Vázsonyi would not have considered film or television use of legend materials as ostensive', but rather a pseudo-imitation, as they argue that audiences are aware that they are not witnessing a presentation of literal reality, but a story represented as a possible or plausible version of reality (2007:197). Koven uses the phrase 'mass-mediated ostension', however, to address this issue, describing the *showing* or *acting-out* of folkloric narratives in the mass media and thus recognising the importance of film and television to the folkloric process.

Any media text, even a more straightforward dramatised ghost story, for example, in its presentation of folklore or contemporary legend, can be seen as mass-mediated ostension. The text is the medium presenting and encouraging debate, whether within the dialogue of a television programme or beyond it in an audience's post-viewing discussion; in this way, ostension has occurred. The very onscreen presentation of folklore or legend raises 'the

possibility that the phenomenon was real, even if entertained momentarily’, thus rendering ‘the incident legendary. And that this phenomenon is *presented* for us, makes the event ostensive’ (Koven 2007: 194). The manner in which legend is reproduced onscreen, and how plausibly it is rendered for the audience, is central in the examination of mass-mediated ostension. Adam Scovell argues that folk horror ‘is never all that fussed with a genuine, accurate recreation of folklore’ and that ‘anything could effectively be put into the mix of practices and customs, and still come out looking relatively authentic’ (2017: 29), but the claim of many folk horror texts to a degree of authenticity is precisely why examination of folkloric presentation is important. As Dégh and Vázsonyi and Ellis have all made clear, the concept of ostension—that is, how and why beliefs persist, develop, are acted upon, and are reproduced in culture—is absolutely integral to modern folkloristics. A useful example from Jacqueline Simpson is the fabricated legend of the three crowns of East Anglia, as used by M. R. James and adapted in ‘A Warning to the Curious’ as part of the BBC’s *A Ghost Story for Christmas* series in 1972. The tale is given such ‘plausible details, many readers now assume that this antiquarian “legend” which James wove into his fictional tale is authentic folklore’ (Simpson 2011: 286).

In the onscreen presentation of a legend or folkloric narrative, then, ostension has occurred, Koven claims, when ‘a particular tele-play presents the narrative to us (the audience) as dramatic recreation’, and, he continues, ‘when we are sutured into the diegesis (and the mechanisms for that suturing) and we experience it directly, as opposed to being told the story. Ostension is action’ (pers. comm. 2018). For example, in television episodes of *A Ghost Story for Christmas*, we see onscreen representations of ghosts and ghostly occurrences as characters are ‘haunted’ (e.g., ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’ and ‘A Warning to the Curious’). In *The Owl Service* we see uncanny events occur as characters become strangely affected by a legendary curse, apparently possessed and fated to act out

elements of a tale from *The Mabinogion*, a collection of Welsh folk tales dating back to the 12th century (Davies, 2007). Because elements of folklore and legend are thus presented, acted out (and even explicitly discussed) in these programmes, they are ostensive, with the possibility to affect audience's notions of folklore and folkloric belief.

The power of mass-mediated ostension and the effect of television upon popular belief is, therefore, important to examine. Folklorist Gillian Bennett acknowledges that popular media can directly influence the shaping of public conceptions about folklore and the supernatural (1987: 44), while Deborah Macey, Kathleen Ryan, and Noah Springer also note that television's varied 'narratives, and cultural forms are not simply entertainment, but powerful socializing agents' (2014: 6). Therefore, it is of vital importance to clarify and contextualize history and folklore as presented by popular film and television texts *because* of their ability to shape contemporary folkloric belief. Acknowledging the derivation of folklore employed in television is an important furrow to plough in exploring the enduring influence of 1970s folk horror. What Koven (disparagingly) refers to as 'motif-spotting' is thus a less useful approach to the subgenre than one based on a more general examination of how (and which) folk beliefs are represented: 'To understand *how* popular film and television uses folklore motifs, we must dig deeper to see what happens when such motifs are recontextualised within the popular media text' (2008: 70). In the spirit of this endeavour, I intend here to draw out what folkloric elements are used in the 1970 television play *Robin Redbreast* to examine *how* these are reproduced and presented on screen and within what context. I thus illuminate the ways in which the explicit use of folklore, and its reproduction onscreen as mass-mediated ostension, helps to create plausibly unsettling narratives for television audiences.

Folklore, historical folkloric texts and notions of insular British village life and local beliefs are foregrounded throughout *Robin Redbreast*, a prime example of 1970s folk horror's

‘absolute refusal to use folklore as tinsel for a story, but recognise it as integral infrastructure’ to the narrative (Southwell 2019). *Robin Redbreast* was first broadcast on 10 December 1970 as a BBC 1 *Play for Today*, just preceding the first episode of the BBC's *A Ghost Story for Christmas* in 1971. (1968's ‘Whistle And I’ll Come to You’, often associated with the series, was, in fact, part of the *Omnibus* series and broadcast in May.) *Robin Redbreast* was thus part of a long-running tradition of scary Christmas stories, stretching back at least to the tales of Charles Dickens and M. R. James. Unsettling Christmas fare on television had become such a staple of broadcast schedules by the 1970s that Mark Gatiss states that such programming was ‘as necessary to the festive season as mince pies’ (in Earnshaw 2014: 5). Whereas the BBC’s *Ghost Story for Christmas* series relied on the more traditional period tales by Dickens or James, *Robin Redbreast*, written by John Bowen, anticipated the contemporary setting of *The Wicker Man* (1973).

Bowen's teleplay follows the character of Norah Palmer, a television script editor who, following the break-up of a long-term relationship, escapes to a rural farmhouse complete with a creaky wooden staircase and cavernous hearth. But this is no cozy retreat, as Norah discovers: the local villagers have strict local traditions, are highly manipulative, and are disapproving of Norah's modern independence and cosmopolitan ways. Norah is introduced to young gamekeeper Rob (or Robin, not his real name but a nickname bestowed upon him by the villagers), who appears to be an outsider like herself. She finds herself strangely attracted to Rob, and, after an evening of awkward flirtation interrupted by unromantic events like a bird falling rather violently down the chimney, the unlikely pair end up in bed together, after which Norah soon finds she is pregnant. A series of other mysterious occurrences add a sense of creeping threat to the play, all of which are events not horrific in themselves but which together create a menacing atmosphere, manifesting on the soundtrack as mice scratching in Norah's cottage wall, and voices and cries are heard on the wind. The

BBC Radio Times noted that *Robin Redbreast* is suffused 'with such elements as dead chickens, all-knowing village sages, murderous axes, birds in the chimney and fertility symbols' ('Powerful' 1971), all weighty with ominous ritual suggestion.

There are moments in *Robin Redbreast* when characters explicitly discuss folklore or belief, known folkloric texts and, within the diegesis, local history and folkloric traditions. Koven refers to this kind of discussion of folklore—'telling' as opposed to showing action—as 'representation of the belief nexus rather than a product of it' (pers. comm. 2018). 'Telling' is less ostensive than 'showing', but both function as types of ostension within *Robin Redbreast*, and, I propose, each complements the other. For example, the entrance of the 'all-knowing village sage', Mr. Fisher in *Robin Redbreast*, foregrounds the importance of folklore and local knowledge from the outset. Fisher is a fount of folkloric wisdom who appears in Norah's garden with a peculiar request to 'hunt for sherds' (from the old English 'potsherd', which refers to fragments of prehistoric pottery). Described as a 'learned fellow' with 'the instinct', Fisher is a self-confessed 'student of...old things', knows the 'Old Tongue' (Anglo-Saxon) and his pursuit of 'sherds' suggests he is, as Vic Pratt describes, 'like a fragment of an elusive rural English past' (2013: 1). The introduction of Fisher reveals not only that he has some special knowledge of local history and folklore but the fact that Norah's housekeeper Mrs. Vigo speaks of Fisher in reverential tones ('He'm got the instinct. *Known* for it') suggests an influential position in the community and that power is afforded him because of this.

Folklore is to the fore here: because of his knowledge of local ways and customs, Fisher is to be feared. Norah, on the other hand, is an outsider, in danger due to her *lack* of knowledge about local folk beliefs. Early in the play, Norah finds herself following Fisher's directions into the woods as a solution to her problem with vermin in the cottage: 'back by the game-keeper's cottage: that's where I should go, if I was troubled with vermin', Fisher tells her. We later realise this is a significant link in a chain of events manipulated by Fisher and,

instead of putting Fisher in harm's way, his knowledge of folklore allows him to orchestrate ritual activity that is dangerous to others. Jeffrey Tolbert states: 'Folklore is potentially dangerous knowledge... and folklorists are therefore dangerous people' (2015: 139) but, rather than bringing Fisher into a dangerous sphere, his knowledge allows him to create this danger for others, with no real threat to himself.

Bowen's teleplay references Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, which also influenced *The Wicker Man*. Particularly important to both texts is the notion of a sacred king—a human sacrifice offered back to the earth to rejuvenate the land and make way for a new king. Koven notes that *The Wicker Man* director Robin Hardy and screenwriter Anthony Shaffer 'made absolutely explicit the source materials that inspired the film', primarily *The Golden Bough*, and that Hardy and Shaffer 'demonstrate their unquestioning acceptance of *The Golden Bough's* truths' (2008: 26-28). In *Robin Redbreast*, Fisher states: 'the goddess of fertility in the old religions...would couple with the young king... and from his blood the crops would spring...You must read a book by Sir James Frazer - *The Golden Bough* in seven volumes.' A horrified Norah realises Robin is the sacrificial virgin, needed only to sow his seed and be ritually murdered as per local tradition to bring fertility to the land. Sinister housekeeper Mrs. Vigo explains the ongoing traditional belief: 'there's always one young man answers to 'Robin' in these parts—has to be'. The villagers' belief in ancient pagan rites to sustain fertility of the land and Fisher's coolly dispassionate discussion of sacrifice, reinforced by what he sees as a factual text, make their actions seem like simple everyday matter-of fact—and more unsettling to the audience because of this. Though Frazer's text is now widely discredited, its use here is interesting. The combination of 'showing' events (rituals acted out onscreen leading to the sacrifice of Robin, which itself happens off-screen, although we hear a blood-curdling scream) and 'telling' (in the discussion of folklore

grounded in a real text) may accentuate the verisimilitude for the audience and, therefore, the overall ostensive effect.

The eponymous 'Robin Redbreast' is, of course, significant in folkloric terms. Many folk tales associate the robin with death and blood, enhancing Bowen's use of the name here to mark the character of Robin as sacrificial pariah. Though robins were famously appropriated in the Victorian era as cheery messengers on Christmas cards (when postmen were nicknamed 'redbreast' or 'robin' due to their red tunics), most legends associated with the robin have darker origins. Many British folk beliefs cast them as bad omens or messengers of death. For example, there is a long-held belief in British folklore that it is extremely unlucky to take a robin's eggs or damage a nest, an interesting parallel to the villagers' careful concern for Rob and Norah's unborn child. It was also believed that an ill fate would find anyone who killed a robin. One writer explains that 'if a robin dies in your hand, it [the hand] will always shake', while another English folk rhyme suggests, 'The blood on the breast of a robin that's caught; Brings death to the snarer by whom it is caught' (Federer 1868: 329). Robins also have a history of religious reverence, which comes from the way they are said to have received their red breast. One Welsh folk tale describes how the robin scorched its breast in the fire of purgatory, when it took pity on sinners and carried water in its beak to tormented souls. Some legends tell that the robin was stained with the blood of Christ as the bird tried to pluck away his crown of thorns. In all these tales, the bird is closely linked with death, blood and sacrifice, and the *Robin Redbreast* title and character name are used by Bowen with ominous resonance for the audience, foreshadowing Robin's sealed fate from the outset.

Folklore and local folk belief are not simply used in their own sense, or as separate from the rest of society here, but are pitted by Bowen against more widely held traditional and Christian beliefs to create an unsettling conflict within the narrative. One scene shows a montage lingering on visceral images of slaughtered rabbits and game birds, blood dripping

from whiskers and feathers, which suggest sacrificial offerings rather than a Christian harvest festival. The vicar's accompanying dialogue speaks in surprisingly pagan terms of 'our precious seed...to bring it forth once more in the spring, when the green shoots pierce the earth'. However, as soon as the dialogue shifts from discussion of the land 'And now to God the Father', the vicar's words quickly fade from the soundtrack. The presentation of belief here within the diegesis moves emphasis sharply away from Christianity to the importance of pagan ritual within the community. It is important to the villagers to attend harvest festival: Mrs. Vigo informs Norah that 'I come to take you to church'. But the attendance of the Vicar himself is apparently not vital, and other significant dates on the Christian calendar, such as Christmas, are largely irrelevant; Mrs. Vigo declares, 'we don't take much account of that'.

The most overt confirmation of pagan influence in *Robin Redbreast* comes through a chilling point of view shot as Norah leaves the village, and she looks back to see the villagers changed: Fisher sports antlers and ancient garb, and Mrs. Vigo's hair streams from a black-hooded robe. Bowen's teleplay notes that Fisher is Herne the Hunter, a pagan spirit or God associated with woods and oak trees, while housekeeper Mrs. Vigo is the Crone, Hecate, a pagan goddess often described as 'Queen of the Witches' (Muller 1973: 240). Whether the villagers are here revealed as their true selves, or whether this is only Norah's perception of them, Bowen explicitly employs folk belief, confident that legend is entirely relevant to contemporary audiences, that it is 'applicable to modern life as well as to the time when the myth first appeared' (2013). The history, faith, and legend dramatized in *Robin Redbreast* all lend a haunting background to the story, shaping a sense of the past lying just behind the present.

Robin Redbreast was in fact based to a degree on historical fact, most grimly on the real-life still-unsolved killing in Lower Quinton, Warwickshire, of Charles Walton, a man who could 'reputedly charm animals with his voice and knew many old rural ways', and who

was found dead on Valentines' Day, 1945 (Fowler 2013: 5). The description of Walton is reminiscent of Fisher in *Robin Redbreast*, who has 'the instinct', but the manner in which Walton was killed has also been linked to ideas of sacrifice and witchcraft, which obviously pervade Bowen's play. Walton's brutally beaten body was discovered in what Paul Newman deliciously describes as the 'depths of the smiling countryside' (2011: 14). This sinister and notorious case features so many peculiar folkloric aspects and coincidences that Newman notes it 'make[s] one think this is surely the plot of an imaginative novelist': the prongs of a 'pitchfork pierced the flesh on either side of the victim's neck [and] the billhook with which the throat had been cut was stuck deep in the chest' (2011:14).

The Walton murder case was investigated by Chief Inspector Robert Fabian, himself a household name. Fabian rose quickly through the ranks of the Metropolitan police, capitalizing on the notoriety of his work in his crime writing, which was dramatized by the BBC in the popular TV series *Fabian of the Yard* (1954-56). Fabian's investigation uncovered rites and rituals taken as routinely accepted belief in small communities such as Lower Quinton. Fabian learned of the ancient Anglo-Saxon custom of either slashing a cross or sticking spikes into a murdered witch's skin, known as 'stacung' or 'stanging' (a 'stang' being a two-pointed stick which some witches reputedly identified with the horned God). One review of *Robin Redbreast* quotes Fabian, who warned 'anybody who is tempted at any time to venture into Black Magic, witchcraft, Shamanism [should] remember Charles Walton [whose death was] clearly the ghastly climax of a pagan rite' (Collins 2013).

Though likely exaggerating occult aspects of the case to generate publicity for his work (writing his book *Anatomy of Crime* twenty-five years after the Walton case, in 1970), Fabian was a respected authority figure and wrote with sincerity. In British media of the 1960s and '70s, reality and fiction blurred, and folk belief was taken seriously. In this 'cultural moment when witchcraft and the occult were no longer ludicrous' (Pratt 2013: 2), the time

was ripe for the permeation of folklore in the media and for its perpetuation by media: the representation of folklore onscreen as mass-mediated ostension heightens the potential for audiences to find folkloric narratives plausible and unsettling. Certainly, the presentation of events and folk belief in *Robin Redbreast* struck a chord with audiences and reviewers, *Radio Times* reviewers describing the play as 'beautifully creepy' and 'convincingly terrifying' ('Powerful' 1971: 4). *Robin Redbreast* highlights contemporaneous news stories, as Norah grimly observes: 'Every now and again there's a song and dance about it in the Sunday papers. Devil worship. Graves dug up... stories of blood'. The convincing presentation of legend and folk belief in this context perhaps more easily suggested 'the *possibility* that the phenomenon was real, even if entertained momentarily' (Koven 2007: 194). Audiences did indeed wonder to the BBC whether this kind of thing could really happen and that 'after living in a small village in the South-West we can well believe this play' (BBC 1970). *Robin Redbreast* presents an unsettling view of pagan ritual and belief within a context of real news, folkloric texts and historical legends, all of which enhance the plausibility of such unsettling narratives. Therefore, onscreen representations of folklore, as mass-mediated ostension, further encourage debate and raise questions about the *possibility* of such events, in turn allowing television to play a significant role in the creation, perpetuation and evolution of folklore itself.

List of References

BBC, Audience Research Report on *Play for Today, Robin Redbreast*, BBC Written

Archives, ref: WAC, R9/7/108, Nov-Dec, 1970.

Bennett, Gillian, *Traditions of Belief*, London: Penguin Books, 1987.

Bonner, Michael, "'The blood in the earth": An Interview with A Field in England Director

Ben Wheatley', *Uncut*, 3 July 2013 <<http://www.uncut.co.uk/blog/the-view-from->

here/the-blood-in-the-earth-an-interview-with-a-field-in-england-director-ben-wheatley-21055>.

Bowen, John, 'Interview', *Robin Redbreast* [DVD extra], UK: BFI, 2013.

Collins, Frank, 'Robin Redbreast—Play for Today', *Cathode Ray Tube*, 27 October 2013 <<http://www.cathoderaytube.co.uk/2013/10/robin-redbreast-play-for-today-dvd.html>>.

Davies, Sioned, *The Mabinogion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Dégh, Linda, and Andrew Vázsonyi, 'Does the Word "Dog" Bite? Ostensive Action: A Means of Legend-Telling', *Journal of Folklore Research* 20, no. 10 (1983), pp. 5-34.

Earnshaw, Tony, ed., *The Christmas Ghost Stories of Lawrence Gordon Clark*, Milton Keynes: Spectral Press, 2014.

Ellis, Bill, *Aliens, Ghosts and Cults: Legends We Live*, Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003.

Evans, Chris, 'The occult revival - four years later', *New Humanist* 92 (May/June 1976), pp. 10-12.

Fabian, Robert, *Anatomy of Crime*, London: Pelham Books, 1970.

Federer, C. A., 'Killing a Robin', *Notes and Queries* s4-I, no. 14 (4 April 1868), p. 329.

Frazer, James G., *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, [1890], New York: Macmillan, 1922.

Fowler, William, 'Robin Redbreast and John Bowen', *Robin Redbreast* [DVD Booklet], UK: BFI, 2013, pp. 5-7.

Gallix, Andrew, 'Hauntology: A Not-So-New Critical Manifestation', *The Guardian*, 17 June 2011 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2011/jun/17/hauntology-critical>>.

Gürel, Perin, 'Folklore Matters: The Folklore Scholarship of Alan Dundes and the New American Studies', 2006

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cjas/print/folklore_matters.pdf>

Hutton, Ronald, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

'Inside No. 9', *BBC Studioworks*. 10 December 2016

<<https://bbcstudioworks.com/news/inside-no-9/>>.

Koven, Mikel. J., 'Most Haunted and the Convergence of Traditional Belief and Popular Television', *Folklore*, 118, no. 2 (August 2007), pp. 183-202.

---, *Film, Folklore and Urban Legends*, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008.

Macey, Deborah A., Kathleen M. Ryan, and Noah J. Springer, eds., *How Television Shapes Our Worldview: Media Representations of Social Trends and Change*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.

Mellor, Louisa, 'The Living and The Dead: The BBC's New Supernatural Drama', *Den of Geek*, 17 June 2016 <<http://www.denofgeek.com/uk/tv/the-living-and-the-dead/41504/the-living-and-the-dead-the-bbcs-new-supernatural-drama>>.

Muller, Robert, *The Television Dramatist*, London: Paul Elek, 1973.

Newman, Paul, *Under the Shadow of Meon Hill: The Lower Quinton & Hagley Wood Murders*, [n.p.]: Abraxas & DGR Books, 2011.

'Powerful' [*Robin Redbreast* Review], *BBC Radio Times*, 18 February 1971, p. 4.

Pratt, Vic, 'Hunting for Sherds: Robin Redbreast', *Robin Redbreast* [DVD Booklet], UK: BFI, 2013, pp. 1-3.

Robin Redbreast, James MacTaggart (Director), BBC One, 1970.

Scovell, Adam, *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange*, Leighton Buzzard, UK: Auteur, 2017.

- Sherman, Sharon R., 'Introduction: An Expanded View of Film and Folklore', *Western Folklore* 64, no. 3/4 (2005), pp. 157-61.
- Simpson, Jacqueline, *Green Men and White Swans: The Folklore of British Pub Names*, London: Arrow Books, 2011.
- Southwell, David, 'Receiving the Ghost Transmissions', unpublished paper presented at *Folklore on Screen* Conference, Sheffield Hallam University, UK, September 2019.
- Thompson, Stith, *The Folktale*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Tolbert, Jeffrey A., 'A Deadly Discipline: Folklore, Folklorists, and the Occult in *Fatal Frame*', in *The Folkloresque: Reframing Folklore in a Popular Culture World*, eds. Michael Dylan Foster and Jeffrey A. Tolbert (Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press, 2015), pp. 125-43.
- Tosenberger, Catherine, "'Kinda like the folklore of its day": "Supernatural", Fairy Tales, and Ostension' in *Transformative Works and Cultures* 4 (2010)
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.3983/twc.2010.0174>>.