

Cecil Sharp: *Some Conclusions*, Chapter VI

Questions

1. Mark any words or passages you do not understand. Discuss them with the others.
2. How can you tell what mode a song is in?
3. What reasons does Cecil Sharp name for why folk songs are thought to be old?
4. Is there an English folk song scale?

Performance: Several recordings of *The Pretty Ploughboy*?

Questions

1. What types of performances can be heard in the recordings?
2. How do these performance-types change the way the song sounds?
3. How has the song changed and why?
4. How is Harry Cox described / used in later adaptations of the song?

Voice in “Brown Adam” and “A Conscientious Objector’s Lament”

Questions

1. Identify the song-internal voices: Who speaks in what role in “Brown Adam”?
2. Does any of the voices reflect social attitudes at the time (in the past)? What about social attitudes of modern audiences?
3. What attitudes does the voice in “A Conscientious Objector’s Lament” represent? How does this fit in with the attitudes of the audience at the time? How about a modern audience?
4. If you had to perform the two songs, which performance problems could you imagine having? What would you find difficult to do, what perhaps unacceptable?

Formulae and Modular Elements

Questions

1. Identify instances of formulaic language (collocations, phrases, lines and stanzas) in the texts supplied.
2. Take one of the ballads with multiple versions and identify “song schemata” in them (Session 2). Do they differ between different versions?
3. Pick out instances of language use which are markedly different from everyday language (and which would therefore qualify as support for the claim that folk song represents a “register”).