Pre-Lent Celebrations: Shrovetide & Carnival

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PRE-LENT CELEBRATIONS:
SHROVETIDE AND CARNIVAL

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by
Eleonore Mitchell

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PRE-LENT CELEBRATIONS:

SHROVETIDE AND CARNIVAL

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The history of pre-Lent celebrations is traced through the presentation, comparison, and evaluation of the main theses of origin held by Shrovetide and Carnival scholars. It is determined that the question whether the festivals are of pagan or Christian origin is not important for the analysis of their present-day significance. Their vitality stems first of all from the general importance of celebration for humans to define themselves in a setting in which they can perform, act, and behave in non-traditional ways that cannot be transferred to everyday life. However, the festivals' uniqueness can be defined through two main characteristics: (1) the establishment of fools' or mock-governments and the ritual dismissal of the local authorities, and (2) the use of elaborate masks and costumes. Masks and costumes not only facilitate new contacts with other, particularly non-masked, members of one's community, no matter to which social level they belong; they also allow people to freely parody and thus criticize their society's
political, social, and moral order, without having to suffer consequences. Although considered to be anarchic by their critics, pre-Lent celebrations actually reflect the everyday world, which they need as a background on which to stage their distinct nature. The actors, called "fools," willingly give up their performance after the festive period and reenter their routine lives without misgivings. However, they often take with them a special feeling of democracy and equality, which they may use within their everyday social interactions. The results of fieldwork done in Southwest Germany (the area of the Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide) are reflected throughout the study. Forty-nine black-and-white photographs as well as a map give a visual impression of Shrovetide in Germany.
INTRODUCTION

Although this study is titled "Pre-Lent Celebrations: Shrovetide and Carnival," it will mainly deal with Shrovetide in Southwest Germany, known under the collective name of Schwäbisch-alemannische Fasnacht or "Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide." I will mention Carnival when I trace the historic development of pre-Lent celebrations, and I will use it to draw connections and comparisons, as well as to determine oppositions between what the Germans know as Fasnacht, Fastnacht, Fasnet, Fasching, Fassenacht, and Karneval.

A definition of Shrovetide and Carnival. What are pre-Lent celebrations and, particularly, what is Shrovetide? It is impossible to define the festivals in one sentence, and it is difficult enough in a whole paragraph, because the events are very complex phenomena with many roots, and they appear in a multitude of forms, on a number of levels, yielding many possibilities of interpretations. However, let me offer a short definition, a definition which hopefully will help the reader to develop a basic understanding of what the following study will be about.

Pre-Lent celebrations are known in many parts of the world under many different names, such as Carnival, Carnaval, Carnevale, Karneval, Fas(t)nacht (with its dialect forms Fasnet and Fassenacht), Fasching, and so forth--many names for the same type of event. The celebrations are first and foremost folk festivals which developed over hundreds, maybe even thousands, of years to become what they are today.
Ancient winter and spring rituals with their use of masks, costumes, song, and dance were modified by the early Christian Church and condensed into one kind of celebration, observed just before Lent, i.e., the pre-Easter period of repentance and renunciation of worldly pleasures. (Lent is now only known by Catholics; the early Christian Church knew no difference between Catholics and Protestants—this shift came only in the sixteenth century with the Protestant Reformation.) Every time period since then has put its stamp on the celebrations: the Middle Ages brought the two-sided concept of the court-jester, influenced by Christian beliefs, i.e., the ideas of the tomfool versus the wise fool; the Reformation caused the festivals to become Catholic events; the Renaissance brought Italian art and court amusements and determined the development of Carnival as an urban versus Shrovetide as a rural event; the Baroque and Rococo eras greatly influenced the look of the masks and costumes; the Age of Enlightenment almost caused the extinction of the festivals, because they were considered "pagan," "irrational," in short, "nonsense." The Romantic era brought the blooming and diffusion of Carnival all over central and southern Germany, while Shrovetide was definitely revived in Southwest Germany only after the second World War. This long history is enriched by many phenomena connected to pre-Lent celebrations, phenomena which are particularly interesting for folklorists: the change from a religious to a satirical, parodistic festival type; the use of masks, costumes, and other accessories; the use of local legends for the creation of new fool figures; special names for towns; the songs, rhymes, jokes, dances, and other folk expressions transferred from one generation of fools to the next; and, as I said before, Shrovetide and Carnival's traits as folk festivals.
This definition of pre-Lent celebrations already sums up my own ideas of the festivals' roots and historical development, which will be presented in this study. The definition as presented here was not always part of my thinking about Fas(t)nacht, Fasching, and Karneval. As a native of Southwest Germany, I grew up with Shrovetide or Fas(t)nacht (known as Fasnet in my dialect), and my fascination with it was (and still is) immense. However, I tended to think of Fasnet in terms of a festival directly descended from the ancient pagan winter and spring festivals which I already mentioned. Like everybody else in my home area, I had totally absorbed this theory which was (and is) diligently spread by the executive committees (the Zunfträte or "fools' councils") of the fools' guilds and corporations (Narrengilden und -zünfte), i.e., the clubs in which active participants of Shrovetide, known as "fools" (Narren), are organized. (The media, particularly the local newspapers, are "dedicated accomplices" in the diffusion of those ideas.) Like everybody else, I knew that the Christian Church had influenced Shrovetide, but I did not know in which ways, and, frankly, I did not care. Finally, like everybody else, I sneered at Karneval, Fassenacht, and Fasching, urban forms of pre-Lent celebrations in central Germany (Karneval), the city of Mainz (Fassenacht), and the non-Swabian parts of Bavaria (Fasching), thinking that those three forms were "not the real thing." The research for this study, however, set me straight: it made me finally understand pre-Lent celebrations as what they were and are; it made me love Fasnet even better; and it made me admire Karneval, Fassenacht, and Fasching for what they are—equally worthy kinds of pre-Lent celebrations which developed differently
from Fas(t)nacht from a certain point in history onward. Germany is the only country that I know of with different types of pre-Lent celebrations. Most countries that celebrate festivals just before Lent know either an equivalent to Fas(t)nacht, as, for instance, Austria or Switzerland, or of Karneval, such as Italy, France, Spain, the countries of Latin America, Louisiana with its New Orleans Mardi Gras and the Country Mardi Gras, and so forth. An explanation for the exclusive "export" of Carnival by Europeans (the European conquerors took their festivals, including pre-Lent celebrations, with them wherever they went), leaving Shrovetide "at home," might be the fact that in the heyday of colonization Carnival had already overtaken Shrovetide, i.e., Shrovetide was almost extinct. As I have already stated, this development had started with the Italian Renaissance in the fourteenth century and went on for more than five hundred years. Many Shrovetide scholars--not accepting the fact that Carnival actually did dominate the "phenomenon pre-Lent celebrations"--point out that Shrovetide could not be exported because it was too dependent on its locality in rural, remote areas, not "fit" to be transplanted. In my opinion this is incorrect: Shrovetide could simply not be exported because it had nearly died out and was only revived in the twentieth century, consciously recreated by the fools' organizations after it basically no longer had a history and ongoing development of its own. I know that this opinion is "blasphemy" in the eyes of the organizers who are very touchy in this respect, because they do not want to admit that the "pure" Shrovetide had to struggle to survive, while Carnival, this "excuse for a festival," swept the country, influencing every existing form of pre-Lent celebrations. Blasphemy or not, I firmly believe
that the reason for the "non-exportability" of Shrovetide lies in this fact alone.

After this excursion, I will now get back to the point that I originally wanted to make. I said that Germany is the only country with different types of pre-Lent celebrations. This seems to be the reason for a recent overabundance of literature on the subject in Germany. Much of the literature, however, is mediocre and rather one-sided. Generally speaking, i.e., without an emphasis on Germany, Carnival as the predominant event all over the world has been described, defined, and analyzed extensively. Shrovetide, an event taking place in a relatively small geographic area, has been overlooked for the longest time, and only in the last fifteen years, roughly speaking, a wealth of studies about Shrovetide has been published. While many of the Carnival studies are excellent works, at least as far as analysis is concerned (the tracing of the historic development lacks much in most cases), the majority of Shrovetide studies, especially the ones published before about 1975, are just descriptive, and the "analysis" is limited to what I would call a repetition of the well-known and eagerly embraced "pagan cult theory."

Looking at studies by German-speaking scholars (including Austrian and Swiss scholars), the following observations can be made: (1) Karneval studies generally describe and analyze the modern festival, going back no further than the nineteenth century, i.e., the era in which Karneval flourished and in which most Karneval organizations were founded. They also generally do not recognize the existence of Fas(t)nacht, or if they do, they maintain that the two are the same. (2) Fas(t)nacht studies follow two
general lines: (a) the one defended mostly by older Shrovetide scholars and "insiders" (i.e., people who often are affiliated with a fools' corporation or association), and (b) younger Shrovetide scholars who as a rule have published their studies not before the mid- to late 1970s.

The first group of Shrovetide scholars generally propose the theory in which I believed when I grew up and which is consciously upheld by the fools' organizations and spread by the media: Shrovetide is very ancient, a direct descendant of our pagan ancestors' winter and spring festivals, and only slightly influenced by Christianity and the Renaissance and Rococo (the latter two only influenced the looks of masks and costumes). Masks and costumes are traditional symbols of fertility, and the fool figures conjure images of the souls of our dead ancestors as well as Nature and her aides (evil and good ghosts). In short: they insist on viewing Shrovetide as "ancient" and "traditional," not even recognizing its probable modern developments and meanings, and thus they do not do modern Shrovetide any justice. They also sneer at karneval and any festival related to it (such as Fassenacht and Fasching), maintaining that those "newcomers" have no place in such a long tradition.

The younger scholars quite generally ridicule the "pagan cult theory" and, by emphasizing the name "pre-Lent celebrations," they determine Christianity alone as the start of the celebrations. They also often include karneval in their observations. For them, the masks and costumes and accessories are all symbols of Christian beliefs.

The difference between the two groups can clearly be seen in their diverging ideas about the etymology of the German words for Shrovetide and Carnival. For the first
group, the word for Shrovetide is Fasnacht, from Middle High German fasen ("to prosper, to thrive") or faslen ("to couple, to bear," and later on "to speak nonsense"). This cannot be proven, but it makes a good, convenient point. For the other group, the word is Fastnacht, from fasten ("to fast"). Consequently, the first group maintains that the origins of the festival are to be found in ancient pagan rituals, i.e., vegetation cults (spring festivals) as well as life-death rituals (winter festivals). The second group understands Fasnacht only as a dialectal variation of Fastnacht, stating that Swabians generally have a slurred pronunciation, and thus maintaining that the name of the festival clearly defines its Christian origin. The English word "Shrovetide," from "to shrive, shrove, shriven" ("to administer the sacrament of penance, to free from guilt"), underscores the Christian definition.—Similar diverging explanations can be found for the Bavarian word Fasching and for Karneval.

Although I do not want to go any deeper into the etymologies, I would like to note that today a lot of people in Southwest Germany use the terms Karneval and especially Fasching instead of Fasnacht, Fastnacht, or Fasnet. This seems to be an indication that for the people the celebrations have lost any of their old meanings; all three types of festivals are now seen as the same thing, independent from the location: an opportunity to celebrate and to have fun in the company of like-minded people.

A few scholars, nevertheless, do not linger on the early history of Shrovetide, nor do they care whether it is Fasnacht or Fastnacht. Instead, they—and there they approach Karneval scholarship—put their emphasis on the event's modern meaning. However, they tend to understand
Christianity as the root of pre-Lent celebrations, as the younger scholars do.

I will try to connect the three groups in this study: in my opinion, the pagan festivals are a definite root, but I acknowledge that Christianity greatly influenced Shrovetide and Carnival, making the festivals a relative of ancient cults, but not a direct descendant. However, in our time Lent has lost its importance for most Catholics, and that means that Shrovetide and Carnival today certainly are celebrated out of a new appreciation for their meanings. Besides having been influenced by ancient cults, Christian beliefs, the court-jester concept, and many more concepts from later centuries, pre-Lent celebrations have survived and are still strong today because they are dynamic, using the present to make the past accessible and understandable. They are important expressions of human character, because people are most natural when they celebrate with others, and in events where most of the fun lies in masking and disguise, people can also clearly express different identities, hidden selves that in everyday life could never be displayed. During carnivalesque events, society's rules are broken; they have no significance whatsoever; they virtually do not exist for a certain period of time. Social positions are reversed. People are allowed to be crazy, chaotic, and disorderly without having to suffer consequences for their outrageous behavior. Yet, even the chaos is ordered, rigidly structured by the fools' corporations and their regulations. Regulations are necessary, though, for folk festivals of the dimensions of Shrovetide and Carnival. However, disorder, madness, and irrationality help people understand the importance of order for their everyday lives in our multifaceted societies. Thus, after a period of craziness,
people are more willing to accept everyday restrictions and limitations. Chaos and disguise help people define their everyday selves. Humor and comedy bring freedom, and this freedom helps people keep their sanity. Carnivalesque events give the participants an immense satisfaction; the people can perform, act, and communicate in ways not permissible under everyday circumstances. They are not expressions of anarchy, as their critics love to charge, but expressions of humanity, democracy, and equality.

The methodology employed for this study. The first part of my study will deal with the history and definition of pre-Lent celebrations. In Chapter I, I will present the two main theories of origin, i.e., the "pagan cult theory" and the "Christian Church theory." From there, I will move on to a complete history of development as I understand it, i.e., I will elaborate on the eight phases afore mentioned.--In Chapter II, I will deal with the importance of celebration in human life. I will also try to determine why people celebrate Shrovetide or Carnival.--Chapter III will define the importance of disguise for humans and introduce some Shrovetide figures with their masks, costumes, and accessories.

The second part of the study is dedicated to "Shrovetide today." Chapter IV will present the basic structural entities of Shrovetide and give a basic Shrovetide calendar, while Chapter V will sum up the former chapters, attempting to determine what pre-Lent celebrations mean for modern people.--Forty-nine photographs, a map, a glossary of Shrovetide and Carnival terms, and a selected bibliography will complement the study.

A few notes about the photographs and the map: I took
two sets of pictures, black-and-white prints as well as color slides. When it came to reproducing the photographs which I wanted to use for this study, I had to pick a lot of the color slides, because certain shots which I wanted to use were not available in my black-and-white selection. Printing color slides in black-and-white unfortunately reduces the quality, but rather than not use the pictures at all, I decided that I would put up with the somewhat inferior quality of those respective prints. Most of the pictures taken by night cannot be used as black-and-white prints, and therefore, nightly events are not illustrated.--The map on page 14 shows the general area where the Schwäbisch-Alemannische Fasnacht is celebrated. Only a small number of towns (and therefore fools' corporations) is included, with an emphasis on Upper Swabia, my home area, where I did my fieldwork. The western part from the border with France to a line running roughly west of Oberndorf, Rottweil, Villingen-Schwenningen, Donaueschingen, and over to the western tip of Lake Constance constitutes Baden, i.e., the Alemannic area. The central part from the just mentioned line to a line from Ulm along the river Iller to Aitrach and then on east of Leutkirch, Ratzenried, Wangen, Isny to west of Lindau is Württemberg. The part east of this line is the Allgäu, the Swabian part of Bavaria. (The people of Bavaria are Bavarians, Frankonians, and Swabians. The Swabians living in the extreme southwestern part of Bavaria celebrate Fasnacht, while the rest of Bavaria knows Fasching.)

Much of the analytical part of the study was done through library research, and I would like to thank the people working for Western Kentucky University's Interlibrary Loan for a superb job done in finding literature for me. A research grant given to me by Western Kentucky University's
Graduate College helped very much to finance a fieldtrip to Southwest Germany in February of 1988, during Shrovetide's "great time," the six main days from Fat or Jumping Thursday to Shrove Tuesday, as well as the Wednesday before Fat Thursday. The results of my fieldwork will be presented throughout the study: in Part I, the results of the review of literature will alternate with the results of my own observations, while Part II will be dedicated to my fieldwork alone. I also reevaluated my personal experiences accumulated through more than twenty-five years, as well as pictures taken in former years, to complete the documentary part. The comparison between the Shrovetide I knew as a child and young adult and the Shrovetide celebrated in 1988 was fruitful insofar as it helped me see that the structure of Shrovetide has not changed over the years. It is static, and even new corporations, as, for instance, the Narrenzunft Biberhex from Biberach/Riß (founded less than ten years ago), will use "old traditions" (i.e., customs and events that have been researched by the Brauchtumsmeister and determined to be "traditional" or "ancient"), refusing to allow more flexibility and new customs. Nevertheless, for the participants, the festivals seem to take on new meanings all the time, i.e., for them the festivals are dynamic.

I also visited the Narrenschopf, a museum for the Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide, which is located in Bad Dürreheim (Fig. 1) and which was founded in 1973 by Wilhelm Kutter, the "great old man" of Shrovetide scholarship, who today is criticized very much by the younger scholars for his belief in the festival's antiquity and his ardent rejection of Karneval and Fasching as "horrible festivals" not worth celebrating.

The nicest thing happened to me during my stay in
Germany: I was so lucky to be able to participate in two parades in the mask and costume of the **Falkenhofer Weible** from Uttenweiler. In former years, I had participated in many parades as a band musician, but my not so secret dream always had been to get a mask. My younger brother, Andreas Beck, made it possible. He is the instructor of the **Fanfarenzug Pflugraicher** from Uttenweiler, a trumpet and drum corps which is part of Uttenweiler's fools' corporation. Through Andreas, I met the **Zunftmeister**, Mr. Reinhold Stritzelberger, members of the **Zunftrat**, and many of the mask wearers, and as I accompanied my brother to all of the fools' corporation's events, Mr. Stritzelberger offered me a **Leihhäas** ("costume on loan")—an immense honor for a virtual stranger, especially if one considers how hard it is to "earn" a mask and costume for permanent participation.

Several conditions made the research on location somewhat difficult, particularly my lack of time, i.e., the fact that I could only be there during the main days (one must consider that the Shrovetide period is between four to nine weeks long, depending on the date for Easter). This diminished my chances of visiting as many towns as I would have liked to visit, and it eliminated the chance for formal interviews, as no active fool has the time or seriousness for interviews during the main days. Nevertheless, by doing extensive library research, by including my pictures from former years, by being constantly on the road while I was in Germany for my fieldwork, by talking to many people in informal settings, by reevaluating my own former experiences, and especially by being a participant observer, I managed to compile what I think is a good analytical as well as descriptive study of Shrovetide in Southwest Germany. This
study should serve well as an introduction to pre-Lent celebrations for my American as well as German readers and connect all branches of Shrovetide scholarship with their different theories about the origins and meanings of Shrovetide and Carnival.
Map 1 The Region of the Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide
Fig. 1 The Narrenschopf in Bad Dürrheim
PART I

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF
SHROVETIDE AND CARNIVAL
CHAPTER I

SHROVETIDE, CARNIVAL, AND LENT

Where Shrovetide and Carnival come from is not clear to this day, and most likely there will never be a definite explanation. Nevertheless, a lot of people have made up their minds about the roots of pre-Lent celebrations, and two main theories can be determined: the "pagan cultic" and the "Christian" theory. Explanations of the festivals usually consider only one of the theories, and they lack a look at the general development of the celebrations. It seems that almost everybody loves the idea of a festival with a single cause which did not lose its meaning or function and which was never influenced by anything through many centuries. A convenient idea, yet it could not be true, especially not regarding celebrations as vital and vibrant as Shrovetide and Carnival. There must have been changes, many changes, and important influences throughout time, or else Shrovetide and Carnival would have died out long ago. After my presentation of the two main theories of origin, I will go on to define the history of pre-Lent celebrations as I see it.

The Pagan Cultic Theory

The main proponent of the pagan cultic theory was Wilhelm Kutter, an extremely prolific Shrovetide scholar and founder of the museum Narrenschopf in Bad Dürrheim.¹ His main study for this theory is Wilhelm Kutter's Schwäbisch-alemannische Fasnacht (Künzelsau: Sigloch Service, 1976).

¹
followers cannot be counted, and every fools' organization has embraced Kutter's theories. Neither the researchers nor the fools' corporations ever questioned Wilhelm Kutter—they just repeated him over and over again.

According to Kutter, Shrovetide goes back to pre-Christian times when people believed in many gods and all types of benefactory and malefactory spirits. Nature herself was seen as a godly power, strong and uncontrollable by humans. People knew only two seasons—winter, the cold season, and spring (or summer), the warm one—and they keenly felt the struggle between the deadening force of winter and the reviving force of spring. The passage from winter to spring meant the awakening of vegetation and life, and the victory of the living over the dead, expressed through the change of seasons. Shrovetide was one of many winter and spring festivals celebrated all over the ancient world. Spring festivals were quite common in the ancient world, and whether we look to Greece or Rome or other countries, we can find reports about and traces of such festivals. Celebrations could be vegetation rituals. People would pray for fertility, for a year bringing good crops. They would bring sacrifices to the vegetation gods, and they would dance and sing in the gods' honor. Winter celebrations often were rites concerning life and death. As Waldemar Liungman points out, many peoples believed in the Perchta, an underworld goddess who roamed the world with her wild army during the Twelve Nights, i.e., from December 25 to January 6. In Austria, to this day the Perchten in the form of ugly (evil) and beautiful (good-natured) figures go around in January, while France and Switzerland, for example, know the "blessed

ladies" (selige Fräulein or dames blanches) who bring luck, abundance, and wealth. The Nordic and Germanic peoples believed that the god Wotan with his army of undead came to the world during the Twelve Nights. People knew that fire and noise would scare evil spirits away, and as they feared the spirits' wrath, people put on masks and disguises. Because of the disguise, the spirits would not recognize them as individuals and therefore would not punish them for their deeds. A lot of other beliefs concerned dealings with ghosts: certain tasks could not be done, such as spinning, mending, sewing--tasks that could disturb the ghosts. Many actions in house, garden, and field, however, would bring special blessings and a good crop later in the year. Noise of all kinds was supposed to scare away ghosts, witches, and the cold season, while at the same time it was said to "awaken" the vegetation. Tree-spirits were believed to bring fertility to women and cattle, and therefore "fertility-poles" were put up--the list could go on and on. Another way to ritually end the cold season was the representation of winter through a dummy whose death was simulated. A straw witch or bear or similar figure was burned (or drowned or hung or buried) and the flames (in the case of burning) gave the people a forecast for the crop of the next season: the higher the flames, the better the crop.  

Shrovetide is supposed to represent all these things: costumes and accessories are, or contain, fertility symbols; masks imitate and personify good and bad spirits; the fools

---

make as much noise as possible, and they sing and dance.

Many scholars of classical antiquity and mythology, first of all Sir James Frazer, gave the Shrovetide researchers the basis for their explanations, but after many years of strong beliefs in these ancient origins, younger researchers started to ridicule them, drawing a new picture: for them, Shrovetide was (and is) an entirely Christian event. Let us now take a look at their theories.

The Christian Theory:
The Medieval Church and the Courts

The scholars who see Shrovetide as an inherently Christian celebration use two different explanations for its origins: (1) roots in the Christian Church alone and (2) roots in the profession of court-jester in the Middle Ages. One of the main proponents of the former idea is Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, while Werner Mezger stresses the similarity between court-jester and Shrovetide fool. The following is mainly a review of their theories.4

Shrovetide as a liturgical celebration. According to Moser, pagan origins of Shrovetide cannot be proven and never existed. He contends that it was the Nazis' fault that so many people still (or again) believe in those cultic roots, because the Nazis negated the importance of the church whenever possible and stressed the origins of many celebrations as well as other cultural expressions in the Germanic or Nordic mythology.5 Many people support the


5Grimm’s Märchen defined as Germanic tales, for instance, got powerful
idea that Shrovetide was a pagan celebration that could not be accommodated in the liturgical calendar. They argue that the Church tolerated the celebration as it was not strong enough to forbid it. Moser, however, maintains that this idea is wrong. For him, the event is a natural part of the ecclesiastical year, a period of preparation for Lent.

Lent is a time of abstinence and repentance before Easter, a period known by Protestants, but only observed by Catholics. As the early Christian Church was one unity, not knowing a difference between Catholicism and Protestantism (a difference that appeared only in the sixteenth century with the Protestant church reforms), every member of the Church went through a period of fasting before Easter. The Protestants after the Reformation did away with Lent; thus fasting plays no part in the Protestant Easter preparation.

At the Council of Nicaea in 325, the Church determined the date for Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring. The length of the period of fasting as related in the Gospel according to Matthew (Mat 4,2) was forty days and forty nights, equaling the time that Christ had spent fasting in the desert. Calculating back, the Church stipulated that Lent began on the Tuesday after the sixth Sunday before Easter (Sunday Invocavit), and therefore Shrovetide took place on the Monday after Invocavit. At the Council of Benevent in 1091, it was determined that the Sundays as memorial days of Christ's resurrection should not be counted, and so Lent had to start six days earlier, on today's Ash Wednesday. The new Shrovetide date was now the Tuesday before Sunday Invocavit. The new Shrovetide had to

6 The Sundays got special names in that time: the Sunday before the old Shrovetide, Invocavit, came to be known as Bauernfastnacht or "peasants' Shrovetide," the Sunday before the new Shrovetide, Estomihi, became assistance from the Nazis—mythology and nationalism supplement each other well.
compete against the old Shrovetide, and only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the new Shrovetide finally succeeded over the old, except in areas with a strong Protestant dominance, where—perhaps out of a sense of threat—the Catholics stubbornly held on to their old customs and the old calendar.

The extension of Shrovetide to six days, from the Thursday before Sunday Estomih to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday according to Moser must have had theological reasons. He sees a parallel between Shrovetide Thursday and Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter): the former exemplifies the sin of everybody who behaves like a fool, while the latter stands for the resumption of the fallen, those who have sinned. Moser even explains the beginning of the extended Shrovetide and Carnival periods. Shrovetide starts on Epiphany (or Twelfth Day) because of another parallel to Easter: originally, Epiphany was the end of another forty-day fasting period. If one calculated back from there, omitting Saturdays and Sundays, the start of that period was November 12. Therefore, the day before the fasting time, November 11, became the starting day for the Carnival period (also called kleine Fastnacht, i.e., "small Shrovetide"), and the day after the fasting time, Epiphany or January 6, became the starting day for the Shrovetide period. When the date for Christmas was set for December 25, that fasting period lost its meaning and became obsolete, and it was replaced by a Christmas preparation time, Advent. However, the dates of November 11 and January 6 retained Pfaffenfastnacht or "clerics' Shrovetide."—Basel in Switzerland (a predominantly Protestant or Calvinistic country) to this day has retained the old date, and therefore the people of Basel celebrate when everywhere else Shrovetide and Carnival have ended and Lent is well under way.

More about this in Chapter IV.
their importance for Shrovetide and Carnival.

For Moser, Shrovetide depends on Augustinus's two-state model as expressed in his De civitate Dei, a book which he started to write after the Goths had captured Rome in 410. The Romans understood the event as a punishment by the gods for the Roman people's apostasy from their creed and their turn towards Christianity, and so they used it as a reason for another persecution of Christians. Augustinus contrasted the attacking Romans with the ideal image of a Christian community, a community of angels and devout Christians, i.e., people who had replaced the fallen angels. Vicious Rome with its many gods for him was the "Whore Babylon" or civitas diaboli, opposed by Jerusalem, an "eternal state" with only one God. The people of the civitas aeterna (or civitas Dei) followed their way to salvation without being held back by the foolishness of the pagans.

Principally, the people could choose between Babylon, the Devil's state, and Jerusalem, God's state, i.e., between the community of fools living according to their own ideas, or the community of believers living for a higher and better goal. Out of this choice, according to Moser, one can explain the existence of Shrovetide and Carnival, a period of a "perverted divine reign" which has the purpose to show people the unimportance of an exclusive orientation to this world instead of looking towards a better world, the Kingdom Come. He categorized the Shrovetide figures into seducers (devils, witches, giants, the Antichrist), rulers of the world (fool kings and princes with their entourage), and citizens of the world (all the fools, i.e., people who deny the existence of one God, the sinners, and the enemies of the church, including savages, Moors, orientals, Indians,

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8This model was an important basis for the mode of thinking in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times.
Protestants, magicians, and so forth). The similarity of Shrovetide with pagan celebrations did not come from a tradition of old customs, but from the Christian representation of a devil image.

The medieval court-jester. Mezger, like Moser, sees the connection between the Christian world and Shrovetide. However, he stresses the importance of another medieval institution, the courts. The ideal medieval ruler was wise, just, and had his authority "through the grace of God." He would lead his subjects to salvation, and he represented a prefiguration of Christ's coming kingdom. Directly opposed to this ruler was the fool or jester, who only looked back, not forward to salvation, who was vain, seduced people to sin, and generally stood outside the divine order. The jester, who was a part of every medieval court, on the other hand was a sign showing how fast one could turn from being a lord to being a fool, i.e., the jester taught humility. The thinking in pairs of opposites was common in the Middle Ages, and so the opposition between lord and jester was accepted and understood without problems. The fool's dress clearly showed the opposition: the fool's cap with ass's ears corresponded to the king's crown, the fool's staff (Marotte) equaled the king's scepter, the fool's bells were an imitation of the king's tintinnabula (little bells along the dress hem), and so forth. Foolishness meant unbelief in God and was opposed to wisdom, i.e., belief in God. Those who did not believe in God and His kingdom were doomed to eternal death instead of eternal life in Heaven, and so the fool showed the people permanently the impact of vanity and sinfulness, in short, he gave them an idea of death and the

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9 The Marotte ended in an ass's head with the fool's own features, signifying the fool's vanity and self-centeredness; cf. the fool's other accessory, the mirror.
transitoriness of this world.

Between the eleventh and the fifteenth century, the jester's image changed from a mere fool to the carrier of a higher wisdom and the teller of hidden truths. (This phenomenon, the Markolf tradition, will be explained more thoroughly later on.) The jester became a warner, giving the king insights that otherwise the latter might not have discovered. A tension developed between joke and seriousness, nonsense and prophecy, entertainment and intimidation. For Mezger, these tensions are the core of the Shrovetide idea.

Enid Welsford's classical work *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London, 1935) offers another version of the "fool idea" by putting the court-jester in opposition to the cultic figure of the festival-fool, a figure which Mezger does not mention. According to Welsford and Mezger, the medieval court-fool (as well as the court-dwarf) often was a deformed and/or idiotic person, dependent on the support of his own social group. The fool's defects were the source for entertainment and sometimes fear. Welsford's festival-fool, however, was a figure whose

. . . folly must be regarded as a sign of mysterious dedication rather than as a defect which shields him from the Evil Eye, and in either case it follows that the festival-fool is essentially a ritual character, and that there is no connection at all between him and the fool who blusters about the royal court, for there is no evidence that the court-fool was ever a sacrificial victim.10

Welsford argues that both the court-fool and the festival-fool provided a safeguard against bad luck and the

Evil Eye (as ugly, misshapen, and abnormal people are immune from the Evil Eye), but that from this common basis the two had taken different developments. In contrast to the professional court-fool, the festival-fool was a cultic figure, a sacrificial victim, a scapegoat who was ritually killed or driven off to free people from their sins, diseases, bad luck, and so forth. He was the antithesis to the mock-king who was often elected on Twelfth Night or May Day or another adequate date and who ordered the scapegoat, i.e., the festival-fool, to be killed or driven off.

Shrovetide has the same basis: a mock-government by the fools and a scapegoat to be driven off or destroyed to finish winter and other evils. The festival-fool gradually adopted the court-fool's dress and rights: court-fools were free to say whatever they wanted; they were considered imbeciles and therefore not held responsible for their actions. And the Shrovetide fool to this day uses this right, almost to excess.

The Historical Development

My opinion about the historical development seems to differ from most Shrovetide scholars' points of view. Without consideration of the people who deliver monocausal ritualistic or Christian theories of origin for Shrovetide, there are quite a few scholars with whom I basically share the idea of several phases in the festival's development (as I have already pointed out in the Introduction). However, my list of phases is not only more extensive, I also rate and interpret their impact on Shrovetide differently. Most scholars do not consider certain phases or time periods--such as the Reformation or the Age of Enlightenment or the
nineteenth century—as influential, and they also seem to misunderstand the relationship between the pagan religions (with their winter and spring festivals) and early Christianity. I do not see pre-Lent celebrations as direct descendants of pagan festivals, as the supporters of the ritualistic theories do, nor do I see them as more or less detached from the pagan festivals, as most other scholars and especially the supporters of the Christian theories do: in my opinion, pre-Lent celebrations are relatives of pagan festivals which have incorporated or been influenced by many other phenomena encountered through the centuries. Each phase brought a new meaning to the already existing festival, until Shrovetide and Carnival came to be what we know and celebrate today—until their meaning will change again, in a future era.

The times of ancient rituals. The first phase in the history of pre-Lent celebrations is a time lost in antiquity, a time which we today describe as "pagan" or "barbaric." In those times, when people believed in many gods and spirits, good and evil, and in an omnipotent Nature, they as human beings felt extremely small, weak, and helpless. Furthermore, during the dark and cold season they felt directly threatened by the Evil, and therefore almost could not wait for the sun to come back, bringing new life and light. Their religion allowed our ancestors to imitate and personify whatever threatened or pleased them, a way of getting into direct contact with those forces. The personification of the Evil worked as a counter-charm against the evil forces, while the personification of the good forces was meant to invite them to do their beneficial work for the human race. Peoples all over the ancient world (and some
peoples today) used masks, costumes, songs, dances, processions, loud noise, and so forth to gain some control over the supernatural forces during all kinds of winter and spring festivals.

Early Christianity. Early Christianity, the second phase, brought many changes. The Christian Church did not allow the belief in and personification of ancient pagan gods and spirits. Old documents with their listings of punishments for the observation of pagan customs prove that those customs and beliefs were not eliminated. Already in the fourth century, Bishop Faustinus (352-384 A.D.) described events similar to Shrovetide:

On these days, miserable people and, even worse, some baptized [Christians] disguise themselves very strangely, and one does not know what to laugh at and what to regret; for what reasonable person can believe that such people are still of sane mind who play [the roles of] stags and change into the shapes of wild beasts. Others dress up in the hides of cattle. Others put on the heads of wild beasts, [and they] rejoice when they have thus transformed themselves into the shapes of animals, so that they can no longer be recognized as human beings. With this they show and prove that they have not so much assumed the behavior of the animals or their appearance, as rather their sense. 11

By the eighth century nothing had changed. The people still observed their pagan rituals and customs, as is shown in the Dicta Pirminii, written by St. Pirminus who had come to the Germanic land to deepen the belief in the Christian Church. The following is an excerpt from the Dicta's Chapter 22:

You shall not worship idols; you shall not present with prayers and vows particularly rocks and trees, corner stones, springs, and crossroads. You shall not believe in or practice conjurers and foreboders of destiny, illusionists, interpreters of sacrifices, prophets,

11Quoted from Herbert Berner, "Vom Werden und Wesen unserer Fasnacht," Fasnet im Hegau und Linzgau (Konstanz: Südkurier, 1982), p. 54; my translation.
fortune-tellers, magicians, sorcerers, godless fortune-telling when sneezing, fortune-telling through birds, or other bad and devilish ideas. The festival of the spring fires and the celebration of the first [day] of a month, hanging up a laurel twig, minding one's pace, pour fruit and wine over a corpse, throw bread in the well, or when the women call Minerva while they are weaving, choosing the day of Venus or only another certain day for a wedding, reserving a certain day for travels: what is that other than devilish work?...You shall not dress up in hides of stags or horses on the first day of the month. Men shall not wear women's clothes, and women shall not wear men's clothes on those days or for other plays....No Christian shall dare to perform round dances, vaudevilles, and dance games, or jokes and other abominable games near churches, in houses, at crossroads, or at any other place....

However, the clergy did not succeed in abolishing the pagan customs, and therefore they decided to use them instead for the Church's own good. Here is a quote by Wilhelm Kutter:

Because of Pirmin's orders and similar prohibitions from former times we know that all pagan-cultic customs and ideas had to be subdued. In the course of this ordered de-demonization, [the people] quite often adopted old forms and procedures, giving them new--i.e., Christian--meanings. Certainly, this change went on slowly, through several centuries, from about the ninth to the thirteenth century. Let us not forget that in Romanesque sacred buildings, even in Gothic cathedrals, the sides of the choir stalls and the gargoyles are adorned with pre-Christian ugly faces or gnomes, whose meanings to this day mostly have not been determined. As Christianity spread ever more, and more seriously as well, the old-fashioned people who still professed pagan ideas became the targets of derision for the people [who had embraced the] new or right faith. This derision was certainly evident in the fact that ancient, pre-Christian forms of cult were parodied. During this long period of transition the former cultic procedures in mummary turned into mockery or into an instructive and serene play with disguises that were partly traditional and partly new. Therefore, at least during the transition period, the widely spread human attitude developed that while doing the one thing, one does not abandon the other. Of course, people were Christians, but the ancient

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[12] Ibid., p. 72; my translation.
cultic forms were engaging, and even if in the old sense they were without real effects, they did not do any damage. Just as folk medicine to this day believes in conjuring, mummery most likely retained pre-Christian beliefs for a long time. All this is based on assumptions because there are no written sources, but we can assume that it is logical and likely.\textsuperscript{13}

The period of transition from pagan to Christian beliefs might have been much shorter than Kutter thought, but, nevertheless, the Church used pagan ideas to draw people to Christianity, changing the ancient gods and spirits into devils, witches, and demons. The battle against evil powers and winter became a battle against sin and vanity, and the belief that spring was good turned into a show of the Kingdom Come and God's love and grace, the things for which Christian people had to strive during their lives. This change in meaning of the ancient winter and spring festivals and their concentration into one single festival that would take place just before Lent was the birth of "Shrovetide": a festival created by the Church that included ancient ideas in a new "disguise," i.e., the Christian worldview.

\textbf{The medieval courts}. The third phase, the time of the medieval courts, shows two currents: the early medieval courts were an extension of the Christian Church and its power, but in the eleventh century, a slow change started to take place. The two currents were represented through the medieval king or sovereign and his court-jester(s). In the early Middle Ages, the king was considered to reign "through the grace of God." He embodied the Christian ideal of a wise, God-fearing, and faithful person who was free of sin, a model for his subjects. The court-jester, in comparison, was backward and vain, and with his denial of God, he was

\textsuperscript{13}Wilhelm Kutter, \textit{Schwäbiach-alemannische Fasnacht}, p. 10; my translation.
supposed to seduce people to sin. Thus he became a sign for death and human mortality. The literature of the eleventh century initiated a turn with the so-called Markolf tradition: the wise man Solomon got an opponent, Markolf, who questioned Solomon's judgments. By the twelfth century, the Markolf figure had become a parodist, and by the fourteenth century, he was called a "fool" (Narr). By the end of the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century, Solomon, the wise man (Sapiens) had exchanged roles with Markolf, the fool (Insipiens). The fool had become the Sapiens, the only wise man in a world of fools, who would prophesy the coming decline of the known world order. --The developing fool figure entered Shrovetide as the "real" fool, the simpleton, and also as the "wise" fool, who tells people the truth and has the privilege to scold them for their ignorance and behavior.

The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The fourth phase is characterized by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The Reformation arose about 1500 and culminated around the mid-seventeenth century. It was conditioned by political, economic, social, and intellectual factors, but above all else it was a religious revival which had as its goal Christian renewal. One of the most important features of the era was the emergence of national states in Europe. The old order was challenged, including the pope's traditional authority and the medieval concept of higher loyalties. The medieval social arrangements were totally upset when out of economic changes a new socioeconomic class emerged, namely the bourgeoisie. Most important, though, was the troubled state of the Christian Church, a church challenged by persistent heresy, popular piety, a loss of papal credibility and the secularization of the papacy following the Great Schism,
clerical ignorance and abuse, resulting first of all from the appointment of clerics according to their loyalty to the secular rulers. In short, the Church had to face its unrelenting decline, and the need for reforms became obvious.

When in 1517 the German priest Martin Luther affixed his Ninety-Five Theses to the church of the castle in Wittenberg, the Protestant Reformation actually began. Luther's conviction that papal authority went too far led to a breach between Rome and the German priest. He maintained that biblical authority was above the authority of the traditional social institutions, be they spiritual or secular, and he taught that one could find salvation through faith in Christ alone. By the mid-sixteenth century, the new Protestant Church had become the dominant faith of much of Germany and most of Scandinavia, and it started to make a significant impact on the religious life of the remainder of Europe.

The following Catholic Reformation (or Counter-Reformation) was an attempt to renew the established Church from within, both in reaction to the Protestant threat and in response to certain internal developments. The Oratory of Divine Love (founded in 1517), a reformed papacy, the establishment of the Jesuits (in 1540), the Council of Trent (1545-63), the Roman Inquisition, and more were all expressions of reform and renewal within the Roman Church.

The Reformation made pre-Lent celebrations a Catholic phenomenon, despised and never tolerated by the Protestants. Bob Scribner in his excellent study of the impact of the Reformation on pre-Lent celebrations has collected documentations on twenty-four events in Germany that show a connection between the Reformation and Carnival. 14

14Bob Scriber, "Reformation, Karneval und die 'verkehrte Welt,'" trans.
events took place between 1520 and 1543, always during Fastnacht, with the majority, nineteen events, between 1520 and 1525, i.e., the early years of the Reformation that still showed more spontaneous than organized movement by the people. All of the events contained some type of parody of and protest against the established Church, and the prevailing tone of all events was the consideration of Fastnacht as popish. This attitude of rejection has never changed, and to this day, Protestants do not celebrate Shrovetide or Carnival. There are other reasons for the rejection, beside the early understanding of Fastnacht as a popish festival that had to be abolished. Quite generally, the Catholic idea of fasting on the one hand and a last time of merrymaking before the long period of Lent as a preparation for Easter on the other hand does not fit the Protestant image of divine order and salvation. Furthermore, for Protestants human beings are righteous people and sinners at the very same time, i.e., they do not accept the idea that one can do the Evil (i.e., Shrovetide or Carnival), then turn away from it to turn towards the Good (i.e., the period of Lent and repentance). Shrovetide and Carnival became devilish things in the eyes of the Protestants. I could quote many sources to illustrate this, but I will give just one example:

You certainly know that Carnival was invented by the Devil; therefore there are so many devil-figures and devil-masks in the Shrovetide parades.... What are the fruits of Carnival? You can read it in the newspapers: jealousy, sex-offences, adultery, divorce, murder, suicide—shattered lives, destroyed family relations, sorrow and misery without end. This is the harvest


15Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, Fastnacht--Fasching--Karneval, p. 48.
from this devil's festival.\textsuperscript{16}

The Catholic Church, however, retained the old tradition, embraced it more than ever, and defended it against any Protestant or other criticism. The popes of the early Christian Church had tried to forbid Shrovetide, but later popes understood very well the advantages and the "profit" that Shrovetide could give the Church, until Pope Benedict XIV in his encyclical of 1748 \textit{expressis verbis} rejected proposals to forbid pre-Lent celebrations.\textsuperscript{17} Paul Leopold Haffner, a former bishop of Mainz and professor at the Theological Seminary there once said: "I deem Carnival to be an immensely Christian and truly Catholic institution, and I almost would consider it heresy to abolish it."\textsuperscript{18}

Another important phenomenon was that the new bourgeoisie did no longer accept the former "divine" order which had been used to control the people during the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, these new ideas brought about a tremendous fear of the future. The people expected the world to come to its end, and in their desperation, many became religious zealots. They rediscovered the fool figure as a symbol of their own mortality and also as a prophet who had always tried to warn them. This new perception made them eventually discover their own foolishness: instead of being different from everybody else, i.e., society's outsider, the fool figure had become a characteristic that all people shared. The recognition of the "fool" in all of us is a very important basic idea to understand Shrovetide and Carnival.

\textbf{The Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo.} The fifth

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{16}Declaration on fliers distributed in Stuttgart in 1955, quoted from Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, "Ein Babylon der verkehrten Welt," p. 12; my translation.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 15.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 14; my translation.}
phase includes the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo. Both Baroque (seventeenth century) and Rococo (eighteenth century) had mainly an artistic influence on pre-Lent celebrations. The oldest masks we know were created then, and many of their features have been retained to this day for our modern masks. --Around the seventeenth century the Renaissance (which had started in Italy in the fourteenth century) came to Germany, bringing costume balls and theater and all kinds of entertainment previously unknown. Besides its artistic influence on masks and costumes, the Renaissance reinforced a shift that had already started to develop: the Stadt-Land or "city-country" shift. In this time, the difference between urban and rural areas became very evident. The burghers of cities (which were always founded near a castle or the residence of a king or bishop and therefore became "entertainment centers") adopted the new amusements directly from the courts, and balls and theater became almost everyday routine for city dwellers. The rural people, who were far from the courts and therefore the city amusements, retained their old kinds of entertainments, such as traditional singing, storytelling, dancing, and so forth. Refined balls and theater were unknown to them, and thus the "uneducated" peasants became the butts of many jokes told in the cities. --Here must be the basis for the development of different types of pre-Lent celebrations: only the urban-rural diversity and conflict can explain the development of urban and rural types of celebrations. Today's Karneval and Fasching are such urban events, celebrated directly in the big cities or in highly urbanized areas, with an emphasis on indoor activities and political satire and parody. Fasnacht, however, lives in the rural Southwest, in small towns and villages, and although indoor activities like balls and meetings take place
("borrowed" from Karneval, by the way), they are not the most important features: outdoor events, the Straßensfasnacht, have "center stage."

The Age of Enlightenment. The Age of Enlightenment, i.e., the eighteenth century, is the sixth phase in the history of Shrovetide. That period did nothing to promote pre-Lent celebrations. Instead, the age of rational thinking brought the festival's decline until it all but died out. Rationally thinking people had no use for ancient pagan or even strongly Christian ideas, and the festivals, considered to be "nonsense," in many areas died a "natural death" or else were forbidden by the German sovereigns.

The Romantic era. The nineteenth century and Romanticism, the seventh phase, brought a revival of pre-Lent celebrations, but mainly in the form of Karneval, as known two centuries earlier. Fasnacht still suffered from the notion that it was "just nonsense," and people celebrating something that reminded others of paganism were seen as downright stupid. Shrovetide had survived and now flourished again only in remote areas and in very small towns and villages, i.e., the already mentioned rural (and therefore "backward") areas in Southwest Germany. Besides ridiculing Fasnacht, people expanded Karneval, founding the first carnival guilds or clubs (patterned after the medieval artisans' guilds which had formerly arranged dances and so forth) to "reform" and organize the then rather wild and unorganized events.¹⁹ Elferräte ("councils of the Eleven"), Prinzenpaare ("princely couples" who reigned during Karneval.

¹⁹For instance, a Karnevalsverein was founded in Köln (Cologne) in 1823, and in Mainz in 1838. The first guilds in the Swabian-Alemannic region were founded in the 1840s and 1850s. Although today's Swabian-Alemannic organizers refuse to remember it, these early guilds were really "carnival guilds," not the types of fools' guilds we now know—Karneval by that time had definitely taken over.
Karnevalssitzungen ("carnival meetings"), costume balls, and Garden ("guard groups or corps") became the staples of pre-Lent celebrations, in Karneval as well as in Fasnacht areas, and they were there to stay. Fasnacht tried to get rid of the Karneval influence later on, but some of the events survived stubbornly, as, for instance, the costume balls, "guard" groups in many towns (Bad Waldsee has one, for example), and so on.--Achern/Baden, a town in the Black Forest, has pure Karneval, although it lies in a Fasnacht area. Ochsenhausen, roughly fifteen miles east of Biberach/Riß, celebrates something that is half Karneval and half Fasnacht, with an Elferrat, a Prinzenpaar, and Carnival meetings, but also Fasnacht-like mask figures and events. Most other Shrovetide towns have shed more of the Carnival influences, but not all, whether the organizers like this idea or not.

After the second World War. At a time when Shrovetide seemed to be extinct, having given way to Carnival, the Nazis tried to rekindle the "Germanic" spirit in the Germans, causing the reintroduction of "ancient" ideas and the creation of new masks, especially the witch masks. But the second World War made an end to all of that. After the war, the eighth and so far last phase of Shrovetide history started. The people needed some fun and enjoyment after the terror and horror which they had survived, and pre-Lent celebrations were a wonderful way of forgetting the trauma of the past years. Karneval boomed and became a

20 Garden originally were meant to parody soldiers, especially the French and the Prussian soldiers who then occupied the Rhine region. Nowadays, Karneval has an almost endless variety of "guards," and most of them are girls, dressed in short skirts, boots, short "military" coats, and three-cornered hats. In the last century and far into this century, however, all Carnival or Shrovetide figures were played by men, never women.
highly commercial and satirical event. The young democracy allowed for even more political and social parody and satire than ever before, and the advent of television brought Karneval into many German livingrooms. Every year, Germans can watch the Mainzer Fassenacht on TV (although called Fassenacht, it really is "Carnival"; the guild in Mainz is called Karnevalverein), in form of meetings staged for TV and presenting many Carnival performers, like singers, dancers, speakers in de Bütt ("on the platform"; they are mostly political parodists), and so forth. Furthermore, the Carnival parades from Köln, Düsseldorf, and Mainz are aired each year in full. What do Germans see of Fasnacht? Not more than maybe five minutes of coverage from the Narrensprung in Rottweil (the most famous and thought to be the oldest).

Fasnacht in those years was rediscovered as something that belonged to the Southwest. The organizers in the area understood that Fasnacht was special and worthy to be brought back to life. The guilds and corporations created the position of a person responsible for the "salvation" of and active search for old customs (Brauchtumsmeister). This led to the creation of many new mask figures, inspired by legends about local people as well as mock surnames for towns or their inhabitants. One example is the figure Weckafresser or "roll glutton" from Äpfingen: a man from Äpfingen, who was at a neighboring village, became hungry. Being a simple man, he was somewhat intimidated and thus ordered one beer and ten rolls. Since that day, the people from Äpfingen have been known as Weckafresser. The wooden mask has a big roll stuffed in its mouth. Many of the new masks received the features of the old masks (as made in the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo) and all kinds of fertility and winter-
So What Is Shrovetide?

Most Shrovetide studies are what I would call "monocausal," pretending that Shrovetide looks back to one single origin, without any later (or earlier) influences, and people who see several roots are rare and often infamous because they tear down carefully built structures of explanations and definitions. Modern Shrovetide scholarship, i.e., the scholarship of roughly the last decade, rejects more and more the pagan origins, looking for explanations in the Middle Ages and early Christianity alone, while the fools' guilds and corporations desperately stick to the mythological explanations offered by older scholars. There seems to be an inherent understanding between the organizers and their "audiences." The mythological-cultic explanation is very convenient; it sounds logical and helps define the meaning of events, masks, costumes, and the fools' behavior in an easily comprehensible way. As I already mentioned, every fools' corporation has a person responsible for the research and presentation of the ancient customs and rites, the Brauchtumsmeister, and those men and women make sure that the audience absorbs the cultic origins of their Fas(t)nacht. The people love this idea of a pure and ancient festival that has survived through the ages. The younger scholars who reject the pagan cultic theory are heard by the organizers, but their impact on the structure and progress of the celebrations is minimal. The popular version of pre-Lent celebrations as pagan festivals will not die out any time soon, no matter what the Shrovetide scholars might say and find through their research, and no matter how well-founded
Nevertheless, the phenomenon of pre-Lent celebrations cannot be explained with one single cause. Although people like Dietz-Rüdiger Moser with their expressly Christian explanations sound very convincing, and although they seem to have logical explanations for the events, founded in Christianity alone, there is one big weakness: they see the early Christian Church as much stronger than it was in reality. Here lies the core of my criticism: as far as I am concerned, there is no doubt about the ritualistic origins of Shrovetide. Many features of the festival could never be explained through the Christian influence alone. Moser gives a wonderful theological explanation for the starting date of Shrovetide, Epiphany, but he does not mention that the same date does have an older significance as the last one of the Twelve Days and Nights during which Wotan (or Perchta) had traveled through the airs with their wild armies. Moser explains the connection between the Devil and noise, i.e., the noise shows the difference between the rule of the Devil and the quietness of God's kingdom. But he does not mention that in old times people believed that noise could scare ghosts away and awaken the vegetation. The problem seems to be that most scholars do not put enough emphasis on and research into legends that people tell to explain the causes of strange events or phenomena.

A case in point: Manfred Fuhrmann in his essay on the Roman Saturnalia points out that the tale about King Saturn—which is the basis for the people's explanation of the origin and significance of the Saturnalia—had a long history as an etiological legend, i.e., a legend that explains a cause.21 He argues that those types of legends

21Manfred Fuhrmann, "Fasnacht als Utopie: Vom Saturnalienfest im alten
all over the world had been told by the people whenever there was a need to find an explanation for something that seemed to be strange or nonsensical, whether it was a name, a natural phenomenon, a custom, even depressing life conditions as death or work. But at this point he stops; he does not attempt to look at the way in which people used these legends to play out their problems, fears, or joys. For him, this "first phase of thinking about the people's own past," which brought about the legends, proceeded "rather naively," and he thinks that this fact puts many historians in despair because they want facts, not "phantastic legends."

For me as a folklorist, here lies one of the main problems. We should not try to explain popular celebrations without looking at the oral traditions that can be found in the areas where those celebrations take place. There often are hidden reasons for events, even if other explanations seem to be more logical. We must not underestimate the power of oral traditions in any community, but in my opinion many scholars do exactly this, and Fuhrmann's example is only one of many that can be cited. Beside narratives, there is a seemingly endless number of beliefs (generally thought of as "superstitions") connected to pre-Lent celebrations. They are as important for a thorough understanding of the history and significance of pre-Lent celebrations as legends, and--as I pointed out earlier in this chapter--Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli's Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens gives us a wealth of information on this point. We also should not forget the old practice of electing mock-kings and scapegoats, with the mock-king as a symbolic ruler who would order the scapegoat, a sacrificial victim, to be driven off

or ritually killed in order to free the world and the people from anything that might scare them, as for example ghosts, the living dead, and the cold season.\textsuperscript{22} The mock-king as well as the scapegoat or festival-fool became (or rather remained) parts of the Shrovetide celebrations: the mock-king is now represented by a whole mock-government (which can be found in many distinct forms, depending on the town where the festival takes place), while the scapegoat, often in the form of a straw dummy (a witch, a bear, a fool, or similar figures), is still ritually destroyed, i.e., burned, buried, hung, or drowned, to drive out winter.\textsuperscript{23}

I said before that too much emphasis seems to be given to the strength of the early Christian Church. The early Church was small in numbers, with single small communities in a very limited area. But the "missionaries" were full of fervor, and they worked tirelessly for the conversion of the pagans. For a long time, several centuries, the Christians lived beside pagans in the same communities, often persecuted, but slowly winning influence in all parts of community life. But the Christian Church was still weak, and many converted Christians in their hearts remained pagans, full of old beliefs which they went on practicing. (The \textit{Dicta Pirminii}, quoted earlier, are a powerful testimony to that.) Even when the Church finally was fully established in Europe, this did not change over night, and the clerics fought bitter struggles against the still flourishing pagan festivals and belief systems. Eventually, the Church understood that it was impossible to get rid of those festivals, and so they were tolerated, and

\textsuperscript{22}These phenomena are treated, for instance, in Welsford's \textit{The Fool: His Social and Literary History} (London, 1935) and in Sir James Frazer's \textit{The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion} (London, 1890).

\textsuperscript{23}More about these events in Part II of this study.
slowly but steadily their meanings changed. Before St. Pirminus ever attacked the paganism in Christians, Pope Gregory in 601 A.D. had expressed an interesting policy:

Let the shrines of idols by no means be destroyed, but let the idols which are in them be destroyed. Let water be consecrated and sprinkled in these temples; let altars be erected, and relics laid upon them, because if these same temples are well built it is necessary that they should be converted from the worship of evil spirits to the service of the true God, so that the people, not seeing their own temples destroyed, may displace error from their hearts, and recognise and adore the true God, meeting in the familiar way at the accustomed places. And because they are wont to sacrifice many oxen to devils, some celebration should be given in exchange for this, as that on the day of dedication, or the nativity of the martyrs whose relics are there deposited; they should build houses out of tree branches round the churches which used to serve as temples, and should celebrate a religious feast, and no longer offer beasts to the devils, but kill cattle, and worship God by their feasting, and give thanks to the donor for their abundance; so that while they still keep outward pleasures, they may more readily receive the spiritual joys.24

The medieval society was built on Christian beliefs and the divine order; the king was king only "through the grace of God"; court-fools emerged and were understood as an antithesis to the king and a warning about mortality, showing how unimportant life on earth was in comparison to the eternal life in God's kingdom—in short, the old meanings and functions automatically left the old fertility festivals and the way was free for Christian explanations. In the meantime, Lent had become an important part of the Christian calendar, and so the old festivals were gathered together and celebrated before the beginning of Lent, a last possibility to dance and sing and eat and drink and so forth before the

long time of abstinence from all worldly pleasures. First traits of social and political criticism emerged through the years, and the old meanings were forgotten. The Protestants after the Reformation would call the festivals "pagan" and "devilish" again, as the early church officials had done, but for them the Catholics as a group were "pagan," i.e., "non-Protestant," with their worship of saints' images, and Luther himself had called the pope "a tool of the Devil." And now, in our time, the meaning of pre-Lent celebrations is still another one (after a short time in which the mythological origins had been stressed again by the Nazis, who could use the festival well for their propaganda). Lent is still there, but it has lost its meaning for many, if not most, Catholics, and Shrovetide and Carnival are now seen as mere expressions of the fun in celebrations, not the last possibility of merrymaking before a long period of abstinence from all worldly pleasures. A trait of the festival that had always played a minor part in the significance of Shrovetide in my opinion is now one of the most important features if one wants to define the impact of Shrovetide on modern people: the world-turned-upside-down, the status reversal. Victor Turner is the main proponent of this theory, and I will come back to it in the next chapter.

To sum this up again: in my opinion, before Shrovetide there were different pagan festivals (fertility and life-death rituals) that used mock-kings and scapegoats to achieve their goals, i.e., to scare ghosts, the living dead, and winter away and to invite spring and awaken the vegetation. Then the Church blended those festivals into one event just before Lent and thus created Shrovetide in its more modern sense. The festival retained its pagan expressions, however with new Christian explanations (ancient
gods and ghosts were now defined as the Evil, the Devil, threatening God's kingdom and the people's salvation). After absorbing many more shaping influences through the centuries, nowadays it seems to be a festival in which people can express their fun in celebrating and leaving the everyday world for a short time, turning the world upside-down and inside-out. After this historical introduction to pre-Lent celebrations, the remainder of this study will be dedicated to Shrovetide as a modern celebration.
CHAPTER II

CELEBRATION AND HUMAN LIFE

Why Do People Celebrate?

The celebration of Fas(t)nacht, Fasching, and Karneval has seen a tremendous revival in the last few years, after it seemed that the festivals had lost much of their power and vitality. One really must wonder where this boom came from, since former reasons to celebrate Shrovetide and Carnival did no longer apply: modern people do neither pray to pagan gods for fertility and the end of winter, nor does the Christian explanation for the phenomenon of pre-Lent celebrations give us a clue. Lent has lost its significance for most Catholics, who do no longer believe that total abstinence from any worldly pleasure is necessary to prepare for Easter. Besides, even the Catholic Church has loosened its formerly strict Lent regulations; and many Catholics even go dancing during Lent, although this was once absolutely forbidden.

Do people just want to keep their old and cherished traditions? I do not believe so. In the eyes of the members of the fools' councils, the celebrations had got so much out of hand that the "pure" traditions, thoroughly researched by the fools' organizations' Brauchtmansmeister, were contorted in ways unacceptable to them. The fools' councils felt the need to strictly regulate the festivals. One example for this is Rottweil, where in 1974 the fools' corporation called
for the systematic cataloguing of all Narrenkleidle ("fools' costumes"). After this, only those costumes could be worn in the parades which after a critical examination had received a certificate and a badge saying Original Rottweiler-Narrenkleid ("Original Rottweil fool's costume"). At the same time, the fools' corporation published rules for the fools' behavior which have to be followed to the letter. Any active fool who misbehaves can be permanently barred from the corporation.25 The keeping of traditions in forms conceived to be "pure" (i.e., accepted by the Brauchtumsmeister as reflections of ancient rituals and traditions) basically has to be "forced" onto the people with the strictest possible regulations, because those traditions have no significance for modern people. In their search for a meaning, people contort imposed contents and traditions, incorporating details from other events, as shown by the ever-present (though fiercely denied) Carnival characteristics in Shrovetide celebration.

This rejection of traditional meanings combined with the ongoing vitality of the festivals makes clear that people celebrate Shrovetide and Carnival—as well as any other festival, by the way—for reasons that reflect the modern world. Celebration defines human life. People strive for a balance between their urge for classification, structure, and regulation on the one hand and their urge for chaos, irregularity, and misrule on the other hand. These polarities of the human condition are expressed through the order and disorder that are parts of any celebration.

According to Frank E. Manning, celebration in general has

four main features: (1) celebration as **performance**, giving a
dramatic presentation of cultural symbols; (2) celebration as
**entertainment**, stressing fun and enjoyment; (3) celebration
as a **public event**, enabling people to enact and socialize
personal meanings; and (4) celebration as a **participatory
event**, actively involving people in what is going on instead
of being just show. For Manning, celebration works in two
modes, namely **play** and **ritual**. Play, he says, inverts the
social order and has a tendency toward license, while ritual
confirms the social order and tends to be regulated.26

Shrovetide and Carnival, like any festival, contain
both play and ritual to a high degree, and they receive their
immense power and vitality from the resulting tension.
However, pre-Lent celebrations make stronger use of this
tension than other festivals: they renounce the social order
and elevate chaos, disorder, and misrule, outwardly presented
through the establishment of fools' governments which
actually strip the real government of its power for six days;
but from within, the festivals are highly structured and
regulated by the fools' corporations, presenting a mirror of
precisely the order that they seem to reject. Carnivals with
their unique mock-governments were always seen as a form of
rebellion or threat (against State or Church) that had to be
suppressed, and their history can be traced through centuries
of prohibitions. However, contrary to other events in
similar circumstances, they survived it all and are as strong
as ever today. (I think that one needs to experience
Carnival to understand and appreciate this insider's
statement. I can imagine critics saying that all festivals

in *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural
Performance* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press,
renounce the social order. Perhaps they do, but not to the same degree as pre-Lent celebrations.) I firmly believe that pre-Lent celebrations go further than any other festival in renouncing the social order. No other festival that I know of has encountered as much controversy as carnivalesque events have met throughout their history, controversy springing from many rulers' continuous fears of anarchy allegedly expressed in the festivals. During celebration, people play with social roles and rules, but they intensify them through a temporary stylization and inversion. Playing is an instinctive desire felt by all humans. It relieves anxieties and defines humanness through the pleasure that play with its contrasting elements of human forms of expression and human relationships brings. Inversion, i.e., the reversal of binary oppositions, is another deeply rooted human desire (and therefore present in most celebrations). Inversion breaks social and cultural rules and allows people to be somebody or something else—or actually themselves. Hidden identities can come to the surface, at least for the length of the festive time, and although those hidden identities have to be forsaken again once the celebration has come to an end, the people will still cherish the memory of their "freedom" and accept again the reestablished rules of everyday life. Again: play and inversion are basic traits of almost any (folk) festival. However, in my opinion pre-Lent celebrations contain these traits in more intense and explicit forms than other festivals.

The Appeal of an Upside-Down World

Pre-Lent celebrations as expressions of status reversal. Carnivalesque celebrations turn the everyday
world upside-down, and normal binary oppositions are reversed (as, for instance, the male-female relationship, i.e., men disguise as women while women disguise as men, and so forth). The denial of structure and the reversal of oppositions are basic elements during rites of passage, used by many cultures to lead their young members into a new phase of life. Rites of passage and carnivalesque celebrations in this sense have much in common. Turner repeatedly points out that according to Arnold van Gennep's study *The Rites of Passage* all rites of passage or "transitions" are marked by three phases: (1) the separation phase, in which the individual or group is detached from the social structure and/or cultural conditions; (2) the liminal period or margin, during which the ritual subject is ambiguous, i.e., passing through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or the coming state; and (3) the reaggregation or reincorporation phase, marking the achievement of a (relatively) stable state, i.e., the ritual subject receives rights and obligations of a clearly defined "structural" type and is expected to behave in accordance with the society's norms and the ethical standards in his or her social structure.

Liminal personae or "threshold people" slip through the network of classifications under normal conditions. They stand outside of positions assigned by law, custom, convention, and so forth. Liminal personae tend to develop intense comradeship and egalitarianism— the secular

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distinctions of rank and status disappear. They experience the confrontation with a generalized social bond that for the moment has ceased to be, and two major social models are put into opposition: (1) the model of society as a structured, differentiated, and hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions which separates people in terms of "more" and "less"; and (2) the model of an unstructured or only rudimentarily structured, relatively undifferentiated communitas.

According to Turner, putting people through a liminal or marginal period before letting them move on to the next level of social positions centers on the idea that superiority would not exist without inferiority. Therefore, a person who is or will be superior must first experience what it is like to be inferior. Turner says:

"We find social relationships simplified while myth and ritual are elaborated. That this is so is really quite simple to understand: if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs."

The "scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture" during carnivalesque celebrations seems to be a central point of utmost importance. For the moment, let me just make the statement that carnivalesque events define and reaffirm the values of a culture, while at the same time they criticize, question, and parody them. I will elaborate on this statement at a later point in this section.

Turner discusses two types of rituals: (1) rituals of status elevation which elevate people from low to high in institutionalized systems; and (2) rituals of status reversal.

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which according to him occur often in cyclical or calendrical rituals. Rituals of status reversal are collective, and people or groups of low status exercise ritual authority over their superiors, while the superiors must endure the ritual degradation. Turner's explanation only partly defines today's carnivalesque events. In my opinion, social positions and status roles are not only reversed but totally invalidated for the time of the celebration. In modern-day Shrovetide and Carnival, high-low conflicts are not the core of the event; social ranks do no longer exist; all people are equal—not only the "liminal personae," but the whole society. This was somewhat different in the Middle Ages. As far as the medieval (and earlier) celebrations are concerned, I would agree with Turner: then, status reversal, not status invalidation, was the core of the celebrations. The high-ranking did lower themselves to their inferiors' level; lords for a short time became servants and servants became lords. Other examples for this type of celebration are the ancient Roman Saturnalia, where the lords lowered themselves to servants while their servants became masters; or the medieval Feasts of Fools with their election of mock-popes and mock-bishops who actually ruled the churches for the duration of the celebration. Conversely, today's "Carnival equality" is expressed through the use of the informal address du instead of the formal Sie for everyone, known or unknown, friend or stranger. (Only family members, children, and close friends are generally addressed with the informal du in German. Strangers and people of higher rank are always addressed with the formal Sie, and even good acquaintances, people who have known each other for years, often prefer the formal address to the informal one. Therefore, the general du during Shrovetide and Carnival has a high significance for Germans.)
It is true that during pre-Lent celebrations, or more exactly during the six days before Ash Wednesday (the so-called *höhe Zeit* or "great time"), mock-governments "rule" the communities. However, those mock-governments are not reflections of higher rank, imposing rules and regulations in the real sense; they only are an expression of the special rules during a special festive time, confirmed and readily accepted by all, including the "overthrown" governments.

Although the celebrations are no longer status reversals as defined by Turner (and many other scholars, by the way), they depend on inversions and reversals. Carnivalesque events are opportunities to reverse everyday binary oppositions, and the most visible of those is the role reversal between men and women. Long before women were allowed to actively participate in pre-Lent celebrations, men would put on women's clothes, and nowadays, with the participation of women as a normal feature, women enjoy dressing up as men, while both enjoy dressing as "sex-less" figures (many fool figures cannot be categorized as "male" or "female," but they seem to be "neutral"). Viacheslav Ivanov compares this inversion of the opposition male/female with a part of the Ainu mythology and with a phenomenon found in Bantu tribes. 29 According to the Ainu belief system

... at the beginning of the universe phenomena were reverse of those known today. Thus, the Ainu were small in size; men, instead of women, menstruated; and locations of the sea and mountains were reversed. The Ainu have been told by the deities through shamans that the state of phenomena will be reversed again at the end of the universe.

Bantu people perform the inversion of male/female roles whenever danger is imminent. The welfare of the tribe

is restored through those who are "normally beneath the battle for jural and political status." This concept of the role of the "inferior," according to Ivanov, corresponds to the image of Carnival as expressed in Victor Turner's studies, as well as in Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*. Transvestism is understood as a "ritual neutralization of semiotically significant oppositions," as for instance the male-female relationship, and besides neutralizing the male-female opposition, it reverses the relationship, so that men act as women and women act as men for a certain period of time. Here again I would say that the image of the "role of the inferior" does no longer correspond to modern-day pre-Lent celebrations, at least as far as Germany (and Europe in general) is concerned. The reversal of the male-female relationship is now just that: a reversal of a relationship, not a reversal of status. I am almost sure that Carnivals in many other countries still depend on the image of high versus low—expressing this, for instance, through the reversal of the male-female relationship, with the male being regarded as superior and the female as inferior—but in Europe, the superior-inferior dichotomy has lost its significance.

**The motivation for the celebration of Shrovetide and Carnival.** The three main types of pre-Lent celebrations in Germany, *Fastnacht*, *Fasching*, and *Karneval*, nowadays can be seen as one single phenomenon, independent from their historical developments. It is true that the outward appearance is very different and distinct (and I will come back to this in later sections dealing with disguise), but "inside" all three types of celebrations are now guided by the principles already introduced: fun in play, in
celebration with like-minded people, in the reversal of roles, and in parody. As I said before, pre-Lent celebrations have survived a history of struggles and threats. People who felt they were rational, seeing themselves in contrast to those who celebrated Shrovetide and Carnival, always fought against the irrationality of the festivals and their participants, because they were afraid of and felt threatened by the festivals' strength. The celebrations functioned as a valve to let off pressure and frustrations. This function of Shrovetide as a pressure relief valve was especially clear in the Fastnachtsspiel ("Shrovetide play") of the sixteenth century, plays which can be seen as the starting point of the secular drama in the German-speaking countries (especially parts of Austria, southern and central Germany). The plays were often extremely obscene and gave some compensation for the strict moral code of the era. Of course, all kinds of moralists saw a threat to God's world order through the fools' licentiousness. Later Carnival opponents thought that the political order was threatened because of the temporary emancipation of the common people. When for example in 1794 Cologne surrendered to the French, the new city commander forbade Carnival activities for the following year because he feared riots and rebellions by people hidden behind masks. Shrovetide and Carnival survived all those problems and every time seemed to come out stronger than before.

Pre-Lent celebrations, considered as a threat to the everyday order (e.g., the social, moral, and political order) always functioned as a reaction to the people's daily frustrations. Shrovetide and Carnival cannot be understood apart from the everyday world; they must be seen in their relationship to everyday life, not as an escape from it. I
think that this marks the distinction of pre-Lent celebrations from other festivals throughout the year. In my opinion, the "average" festival does not try to deal or cope with everyday life, but escapes from life for a short time. Shrovetide and Carnival, however, define everyday life through a very intense reaction to and cooperation with it. Festivals in general can be understood without a look at everyday conditions. Shrovetide and Carnival need everyday life and therefore cannot be understood without it. An out-of-town visitor will be able to enjoy any type of festival without knowing what it is all about. Experiencing the town's festive spirit is enough to give anyone the feeling of being part of it. But the same out-of-town visitor will be at a loss if he or she happens to witness a Shrovetide or Carnival event without some knowledge of the town's history, society, culture, politics--in short, the town's everyday life. Throughout the years, I have met many people, "outsiders," who came to see Shrovetide parades and other related events. Quite generally, they reacted with bewilderment. For them, the celebrations were weird and plainly strange, and they never managed to understand what was going on and why the local people enjoyed themselves so much. But without this understanding, they were not able to really enjoy the events. However, I have never had this same experience during other festivals, as, for example, the big historical festival that goes on in my hometown every summer. Out-of-town visitors flock to Biberach/Riß in great numbers to see the parades and take part in other events during the eight days of festivities, and they never ask the local people, "Why in the world are you doing this?" During Shrovetide, however, one can hear this question all the time.
Modern scholarship mostly overlooks this phenomenon and its importance, i.e., Shrovetide and Carnival's projection of everyday life versus other festivals' escape from life. Many Shrovetide scholars put the people's reactions to everyday life into a historical frame, i.e., they are not treated as actual, current signs. The fools' criticism of their everyday world is seen as something remote, without a connection to modern, contemporary life. However, the question here is whether the boom currently enjoyed by pre-Lent celebrations does not really come from the people's growing dissatisfaction with their lives. I agree with Werner Mezger when he requests that modern Shrovetide scholarship must be actualized. However, I differ from his opinion insofar as I think that Shrovetide and Carnival must be treated not only as actual (as he demands), but also as historical phenomena. Without their historical development, the festivals would not be what they are; they were strongly shaped by many influences from many historical time periods. Nevertheless, without a look at their actual meaning, pre-Lent celebrations will lose their motivation, legitimation, and vitality. The connection of history and actuality will assure the festivals' continuous uniqueness, saving them from either the fate of a meaningless tradition or the fate of becoming a likewise meaningless "elaborate party" to be exploited by everybody without a deeper comprehension.

The motif of the power struggle between Shrovetide and everyday life is a vital and important part of the celebrations. The fools assault and take over the city halls; the authorities (i.e., the mayors and the city councils) are symbolically overthrown, and the fools form a fools' or mock-government; the children are freed from
school—everyday order must submit to the fools' ideas of order and regulation. During the six main days of Shrovetide which are called die hohe Zeit ("the great time")—the six main days being the six days before Ash Wednesday—the fools live in an alternative social and political order. This alternative order stands in direct relation and opposition to everyday life, and it represents the fools' reaction to the common conditions. This time of a world upside-down is perceived as plainly foolish by rationalists who do not see its vitality and inherent criticism. Others see it as a threat—a threat, for instance, to the Christian or any other moral standards, or to political standards that are inhuman, as in dictatorships—and want to abolish it with all means. Still others, like Victor Turner and his followers, only stress the reversal of (social) status—mostly expressed through disguise and masking—with a clearly defined, often even violent, dominance of the inferior people over their superiors.

Actually, Shrovetide and Carnival are much more complex, and, in spite of their outward folly and craziness, they are rather serious events. In our modern world we are under permanent social stress. Our social order is no longer rigid and strict, but constantly fluctuating. We may try to change our social status through our own efforts. Exactly this opportunity puts us under stress: we constantly strive for a better life, which means, among other things, a higher social status. Werner Mezger presents an interesting comparison: a child that finds him- or herself in a complicated or embarrassing social situation handles this embarrassment by "hiding" behind his or her hands. At the

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30Jürgen Hohl, a well-known folklorist and ardent participant in Fasnacht, told me that d'Fasnet isch a ernachte Sach (Swabian dialect, "Shrovetide is a serious affair").
same time, the child will peep through his or her fingers. This allows the child to stay in the situation, but with a new identity.31

A basic trait of Shrovetide or Carnival is that people give up their old identity to take on a different role. Giving up old identities helps people search for the world, not escape from it, and thus they can confront life under new circumstances. The means people use to reach new identities are above all disguise and masking. Substance abuse, particularly excessive drinking as well as spontaneous love affairs (often adultery) are other ways of reaching a new identity. Although these phenomena do occur in Shrovetide (or Carnival), they are not dominant, leaving the emphasis on disguise for role-play. This stands in sharp contrast to most other festivals (at least as far as Germany is concerned), where a new, festive identity almost always is reached or intensified through things other than disguise, i.e., especially alcohol abuse. For many Germans, relaxed social interaction is rather difficult to achieve, and alcohol helps loosen tensions, anxieties, and people's tongues. In Shrovetide and Carnival, alcohol is replaced by disguise.

Shrovetide and Carnival help people examine and define their lives and their social, cultural, and political values. Disguise and masking during pre-Lent celebrations also help people to simplify social interaction. After the celebrations, life will go on as before, but there is a good chance that something from the festival will be taken into everyday life, as, for instance, a new-found friendship or a deepened appreciation of one's community with its values.

31Werner Mezger, "Fasnacht, Fasching und Karneval als soziales Rollenexperiment," p. 211.
Although Shrovetide and Carnival seem to represent anarchy and pure folly, they are the opposite: they support political systems by using a democracy's privilege to criticize and parody life and social and legal institutions, thereby defining them and making them more easily acceptable for the people. They open people's eyes for the flaws as well as the good things in their society's system. The festivals today profit a lot from what the German Shrovetide scholars call their "psycho-hygienical function," i.e., the possibility to let off frustrations in a playful setting. And exactly this psycho-hygienical function, the opportunity to cope with life through celebration, is the common motivation for all types of pre-Lent celebrations--whether we call them Fas(t)nacht, Fasching, or Karneval--as well as many other festivals. Pre-Lent celebrations have much in common with other folk festivals, as many of their underlying characteristics can be applied to all celebrations. Nevertheless, in my opinion they have two unique traits, namely (1) the establishment of fools' governments, which are accepted by the real authorities, and (2) the replacement of alcohol as a "social booster" by masks and disguise for simplified social interaction and total equality.
CHAPTER III

MASKS AND COSTUMES

The Significance of Masking and Disguise

Masks have utmost significance for Shrovetide fools. Masks make people unknown and strange, and they seal the transformation of identity so important for Shrovetide. Without masks, Shrovetide would not be what it is today.

Some historical background is necessary to understand Shrovetide masks. Thus, I will first present the history, functions, and meanings of masks in general, before moving on to Shrovetide masks.

The meaning of masks. Most human cultures and societies know masks, because their use originates in instinctive beliefs common to all people. Masks seem to be almost as old as humankind, and from their earliest use, they were designed to represent something: ancestors, deities, demons and other supernatural beings, the souls of the dead, spirits of good and evil, spirits of nature, of animals, of crops, of rain, of disease, of drought, of fertility, of abundance, and of death. Besides these masks, which played (and in parts of the world still play) a vital role in community rituals, there are funeral masks, as well as war masks and masks for spectacles (i.e., theater masks and carnival masks).\(^\text{32}\)

\(^{32}\)I am not concerned with funeral and war masks, as they had no influence on Shrovetide masks. --Theater masks are no longer used in the Western
The origins of the word "mask" are not entirely clear. However, the Greek word prósōpon ("face") and the Latin word persona ("mask") were replaced by the Italian maschera. German Maske, French masque, and eventually English mask, all of which supposedly derive from Late Latin masca, maschera, māscus and probably Arabic maskharah. The Latin masca, like prósōpon or persona, had a double meaning, but instead of "mask" and "manifested character" (the two meanings of prósōpon and persona), it meant "mask" and "evil spirit, witch, demon." It seems that the Christian church preferred the second meaning of masca (i.e., "evil spirit") to that of prósōpon or persona (i.e., "manifested world (except in revivals of the Italian commedia dell'arte), however, in Germany the actor/actress macht Maske ("makes mask," i.e., applies make-up), helped by the Maskenbildner ("mask builder," i.e., the make-up artist). It is interesting to note that in German studies the Arabic word generally is transcribed as mashara, not maskharah, and this seems to lead many scholars to believe that the Arabic word (which literally means "buffoon") cannot be the ancestor of Maske (or mask, and so forth). The Swiss mask scholar Karl Meuli stated that the Arabic word could not be the root of the German, French, or Langobardic words. I would also include the English mask here. (Meuli mentioned Langobardic because the word masca appears in a Langobardic legal work of the seventh century.) All these mentioned languages, however, know words very close to the Late Latin masca. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that the Arabic word is a root, for example of the Italian maschera, as well as of some German dialect words, like, for instance, the Austrian Maschgera and the Swabian Mäschgerle (both of which, by the way, mean the whole character which is represented through mask and dress). Wilhelm Kutter drew an interesting conclusion (see "Schwäbisch-alemannische Masken: Versuch einer Deutung und Typologie," in Der Weiβe Turm IV (1) (1961): 7-13). On page 8 he says that already in the early Middle Ages, the Langobardic masca meant as much as "mask" (Maske) and also "mesh, net" (Masche, Netz). The primary meaning of masca was "evil spirit," a spirit who would attack living people. Masca was a Wiedergänger, i.e., a person who had died but could not find eternal peace and therefore had to come back to earth to haunt the living (the closest English word, I suppose, is "ghost"). That dead person had been wrapped into a net in order to prevent him or her from coming back to the world. The custom of wrapping bodies into nets existed for many centuries. Kutter concludes that, before knowing the word Maske, people used Masche, i.e., the net into which the dead were wrapped, but in time it came to mean the dead him- or herself who wanted to come back, i.e., an evil spirit. Finally, the word came to mean a person who, hidden behind a net (or mask), only represented such a spirit, and the more recent usage defines Maske only as the actual object behind which a face disappears. An exception is the usage by some Swabian dialect speakers as explained in Note 36.
character"). The concept of the latter two was altered and consequently concretized to mean what we now understand when we hear or say person (a word which exists, with the same meaning, in most European languages). An explanation for this could be the following: the Christian doctrine does not approve of masks, and for the early Church, they were just another manifestation of pagan customs. For Christians, the representation of gods by humans is a blasphemy, and the removable "face" makes no sense in the presence of an omnipotent God. Christians cannot accept the belief in any god figure but the Holy Trinity, and they never could tolerate the fact that for non-Christians masked people were real representations of the gods and spirits they believed in. Out of this thinking resulted the Church's attempt to forbid the wearing of masks, but as this failed to succeed, the clergy grudgingly allowed some masks, though only after having altered their meaning, i.e., what they stood for. Masks all of a sudden depicted not gods and demons, but the devil and sin, and it just seems that the double meaning of masca supported the Church's interpretation sufficiently. As a consequence, the old meanings of prósōpon and persona disappeared as they had lost their place in the Christian language.

The European mask tradition must be very old indeed--it certainly had its beginnings in palaeolithic times--but its original significance survived only up to the beginning of the Christian era. Christianity incorporated many of the ancient customs and ideas into its own traditions, but it changed their meaning, so that the continuity was broken, the contents of ancient myths were turned upside down, old fertility gods changed to devils and goddesses to witches. Only in remote regions, in alpine valleys and in some district of Poland and Moravia, do remnants of the old concepts still persist in folk art and ancient mask-traditions. Christianity suppressed the old gods and the ancient beliefs and gave to occidental thinking an entirely new direction.
but the powers of the subconscious were no longer encouraged to flower, and a certain degree of compromise between various psychic levels, achieved by primitive cultures, and Shamanism in particular, ceased to operate. In order that the bright, conscious mind could reign, the dark forces of the subconscious were repressed and turned into demons.35

One needs to know a specific mask's function—besides what it represents—in order to understand its full meaning. Two functions seem to lie at the bottom of Shrovetide masking: the wish to (1) "impersonate and identify with certain supernatural beings in order to effect some individual or communal good, for instance, fertility (e.g., fecundity of domestic and game animals and of women and crops)," and (2) "criticize, and thereby control or alleviate, social wrongs by terrorizing wrongdoers or, by satire and buffoonery, ridiculing them."36 In my opinion, function (1) can be mainly associated with the ancient winter and spring festivals, i.e., Shrovetide's ancestors, while function (2) partly helps to define what Shrovetide means today.

**Masks in Europe.** Events dominated by masked people once could be found all over Europe, particularly between the winter solstice (December 21) and the summer solstice (June 21). This period had high significance for our ancestors, mainly because of two reasons: the first period after the winter solstice was considered a particularly dangerous time in the year, and after that dangerous time had passed, new life appeared.

From earliest times, the period around the winter solstice was considered dangerous because it was then that the supernatural world was believed to be unleashed. The


36 Functions quoted from *Encyclopaedia of World Art*, 1964, s.v. "Masks."
souls of the dead returned from beyond the grave to punish the misdeeds of the living or to bring good luck. For thousands of years, this period was chosen as a time for ritualistic masquerade. By assuming the forms of demons and the ghosts of their ancestors, people kept in contact with the supernatural world and at the same time, through their sinister behavior, they managed to intimidate the other members of their communities. They tried to prevent the souls of the dead or other evil spirits from doing harm, but they also tried to win the spirits' favor. This period lies roughly between what we now know as Christmas and Epiphany (January 6), i.e., the "Twelve Nights." This never excluded a few events from occurring as early as the night between December 5 and 6, or all through January, until February 2 (Candlemas).

The following period was the one to bring life and light back to earth, making people forget the threat of the dark spirits. As I pointed out before, a wealth of spring festivals took place all over Europe, festivals in honor of vegetation deities, during which people prayed and sacrificed to ensure fertility and a good harvest. But first of all, winter, i.e., Evil had to be driven away. Many ritualistic events took place to ensure fertility for women, livestock, and crops. People wearing ugly, terrifying masks (to represent winter and evil spirits) made loud noises with bells, jingles, whips, rattles, and similar "instruments"; they moved in certain rhythmic patterns; and they either did not speak at all or only in a high falsetto. The noises were supposed to scare the Evil away, the rhythmic movements were

37 The belief that the dead reappear in some way to guide their living relatives through life or troubled times has not died out in the world's folklore; see, for instance, Jane Beck's essay "'Dream Messages' from the Dead," in Journal of the Folklore Institute 10 (1973): 173-186.
supposed to invite the Good, and the silence as well as the falsetto voices represented the supernatural. Shrovetide figures, like their ancestors, do not want to be known by their voices, as they have assumed a new identity with their masks and costumes. This means that every Shrovetide fool—if speaking at all—disguises his or her voice as much as possible, and speaking in a high falsetto is still a very popular means to achieve that end. Furthermore, noise-creating instruments as well as all kinds of rhythmic movements are essential "tools" for every fool.

However, what have all those mask seasons got to do with Shrovetide? Wilhelm Kutter says that the pre-Shrovetide mask figures (the winter festival masks) had their origin and sense in the souls of the dead, while the post-Shrovetide mask figures (the spring festival masks) were rooted in the struggle between winter and summer. Shrovetide, according to Kutter, unites both cultic traits. He is only partly correct, though. In my opinion, it is wrong to speak about the festivals in terms of our Christian calendar, convenient as it may be. Kutter, however, was a firm believer in the idea that Fasnacht always existed, exactly like the winter and spring festivals. Therefore, for him it was logical to conclude that Shrovetide united the cultic traits of winter and spring festivals just because it lay in between the two. This is not correct. Fasnacht did not exist alongside the pagan festivals. Fasnacht as we know it presents a conscious combination of the two types of festivals with many of their cultic traits into one event, sanctioned by the Christian Church.

The festivals that the Church did not approve of in its early times actually were not what we now call

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"Shrovetide." They were descendants of the ancient, pagan winter and spring festivals, using the ancient ritualistic concepts. Through the Church's interference, the old spring festivals were modified into Christian festivals like Easter and Whitsuntide and so forth. The winter festivals fared no better; they also either disappeared or were modified to become Christian festivals, such as St. Nicholas, Christmas, Epiphany, and so forth. Some of the winter festivals survived, but only in very remote, hard-to-reach areas. Therefore, in Austria to this day the Perchten still go around during the Twelve Nights. But this is an exception, not the rule, at least regarding Western Europe. The Church had started to determine the "festival calendar" in the Christian world, and almost nothing could stop the zealous clergy. However, the people would not let go of their old festivals so easily and, as it was convenient and fit the Christian calendar very well, the Church invented pre-Lent celebrations as a substitute for the much loved winter and spring festivals.

Those old festivals had always been quite "wild," and the clergy understood very well that it would help them control the people to a high degree if they allowed them to be "beside themselves" for some days during the then very rigid church year. And which time could have been better suited for that than the days before the extremely austere Lent period? The people were happy because they were allowed

39Some notes: Easter, for instance, had been a festival to honor the goddess Ostera. Christmas in ancient times was known as Yuletide. Epiphany, the day when according to Christian belief the Three Kings came to see the baby Jesus in the manger, had been the last of the Twelve Nights during which the supernatural forces had been unleashed. This list of pagan-turned-Christian festivals could go on and on.--The American figure of Santa Claus, by the way, is not known in most parts of Europe. In Germany, for example, St. Nicholas, dressed as a bishop and accompanied by a grim Knecht Ruprecht, gives presents to children on the evening of December 5, while the Christchild brings the Christmas presents on December 24, Christmas Eve.
to keep their old customs (at least to a certain degree); the Church was happy because all was now under control; and after a short time, the people actually believed that this festival always had been meant to be a last wild time before Lent, a time to celebrate before the time to repent. And so the old masks and customs had finally lost their meanings, and new concepts had to be introduced. The old concepts were replaced by Christian concepts, such as devil, sin, the Kingdom Come, repentance, and so forth).

Scholars like Dietz-Rüdiger Moser and Werner Mezger are somewhat right with their Christian explanations of Shrovetide, however, they have too narrow a view if they want to negate the impact of the festivals' ancestors. Equally short-sighted are the scholars who put Shrovetide in a row with pagan cults, saying that the Church only picked up an already existing festival, just altering it a bit. In my opinion, Shrovetide unites both cultic characteristics of winter and spring rituals not because it lies in between, but because the Church consciously put it between winter and spring, thereby uniting the two. And here we see that Shrovetide is both Fasnacht and Fastnacht: Fasnacht because it does include the old cults, no doubt about it, and Fastnacht because the old concepts were undeniably altered and newly defined by the Church.\textsuperscript{40}

It is interesting that the Church allowed the use of masks representing pagan gods and spirits, although this does not fit into its doctrine, which denies the existence of any spiritual beings except the Holy Trinity, the Christian saints, the angels, and the Devil. But by altering the whole meaning of the events and masks from pagan to Christian, the

\textsuperscript{40}The difference between the two German terms is explained in the Introduction.
gods and spirits became symbols for devils and sin and vanity, and it is acceptable for Christians to believe in all these things. (The medieval Church even could use these symbols so well for its own advantage that they were included—as statues or sculptures or in paintings—in every newly built church, and to this day, the faithful can see what they have to guard against whenever they look at an old church.)

This brings me back to my topic: the masks. Throughout history, masks have taken their wearers out of actual time and life, transforming them into somebody else. Through the mask, the new person can criticize without being held responsible, and he or she can behave in a way not possible in everyday life. The transformation into a "festival person" with a totally different identity is more complete in Shrovetide than in any festival that does not know the use of masks, because the factor of being unknown to everybody cannot be overestimated; it helps release a different and very distinctive new self, an image very distinct from an alcohol-induced change of personality. Mask wearers are virtually unknown to everybody as long as they wear masks, and not even their fellow maskers recognize them. Hiding behind a face mask produces tension and makes it possible to play with one's environment and even with social rivals. One more thing is quite important and strongly played out during Shrovetide: during the masquerade, the sex of the maskers is concealed, and so the sexes can (and do) reverse roles, i.e., during Shrovetide everyday opposites are neutralized, while the sexes are totally equal, even if only for a short time. Of course, a lot of confusion can result from this as well: about ten years ago, after my family had watched a Narrensprung in Bad Waldsee, we saw a "lonely" Schrättele walking along the street. The figure was wearing
"its" mask, but as "it" was not very tall and rather dainty, my brother Andreas thought that "it" was a "she" and started cooing at "her." (Schrättele coo, they usually do not talk.) Hearing the sound, the Schrättle came running toward us, but instead of hugging my brother, "it" hugged me. Andreas thought that "she" was making fun of him, but when my mother cried, "Oh my god, watch those glasses!" (I wore glasses at the time), a distinctly male voice said, "I see those glasses very well." My brother certainly was disappointed!

**The costumes.** Much the same can be said about the costumes that I already said about the masks. The costumes developed along with the masks, but their importance naturally was never as high as that of the masks, because they only complement the total transformation made possible by the masks. Scholars who embrace the monocausal Christian Shrovetide theory maintain that all the patterns and accessories considered symbols of fertility by so many people really are Christian symbols for devil, sin, vanity, and so forth. Here again I must say that the Church merely altered the meanings of the ancient, existing symbols (for instance, foxtails, which are often worn on the mask, once were considered a symbol for fertility, but the Church determined that they are a symbol for vanity; white fabrics were supposed to symbolize the souls of the dead or burial clothes, but the Church changed the meaning to being free of sin; and so forth). Of course, some new Christian symbols as well as fashion elements from several periods were included, and the same is true for the masks. But the bottom line is that paganism and Christianity peacefully coexist in Shrovetide (as much as in other Christian holidays, as already mentioned).
I said above that the mask is more important than the costume in changing the wearer into a new person. This is only true for Fasnacht, though: Karneval does not know wooden masks, and other types of masks are worn very rarely. Thus, the Karneval fool totally depends on his or her costume and maybe some make-up to make a statement about his or her changed personality. The two different disguises are known as total versus partial disguise, and I will come back to this phenomenon in the last chapter of this study.

I will now introduce some Shrovetide masks, costumes, and fool figures. This following part shall only describe, rather than try to determine the exact history, development, and meaning of every mask and costume. That task should be reserved for another study. The general observations I made about masks and costumes should suffice to understand the following descriptions.
Types of Disguise: Masks

In this section, I will describe the general features of the masks that are used in Shrovetide. Most masks that we know today have been made after 1700. Only a few old masks have survived and can still be seen in museums. Most of them have the terrifying traits that generally are thought to be remnants of pagan cults and nowadays can only be found in some remote areas of, for example, Austria, Switzerland, and the Black Forest. Most of today's masks do not show really terrifying characteristics. Instead, through time they have been greatly influenced by the Italian Renaissance with its theater fashions and masquerade balls, the late Rococo, and the first decades of the nineteenth century, and thus they have achieved a certain degree of "sweetness"—more or less sweetness, of course, depending on what type of mask we are talking about. Nevertheless, demonic masks that have been created in recent years tend to show again many of the terrifying traits of the old masks, as, for instance, the mask of the Biberhex from Biberach/Riß.

Masks can be created in several different ways, but the most important are wooden masks. They are hand-carved from linden-wood, then primed, smoothed, stained, and finally varnished for sheen (Fig. 2). Besides being very beautiful, these wooden masks are very valuable. There are two main types, the beautiful ones and the ugly ones (parallel to the Austrian Schikanperchten—"beautiful Perchten"—and the Schiachperchten—"ugly Perchten").

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41 In the following two sections, I will mention some figures and include pictures without further description; other figures will be mentioned, with or without picture, and then described more thoroughly in "Some Shrovetide figures."
Fig. 2 Masks in Different States of Production
The beautiful masks are generally known as **Glattlarven** ("smooth masks"). These smooth masks are always stained in light to medium browns, as well as yellowish and white tones. They almost always have very friendly facial expressions; only some of them are mit Biß ("with bite"), i.e., the teeth are shown, however, without looking scary. The figures wearing smooth masks generally are friendly, helping the people or teasing them in a funny way, like the **Faselhannes** from Bad Waldsee; or they can be all kinds of unhappy ghosts, ghosts who might be somewhat mischievous, but do not really want to harm people, like, for instance, the **Schloßgeist** from Mittelbiberach (Fig. 3), the **Reutibachgeist** from Uttenweiler, or the **Lauratalgeist** from Weingarten.

The ugly mask types are nowadays dominated by the witches, although not one of the witch masks known today was created before 1930. The witches are extremely popular, both with the participating fools and with the visitors, and one of the reasons is that the witches are allowed to be much more active during events, especially during parades, than most other masks (each mask according to the rules has to move and behave in a way which fits the type that is represented). Thus, the witches with their popularity have taken over the field of the evil ghosts, devils, and demons. Scholars do not know whether the Shrovetide witch figure has its roots in the medieval witchcraft or in the even older legends about the Wild Women and Wild Men.\(^{43}\) My favorite witch figure is the **Schrättele** from Bad Waldsee (Fig. 4). Although understood as a witch, this mask supposedly has its roots in the figure of the **Waldschrat** ("forest-sprite"), a malicious and mischievous little character who haunts and

\(^{43}\)Wild Women and Wild Men once were popular Shrovetide figures, and they still can be found in parts of Austria, for example. In Southwest Germany, however, they have all but disappeared.
Fig. 4 Face Mask of a Schrättele from Bad Waldsee
teases people who have to travel through the woods. The mask actually has a malicious and a funny side, i.e., an evil and a wily eye. As a comparison, the Jordanhexe from Bergatreute (Fig. 5) or the Eckhexe from Aulendorf (Fig. 6) show the general traits of the witch figure. Besides witches, the ugly mask type includes devils and demons, as, for instance, this Dämon from Ehingen (Fig. 7), as well as many of the Springnarren ("jumping fools"), like the Federahannes from Bad Waldsee.

Many of the animal figures have wooden masks, too. There are all kinds of bear, fox, horse, goat, sheep, pig, and cat faces. Bats, birds, fish, and even a red spider can be seen. I want to show two examples here: the Böcke from Stetten am Kalten Markt, shown with their shepherd (Fig. 8), and the Katze from Leutkirch (Fig. 9).

Besides wood, there are several other materials to create masks. One possibility is the use of fabric, as used by the Binsengeister from Lindau (Fig. 10), or the Wusele from Munderkingen (Fig. 11). Another mask that is made from fabric is the mask of the Seegockel from Friedrichshafen.

Fur and leather masks have basically died out, but they once were very popular. Hairy beardmasks are mostly worn by the fools' policemen. A last major possibility to create a mask is make-up, either in different colors to, for example, imitate the looks of the wooden masks (children whose parents are active fools often wear the same costumes as their parents, while their faces are made up in this way—they are not allowed to wear wooden masks before age sixteen), or in simple black (often soot instead of black make-up) or white (often flour or clown make-up).
Fig. 5 Jordanhexen from Bergatreute
Fig. 7 Face Mask of a Diamon from Ehingen/Donau
Fig. 8 Böcke With Their Shepherd from Stetten am Kalten Markt
Fig. 9. Katzen from Leutkirch
Fig. 10  Binsengeist With the Banner of the Narrenzunft Lindau
Types of Disguise: Costumes

The costume complements the mask, as I have said before. It is the mask that determines the figure, but the costume makes the image complete. Every Shrovetide fool will cover his or her body so that not even the smallest piece of bare skin can be seen. Therefore, the costume consists of more than just trousers or skirt and blouse or jacket. It includes headdresses of all sorts that cover the back of the head and are fastened to the masks, as well as gloves and certain types of shoes. Most fools also carry some type of accessory, such as umbrellas, rattles, bells, whips, fools’ books (Narrenbuch), fools’ sausages (Narrenwurst), candy baskets, pigs’ bladders (Saubloder), and many more. I will describe some of them in the next section.

In ancient times, costumes most likely were made from natural materials, such as moss, furs, grass, straw, and so forth. Some figures clad in straw still exist, like, for instance, the Strohbräuer from Wilflingen ("straw bear") (Fig. 12). The Strohbräuer is a so-called Einzelfigur ("single figure"), i.e., only one person disguises as the Strohbräuer, contrary to the Gruppenmasken ("group masks or figures"), which appear in large numbers. The Strohbräuer can be seen only on one day during the entire Shrovetide season. He is led by two Treiber ("drovers"). They carry whips and constantly beat the Strohbräuer, who represents the Evil and eventually is ritually "killed." Usually, the figures representing the Evil are dummies or puppets which are "killed" on the evening of Shrove Tuesday.

As I already said, costumes made entirely of straw are rare and considered very special (straw costumes are
Fig. 12 Strohbär from Wilflingen
still relatively popular in Austria during the "Twelve Nights" events, worn by "Wild Men" figures). The more "common" costumes can basically be classified in four main categories: **Blätze, Hansel, Hexe, and Bär.** The **Blätzenarren**, which could be translated as "fools wearing costumes made from patches," make up a very large group of costume types—if not the largest. All of the costumes are extremely valuable, as they consist of full suits, covered with an average of 4,000 to 5,000 patches that have been cut out and sewn on by hand. Two **Blätzenarren** will be featured in the next section, namely the **Plätzler** from Weingarten and the **Seegockel** from Friedrichshafen.44

The **Hansel** is younger than the **Blätzenarr**. There are three possible origins for the name: (1) the general concept in Swabia of a somewhat stupid person as a **Hansel**; (2) the concept of the buffoon, often called **Hanswurst** in German; or (3) the verb **hänself**, i.e., "tease somebody," a thing which this figure does to a great extent when it makes use of its privilege of the **Rügerecht** ("the right to scold people").45 Whatever the word root, the **Hansel** wears a white costume with colorful designs all over. The designs—which can be flowers, fruits, stars, suns, animals, and so forth—are hand-painted or hand-embroidered. The fact that the designs are always on white suits gives the figure another common name, namely **Weiβnarr** ("fool wearing a white costume"). The ritualistic explanations of Shrovetide symbols really clash with the Christian ideas as far as **Weiβnarrren** costumes are concerned. The former say that the designs on the costumes (as well as the accessories) are fertility symbols, while the white fabric symbolizes dead

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44 It does not make any difference, whether **Blätze** is spelled with B- or P-; both spellings are correct in Swabian dialect.
45 More about the **Rügerecht** in the next section.
ancestors. The Christians define the white color as free of sin, while the designs and the accessories are symbols of sin and vanity that have to be conquered to earn a place in Heaven. To make the confusion complete, the figure is also known as a **Gschellnarr** ("fool wearing bells"), as almost always it wears broad straps with heavy bells over the shoulders and chest or around the waist. However, figures from other costume categories might wear bells, too (and therefore those figures can be called **Gschellnarren** as well, putting more emphasis on the **Gschell** than on the costume category), but quite generally, the **Hansel** figures are the ones wearing bell straps (i.e., the **Gschell**). Another identifying characteristic for the **Hansel** is that most of the time it has up to three foxtails hanging from its headdress, framing the mask. Several examples of the **Hansel** or **Weiẞnarr** category will be described in the next section.

The **Hexe** ("witch") stands for the group that makes up the "ugly masks," i.e., besides the witches, it includes demons, devils, evil figures, and most jumping fools. There is not one single trait that is typical for the costume, and the range is only somewhat indicated by the figures that will be discussed in the next section.

The **Bär** ("bear") stands for the animal figures, including the **Strohbär** described above. Some of the costumes fall into categories already mentioned, i.e., the **Seegockel** from Friedrichshafen could also be considered a **Blätzlenarr**; many others are **Gschellnarren** because they wear bell straps. However, animal figures usually do not wear the costume of the **Hansel**. Animal single masks tend to appear in groups of three people: the animal with two drovers (cf. the **Strohbär**). Most animal masks are group masks, however, (cf.
In this section, I will describe a few figures or mask types more thoroughly. I will comment on the masks, the costumes, the accessories, and the stories of origin (as far as they are known to me). The pictures are drawn exclusively from my own fieldwork. This fact limits the section to only a very small range of Shrovetide figures from a relatively small area in Upper Swabia. However, even this small number will give a good idea of what Shrovetide figures look like, as the principles illustrated here are found in any area that knows Shrovetide celebrations. For the location of the towns, please refer to the map on page 14.

**Bad Waldsee.** Bad Waldsee has five mask figures appearing in groups and one single figure, made up of three people.

The Federle or Federahannes (Fig. 13) is a local figure whose name has been known in Bad Waldsee since the time of the witch trials (from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century). The people accused of being witches were tortured to extort confessions or admissions. Many of them could not stand the torture for long and consequently "confessed," naming their master as Hans Federle, who became known as "the Evil of Waldsee."46 He always was described as a very handsome man, dressed like a hunter, with feathers on his hat.--As a Shrovetide figure, Federle wears a wooden mask.

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46Swabians tend to talk about people by their full names, putting the family name first. In the case of Hans Federle, the name could be "d'r Federle Hans (or Hannes)" or "d'r Federahannes." It also could just be "d'r Federle"--and this explains the two different names for the Shrovetide figure.
Fig. 13 Federle from Bad Waldsee
stained in a medium to dark brown. With its diabolic features, the mask belongs to the ugly type. The mask is topped with a brown hunter's hat with three long pheasant feathers. A yellow- to orange-colored cloth covers the back of the head and comes down to the shoulders. The costume furthermore consists of a black coat with long sleeves and red buttons; tight, red pants; a long green cape with a red lining, decorated with many goose feathers in bright colors; a brown leather belt around the waist; brown shoes ending in upwardly bent points, imitating the fashion of the Middle Ages; and black gloves. Federle carries a jumping pole which is circa two meters or about six feet long and forked at the end. The forked end is used to tease people. The Schrättele (Fig. 14) is the female counterpart of the Federle. Its name derives from Waldschrat ("forest-sprite"), a malicious and mischievous forest spirit. Nevertheless, the figure is conceived by the people as a witch, mastered by the Federle. It is by far the "wildest" and most active of the Shrovetide figures in Bad Waldsee (witches in general are the most active figures in any Shrovetide town). It runs, crawls, jumps, climbs houses and trees, captures people and drags them along for a few yards in the parades, and there is virtually no end to its inventiveness. These activities are the reason for the figure's popularity, both with the prospective mask wearers and the onlookers.--The wooden mask is stained in a medium brown and shows two faces: one side has an evil, staring eye, the other has a wily eye. A red cloth covers the back of the head and comes down to the shoulders. Two long, thin straw braids are fastened to the headdress and frame the mask. The mustard-colored coat has long sleeves and red buttons. Around the shoulders, the Schrättele wears a half-long, black cape with red lining and
Fig. 14 Schrättele from Bad Waldsee
broad fringes. The two skirts—a green skirt over a long red underskirt—have fringes, too. The white underpants end just below the knees and are trimmed with lace. The knee-high stockings have red and white rings, straw overshoes hide the sneakers that the Schrättelte likes to wear, and the gloves must be brown or black. And, of course, a Schrättelte would not be complete without a witch broom.

The **Schorraweible** (Fig. 15) is a somewhat mischievous, but friendly wood spirit from a forest just outside Bad Waldsee (the **Schorrenwald**), and it loves to tease the people. It has the appearance of a very old woman, walking very slowly and carrying a basket filled with "herbs" and "medicine" (actually candy and little bottles with brandy or **Schnaps**). It will approach people, asking them whether they need medicine for all kinds of ailments, and then it will make the funniest and most witty remarks when it actually offers something from the basket.—The wooden mask with its friendly and cunning expression is stained in a medium brown. A colorful, but not brightly colored cloth covers the head. The mask is framed with fir sprigs and cones. Both the blouse and the long skirt are colorful, but kept in dark colors. An apron, a long dark cape, old shoes, and dark gloves complete the dress. The Schorraweible carries the afore-mentioned basket filled with candy and little brandy bottles, as well as an old, dark-colored umbrella.

The **Faselhannes** (Fig. 16) is a friendly figure that moves in a certain rhythmic pattern to make its many bells sound. The figure's most important feature is its privilege of the **Rügerecht** ("right to scold") or **Außagen** ("telling"), and therefore its most important accessory is the **Narrenbuch** ("fools' book"), which is actually carried only by a few
Fig. 15 Schorraweible from Bad Waldsee
Fig. 16 Faselhannes from Bad Waldsee
members of the group. The Faselhannes picks "victims" either during parades or while walking through town or by going from house to house, from restaurant to restaurant. Once a victim is found, the Faselhannes will open the Narrenbuch and with a disguised voice read the "misdeeds" of that person to everybody, often illustrating everything with drawings. The Faselhannes will collect stories about local people throughout the year and illustrate them (if he or she has the talent), presenting the often not so pleasant truth about people during Shrovetide.—The figure's wooden mask has a friendly expression and is stained in a light brown. It is framed by black horsehair (above the forehead) and two foxtails. A pointed hood with a pelerine covers the head and shoulders. The hood, blouse, and baggy pants are made from white fabric, with colorful designs (hand-painted or hand-embroidered) all over. The Faselhannes wears two broad leather straps with six to eight heavy bells each. The straps are arranged cross-wise over the shoulders and chest. A leather belt decorated with many colorful silk handkerchiefs is slung around the waist. The figure wears black shoes and simple white gloves. All Faselhannes carry boxes with candy. Those who do not carry a Narrenbuch normally have a Narrenwurst ("fools' sausage," a club made from brown leather and stuffed tightly), which they use to tease people.

The Narro (Fig. 17) accompanies the Faselhannes, looking a lot like the latter and moving in the same manner.—The wooden mask with its friendly expression is stained in a light brown. Black horsehair tops the mask above the forehead. Several long, colorful ostrich-feathers are arranged in a half-circle above the mask. A shoulder-length
Fig. 17 Narro from Bad Waldsee
cloth that covers the head, the blouse, the long pants, and a half-long cape are made from white fabric and decorated with colorful hand-painted or hand-embroidered designs. Four to six round, heavy bells and several colorful silk handkerchiefs are fastened to a leather belt worn around the waist. Black shoes, white gloves, a brown Narrenwurst, and a little basket filled with candy complete the outfit.

Werner's Esel (Fig. 18) is a Einzelmaske ("single figure") and consists of three people: a donkey and his two drovers. One of the drovers looks very ill-humored, the other one is rather cunning. Whenever the donkey does not want to obey their commands, they have to react according to their masks' expression. --The donkey wears a grey wooden mask, a headdress with long ears, a grey suit, and two leather straps with heavy bells arranged cross-wise over its shoulders and chest. It is led with a long grey rope. The ill-humored drover wears a red cap, a blue cloth covering his head, a red vest with blue buttons and white sleeves, white pants with flower embroidery, wooden shoes, and grey gloves. The cunning looking drover has the same costume, only the colors red and blue are exchanged. Both drovers carry whips.

Uttenweiler. Uttenweiler has two mask groups and one single mask.

The Falkenhofer Weible (Fig. 19) was inspired by a local legend about a count and his family living at the Schloß Falkenhofen ("Falkenhof Castle") which supposedly once stood in the Falkenhofer Wald ("Falkenhof Forest") near Uttenweiler. The count and his first wife had a blind daughter. When the countess died, the count remarried. The second countess bore a healthy daughter. Before his death, the count told his wife that the blind daughter would inherit
Fig. 18 Werners Esel from Bad Waldsee
Fig. 19 Falkenhofer Weible from Uttenweiler
a Simmri (an old measurement) of gold. The countess consented, but after her husband's death, her greed led her to fraud: she got a Simmri, but instead of filling it up, she turned it around and put only a few gold coins on its bottom. The blind daughter felt the gold coins and believed that the measure was full. The other daughter thought so, too, and because of her own greed and jealousy, she jumped into a lake and died. Therefore, the evil and greedy countess will be haunted until another castle is built in the Falkenhof Forest and another blind child is born to the family living there.--The wooden mask has an unfriendly expression and is stained in a medium brown. A green cloth with little bells around its edges covers the head. The figure wears a brown cloth around the shoulders; a dark-green blouse; a brown, long skirt; a light-green apron; dark shoes; and dark gloves. Some members of the group carry long wooden poles, while most of the others have baskets filled with candy. A lot of people think that the Falkenhofer Weible is a witch figure, but it really is an unhappy ghost who is not allowed to rest in peace. The mask looks quite ugly, but it lacks the maliciousness of witches' masks; and the Weible does not carry a witch broom, an important detail for witch figures. I participated in Shrovetide 1988 in this mask and costume.

The Bachpfatscher (Fig. 20) is Uttenweiler's single figure, which participated for the first time in 1988. The Bachpfatscher is said to have been a greedy count, who once annexed much farmland from the farmers to reroute a creek, but he did not pay the farmers any money for compensation. Every farmer, who dared to ask the count for some compensation, was beheaded. Because of this injustice, the
Fig. 20. Bachpflatscher from Uittenweiler
count after his death could not rest in peace and thus has to fall into his creek, making a lot of noise (Swabian in da Bach pflatscha). Around midnight, he often could be seen sitting on a white horse, swinging a whip. He always was seen carrying his head under his arm, while above his neck, where the head normally should sit, people saw a flame.--The Bachpflatscher wears a grey coat which is buttoned above the head (with little holes in the coat through which the mask wearer can see). He wears grey, knee-length pants, light-colored stockings and gloves, and dark shoes. In one hand he carries a whip; and under one arm, he carries his head, a wooden mask.

The Reutibachgeister (Fig. 21) are the Bachpflatscher's aides and companions. They are ghosts living in the Reutibach, supposedly the creek that the greedy count created after he had cheated the farmers out of their land and rights. Many tales are known about the ghosts and their mischievous deeds.--Their masks are perfectly smooth, stained in white, and look rather funny. The headdress in the shape of a hood and the entire suit are covered with thousands of little patches (Blätzla), cut and sewn on by hand. The patches change in color, from very dark grey (top of the head) to red and orange (from the shoulders to the hips) to light grey (on the thighs) to two different shades of dark grey (from the knees down). The ghosts wear dark shoes and gloves, and they carry large rattles with which they make a lot of noise.

Biberach/RiB. Biberach/RiB, my hometown, started to have Shrovetide celebrations with masks only a couple of years ago. The oldest mask, the Biberhex, was created in 1982. Now, there are five mask figures--four group masks and
Fig. 21: Reutbachgeister from Uttenweiler
one single mask. I cannot present the single mask, called the *Rißnebel* ("fog over the river Riß"), because I have never seen it.

The *Biberhex* (Fig. 22) is a witch with a rather typical legend explaining its origin. Witches were believed to live in the woods and marshes around Biberach, representing evil forces because of their connection with the Devil. The wooden mask has very scary features and is stained in a dark color, very close to black. The back of the head is covered with a green cloth which is decorated with a flaxen strand of hair and snail-shells. A piece of fur is worn on top of the cloth. The blouse has a chequered pattern in dark-brown and grey, and a fur decorated with snail-shells is thrown over the right shoulder. The long skirt is black and has a toad painted on. A green apron is gathered up so that the toad can be seen. The Biberhex wears white underpants that end just below the knees and are trimmed with lace; stockings with black, green, and white rings; and shoes made from sisal. Instead of a witches' broom, the Biberhex carries a long, forked pole.

The *Mahdgeist* (Fig. 23) is a half friendly, half malicious spirit. It would wait in the fields along the road leading to Mettenberg to tease and terrify the people coming by, often jumping on top of their wagons, "hitching a ride."---The mask is stained in a medium to dark brown and has a friendly, cunning half, as well as an evil, devilish one. The head is covered with a black hat and chin- to shoulder-length flaxen hair. The blouse has a reddish-brown color, the pants have the color of ripe flax. The dress is cut according to the medieval peasants' fashion. The blouse and pants are held together with a belt made from a rope. A fur
Fig. 22  Biberhex from Biberach/Riß
Fig. 23 Two Manngeister from Biberach/KB, walking in front of a group of
cape is thrown over the shoulders, while two leather straps with heavy bells are slung over the shoulders and chest, arranged cross-wise. The shoes and gloves are dark-brown or black.

The **Mumpfentalschrat** (Fig. 24) is the protector of the **Mumpfental**, a valley between Biberach and the village of Rissegg. The Mumpfentalschrat makes sure that no evil ghosts or demons bring destruction or ill luck to the valley.--The wooden mask with its friendly, funny expression is stained in a medium brown. The tip of the bright red tongue is shown. The right side of the mask is decorated with a foxtail. A grey cloth covers the head and comes down to the shoulders. The grey coat is held together by a black belt; the black pants are baggy around the thighs, but tightly tied from the knees down with narrow strips of light-grey leather. The shoes are light-colored (grey or white), the gloves are dark. One leather strap with heavy bells is slung over the right shoulder and the chest. Some of the figures carry long, forked poles.

The **Burrenmahle** (Fig. 25) is a male figure who supposedly lived in the **Burrenwald**. He is thought to have been an old, surly man, haunted by a guilty conscience, who nevertheless had a heart for good people, especially young lovers. If he approved of the young people's wish to get married, the Burrenmahle would counsel them and give them money for their wedding.--The Burrenmahle has a medium brown mask with a surly expression. The lines of the cheeks show a heart shape, an indication of the figure's good actions. The head is covered with shoulder-length, flaxen hair. A light brown shirt, a dark-green coat with long sleeves that covers the hips, dark-brown pants, black shoes, and brown or black gloves complete the costume. The Burrenmahle carries a long,
Fig. 24 Mumpfental Schwarte from Biberach/RiB
Fig. 25 Burrenmahle from Biberach/Riß
gnarled pole (not a jumping pole!) and a purse filled with pennies, to be given to the people.47

Weingarten. Weingarten has four group masks and three single masks.

The Plätzler (Fig. 26) appear in three variations: red, red-white, and white Plätzler. Generally, the red Plätzler throws candy carried in a basket; the red-white Plätzler carries a Saubloder ("pig's bladder") with which it beats people on the head; and the white Plätzler, who is rare and therefore seldom seen, just moves daintily, carrying an umbrella. (However, there are exceptions to these rules, and thus a red Plätzler may carry a Saubloder, while a red-white one distributes candy, and so forth.)--The wooden masks are very smooth, with friendly expressions, and they are stained in a light brown. The hood covering the head and the whole suit are covered with 4,000 to 5,000 red, red and white, or white patches (Blätzla). Around the waist goes a broad belt, hand-knotted in Smyrna technique (a technique used by tapestry workers, which came from the Turkish city of Smyrna, now Izmir). Some Plätzler wear leather straps with bells.

The Fasnetsbutzarössle or simply Rössle (Fig. 27), a group of three people, is a single mask which is considered part of the Plätzler group. The Rössle is a "horseback rider" in the costume of a red Plätzler, with the horse being part of the costume. It is driven by two drovers in the red-white Plätzler costumes. Both drovers have whips which end in Saublodera ("pigs' bladders").

The Wurzelepp (Fig. 28) is a single figure that accompanies the group of the Waldweibla ("forest women," not

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47The photograph is not clear because I did not come close enough to take a good shot of the Burrenmahle. This picture is an enlarged section of figure 42, page 149.
Fig. 27 Plätzler Group from Weingarten With the Fasnetsbutzarössle (Center) as Displayed in the Narrenschopf in Bad Dürrheim
Fig. 28. Wurzelstepp from Weingarten
illustrated; very similar to the Schorraweibla from Bad Waldsee). The Wurzelsepp has a medium-brown wooden mask with a very friendly expression. The chin is "decorated" with a long, dark beard, and a long pipe hangs out of the mouth. The head is covered with a brown cloth that falls over the shoulders, brown hair, and a large straw hat. The coat is moss-green, with flowers embroidered on the front. The brown pants end just below the knees, and the knee-high stockings have brown and green rings. Dark gloves, straw shoes, a basket with little bottles filled with "home remedies," and a cane, made from a gnarled tree branch on which a stuffed squirrel sits, complete the outfit.

The Lauratalgeister (Fig. 29) accompany Laura (one of the single masks, not illustrated), the unhappy young lady who lost her father and her lover in the same stormy night. After her castle was struck by lightning, she tried to save her father, but he died. Her fiance, who had left the castle shortly before lightning struck, tried to come back. At the same time, Laura—not knowing that her fiance was coming—ran after him to ask for his help. She found him struggling against the waves in the river. Trying to save him, she drowned.—The Lauratalgeister (the ghosts from the Laurental, the valley named after Laura) have wooden masks stained in white. The faces look very unhappy, and thick tears roll down the cheeks. The heads are covered with pointed hoods and pelerines that come to the shoulders. The hoods, pelerines, blouses, and pants are white, with colorful designs painted on. Around the waist, the ghosts wear black belts with heavy, round, black bells. White gloves and black shoes complete the appearance.

The Schlößlenarr (Fig. 30) was created in 1976. I do
Fig. 30 Schlößennarr from Weingarten
not know the figure's history or the legend that led to its creation. -- The wooden mask imitates the features of eighteenth century (Rococo) masks, with a smooth face and a little moustache. (Beards on masks became bigger in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and while the Rococo beards were painted on, the later ones were made from hair or some similar material and glued on.) Around the forehead, locks of brown hair are painted. The face is friendly, with a rather large, almost "Roman" nose. The head is covered with a brown hat. Around the shoulders, the figure wears a medium-green pelerine. The suit is a Hansel suit, however, in light green instead of white, with colorful, embroidered flowers which are framed with green rhomboids. The Schloßlenarr wears white gloves and brown shoes and distributes pretzels that have been put on a sabre.

I want to complete this section with the description of three masks—two group masks and one single mask—from three different towns, Friedrichshafen am Bodensee, Ehingen/Donau, and Lindau am Bodensee. Each of these towns has a rich variety of masks; however, I do not have enough information on all of them and therefore want to introduce only one mask type for each city.

The Seegockel from Friedrichshafen (Figs. 31 and 32) is an animal mask that appears in a small group. It is constantly threatened to be butchered by the Gockelmetzger ("cock butcher"), but generally manages to escape. --The Seegockel does not wear a wooden mask. Its head and face are covered by a mask made from fabric which has the features of a cock or rooster, with cheerful eyes, a beak, red wattles, and a red cockscomb. The mask and the suit, which ends just below the knees, are covered with thousands of brown and
Fig. 31 Face Mask of the Seegockel from Friedrichshafen
Fig. 32 Seegockel (Full Figure) and Falkenhofer Weible
yellow patches (Blätzla). The sleeves are shaped like wings, and the Gockel will run around, flapping its wings, calling Gockolores-kikeriki ("cock-a-doodle-doo"), and offering Gockeleier ("cock's eggs"), i.e., peanuts, to the people. From the knees down, the Gockel wears yellow wool stockings that cover the tops of the shoes with three toes and a spur.

The Krättaweil, ("woman with basket") from Ehingen (Fig. 33) is a mask type that once was very popular, but now only survives in a few towns. The figure looks as if an old, weak, bent-over woman were carrying a young, strong man in the basket on her back. Actually, the man, who does not wear a mask, is dressed as a man on top and as a woman from the waist down, and the poor, old woman is a puppet fastened to the man's costume.

The Butzateufel from Lindau (Fig. 34) is a single mask, a scary looking demon who commands the group of the Pflasterbutza, rather scary looking demons themselves. The Butzateufel wears a huge, reddish-brown, wooden mask with big eyes, an evil-looking mouth with strong teeth (i.e., a mask "with bite"), and a big, rolled-up, red tongue. The head, shoulders, and upper body are covered with brown fur. The suit is tight and reddish-brown; the hands end in fingers with long, sharp claws; and a devil's tail adorns the rear end of the figure.

Observations of a Mask Wearer

After the analytical part about the meaning and functions of masks, and after the description of a few Shrovetide masks from Upper Swabia, I will sum up this chapter with some personal observations. As I mentioned
Fig. 34 Butzateufel from Lindau/Bodensee
before, I was a participant observer in Shrovetide 1988. I had been a participant in former years, as a band musician, but 1988 was the fulfillment of an old dream of mine: I finally was a mask wearer.

My brother, Andreas Beck, had introduced me to the Zunftmeister, Mr. Reinhold Stritzelberger, and many of the mask wearers from the Narrenzunft Pflugraicher from Uttenweiler. Mr. Stritzelberger offered me a Leihhäs, a "mask and costume on loan," from the group of the Falkenhofer Weibla. Of course, I accepted gladly—and proudly, because it is very difficult for strangers to receive such an outfit.

I participated in two parades as a Falkenhofer Weible: the Narrensprung in Bergatreute on Shrove Sunday, February 14, and the one in Uttenweiler on Shrove Tuesday, February 16. When I went to pick up my costume on Sunday, just before the parade, three people helped to dress me and show me how to put on the mask. (The results can be seen in Figures 19 and 32.) I met another young woman from a neighboring village who had received a Leihhäs and who was as excited as I was. I also met an old friend of mine, Dieter Lietz, who had been a fellow musician in one of my former bands. He now is the drums instructor of the Fanfarenzug ("trumpet and drum corps") from Uttenweiler which is led by my brother. Dieter also is a member of the Falkenhofer Weibla. On the way to Bergatreute, he told me that when he first was offered the costume, he accepted, thinking, "What in the world am I doing now? This is ridiculous! I am not going to wear a skirt and a mask." However, after his first parade he was "hooked," and he now owns his mask and costume.

"My" two parades were two of the most exciting and fun things I have done. I'll never forget the moment when our group finally started to move. All of us put our masks
and gloves on—and we no longer knew who was walking beside us. I soon felt extremely hot, because I had to run and jump all the way, and my face felt as if I were spending an afternoon in a sauna. But all that was forgotten when I started to tease the onlookers—mostly young men, of course—who tried to see my eyes and thus recognize who I was. Some of the people run from you because they never know what you will do to them. Almost all is allowed: stroking, hugging, messing up hairdos, "stealing" hats or scarves and putting them on somebody else further down the road, loosening shoelaces, even little beatings (I once was dragged in the middle of the road and beaten by a witch from Äpfingen, a village where I had instructed the fife players of the fife and drum corps—and I never found out who the witch was). But even if the people run, they love to be caught! I certainly had fun, as all the other mask wearers did. Although I am not a shy person and although I start new contacts with ease, I would never do in normal life the things I did while wearing the mask. As far as I am concerned, the mask allowed me to behave in a different, "outrageous" way, "attacking" men and then "comforting" them with candy. I did not need the mask for normal social interaction, but used it to behave in a usually unacceptable, odd way, knowing that the recipients of my teasing under normal conditions would not be pleased. However, Shrovetide turns the world around—and I know that many of the mask wearers feel like I did.
PART II

SHROVETIDE TODAY
CHAPTER IV

THE STRUCTURE OF SHROVETIDE

As I have stated several times, Shrovetide and Carnival celebrations seem to be totally unstructured. But this outside appearance deceives, as the celebrations from within are highly structured and organized. In the first section of this chapter, I will present some of the most important institutions and structural entities of Shrovetide celebrations. The second section is dedicated to a Shrovetide calendar.

Basic Structural Entities

Fools' guilds and fools' corporations

In the Middle Ages, Germany as well as Europe in general saw the growth of towns and cities. The farmers, who generally lived in rather isolated places, were self-sufficient, producing and repairing everything they needed for their lives on the farm without outside help. The city dwellers, however, depended on specialized craftspeople to produce all their daily necessities, such as food, clothing, furniture, tools, building materials, and so forth. Craftspeople of the same branch--like bakers, butchers, shoemakers, carpenters, weavers, and many others--united in craft guilds, and they were often joined by merchants and retailers. The members of a certain guild, as for instance
the carpenters' guild or the weavers' guild or the bakers' guild, and so forth, mostly lived in the same area, even street, of a town, and the guilds, which had their own crests and flags, became strong powers in the medieval towns. A strong sense of belonging to their guilds distinguished the individual members, and they generally celebrated together, met whenever possible—in short, they were closely connected in their professional and private lives. Strict statutes and a highly hierarchical structure determined everyday business and relations. Although the members had some legislative power, the guilds actually were led by two to four wardens or guild masters as well as an assisting council. After the Reformation and with the growing power of the many governments in what we now know as Germany, the guilds' influence weakened continuously, until they finally died in the era of industrialization. They were abolished in Germany in 1859-60.

Since the Middle Ages, the guilds had had the right to organize dances, and some of them had the privilege to organize Shrovetide events and parades. After many years of unorganized Shrovetide and Carnival events, the first Karnevalsvereine were founded in the early nineteenth century, and Narrensorden ("fools' guilds") and Narrenzünfte ("fools' corporations") soon followed in Southwest Germany. All of those organizations were patterned after the former craft guilds, with a strictly hierarchical structure, presided over by the Zunftmeister and the members of the Zunftrat, and with statutes rigidly enforced with the organizations' members. Fools' corporations, which are generally even more strictly organized than fools' guilds,

48 Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines corporations as "group[s] of merchants or traders united in a trade guild," and guilds as "association[s] of men with similar interests or pursuits, especially medieval association[s] of merchants or craftsmen."
can join one of the ten existing associations.

Let me give an example of statutes that can be considered quite representative for fools' corporations, before I say more about the associations. The Narrenzunft Waldsee from the city of Bad Waldsee regulates the administrative duties and details as well as the behavior of the mask-wearing fools through the Satzung ("statutes") and the Maskenordnung ("regulations for mask-wearers").

The Satzung first of all states its purpose:

The Waldseer Fasnet has its roots in Swabian-Alemannic folk customs. In order to maintain, cultivate, and promote these customs inherited from their ancestors, the fools of Waldsee have joined the Association of Swabian-Alemannic Fools' Corporations and have united in the Fools' Corporation Waldsee.

The protection and maintenance of its six types of masks and costumes is considered the organization's purpose and most important task. Furthermore, the statutes regulate the start and length of the business year as well as the membership details and the character of the organization's organs. Full members must be sixteen years old, pay membership fees, and—if they already own a mask and costume (because they for instance "inherited" them from a parent or other relative)—yield to the regulations laid down by the council. Members who do not obey the rules and regulations can be dismissed. The organs of the Narrenzunft are the following: the Zunftversammlung ("members' meeting"), the Zunftrat ("council of the fools' corporation"), the Zunftmeister ("master of the corporation") and his deputy.

49 In southwest Germany, a Narr ("fool") can also be called a Maske ("mask"). In this case, Maske stands for the whole person, including the costume and the mask. Thus, a Maskenordnung does not just regulate the types of masks and how to wear them, but also the costumes, as well as the behavior of the person wearing that mask and costume.

(both of whom have full representative rights), and the Narrengericht ("fools' court"). The tasks of every single organ are explained and determined in full.

The second part of the statutes of the Narrenzunft Waldsee is the Maskenordnung ("regulations for mask-wearers"), which states its purpose as follows:

Mummery, which has its roots in our pagan ancestors' belief in gods and ghosts, the struggle between summer and winter, and other ideas, has long been superseded by Christianity. The pleasure in masquerade, however, remained alive, not because many people feel an urge to romp in mask and costume, but to talk to and be at ease with everybody, whether subject or stern superior, speaking and behaving freely and as they actually always desire.

The purpose of these regulations is to protect this custom from any abuse or aberration. 51

The Maskenordnung then describes the six different mask types and the corresponding costumes (Fig. 35). This is followed by general rules about the acquisition and registration of the masks and costumes, as well as regulations about how to wear them. Non-registered masks cannot be worn during the official parades and other events. The regulations also contain recommendations about the persons who are most appropriate for the different masks: there are mask-types that are supposed to be perfect for young men, others are the young women's and the children's or the older generation's domains. These recommendations, however, are not binding. Regulations about the fools' correct behavior and the consequences of any type of abuse bring the Maskenordnung to its end.

In 1924, the Vereinigung Schwäbisch-alemannischer Narrenzünfte ("Association of Swabian-Alemannic Fools'
Fig. 35 Five Mask Figures from Bad Waldsee: Schorraeible, Faselhannes, Schrättele, Narro (Background), and Federle.
Corporations") formed, and since then, fools' corporations have joined this one and nine more associations that formed throughout the years. According to Wilhelm Kutter, in 1976 about 355 fools' corporations, as well as many guilds, existed in about 320 towns in southwest Germany, and they were organized in the existing ten associations. Since then, many more guilds and corporations have been formed, and the number is growing. Looking at the statutes of the Alemannischer Narrenring (founded in 1969 as Internationaler Narrenring, name changed in 1970), one sees that the associations have regulations similar to those of the corporations, with whole fools' corporations considered as single members. The executive committee is somewhat larger than the committees of the single corporations, but in principle it is organized in the same way. A big part of the statutes of the associations deals with the bestowal of honorary titles and medals for meritorious members and sponsors.

The fools' world

Dietz-Rüdiger Moser states that the fools live in their own world during Shrovetide. They establish their own governments, "overthrowing" the towns' real authorities. During the six main days, the "fools' great time," they live in their world governed by irrationality, folly, satire, and parody. Moser proposes a diagram, showing the structure of this world. I am using his diagram as a basis, drawing up several modifications of my own (according to my understanding of the structure of Shrovetide), to describe the four phases of the fools' world.

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53 Alemannischer Narrenring, *Satzung*, no date.
The first phase can be called the "establishment of the fools' empire," with the erection of the fools' tree or other "legal" signs and the "awakening" and appointment of symbolic figures. The second phase marks the "assumption of the power by the fools." Here, the fools assault, occupy, and conquer the city halls, take on the power of the city's keys, install their own foolish authorities, proclaim the foolish legislation, and--last but not least--free the children from school (and often the working population from work). The first two phases usually take place on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday, the first day of the "great time." The third phase is the "execution of the folly." The fools behave in foolish ways; special honors, medals, and prizes are awarded; the fools' legislation leads to fools' trials; and in general, people enjoy singing, dancing, performing in parades and otherwise, and making as much noise as possible. Much eating, drinking, and flirting are also indispensable features of the crazy days. This phase characterizes all six days of the "great time." The fourth and last phase of the fools' world is marked by the "elimination of the fools' empires and power." The fools' trees are felled; the symbolic figures are ritually killed; and the now empty money purses are washed. This phase normally takes place on the evening of Tuesday, the last day before Ash Wednesday. Some corporations let phase four take place on Ash Wednesday, which is not a part of Fasnacht (this practice is not appreciated by the clergy). But normally, the fools meet for a Fastenessen--they eat frog legs, fish, any traditional Ash Wednesday meal without meat to ease the passage into Lent. And from this day, they are looking

forward to the next Shrovetide season: 's göht dergega—a term which is virtually impossible to translate, but which means that there is no need to be overly sad because the next Shrovetide is coming for sure.

**A Shrovetide Calendar**

In this section, I will present some of the events going on during Shrovetide. I will only describe events observed in towns that I visited, looking at their development over more than twenty-five years, i.e., since my childhood until the year 1988. Two observations in advance: (1) the range of basic events is small, while the number of local variations is almost limitless, and (2) a development in its proper sense does not happen: the events are observed now as they were in the sixties or even before, i.e., their structure is rigid and no flexibility is allowed by the fools' organizations. I will come back to this statement at the end of this chapter.

First of all, how long is the Shrovetide period? Quite simply, the length of the Shrovetide period depends on the date for Ash Wednesday and therefore Easter. Shrovetide all over Southwest Germany (i.e., the Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide), as well as in Switzerland and Austria (especially Tyrol), starts on January 6, the last day of the Twelve Nights. In Swabia, this day is generally called d'r Oberste. The end of Shrovetide is not as easy to determine. Of course, Shrovetide ends on Ash Wednesday, but what date is Ash Wednesday? It is a movable day in the

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55Carnival starts on November 11 at 11:11 a.m., and, sad but true, a lot of Swabian-Alemannic fools' corporations nowadays have a first meeting on that day, too, although historically the date has no importance for Shrovetide. Those first meetings seem to be a "relic" of the influence of Karneval in Southwest Germany during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the "real" start is still on January 6, as described below.
Christian, Gregorian calendar, and therefore, with a fixed start and a movable end, the length of the Shrovetide period varies from year to year. As I have said before, Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Lenten period before Easter. Lent always starts on the Wednesday before Sunday Invocavit, i.e., Ash Wednesday, and it is forty days long, not counting the Sundays. As Easter is on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the first day of spring (March 22), Lent is actually forty-six days (including the Sundays) or six and one half weeks long. Now, if the first full moon after the beginning of spring actually is on March 22, and if March 22 is a Saturday, then Easter will be celebrated on March 23. Accordingly, Ash Wednesday is on February 3, and therefore this Shrovetide will be the shortest possible with only twenty-eight days. However, if the first full moon in spring is on April 18, and if this day is a Monday, Easter will be celebrated on April 24. Consequently, Ash Wednesday is on March 10, and therefore the longest possible Shrovetide is sixty-three days long. But whether it is a short or a long Shrovetide, the active fool will already be comforted on Ash Wednesday by the idea that 's gôht widere drgega, i.e., "it is again going towards" the next Shrovetide.

January 6

At noon on January 6, Shrovetide starts with many different local customs. In many towns, the masks, costumes, and bells are "dusted" ('s Häss ond 's Gscheil abstauba), so that they look and sound clean and clear. The other important accessories--such as rattles, whips, umbrellas, and
so forth—are also checked, and the pigs' bladders (Saublodera) are ordered. Shrovetide is announced by fools (who do not wear their masks and costumes yet) in many towns, for instance, by flicking the Karbatschen (whips with short handles that are three to four meters, i.e., about nine to twelve feet long) so that they make a very loud noise. Most of the active fools meet for the first time with their masters (the Zunftmeister) and the members of the councils of the fools' corporations to decide on and announce the program for the coming Shrovetide.

From January 7 to the Tuesday before Fat Thursday

The period from January 7 to the Tuesday before Fat Thursday is relatively quiet. The Narrensamen ("fools' seed," i.e., the children) put on their costumes as often as they have free time and run and play outside, imitating the grown-ups as much as possible. A lot of Narrentreffen ("fools' meetings") take place, where members from different fools' corporations that are united in the same association come together in certain towns, getting to know each other and planning the upcoming parades in detail. If a corporation or an association celebrates an important anniversary, the relatively small Narrentreffen are extended to be Ringtreffen ("meetings of members of the ring/association") in which many groups participate. A Ringtreffen generally culminates in a Narrensprung ("fools' jump," the name used for Shrovetide parades all over the Swabian-Alemannic region), normally the biggest parade for any of the participating corporations during the season.

After Candlemas (February 2), more and more grown-up
fools in masks and costumes can be seen (especially on weekends), when they go from restaurant to restaurant to tell the local people the truth (aufsagen, schnurren, hecheln), whether their "victims" like this or not. The fools profit from their right to criticize (Rügerecht) -- "fools and children always tell the truth," as a German proverb says.

In Bad Waldsee, the Sammlervölkle ("collecting group") together with the Lumpagsindel ("riff-raff," a small band dressed as bums; Fig. 36) during January and February visits the surrounding villages and farms to collect money and presents, to be given to the children during Shrovetide.

Approaching die hohe Zeit der Narren ("the great time of the fools"), which starts on Fat Thursday, Shrovetide is announced one more time in many towns, with a variety of local customs.

The Wednesday before Fat Thursday

Bad Waldsee. In Bad Waldsee, the Zunftrat calls for the Narrenrecht ("fools' legislation") at the city hall on Wednesday night. I was able to attend this event for the first time in 1988; however, I was told that it has not changed as far back as anybody could remember. At 7 P.M., the members of the city council as well as the mayor, all of them clad in historical costumes and wearing wigs, assemble in a large meeting room in the city hall. At the same time, the members of the Zunftrat ("council of the fools' corporation") and many of the active fools (who, by the way, are not wearing their masks and costumes at this time) make a kind of procession to the city hall, led by a messenger (Herold) on horseback. Representatives of the Zunftrat, including the fools' police (BütTEL), a drummer, a night-
watchman in historical costume, and the messenger, enter the room and demand the Narrenrecht. They explain their demand by means of sketches and jokes about local politics: they maintain that the mayor and the city council must "resign," because they are not fit to lead the city (Fig. 37). The mayor allows the other members of the Zunftrat as well as their "entourage" to enter. They all demand the Narrenrecht, and the Zunftmeister reads the fools' legislation to the city officials—all of whom, of course, refuse to resign. Consequently, the fools seize the power "by force" and make the mayor sign their documents. After this is accomplished, the mayor has to accept a Narrenorden ("fools' badge") and the Narrenhut ("fools' hat," made from straw), which he has to wear until Shrove Tuesday (Fig. 38). If during that time he is ever caught without the badge and the hat, he will have to stand trial before a Narrengericht ("fools' court").

Later on that same evening, the Schrättela perform a Hexentanz ("dance of witches") in front of Bad Waldsee's city hall. Here, I encountered the only "real" change compared to former years: Until 1987, the dance always took place at midnight. In 1988, however, it was performed immediately after the fools had seized the power, i.e., at 8 P.M. I did not find anybody who could tell me why the change of time had been introduced. The fact that Bad Waldsee is a health-resort might offer an explanation: the patients of the health-care facilities have to be "home" by 10 P.M., and thus they could never see the dance of the witches (unless they sneaked out, which a lot of them did—I met many spa guests every year at the witches' dance!). I suppose that this was the reason for the fools' organization to change the time: the spa guests assure the city a good income, and thus the
Fig. 37 The Herold from Bad Waldsee, Demanding the Narrenrecht
Fig. 38 The Mayor from Bad Waldsee Has Resigned and Receives His Fools' Hat
city tries to be as compliant as possible.--For the dance, a big fire is lit on the square, and all of a sudden the Schrättela start coming out of their hiding places, one by one. (Actually, less than twenty out of a group of about eight hundred are allowed to participate in the dance.) They are moving cautiously, ducked down, and they carry their broom sticks in their hands, while the bundles of fir twigs, which have to be put on the brooms, are hanging on their backs. They glide around the fire to the hollow beats of a drum (which is played by a fellow Schrättela), holding their broom sticks into the fire to "prepare" them to be assembled. Suddenly, one of the dancers checks the stick and sees that it is ready. The Schrättela yells with joy, and immediately all the dancers grasp their fir bundles, pushing them onto the sticks. With their brooms assembled, they all stand up to their full height, screaming and dancing and jumping around the fire. But suddenly, a disturbing thing happens: a group of Faselhannes spring into the square, sounding their bells (Gschell) and trying to chase the witches away. Of course, the Faselhannes win, and now it is their turn to dance around the fire with joy (Fig. 39). The Schrättela from this moment reign in Bad Waldsee, until the evening of Shrove Tuesday.

Aulendorf. In Aulendorf, the sorcerer (Hexenmeister) comes to the Schloßplatz (the square by the castle) where a big fire is burning. He starts to conjure the masks, ordering them to come to the square. He calls them one by one, the Fetzle, the Schnörkele, the Rätsh and the Tschore, and then the Eckhex (Fig. 40). Upon appearance of the

56The Fetzle's name has a double meaning: in Swabian, a Fetz(lei) is a "rogue" as well as a "fabric patch" (i.e., a Blätzle); the Schnörkele has its name from a type of pastry made from pretzel dough. Both are funny mask figures. The Rätsh is a female figure with a sharp tongue, while the Tschore, her companion, is a real ninny. Both names symbolize the figures' characters in Swabian dialect. The Eckhex is a witch that has
Fig. 40 The Five Mask Figures from Aulendorf: Schnörkele, a Little Eckhex, Two Fetzla, Rätsch, Tschore, and, Above Tschore, a Big Eckhex
witches, magnesium is added to the fire, creating a stunning effect. In this spectacular light, all the mask figures hold hands and dance around the fire. Immediately after the dance, the fools demand the Narrenrecht and the Stadtschlüssel ("city key," a huge key symbolizing the power over the city) from the mayor. Of course, the mayor first refuses to resign, but then complies with the demands and thus is "honored" with his Narrenhut.

**Mittelbiberach.** In Mittelbiberach, the sorcerer frees the Schloßgeister from their banishment, and thus they can leave the dungeon where they had to stay since Shrove Tuesday the year before. They will be free for six days, until the night of Shrove Tuesday, when the lord of the castle will banish them again.57

The events described here are an anticipation of Fat or Jumping Thursday, which generally is the day when the fools establish their governments.

**Fat or Jumping Thursday**

Fat or Jumping Thursday is the start of Shrovetide in its most narrow sense, the six days known as "the great time of the fools" (die hohe Zeit der Narren). The name of the day (which, by the way, is known as jeudi gras in French-speaking carnival areas and giovedì grasso in Italy) varies in Southwest Germany, depending on the area. Quite generally, one can say that in the Alemannic area, i.e., in and around the Black Forest, it is called schmutziger, schmotziger, or fäßer Dunschtig ("Fat Thursday"), in accordance to the grease in which the famous Fasnachtskiachla its name from a square in town, locally known as the Hexeneck ("witch's corner").

57Told by Mr. Dieter Lietz from Mittelbiberach.
("Shrovetide pastry") are baked. In the Upper Swabian area, the fools seem to put more emphasis on their own behavior than the pastry, although Fasnetskiachla are as popular in Swabia as in Baden (i.e., the Alemannic region). Anyway, the name of the day is gumpiger, gompiger, or auseliger Donnschtig ("Jumping or Restless Thursday"), because the fools move in seemingly erratic patterns, jumping up and down all the time.

Fat Thursday is the day when most fools' corporations raise the Narrenbaum, force the local governments to resign, and free the schoolchildren, as well as some working people. In 1981, I lived and worked in Bad Waldsee. The owner of my company was (and still is) active in the Zunftrat, and many of my colleagues were active fools. That Shrovetide, some of us had gone to the Hexentanz on Wednesday night, celebrating until we had to go to work, but not before we had gone home to dress in costumes. As the morning wore on, around 11 A.M. we heard a tremendous noise in our building. The Sammlervölkle and some mask wearers had come to free us from work, bringing sparkling wine and pretzels. All of us left work around noon, not coming back until Ash Wednesday. (All companies in Bad Waldsee and in most other fools' cities stay

58 The Germans in Pennsylvania and, I suppose, in other parts of the United States to this day have retained this custom of baking special pastries (such as donuts or pancakes), but they often do no longer know why they are doing this or where the custom comes from. While I was in Germany to do the fieldwork for this study, my husband, Thomas, found two interesting items. One was an advertisement for Fasnachtskeulkles Sale Days (note how Kiachla became keulkles in the American spelling!) in the Louisville Courier-Journal. Chas. Heitzman Bakeries, Inc. of Louisville offered--among other goods--"Fasnachtkeulkles (Spiced Lenten Donut)." Unfortunately, my husband forgot to date the advertisement, but it appeared during Shrovetide. The second item was an interview he heard on WHAS radio on Shrove Tuesday, February 16, 1988. A lady from Snitzelburg, Kentucky called in to tell about her childhood memories of Shrove Tuesday. She said that she and other children used to dress up in old clothes and go around the neighborhood to collect candy and baked goods. Knocking on doors, the children would call something like "Fasnet, Fasnet, Kringle." A Kringel in German is a pastry shaped like a circle.
The Narrenbaum. The Narrenbaum ("fools' pole") supposedly is a young Shrovetide appearance. It was patterned after the Maibaum ("may pole"), which has a long history all over Europe. For many peoples, trees were symbols of strength, life, and fertility (and sitting or dancing under the may pole, for instance, brought luck). All active fools participate when the Narrenbaum (which is generally up to 30 meters or about 90 feet long) is felled; then they help to carry or drag it into town, being careful that the crown is not damaged. Once they arrive in town, the carpenters' guild (which in almost all towns is responsible for the Narrenbaum) will raise the tree, which has been decorated with all kinds of symbols: guild symbols, Shrovetide symbols, and so forth (Fig. 41). The saying goes that those who have not touched the Narrenbaum won't live to see the next Shrovetide.

The Rathaussturm. The fools in Bad Waldsee and Aulendorf are rather "polite" when they seize the power on Wednesday night. The great majority of fools overthrow their local governments quite "violently" on the morning of Fat Thursday. Biberach/Riß is a good example: the Zunftmeister and his deputy lead the mask wearers to the city hall on Thursday morning. The Zunftmeister calls for the mayor, who won't come outside, and demands the Narrenrecht. As the mayor refuses to even listen, the Zunftmeister tells the masks to take the city hall by storm and fetch the mayor. The fools do so immediately and triumphantly escort the mayor to meet the fools' delegates. The Zunftmeister reads the laws of the fools' corporation (Zunftgesetz) to the mayor, demanding the city key which the mayor reluctantly turns over (Fig. 42). When I attended the event, the Zunftmeister made
Fig. 41 The Fools' Pole Is Raised in Stockach
Fig. 42 The Mayor of Biberach/Riß Gives the City Key to the Zunftmeister
the mayor stand trial before the fools' court immediately, because the latter had already broken three laws: he had refused to resign, he did not wear a Narrenhut ("fools' hat"), and he had planned a meeting of the city council for that same day (Fig. 43). He was sentenced to appear, together with all the members of the city council, at the ball that the fools' corporation had organized for that night. The fools showed that the power was theirs by displaying their flag in the lobby of the city hall.

The Schulbefreiung. The Schulbefreiung is very similar to the storm on the city hall. The fools go to the schools and demand that the children be sent home. The school principals refuse, and therefore the fools take the schools by storm, freeing the children and giving them small presents. In Bad Waldsee, the principals will even be "taken prisoner," i.e., they will be bound and led away. The children then run home to put on their costumes (if they did not already come to school in costumes). They go through town, chanting old Shrovetide rhymes (in order to receive more presents), and in the afternoon they participate in the first Kinderumzug, a children's parade.

Fat Thursday is also known as Weiberfasnacht ("women's Shrovetide"), i.e., the women go out without men. Men wearing neckties on that day have to beware, because the women will mercilessly cut the neckties off. This custom is also observed in Carnival regions, and actually I suppose that it originated there and was taken over by Shrovetide fools as a fun thing to do.
Fig. 43 The Mayor of Biberach/Riβ Is Sentenced at a Fools' Trial
From Sooty Friday to Shrove Monday

Sooty Friday (Rüüger Freitag), which has its name from the old custom of blackening one's face with soot or trying to blacken other people's faces (some scholars think that our ancestors did this to become invisible for the evil ghosts), as well as Shrove Saturday, Shrove Sunday, and Shrove Monday are the days for many children's parades, balls, receptions for the masters of the fools' corporations (Zunftmeisterempfänge), and, on Monday, most of the big fools' jumps or parades (Narrensprünge).

Zunftmeisterempfang. As only small delegations (the Zunftmeister, his deputy, and maybe two or three representatives of each mask group) of fools' corporations united in the same associations are invited to the receptions for the masters of the fools' corporations, it is very difficult if not almost impossible to participate in one. I was lucky, though. On Friday, February 12, 1988, the Narrenzunft from Ratzenried gave a reception, inviting the Fanfarenzug of the Narrenzunft Pflugraicher from Uttenweiler together with Uttenweiler's delegates (Fig. 44). One of the reasons was that the Fanfarenzug is new, and thus the delegates from the other fools' corporations wanted to see and hear the musicians. As I mentioned earlier, my brother Andreas is the corps's instructor, and thus he thought that I could accompany them. I felt somewhat strange, because I was not invited, but I went anyway. Delegates from sixteen corporations were present, all of them part of the Alemannic Fools' Ring or Association (Alemannischer Narrenring), including two delegations from Austria and Switzerland. At this kind of reception, the master of the host corporation
honors every corporation present, greeting each one with a rhymed, witty speech and their own Narrenruf ("fools' call"), after which he presents the delegates with a medal or badge (Narrenorden). The recipients thank with a rhymed speech and the Narrenruf (Fig. 45). 59

The funniest moment was when the Zunftmeister from Ratzenried invited the "young lady from the press" to come forward. I looked around, trying to find out where the lady from the press was. The musicians sitting around me started to laugh and said that the Zunftmeister talked about me—he had seen my two cameras and the notepaper and therefore concluded that I was a reporter from the Schwäbische Zeitung, the regional newspaper. I tried to tell him that I was not from the paper—in vain: I had to go to the front and accept a medal, because "last year, your colleague stayed here only for a moment and did not even take pictures"—they were so delighted to have me there! The Zunftmeister from Uttenweiler, Mr. Reinhold Stritzelberger, afterwards told his colleague that I was a student who had come from America to do fieldwork for my master's thesis on Shrovetide. Well, this just made everybody even more excited, and I got to keep my medal.

On Shrove Saturday, I accompanied my brother to a ball at Allmendingen where Mr. Stritzelberger was going to introduce the masks of Uttenweiler (about fifteen mask wearers were there) as well as the Fanfarenzug. As I did not wear an "official" costume, I would have been obliged to pay admission. But Mr. Stritzelberger made me look official: he

59 Every fools' corporation has a Narrenruf or "fools' call," a means to identify the single corporations, with which people greet each other during Shrovetide. Fools participating in parades use their own Narrenruf to identify their group and hometown, and they expect the onlookers to answer them. Some examples: "Aha" (Bad Waldsee); "Ratzatropfl--Graba naß" (Biberach/Riß); "Pflug--Raicher" (Uttenweiler); "Breisgau-Ofaloch" (Weingarten); "Ha, ha, ha--ja was saischt au" (Aulendorf); "Kügele--Hoi" (Ehingen/Donau); and so forth.
Fig. 45 The Zunftmeister of the Narrenzunft Pflugraicher Receives a Fools' Badge at a Reception in Ratzenried
gave me the little present that he was going to give to the
Zunftmeister of Allmendingen, as well as his son-in-law's
Zunftrat hat (the son-in-law participated as a Falkenhofer
Weible and therefore did not need the hat for the moment).
Then I had to accompany him and the group on stage for the
presentation—wearing a Western Kentucky "Big Red" T-shirt!
That same night, Mr. Stritzelberger offered me a Falkenhofer
Weible costume to participate in the remaining parades.

Shrove Tuesday

The last day of Shrovetide brings more children's
parades and Narrensprünge, but it also brings the inevitable
end: after dark, Shrovetide is burned, hung, drowned, or
buried.

In Mittelbiberach, the ghosts of the castle
(Schloßgeister) are banished by the lord of the castle. They
have to stay in the dungeons and await the next Shrovetide
when the sorcerer will free them again.60--In
Friedrichshafen, the witches catch the Seegockel so that the
Gockelmetzger can "butcher" them, sparing only one who will
be "caged" to "hatch" for the new Shrovetide season.61--In
Bad Waldsee, Shrovetide is drowned. First, the Narrenbaum
is burned, and the Schrättela come one more time in mask and
costume to dance around the burning tree and mourn. A dummy,
dressed in mask and costume (looking a lot like the
Faselhannes), is then carried from there to the Schloßbach (a
creek that flows through town), accompanied by a large
"funeral procession," i.e., all the active fools dressed as
mourners in black suits and dresses, with top-hats and

60Told by Mr. Dieter Lietz.
61Told by Susanne Jacobs, the Seegockel pictured in Figures 31 and 32.
mourning veils. They all scream and cry and blow their noses into big white handkerchiefs. Musicians walk ahead of the procession, playing as pitifully as they possibly can. At the Schloßbach bridge, the fools' "priest" (Narrenpfarrer) says a "mourning sermon" for "our poor, beloved deceased" and "prays" a mock litany, which is extremely funny. However, the onlookers are supposed to "cry"--and cannot help laughing. I watched many of those drownings, and every time when I was trying to "cry," breaking out in laughs, some fool would approach me (as well as other people) with the most serious face, telling me (us) to behave in a way appropriate for the occasion. Finally, the dummy is thrown into the creek. The newspaper (Schwäbische Zeitung, Bad Waldsee issue) each year prints an announcement for the "funeral." I got a copy of this year's (1988) announcement:

After exciting and crazy balls with a witty and Shrovetide-like program in the Café Oriental, after a Jumping One [i.e., Jumping Thursday] at which the rough but favorable weather god was, sad but true, more rough than favorable with the people of Waldsee, after enterprising fools' trips to other fools' nests [i.e., towns], and after a Shrove Monday with foolish events in abundance, the Shrovetide in Waldsee 1988 finally passed away in her prime, with a merry jubilation and a painful sigh, and she will be buried in the Schloßbach tonight at 7 P.M. under general laments of "Oh, dear me." Everybody, who wants to thank the dear deceased for the joy and mirth she brought, is invited to come to the funeral procession as well as the following repast, at his or her own expense. She loved us and we loved her. The shaken and sad Master of the Fools' Corporation.62

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Ash Wednesday

Although Ash Wednesday really is not a day of Shrovetide, many fools meet one last time to "wash their money purses," hoping that when they lower them into clear, silvery water, they will come out full with "silver" (money); some put the city governments back into power, returning the "city key"; and they eat the first Lenten foods, such as frog legs, fish, snails, and Kässpätzla (homemade Swabian noodles, sometimes called "dumplings," with melted cheese and browned onions on top). The churches do not like these last events because Lent has already started; however, they tolerate them, and quite a number of clergymen after the Ash Wednesday church service meet with the fools to eat.

Pyre Sunday

On Sunday Invocavit, the Sunday after Ash Wednesday (which is also known as the "old or peasants' Shrovetide"), in some areas in southern Germany, people still observe an ancient custom which is linked to Shrovetide, called Funkensonntag or "Pyre Sunday." Young people during the last few days have built a Funken, which is a kind of pyre, using all kinds of materials that burn well, such as old car tires, large tree branches, old clothes, and Christmas trees which were collected in January. A long pole has been erected in the middle of the Funken, with a dummy (a straw witch) fastened to it. The Funken will be lit after dark, symbolizing the end of winter. The height of the flames gives a forecast for the summer's harvest, and every field within range of the light will yield good crops, while the
houses and their inhabitants will be blessed with good luck during the coming year. The young people try to blacken each others' faces with soot from the fire. In some areas, burning rings or wheels, a symbol for the returning light, are rolled down-hill.

As I already said, all of these descriptions are the fruit of observations made for years. Shrovetide events tend to stay the same once they are established, because the Brauchtumsmeister and with them the entire fools' organizations want to emphasize the "old age" of traditions which they have researched for the use in the celebrations. They do not want flexibility; they want to retain the status quo. The contents and flow of events which I have known since my childhood have not changed, and according to my parents already were the same when they were young people. Even young corporations, like the Narrenzunft Biberhex from Biberach/Riß, consciously create "traditional" events, i.e., they pattern them after events that have been observed in other towns for many years, and they won't allow any changes towards a more modern celebration. All this is closely connected to the fools' corporations' rejection of the idea that Karneval once dominated pre-Lent celebrations in Southwest Germany. With their emphasis on "antiquity" and on an unchanging, static structure, they try to reestablish Shrovetide's own identity, independent from Carnival. In my opinion this is a fruitless endeavour, because first of all, Carnival influences are here to stay, and furthermore people keep modifying Shrovetide's meaning for themselves. Nevertheless, the events are very beautiful and also funny, and perhaps the tension that results from the structural rigidity versus the progressive changes in personal meanings
is one of Shrovetide's most special characteristics, keeping it alive and vital.
SHROVETIDE IN OUR TIME

The Making of Modern Shrovetide

Shrovetide is...a complex phenomenon with numerous roots and an abundance of forms, a folk event that has many levels and can be interpreted in many ways, and therefore it is, in a certain sense, a world of its own.63

As this study so far has shown, this statement by Franz Götz is very true. Shrovetide and Carnival both went through a long development, and through the centuries they incorporated many influences that came from the contemporary fashions as well as the general worldview of the times. In spite of its long historical development which can be traced back to ancient winter and spring festivals, Shrovetide or Fasnacht today is something new. This statement will not endear me to most Shrovetide researchers, whether layperson or scholar. Nevertheless, Shrovetide as we know it today has been consciously recreated after the second World War. At that point, Fasnacht was almost extinct, and Karneval dominated pre-Lent celebrations all over central and southern Germany as well as in any country that knows this kind of festivals. An exception were remote parts of Austria and Switzerland, both mountainous countries where old customs tend to survive better than in more easily accessible areas.

Shrovetide was a conscious recreation by the fools'

organizations and especially their Brauchtumsmeister. When they decided that Fasnacht was worth reviving, they determined that every Karneval influence had to be eliminated. They did not succeed entirely: many Karneval-inspired events stubbornly survived because the people liked them, such as fools' meetings; masked balls; guard corps (Garden); floats in the parades parodying local political and social institutions; costume groups whose participants do not wear wooden masks, who are not part of the fools' organizations, and who often parody all kinds of people and events (cf. Figures 46 and 47); the cutting off of neckties on Weiberfasnacht; and many more.

However, the Brauchtumsmeister and with them the fools' councils decided for themselves that although Karneval influences could not be totally eliminated, they had to be denied. Thus, the idea that Fasnacht is a direct and pure descendant of pagan winter and spring festivals was built up and spread, supported by the local media and newspapers. Without shame, fools will tell you that Fasnacht is not and never was influenced by Karneval, and people believe it--I admit that I did so myself.

This insistence on "pagan origins" and "ancient traditions" won't do our modern Fasnacht any good. It will "degrade" it to just another historical festival which people celebrate because "it's always been like that"--of course, we do no longer celebrate Shrovetide for its pagan meanings, not even for the Christian ideology (Lent has lost its importance for most Catholics), but we certainly should not celebrate Shrovetide only for its quality as a traditional festival. This notion does not do justice to a festival as vital and vibrant as Shrovetide, a festival that means and for a long
time already has meant much more to the festival-goer. Instead of suppressing this special meaning, the organizers should allow the modern reasons for the celebration of Shrovetide to come to the surface. The emphasis on "tradition" threatens to take the vitality away from a festival that has survived many attacks, opposition, and criticism because of its quality of "conflict," but if we forget this very fact, we will one day lose the festival or render it entirely meaningless, because "tradition" alone won't be enough to assure its survival. A case in point: unfortunately, people nowadays celebrate a lot of festivals without any knowledge of the festivals' history or meaning. "It's always been like that" seems to be good enough for most people to justify their celebration. I think, for instance, of the Schützenfest, a historical festival that is celebrated every summer in Biberach/Riß, my hometown, and in which I participated from age six until I married and definitely "cut the strings." (I had left my hometown years earlier but was "magically" drawn back for the festival each year.) Only a few people know that the festival first took place after the Plague in the seventeenth century, a festival intended to give thanks to God by the people who had been spared from further harm by the Thirty Years War or the disease. All people know that the festival celebrates our town's and area's history—they have to recognize it because the whole festival week with all its parades, dances, and other events reflects that history—but the people could not care less. They do not draw the connection between what they see every year and what the town's history actually is. "It's always been like that": they just want to be entertained and have fun. However, about fifteen years ago, this festival—like many folk festivals, including Fasnacht—was at an all-time
low, but about five years later, all folk festivals in my home area saw the biggest revival ever. Why? There must be other reasons, conscious or not, beside tradition and history to celebrate a festival, and I hope to answer this question with my search for the motivations for Shrovetide and Carnival. Although Shrovetide has some unique characteristics, much that can be said about it is also true for other folk festivals.

**Shrovetide Today**

*Fasnacht* is very complex and extremely difficult to understand, not only for the outsider, but even for the insider, the active participant. The many years of "cultic indoctrination" that I just mentioned have become a convenient means of withdrawal for the fool who is asked too often why he or she is doing what he or she is doing. The fool actually does not know it, because *Fasnacht* undoubtedly has become a routine event for many, but as "It has always been like that" generally is not accepted for an answer, the fool falls back on the cultic interpretation without questioning it. However, the static and rigid cultic and traditional interpretation does not leave any room for the participant or the onlooker to search for the real motives, and often enough the interviewer, i.e., the one who asks for the fool's motives, does not even want to get any answer but "pagan customs." (The idea of the survival of "pagan customs" seems to be too endearing to be lost.) Nevertheless, there is much more to *Fasnacht* and *Karneval* than meets the eye, and only an understanding of the motivations for this kind of celebrations will lead us to a
full understanding of the festivals.

Pre-Lent celebrations come in many manifestations or forms which underlie constant change, which are new or traditional, which are regulated or imitated, in short: which are consciously assumed and manipulated by the people. These manifestations might be masks, costumes, and accessories; fools' guilds and corporations; organized events and the dates for them; the communication and interaction between people; social contacts; and so forth. The formal manifestations won't help us much to understand the "phenomenon Shrovetide," though.

The clue to understanding Shrovetide are the motivations that people have to celebrate. These motivations seem to clash decisively with the ideas upheld by the fools' councils. The people do not celebrate Shrovetide because of its traditional implications, which are not even pure, but imposed. The rigid structure of Shrovetide with its bottomline of "tradition for tradition's sake" contrasts sharply with the significance and meaning of as well as the motivations for the celebration of Shrovetide: they are not only constantly changing, but also different for everybody.

I, for instance, generally like the atmosphere of Shrovetide events, the people's different behavior, their openness and craziness, and the look of masks and costumes, i.e., the aesthetic side of the festival. But, more importantly, for me wearing a mask means being able to behave "outrageously," i.e., in a way in which I usually would not behave, and thus I draw my personal satisfaction from the emphasis on the possibilities that the mask offers me. However, somebody else might just enjoy the folk festival in Shrovetide, i.e., celebrating with others, while a third person might especially like the masked balls. But nobody celebrates
Shrovetide for its artificially maintained traditional structure. I must admit that I like this structure, however, I want to be free to understand Shrovetide as I please. The tension resulting from the clash of this structure's rigidity versus the people's flexibility for their motivations gives a special character to Shrovetide. Although the structure remains the same, the functions and meanings of Shrovetide depend on the individual's perception. This means that Shrovetide won't die out even if the current main function—i.e., the portrayal of an ideal, democratic, emancipated world—becomes obsolete, because the ideal world perhaps will have become the real world. Shrovetide will just go on with a new function, most probably parodying exactly this new ideal world. Let me present a little diagram here, which shall help to guide me and the reader through my explanation:

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SHROVETIDE/CARNIVAL

PLAY

DISGUISE AND

MASK

Change of roles

Counter-world

New social order

Rügerecht

"Psychohygienic function"

"Emotional valve"

FOLK FESTIVAL

Gregariousness

Sociability
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Shrovetide, like any festival, is first and foremost **play**. Playing is a basic human need and instinct, and the manifestation during play of forms that stand in contrast to everyday life help people to emotionally cope with life and find ways to work out problems. The foolish world of Shrovetide makes the real world richer because of Shrovetide's irrationality and the playful creation of counter-forms, which actually help to confirm the rightness and necessity of norms. Play reinforces the impact of personal experiences and even life itself. This basic significance of play for Shrovetide leads us to the two main features of the festival: the importance of the masks and costumes, i.e., the **disguise**, and the **folk festival** character of Shrovetide. What I am going to say about the folk festival is true for any festival, but the importance of disguise and all that depends on and is connected to it belongs to Shrovetide and Carnival alone, therefore making pre-Lent celebrations a very distinct type of festival, unlike any other folk festival (as known in Europe and North America—I do not know enough about festivals in other parts of the world to be able to make a judgment). In my diagram, I have associated the "change of roles" only with disguise. This is a simplification on my part. Of course, people assume different, festive roles during any festival; I have discussed this point in Chapter II. However, the change of roles in folk festivals in general is more subtle and usually depends on things other than actual disguise, such as the use of alcohol. Shrovetide's change of roles is not only more evident through the use of disguise, it is also more intense, because the use of disguise and the use of other role-modifying agents (as found in any festival) are combined to reach a very strong effect.
Disguise: mask and costume. Disguising oneself is a basic instinct for humans, and indeed it belongs to play, not only because it is such a basic desire, but also because disguise dramatizes people's play with their environment. For humans, their dress always sends out certain signals about them: it helps define their sex, their social status, their occupation, nowadays even their political standing, and it is also an expression of their pleasure in pretty attire. Shrovetide costumes reverse all that: the sex can be hidden, and thus male becomes female and vice-versa; the social status can be changed, i.e., a well-to-do citizen can change into a ragamuffin, while a not-so-well-off person can become a royal figure, if only for a few hours or days; the professional dress leaves all possibilities open, i.e., the pharmacist might dress up as a sailor; and the political conservative might appear as an alternative punk. Finally, the pretty attire that we like so much (and pay so much for) in everyday life can be exchanged for the ugliest outfit imaginable. This personal change through a change of dress is reinforced if one wears a mask. The hiding or changing of one's identity creates tension and excitement, and in this state most people—even those who are generally considered shy or "unsocial"—succeed in starting conversations and new contacts, even if they have not used alcohol to help ease their tensions. They also succeed in reinforcing relationships much more easily than without their outward change of personality. And with some luck, new relationships might even be transferred into everyday life after the celebration is over. This does not give the German people a superior "grade" for their social ease, but I suppose we Germans need something like Shrovetide, or otherwise quite a
few of us would be totally stuck in social agony. (Well, not
totally, but it is a fact that our society is rather formal
and "stiff." ) The relief from everyday pressure and social
restrictions through Shrovetide disguise cannot be
overestimated! The disguise allows people to change their
everyday roles, assume a role or identity that is totally
different from the range of roles that one plays, at one time
or another, in everyday relations and life. The Shrovetide
role is a break with the world, but a break without ultimate
consequences, because it can be reversed at any time, just by
taking off one's mask or changing outfits.

Werner Mezger has made some excellent points about
disguise, and I will use his ideas as a basis for my
observations.\textsuperscript{64} An important formal consideration is the
difference between \textit{partial disguise} and \textit{total disguise}.
Mezger says that the former, which is more typical for
Karneval, changes the personality of the wearer, leaving his
or her real identity recognizable, while the latter, which is
at home in the southwest German Fasnacht, totally hides and
changes the wearer's identity, making him or her unknown to
everybody. However, this is true primarily for the \textit{active
fool}, who is organized in a guild or corporation, and then
only as long as he or she is outdoors. At balls, the mask
wearer has to take off the mask (unless participating in a
performance), and the average person attending a ball wears
the same types of costumes that people in Karneval would
wear. Mezger distinguishes the following disguise patterns:
the comic, parodistic, exotic, erotic, demonic, historical,
and military.

Shrovetide and Carnival draw their identities
primarily from the wide range of the \textit{comic} or \textit{parodistic}.

\textsuperscript{64}Werner Mezger, "Fasnacht, Fasching und Karneval als soziales
The role of the disguised person is funny for others because it varies from the "normal," even clashes with the general conception of what is right or beautiful. The bigger that distance from what is conceived as "the normal," i.e., the wider the divergence, the funnier the person and his or her role are perceived. The comic role is completed through a change in speech (by talking nonsense or using broad dialect instead of standard speech, or vice-versa, and so forth), behavior, and movement. Parody always was part of Shrovetide and Carnival, whether in form of the "clown" (which comes from Latin colonus--"peasant, farmer," and since the Middle Ages the city dwellers used the clown as a parody of the "backward and ignorant" country people; Fig. 46), or the parody of the French soldiers in the eighteenth or the Prussians in the nineteenth century, or the parody of prominent public figures nowadays, even the parody of national monuments, as "Miss Liberty" demonstrates (Fig. 47).

The exotic role is assumed not so much to make people laugh, but rather to evoke their admiration and awe. Through the centuries, people changed into figures from newly discovered countries or continents. Nowadays, the exotic or heroic role in the form of Native Americans, sheiks, gypsies, pirates, cowboys, and what have you, seems to have a certain effect of relief for the average citizen who leads an unsung, rather dull daily life. Mezger thinks that people who assume exotic roles consciously want to evoke admiration and social attention, because this type of role as a rule appears as a partial disguise, i.e., the others' attention is always directed not only to the disguise, but also the wearer's identity.

The erotic role goes back to the late Middle Ages and
Fig. 46  A Group of Clowns in Bad Waldsee
Fig. 47 Miss Liberty in Bad Waldsee
the Shrovetide play (*Fastnachtsspiel*), which often drew its contents from the sexual sphere to compensate for the rigid moral code of the time. In today's Shrovetide and Carnival, sexual innuendo can be found openly and everywhere, but particularly at the costume balls, where young women and men wear sexually inviting outfits and often behave in a sexually explicit manner. Mezger makes an interesting observation: in spite of the "sexual revolution," the moral code at public events is still so high that people need the craziness of Shrovetide or Carnival to free themselves from social restraints.

The demonic role, always in the form of total disguise and so typical for *Fasnacht*, gives the mask wearer power. People still instinctively fear and feel threatened by a totally disguised figure, especially if that person wears a mask with devilish features. The mask elicits respect (something people in everyday life often do not get), and the laughter that normally follows does not come from a sense of mockery and derision (as in the case of the tomfool or simpleton), but from a sense of relief about the actual harmless of the "demon."

The historical dimension of Shrovetide and Carnival might result from a deeply rooted nostalgia in everybody for a former, "better," more glorious time. Especially the southwest German *Straßenfasnacht* ("street Shrovetide," i.e., outdoor events) is full of historical allusions. The older masks and those inspired by them, i.e., particularly the masks of the *Weiβ- and Blätzlenarren*, have features of the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo. Many of the fools' councils have adopted costumes from a certain historic period; the often participating militias usually wear eighteenth century costumes; while the trumpet and drum corps
Fanfarenzüge) and other bands often appear in sixteenth century mercenary costumes, their "regular" outfits, unless they prefer to participate in Shrovetide parades wearing their own Shrovetide costumes. When I still was an active band musician, we would often participate in Shrovetide parades. We would decide on a costume type, i.e., everybody had to come in pyjamas or night gowns, or maybe look like bums or clowns—-you get the idea. My bands, like many other bands, never wore their regular outfits for Shrovetide events. Historical costumes usually seem to be limited to "organized" groups. One rarely sees a person made up as a historical figure at a costume ball. The same is true for the military pattern, the last costume group.

The military costume can most often be found in Karneval. The "guards" (mentioned earlier) generally wear costumes inspired by military fashions (Fig. 48). Originally meant to be parodies of soldiers, the costumes (and roles) nowadays might express something different—-maybe the desire to look impressive. The scholars have not found an explanation yet. Besides, military costumes can be found in many countries: just think of the "armies" of French or American majorettes.

Nevertheless, in many disguises several of the mentioned patterns are evident, and there are not many "pure" costume types. It is more important to note what disguise itself does for people. The disguise allows people to be "beside themselves" for some time, to act in a way that normally is not acceptable. Through masking people really "de-mask" themselves. They become somebody that otherwise they cannot be, they find their identity by hiding it, they become themselves. This newfound identity then is used in
Fig. 48 The Fools' Guard from Bad Waldsee
interaction with one's environment: the Shrovetide or Carnival fool needs the normal world as a basis on which to stage the "ideal" world. Without the normal world, the very idea of Fasnacht, parody, would be dead, as parody needs the direct comparison to be effective. The fool finds many ways of interacting: from the teasing of people who watch the parades, to the simplified contacting of people through the informal du address, to the seizing of the power in the community, to the Rügerecht--there are endless possibilities for interaction, but the everyday, normal world is needed for the interaction to make sense, even to be possible.

I can readily confirm this from my own experience. Masked fools do not interact with their fellow maskers. Whether they make use of their right to scold, whether they tease people, or whether they seize the power: those things are done to or with non-masked, "normal" members of the community. I do not have a good picture of myself teasing people while I was masked, but this picture taken in Bad Waldsee in 1985 shows clearly that the demons caught "normal" onlookers (in this case myself and an unidentified man), dragging them to the "demons' pole" and stamping their faces with a "demons' stamp" (Fig. 49). This is an absolutely typical scene for Shrovetide, and it underlines the emphasis on interaction between the fools' and the everyday worlds. The change of roles through disguise, the building of a counter-world with a different social order, and the Rügerecht are special characteristics of Shrovetide and Carnival. I know that Americans, for instance, dress up on Halloween and go to costume balls, but even in their disguise, they do not parody the real world or search a dialogue with it.

The folk festival. The folk festival character of
Fig. 49 The Author Captured by Demons from Ehingen/Donau
Shrovetide must not be underestimated. It expresses another human need and desire: the desire to come together with other people in a festive environment. Celebrating together joins people and leaves them with a positive feeling and the ability to open themselves to the world and to human relationships. In the gregarious setting of a folk festival, people can show at least part of their real selves, in contrast to the "work-person"; they learn to cope with frustrations through relaxation; they can have fun in an alternative setting which allows them to dance, jump, sing, speak nonsense, and so on, without being judged by everyday standards. Things that normally would put them apart from the mainstream support their integration in the festive setting.

Going back to the diagram on page 166: Shrovetide is play, like any festival, and the festival could not exist without play. The gregarious setting of a festival allows people to make contacts, open up, and be integrated in spite of their "outlandish" behavior. This relaxed atmosphere has the effect of an emotional valve, a pressure relief that lets people learn to cope with their frustrations and daily setbacks. However, what makes Shrovetide and Carnival a special, distinct type of festival is the reinforcement of this "psychohygienic function" through the wearing of disguise and the opportunities offered because of it. Disguise allows people to build a counter-world with a new social order in which the normally silent majority can scold the authorities and live their ideal life in an ideal, equal, democratic world for a few days. The people do not break with their reality, but through the foolishness and irrationality of Shrovetide--with the real world as a backdrop as well as a means of comparison and dialogue--they
understand the shortcomings, but also the advantages of a regulated society. Shrovetide is not anarchic, as charged by its critics, but it reinforces regulations and social norms by questioning them.

However, Shrovetide can only be enjoyed if one allows it to enter one's life. Standing outside won't make Shrovetide's meaning accessible or render somebody able to give a meaning to the festival. I remember a former colleague of mine, a middle-aged lady from Schwäbisch-Gmünd, a Swabian city about eighty miles north of my hometown, where I lived for two years and where the Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide is unknown. The lady told me that some years before she had gone to a city on Lake Constance for professional training, and as Shrovetide season came along, she watched a parade. As she watched in utter amazement, not knowing or understanding what was going on, some fool wanted to tease her, messing up her hair. She said she was shocked, and she asked me why we were doing and allowing such "horrible" things. Never would she understand this, she assured me--she had remained "outside," not allowing Shrovetide to reach her and having an effect on her life. What a sad mistake! Even outsiders can get utmost enjoyment from Shrovetide if they open themselves not only to the fun of the folk festival, but especially to the fun of the interaction with masked fools. Any Shrovetide lover can confirm this.
GLOSSARY

ALTE FASNACHT; old Shrovetide; see Sonntag Invocavit.

ASCHERMITTWOCH; Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent; often used for some last Shrovetide-related events by the fools.

AUFSAGEN; also Schnurren, Hecheln, Strählen; form of the —>Rügerecht, i.e., the right of the fools to scold people while wearing their masks and thus remaining unknown. Aufsagen always happens in an intimate setting, like, for instance, in a restaurant or house or during a parade, in opposition to the —>Narrengericht, i.e., the fools' trials, which take place publicly and are followed by a "sentence."

BACHPFLATSCHER; "person making noise in a creek"; a single mask from Uttenweiler.

BAUERNFASNACHT; peasants' Shrovetide; see Sonntag Invocavit.

BIBERHEX; witch figure from Biberach/Ri8.

BINSENGEIST; "ghost in the rush"; ghost figure from Lindau/Bodensee.

BLÄTZLENARR; collective name for the fool figures who wear costumes that have been decorated with thousands of small fabric patches which are cut out and sewn on by hand.

BOCK; also Schafbock; animal (sheep) mask figure from Stetten am Kalten Markt, accompanied by a shepherd.

BRAUCHTUMSMEISTER; member of the —>Zunftrat, whose responsibility is the research and salvation of old customs. The Brauchtumsmeister greatly influences the looks of the newly created masks and costumes, as well as the story behind the new fool figures.

BÜTTEL; fools' police.

BURRENMAHLE; "little man from the Burren Forest"; surly old man with a heart for young people, especially those who want to get married, but don't have the money for a wedding; lives in the Burrenwald, a big forest near Biberach/Ri8.

BUTZATEUFEL; devil figure from Lindau/Bodensee. Butz in Swabian dialect means "scary figure," used by adults to
terrify children. An English equivalent would be "bogeyman."

DIE HOHE ZEIT DER NARREN; the great time of the fools, i.e., the six days between Fat or Jumping Thursday and Shrove Tuesday; the main days of the Shrovetide period.

D'R OBERSTE; January 6; the last of the Twelve Nights (→Rauhnächte) and the start of the Shrovetide period.

ECKHEXE; "witch from the corner"; witch figure from Aulendorf.

EINZELMASKE; single mask, i.e., a mask figure that is played only by one person, such as the →Bachpflatscher from Uttenweiler, or a small group, generally an animal figure with its drovers, such as the →Fasnetsbutzarössle from Weingarten.

ELFERRAT; council of the Eleven; →Karneval's equivalent of Shrovetide's →Zunfttrat.

EPIPHANIE; Epiphany or January 6, start of the Shrovetide period. Cf. →d'r Oberste.

FALKENHOFER WEIBLE; "woman from Falkenhofen"; mask figure from Uttenweiler, depicting a countess who was greedy in her lifetime and thus cannot rest in peace.

FASCHING; the kind of pre-Lent celebrations observed in Bavaria; more urbanized than →Fasacht; emphasis on indoor events like costume balls, etc.

FASSELHANNES; "tomfool who speaks nonsense"; figure from Bad Waldsee who exercises the fools' right to scold people.

FASNACHT; also Fastnacht or Fasnet; period between Epiphany or January 6 and Ash Wednesday as celebrated in Southwest Germany, parts of Austria, and Switzerland; "Shrovetide."

FASNACHTSDIENSTAG; Shrove Tuesday, the last day of Shrovetide.

FASNACHTSMONTAG; Shrove Monday, aka →Rosenmontag, particularly in →Karneval areas.

FASNACHTSSAMSTAG; Shrove Saturday.

FASNACHTSSONNTAG; Shrove Sunday, →Sonntag Estomihi.

FASNET; see Fasacht.
FASNET VERGRABA; burying Shrovetide; events ending the Shrovetide period on the night of Shrove Tuesday, such as burying, burning, drowning, or hanging a dummy which represents Shrovetide, winter, or the Evil.

FASNETBUTZARÖSSLLE; "Shrovetide horse"; mask group (→ Einzelmaske) from Weingarten, consisting of the Rössle and its two drovers. Part of the → Plätzler group.

FASNETSKIACHLA; special Shrovetide pastry, usually baked in grease, such as donuts, and so forth.

FASSENACHT; pre-Lent celebrations in the city of Mainz, the capital of the state of Rheinland-Pfalz (the Rhineland-Palatinate). Fassenacht really is a form of → Karneval, not → Fasnacht.

FASTENZEIT; Lent; time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, six and one half weeks long. The period recalls Christ's forty days of fasting in the desert. Catholics believe in it as a time of repentance, renouncing abundance and worldly pleasures.

FASTNACHT; see Fasnacht.

FASTNACHTSSPIEL; Shrovetide play; form of theater that bloomed in the fifteenth and sixteenth century all over Germany and Austria. The plays depended on Shrovetide/Carnival for their topics, and they were generally critical of the period's society. First form of secular theater in Germany.

FEDERAHANNES; also Federle; evil, male mask figure from Bad Waldsee; said to be the master of the → Schrättelena.

FETZLE; friendly, funny mask figure from Aulendorf.

FUNKENSONNTAG; Pyre Sunday or → Sonntag Invocavit. An extension of the Shrovetide period with the burning of a dummy (generally a straw witch) representing the winter.

GARDE; also Korps or Corps; guard; costume groups typical for → Karneval, but also encountered in → Fas(t)nacht. Formerly only played by men, nowadays mostly by young women, the Garden are dressed in costumes that parody military uniforms. They originated in the times when the city of Köln or Cologne was "governed" (actually occupied) by French and later Prussian soldiers, as a form of political parody and criticism.

GELDBEUTELWÄSCHE; washing of the money purses; ritual done
by many fools either on the night of Shrove Tuesday or on Ash Wednesday morning. The empty purses are lowered into water and expected to come back out full—which they normally do: full of water, of course.

GLATTLARVE; smooth or beautiful mask, stained in light browns and generally worn by friendly or funny mask figures, as well as by unhappy ghosts (in this case, the masks would be stained in even lighter colors, often white).

GOCKELMETZGER; "cock butcher"; mask figure from Friedrichshafen which complements the —>Seegockel group.

GOMPIGER DONNSCHTIG; also Gumpiger, Glumpiger, Glompiger, or Auseliger Donnschtig, i.e., Jumping Thursday; known as —>Schmotziger Dunnschtig in the Alemannic region.

GRUPPENMASKE; mask figures appearing in often large groups, in contrast to —>Einzelmasken.

GSCHELLNARR; fool figures wearing heavy bells on leather straps over one or both shoulders or around the waist.

HÄS; fools' costume, Swabian dialect.

HÄS OND GSCHELL ABSTAUBA; dusting of the costume and the bells; first official Shrovetide event in many Shrovetide towns on January 6.

HÄSSLICHE LARVE; ugly mask, generally stained in medium to dark browns or even black and worn by mischievous or evil figures.

HANSEL; tomfool, also —>Weißnarr; figures wearing friendly-looking masks, bell straps, and white costumes that have been decorated with hand-painted or hand-embroidered designs. The Hansel figures often have the —>Rügerecht.

HECHELN; see Aufsagen.

HEROLD; fools' messenger.

HERRENFASNACHT; gentlemen's Shrovetide; see Sonntag Estomihi.

IN DE BÜTT; on the platform. Speaking in de Bütt is typical for —>Karneval, and the speakers use the event for extremely witty, often sharp political satire and criticism.

JORDANHEXE; witch figure from Bergatreute. Jordan is the Shrovetide nickname of the creek that flows through the
village.

KARBATSCHE; whip, up to four meters (about twelve feet) long, with a short handle; used to crack in order to make loud noises.

KARNEVAL; also Rheinischer Karneval; forms of pre-Lent celebration observed in the Rheinland or Rhine area of Central Germany. Like →Fasching, Karneval is urbanized, in contrast to the more rural Shrovetide, and it puts its emphasis on indoor events.

KARNEVALSSITZUNG; Carnival meeting; indoor events typical for →Karneval, organized by the →Elferrat. Carnival meetings consist of performances, mostly satirical, by Carnival singers, dancers, and speakers →in de Bütt.

KARNEVALSVEREIN; Carnival club; the Carnival equivalent to the →Narrenegilden and →Narrenzünften of Shrovetide.

KEHRAUS; sweep-out; the last costume ball of Shrovetide (Carnival) on Shrove Tuesday night.

KRÄTAWEIB; "woman with basket"; mask figure from Ehingen/Donau.

LARVE; face mask; term usually preferred to →Maske, because the latter often refers to the entire Shrovetide figure, including the costume.

LAURATALGEIST; "ghost from the Laurental"; unhappy ghost figure from Weingarten.

LEIHHAUS; "costume on loan." Every fools' organization has several costumes which they loan to special friends or to prospective new members (who can become full members with their own costumes only after a trial period during which they loan their costumes).

LENT; see Fastenzeit.

LUMPAGSINDL; small brass band, dressed up as bums, which accompanies the →Sammlervölkle; from Bad Waldsee.

MAHDGEIST; "ghost in the mowed fields"; a half friendly, half mischievous mask figure from Biberach/Riß.

MASKE; mask; in the Shrovetide region often used not only for the face mask (cf. →Larve), but for the entire fool figure.

MASKENORDNUNG; mask regulations, used by the fools'
corporations to control the look of masks and costumes. All mask wearers have to comply to the rules; if they don't, they can be forced to turn in their mask and costume and leave the fools' corporation.

MUMPFENTALSCHRAT; "sprite from the Mumpfen Valley"; a friendly figure that protects the valley near Biberach/Riß from all harm.

NARR; fool; in Shrovetide or Carnival name for every person who actively participates in the celebrations.

NARRENBAUM; fools' tree or pole; decorated tree raised on or around Fat Thursday. Most probably inspired by the may pole.

NARRENBUCH; fools' book; scrapbook used by the fools who perform the -->Aufsagen; to record stories about local people during the year, often with appropriate drawings.

NARRENGERICHT; fools' court; form of the -->Rügerecht, i.e., the fools can put people, mostly public figures, on trial for their "misdeeds" and punish them.

NARRENGILDE; fools' guild; fusion of a town's mask groups in one organization. Fools' guilds cannot join a -->Narrenring.

NARRENHUT; fools' hat, often a straw hat which is given to the mayor when the fools seize the power. Cf. -->Narrenrecht, -->Rathaussturm.

NARRENKLEIDLE; fools' costume in Alemannic dialect; cf. -->Häs.

NARRENORDEN; fools' badge; medal given to people who strongly support Shrovetide.

NARRENPFARRER; fools' priest, i.e., a fool who parodies the church and officiates at the burying of Shrovetide (-->Fasnet vergraba).

NARRENRECHT; fools' legislation; basis of the fools' government, read to the mayor and the city council when the fools come to seize the power.

NARRENRING; association of several fools' corporations from a larger area. The more than 350 Swabian-Alemannic fools' corporations, as well as some Swiss and Austrian corporations, are currently organized in ten associations.

NARRENRUF; fools' call. Every fools' guild or corporation
as well as every carnival club have their own calls, used to identify their hometown and to greet people during Shrovetide/Carnival.

NARRENSAMEN; fools' seed, i.e., children in Shrovetide costumes.

NARRENSPRUNG; fools' jump, i.e., Shrovetide parade.

NARRENTREFFEN; fools' meeting; meetings of fools' corporations which belong to the same —>Narrenring during the period between January 6 and Fat Thursday. The meetings often end in a —>Narrensprung.

NARRENVEREIN; see Narrengilde or Narrenzunft.

NARRENVEREINIGUNG; see Narrenring.

NARRENWURST; fools' sausage; slender clubs made from leather and soft stuffing, carried by some mask figures to tease people.

NARRENZUNFT; fools' corporation, fusion of a town's mask groups in one organization. Fools' corporations are strictly regulated and hierarchical, and, in contrast to fools' guilds, they can join a —>Narrenring.

NARRO; —>Hansel figure from Bad Waldsee.

NEUE FASNACHT; new Shrovetide; see Sonntag Estomihi.

PFAFFENFASNACHT; preachers' Shrovetide; see Sonntag Estomihi.

PLÄTZLER; group of —>Blätzlenarren from Weingarten; red, red-white, and white Plätzler. Cf. —>Fasnetbutzarössle.

PRINZ KARNEVAL; Prince Carnival; a man who is chosen to represent —>Karneval and is considered the head of the fools' government in Karneval cities. Shrovetide does not have such a single figure for representation.

PRINZENPAAR; princely couple; "princess" often played by a man.

RATHAUSSTURM; storm on the city hall; "violent" take-over of the power by the fools.

RÄTSCH; "woman with a sharp tongue"; female figure from Aulendorf, companion of the —>Tschore.

RAUHNÄCHTE; the Twelve Nights, i.e., the twelve days and nights between Christmas and —>Epiphanie (January 6).
Those twelve nights were feared by our ancestors as a time when the supernatural forces were unleashed, threatening everybody.

REUTIBACHGEIST; ghost figure from Uttenweiler; aide of the Bachpflatscher.

RINGTREFFEN; ring meeting; bigger than a Narrentreffen as all members of the association will appear. Often celebrating an anniversary of a member, the Ringtreffen always end in a Narrensprung.

ROSENMONTAG; see Fasnachtsmontag.

RÜGERECHT; right (of the fools) to scold people; basis for the fools' legislation (Narrenrecht), the fools' court (Narrengericht), and the Aufsagen. The Rügerecht might have its origin in the privilege of the medieval court jesters to speak the truth to everybody, without having to fear any consequences.

RUSSIGER FREITAG; Sooty Friday; the Friday after Fat Thursday on which formerly people would smear their own or other people's faces with soot.

'S GOHT WIEDER DRGEGA; Swabian for "it is again going toward [Shrovetide]"; the fools' consolation upon the end of Shrovetide on the night of Shrove Tuesday.

SAMMLERVÖLKLE; group of people from Bad Waldsee who go around in January and February to collect money and gifts for the children; accompanied by the Lumpagsindl.

SATZUNG; statutes; general regulations for the running of any club in Germany and therefore also used by fools' guilds and corporations.

SAUBLODER; pig's bladder; made into balloons and fastened to a stick, they are carried by some fool figures to tease people.

SCHLOSSGEIST; "ghost from the castle"; figure from Mittelbiberach.

SCHLÖSSLNARR; "fool from the castle"; figure from Weingarten.

SCHMOTZIGER DUNSCHTIG; also Schmutziger Dunschtag, i.e., Fat Thursday; known as Gompiger Donnschtig in Swabia.

SCHNÖRKELE; friendly, funny mask figure from Aulendorf.
SCHNURREN; see Aufsagen.

SCHORRAWEIBLE; "woman from the Schorren forest"; friendly mask figure from Bad Waldsee.

SCHRÄTTELE; witch figure from Bad Waldsee, dominated by -->Federle.

SCHULBEFREIUNG; freeing [of the children] from school, whether the school principals like it or not. The event is comparable to the --Rathaussturm.

SCHWÄBISCH-ALEMANNISCHE FASNACHT; Swabian-Alemannic Shrovetide; collective name for the pre-Lent celebrations found in Southwest Germany, i.e., in the southern part of the state of Baden-Württemberg, whose capital is Stuttgart, as well as in the extreme southwestern part of Bavaria (the Allgäu or Swabian Bavaria). Baden, once an independent kingdom and best-known for the Black Forest (Schwarzwald), makes up the Alemannic part of Shrovetide, while Württemberg (also known as Swabia), another former kingdom, and southwestern Bavaria, make up the Swabian part. The Alemanni and the Swabians were two of many peoples that long ago settled Europe and, of course, what is now known as "Germany." Like all the other tribes, they retained their own customs, and even nowadays, inspite of the Germans' increased mobility and intermarriages, they still show many of their own characteristics, including their dialects.

SEEGOCKEL; "cock of the lake"; animal mask figure from Friedrichshafen.

SONNTAG ESTOMIHI; also Herrenfasnacht, Pfaffenfasnacht, or Neue Fasnacht; the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, --Fasachtssonntag. See Sonntag Invocavit.

SONNTAG INVOCAVIT; also Bauernfasnacht or Alte Fasnacht; the Sunday after Ash Wednesday, --Funksonsoonntag. At some time in the history of the Christian Church, the clergy (also known as the Pfaffen--"preachers"--or Herren--"gentlemen") started the Lenten period a week earlier than the common people: instead of starting to fast on the Wednesday after Sunday Invocavit, they now started on the Wednesday after Sunday Estomihi, the Wednesday now known as Ash Wednesday. Therefore, the date for Shrovetide changed: although the common people held to their "old Shrovetide" for some time, they eventually had to give it up and accept the "new Shrovetide." Basel in Switzerland, predominantly Protestant and therefore not touched by the change, retained the old date.

SPRINGNARR; jumping fool; mask figures that carry long poles
which they use as supports for long jumps. An example is
the Federle or \textit{Federahannes} from Bad Waldsee.

\textbf{STADTSCHLÜSSEL;} city key; a symbolic city key is turned over
to the fools by the mayor when he "resigns" from his
post.

\textbf{STRASSENFASNACHT;} street Shrovetide; collective name for
outdoor events; these are more important for Shrovetide
than \textit{Karneval}.

\textbf{STRÄHLEN;} see Außsagen.

\textbf{TSCHORE;} "bumpkin, ninny"; male mask figure from Aulendorf,
companion of the \textit{Rätsch}.

\textbf{WEIBERFASNACHT;} women's Shrovetide; both in Shrovetide and
Carnival, Fat or Jumping Thursday is the day when the
women go out without men. Their most famous "pastime" on
that day is cutting off every necktie that they can find
on a man.

\textbf{WEISSNARR;} white fool; see Hansel.

\textbf{WERNERS ESEL;} "Werner's donkey"; a single mask consisting of
the donkey and its two drovers; from Bad Waldsee.

\textbf{WURZELSEPP;} "Root Joe" (Sepp is an abbreviation for the male
first name Josef); friendly forest figure from
Weingarten.

\textbf{WUSELE;} \textit{Hansel} figure from Munderkingen. The name cannot
be translated, but the Swabian dialect word \textit{wusela}
means "running around, often in an erratic pattern."

\textbf{ZUNFT;} see Narrenzunft.

\textbf{ZUNFTMEISTER;} master of the fools' corporation; highest-
ranking official in the fools' hierarchy.

\textbf{ZUNFTRAT;} fools' council; governing body of a fools'
corporation, headed by the \textit{Zunftmeister}.

\textbf{ZUNFTVERSAMMLUNG;} meeting of the fools' corporation;
meetings which all members of a \textit{Zunft} can and should
attend; to discuss the corporation's concerns and
business.
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