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Oral Tradition seeks to provide a comparative and interdisciplinary focus for studies in oral literature and related fields by publishing research and scholarship on the creation, transmission, and interpretation of all forms of oral traditional expression. As well as essays treating certifiably oral traditions, *OT* presents investigations of the relationships between oral and written traditions, as well as brief accounts of important fieldwork, a Symposium section (in which scholars may reply at some length to prior essays), review articles, occasional transcriptions and translations of oral texts, a digest of work in progress, and a regular column for notices of conferences and other matters of interest. In addition, occasional issues will include an ongoing annotated bibliography of relevant research and the annual Albert Lord and Milman Parry Lectures on Oral Tradition. *OT* welcomes contributions on all oral literatures, on all literatures directly influenced by oral traditions, and on non-literary oral traditions. Submissions must follow the list-of reference format (style sheet available on request) and must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return or for mailing of proofs; all quotations of primary materials must be made in the original language(s) with following English translations. Authors should submit two copies of all manuscripts. Most contributions will be reviewed by at least one specialist reader and one member of the editorial board before a final decision is reached. Review essays, announcements, and contributions to the Symposium section will be evaluated by the editor in consultation with the board.

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Contents

Editor's Column.....233

John H. McDowell
Immanence and Immanent Truth.....235

Jarold Ramsey
Generic and Racial Appropriation in Victoria Howard's "The Honorable Milt" 263

E. A. Mackay
Narrative Tradition in Early Greek Oral Poetry and Vase Painting.....282

Betsy Bowden
Chaucer New Painted (1623): Three Hundred Proverbs in Performance Contex 304

Robin Waugh
Word, Breath, and Vomit: Oral Competition in Old English and Old Norse Literature.....359

Susan Niditch
Oral Register in the Biblical Libretto: Towards a Biblical Poetic 387

Werner H. Kelber
Language, Memory, and Sense Perception in the Religious and Technological Culture of Antiquity and the Middle Ages 409

Review Essay
Jesse L. Byock
The Fornaldarsögur: *Stephen Mitchell's Contribution*.....451

About the Authors.....459

Index to Volume 10.....461

Editor's Column

With this issue of *Oral Tradition* we offer our readership a salamagundi of essays on an international variety of fields. John McDowell begins the discussion with his remarks on immanence as a characteristic and crucial feature of traditional discourse, drawing particularly from his fieldwork in southern Native American verbal art. Jarold Ramsey also focuses on Native American oral tradition, forming a small cluster on that important and extremely diverse area; in addition, he probes the effect of gender on narrative voice in a tale from the Clackamas Chinook.

From Sibundoy and Chinook we take a long step back and eastward to the subject of E. A. Mackay's contribution on ancient Greece, which tackles a fascinating set of correspondences between the representational codes of vase-painting and Homeric epic. Betsy Bowden then moves forward in time to the English Middle Ages and Renaissance with her recovery of performance context for a neglected collection of proverbs (with a Chaucerian connection) composed by William Painter; the collection is published for the first time here. Robin Waugh's interest, still against the background of the Middle Ages, is in another aspect of "orality," namely the somatic emphasis in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse narrative on the various functions of the mouth and the breath.

From this point Susan Niditch takes up the "song," considering the evidence in the Hebrew Bible for a linguistic register or specialized idiom ascribable to its origin in oral tradition, and then going on to discuss the implications of that expressive medium. Werner Kelber's subject is far the broadest and most ambitious of the issue: nothing less than a historical sketch of how concepts of language, memory, and sense perception modulated from earliest times through the medieval period. With Jesse Byock's contextual reading of Stephen Mitchell's recent book, *Heroic Sagas and Ballads*, the conversation comes temporarily to a close.

The next issue of *Oral Tradition* (11, i) will present a unique glimpse of epics along the famous "Silk Roads," an immense stretch of territories and peoples across northeast Europe and vast parts of central Asia. We are particularly proud to be presenting this group of essays, many of them translated specifically for inclusion in this collection, on areas that are little known to mainstream Western scholarship, largely because of the language barriers. With this issue readers may expect to hear, perhaps for the first time, of Mongolian, Tibetan, Chinese, Indian, Palawan, Caucasian, and Khalkan epics as well as of the Finnish *Kalevala*, more familiar to those of us laboring in the Eurocentric vineyard.

Also in the future are special issues on Native American and on South Asian women's traditions, as well as the more customary miscellaneous issues that, like the present one, attempt to make connections and portray contrasts by illustrating the international ubiquitousness and diversity of oral traditions.

As always, we welcome your manuscripts, responses, and suggestions.

John Miles Foley, Editor

Oral Tradition, 10/2 (1995): 235-262

Immanence and Immanent Truth

John H. McDowell

> The process of the affecting presence is the process of bringing work into the powers of being, of making the hidden visible, the latent manifest, the inaudible audible, the stilled dynamic—of making the intransigent tractable.
>
> (Armstrong 1981:19)

In a recent attempt to account for the cathartic power of traditional expressive speech forms, I introduced the notion of *commemorative* discourse, which is differentiated from its counterpart, *informative* discourse, on the basis of referential, structural, and acoustic properties (McDowell 1992). With regard to spoken discourse, informative utterance typically exhibits irregular (or only slightly regularized) prosodies and its referential capacity takes in the whole sweep of routine experience. Commemorative utterance, in contrast, exhibits more regularized prosodies in the process of asserting or formulating something that I called *immanent truth*, by which I intended approximately the set of ideas, values, and associations that are in some sense constitutive of the collectivity.

In working through this notion I was left a bit uneasy about the privileged referential domain indexed by commemorative discourse. The term *immanent truth* slipped into the argument without first proving its credentials. I had in mind a truth so basic that it could not be challenged without departing from the reigning conceptual order, a truth whose status had come to be accepted as "natural" (see Bourdieu 1977). I initially developed the idea of commemorative discourse with reference to the ballads (*corridos*) of Mexico's Costa Chica (in the state of Guerrero), in an

attempt to explain the peculiar weight of these narratives within the local mentality. John Foley's notion of "the immanent poetic tradition" (1991:44), that is, the tradition immanent in the poetry, is helpful here, but I am seeking to describe an even deeper resonance, one in which the ethos of the community is somehow immanent in the tradition. Moreover, whereas Foley is primarily concerned with text explication, I am interested in coming to terms with the cultural uses and functions of verbal artifacts. I argue that the ballad protagonists "emerge as larger-than-life figures, prototypical in their stubborn postures of defiance and allegiance" (1992: 409). The *corrido*, as an instance of commemorative utterance, taps into "the well-springs of consensus within the community . . . Sidonio [a ballad hero] and his companions sally forth as incarnations of the Costa Chica everyman, as quasi-mythical figures who portray in vivid detail the destiny that encloses and marks us all" (415).

As I puzzle over these matters I believe that the key to immanent truth, at least with regard to the theory of commemoration, lies in the experience of *immanence* (from the Latin, "dwelling in"), normally defined as a "pervasive presence within something," and in theological terms as "the presence of God throughout the universe" (Garmonsway 1965:*s.v.*). The term possesses a fascinating history in Western theology and philosophy, where it is often made to stand in contrast to *transcendence*, the notion of an order external to our experience of the world. Benedict de Spinoza, the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher (of Spanish Judaic extraction) launched the contemporary career of *immanence* in formulating his *idea vera*, a "true idea" or first principle, of a deity immanent in the universe. One rendition of this principle reads as follows: "God is identical with all that is, and is thus the single substance in existence—necessary, self-caused and eternal, encompassing all the aspects and dimensions of reality, including matter and mind, extension and thought, finite and infinite" (Yovel 1989:6).

Spinoza's postulation was revolutionary in the context of the reigning Christian and Cartesian dualism, which presupposed a transcendent God, but we cannot begin to trace here the convoluted debate that has swirled around these issues among Western philosophers nor the important role of the concept of immanence in the development of modern aesthetics (see Mileur 1984; Kramer 1983; Peterfreund 1988). For our purposes, the essence of immanence is *presence*, the experience of actively perceiving, of registering through the senses the tangible qualities of those entities thought to be real. Immanent truth, then, would be a truth backed by *presence*, by the experience of immediacy, and specifically the presence of constitutive elements within the local ethos. This insight helps explain the wild

enthusiasm of Costa Chica audiences when local *corridos* are performed. Their shouts of approval, their strident affirmations of local identity, recognize the presence of indigenous archetypes personified in the ballad protagonists. It would be safe to say (anticipating a point I will develop below) that these *gritos* assert not only recognition of this presence but also identification with it.

What I would like to do in this essay is to pursue the notion of immanence with reference to a set of expressive forms cultivated by the Sibundoy Indians of the Colombian Andes, a site where I have conducted extensive field research. The Sibundoy peoples include several indigenous communities speaking Inga (of the Quechuan family) and Kamsá (a language isolate, the last remnant of archaic Quillasinga). Despite their linguistic differences, the Sibundoy peoples for the most part share a common culture, the result of their long (though not always friendly) coexistence in the Sibundoy Valley. The Sibundoy Valley is a verdant ellipse in the southwestern corner of Colombia, situated just at the northern fringe of Incan influence and transitional between the highlands and lowlands at this latitude of the Andes.

Sibundoy expressive discourse presupposes the Sibundoy account of ethnogenesis, an account that centers around the formative actions and continuing influence of the ancestors, known as *ñugpamandacuna*, "the first people," a generalized stratum of original humans. These first people are viewed as accomplishing a transition between a primordial time when only the celestial deities were active to the contemporary period marked by appropriate forms of physical and social reproduction. The ancestral period bridging these cosmic states was one of rife spiritual potency that had to be contained and marginalized in order for society to flourish.

Sibundoy expressive forms reference and rehearse this cosmogonic setting. As we shall observe, they occasion experiences of immanence in the form of ancestral presence. In these expressive arenas the implicit structural principles of Sibundoy cosmology are made tangible to the senses and palpable to the imagination. In some of these genres this ancestral presence is vicarious or virtual; in shamanic singing as in carnival dancing, it becomes at moments almost visceral. We shall see that immanent truth, in this setting at least, is a cultural artifact that is sustained by an extensive network of contrastive and complementary expressive forms.

Sibundoy Carnival

We have entered the house of the alguacil mayor, one of the chief officers of the cabildo, the community organ of self-government. We are a singing, dancing horde, maybe one hundred of us, musician-dancers arrayed in feathered coronas (crowns) and traditional capisayos (ponchos). At every step we are presented tutumas (gourd cups) of chicha (maize beer) by fellow musician-dancers porting larger aluminum containers of the refreshing and intoxicating beverage. On all sides circulate flutists, sporting flutes ranging from barely a foot long to as long as a yard or more, each intoning (but not in unison) the carnival melody. Other dancers beat the steady carnival rhythm on drums or keep the same beat with seed rattles or jars filled with small stones. From time to time one catches the sweet tones of a harmonica drifting nearby, and blasts from the hollowed sugar cane stalks and horn trumpets assault the ears from all directions. Here and there someone sings a verse from the carnival song, and the web of sound is punctuated with the cry: "Klistrinyi, klistrinyi," ("celebrate the day!"). Our motley carnival orchestra has no need of conductor, score, or audience; it is held together by the isochronic rhythm and the plaintive strains of the carnival melody. In the midst of all this fanfare, a remarkable transformation occurs: the ecstatic dancers take on an altered identity as ancestral spirit beings, and we are transported to the cosmic juncture when the first human beings wrested spiritual dominion away from the aucas, the heathen savages of the region. It is carnival time in the Sibundoy Valley and the ancestral spirits once again wander the earth.

This account, constructed from notes that I made during and after one Sibundoy carnival season, is intended to convey some sense of the immediacy of the carnival experience from the standpoint of its central players, the musician-dancers. The key public events of Sibundoy carnival occur in the towns of Santiago (on Monday) and Sibundoy (on Tuesday), when members of the Ingano and Kamsá communities, respectively, arrive in town from the outlying *veredas* or hamlets to celebrate the advent of a new carnival period. Members of the indigenous communities arrayed as musician-dancers circle the plaza of these towns, enter church to receive the counsel and blessing of the priest, and then spill out into the plaza where they commence to celebrate in earnest. After circling the plaza a few times and engaging in a range of ritual games there (see Dover 1995), they filter into the "official" houses of the communities, the *cabildo* and the homes of its chief officers. There they receive ample portions of chicha, and there they consummate the transformation into ancestral spirits. After perhaps an

hour in this state, people drift away towards their own veredas where they continue for two or three days and nights to dance the carnival music as they wander from house to house, receiving fresh chicha at every stop.

I want to highlight here the transition from "normal" reality to the special reality of carnival, accomplished through a combination of effects: the donning of feathered crowns, the imbibing of chicha and sugar-cane alcohol, the pulsating envelope of the carnival music, and the continuous dancing that eventually induces a trance-like state of consciousness. This sensory assault precipitates an entry into the ancestral world, a world that is thoroughly familiar to members of the communities through exposure to mythic narratives, to the healing practices of the native doctors, and to a storehouse of folk religious belief and practice (see McDowell 1989). Sibundoy carnival reactivates a formative moment in cosmic history, the decisive moment that foreshadows the establishment of Sibundoy civilization. The centerpiece in this transformation is the illusion of ancestral *presence*, the perception that the ancestors have returned, or alternatively, that the modern people have become, provisionally, the ancestors.

Carnival in the Sibundoy Valley is thus a time of enhanced spiritual presence, when the implicit, partially concealed spirits that animate the local belief system become tangible presences. The carnival musician-dancers are the primary, but not the exclusive manifestation of this extraordinary cosmic inversion; on the fringe of carnival events one encounters the *sanjuaneros* who solicit gifts for their babies (plastic dolls they carry about) and the menacing straw-cloaked spirits who come at you speaking in high-pitched voices and require a few coins or cigarettes before they will relent. Sibundoy ancestral spirits are believed to be hovering about at all times, but during the carnival interlude they appear as visible and audible presences, in the process (as we shall see) of a re-enactment of the founding of Sibundoy society.

Sayings, Blessings, and Cures

Immanent truth in the Sibundoy Valley revolves around the exemplary doings of these ancestors who are brought to mind during social events both routine and extraordinary. It would not be an exaggeration to state that ancestral spirits accompany the modern people in every step of their mortal journey. The influence of the ancestors is most pervasive in the sayings attributed to them, which guide people through the phases of the life cycle. The sayings of the ancestors are formulaic propositions adducing

the likely implications of specific physical or psychical manifestations. Many of them are essentially benign in their frame of reference:

(Kamsá)
bokoy tkojotjena,
ibsana wabtena jabinynam.
If you dream of chicha [maize beer],
you will see rain at dawn.

But a significant portion of the corpus entails more weighty concerns:

(Quechua)
santo piso huasi ucuma yaycumi tapia,
huahuacuna huañungapa o dañucugmanda.
The centipede enters your house, it is a sign:
the children are to die,
or they will be harming them.

(Quechua)
bailacugta muscuchimi, chica llaquica.
You are made to dream that you are dancing,
that is sadness.

Whether addressing naturalistic observation or dream images, this portion of the corpus conveys highly significant revelations of spirit machinations operating upon human destinies. Especially foreboding premonitions will cause people to take preventive measures, often with the assistance of a native doctor.

It is believed that the sayings were coined by the ancestors and passed along in an unbroken chain of oral tradition from their time to ours where they persist as an important resource for interpreting experience and shaping responses to it. They are called (in Inga) *ñugpamandacuna imasa rimascacuna*, literally "what the first people were accustomed to say." When bringing a particular saying into the framework of a conversation, people sometimes use the expression *ñugpamandacuna nincuna: chi tapiami ca* ("The first people would say: 'That is an omen'"). Collectively, the sayings propose forms of behavior that are in keeping with the example and wisdom of the elders; they are a kind of practical guide to everyday problems. But their import extends to the crucial business of detecting and combating spiritual sickness, a dreaded condition that leaves the person and his or her family vulnerable to all forms of misfortune.

The sayings of the ancestors permeate every arena of daily life in the valley, so that people are constantly reminded of the cosmological matrix; indeed, this matrix can be said to condition their experience of the world at all times. The ancestors are invoked less casually in a number of speech forms associated with the discharge of community business. Elsewhere I have explored the combined impact of *blessing* and *cure* as elements in an indigenous survival plan (McDowell 1990). Each of these remedies involves forms of appropriate discourse and each draws its legitimacy from the example of the ancestors. The blessing is a social instrument performed through the use of ceremonial speech. Such speech is an oratory that graces all moments of public gathering and can even intrude into informal conversation when one speaker seeks to honor or acquire leverage over another. It is composed of chanted phrases lauding the example of the ancestors and imploring their benevolent intervention.

Ceremonial speeches recognize the present occasion by assimilating it to an eternal charter established by the ancestors. Because this speech form emerged in the context of the colonial system, it reveals layering of the traditional respect for the ancestors with a litany of Catholicism. In this syncretism, an equivalence is established between Jesus Christ and Our Father the Sun, and the traditional ancestors are implicitly connected to Catholic prophets and saints. These speeches are very structured in terms of phonetic output, evincing an aural texture reminiscent of the chanting tonalities of Catholic prayer. The Sibundoy invest this speaking style with the capacity to reach the ears of the ancestors.

Consider, as an instance, a series of speeches that are associated with the Sibundoy carnival. I draw here from Kamsá texts provided by my host and research partner, don Justo Jacanamijoy of the vereda San Felix. As part of the round of activities associated with carnival season in the Sibundoy Valley, persons of lower sociopolitical standing solicit a blessing from their superiors. As Justo puts it: "The blessing is solicited from an elder relative, or from anyone you hold in respect." Formerly, any Kamsá individual might solicit the blessing from the *cacique* or traditional chief. Nowadays, here are some of the dyads customarily involved in the blessing encounter:

son, daughter :: father, mother, father-in-law,
mother-in-law
nephew :: uncle (on mother's side)
younger brother :: older brother
godchild :: godfather
compadre :: compadre
any adult :: any member of the *cabildo* (tribal council)

The sequence begins as the younger person approaches the elder and requests the blessing. These texts are derived from a simulated performance by Justo Jacanamijoy:

THE CARNIVAL BLESSING
(Kamsá)

i) solicitation

a dios ndoka remidio taita chká xmutsepasentsia
By the grace of God so be it Father, please forgive me

mnté chkaté tojabinyna oboyejwaite klistrinyi
Today this day of carnival festivity has dawned

mntxá tsuwustona ndoka remidio
Thus I come following the carnival spirit so be it

taitabe botamán palabra razona lastema karidad xkatobemañe
Please be so kind as to give me father's beautiful word of advice

At this point the solicitor kneels before the elder, and removes his carnival crown; the elder then delivers the blessing:

ii) the blessing

apaye ndoka remidio basabe barie *5*
That's very kind of you so be it for my son-in-law's part

chká tkojajwabo ngnatena oboyejwaite tojabinynana
Thus you have taken a mind as this day of festivity has dawned

ntxamo mas remidio muchaisebema ndoka remidio
We have no other choice so be it

bngabe taitana respeto kwamojiitseperdena
Without losing respect for Our Father surely we must proceed

mntxá kwamojiitsashekwastona ndoka remidio
Thus we are following in the footsteps of the ancestors so be it

tempska yayanga besawelanga tmetsekostumbra palabrena
From the old days our grandparents and great-grandparents
have kept this custom

ndaye remidiona nye testigona kaba kema palabrena kwanetsekedana
So it has come to pass that only a part of this custom remains

kwamenetsebojanya ndoka remidiona
We are surely conserving it so be it

oboyejwaite yomenana komntxasa
There used to be this day of festivity among our people

muchuftsenoperdenga
We must proceed without losing respect

disomanda por diosa kwedadoka kortisia respetoka
For the sake of God be careful, courteous, respectful

mntxá basabe barina kochoboyejwaye kem utate o kem ungate
Thus for my son-in-law's part, you will make merry these two days
or three days

chká yowetsakostumbrana kausna
Because such is the custom we have always kept

i taitabe derecho karidadna kwedadoka mntxá trabajo
And the Father's will provides thus with care His work

impadna tekochjatxataye pamilliangabe barina
In measure you will enjoy yourself in behalf of the community

ndoka remidio basabe barina botamán palabra botamán kortisio
So be it on my son-in-law's behalf, a beautiful word, a beautiful courtesy

lastema karidado kwaxkotsolastimañe
Without harm a kindness you bestow on me

ndone kwachandopodia mntxá stutxoye jenokedanas
I cannot thus cast you aside

ndoka remidio selokana bngabe btsá
So be it from heaven Our Father

ntxamo respeto itsjiitseperdenkana chaxopasentsia
Thus without losing respect I will proceed, may He forgive me

i chentxa despuesna basabe barina chka xmojaisepasentsia
And then later on my son-in-law's behalf, please forgive me

polvo jaftsekeda bwakwatxekena respeto kwachenoperdey
With this hand that will return to dust I will proceed

(the sign of the cross is made over the kneeling person's head)

la bendición del padre, del hijo, del espíritu santo
the blessing of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Ghost

oboyejwaite tojabinynana ndoka remidio
A day of festivity has dawned so be it

nye ratotema xmaisebiajwa
Just for a while let us be merry

The younger person now rises and addresses the elder:

iii) <u>thanks</u>

ndoka remidio taita chká xmojatspasentsia
So be it Father thus please forgive me

oboyejwaite tojabinyna kausna respeto kwatsabayenoperdena
As it has dawned a day of festivity I am proceeding with respect

ndoka remidio tonday delikadokasna
So be it since there is no problem between us

nye nyantena mntxa bominye temochjaisejajon
If only for another year thus our vision will continue

ndoñesna nye mora nyetxa bominya kwatsjaiisekukjna
If not then only to this point surely my vision has guided me

ndoka remidio taitabe botamán lisentsiakna *35*
So be it with father's beautiful blessing

ndoka remidio mntxá xkwaisoboyejwa
So be it thus I will rejoice

> At this point the younger person takes a flower and sheds its petals over the older person's head, removing the elder's carnival crown and saying:

lisentsia taita klistrinyi klistrinyi taita
By your leave, Father, celebrate, celebrate the day, Father

We are dealing here with a ritual dialogue whose focal point is the conferring of the blessing, which is reciprocated in the shedding of the flowers by the newly blessed person. This event opens with a brief solicitation as the younger person takes note of the occasion ("Today this day of carnival festivity has dawned") and then requests "Father's beautiful word of advice." The older player then launches into the principal speech of the event. The first section of his speech recognizes the carnival occasion and even brings in a charged political note: "From the old days our grandparents and great-grandparents have kept this custom; so it has come to pass that only a part of this custom remains." In fact, the Capuchin priests successfully extinguished much of the festive life of the Sibundoy peoples during the first half of the present century (see Bonilla 1972).

The speaker initiates his counsel to the petitioner starting around line 15: "For the sake of God be careful, courteous, respectful." The blessing segment begins with line 20: "So be it on my son-in-law's behalf, a beautiful word, a beautiful courtesy." The climactic blessing sequence occurs with the recitation of the Catholic formula *la bendición del padre, del hijo, del espíritu santo* in line 27. Here the elder stands in as surrogate

priest and in this guise releases the petitioner to enjoy the carnival celebration. The petitioner then brings closure to the event by uttering the spirited words, *klistrinyi, klistrinyi*, as he or she sheds the petals of a flower over the elder's head.

Although these speeches foreground the Christian connection, the indigenous ancestors reside within them as a kind of unspoken counterpoint. Our Father, *bngabe taita*, is a composite figure, containing the Christian Jesus Christ as well as the indigenous solar deity, *shinye* (see McDowell 1994). This complex religious orientation surfaces in the following ritual language formula (line 9):

mntxá kwamojiitsashekwastona ndoka remidio

The pivotal verb here can be parsed as follows:

(1) *kwa-* mood of certainty
(2) *-mo-* plural subject
(3) *-jii-* verbal marker of respect
(4) *-ts-* progressive aspect
(5) *-a-* preverb, indicates collective action
(6) the root *shekwastona*, "to follow in their footsteps"

Kamsá ritual language is laden with heavy, complex verbal structures like these, to a far greater extent than other modes of Kamsá speech. The sense of this construction is something like, "We are surely following in their footsteps." The verbal root, *shekwastona*, carries a strong connotation of dedication to the Sibundoy ethos as established by ancestral example.

The ceremonial speeches occasion a provisional sense of ancestral presence rather than a full-fledged experience of immanence. With the ancestors as eavesdroppers, ceremonial speeches bring people into the beneficent fold of ancestral example. The strongly rhythmic acoustics move people towards an experience of the ineffable, reinforced by the religious import of its chanted phrases.

If the blessing operates to smooth over social interaction within the community, the cure reaches out to encompass relations with the spirit beings. One key component of Sibundoy curing is the "singing to the spirits" performed by native doctors who have mastered the language of the spirits, a language replete with singing and chanting, humming, whistling, and ritual blowing, all to accompaniment of a rhythmic shaking of the medicine branches. Sibundoy native doctors are widely respected throughout the region, by indigenous people and mestizos alike. They trace their lineage to the lowland *médicos*, with whom they customarily serve an apprenticeship, and to the *tigre* (jaguar) who is closely associated with

lowland medicine. In their singing, the native doctors announce their pedigree and call upon the spirit helpers required for spiritual curing and fortification.

The native doctors' "singing to the spirits" precipitates a genuine manifestation of the ancestors, for this spiritual idiom effects a dialogue between human medium and his spirit helpers. The singing to the spirits, with its compendium of assorted auditory effects, is considered a communicative medium common to humans and ancestral spirits. Here the ancestors are not merely eavesdropping on a conversation among humans. Instead, they are directly involved as the intended recipients of auditory production. The expressive code for this channel is more musical than verbal, as whistled and whispered melodies are interwoven with chanted verbal components.

Immanence is very real in this setting, and it is further enhanced by the customary ingestion, by doctor and patient alike, of the *huasca*, a hallucinogenic preparation with the active ingredients of LSD (Schultes and Hofmann 1979; McDowell 1989). This medicine, known popularly as *yagé* or *ayahuasca*, is defined in the Sibundoy context as a vehicle for breaking through to the ancestors. In the hallucinogenic state, the singing to the spirits creates a powerful sensation of direct contact with the ancestors. Their presence is experienced as reality, in a setting thought to be more real than experience of the ordinary. These curing sessions activate a kind of vicarious immanence, an encounter with the ancestors mediated through the psychotropic effects of the drug and the acoustic performance of the native doctor.

Mythic Narrative

Sayings of the ancestors are attributed to the first people, and blessing and cure each presuppose the continuing presence of ancestral spirits. But it is in the mythic narratives that speakers rehearse the available information about the ancestors and their actions. These narratives are primarily a corpus of knowledge about the ancestors, but in performance they obtain an important additional status, as verbal art objects creating the illusion of ancestral presence. "The Tale of the Heathens' Walk" sheds light on the scenes enacted and re-enacted during Sibundoy carnival. This performance emerged in a late afternoon session on a June day in 1976. I had been invited into the cabildo in Santiago for a "drop" of chicha and a cup or two of *aguardiente*. Present were Manuel Muyuy, the governor at the time, his wife, and a young fellow who was a junior officer, *alguacil*, in the cabildo.

After some brief conversation, I made a request for performances of traditional narrative. Mr. Muyuy agreed to tell about the heathens' walk, and graciously allowed me to record this performance on tape. He delivered a casual narrative performance, one that tells the tale but also meditates on key elements in the tale, such as the exact nature of the *aucas*, and the significance of seizing the auca's feathered headdress. Mr. Muyuy's performance is punctuated by comments from members of the audience, including a couple of admonishments to keep the performance in the Inga language.

I have transcribed this performance in a manner that seeks to capture some of its more salient qualities of phrasing and emphasis. Line breaks indicate the placement of intonational closure and pauses between utterances; larger spaces between consecutive lines indicate boundaries between adjacent episodes. Indentations mark asides as audience members added details or interjections. I supply the original Inga text with a fairly close English translation beneath it.

aucacunapa purepi parlo
The Tale of the Heathens' Walk
(Quechua)

chi aucacunapa pureypi parlasa
Of the heathens' walk I will speak

> *aha*
> yes
>
> *sug yahuar sutuchisi, sutuchisi parlay*
> of a drop of blood spilling, it is said, spilling, speak

aucacunapa pureypi no verá entendey entendey
the heathens' walk, you see, perhaps to understand, to understand

> *aha*
> yes

auca pureypi entendengapa
so that you will understand the walk of the heathen

> *aha*
> yes

aucaca casami purencuna
and so the heathen walk about

runa cristianota runata cahuaspaca purencunami casa no
looking for human beings, for people, they walk about like this,
you see

eso es lo chi aucacuna purenacumi
that's it, those heathens are walking about

yahuar cahuaspa micungapa runata no
looking for blood, in order to eat people, you see

runaca yucami miticunga caymanda cayma yucami miticucungalla
the people will have to flee, from one place to another,
they will just have to flee

nipica sug ricumi buduquerahua
then along comes one with a blow gun

amigo no ya buduquerahua
an Ingano, you see, with a blow gun

yuca aucataca flecha cachacungalla no
he will just have to be sending an arrow to the heathen, you see

ya entonces que cuti chica imata ruranga
yes, well then, again, that one, what will he do?

pero imata chasa animal caticuchu
and so like that the rascal might be following him

auca animal claro yucami micungapa
that heathen rascal, sure, he has to eat

chi runata yucami caticunga micungapa no
that person he will have to follow in order to eat, you see

y ahora que manima pudi pudi apingapa no
and now what, but no, he cannot, he cannot catch him, you see

y mana pudi apingapa no y nada
and he cannot catch him, you see, not at all

y yucarca paycar vencerca flechahua flechahua vencerca
and he had to defeat him, with the arrow he defeated him

rirca ña catimaca ña miticurca a la playa
he went now, following him, now he fled to the beach

playa suticanca
the beach, as it is called

nipica pay nig carcasi sinchi yacha
then around there he was a powerful doctor, it is said

y chipi payca catichirca carajo calpachirca buduquerahua
and there he followed him, damn! he made him run with the blow gun

venenohua pambarca paytaca suma
with poison he buried that one well

se fue miticurca niyca miticurca chi upa aucaca
he left, he fled, as they say, he fled, that mute heathen

upa aucaca miticurca
the mute heathen fled

aja pluma pluma tucuy yucarca
yes, feathers, all kinds of feathers he had

calpasi rirca sug chi—may chi yaco patachu chi
he ran, it is said, he went, where, to the edge of that river

amigoca upasi mana carca calpachirca
the Ingano was not mute, it is said, he made him run

auca calpachihuraca maypimi urmagri
when he was chasing the heathen to the place he would go to fall

allí está y chicar chipi apagrirca
there he is, and then he went to take him there

chi cahuagrirca
he went to see him there

u carajo chipicar paypa pluma coronaca pluma tucuy tiapusca
and damn! there with his crown of feathers, all those feathers, they were there for him

chasquigrirca pay tranquilo ya ve
he went to receive them, he was calm, you see

y lo mató
and he killed him

ingapi
In Inga!

no pues chica manima pudirca pero huañuchingapa chi indiota
so you see, he just couldn't kill that Indian

manima pudirca no
he couldn't do it, you see

auca animal cascaca cucu pues no
the heathen rascal was a spirit, you see

cucu diga cucu es un ser persona indio no
a spirit, let's say, a spirit, it is a being, a person being, Indian, you see

ningapaca yangasina ningapaca auca
so to speak, not like a real person, so to speak, a heathen

micudur runata micudur runata
an eater of people, an eater of people

cuna horaca caypi micunshanchi camcunata tucuyta no
nowadays here we don't eat you people at all, you see

auca chi micumi sutipa ya chica micumi
the heathen, that was truly his food, that was his food

bien bueno le cogió la pluma y todo bien
fine, and so he picked up the feathers and all was well

ingapica hermano
in Inga, brother

y apircasi pluma
and he seized, it is said, the feathers

y plumataca apircasi quinquin tarirca
and those feathers he seized, it is said, for himself he found them

quidarca sinchi yacha sinchi
he remained a powerful doctor, powerful

y paysi carca dueñoca tucuy imata de gente de animales
and he was the owner, it is said, of all kinds of people and animals

no ve sutipa nincuna yacha animal no
you see, truly they say, quite a doctor, you see

ningapaca ningapaca ningapaca pues tucuy ningapaca
so to say, so to say, so to say, thus all, so to say

tucuy tigre uso tucuy dueño quidagrica
all jaguars, bears, he went to remain their owner

paypa poderpi quidagringa yacha
in his power, he went to remain a powerful doctor

chica pero nombreca mana huillarca ima suticagta
that one, but he didn't leave us his name, what he was called

ya ve ni mana yacharcanchi pi nombre cagta
so you see, we don't even know how he was called

yachaca pero yachaca y sinchi tucurca
a doctor, but a doctor and a powerful one he became

y yacha animal quien sabe imachar payca
and quite a doctor, who knows what he was?

carca volador carca tigre tucuy hasta este digamos pues huacamahi pajuil
a flyer he was, a jaguar, everything, even this huacamayo, the parrot

digamos esos pajaros no muy sabedor
let's say, those birds, you see, he was very knowing

yapa yacha quedó escrito con el pero sin saber
very wise, that was his destiny, but without knowing it

y chi auca y chi aucataca huañuchirca
and that heathen, and he killed that heathen

y payca huañuchirca y lo quitó
and he killed him, and he took it

y aparcami herencia de el herencia herencia claro
and he took it, the inheritance of that one, the inheritance, inheritance, surely

paypa yuyaytaca apapurca paypa umama
his knowledge he took for himself into his own mind

claro que mas apapurca paypa yuyay umata no
surely more, he took for himself his mind, you see

chica carca yuyayyugca
that one was an owner of knowledge

caypica purircami caypica purecurcami
and here he walked about, here he was walking about

uso tucuspa aja tigre tucuspa
becoming a bear, yes, becoming a jaguar

manchachinacurayami oveja ima yucascata
he would be frightening the sheep or whatever they had

y micurca caypimi purica chi oso no
and he ate, walking about here, that bear, you see

runa animalmi puricurca
that man was walking about

runa runa purimi
that man, that man, he walked about

mana carcachu imata animal
he was not an animal

sino payca como asi mustrami puricurca
but he was walking about like this, naked

payca carcami como así
he was like this

yapa yacha yapa yacha
quite a doctor, quite a doctor

allí está
there it is

The story is etiological in that the encounter between the *auca* and the *amigo* accounts for beliefs and practices associated with the Sibundoy

native doctors; it is allegorical in that it represents the emergence of Sibundoy civilization. The auca is a heathen, cannibalistic savage, not exactly a person but rather a spirit being. The aucas are portrayed as a substrate population in Andean ethnohistory (see Guaman Poma de Ayala 1615), a bellicose contingent that had to be removed to make way for civil society. Our narrator devotes considerable effort to defining this primordial creature who walks about hunting the early people who are his food supply. Mr. Muyuy's ambivalence is evident in the halting characterization he provides in lines 37-40:

auca animal cascaca cucu pues no
the heathen rascal was a spirit, you see

cucu diga cucu es un ser persona indio no
a spirit, let's say, a spirit, it is a being, a person being, Indian, you see

ningapaca yangasina ningapaca auca
so to speak, not like a real person, so to speak, a heathen

micudur runata micudur runata
an eater of people, an eater of people

The lexicon employed in this passage is interesting. I translate *auca* as "heathen," in an attempt to capture the sense of otherness central to the term. The word *cucu*, which I translate as "spirit," came to signify "demon" or "devil" under the influence of the Catholic priests, though it is clear that its original semantic frame was more neutral. The narrator is at a loss to pin down this amorphous and anomalous figure, who is like a person but not a person, an *indio* but not like the modern Indians.

The auca's adversary, on the other hand, is decidedly a human. He is labelled an *amigo*, a term that refers to Quechua-speaking associates in the adjacent lowland areas. The amigos are perceived as branch populations of the Sibundoy indigenous communities, and a key portion of Sibundoy mythology portrays the amigos as a kind of ancestral source of the modern Sibundoy peoples (see McDowell 1994). I have translated *amigo* as "Ingano," but perhaps "proto-Ingano" would be more accurate.

The face-off between the auca and the amigo is thus a collision between the substrate population of the zone and the ancestors of the people who would come to replace them. The amigo possesses a *buduquera*, a blow gun, an artifact that gives him a distinct advantage over the auca. Blow guns are still familiar among the lowland peoples at the northwestern

fringe of the Amazon basin, and middle-aged Sibundoy consultants remember seeing them in the valley when they were children. With the blow gun in hand, the amigo is able to turn the tables on the auca, and the hunter becomes the hunted. The amigo, with the aid of technology unavailable to the auca, wins the contest and brings his foe down by the edge of a river.

The storyteller places great emphasis on the crown of feathers worn by the auca and appropriated by the amigo: "all those feathers, they were there for him" (line 32). Again the narrator lingers over an important and problematic detail: with the feathers, the amigo takes "the mind" of the auca, his spiritual "inheritance" (line 62). Thus it is made clear that the feather crown of the auca symbolizes or more accurately contains the spiritual knowledge of the auca. The protagonist of the tale, already a *sinchi yacha* (powerful doctor) at the outset, obtains an additional store of spiritual power through the appropriation of the auca's headdress. He emerges from the encounter *yapa yacha*, very wise, a great doctor, a powerful spiritual operator. In this condition he is able to roam the world as a bear or jaguar, even a flying creature.

Manuel Muyuy, our storyteller, signals the exemplary nature of his story's content through the curious expression, *quedó escrito con él*, which I translate "that was his destiny" (line 59). Literally, this phrase means, "it was written with him," but I have seized on its fateful or biblical aura in concocting my translation. The connotation is of a crucial turn in the progression of cosmic history; in this light the expression could be rendered, "that was our destiny through him." Clearly the narrator is claiming a portentous character for the events he narrates. He remarks as well the oddity that we do not know the name of this important progenitor, since "he didn't leave us his name" (line 53). The portrait that emerges is of an anonymous but consequential proto-Ingano, of a culture hero who performs tasks essential to the establishment of society.

As etiology and allegory this story provides a backdrop to the spiritual beliefs and practices active among the modern Sibundoy. The contemporary native doctors work within the confines of this historical charter, identifying the Ingano amigo as the original *sinchi*, practitioner of indigenous medicine. We also have a charter for the carnival celebrations, which feature feathered crowns inspired by the encounter between the auca and the amigo and its consequences. Another mythic narrative, *calusturinda taita*, "The Owner of the Carnival" (Sijindioy 1983) traces the origins of Sibundoy carnival to the culture hero who vanquishes the heathens.

Varieties of Immanence

The system I have described is, I believe, pervaded by immanent truth, founded on the premise of the ancestors as founders and protectors of a civilizing impulse. Immanent truth for the Sibundoy peoples can be formulated in a series of propositions about the ancestors and their continuing impact on the modern people. But let us turn our attention to the experience of immanence, which in the particular sense I have outlined here entails for the Sibundoy experiencing the presence of the ancestors. I believe that the presence of the Sibundoy ancestors is particularly fostered by participation in the kinds of expressive performances described above, not only these verbal ones but also artifactual, kinetic, and composite ritual forms.

I envision a scale of Sibundoy immanence organized according to degree, ranging from merely echoic intimations of the ancestors to full-fledged encounters with them, all of this lodged within a deeply evocative referential environment featuring the exemplary character of the Sibundoy first people. Providing much of this ambience are the sayings of the ancestors and the mythic narratives. The sayings and myths keep the memory of the ancestors alive and active, and each genre holds some potential to evoke the ancestors as well. But it is in the more formally organized speech genres, the ceremonial discourse and the singing to the spirits, and in the ecstatic carnival dancing, that ancestral presence becomes immediate and palpable.

The mythic narratives play a vital role in conveying knowledge about the ancestors, but their power to invoke them is somewhat limited by the iconic, representational character of narrative discourse (McDowell 1983). However, as I have shown elsewhere, narrative discourse has the potential to transcend its customary role of *recounting* experience and move towards *recreating* it instead. I have employed the term *narrative epiphany* to identify those moments when stories surmount their narrative vessels. In such moments the performance setting dissolves into the imagined scene of the plot, and the voices of story protagonists merge with the voice of the narrator to create a virtual encounter with the narrative substrate.

Sibundoy mythic narrative performances can precipitate epiphanies, bringing the audience members into *virtual* contact with the ancestors. These effects are stimulated by vocal and gestural devices, as performers seek to dramatize their stories. Gestures of eye, head, and hands are used to imply an identity between the surroundings of the performance event and physical entities mentioned in the tale. Thus the storyteller will gesture to

the eaves of a nearby house when describing the descent of Our Lord to a position just above the plaza on Corpus Christi day.

The vocal effects revolve primarily around episodes of reported speech (and reported animal voicings). Sibundoy narrators, especially the best of them, show great skill in evoking the protagonists of their tales by imitating their voices. Manuel Muyuy's performance of "The Tale of the Heathens' Walk" is remarkable for the absence of reported speech; he made no particular effort to dramatize the encounter between heathen and proto-Ingano. But a comment by his wife at the outset of the performance contains one interesting move towards experiential vitality (line 3):

sug yahuar sutuchisi, sutuchisi parlay
of a drop of blood spilling, it is said, spilling, speak

Her repetition of the verbal form, "spilling," recreates through the medium of speech the experience of watching blood drip, a repetitive process captured in the repeated verb.

The sayings of the ancestors, in spite of their expository character, contain elements contributing to an out-of-the-ordinary experience. I am thinking in particular of their symbolic language, which conjoins referents normally held separate from one another. The very inconformity between sign and event, between omen and result, the process of symbolic contamination that brings these two tokens into contact, is a reminder that a peculiar logic is at work in the sayings, what we might call a *spiritual* or *ancestral* logic. This juxtaposition of referents taken from contrastive experiential domains signals the presence of an extra-ordinary consciousness in the corpus of sayings and beckons, I believe, towards an encounter if not with the ancestors then at least with the ancestral mentality.

The ceremonial speeches occasion, as we have seen, a sense of ancestral proximity, but for the experience of true ancestral presence we must turn to the curing chants and songs of the native doctors. In these sessions, under the influence of psychoactive substances and pervasive acoustic rhythms, the Sibundoy people live the presence of their ancestors, as spirit helpers appear at the summons of the native doctor and register direct sensory impressions upon those assembled. Carnival dancing brings about, I suppose, the ultimate degree of immanence, the bodily incorporation of the ancestors, a true "in-dwelling" of the ancestors.

We have surveyed the sliding scale of Sibundoy immanence, ranging from provisional effects to palpable and even somatic ones. It is possible to devise in these materials a typology of immanence that might transfer to expressive systems in other cultural settings, starting with the ambient

referential apparatus that preserves objective knowledge about the cosmological nexus and culminating with the more profound experience of significant presence.

Conclusion

Immanent truth, by this account, both derives from and facilitates profound, very personal experiences of presence, and specifically of a particular sort of presence, one that we might label foundational. This immanence, or pervasive presence, is tied to sources of collective identity—for Sibundoy Indians, to exemplary ancestors both indigenous and Christian. We have seen in one setting how the numerous permutations of immanence, from faint to all-encompassing, support a collective vision of cosmogenesis. There is, in addition, a correlation between expressive means and levels of immanence, such that the more powerful experiences of presence are associated with more stylized discourses. This association of means and effects holds the key, I believe, to the phenomenology of commemoration, and I would like to explore these matters in bringing this essay to a close.

In my discussion of commemorative discourse, I proposed the notion of *speech narcosis*, the capacity of measured and allusive speech to instill an altered state of consciousness. The primary agent in this mood-altering capability is the impact of rhythmic sensory stimuli on the peripheral and central nervous systems. Here I make reference to a growing body of data and theory concerning neurological effects known as *driving* and *entraining* of brain rhythms through the application of a rhythmic external stimulus (Dobkin de Rios 1993). This research indicates that repetitive sensory impressions cause a spill-over effect that I have characterized as "the wholly-engaged brain" (McDowell 1992:419). It has been demonstrated that cerebral driving is associated with the experience of trance-like mental states.

A secondary factor in speech narcosis is the semantic opacity of these messages, which creates an aura of privileged understanding (Kermode 1979). The metaphorical pattern of messages encoding immanent truth, the way they encompass the broad sweep of history, their veiled implications for everyday behavior, all contribute to this promise of revelation. These sensory and conceptual elements work together to foster the impression of presence, since speech that is rhythmic and densely allusive seems to spring from an eternal source, somehow independent of the immediate circumstances of its production. It will be evident that the Sibundoy speech

forms activate these mood-altering features to a variable extent, remotely in the case of the narratives and the sayings, more forcefully in the case of the ceremonial speeches and the singing to the spirits. Most interesting is the carnival dancing, which brings to bear the entire range of transformative properties and thereby effects the most pervasive sensation of immanence. In this setting the drums lead the way in establishing an insistent rhythm, and the literature on altered states of consciousness indicates that the drum sonority, with its large profile of frequencies and heavy representation in the low frequency zone, is especially productive of the sonic driving effect (see Neher 1962).

In the grip of the ecstasy of the moment, the musician-dancers play the carnival melody on their flutes, a melody that is believed to have originated with the bird-people who populate the mythic narratives. The woven belts dangling from the carnival crowns, with their geometric portraits of ancestral figures, complement the sonic rhythms with visual rhythms of their own, and further evoke this formative phase in the rise of Sibundoy society, just as the colorful feathers suspended from the crown index the spiritual inheritance wrested from the aucas. Finally, the carnival song with its celebration of the joy and mystery of the moment ratifies the shared perception of an altered reality. On every front, in every medium, the carnival participants are bombarded with precisely the acoustic, visual, and representational messages that would channel them into a heightened state of awareness. It is in this crucible, where aural and visual rhythms conspire to summon the ancestors, that people experience the ultimate degree of immanence—themselves and their companions as ancestral spirits.

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Genderic and Racial Appropriation in Victoria Howard's "The Honorable Milt"

Jarold Ramsey

I

One of the major limitations of the system of structural analysis of oral narrative formulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss and developed by Edmund Leach and others is that it resolutely ignores the bearing on the stories being examined of individual performances and performers working within literary conventions, seeking instead to understand the generation and evolution of myth-narratives as being, in Dell Hymes' trenchant phrase, "an imperturbable self-transmogrification" (1981:327).

The perception that, on the contrary, oral narratives (mythic and otherwise) are significantly localized, textured, and sometimes highly personalized entities is one of the chief contributions of the *ethnopoetic* movement, as it has emerged in recent years in the translative and interpretive work, chiefly on Native American oral literature, of Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, J. Barre Toelken, Joel Sherzer, and others. Looked at "emically," that is, scrupulously "from inside" the originating culture, beginning if possible with the Native language itself, and drawing on ethnographic data, many Native American texts turn out to be not "imperturbable" artifacts of a classical and fixed tribal tradition, but rather literary expressions of particular and identifiable viewpoints between and within tribal communities—on matters of gender, morality, social class, race, aesthetic preference, and so on.

On the basic issue of literary modality, for example, whereas structural analysis does not challenge the long-standing Western assumption that traditional oral narrative is a kind of *prose* (so far as it worries about such issues at all), recent ethnopoetic analysis of several Native oral repertories indicates that, on the contrary, they constitute a *poetic* art,

involving measure according to line-units, expressive repetition, and other elements of versification. Hence to translate, present, and read such material in text-form as prose may well be a fundamental misappropriation of modes.

And in some instances—fewer, alas, than would be the case if only more Anglo fieldworkers had seen fit to identify and interrogate their "informants" as more than just linguistic or ethnological sources—it is possible to delineate and appreciate the individual literary skills, the distinctive *styles*, of Native recitalists. This is true, for example, in the texts recorded in the Pacific Northwest between the l890's and the l930's from the tellings of three gifted individuals who happened to be the last bearers of their tribes' repertories: Charles Cultee (Kathlamet Chinook), Clara Pearson (Nehalem Tillamook), and Victoria Howard (Clackamas Chinook).

In his ethnopoetic study of Cultee's performance of "The Sun's Myth" (as recorded by Franz Boas in the l890's in Bay Center, Washington), Dell Hymes has found compelling evidence of Cultee's re-shaping of traditional Kathlamet material so as to formulate a personal view of his people's apocalyptic predicament under Anglo encroachment at the end of the nineteenth century (Hymes 1975). And in my own recent work on Clara Pearson's Tillamook stories, as told in English to Elizabeth Jacobs in the l930's, I have been able to identify what appear to be Mrs. Pearson's distinctive narrative adaptations of her tribal repertory (which she learned in the Tillamook language) for Anglo understanding—specifically for reading rather than hearing (Ramsey 1990).

Further, close study of the transcribed repertories of Mrs. Pearson and Mrs. Howard reminds us that one of the crucial "local" variables capable of operating in oral tradition is *gender*—especially so where the line of story-transmission is known to have run through only one sex over several generations. Mrs. Howard told Melville Jacobs that her knowledge of Clackamas oral literature had come from her mother-in-law *wa'susgani* and her maternal grandmother *waga'yuh*, with some indication that this female lineage may have extended even further back in time (Jacobs 1959b: 120-21).

Hymes and I have both explored *en passant* what appear to be female appropriations and reconfigurations of a traditionally male-centered hero-story-type in Mrs. Howard's "Seal and her Younger Brother Lived There."[1]

[1] Hymes 1981:274-98; Ramsey 1983:76-95.

The hero-story, widely distributed throughout the Northwest and typified by "The Revenge against the Sky People" narrative of the coastal Coos tribe, recounts the exploits of a young man in revenging the murder and decapitation of his elder brother by "the Sky People." By means of a ladder of arrows, he ascends into the Sky Country, locates and interrogates the murderer's wife and then kills her and puts on her skin, and then after several near-disasters (notably when a child in the murderer's household observes that "she" looks like a man) succeeds in killing his brother's slayer and returns to earth with the missing head—which is then reattached to the brother's reanimated body.

This rousing story dramatizes the young hero's ability to be both "smart" and "proper"—indeed, he is heroically successful in his proper moral mission of revenge and recovery of kin precisely because he is so "smart," so self-controlled and resourceful in carrying out his mission. Mrs. Howard's "Seal and her Younger Brother" in effect turns this narrative inside out, for what appear to be special women's purposes. The young male hero is replaced by a young girl, who lives with her mother Seal and her brother, the girl's uncle, who is head of the household. When the uncle takes a "wife," the girl notices that the "wife" sounds like a man when urinating at night, but she is repeatedly chided for making this observation by her decorous mother: "Shush, your uncle's wife!" When the girl is awakened one night by something dripping down on her from her uncle's bed, she finds that it is blood—and that her uncle's throat has been cut, apparently by the ambiguous "wife," who has vanished. In this compelling story, as Dell Hymes was the first to point out, being "smart" and being "proper" are tragically in conflict—as the story ends, while Seal is conventionally mourning the death of the head of their household, her daughter bitterly denounces her for not paying attention: "In vain I tried to tell you!" (Hymes 1981:287ff.)

Although it is difficult to generalize about Mrs. Howard's narratives in terms of her culture, because we have so few instances of Clackamas literature from other recitalists, there is warrant, I believe, to claim that one of the persistent cultural themes reflected in *Clackamas Chinook Texts* is the predicament of women in a time of rapid and chaotic change.[2] How should

[2] The Clackamas people were living precisely at the end of the Oregon Trail, around what became Portland and Oregon City; hence their culture had been engulfed by the 1870's, and had vanished by the turn of the century—except for the remarkable survival of

the old ways of keeping a home and dealing with members of the opposite sex be adjusted to the new realities of Anglo life? What should older women be telling young girls—about the traditional Native values of hospitality and deference to strangers, for example; and how much of the traditions of social propriety should the young girls credit, given the disruptive pressures of acculturation? No wonder that the perplexities and anguish of older women and young girls figure so prominently in Mrs. Howard's stories, and no wonder that she (or one of her female storytelling predecessors among the Clackamas) turned the "Revenge against the Sky People" story quite inside out, replacing its point of view of the heroic disguised invader with the point of view of the "invaded" household, and specifically replacing the "smart and proper" male protagonist with the terribly conflicted young female protagonist, caught between her mother's traditional sense of propriety (which the story does not denigrate in principle), and what she comes to know experientially about the threat to her household from the sinister "wife."[3]

Another one of Mrs. Howard's Clackamas narratives, "The Honorable Milt! I Supposed Him for Myself," can provide us with a purer and in some ways more revealing instance of the process of appropriation in Native oral literature, and it also offers a welcome glimpse of the possibilities of humor in such appropriations. Before giving the text of the story, I should explain that its original title, as derived by Melville Jacobs from the protagonist's magical song, was "She Deceived Herself with Milt," but recent work text by Hymes makes it clear that the words of the Widow's song and hence of the title are more accurately rendered as given above (1987:323-29). Words and phrases in brackets are Jacobs' editorial interpolations for the purpose of clarification, as in cases of pronoun

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Mrs. Howard's repertory. For ethnographic descriptions of the Clackamas and their Chinookan neighbors, see Jacobs 1959b:8-21 and *passim*; 1960:vii-xi; and Beckham 1977.

[3] In part because of the rigidities of his psychoanalytic approach to literary interpretation, Jacobs is notably insensitive to the distinctly female perspective of much of Mrs. Howard's repertory. For a discussion of this defect in Jacobs' monumental work, see Thompson 1991.

ambiguity—which would not be problematic in oral performance in the original language.[4]

II

> People were living there. They were continuously smoke-drying salmon and various things. There was one widow. They [fishermen] would come, they would come ashore there. Now she would be going about at that place. Right after they threw them [their catch of fish] ashore, she would get one or two to take with her. She smoke-dried them. [In consequence] her house was full of food. In the winter they [other villagers] would get hungry, and they would buy various things from her. That is how she had many valuables.
>
> I do not know how long a time, and then she got one [large and fat] salmon, she butchered it well, she took out its milt. She thought, "Dear oh dear. It is nice. I shall not eat it." She wished, "Oh that you become a person." I do not know where she put it.
>
> I do not know how long a time afterward, and then some person was sleeping beside her. She thought, "Oh my! I wonder where the person came from to me." She lay there for a while. Then she thought, "Perhaps he is not from here. Perhaps the person got to here from a long distance away." Presently as she was thinking about it, he then said to her, "What is your heart making you know [what are you thinking about]? You yourself said to me, I wish that you would become a person." She reflected. "Oh yes," she thought. "It just has to be that milt." She looked at him in the morning. "Goodness. A fine-looking man, he is light of skin." Now they remained there, I do not know how long a time they lived there.
>
> Then some other woman began to steal him away from her. After quite some time then she [the other woman] took him away from her. She continued to live there. When she [the other woman] saw her, she would say, she would tell him, "Oh dear me. Your poor poor [former] wife! Look at her!" He would reply to her, "Leave her alone!" After quite some time then she laughed at her all the more. They [villagers] said to her [the deserted wife], "Dear oh dear. Why does your co-wife laugh and mock you all the time?" She said, "Oh let it be!"

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[4] Hymes' work on Clackamas texts makes it clear that "The Lordly Milt" ought to be recast as measured verse. But for the purposes of this essay, with no competence in the Clackamas language, I must rely on Jacobs's prose translation, with the title and the Widow's song reworded by Hymes, as noted above. The text is quoted from Jacobs 1958:359-60.

> Now time after time when they [the married couple] were sitting there, she [the deserted wife] passed by them [two], she [the second wife] nudged her husband, she said to him, "Look at your [former] wife! Oh dear! The poor poor woman!" He replied to her, "Leave her alone!" She laughed at her all the more. She [the deserted first wife] went along, she went back to them [the married couple], and now she danced in front of them. She said [in the words of her song]:
>
> "The honorable Milt!
> I supposed him for myself.
> The honorable Milt!
> I supposed him for myself."
>
> She [the second wife] nudged him again [and again mocked his first wife by saying], "Oh dear oh dear! That poor poor wife of yours." He continued to say, "Do leave her alone." The fifth time [when she had sung the song five times], she extended her spirit-power regalia [toward the couple]. The woman [the second wife] turned and looked, only milt lay beside her. She [the second wife] arose, she went away. That first woman took the milt, she threw it at her, [saying] "This thing here is your husband!" She [the second wife] went back home, she reached her house, and there she remained, she stayed there. And that is what she continued to do.
>
> Now I recall only that much of it.

This funny and revealing story, although unique in its details in the surviving Clackamas repertory and in the literatures of neighboring tribes, *is* relatable to several narrative patterns in Native American oral tradition.[5] Many tribes, for example, have had stories about girls who "wish upon a star" for husbands—and wake up finding, often to their distress, that the star has come down to take up housekeeping with the wisher! Such stories, classified in Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk-Literature* under the heading "Cl5, Tabu: Wish for star husband realized" (1928:489), generally convey a Native conviction that wishing is no idle imaginative indulgence, but rather a powerful and potentially risky mental activity for both sexes—the psychological implication of this belief being that even if wishes do not come true, they are important as training for real-life volitions.

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[5] Jacobs' commentary on the Milt story (1960:243-47) concentrates mainly on the dynamics of Milt's spirit-power relationship with the Widow, noting the story's genderic and racial perspectives only in passing.

So it seems to be in Mrs. Howard's own Clackamas Star-husband offering, titled "The Two Stars Came to the Two Girls." One of the girls, the elder, is rewarded with a young man, but the younger finds herself encumbered with an old man for a husband (Jacobs 1959a:468). Mrs. Howard's rich widow in "The Honorable Milt" is no green girl, of course, and the object of her wishing is not a celestial object but the sexual fluid of a male salmon; but her story of wishing leading to complications can be seen as part of a general trans-tribal "set" or field. Presumably Mrs. Howard and her Clackamas listeners would have recognized the relationship—just as, in our own literary/cultural competence, we recognize fictional or movie "extensions" of the Cinderella story when we see them, or an analogue of *Othello*.

Another set of Clackamas stories premised on wish-fulfillment involves not heavenly bodies as objects of wishing and transformation, but—coming closer to "The Honorable Milt"—earthly items, tools, foodstuffs, and so on. Mrs. Howard offers several such narratives from Clackamas tradition—involving, interestingly enough, mostly male wishers. For example, in "Stick Drum Gambler and His Older Brother," a solitary hunter, having cut a limber hazel branch to tie some deer meat to a tree, later says to the branch, "I wish you would become a person and keep me company." *Voilà*—the hunter soon discovers that a male being, "Hazel Drumstick Gambler," has come to live with him as the result of his wish, taking the role of a helpful and spiritually potent younger brother (Jacobs 1958:246-55).

A less auspicious story of wish-fulfillment in a tool or useful article is "Awl and Her Son's Son." A hunter breaks his awl while at home repairing his mocassins, and throws it under his bed, saying as he does, "I wish you would turn into a person." Returning home later from a hunting trip, he finds a fire burning, and his bachelor household all spruced up. Eventually he discovers that his mysterious housekeeper is none other than "Awl," transformed into an older woman, who claims and dotes on him as her grandson. At length five sisters notice how well the hunter is living, and one by one (eldest to youngest) they visit his house—only to be murdered by the homicidally jealous Awl, until at last she is killed by the youngest sister, who then marries the hunter (Jacobs 1958:226-40).

For a wishing story specifically involving *milt*, we must go outside the Clackamas culture, to their Sahaptin-speaking neighbors the Cowlitz, across the Columbia River in what is now Washington State. The Cowlitz

have a story, "Coyote Loses His Milt Daughters" (collected by Melville Jacobs from Joe Hunt), in which Coyote, the Trickster, finds white milt in a salmon, and wishes for it to become "something nice." The sexual inclinations of his wish are soon manifested: two "very pretty girls" appear—and before long Coyote has them rowing him in a canoe like dutiful daughters, but true to his tricksterish nature, he commits a Freudian slip and addresses them lecherously as "my nice little girl wives"—whereupon the Milt girls, offended, run away (Jacobs 1934:139-40).

I have taken this much time to contextualize "The Honorable Milt" in Clackamas/Chinookan literary terms in order to set off its own distinctive features within a thematic "field"—in particular its patterning as a woman's story. If most Chinook wish-fulfillment narratives focusing on objects seem to involve male wishers, "The Honorable Milt" involves a *female*, whose wish brings her a husband-of-sorts—and with a story like "Coyote Loses His Milt Daughters" in mind, it therefore appears that "The Honorable Milt" represents a genderic appropriation, equivalent to the transformation of "Seal and Her Younger Brother Lived There." But to understand the whys and wherefores of this appropriation and its full scope, we must now turn to the details of Mrs. Howard's text.

III

First, unlike her analogues in the "Star-husband" stories, our protagonist is presented as a mature, sexually experienced, canny woman, a widow whose affluence is the result of astute trading in salmon. Further, she possesses the advantage of spirit-power, as expressed in the story's climax, when she is able to ritually transform her errant "husband" back to milt. So her wishing on the seminal fluid of a male salmon is not idle or "innocent"; rather than eat it, or offer it for sale (both interesting alternatives!), she chooses to "wish" on it for herself, with an expectation that her wishing will be "profitable." Although Mrs. Howard's Clackamas phrasing for her actual wish, *ánixčwa əmg^{w}ə́tilx mx̣átx̣ax̣ (*"Oh that you become a person") is apparently an oral formula, appearing verbatim in every one of her stories when someone wishes for something to be humanly transformed, here the neutral "person" clearly means "male person," and so, when the Milt-man makes his appearance, it is in the posture of a husband,

obligingly sleeping beside her.[6]

What should we make of his attractive whiteness, which seems to draw the widow's attention initially when he is just milt, and after his metamorphosis elicits her satisfied admiration, "Goodness. A fine-looking man, he is light of skin"? Salmon-milt *is* in fact a pure milk-white, but clearly the Milt-man's coloring figures more expressively in the story than just as a piece of ichthyological realism. For once, we can refer an interpretive question directly, emically, to a Native critical source—specifically, to an ethnographic note Mrs. Howard herself gave to Jacobs, which implicates this story. (I use a new translation of the note by Hymes [1987:322-24].)

> Our house (was) near the road.
> Someone will pass by us.
> She will look at them.
> Now she will laugh and laugh,
> she will say:
> "Dear oh dear . . .
> "A light one!
> "Maybe it's milt!"
> Now she will sing,
> this is what she will say:
> "The Honorable Milt!
> "I supposed him for myself."

Mrs. Howard's amusing note serves to remind us that a Native oral literature served, even as ours does, the social purposes of allusion, quotation, and embellishment of occasions, for those competent in it: in fact such competency amounts to a better illustration of the workings of what Stanley Fish has called "interpretive communities" than anything he provides in *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980). But for our story about the Widow, Mrs. Howard's note indicates that Milt's whiteness is to be understood in a *racial* context, and that the story therefore involves not only a genderic appropriation, but a kind of racial appropriation as well, one reflecting with wicked humor a particular set of Contact-era tensions between Indian women and Anglo

[6] The Clackamas phrasing for "Oh that you become a person" appears verbatim, for example, in Mrs. Howard's "Awl and Her Son's Son," "Stick Drum Gambler," and elsewhere in her repertory.

men. Jacobs notes that when Mrs. Howard got to the Widow's exultant remark about her husband's whiteness, she "bubbled with mirth," and wondered in an aside if maybe he was a "half breed" (1959a:652).

It looks as if our Widow has gotten herself, then, one of those white husbands by wishing, instead of through the troublesome and in fact often tragic cross-racial/cross-cultural alliances common in the Far West of Mrs. Howard's own early life. But her new husband's true colors (so to speak) appear as soon as he is noticed by "some other woman." If he has great sexual attractiveness to both women, in his actions between them he is revealed to be a wimp, a will-less and passive embodiment of male sexuality, the potency without the affect—a "milt-man" indeed. He allows himself to be taken away from the Widow, and when the Other Woman obnoxiously mocks her for losing him, he merely protests the insults, telling his new wife to "stop it" but doing nothing.

With Mrs. Howard's anecdote of her mother-in-law's joke in mind, it is irresistible to see Milt-man in his story as a mischievous depiction, from a Clackamas woman's perspective, of the white male as sexual object . . . attractive, but unstable, not to be depended upon and likely to be the source of much trouble, and in some ultimate cultural sense, not real. The fact that Milt-man is such a colorless actor in the story's romantic triangle—no more than a pawn, really—serves to emphasize how completely the story has appropriated its traditional male elements to become a woman's narrative. In an odd sense, in fact, it is a very grown-up and ironical version of the cautionary "Star-husband" tales. What is "cautionary" here, as the plot unfolds, is that women's sexual wish-fulfillment and romantic predation are seen to be equally risky, especially when the object of either or both is a male "white-eyes" (to use a very old but still current Indian racial epithet).

"Equally risky" and likely to be profitless—but at least the Widow, with her command of spirit-power, has the advantage over her odious rival. Apparently at first willing to give up her new husband (that she is willing perhaps indicates her knowledge of his unreality), she is at length provoked to take a most peculiar but fitting revenge. Having "wished" Milt into a kind of manhood, now she ritually un-wishes him (perhaps his disapproving remarks to his new wife earlier express not so much feckless sympathy for the Widow as fear over what she will do if provoked?), in the form of a magical song and dance in public view, repeated the requisite five times, with appropriate gestures involving spirit-power regalia—until only a pile of fish-semen remains, where there had been an attractive man.

The Widow's deployment of her magical song represents yet another line of appropriation in the story, involving a generic switching from narrative to lyric; but such switching is a conventional feature of Clackamas and other Native literary art, typically brought into play, as it is here, at some especially dramatic moment in the story, where formal lyrical expression of emotion can briefly refract and focus action and dialogue, very much as Shakespeare's lyrics do in the romantic comedies. In Hymes' retranslation, the words of the song bristle with sarcasm in context—an impression that is heightened if one listens, as I have, to Jacobs' Ediphone recording of Mrs. Howard singing the song in a separate performance.[7] Her voice seems to descend, as she vocalizes the Clackamas words, in a kind of sarcastic sing-song suggestive of schoolyard mockery and abuse.

But of course the mockery here is "adult" and complex, beginning with the Widow's socially conscious sneer at her quondam husband's status as head of two households: "The Honorable Milt!" The complexity is compounded in the second line—"I supposed him for myself"—in that "suppose" seems to have a double force: (l) meaning "making-up" or conjuring into a kind of suppositious existence, mere milt into Milt-husband; and (2) meaning, with a certain rueful admission of lack of knowledge about outcomes, "I thought he was mine," applying directly to the Widow, because she is speaking, but also of course applying to the Other Woman, who foolishly did her own "supposing"—and now stands publicly humiliated, indeed bespattered with gobbets of milt because of her "supposes."

In an extended commentary on Mrs. Howard's rendition of *wa'susgani*'s literary joke about white men being Milt-figures, Hymes identifies in it and in several other short texts a pattern of Chinookan humor: a two-step exchange involving a joshing insult or insinuation, and then a second statement that tops or outdoes the first by echoing it ironically. So, in the anecdote from *wa'susgani*, she first mentions the possibility that the white passerby is just milt ("Maybe it's milt!"), and then she caps her own sly insinuation by identifying the uncomprehending victim of her humor for all Clackamas speakers listening by quoting the myth and actually performing "The Honorable Milt! / I supposed him for myself."

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[7] The recording is in the Ethnomusicology Archives of the Melville Jacobs Collection at the University of Washington, #14542 (45), Tape 11, Band 2. I am grateful to Gary Lundell, Archival Specialist, for help in working in the collection.

What Hymes goes on to say about the effect of *wa'susgani*'s "two-step invention" seems to me to identify the complex irony of the myth itself, lacking only the specifically *female* emphasis I have been laboring to illuminate here (1987:328):

> The first echoic mention ["Possibly it is Milt"] demeans the white; the second entertains the possibility that the white is but a figment of Indian imagination, existing on Indian sufferance . . . . Probably there is a sense of satisfaction in being able to name the situation of the presence of a white as one encompassed by Indian tradition stretching back before whites came. Certainly there is satisfaction in being able to entertain the proposition, through quotation of myth, that whites are shameful and that a widow could both conjure them up for sexual satisfaction and dismiss them.

In applying this comment on *wa'susgani*'s literary joke to her daughter-in-law's narrative itself, I would add only two related points: (a) that throughout the narrative, as in the anecdote alluding to it, a Clackamas woman's perspective seems to be all-pervasive and self-consciously "appropriative," and (b) that the Widow's song in effect "out-tops" her sarcasm at the expense of Milt and the Other Woman, by including *herself* within the range of her irony: "I supposed him for myself" (as if to say, "How could I have been so dumb!").

IV

At the outset, I argued that a serious inadequacy of Lévi-Strauss' procedure for structural analysis of oral narratives (at least for literary purposes) is its disregard of mode, texture, verbal and narrative style, and indeed the possibilities of local, "authorial" inventions and appropriations of traditional elements. But, as Hymes and others have shown, a modified form of structural analysis—using the procedure as a supplement to close reading of verbal patternings—can be profitable. It can usefully identify a given narrative's structural and thematic affiliations with other stories comprising its "set" within a tribal literature, or between tribal groups; and it can, in the very abstractness of its attention to synchronic rather than diachronic or narrative form, help to illuminate the way a given story is organized.

The latter advantage seems pertinent to "The Honorable Milt." In

what follows, I will assume that the reader is familiar with Lévi-Strauss' brilliant, sometimes exasperating "demonstrations" of his method in the celebrated essay, "The Structural Study of Myth" (1967:207-25). Beginning with the reduction of the story to its basic narrative elements (Lévi-Strauss calls them "sentences"), we arrive at the following diachronic outline:

l. Widow notices and wishes on milt.
2. Milt-man appears.
3. Other Woman notices and desires Milt-man.
4. Other Woman steals Milt-man.
5. Other Woman mocks and harasses Widow.
6. Widow sings her magical song.
7. Milt-man is transformed back into milt.
8. Widow mocks and harasses Other Woman.

The next step is to break this diachronic listing up into vertical columns of related sentences, so as to "discover" the true synchronic structure of the story—whose elements the story's narrative repetitions are, according to Lévi-Strauss, accentuating. Typically, following his conception of the *mediative* function of myth, this step should reveal a pattern of bipolar oppositions, which the story serves to mediate (to use his own examples, "Nature" vs. "Culture," "Raw vs. Cooked," the autochthonous account of human origins vs. the sexual account, and so on). What emerges with "The Honorable Milt" after this step seems odd: a diachronic list with *three* columns (note that, as Lévi-Strauss would have it, the story can still be "read" from left to right as well as vertically):

1.	2.	3.
Widow notices/wishes on milt.	Milt-man appears.	
Other woman notices/ desires Milt-man.	Other woman steals Milt-man.	Other Woman mocks/ harasses Widow.
Widow sings her magical song.	Milt-man transformed back into milt	Widow mocks/harasses Other Woman

The "sentences" in Column One pertain to *wishing*; those in Two, *transformations*; those in Three, *mocking and harassment*, so that in its ultimate structuralist reduction the story can be seen to embody the formula Wishing:Transformation:Mockery, with the first and third terms in the

position of bipolar opposites, and the second standing as a mediating term. But what would this formula mean? Wishing and mockery are not *prima facie* opposites, in the abstract; and yet in the genderic narrative patterning of this story perhaps they are. Wishing for a husband is to posit sexual and social gratifications for which mockery and ridicule *are* exact emotional opposites; such wishing, then, even for someone with the Widow's special powers, involves a certain vulnerability, a wearing of the heart on the sleeve. As for transformation as a middle or mediating term: as the modality whereby wishing leads to consequences, it seems to express both the potency of wishing, and the instability of what it leads to. There is something of this pattern in the Native "Star husband" stories mentioned earlier as distant cognates to "The Honorable Milt"—for the unlucky girl-wishers, the ones who obtain elderly star-husbands, mockery and ridicule are often at least implied. But of course, as we have seen, "The Honorable Milt" is very much an adult story, involving both sexual wishing or supposing and sexual predation by women—and although our structural-analytic procedure shows its interpretive limits by failing to register the *racial* overtones in the story, those overtones are crucial to the understanding Mrs. Howard and her mother-in-law (and presumably other Clackamas women) had of the Rich Widow's romantic adventure.

The tonality of that understanding is difficult to verbalize, but surely it involves sympathy for the Widow throughout, along with reservations about the "raw material" of her wishing; concomitant disapproval of the Other Woman's predation and her outrageous harassment of the Widow; and finally, satisfaction both righteous and hilarious in the exposure of Milt for what he really is, and the truly devastating exposure of the Other Woman for her choice of a husband. As the story closes, the Other Woman is keeping indoors, in shame, while the Widow is at large again, unencumbered, freed from the consequences of her "supposing." Perhaps she is wiser, but I do not imagine her forlorn: given the literary, sexual, and racial appropriations at work in the story, perhaps her condition at the end constitutes an ultimate Contact-era Clackamas woman's wish-fulfillment!

V

Finally, having endeavored to contextualize "The Honorable Milt" in Native literary and cultural terms, I want to sketch out a place for it in a

wider context of women's appropriative storytelling. In the domain of Native autobiography, Maria Chona's telling of her life story, as edited by Ruth Underhill in *Papago Woman*, emphasizes her "official" acceptance of and fulfillment within the restrictions of the traditional Papago concept of womanhood—but all through her narrative, she seems to resent and subvert this limiting concept, sniping at men's privileges and asserting her equality with men in knowledge and power. Her feminist bias is nowhere more tellingly expressed than in her conspicuous appropriation of the Papago myth of the origin of Corn. Whereas standard versions of the myth relate that the Corn God simply bestowed the plant and its ceremonial mystique upon the Papagos after taking up with one of their women (see, e.g., Saxton and Saxton 1973:28-44), in Chona's version (unique to her, so far as I know), full mythic credit is given to the woman (Underhill 1979:52):

> The corn was once a man and he lured a woman away to sleep with him. She stayed a long time, and when she came home, she knew the songs that made the corn grow. So when the men all went to their meetings, this man [her husband] did not go but he stayed home hearing his wife sing. The men from the meeting came to speak to him. "Why are you absent?" "Because I am listening to my wife." "How can it be that a man can learn more from a woman than from talking with us? Let us hear her, too."
>
> So she came to the men's meeting and she sat between the chief and her husband. "Sing." And she sang the corn songs.
>
> At the first song those men began to sing. At the second, they danced. At the third, the women came out of the houses, creeping to the council house to listen to the singing. At the fourth, they were all dancing, inside the council house and outside, to that woman's singing.

I have no doubt that close inspection of mythic and personal texts from other Native American cultures will turn up similar *pro femina* appropriations of traditional material—and something of the same impulse seems to operate in modern literary terms in Ursula Le Guin's remarkable 1985 novel, *Always Coming Home*. Le Guin's novel concerns a people, the Kesh, who "might be going to have lived a long, long time from now in Northern California," after some unspecified catastrophe. The Kesh have taken on many of the folkways of California's original Indian cultures, including a rich and complicated oral-literary tradition of stories and songs. Le Guin's invented Kesh myths sound like their Indian prototypes—except

that her Coyote stories invariably feature a *female* Trickster! The manner of Le Guin's slyly feminist/subversive appropriation of the mystique of "Old Man Coyote" can be illustrated by the beginning of a Kesh myth about a war between bears and humans (54):

> Well, Coyote was going along inside the world, you know, and she met old man Bear.
>
> "I'll come with you," Coyote said.
>
> Bear said, "No, please don't come with me. I don't want you. I'm going to get all the bears together and make a war on the human beings. I don't want you along."
>
> Coyote said, "Oh, that's terrible, a terrible thing to do. You'll all destroy each other. You'll be killed, they'll be killed! Don't make war, please don't make war! We should all live in peace and love each other!" All the while she was talking, Coyote was stealing Bear's balls, cutting them off with an obsidian knife she had stolen from the Doctors Lodge, a knife so sharp he never felt it cutting.
>
> When she was done she ran away with Bear's balls in a pouch. She went to where the human people were. . . .
>
> (Coyote hopes to sabotage the war by getting the bears and the men to use each others' testicles as ammunition, but her plan fails, and after a one-sided battle the humans drive the bears into the wilderness, where they live to this day.)

An equally remarkable imaginative appropriation of gender has appeared in our popular culture in the crypto-feminist rewritings and reinventions of *Star Trek* narratives. Produced so far mainly in the specialized realm of "Trekkers" and "fanzines," such stories take as their premise that the heroes of the original *Star Trek* series, the earthling Capt. Kirk and his half-Vulcan associate Spock, are homosexual lovers, with a wholesale sexual and political revision of the *Star Trek* mythology proceeding from this discovery. According to Constance Penley, the authors and readers of such "slash" fiction (after "Kirk/Spock") are nearly all women, and most of them—despite the gay-pornographic coloring of their work—are probably heterosexual.

Penley has argued that much can be learned from slash fiction "about how women, and people, resist, negotiate, and adapt to their own desires the

overwhelming media environment that we all inhabit" (1993:484).[8] In her view, the "slash" authors and their fans are co-opting the *Star Trek* stories and gay pornography to each other not just for the rebellious, subversive, naughty pleasure of it, but also in order to imagine for themselves a utopian condition of free equality in love for which the Kirk/Spock alliance is, however startling, a satisfying projection out of popular culture—satisfying because *outré*, far out, requiring (or rather licensing) the making up of new rules for self-determination and romance.

Penley's analysis of slash fiction usefully invokes the work of the French ethnomethodologist Michel de Certeau, and although his fascinating study of the everyday tactics whereby we subvert or co-opt mass culture is literally worlds removed from the culture and oral literature of the Clackamas Chinookans, he has I think identified an art of appropriation humanly common to contexts as radically different as French factory-employees "working" the System; American women "Trekkers" co-opting a popular commercial TV series to make it functionally their own; and Contact-era Clackamas Indian women appropriating a male-oriented story-tradition to "say" something mischievous and useful about the sexual and racial inequalities in their lives (1984:29):

> *A way of using* imposed systems constitutes the resistance to the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimations. A practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space: it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference. That is where the opacity of "popular culture" could be said to manifest itself—a dark rock that resists all assimilation . . . . Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game, that is, the space instituted by others, characterize the stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations. People have to make do with what they have.

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[8] What Penley calls "this overwhelming media environment we all inhabit" has no exact equivalent in traditional Indian life—but if not "overwhelming," the oral literature of any Native culture was certainly all-pervasive, and always subject to "local" appropriations and co-optings, as I have tried to show here.

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Narrative Tradition In Early Greek Oral Poetry And Vase-Painting

E. A. Mackay

Archaic Athenian vase-painting of the sixth century BC exhibits visual narrative phenomena that are very similar to the verbal narrative patterns of traditional, orally composed poetry: in the poetry these are the familiar formulaic phrases and themes analyzed by Milman Parry and the ensuing train of oral theorists; in the art they take the form of repetitious iconography and recurrent compositional structures.[1] In the vase-paintings as in the poems the same question arises: do the repetitions have an aesthetic or significatory function in the narrative context, or are they rather incidental and even impedimental to the process of reception? In his recent work on oral traditions, John Miles Foley (1991) has recognized the need to develop a new theory of reception for oral and oral-derived poetry, one that takes into specific account the peculiar characteristics of oral composition. It will be argued that this theory can usefully be applied also to the vase-paintings.

In regard to poetry, Foley has proceeded by seeking to define a question, the answer to which is constituted by the characteristics of oral composition. Starting from the premise that the repetitious noun-epithet formulas are significatory rather than redundant, and accepting that their signification cannot regularly be conferred by the context in which they are

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[1] The ideas on which this paper is based were presented in embryo in my Inaugural Lecture at the University of Natal, September 1991 (Mackay 1993), and subsequently in a more developed form under the current title at the 27th AULLA Congress in Dunedin, February 1993. I acknowledge with gratitude financial support for the research underlying this paper from the Research Fund of the University of Natal. For their help in obtaining photographs I should also like to thank Joan Mertens, Katherine Ireland, Michael Vickers, and Dyfri Williams.

used, he has concluded that their reference is to the whole tradition in which any given oral performance is situated. He has coined the term "traditional referentiality" for a process whereby a formula such as πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς ("swift-footed Achilleus") in the oral-derived Homeric texts resonates with all the other occasions in the same tale and in others where a listener has heard it used, and so evokes from that listener's own experience of this traditional material an awareness of the whole hero, in all the complexity of his many roles, immanent in the reference. It is important to realize that Foley is examining the phenomenon of oral composition and oral-derived composition *as it is situated in a tradition,* so that the written-literature distinction between text analysis and reception-aesthetics is inappropriate, and indeed inapplicable.

While Foley's theory explains how formulaic phrases convey meaning, it is difficult for modern readers, immersed in more than two millennia of literary traditions, to experience a process of reception appropriate to an oral tradition. One may accept intellectually that reiteration of such personalized formulas as πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ ("resourceful Odysseus"), πολύμητις Ὀδύσσευς ("Odysseus of many counsels"), Ὀδυσσῆα πολύφρονα ("thoughtful Odysseus"), and of course πολύτλας Ὀδυσσεύς ("much-enduring Odysseus") builds up a composite picture of the hero's complex personal qualities—his endurance, intellect, and guile—as exemplified in the many instances where the epithets recur; and that epithets like δῖος ("godlike") and μεγαλήτωρ ("great hearted"), used of a number of different heroes, seem to convey a more generalized sense of heroic stature. However, the echoic quality or resonance that Foley describes tends to elude those who are not active participants in the same oral tradition. The effect is perhaps easier to appreciate in a different medium, and it is therefore of particular significance for Homeric scholarship that in the narrative art produced in Greece in the archaic period (from c. 620 to c. 480 BC) there is a set of phenomena that manifests as similar to the traditional poetic elements, and that can be shown to work in a similar way.

Although the *floruit* for "Homer" customarily ranges from the ninth to the seventh century, it is likely, since the texts as we have them represent a continuing tradition crystallized at a given point, and since that point must be rather late (at a time when writing may be presumed to have been rather widespread), that the texts represent the state of the oral tradition at a date more or less contemporary with the rise of narrative art at the beginning of the archaic period. Thus it is probable that the narrative techniques developed by the vase-painters evolved from the techniques of what was

still a living oral tradition, at a time when oral methods of expression were regarded as the natural means of telling—or depicting—a story.

Although there is a high degree of uniformity in archaic narrative techniques in all the various visual media, the largest and most diverse body of evidence is provided by narrative vase-painting scenes (mainly Athenian), on which this study will therefore focus. It has long been recognized that Greek art exists in a tradition. In reference to the beginnings of the Athenian black-figure technique J. D. Beazley wrote (1951:12):

> The typical and traditional element, indeed, now becomes very strong, and remains so throughout the history of black-figure. It is strong in Greek art as a whole. This has its drawbacks, but also great advantages: the blend of tradition and originality, of past and present, makes for health and power. Before the end of the seventh century, the elusive multiplicity of the visible world has been condensed into a few well-pondered, crystalline forms, which are adequate to express the main activities and attitudes of man and beast—standing, walking, running, sitting, reclining, riding, thrusting, throwing. This small world of forms is a nucleus capable of expansion and transformation; it is the foundation on which Greek art of the fifth century was based, and through it all Western art.

Virtually from the beginning, Greek painters representing human activity turned their attention to mythological subjects. By the end of the seventh century BC, they had established a traditional repertoire by which actions could be represented; there remained to be developed a consistent way of identifying figures in action as representing a given narrative situation, for narrative art depends upon the principle of identification. The early archaic artists had one means immediately at their disposal: they could select narrative situations of an unmistakable uniqueness. This probably accounts for the propensity for scenes involving violent death (particularly of mythological, hybrid creatures) on the earliest vases. As interest in narrative scenes spread in the first decades of the sixth century, however, a system began to evolve whereby the common mythological figures, and especially the deities, came to be associated with certain characteristic attributes; to take an obvious example, Athena wears the aegis, and is usually equipped with some or all of shield, helmet, and spear. Within a short time this system became an established tradition, sanctioning innovation only insofar as it might serve a useful purpose in the narrative context.

From the early days, then, there was a gradual, more or less parallel development of two different kinds of formulations: first, **formulaic**

atttributes such as have just been briefly described, which serve to identify a given figure irrespective of the context, and second, **formulaic composition,** in which the poses and relative positions of the figures, in short the format of the scene, gradually became standardized and so came to signify a particular mythological or generic context. At the same time, marking the spread of literacy, some painters would inscribe names of important mythological figures; it is highly significant that these inscriptions did *not* in time come to replace iconographic or contextual identification, and so were by and large functionally redundant in the signification of a scene (although inscriptions do sometimes contribute aesthetically to the compositional structure). In fact, for many painters the inscriptions would appear to have been another kind of visual attribute. While these repetitive iconographic and compositional formulations seem to have developed initially out of the need for identification, it is clear that the signification soon went beyond mere stimulus of recognition, as there regularly tend, for instance, to be *more* iconographic elements included in a scene than would be strictly necessary for identification, especially when the composition of the scene is also formulaic.

The nature of the formulaic attribute in vase-painting will be discussed first, with reference to the development of iconographic imagery associated with Herakles. Thereafter the nature of formulaic composition will be examined through analysis of scenes featuring chariots, and the potential for interactive signification between attribute and scene-type will be presented: it will be argued that this is parallel to the interactive working of formulas and themes in orally composed (or oral-derived) poetry.

Formulas

One of the earliest appearances of Herakles on an Athenian vase is on a protoattic amphora from around the middle of the seventh century BC, attributed to the New York Nessos Painter; the main scene shows the hero with the centaur Nessos and with Deianeira (Plate 1).[2] Herakles is represented as bearded with long hair, wearing body-armor over a *chitoniskos* (short tunic), and wielding a sword against the errant centaur. He would be undistinguishable from any other warrior were it not for the unambiguous circumstances of the conflict—who but Herakles would

[2] New York 11.210.1. For discussion of this vase, see Morris 1984:65-68 and pl. 15.

advance upon a centaur in defense of a woman who meanwhile steadies his chariot horses?[3]

Plate 1: Herakles attacks Nessos. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 11. 210.1. (Rogers Fund 1911) Photograph courtesy of museum.

By the end of the seventh century, Herakles is represented in the black-figure technique in essentially the same format (although the composition is different), but without the body-armor and with his and the centaur's names inscribed.[4] By c. 580 BC, Herakles brandishes a club at

[3] Perhaps evidence of an early tradition of Deianeira driving a chariot that is represented much later in literature by Apollodoros, *Bibl.* 1.viii.1.

[4] On the name vase of the Nettos Painter, Athens 1002 (Beazley 1956 [hereafter *ABV*]:4,1): the painter takes his name from the inscription of the centaur's name, which in the Attic dialect replaces sigma with tau.

Nessos, one of the earliest occurrences in Attic black-figure of what was to become Herakles' characteristic weapon.[5]

Another narrative involving Herakles that occurs on early black-figure vases is the hero's struggle with Nereus, a marine deity in this period with a human head and upper torso merging into an elongated and undulating fishy tail. Here too the opponent is immediately identifiable, and perhaps because of this, the narrative emerges early as a fairly standardized composition, showing Herakles wrestling, half-obscured, astride his opponent's scaly tail: this is a scene-type established at least as early as c. 590 BC,[6] and continued by Sophilos, who introduces a quiver and scabbard and short, possibly curly hair,[7] as also by the KX Painter, who includes a scabbard, curly hair, and possibly a quiver.[8]

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[5] On a lekythos attributed to the Deianeira Painter, in the Manner of the Gorgon Painter: London B 30 (*ABV* 11, 20).

[6] The *floruit* of the Gorgon Painter's workshop. See for example the shoulder of a 'Deianeira' lekythos, Louvre CA 823 (*ABV* 12, 22), with Herakles bearded, long-haired and *chitoniskos*-clad but without weapon, and the fragmentary small amphora, Boston 88.827 (*ABV* 13, 45, discussed by Williams 1986:62-64), which preserves Herakles' right arm, left fingers, and (on a joining fragment, Reading, Ure Mus. 26.ii.76) what should be the back of his head. The *en brosse* hair style is unusual, and could perhaps imitate a Middle Corinthian way of rendering short, curly hair, as is exemplified on an aryballos in Basel BS 425 (Amyx 1988:180). A composition rather similar to both of these seems to have been used at about the same date on a Corinthian krater fragment in Basel, Cahn 1173 (Amyx 1988:pl. 138,1), the fight there attended by (?) a sea nymph.

[7] On a well preserved column-krater, Athens Inv.12587 (*ABV* 40, 24), very similar in composition to Louvre CA 823 (see note 6 above), again showing Herakles in a *chitoniskos* and bearded, but with short hair with incised lateral lines (perhaps intended to represent curliness), and with a quiver and scabbard; the whole between a pair of bystanders on the left and Hermes (with *kerykeion* [herald's staff]) on the right. A hydria fragment attributed to Sophilos in the Maidstone (Kent) Museum and Art Gallery, preserving the head and arm of Nereus, and the *kerykeion* of Hermes on the right, probably derives from a similar composition (Bakir 1981:pl. 64/126).

[8] Samos 2294 (*ABV* 25, 18), fragments of a hydria preserving most of Herakles and much of Nereus (both with names inscribed). Herakles' hair is represented as short, with an incised headband: across his forehead are incised open loops, and a similar effect is achieved with the brush around the contour of his head—the first Attic representation of which I am aware showing short curly hair for Herakles, although this scheme becomes virtually canonical in certain workshops by the middle of the sixth century. A scabbard with incised patterning juts at Herakles' waist, and a small, triangular black protrusion at his shoulder may perhaps be intended as a quiver.

It is clear from these examples that already, before c. 570 BC, Athenian painters representing Herakles were beginning to include certain features that were not standard for other mythological figures. The body-armor, which before the archaic period typified Herakles as a warrior,[9] was omitted by the black-figure artists; the beard and *chitoniskos* were retained; the hair became generally short and curly; and although the sword (commonly represented by the scabbard) was retained, the quiver begins also to be incorporated into the scheme (initially without indication of the bow), as does the club.

The painters of the next generation introduce the lionskin, an innovation in Athenian painting that can be dated to soon after c. 570 BC. A splendidly incised image of Herakles wearing his lionskin with the head pulled, helmet-like, over his head appears on a Siana cup in the Manner of the C Painter, in a scene showing his entry to Olympus (Plate 2).[10] It is significant that there is no other specific attribute clearly associated with this figure; the lionskin alone already seems to constitute adequate identification in a context that by no means aids the identificatory process. On "Tyrrhenian" amphorae Herakles is regularly identified by the lionskin, with or, more often, without other attributes. There is still some experimentation in this period, at least to the extent that Herakles does not always wear the lionskin's head over his own;[11] however, a distinctive draping of the skin has become almost canonical, with the lion's back down Herakles' back, the sides wrapped around his sides to meet at his belted waist with the hind legs dangling by his thighs, and the front paws knotted

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[9] *LIMC* V,l:184; Brommer (1986:65-66) comments on this point in a succinct discussion that is relevant to this analysis.

[10] London B 379 (*ABV* 60, 20). The rendering of the mane of the lionskin is very elaborate, the pattern derived from earlier renditions of lions in animal friezes and the like—compare for instance the incised zig-zagged shagginess of the lions on Sophilos' loutrophoros, Athens Inv. 991 (*ABV* 38, 1) and lebes gamikos, Izmir Inv. 3332 (*ABV* 40, 20), and his amphora Jena Inv. 178 (*ABV* 39, 7), which has a more elaborate pattern.

[11] As for instance on three ovoid neck-amphorae (not "Tyrrhenians") attributed to the Camtar Painter, Tarquinia RC 5564, Cambridge 44 and Louvre E 863 (*ABV* 84, 1, 2, and 3 respectively). In all three scenes Herakles also wears a quiver, and fights variously with sword or spear; all three show the hero with short hair, and the Cambridge and Louvre examples have incised spiral curls across the forehead. Among examples from the "Tyrrhenian" amphorae is Villa Giulia 74989, attributed [Bothmer] to the Prometheus Painter *(LIMC* V, 2:Herakles 2822).

(in a "Herakles' knot") across his chest. Sometimes the lion's tail hangs behind the hero.[12]

Plate 2: Athena introduces Herakles to the gods on Olympos. London, British Museum B 379. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

[12] For instance, Boston 98.916 (*ABV* 98, 46).

About this time the club begins to become a frequent, though by no means ubiquitous, feature: Boardman observes that Herakles "is commonly shown wearing a sword but not often using it except against humanoid foes —Amazons, Kentauroi, Kyknos—and often in Attic [black-figure] against the Lion, sometimes shown to be ineffective . . ." (*LIMC* V, l:184).

Before the middle of the sixth century, then, the painters had established a set of attributes that in combination, or in some instances singly, allowed Herakles to be identified without necessary reference from inscription or unusual context. It is certainly not coincidental that from about 560 on there is a noticeable expansion in the range of narrative contexts in which the vase-painters featured Herakles.[13] For instance, Herakles and the Nemean Lion was a story known in Greek art at least from the late seventh century,[14] yet it is neglected by the Athenian vase-painters until c. 560 BC, when it begins to appear on Siana cups. About the same time the Hydra,[15] the Boar, the Deer, and the Amazons also begin to occur with comparative regularity, along with Herakles' entry to Olympos. While one cannot of course say which developed first, the expanded repertoire requiring visual identification or the iconography that made it possible, at about the same time there is evidence of increased interest among vase-painters in rendering mythological scenes generally. More or less simultaneously there was established what must be recognized in the broader context as a tradition of identifying the more common or significant mythological figures through prescribed sets of iconographic attributes.[16]

By the second half of the sixth century, the iconography of Herakles had become more or less canonical, as may be observed in the vases attributed to Group E and (its later continuation) the Lysippidean workshop. This large workshop, active over three decades, seems to have had a particular interest in depicting Herakles, as scenes involving the hero occur on over a

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[13] The relationship between the representations of Herakles on Athenian vases and those on the series of fragmentary pedimental sculptures from the Akropolis cannot be defined with any certainty owing to the vexed problems of chronology for the latter.

[14] From the bronze shieldband relief, Olympia B 1911 *(LIMC* V, l:1776).

[15] It is noteworthy that the limestone pediment from the Athenian Akropolis (Athens, Acr. 1) featuring Herakles and the Hydra is usually dated to about 560-550 BC.

[16] For instance, Carpenter (1986) gives a clear and selectively illustrated account of the development of Dionysian imagery, in which he cites the Heidelberg Painter (c. 560) as establishing the canonical features (ivy wreath and drinking horn) for Dionysos.

third of the two-hundred-and-eighty-odd vases attributed variously to Group E and to painters within or associated with the workshop.[17]

Named by inscription on only five of these vases,[18] Herakles is nonetheless easily recognized, first by his lionskin (either on the hero, or still on the Lion in representations of his encounter with the beast), and then by the club that is fairly regularly included in the scenes: and few indeed are the scenes without either lionskin or club.[19] Herakles continues to wear his *chitoniskos* regularly, although he is occasionally nude, and equally commonly his sword is included, either in use or (more often) sheathed at his side. The quiver and bow become increasingly popular as attributes, particularly among the later painters,[20] and this same group occasionally emphasizes Herakles' short, curly hair by incising (or indicating in relief paint) tight spirals all over his head.[21] Curls of this kind became a fairly regular attribute of Herakles on vases from c. 525 BC on, into the red-figure tradition.

This brief survey of Herakles' appearance on archaic vases shows how in a comparatively short time the painters established a set of visual attributes for the hero that by being consistently used in various combinations seems quickly to have amounted to a tradition: the association of iconographic formulas with a given figure is sanctioned by continual usage, and yet there

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[17] Excluding Exekias and the Andokides Painter, as these are special cases in terms of their innovativeness, but including the Lysippides Painter (whom I take to be distinct from the Andokides Painter).

[18] Louvre F 53 (*ABV* 136, 49: Group E, amphora, Geryoneus); Reggio 4001 (*ABV* 147, 6: Manner of Exekias, amphora fr., Chariot of Demeter and entourage); Boulogne 417 (*ABV* 260, 32: Manner of the Lysippides Painter, hydria, Chariot of Athene and entourage); Boulogne 417 (*ABV* 260, 32: Manner of the Lysippides Painter, hydria, Chariot of Athene and entourage); Rimini (*ABV* 261, 36: Manner of the Lysippides Painter, hydria, Chariot of Athene and entourage); Philadelphia 3497 (Beazley 1971 [hereafter *Para.*]: 318: "recalls Exekian and the Lysippides Painter," amphora, Lion).

[19] For instance, the Group E amphora San Antonio 75.59.15P (*Para.* 56, 38 *bis,* ex La Rochelle, Imbeza Valley), where the opponent is Nessos (and Deianeira is included). The Lysippides Painter's scene showing Herakles as a symposiast (Munich 2301: *ABV* 255, 4) also omits lionskin and club, relying on quiver, bow, and curly hair as well as context to identify the hero: it is arguable that he was following the Andokides Painter's red-figure handling of the scene on the other side of the amphora.

[20] The Lysippides Painter and those in his Manner or Related to him.

[21] For example Exekias' amphora in Orvieto, Faina 2748 (was 78: *ABV* 144, 9), and the neck-amphora attributed to the Lysippides Painter, Zurich ETH 7 (*ABV* 258, 17).

is continuous development by analogy and mythological association as much as by clearcut innovation. It must be appreciated, of course, that this kind of diachronic analysis of the process by which a figure accumulates a number of overlapping and semi-redundant formulaic attributes is a relatively easy matter where every stage of the development is represented by extant archaeological material; it is not possible in ancient oral literature when the establishing of a written text, at whatever time and by whatever means that occurred, preserved a single evolutionary stage as it was at that given point of time.

So far the focus of discussion has been the primarily identificatory function of the visual formulas described. It remains to be determined whether these iconographic elements, like the traditional oral formulas, are active in conveying meaning beyond this. As with Homeric nominal epithets, for example, one does not look for necessarily contextual signification in archaic vase-painting: were it so, then Herakles would scarcely appear nude when tackling the heavily-armed triad of Geryoneus,[22] nor would he wear his protective lionskin when not in a risky situation.[23] The question to be asked, then, is not what the significance of the attributes may be in the context of a given scene, but rather whether they may be possessed of a traditional referentiality such as Foley has defined for the formulaic phrases of oral composition.

This question may best be answered by considering, for each of the main attributes of Herakles, what it may signify within the continuum of the black-figure tradition. It is certain that in varying degrees, all evoke specific and characterizing actions: to wear the skin of an animal, for instance, would suggest that one has killed it. Herakles' lionskin is thus doubly significatory, in that he is the *sort* of hero who can kill a lion, and he is the *selfsame* hero who *did* kill the Nemean monster in his first "Labor." Thus when he is depicted in the lionskin while engaged in another feat, such as the battle with Geryoneus or the capture of the Erymanthian Boar, the image is resonant with the earlier achievement, and immanent within it is the extra-contextual characterization as the hero who has already destroyed one monster. Furthermore, since the lionskin recurs in the narrative representation of many different adventures, it acquires an accumulating, secondary resonance from each and every context.

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[22] As he does for instance on an amphora in Christchurch (N.Z.) 42/57 *(Para.* 55, 7 *bis).*

[23] See below, espec. notes 28-29.

Like the lionskin, the club is an attribute mainly reserved for Herakles' use.[24] It is a weapon of strength and brute force rather than intelligent precision, only a little more refined than the tree-trunks often used by centaurs; thus it clearly betokens these traditional aspects of Herakles, and again, in any given context it resonates with other contexts where Herakles has been shown to carry it or, better, to employ it.

The quiver, with or without the bow, evokes Herakles' early established reputation as an archer, known in the Homeric tradition and subsequently.[25] It is perhaps significant that the only visual context in which Herakles is fairly regularly shown using his bow is the Gigantomachy,[26] and it could be that inclusion of the quiver elsewhere evoked an echo of this heroic involvement. The sword, in use or sheathed, is almost omnipresent in scenes depicting Herakles from early times through to the late archaic period, and here too the signification is obvious: Herakles was a warrior *par excellence*, and indeed in many narratives of his exploits in early Greek literature he is specifically described as using either a sword or a spear.[27]

Of course, while the lionskin and club are closely associated with the identity of Herakles, the sword and spear (and to a lesser extent the bow and quiver) are not, but rather form the standard equipment of any warrior, whether identified as mythological or not, on archaic Athenian vases. In comparison with the Homeric noun-epithet formulas, then, the club and lionskin can be compared with personalized formulas such as πόδας ὠκὺς Αχιλλεύς ("swift-footed Achilleus") and πολυμήχαν' 'Οδυσσεῦ ("resourceful Odysseus"), evoking a particularized awareness of the hero in his many roles in many other contexts, while the rest of the panoply, being

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[24] Rarely, a lionskin is worn by other figures (see, for instance, the fragmentary dinos signed by Lydos, Athens, Akropolis 607 (*ABV* 107, 1), where Artemis fighting giants wears her lionskin in Herakles' manner. Compare also Homer, *Iliad* 10.23 and 177.

[25] Homer, *Iliad* 5.392; *Odyssey* 8.224; 11.606-8; Hesiod, *Shield of Herakles* 129-34. Compare also Bacchylides, *Epinikion* V, 71-76.

[26] See *LIMC* IV.1:257.

[27] The spear is not distinct from the sword in its traditional signification as a standard-issue warrior's weapon. In Hesiod, for instance, against the Hydra νηλέι χαλκῷ ("with ruthless bronze [sword]"): *Theog*. 316-18; against Kyknos ἐγχεῖ μακρῷ ("with a long spear"): *Shield of Herakles* 416-19; compare also in the same work the arming of Herakles, where he takes up ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα σίδηρον ("the iron [sword] that protects against doom": 128) and ὄβριμον ἔγχος, ἀκαχμένον αἴθοπι χαλκῷ ("the strong spear, tipped with flashing bronze": 135).

generally applicable to other fighters, is like such generalized epithets as δῖος ("godlike") and μεγαλήτωρ ("great-hearted"): like these formulas, the sword, spear and occasional breastplate (especially on early vases) convey merely a generalized sense of a successful warrior, evoking an ambiance of heroic conflict.

It must be recognized that while the lionskin and club (as the particularized elements) are often *relevant* to the context in which they are portrayed, in that the skin provides invulnerable protection against attack from man or beast and the club is a useful weapon, they are also to be found in situations where their referentiality is clearly extra-contextual. Such is the case, for example, in scenes such as Herakles among the gods,[28] or Herakles as a musician playing a *kithara (*a stringed musical instrument),[29] where there is no need for protection or offensive armament. Of course, these elements serve clearly to identify Herakles, but it can be argued that they refer as well to the whole visual tradition of the hero, identifying him not only by name but by *curriculum vitae*. That is, the visual attributes, like the noun-epithet formulas of traditional oral poetry, seem regularly to signify *more* than just an essential idea; they seem consistently to resonate with the entire concept of the heroic Herakles, victor in many conflicts, supreme over many monsters.

Themes

Just as the repeated iconographic attributes associated with mythological figures in archaic Athenian vase-painting can be seen to serve similar functions and to work consistently in similar ways to the formulas of orally composed (or oral-derived), traditional poetry, so there is in often-repeated (formulaic) compositions a visual narrative parallel for the themes that constitute another of the essential characteristics of oral composition. Themes work for Foley in a similar fashion to formulas—the repeated use of the same theme or cluster of ideas in different contexts, applied to different participants, creates an aura of additional signification around the theme derived from the totality of occasions when the hearer has heard it used. It is noteworthy that many epic themes tend to involve ritualized or quasi-ritualized situations, like performing a sacrifice to the gods, preparing for and eating a feast, calling a council, engaging in single combat: the effect of the extra-situational resonance is to imbue each occasion with the additional quality of being a single example of an often-performed event,

[28] Such as that attributed to Exekias: Orvieto, Faina 2748 (78) (*ABV* 144, 9).

[29] Such as the Lysippides Painter's neck-amphora, Munich 1575 (*ABV* 256, 16).

for which the nature and sequence of the actions is prescribed and intrinsically significant. This is important to the reception of the meaning of each occurrence, as not infrequently there is a tension between the *traditional* form of the theme and the *specific* form presented in a given context.[30]

That the same kind of tension can be generated in vase-painting is easily demonstrated by a brief analysis of one very common generic scene-type: the chariot departure scene.[31] Like a theme in orally composed poetry, the chariot scene is a prescribed basic structure that can be applied to a number of different narrative contexts; again like a theme, it can be cut to its bare minimum of the four horses and chariot and a person holding the reins,[32] or it can be expanded and elaborated upon.[33] Even the chariot-harnessing scene, which might at first glance seem to be a substantially different composition, can be shown in terms of balance of mass to be essentially the same, in that the horse or horses being led up for harnessing occupy positions otherwise filled by human figures; the same is true of the chariot involved in a battle context, as for instance in many Gigantomachies.

Wrede (1916) has shown that there are certain more or less fixed positions for figures in the chariot departure scene-type that becomes the norm around the middle of the sixth century: that is, a scene that is more or less fully occupied by the chariot and entourage (normally heading towards the right), with the human figures grouped around the equippage. Although Wrede's analysis focused almost exclusively on warriors' departure scenes, by and large the same positions operate *mutatis mutandis* in other applications of the chariot scene.

In any chariot scene, one figure will be holding the reins. In a warrior's departure, that person will most often be a charioteer (usually identified by his distinctive long, and often white, *chiton* [long tunic] and sometimes with a "Boeotian" shield), either standing in the chariot-body or

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[30] As Foley (1991:156-89) demonstrates in his analysis of *Iliad* 24.

[31] That is, the chariot scene that consists of a *quadriga* seen from the side; frontally presented chariots or chariots wheeling round are excluded from this discussion since the scene-type is significantly different.

[32] For instance, the amphora signed by Andokides, New York, Bastis (*ABV* 253, 1); seldom are self-standing chariot scenes so stark, however, and such minimal representations usually occur in the context of racing chariots, or of a chariot waiting while its owner engages in battle on foot.

[33] For instance, see the overpopulated amphora attributed to the Painter of Munich 1410, Karlsruhe 61.89 (*Para.*135, 1 *bis*; see also Weiss 1990:plates 12-15).

in the process of mounting; he will often hold a long stick (goad) in his right hand. The warrior may in the first instance stand in the chariot beside his driver on his left (to keep his shield-arm free, as Wrede suggests [1916: 253]), often with one hand on the front rail of the chariot, or he may himself be in the process of boarding; otherwise he will be standing to the left of the chariot facing to right, or behind the chariot-body facing either to left or right, or behind the chariot-pole, normally facing to left as if moving up to board. Members of his family or household are grouped around the chariot: a figure standing or (less commonly) seated to left at the right margin of the scene, before the noses of the horses; a figure behind the bellies of the horses, either to right or to left; a figure behind the horses' tails and chariot-pole (if the position is not occupied by the departing warrior). Further optional positions are: facing to right at the extreme left margin of the scene; either way behind the rumps of the horses; standing behind and more or less obscured by the horses' heads. Some of these figures will be women (rarely more than two in a scene), and sometimes a second warrior may be included.

Plate 3 illustrates a fairly typical chariot departure scene on an amphora attributed to the Rycroft Painter:[34] a charioteer in a white *chiton* (the white paint now partly flaked off) stands in the chariot holding the reins; next to him and partially hidden by his body stands a warrior, his right hand on the front rail; an old, (once) white-haired man stands to right behind the chariot pole; a second warrior walks to right, his face turned to left, behind the horses' bellies; a woman stands to left at the right margin of the scene.

An adaptation of the departure of a warrior is the departure of other figures in a non-military context, such as the pair of youths evidently going hunting on the reverse of an amphora in Boulogne,[35] or the many scenes, mainly later in the sixth century, where a male or female deity is shown standing in or mounting a chariot. In such scenes the figures in the other positions tend to be similar to those in a warrior's departure, though sometimes identified iconographically as Olympian deities.

[34] Oxford 1911.256 (*ABV* 336, 11).

[35] Boulogne 558 (*ABV* 145, 18).

Plate 3: Chariot scene: departure of a warrior. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1911.256. Photograph courtesy of museum.

In a wedding-procession scene there is less variation in the positions of the essential figures—the bride and groom stand together in the chariot-body, with the groom in the foreground, holding the reins and stick, the bride partially hidden behind him, in most cases with her hand on the chariot rail. These two figures are in parallel to the charioteer and warrior in a departure scene. The other positions in the picture-field are occupied by figures of women bearing ritual objects or perhaps gifts on their heads (behind the chariot-pole, horse-tails, and horses' bellies). There is usually at least one figure at the right margin of the scene. A typical example of a wedding chariot scene is illustrated in Plate 4, from the name amphora of the Painter of London B 174.[36] In some scenes with a man and woman in a chariot, a musician playing a *kithara* appears behind the horses' tails or

[36] London 1868.6-10.2 (B 174), (*ABV* 141, 1).

bellies, and other figures (male or female) replace the women bearing objects on their heads.[37]

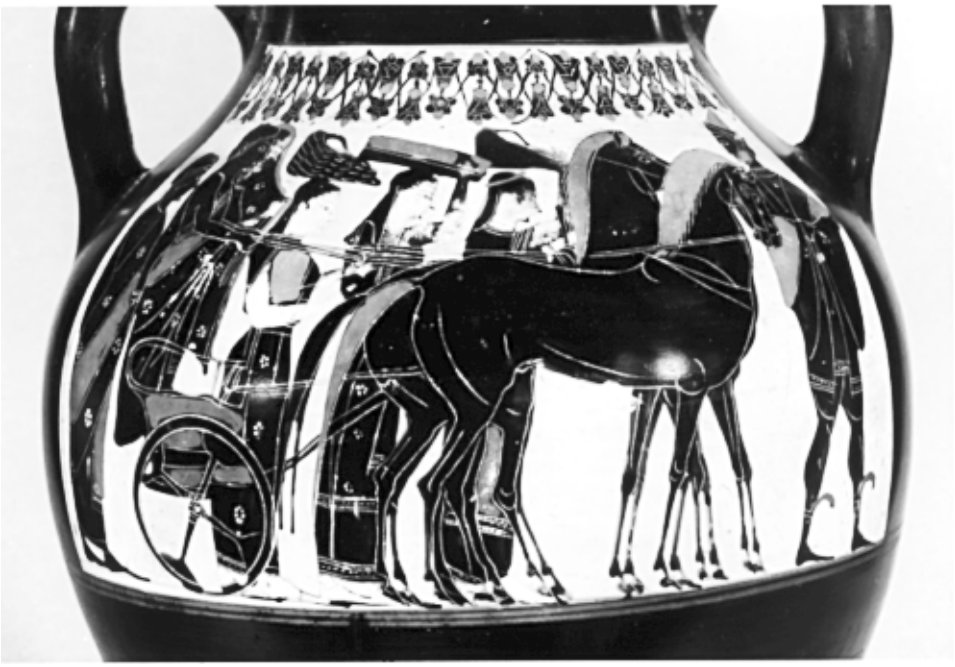

Plate 4: Chariot scene: wedding procession. London, British Museum 1868.6-10.2. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Rarely in wedding chariot scenes after about 560 BC are the participants named or otherwise specifically identified as deities; yet there are so few examples of "daily-life" scenes on vases before c. 520 BC that it must be assumed, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that mythological scenes are intended. One thinks most readily of the wedding procession of Peleus and Thetis, given the popularity of the scene on early black-figure vases. The inclusion of the *kithara*-player may be a clue to the specifically divine nature of the occasion: he is usually represented as a youth, often with incised locks of hair hanging before his ear, and so it is difficult not to perceive him as Apollo. Such a tendency to automatic identification usefully illustrates the way in which traditional referentiality works in vase-painting.

[37] So for instance the reverse of an amphora attributed to the Painter of the Vatican Mourner [Bothmer], Malibu 78.AE.148. For illustration see Mackay 1985:230. In other such scenes with a *kithara*-player, of the figures in the chariot the woman is in the foreground, holding the reins, while the man is partially obscured beside her (for instance the scenes on both sides of the neck-amphora attributed to Exekias, New York 17.230.14 [*ABV* 144, 3]).

In all chariot scenes the most visually dominant objects are the horses, as they constitute a large, more or less unbroken, mass of black. It is this regularly recurring and immediately recognizable kernel of the chariot scene that serves to link all the different applications together: the positions of the horses and chariot are fixtures in the picture-field, and of necessity there are only a few convenient positions for figures if they are to stand out with any clarity. The composition of chariot scenes is thus a common factor, relying for narrative meaning on closer inspection of the definition of details such as the identity (or function) and arrangement of the various constituent figures.

A dynamic tension between the signification of formulaic iconographic elements and the formulaic compositional context in which they are used may be seen in a specialized application of the chariot scene, of which there are many examples from a variety of workshops in the last third of the sixth century. The chariot is that of Athena, and Herakles is also featured within the scene, associated with the goddess and her chariot; subsidiary positions are usually occupied by figures identified iconographically as Olympian deities. It is arguable that most of these scenes show the procession escorting Herakles to Olympos in celebration of his apotheosis.[38] In some versions, Herakles and Athena stand side by side in the chariot, with Athena always in the foreground, holding the reins; she is the higher-ranking personage, and she is presumably to be thought of as conducting Herakles,[39] so that this seems logical. But is the underlying image-referent that of the warrior's departure, or the departure of the wedding procession? If the former, then Athena is playing charioteer to Herakles' superior role; this could be supported by noting that Herakles is customarily represented in his lionskin and equipped with his club—the equivalent of the fully armed warrior; also Athena's *peplos* is a long garment reminiscent of the charioteer's *chiton,* and the added white so often applied to the latter garment could be evoked by Athena's flesh, white as is customary for women in the black-figure technique. On the other hand, the overriding image could be defined as a male and a female in a chariot; that their roles are reversed, in that the female holds the reins, serves to draw attention to

[38] See *LIMC* V, 1:126.

[39] This is the inference to be drawn from setting these chariot procession scenes into their developmental context: the earliest occurrences of the narrative of Herakles' introduction to Olympos show Athene leading Herakles on foot (for instance Plate 2 and see note 10 above), and the relationship between conductress and conducted is made clear by the Phrynos Painter on his cup London B 424 (*ABV* 168).

the unusual circumstances,[40] and to the fact that this is no wedding.[41] Some scenes that include Apollo playing his *kithara* would seem to underline this interpretation.[42]

Placing a specific processional scene within the context of the broader genre exposes the dynamic interrelationship between formulaic attribute and formulaic composition. The composition can create a new context for a given narrative that contributes substantially to the signification of the scene, for instance by revealing through similarities of structure a narrative link between two quite different stories.[43] The attributes, by identifying the participants in a scene, particularize it and so render it narrative rather than just depictive. Both composition and attributes enrich the scene by bringing together reminiscent echoes from the entire developing tradition.

Initially each such reinterpretation of an established genre of composition, each such recontextualizing of an often-depicted tale, must

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[40] Reference should be made here to the political inference drawn by Boardman (1972) in suggesting that these scenes may refer to the trick played upon the Athenians by Peisistratos (related by Herodotos 1.60).

[41] I am aware of at least four scenes with a male and female in a chariot where the figures are not specifically identified, but where the woman holds the reins (cp. *LIMC* V, 1:126*):* both scenes on the neck-amphora attributed to Exekias, New York 17.230.14 (*ABV* 144, 3); a scene on an amphora attributed to the Bateman Group in the Manner of the Lysippides Painter (*ABV* 258, 5); a scene on an amphora attributed to the Euphiletos Painter, London 1843.11-3.70 (B201: *ABV* 323, 22). All except the reverse of the New York Exekias amphora have an Apollo-like musician figure; in addition the Bateman Group scene includes a Hermes look-alike, and the London amphora has a Hermes (with *kerykeion)* and a Dionysos (seeming to hold the stems of the ivy that has invaded the scene): these details seem sufficient to identify a divine setting, and one thinks first of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, where the couple, otherwise iconographically unmarked, would quite likely be represented giving "driving-seat" preference to the divine Thetis over mortal Peleus.

[42] For instance, Vatican 351 *(LIMC* V, 2: Herakles 2881) and Berlin F 1827, by the Chiusi Painter (*Para*. 170, 5, *LIMC* V, 2:Herakles 2884).

[43] For instance, after about the middle of the sixth century there is a general similarity between Herakles fighting the Nemean Lion amid onlookers and Theseus tackling the Minotaur amid onlookers: both Herakles and Theseus adopt a similar stance, especially in the scenes where they thrust a sword into their opponent's neck or breast. Both stories concern a major hero overcoming a fearsome monster to the advantage of others. It is noteworthy, however, that despite this passing similarity at one time, the Nemean Lion narrative underwent an extensive subsequent development under the influence of a new kind of genre scene—wrestlers in the *palaistra*—while the Minotaur narrative remained comparatively static.

have been highly innovative, and would probably on this account have been regarded with some suspicion by painters' clients or patrons. However, as soon as an innovative combination caught the popular attention and began to be reproduced, it too, sanctioned by usage, became part of the developing tradition, to be reinterpreted in its turn. Evidence of this phenomenon in the example of Athena's chariot analyzed above may be found in the many variations of the basic scene that emerge particularly from about 520 BC on, and especially those where Herakles is shown standing in or mounting the chariot while Athena (or a woman who may be so identified) stands nearby.[44]

The working of this interrelated system of formulaic attributes and formulaic compositions seems to be very close to the significatory system described by Foley for the formulaic phrases and themes of orally composed (or oral-derived) traditional poetry. Both sets work consistently in concert in their respective media; the elements of both are susceptible to being analyzed in isolation, in a way that tends to blur their meaning when taken together; both have given rise to rejection by critics as merely repetitive, when recurrence is the very essence of their value as affirmative conveyors of an established yet ongoing tradition. The value of the vase-painting analysis lies not only in its potentially bringing to archaeologists and art historians a new approach to the reception of visual narrative in the archaic period (with advantage also to fields of visual narrative other than vase-painting), but also in the confirmation it offers of Foley's reception theory for oral poetry by showing that in a related but distinct tradition a similar system obtained; furthermore, in that system it is possible to trace the whole process of development, which it is here suggested should be viewed as potentially parallel to the development of an oral poetic tradition. Precisely because so much evidence remains of the vase-painting narrative tradition over its whole period of popularity, one may become sufficiently familiarized that one can perceive to a small extent what it is like to experience traditional narrative from within the relevant tradition, recognizing the wider referentiality of at least some of the traditional narrative components.

There are thus two advantages to be derived from comparison between the narrative art of vase-painting and the Homeric poems. One consists in the fact that the visual tradition preserves evidence of every stage of its development, so that it is possible to trace the evolution of repetitive

[44] The examples listed in *LIMC* V, 1: Herakles 2877-2906, provide a representative selection of examples illustrating the whole development of this narrative type.

narrative elements in the art, and to postulate a similar evolutionary process for repetitive verbal elements in the poetry. It is in the nature of things that an isolated example of an oral tradition, be it text or recording, can be studied only synchronically, whereas a tradition is essentially a diachronic phenomenon. The other benefit lies in the realization that orality is not merely a feature peculiar to orally composed "texts," but is rather a way of thinking, a way of looking at the world that is most prominent at times in cultural development when writing is least in evidence, but that by no means comes to an abrupt end when poet puts stylus to tablet.

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Chaucer New Painted (1623): Three Hundred Proverbs in Performance Context

Betsy Bowden

Among many battles currently being lost by English professors is one to retain the meaning of the word "unique." Unfortunately, nobody who substitutes it for "unusual" is apt to read this argument that the long poem *Chaucer New Painted*, which is unique in certain aspects and nearly unique in others, can open a gateway to realms of information less accessible were scholarly inquiry limited to more prevalent forms of verbal art. Investigation of this very unusual Jacobean-era poem will reveal wide-ranging diachronic issues about the interface between oral tradition and formal education. It will indicate that a genre nowadays neglected or maligned, the proverb, has stood as keystone in the continuity of oral and written culture across millennia of Western intellectual history, up until the present century.

The useful poetic gateway to such an expanse of scholarly issues has survived only by chance, in a unique copy owned by the Huntington Library. My introduction to the Appendix, which consists of its text reprinted and annotated for the first time, gives bibliographic details. The sole copy of *Chaucer New Painted* begins at the beginning but ends before the end of the story being told, for the title page and at least one concluding page are missing.

Chaucer New Painted is not quite unique in its form, that of a proverb collection incorporated into a frame narrative. Literature in English offers five additional examples of framed proverb collections, done respectively by Geoffrey Chaucer before 1400, John Heywood in 1546, Jonathan Swift in 1738, Benjamin Franklin in 1758, and William Blake ca. 1793 (all to be discussed below). *Chaucer New Painted* differs somewhat from all five in sheer concentration of proverbs: 301 documentable proverbs within 1153 lines of poetry, 287 of them packed into the 743 lines framed by narrative.[1] The author William Painter, apparently a tradesman

[1] Lines 105-847 of the Appendix.

in the service of a powerful London merchant,[2] often manages to construct quatrains that incorporate three proverbs in four lines. In his *tour de force*, lines 605-8 interconnect four proverbs in four lines.

Chaucer New Painted remains truly unique, even within its tiny fellowship of frame-narrative proverb collections in English, inasmuch as the author has recreated a live performance context. In the narrative frame, participants vaunt their individual skill at performance of traditional oral genres within an unofficial, yet structured, verbal game. Herein Painter may well have been inspired by the schema for the *Canterbury Tales*—namely, that the Canterbury-bound pilgrims exchange performances within a tale-telling contest proposed and judged by the Host. Painter conjoins Chaucer's name and a pun on his own, for his title, because of this resemblance and others to be noted, many of which are based on Jacobean-era ideas no longer held about England's first poet. Besides the frame-story contest, another relatively direct connection appears in the opening couplets of *Chaucer New Painted*. The scene evokes the commencement of Chaucer's work best known then and now (97-100):

> **I**N Christmas time I needs abroad would walke,
> Desirous for to heare some merry talke:
> It was my chance to meet a merry Crew,
> And what their talke was I will heare tell you.

The *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* likewise specifies the season and then presents a chatty company, whom a first-person narrator meets by chance and offers to quote for our benefit. *Chaucer New Painted* soon diverges from its prototype, however. Chaucer introduces each pilgrim individually, and in doing so divulges also the personality of "I"—of the naive, bashful, and well-meaning but inept Chaucer-the-narrator. Instead, Painter's "merry Crew" promptly disappears behind a smokescreen of high-density proverb lore wrenched toward end rhymes (105-6):

> Soone ripe soone rotten, the proverb doth say:
> And seldome seen, soone be forgotten may . . . .

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[2] In the only previous scholarship on this poem, excepting perusal of it for *ODEP* 1970, Wright 1933 distinguishes the author from the William Painter (1540?-1594) who compiled *The Palace of Pleasure*. Spurgeon, the indefatigable compiler of Chauceriana, noted the Stationers' Register entry but found no copy of the book in British libraries at the turn of the twentieth century (1960:I.198, III.4.65). The Huntington Library acquired its copy in 1926.

Hundreds of lines later there reemerges the frame story, the implied performance context. Members of the merry and, presumably, patient crew have been lounging around the fireplace at a local tavern. Conversation ensues, followed by declaration of a folkloric challenge (925-28):

> Then one that was there in the company,
> Said masters, if you will be ruled me by,
> Who will not sing, read riddle, nor tell tale,
> Shall neither taste of Apples nor of Ale.

Nothing like the subsequent contest occurs in either of the two frame-story proverb collections available to Painter, those done by Heywood and Chaucer. Probably the author actually read Heywood's popular *Dialogue of Proverbs*, which was reprinted ten times between 1546 and 1598. In 2754 lines of iambic pentameter couplets, Heywood presents a young man asking advice from the first-person narrator: should he marry a poor young girl for love, or an old widow for money? Conveniently, the narrator's two sets of next-door neighbors exemplify those two marital states. After hearing two sad stories, replete with appropriate proverbs advising opposite actions, the young man decides against o'er-hasty marriage to anybody at all.

It is less likely, though not impossible, that Painter read with full comprehension the whole of the Middle English precedent to *Chaucer New Painted*: the *Tale of Melibeus*, that "litel tretys" containing "somwhat moore / Of proverbes than ye han herd befoore," which is humbly offered by Chaucer-the-narrator after the exasperated Host terms his *Tale of Sir Thopas* "rym dogerel . . . nat worth a toord."[3] Chaucer-the-author translated from French the *Tale of Melibeus*. As prose, it differs from the poems by Heywood and Painter also in having no first-person narrator. Its frame story opens with one brief burst of action: while Melibeus is away from home, enemies attack his wife and daughter. Throughout the rest of the treatise (920 prose lines in standard editions) the protagonist cites proverbs that urge revenge, while his wife, who is named Prudence, cites proverbs that urge prudence. Although the woman does win this debate, the Wife of Bath and her lively sisterhood seem far distant in spirit.

Both of the precedent frames available to Painter are unequivocal fictions. Neither author pretends that live human beings would actually discuss marriage or revenge by citing proverbs back and forth. In contrast, the frame to *Chaucer New Painted* does seem intended to preserve, however

[3] *SirT* 955-57, 925, 930. Subsequent references are parenthesized with tale abbreviation and line numbers, as stipulated in the References under Benson 1987.

stiffly, a performance context like those in which Painter himself must have participated—however stiffly. His narrative "I" seems rather a pompous killjoy. To begin with, he promptly expurgates what he considers irrelevant: all of the fireside "tales and iests" told (101).

As much as one might regret the loss of any tales or jests, quite a few seventeenth-century examples do survive elsewhere in manuscripts and print sources. Riddles, as a genre, have been less often preserved. Here Painter provides four riddle questions and a colloquial sense of orally delivered answers (e.g., "a foole may well know this," 957). In addition, Painter the proto-folklorist sketches the contest rules, which are agreed upon without ado. His informants are sitting side by side, facing the hearth. As response to the challenge quoted above, the man at one end of the row tells a riddle. The man at the opposite end of the row has to match the genre and try to cap the offering, such that he poses a three-riddle series (929-31, 937). Next, each man sitting second from an end of the row must sing a song. With thoroughness worthy of a trained fieldworker, but in fact based on the customary form of printed ballads at his time, Painter even supplies both tune names (961-64).

Apparently Painter-the-narrator is sitting third from one end of the row, and apparently his position allows him to choose the genre that his counterpart will have to match. When his turn comes to perform, at line 1108, humility about his own verbal skill echoes that of Chaucer-the-narrator (*SirT* 691-711). Abashed but game, he ventures to claim his share of apples and ale with an anagram that beatifies one Joan Clark, whom he then reveals to be his mother.

A battle of words erupts, yet another skirmish in the male-orchestrated War Between the Sexes. "The last man whom by lot it vnto came" poses in response a cynical anagram such that the four words "woe . . . yealousy . . . flattering . . . euill" spell "wyfe." Painter-the-narrator, permitted or goaded to take an extra turn, counters with "worth . . . youth . . . faithful . . . [turn from] euill." He tops off his verbal dexterity with an antimisogynistic proverb that has no exact analogue. And at that page bottom ends the unique surviving copy of *Chaucer New Painted.*

The loss is a pity, for this folkloric debate probably did proceed to a conclusion in defense of womankind, perhaps one further evoking Chaucer's work itself. Could it be that some disgruntled misogynist ripped out the last pages, thereby revenging damage wrought by the Wife of Bath upon her young husband's "book of wikked wyves" (*WBP* 685, 788-93)? More seriously, might the conclusion have contained even stronger indications for Painter's comprehension of *Canterbury Tales* in terms of folkloric debate? The *Friar's Tale*, which attacks summoners, sparks the

Summoner's Tale attacking friars, and so on. If so, the whole would add historical data for recent approaches to Chaucer's work, which await further development by medievalists trained in methodologies appropriate to oral tradition transformed into literature.[4]

As another possibility, that lost conclusion might well have added diachronic fuel to the inflammatory present-day topic of sexual bias in textual interpretation. Did this representative seventeenth-century male look upon Chaucer as an affable promoter of female sovereignty, as argued by many scholars today? Or did Painter inevitably bond with a sexist patriarch who glorifies rape and who "silences" and victimizes even the Wife of Bath, as claimed by one faction of feminist Chaucerians? Applied to such current controversies, medievalists' thoughtful awareness of the author's reception and reputation throughout six centuries can help disentangle concerns specific to the late twentieth century from legitimate approaches to Chaucer's verbal art within its own social and intellectual context.

It remains problematic, of course, that Chaucerians reconstruct the social and intellectual history of late-fourteenth-century London based to some inevitable degree on their own concerns and expectations. This and other vast interpretive issues would not be resolved should a dusty bookshelf somewhere reveal a second extant copy of *Chaucer New Painted*, this one intact. It is worthwhile to articulate such problems, however, and in the meantime to appreciate the value of whatever Chauceriana have survived. *Chaucer New Painted* happens to be incomplete, although unlike the *Canterbury Tales* it was not a work in progress at the time of the author's death. It imitates certain aspects of Chaucer's best-known poem—some of them still considered significant, others retrievable via reception studies. Painter's partial and, to be sure, inexpert imitation provides a reconstructed performance context for excruciatingly retextured oral texts, primarily proverb texts. Undeniable aesthetic deficiencies notwithstanding, Painter's poem offers an extraordinarily direct record of the oral art of early seventeenth-century folks, lounging hearthside at a tavern in winter. It thereby permits an extraordinarily piercing insight into their attitudes and expectations toward England's first and most consistently loved poet.

The texture of *Chaucer New Painted*, of this literary text as a whole, may most kindly be described as sing-song. Normal word order, a major carrier of discursive meaning in English, is frequently sacrificed to maintenance of rigid iambic pentameter couplets. Like others at his time,

[4] See Lindahl 1987 and Bowden 1987.

Painter believed that he was improving on his Middle English model by regularizing its rough meter. He lived during the stretch of centuries intervening between the Great Vowel Shift and today's consensus that, in Middle English poetry, the final *e* and other minor syllables were enunciated or dropped at will, whichever way better fit the meter. Early commentators, tackling the language with their own pronunciations of Modern English, bemoan Chaucer's childlike inability to write smooth iambic pentameter verse.[5]

Although *Chaucer New Painted* itself was seldom purchased or preserved, apparently, other evidence implies that seventeenth-century readers would have preferred Painter's poetic texture to Chaucer's own. Those few aficionados presumably considered Painter's poetic skill inferior to that of Jacobean poets whose publications were much more widely read and retained, however.

Throughout Painter's poem, the most frequent verse-form is that of quatrains rhymed *aabb*. The entire collection of explicated proverbs is printed in quatrains, with but two exceptions: a Biblical paraphrase to be discussed; and just before it a segment rhymed *aaabb*, which contains supposedly "this last prouerb" followed by another "almost quite forgotten" (lines 761-65). Verse-form varies somewhat before and after the collection itself, though. The preliminary matter is printed in continuous couplets, which is Chaucer's predominant choice for the *Canterbury Tales*. Printed thus are a dedication to Painter's wealthy but middle-class patron; a superficially modest address "To the Reader;" and a page in large print addressed to visual artists, which expresses Painter's opinion that a primary value of proverbs lies in their striking use of visual imagery (lines 85-96).

This preliminary matter incorporates occasional proverbs, in a proportion probably no larger than that of other Jacobean poems. A similar ratio of lines with and without proverbs occurs in the concluding passage, which likewise deviates from the quatrain as verse-form. Continuous couplets again, with breaks for sense rather than for versification, follow the narrator's statement at lines 848-49 that he will now cease listing proverbs.

Thus Painter uses the quatrain to distinguish his proverb collection from the rest of the poem. Throughout, in contrast, the meter never varies: iambic pentameter for the introductory matter and the folkloric scenario, as well as for the collection. Only the two songs differ, because English speakers would not be singing a five-beat line. The first song, lines 965-1041, resembles the rest of *Chaucer New Painted* except for its tetrameter:

[5] See Spurgeon 1960:III.6.16-17, s.v. Verse.

each stanza is a quatrain rhymed *aabb*, plus a couplet as refrain. Verse-form deviates further for the second song, lines 1042-1107, such that it appears more musical. Perhaps it thus betters the first song, as the three-riddle series seems meant to cap the single riddle. The second song employs ballad meter—that is, lines alternating tetrameter and trimeter, here rhymed *abcb*—and the refrain's longer lines repeat the meter and rhyme scheme of the stanzas. In each refrain, the feminine end-rhyme "feeding/heeding" enhances the song's aesthetic complexity, for a listener would expect comparative simplicity in a repeated refrain.

Once upon a time my mention of complex versification, in reference to songs sung at hearthside, would have exiled "The Pleasant Life of Shepheards" (line 1042) and its companion song to the bleak and forbidding academic badlands, there to languish unapproached by scholars from either discipline of "Folklore" or "English." Along with the two songs' classical, Biblical, and pastoral references, sophisticated versification would formerly have disqualified each from consideration as a pure folksong generated spontaneously by the unlettered rural folk. The songs in *Chaucer New Painted* would have been shunned even more decisively by scholars of English literature. In order to gain prestige for university-level study of "high art" in the vernacular, through most of the twentieth century literary critics kept trying very hard to create methodology applicable only to items of known authorship that display aesthetic complexity on the printed page, without benefit of performance. Indeed, despite urgings from Booth (1981) and Bowden (1982), literary scholars still have barely begun to acknowledge that songs meant to be sung will require analytic techniques quite unlike those developed for silent or even spoken poetry.

Happily, though, this split between the academic disciplines of Folklore and English is both recent and reparable. Although signs of fissure may be spotted earlier, the chasm gaped wide only in the aftermath of World War II. Nazi transformation of folklore into propaganda had a negative impact on scholarship everywhere.[6] Academic commitment to folklore then became downright dangerous during the McCarthy Era, for many major concepts in the field had indeed emerged from Russia and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the notion that ordinary men and women all around us are creating great art right now, orally, would have undermined literary critics' desperate efforts to establish a vernacular canon as solid as the canon of Greco-Roman literature, then still accepted as such. Partly in justified fear of being unjustly linked to the International Communist Conspiracy, therefore, literary scholars forty years ago abruptly turned their

[6] See Dow and Lixfeld 1994.

backs on certain genres of verbal art too hastily labeled mere "folklore"—including, least appropriately of all, the proverb.

In order to position *Chaucer New Painted* in relation to proverb collections of and before its time, it will be necessary to adjust our sights backward to scholarly attitudes that predate the Cold War. We must adjust our focus outward, also, toward an overview of the actual sociohistorical context for Painter's pretended performance context, with its unique combination of oral traditional texts.

Painter, that is to say, composed his proverb collection and frame narrative at a specific time and place. As described by Wright (1933), Painter exemplifies the solid middle-class English mercantile values justified by Protestant Christianity. Protestants were to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Accordingly, within Painter's proverb collection the notable exception to printed quatrains occurs as a seven-couplet paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: "To every thing there is a season, and a time" (770-83). This passage concludes with two good reasons why there is, in contrast, no proper time for sin: sin breaks God's law, and sin is a waste of time.

The latter theme expands after the list of proverbs gives way to retextured conversation about a recent American import, tobacco. Because this new product created social situations unaddressed by proverbial wisdom, only two proverbs occur throughout these conversational lines 848-922. (In comparison, the immediately preceding lines 773-847 feature twenty-four documentable proverbs in the same space.) Painter concludes his proverb collection by calling attention to the interface therein represented between oral and literate culture, with reference to the role of memory (848-51):

> There was no more that I remember can,
> Worth writing that was spoke of any man.
> But some there was that would Tobacco take,
> Which as it seemed did one offended make.

The non-smoker lists numerous objections (857-60):

> It makes them daily to dispend much time,
> And neuer haue enough of beare and wine.
> And neuer any good that I did heare
> It one man did this fiue and thirty yeare.

He who was offended continues to object primarily to the amount of time that is wasted rolling and smoking "that stinking Indian weed" (882). Since

no one else speaks up, Painter-the-narrator takes it upon himself to respond at length that any substance might be abused. In conclusion he urges tolerance and moderation. Perhaps he is echoing the tolerant attitude of Chaucer-the-narrator, who agreeably describes every Canterbury pilgrim and condemns no one (921-22):

> Who good finds by it may sometimes it vse,
> And whom it hurts, from taking Ile excuse.

This 75-line conversation has its niche in the literary "tobacco wars" of the day, which were sparked partly by King James I's detestation of secondhand smoke. The relationship of this passage to Chaucer is less obvious now than it was then. In a Jacobean-era poem now lost, but so widely circulated that at least two reply poems were composed, a speaker said to be Chaucer gave credit to tobacco for his poetic inspiration. The extant reply poem gleefully proves anachronism in such a pretense.[7]

At this point in *Chaucer New Painted*, a reader may imagine chairs shifting to establish smoking and non-smoking sections by the fireplace. In the poem itself the "apples and ale" challenge follows, so that the two men seated at row ends pose their riddles. The three-riddle series involves surname puns, resembling the one on Painter's name in the poem's title. The first riddle posed, though, is quite poignant. A coal has been smothered with ashes, says the riddler, whereas one blast from the bellows could have caused it to flame and warm many nearby (947-50):

> [This] doth meane a poore mans Sonne I know,
> VVhich halfe a yeare to schoole did neuer goe,
> For had he had but learning to his wit,
> Sure many should haue profited by it.

Here and elsewhere Painter seems self-conscious, indeed psychologically defensive, about his own truncated education and thereby his want of any official relationship to proverb collections. By his time such collections, notably the *Distichs of Cato*, had been the mainstay of elementary education for many centuries. In addition, one century earlier Desiderius Erasmus had established influential goals for humanistic education at the highest levels of university, goals that decisively included the documentation of proverbs throughout Greek and Latin literature. As will be shown further, in Painter's milieu proverb collections were firmly

[7] See Spurgeon 1960:I.192, I.248, III.4.65.

associated with all levels of formal education. Yet in his poem's prefatory matter, Painter claims the right to list proverbs in spite of his own lack of opportunity for advanced study (21-24, 45-50, 59-64):

> . . . I haue hope as the old prouerbe spake,
> That barking curs oft times great mastifs wake,
> That this my booke some scholler may incite,
> Ere it bee long some better for to write.
> . . .
> I am well knowne no Scholler for to be,
> Therefore marke well what I shall say to thee,
> A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,
> Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile,
> A Scholler might a thing of farre more worth,
> With much lesse labour very well set forth.
> . . .
> For had I wit and learning as haue many,
> I would as bountifull haue been as any,
> Though learning euer did prohibit me,
> One of her Schollars in her schoole to bee.
> Yet common reason doth to mee declare,
> All they that worke, not master builders are.

The author's pose of humility is here just a pose, for he has openly defied social propriety by making and publishing a proverb collection. After apologizing for usurpation of a major role of the official culture, Painter ends "To the Reader" by apologizing for his own incompetence as a poet. Nonetheless he proudly works his full name into the very text of the poem, as well as into its title, at a time when many works carried the author's initials only or no credit (83-84):

> Though Poetry my lines may seeme to shame,
> Yet truly *William Painter* is my name.

This last apology represents both a convention in seventeenth-century literature and an adaptation from the protests of Chaucer-the-narrator (*SirT* 707-9, 926-28). It is, in addition, accurate. No one would claim poetic genius for William Painter, then or now. There is no chance whatsoever that yet another dead white male is poised to enter the canon of English literature. Painter's poetry is worthwhile insofar as it establishes a performance context for traditional oral genres, along with an ethnographic context for Chaucer's reception during the third decade of the seventeenth century in London, all presented by someone who regrets the inaccessibility

of advanced education yet who proclaims his personal ability to contribute to scholarship in one of its most basic formats: the proverb collection.

How is it that a format so essential throughout European intellectual history, up until the twentieth century, has been so thoroughly eliminated from scholars' reconstructions of earlier literary contexts? At the New Chaucer Society meeting in 1992, for example, a panel gravely discussed the flimsy frame narrative of *Tale of Melibeus* for two full hours without so much as uttering the word "proverb." Rather than detour into further analysis of academia during the Cold War, I will here posit one apolitical reason for scholarly bypass: the profusion of terms for the same sort of item, across many centuries and many social contexts. Just during the five centuries prior to ours, active bearers of the genre have given the memorable sentence such labels as adage, aphorism, apothegm, axiom, balet, byword, commonplace, dictum, gnome, lesson, maxim, old text, old thing, parable, paroemia, platitude, precept, proverb, saw, saying, sentence, sententia, sententious remark, term, and truism, not to mention lists that long for languages other than English. Similarly, memorable sentences were collected into *summae*, *florilegia*, anthologies, bees, bouquets, commonplace books, compilations, copybooks, courtesy books, and so on. Twentieth-century attempts to claim consistent usage flounder and fail justly, for there was none.

By the early seventeenth century Chaucer's corpus of work, in spite of its vernacular language, had been elevated to intellectual respectability by serving as yet another form of proverb collection. Painter would have known Thomas Speght's second edition of Chaucer, printed in 1602. Emulating many of the manuscripts, it became the first printed edition to feature "Sentences and Prouerbes noted." Although scribes had commonly added manuscript marginalia with Latin versions of Chaucer's Middle English proverbs, the editor in 1602 does not attempt analogues. Speght simply prints little hands in the margins, pointing to sentences that he or his sources regard as memorable. Subsequent readers were to continue to experience Chaucer's text with its proverbs foregrounded: by asterisks in the 1687 Speght edition, then by italics in the 1721 Urry edition, and thereafter less prominently in notes.[8]

In 1598, Speght's first edition had become the earliest Chaucer publication to provide scholarly apparatus: the first-ever glossary, plot summaries, explanatory notes, and so on. At the end, after a list of errata

[8] For general information on the Speght and Urry editions, see Hammond 1933:122-30 and Ruggiers 1984:71-115. For details it is necessary to consult physically existing copies of the books themselves.

that he intends to correct for the next printing, Speght comments that "Sentences also, which are many and excellent in this Poet, might have ben noted in the margent with some marke, which now must be left to the research of the Reader." Along with other kinds of evidence, this comment by Speght shows that sixteenth-century readers normally sought proverbial wisdom within Chaucer's works. Their expectations form a continuum with those of fifteenth-century scribes, as mentioned, and likewise with those of John Lydgate, who praises his mentor's "many proverbe divers and unkouth," and William Caxton, who praises the author's "short quyck and hye sentences" (Spurgeon 1960:I.28, I.62).

Caxton thus heralds his edition of *Canterbury Tales*, one of the first four books printed in England. Of the three others, two were straightforward proverb collections. During that first year, 1477, Caxton printed Earl Rivers' translation from French of the *Proverbes Morales* by Christine de Pizan; she had made this compilation for her son, modeling it on the *Distichs of Cato* and also on some among the voluminous works of the Spanish philosopher Ramon Llull. Another of Caxton's first four books was *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which had been compiled from Greek sources in eleventh-century Damascus by Abû al-Wâfa Mubashshir ibn Fatik. It was translated from Arabic into Spanish in the early thirteenth century, then into Latin in the late thirteenth, French in the late fourteenth, and eventually into English by many translators including Earl Rivers for Caxton.

In addition to four folio books, during 1477 Caxton published several quarto pamphlets. One was a Latin text and English paraphrase of the *Distichs of Cato*, which by then had served for thirteen centuries in elementary Latin education throughout Western Europe. Since at least the second century C.E. younger students had been memorizing its two- and three-word sentences, older students its two-line distichs offering succinctly worded advice. In incalculable multitudes of manuscripts and printed editions, varying widely in scope, with and without vernacular translations, the *Distichs of Cato* remained a staple of basic education well into the eighteenth century.[9]

Medievalists realize that Chaucer's "Cato" refers to this collection, rather than to either historical Roman whose name was attached to it (Hazelton 1960). In contrast, to my knowledge no Dante scholar has wondered whether Cato in the *Divine Comedy*—Cato, the one and only pagan permitted to dwell in Purgatory—might represent the ahistorical "author" of the ubiquitous *Distichs*. The figure in Dante's poem is Cato the

[9] See Duff and Duff 1968:585-89.

Younger, whereas the *Distichs* were commonly attributed to Cato the Elder (according to Habenicht 1963:5). Would this precise distinction have held fast in Dante's precise sociohistorical and educational context? I pose that question to Dante specialists, in hopes that one *locus obscurus* in the *Divine Comedy* may be penetrated by proverbial light.

Not long after England's first printing of the *Distichs of Cato*, by Caxton, Erasmus himself prepared the first scholarly edition of it (1514). Erasmus' massive influence made central to Renaissance humanism the documentation of and commentary upon proverbs in Greek and Latin literature. The first book by Erasmus to be printed was *Adagiorum Collecteana* (1500, expanded as *Adagiorum Chiliades*). In it Erasmus provides a workable definition—"A proverb is a saying in popular use, remarkable for some shrewd and novel turn"—and then gives references and commentary for 4151 proverbs in the largest edition, including ones as familiar today as "Posterioribus melioribus [Better luck next time]," which he locates in Plautus, Plato, Terence, Aristotle, Euripides, and three places in Cicero's works.[10] This constantly growing collection saw 48 editions and reprints before the author's death in 1536, 37 more by 1670, and in total at least 88 epitomes and adaptations. In England, besides many versions of the Latin, vernacular translations of Erasmus' *Adagia* were made by Richard Taverner, Bartholomew Robertson, and others.

Erasmian scholarship soon trickled down to the lower schools. By Painter's day generations of boys had been made to translate Latin proverbs into Greek, translate Greek proverbs into Latin, and compose prose and verse essays upon proverbs assigned. Inevitably, this being England, a satiric counterpart arose: wit-laden commentaries upon vernacular proverbs, showing each one to be either wrong or else applicable to an authority figure who ought to know better. After composing *A Dialogue of Proverbs*, John Heywood saw a potential for fusion of that schoolboy game with a more respectably witty genre, the epigram. He thereupon produced *Two hundred Epigrammes upon two hundred prouerbes* (1555, later expanded). Other authors with access to print followed suit, such as John Davies of Hereford in *The Scourge of Folly* (1611?).

Solemn English writers embraced vernacular proverbs as enthusiastically as did the satirists. In William Baldwin's *Treatise of Morall Phylosophie* the section of "Proverbes and Adages" helped generate a runaway bestseller, second only to the Bible in the number of editions published between 1547 and 1651. Proverbs were essential also to the practical education of merchants and other travellers abroad. Via lists of

[10] Phillips 1982:4, 267. On Erasmus see Appelt 1942 and Phillips 1964.

parallel proverbs meant to be memorized, foreign-language phrasebooks instilled in the learner an idiomatic feel for the spoken tongue. To mention just one more among endless examples, the predominantly religious poet George Herbert left for posthumous publication a list of 1010 "Outlandish Proverbs" (1640). Many are indeed foreign ("outlandish") proverbs translated, while others seem to be of Herbert's own devising; some remain as familiar as #524, "Living well is the best revenge."[11]

Proverbs permeated William Painter's milieu, that is, in *belles lettres* as well as in formal education at every level. The author's own personality and interests, not some social dictate, motivated him toward a serious rather than a satiric collection of proverbs. Assuredly, too, there was no social dictate that he differentiate traditional vernacular proverbs from his own comments on and paraphrases of them. Painter's poetic lines always rhyme, sometimes alliterate, and often express general truths as do proverbs. Indeed, he does his level best to make his own thoughts sound proverbial. How then can we determine which lines actually restate proverbs from oral tradition at his time?

Scholarship on any early proverb collection encounters some degree of this same problem. Suppose that a memorable sentence first occurs in *A Dialogue of Proverbs*. How do we know whether Heywood recorded what he had heard, on the one hand, or instead invented a succinct sentence that he thought worthy of so honored a label as "proverb," which then fulfilled his hopes by passing into oral tradition?[12] Entry of an author's own words into oral tradition, complete with the variants that characterize folklore, surely does occur. My Swedish grandmother was not misquoting *Hamlet* I.iv.90 when she used to say, "There's something rotten in Denmark, Switzerland." Both Heywood and Shakespeare were, however, popular and influential. Because Painter was neither, his case is simpler. It is not a viable possibility than an author so obscure as Painter—unmentioned by any contemporary—created a proverb from scratch and launched it into future circulation. For the Appendix, therefore, I document all proverbs recorded elsewhere, even if those other occurrences postdate 1623.

Two documentation problems remain, both to be noted in the Introduction to the Appendix. In Painter's poem about a dozen passages,

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[11] For more on proverb collections at and near Painter's time, see Charlton 1965:89-130, 227-52, and *passim*; Crane 1986; and Wright 1935:147-53, 339-72, and *passim*. On the most prolific collector and publisher of parallel proverbs for Elizabethan travellers, see Yates 1968.

[12] See Habenicht 1963:18.

which I signal with question marks, to me sound absolutely proverbial; however, they lack recorded analogues. One example has already been quoted (47-48):

> A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,
> Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile.

Unlikely as it seems that Painter himself invented this succinct image, reference materials offer no proof to the contrary.

A second problem of documentation is well exemplified by the last extant line of the poem, with which Painter-the-narrator augments his defense of womankind (1153): "A wild wench may a good wife make one day." In proverbial lore ragged colts become good horses, and good men are made from unhappy, ill, or shrewd boys.[13] Did Painter make an authorial decision to transform the species and/or gender toward his own artistic ends? Or was the "wild wench" itself an oral commonplace that nobody else happened to write down? After making editorial judgments that sometimes approached agonizing, I have documented each such unrecorded analogue with the sign ~ (for "approximately") plus the code for some recorded proverb that either makes the same point using a different poetic image, as does the "wild wench" instance, or else makes a different point using the same image. An example of the latter occurs in lines 143-44:

> Though *Salomon* were wise, and *Sampson* strong,
> They neither could their yeares one day prolong.

Whether Painter has reworded a proverb or just happens to be its only recorder, this sentence sounds at least as traditional as does its closest analogue S86: "Sampson was a strong man and Solomon was a wise man but neither of them both could pay money before they had it."

Besides these three categories—documentable proverbs, mystery proverbs lacking analogues, and approximately analogous proverbs—Painter's collection incorporates many lines and couplets that somewhat resemble proverbs but, to my editorial ear, sound too abstract to have circulated orally. Another editorial ear may hear otherwise. One example occurs as lines 413-14, which I understand to be Painter's explication of the documentable proverb quoted immediately afterward:

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[13] Codes C522 and B580 in Tilley 1984, hereafter understood.

> Some men will vainly spend more at one meale
> Then would suffice for two by a great deale.
> Yet the old Prouerb saith, Who wealth will win,
> Must euer at the tables end begin.

Indeed, except for the frequent lines stating that a proverb will now be stated, just about any authorial comment or paraphrase might conceivably have been an abnormally abstract proverb that only Painter ever wrote down. However, at some point one must cease documenting that which is conceivable but improbable. Everything has an end and a pudding has two (E121). I have stopped with 301 documented proverbs and 14 mystery proverbs.

Among the 301 proverbs only four are duplicates. Variants occur of D100 at lines 148 and 1098, of C831 at lines 342 and 992, and of S585 at lines 805 and 1012. In each of these three cases the first variant occurs in the proverb collection itself, the second within one of the songs. As the fourth instance, in lines 745-56, Painter directly states his intention to record two variants of the same proverb, S267. In another passage, lines 493-96, Painter provides what he considers the "same prouerb" as the one just told; however, it is one that uses a different poetic image to give the same advice (C144, N319).

Elsewhere also Painter organizes his collection to highlight his awareness of relationships among proverbs. Sometimes he pairs two that offer opposite viewpoints on the same situation, as in lines 578-80 (B580, T232). At other points he juxtaposes proverbs of different import that happen to share a poetic image, such as the "foot" in lines 662-64 (F572, O103). Quite often he groups proverbs according to topic advised upon: marriage, or child-rearing, or friendship, or merchandising, or (in lines 407-50) eating. Nowadays we might wish for subtitles, or at least better-marked entrances and exits to these groupings. It is therefore important to realize that Painter is, again, unique or almost unique in imposing so much order on a proverb collection. The norm was to list at random, with occasional clusters free-associating on (usually) a visual image. Such a dearth of organizational principles appears in the collection of Painter's contemporary George Herbert, for example, who was assuredly a superior poet *qua* poet, as well as in the long-established models by "Cato" and Erasmus.[14]

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[14] As a convenient set of examples, Ong 1977:166-81 describes three different formats for three proverb collections by two sixteenth-century scholars. Proverb collections, which now are library reference books, have by no means settled into one accepted format. Walther 1963-86 alphabetizes by the first substantive word in one

Presumably Painter might have rechanneled his enthusiasm, and his tendency toward innovative organization, into business ventures. Yet he never became rich or successful enough to warrant mention in London city records. If the first riddle posed is as self-referential as it seems, it is truly a tragic waste that this "poore mans Sonne" (947) was denied the education that would have earned him even a schoolmaster's post.

Would Painter have had enough basic education and enough free time to comprehend fully the Middle English works of the author whose name he invokes in his title? Speght's 1602 edition does supply a glossary and other aids; and its black-letter typeface, while appearing old-fashioned at the time, did not yet pose a barrier to readers. Among the connections to Chaucer so far suggested, however, none necessitates Painter's having read very much Middle English at all. It may be that he read only the *General Prologue* and, guided by Speght's headings in roman typeface, "The Rime of Sir Topas . . . purposely vttered by Chaucer . . . as though he himselfe were not the authour, but only the reporter of the rest," along with "Chaucers Tale" of Melibeus. In the latter's multitude of pointing hands Painter found reinforcement for his impression that Chaucer had a particular interest in proverbs. Furthermore, even if he did not read much past the opening action of *Tale of Melibeus*, Painter would have recognized it as a frame-narrative proverb collection somewhat resembling John Heywood's, embedded within the better-known frame narrative of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Painter would not have had to read carefully all of Chaucer's tales and tale links in order to acquire the sense of folkloric contest that he emulates. In the *General Prologue* the Host proposes the tale-telling competition that was familiar within Painter's milieu, both specifically and in a more general sense. For several centuries beginning ca. 1550, "a Canterbury tale" occurs as a generic term somewhat resembling "folktale." A Canterbury tale was wholly fictional, therefore sometimes decried, and was normally told in some kind of structured but unofficial social situation.

Besides knowing already about the frame narrative for the *Canterbury Tales*, Painter would have considered Chaucer's work to be a

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instance of a proverb, a problematic system with regard to variants. *ODEP* 1970 is alphabetical according to key word, with cross-references to near-synonyms and to proverbs with that word in a non-key position. American scholars, whether in rivalry or isolation, set up two conflicting classification systems in which each proverb is assigned a letter (the initial of its first substantive word) plus a number. As an example, both Tilley 1984 (whose system Dent adopts) and Whiting 1968 consider "sight" the key term in "Out of sight, out of mind"; but its code is S438 in Tilley and S307 in Whiting.

respectable, well established, vernacular proverb collection with the relevant items clearly marked. How many of them did Painter incorporate into his own collection? Marginal hands in Speght's edition point out 707 proverbs in the *Canterbury Tales* alone: 194 in *Tale of Melibeus*, 132 in the *Parson's Tale*, and 381 in the versified tales put together.

To document parallel proverbs, I had to keep *Chaucer New Painted* entire in my memory while scanning page after page of Speght's black-letter type. The number of Chaucerian proverbs reused by Painter may well be approximate, therefore, not exact. The number seems nonetheless significant, for the number is one. "All is not gold that glitters" (A146) occurs at line 708 of *Chaucer New Painted*, and at what is now line 962 of the uncompelling *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*. Rather than borrowing any of Chaucer's proverbs, it seems that Painter made just one slip-up in his plan to accomplish quite the opposite: to make a collection of vernacular proverbs that is mutually exclusive of Chaucer's precedent-setting work. Mutually exclusive, and thereby unique.

"To Generalize is to be an Idiot."[15] Scrawled in a book margin by William Blake, this proverb-like sentence deserves wider circulation among literary theorists prone to brush aside calls for textual evidence to support their abstract musings. Blake's pointed comment can here apply to analysis of the five other frame-narrative proverb collections in English. They resemble *Chaucer New Painted* principally in that each is unique in its own way. The six literary items display widely divergent formats, tones, apparent intentions, and effects upon real or implied readers. Blake's piece is intensely Blakean, moreover, and Swift's is quintessentially Swiftian. By no means do the six items exemplify diachronic development of a specialized genre. Probably the three eighteenth-century authors had some knowledge of the prototypes by Chaucer and Heywood; perhaps they even encountered *Chaucer New Painted*. Whether or not any given author knew any given predecessor, though, each was creating independently.

For Blake the effect of independent creation is magnified. In nearly all of his works, certainly including *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (ca. 1793), Blake intentionally defies social and generic expectations. His "Proverbs of Hell" constitute a central section of this early work in illuminated printing, in which Blake intends his audience to experience verbal and visual art unified, inseparable, unapproachable by any mind that gives credence to Reason. For example, the Proverb of Hell "One thought . fills immensity" contains a non-syntactic period that functions as a sort of

[15] Blake's annotation to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798), in Erdman 1982:641.

vortex for combined verbal/visual meaning. An entire seascape emerges through, as it were, that tiny black spot: after the words cease, an ocean scene with cliffs and ships completes the line visually.[16]

In addition to seventy decisively non-traditional proverbs listed, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* includes both poetry and prose (Erdman 1982:33-45). It thereby differs from Blake's other works in illuminated printing, which are poetry. Although unclassifiable even within Blake's own corpus, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* does function as a frame narrative. After the opening poem entitled "The Argument" (that is, the plot summary), a first-person narrator hears "The voice of the Devil" and then describes a series of Memorable Fancies, culminating in "A Song of Liberty" with its proverb-like ending, "For every thing that lives is Holy" (Erdman 1982:45). No Blake specialist has yet placed "Proverbs of Hell" in the context of late-eighteenth-century educational practices that sought to impose Reason upon innocent minds.[17] Blake meant to hoist that system with its own petard—namely, with the proverb collection.

Jonathan Swift was being equally subversive, but with quite a different tone and target, in his *Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation* (1738). As frame for this proverb collection he employs a genre readily identifiable, the play. In order to mock the empty lives of upper-class chatterers, Swift as "Simon Wagstaff, Esq." does a tongue-in-cheek "Introduction to the following Treatise," which glorifes Colley Cibber and other allegedly brilliant conversationalists. "The Argument" to the play carefully outlines its banal action: five gentlemen and three ladies meet in a fashionable park, take tea, stay to dinner, play cards, and then "all take leave, and go Home" (Davis and Landau 1973:130). Their complete conversation consists of clichés, stale witticisms, and about 500 documentable proverbs (Jarrell 1956). Swift was primarily satirizing high society, with no particular intent to harm the proverb collection as a genre. However, it may be that this comparatively obscure work reached enough Swift devotees that it began to undermine the esteem normally accorded to vernacular proverb collections.

Any such potential denigration of the genre was stolidly ignored by Benjamin Franklin. By the publication date of Swift's *Complete Collection*, Franklin was already generating long lists of proverbs for *Poor Richard's Almanack*, culminating in *The Way to Wealth* (1758). Within a shorter, more straightfoward frame narrative than any of the other English-

[16] See Erdman 1974:105.

[17] See Lansverk 1994.

language examples, the narrator "Richard Saunders" relates that "I stopt my Horse lately where a great Number of People were collected," all complaining about taxes. They ask advice of Father Abraham, who orates with plentiful proverbs that he periodically credits to Poor Richard. The people listen, approve, and go right back to wasting money as soon as the market opens. Only the narrator acts upon the advice, noting that nine-tenths of the proverbs were not his own "but rather the *Gleanings* I had made of the Sense of all Ages and Nations" (Jorgenson and Mott 1962:281, 289).

As was not possible for a learning-deprived William Painter, Ben Franklin seized the opportunity to fan his own spark so as to warm many others. Seven years before publishing *The Way to Wealth*, Franklin had founded the academy that became the University of Pennsylvania. He defied educational propriety by insisting on a clause in the charter to stipulate that English be taught there as an academic discipline (see Bowden 1989). A century and a half would pass before English and other "modern languages" became acceptable fields in college curricula and, tentatively, scholarly research. At first, professors trained in Classics but teaching Modern Languages set out to document proverbs in vernacular literature, following Erasmian footsteps across a new field.[18] As printed schoolbooks grew cheaper and cheaper, though, proverb collections finally dropped out of lower-school curricula. Rote memorization and recitation of well-worded, idiomatic sentences lost favor even in foreign-language classes. Then, abruptly, circumspect scholars slapped the label "folklore" onto the genre "proverb" in spite of its central role in formal, official religion and education throughout human history.

Onward now struggles the hardy band of folklorists, burdened with genres ejected from the literary canon during the McCarthy Era. Yet picture a world in which scholars from other fields no longer cringe and cover their ears but instead, boldly, join up. Picture academic disciplines striding together past the dregs of Post-Post-Modernism, striding toward the reunification of what has so recently split asunder: the reunification in proverbs of canonical literature and folklore, of what is written and oral, of that imagined and performed, of visual and aural, of concrete and general, of official and unofficial, of cultural and personal, of education and entertainment, of tradition and innovation, of past and present. A mere

[18] Concrete results include the indexes by Dent (1981, 1984), Tilley (1984), and Whiting (1968, 1989); the bibliographies by Mieder (1977, 1978, 1982); work by many scholars including Finnegan (1981), Rothstein (1968), and Taylor (1985); and three editions of the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs.*

century or so has passed since proverbs were nudged out of their central role in scholarship at all levels. And hey, you know what they say. What goes around, comes around. And if you can't get on, get off.

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Appendix: Annotated Text of *Chaucer New Painted* (1623), by William Painter

Introduction

The Huntington Library in San Marino, California owns the only suriving copy of this 56-page octavo, designated as #RB82492. An indeterminate number of pages is missing from beginning and end, including the title page. The internal title before line 97, however, along with the author's self-promotion at line 84 and the running heads throughout ("CHAVCER *new painted*"), allows identification of this item as one licensed in the Stationers' Register on 14 May 1623.

To the poem as printed in 1623, I have added line numbers, glosses on obsolete words (marked °), and documentation for its proverbs (in brackets). I use the classification system developed by Tilley (1984) and adopted by Dent (1981, 1984.) The wider-ranging *ODEP* (1970) has been essential for searching and cross-checking, but *ODEP*'s full quotations would not have fit into margins as the Tilley/Dent code numbers do. For lines 58 and 1017, the marginal allusions are to the Bible rather than to any proverb separately documented.

Bracketed codes in the margin are sometimes preceded by "~," as the mathematical symbol for "approximately." In these borderline cases either a similar poetic image makes a different point or else a different abstraction or image makes a point similar to the proverb cited as an approximate analogue. For reasons explained in the article, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether Painter is inventing lines that sound proverbial or, instead, quoting a proverb variant known to him but not recorded elsewhere.

Besides these approximations marked "~," several lines are followed by bracketed question marks.[19] These indicate dead-ends reached after extensive searching under all imaginable variants in syntax and wording. Each set of lines sounds utterly proverbial, that is, yet utterly lacks recorded analogues. I welcome input on these mystery proverbs and on all other aspects of documentation.

[19] Lines 48, 128, 204, 251, 280, 308, 358, 564, 598, 692, 702, 732, 742, and 809.

To the right Worshipfull, Sir *Paul Pinder*,
Knight, and late Lord Embassadour
At Constantinople, that Cittie so renown'd
Whose like on earth is scarcely to be found,
William Painter wisheth all increase of grace,
In this life, and in heauen a Mansion place.
RIght worshipfull Sir, for many fauours shown
To me, that neuer yet deserued One.
Some from your selfe: your brother many Moe:
Your Sister, and their Children also.
And though I no way can requite the same,
If I forget them should, I were to blame;
For meere humanity all men incite,
Vnto their power all kindnesse to requite.
I haue of late some little labour tooke,
The English prouerbs to write in a booke;
Though rudely, yet the best that I could doe,
And to your Worship Dedicate it to:
Yet certainely I thereby shall declare,
The loue which I doe vnto learning beare;
And I haue hope as the old prouerbe spake,
That barking curs oft times great mastifs wake, [C919]
That this my booke some scholler may incite,
Ere it bee long some better for to write.
If this I shall by any see amended,
I shall bee pleased and no whit offended.
If you vouchsafe but pleased herewithall,
I double paid account my labour shall,
If I could but in a full measure show,
The loue and seruice which to you I owe,
Although it came by labour and much paine,
Or with some losse, I should account it gaine.
But as the prouerbe saith, Few words suffice,
When they are spoke to those men that be wise: [W781]
So I had rather too abruptly end,
Then with long protestations to offend.
I thus conclude, beseeching mighty Ioue,
Hourely to send you blessings from aboue.
Your Worships Orator, wholy deuoted,
Till death in sunder cut the vitall threed. [T249]
W. P.

TO THE READER.

G*ood courteous Reader, be thou young or old,*
Here giue me leaue to make a little bold,

To shew to thee my want of learning here,
Which after will in euery verse appeare,
I am well knowne no Scholler for to be,
Therefore marke well what I shall say to thee,
A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,
Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile, [?]
A Scholler might a thing of farre more worth,
With much lesse labour very well set forth,
For had this by a Scholler beene set forth,
It surely would haue beene of lesser worth,
For he that wealthy is must liberally
Contribute to the poores necessity.
I seeing those that wealthy were and rich,
Into the treasury did cast in much,
I my one mite, like to the widow poore,
Likewise cast in euen all I had in store, [Mark 12.42-44]
For had I wit and learning as haue many,
I would as bountifull haue been as any,
Though learning euer did prohibit me,
One of her Schollars in her schoole to bee.
Yet common reason doth to mee declare,
All they that worke, not master builders are, [M107]
For some must carry water and some stones,
And some fill vp the midst with shells and bones:
And some must carry morter, and some other lime,
And some must tend the tooles all dinner time,
And in the euening safely them vp lay,
That in the morning nought bee wanting may.
If I accounted like the worst of these
Shall bee, it will mee both content and please:
And I to thee will further promise make,
To quit thy loue some greater paines Ile take:
I will omit no opportunity,
Vntill some better shall bee made mee by,
That what is wanting both in art and skill,
May bee supplide in kindnesse and good will:
What's here defectiue Ile no way defend it,
But hee that can Ile giue free leaue to mend it:
I hast till I the matter shall you tell,
And for this time thrice heartily farewell.
Though Poetry my lines may seeme to shame,
Yet truly William Painter *is my name.*

YOu curious Painters
and you Limmers all,
From Temple-barre
along to Charing-crosse,

That your gay pictures
hang out on the wall,
Goe take them downe,
for they are all but drosse:
For here are liuely
pictures to behold,
More worth then those
that guilded are with gold.

CHAVCER
new Painted.
BY
WILLIAM PAINTER.

IN Christmas time I needs abroad would walke,
Desirous for to heare some merry talke:
It was my chance to meet a merry Crew,
And what their talke was I will heare tell you.

Some tales and iests they had which Ile omit,
Because they nothing to my purpose fit:
But all the ancient Prouerbs that I well
Remember, I will truly to you tell.

Soone ripe soone rotten, the proverb doth say: [R133]
And seldome seen, soone be forgotten may: [S208]
Yet what in youth a man hath most in °vre, °use
The same to keepe till death hee shall bee sure. [Y42]

Therefore bend thou the Plant whilst it is young,
Lest it in time doe wax for thee too strong; [T632]
For if it once vnto a tree doth growe,
Thou maist it breake before thou shalt it bowe. [B636]

Subjects and seruants neuer should withstand,
But gladly doe what they haue in command:
For why? the Prouerbe saith: Better or worse,
Bee alwaies rulde by them that beare the purse. [P646]

In high affaires that doth surmount thy state,
See that thou meddle not in any rate:
For hee shall scarce himselfe from danger keepe,
That doth awake a Lyon out of sleepe. [L317]

Against thy King and Countrey plot none ill,
For by some meanes it knowne be surely will;
Examples hereof every day appeares:
Besides that, little Pitchers all haue eares. [P363]

Thinke twise, then speak, the old Prouerbe doth say, [T219, T224]
Yet Fooles their bolts will quickely shoot away: [F515]
And one of these two euills comes thereby,
Their purse must pay for't; or say, tongue thou lye. [?]

And more at large the prouerbe this expresse,
Which saith, That man which in his drunkennesse
Doth kill a man, most commonly we see,
When hee is sober, for it hang'd shall bee. [M175]

Looke ere thou leape, the old prouerbe doth say; [L429]
For otherwise thou fall in the ditch may:
Yea, you shall neuer any boulder finde
To bee, then is old Byard that is blinde. [B112]

'Tis dangerous to meddle with edg'd tooles: [J45]
The prouerbe saith: therfore take heed when fooles
Set stooles, that you thereat breake not your shins, [F543]
For sure delay oft times great danger brings.

The old prouerbe thus, long agoe did say:
That time and tide for no man will not stay. [T323]
Though *Salomon* were wise, and *Sampson* strong,
They neither could their yeares one day prolong. [~S86]

Looke to the end before that thou begin, [E128]
What thou thereby maist either lose or winne,
For hast makes wast, the old prouerbe doth say: [H189]
And praise at night the fairenesse of the day. [D100]

Hee that a Theefe doth from the gallowes saue,
By him some mischiefe shall be sure to haue: [T109]
But I thinke none that any danger feares,
Will goe and take a madde Dogge by the eares. [W603]

Wee see it daily, that both great and small,
Will euer thrust the weakest to the wall: [W185]
And this by proofe to speake I dare be bould,
That hee that worst may shall the candle hold. [C40]

Some euer will pinch on the Parsons side, [P67]
And cut a large thong off their neighbours hide [T229]

And where the Stile is troden and made low,
There euery one will soonest ouer goe. [H364]

If some men might but in authority be,
Them cruell Tyrants euer you should see:
But God, to keepe poore silly beasts from harmes,
Doth send a curst Cow euermore short hornes. [G217]

There is one prouerbe that doth thus alledge,
Some steal may better then some looke o're th'hedg: [H692]
For lawes may bee to Spiders webs compar'd,
Which Great flies breake, and small ones be insnar'd [L116]

Goe not to law vnlesse thy cause be right,
Especially against a man of might,
For why? the prouerbe saith, As one's befrended,
Hee shall bee sure to haue his Action ended. [M63]

Some men will euer ready haue at hand,
An *Oliuer* for any other mans *Rowland*. [R195]
And hee that such men sue shall at the law,
May in the end perhaps to get a straw. [L99]

Some e're their Chickens hatch be, count them will. [C292]
To such the prouerbe plainely saith vntill,
They that the reckoning make without their host,
Most commonly their labour proueth lost. [H726]

But fare and soft doth euer furthest goe, [S601]
And a slow fire maketh sweet mault also: [F280]
And hee that leaps e're hee the stile comes at,
A broken shin surely hath often gat. [S856]

The shortest horse you soonest curry may. [H691]
Thus the old prouerbe long agoe did say.
And they that faine would liue at peace and rest,
Must heare and see and alwaies say the best. [P140]

Let none reioyce in others griefe and paine:
For why? the prouerbe telleth to vs plaine:
Hee that his neighbours house on fire doth see,
Should of the sparkes take heed and carefull bee. [N116]

By others losse who seeketh his owne gaine, [M337]
And stormes, by any for to bee gainsaine,
The prouerbe telleth vnto all such plaine,
A worme that's troad on sure will turne againe. [W909]

Hee that doth glory in his strength and might,
That take no wrong will, nor will doe no right,
That prouerbe fits, which saith, the Pitcher long
Had to the wel, at length comes broken home. [P501]

Some say, Hang sorrow, care will kill a Cat, [C84, C85]
And surely euery Rogue hath learned that,
For they will sweare, e're they will carry coales, [C464]
Their feet shall fill vp eight of the nine holes. [?]

Some say, A bad scuse better then none is: [E214]
But I an honest man once heard, say this:
Finde Hares at any time that no °Muces haue, °gap in hedge (as escape route)
And Knanes no scuses, and Ile be a knaue. [H156]

And one thing more Ile tell you now in briefe,
That Fish is said to find but small reliefe,
Which to auoide a danger doe desire,
Leape forth the pan and fall into the fire. [F784]

The old prouerbe did long agoe say this:
That stopage no time any good law is: [~S901]
And further also the same prouerbe spake,
That euen reckoning alwaies long friends make. [R54]

Harm watch harm catch, the old prouerbe doth say, [H167]
And that to passe comes almost euery day:
For hee that striketh with the sword wee see,
Shall with the scabbard stricken againe bee. [S1047]

When the Steed's stoln, they'll lock the stable door,
That scarce would euer put it too before: [S838]
And Faulkners often say, had I but °wist, °known
I would haue kept my hauke still on my fist. [P453]

There is a saying, Happy is that man,
By others harmes that take a warning can: [M612]
And to this purpose hath the prouerbe said,
The burned child of fire is afraid. [C297]

Fair words the prouerbe saith makes fooles too faine [W794]
And further saith, which I thinke is certaine,
It is farre better for to haue one Thrush
In hand, then two that sitteth in the bush. [B363]

For any kindnesse thou hast done thy friend,
Vpbraid him not although hee thee offend:

For why? the prouerbe saith, It is not fit,
To giue one roast, and beat him with the spit. [M147]

The greatest wonder, the old prouerbe saies,
Did neuer yet endure aboue nine dayes; [W728]
I would that wrath and enuy were like it,
That men in ten dayes could them quite forget.

But wrath and enuy now is growne so rife,
It dwell in house will with a man and wife:
And one said, That doth deadliest hatred proue,
That commeth from the quenched coales of loue. [H210]

One that offended was I did heare say,
Th'offender in his *Pater noster* may
Perhaps to come; but did protest indeed,
That hee should neuer come into his *Creed*. [P96]

Ile tell you what I heard say of malice,
That hee a very good Informer is,
But no way fitting for to make a Iudge. [?]
Whereat I °trowe he did no little grudge. °believe

Some will be angry ere they haue a touch,
Yet the old Prouerb plainly teacheth such,
Hee that is angry when none offends,
Againe must pleased be without amends. [C200]

And some doe thinke how euer he offends,
If he doe pardon craue he makes amends:
But the old Prouerb sayes it small relieue,
To breake ones head, and then a plaister giue. [H269]

When for offences any sorrowfull be,
Adde not a torment to a misery,
But comfort yeeld the penitent and humble,
For men say that's a good horse that nere did stumble. [H670]

The old Prouerb this long agoe did tell,
To halt before a cripple tis not well: [H60]
For those that vse to mocke we dayly see,
Shall for their mocking °flowted againe be. °insulted

A Lyar is counted in a common-wealth,
Worse then a thiefe that liueth vpon stealth: [L218]
And he whose tongue doth °cogge and lye apace, °deceive
Men will with *Bolton* pray him bate an ace. [A20]

Truth seekes no corners, the old Prouerbs say, [T587]
But dares meer Falshood either night or day.
Though she by some may wrongfully be blamed,
She neuer shall by any be ashamed. [T584]

And this our swaggering gallants verifie,
For whosoeuer shall giue them the lye,
Shall with a whole head scarcely goe his way,
For it deserues a stab they all doe say. [?]

The old Prouerb doth say as I doe find,
Tis best to sayle with current and with wind, [W429]
But these of all men ought to be controld,
That run with Hayre & with the Hound will hold. [H158]

Young men that godly are all men delight,
But some so close haue playd the hypocrite,
Which caus'd this Prouerb I dare vndertake,
A young Saint alwayes an old Deuill doth make. [S33]

Young men thinke old men very fooles to be,
When old men young men very fooles doe see, [M610]
And some will other men rebuke and blame,
When they themselues are guilty of the same. [F107]

They that be nought the old Prouerb doth tell,
Will measure others by their owne bushell, [C663]
The mother neuer sought the daughter in
The place where she her selfe had neuer bin. [W353]

Ill may the Ouen speake, and say untill
In spitefull sort, a burnd arce is the Kill, [K33]
Yet you shall heare when women chide and brawle,
She that's a whore will th'other whore first call. [W319]

When thriftlesse prodigals the couetous blame,
And drunkards doe on vsurers cry shame,
Tis more then time for iustice to come in,
When vice thus openly rebuketh sinne. [V43]

He that a Lyons heart hath, and a Ladies hand,
May a fit °Chirurgion make in any land, °surgeon [S1013]
But these two me thinkes better doe agree,
Hands that be hard, and hearts that bended be. [?]

The couetous Vsurer whom neuer yet
A peny from him any one could get,

Except it were vpon a pawne or bill,
For he the pan hold by the °steale fast will. °handle [~H513]

Like him be greedy Cormorants, which haue,
A conscience more insatiate then the graue, [~C608]
Which rake and scrape whateuer they can get,
And all's good fish that comes within the net. [A136]

These will of no man any kindnesse take,
For feare thereof they should requitall make,
But like the Hogge that Acornes feed vpon,
And neuer looke vp from what tree they come. [H492]

And if their neighbours any thing would borrow,
They'll alwayes pray them come againe to morrow,
But the old prouerb plainly telleth thee,
While grasse doth grow the Steed may starued be, [G423]

And on the morrow if they come againe,
He will not sticke to tell them flat and plaine,
That charity alwayes doth at home begin, [C251]
And none by lending any good doth win. [~L199]

Or in plaine words will vtterly denay,
And in short termes these words to them will say;
Good neighbour, if you would but such things buy,
You should haue of your owne as well as I.

When at his doore the poore and lame doe cry,
Ere hee'll relieue them they shall starue and dye,
And he'll say if his friend be in the goale,
They that a cold be, let them blow the coale. [C460]

They say that conscience seuen yeares agoe,
Was hang'd, and after buried also, [C602]
And therefore God helpe rich men they all say,
If poore men want they goe abegging may. [G193]

The Crocodile ne're weepes, I haue heard say,
But when he's hungry, and doth want a prey, [C831]
Yet though the couetous hath much riches got,
Still wants what he hath as what he hath not. [M1144]

The old prouerb did tell this long agone,
The couetous man doth seldome ought bring home, [C745]
The fable shewes you how the dog was crost,
Which catching at the shadow the bone lost. [S951]

Make triall of thy friend ere thou hast need,
Lest thou dost faile when thou wouldest speed, [F718]
And he that friendship shewes thee at thy need,
Forget him not for he's a friend indeed. [F693]

Deceitfull euer will mistrustfull be, [~T559]
But no mistrust is found in honesty.
For honest men thinke all men would as they, [T221]
What they doe owe be carefull for to pay.

What one doth promise may performed be,
When two doe promise we it seldome see, [?]
For dayly by experience it is found,
Betwixt two stooles the taile falls to the ground. [S900]

Some borrow will of *Peter* to pay *Paul*, [P244]
And some will neither lend nor pay at all,
And yet this Prouerb euery one doth know,
That debt before a deadly sinne doth goe. [D167]

The old Prouerb did long agoe say this,
He that an ill name hath halfe hanged is, [N25]
Wherefore I wish that all men should for shame,
Such courses take they may haue a good name.

For wealth hath wings, and it may flye away, [R111]
And flatterers get friends, the Prouerb say, [F411]
But I know this, and so I thinke doe you,
The christned child may Godf'ers have enow. [C319]

Parents ought honest courses for take,
If no cause else were but posterity sake.
For why the Prouerb saith all men vntill,
If horse and mare both trot, the foale scarce amble will. [F408]

And to this purpose is that Prouerb sure,
Which at this day is most of all in °vre, °use
And I haue heard it oft where I haue gone,
That will nere out o'th flesh that's bred i'th bone. [F365]

Their tongues at no time should accustom'd be
To idle talke, much lesse to ribaldry,
For all men know that any thing discerne,
That as th'old Cocke doth crow the young doth learne. [C491]

Some parents in their children so delight,
They scarce be well when they are out of sight,

But one may loue his house in it t'abide,
Though neuer he vpon the ridge doe ride. [M266]

The Prouerb saith, Giue children while they craue,
And Dogges so long as they their tailes will waue,
And in the morning you shall plainly she,
Your dogges will cleaner then your children be. [C304]

As parents should not too indulgent be,
So they abandon should all cruelty,
Ile tell you what I heard one say last weeke,
That's a neare °collop that's cut off the °fleeke. °slice of meat. . . flesh [C517]

What thou maist secret keepe neuer disclose,
Although it be against thy vtter foes,
But not against thy kin of all the rest,
Men say that's an ill bird befiles the nest. [B377]

Though some both idle and lewd courses take,
Their friends should suddenly not them forsake,
For why? the prouerb telleth all men plaine,
That he goes farre that neuer turned againe. [R210]

The prouerb sayes, That wind blowes euer ill,
When no man profit it doth blow vntill: [W421]
For fooles oft times prouide good store of meat,
But wise men euer most of it doth eat. [F540]

Cookes at all times should looke most carefully,
There may no fault be in their cookery,
For euery asse will say that thereon looke,
God sent the meat, but the Deuill sent the Cooke. [G222]

Some men will vainly spend more at one meale
Then would suffice for two by a great deale.
Yet the old Prouerb saith, Who wealth will win,
Must euer at the tables end begin. [T3]

The old Prouerb saith thus of Gluttony,
The belly is sooner filled then the eye, [G146]
And that he is no kinder then a Kite,
For what he cannot eate hee'll alwayes hide. [K113]

The shamelesse Glutton you shall euer see
Vnbidden will at euery banquet be.
And yet there is a saying in all Schooles,
Vnbidden guests should with them carry stooles. [G476]

The Glutton and the Drunkard surely,
One's alwayes hungry, and the other dry: [M1149]
And surely he deserveth double blame,
That shall adde fuell to encrease a flame. [F785]

Some will find fault euen with the fattest Oxe, [F118]
And some are fed like Apes with bits and knockes, [B420]
But the old prouerb long agoe said this,
What thing is plenty neuer dainty is. [P425]

The prouerb saith, The more the merrier are, [M1153]
But fewest alwayes doe the better faire, [W798]
Yet one said it is merriest in the hall,
When tongues lye still and beards are wagging all. [H55]

Wishers and woulders I thinke none haue knowne
Two good housholders, nor yet scarcely one, [W539]
For one said he at no time worse did fare,
Then when he sate and wisht for his dinner. [S1001]

There is one prouerb which sayth on this wise,
Enough as well may as a feast suffice, [E158]
Yet one sayd, but I thinke he did but iest,
Farre fetcht and deare bought pleaseth Ladies best. [D12]

When one that's hungry you at meat doe see,
He may eat much, and yet no glutton be,
For the old prouerb long agoe thus spake,
Three bad meales will the fourth a glutton make. [M789]

The prouerb sayth, The fat Sow in the stye,
Nere thinkes what ayles the hungry that doth cry: [S676]
Yet too much pitty the same prouerb say,
Bring vnto ruine a great City may. [P366]

He that accustom'd is to sweare and curse,
If one rebuke him hee'll but be the worse,
For the old prouerb saith, It is the tricke,
A °gauld horse being rub'd to wince and kicke. °sore from chafing [H700]

Some spendeth euery day in the whole yeare
In gaming, drinking, and making good cheare,
And neuer doe themselues for death prepare,
Till he them napping catch, as *Mosse* did's mare. [M1185]

And then t'will be too late, the prouerb say,
When night is come, backe to recall the day, [~D70]

For he that will not wait at dinner time,
Must fast unlesse he with Duke *Humfrey* dine, [D637]

Though some long time haue liued poore and bare,
The prouerb biddeth such should not despaire,
For God did neuer make a mouth as yet,
But he likewise prouided meat for it. [G207]

Yet none should on Gods prouidence so rely,
But they must vse their chiefest industry,
For from the bridge who in the ditch shall swarue,
And shall lye still, may lye vntill he starue. [D388]

For that old prouerb that doth say to thee,
As thou beleeuest thou shalt saued be, [B265]
Is but a mocke I tell thee plaine and briefe,
For that is euer meant of vnbeleefe.

Some any kindnesse for their friends would doe,
If they were but requested thereunto.
And the old prouerb plainly telleth this,
That's a bad dogge that not worth whistling is. [D488]

Ile tell you what I heard one lately say,
As he and I were walking on the way,
That he surely shall neuer be relieued,
That doth conceale the thing wherewith he's grieued. [G447]

Faint heart men say nere winne faire Ladies loue, [H302]
Nor coward did a valiant champion proue, [~M496]
And Robin Red-breast loseth God knowes what,
Because that he afraid is of the Cat. [~F138]

When Cannons rore, and bullets thicke doe flye,
Who aymes at honour must not feare to dye. [H565]
Ile tell you what I heard one say of late,
That's a hard battell where no man escape. [F207]

The prouerb saith, The Cat faine fish would eate,
But that she's very loth her feet to wet: [C144]
But the same prouerb sayes, Who ventures not,
Hath seldome time great store of riches got. [N319]

Men say that barking Curres will seldome bite, [B85]
And brauling Knaues will euen as seldome fight,
Yet you shall euer see the bragging Iacke,
Will a great dagger carry at his backe. [B591]

Some men there are that bitterly will curse
The cony-catching cheater and picke-purse,
But there's a saying, Foxes neuer fare
More better then when they most cursed are. [F632]

He that is borne to neither goods nor lands,
Must not thinke scorne to labour with his hands,
For the old father said, Yea by Saint Marry,
That's a proud horse will not his prouander carry. [H683]

Tis best hay making when the Sunne hath shin'd, [H235]
And winnowing when in'th barn doore sits the wind,
The prouerb sayes, The Ant that nothing get
In Summer, shall in winter nothing eat. [F772]

He that thrasht in his cloake, being contrould,
Said that he did as much as ere he could: [G342]
Yet the old prouerb plainly telleth this,
That idlenesse the mother of mischiefe is. [I13]

But this prouerb I very well did marke,
The Priest forgotten hath that he was Clearke: [P56]
And Fire and Water, as we daily see,
Good seruants both, but cruell masters be. [F253]

The prouerb saith, Nothing agreeth worse,
Then doth a proud heart and a beggers purse, [H324]
Yet beggers set on horse backe, all men say,
Will to the gallowes ride before they stay. [B239]

There is one prouerb saith, That through enuy
Idiots and fooles vntimely deaths doe dye, [~E174]
Yet the same prouerb saith, That begger's woe
That seeth another by the doore to goe. [B237]

Some men that neither learned be nor wise,
We daily see to great promotion rise,
Sure t'was of such one said the other day,
Giue a man lucke and cast him in the Sea. [M146]

And some promoted are we daily see,
Out of the hall into the kitchen be, [H56]
And such haue euermore beene said to come
Out of Gods blessing into the warme Sunne. [G272]

A ragged colt ofttimes a good horse make, [C522]
Thus the old prouerb long agoe hath spake,

An Asse may goe that laden is with gold,
Through Princes Courts, and neuer be controld. [A356]

Let none neglect what he may lawfully
By gift or bargaine either wayes come by:
For why, the prouerb long agoe this told,
Though Summer's hot yet Winter's alwayes cold. [~S190]

What's freely giuen thee neuer doe forsake,
Nor of the goodnesse neuer question make:
For it hath alwayes folly counted beene,
To looke a giuen horses mouth within. [H678]

With them that freely giue make not too bold,
Lest they grow weary and their hands withhold,
For why the prouerb plainly telleth thee,
The freest horse may soonest tired be. [H642]

Thy goods nor money at no time mispend,
Nor carelessly the same to any lend:
For the wise father to the sonne did say,
Keepe somthing till there comes a rainy day. [D89]

For if a man to pouerty doe come,
His friends and kindred will his company shun: [P529]
And in such state as any one doth meet you,
Hee with like salutations sure will greet you. [L286]

One that much time and money had mispent,
And being asked what hee thereby meant:
Answered hee car'd not, hee had °Boote on beame, °remedy
If that his °naunt did die before his °neame. °aunt. . . uncle [?]

But the wise prouerbe wish all men to saue
Their foule water vntill they fayrer haue, [W90]
For they that hope by dead men to haue boot,
Wee often see goe ragged and barefoot. [M619]

The thriftles and the prodigall naught set by
No little thing nor little quantity:
Yet many a little the old prouerb said,
Doth make a mickle when together laid. [L362]

Things of small value the old proverb say,
Wise men seuen years will carefully vp lay,
If in that time it will for nothing fit,
Then any way they may dispose of it. [T141]

Though wicked weeds apace grow many say, [W238]
Vntoward boyes may good men make one day; [B580]
Yet the old prouerbe said e're I was borne,
That's earely sharpe, that after proues a thorne. [T232] 580

In trust is treason, the old prouerbe say, [T549]
For he that trusteth, soone deceiu'd be may: [T559]
Yet some will trust those that as sure will faile,
As hee that hath a quicke Eele by the tayle. [H508]

Try e're thou trust, the old prouerb doth say, [T595] 585
Fast binde fast finde shall surely alway: [B352]
And hee that hideth neuer doubts in minde,
But hee the same at any time shall finde. [H453]

Though some may one Theefe from the gallowes saue [~T109]
And one knowne lyar may some credit haue. 590
Yet the old prouerbe long agoe thus spake,
One swallow yet did neuer summer make. [S1025]

Examples alwaies no good reasons bee, [R206]
Which makes a many say though foolishly,
What's meat for one, another poyson may, [M483] 595
When'ts ment of swords that both defend and slay.

Who cares for no man, none for him will care, [F745]
And want with many men is a good spare, [?]
And the old prouerbe saith, that pouerty
Hath oftentimes parted good company. [P529] 600

Ill gotten goods are seldome times well spent: [G301]
And one said lately whatsoe're hee meant:
That sweet meat alwaies sower sauce must haue, [M839]
As hee came from the whipping of a knaue.

Change is no robbery thought the Fox in mind, [C228] 605
When he the Goose stole leauing the feathers behind [G365]
To chop and change hard neede constraineth many [C363]
For needs must taken bee the needy penny. [P208]

The old prouerbe did long agoe tell this,
That no foole like vnto the old foole is: [F506] 610
Yet all men say, that horse is nought for saile,
That neither whinny can, nor wag his tayle. [H671]

What men doe loue they hardly will forsake
This the old prouerbe long agoe hath spake,

The foole sure will not from his bable part,
If hee might haue the Tower of London for't. [F476]

The wilfull man hath neuer wanted woe. [W396]
Thus the old prouerbe said full long agoe.
And further also the same prouerbe say,
The swiftest course is that beside the way. [~W158]

The old prouerbe this long agoe hath told,
That wares well bought are euermore halfe sold: [W66]
And one must learne to creepe e're goe or runne, [C820]
A match well made is euermore halfe wonne. [~W657]

Some will buy wares of any kind of rate,
And then repent themselues when 'tis too late:
But ther's a saying bad ware's alwaies deare: [W64]
And what was good that n'ere yet lou'd the Frier. [F676]

Hee that good wares haue wheresoe're he dwell,
Once in a yeare hee shall be sure to sell: [W62]
For the old prouerbe saith as much indeed,
That good wine neuer of a °bush hath need. °inn sign [W462]

Buy not for time those wares that are too deare,
For many lose thereby as I doe heare:
And some doe buy and sell and liue by'th losse.
And so at length come home by weeping crosse. [W248]

Chapmen no great care need to take, nor paines,
To sell their ware vnlesse it bee for gaines: [M889]
The prouerbe saith, hee's neuer chapman bare,
That either ready money hath, or ware. [M884]

Some praise and dispraise will the selfe same wares,
And prate and talke of euery mans affaires,
When they know neither what is said nor done
No more then doth the man that's in the Moone. [M240]

Some will make gaine of any wares they buy,
Their tongues are so inur'd to °cog and lye; °deceive
And the old prouerbe saith as much indeed,
A crafty knaue doth neuer broker need. [K122]

Take heed thou neuer keep no companie,
But such as honest men are knowne to bee: [M535]
For why? the prouerbe saith, a man at Rome,
Must bee inforst to doe as there is done. [R165]

If here against, any should make reply,
The prouerbe further telleth them plainly,
'Tis daily seene, fowles that bee of a feather, 655
Will flie in troopes and company together. [B393]

Another prouerbe there is like to it,
Which for some cause I will not here omit,
That like will to his like by night and day,
As once the Deuill did to the Colliar say. [L287] 660

Whose foote is alwaies his friends table vnder, [F572]
If he grow prouident it is a wonder:
And to giue counsell it doth seldome boote,
Where the blacke Oxe ne're trod vpon the foote. [O103]

He that hath left him goods and money much, 665
The prouerbe plainly sayeth of all such,
It is no mastery for them to swimme,
Whom others alwaies holds vp by the chinne. [C349]

Some will bee proud of any thing done well,
To such the old prouerbe doth plainly tell, 670
It was by fortune more then by good wit,
A blinde man shooting chanc't a Crow to hit. [M81]

Against the streame it is in vaine to striue, [S927]
But they must needs go whom the deuil doth driue [D278]
And this old prouerbe is too true God wot, 675
That hard need alwayes makes the old wife trot. [N79]

The prouerb say, Loue is a pleasant thing,
When like the Snake it once hath lost the Sting. [~N321]
Sure, 'tis not meant the loue of charity,
For that lies sicke, pray God it may not dye. [C253] 680

I know not whether 'tis meant of loue or lust,
But loue with loue repaid againe be must: [L515]
And by experience this I euer found,
That hee that lou'd me also lou'd my hound. [D496]

There is one prouerbe that saith on this wise, 685
Reason and loue lookes through two paire of eyes, [L517]
But all the Poets doe agree I finde,
It neuer saw ought, for it was borne blinde. [L506]

I heard one once say thus of Iealousie,
'Tis pitty loue should keepe it company: [L510] 690

Of all kind natures I may say as much,
Tis pitty wit should wanting bee in such. [?]

This the old prouerbe long agoe hath spake,
Bare walls doth euer giddy huswiues make: [W18]
And hee that marrieth before hee's wise,
Most commonly shall dye before hee thriues, [W229]

The old prouerbe did tell this long agone,
That forward Children seldome time liue long, [~M1176]
Wee forward wedlocke may compare thereto,
For that vnto a night cap bring a man will doe. [A63]

Although a woman smile, yet thou must not
Straight way conclude that thou a wife hast got, [?]
For the old prouerbe plainely this doth show,
That two words alwaies to a bargaine goe. [W827]

Many in chosing wiues deceiued bee,
But most in too much praising their beauty: [W344]
For this most true the old prouerbe doth say,
All is not gold that glisters and showes gay. [A146]

One cannot wiue and thriue both in one yeare, [Y12]
Some say, and yet to marry none need feare:
For why? the prouerb saith all men vntill,
A good Iacke alwaies maketh a good Gyll. [J1]

The prouerb saith, That man that meanes to thriue,
Must first aske leaue and counsell of his wife, [L169]
For as the good man saith, so say all we,
But as the good wife saith, so all must be. [G331]

If maydens any young men doe entice
To marry them, or to doe otherwise,
The old prouerb still standeth in full force,
Which saith, the gray mare was the better horse. [M647]

When a bad couple maryed be, I feare
Men say of them you presently shall heare,
It is the wisest way a man can doe,
To fill one house, rather then trouble two. [H750]

Where nere a barrell better Herring is, [B94]
A man in choosing cannot choose amisse:
The man that foxes sold, said vse your skill,
The baddest is best, therefore take which you will. [B316]

He that a widow marries with children three,
The prouerb say of four theeues sure shall be, [W335]
Who may go on the ground, and will goe on the ice,
Is sure a foole, and the other is scarce wise. [?]

When simple swaines fine wiues will needsly take,
I doubt they will their heads like Acteons make, [~L25]
If I them wrong, their pardons I beseech,
But sure I am most master weares no breech. [M727]

But all men count it folly for to be,
For any one to meddle twixt the barke and tree. [B83]
Ile say no more, but wish all men good wiues,
As dearly loue should as they loue their liues.

Many kind heart we heare and see daily,
Doth make them smart, the more is the pitty, [?]
And that none should by knaues deceiued be,
Ile tell them what one once did say to me.

They that deceiue me once I them beshrow,
They that deceiue me twice I say the same also,
But if they shall deceiue me any moe,
For that my selfe not them I will beshrow. [S267]

Another saying there is like to it,
Which for some cause I will not here omit,
If that by one I once deceiued be,
For that pray God forgiue both him and me.

But if I twice shall be deceiued him by,
Sure euery man will say the more foole I.
But if I thrice by him deceiued be,
No man that's wise for that will pitty me. [S267]

But this I often times haue heard men say,
Him that deceiues him well deceiue you may, [D180]
But true religion doth no more allow,
But deale with all as they should deale with yow. [D395]

But this last prouerb I like worst of all,
That men a iewell should plaine dealing call,
Saying, he that vse it dye a begger shall. [P382]
And I had almost quite forgotten this,
Too much of one thing good for nothing is. [T158]

Now giue me leaue to make a little bold,
To tell what one in priuate to me told,
If you shall iudge it not worth hearing is,
Then surely I did take my ayme amisse.

There's time to eate, and time to drinke,
And time to speake, and time to thinke,
And time to worke, and time to play,
And time to sing, and time pray,
And time to sit, and time to goe,
And time to reape, and time to sow,
And time to wake, and time to sleepe,
And time to laugh, and time to weepe.
Of all things else that's vnderneath the Sunne,
There is a time when it may best be done. [T314]
Except to sinne, and for that no time is,
Wherefore the workers shall be sure of this,
A double punishment shall inflicted be,
For abusing time, and breaking Gods decree.

Some men doe thinke howsoeuer they doe liue,
God is so mercifull hee'll them forgiue,
But common reason vnto all men show,
That none shall better reape then he doth sow. [S687]

And some men out of meere simplicity,
Will adde a torment to a misery,
Euen like to oyle which foolishly was cast
To quench the fire, which caused it burne more fast. [O30]

Some flatter will and humour euery man,
To get them friendship and what else they can,
Which gotten they'll not one good word afford, [F709]
Such yet was neuer good neither egge nor bird. [B381]

Some make no end whatsoeuer they begin,
And some will bargaine whether lose or win,
Yet common reason sheweth vnto all,
Tis better sitting still then rise and fall. [S491]

Some will both kindnesse and friendship professe,
When they indeed doe intend nothing lesse
But seeke their owne turnes for to sit and serue,
And neuer care though others pine and starue. [~S219]

Some men say there haue been sweet flowers nigh,
A Serpent foule seene for to lurke and lye, [S585]

And vice hath neuer done more hurt indeed,
Then when he came cloathed in vertues weed. [V44]

He that his bed keepes when the weather is cold,
Tis pitty but he be a hungry should: [?]
And those that haunt Theaters certainly,
Shall dance the beggers °galliard ere they dye. °a triple-time dance [~J56]

Some to get money will take any paine,
And presently will spend the same in vaine.
Euen like the cow that giueth milke great store,
And with her foot straight throw it on the flowre. [M661]

When things are gone tis very hard to say
Who haue them, or which way they went away.
For men in iudging often iudge amisse,
But they that see may alwayes say as tis. [~A285]

No man can surely of a wife be sped,
Vntill such time as he to her be wed,
For chances oft betwixt the lip and cup;
Doe come before a man thereof can sup. [T191]

And though a man in imminent danger were,
Of helpe he should not vtterly despaire,
For twixt the bridge and water some haue found
Such succour, that they scapt and were not drown'd. [~H411]

To erre and sinne is giuen to man by kind,
But to perseuer doth shew a beastlike mind. [E179]
A wise man may walke nye a riuers brim,
Where fooles and idiots oft times haue fallen in. [~B668]

Some men that beastlike drunken you shall see,
When they be sober for it grieued will be
Yet like the dogge that vomits vp his meat,
And presently the same againe will eat. [D455]

Where many paths meet, one may lose his way, [~C642]
And some that many trades haue I dare say,
The worst of them will find them bread I thinke,
And all the rest will scarcely find them drinke. [M293]

Some beat the bush and others catch the bird, [B740]
And some will blowes giue sooner then a word. [W824]
And some doe yet and did ere I was borne,
Make a long haruest of a little corne. [H184]

And some there be that hath got an ill guise,
They are loth to bed, and lother for to rise. [S547]
Ile say no more lest some should be offended,
When little's said it soone may be amended. [L358]

There was no more that I remember can,
Worth writing that was spoke of any man.
But some there was that would Tobacco take,
Which as it seemed did one offended make.
One once, said he, Tobacco seed did sow,
I thinke it is the smallest seed that grow,
And would to God that it as small leaues bore,
Then in this land there would not be such store,
That they thereby will quite themselues vndoe.
It makes them daily to dispend much time,
And neuer haue enough of beare and wine.
And neuer any good that I did heare
It one man did this fiue and thirty yeare.
Beside the charge it putteth men vnto,
There is about it such a deale of doe,
First one must cut it, and then must it dry,
And then a while acooling let it lye.
Then pipe and stopper both must be ready,
And then a coale to light it presently,
Which they hold in a little payre of tongs,
A pipe case also hereunto belongs,
And then a boxe you alwayes ready see,
To put vp that that shall vntaken be,
Which made of leather is, and gilt brauely,
And so there are be made of Iuory,
And some of siluer are, and some of tinne,
And some of horne, which are not worth a pinne.
And some of plate are made, and some of brasse,
For those of paper good for nothing was,
And some affect it so as many say,
That they will take it riding on the way,
And such must euer haue in readinesse
A tinder box, or else a burning glasse.
This charge and trouble daily doth proceed,
By taking of that stinking Indian weed.
Would all mens like mine from it were turned,
Then ere they take it would it should be burned.

When I saw none would, I did vndertake
Before them all this answer for to make:
Saying, Sir if you spoke had by aduice,
These speeches might haue well beene spoke at twice,

For I my selfe some good haue had thereby,
Which Ile conceale lest you should thinke I lye.
And for the charge you say thereby arise,
It is not great to those men that be wise.
If things abused should be vsed no more,
Tobacco then should company haue store,
For bread is daily giuen to dogges and beares,
Which serue for nought but hinder mens affaires:
And if that corne to mault conuerted be,
That's so abused it would pitty one to see,
For many will more like to beasts then men,
Drinke more in one day then would serue for ten,
And some in one month spend more in good cheare
Then would suffice the best part of the yeare.
And some will haue a gay suit on his backe,
Though hee and all his houshold victualls lacke:
And yet I thinke for all this great abuse,
You'll say there is of these a lawfull vse.
So worldly wealth who so too much desire,
Shall find it of the nature of the fire,
Whereof a little doth at no time harme,
But oft times good cold bodies for to warme.
When as great flames the body scorch and burne, [F249]
So too much wealth oft times to woe doth turne,
But time, and place, and quantities required,
Before that any thing should bee desired:
For if there dung should in your Chimnye lye,
You out of doores would throw it presently:
And if there fire should on the dunghill be,
You soone would fetch it into your chimney.
Yet both of these are good in places fit, [T169]
And this is all that I will say of it:
Who good finds by it may sometimes it vse,
And whom it hurts, from taking Ile excuse.

Then store of Apples in the fire was laid,
And Ale was gone for as the good wife said.
Then one that was there in the company,
Said masters, if you will be ruled me by,
Who will not sing, read riddle, nor tell tale,
Shall neither taste of Apples nor of Ale.

Whereto the company agreed all,
And to begin the lot thus out did fall,
They at the rowes end would their Riddles tell,
Which I must read that neuer well could spell.

There was a coale whereon one ashes cast,
Which if he had with bellowes giuen one blast,
It quickly would haue burn'd into a flame,
That one might well haue warmed them by the same
The second said, now marke what I shall tell,
There be three men in towne where I doe dwell,
The one hath been my neighbour dwelling long,
Who when he was in'th wright was then in'th wrong
The other dwels right ouer me againe,
Whose ioy was greatest when he was in paine.
The third, of long time I know certainely,
Hath wisht that both his wife and hee might dye.
Now, since the reading you haue put to mee,
Ile tell you what I thinke these for to bee.

The first doth meane a poore mans Sonne I know,
VVhich halfe a yeare to schoole did neuer goe,
For had he had but learning to his wit,
Sure many should haue profited by it.

And you that last spoke of your townes men three,
Ile tell you what I thinke them for to bee.
I doubt your neighbour takes too much delight,
In some lewd louer that is named VVright.
And hee that dwells right ouer you againe,
Doth loue another that is named Paine.
And for the third, a foole may well know this,
That he a Dyar by profession is.

They that sat next did not much time prolong,
But presently each of them sung a song:
To tell the tunes I thinke it me behoue,
The first is, *Liue with mee and bee my loue*.
The second is if I bee not deceiu'd,
Mad Tom of Bedlam, of his wits bereau'd.

Who doth these dayes of ours not see
Most lamentable for to bee,
When great offences sore doe rage,
Whom iustice can no whit asswage:
From euill temptations night and day,
Deliuer vs Lord wee thee pray.

It endlesse were to goe about,
With colours for to paint them out:
But I wish all men should abstaine,
From those which chiefest now doe raigne.

From euill temptations, &c.

The poore mans faults compare I may,
To spots in Images made of clay:
But faults in great men to behold,
Like staines in statues are of gold. [M524]
From euill temptations &c.

But as no man can safely ride,
Too neare vnto a riuers side,
So they that with bad men conuerse,
Oft times cannot but bee the worse.
From euill temptations &c.

For as the *Syrens* pleasant song,
The hearers death doth hasten on
So hee that enuy entertaines,
Can haue no ioy vnmixt with paines.
From euill temptations, &c.

When as the *Crocodile* most doth weep,
Doth most desire the silly sheepe. [C831]
So doth the flatterers double tongue
His dearest friend the deadliest wrong.
From euill temptations, &c.

The strange *Camelion* that by kind,
Can change her colour with her minde [C221]
The Lyer can as readily,
Of one lye make you two or three.
From euill temptations, &c.

As *Boreas* rough breakes Ships in twain
And causeth flames to burne amaine:
So doth the Tale-bearer hatred sow,
Where loue and friendship else would grow.
From euill temptations, &c.

From Wolues the worst of all ill beasts,
A man in house may safely rest: [~W605]
But from backe-byters deadly sting,
No house can safe secure him.
From euill temptations, &c.

As oftentimes sweet flowers nie,
Haue Serpents foule beene seene to lye, [S585]
So in a coat full gay hath beene,

A trecherous heart full often seene.
From euill temptations, &c.

But as wee read, once *Balaams* Asse,
More wiser then his Master was: [Numbers 22.21-34]
Euen so are they that dangers shunne,
More wise then they that to them run.
From euill temptations, &c.

As Elephants strong in waters deepe,
The weake ones doe from danger keep,
I would all men would learne of them,
To pitty their poore bretheren.
From euill temptations, &c.

What christian heart can thinke vpon,
The wicked liues of many a one,
And not with Christ our Sauiour deare
For them shed many a mournfull teare.
From euill temptations, &c.

But such as purposely entend,
Their sinfull courses to amend,
God with his Spirit assist them so,
That they from grace to grace may grow.
From euill temptations, &c.

Now as a friend I all men will,
Good men no harme to doe vntill:
And when to speake you are inforst,
Of bad men neuer speake the worst.
Like to our selues Lord grant wee may,
Our neighbors loue both night & day.

THE pleasant life of Shepheards,
hath euer yet been deemed,
Amongst all Swains to take least paines
and yet the best esteemed.
But now may they waile, both in mountaine and dale,
where last their flockes were feeding,
For now dead they be, scarce one of twentie
is left that's worth the heeding.

And if the liues of Shepheards,
considered be aright,
All men must say both night and day,

they liue in blisfull plight.
But now may they waile, &c.

Fayre *Flora* in the Spring time,
first offereth vnto them,
The earths sweet flowers through Aprills showers,
before all other men.
But now may they waile, &c.

When *Phœbus* in his highest,
with hottest beams doth shine,
He soone will hie, him downe to lye,
in shade vnder the Pine.
But now may they waile, &c.

And if *Apollo* chanceth,
with raine to coole the heat,
His Pine will serue for to preserue,
him likewise from the wet.
But now may they waile, &c.

Whilst hee rests thus defenced,
both from the raine and heat,
His pretty Lambes vpon the lands,
doe sweetly eate their meat.
But now may they waile, &c.

If any goe astray,
in't meadow or in't graine:
His little Dog will at first word,
Soone fetch them forth againe.
But now may they waile, &c.

When Autumn's fully ended,
and hay and corne in barne,
His flockes may goe both to and fro,
and neuer commit harme.
But now may they waile, &c.

Then hee with his faire *Phillida*,
vnder a willow tree,
May sport and play each day by day
with mirth and melodie.
But now may they waile, &c.

And when that hoary *Hyems*,
begins his raigne to hold.

A firre bush tree prouide will hee,
to keepe him from the cold.
But now may they waile, &c.

Thus haue you heard recited,
the blisfull Shepheards plight:
But I aduise no man to praise,
a faire day before night. [D100]
But now may they waile, &c.

For many Shepheards now,
are forced hereunto,
In raine and heat their bread to get,
or else a begging goe.
Wherefore may they waile, both in mountaine and dale,
where late their flockes went feeding,
For now dead they bee, scarce one of twenty
is left that's worth the heeding.

The next of all it came to mee by lot,
To pay my penny to make vp the shot:
I neither sung had, riddle, nor good tale,
Yet faine I would the apples tast and ale.
Then presently into my minde it came,
That I before had made an *Annagram*,
Which I them told in the stead of a tale.
And by that meanes I tasted of the ale.

There bee nine Letters in the Alphabet,
Which vntill death I neuer will forget,
They to my minde doe giue so much delight:
And which they bee I briefely will recite.
The *I*, alwaies some ioyfull thing presage:
The *O*, bids youth prouide against old age:
The *N*, good newes doth euer to vs tell:
The *E*, bids none let enuy with him dwell:
The *C*, to all men charity doth show:
The *L*, to all is louing where it goe.
The *A*, is alwaies amiable to behold:
The *R*, said he by reason ruld bee would:
The *K*, doth keepe the key of knowledg so,
That no euill thing into the house can goe.
If I the reason hereof should not tell,
I seeme to marre should what I haue made well,
But I may boldly tell it without shame,
It was the Anagram of my mothers name.

The last man whom by lot it vnto came,
Said he also would tell an Anagram,
Which here Ile briefly shew vnto your view,
I lik't it not, no more I thinke will you.
The *w* presageth double woe,
The *y* nought else but yealousy doth show,
The *f* is flattering false vnto his friend,
The *e* thinkes euill whatsoeuer it pretend,
Thus you may see that *w, y, f, e,*
Doth bring a man from wealth to misery.
If euery man were minded like to me,
Then surely they would maried neuer be.
Then said I, Sir, if you'll not be offended,
Your Anagram you shall heare soone amended.
The *w* doth worth and wealth presage,
The *y* bids youth prouide against old age,
The *f* is faithfull and doth friendship show,
The *e* from euill bids all make hast to goe.
Thus you may see that *w, y, f, e,*
A wild wench may a good wife make one day. [~B580]

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Word, Breath, and Vomit: Oral Competition in Old English and Old Norse Literature

Robin Waugh

Study of orality has been fixed on the ephemeral instead of on the physical, on will-o'-the-wisps like the "theme" instead of on the mouth and the ear.[1] Walter Ong notices that "when all verbal communication must be by direct word of mouth, ... interpersonal relations are kept high—both attractions and, even more, antagonisms" (1982:45). Certainly in traditional works the causes of misfortune are usually centered in another person, so that rage is more easily directed and "solutions" to trials more easily found by acting upon the body of someone else.[2] The mouth figures in such acts: "reciprocal name-calling" sessions are "standard in oral societies across the world" (Ong 1982:44), and, if one looks at the anatomy of orality more particularly, one finds that the word connects with the body directly.

In oral society (and in literate, but more secretively), the individual perceives the speech (and oral biography) of another as a physical and interior object or organ that makes language. This figure is a sort of totem. In Christian thinking, it becomes Augustine's *homo interior* (*De magistro* i.2; Derrida 1978:180).[3] In order to combat this secondary person inside

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[1] For analysis of the "theme," see John Miles Foley's studies of oral composition (1990:330-35; 1991:17, 33-36). See also Paul Zumthor (1984:81), and cf. Alain Renoir (1988:96-102, 107-32), who discusses the theme of "The Hero on the Beach" in *Beowulf*. I thank Sarah Higley for many helpful suggestions concerning this article.

[2] For verbal competition in heroic literature, see Parks 1990:25, 48.

[3] I refer to the church fathers by book, chapter, and paragraph (where appropriate); to Raymond of Capua by book, chapter, and paragraph in the *Acta Sanctorum* for April, volume three; to Old English poetry (except for *Beowulf*) by line numbers in *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*; to *Beowulf* by line numbers in the Klaeber edition; to Julian of Norwich's *Book of Showings* by chapter numbers in the longer version; to Snorri's *Edda* by the 1848 chapter numbers; to the Old Norse sagas (except for *Vǫlsunga saga*) by page numbers in the *Íslenzk Fornrit* editions, including the verses; to *Vǫlsunga saga* by page

the rival, a warrior tries to grasp the other's organs of speech, and so take hold of the interior power. Language is reality's "body, ... flesh, and blood" (Foucault 1977:57), and is the target of aggressivity, which "gnaws away," kills, mutilates, and "castrates" (Lacan 1977:10). Fear and competition run through all sound, language, and action from the earliest stages of childhood, when the image "of the fragmented body" causes the thoughts and speech about "mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body" that children constantly display (11). "Power in this context can be defined as the capacity to wound[. It] always includes violence, however psychic or internalized" (Bloom 1982:49). Thus *Beowulf* puts great emphasis on dismemberment, and on the eating of body parts (Zumthor 1990:219). The Grendel race eats the bodies of people who seem to have a greater ability with language than its own kind. Hondscioh's death (*Beowulf* 740-45a) is a diagram of the relationship between the body and the other, and, with this "sense of 'otherness'," Beowulf is able to perceive the "intimacy" of his "own embodiment" (Zaner 1981:52-53), so that he can act. The heroes of *The Kalevala* obtain the rudiments of poetry from a giant's body: "from the mouth of Antero Vipunen, from the belly of the man richly stocked" (17.13-14). Sigurðr kills Fáfnir, cuts out the dragon's heart, eats part of it, and so gains understanding of the language of nature in *Vǫlsunga saga* (65-66; *Fled Bricrend* 106-7). Hǫgni's heart is also cut out (102). Atli eats the hearts of his sons, after Guðrún slits their throats (104). The hero of *Beowulf* declares that, when he killed Dæghrefn, he "heortan wylmas, / banhus gebræc" (2507b-8a) "broke the bone-house, the heart's wellings." He causes the hearts of two rulers to overflow in similar wellings: Hrothgar "breostwylm forberan ne mehte" (1877) "could not restrain the breast-welling;" Hygelac says "Ic ðæs modceare / sorhwylmum seað" (1992b-93a) "I have brooded over this / with anxious mind and sorrow-wellings." In a figurative sense, Beowulf overpowers the interiors of his two greatest patrons.

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numbers in the Finch edition, including the verses; to Saxo's *History of the Danes* by page numbers in the Olrik and Ræder edition; to *The Táin* and to other works concerning Cúchulainn (except for *Fled Bricrend*) by page numbers in the Kinsella translation, including the verses; to *Fled Bricrend* by page numbers in the Henderson edition and translation; to *The Kalevala* by poem numbers, then line numbers, in the Magoun translation. All uncredited translations are my own.

Andreas describes acts of cannibalism (158b-60):

> wæs him neod micel
> þæt hie tobrugdon blodigum ceaflum
> fira flæschoman him to foddorþege.
>
> The need in [the Mermedonians] was great to rend the corpses of men into pieces with bloody jaws for their fodder.

This diet takes on a new meaning when it might include the bodies of two apostles who bear the word of God inside them. Mary also carries the Word inside her when she carries Jesus in her womb (Jager 1991:284). Óðinn is more than just a meal for Fenrir when the chief god has power over runes and language (Snorri 51). In *Riddle 47* the bookworm *word fræt* (1), "ate words," as if they were meat, and the Christian eucharist connects word, body, and food (Zumthor 1990:8; Revelation 10:10).[4]

Evidence suggests that oral people situate the soul in the breast (Jager 1990:850; Higley 1992:284), and associate it with life as physical life: breath, body parts, and blood, which move inside the chest cavity. Both the Finnish and the Old English traditions mention a "wordhoard" or physical organ of speech inside the person: "Shall I open my chest of words, unlock my song box" (*Kal* 1.87-88; cf. *Beo* 259b). Even writing participates in the physicality of northern culture. Brynhildr's long poem in *Vǫlsunga saga* describes runes inscribed upon the body, the back of the hand, and on the body parts of animals (37-38). The act of making a text cuts the skin and reveals the interior flesh. Language's relationship with the body appears again in Theodoric's refusal to allow the Goths an education in the Latin language, because fear of the strap in school might lead to fear of the sword in battle (Wormald 1977:98). But above all, oral cultures reveal physical aggression in their preoccupation with the voice.

Paul Zumthor redirects discussion of the voice towards its physical attributes (1984:76-77):

> the tension out of which the oral poem is formed in effect takes shape between the spoken word and the human voice, and proceeds from a quasi contradiction between their respective finalities: between the finite properties of the discourse structures and the infiniteness of memory; between the abstract nature of language and the spatial world of the body.

[4] Sarah Higley gives an excellent inventory of these kinds of connections, particularly in Norse and Welsh metaphors of poetic acquisition and their Indo-European analogues (1992:278-303).

Since one's voice can increase in volume, even more impressively with practice (and with a large physique), "voiced discourse given aloud has its roots more clearly in the human body" (69), and has more self-knowledge in terms of its "physical power" (69; 1990:8, 201). Oral tradition always bears a human face and always has a human body. Any knowledge within this tradition has physicality because the memory cannot recall information without the voice that speaks it, and "knowledge, once acquired, had to be constantly repeated or it would be lost" (Ong 1982:24). Since oral methods of preserving knowledge "tend to be agonistic in operation" (1981:123), the production of heroic biography is crucial, even desperate. Oral compositions are fame-driven, physical, and agonistic.

Early biography reflects and supports existing forms of social organization, such as kinship; so, oral people think of human lives and of the stories of these lives as aggregates of legendary and nearly legendary events, places, and persons. All of these exist only as an other, a body of memories within a person's mind (Ong 1982:37-39). The past is therefore like a part of the body, an interior totem, "a language . . . that appropriates and consumes all other languages" (Foucault 1977:66), and the active hero competes with and tries to surpass the aggregative power of history by absorbing his rivals and all of their prior accomplishments into his own good name. This absorption relates to the act of speaking, because a hero engulfs words when he absorbs another person's reputation (Higley 1992:287).

The mouth is the focus of physicality and violence in the face. Objects enter the mouth, are broken down, and lose their original form. While faces indicate the differences between one human and another, mouths indicate an interior that one cannot see, but knows is similar to one's own: chewing reduces a variety of objects into a kind of sameness. Since the interior is unseen, it is dangerous. Verse 9 of Psalm 5 describes the singer's enemies: "their inward part is very wickedness." When it vomits, the mouth again presents physicality and violence (Zumthor 1990:8; Higley 1992:283), and this organ has associations besides food: "gluttony," "lips sucking at the breast, . . . nourishment, . . . love, . . . a sexual organ" (Zumthor 1990:8), the only sexual organ that can be either active or passive. Teeth have a sense of touch, but a violent function, although the soft lips hide the potential offense of the mouth's interior most of the time. The mouth is "ambiguous" (8; *Grettis saga* 52-53, verse 14), and the open mouth of a declaiming oral poet emphasizes its physical traits of interiority and violence.

Speech includes "spatiality of the body" (Zumthor 1990:41) beyond the mouth, such as parts of the neck. These organs are also associated with violence. The term "Adam's apple" implies that the larynx belongs or belonged to someone else (Ps 12.4): the other, the interior figure, the past, a forebear from ancient times. This speaking organ is an object, an inheritance. Its proverbial title implies that it can kill, because "Adam's apple" makes the voicebox into a version of the apple in the Genesis story. The apple represents knowledge of good and evil, but also death, the word (Ambrose, *de paradiso* xv.74; Jager 1991:281, 284), and stolen speech. One psalm describes the throat of an enemy as "an open sepulchre" (5.9; Zumthor 1990:8), an image of death, while another addresses God: "Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies" (18.40). Surely any society that sanctions capital punishment through hanging someone by the throat (often also a form of torture and/or ritual [Swenson 1991:128]) perceives some danger from the larynx, and many other forms of execution involve the neck. Hanging attacks the voicebox directly and silences the victim by cutting off breath.[5]

Speaking relies on the body's breathing apparatus. Eric Jager notices that the word *breost* in Old English often means "organ of speech"; poets connect it with "poetry or song" (1991:279, 280; 1990:847-48; *Beo* 2550-51; *Andreas* 1278-80), as well as with motherhood and eroticism (284). In orality, words and thoughts are "necessarily spoken, sounded, and hence power-driven" (Ong 1982:32), because breath is physical power (*VgS* 61; Ps 18.8-15; 29.4-9). A person thinks that the force of a breath, like speech, contains something of the breather: one can betray one's presence, level of consciousness, level of health (Job 17.1), and state of emotion with breath. This recognition that breath is life (Job 7.7), this recognition of the life of the other, is unsettling because one interprets it in a hostile way: "the fecundity of the *other* breath . . . is unpower" (Derrida 1978:176). Others "breathe out cruelty" (Ps 27.12). Cúchulainn fights "over the breaths of men-folk" (*Fl Bric* 26-27, 108-9).

The oral poet thinks of speech as "breath" (Derrida 1978:176), a "possession" that others can steal—and they take it ceaselessly (175). One can even steal from one's own speech and compositions (177-78), as the metonymic habits of Old English imply: "since [speech] is stolen from

[5] Crucifixion also affects powers of speech by distending and weakening the chest cavity.

language it is, thus, stolen from itself" (178).[6] "Wordhoard," then, "signifies not only the repertoire of language but the power of language symbolic of the speaker's power" (Irvine 1991:192).

As literacy and Christianity gain acceptance, sensitivity to breath and to the interior of the body change. The speaking parts of chest and thorax, an interior of wet, dark, soft, moving parts, are replaced with a more abstract soul. Augustine defines the body quite clearly, but in order to banish it—in order to define the soul (*De Civitate Dei* XXII.xxiv). He and others try to silence the interior, and help to redefine the body as a temple (1 Cor 6.19), a cold object of restricted access, usually made of stone. Ong calls oral narrative less interior than that of the novel (1982:44); perhaps he means that oral societies, unlike Augustine, do not fully abstract the interior. "By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld," Ong continues, "orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle" (*idem*) that involves the body.

Oral traditions show this struggle in their poetry, and works that have some claims for oral origins are candid about the power and violence of oral art (Higley 1992:278-303). The biblical God, for instance, especially in the Old Testament, is remarkably oral: prophets do not see Him but hear Him (Deut 4.12). He demands animal carcasses as sacrifices; breathes life into the lifeless body, or breathes torture upon it in the form of fire (Isai 30.33). He destroys enemies (30.30-31), gives forth "hail stones" (Ps 18.13), shakes "the earth" (Heb 12.26), and silences all else (Zec 2.13) with His "still small voice" (1 Kings 19.12; Ps 29.4-9). In the New Testament, God's law speaks "that every mouth may be stopped" (Rom 3.19).

In oral works, a person's reputation will contain both art and battle because the only way to surpass someone else is to fill the present instant with either poetry or action, which seem to have similar powers and seem to issue from the same place. In *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, the hero is the most vociferous proponent of his own achievements in combat, verse, and reputation. Each Ulster warrior in *The Táin* has his day "to take care of every man who came that way with poetry, and to fight any others" (86). This description implies that one may defeat someone with poetry's power alone; however, most heroic poems mix battle- and verse-skill together. Egill the veteran fighter has many oral skills: "power over runes, power in cursing, ... power in healing" (Fell 1975:xv), and power in judging, all of which give this hero social and bardic status and help him to excel in any demanding situation.

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[6] For an interesting study of metonymy in *Beowulf*, see Overing 1990:10-17. See also Foley 1991:7. Parks calls metonymy the "dialogue of memories" (1991:57).

In Egill's fight with Ljótr, poetic prowess seems to be the same as fighting prowess. Ljótr can expect no mercy from *skaldi* (*EgS* 203, verse 38), "the poet" (as Egill often calls himself in the course of this duel [202-6]) either in battle, or in the record of history that begins with Egill's verse descriptions of his foe. Whereas Ljótr boasts, bellows, and bites his shield (202-3), Egill decorates their encounter with the poetry of a virtuoso. The battle not only kills Ljótr, but also *kyrrum* (204, verse 39) "quiets" him. The verbal dimension of a battle can be as damaging to one's reputation (and to one's person) as the physical.

Egill next contends with Atli. This antagonist anticipates loss when he responds to the hero's boast with "kann ek engu svara" (207), "I cannot reply." Egill "segir, at eigi vill hann eiða hans taka fyrir fé sitt" (208), "said that he did not want to take [Atli's] oaths instead of [Atli's] money," and so dismisses the value of his rival's words. Eventually Atli admits to verbal defeat: "þú mælir þat, er ek ætta at mæla" (208), "you said what I ought to say." Sometimes, the mere appearance of Egill and his father is enough to render the words of others ineffective (Fell 1975:xv). A hero's mouth, body, and energy work to silence any competitor.

Characters in heroic compositions often treat battle and verbal attack as much the same thing, and describe these two in the same terms. In *Beowulf*, people rarely speak without engaging in conflict with someone else, with the past, or with the future. In *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Kári speaks (albeit ironically) of men that "með orðum eru vegnir" (415), "are slain with words," and *Vainglory* describes voices as weapons in a kind of battle (16-23a):

> wordum wrixlað, witan fundiaþ
> hwylc æscstede inne in ræcede
> mid werum wunige.
> . . . cwide scralletaþ
> missenlice. Swa beoþ modsefan
> dalum gedæled, sindon dryhtguman
> ungelice.
>
> [They] exchange words, strive to know which battlefield may dwell with men in the hall. ... voices rise up in competition with one another, just as temperments are given out: men are unlike one another.

On this battlefield (here in the meadhall, where "vainglory" holds sway), powers of battle and language are mixed.

To pinpoint one particular image of verbal aggression, Unferth's "wit" pierces like a sword in *Beowulf* (589b; *Precepts* 84), and in the Irish

story *Aided Oenfir Aife* from *The Yellow Book of Lecan*, Cúchulainn uses an image of spears to describe the assault of his language upon an opponent (*Táin* 41,44):

> I tuned my voice:
> from little jaws
> a straight shot sped
> with my little spears
> flung from afar.

The image is similar to those in Psalm 64 (3), Isaiah (49.2), and Revelation (2.16). *Vainglory* describes a proud man's speeches as *hygegar* (34b; *Kal* 3.267-68; Jager 1990:851), "thought-spears."[7]

In these works, and in others that seem to be of oral provenance, attacks often occur from the mouth. Job says of his enemies: "They have gaped upon me with their mouth" (Job 16.10; Ps 22.13). Some of these assaults suggest cannibalism: "my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh" (Ps 27.2; Job 16.9; Zumthor 1990:8). At one point in *Vǫlsunga saga*, destiny seems to take the form of a huge bear in a prophetic dream. The animal threatens to eat all of the principal characters: "hafði oss ǫll senn sér í munni svá at ekki máttum vér" (67; *Fl Bric* 106-107), "it had us all in his mouth so that we might do nothing." Some residue of this kind of cannibalistic assault remains in the medieval idea of hell-mouth, in the heart-directed violence (sometimes oral) of love-literature, and in the many accounts of saints' lives where the martyr is tortured in a fashion that suggests the preparation of a meal: skinning, boiling, roasting on a gridiron.

In *The Kalevala*, the recited words of a poet assault a person physically. Väinämöinen's reputation for singing grows so great (3.31-34) that Joukahainen becomes envious, and vows (3.57-66):

> I will sing down my rival singers, enchant my enchanters.
> I will sing the best singer into the worst singer,
> sing shoes of stone onto his feet, wooden pants onto his hips,
> a stone weight onto his chest, a chunk of rock onto his shoulders,
> stone mittens onto his hands, onto his head a high-peaked hat of rock.

Väinämöinen becomes angry and his song changes his rival's possessions and clothing into dead and/or rigid aspects of nature; he imprisons Joukahainen in the landscape. Väinämöinen sings (3.325-30):

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[7] See also *Finnsburg Fragment* (6b-7a); *Andreas* (1132b-34); *Táin* (107).

> the soft woolen belt from his waist into stars throughout the heavens.
> He bewitched Joukahainen himself, sang him into a fen up to the loins,
> into a grassy meadow up to the groin, into a heath up to the armpits.

As part of the older tradition, Väinämöinen uses his Orphic power to try to engulf the younger poet.

A similar conquest takes place in the career of Lemminkäinen, who sings all other poets into the ground, and drives them off into infertile territories, "to treeless clearings, fallow fields, / to fishless ponds" (12.459-61). His song demonstrates control over nature in contrast to the sterility of his adversaries: he destroys their oral and social powers, increases their alienation, and shrivels their reputations. The wastelands have no other people in them, so these exiles have no opportunities to demonstrate their martial abilities and further their fame.

The image of a sterile landscape hints at a connection between oral poetry and fecundity. Higley proposes that "producing poetry is a kind of 'birth,' . . . a means by which a male poet can partake in the female act of creation" (1992:287); however, the actions of men in *The Kalevala* are not "passive" (*idem*), but active: Väinämöinen descends into the belly of a giant to steal poetry (17.13-14). As the figurative childbirth of a violent hero, an oral performance absorbs the creative power of women. Generally, oral cultures attribute extreme power to oral utterances: "in early Irish tradition, a satire could cause a king to waste away . . . it could cause human deformities; it could kill animals; and it could make the land sterile" (Bloomfield and Dunn 1989:39). In Saxo's *History*, Starcatherus's severed head snaps at the ground as if he were still reciting his deeds (229). The power of the mouth goes beyond nature.

Augustine's attitude towards the physicality of the voice in *De magistro* is like the ancient Greeks' toward "barbarians." He treats orality superficially, as if it were a superstition that literate Christianity would get rid of; yet Augustine cannot hide his nervousness about the oral tradition. In one of his definitions of signs, he recalls a popular joke in order to clarify his distinction between nouns and the objects that the nouns denote (viii.23):

> *Aug*. Vellem scire, quomodo illi resisteres, de quo iocantes solemus audire, quod ex eius ore, cum quo disputabat, leonem processisse concluserit. Cum enim quaesisset, utrum ea, quae loqueremur, nostro ore procederent, atque ille non potuisset negare, quod facile fuit, egit cum homine, ut in loquendo leonem nominaret. Hoc ubi factum est, ridicule insultare coepit et premere, ut, quoniam quicquid loquimur ore nostro exire

> confessus erat et leonem se locutum esse nequibat abnuere, homo non malus tam immanem bestiam vomuisse videretur.
>
> *Adeodatus*. Minime vero erat arduum scurrae huic resistere . . . .
>
> *Aug*. Let's see how you would prove the man wrong who claimed that a lion emerged from the mouth of the man he was debating with, as we frequently hear in the form of a joke. For, when he was asked if the things that we say proceed from our mouths, this man could not say no. It was easy for this man [the prankster] to make the other mention a lion in the course of his speech. When this occurred, he began to mock him and to drive home the idea that, since he had admitted that whatever we say comes out of our mouth, and he did not deny that he had said "lion," he had unleashed from his mouth such a monstrous beast, though he seemed to be not a bad man.
>
> *Ad*. It would not be at all hard to refute this clown, truly . . . .

This jester, albeit facetiously, treats the ignorant man's replies as an attack by a monstrous beast, whose violence represents the terrible oral powers that lurk in the mouth. Augustine feels a threat from these powers. Stephen Nichols observes that the saint associates the voice with the sexuality and sensuality of the body, which are forces to be silenced (1991:146, 148-52; Augustine *DCD* XXII.xxiv).[8]

Many characters in heroic works attack the speech-organs of rivals. These assaults contribute to a hero's contest for fame, because such organs do as much to make a reputation as one's deeds. Although the nickname *ormstunga* (*Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu* 59; *Fl Bric* 1-2; Rom 3.13), "snake-tongue," insults an enemy's verse, it has the physical target of the victim's appropriate body parts (just as sexual insults often do). However, most assaults upon poetic power are physical: a warrior slices open the enemy body, takes out the speech-maker (or perhaps the container of aggregate memory), and swallows it. These events occur explicitly in *Vǫlsunga saga* (33) when Sigurðr tastes part of Fáfnir's heart and understands the language of birds; they occur implicitly when anyone chooses the mouth, chest, or throat as a target.

In *Grettis saga*, the young hero quarrels with his relative Auðunn after a ball game, and promises revenge after the older boy bests him at wrestling (44). As men, the two resume their fight. The poet Barði separates them, and Grettir warns him in a verse (97-98, verse 26):

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[8] However, Augustine acknowledges the power, physicality, and violence of the mouth when he imagines the saints as the "teeth of the church" (*De doctrina christiana* II.vi.7).

Eigi veitk, nema útan
Jalfaðr at þér sjǫlfum
kverkr fyr kapp ok orku,
kvelling es þat, svelli;
svá bannaði sinnir
seim-Gauts, þás vask heima,
ungum endr fyr lǫngu
ákall þinul fjalla.

I do not know but that [Auðunn] will attack your throat and cause it to swell, to reward your stubbornness. That would be an injury. In that way, he repulsed me a long time ago when I was a youngster at home.

By depicting such an assault, and suggesting that Auðunn will go at another poet in the same way, Grettir associates an attack on the larynx with an attack on one's power to speak and one's prowess in verse.

Grettir demonstrates his own power to stop speech in his encounter with a berserker who chews on his shield in a display of oral aggression. The hero perceives power in his rival's "toptum / tanngarðs" (137, verse 29), "tooth-fortress," a place where personified speech lives in the man's interior. By splitting the berserker's jaw with a kick (136-37), Grettir prevents him from being able to boast as the hero can: "þess verðr þo getit, sem gǫrt er" (137), "what happened will be talked about." Similarly, God's word may prosper more thoroughly once He has amputated the speech-organs of His enemies (Ps 12.3), and in *The Kalevala* Lemminkäinen also assails his adversaries in their speaking parts: "he pushed stones straight into their mouths" (12.453). Grettir's kick may recall the divine revenge after Óðinn meets his death in Fenrir's mouth and stomach. The wolf dies when Viþar tears apart its mouth (Snorri 51). The gods' battle represents the verbal contest at its most mythological and resonant.

In *Eyrbyggja saga*, the ear receives the attack as well as the mouth. Þórarinn strikes Þorbjðrn with his sword and later describes the result (39, verse 4):

blóð fell, en vas váði
vígtjalds náar skaldi,
þá vas dœmisalr dóma
dreyrafullr, of eyru.

Then blood flowed down over the ears and the speech-hall [mouth] filled with blood. The sword was near the poet.

The poem's imagery suggests that Þorbjǫrn lacks the spittle necessary to lubricate his mouth and praise himself. Þórarinn causes some fluid to appear, and his foe tastes death. The word *dœmisalr* personifies speech and places it in the mouth like an interior man; but this use of "speech-hall" for "mouth" is also a corrosive irony. Þorbjðrn is rendered silent. Like Grettir, the victor of this contest contrasts his powerful verses with the weakness of an enemy (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 44, verse 10; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, 443).

Þórarinn's reference to liquids recalls the origins of poetry in the spittle of the gods and giants. The Vanir and Æsir spit into a vat as a ritual of truce: their aggression is vented through oral action. The gods form this spittle into the wisest man on earth, but two dwarves kill him and take possession of his blood, which they mix with honey in order to make the mead of poetry. This legend associates verse with many of the physical aspects of orality, including food, saliva, cannibalism, and rending of the body. Once a giant hides the mead inside a mountain, poetry also takes on the interiority of an internal organ (Snorri 57-58).

The most vivid examples of competitive orality are assaults from speech-organs upon other speech-organs: "I will sing his shoulders apart, will talk his chin apart, / his shirt collar in two, his breastbone to pieces" (*Kal* 26.297-300). Egill is the most virulent perpetrator of attacks upon speaking parts. At the end of his fight with Atli, Egill "greyfðisk at niðr ok beit í sundr í honum barkann; lét Atli þar líf sitt" (*EgS* 210), "bent down and bit his windpipe asunder; then Atli died." The hero acts like an animal, almost like a cannibal, to silence and kill his rival, and exhibits "the oral hostility underlying internecine slaughter among hall-thanes" (Hill 1977:18).

Egill's next act suggests that his mode of attack has associations with ancient religious beliefs. He kills a sacrificial bull by grabbing its *granarnar*, "jaw," and twisting. He then says (*EgS* 210, verse 42):

> Beitat nú, sás brugðum,
> blár Dragvandill randir,
> af þvít eggjar deyfði
> Atli framm enn skammi;
> neyttak afls við ýti
> ǫrmálgastan hjǫrva;
> jaxlbróður létk eyða,
> ek bar af sauði, nauðum.
>
> The sword, blue Dragvandill, although I drew it, did not dig into the shield, because Atli the short dulled its blades. I used strength against the snake-

> tongued sword-waver. I needed to let my teeth work destruction. I performed the sacrifice.

With a "snake-tongued" foe, Egill's actions against Atli's speech-organs make sense as a climax to the verbal battle that precedes the duel. The hero eliminates the oral and poetic competition. A throat wound removes the possibility of a rival telling a conflicting version of the outcome or events of a battle, and so strikes a blow for one's own fame.

Christine Fell finds the "strength and madness" of Egill's method of killing Atli to be "normally associated with shape-changers" (1975:xv). In *Vǫlsunga saga* two assaults similar to Egill's take place while humans are in the shapes of animals. In one instance, Sigmundr and his companion put on magic wolf-skins. When Sinfjǫtli fails to live up to an agreement, the hero "hleypr at honum svá hart at hann stakar við ok fellr. Sigmundr bítr í barkann framan" (11), "rushed at him so fiercely that [Sinfjǫtli] stumbled and fell. Sigmundr bit into his windpipe." The hero regrets his actions, watches a weasel heal a throat-wound with a herb, heals Sinfjǫtli with the same herb, curses the skins, and eventually burns them (11-12). His back-pedaling suggests that much guilt accompanies this kind of assault. The writer implies that Sigmundr acts so violently only because his human nature (his interior man) is changed into an alien, animalistic presence (11), so changed that the hero feels he must rip this alien figure out of his rival's/alter ego's interior.

The other oral assault in this saga demonstrates that oral competition has links with sexual competition.[9] Sigmundr and his brothers are imprisoned in stocks while a witch in she-wolf form feasts on all of them save the hero. Witches represent a sexual power that threatens male dominance.[10] Sigmundr prepares himself for the wolf's next visit (8):

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[9] Sexual competition is probably implicit in battle-scenes; Þórarinn's accusation in *Eyrbyggja saga* that his rival lacks fluid certainly implies a sexual competition.

[10] Female monsters of all sorts, including witches, carry an oral threat. In one of Grettir's poems, a *harðmynnt*, "hard-mouthed" troll-woman, looms over an opponent (*GrS* 47, verse 11). *Beowulf* implies that Grendel's mother eats men. In addition, the she-wolf in *Vǫlsunga saga* might connect with the giant wolf, a figure of chaos, which swallows the divine control over runes and language when it engulfs Óðinn at the end of time (Snorri 51).

Equally, men represent a sexual/oral threat to female narrators. In Julian of Norwich's last revelation, "the fende sett hym in my throte, puttyng forth a vysage fulle nere my face lyke a yonge man, and it was longe and wonder leen" (Chapter 67). This devil appears in Julian's "slepe," like a sexual fantasy, and unlike any of her other visions. He is bestial and his mouth is particularly threatening: he "shewde me whyt teth and so

> Um nóttina eptir þá kemr sú in sama ylgr at vanda sínum ok ætlaði at bíta hann til bana sem brœðr hans. En nú dregr hon veðrit af honum, þar sem hunangit var á riðit, ok sleikir andlit hans allt með tungu sér ok réttir síðan tunguna í munn honum. Hann lætr sér verða óbilt ok beit í tunguna ylginni. Hon bregðr við fast ok hnykkir at sér hart ok rak fœtrna í stokkinn svá at hann klofnaði allr í sundr, en hann helt svá fast at tungan gekk ór ylginni upp ór tungurótunum, ok fekk af því bana.
>
> A later night the wolf came in the same fashion, and thought to bite him to death, just as she had done to his brothers. When she smelled the honey that had been daubed on him, she licked his entire face with her tongue, and then pushed her tongue into his mouth. He screwed up his courage and bit into the wolf's tongue. She reacted suddenly and pressed backwards, bracing herself with her paws against the stocks, so that they burst into pieces; yet he held so strongly onto the tongue that it was torn out by the roots, and that was her death.

Like Grendel, the wolf embodies most of the human fears concerning the other: darkness, magic, animalistic humanity, inevitability of return, anticipated death, and feeding on human flesh. She lacks (for the moment) the normal human means of identification and communication (such as human language). Sigmundr is immobile and his plan seems to be a last resort. The idea of her penetrating his interior, with its suggestion of his sexual passivity, probably adds to Sigmundr's uneasiness. He has to push himself into the act of biting her tongue. As soon as he grips it, he steals her power: she destroys the stocks, but, despite teeth and claws, can do no damage (apparently) to the hero's body. This power seems to be sexual. Her tongue is phallic and Sigmundr "castrates" his monstrous rival—"monstrous" (according to early medieval ideology) because she represents active feminine sexuality.

The connection between oral and sexual dominance is even more explicit in Snorri's *Edda*. In order to obtain the mead of poetry from the interior of a mountain, Óðinn must submit to the sexual desire of a giantess: "la hia henni iii. nætr, ok þa lofaþi hon honum at drecka af miðinum iii. drycki" (58), "[Óðinn] lay with her three nights, and then she granted him three drinks of the mead." The phallic imagery of Óðinn's entry into the giants' lair (he changes himself into a snake and travels through a hole in the mountainside), and the correspondence between three nights of sex and three draughts of liquid secure the connection between oral poetic prowess

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mekylle me thought it the more ugly . . . with hys pawes he helde me in the throte, and woulde a stoppyd my breth and kylde me" (Chapter 67). This fiend perhaps represents Julian's anxiety at being silenced by the authorities of the church. At the time of her revelations she is "unlettyrde" (Chapter 2); thus the fiend attacks her oral powers.

and sexual prowess (Higley 1992:283). Since the mead was originally spittle, a vat of it is something like a mouth; Óðinn's draughts represent the sucking of poetry from one interior into another.[11]

To deliver the mead of poetry to the Æsir, Óðinn must vomit it forth (Snorri 58). Words connect with vomit, as Zumthor (1990:8), Higley (1992:282-83), and Ong imply: spoken language involves "'eating,' psychologically chewing, swallowing, digesting, assimilating from within" (Ong 1977:24).[12] Vomit therefore has metaphorical associations with poetry. Egill makes such an association when he responds to a farmer's inferior hospitality. He puts his hands on his host's shoulders as if he were about to recite, and then (226)

> upp ór sér spýju mikla, ok gaus í andlit Ármóði, í augun ok nasarnar ok í munninn; rann svá ofan um bringuna, en Ármóði varð við andhlaup, ok er hann fekk ǫndinni frá sér hrundit, þá gaus upp spýja.
>
> brought up a huge vomit that flooded over Ármóðr's face, and inside his eyes and nostrils, and into his mouth; it ran down over his breast so that Ármóðr approached suffocation. And when he could draw breath again, he vomited.

The "attack" exits from the hero's mouth, affects the speech-organs of the rival, and goes into his interior. Winded and fearful of his life, the farmer is prevented from speaking, and from returning Egill's insult, until he can catch his breath. The vomit's effect is temporary, but it is the same as that of a throat or chest wound. And, despite the onlookers' reaction that Egill "væri inn versti maðr af þessu verki" (226), "was the most dishonorable man for this deed," the spewing-contest seems to add to Egill's reputation. He says (226, verse 45):

> Títt erum verð at vátta,
> vætti berk at hættak
> þung til þessar gǫngu,
> þinn kinnalǫ minni,
>
> I am delighted to offer testimony for your hospitality with my cheek-ale. I give strong evidence that I went for this walk,

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[11] A vat also suggests female genitalia. The story may imply that Óðinn, in his role as a taboo-breaker, has oral sex with the giantess.

[12] *Vǫlsunga saga* makes links between drink, speech, and poison (10, 18). In Revelation, John eats a book which makes his "belly ... bitter" (10:10).

—and connects poetic "testimony" with vomit in explicit terms.

Beowulf's oral preoccupations come through in the poem's connections between talking, joy, and culture (88b-90a). Speech is a civilized and civilizing act—light as opposed to darkness. The poem is a dialogue between sounds and silence, and progresses from silence to communication: "assertive nonverbal behavior in the poem functions to initiate and maintain communication between parties" (Redwine 1984:36). Grendel's terror engenders dialogue between the Geats and the Danes.

A giant like the man-eating trolls in Old Norse legend (Kaske 1967:290; *Beo* 426a, 761a), Grendel uses his mouth to devour instead of to communicate with the human society (*Beo* 740-45a; *GrS* 47, verse 11). In contrast to the eloquent hero, Grendel approaches Heorot as "the threat of silence given form" (Near 1988:227), and presides over an alien world of soundlessness and "animal . . . instinct" (Neumann 1954:291; Redwine 1984:36; *Beo* 687-767a). Besides silence, this monster represents another oral taboo: a regression into an existence "where eating and being eaten are the sole expressions of life and of man's efforts to dominate nature" (Neumann 1954:291). In his "oral rage" (Hill 1977:18), he threatens to eat all of the Danish community (*Beo* 731-34a); perhaps, as God's enemy (786b), all of God's community. Grendel paralyzes the Danes with his incomprehensibility: "Monig oft gesæt / rice to rune; ræd eahtedon" (171b-72, 130-34a), "Many a powerful man sat often in council, and searched for a plan" against Grendel, but to no effect.

This monster's silence adds to his mystery. He becomes just a bit more human once Beowulf's grip causes him to cry out (785b-88a):

> wop gehyrdon,
> gryreleoð galan Godes andsacan,
> sigeleasne sang, sar wanigean
> helle hæfton.
>
> [The Danes] heard the lamentation, [heard] God's enemy sing a fearful poem, a song of defeat, the captive of hell wailing in pain.

Now that Grendel has spoken, it makes sense for Beowulf to attack him in his speaking parts. In the mere, the hero hacks off the monster's head (1590) and thus does something to silence the *deofla gedræg* (756a), "the noise of devils," which Grendel embodies and seeks in death. This *sceadugenga* (703b), "walker in shadows," becomes more and more recognizable to the Danes and to the rest of humanity throughout the course of the poem: they first perceive his voice, then his arm (833b-36), and

finally his head (1647-50). The silence of this head, and its separation from the body, prove Grendel's death. Beowulf also cuts into the neck (1566a) of Grendel's mother.

Later in the poem, the dragon responds to Beowulf's war-cry (2551b-52) with a kind of pseudo-speech that has previously broadcast the monster's evil reputation throughout the land (2306b-11), and now threatens to consume the hero (2582, 2595). Beowulf tries to attack the monster's head (2679b), a successful approach with previous adversaries; but his sword breaks (2680b), and he receives a wound in his organs of speech. Jager notices that the chest, a center of speech, figures prominently in this fight (1990:849-50). But the dragon (like Egill), in seeking to kill and silence a challenger, attacks Beowulf in the neck (2691b-93):

> heals ealne ymbefeng
> biteran banum; he geblodegod wearð
> sawuldriore, swat yðum weoll.
>
> the terrible fangs grasped him about the neck; he became drenched in life's-blood; the blood welled out in waves.

Wiglaf manages to pinpoint the vulnerable speaking parts of the dragon more accurately, and strikes it *nioðor hwene* (2699b), "further down," so that now "ðæt fyr ongon / sweðrian" (2699b-2702a) "the fire began to abate." Beowulf seems to take his next target from Wiglaf's example (2705), slashes the dragon in the belly, and it dies.

In the same pattern as the fight, the dragon's poison moves from Beowulf's throat to his lower speaking parts (2711b-15a):

> Ða sio wund ongon,
> þe him se eorðdraca ær geworhte,
> swelan ond swellan; he þæt sona onfand,
> þæt him on breostum bealonið(e) weoll
> attor on innan.
>
> Then the wound, which the earth-dragon had given him before, began to seethe and swell; he soon realized that poison, harmful currents, welled inside him at his breast.

The venom seeks out Beowulf's "soul's treasury," lodged in his breast like the "wordhoard" (2419b-24; Jager 1990:851), but his voice fights back. The hero "ofer benne spræc, / wunde wælbleate" (2724b-25a), "spoke over the wound, the deadly injury." As Joseph Harris points out, speaking

despite one's wounds is part of a tradition in the "death-song" genre, where the dying hero often mentions his or her physical "condition" (1992:7, 15).

Wiglaf throws water on his king, which, besides the waking effect, would cool the burns, dilute the poison, and allow Beowulf to find the fluid to speak more easily, if water were to end up in his mouth. And the result of the water is words, described in aggressive terms: "oð þæt wordes ord / breosthord þurhbræc" (2791b-92a), "until the point of the speech broke through the container of the breast." The monster's poison tries to imprison the words of Beowulf's story inside their physical place of origin, but this moving testimony, the legacy of a great hero's achievements (2733-43), fights through like the "thought-spears" of *Vainglory* before Beowulf lapses into permanent silence.

Another Old English poem, *Solomon and Saturn*, chastises the devil for his "illegitimate speech," "vicious counter-language" (Hermann 1989:36), and "letters of death" (O'Keeffe 1990:56, 57; *S & S* 161-63a). The personified letters G, S, and T of the manuscript *pater noster* in *Solomon and Saturn* make assaults like Grettir's on the demon's speech-organs, and the manuscript page becomes a battlefield (O'Keeffe 1990:57; Hermann 1989:36). T spears the devil's tongue (*S & S* 94b), G *stilleð* him (133b), and S also *gestilled* him when it (113b-15a; cf. Ps 3.7)

> læteð foreweard hleor
> on strangne stan, stregdað toðas
> geond helle heap.
>
> hurled his face against a hard stone, scattered his teeth through hell.

The "self-referential and self-canceling" (Hermann 1989:36) written letter "silences" (O'Keeffe 1990:57) and "censors" (Hermann 1989:36) the demon in order to win one battle in the war between orality and literacy: "the central tension of *Solomon and Saturn I* lies in the opposition of speaking and writing both as modes of discourse and as means to power" (O'Keeffe 1990:70). The conflict between orality and literacy is no mere abstraction, then, but reflects the physical battles of oral heroes.

Solomon and Saturn is a more didactic poem than *Beowulf*, with a Christian philosophy at its center. This philosophy gradually alters orality and oral biographies. Most obviously, Christianity tells the story of a deity vastly different from any pagan god: an Other who is incontestable, abstract, gazeless, often unrecognized, and comfortably distant, being spiritual. He installs Himself as "god of poetry," "supplant[s]" any past gods (Frank 1978:108), and rules in "immateriality and immortality"

(Bridges 1979:369). Whereas oral heroes and poets try to outdo one another, the Savior assimilates the whole variety of experiences (and all people of the past, including characters from all oral and literate compositions) into His career—not by surpassing them, but by redeeming humanity for them. Christ changes competition because He becomes a new (unreachable) ideal: "the sublimation of all aggression" (Ong 1981:182). His non-aggressive competition forms the last stage of heroic oral competition.

Only Jesus' story has the power to deface all biographies. Christian history negates the hero's search for immortality because this subversive narrative creates a new past that is impossible to transcend. The idea of competing with God's life-story is ludicrous. He alone is divine, conquers death physically, and thus wins the oral hero's race to possess the most ancient and surpassing history, genealogy, or legendary background. God can have no precursor (Derrida 1978:179). Nor can one compete with Him as a narrator. The written tradition asserts the authority of God's words, and reveals Him as the ultimate narrator of human history (John 1:1). The aggregate memory becomes God and loses individuality, so competition must change its focus.

Biographies begin to maintain the life of Christ as their subtext. They become signs. The heroes of saints' lives, for example, are "de-individualiz[ed]" (Huisman 1978:136) because their lives have imitation for the sake of heaven, rather than individualization for the sake of fame, as their goal. "The poets actually conflate the saints with Christ" (Bjork 1985:128) and martyrs live His life and die His death—not their own (Bridges 1979:377). Therefore, any attempt to absorb a saint's life is futile because this life does not really exist. The agonistic quality of biography is subsumed into mass prayer and preparation for salvation.

Christianity also alters oral competition by forcing the speaking totem inside of oral humanity to fall silent. Jesus becomes the new ideal hero, and He contradicts the idea of an interior totem because splits and conflicts within the self are irrelevant to Him. The deity is a perfectly united soul. Humans should strive for similar unity (Augustine, *De trin* X.ix.12).[13] The

[13] For splits in the human soul, see Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* (XIV.v) and Boethius's *Consolatio* (III. m. ix.15-17; IV.ii.5; V.iv.28-29). According to Malcolm R. Godden, *Beowulf* separates the *sawol* which can go to heaven from the *mod* which "seems to convey ... an inner passion or wilfulness" (1985:287, 289). Other scholars suggest further distinctions within the Anglo-Saxon soul (Moffat 1990:18-19; Higley 1988:28-29). See Allen J. Frantzen (1986:56) for King Alfred's version of the soul's relationship with God.

Savior further discourages the speaking self through quietness. In the gospels, Jesus wields considerable oral strength, but, in contrast to the loudness of oral combat, His "quietness" also "bespeaks power" (Ong 1981:179). At the trials before Christ's crucifixion, His non-answers to the questions of the priests and of Pilate express the might of God's new kingdom that exists beyond the scope of human language (Matt 26.63; 27.14). At His death, Jesus "let[s] silence interrupt his voice" (Derrida 1978:67). This silence is part of His triumph, part of the way in which He transcends human nature.

God also silences the interior self by invading the individual with His quietness. Augustine suggests that a person turn to his/her *homo interior* in order to come to a conception of self. In the privacy of this interior (*clausis cubiculis* [*De magis* i.2]), the proper activity is prayer, and

> non opus est locutione, cum oramus, id est sonantibus verbis, nisi forte, sicut sacerdotes faciunt, significandae mentis suae causa.
>
> when we pray there is no benefit in speaking, that is, in sounding the words; except, perhaps, to express the thoughts of one's mind as priests do.

Augustine turns the interior speaker, the totem of speech that oral competitors try to grasp, into something that communicates silently. According to Nichols, Augustine feels that "performance as a step toward spiritual knowledge can only begin when the *vox corporis* (voice of the body) falls silent" (1991:147; Augustine, *Confessions* VIII.xi).[14] Once this totem ceases to speak and its threat becomes less open, competition can become less physical, less violent (Hermann 1989:40), and less oral.

Jesus not only silences the totem, He replaces it. In Augustine's thought, the interior figure becomes God—*in interiore homine habitare Christum* (*De magis* i.2; Eph 3.17). This invasion of the self occurs in spiritual terms for Augustine, but other writers describe it as a physical act. Raymond of Capua suggests that God's spirit may enter the human interior in a violent fashion that recalls the sex act, the childish interest in dismemberment, and the oral heroic act of ripping out a rival's interior organs of speech. Christ appears to Saint Catherine of Siena while she prays, opens her side and takes away her heart, replacing it a few days later with one that is red and shining. He informs her that He has given her the heart she prayed for: His. A scar remains on her skin to testify to the

[14] Nichols interprets this voice as "passions" (150), not as an interior figure.

miracle and to the physical nature of these happenings (Raymond of Capua II.vi.178-80).

The written text, representing God, also goes into the interior. In Revelation, John eats a book from the outstretched hand of an angel, "and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (10:10). This event suggests an oral absorption of literacy. The two traditions are at a meeting point. Since the angel's book comes from God, and is not the individual memories of an individual poet or warrior, absorbing it involves no violence to another's body. And, although the Bible's message is spread mainly through oral means in medieval times, the message itself exalts literacy by promoting the authority of written texts. The Bible is thus a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy in that it becomes the surpassing work of the Middle Ages (Nichols 1991:151-52; *Conf* VIII.xi, XI.xxviii.38).

God's invasion of the self installs the "Inner Master, who is Christ, the *Logos"* as "the voice of reason" (Earl 1989:55) inside individuals. This new voice engages in ideal communication (Derrida 1978:179) at the upper "limits of all possible languages" (Foucault 1977:33), and teaches people the meaning of signs (Earl 1989:55; Hermann 1989:130). When the same God and the same word live inside a person, when the body of memory has lost its individuality, has become an exterior totem (the book), the interior contains nothing worth ripping out. One no longer needs to engulf the words, reputations, and interiors of others. Meaning and stories are more easily obtained from the exterior source. Also, any remaining vestiges of desire for the word, the flesh, and the interior are satisfied in the symbolism of the eucharist, and of the codex itself, which has words in its interior.

The reign of manuscript means that the plan to destroy the other involves erasing not swallowing. No trace of a rival biography remains once a written account is erased and replaced with a new one on the same subject, or with one on a different subject. In *Exeter Book Riddle 47* (1-5a) for example,

> Moðde word fræt. Me þæt þuhte
> wrætlicu wyrd, þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn,
> þæt se wyrm forswealg wera gied sumes,
> þeof in þystro, þrymfæstne cwide
> ond þæs strangan staþol.
>
> A moth ate words. That appeared to me to be a marvelous event, when I learned of that wonderful happening, that the caterpillar, a thief in darkness, consumed the poem, the secure-in-glory speech, of some man, and [consumed] the foundation of that strong thing.

The bookmoth represents two kinds of destruction. It eats words as an oral competitor does (Russom 1977:131), but it also destroys songs by eating the foundation of the text. At the conjunction of oral and literate traditions, the mouth performs an erasure. This riddle, Augustine's uneasiness about the powers of speech in *De magistro*, and his wonder (and intimidation) at Ambrose's ability to read texts silently (*Conf* VI.iii.3) indicate that literacy does not take over from orality cleanly. The violence of the mouth and the strength of speech go underground while the attitude toward orality shifts. Prayer and the other legacies of literate tradition only mask the oral aggression that secretly inspires all forms of composition.

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Oral Register in the Biblical Libretto: Towards a Biblical Poetic

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With the publication of A. B. Lord's *The Singer of Tales* in 1960, students of the ancient literatures of the Hebrew Bible, like their colleagues in Old English, medieval French, and Old Icelandic, were intrigued with the possibility that the corpus they studied reflected the work of composers in an oral tradition. Biblicists began to think in terms of bards who composed their literature extemporaneously without the aid of writing through the fresh manipulation of traditional patterns in language and content. Continuing and refining the work of his teacher Milman Parry, Albert Lord had suggested that such an oral compositional process lay behind the elegant and complex epics in classical Greek that are attributed to Homer. Lord and Parry's studies were comparative, grounded in the collection and analysis of numerous examples of the live oral traditions of the former Yugoslavia. Lord demonstrated that the literary creations of the Serbo-Croatian singers of tales who could neither read nor write were characterized by certain traits: 1) a specific metrical scheme; 2) "disenjambement" so that the thought is complete at the end of each line; 3) a high degree of formulicity with the bard expressing essential ideas and images with particular appropriate sets of words, patterns of words that could be varied to suit metrical requirements and the interests of the context but that were conventionalized and traditional even in variation; and 4) an equally traditional set of themes, stretches of plot or patterns of content created by the formulaic language. Lord was then able to demonstrate that the very same traits characterized the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Hence, for Lord these works too must have been orally composed. He believed that in the classical Greek case as in the Serbo-Croatian, the oral mode of composition virtually required illiteracy on the part of the composer. What was entailed was a special mode of literary creativity that was somehow contaminated or transformed once the singer had access to writing and

reading. For Lord, of course, this was not to say the singer was unsophisticated or simple-minded; rather it was to draw a clear demarcation between oral and literate styles and the cultures that support them.

The metrical evidence analyzed by Lord tended to support, for biblicists, the notion espoused by Hermann Gunkel that an oral stage of any biblical composition would be poetic (1966:38-39). Thus John Kselman sought to recover poetic, orally based fragments in the so-called Priestly stratum of Genesis. Stanley Gevirtz (1963), William Whallon (1969), and Perry Yoder (1971) saw in the parallel constructions typical of Israelite poetic and non-poetic compositions a key to Israelite oral composition,[1] while I explored formula patterns used by biblical prophets, entertaining the possibility that an oracle such as Isa 1:4-26 was orally and extemporaneously performed by the prophet (1980a). He might have created and combined traditional formulas to produce blocks of content or "literary forms" that also suggest the stuff of oral composition. The most complete study of poetic formulas in the Bible is that of Robert Culley (1967). After assessing the formulicity of the poems in the Psalms according to his criteria of repeated phrase and "free substitution," Culley concludes cautiously and, I think, correctly that the amount of material available in the Hebrew Bible is too limited from which to draw definite conclusions about oral composition in the biblical psalms.

All of these studies of biblical material lead one to conclusions about oral composition far less sanguine than those of Lord and Parry concerning the use of formulaic language in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, a corpus that evidences a very high degree of formulicity. And yet these studies begin to suggest something very special about modes of expressing content in Israelite literature, prose, and poetry. Biblical authors of various periods and persuasions composing in a variety of genres share a set of traditional ways to express particular ideas or to create particular images. We cannot link these seeming formulas with systematic metrical and prosodic patterns, nor with strictly poetic texts at all,[2] but the language of the Bible is much more stylized and conventionalized, than, for example, the writing in a

[1] See also O'Connor's comments on oral composition as it relates to his complex classification of Israelite poetics (1980:42-48, 96-109, 159-63).

[2] See formulas in tales of the successful wise heroes in Genesis 41, Ahiqar, and Daniel (Niditch and Doran 1977:189-90), and in the story of Joseph and Esther (Niditch 1987:126-28).

modern novel or poem and involves variations on certain formulaic patterns of language.

We do well to study biblical literature on its own terms. James Kugel suggests, in fact, that scholars have superimposed their notions of poetry upon the biblical corpus, "reconstructing" to make lines more even, visually aligning the text, and drawing prosodic distinctions in the way we print manuscripts or translate them, creating a false distinction between "prose" and "poetry" (1981:69-70). He suggests implicitly, as the folklorist Dan Ben-Amos does explicitly (1976), that we need to be attuned to the ethnic genres of the culture itself. Kugel's observation encourages one to reject altogether the search for poetic fragments in what now appear in our terms to be prose texts. More importantly, however, he implicitly urges us to explore the nuances of these ancient Israelite compositions in terms of their culture and social contexts, their authors and audiences. While biblical works cannot be proven in any instance to have been orally composed, the written works of the Hebrew Bible evidence traits typically associated with ascertainably orally composed works. They belong somewhere in an "oral register." This phrase refers not to modes of composition but to the style of compositions whether the works were created orally or in writing, whether they are performed or read to oneself (see Foley 1995:15-17).

"Oral register" applies also to the patterns of content that are the plots of biblical narrative and to various recurring literary forms, employed by a range of biblical authors. Robert Alter's studies of biblical type-scenes (1981) testify to this traditional style though, in some misconception about the depth and sophistication of traditional literatures, Alter himself never associates biblical modes of composition with an oral style. Many other studies of biblical patterns of content point to the Bible's oral register. These include my own work with tales of unlikely heroes and tricksters (1987, 1990); Dorothy Irvin's study of the "birth of the hero pattern" in which biblical authors craft tales of Moses (1977); Ronald Hendel's analysis of the lives of the patriarchs (1987); A. B. Lord's study of patterns of the hero in biblical narrative (1990); David Gunn's careful studies of biblical battle reports (1974a, b); Robert Doran's and my study of Genesis 41, Ahiqar, and Daniel 7 as examples of a particular topos about the success of the wise courtier (1977); my studies of various recurring prophetic forms including the symbolic vision form (1980b), the woe oracle, the cult polemic, and the lawsuit (1980a), and of patterns of creation in the Hebrew Bible (1984, 1986).

In the Hebrew Bible traditional style or oral register emerges in the following features. 1) Repetition is present in one passage, particularly in narrative but in other forms as well. The repetition serves to unify the work and to reiterate essential messages or themes that the author wishes to emphasize and that are important in the larger tradition. As Lord has noted (1987:57-62), such repetition is not merely a mnemonic device for the illiterate performer and his listening audience who have no recourse to writing. Rather, repetition has to do with matters of meaning and stylistic preferences. While this style is typical of orally composed works, it also characterizes works composed in writing that participate in the same aesthetic as do orally composed works. 2) Formulas and formula patterns are used to express similar ideas or images throughout the tradition. When a prophet describes God's power in nature or a storyteller wishes to create the image of an autocratic king, he or she has available certain phrases, vocabulary, and patterns of syntax. The composer can endow the formula with his or her own special nuance, but the phrase will nevertheless be conventionalized to mean in shorthand terms "king who is autocratic" or "God-power." 3) The use of conventionalized patterns of content recur throughout the tradition. In the field of biblical studies, such patterns are called literary forms. In traditional cultures there may be ways to describe the preparation for war or the birth of a hero. Each culture has its own favorite recurring literary patterns and ways of combining them into larger wholes.

All of these stylistic characteristics fall under the heading of an aesthetic that John Foley has described in detail in *Immanent Art* (1991). The term that best sums up this aesthetic is *metonymy*, "a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole" and the

> text or version is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact, in which the experience is filled out—and made traditional—by what the conventionality attracts to itself from that context (7-8).

> Submerged beneath the surface of the single tale or element lies a wealth of associations accessible only under the agreement of metonymic representation and interpretation (11).

> Catalán's formula (and all phraseological and narrative metonyms) conveys its meaning by an institutionalized association, its denotative concreteness standing by prior agreement for a richer and more resonant reality (13).

Thus for Foley, the formulaic phrase is no mere convenience for a bard who works extemporaneously, seeking to maintain a certain meter while providing a piece of content. Rather, the formula is a signifier rich in inherent cultural meanings, that draws upon the wider related literary tradition, a template of the tradition and an indicator of worldview. Formulas bring the larger tradition to bear on the passage, allowing a few words to evoke a wider and deeper range of settings, events, characters, emotions, and meanings than the immediate textual context of the phrase might suggest.[3]

In a careful discussion of one noun-epithet formula translated "the malefactor" used for the monster Grendel in *Beowulf* and for other malevolent figures in Anglo-Saxon literature, Foley shows how this particular phrase "adds to the atmosphere of dread that permeates this part of the poem" because "it resonates with a meaning beyond its semantic formulaic, and literary-critical content" (32-33). The phraseology that combines terms for "dark," "night," and "stalking" similarly "encodes" a "terror" that "springs into the narrative": "the referential meaning of this group of words is much greater than the sum of their individual denotations and connotations, and it enriches each instance with a greater than situational impact" (30, 33).

Similarly, an epithet for Achilles used in one context "promotes the interpretation of a hero's specific and present actions against his overall mythic identity, in other words his whole, extrasituational character" (141). This metonymic quality applies not only to phrases but also to larger structures that "carry with them traditional connotations that are active in the smaller situational compass of individual occurrences" (33).

Foley provides a meaning-rich context in which to understand the repetitions, formulaic language, and motif clusters that characterize works in the oral register. He shows further how this technique of "immanent referentiality" (1991:95) is found not only in works that are orally composed such as those collected by Parry and others but also in works that we have only in libretto form whose mode of composition can never be ascertained with absolute certainty. The relevance of his work on *Beowulf* to biblical material is especially strong.

Foley also beautifully shows how traditional-style works vary in their adherence to this aesthetic of metonymy, with the Moslem epics of the

[3] See especially 33, 133, 217, 252.

former Yugoslavia, for example, being more fully informed by the "aesthetics of traditional referentiality" (70), "by poetically sanctioned reference to inherent meanings embodied in traditional forms" (*idem*; see also 111-18), than Christian epic songs that blend oral traditional aesthetics with "a more textual orientation" in which the phrase derives more meaning from immediate context. In such works "too metonymic" a reference may be regarded as Homer's nodding and be "corrected." This too becomes relevant to the biblical process, and to our understanding of styles in ancient Israelite literature.

Foley's work encourages us to think deeply about the role of recurring language in the biblical corpus, about epithets and larger formulaic phrases of varying sorts of content, and about the literary forms that unify the corpus. This approach leads us also to question some basic scholarly text-critical and source-critical assumptions about the formation of the Bible that are grounded in the perspective of modern-style literacy and textuality.

Repetition

Examples of purposeful repetition within individual pericopes abound in the Hebrew Bible. The repetition is sometimes of the framing variety found in the first chapter of Genesis with a "fill in the blank" quality (e.g., "And the Lord said let there be x," "And the Lord called the 'x' 'y,' and it was evening and it was morning of the nth day"). Other times, repetition involves full sentences whereby, for example, news is delivered to someone and then is received or overheard by a second character, then repeated perhaps several times as it is passed on to other characters, for example the news that the old man Isaac plans to pass on his blessing to his eldest son Esau and the father's instructions to his son overheard by Rebecca and repeated to her favorite son, the younger Jacob, who then pretends he is his brother by following the instructions (Gen 27:2-4; 7; 9-10; 31; 33). The language recurs in the uncovering of the deception. A similar passing on of news about Tiamat's plot to destroy the gods who had killed her husband is found in the Mesopotamian creation epic *Enuma elish*. A third variety of repetition involves play on a particular *Leitwort*, or key word, a phenomenon noted by Martin Buber and more recently explored by Michael Fishbane (1979:xii, 50-54), Joel Rosenberg (1984:38), and others. In

Genesis 27 such key words are *'kl* "to eat" and *brk* "to bless," terms that invoke hospitality, ingratiation, and fertility.

Scholars with a taste for a particular sort of literate aesthetic have sneered at repetition. One thinks, for example, of G. S. Kirk's depiction of repetitions in the Akkadian *Enuma elish* as boring and tedious (1970:120). Kirk is simply not appreciative of the rhythms, tastes, and modes of creating meaning that are found in many traditional contexts.

Repetition is not a simple-minded stylistic device that allows an audience to follow a story that is heard rather than read or that provides a composer a quick way to create content without varying the vocabulary or that merely provides the syntax. Repetition is a means of emphasizing metonymically key messages and moods in a work of literature as in a musical composition. The repeated frames in Genesis 1, for example, create the impression of a magisterial and in-charge deity whose word is all-powerful, whose creations are firmly rooted, solid, and integrated. The process of creation and the overturning of chaos is inevitable and builds surely and confidently to the creation of humanity, the capstone of the process. Repetition itself is metonymic for the process of becoming.

Similarly, the refrain "It was good" emphasizes the underlying goodness of the cosmos, a world which comes to include murder and theft, violence, and deception. This is a key theme to an important line of biblical thinkers in the tradition and the repeated phrase serves simply and elegantly to weave the notion of cosmic goodness into the very fabric of creation. In a tale such as Genesis 27, repetitions in the father's words to Esau, the mother's words to Jacob, and Jacob's actions build drama and beautifully highlight complex triangles of family relationships and tensions, as the various characters stand in relation to the words that are repeated. The repetition about the father's anticipated death and about obtaining the food that he loves in exchange for blessing, points implicitly and via shorthand to parental preferences for one child over another, to causes for sibling rivalries, and to Jacob and Rebecca's roles as tricksters as the same words become a source of deception and manipulation. The words, immanently and indirectly referential, create strong impressions of the characters' psychologies and personalities.

The single repeated word can also be a powerful source of immanent referentiality within a work, unifying and deepening the meanings of a composition in ways that are paradoxically more subtle than variation in language. The term "eat" in Genesis 27, for example, serves to juxtapose

Isaac and Esau's physicality—the old man's desire to eat and satisfy his appetite and the young man's willingness to hunt to obtain food—with Rebecca and Jacob's more hidden plans—the woman's work of food preparation that allows her to influence the male (so Abigail, so Esther) and the young man's participation in the act of domesticity as deception. This word not only works metonymically in this tale but evokes a whole range of eating men and food-preparing women in the biblical tradition and sets up the constellation of men to be influenced, lulled, calmed, or as in this case deceived.

Repetition is thus one of the features of the Hebrew Scripture's aesthetic of metonymy. It is important to note, however, that not every traditional-style author represented in the Bible employs the varieties of repetition described above. Such repetitions are a marker of traditional style, an important indicator of a particular traditional style, but not all traditional-style works exhibit this particular feature.

Formulas

Works that exhibit the aesthetic of metonymy will always employ a different sort of repetition, namely the use of certain kinds of language to convey an essential image or idea, to import into a passage of literature a particular mood or characterization or expectation of events because these terms are regularly employed in the tradition to communicate this mood or to introduce certain kinds of events. Such familiar phrases bring with them a meaning beyond the immediate content of the literary context, enriching the passage with the larger implications of the tradition and with essential denotators of a culture's worldviews.

Epithets

Some of the briefest and most basic recurring phrases of the Hebrew Bible are noun-epithets comparable to those Foley explores in Serbo-Croatian, Anglo-Saxon, and classical Greek sources. An archaic epithet for Yahweh, god of the Israelites, provides an interesting case study: *'ăbîr ya'ăqōb*. The translation for this phrase in RSV, the NRSV, and others is "The Mighty One of Jacob." This translation is itself counter-metonymic, a

theologically motivated attempt to invoke only one aspect of the phrase's meaning. More basically and literally the *'ăbîr* in Northwest Semitic languages means "bull," as P. D. Miller has shown in a classic study and as poetic texts such as Isa 10:13; Ps 22:13 (v. 12 in English) and Ps 50:13 strongly confirm. In the latter two passages in particular the "bull" is in synchronic parallelism with the "cow" (Ps 22:13) and the "he-goat" (Ps 50:13).

The horned bull includes implications of strength (hence the translation "Mighty One"), youth, warrior skills, and fertility with a particular sort of machismo. An American of a particular generation might speak similarly of a "young buck" or a "stud." Ancient Canaanite religion is rich in tales of the god Baal imaged as the bull. In fact, horned crowns were important symbols of god-power throughout the ancient Near East. As metonymic symbols of various deities, such crowns were set upon thrones in temples representing and assuring divine indwelling presence. [4]

In part because of the association of the bull with Canaanite and other ancient Near Eastern deities, not all Israelites were comfortable with bull iconography or the related mythology—hence the condemnations in Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 13—and yet for many, perhaps most Yahweh worshipers, the bull symbol invoked a range of positive aspects of the deity as powerful, youthful bringer of plenty, rescuer from enemies. When in Exodus 32 the Israelites shout toward bull icons, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt," it is the power symbolically and metonymically represented by the Bull that captures their imagination. This bull is not Baal or El or Marduk, but the God of Jacob Israel, bound to this people in a shared history of experience, in a narrative tradition that creates, preserves, and maintains the relationship. The Israelite tradition no doubt contained many additional references to the Bull of Jacob beyond the few found in Hebrew Bible—stories, proverbs, longer formulas—but even the limited biblical references are instructive. Each time the epithet is used, a larger tradition of associations is brought to bear on the context at hand that may deal in an immediate way with only certain aspects of the Bull of Jacob.

Thus in Gen 49:24, the literary setting is Jacob's testament, his old-age blessing to each son, considered in the tradition to be ancestor hero of a

[4] See Niditch 1980b:121-24 on the horn as a metonymic symbol in Zechariah 4 and 2 Kings 22.

particular tribe or tribes. Joseph, father of Ephraim and Manasseh, the northern Israelites, is described in a warrior context. Archers have a grudge against him but his bow stays firm, his arms agile. The translation at vv. 23-24 is difficult but the phrase employing the bull epithet follows these indications of fortitude in battle with a phrase meaning literally "from the hands of the bull of Jacob." In other words, Yahweh, Bull of Jacob, supports his charges in battle like an Athena or a Zeus supports a favorite warrior. The image of the bull brings this agonistic power to bear. So too at Isa 1:24 and Isa 49:26. The latter describes the victory over oppressors in the ghoulish language of a cannibalistic post-victory banquet: "I will cause those who oppress you to eat their own flesh/As with sweet wine they will become drunk on their blood. All flesh will know that I Yahweh am your savior/Your redeemer is the Bull of Jacob." As I have discussed for Ezekiel 38-39 (Niditch 1987), the victory of Israel over her enemies takes the cosmogonic form of the victory-enthronement pattern, the victorious banquet motif intertwining with the blood-soaked imagery of the battlefield —in this case of the enemies' self-consumption in defeat. The "savior" and "redeemer" who makes that possible is the Bull of Jacob. Warrior is also world-maker, establisher of cosmos after chaos, destroyer and builder, wager of battles and peacemaker, guarantor of fertility. All of these nuances are contained in the bull.

Isa 60:16 in context emphasizes the paradise aspect of the bull, the plenty and fertility he brings in the victory over enemies as Israel sucks the milk of nations/the breast of kings. Instead of a cannibalistic self-consumption, there is an image of absorbing the enemies' strength as a baby would drink nurturing milk at its mother's breast—an image of ultimate security and freedom from oppression. This too is within the power of the Bull of Jacob. And yet this epithet emphasizing fecundity, complete security, and peace, also metonymically references the warrior, the aggressive male power.

As Foley has pointed out, such an epithet brings to a passage a full range of a character's personality in the tradition, qualities beyond those emphasized in the context at hand. Psalm 132 is a pro-Davidic, pro-Jerusalem, pro-temple hymn, in which the worldview is similar to that of 1 and 2 Chronicles. David is imagined as an ideal ruler who establishes Yahweh's holy city and prepares for God's dwelling place on earth (132:3-7). The covenant with the Davidic dynasty is emphasized (132:11, 12) as is the role of the priests (132:9, 16) and the eternal bond between God and an

inviolable Zion (132:13-15). This passage neither deals directly with war (v. 8 contains only hints of the warrior enthroned, returned from battle) nor employs overt fertility imagery, but Yahweh is addressed as Bull of Jacob (v. 2). David seeks a dwelling place for the Bull of Jacob (v. 5). This epithet introduces into the passage the full mythology of the bull, the special sort of male power and fecundity, all of which contribute to the message of security under the eternal rule of David in Zion blessed by Yahweh, but the contribution is of the immanently referential or metonymic variety.

A similar sort of metonymy applies to other biblical epithets. When Yahweh is called "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," the context does not always overtly and directly deal with covenant or genealogy, but this epithet metonymically brings these key themes to bear on a context for those who share the tradition. The epithet is a template of the larger tradition.

Longer Formulas

The Bible is also rich in more complex and longer formulas, as studies by Culley, Whallon, myself, and others have indicated. The metonymic quality applies to these phrases as well. For example, when a biblical figure at court has a difficult problem to solve, he "sends for" or "calls to" a formulaic chain of advisors and assistants.

The chain of wisemen can include any number of wizards, magicians, advisors, officials, and other members of the royal entourage (see, e.g., Gen 41:8; Ex 7:11; Dan 1:20; 2:2; Jer 50:35). These terms may then be used in a variety of stylized expressions. In Jer 50:35, for example, the prophet intones a virtual incantation over the inhabitants of Babylon, predicting that kingdom's downfall and helping to bring it about: "A sword against the Chaldeans says the Lord and against the inhabitants of Babylon, against her officials, and against her wisemen." In three other locations (Gen 41:8; Dan 2:2; Ex 7:11) items from this chain are used with the verb "to call" when a king facing a difficult problem calls to members of his bureaucracy to help him address the difficulty. The formulaic chain appears also at Dan 1:20 to indicate that exiled Jewish wisemen at the Babylonian court were worth ten times more than the local counterparts.

In each case, through the use of a combination of these key terms, the storyteller is able to bring into his context the aura of the foreign court and the notion of contest between those in power and those who are in a more marginal political position but who are backed by God. The longer formula "call to" + "chain of bureaucrats" is a shorthand notice that the Israelite wiseman is involved in some version of a court contest while the author of Jer 50:35, 51:57 is able to use the list of officials formula to describe the undermining of Babylon's government, her seat of power. Such a list is more than a convenience for oral-style storytelling, more than an indication of an aesthetic in which there is a marked preference for describing the same piece of content in the same language. The list is also a means of including an essential idea in a passage, of creating the proper image in the minds of members of an audience, a means of making sure everyone shares the same setting, nuances, and ranges of meaning offered by the tradition.

Quotation of a Specific Text or Traditional Referentiality

In Ex 2:2 the mother of Moses is described: "The woman became pregnant and she gave birth to a son and saw he was good (*wattēre' ōtô kî tôb hû'*)." Many including myself have suggested that the author here echoes the very language of God's creation in Genesis 1 (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), thereby setting in motion in the reader's mind a pattern of cosmogony that will lead to the establishment of a new and free people, the Israelites (Niditch 1993:49).

Implicit in this suggestion is often the assumption that the tale in Genesis 1, in its written form, is being quoted. World-creation is thus a model for other creations. This, of course, assumes a relative chronology in which Genesis 1 is earlier than Exodus 2, a problem for those who would assign these passages to a sixth-century "P" source and a tenth-century "J" source respectively. Within a framework that is more attuned to an oral traditional aesthetic, one might suggest that the creation account of Genesis 1 was known, was popular, had become a part of the culture whatever its origins in writing or speech, and that the author of the birth story of Exodus 2 had available the words of world-creation to introduce a new creation. One does not suggest a rigid process of copying or quotation, but rather that Genesis 1 had become a part of the tradition, the refrain "it was good" had become formulaic.

And yet, perhaps even this framework does not allow adequately for the role of metonymy in assessing the relationship between the passages. In fact, the "see and was good" phrase is found in one additional biblical passage and the phrase "it was good" in numerous others (see Kugel 1980).

In Gen 49:14-15 in the testament of Jacob the saying comes to Issachar:

> Issachar is a strong (bony) ass
> dwelling (lying down) among the encampments (cattle pens)
> He saw a resting place that it was good
> And the land that it was pleasant
> And he bent his shoulder to bear
> And became a slaving labor band.

The various sayings in Genesis 49 provide brief overviews of the various tribes, their strengths or weaknesses, the myths or traditional stories associated with them, and their geographic settings; comparisons to animals or other natural features are common. This piece of tradition characterizes the tribe of Issachar through a donkey metaphor: their brawny animal strength, their stubborn will and endurance, their subjugation. The metaphor works beautifully and is no doubt related to a perception of Issachar's status at some point in Israelite history or to an actual sociological/historical situation for one of the early Israelite groups.[5] As we seek to understand the use of the "see and it was good" phrase in this and the other contexts, we note that once again the phrase is associated with founding or beginning, for Gen 49:14-15 is a founding myth that addresses Issachar's settling into a particular portion of land. The resting place is beheld to be good by one who will work and husband it, reshaping it through his labor.

Thus the phrase "to see and it was good" has to do with creation, procreation, and beginnings. Exodus 2 need not be reliant on Genesis 1 or vice-versa, but all three passages may reflect the sort of metonymic or traditional referentiality that so aptly described the workings of epithets. The smaller phrase "it was good" may also trigger related cosmological themes, for it is frequently used in biblical contexts to describe God, the

[5] Note the double-entendres and see the discussion in Westermann 1986:233-34.

quintessential and eternal creator.[6] The good land, the good lad, and the good earth all reflect the great goodness that is God.

This approach to recurring biblical language not only challenges the scholar to look in new ways at biblical intertextuality but also raises questions about the whole source-critical enterprise. Many scholars, for example, have seen the woman of Tekoa's description of her sons' fratricidal conflict—a tale she spins at Joab's urging to lead David to rehabilitate his fratricidal son, Absalom—as a case of a Davidic court writer's echoing the mythic tale of Cain and Abel (2 Sam 14:6; Gen 4:8). Both descriptions describe the killing as taking place in an open space (*śādeh*). In fact, the language in each is quite different—different words are used for the conflict and the killing (e.g., *hrg* "to kill" [Gen 4:8] vs. a hiph. of *mwt*: lit. "to cause to die" [2 Sam 14:6]). Other scholars suggest that the courtly tale predates Genesis 4 and that a later writer echoes the woman of Tekoa in his telling of an early cosmogonic myth, perhaps in order to remind readers of Absalom's lack of worthiness and the rightness of the choice of Solomon as David's successor in the dynasty.

One who is attuned to the aesthetics of traditional literatures might view such questions as the wrong ones, the argument itself imaging the proverbial question about the chicken and the egg. Rather, the field, the open spaces, are places where subversion traditionally can take place, where social mores can be overturned. It is the world of nature: Esau's world (Gen 25:27); or the place where Jonathan assists David's escape from King Saul (1 Sam 20:35) when the latter as political authority rules David to be a rebel, an enemy of the state; or the place where a woman can be attacked with no one to hear her screams for help (Deut 22:27). Is it not possible that the open spaces are the ideal setting for various acts of subversion including fratricide, and that references in tales of Cain and Abel and Amnon and Absalom refer to a wider field of tradition that includes not only these scenes from the tradition, these tellings of stories, but other scenes as well?

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[6] Jer 33:11; Ps 34:9 (v.8 in English); 54:8 (v.6 in English); 69:17 (v.16 in English); 100:5; 109:21.

Patterns of Content

In the study of patterns of content the field of folklore overlaps with the biblical sub-field of form-criticism. As briefly noted above, scholars have uncovered scores of recurring *topoi* in the biblical corpus, constellations of motifs or clusters of content that serve authors who present their own versions of the various traditional forms. Under these traditional *topoi* we would include particular sorts of narratives, such as the tales of the hero explored by Hendel (1987); the battle reports explored by Gunn (1974b); varieties of prophetic speech, e.g., the woe oracle and the symbolic vision (Niditch 1980a, b); and the various types of traditional sayings explored by Fontaine (1982).

Complex issues of genre and definition are raised by the mention of these traditional forms. How, for example, does one specify content (Niditch 1987:ch.2)? Is each variety of traditional narrative a separate genre or form? How can we be faithful to Israelites' own notions of literary form without superimposing our own notions of structure and content upon the ancient material? It is, after all, an Israelite aesthetic we seek to uncover. However one specifies the content, be it via my overlay map or via Culley's Propp-influenced action sequences or via Alter's type scenes, it becomes clear that the Israelite literary tradition preserved in the Hebrew Bible is characterized by what Culley has called "themes and variations" (1992).

The attempt to identify Israelite ethnic genres—that is, the literary forms that Israelite authors and audiences would recognize by a specific term, context, content, and form—is an important topic for ongoing work. For our purposes, the recognition of the use of themes and variations is essential to understanding the larger aesthetic concept behind the tradition as a whole. Work by Culley, myself, and others proves that the Bible is rich in recurring patterns of content, and, as with the use of formulaic phrases, such clusters partake of a traditional aesthetic of metonymy.

The Victory-Enthronement Pattern

One of the most pervasive traditional patterns in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East is the victory-enthronement pattern. This narrative thread is associated with cosmogonic narratives, tales of creation

and re-creation, and is related to human patterns of war. The narrative sequence at its fullest can contain: 1) a challenge to a male warrior, frequently the young powerful deity who is involved in the world-creating pattern; 2) the preparation of weapons, sometimes via magical help; 3) the battle; 4) the victory of the hero; 5) a victory shout; 6) procession; 7) house-building (which in Israelite tradition is frequently associated with the founding or rescue of Zion, the building of the temple in Jerusalem, or taking possession of the land of Israel); 8) a banquet/gathering in the house; and 9) the young warrior's enthronement.

This pattern is found in the Canaanite tale of Baal and Anat, in the Mesopotamian creation tale *Enuma elish*, and frequently describes Yahweh's victories for his people Israel as well as the more universal world-creation (see, for example, Hanson 1973 and Cross 1973:99-104). In some passages many of the motifs that belong to this cluster appear. Few if any biblical texts, however, include all of the motifs listed above, a set of motifs found in the epic of Baal and Anat, which itself has been reconstructed by modern scholars from extant fragmentary ancient texts. None of these examples of the use of the victory-enthronement pattern need in any one case exhibit all the motifs available in the tradition in order for the metonymic force of the cluster to be invoked and experienced. As Foley shows, it is our challenge as modern readers to try to identify with the ancient Israelite receiver of or participant in this material who does have an ongoing connection with this essential mythic pattern and who would be sensitive to the parts as triggers or markers of the larger whole.

A fine example of the way in which Foley's insights lead us to read the ancient traditional material with new eyes is offered by an exegesis of the opening verses of Isaiah 55, one of the works in the sixth-century BCE corpus attributed to the pseudonymous prophet called Deutero-Isaiah by modern scholars. The first two verses are an invitation to all to drink and eat. Reference is then made to the covenant with David (3-5), the call to repent (6-7), the uniqueness of God (8-9), and the inevitability of God's word (10-11). The passage concludes with the imagery of fertility and peace that betoken a sort of reversal of the loss of paradise (12-13). In terms of context, the welcome to eat and drink rich foods, wine, and milk for free can be seen as an *inclusio* with paradise imagery at the end of the pericope. God's salvation brings fullness and plenty. But if one reads more widely in the 2 Isaiah tradition, and in the Israelite tradition as a whole, 55:1-2 can be perceived to invoke the banquet motif of the victory-

enthronement pattern (see Cross 1973:108, 144). A similar invitation to eat and drink is offered by Woman Wisdom in Prov 9:5. A figure closely associated with creation in Proverbs 8, God's "master-builder," a virtual divine consort, Woman Wisdom existed before there were depths, before mountains were dug out. She builds her house at 9:1 and prepares a feast in another biblical example of the victory-enthronement pattern.

Pieces and parts of this pattern ramify through the fifteen chapters attributed to Deutero-Isaiah. In this way salvation becomes liberated from one specific historical event, hoped for and contextualized, and becomes part and parcel of the re-creation of the world, Israel's rescue a new beginning of the cosmos. The warrior and the battle/victory are found in 42:10-17, battle-victory/procession in 51:9-10, procession in 49:8-11, city or world-building and -ordering in 45:11-13 and 45:18-19. As Foley notes for Christian South Slavic epic, the metonymic referentiality of traditional-style immanent art combines with the more immediately contextualized referentiality of non-traditional literatures.

The skilled biblical author at home in the oral world and aware of his audience's expectations within the tradition can quite consciously invoke traditional patterns to manipulate them in recognizably less than traditional ways in order to shock and to make those who receive his message take notice (see Foley 1995:39-40). Amos, for example, invokes the motifs of light and brightness by mentioning "the Day of the Lord," associated with God's liberating acts on Israel's behalf, and instead with dramatic irony declares that for a sinful Israel the day of the Lord means punishment and devastation, darkness and not light (Amos 5:18-20).[7] The power of the traditional pattern thus operates in a transformed capacity. The pattern also plays a role in the biblical tradition in the redaction process itself.

The victory-enthronement pattern, for example, holds together important portions of the Hebrew Bible that probably originally circulated quite separately or that at least admit of different sorts of style, content, and concerns. The last ten chapters of Ezekiel include at least two collections: 1) the apocalyptic battle with Gog of Magog in chs. 38-39, probably the work of a post-exilic writer who expects an overturning of Israel's current situation with a final world-shaking battle; and 2) Ezekiel's plans for the rebuilt temple in chs. 40-48, a visionary excursus that I have compared to

[7] See Culley on the importance of shared themes and individual variations upon them (1992:47, 169-71).

the mandala visions of the Hindu and Buddhist tradition, as the holy man reports in great architectural detail his vision of God's temple on earth (Niditch 1986). The temple is a new center of the cosmos that mirrors the heavenly realm but that is of this earth, inhabited by priests, princes, and people who now participate in a reinvigorated covenant with God. Holding this disparate material together is the pattern of victory enthronement. Within 38-39 comes the battle (ch. 38:1-16), the victory (38:17-39:16), and the banquet (39:17-20), and in chapters 40-48 the house-building, the building of the dwelling place of the victorious deity that is a cleansed Edenesque cosmos, where all is ordered according to God's plan, peaceful and plentiful in accordance with God's peace.

Similarly, Exodus 1-15 includes the epic of Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt into the wilderness. Chs. 20-40 contain legal and ritual material albeit presented within the narrative context of the exodus. Exodus 15 includes motifs of challenge (15:9); battle/victory (15:1, 4-8, 10-12); procession (15:13; 16), and enthronement (15:17-18). Then comes the world-ordering via law, culminating with directions for the building of the tabernacle, the moveable tent shrine that like the later temple is the locus for God's indwelling presence on earth. Thus, as in Ezekiel 38-48, the cosmogonic victory-enthronement pattern serves as a connecting web in Exodus.

The traditional victory-enthronement is extremely important in shaping the slice of the Israelite tradition we call the Hebrew Bible. Its force is not superorganic without reference to actual people who constitute real cultures, but rather is testimony to the power of "immanent art" in the mind and work of redactors, for people at home in an oral culture have determined the form of what ultimately became the written words of Scripture. Quite late in the final formation of the biblical tradition redactors compiled materials that were by then perhaps quite fixed either orally or in writing, influenced by an orally derived sense of what sorts of themes or motifs belong together.

The important message from our study of formulaic patterns of language and content in the literature of the Hebrew Bible is not that the Bible is derived from orally composed literature in some simple evolutionary process. Certainly some works may have been composed extemporaneously, but the crucial conclusion is that the oral aesthetic infuses Hebrew Scripture as it now stands. Without an understanding of

this aesthetic and the world that provided its context, we cannot fully appreciate the literature of ancient Israel preserved in the Bible.

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Language, Memory, and Sense Perception in the Religious and Technological Culture of Antiquity and the Middle Ages

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The Albert Lord and Milman Parry Lecture for 1993-1994

> . . . major developments, and very likely even all major developments, in culture and consciousness are related, often in unexpected intimacy, to the evolution of the word from primary orality to its present state. But the relationships are varied and complex, with cause and effect often difficult to distinguish.
>
> (Ong 1977:9-10)

The two persons in whose honor this lecture is named were North American classicists of eminence who had acquired additional training in the oral traditional epics of the former Yugoslavia, an achievement unequaled among scholars of their time. Long before interdisciplinary studies had come into scholarly and curricular vogue, Milman Parry and Albert Lord had attained a literacy in comparative studies that was both severely academic and daringly imaginative. Almost singlehandedly, they initiated the distinct academic field of oral traditional literature, which concerns itself with the study of compositional, performative, and aesthetic aspects of living oral traditions and of texts dependent on oral tradition. Strictly speaking, the work inaugurated by Parry and Lord, and energetically carried forward by John Miles Foley, aspires to a new poetics informed by our growing knowledge of oral tradition. By now the field has grown into a scholarship that cuts across a wide spectrum of the humanities and social sciences, bridging national and religious boundaries and encompassing the multicultural body of the human race.

Broadly speaking, the impact of Parry and Lord extends beyond the subject matter of oral tradition. The rediscovery of a culture of speech in the Western tradition has in turn encouraged reflection on the nature of texts, exposing a dominantly post-Gutenberg mentality within classical, biblical, and medieval studies. To a growing number of scholars who are proficient in the field of oral traditional literature, it is evident that there is something different about many of our classical texts, and our conventional reading of them, than most branches of current literary criticism would let us know. Oral and orally dependent texts were tradition-bound, variously interfacing with orality and other texts, and deriving meaning from extra-textual signifieds no less than from internal signification. "What we are wrestling with," Foley has suggested, "is not just 'mechanism' versus 'aesthetics,' not just 'oral' versus 'literary,' but an inadequate theory of verbal art" (1991:5). Eric Havelock (1963, 1982) and Walter Ong (1967, 1982, 1983), whose work likewise came to focus on the culture of orality, pursued still broader avenues into philosophical, intellectual, and religious history. Today, the field commonly referred to as orality-literacy studies challenges us to rethink a set of concepts we thought we had known for certain. Text and intertextuality, author and tradition, reading and writing, memory and imagination, logic and cognition—these central metaphors of Western thought—are all affected by the study of oral traditions and a chirographic culture interacting with them. We begin to see—as if through a glass darkly—the broader implications of Parry's and Lord's scholarship for understanding our cultural heritage.

This essay will not consider the technicalities and aesthetics of oral traditions *per se*. I shall pay homage to Parry and Lord by developing across ancient and medieval culture some implications of the intellectual project they initiated. The broad and rather sweeping scope of the essay does not aspire to another metahistory, for I share postmodernism's anxiety about the futility (and vanity) of global narrative ambitions. History resists assimilation to single research paradigms. But in reinvesting imaginatively the interdisciplinary endowment of Parry and Lord, I seek to identify issues of longstanding and persistent urgency resonating across the religious and technological culture of our ancient and medieval past.

I

"Speech is a powerful ruler."[1] With these words, the fifth-century Sophist, rhetor, and rhetorician Gorgias invoked what for him was the critical issue of language. Ostensibly, the idea of language he had in mind was shaped by the media conditions of his culture. The *logos* was perceived here neither as sign nor signification, and not as carrier of meaning or revealer of truth, but rather as a potent ruler intent on governing his subjects. Gorgias' idea of the *logos* flowed directly from the experience of oral speech. Language was perceived to be a force, orally processed and operative in relation to hearers. This theme enunciated by Gorgias retained its hold on Western culture, bequeathing to it a myriad of linguistic, philosophical, and political problems.

True to the oral, rhetorical epistemology, Gorgias advocated an approach to language that comes close to the one we have recently rediscovered in terms of receptionist theory. What interested him primarily about speech was not the processes of verbal composition, but the aesthetics of reception. "Of *logoi* some give pain, some pleasure, some cause fear, some create boldness in hearers, and some drug and bewitch the soul by a kind of evil persuasion."[2] The arousal of pain and pleasure, of fear and pity are the primary objective of the *logoi*. Among words Gorgias singled out the metered language of the poetic tradition, which effected fearsome horrors, tearful sympathies, and melancholic desires (*Helen*:9). He did not entirely dismiss the rational aspects of speech. Occasionally he would attend to speech as *technê*, an acquirable art. But his main interest lay in the elaboration of a psychology of the emotive powers of oral communication. The efficaciousness of words meshed with the form of the soul, impacting it, molding it, and converting it. It was this affective persuasion of the soul that lies at the heart of Gorgias' theory of language.

The alliance Western culture has forged with the powers of oral speech is an addictive but uneasy one. Gorgias himself introduced the

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[1] Gorgias, *Helen*: 8: λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν.

[2] *Helen*: 14: τῶν λόγων οἱ μὲν ἐλύψαν, οἱ δὲ ἔτερψαν, οἱ δέ ἐφόβησαν, οἱ δὲ εἰς θάρσος κατέστησαν τοὺς ἀκούοντας, οἱ δὲ πειθοῖ τινι κακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφαρμάκευσαν καὶ ἐξεγοήτευσαν.

celebrated metaphor of the *pharmakon*. The power of words affects the soul as the *drug* does the body (*Helen*:14). In speech, the processes of healing and poisoning were mysteriously mingled, swaying the psychic condition for better and for worse. Under the powerful spell of speeches, the soul was likely to be cured or deceived. The worst possible scenario, and one Gorgias was keenly aware of, was the use of words for flattery, manipulation, and the fulfillment of personal longings for power. The principal characterization of this aspect of speech was deception (*apatê*). It was a stigma that would cling to the powers of speech from antiquity to modernity. Pressed for an explanation for this ambiguous operation of oral language, Gorgias invoked the realm of magic and religion. The spell of words, especially poetic words, was perceived to be closely allied with magic and witchcraft (cf. de Romilly 1975). Poetic performances, the stirrings of passion, and the conversion of the soul escaped rational probings. Divine both in origin and in their inspirational effect, they created a godlike trance (*enthousiasmos*) among hearers. Speech thus put into effect by accomplished oral practitioners was a form of divine madness.

It bears repeating that the principal problematic of language—as viewed by Gorgias—was not meaning, but power. How did one cope with the poetic powers that drew their sustenance from divine resources? Should speech be liberated from its seductiveness and channeled into the *paideia* of truth and wisdom? How could the awesome powers of magical, inspirational speech be harnessed and integrated into a viable educational program? How destructive a force was language untamed by method and *technê*? Clearly, the issue was that language presented itself in terms of force and effect rather than with a view toward referential meaning, structure, or signification.

Once we recognize the importance attributed to language as power, and the duplicity of language in terms of healing and poisoning, Plato himself and his philosophical project begin to take on novel meaning. It was Havelock's signal humanistic achievement to have relocated the master philosopher into the broad cultural context of a technological and intellectual revolution in antiquity (1963, 1978, 1982). Propelled by the invention of the "explosive technology" of the Greek alphabet (1982:6), a literate consciousness was ushered in that challenged the millennial tradition of poeticized, recitable language—the language of power and magic. In that age of sweeping cultural changes, Plato's dialogues both accelerated the

collapse of tradition-honored habits and endeavored to explore alternative ways of understanding. The philosopher lived "in the midst of this revolution, announced it and became its prophet" (Havelock 1963:vii). Poised between the *ancien régime* of the poets and the literate technology of a new age, he articulated a moral and intellectual program that assimilated the reorganization of culture and consciousness.

When Plato refused to admit the poets into his well-ordered state (*Rep*. 605b, 607b), he pointed to the emotive and magical impact of their words. He did not mind telling his audience that what it was applauding in the theater was the conduct of a woman, whereas men had learned to retain control over their passions (*Rep*. 605d, e). His chief objection, however, did not rest on the problematic linking of poetic emotions with gender, but on the issue of *mimêsis*. The mimetic art practiced by "friend Homer" (*Rep*. 599d) and his fellow poets corrupted the soul and destroyed its rational part by fashioning phantoms removed from reality. The poeticized tradition and experience of rhythmic and emotional spells so necessary to the act of identification was a kind of "psychic poison" (Havelock 1963:5). Plato's targets, Havelock came to realize, were the dramatic performances and the audio-visual group experience of audiences, and the degree to which this theatrical mentality indoctrinated a plurality of views about justice and the good held by the many. Had Homer been able to truly educate the people, he would have "possessed not the art of imitation but real knowledge."[3]

Plato himself lacked the temporal distance to appreciate the cultural, linguistic implications of his tirade against the Homeric poetic tradition. It was Havelock's illuminating work on Plato (1963) that explicated *mimêsis* in terms of a millennial experience of oral performing and traditioning. Shaping language in rhythmic, memorable fashion and composing it via the oral processes of imitation, the poets encouraged recitation and learning through repetition, as well as emphatic participation. But as far as Plato was concerned, knowledge acquired by imitation, repetition, and empathy was of little value. What mattered was to determine "what each thing really is,"[4] a new type of mental activity clearly envisioned as a conversion away from plural impressions toward the abstracted object and timeless truth.

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[3] *Rep*. 600c: οὐ μιμεῖσθαι ἀλλὰ γιγνώσκειν δυνάμενος.

[4] *Rep*. 533b. ὃ ἔστιν ἕκαστον.

For the philosophical purpose of Platonism was "to accelerate the intellectual awakening which 'converts' the *psyche* from the many to the one, and from 'becomingness' to 'beingness'" (Havelock 1963:258-59). This new type of intellectual activity was related to the methods of mental storage that had undergone changes since the time of the Homeric bards. Alphabetic literacy not only distanced the individual from the tribal encyclopedia, it also freed the mind to entertain thoughts apart from and even against it. Plato's resentment against the poets could thus well be understood as a revolt of the literate mentality against the oral traditional hegemony of Homeric poetic culture.

Although Plato's philosophy was a beneficiary of the rationalizing effects brought about by the alphabetization of the Greek language and of chirography, the philosopher could not bring himself to embrace the new medium as a matter of principle. While availing himself of the new chirographic technology, he lamented its corrosive effects on memory, discourse, and culture generally, basing his objections on a thoroughly oral apperception of language. Writing, far from assisting memory, implanted forgetfulness into our souls (*Phaedr*. 275a). Written words were antisocial, because they segregated themselves from living discourse. Like paintings, writings "maintain a solemn silence": they stare at readers, telling them "just the same thing forever."[5] Chirographic products were rather like children who had lost their parents and were unable to defend themselves. Plato knew that it was the inevitable fate of writings to fall into the hands of the wrong people (*Phaedr*. 275e). Writing, finally, was an unacceptable exteriorization of thought that only gave the appearance of wisdom (*Phaedr*. 275a). These were all arguments characteristic of a mind deeply versed in oral culture, distrustful of the harmful influence of writing and committed to the living, dialogical, and interiorizing powers of speech.

Poetic speech aside, what would Plato have to say about non-poeticized, oral speech that by his time came to be called rhetoric? On this matter he joined Gorgias in denouncing speakers who "steal away our souls"[6] with their embellished words and whose flattery sends us to the "Islands of the Blessed."[7] Rhetoric simply as a producer of persuasion was

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[5] *Phaedr*. 275d: σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ . . . ἕν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταὐτὸν ἀεί.

[6] *Menex*. 235a: γοητεύουσιν ἡμῶν τὰς ψυχάς.

[7] *Menex*. 235c: μακάρων νήσοις.

hostile to an environment that nourished discourse and dialogue. Ask any of our proficient speakers about their words, he exclaimed in a state of exasperation, and they will give us more speeches of the same: "like books they cannot either answer or ask a question on their own account."[8] The "art of oratory"[9] is no art at all if it is practiced by one who is "chasing after beliefs, instead of knowing the truth."[10] Rhetoric's basic flaw was thus its inability to enlist words in the search for truth.

Resentful of the magical powers of speech, in revolt against the poetic mentors of ancient Greece, and distrustful as well toward the new technology of writing, Plato redefined the oral, rhetorical tradition in terms of dialectic. One of its objectives was to keep words alive in the flow of discourse and to forestall ideational sedimentation. Unfettered by scribal constraints and mimetic routine, dialectic availed itself of the oral mode of communication, which was flexible enough to facilitate replacement of anything with something else, should the need arise. But it was a "discourse of reason,"[11] distanced from Gorgias' magical comprehension of speech, and unthinkable without the rationalizing effects of writing. Dialectical reasoning isolated and defined subject matters, divided and subdivided them until "it reached the limit of division."[12] Proceeding in this analytic fashion, it aspired to lead the soul away from the particulars and toward the contemplation of "the very essence of each thing."[13]

One of the most revolutionary aspects of the Platonic dialectic was its ambition to arrive at the nature of things "apart from all perceptions of sense."[14] The person most likely to succeed was one whose soul was "free

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[8] *Protag*. 329b: ὥσπερ βιβλία οὐδὲν ἔχουσιν οὔτε ἀποκρίνασθαι οὔτε αὐτοὶ ἐρέσθαι.

[9] *Phaedr*. 262c: λόγον ἄρα τέχνην.

[10] *Ibid*.: δόξας δὲ τεθηρευκώς.

[11] *Rep*. 532a: διὰ τοῦ λόγου.

[12] *Phaedr*. 277b: μέχρι τοῦ ἀτμήτου τέμνειν ἐπιστηθῇ.

[13] *Rep*. 532a: ἐπ' αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστιν ἕκαστον.

[14] *Ibid*.: ἄνευ πασῶν τῶν αἰσθήσεων.

of all distractions such as hearing or sight or pain or pleasure of any kind"[15] and eager to pursue the truth "by applying his pure and unadulterated thought"[16] to the object of thought. The quest for knowledge was to be transacted "by thought itself,"[17] as it were. These were ideas no longer in keeping with the affective persuasion of words and the divine madness they created among hearers; they were diametrically opposed to the cultural mindset of Homeric orality. Language was thereby transformed into a catalyst of cognition, displacing the oral powers both of emotive incitement and rhetorical persuasion.

Viewed in the context of a cultural revolution, Plato's dialectic endeavored to forge a middle way. It sought to retain the medium of speech, while effecting its domestication in the interest of logic. As a consequence, rhetoric's "'savage' roots" were severed (Ricoeur 1977:10), and oratory was subjected to the discipline of philosophical reasoning. Oral discourse written into the soul of the listener remained a viable procedure, but it was discourse tamed by the logical restraints of dialectical reasoning. In late antiquity and in the Middle Ages, the dialectic tradition came to be situated between rhetoric on one hand and logic on the other, whose conflictual relationship constituted a deep and enduring problematic in the Western tradition.

Plato's daring project to purify thought by the exclusion of the senses flies in the face of ancient theories of knowledge. For it was widely understood that orality and rhetoric, as well as the art of scribality, engaged the human sensorium and played the sensory register in the interest of retention, emotive incitement, and persuasion. Ong's phenomenology of culture and consciousness has furnished ample evidence of the oral affinity between sound and thought (1967:111-75). What must be added is that the processes of knowledge were transacted by analogy with seeing no less than with hearing. Both vision and voice were sense analogues for the intellect. That one should "disregard the eyes and other senses and go on to being

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[15] *Phaed*. 65c: τούτων μηδὲν παράλυπῇ, μήτε ακοὴ μήτε ὄψις μήτε ἀλγηδὼν μηδέ τις ἡδονή.

[16] *Phaed*. 66a: αὐτῇ καθ' αὑτὴν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ χρώμενος.

[17] *Rep*. 532b: αὐτῇ νοήσει.

itself in the company with truth," as Plato would have it,[18] remains a revolutionary but passing reference in ancient philosophical discourse. For the exclusion of the human sensorium from the pursuits of knowledge was largely unthinkable in ancient and medieval intellectual culture.

Indeed, Plato cannot dishabituate himself from visual metaphors altogether. His language is replete with image analogues: *eikon, eidolon, phantasma, homoioma, mimema* (Patterson 1985:30). For example, he would postulate the presence of an internal painter who draws into our soul pictures of assertions we make (*Phil*. 39b). More importantly, he defined the highest form of cognition as a vision (*eidos*) of the soul liberated from all earthly chains and ready to contemplate the real and the true (*Rep*. 518c-519a). To obtain this view of the good, the soul has to be converted and its vision redirected "from the world of becoming to the world of being."[19] Whether the vision is internalized or outer-directed, there is a form of seeing no less than hearing that serves as an agent of cognition.

A *locus classicus* for sense perception was memory, the esteemed "treasure-house of eloquence."[20] Long before the art of memory was assigned a place of honor in rhetoric, its significance was already recognized in mythology. According to myth, Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, bore Zeus nine daughters, the Muses, who personified different modes of poetry, the arts, and sciences. An imaginable female, a corporeal similitude herself, the goddess embodied memory. Her daughters, who carried the attributes of wax tablet and pencil, the flute and lyre, the tragic and comic mask, the scroll and a celestial globe, represented a civilization that was constituted by writing and music, the tragic performance and comedy as well. But whether they facilitated sound or vision, speech or writing, they always functioned as the daughters of Mnemosyne. As mother of the Muses, she was the origin of all civilized labors and a wellspring of culture. Memory, not textuality, was the centralizing authority. Only a civilization conscious of and dependent on oral modes of communication and thought could have produced this myth of Mnemosyne and the Muses.

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[18] *Rep*. 537d: ὀμμάτων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης αἰσθήσεως . . . μεθιέμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸ τὸ ὂν μετ' ἀληθείας ἰέναι.

[19] *Rep*. 521d: ἀπὸ τοῦ γιγνομένου ἐπὶ τὸ ὄν.

[20] Quintilian, *Inst. Orat*. 11.2.1, et al.: *thesaurus eloquentiae*.

From Aristotle we have received one of the earliest, strikingly philosophical, testimonies to memory. His treatise on *Memory and Recollection* introduced a key feature of memory, namely, the theory of images. Responding to external stimulation, memory retained a sense content, a visual representation of the external object. According to this principle, all our thoughts and perceptions were deposited in memory by way of images: "we cannot think without images."[21] What was actually present in memory were pictures (*phantasmata*) of the real things. In principle, memory could not process understanding as a function of pure thought. Even conceptual thought, Aristotle insisted, cannot exist without mental pictures.[22]

Apart from its mythological thematization, memory was inescapably drawn into the orbit of rhetoric. For Cicero (*De Oratore* 2.ixxxvi, 351-60), for the anonymous author of *ad Herennium* (3.16.28 - 24.40), and for Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 11.2), oratory was a subject of supreme practical value, and memory the esteemed custodian of rhetoric. In the writings of these authors the theory of memory's *imagines* and *loci* is delineated in some detail. The work of memory was conducted via images and places; these were "the stock definition to be forever repeated down the ages" (Yates 1966:6). The challenge was to create a condition that was favorably disposed to the retention of whatever one wanted to remember. First, one had to invent figures, marks, or portraits that adhered the longest in memory. Since all images required an abode, one secondly had to employ a large number of mental places, clearly defined, in orderly arrangement and separated at measured intervals. Memory thus perceived was entirely a spatial entity, like a house divided into many rooms, and its principal operative mechanism was the storing of images in those localities. Words no less than things were thought to be transmutable into images and localizable at places, although it was often recognized that the *memoria verborum* was more difficult to accomplish than the *memoria rerum*. Thus, in the work of memory, the visual nature of mental representations was widely taken for granted. "Of all the senses, sight is the keenest,"[23] Cicero

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[21] 449.b.30: καὶ νοεῖν οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ φαντάσματος.

[22] 450.a.10: ἡ δὲ μνήμη καὶ ἡ τῶν νοητῶν οὐκ ἄνευ φαντάσματός ἔστιν.

[23] *De Orat.* 357: *acerrimum autem ex omnibus nostris sensibus esse sensum videndi.*

exclaimed, extolling the cognitive superiority of vision, a theme that was going to be replayed by Aquinas, Leonardo, John Locke, and a myriad of modern thinkers. But when we consider that words such as fantasy (*phantasma*), imagination (*imago*), and rhetoric itself, essential components of the rhetorical model of cognition, have largely become pejorative terms in our time, we also recognize the changes in consciousness that distance us from our ancient heritage.

The memory tradition defied all theories of pure thought and verbocentrism. Plato's penchant for disembodied thought and desensitized vision of the good notwithstanding, ancient and medieval theories and practices of language were strongly indebted to a kind of physiology of perception (Padel 1991). It was widely assumed that both hearing and seeing mediated processes of recollection and perception. In spite of a developing chirographic culture, words were still perceived to be functioning more in the biosphere of human interaction than in the tissue of intertextuality. Knowledge took its rise from the sensorium.

Augustine, practicing rhetor and trained rhetorician himself, singled out Paul as a paragon of Christian oratory: "With what a river of eloquence [his words] flow, even he who snores must notice."[24] Indeed, Paul's letters, the earliest Christian canonical literary products, operated in the mode of argumentation and with the intent of producing conviction in audiences (Bultmann 1910, Wuellner 1977, Betz 1979, Stowers 1981). If Plato was the dialectician in search of a reasonable alternative to sophistic deception and the *ancien régime* of oral, poetic authority, and Aristotle the analytical rhetorician making the *ars rhetorica* safe for philosophy, Paul was the practicing Jewish-Christian rhetor ever mindful of his message's reception in its hearers' hearts. Academic and popular wisdom, however, unaware of the ancient recognition of Paul's rhetorical skills and identity, has frequently identified him as Christianity's first self-conscious theologian. In this role he is perceived as a thinker who developed for reflection generic topics such as christology or eschatology, and who conceptualized faith, Spirit, and works. But to perceive him in this classic theological fashion is to deliver him to the time-honored rival of rhetoric, that is, to logic. While the degree of Paul's indebtedness to Jewish, Hellenistic, or Hellenistic-Jewish culture remains subject to debate, there is a

[24] *De Doc. Chr.* IV,vii,12: *quanto vero etiam eloquentiae concurrerint flumine, et qui stertit advertit.*

growing realization that he did not seek the truth abstracted from the pragmatics of concrete human interaction. Increasingly we learn to see him as a master in discerning the persuasive potential of current issues and concerns, and in constructing appropriate epistolary responses.

Pauline rhetoric betrays a distinctly dialogical flavor. Its reasoning, which was adverse to descriptively dispassionate thought, evolved in argumentation with others. Historical criticism has well explained the prevailing polemics in the apostolic letters as responses, not to Judaism *per se*, but to alternate gospel versions. Viewed from this perspective, the Pauline letters give us insights into an early situation of multiple traditions in conflict. But there is a rhetorical rationale for Paul's mode of argumentation as well. Far from admitting of any reflection on the personality of the man, his adversarial style has grown directly out of the rhetorical culture of late antiquity. Thought and convictions in this culture were born out of assertion against opposition and in discourse with other persons. One of the best known examples of Paul's dialogical reasoning was the diatribe. It was a device whereby imaginary and anonymous interlocutors posed questions, raised objections, and made patently erroneous statements, which in turn provided Paul with an opportunity to respond, correct, and state his own view on the matters in question.

The diatribe, in other words, was a rhetoric of simulated dialogue that purported to intensify contact and to lessen the distance between Paul and his audiences. Nowhere in the Pauline corpus are the interlocutory devices of the diatribe more thoroughly implemented than in *Romans*, the very letter that addressed a community Paul had no personal knowledge of at the time of his writing (Stowers 1981:79-184). But it is also in *Romans* that the idealized nature of the diatribal discourse is clearly in evidence. More than the other Pauline letters, this one lacks features of historical specificity. The fictionality of simulated dialogue in *Romans* is hardly incidental. It is designed to enhance communication in the very situation in which Paul lacked case-specific information.

A principal technique of apostolic persuasion was to adopt and revise key terms employed by his addressees. One remembers Socrates' advice given to Meno that in discourse we must employ terms "with which the questioner admits he is familiar."[25] Paul's thought, as it mainfests itself in his letters, proceeded in a dialectic of adoption and revision, a process that

[25] *Meno*:75d: δι' ἐκείνων ὧν ἂν προσομολογῇ εἰδέναι ὁ ἐρωτώμενος.

kept his language inescapably focused *ad hominem*. Each letter, therefore, involved readers in a different intellectual orbit and in a distinct semantic field. As a whole, the Pauline *corpus* presents itself as a kaleidoscopic experience, confronting readers with multiple rhetorical situations. This is a principal reason for the difficulties modern readers encounter in comprehending the apostle's letters. The casuistry of his rhetoric runs counter to theological and logical premises, prompting charges of inconsistency, even of intellectual inferiority. But rhetoric, not logic, is the key to Paul. In the words of Carruthers, rhetoric "does not normalize an occasion, it occasionalizes a norm" (1990:181). If logic considers an audience at all, it thinks of a universal audience. Paul the rhetor practices thinking in interaction with multiple audiences.

Dialectical features notwithstanding, Paul is more adequately viewed as belonging to the rhetorical rather than the dialectical tradition. True to the ethos of rhetoric, he shaped his message to preconceived ends. Knowing the rhetorical objective in advance, he cultivated the means of persuasion that were to attain the goal. His repeated pronouncements on the Law, for example, did not move from an analysis of the human plight under the Law to the solution in Christ, but rather from the experience of redemption in Christ to a reconsideration of the role of the Law. Without recognizing the full import of his discovery, E. P. Sanders had in fact defined the rhetorical nature of Pauline thought when in reference to the issue of the Law he coined the memorable phrase: "the solution precedes the problem" (1977:442). Whereas a thoroughgoing dialectic is propelled by a rigorous sifting of ideas aimed at discovering truth, rhetoric "knows its conclusions in advance, and clings to them" (Ong 1983:2). In Paul, dialectic is subsumed under rhetoric. While his argumentation is intrinsically consistent and often in keeping with midrashic norms of interpretation, it evolved out of and adhered to human life situations, and it knew its cardinal premises and conclusion in advance. The principal test of truth was loyalty to Christ, to the gospel, as well as to him, the apostolic messenger. Partiality, not objectivity, was desirable.

Paul the rhetor favored a fundamentally oral disposition toward language.[26] He deployed the term *gospel* predominantly in auditory contexts and exclusively in reference to the oral proclamation. To be effective, the gospel needed to be proclaimed and heard. The notion of

[26] See espec. Kelber 1983:140-83.

responding to his addressees by way of a written gospel narrative appears to have been entirely foreign to his mode of thinking. Hearing, not sight, was accorded a place of pride in his economy of the sensorium. It was the supersense that facilitated interiorization of sounded words and faith. Heart was the anthropological metaphor of human interiority and intentionality (Jewett 1971:305-33). It was also the central receptive organ both of the Spirit (*Gal*. 4:6; 2 *Cor*. 1:22) and the word of proclamation (*Rom*. 10:8). Preached words, Paul insisted, entered human hearts, engendered faith, and in turn generated confession. His media advise that "faith comes from hearing" (*Rom*. 10:17) contributed toward Christianity's historical commitment to the ancient oral-aural sense of words, a commitment that prevailed across the centuries in spite of progressively technologized transformations of language. If to Homer we owe the legacy of the "winged words,"[27] from Paul we have received the metaphor of the light-footed word that "runs" its course,[28] across the mediterranean *oikoumenê*, carried as it were by the apostolic feet.

As is the case with all categorizations, rhetoric illuminates principal aspects of Pauline language and thought, while simultaneously masking features that lie outside the rhetorical ethos, or are in tension with it. Also present in Paul's letters is a potentially conflictual relation with rhetoric. When in 1 *Corinthians* the apostle castigated the "wisdom of the world" (1:20) as a strikingly oral, rhetorical phenomenon, referring to it as the "superiority of speech and wisdom" or the "persuasiveness of wisdom,"[29] he sowed the seeds of a persistent Christian ambivalence about the culture of rhetoric. Unwittingly, he anticipated the later Christian distinction between a wisdom of this world (*sapientia huius saeculi)* versus the genuinely desirable spiritual wisdom (*sapientia spiritualis).* What is particularly noteworthy is that Paul was not unfamiliar with the traditional philosophical anxiety about sophistic vanities and empty eloquence. He would rather stand accused of being "unskilled in speech"[30] than use the

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[27] *Iliad* 1.201, et al.: ἔπεα πτερόεντα.

[28] 2 *Thess*. 3:1: ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχει.

[29] 2 *Thess*. 2:1: καθ' ὑπεροχήν λόγου ἢ σοφίας. 2:4: πενθοῖ [ς] σοφίας [λόγοις].

[30] 2 *Cor*. 11:6: ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ.

gospel's proclamation to advance his personal gain. Still, his own reservation toward the wisdom of words was based not on the philosophical urge to cleanse language of its magical roots in the dialectical search for truth, but rather on the revolutionary kerygma of the cross of Christ that inverted human values, turning wordly wisdom into foolishness and God's foolishness into genuine wisdom (1 *Cor*. 1:18-25).

In the first five centuries of the common era the merits and demerits of rhetoric were subject to debate, and the compatibility of rhetoric with the Christian proclamation remained controversial. As is well known, many of the Latin and Greek Fathers were trained in the art of rhetoric, and some were teachers of rhetoric themselves. Tertullian, Cyprian, the three great Cappadocians, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and above all Augustine come to mind. They assimilated rhetoric, but rarely by way of unreflective osmosis. Conscious of the linkage between medium and message, between ancient rhetorical culture and the *doctrina Christiana* (Christian teaching, not doctrine!), theologians pondered the question of whether rhetoric would compromise the gospel. Origen, a preacher and textual scholar par excellence, had little sympathy for Greek rhetoric as taught in Alexandria and Antioch (Smith 1974:89-90). For others such as Cyprian, a teacher of rhetoric at Carthage, conversion was tantamount to a renunciation of pagan letters altogether (Murphy 1974:49). "What," Tertullian asked provocatively, "has Athens to do with Jerusalem, or the Academy with the church?"[31]

A matter of great consequence was the elevation of biblical texts to canonical status, creating a mode of privileged authority unknown to Greco-Roman culture. Increasingly, Christian theologians trained as rhetors and rhetoricians had to come to terms with Scripture, be it as source of a new rhetoric or as counterpoint to the old rhetoric. In tracing their Christian identity to the new authority of the Bible, they developed a homiletic mode of discourse, long established in Jewish hermeneutics. *Homily*, this Christian type of preaching, legitimated the biblical text as principal inspiration and textual guide of the proclamation. The Christian homily was thus a type of rhetoric that was "basically determined by the order of the material in the text, to which may be added material from other texts" (Kennedy 1980:136). As a consequence, memory was often relieved of

[31] *De praescr*. 7.9: *quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid academiae et ecclesiae?*

problems of invention and arrangement, and a new homiletic rhetoric evolved that was based on and filtered through the medium of the newly privileged text of the Bible.

In spite of the canonization of Scripture that privileged textuality and textually based thematic preaching to a high degree, memory was far from being ejected from the Christian tradition. Augustine himself offered a sustained meditation on the mystery of memory in the tenth and last book of his *Confessions*. Entirely in keeping with the tradition of ancient rhetoric, he adopted the spatial metaphor of memory, including the deposition of *imagines* at strategically placed mnemonic *loci*. He was enraptured with that vast court of memory, this "large and boundless chamber," replete with "numberless secret and inexpressible windings," "the plains and caves and caverns, innumerable and innumerably full of innumerable kinds of things." "The things themselves are not present to my senses; what is present in my memory however are their images," ready to be recalled to sight in the act of remembering. "Great is the power of memory, excessively great, o my God, a large and boundless chamber; whoever sounded the bottom thereof?" he asked exuberantly.[32] Notably, Augustine's conversion to the Bible and his prodigious chirographic activity did not diminish his enthusiasm and need for the memory tradition of ancient rhetoric.

Augustine belonged to a culture in which quality of thought was intricately related to the powers of remembering: "His memory, trained on classical texts, was phenomenally active. In one sermon, he could move through the whole Bible, from Paul to Genesis and back again, *via* the Psalms, piling half-verse on half-verse" (Brown 1969:254). And yet, as he probed the deep space of memory, he struck out onto new ground. We note that his encomium in praise of the wonders of memory facilitated remembrance of what he had done, where, and with what feelings. As he lifted these imaged experiences into the full light of his interior vision, he came face to face with his own self. In this way, memory assisted him in the exploration of selfhood, a consciousness made possible by interior

[32] *Conf.* 10.8.15: *penetrale amplum et infinitum*; 10.8.13: *qui secreti atque ineffabiles sinus eius*; 10.17.26: *campis et antris at cavernis innumerabilibus atque innumerabiliter plenis innumerabilium rerum*; 10.15.23: *res ipsae non adsunt sensibus meis; in memoria sane mea praesto sunt imagines earum*;10.8.15: *magna ista vis est memoriae, magna nimis, deus meus, penetrale amplum et infinitum; quis ad fundum eius pervenit?*

visualization. It seemed only sensible to ask if memory, the facilitator of consciousness, also had the power to mediate knowledge of God. Augustine had come to know God, and where else could God abide but in memory? Was God not intelligible as a memorable presence? But as Augustine traversed the vast space of his memory, he had to admit to himself that he could find neither place nor image of God. There was a sense in which his search for God arrived at the cognitive limits of the ancient art of memory. Knowing God, without finding him in his interior recesses, Augustine was compelled to reach beyond memory. "I will pass even beyond this power of mine which is called memory; yea, I will pass beyond it, that I may approach unto Thee, o sweet light. What sayest Thou to me?"[33]

He again took up the issue of memory in *De Trinitate,* a psychological study of the trinity unparalleled in patristics. In book eleven he developed the threefold dynamics of the mind that resemble that of the supreme Trinity. Of the many trinitarian structures he uncovered in the mind, the most important one for our purpose was that of memory, vision, and will. The perception of external impressions, internal visualization, and the concentration of the mind, while representing different properties and faculties, converged under the guidance of the will in trinitarian unity: "And so that trinity is produced from memory, from internal vision, and from the will which unites both. And when these three things are combined into one, from that combination itself they are called thought."[34] As far as memory was concerned, Augustine metamorphosed the rhetorical base of mind and memory into the metaphysical realm of trinitarian psychology.

Given the high premium placed on verbal performance and modes of argumentation in Greco-Roman culture, Christianity, which was itself centrally concerned with proclamation, was compelled sooner or later to define its position in relation to classical rhetoric. The task was all the more urgent because Cicero was rapidly advancing to the status of *magister eloquentiae* and his rhetoric becoming a cultural model for late antiquity and the Middle Ages. In spite of the fact that Christian culture increasingly embraced the Bible and popularized the homiletic style of preaching, the

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[33] *Conf.* 10.17.26: *transibo et hanc vim meam, quae memoria vocatur, transibo eam, ut pertendam ad te, dulce lumen. Quid dicis mihi?*

[34] *De Trin.* 11.3.36: *atque ita fit illa trinitas ex memoria, et interna visione, et quae utrumque copulat voluntate. Quae tria cum in unum coguntur, ab ipso coactu cogitatio dicitur.*

enduring influence of rhetoric demanded that theologians came to terms with its legacy.

No Christian writer in the first five centuries of the common era has addressed this issue more thoughtfully than Augustine. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, "one of the most original [books Augustine] ever wrote" (Brown 1969:264), he sought to find a rapprochement between the classical institution of oratory and scriptural authority, or, perhaps more accurately, he devised a Christian hermeneutic on its own terms. Few Christians could have been more qualified for the task. From childhood on, rhetoric had been Augustine's single most important cultural influence, and yet his intellectual development took place under the aegis of a literate, increasingly biblical tradition. Indeed, his *Confessions* have been interpreted as the self-conscious construction of a conversion from an oral, rhetorical to a primarily textual culture (King 1991:150-272).

In book four of this influential treatise *De Doctrina,* Augustine assigned rhetoric a place in Christian teaching. Eloquence, he stated, could not be rejected out of hand, even though it was intimately associated with paganism. What is more, non-artistic discourse would cripple the Christian proclamation. On a number of substantial points, Augustine holds up as a model of Christian oratory "a certain eloquent man,"[35] who is none other than Cicero. For example, Augustine cites with approval Cicero's dictum (*De Invent.* 1.1.1) concerning the interrelationship of eloquence and wisdom.[36] In the Christian proclamation, just as in pagan speech, competent rhetoric is not without wisdom, and true wisdom is ineffective without rhetoric (4.5.7). Consistent with Ciceronian principles (*Orat.* 21.69), Augustine advocates three modes of proclamation, each of which entails its own particular style of speaking.[37] True eloquence requires that teaching (*docere*) be done "in a subdued manner" (*parva submissa*), pleasing (*delectare*) "in a temperate manner" (*modica temperata*), and persuading (*flectere*) "in a grand manner" (*magna granditer*). And yet, Augustine did not simply plead for a Christianization of conventional Ciceronian rhetoric. *De Doctrina*, it must be remembered, was a theoretical reflection on the interpretation and teaching of a Christianity that was about

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[35] *De Doc. Chris.* 4.12.27: *quidam eloquens.*

[36] *De Doc. Chris.* 4.5.7.

[37] *De Doc.Chris.* 4.12.27; 4.17.34.

to be self-consciously centered in the Bible. What distinguished the Augustinian concept of rhetoric from classical rhetoric was the central role assigned to the Bible. The authoritative status of the Bible was assumed, and so was a biblical rhetoric intrinsic to the central book: "The great virtue of *De Doctrina Christiana* is that it made it possible for Christians to appreciate and teach eloquence without associating it with paganism" (Kennedy 1980:159). Admittedly, the rhetoric of the Bible may fall short of the oratorical and ornamental features of pagan rhetoric, but in refraining from a more polished language, the Bible communicated what it intended to say.

If absence of sophisticated pompousness was one of the hallmarks of scriptural rhetoric, the presence of obscurity and ambiguity of meaning was another. Augustine was at pains to show how many biblical passages were written in veiled language. The separability of expression from meaning was thereby canonized in Christian hermeneutics. As he saw it, the obscurities of biblical writings were themselves "part of a kind of eloquence"[38] designed to exercise our mental faculties in search of hidden meanings, "for what is sought with difficulty is discovered with more pleasure."[39] Consequently, the expositor's primary task was neither the demonstration of rhetorical flourishes, nor an appeal to the emotions, but a raising to consciousness of "that which lay hidden."[40] At this point, Augustine's perception of language is a world removed from Gorgias' exuberant endorsement of the magical power of words, and distanced as well from Plato's dialectical discourse of reason. *De Doctrina* did not expound on the unmediated efficaciousness of spoken words any more than it made a case for dialectical discourse, driven but disciplined by logic. It had more in common with Paul's apprehension at the wisdom of the world, although it did not share in his letters' fundamentally oral disposition toward language. What was new about Augustine's *De Doctrina* was the privileged status given to a central text. Rhetoric was thereby transformed into a teaching of the biblical texts, which entailed a search for latent meanings. In the end, Augustine's *De Doctrina*, not unlike his *Confessiones*, undertook a painfully elaborate and intellectually meandering

[38] *De Doc. Chris.* 4.6.9: *tali eloquentiae miscenda fuerat.*

[39] *De Doc Chris.* 2.6.8: *et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inveniri.*

[40] *De Doc. Chris.* 4.11.9: *sed ut appareat quod latebat.*

transit from the classical, rhetorical culture of antiquity toward a text-based, Christian hermeneutics.

It would appear that Augustine, never fully persuasive on the matter of biblical *rhetoric*, adopted a hermeneutic informed by *scribal* sensitivities. Philosophically, what concerned him most was not the efficaciousness of biblical oratory, but its character of signification. Not content with affirming the allegorical tensiveness in Scripture, he proceeded to elevate the deferring nature of language to a linguistic, theological signs theory. Postulating a distinction between sign (*signum*) and thing (*res*), he could at times attribute an astonishingly provisional value to words: "by means of words, therefore, we learn nothing but words."[41] The most that could be said about words was that "they serve merely to suggest that we look for realities."[42] All words, spoken and written, were perceived to be signs that signified the authentic *res*. Hence, "no one should consider [signs] for what they are but rather for their value as signs which signify something else."[43] Words were mere prompters as it were, and "the realities that were signified were to be esteemed more highly than their signs."[44] In part at least, this theory of signification was born under the pressures of scribal sensibilities. Undoubtedly, signifying deferrals were a commonplace in allegorical, metaphorical, and parabolic speech. Orality and rhetoric had long been familiar with metonymic expansiveness that resonated with the transtextual world, and with figurative language that resisted being taken at face value. However, "Augustine was the first Latin author to call words 'signs'" (Swearingen 1991:196). What merits additional attention is his elevation of these processes of linguistic signification into a sign theory. It presumed a lifelong experience with the chirographic status of language as signs, e.g., the embodiment of spoken language in a system of visual symbols. When measured against the ethos of rhetorical efficaciousness, signs were obstacles to the presenting powers of spoken words. In Augustine's case, oral presence was deferred in the interest of a higher goal of unity. The

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[41] *De Mag*. 11.36.5: *verbis igitur nisi verba non discimus*.

[42] *De Mag*. 9.36.2: *admonent tantum, ut quaeramus res*.

[43] *De Doc. Christ*. 2.1.1: *ne quis in eis attendat quod sunt, sed potius quod signa sunt, id est, quod significant*.

[44] *De Mag*. 9.25.1-2: *res, quae significantur, pluris quam signa esse pendendas*.

readers of allegorical and otherwise ambiguous scriptural passages were inspired to turn over words in their minds, to move from one hint to another, and from discovery to discovery, each one opening up further depths, and ideally to arrive at the love of God and the vision of God.

In the Western tradition, Augustine's fateful distinction between signifier and signified was a major contributor to a linguistically based bipolarity of metaphysical magnitude. It was replayed in a myriad of ways, pitting exteriority against interiority, the letter against the Spirit, the sensible against the intelligible, the written text against the transcendental *Logos*, temporality against eternity, and so forth. In the end, it may be said that Augustine's assimilation of rhetoric to scribality created a kind of "metarhetoric" (Murphy 1974:287), or perhaps more precisely, a Christian hermeneutics of communication at the heart of which lay the metaphysical nature of language. In this fashion, it made an indelible impact on medieval concepts of language, buttressing the whole medieval world of analogies and correspondences.

II

A Christian codex dated prior to 1000 C.E. depicts Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 C.E.) as interpreter of Scripture. The miniature carries the title: *Pope Gregory I inspired by the Holy Spirit* (Gumbrecht/Pfeiffer 1993: 726-29). His left hand rests on an open book that is placed on a lectern. Undoubtedly, this book represents the holy Bible. In his right hand Gregory holds another book that is closed. Decorated with a golden cover, it appears to be a copy of the Bible. A white dove, a symbolic representation of the Holy Spirit, sits on the right shoulder of the Pope. The dove's beak is wide open and placed near the ear of Gregory: the Holy Spirit inspires the Pope. Gregory's gaze is directed neither toward the viewer nor toward the books. His is a posture of auditory concentration. He is listening to the words of the dove whispered into his ear. Behind Gregory, separated by a curtain, sits a scribe. In his right hand he holds a *stilus*, a sharp slate-pencil, and in his left hand a writing tablet. With the *stilus* he points toward the dove, source of inspiration, and with his writing tablet he gestures toward the Pope, possessor and mediator of Scripture. Presumably, the scribe receives the Pope's dictation that had been transmitted to him through the mediation of the Spirit.

Tenth-century manuscript illumination by the Master of the Registrum Gregorii, Trier 983/84. Stadtbibliothek Trier, Ms. 171a. (The author acknowledges his gratitude to the Stadtbibliothek Trier for granting permission to republish the illustration of Pope Gregory I.)

The miniature may serve as a central metaphor for both the grand simplicity and the notable complexity of medieval linguistic and religious culture. It locates the Pope, assuredly, at center stage: he is the pre-eminent authority and chief interpreter of the Holy Book. Apparently, the meaning of the Bible is not self-evident. As sacred text it partakes of secrecy. For secrecy "is a way of figuring Scripture as a book of revelation which nevertheless . . . withholds a good portion of itself" (Bruns 1982:18). Indeed, secrecy is an indispensable category of sacred writings (17-43). Thus, although widely understood to be the unified and unifying Word of God, the Bible was experienced as a text written in veiled language. Its authority was firmly established, but its written status raised a host of interpretive questions. There is a sense, therefore, in which the miniature dramatizes the intricacies of a hermeneutical scenario surrounding the sacred text.

Encoded in the miniature were differences that called for hermeneutical mediation. The Spirit, represented by the dove and source of auditory inspiration, was once removed from the Pope, twice removed from the Bibles, and thrice removed from the scribe behind the curtain. Moreover, the open book of revelation was placed side by side with the closed book of revelation, and both Bibles were separated by a curtain from the scribe who was about to commit the Pope's dictation to writing. Thus medieval Christian culture, centered on the Pope, the Bible, the Spirit, and the scribe, has set into motion a process of triple mediation. Assisted by the agency of the Spirit, the Pope was enabled to read and to open the closed book of the Bible, and to mediate his reading to the scribe who in turn transposed the dictation into writing, thus producing another text. The very text-centeredness of the Bible is obvious, and yet its chirographic status is innocent of the modern perception of intertextuality that imagines a devocalized environment in which texts relate impersonally to other texts. The miniature clearly conveys the impression that the connective tissue that mediated textual meaning, the Spirit's whisperings and the Pope's dictation, was oral in kind.

Partially influenced by the growing dominance of the Bible, and fostered by the scribal traditions of monasticism and scholasticism, an increasing output of manuscripts was generated that lay at the basis of medieval cultural and intellectual life. Still, if one wishes to comprehend the Middle Ages from the perspective of communications changes, one must imagine trends of the type of *la longue durée*. The period roughly from the

fall of Rome to the invention of printing saw a general shift from oral performance to chirographic control of writing space. Manuscripts increasingly became important tools of civilized life, and from the eleventh century onward an ever-growing scribal culture shaped the processes of learning. One must, however, guard against simplistic divides of orality versus textuality, against anachronistic notions of medieval textuality, and against facile premises concerning links between manuscript technology and the restructuring of consciousness. It bears repeating that this picture of the textualization of the medieval world is correct only on the macro-level of history.

Medieval scribality was a craft that required mastery of a variety of tools and skills. The production of manuscripts was hard labor, "a seasonal activity like football" (Troll 1990:118), but rarely of a gratifying intellectual nature. In so far as scribes were copyists, they worked in the interest of preservation and transmission of knowledge; when they took dictation, they served as catalysts of orally dictated compositions. But whether they copied or took dictation, scribes were craftsmen, not personalities eager to think for themselves or to advance knowledge. Whether medieval scribal craftsmen were engaged in monastic discipline or conscripted into the paid service of rulers and administrators, theirs was always hard manual labor, indeed drudgery, which did not advance their *libido sciendi* any more than it stimulated their urge for self-expression and individuation.

More importantly, the effects of manuscript technology were not directly translatable into literacy. We do well to keep scribal textuality distinct from literacy. Some of the most exquisite medieval scribal productions, the illuminated Bibles, were primarily sacred artifacts, objects of ritual celebration, rather than direct sources of intellection. As a craft revolution, scribality enhanced the availability and status of texts. But the literate revolution, that is, the formation of a broadly based and informed readership, did not get underway until the sixteenth century when print technology revolutionized communications processes. In medieval culture, not only did literacy remain the privilege of few, but reading and writing did not inevitably connect to form a literate mentality. Reading was widely practiced as an oral activity (Balogh 1926, Saenger 1982, Achtemeier 1990). To be sure, aids to visual apperception slowly increased. Punctuation and word and chapter divisions, initially introduced in support of oral reading, imposed a visual code upon manuscripts, a process that

gradually encouraged silent copying and silent reading. Still, far into the high Middle Ages "reading was regarded as an active energetic exercise, requiring good health, and not as a passive sedentary pastime" (Saenger 1982:382; cf. 377-82). The recipients of texts were often listeners who did not necessarily know how to write, while scribal copyists were frequently unable to comprehend what they wrote. "Reading" was linked with the dictation and recitation of texts more than with private reflection. What constituted "literate" intellectualism was thus not necessarily the combined skills of reading and writing, but rather a high degree of audiovisual apperception and memorial practices (Carruthers 1990).

Undoubtedly, the high culture of medieval learning, which excelled in formulating intricate philosophical, religious, and linguistic theses with signal keenness of intellect, was the beneficiary of a developing chirographic activity. Once ideas and experiences were enshrined in writing, they began to assume a semblance of stability, irrespective of their continued oral functioning. Once knowledge was detached from the oral traditional biosphere, it was disposed toward depersonalization, and hence subject to reflection and analysis. Relentless scribal labors extended the texual base that slowly but inevitably enhanced the possibilities of comparative and critical thought. In this high intellectual culture, reflections on language, cognition, mind, and memory were increasingly shaped by a working relationship with texts.

There was an additional feature that uniquely assisted medieval coherence and consciousness: the use of the Latin language. Medieval intellectualization owes as much, if not more, to the use of Latin as to scribal productivity.[45] For at least a thousand years, roughly from the sixth to the sixteenth century, the Western Middle Ages was under the governing influence of Latin. *Litterati* were primarily those canonists, diplomats, administrators, and theologians who had mastered Latin—which may or may not have included the ability to read and write.[46] Latin became a standard of medieval high culture and the vehicle of theological, philosophical achievements. Coleman's observation that in certain monastic circles the assiduous study of grammar "was meant to teach a way to reach heaven through latinity" (1992:145) could well be extended to the

[45] Ong 1967:76-79, 250-52.

[46] Stock 1990:26, Troll 1990:112.

aspirations of many clerical *litterati*: Latin was perceived to be the linguistic medium that aided in the ascent to heaven. But with the rise of ethnic, national identities, Latin either followed the concomitant upsurge in vernaculars and developed into the Romance tongues, or it turned into learned Latin, a "chirographically controlled glacier" (Ong 1967:78) that had little or no broad-based social marketability. But it was precisely learned Latin's abstraction from oral life that increased its value as an ideal instrument for the academic scholarship of a culture elite. High medieval intellectual culture was thus the result not only of a rapidly increasing chirographic productivity, but of a distinctly Latin type of literacy that had removed itself from the oral lifeworld.

Even though manuscripts eventually came to function as articifial memory bases in their own right, medieval scribality and latinity neither displaced nor vacated memory. Quite the opposite. For centuries the growing body of texts only intensified and complicated demands made on memory: "Medieval culture remained profoundly memorial in nature, despite the increased use and availability of books . . ." (Carruthers 1990:156). Not only was there more and more material that had to be processed, more and more authoritative voices that had to be registered and reconciled, but changing cultural circumstances enlisted memory into new services. As far as preoccupation with memory was concerned, medieval Christian intellectualism in no way lagged behind antiquity, although memory was often exiled from its natural home in rhetoric and assimilated to new religious and epistemological tasks (cf. Coleman 1992).

The French Cistercian reformer Bernard of Clairvaux, who represented medieval monasticism at its height, contributed to the conversion of memory from the theory of rhetoric's esteemed treasure-house of eloquence to a symbol of religious reconstruction. Steeped in the monastic experience of hard labor, prayer, and silence, he saw little meaning in memory as a depository of precious icons and *loci* that negotiated cognition and consciousness. His religious experience taught him that memory was a house that was "contaminated with intolerable filth."[47] Into it, "as if into some cesspit runs all abomination and uncleanness."[48] "Why should I not grieve for the stomach of my memory,"

[47] *De Con*. 4.8: *intolerabili fetore contaminat*.

[48] *De Con*. 3.4: *velut in sentinam aliquam, tota decurrit abominatio, et immunditia tota defluxit*.

he exclaimed, "which is congested with such foulness?"[49] He advised his audience to "close the windows, lock the doors, block up the openings carefully"[50] through which so much filth has infiltrated and clogged up memory. While Bernard was careful to state that memory itself should be left intact, he advised his hearers "to purify memory and pump out the cesspit."[51] However brief the enticements of sensual experiences, "the memory is left with a bitter impression, and dirty footprints remain."[52] These, too, should not be erased altogether, but retrained and enlisted in the service of smelling, inhaling, tasting, seeing, and hearing the delights of charity, hope, and spiritual pleasures. Memory thus reconstructed—purged and equipped with a converted sensory base—was able to facilitate the believers' gradual attainment of spiritual purity. Steeped in monastic discipline, Bernard turned memory, rhetoric's treasure-house of knowledge and Augustine's instrument of self-knowledge, into a vehicle of religious conversion.

Scholasticism, one of the supreme philosophical and theological achievements of the Middle Ages, registered in different ways the cultural revolution marked by scribal productivity and latinity. A hallmark of scholasticism's intellectual project was the compilation and juxtaposition of biblical, patristic, and philosophical authorities. The need for collecting seemingly discordant authorities is a procedure utterly foreign to us. The project was founded on the fundamental premise of the two distinct, but reconcilable, sources of truth, theology, and philosophy. More is at stake here than the oral penchant for quoting authorities. The drive toward the collection and juxtaposition of authorial voices was in part at least attributable to the textualization of medieval learned culture. It was thrust upon scholastic theologians by the steady growth and growing diversity of Latin texts. The translation of Aristotle from Greek and Arabic into Latin from the tenth through the twelfth centuries had a particular bearing on this development. Here was an activity that made available systems of thought

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[49] *De Con.* 3.4: *quidni doleam ventrem memoriae, ubi tanta congesta est putredo?*

[50] *De Con.* 4.8: *claude fenestras, obsera aditus, foramina obstrue diligenter.*

[51] *De Con.* 15.28: *purganda scilicet memoria et exhaurienda sentina.*

[52] *De Con.* 3.4: *memoria quaedam impressit signa memoriae, sed vestigia faeda reliquit.*

(Aristotle, Avicenna, Averroes) that were not only independent of theology, but placed a high premium on reason and rational reflection (Coplestone 1985:II, 205-11). The compilation of discordances, the passion for weighing and comparing different opinions, the contraposition of authorities, and the desire to seek clarification amidst authorial dissonance were all features traceable to growing intellectual diversity based on a rapid enlargement of the textual database. This is precisely what the scholastic theologian Peter Abailard conceded in the prologue to *Sic et Non*, a collection of seemingly contradictory authoritative statements on 150 theological issues. What necessitated his labors, he wrote, was "the very vastness of verbal materials," which "appeared to be not only in themselves different, but truly also contradictory."[53]

While driven by the conditions of a textual revolution, the scholastic method of organizing thought remained indebted to a form of dialectic. Adopting a pattern of threefold schematization, issues were isolated and discussed by way of explication of objections, argumentation of resolution, and refutation of objections (Grabman 1909-11:I, 28-54). Rather than proceeding along the lines of a sequential, discursive logic, the scholastic art of structuring thought still operated in the tradition of a disputatious dialectic. But the scholastic dialectic differed from the Platonic dialectic, which had intended to keep thought alive in the flow of living discourse. The dialectic of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, for example, was characterized by a nonemotional, stylized quality of thought and a severe asceticism of language. His intellectualism moved in the rarified world of intensely abstract thought. Both in its organization of thought and in the delivery of ideas, it presented itself as a paragon of supreme rationalization. In its passion for rational penetration, the *Summa* practiced argumentation in a highly formalized dialectic. It is generally acknowledged that the strategies of scholastic dialectic originated in the medieval system of academic learning (Grabman 1909-11:I, 31-32; Coplestone 1985:II, 214-15). It was in university settings that teachers trained students by prompting them to raise objections to propositions, by directing the processes of argumentation, and by formulating final resolutions. This was the cultural context, in which medieval philosophers from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries shaped the tradition of academic dialectic into an

[53] *Sic et Non*, I, 1-2: *. . .tanta verborum multitudine. . . non solum ab invicem diversa verum etiam invicem adversa videantur.*

instrument of high-powered precision, composing in a Latin that was neither that of the ancients nor that of the Fathers, but a Latin of a distinctly scholastic diction. However, it is typical of the harmonizing disposition of Thomas' *Summa* that the authorities were secured in tradition more than seriously challenged, that more often than not the objections raised were of a perfunctory rather than a substantive kind, and that the resolutions were anticipated in advance of the argumentation. This is but another way of saying that Thomistic dialectic, this highly formalized academic ritual that was passionately devoted to logic, was at the same time constrained by rhetorical conventions (Kinneavy 1987:90-94). Viewed from this perspective, the scholastic method of Thomistic dialectic, anchored in logic yet beholden to rhetorical premises, manifested the old and unresolved conflict between rhetoric and logic.

The question of what memory was and how it collaborated with the mind had to be assimilated to the new intellectual system of scholasticism. In substance, Thomas reiterated the ancient rhetorical theory of the mnemonic *imagines* and *loci*, adding the advice that one must cleave with affection to the things to be remembered in order "to keep the shape of images intact."[54] Thomas fully shared the Aristotelian premise that "all our cognition takes its rise from sense perception."[55] In his commentary on Aristotle's *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* he returned again and again to the commonplace proposition that "man cannot understand without image."[56] In part at least, human knowing was conceived on the analogy of interior visualization; it originated in *phantasmata* or corporeal images that were situated in memory. To be sure, parts of memory had the faculty of entertaining thoughts and opinions, but in principle no human thinking could take place without some kind of imaging. Additionally, memory's imaginary perception was always of particulars; it had no grasp of universals. Owing to the scholastic axiom that "it is natural to man that he should come to the intelligible things," e.g. the universals, "by way of the

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[54] *Summa,* vol. 36, *quaestio.* 49: *conservat integras simulacrorum figuras.*

[55] *Summa* I, 1, *quaestio* 1: *omnis nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet.*

[56] Liber I, lectio 2: *non possit homo sine phantasmate intelligere.*

sensible things," e.g. the particulars,[57] memory and its menu of icons served as the indispensable base for all our cognitive processes. In reflection on and abstraction from the particularity of sense images, intellectual cognition came to know what was truly worth knowing: the divine universals. With Thomism, memory was thoroughly integrated into the medieval system of knowledge and faith. But it is worth noting that in the new scheme of things, memory functioned no longer in its classic oral sense as a treasure-house of eloquence, but metaphysically, as a mediator of universals and facilitator of the knowledge of God.

There was yet another, more obvious sense, in which Thomas strove to disengage memory from its traditional base in rhetoric. Not content with assigning memory to the metaphysics of knowing, he also reassigned it to ethics. Memory, originally the mother of the nine Muses, had become one of eight components of prudence, the governing queen of all moral virtues. Since prudence had made it her business to secure knowledge about the future based on past or present experiences,[58] and memory sought to store knowledge about the past,[59] prudence depended on memory. Hence, prudence and memory were expected to cooperate in the interest of discerning matters in advance so as to facilitate the right course of action. Although thoroughly familiar with the ancient and medieval disciplines of memory, Thomas refrained from commending memory as rhetoric's treasure-house of eloquence. This fact will not have come about entirely without the pressures of scribality. At a time when handwritten materials came increasingly into use, memory began to lose its ancient rhetorical rationale, and as it forfeited its base in rhetoric, Thomas recommended it as a helpmate of prudence based on considerations of practical reason.[60]

We shall conclude with a model of cognition that manifested both the height and incipient demise of scholasticism. William of Ockham, whose thought is frequently viewed in connection with the nominalism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, remains "to this day the most

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[57] *Summa* I, 1, *quaestio*. l: *est autem naturale homini ut per sensibilia ad intelligibilia veniat.*

[58] *Summa*, vol. 36, *quaestio*. 47.

[59] *Quaestio*. 48.

[60] *Quaestio*. 47: *quod est finis practicae rationis*.

controversial thinker of medieval intellectual history" (Klein 1960:1556). Best known for his anti-realist position in the controversy over the universals, the Franciscan friar rethought epistemology and helped clear the way for what came to be known as the *via moderna*. He was "perhaps the greatest logician of the Middle Ages" (Ockham-Boehner 1990:xviii), whose logical brilliance, verbalized in stunningly abstract Latin, was nourished by close rapport with a flourishing scribality. At the same time, Ockham's philosophy exhibited a distinct reserve toward rhetoric, dialectic, and imagination.

It was a deeply held conviction of medieval realism that language, memory, and sense perception collaborated in the higher interest of universal knowledge. In fact, divine universals, eternally true realities, were the appropriate objective of the mind's aspirations. More than that, to universals was attributed the status of truly existent metaphysical realities. The crux of Ockham's controversial work was that it problematized the reality corresponding to universals outside the mind: "a universal is not a substance existing outside the mind in individuals and really distinct from them."[61] He refused to admit that there was anything in the experienced world that corresponded to the universality of a concept. Universality was a function of the *actus intellegendi* (8), a mental construct, or simply the manner in which the mind achieved sufficiently generalized abstractive cognition.

As a logician, Ockham was well aware that the requirements for demonstrating the being of God were exceedingly difficult to fulfil. Nonetheless, in an argument of tortured logic he undertook to prove the proposition that God existed,[62] while conceding all the same that God's existence "cannot be known from propositions by themselves, since in every argument something doubtful or derived from faith will be assumed."[63] The unity of God, on the other hand, was not subject to logical

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[61] *Epis. Pro.* 6: *universale non sit aliqua substantia extra animam existens in individuis distincta realiter ab eis.*

[62] *Proof. Ex.* 6: *sciendum tamen, quod potest demonstrari Deum esse.*

[63] *Ibid.*: *nec potest probari ex per se notis, quia in omni ratione accipietur aliquod dubium vel creditum.*

demonstration.[64] It could only be assumed in faith.[65] On the whole, however, Ockham was more adept at demonstrating what was not demonstrable about God than in confirming his verifiable attributes.

If Ockham's preoccupation as a philosopher was to purge Christian epistemology of the metaphysics of essences, it was not because he was prompted by agnostic impulses. Nothing could be further from the truth. His philosophical intention was to immunize divine freedom and omnipotence from what he regarded as human essentialist interventions. There was no inherent necessity for anything in this world to be just as it was. So far as God was concerned, things might be different. If, therefore, the world was contingent, as Ockham thought it was, it was contingent by divine choice, and hence knowable only by its contingency.

Given this worldly contingency, Ockham held to an epistemology that presumed an autonomy of mind, memory, and cognition. Priority was assigned to intuitive cognition, and immediate apprehension of the particulars by intuitive cognition preceded all other modes of knowing. In Ockham's words, "a cognition which is simple, proper to a singular thing, and the first to be acquired, is an intuitive cognition."[66] Only in second-order acts of thought, the so-called abstractive cognition (*cognitio abstractiva*), could things perceived lead to the formation of images and propositions. But even these second-order mental acts relied only partially on images. Concepts and images, moreover, neither represented metaphysical essences nor did they invite cognitive ascent toward divine universals. They were merely mental substitutions for the particulars.

Ockham's skepticism with regard to philosophical realism moved the particular, the experiential, and the contingent to the center of inquiry. Consequently, his model of language and thought focused with unprecedented force upon the status and quality of distinctiveness, including the particularity of texts. Scripture, indeed all texts, was assumed to be operating according to something akin to an intrinsic linguistic economy, and the operations of the mind—everybody's mind— were such that they could access the internal textual logic via the *cognitio intuitiva*. Gorgias'

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[64] *Ibid.*: *unitas Dei non potest evidenter probari.*

[65] *Ibid.*: *sed hoc fide tantum tenemus.*

[66] *Epis. Pro.* 3: *cognitio simplex, propria singulari et prima tali primate est cognitio intuitiva.*

oral theory of language, which had manifestly postulated persuasive powers over the soul, was a thing of the past. One looks in vain, moreover, for a special commitment to rhetoric. As Ockham came to view things, language was not primarily meant to arouse emotions. Furthermore, the status of memory was once again modified. Divorced from its rhetorical, metaphysical, and ethical obligations, memory became a part of abstractive cognition and subordinated to intuitive cognition. No longer the treasure-house of eloquence, or the metaphysical abode of trinitarian psychology, or a vehicle of conversion, memory came to play the role of an almost Proustian remembering of things past.

Most importantly, the Augustinian sign theory, which had canonized the metaphysical nature of language, was not replicated in Ockham's thought. It was not that he discarded the signs character of language, but he reintegrated it into his nonmetaphysical notion of cognition. The word as sign, he wrote, "does not make us know something for the first time . . . , it only makes us know something actually which we already know habitually."[67] Nowhere does one encounter in Ockham the Augustinian correspondence between *signum* and *res*. There was no discernible correspondence between the linguistic signs and the metaphysical realities. The signs character of language had become an intrinsically linguistic phenomenon transposed into intramental processes. More than that, Ockham could in a spirit almost akin to postmodernism state that "a spoken and written term does not signify anything except by free convention."[68] In postmodern linguistic terms, the relation between the signifier and the signified was an arbitrary one.

A principal feature of Ockham's model of mind and language was a mode of thought that ran counter to the universalizing thrust of Platonic, Augustinian, and scholastic philosophy. Ockham approached epistemology and theology from the side of the particular—"a change of outlook almost as epoch-making as the Copernican revolution in astronomy" (Ockham-Boehner 1990:xxvii). In the history of humanistic thought, it was a revolution less popularly known but no less significant than the Platonic revolt against the poetic encyclopedia of ancient Greece. A certain

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[67] *Log. Pro.* 1: *non faciat mentem venire in primam eius . . ., sed in actualem post habitualem eiusdem.*

[68] *Ibid.*: *terminus . . . prolatus vel scriptus nihil significat nisi secundum voluntariam institutionem.*

underpinning, although by no means the single cause, of both Plato's universalist and Ockham's particularist turn was provided by the technology of chirography, which in Ockham's case was reinforced by a high-intensity Latin. When Plato aspired to the essence of things abstracted from the Homeric poetic tradition, and liberated from oral, tribal pluralism, he was aided and abetted by the alphabetic revolution in ancient Greece. In Ockham's case, it was his reliance on the inner resources of a chirographic tradition, matured to a highly stylized Latin, that fostered the mental and psychological distancing from the metaphysical superstructure. Paradoxically, it took Latin's withdrawal from life, and a penetrating reflection on the fundamental problems of logic, in order to come to the realization that the essence was in the things themselves.

That Ockham was in fact a privileged and eager beneficiary of scribal culture is well established. From the eleventh century on, manuscripts had increasingly become the working material for the cultural elite: "His whole scholarly life until 1330 was spent in the greatest of European universities, his circle the most 'bookish' of the time" (Carruthers 1990:158). The year 1330 marked a watershed in his life. In that year he moved, in compliance with a papal ruling, to a Franciscan convent [*sic*] in Munich where he lived, cut off from all major University libraries, until the end of his life in 1349. Whereas the Munich period saw the publication of distinctly political, ecclesiastical writings, virtually all of his philosophical and theological books were written prior to 1330. How important a role written materials had played in the formulation of his epistemology is underscored by the bitter complaints he issued from Munich about the unavailability of books (Carruthers 1990:89).

Let us return to the miniature of Gregory the Great that had portrayed the authorities of the Pope, the Bible, the Spirit, and the scribe in a dramatization of medieval hermeneutics. Ockham revised this drama by shifting the balance of authorities. The most consequential implication of Ockham's theology was a decentering of the Pope in the interest of a sharpening of focus upon the Bible, and the implementation of a *cognitio intuitiva*, an immediate cognitive apprehension of Scripture. The text-centeredness, recognizable to a degree already in the miniature of Gregory the Great, had thereby acquired a sense of authorial objectivity. With a force unknown to previous thinkers, Ockham moved the textual authority of Scripture and its individual interpreters to center stage, anticipating events that would not come to historical fruition (and explosion) for another two

centuries. For the focus upon scriptural authority and the attribution of interpretive powers to individual human cognition prepared the way for a potentially conflictual relation between the authorities of the Pope and the Bible.

III

In paying tribute to Milman Parry and Albert Lord, this lecture has suggested degrees of connectedness between oral and chirographic incarnations of the word and the structuring of human thought. Our premise is furthest removed from the notion that language and different linguistic embodiments are comprehensible as neutral carriers of ideational freight. In the spirit of Parry and Lord, we have postulated that modes of communication were themselves potential embodiments of cognition and shapers of consciousness.

Glancing over the long haul of ancient and medieval history, we have made a set of observations concerning shifting roles of language, memory, and sense perception. Speech as divine madness was viewed as the product of a linguistic culture that was dominated by an orality largely untamed by the powers of chirography. Rhetoric, taking advantage of the technology of writing, made speech conscious of itself and also subservient to civic life. Few experiences enhanced Western text-consciousness more deeply than the canonical centering of the Bible. It helped reshape ancient rhetoric into Jewish and Christian modes of homiletics, and unleashed a seemingly unending flow of midrashic rewritings of the privileged biblical texts.

Memory, the wellspring of civilized life, was a continuing theme in ancient and medieval culture that was in fundamental ways a memorial more than a documentary culture, notwithstanding the increasing production and availability of books. But the *praxis* of memory changed as different media circumstances exempted it from strictly rhetorical obligations and enlisted it into the service of ethical, metaphysical, and historical remembrance.

The fundamentally oral, rhetorical understanding of the cognitive value of the sensorium was widely shared by ancient and medieval thinkers. Plato's striving after pure, disembodied thought never found credence with a majority of thinkers. Elsewhere in ancient and medieval thought, cognition was perceived to be sensory cognition. But a growing manuscript

culture, and the possibilities it raised for detached thought, left its impact on the role of the sensorium as well. Among the cultural elite, the developing processes of medieval scribality went hand in glove with the privileging of Latin that, shaped into a finely tuned instrument for rational discourse, increasingly forfeited its marketability in a world of ethnic and vernacular turmoil.

Scholasticism's hierarchical thematization of the *sensibilia* versus the *intelligibilia* acknowledged both the foundational role of the former and the superiority of the latter. What William of Ockham set into motion was a reversal of Thomistic scholasticism, for which universals alone had been the proper object of knowledge. If what mattered were not the universals but the particulars, attention was refocused upon the philosophically conventional, the culturally distinctive, and the linguistically contextual. Thus in a time of growing literacy, individual believers found themselves confronted with the internal logic of the biblical texts. The Bible as central grammatological authority was thereby reinforced in ways unheard of before. But if it was admitted that the biblical texts operated under logical laws that could be intuited by the minds of individual interpreters, then the Pope's authority as pre-eminent interpreter of the Bible had implicitly been called into question. A whole set of far-reaching historical and theological implications came into play, relentlessly text-centered implications, that reached their culmination in the sixteenth century. For in so far as the Reformation came to elevate the *sensus literalis* to the exclusion of all other senses, and to embrace the principle of *sola scriptura* vis-à-vis papal authority, and to adopt the notion of *scriptura sui interpres* (Scripture is its own interpreter), it fulfilled the legacy of the *via moderna*, a legacy principally set into motion by Ockham and his successors.

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The *Fornaldarsögur*: Stephen Mitchell's Contribution

Jesse L. Byock

The *fornaldarsögur* (literally, "sagas of antiquity") have long been relegated to the status of "poor cousins" within the family of Old Icelandic literature. To a large degree this downgrading has occurred because the *fornaldarsögur* are often fantastic narrations that read very differently from the more sober and worldly *íslendingasögur* [family sagas]. Written in the period from roughly the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, the *fornaldarsögur*, a mixture of tradition and invention, often recount legendary and mythic events from the recesses of Scandinavian folk memory. Sometimes a tale follows its hero or heroes into the supernatural world and also recounts quasi-historical memories of events that can be traced as far back as the migration period. In general, the *fornaldarsögur* focus on Scandinavia; southern Germanic matters and events are less evident and usually only enter the tales in connection with stories built on, or sharing motifs and traditions with, Eddic material, as they do in the *Völsunga saga*.

Both the family and the kings' sagas, as well as other Norse sources, offer a good deal of evidence suggesting that the *fornaldarsögur*, or similar prose narratives, were told orally by Icelanders both before and after writing became common in the twelfth century. *Sturlu þáttr*, from the *Sturlunga saga* compendium (1946), contains a description of such oral storytelling. It records the following tale about Sturla Þórðarson, who journeyed to Norway in the mid-thirteenth century. Sturla undertook his trip hoping to restore his standing with the king, to whom he had been slandered. As fate would have it, Sturla, though gaining access to the royal ship, found the king displeased with him, and the Icelander was lodged in the forward part of the vessel away from the king (vol. 2:232-33).

> And when the men lay down to sleep, the king's forecastleman asked who should entertain them. Most remained silent at this. Then he asked: "Sturla the Icelander, will you entertain us?"
>
> "You decide," says Sturla. Then he told *Huldar saga*, better and more cleverly than any of them who were there had heard before.
>
> Many thronged forward on the deck and wanted to hear it clearly, so that there was a great throng there.
>
> The queen asked, "What is that crowd of men on the foredeck?"
>
> A man says, "The men want to hear the saga that the Icelander is telling."
>
> She said, "What saga is that?"
>
> He replied, "It's about a great troll-woman, and it is a good story, and it is being well told."
>
> The king told her to pay no heed to this but to sleep. She said, "I think this Icelander must be a good man and much less to blame than he is reported to be."

> The king remained silent. People went to sleep for the night. The following morning there was no wind, and the king's ship was in the same place. When the men were sitting at table during the day the king sent to Sturla some dishes from his table. Sturla's messmates were pleased at this, and said, "Things look better with you here than we thought, if this sort of thing goes on."
>
> When the men had eaten, the queen sent a message to Sturla asking him to come to her and have with him the saga about the troll-woman. Sturla went aft to the quarterdeck then and greeted the king and queen. The king received his greeting shortly but the queen received it well and easily. The queen then asked him to tell that same story that he had told in the evening. He did so, and told the saga for much of the day. When he had told it, the queen and many others thanked him and understood that he was a knowledgeable and wise man.

Although individuals like Sturla Þórðarson may have been famed as raconteurs of fantastic stories such as the lost *Huldar saga*, much remains unclear about the provenance and the transmission of the *fornaldarsögur*. Even the naming of this group of texts has caused confusion. The term "sagas of antiquity" was coined by the first scholarly editor, presumably because the tales are set mostly in the ancient pre-Viking and early Viking past, that is, from the fifth to the tenth century. What the medieval Icelanders called these sagas is not known, but, in modern times, there have been numerous attempts to name and categorize all or parts of the *fornaldarsögur*. Groupings have alternately been referred to as "legendary sagas," "mythical-heroic sagas," or "legendary fiction," and other rubrics, such as "Viking romances" and "Viking sagas," have been proposed. These latter suggestions reflect the fact that many of the texts deal with Viking forays; some of them are set in the west, as far away as Ireland, but most take place in the East (including Finland, Bjarmaland, and Garðaríki-Russia).

Stephen A. Mitchell, in *Heroic Sagas and Ballads* (1991), chooses to stick with the term *fornaldarsögur*. To this end he delineates (in chapter 2, "Definitions and Assessments") five traits that contribute to a definition of the texts: grounding in traditional heroic themes, their fabulous nature, inclusion of verse, distinct temporal and spatial frames, and a tendency toward monodimensional figures. Traditionally, scholars in search of ancient mythic and historical information have been the primary investigators of these texts. Such an exploration is a time-honored pursuit. The *fornaldarsögur* have supplied numerous pieces of information crucial to the unfinished jigsaw puzzle that forms our understanding of early Scandinavia. Mitchell, however, is not seeking still more clues to the earliest cultural and historical past of the northern regions; in fact, his goal is altogether different from an exploration for motifs and sources. Instead, Mitchell sets his sights on opening this large body of often ignored texts to modern narrative inquiry, bringing the hard-won lessons of oral theory to the study of the *fornaldarsögur*. He regards the texts as constituting a genre that is the product both of conscious literary innovation and of the medieval Icelanders' use of traditional, oral narrative forms and techniques. For Mitchell, the *fornaldarsögur* "are a cultural hybrid, a constellation of (primarily) folkloric and traditional materials and of (secondarily) literary materials, the interpretation of which must depend on the methodological tools of both fields" (43). Mitchell's intent in combining these methodological approaches is to shift the focus of the discourse to an analysis of the underlying generative elements, that is, the cultural, social, and narrative forces responsible for the creation and centuries-long maintenance of this Icelandic form of storytelling.

Mitchell has thus set himself an ambitious task, but in pursuing it he is, to his credit, highly successful. His success is due in a large part to his ability to concentrate on significant social and historical issues while introducing current concepts of narrative structure and oral theory. Mitchell distinguishes his work from earlier studies in several innovative ways. On the social and historical front, he purposely chooses to draw only occasionally on Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum*. Similarly, he does not depend on the other more fragmentary attestations to preexisting legendary traditions. Passing over these frequently used sources of events and traditions of the eighth and ninth centuries, Mitchell breaks new ground by exploring the *fornaldarsögur* within the contextual framework of thirteenth-, fourteenth-, and fifteenth-century Iceland, that is, within the realm of the society and culture that produced and used these texts.

Throughout his book, Mitchell is steadfast in his contention that the *fornaldarsögur* are best understood in connection with the later period of writing rather than in light of the ancient settings of the stories themselves. Although legendary narratives were popular before the thirteenth century, Mitchell argues that the distinctive nature of the extant texts is a result of their connection with the Icelandic Middle Ages. At that time—the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries—the island society was experiencing decisive changes. The older order of the Free State was adapting to the constraints of foreign overlordship and perceptions were changing with the importation of new cultural influences. To Mitchell's list of shifting cultural factors might be added the significant economic and social alterations induced by the large-scale exportation of stockfish that began in the third decade of the fourteenth century.

The introductory section of *Heroic Sagas and Ballads* reviews the current state of saga studies. The core theoretical issues unfold in four long chapters, followed by an Epilogue and an Appendix. The latter lists the mostly prose *fornaldarsögur*, linking them with examples of related ballads and *rímur* (metrical romances). The bibliographical apparatus is extensive, listing translations and editions and then presenting a comprehensive listing of secondary literature. By focusing on the sagas, the first three chapters form the comparative groundwork for the final chapter, which offers a new paradigm for the relationship between the *fornaldarsögur* and the versified texts. In the past most scholars have argued that transmission between the genres flowed in one direction, from saga to ballad and *rímur*. Mitchell, however, takes a different view, arguing that "the relationship between the *fornaldarsögur* and the versified texts cannot be characterized by transmutation in a single direction" (137). He observes that there was considerable movement back and forth between the genres, noting that some of what we regard as *fornaldarsögur* are in reality prose reworkings of *rímur*.

Firmly grounded in modern folklore analysis, Mitchell addresses the conviction that in critical scholarship there is no text without context. Stating his goal of exploring the nature of literary transmission in medieval Iceland and the attitudes of the medieval audience, Mitchell, in his introduction, carefully lays out the theoretical background of his study. As a result, his clear and concise assessment of previous theories reaches far beyond the often narrow confines of traditional studies of the late heroic texts. He notes that whereas "the question of orality as a matter of scholarly debate has attached itself more to the *íslendingasögur* than to other saga genres," the influence of the orality question "colors virtually every discussion in the area of Old Norse literature, and the issues seem to me to be of the utmost importance in the case of the *fornaldarsögur*" (6).

The Introduction is a critical reassessment that will serve as a departure point for future analyses of saga story, whether concerning the *fornaldarsögur* or the family sagas. Mitchell has the analytical acumen to formulate the issues and the courage to stand up and say what has in the past few years become increasingly clear: we are now at a watershed where we can discern that several idiosyncratic approaches troubling contemporary saga studies are no longer viable. Focusing at first on the more than seventy years of debate over saga origins, Mitchell distinguishes three groups: "bookprosists," who advocate the late written, though mostly indigenous, origin of the sagas; "continentalists," who embrace a form of bookprose, in which the genesis of the Icelandic texts lies in imported continental Latin/Christian or late vernacular literary models; and "traditionalists," who believe that the texts originated in a native tradition of well-developed oral storytelling. Once the distinctions are set out, Mitchell refuses to be drawn into rehashing the old arguments about bookprose and freeprose. Instead, he concentrates on evaluating the work of the continental school by applying the critical eye of the comparativist. He astutely observes (4-5) that, like the old bookprosists,

> the modern Continentalists seem perfectly prepared to leave society out of the equation as well. And in their desire to make the Continentalist case, its adherents threaten to become locked into an arid search for "sources," whether at the level of the individual motif or of the macrostructure.

Focusing on Carol Clover's *The Medieval Saga* (1982) and Marianne Kalinke's *Bridal Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland* (1990) as examples of continentalists' work, Mitchell goes on to say (5) that

> Source studies by the Continentalists would seem to be an intellectual cul-de-sac. Placed in contexts of this sort, literature begins to lack meaning, other than as a sterile warehouse of motifs and structures with which partisans may ratify such displaced concerns as the glory and influence of medieval France.

Tired of the hodgepodge logic and the aggressive but unconvincing argumentation of the continentalists, Mitchell chooses critical rigor. He rejects the basis of Clover's review essay, "Icelandic Family Sagas (*Íslendingasögur*)" in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide* (1985). Pointing out the contrived nature of Clover's conclusions, Mitchell notes (5) that her reasoning is

> often based on a kind of negative analogic argument. The idea that the complex interweaving of saga style could not have developed from traditional oral forms, for example, is based on selectively culled evidence from non-European folk traditions: there are counterexamples from Irish and Serbo-Croatian oral traditions which make the point moot.

Having addressed head-on the outdated continentalist-bookprosist views, Mitchell develops an analytic alternative. In the process he formulates the position (5) of

> the modern-day traditionalists [who] believe in an oral literature that served a nonelite, as well as elite, constituency; in a significant oral impact on the written work; and in a healthy synergism between oral and written saga forms. Obviously, the modern traditionalist position little resembles what Andreas Heusler had in mind at the turn of

> the century, when he could characterize the saga writers as something like stenographers accurately recording a fixed text word for word from oral narration; if anything, today's traditionalists probably resemble what his generation would have thought of as book-prosists, namely, believers in an individual saga writer employing inherited oral verse and indigenous traditions in the service of a written text.

Grounded in this moderate view, Mitchell moves his study forward, showing how Icelanders of the postclassical fourteenth- and fifteenth-century period worked with the elements of traditional narrative still alive in their culture. In the first chapter, "Definitions and Assessments," Mitchell organizes his critical perspectives in three categories: the *fornaldarsögur* and history, the reaction against the *fornaldarsögur* as history and as literature, and the connection between the *fornaldarsögur* and folklore and mythology. His historical review of the reception of these texts and their relationship to folklore studies is highly informative, preparing the reader for the analysis to follow. In chapter 2, "Origins and Influences," Mitchell takes up the issue of tradition, discussing key concepts of the idea of tradition, including continuity, variation, and communality. He considers the nature of the traditional and the learned lore that together form the semantic underpinnings of the *fornaldarsögur*. Mitchell's purpose is "to provide a more precise sense of what tradition is in the Old Norse context and of the extent to which we must think of these works as belonging to the late Middle Ages, rather than earlier periods" (48). In this effort he employs a model of saga communications developed by Lars Lönnroth in *Njáls saga: A Critical Introduction* (1976) in order to link studies of the family sagas and the *fornaldarsögur* in the areas of tradition, innovation, literary borrowing, performance, sponsorship, and the creative process. While Lönnroth's model was applied only to the *íslendingasögur*, Mitchell extends this analysis to the *fornaldarsögur*.

Although Mitchell's ideas and explications are excellent, the arrangement of *Heroic Sagas and Ballads* is at times clumsy and confusing. For example, chapter 2, with forty-seven pages, is too long for its purpose, and its length sometimes cloaks an analysis that thoughtfully weighs the competing influences of tradition and original composition. Understanding these competing influences is a critical factor of Mitchell's analysis since the *fornaldarsögur* as a genre are steeped in tradition, whether mythic, folkloric, or historical, while the individual texts are highly eclectic, frequently drawing on fresh literary impulses from abroad. In chapter 3, "Uses and Functions," Mitchell discusses the impetus for the composition of the *fornaldarsögur*. He analyzes the factors that influenced this activity, concentrating on overlapping and shifting issues that confronted saga audiences. These include literary merit, ability to entertain, and historical worth. Here Mitchell, following the lead of contemporary Icelandic scholars like Vésteinn Ólason (1982, 1983, 1985) and Sverrir Tómasson (1977), offers a redefinition of the cultural milieu of the later Middle Ages, a critical point that enables him to move beyond a consideration of the *fornaldarsögur* in simple evolutionary terms. This shift in emphasis opens the analysis to questions of audience participation, including a consideration of the popularity of these texts.

In the fourth and final chapter, "The Legacy Renewed," Mitchell considers the process by which traditional elements underlying the basic stories of the *fornaldarsögur* were transmuted into the new genres of ballads and *rímur*. He begins the chapter by reviewing the scholarship on Scandinavian balladry, comparing items in the ballad repertoire with analogues among the *fornaldarsögur*. As illustrations of the relationship

between the *fornaldarsögur*, Nordic balladry, and traditional legendary materials, Mitchell discusses *Norna-Gests Þáttr*, *Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra*, and *Heiðreks saga*. He treats the relationship by building on Lars Lönnroth's saga communication model (163):

> Like Lönnroth's model (and the biologist's concept of phylogenetic descent with reticulates), the relationship among traditional legendary material, *fornaldarsaga*, and ballad does *not* consist solely of a series of constantly branching binaries. Indeed, the relationship is much more one of dynamic reticulation, that is, frequent exchange between the various multiforms and their genres. The system of saga-ballad communications which thus begins to emerge, relevant both synchronically and diachronically, is one in which transmission (or "communication") takes place through both oral *and* written channels, the latter consisting of printed as well as of scribal copies, not on one occasion only but also over time.

Turning to Iceland and the uniquely Icelandic tradition of *rímur*, Mitchell continues to build on work by Vésteinn Ólason. He determines that the "transferral of the prosimetrical *fornaldarsögur* (or their traditions at any rate) into the multimetered *rímur* dictates not only the expansion of the existing text at one juncture and its contraction elsewhere, but also a new style of narration and the introduction of completely new material" (166). Having arrived at this determination, Mitchell concludes with a forward-looking discussion of the reinvigoration of the legendary materials, seen as a byproduct of the saga-*rímur*-ballad dynamic in the northern heroic tradition. Toward the end of the volume Mitchell illustrates his point with a diagram that proposes a model for *fornaldarsögur*-*rímur*-ballad communications. The model provides an important representation of the paradigm shift proposed by Mitchell and is a sketch of the dynamic by which texts were recycled and legendary materials renewed. Here the oral or written origin is not seen as a determinant, but only as an important factor (176):

> Whether the contributing materials were heard from a traditional raconteur, heard while being read aloud from a manuscript, or simply read is an important issue with regard to contextualization and to other aspects of our understanding of the tales and their environment, but it does not significantly alter the path of generic transformation.

With this model, the study comes full circle. Mitchell has taken a skeletal saga communications structure originally meant for the *íslendingasögur* and recast it into a new communications model, reflecting the development of the legendary material. Unfortunately, here too the basic organization of the book detracts from the theoretical questions. The model, which challenges the reader to rethink relationships among *rímur*, saga, and ballad, appears only in the final chapter. Surely the analysis would have unfolded in a more cogent manner had it appeared at an earlier stage and thus enabled the reader to test Mitchell's analysis against the new paradigm that he is constructing. With the introduction of his new paradigm the book essentially comes to an end. The Epilogue is short, reinforcing the basis of analysis used in the study.

In light of the scope and originality of the book, the organizational weaknesses are distracting but minor. Mitchell has written an important study that challenges the basis of previous scholarly analysis of the *fornaldarsögur* and provides an essential tool for those seeking to understand the fundamental differences between the *fornaldarsögur* and the

íslendingasögur. Future studies of the *fornaldarsögur*, as well as of the *íslendingasögur*, will require significant reflection on Mitchell's work and conclusions.

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