ORAL TRADITION

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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.

Oral Tradition appears twice per year, in March and October. To enter a subscription, please contact Slavica Publishers at the address given above.

All manuscripts, books for review, items for the bibliography updates, and editorial correspondence, as well as subscriptions and related inquiries should be addressed to the editor, John Miles Foley, Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, 21 Parker Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211.

Printed in the United States of America.

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Contents

Editor's Column

With the present issue *Oral Tradition* enters the next millennium—as long as we forgo mathematical niceties, of course. Whatever the case, volume 15 unambiguously marks a decade and one-half of publication, enough time to see many changes take place in the field of research we serve.

Fifteen years of continuous publication didn't happen by accident, and so it seems appropriate to take a moment to thank those who have worked so hard—in the front lines and behind the scenes—to bring us to this point. In a real sense the history of *Oral Tradition*, and of the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, begins and ends with the University of Missouri-Columbia. In 1985 then-Dean Milton Glick and then-Provost Gerald Brouder created the Center as a facility to serve the international community through editorial activities, lecturers, conferences, and seminars. It was Associate Dean Ted Tarkow's vision that moved the plan forward and helps maintain it to this day, ably abetted by former Dean Larry Clark and present Dean Richard Schwartz. We owe the journal's support on the MU campus to these stalwarts.

Equally instrumental from the planning of the first issue onward was Professor Charles E. Gribble, former president of Slavica Publishers, who signed onto this project when it was simply a (wide-eyed) idea. Under his guidance we passed through many technological stages and built an international audience for the comparative study of the world's oral traditions. Two years ago, Slavica, which was founded by Chuck Gribble, moved on to the stewardship of Professor George Fowler of the Slavic Department at Indiana University.

In editing *Oral Tradition* I have been lucky enough to benefit from the expertise and devotion of a long line of editorial assistants from the departments of Classical Studies, English, and Religious Studies at Missouri. I despair of naming them all here—their names are faithfully inscribed in the individual mastheads of the issues they helped to "birth"—but my gratitude is, as Homer would say, *aphthiton* ("undying").

Finally, to our dozens of authors, who sent us their best work, and to our dozens of reviewers, who contributed both time and expertise to our ongoing joint project, I offer deep thanks. Your ideas are what made *Oral Tradition* the venue it is and aspires to be.

Any *envoi* worth the name also looks to the future, and so I close by taking advantage of this moment to ask our readership for two things. First of all, we want your manuscripts—whatever the tradition, whatever the perspective. We will try to continue our small tradition of fostering as broad a discussion as possible.

Second, we want your subscriptions. At a mere twenty dollars per year (for two issues of about 400 pages total), we feel *Oral Tradition* is perhaps the best value since the start-up days of that computer company identified by the fruit as a logo.
We welcome your ideas, contributions, and, of course, your subscriptions.

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The "Trick" of Narratives:
History, Memory, and Performance
in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*

Chiji Akoma

> History was someone you touched, you know, on Sunday mornings or in the barbershop. It's all around you. It's in the music, it's in the way you talk, it's in the way you cry, it's in the way you make love. Because you are denied your official history you are forced to excavate your real history even though you can never say that's what you are doing.

James Baldwin[1]

The oral or folkloric sign, which is an integral part of Toni Morrison's aesthetic, once again becomes a crucial aspect of her latest work. Morrison's *Paradise* is an imaginative discourse on the oral-written interface in African American culture. In earlier novels such as *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*, memory is the interpretive sign. In *Paradise*, however, memory is interrogated as Morrison presents a slice of African American experience centered on the (ab)use of memory. This interrogation focuses on a community's response to oral and written history. In some ways, *Paradise* is a demonstration of Morrison's awareness of the complex nature of the African American historical experience, an experience that she is reluctant to represent in binary terms (that is, black/white, written/oral). Driving the narrative is a performer interested in representing the lore of her community's history, playing to the strengths of that community, but also remaining critical of certain aspects of that history. Morrison operates within the African American folkloric medium and invests the historical

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[1] The epigraph is taken from Baldwin's interview with *The Black Scholar* (Baldwin 1989:150).

contents of her narratives with a mythic dimension.[2] The implication is clear: the resistance to empiricism and linearity, which defines mythic "truth," is coupled with the representation of African American reality. As Morrison explains elsewhere, black reality involves "the acceptance of the supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time with neither taking precedence over the other" (1984a:342). The result of this coupling is a dynamic narrative vision capable of depicting black history without a betrayal of the deep oral roots of that history. *Paradise*, I would argue, marks Morrison's clearest delineation of the uses of memory in representing the black experience in America, both as an alternative to the privileged medium of writing and to the hegemonic power conferred on written and lineal history. The novel goes beyond celebrating the centrality of memory to black consciousness evidenced in *Beloved*; it delves into the very process of narrating what is remembered in order to reveal the myriad of interests that shape this narrative. At the end, the notion of a communal narrative generated by a common response to a past is seen as the catalyst for the various narrative performances that compete for acceptance in the novel.

Sites of Memory, Sites of Contest: Rethinking Memory and History

A clarification of the use of the term *memory* is necessary. Memory is part of what defines the human consciousness, and I do not wish to fetishize its presence in Morrison's narratives. To remember or to forget, Matthew Hugh Erdelyi writes, are the two "contradicting tendencies of memory" (1996:15). In this essay, however, I find the French historian Pierre Nora's description of memory very useful, especially in the way he sets it off against history: "Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name," he argues. "It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived." Conversely, history "is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer" (1994:285). The problem with history, one would surmise, is its need for exactitude ("reconstruction"), a need shunned by memory.

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[2] Peterson argues that Morrison's notion of history is unconventional, attributable to her "improvisational exploration of alternative concepts and forms for reconstructing African-American history" (1997:202).

However, Nora complicates the difference between memory and history by arguing that in our modern times what we call memory is actually history. The kind of environment in which "real memory" operates—spontaneous and unself-conscious—has been dislodged, he states, "under the pressure of a fundamentally historical sensibility" (284). The emergence of several voices or groups, especially those hitherto silenced by hegemonic history, and the occurrence of radically transformative world events, have created an age wherein what is remembered is not left to chance and spontaneity. The expression, "Never again," commonly tied to the Jewish Holocaust, for example, becomes an injunction for the group, indeed the world, to etch this particular event in memory. What is remembered assumes orderliness and specificity that bring memory under the province of history. Thus, to use the Holocaust example, that singular historical event becomes a "*lieu de mémoire*," a site of memory "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn—but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of history in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists" (284).

The Middle Passage and plantation slavery remains a traumatic historical event, which resonates in and influences African American political and cultural consciousness. The will to remember that period, especially when the ramifications of the experience still exist, constitutes black racial memory. What Morrison does is to transform that memory into a literary metaphor that best conveys the unique position and experience of the African American. In this typology, memory is not an "art," as Frances A. Yates's *The Art of Memory* suggests, but an eruptive force that the African American writer harnesses in order to present a counter-American narrative. In fact, it is more appropriate to refer to the kind of memory present in African American narratives as "counter-memory," which George Lipsitz defines as "look[ing]" to the past for the hidden histories of those excluded from dominant narratives" (1989:162). One problem with Lipsitz's definition, however, is that the history he identifies as emanating from this counter-memory is still lineal, even though he sees it as "supplying new perspectives about the past" (*idem*). Morrison's conceptualization of memory manifests itself in oral histories, that is, histories that her characters assume responsibility for telling, though the narratives collapse into one extended and convoluted narrative of the community. The disruptive effect of these histories on the American Narrative is a direct consequence of their non-linearity. In his study of social memory, Paul Connerton notes that oral histories by an oppressed group produce a different type of history that runs

counter to the structure of the dominant narrative (1989:19): "The oral history of subordinate groups will produce another type of history: one in which not only will most of the details be different, but in which the very construction of meaningful shapes will obey a different principle. Different details will emerge because they are inserted, as it were, into a different kind of narrative home."

The narrative principle that informs Morrison's novels is oral, and the stories she tells are so composed within a different frame of memory that her coinage, "rememory," which is featured significantly in *Beloved*, becomes a conscious attempt to distinguish her own conceptualization. Sethe explains rememory to her daughter Denver as a phenomenon that has a life of its own outside of events, places, and people (1987:36):

> Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm—every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there—you who never was there—if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you.

Rememory becomes a present thought of a past, solidified in an image kept alive by its capacity to be evoked or re-enacted by virtually any member of the community. Sethe's escape from Sweet Home does not exorcise the ghost of the harrowing life at the plantation—an experience that assumes a physicality with the appearance of Beloved. Together with Paul D, life at Sweet Home is relived and made part of the impetus for living.[3]

In her essay, "Memory, Creation and Writing," Morrison accentuates the act of memory as living tissue in the community's sense of being when she asserts that "memory (the deliberate act of remembering) is a form of willed creation. It is not an effort to find out the way it really was—that is research. The point is to dwell on the way it appeared and why it appeared in that particular way" (1984b:385). The above statement points toward an important aspect of her conceptualization: remembering as a conscious act. To dwell on a past that the dominant narrative has tried to erase through contrived history is both an act of resistance and a process of communal

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[3] April Lidinsky vigorously discusses the collectivity of rememory in this novel. Beyond the connection Paul D and Sethe make through their common experience, Lidinsky notes that communal rememory also "dissolves power's vertical compartmentalization of knowledge, temporality and identities" (1994:207).

validation. Thus, Aimable Twagilimana's statement that rememory is "an activation of the past, to the time of stories told by mothers and grandmothers, to the middle passage, and even to Africa, the land of origins" (1997:103) proves a valid amplification of Morrison's position. For what she does is to establish rememory as the mediation between the oral storytelling practices of the ancestral land and New World black experience.

It would seem that memory, as an eruptive force, when expressed on a purely oral basis, is a weapon of choice for an oppressed community interested in dislodging the lineal and exclusionary narrative of the dominant agent. *Song of Solomon,* for instance, is predicated on a dismissal of the written and lineal paradigm for perceiving history; the history of Solomon and his family, which later regenerates Milkman, derives its force and significance from the conscious effort of the ancestor's children to preserve his existence in their memory. Even when Pilate sings a disembodied and mutilated part of the narrative without much meaning or context, as agent Smith contemplates a suicide dive, the text retains an enigmatic or riddling quality that is explicated by the questing Milkman. The song is, to borrow Nora's term, a site of memory. The novel makes the case that a marginalized group preserves its identity through the agency of memory and folkloric traditions.

Yet the oral transmission and preservation of a community's history has its pitfalls. At its core, *Paradise* interrogates the neutrality of memory in fashioning the narrative of the community's past, more so when what is remembered serves to perpetuate a patriarchal order. Let me suggest that the novel is a logical progression of the kind of "aesthetic ideology" on which novels like *Jazz* and *Song of Solomon* are based. That is, whereas the earlier novels seem to draw their "truth" from the extent to which the characters and authorial voices relate to black oral traditions, *Paradise* refuses to accept the affirming value of orality at face value. The novel presents a conflict between one group's "duty-memory" (Nora 1994:292), that is, the group's resolve to remember their past in a certain way as a matter of duty, and another group's determination to experience that past in a liberating manner. This conflict between the older men and their children runs alongside the novel's focus on the lives of the women at the Convent in the present. Unlike the absence of a single version relating the founding of Haven and Ruby (even though the Morgans insist there is one), the reader is privy to the circumstances of the women's arrival at the Convent. From Mavis, who runs away from a threatening domestic space, to Gigi, who searches for (and later abandons) an elusive rendezvous with her jailed boyfriend, the narrator focuses on the process of the women's acceptance of each other under the tutelage of Consolata. It is almost as if their lives, accounted for in the

present, repudiate the fetish the men have made of their communal memory. If this appears to be a negation of the argument in the previous novels, it is because Morrison, as an artist with a role similar in some ways to that of the African oral artist, resists the temptation to fossilize her position. As varying and sometimes contradictory as some of her statements during interviews are, Morrison is more interested in whatever tradition each generation of her characters adopts as a conduit for attaining agency.

Memory as a Trace: The Making of a Patriarchal Narrative

Set in mid-1976, amid the national trauma following the Vietnam War, *Paradise* presents the gradual death of Ruby, a community of fiercely proud black people, due to the refusal of its patriarchs to excise the cyst of an isolationism related to the circumstances of Ruby's founding. Around 1889, nine freed African American men, their families, and some strays from Mississippi and Louisiana band together in search of a settlement site in the Oklahoma Territory. They reach a town called Fairly, a settlement of fellow African Americans, and appeal to be allowed to join them. The request is rejected; the citizens of Fairly provide the migrants with victuals and ask them to move on. The migrants are quick to identify the cause of the rejection, later to be known as the Disallowing, as color. While the people of Fairly are lighter-skinned, the patriarchs and their families are darker. Stung by this rejection, they travel without stopping until they establish their own community, which they call Haven. Haven thrives for decades but later suffers during the post-World War II depression. Descendants of the founders embark on another migration to a better land and Ruby, named for the woman who apparently died as a result of the demanding trek, is founded.

Ruby, an isolated town, "ninety miles from the nearest O for operator and ninety miles from the nearest badge" (13), is incidentally about 17 miles from an old and obscure building housing a Catholic institution, Christ the King School for Native Girls, which the citizens of Ruby simply refer to as the Convent despite the bold sign announcing its official name. Now in disrepair and no longer a school house, the Convent is inhabited and governed by the Mother Superior and her ward, Consolata (Connie), an orphan whom the nun has adopted. The Mother Superior dies at the beginning of the novel. Devastated by her death, Connie allows the Convent to sink further into ruins while turning it into a haven for women with various troubled histories. The persons and events in the Convent intersect

to form the narrative of *Paradise*.

As leaders of the community, the men of Ruby maintain cohesion amid the growing dissent of the younger ones and the women by insisting on a particular narrative about the founding of the community and its predecessor, Haven. This narrative, incidentally, is far from written; it is a history kept alive in the memory of the older members, especially as remembered by the twins Deacon and Steward Morgan. Not only are the brothers the grandsons of Zechariah Morgan, known in Ruby's lore as Big Papa, the legendary leader of the first settlement at Haven, but they are also the most prosperous members of Ruby. "The twins," the narrator comments, "have powerful memories. Between them they remember the details of everything that ever happened—things they witnessed and things they have not. And they have never forgotten the message or the specifics of any story, especially the *controlling* one [emphasis mine] told them by their grand-father" (13). Deacon is also described as possessing a "total memory" (107).

In this sense, the novel opens up its argument; while the twins' recall capacity during oral recountings of Ruby's history follows the trajectory of remembering "things they witnessed and things they have not," the narrator nevertheless notes their insistence on a controlling narrative. Despite the disruptive or non-lineal dynamic of memory, especially in an oral performance medium, the Morgans' position points to a harnessing of what is remembered into what is literally a master-narrative. The implication is that what is remembered and at the core of Ruby's "nationalism" is a narrative of bruised male ego and a vengeful determination to reclaim it. This implication validates Cynthia Enloe's argument that "nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (1990:44). There is also a class factor involved. The enormous economic power and social influence wielded by Steward and Deacon Morgan lead to a process of consciously choosing what they remember, and what they compel their fellow citizens to remember, about the principles and beliefs on which their community is founded.

In *Paradise*, the oven symbolizes the strategy of substituting what is otherwise a transgressive narrative medium for a coherent and "conservative" one. As Steward remembers the event, it was Big Papa who prompted the men of Haven to build a cook oven. This facility not only served as a "community 'kitchen,'" but was in fact a gesture of the men's pride "that none of their women had ever worked in a whiteman's kitchen or nursed a white child" (99). Steward clearly favors this lofty reasoning for his grandfather's act even though Steward equally contemplates that "[m]aybe Zechariah never wanted to eat another stick-roasted rabbit, or cold

buffalo meat" (99). The obvious appeal to the male ego that informs the making of the oven assumes an emblematic distinction when the twins and thirteen other families begin a fresh journey from Haven to Ruby, carrying the oven with them. Once reassembled on the new site, it becomes the community's meeting place and the men from the leading families confer on it the status of a totem.

However, a conflict between the younger sons of Ruby and their fathers arises over the correct words Big Papa had inscribed on the iron lids of the oven. Were they "Be the Furrow of His Brow" or "Beware the Furrow of His Brow"? During its transport from Haven to Ruby, the letters of the first word in the meaning-laden statement had fallen off the oven, leaving a gap that the two generations would contend to fill. The conflict over the missing word is at the center of a three-sided dialectic among controlled memory, the written word, and an unfettered "true memory." Though both sides understand the pronoun "His" to refer to God, the disagreement concerns the relationship of this powerful and fearsome God to His people, the black people of Ruby. The fathers vehemently declare that the statement is an order; hence the word is "Beware," for "God's justice is His alone" (87). The younger generation, on the other hand, sees the message on the lid as a motto challenging the people to be "His instrument, His justice" (87).

The unspoken ideological argument is that the older generation of the Morgans, who insist on retaining the isolationist and patriarchal order instituted by the original freed men, desire to use the oven as an instrument of social cohesion. The power and reverence for God that they argue the words on the lid represent is a ruse for the unchallenged authority they demand. The interpretation by Harper Jury, the son of one of the founders of Haven, reflects this unspoken bias: "It says, 'Beware.' Not 'Be.' Beware means 'Look out. The power is mine. Get used to it'" (87). Deacon Morgan says categorically, "Nobody, I mean nobody, is going to change the Oven or call it something strange. Nobody is going to mess with a thing our grandfathers built" (85). His brother Steward also wonders what the founders "would think of those puppies who wanted to alter words of beaten iron" (99). For the older men, the oven is the solidification of a remembered past.

There is an irony in the disagreement that divides Ruby in two, and it does not lie in the elliptical life of the words on the oven. The irony is that the critically ambiguous words of the patriarch, which have become "worn letters" (6) on the oven, betray one primary virtue of writing—permanence, an ability to "preserve the word from vanishing" (Biakolo 1987:88). In contrast to Walter Ong's assertion that the written word has the "potential of

being lifted and placed on different places, or being resurrected" (1977:156), the written words on the lid of the oven disappear, creating a rift among Ruby's inhabitants. The irony deepens when, in order to prove their own version of the missing word, the twins and the other men call on Esther, the 80-year-old sole surviving member of the Haven settlers, to tell the community what she remembers about the word on the oven. The young people ridicule what they call Esther's "finger memory," peeved "at the notion of remembering invisible words you couldn't even read by tracing letters you couldn't pronounce":

> "Did you see them?" asked the sons.
> "Better than that!" shouted the fathers. "She felt them, touched them, and put her fingers on them!"
> "If she was blind, Sir, we could believe her. That'd be like braille. But some five-year-old kid who couldn't read her own tombstone if she climbed out of her grave and stood in front of it?" (83)

In the heated debate, the fathers invoke the authority of a living witness to validate their interpretation of a text that not even the testimony of a witness can validate. Like the elder Macon Dead in *Song of Solomon* who is betrayed by the power of literacy, Esther's memory and belief in the infallibility of the written word is vitiated by her inability to read. Whatever she thinks she remembers, contrary to the thinking of the men who depend on her testimony, cannot be so easily traced on the impersonal contours of the engraved words—a point the sons emphasize.

The misalignment between what is remembered and what is traced and felt on the fingers marks a paradigm shift that *Paradise* problematizes. The missing letters constitute a problematic space in which Morrison interrogates the permanence or durability of the written word or documented history. Yet she points to the potential of oral histories, even when recounted by someone who "felt them, touched them, put her fingers on them," to be channeled toward a political end. In *Song of Solomon*, there is no obvious special interest within the black community to preserve the story of Shalimar in a particular way (even though the village belle, Sweet, would sarcastically ask Milkman, concerning his great-grandfather's flight, "who'd he leave behind?") (1977:328). What is embedded in the communal consciousness in the earlier novel is both the affirmation of the story of the ancestor and the presence of dissenting or disinterested voices, like Susan Byrd's and Sweet's, who are at liberty to question the usefulness of the Shalimar narrative. In *Paradise,* the men are determined to submerge the

compositeness of communal memory[4]—the missing letters on the iron lid of the oven—in favor of an orchestrated narrative that kills the creative force of the community represented by the imperative verb, "Be."

The leading men of Ruby nurture and retain memory of their humiliation by fellow black men, albeit of a lighter complexion; not content to found a place of their own, they build one that resists any dissent and any form of freedom not made in their own image. In this way, the novel raises a pertinent issue concerning the limits on the use of the memories of the past. Is what is remembered to be a furrow, an impediment to the creative conscious of the present, or a catalytic agent capable of transforming the present? The Methodist priest Richard Misner, a non-native and the rallying point for the younger people, perceives the trouble with Ruby's sense of its past (161):

> Over and over and with the least provocation, they [the citizens of Ruby] pulled from their stock of stories tales about the old folks, their grands and greatgrands; their fathers and mothers. Dangerous confrontations, clever maneuvers. Testimonies to endurance, wit, skill and strength. Tales of luck and outrage. But why were there no stories to tell of themselves? About their own lives they shut up. Had nothing to say, pass on. As though past heroism was enough of a future to live by. As though, rather than children, they wanted duplicates.

It is not that the older men do not have stories of themselves to tell; they have fought as American soldiers in foreign lands, and their courageous decision to move away from Haven to a new land could well translate to stories of heroism. The reason for their silence about themselves is that the Morgans and the other men who share their vision of a community recognize the power of the oral tradition, the political and religious power that a mythic narrative of the past has for coercing conformity.

"Nobody Knew": Ordering Memory in Performance

Yet *Paradise* is far from being a single narrative about Ruby. Events—past and present—constitute keenly agonistic spaces for narrative performance by the key characters. Three main levels of narration operate in the novel: the twins' recollections provide one layer of account; the voices

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[4] Connerton (1989:16-17) suggests that members of a community form communal memory through the interlocking of individual histories.

of Patricia Best, Dovey and Soane Morgan (the two sisters who are married to the twins), Consolata, and Lone DuPres make up varying degrees of a counter-narrative to the twins'; and, finally, an authorial voice acts as the reader's interpreter. Among the three perspectives, the authorial voice constantly redirects the reader to composite narratives. This practice enables the reader to witness the partial or even dubious manipulation of a received tradition by the performing characters. As readers we are in the presence of story-making, but like the characters in the novel we are denied the privilege of omniscience. Nobody knows. Thus, the narrative structure effectively exposes the impracticability of the kind of narrative that the Morgans and the men want to foist on Ruby.

Different narrative moods distinguish the men's narrative from the women's. The Morgan twins' recollections are evoked with a masculine sense of infallibility; they have no reason to doubt the stories their father, Rector, handed down to them. Besides, some of their claims of authority rest on their personal recollection of events. More significantly, the brothers promote their personal memory as representing the community's. Such an enormous leap from the private to the public is achieved with rhetorical forcefulness. One striking example of the twins' controlling performance occurs at the same venue where Esther's "finger memory" is ridiculed. Irked by the young people's boldness in questioning their elders' reverence of the oven, Deacon responds with characteristic specificity, calling on his colleagues to bear witness (85-86, my emphasis):

> *They* [the founding fathers] dug the clay—not you. They carried the hod—not you. They mixed the mortar—not a one of you. They made good strong brick for that oven when their own shelter was sticks and sod. You understand what I'm telling you? And *we* respected what they had gone through to do it. Nothing was handled more gently than the bricks those men—men, hear me? not slaves, ex or otherwise—the bricks those men made. Tell, them, Sargent, how delicate was the separation, how careful we were, how we wrapped them, each and every one. Tell them, Fleet. You, Seawright, you, Harper, you tell him if I'm lying. *Me and my brother* lifted that iron. *The two of us.*

While Deacon recounts what is evidently communal lore, the institution of the oven, we observe a gradual shift from representing the efforts of the patriarchs ("they") to courting the solidarity of his fellow men ("we"), and finally to resting the weight of his entire speech on the action of him and his brother Steward. Deacon does not make a distinction between received tradition and his own personal narrative; for example, he was not at the oven-making ceremony to know the specifics of the construction—digging

the clay, carrying the hod, and so forth. But the reference is necessary in order to reinforce the events in which he is a participant and, now, the narrator.[5] This performance strategy is not lost on Royal Beauchamp (Roy), one of the leading speakers for the youths, who retorts to charges that his peers want to kill the oven's value in this way (86): "It's our history too, sir. Not just yours." Deacon's act is a powerful appropriation of communal history that relies on realigning the key parts of that history to serve the speaker's purpose.

The founding of Haven is remembered and narrated in mythic proportions. This is not surprising; the narrration is from the subject position of Steward who "remembered every detail of the story his father and grandfather told" (95). After the Disallowing, and in righteous anger, Big Papa, who is lame, urges the people on an uninterrupted trek. On the third night, while the other trekkers are resting, Zechariah takes his only son, Rector, far into the woods to pray. In a scene reminiscent of Christ's intense emotional torment in the Garden of Gethsemene,[6] Zechariah remains on his knees, "hum[ming] the sweetest, saddest sounds" in prayer (96), while Rector, like Christ's disciples, cannot keep up and apparently falls asleep. Big Papa's reported opening words of prayer are striking: "My Father, Zechariah here." It echoes the intimacy with God that such biblical figures as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and Christ experienced. In Gethsemene, angels minister to Christ to strengthen Him for the journey to the cross. As for Big Papa and Rector, they hear thundering footsteps and then "a small man, seemlike, too small for the sound of his steps," wearing a "glistening white" shirt appears (97). Zechariah's foot is miraculously restored, and from that point the small man, seen by only Zechariah, leads the families for twenty-nine days until he brings them to the appointed place, preceded by a supernatural sign. Like the ancient Israelites who were led through the desert by fire in the night and cloud by day, Zechariah follows behind the loud footsteps of the unidentified man.

The Disallowing is Ruby's unifying narrative (189): "Afterwards the people were no longer nine families and some more. They became a tight band of wayfarers bound by the enormity of what had happened to them."

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[5] See Bauman 1986:espec. 49-52 on the narrative practice described here. The fact that Bauman's analysis pertains to oral storytelling seems to further vindicate the appropriateness of applying a performance rhetoric in interpreting Deacon's speech. Morrison, too, suggests such a connection by including gestural and emphatic phrases in the twin's story.

[6] Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46.

Further on, the narrator remarks: "Everything anybody wanted to know about the citizens of Haven or Ruby lay in the ramifications of that one rebuff out of many." The unspoken rule not to have any dealings with white people or with blacks with lighter skin emerges from such encounters (189): "Their horror of whites was convulsive but abstract. They saved the clarity of their hatred for the men who had insulted them in ways too confounding for language: first by excluding them, then by offering them staples to exist in that very exclusion."[7] The deep-seated hatred for persons of mixed-race, however, creates a rupture in an otherwise morally persuasive narrative, in that the hatred accounts for the efforts of the leading families to tactfully erase some details of the original persons who began the journey to Haven and, later, to Ruby.

The men of Ruby nurture and retain the memory of their humiliation. They give the incident a name of epic dimensions—the Disallowing—which they use as an instrument for silencing or ostracizing members of the community who are not as dark as those members of the founding families. Patricia Best, the counter-narrative performer in the novel, aptly calls the core families, "8-rock. An abbreviation for eight-rock, a deep deep level in the coal mines" (193). Memories of images of their ideal black women also cast a long shadow over their standards of what is acceptable conduct for women. This shadow is the instigator for the mid-July 1976 attack on the women living in the Convent. The five women there not only live an uncensored life, but are also free of male control (177): "The whole house [the Convent] felt permeated with a blessed malelessness, like a protected domain, free of hunters but exciting too." The xenophobic attitude of the men and their repulsion of the women in the Convent are projected as justified because of the twins' biased rendering of a communal narrative.

Patricia Best: Performing Counter-Memory Through Writing

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[7] At the Disallowing, the people of Fairly refused the trekkers residence but provided them with supplies and money to aid them on their journey. The men, in their pride, left the items where the offer was made and continued on their journey. What the men do not know is that the women sneaked back to gather the food to feed their little children to save them from starving to death. As readers, once given this information, we realize that this is a rupture of the master narrative, or rather, that there exists an alternative narrative, surreptitiously stored in the memory of the women. This narrative remains silenced; yet since half of the members of the 8-R (the women) know it, this alternate narrative has the potential to disrupt the men's narrative.

Set against the endorsed oral and remembered history of Haven and Ruby is a counter (documented) text being assembled by Patricia Best, a school teacher and daughter of Roger Best, one of the nine cofounders of Ruby. Both father and daughter, as well as Patricia's daughter, Billie Delia, are treated as outsiders and morally tainted persons because Roger broke the unspoken code by "marrying a wife with no last name, a wife without people, a wife of sunlight skin, a wife of racial tampering" (197). From her forced position as an outsider among her own people, and given her limited influence as a woman in Ruby's patriarchal society, Patricia initiates an unraveling of the common ancestral narrative as peddled by the powerful male authority in Ruby. Rather than rely on the remembered accounts—known in detail only by the men and performed by the children in place of the nativity story—Patricia chooses to assemble a counter narrative based on written evidence (188):

> The town's official story, elaborated from pulpits, in Sunday school classes and ceremonial speeches, had a sturdy public life. Any footnotes, crevices or questions to be put took keen imagination and the persistence of a mind uncomfortable with oral histories. Pat had wanted proof in documents where possible to match the stories, and where proof was not available she interpreted—freely but, she thought, insightfully because she alone had the required emotional distance. She alone could figure out why a line was drawn through Ethan Blackhorse's name in the Blackhorse Bible and what the heavy ink blot hid next to Zechariah's name in the Morgan Bible.

The written records sought by Patricia present another instance of the novel's parodying of the written text. As the instrument of state power, the written word is the preferred medium for the preservation or execution of authority in the public domain. It is retrievable, "citable," and carefully composed with an eye to its relevance to and applicability in the future.

Patricia's historical credo, on the other hand, is based upon the intimacy of the written word. Far from the public space where the patriarchal narrative holds sway, the personal names on books—those blotted or crossed out, and the individual histories of their families that Patricia's young students produce—are the narrative strands that she uses to question and undermine the master narrative. Moreover, her historical process provides a space for "de-inking" the blotted names for a more expansive and embracing narrative of the founding of Haven and Ruby, a narrative in which the lives and contributions of other citizens who have

been excluded from the "official story" are included.[8]   Of those disadvantaged persons, the most visible (by their invisibility) are the women, known only by their first names and by their affiliation through marriage to the 8-rock families. Pat, contemplating the fate of her mother, Delia, and other women who had died, wonders (187-88):

> Who were these women who, like her mother, had only one name? Celeste, Olive, Sorrow, Ivlin, Pansy. Who were these women with generalized last names? Brown, Smith, Rivers, Stone, Jones. Women whose identity rested on the men they married—if marriage applied: a Morgan, a Flood, a Blackhorse, a Poole, a Fleetwood.

It is significant that in representing the history of her own family in the project, the third person point of view disappears, giving way to Patricia's first person journal entry as she addresses her parents (196-202). This is the only place in the novel where first person narration is sustained, highlighting Patricia's manipulation of the individualistic act of writing in drawing meaning out of the experiences of her parents.

Patricia's genealogical tree therefore restores the several branches that have been pruned in order to feed a sexist vision. For example, the blotted name beside Zechariah's in the Morgan family Bible belongs to Tea, Zechariah's twin brother, and Zechariah's name at birth was Coffee (302). Tea's name is erased as an external act in the process of obliterating his memory as the one who "quite reasonably" complied with the command of two drunk and gun-toting white men to dance. Zechariah had refused and

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[8] The conflict between Patricia's efforts to account for those whose names have been erased from the history of Haven/Ruby seems to validate one of the "disputes" in Jean-François Lyotard's *The Differend* (1998). The book continues Lyotard's discourse on the dialectics of "master" narratives and "local" narratives, here configured as conflict between "little stories" and "History." Using the cultural practices of the Cashinahua, Lyotard states (155): "The little stories received and bestowed names. The great story of history has its end in the extinction of names (particularism). At the end of the great story, there will simply be humanity." In other words, it is in the interest of a hegemonic power to suppress dissent through the elimination of narratives that challenge its authoritarianism. Patricia's action of writing a different narrative falls within Lyotard's argument that "the perpetuation of narratives of origin by means of repeated narratives" is the key to the consolidation of political power (147). But so much has changed since Lyotard's definition of these terms that they have almost become opprobrium in contemporary usage. I believe that Morrison is aware of this change, and that is why she pursues Patricia's agenda guardedly.

was shot in the foot for his disobedience.[9] Ashamed of his twin brother's ready compliance, he invited two other men and together they gathered other families for the trek that led them to Haven, leaving Tea behind. Tea's name is blotted out because his act of obliging the white men with a dance is antithetical to the 8-rock's narrative that they have never bowed to any white person. Nor have their wives. Also, it enhances the process of mythologizing Zechariah as a combined Moses and Christ figure. Similarly, Patricia's performance reveals the lie in the men's aversion to whiteness; they had no problems in using Delia's light complexion to gain access to places from which they would have otherwise been barred (200).

The unraveling of such repressed histories as Zechariah's twin cannot compare with the greater significance that the resurrection of the women's names has for understanding the major sources of conflict in the novel. Women in *Paradise* are the wise silent observers of the men and their puny emotional outbursts. The women see through the hypocrisy and shallowness of the men's thinking, thereby projecting visions of another world, another black world, where the benefits of emancipation have not been still-born or thwarted by the foolishness, acrid hatred, and meanness of their men. While the male founders of Ruby fight doggedly to protect their narcissistic sentiments about their community, and in the process suppress dynamic social forces, the women are perceptive enough to discern the conflicts and dismiss them as mere egotistical sallies.

Consider Dovey, Steward's wife. Alone and thinking about the meeting of the older men and their children about the original words on the iron lids of the oven, she ponders with Christian philosophical flair (93): "'Beware the Furrow of His Brow?' 'Be the Furrow of His Brow?' Her own opinion was that 'Furrow of His Brow' alone was enough for any age or generation. Specifying it, particularizing it, nailing its meaning down, was futile. The only nailing needing to be done had already taken place. On the Cross." Dovey's meditation articulates the novel's larger argument. At first appearing passive, her words are remarkably postmodernist and radical by their resistance to specificity. They are calls for each generation to interpret its past in the manner relevant to it, rather than be slaves to the past.

Except for advocating Dovey's opinion, there is no clear indication about the veracity of the source of the conflict. In Patricia's version, the

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[9] Even this piece of information is inconclusive. In Patricia's view (189), "his [Zechariah's] foot was shot through—by whom or why nobody knew or admitted, for the point of the story seemed to be that when the bullet entered he neither cried out nor limped away." This is yet another example of the novel's careful presentation of composite opinions that show the elusiveness of a single version of communal memory.

words are a "conundrum" deliberately wrought by Zechariah with utmost linguistic ambiguity (195):

> "Beware the Furrow of His Brow," in which the "You" [understood], vocative case, was not a command to the believers but a threat to those who had disallowed them. It must have taken him months to think up those words—just so—to have multiple meanings: to appear stern, urging obedience to God, but slyly not identifying the understood proper noun or specifying what the Furrow might cause to happen or to whom. So the teenagers Misner organized who wanted to change it to "Be the Furrow of His Brow" were more insightful than they knew.

Impressive as Patricia's semantic analysis is, the novel does not allow the reader to surrender to any single perspective on meaning. In the case of the vexatious words, earlier on in the novel, one of the unidentified men who attack the Convent expresses doubts about the source of the words attributed to Zechariah Morgan (7): "It is still not clear where the words came from. Something he heard, invented, or something whispered to him while he slept curled over his tools in a wagon bed. His name was Morgan and who knew if he invented or stole the half-dozen or so words he forged." It is clear here that whatever greatness Zechariah's children and grandchildren attribute to him is not shared by the entire community, not even among the men who accompany the twins to the Convent.

In Ruby, the past remembered by a select few has degenerated into a cold, oppressive ideology of intolerance. Delia Best, Patricia's mother, dies at childbirth because her 8-rock neighbors would rather watch her bleed to death than invite a white doctor into the community to save her. Worse still, her death would mean the elimination of what they consider a blot on Ruby—a light skin complexion. Concealed within the genealogies of many of the leading families are cases of incest committed in order to avoid marrying into a non-8-rock bloodline (196). Following the attack on the women at the Convent and the consequent communal shock and embarrassment at the incident, the closed world of Ruby falls apart. The young people represent this anomie by attacking the words on the oven (298): "No longer were they calling themselves Be the Furrow of His Brow. The graffiti on the hood of the oven now was 'We are the Furrow of His Brow'." It is a tragic epitaph for a grand nationalist design, which in its attempt to express the dignity of a community exchanges that vision for a narrow and constricted one.

A/Lone Voice

It is perhaps in Lone DuPres that Morrison imbues the most penetrating understanding of the hollowness of the men's thinking. She is one of Ruby's oldest citizens, the only midwife and a reputed seer who actually "practices." Like Patricia, Lone is part of the community and yet lives as an outsider who in her ruminations perceives the rapid changes occurring in Ruby. As a little child Fairy DuPres, a teenaged member of the original pilgrims, rescued her. Fairy had found her sitting alone by the door post of a hut, half-starved, with her mother dead and lying in the hut. Against the urging of the men, who felt they did not have enough food to feed another hungry mouth, Fairy refused to abandon the baby and named her Lone because of the circumstance of her rescue.

Although it appears that Lone's interventions at critical situations in the novel are merely coincidental, there is a strong suggestion that she is like the biblical lone "voice of one crying in the wilderness."[10] She is the only person in Ruby who understands the troubled lives of the women who eventually wander into the Convent. She alone understands the haven the women find there. On the night of the nine men's pre-dawn attack on the Convent, Lone stumbles into their conspiracy and rushes to tell the women at the Convent about the plot. But they do not believe her and, desperately, she drives back to wake up her fellow villagers to dissuade the men from carrying out their plan. As she drives from the Convent back to Ruby in her worn single-headlight Oldsmobile, she thinks about the significance of the road (270):

> it was women who walked this road. Only women. Never men. For more than twenty years Lone had watched them. Back and forth, back and forth: crying women, staring women, scowling, lip-biting women or women just plain lost . . . women dragged their sorrow up and down the road between Ruby and the Convent. They were the only pedestrians. But the men never walked the road; they drove it, although sometimes their destination was the same as the women's.

It is this accurate understanding of the fate of the women in her male-dominated society that compels her to try, though unsuccessfully, to stop the men.

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[10] Isaiah 40:3.

More significantly, Lone is the only character who divines the real reason behind the men's attack. At their nocturnal meeting, the men allege that the Convent women are polluting the moral atmosphere of Ruby by their apparent amorous or amoral lifestyle. It does not matter that, unbeknownst to all the men but Steward, Deacon Morgan had in the past had a passionate tryst with Consolata. The men accuse the women of infanticide, mass murders, and the seduction of Ruby's young ones. Lone reverses this grievous narrative by helping the reader make connections with incidents narrated earlier that expose the falsehood of the men's allegations. That the nine men choose to act from sheer ignorance and pigheadedness is one of the high points of this novel; what is frightening is the dangerously sexist underpinning of this misconception. The men consider their impending aggression against the women as a moral necessity (276): "these here sluts out there by themselves never step foot in Church and I bet you a dollar to a fat nickel that they ain't thinking about one either . . . . They meddle. Drawing folks out there like flies to shit and everybody who goes near them is maimed somehow and the mess is seeping back into *our* homes, *our* families." Lone rightly understands the men's actual grudge is that the Convent is a "house full of women. Not women locked safely away from men; but worse, women who chose themselves for company" (276).

As Lone eavesdrops on the men's secret meeting, she critiques the narrative the men have chosen to believe to justify their invasion (275): "Here, when the men spoke of a ruination that was upon them—how Ruby was changing in intolerable ways—they did not think to fix it by extending a hand in fellowship or love. They mapped defense instead and honed evidence for its need, till each piece fit an already polished groove." Lone's observation touches on the central argument of the novel. The men refuse to see the unwinding threads of Ruby's society and fixate instead on the sentimental value of a controlled memory of their past. They are determined, as they rampage the Convent, "that nothing inside or out rots the one all-black town worth the pain" (5). In their misguided representation of themselves as defenders of their society's ideals, they are portrayed as dangerous zealots who cripple the promise of an otherwise lofty enterprise.

Unlike most of Morrison's previous novels, in which she focuses on individuals and their relationship to the community, *Paradise* can be read as a narrative on Ruby. The conflicts in the novel are related to the charting of Ruby's destiny based on how the people perceive or are led to perceive their past and its relationship to their well-being. The "total," domineering memory of the Morgans is pitted against the cold and guided written document of Pat Best. But the presence of Lone DuPres suggests that Morrison's view of this African American society cannot be so easily

perceived through such a straight-laced binary exposition. Lone, the rejected midwife, feared because of her spiritual powers, is the one character who "know[s] something more profound than Morgan's memory or Pat Best's history book. She knew what neither memory nor history can say or record: the 'trick' of life and its 'reason'" (272).

     Paradise is perhaps Morrison's clearest articulation of the fallacy in attributing any form of narrative—oral or written—to either the oppressed or the oppressor. What she suggests is that these positions (subject and form) are not permanent. Between the blacks in Fairly who turn away their darker-skinned freed men and women, and the men of Haven who try to erase the presence of the Bests because of their color, there is no difference. What unites them is power. The oppressive role oral narrative plays in *Paradise* confirms Kerwin Lee Klein's argument in his critique of Lyotard's conceptualization of the terms "master narrative" and "local stories." According to Klein (1995:297), "no special way of telling can guarantee that today's local narrative will not become tomorrow's narrative master. Virtually overnight, the chanting of subaltern protest may modulate into the crack of the historical whip."

     The men's fossilization of Ruby's history through their selected memory recall is rejected because it delegitimizes parallel narratives in the rapidly changing fortunes of Ruby. Significant as orality is in the African American aesthetic, *Paradise* rejects this particular performance by the men by revealing how dangerously malleable the spoken text can be. After the attack on the women, several versions—or "editions," as Pat Best calls them—of what actually happened emerge.   Again, it is Lone who is "unhinged by the way the story was being retold; how people were changing it to make themselves look good" (297). She sees how relatives of the men involved, with their varying exculpatory versions, "supported them [the versions], enhancing, recasting, inventing misinformation" (*idem*). This is one place where Morrison, with an unflinching gaze, shows us the making of an oral narrative and the challenges it poses to a Grand Story. No one in Ruby is able to explain the mysterious disappearance of the Convent women—both the murdered and the survivors; nor does Morrison assist the reader.

     Like the oral tale whose first teller or "author" can hardly be identified, the truth about the fate of the women will never be verified. The narrator consciously leaves the women's disappearance and their later "manifestations" on the mythic plane. Lone refers to the various versions of the Convent attack as "altered truth," but reading the uses the men have made of the event's mystery solidifies the novel's argument about the capacity of the spoken word to authenticate power. Conversely, the

incomplete endorsement of the alternative represented by Patricia Best's genealogical tree project is based on its similar inability to account for the whole truth. Conscientious as she is in accounting for every person in Ruby, she cannot avoid the trappings of individuality that writing fosters, as she adopts a more intimate perspective in representing the lives of her parents. No wonder that, in a strange twist of events, Patricia throws the entire project into a fire. Morrison directs her artistic vision to the unknown quantity in African American experience, the "trick" of life that defies any unitary narrative.

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Dario Fo and Oral Tradition:
Creating a Thematic Context[1]

Antonio Scuderi

> A historical analysis, especially a critical one, of an actor's techniques is impossible if the actor does not have "poetics." It is by means of "poetics"—in the themes by which it is developed—that the "techniques" acquire depth and meaning and become a "style." Totò[2] has a poetics that is rich in themes and motifs that weave and dovetail, presenting a whole and complex vision that is always identifiable as being "Totò's." (Fo 1991a:9)[3]

Dario Fo, recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize for Literature, presents himself as a champion of popular culture. He does this in part by adapting modes of performance used in oral traditions and in various forms of *teatro minore*[4] as his medium, and by emphasizing oral and oral-derived performance over the literary text. Fo was born on March 24, 1926, in the town of San Giano in the Lombardy region of northern Italy. After moving several times, his family settled in the town of Porto Valtraglia near Lake

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[1] Adapted with permission from *Dario Fo and Popular Performance* (Scuderi 1998).

[2] Totò (Antonio De Curtis, 1898-1967) began his career on the Neapolitan vaudeville stage and starred in many Italian movies, including Pasolini's *Hawks and Sparrows*. He is one of Fo's greatest influences and the subject of one of his books (1991a).

[3] All translations are by the author with permission from Compagnia Teatrale Fo Rame (C.T.F.R.).

[4] Fo uses the term *teatro minore* to refer to all forms of performance that are considered second-rate or marginal, deriving from or primarily informed by popular traditions. Included in this category are popular farces, variety theater, clown shows, and comedy films of the silent screen. See further Scuderi 2000.

Maggiore. The oral tradition was very much a part of the local culture during his childhood, and he remembers various forms of popular entertainment, such as puppet shows and professional storytellers. But his greatest influence would come from the local storytellers he refers to as *fabulatori*.[5] These tended to be fishermen, glassblowers, or itinerant vendors who told tales while they worked or as a pastime. His grandfather was himself adept at telling tales and known locally for his pungent wit, for which he was nicknamed Bristin, meaning "pepper seed." Bristin would use his verbal art as a means of drawing clients to his cart as he sold his wares, and would often take young Dario along with him. The *fabulatori* were Fo's first and greatest influence, and his earliest performances, back in 1940, were stories and sketches improvised around the tales he had heard from them.

Over time Fo developed his *giullarata*,[6] a one-man show performed in dialects, which in Italy were historically the predominantly spoken language of the people. It is a type of performance that, due to its basis in the principles of oral art, is closely related to other oral traditions around the world. Ruth Finnegan's description of African narrative traditions, for example, may be used to describe Fo's *giullarata* as well (1970:501-2):

> Stories are often enacted in the sense that, to a greater or smaller degree, the speech and gestures of their characters are imitated by the narrator, and the action is largely exhibited through dialogue in which the storyteller directly portrays various characters in turn. It is true that such enactment of character is not sustained or complete, that straight narration, as well as dramatic dialogue, is used to communicate the events of the story, and that only one real "actor" could be said to be involved. . . .

Fo has come to be associated with the themes of an interpretive code he has developed, and, as the epic performer whose personality is ever-present in a performance, he embodies them as well. They define his *poetics*. In his studies of oral performance and oral-derived texts, John Miles Foley (1991, 1995) discusses how interpretation remains, to some

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[5] *Fabulatore* (pl. -*i*) derives from the Latin *fabula*, meaning "fable" or "tale."

[6] Fo termed his signature solo performance the *giullarata* (pl. -*e*), based on the Italian word *giullare* (pl. –*i*). *Giullare* is a derivative of the Latin *ioculator* (joker, jester), as are the French *jongleur* and the English *juggler*. In the Middle Ages, the *giullari* were itinerant players, mostly of the lower classes, who worked within the oral tradition. They included a wide variety of performers: musicians, dancers, acrobats, tumblers, jugglers, actors, mountebanks, storytellers, and so forth.

degree, open to the individual receiver, while at the same time maintaining a certain degree of homogeneity that is shared by all receivers. It is the tradition itself that provides the homogeneous quality and encodes the performance frame with meaning that goes beyond the literal level.[7] Words or units of utterance within the frame are invested with special significance that is understood within the tradition: "That is, the traditional phrase or scene or story-pattern has an indexical meaning vis-à-vis the immanent tradition; each integer reaches beyond the confines of the individual performance or oral-derived text to a set of traditional ideas much larger and richer than any single performance or text" (Foley 1995:6).

Not working within a living tradition, Dario Fo has devised his own means for defining his frame and providing a code that aims beyond the primary meaning of a given performance. Besides using an extended prologue and metanarrational commentary to define the frame, he has succeeded in creating a code of meaning peculiar to his theater. He has accomplished this by repeating certain themes in his workshops, interviews, and writings, and in his prologues and in his plays. For many members of the audience, the presentation of a given theme automatically carries with it references to the same and/or related themes that run throughout Fo's theatrical code.

Many of these themes fall into his Gramscian-derived view of popular versus official culture. One overriding theme is that the dominant class has managed to appropriate what it wanted from popular culture, stripped it of its dignity and validity, and presented it back to the people as substandard and inferior.[8] As part of this process, the dominant class has retold history, presenting it in such a way as to suit its own sense of purpose. Fo's theater works towards rectifying this bastardization of history and denigration of popular culture by presenting history from a subaltern point of view and by putting back what official culture conveniently left out. His mission is to restore the dignity of the downtrodden masses with his own interpretation of history: "The duty of every intellectual is to reconstruct popular culture, which has been stolen and falsified, and give it back to the people" (Fo 1992a:76). Many themes that turn up in his plays—the abuse of power, the myth of the superiority of official culture, the subversive power of humor, official sobriety versus folk laughter, official religion versus popular

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[7] For more on Dario Fo's performance frame, see Scuderi 1996a and 1998.

[8] This theme is expounded in the prologue and performance of the medieval poem "Rosa fresca aulentissima," which Fo often used as the first sketch of *Mistero buffo*.

religion, the inhumanity of human beings towards each other—are charged with Fo's sociopolitical outlook and may be all subsumed under a greater Marxist-Gramscian rubric.[9]   These themes encode a Fo performance with meaning. By repeating a circumscribed set of themes in various contexts over the years, they have come to constitute an interpretive system. Like the "units of utterances that constitute the idiom" in traditional oral narrative, those elements in a Fo performance that refer to his code of themes "are charged with associative values particular to the event taking place" (Foley 1995:8).

Fo creates an interpretive code that informs his performances through the associative value of the code's various elements. In his own theory of performance, this code of "themes and motifs that weave and dovetail" constitutes his *poetics*, which defines and identifies him as a performer. For the present study, whereas *themes* name the messages or meanings of a narrative, *motifs* should be understood as the narrative elements that contribute to the plot or content. This definition of motif in folklore includes the quality of transferability across cultures and across genres (Ben-Amos 1980). Our concern is that a motif may be transferred by Fo across texts and performances. For example, in his prologues Fo often drags powerful figures down to his level of popular entertainer by insinuating that they are fellow performers. He has done this on numerous occasions in reference to former President Reagan, an erstwhile movie star. In his introduction to "The American Technocrat" in *Mistero buffo* (1977a), he suggests that former President Ford's unfortunate public trips and stumbles are in reality intentional gags and refers to Ford as a fellow clown. And in the prologue to "The Pope and the Witch," he does the same with reference to Pope John Paul II: "We theater folk should be more generous towards each other" (1992b:i). The import of each such instance is enhanced by its associative value, that is, by its appearance in other contexts, and by its role in comprising a theme that in turn serves to define Fo's *poetics*. The humorous value is heightened by repetition as well, much like the signature jokes or shtick of famous comedians and comic actors.   In order to illustrate the point, we will trace several themes and motifs from various sketches of his first *giullarata*, *Mistero buffo* (initially performed in 1969), which were later used in the development of one of his last *giullarate*, *Johan Padan* (initially performed in 1991). *Johan Padan Discovers America* is a *giullarata* about the adventures of a northern Italian antihero, first in Europe during the

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[9] See Scuderi 1996b and 1998.

Inquisitions, then on Columbus's fourth voyage, and finally in America with indigenous peoples.[10]

The Tyrannical Father and the Loving Son

The overriding theme of Fo's theater concerns the domination of official power over subaltern cultures. Subsumed under this greater rubric, and imbued with Gramscian overtones, are a myriad of themes and motifs that Fo strings together during the course of a performance or the development of a text. These themes and motifs carry with them added meaning from the contexts of the other performances and texts in which they appear. The primary theme, "official power versus popular culture," encompasses two very strong supporting themes that concern the figures of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The paternal God serves simultaneously as a device for justifying the authority of those in power and as an instrument to terrorize the downtrodden. Fo has consistently questioned the validity of the paternal God-figure of the First Testament. This work would suggest that the Church, as part of the ruling power structure, presents Him as a fickle and authoritative tyrant, distant from the sympathy of ordinary people. God the Father has served both as a symbol of and as a tool for an official culture that has historically used "cosmic terror" (Bakhtin 1984:335) and the fear of divine retribution as a means of oppression, while justifying its power and privileges as being divinely ordained. Fo discusses this issue in the prologue to "The Massacre of the Innocents" (1977b:28):

> And why so much hatred on the part of the people towards God the Father? . . . Because the Father is representative of what those in power have taught the people. It is He who made divisions, dispensing lands, power, and privileges to a certain group of people, and trouble, desperation, submission, humiliation, mortification to the other part of the population.

While attempting to subvert the Church and its official dogma, Fo concurrently champions the cause of popular religion. His interpretation of popular religion is not only based on a historical aversion to the authoritative patriarchal God, but also asserts an affinity on the part of the folk with Jesus Christ: "That is why God the Father is so hated, because he represents those in power. It is He who bestows crowns and privileges; while Jesus Christ is

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[10] The protagonist's name is not pronounced like the German *Johann*, but rather /žo'an/, in Lombard dialect.

loved, for it is He who comes to earth to try and give back spring and above all dignity" (1977b:28-29). This Father/Son dichotomy and its social implications is at play in many of the elements that comprise Fo's overall thematic-motivic code and his *poetics*.

The Disgusted Soldier and the Warrior Angel

There is a motif in "The Massacre of the Innocents" that we might label as "the disgusted soldier." The sketch begins with two of Herod's soldiers carrying out his bloody decree to slaughter all male children under the age of two. One of the soldiers has a change of heart, becomes disgusted with his actions, and refuses to continue the heinous mission. He tries to explain to his colleague that it is not a matter of cowardice, attempting to draw a distinction between justifiable acts committed during war and senseless bloodshed. In this case, the motif in the published text is well developed and closely corresponds to its forms in various performances (1977b:32, ellipses in the original):

FIRST SOLDIER	Wait, I think I'm going to puke.
SECOND SOLDIER	What do you expect? You eat like a cow: onions, salted goat and then... Come on, there's an inn on the corner, I'll buy you a drink.
FIRST SOLDIER	It has nothing to do with eating! It's this slaughter, this carnage of children, it turns my stomach.
SECOND SOLDIER	If you knew you were so delicate, you shouldn't have gotten into this profession.
FIRST SOLDIER	I became a soldier to kill men. Enemies.
SECOND SOLDIER	And perhaps to bang some women while you were at it, eh?
FIRST SOLDIER	Well that's understood, but enemy women.
SECOND SOLDIER	And slaughter their livestock.
FIRST SOLDIER	The enemies' livestock.

SECOND SOLDIER	Burn their houses, kill the elderly, the chickens, the children . . . . I know, I know, "enemy children."
FIRST SOLDIER	Yes, even children. But in war! In war it's not a dishonor . . . .

The same motif appears in the first act of *Johan Padan*. The native people rebel over the continuous abduction and enslavement of their fellow tribesmen. When they try to stand up for their rights, the protagonist, Johan, witnesses their slaughter at the hands of the Europeans (*JP-V*)[11]:

> . . . out from the ships came the cannon and began firing against these warriors. Pow! Boom! People screaming, torn apart, guts hanging out, heads blown off. We were a bunch of imbeciles! Oh, let's be clear on this, I'm no sissy, I'm not weak of heart. At eighteen I was with the Lanzichenecchi [mercenary troops] between Brescia and Bergamo. I had the heart of a lion and I slaughtered men, but men who wanted to slaughter me. But these people were naked, always smiling, immaculate, the children laughing. And we'd catch them, throw them in the air, cut them in two, disembowel women. Scoundrels! I wanted to puke!

This scene, present in all the versions of *Johan Padan* used in this study, makes use of the "disgusted soldier" motif to define the horrors of military crimes and to establish the viciousness of the Europeans towards the indigenous people. Johan, as the disgusted soldier, while not protesting too strongly, retains some semblance of humanity and thus the sympathy of the audience.

Another motif from *Mistero buffo* may be labeled "the warrior angel." Marisa Pizza reports on Fo's prologue in a recorded performance of the sketch, "The Passion of Mary at the Cross." After telling how the Devil will be punished by having his tail cut off by the angel Gabriel, Fo digresses into a discussion on the mythical violence of archangels, "always going around armed," reminding us of Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise (Pizza 1996:233). This iconic motif is a strong statement in support of the thematic

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[11] Citations from and references to the various versions of *Johan Padan a la descoverta de le Americhe* will be indicated as follows: *JP-I* (iconography), the published facsimile of the original iconography painted by Fo (Fo 1992c); *JP-T* (text), the published text of the play in dialect with an Italian translation (Fo 1992d); *JP-A* (audio), the recording on audio cassettes of a performance in Pordenone on December 12, 1991 (Fo 1991b); and *JP-V* (video), the recording on video cassette of a performance in Milan on April 24, 1992 (Fo 1992e).

association of official religion and official power.[12]   In the second act of *Johan Padan*, when Johan tries to teach Christianity to the Indians, Fo introduces the same motif, dovetailing it with the violence previously established by "the disgusted soldier." After trying in vain to convey why Adam and Eve felt shame for their nakedness (since the Indians themselves wore few or no clothes), he describes their expulsion from the garden (*JP-T*:87-88):

> And how angry they were when I told them how the angel of God descended with a flaming sword to chase Adam and Eve out of terrestrial paradise.
> They yelled: "For sure that angel was one of those Spanish bastards!"
> Then they asked me: "What was this terrestrial paradise like?"
> "Well, it was a sweet and beautiful place, much like this."
> "Therefore the god didn't kick us out, since we're still here!"
> "I guess they were right!"

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[12] An angel armed with an enormous saber guards the manger in the send-up of the nativity scene in "The First Miracle of the Christ Child," from *The Story of the Tiger* (Fo 1980:86).

The symbol of the paternal God as a terrorizing force, associated with the abuses of official power, was already present in the "Massacre of the Innocents," as the grieving mother screams: "'Terrible, pitiless God!' I yelled. 'This killing is your doing! It was you who wanted this sacrifice in order to allow your son to descend. One thousand children butchered for the sake of one of yours. A river of blood for one little cup'" (1977b:36). The weaving of motifs becomes intricate, for later in the religion lesson in *Johan Padan* the Indians express their anger toward God, admonishing Him in a similar way: "'Oh cruel and evil God!' they yelled, 'When your son called to you, "Father help me!", why did you pretend not to hear and stayed there playing the guitar with the angels? You left him to die like a dog!' And so crying, they threw stones into the sky at Him!" (*JP-T*:91)

Thus the motif of "the disgusted soldier" comes to *Johan Padan* already heavily charged by this former context. Fo uses it to establish the cruelty of the Europeans in the New World, and this information in turn works to inform the motif of "the warrior angel" when he is presented in the religion lessons. When the image of the archangel is introduced in *Johan Padan* it is given new meaning by its association, in historical context, with the violence and cruelty of the conquerors, creating a powerfully ironic icon that embodies the abuses of both official power and official religion.[13]

Feminine Beauty

In support of the general theme that "sex is human" or "sex is not evil" (in opposition to official religious morals), Fo takes delight in describing feminine beauty in his performances. In "The Birth of the *Giullare*," the *jongleur*-narrator tells of his former life as a poor farmer. In the description of his wife in the written text, we find a motivic formula to be contextualized and developed in performance: "She's sweet my wife, white skin with two round breasts. She has a gentle gait, like a young girl when she walks" (1977b:72). In performance this brief sketch becomes an elaborate description of feminine beauty, which includes firm breasts "that would come together like bells when she ran" (1977a). It also includes a stately manner of walking with perfect posture (among Fo's favorite routines), which in performance is accompanied by his extraordinary mime.

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[13] The original text for *Johan Padan* was a series of drawings and paintings (*JP-I*), an example being the image of the expulsion included in this essay. In performance, Fo kept the iconographic text on a lectern and would occasionally refer to it as a mnemonic device.

(The image of balancing the glass while walking comes up in each of the examples of the motif's variations that follow.)   Here is one instance (1977a):

> . . . she walked like a queen. You could place a small glass filled with water on her behind as she walked by, not a drop would be spilt!

There are various descriptions of feminine beauty in *Johan Padan*. In the published text, when Johan encounters a new tribe of indigenous people who have come to pay a visit to his host tribe, he comments on the women: "Their women were beautiful, I had never seen any so beautiful" (*JP-T*:33). Once again, this statement in the text stands as a formula that Fo contextualizes in performance with elaborately sensual descriptions, accompanied by gestural language conveying the stately walk:

> . . . what magnificent girls! Big, with long black hair to their knees. What breasts! Their breasts would laugh! Buttocks like balconies, such that if you were to place a glass of water on their buttocks as they walked, not a drop would they spill! (*JP-A*)

> . . . with girls, the most beautiful women I had ever seen in the world! With long flowing hair down to their knees, breasts that would emerge, magnificent buttocks, such that if you placed a glass of water on their buttocks, they could walk without spilling a drop! (*JP-V*)

The "sex is not evil" theme, supported by its motifs and informed by the general thematic-motivic code, occurs often in *Johan Padan* as the adventurer makes love to his girlfriend back in Venice and to the uninhibited native girls, even two at a time (*JP-T*:36).   Each time this theme is introduced in performance, it is supported by elements of the "feminine beauty" motif. It is finally introduced with powerful subversive impact, once again, when Johan tries to explain Christianity to the Indians. He is forced to placate them by presenting Mary Magdalene as Jesus' lover, thus presenting Christ in a human light (*JP-V*):

> How happy they were to hear how He would raise the dead, embrace children. . . .   The only thing they didn't like was this going around praying with the twelve apostles, all men. They were a little suspicious, so I added Mary Magdalene: "He had a lover named Magdalene." They loved this image of a beautiful woman covered only by her long hair. [He mimes Magdalene flashing her breasts from under her hair.]

> "They must have always been in their hammock making love!"

"No. The Gospel doesn't mention it."

"Then what were they doing in the hammock, catching a breeze? They were making love! How can a woman like Magdalene not make love with Jesus, and he, the son of God, not make love to her? He did make love, by God! Like a god!"
[Audience applauds]

"Then why doesn't the Gospel say so?"

"They must have torn out the pages!"

The motif of "feminine beauty," associated with lovemaking and presented in a positive light, is used various times throughout *Johan Padan*. By the time Fo gets to Mary Magdalene, it seems natural that she also be depicted in this mode. The motif helps to present her as an extraordinary woman, worthy to be the lover of the son of God. This, in turn, serves to underscore the human aspect of Jesus. The two themes, "sex is not evil" and "Christ was human," dovetail and support the positive popular connotations associated with Fo's Jesus, the complementary converse of the authoritative and distant God. As would be expected in Fo's schema, the Native Americans, as subalterns and victims of the European conquerors, readily accept Jesus while reacting to God the father with suspicion and aversion.

Coming from a standpoint deeply rooted in Gramscian thought, Fo believes that "all art, even the most aristocratic, always derives from an art that was born of the folk" (1993). Although at times he may have carried this point of view to extremes, his perspective on popular performance is essential for an understanding of his theatrical art. The thematic-motivic code explored in this study is but one aspect of Fo's theater that is akin to popular performance forms. As indicated above, his *giullarata* also represents an adaptation of formulaic-based performance, in which he contextualizes preconceived ideas without memorizing a text.[14] This was demonstrated at his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes" ("Against Jongleurs of Irreverent Speech"). In the formal and official context of the Nobel Prize, specifically awarded for "literature," Fo made a strong statement about the important role popular culture has played in his theater through his rejection of a written text and the homage he paid to the oral tradition. Instead of a formal, written text of his speech, he passed out a series of cartoon-like drawings that amounted to a mnemonic device, signaling a series of formulas based on preconceived ideas to be

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[14] See Scuderi 1996a and 1998.

contextualized—that is, actualized as a performance. With the validation of the Nobel Prize for Literature, along with his worldwide popularity and influence in performance circles, Fo has succeeded in a very real way in raising the status of the oral tradition to the level of literary prestige, and has helped in redefining the concept of "literature" to comprehend oral tradition and performance.

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Cycle Construction and Character Development in Central Algonkian Trickster Tales

Andrew Wiget

Perhaps no character from Native American folklore is more widely recognized than the Trickster. The stability of certain Native American Trickster episodes such as The Dancing Ducks/Prairie Dogs, The Eye-Juggler, and The Bungling Host are so well known to scholars of Native American folklore that, despite the lack of motif or tale-type indexes for native American folklore, there is little hesitation about recognizing them as tale types.[1] However, the ease with which such tales can be combined into cycles or fragmented or compressed into motifs raises important formal and structural questions about the nature of these familiar tales.

At the same time, Trickster has been subject to a variety of interpretations. Those who employ cultural-thematic or structural analysis in response to the gnomic character of individual tales tend to find in Trickster a static, structural foil who facilitates cultural critique through an inversion of cultural values (see Dundes 1964; Wiget 1987, 1990). Others point out that some episodes seem to conclude with acts of self-reflection and evaluation that, coupled with Trickster's beneficial transformative actions, appear to mark his growth and development as a model of self-realization (Jung 1972; Babcock 1975). One can also sketch, albeit quite roughly, the relationship between these questions of interpretation and debates about the historical priority of Trickster. To the degree that the

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[1] The closest published analogue to a motif and tale-type index of Native American tales is the classification prepared by Stith Thompson for his *Tales of the North American Indians* (1966), which was obviously meant as only a preliminary guide to the vast ethnographic and folkloric literature. A close examination of Boas 1916 indicates the distribution of many types along the Northwest Coast. Fisher prepared the first comparative study of Algonkian materials (1946), though she focused on northeastern, not central Algonkians.

developmental model sees Trickster as evolving from undifferentiated Trickster/Transformer to differentiated Culture Hero, it conflates a model of "progress" with a model of cultural evolution, thus suggesting the historical priority of the Trickster over the Culture Hero. Structuralist interpretations, on the other hand, appear to presume at least a parity between the two figures who serve as mutual foils, or, in the extreme, the priority of the Culture Hero who establishes the conventions against which the Trickster must rebel. The attractiveness of the developmental model for many is that it offers a representation of the trickster more complex, and thus more aesthetically (and perhaps morally) satisfying to some Westerners, than Trickster as simple structural foil.

Overlooked in both interpretive tendencies are the material conditions on which they are based. Polyvalent structural interpretations require the isolated and decontextualized presentation of a single tale as a condition for ambiguity and polysemy; in its most expansive application, this has been extended to considerations of variants of a single tale-type. Conversely, the developmental sociological or psychological interpretation depends on the context of other tales performed in a cycle to create the conditions for defining Trickster's emerging character; the key source here is the Winnebago Trickster cycle published by Radin (itself an anomaly, since it was written by one Winnebago in syllabary from dictation by the informant, not recorded from an oral performance), together with Jung's commentary on it. Moreover, almost invariably the sources for both the structural and the developmental interpretive traditions have been published translations of texts. The fundamental question is whether these conclusions about the nature of the Trickster figure, dependent as they are upon the material conditions of the received texts upon which they are based, can be sustained by an examination of trickster cycles as actually performed.

With few exceptions, such as Bloomfield's recording of Maggie Achenam's Cree Trickster cycle performance discussed here—the performance that first alerted me to these questions—the publication of trickster materials has usually taken the form of collections of single tales, regardless of whether they were originally performed singly or as parts of cycles. The methodological problem posed by the present inquiry is how to assemble a coherent corpus of trickster cycles that represent a valid record of performances, which can then be made available for analysis. In this respect, the methodology proposed and demonstrated with great effect by Dell Hymes proves useful. Hymes has shown that utterance-initial particles are customarily used in a number of American Indian oral narrative traditions to mark stylistic and structural units of narration. Adequate linguistic transcriptions would record these linguistic markers, and, coupled

with necessary contextual information such as the informant's name and the place and date of performance, provide the data necessary to reconstruct cycles-as-performed from published materials that had been dismembered by the editor for his own purposes of analysis or representation. This article reconstructs and analyzes nineteen Central Algonkian Trickster cycle performances to provide a valid performative basis for understanding some important aspects of Central Algonkian narratology and for testing historical and thematic interpretations of the Native American trickster.

The Structure of a Trickster Episode

A Central Algonkian Trickster story has six specific elements, the identification of which make possible an aesthetic appreciation of the structure of the tale on the part of the audience, while at the same time providing the creative resources with which the raconteur can work. These are: (1) an Opening Formula, which differs between cycle-initial and cycle-internal stories; (2) an Entitlement Address; (3) an elaborate construction of episode into linguistically Marked Scenes; (4) an Exclamatory Element; (5) an Explanatory Element; and (6) a Closing Formula. The Entitlement Address, the Exclamatory Element, and the Explanatory Element are in this sense not absolutely necessary for maintaining audience engagement or the momentum of the narrative, though, given the frequency of their occurrence, their presence would seem to be preferred.

Opening Formula

The Opening Formula of Central Algonkian Trickster stories is very similar to those generally associated with Trickster stories, whatever their provenance. The Maggie Achenam cycle provides many typical examples:

> Once upon a time Wishketchak[2] got ready and went forth. Then he saw a

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[2] The name of the Central Algonkian Trickster is variously transcribed as *Menapus*, *Nenabuc*, *Nenabush*, *Nanabush*, *Nanabusha*, *Nenabojo*, *Wenabojo*, except among the Cree, where he is known as *Wishketchak*, *Wisahketchak*, or *Wisateketchak*. The name of the class of Central Algonkian spirits is variously transcribed as *manido*, *manitou*, or *manito*. I have preserved these variant spellings throughout the article.

buffalo. It started to run away. (Bloomfield 1934:279:l. 1)[3]

Or:

As he walked along, he saw some geese. The geese tried to get away.
(*ibid.*:289, l. 112)

Or:

He was hungry; he had nothing to eat. He decided to try and kill some
game. He saw four buffalos; he had no way of killing them. (*ibid.*:l. 121)

None of these openings is very complex, but they are formulaic nevertheless.
The standard pattern requires four parts. The first part is a direct
reference to Trickster, which in the Opening Formula for the first episode of
the cycle, and hence for the cycle itself, takes the form of the trickster's
proper name or title; for cycle internal episodes this reference is made
deictically. Of the eleven Ojibwa texts for which Performance Closing
Formulae were recorded, the Performance Opening Formula mentioned
Trickster by name, while subsequent internal episodes used only a
pronominal reference at the episode Opening Formula. As self-evident as
this correlation may appear upon reflection, it provides another reference
point for reconstructing performances from previously recorded texts that
the transcriber/editor may have divided for his own purposes (cf. Kendall
1980). Where proper names are used at internal boundaries between
episodes within a cycle, the narrator has also deepened the boundary by
adding information that establishes a strong temporal or spatial link between
episodes (a very unusual practice):

> And so *there* for a long while continued *Nanabushu*. Now, once on a time
> *to another place* moved *Nanabushu* and his wife. (Jones 1917:429, italics
> added)

The full name reference then, seems to alternate with the deepened boundary
and to vary with the pronominal reference. The Lac du Flambeau cycle (Oj
D; see Table 1 below for sources and abbreviations) and the Bois Fort (Oj
A) cycle both consistently employ the deepened boundary/pronominal

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[3] Line numbers in citations or quotations refer to the line numbers originally
ascribed to the text in the original publication, and not to line numbers as defined by the
author of this paper in reconstructing those original texts according to the methods
outlined herein.

reference contrast, the first leaning more toward deep boundary and full name, the second toward pronominal reference. Oj E seems equally divided. The same contrast pattern appears in Plains Cree, Menomini A, and less obviously in Menomini B. In the Timiskaming Algonkian cycle, the exact correlation between Full Name Reference Cycle Opening Formula and the Cycle Closing Formula obtains, but the contrast does not appear at all strongly in the internal episodes.

The second part of the Opening Formula is a verb of indefinite movement, that is, goal-less motion without an explicit destination or motivation. The Cree preference is for *pimihtaw*, "to walk along," and in these stories it seldom occurs with nouns that have locative forms. Consequently, Trickster can never be said to be going anywhere in particular. And if the formulaic nature of these openings were not sufficient to make this clear, the verb of motion was frequently reduplicated, a grammatical form that commonly marks the recurrent, habitual, or perpetual character of an activity in many languages, not only Native American ones. Hence, several stories show *pa-pamuhtaw* ("he was continually walking along") or *sa-sipwahtaw* ("he continually went from place to place") (Bloomfield 1934:282, l. 33; 292, l. 144; 292, l. 151).

The third part is an Encounter Verb. Here the Cree prefer *wapimaw*, "to see," though another verb may be used when the story makes it more appropriate. In the case of the Sun Dance of the flies in the buffalo skull, for instance, it is *pahtam*, "to hear." Nevertheless, the verb reflects an encounter not resulting from prior intention, at least not in the beginning of a tale or episode.

The fourth part is the denomination of the antagonist, done simply and most frequently by saying, "He saw (buffalo, geese, a fox, and so on). A fifth (very infrequent) part is a statement of Trickster's condition: "Now it was winter; he was very cold" or "He was hungry; he had nothing to eat" (Bloomfield 1934:279, l. 12; 289, l. 121). Moreover, these conditions are not specific enough to motivate a particular story; instead they provide the narrator a chance to select one story of a particular kind, for example those associated with hunger, and so permit the thematic sequencing stories. These conditions, however, are so much a part of trickster's character—he is perpetually underfed and oversexed—that they seldom if ever seem to be the consequences of the outcomes of previous stories, which may be a way of saying the same thing. In sum, the Opening Formula makes clear that Trickster is purposeless. He does not go to some particular place in order to accomplish some particular end. Instead, he wanders into a non-place and transforms it into a place by making something happen there.

Entitlement Address

The second element in the Trickster stories is very interesting in a number of ways, not the least of which is the fact that it has been overlooked. This is the familiar form of address that Trickster employs when he first meets his antagonist. Almost without fail he will address the other animals as "Little Brother" (Plains Cree, *Nisim*; Ojibwa, *Nicima*; Menomini, *Nehsi'meh*; Fox, *Nesi'i*). The form of address is also found in the English translations of stories from the Eastern Cree and the Wisconsin Ojibwa, cycles for which no Native text was provided in the publication. The familial form refers to the belief that Trickster was among the firstborn of the Earth, and that his brothers were the ancestors of the animals (Jones 1917:75). This kinship link makes him their uncle and establishes the possibility of the joking relationship among them. A similar situation is found in other Native American oral literatures, in which Trickster addresses everyone as "cross-cousin," as in Kiowa or Apache, for instance (Parsons 1929, Evers 1978). Interpreting this address as motivating a joking relationship would explain the compulsive trickery that dominates Trickster's relationship with other creatures. Further, as David Turner has pointed out, Cree society is clearly "inside/outside" oriented along lines of primary brotherhood denominated as "*nisim*" (1978:68). Indeed, if the naming provides a kind of entitling, like that of which Crocker speaks, we can interpret trickery as a form of compelled status negotiation and consequently understand plot as a narrative that moves from ambiguity of encounter to clarity of outcome.[4]

There is some verbatim evidence that relationships with Trickster are compelled relationships. One of Speck's Timiskaming Algonquin informants told him that Trickster "had the power to make everything in creation answer him when he spoke to it; trees, water, animals, and all other little creatures would reply when he spoke" (1915:21). This compulsion is clearly manifest in the narratives by the fear-and-flight response that some of the antagonists display when Trickster hails them as "Little Brother." When

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[4] Dundes (1971:180-81) observes that "while American Indian trickster tales, like African trickster tales, do employ deceit and deception motifemes (Dundes 1964:72-75), the friendship frame is conspicuously absent. Similarly, the violation of a contract is not a common structural sequence in American Indian tales." All of this may indeed be true, but it misses the point because it does not directly address the kinship entitlement.

Trickster first meets the pack of wolves with whom he will later run, they warn each other, "Go you not so very close, for he wishes to say something to you" (Jones 1917:73). Before Trickster can even address the caribou he will later kill, the animal is on to him: "Without fail he will have something to say to me" thought the Caribou. "I think I will draw him on" (Jones 1907:11). If there were any doubt about the fatal consequences of conversing with Trickster, the Beaver in the Eastern Cree cycle eliminates them (Skinner 1911:84):

> He saw one beaver swimming about. "Come here, brother", he said, for he was the older brother of all the animals. The beaver refused to go. "Why do you call me?", said the Beaver, "when you only wish to kill me?"

The purported familial relationship can also provide opportunities for levity, however, as when animals begin to think too deeply that there might be some substance to the ruse. In the Lac du Flambeau version Trickster moves immediately from the familial address to explain to the moose that "'I've been looking all over for you! They told me you were here. Come here! We were brought up by different people when we were small babies, so it's a long time since I last saw you. You wouldn't remember me.' The Moose thought maybe Wenebojo was telling the truth, so he went up to him." (Barnouw 1977:24). This, it turns out, is to be a very brief encounter between longlost relatives. Wenebojo proceeds to tell the story of one brother who murdered the other, and while acting out the story, slays the Moose. In the Eastern Cree version of the same story, it is a dull-witted Bear who remarks, "I didn't know you were a brother of mine" (Skinner 1911:86).

The widespread occurrence of this element and its function as establishing a basis for compelled negotiating of status through trickery seem to make it an essential component. Just as Trickster's inherent condition of unsatisfied appetite is not explicitly stated but is nevertheless understood, so too it appears that even when the "Little Brother" address does not occur, the acknowledged relationship that underlies it is motivating the interactions in the tale.

An interesting note along this line is the difficulty encountered by Charles Hockett (1964) in reconstructing Proto-Central Algonquian kinship terms. Twenty-four different kinship terms were reconstructed, most confidently. The two doubtful ones were "cross-uncle" (*/nesihSa/ or */nehSe.nha/) and "younger siblings" (*/nehSi.ma/ or /nehSi.me.nha/ or /nehSi.me.hsa/). The longer forms are Proto-Ojibwa and Proto-Potowatomi,

the shorter are Proto-Cree, Proto-Menomini, and Proto-Shawnee, and, with the diminutive */-e.h-/, Proto-Fox. What makes this pair peculiar is that the successful reconstruction of these terms required the postulation of a Proto-Central Algonkian consonantism, */-hs-/, which literally was found in only these two terms. This scenario suggests a strong, yet unconventional relationship between the two terms. The transformation of "cross-uncle" (Trickster's relationship to other animals who are offspring of the first-born family, which included Trickster) into "Brother" is accomplished through what Lounsbury (1964) has called the "skewing rule."

Putting aside for a moment the more complex discussion of story construction, we can take up the three concluding elements of Algonkian Trickster stories.

Exclamatory Element

As customary as it is for these stories to begin with some direct address that engages the protagonists, it is equally stereotyped that the stories conclude with some parting words that serve to define the relationship of Trickster to his actions. These closing words, usually no more than a single line, are of three types. Most frequent is a curse, hurled by Trickster at an animal who has turned the tables on him, usually in a very humiliating way. It is the humiliation, in fact, that is the source of the humor in the curse, for the curse is usually accompanied by a forest-shaking proclamation—"It was I who created the Earth!"—and a threat of revenge, which seem absurd coming from someone so easily duped. The second type of Exclamatory Element is a remark about Trickster's character most often made by others but sometimes by Trickster himself. These remarks create a reflective distance from which to see Trickster. So after Trickster flies with the geese and is shot down, or after he falls into the lake and finally breaks off the animal skull he had been wearing, others remark to our delight, "Why, it's Wisateketchak again!" and even he is forced, after beating the trees that snared him, to reflect, "Now I regret it." A final kind of statement usually accompanies a transformation. As an expression of gratitude, it is differentiated from a conventional Explanatory Element (Waterman) describing the appearance of something. So after the Weasel helps Trickster to kill the Windigo or after Kingfisher tells Nanabush where the manitos are hiding so that he can kill them, he rewards each not only with a change in appearance but also with an expression of thanks.

Explanatory Element

Explanatory Elements are of two kinds in Trickster stories: dramatic and transformative. The transformative ones are the familiar changes in appearance caused by elements in the tale itself—why buzzard's neck is bare—or as the result of an action of trickster, such as the Weasel's appearance. Either instance represents the first type of Explanatory Element: one that is meant to account for changes to something presented to us as first having been another way. The second kind of Explanatory Element is a statement by Trickster that declares, but does not change, the nature of the object, as when he says of the Laxative Bulb, "We make people windy in the stomach, I was told. Oh, why I am breaking wind! That is what the people, my uncles, shall say till the end of the world." In these Explanatory Elements, Trickster declares the nature of something that has transformed him. Waterman has argued that the Explanatory Elements have no necessary logical or scientific connection with Trickster stories. This statement is true only insofar as one uses Trickster stories as a vehicle to satisfy inquiries derived from Western scientific categories or even from native ethnoscience. The stories remain explanations, though metaphysical ones, in the sense employed by the Navajo storyteller, Yellowman, when he told Barre Toelken (1976) that Trickster "makes all this possible."

Closing Formula

This last and simplest element encountered in an Algonkian trickster story can present some complications when it is met in a cycle. The preferred Cree ending is *Akah sipwahtaw*, "Then he went away from there." Like the Opening Formula, in other words, it entirely lacks specificity. It closes off the episode and that is all. Though one can imagine innumerable alternative endings in terms of setting ("He left on toward evening" or "He went on towards the waterfall"), action ("He searched for the fox") or motivation ("He left vowing revenge"), these do not occur. Consequently, an episode ends without providing motivation for subsequent episodes. Where motivations are filled in, they usually suture two, smaller incidents into a larger episode, itself destined to be finally resolved in the customarily ambiguous way. Both the Opening and Closing Formulas, then, are extremely shallow, a matter of one line or two, and very weak, providing no thematic, causal, or dramatic connection between episodes. A cycle of episodes was normally concluded by a performance-ending formula though several Ojibwa cycles lack them.

Episode Construction

We can now turn our attention to the very elaborate form of episode construction involving the use of sentence-initial particles and key shifts to mark thematically related units of plot. Dell Hymes pioneered the use of this technique to discern the artful structure of oral narrative frequently obscured by the form of the printed word mass, discriminating in this way the dramatic structure of the performance.

Particles often manage the business of narration by sequencing, bounding, co-relating, and otherwise defining events. In narrative there is no "wasted" time because all time is "narrative time," that is, organized through the use of particles and other means towards a particular end through a dramatic conceptualization we call plot. What makes this particular technique so useful is that particles like "then," "now," "so," and "thus" do not necessarily have to come at the beginning of the sentence, and in writing frequently they do not. But with notable regularity, the opposite is true in oral narrative, where both narrator and audience seem to share the expectation of first invoking a narrative frame before developing a scene. This makes sentence-initial particles useful markers of large plot elements. As Hymes points out, however, construction of narrative is not mechanical and certainly involves more than the manipulation of sentence-initial particles. A second key element is the use of key shifts, which change the mode of narration. In any single story the two principal keys employed, besides narration, are quotation and meta-narration. It is also necessary to check parallel structures because frequently the linking of sense and structure is accomplished in a sentence-final element like a verb root. (Hymes 1980a:12-14, 23-24, 31)

Combining these elements in skillful ways to illuminate the sense of the text is a measure of the narrator's artistic skill. There is, in other words, a covariation of form and meaning, so that "verses are recognized, not by counting parts, but by recognizing repetition within a frame, the relation of putative units to each other within a whole" (Hymes 1977:438). These parts, each of which Hymes calls a Verse, may be made up of any number of Lines, each marked by the presence of a single verb. Stanzas consist of individual Verses grouped into clusters customarily determined by culturally preferred pattern numbers, usually four or five, which in some instances Hymes has associated with continuous language groups. So that while, he asserts, Karok, Zuni, Takelma and Tonkawa—totally unrelated languages—favor patterns of two and four, "in the Chinnookan languages,

and in the neighboring Sahaptin and Kalapuyan languages, the formal pattern is built up to threes and fives." (1980a:9). This pattern, he believes, also extends to the organization of Stanzas into Scenes and of Scenes into Acts, so that one can speak of a native "rhetorical conception" based on patterned sequences of action (*ibid.*:9). Beyond Acts, longer narratives may be organized into Parts along the same principle (1980b). Ghezzi (1993) has recently employed Hymes' methodology in the analysis of Ojibwa storytelling.

Given adequate native-language transcriptions of original performances, Hymes' method can be employed to "reconstruct" performance-based texts, reconfiguring the text from the published, translated form in which it appeared according to Western conventions for representing prose, in order to disclose the dramatic conception that first motivated the oral performance. This is a process that requires, as Hymes observes, a "sympathetic imagination, and acquaintance with the nature of such story-telling" (1980a:32). In an earlier, independent work Scollon has shown how elaborate the use of particles can become. In examining Chipewyan narratives, he found that "a section of text marked by *Reku* boundaries must begin with a full noun reference. It also suggests that a section of text must close with a full noun reference" (Scollon 1979:63). This is very complex grammatical construction indeed (there is nothing at that grammatical level in the narratives Hymes has explored), but it does demonstrate the possibilities of this kind of stylistic device.

It was in fact the narrative and linguistic complexity of Maggie Achenam's Trickster cycle that first attracted my attention. Bloomfield had divided the text into 194 paragraphs, a few of which had but one line and not more than a handful of which had up to ten. The regular use of sentence-initial particles to organize the narration seemed apparent from a review of the transcription of the Cree language text, but whether this was actually a systematic series of aesthetic-rhetorical choices required further exploration. It was also unclear whether this rhetorical strategy was an individual, tribal, or language-group preference. Thus, the scope of the investigation was widened to include a limited comparison of texts collected from other members of the language group.

Applying the method first described by Hymes reconfigured the Maggie Achenam text into 710 discrete lines. Immediately obvious was the recurrence of the sentence-initial particle, *akwah*, which Bloomfield most frequently translates as "then" when it occurs initially and as "and" when it occurs linking two clauses. Wolfhart translates it as "then" and Hockett (personal communication, 1980) has suggested that it functions "like the Biblical 'and'." It is, in other words, a sequencer of different but related

actions. In this it differs from the Cree phrase *asa mina*, which sequences identical actions, and is best translated as "again." Trying to perceive an inherent organizational scheme structured around the use of sentence-initial particles was frustrating, because there were simply too many of them, dozens in a single episode like the Dancing Ducks story. Clearly an episode of that length, like so many others in the cycle, seemed to have larger parts, intermediate between the level of Verse and Stanza and the level of Act, for which I suspected that Maggie Achenam used four and eight as pattern numbers.

The marker for Scene and for scene changes most of the time is *katahtawa* (K), which Bloomfield translates most frequently as "presently." It clearly functions to initiate a new series of actions, and in this sense it occasionally varied with *sipwahtaw* (S) or *akwah sipwahtaw* (AS), "he left there" or "then he left there." Both shifted scene, one temporally and the other spatially. Frequently they occurred together, and when they did they corresponded very neatly with the folklorist's sense of episode juncture gained by reading the English translation (Bloomfield 1934:286-87, l. 99)

> *sipwahtaw akwah. Akwah pa-pimuhtaw. Katahtawah ka-patahk ah-nipakwasimowiht.* Then he went from there. He went along. Then at one time he heard a Sun Dance going on. He ran.

Here the combination of *Akwah sipwahtaw* (AS) and *katahtawah* (K) make a boundary between episode.

Within episodes, however, either one can also be used to mark incidents or scenes. A close examination of the Dancing Ducks episode reveals it to have four related parts (*ibid*.: ll. 36-64)

> *Wisahketchak* walks up to the ducks:
> (36) "Wait a bit, Little Brothers," he called to them.
> (37) "No, Big Brother. You mean to kill us."
> (38) *Wisaketchak* carried something on his back. He deceived them, <u>Then</u> he went away. <u>There</u> was a lake; it was a very big lake. He went thither.
> (50) "First I shall take a walk. Afterwards I shall eat."
> (52) He left his roasts. * As he was walking he saw a fox.
> (53) "Hey, stop a bit, Little Brother," he said to him.
> (64) <u>He went from there</u>; he looked for the fox. Then, <u>at one time</u>, as he walked about, he found him sleeping in the tall grass.

A first reading of the English translation might divide this episode into two parts or perhaps even into two distinct episodes, the deception and slaughter of the ducks and the Trickster's Race and Revenge incident, on the basis of

the *akwah sipwahtaw* (50), the *katahtawah* (not translated, 50), and the *waptawaw* (52). A closer reader might have further divided the latter into two parts by making a second division at line 64, observing the recurrent combination of *sipwahtaw*, the first underlined element, and *katahtawah*, the second. But the "then" provided by Bloomfield in line 38 and underlined is another *katahtawah* like the one in line 52, and it follows another *akwah sipwahtaw*. This suggests that however underdeveloped this piece is in line 38, it must be counted as a scene. In fact, in some other Algonkian versions of this story, because Trickster's reputation has preceded him, a failed attempt *does* occur before Trickster is successful in bringing them out of the water (Jones 1917:409).

Using either the *Katahtawah* (K) or *Sipwahtaw* (S) or *Akwah sipwahtaw* (AS) to mark scene boundaries demonstrated Maggie Achenam's proclivity for Acts with two or four scenes. Of eleven identified episodes or Acts in the cycle, six were found to have four scenes and five to have two scenes.

But there is a second question that needs to be asked about these boundaries: why cannot those containing both AS and K elements and the Encounter Verb (50-52, 64) be called episode boundaries? The answer to that question provides one of the main clues to the flexibility of an Algonkian performer in generating Trickster cycles.

The normal episode boundary is composed of the Closing Formula of the preceding episode and the Opening Formula of the succeeding episode. Consider the following instances:

Menomini
Then he went away from there; to some place or other he went.
As he tramped along, after a time he saw a dwelling. So he went toward it. When he entered that dwelling, there sat a wolf. (Bloomfield 1928:175).

Plains Cree
He went away; he tramped along. He saw a house, a very ugly little house. (Bloomfield 1934:293, l. 151)

Ojibwa
So then upon his way he slowly went along. And once while traveling along he saw some creatures. (Jones 1917:113).

The external (episode) boundary is general, that is, unspecified in time or place or motive, and shallow, perhaps only a few lines, even a few words. Both of these characteristics make it very weak—weakness being defined

both positively, as providing good opportunities for satisfactorily terminating the narrative or radically changing its course, and negatively, as providing no causal motivation for a specific sequel. Internal (incident- or scene-internal) boundaries, on the other hand, are usually strong. They establish the change of scene by employing the appropriate formulaic elements, but either specify them through localization in time or space or deepen them by extending them over several lines during the course of which other information is added to correlate the incidents. If one re-examines the boundaries of the Dancing Ducks-Trickster's Race story (ll. 50-53) quoted earlier, it is clear that the boundary has been deepened to four lines. Additionally, information has been added between boundary elements to specify the temporal relationship of the incidents ("First I shall take a walk. Afterwards I shall eat."). A similar strengthening is found in line 64 with the addition of motivational information that specifies the closing formula: "He went from there; he looked for the fox." Such specifying and deepening alterations make clear that we are dealing with internal boundaries. The storyteller's advantage, however, becomes the folklorist's problem. In presenting such material, the folklorist-ethnographer might casually divide the more complex stories, like the Dancing Ducks, on the basis of the apparent similarity of these boundaries, or based on his or her prior knowledge that these stories do occur independently. Radin, in fact, did just that with with this particular story.
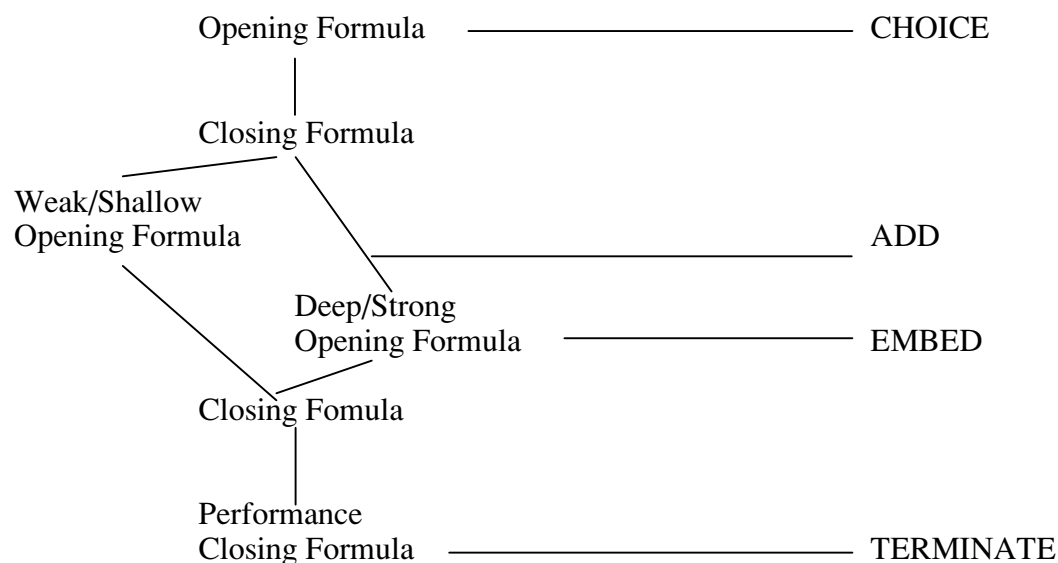
Figure 1. Options for Narration in Cycle Development

The advantage of this weak/strong, shallow/deep, external (episode)/internal (incident) framing system for the narrator is that it provides for three choices at a boundary: adding, embedding, and terminating or reforming. Opening and Closing Formulas and initial particles serve the same purposes in other Central Algonkian texts as those identified for Plains Cree. I want to emphasize that these are particles that serve equivalent functions, although the various instances of particles serving identical rhetorical functions in different languages may not be derived from the same Proto-Central Algonkian reconstruction. Nevertheless, the presence of the particle-and-pattern rhetorical strategy in texts from different native genres from other Algonkian literatures tends to support Hymes' contention that this is a performative mark of a general Native American narrative style. Episode framing, as a similar combination of Opening and Closing Formulas such as that described here for the Plains Cree, is also common enough elsewhere for it to be considered a generic feature of importance even across boundaries between language groups. Finally, with some modifications ("Little Brother" becomes "Cross-Cousin"), the same may be said for the Entitlement Address.

Using these particles and Opening and Closing Formulas in the same manner as for the Plains Cree, it is possible to determine episode boundaries, incident boundaries within episodes, and verse patterning. In this manner, even performances that have been broken up—often quite badly—by the recorder/translator can be reconstructed and their actual shape determined. Consider, for instance, the text presented in Table 1 below as Ojibwa C. In this case it was possible to determine that Michelson, who edited Jones' transcriptions and published them as a series of thirteen separate stories, actually had before him a record of five discrete performances, consisting of 9, 1, 4, 2, and 1 episodes, respectively.

Cycling Trickster Episodes in Perfomance

Publications of Native American folklore reveal that Trickster episodes are often performed singly. Based on the previous discussion of Cree tales, it is apparent that the potential for combining episodes into a cycle during performance is made rhetorically practical by the weak/shallow boundaries between episodes. The more urgent question before us is what motivates the selection of any particular episode as the "reasonable" successor to the the episode just narrated.

A review of the nineteen Central Algonkian trickster cycles listed below, reconstructed according to the method outlined above, was

undertaken to see if the larger questions associated with cycle form and structure could be answered. Here are the texts examined:

Oj A	Wasaganuackank, Bois Fort Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj B	Midasuganj, Bois Fort Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj C1-5	Pinessi, Fort William Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj D	Tom Badger, Lac du Flambeau	(Barnouw 1977)
Oj E	Nizebeng, Sarnia, Ontario	(Radin 1972)
Oj F	Yellowhead, Rama, Ontario	(Radin 1972)
Oj G	Aleck Paul, Timigami, Ontario	(Speck 1915)
Oj H	__, Ojibwa	(Skinner 1911)
Me A	__, Menomini	(Hoffman 1893)
Me B	Misen Makapiw (Michael Macoby), Menomini	(Bloomfield 1928)
Fx	__, Fox	(Jones 1907)
Al	Benjamin Mackenzie, Algonquin	(Speck 1915)
PC A	Maggie Achenam, Sweet Grass, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield 1934)
PC B	Buffalo Bull, Star Blanket, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield, Ms. 101)
PC C	Buffalo Bull, Star Blanket, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield, Ms. 102)

Table 1. Reconstructed Performances of Trickster Cycles

In Table 2 below, Culture Hero stories are distinguished from Dupe stories by referring to the former as N episodes (for *Nanabush*) and the latter as T (for Trickster episodes), despite the acknowledged variety of tribal appellations. This is a purely analytic category, but not an *a priori* one, as discussed later. In this corpus of materials, 21 distinct Culture Hero episodes and 26 distinct Trickster episodes can be performatively defined:

Culture Hero (Nanabush) Episodes

N 1   Birth of Nenabush
N 2   Theft of Fire
N 3   N Slays Stone Brother
N 4   Death of Other Siblings
N 5   Wolf Pack
N 6   Wolves and Bone Chip
N 7   Wolf Nephew Killed
N 8   Wounds Manito
N 9   Advised by Kingfisher
N 10   Kills Toad Woman

N 11   Manitos' Underwater Home
N 12   Deluge; Earth-Diver
N 13   Threatens Spirit
N 14   Spirits Appeased
N 15   Medicine Dance Given
N 16   Transforms Snake
N 17   Revenge/Turtle
N 18   Underwater Manito
N 19   Fish Trap
N 20   Marriage
N 21   Domestic Life

Trickster Episodes
T 1   Deceiving rushes
T 2   Big Game Feast
T 3   Tree Snare
T 4   Skull Trap
T 5   Tree Guides
T 6   Soiled Fat
T 7a   Dancing Ducks
T 7b   Dinner Stolen
T 7c   Burned Anus
T 7d   Scab Food
T 8   Intestine Necklace
T 9   Reflected Fruit
T 10   Flies with Buzzard
T 11   Hollow Tree Trap
T 12   Animal Transformation
T 13   Snared Geese
T 14   Bagged Geese Freed
T 15   Sex Transformation/Marriage
T 16   Windigo
T 17   Wood Weapons
T 18   Eye Juggler
T 19   Slays Buffalo
T 20   Laxative Bulb
T 21a   Winged Startlers
T 21b   Revenge of Winged Startlers
T 22   Flies with Geese
T 23   Failed Beaver Hunt
T 24   Popokwis
T 25   The Little Fishers
T 26   Bungling Host

Table 2. Culture Hero (N) and Trickster (T) Episodes

These nineteen reconstucted Central Algonkian Trickster cycles have been arrayed in Table 3. Each episode, defined performatively by its being bounded by Opening and Closing Formulae, is assigned an alphanumeric item number. The item numbers themselves are simply convenient codes and are not meant to reflect the length or complexity of the material they encode (motif, incident, or tale), which is properly signaled by performance boundaries. An item number followed by a circumflex is one that is not developed and more resembles an incident than a tale. An item followed by a v̲ is a variant of the well-known motif represented by the item number. Likewise, the alphanumeric designations do not necessarily represent the transcriber/editor's divisions; the Bungling Host story, to take only one example, can be presented as a single tale or may have been divided by an editor in any number of ways. Episodes so identified are arrayed in vertical columns in which they follow each other in my reconstructed order of their occurrence in the cycle, beginning at the top of the column. Incidents or scenes within episode boundaries are linked horizontally by a dash (e.g., T 7a-b-c). A dashed vertical line between episodes indicates the absence of one or more episodes in a shorter cycle of episodes that are found in the same narrative space in fuller versions.

A quick glance at Table 3 reveals that the Culture Hero episodes, here designated by N, form a very coherent body. Not only are these episodes of a different type from the Trickster episodes (T), but they apparently have a sequence dictated by custom and internal necessity, of which more later. For now, let us turn our attention to the Trickster episodes.

The weak external boundaries of the Trickster episodes make it possible for the storyteller to combine these episodes in nearly any sequence he or she chooses. This is not to say that there may not be other constraints operating to sequence the stories; but if there are, they are not literary in terms of plot or text. Nothing in any one story seems to demand that the next story be one particular episode as opposed to another. This is true even of the most favored sequences of motifs, such as *Dancing Ducks-Burned Anus* (exception: Plains Cree) or *Big Gamed Killed-Feast Spoiled by Tree Snare* (exception: Eastern Cree). Because such freedom is possible, the kind of order that might occur can tell us something about the dramatic conception underlying the cycle.

Trickster episodes can be unified in any number of ways. As with other episodic constructions, one can use recurrent themes, recurrent actors, recurrent stylistic features, even mnemonic devices like geographical or temporal matrices to anchor a story. To some degree all of these are present in the Central Algonkian Trickster cycles reviewed here.

Table 3. Central Algonkian Trickster Cycles (Reconstructed)

OjA	OjB	OjC1	OjC2	OjC3	OjC4	OjC5	OjD	OjE	OjF	OjG	OjH	AL	ME1	ME2	FX	PC1	PC2	PC3	WC
N1	T2					N1	N1		N1	N1	N1								
N2	T3					–	–		N2	N2	N2								
N3	T4					N3	N3		N3	N3	N3								
N4	T5					N4	N4			–					N4				
T21	T7A						T13	T7	T7	T7		T23				T6	T2/16	T10	T23
T1	T7B						T11	T7b	T7c	T7b		T23				T21	T3	T18	N12
T24	T7C		T26	N20	T22		T9	T7c	T7d	T7c		T3			N6	T7a	T21a	T7a	T23^
N5	T7D			N21			T2	T7d	T21a	T21b		T6			N7/4	T7e	T21b	T7a	T7d
N6	T9						T12	T21a	T4	T2^		T5			N17	T7f	T7a		T7c
N7	T1	T7					T4	T21b	T3	T3^		T4			N11	T18	T7d		T7b
N9	T20	T25					T3	T4	T2	T6^		T6			N18	T4	T7c		T7a
N8	T21						T1	T3	T1	T5		T23				T7c	T20		T6
T7a	T25/N18						T7a	T5	T5	–		T21a				T7d	T7c		T23^
T7b	T16						T7b	T1				T21b				T22	T6		T22^
T7c	T18						T7c	T7a	T7a	T7a		T12				T2/19			T25
T20	T24						T7d	T7b	T7b	T7b		T15				T3			
T9	N5						–	T7c	T7c	T7c						T17			
T2	N6						–	T7d	T7d	T7d						T16			
T3	N7						–									T15			
T4	N8						N5	N5											
T5	N9						N6	N6	N7	N7	N7				N9				
T22	N10						N7	N7	N8	N8^	N9				N8				
T10	N11						N8	N8	N9	N9	N10				N11				
T11	N12						N9	N9	N10	N16	N11				N2				
T15							N10	N10	N11	N10	N12				N13^				
N10							N11	N11	N12	N11					N14				
N11							N12	N12		N12									
N12							N13	N13											
							N14	N14											
							N15	N15											

Given the freedom of the raconteur, they function as a reservoir of creative possibilities. Performatively, the first difficulty for the narrator will be to generate some overarching pattern that organizes the cycle by maintaining audience expectation and providing plausibility, that is, not merely any sequence but a sequence that satisfies. The second difficulty will be to realize these goals in performance while moving from episode to episode This is not to deny the emergent quality of performance, of course, but rather to assert that form emerges along particular lines and is always realized in performance as word choice.

     Certain recurrent activities are characteristic of Trickster figures. Preoccupied with all the orifices of his own and everyone else's body and with bodies in generally, he customarily wanders into the spotlight to eat, defecate, have sexual intercourse, or exchange his body for another's. For want of more economical terminology, I would thematically encode these action categories as Oral, Anal, Sexual, and Transformational.[5] At this point, I do not want to open a lengthy discussion of Trickster's nature or function. Suffice it to say that these are spheres of interest as defined by the character's most frequent actions. They are also for the most part actions that societies have tended to circumscribe with a great deal of ritual and custom, precisely because the body serves as boundary and interface between the self and others, and through its symbolization most social-personal values can be polarized (Douglas 1966, 1970; Leach 1964). The performative question, however, is whether Trickster episodes are grouped thematically.

     An examination of the Central Algonkian Trickster cycles before us suggests that the Trickster episodes are easily grouped thematically. In Ojibwa G, for instance, anal themes govern one sequence: Trickster first burns his anus for not watching the food, then defecates on the Young Partridges (Winged Startlers), and is revenged by the Partridge Father who scares Nanabush into falling down a cliff, on which he leaves the scabs of his behind. In the Maggie Achenam (Plains Cree) cycle, hunger organizes several stories around Oral themes. Trickster first kills the buffalo but loses the food while snared in the tree; he tries again, but his anus scares away the buffalo; finally he ends up in a berry patch, seeking magic weapons to help him get food, when he is attacked by a bear whom he defeats with the help of a buffalo skull. In the same cycle one sequence is organized around Transformations that fail: *Eye-Juggler, Skull Trap, and Trickster Flies with*

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[5] The use of these terms is meant only to be descriptive. I expressly disavow any psychological interpretations, conventional or otherwise, associated with these terms.

the Geese.

These are very high-level generalizations, however. While they very vaguely gather groups of stories into sets, the immediate difficulty for the storyteller is how to sequence episodes within these groupings to make the narrative seem plausible. Like the linking of episodes, the creation of links between episodes is associative, not causal. Whatever connections are made between two episodes in one cycle performance most probably will not appear in another cycle perfomrance. Furthermore, these connections usually modify the opening frame only slightly—just enough to make the connection—and then the story is off and running on its own power. Some examples of the Associative Means employed are:

OBJECTS:
1. In order to link the *Deceiving Rushes Episode* with the *Dancing Ducks* episode, Trickster takes some rushes from the former to stuff his pack for the latter (Me a).
2. *Popokwis'* story about sturgeons and berries prompts a second story about killing the giant sturgeon (Oj B).

ACTIONS:
1. One Ojibwa version of the *Deceiving Rushes* ends with Trickster "crawl [ing] out to the edge of the swamp." The next episode begins, "And once, when he was crawling about . . ." (Oj B).
2. In the Maggie Achenam cycle, Trickster is ridiculed by people after being shot down while flying with the geese; so when he approaches the buffalo he deceives them by pretending to pass on ridiculing comments he heard about them from the same people, though he really is pointing to rock constructions while referring to the humans (PC).

SETTING:
1. One narrator links the *Popokwis'* story with the *Pack of Wolves* story because both were supposed to have taken place on a frozen lake (Oj A).
2. Another sequence: the *Killing of the Windigo* and the *Killing of the Great Fisher* are linked because they both happened while Trickster was "going along the shore" (Oj B).

The preference for weak episode boundaries and thematic groupings of episodes creates a pressure to find some stronger, more explicit means of organizing the sequence of episodes. The Timiskaming Algonkian version (Al 1) is not unique in establishing a geographical matrix for locating each of the episodes, but as Speck (1915) pointed out such matrices vary greatly from band to band. They are, in other words, merely a device, and not an intrinsic part of any shared Trickster biography. The Nenebojo cycle that

Speck heard from Nizibeng in Sarnia, Ontario (Oj E) was organized by means of interepisodic sutures that attempted to provide a temporal matrix for the episodes. Trickster is always sending his grandmother ahead of him, having an adventure, catching up with her, staying a few days, then sending her on again before starting off again himself. The important thing about these textual features is that they do not determine the theme, but rather seem designed to facilitate linking together stories with similar themes.

Effecting this linkage satisfactorily can be quite a complex process. For example, in Ojibwa G the narrator organized her short cycle by beginning with the Dancing Ducks. After Trickster burns his anus and discards the abandoned legs of the Ducks, he discovers a group of baby fishers, whose legs he breaks and on whom he also defecates. When she returns, the mother takes revenge by turning him into a log and then savaging it with her teeth. Off again, he comes to the baby partridges on whom he defecates; he is found by their father and frightened off a cliff. While tumbling down he leaves his scabs and food. While not expressly stated in this incident, in most variants of this widely distributed story the scabs become tobacco and food. Hungry now, he deceives a moose into being killed. The story concludes with the Tree Snare and Skull Trap incidents. The associative pattern is elaborate. The ducks, fishers, partridges, and moose have all been caught in an elaborate psychodrama of aggression and punishment, wherein all of Trickster's attempts to inflict his will on the world are turned against him. Nevertheless, this highly generalized theme does not enable either us or the storyteller to distinguish any principle for moving the performance from one specific episode to the next. A closer examination reveals that there are several kinds of links, but the primary connection between episodes is an associative one. The legs of the discarded ducks are associated with the wrists of the fishers and the pain in his behind. The parents of the fishers and the parents of the partridges are linked in their revenge against Trickster. And the moose is linked to the partridges first by similarity—his antlers being explicitly identified metaphorically as feathers—and by an implied haughtiness ("a very handsome man was he") that contrasts with Trickster's humiliation.

But even these textual links and the recurrent aggression/punishment pattern do not tell the whole story. What begins as a search for food and ends on the same Oral Theme becomes diverted into an Anal Theme in the middle of the sequence. These transitions are accomplished by what I will call Double Domain Incidents. These are incidents associated with two themes, one by virtue of the story that precipitates the incident, the other by virtue of the outcome of the incident itself. In this case, the Burned Anus event is such a Double Domain Incident, beginning with a quest for food or

Oral Theme and ending with Anal Theme. By the same token, the Scab Food incident is a reversal of that order, beginning as an Anal Theme and ending as an Oral one. The use of Double Domain Incidents helps us to understand how the story proceeds on thematic as well as textual levels, as represented in Figure 2 immediately below.
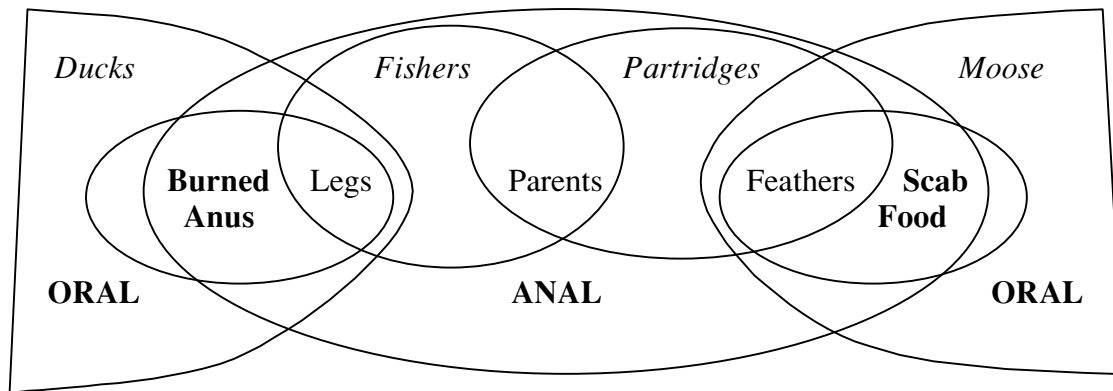
Figure 2. Double-Domain Incidents

Several other such Double Domain Incidents recur. The *Skull Trap* effectively moves a story from the food quest's Oral theme to a Transformational Theme. The Intestine Vine, like the Scab Food, is another Anal/Oral incident, while the Laxative Bulb is an Oral/Anal one. These Double Domain Incidents make possible the thematic progression of the narrative through thematically distinct sequences of episodes.

There also appears to be a preferred order implied in the ways these thematic groupings are arranged in the Trickster cycles. The favored pattern present Oral-thematic stories first, Anal-thematic stories second, and Transformations third. Stories about women, when they do occur, precede Transformation episodes if they are about passive women as the object of Trickster's desires (Sexuality); they follow Transformation episodes if they are about agentive, aggressive women (Aggression). This latter suggestion is hypothesis only, however, because one of the most remarkable features of Central Algonkian Trickster cycles is the absence of familiar sexual episodes such as the *Long-Distance Intercourse* or the *Penis Flag*. Then too, the sequence itself is only a tentative assessment based on clear patterning in several of the cycles; others are less clear. In any case, we are dealing not with a strict order but a matter of preference, one that provides those raconteurs who close their cycles with *Nanabush* stories a choice of several

useful points of re-entry into the Culture-Hero biography. This set of tendencies is presented schematically in Figure 3.

No *Nanabush* Conclusion   Theme Group   Concluding *Nanabush* Cycles
                                                       Point of Entry

                                  ORAL
                                   |
                                  ANAL
                                   |
                                  (SEX)
                                   |
                                  TRANSFORMATION ——— Oj B, Oj G
                                   | PC, Me B
                                   | Monster-Slaying
                                   |
Me A, EC ———————————— AGGRESSION ——— Oj A
                          Women   Slaying Toad
                                                     Woman
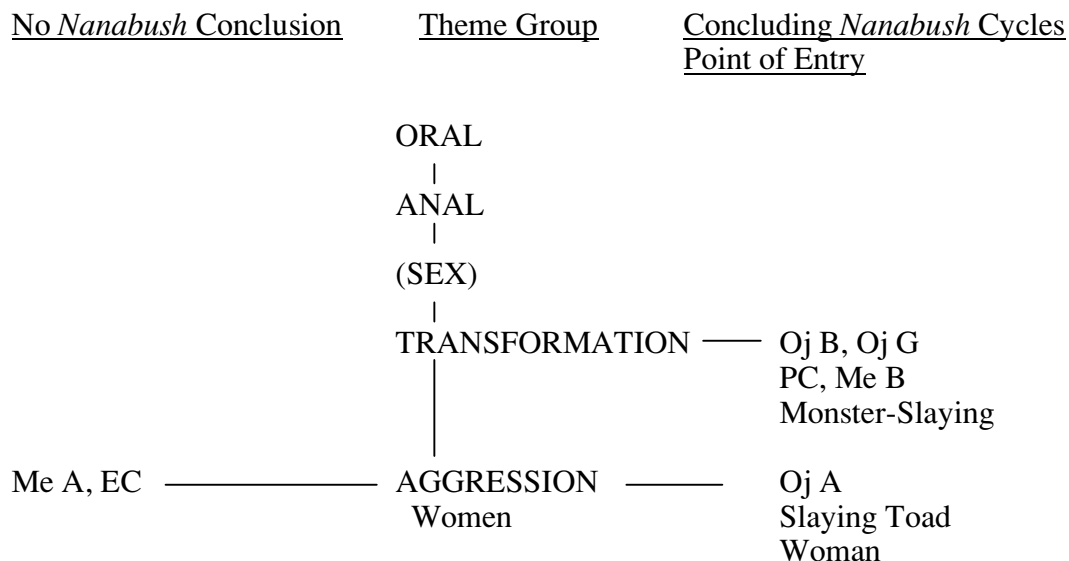
Figure 3. Thematic Structuring of Cycles

The Culture Hero Biography

In contrast to the thematic patterns of association made possible by the weak boundaries of Trickster episodes, the Nenabush biography appears incredibly coherent because of the degree to which boundaries between episodes have been deepened and strengthened. Those boundaries for Nenabush episodes that appear not to conform to the strong/deep pattern seem, on closer examination, to have been contrived by the editor. When one searches for genuine performative boundaries, they usually appear at the end of Nenabush's genealogy, a convenient term to cover those episodes that include:

    N 1   His Birth
    N 2   His Theft of Fire
    N 3   His Slaying of One Brother
    N 4   The Slaying of His Other Brother, Leaving Him Alone

This pattern, or something approximating it very nearly, occurs in all *Nanabush* biographies. The *Theft of Fire* may be replaced by *Taming of the Winds* (Oj G) and the nature of his brothers may change. In Oj A his

brothers are *Hair-Knot* and *Skin-Hewer*: by killing the first, *Nanabush* creates death; by killing the second, he creates war honors. In Oj D, the first brother "didn't have human features exactly but he looked like a human baby to some extent" (Barnouw 1977:15). The second brother was a Stone. Unlike Oj A, which features elder brothers, Oj D has *Wenebojo* slaying his younger brothers because he slowed down the brothers when they wanted to travel. It is the death of the not-quite-human brother that occurs second, and that establishes the absolute nature of death. The most important elements in this biography are the Culture Hero deed (N 2) and the establishment of death. Among the Timigami Ojibwa they are combined when *Nanabush* subdues the Four Winds who are his brothers.

The consequence of having killed his brothers, the narrator of Oj D points out, is that "Now that *Wenebojo* was all alone, he traveled wherever he wanted to go" (Barnouw 1977:15). This kind of frame, which is more meta-narrative than narrative since it does not so much tell what he did as tell about what he did, occurs after this episode in those cycles that incorporate Trickster (T) episodes. Here are two examples:

> Timigami Ojibwa
> Now *Nenabuc* grew up and was alone. He was a man and began to travel. He knew all kinds of things concerning the trees, the world, and everything which his grandfather had taught him. (Speck 1915:31).

> Ojibwa A
> And so then was the time that he started away, and from there he traveled doing all manner of things. And now everywhere over the earth he went. For look and see what he has done here upon the earth. (Jones 1917:41).

What is interesting about such sutures is that they do not in any way motivate a specific episode; they hardly even require a sequel. As summary statements, however, they function as useful pivotal points in the narration. The raconteur has the option of terminating here or going on to narrate some episodes (T).

Interestingly, when portions of the Culture Hero biography are narrated separately from the Trickster episodes, there is little indication that Trickster episodes need follow. In the Fox version (which admittedly is also different in other ways, but not on this point), after the death of the Younger Brother the Culture Hero prepares to retaliate against the *manitos*. In a Plains Cree version, evidently quite abruptly ended, the narrator concludes with the incident of *Wisahketchak* being separated from his dying brother, who utters at the end, "All I can do is turn into a wolf" (Bloomfield

1934:278). This, of course, anticipates the *Wolf Pack* story, which is not really a Trickster episode.

According to Victor Barnouw (1977:69), Johannes Gille argued in 1939 that the *Wolf Pack* episode is an extremely coherent story composed of three episodes that are almost never related separately. In the first (N 5), *Nanabush* joins a pack of wolves, but his performance and attitude leave much to be desired; he can neither run and hunt with them nor can he cope with the raw winter, and he is ungrateful for their assistance. In the second (N 6), he is selfish and disobedient; because he is hungry he spied on Old Wolf, who is cracking marrow bones, and since this is forbidden he is punished by having a splinter fly into his eye. In the third and last episode (N 7), the Old Wolf decides *Nanabush* and the pack should part company, relations between them not having been amicable. He gives *Nanabush* one of his sons to hunt for him, but this "nephew" of *Nanabush* is drowned in a stream after *Nanabush* had dreamed the event would occur.

Both Barnouw and Fisher have adequately determined the range of this tale and its origin among the Algonkians. What is of interest about the sequence for the purposes of the present inquiry is the ability of the *Death of the Wolf Nephew* episode to assimilate the *Death of the Brother*'s episodes and so recoup any momentum lost in the developing Culture Hero biography by interpolating Trickster episodes between these two episodes. This assimilation is accomplished in several ways. The first, exemplified by the Cree version of the *Younger Brother's Death* cited above, has the younger brother turn into a wolf. His skin then becomes the door covering for the underwater *manitos*. The second is to have the younger brother die by drowning so that his death can be identified with the wolf's; this event is also in the Cree story. The third is to attribute hidden intentionality to the Culture Hero for the death of the wolf; this development identifies the wolf's death with the Culture Hero's earlier murders of his brothers. Portrayal of such intentionality can be accomplished by giving the Culture Hero prior knowledge, in this case a portentous dream. It is not enough that he tells the young wolf to be careful as a result of his dream. Dreaming violent dreams was considered a sign of much repression that required externalizations in order to relieve the psychological pressure. In this sense the young wolf's death was "caused" by the Culture Hero in the same way that he "caused" the death of his older brother by refusing to readmit him to the land of the living.

That these two episodes can be subsumed into one is illustrated by the Fox tale, which has the *Menapus* avenge the death of the Younger Brother against the underwater *manidos* while a Menomini version and one from the Court Oreilles Ojibwa (Barnouw 1977:62-69) use the Wolf Nephew for the

same purpose. What is notable about these three narrations is that none features *both* sets of episodes. The appearance of both sets of episodes seems co-occurrent with intervening Trickster episodes. This interdependence supports the notion that the *Wolf Pack* episode recoups biographical momentum vitiated by the interpolation of Trickster episodes. The unprefaced appearance of Trickster episodes before the *Wolf Pack* episodes, as in Oj D, does not jeopardize this argument because the Trickster episodes do not intervene between an earlier portion of the Culture Hero biography and a later one. It is also interesting in this regard that in Oj G, where the Culture Hero's brothers are the winds and where he tames but does not kill them, there is no real motivation for the slaying of the underwater *manidos* or the *Toad-Woman* who doctors them; rather these are simply treated as Monster-Slayer stories.

Moving from Trickster episodes to the *Wolf Pack* episode is accomplished thematically and textually. The thematic link is Trickster's ingratitude and deceit, which make us feel right at home with an all-too-familiar character. This impression is reinforced in both Oj A and Oj B by preceding the *Wolf Pack* story with that of *Popokwis, the Pilferer* (T 24). In this story, Trickster lives with some people during the fishing season, and they make an arrangement whereby all the fish caught by their group will be shared and eaten before those caught by Trickster. Of course, when all the first group's fish are gone, the people discover that Trickster has been quietly consuming his. On the verge of starvation, the people are magically assisted, and because they follow instructions are rewarded with plenty. Trickster is given the same opportunity, but cannot follow instructions and shows up badly, ready to run with the wolves. But here too he cannot follow instructions, cannot share, cannot cooperate, and is ever ungrateful. Textually, the linkage is accomplished by having Trickster join the wolves in winter after the end of the fall fishing season, and by having both wolves and fishermen addressed as "Little Brother," thus presenting the possibility of trickery.

These textual arrangements would suggest that the first two wolf episodes are more closely related to each other than they are to the third, the death of the wolf nephew, and that in fact the first two may be true Trickster episodes and the third a transformer episode. Some support for this analysis comes from the Northern Saulteaux version recorded by Skinner that begins with the Wolf and *Wisahketchak* living together and *Wisahketchak* dreaming of the other's death. The power of the *Wolf Pack* setting, however, is strong enough to keep the three linked in the minds of most narrators.

The next important section of the Culture Hero's biography is his attempt to avenge the death of his brother, perhaps to exculpate himself.

The inevitable sequence is a wounding of the underwater *manitos* (N 9), often after a warning from Kingfisher (N 8), and a final successful assault in their underwater home (N 11), often preceded by slaying Old Toad Woman (N 10) who is on her way to doctor them. The slaying precipitates a deluge, which in turn prompts the *Earth-Diver* story, and a measuring of the Earth (N 12). Occasionally, in Christianized versions, the raft of the deluge may become a kind of ark and a blessing of the animals, as in Genesis, may be appended. A final section that recurs in Oj D and in the Fox version is the gift of the *Medicine Rite* or *Midéwiwin* to restore life (N 13-15).

Combining Trickster and Culture Hero Episodes in Performance

Because of the deep, strong sutures between the various episodes in the Culture Hero biography, it is almost impossible for Trickster episodes to be introduced. The only place that such an insertion can be accomplished satisfactorily is after the genealogical portion, and one senses that the summary created there is precisely for the purpose of effecting this transition, by delocalizing and detemporalizing the boundary.

Elsewhere such intrusions, when they do occur, are rare and never satisfactory. Speck was shocked to find one of his narrators concluding the *Earth-Diver* story this way (Speck 1915:21):

> After a while *Nenebojo* sent out the Caribou to see how large the island was. He soon returned, saying that it was not large enough, so *Nenebojo* blew some more sand into the water. Then he stopped making the earth and said, "Tomorrow I am going to give a feast to all the animals. I will make a large leaf-house and invite all the ducks to a dance."

The story then proceeds to its familiar conclusion, burned anus and all. Two things are interesting about this sequence of episodes. It is shocking to find such behavior coming from an acknowledged Culture Hero; there is a violent clash in affective responses to these two contiguous episodes. On the other hand, the narrative of the Culture Hero is essentially finished (the Midé origin myth is an amendment), which is to say that the Trickster episode has not really penetrated the biography so much as it has been awkwardly added on.

On the other hand, thanks to the very weak and shallow boundaries between Trickster episodes and their loose thematic association, it is very possible for narrators to introduce episodes from the Culture Hero biography among Trickster tales. It is significant that most do not choose to do so,

because once that coherent narrative is initiated it is difficult to exit it. The narrator of Oj A moved from the *Popkwis* Trickster episode to the *Wolf Pack* episode and soon was caught up deeply in the biography. He then took advantage of the traditional first, failed attempt (N 8) to precipitate a minor flood that, once receded, permitted Trickster to continue on his way. This re-entry into the Trickster cycle is made early because the weak episode frames require nothing. The narrator recovers momentum after several trickster episodes by having the protagonist meet the Old Toad Woman on her way to doctor the *manidos* that *Nanabush* had wounded earlier in the cycle. It is, in all, a competent achievement of narration that contrasts strongly with Speck's example.

The differences in the nature of both kinds of narratives, the Culture Hero biography (N episodes) and the Trickster cycle (T episodes), are stylistic, structural, and thematic. This has implications for understanding the historical development of the present cycle-form. Because these two kinds of narrative are so radically divergent, I would suggest that they were originally distinct:

I. a) N 1-4, N 8-12
    b) T1 . . . . . Tn

With the addition of only two transformations:

II. a) T 5-6 > N 5-6
     b) N 4 = N 7

the prototypical combination emerges:

III. (N 1-4) + (T . . . . .Tn)

from which the combined cycle form preferred at the beginning of this century evolved:

IV. N 1 - N 4, T1 . . . . Tn, N 5-6, N 7, N 8-12

This latter form easily accommodates the addition of Midé myth episodes:

V. (IV) + N 13-15

Other combinations of episodes, like Speck's example (N 12 + 17), are clearly not favored.

Conclusions

This essay suggests that given adequate linguistic and contextual materials, performative boundaries can be identified that enable the reconstruction of coherent cycles from episodes that had been separated by the editor for analytical purposes during the process of preparing materials for publication. This reconstructive method has been shown to provide important evidence useful for addressing historical, thematic, and formal questions.

One fundamental matter central to ethnographic and folkloric questions surrounding the Native American Trickster figure is the debate over the historical priority of this form: whether the figure originated as a single, undifferentiated Trickster-Transformer figure and subsequently evolved into two distinct figures—a Transformer/Culture Hero and a Trickster/Dupe—or whether indeed these two figures were original and subsequently merged into a single Trickster/Transformer. The analysis of textual evidence presented here suggests that, for Central Algonkians at least, these two were originally distinct figures and were only subsequently merged. This is not a claim that could be extended to other Native American traditions without an equally rigorous examination of materials from other tribal traditions. Nevertheless, this Central Algonkian example is telling, especially given the preponderance of evidence that a wide variety of tribal traditions from every region of Native North America (except the Arctic) focus the dramatization of foundational cultural institutions through a pair of brothers who often reflect polarized values in their behaviors.

Another, equally important question recurring in the literature associated with Trickster is whether he is a static or a dynamic character. Those who favor the former position point to his unvarying inventory of habits that inevitably lead to his disappointment: Trickster as Overreacher. Others point out that some episodes seem to conclude with acts of self-reflection and evaluation that, coupled with his beneficial transformative actions, appear to mark his growth and development as a model of self-realization. It is important to note that these opinions emerge from different materials. Those favoring the former, static character definition cite his behavior in isolated episodes, while those favoring a dynamic, developing character advert to his apparent growth throughout the course of a cycle.[6] If, as the present analysis of Central Algonkian cycles suggests, these characters were originally represented by distinct bodies of tale traditions,

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[6] Radin's publication of the Siouan Winnebago cycle (1972), not reviewed in this article, is most often the textual basis of these judgments.

the appearance of growth and development in the trickster figure is purely an effect derived from the merging of these two traditions in performance. This is not to say that the peoples who generated these cycles might not believe today that Trickster is a single, developing figure, especially given the fact that a single name now often denominates the merged figure. However, fieldwork to investigate such a cultural judgment generally has not been undertaken, even by those who propose this position[7]; rather the evidence is presumed to fit a universal model of psychosocial development.

Finally, Trickster tales are often regarded as relatively simple forms. Perhaps this is because familiar episodes can be as easily condensed into anecdotal form as expanded into a detailed narration. Structuralists see them as instances of taboo violation or simple narrative inversions of cultural values. Far from a string of simple jests, however, Trickster cycles are complex narrative phenomena. Focusing on the performative dimension of Trickster tales makes possible an informed appreciation of the multiplicity of aesthetic choices in which the storyteller must succeed in order to create a cycle of tales that creates, manipulates, and fulfills audience expectations in a culturally satisfying manner.

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[7] Interestingly, see the commentary of Felix White, Sr., a Winnebago, who subscribes to the developmental model and whose cycles are consciously constructed along the developmental line (Danker 1993). The Winnebago are a Siouan-speaking people, however, and are not included within the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, Radin's earlier publication of another Winnebago Trickster cycle (1972) is the basis for most developmental hypotheses concerning Trickster's character. Trejo (1974) offers a Paiute commentary more consonant with the structural interpretation of Trickster as Overreacher. It remains an open question whether or not Trickster is viewed as a developing character in most Native American oral literatures.

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"O man do not scribble on the book": Print and Counter-print in a Scottish Enlightenment University

Matthew Simpson

The University of St. Andrews in the latter half of the eighteenth century was a small and under-funded institution. Nevertheless, it shared in the changes and accomplishments that made Scottish intellect in that period a European phenomenon. Some evidence of the university's intellectual vitality at that time can be seen in the very full records that survive from its contemporary Library: records of the Library's administration and of its everyday business, and also such records as the books themselves represent. It is with this last sort of evidence that I will be mainly concerned here. The books at St. Andrews unwittingly preserve a remarkable corpus of marginalia added by the students. In this article, I hope to relate these student writings to their educational context. Making use of the distinctions that Walter Ong has so instructively drawn between print, manuscript, and oral habits of mind, I will suggest that the marginalia oppose the Enlightenment ideology of their university with the values of an older style of discourse.

Much has been written about that astonishing flourish of Scottish intellect commonly called the Scottish Enlightenment, and there have been various attempts to account for it.[1] Since we know it largely by its published works—or indeed *as* those works—we may confidently say at least that a necessary condition for its development was the adaptation of Scottish intellectual culture to the printing press. Such adaptation can indeed be observed directly. In religion, for instance, it was not just that the

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[1] See Broadie (1997:10): "Scotland's situation at the start of the eighteenth century has prompted many to ask how this of all countries could, just then, have moved towards the accomplishment of so much."

liberalizing and gentrifying of the Church of Scotland in this period made polite literature an accepted part of the minister's mind, active in his sermons and his conversation; this minister, now so well equipped to please and edify, was urged to publish. Print was asked from him both as a professional, a provider of sermons and prayers, and more largely as a practitioner in belles lettres. In the 1770s, a series called *The Scotch Preacher* began to offer to ministers, even to those in "obscure corners of the country," the printed way into "public notice and regard" as "Authors"; they had only to bring their sermons into "that state of correctness which would render them fit for publication."[2] One of the sermons that subsequently did appear in that series (though by no means from an obscure corner) was Alexander Carlyle's address given in 1767 to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, in which he had invited his clerical audience beyond such merely professional discourse and into "that field of distinction so lately opened to the learned of this country, I mean composition, and the art of writing [. . . .] It is here, ye rising hopes of our Jerusalem! it is here that you must look for your rewards in this world" (*The Scotch Preacher* 1789:II, 25). The printed results, both spiritual and secular, are indeed part of what we count as the Scottish Enlightenment.[3] Most notable among these clerical authors was Hugh Blair, whose *Sermons* (1777-1801) and *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) were publishing triumphs of both sorts.

    The universities (whose leaders were mostly the same men as those leading the liberalized Church, and many of whose students were destined for the ministry) were making a similar adjustment. Of course, they had always needed and produced texts that were standardized by copying or printing, but some changes in the academic profession were now giving that part of their function a new motive force. It was during the eighteenth century that the teachers' part in that much-prized polymathic tradition of the Scottish arts course was abandoned: the "regent," who had hitherto taught most subjects to his one group of students as they passed through their arts course, and who had also acted as their moral tutor, was now wholly replaced by the specialist professor.[4] The effect of this change was to channel academic work in the direction of research, making the university

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[2] Quotations from the Advertisement to *The Scotch Preacher* (1789:I, v-ix).

[3] Richard Sher (1985:164-65) provides a list of "Polite Literature Published by Scottish Ministers, 1746-1793."

[4] The change was completed at Edinburgh in 1708; Glasgow in 1727; St. Andrews in 1747; Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1753; and King's College, Aberdeen, in 1799.

teacher's ideal sphere of activity the printed book rather than the classroom or lecture-hall. As Dr. Chalmers, Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews University in the early post-Enlightenment period, said, "I make the Chair the medium of conveyance to the press" (*Evidence* 1837:80). A contemporary of Chalmers on the staff at St. Andrews fitted the student into this revised model of academic communications by suggesting that, rather than attending the live lecture, he should obtain a copy of his professor's published text and "study the subject coolly and without distraction in his closet."[5]

The lectures continued in spite of such professorial reasonableness, but there was another university reform that was more persuasive in drawing the student into the new print-orientation. During this same period, the later eighteenth century, the Scottish universities made significant changes in the academic subject that had discourse for its field of study—namely Rhetoric. Its professors now added to the subject's traditional preoccupation with the techniques of persuasive oratory a much broader interest in composition of all kinds. The illustrative texts were no longer the Latin and Greek classics only; there were modern English samples too, and these were given attention not merely as samples but in their own right as objects of literary criticism. There has recently been much discussion of this "New Rhetoric" in the Scottish universities.[6] It has been convincingly identified as the starting-place of the modern academic subject of English Literature. If this seems an odd place for English studies to start, we must remember that Rhetoric's Scottish students were being educated for participation in the London-centered nation of Britain: the study of English literary models—Pope, Swift, Thomson (a Scot, but writing, of course, in a Scots-free English)—would help these students to avoid self-betrayal and consequent self-limitation as provincials. In this way Rhetoric was part of the assimilation of Scottish culture to English culture. This trend has been regretfully acknowledged even while the New Rhetoric's great academic import has been celebrated.[7]

What has been less frequently noticed (or perhaps simply taken for granted) is that the reform of Rhetoric also involved a shift from its traditional, essentially oral character as a science of public speaking toward literary and critical interests that made it more nearly a science of the printed

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[5] *Evidence* 1837:151—testimony of Thomas Duncan.

[6] See esp. Crawford 1992, 1997, 1998.

[7] E.g., in Crawford 1992:42.

book, which is indeed what modern English Literature has largely been— at least in British schools and universities. This shift is one that Robert Watson, professor in Rhetoric at St. Andrews University and one of the pioneers of the New Rhetoric, expressly announced at the start of his course of lectures on the subject, as surviving notes of those lectures show (Watson 1758:fol. 1r-1v):

> In order to fix the Notion of Rhetorick, let me observe the chief Particular in which it seems necessary to find Fault with the common Writers on Rhetorick, is for confining their Precepts to one particular Sort of Discourse viz; Publick Orations. First because many of the Rules of this Art are of a General nature, and therefore ought to be delivered as general. And Secondly. Because an Acquaintance with the Rules of History, and Poetry, is at least of equal Consequence to the Improvement of Taste, as an Acquaintance with the Rules of Orations.

This "taste," then, was to be as much related to texts as to speech. It was, besides, to be a reader's taste as much as a writer's: "To what follows then you may give the Name of Rhetorick, or Criticisms as you please; if they deserve the one they will deserve the other also."[8] If Scottish intellectual culture was migrating into print, Rhetoric was teaching the future generations how to consume it in that form.

That migration is not my primary subject here; I only wish to establish it as a necessary and leading characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment. Nor can I attempt here to say how that migration related to the Anglicization of Scottish culture; the two were certainly inseparably involved. And just as that Anglicization was after all only partial—in some areas of Scottish life nearly ineffectual, here and there actively resisted—so in the matter of print, there was resistance, conscious and otherwise. It was most conscious, perhaps, in the Church, where the difference between print and speech had important theological implications. As Samuel Johnson said (with reference to Church of Scotland prayers, but much the same principle applied to the sermon), "The minister formerly, in the effusion of his prayer, expected immediate, and perhaps perceptible, inspiration, and therefore thought it his duty not to think before what he should say" (1985:87). This traditional practice of the Presbyterians, condemned by less sympathetic observers as "extempory ravings, which they miscall spiritual preaching and praying," may be compared to the week's compositional labor that Hugh Blair would

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[8] Watson 1758: fols. 1v and 2r. See also Warnick 1993:34-35.

devote to a sermon.[9] Johnson was pleased to find the old doctrine in disuse: he, after all, regarded the sermon as "a considerable branch of English literature" (Boswell 1980:1145; entry for May 8th, 1781). But a substantial grouping in the Church of Scotland, the "orthodox" or evangelical party that had opposed the liberalizing reforms of the "moderates," was in fact holding on to that old doctrine and deploring the transformation of the sermon and prayer into a subsection of what this party's most eloquent spokesman, John Witherspoon, scornfully called "fine writing" (1754:18).

Could there reasonably have been an equivalent resistance in the universities, where the new arrangements had such obvious professional advantages? Certainly some educationists worried about the incidental loss of that pastoral attention to students that the all-purpose regent had provided, a loss that eventually made student residency in the Scottish universities impractical. (In St. Andrews, it ended in 1820.) Although this concern gave rise to some more welfare-conscious alternatives—real or imagined college communities, glorifications of the tutorial relationship[10]—it was just as likely to produce printed remedies. The New Rhetoric itself was one such remedy; since good literature provided "a profitable exercise to the virtuous affections and passions," the study of it was really a moral discipline (Watson 1778:142-43). In addition, there was a growing body of print aimed at supplying just that holistic pedagogy that was disappearing from the Scottish universities. Texts like John Clarke's *Essay on Study* (1731), Isaac Watts' *Improvement of the Mind* (1741), Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator* (1745), or Robert Dodsley's *Preceptor* (1748)—all of which were being read at St. Andrews[11]—took in hand most or all aspects of the student's development. Dodsley's very title neatly announces the printed book as substitute teacher. In fact his text went further; by incorporating the voice of the pupil as well, it attempted to put into type the whole apparatus

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[9] Quotation from Crokatt and Monroe 1786:43; for Blair's sermon, see Boswell 1963:45 (entry for August 19th, 1773).

[10] For examples of these types of alternative, see, respectively, John Witherspoon, the Scottish minister who became principal of the College of New Jersey, promoting the College in his *Address* of 1772 (Witherspoon 1815:308-30); the Scottish academic David Fordyce's fictitious "Academy" (Fordyce 1745-48); Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, a book that had a great influence in Scotland (Rousseau 1762); and the St. Andrews alumnus Andrew Bell's "Madras System" of "Mutual tuition" (Meiklejohn 1881:124).

[11] Records of borrowing survive for most of the period. Dodsley's *Preceptor* emerges as one of the most frequently borrowed of all titles during the later eighteenth century.

of pedagogy. In short, the student might pursue maturity as well as knowledge "in his closet."

Probably no professor would have believed wholeheartedly in such a project, but in order to justify the new academic regime it was necessary at least to suppose the students more adult than they really were. It should be remembered that students in the Scottish universities were in fact very young, commonly matriculating in their early teens. From such youths the new bookish regime was requiring not an absolute self-sufficiency, of course, but a strenuous degree of it. It was upon them that the shift from voice to print bore least favorably, and so it is among them that one might look for signs of resistance. One would not expect formal or corporate opposition of the sort that clerics might assemble—what sort of student would even have identified the change of which I have been speaking, among all the more immediate changes in his own and the national life? More likely there would be some unordered, habitual resistance, something in the nature of a friction as the force of change came to bear. It was just such a friction, I believe, that showed itself when the students at St. Andrews suddenly took to scribbling in the library books.

This outbreak of writing in books was most directly the consequence of an unpopular regime in the Library, the regime of Librarian William Vilant (nicknamed "Punctum" by the students), which lasted from 1768 until 1788.[12] For that reason, although I hope to ascribe a convincing meaning to it as a response to the established literary culture at St. Andrews, I must allow that its energetic, subversive spirit was prompted at least partly by an essentially extraliterary motive—the war with Vilant. Moreover, once under way, marginalia like these tend to become timelessly a function of the general pathology of writing on forbidden surfaces. As such, they tell us about psychology, especially male adolescent psychology, rather than about phases of cultural history. Therefore, the St. Andrews marginalia do have both a more local and a more universal reference than the one in which I am interested here.

However, as to the local reference, William Vilant was after all the custodian of the Library's books, and his power to refuse requests for loans

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[12] The marginalia frequently incorporate their own dates. If not, they can very often be approximately dated from personal allusions or signatures, or much more vaguely from their handwriting and ink. Vilant's time in office deposited the richest vein, but certainly there was some writing in books both before and after that, and I am only concerned to keep my examples within the Enlightenment period. I have quoted the marginalia in bold type, in order to retain something of their distinctive appearance in the books. Doubtful readings are in square brackets.

that were not authorized by a professor's signature ("**Punctum Vilant if ye do not give me out a Book when I want you may assure yourself that I will murder you some dark Night**")[13] tended to cast him as the proprietor of them. As such, he was the target not only of personal invective but also sometimes of comments that were really the expression of attitudes toward the books themselves. Perhaps the most intriguing of these is the simple statement "**Punctum is Addison.**" However ironic or fantastic in spirit, this identification of the Librarian with a key figure in English literature and in the New Rhetoric that studied it (four of Hugh Blair's *Lectures* were devoted to a study of Addison) suggests that Vilant was felt to stand in some elementary relation to the culture that he physically distributed.[14] At any rate, the scribbling craze that embarrassed Vilant's period of office ranged well beyond Vilant himself for its subjects.

As to the universal psychology of writing on forbidden surfaces, the surfaces in this case were printed books and not, for instance, lavatory walls. And just as graffiti in lavatories have as their context the act of evacuation, so marginalia, however unscholarly, have as theirs the act of reading. Everything written in margins must be, however obliquely, a reflection upon reading, the more so because, unlike lavatorial graffiti, marginalia have a context that is also their own medium of communication. To read them is in itself to modify the act of reading envisaged by the makers of the printed book. Sometimes, indeed, the student marginalia in the St. Andrews Library books directly address the business of reading. A reader of James Harris' *Philosophical Arrangements*, for instance, candidly muses, across the front end-paper of the Library's copy, about the way reading experiences bed down in the mind:

> **This is a very good Book I never read a better in my life here** [before?]**, not I, you may believe me for I tell the real truth**
> **It is curious what made me say so The book is good enough but I have seen a better** [15]

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[13] Marginal comment appearing in Addison 1721:II, 459, of the St. Andrews University Library copy class-marked sPR3300.D21 (hereafter referred to as "Addison ms.").

[14] It may be evidence of Addison's status at St. Andrews University that its copy of his *Works* (1721) is the most extensively written in of all the books I have inspected. However, this particular marginalium appears in Baxter 1740:II, title page, of the St. Andrews University Library copy class-marked sQB50.B3D40A.

[15] Harris 1775, copy class-marked sB1374.H2.

In other cases, the marginalia seem to challenge the business of reading altogether. "**1, 2, 3, come follow me**" may be a nonsense verse, or perhaps a tag in some playground game (I have mentioned that St. Andrews students were in many cases not so far off playground age). In either case, it invites the reader away from his text.[16]

It may yet be asked: is there not a characteristic psychology governing all defacement of books and lifting it from particular contexts of time and place? It is certain (as anyone who uses university libraries must know all too well) that such scribbling is not a rare or merely historical thing, and anything said about one sample of it will perhaps readily apply to most or all of the rest. Much of what I observe below will undoubtedly be generally true (if true at all) in that way. However, I believe that the St. Andrews marginalia are distinctive to this extent: that they do not have it as their overriding motive to manage, quiz, or deride the intellectual content of books (by far the most common motive behind modern student marginalia, in my experience of it), but consist rather in the self-sufficient or parasitical exercise of their own subjects and habits of conversation. And the fundamental statement that I wish to make about the marginalia at St. Andrews is that they are conversation: their habit of discourse, counter-colonizing the pages of the newly expansive print empire in Scotland, was distinctly the habit of an older colloquial culture.[17]

These marginalia characteristically open a dialogue of some sort—with the text, with other students, or with both. They therefore tend to be concentrated in a few books where, the ice having once been broken, new voices readily join the conversation. But they are absent from other books that were, as the Library records show, no less freqently borrowed (this indeed remains a familiar fact of the genre). And these conversations do not just accrete speakers; they evolve audiences. The first student may speak at large, then another will address that student, a third will call up a new audience to condemn the debate, and so on. Therefore, the merely notional, undefined, or universal audience, which the printed book as such usually addresses, is partitioned by these marginalia to create identified and self-conscious groups or individuals within it, remodeling the book on the

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[16] It appears in Bolingbroke 1754:I, 338, copy class-marked sB1355.A2D54. Chants not unlike this one, used for a variety of the game "leapfrog," are given as number 304 in Gullen 1950:94.

[17] In this connection, I note that one sociologist has referred to graffiti as "a written source of material that is almost solely colloquial" (Allen Walker Read, quoted in Abel and Buckley 1977:8).

pattern of colloquial exchange. At the same time, the fixity that a printed text embodies, as one copy of a mass-produced edition, is refuted by these visible changes, expressive as they are of the influence of locality and occasion on that text. I will here quote from Walter Ong in confirmation of my argument (perhaps already self-evident) that the marginalia were thus drawing printed books back into the habits of earlier scribal and oral cultures (1982:132):

> Print encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion [. . . . It] situates utterance and thought on a surface disengaged from everything else, but it also goes farther in suggesting self-containment. Print encloses thought in thousands of copies of a work of exactly the same visual and physical consistency. . . . The printed text is supposed to represent the words of an author in definitive or "final" form. For print is comfortable only with finality. . . . By contrast, manuscripts, with their glosses or marginal comments [. . .], were in dialogue with the world outside their own borders. They remained closer to the give-and-take of oral expression.

The phrase "give-and-take" very well describes both the tone and the structure of the St. Andrews marginalia.

In various other ways these marginalia have the character of colloquial utterances. I will briefly discuss three of them: their punctuation (or lack of it), their formulaic character, and their adversarial relationships. They are, as my quoted examples show, frequently unpunctuated, as if nearer to the habit of voice than to that of text, and perhaps intended by the scribes as a heard voice rather than a read text. The connection between punctuation and merely visual reading, and conversely between unpunctuated texts and reading aloud, has been made by Marshall McLuhan in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Tracing the rise of private, silent reading, he argues that the work of some modernist writers—Gertrude Stein, e. e. cummings, Pound, and Eliot—"with its lack of punctuation and other visual aids, is a carefully devised strategy to get the passive visual reader into participant, oral action."[18] Of course there is no such "strategy" on the part of student writers in books, but juxtaposed as their writings are with fully punctuated texts, their common disregard of "visual aids" is a reminder that they were bringing to such texts the practices of a different tradition of discourse.

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[18] McLuhan 1962:83. More recently, the same connection between punctuation and silent reading is made by Alberto Manguel (1996:49-50).

Another of those practices was the ready recourse to verbal formulas, the preference for familiar collocations of words over individual expression. Aspects of this practice—the "massive use of formulaic elements"—are related by Walter Ong to the exigencies of oral, as opposed to scribal, tradition (esp. 1982:38-42). Perhaps only by reading the marginalia in this context—by understanding them, that is, as the exercise of an uninstitutionalized, extraliterary culture—will one be unsurprised by the repetitiveness and unoriginality shown by most of them.[19] Their invective, for instance, consists rather in the ritual re-use of familiar terms—*ass*, *bitch*, *blockhead*, *idiot*—than in anything individually aimed. And it is surely as an instance of this formulaic character that we must explain the otherwise anomalous dragging of the Librarian's name into fantasies of unusual sexual endowment: "**Damn ye Punctum your Prick is as long as a red Carrot with three months growth and your Stones as large as 2 Large Turnips well wintered.**"[20] Here were two recognized tropes of marginal rhetoric at St. Andrews—abuse of William Vilant and preoccupation with sexual hypertrophy and excess—brought together more by random than by deliberate composition, just as in oral verse "the formulas and themes are reshuffled rather than supplanted with new materials" (Ong 1982:42).

One common manifestation of the formulaic habit is indeed the use of verse to structure and standardize exchanges, and there is some verse or doggerel in the St. Andrews material.[21] One marginalium, which responds to an attack on Robert Fergusson (the poet, who was then a student at St. Andrews) and was perhaps therefore written down by Fergusson himself, is a couplet that sounds like common property (and certainly survives today in various forms):

The man that wrote these cursed lines on me

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[19] This is a phenomenon that Iona and Peter Opie comment upon in the introductory chapter to *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (1959:2): "Conscious as we were of the economy of human invention, and the tenacity of oral tradition (the two elements without which there would be no folklore), we were not prepared for quite the identity of ritual and phraseology which has been revealed throughout the land in children's everyday witticisms, and in the newer of their self-organized amusements."

[20] In Swift 1727-35:III, 29, copy class-marked sPR3724.M4D27 (hereafter referred to as "Swift ms."). A photograph of this marginalium appears in Crawford 1997:51 (Plate V).

[21] This tendency again is amply evidenced in Opie and Opie 1959, as well as in the comparable collections Gullen 1950 and Chambers 1870.

he now is damned and ever more shall be. [22]

Some words inscribed along a margin in Kames' *Sketches of the History of Man*—"At the hour of ten at night"—may have their explanation in one of the "miscellaneous puerile rhymes" that Robert Chambers included in his *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*:

> In the principal country-towns in Scotland, it used to be customary for the boys to parade the streets at night in bands, bawling, at the full extent of their voices, various rhymes of little meaning, such as:
>> The moon shines bright,
>> And the stars gie a light,
>> We'll see to kiss a bonny lass
>> At ten o'clock at night! [23]

Other instances of formulaic composition will appear later in my discussion. The examples chosen here are intended merely to relate the marginalia, in this respect, to folk habits of discourse.

The third characteristic of oral culture in these marginalia is their adversarial spirit. Walter Ong calls this cultural characteristic "agonistic dynamics"; his examples include flyting and other traditional polemical oratory, and he relates it most basically to the necessarily personal character of spoken exchange, in contrast to the disengaged character of written texts (see 1982:43-46). Sometimes the St. Andrews marginalia do indeed seem to be only momentary incursions into writing of spoken oppositions. **"Devil damn you to hell**" at the top of a page suggests that the book was being used as a vehicle in a hitherto vocal exchange now perhaps interrupted by the necessary silence of a class or of the Library itself.[24] A slightly more complicated relation between script and orality is suggested by "**David Savile if you don't speak lower I will kick you to the door, or else cut out your tongue. R. Knox.**," but even this marginalium preserves all the

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[22] See Swift ms.:IV, 92. The originating abuse of Fergusson is on the opposite page.

[23] Chambers 1870:151-52. The marginalium is in Kames 1774:I, 377, copy class-marked sJC176.H7. But the same hand has written, on the next page, "**Come all you jolly seamen**," so possibly another song, or some coastal variant of Chambers' (St. Andrews being by the sea), was in the writer's mind.

[24] See Quintilian 1756:II, 423, copy class-marked sPA6650.E5G8.

ad hominem immediacy of the speech that it seems to threaten.[25] Elsewhere, some comments on the rhetorician John Ward show an interesting gradation from the scholarly towards this colloquial type of opposition, concluding as they do in this way: "**We might find many more faults with him but as we do not intend to criticize him it may be sufficient to say he is a damned Blockhead.**"[26] The pseudonym "Inimicus," which signs off some inter-student abuse in the same book, will perhaps summarize the attitude.[27] Again, this characteristic of oral culture needs no further evidencing here since it will be seen often enough in the following material.

In case these colloquial characteristics in the St. Andrews marginalia should seem merely inherent in the genre, it may be instructive to mention two quite unconforming varieties of marginalium found in the Library's books. The more common of the two consists simply in the re-writing in a neat, italic hand (occasionally in imitation print) of phrases from the printed text. Whether we interpret this as the misplaced but diligent practicing of the taught hand of the day, or as a mere byproduct of daydreaming, it did tend to assimilate manuscript habits to printed book values, and it seems significant that it remains a private response to the text, inviting (and in practice receiving, as far as I have seen) no rejoinder.

Then there is the less frequent but not rare practice of correcting the English of printed texts. Against Swift's phrase "in the Condition he was," for instance, a student writes "**perspicuity requires that the author should have said *in which* he was.**"[28] Even this sort of scholarly interference may be intemperately expressed, and it sometimes produces its own controversies, but it otherwise differs from the kind of marginalium that I have been discussing hitherto in that its motive is deliberately towards the ideal of standardization implied in printing, rather than counter to it. It shows, no doubt, the application to student reading of lessons learned in the

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[25] Fielding 1743:II, 128, copy class-marked sPR3454.M5D43 (hereafter referred to as "Fielding ms.").

[26] Ward 1759:II, 93, copy class-marked sPN4105.E5W3 (hereafter referred to as "Ward ms.").

[27] Ward ms.:I, 15. The accompanying date is 1772.

[28] Swift ms.:I, 284. There are several corrections of this sort in the same text. Swift was in fact commonly cited as a model of English prose by the Scottish rhetoricians.

Rhetoric classes: "perspicuity" was a key word there.[29] To write in books, then, was not necessarily to challenge their type of discourse; it might signal acceptance and even promotion of that discourse. However, the essential habits of oral culture did in general persist in the student marginalia, as I hope to have shown, and accordingly there was at least implicit in them a challenge to the newer culture of print. I will now consider some of the devices and strategies distinguishable in these marginalia, and suggest what sorts of challenges they represented.

By defacing books the students were necessarily abusing them, whatever it was they wrote, and it is evident that this abuse was often a conscious motive. In one identifiable genre of marginalium, in fact, it is the defining motive. The scribe will specifically deplore the practice of writing in books: "**O man do not scribble on the book.**"[30] This seems a sincere and very welcome remonstration, but of course there is at least a paradox in it, and when one finds similar injunctions spreading into several lines of hand-writing one cannot dispute the irony. In one variety of this *jeu d'esprit*, the scribe defends the dignity of the book by claiming his own defacement of it for a special privilege: "**Damn everyone that writes on any of the library books except W. B. S.**"[31] Or he may at least mischievously acknowledge, while he offends, that dignity: **"David Balmain the old pistol footed scoundrel I will have** [?] **the impudence to insert his name in this honourable book of Punctum's."**[32] As this last example indicates, the immediate authority being challenged was that of the Librarian, or more generally of the Library and the University: but the word "honourable" (perhaps, with "impudence," taken from Vilant's own vocabulary) suggests that this authority was also representative of, and spokesman for, the larger authority of print culture.

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[29] The word appears in the lectures of both Watson and his successor William Barron, and evidently Barron also set it as a topic for composition: an extensive manuscript addition to the Library's *Female Spectator* alleges that one Colin McVean (matriculated 1779) tried to deal with this set task by bribing the professor (see vol. IV, facing p. 323, of the copy class-marked bAP4.F2S6).

[30] Hooke 1738-71:I, 42, copy class-marked sDG208.H7D38 (hereafter referred to as "Hooke ms.").

[31] Johnson 1767:III, 118, copy class-marked sPR1365.R3D67 (hereafter referred to as "Johnson ms.").

[32] Addison ms.:I, 382. The wording is obscure, but Balmain's name appears elsewhere on the page. He matriculated in 1789.

It is clear that recording a name was often sufficient in itself to satisfy the urge to deface. This practice seems indeed to be the most common type of marginalium, and names of course play a part in many other types. It is one of Walter Ong's reiterated themes that the moving of discourse from speech through writing and into print meant "removing it from the rich but chaotic existential context of much oral utterance" (1982:103-4). Even between writing and printing, Ong finds a difference in this respect. Each of them "situates utterance and thought on a surface disengaged from everything else," but print "goes farther in suggesting self-containment" (132). Ong instances the textbooks of Peter Ramus and his successors: "A Ramist textbook on a given subject had no acknowledged interchange with anything outside itself" (134). By contrast, the students did indeed take communications back into the "chaotic existential context" of current life when they wrote their names in books, often adding dates and even places of abode. Here again, no doubt, there is some element of the more primitive motivation shared with writing on trees, lavatory walls, desks, and so on, and having to do with territory and self-announcement. We may recognize as merely primitive and universal such marginalia as "**John Roger wrote this**" (assuming that he did).[33] But something more directly challenging to what Ong calls the "closure" of the printed text is implied in various St. Andrews localizations of Addison's sentimental drama *Rosamund*. For instance, next to the heroine's printed name one hand writes "**not so beautiful as a Bell Tibby** [?] **in this town to wit St. Andrews I love her more than Harry loved Rosamund A: Student 1785.**"[34] The student's own name is in fact missing here, no doubt in that common bashfulness of the lover that another scribe expressly acknowledges later in the same volume.[35] However, place and date are identified, asserting themselves further in the word "this" and in the present tense of the student's affection, surpassing and superseding that of Addison's Harry.

This personalizing of the printed texts is not necessarily self-assertion; the names and contexts are often other people's. A story told in *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, about a canny minister who revises his gloomy spiritual prognosis for a dying parishioner when he hears that he

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[33] Johnson ms.:IV, 137. Roger matriculated in 1780.

[34] Addison ms.:I, 118.

[35] In an exchange on p. 205: "**Alexr.** [surname scored out] **dreams all night and thinks all day about a lovely girll** [*sic*] **in this town**," below which is written, "**He that wrote this wrote what was true but I don't want it published to the world I have put out my name.**"

himself is to do well from the man's will, is reattached to a member of staff, George Hill.[36] Henry Fielding's *Journey from this World to the Next* has been thoughtfully personalized thus: "**I think this book is just fit for punctum to inform him about the journey he must soon goe, then he'll put off his ill nature.**"[37] Poor William Vilant's was indeed the most common name in such recastings. Elsewhere in this same text, a marginalium of about 230 words pictures Vilant's soul—rejected even by the devil—suffering a series of unflattering transmigrations. In another ambitious attempt upon the abstraction of the printed page, a reader of the *Spectator* papers addresses a twenty-two-line poem to Joseph Addison, telling him that "**gin [=if] ye knew / How short-legged P– uses you**" he would leave his classical retreat in "**th'elisian fields**" and visit St. Andrews to punish the Librarian for the unspecified offense. Possibly the offense in question is that of allowing the much-defaced book to be written in, so that the poem may belong also to that ironic genre that I have already identified.[38]

This last example, with its un-Addisonian "gin ye knew," is a reminder of the specifically national dimension, in Scotland, of the confrontation between colloquial and print culture. As one would expect, the student marginalia seem to resist that promotion of Englishness I mentioned above. They do not in general make language itself the site of that resistance. Since they deal much in scurrility and invective, they necessarily use a more demotic vocabulary than does print, and one might expect a rich Scottish content to this vocabulary. In fact, however, among the standard terms of abuse the only common Scots term is *bitch* (used for men). Other Scots words are indeed used: "**Sandie M Flockherd** [is a] **muckle moued** [= big-mouthed] **bitch**," for instance, and "**The French are clorty** [= dirty] **bodies.**"[39] But national feeling among the students was generally asserted, here at least, in other symbols than language. The

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[36] On p. 37 of the Library's copy of the London, 1719 edition, class-marked sBX9180.C8D19. Trimming of the page has made some of the writing illegible, but the part that can be read says "**This is a** [. . .] **George Hill** [. . .] **trick I dare say it was just** [. . .] **him**." George Hill became a professor in 1772 and Principal of St. Mary's College in 1791.

[37] Fielding ms.:II, 151.

[38] Addison ms.:III, 250.

[39] Clarke 1731:196-97, copy class-marked sLC30.C6, and Addison ms.:I, 73. Flockhart matriculated in 1782.

remark about the French was prompted by a reference in Addison's poetry to "the Gaul." Nearby, in the same poem ("The Campaign"), his praise of the Duke of Marlborough, and of English heroism in general, produces further restiveness. Someone has written "**I can write better**," and more curiously "**Lieutenant Hismacago** [*sic*]": the possibility that the writer is proposing a Scottish hero seems confirmed by the appearance over the page of the words "**Humphray Clinker**" (Lieutenant Lismahago is a spokesman for Scotland in Smollett's novel of nearly that name).[40] More self-explanatory is a marginalium in *The Rambler*: "**The Ramblers name is Johnston, a most hellish surly, lying fellow who says there is not a tree but two in all the Shire of Fife which certainly is a damn'd lie. John Grant attests.**"[41] A similar correction is made in a copy of Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, where that author mentions "a few rows of tolerable trees" as "the only trees that I saw from Berindale to the extremity of Caithness": "**you have not been looking about you then**," someone has written.[42] Both these writers, Johnson and Pennant, were celebrated reporters on Scotland to English readers; both books were published in London, returning to Scotland to represent the Scots to themselves in an English mirror. The resistance being effected in these marginalia, therefore, was not only to a particular libel, but also to the centralized revision of Scottish culture that print both effected and enshrined. The center in question was, of course, London, still the publishing center even for the Scottish Enlightenment (Hugh Blair's *Sermons* and *Lectures* were both printed there). We may therefore take as a motto for this type of resistance the assertion, more patriotic than accurate, which one student has written into a course text, "**Edinburg is the Metropolis of my Country.**"[43]

I wish to make a final point about Scottishness, this time suggested by John Grant's epithet "hellish," quoted in the previous paragraph. The word "hellish" may well be read as careless hyperbole, along with the "damn'd lie," but there were orthodox Scottish ministers in the 1770s who would have seen no hyperbole in the second phrase at least. And if the cast of Presbyterianism to which such ministers belonged was—as I have

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[40] Addison ms.:I, 69 and 71.

[41] Johnson ms.:I, 192. This John Grant matriculated in the 1770s, probably in 1775.

[42] Pennant 1776:I, 195, copy class-marked sDA855.P3. This marginalium may well be of nineteenth-century date.

[43] Hooke ms.:II, 381. There is no apparent context in the print for this statement.

suggested—allied, like the marginalia, to popular oral traditions, while the new liberalism preferred politeness and print, it is not surprising that any religious affiliations apparent in the marginalia should be to that orthodox kind. Probably, most of their many passing references to hell, damnation, and the devil are no more than the ordinary currency of invective.[44] In that case, they tell us more about old-style Presbyterianism and the powerful appeal to popular habits of thought that its downright theology made than about student spirituality. But even where there is a more attentive theology in the marginalia, the same preference does appear. A user of the Library's much-borrowed and much-maltreated volumes of Hooke's *Roman History* adds this comment: "**The damd villans that tears these fine histories should be hunted with dogs till the day of Judgement & that in the afternoon**" (Hooke ms.:I, 449). Here is just that sort of literal-minded and savored eschatology that caricaturists of the Scottish church ridiculed and that was being shunned by the moderates.[45] We are alerted, too, by the syntax of "tears" and its plural subject (an idiom in Scots grammar) to the specifically Scottish allegiance of this marginalium. Even if, therefore, we may doubt the seriousness of such Knoxian animus, it certainly shows the choice of a peculiarly Scottish demotic rhetoric in which to debate personalities and deface printed books, a rhetoric directly opposed to the Anglicized liberalism of the Scottish university establishments.

We return to a more general critique of authority in that pompous formula from the same *Rambler* marginalium, "**John Grant attests**." Devices to celebrate the descent from the dignity of the printed context to the familiarities of student life are not uncommon in these marginalia. A proclamation of "Geo: Rex," for instance, makes public John Whyttock's relations with "**that damed clapped whore in the north gate**."[46] At the back of the Library's copy of William Duff's *Essay on Original Genius*, a similarly scurrilous observation is signed "**A. Divine**" ("Divine" is a Scottish name, but since no such student formally matriculated it may have been assumed to embellish the occasion).[47] A common formula for signing

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[44] See for instance, in Dixon 1789:220, under the running head "A Voyage to the North-West Coast of America" the suggested variant "**A Voyage to the Devil in H-ll**" (copy class-marked sG440.D5).

[45] See for instance the account of it given in *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*.

[46] Addison ms.:I, 254. John Whyttock matriculated in 1781.

[47] Duff 1767, copy class-marked sPN1031.D8. The observation in question is "**The Close with a wench is a better place than a bawdy house.**"

these marginalia is the legalism "quod testor" [= which I hereby attest], as in "**Why the Devil Bruce do you write your name here. see if I do that. quod testor Batchelor.**"[48]   More violent translations of register may occur: there is, for instance, the evergreen fun of making the text lampoon itself, as when the list of subscribers fronting Henry Ellis's *Voyage to Hudson's Bay* is altered so that "His Grace the Duke of Montague" becomes "**His arse the Duke.**"[49]   The occasional macaronic exercises and the writing of the Librarian's nickname in Greek letters (evidently a rather fascinating practice to some: the new students of Greek, perhaps) belong, I would suggest, to this same type of ironic interplay between popular and high cultures.

In this last variety of marginal rhetoric, specializing in the mockery of print-borne authority, the collision of two modes of discourse is seen in its most willed and elementary form, and it may be reasonable to find in it the essential pattern and sentiment for all the subversive writings in books that I have been instancing. For all these writings persistently assert, whether consciously or not, the rivalry of an oral culture, and in the case of the more self-conscious assertions that I have lastly spoken of, there seems to be a deliberate celebration, in mockingly artful juxtapositions and translations, of the power of the hand acting on behalf of the voice to ambush and discomfort print.

Yet subversive and oppositional as these marginalia are, they are also essentially reactionary. Their writers wittingly or otherwise speak for pre-Enlightenment values in their own and the nation's life: in particular, for juvenile culture against the adult culture of their immediate future, and for Scottish culture against the new Anglo-British values of their professors. More generally, and incorporating these, they reassert oral culture against the print culture into which their university was inducting them. These marginalia were merely a local and transitory defiance of print culture, but they now provide, sited as they are right on the invasive printed page, a vivid instance and image of the post-Gutenberg collision of discourses.

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[48] Ward ms.:I, 97. The Bruce in question matriculated in 1777.

[49] Ellis 1748, copy class-marked sG650.E5.

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Text, Orality, Literacy, Tradition, Dictation, Education, and Other Paradigms of Explication in Greek Literary Studies

Barry B. Powell

By now we might hope for some kind of consensus on the genesis of the Homeric poems, but the plot seems as muddled as ever. In the history of Homeric studies we find our truest exemplum of cultural myopia. We don't know what to do with Homer because we think he is just like us. As we change, he changes too. Our present myopia is, in my experience, bound up with a set of terms that mean too many things, or contradictory things, to too many people, creating the illusion that we have grasped something when we haven't. From a longer list of similar terms, I have selected six to discuss in this article: *text*, *orality*, *literacy*, *tradition*, *dictation*, and *education*. I do not hope to present a universal or historical description of how such terms have been used, but to show how they have come to be mixed up with each other in a perplexing chaos, presenting a distorted description of the nature and origin of early Greek literature.

Text

Let us begin by thinking about Homer, who, whatever else, is a text and always has been a text (Fig. 1). Homer is a physical object first, with look and texture and graphemes capable of interpretation. One sometimes hears phrases like "oral text" or similar metaphors, but these I reject out of hand. The Homeric Question is directed to the problem of how this physical object, this text, came into being.

One way of making a text is to take a pen in your hand and inscribe marks on a flexible substance, arranging them into rows according to complex rules of orthography and formal grammar, in expression following classical models that we can expect our socially equal readers to understand and enjoy. The creation of the text lies in the hands of a master of literature, of artistic expression in "words." Alexandrians made literature in
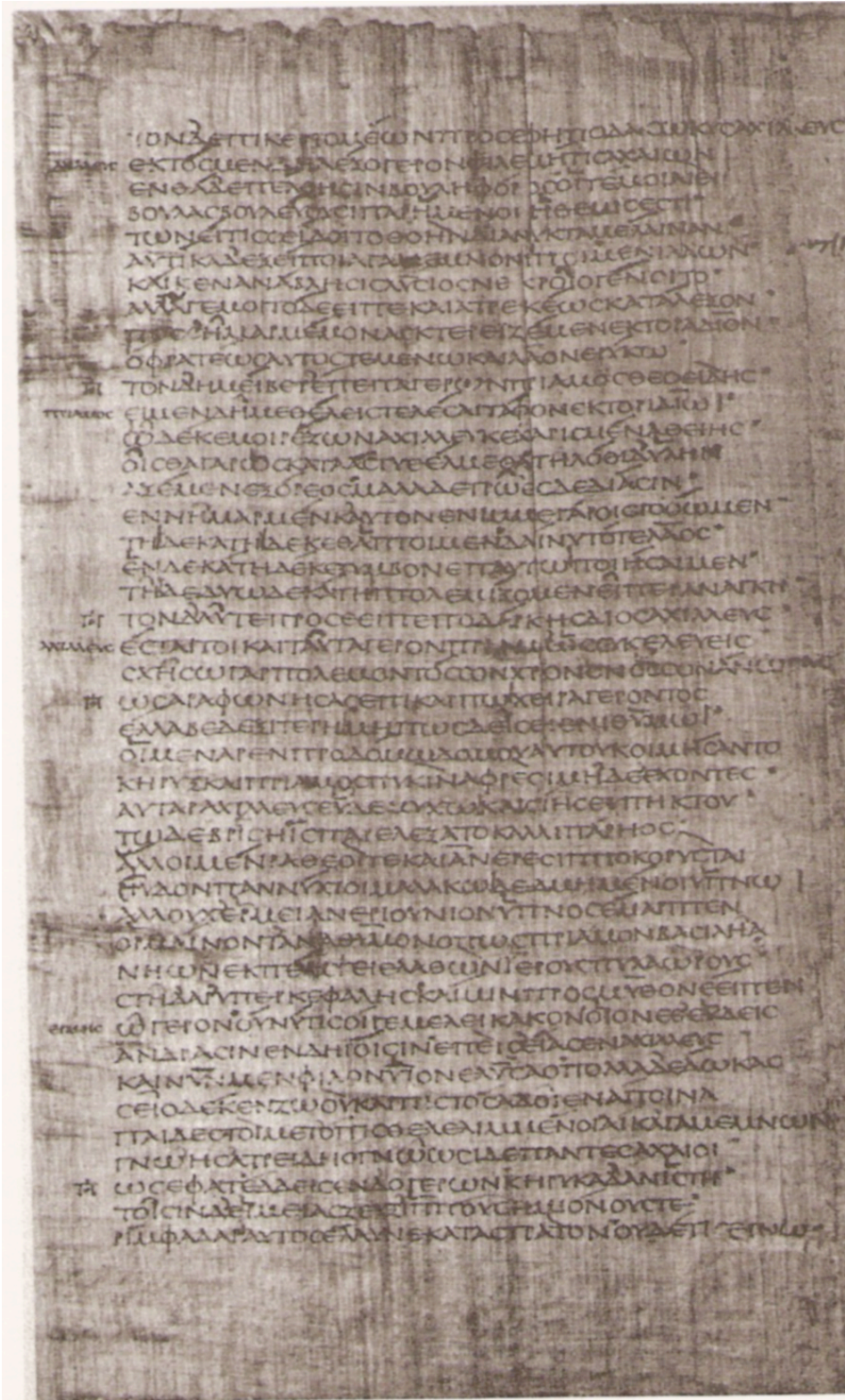
Fig. 1. The Bankes papyrus, showing *Iliad* 24.649-91 (2nd century AD, BM Papyrus cxiv).

this way, and so did the Romans who copied them. Shakespeare did something similar. In general, people have wanted Homer's texts to have come into being in the same way and at the hands of a similar master. But the oral origins of Homer's verse, now rather well defined, make that conclusion unlikely. How then did *our* text come into being?

Our own conceptual world consists more and more of sounds and images than of abstract markings on a flexible substance, and the word-processor mocks the theory of a fixed, original text. It is not surprising that today some scholars claim a similar model for Homer's text, also said to be ever shifting, refined, drifting in and out of the darkness of cyberspace on the tides of orality. *Text* and *poetry* are supposed to be the same thing. *Writing* and *language* are the same thing too. There never was a Homer, a historical personality, but only a tradition, or there were many "oral texts" of "Homer" taken down repeatedly, whenever someone felt like it.

Facts are meager. Milman Parry died before the computer age, but he pioneered the use of modern technology to discover historical truth. He discovered a new way to make a text. He carried to Yugoslavia the best electronic recording equipment he could, when electronic recording was so primitive that some songs were taken down on aluminum discs, and some even on aluminum wire.[1] In the Milman Parry Collection at Harvard University, Albert Lord once showed me in a drawer several rolls of this wire, hopelessly tangled—I wonder what lost songs this tangled text preserves.

Parry's aluminum discs and wire are just as much a text as a papyrus with graphemes. Each has a material basis—obviously liable to corruption—and a code impressed upon it. In either case the text depends on technological innovation: on the one hand the Greek alphabet inscribed on papyrus, electronic magnetization on the other. All texts are useless without the technology to decode their symbols: the rules of Greek alphabetic writing in the one case and the tape-player on the other.

Parry's field methods were an important part of his argument because he showed how it was possible to make a text out of oral poetry, evidently a contradiction in terms. The singer sings and the scribe records, whether on aluminum discs or wire or by means of graphemes on a flexible substance. Parry experimented with both methods and noticed that the slower, more plodding grapheme method produced a longer and more complex text (except for Stolac songs). It was possible to record a song more than once, and Parry and Lord made deliberate experiments along these lines, including recording the same song after an interval of many years (e.g.,

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[1] See Foley 1988 for the history of oral-formulaic theory.

Lord 1960:115ff.). But Parry's repeated recording of the same song was done for experimental purposes, and cannot be thought to have occurred in the ancient world. Many have wondered what an improbable production the recording of the Homeric texts must have been—the time, the expense, the specific circumstances now lost to us. The recording can have happened but a single time.

Parry combined stylistic evidence from the Homeric poems, the subject of most of his publications, to prove the accuracy of his model for text-making. In Homer's text he isolated features of language inexplicable according to ordinary theories of literary style, like the fixed epithet. Homer's verse was composed in a curious rhythmical language whose units of meaning could be phrases, not words (as if an illiterate might have a concept of "phrase" or "word"). Homer's style is inappropriate to written composition and unknown in written composition. Neither Milman Parry nor Albert Lord was interested, however, in the nature or history of the technology that had made the text of Homer possible, any more than Milman Parry looked into the history of the recording machine. The technology was there and somebody brought it to bear.

Here is the paradox, the conundrum. The very technology of writing that made our text, which may or may not bear any relation to an actual song that Homer sang, is not found in Homer's poetic world, an observation already pressed in ancient times and emphasized by F. A. Wolf in his epoch-making *Prolegomena ad Homerum* of 1795. We cannot believe that Homer has suppressed all reference to writing in order to create "epic distance," a literary ploy making his poetic world seem long ago and far away, in the way that his warriors use bronze weapons exclusively. Bronze weapons are obviously old-fashioned, but no illiterate bard could have understood the historical importance of writing. If Homer had seen writing, the technology that made his *text* possible, he would have talked about it, as he almost does in his story of Bellerophon (*Iliad* 6.157-211) that tells how the king of Corinth sent Bellerophon to his father-in-law bearing a folding tablet with "baneful signs" (*sêmata lugra*). The exception proves the rule: Homer does not understand the reference, which must have come to him with the Eastern story.[2]

The absence of writing from Homer's world is extraordinary and contrary to everything we know about the importance of written documents, especially letters, to advance a narrative in the literature of literate societies. In the pre-Hellenic societies of Egypt and the Near East, written documents and writers of documents appear constantly and play key roles in narrative.

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[2] On Bellephron's tablet, cf. Foley 1999:1-5.

Even Enlil's power over the universe depended on his possession of the mysterious Tablets of Destiny, stolen by the demonic Anzû bird (Dalley 1989:205-7). How could writing and written documents not play a key role, when writing served such a central function in their society? Later details of the saga are happy to refer to writing: the words on the Apple of Discord, the false message by which Palamedes was taken.

The curious ignorance of writing everywhere in the Homeric poems, except in the special case of Bellerophon's tablet, was Wolf's strongest argument that Homer's world was illiterate. Parry, through stylistic analysis and field experimentation, proved Wolf's point, but the two men drew opposite conclusions: Wolf, that Homer was not a historical personality; Parry, that he was. Like Parry's tape-recorder, a new technology came to Greece from outside, in the hands of outsiders—*Phoinikeia grammata*, "Phoenician scratchings"—and accomplished its purpose, the recording of Homer. This technology came to Greece before there was time for news of it to enter the tradition of oral song. Here is one of the strongest reasons for thinking that the adapter, the man who invented the Greek alphabet on the model of Phoenician writing, himself recorded the songs of Homer. There are no tape-recorders in the songs of the *guslar* Avdo Medjedović either.

Orality

Parry's demonstration that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were orally composed refocused Homeric studies in a dramatic way, at least in the Anglophone world, and challenged our understanding of archaic Greece. Instead of being a free artist like Vergil (strange thought!), Homer was now considered a *traditional* poet, whose songs are traditional too, passed down orally from time immemorial, continually recomposed in the special rhythmical language whose units of meaning were phrases and not words. Homer, or whoever he was, even knew about the Trojan War fought at the end of the Bronze Age around 1200 BC, just as in this century South Slavic guslars knew about the Battle of Kosovo, fought in 1389 CE between the Moslem Turks and the Christian Serbs. Tradition, and its congener the inelegant traditionality, rode in the bosom of orality and could accomplish such feats.

We are speaking of a new dogma. Archaic Greek civilization was an oral, traditional culture, evidently, where poems were *composed*, not *written*, and writing played a limited and auxiliary role. Sometimes poetry was written down, of course, but many oral songs were always transmitted

orally and never written down. On the one hand there is *orality*, Homer's world, which offers certain qualities, and on the other there is the *text*ual world of *literacy*, our own world, which offers other qualities that are not necessarily superior. Literacy replaced orality in history, but orality always remains effective. Orality is not a lack or an inferior mode, an absence of something found in literate societies, but a *Ding an sich* with influence by no means primitive. Although *writing* undoubtedly separates modern, civilized, literate societies from primitive, uncivilized, illiterate ones, and may even be the basis for different versions of reality (as some have thought), Parry's demonstration of Homer's orality was the best possible illustration that oral cultures are not inferior to literate ones. What literate poet ever surpassed Homer?

Oral theory agreed, then, with postmodernist hostility to Western civilization's prideful colonialist claim to ascendancy over illiterate, native cultures. Oral theory agreed with anthropological arguments, going back to the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942), that cultures do not evolve and become better (for if they did, some would be better than others). Three thousand years of Greco-Roman literacy enabled complex thought, but did not make the English morally superior to the Zulu. All cultures, oral and literate, stand on an equal moral plane, and oral theory has proved it.

Such points of view are nicely illustrated in the following complaint by Walter Ong, a prominent theorist in oral studies, in a recent issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Ong refers to an earlier review in which he was mentioned (1997:17):

> Suzanne Reynolds's otherwise highly informative review attributes to me (without any quotations) an interpretation of the relationship between the oral and the textual world which I have never proposed, namely, that "the emergence of literacy necessarily entails the extinction ... of an inferior mode (orality)."
>
> I have never stated that orality is "inferior." In [my book] *Orality and Literacy* [1982] I decry the tendency to identify orality with the "primitive" or "savage" and state that "orality is not despicable. It can produce creations beyond the reach of literates, for example, the *Odyssey*."
>
>
> ... [A]lthough writing does make available thought structures and processes which were unavailable to our purely oral ancestors, writing was long dominated by orality, and it never eliminated orality or made orality "primitive" or inoperable.

The view that Suzanne Reynolds mistakenly attributes to Ong goes back, if unconsciously, to the very experiments launched by Parry and Lord in the central Balkans. Not only did literacy—that is, alphabetic literacy—appear to harm, or destroy, a *guslar*'s ability to compose in performance by means of a learned, rhythmical, traditional language, Lord observed, but in such highly literate societies as our own, or even in modern Slavic lands, oral singers do not seem to exist. Literacy, whether a superior mode or not, has killed them off.[3]

Ong's notion that orality continues to be effective after the introduction of writing—he means alphabetic writing—is on the surface set against the Parry-Lord theory, which placed orality on one side of the divide and literacy on the other. Ong is interested in defending the moral equality of illiterate societies, while Lord is thinking about the origin of texts.   To Lord, focused on the origin of the Homeric text, the incompatibility of oral and literate modes meant that there can be no *transitional text*, a text that was somehow oral and literate at the same time, because, in the experience of Parry and Lord, texts are created out of the oral tradition by means of dictation. Parry and Lord could not put a pen in the hands of South Slavic *guslari* and expect to get "oral poetry," so we should not put a pen in Homer's hand either.[4]

In *The Singer Resumes the Tale* (1995), Lord reversed his earlier orthodoxy about the transitional text and agreed that in some conditions true transitional texts can be found.   An oral poet learns how to write (alphabetically), and by means of pen and ink fashions a poem that looks like one that was composed in performance and taken down by dictation. Yet such conditions, Lord emphasized (1995:212-37), are unimaginable for the age of Homer. According to Parry and Lord, Homer's poems are dictated texts, taken down a single time at a single place. There was an Ur-text, from which our own texts descend through undoubtedly interesting but mostly invisible peregrinations. Parry and Lord are therefore placed in explicit contradiction to Wolf, who thought that there had been many texts, that there never was an original, and that our texts are the redactions of editors. Wolf thought that Homer's poems had origins similar to those of the Hebrew pentateuch, which certainly is a redacted text, but Parry and Lord rejected that model *in toto*.

Some have thought it unlikely that Homer was recorded by dictation in the early days of the alphabet, although evidence points to it, as if the

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[3] See further Lord 1960:124-38.

[4] On Parry and Lord's theory of the dictated text, see Janko 1990 and 1998.

alphabet required maturation before being put to such ambitious use. But already in the fourteenth century BCE a certain Ilimilku of Shubbani reports that he recorded various myths as they were dictated by the chief priest Attanu-Purliani, both men subsidized by Niqmaddu II, king of Ugarit from c. 1375-1345 BCE (from Coogan 1978:10, 115):

> The scribe was Ilimilku from Shubbani;
> the reciter was Attanu-Purliani, the chief priest,
>   the chief herdsman;
> the sponsor was Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit, master of Yargub,
>   lord of Tharumani.

Jeremiah, of the seventh to sixth centuries BCE, presents a second example of dictation to a scribe writing in archaic Hebrew script, identical in structure to the Ugaritic script of Ilimilku. After Jehoiakim, king of Judah, burned the scroll of Jeremiah because it prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah "took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them" (Jeremiah 36:32). The words of Jeremiah are not what we think of as myths, but the relation between the composer who dictates and the scribe who records is clearly drawn.

Literacy

Although anxious to defend orality, Ong does concede that *writing* makes possible "thought structures and processes which were unavailable to our purely oral ancestors," as if writing were a single thing, a monolithic force always bringing the same effects when laid upon a substratum of orality. The bonds between literacy and complex forms of thought were emphasized in well-known studies from the 1960s by Ian Watt and Jack Goody, Eric Havelock, and Marshall McLuhan.[5] Alphabetic literacy, according to these studies, had especially dire effects on orality, making possible rationality, democracy, philosophy, historiography, law, and other dangerous tools of modern civilization. I was a student when these books appeared and remember how many then searched for social and personal

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[5] Goody 1963; Goody and Watt 1963-64; Havelock 1963; McLuhan 1966. See also Street 1984:19-43, 44-65; Robb 1994.

renewal in the preliterate human past: complex thought had brought to the world Marxism and the atomic bomb.

Eric Havelock did not take writing as a monolith, but understood that it was a technology with a complex history. His voice was strong in advocating the alphabet as underlying a new form of rational cognition that had gradually replaced the earlier, fundamentally different orality of Greek culture whence Homer had emerged. But he was also concerned to show how such prealphabetic systems of writing as Mesopotamian logosyllabic cuneiform and the West Semitic writings, including Phoenician, Hebrew, and Aramaic, encouraged different psychological effects and social practices from those among the alphabet-using, reason-loving Greeks. Unfortunately, it is never easy to say just what these different effects are or how one can measure them.

None of these scholars was able to read nonalphabetic writings, and some could not read Greek. Being dependent on secondhand accounts, they were open to exaggeration or understatement. The trouble with tying rationality and science to Greek alphabetic writing is that such a bond, if real, might imply ethical superiority on the premise that science is good for humans whereas magic is not. Still, alphabetic writing does seem to have made possible the refinements of philosophical thought from which modern science grew. No earlier writing did or could have served similar ends. The inventors of the atomic theory of matter were the first possessors of a system of writing whose graphemes have given rise to the theory of the phoneme, the smallest unit of speech that makes a difference in meaning (Fig. 2).

<p style="text-align:center">

*P*OT

*R*OT

R*OO*T

ROO*F*
</p>

Fig. 2. Miracles of the phoneme

The restricted number of atoms, as it were, of spoken language, when recombined create the dazzling variety of the molecules of speech. This is the Greek alphabet, that's how it works. The Greeks even used the same word for an alphabetic sign as for an atomic element: *stoicheion* "something in a row," because the alphabet was learned as a row of graphemes and a row of names, an abecedary (Fig. 3). They imagined that the structure of their writing paralleled the structure of the phenomenal world, according to an unobvious theory that matter consists of a limited

number of discrete particles, invisible but real, which act in combination to produce predictable visible effects, just as phonemes recombine to make different words, which in turn recombine to make units of thought. Although even modern atomic theories do not explain how highly volatile oxygen and highly volatile hydrogen produce highly unvolatile water in combination, neither do the rules of the alphabet explain why "cough" is spelled c-o-u-g-h. Such things just happen and are not taken to vitiate the theory (although they should).

Fig. 3. A miniature amuletic ivory writing board from a tomb in Marsigliana d'Albegna in northern Etruria. The series of letters are identical in form to the alphabet used in Euboea, whence came the earliest Greek settlers in Italy.

I have been interested in evidence that speech is not in fact made up of phonemes, if by speech we mean the stream of intelligible sound proceeding from our mouths. Voice spectographs show how speech is a wave, an undulating continuum (Fig. 4), expanding and contracting but not made of discrete units. If speech is a wave, *the alphabet does not represent it*. Hence, too, linguists have been unable to define a word, except that it is something found in dictionaries with space on either side. The alphabet is a kind of structure that determines the illusion that writing, whose effects so interested Ong and Havelock, does represent speech. The Greek alphabet

did not reveal the secret structure of speech, but defined our illusions about it. The so-called science of linguistics has all along been studying writing, not speech.
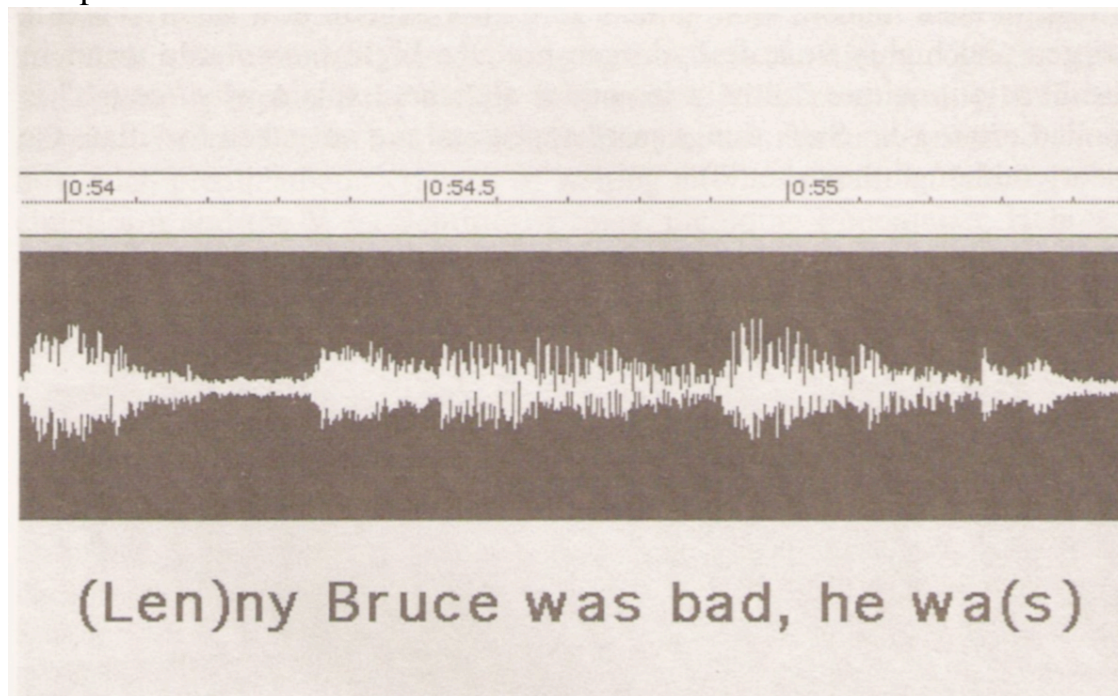

Fig. 4. Snippet from a Bob Dylan song, projected as a voice spectrograph.

Speech is, of course, a form of language, but the distinction between speech and language can be elusive. Let us trace the cause of confusion to Saussure's famous dictum (1983:24), "A language and its written form constitute two separate systems of signs. The sole reason for the existence of the latter is to represent the former." First comes *parole*, then *écriture*. But the human faculty to use and invent language, in spite of its origin in *lingua*, "tongue," is not limited to a modulated stream of symbolic sound issuing from the human throat and its reception by other sense organs. Gestural language among the Indians of the North American plains and sign languages of the deaf prove that language must be a broader category than speech. Language, let us say, is symbolization, an innate human faculty not found in the animal or vegetable kingdoms. Speech, which (until modern tape-recorders) is never material and always ephemeral, is one tool for the expression of this symbol-making faculty.   Writing, which is always material and potentially eternal, is another expression. Both tools serve the same human faculty, but one does not represent the other. That is why writing can express forms of thought quite impossible to speech, and why the structure of writing may well be tied to forms of thought. That is why

writing originated independently of speech and to a greater or lesser degree has always remained independent of it.

Clarity about the relation between speech, one form of language, and writing, another form, has been slow to emerge because the entire discussion has been carried on in the Greek alphabet, whose idiosyncratic attention to phonetic verisimilitude, although much exaggerated, has so skewed our notion of the nature of writing and inspired Saussure's influential description in the first place (Pettersson 1996). After all, speech consists of gesture, intonation, facial expression, bodily movement, and other deictic behavior that contributes to the meaning of the utterance. It is only alphabetic writing, which we mistake for speech, that makes us think that such aspects, although semantic, are secondary to speech's phonic aspects. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which we know only through alphabetic versions, do not therefore even theoretically resemble the living experience of Homer's speech, his oral song. They are *texts*— cold, material, abstract graphemes that support a phonic approximation of what was once an oral poem, although not one that anyone ever heard in a traditional context. Orally composed perhaps, the Homeric poems are not oral poems. It is amazing that anyone ever thought so. The dichotomy of literacy versus orality can obscure more than it reveals when we ignore the need to approach writing, alphabetic and otherwise, theoretically and historically. To say that literacy disappeared from Greece around 1200 BCE, then returned around four centuries later, innocently assumes that Linear B was in some important way the same technology as the Greek alphabet, which it certainly was not.

Tradition

In a recent remarkable book, *The East Face of Helicon* (1998), Martin West has made thoroughgoing, massive, in-depth comparisons between the cuneiform, logosyllabic, literary cultures of Mesopotamia, the syllable- or consonant-writing Western Semites, and Greek alphabetic literary culture. Thirty years earlier, in his edition of Hesiod's *Theogony* (1966), he claimed that Greek literature was a Near Eastern literature, and here he sets out to prove it. Such comparisons between Greek and Semitic intellectual culture go back to the nineteenth century, but have received increased attention in recent times, notably at the hands of the polymathic German scholar Walter Burkert (espec. 1992). Yet West's presentation is uniquely persuasive.

While reading the book, I kept disagreeing with his examples. Just because the ground "drinks" the blood of warriors in Homer and in the Bible does not prove very much.[6] But even if one-half of the hundreds of examples West cites of continuity between Near Eastern and Greek literatures admit of other explanations, so much remains that we cannot doubt his amazing conclusions that during the Greek Archaic Period, from 800-500 BCE, there was an international *koinê* in literary expression with Near Eastern, especially Semitic, literature on the one end and Greek on the other.

Why shouldn't we be shocked that essential elements in the story of Achilles, and even in the story of Odysseus, are not Greek in origin, as West maintains? Their deep values do not appear to be Greek in origin either—the destructive power of anger and the quest for eternal life. Why shouldn't we be shocked to realize that the celebrated Greek pantheon with its high jinks is not Greek either, but Mesopotamian, even in such details as the love-goddess's complaint to the storm-god about how she's treated? Even the names turn out to be the same: the Greek healing god Asclepius, thought once to have been a real man, appears to be a corruption of the Semitic Azugallatu, "great physician," epithet of the Babylonian healing goddess Gula.

In his classic *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology* (1932), Martin Nilsson argued that the monarchic Greek pantheon reflected the social world of the monarchic Mycenaean palaces, one of those many details about life in the Bronze Age passed down by oral poets through a vigorous oral tradition until fixed in writing after the eighth century BCE. That argument, too, now looks wrong, because the divine machinery Nilsson wished to explain is a Mesopotamian import, a tradition one thousand years old in the days of Agamemnon and completely non-Greek in origin. The more we impute to the evidently overwhelming cultural power of literate Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant, the more we wonder what was the Greeks' distinctive contribution, and even who were the Greeks whom we thought we knew so well. The dogma that Greek myth was primary and original, whereas Roman myth was secondary and derivative, appears ill-founded, when the Greeks, like the Romans, stole everything root and branch from elsewhere.[7]

The theory of traditional Greek culture has become something of a problem. We thought that tradition was the burden of oral song, the

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[6] West 1998:236, 575, 578.

[7] For the falseness of this version from the Roman side, see Feeney 1998:47-75.

backbone of orality, leading back through the dangerous Iron Age to the ramparts of Troy and the bard in the fresco of the throne room at Pylos (Fig. 5), or, as some have thought, even to primordial Indo-European rhythmical composition in performance. Such Indo-European survivals now appear exiguous, or imaginary, and irrelevant to the flood of poetic creativity flowing down the Orontes toward the barbarian West.

Fig. 5. Fresco from the throne room at the palace of Pylos. The horseshoe-shaped, goose-headed lyre is similar to the Minoan type, but normally had eight strings. The restored flying dove in front of the singer may in fact be a griffin, according to a suggestion by J. Bennet (personal communication).

Everything we thought was from Greece turns out to be from somewhere else. The way Homer organizes his tale, his elaborate descriptions of objects and scenes, various kinds of scenes, organization through ring composition and chiasmus, even rhetorical tropes like anaphora, West argues, come directly from the East. Somehow such elements became part of the special language of the Greek *aoidos*, the "singer" of tales, passed on and elaborated when these elements proved to

enhance the power of performance. But how did such elements cross from East to West? How did they cross the barriers of language and custom?

Tradition is a complex problem, because our evidence for tradition depends on written documents, but tradition cannot have been restricted to such documents. Homer was an *aoidos*, an oral bard, heir to an ancient tradition of oral verse-making and not beholden to the scribal schools, which in the East were transcendent. In comparing Western literature with Eastern, we are mostly comparing alphabetic, aoidic, dictated documents with nonalphabetic exercises produced in the scribal schools by learned professionals of high social status to impress and educate their students and peers. The Ugaritic Attanu-Purliani, the chief priest who dictated mythic texts to Ilimilku from Shubanni, is unlikely to have been an oral poet. Greek alphabetic texts, by contrast, were made by amateurs unconnected to centers of monarchic empire. Scribal bilingual competence in Sumerian and Akkadian had assured the transmission of non-Semitic Sumerian tales to the Semitic Akkadians—the tales of Gilgamesh are the best-known example (Fig. 6)—but Homer's stories of Achilles and Odysseus and

Fig. 6. Two eunuchs, on the right, make a record of spoil taken in Chaldea. The eunuch on the far left seems to be dictating the items to be recorded. The eunuch in the middle holds a clay tablet on which he impresses signs, no doubt cuneiform signs adapted to the Akkadian language. The man on the right appears to write on papyrus or leather, presumably West Semitic writing in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Assyrian empire. Such biliteracy was typical of Near Eastern literacy from the third millennium, when Semitic-speakers adopted Sumerian writing to Akkadian, but continued to learn and use Sumerian lexemes and to study Sumerian documents (author's photo).

Hesiod's story of the storm-god's war against the dragon of chaos can only have taken place through oral means. We do not think of Homer and Hesiod as reading Ugaritic epic in their studies (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7. A three-fingered bronze lyre-player from Crete, c. 750-700 BCE, who must represent an *aoidos* like Homer. The figure's pierced ears and oversized head are characteristic of Levantine bronze figurines, and some have thought that the figurine may be an import. Epic song, too, seems to have crossed from East to West along the north Syrian coast and in Cyprus. In myth, the musician-king Kinyras, whose name is derived from Semitic *kinnor*, "harp," lived on Cyprus (author's photo).

It is easy to speak of bilingual speakers, not being sure if we mean *biliterate* as well, or instead. But we must place Semitic singer and Greek singer on a continuum to explain the continuity of tradition, and probably the only way to do that is to have a Semitic singer learn the technique of Greek *aoidic* song: composition in performance. I'm not sure how that could have happened, but I do not see how else to explain the overwhelming Semitic or Eastern character and content of Homeric and Hesiodic oral song. The flow of tradition is altogether in one direction.

A thorough bilingualism in an oral milieu, which we desire, must depend on intermarriage and bilingual households, including households whose members were oral singers (cf. West 1997:590-606). Homer tells how Taphians, whoever exactly they were, snatched away the Phoenician mother of Odysseus' faithful servant and swineherd Eumaios (*Odyssey* 15.425-29), who came to live near the court in Ithaca where a singer named Phemios entertained the suitors, and Herodotus begins his history with a tongue-in-cheek report of Greek and Levantine households stealing each other's women. In just such bilingual households, not in any public forum, and certainly not in the scribal schools, tradition passed from East to West.

In the polyglot, racially mixed world of the north Syrian coast with its connections in mainland Greece and Italy, an heir to the tradition of notating dictated mythic texts applied this already ancient method to Greek oral verse. This worked very badly because of such formations as ἀάατος "inviolable," (e.g. *Il*. 15.271), which cried out for graphic notation and inspired the inventor to restructure his model in a way that enabled him to preserve the rhythm of the verse. In this way the alphabet came into being. The need to preserve the powerful rhythm drove the invention of signs for vowels and the revolutionary spelling rule that one group of signs, what we now call consonants, must always be accompanied by a representative from the second group, what we now call vowels. This simple rule drew the divide between East and West and created the illusion that speech is made up of phonemes and that the purpose of writing is to record speech.

In the beginning Greek alphabetic writing was a dedicated technology, designed and used to create, through dictation, texts out of *aoidic* song. Within a hundred years of its invention around 800 BCE, the alphabet was turned to other literary—but not practical—purposes. The earliest Greek "law code," from the temple of Apollo at Dreros on Crete, c. 650 BCE, is a stumble-bum chaos of clumsy uncertainties, when compared with the elegance of the oldest Greek inscriptions, orally composed, on pots from the eighth century BCE (Fig. 8).

Education

We have a tradition, then, which is old and Semitic/Eastern, and it is Greek too, somehow. But oral tradition is never separable from the oral poet. As alphabetic graphemes are a way of talking about speech, tradition is a way of speaking about the past and does not produce anything by itself. Poems are the products of poets who stand within a tradition. Albert Lord
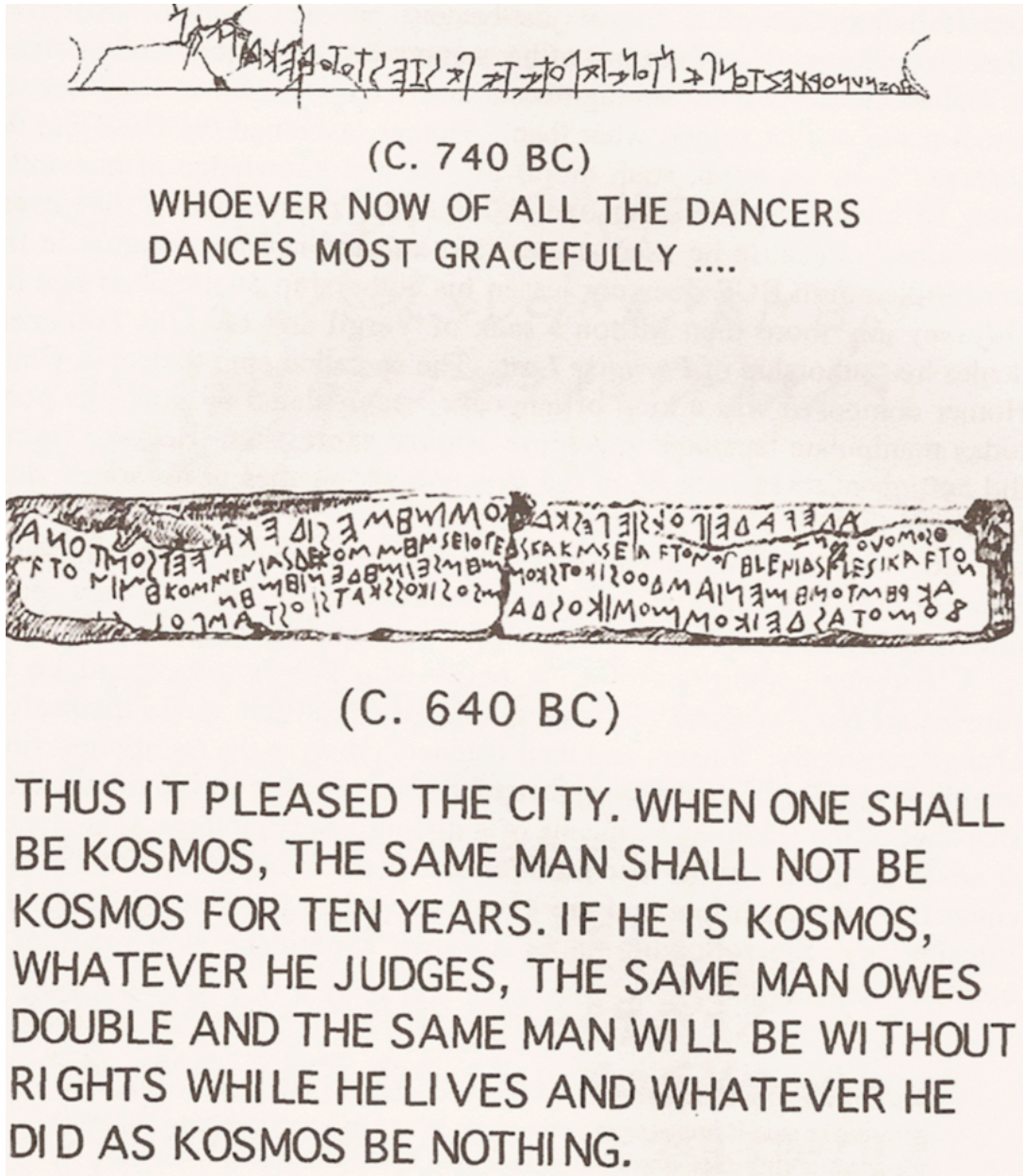
Fig. 8. The Dipylon Oinochoe inscription (c. 740 BCE) and a law from the temple of Apollo at Dreros on Crete (c. 640 BCE). A *kosmos* was a high official in the Cretan state.

liked to say that the poet *was* the tradition (1995:3). Homer was no symbol, as some think, but one of the world's great makers (*poiêtai*) of song. He does not come at the end of an oral tradition, any more than a stone falls into the end of a river, just because phonic aspects of artificially swollen performances of several of his songs were idiosyncratically notated in alphabetic writing in the eighth century BCE. If Homer was not the actual name of that singer, what then? Homer fashioned the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from his mind, soul, moral genius, and knowledge of humanity, using an inherited poetic language and inherited poetic themes, like every entertainer. Because he used stories first attested in Mesopotamia in the third millennium BCE does not lessen his authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* any more than Milton's sack of Vergil and the Old Testament denies his authorship of *Paradise Lost*. The so-called epic dialect in which Homer composed was a kind of language, manipulated by poets, as poets today manipulate language to achieve original expression. Because Homer did not invent this language, or the structure and themes of his songs, does not mean that the Homeric poems are essentially the product of more than one poet any more than poets in English today are denied originality because they did not invent the English language or because they recast older themes.

Although traditions of song begin who knows when, and go on forever so long as there are singers and listeners, the songs themselves change constantly. Singers and their listeners preserve the tradition; scribes wielding alphabetic technology, or modern recording equipment, take a snapshot of the tradition by means of a disruptive technology. The picture is never the thing itself. The motives of the recorders of tradition do not come from the tradition, and are even opposed to it. The Africanist Jan Vansina says the following about his own experience as a recorder of traditional tales (1985:3):

> As a professional fieldworker I was in a class of my own because my activities made it impossible to place me in any existing category. Indeed, for a while this very observation was used to suspect me of witchcraft. It took quite a while before it was accepted that I was collecting traditions because I was interested in the past history of the country and because that was my job, although it was hard to imagine why anyone should invent such a job. I ended up by being regarded as a harmless, friendly lunatic from whom one could hope for some unexpected windfall.

The collectors Parry and Lord were in a similar position, and so were the makers of the texts of early Greek epic poetry, wandering through a

traditional society armed with a newfangled technology. Remarkably, someone in the infancy of alphabetic literacy, in the eighth century BCE, wrote down 26,000 verses of Homer's song on papyrus in a script that went back and forth across the page without punctuation, word division, capitalization, or diacritical marks, column after column, roll after roll, unintelligible to the eye or the mind until sounded out and heard aloud (Fig. 9).
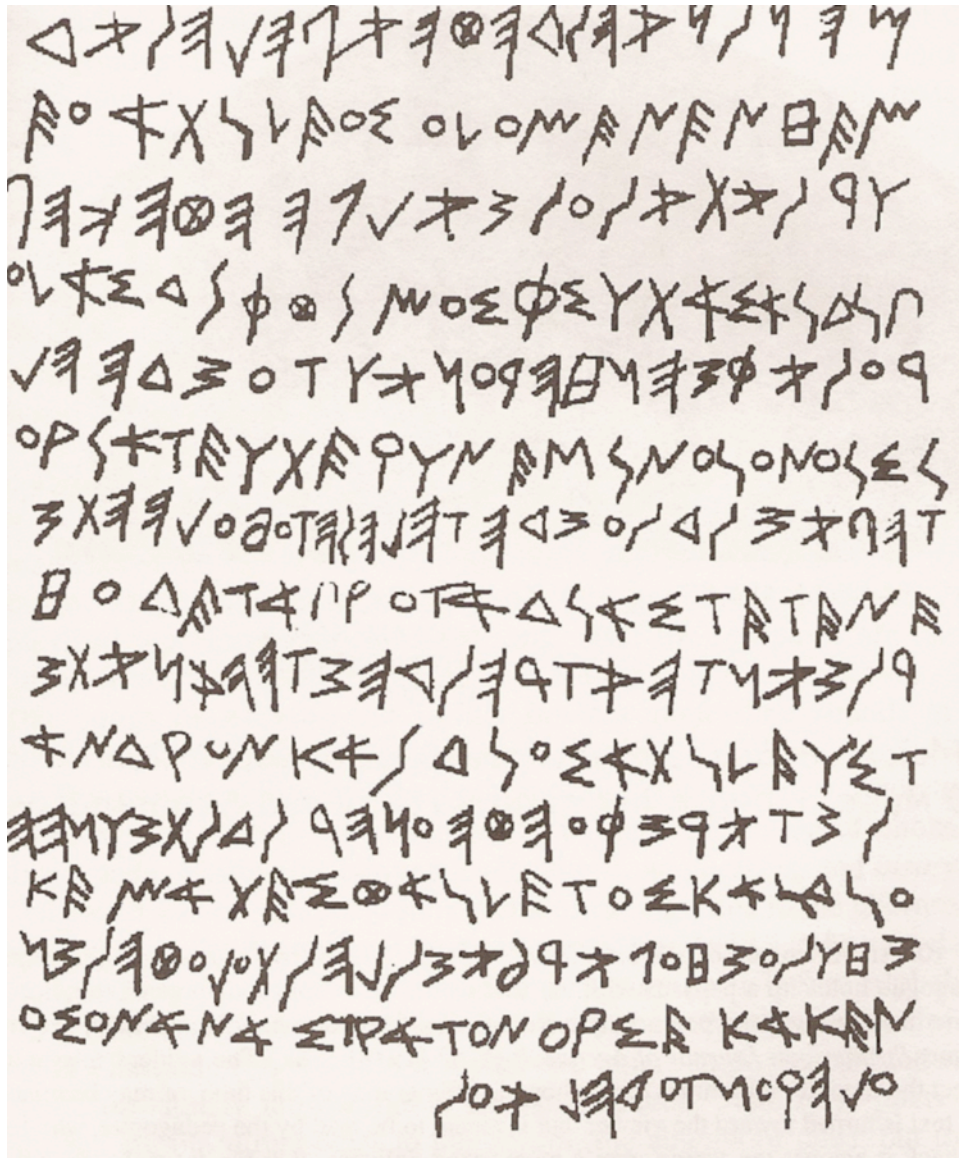
Fig. 9. The first ten lines of the *Iliad* as they might have appeared when recorded in the eighth century BCE.

The arts of writing are not transmitted inadvertently, but through education. An older man teaches a younger one the abecedary, its names and sounds, then gives him a text based on aoidic song to puzzle out and commit to memory. Such was still the basis for Athenian education in the fifth century BCE (Fig. 10), and to some extent such was the basis of my

BerlinF2285, c. 485 BC

ΜΟΙΣΑΜΟΙ
ΑΦΙΣΚΑΜΑΝΔΡΟΝ
ΕΥΡΩΝΑΡΧΟΜΑΙ
ΑΕΙΝΔΕΝ

Μοῖσα μοι ἀμφὶ Σκάμανδρον εὔρον ἄρχομ᾽ ἀείδειν
O Muse, I begin my song with broad Skamandros …

Fig. 10. An Athenian school, c. 485 BCE (Berlin F2285, by Douris). In the center, a pedagogue holds up a papyrus with the first words of an epic song about Troy, now lost (some have thought the poem may have been by Stesichorus: J. D. Beazley, "Hymn to Hermes," *American Journal of Archaeology* 52 [1948]:338). The evident misspellings reflect the flexible, sometimes hyperphonetic orthography of this time, or may be mistakes. The text is turned toward the viewer, but is meant to be read by the pedagogue, who seems to check it against the young man's memorized delivery. On the far right, an old man watches. In the lefthand scene, the same boy practices his lyre before the pedagogue. Hanging from the wall are kylixes, lyres, a basket for papyri, and a flute-case. Along the top edge is inscribed ΗΙΠΟΔΑΜΑΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ, "Hip[p]odamas is beautiful."

own education.   We do not know when the Greek tradition of composition-in-performance by means of the special epic language ended, but perhaps as late as the fifth century BCE.[8]   The ending of aoidic composition does seem to accompany the profound cultural changes brought about by the revolutionary alphabetic writing.

Education created a class of literati probably not distinguishable from what we think of as the Greek aristocracy. By Eastern standards, such aristocrats were pathetic amateurs in the game of class distinction; the impoverished and ill-organized Greeks could not afford the luxury of their own scribal class. By the seventh century BCE, by the times of Archilochus, the literati had turned away from creating poetic texts by notating the phonic aspects of aoidic song and begun to create poetry in writing, just as had their Near Eastern predecessors more than one thousand years before. But the Greek literati, the amorphous ruling class who had time and motive for idle pursuits, did not serve the political and religious needs of the state, nor did they wish to inform, admonish, or amuse other scribes. They served themselves and their own class interests and sought to gain status by entertaining successfully in the all-male symposium, a principal context for Greek intellectual culture in the archaic period.

When in the backward conditions of archaic Greece an *aristos* deciphered such a text, he could recover, and recite, the wisdom and beauty of Homer or Hesiod or Archilochus. Homer parodies this context for song in his description of the suitors who feast, whore, and hear song in the house of Odysseus; there, of course, it is genuine aoidic song, not memorized reperformance of aoidic song. But the symposia are natural settings for political conspiracy, and so were the suitors conspirators. The written songs of Alcaeus and similar *poiêtai* made their rounds in the symposia, and some lines have even come down to us.

The unique ability of alphabetic writing to inform its interpreter of the approximate sounds of human speech through the fiction of phonemic analysis made possible the outrageous locutions, neologisms, and *bizarrerie* that characterize Greek archaic song and are still vigorous in the choruses of Greek tragedy. With its bewildering rhythms wedded to unknown dance steps, choral lyric cannot have existed as we know it before alphabetic writing. Such baroque expression directly reflects the exuberance of the discovery that one can recombine alphabetic letters in unprecedented ways to create previously unimaginable forms of speech. The lyric poets and tragedians are not direct heirs to the *aoidoi*, the singers of tales, but to the

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[8] Janko (1982:133) thinks the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* was created in writing, although it has an "oral foundation" (149).

men who made texts on the basis of aoidic songs. The lyric poets echo Homer not because they are "oral-derived," but because their makers, *poiêtai*, the high-born literati, have been educated in the texts of Homer and other hexametric poets. The first thing such an education teaches is that poetic expression is distant from vernacular speech, and so Greek poetry always was.

Summary and Conclusions

All Greek festivals honored gods and spirits. There animals were killed and eaten and wine was drunk. Song summoned the god and entertained the people—at first aoidic song, then memorized performances of dictated aoidic texts (for example the Homeric hymns) and memorized performances of new kinds of texts, created in writing (for example, choral song). Men called *rhapsodes* specialized in the memorized reperformance of such dictated aoidic texts. Famed for the power of their voice, histrionic behavior, and willingness to expound on texts they had memorized, rhapsodes were the first actors and the first literary critics. Philosophy owed a great deal to the rhapsodes and carried forth speculation about the meaning of aoidic texts by means of the same technology that made aoidic texts possible.

The rhapsodes were always schoolboys, without connection to the ancient *aoidoi*, to Homer or Hesiod. Rhapsodes were never musicians, whereas *aoidoi* were always musicians. Rhapsodes chanted with a stick, as shown in Fig. 11, their name, properly derived from *rhabdos*, "staff": they were the "staff-singers." In Greek festivals, notably the Panathenaea that holds such importance for the history of the Homeric texts, the *rhapsoidos* ("staff-singer") (Hdt. 1.23), *kitharoidos* ("cithara-singer"), and performer of *auloidia* ("flute-singing") competed for awards, each named from the implement with which he accompanied song. Playfully derived from *rhaptos*, "sewn," as early as Pindar's *rhaptôn epeôn aoidoi* (N. 2.2), "singers of stitched words,"[9] the false etymology encouraged F. A. Wolf and later Homeric analysts in the view that Homer was only a symbol, his poems "stitched" together by editors from separate preexisting lays. Even

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[9] The scholia to this passage, of uncertain origin and date (Hes. Fr. 357 MW), employs the same metaphor in reference to the legendary contest between Homer and Hesiod: ἐν Δήλῳ τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἀοιδοὶ, μέλπομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν; "On Delos then I and Homer sang, *aoidoi* both, stitching song in fresh hymns."

Fig. 11. A rhapsode declaims from a low platform (on which is painted ΚΑΛΟΣ ΕΙ ["You are beautiful"], the beginning of a hexametric poem, perhaps on Herakles). The words, invisible in the photo, are shown as a continuous stream pouring from his mouth as he leans on his staff (ῥάβδος), from which ῥαψῳθός, "staff-singer," probably derived.

in modern times the etymology has encouraged theories about the "stitching together" of Milman Parryesque traditional phrases and lines, but the *aoidoi* composed in performance, whereas the rhapsodes were members of the literati in good standing.

  Where does rhythmic speech come from? Rhythm is implicit in speech, but when rhythm is regularized and becomes predictable, that is

poetry. In Homer's case, and perhaps always, rhythm is a functional part of the semantic system. We have to get over our surprise that unusual people, with unusual training, can tell a nonmemorized story in rhythmic verse, but we have also to take account of the fact that the first technology of writing capable of preserving the realia of that rhythm did in fact preserve it. A disinclination to approach such problems historically, and a preference for ill-defined generalities, has created the odd impression that little is known about Homer, that even his date can be bandied about according to the critic's subjective feel for what is going on. Recent efforts to downdate Homer into the sixth century BCE proceed as if there were not from the first an intimate historical relation between alphabetic writing and the recording of epic verse. In reality, we know a good deal about Homer, about his place in the world, and about how his poems were recorded and used.

Experiments in notating poetry by dictation reach back into the Late Bronze Age in Ugarit, so the unusual Greek success cannot be viewed as appearing from nowhere. Excavators of Bronze Age Ugarit (Fig. 12) found an unprecedented *mélange* of scripts and languages: tablets side by side in Egyptian hieroglyphic, Mesopotamian cuneiform, Cypro-Minoan, Hittite hieroglyphic, and the unique Ugaritic West Semitic writing made by impressing a stylus in clay. The Greek alphabet emerges from what must have been similar polyglot environs in the later but nearby Al Mina, where the Orontes debauches into the Mediterranean, where Euboean Greeks, who established the earliest Greek colony in Italy, had an emporium. Hesiod's song about a great monster that threatened the world must come directly from here, where Hittites lived side by side with Semites in the vigorous late Iron Age. The Hittite Song of Ubelluri is the best parallel to Hesiod's story of Zeus' war against the monster Typhon, which according to later sources (Apollodorus 1.49) took place beneath Mount Casius on the Orontes plain, the very gap between the Taurus range to the north and the Lebanon ranges to the south through which the intellectual culture of the ancient East poured into the provincial Mediterranean.

Homer lived in this Euboean circle, presumably on Euboea itself (Fig. 13), where his poems may have been recorded. In his *Odyssey* he celebrated dangerous sea-travel to the far West where Euboeans founded the first Greek colonies. Achilles, that famous hero from Phthia in southern Thessaly, was born just across the straits from the northern tip of Euboea. The expedition to Troy assembled at Aulis, the Euboean port for overseas embarkation. Some small portion of Homer's songs may go back to the Greek Bronze Age, perhaps the story of an Achaean campaign, but the central tradition appears to come from abroad. The somewhat later, but
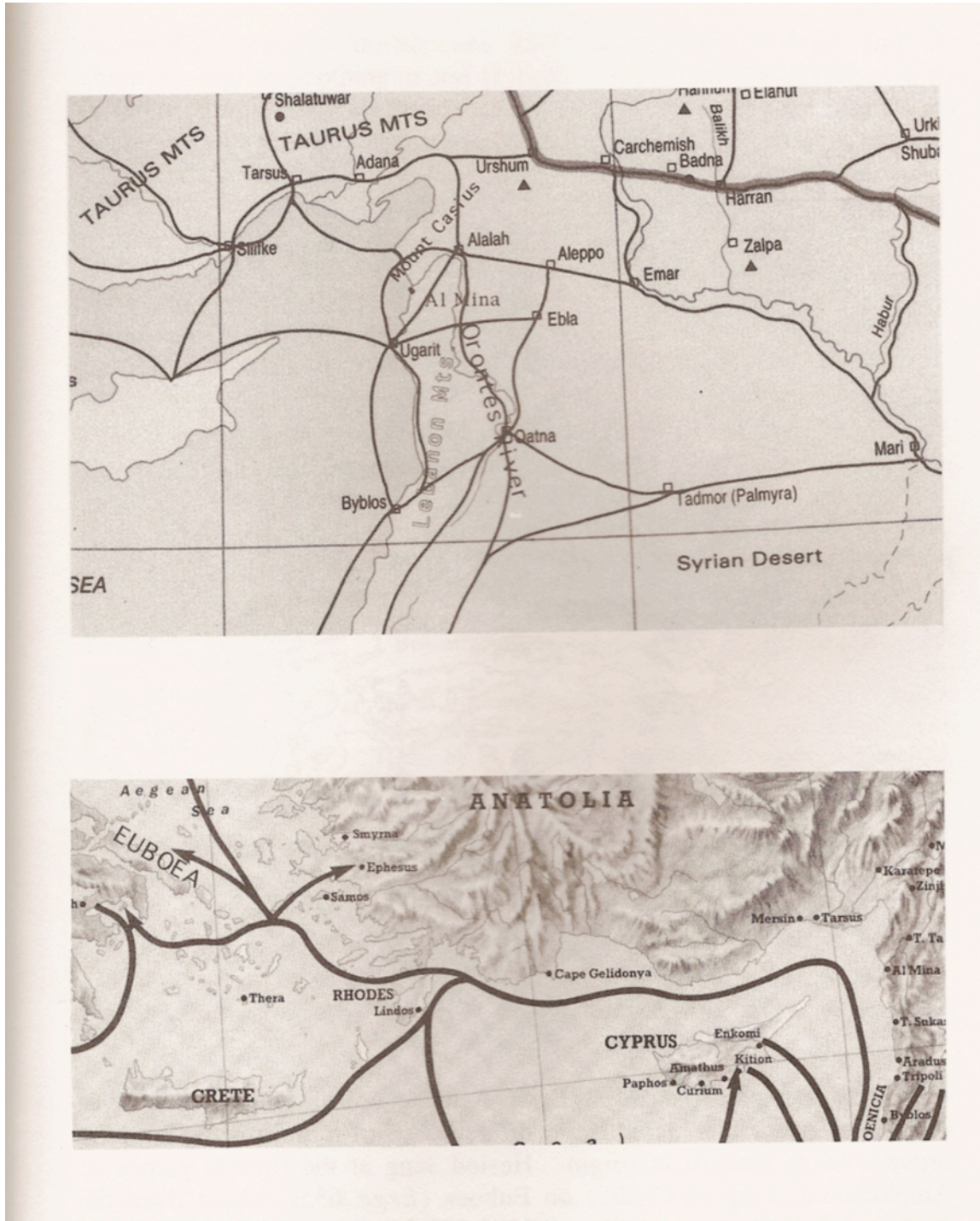
Fig. 12. Trade routes, east and west.

CENTRAL GREECE

Fig. 13.

very early, Hesiod depended on Eastern cosmogonical mythical narratives and, in his poem *Works and Days*, on traditions of moral instruction long recognized as Eastern in origin. Hesiod sang at the funeral games of Amphidamas, king of Chalcis on Euboea (*Erga* 655), where lived the earliest alphabet-possessors (Powell 1991:181-86).

The unnecessary confusions that surround Homeric studies today reflect the inadequacy of badly used critical categories, words, and phrases that betray more than they explain. The contrast of orality and literacy is

especially treacherous because literacy is many things and its absence—
orality—nothing in and of itself. Literacy for the Egyptians is so different
from literacy for the alphabetic Greeks that we are not sure we are talking
about a related technology. It disfigures our understanding to speak as if
literacy in Egypt and in Montana were somehow comparable, and in either
case opposed to an orality held to illuminate the Homeric Question. In the
study of the history of writing we find our best clues to understanding the
history of Greek literature and the historical forces that lay behind the
creation of the Homeric epics and other texts of the Greek archaic age.[10]

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[10] My thanks to Silvia Montiglio for many helpful suggestions. Fig. 1, Wace and Stubbings 1962:plate 3; Fig. 3, Guarducci 1967:Fig. 89; Fig. 5, Christopoulos 1974:337; Fig. 7, Powell 1991:58; Fig. 8, Guarducci 1967:Fig. 59a; Fig. 10, Christopoulos and Kakrides 1986:vol. 1., Fig. 32; Fig. 11, Christopoulos and Kakrides 1986:Fig. 33.

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The Narrator's Voice in *Kalevala* and *Kalevipoeg*

Thomas A. DuBois

> Ossian, himself, appears to have been endowed by nature with an exquisite sensibility of heart; prone to that tender melancholy which is so often an attendant on great genius; and susceptible equally of strong and of soft emotions. He was not only a professed bard, educated with care, as we may easily believe, to all the poetical art then known, and connected, as he shews us himself, in intimate friendship with the other contemporary bards, but a warrior also; and the son of the most renowned hero and prince of his age. This formed a conjunction of circumstances, uncommonly favourable towards exalting the imagination of a poet. . . . In such times as these, in a country where poetry had been so long cultivated, and so highly honoured, is it any wonder that among the race and succession of bards, one Homer should arise; a man who, endowed with a natural happy genius, favoured by peculiar advantages of birth and condition, and meeting in the course of his life, with a variety of incidents proper to fire his imagination, and to touch his heart, should attain a degree of eminence in poetry, worthy to draw the admiration of more refined ages? (Blair 1765/1996:352-53)

So writes Hugh Blair in his early and influential essay on the apparent narrator / author of James Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian*. Blair focuses attention on the figure at the very heart of the epic as conceptualized in his day. Imagined as a historical author whose perceptions and social backgrounds left their marks on his songs—a Homer or Virgil—this bard became a figure of intense interest to antiquarians and romanticists alike. Blair's "Critical Dissertation," and the epic it celebrates, were to have a profound impact on European arts and letters during the latter half of the eighteenth and bulk of the nineteenth centuries. The folklore-derived literary epics that would follow Macpherson's breakthrough work, sometimes fearlessly, sometimes with greater skepticism, hold singular significance not only in the cultural but also in the political history of European nations. Beginning with a body of localized oral tradition—be it song or tale collected only recently or culled from manuscript finds—and the contention that every great national literature needed at its foundation a great

national epic, the writers of these works set out to create (recover, "textualize" [Honko 1998]) texts that would serve at once both aesthetic and political functions. Key to the entire enterprise were the twin concepts of the native spirit—a people's innate and unique way of experiencing the world, reflected in their songs—and the bard, the great Homer or Ossian who had transformed the limited thoughts of native genius into a masterpiece of transcendent value sometime in the past. A great nation *produced* a great bard, and he in turn gave noble form to the rude and lovely sentiments of the nation. And it fell to the scholar to recover both native spirit and bard in the compilation and presentation of the epic in print, reconstructing it, if necessary, from the scattered shards of present songs.

Given the loftiness of this task, it is no surprise, then, that the great epic writers of the nineteenth century were often treated with esteem, even outright adulation by the broader intelligentsia (and eventually also the masses) of their nations. The same grandeur of task sometimes, of course, attracted instead the envy of literary contemporaries. The lives of Elias Lönnrot and Friedrich R. Kreutzwald are similar in these ways. Both are best known today for the folklore-derived epics they authored: Lönnrot's Finnish national epic *Kalevala* (1835, revised 1849) and Kreutzwald's Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857). But these epic authors—although similar in product, intent, and reception—differ in precisely what role they assumed for themselves in the sacral reembodiment of the national soul. By looking at one of the most important aspects of any such epic of the era—the narrator's role, usually equated with the persona of the bard—I believe we can perceive different strategies for handling and organizing the traditional material these nineteenth-century scholars had as their sources and different attitudes regarding the relation of scholarly editor to the epic bard of the past. We can glimpse differing implicit images of the role of the literary redactor in the great transaction underway between traditional performers and a modern reading audience, images indicative of areas of ambiguity in the literary enterprise of epic-making.

The Authorial Voice of the Introductions

The complex role of the narrator in these two national epics finds its first indications in the prefaces to each work. Here, each author / editor's voice comes necessarily to the fore, as he enunciates the principles and goals that he has pursued in producing the text. An audience of the nineteenth century would have no more left the preface or introduction unread than we today would leave the ending of a movie unwatched; it is here that the

purpose of the work becomes clear and the keys to its provenance and interpretation are given. It is the voice and tone of this authorial figure, carefully crafted and rhetorically deployed, that we often expect to find whenever a narrator's voice comes to the fore in the subsequent text. Such an assumption is accurate only in *Kalevipoeg,* however, and even there only to a limited extent, as we shall see. But in the introductions to both *Kalevala* and *Kalevipoeg,* we find stated attitudes that relate directly to the role of narrator as it eventually emerges in the texts.

In the Introduction to the 1849 *Kalevala,* as in his earlier Introduction to the 1835 first edition, Elias Lönnrot (1802-84) makes clear his intention of foregrounding the songs rather than the editor. Certainly, the success of his epic in Finland and abroad had convinced the writer to lessen the expressions of humble self-doubt and inadequacy that close the 1835 Introduction: "The starting point from which many others get encouragement from their activities is quite different from mine, namely, the hope of achieving a complete and adequate piece of work. In my case this hope is totally lacking. Dubious, to say the least, of my ability to produce something suitable, I have occasionally been plagued with doubt to such an extent that I have been on the verge of throwing the whole thing into the fire."[1] But the 1849 reprise wastes few words on self congratulation or posturing.[2] Rather, Lönnrot uses the opportunity to focus attention on issues raised by the songs themselves: their possible order, origin, historical and mythological significance. The earlier Introduction's extended discussion of prosody and language is reduced to a briefer discussion of difference between the text's Karelian and the reader's likely Finnish dialect. The Introduction closes with a listing of contributors of source songs and a careful tabulation of the new text's lines and their relation to the earlier edition. Judgment as to the success of the new text's ordering is left, deferentially, to the reader: "Whether, in the order of the poems and in other internal matters, this one is better than the previous edition is a matter left for each reader to decide for himself."[3] We are left, then, with the (illusory) feeling that the editor Lönnrot has now departed entirely and that we will be left henceforth to meet the songs alone.

Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald's (1803-82) Introduction, in contrast, is far more personal and anecdotal, and we come to suspect that this

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[1] Magoun 1963:373-74; for original, see Majamaa 1993:189-90.

[2] Magoun 1963:374-79; for original, see Majamaa 1993:409-17.

[3] Magoun 1963:369; for original, see Majamaa 1993:417.

garrulous editor will never leave us alone with the text. Kreutzwald is partly obliged, of course, to supply more details regarding the genesis of his work, since the process involved so many more people and events. These included his fellow doctor and friend Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798-1850), who began the work of creating the epic but died before advancing the project to completion; Dr. Georg Schultz-Bertram of St. Petersburg, the prime instigator of the project and advocate for Kreutzwald's efforts; several other collectors in the Võru region of Estonia; the membership of the Learned Estonian Society (Õpetatud Eesti Selts), who served as the work's publisher and immediate audience; and the pastor Carl Reinthal, who produced the facing-page German translation of the text. But Kreutzwald also goes further in his personal relation of the stages of his work, opining on the declining nature of the Estonian imagination, cataloguing the difficulties involved in writing the epic, and defending himself in advance against a host of likely criticisms, particularly regarding the names and natures of his characters. In recounting some of the more severe vicissitudes of his work, Kreutzwald laments (Kurman 1982:296):

> I began my work without expecting results from the request to the public (i.e., to assist in the undertaking with suitable communications) which had in the meantime been issued. As I might have foreseen, this request was in fact not only unsuccessful but also provoked utterances in public media that attempted, in many ways, to cast the entire project and the parties concerned with it in an unfavorable light. But such indifference or else ill will on the part of the public was not able to hinder the continuation of the project, as I not only possessed as abundant material as I could for the moment desire, but I also was already so deep in the subject so as not to be bothered further by minor—even though sometimes quite malicious—taunts and gibes not pertinent to the matter.

The effect of these intimations is to foreground the editor as a sensitive and fervent writer, wholly different from the retreating, seemingly detached editor persona presented in the introductions to *Kalevala*. And thus, although Kreutzwald covers many of the same scientific issues as Lönnrot, the overall effect of his Introduction is to bring the reader into personal engagement with a writer whose voice we will come to recognize repeatedly in the epic. We are prepared to expect his voice and persona to bleed into the epic itself, as indeed proves the case, at least in part.

The Epic Begins, the Bard Appears

Once these scholarly introductions have been made, both epics can launch into their songs themselves, but not, however, without first introducing a fictive folk narrator, who takes the place of the editor persona as the seeing "I" of the narrative. Both the Finnish-Karelian and the Estonian ancient song traditions contain verses pertaining to singing itself, the singer as a character, and the sources of his or her words. And both authors make use of these traditional lines to erect a narrator / bard persona, who takes center stage at the outset and, in the case of *Kalevala,* at the closing of the epic. In *Kalevala* (Poem 1:1-108) the epic's opening lines portray an aging singer who addresses a male childhood friend and exhorts the latter to join hands in singing (1:12-21):

Veli kulta, veikkoseni,	Dear brother, my brother,
kaunis kasvinkumppalini!	beautiful companion of my youth!
Lähe nyt kanssa laulamahan	Come sing with me,
saa kera sanelemahan	let us begin to recite,
yhtehen yhyttyämme,	now that we've come together,
kahta'alta käytyämme;	arrived from two directions.
harvoin yhtehen yhymme,	Seldom do we see each other,
saamme toinen toisihimme	or come together,
näillä raukoilla rajoilla	in these wretched districts
poloisilla Pohjan mailla.	in these pitiful Northern lands.[4]

The singer recounts learning songs at both a father's and a mother's knee in childhood and notes further songs learned while working as a cattle-herd. In lines that are added to the 1849 version of the epic, the very landscape is portrayed as having given up songs to the learning singer, all of which were carefully stored away (1:65-78):

Vilu mulle virttä virkkoi,	The cold told me a song,
sae saatteli runoja,	the rain brought poems,
virttä toiset tuulet toivat,	the winds carried another song,
meren aaltoset ajoivat	the sea's waves drove another,
linnut liitteli sanoja	birds added words,
puien latvat lausehia.	the treetops sentences.
Ne minä kerälle käärin,	These I wound into a ball,
sovittelin sommelolle,	arranged into a skein,
kerän pistin kelkkahani	I stuffed it in my sled,

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[4] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

sommelon rekoseheni;	the skein into my sleigh,
ve'in kelkalla kotihin,	I brought it home by sled,
rekosella riihen luoksi	by sleigh into the barn,
panin aitan parven päähän,	I put it up in the loft
vaskisehen vakkasehen.	in a copper box.

The singer will now uncoil this carefully preserved ball of lore optimally in exchange for beer. But as the singer declares in both editions of the epic, the song will out in any case, even without a drink (95-102 = end of poem):

Kun ei tuottane olutta,	If no beer is brought,
tarittane taarivettä,	no ale arrives,
laulan suulta laihemmalta,	I'll sing with a more meager mouth
vetoselta vierettelen	and croon on water alone,
tämän iltamme iloksi	for the joy of this, our evening,
päivän kuulun kunniaksi,	to the honor of this great day
vaiko huomenen huviksi	even to brighten the morrow
uuen aamun alkeheksi.	the beginning of the new morn.

Lönnrot's use of traditional song lines creates both a narrator persona here and an inscribed context for the epic's performance: what is to follow is to be seen as the stored-up words of an elderly singer, performing in a farmhouse for the entertainment of an old friend and all others who may wish to listen. Given the lengthy discussion of Arhippa Perttunen as a prototypical singer in the preface to the 1835 *Kalevala,* it is easy to imagine this textual narrator as a bearded elder, tramping the woods and fields of Karelia and meeting with a companion of old. Lönnrot's opening lines in neither edition of the epic, however, explicitly identify the singer as male, balancing both the singer's sources of lore (mother and father) and childhood activities. What is most important, it seems, is the singer's age, the traditional sources of the singer's words, and the traditional context in which the epic is supposedly being performed. The first poem appears designed to furnish a quasi-ethnographic account of the typical epic singer and song situation.

Similarly, the ending portion of Poem 50 (513-620) returns to the persona of the narrator to provide a closing, seemingly ethnographic portrayal of the traditional singer and context. The brief 29 lines of first-person narration that close the 1835 *Kalevala* are expanded in the 1849 revision through the addition of lines gleaned from lyric and lyric-epic songs, creating a poignant 107-line soliloquy. The singer now asks whether it is time at last to stop, predicting that the audience will eventually tire of the song (50:535-36):

| Mieli on jäämähän parempi | It is better to end on one's own |
| kuin of kesken katkemahan. | than be cut off in the middle. |

The narrator then launches into a sorrowful defense of the performance itself, attributing shortcomings to the singer's own impoverished and disadvantaged youth, the details and tone of which seem to contrast with that of the narrator portrayed at the opening of the epic. Orphaned at a young age, the singer / narrator of the 1849 *Kalevala*'s final song was obliged to wander about the countryside, suffering the effects of wind and weather (50:575-82):

Sainpa, kiuru, kiertämähän,	I, a swallow, had to wander
lintu, kurja, kulkemahan	a poor bird, traveling about,
vieno, maita vieremähän	a gentle one, crossing the countryside
vaivainen, vaeltamahan,	one beset, tramping about,
joka tuulen tuntemahan	knowing the feel of every wind
ärjynnän älyämähän,	the sting of every gale,
vilussa värisemähän,	shivering in the cold,
pakkasessa parkumahan.	weeping in the frost.

This is a singer who knows the harshness of criticism, and plaintively recounts familiarity with every sort of mean word (50:583-92):

Moni nyt minulla onpi,	Now I have many,
usea olettelevi:	with whom I often meet:
virkkaja vihaisen äänen,	a scolder of angry voice,
äänen tuiman tuikuttaja;	a deliverer of harsh voice;
ken se kieltäni kirosi,	such a one cursed my tongue,
kenpä ääntä ärjähteli,	roared at my voice,
soimasi sorisevani,	faulted my verses,
lausui liioin laulavani,	exaggerated my singing,
pahasti pajattavani	as poorly delivered
väärin virttä vääntäväni.	or wrongly wrought.

The beset and unhappy singer promises now to wind the songs back up and store them away in a barn, resigned to the inevitable criticism that will follow the performance and noting again the poverty and lack of opportunity that have caused the song's imperfections. Nonetheless, the singer notes in closing, the performance has blazed a trail for other singers in the rising generation, singers who may take up the folk harp (*kantele*) that Väinämöinen has just left for the benefit of the Finnish people.

Kreutzwald creates a similar, albeit more Macphersonesque, image of the singer in his opening Invocation, Introduction, and first poem, drawing again on traditional lines from Estonian folksong. In the epic's opening Invocation *(Soovituseks;* German *Anruf),* the singer boldly asks Vainemuine (the Estonianized rendering of the Finnish Väinämöinen) to lend his harp (*kannel*) and recalls a similar combination of homespun and nature-born sources for the verses to come (Soovituseks 21-24):

Mis mina kodunurmelt noppind,	What have I gathered from my home pasture
kaugelt võõral vääjel künnud,	sown into distant foreign fields?
mis mulle toonud tuulehoogu	What have the winds brought to me
lained lustil veeretanud	the whirling waves carried to me?[5]

Significantly, however, and in contrast to the narrator of *Kalevala*'s opening, this is a singer whose childhood friends lie buried, and who is about to sing forth alone for strangers (Soovituseks 29-40):

Seda ma lauluna lõksutelen	I will sing these out as a song,
võõra kuulijate kõrva;	into the ears of listening strangers,
armsamad kevadised kaimud	my springtime companions
varisenud mulla alla,	are settled beneath the soil,
kuhu mu lusti lõõritusi	to where my hoping rhymes
kurvatuse kukutusi	my sad trilling
ihkava meele igatsusi	the yearnings of a mournful spirit
koolja kuulmesse ei kosta.	cannot be heard by the dead.
Üksinda, lindu, laulan ma lusti,	Alone, a bird, I sing out
kukun üksi, kurba kägu,	I trill alone, a poor cuckoo,
häälitsen üksi igatsusi,	I give voice to my yearnings
kuni närtsin nurmedella.	until I wither on the meadow.

In this way, Kreutzwald creates a mournful, wistful narrator, more in keeping with the narrator of *Kalevala*'s end than that of the *Kalevala*'s beginning. He also creates a more evidently aware persona: one who is conscious of the readerly audience and compelled despite present sorrows to perform the repertoire learned in youth. It is tempting, too, to hear Kreutzwald's own voice in this resignation, as he cryptically recalls the deaths of treasured friends (including Faehlmann) and his own daughter (Kurman 1982:269, n.1).

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[5] Translation my own. Some translations of Kreutzwald are from Kurman 1982, as noted in text.

In the 318-line Introduction *(Sissejuhatuseks)* that follows this opening, Kreutzwald's narrator again recalls the narrator of Lönnrot's epic, recounting the places in which the songs of old had become hidden and the singer's own reveries into which the songs had eventually intruded. Kreutzwald's narrator locates the origin of the songs much more emphatically in the natural landscape, as well as in the mythical world of Uku, Mardus, and Vanataat, and depicts the singer's work as a quintessentially skilled act of decipherment (79-85):

Kõiges kuuleb targa kõrva,	In everything the keen ear,
mõisteliku õrna meeli	that tender, thoughtful sense,
lustilugu, leinanuttu,	hears tales of joy along with dirges
kiusatuse kiljatusi,	and cries of anguish;
kuuleb kõiges muistset kõnet,	in everything ancient words,
märkab muistseid mõistatusi,	olden riddles, are sensed and heard
salasõni sõlmitusi.	in the knots of secret phrases.

<div align="right">(Kurman 1982:6)</div>

But the singer does not dwell only on personal memories and the experience of learning songs from one's environment. Defiantly, he or she speaks out toward the assumed reader, challenging the latter to a contest of knowledge and worth (97-104):

Poeg, kas tunned pilve põues	Son, do you know the secret
sala peitelikku sisu?	hidden inside the stormclouds?
Pikse välgud, müristused	The flash of lightning, and crashing din,
rõhutavad raheterad,	sounds of thunder
lume paksud puistatused,	deep pilings of snow
äikese ähvardused	peltings of hailstones,
magasivad pilve rüpes	that lie in the lap of the cloud
petteliku põue peidus.	hidden inside the stormcloud's bosom?

<div align="right">(Kurman 1982:6)</div>

Unlike the inscribed male reader, the skilled singer at the heart of the text takes the messages of this turbulent and awesome nature and transforms them into artful song (116-27):

Laulik, luues lugusida,	The bard, in building tales,
veeravaida värssisida,	in reciting rolling verses,
võtab pihu võltsivallast,	takes a fistful from fraud's country,
tüki teise tõsitalust,	picks a second from truth's homestead,
kolmandama kuulukülast,	still a third from rumor's village;
laenab lisa meelelaekast,	borrows still more from the senses' silo,
mõttemõisa magasista.	the granary of thought's manor.

Näitab kuju kulla nägu,	Now should the creation glow golden,
kõne kaunis tõe karva,	the tale gain the fair hue of truth—
tõe karva, tarka arvu,	show truth's hue and good sense—
siis on laulik osav looja,	then this bard's a skillful maker,
laitemata sõnaseadja.	a singer beyond reproach.

<div align="right">(Kurman 1982:7)</div>

Here, then, the bard comments on the very act of composition that has brought forth the present epic, attributing all that follows in the text to this unique and canny artistic project of a traditional singer / author. In so doing, Kreutzwald's bard parallels the images of grandeur and lofty vision attributed to Macpherson's Ossian in Blair's essay. Like Blair, we are to feel ourselves in the presence of a uniquely accomplished singer, one whose words represent a mystical translation of the ancient natural and mythic past of the nation. And somehow, through a now invisible editor, this bard has come into face-to-face interaction with readers, thanks to the publication of the text.

Finally, at the outset of Poem 1, this imposing bard, now life-weary and withered upon the heath, remembers anew the stirring summer of youth and directs our gaze toward the first scene of the epic (1:36-52):

Kaugelt näen koda kasvamas,	From afar I see the home rise
Kalevite kaljulinna,	the stone fortress of Kalev's people
tammed müüridel toeksi,	oaks used as a stockade
kaljurahdnud seina katteks,	boulders bracing its walls
toomingad toa tagana.	choke-cherry trees behind.

This strikingly visual depiction places us not only in the audience of the bard but by the singer's side, viewing the heroes' stronghold of old. Time and space are mystically removed, as we are able to transcend all mortal boundaries through the singing of the bard. Yet the bard will never abandon us entirely to the experience of the scene, returning frequently in interjections, assurances, and explications.

In this sense, then, both Lönnrot and Kreutzwald draw on much the same kind of source material at the outset of their epics, erecting aged narrator personas possessed of lifelong experiences and the hoarded repertoire of many years. Lönnrot's narrator is more diffident, cognizant of the rarity of encounters with friends at the start of the epic and accustomed to mean treatment and constant criticism at the end. Kreutzwald's singer shows more braggadocio, locating sources in the very mystical fabric of nature and asserting expert skill in the interpretation, creation, and performance of songs. This is a singer who dares us to try to compete,

confident in a wisdom unmatched by the inscribed reader's book learning, an instance of which the present epic represents. But the differences between the two narrator personas here are more of emphasis than of substance, and the source poetry and epic lines used in each text echo each other frequently. It is easy to see why Kreutzwald opens his Invocation with an exhortation to Vainemuine—indeed, we can almost imagine the ancient singer of Lönnrot's epic and the present Estonian bard clasping hands across the celebrated Finnish bridge *(Soome sild)* to regale each other with their treasured songs.

The Narrator in the Epic's Core

If these bracketing details create an image of continuity between *Kalevala* and *Kalevipoeg,* the subsequent treatments of the two narrators within the body of the epics themselves reveal a striking contrast. The narrator of *Kalevala* dissolves immediately into depersonalized, vague interjections, largely of rhetorical questions. Such lines usually derive directly from traditional songs available to Lönnrot and are subordinated entirely to the guiding perceptions and voices of the epic's main characters. The narrator of *Kalevipoeg,* in contrast, asserts control of the text repeatedly, commenting in detail on the foibles of the epic's characters and providing explication of the plot's outcomes and images. The bard decides what we will see and when, prescribing the epic's pace and often demonstrating control over the flow of the narrative by interrupting scenes to shift from one setting or moment to another.

It is noteworthy that Lönnrot silences his narrator through the bulk of his epic, even at junctures where some sort of narrator intrusion might be welcomed, as in the abrupt scene changes between various strands of the epic's interwoven narrative or at especially poignant moments, such as the death scene of Aino (Poem 4) or the suicide of Kullervo (Poem 36). Consider the refrained and perfunctory nature of the apparent narrator interjection after the latter scene (36:343-46):

Se oli surma nuoren miehen	That was the death of the young man
kuolo Kullervo urohon,	the demise of Kullervo the man
loppu ainakin urosta	the end at last of the man
kuolema kovaosaista.	the dying of the unlucky one.

To be sure, Lönnrot's text does not fail to provide moral commentary on this as other similar moments, but it does so through placing the words in the

mouths of observing characters rather than in the persona of a narrator. Here it is Väinämöinen who is quoted at the end of the Kullervo cycle, warning people to raise children well and prevent the development of waifs like Kullervo in the future (36:347-60). In erecting this "chorus structure," as Rafael Koskimies has termed it (1978), Lönnrot makes use of two-week old babies, old men lying on ovens, even rabbits at various points in his text. In contrast, Kreutzwald does not hesitate to award these musings to his bard, whose opinions become abundantly clear through the text.

In Kreutzwald's epic, we can see the dramatic effects of the bard's intrusive interruption technique in the handling of the Great Oak episode. Since this narrative is treated in both Lönnrot's and Kreutzwald's epics, and since it draws in each case on native songs collected from traditional singers, an examination of this event helps focus our observations concerning the different narrator techniques of each literary epic. Lönnrot incorporates the myth-song of the giant oak that blots out the sun and its eventual felling by a tiny man from the sea into the 1849 *Kalevala*'s second poem, where it plays a part in the establishment of agriculture and the world as we know it under the direction of the young-old hero Väinämöinen (2:47-204). The entire 158 lines of the episode are presented as a block, immediately following the development of burn-beat technology and preceding the advent of barley cultivation. Throughout its length, we find few overt interjections by a narrator, although its scenes and content are clearly guided by the perceptions of the key witness and instigator of action, Väinämöinen. It is he who perceives the danger of the too-massive tree and calls upon his mother to send a feller to dispatch it; it is he, too, who looks incredulously at the tiny man who rises from the sea only to transform into a giant a moment later. And at the end of the passage, when we are told of the magic tools that derive from the felled Oak itself (good fortune, wizardry, love, magic arrows), we have moved only subtly and without fanfare from the eyewitness persona of the hero sage to an unmarked narrator voice (2:191-96):

Kenpä siitä oksan otti,	Whoever took a branch from there
se otti ikuisen onnen;	took eternal luck;
kenpä siitä latvan taittoi,	whoever crafted a treetop from there
se taittoi ikuisen taian;	crafted eternal magic;
kenpä lehvän leikkaeli,	whoever severed a leafy branchlet
se leikkoi ikuisen lemmen	severed eternal love . . . .

Here, the third-person singular form of the verbs presents the aftereffects of the felling with matter-of-fact clarity, despite the wondrous details of the

uses made of the primordial oak. The narrator uses a rhetorical catalogue technique typical of the folk song tradition, with little or no further editorial comment on the part of either the inscribed singer or the implicit scholarly editor. We are by no means led to notice the nineteenth-century author through whose mind and hands the song has passed in arriving at this juncture in the epic, nor are we made aware of any perceiving entity in the text besides the omnipresent Väinämöinen, who becomes portrayed as the source and performer of many such songs both in the Joukahainen episode (Poem 3) and in the wedding ceremony (Poem 21:253-438). Although a narrator exists outside of Väinämöinen, this figure is left a simple, omniscient voice, providing no real competition for the narrative's central prime-mover.

In *Kalevipoeg,* on the other hand, the Oak episode is forcibly divided into two parts by an intrusive and irresistible narrator. The Oak song appears in the aftermath of the fourth poem's rape scene and the victim's desperate suicide, a parallel to the death of Aino in Poem 4 of the *Kalevala*. At the outset of Poem 5, the transgressor Kalevipoeg has arrived on the shores of Finland, exhausted from his swim and other activities. Then our narrator intrudes upon the text, putting the hero to sleep and diverting our attention back to the island of disgrace. The narrator intones (5:107-13):

Kalevite kallim poega!	Dearest son of Kalev!
Seni kui sa selilie	while you are sprawled
kaljukünkal koidu-unda	on that hard boulder
lased kiirelt laugudelle	with dawn-drowse light on your lids
vaatab laulik vaimusilmil	this bard, with mind's eye
sinu teede käikisida	will view your coursings,
radasida Soome rannas.	your career on the Finnish shore.
	(Kurman 1982:60)

After describing another (Macphersonesque) storm flashing about the sleeping hero, the narrator takes us back to the island, calling to the character below (5:128-32):

Puhka väsind keha, poega!	But rest your tired limbs, my boy!
Lauliku tiivad lendavad	like the sun on the sky's edge
nii kui päike taeva servas	this bard is borne on shining wings
ilupaistel kõrgemalle,	higher to a farther flood-plain.
lähvad teiste luhtadelle.	(Kurman 1982:61)

Under the control and interpretive presence of this powerful narrator, then, we watch the events that form the outset of the Oak song. The

deceased girl's parents recover the oak tree from the sea and plant it as a memorial to her loss. The mother also saves an eagle's egg, which eventually matures into an eagle under whose wing the little man with the axe awaits. Then, after introducing these details, the narrator again interrupts and redirects the song, leaving us suddenly with the mysterious image of the little axe-man to ponder. The 125-line passage thus ends suspensefully, while the narrator again addresses Kalevipoeg directly, revives him, and sends him forth on his adventures in Finland (5:264-74):

Kalevipoeg, hella venda,	Kalevipoeg, dear brother
tahtsid aga tunnikese	you intended for your eyelids
tukul' lasta laugusida	to drowse for only an hour;
tahtsid pisut puhatelles	you wanted to rest a bit,
koidu-unda keerutada;	just doze at dawn.
aga väsimuse võimus	But the weight of your weariness
võitnud ettevõttemised,	did away with these intentions
kütkendanud kangelase.	and shackled your strong limbs.
Puhkasid sa terve päeva	You drowsed for the entire day,
uinusid pika öö pimeda	slept through the long dark night,
tükike veel teista päeva.	even dozed a spell on the second day.
	(Kurman 1982:62)

In this way, the unobtrusive omniscient narrator of *Kalevala* becomes in *Kalevipoeg* an equally omniscient but now wholly personified narrator character, who interacts both with us as readers and with the characters of the plot. The interruption and resumption of plot lines underscores the narrator's empowerment and reminds us of the narrator's constant presence in the text.

We now witness—at this narrator's overt instigation—Kalevipoeg's pursuit of his mother's wizard-murderer, Kalevipoeg's purchase of a wondrous sword, the hero's drunken bragging about the rape, and his final slaying of the Smith's son when the latter upbraids him (Poem 6). Only at this moment, with the curse now placed on the sword in revenge for the son's slaying, does our narrator return to the island and to the tale of the Oak's felling (6:765-73):

Laskem laululaevakene	Let's leave the ship of our song,
pajataja paadikene,	the boat of a teller of tales
lustikandja lodjakene	our good barge, standing
saare randa seisemaie,	on the shore of the island,
parve äärde puhkamaie.	resting by a seabank;
Lähme saare lagedalle	let's step to the island clearing
vana tamme vaatamaie,	to see the old oak tree

mis seal enne toodud merest,	that had been raked from the sea
lainetesta oli leitud.	found earlier in the waves.
	(Kurman 1982:69)

Only now do we hear of the attempts to fell the tree, the successful act of the little man and the products made of the wood, including a bridge to Finland, houses for a town, a sauna, a poorhouse, an orphanage, and — quintessentially—a home for the singer (6:907-10):

Sealt saab tena laulutuba,	From that can be made a song hut,
laulija lustikamberi	a house of joy for the singer,
kus neid sõnu seadeldakse	where these words are being woven
laululõngaks liimitakse.	this skein of song is being spun.
	(Kurman 1982:80)

Here, then, we are brought forcefully not only into the presence of the narrator / singer, but into the very hut in which the song is being performed, a hut of meager size but grand content. And in the final lines of Poem 6, the narrator mocks those of us who underestimate the wonders and power of this abode and the shining yarn that the singer has produced. Both hut and song are shown to dissolve to encompass the entirety of nature, the source, as the bard stated before, of all the included words (6:926-35):

See on lauliku toake,	This is the singer's shack,
kehva mehe kambrikene,	a poor man's chamber,
vaese mehe varjukene.	a pauper's refuge!
Kuu on uksena eessa,	The moon serves as a door
päike laella läikimassa,	and the sun shines from the ceiling;
tähed toassa tantsimassa,	stars are dancing in the room
viherkaar vibuna varjuks.	and the rainbow curves for a roof.
Siin need laululood loodi,	Here is where these tales were wrought
sõnasõuded sünnitati,	where the tongue's twine was doubled over
keelekeerud korrutati.	and the winged words brought forth.
	(Kurman 1982:80)

While the singer thus attributes the structure of the poem and its contents ultimately to the landscape, the epic lines also remind us of the powers of the bard to perceive and harness these communications. The Oak song becomes not a myth standing on its own, but a proof and example of the narrative art of an inscribed narrator, one stridently calling for our attention and respect.

It is this pervasive and powerful narrator that distinguishes Kreutzwald's *Kalevipoeg* so markedly from Lönnrot's *Kalevala*. Certainly, Lönnrot also practices a plot interruption technique, most obviously in his

segmentation and distribution of the Sampo episodes (Poems 7, 10, 39, 42, 43) and in his interrupted coverage of the Lemminkäinen songs (Poems 11-15, 26-30), both pieces of his epic, we know, that he originally composed as entirely separate units and only subsequently wove together. But in the 1849 *Kalevala,* Lönnrot links these surreptitiously, through the purportedly innocuous editorial act of "ordering" the songs rather than the invasive, spotlighted enunciation of narrative control evinced by *Kalevipoeg's* narrator. And, we might point out, as Matti Kuusi demonstrated in his classic analyses of both the Sampo and Lemminkäinen cycles (1977, 1980), Lönnrot often follows natural fault-lines in the narratives themselves, possibly reflecting the boundaries of once-separate songs synthesized in the past by folk redactions. Lönnrot does not as a rule interrupt a song in midstream only to create greater suspense and highlight an empowered singer figure; instead, he attempts to order the songs in a roughly chronological order, shifting scenes only at the beginning and end of distinct poems and worrying aloud in the Introduction to his work over the effectiveness of his editorial decisions.

Nor can we say that the narrator of *Kalevipoeg* is entirely foreign to Estonian oral tradition, although Kreutzwald's creation shows a clear reliance on nineteenth-century images of Homer and Ossian. The narrator's assertions of control and skill are drawn recurrently from traditional songs as well as narrator devices typical of prose folk narrative throughout Northern Europe. And the narrator's self-confidence bears strong resemblance to the persona of Väinämöinen himself as presented in first-person passages throughout Lönnrot's epic. And thus we can say that while Lönnrot gives us the Väinämöinen figure as a narrative character, Kreutzwald gives us much the same persona as a narrator, in whose capable hands we fly across the sky and history of Estonia. In so doing, it becomes difficult, however, to fully distinguish this wondrous narrator from the nineteenth-century compiler-poet, Kreutzwald himself.

Kreutzwald also shifts to first-person narration several times in his epic without explicitly tagging the lines as belonging to any particular character or to the established narrator. In Poem 1, for instance, while describing the wedding of Kalev and Linda, we suddenly find ourselves in the presence of a mistreated servant woman who complains of her hard conditions without reference to her own identity or any attempt to insert her into the overall narrative (1:756-82). Similarly, in Poem 9, Kalevipoeg's written orders to his army are destroyed by the messenger he dispatches, whose thoughts and perceptions fill the final 158 lines of the poem. While Lönnrot, too, makes frequent use of such first-person narration in his epic, he always identifies the speaker of the lines in a manner that ties the figure

unambiguously to the plot and its events. In so doing, he clarifies his text for the reader but loses some of the abruptness and aesthetic effect of traditional lyric and lyric-epic songs, which confront the audience centrally with an unknown speaker whose identity we must puzzle out. Kreutzwald's terse additional first-person passages add further texture to his work's narrator niche and create a work both evocative of traditional Estonian lyric and aesthetically pleasing to a modern reader.

Despite the prominence of the *Kalevipoeg* bard, Kreutzwald refrains from reintroducing the character at the end of his epic. Thus, while the stirring moment of the *Kalevala*'s Poem 50—the departure of Väinämöinen and the leaving of the kantele to the people of Finland—is undercut by the return of the humble and self-deprecating folk narrator in the final lines of the text (Poem 50:513-620), the final stirring image of *Kalevipoeg*—the promise of Kalevipoeg's eventual return and renewal of Estonia—is allowed to stand as the text's final word. Compare the key lines in each epic:

Sinne puuttui pursinensa	There he stopped with his boat
venehinensä väsähtyi,	tired with his craft,
jätti kantelon jälille	he left the kantele behind
soiton Suomelle sorean	fine instrument for Finland
kansalle ilon ikuisen	everlasting joy for the people
laulut suuret lapsillensa.	great songs for his children.
(*Kalevala* 50:507-12)	

Aga ükskord algab aega	But one day an age will dawn,
kus kõik piirud kahel otsal	when all spills, at both their ends,
lausa lähvad lõkendama;	will burst forth into flame;
lausa tuleleeki lõikab	and this stark fire will sever
käe kaljukammitsasta—	the vise of stone from Kalevipoeg's hand.
küll siis Kalev jõuab koju	Then the son of Kalev will come home
oma lastel' õnne tooma,	to bring his children happiness
Eesti põlve uueks looma.	and build Estonia's life anew.
(*Kalevipoeg* 20:1047-54 = end of poem)	(Kurman 1982:266)

Lönnrot's stirring moment comes well before the actual close of his epic; Kreutzwald lets his image close his text. This difference seems to encapsulate the diverging goals of the two authors. Lönnrot, ever seeking a more complete text, finds it necessary and desirable to use traditional lyric lines in the closing of his epic. Kreutzwald, ever attentive to the dramatic needs of his work, chooses a more stirring ending over the possibility of a more complete catalogue of Estonian folklore, balancing this choice with a more invasive narrator in the prior nineteen poems. The two authors prioritize differently but respond to the same dual demands of the folklore-

derived national epic: to present their nation's folk song tradition with a degree of ethnographic, scientific completeness and to create a literary work capable of captivating a domestic and even international audience. Who succeeds better in either regard is an issue of inevitable debate.

It is tempting, on the basis of the evidence presented above, to describe Lönnrot summarily as a would-be man of science and Kreutzwald as a would-be man of letters. Lönnrot hides his persona well behind his poems, drawing on traditional lines and images for almost the entirety of his work and concealing his artistic control of the narrative and its images. Kreutzwald, in contrast, appears willing and eager to swagger into the epic, describing rosy dawns, directing our gaze and interpreting his characters' motives, albeit in the folksy persona of an aged singer. But neither characterization does these authors justice. For Lönnrot exercises aesthetic and substantive control over his epic in myriad ways, albeit without loud fanfare or even clear statement of the fact in his Introduction or text. And Kreutzwald, for all his aesthetic apparatus, begins his Introduction with a quotation from Jakob Grimm deploring the attempts of men of letters to "improve" on the native charms of true folk epics: "It was desired at one time to improve on the national saga, but this has never been accomplished. Even when it appears in fragmented form, supplementation must not be attempted since this would destroy its charm as would even a few strokes of whitewash over old ruins" (Jakob Grimm quoted in Kurman 1982:293). Kreutzwald would hardly have invoked such a statement as his Introduction's epigram if he believed that he had really erred along the lines so forcefully and pejoratively described by Grimm. Kreutzwald the aesthete hoped equally to create a work of science, documenting the ancient national imagination of the Estonian people, just as Lönnrot the man of science was equally interested in creating a work of aesthetic appeal—the product of a man of letters. That these motives seem difficult to reconcile in the minds of twentieth-century scholars derives, I believe, from the latter nineteenth century's development of distinct disciplinary boundaries and the resultant disparagement of earlier forms of now stigmatized "amateurish" intellectual holism. But for the tiny cadres of men of learning in the remote corners of nineteenth-century Europe—men who met together to plot and produce their peoples' national awakenings—such imposed limitations of thought and action were of little use. It was a time that needed national epics, and Lönnrot and Kreutzwald supplied them. And we are forever enriched by their efforts.

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Ex Ovo Omnia: Where Does the Balto-Finnic Cosmogony Originate?
The Etiology of an Etiology

Ülo Valk

The idea that the cosmos was born from several eggs laid by a bird is found in the oldest Balto-Finnic myths that have been preserved thanks to the conservative form of *runo* song. Different versions of the Balto-Finnic creation song were known among the Estonians, the Finns of Ingria, the Votes, and the Karelians.[1] The Karelian songs were used by Elias Lönnrot in devising his redaction of the myth in the beginning of the epic *Kalevala*.

Mythical thinking is concerned with questions about the origin of the world and its phenomena; etiologies provide the means to discover and transmit these secrets and to hold magical power over everything. The "quest for origins" has also determined the research interests of generations of scholars employing a diachronic approach. The evolutionist school has tried to reconstruct the primary forms of religion, while the structuralist school of folklore has attempted to discover the basic structures that lie latent behind the narrative surface. The etymologies of Max Müller were aimed at explaining the origin of myths; the geographic-historical or Finnish school once aimed at establishing the archetypes of different items of folklore. That endeavor to elucidate the primary forms and origins of phenomena as the main focus of scholarship can be seen as an expression of neo-mythical thinking. It has become clear that the etiological approach provides too narrow a frame for scholarship, since it cannot explain the meanings of folklore for tradition-bearers themselves, the processes of its transmission in a society, and other aspects that require synchronic interpretation.

Thanks to long traditions of research, a large body of knowledge has been accumulated about the prehistory of Balto-Finnic *runo* songs and their relationship with the oral traditions of other peoples. In this article, I ask

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[1] For a survey of Balto-Finnic redactions of the song, see M. Puhvel 1971.

what we know about the origin of the cosmogonic myth of the "Creation song." Some previous research is also reconsidered.

The corresponding Estonian creation song has been recorded in more than 150 variants. One of the shortest among them is the following text, which presents no more than the fragmentary core of the myth:

Pääsukeine, päevalindu	Swallow, the sun-bird
Tei ta pesa söödu pääle,	Built a nest in the field,
Munne kolmi muna sisse.	Laid three eggs in it.
Üits sai aoss alla ilma	One became dawn to the nether world,
Teine päevas pääle ilma,	The second became sun to the upper world,
Kolmas sai kuusse taevasse.[2]	The third became moon into the sky.

In versions from western Estonian coastal parishes the bird comes from the sea, flies to "our" paddock, and builds a nest in the bush or a tree. Sometimes the creation begins from an apple tree and an apple that has dropped into the waters. It is probable that the sea here designates the same primordial ocean as in Karelian songs, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the apple tree is a reflection of the cosmic world tree (which can be found in the imagery of some other Estonian mythical songs). The following is a fairly typical example of Estonian *runo* songs in which the epic plot is presented through lyrical elaboration:

Mõistke mehed, mõistke naesed,—	Guess men, guess women—
Meri meie õue all,	The sea is near our yard,
Õunapuu saare keskeel.	An apple-tree in the middle of the island.
Tuli aga tuul ja tõstis tormi,	The wind came and brought the storm,
Akkas õuna õõtsutama,	It started shaking the apple,
Õõtsutas õuna meresse.	Until it shook it into the sea.
Merest aga tõusis kirju lindu;	A many-colored bird rose from the sea,
Lendas meie kopelisse,	It flew to our paddock,
Meie kopli kuuse otsa	To the fir-tree growing in our paddock
Akkas pesa tegema	It started to build a nest
Riegudest ja raagudest,	Of branches and twigs,
Maa murusta, puu purusta,	Of grass and pieces of wood,

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[2] H I 2, 129 (3). Recorded in Halliste parish, North Estonia in 1889. Reference is to the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives in Tartu.

Meie metsa lehtedest.	Of leaves of our forest.
Tegi kuu ja tegi kaks,	It built the nest for a month, for two months,
Paari päeva kolmat kuud.	A couple of days of the third month.
Siis akkas mune munema;	Then it started to lay eggs,
Munes kuu ja munes kaks,	For a month, for two months,
Siis akkas poegi auduma;	Then it started to hatch young birds
Audus kuu ja audus kaks.	For a month, for two months.
Siis akkas poegi jägama;	Then it started to give the young birds away,
Jägas kuu ja jägas kaks,	For a month, for two months.
Ühe andis armuss alla ilma,	It gave one graciously (?) to the nether world,
Teise pilvess peale ilma,	The second became a cloud above the sky,
Kolmas koidu tähesse,	The third became the Morning Star,
Nel'las põhja naelasse,	The fourth the North Star,
Viies vankriss vaatama,	The fifth became the Great Bear,
Kuies kuuss kumama,	The sixth started to shine as the moon,
Seitsmes sõelas seisema.	The seventh to stand as the Pleiades.
Sest me ajad arvame	Thus can we tell the time
Ja omad tunnid tunneme.[3]	And know the hours.

The number three is very common in Estonian songs: often three bushes (blue, red, and golden) are mentioned, the bird lays three eggs, the hatching lasts for three months. Besides this song, there are only a few traces of the myth in Estonian folklore. There was a traditional saying about the period between the old and the new moon, when no moon is visible; people observed that "the moon is in the nest" (*kuu on pesas*), expressing the idea that the moon is born in a nest, time and again. The sun was also said to be in the nest during solstices. A couple of prose redactions of the myth of cosmic eggs in the Estonian Folklore Archives originate from folklore collectors who were, most probably, acquainted with *Kalevala* and inspired by this epic.

On the basis of different versions of the Balto-Finnic songs, Matti Kuusi has restored the common mythical story: "A heavenly bird (an eagle?) flies above the sea and looks for a place to build a nest. Having found it (a piece of sod?) the bird lays one or three eggs. The wind rolls them into the water and the sun, the moon and the stars (and heaven and earth?) are born of them" (Kuusi 1963:68). Also found in Karelian songs is a motif of the

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[3] H II 2, 200. Recorded in Karuse parish, West Estonia in 1889.

demiurge Väinämöinen uttering the words of creation that makes the earth and the sky from the shells of that egg.

The Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth has many international parallels. They are so numerous that it may initially seem that myths about cosmic egg(s) belong to the common traditions of mankind. An egg is a symbol of latent life force, fertility, and resurrection in many cultures, and the word denoting an egg often has sexual connotations. *Muna* ("egg") already had the parallel meaning "testicle" in the Proto-Uralic language (Rédei 1986:285). The Vedic and Sanskrit word *aṇḍa* is also ambiguous, denoting egg, testicle, and sperm (Böhtlingk and Roth 1855:86). In the dream omens of Estonian folklore the egg is also connected with fertility: if a young wife dreams of finding a bird's nest, it foretells pregnancy.[4] However, belief in the cosmogonic function of an egg has not been found everywhere; there are, rather, four broad areas where myths about cosmic egg(s) belong to indigenous oral traditions: 1) the Balto-Finnic region; 2) the Eastern Mediterranean lands; 3) South Asia (China, Tibet, Indo-China, India); and 4) the Malay Archipelago, Oceania, and Australia.[5]

Geographically, the closest parallels to the Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth can be found in the folklore of other Finno-Ugric peoples. In a Lappish creation story, a duck lays five eggs upon a blade of grass on the ocean; vegetation, fish, birds, a man, and a woman hatch out of these eggs (Ajkhenvald et al. 1989:157). In Zyrjan (Komi) mythology the two dualistic demiurges Jen and Omol are born of two eggs laid by a bird. They break the four additional eggs and thus create sun and moon together with good and evil spirits. In Mordvinian folklore three goddesses or mother-spirits are born of three eggs laid by a bird on the cosmic birch-tree (Napolskikh 1991:29). The Uralic origin of these myths is doubtful because parallels in the Ob-Ugrian and Samoyed mythology have not been found.

The Balto-Finnic creation myth is strikingly unique in Europe, with the above-mentioned Finno-Ugric parallels the only clear traces of the egg cosmogony in recent European folklore. Vladimir Toporov has discussed the hypothetical Russian parallels in his reconstruction of the myth of the world egg (1967). He relies upon some motifs in magic tales that describe the transformations of kingdoms of copper, silver, and bronze into eggs (balls, apples) (Aarne and Thompson 1961:no. 301). Eggs and round objects

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[4] E 42182 (18). Recorded in Rakvere parish, North Estonia.

[5] Such an overall picture can be drawn on the basis of previous research and the personal knowledge of the author of this article; it is possible, however, that more "core areas" should be added to this list in the future.

are universal symbols in tales of magic, and contraction is one of the basic rules applied in their artistic language (Holbek 1987:444-46). Attempts to draw conclusions about Proto-Indo-European mythology on such a basis cannot be convincing. As Toporov states (1967:82), explicit formulations of the myth of the cosmic egg have not been found in Slavic folklore. The Latvian version has turned out to be the falsification of a folklore collector, and the myth of the cosmic egg cannot be found in Lithuanian folklore either. The closest Lithuanian parallels are some dualistic legends in which the world is created from an apple floating in the primordial ocean.[6]

Different versions of the myth of the world egg occur in the mythology of ancient Egypt. According to the priests of Hermopolis, Thoth, the god of wisdom and the moon-god, was the true demiurge who hatched the world-egg on the primordial ocean in the shape of the divine ibis-bird. The sun-god Ra was born of the primeval egg (Viaud 1989:27). A few traces of the myth of the cosmic egg can be found in the Phoenician traditions described by the Jewish philosopher Philo and some Greek authors (see Delaporte 1989:82). The oldest Greek cosmogony, Hesiod's *Theogony*, does not mention the cosmic egg; it seems to be a rather specific trait of the Orphic tradition. The speculations of the Orphics about the origin of the world include the motif of the cosmic egg, expressing the notion of implicit totality. The demiurge Eros, Phanes, or Protogonos was said to be born from it.[7] The Orphic cosmogony has been preserved only in fragments and is a metaphysical system rather than a primitive or popular mythology. It is noteworthy that this system has some parallels with the Vedic and epic cosmogonies of India, for example the motif that the world emerges from sexual desire, or passion (*kāma* in India).[8] But it is probable that the concept of cosmic egg was borrowed from the traditions of other peoples just like many other pieces of Greek mythology, and that it did not emerge from the Indo-European heritage.

To emphasize the Indo-European origin of the myth, many authors have cited ancient Indian texts (*upaniṣads*, *purāṇas*, *Manu-Smṛti*, *Mahābhārata*). However, the oldest source, the *Rig Veda Saṁhitā*, does not prove that the myth about the cosmic egg was known among the Aryan tribes who invaded India. This collection of 1028 hymns introduces diverse

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[6] Kuusi 1956:56; personal communication with the Lithuanian folklorist Dr. Lina Būgienė.

[7] Lebedev 1989:38-39, Bianchi 1987, Paladino 1987.

[8] Rig Veda (= RV) X, 129. See O'Flaherty 1981.

cosmogonic myths, most of them collected in the last and most recent (tenth) mandala, and several presented as fragments of knowledge that lie hidden behind the verses. Two passages formulate the idea of a golden germ, womb, seed, or embryo (*hiraṇyagarbha*) floating in the primeval water:

> That which is beyond the sky and beyond this earth, beyond the gods and the Asuras—what was that first embryo that the waters received, where all the gods together saw it?
>
> He was the one whom the waters received as the first embryo, when all the gods came together. On the navel of the Unborn was set the One on whom all the creatures rest.
> (RV X, 82, 5-6; O'Flaherty 1981:36)
>
> In the beginning the Golden Embryo arose. Once he was born, he was the one lord of creation. He held in place the earth and this sky. Who is the god whom we should worship with the oblation?
> (RV X, 121, 1; O'Flaherty 1981:27)

The idea of the golden embryo that conceals cosmic potency precedes the later notion of *Brahmāṇḍa* ("Brahma-egg"), meaning the implicit primeval existence of the world and the whole universe as totality. The demiurge Prajapati, who was later replaced by Brahma, was said to be born of this primordial egg. The fact that it is the abstract god Brahma who is connected with the cosmic egg gives evidence of new developments in mythology in the period of the decline of the Vedic gods and the ascent of the gods of Brahmanism and epic mythology.

An explicit formulation of belief in the cosmic egg can be found in later commentaries to the Samhitas of the Vedas. In *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (XI, 1, 6, 1-11) the primordial golden germ is replaced by the golden egg (*hiraṇmaya aṇḍa*) floating on the ocean and giving birth to the demiurge Prajapati (Weber 1964:831-32). The cosmogony of *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* (III, 19, 1-3) also relies upon the concept of an egg (Radhakrishnan 1994: 399): "In the beginning this (world) was non-existent. It became existent. It grew. It turned into an egg. It lay for the period of a year. It burst open. Then came out of the egg-shells two parts, one of silver, the other of gold. That which was of silver is this earth; that which was of gold is the sky." These texts probably date from between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE and are about five hunded years later than the Rig Veda Samhita.

Mārtāṇḍa ("dead egg") is an occasional parallel name of the Vedic sun-god Vivasvant. Sometimes the expression is rendered as "born of a dead egg" or "egg's son," but these are not literal translations. The dead egg

probably denotes a bird-egg as opposed to a living egg, a testicle (Böhtlingk and Roth 1868:880). Indian sources do not assert *Mārtāṇḍa* to be born of an egg but rather to be as the last son of the goddess Aditi. Karl Hoffmann interprets *Mārtāṇḍa* as an abortion or miscarriage of Aditi (1957:92-93). *Mārtāṇḍa* as an appellation of the egg can also be understood as a metaphor. The sun resembles an egg, but such a comparison does not prove the existence of a myth that the sun has been born of an egg. Metaphors of that kind referring to the sun (day-egg, sky-egg, and so forth) can occur in the folklore of peoples who do not share the belief in the cosmic egg. Nevertheless, stories about the sun's birth from an egg-yolk can be inspired by the objects' apparent similarity, and metaphors can sometimes be seen as potential or latent myths.

W. B. Henning (1954) has written about the reflection of the cosmic egg and a hatching bird in Avesta (Yasht 13, 2-3). However, his rendering is based on a single obscure expression and does not derive from the Gathas, the oldest Iranian sources. This piece of evidence is too doubtful to claim the proto-Aryan origin of the myth and to connect it with Finnish folklore, as has been done by Pentti Aalto, who regards the figure of the bird as an exclusive parallel between the two traditions (1987). (As we saw, the bird is common in the creation myths of the Eastern Mediterranean lands as well.) It is probable that the Aryan tribes who invaded India did not know the myth of the cosmic egg. The later myths of Brahmanda are based on the RigVedic concept of *hiraṇyagarbha* that Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty calls "a truly pregnant term" with complex connotations. She explains that the second element of the compound means "womb," "seed," "embryo," or "child" in the Rig Veda and later comes to mean "egg" (1981:26-27). It is possible that the myth of the world egg, and other cosmogonic myths that are expounded in the Sanskrit sources, have been influenced by the indigenous oral traditions of India.[9] During the period when the Aryan invaders settled in the basin of the Ganges river, they adopted several non-Aryan ideas and religious observances.

The myth of the cosmic egg is found in the folklore of several peoples of eastern Asia and Indo-China. The basic motifs of the Indian and Chinese myths coincide: the demiurge is asserted to be born of the primeval egg. In China this divine being P'an-ku was said to be the forefather of all creatures, just like Prajapati in India (Yuan Ke 1965:41-42). P'an-ku was the primeval giant whose body-parts make up the material world, an origin that connects

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[9] For the Proto-Indo-European cosmogonies, see Mallory and Adams 1997:129-30 and J. Puhvel 1987.

him with Purusha, the primeval man of the Vedic mythology (RV X, 90) and with other proto-men of Indo-European anatomical cosmologies.

There are also essentially different versions of the myth of the cosmic egg in Asia. In the folklore of some of the peoples, the number of primeval eggs is more than one (as in Balto-Finnic songs). In the epic songs of the Miaos who live in China, two gigantic birds are born of eggs and hatch out earth and sky (Jia Zhi 1987:374). Several egg cosmogonies are known among the tribal communities of Assam. According to a Bodo-Kachari myth, the Great Lord created two birds whose three eggs gave birth to spirits, trees, and procreators of mankind. In Karbi folklore the mythical bird *wo plakpi* laid several eggs out of which were born the progenitors of different peoples and tribes of Assam. In Dimasa creation myth gods, spirits, and ghosts are born out of the seven primordial eggs (Datta et al. 1994:39). Complex and elaborately detailed cosmogonic myths can be found in the sacred texts of the Bon religion in Tibet. An offshoot of the ethnic shamanistic religion, Bon competed with and confronted Buddhism for centuries. The two religious traditions share many common elements, and in philosophy the Buddhist influence on Bon is remarkable; however, Bon also has its own special features such as its cosmogonic lore. Bon literary sources relate diverse myths about the origin of gods, demons, humans, and the realms of the world. Sometimes the number of cosmic eggs varies within the same text, the most common numbers being "two," "five," and "nine" (Karmay 1975). The cosmogonic doctrines of Bon seem to be genuinely Tibetan; only the dualistic tendency in myths—the oppositions light vs. darkness, good vs. evil, gods vs. demons, and the like—refers to the probable influence of Iranian religious sources.

Different myths about cosmic egg(s) were known in the Malay Archipelago, Australia, and the islands of the South Seas as far as the Americas. There are etiological legends about the birth of heavenly bodies, earth, and the first human beings from eggs. The motif that seems to be most well-known—the birth of the demiurge (Tangaroa, Tangaloa, Ta'aroa) from the primeval egg—corresponds to the traditions of Asia.[10]

Finally, let us return to the Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth that has often been regarded as an ancient borrowing of Oriental origin. There are, however, several points that contradict this theory. The Balto-Finnic songs do not include the motif of the birth of the demiurge from an egg that is central in India and in some Chinese myths; rather, they present a very different version of a bird whose eggs are transformed into heavenly bodies. There seems to be some kind of affinity between the Balto-Finnic myths and

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[10] Luquet 1989:449, 457, 464, 469; Alpers 1970:51-54.

those of Tibet, Assam, and some regions of China, while the Indo-European (Indian) version differs widely from them. All of this makes the possible dynamics of borrowing quite mysterious.

Such a central myth as the one explaining the origin of the whole cosmos could hardly be adopted through some occasional folklore contact. If the Balto-Finnic myth about the marvelous bird and its eggs is a borrowing, it should have been borrowed from some ethnic group with whom the Baltic Finns had lasting historical contacts. Who could they be? They probably were not the Indo-Europeans, as the Indo-European origin of the myth cannot be definitively established. Cosmic eggs are known in both the Greek (Orphic) and in Indian traditions, but both cases could have been inspired by the myths of neighboring peoples or the local mythological substratum. We cannot refer to the hypothetical Proto-Indo-European heritage and assert that the Baltic, Slavic, Celtic, and Germanic peoples must have known the myth about the cosmic eggs as well. No reliable data in folklore or literary traditions have been discovered to support such a claim.

The Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth can be dated to the period antedating contact between Asia and Europe via the Silk Road. The common form of the *runo*-song enables us to date it to the first millennium BCE. The prose versions of the myth must have been generally known even before the songs were composed. The scope of variation of different redactions of the Balto-Finnic songs is so remarkable that there is no need to look for one common archetype, a single original form. Martin Puhvel understands the Estonian swallow-song as a basically independent creation, contending that the Estonian and Finnish songs "have fundamentally nothing in common beyond the basic concept of creation of cosmic bodies from bird-eggs" (1971:23). True, there are similarities in the composition of the Balto-Finnic songs as shown by Matti Kuusi (1956:83). However, we can suggest that singers of different tribes and localities created their own versions of the songs now and again, as they transformed the sacred etiological lore into the poetic language of *runo*-song.

Among the numerous petroglyphs near Lake Äänisjärv in Karelia are some images that can be connected with the Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth, an interpretation arrived at by the leading expert on the petroglyphs, K. D. Laushkin. One petroglyph depicts a bird who lays an egg that gives birth to the sun and constellations. These pieces of art have been dated to sometime in the period between the middle of the third millennium and 1850 BCE (Laushkin 1962:277-80; Sawwateyev 1984:119). Likewise, it cannot be mere coincidence that some Lappish, Mordvinian, and Komi cosmogonies are based on motifs associated with cosmic eggs. These traditions should be connected with the mythic lore of the Estonian, Finnish, and Karelian

"Creation Song."   The Finno-Ugric myths most probably derive from a common heritage and can thus be dated to the third millennium BCE at the latest.   Birds and waterfowl are among the most recurrent mythological motifs of Finno-Ugrians and in Northern Eurasia in general (Antanaitis 1998:63).   There is another widespread Uralic cosmogonic myth about a water-bird who dives to the bottom of the primordial ocean and brings back some soil to make the earth (Napolskikh 1989).

The Balto-Finnic cosmogonic myth can thus be regarded as an indigenous oral tradition of the region where it has been preserved.   The possibility cannot be excluded that the myth is a borrowing from the Proto-European tribes who were later assimilated by the Baltic Finns.   The belief in the cosmic egg was probably part of the mythology of Europe before the Indo-European invasion, as shown by Marija Gimbutas (1982:101-7).   Works by Uku Masing (1985) and Vladimir Napolskikh (1991) point in the same direction: a possible substratum of the folklore of Proto-European peoples that can be recognized in the Balto-Finnic oral traditions.   Thus we are dealing with a remnant of the mythology of the European Stone Age, cosmogonic knowledge that has been transmitted through the millennia.[11]

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[11] I am grateful to Dr. Richard Cohen and Dr. Nancy Caciola, both from the University of California, San Diego, for their kind help with Sanskrit sources, and to Jonathan Roper (of NATCECT, University of Sheffield) for assistance with language problems.

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Beowulf as Epic

Joseph Harris

Cambridge, Massachusetts, has been home to two translators of the *Kalevala* in the twentieth century, and both furnished materials, however brief, for an understanding of how they might have compared the Finnish epic to the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*. (The present brief Canterbridgean contribution to the generic characterization of *Beowulf*, taking a hint from the heterogeneous genre make-up of the *Kalevala*, focuses chiefly on a complex narrative structure and its meaning.) The better known of the two translators was my distinguished predecessor, the English professor and philologist Francis Peabody Magoun (1895-1979). In his 1963 translation of the 1849 *Kalevala*, Magoun's allusions, still strongly under the spell of the early successes of the oral-formulaic theory, are chiefly to shared reliance on formulaic diction, though he does also point out certain differences in the two epics' application of this style (1963a:xvii, n. 1; xviii, n. 3). Magoun's reference to "the *Beowulf* songs" (xviii, n. 3) in the plural, however, alludes to his belief that different folk variants on the life of the hero can still be discriminated in the epic. By the time of his 1969 translation of the *Old Kalevala* Magoun seems not too far from the current standard view (xiv):

> . . . such a semi-connected, semi-cyclic work as the *Kalevala* or the received text of the Anglo-Saxon *Béowulf*, however oral in its genesis, cannot possibly be the product of oral composition. Unlettered singers create in response to an immediate, eagerly waiting audience; they do not compose cyclically, but episodically . . . . it is for that reason that I have been firmly persuaded that the Anglo-Saxon *Béowulf*, being cyclic in treating more than one episode in the titular hero's life, must, like the *Kalevala*, be the work of a lettered person using the verses of traditional singers.

Magoun's narratological terms, especially "cyclical," are obscurely used, but in his articles it does emerge clearly that he thinks of the received text as containing three songs about Beowulf "soldered" together (his metaphor) by a "concatenator" (1958, 1960, 1963b). Though Magoun's dissecting, neo-

Liedertheorie does bring out some real issues that unitarians ought to answer, this mechanical view of poetry separated him from his own students (e.g., Creed 1966) as well as from current scholars of *Beowulf*, such as John Foley, who think rather in subtler terms of the "oral-derived" product of a real poet, not a concatenator (e.g., Foley 1991).

The second Cambridge translator was of a very different sort. A relic of turn-of-the-century Finnish immigration to western Massachusetts, Eino Friberg (1901-95) was a poet; educated to the M.A. level in philosophy at Harvard, he was a man of letters who never held an academic position and who, most remarkably, had been blind since childhood. When I knew him, briefly at the end of his life, he was far gone in a romantic spirituality, which, I believe, can already be heard in the terse and sometimes stark poetry of his translation. His highly oblique reference to *Beowulf*, which is unnamed but clearly discernible beneath the general wording, is framed as a contrast to the *Kalevala* (1988:12):

> The difference is clear, although expressing it may be somewhat more tentative; other Germanic and Scandinavian folklore collections seem to represent reactions to the imposition of Christianity, and the consequent loss of a past way of life—a fond farewell look over the shoulder before taking a place in the historical and literate order of Christendom.

The *Kalevala*, on the other hand, appears at an historical juncture, "a time when history was ripe with destiny" (1988:18), that projects its influence into the future. Friberg would have deplored a word like "concatenation"; to his inner eye "the structural units of the runo-singers were already transformationally related before Lönnrot recorded them" (1988:20)—which may be a poet's way of referring to a mystic teleological coherence in what I would call the network of discourses, that is, in tradition.

The *Kalevala* is not the only epic that ends with an aeon marked by the coming of a new religion: for one could say the same of the *Shahnama* and of the less familiar *Watunna*, collected and compiled in twentieth-century Venezuela (de Civrieux 1980). Such a structure perhaps becomes available to the epic poet whenever history seems to terminate myth. But how exactly to characterize the glance over the shoulder in *Beowulf*? This has become one of the many controversial themes in the interpretation of the Old English epic.

Function, Context and Genre

A representative contemporary effort is that of the Freudian James Earl in his recent book *Thinking About "Beowulf"* (1994). Earl's first chapter argues that the Anglo-Saxon epic is "an act of cultural mourning" (47):

> . . . in *Beowulf* Christianity appropriates the mythic eschatology of the Germans by historicizing it . . . eschatology is the poem's very motivation. The world destroyed at the end of the poem is the heroic world, that pre-Christian world which in many respects had to be renounced by the Anglo-Saxons with the coming of Christianity. The poem is in large part a lament for those losses; and precisely a lament, for in the poem Anglo-Saxon culture seems to be mourning for its lost past. Mourning epitomizes the normal, healthy processes of relinquishing the past and coming to terms with its absence. To the reader of *Beowulf* it need hardly be argued that a culture can mourn for its past as an individual can. Mourning is in fact commonly experienced collectively.

The chapter, under the dramatic title "The Birth and Death of Civilization," is couched in a rhetorically overheated style and is also overstated: Earl's confident handling of what he calls the "eschatology of the Germans" is hardly justified, even by the chief witness, *Völuspá*. Nevertheless, most contemporary interpreters of *Beowulf*, including me, do now seem inclined to read it as culturally postheroic and retrospective. It does not explicitly announce the coming of a new age in some imagined equivalent of the advent of the King of Karelia in Lönnrot's Runo 50, but Beowulf's barrow on Hronesnes does seem to bury a past in anticipation of something new.

This interpretative consensus, to the extent that it is a consensus, does not extend to the date, provenance, and political function of the poem. Since 1979 the respectable range of dating possibilities has been extended from, say, 680 well past 800 to around the date of the manuscript, that is about 1000 or a little later.[1] Several prominent Beowulfians are now arguing for the tenth century and the court of Æthelstan or another successor of Alfred (e.g., Niles 1993). This date enables them to think in terms of correlating the poem with the founding of the English nation in the wars of Æthelstan and his successors and thus to explain the Danish subject matter politically. I am of an older school. I think the poem has the kind of cultural function we heard of from James Earl, but the political function would have been pre-

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[1] The "aeon" of 1979 is supplied by a paradigm-shifting conference; see Chase 1981.

national, perhaps that of the familar *speculum regis*. I belong among those who think there is a connection between the East Anglian royal family, the Wuffings, and the land of the Geatas, present-day Västergötland; and the East Anglian ship burial at Sutton Hoo, about 625, would seem to furnish a clue to the earliest milieu for the culture reflected by the poem.[2] However, unlike Sam Newton, I am inclined to regard the poem as we know it as a product of the Mercian (Middle Anglian) court of Offa the Great (757-97) or of a successor such as Wiglaf (827-40).[3] In the context of current *Beowulf* scholarship, therefore, I belong among those who see the poem as chronologically relatively early, but typologically late in terms of cultural and literary history—as opposed to, for example, Niles (1993), who favors a chronologically late poem that is nevertheless foundational in cultural terms.

At least all students of the poem agree in calling it an epic. Or do they? That ambiguous term papers over several disagreements. First, I reserve the word "epic" for relatively long narrative poems of a certain dignity; this allows for a hermeneutically useful contrast with the lay. Thus *Hildebrandslied* or *Atlakviða*, for example, as relatively short narrative poems, are lays and not epics. I am not claiming that the Continental and Scandinavian use of "epic" to mean "narrative" is unjustified by custom (in German, for example) and etymology, only that the predominant Anglo-American customary sense (a *long* narrative poem with certain other features, which, however, are less distinctive than length) allows for useful contrasts that are missing in the non-Anglo-American tradition. In my main effort to present Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry within a consistent literary-historical framework (Harris 1985), I largely follow Andreas Heusler's lead in constructing an ascending scale of poems from the sophisticated lists of *Widsith* and *Deor*, through eulogy, to the classic heroic lay, a native oral genre that we know from the West Germanic fragments, from the "five old poems" of the *Poetic Edda*, and from such secondary reflections as the Finnsburg Episode in *Beowulf* (cf. Heusler 1941). The next level of literary magnitude and complexity is the long narrative, the epic. Heusler and his present-day followers, for example my teacher Theodore Andersson (especially in 1987), derive the inspiration for the *Buchepos* ultimately from Virgil, and I concur. But the poles of lay and epic are more immediately a useful hermeneutical tool, as Heusler's notion of the origin of epic by "swelling" (*Anschwellung*) of a lay already makes clear (cf. Haug 1975). The original of the Finnsburg Fragment, for instance, may have been longer

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[2] On this topic see most recently Newton 1993.

[3] See Harris 1985:264-66.

and more leisurely than Heusler's reconstructed ideal of the oral lay provides for, but it is still enlightening to contrast it with a "book-epic" such as the Latin *Waltharius* and probably with the original of the English fragments of the *Waldere* epic.

Beowulf, however, the crowning achievement of Old English heroic poetry, lies outside all these genres, including even the "epic"; it presents a further generic development, having, of course, its point of departure in epics such as *Waldere*. In comparison to the lay and to simple epic developed by amplification, *Beowulf* embodies an exceptionally complicated narrative; the essential story—the monster fights and Beowulf's life—conveys far less conception of the poem than is the case for lay and simple epic. In texture and structure *Beowulf* distinguishes itself from *Waldere* and other extant Germanic narratives. Its special blend of Christian and secular-heroic ethics is also unique, though perhaps not different in kind from *Waldere*'s. As a typologically "late" work, *Beowulf* carries within it strong evidence of awareness of its literary predecessors and as a whole implies an attitude toward and perspective on those sources. Like *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Waste Land*, *Finnegan's Wake*, and *The Kalevala*, great works that transcend inherited genres, it embodies a new literary form that is, nevertheless, emphatically oriented toward the literature of the past. In the absence of an established term, I have called this kind of work a *summa litterarum* (Harris 1982, 1985). Such *summae* are generically synthetic and punctuate or terminate a period, summarizing or *summa*-rizing the literary past and seeming either to generate no direct progeny or to devour their own by overshadowing them in the course of literary history. The Beowulfian *summa* represents the poet's "reading" of antecedent literature, mostly oral literature; its unity is more organic and its "idea" less a critical problem than for *The Canterbury Tales* (cf. Howard 1976) or *The Kalevala*. Yet anthology-like, it contains at least the following genres: genealogical verse, a creation hymn, elegies, a lament, a heroic lay, a praise poem, historical poems, a flyting, heroic boasts, gnomic verse, a sermon or paternal advice, and perhaps less formal oral genres. In addition, a number of other genres are alluded to, just as Chaucer alludes to drama; but without paraphrase the generic terms (for example, *spell*) are difficult to interpret. As a whole, then, *Beowulf* represents for me a unique poet's unique reception of the oral genres of the Germanic early middle ages.

Nested Narrative Parallels

From the beginning some of the most interesting work on *Beowulf* has been narratological. Connections between this formal or structural work and the kind of hermeneutics we sampled from James Earl are generally risky, but I would like to devote the remainder of my essay to taking just such a risk. Anyone who knows the text of *Beowulf* knows that its mode of storytelling "lacks steady advance," to paraphrase the famous judgment of Frederick Klaeber (1950:lvii); there are all manner of digressions, predictions, and resumes, in addition to the repetition of whole story-structures. I would like to examine one type of repetition that has escaped structural description and that can, I venture, have a meaning coordinate with the sense of the whole. It is the structure of narrative repetition known as *mise en abîme*.

The history of the term and its use in literary theory have been brilliantly chronicled by Lucien Dällenbach (1989). In medieval heraldry a shield that contains a replica of itself was said to contain it "*en abîme*"; closer to our own time and social level, the Quaker Oats box has (or used to have) on it a Quaker who holds up a box of Quaker Oats, which of course has on it a Quaker who holds up another, and so forth. The play within a play in *Hamlet* is a famous example in drama, and in narrative the *mise en abîme* has been described simply as the primary fabula containing, embedded within it, a secondary fabula that mirrors it (Bal 1985:143-48). Perhaps "nested narrative parallels" would be an adequate brief definition. In any case, the possibility of infinite regress seemingly offered by this structure suggests that in the *mise en abîme* we are led inward to the core of a story.[4]

While *Beowulf* would be a paradise for any student of repetition in narrative, it offers one passage that I believe immediately qualifies as a significant *mise en abîme*. *Beowulf* begins his final series of speeches with a reminiscence of his childhood in fosterage with his uncle King Hrethel, whose old age is soon blighted when one of his sons accidentally kills another (2425-43); in Chickering's moving translation: "There was no way to pay for a death so wrong, / blinding the heart, yet still the prince / had lost his life, lay unavenged" (1977:2441-43). Hrethel suffered grief and frustration that no revenge could be taken against the killer "though he did

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[4] The ideas in this section are more extensively developed in Harris 2000. For an excellent further discussion, see Jefferson 1983. *Beowulf* is cited by line number from Klaeber 1950 or in the translation of Chickering 1977.

not love him" (2467b), with the result that the king soon passed from this world in death. Literally into the middle of this domestic tragedy—*en abîme*—is inserted an analogous tale attached by *swa* ("so") at the beginning and end (2444-62a), in other words something like a Homeric simile. Here an old man who loses his son on the gallows (also an unavengeable death) grieves that he cannot help the lad. The boy's room reminds him of his emptiness and the absence of former joys. Then the old man takes to his bed and sings a lament. We do not learn whether he dies like Hrethel or lives, saved by song, as Egill Skalla-Grímsson does in a similar incident in an Icelandic saga, but, like Egill, the Old Man's intention is certainly to put life behind him (Harris 1994, 2000).

No one is likely to disagree that a tale within a tale connected by the explicit marking of a simile can be called a "nested narrative parallel," but I want to push the argument for a *mise en abîme* centered on the Old Man's Lament to a further stage with the claim that we should recognize two more layers of this regress. I expect some resistance to this proposal. Within the simile comes a moment when the father thinks about and rejects an ancient maxim, a maxim that we know more directly from Egill Skalla-Grímsson's elegiac poem for his dead sons, *Sonatorrek*, stanza seventeen of which observes: "This is also said that no one may get recompense for his son unless he himself begets yet another descendant who will be for the other a man born in place of his brother."[5] I have argued that both poets have in mind the same piece of gnomic wisdom, a survival from a primitive stage of the family in which there *did* exist a form of compensation, namely in rebirth, "Wiederverkörperung in der Sippe," as Karl August Eckhardt put it (1937). The gnome is worded negatively, however, casting doubt on itself: "no one may get recompense for his son unless. . ." Egill is definitely quoting the saying sarcastically; though he does not announce his intention to die in the poem—it is the saga that elaborates that theme—it is clear that Egill is not about to await a replacement son. When the preconceptions of the Old English are teased out at length, as I did in the earlier paper (Harris 1994), it appears that the *gamol ceorl*'s (or Old Man's) decision not to await a replacement son must mean that he knows some men would wait, that he is rejecting the ancient wisdom without quoting it.

So the *gamol ceorl*'s actions are based on something very like the maxim quoted in *Sonatorrek*. Now I want to claim that the maxim carries with it the presupposition of an implicit story *in potentia*—a sort of freeze-dried narrative. It is not a series of events in the past tense (a narrative), but is framed as a condition and a consequence—the structure of a belief, a

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[5] For references and a detailed discussion, see Harris 1994.

superstition, or a legal scenario: "If a man lose his son, he may get no other recompense than to engender another to replace the first."   The transformational relationship between this story *manqué* and a biblical-sounding parable should be clear. This is the innermost repetition, the center of the simile—*en abîme*.

Finally we turn to the outermost shell. The whole passage we have just examined is spoken by Beowulf, who is very old and approaching his death; the epic never reported a marriage for Beowulf, and it is certain that he has no son. After the dragon-fight and his mortal wounding, his nephew Wiglaf just manages to bring him back to consciousness; but the old king's first words concern his lacking son: "Now I would want to give to my son / these war-garments, had it been granted / that I have a guardian born from my body / for this inheritance (Chickering 1977:2729-32a). "Guardian" here, *yrfeweard*, is the term used of the *gamol ceorl*, who did not care to await a replacement *yrfeweard* (2453a); the grieving father tends toward death, perhaps by implication toward a reunion with the dead son and other relatives, and Beowulf, with his missing son on his mind, "must go after" his departed kinsmen (2816). Hrethel leaves his possessions to his surviving sons (*eaferum*, 2470a), and Beowulf, after expressing his regret for not having a son for this function, finally gives his personal war-gear to Wiglaf (2809-12), but he does not adopt his nephew though he had admonished Wiglaf "to watch / the country's needs" (2800b-01a). These motifs around the theme of sonlessness are complicated in a curious way by the virgin king's treatment of his people as a son-substitute and of the dragon's treasure as a patrimony. After regretting the lack of a son, Beowulf's next topic is his people (2732b ff., 2794 ff.), and the treasures are left to them though they are not called his *eaforas*. Death, in either case, is the father's part.

When one begins to work on this text in terms of parallels and their meaning—and here I am thinking immediately of Wiglaf and the Last Survivor—it seems to offer no terminal point. But I end here with the suggestion that our quadrupled story about the death of a sonless father, literally nested parallel narratives, takes us *en abîme*, to the heart of a special kind of "epic" that projects cultural anxiety about the end of one era and problematic connections to the fictional future—that is, to the real audience's more recent past.

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Thor's Visit to Útgarðaloki

John Lindow

Snorri Sturluson lived more than five hundred years before Elias Lönnrot, and in a different part of the North, the commonwealth of Iceland. But he shared with Lönnrot a gift for collecting and systematizing, above all for creating from his own cultural materials something that the entire world would come to cherish. In Snorri's case this involved especially the mythology of his forebears, and his *Edda* has endured as the work that most defines that mythology.

The part of his *Edda* devoted exclusively to the mythology is *Gylfaginning*, and the longest and most complex narrative in it—about one-sixth of the entirety of *Gylfaginning*—describes Thor's journey to and visit with Útgarðaloki. Because *Gylfaginning* endeavors to present the entire curve of the mythology, from the creation of the cosmos through the ongoing conflict between gods and giants to the destruction of the cosmos, with non-narrative detours cataloging features of the gods and goddesses, that sixth part is large indeed. The story is also significant because it does not draw from the eddic poems *Völuspá*, *Vafþrúðnismál*, and *Grímnismál*, which were the major sources of *Gylfaginning*. Since the latter two—indeed, perhaps all three—are Odin poems, *Gylfaginning* has a certain focus on Odin, and besides the journey to Útgarðaloki, there is only one other Thor narrative in *Gylfaginning*, about his visit to the giant Hymir and fishing up of the Midgard serpent. Thus the visit to Útgarðaloki offers the fullest opportunity within *Gylfaginning* to see Thor in action—within all of *Snorra Edda*, actually, and judging by length at least, within the entire corpus.

The story comprises several parts, which I will designate as follows (these designations deliberately differ from what has ordinarily characterized analysis so as to emphasize the unity of the existing narrative): a prologue in which Thor visits with a human family; a journey undertaken with several companions and a mysterious giant, with whom Thor has a falling out; a sojourn at the court of Útgarðaloki, involving contests of various sorts; and an epilogue in which the contests are explained.

One motif from the prologue is found in altered form in *Hymiskviða* 37: Thor's lame goat. Parts of the travel sequence are also referred to in Eddic poetry: Odin and Loki accuse Thor of cowering in a giant's glove in, respectively, *Hárbarðsljóð* 26 and *Lokasenna* 60, and Loki also reminds Thor that he was unable to open the giant's food sack during the journey. Otherwise the story is all but unknown in verse, although Saxo Grammaticus also appears to have known it.

Research on the various parts of this story has tended to stress foreign origins on the one hand and a lack of mythic or religious significance on the other. As regards foreign origin, the title of a 1908 article by Friedrich von der Leyen says it all: "Utgarðaloke in Irland." For many scholars, Ireland has remained the location of the supposed sources of the narrative.[1] In 1964 Nora K. Chadwick went in the other direction when she pointed out parallels in Russian *byliny* relating to the giant Svyatogor. Citing a text catalogued by Georges Dumézil (1930:146), Jan de Vries (1970, 2:142) proposed an unconvincing Ossetic parallel, and this suggestion has entered the handbooks[2] and has even been attributed to Dumézil himself (e.g., Anne Holtsmark in Munch 1967:102-03). Kaarle Krohn (1922:207-15) derived the story of the goats brought back to life in the "prologue" from medieval legend and identified a Finnish folktale parallel with the night Thor and his companions spend in the glove of Skrýmir (215, fn. 1). The second major thrust[3] sees analogies to folklore, either in fairy tale or legend, depending on individual opinion. These analogies are found at both the stylistic and structural levels. At the stylistic level, the tone is judged light and ironic, a quality that some people seem to think is typical of folklore, perhaps especially fairy tale. I cannot accept this assumption, for even if one accepts a kind of universal *Märchenstil*, as described by Max Lüthi (1982), I do not believe that Snorri indulges in it here. As for structure, what the observers in question have in mind is a journey to Hell or the other world, and, although that is an apt analogy, it appears so frequently in the rest of the mythology as to render meaningless any special application in this case.

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[1] See C. W. von Sydow's important 1908 study (despite the polemic carried out between Finnur Jónsson [1921:104-15] and von Sydow [1921]) through those of Alexander Haggerty Krappe (1937) and Michael Chesnutt (1989).

[2] E.g., Simek 1984:364, 427-28, who, however, cited the seemingly irrelevant Dumézil 1943.

[3] Which is in fact closely connected to the first in the works of von der Leyen (also 1899:40-45) and von Sydow and developed independently by other scholars, such as Axel Olrik (1905) and not least Jan de Vries (1933:82-89; 1956-57, 2:131-45).

According to this major trend in the interpretation of the Útgarðaloki story, then, the material was taken from somewhere else and assembled by Snorri, according to the notion of Snorri's "novellistische Darstellung" ("fictional presentation") as championed by Eugen Mogk (1923). It would then have had no mythological or religious significance[4] or at best only a few significant motifs.[5] I disagree completely with such an assumption and thus am in a minority camp.[6] Let me briefly present Clunies Ross' understanding of the myth as a whole.[7] After pointing out that the question of an Irish loan will never be answered, and that if there was such a loan the material must have been meaningful for Thor in any case, Clunies Ross focuses on the contests themselves. They are, she notices, all of them against forces that even the gods in this mythology cannot overcome: fire, thought, water, the midgard serpent, and death. All, in fact, have a connection with Ragnarök, the judgment of the gods and end of the current world order, for at that time the earth will burn and sink into the sea, the midgard serpent will be freed from its station encircling the earth and will battle the gods alongside the forces of evil; then the gods will die. Old age stands in this interpretation for death, and Útgarðaloki's thought will be another uncontrollable force.

This is an elegant and ultimately convincing interpretation, and it makes most of the traditional scholarship on the story look quite wrong-headed. I intend now to offer a set of mostly complementary interpretations based on the details of the texts themselves, to which I propose to turn now.

Before the Prologue

Note first the circumstances under which Gylfi / Gangleri elicits the story. If his interlocutors do not tell it to him, he declares that he will have overcome them. This relates to the frame story: "Hár said that he would not

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[4] So explicitly Krohn 1922:194, quoting Schück 1904, 1:21.

[5] So, e.g., Grønbech 1931, 2:268-69.

[6] Other members have included Folke Ström (1956:76-80) and Margaret Clunies Ross (1994:266-68).

[7] Which was also foreshadowed in the commentary of Gottfried Lorenz (1984:526-40).

emerge alive, unless he were the wiser"[8] The motif of the head-ransom is usually in this instance derived from *Vafþúðnismál*, in which Odin and the giant Vafþrúðnir explicitly wager their heads. In *Grímnismál* something similar is implicit, for King Geirrøðr, who has been listening to Odin's ecstatic wisdom performance, dies at the end of the poem. The reference to the motif at this later point in *Gylfaginning* is the only one following its original mention. Siegfried Beyschlag (1954) related this moment to the entire narrative logic of *Gylfaginning*: now the *Æsir* must tell stories about Thor in which he does not emerge triumphant.   We can accept this point without losing sight of the fact that reintroduction of the head-ransom motif must indicate the importance of the story that is to follow and undermines any argument that it is insignificant.

The Prologue

Ironically, it is in the first part of the story that the bulk of the scholarship has found an item of genuine religious significance, in the motif of Thor's use of his hammer for the revival of the goats. It is not for most scholars the revival of the goats itself, which they see as typically Irish or folkloric, but rather the use of the hammer for the purpose of fertility that also appears to be echoed in a few other texts. I prefer to draw attention here to the interaction between deity and human community.   The human community is represented by a nuclear family of father, mother, and children, living as people did on a farm and offering as people did hospitality to travelers. The story of the botched revival of the goats is etiological within the mythology, for it tells how Thor acquired his assistant Þjálfi.   Structurally the incident may be read as a violation of ritual procedure provoking an angry response from the god, followed by a request for the god's favor whose granting shows the removal of the god's anger. The result of the sequence is the binding of two younger humans to the god, to be literally his followers for life. (Actually, Röskva vanishes from the extant mythology at this point, but Þjálfi is a constant presence within it). There is a second etiological moment, namely an explanation for the lame leg of one of Thor's goats. This gimpy leg makes the goats consistent with the many other flaws within the mythology: Odin lacks an eye and Týr a

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[8] "Hárr segir, at hann komi eigi heill út, nema hann sé fróðari." (Normalized from Finnur Jónsson 1931:10; translation from Faulkes 1987:40. Unless otherwise indicated, all textual citations are from Finnur Jónsson 1931, and all translations are from Faulkes 1987.)

hand, Thor's hammer is slightly too short, and so forth. All these flaws are extensions of the basic flaw at the creation of the universe, which was made possible by a killing within a family—Odin and his brothers killed a maternal relative, the giant Ymir, and fashioned the cosmos from the parts of Ymir's body. When they killed him, Ymir's blood rushed forth and drowned all the giants save one, who repopulated the cosmos with his kind, the enemies of the gods.

A significant feature of this episode is the manifestation of Thor's rage. It begins with the sinking of his brow, which is a colorful and quite well-known motif in the sagas of Icelanders that indicates extreme repressed emotion. But it is Thor's eyes that truly frighten the farmer, who thought, Snorri wrote, that he would fall before Thor's gaze alone. Here Snorri is drawing on a common and powerful motif from Viking Age poetry and figural representations of Thor, whose gaze indeed was mighty. Poems and rock carvings alike focus on the meeting of eyes between Thor and the midgard serpent when Thor fished up the beast, and many of Thor's hammers are equipped with large eyes.[9] Thor is gripping his hammer, and we are to understand that he is fighting against the urge to use it on the family. That, however, would wholly violate the nature of the god, who among all the Norse gods was, as far as we can tell, the protector of humans from inimical forces. The famous example of Helgi the lean, who prayed to Christ when on land but to Thor when at sea, provides a concrete example; perhaps it was from the midgard serpent itself, whose domain was the sea, that Helgi wished to be protected. In any case, Thor's hammer is significant as the only artifact yielded by archaeology that shows a widespread desire within the human community for a connection with a deity, presumably for protection (Lindow 1994). Had Thor killed the farmer and his family, he would in fact have been acting like one of the giants or some other of the forces that threaten human existence. That he does not is mythologically correct, and it also indicates another mythological fact: the very thin line separating gods and giants.

Thus Þjálfi and Röskva became the servants (*þjónustumenn*) of Thor, in the closest such relationship to be found in the mythology. The only other god to whom more than one human is attached is Odin, and I would like to suggest that by this fact alone the prologue portion of our story implicitly compares Odin and Thor. The most famous of the Odin heroes was Starkaðr, and there is a complex of stories about his origin and the institution of his relationship with Odin. The most salient feature here is descent from the giants. Indeed, Starkaðr the old, a forebear of Starkaðr the Odin hero,

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[9] A potential association with leadership; see Marold 1998.

was a monster with extra arms that Thor tore from him to give him human form. As a descendent of the inimical forces, Starkaðr could never hope for the protection of Thor, and indeed *Gautreks saga* and *Hervarar saga* have a sequence in which Odin and Thor alternately bestow good and bad events on Starkaðr's future life.   Perhaps the most salient point about Starkaðr, however, is that he himself is a disruptive force within human society, one who lives three lifetimes and commits three evil deeds during the course of those lifetimes. Of these the most salient is probably the slaying of the king whose retainer he is.   Thus Þjálfi, the "Thor-hero," enjoys a productive relationship with his divine patron and even, by participating in the killing of Hrungnir when Thor dueled that giant and by killing the monster Mökkurkálfi himself, joins in his patron's sphere of religious activity, which is to make the world safe for humans. On the other hand, Starkaðr, the Odin-hero, has a distant relationship with his divine patron and joins to some extent in his patron's sphere of mythological activity though cowardice and breaches of faith. To contrast Thor and Odin even more explicitly, consider that according to Saxo (Book 8), Odin himself killed his follower Harald wartooth at the battle of Brávellir after betraying to Harald's enemy Ring the formation that had given Harald so many victories.

I read the prologue, then, as an adumbration of the relationship of humans and their gods, explicitly Thor, implicitly Odin.

The Journey

Joined now by Þjálfi and Röskva, in addition to Loki, Thor continues the journey through Jötunheimar and over the ocean to some distant land that we must assume from what transpires later is Útgarðar. This is one of the supposed folktale-like features of the narrative, but to put it in its place I will note that Thor's crossing of waters, not least rivers, and among them especially the one flooded by the daughters of the giant Geirrøðr, is a regular feature of the mythology. Drawing again on Helgi the lean, I propose that we read this passage religiously, that is, as an example of Thor helping humans, his servants Þjálfi and Röskva, to cross the deep sea. If accepted, this proposal draws together the prologue and journey.

Once Thor and his companions arrive in this strange world, they seek lodgings. Here again it is instructive to consider the world in which humans actually lived. In that world people would have sought out, as Thor and Loki did in the prologue, a farmhouse, and they would have enjoyed the hospitality of the household there. Thor and his companions come upon a house, but it is uninhabited. In the other world there is no hospitality. There

follows what I believe can only be a Snorronic joke, an earthquake. Very soon in *Gylfaginning*, in connection with the punishment of Loki for his role in the death of Baldr, Snorri will tell us that all earthquakes originate in the writhing of the bound Loki when poison falls upon him from the snake fastened above him. Now Loki is in the so-called house and is frightened by the earthquake. Thor leads him and the others to a room further inside, where, like Þjálfi and Röskva, he cowers, while Thor stands in the doorway, once again exercising his protective function. The text says that Thor intends to protect himself (*verja sik*), but from the entire scene it is clear that he has the well-being of his companions in mind as well.

In the morning the origin of the empty house and the earthquake are disclosed when Thor emerges to find the huge person Skrýmir and learns that the house was Skrýmir's glove and the earthquake his snoring. We may ask ourselves where Skrýmir was when Thor and his companions arrived to find the glove. If he was at hand, he withheld the normal greetings and hospitality. Thor behaves in the socially correct way when he asks about Skrýmir's name, and he is apparently not surprised when Skrýmir calls him by name, since Thor is not devious and, unlike Odin, in reality seldom does conceal his name (*Hárbarðsljóð* 9-10). At this point in our narrative there is no way to know what race of beings Skrýmir belongs to, and thus Thor's treatment of him should excite no comment. Nor should Skrýmir's offer that they travel together and share their provisions, although some critics have missed that point.

The offer to share food, and the result of that offer, constitute another feature drawing together prologue and journey and indeed the entire narrative, although to my knowledge this feature has been entirely overlooked in the scholarship and handbooks. For where Thor provided food to the human community in the prologue, here a giant denies it. Skrýmir not only binds it with iron so strong that even Thor cannot get at it, but also at their parting, Skrýmir actually steals their food: "Skrymir took the knapsack and threw it on his back and turned abruptly away from them into the forest, and there is no report that the Æsir expressed hope for a happy reunion" (Faulkes 1987:40)[10]

The duty of the gods is to help with food, not deny it, as Thor seems to understand. His inability to open the food sack so angers him that he strikes the sleeping Skrýmir with his hammer Mjöllnir. Let us contrast this moment with the occasion in the prologue when Thor grips the hammer in

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[10] "Tekr Skrýmir nestbaggann ok kastar á bak sér ok snýr þvers í skóginn frá þeim, ok er þess eigi getit, at æsirnar bæði þá heila hittaz" (Finnur Jónsson 1931:53).

anger against humans but does not use it. Thor, or perhaps I should rather say the narrative, has apparently unveiled Skrýmir as a giant, and it is Thor's duty to kill giants. That he is thrice unable to kill this one is disquieting, to say the least. It is also disquieting that the effects of his hammer blows, so consistently fatal, are likened by the giant to falling leaves, nuts, and rubbish of some sort, presumably bird droppings. Mjöllnir was manufactured with great craft, while these are useless items from nature.

In the passage just cited above, Snorri refers to the traveling company of gods and humans as *Æsir*, the term ordinarily used for the gods alone. This does not mean that Þjálfi and Röskva have been promoted to the status of deities, but rather that the black-and-white situation is one in which *Æsir* oppose *jötnar*, the giants. Consider the directions mentioned just above. Thor and company should continue east, Skrýmir says, while his path lies to the north. In mythic cosmology both these directions are associated with the *jötnar*. The battle has been drawn. Skrýmir and Thor now part ways, and Thor and his companions arrive at the stronghold (*borg*) of Útgarðaloki.

The Contests

At the beginning of the sequence at the stronghold we again find an inversion of normal human procedure, for Thor cannot open the gate, and hospitality, including of course food once again, is apparently denied. Arriving as they do at the middle of the day, the travelers have every right to expect to be fed, but such an expectation is not met. Instead, they are told, they must demonstrate accomplishments (*íþróttir*, which ordinarily involve activities requiring training, such as poetry, music, and the like). Guests, says Útgarðaloki, must demonstrate some "list eða kunnandi" ("art or skill"). These are to be displayed in contests.

The choice of eating as the first contest can hardly be arbitrary, given the importance of food throughout the narrative, as I have emphasized, and in his final explanation, Útgarðaloki says that Loki was ravenous (*mjök soltinn*) before the contest began. It is instructive to compare this eating sequence with the one in the prologue. There the breaking of one bone provoked a crisis; here Loki leaves all the bones intact, but Útgarðaloki's retainer named Logi destroys them along with the dish the meat was on and is thus declared the winner. Insofar as the meal in the prologue suggests a ritual, Loki has followed it, while in this later instance Logi has inverted it. By the logic of the narrative ritual, the food source that Útgarðaloki has used in the instance has been destroyed, an event that suggests a negative world

full of lack. It also could suggest that by the definition of the narrative as a whole, Loki won the contest, not Logi.

The second contest is formulated as a series of footraces between Þjálfi and Útgarðaloki's retainer named Hugi. The series follows the usual folkloric rule of three, but the key is found in Útgarðaloki's comment after the first race.

> Þurfa muntu, Þjálfi, at leggja þik meir fram, ef þú skalt vinna leikinn, en þó er þat satt, at ekki hafa hér komit þeir menn, er mér þykkir fóthvatari enn svá. (Finnur Jónsson 1931:55)

> You will have to make a greater effort, Thialfi, if you are going to win the contest, and yet it is true that never before have people come here that have seemed to me to run faster than that. (Faulkes 1987:45-46)

The term he uses for people, namely *menn*, can refer to gods, giants, or humans, or indeed any race with human form. Þjálfi is, then, acknowledged as the fastest runner with a human body. Perhaps, like Loki, he too is the victor, although Hugi reaches the finish line first.

Thor participates in the next contests, which again follow the rule of three, tripled. Consistent with the theme of food, the first involves consumption of what initially appears to be beer. Elsewhere in the mythology Thor's appetite is a kind of comic commonplace; one poet, for example, claimed that Thor drank three barrels of mead when disguised as the beautiful Freyja who was to be bride to the giant Þrymr so that Thor could get his hammer back. To empty a mere drinking horn, however large it was, could hardly pose a challenge to such a tippler, especially since he is, according to Snorri, very thirsty, but Thor leaves behind more than he consumes. Snorri is probably playing here with his report elsewhere in *Gylfaginning* on Valhöll, Odin's hall, where the beer is inexhaustible, but in this context the leftover beverage represents a decided setback for Thor. Nor is it better when he tries to lift the cat or wrestle with the old woman called Elli. Only after these tests have been failed—or passed?—does Útgarðaloki show hospitality to his guests, and only on the following morning does he explicitly give them food and drink.

At this point it is appropriate to wonder who Útgarðaloki might be and what kind of household this is. Útgarðaloki is called king, and he has retainers (*hirðmenn*)—by the early thirteenth century, when Snorri composed this text, the term referred to a royal or bishop's court. Certainly there were persons with arts, skills, and accomplishments at royal courts, and their practice of these functioned as entertainment, so the participation of Thor and his companions in the contests has a certain strange logic. That

Útgarðloki is a king adds a social dimension to the story. Thor comes first to a farmer, the head of a human household, and there the normal rules of hospitality obtain and Thor's position as a powerful deity is verified. Now he has traveled over the sea and come to the castle of a king, with a supernatural household where the ordinary rules do not seem to obtain. Thor knew just what to do in the farmer's house, but here in the king's hall he is clueless, and he fails to behave, apparently, as the king would wish. That could suggest a social dimension to the use of the god in the human community, the hoary notion of Thor as a god of yeomen and Odin as a god of kings. But it is also tempting to put the story in the context of the kingless Iceland in which it was written down and perhaps specifically in the context of Snorri himself, whose encomium for Hákon Hákonarson and Jarl Skuli may not have met with quite the success he had hoped.

The name *Útgarðaloki* (lit. Loki of Útgarðar [pl.]) has baffled observers. The fact that the first component is plural has, however, attracted little attention. I understand the plural as parallel to that of the home of the giants, Jötunheimar. Both, it seems to me, suggest a group of places as opposed to a unified cosmological center implied by Ásgarðr or Miðgarðr, the dwelling places of gods and men respectively. I see these groups of places as located at the periphery and indicative of an opposition between inside and outside, in group and out group, ultimately of nature and culture or even "holy" and "profane," if one wishes to express the opposition so (cf. Hastrup 1985:136-54). Unlike Clunies Ross (1994:266, n. 32), therefore, I am not worried by the fact that Snorri never identifies the inhabitants of Útgarðar as giants, nor that the realm of Utgarthilocus in Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* is clearly one of the dead. Indeed, in describing Ragnarök, Snorri wrote later in *Gylfaginning* that Hrymr was accompanied by *hrímþursar* ("frost giants") and Loki by *allir Heljar sinnar* ("all the companions of Hel," that is, the dead; Finnur Jónsson 1931:71), thus verifying the obvious equivalence among the various non-social races in their opposition to the social order of gods and men. An equivalence between giants and the dead is indeed often accepted.[11]

As a shapechanger, the king of Útgarðar was a kind of Loki, and perhaps it is appropriate that the world of the giants should, like the world of the gods, have a Loki. The recent ruminations of Anatoly Liberman (1992) to the effect that Útgarðaloki represents an earlier stage of an originally chthonic Loki (one who locks) are stimulating but unverifiable. The reading I find most suggestive, however, was offered by Folke Ström (1956:80), who surmised that the Útgarðaloki of tradition, with his shapeshifting and

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[11] So Schoning 1903, but cf. von Sydow 1919:53-70.

control of magic, was a kind of *doppelgänger* of Odin who showed just how close Odin and Loki are. I will not rehearse his argument here, but will simply point out that according to Snorri Odin has two ravens, Huginn and Munin ("thought" and "memory"), who fly about the world gathering information for him, functioning as what we might now term shamanic helping spirits, and the first of these is of course just the definite form of the noun Hugi, the name of the retainer of Útgarðaloki. Logi, fire, inspires Odin to an ecstatic wisdom performance in the poem *Grímnismál*, for in it he is suspended in the fires at the hall of the human king Geirrøðr. The prodigious eating and drinking that characterize the hall of Útgarðaloki are of course also to be found in Valhöll, Odin's hall, where there are endless sources of meat and mead for the *einherjar*, Odin's chosen warriors, his *hirðmenn*—to use the term Snorri employed for Útgarðaloki's retainers. In my view, then, what goes on at the court of Útgarðaloki has remarkable Odinic aspects, of which the most obvious is none of what I have just recounted but rather the way Thor and his companions fail the tests set for them. This parallel turns on the use of words. Thor and his companions fail to understand that a person named "fire" or "thought" or "old age" can actually be his or her name, or a personification of it. There is of course something of a joke here, for the nouns *logi*, *hugi*, and *elli* were hardly unknown, but understanding them in this context requires an ability to manipulate language, which is at the heart of poetry in Old Norse-Icelandic tradition. And poetry, in its turn, was delivered by Odin to gods and men and was perhaps Odin's principal skill. In *Ynglinga saga* Snorri reports that Odin spoke in verse alone, and the acquisition of magic in *Hávamál* shows that Odin's magic was for the most part a magic of verse.

Before wrestling with Elli, Thor drinks the sea and lifts the cat. The drinking itself suggests an association with poetry, which was manifested as mead, and here we could see a direct Odinic challenge to Thor, to which he does not rise. The cat comes next, and it is worth pointing out that the *þulur*, versified lists of poetic vocabulary recorded in manuscripts of *Snorra Edda*, list *köttr* or "cat" among the names of giants. Here the joke would be opposite from that presented by Logi, Hugi and Elli. Köttr is a giant according to poetry, but Thor is ignorant of or cannot apply that fact. And although the kenning is not as far as I know attested, a cat of the sea, stretched and coiled, would of necessity be the midgard serpent in verse; compare the kenning used for this beast by Bragi the Old, traditionally reckoned the first skald: "coiling eel of the drink of the Völsung." The possibility of an underlying kenning here would thus join Thor's first two tests.

The Epilogue

The final scene of the narrative takes place outside the hall of Útgarðaloki. After the events of the previous evening, Útgarðaloki has fed his visitors properly and now he accompanies them out of the hall, as was customary in the human world that fostered the mythology. In other words, although they have failed (or appear to have failed) his tests, he no longer withholds food from them and treats them with the normal hospitality. Now he explains the events, giving them the retrospective interpretation or reinterpretation so characteristic of this narrative.

At the very end of the entire narrative, after he has explained the tricks, Útgarðaloki's stronghold simply vanishes and Thor and his companions are left standing on the field. *Gylfaginning* ends in precisely the same way: the hall of the *Æsir* vanishes and Gylfi is left standing on the field. The similarity can hardly be coincidental, and it has attracted much comment. Let us follow its lead.

In *Gylfaginning*, three wizards bearing Odin names host and trick Gylfi/Gangleri. The underlying structure is taken from such contests of wisdom as *Vafþrúðnismál*, *Grímnismál*, or the riddle sequence in *Hervarar saga*, in which Odin is the disguised visitor. In the Útgarðaloki sequence, a figure with Odinic characteristics hosts and tricks Thor. Moving from the underlying model through *Gylfaginning*, one might say that Thor is being tested in an Odin role, in Odin's realm, that of words. He fails the test, and the hierarchical superiority of Odin over Thor in this arena is reinforced. That the hierarchy was significant is established beyond a shadow of a doubt by the poem *Hárbarðsljóð*, in which, as Carol Clover has shown (1979), Thor is defeated and set hierarchically lower than Odin in the poetic realm because he cannot cope with Odin's playing with its form. Whether the issue is form as in *Hárbarðsljóð*, or words, as in the Útgarðaloki sequence, the result is the same.

And yet, as I hope to have shown in my discussion of the prologue and journey, Thor has revealed that he has a better relationship with humans than does Odin. Furthermore, a careful reading of the entire narrative shows that Thor can make claims within the Odinic realm. Consider first the blows of the hammer deflected by Skrýmir onto a local mountain, which Thor thought had failed even to awaken the sleeping giant: as Útgarðaloki tells Thor during their last conversation, these blows created three valleys. Now, the creation of the cosmos was, as I have mentioned above, the work of Odin and two other gods, his brothers Vili and Vé, according to Snorri. Thor shows here that he too is a fashioner of the cosmos. The creation of the cosmos through the slaying of a giant sets an archetype for mythic activity in

which every slaying of a giant recapitulates the proto-slaying and thus is a creative activity, and Thor serves nobly in this arena through his frequent giant-slaying; but this is different, in that an area of the cosmos is actually ordered. Thor's swinging of his hammer in these three instances, then, was anything but wasted. And the physical landscape was not all he created, for in attempting to drain the drinking horn, he created the tides. These have, of course, a physical aspect, but as the etymology of English tide, transparent in Swedish *tidvatten*, will show, it has an anchor in time-reckoning. Time-reckoning too was the province of Odin and his brothers at creation, for after the cosmos was created, the sun, moon, and stars did not know where their stations were to be. These stations were assigned to them by Odin and his brothers, in order, *Völuspá* 6 explicitly states, that men may reckon time. Thus we may say that Thor has a valid claim to participation in both aspects of creation, the ordering of the cosmos and of the principle of time-reckoning.

Above I observed that an argument could be made that both Loki and Þjálfi actually "won" their contests with the retainers of Útgarðaloki, Logi and Hugi. To these we can add the creative aspects of Thor's drinking from the horn, as well as his creative hammer blows on the journey to Útgarðaloki's castle. Let me now take up the cat and the old woman.

By lifting the cat, that is, the midgard serpent, off the ground but not completely so, Thor verified the mythic present, where his conflict with the midgard serpent remains a standoff. The texts are, quite frankly, unclear as to whether Thor killed the serpent when he fished it up, possibly because the story changed over time (Meulengracht Sørensen 1986), but for Snorri, I think, the serpent needed to stay in the sea until Ragnarök, the end of the world, when it would emerge for its final battle with Thor and each would kill the other. By staggering back nine paces before dying, however, Thor obtains a kind of moral victory. He is, as it were, unbowed by death, just as he is unbowed by old age when he grapples with it at the court of Útgarðaloki. Thus he makes possible his heroic death at Ragnarök.

Even in these two cases, then, it is difficult to see that Thor actually lost the contests. If we now look back at all five contests, we can see that the judgment of defeat of Thor and his companions was in every case except the first—Loki versus Logi—made in the form of verbal interpretation by Útgarðaloki. By his mastery over words he persuades even us, the readers, that his interpretation of events is to prevail.

I wish to make one last point about the remarkable parallelism between the frame story of *Gylfaginning* and the Útgarðaloki narrative. This parallel is complete in the area of the *ginning* or deceiving of the principal characters—indeed, the Útgarðaloki narrative has been called *Þórsginning*—

and the use of *sjónhverfingar* (lit. "alterations of visual perception") in both instances. However, a final explanatory scene parallel to the one in which Útgarðaloki explains it all to Thor, is absent, and in my view conspicuously so, from *Gylfaginning*. It should be apparent by now that I harbor enormous respect for Snorri the author and that I do not find much that is random in *Gylfaginning* (or indeed elsewhere in his splendid authorship). The absence of the explanatory scene invites us, or so I believe, to supply one. Who were Hárr, Jafnhárr, and Þriði, and what would an explanation have looked like if Snorri had put one in their loquacious mouths? That will turn on how we understand the nature and purpose of *Snorra Edda*, but I would be content to regard it as an explanation of the underlying euhemerism. This explanation would join *Gylfaginning* to the Prologue to *Snorra Edda* and the opening chapters of *Ynglinga saga* in *Heimskringla*, Snorri's redaction of the sagas of the Norwegian kings. In both texts such a theory is set forth explicitly. The *Æsir* were men of Asia, who emigrated to the north under the leadership of a historical Odin, who established other Asia-men as his temple priests. Later, at the moment Snorri captures in *Gylfaginning*, descendants of these immigrants from Asia kindle in Gylfi/Gangleri a belief in their forebears. That, I would like to believe, is what Hárr, Jafnhárr, and Þriði would have told Gylfi/Gangleri just before the hall disappeared.

At the beginning of this essay I summarized the prevailing view of the narrative of Thor's journey to Útgarðaloki as a pastiche of elements borrowed from here and there, from Irish tradition, from migratory folk narratives, combined into a whole by Snorri to no particular purpose. My goal has been to suggest that the importance of the narrative within *Gylfaginning*, as measured in sheer bulk, is commensurate with its mythological significance. It serves to order the two chief deities, Odin and Thor, allowing each hegemony in certain areas. Thor has a comfortable relationship with the human community, Odin does not. Odin commands words, Thor does not. Odin created and ordered the cosmos and time-reckoning, but Thor contributed in that arena as well. This narrative is not the only "Thor" myth to indulge in comparison with Odin; so too, I have argued, does the Hrungnir myth (Lindow 1996). The pantheon required both of them, Thor and Odin, for they had different and often complementary things to contribute. The narrative form of myth functions, then, as a means of exploring and evaluating the contributions of two essential deities and allows explicit comment on the nature and structure of the pantheon.

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