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.

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Editor's Column

Habitual readers of *Oral Tradition* know that an informed predilection for open disciplinary borders is a hallmark of the journal. New readers may confirm the value of that statement by addressing themselves to the splendid work assembled in *Oral Tradition* 15/2: the authors cover conceptual ground that is as nuanced and compelling as is sweeping the cultural and historical territory they explore. Because our warrant is the promotion of the study of oral tradition in all of its facets, we welcome your ideas and your submissions, and strongly encourage you to add your voice to this lively discussion.

Mark Amodio leads with the fifteenth annual Albert Bates Lord & Milman Parry Lecture. His theme, Anglo-Saxon oral poetics in the post-Norman conquest milieux, focalizes the flexibility and resilience of oral poetics and performance practices; impermeable walls insulating orality from literacy are notable for their absence. A masterful study of the Middle English simplex *abelȝen*, "to anger or incense; to grow angry," deftly illustrates the crucial role innovation and economy play in oral poetics.

Lauri Harvilahti offers a fascinating illustration of Amodio's "realm of oral poetics." An account of early fieldwork on Altai oral epic and notes on forty years of schooling in the *Kai* (laryngeal style) tradition prepare the way for an interview with several representatives of the Kalkin family, a dynasty of traditional *Kai* epic singers. Excerpts from the *Maadai-Kara* epic—a cosmogonic myth of "the heavenly tree" derived from shamanistic initiation rites—as performed by father and son with idiolectal variants depict a metonymic network of form and meaning that imbues a single formula with polysemy and maintains a universe.

Contributors Stephan Meyer, Anna-Leena Siikala, and Sybil Thornton reflect on oral/literate reciprocity and how it plays out in a given *oikoumene*. Meyer's probe of a collaborative South African auto/biography brings to the fore the ancient, fundamental problem of translation—of human experience between individuals, and of human expressions between modes of performance, spoken and written. Siikala's fine essay on Kalevala rune-singing shows to advantage the protean nature and functionality of oral tradition. Her reading of the conjugation of somatic attitude, performance arena, cultural agency, gender, and personal ambivalence adumbrates and indexes the full range of purposes and ends available to a tradition—from the quotidian to the supernatural and back again by way of the risque. A cautionary tale of purported scholarly truth dashed on the rocks of *a priori* expectation implies much more than the frustrations the field campaigners express. Thornton's exhaustive study of a sixteenth-century Japanese epic

narrative begins with the assertion that a millenium of mutual influences precludes separate, clearly differentiated oral and literary traditions in Japan: oral poetic diction is no guarantee of oral provenance. With Siikala, Thornton's case study of the *Kōnodai senki* ("Chronicle of the Battle of Kōnodai") elaborates a clear panoramic vision of the general and specific functions of epic, in this case Japanese epic—a peculiar rhetorical structure reliant on mythmaking and texts, an invocation of traditional narratives to legitimate new ideologies, a continuum of performance modes and skilled performers, subordination to a master narrative, and possessing a striking range of cultural functions. Her reading of a collation of sermon materials, popular narratives, other performing arts and poetry intended to console the vanquished and bereaved, to pacify the angry spirits of the dead, and to justify a new temporal order enlists the heuristic of "traditional referentiality." With it she reaches an understanding of how the many complex elements of *Kōnodai senki* work as a unified narrative.

Drawing from Millman Parry's classic definition of the formula, from discourse analyses of the performances of auctioneers, horserace callers, hockey face-offs, and cricket phraseology, Koenraad Kuiper essays Chomskian concepts of internalized, external, and performance constraints, together with rules of discourse structure in his analysis of how a formula is like and is not like other verbal forms. He finds that the idiomatic phrase is by nature most akin to the formula, since both share felicitousness, and that the formula is not only a way of speaking but also of seeing, of negotiating the network of semantic relationships that constitute knowledge of a given subject.

Diverse as the essays assembled here in fact are, they nonetheless share a signal universal: each reveals a human being imbricated in a fragile and unique here and now, in dialogue with a network of living tradition that insistently voices the profound dignity of human experience. Such a thread, it seems to me, is sewn into the conceptual binding of these half-dozen studies in *Oral Tradition*.

John Zemke, Assistant Editor

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Tradition, Performance, and Poetics
in the Early Middle English Period

Mark C. Amodio

Of the many periods into which scholars habitually divide English literary and social history, the post-Conquest period surely ranks as one of the most interesting and most complex. The tumultuous years 1066-1250 witness not only the rise of most of those political and social institutions upon which England's unique national identity rests,[1] but it is also the period in which literacy and its concomitant practices and habits of mind move beyond the walls of the monastic and scholastic cells where they had long been sheltered and begin to become more widely available, and increasingly necessary, to people situated at all levels of the social hierarchy.[2] But even though literacy comes to be increasingly central to English society in the early Middle Ages, documentary culture does not immediately displace or marginalize oral culture: English society does shift from being largely oral to being increasingly literate following the Norman Conquest, but this movement is marked by the continued interpenetration and interdependence of oral and literate culture, not by their conflict or rupture. Despite the growing importance of documents, orality remains an important component of medieval society because the literate skills of those who daily came into contact with official documents are almost entirely of a practical and rather limited nature: reeves and bailiffs needed to keep accurate records to manage their estates successfully, and lords and overseers needed to have the ability to ascertain the accuracy of these records for themselves so that they might

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[1] Among the "great institutions undreamt of before in the life of man" that emerge during this period are "representative assemblies, universities, juries and much else upon which our modern civilization still rests" (Trevelyan 1953:187). More recent considerations of this important period in English history include Chibnall 1986 and Bartlett 1999.

[2] See further Clanchy 1993.

escape the fate of the unnamed lord who employs Chaucer's "sclendre[,] colerik" (I.587), and slyly dishonest reeve, Osewold.[3]

For the vast majority of the populace, including most of those who acquired the skills that enabled them to negotiate the official and non-official documents that began to proliferate in the early Middle Ages, the spread of literacy had very little impact upon their experience of the world of imaginative verbal art because throughout the period poetic texts (as well as sacred and even vernacular prose ones) continued to be received primarily through the ear, not the eye. There are any number of reasons for this situation, not least of which is that the skills needed to decode lists of figures or recognize inventory categories are only tangentially connected to those that enabled readers to decode written texts. The persistence of oral habits of mind must also be reckoned with, and we must also not forget that within the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages books were precious commodities that remained well beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest members of lay society.[4] While members of those households privileged enough to possess a few books presumably had the opportunity to come into direct physical contact with them and so could peruse them privately and at leisure, the majority of the populace had no such opportunity to experience texts as physical objects; rather, as members of what Brian Stock labels "textual communities," they came into contact with texts and textual culture only through the mediation of a reading voice.[5]

Although the means by which verbal art was received remains remarkably stable from very early to very late in the English Middle Ages— the picture of poetic reception Bede presents in Book IV, chapter XXIV (XXII) of the *Historia ecclesiastica* differs little from that which Chaucer presents in Book II of his *Troilus*—, the English poetic tradition

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[3] Although the acquisition of literate skills becomes ever more necessary to the success of the middle and upper classes of medieval society, members of the lower classes also recognized how important these skills were. As Clanchy argues, serfs and villeins learned that they "needed to imitate their betters and exploit written procedures" if they were to "advance themselves or provide for younger sons or daughters" (1993:49). I cite Benson's (1987) edition of *The Canterbury Tales* throughout.

[4] W. L. Schramm has calculated that "the value of the 'twenty bokkes, clad in blak or reed,' that Chaucer's Clerk of Oxford owned or would have liked to have owned (*Cant. Tales* I.294) would be about sixty times his annual income, while Jankyn's 'book of wikked wyves' (*Cant. Tales* III.685) would have been a treasure worth several pounds" (cited in Pearsall 1989:7).

[5] On the nature and role of "textual communities" in the Middle Ages, see Stock 1983:88-240, 1990:140-58.

undergoes nothing short of a sea change during the same period of time. The transformation of the poetics fundamental to English vernacular verse composition is so complete that were we to copy onto a single piece of paper both *Beowulf*'s opening lines—"Hwæt, we Gar-Dena in geardagum / þeodcyninga þrym gefrunon, / hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon" (1-3)[6]—and the opening lines of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*—"Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote / The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, / And bathed every venye in swich licour / Of which vertu engendred is the flour" (I.1-4)—and then present them to someone who conveniently had no knowledge of the English poetic tradition, the fact that both poems are habitually grouped under the heading "medieval English literature" would not, I think, be the first thing that would spring to her mind. Were we to present our subject with facsimiles of these lines as they appear in their respective manuscripts and were we additionally to read the lines aloud, we would surely not only further stymie her but we would no doubt also further confirm her opinion that these two pieces of poetry are wholly unrelated to each other.[7]

That native English poetics should change dramatically over the course of several centuries is neither hard to account for nor particularly surprising, given the nature of oral traditions and the confluence of internal and external forces that come to bear expressly and uniquely upon the English oral tradition during the Middle Ages. Among his many seminal and lasting contributions to our understanding of oral traditions, Albert B. Lord more than anyone else has demonstrated that these traditions are not fixed, monolithic entities but are rather best thought of as highly protean ones whose constituent elements (especially their specialized verbal

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[6] I cite *Beowulf* throughout from Klaeber's (1950) edition.

[7] This example is not so far-fetched as it might initially seem; a similar view of the relationship between Old English and Middle English poetry informs the recently published *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, a volume whose one-thousand and sixty-eight pages of commentary, notes, and acknowledgments curiously, if accidentally, reveal its rather skewed sense of the medieval period. For David Wallace, the editor of this volume, and no doubt for many others, the rubric "medieval English literature" apparently applies most fittingly to that literature produced in the period following William's ascension to the English throne, the period in which the autochthonous oral poetics that for hundreds of years had been fundamental to poetic articulation in England begins to be replaced by a new, vastly different poetics grounded not in the specialized metrics and idiom of the English oral tradition but rather in the metrical systems and registers of the literate poetics imported from the continent.

collocations and narrative patterns) are always in a state of flux.[8] To find evidence of this, we need look no further than to living oral traditions, where the ease with which they accommodate new ideas and new expressions within their traditional frameworks bears witness to their fluid, protean natures. Given my focus on the medieval English oral-literate nexus, my opportunity to do fieldwork is admittedly limited, but I did have occasion to witness, along with John Foley and a number of others, a master *imbongi* seamlessly weave both his very non-traditional surroundings (a living room in a private residence in Piedmont, California) as well as the equally non-traditional owner of the house (an expert on, among other things, all matters Bulgarian as well as the ancient ruler XIII Rabbit) into an otherwise wholly traditional Xhosa praise poem.[9] But while we have long been aware of just how flexible living oral traditions are, we are only recently beginning to understand that those oral traditions that survive only in writing also display considerable fluidity within their traditional frameworks: for example, even though the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition has long been acknowledged to be a highly, almost cripplingly, deterministic one that circumscribes not simply the metrics but the verbal collocations and thematics of Old English poetic discourse, the works of verbal art produced by Anglo-Saxon poets everywhere witness the highly idiosyncratic ways those poets engage, negotiate, and continually alter what was for them a dynamic and vital tradition. A glance at the unique way the *Beowulf*-poet, arguably the best and seemingly the most traditional of all Anglo-Saxon poets, handles, for example, the "Beasts of Battle" type-scene and his equally unique treatment of the social ideal of the *comitatus* reveals just how much latitude Anglo-Saxon oral poetics affords him and, by extension, all the other poets who similarly engage it.

    While the instability of oral traditions accounts for many of the changes that occur in the English poetic tradition, the Norman Conquest, a true watershed in the island's literary and social history, has a tremendous impact as well. Owing in large part to William's systematic decimation of the Anglo-Saxon nobility in the decade following the Conquest, secular and religious power on the island becomes concentrated almost entirely within Anglo-Norman hands, a development that radically reduces the audience for

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[8] See especially Lord 1960:68-123, 1986, and 1991:195-210.

[9] Opland discusses this event at greater length (1992a:429-34). The full text of the poem the *imbongi* D. L. P. Yali-Manisi produced on this occasion, as well as an English translation of it, can be found in Opland 1992b.

traditional, native poetry and further ensures that the remaining audience for such poetry would not be among the politically or socially powerful. As the small number of vernacular English poetic texts extant from the period 1066-1250 attests, the newly installed Norman ruling classes and their Anglo-Norman descendants, like Chaucer and his Parson centuries later,[10] apparently had little appreciation for or interest in verse that adhered to the principles of the native English poetic tradition, but rather, and quite understandably, preferred (and hence supported and fostered through their patronage) verse that was founded upon and that celebrated their own cultural heritage, verse that was, moreover, written not in the foreign tongue and alien metrics of a conquered people, but in the language they themselves spoke and in metrical forms with which they were long acquainted.[11]

The natural propensity of oral traditions toward change coupled with the tremendous cultural, political, and linguistic pressures that come to bear upon the native English poetic tradition following the Conquest cause it to lose its characteristic univocality and uniformity and to become instead polyphonous and "amorphous" (Pearsall 1977:85). As Derek Pearsall aptly puts it, English poetry after the Conquest is no longer "the product of a coherent tradition with a systematic style and diction and a standardised language, but [is rather] a series of fragmentary responses to a multitude of European influences, in a language thrown open to the winds of change" (*idem*). But even though the English poetic tradition begins to change rather dramatically during the transitional period and even though vernacular poetry need no longer be articulated solely within the stable, homeostatic,

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[10] Chaucer not only never composes any significant verse based upon the tradition's once-dominant metrical system, but he also, in a single line, summarily dismisses the whole tradition of alliterative composition when his Parson announces to the Canterbury pilgrims that he is "a Southren man" who "kan nat geeste 'rum, ram, ruf,' by lettre" (X.42-43). Although Chaucer, whose many poetic innovations and status in the court of London suggest that he was conscious of writing "al of the newe jet" (I.682), may here simply be criticizing his northern and west-midland contemporaries for producing what to his urbane ears and eyes was surely unfashionable verse, the Parson's confessed inability to compose alliterative poetry nonetheless also constitutes a pointed and only thinly veiled rejection of a poetics that no doubt struck Chaucer and his Ricardian and Lancastarian patrons as being at best hopelessly outmoded and at worst reactionary.

[11] This is not to say that we should dismiss out of hand the argument that the nearly complete disappearance of English vernacular poetry from the written records of the eleventh and twelfth centuries reflects the Normans' concerted attempts to suppress native literary culture, but simply that we need not read such an explicitly and wholly political motive into the absence of native poetry.

and highly deterministic idiom that is Anglo-Saxon oral poetics—a poetics characterized by the remarkable consistency and uniformity of its metrics, its traditional, inherited lexicon, and its broadly shared thematics and narrative patterns—, oral poetics continues to play an important, if admittedly less central, role in the production and reception of vernacular poetry throughout the remainder of the period and traces of it continue to appear in textualized works of verbal art dating from the Renaissance to the present day.

Coming to terms with the nature of post-Conquest oral poetics and situating it within the period's complex cultural and social milieux are two of the central challenges of medieval studies. While I do not have the space in this essay to embark upon a full consideration of either of these thorny and interconnected issues, I would like to take some initial and tentative steps in that direction. I will first consider the relationship of performance to post-Conquest oral poetics before turning to examine in more detail how one isolated component of that poetics functions within three very different texts dating from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the period in which vernacular poetry once again begins to appear in the written record after having virtually disappeared for nearly a hundred years.

Like so much else about the literary and cultural history of the post-Conquest period, the relationship between the vernacular poetic tradition and performance is complex and difficult to untangle. On the one hand, we know that from early in the period onwards poetic composition becomes a private rather than a public process, as poets need no longer enter a public space to articulate poetry but rather retire to the scriptorium or cell to do so.[12] On the other hand, despite being the product of literate authors whose compositional practices closely mirror our own private, non-performative ones, performance continues to cast a large shadow over post-Conquest poetics, and the poetry everywhere evidences what appear to be signs of its fundamental performativity. Among other things, such characteristic features of Middle English verse as the poets' direct addresses to their listening audiences, the oftentimes overwhelming preponderance of highly

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[12] Within this private space, the compositional practices of post-Conquest poets appear strikingly modern: not only do they compose pen-in-hand, but the texts they produce tend to be highly intertextual. Laʒamon, the author of the late twelfth-century *Brut*, exemplifies the ways in which early medieval authorial practice reflects our contemporary ones. He first carefully cites a number of real and fictive sources and then informs us that he formed his text by setting "to-gadere" ("together") the "soþere word" ("true words") of his sources and "þa þre boc�993 þrumde to are" ("those three books condensed into one," 27-28). All quotations from and line references to the *Brut* are from Brook and Leslie's edition (1963/1978). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

iterative and largely meaningless tag-phrases, and the loosely episodic structure of many narratives have all long been attributed to the poets' acute awareness that their "poetry would become known to the public through the ear fully as much as through the eye" (Crosby 1938:414). While there is little doubt that poets composed "with oral presentation in mind, adopting a style, so far as they were capable of it, natural to live presentation" (Baugh 1967:9), we still know frustratingly little about the performative matrix within which these texts were disseminated. Many performers no doubt recited memorized texts, and many others no doubt read aloud from written texts. We also cannot rule out the possibility that some of them may even have composed or recomposed during performance, although the probability of this is admittedly remote even in the earliest part of the period and it diminishes greatly as the period progresses. That these categories are neither exhaustive nor absolute further complicates matters: in practice, performers may have worked partially within some or all of them as they performed, perhaps reciting from memory but not hesitating to improvise by importing blocks of memorized verse from elsewhere in the same or even a different text,[13] and there is no reason to think that they were incapable of composing new material while they were performing, either by tapping into the highly significative idiom of traditional oral poetics or by some other improvisational process.

But while the fact of performance cannot be disputed, we need to realize that the performative features of post-Conquest poetry reveal far more about its general aurality than its orality; that is, they reveal the degree to which the poetry is oriented towards the ear and little, if anything at all, about the poetics upon which the poem rests. The landscape of Middle English vernacular poetry is dotted with numerous subtly and overtly performative features,[14] among which direct addresses to listening audiences and the trope of the talking book figure prominently, but we need to realize that while these are usually taken as signs of the persistence of the compositional habits and dedicated idiom long identified as being uniquely

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[13] McGillivray labels this phenomenon "memorial transfer," which he defines as "the movement of material from one part of a text to another part which is physically remote, but which is liable to confusion with it because of similarities of situation, content, or language" (1990:5). Baugh 1959 remains a *locus classicus* for this issue. For a more recent treatment of the role memory plays in the production and transmission of Middle English vernacular verse, see Bradbury's nuanced discussion (1998:1-21 *et passim*).

[14] See the examples cited in Crosby 1938, Baugh 1967, and Bradbury 1998.

associated with orality, the performative features of post-Conquest poetry rather witness the poetry's aurality and hence speak primarily to its general mode of transmission and reception without revealing anything about the nature of the poetics upon which it is founded. To cite just three of many possible examples, when the *King Horn*-poet declares that he "schal . . . singe" (3) to his audience (ʒou) the tale of King Murray and his son Horn,[15] or when the *Kyng Alisaunder*-poet memorably if somewhat peevishly requests that his audience quiet down and behave so that he may begin his tale—"Now pes! listneþ and leteþ cheste— / ʒee schullen heren noble geste / Of Alisaundre þe rich[e k]yng" ("Now peace! listen and stop wrangling and you shall hear a noble tale of Alexander the powerful king," 29-31)[16] or finally when the *Gawain*-poet promises that "If ʒe wyl lysten þis lay bot on littel quile, / I schal telle hit as-tit, as I in toun herde, / with tonge" ("If you will listen to this lay but a little while, I shall tell it at once, as I in town heard it, with tongue," 30-32),[17] they engage the rhetorical topos of performance, not the specialized idiom that is oral poetics. To put this another way, the mode of transmission upon which aurality depends needs to be distinguished from the compositional praxis of oral poetics. What makes this issue especially challenging is that the two at times overlap, but once we admit the distinction by acknowledging the central aurality of post-Conquest poetry we will be better able to see that the key to the continued presence of oral poetics in the increasingly literate Middle Ages does not lie in the possibility of an actual, dynamic performance, since the texts are all indisputably composed in writing, nor in the textualized representations of performance, nor in any of the other performative features embedded into the mute surface of the manuscript page because these are all the fictionalized and perhaps even romanticized products of oftentimes demonstrably literate sensibilities.

As a way of illustrating that we cannot simply and automatically assume that a poem's performative features situate it within the specialized world of oral poetics, I would like to consider briefly the *Brut* and the *Hule and the Niʒtengale*, two of the earliest poems to appear in English following the Norman Conquest. The former, for which no known English models are

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[15] I cite Hall's edition (1901) of the version contained in Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27.2.

[16] I cite Smithers's edition (1952) of the version contained in Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Laud Misc. 622.

[17] I cite Davis's edition (1967) of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

extant, is a verse chronicle of very uneven poetic merit that traces the history of England from the time of its eponymous founder Brutus to that of Cadwalader, the last of the British kings. The latter is a much shorter poem in the well established tradition of Latin debate-poetry whose artistry is universally praised.[18] Judging from their length, subject matter, relative levels of artistic achievement, and performative features, the *Hule* stands out as the one far more likely to have been read aloud. An engaging poem, produced by a well trained, imaginative poet writing "in a style of civilised, literary colloquialism" (Stanley 1960:22), it seems well suited to the highly performative matrix through which early Middle English poetry was chiefly disseminated. Its brevity would make it easy to copy and to carry, and a talented reader (or memorizer) would encounter little difficulty bringing to life the poem's well defined avian characters during a public performance, a task made all the easier by the poem's highly regular metrics, by its *mise-en-page*, and by the poet's habit of identifying the poem's different voices through direct discourse markers such as "Þo quaþ þe Hule" ("Then said the Owl," 187) and "'Nay, nay,' sede þe Niȝtengale" ("'Nay, nay,' said the Nightengale," 543). Unlike the *Hule*, there is little about the *Brut* that suggests that it was ever intended for oral delivery or that a performance of it would have had any but the most limited appeal to a listening audience: the poem is extremely long (over 32,000 lines in Madden's 1847 edition),[19] its rhythms and metrics are highly inconsistent and at times frankly soporific, and some of its internal evidence (including the lack of direct "addresses to the audience, real or invented, of the kind that characterize the genre of Middle English romance or Chaucer" [Brewer 1994:204] and Laȝamon's consistent use of the "singular pronoun of address" [*ibid*.:205]) has led at least one scholar to claim recently that Laȝamon "appears to envisage a solitary reader" (*idem*) and not a listening audience.

But while the *Hule* is certainly well suited to oral delivery and may have reached its intended audience principally through the mouths of readers

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[18] For example, Bennett claims that the *Hule*-poet speaks "in assured tones and show[s] a delicate humour, a rich humanity, and a sensitivity to nature that amounted to genius, and that will hardly be met with again before Marvell's time" (1986:1), and Bennett and Smithers similarly note that the poet's wit and sophistication set him apart from other early twelfth-century poets (1968:1). For a full discussion of Middle English debate poetry, the genre to which the *Hule* belongs, along with other examples of the genre, see Conlee 1991.

[19] Brook and Leslie (1963 and 1978) print the text in long lines and so reduce Madden's total to 16,095. Even when its total number of lines is so reduced, the *Brut* remains one of the longest poems extant from the English Middle Ages.

or reciters, there can be no doubt that it is founded almost exclusively upon a highly literate poetics. Its meter may have developed from the native stress-based alliterative line (Stanley 1960:30-36), but its debt to the French octosyllabic couplet "with its easy rhythm and colloquial flavour" (Bennett and Smithers 1968:1) cannot be ignored. It is also a highly intertextual poem, one with clear generic affiliations and one in which the poet "handles a wide range of source-materials with deceptive ease, introducing proverbs . . . and exemplary stories as if spontaneously, and lacing the debate with technical terms to give it the air of a lawsuit" (Pearsall 1977:94). And finally, there is little trace of the highly specialized idiom through which medieval English oral poetics was preserved and transmitted. In short, everything about the *Hule*, from its physical encoding on the page to its metrics, suggests that it may well be one of the first pieces of vernacular English poetry composed largely, if not entirely, outside the tradition that had given English verse its distinctive shape and sound since at least the fifth century.

By way of contrast, in the entire canon of early Middle English poetry there is probably no poem less well suited for oral delivery than the *Brut*,[20] a poem whose subject matter and extraordinary length alone militate strongly against the possibility of its ever having been presented to a listening audience. Internal evidence clearly points to the poem's written genesis and suggests that Laȝamon was "a keen and solitary reader and writer" (Brewer 1994:205) who meant for his poem to be received through the eyes rather than the ears. In a detailed and unusually autobiographical prologue, the poet reveals himself to be a literate author who is at least bilingual and perhaps even trilingual.[21] His highly intertextual compositional process further reflects the literate poetics upon which his poem is founded: he announces, for example, that once the desire to compose this poem

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[20] Of course, the *Orrmulum* presents a stiff challenge to the *Brut* in this regard, but the former's doctrinal focus may have made it more attractive to a contemporary listening audience. On the possibility of the *Brut*'s having been read aloud, see Brewer, who claims without elaboration that a poem such as the *Brut* "might well be read aloud in the thirteenth century, but it lacks obvious oral qualities" (1994:204).

[21] In addition to English and French, Laȝamon may also have had some Latin. He claims to have used a Latin source, which he identifies as the book "þe makede Seinte Albin. / ⁊ þe feire Austin" ("which Saint Albin and the fair Austin made," 17-18). Although the few Latin terms that appear in the poem are employed by him in metrically and semantically appropriate ways, it is simply not possible to determine how firm a grasp of Latin he possessed from the evidence currently available to us.

descended upon him, he "gon liðen⸱ wide ȝond þas leode" ("began to journey widely throughout this land," 14) in search of textual exemplars. Elsewhere in this prologue, Laȝamon reveals that he is also directly responsible for the material production of his text—"Feþern he nom mid fingren⸱ ⁊ fiede an boc-felle" ("Quills he took in his fingers and wrote on the book-skin," 26)—and he names himself (1), identifies his vocation (1), and locates himself geographically (3-5) before concluding with a request for prayers for himself, his father, and his mother (29-35). Throughout the prologue and elsewhere in the text, he speaks with the cultivated, self-consciously authorial voice we more frequently encounter in the vernacular romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But despite the almost complete absence of any performative features, oral poetics is, as I have argued elsewhere,[22] nevertheless fundamental to Laȝamon's poem, and its influence can be detected in the poem's syntax, diction, lexicon, thematics, narrative structure, and physical encoding.

Virtually from its inception, oral theory has stressed the necessary and logical connection between performance and the specialized poetics foundational to traditional verbal art, and, while it is no doubt true that the richly associative, meaning-laden idioms deployed by poets in oral cultures evolved in response to the pressure of composing during performance, we have lately begun to understand that oral poetics does not exist solely in symbiosis with performance. While it may be most readily apprehensible in the dynamic, embodied space that Foley has labeled the "performance arena," a space he defines as "the locus in which some specialized form of communication is uniquely licensed to take place" (1995:8), oral poetics is not, as Foley acknowledges,[23] restricted to that space but functions within the broader parameters of what he labels the "textual arena" (*ibid*.: 58) as well as what we might call the "compositional arena," an area open to all poets who engage the traditional idiom, whether they do so fully and publicly during performance or partially and privately with pen in hand. Severing post-Conquest oral poetics from the performative matrix may appear to be both illogical and heretical, since, as we have learned from Parry, Lord, and more recently Foley, performance is nothing less than the event that both enables the production of traditional poetry and determines

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[22] See, for example, Amodio 1987 and 1988.

[23] Perhaps more than anyone else, Foley is acutely aware of the complex ways in which oral and literate poetics intersect. See especially his remarks in the second and third chapters of *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (1995:56-98).

the channels for its reception, but shifting the mode of production from mouth to finger does not necessarily entail a concomitant change in the ways poetry is articulated or received because oral poetics remains a powerful and flexible significative idiom whether it is deployed within the wholly traditional, homeostatic space of the "performance arena" or the more heterogeneous space of the "compositional arena."[24]   The traditional idiom retains its significative power even when the primary conduit for engaging it is the pen and not the tongue because, as Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe notes, "[w]riting does not alienate a text from traditional meaning immediately—early written texts will still appeal to immanent meaning despite their written condition" (1998:53).   In the remainder of this essay, I would like to consider in more detail the ways in which oral poetics continues to figure within the complex stew of post-Conquest vernacular poetry by focusing on the simplex *abelȝen*, which the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) tells us means "to anger or incense; to grow angry."

In Old English poetry, the ancestor of *abelȝen*, (x-)*bolgen*(-*mod*), functions associatively and metonymically within Anglo-Saxon oral poetics to signal the approach of an impending slaughterous encounter.[25] As do all *sêmata* deployed within the parameters of a traditional oral poetics, (x-)*bolgen*(-*mod*) clearly signals an "emergent reality" (Foley 1999:26); in this instance the *sêma* thematizes imminent slaughter for an audience whose channels for receiving poetry are situated within the appropriate oral poetics.[26] In poems as varied as *Beowulf*, *Andreas*, and *Juliana*, the simplex links what is "present and explicit to what is immanent and implied" (Foley 1999:26) and thus serves as a conduit through which poets economically bring institutionalized meaning to bear on the narrative present and enable the interpretative channels through which their poems will be received. In the *Brut*, the affective dynamics of the simplex *abolȝen* (past participle of the ME infinitive *abelȝen*) and its variants *abolwen* and *abælh* is remarkably similar to that of the Anglo-Saxon (x-)*bolgen*(-*mod*), as we can see from considering the way Laȝamon employs it during the episode in which Arthur

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[24] Along with Foley, Doane (1991, 1994) and O'Brien O'Keeffe (1990, 1998) have done much to help us understand the dynamic nature of the manuscript page and to appreciate the role scribes played in producing vernacular poetry.

[25] Of course, Anglo-Saxon poets who wished to thematize slaughter could proceed in any number of directions; engaging the affective dynamics of the simplex (x-)*bolgen* (-*mod*) is just one of the many options that were open to them.

[26] I borrow the term *sêma* from Foley. See further his discussion in *Homer's Traditional Art* (1999:13-34).

accepts King Frolle of France's offer "to-dælen and to-dihten þis kine-lond mid fihte" ("to deal and dispose of this kingdom with a fight," 11791) "bi-twixen unke seoluen" ("between ourselves," 11790). After a protracted build-up, in which Laʒamon reports several times that Frolle wishes he never made such an offer and in which the poet carefully chronicles the names of those who will witness the battle, the fight begins unremarkably: Arthur knocks Frolle from his horse and Frolle succeeds in unhorsing Arthur by killing his steed. Because the two antagonists are unusually well matched, the fight promises to be a protracted affair—"beien heo weoren cnihtes kene�':' ohte men and wihte" ("they were both brave knights, worthy and valiant men," 11935)—but during an assault by Frolle, one in which he succeeds in knocking Arthur's shield to the ground, Arthur sustains a "wunde . . . feouwer unchene long" ("four inches long," 11961), the blood from which "orn a-dun⁷ ouer al his breoste" ("ran down over all his breast," 11963). After receiving this wound, Arthur, who approached the fight gleefully anticipating that it would end with him adding France to his growing list of recently conquered lands and who perhaps did not expect much of a contest from Frolle, becomes "abolʒe⁷ swiðe an his heorte" ("greatly enraged in his heart," 11964). The appearance of the simplex *abolʒen* is, in this instance, immediately followed by a graphic account of slaughter (11965-69):

> . . . [Arthur] his sweord Caliburne⁷ swipte mid maine⁷
> and smat Frolle uppen þæne hælm⁷ þat he atwa helden.
> þurh-ut þere burne hod⁷ þat hit at his breoste at-stod.
> Þa feol Frolle⁷ folde to grunde.
> uppen þan gras-bedde⁷ his gost he bi-læfde.

> . . . Arthur his sword Caliburn swung with might
> and struck Frolle upon the helmet so that it split in two
> and cut through the mail-coif until it stopped at his breast.
> Then fell Frolle to the earth of the field;
> on that grass bed he gave up his ghost.

As was true in the Old English poems in which (x-)*bolgen*(*-mod*) is situated within the thematics of slaughter, there is in the *Brut* considerable variation in the number of lines that elapse between the appearance of the simplex and the slaughter that it announces and thematizes, but *abolʒen* is directly linked to slaughter every time it occurs in the text.[27] In the great

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[27] In addition to the Arthur / Frolle episode, *abolʒen* is linked to an explicit slaughterous encounter eighteen other times: 784/786; 850/861 ff.; 3188/3195; 3648,

majority of these instances, the simplex functions precisely as it does in Anglo-Saxon oral poetics by pointing narratively to an imminent slaughter and metanarratively to the simplex's traditional, immanent meaning. However, in a few instances, Laȝamon's usage of *abolȝen* diverges from the expected and logical pattern displayed in Anglo-Saxon oral poetics. These moments of divergence prove to be of special interest because they demonstrate not only the simplex's continued ability to fulfill its traditional function, but also the degree to which traditional oral poetics combines seamlessly with Laȝamon's literate poetics.

During the episode that details Uther Pendragon's unsuccessful attempts to build his castle (each night all the stones that had been erected during the day fall "to þan grunde" ["to the ground," 7898]), Uther tells the young Merlin that the royal counselors have revealed that if Uther were to "nime þi blod꞉ ut of þire breoste꞉ / ₇ minne wal wurche꞉ ₇ do to mine l(i)me. / þenne mai he stonde꞉ to þere worlde longe" ("take your blood out of your breast and work it into my wall and mix it into my lime, then may the castle stand to the end of the world," 7900-02). Merlin finds this news justifiably alarming, but rather than quailing before the king, the young sorcerer responds by becoming "bælh on his mode" ("enraged in his mind," 7904). Although seventy-five lines elapse between this affective cue and its expected complement, Joram and the seven others who counseled Uther to mix Merlin's blood into the mortar for the castle are eventually beheaded. But while the death of the counselors fulfills the narrative's expected, traditional pattern, what is noteworthy about the scene is that the simplex serves as the narrative equivalent of a squinting modifier: it not only signals an imminent death, but also looks back to an implied (but ultimately unrealized) slaughter: that of Merlin by Uther.

We find precisely the same pattern at work when Constantine becomes *a-bolȝen* (14309) after learning that Modred's sons "þuhten to slan" ("thought to slay," 14308) him. The slaughter thematized by *a-bolȝen* occurs twice in less than fifty lines when Constantine first the "hefd . . . of-swipte" ("the head . . . swiped off," 14332) of Modred's unnamed son and again shortly thereafter when he does the same thing to Meleus, Modred's

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3679/3720; 7532/7617; 7904/7979-80; 10594/10595-96; 10609/10607-08, 10615-16; 13065, 13156/13204; 13870/13889-90; 14174/14196; 14309/14332, 14346; 15123, 15132/15149-50; 15457/15464; 15790/15840. In two instances *abolȝen* is closely linked to a threatened slaughter (12599/12607; 14076/14081-82) which then occurs somewhat later (13301 ff./14255), and in one it is used to describe the mental state of a cannibalistic monster (12944) who is disfigured in a battle with Arthur (13000-12) before being beheaded by Bediver (13032).

other son: "Constantin braid ut his sweorde⸴ ⁊ þat hafde him of-swipte" ("Constantine drew out his sword and swiped his head off," 14346). As he did earlier, Laȝamon once again expands the simplex's rhetorical horizon to include an implied but unrealized slaughter—namely that of Constantine by Modred's sons—that, when coupled with the explicit slaughter that eventually occurs, effectively (and affectively) frames the simplex. Far from destroying the simplex's traditional referentiality or compromising the narrative integrity of the thematics of slaughter, Laȝamon's departures from the traditional pattern broaden and enrich it and so point to the tradition's elastic and accommodating framework. Although he composes in writing and not in the crucible of performance, Laȝamon engages not a fixed, static oral poetics—if indeed there can be such a thing—but one that is as dynamic and ever-evolving as those theorized for or witnessed in performance-based oral traditions.

Abelȝen survives in several other texts (both prose and verse) that date from the early Middle English period, among which are the *Orrmulum* and *The Hule and Niȝtengale*, two texts in which medieval English oral poetics plays, at best, a very small role. That we should discover poems in the early Middle English period that stand at some remove from medieval English oral poetics is not surprising since, as noted above, the system that determined the shape and sound of English poetry in the Anglo-Saxon period underwent a sea change in the centuries following the Norman Conquest. Similarly, we should not be surprised to discover some trace of the dedicated register of medieval English oral poetics in poems composed outside of its sphere of influence because, even in a time of great flux for the English poetic tradition, the register of oral poetics continued to allow authors to engage "the meaning-bearing potential of . . . tradition, even if at one expressive remove" (Foley 1995:94).

In Orrm's long and truly quirky poem, the simplex appears nine times, invariably in the form *bollȝhen*, and it is always either closely linked to an account of actual slaughter or, in two cases, to a threatened and imminent but unrealized slaughter. As we can see in an episode drawn from the end of Herod's life, the simplex's traditional contours are still clearly visible, and its affective dynamics still intact, even though Orrm, who composes his poem in order "to provide English verse-translations of the Gospels in the massbook for the whole year, with appropriate homiletic interpretation" (Pearsall 1977:102), is a decidedly literate poet whose remarkably consistent, if wholly idiosyncratic, system for representing his language in writing reveals that his chief orientation is ocular and aural, not oral.

In his account of Herod's last days, Orrm explicitly links the physical torment Herod suffers to the tyrant's lifetime of sinful behavior. Although

they are both interesting in their own right, I wish to focus neither on the extreme pain that besets Herod near the end of his life nor the obvious moral lesson Orrm attempts to wring from the episode; rather, I wish to concentrate on the way that oral poetics cues the approach of slaughter in this indisputably literate text. According to Orrm, even near death, Herod continues to engage in the slaughterous behavior for which he is infamous: the doctors who are summoned to treat him are all put to death once they fail to alleviate his suffering, and, in an effort to extend his control of earthly matters even beyond the grave, Herod's men are instructed to kill a large number of recently imprisoned nobles following his death so that his people will be too busy mourning their newly murdered husbands and fathers to rejoice over the tyrant's demise. In his desperation to find a way to end his suffering, Herod even attempts to take his own life with a knife he requests ostensibly to pare an apple. His (amazingly) still loyal servants thwart his suicide attempt, but news of it reaches one of his sons (whom the tyrant had earlier imprisoned) who "warrþ swiþe bliþe þa / ₇ toc to lahhȝenn lhude" ("becomes very happy then and took to laughing loudly," 8141-42).[28] Upon learning of his son's reaction, Herod predictably "warrþ wraþ ₇ bollghenn, / ₇ badd tatt mann himm sollde anan / Wiþþ swerdes egge cwellenn" ("becomes angry and enraged and commands a man at once to kill him with a sword's edge," 8144-46) something that Orrm reports "wass þanne sone don / To forþenn himm hiss wille" ("was soon done to fulfill his will," 8147-48).

Elsewhere in the poem, we can see that the simplex continues to function as a *sêma* even when no slaughter occurs in its immediate narrative context: Herod's several vows to murder the newborn Christ (7260-61; 7312-13) are preceded in each instance by the simplex (7145, 7159, 7197, 7201), and the episode in 2 John in which Christ prudently departs from Judea upon learning that the Pharisees are *bollȝhenn* with him contains a reference to Herod's slaughter of the innocents (19588)[29] and concludes with a description of the crucifixion (19809-18), two events that do not bear on the narrative moment being related but that serve as traditional and metanarrative complements to *bollȝhenn*. The simplex is used more

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[28] I cite the *Orrmulum* throughout from White's edition (1852).

[29] Orrm relates the slaughter of the innocents at 7995 ff.

restrictively in the *Orrmulum* than it is in the *Brut* or in Old English poetry,[30] but it nevertheless remains closely connected to the expressive economy of oral poetics even when it is used so narrowly by a poet of such severely limited means.[31]

Abelȝen also occurs in the *Hule and Niȝtengale*, a poem whose graceful execution, intelligence, wit, and overall artistry set it so far apart not only from the plodding, uninspired work of Orrm, but from the rest of the extant verse contemporary with it that its appearance in the twelfth century has been justly deemed nothing short of "miraculous" (Bennett and Smithers 1968:1). Even though the simplex occurs only once in the poem, it nonetheless sheds valuable light upon medieval English oral poetics in the post-Conquest period because it demonstrates that the traditional idiom retains traces of its communicative power even when it is deployed in a wholly new and unexpected way within a radically different poetics. The narrative context within which the *Hule*-poet situates the simplex—one rife with the potential for violence—is wholly traditional: the Owl's imposing, threatening physical presence is never far from the Nightengale's consciousness; the Nightengale twice points to the Owl's monstrosity by labeling her an "vnwiȝt" ("monster," 33, 90); and, most importantly, both the Nightengale and the Owl comment explicitly on the Owl's *cliures* ("talons," 84) and the violence the Owl would like to perform on the Nightengale's body with them and her equally dangerous beak. Not only is the Owl capable of and perhaps even predisposed towards acting violently (she is, after all, a raptor), but the Nightengale also does all she can to deserve being on the receiving end of the Owl's malevolence. After completing the *longe tale* (140) in which she voices the platonic argument that owls' ugliness, lack of virtue, and low place in the great chain of being explain their degraded and disgusting habits—the chief of which is their proverbial tendency to foul their own nests—the Nightengale "song so lude & so scharpe, / Riȝt so me grulde schille harpe" ("sang so loud and so sharp as if one plucked a shrill harp," 141-42). When we learn in the next line that the Nightengale's deeply insulting speech results in the Owl becoming so outraged that she "sat tosvolle & ibolwe" ("sat swollen and enraged," 143), all the narrative signs point to a swift, unhappy, and decidedly bloody

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[30] In the *Orrmulum* the simplex applies chiefly to Herod, who is so closely associated with it that he is even invoked as a murderer in the one episode in which the simplex is applied to someone other than him.

[31] As Pearsall has aptly put it, Orrm's "methods of filling out his verses, combined with a propensity to explain and repeat everything several times over, make for infinite tedium" (1977:102).

conclusion to their encounter. All that is missing is the graphic slaughter that serves as the simplex's traditional complement.

As readers of the poem know, however, no slaughter occurs here or elsewhere in the poem's 1794 lines. In fact, the poem ends without a single feather being more than metaphorically ruffled; rather than resorting to violence to settle their quarrel, the two disputants civilly agree to fly off together to Portesham so that the very capable and learned Maistre Nichole can adjudicate matters (1778). Not only does the simplex's expected complement never occur, but the simplex itself is put to a very different, post-traditional purpose: after building up the expectation of slaughter before, during, and after the Nightengale's first extended speech (55-138), an expectation that culminates in the appearance of the traditionally freighted sign *ibolwe*, the *Hule*-poet immediately shifts the ground under the simplex and disconnects it from its traditional expressive economy by deploying it not as a traditional signal of imminent slaughter but as the pivotal element in a post-traditional moment. What follows the appearance of the simplex in the narrative is not a graphic account of slaughter but the poet's comic revelation that the Owl is so swollen with anger that she looks "Also ho hadde one frogge isuolȝe" ("as if she had swallowed a frog," 146). The figurative distension so important to the simplex's affective dynamics, a distension made explicit in the Anglo-Saxon simplex (x-)*bolgen*(-*mod*), is here humorously literalized and the violence that it thematizes is comically defused. Rather than signaling the imminence of a terrifyingly violent outburst as it does when Beowulf is described as *bolgenmod* in the moments before Grendel arrives at Heorot (709a), or when Arthur becomes "abolȝeɹ swiðe an his heorte" in the *Brut* (11964), or when Herod becomes *bollȝhenn* in the *Orrmulum* (8144), in the *Hule* the simplex signifies the literal, and decidedly ridiculous, physical distension that occurs when an owl swallows a frog whole. Although my experience in these matters is limited, I imagine that it would be difficult for one to maintain his or her dignity, let alone project even a moderately threatening image, while ingesting a frog whole.

For the remainder of the scene (and the poem), the Nightengale remains wary of the Owl's potential for violence, mentioning both the latter's "scharpe clawe[s]" twice (153, 154) and her "cliuers suþe stronge" ("very strong talons," 155) and the promise of violence surely underlies the Owl's restrained response to the Nightengale's initial *ad avem* attack (150-52):

> Whi neltu flon into þe bare
> & sewi ware unker bo
> Of briȝter howe, of uairur blo?

> Why don't you fly into the open
> And show which of us two
> Has the brighter hue, the fairer complexion?

But the Nightengale, being far too smart to fall for such a transparent ruse, remains safely hidden among the branches of her hedge and so no slaughter ensues. The *Hule*-poet clearly taps into the traditional, dedicated register of oral poetics and exploits the traditional channels of reception it affords him, but he reveals his distance from the tradition by thwarting the audience's expectations and using the simplex in a narrowly denotative (and hence post-traditional) fashion rather than a richly connotative one. He skillfully draws upon the simplex's traditional, inherent meaning in this episode by gesturing towards the violence (actual or implied) that the *sêma* signals in medieval English oral poetics, but what is finally most important about its appearance in the *Hule* is the idiosyncratic meaning the poet confers upon it:[32] the Owl, rather than appearing as a dangerously distended monster who appears to be on the verge of tearing her physically outmatched opponent to shreds, looks more like an indignantly puffed-up society matron of the type Margaret Dumont portrayed so ably on stage and screen.

The doublet *tosvolle* that precedes *ibolwe* further evidences the scene's dependence on a literate rather than oral poetics and on conferred rather than inherent meaning. In Old English poetry, a poetry in which variation plays an enormously important role, (x-)*bolgen*(-*mod*) is only twice found in an appositive construction;[33] every other time it appears, it stands on its own. If we adopt J. A. Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre's reading (1992) and take *ibolwe* to mean "puffed up," we can see that the poet might have included *tosvolle* for emphasis so that his audience would be sure to get the joke that followed, but there is little etymological support for accepting their reading over the *MED*'s, which I cited above, or Stanley's "swollen

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[32] See Foley (1991:8-9) for a fuller discussion of the differences between the meaning that inheres in *sêmata* in a traditional oral poetics and the meaning that authors confer upon them in a literate poetics.

[33] Of these two instances, only one is unambiguously an appositive construction. In *Guthlac*, the devils besetting Guthlac are first described as being *bolgenmode* (557b) and then immediately as "wraðe wræcmæcgas" ("angry wretches," 558a). In what is not strictly speaking an appositive construction, the evil men who are the subject of *Meters of Boethius* 25 are similarly described as being *gebolgene* (45a) shortly before we learn that in their breast "swiðan welme / hatheortnesse" ("fury strongly surged," 46b-47a). I cite Krapp and Dobbie's edition of *Guthlac* (1936) and Krapp's edition of the *Meters* (1932).

with anger" (1960) or Bennett and Smithers's "swollen, distended (with rage)" (1968).[34] The appearance of the doublet does suggest the degree to which the affective dynamics of *ibolwe* has become diminished for the *Hule*-poet (and / or his intended audience): instead of being a traditional *sêma* linked directly and metonymically to worlds of established, shared meaning, it instead appears to be one that needs direction and clarification (as do all *sêmata* in post-traditional poetics, whether or not they descend from oral poetics) because its traditional referentiality has become occluded and its connection to the thematics of slaughter needs reinforcing.[35]

That the *Hule*-poet should be able both to tap into the traditional affective dynamics of a lexeme and then put that lexeme to a decidedly post-traditional use is not surprising: his actions differ only in degree, not in kind, from those of poets who worked wholly within the far more deterministic, but equally non-performative oral poetics upon which Old English poetry rests. Just as the literate Anglo-Saxon poets who composed and physically encoded Old English poetry necessarily altered the tradition in the course of negotiating it,[36] so too did Middle English poets constantly effect changes in their evolving tradition by, among other things, putting traditional *sêmata* to new, not wholly traditional uses and by incorporating elements of non-native poetics into their own.

Given the slipperiness of oral traditions and their complex intersections with literate traditions, we may never be able to establish any sort of absolute fixed standard against which the traditionality or non-traditionality of any given medieval English poetic practice can be confidently measured. This is so because innovation, long considered a sure sign of post-traditionality, lies at the heart of those poems produced by even the most traditional of poets and because the communicative economy of oral poetics—its "highly focused mode of signification" (Foley 1995:81)—remains available to those poets whose poetics are literate and

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[34] Burrow and Turville-Petre's reading would be more secure if *ibolwe* were one of the only elements in the poet's lexicon clearly rooted in Anglo-Saxon, but as even a cursory glance reveals, the poem has strong and deep lexical connections to Anglo-Saxon.

[35] Renoir (1988:169-74) rightly argues that we can best understand both the appearance of the traditional oral theme of the hero on the beach and the *Gawain*-poet's famous direct address to his listening audience at the beginning of *Sir Gawain* by recognizing that the "poem is intended for an audience quite unfamiliar with these things and therefore in need of some kind of explanation" (172).

[36] See the works cited in note 24 above.

non-performative. As we trace the trajectory of oral poetics from its logical, if theoretical, genesis in a primary or wholly oral culture, to its commingling with a nascent literate poetics, to its continued survival (albeit in a diminished and diminishing capacity) in a culture increasingly dominated by a literate poetics, what stands out most strikingly is its flexibility and resilience. Oral poetics survives for so long and has such a great impact upon the literary history of medieval England not because it is the object of conscious preservation but because its channels of meaning remain open to poets who are entirely free to employ them (either wittingly or unwittingly) in traditional or non-traditional ways. [37]

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[37] A slightly different version of this article was presented at the University of Missouri-Columbia on 24 April, 2000, as the 1999-2000 Lord and Parry Lecture.

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Altai Oral Epic

Lauri Harvilahti

The History of Research on Altai Epics

One of the pioneering scholars in the field of multidisciplinary cultural and linguistic studies of the Altai region was the orientalist Wilhelm Radlov (1837-1918), founder of the first International Association for the Exploration of Central Asia (1899), director of the Asian Museum in St. Petersburg, and a prominent collector and publisher of folklore texts. Radlov was already writing down Altai heroic songs in his youth during the 1860s, and large samples of this material, including ten epic texts (some of them consisting of short fragments), were published in St. Petersburg.[1] In the Upper Altai region one singing style called *Kai* (Qaï) is of special interest.

Some singers using this peculiar technique of laryngeal epic singing have preserved archaic epic traditions up to the present day. According to the ethnographer and composer A. V. Anohin (1869-1931), the upper Altai people sing heroic epics using a tonality that resembles the buzzing of a flying beetle.[2] This technique of performing the epics has its roots in the same tradition as partial tone or "throat" singing. Epic singers in the Altai region use a singing style in which the words are clearly differentiated, but the timbre is very close to that of the two-voiced, wordless singing style of that region.

In addition to Radlov and Anohin, the first collectors of Altaic epics include A. Kalačev, who as a student of St. Petersburg University made a research trip to the southern part of the Russian Altai, the Russian missionary V. I. Verbickij (1827-90), and the scholar and explorer G. N. Potanin (1836-1920). Some of the early investigators belonged to the

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[1] Radlov 1866. See also Katašev 1997:12-13.

[2] See Šul'gin 1973:459.

indigenous Altaians, as for example N. Ja. Nikiforov (1874-1922), who collected epics from the singer Čoltyš Kuranakov. The Altai material collected by him has been lost, but Potanin published the material in Russian translation in 1915. Among the most important Altai scholars in the field of epic studies was the poet P. V. Kučijak (1897-1943). Kučijak himself was able to perform epics he had heard from his grandfather Šonkor Šunekov. His most important publications include the epic texts written down from the great epic singer N. U. Ulagašev (1861-1946). Other scholars who have contributed significantly to the study of Altai epics include the Turkologist N. A. Baskakov (1905-96), the specialist on Altai shamanism A. P. Potapov (1905-), and the renowned folklorist V. M. Žirmunskij.[3] In 1963 the researcher and collector of Altai epics S. S. Surazakov (1925-1980) acoustically recorded one of the best known of the Altai heroic songs, *Maadai-Kara*, performed by Aleksej Grigorevič Kalkin in the Institute of Pedagogy (Gorno-Altajsk). This version contains 7,738 verses, and it was published in 1973 in bilingual format in Altaic and Russian by the Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in the series *Èpos narodov SSSR*, "The Epics of the Peoples of the Soviet Union." Surazakov was also the founder of the series *Altaj Baatyrlar*, "Altai Heroes." The 12 volumes published so far include more than 80 epic texts, among them 30 valuable texts from A. G. Kalkin and N. U. Ulagašev.

The Master of *Kai (qaï)* Singing Aleksej Grigorevič Kalkin

Aleksej Grigorevič Kalkin (1925-98) was the eldest and most prominent among the last masters of the *Kai* in the Upper Altai region. He was born in the remote district of Ulagan Ajmak in the former Altai Autonomous Region of the Soviet Union. A. G. Kalkin's grandfather, Teleš, and father, Grigorij, were also well-known singers. His eldest brother Jamay was a very promising singer but he died at the age of fourteen.[4] Step by step, young Aleksej learned to perform the epic songs, first as prose, then as sung recitative; finally, toward the end of his thirties, he learned the proper technique of *Kai*. Already in his youth he had almost totally lost his sight due to an eye illness. In addition to learning from his father, the young singer had abundant opportunities to listen to other performers of the epics,

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[3] See in detail Katašev 1997:13-17.

[4] See Šinžin 1988:194-95.

including N. U. Ulagašev, whom he had met in the hospital of Gorno-Altajsk.

After Kalkin won the contest for the title of the best singer during the festivities of the 25th anniversary of the Altai Soviet Autonomous Region (1947), he gradually became celebrated as a national artist.[5] The following year he made a successful tour to Moscow, where he gave concerts in theaters and clubs, and took part in a gathering of folk-artists of the USSR. In the All-Union House of Folk Art named after N. K. Krupskaia, fragments of his performances of traditional Altai epic songs were recorded by a group of leading Soviet Turkologists. Later on, Kalkin also composed songs celebrating the Soviet leaders and the new life (according to the requirements of the time).[6]

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[5] See Surazakov 1973a:439; Šinžin 1988:194-95.

[6] See Surazakov 1973a:439-42; Šinžin 1987.

These new songs had the same fate everywhere in the Soviet Union: they were regarded as artificial and fell into oblivion, since they were neither sustained by the oral tradition nor had any place in the literary culture. But the folk epics performed by Kalkin and other epic singers of Upper Altai have maintained their importance among the most attractive and peculiar forms of folk tradition in the world. Our research group had an opportunity to encounter A. G. Kalkin in his present home village of Jabagan in the autumn of 1996 and 1997. Our team consisted of Academician V. M. Gacak (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) and local Altai members Z. S. Kazagačeva, M.Tolbina, and T. Sadalova. The fieldwork in 1996 and 1997 and subsequent transliteration and translation work would not have been possible without good working relationships with the staff at the Upper Altai Research Institute for the Humanities.

Although Kalkin was frail and sickly, his wit was intact and his nearly blind eyes had yet to lose their animation. He explained in a whispered voice:

> *Kalkin*: Earlier I was a man known as a singer of tales. But some time ago I stopped singing; since my son Elbek began to sing *Kai*, I no longer sang. It's enough, if this boy—let him perform *Kai*, why should I do it anymore? Then, I stopped playing *topšuur*[7] regularly, and my voice got ruined, totally blocked; my breast was ill, every kind of thing happened. My voice became altogether somewhat strange. If one wants to sing *Kai*, one has to tune the instrument the day before you are going to sing, to repair it, to start getting used to singing *Kai* again. And you have to make the *topšuur* accustomed to *Kai*, as well. Without it this whole thing doesn't work. And a true singer has to behave as I described.
> *Mira Tolbina*: We invited Elbek. . . .
> *Kalkin*: Elbek, if he would sing *Kai*, that would be a real one. . . .[8]

After a while, Elbek Kalkin entered the house. Elbek Kalkin, in the official documents Albert Alekseevič Kalkin, was born in Jabakan, December 19, 1953. He attended ten years of school and since then he has been working in different professions, "odd jobs" as he calls them, for example as a shepherd. At the time we interviewed him, he was a security guard at a commercial bank in In Ongudai, the center of his home district. Elbek started

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[7] A traditional plucked instrument.

[8] From an interview recorded by Mira Tolbina, September 1996, Jabagan, Altai Republic.

to train with the plucked instrument *topšuur* in his boyhood while still in school, and his first song was a panegyric for the Altai mountains, *Altain Maqtal*. After that he started to learn epic songs. Elbek's grandfather, Grigorij, who was a singer himself, would often put the boy to sleep with lullabies. He also performed different styles of overtone singing *hömei* as well as epics in *Kai*, and the grandson began to imitate his singing. Elbek became serious about playing the *topšuur* only after finishing school.

> *Z. S. Kazagačeva*: When did your father notice your fondness for *Kai*?
> *Elbek Kalkin*: I was feeling rather shy in the beginning, and I did not want to show him what I had learned to perform.
> *Z. S. Kazagačeva*: Where was your first public performance?
> *Elbek Kalkin*: It was in Ust' Kaan, in the center of this district. I have also performed *Kai* in Gorno-Altajsk, Barnaul, Novosibirsk, Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg), as well as in Kyzyl and Abakan. At an All-Soviet competition of singers, organized in Moscow, I won a medal. My son has been interested some four years in singing—he is now twelve years old, and he has been playing *topšuur*, but he has not yet learned the singing voice required for performing *Kai*.
> *Lauri Harvilahti*: What is your religion?
> *Elbek*: Among us—the real Altaians—the religion is a heathen one.
> *Lauri Harvilahti*: Where does the epic come from? Does it originate from—what do you think?
> *V. M. Gacak*: Who gave people the epic?
> *Lauri Harvilahti*: Does it come from a god, or the ancestors? What would you say?
> *Elbek*: I think it comes from, from the ancestors. Well, as heathens we worship the mountains . . . poetically, the *Altai Eezi*. That is the spirit of the mountain. *Altai Eezi* may also, how to put it—I mean, transmit the epics.[9]
> *V. M. Gacak*: All right, then. So when did you start to listen to *Kai,* when did you start to learn the songs by heart, and when did you get the desire to learn how to sing? How did it happen?
> *Elbek*: From my childhood I started to learn. I happened to listen to lullabies and *Kai*. And so I also wanted to learn, of course. And my grandfather and great-grandfather sometimes sang. The songs my grandfather sang, I tried to remember, to remember his music—[10]

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[9] See Potapov (1991:200), who states that in epics the god of Altai is called *Altai Ääzi*, "the lord of Altai."

[10] From an interview recorded by Z. S. Kazagačeva and Lauri Harvilahti, September 1996, Jabagan, Altai Republic.

The Epic of *Maadai-Kara* and the World Tree

The following is a short fragment from the *Maadai-Kara* poem performed by A. Kalkin:[11]

Jeten airy kök talaidyŋ beltirinde
Jeti jaan köö taiganyŋ koltugunda
Jüs budaktu möŋkü terek. . .

By the shores of a blue river with seventy still waters
By the loins of seven matched black mountains,
(Grew a) hundred-branched eternal poplar. . .

The eternal poplar described in the poem is the world tree. The road to the lower and higher levels of the world runs, according to the elder Kalkin, up and down an eternal tree. It may be a single iron tree trunk or there may be one hundred trunks. The eternal poplar thus unites the upper and lower world by passing through the middle world, where humans dwell. It is believed that the world tree both brings forth and maintains life, as well as controls human destiny.

In Altai epics the eternal poplar marks the center of the world. This mythical tree is also characteristically a dwelling place for a number of mythical animals. These animals have various functions: they determine destinies, guard the tree, and caution those who have taken the wrong road. When the tree leans towards the moon, it begins to shed golden leaves; when it leans towards the sun, it begins to shed silver leaves. The treetop is the home of two golden cuckoos, who call out the number of days that remain for the living; they also know where the souls of the dying will go. In the middle of the tree perch two identical diamond-clawed eagles, the protectors of the firmament. Their breath is like the wind, and they shriek warnings to lost heroes on dangerous roads. At the base of the tree are two black dogs with flecked and flashing eyes who gaze in the direction of the underworld. Gnashing their teeth, the dogs bark to Erlik Kaan, the lord of that realm.

In addition to the iron poplar, or any other tree symbolizing the center of the world, the iron mountain also functions as a symbolic center of the world in Altai mythology. The task of the shaman was to take the souls of the dead to the base of the world tree or mountain, that is, to the tortuous path leading to the Erlik's realm.

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[11] Surazakov 1973b:verses 45-47.

Another symbolic center of the world is the hitching post described in the Altai and Yakutian shamanistic epic. This pole runs through the lower, middle, and upper levels of the earth. The upper part belongs to the god of the heavens, generally known in the poems as Üč-Kurbustan,[12] while the middle belongs to the poem's hero, Maadai-Kara, and the lower part to Aibystan, the god of the underworld:[13]

> Togzon kyrlu taš örgöödiŋ ežigi alty
> Togus kyrlu möŋgün čaky bar boluptyr.
> Altyy učy altyy oroon —
> Aibystannyŋ bu čadany,
> Üstin učy üstin oroon —
> Üč-Kurbustan bu čakyzy.
> Tal ortozy
> Kara kaltar jakšy attu
> Maadai-Kara baatyrdyŋ
> Bu čadany bu boluptyr.

> At the mouth of the ninety-sided stone yurt
> Stands a ninety-sided silver hitching post.
> Its lower part is in the underworld,
> It is Aibystan's hitching post.
> The upper part extends to the upper world,
> It is Üč-Kurbustan's hitching post.
> The middle part belongs to
> The one who rides the dark gray steed,
> It is the hitching post of the hero Maadai-Kara.

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[12] In Altaic epic poetry, *Üč-Kurbustan* is the god of the heavens and corresponds to *Ülgen*. Kurbustan refers to the Persian god of the sky Ahura Mazda. As it was adopted by Buddhism, this divinity was identified with Šakra (Indra) and in the Mongolian Lamaist cosmology it became the leading divinity of the group of 33 divinities of the sky (*teŋgri*). It was also adopted with varying significance in shamanistic concepts, in particular as the highest god of the sky, but among the peoples of the Altai mountains it also applied to spirit beings (*körmös*) from shamanism in general. The first part of the name appearing in the poem, *üč*, which means three, may allude to Buddhism (the number three in place of the original 33). For more details, see Harva 1933:97-98; Nekljudov and Žukovskaja 1991:594.

[13] Surazakov 1973b:verses 156-65. Aibystan ("sable-fur-blanket") is a euphemism for Erlik, the lord of the underworld (see Puhov 1975:24; Kazagačeva 1997:638).

In the narrative poetry of the Yakutians (a Siberian ethnic group), the top of the world tree serves as a hitching post for the highest god. During Buryat shamanistic funeral rites, participants would place three posts on the way to the burial site, posts where the shaman's spirit might tie his horse.[14]

Uno Harva shows the close link between the shaman's tree and its guardian. According to the Yakutian myths, the supreme god *ajyy tojon* brought the blossomless tree into the world and taught the first shamans their incantations and powerful techniques. Each shaman had his own tree that would begin growing as soon as the sorcerer found his calling. When the shaman died, the tree would also begin to decay. The belief that chopping down a shaman's tree also spelled the death of the shaman is widespread among the peoples of Siberia.[15] According to local Altai researchers, a deceased shaman would customarily be entombed in the hollow of a deciduous tree. The shaman's final resting place and the surrounding woodlands were highly venerated. Even today, the multi-branched tamaracks at an old sacrificial site are surrounded by a thick log fence. According to one explanation, this practice also prevents animals from digging at the roots of the sacred trees.

The beginning of *Maadai-Kara* is a typical description of the mythical time and golden age. The epic begins with familiar elements from the mythical landscape, including the holy poplar as a symbol of eternal life. Maadai-Kara is an old hero who has already lost his power. He sleeps for sixty days. When he finally wakes up, he notices that a hostile *kaan* (lord or ruler) is approaching in order to seize him and capture his livestock, people, and property. When his wife gives birth to a son, Kögüdei Mergen, Maadai-Kara hides the boy in the black mountain and leaves him under the protection of the birch trees of Altai. The hostile Kara-Kula Kaan arrives and enslaves the white-faced people of Maadai-Kara.

The son remains in the mountain, however, and becomes the real hero of the epic. The old mistress of Altai finds him, takes good care of him, and soon the boy starts his heroic exploits. First he shoots two gigantic wolves and ravens with his bow and arrow. Then he rides his heroic steed toward the domain of Kara-Kula Kaan and kills all of the monsters on the way. His horse jumps over a yellow poisonous sea and through two continuously opening and closing mountains. After multiple adventures, Kögüdei Mergen finds out that Kara-Kula Kaan's soul is hidden in the form of a quail's chick

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[14] Harva 1933:53, 201; see Puhov 1975:24.

[15] Harva 1933:319-20.

in a gold coffer in the abdomen of one of the heavenly reindeer. Finally Kögüdei Mergen is able to shoot the middle reindeer, causing the golden coffer to fall out. In the struggle between the hostile *kaan* and the hero the quail chick is injured, and Kara-Kula dies. With the help of seven identical heroes Kögüdei Mergen is able, after a long wooing competition, to win the daughter of Ay Kaan, *Altyn Küskü*, as his bride. Finally he is able to kill Erlik by burning him into coal. Then he sets free all the just prisoners from Erlik's domain, but the unjust remain there. As a result, a golden era returns to Altai.

At the end of the epic Kögüdei Mergen and Altyn Küskü, as well as the seven identical heroes, turn into stars. In the night sky the seven *kaans* (the Great Bear) are the seven heroes going to the wedding, the North Star is Altyn Küskü, and above the constellation of the Three Reindeer (Orion) is a red star. That is the arrow of Kögüdei Mergen. In the Altai language the Great Bear is *Jeti-kaan*, "Seven kaans," and Orion *Üč myjgak*, "Three reindeers," and the North Star is called *Altyn-Kazyk*, "The Golden Pole." This summary is in brief the main content of this fantastic mythical epic, a total of 7,738 verses in Aleksej Kalkin's version.

According to Ugo Marazzi the epic of Maadai-Kara is an example of the cosmogonic theme of "heavenly hunt," with a heroic plot borrowed from a shamanistic initiation experience. It serves as a tale of origin for the constellations Orion and the Great Bear, and the hero Kögüdei Mergen is a great proto-shaman.[16]

There are many versions of this epic in collections from different eras. The earliest one was written down by Wilhelm Radlov. He does not indicate from whom or where he collected his version of the song related to the heroic epics of Maadai-Kara, or *Kaan Püdäi*, as it is called in his publication. As Surazakov mentions, the language in which the text was performed belongs to the Southern dialects of the Altai region, and, according to Surazakov, the general story line or plot is "transmitted in fairly full order."[17] In *Kaan Püdäi* as recorded by W. Radlov there are three main chapters: 1) The capture of the territory of the father (Karaty Kaan) of the main hero Kaan-Püdäi by the antagonist Kara-Kula, with the main hero releasing his parents, 2) the exploits connected with the wooing and wedding of the hero, and 3) the decisive battle of many years' duration against the hostile *kaan* and the victory.[18]

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[16] Marazzi 1986:7-8.

[17] Surazakov 1985:160.

[18] Radlov 1866:59-85.

As for the epic *Maadai-Kara*, Surazakov assumes an original form of the text, the one and only ancient source for the epics, and explains that the parts lacking from one or another version are deficiencies that derive from the varying skills of the singers, changes in the tradition, or the techniques of the collectors.[19] If we take a closer look at other singers' versions that still resemble the main story line of Maadai-Kara as performed by A. G. Kalkin, it is easy to see that there are similarities on both the macro and micro levels. But it seems futile to suppose that one archetypal text served as the starting point for all of the versions recorded later. The epics *Kan-Tutai* by N. U. Ulagašev, *Ösküs-Uul* by P. I. Čičkanov, *Temir-Bii* by Mendi Kurtov, and *Kan-Saru* by D. Jamančikov are so different that they are best understood as belonging to the same Altaic epic tradition; they have points of contact on different levels, but they do not derive from any original text.[20] These points of contact are to be found in the semantic similarities of the story line, syntactic structures, systems of formulae, and parallelism. The easiest way to show such correspondences is to compare two singers—father and son— across a selection of different songs and multiple recordings of the same story-line. Here I offer as evidence only a sample of formulaic patterns.

The Formula

Both singers' versions have a large number of formulas that occur in exactly the same form and context. (Albert Lord named these "straight formulas.")[21] I will mention the following two verses: "Altai tübin ödüp öskön" ("After arriving at the base of the Altai [they] multiplied"); and "Kün altynda tomyra tüšken" ("Arched below the sun"). The singers may use these direct formulas in different plot structures and themes, although the meaning is the same. It is clear that the core formulas used by the elder Kalkin and his father have been preserved in the versions of the younger singer (Elbek) as well.

It is worth noting, however, that we are able to trace a considerable variation in the three versions of the prologue to *Maadai-Kara* performed by Elbek. This variation becomes especially clear when comparing the multiple

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[19] Surazakov 1985:160-61, 207.

[20] Cf. Surazakov 1985:207-17.

[21] Lord 1960:30, 35, 46.

versions by Elbek and the elder Kalkin, recorded at different times. The range of the variation reaches from phonological, lexical, and morpho-syntactical levels to larger contentual units or themes.

One example of the metonymic network formed by the formulas is the pattern "Eki tüŋgei X" or "Two identical X." Both the elder Kalkin and his son make frequent use of this formula. In the mythological introduction to the poem the formula is used repeatedly. Two cuckoos are sitting at the top of the mythical poplar tree: "Eki tüŋei altyn küük" or "two identical golden cuckoos." Halfway up the trunk of the poplar there are two guardian eagles. Elbek uses an identical segment as the beginning of the formula, with the flexibility localized in the latter part: "Eki tüŋei kara mürküt" or "two identical black eagles." The two guardian dogs at the base of the tree again form a symmetrical formula: "Eki tüŋei kara taigyl" or "two identical black dogs." In these cases, the formula is quite naturally adaptable for expressing similar content; the shamanistic auxiliary animals always occur here in pairs. But the same elements can be used in a wide range of contexts. In one of the variants sung by Elbek, the greatness of the heroic steed is described with a hyperbolic image of two identical scissor-like ears that are driving the clouds in the sky here and there, while its two identical jawbones, "tiži Eki tüŋei," are rasping the grass.

The same formula is used repeatedly in a sequence of passages that describe the guard animals in the eternal poplar. Interestingly, the same formula is used to produce different meanings as well. Thus the form and meaning create a metonymic network in which some of the core elements are used repeatedly on the surface level, although the context is different. The flexibility of the system becomes evident when we compare versions by the younger and elder Kalkin. Elbek uses the same formulaic pattern in the sequence describing the guard animals, whereas his father creates a formulaic structure of a different type, while still having recourse to the same formulaic model when needed. For example, when Kögüdei, the son of Maadai-Kara, the main heroic figure of the epic, is born and taken away as a baby from his mother, "two identical streams of milk" ("Eki le tüŋei aktar südi") flow from her breasts.

Elbek Kalkin

Möŋkü temir terek ol bažynda	At the top of that eternal / iron poplar tree
Eki tü ŋi altyn küük	Two identical golden cuckoos
Tüni-tÿži em oturat	Day and night sit there/
em otyrpy edip jadar	were sitting there / are made to sit there

Temir terek tal ortodo   In the middle of the iron poplar tree
Eki tüŋei kara mürküt   Two identical black eagles
Otyratan jaŋdu boltyr,   Were made to sit,
Ai kanady ak buluttyi   (Their) moon-shaped white wings
Aidy-kündi bu čalytty.   Reflecting the Moon and sun

Eki tüŋei kara taigyl   Two identical black dogs
Ežiginde jadar boldy.   Were made to lie at the door
Azu tiži arsyldagan, ai,   Grinding their fangs,
Ala közi jaltyragan   Blinking their speckled eyes.
Erlik-Biidiŋ kara jolyn   At the black road of Erlik-Bii[22]
Keze körip ürüp jadar.   They are watching with their eyes, barking.

Altyn tügi mysyldagan,   Its golden hair was gleaming,
Ai taŋmasy jaltyragan.   Its moon-shaped brand was glittering.
Eki tüŋei kaičy kulak   Its two identical scissor-ears
Teŋeriniŋ agyn-kögin   The white and blue (clouds) of the sky
Elip-selip turatan boltyr.   Were driving here and there.

Ai taŋmasy jaltyragan   Its moon-shaped brand was glittering,
Altyn tügi myzyldagan   Its golden hair was gleaming,
Kö-ö-örgöžin, emdi onyŋ   And, with its
Tiži Eki tüŋei   Two identical jawbones,
Jer-Altaidyŋ amyrjabyn   The grass of Altai
Jula sogyp turatan boltyr.   The standing steed was grazing.

Aleksej Kalkin

Jüs pudaktu temir terek ol pašyndai   At the top of the hundred branched iron
                                              poplar

Eki tüŋei at pašyndai   Two identical horse-headed
Altyn küük jyŋ kyldagan.   Golden cuckoos were nodding.

Jeti üjelü temir terek tal ortodo   In the middle of the seven trunked iron
                                              poplar

Eki le kara pu mürküdim   Two of my black eagles
Ai kanady ak puluttyi,   The moon-wing, the white wing,
Oŋ kanady kök puluttyi   The left wing, the blue wing,
Teŋeri tübin tosoogysy   Guarding the ground of heaven,
Asar-kasar eki kara ol mürküdi   Asar-Kasar, the two black eagles
Emdi turbai pu la kaitty.   Were put to sit.

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[22] i.e., Erlik Kaan.

Eki emčektiŋ pu la südi	From her two breasts the milk,
Eki le tüŋei aktar südi	Two identical streams of milk,
Pu la polyp jaikalala,	Were leaking from her
Ulaasynaŋ jajylyp, agyp čykty kaitty.	To the floor of the jurt, so it was told.

While we were interviewing him, Elbek told us that a singer may improvise on the basis of traditional forms and repeat a song by altering it according to the situation, but that the widespread or well-known epic poems must be repeated in a traditional, standard form. We have evidence of this in the three versions performed by Elbek. Sometimes he included a passage or theme; sometimes he left it out. He often changed the wording, but usually the formulas remained relatively fixed. It was interesting to note that he and his father used partly the same key formulas, but their versions also show considerable idiolectal variation. It will be intriguing to compare the versions that we collected in September 1996 with the version compiled by Surazakov thirty years earlier from Kalkin. The elder singer used the formula "eki tüŋgei X" in the version published in 1973, and then very consistently.[23] We may interpret this variation within limits as proof of the flexibility of the formulaic system. The same content may be expressed by using different solutions on the surface level, and the singer may replace one formulaic structure with another. It is also possible—since the father had not been performing the epics regularly—that he had lost touch with the intertextual links on the level of repeated formulaic structures. However that may be, this analysis reflects the interplay between the rhetorical stability of traditional forms and the rhetorical transformation of metonymic cues of performance.[24] The most characteristic feature is that the beginning of each theme or episode is relatively stable, but the constant formulas become key-elements or nodes in the text. The personal variation and the choices that have become customary in the individual versions form an interplay between constant and variable elements. The further the song proceeds, and the more versions we analyze, the more variation we find.

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[23] Surazakov 1973b:68-69, verses 69, 85, 103, 138, 141; 88, verse 924.

[24] See further Foley 1995.

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Collaborative Auto/biography:
Notes on an Interview with Margaret McCord on
The Calling of Katie Makanya:
A Memoir of South Africa

Stephan Meyer

Introduction

The Calling of Katie Makanya: A Memoir of South Africa belongs to that curious genre of collaborative autobiography in which a writing author (Margaret McCord) publishes a written account of an oral narrator's (Katie Makanya's) life story. What distinguishes *The Calling of Katie Makanya* from the host of predominantly anthropological and historical texts[1] in this genre is its novelistic style, which places it in the tradition of another South African collaborative auto/biography, namely Elsa Joubert's *Poppie* (1980) and John Miles' *Deafening Silence* (1997). The interview below probes issues specific to this kind of collaborative "written orature," such as the relations of production, authorship, and the transition from the private oral narrative to the written publication.[2] As some of the questions and answers reveal, one of the aims of the interview was to establish to what extent the oral narrator and writing author were aware of the degree to which they had moved away from the *apparently* monological notion of truth production propounded by Descartes in his autobiographical *Discourse* and *Meditations* and carried on in Rousseau's *Confessions*, and to what extent they promote

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[1] Cf. Charles van Onselen (1997).

[2] The interview was conducted in Boston in August 1998 as part of the forthcoming collection *Telling Lives: Interviews on Southern African Autobiography* (Coullie et al. forthcoming).

an intersubjectivist understanding of autobiography and relational notions of the self.[3]

Context

The Calling of Katie Makanya won the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* Alan Paton Prize for nonfiction.[4] On the dust cover (which shows a photo of Katie with the African Native Choir as they appeared in traditional African dress in London in 1892) and on the title page, the author of the publication is given as Margaret McCord (the full maiden name of Peg Nixon, who also holds the copyright). The book narrates the life of Katie Makanya née Manye. According to her mother's entry in the family Bible, Katie was born in the Cape Province at Fort Beaufort on 28 July, 1873, to a Basotho father and a Fingo mother.[5] Her father had converted to Christianity and started learning to read and write upon meeting her mother, who had grown up literate and Christian. Katie's closest relationship during her youth was with her older sister Charlotte, who later graduated from Wilberforce and became founding president of the African National Congress (ANC) Women's League. After difficult teenage years in which Katie funded her schooling in Port Elizabeth with work as a live-in maidservant and nurse in white homes, she and Charlotte traveled with the South African Native choir in Britain. From 1892, for just over two years, they were hosted by and moved freely among the aristocracy, philanthropists, and women's liberationists, giving performances to Queen Victoria, among others. Turning down an offer to be trained as a solo artist and a career in Europe, Katie returned to South Africa determined to marry. To the initial consternation of her mother, she married a Zulu, Ndeya Makanya, in Johannesburg in 1895, where their first son, Samuel, was born. Their lives endangered by the Anglo-Boer war, they fled

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[3] See Habermas 1992:149-204. Collaborative auto/biography in fact makes patent a point concealed somewhat by classic autobiography, namely the extent to which "human life is dialogical" (Taylor 1994:32).

[4] The Alan Paton Prize is awarded to publications that illuminate small, unfashionable truths, display elegant writing, and demonstrate intellectual and moral integrity.

[5] The Fingo are a mixture of Zulu, Xhosa, and Pondo refugees who wandered to the Eastern Cape in the wake of Shaka's construction of empire (*DSAE*). The Eastern Cape was one of the most heavily missioned areas in South Africa, with a comparatively high literacy rate among Africans in the 19th century.

to her husband's homeplace in Amanzimtoti, about twenty kilometers south of the city of Durban on the South African east coast.

From 1903 until her retirement in 1939, Katie worked as an assistant to Dr. James McCord,[6] a United States mission doctor and the father of the writer Margaret McCord. Her working life was accompanied by several moves from Adams near Amanzimtoti, the site of the first mission surgery, to rented rooms and hostel accommodation in various parts of Durban city after a surgery was opened in town and the McCord Zulu Hospital was built. During this period she brought up her own and several other children under trying conditions. A reading of the transcripts of the interviews (more so than the publication) illustrates that her staunch Christian beliefs were instrumental in shaping her commitments to missionary medical practice, her latent Eurocentrism in certain matters, her role in the founding of the temperance movement, and her rejection of radical politics of the 1930s. At the age of eighty-one, wanting to have her autobiography published but having completed only eight years at school, Katie enjoined Margaret McCord to write her life narrative. Thus came about the tape recordings on which the publication is based. Katie died nine years later in 1963, thirty-two years before the 1995 publication of the book.

The author Margaret McCord was born in South Africa of an English-speaking South African mother and the Dr. James McCord mentioned above. Katie knew her from her birth in 1913. This early acquaintance, and the intimacy established by Katie's having given Margaret her Zulu name, Ntombikanina (M. McCord 1995:209), prepared the ground for both their early and later narrating-listening relationship. As a teenager, Margaret's interest in storytelling and Zulu history were kindled by Katie, who told her stories about her own life and from Zulu history, both of which subjects were purged from official white society and school history. After completing school, Margaret studied in the United States (where she now lives) and married a scholar of African studies. Intermittent work on several drafts resulted in publication when she was herself eighty-two—about the same age Katie had been at the time of the oral recordings. The preponderance of "third world" women as oral narrators and "first world" women as writing authors in the genre of collaborative auto/biography points to class, racial, and gendered aspects of these texts that have been dealt with extensively in the context of subaltern studies. This reality shines through not only in Katie's dependence on McCord's writerly skills but also in the latter's remark that the chores of being a wife and a mother made it

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[6] *The Calling of Katie Makanya* opens with an oblique reference to James McCord's ghost-written autobiography published in 1946 (J. McCord 1946).

difficult for her to focus her energies on the task of turning the transcripts of the oral recordings into a literary text.

According to McCord, it was essential to their project that at the time of recording Katie's oral narrative, she herself was no longer just the listening teenager and Katie the Spivakian native informer of her youth. Because Katie had ceased to be the "voice of authority" she had been when Margaret was a teenager, they "were able to argue" over each other's interpretation of events (e.g., M. McCord 1995:226-27). Yet like many contemporary writing authors, McCord responds to the widespread skepticism towards collaborative auto/biography produced by ostensibly different people[7] with qualms about her ability to understand and to tell Katie's life. Her reticence in responding to Katie's request to write her life story because of the differences between them is thematized in the opening lines of the book, set at the time of the 1954 recordings (M. McCord 1995:3):

> "'You are very much educated so you know about these things. That's why you must write my story."
> "But Auntie, I can't do that," I gasp.
> "Why not?"
> "Because—" (I search for the right words) "—we live in different worlds."
> She shakes her head impatiently. "Now you talk foolish. God only created one world."
> "I mean we lead such different lives."
> "What does that matter? When you were little you slept in my bed, ate my food, played with my children. [. . .] You were like a daughter to me."

Significantly, it is Katie Makanya who here denies both the existence and the importance of these differences. In contrast to her insistence in the opening of the book on the obstacles posed by difference, Margaret McCord downplays this aspect in the interview. This paradoxical double emphasis found in many collaborative auto/biographies illustrates a muddled conception of the significance (including the benefits) of both similarity and difference for the writing author's ability to understand the oral narrator's life and for them to jointly produce a true account of it. The writing authors' insistence on the similarity between themselves and oral narrators may well be due to objections raised by critics that understanding across difference is impossible. However, what critics often forget is that, if similarity were a

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[7] Even a sympathetic critic like Ngwenya raises a question about "the capacity of [a] white American woman to enter the consciousness of a South African black woman and authentically articulate her thoughts and feelings" (Ngwenya 1995:6-7). For a more recent discussion, see Ngwenya 2000.

precondition for the writing author to understand the oral narrator, it would be just as much a precondition for the reader (including the critic), with the consequence that only readers identical to the oral narrator could understand her. This limitation would contradict the whole idea of making one's life story known to a wider reading public.

Furthermore, a look at the production process of novelized collaborative auto/biography illustrates to what extent the question "Is that really what she said?" and Malcolm X's comment to Alex Haley—"A writer is what I want, not an interpreter"—are misplaced (Malcolm X 1968:78). The interview specifically goes into the parts played by the editor, the pre-publication reader, and the translators, not to mention the influence of the assumed expectations of a reading public on the way in which the writing author transforms the private oral narrative for written publication. Such a situation makes it senseless to want to tease out a purified oral narrator's voice from the others, an initiative that amounts to a hangover from the misguided Cartesian and Rousseauan monological ideal of spinning the truth about oneself out of oneself. Thus the more appropriate question to ask is: "Would the oral narrator (have) accept(ed) the way in which the writing author has rendered her original words?"

The written publication of Katie's oral narrative cleverly deals with the issue of authorial presence in the production of the oral narrative in eight unpaginated insertions set at the time of the recording (Durban, 1954) and writing (California, 1993). In these insertions the perspective is that of the first person narrator who coincides with the writing author Margaret McCord. In the actual narrative of Katie's life, however, the perspective shifts to that of an omniscient third person narrator of biography rather than an autobiographical first person, as it is found in the transcripts of the oral recording coinciding with Katie's own view. The narration thus differs from many other collaborative autobiographies in which the presence of the writing author is totally concealed by a first person narrative told from the viewpoint of the oral narrator,[8] those that punctuate the first person narrative of the oral narrator with other texts,[9] and those that retain a semblance of dialogue between the first person oral narrator and the listening (but never speaking) author.[10] McCord ties this significant shift in perspective to the

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[8] For example, "My name is Rigoberta Menchú. I am twenty three years old. This is my testimony" (Menchú 1984:1).

[9] See, for example, Mandela and Benjamin 1985 and Shostak and Nisa 1990.

confluence of difficulties in linguistic and cultural translation created by the mediation of an oral narrative to those unfamiliar with the oral narrator's lifeworld.

A comparison of the transcripts of the oral recording, which McCord has kindly made available to me, and the final publication sheds light on the production of the oral text as well as the transition from the oral to the literary. What seems to be the transcript of the first recording starts with Katie's birth and gives a selective autobiographical sketch up to 1903, when "I started helping the doctor"—all in less than eight hundred words without any sign of Margaret's intervention. The following transcripts are more clearly divided into paragraphs and thematically less continuous, indicating ways in which Katie strayed from one story to the next as well as possible divisions due to Margaret's questions or prompts. With the exception of the few bracketed remarks "(What is the difference between Umkulunkulu and God asks Peg)" (ms. 27), McCord's prompts are not transcribed. A few of these can be roughly reconstructed from Katie's replies, as in "No when I married Ndeyo I was still a Basuto. How could I be a Zulu. They were not my people" (ms. 38). This makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the content, style, and structure of Katie's narrative were influenced by Margaret's presence already at the level of the oral recordings. References in the transcript to "heathens" and "boys" (to refer to adult male African house servants) seem to indicate that the missionary discourse is Katie's rather than McCord's.[11] In fact, the publication has been sanitized of a couple of embarrassing comments that call into question Katie's apparently evenhanded lack of prejudice.

In contrast to other collaborative autobiographies (e.g. Joubert's *Poppie*, 1980) that attempt to retain the oral nature of the original recordings in a sort of written orature, McCord has opted for a literary style, especially in the descriptive parts, with finely crafted writerly sentences drawing on Katie's oral narrative. In some cases the direct speech in the transcription is rendered virtually verbatim. (For example Katie's address on the issuing of passes to women, which shows similarities to Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" [ms.120, M. McCord 1995:229]).[12] In others, like the quotation

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[10] For example, "Baba Mhlahlela, you wish to hear my life's story so that you may reduce it to writing. Yes, indeed, there is much I can tell you, as to how I grew up and as to how I served my king, Cetshwayo. . ." (Dlamini 1986:11).

[11] This in answer to a question by Anne Mager, see footnote 13 below.

[12] For Katie's version of John Wilkins' 1694 anecdote in Mercury, see McCord 1995:11 and ms. 97-98. These similarities of course raise interesting questions regarding

below, McCord rendered the gist in the form of a stylized conversation typical of the written, novelized form.

As a comparison of the published version and the transcript shows, McCord's novelized written text does not follow some of the conventions of oral historians (M. McCord 1995:8):[13]

> "Before they left," Ma continued, "the warriors warned their women to flee, and leave the children behind so that their crying would not betray their whereabouts. Some did abandon their children. But your ancestor refused. She tied her baby on her back and took her little boy by the hand, and all three hid in the bushes."
> "You were that little boy?" Katie asked Grandfather.
> "Yes," he said. "I remember that very well. Those Zulus passed so close to our hiding place I could see the dirt under their toenails. But they did not see us. They were laughing too loud at a girl who was trying to hide in the river. [. . .]"
> "So you escaped?" Charlotte said.
> "Almost. We crept out of the bushes, but too late we saw one last Zulu straggling after his brothers. As he passed us his knobkierrie[14] swung down, crushing the baby's skull, and swung down again on my mother's head. He ran on supposing her dead, and why she did not die I cannot say."
> "What happened then?"
> "That girl came out of the river and pulled my mother to her feet and helped her bury her poor dead baby."

And the transcript (n.p.):

> I can still remember my great grandmother. She was very old. But she still told us stories about how she hated the Zulus. She followed about a

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the connections between the absorption of literary culture into oral culture and cross-Atlantic transferences.

[13]   There "are none of the conventions of oral historians to comfort the reader. There are no footnotes, and it is not clear whether quote marks designate Makanya's words or McCord's reconstruction. Are the love letters taken from the original, recounted from memory by Makanya, or reconstructed by McCord? Where does the title of the book come from? Did Makanya adopt the language of the missionaries in describing herself thus or was this McCord's understanding? Perhaps it does not matter. Nevertheless, the uneasiness niggles, particularly since the efforts of oral historians to adopt self-reflexive approaches to their work have taught us to question ourselves more rigorously as chroniclers of the lives of others" (Mager 1996:299-301).

[14] An Afrikaans term for a traditional Zulu fighting stick with a round head.

mile behind the impi[15] and her husband told her to leave the child because she had my grandfather but also a very small baby on her back and her husband told her the other women grumbled because they had left their children but she would not leave hers and so she could not go with the impi for fear that baby would cry and tell the Zulus where they were. So she followed a way behind. And then the Zulus did come and one hit her on the head, she had a big hole there, and then hit the baby with a knobkierrie. And there was another woman there who jumped in the river, and the baby died, and then they went on. And she told me she said, I have done one great sin. I let that man kill my baby on my back and I should have made him kill me first but of course she could not help it but she said her sin was that baby buried in the bushes there. And as for those other children left behind, they were all eaten up by the Zulus.

Mager's objections may have been a point of concern had McCord been writing an academic text with primarily oral historians in mind. While being of use to (oral) historians, *The Calling of Katie Makanya*'s aims and readership are broader, as its novelization implies.

Since David Stoll's *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of all Poor Guatemalans* (1998) and Arturo Arias' *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (2001a and 2001b), the problematics of texts like *The Calling of Katie Makanya* have once again been brought to public attention. Two of the issues at stake are the nature of the truth of the claims raised in such publications and the notion of the subject, which touches on issues like authorship and appropriation. The former issue has been central to the Rigoberta Menchú debate and the latter to criticisms of Joubert's *Poppie* (McClintock 1991). I have tried, both here and elsewhere,[16] to frame these issues in a different light. I suggest that most of these criticisms directed at collaborative auto/biography are still indebted to a monological philosophy of consciousness and would need to be reformulated if they are to hit the mark. They disregard the extent to which, as Habermas argues, truth and identity are intersubjectively generated in speech and acts of reciprocal recognition, a fact borne out by the production and reading of *The Calling of Katie Makanya*.

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[15] A Zulu term for an army or regiment.

[16] In a paper given at the international auto/biography conference at Peking University in 1998.

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Interview with Margaret McCord

SM: Some of the things that I would like us to speak about are the shift from orature to literature, and the relationships between writing authors and speaking narrators. So, can we start off with the question how it happened

that Katie asked you specifically to write the book?   What kind of relationship did you have that led to that point?

MM: Well, to begin with Katie worked for my father, as you know. From ever since I can remember she was there in the dispensary and whenever I was down in the dispensary she would tell me stories about her life. When I was in high school, through her stories I became very interested in Zulu history. In schools at that time in South Africa history stopped at the end of the Boer War. Well no, it stopped in 1910 when Union was established. We didn't have any history lessons on African history after 1910 and the Zulu history was all told from the white point of view. But I'd get these stories from Katie. For instance, one of my favorite stories that she told me was about the last great Zulu war, the Cetshwayo War, and her father's reaction to that. And the reaction of some of the Africans at church, feeling that the English were so unfair because they didn't regard war as a sport, they used all these terrible guns and so on. And then Katie's sister coming up with the idea that it was magic, because Napoleon's son was killed and so Napoleon had really created this magic medicine that destroyed the A[fricans]. . . . I mean all this I found so interesting. We never learnt any of this in terms of school. So when I was in high school I would really pester Katie for stories about African history, and I think she remembered that. And then I was at the dispensary when she got the telegram about her one son's mental illness, and I cried I. . . . It just seemed terrible. I was then fifteen, sixteen. And I think Katie really felt that I was very close to her. Well, in a way I was, but I was close to her in the sense of an ancient family friend. I didn't think of her at that time as a friend—she was a very old lady.

SM: How old was she then?

MM: When I went back in '54 she was eighty-one, so she was in her sixties then. Then when I came to America she wrote to me and I wrote back. She wanted me to visit her brother in Chicago, which I did. And I would send her Christmas . . . the way you do for an elderly person that's been a friend of the family. But then when I went back in '54 she was the first person who visited me after we were established in the flat. I had a nine-year-old son at that point, so she started telling my son stories and it brought back all the stories that she had told me. She was a fascinating person so I got interested. Her sister Charlotte had written an autobiography that was never published. I don't know where it is now. But Katie wanted to write her story, but she had never . . . well, she had finished standard six but she had never gone beyond that. I think that it was because I had always pestered

her for stories and I'd been to college so I ought to be able to write, was the attitude that she had. So that's how it came about. And in terms of the relationship, I was then myself forty.

SM: And she was eighty-one then?

MM: But I was an adult. I was no longer a teenager and I really began to appreciate the kind of person that she was. My mother was visiting us at the time and those two old ladies were a riot together! I really felt much closer to her then as a person than I had as a teenager when she was a source of information. One of the other aspects of that relationship was that when I was a teenager she was a voice of authority. When I was forty I was able to argue with her and there was a difference there. I was no longer the child to be brought up. I think that she respected me in a different way than she did when I was a teenager.

SM: Many questions arise from what you have said. You mention your son being present when she started telling these stories in '54. How important do you think it was that she told your son these stories as well as you? What was that constellation exactly? Was he always present? Was he only sometimes there?

MM: No, he was at school most of the day. He'd get home between three and four and when he came in the door she turned off the recorder. That was her time with Johnny. One of the things that's rather interesting, and I think it indicates how overwhelming a personality she was, was that Johnny had a friend at school—a little boy called Norman, whose father was an English-speaking South African policeman in Durban—which should give you some clue to his political orientation. Norman often came home with Johnny to play and those two boys would sit right down at Katie's feet and listen to her stories. Now I took Katie back to Amanzimtoti for the weekend. We'd drive back Friday afternoon and I'd pick her up Sunday afternoon. Once when I was about to take her back I had told Norman that he couldn't come home with Johnny on Friday because we were driving Katie back to Amanzimtoti. Well, he wanted to go too, and I said, "Well, you have to ask your mother." Incidentally I always called Katie *Tante* Katie.[17] So his mother called me up that night and she said "Oh, it's so kind of you to ask Norman to go with you when you take your aunt back to her home." And this woman had no idea that Katie was a black woman. And I was faced

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[17] The Afrikaans term for "aunt" (*DSAE*).

with the problem, do I tell her that Katie is not my aunt, that she is an African woman, or do I just leave it. Well I just left it. And I just don't think the fact that she was black made enough impression on Norman for him to mention to his parents that she was an African woman and not an English woman. I found that rather interesting. And of course she spoke with a perfect English accent. She made grammatical mistakes. But, with her three years in England (and she had moved easily among the aristocracy) she spoke without a trace of an African accent—which of course to a child of nine would perhaps be more important.

SM: Can I ask you some questions about the very nuts and bolts around the recordings? You mentioned before that it was a big bulky thing on which you did the recordings.

MM: Yes. We went to South Africa at the end of 1953 and those personal recorders were very new at that time. My husband had a research grant. We went out to Durban on a research grant. He got himself a recording machine and we were very proud of this new gadget. He got several tapes and of course he was the one who had the grant. I went along as his wife. We were a couple of young academics, didn't have any money; I couldn't go out and buy tapes. I did buy three. But I couldn't afford to buy any more. So I used them over and over and over again. And I transcribed them in the evening. So what I have are my transcribed notes. I don't have the recordings. In hindsight I think what a pity that I didn't have the money and didn't think ahead to preserve her voice on the tapes.

SM: How long were the sessions? Did you have regular meetings? Did you say you were going to do this all in one month for example? Three hours every morning, etc.?

MM: When we talked about my writing a book about her, which she wanted me to do, I warned her it would take a long time, it would be very hard work. I brought her into town and put her up at the Salvation Army hostel out towards the Sydenham area. I would go out and pick her up at the hostel at eight o'clock in the morning, take her back to the flat, and we would have a cup of coffee and just. . . . I'd try and get her organized to the kind of material that we would talk about. It didn't work ever. And we would start. We'd have coffee. We'd have a bun or so on, and then we would start. I'd hitch up the recording machine and we would work until Johnny came home.

SM: Which was early afternoon, then?

MM: Yeah.

SM: And you did this regularly from Monday to Friday?

MM: From Monday to Friday. We would have a break between eleven thirty and twelve thirty for lunch. I mean she needed a rest at that point. I would try to get her to lie down, take a nap, but she was not willing to do that. That went on for six weeks. By that time, the last two or three days, I think she was talked out. She didn't have her thoughts organized. It was all spontaneous, and she'd be in the middle of telling me one story and something reminded her of another story, which reminded her of another story. So it was a very confused story. As I transcribed the notes at night I would have to sort of raise questions the next morning as to what happens in the middle of this story to get the end of these various stories that she had started telling me bits and pieces of. Then of course the first major job that I had to do was to piece together all these reams and reams of material in a chronological way, because the only way I could really tell her story was to do it chronologically.

SM: You mentioned that after transcribing you would have questions. To what extent were you asking questions? How many questions did you have to ask? When did you have to ask them? The whole thing around questions and answers interests me.

MM: Well, in this little period between eight and nine I would say, "Look Katie, you started to tell me about when you and Dad went off to visit chief so-and-so and Dad had trouble with the motorcycle, but you didn't tell me what happened after that." Then she would start talking and I would say, "Hey, wait a minute, we have to turn on the recorder! But there's something else I want to know." This was the way it went. I would raise two or three questions. Once the recorder was on I would remind her of the first question and she would talk about that. Sometimes she would complete the story and sometimes she would go off on still another tangent and I'd have to pull her back. The first couple of hours was really a matter of trying to get her to finish things that she had told me the day before, and then after lunch I just didn't interrupt her, I just let her talk.

SM: So the first part would be following up, tying up loose ends. Then you would have a second part in which she would speak freely which you would tie up again the next morning.

MM: Right. That was roughly what happened. But sometimes in the first part I would give up because she would get onto some incident in her life that was very important and then she would just keep talking. One of the other problems that I had . . . (I could make myself understood in Zulu. And I can understand a good deal, probably half to three-quarters of what somebody is saying if they're talking quickly. But I'm not fluent) . . . when she was telling me things that had a lot of emotional significance to her she would unconsciously break into Zulu. Then I would have to have somebody come and transcribe them. There were times when I really felt that just a Zulu phrase would have so much more dramatic impact. But because I was writing for an English audience I would have to tr[anslate]. . . . For instance when she talked about the death of her friend Mbambo she'd told me about his going back to his homeplace, and then she looked at me and she just said "Aikona Mbambo."[18] There was so much emotion behind that, there was no way I could translate it. I actually did make an effort and said "I do not see Mbambo," but that doesn't carry the emotional impact of the Zulu word, which is all frustrating for me as a writer.

SM: I'm sure these were thoughts that came up with you regularly, this shift between languages and cultures and to what extent you had to make some things fit into a tradition which they didn't necessarily come from. Say the whole notion of an autobiography. To what extent were you framing a life story into a certain tradition, namely the tradition of the autobiography which might not have been a tradition in which the story was originally thought, or in which Katie originally thought? So it's that shift between different languages, different cultures, because you're writing in English you have to transfer certain things. And it's more than just words.

MM: Well, I knew enough Zulu so that there were times when I actually used the Zulu idiom. For instance, the phrase "The mountain's eating up the sun" is a Zulu phrase. It's a literal translation of a Zulu phrase. I think it's a telling phrase for the sunset. And there were a few other idioms of that sort for which I used a literal translation. Mostly when she used an African language she would use Zulu, but occasionally she would forget and use Sotho phrases. This was back in '54. It was before the [South] African

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[18] *Aikona* is Zulu for "no."

government had prohibited nurses coming down from what was then Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, Malawi, and other parts of Africa to train at McCord's. So we still had a number of different tribes represented by the nurses and we did have Sothos, we did have Xhosas, and of course Zulus. The nurses, being high school graduates, wanted to be very exact and they also wanted to show off their knowledge of English. So they would come over and dictate their translation of what she said, and it would come out in rather flat high school English. Then my problem was to rephrase it so that it fit into Katie's way of speaking. Sometimes I succeeded and sometimes I didn't, but at least I made the effort to keep the poetic quality of the Zulu language in the story and that was a conscious effort. I hope it didn't make it sound too affected but . . . .

SM: I think what is unfortunate is that many readers won't pick it up, because they don't know the Zulu, that they won't get the richness of it because it doesn't ring the Zulu bell in the background for them.

MM: I did have one very interesting experience two months ago. I met a young man, Veit Erlmann, in the late eighties who was a young music professor at NUC[19] and he was very helpful because he was working on a book in which he was talking about the African choir. He had done a lot of research in London. He was very helpful to me in terms of getting me the actual quotes from some of the English newspapers. He called me a few months ago from Austin, Texas. He'd read the book, congratulated me on it, and we chatted for a bit because I had given him a lot of my notes about the choir's trip in England. Then he said that the one thing that puzzled him was that I used the term *ufufunyane*,[20] and that was a term which he understood had not come into the Zulu language until the 1920s and I used it for the 1890s. I was bothered by this. I have three dictionaries. One that was the first English-Zulu dictionary published in South Africa by one of the missionaries. Well, there were two by missionaries, one in 1860 and one about 1880 and another one in 1954. The one in 1860 did have a word *ufufu* meaning basically the same thing. So actually *ufufu* was being used in 1860, perhaps without the suffix. Katie would use a term when talking to me about the 1920s and that was a fairly new term. That sort of bothered me. That's the one error in the book that has been pointed out to me.

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[19] Natal University College (now the University of Natal, Durban)

[20] "An emotional disorder, characterized by hysteria and hallucinations and often believed to be caused by witchcraft" (*DSAE* 1996:s.v.).

SM: Can I ask to what extent you found that the recorder was impacting on the narrating and listening relationship?

MM: The first couple of days it was difficult and then Katie got very used to it. She'd go in, she'd sit down, she'd touch the button, she'd pick up the microphone, and then when she'd finished she'd put the microphone in her lap and wait for me to ask a question or to prompt her and she picked it up and. . . . So it took her really a very short time to get used to it. This is partly, I think, because she was very anxious to have her story told. After we had finished (I think we finished it in late September and we left South Africa at the end of November to come back to UCLA), I went out [to Adams] to say goodbye. It was six weeks or two months and she wanted to know if my book was written yet. I hadn't even finished going through the notes, but she was impatient. I think she'd recognized the symptoms (she died of consumption of the heart) and knew she didn't have long to live, and she wanted so much to see it before she died.

SM: Did you communicate after you had left South Africa and before she died?

MM: I had two letters from her. I wrote her probably every week, but her hands were very crippled. Then, after she died I got a long letter from her son Samuel telling me, you know, everybody who had come to the funeral, and then she was taken out to Adams and buried out in Adams in the cemetery there. It's interesting . . . her grandson Desmond . . . three of her grandchildren live out at Amanzimtoti. . . . Desmond, I think, was her favorite grandchild. He was fifteen in 1954 when my son was nine. During the school holidays he would sometimes come in and he would take John places. He was a big boy when John was nine. Now that both men are grown up they have become, in their adult years, very good friends. As John says, Desmond has a lot of Katie's genes. He's very much an activist. The hospital has recently set up a clinic at Amanzimtoti and Desmond was very active in getting that established. So there has been a continuing family relationship. I think the relationship between John and Desmond will continue long after I'm gone—it's independent of me.

SM: I wondered about the time difference between the recordings, the transcripts, and the actual publication. What happened in that time?

MM: Well, I was married. I had two children to raise.

SM: Could you comment on the name? Why, for example is it subtitled *A Memoir of South Africa*? Whose memoir is it? And how is it different from an (auto)biography?

MM: Russell Martin, who was my editor at David Philip, didn't like the original title. He couldn't come up with another one, and he was trying all sorts of things and none of them gelled. He sent a copy of the manuscript to Tim Couzens, a professor at Wits, who had also been a Paton prize winner for a novel that he'd written about South Africa, and asked him to read it to get his reaction for a blurb at the back of the book for the African edition. He also commented about his problems with the title and this professor (he wrote a wonderful blurb for the African edition) suggested *The Calling of Katie Makanya*. I liked it, Russell liked it, and so we decided on that. As far as it being a memoir, that was Russell's addition. I think I had it *The Calling of Katie Makanya* and that was all, but he added *A Memoir of South Africa*—I think partly from a sales point of view.

SM: How do you see the difference between autobiography and biography? How would you describe a text like this? Or doesn't this distinction really matter?

MM: I don't think it really matters. Basically I think it's a biography but it has a few autobiographical. . . . This is something that I have been interested in because so many of the reviews have commented on the mixture of autobiography and biography. It seems to me that it puts more emphasis on my history than is entitled by the contents of the book, because what I wrote about myself was really (except perhaps for the epilogue) to explain reactions of Katie or the relation with Katie.

SM: Would you say then that it makes sense to rather look at the book not as anybody's autobiography but as the trace of your relationship?

MM: Yes, yes, I do. One of the things that I find very interesting is that most of the South African reviews emphasize the historical aspects. I've had letters from most of either the history or African studies programs from NUC and Wits and Cape Town and Pretoria—interestingly enough— wanting the recordings, because they have felt that this period of the first half of the twentieth century was a rather gray area as far as history was concerned. They had used [the book] as supplementary reading in a lot of their graduate history courses, and I found that very interesting. It is true

that when I was still in South Africa I did do an enormous amount of checking of names and dates particularly and I. . . . Katie just was extraordinarily accurate in terms of her memory when it came to times. In addition to that, Russell at David Philip had read history and he did some more research. I think I mention, in the foreword that I wrote for the American edition, that Katie had told me about this Louisa and I thought she'd said Hyde. She told me that Louisa was the wife of an American. Well, Russell went back to the book of addresses of that period and the name was Height and he was an American and he owned Height's hotel in Johannesburg during those tumultuous mining days of the nineties. So I was grateful that Russell had caught that, because I had misheard.

SM: A more general question: What do you think are the preconditions under which people from different cultures, different ages, different continents, different languages can actually understand each other? I am thinking here of two things: firstly you and Katie, and secondly you and your readers.

MM: Well, the first one is easy to answer. The second one is not so easy. To begin with, I grew up in Africa, so it was not a different country because my parents were missionaries and my mother had also been born in South Africa. Both she and I were always considered descendants of a chief from Umzinduzi. There was nothing of the kind of barrier that you find between blacks and whites in this country. And I think there is less of that kind of a barrier in South Africa, anyway. I was comfortable in African families and in African kraals. I visited heathen kraals and Christian houses with my parents as far as I can remember. Then of course, when I was in high school, like most youngsters, I rebelled more at the white culture than I did at my parental culture. I mean that was the form that my teenage rebellion took. I don't know whether that answers your first question.

SM: And the second one? Say, for example, if we take Katie's family, or people from the area now reading this text?

MM: Well it's interesting: Katie's family is thrilled. As a matter of fact, Desmond bought a copy and sent it to the Minister of Health. Whether it was his gift and his accompanying letter, or his friendship with this particular minister which resulted in a large government grant to the hospital, I don't know. But Katie's grandchildren and great-nephews and -nieces are very proud of the book. I think the greatest compliment that I had was not in South Africa, but in Malawi. I have a friend who is a Malawi

woman who was made deputy chief of health. On one of my last visits to Africa we stopped in Malawi to visit her and she introduced me to her secretary. Her secretary had read the book, and her comment to me was, "Even now that I meet you I can't believe you're a white woman because you wrote that book"—which I felt was about as great a compliment as I could have got. I had another very interesting experience from an American black. I gave a reading at a Borders bookstore and this very, very attractive young black woman was sitting in the front row. She waited until I'd done all the signing and then she came up. When she left New York she had been given a copy of my book to read on the plane, and then she had stopped in at this bookstore to buy another copy to give to somebody and found that I was speaking there that night. And she was very complimentary. So those two I thought I found very. . . . Oh and I must tell you something else that was very exciting! *San Francisco Review,* back in April of last year, had a great review of the book. They reviewed two books: one by the Vice President of Cape Town University, Ramphele.   And the reviewer pointed out something—that Ramphele met Biko at 86 Beatrice Street, and 86 Beatrice Street was the dispensary that my father built in 1902. After he retired in 1940 the mission kept on the schools. There was a wing that had been built on to it for the school administration. The mission kept it and it now has big UCC[21] letters. They also continued the night school. Apparently this was the headquarters of the student liberation movement back in the seventies that Biko was running in Durban. I thought, how appropriate that they should have chosen that particular location, because Dad was considered such a radical when he first went out. By the time I was growing up he had been accepted and the society had accepted the necessity for medicine among the Africans, but when he first went out this was something new. Anyway, I got a tremendous thrill.

SM: To what extent do you think the writing author is both facilitator for the narrator, for Katie, as well as a corrective, asking her to check on her own views and her own perception of herself? Because by speaking to you she is also checking herself against how other people might perceive her.

MM: I think that's true. But I can remember asking her if she ever regretted leaving England. I was thinking in terms of her singing career. She didn't

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[21] UCC: The United Church of Christ, the organization that followed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions under which Dr. and Mrs. McCord worked in South Africa. The original building still stands at 86 Beatrice Street, Durban.

even understand what I was talking about: why would she want to sing? She came home to find herself a husband and have a family—that was the important thing to her. I don't think actually that she understood really what she was offered, or what the possibility was of the prediction that her agent made about her singing quality. She was angered by the way it was put to her, but I don't think she ever really envisioned herself as being a wealthy woman. For me to ask that was a silly question. What she was really proud of was her work among the Zulus. I don't think my father would ever have accomplished as much as he had without her support. She was very proud of that, but as far as her singing was concerned, well, that wasn't something that she had *done*. Her voice was something that God had given her.

SM: And how do you think the idea that there would be a reading public acted as a type of censorship on what she was saying?

MM: It's hard to say. I think she was leaving it to me what to put in and what not to put in. I think she felt that my father, in writing the book he wrote, had left out a lot. He wrote an autobiography in 1940. What he was interested in doing was writing the history of a medical work, the building of a hospital. He didn't write the personal human stories. And that's what she was interested in. She wanted the stories of the patients told. And there were quite a number of patient stories which I included in my original manuscript which we finally cut. My first full manuscript was eleven hundred pages.

SM: I was wondering about that move between the first manuscript and the final two hundred and sixty pages.

MM: Well, I cut it down to seven hundred, and I thought I had done all the cutting I could. Then I cut it down to about four hundred and fifty and that was it. Then after David Philip said they wanted to publish it, they wanted me to cut it to a hundred and twenty thousand words. So I worked with Russell on that, and we cut out certain things which I have always regretted cutting out.

SM: How would you say that your book is different from other collaborative efforts where the writer and the narrator could both read the text and make changes to it? One of the examples I'm thinking of is Katherine Kendall and Mpho Nthunya's *Singing Away the Hunger*, where Katherine Kendall took down notes, wrote a text, and then gave it to Mpho Nthunya to read; and then at times Mpho Nthunya would say, "No it wasn't like this" and then

changes were made.   Elsa Joubert describes a similar relationship with *Poppie Nongena*. How do you see that fact that you couldn't go back and check with Katie?

MM: Well, I think it would have been wonderful if I could have gone back. How much Katie would have changed, I don't know.   I mean that's impossible for me to say. I tried to tell the story as honestly as I could, but there were a lot of incidents where I added descriptions which might not have been accurate. But they were as accurate as I could make them. I'm not talking about her husband's home place up in the Transvaal, because I visited there and I know those descriptions. The physical descriptions were correct. But there were things that had happened in Johannesburg where I felt that I had to set a scene, and so I described a scene and it may not have been correct. She might have changed that. As far as the incidents are concerned, I think they were accurate.

SM: I'm not so concerned about the accuracy of your rendering.   I'm thinking more about the relationship between the writer and the narrator— how it's a full circle. But if I understand you correctly, you sometimes had this feeling that it would have been nice if you could have discussed it again with Katie.

MM: I would have appreciated that. I think it might have given me a little more confidence, at least when we were peddling the book. I got the confidence since then, but I might have a had little bit more. I might have had a little more confidence about insisting that I had something to say which was important to say, and insisted on writing it sooner. I don't know, it's hard to say. It's one of those *if* questions. I really am hoping that the family can rediscover [her sister] Charlotte's manuscript. Charlotte was a more important person from a public point of view than Katie was, perhaps in a different. . . .   She certainly was better known than Katie outside of Natal.

SM: How do you see the difference between writing an autobiography and speaking an autobiography?

MM: How do you mean?   Do you mean the reporting of a speaking biography?

SM: Maybe more concretely: How would it have been different if Katie had herself written? How do you see the significance of the fact that she spoke rather than wrote?

MM: Well, now we're talking about a specific individual. As far as Katie is concerned, if she had written it, it would have been very stilted and very short. She was an oral person. She could tell wonderful stories, but the letters she wrote to me were like letters written by a high school student, or by a grammar school student. She was much too busy making her handwriting beautiful than she was concentrating on what she said. Now as far as I'm concerned, I write much better than I speak, so it depends on the individual I think.

SM: Listening to what you said I take it that her letters take the form of all high school letters of the time, that her own writing suffered the typical fate of the period in that it followed a set format. Her letters to her parents written from England presumably followed the prescriptions of what a daughter in a distant land had to say, and were in that sense probably not very personal.

MM: Of course, I had never seen any of the letters that she had written from England. I saw the letter that she wrote to my mother after she heard of my father's death, and that was a very personal letter. But again, it was expressed like a thirteen-year-old would express herself—in very affectionate but sort of vague terms: "No one will ever know how much we loved the doctor because of what he did for our people." Now that's both very personal but it's also vague. I'm not quoting, actually, but I remember she said something like that. And the letters that she wrote to me: she would tell me that her husband was well, and that she had seen Mrs. Hoskins and Mrs. Hoskins wanted to be remembered to me; and it would be a short paragraph.

SM: How do you see the shift from the first person insertions in the book, which are printed in italics, to the third person narrative which makes up the bulk of the book?

MM: The first draft was written in the first person. Then I ran into problems, because she described her great-grandmother and she said, "I

thought she was a *sangoma*."[22]   Now how do you translate that so that an American would understand what she was saying? The word *witch* is such a generalized term, and yet it was the only term that I could come up with. That was what made me feel I had to write it in the third person, because Katie would never have said that her great-grandmother was a *matagati*.[23] And yet, that was the translation I was giving it, but it made sense from an English-language point of view. So there we come in to the problem of translation again.

SM: It's interesting that you take that very word. Because it is the opening line and I had problems with it myself. I asked myself, "A witch? What exactly would a witch be?" But if you'd used a *sangoma*, as an average white South African reader I would have immediately caught on. So there's that connection between the language shift and the shift to the third person. Are there any questions which I left out, which you think should be asked? Or is there anything that someone who does not know the context as intimately as you do would never think of, but which you think is important?

MM: I don't know how to answer that really because I think the importance to me is the fact that here was a personality that had a great influence on me: a woman I loved very much, who led a very important life and a life that was not appreciated by the majority of white South Africans. There were a lot of women like that. I think of many women that I knew in that generation, not as well as I knew Katie, but I think Mrs. Luthuli was the same kind of woman. And other women that I knew well. I think I had a certain feminist point of view—that I wanted the white South African society to appreciate the women in the black society. That's a rather American point of view. It's not a South African point of view particularly. I remember asking Katie once (she had always kept on her dresser a newspaper cutting of Emmeline Pankhurst; it was a cutting of Pankhurst with an umbrella that she was shoving at a policeman on the streets of London) what she thought of Emmeline Pankhurst: "She was an important woman, and she did an important political job, were there any African women who acted like that?" And Katie's response was something to the effect that they didn't have to act

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[22] The Zulu term for "traditional healer or diviner who employs music, dance, and the throwing of bones to discover evil and diagnose disease" (*DSAE* 1996:s.v.).

[23] The Xhosa and Zulu term for "witch or wizard; a practitioner of evil magic" (*DSAE* 1996:s.v.).

like that, because it was better to work through your husband, and that African women were really . . . were really . . . made decisions, but that they had their husbands voice those decisions—in other words, the power behind the throne.

Boston, 18 August 1998

Body, Performance, and Agency
in Kalevala Rune-Singing

Anna-Leena Siikala

The first written account of Kalevala rune-singing dates back to 1778. At that time, Henrik Gabriel Porthan, professor of rhetoric at Turku Academy, presented his classic work: "De Poësi Fennica." His dissertation contains an interesting detail—an attention to the rune-singers' bodily movements, position, and physical contact (1983:80):

> Singers sat either side-by-side or facing each other, each clasping the other's right hand, with knees touching, one naturally touching the right knee and the other the left, where they rest their arms. While singing, they slowly rock their bodies so that they almost look as though each one wanted to touch the other with his head, and their facial expressions are solemn and contemplative. Very rarely do they sing while standing up. If they occasionally do, they do so as though inspired by the muse and begin the song standing up; nevertheless, as the song progresses, they would, clasping each others' right hands, seat themselves and continue the song in the customary fashion.[1]

Porthan established the prototypical image of rune-singing. Thanks to his account, rune-singing was imagined as a ceremonious performance involving bodily contact between two male singers. Readily adopted by his students, the image was in turn passed on to nineteenth-century scholars and folklore collectors. Because it served as a model for many later reports, its authenticity and relevance has been widely discussed. The bodily position of two male singers has been seen as a sign of the special value of Kalevala poetry. For the scholar of heroic epic poetry, the physicality of its performance worked as evidence of the genre's import and character. Lately, the question of body language in performing Kalevala epic poetry has been trivialized and thus interest in its study has diminished.

In the end, the discussion of body language in performances of

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[1] Translations from the Finnish, here and elsewhere, are my own.

Kalevala epic poetry proved unfruitful. Scholarly debates revolved around the reliability of Porthan's description instead of paying attention to the possible variety of performance strategies. The study of body language and performance settings reveals the field of meanings and values attached to rune-singing in various contexts. In examining these questions, however, we have to consider the praxis of rune-singing as a whole. This article deals with the differences in the habitus of rune-singers from the point of view of performance. The performance strategies of rune-singing are examined by paying attention to its bodily expressions and the way in which such movements relate to the performers' aims for self-expression and social recognition.

Variation in Performance Strategies

The Kalevala meter was once the poetic code throughout much of the Balto-Finnic area: among the Estonians, Finns, Izori, Karelians, Livonians, and Votyans. The Balto-Finnic peoples were and continue to be a culturally diverse lot. Thus, rune-singing praxis—its institutional contexts, performing styles, performers, and their goals and poetic skills—varied, often in fundamental ways, according to the region and people in question. The place and significance of Kalevala poetry in a community had an impact on its reproduction and interpretation. Because many of the poems were known in several cultural areas, even in the form of very different variants, the comparative studies of individual poems largely ignored the cultural variation of rune-singing practices. The same concern affects the new approaches dealing with individual singers and their small communities. Much of the research on Kalevala poetry has thus been produced either under the assumption that, although the ways of singing varied in different cultural areas, rune-singing culture can be characterized as a totality with similar features, or on the basis of generalizations regarding specific forms of rune-singing.

In his work *Language and Communicative Practices* (1996), William Hanks investigates bodily anchored practices of performances in socially constructed and situational fields of communication; he employs the concept of habitus to illuminate these practices. For Hanks, habitus is made up of routine modes of perception, action, and evaluation, or "a set of enduring perceptual and actional schemes" (240). The concept was originally presented by Pierre Bourdieu, who himself defined the concept in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* in a way that connects cognitive functioning, bodily practices, and agency: "a subjective but not individual system of

internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception" (1977:86). The concept of habitus is a useful tool for examining variation in rune-singing practices. We may assume that the cultural differences in rune-singing areas meant different modes of rune-singer habitus. Such variation in habitus no doubt existed within the same local communities as well.

Charles L. Briggs (1994) has studied the relationship between oral performance and bodily practices in ritual healing; through an incantation the seer could recreate the patient's body. The bodily practices of seers themselves are highly culturally ordered and closely tied into their habitus and performance. Public performances as such are characterized by organized body language that creates clues for the interpretation of mediated messages. In the performance event individuals are transformed into social actors by manipulating their appearances, movements, gestures, decorations, and so on. Situated acts of bodily constructions are for this reason important keys for interpreting oral poetry. Briggs examines bodily practices in terms of agency, defining the concept on the basis of work done by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff as "the capacity to infuse action with subjectivity, meaning, and social power" (Briggs 1994:151-52). Physical contact between two male Kalevala singers has been linked to the idea of the "competent singer." How did bodily practices of rune-singers reflect their aims for prestige and social recognition? How did these practices express shared and individual values and emotions?

Like Pierre Bourdieu (1983), Hanks links the concept of habitus closely to the concept of social field, a space of position and position-taking in communicative acts, understanding habitus as having a "capacity to create homologies across distinct fields" (Hanks 1996:241). When defined as formations and situational guides for our corporeal orientation to the world, fields are not closed domains but have varying forms. Hanks states that fields that can be disjunctive at one level can belong to a common larger whole—as, for example, the fields of shamanic curing and agricultural ritual among Yucatan Maya. The notion of intertextuality of Kalevala epic and incantations refers to the fact that these genres represent a larger field connected to the mythic knowledge of the other world performed by singers and seers. The concept of field has its advantages in incorporating communicative acts in the socially organized world. On the other hand, as a concept it is as vague as social life itself.

For studies of bodily practices in performances of Kalevala poetry, the concept of performance arena presented by John Miles Foley (1995) is useful in its specificity. Performance arena could simply be understood as a

spatial metaphor referring to the locus of the performance event. But, being a site for distinct cultural practices, performance arena includes reference to patterned actions and their perceptions and interpretations. Foley states: "It marks the special arena in which performance of a certain kind is keyed—by the speaker and for the participating audience—and in which the way of speaking is focused and made coherent as an idiom redolent with pre-selected, emergent kinds of meaning. Within this situating frame the performer and audience adopt a language and behavior uniquely suited (because specifically dedicated) to a certain channel of communication" (47-48). Performance arena, as such, gives hints or determines the mode of performing and its interpretations. In Kalevala epic singing, performance arenas are shaped not only by space but also by the bodily practices reflecting the character and demands of different performances. The ideal setting of the performance arena is then closely connected to the ideal modes of singing.

My starting point for examining the details of performance practices of Kalevala rune-singing is that the praxis of rune-singing is tied in many ways to the organization of other cultural practices (Honko 1998:139). The Kalevala epic recorded in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries in Balto-Finnic areas represents not just one but several specific forms of culturally patterned oral discourses related to different cultural domains and institutions. That means that performance arenas, modes of performances, habitus and gender of performers, importance and interplay of genres, and generic models and registers of rune-singing were not fixed or randomly improvised constructions but were guided by the goals and value orientations of performers and their interlocutors.

The Ideal Model of Singing

In Finland, knowledge of Kalevala rune-singing has its longest history in Savo, Ostrobothnia, and Kainuu. Epic art vanished quickly, however, and the documents we now have date from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The oldest record of epic rune-singing is given by Jacobus Petri Finno, who died in 1588 and reported that epics were sung on festive occasions and on journeys to pass the time and as a means of entertainment, the singers competing with one another (Salminen 1934:130). Similar performance arenas and entertainment functions are hinted at by H. G. Porthan in his classic description of rune-singing in 1778: epics were sung above all at feasts, where Bacchus was the bringer of pleasure, and during rests on long journeys made by the inhabitants of the highland in

order to sell their products and buy commodities in the coastal towns. Forty or fifty people would travel together in long caravans, and in the inns dozens of travelers might come together. Porthan describes these overnight stays at inns as follows (1983:83): "A large crowd with leisure time makes for an animated evening. Generally, such a caravan has no shortage of poets or trained singers, and these artists never lack for runes." Porthan's well-known account of rune-singing practices is based on information from Western Finland and Eastern Finland and also undoubtedly influenced later reports. In a footnote to the main text he adds (82): "We have written the words according to the Savo dialect (as most other examples) because they are directly taken from the mouths of Savo people." He also asserted that singing was the only form of entertainment of inhabitants of Savo and Karelia.

        Porthan was an extraordinarily gifted writer. Indeed, the detail and vividness of his descriptions of rune-singing can easily mislead the reader into thinking that the man actually witnessed such performances (79-80):

> Our peasant friends of the muse follow an original but inherited custom when performing their poems. They always sing in pairs, ceremoniously, surrounded by a throng of listeners standing there with their ears pricked up. The leading singer is either the only one capable of performing the songs, or the one with the best command of the art; he may be older or simply have a higher status in the community. At any rate, he is the one who assumes the role of the poet whenever there is a need to improvise. He chooses for himself a partner who is referred to as either a supporter or an accompanist. The two share the task of singing in the following manner: when the leading singer has reached the line's third-last syllable, that is the final foot, the accompanist joins him in song. In fact, the accompanist, who is well acquainted with the theme and the meter, has an easy time estimating the remaining foot. After this, the accompanist repeats the line on his own, slightly varying the tune, as though he were gladly giving it his approval. During these moments, the leading singer remains silent until the accompanist reaches the final foot, which both then sing in unison. Then the singer performs the next line, which the accompanist repeats in the same manner, and so on until the end of the poem."

Porthan eloquently describes the role of listeners in establishing the performance arena and the ceremonious behavior of singers. The description of rune-singing published by Elias Lönnrot in the *Morgonblad* 1835 seems to follow Porthan and is general in its nature (Lönnrot 1902:223). On the other hand, even before Porthan and Finno, a student by the name of Gabriel Paldan had, in a letter to Johan Ervasti, already

mentioned rune-singing in similar situations (Andersson 1969:155). And in 1795, Jakob Tengström also wrote about singing sessions with all the vividness of an eyewitness. His depictions of the singers' use of their bodies resembles Porthan's descriptions (Salminen 1934:160-61):

> In particular, one of the best entertainments at social gatherings and feasts was when, the food and drink having been served, one or more singers would perform songs to the delight of the assembled guests. The poet himself, or someone else, preferably an elderly man who could reproduce ancient or more recent songs from memory, would seat himself on a chair or a long stool, leaning towards the singer or accompanist sitting opposite him, knees touching, hand in hand. One would accompany the singing so that when the singer, at a slow, solemn pace, his body swaying to the rhythm, had almost finished singing the first line, the other would join in the last two or three syllables, which they sang together. The accompanist repeated the same line, but varying the melody slightly. While he was doing this the main singer had time to compose or recall the next line, until he again joined in the final syllables sung by the accompanist. Then he would again sing the next line alone, to be repeated by his companion. This continued until the end of the poem, when the singers were regaled and entreated to continue for the pleasure of those present. But when they came to the end of their repertoire, grew tired, or their voices became hoarse, it seldom happened that there was no one ready to take their place. All those present, young and old alike, gathered round the singers, listening with pleasure and attention to the songs that were thus handed down over the years, from one generation to the next, without their ever being written down. Since this form of entertainment appealed to the people more than any other social pastime, the singing would sometimes continue uninterrupted until late into the night, being finally halted by more feasting, sleep, and inebriation.

Drawing on the facts presented above, as well as on certain other sources and accounts by folk singers themselves, Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio (1949) constructed a picture of how two men would solemnly sing heroic epics. The performance arena could be either festive, involving alcohol (beer in Finland, spirits in Karelia), or simply part of everyday life, that is, a journey or fishing expedition, when men had more idle time to spend together. A line sung by a solo singer was repeated by a second, sometimes to the accompaniment of the kantele. Enäjärvi-Haavio concludes (133): "It seems that the men's singing in pairs was chiefly bound to the life of the old Finnish heroic poetry. Both the custom and the heroic poetry covered more or less the same area: Finland and East Karelia."

Enäjärvi-Haavio's construction of festive rune-singing has been contested by Leea Virtanen and other writers who, on the basis of the

Karelian ethnographic material, rejected the notion of two men singing together, not to mention their bodily position (Virtanen 1968). Knowledge about Karelian rune-singing fails to affirm—or contest—Porthan's account, which he made on the basis of the Finnish or, more accurately, Savo and Ostrobothnian observations of festive singing. I would like to point out, however, that there are other accounts to support his claim. Bishop Alopeus from Porvoo, for example, remembered in 1885 that in South Savo, in Juva and Puumala, old poems were sung before 1832 in the following way (Salminen 1934:160): "The singers, who were old men, sat facing each other, holding both hands (*kädet ha'assa*), moving their bodies back and forth, so that, in turn, the one pulled the other to him. To his mind, the song was beautiful and festive."

Interestingly enough, folk poets who wrote and performed Kalevala-meter epic songs about local and contemporary events during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries followed apparently valued traditional modes of performance on important occasions. They would assume the festive rune-singing position when performing publicly, even though their habitus as singers differed dramatically from that of traditional rune-singers. For example, on May 30, 1800, when Pietari Väänänen represented the farmers of South Savo at the meeting of parliament in Norrköping, Sweden, he also sang a poem of praise to honor the King of Sweden. His first few lines describe how poet and accompanist sing the song. The poem was printed on a leaflet, which provided instructions for how the song should be performed. He declared that the poem of praise should be sung "according to the old custom of Savo" (Laurila 1956:106). In 1845 in the Punkaharju village of Kauvonniemi, August Schauman saw three famous folk poets, Olli Kymäläinen, Pietari Makkonen, and Antti Puhakka, perform both their songs and "songs from the Kalevala." Folk poets sang both individually (possibly their own songs) and together, hand in hand (*haka toisehen hakahan*) (*ibid*. 107). The men were on their way to Helsinki to perform their poems. G. D. Budkovski visually captured the event in a work of art. His painting, which now belongs to the Finnish Literature Society, portrays Kymäläinen and Makkonen seated and holding each other's hands in the classic rune-singing position.

H. G. Porthan's account of rune-singing performance contains a footnote that has received little scholarly attention (1983:108): "If both performers enjoy equal authority and expertise, they will occasionally change roles, taking turns at being singer and accompanist. More often, however, the more experienced singer selects a younger poetry enthusiast as his helper, and after having the leading role shows his skills." The hierarchical master / novice setting is also emphasized elsewhere in

Porthan's texts (1983:105). Although his accounts may exaggerate the real learning practice, they do tell us something about the cultural value of rune-singing skills and the effort and dedication needed to learn songs, rune-singer habitus, and performance strategies.

The ideal or prototypical image of rune-singing performance given by H. G. Porthan and other late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sources observing mainly Finnish (Savo and Osthrobothian) singing practices includes a festive and public performance arena where the performers, two elderly men, and the audience are clearly separated from each other but, at the same time, in intensive interaction. The singer and accompanist would bodily convey the force and exalted nature of heroic songs. As they sang, the men would hold hands and, with their knees touching, slowly sway to the rhythm. The very physicality of these performances contributed to their emotive power. Today, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts of the beauty and solemnity of rune-singing appear clichéd and forced. Still, even later reports from Karelia refer to the inspirational powers of the poetry (Salminen 1921:144): "People could still recall how, as the men began to sing about Väinämöinen, both the lead singer and the accompanist, and the entire audience, would be moved to tears: 'it was so poignant.'"

Their bodily positions, turned towards each other and holding hands, symbolized a sense of unity, even brotherhood, albeit hierarchical. Shared alcoholic drinks furthered this mood of fraternity. Likewise, the task of the accompanist—to maintain the lead singer's rhythm—worked to achieve the same effect. This unity meant more than simply male companionship; it reflected the high prestige accorded to epic rune-singing within the rural order. Indeed, this highly regarded form of singing was the medium for presenting knowledge about mythic-historical events. The elevated style of archaic expressions and words alien to everyday life keyed the same interpretation of epic (cf. Kuusi et al. 1977).

With slow and measured movements the singers underlined the dignity of their songs. The images of elderly male singers are compatible with their society's hierarchical order—a society in which seniority and manliness were highly esteemed. The image of Väinämöinen, the main hero, conveyed these values. Indeed, the ideal rune-singer was a personification of Väinämöinen, the prototypical singer, old and wise, whereas his opponent was Joukahainen, the young and foolish, according to epic poetry. The "older – younger" or "master – novice" setting was repeated both in epic poems, for example in the so-called Singing Contest and in performances where the main singer was accompanied by another singer with inferior skills. The agency of publicly performing rune-singers

was tied into the powerful images of the mythic-historic tradition and its heroes; it reflected the values of a male-dominated society in which age was synonymous with leadership and wisdom.

The Broken Voice of Savo Singers

Observations of rune-singing in Savo or other Finnish areas are rare after the 1850s. The disappearance of the tradition has been explained by the fulfillment of the long campaign of the Lutheran Church and growth of literacy. By the end of the nineteenth century Finland had a 20 percent illiteracy rate, while in Karelia—where rune-singing was still known but not practiced as much as before—92% of the people were illiterate. The appearance of new dances, instrumental music, and above all the establishment of many new publishing houses in inland small towns with the marketing of leaflets of songs in the Finnish language offered new and alternative forms of entertainment. The value ascribed to festival rune-singing gradually diminished. The tradition thus transformed into modes of discourse that suited the new conditions.

An interview situation recorded by an undergraduate student, Anna-Leena Kuusi, as late as August 14, 1965, in Juuka, a border parish between North Savo and North Karelia, includes references to the trends already noticeable in the collections of the last century. According to the notes given to the Finnish Folklore Archives, farmer Matti Kuivalainen, born in 1897 in Juuka, performed a poem entitled the "Knee Wound of Väinämöinen" during the discussions. The collector had stated "possibly literary influence" in her field notes:[2]

> *Ite vanha Väinämöinen*
> *soittaja iänikuinen*
> *teki veikaten venettä*
> vaan empä minä siitäkään mitenkä se siinä on . . .
> se tuloo sotkuksi
> . . . niin se löi kirveellä siinä jalakaasa sitten, ni
> niin *meni tietäjän tuvillen*
> jotta
> "*Onko täällä rauan rannan kahtojoo*
> *veren summan sulukijoo*"
> niin
> se

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[2] The italics in the following passage and translation signify the lines of the poem.

Ukko uunilta urahti
halliparta paukutteli
"Ompa sulettu suuremmatki
jalommatki jaksettuna,
lahdet päistä,
virrat niskoilta vihaset"
jotta
vaan sitte se kurkisti
jotta tuota
"Mikä lienetkään sä miehiäsi
ku urohiasi
kun tuota
"Verta on jo seihtemän venettä
lattialle las . . .
polonen sun polovestasi,
lattialle laskettuna." (SKSÄ 33/1965)

- Muistatteko oliko siinä mitään jatkoo, sitten?
- Oisi siinä, vaan en minähän häntä kunen muista.
- Ette muista, oliko se, paransiko se sen haavan, mikä siinä sitten?
- Niin on, se sulukenu kait. . . . " (SKSÄ 33/1965)

Old Väinämöinen himself
the eternal singer
crafted a bark with his wits
well, I don't really know how this goes . . .
it gets all mixed up
. . . well, he cut his foot with the axe then, well
well, *he went to the seer's cottage*
so that
"*is there anybody who can look / see this iron shore?*
who can block this blood?"
well
he
The old man atop the stove snarled
the snowy-bearded one bellowed
"Bigger ones I've blocked
Grander ones I've plugged
bays from the headlands
wicked rivers flowing from the neck / throat"
so that
and then he just looked around /
so
"*What sort of man may you be*
what kind of fellow

when . . .
"The blood fills seven boats
flows to the floor . . .
from the knee of woeful you
blood to the floor."

- Do you remember if or how it continued?
- I reckon it did, but I can't remember how.
- Do you remember, was it, did the wound heal, or what happened then?
- Yes, I reckon it closed up. (SKSÄ 33/1965)

According to the archival practice of the sixties, the aim of collecting was simply to record the folklore item and the discussion directly related to it. Without any additional information it would be difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of recording. But, because Anna-Leena Kuusi is a younger version of the present writer, the character of the recorded poem can be discussed here.

The notions of "literary influence" were already common in the last century in the archival collections of the Savo epic. In the case of Kuivalainen's poem, the collector referred to the *Kalevala*, in which she found a group of similar lines. Rereading this short and distorted poem in 1999, I was struck by the description of Väinämöinen's wound: it bled so much that seven boats filled with blood. Although the line is rare, it did occur in oral tradition. In fact, it appeared in a variant recorded in Kainuu (SKVR XII 1, 29) but was left out of the *Kalevala*. Upon closer examination, the poem proved to be built both of orally transmitted phrases, for example "polvesta polosen pojan" ("from the knee of the woeful boy,"[3] SKVR XII 1, 16), and of phrases that are traditional but also published in the *Kalevala*.

Although the mix of lines betrays a literary influence, it also testifies to the artist's knowledge of oral poetry. Moreover, this little poem—with its partially distorted meter—conveys a powerful sense of originality through its idiosyncratic structure. The poem appears to be Matti Kuivalainen's (or his father's) re-creation, composed by using the bricolage technique typical of the habitus of folk poets. Folk poets of bygone centuries used the Kalevala meter and sometimes also lines of traditional poetry when creating new songs telling of contemporary events and local people (Laurila 1956:35-37). In nineteenth-century Savo, traditional rune-singing was assimilated into new modes of discourse; thus, singers eagerly incorporated published

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[3] The "boy" here is Väinämöinen, who is sometimes referred to as a boy in Osthrobothian poems.

poems into their own repertoires, which they were continuously creating and re-creating. This art of bricolage cannot be explained by literacy alone— although many have sought to do so (Laurila 1956); instead, these were new ways of seeking agency in communities where class hierarchy was becoming more evident than before. In a society where ethnic myths had value only in the secret world of seers, agency, still anchored in poetic expertise, was sought through wit and humor—and thus they attempted to portray the world around them.

Matti Kuivalainen was undeniably a poet. In addition to performing his father's humorous poems, he also performed a long narrative poem about his trip to Helsinki. He used the Kalevala meter, models of new rhymed folk songs, and even popular songs. Unfortunately, he was not a very able poet, and thus the meter takes some obscure paths. Several scholars have noted the "broken" voice of Savo singers when using the Kalevala meter. Metrically, the best parts of Kuivalainen's performance were dialogues, which seem in general to have preserved the classical meter better than episodes describing action. The latter were usually rendered in prose by Savo singers. The shift to prose reflects the changed modes of performance: Kuivalainen, like many nineteenth-century seers, did not sing his poems but recited them rhythmically.

Why was Kuivalainen interested in these kinds of poems? Even though it is not mentioned in the field notes, Kuivalainen was living in a lonely cottage surrounded by marshland. Farmer Atte Räsänen, who had recommended Kuivalainen as a performer of poetry, took me to Kuivalainen's cabin along the log path over the marsh. The discussion with Kuivalainen actually came to an abrupt end because Räsänen took over and began to tell tall tales. Apparently, this was not the first time the two men had spent time together. They were friends who had passed the time by telling humorous stories and drinking their preferred beverage—vodka.

Kuivalainen never sought to perform as a bard or as a dignified performer in the public arena. On the contrary, he constructed his poetic habitus on the values of humorous entertainment in a private performance arena. His own poems were generally ironic. Similar tendencies can be observed in Savo oral poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Performers transformed elevated styles and romantic expressions into a humorous code—by changing the register nearly totally.   The ambivalent and sometimes broken voice of the Savo singers contains yet another dimension. As he finished his recitation Kuivalainen, with a bit of prompting by the collector, reluctantly mumbled these words: "Yes, they stopped." By the half-expressed phrase "stopped blood," he referred to the poem's use as an incantation. Even Kuivalainen himself appeared ashamed

to bring the topic up. A great part of the epic poems of Savo were used as—or incorporated into—incantations during the last century.

Kuivalainen, Räsänen, and possibly their like-minded friends may be compared to Kaapro Vatanen (died 1850) and Sylvi Kurtenius (died 1845) from Iisalmi. They too were renowned for their poetical drinking sessions. Speaking to Kaarle Krohn in 1885, a local informant derided their pastime by using the verb *loruilla*, "to perform nonsense poems, rhymes." In other words, their art was hardly appreciated. The pair's repertoire included parts of the Singing Contest, the conflict between Väinämöinen and his young rival Joukahainen, and the Origin of Beer (SKVR VI 1, 29 and 65). Sometimes the performances of drunken singers led to serious problems. In 1643, for example, a man named Erkki Matinpoika was taken to the Elimäki and Vehkalahti court because he and another man sang an epic poem about St. Stephen "wrongly" during the St. Stephen's Day festivities. According to the legal records, the two men had indeed performed a distorted version of a ritual song; their version could be regarded as ironic, but also as an evil charm (Siikala 1992:227-28). Comparable "singing schools," private circles of male-singers, could also be traced in other places in Savo. For example, C. A. Gottlund, in the early nineteenth century, had amassed a vast collection of humorous poetry (often sexual) from Juva men. Some of the men were locally recognized seers with a command of both incantations and Kalevala epic poems. Matti Immonen, for example, presented a long narrative poem about the marriage of Väinämöinen and the Mistress of the North.

Clearly, Porthan's account of ceremonious epic performances featuring the controlled physical performances of male singers has little to do with the leisured and alcohol-inspired singing sessions taking place among friends. In private male gatherings, singing and drinking encouraged physical and mental relaxation and created a "cosmic unity of men." Instead of ascending the stage to be gazed upon, these male singers—and hence their bodies—could hide within cabins or saunas. In the private sphere, they could dodge the controlling eyes of the village women. These kinds of gatherings epitomize values such as equality and loyalty. Moreover, the setting and participants themselves favor secular, humorous, locally bound epic genres; thus heroic and mythic epic songs are laced with irony, thereby losing all the features of Kalevala poetry's elevated style.

Creating a private male world through shared drink and song appears to be a nearly universal phenomenon. I have encountered such groups in the *tumu nu* drinking circles in the Cook Islands, South Pacific, as well as among various ethnic groups in North Russia. The organization of space among a circle of friends establishes their own common ground; the backs of

their bodies turn into shields against the world beyond. The group's communal power is established through their common space. This space acts both as a symbol of unity and of their successful—however fleeting—escape from the pressures of day-to-day life.

Ambivalent Habitus of Karelian Singers

Many of the rune collectors who went to Karelia had inherited Porthan's ideal image of rune-singing, along with his aesthetic norms for Kalevala poetry. Thus encounters between rune collectors and rune singers were fraught with misunderstanding and conflict because of differing value orientations. The aesthetic sensibilities of collectors, in turn, determined which poems would be worthy of the written record. Poems had to be clear in content and complete in form. Meetings with "recommended" singers often ended in disappointment. A. A. Borenius was one of these dissatisfied travelers. Huotarini Kostja was praised as Uhtua's best singer, but turned out to be "a confused master of incantations" (Niemi 1921:1091). Sages, on the other hand, were reluctant to give away their magical capital. After all, their words were of economic value. Collectors had to state quite often that seers either refused to perform or simply ran away.

In Archangel Karelia, rune-singing was regarded with ambivalence for several reasons. The arrival of Old Believers in Northern Karelian areas meant even more religious pressure. A number of collectors' accounts attest to its impact. From the Old Believers' point of view, singing was *räähkä*, a sin. Martiskaini Teppana dreaded the consequences of his singing and after a collecting session prayed late into the night (Inha 1911:37-42; about Miikali Perttunen, see Niemi 1921:1079, also 1142). Trade trips to Finland had also changed value orientations. Rune-singing was no longer valued in Uhut, the most prosperous village in Archangel Karelia, and, accordingly, poems were not so "complete" there as in the small villages near the Finnish border (Niemi 1921:1085). The Jamanainen brothers, who were photographed by I. K. Inha, exemplify the loss of interest in rune-singing. Both brothers enjoyed high social status in Uhut. They were embarrassed, however, when asked to perform. After much persuasion, the men agreed to sing, but only in a closed room so that none of their peers could see them.

A number of circumstances contributed to the knowledge that we now have of Archangel Karelian rune-singing. Firstly, the collecting situation involved a clash of values between the collectors and the singers. Secondly, the collecting took place during a period of accelerated cultural change that brought into conflict several competing ideological alternatives. The most

apt word to describing an Archangel Karelian singer's habitus may be ambivalence, reflecting the singers' social, religious, and practical aims. This ambivalence has confused researchers trying to draw conclusions about Karelian performance practices.

According to Jacob Fellman, who made a trip to Archangel Karelia in 1829, everybody there could sing rune-songs (Fellman 1906:496-98). For this reason, and because of the ambivalent values later attached to rune-singing, the scale of performance arenas and strategies in Karelia shows great variety. A very large number of reports, some from the twentieth century, link the performance of Kalevala poetry with the everyday life of the extended Karelian family (Virtanen 1968). Vihtoora Lesonen, for example, reported that her father was a keen singer who, as he wove his nets by rushlight, would sing to his children and those who gathered at his farm on long winter evenings: "There they would pose riddles, tell tales, and sing poems" (Niemi 1921:1128).

According to the travel accounts the best singers were usually men, and this was consistent with Porthan's ideal image of the rune singer. Epic poetry on Kalevala themes was regarded as a masculine tradition (Virtanen 1968:50-51); epic poems were sung on fishing expeditions, during free moments spent in the forest saunas, or at religious village festivals, the *praazniekkas*, when people had sometimes traveled long distances to see their relatives (SKSA, Krohn 0071; Härkönen 1909:36-38). On the other hand, the rune collectors also met many female rune-singers in Archangel Karelia. Most women tended to favor ballads, legend songs, and epic-lyrical songs more than anything else (Virtanen 1968:19). However, there were female singers, such as Hännini Maura, who not only mastered the mythic-historical epic but also interpreted it in an innovative and personal way. Judging by the ethnographic writings available, women well versed in the seer tradition also had a command of epic songs.

From the villagers' point of view, the ideal epic singer was more than just a singer: he was a *laulaja-tietäjä*, singer / sage or singer / seer. Because incantations were often sung in Karelia, such a definition appears quite natural, having its roots in the past (Siikala 1992:226-31 and 293-94, on singer-seer). On the other hand, the singer's habitus is marked by ambivalence—from a performing singer to a seer who used epic poetry as a store of knowledge about the other world.

No clear border separated the sages' secret and traditional chants from the publicly performed epic songs. Both had preserved ancient mythical motifs and images. Surprisingly often, Kalevala epics also had a ritual function. Two of the most popular songs in the area of Karelia around Lake Ladoga, "Lemminkäinen's Adventures" and "Wooing the Daughter of

Hiisi," were used by sage-matchers at weddings to provide magic protection. According to information obtained by Kaarle Krohn, even the Sampo poem was performed ritually (SKSA, Krohn 0072): "During the spring and autumn sowing, the people first sang the sowing spell, and then the song about the forging and stealing of the Sampo and the chase by the Mistress of Pohjola (the North). The rest describes how Väinämöinen banished the frost sent by the Mistress of Pohjola." The same notes by Krohn state that a number of other epic songs were performed in ritual situations analogous with their content.

These features of interplay between epic poetry, incantations, and communal ritual poetry may in part be the outcome of the sage's central position in Karelian culture. Collectors in search of rune-singers were often told to consult the sages. In fact, A. A. Borenius wrote that a singer's reputation often rested upon his knowledge of chants, whereas the best singers of epic poetry were frequently anonymous (Niemi 1904:475). The high prestige ascribed to magical knowledge is also illustrated by the fact that many rune-singing families were the descendants of a mighty witch or sage (Virtanen 1968:9).

But the habitus of singer / sage did not fit all Karelian singers. For some singers epic poetry had only a performative function. The most renowned singers of Western Archangel Karelia—Arhippa Perttunen, the greatest contributor to the *Kalevala*, and his son Miihkali Perttunen—were definitely epic singers, not seers. Arhippa Perttunen scorned incantations and thought that performing them was sinful. His son Miihkali was of the same opinion. If we want to speak of the epic singer's habitus, we also need to pay attention to established performance arenas and audiences in addition to evenings at home devoted to domestic tasks. The main question, then, is whether epic songs played any role in public gatherings. Arhippa Perttunen himself provided a clear answer when describing singing competitions organized at feasts. He told Elias Lönnrot about all the singing competitions he had won. As we can see from the passage below, Lönnrot's meeting with Arhippa taught him much about singing performances and competitions (Lönnrot 1902:223-24):

> Perhaps some would be interested to know how a good singer conducts himself while singing. When there are no other singers present, he'll sing alone, but if there are two singers, as is required of festive singing, they will sit either facing each other or beside each other, clasp each other's hands either with one or both hands and commence their song. For the duration of the song, the body rocks back and forth, so that it appears that the two of them are taking turns pulling each other closer. One first sings the first line of the poem and is joined by the other at the last part, and

then repeats the entire line. As this repetition takes place, the first singer has time to think about the next line and thus the singing progresses, either by singing poems that have already been composed or by creating something entirely new. The mark of a good social gathering is the presence of many singers. During such feasts, singers often take part in singing contests. Their friends and acquaintances make bets as to who will beat their opponents. Arhippa told me that the villagers often urged him to join such contests, but he could not recall ever being beaten. But how do they compete in rune-singing here? - Not the way they would in music academies; the prize is not awarded to the one who sings the best songs, but to the one who can sing the longest. First, one singer sings a poem, and then he allows one of his rivals to sing a comparable response. Then the first one sings again, and thus it continues with each taking turns. If a singer's poetic repertoire is exhausted and the other one can still keep singing, then the first singer has been beaten. If both singers are inferior talents, the spectators can laugh at their attempts to get in the last word. The contest then begins to resemble something of a chicken fight: the one who can cluck the longest believes himself victorious. Here, too, some of the best songs have been doomed to obscurity; for some can only recall words and fragments and try to use them to beat their opponents. The good singers, however, are an altogether different story. As the poem says, "Singing day after day, night after night" truly happens here, and only slumber can put a stop to the battle, and then neither of them or both are deemed victorious.

Leea Virtanen has concluded that the solo-repeat mode of singing was unknown in Karelia (1968:40). There are, however, some reports of two men singing together in Karelia. In his letter to Kaarle Krohn, I. K. Inha describes a rune-singing performance in the following way (Enäjärvi-Haavio 1949:99): "If I recall correctly, it was said that when they were singing, singers would sit face-to-face on either side of the table, with one holding the other's left hand in his right hand, their elbows on the table, so that the other hand was free to tilt the glass." Accordingly, Iivo Härkönen depicts the Karelian rune-singing performance as the bodily contact of two male singers (1909:36-38).

Even though Härkönen's portrayal tends to romanticize rune-singing and underscore its masculine values, it nevertheless mentions feasts, *praasniekka*, as a performance arena for rune-singing, a detail that Virtanen overlooked. Annual festivals were especially important celebrations and included among other sorts of late nineteenth-century entertainment, e.g. dancing for younger people. The performance of runes on festival occasions is noted also by Kaarle Krohn. Jyrkini Iivana, a son of Jyrki Malinen, told him in 1881 that "on festival days, old men when drunk would sing Kalevala poems without any particular order, only Kekri (an autumn festival) had its

own song, the Song of the Ox, which was then specially sung among the others" (SKVR I, 2, 896).

According to A. Berner's photograph (found in Kuusi et al. 1977) of two singers—Jyrki Malinen and Ohvo Homanen, related to the Malinen family—the men were familiar with a mode of performance requiring them to sit beside each other holding hands. On the other hand, the Jamanen brothers from Uhtua, who were photographed by I. K. Inha (1911), were made to assume a "rune-singing" pose, but it was utterly foreign to them. Those who traveled to Archangel Karelia in search of runes found that there, too, singing was done in pairs. Rune-singers often spoke of performers who accompanied them. Arhippa Perttunen, for example, told Elias Lönnrot that his father, who was also a skilled singer, had sung on fishing trips with his helper. The other man was also an able singer, but no match for Arhippa's father (Lönnrot 1902:221-22): "Often they would sing throughout the night, hand-in-hand by the campfire. They never even sang the same poem twice. At that time I was just a little boy and listened to them, so slowly I learned the best songs."

In Archangel Karelia, rune-singing was an art practiced by just about anybody and on any occasion—even though the collected poems show that most people remembered only a few epic songs. Obviously, when people sang at home while either spinning or repairing fishing nets they did not assume formal postures or use gestures aimed to impress an audience. Those with more knowledge and skills in rune-singing might have had an ambivalent habitus of *laulaja* / *tietäjä* or singer / seer, or of either orientation. Sages (the masters of the seer tradition) did not perform in public; on the contrary, they would work their magic in a place closed from outsiders, in the sauna or the forest. Their bodily practices included ecstasy, frenzied hopping, spitting, and so on. The ritual behavior of the seer was intended to have an impact on the patient. Some of the accounts of the ritual uses of epic poetry refer to public performances, but there is little information on the performing strategies available.

In public performances, especially at annual festivals and weddings, Karelian male singers would sing with an accompanist if there was one available. The best singers had a strong performer habitus, differing from that of the seer in its value orientation. Singers like Arhippa Perttunen and Jyrki Malinen performed publicly, competed in rune-singing, and used formalized body language in legitimating their position as rune-singers. In Karelia, the amount of bodily control depended on whether the performance arena was private or public and on the nature of audience.

Female Body and the Construction of Self in Ingria

In the farming communities of South Karelia and Ingria, epic songs were clearly a feminine tradition (see Kuusi 1983 and Harvilahti 1992). Although certain records of men's epics, even of singing competitions, do exist (Enäjärvi-Haavio 1949:144), the bulk of epic songs in the Kalevala meter were sung by groups of women. Women sang as they went about their everyday work, at meetings and festivals for the girls and women as an accompaniment to dancing in circles and chains. The choral repertoire of women consisted of ballads, legends, and a vast array of epic-lyrical songs dealing with kin and family relationships. In addition, women added episodes from nature myths to their songs. Even serious epic poems, such as "Sun and Moon," which contains a mythical theme about the disappearance of the sun and the moon, were sometimes used to accompany dancing in Ingria. Maidens interpreted Kalevala poems from their own point of view, incorporating elements about themselves and village life. Framing mythical themes with motivating lines and motives or direct secularization shows that the significance of poems was poetic rather than indicative of a mythical worldview. Choirs of young girls would sing under the leadership of a solo singer, sometimes in multiple parts.

Ingrian maidens enjoyed traditional dances going back to medieval times. In addition to circle and chain dances, the girls would set off on singing walks in the period between the spring sowing and the autumn harvest. Such walks were also common in Russia and elsewhere in Europe (Enäjärvi-Haavio 1949:149-56). Dressed in their finest clothing, the girls wandered along the village lanes; having reached marriageable age, they were, so to speak, "on display." As they walked by, older people and potential suitors admired the beauty of the singing girls. The *praazniekkas*, local holy days, also provided young women opportunities to parade their beauty. Törneroos and Tallqvist described the following scene from Ingria (Niemi 1904:374):

> As on all festive occasions, the girls here too first passed the time by singing and dancing. Bands of girls walked hand in hand with garlands on their heads through the market field, singing as they went, at times coming to a halt, giggling and running into a circle in which two girls at a time tripped round like the Russian women in some of their dances. This would have gone on and been quite beautiful to behold had not the miserable boys, who did not seem to have had anything better to do yesterday afternoon than drink and fool around, interrupted the girls' quiet singing and dancing and began to behave in a coarse and uncouth manner. For they pounced on the girls in an unruly manner and dragged one girl

after another from the circle.

Girl choirs played a vital role in maintaining traditional singing; after all, girls were allowed to sing the sacrificial hymns at the joint ritual festivals, even though men were responsible for performing the rites (Haavio 1961:56). Similar ritual practices were observed in Ritvala parish, Western Finland, where young maidens walked in ritual procession, forming a cross along village roads and fields. During their walk, organized in rows of three or four girls, the performers sang ballads especially for this event. The purpose of Helka of Ritvala was to ensure abundant crops. The ritual, "holy" nature of the singing walks influenced the choice of performers: the singers had to be virgins, physically pure and intact.

Women's group performances in Ingria and south Karelia were built on organized ways of constructing and displaying the body. Young female singers, dancing in circles and chains or walking in rows, were seeking empowerment in a culturally acceptable way. Singing, organized movements, and decorations transformed individual girls into social actors capable of expressing their subjective ideas, emotions, and hopes. For the young women, singing was an instrument of self-construction, fostering a sense of companionship and togetherness for the girls as a group. Finally, singing gave them an aura of importance and recognition. A sense of personal agency is reflected in their preferred songs: their repertoires included special songs describing the subjective attitudes and experiences of singers. Even in old age, when some of the women singers reminisced about their youth for collectors of folklore, they vividly recalled the feelings of joy and freedom that their songs inspired.

Conclusion

The performative power of rune-singing was manipulated through the singer's body (position, poise, decoration and so on) in various kinds of performance arenas. Rune-singing was attached to different social fields, and, accordingly, performance arenas were shaped in different ways even within the same community. Singing practices and singing habitus were also subject to considerable variation. Besides the classic bard-type, male singer habitus embodied in Arhippa Perttunen, the most famous singer of Kalevala poetry, there were singers who identified themselves as seers rather than singers, and—on the other hand—singers whose agency was based on bricolage-like creativity and wit in composing new songs within the changing societies of the nineteenth century.

H. G. Porthan's romantic model was inspired by actual Finnish-Karelian rune-singing. Nevertheless, the model only represents one mode of singing practiced in public arenas. As did the elevated poetic register, the use of body language keyed the performance. The group-singing of maidens formed a powerful contrast to the pair-singing of old men and represents a conflict with cultural values rooted into the Baltic region since medieval times. Being present, seen, and heard at public gatherings was no longer an exclusively male privilege. Young women had found a means to transform their subordinate position in the community into a temporary mastery of the village scene, and through their ritual walking, they gained control of important fields of social interaction. It is interesting to note that organized singing-groups of girls were performing when wandering village roads, open fields, and holy groves, in places to which everybody had access. They were seen and looked at. The performance arenas of male singers were much more restricted even when public: men performed inside festival houses or inns and in faraway forest saunas or traveling boats. It must also be remembered that private fields and performance arenas were not only domestic or connected to everyday labor, but also included different kinds of singing contexts. Circles of friends escaping the control of village women and seeking a temporary feeling of agency created performance arenas that transformed Kalevala poetry into humorous and ironic songs far away from heroic epic.

The dispute about festival performances in rune-singing seems to have arisen from the inability of empiricist folklorists to distinguish between public and private modes of performance. The image of male rune-singing introduced by Porthan appears to be based on detailed and reliable ethnographic data. This image, however, has no relevance for the singing practices employed in private or spontaneous performance arenas. In the larger Baltic-Finnic area, the private or spontaneous arena was no doubt far more common. As already known in Porthan's time, the distinctive bodily position assumed by a pair of male rune-singers when singing on ceremonial occasions signifies the special value accorded to Kalevala mythic and heroic songs. Nonetheless, it did not characterize all performances of these genres. The singer habitus varied, and this variation affected the reproduction and interpretation of songs.

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On the Linguistic Properties of Formulaic Speech

Koenraad Kuiper

In the study of oral-formulaic performance the formula has always been understood as playing a pivotal role (Lord 1960, Foley 1995). But although it is clearly a linguistic unit, the technical study of formulae by linguists has been slight. This paper intends to remedy this lack by proposing some linguistic theories as to the nature of the formula. They will take the form of formal and testable proposals. By formal I mean mathematically modelled.

Why place such a study before the readers of *Oral Tradition*? Two preliminary observations are in order. First, it has become clear over the last twenty years that the use of formulae is not restricted to the performance of oral literature (Edwards and Sienkewicz 1990). The theories developed below draw on the study of vernacular oral traditions and specifically on the author's work on some of these traditions (Kuiper 1996). It is not intended that this should be a slight on the work of others. It is just that mine is the only work I know of that looks at formulae from a technical perspective (cp. Pawley 1991 and 1992). However, the theories proposed are intended to generalize to formulaic speech used for the performance of oral literature.[1]

Second, the work being attempted here is essentially cross-disciplinary between the post-Lord study of formulaic literature and the linguistic study of formulaic speech. As such it attempts to explain the properties of formulae via formalisms used in linguistics. The cost of this is that such formalisms may not be familiar to a number of the scholars working on formulaic speech within a more literary or ethnographic tradition. However, it should be clear that formulae are linguistic units and as such the formalisms of linguistics are appropriate, not to say, the appropriate tools with which to study the linguistic properties of formulae. While there are some costs for scholars who may be unfamiliar with contemporary linguistics in understanding what such tools have to offer, the

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[1] The literature relating to this field is summarized in Foley 1988 and 1990.

benefits of cross-disciplinary study are that the approach taken by another discipline has the potential to illuminate aspects of the phenomena under study that are not available elsewhere. Since those who are most interested in oral-formulaic traditions have the most to gain, I present the material below in the hope that it does illuminate aspects of the formula and formulaic speech that have been left rather in the dark.

Some Preliminary Distinctions

Since the formula has a multifaceted character, understanding the formula as linguistic unit requires making a number of distinctions commonly drawn in linguistics. It is, first, part of the internalized linguistic resources of a speaker, the speaker's linguistic competence (Chomsky 1965), the speaker's I (for internalized) language (1986). Second, it is part of a linguistic tradition; that is, it is a social fact, a unit of a language external to a single individual, what Chomsky calls an E language (1986). Third, it is a unit used in speech, what Chomsky terms performance (1965). Chomskian performance with a small "p" needs to be distinguished from performance with a capital "P," the object of study of performance theorists such as Bauman (1986). To understand the nature of the formula involves looking at all three of these aspects of the formula.

Internal Constraints: The Role of Memory in Performance

Our aim is to understand both how formulae are stored and retrieved from memory and how they are used in the production of speech. We will suppose that one critical function of formulae is to limit the linguistic resources of a speaker when that speaker's working memory is under pressure. This idea, at least in embryo, goes back to Lord: "The singer's mode of composition is dictated by the demands of performance at high speed" (1960:65). I will assume that high speed performance makes greater demands on working memory than slower speech does. The support for that view will require some unraveling.

One of the oldest concerns in the modern study of linguistic performance—the way humans use language in speech—is the impact of human memory on performance. Miller and Chomsky (1963) showed that while syntactic center embedding in sentences such as "The boy the man the people loved saw died" is grammatical, that is, allowable by the rules of grammatical competence; nevertheless, people cannot understand the

grammatical structure of such a sentence when it is spoken. This is because human beings have a limited short-term or working memory. Center embedded structures require that earlier syntactic constituents of sentences are remembered while later units are being processed. When the depth of center embedding gets down below two levels, human working memory capacity gives up. However, people can decipher such a sentence when given a pencil and paper, since with that support nothing is required to remain in working memory. It can all be written down. This experiment shows that the shortfall from which the problem stems is not the speaker's knowledge of the structural properties of his or her grammar.

The hypothesis that human working memory is quite limited is now well established. George Miller (1956) suggests that its size is seven plus or minus two chunks. A "chunk," roughly speaking, is a structured set of information that has a single address in memory. It appears that human beings can only access instantaneously—that is, hold in working memory— between five and nine of such chunks. That may be a slightly low estimate but it is close enough for our purposes.[2] Frazier and Clifton (1996) and Marcus (1980), for instance, base their theories of human ability to reconstruct the grammatical structure of sentences while they are heard on the assumption of a limited working memory.

Suppose, following Newell and Simon (1972) and Baddeley (1990), that human beings have at least two kinds of memory: long-term or encyclopedic memory, and short-term or working memory. Everything that we remember and can later recall from memory is placed in long-term memory, which has the following relevant properties: it is unfillable in a finite lifetime and recall from it is normally rapid. Human working memory is a much smaller memory store where chunks of information are held while they are being used for some kind of processing. For example, in order to use in a sentence the information that someone was born in 1918, that fact must first be recalled from long-term memory and placed in working memory so that it can be given linguistic form. To recall a face, we first need to extract a representation of it from long-term memory and then make it accessible by placing it in working memory.

The use of working memory in sentence production can be seen clearly when we look at how a speaker goes about constructing a simple sentence such as the following: "The woman who owned the store has decided to return, hasn't she?" In order to produce this sentence in the correct grammatical form, the speaker must remember a number of chunks of grammatical information, including the following:

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[2] See Baddeley 1990 for an account of human memory.

1. the number, person, and gender of the subject of the sentence
2. the fact that there is no negative after the first auxiliary verb in the main clause of the sentence
3. the tense of the first auxiliary verb
4. the first auxiliary verb itself

The first chunk of information has to be kept in short-term memory because the form of the first auxiliary verb *have* depends on it. In the case of a third person singular subject, the present tense auxiliary will be *has* and not *have*. This chunk must also be retained in working memory because the final pronoun in the sentence gains its form from this information. The second chunk of information must be held in working memory because the tag question that follows the comma at the end of the sentence will have a negative if the statement preceding it does not, and vice versa. The third chunk of information must be remembered because the tense of the tag question must match it. The same goes for the first auxiliary verb. Note also that the part of the sentence between the fourth chunk of information and the point in the sentence where the information is required is of indeterminate length. However, because sentences are grammatically planned, all this must be held in working memory pending its potential use.

The conclusion we can therefore draw is that speakers who are producing novel utterances must have a reasonable portion of working memory available in order to be able to speak. Oral-formulaic performers also have need of working memory resources to be singers of tales. Producing metrical lines of poetry at speed like those sung by the South Slavic *guslari* studied by Lord requires memory resources. The poet, for example, must, at any stage during the production of the poem, know where he is within the structure of the whole as well as keep a live, mobile audience interested in the performance. It thus seems that memory resources in addition to those of "normal" speech are required if we are to suppose that oral poets make everything up from scratch. After Lord's work, that is no longer supposed. In what follows I intend to explain what makes it possible, psychologically, for oral-formulaic performers to speak given the kind of pressure that they are under.

Memory constraints are only one internal constraint on performance. Speech must be constructed in such a way as to be *intentional*. Speakers have intentions in speaking, and endeavor, by speaking, to have hearers infer those intentions (Sperber and Wilson 1986). A great deal of speech production must also be automatic, since speakers, having made up their minds what they wish to say, must leave the brain to get on with low-level

(albeit complex) processes such as articulation without interference. This allows them to get on with planning the next unit of speech.

Speech production must also be *compositional* since the whole of what is said must be made out of parts. Levelt (1989) supposes that speech is composed in a lockstep fashion, starting with speaker's intentions and followed by the selection of an appropriate message representation of what the speaker wishes to say. The required words are then selected. The words in turn structure the syntactic sequence the speaker is going to produce. The syntactic sequence of words is then related to the articulatory sequences in which the sentence is spoken. Such a process is both compositional and analytical. It is analytical in that the speaker breaks down his or her intentions into the words that are required to give form to those communicative intentions. It is compositional in that it supposes that speakers create utterances, as it were from the ground up, out of words.

Levelt also supposes that speech is constructed by a series of parallel processes that are relatively autonomous (1989:14). Each processor accepts information from others but carries on its work independently. This order is necessary to ensure that there are not long stretches of waiting while one processor—for example, the one that constructs the surface form of the sentence—finishes its work before the one that looks after the pronunciation of the sentence can get started. If an understanding of oral-formulaic speech is to have any firm explanatory force, then in at least some of these areas of internal constraint, oral-formulaic speech must create a more efficient way of speaking when speakers, including the performers of oral literature, are subject to heavy working memory loading.

Recall that I am assuming that all oral performers are under some degree of working memory constraint and, following Lord (1960) and Kuiper (1996), that those who perform oral heroic poetry and, for example, the commentaries of fast sports and rapid auctions are under a greater than normal degree of such constraint. Thus I further assume that they will seek means of reducing their linguistic options, that is, their search space in memory, as they speak. After looking at the formal properties of oral-formulaic speech we will be in a position to see how the linguistic resources used by oral-formulaic performers make that possible.

External Constraints on Performance: Routine Contexts

Much of living in a society involves interacting with other people in predictable ways. Not all of what we do needs to be predictable in every

respect, but much of it must be to some degree. The linguist Charles Ferguson describes an interesting experiment (1976:140):

> To see what the result would be, I simply did not reply verbally to her [his secretary's] good morning. Instead I smiled in a friendly way and through the next day behaved as usual. The next morning I did the same thing. The second day was full of tension. I got strange looks not only from the secretary but from several others on the staff, and there was a definite air of "What's the matter with Ferguson?" I abandoned the experiment on the third day because I was afraid of the explosion and the lasting consequences.

Experiments like this can be conducted in a wide variety of contexts. For example, a caller on the telephone can become very disconcerted if the person picking up the receiver does not say anything. (Very young children, for example, do this.) The discomfort comes about because, in our society, the person answering the call is supposed to announce himself or herself somehow. It is a social convention. There is a large literature on such social conventions, and this is not the place to summarize it. But I will assume, and with good cause, that there are conventions that order the way social events are perceived and the way social life is conducted. Sometimes there is a measure of freedom within such conventions (Chomsky 1988:5): "The normal use of language is thus free and undetermined but yet appropriate to situations; and it is recognized as appropriate by other participants in the discourse situation who might have reacted in similar ways and whose thoughts, evoked by this discourse, correspond to those of the speaker." But in many circumstances we have little option as enculturated human beings but to do and say what our culture constrains us to do and say, and speech itself, taking the specific forms that it does, structures our social realities.

Oral-formulaic performance could be a factor in providing an explanation of the way in which speech is matched with context. Again, after looking in detail at the nature of oral-formulaic performance we will be able to see how this is so. In summary, an oral-formulaic performer, like anyone who is speaking, is subject to constraints from two sources: his or her internal psychological limitations, and limitations placed on the speaker as a result of being an enculturated human being who is required to behave in culturally sanctioned ways in order to be considered a native of the culture they inhabit. The kinds of discourse that such performers enact create a special role for formulae. Formulae may therefore be a response to the two kinds of constraints on performance discussed so far. To illustrate this dynamics will be the burden of what follows.

Discourse Structure Rules

In early studies of formulaic speech, pioneers like Parry and Lord note that the oral poems they study contain certain themes. What they mean by themes is not precisely defined. Lord's definition and description of themes will suffice as a starting point:

> I have called the groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song the "themes" of the poetry (Lord 1960:68).

> Although he [the singer] thinks of the theme as a unit, it can be broken down into smaller parts: the receipt of the letter, the summoning of the council, and so forth (71).

> Although the themes lead naturally from one to another to form a song which exists as a whole in the singer's mind with Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end, the units within this whole, the themes, have a semi-independent life of their own. The theme in oral poetry exists at one and the same time in and for itself and for the whole song (94).

It seems that themes have two aspects. One is internal form. Themes deal with one significant episode, such as the sending of a letter, the arming of a warrior, the departure for battle. Episodes consist of a sequence of events that take place in roughly the same order whenever they appear, with optional elements. The other aspect is the significance that the episode has in the total story, in other words, where it fits in the larger structure. We may suppose then that themes are episodes that have internal sequential structure. Thus we can model themes by supposing them to be rule-governed; the parameters that provide their structure we will term "discourse structure rules." The set of rules that define the structure of a genre or text type we will term its "discourse grammar." Discourse structure rules define the structure of the episode in that they give the order of its constituent events, or the sequence of items in a description. Note that we are not necessarily supposing that all the sub-episodes are in a fixed order; only that some of them are. We shall have more to say about this later.

The events in a theme also have an integrity in terms of what they contribute to the whole. Lord declares that all songs are made from a finite set of themes. This perspective suggests that the plot of a song is created out of independently existing themes and that different songs use the same themes. This is to suppose that singers have learned a finite set of discourse structure rules and do not need to learn new ones in order to sing new songs.

It would probably be too simplistic to equate themes exactly with the constituents of discourse structure rules, since Parry and Lord do not think in this way about epic poems. However, themes and discourse constituents are not so different that we could not regard the latter as a model of the structural aspects of the former.

       If we compare the themes of oral heroic poems with the narratives of sports commentators, similar theme-like episodes can be found. The face-off episode in an ice hockey game has a particular characteristic part to play in the events of the total game (Kuiper and Haggo 1985). In the speech of ice hockey commentators, the way the face-off is called can be given a formal representation by a set of rules. Similarly, the description of the lot has a unique role in an auction (Kuiper and Haggo 1984).

       Let us suppose that discourse structure rules are an explicit model of what have traditionally been called themes. Since they are explicit, they have both the advantages and disadvantages of explicitness. There is a loss of mystique and a greater empirical vulnerability. But such proposals also have greater predictive power. That power can be put to the test. All the discourse structure rules examined in *Smooth Talkers* (Kuiper 1996) and elsewhere, such as Salmond (1976) and Pawley (1991), are of the same general kind. They are context-free rewrite rules, which have particular mathematical properties.[3] They are a formal means of generating or explicitly characterizing ordered hierarchical structures. They look like this:

A —> y + z

Such a rule states that there is a constituent, e.g., a section of discourse A that consists of two sub-constituents y and z that occur in that order. In this rule, A is called a non-terminal symbol since it is not at the bottom of the hierachical structure, whereas y and z are terminal symbols. Where a grammar consists of a number of such rules, i.e., where the hierarchical organization of the discourse consists of more than one level, non-terminals may appear on both sides of the arrow as follows:

A —> B + C
B —> w + x
C —> y + z

In this grammar A, B, and C, are non-terminals and w, x, y, and z are terminal symbols. The difference between terminal nodes and non-terminal

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[3] See, e.g., Gross and Lentin 1970.

nodes is that the former are the end of the line, as it were. There is no substructure possible below them whereas non-terminal nodes have additional structure below them.

Having made these formal distinctions, we can explore the discourse grammars of oral-formulaic speech more explicitly. First, the kind of rules we have looked at above propose that all discourse sequences in a theme will be strictly ordered. That is not always the case. Free order sequences are permitted in some varieties of formulaic speech. In discourse structure rules square brackets are used to enclose such sequences. For example, in commentaries on ice hockey matches, every now and then a commentator will relate a face-off episode. In such an episode the linesman, an official, drops the puck between two players in order to restart the game. The discourse grammar for the face-off is rigidly sequential, but that grammar is embedded in larger episodes of the game. It seems that these larger episodes are, in many cases, not structured by discourse structure rules because the play is not routine enough to allow it to be coded into discourse structure rules. Putting it differently, there are aspects of ice hockey that allow for free and relatively unordered play. Such play is still related using formulae since such patterns, as will be seen later, code significant episodes of a formulaic variety. In the case of ice hockey, some of these episodes are serial in nature: for example, a series of passes from one player to another. In such a sequence, formulae will be used to describe the passes. The same can be observed in the case of some of the episodes of cricket commentaries (Pawley 1991). As a result, the context-free rewrite rules that account for discourse structure with free order sequences are not as restrictive as they are in the grammar of English, for example, where words cannot be put into free order sequences.

None of the discourse grammars underlying a formulaic variety of speech that I have investigated is recursive. The recursive property of context-free grammars allows them to embed structures within structures ad infinitum. For example, in the grammar of English it is possible to embed possessive phrases inside one another in the following way. We can say "My father's brother's sister's mother's aunt's car's door's handle's. . . ." It seems that such embedding, where it takes place in the discourse structure of formulaic speech, has limits.

In such genres any non-terminal constituent that appears on the righthand side of one discourse structure rule appears on the lefthand side of one and only one other rule. Therefore the rules that have a particular non-terminal node on their lefthand side appear higher in the grammar than those with that node on their righthand side. For example, in the discourse structure of auctions, there is a constituent for the description of the lot.

This constituent appears on the righthand side of the rule that gives the top structure of the auction. In turn, the description of the lot constituent appears on the lefthand side of the rule, giving the internal structure of the lot description, for example, in the livestock auction grammar. The conventions for these rules are as follows: the arrow can be paraphrased as "consists of;" the parentheses enclose optional structural elements; the square brackets enclose free order sequences as indicated above.

> Auction —> description + opening bid search + bidcalling + sale + (epilogue)

> Description —> [provenance + number] + [(history) + (preparation) + (potential) + ...]

Figure 1: Discourse structure rules of auction speech

The restriction limiting non-terminal elements to being on the righthand side of the arrow in only one rule has the effect of stipulating that the degree of embedding allowed by a set of rules is limited by the number of rules in the discourse grammar that have non-terminal nodes. The depth of each non-terminal constituent is also unique, since, under these limitations, the same constituents always appear at the same level of embedding. Suppose, for example that we have a discourse grammar with the following rules:

A —> B + C
B —> E + (F) + G
E —> a + b
F —> c + d + e
G —> f

In such a situation B is always and only the first sub-section of A; G is always and only the final sub-section of B, and so on. Such a restriction on a context-free grammar has as the consequence that the discourse grammar is not fully recursive, except in so far as the rules allow repetition of the same constituent. That occurs in the commentaries of horse races, where, if the race were to go on forever, the cycle constituent in the commentary that names the horses in the order in which they are currently running would be repeated forever (Kuiper and Austin 1990).

Second, there appears to be a general constraint on discourse grammars that will not allow them to have any more than four or perhaps five levels of structure. In the case of race-calling, each cycle is contained

within the structure of the whole race commentary. In the discourse grammar of North Canterbury livestock auctions, the structure has only three levels, as can be seen from Figure 1 (Kuiper and Haggo 1984:209). The distance from highest constituent to lowest goes from Auction (the highest level) to Description of the lot (the next level down) to Provenance, where the lot comes from and the lowest level of discourse structure. Thus the three levels.

In oral heroic poems such as the *Iliad*, there are constituents of the story that recur embedded in other episodes. For example, Homer's heroes in the *Iliad* arm themselves for battle. When they do so, there is a small discourse grammar that supports the description (Thornton 1984:100-3). Since these arming sequences appear inside other sequences, the arming grammar is embedded in a higher structure, but even here it seems that the levels of embedding are limited to four. The highest-level constituent is the poem as a whole. Below this, if Thornton is correct (46-63), there is a constituent for one of the journeys back or forth from the shore to the walls of Troy in which the Greeks fight their way to the walls of Troy or are beaten back to their ships by the Trojans. Below that there is, say, the battle between Achilles and Hector, part of which is the arming sequence; at the bottom we find the putting on of the greaves. This structure consists of five levels of constituents and four levels of embedding.
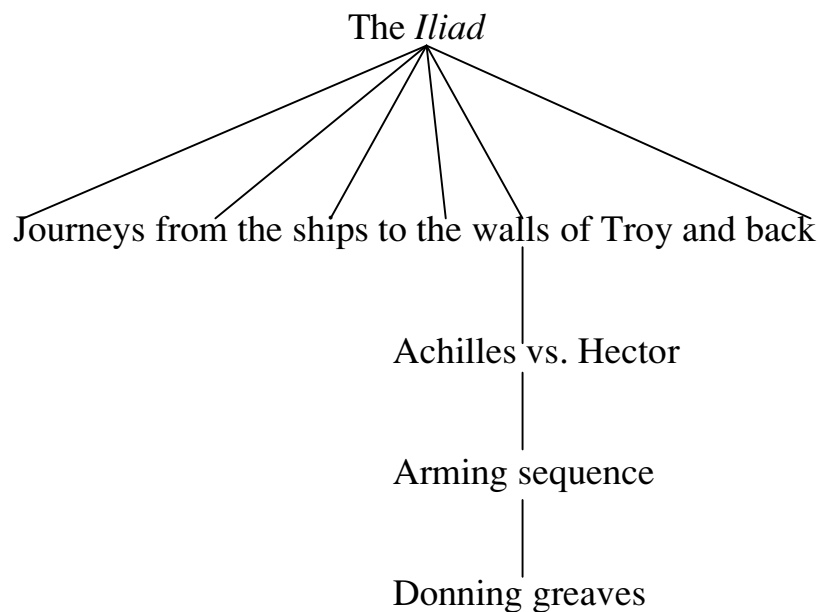

Figure 2: The hierarchical structure of the Iliad

The arming episode also usefully illustrates an earlier point. Arming constituents in the *Iliad* recur. People arm themselves or are armed at various times, but on each occasion the arming sequence is at the same level within the structure of the poem. There are, to put it differently, no insertions of minor battles within the sequence of a warrior being armed. It is, by contrast, perfectly possible to imagine that kind of insertion happening in a modern novel.

Self-embedding of discourse grammar constituents is also impossible. There are never auctions within auctions, descriptions of the provenance of cattle within descriptions of the provenance of cattle, arming sequences within arming sequences. The result of this set of constraints on the discourse structure rules of formulaic speech is that they build rather flat structures. In some cases this results from the events themselves having a linear character. For example, while the commentator of a horse race may call horses repeatedly, he will use an iterated structure rather than an embedded one. Auctions have the same linear character. On sale day, one sale succeeds another and in an individual auction one bid succeeds another. This point about linearity is made in general for oral forms by Ong (1982:37-38). But in other cases it appears to be the result of the way oral-formulaic performance utilizes human memory.

The four properties just mentioned—the lack of true recursion and of self-embedding, the relatively low level of embedding, and the possibility of iteration—can be seen as a consequence of the theory of oral-formulaic performance proposed in *Smooth Talkers* (Kuiper 1996), namely that formulaic varieties of speaking can be used as a way of mitigating the effects of limited short-term memory in certain high pressure situations. Iterated structures are flat while embedded structures are not. If a speaker is under working-memory pressure in performance, the flatter the structure that the speaker has to produce, the better. The reason for favoring flatter structures is that the greater the depth of structure, the greater the burden on working memory. In a heavily embedded structure, the speaker must remember where in the higher structure he or she is while going through the lower structure.[4] It is likely that auctioneers, race callers, and oral poets will want to save as much working memory space as possible and will therefore use discourse grammars that are as efficient as possible in this respect. Making do with shallow structures meets this goal. Performers of heroic poems cannot do without some structural depth, since their texts are much longer

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[4] There is evidence from the theory of the parsing of syntactic structure in linguistic performance that human memories and processors have a preference for flat structure (Frazier and Clifton 1996, Marcus 1980).

than those of race callers and auctioneers. They also do not appear to be under quite the same working-memory loading from external sources as race callers and auctioneers. They have no race to watch or goods to sell, but they do have a complicated tale to relate from long-term memory. They therefore have the memory resources to manage a certain amount of structural depth.

To summarize, the discourse structure of formulaic varieties of speech has three formal properties. It can be modeled by context-free rewrite rules. These rules do not permit self-embedding, and allow other forms of embedding down to four levels only. The rules do allow for iteration and therefore tend to build relatively flat structures.

Formulae

Formulaic speech appears to be inextricably bound up with using lexicalized phrases. Most scholars of oral-formulaic performance take as their starting definition of the formula that of Milman Parry quoted by Lord: "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (1960:30). The metrical element of this definition derives from the properties of the formulaic tradition in which Parry was working. Since we know that Old English alliterative poetry is in part formulaic but its meter is accentual, we might loosen Parry's definition to include the possession of rhythm as a defining property. However even this hypothesis proves too strong. Not all formulae in all formulaic varieties of speech have a rhythm that is different from normal speech rhythm. This leaves us with a definition specifying only a group of words expressing an essential idea—not a precise definition.

Lord suggests that "the most stable formulas will be those for the most common ideas of the poetry. They will express the names of the actors, the main actions, time, and place" (34). He also suggests that the "group of words" part of the definition can be augmented by supposing that formulae have a kind of slot and filler grammar: "We immediately begin to see that the singer has not had to learn a large number of separate formulas. The commonest ones that he first uses set a basic pattern, and once he has the basic pattern firmly in his grasp, he needs only to substitute another word for the key one" (36). An interesting use of this concept is a study by Fry (1975) that shows how a pagan set of formulae can be converted to Christian usage by small changes in the fillers for particular slots. It seems that formulae have both syntactic and lexical properties, as well as a relationship with the sites in which they are employed in the composition of oral epic.

However, scholarship in the field of oral-formulaic performance has not helped to make the theory of the formula much more precise. For example, Lord (1986) covers a range of scholarship related to the formula, but there is little increase in precision of definition.[5]

Linguistically a formula is a lexical item that is phrasal in character rather than being just a single word; that is, it has syntactic structure. It is held in long-term memory by a speaker or a community of speakers. In this way formulae are like idioms. But they also have an additional property. Each formula has idiosyncratic conditions of use. It does particular work for a speaker in a particular situation; specifically, in the case of oral poetry, it performs the kinds of discourse functions Lord alludes to above.

Since formulae are lexical items, their properties should be demonstrable. Like all lexical items, formulae show both arbitrariness of form and idiosyncrasy of behavior.[6] The arbitrariness of form exhibits itself in the fact that while some formulae have variants, there are many ways other than these of saying the same thing, ways that oral-formulaic performers do not use. For example, in the face-off in ice hockey commentaries, the expression "get the draw" is formulaic whereas "aim for the draw" is not. In race calling the loop formulae that one caller uses to signal that he is moving from the last runner in the field back to the first runner include "round the Showgrounds bend they come," but not "round the Showgrounds bend they trot." An auctioneer will ask towards the end of the bidding "Any more bids?" But he will not ask, "Has anyone a further bid?"[7] Pawley and Syder suggest that, given the infinite number of possible ways a language provides for saying something, in many cases native speakers select only one or two characteristic ways of saying it. Formulae are such ways of saying things in a "nativelike" way.

However, formulae are not without variant forms. In a real estate auction (see Kuiper 1996), the auctioneer (Rod Cameron) calls bids in the following ways (where X is a dollar value):

1.   I have X dollar bid
       I have X dollars
       X dollars
       X

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[5] See, for a further example, Russo 1976.

[6] Arbitrariness of form is regarded by Di Sciullo and Williams (1987) as diagnostic of lexical items.

[7] For a detailed discussion, see Pawley and Syder 1983 and Pawley 1985.

2.   At X dollars
        At X

If we look at these two sets of data, each can be seen as consisting of variants of a single formula in much the same way as Lord's "systems" are (1960:35). Lord illustrates one such system as follows:

$$a \; u \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{kuli} \\ \textit{dvoru} \\ \textit{kući} \end{array} \right.$$

Such systems are arbitrary in form and in their lexical selection since we can think of many other syntactically well-formed variants that do not occur.

How should we explain such arbitrary variation in formulae? Let us look again at the variants in 1 and 2 above. In each case some of the elements are compulsory and some optional. At first glance it might appear that each variant has a separate lexical entry just like a single word. However, to suppose that would be to ignore the family resemblances among the different variants. We can account for these family resemblances by supposing that formulae are generated, that is, given explicit structural description, by finite state grammars without loops. Such grammars look like this:
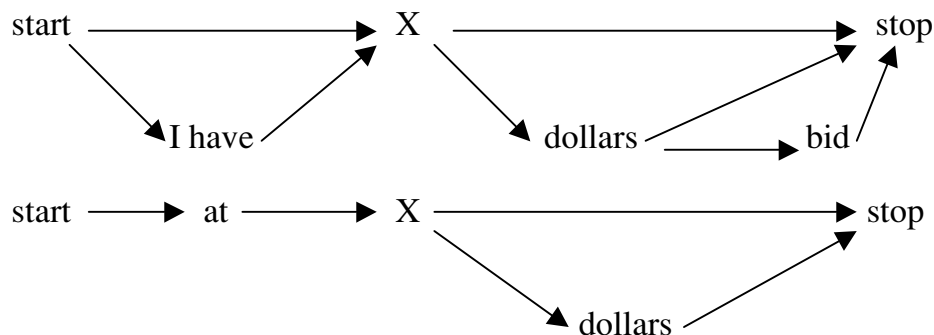

Figure 3: Finite state representation of two bid-calling formulae

Finite state diagrams not only provide a model of these two formulae but of very many formulae. Here are some of the formulae for describing face-offs in ice hockey:
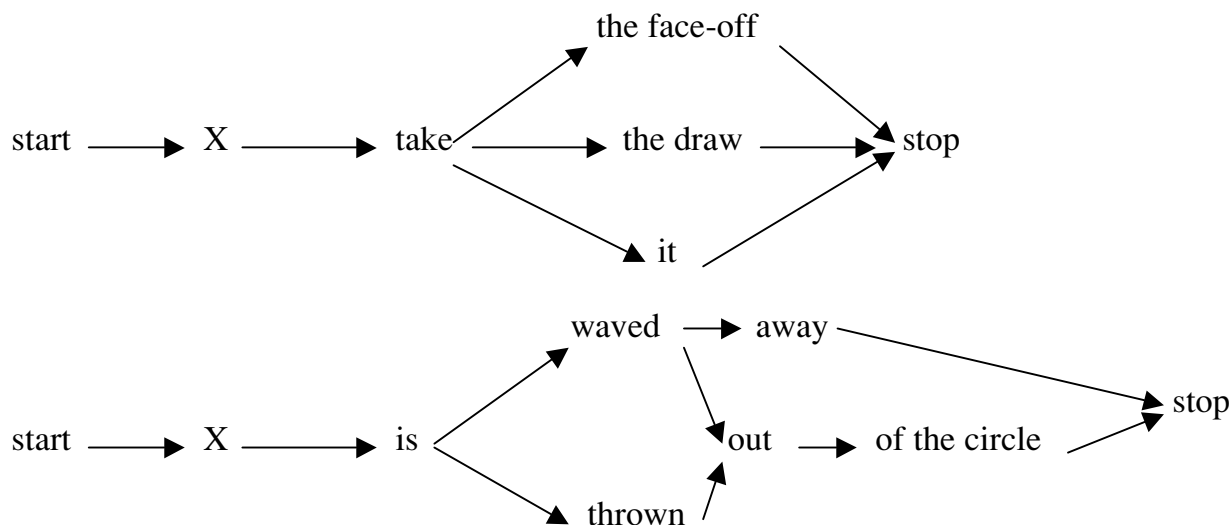
Figure 4: Finite state representation of face-off formulae

If formulae have finite state properties, we can explain why some variants appear and others do not. The reason is that only those forms that can be generated by the finite state diagrams are available variants. If formulae were freely generated syntactic structures, then we would expect many more variants to appear than actually do. Formulae share this property of having a restricted set of variants with idioms that are also phrasal lexical items.[8] Though formulae may be modeled as finite state diagrams, they also have a grammatical category: they are noun phrases or verb phrases. Speakers must know what the grammatical category of a formula is because formulae can and do fit into a grammatical position when they are not a full sentence.

None of this precludes a formula from being reanalyzed in its entirety as a normal syntactic structure. Formulae are, for the most part, normal in their syntactic properties. What is being claimed is that oral-formulaic performers normally store formulae and use them in a finite state form. Someone who is not familiar with the formula as formula will parse it as they would any other structure, since there is often nothing about a formula that tells those who do not know it that it is a lexical item. On occasion someone who is familiar with that fact will nevertheless reanalyze it, making up new versions for rhetorical effect.

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[8] See further Weinreich 1969, Chafe 1968, Fraser 1970, and Di Sciullo and Williams 1987.

A further lexical property of formulae is that they frequently do not mean what they say; that is, they are semantically non-compositional. The traditional formula to end bidding at an auction—"going once, going twice"—does not mean what it says. The lot is only going to be sold once, not two or three times. The formulae of cricket commentaries are almost all non-compositional. Cricket commentators talk about a ball being "on the leg" as in "so and so gets this ball on the leg." In cricket the field of play is divided symmetrically into the "on" side and the "leg" side. A ball bowled "on the leg" is on the leg side of the midline dividing the field of play. It is not on the person's leg at all nor is the person's "leg stump," another technical formula, the stump of the person's leg. What this actually means in turn needs an explanation that would, if a cricket enthusiast were explaining it, involve further non-compositional formulae. Such examples could, we predict, be found in all varieties of oral-formulaic speech. Formulae are thus not only ways of saying but ways of seeing, being interdependent parts of a semantic network of relationships that constitute the knowledge one has of an area, such as a sport or the Trojan War.

We are now in a position to see the connection between discourse structure rules, whose formal properties we looked at earlier, and formulae. A defining property of formulae is that they are indexed to particular constituents of the discourse structure rules. Any formula appears to be tied to one—and only one—constituent of the discourse structure. This linkage makes formulae in oral-formulaic speech unambiguous in their discourse function. Speaking metaphorically, we could say that formulae are stored on file cards with one, and only one, index. If formulae are seen in this way, then the discourse structure rules have a dual aspect; they model the high-level structure of the discourse but, perhaps more significantly, they anchor every formula to its appropriate place in the discourse.

If formulae have the structure of indexed finite state diagrams, and given the hypothesis initially proposed by Lord that formulaic speech is a response to the pressures of real-time performance (including, in the terms we discussed earlier, subject to internal and external constraints on such speech), then it should be the case that using formulae makes it easier for speakers under working memory pressure to speak fluently. Let us suppose that all the features of oral-formulaic speech reduce the range of choices available to the speaker. In the case of formulae, we can clarify as follows. Speakers who reach a particular point in the discourse have at their disposal a number of formulae, each of which is a finite state diagram. The choice of formula is not functionally significant, but it is stylistically important. To remain interesting, speakers must not say exactly the same thing every time they open their mouths at a particular point in the discourse. The choice is

therefore first among the various formulae that have the same discourse index, and then, secondly, which particular path that a speaker takes in the finite state diagram.   At each point the number of choices is small and finite, so that using formulae does exactly what we have supposed needs to be done under working memory pressure. It sharply limits the speaker's linguistic resources. It also means that what the speaker says will be contextually appropriate if the discourse structure rules are followed for the kind of discourse that the current context requires. A race caller will produce an appropriate account during the running of a race if he follows the discourse rules and inserts the contextually determined names of horses into the formulae he is using.

Compare this process with the hypothesis that speakers construct sentences compositionally. Here the number of available choices is infinite. No doubt speakers can and do, from time to time, use linguistic resources in this way, but they do not seem to do so in the case of oral-formulaic speech. We can conclude that oral-formulaic performers replace the act of processing speech with looking up formulae wherever possible.   Where processing is necessary, they use the look-up procedure to give themselves time to do what processing needs to be done.

We have now defined the linguistic aspect of the formula in some detail. We have had nothing to say about the metrical properties that have exercised some literary scholars of heroic epic. The reason for that omission is that metrical properties do not seem to be necessary properties of all formulae. That is not to say that in particular oral traditions, such as those of oral poets, meter may not be significant. It clearly is. But the *necessary* properties of formulae are their finite state syntax and their discourse indexing.

The Drone

In many oral traditions, speaking or singing with a strong tonal center, or droning, is the basic prosodic mode in which the performer performs. Different oral traditions ornament this tonal center in different ways, generally in a fairly predictable fashion. In part this predictability is part of the tradition; in part it is idiosyncratic to different performers. What is important for the foregoing is that a strong tonal center and a high degree of predictability in the prosodic ornamentation of oral-formulaic speech lead to the limitation or focusing of linguistic resources that characterizes such speech.

Fluency and Abnormal Fluency

Normal conversational speech is fluent. Speakers speak at an average rate of five to six syllables per second and often with little hesitation (Bolinger 1975:496). Generally the speech of oral-formulaic performers is abnormally fluent. Its speech usually averages out to conversational speed but, unlike conversational speech, it has an abnormally even articulation rate, a lack of hesitation phenomena such as voiced or unvoiced pausing, an absence of filler expressions such as "you know," and an absence of false starts. Not all oral-formulaic speech has all these features (Kuiper 1996). We can attribute the abnormal fluency of formulaic performers to the fact that they make heavy use of recall rather than constructing utterances from the ground up. While one is speaking from memory, the hesitation phenomena that indicate the uncertainties of speech planning are absent.

Situations, Formulae, and Oral Traditions

I now turn to the final area in which further explication might be sought, the general relationship between the text and its context. Consider first "what Bauman refers to . . . as an 'interpretative frame,' [which Foley] prefer[s] to call the performance arena, understanding by that term the locus in which some specialized form of communication is uniquely licensed to take place" (Foley 1995:8). We have seen that discourse structure and formulae are intimately related and that reasonably precise theories can be constructed as to how this happens. But what of the discourse structure, formulae, and their relationship to the non-linguistic context? In this regard it is salutary to recall Sherzer's admonition (1983:18):

> There is the relationship between speaking patterns and the other sociological patterns found in a society—social organization, political, ecological, economic, or religious. There are anthropological theorists who would always see one of these aspects of a society as basic. Such a view would always have speech patterns be secondary, superficial reflections of the more basic structure. But in many situations in many societies speaking has a structure of its own which can play a major role in defining, determining, and organizing sociological structures.

The most likely source within linguistics for a theory of how this may take place is the ethnography of communication and, more specifically, the theory of register. A register is usually conceived of as dealing with those

varieties of a language some of whose features are situationally determined or correlated—a situated discourse, in other words. Since formulae are linguistic units whose conditions of use are situationally determined, the frameworks for ethnography of communication and register studies should yield useful analytic tools for exploring what I will term "pragmatic indexing."

There exist a sizeable number of situational classifications from which one might draw suggestions for how speakers code pragmatic indexes. These should be seen in the light of the comment by Biber that "despite the number of register studies that have been completed to date, there is still need for a comprehensive analytical framework. Such a framework should clearly distinguish between linguistic and non-linguistic characterisations" (1994:31). Here I will consider only the non-linguistic characterizations, since I explored the linguistic properties of formulae earlier. Such characterizations can be of two kinds: analytic frameworks or taxonomies devised by the ethnographer for describing situated discourse, or theories as to the nature of the communicative events that native speakers have internalized and that constitute aspects of their native-like communicative competence.[9] These two approaches do not necessarily come up with different answers, but their objectives are dissimilar. For the objective I have set, the second approach is to be preferred. I am not so much interested in an analytic framework as a theory of the nature of pragmatic indexing.

To put things a little differently, let us suppose that part of a native speaker's communicative competence involves the learning of a set of phrasal lexical items. Some of these will be formulae. Attempting to give a descriptively adequate account of formulae therefore requires a theory of how formulae are entered into the native lexicon, that is, explaining how formulae are native-like component parts of certain communicative events. That is to suppose that each formula is a kind of micro-register. So is it possible to discover restrictive theories of such micro-registers that have the explanatory power of the linguistic constraints that we have proposed above in limiting the world of the possible where formulaic speech is concerned?

Regrettably, in our current state of knowledge, the answer seems to be that it is not. If it were, then there would exist general parameters that "define the frames of perception which constitute the boundaries between socio-cultural domains and along which natives determine to which socio-cultural categories linguistic units belong" (Herdt 1980:197). By looking at standard examples such as arming formulae in Homer, we can see that a search for general constraints on the pragmatic indexing of formulae is

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[9] See Hymes 1974, Pawley 1985, and Sherzer and Darnell 1972.

futile. Each formula is indexed for a specific constituent of the discourse structure rules, but these rules are culture-specific.

If we look at the kinds of frameworks that have been constructed for performing analyses of situational constraint,[10] none provide constraints as to what a possible pragmatic index might include. For instance, they do not preclude the possibility that a formula might be indexed for the haircolor of the speaker or for whether or not the addressee is wearing contact lenses. Instead, they provide fairly open-ended frameworks that analysts of the situational context of speech can use as checklists for the general areas in which pragmatic indexing may be found. In other words, in our current state of knowledge it is not possible to say what constraints exist on the pragmatic indexing of formulae.

Conclusion

The speech of formulaic performers is constrained both from within, by human memory and processing capacities, and externally, by the routine tasks that formulaic speakers must perform. In turn, these constraints make it advantageous for speakers to select speech that makes do with limited resources. Formulaic speech employs discourse structure rules and formulae with formal properties that limit what can be said. It employs unusual prosodic modes. As a result, speakers who utilize formulaic modes of speech speak with extraordinary fluency.[11] What has been shown above is that by looking in a precise way at each of these linguistic features of oral-formulaic speech, particularly at the formal properties of discourse structure rules and formulae, we can get a clearer picture of some of the mechanics of an oral-formulaic tradition. We can also delimit formulaic speech from other varieties of speech, since the formal constraints we have been able to place in discourse structure rules and formulae do just that.

Using formulae according to their discourse indexing limits a performer's options, allowing speech in circumstances where performance constraints limit a speaker's ability to be highly creative. Formulaic speech also consists of a prosodic tradition, a way of speaking or chanting that makes speaking simpler by limiting the performer's options in this area. The employment of these two parts of the linguistic tradition results in an unusually fluent performance. I have suggested, however, that we cannot

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[10] E.g., Hymes 1974, Crystal and Davy 1969, Biber 1994, and Coulmas 1979.

[11] This theory is the burden of Kuiper 1996.

yet make precise predictions about the ways in which the non-linguistic conditions of use for formulae are coded in the mind of the speaker.

What practical consequences do these findings have for those working in the field of oral literature? They allow for formulae to be seen not just as underlined sections of (transcribed) text but as mental representations of an abstract structure that can give rise to a small, finite number of instantiations of the formula. In such cases the formula is, in fact, the finite state representation rather than a particular form of words. The findings also suggest that discourse structures can be represented by a system of rules that performers follow and that explain some of the properties of their performances in a testable fashion.

In practical terms, the theories presented above allow students of oral literature to construct dictionaries of formulae represented as finite state systems. They also allow for the structure of works of oral literature to be represented as discourse grammars. But these are only beginnings. The microstudy of a specific oral tradition reveals that different performers make idiosyncratic use of the discourse rules and the inventory of formulae.

Careful study would show how an individual performer uses the discourse grammar and which particular paths he or she prefers through a finite state system of a particular formula. In this way the theoretical claims made above can be turned into a way of uncovering both the tradition and an individual performer's accessing of it. Take, for example, the highly characteristic prosodic patterns used in the oral traditional performances of tobacco auctioneers in the American South. Kuiper and Tillis (1986) have noted the macro features of the tobacco auctioneers' chant tradition, but, as far as I know, no one has studied the idiosyncratic implementations of that tradition by individual auctioneers. Even the study of specific performers is at the level of generalization. We know that no two performances are ever identical. The theoretical claims made earlier allow for the discourse structure rules and formulae of one performer to be studied in their detailed implementation at particular times and places. Furthermore, the longitudinal study of a performer's gradual induction into a tradition and subsequent development as a performer within it would benefit from looking, for example, at the ways in which the discourse structure rules become articulated and the flexibility of finite state systems expands as the performer becomes more experienced.

I hope that the theories presented in this study will give rise to greater precision in the discussion of formulaic speech and will allow those who work on formulaic performance traditions to understand them better and to

utilize the formalisms presented here to gain greater understanding of both the macro- and the micro-levels of formulaic performance.[12]

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Kōnodai senki: Traditional Narrative and Warrior Ideology in Sixteenth-Century Japan

S. A. Thornton

"Tradition" is routinely invoked as an appeal to the past in order to legitimate the interests of the present. So, too, traditional narratives—in whole, in part, or in new combinations—are marshalled to legitimate new or foreign ideologies. For example, the author of *Beowulf* effectively combined traditional Anglo-Saxon prosody, Scandinavian history, folk tale, and myth both to present an idealization of traditional kingship and to condemn it: not even the best of kings, not even a Beowulf, is capable of fending off forever the inevitable and ineluctable disasters of internecine warfare arising from the horizontal and egalitarian structure of Germanic-Scandinavian society and the very competition for kingship itself.

In Japan, too, traditional narratives and narrative strategies have been employed to legitimate new power centers and their sources of authority. This pattern is clearly seen in *Kōnoda isenki* (*Chronicle of the Battle of Kōnodai*),[1] a sixteenth-century account of the battle in 1538 that finalized the transition of power from the old shogunal (military dictatorship) ruling family to a new warlord family in the area, still called the Kantō, around what is now Tokyo.

Historical Background

Between 1185 and 1867, Japan was ruled by a series of three warrior governments that were legitimated by the emperor's appointment of a major

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[1] For the text, see Hanawa 1977a. The numbers in parentheses refer to the lines in the text, which are not numbered in the Japanese text but are numbered in my translation. The author wishes to thank the Women Historians Reading Group of the History Department at Arizona State University for reading the article and making valuable comments that resulted in this version.

warlord to the position of *seiitaishōgun*, the military commander commissioned to pacify barbarians on the frontier.[2] The second of these warrior governments was the Ashikaga shogunate (1336-1573). The Ashikaga family headed a weak coalition of warrior families of roughly the same status and strength as its own that held together as long as they faced a common enemy. However, once the Ashikaga house had managed to defeat or coopt all its rivals in 1392, it immediately found itself challenged by its allies and even by the cadet house that had been established in the town of Kamakura (an hour west and south of Tokyo by train) to rule the Kantō and the north for the main house.

The power of the Ashikaga shogunate was broken by the civil war of 1467-77, the Ōnin War. Succession disputes not only in the Ashikaga main house but also in major warrior families serving the house (and often instigated by the shogunate) resulted in internecine warfare: there was no primogeniture to determine succession, and endemic factionalism in the main house based in the capital extended down to the vassals in the provinces. By the 1490s, Japan had devolved into some two hundred larger and smaller independent domains. Although mortally wounded, the Kyoto Ashikaga shogunate, like Madame Butterfly, took a long time dying: the *coup de grâce* was delivered by a warlord who ejected the last Ashikaga shogun from Kyoto in 1573 and began the process of reunifying Japan.[3]

The breakdown in the Ashikaga shogunate based in the capital was paralleled by the breakdown of the Ashikaga military government in the Kantō. After raising a major rebellion against the shogunal house in 1439 and assassinating the head of their own main vassals, the Uesugi, the Kamakura Ashikaga were forced out of their capital by the Uesugi and established themselves at Koga in the 1450s. The Uesugi requested that the Kyoto main house provide a replacement to head the Kamakura Ashikaga house, and a younger brother of the shogun was sent. Bringing bad habits from the capital, he favored the younger son to succeed him and was

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[2] The three shogunates are the Kamakura Shogunate (1192-1333), the Ashikaga Shogunate (1336-1573 [Japan was politically fragmented as a result of the Ōnin War of 1467-77]), and the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867). Between 1333 and 1336, there was a brief attempt to restore imperial rule, and between 1573 and 1603 Japan was gradually reunified under two warlords who, because of their descent, were precluded from appointment to the position of shogun, which was reserved for descendants of the Minamoto.

[3] The capital city was officially named Heian-kyō but called more generally Miyako, "the capital." For the sake of convenience, I will refer to it by its modern name, Kyoto.

subsequently assassinated by the elder in 1491; he was "avenged" by a vassal of the neighboring province of Suruga, one Ise Nagauji (Hōjō Sōun; 1432-1519), who took over the entire province of Izu, in which Kamakura was located.[4]

The Ise served the Ashikaga shoguns in a variety of capacities as specialists in court ceremony, bureaucrats and functionaries, and even as tutors to the Ashikaga heirs. Ise Nagauji had served Ashikaga Yoshimi (1439-91) until 1468 (Steenstrup 1974:284). To legitimate his new position, Nagauji married his son Ujitsuna (1487-1541) to a descendant of the family that had controlled the previous warrior government and took their name, Hōjō. Thus he tried to erase his connections to a house subordinate to the Ashikaga and to create an identification with the family of the previous regime.

The Ise or Odawara Hōjō, as they are now called, became one of the leading forces in the east and north and controlled the provinces of Izu, Sagami, and (most of) Musashi. In establishing themselves as a power in the eastern part of Japan, the Ise Hōjō had taken advantage both of the breakdown of the Ashikaga cadet house and of the competition between the two branches of the Uesugi family serving as the Kamakura Ashikaga's hereditary chief ministers or deputies. In the process of consolidating their power, the Ise Hōjō found it expedient to use a descendant of the Kamakura Ashikaga to bolster their authority. To this effect, Hōjō Ujitsuna married his daughter to Ashikaga Haruuji (d. 1560), son of Takamoto, the "Prince of Koga" (Koga *kubō*), and in the 1520s fought the Uesugi in their name.

Takamoto's younger brother Yoshiaki (d. 1538), after a disagreement with his father and brother, left Koga. In 1517 he was invited by Takeda Nobukatsu Jokan, who held Mariyatsu Castle in Kazusa Province, to help him in his campaign against a vassal of the Chiba of Shimosa Province. In that campaign, Yoshiaki apparently made a name for himself as a soldier and was installed in that vassal's castle Oyumi; he was therefore called "Prince of Oyumi" (Oyumi *gosho*).[5] He then allied himself with a major rival of the Hōjō, Satomi Yoshitaka (1512-76) of Awa Province, in the hope, of course,

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[4] All names are given in the Japanese style, with the surname or family name first and the personal name second.

[5] The title *kubō* was first used for the emperor and during the Ashikaga period for the shogun. For the Kamakura Ashikaga, who had been established as *kanrei* or Deputy to the shogun, to assume the title was in effect to challenge the shogun's authority by asserting parity of status. The title *gosho* means literally "imperial palace" and was used for the palaces of the shogun and of the Kamakura Ashikaga. By extension, it referred to the occupant of the palace; in Japan, you are where you are.

of taking over leadership of the Ashikaga family and of restoring its power in the Kantō.

The situation was resolved by this battle at Kōnodai, which took place on the seventh day of the tenth lunar month of 1538 in what is now Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture, which borders Tokyo on the east. Ashikaga Yoshiaki and Satomi Yoshitaka took up a position on the Ichi River (Ichikawa, more or less on the border between Musashi and Kazusa Provinces); Hōjō Ujitsuna and his son Ujiyasu (1515-70) marched out from their base at Edo Castle. In the battle Yoshiaki, his eldest son, and his brother Motoyori were killed; Satomi Yoshitaka escaped. Their victory in this battle secured for the Hōjō a position in the area that was dominant but not unchallenged (Ichikawa 1971-75, ii:232-41).

The Text

The Battle of Kōnodai was composed some time before the date of a colophon, at the end of one of the several surviving manuscripts, indicating that in 1575 (Tenshō 3.8.11)[6] it was catalogued or filed together with two other texts whose narratives were connected with that of the *Kōnodai*. The manuscripts have not been collated, but there does not appear to be any great variation except that some copies are bound together with the above-mentioned texts and others are not (Kami 1977:85-86).

The text was block printed by Hanawa Hokinoichi in the early nineteenth century in the series now called the *Zoku gunsho ruijū*. This is the text I am using. As printed in the modern edition, the text runs to a short eleven and one-half pages or 603 lines of varying length. Probably because of its length, there are no subdivisions such as chapters.

Kōnodai is written in a style called *wakan konkōbun*, which mixes Chinese characters and the Japanese syllabary called *hiragana* and follows Japanese rather than Chinese word order (*kanbun*), which was used regularly only by clerics and high-ranking aristocrats. The balanced mix of Japanese and Chinese was commonly used in writing literary prose and was certainly easier to read, especially by a performer reading out loud to an audience. In addition, the text's sentences are broken up into small units: a grammatical sentence (with a verb ending in a sentence-ending inflection) can run to several lines, but a line can be as short as one word, a name in a list. The punctuation is indicated by small circles, which function like commas and periods.

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[6] Third year of the Tenshō era, eighth month, eleventh day.

Although there is little actual documentation of the battle, there are other extensive narratives besides the *Kōnodai senki*.[7] The earliest is the 1538 account written a bare eighteen days after the battle, *Oyumi gosho-sama onuchiji ikusa monogatari* (*The Battle Tale of the Death of the Prince of Oyumi*; Bōsō Sōsho 1912, i:189-95). Also very short (five pages in the modern print edition), it may be the original of which *Kōnodai* was a reworking (Kami 1977:96); it certainly shares many features with the *Kōnodai* , including its pro-Hōjō sympathies. Other accounts of the battle are found in a series of histories of the Kantō region written in the seventeenth century and later: *Sōshū hyōran ki* (*Chronicle of the Military Disturbances in Sagami Province*; Hanawa 1977c), *Hōjō ki* (*Chronicle of the Hōjō*; Hanawa 1979a), *Satomi kyūdai ki* (*Record of Nine Generations of the Satomi*; Hanawa 1979b), and others. The accounts drawn from the Satomi side diverge significantly from the others in that they relate little or nothing.[8]

What interests the historian is how different the description of the event in the *Kōnodai senki* is from the later historical texts. For example, *Kōnodai* 's narrative is written in a style so terse and elliptical as to suggest it was written for insiders: one could not possibly understand what was happening without already knowing the context of the event and details of the battle. Indeed, the text actually omits certain critical information. The battle is framed as a confrontation between Hōjō Ujitsuna and Ashikaga Yoshiaki. Two very important characters are left out of the discussion altogether. The first is Yoshiaki's elder brother Takamoto, the Prince of Koga, and father of Ujitsuna's son-in-law. According to the 1538 *Oyumi* mentioned above, Takamoto had given Hōjō Ujitsuna an official order (*gonaisho*, in his capacity as titulary head of the Kamakura military government) to attack Yoshiaki (Bōsō Sōsho 1912, i:190). This detail is missing from the *Kōnodai*. Fifty years after the fact, the Ashikaga were hardly relevant and no longer needed as a source of authority for the Hōjō action. Further, the *Kōnodai*, like the *Oyumi*, does not mention the Satomi. Neither in 1538 nor in the early 1570s did the Hōjō care to hear that there was serious opposition to their control of the Kantō. The neglect to include the Satomi in accounts of the death of Yoshiaki may stem from the fact that Satomi Yoshitaka was still alive and kicking: he continued successfully to challenge the Hōjō until his death in 1574. In fact, his heirs continued to

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[7] For a collection of available materials, see Ichikawa 1971-75, v:405-38 (for both battles).

[8] The different sources for the history of the battle have been examined and are not of importance here. See Satō 1925.

resist Hōjō encroachment vigorously and participated in Toyotomi Hideyoshi's 1590 campaign to destroy the Hōjō, the last major campaign in the reunification of Japan.

Indeed, the cavalier treatment of the date of the battle in the *Kōnodai*, which is given as a year earlier, and the indication of the date itself by what Kami Hiroshi calls a "traditional circumlocution"—"around the first ten days of the month of the sixth year of Tenbun [1537] or so they say" (line 4)—suggest that history is not the point of this account (Kami 1977:86-87). Kami has analyzed the *Kōnodai* as a collation of contemporary sermon materials, popular narratives, performing arts, and poems (*ibid.*:96-97). His focus is on the *Kōnodai* as a representative of one strain of late-medieval battle literature that was heavily influenced by contemporary narrative performing arts, both elite and popular. However, a close examination of the text reveals that something more than entertainment (in the sense that tragedies like *King Lear* or *Hamlet* are entertainment) is being offered here. It may look like a *tour de force* anthology of allusions to and characters, themes, scenes, and poems from well-known narratives old and new, but it also disguises and at the same time foregrounds an assertion of Hōjō legitimacy and the right to rule. Traditional narrative strategies represented by that patchwork are used to define—and to console—the losers of the Battle of Kōnodai as the latest victims of the onset of a cosmic cycle of decline, a period of the decline of Buddhism and the polity associated with it. The victory of the winners, on the other hand, is vindicated by a competing warrior ideology of rational conduct derived from Confucianism: the right to rule earned by proper lord-vassal relations, proper strategy, and proper consideration of omens and the Japanese gods. As the account of a battle that is based on narrative strategies identified with oral composition, which incorporates a wide variety of available Chinese and Japanese literary topoi and provides interrelated religious and political interpretations of the events, *Kōnodai senki* demonstrates the same form and function of other examples of the genre of battle narratives known as *gunki monogatari*.

On the *gunki monogatari* as Genre and Object of Scholarly Inquiry

It is not my intention to rehearse the history of the classification of *gunki monogatari* as a distinct genre of battle literature. However, since there is so little available in Western languages on the topic, perhaps a short introduction is in order. The *gunki monogatari*, "war tale" or "epic,"[9] is a

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[9] I use "battle narrative" to refer to any account of battle or war in any genre.

narrative whose subject is a battle or war in which a great family is destroyed.[10]   An epic is never the story of a victory, but of a great tragedy. The key word is *metsubo*, "fall" or "destruction," or a variation. Indeed, the original title of our text is "The Downfall at Kōnodai" or *Kōnodai gobotsuraku no koto* (line 2; Kami 1977:86).

The epic is usually a compilation of many accounts culled from many sources including diaries, official records, old war stories, and religious stories about those defeated and killed, about the victors shocked by the horror of battle into leaving the world, and about the servants, lovers, wives, and mothers who entered religious life to pray for the souls of the dead. The epic usually begins with a sermon-like introduction and ends with a peace-producing account of an imperial/shogunal reconciliation or with a pacification ritual. It is true that not all *gunki monogatari* share all the same features, but they do share enough of them to be recognized as belonging to the same genre.[11]

Of the several hundred surviving examples of Japanese battle literature, including variations, over ninety percent were produced between 1375 and about 1600. However, only a handful of texts from the tenth through fourteenth centuries have received significant attention. Further, until the 1970s, only these few were generally recognized as *gunki monogatari* or *senki monogatari* (battle tales): the best-known include the *Hōgen monogatari* (*Tale of the [Disturbance] of the Hōgen Era*), *Heiji monogatari* (*Tale of the [Disturbance] of the Heiji Era*), *Heike monogatari* (*Tale of the Heike*), and *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of the Great Pacification*).[12]

"War tale" seems to be acceptable to Japanese scholars; see, for example, Yamashita 1976.

[10] Tomikura 1963:10; Takagi I. 1956:235; Takagi T. 1936:194.

[11] The standard definitions have been based on only those narratives produced between about 1200 and 1400 (Sugimoto et al. 1963:80).

[12] See, for example, Sugimoto et al. 1963, which lists and discusses fully and individually seven *gunki monogatari* through the *Taiheiki* and lumps together the production of the next two hundred years in a four-page review before discussing the *Gikeiki* and *Soga monogatari*. Even Tomikura Tokujirō admits that the 1393 *Meitokuki*, which he edited, is not considered to rank with either the *Heike monogatari* or the *Taiheiki* (Tomikura 1941:180). Kajiwara observes that *Meitokuki* does not have the scale of the other two, i.e., that it is a shorter work (1970:41-42). Ichiko Teiji states explicitly that the *Meitokuki*, *Kakitsuki*, *Ōninki*, and *Yūki* are not to be ranked with the *Heike* or *Taiheiki* (1957:232).

The restricted focus on the *gunki monogatari* was the result of research interests dominated by two main fields, literature and folklore. Literature had two major influences. The first was to restrict research to a few texts on the assumption that only they demonstrated the literary quality that made them worth studying. The judgment of quality was based on characteristics such as faithfulness to historical facts and the expression of morality, ideals, or intellect (Takagi I. 1956:235).[13]

The second influence of the field of literature in limiting the focus of research to such a small proportion of the narratives has been the need to establish the relationships among the variants preserved in manuscript and sometimes block print. This line of research calls for a daunting breadth of paleographical and philological skills; however, as the variants are many, so must the texts be few. Moreover, this line of research has been dominated by a kind of textual fundamentalism: the search for the true, original text buried in the accretions of the so-called expanded text.[14] On the one hand, one could trace the development of a text like the *Heike monogatari* in all its stages back to the diaries and other documents on which the original text had been based. Kenneth Dean Butler's "The Textual Evolution of the *Heike monogatari*" is an excellent representative of this approach (1966). Nevertheless, this line of research could also be taken as indicating that the object was to identify and recover a first and original composition buried in a given text, to strip it of its additions and interpolations, and to reinstate it as the true and authentic version.

However, more recent scholarship recognizes that the process of the development determines the genre, that the end product, the expanded text, *is* the *gunki monogatari*. This reevaluation of the war tale as a genre was initiated by a younger wave of Japanese scholars[15] who had allied themselves with senior scholars in the field of folklore.[16] They looked at the "accretions" and the process of expanding the text to redefine the genre and, on that basis, added to the list of texts at least five examples from the period

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[13] See also Takagi T. 1936:194 and Tomikura 1963:10.

[14] Analysis of the process of developing a *gunki monogatari*, for example, presumes that one starts out with a purely historical or documentary account to which legends or *setsuwa* are added. See Butler 1966:n. 6, Kajiwara 1970, and Kanai 1967:189-90.

[15] For example, Kajiwara 1970 and Kami 1970.

[16] Fukuda Akira and Kadokawa Gen'yoshi, among others.

after 1375, including *Kōnodai*.[17] In particular, they looked at the accretion of popular religious material to define the genre: stories about taking the tonsure, the origins of sacred objects, the practical and spiritual benefits of specific practices, the attainment of paradise, and sermons. Japanese scholars refer to the religious material in the *gunki monogatari* as the "sermon" (*shōdō*) aspect and have recognized the specific importance of this religious material in defining the *gunki monogatari* as a distinct genre of battle literature.[18]

If the product of the research of specialists in literature was usually reduced to graphs elaborating the relationships among manuscripts and text variants, then the result of the folklore wing of research was the recovery of what was thought to be historical evidence of contemporary religious beliefs and practices as well as the institutions by which these materials were generated and transmitted.[19] As might be expected, such divergence in aims and methodologies resulted in a real difficulty in defining the *gunki monogatari* as a genre. For example, in 1963 a special issue of a journal on the *gunki monogatari* offered a "dictionary" that could not define *gunki monogatari* with any more precision than as literary narratives about battles and incidents surrounding those battles (Sugimoto et al. 1963:80). Thus, really almost any account in which a battle was described could be included: the biography of a war hero, a vendetta.[20] Nevertheless, on one point all

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[17] The other four are *Meitokuki* (*Chronicle of the Meitoku Era*; 1393; Tomikura 1941), *Ōtō monogatari* (*Tale of [the Battle of] Ōtō*; after 1400; Hanawa 1977b), *Yūki senjō monogatari* (*Tale of the Battlefield of Yūki*; after 1488; Hanawa 1940c), *Sasago ochi no sōshi* (*Story of the Fall of Sasago Castle*; 1543?; Hanawa 1940b) and *Nakao ochi no sōshi* (*Story of the Fall of Nakao Castle*; 1543?; Hanawa 1940a). See further Kajiwara 1963:17, Kami 1960a (for *Sasago* and *Nakao*), and Kami 1960b (for *Kōnodai*).

[18] Kami 1970:73, 76; Kajiwara 1970:49-53. Kajiwara uses the term, but not as a category, preferring a different term for each kind of religious story discussed.

[19] Many folklorists try to puzzle out how the expanded text came to be expanded and occupy themselves in identifying oral-derived material as the product of religious propagandists and then, on the basis of that material, with reconstructing contemporary religious practices and beliefs. For example, see Sugimoto 1985:82-101; Fukuda 1981; and Kami 1960a:93-94 for the work of Usuda, Morogi, and Fukuda.

[20] The section on battle literature between about 1400 and 1600 lists six types depending on content: 1) disturbances in the government, 2) records of the battles of specific houses, 3) accounts of the careers of individual warriors, 4) battles and incidents in specific areas of the country, 5) specific battles, including the battle at Kōnodai, and 6) memoirs and reminiscences of individual warriors (Sugimoto et al. 1963:117). In fact, the same incident could be described in a variety of genres, contexts, and writing styles.

scholars seem to be agreed: of these texts, the single most representative and most important is the Kaku'ichi variant (by 1371) of the *Heike monogatari*.

The definition of the Kaku'ichi *Heike monogatari* as an epic poem (*jojishi*) as far back as 1910 (Yamashita 1994:9-16) offered a point of commonality for both wings of scholarship, even if this was not immediately realized or articulated. The definition of epic in Western literary theory included texts as divergent as *Gilgamesh*, the *Odyssey*, the *Inferno*, and *Paradise Lost*, but all with considerable literary reputations that, of course, invited favorable comparisons with the *Heike*. Thus, for example, when Kenneth Dean Butler declared in 1966 (5) that "the *Heike monogatari* [was] a true epic of major proportions" and might be considered "the national epic of Japan" comparable with the *Poem of the Cid*, the *Song of Roland*, and *Beowulf*, he was not saying anything particularly new. However, when in 1967 he introduced the oral composition theories of Milman Parry and Albert Lord to a symposium in Japan, the impact on research on the *Heike monogatari* and other areas was considerable (Yamamoto 1976:100). Parry and Lord are now cited in Japanese scholarship on oral narrative, as are Ong and Bowra.[21] Now one speaks of *gunki monogatari*, of Japanese epics, as texts that derive their meaning in good part from the "structural integers (formula, theme, story pattern) perceived as constituents" (Foley 1992:279) of a traditional narrative form.

Thus, the only way to guess at what a *gunki monogatari* might be was to examine the texts chosen for inclusion.

[21] Yamashita 1994:13, 45, 47; Murakami 1992:26-27, 46n. Even though contemporary scholarship on *gunki monogatari* may not use the diction of oral composition theory, scholars are sensitive to its methodology. For example, at the 1997 symposium on the *Heike monogatari* at Cornell University, three papers dealt with the reception and rewriting of narratives on the models of existing traditional themes: one used the literary term *topos* (Watson 1997), one the more general term motif (Matisoff 1997), and the third, under the influence of Ong and Foley, mentioned "narrative cycle," the metonymic connection of an individual telling to the narrative cycle through motifs, "similar but not identical retellings . . . operat[ing] within the immanent narrative cycle" (Oyler 1997). In addition, Eric Rutledge has apprenticed with a *biwa hōshi* ("lute priest," a performer, usually blind, of narratives chanted to the accompaniment of a lute) and determined that the types of errors found in manuscripts and on the basis of which families of genealogies of manuscripts have been determined are very much the sort of errors committed by performers both in practice and in performance, an indication that "phrases were at one time units of recitational composition that performers could choose among, like the formulas described by Milman Parry and Albert Lord" (1993:344).

Tradition, Structure, and Meaning in the *Kōnodai senki*

Although *Kōnodai* is a literary text composed by consulting an original version and perhaps documents and other accounts as well, *Kōnodai*'s meaning is created not solely by and within itself but also by its invocation of the tradition of the epic by means of narrative strategies that are usually associated with oral composition.[22] John M. Foley terms this process "traditional referentiality" (1991:8-9):

> Traditional referentiality, then, entails the invoking of a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself, that brings the lifeblood of generations of poems and performances to the individual performance or text. Each element in the phraseology or narrative thematics stands not simply for that singular instance but for the plurality and multiformity that are beyond the reach of textualization. From the perspective of traditional context, these elements are foci for meaning, still points in the exchange of meaning between an always impinging tradition and the momentary and nominal fossilization of a text or version. Even when the process becomes one of making oral-derived texts, the traditional phraseology and narrative patterns continue to provide ways for the poet to convey meaning, to tap the traditional reservoir. Poets do not persist in employing traditional structures after the advent of literacy and texts out of a misplaced antiquarianism or by default, but because, even in an increasingly textual environment, the "how" developed over the ages still holds the key to worlds of meaning that are otherwise inaccessible.
>
> Such a process of generating meaning I call *metonymy*, designating a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole. It is this aspect of traditional art that may be understood as "conventional," as long as one realizes that in this case the convention allows for much more than a preset, one-to-one allusiveness; in this case we are speaking about a situation in which a text or version is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact, in which the experience is filled out—and made traditional—by what the conventionality attracts to itself from that context. The phrase or scene or tale as a whole commands its meaning by synecdoche.

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[22] These strategies have recently been addressed in studies of the use of models in writing Japanese sacred biographies or hagiographies. In short, there is one model, the life of the Buddha, to tell the story of famous Japanese Buddhist saints and famous priests. James Foard finds useful the concept "prefiguration" (1992:86-92) and Shimizu Yoshiaki that of "commemoration" (1992:206-7). An approach similar to theirs was taken by William LaFleur (1976) in an earlier study of the life of the twelfth-century poet-monk Saigyō.

This definition of "traditional referentiality" is critical to understanding how the *Kōnodai* works as a narrative. *Kōnodai* is an oral-derived text, a literary text that employs "traditional structures" of oral narratives to bring into play a full range of other similar texts, that is, other versions of this one text or other representatives of the genre.[23] The connection between the *Kōnodai* and the other texts comprising the genre is a shared range of patterns of diction and narrative that indeed defines the tradition. This dynamic is extremely crucial to the *Kōnodai* because, even though such a short text, it is able through these patterns to invoke that much larger context of the tradition.

Oral narrative is characterized by thematic composition and formulaic

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[23] Composition may be technically "literary" (composition is not accomplished during performance [Lord 1960:5]) but transmission and reception are still very much "oral." This was true especially for the sixteenth-century warriors for whom the *Kōnodai* was most likely composed, most of whom were barely literate (able to read only Japanese syllabary if anything at all) and thus would have experienced the *Kōnodai* and all other epic cycles as public, recited performances. Strategies used in the Japanese epic are also used in many if not most genres of Japanese narrative, oral and literary, and in poetry as well. Further, strategies of oral composition persisted (and in some contexts dominated) in Japanese literature until well into the pre-modern period.

For example, Kabuki, the popular stage of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, has provided the best-known examples. Plays were made up of type scenes that included, among others, the battle scene (*shuraba*), sex scene (*nureba*), torture scene (*semeba*), and the hero-in-disguise-reveals-himself scene (*jitsu wa*). Distinctive motifs or type scenes were identified with the narratives of specific, well-known historical figures (Brandon 1975:5, 9, 11, 14). By using specific motifs or type scenes, a playwright could cross narratives; techniques included *mitate* (matching past and present), *yatsushi* (the hero in disguise) and *jitsu wa* (the hero revealed in his true guise). By means of these techniques, Kabuki playwrights were able to evade government censors by setting the early eighteenth-century forty-seven *rōnin* incident under the cover of the fourteenth-century Enya Hangan-Kō Moronao confrontation or to set the twelfth-century Soga revenge story in the period of the late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century through the theme of the poor man versus rich man rivalry over a courtesan. Although Kabuki offers the best-known examples, this traditional narrative strategy was articulated early in the fifteenth century by the *nō* playwright and theorist Zeami, who stated, "There is also the category of 'created nō' in which a new play is prepared . . . making use of the affinities between famous places or historical sites" (Sekine 1985:99, citing Zeami 1974:30). Thus, the *Kōnodai*, like other "oral-derived texts," with its very mixed provenance in oral and literary composition practices shared with a broad variety of Japanese narratives over a very long period of time, can properly be said to be based on traditional narrative strategies.

diction. Narratives consist of themes or type scenes.[24] In *gunki monogatari*, as we shall see, we can expect a narrative composed of the background, battle, and aftermath sections (Kajiwara 1970:41). The aftermath section, for example, contains any number of themes: religious-awakening, taking-the-tonsure, and entering-religious-life stories featuring battle survivors or servants and female connections of the slain.

The themes are described conventionally in formulaic diction, which varies greatly depending on the tradition. In the Japanese epic, the diction is much looser than, say, in the *Odyssey*.[25] We expect the diction of the *Kōnodai* to be that of traditional Japanese oral narrative, called *kōshō bungaku* (oral literature) or *kuden bungei* (orally transmitted [narrative] arts). The process of composition and transmission in performance as described by Parry and Lord and the subsequent elaborations identified as oral theory or oral-formulaic theory are called *kuchigatari* in Japan.[26] Yamamoto describes oral composition, as evidenced by his analysis of recordings of the religious balladry of blind female performers called *goze*, as characterized by a basic meter of seven and five syllables, a high incidence of formulas in meter, and free substitution of formulas having the same meter and the same meaning or the same function (1977).

The diction of *Kōnodai* is a bit different. One characteristic is its high density of a limited number of verbal forms, whose overall impression is one of maddening repetitiveness. The verbs are almost exclusively in additive form, which in itself is not unique to Japanese prose or speech patterns. Almost all the verbs or verbals (having adjectival functions but inflected as verbs) that are not attributive (in dependent clauses) are inflected in one of six ways. Two forms are used the most often. The fifth uses the conjunctive

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[24] The type scene "may be regarded as a recurrent block of narrative with an identifiable structure, such as a sacrifice, the reception of a guest, the launching and beaching of a ship, the donning of armor" (Edwards 1992:286). Some, like Edwards, distinguish between type scene and theme; others do not (1992:285-87 for a review). See also Foley 1990:331-35.

[25] Work by Yamamoto Kichizō on recorded *goze* (blind, female, semi-religious entertainers) ballads was the first serious attempt, as far as I can tell, to analyze formulaic diction in the Japanese oral tradition (Yamamoto 1977).

[26] For the theories behind Japanese oral composition and their history, from Yanagita Kunio's 1932 *kuden bungei* (*la littérature orale*, from Paul Sébillot) to Yamamoto Kichizō's translation of Parry's "oral composition" as *kuchigatari*, see Yamamoto 1976:97-100. For the application of Yamamoto's Parry/Lord-based studies of oral composition by *Heike* scholars, see Yamashita 1994:45-47.

particle *-ba* to indicate that one action follows another in time or by reason or cause:

> Moto yori kano shōgun wa / yumiya o **konomase tamaeba** / Bōshū Kazusa ryōgoku no gunpyō o ugokashi. . . . (19-21)

> As well you know, as for that general / **he was fond of** waging war **and because he was** / he mustered the soldiers of the provinces of both Bōshū and Kazusa and. . . .

The sixth is with the conjunctive form *-te* of the inflected particle *-tsu*, which indicates completed action (rather like the ablative absolute in Latin):

> On-kyōdai no on-naka fuwa ni **narase tamaite** / Michinoku goikken to zo kikoekeru. (8-9)

> Relations between the brothers **becoming strained** / he went [north] to Michinoku, so it is rumored.

These forms are of course found quite regularly in texts such as the Kaku'ichi *Heike monogatari*. In the *Kōnodai*, however, *-ba* and *-te* forms are used with numbing frequency. If any feature of diction suggests oral composition, it is this one; furthermore, it may be partially responsible for the low value placed on *Kōnodai* by earlier scholars. Even so, Yamamoto does not emphasize this feature as an indication of oral provenance.

The use of meter hardly approaches that of the *goze* ballads. Nevertheless, there are other features suggesting oral composition. The limited use of verbal inflections is complemented by a high rate of repetition of formulas and formulaic systems: "this is the gist of what [ ] thought/said," "a resident of [ ] Province," "high [ranking] and low," "soak [ ] sleeves," "there was not a person who did not praise [it]," "facing west," "press hands together," "said the invocation of Amida's name," "raise [face] to heaven and cast [hands] down on the ground," "realm of the hell of fighting Asuras," "pray for becoming a buddha," "most moving," and so on. Some are repeated within the text; some are part of a greater body of formulas shared with other texts, including the *Heike*. Finally, there is very little enjambement. Diction is, however, easy to imitate: the appearance of such elements in a text does not prove an oral provenance, but suggests rather that the composer was skilled in the use of traditional techniques of oral composition.

Finally, in the quotation above, Foley makes the fine distinction between texts that share traditional narrative strategies (formulas, formulaic

systems, and type scenes, and so on) constituting the particular idiom or register of oral narrative versus the intentional invocation of a particular narrative through the same techniques: "preset, one-to-one allusiveness." According to Ziva Ben-Porat, "literary allusion is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts . . . achieved through the manipulation of a special signal: a sign (simple or complex) in a given text characterized by an additional larger 'referent[,]' [which] is always an independent text" (1976:107-8, cited in Kamens 1997:6). This begs a question of the *Kōnodai*: is the composition of the account of the battle as a *gunki monogatari* a deliberate invocation or "activation" of all other *gunki monogatari* or of one in particular, perhaps the single most representative example of the genre, the Kaku'ichi variant of the *Heike monogatari*?

The *Heike monogatari* as the "Always Impinging Tradition"

The *Heike monogatari* is the tale of the rise of the Taira house under Taira Kiyomori (1118-81), who rose to become Prime Minister and grandfather of an emperor, and their complete destruction at the hands of the Minamoto in 1185. The reasons for its preeminence are as much political as aesthetic. The Kaku'ichi variant of the *Heike monogatari* was the monopoly of one guild (called the Tōdō) of epic singers (*biwa hōshi*, or "lute priests"), blind minstrels who accompanied themselves on a lute called the *biwa*. This guild claimed Kaku'ichi (active 1340-71) as its founder, and control of the text he produced secured control over the organization of the guild. Kaku'ichi had prohibited anyone but the head of the guild to make a copy or even to show a copy to anyone outside the guild. Even so, in order to obtain recognition of the Tōdō's independence from its original guild, in 1399 a copy of the authorized text was presented to the third Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu (1358-1408; r. 1367-95;[27] Hyōdō 1993:62-63). Thus the right to control the guild passed to the Ashikaga and the performance of the *Heike* became part of the official ceremonies of the shogunal court: if the custom of the later Tokugawa shogunate was based on precedent as claimed, the head of the guild apparently performed the *Heike* before each new Ashikaga shogun at his promotion to office and at his funeral (Hyōdō 1997:1-2).[28]

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[27] Early abdication was practiced in the imperial and shogunal courts in order to secure the succession.

[28] Hyōdō assumes that this custom of the shoguns of the Tokugawa period had its precedent in the relationship between the guild and the Ashikaga shoguns.

Ashikaga interest in the *Heike* was based on the shogun's position and function as head of the entire Minamoto clan (*uji no chōja*), transferred to Ashikaga Yoshimitsu in 1483 (Hyōdō 1993:64-65). First, heads of clans, as winners of battles, had pacification rituals performed for the angry spirits of their defeated and dead enemies; Ashikaga Takauji (1305-58; r. 1336-), for example, built the temple Tenryūji in Kyoto to console the spirit of the emperor he had deposed. Thus, as chief of the Minamoto, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu then took over the management of the Kaku'ichi *Heike* as a performance meant to pacify the angry spirits of the Taira family, destroyed by the Minamoto two hundred years before (Hyōdō 1993:65, 77).

Second, the *Heike* provided the myth legitimating Ashikaga power. The *Heike* describes the fall of the warrior family, the Taira, also called the Heike, which had effectively taken over the imperial family and control of the country between 1159 and 1180, when civil war broke out. They were destroyed in 1185 by the Minamoto clan, also called the Genji, who established the first shogunate with headquarters in the town of Kamakura (Kamakura Period, 1192-1333). Thus, the Kaku'ichi *Heike*, completed after the fall of the Kamakura shogunate and written under its influence, is a tale of the transition of warrior leadership from the Taira to the Minamoto. Because of succession problems, leadership quickly passed to the family of the first shogun's wife, the Hōjō, who were Heike descendants. (As *shikken*, head of one of the shogunate's administrative boards, they acted as regents for a series of shoguns during their minority.) The Ashikaga, descendants of the Minamoto or Genji clan, brought down the Hōjō in 1333 and established a new shogunate in 1336. The *Taiheiki* (by 1374), composed under the influence of the *Heike* during the period of Ashikaga consolidation of power, tells the story of the rise of the Ashikaga in terms of the *Heike*'s theme of transition from Taira to Minamoto (Hyōdō 1997:4).

This theme of transition provided the Ashikaga with an effective rallying cry in mobilizing Minamoto forces against the Hōjō as Taira. The alternation between Minamoto and Taira would model later political actions: Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), founder of the third and last warrior government, had a Minamoto genealogy concocted for himself; he also frequently had the *Taiheiki* read to him about the time he received the appointment of shogun (1603) and, following the precedent of the Ashikaga, took over the patronage of the Tōdō guild of *biwa hōshi* (*Tōdō daikiroku*, in Atsumi et al. 1984:16-17).

The *Heike monogatari*, then, functioned to legitimate the victory of the Minamoto and their descendants through the narrative theme of "alternation between Heike and Genji," in this case "the transition from

Heike to Genji."[29]   As the version officially authorized by the Ashikaga shogunate, it was the dominant if not the exclusive version and the one most likely to be heard in warrior circles.

Dissemination was intensified in the years following the Ōnin War of 1467-77: the weakening of the shogunate resulted in a weakening of control over the guild. Many copies, including abbreviated versions, of the authorized text were made, sold, and then used as scripts by the new forms of popular entertainment that sprang up during the sixteenth century.[30]

Alongside the *biwa hōshi* there developed in the fourteenth century the "tale priest" (*monogatari sō*; Ishii et al. 1990:104-5; Yoshida 1959). Some were sighted laymen, even physicians, who read texts out loud to members of the warrior class, or *biwa hōshi* not in the guilds. Since they could not perform stories monopolized by the guilds (Butler 1967:259), many apparently composed as well.[31]   They are documented not only in contemporary diaries but also in epics, as was one in the train of the Governor of Shinano in the *Ōtō monogatari* (*Tale of [the Battle of] Ōtō*). In the sixteenth century, such professional reader/performers served in the entourages (*otogishū* or *dōbōsū*) of great warlords along with the art appraisers, musicians, and tea instructors (Ishii et al. 1990:120-21). Such a reader/performer in the service of the Ise Hōjō may well have composed the *Kōnodai senki*.

The Hōjō and the Warrior Ideology of Legitimate Rule in the Sixteenth Century

The Ise Hōjō would have been very interested in the ideology of the theme of the "alternation between Heike and Genji." The Hōjō "dynastic

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[29] Along with the *Hōgen monogatari*, *Heiji monogatari*, and *Jōkyū ki*, the *Heike* charts the alternation of power between the two clans. The last concerns the revolt in 1221 against the Minamoto warrior government, which was actually headed by the Hōjō (Taira descendants) by then.

[30] This discussion is based on a chart, "The History of the Tōdō Guild," provided by Hyōdō as part of his presentation at the 1997 Cornell symposium on the *Heike* (Hyōdō 1997).

[31] This fact begs the question whether the overwhelming dominance of the *Heike* cycle, especially of the Kaku'ichi version, not only forced performers outside the guilds to compose narratives of their own but also forced them to compose as much as possible in the style of the *Heike*.

philosophy was to establish a Kanto [sic] state ruled by scions of the Taira surpassing in martial virtues even the Minamoto clan in its prime and, certainly, the then declining Ashikaga shoguns, who were descendants of the Minamoto. The age believed that Minamoto and Taira ascendancy went by turns and the Odawara Hōjō perceived a parallel between the vindication of the Taira name achieved by the *shikken* and their own 'Taira' rule over the Kanto [sic]" (Steenstrup 1974:285).[32] The identification of the Ise Hōjō with the original Hōjō was encouraged at many levels: the founder of the family, Hōjō Sōun (Ise Nagauji) read the *Taiheiki* and the *Azuma kagami* (*Mirror of the Eastern Provinces*) to learn all he could about the original Hōjō, and high-ranking vassals were required to wear the court dress of the Kamakura period. Thus, in the *Kōnodai*, as in real life, the Ise or Odawara Hōjō justified their ascendancy over the Ashikaga in the Kantō with the theme of "alternation between Heike and Genji" of the medieval epics.

To justify the transition from the Ashikaga Minamoto to the Taira Ise Hōjō, *Kōnodai* praises the Hōjō and criticizes Ashikaga Yoshiaki in terms of Confucian ideals. In the sixteenth century, Japan underwent massive changes as it devolved into some two hundred or more independent domains. The last vestiges of the old institutions under which the country had been unified had broken down completely: the imperial court and its bureaucracy, the vassal system under the Ashikaga shogunate, and even the old great temple and shrine complexes. Systems of organization based on family, temple affiliation, or government service gave way to those based on geographical proximity. Land tenure systems changed, as did taxation systems, and the basis of legitimate rule. The right to rule was based on success in warfare (the ability to protect and to expand the state) and on efficient administration; this system was derived from the Confucian idea of the conditional right to rule known in the West as the Mandate of Heaven. This concept was best articulated by Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), the first of Japan's three unifiers, who claimed as the source of his authority to rule nothing less than the victories in battle granted by heaven. Whatever background a warlord's family might have—descent from emperors or centuries of service in either the imperial bureaucracy or shogunal vassal system—a warlord looked to no other right to rule than his continued success and competence. On this basis, warlords experimented with forms of taxation, land tenure, and even recruitment and promotion on the basis of merit: the models for these experiments came from the Chinese classics.

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[32] The *shikken* was the regent for the shogun of the Kamakura period, a position held by the main line of the Hōjō family.

Indeed, the sixteenth century begins the replacement of Buddhism by Confucianism as the dominant ideology in Japan.[33] Confucian learning was on the whole the preserve of certain aristocratic families and of the Zen school of Buddhism. For example, long before the outbreak of the Ōnin War, Ise Nagauji, founder of the Ise Hōjō dynasty, had studied the Chinese classics at Daitokuji, head temple of a branch of the Zen Rinzai school of Buddhism (Steenstrup 1974:284). It is a commonplace that modern Confucianism in Japan began with Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619), who was the first, under the patronage of Tokugawa Ieyasu, to abandon his status as a Buddhist monk and establish a school of Confucianism separate from Buddhist institutions. However, one did not necessarily have to be an aristocrat or a Buddhist monk to study Confucianism: in the town of Ashikaga, the home territory of the Ashikaga family, at least, was the Ashikaga Gakkō (Ashikaga school), a secular institution substantially revived and endowed in 1439 by the Kamakura Deputy Uesugi Norizane (d. 1455). Staffed by Zen monks, at its height it trained about three thousand students, including monks, and was the foremost school of Chinese learning throughout the sixteenth century. One can only imagine the number of laymen and monks from this institution who entered the service of warlords throughout the century to advise on law, taxation, and strategy. Certainly, the availability of such advisers is evidenced in the successful restructuring of domains, such as that of the Hōjō and the Takeda, many of whose reforms were adopted by the last Tokugawa warrior government. Many of those reforms are seen in the household codes of warlords of the period. They range from an odd assortment of maxims of the "early to bed, early to rise" variety, like that of Ise Nagauji (Steenstrup 1974), to strict regulation of vassals and their land, as with that of the Takeda (Röhl 1959).

In an age in which vassals frequently overthrew their overlords, the Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety were appreciated and promulgated. This tendency is seen in the famous and widely studied Imagawa Letter of Imagawa Sadayo Ryōshun (d. 1429) to his brother and adopted son, written to admonish him for his bad administration and conduct (Steenstrup 1973). Because of Ise Nagauji's relationship with the Imagawa (his sister was the mother of Imagawa Ujichika [1470?-1526; Streenstrup

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[33] Confucianism can be described in brief as the ideology of the perpetuation of the state and the family, government by a virtuous ruler assisted by ministers chosen for their education and merit, and the personal development of social values in accordance with the principles of nature. At its best, Confucianism meant the education of humane men to administer a draconian legal system. At its worst, it justified the abuse of subordinates and children on the basis of the ultimate value of loyalty and filial piety.

1974:284) and years of service to the domain, it was no doubt an important text for the Hōjō, too. In it we can recognize many of the same Confucian themes pursued in the *Kōnodai* in complaints against Ashikaga Yoshiaki: putting private benefits before moral law (*tendō*, "the way of heaven"), razing family shrines, showing a lack of respect to parents, disregarding the advice of wise and loyal vassals, and so on. The letter also warns of the dire repercussions of the failure to understand the basic Buddhist principle of the consequences of actions (personified indeed by Taira Kiyomori in the Kaku'ichi *Heike*), what Steenstrup translates as "not understanding that pride goes before a fall" (1974:305).

The virtue of filial piety figures prominently in the *Kōnodai*. In the background section, Yoshiaki's deepest thoughts (25-27) are compared with Ujitsuna's (30-46): not only is the number of lines considerably in Ujitsuna's favor, but so is the comparison. Yoshiaki is contesting power with his father and elder brother; he wins one battle and thinks he can conquer the Kantō. In contrast, Ujitsuna's goals are the filial (Confucian) completion of his father's dream, to be accomplished only through thought and planning (19-48):

> As well you know, as for that general / he was fond of waging war and because he was / he mustered the soldiers of the provinces of both Bōshū and Kazusa and / he subjugated Takagi [Governor of] Echizen father and son, children (vassals) of Hara no Jirō's house and / driving out the Governor of Shimotsuke and his son, [of the] same [family] / immediately afterward attacking and killing Hara no Jirō / deep in his heart this is the gist of what he thought: / "There is no one waging war to rival me. / Surely, there is no doubt that I shall become general of the Kantō," he thought, however / at this time, [one] calling himself Hōjō Shinkurō Ujitsuna / was become [a man] of his times waging war. / Deep in his heart this is the gist of what Ujitsuna thought: / "Indeed the one who was my father invaded the Kantō and / he raised his flag over [the province of] Sōshū and / to himself this is what he said: / 'Someday I shall conquer the Kantō and while recommending [my son] Kurō for office [at the imperial court], / I shall build a palace in Kamakura, and this is what I want,' this he declared./ Now it becoming my generation / I shall conquer the province of Musashi and / in knowing that I shall soon have the Kantō in my hand / what chagrin to fear Yoshiaki's might. / Thus even in the words of the ancients / 'The inchworm shrinks / in order to extend [himself]'— now is the time to pay attention [to these words] / debasing myself and drawing near to that prince / awaiting the winds of opportunity, destroying him / after that, I shall extend my power over the eight provinces [of the Kantō], that is certain. / First, I [must] pull strings," so saying / preparing gold, silver, and jewels / he sent messengers one after the other and although he expressed his earnest desire, it was of no

use.

Success also depends on consultation with vassals and respecting their advice. Ujitsuna's chief strategist Kinkokusai stresses the difference between Ujitsuna and Yoshiaki (103-12):

> "As for what is called the council of this house / lord and vassals having come to a consensus / we consult the omens and when we do / together with the strategy there is no failure. / As for what is called waging war of the Prince's side / having made their wills one with the prince's [having submitted to the prince's will] / they do not even have a conference and since they do not / the wills of lord and vassal are [only finally] reconciled / and because they are / they are a little inferior and because they are / they may not be able to rectify their [way of] waging war [and their army can never match ours]. . . ."

Ujitsuna consults his vassals and they come to a consensus on strategy and tactics; Yoshiaki's vassals are forced to submit to his will. Indeed, when the size of Ujitsuna's attacking force is reported and a plea made for a sudden charge to drive back those who had just crossed the river, Yoshiaki, according to Ujitsuna "a warrior of reckless valor" (143), orders his men to advance at a stately pace and, in effect, to impress the enemy with their grandness as the tactic for forcing them back (174-204). His army spends a good hour exchanging verbal challenges and then volleys of arrows (212-20), which gives Ujitsuna time to surround them in a pincer movement as planned (222-24).

In an age when the recruitment and consolidation of relations with vassals depended greatly upon a warlord's ability to reward them by expanding the domain, success in warfare was of paramount importance. In the *Kōnodai*, the values of military leadership and strategy are stressed. Success depends first and foremost on proper reverence of the gods. As Ise Nagauji had proclaimed, "First of all, you shall believe in the Buddha(s) and the Gods" (Steenstrup 1974:289). Ujitsuna speaks at length on this (128-41):

> "Well now, I invaded the Kantō and put it into confusion and / for more than thirty years I have preserved my rule. / This our country is the land of the gods. / As for the gods they do not receive negligence of worship and / surely they will reciprocate with their intercession. / Moreover, according to certain sacred texts / nothing is achieved without the aid of the gods. / Depending on how one shows respect, [the gods] increase one's power, so I heard and when I did / even though [Hachiman] is the tutelary deity of the Minamoto / I worshipped him most importantly at [the shrines in] Izu,

> Hakone, and Mishima and / I even restored Wakanomiya [Shrine] and / I
> worshipped praying for [success in] waging war and / as for the gods, they
> lodge in the mind of an honest man and because they do / how could there
> be no sign in today's battle?"

The gods must be worshipped and revered and the shrine of the tutelary god
of the Minamoto, founders of the shogunate, rebuilt. This detail is an
allusion to an appalling act of sacrilege: the *Hōjō ki* (*Chronicle of the Hōjō*)
and the *Sōshū hyōran ki* (*Chronicle of the Military Disturbances in Sagami
Province*) relate that, under Yoshiaki's orders, in 1526 Satomi Yoshihiro
(confused with his father Yoshitaka) invaded Kamakura, in the Hōjō
domain, with his navy and rampaged through the shrines, including the
Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine (Hanawa 1979a:444-45; 1977c:562). It
enshrined the tutelary deity of the Minamoto, founders of the shogunal
system, as well as the Ashikaga and Satomi, descendants of the Minamoto.
It was Ujitsuna who rebuilt it and signaled thereby his claim to the position
of leadership in the Kantō (Hanawa 1979a:453-54; 1977c:568-69). Not only
does the *Hōjō ki* chastise Yoshiaki for the abuse of his own tutelary deity,
but he also states, "Our country is the land of the gods" ("Waga chō wa
shinkoku nari"). Reverence for the gods is of primary importance, and the
Kōnodai senki chimes in with its own declaration, "This our country is the
land of the gods" ("Sore waga chō wa shinkoku nari"; 130). This concept
had become an important strain of the ideology of the military class ever
since Japan's rescue by typhoons from two Mongol invasions in the
thirteenth century. In addition, the gods are the source of legitimacy, and in
this case legitimate control over the Kantō is at stake. Yoshiaki's ghost tells
his nurse Rensei, "because of these mistakes / the gods and the buddhas may
well have deserted him" (573-74).

      This theme is important in the *Heike* cycle because it is the burning by
the Heike (Taira house) armies of important temple complexes, especially
that of the Tōdaiji in Nara, the centerpiece of a network of temples
throughout Japan dedicated to the preservation of the imperium and the
imperial family, that led to the death of their leader Taira Kiyomori and the
ultimate defeat of the clan. Even the accidental burning of the temple
Zenkōji in Nagano Province was seen to portend the fall of the Taira (2.13
[burning of Zenkōji]; 5.14 [burning of Tōdaiji]; and 7.7 [burning in hell of
Taira Kiyomori]).

      More importantly, it is the theme of the veneration and protection of
the shrine of the Minamoto tutelary deity that places the *Kōnodai* in the
cycle of epics concerning the "alternation between Heike and Genji." While
the *Heike* celebrates the transition to the Minamoto, the *Kōnodai* justifies the

transition to the Ise Hōjō: the Minamoto have again (as in 1159, described in the *Heiji monogatari*) caused a major disturbance. Damage caused to the shrine by the Satomi under Ashikaga Yoshiaki's orders has been repaired by the Hōjō. Like the Hōjō of the Kamakura shogunate, the Ise Hōjō have had to replace the Minamoto in leadership because of the trouble they caused; the Hōjō are the proper caretakers of the Minamoto project. The Hōjō are indeed better Minamoto than the Minamoto themselves. *Kōnodai* reinforces this claim by ignoring, for the most part, Yoshiaki's brother Ashikaga Takamoto, the Prince of Koga, in whose name the Hōjō actually fought and defeated Yoshiaki.

Ujitsuna is a model of the good ruler described in the Chinese classics. The irony is that the direct condemnation of Yoshiaki as a leader is made by the ghost of his son, who died with him in battle: refusal to consult the gods (lack of reverence), bypassing the main Ashikaga house for private gain (lack of filial piety) and ingratitude to vassals.[34] Arrogance, then, is equivalent to bad leadership; bad leadership results in defeat in battle and the loss of rule. Even Yoshiaki's vassals who suffer and die because of him are presented as better than he because they exemplify the Confucian value of loyalty. His loyal vassal Henmi, Governor of Yamashiro, before killing himself, persuades others not to join him in death but to flee with Yoshiaki's younger son to save the house by citing a Jin dynasty strategist of the Warring States period (403-221 BCE): "'Seeing the fall of the old king / be loyal to the new,' so saying / Kōsekikō left [these words to us]." (379-81). Yoshiaki's loyal concubine Aisu no kimi commits suicide.

What is distinctive about *Kōnodai* is the degree to which the arrogant lord Ashikaga Yoshiaki is compared with the good lord Hōjō Ujitsuna. Rarely in the epic is the victor given such a prominent role. What may not be obvious is that the comparison offers an opportunity to state principles of leadership and to legitimate transfer of authority on that basis. However, while the success of the Hōjō is defined in terms of the political values and texts associated with Confucianism, the destruction of Ashikaga Yoshiaki is given an added dimension.

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[34] In the seventeenth-century *Hōjō ki* (*Chronicle of the Hōjō*) this same analysis is given by the Hōjō strategist, Ōfuji Kinkokusai, and the diction is very close, if not exactly the same (Hanawa 1979a:449).

Traditional Narrative Strategies: The Buddhist Sermon

While the *Kōnodai* justifies the victory of the Hōjō by invoking an important theme in epic, "alternation between Heike and Genji," the defeat of Ashikaga Yoshiaki is explained by another theme of the epic, especially of the Kaku'ichi *Heike*—the Buddhist concept of decay. The author of the *Kōnodai senki* invokes this concept especially by use of certain patterns of narrative, specifically religious narratives so formulaic in nature that they might be considered "type scenes." As mentioned above, this religious material, the so-called sermon aspect of battle narratives, is identified as crucial to the definition of the Japanese epic as a narrative genre. Religious narratives are by no means exclusive to the epic; nevertheless, their use in the epic is one of the characteristics distinguishing them from other genres of battle narrative.

In the Kaku'ichi *Tale of the Heike* and others one can find different kinds of religious material. The first is the motif of invoking the name of Amida Buddha who presides over the Pure Land paradise in the West, the *nembutsu* motif. The *nembutsu* is chanted in times of danger or in anticipation of death. For example, in the story of Giō, the dancer replaced by another in the affections of a powerful man, three women in a remote cottage hear a knock at the door at midnight and, anticipating the worst, chant the *nembutsu* before opening it (1.6).[35] The *nembutsu* is often chanted as the warrior faces death on the battlefield.[36] In the sixteenth century, the ten chantings of the *nembutsu* by a warrior were so strongly entrenched as a traditional convention of the genre that one epic has a warrior, a follower of Nichiren (1222-82), himself founder of a school of Buddhism violently opposed to the practice of chanting the *nembutsu*, chanting the invocation of the title of the Lotus Sutra (*daimoku*) ten times before death (Hanawa 1940a:36).

The second kind of religious material is the sermon. In the *Heike*, for example, the great Pure Land sectarian founder Hōnen (1133-1212) prepares

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[35] The first number is the book number, the second the chapter number. Since the Japanese and English versions of the standard Kaku'ichi version are arranged identically, only the book and chapter numbers will be given. The standard Japanese edition is Takagi I. et al. 1959-60; for a serviceable if imperfect English translation, see Kitagawa 1975; others prefer McCullough 1988.

[36] The *Heike monogatari*, 4.12, describing the death of Minamoto Yorimasa or 9.14, describing the death of Tadanori. See also 9.19, 10.5, 10.10-12, 11.9, 11.18, and Epilogue.5 describing executions and other deaths.

Taira Shigehira for death with a sermon on Pure Land teachings (10.5). Sometimes the sermon is indicated in the rhetoric of a descriptive passage. In the *Tale of [the Battle of] Ōtō*, for example, in describing the battlefield after a slaughter, the narrator exclaims, "Those who have heard what people have seen and heard and have not at this time awakened to religion, [just] what time are they waiting for?" (Hanawa 1977b:371). There are no Buddhist sermons in the *Kōnodai*; there are, however, a lecture on good strategy and an oracle from the dead on bad leadership (see below), which have the same function in helping to establish the ideological framework of the text.

The third kind of religious material comprises the story of religious awakening (*hosshin-mono*), usually that of a warrior, and the story of entering religious life (*shukke-mono*), usually that of a woman. The best known of all *hosshin-mono* is the story of Atsumori, a young member of the Taira family killed in combat. However, the story is not about Atsumori, but about his slayer, Kumagai Naozane, who later became a famous *nembutsu* (priest). Killing Atsumori first opened his eyes to the reality of his life and led to a rejection of it (9.6). The best known examples of stories of entering religious life are the stories of the empress Kenreimon'in (*Heike*, "Epilogue"), the woman warrior Tomoe (Mizuhara 1937), and Tora (of the *Soga monogatari* [*Tale of the Soga*]; Fukuda 1981:54-60), who put on black and devoted their lives to praying for the souls of themselves and their dead. In the *Kōnodai*, the nurse of Yoshiaki's son, Rensei, becomes a nun to pray for his soul. The nurse's story as a story of entering religious life (*tonsei-* or *shukke-mono*) is traditionally part of the aftermath section. However, as the story that ends the epic, the nurse's story has the traditional function of ending the tale of horror and woe with a representation of a pilgrimage, a ritual that will pacify the ghosts of the dead (592-602):

> Rensei feeling she had wakened from a dream / weeping weeping departing there / she hurried to a certain mountain temple and at the [age] of thirty-one / she shaved [her head] and / clad herself ill in [a robe of] inky black and / while she wandered the many provinces and the seven highways / at holy Buddhist temples / at holy Shintō shrines she made her obeisances and / prayed for his buddhahood, how moving it was! / How moving it was!

The young prince's ghost acknowledges her pilgrimage to his grave, saying, "[That having come] all the way here you pray for my afterlife / makes me so happy" (550-51). Her efforts on his behalf are indeed welcome because, having died in battle and slipped through the net of Amida's compassion, he

has been condemned to the hell of "the realm of the fighting Asuras" (551, 585).

The fourth kind of religious material found in epic is the story of Rebirth in paradise or *ōjō-den*. This is the story of the death of a Pure Land believer, like Taira Kiyomori's daughter, the former empress Kenreimon'in, whose Rebirth in paradise is prepared by facing west, tying the hands with a five-colored cord attached to a statue of Amida, and chanting the *nembutsu*. The attainment of Rebirth in paradise is indicated by the scent of incense, the appearance of purple clouds in the sky, the sound of music, and sometimes a rain of flowers, all representing the coming of Amida to welcome to paradise believers who have died calling on his name (*raigo*; Epilogue.5). The closest to this theme in the *Kōnodai* is the description of the suicide of Yoshiaki's concubine, who dressed herself for death, wrote her last poems, and, before biting off her tongue, "facing the west, she pressed her hands together and finally in a loud voice she said the invocation of Amida's name" (496-97).

The fifth and last kind of religious material is the story of the origins of an object of worship, usually a temple, the *engi*. Again, in the *Heike*, for example, a passage is devoted to Zenkōji, the head temple in Nagano of an Amidist cult (2.13). However, the antecedents of many people, places, and things are described, including those of the imperial regalia, the sword and the mirror (12.11 and 14). The *Kōnodai* also includes an aetiology of the hill Kōnodai itself (62-72): it cites the legend that the famous mythical hero Yamato Takeru had named the hill for a stork, a good omen, that had alighted there.

Again, Japanese scholars refer to the religious material in the epic as the "sermon" (*shōdō*) aspect and have long recognized the importance of this religious material in defining the epic as a distinct genre of battle literature. I would go further and claim that this religious material determines the very form and function of the Japanese epic as a Buddhist sermon. The heavy influence of the sermon in general and of Pure Land Buddhism in particular may be due to the fact that one of the earliest stages in the Kaku'ichi *Heike*'s development was produced by the Agui school of Pure Land preachers and propagators, to which are attributed the crucial beginning and ending chapters as well as much of the Pure Land material that appears in the text (Sekiyama 1978:69). In the first part of the thirteenth century, the preaching of Pure Land Buddhism was proscribed in Kyoto, and the early traditions are thought to have been used surreptitiously to preach (Butler 1966:9). Certainly the immediate ancestor of the founder of the Agui school,[37]

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[37] The founder was Chōken (1126-1203), seventh son of Shinzei, whose name also appears in 1.12, 3.15, and 3.18.

Fujiwara Michinori Shinzei, is featured prominently in the text (1.12, 1.13, 2.4, and 4.1), as are the Fujiwara and Taira followers of the founder of Pure Land Buddhism as an independent school. Of those examples of medieval battle literature that have been identified as epic, the Buddhism espoused is predominantly (I will not say exclusively) Pure Land.

By using specific motifs and specific types of religious narratives also incorporated into the larger narrative of the *Heike*, the *Kōnodai* can invoke the wider Buddhist interpretation informing the *Heike* very economically. The description of Yoshiaki's concubine folding her hands in prayer, facing west (the direction of Amida's Pure Land paradise), and chanting the *nembutsu* before committing suicide invites comparisons with other such descriptions, particularly that of the death of Kenreimon'in in the Kaku'ichi *Heike*, which is a much more fully developed version of the type scene; indeed, the story she tells of her own life fully develops the sense of despair consequent on losing her family in war, a despair from which only the mercy of Amida can save her. Even if the description of the death of Yoshiaki's concubine is an abridged or truncated version of the type scene "story of Rebirth in Amida's paradise," it is no less a "story of Rebirth in Amida's paradise" than Kenreimon'in's and loses nothing in terms of its meaning in the broader narrative of the epic precisely because, as a type scene, it invokes the story of Kenreimon'in. The part can stand for the whole in all its forms (metonymy) because of the operation of the contiguous performance (anaphora): the audience, depending on experience, has heard one or more versions, plays them simultaneously, compares and draws meaning from the comparison (Foley 1991:9-10). *Kōnodai* , despite its short length, has access to meaning that its 600-odd lines alone could not possibly provide; even as an abridged or truncated *gunki monogatari*, it still has access to the meaning inherent in the entire genre.

Buddhist Historiology in the Epic

As Buddhist sermon, the function of the epic is to interpret the historical event, in this case the war or battle, as proof of Buddhist doctrines of eschatology and soteriology. Therefore, the Kaku'ichi *Heike* explains the downfall of the Taira in terms of the basic tenet of Buddhism—all things are subject to change—and its elaboration in Pure Land Buddhism, as seen above. The question is, then, how this function is merged with the historical theme of "alternation between Heike and Genji" that explains the rise of the

Minamoto. The way that history (the narration of events) and Buddhism (the analysis) are fused in the *Heike* provides the interpretive framework for the *Kōnodai senki*.

The content of the epic falls into three parts (Kami 1970:73). First comes the background, which describes the events leading up to and causing the battle. The second part is the account of the battle itself. Here, victors can shine through their noble exploits on the field; even so, the focus is on the deaths of the defeated. The third and last part describes the aftermath of the battle. In this section survivors are executed, witnesses of the battle retreat into religious life, and the families and loved ones of the dead devote themselves to their afterlives. Ideally, these three parts fall neatly in succession; however, in longer works with many protagonists, the battle and aftermath sections of their stories of each individual are included in the same chapter. For example, in the case of the *Heike*, there are too many characters and too many battles to place all the battle stories in one section and all the aftermath stories in another. Rather, for each important character the battle story and the aftermath story are included in the same chapter. However, the six chapters tacked on to the end of the *Heike*—the story of the empress in the aftermath of the destruction of her family—serve as a summary and recap, and thus create the effect of the overall three-part structure of shorter epics.

The three-part structure of the epic organizes the content as an historical narrative. Over this structure is laid the structure of the Buddhist sermon, itself based on the system of Buddhist logic. There are five parts. The first is the citation of the theme derived from sacred scripture, the sutras, or by extension, the teachings of sectarian founders. The second is the explanation of the citation. The third is a parable that illustrates the citation. The fourth is an example given as a proof of the teachings, and the fifth is a summary/conclusion (Sekiyama 1978:24-25).

The Background Section of the Epic

The function of the background is to describe the events leading up to the war or battle and to give the cause for the destruction of a great house. In historical—or historiological—terms, the cause is the arrogance of the head of the house.[38] The theme is presented in the opening lines of the Kaku'ichi

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[38] For Taira Kiyomori, see *Heike monogatari* 1.1. Such are also the cases of Yamana Ujikiyo in the *Meitokuki*, of Ogasawara Nagahide in the *Ōtō*, and Ashikaga Mochiuji in the *Yūki*, whose actions precipitate the destructions of their families.

Heike: "Yes, pride must have its fall, for it is as unsubstantial as a dream on a spring night. The brave and violent man—he too must die away in the end" (Kitagawa 1975:1:5); moreover, the background section describes the arrogance of Taira Kiyomori and the suffering he causes: the suffering to the court (in his intervention in the emperor's love affairs and elimination of rivals to his own daughter [6.4]), the suffering to individuals (such as the two entertainers Giō and Hotoke), the suffering to the religious realm (precedents in ritual broken [e.g., 1.8]), and the suffering to himself (he dies of a fever whose heat is equal to that of hell [6.7]).

These historical events are given an interpretive framework of Buddhism; in the opening chapter of the *Heike* are the first elements of the Buddhist sermon.[39] It opens with lines citing the Buddhist theme of the narrative:

> The bell of the Gion Temple tolls into every man's heart to warn him that all is vanity and evanescence. . . . [A]ll who flourish are destined to decay (Kitagawa 1975:1:5).

The reference to the Gion temple bell that tolls at the death of a monk comes from one Buddhist text, the *Gion zukyō*, and the reference to the sāla tree that turned color at the death of the Buddha from another, the *Nirvana sutra*. Then comes the explanation: what flowers withers, and, more importantly, pride goeth before a fall. Next the text cites examples of traitors from the pasts of China and Japan and then focuses on an example from the recent past, Taira Kiyomori. The entire *Tale of the Heike* is the story of Taira Kiyomori and the destruction of the Taira house exacted in retribution (Epilogue.5). As set up by the first chapter, the rest of the *Heike* functions as parable and proof of Buddhist doctrine. The *Heike* is in fact a very long, serialized sermon.

Similarly, the background section of the *Kōnodai* explains the events leading up to the battle (lines 1-56): Yoshiaki's ancestry, his sojourn in the far north, his return to take Oyumi, his ambition to take the Kantō, and the similar ambitions of his rival Hōjō Ujitsuna. This section includes traditional type scenes of "the warrior declaring his name" (399-408), "description or armor and accouterments" (270-72), "the warrior's faithful horse" (312-35), and, especially, "the loyal vassal" (245-48, 346-420) and "the arrogant lord" (107-12, 143-44, 175-204 for Yoshiaki's incompetence

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[39] Not all epics set the stage with a Buddhist citation. The *Taiheiki*, for example, begins with a Confucian/Taoist exposition on chaos; the *Meitokuki* and *Ōtō monogatari* begin with Confucian references. However, the *Yūki senjō monogatari* and *Sasago ochi no sōshi* are placed firmly if briefly in a Buddhist context in the opening lines.

in war).

It is true that in terms of its opening *Kōnodai* lacks both a literal statement of Buddhist orientation and a characterization of Yoshiaki as arrogant. Much, however, is referenced through its diction. For example, the Kaku'ichi *Heike* begins by "inquiring" into the careers of arrogant leaders in China (*ichō o toburaeba*), "inquiring" about the same in Japan (*honchō o ukagau ni*), and, finally, "inquiring" into the ancestry of Kiyomori himself (*Sono sensō o tazunereba*). Similarly, the *Kōnodai* begins by "considering the year of the battle" (*on-ikusa no nengō o kangauru ni*) and "inquiring fully into the background of the destruction of the noble Prince" (*gosho-sama no go-metsubō no yurai o kuwashiku tazuneru ni*), which phrase leads directly into Yoshiaki's ancestry. This loose formulaic system based on verbs meaning to ask or to inquire or even, by extension, to consider is employed extensively in the introductions of popular religious narratives concerning the origins of gods and shrines. Thus, its economical use in the *Kōnodai* places it firmly by traditional association in the ranks of popular religious narrative in general and the Buddhist epic exemplified by the *Heike* in particular. The death of Ashikaga Yoshiaki in battle is understood in religious terms, whatever other reasons might be stated explicitly in the text. In common with other epics, it presents the theme of the destruction of a great house because of the pride, violence, and arrogance of the head of the house. The theme of destruction through arrogance is explicitly stated at the end of the text as summed up by the ghost of Yoshiaki's son in the aftermath section (557-70). Yoshiaki's arrogance consists of refusal to consult the gods, bypassing the main Ashikaga house for private gain, and ingratitude to vassals (557-73):

> Relate in detail to the young prince my younger brother / this time his father the great prince / for his destruction there are three mistakes to blame and / as for the first: although his spirits were high / his martial spirit not consulting the omens / he did not know the fear of heaven [and] / as for the second: he bypassed the main house and / thinking he would become master of the eight provinces / because he thought [of this] deep in his heart / he made the way of heaven (government) a matter of private interest and / as for the third: Mariyatsu Jokan had served him as a follower but / not long after [Yoshiaki] disowned him and because he did / suddenly [Jokan] died. / His resentment becoming an evil spirit / it bore a grudge against his prince. / Because of these mistakes / the gods and the buddhas may well have deserted him.

In Buddhist terms, however, the real cause of the end of the Heike or Taira house is *mappō*, the fourth and final age, one of religious decline, after

the death of the historical Buddha, which is used to explain the degeneracy and decline of the social and political sphere or the destruction of a temple (2.12 [the fate of Zenkōji], 2.13 [the squabbling on Mt. Hiei], 4.9 [fate of Miidera], 4.15 [of Kōfukuji]) and even an earthquake (12.1).[40] The idea of the breakdown of both the religious and the sociopolitical realms in the Final Age of the Dharma is a basic tenet of Pure Land Buddhism, which proposes that the most appropriate response to such dreadful times is belief in the Buddha Amida and his forty-eight vows to save all Sentient Beings who think or call on his name. In Japan, *mappō* was calculated as beginning in 1052 (Hori 1967:210). Taira Kiyomori is presented as a villain, of course, but more importantly as an agent of *mappō* in the disorder he causes to religious, public, and personal lives.

 Mappō is not invoked by means of a one-to-one correspondence between one particular vocabulary word and its denoted meaning. The "narrative" of Pure Land preaching also works on the principle of metonymy. The world is in the grip of the Final Age of the Dharma. The world is therefore in chaos. This chaos is defined in terms of the Six Realms of Existence (*rokudō*), which now penetrate each other, so that one can in a single lifetime experience the sufferings of all Six Realms, regardless of virtue earned in previous incarnations and the anticipated rewards of being born in one of the first three. The only escape is the mercy of Amida Buddha, who has vowed to cause to be reborn in his Pure Land paradise all who call on his name, that is, who chant the *nembutsu* (*Namu Amida Buddha*), especially at death. No one of the terms Final Age, Six Realms, Amida, Pure Land, or *nembutsu* makes sense without the others. Therefore, any one of these terms invokes the others and the meaning of the whole. Thus, when Taira Kiyomori's daughter Kenreimon'in describes her life in terms of experiencing the sufferings of all Six Realms, when as an empress and mother of an emperor she should have experienced very little suffering at all in her life, she also invokes *mappō* and her father as the agent of *mappō* as the direct cause of her predicament. The fact that this personal interpretation of her life and the description of her death with full signs of being welcomed into Amida's Pure Land paradise come at the end of the Kaku'ichi *Heike* reinforces the Pure Land interpretation of the fall of the Taira as a consequence of *mappō*.

 Here, *Kōnodai* follows the form of the Kaku'ichi *Heike* and other epics. The anticipated framework—the Final Age of the Dharma (*mappō*), the concomitant breakdown in public and private life, and the only salvation

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[40] Imperial edicts accuse Kiyomori of destroying both Buddha's Law and the Imperial Law (4.7, 4.8, 5.10, and 7.10).

through Amida Buddha—is provided in traditional places in the battle and aftermath sections. After describing the death of Yoshiaki's horse, the text summarizes by saying, "That was the age of wisdom, this the world of the Final Age of the Dharma (*mappō*) and of fools of which these are even the proofs" (342-43). Again, in the aftermath section's descriptions of the fate of Yoshiaki's ladies, the text notes with a very general allusion to Buddhist teachings: "Until yesterday this being a place of fame and honor / they played with the ball of fortune and / in the morning, [things] having changed, down the road of ignoring the law of karma they retreated to their destinations" (449-52).[41]

The Battle Account Section of the Epic

The second part of the epic is the account of the battle. Battle accounts also have two interrelated functions, the historical and the religious. First they describe the battles as they happened: who fought whom, where, when, and how; what were the notable exploits and victories; who was killed. Sometimes an epic will be quite exhaustive in detailing the numbers and types of troops, their weapons, and their deployment. The *Kōnodai* describes the positions of the armies, their councils, their tactics, and the deaths of Yoshiaki, his son, his brother, and his loyal vassals (53-501).

The second function of the battle account is to describe the suffering caused in battle to the family and vassals of the head of the house. True to the medieval tradition, the descriptions in the epic are explicit and quite horrific. No nice, clean shoulder wounds here. Arms and legs are lopped off; blood soaks the grasses; and the corpses of men lie strewn together with the carcasses of horses, as in the *Ōtō* (Hanawa 1977b:371). Like all epics, and especially later epics, the *Kōnodai* is replete with gore. Sad are the deaths of Yoshiaki's brother and son who obey the family code not to commit suicide but seek their deaths in battle (228-310), sad the fate of his horse, Devil Moon Coat, which makes its way back to Oyumi, where, exhausted and covered with blood, he collapses—screaming—in the garden of the palace to the great dismay and fright of the ladies: "there was not one person who did not soak his sleeves [with tears]" (312-45). But most poignant is the death of Henmi, Governor of Yamashiro ("the loyal vassal"), who committed suicide after convincing four others to retreat and escape

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[41] For a discussion of the role of *mappō* thought in Japanese historical tales and medieval epic, see Brown 1979:370-401.

from Oyumi with Yoshiaki's younger son in the hope of reviving the house in the future (394-420):

> Thus the Governor of Yamashiro drew a fan from his waist and / he beckoned the side of the enemy / a vassal serving lord Hōjō / Yamanaka Shūrinosuke (Assistant Director in the Office of Palace Repairs) as soon as he saw this sight / two or three hundred horsemen had come hurrying up [to him]. / "Yamanaka am I and who might you be? / Declare your name," so saying he attacked and when he did / Yamashiro hearing this / "As for me, [I am] of the Prince's side, Henmi, [Governor of] Yamashiro, hearing this / you might know [of me] already. / Since I am an aged warrior / I was cut off by great numbers and / I was delayed [in attending] the prince [at his death]. / I pray you, act as my second," so saying / he slipped out the sword at his waist and / he cut a cross into his stomach and / he took out his entrails by the handful and / he had just bade farewell [to this world] and when he did / as soon as Yamanaka saw this sight / since he was a person of [delicate] sensibility / under his breath was heard a single line of poetry: / "I who struck and the man struck together within the same [lotus] calyx may we not be born?" / saying, he swung his sword in a flash and / as for the head, it fell away. / The manner of the end of that person / there was indeed not a single person who did not praise [it].

The *Kōnodai* describes the death of Henmi in a collation of formulas and themes. The encounter with Yamanaka is modeled after the death of Taira Atsumori at the hands of Kumagai Naozane at the Battle of Ichinotani as described in the Kaku'ichi *Heike* (9.16) through the character of Yamanaka. Like Kumagai, 1) he is under pressure by the presence of many colleagues who will take Henmi's head if he does not, 2) he demands to know Henmi's identity, and 3) he expresses Buddhist sensibilities at the taking of another warrior's life.

In addition, by having Henmi call himself "aged warrior," the author makes an allusion to Saitō no bettō Sanemori (1111-83) one of the major figures of the *Heike* who died in the wars between the Taira and Minamoto. Not only was he honored with a chapter for himself in the *Heike* (7.8), but the play *Sanemori* was prominent in the *nō* repertoire. His story is also invoked in the *Kōnodai* by Ujitsuna's vassal Kinkokusai, who calls himself an "aged warrior" (116), as does Ashikaga Yoshiaki's loyal vassal, Henmi Governor of Yamashiro (405). Sanemori, a follower of the Taira, had dyed his hair black lest he be refused combat by younger men: ". . . it would be miserable to be scorned by people as an aged warrior" (*rōmusha toshite hito no anadoran mo kuchioshikarubeshi* [Takagi I. et al. 1959-60, ii:81]). The word for "aged warrior" (*rōmusha*) functions as a formula echoing a narrative   tradition that infuses any single narrative situation with a

poignancy felt for an old man struggling to maintain his dignity as a warrior. Although the theme of the aged warrior was created in the *Heike*, the frequency of references through citation of the diction has resulted in a narrative tradition in both literary and oral contexts.

The description of the death of Ashikaga Yoshiaki is not as sympathetic as that of Henmi's death. The theme of the "standing death" (*tachiji*) is used to describe the death of Yoshiaki, who is allowed to demonstrate his prowess as a warrior by cleaving in twain the helmet of a huge opponent before succumbing to a shower of arrows (283-309):

> As for the enemy soldiers, seeing this / becoming afraid they did not draw near. / From among the great numbers [of men] / a man announcing himself as Yokoi Shinsuke / taking a bundle of thirteen [arrows] to his three-man bow, he fixed [arrow to bow] until none remained and / he shot for an hour. / These arrows flying across [at Yoshiaki] / were what sealed his fate. / Completely through the armor the noble Prince was wearing / they stuck right out of his back. / Valiant as the prince was even so / while he was distracted / struggling to keep his eyes open / glaring [suddenly] at the direct vassals of the Hōjō right in the eyes / using his seven-foot three-inch sword as a support he died on his feet. / "Well!" they said, even so / there was no one who would come near him. / In such a situation / a resident of Sōshū / announcing himself as Matsuda Yajirō / drawing his three-foot one-inch [sword] / he came hurrying in front of the lord. / He probed under the flap of his armor twice with his sword and when he did / as well you know, his soul had departed and because it had / suddenly he fell down to the bow hand. / Matsuda saw this sight and / he took his head.

This theme of the standing death or *tachiji* is found in other epics. In the *Meitokuki*, it is used to describe the death of Yagi Kurō, who

> bearing wounds deep and slight in five or six places, made a crutch of his sword, and chanted the *nembutsu*, saying, "Namuamidabutsu, namuamidabutsu." He was walking slowly in the direction of Ōmiya when soldiers of Yamana Gunai-sho surrounded him and, in the end, he was killed. How cruel it was! (Tomikura 1941:89)

However, the most famous standing death is that of Benkei, the warrior priest who followed Yoshitsune (1159-89), in the fifteenth-century *Gikeiki* (*Chronicle of Yoshitsune*):[42]

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[42] McCullough 1966:289. The Japanese text has it as "dying while standing" (*tachinagara shi suru koto* [Okami 1959:381]).

Singlehanded he checked the entire enemy host, not a man of whom dared meet him face to face. One could not even guess at the number of arrows lodged in his armor. He bent them and let them hang, for all the world like a straw raincoat wrong side up, with their black, white, and colored feathers fluttering in the breeze even as *obana* reeds in an autumn gale on Musashi moor. . . .

The victorious Benkei, hearing this, planted his halberd upside down on the ground, rocking with laughter. He stood there like one of the two Guardian Kings. . . .

After an interval during which none of the enemy ventured to approach, someone spoke up: "I have heard it said that heroes sometimes die on their feet. Let someone go up and take a look." None of his comrades volunteered, but just than a mounted warrior came galloping past and the swish of wind caught Benkei, who had indeed been dead for some time. As he fell, he seemed to lunge forward, gripping his halberd.... Only after he had remained motionless on the ground for some minutes was there an unseemly rush to his side.

In time, people realized that Benkei had stood like a statue to protect his lord from intrusion while he was committing suicide.

The motifs in common are the armor bristling with arrows, the death position with the body braced against the weapon, the fierce glare of the two protective deities (*niō*) at Buddhist temple gates, the hesitation of the enemy to approach, and the sudden drop to the ground. The "arrow" motif is also prominent in the description of the death of Satō Tadanobu in the *Gikeiki* (204):[43]

Then he offered his body as a target for arrows, with his armor pushed up stiffly. The missiles of ordinary soldiers were deflected, but the best archers found their marks, and soon the arrows standing in his armor were so numerous that his senses began to fail.

Pulling out one's entrails by the handful is another standard motif in later descriptions of death in battle. In the *Gikeiki*, for example, Yoshitsune decides to die like his vassal Satō Tadanobu (290):[44]

With that very dagger he stabbed himself below the left nipple, plunging the blade so deep that it almost emerged through his back. Then he stretched the incision in three directions, pulled out his intestines, and

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[43] Anyone who has seen Kurosawa Akira's film *Kumonosujō* will identify the death under a hail of arrows as a well-recognized theme in popular Japanese narrative.

[44] For the Japanese text, see Okami 1959:383.

       wiped the dagger on the sleeve of his cloak. He draped the cloak over his
       body. . . .

This ripping out of the intestines is even more gruesome in the description of
the suicide of Tadanobu (205-6). Nevertheless, it was a real practice of the
sixteenth century: Father Frois's description of the suicide of Shibata Katsuie
(1530-83) was considered so indelicate that it was left in the Latin in a
standard history text (Murdoch 1910-49).

      The battlefield has special significance, a particular role in the rhetoric
of the sermon in describing suffering as characteristic of the human world.
According to the doctrines of the Tendai school of Buddhism, from which
the Pure Land school derives, in this world are Six Realms or paths of
existence (*rokudō*): the realms of hell, of the hungry ghosts, of animals, of
the anti-gods, of humans, and of the gods. Normally, one would expect
rebirth exclusively in one or the other. But the Tendai concept of the
interpenetrability of the realms means that no matter the realm into which
one is reborn, one will be able to experience the other realms. This
interpenetrability is experienced through the suffering characterizing each of
the realms and the place of this experience is the battlefield, the place of the
anti-gods or Asuras, the *shurajo*. In the *Heike*, Kiyomori's daughter, the
former empress Kenreimon'in, relates an account of her own life in terms of
the Six Realms and their interpenetrability, her life in the palace (the realm of
the gods), in warfare (*shuradō*, that of the anti-gods), on the run without
provisions (that of the hungry ghosts), and witness to death by fire (that of
hell; Epilogue.4). The battlefield is representative of the breakdown in the
world order, proof of *mappō*, and the place of the fall of the house. Those
who should have had everything experience all horror here: Antoku,
Kiyomori's grandson, who in a previous life had mastered the ten precepts
and been rewarded with rebirth in the estate of emperor, dragged by his
grandmother into the sea during a battle (11.9); Taira Michimori and his wife
Kozaishō—he dead in battle, she, pregnant, a suicide by drowning (9.18 and
19); Taira Atsumori, young and a gifted musician, slain with a sword through
the throat on the beach at Ichinotani (9.16).

      The *Kōnodai*, too, if briefly, makes reference to this entire
interpretation of the battlefield in describing the opening moves of the battle
(212-20):

       In the meantime, as for the noble Prince, seeing this sight / the soldiers of
       the three provinces at the head of his forces he readied and / they faced the
       Hōjō. / For just about an hour they fought with words / and after that the
       battle with the first volleys of arrows / and when they were over / they
       began to fight with swords and when they did / the war cries clashing

against each other / made this a place none other than the realm of the
fighting Asuras.

Again, later, Yoshiaki's brother and son, killed in the battle, are described as
being in "the hell of the realm of the fighting Asuras" (551, 584).

The Aftermath Section of the Epic

The battlefield is replete with suffering; nevertheless, it cannot contain
the suffering, which continues into the aftermath of the battle, the third and
final part of the epic. In the *Heike*, the children of the defeated are slain, as is
the twelve-year-old boy Rokudai (12.9). Like the Empress Kenreimon'in,
the women of the dead survive all, but spend their lives in endless grief,
mourning and chanting the *nembutsu* for their lovers, husbands, and sons as
well as for themselves (Epilogue.1). Even the victors become victims:
sooner or later, like Kumagai Naozane, as a result of their battlefield
experiences, they retreat into religious life to chant the *nembutsu* for
themselves and the men they killed.[45] In the *Kōnodai*, Yoshiaki's nurse,
Rensei, makes her way to the battlefield, engages the ghost of the young
prince in dialogue, and then, as described above, takes the tonsure and goes
on pilgrimage to Buddhist and Shintō holy sites to pray for buddhahood
(502-602).

The epic conventionally ends with a resolution. In some, the tale ends
with the story of a reconciliation: in the *Yūki senjō monogatari*, the
antagonists "met in the suburbs of Kyoto and made peace" (Hanawa
1940c:734). In others, in the Kaku'ichi *Heike monogatari* for example, the
tale ends with a story of Rebirth in paradise (*ōjō-den*). The ending must have
(in the manner of sympathetic magic, shall we say) a salutary effect to
counter all the pain manifested by the narrative, to pacify the ghosts. The
Heike ends with the story of Kiyomori's daughter, the former empress
Kenreimon'in and her death, accompanied by all the signs of Rebirth in
paradise. Sending the spirit off to paradise is an effective form of
exorcism.[46]

The story of Kenreimon's life is a summary of the *Heike*, a summary
of the story of Taira Kiyomori and his house, a summary of the Buddhist

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[45] This is a pattern from Mt. Kōya propaganda traditions. It is also seen in the *Ōtō*
and the *Yūki*.

[46] Not all versions of the *Heike* actually end with this story, although they always
include it.

doctrine of *mappō* and suffering in the Six Realms, a summary of the Pure Land teachings of escape from rebirth in the Six Realms through belief in the vows of Amida. The story of the life and death of Kenreimon'in is the summary and conclusion of the *Heike monogatari* as Buddhist sermon.

In the *Kōnodai* the third and last aftermath section is intercut with the end of the battle through the story of Yoshiaki's horse, which runs all the way back to Oyumi and breaks up a moon-viewing party being held by Yoshiaki's ladies (311-45). The scene again shifts back to Oyumi and a series of stories of the survivors: the vassals report to their new lord and persuade him to escape with them to Awa Province (421-44), the ladies of the palace suffer injuries and it is even suggested that they are raped by peasants as they flee (445-62), Yoshiaki's favorite concubine commits suicide (445-501), and his elder son's nurse travels to the battlefield, communicates with his ghost, and enters a temple as a nun to pray for his soul (502-602).

The multiform theme of the "warrior's horse" crosses the narrative of the *Kōnodai* with a narrative cycle focused on Minamoto Yoshitsune, a daring general who had defeated the Taira in 1185 and was hounded to his death in the far north by his brother Yoritomo (1147-99), the first Kamakura shogun. As described in the *Heike monogatari*, one of Yoshitsune's vassals, Satō Tsuginobu, took an arrow for Yoshitsune at the Battle of Yashima (1184) and Yoshitsune gave his own horse Black Captain to a priest to pay for the copying of scriptures for Tsuginobu's soul (11.3). In the *Gikeiki*, Tsuginobu's brother relates that when Tsuginobu gave his life for Yoshitsune's at the Battle of Yashima, he rode to hell on Black Captain (Okami 1959:205).[47] According to the variant of this story related in *Kōnodai senki* (337-345), the horse followed its master to the underworld (336-41):

> In ancient times at Yoshitsune's battle at the beach of Yashima / Satō Tsuginobu took an arrow meant for him and when he did / [the horse] he gave, Black Captain, / this horse having circled Tsuginobu's corpse three times / in the end dying / he went to the underworld, so I have heard.

The logic of the development of the horse presented for the sake of a warrior's soul to the horse that follows its master to hell is clear if one accepts, firstly, the Buddhist teaching that warriors go to hell for dying and

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[47] Helen Craig McCullough translates the section as "When my brother Tsuginobu sacrificed his life for Yoshitsune at the battle of Yashima, the mount he received for his journey to hell was Tayūguro, a horse given to His Lordship by Hidehira of Ōshū" (1966:176).

having killed in battle and, secondly, that the means of one's death are taken to hell. In the fifteenth-century biography of Yoshitsune, *Gikeiki*, Satō Tadanobu speaks of the sword with which he commits suicide as "An excellent blade! . . . I shall take it with me to hell." He then shoves the sword into the open wound he has just cut into his belly with it, saying, "That's how I treat the sword I take to hell" (McCullough 1966:205). I have not seen another example of the warrior's horse announcing the death of its master except in Kurosawa Akira's 1957 film, *Kumonosujō* (*Throne of Blood*/*Castle of the Spider's Web*), an adaptation of *Macbeth*. However, an old Scottish folksong, "Bonnie George Campbell," recounting the appearance of his horse with empty saddle at his home ("toom cam his saddle all bloody to see, hame cam his good horse but never cam he") indicates that this might be a fairly widespread theme, as does the custom of leading a saddled horse in the funeral cortege of an officer. In the case of the *Kōnodai*, we have not only a traditional theme but also a one-to-one allusion to the *Heike* cycle.

The story of what happened at Oyumi is reminiscent of the fates of the Heike survivors, the Heike women dragged out of the sea at the Battle of Dannoura (11.11) and the execution of male children (11.16, 12.9). The violence done to Yoshiaki's ladies is typical of popular stories of the period (such as the sermon ballad, or *sekkyōbushi*, *Oguri hangan*), which emphasize sex and violence as the "hell picture" of Buddhist sermons (445-62):[48]

> In the meantime the ladies of the Inner Palace / high [ranking] and low more than two hundred and eighty persons cried out all at once and when they did / surely even the state of the shrieks in hell / was thus. / Until yesterday this being a place of fame and honor / they played with the ball of fortune and / in the morning, [things] having changed, down the road of ignoring the law of karma / they retreated to their destinations and when they did / they hurried along on rough stones and / the blood flowing from their feet / stained the grass on the wayside this / must surely be like the road to the netherworld. / Some were stuck by horses' hooves and / and they died and / some passed to the hands of the peasants and / they came to an unhappy end and / indeed even the retreat from the capital of the Heike general Munemori / how could it have been worse than this?

Usually, the horrors of war are restricted to the battlefield, but the *Kōnodai* extends the battle to Oyumi and the flight of Yoshiaki's ladies; if the

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[48] Taira Munemori (1147-85) was the second son of Kiyomori and head of the Taira when, in 1183 after a disastrous defeat, they retreated from Kyoto to escape an advancing Minamoto army.

arrogant lord causes suffering to his vassals and kinsmen in battle, he also causes suffering to the women and children who survive them. This violence is also a feature of the *Oyumi gosho*: the theme of the terrible fate (very likely at the hands of Hōjō soldiers, but this is not explicitly said) of the common people of the provinces of Kazusa and Shimosa and their toddlers lost, trampled, and buried on the beach—even the hardened warriors wept— has been transferred to the ladies of Yoshiaki's court. The theme of the five- and ten-year-old princes, who "had never even walked on the white sands of the garden" but were led away in the confusion howling for their nurse and governess, is also transferred to the story of the concubines who had to walk on rough ground and left blood from their feet on the sides of the paths (453- 55; Bōsō Sōsho 1912:193). This example provides a very interesting transition from the traditional theme "children in danger" to what may be a newer theme, "women in danger."

The woman Yoshiaki's most endangers is his favorite concubine, who commits suicide out of loyalty (463-501):

> At this time, most moving indeed [was the case of] / a person exceedingly beloved of the noble great prince called Aisu no kimi and / she retreated far and away from the gate but / "A wise man does not follow two princes / nor a virtuous woman serve two husbands" she remembered it was said and / she withdrew into the Inner Palace and / entering her apartments / next to her skin she put on a white, lined garment and / over that she layered a robe of figured silk and / she tied on her long crimson culottes and / her disheveled hair she bound high and / she dyed black her long brush in an inkstone and / the traces of her hand inscribed on fine crepe paper [the color] of turning leaves she saw and when she did [she had written] / "How interesting, now I even from the age of seventeen years / until the end of my twenty-first autumn / not even for a moment did I leave the side of the prince. / His love surpassing in beauty like the chrysanthemum / even in the poem on the season of the dew on the leaves of the chrysanthemum at Narumi / this which was pledged by that Emperor Xuanzong to Yang Gueifei / even this pledge of the seventh day of the seventh month / 'If in the sky a bird with wings abreast / if on the earth one branch joined to another,' saying this / he declared in lover's talk. / Now at the point of my life [standing before] the crescent moon [like a bridge to the next world] / my decision is not to return [but] / together with you [my prince] [crossing] the river of death / let us surmount the waves of the pools and shoals," so writing / even the brush was shaking as she wrote and / the season being the end of autumn / remembering [this she wrote] as follows: / "As for me, lost in thought [of you] I am like the autumn mist [suspended] in the deep grass; as for you [my prince], on whom I relied, the wind that tears through the trees [has torn me from you]" / saying this, together with her tears she folded [the

paper on which she had been writing] and / while she put it in her scented sleeve / facing the west, she pressed her hands together and / finally in a loud voice she said the invocation of Amida's name and / she bit off her tongue and when she did, spitting it out / she lay down with her head to the north. / The manner of the end of that lady / as truly admirable it is remembered.

The story of Aisu no kimi is given in the *Oyumi gosho-sama*, but her name is not given.[49] As the *Oyumi gosho-sama* notes, "according to the custom of past and present too," Yoshiaki had taken ten concubines and among them was one just twenty who said, "As long as I live, in whatever world, there is someone [to whom] I must [keep my] pledge" (*Itsu made ikite, itsu no yo ni, tare ni chigirite arubeki* [Bōsō Sōsho 1912:193]). The "lover's pledge" as theme in the *Oyumi* has then been much expanded in the *Kōnodai* (and indeed reversed from a man's pledge to a woman's pledge) in order to link her story to that of the tragic denouement of the love between Tang Emperor Xuanzong (r. 713-56) and his concubine Yang Gueifei: he was forced to consent to her strangulation at the hands of his soldiers because she was blamed for the rebellion of her *protégé* and adopted son An Lu-shan in 755. This story was famous in Japan through the poem by Bo Juyi (772-846) "Song of Eternal Woe" (Turner 1976:168-81). In the *Kōnodai*, the direct reference is made as follows (481-85):

> . . . kano Kensō kōtei no Yōkihi ni **chigireru** kore wa / **fumizuki nanuka no chikai** ni mo / **ten ni araba hiyoku no tori** / **tsuchi ni araba renri no eda** to / mutsugoto ni notamaishi.

> . . . this which was **pledged** by that Emperor Xuanzong to Yang Gueifei / even this **pledge of the seventh day of the seventh month** / **"If in the sky a bird with wings abreast / if on the earth one branch joined to another,"** saying this / he declared in lover's talk.

The original poem is translated by Turner (1976:181) as follows:

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[49] The name Aisu no kimi could simply have been made up from the verb *aisu* ("to love") and the noun *kimi* to mean something like "beloved lady" or even "lady who loves." I have seen an "Ai no kimi" somewhere. The problem is that the orthography is a bit strange: the word for "love" is *ai* and the text has *ahi*. Since the text does not use the markings that would indicate a *zu* rather than *su*, her name could also be Aizu no kimi ("lady from Aizu"), a district in Iwashiro Province. She might then have been connected to the powerful Ashina family. However, Aizu was usually written "Ahitsu" rather than "Ahisu."

> . . . and her message told of a deep **oath** that they two only knew. / —**The seventh moon, upon the seventh day** / Alone at midnight in the Immortal Hall **they swore** / When none was near in private talk they swore / **In heaven as birds that yoked together fly / To fly, or else on earth to grow as trees / That twine their branches from a single stem**.

Just what translation from the Chinese was familiar or available to the composer is not yet determined. As Watson (1997) notes, the story was well known both through Bo Juyi's poem and "its companion piece, the prose 'Account to Go with the "Song of Lasting Pain"'" written by the poet's friend Chen Hong." It was referred to often in the opening chapter of Murasaki Shikibu's novel *Genji monogatari* (*Tale of Genji*, c.1000) and more than a dozen times in the *Heike*.[50] This story of Xuanzong and Yang Gueifei, although literary and originally Chinese, was both naturalized and circulated orally through recitation of the *Heike* and other oral narratives.

Next to nothing is known about Aisu no kimi, and therefore her story is made up almost entirely of traditional themes and other borrowed materials. Even the poems she writes are cited from other sources and not that precisely. Consider the first poem (493):

> Omoiiru mi wa fukagusa no aki no tsuyu **tanomishi kimi** wa kokarashi no kaze.

> As for me, lost in thought [of you], I am [like] the autumn dew [suspended] in the deep grass; as for **you** [my prince], **on whom I depended**, the wind that rips through the trees [has torn me] from you.

This is an adaptation of a poem by Fujiwara Ietaka (1158-1237) included in the imperial anthology he edited in 1205, the *Shinkokin wakashū*:[51]

> Omoiiru mi wa fukagusa no aki no tsuyu **tanomeshi sue** ya kogarashi no kaze.

> As for me, lost in thought [of you], I am [like] the autumn dew [suspended] in the deep grass; **the tip [of the blade] which let me depend on it—oh**, the wind that rips through the trees.

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[50] Watson's paper makes clear, however, that in the chapter "Kogō" (6.4) the story has been adapted to conform to the topos of "the grieving monarch" rather than "the lover's pledge."

[51] Also in the *Jisanka*, compiled from the poems of seventeen poets, including emperor Gotoba (r. 1184-98), included in the *Shinkokin wakashū* (Kami 1977:89). The poem is no. 1337 (Shinpen 1983:244).

More importantly, because she commits suicide out of loyalty, she is a female comparand to Henmi, Governor of Yamashiro and a "loyal vassal." Even the author's praise of her contains verbal repetition of the same diction used to praise Henmi, Governor of Yamashiro, who follows his lord in death (500-1):

> . . . **kano** nyōbō **no saigo no shigi** / ge ni yasashiku zo oboekeru.

> . . . **the manner of the death of that** lady / truly as **admirable** it is remembered.

Compare this with the judgment of Henmi (419-20):

> **Kano** hito **no saigo no shigi** / homenu hito koso nakarikere.

> **The manner of the death of that** person / not a person was there who did not praise [it].

Her death is described as "admirable" (*yasashiku*); the adjective *yasashi* resonates with a complex layer of meanings. Because of the lengthy description of her poems, the word ties in the usual idea of the elegance or refinement of court poetry and music; indeed, the word is used this way in the Kaku'ichi *Heike* (5.11). However, as a traditional formula, it also brings to mind the courtly warrior like Taira Atsumori, slain in the field, who was praised in the same text for his "refinement" in bringing a flute to the battlefield (*Heike* 9.16). Furthermore, the "old warrior" Sanemori was praised in the same Kaku'ichi *Heike* as "admirable" for refusing to retreat and standing his ground alone against the enemy (*Heike* 7.8). Thus the combination of type scenes and diction economically places Aisu no kimi in the ranks of the courtly warrior, as talented as he is brave. The story of Aisu no kimi, described in terms of a death in battle, is that of a loyal vassal; values are not differentiated by sex but by caste. Her story even fills a gap by providing what is lacking in the text, an example of the traditional theme of the warrior who chants the name of Amida Buddha as he dies in battle or by suicide. Aisu no kimi is described in terms of the traditional themes associated with a warrior in battle—most stunning is the variation on the description of the warrior's armor and accouterments. Her story includes many of the traditional themes that usually describe a warrior at death: she dresses herself for death (470-73), writes her death poems (474-95), faces west and chants the name of Amida Buddha (496-97), and only then bites her tongue and dies (498-501; this motif is often found in later popular

drama and even films).

If Aisu no kimi is one example of an historical person whose life is told solely in terms of borrowed materials and traditional themes, then the nurse of Yoshiaki's son, Rensei, must be a totally fictional character created to fit the pattern of the fate of the survivors of battle and the women left behind, a fate that usually involves the themes of religious awakening and taking the tonsure. Thus, as in other epics, the dead are survived by women who live out their lives seeking salvation in the afterlife: Tora for Soga Jurō in the *Soga monogatari* (*Tale of the Soga Brothers*), the mother of thirteen-year-old Tokiwa Hachirō in the *Ōtō monogatari*, and the nurse of the two executed Ashikaga princes in the *Yūki senjō monogatari*. The traditional form and function of the epic as a specific genre demands this pattern of consolation for the dead as an ending. The common interpretation of the epic is that because of its religious, sermon content, it functions as a form of pacifying the dead. Certainly, victors in battle pacified the souls of their dead enemy by building temples for them, entering their names in Buddhist death registers and having ceremonies performed for them.

The narrative genre with the structure closest to that of a pacification ritual is the *nō* theater, which was developed at the end of the fourteenth century and came under the patronage of the Ashikaga shoguns. According to Honda Yasuji, many *nō* plays are basically stagings or dramatizations of spirit pacification rituals. The structure has three parts: first, the ritualist arrives at the ritual site and hears the story of the spirit as a third-person narrative delivered by a local—the spirit in disguise is actually the spirit speaking through the mouth of a human medium. Second, the same story is told again as another third-person narrative delivered by another local resident, the *kyōgen*; this retelling is based on the need to translate the usually unintelligible words of the "victim" under possession. These two narrations (*saimon*) act as invocations of the spirit, who appears in his "true form" in the third part of the play and delivers his story in a first-person narration. The pacification is achieved through the dialogue (*mondō*) between ritualist and spirit (Hoff 1978:141-207).

Rensei's journey to the battlefield at Kōnodai and encounter with the ghost of her late charge is in the style of the *nō* play in general and one play in particular, *Sumidagawa* (*Sumida River*) by Jūrō Motomasa (1395-1459) or his father Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443).[52] It concerns a mother whose son has been kidnapped; she has gone mad in searching for him, only to find he has died in the area of what is now Tokyo, the same general area as that

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[52] For the text, see Sanari 1931. For an English translation, see Japanese Classics 1955.

of *Kōnodai*. Thus, Rensei's plight is compared to hers.

For example, Rensei travels from Oyumi to the battle site. The journey is described in a traditional narrative passage form called "going the road" (*michiyuki bun*), incorporated into the *nō* only in the fourteenth century, which uses place names along the route to describe emotional states through their relationships with other narratives and poems (510-30):

> . . . departing Oyumi in the middle of night / when she went, in the waves on the shore of Yūki / she wrung out her sleeves and skirts. / She indeed was reminded too of the river of death at the border of the netherworld. / She passed beyond Mikawa and when she did / "Indeed this must be [the famous] Matsuyama at Inage" [she thought]. / The wind blowing through the pines piercing her body / how uneasily the plovers call / on the rapids of the Kemi River / wondering whether they might have met you [my prince] / putting her faith in the buddhas and the gods she passed through the thick-grown bamboo of Funabashi. / When she had gone as far as her feet would lead her / the ferry man of the Ichi River boat / she asked whether or not the prince she thought of was there and when she did [he said] / "For whom do you wait in the area of the hills at Matsudo?" / She arrived too at Sagami Hill and when she did / while going to the noble young prince's grave / while she plucked the flowers of the various grasses / the tears flowing from her sleeve / imitating a libation of water / this is the gist of her lament . . .

Of the sites mentioned, major highway stations in the sixteenth century, several are still stations on the railroad line: Yūki, Mikawa, Kemikawa (Kemi River), Funabashi, Ichikawa (Ichi River). The composer even "puns" Kemikawa to make a poem with the standard poetic formula, the place-name Mogamikawa (line 517).

In this section Rensei cites part of a poem by Ariwara Narihira (825-80), hero of the romance *Ise monogatari* (*Tales of Ise*), which is also quoted in *Sumidagawa*, in both cases in addressing the ferryman at Ichi River (523):

> . . . **waga omou kimi ari ya nashi ya to koto to**eba . . .

> . . . she asked **whether or not the prince she thought of was there** and when she did [he said] . . .

The poem appears in the play as

> Na ni shi owaba, iza **koto to**wan, Miyakodori, **waga omou hito wa, ari ya nashi ya to**.

> O, birds of Miyako, If you are worthy of your name, Tell me, does my

love still live? (Japanese Classics 1955:151-52)

There are two changes: *kimi* ("you"/"prince") is substituted for *hito* ("person"), and the inflection of *koto tou* is changed as it is moved in position and the syntax changes. Exact verbal repetition is not necessary to invoke either the play or the original poem: a scene of loneliness and separation in its multiforms is generated.[53]

    When Rensei arrives at the battlefield, she encounters the ghost of the young prince; this also happens to the mother in *Sumidagawa*. The theme of the encounter with a ghost is the traditional structural basis of the *nō*. The *nō* play very often ends with representations of the pacification of angry spirits of the dead, as does this play, which presents invocation of Amida's name as a service for the boy. This story in the *Kōnodai* of Rensei's ritual dialogue with the spirit (*mondō*) also crosses narratives with another *mondō* tradition carried by other epics. Rensei invokes the great priest-poet Saigyō and his poem at the grave of the former emperor Sutoku and gives a poem as the response of Sutoku's ghost (536-43):

> In ancient times Saigyō, I think it might be, / [going] to the grave of the Sanuki former emperor [Sutoku] / remembering that he had chanted a poem, [wrote] as follows: / "Good prince, even though you think of your

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[53] Again, the diction of another passage in the *Kōnodai* is vaguely reminiscent of a similar passage in the play *Sumidagawa* (Kami 1977:91-92). When the ghost of the young prince disappears back into the mound (587-90):

> Rensei mo on-**ato** o shitai tatematsurishi ni / **shinonome mo akeyukeba** / **kusa hōbō to shite** / **tsuka** nomi nokoreri.

> Rensei too as she tried to follow after him / dawn broke and when it did / the grass being everywhere / only the mound remained.

In *Sumidagawa*, as the mother prays at her son's grave, his ghost appears briefly and then disappears as dawn breaks. The play ends with these lines (Sanari 1931:391-92):

> . . . **shinonome** no sora mo honobono to, **akeyukeba** ato taete, waga ko to mieshi wa **tsuka** no ue no **kusa**, **bōbō to shite** tada, shirushi bakari wa Azachigahara to, naru koso aware narikere, aware nari kere.

> Day breaks in the eastern sky. / The ghost has vanished; / What seemed her boy / Is but a grassy mound / Lost on the wide, desolate moor. / Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts, / Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts! (Japanese Classics 1955:159)

The formula "aware" also ends the *Kōnodai*; it is a standard ending for tragic narratives in oral tradition and performing arts.

resplendent palace of old, after what has happened, what does it avail you?"[54]

Sanuki no In is the retirement name of Sutoku, seventy-fifth emperor of Japan (1124-41), who was forced by his father to retire and on whose son's behalf the revolt of the Hōgen civil war of 1156 was fought and lost, whereupon he was exiled to Sanuki, dying there in 1164. The exchange of songs (*uta mondō* or *mondōka*) at a grave is a well-known theme. The allusion is to Sutoku's resentment: he had lost in a succession dispute and then been exiled. However, the particular exchange including this poem is recorded as a set only in the collection of popular and religious narratives called the *Shasekishū*. The first poem is Saigyō's (in his collection *Sankashū*) and is cited in several epics in the *Heike* cycle as being presented to his wife rather than to the former emperor's grave (Kami 1977:90).[55]

The very name Rensei invokes two other narrative cycles. Rensei is the religious name of Kumagai Naozane, who killed the young Taira Atsumori, according to the *Heike* cycle. His story forms the basis of the "old warrior kills young warrior" type scene (even though there is no historical evidence that he indeed did kill Atsumori), and his function in the aftermath section of the story is to pray for Atsumori's soul—in fact, he took the tonsure and became quite a famous follower of the founder of the independent Pure Land movement, Hōnen.

Rensei is also the name of the nurse of Princess Jōruri, the sometime lover of the tragic hero of the *Heike* cycle, Minamoto Yoshitsune, brother of the first military dictator Minamoto Yoritomo. A diary (*Munenaga nikki*) records that in 1531 (Kyōroku 4.9.13) a *zatō* ("blind performer" [Ishii et al. 1990:108]) was performing the story of Princess Jōruri in Odawara, the capital of the Hōjō domain (Kami 1977:95-96). The Jōruri cycle was a popular "spin-off" of the *Heike* cycle and gave its name to the style of chanting associated with puppet performance of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). Here the author of the *Kōnodai senki* displays a virtuoso command of traditional strategies of invoking other narratives by substituting a nurse for the killer in the function of securing the peace of the victim's soul in the afterlife.

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[54] "Yoshiya kimi mukashi no tama no yuka tote mo kakaran nochi wa nan ni kawasen," a poem by Saigyō Hōshi (1118-90) from his collection *Sankashū* and quoted in many texts, including epics.

[55] These include the *Hōgen monogatari*, Nagato text of *Heike monogatari*, *Gempei tōjōroku*, and *Gempei jōsuiki*.

Conclusion

The Kaku'ichi *Tale of the Heike* is probably the most perfect example of Buddhist historiography, the interpretation of history through Buddhist doctrine. The epic, the *Heike* and the others, are informed by the two basic elements of the sermon. The first is the statement of a religious theme—and this can be Taoist, as in the case of the *Taiheiki*, or Confucian as in the case of the *Meitokuki*, but most often it is Buddhist. The second is the use of recent history as a proof of that theme. Even if the theme is Taoist or Confucian, the epic is constructed as a Buddhist sermon, and the text will in fact contain a great deal of Buddhist material. The fall of a great house in battle is set in a religious view of history. Thus the epic is a sermon, and *Kōnodai senki* functions in part as a sermon.

In the *Kōnodai senki*, the narrative of the winners, the Hōjō, is based on material that can either be documented or is replicated in other, historical accounts. However, the narrative of the loser, Ashikaga Yoshiaki, Prince of Oyumi, is almost completely made up of material culled from a range of popular narrative traditions: religious propaganda stories, the epic in general and the *Heike monogatari* in particular, the Yoshitsune cycle in general and the *Gikeiki* in particular, the *nō* play in general and *Sumidagawa* in particular, the Princess Jōruri cycle, the Xuanzong and Yang Gueifei cycle, poetry, and so forth.

There are two interrelated ways to look at this situation. First, this poem was composed under Hōjō patronage, and its sources were limited to those provided by the Hōjō: the author did not really know the names of Yoshiaki's sons; nor did he have access to Ashikaga or Satomi vassals and their documents and battlefield stories. Thus, he provided fictional "filler" as he thought appropriate to the form and function of the text he was composing. Or, secondly, the *Kōnodai senki* can be seen as presenting a calculated manipulation of traditional themes and motifs to legitimate a transfer of power from one family to the other. The traditional form and function of the epic places the losers of the battle in a particular relation to the winners. The Buddhist framework of the epic places responsibility for the destruction of Ashikaga Yoshiaki on the Final Age of the Dharma. The Hōjō are vindicated by other sources of authority—Confucianism and the Japanese gods. The Hōjō acknowledge the angry spirits of the dead as in need of pacification, but use the traditional references to Tendai and Pure Land Buddhist eschatology and soteriology both to console them and to exculpate themselves from responsibility for their deaths. At the same time, the Hōjō can put the blame squarely on the shoulders of Ashikaga Yoshiaki, the arrogant lord and "warrior of reckless valor," by comparing him

unfavorably with Hōjō Ujitsuna, who honors the gods, consults his vassals, and plans his battles carefully. Yoshiaki is "framed" by the traditional form and function of the epic as Buddhist sermon and all the elements associated with it, including the themes and diction of popular, orally delivered narratives.

It is difficult to speak of separate and clearly differentiated oral and literary traditions in Japan. There is a vast difference between speaking in Japanese and writing in Chinese just as there is between performing a script composed in advance and composing in performance, usually by the blind or the unlettered. These differences, however, were mitigated over a thousand years by a process of mutual "feedback." On the one hand, chirographic traditions were disseminated through a variety of public oral performances such as public readings, sermons, lectures, and even secondarily through citation in plays. On the other hand, as in the case of the *Kōnodai senki*, literary composition deliberately co-opted and used the techniques identified with oral composition. Except for extremes of the scale, then, there is no distinct literary or oral tradition of composition; it is more correct to speak of traditional strategies of narrative composition. As the *Kōnodai senki* indicates, the epic is a genre of narrative in which historical events are recomposed in terms of a wide variety of available Chinese and Japanese literary topoi *and* popular themes and type scenes.

Clearly, the epic, as the account of a battle and as represented by the *Heike*, is a way of rehearsing distant or historical events, a type of historiology with its own rhetorical structure (form and function) dependent as much on mythmakng as on manuscripts. And yet, understanding the *gunki monogatari* as a narrative genre is crucial to evaluating such texts for their historical content as well as their historiography: in certain cases, the *gunki monogatari* is the only extant narrative account of an historical incident.[56] Because other narratives, war tales and histories, concerning the battle are available for comparison, *Chronicle of the Battle of Kōnodai*, an "admittedly reduced textual record" of traditional narrative strategies (Foley 1992:292), provides an excellent case study for determining the characteristics and use of traditional narrative strategies in the *gunki monogatari*.

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[56] This is the case of two texts covering material connected with that of the *Chronicle of the Battle of Kōnodai*, *Story of the Fall of Nakao Castle* and *Story of the Fall of Sasago Castle*.

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Appendix

Account of the Battle of Kōnodai
Translation of *Kōnodai senki*,
a Sixteenth-Century Japanese Epic[57]

1.   Account of the Battle of Kōnodai or Account of Kōnodai, Part One
2.   The downfall at Kōnodai
3.   To begin, in considering the year of the battle of Kōnodai in the province of Shimōsa
4.   [we find] it was around the first ten days in the tenth month of the sixth year of Tenbun [1537], or so they say.[58]

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[57] The author wishes to thank Katsuko Hotelling, Associate Japanese Studies Librarian at Hayden Library, Arizona State University, for all of her assistance in translating the work. However, all mistakes are the author's. The translation attempts to preserve as much as possible the features of the diction of the original.

5.   In enquiring fully into the background of the destruction of the noble Prince
6.   [we find] as for that lord, a descendant of the Emperor Seiwa,
7.   the second son of the general Masauji, the younger brother   of the noble Takamoto, Yoshiaki he was called.
8.   Relations between the brothers becoming strained
9.   he went [north] to Michinoku, so it is rumored.
10.   Now then, a futile dispute that the Deputy-Governor General of the province of Kazusa, Mariyatsu, Governor of Mikawa,
11.   had fought over territory with Hara no Jirō, a vassal serving the Chiba, had lasted many years.
12.   On account of this, the Governor of Mikawa sent a messenger [north] to Mutsu and
13.   persuaded Yoshiaki to remove [to Chiba in 1517].
14.   He advanced on Oyumi Castle in which that Hara no Jirō had entrenched himself and
15.   took it within three years and
16.   established Oyumi as the seat of Yoshiaki.
17.   The samurai of the provinces of both Bōshū (Awa) and Kazusa were without treachery and
18.   they protected that prince.
19.   As well you know, as for that general
20.   he was fond of waging war and because he was
21.   he mustered the soldiers of the provinces of both Bōshū and Kazusa and
22.   he subjugated Takagi [Governor of] Echizen father and son, children (vassals) of Hara no Jirō's house and
23.   driving out the Governor of Shimotsuke and his son, [of the] same [family]
24.   immediately afterward attacking and killing Hara no Jirō
25.   deep in his heart this is the gist of what he thought:
26.   "There is no one waging war to rival me.
27.   Surely, there is no doubt that I shall become general of the Kantō," he thought, however
28.   at this time, [one] calling himself Hōjō Shinkurō Ujitsuna
29.   was become [a man] of his times waging war.
30.   Deep in his heart this is the gist of what Ujitsuna thought:
31.   "Indeed the one who was my father invaded the Kantō and
32.   he raised his flag over [the province of] Sōshū and
33.   to himself this is what he said:
34.   'Someday I shall conquer the Kantō and while recommending [my son] Kurō for office [at the imperial court],
35.   I shall build a palace in Kamakura, and this is what I want,' this he declared.
36.   Now it becoming my generation
37.   I shall conquer the province of Musashi and

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[58] *Nengo*: year name. In premodern Japan, years were grouped under year or age names which were changed to commemorate auspicious events or to change bad luck. They were not named after the reigns of emperors as in the modern period.

38.   in knowing that I shall soon have the Kantō in my hand
39.   what chagrin to fear Yoshiaki's might.
40.   Thus even in the words of the ancients
41.   'The inchworm shrinks
42.   in order to extend [himself]'—now is the time to pay attention [to these words]
43.   debasing myself and drawing near to that prince
44.   awaiting the winds of opportunity, destroying him
45.   after that, I shall extend my power over the eight provinces [of the Kantō], that is certain.
46.   First, I [must] pull strings," so [say]ing
47.   preparing gold, silver, and jewels
48.   he sent messengers one after the other and although he expressed his earnest desire, it was of no use.
49.   This is the gist of what Hōjō thought:
50.   "As for my luckless enemy, in real battle[59] shall I decide the outcome," indeed so [saying] he was enraged.
51.   "Although good news travels slowly
52.   ill news runs apace,"[60] or so they say.
53.   Rumours of this were reported at Oyumi.
54.   Since this was the case,
55.   he thought to take up a position at an advantageous place and
56.   he thought about what would be the best place to stop an attack and
57.   he enquired whether somewhere there might be a good site, and when he did
58.   the places the captains proposed were many, even so [the best among them was the following]
59.   a tributary of the Tone River
60.   was called the Ichi River and extending to the bow hand [left]
61.   there was a hill called Kōnodai.
62.   As for this mountain,
63.   long ago Yamato Takeru was returning to the capital after subjugating the Ebisu [natives] of the east [and] just at that time
64.   resting on that mountain
65.   in looking at the depths of water near the bank of the river at the foot of the mountain [he saw]
66.   [from] somewhere or other, a bird called a stork flying in
67.   beginning to tread the shoals of the river
68.   he greeted the royal prince and because he did
69.   the royal prince in his exceeding happiness
70.   facing that bird, he declared "I give you this mountain," and because he did
71.   this bird, receiving the imperial decree, always lived on this mountain.
72.   People who saw, naming it, called it Kōnodai [Stork Hill].
73.   As for this mountain, a vassal serving the Ogi[ga]yatsu[61] [Uesugi]

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[59] *Hadae o uchiaite*: strike his skin, hit him where it hurts.

[60] "Although good news leaves the gate, bad news runs a thousand *ri*."

74. Ōta no Dōkan,[62] facing Usui[63] Castle, he took it as fiefs [for his vassals], or so they say.
75. Having made the river at the foot [of the mountain] a line of defense, he waited for the enemy facing him, and when he did
76. with laborers from the three provinces of Bōshū, Kazusa, and Shimōsa
77. in three days and three nights he built fortifications and
78. and [there] posted Motoyori, younger brother of the noble Prince and [his own son] the young prince and
79. issuing commands to the samurai of the three provinces
80. he awaited the approaching Hōjō, that was indeed extraordinary.
81. In the meantime
82. as for the honorable Hōjō, being stunned by this news
83. "Before the many samurai of the Kantō swear fealty to him
84. I shall quickly decide the outcome," so [saying],
85. setting out from Odawara on the fourth day of the tenth month
86. on the fifth, at the hour of the dragon [6-8 in the morning]
87. he arrived at Edo Castle, famous in the province of Musashi.
88. He saw the roster of those enlisted [in his cause] and when he did
89. they numbered more than 20,000 horse, or so they say.
90. In the meantime
91. As for Ujitsuna, [there was a man] called Kinkokusai[64]
92. he was originally raised at Negoro and
93. making the fate of this house his fate
94. in waging war he had not once made a name for failure.
95. That Kinkoku the honorable Hōjō summoned into his presence[65] and
96. "How now, Kinkoku, listen.
97. This time hurry and face the forces [of the Prince] and
98. you shall absolutely decide the outcome.
99. You will be the first in the charge and
100. [so] fight a glorious battle!" so [saying]
101. Kinkoku received an exceptional spring colt and
102. being exceedingly pleased, this is what he said to Ujitsuna:
103. "As for what is called the council of this house
104. lord and vassals having come to a consensus

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[61] In text, "Ōginoyatsu."

[62] Sukenaga, 1432-86. Served not the Ōgigayatsu but the Yamanouchi branch of the Uesugi family, who served as First Ministers for the Ashikaga Kamakura Deputies, from whom Yoshiaki was descended, and who had been forced out of Kamakura.

[63] Western district of Kōzuke province and fought over by the Takeda and Uesugi.

[64] Ōfuji Kinkokusai, a principal Hōjō strategist.

[65] Possibly, "this Kinkoku [Ujitsuna] summoned to an audience at the Hōjō palace."

105. we consult the omens and when we do
106. together with the strategy there is no failure.
107. As for what is called waging war of the Prince's side
108. having made their wills one with the prince's [having submitted to the prince's will]
109. they do not even have a conference and since they do not
110. the wills of lord and vassal are [only finally] reconciled and because they are
111. they are a little inferior and because they are
112. they may not be able to rectify their [way of] waging war [and their army can never match ours].
113. Somehow or the other this lay priest will be first in the charge and
114. because I have had this interview with you
115. indeed when I have left your presence
116. although they call me an aged warrior
117. I will be like the eagle and the crested eagle."
118. In the meantime as for lord Hōjō
119. concealed in the dead of night he crossed the Asakusa River and
120. Otsu Station still in the deep of night he passed and
121. waiting for the enemy, on the banks of the Matsudo
122. what was said at the council of war was interesting indeed.
123. Ujitsuna sat on a camp stool and
124. he was taking his rest.
125. Most importantly [including his son] Ujiyasu
126. he summoned the many samurai and
127. this is the gist of the orders he gave:
128. "Well now, I invaded the Kantō and put it into confusion and
129. for more than thirty years I have preserved my rule.
130. This our country is the land of the gods.
131. As for the gods they do not receive negligence of worship and
132. surely they will reciprocate with their intercession.
133. Moreover, according to certain sacred texts
134. nothing is achieved without the aid of the gods.
135. Depending on how one shows respect [the gods] increase his power, so I heard and when I did
136. even though [Hachiman] is the tutelary deity of the Genji
137. I worshipped him most importantly at [the shrines in] Izu, Hakone, and Mishima and
138. I even restored Wakanomiya [Shrine] and
139. I worshipped praying for [success in] waging war and
140. as for the gods, they lodge in the mind of an honest man and because they do
141. how could there be no sign in today's battle?
142. I have heard and since I have
143. that, as for Yoshiaki, very possibly being a warrior of reckless valor
144. he will break through the lines facing him.
145. This being the case, if it is so
146. parting the numbers of men on our side to the left and right,
147. capturing in our center the troops on the side of the Prince

148. we will bring up reinforcements and press them and when we do
149. even though they have the might of the Four Kings and Man-eating Devils
150. in the end we shall take them."
151. First of all, as generals on the bow hand
152. most importantly the honorable Hakone
153. Matsuda
154. Oishi
155. Shimizu
156. Kano
157. and Kasawara he assigned and
158. then, as generals of the right hand side
159. Tōyama
160. Kinkoku
161. Yamanaka
162. Obata
163. Tame
164. Arakawa
165. and the rest of the samurai[.]
166. "Keep your eyes on the direct vassals and
167. while we band together with [us], father and son, in the center
168. let friend and foe observe our bravery or cowardice.
169. As for the [greatest] single battle in months and years, there may be nothing to surpass today.
170. Sally forth," so [saying], he gave the order.
171. As for the soldiers
172. they heard this and
173. while they beat the attack drum
174. they crossed the Matsudo River and when they did
175. from within the camp of the Prince
176. Shiizu
177. Murakami
178. Horie
179. Kajima, most importantly,
180. about fifty horsemen charging up Sagami hill
181. they saw the numbers of the enemy.
182. Quickly they returned to camp and
183. [this is] the gist what they said to the prince:
184. "In seeing the numbers of men of the Hōjō [we estimate]
185. they may have exceeded ten [or] twenty thousand.
186. If they cross that river
187. as for this single battle, the outcome is uncertain.
188. The knaves who have crossed the river
189. may well already number one [or] two thousand.
190. To clear them off who have no martial spirit, send numbers of men and
191. drive them back to the river at their rear and drown them and when you do
192. while the direct vassals readied to face us too are losing heart
193. surely they shall disperse," so [saying]

194.   one by one they said this and when they did
195.   the noble Prince heard and [his adviser said]
196.   "As for the outcome of the battle, it does not depend upon
       the numbers of men, great or small but
197.   one relies upon the dispensation of heaven, the fact is.
198.   In these years we did not take to the field[66] against these Hōjō and therefore
199.   the Kantō is unsettled.
200.   This time accomplishing the subjugation
201.   we shall pacify the eight provinces.
202.   Grandly, make them cross the river, I say," he declared and when he did
203.   as for the near and outsider vassals
204.   they gave the appearance of being skeptical.
205.   In the meantime, as for Ujitsuna, quickly crossing the river
206.   parting [his forces] to the right and left
207.   as for the father and son, while they banded together with them in the center
208.   as for the appearance [the two presented] as they awaited the Prince's forces
209.   even though it was not yet time
210.   they were as [calm as] chickens waiting for their friends
211.   at the games at Tatsuta.[67]
212.   In the meantime, as for the noble Prince, seeing this sight
213.   the soldiers of the three provinces at the head of his forces he readied and
214.   they faced the Hōjō.
215.   For just about an hour they fought with words
216.   and after that the battle with the first volleys of arrows
217.   and when they were over
218.   they began to fight with swords and when they did
219.   the war cries clashing against each other
220.   made this a place none other than the realm of the fighting Asuras.
221.   As well you know, as for the Hōjō, since they had already discussed this
222.   attacking [in the formation] of a three-quarter moon
223.   capturing the direct vassals of the Prince's forces [with them] in their center
224.   even though [the fighting] became furious, they attacked.
225.   As for the troops of the three provinces
226.   they were cut off by the enemy from the prince and
227.   they were unable even to draw their bows.
228.   In such a situation
229.   most importantly the great prince
230.   his younger brother Motoyori and the young prince, as for all three
231.   alighting from their horses
232.   they drove off to the east and west the soldiers coming at them from all four
       directions and when they did
233.   as for the traces of their sudden retreat

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[66] *Hata o awasenu*: clash banners, or fight a real battle.

[67] The last two lines are inverted in the Japanese original.

234. it was like the disarray of divining sticks.
235. They fell back and they pushed forward and
236. up to seventy-three times
237. they brought in reinforcements and attacked them and because they did
238. valiant as they were the princes too
239. were worn out.
240. This is what the young prince said:
241. "Hear now, Motoyori, listen.
242. I bear very serious wounds and
243. I shall cut my stomach," he declared and when he did
244. Motoyori heard and [said]
245. "In this house there is a code forbidding cutting the stomach.
246. Why should we do what the Hōjō band want us to do?
247. we [must] break through the direct retainers
248. and stab and be stabbed by Ujitsuna and serve [in death] as companions to our master," so [saying]
249. they [tried to] cut their way through [the enemy].[68]
250. As for the Hōjō [lords], seeing this
251. "Those are the princes themselves [coming at us]!
252. Don't let them escape," so [saying]
253. they took up their halberds.
254. The samurai nearest the lord
255. Ishimaki
256. Kuwabara
257. Daidōji
258. Itō
259. Asakura, most importantly,
260. thinking this the critical moment they fought and when they did
261. how sad it was! as for both princes, as for their hearts they were brave, even so
262. as for their wounds, many did they bear.
263. Their bodies too being exhausted
264. in the end they were killed.
265. In such a situation
266. as for the noble Great Prince
267. he eyed the Hōjō [looking for an opponent] and
268. in seeing the opportunity [he saw]
269. [it was] a man the height reaching seven feet
270. in armour laced with black in the Kurokawa pattern
271. a single warrior met only once in a half moon
272. carrying a drawn sword of five feet three inches
273. raising up a great voice this is the gist of what he shouted:
274. "A vassal serving the Hōjō
275. as for this man called Andō, even with your pardon
276. I will come as the noble Prince's opponent," so [saying] without waiting for an answer

---

[68] Hurl oneself into the midst of the enemy while slashing away with one's sword.

277.   he had come hurrying in front of the lord.
278.   As for Yoshiaki, seeing him
279.   "This is the conduct of a brave man, indeed," so [saying]
280.   shortly meeting with him
281.   he broke the middle of his helmet right into two and when he did
282.   he [Andō] disappeared like the morning dew.
283.   As for the enemy soldiers, seeing this
284.   becoming afraid they did not draw near.
285.   From among the great numbers [of men]
286.   a man announcing himself as Yokoi Shinsuke
287.   taking a bundle of thirteen [arrows] to his three-man bow, he fixed [arrow to bow] until none remained and
288.   he shot for an hour.
289.   These arrows flying across [at Yoshiaki]
290.   were what sealed his fate.
291.   Completely through the armor the noble Prince was wearing
292.   they stuck right out of his back.
293.   Valiant as the prince was even so
294.   while he was distracted
295.   struggling to keep his eyes open
296.   glaring [suddenly] at the direct vassals of the Hōjō right in the eyes
297.   using his seven-foot three-inch sword as a support he died on his feet.
298.   "Well!" they said, even so
299.   there was no one who would come near him.
300.   In such a situation
301.   a resident of Sōshū[69]
302.   announcing himself as Matsuda Yajirō
303.   drawing his three-foot one-inch [sword]
304.   he came hurrying in front of the lord.
305.   He probed under the flap of his armor twice with his sword and when he did
306.   as well you know, his soul had departed and because it had
307.   suddenly he fell down to the bow hand.
308.   Matsuda saw this sight and
309.   he took his head.
310.   As for the end of that prince, it simply astounded the eye.
311.   At this time, this was most moving.
312.   The Prince's mount called Onitsukige [Devil Moon Coat]
313.   was a treasure of a horse.
314.   He saw the end of the prince and
315.   [he reared] folding up his forelegs
316.   two times three times he neighed and
317.   he galloped 'round the enemy camp and
318.   away from the battle site

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[69] A Sagami (province) man, a formula meaning a man with a stipend of land based on service in the government.

319.   down the road more than fifty leagues all the way to Oyumi
320.   running in barely an hour into the palace
321.   at the end of the garden he completely collapsed.
322.   He snorted
323.   and indeed he neighed on high.
324.   Just then, as for the ladies of the Inner Palace
325.   gathered in the moon viewing pavilion
326.   they were just in the course of viewing the moon.
327.   However, they heard the whinnying voice of that horse and
328.   the ladies high [ranking] and low
329.   at once left the reception room and
330.   upon seeing this horse [they saw]
331.   here and there bearing wounds
332.   while it shed tears of blood
333.   it seemed to be trying to speak, however
334.   it was a being not equipped with the six senses [and] therefore
335.   it could only neigh.
336.   In ancient times at Yoshitsune's battle at the beach of Yashima
337.   Satō Tsuginobu took an arrow meant for him and when he did
338.   [the horse] he gave, Black Captain,[70]
339.   this horse having circled Tsuginobu's corpse three times
340.   in the end dying
341.   he went to the underworld, so I have heard.
342.   "That was the age of wisdom
343.   this the world of the end of Buddhist teachings and of fools of which these are even the proofs," so [saying]
344.   all the people high [ranking] and low generally
345.   there was not one person who did not soak his sleeves [with tears].
346.   In such a situation
347.   Sasaki Shirō [and] Henmi no Hachirō
348.   Sano Tōzō and Machino no Jirō
349.   as for them they were pushed back by the enemy and cut off [from their lord] and
350.   they could not be with the prince at his end, this they may well have thought was regretful.
351.   They regrouped their horses and [and forces] and
352.   they charged the enemy lines and
353.   they were about to die in battle each in his own way, however
354.   just then from a slight elevation
355.   a shouting voice was heard
356.   they got a clear look and when they did [they saw]
357.   Henmi Governor of Yamashiro bearing wounds had been [trying to retreat] without being noticed.
358.   They leapt from their horses and
359.   "Now, now [how do you fare]!" they said and when they did
360.   this is the gist of what Yamashiro said:

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[70] To a priest to pay for services for Tsuginobu's soul.

361. "Now, listen, all of you!
362. I was cut off by great numbers and
363. I was delayed at the prince's decease, how regretful it was!
364. Moreover, [here and] now I shall cut my stomach and
365. I shall presently be with the prince.
366. Quickly all of you hurry to Oyumi and
367. attend upon the young prince the younger brother and
368. fall back to whatever place and
369. wait [to see] what he intends to do," Yamashiro said this
      and when he did
370. being stunned by these words
371. "See here, as for Yamashiro, there is surely a mistake.
372. Isn't it so that loyalty to others is loyalty to oneself?
373. Each in his own way dying in battle
374. we too will accompany the prince
375. and this until the end of time will [bestow] fame [on us]."
376. They were just about to charge, however
377. Yamashiro seeing this sight
378. "Come now, my people, listen a moment to what [I have to say].
379. 'Seeing the fall of the old king
380. be loyal to the new,' so [saying]
381. Kōsekikō[71] left [these words to us].
382. The elder princes have just been destroyed and when they were
383. they left the young prince the younger brother and
384. [we] wait for the time of the phoenix [to rise] and
385. when [the house] rises for the second time in the world
386. our princes too who are in the underworld
387. surely they will rejoice.
388. When that time comes,
389. my colleagues, pray for my after life and act as my substitute," so [saying] he
      lamented and when he did
390. valiant as even these men were
391. brought to a standstill by his reasoning
392. their farewells at death to each other
393. truly moving they seemed.
394. Thus, the Governor of Yamashiro drew a fan from his waist and
395. he beckoned the side of the enemy
396. a vassal serving lord Hōjō
397. Yamanaka Shūrinosuke (Assistant Director in the Office of Palace Repairs) as
      soon as he saw this sight
398. two or three hundred horsemen had come hurrying up [to him].
399. "Yamanaka am I and
400. who might you be?
401. Announce your name," so [saying] he attacked and when he did
402. Yamashiro hearing this

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[71] Warring States strategist of the Jin dynasty.

403. "As for me, [I am] of the Prince's side, Henmi, [Governor of] Yamashiro, hearing this
404. you might know [of me] already.
405. Since I am an aged warrior
406. I was cut off by great numbers and
407. I was delayed [in attending] the prince [at his death].
408. I pray you, act as my second," so [say]ing
409. he slipped out the sword at his waist and
410. he cut a cross into his stomach and
411. he took out his entrails by the handful and
412. he had just bade farewell [to this world] and when he did
413. as soon as Yamanaka saw this sight
414. since he was a person of [delicate] sensibility
415. under his breath was heard a single line of poetry:
416. "I who struck and the man struck together within the same [lotus] calyx may we not be born?"
417. [so saying], he swung his sword in a flash[72] and
418. as for the head, it fell away.
419. The manner of the end of that person
420. there was indeed not a single person who did not praise [it].
421. Thus, Sano
422. [and] Machino, most importantly,
423. they quickly hurried to the Inner Palace and
424. this is the gist of what they said to the young prince:
425. "Well, our prince was surrounded by the Hōjō and
426. he is truly dead.
427. We wished to accompany him but
428. this is the gist of what Yamashiro the lay priest said:
429. 'You shall accompany our young prince and
430. remove him somewhere!' so [saying] this
431. he expressed his decision without reserve and because he did
432. as useless as we are in the life we are living
433. we are come to serve our lord.
434. Please quickly fall back," so [saying]
435. one after the other said and when they did
436. the young prince heard and
437. "Wherever we go
438. what person is there who will offer protection?
439. Immediately will I cut my stomach," so [saying] this
440. he put his hand to his sword and when he did
441. they saw this sight and
442. earnestly did they console him and
443. in the direction of Bōshū they had him fall back and this
444. was thought right and proper indeed.

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[72] It appeared too fast to be seen.

445. In the meantime the ladies of the Inner Palace
446. high [ranking] and low more than two hundred and eighty persons cried out all at once and when they did
447. surely even the state of the shrieks in hell
448. was thus.
449. Until yesterday this being a place of fame and honor
450. they played with the ball of fortune and
451. in the morning, [things] having changed, down the road of ignoring the law of karma
452. they retreated to their destinations and when they did
453. they hurried along on rough stones and
454. the blood flowing from their feet
455. stained the grass on the wayside this
456. must surely be like the road to the netherworld.
457. Some were stuck by horses' hooves and
458. and they died and
459. some passed to the hands of the peasants and
460. they came to an unhappy end and
461. indeed even the retreat from the capital of the Heike general Munemori
462. how could it have been worse than this?
463. At this time, most moving indeed [was the case of]
464. a person exceedingly beloved of the noble great prince called Aisu no kimi and
465. she retreated far and away from the gate but
466. "A wise man does not follow two princes
467. nor a virtuous woman serve two husbands" she remembered it was said and
468. she withdrew into the Inner Palace and
469. entering her apartments
470. next to her skin she put on a white, lined garment and
471. over that she layered a robe of figured silk and
472. she tied on her long crimson culottes and
473. her disheveled hair she bound high and
474. she dyed black her long brush in an inkstone and
475. the traces of her hand inscribed on fine crepe paper [the color] of turning leaves she saw and when she did [she had written]
476. "How interesting, now I even from the age of seventeen years
477. until the end of my twenty-first autumn
478. not even for a moment did I leave the side of the prince.
479. His love surpassing in beauty like the chrysanthemum
480. even in the poem on the season of the dew on the leaves of the chrysanthemum at Narumi
481. this which was pledged by that Emperor Xuanzong to Yang Gueifei
482. even this pledge of the seventh day of the seventh month
483. 'If in the sky a bird with wings abreast
484. if on the earth one branch joined to another,' so [saying]
485. he declared in lover's talk.
486. Now at the point of my life [standing before] the crescent moon [like a bridge to the next world]

487.   my decision is not to return [but]
488.   together with you [my prince] [crossing] the river of death
489.   let us surmount the waves of the pools and shoals," so writing
490.   even the brush was shaking as she wrote and
491.   the season being the end of autumn
492.   remembering [this she wrote] as follows:
493.   "As for me, lost in thought [of you] I am like the autumn mist [suspended] in the deep grass; as for you [my prince], on whom I relied, the wind that tears through the trees [has torn me from you],"
494.   so [saying], together with her tears she folded [the paper on which she had been writing] and
495.   while she put it in her scented sleeve
496.   facing the west, she pressed her hands together and
497.   finally in a loud voice she said the invocation of Amida's name and
498.   she bit off her tongue and when she did, spitting it out
499.   she lay down with her head to the north.
500.   The manner of the end of that lady
501.   as truly admirable it is remembered.
502.   At this time, the noble young prince's wet nurse
503.   was a lady called Rensei and
504.   as soon as she heard of the prince's death
505.   she raised her face up to heaven and
506.   casting herself down on the ground
507.   she lamented and she grieved and
508.   "At least I will go to view the body of our prince," so [saying] this
509.   since she was in the public glare
510.   departing Oyumi in the middle of night
511.   when she went, in the waves on the shore of Yūki
512.   she wrung out her sleeves and skirt.
513.   She indeed she was reminded too of the river of death at the border of the netherworld.
514.   She passed beyond Mikawa and when she did
515.   "Indeed this must be [the famous] Matsuyama at Inage," [she thought.]
516.   The wind blowing through the pines piercing her body
517.   how uneasily the plovers call
518.   on the rapids of the Kemi River
519.   wondering whether they might have met you [my prince]
520.   putting her faith in the buddhas and the gods she passed through the thick-grown bamboo of Funabashi.
521.   When she had gone as far as her feet would lead her
522.   the ferry man of the Ichi River boat
523.   she asked whether or not the prince she thought of was there and when she did [he said]
524.   "For whom do you wait in the area of the hills at Matsudo?"
525.   She arrived too at Sagami Hill and when she did
526.   while going to the noble young prince's grave
527.   while she plucked the flowers of the various grasses

528. the tears flowing from her sleeve
529. imitating a libation of water
530. this is the gist of her lament:
531. "Yesterday the form of the [young] shogun's heavenly robes
532. —how beautiful [his face with its] sidelocks—
533. he swung his long sleeves [like] snow swirling in the wind,
534. as for the morning [all] changing again
535. at the base of this mugwort in the deep grass he has made his dwelling, oh.
536. In ancient times Saigyō, I think it might be,
537. [going] to the grave of the Sanuki former emperor [Sutoku]
538. remembering that he had chanted a poem, [wrote] as follows:
539. 'Good prince, even though you think on your resplendent palace of old, after what has happened, what does it avail you?'"
540. so [saying] when she chanted this to herself
541. suddenly from the base of the mound the answer of the noble young prince—what she thought it might be
542. "As for the traces of the harbor plovers even though they fly back and forth to Oyumi, as for me in this field of grass there is not even a sound,"
543. so he sang and when he did
544. Rensei shed even more tears, however
545. even from within the grave
546. what she thought to be the ghost of the noble young prince
547. wearing helmet and armor
548. approaching where Rensei lay her head
549. "[That having come] all the way here you pray for my afterlife
550. makes me so happy.
551. As for myself, while being in the hell of the realm of fighting Asuras
552. as for my soul, being in heaven
553. it appears as a star called Daikunshō and
554. I shall receive a second life in this world and
555. I shall become the master of the eight provinces [of the Kantō].
556. You, do not grieve too much for me.
557. Relate in detail to the young prince my younger brother
558. this time his father the great prince
559. for his destruction there are three mistakes to blame and
560. as for the first: although his spirits were high
561. his martial spirit not consulting the omens
562. he did not know the fear of heaven [and]
563. as for the second: he bypassed the main house and
564. thinking he would become master of the eight provinces
565. because he thought [of this] deep in his heart
566. he made the way of heaven [government] a matter of private interest and
567. as for the third: Mariyatsu Jokan had served him as a follower but
568. not long after [Yoshiaki] disowned him and because he did
569. suddenly [Jokan] died.
570. His resentment becoming an evil spirit
571. it bore a grudge against his prince.

572.   Because of these mistakes
573.   the gods and the buddhas may well have deserted him.
574.   Fate quickly spends its allotted span," so [saying] he was unable to speak more and
575.   and he was drowned in tears, however
576.   from the direction of the north a great wind suddenly blowing
577.   in the south a great bell sounded and
578.   in the west a drum was struck with a great boom
579.   in the middle of a square
580.   too from among the [voices] all shrieking at the same time
581.   the honorable Motoyori's voice being there
582.   "As for [you] young prince
583.   why do you delay?
584.   Now indeed the time for the fighting Asuras," so saying he shouted.
585.   The young prince too, "Understood," so saying
586.   he ran out.
587.   Rensei too as she tried to follow after him
588.   dawn broke and when it did
589.   the grass being everywhere
590.   only the mound remained.
591.   Rensei feeling she had wakened from a dream
592.   weeping weeping departing there
593.   she hurried to a certain mountain temple and
594.   at the [age] of thirty-one
595.   she shaved [her head] and
596.   clad herself ill in [a robe] of inky black and
597.   while she wandered the many provinces and the seven highways
598.   at holy Buddhist temples
599.   at holy Shintō shrines she made her obeisances and
600.   prayed to become a buddha, how moving it was!
601.   How moving it was!
602.   third year of Tenshō [1575] year of the junior brother of the wood, year of the boar, twelfth day of the eighth month.

About the Authors

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