



ORAL TRADITION

**Festschrift for
John Miles Foley**

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Oral Tradition (<http://journal.oraltradition.org>) seeks to provide a comparative and interdisciplinary focus for studies in oral tradition and related fields by publishing research and scholarship on the creation, transmission, and interpretation of all forms of oral traditional expression. In addition to essays treating certifiably oral traditions, *OT* presents investigations of the relationships between oral and written traditions, as well as brief accounts of important fieldwork, and occasional transcriptions and translations of oral texts. In addition, issues will include the annual Albert Lord and Milman Parry Lecture on Oral Tradition. Submissions should follow the list-of-reference format (http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/misc/oral_tradition_formatting_guide.pdf) and may be sent via e-mail (journal@oraltradition.org); all quotations of primary materials must be made in the original language(s) with following English translations. If appropriate, please describe any supporting materials that could be used to illustrate the article, such as photographs, audio recordings, or video recordings. *Oral Tradition* publishes such materials online in an eCompanion designed to supplement the texts of articles. Most contributions will be reviewed by at least one specialist reader and one generalist reader before a final decision is reached.

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Festschrift for John Miles Foley

presented with gratitude and admiration by his students

University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present)
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars (1987-94)

Lori Ann Garner and R. Scott Garner, *Special Editors*

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Editors' Column

We are thrilled to present *Oral Tradition* 26.2, a special issue dedicated with deepest admiration to the journal's editor, John Miles Foley, in celebration of his 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. This surprise Festschrift—conceived and planned entirely without his knowledge—celebrates Foley's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his former and current students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

The issue opens with a foreword by John's friend and colleague, Joseph Falaky Nagy, who eloquently begins the "pleasurable task of paying tribute to a pioneer in the study of oral tradition." Following a brief introduction are fourteen scholarly investigations into a wide range of issues related to oral traditions and the works of verbal art that they engender. Authors include Thomas A. DuBois, Steve Reece, Aaron Phillip Tate, Lori Ann Garner and Kayla M. Miller, Carolyn Higbie, Heather Maring, R. Scott Garner, Michael D. C. Drout, Dave Henderson, Andrew E. Porter, Adam Brooke Davis, Raymond F. Person, Timothy W. Boyd, and Wayne Kraft. Following these full-length and in-depth analyses, an arrangement of eleven essays collectively titled "Further Explorations" is meant to follow John's lead of always pushing scholarship into that next uncharted area for the benefit of specialists and non-specialists alike. Contributors to this cluster include Bonnie D. Irwin, Holly Hobbs, Catherine Quick, Rebecca Richardson Mouser, Claire Schmidt, Peter Ramey, Ruth Knezevich, Sarah Zurhellen, Derek Updegraff, Bruce E. Shields, and Morgan E. Grey. The issue then concludes with a short personal reflection by John Foley's first Ph.D. student, Ward Parks, and an annotated bibliography devoted to the still quickly-expanding body of John's scholarship.

Collectively, these essays explore ancient Greek, Old English, Middle English, Latin, South Slavic, Old Irish, modern Irish, Old Norse, and Hungarian traditions as well as issues related to Biblical Studies, modern media, rhetoric, folk speech, occupational humor, pedagogy, ethnopoetics, and eighteenth-century British literature. This present issue of *Oral Tradition* is thus meant to serve both as a testament of and a tribute to John's tireless dedication to creating truly interdisciplinary dialogue through ground-breaking scholarship, creative collaboration, and generous mentorship.

Not surprisingly, given that John's immeasurable contribution to scholarship is more than matched by his capacity for friendship, this project has received tremendous support from all around the globe, most especially from the dedicated group of contributing authors whose combined efforts give John's Festschrift the distinction of being the largest single *Oral Tradition* issue to date, a compelling statement on the profound influence he has had on us all. We are all enormously grateful to the more than twenty readers and editorial board members, who gave generously of their time and expertise in ensuring the highest quality for the collection during the review process and to the enthusiastic editorial assistants at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition who saw it through publication. Most especially, we are grateful to Managing Editor Justin Arft, IT Manager Mark Jarvis, and of course Anne-Marie Foley, whose creative and loving vision helped propel and sustain this project from its inception. On behalf of all those involved, we express our earnest hope that John will forgive us for hijacking his journal and accept this

Festschrift as our modest but sincere thanks for his mentorship and as a tribute to his impact on studies in oral traditions throughout the world.

Lori Ann Garner, *Special Editor*
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Foreword

Joseph Falaky Nagy

The men of Britain are stymied. Having crossed over the Irish Sea to rescue their king's sister and to punish the Irish for having treated her cruelly, the British expedition, led by their gigantic king Bendigeidfran ("Blessed Raven"), finds that the Irish have retreated across an unnavigable river over which there are no bridges. The Britons ask Bendigeidfran (translated in Ford 1977:67; Middle Welsh text in Thomson 1961:11):

"What do you advise for a bridge?" "Nothing, except that he who is chief shall be a bridge." Then was first uttered that saying, and it has become proverbial. And then after he had lain down across the river, planks were placed across him, and his hosts went over-across him.

I propose that this episode from the twelfth-century Welsh prose composition known as the Four Branches of the Mabinogi (specifically, from the Second Branch) gives us much to think about as we undertake the pleasurable task of paying tribute to a pioneer in the study of oral tradition—and not just because John and his reputation, like Bendigeidfran, are so much larger than life. (I hope that in comparing him to a Welsh nemesis of the Irish I am not offending John's Gaelic ancestors.)

This passage exemplifies a trait of authors working in a milieu highly attuned to the performative background of an evolving literary tradition—the kind of milieu that produced compositions such as the Four Branches of the Mabinogi (a point made by Sioned Davies in her important 1992 contribution to *Oral Tradition*). Such authors are often very eager to trace the history of traditionally stabilized items, such as proverbs, back to a primal moment when they "happened" for the first time. Running on the mythological fuel of the character who says it, Bendigeidfran's verbal reaction to an unusual circumstance fast-forwards into the present as a set expression that people living and speaking long after the time of Bendigeidfran still quote and apply to a variety of quotidian contexts. The fortunate audience of the Second Branch are imaginatively ushered by its composer back to the "there" of a primeval world where giants ruled, and where it is possible to listen in as a proverb is coined and achieves currency. (Stefan Zimmer's 2003 study further explores the pedigree of this "leader as bridge" metaphor.)

Following traditional forms back to the world of their originating mothers and fathers happens to be a reflexive preoccupation not only of the early and medieval literary traditions that self-consciously grew out of and alongside oral tradition. The desire to recover that primal conception still informing an ongoing process also underlies the efforts of folklorists and other

toilers in the field of oral tradition studies. With his pioneering historical and bibliographical work John has set out for posterity the fruits of these studies in all their diversity and richness, making it all the more possible for us to appreciate both the deep roots in the past and the expanding future of scholarship on oral composition, performance, and transmission.

On another front, we have gained immeasurably from the comparative work John has done on the authorizing strategy familiar to us from pre-modern literatures and fieldwork reports—the syndrome whereby a tradition attributes a text, or a storyteller or performer attributes all part or part of his/her repertoire, to a spatially or temporally distant mentor. As a Celticist, I cannot resist mentioning in this regard the scenario attested in both medieval Irish literature and conversations collectors have had with Gaelic storytellers whereby the aged shanachie expresses regret that the scholar in search of traditional material had not come to interview him before his memory had grown rusty, or in time to speak with another tradition-bearer, even more knowledgeable than the shanachie, but no longer alive.

Having invoked one kind of deferral *topos*, I now resort to another, the application of which John's unusual productivity amply justifies. Where can one start to account for all that he has done for oral tradition studies? Like the overarching Bendigeidfran, John has overcome disciplinary and linguistic boundaries and led us into previously unknown territory, dramatically expanding our sense of the range of living laboratories in which the investigation of epic, ballad, lament, and other living genres of oral performance can be productively conducted. Criss-crossing the globe in his academic travels, contributing his research and ideas to fora dizzying in the variety of their locations and disciplinary foci, and creating an international journal that showcases the work of scholars so diverse that nowhere else would one expect to find their names listed in the same table of contents, John has laid the foundation for a network binding together a vast community of scholars. Were it not for their having met John (many of them in the context of the NEH Summer Seminars he has organized), being welcomed into this extended scholarly family he has helped to create, and crossing over the (now virtual) “bridge” *Oral Tradition* and its founding editor have provided, many far-flung researchers, thinkers, and innovators might never have realized that they have true soulmates who share their scholarly interests and goals.

As mentioned above, motivating Bendigeidfran and the men of the Isle of the Mighty to take up arms and cross the sea is the desire to rescue the king's sister, Branwen, who has sent an unusual SOS to her kinspeople (see below). True, Branwen's story may seem just a distant cousin to that of the unjustly calumniated Rhiannon in the First Branch of the Mabinogi, as well as to those of the calumniated Constance and patient Griselda, both stories high on the list of medieval “greatest hits” (Wood 1996:62-68). Branwen, however, is neither a faceless pawn of the narrative nor a passive “damsel in distress.” It has been observed that not only does her name *Branwen* contain the same key element as her brother's name (*bran*, “raven”) but that the modifying element in *Branwen*—the adjective *-(g)wen*, the feminine inflection of *gwyn* (“white, bright, holy”)—is perhaps a “native” counterpart to the borrowed adjective that does the modifying in Bendigeidfran's name: *bendigeid* (“blessed, holy”) from Latin *benedictus* (Ford 1987-88:105). Hence, it is fair to speculate whether at some point in the development of this story these two characters were twins, or originally one person whom the tradition split in two so as better to represent the contrasting values associated with this complex character-package.

Not going so far in Jungian fashion as to assign an *anima* to our honoree's *animus*, I would nevertheless propose that Branwen, like her brother, is good to think with as we pay tribute to John and attempt to describe all that he has accomplished. An outstanding attribute of Branwen's, one assigned to no one else in the Four Branches, is that *Branwen can write*, even though her story is supposed to have taken place in a time long before the introduction of writing into the world of the insular Celts. When she is being persecuted and suppressed by the dastardly Irish, who are enforcing an embargo between Britain and Ireland lest news of her imprisonment spread back to her home, Branwen alights upon the bright idea of writing a letter to her brother in which she tells of her plight. She also devises the equally remarkable ploy of training a pet starling to speak like a human, and teaching it how to recognize and find its way to her brother, to whom the bird subsequently delivers the letter, tucked under its wing. It is in response to her missive that Bendigeidfran assembles an army and a fleet. When these approach the Irish coast, it is only Branwen who can properly interpret what the Irish see from the shore. Although they have been treating Branwen with contempt, they know that she is the only one who can make sense of the bewildering and deeply troublesome reports they have received. And indeed, she can. Though it may seem to be so, it is no mountain or forest moving on the water, she explains—it is her gigantic brother and the masts of the ships bearing the formidable army accompanying him. After the British land and march across the barrier of the river, using (let us recall) Bendigeidfran's body as a bridge, it is Branwen who arranges for a truce between her sanguine and affinal relations—an arrangement to be ratified by the offering of a feast to the invaders-turned-guests. (Unfortunately, Branwen's plans come undone on account of the chronic deviousness of the Irish and the willful destructiveness of her half-brother, but these are sad matters better discussed elsewhere.)

Both as a thoughtful reader over the years of the myriad submissions that have appeared in the mailbox of *Oral Tradition* and as a researcher restlessly seeking new subject matter, John, like Branwen, can see the familiar and the orderly appearing on the horizon of our scholarly vision, in data that other editors might have found alien, obscure, or even downright threatening. Moreover, as a conference organizer of the first order, and a frequent invitee and regular participant at the yearly meetings and congresses of organizations such as the Modern Language Association, the American Folklore Society, and the Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University, John knows how to bring people on different sides of various issues together in a friendly and stimulating environment, so that they end up talking freely to each other and leaving with a commitment to stay in touch. Moreover, both under the auspices of the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, founded by John at the University of Missouri-Columbia, as well as in less formal settings, John has demonstrated time and again that he and his wonderful better half Anne-Marie are experts in making guests feel welcome and giving them a very good time they are not likely to forget.

The Branwen analogy also hits the bull's eye in that John *can certainly write*! His natural gift for expression and his admirable resistance to indulging in the chronic academic habit of complicating one's writing or thinking for complication's sake have helped to create a body of work that conveys a whole world of ideas, methods, and information, and will continue to do so for generations of scholars, students, and readers to come. I like to think that, given the depth accorded the character of Branwen in the text's presentation of her, the letter she wrote was more

than just a plea for rescue—that it also offered an acute analysis of the situation and how she ended up in it. Similarly, as anyone who has sampled the extensive body of John’s publication can attest, there is so much more in his “letters” than the perfunctory academic exercise or the bald statement of supposed fact.

But, to return to Branwen, if she had gone to the trouble of teaching a bird how to talk to humans and thus presumably convey the message, why did the letter have to be produced at all (Lloyd-Morgan 1998:158-59)? Perhaps here, as in the passage discussed earlier which highlights the transformation of Bendigeidfran’s saying into a proverb, the composer of the Second Branch is showing that he is interested not just in telling the story of some extraordinary characters living in a primeval time, but also in saying something about the profound issues implied in the difference between fluid and fixed discourse, between the past as happening and the past as enshrined in hindsight, and between a talking bird that can fly over the Irish Sea and a letter that, to do its job, must stay put, affixed to the bird. We should note that the “oral” bird and the written letter are not dispatched in sequence but are sent off together, complementing each other and reinforcing the same message, imprinted upon each in a different way by Branwen, who is both writer and teacher. Perhaps it is with this dual accomplishment that Branwen and the author of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi convey to us the essence of what the story has to say: that writing needs an accompanying “voice” to reach its intended audience, and that communication—whether spoken or written, oral or visual—can never be completely stifled or robbed of its efficacy. We thank John Foley for having so eloquently and graciously taught us these same truths and expanded upon them so creatively in his writings, in his teaching, and in all his exercises of “word power.”

University of California, Los Angeles

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Introduction and *Tabula Gratulatoria*

Lori Ann Garner and R. Scott Garner

Tamo bez njeg' hoda ne imade.

Our journey there is impossible without him.

adapted from *The Wedding of Mustajbey's
Son Bećirbey* (Foley 2004:line 412)

For John Miles Foley, oral tradition has always been about the journey—for scholars and teachers as well as for verbal artists and their audiences—and as he himself puts it in *Immanent Art*, “long journeys are also the most pleasant and the most rewarding” (1991:ix). The important role of such travel is perhaps referred to most explicitly in his recent work, *The Pathways Project*, which through its very title explores the “thought technologies” of oral tradition and electronic communication as complex navigation systems with infinitely variable routes; however, the metaphor of a journey to conceptualize scholarly work and even the verbal arts we study—never static, always in motion—has characterized his work for decades. Scholarship itself a journey, Milman Parry’s and Albert Lord’s influential work was described as “pathbreaking” (Foley 1995:xiv), and John Foley’s earliest goals for extending this path were cast in terms of a road for travel: “I hope to have succeeded in telling the tale *pravo* (straightforwardly) and not *krivo* (crookedly, falsely), as the South Slavic *guslari* would say” (1988:xiv). Later, as part of his unceasing effort to pave the way for oral traditions to be studied more readily in the classroom, he envisioned his edited *Teaching Oral Traditions* volume as “an avenue into the study of oral traditions” (1998b:1). And, of course, even the storytellers themselves can be understood in terms of their narrative voyage, such as is the case for the ancient Greek bard who “navigates through the maze of traditional story” (1998a:20).

In honor of John’s 65th birthday and his recent retirement (though a retirement largely in name only), the current surprise special issue of *Oral Tradition* celebrates and continues this journey among the world’s widely diverse oral traditions through a series of essays contributed entirely by his former and current students. Collectively, the essays that follow explore ancient Greek, Old English, Middle English, Latin, South Slavic, Old Irish, modern Irish, Old Norse, and Hungarian traditions as well as issues related to Biblical Studies, modern media, rhetoric, folk speech, occupational humor, pedagogy, ethnopoeitics, and eighteenth-century British literature. Seldom do the students of any given scholar work in such a wide array of fields, and one might

well wonder how a single mentor could inspire and influence research across such a diverse range of subjects. But as a starting point for understanding this phenomenon, it seems best to begin by turning toward a pair of traditions held most dear by John himself.

First, we have the South Slavic proverb that appears above as an epigraph to this introduction. Taken from *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey*, a traditional Moslem oral epic performed by Halil Bajgorić in 1935 and then translated by Foley as part of his award-winning edition in 2004, this proverb is spoken by the character Mustajbey and works to anticipate the essential role that Tale of Orašac will play in the requisite military campaign leading up to the wedding of Bećirbey to Zlata.¹ As a “larger-than-life trickster figure” (Foley 2004:40), Tale is revered as a hero despite—and, to a certain extent, because of—his unconventional and unpredictable ways of presenting himself and handling challenging situations. Whereas his horsemen wear sterling silver and gold, Tale himself spurns impractical grandiosity, dressing in goatskin trousers and employing as his weapon of choice a simple “nail-studded walking stick” (line 693). The horses of more conventional warriors may carry grand and stately weaponry themselves, but Tale’s dun-colored horse is more accustomed to carrying flour-meal on his back. And as the perfect witness to Tale’s defiance of any easy stereotype, his standard-bearer aptly rides backward and carries an upside-down standard. Yet in spite of Tale’s seemingly counter-heroic behavior and demeanor, he is still recognized upon his arrival as a hero (*junak*, line 457). Indeed it is clear that Tale is the hero without which the epic journey to defend Zlata against the villainous Baturić ban cannot, and will not, begin. And in fact it is Tale’s command—Let’s start traveling now! (*Da jidemo sada putovati!*, line 476)—that finally spurs the party into action.

In the end, it is precisely Tale’s refusal to conform that saves the day and allows for the successful conclusion of the wedding song. Traveling up a mountain with seven sponsors to protect Zlata, Mustajbey and his men unknowingly encounter Baturić himself, so convincingly disguised as a blind beggar that, at Mustajbey’s behest, all seven sponsors and even the bride and groom themselves generously share with him their riches. It is only the unassuming and nonconforming Tale who sees through the disguise, exposing the terrified Baturić with the help of his nail-studded walking stick before giving thanks to god for the cloak he then obtains from his fleeing enemy. Because of Tale’s fortuitous intervention, it is now possible for the journey to proceed so that Mustajbey’s troops can avenge themselves against the forces of Baturić, with the great hero Djerdelez Alija bravely killing Baturić himself and thus enabling the happy and long-awaited union of Zlata and Bećirbey. A trickster-hero defined by his readiness to push boundaries, Tale is, in Foley’s words “a combatant of unmatched bravery and achievement” (107).

As is true for Tale, John’s success in facilitating successful journeys—both for himself and for his students—derives in large part from his refusal to follow convention purely for convention’s sake, a decision made quite apparent in *Immanent Art*: “I now declare my independence, for better or for worse, from any of the modern critical schools” despite the “price

¹ As Foley explains, “this line is proverbially attached to Tale, and Tale alone, in many epics” and “it speaks idiomatically to the necessity of his presence and contribution in battle” (2004:107).

one has to pay for nonalignment” (1991:xiii). Further departures from scholarly norms soon followed, both in his bringing together of unlikely comparanda within *Singer of Tales in Performance* because “contexts that lie outside the received version or text are most certainly active and crucially important” (1995:xi) and in his choice to bridge the gap between academic scholarship and a general readership in *How to Read an Oral Poem* through the utilization of a more readable style: “If in championing the cause of the nonspecialist this book errs on the side of simplicity and availability, then so be it” (2002:ix). Similarly, The Pathways Project was described from its outset as “a provocation, not a solution” (Foley 2011-:“Preface” node) that “follows its own credo” (“Responses” node).

Accordingly, John Foley has also long found it necessary to remind his students and his readers that, like Tale’s journey, the study of verbal art has, unfortunately, often been more akin to warfare than to dialogue. Noting the etymological connection between *cannon* and *canon*, he astutely observed early on that “*canon* has come to designate a battlefield, an intellectual fortress under siege, a primary site for cultural combat” (1988a:13). But just like Tale, at the heart of the battle but refusing to accept its polarizing terms, Foley removes the entire question away from the battlefield of the *canon*, comparing oral tradition instead to Proteus who “exists only in his shape-shifting and resists the captivity of canonical form” (22). As he explains in *Traditional Oral Epic*, the “danger” involved with broad comparative studies is a “risk occasionally worth taking” (1990:ix), but only when it involves “honest appraisal of differences as well as similarities” (ix).

We mustn’t press the connection too far, however, for Tale, to put it mildly, is neither collaborator nor teacher. Although his seemingly counter-intuitive methods “inevitably prove essential to any mission’s success” (2004:40), this “trickster-hero” acts largely in his own self-interest, and it is here that John Miles Foley sharply parts ways with Tale of Orašac. At this juncture, then, we are compelled to turn to another tradition held dear by John, that of Old English poetry. Poetically affirming the mutual enrichment of open dialogue, *Maxims I* opens with the sage assertion that “Wise men shall exchange *gieds*” (*Gleawe men sceolon gieddum wrixlan*, line 4a²), *gied* signaling, in Foley’s words, “the nexus of song and wisdom” (1995:205). And it is just such exchanges of songs and wisdom that he himself has helped to facilitate by establishing and directing the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, which has served for more 25 years “to foster conversations and exchanges about oral tradition that would not otherwise take place” (<http://oraltradition.org/about>). John further sought in 2006 “to democratize academic research” and “to remove barriers to learning and knowledge-sharing” (<http://www.e-researchcenter.org>) by founding the Center for eResearch, and these goals were then achieved to an even greater extent in 2011 when John created the International Society for Studies in Oral Tradition as “an online, universally accessible, and free-of-charge facility” designed to “create and maintain an open, democratic network for understanding the world’s oral traditions” (<http://oraltradition.org/articles/issot>). And of course as the general editor and founder of several book series—including the Albert Bates Lord Studies on Oral Tradition (Garland, 1987-98), the Voices in Performance and Text series (University of Illinois Press and Indiana University Press,

² *Maxims I* quotation from Krapp and Dobbie 1936. Translation follows Foley 1995:205.

1994-99), the Poetics of Orality and Literacy series (Notre Dame, since 2004), and numerous other edited volumes³—John Foley has been vigilant in creating every opportunity possible for exchange and in nourishing truly interdisciplinary dialogue.

Perhaps nowhere is his generosity in providing opportunities for productive exchange more apparent than in his teaching. Joining the Department of English at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1979, John Foley has gone on to influence students in numerous departments, as he eventually was named as a professor of Classical Studies in 1991, an adjunct professor of Anthropology in 1992, and a professor of Germanic and Slavic Languages in 2003. His thoughtful mentorship has therefore enabled numerous undergraduate and graduate students in these various departments to reach beyond their established curricular boundaries and aggressively pursue research enhanced by multiple theoretical approaches and finely nuanced interdisciplinary insights. But his dedication to the exchange of ideas through teaching does not stop at his home institution. He has dedicated numerous summers to even more wide-reaching exchanges, now leading workshops and summer schools in places as far-flung as Finland and China, but perhaps his most intensive efforts were those involved with his direction of six National Endowment of the Humanities Summer Seminars on oral traditional literatures in 1987, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, and 1996. But whether at home or abroad, John Foley has always understood teaching and research to be inextricably connected, and even very early in his career he noted of teachers that “it is the light of their learning that was kindled and burns yet within us” (1983:7). By conceiving of pedagogy and scholarship as dual aspects of “‘learning’ in the most essential meaning of the word” (5), he has thus always inspired his students to maintain a commitment toward mutually nourishing teaching, research, and learning “because we are doing what we believe in and contributing to a long and distinguished tradition, whatever individual roles fate prescribes for us” (6).

Throughout his career, John Foley has always acknowledged and celebrated the contributions of his own mentors and those of the field more broadly, dedicating numerous volumes as tributes.⁴ Therefore, in honor of his 65th birthday and his “semi-retirement,” our hope was to turn the tables on John and allow his students the opportunity to demonstrate their own appreciation for all he has done to help each of us as we proceed on our own individual journeys, whether we first encountered him as a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia or as a participant in one of his NEH seminars. However, because we have each been influenced by John in so many different ways, we did not want to limit ourselves to a venue where only lengthy, in-depth essays would be appropriate. Instead, we wished to have the freedom to include such pieces, of course, but to complement them with shorter pieces as well, contributions that fearlessly struck out into less familiar—and perhaps in some cases, more personally meaningful—territory as they examined connections that John’s efforts had either directly or indirectly helped make apparent. And it became clear at this point that the most fitting place for such a

³ See further the annotated bibliography of John Miles Foley’s work at the end of this volume.

⁴ *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord* (Slavica Publishers, 1981); *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry* (Slavica Publishers, 1987); *A Festschrift for Walter J. Ong* (special issue of *Oral Tradition*, 2.1, 1987); *De Gustibus: Essays for Alain Renoir* (Garland, 1992); *Oral Tradition*, volume 18, dedicated as a *Festschrift* to Robert Payson Creed, “who introduced me to Old English poetry and oral tradition” (Foley 2003, n.p.).

tribute would be as a special issue of *Oral Tradition* itself, the multi-disciplinary and ever-innovative journal that John Foley has now edited for more than 25 years. As readers will see, this journal's wonderful flexibility has allowed us not only to incorporate more than a dozen full-length investigations into a wide range of issues related to oral traditions and the works of verbal art that they engender, but also to follow its well-established precedent of grouping together shorter pieces within a unified cluster—in this case, through an arrangement of essays entitled “Further Explorations” that is meant to follow John's lead of always pushing scholarship into that next uncharted area for the benefit of specialists and non-specialists alike. The issue then concludes with a short personal reflection by his first Ph.D. student, Ward Parks, and an annotated bibliography devoted to the still quickly-expanding body of John's scholarship. This present issue of *Oral Tradition* is thus meant to serve both as a testament of and a tribute to that rare combination embodied in John Miles Foley of Tale's willingness to push boundaries and the Anglo-Saxons' firm belief in the wisdom of shared knowledge and shared song.

As we pursued this project, we wished to preserve for as long as possible the surprise nature of this special issue, and, thus, as noble as our intentions may have been, we were unfortunately in the end forced to depart from the publicly heroic acts of any South Slavic or Anglo-Saxon hero and instead emulate the evil Baturić and his kidnapping tendencies by hijacking John's journal, with the esteemed editor remaining unaware of our intentions for several months as we solicited contributions, saw them through the journal's normal review and editorial process, and eventually finalized the issue's contents. But though we must accept ultimate culpability for this clandestine enterprise, we have not acted alone. The tremendously dedicated group of contributing authors themselves were of course complicit throughout the entire endeavor, and we would like to express our deepest thanks to them and to all of the former and current students listed in the *tabula gratulatoria* that follows. Among the many others who have generously shared their time, support, and invaluable knowledge with us in planning and executing this special issue, the following deserve special mention: Mark Amodio, Leslie Arnovick, Geoff Bakewell, Margaret Beissinger, Mark Bender, Chogjin, Casey Dué Hackney, David Elmer, Larry Evers, Terry Gunnell, Holly Hearon, Dan Hooley, Andrea Lively, Heather Maring, Richard Martin, Joseph Nagy, Susan Niditch, Brian O'Broin, Pat Okker, Chad Oness, Kenan Padgett, Thomas Pettitt, Catherine Quick, Karl Reichl, Seth Rudy, Michael Saenger, David Schenker, Aaron Tate, Ron Turner, and Barbara Wallach. We must also incriminate and thank the staff at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, who provided expert copy-editing and proof-reading as well as a contagious enthusiasm for this project, most especially managing editor Justin Arft and editorial assistants Peter Ramey, Sarah Zurhellen, and Morgan Grey, as well as *Oral Tradition's* associate editor, John Zemke. Finally, as co-conspirators with us from the very beginning, Mark Jarvis and Anne-Marie Foley not only helped us in our planning at every stage, but they also took extreme measures to keep the special issue secret from John himself until the compilation was fairly close to completion.

Quite fittingly, John Foley recently described the approach toward scholarship that he has always instilled in his students as part of their own journeys (Foley 2011-:“Response” node):

In my view any contribution or intervention worth the name has as its most basic responsibility the stimulation of dialogue—more accurately, polylogue—that will lead to greater understanding than any single contribution can ever engender.

It is our sincere hope that he will accept this special issue as our modest thanks for making such conversations and their encompassing journey possible, and as evidence that the paths he blazed do indeed wind on in ever-new and always-surprising directions.

Rhodes College

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Tabula Gratulatoria

*The following former and current students of John Miles Foley wish to enter their names in this Tabula Gratulatoria as an expression of their gratitude for his mentorship and as a tribute to his impact on studies in oral traditions throughout the world.**

Justin Arft
 Michael Barnes
 Timothy Boyd
 Julie Christenson
 Dave Collier
 Jackie Dana
 Adam Brooke Davis
 Erin Davis
 Keith Dickson
 Michael D. C. Drout
 Adam M. Dubé
 Thomas DuBois
 Amy Elifrits
 Lori Ann Garner
 R. Scott Garner
 Morgan E. Grey
 Nancy Hadfield
 David Heckel
 Dave Henderson
 Kendy Hess
 Holly Hobbs
 Carolyn Higbie
 Bonnie D. Irwin
 Ruth Knezevich
 Wayne Kraft
 Lynn C. Lewis
 Xianting Li
 Randolph Lumppp
 Zaid Mahir

Edward Mallot
 Heather Maring
 Eric Montenyohl
 Rebecca Richardson Mouser
 Lea Olsan
 Chad Oness
 Ward Parks
 Raymond F. Person, Jr.
 Andrew Porter
 Catherine Quick
 Peter Ramey
 Roslyn Raney
 Melissa Range
 Steve Reece
 John Roth
 Marjorie Rubright
 Claire Schmidt
 Casey Shamey
 Bruce Shields
 Jamie Stephens
 Denise Stodola
 Leslie Stratyner
 Aaron P. Tate
 Sybil Thornton
 Lee Edgar Tyler
 Derek Updegraff
 S. Matthew Wharton
 Sarah Zurhellen

* While we did our best to reach all those students who worked closely with John at the University of Missouri-Columbia or participated in one the NEH Summer Seminars that he directed, we did not always succeed and know that this list doubtless represents only a fraction of those whose lives and work have been greatly enriched by his teaching and scholarship.



ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

<http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii>

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Juxtaposing *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* with *Orkneyinga saga*

Thomas A. DuBois

It is probably fair to say that following the argument of a comparativist scholar increases in difficulty in direct proportion to the number of cultures invoked or examined. If such is the case, then it can also be said that *constructing* a comparative argument increases in difficulty exponentially with each new case or example.¹ Yet some scholars, notably John Miles Foley and his teacher Albert Lord and his teacher's teacher Milman Parry, made careers built on the work of comparison. The scholarship of Foley, for instance, challenges the Classicist skilled and sensitive to the subtleties of the aorist and the past contrafactual to look for parallels to Homeric epic in the singing of Bosnian villagers from Interwar Yugoslavia. He challenges the Anglo-Saxonist, learned in the monastic culture of late first-millennium England, and potentially quite amenable to imagining the conviviality and orality of a Bosnian village, to contemplate the complexities of Homeric Greece thousands of years in the past. It is perhaps not surprising, given the challenges of such research, that scholars of the latter half of the twentieth century increasingly abandoned comparative perspectives in many fields of the humanities. Not only did comparative research lose appeal for scholars and readers, but comparativist scholars themselves became suspected of disciplinary transgressions, accused of lacking rigor or commitment, like roving men: one foot in sea and one on shore, to one thing constant never. As approaches to single cultures became the norm, comparative findings became marginalized, dismissed at times as superficial, spurious, or insignificant. And even as the humanities contracts throughout North American and European academia today, the scholarly commitment to monoculture remains strong in American research universities.

My intent in the following paper is to make a case for the usefulness of comparative analysis in a narrower and more specific context, that is, in examining two fascinating but often marginalized medieval works: the Irish *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* (modern Irish *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* ["The Battle of the Gaels and the Foreigners"]) and the Icelandic/Orcadian *Orkneyinga saga* ("The Saga of the Orcadians"). The Irish text relates the travails of Irish

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2011 annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, held in Chicago, Illinois, April 29-30, 2011. Quotations from *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* in both Irish and English are taken from Todd's 1867 edition. Quotations from *Orkneyinga saga* in Old Norse are from Finnogi Guðmundsson's 1965 edition. English texts of passages from *Orkneyinga saga* are from the translation of Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (1978). I am particularly grateful to Terry Gunnell for comments that helped me strengthen and clarify my argument.

kingdoms in withstanding the depredations of Viking invaders over the course of several centuries, leading to the emergence of the Dál gCais Bóruma dynasty of Munster, the rise of its greatest son Brian Bóruma (Boru) to the lofty title of High King of Ireland (a rank seldom held by the kings of Munster), and his subsequent fall and death in an insurrection led by revolting Irish and Scandinavian populations in the fateful Good Friday Battle of Cluain Tarbh (Clontarf) on April 23, 1014. The Old Norse text relates the settlement of Norse colonists in Orkney and the establishment of a jarldom/earldom at first independent, but gradually brought under the contending influence of both Scotland and Norway. The saga follows the ups and downs of the islands' tumultuous dynastic history, focusing attention on particularly famous earls, such as the Earl Sigurðr, who lost his life fighting against Brian Boru's forces in the Battle of Clontarf of 1014. Where *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* ends with that fateful battle, *Orkneyinga saga* continues its narrative long after 1014, but features the battle as a very important moment in the earldom's history. Both texts, then, narrate a period of extensive intercultural contact between Norse (Norwegians, Danes, Orcadians, and Icelanders) and Celts (specifically, Irish and Scots) over a number of centuries.

I posit that comparison between these two works and the remarkable vernacular prose traditions they reflect reveals complex, apparently shared processes of cultural characterization and contrast, an "immanent" (Foley 1991; Sigurðsson 2004) narrative account of a cultural meeting that transformed both the Celtic and Viking worlds. Within this shared narrative that proclaims inexorable difference between Norse and Celt, we can also recognize surprising rapprochement, the product of long histories of contact, trade, and intermarriage. I hope to suggest that examining the disjunction between a rhetoric of cultural opposition and a reality of cultural merger can shed valuable light on contact situations in general and serve as a much needed balance to the celebration of monoculture implicit in many individual works of medieval literature. That narratives of intercultural contact, albeit individually partisan and biased to one side or another of a conflict, nonetheless become shared between purported adversaries is a lesson readily demonstrated in modern folklore studies, be it in the examination of Anglo and Mexican cultures along the Texas-Mexico border (Paredes 1970; Bauman and Abrahams 1981), Jewish and Christian cultures in the late Antique Mediterranean (Hasan-Rokem 2003), Catholic and Protestant cultures in twentieth-century Northern Ireland (Cashman 2008), or any number of other historically significant and fraught intercultural encounters. Folklorists have a particular role to play in the examination of such intercultural common ground, the development of an immanent narrative of cultural confrontation and its reflection in individual narratives (oral or written) that rely upon or respond to details of the implicit account. Comparing the two medieval works at the center of this study offers new ways of contributing to the fields of Scandinavian Studies and Celtic Studies, ways that restore some of the once extensive comparative research that declined in the era of monocultural focus and that is undergoing renewed attention in current research (Sigurðsson 2000). At the same time, such an examination, because it focuses on texts that can be described as "voices of the past" (Foley 2010), sheds useful light on the intimate and complex relations between medieval oral tradition and textual production within medieval Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia, relations that have also received renewed and substantive examination in recent scholarship (Ní Mhaonaigh 2002; Hudson 2002; Sigurðsson 2004; Amodio 2005; Melve 2010).

Manuscripts and Texts

A first basis of comparison of any medieval works lies in manuscript histories and the material production of the texts that have resulted in the works as we have them. In the cases of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga*, both works illustrate well the value of noting where and how a work that we think about as a “text” came about, and what manuscripts our modern textual reconstructions are built upon. Both also illustrate the interesting histories that such works can have in the post-medieval period, as they become identified and used as symbols of national or local identity.

Máire Ní Mhaonaigh (1996) summarizes the textual history of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*. The work survives in three main manuscripts. The earliest of these occurs in the celebrated Book of Leinster, a crucial surviving medieval manuscript that preserves for us such other works of importance to modern Celtic studies as the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, various tales and poems of the Ulster Cycle, and the metrical *Dindsenchas*. The Book of Leinster was produced in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century by various hands, probably under the supervision of abbot Áed Ua Crimthainn, a well-connected cleric stationed at the prominent Tipperary monastery of Tír-Dá-Glas. *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* is the final item in this long and valuable compilation and is fragmentary due to the loss of the final section of the book. Trinity College Dublin Manuscript 1319 preserves a second, also fragmentary account, differing markedly from the version contained in the earlier manuscript. It has been dated to the fourteenth century. Finally, the seventeenth-century friar Micheál Ó Cléirigh produced the third manuscript (Brussels Manuscript 2562-72), a fair copy of a transcription of a now lost medieval manuscript known as *Leabhar Chonn Chonnacht Uí Dhálaigh*, a work produced or owned by a prominent Westmeath bard Cuconnacht Ó Dálaigh who died in 1139 (Todd 1867:xv). Ó Cléirigh’s version resembles the Dublin manuscript closely but has some added poems not found in the earlier work (Ní Mhaonaigh 1996:101). James Henthorn Todd produced the first (and to date only) modern edition of the work in 1867. Todd’s edition, accompanied by an extensive introduction, detailed textual notes, and facing-page Middle Irish/Modern English texts, appeared in a British series entitled “*Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages.*” Published as part of a royal project to assemble “materials for the History of this Country from the Invasion of the Romans to the Reign of Henry VIII,” (1867:2), the work was thus subsumed into a Victorian project to depict England and Ireland as a single entity, now happily united under a single crown. Despite this underlying political agenda, Todd’s edition has generally been judged thorough and balanced, and has served as the main means of access for scholars wishing to study the text ever since.

Scholars beginning with Todd have theorized about the possible creator of the *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* itself and have surmised from language, textual references, and the work’s panegyric tone that it was composed in the court of Brian’s great grandson Muirchertach Ua Briain, himself a king of Munster and sometime high king of Ireland, who died c. 1119. As such, the medieval text has its own political agenda, particularly an intention to demonstrate the valor of the Dál gCais dynasty and its natural claim to the high kingship, an honor more often commanded by kings of Leinster or Ulster. It is also likely that prominent members of the text’s original audience were considered direct descendants of the heroic Brian and his contemporaries.

Judith Jesch (2010) summarizes the textual history of *Orkneyinga saga*. Like *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, *Orkneyinga saga*'s claim to undisputed age lies in the survival of some manuscript fragments from the early fourteenth century. The text as we know it in modern editions derives from three main manuscripts. The first of these in age is AM 325 I 4to (Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling), a fragmentary manuscript dated to c. 1300. The much later Holm papp 39 (Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek) is a seventeenth-century copy of a sixteenth-century translation of the text into Danish, based on a now lost Codex Academicus, that perished in a fire of 1728. Scholars have regarded this version as particularly valuable, although it is also fragmentary and survives only in translated form. The youngest and most complete version appears in the magnificent late medieval tome *Flateyjarbók*, a work compiled by two Icelandic priests working in succession: Jón Þórðarson and Magnús Þórhallsson, the latter of whom seems to have finished his work by 1395 (DuBois 2004:2). Both priests took a hand in incorporating portions of *Orkneyinga saga* into their overall work, dividing what must have been an original complete manuscript into sections and incorporating these as excurses in broader sagas devoted to the life and times of King Ólafr Tryggvason and King Ólafr Haraldsson the Saint. In a fascinating and complex recent study, Elizabeth Ashton Rowe has examined *Flateyjarbók* for signs of its compilers' political agendas, locating its emphases and silences in the relations of Iceland and Norway during the late fourteenth century (Rowe 2005). Because *Orkneyinga saga* deals repeatedly with the uneasy relations between the Orkney earldom and the Norwegian crown, Rowe has characterized it as a "colonial saga." In a series of important articles focused more exclusively on *Orkneyinga saga*, Judith Jesch (1992, 1993, 2010) has examined the alterations that Jón and Magnús seem to make to the text as can be gleaned through comparison of their work with earlier fragmentary texts that survive. Jesch's stylistic and narratological analyses of the saga stand out as particularly valuable examinations. Two modern editions of *Orkneyinga saga* have been produced: one by Sigurður Nordal (1913-16) and a later one by Finnbogi Guðmundsson (1965). Jesch (2010) has provided a careful critique of both editions, pointing out the scholarly predilections and tendencies of the two scholars, particularly with regard to a then hotly debated dispute regarding the literate or oral sources of extant sagas.

Because other Icelandic sagas and saga writers seem to use *Orkneyinga saga* as a source (Hudson 2002:248), and judging from the intimacy of detail in the saga's final portion—where it seems likely that the writer may have known some of the figures in the text personally (Foote 1989)—scholars have suggested a dating of c. 1200 for the original text. Scholars have debated whether it was written originally in Orkney or composed in Iceland by someone with access to written and oral information regarding the history of the islands. Tommy Danielsson (2002), in surveying the theories that have arisen over time, suggests it is likely that a Latin *vita* of the life and works of Earl St. Magnús Erlendsson (1075-1117) served as a major source for at least part of the text. The *vita* would have appeared around the time of Magnús's canonization and has been dated to c. 1130. Attributed to a Master Robert, this Latin text apparently gave rise to a Norse *vita*, as well as possibly portions of *Orkneyinga saga* (Tomany 2008:131-33). Further source materials may have arisen in connection with the canonization of Rögnvaldr Káli (d. 1156) in 1192. The compiler/writer seems to have taken these and other materials and supplemented them with detailed knowledge of contemporary Orcadian politics and history, devoting particular attention to the figure of Sveinn Ásleifarson, who appears in fully a quarter of

all chapters of the saga, dominating its final section (Beuermann 2006, 2009). Hudson (2002:261) suggests that the composition of the saga may have occurred within a monastic setting, where access to Irish annals and Irish learning may have influenced the work. Icelandic scholars, in contrast, have theorized an Icelandic genesis for the compilation, occurring possibly at the estate of Oddi, which had close ties with the earls of Orkney over a number of generations. (For a summary, see Danielsson 2002:341-44.) In either case, as we shall see, such specific textual sources appear to have been grounded and interpreted within a broader, immanent understanding of Norse-Celtic relations as they occurred in the eighth through twelfth centuries.

As this summary indicates, both *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* can be seen as complex products of the learned historicizing enterprise of their time. Conflicts between Norse and Celts are depicted within narratives that celebrate rulers who were particularly adept at suppressing or overwhelming their opponents. Both works are retrospective and idealized, and although we can posit a specific time and place of authorship for each work, we also see that the texts as we have them reflect successive revisions over a number of centuries, during which the textual history of the works becomes inextricably bound to a wider cultural tradition regarding Norse-Celtic interrelations and their place in local and national histories.

Questions of Genre

A second point of comparison concerning *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* revolves around questions of genre and theme. Both the disciplines of Irish studies and Old Norse studies have devoted great attention to questions of periodicity and genre. Such is understandable, since the texts that survive from the medieval era vary in content, language, and style, and yet are often preserved in the same omnibus folio compilations such as the Book of Leinster or *Flateyjarbók*. Scholars have wished to find ways to reconstruct the historical development of genres within their respective literary traditions and to relate these to social and cultural developments that took place over the centuries. Both *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* differ in details of form and content from what scholars identify as generic norms within each tradition. And yet, by their very departure from such broader norms, they seem to point to interesting clues into the ways in which genres developed in their source cultures. Accounting for the particularities of these texts reveals weaknesses in the theories advanced for more conventional exemplars of the literary tradition and hints at both a literary and an underlying oral context that was international and intercultural rather than purely national.

In largely dismissing any possibility of influence of Scandinavian works on Irish literature, Proinsias Mac Cana writes: “of all the suggested material borrowings by Celtic literature from Norse, scarcely none is universally, or even generally, accepted, so difficult is it to determine the direction of borrowing between the two literatures and to distinguish between Norse, continental Teutonic and common folklore prototypes as the source of the supposed Irish borrowings” (1983:78-79). According to Mac Cana, Irish literary traditions were too well established and normative by the time of Scandinavian contact to allow for any substantive influence, even if most of the manuscripts that have survived date from an era well after these contacts had begun. In general, the Irish literary canon has been divided into cycles depending on

the topics and era depicted, and in his classic survey (1948) Myles Dillon divides the corpus of “early Irish literature” into the Ulster Cycle, the Fenian Cycle, the Mythological Cycle, the Historical Cycle, the Adventures, the Voyages, the Visions, and discrete works of Irish poetry. Although Dillon mentions Brian Boru as the final topic of the Historical Cycle (73), he includes no discussion of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* whatsoever in his volume, and it is clear from his text that historical accounts of battles with Vikings are not seen as belonging to the topic of *early* Irish literature. Likewise, in their influential anthology *Ancient Irish Tales*, Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover (1936) include no piece or discussion of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, although they do include a substantial section on “Tales of the Traditional Kings” (469-587), where a history of Brian Boru would logically be placed.

In the nineteenth century, scholars such as Timothy Lee could read *Cogadh* largely as a battle record rather than as a piece of literature, accepting it entirely as a valid and valuable historical source, to be confirmed through cross-referencing with the various annals that relate the same events (Lee 1889). Later scholars tempered these views somewhat, although remaining confident regarding the basic historical accuracy of the core events depicted in the text (Ryan 1938; Stacpoole 1964). In this context of source evaluation, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has offered a valuable reassessment (1996) of the structure and probable textual antecedents of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, demonstrating the extent to which the work draws on annalistic sources, probably in particular a now lost tenth-century source annal from which all the currently surviving annals derive (110). Ní Mhaonaigh regards both the overtly annalistic first section of the text and the more “saga-like” narrative that begins with the introduction of the Dál gCais dynasty (Chapter 41) as ultimately drawing from the same sources, albeit with a different degree of development and dramatization. More recent scholars have continued to look to the text as a key to understanding the rise of the Dál gCais dynasty from comparative obscurity to island-wide prominence in the late tenth century, though with greater hesitancy regarding its depiction of events (Mac Shamhráin 2005). Such scholars have increasingly regarded the work as an *imagined* history, one that tells us a great deal about how a scribe in the employ of the Dál gCais wished to see the past, particularly the rise of his sovereign’s grandfather to the high kingship of the island (Downham 2005; Clarke 1995). So although *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* has never been openly inducted into the esteemed category of early Irish literature, scholarly approaches to the work have grown to regard it more and more as a literary creation, but one constructed—like the annals and other historical works of Irish, Welsh, English, and Scandinavian traditions—with a central attention to questions of history.

If *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* is regarded as a late addendum to the centuries of literary activity preserved for us in twelfth-century manuscripts, *Orkneyinga saga* is often regarded as a strikingly early exemplar of a type of writing that would eventually become known as the sagas. Scholars have classified the various surviving sagas as belonging to broad categories according to theme and content. In an important bibliographic survey of Old Norse literature edited by Carol Clover and John Lindow (1985), the sagas are broken down into Kings’ Sagas (*Konungasögur*), Icelandic Family Sagas (*Íslendingasögur*), and Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*). Mythological works such as *Völsunga saga* have in turn been seen as Mythological Sagas. In a recent study that updates and extends a career of attention to questions of the development of the saga genre, Theodore Andersson (2006:17) describes a category of

“regional or chronicle sagas,” including biographical works such as *Víga-Glums saga*, chronicles of Icelandic locales like *Laxdæla saga*, and broader North Atlantic chronicles including *Orkneyinga saga* and its Faroese counterpart *Færeyinga saga*. Melissa Berman (1985), emphasizing the focus of *Orkneyinga saga* on the relations between a semi-independent locale and the Norwegian crown, proposed the category of “political saga.” Recently, as noted above, Elizabeth Ashton Rowe (2005) treats many aspects of *Orkneyinga saga* within her wider examination of the representation of history and politics in *Flateyjarbók*, describing it as a “colonial saga.” What appears clear from all these discussions is that *Orkneyinga saga* doesn’t quite match up with the sagas that apparently postdate it, leading Judith Jesch (1993, 2010) to suggest that it represents perhaps an earlier stage in the formal evolution of the saga genre.

It is intriguing to note the extent to which both of these texts seem to offer evidence for tracing the evolution of literary genres within their respective traditions. *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* offers a glimpse of the further development of Irish historical discourse from what we find in works recognized as “early” Irish literature to works that come after. *Orkneyinga saga* seems to offer an indication of how the saga genre developed out of chronicle and annalistic literature and what sorts of narrative evolution the enterprise of historical storytelling underwent in the Icelandic context. Both works are, then, seeming snapshots of wider processes of genre development built upon persisting or emergent norms of narrative content, form, and representation operating within (and also possibly between) the cultures in question.

The Battle of Clontarf

As noted above, the Battle of Clontarf directly links the Irish *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga*. The topic of Brian Boru’s final battle in fact finds repeated depiction in the Icelandic sagas, appearing not only in *Orkneyinga saga*, but also in the more famed and valued *Njáls saga*, as well as the fairly obscure *Þorsteins saga Síðuhallssonar* and the once-independent poem *Darraðarljóð*, incorporated into the prose text of *Njáls saga*. The Dutch scholar Albertus Goedheer (1938) took pains to produce a careful comparative study of these accounts already at a relatively early stage in the development of modern Celtic studies. Scandinavianists, starting with Sophus Bugge (1908) and later Éinarr Ó. Sveinsson (1954:xliv-xlix), postulated a lost **Brjáns saga*, a Norse work focusing on the life and times of Brian Boru and resembling in some details *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*. Later scholars have been less inclined to posit a complete saga, preferring instead to suggest the existence of various narratives regarding the battle that were taken up and adapted by saga writers in various ways (Lönnroth 1983:226-36). Questioning some of the logic behind the postulated **Brjáns saga*, Hudson (2002) takes up suggestions from earlier scholarship that the various Old Norse accounts of Clontarf could derive from a saga devoted not to the Irish king but to the Orcadian Earl Sigurðr. Such a theory makes *Orkneyinga saga* much more central to the story of Old Norse accounts of the Battle of Clontarf and reinforces the idea that the saga may have served as a source for other sagas, such as *Njáls saga*.

As the above summary of scholarship suggests, certain lacunae persist in our understandings of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* and their relations to other

elements of their respective traditions. Although recent Celticist scholarship has largely embraced the Irish text as a work of literary aspiration and construction, and has increasingly taken interest in the relation of the text to Old Norse counterparts (see below), discussions have tended to limit themselves to comparisons with *Njáls saga* alone (Downham 2005; Preston-Matto 2010; Ní Mhaonaigh 1996). Such is unfortunate, since in many ways, as I hope to demonstrate here, *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* have much in common with each other both in terms of age and content. As we have seen, they were composed within about a century of each other and seem to rely at least in part on the same annalistic antecedents, reflective of a shared historical perception (but contrasting historical evaluation) of the events described. They each look back with a mixed sense of nostalgia and revulsion at the violence, volatility, and heroism of a time a century before, when figures larger than life strode the same halls and occupied the same seats that were by that later time presided over by more mundane and limited rulers. Together, the two texts suggest the potential for conceiving of the Irish Sea region as an area in which narrative models and themes spread across linguistic boundaries, perhaps, as Hudson suggests (2002:262), facilitated through a bridging Latinate culture and the frequent and productive linkages that united monastic houses of the region. Such a suggestion places the two texts discussed here no longer at the periphery of established national literatures, but at a productive crossroads between cultures, one reflective of the very antiquarian enthusiasm that led learned men of Ireland, Orkney, and Iceland to record or transcribe into new deluxe volumes other texts reflective of a heroic past, works that might have been abandoned, or never written down in the first place, had there not been such an intense interest in things of the past. It is this shared lore that Gísli Sigurðsson (2000, 2004) has explored so insightfully in his scholarship and that in many ways can be seen to undergird the processes of textual production, evolution, and transmission described above.

Commonalities of Form

If *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* can be said to share some elements of manuscript history and genre, they also clearly share certain elements of form and content. Such formal similarities include a certain mode of narrative emphasis, a localization of plot to focus only on the world of the narrator and the society centrally described, a focalization of narration to allow the audience to “listen in” on the thoughts or perceptions of certain prime characters, and a particular set of norms regarding the use of interpolated poetry. Once we have established these overall formal commonalities, we can examine commonalities of content between the two texts, particularly in terms of brother partnerships or rivalry, images of empowered or goading women, images of significant banners, and depictions of heroic deaths steeped in hagiographic detail. Together, these formal and content-related features suggest a resemblance between *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* that goes much deeper than their seeming surface differences, one rooted, I believe, in an immanent understanding of the Norse-Celtic encounter shared by Irish and Norse writers of the time.

One formal feature shared by both *Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* is a tendency toward increased detail in the portions of the text corresponding to the narrative’s most recent

events. Coverage is not even, in other words, but decidedly skewed toward the narrator's present. As Judith Jesch (1992:340) points out, scholars have tended to view this unevenness as a rather artless product of the author having had more material available regarding recent events than related to remote moments of the past. Such imbalance would certainly be expectable, and can be noted in virtually any modern history. Yet the degree of skewing in *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* is far more than one might expect if it were merely a reflection of differing access to information. Let us note the concrete details of the shifts in emphasis as we find them in the texts that come down to us.

Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib begins in the ninth century, with a rapid, rather sketchy annalistic account of the first arrivals of the Norse and their various attacks on Irish churches, kingdoms, and populations. Some 35 chapters go by until we turn particularly to the situation in Mumhain (Munster), the kingdom of the Dál gCais. The Dál gCais themselves are introduced in Chapter 41, with Brian eventually taking the throne in Chapter 63. The text now slows considerably in pace. Over the course of 25 chapters, the text recounts Brian's rapid rise to complete control of Ireland and the development of an insurrection against his rule, led by his estranged brother-in-law in collaboration with the Norse of Dublin, a period extending over roughly forty years. The resulting Battle of Clontarf occupies the next 29 chapters, slowing the narrative to more than a full chapter for each hour of Brian's fateful final day and closing the text with a listing of the valiant dead whose lives ended in the conflict.

Orkeyinga saga begins in a mythic past of Norway, a prefatory history apparently addended to the beginning of the saga only at a late phase. The dynastic history of the islands begins with Chapter 4 and the various sons of Earl Rögnvaldr, a supporter of King Haraldr Fairhair of the late ninth or early tenth century. In the course of six chapters, it covers three generations, slowing somewhat to focus on the reign of Earl Sigurðr and his death in the Battle of Clontarf (Chapters 11 and 12). A full eight chapters then chronicle the stormy relations of Sigurðr's various sons, followed by an additional ten focusing on one of these sons (Þorfinnr) and his relations with his nephew and rival Rögnvaldr. Chapters 31 and 32 close the story of Þorfinnr with the story of his pilgrimage to Rome and eventual death. Not surprisingly, the narrator states: "Er þat sannliga sagt, at hann hafí ríkastr verit allra Orkneyingajarla" (Ch. 32; 81) / "it is said on good authority that he was the most powerful of all the Earls of Orkney" (75). The pace now quickens somewhat, taking ten chapters to cover history and society during the reign of King Magnús of Norway (Chapters 33-43), slowing again to examine the holy life and martyrdom of Earl Magnús the saint (nine chapters), followed by a series of brief chapters devoted to Earl Hákon and his sons Páll and Haraldr (Chapters 53-56), followed by accounts of St. Magnús's attested miracles (Chapter 57) and the introduction of Káli Kolsson (Rögnvaldr Káli) (Chapter 58). Rögnvaldr Káli's detailed exploits occupy the next six chapters, which relate Rögnvaldr's rise to power and return to Orkney in an attempt to wrest control of the earldom away from his kinsman Earl Páll. The narrative now slows even further as it explores the intrigues and powerplays of various earls and chieftains in the struggle for supremacy, focusing particular attention on the crafty and warlike Sveinn Ásleifarson, the ongoing struggle of Rögnvaldr and Páll, and the eventual death of Páll (ten chapters). Chapter 77 relates the orchestrated rise of Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson as an underlord of Rögnvaldr, followed by more personal intrigues involving Svein Ásleifarson (a further seven chapters). Earl Rögnvaldr's grand

journey to Norway (85), Galicia (86), Gibraltar and Byzantium (87-88), and back to Norway (89) receives step-by-step coverage. Eighteen chapters then recount in close and leisurely detail the subsequent dealings of Rögnvaldr, Haraldr, and Sveinn Ásleifarson, leading to the murder of Rögnvaldr and the eventual death of Sveinn. Sveinn's death scene is one of the few times in the saga when we are actually taken into Ireland: Sveinn arrives in Dublin where he is quickly tricked into falling in a pit and is killed. His importance in the narrator's estimation is underscored at the close of Chapter 108, which states: "Nu er þar lokit frá Sveini at segja, ok er þat mál manna, at hann hafi mestr maðr verit fyrir sér í Vestrlöndum bæði at fornu ok nýju þeira manna, er eigi höfðu meira tignarjafn en hann" (Ch. 108; 288-89) / "That then, is the end of Sveinn's story, but people say that apart from those of higher rank than himself, he was the greatest man the western world has ever seen in ancient and modern times" (218). A scant four chapters close the saga, relating Haraldr's relatively peaceful reign after the death of Rögnvaldr and those of the heirs that inherit the earldom after him.

In neither *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* nor *Orkneyinga saga* are we dealing with artless imbalance. Instead, I suggest, we can see in these works a deliberate hierarchizing, in which the characters of greatest importance receive the most narrative attention. It becomes impossible to miss the narrative focus, a fact that is often underscored by the texts' overt announcements of prioritization of material. The above concept of rhetorical emphasis suggests that the material included in each of these texts expresses an author's, or a narrator's, or a *tradition's* judgments regarding relative importance. Whereas a modern academic history aims typically at a balance of coverage between various historical moments or events, the writers or compilers of the texts under examination here show no such concern. Instead, value is signaled by extent of coverage, and the resulting perspective is decidedly partisan. This fact can be seen as well when we look at the coverage of events happening within the narrative "insider" society as opposed to those taking place in the designated "outside" world. In *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, the narrative follows characters only during their time in Ireland, providing no details of where they go or what they do when they leave the island. In *Orkneyinga saga*, correspondingly, the narrative provides intimate details of characters' experiences in Orkney or in Norway, but limits description of their time in Ireland to a bare minimum. In other words, whereas both texts depict their characters traveling across the prime cultural boundaries of the region, neither narrator follows them outside of his own cultural sphere. Warriors and narratives may be mobile, but their medieval chroniclers or narrators appear much less so.

Some examples from *Orkneyinga saga* illustrate the process of selective attention. The chapters related to the Norwegian King Magnús's period of warfare in the islands describe the king's every movement in Orkney and Shetland. We hear of Hákon Pálsson's visit to Norway, where he convinces King Magnús of the desirability of taking the islands (Chapter 37-38), Magnús's journey and retinue at the Battle of Menai Strait (Chapter 39), and King Magnús's activities at various sites along the Scottish coast and in the Hebrides (Chapters 40-41). We hear of his trick to secure the peninsula of Kintyre for himself: King Malcolm had granted him possession of all islands that were separated from the mainland by water deep enough to permit the passage of ship with its rudder down. Magnús, we are told (Ch. 41; 98-99):

lét hann draga skútu yfir Sátírseið. Konungr helt um hjálmvöl ok eignaðisk svá allt Sátíri; þat er betra en in bezta ey í Suðreyjum nema Mön. Þat gengr vestr af Skotlandi, ok eið mjótt fyrir ofan, svá at þar eru jafnan dregin skip yfir.

had a skiff hauled across the narrow neck of land at Tarbert, with himself sitting at the helm, and this is how he won the whole peninsula. Kintyre is thought to be more valuable than the best of the Hebridean islands, though not as good as the Isle of Man. It juts out from the west of Scotland, and the isthmus connecting it to the mainland is so narrow that ships are regularly hauled across (86).

Of his death, however, the saga simply states (Ch. 43; 102):

Þá er Magnús konungr hafði landi ráðit níu vetr, fór hann ór landi vestr um haf ok herjaði á Írland ok var um vetrinn á Kunnaktum, en um sumarit eptir fell hann á Úlaztíri Barthólómeussudag.

After ruling Norway for nine years, King Magnús sailed west over the sea to plunder in Ireland. He spent the winter in Connaught and was killed the following summer in Ulster, on St. Bartholomew's Day [August 24] (88).

As a comparison of these two passages shows, Orkney and the islands and coast of the Irish Sea merit detailed description in the text, but events inside Ireland are mentioned with only the broadest of place names, even when they entail such occurrences as the death of the earl in battle.

Such spotlighting lends each text a decidedly partisan flavor: we are not presented with a balanced account of Norse-Celtic relations, but rather with an image of the confrontation of two cultures, as seen from a single vantage point. As we shall see, *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* reverses *Orkneyinga saga*'s tendency precisely, offering us a quintessentially Irish view of the same events. In the Irish text, the abrupt arrival of the Norse as raiders is noted in Chapter 4. No details of where they come from are supplied, although the places they raid and ruin are carefully enumerated. In Chapter 26, the Norse appear to simply pack up and leave, as the narrator declares: "Bai, imorro, arali cumsana deraib Erend fri re .xl. bliadan can inred gall" / "Now however, there was some rest to the men of Erin for a period of forty years, without ravage of the foreigners" (Ch. 26; 25-26). Again, we are not told where the Norse have gone but only that they are no longer in Ireland. In Chapter 27, however, they return just as abruptly: "Tanic iarsin rig longes adbul mor clainni Imair inn Ath Cliath; ocus ro hinred urmor Erend uli leo, ocus ro loted leo am Ardmacha" / "After this came the prodigious royal fleet of the children of Ímar to Áth Cliath [Dublin]; and the greater part of Erin was plundered by them. Ard Macha also was pillaged by them" (Ch. 27; 28-29). The Norse leave again at the end of the chapter, returning to Scotland for no stated reason. Reading between these two texts, then, it is as if we are viewing the same events via different cameras, with a voiced-over narrator on each side describing the events from a single, opposed vantage point. And yet, in so doing, each text contributes to or reflects an underlying shared understanding of the events themselves and their importance in the history of the region.

A further shared formal feature found in both texts is a selective, occasional focalization in the second degree. Jesch (1992:339) describes this tendency in her discussion of *Orkneyinga saga*, but the characterization can equally be applied to *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*. In each text the narration shifts at certain moments from a basic omniscient narrator, who dominates for the bulk of the text, to a narrator whose viewpoints become for a time identical to those of one of the narrative's prime characters. As Jesch puts it, "occasionally the narrator as it were zooms in on one of the characters in the story and tells the events from the perspective of that character" (339). During these striking and relatively exceptional moments in the text, point of view is highlighted, and the audience is denied full information in the interest of allowing the audience to imagine more fully the situation and perspectives of a particular character. In *Orkneyinga saga* this focalization parallels precisely the slowing of pace of narration described above and the privileged points of view of some of the characters. Sveinn Ásleifarson, Earl Rögnvaldr, Earl Páll, and other key characters become further characterized through this technique. In some cases, indeed, the management of point of view seems to derive directly from the writer's sources: in closing the narrative of Earl Páll's abduction, for instance, the narrator states: "Ok er þetta frásögn Sveins um þenna atburð. En þat er sögn sumra manna, er verr samir" (Ch. 75; 170) / "This is Sveinn's account of what happened, but according to some people, the story was a lot uglier" (139).

Part of the mechanics of shifting to this focalized account involves announcing its onset to the reading audience. Both texts demarcate the shift clearly within their discourse. In *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, for instance, a purely narrative account of the Battle of Clontarf is interrupted to allow us to see the battle from Brian's limited and marginal perspective. The narrator addresses the reading (or listening) audience with the statement: "Imtus imorro Briain mic Cennetig" / "Let us speak now of the adventures of Brian, son of Cenneidigh, during this time" (Ch. 113; 196-97). *Orkneyinga saga's* Chapter 56 provides similar stage directions for the reader. As the narrative moves from accounts of Earl Magnús's life to a recounting of his attested miracles after death, the narrator announces the shift: "Nú munu vér fyrst láta dveljask söguna of hrið ok segja heldr nakkvat frá þeim jartegnum háleitum, er guð hefir veitt fyrir verðleika sakar ins helga Magnúss jarls" (Ch. 56; 122) / "Now we must first let the story rest for a while and instead tell something of the sublime miracles which God performed because of the merit of the holy jarl Magnús" (102). The two texts display a surprisingly similar inscribed narrator, one probably strongly influenced by hagiographic literature, a quintessentially important literary and religious genre of the time throughout the region (Nagy 1997; Lindow 2001; DuBois 2008; Ommundsen 2010).

Another striking similarity between these texts, however, is their substantive incorporation of poetic texts either as narrative events or as narrative evidence. In the first case, a narrator may announce that the particular narrative moment described was the occasion upon which some famous or noteworthy poem was composed. In this sense, the poem becomes evidence of the historical significance of the moment and its implications for people of its time or afterward. The fact that a poem was composed is meant to convey the notion that the moment was important; the fact that the poem was remembered by others is intended to indicate that the memory and the discussion of the event lived on in oral tradition. In the second case, a narrator introduces a poem as a source of information regarding a narrative moment described in the text.

Verse here becomes a sort of eyewitness or at least a contemporary account, one that adds credibility to the retrospective description of the event at hand.

Judith Jesch (1993:212) differentiates these two uses of poetry in her examination of *Orkneyinga saga*. According to Jesch, in the earlier portions of the saga, when the events recounted take place farther back in history, verse is employed as simple evidence. The fact that Rögnvaldr Brusason was fostered at the court of King Ólafr, for instance, is substantiated by quoting part of a verse by Óttarr svarti (Chapter 19). Later in the saga, however, as the pace slackens and the text provides greater detail on all aspects of the story, verse can be presented as a narrative event in itself. Illustrative is Chapter 85, in which Rögnvaldr Káli is depicted delivering witty verse regarding a variety of subjects, particularly regarding his shipwreck experience.

In *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaib*, meanwhile, verse is sometimes presented as evidence, as for example, in the opening description of the Dál gCais (Ch. 41; 55), where a poem by Cormac mac Culennán is quoted in evidence of the esteem paid to the rulers of Cashel. More often, however, interpolated poetry is a narrative event characterizing the person speaking the verse and allowing for a glimpse into the personality and motivations of the character(s) involved. In Chapter 52, in the aftermath of the decisive Battle of Sulcoit (968), for instance, King Mathgamhain asks his brother Brian about the battle: “Ocus do bai Mathgamain oc fiarfaidhe scél do Brian, ocus do bi Brian acc innisin scél dó, ocus a dubairt in laidh” / “And Mathgamhain asked Brian for an account of the battle, and Brian related the story to him, and he spoke this poem” (Ch. 52; 76-77). What follows is a poetic dialogue between the brothers in which Brian reports on his victory in battle and Mathgamhain praises him, although noting some anxiety about whether this win will prove advantageous in the long run. In a note on the passage (1867:77, n.10), Todd observes that this poem appears only in Ó Cléirigh’s Brussels transcription of the text and not in either of the earlier manuscripts. Todd also notes that Ó Cléirigh has modernized the poem’s orthography and “perhaps also the language.” Although arguing for the poem’s antiquity, Todd nonetheless leaves open the possibility that it did not appear in this place in the original manuscript that Ó Cléirigh transcribed but that it may have been inserted by the friar in this place during the copying process.

In contrast, in Chapter 73 Ó Cléirigh’s transcription leaves out a long and artful poem that is included in earlier manuscripts: a poetic incitement of Aedh O’Neill to take up arms against Brian. As Todd notes in his critical apparatus, Ó Cléirigh’s text elides the poetic performance entirely, noting simply: “Do roine an fili a thechtairecht amail as ferr ro fhét fri hAédh. Asbert imorro Aodh ó Neill, 7c:” / “The poet did his message as best he could for the information of Aedh. Then Aedh O’Neill answered &c, as in Chapter lxxiv” (121, n.4).

In my own work on medieval lyric (DuBois 2006:37-64), I have noted the ways in which such interpolated verse allows for a slowing, even halting, of the pace of a narrative progression, allowing the audience to contemplate the significance of the moment as a juncture of importance in and of itself, rather than as just a further step in an unfolding series of events. Such halting occurs particularly when the interpolated verse is treated as a narrative event. Thus the decision of whether or not to include verse is not merely a question of access to manuscript copies of the poems, but of judgments regarding the relative importance or value of the narrative moment. It is interesting to note the ways in which verse is treated in these two works and the degree to which

a single logic seems to operate across cultural and literary divides. Although *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* makes more consistent use of verse as a narrative event, both texts contain plentiful amounts of poetry and use it as a key part of characterization and narrative interest.

In providing uneven treatment of varying narrative moments, spotlighting only a single side or locale of a historical conflict, strategically allowing audiences into the minds of particular characters, and incorporating poetry as an important part of the narrative framework, both *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* display a highly comparable set of formal characteristics, ones that make the texts resemble each other to a surprising degree, despite their overtly partisan attention to the opposite sides of the narrated Norse-Celtic conflict. *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* are more alike than their cultural assertions of conflict might lead us to assume, and, as we shall see, this common ground extends beyond form to include important aspects of narrative content as well.

Commonalities of Content

When we turn to questions of narrative details, *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* again present a surprising degree of common ground, particularly on the level of character type and function. We may first note that both texts employ stock stereotypes in depicting the enemy. This fact will become clearer in some of the discussion below, but suffice it to say here that the Irish text depicts the Norse as water-borne, roving, and brutish, while the Norse text depicts the Irish as conniving and prone to sorcery.

In *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, the Norse are typically depicted with water metaphors, as if they were one with the element that brought them to the shores of Ireland. Consider, for instance, the description of Norse attacks in Chapter 35 (41-42):

Do lionadh Mumha uile do thola eradbhail, ocus do murbrucht diaisneisi long, ocus laidheng, ocus cobhlach, conach raibhe cuan, na caladhphort, no dún, no daingen, no dingna i Mumhain uile gan loingeas Danmarccach ocus allmurach.

The whole of Mumhain became filled with immense floods and countless sea-vomitings of ships and boats and fleets, so that there was not a harbor, or a landing-port, nor a Dún, nor a fortress, in all Mumhain without fleets of Danes and pirates.

The writer amasses long chains of alliterating terms to describe the Norse, few of which are positive in any way (Ch. 91; 158-59):

Batar, imorro, dun darna leith in catha sin glaim glonmar, gusmar, glecach, galach, gnimach, gargbeoda, duabsig, dian, demnietach, dasachtach, diceillid, docoisc, dochomuind, becda, borb, barbarta, boadba, ath, athlum, anniartacha, urlam, angbaid, irgalach, nemnech, niata, namdemail danair; dana, durcraidecha, anmargaich, anbli, allmarda gaill, gormglasa, gentlidi; can chagill, can cadus, can atitin, can comarci do Dia no do duni.

Shouting, hateful, powerful, wrestling, valiant, active, fierce-moving, dangerous, nimble, violent, furious, unscrupulous, untamable, inexorable, unsteady, cruel, barbarous, frightful, sharp, ready, huge, prepared, cunning, warlike, poisonous, murderous hostile Danars; bold, hard-hearted Danmarkians, surly, piratical foreigners, blue-green, pagan; without reverence, without veneration, without honour, without mercy, for God or for men.

On the other hand, the Irish are depicted in *Orkneyinga saga* as duplicitous and magical. As we shall see below, the two principal magic objects described in the text—a killing shirt and an enchanted banner—are both the products of Gaelic women. And in one of the very few scenes in which the narrator actually follows his characters into Ireland, Sveinn Ásleifarson—the doughty and heretofore undefeated Viking of the saga—is tricked to his death in Dublin (Ch. 108; 288):

Um morgininn eptir stóðu þeir Sveinn upp ok vǫpnuðusk, gengu síðan til staðarins. Ok er þeir kómu inn um borgarhliðin, gerðu Dyflinnarmenn kví frá borgarhliðinu allt at gröfunum. Þeir Sveinn sá ekki við ok hljópu í grafirnar.

In the morning, Svein and his men got up, armed themselves and walked to town as far as the gate. The Dubliners formed a crowd so that the way to the pits was clear, and Svein and his men, suspecting nothing, fell right into them (217).

For the writer of *Orkneyinga saga*, the Dubliners appear to be Irish, or at least behave in some sort of Irish (that is, underhanded) manner; in *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, of course, they are depicted as purely Norse. In any case, Ireland is a place of duplicity and misdirection, a place where people triumph through cunning.

Such stereotypes create stark contrasts between Irish and Norse, ones that, when coupled with the textual silence regarding the Other when away from the narrative's inner world, create the impression of utterly separate, mutually hostile polities. In *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, the fierce Norse appear out of nowhere, harry and oppress, and then disappear again into the waves of the sea. In *Orkneyinga saga*, the mysterious Irish wait silently to be attacked, put up their resistance during memorable battles and magic spells, and then recede again from view. Yet the texts also simultaneously acknowledge extended cultural contact and intermarriage. As we shall see, the magic banner made in *Orkneyinga saga* is produced by Earl Sigurðr's Irish mother, while the impetuous Gormflaith, Brian's estranged and ill-willed wife, is the former spouse of the Dublin king Amlaíb Cuarán (Óláfr kváran). Sigurðr eventually marries a Scottish princess, while Brian marries his daughter to King Sigtryggr Silkenbeard of Dublin. In a very real sense, each text asserts stereotypes and narratives of mutual opposition while revealing processes of cultural merger. Such competing narrative depictions create a paradox in both texts, which, similarly, goes largely unaddressed by the narrator, or even by later scholars.

A further element of similarity of content lies in the narrative treatment of brotherhood. The portion of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* devoted to the Dál gCais (Chapters 41-121) centers initially on a partnership between the two sons of Cennétig (Cennedigh), Mathgamhain and Brian. Mathgamhain, the elder, serves first as leader, but relies strongly on his brother for

military support, particularly in defeating the Norse at Limerick. And after Mathgamhain's death, at the hands of Irish and Norse enemies, Brian takes the throne as his successor. There are intimations of strains in their relationship, chiefly due to the fact that Mathgamhain is a little too forgiving of his enemies and too trusting of his allies for his own good. Such a failing sets the narrative grounds for Brian's superior rise to power, but also for his eventual demise due to the unfaithfulness of in-law relations. This notion of a partnership in ruling between brothers—potentially with rivalry and even animosity—is a familiar feature in many Celtic narratives, some of which are Irish (for example, in tales of Naoise and the sons of Usnech [Gantz 1981:256-67; DuBois 2006:56-63]). It also abounds in Welsh tradition, as Patrick Ford (1977) has demonstrated in his translation and examination of the *Mabinogi* and related medieval Welsh tales. One need think no further than the relations of Bendigeidfran and Efnisien (Ford 1977:57-72), Gilfaethwy and Gwydion (89-110), or Llud and Llefelys (111-18) for a sense of the remarkable productivity of this motif in Welsh tradition, creating imagistic resonances that the story of Mathgamhain and Brian echoes.

The same attention to brotherhood occurs over and over again in *Orkneyinga saga*, where time and again the earldom is subdivided for a generation between the sons of the previous earl, leading to fraternal conflicts that also often result in conflicts between uncles and nephews. Maria-Claudia Tomany (2008:129) notes that this feature of Orcadian rulership is shared with Norway: "But Orkney, like Norway, also offers a possibility for several earls, usually brothers or cousins, to share or to divide between them the rule of the islands." William Ian Miller observes that the kinship system of Icelanders—and probably also other Western Scandinavian populations—was cognatic (1990:143). In other words, property and inheritance tended to pass through the male line, but in the absence of suitable male heirs, could pass through the female line instead. The notion of partible inheritance—of dividing a legacy into equal pieces rather than bequeathing it solely to the firstborn son, as in primogeniture—seems to have been a viable method of organizing the transferral of property from one generation to the next, even if in practice it could create sizable difficulties on the level of a state or realm. In both Norse and Celtic traditions, brothers represent prime means of achieving or maintaining control of an area, but they also represent potential challenges to longterm stability, since the brothers inevitably vie with each other for preeminence. It is perhaps intended as a sign of Brian's moral superiority—indeed, sanctity—that he resists such enmity in his life. The Orcadian saint figures Magnús and Rögnvaldr do not always show such magnanimity.

If the texts' attention to issues of brotherhood may seem reminiscent of each other, their attention to outspoken wives and powerful women is even more noticeable. Within recent scholarship on *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, the character of Gormflaith—Brian's resentful wife who helps instigate the revolt that leads to the Battle of Clontarf and ultimately to Brian's death—has attracted extensive attention. According to James Doan (1985), Gormflaith seems to carry on an ancient Celtic tradition of locating the sovereignty of the land in a queen, who confers upon the man who acquires and marries her rulership over the kingdom. As Doan notes, Gormflaith's very name reveals this function: "her name contains the element *flaith* and means literally 'illustrious or splendid sovereignty' suggestive of [her and other such queens'] role as 'bearers of sovereignty,' perhaps literally as well as figuratively, since they would be the mothers of future sovereigns" (94). Doan's mythological reading of Gormflaith is carried on by W. Ann

Trindade (1986). In a more recent work, Ní Mhaonaigh (2002) takes up the character of Gormflaith, contextualizing her in a long line of Irish queen figures with the same name and suggesting some rhetorical processes at work within medieval histories. Rejecting to some degree the mythic reading of the queen as a sovereignty figure, Ní Mhaonaigh focuses on Gormflaith's depiction as a canny manipulator in dynastic struggles. She quotes John Ryan's wry speculation that the men of Leinster would not have revolted from Brian's rule "were they not nagged into irresponsible fury by a woman's tongue" (Ryan 1967:363). Lahney Preston-Matto (2010) draws on both Ní Mhaonaigh (2002) and O'Brien O'Keeffe (2007) to locate Gormflaith's experience in an Irish tradition of political hostage taking, meshed with the rhetorical construct of "phantom agency," in which male writers of later generations blame sequestered women for their imprisonment and rape, thereby exculpating the men involved. Gormflaith does not appear in *Orkneyinga saga*, but she is depicted in *Njáls saga* as Kormlöð, where she offers her sexual attentions to a variety of Norse warriors in an attempt to win their support against Brian. Such behavior harkens back to Medb of the *Táin* and her similar tactics, sometimes involving the favors of her daughter as well (Carson 2007).

Although by no means receiving the same degree of scholarly attention, the figure of Brian's daughter in *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* presents a parallel instance of an Irish goading woman. Married to the Norse king whom the writer designates only as *mac Amlaib* ("son of Amlaib"), that is, King Sigtryggr/Cedric of Dublin (d. 1042), she participates in the kind of intermarriage that the text's rhetoric would seem to deny. When the Irish forces of the Battle of Clontarf manage to drive the Norse into the sea, the sharp-tongued Irish wife—standing alongside her Norse husband on the battlements of the Castle of Dublin—mocks their retreat, stating (Ch. 110; 192-93):

"Is doig lemsa," arsi, "ro bensat na Gaill re nduchus."

"Cid sen, a ingen," ar mac Amlaib.

"Na Gaill ic tocht is in fargi, ait is dual daib," arsi, "nuchu netar in aibell fail ortho, acht ni anait re mblegun mased."

Ro fergaiched mac Amlaib ria, ocus tuc dornd di.

"It appears to me," said she, "that the foreigners have gained their inheritance."

"What meanest thou, o woman?" said Amlaib's son.

"The foreigners are going into the sea, their natural inheritance," said she; "I wonder if it is heat that is upon them; but they tarry not to be milked, if it is."

The son of Amlaibh became angered and gave her a blow.

Such depictions of taunting women can be seen as interesting elements of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, but from the comparative perspective they take on even greater significance, for the goading woman becomes a key motif in Icelandic sagas, including in *Njáls saga*. As Hudson (2002:256) notes, *Njáls saga*'s Hallgerðr can be seen as a parallel "vengeful woman" to Gormflaith. But the saga also contains other women of this sort: Njál's wife Bergþora, for instance, who goads her sons into avenging the deaths of various family members or retainers (Chapters 44 and 98), and Hildigunnr, who goads her uncle Flosi into avenging her husband's

murder (Chapter 116). Hildigunnr does so in a manner strongly reminiscent of Gormflaith. Where Gormflaith refuses to mend a cloak that had been given to her brother by Brian, throwing it instead into the fire, Hildigunnr saves the bloody cloak of her murdered husband Höskuldr to throw upon her uncle's shoulders as a means of shaming him into action (Magnusson and Pálsson 1960:239-40). The prominence of such characters in Old Norse literature has long been noted, and excellent recent works have examined the motif of the "strong Nordic woman" from a variety of perspectives (Jochens 1996; Anderson and Swenson 2002).

Interestingly, in *Orkneyinga saga*, the best exemplars of this type of empowered and conniving woman are Frakökk and her niece Margrét. Frakökk first appears in the text in Chapter 53, where she is described as one of the daughters of a wealthy farmer named Moddan of Caithness. She is married to Ljot the Renegade of Sutherland and appears to be of either Scottish or mixed Scots-Norse background. Together with her sister Helga, she uses her skills in magic to create a poisoned shirt, intended to kill Earl Páll, the brother/rival of Helga's son Earl Hákon (Chapter 55). Regrettably, Earl Hákon sees the shirt first and claims it for himself, succumbing immediately to its poison and dying soon after donning it. Páll drives the sisters out of Orkney, and they return to Sutherland, where they bide their time, waiting to attack again.

In Chapter 63, Frakökk sees her chance when an emissary from Earl Rögnvaldr arrives to ask their support against Earl Páll. Frakökk's reply shows her power and confidence (Ch. 63; 143-44):

"Vitrliga er þetta ráð sét, at leita hingat til afla, því at vér höfum frænd afla mikinn ok marga tengðamenn. Ek hefi nú gipta Margrétu Hákonardóttur Maddaði jarli af Atjoklum, er göfgastr er allra Skotahöfðingja at ættum. Melmari, faðir hans, var bróðir Melkólms Skotakonungs, föður Davíðs, er nú er Skotakonungr," sagði hon. "Höfum vér ok mörg sannlig tillköll til Orkneyja, en erum sjálf nökkurir ráðamenn ok kölluð heldr djúpvitr; kemr oss ok eigi allt á óvart í ófriðinum."

"It's clever of him to look for our support when we have so many powerful friends and marriage connections. Now that I've married off Margrét Hakon's Daughter to Earl Maddaðr of Atholl, we've many a good claim to Orkney, for he's the best-born of all the chieftains of Scotland, his father Melmari being brother of Malcolm King of Scots, father of David the present king. I'm not without influence myself and people think me pretty shrewd, so it's unlikely that I'll be fooled by whatever might happen in this conflict" (119).

Despite her confidence, however, Frakökk raises a poorly equipped army inexpertly led by her grandson Ölvir, whom Páll easily defeats (Chapter 64). Later, in Chapter 74, Frakökk's niece Margrét and her husband Earl Maddaðr plot with Sveinn Ásleifarson and are able to capture and threaten the life of Earl Páll, Margrét's brother (Chapter 75). They depose and possibly blind Páll so as to replace him with Margrét's three-year old son Haraldr Maddaðarson as the next earl and rival to Rögnvaldr. Although Rögnvaldr subsequently shows little fear of Frakökk, Sveinn Ásleifarson feels differently, stating of Frakökk and Ölvir: "Jafnan munu mein at þeim, meðan þau lifa" (Ch. 78; 177) / "As long as they're alive they'll always cause trouble" (Chapter 78, 144). Sveinn eventually burns Frakökk to death in her house. Margrét returns to the saga briefly in Chapters 92 and 93, where she bears Sveinn Ásleifarson's brother a child after the death of her

husband and later marries Erlendr the Young of Shetland, both of which events cause her son Haraldr great embarrassment and anger.

To be sure, female characters with similar independent streaks are found in both Irish and Norse traditions, and one need look no further than Medb of the *Táin* or Brynhildr of *Völsunga saga* for examples deeply rooted in each culture's mythologies. But it is also interesting to note that the motif seems more a shared feature of the region in general than a unique characteristic of only one tradition. And it is worth noting that in both *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* the chief exemplars are Gaelic women in relationships with Norse men. The same tendency recurs in other Icelandic sagas, including *Laxdæla saga* (Chapter 13), in which Höskuldr's silent concubine Melkorka eventually proves to be an Irish princess and a very effective advisor of her son Ólafr Peacock (Sveinsson 1934).

Another striking feature common to the two texts is the central narrative role they accord banners in connection with the Battle of Clontarf. Hudson (2002:249-50) notes in particular Chapter 89 of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, in which Brian's harrying of undefended territories in Leinster (Laighin) leads the Scandinavians to prepare for battle at Magh n-Elda: "Ot concatar na gaill na forlosci i Fini ocus tuaith Etair, tancatar ina nagaid in Mag nElda, ocus ros comraicset ocus tucsat a nidna catha os aird" / "When the foreigners saw the conflagration in Fine Gall and the district of Edar, they came against them in Magh n-Elda, and they met, and raised their standards of battle on high" (Ch. 89; 154-55).

More striking, however, is the text's description of banners on Brian's side, and their importance for motivating or sustaining troops. In the height of the Battle of Clontarf, Brian is depicted taking a special interest in whether the banner of his son Murchadh is still aloft. Brian, we are told, is not on the battlefield himself but rather is bent in pious prayer at a convenient vantage point. In a narrative device commonplace in Irish literature, Brian repeatedly asks information of a young attendant (Latean), who describes what he sees, receiving in return the elder's canny interpretation of what has just been described. Brian pauses in his prayer a first time to ask about the banner, and when he hears that it is still standing, and with it many others belonging to the Dál Cais, he states happily: "Is maith in scel sin, am" / "That is good news indeed" (Ch. 113; 198-99) and returns to his prayers. A little later, he again asks for an update on the battle, inquiring about the status of his son's banner in particular. On hearing that the standard has moved westward but is still aloft, Brian states: "Is maith betit fir Erend, arse, cen bias in mergi sin na hessum, daig biaid a mesnech fein, ocus a nengnum in gach duni dib i cen iticerat in mergi sin." / "The men of Erin shall be well while that standard remains standing, because their courage and valor shall remain in them all, as long as they can see that standard" (Ch. 113; 198-99). Another fifty psalms, fifty prayers, and fifty Pater Nosters later, Brian inquires once more. The attendant describes the chaos of the battle, noting that the foreigners have been defeated, but that the standard of Murchadh has fallen. At that, Brian exclaims (Ch. 113; 200-01):

"Truagh an sccel sin," ar Brian; "dar mo breithir" arse, "do thuit eineach ocus engnam Erenn an tan do thuit an meirge sin, ocus do thuit Ere de go fir, ocus noch a ticfa taraéis co bráth aon laoch a ionnsamhail na cosmaileis an laoch sin."

“That is sad news,” said Brian, “on my word,” said he, “the honour and valour of Erinn fell when that standard fell; and Erinn has fallen now indeed; and never shall there appear henceforth a champion comparable to or like to that champion.”

Brian now reveals that he had had a premonitory dream the night before in which Aibhell of Craig Liath (the banshee of the House of Munster) had appeared to him and told him that the first of his sons that he saw today would succeed him as king. With Murchadh dead, Brian now confers his throne upon Donnchadh, sending the attendant away to convey the news. He dies himself soon after. This account of a significant banner in the Battle of Clontarf contains no implication of magic. Rather, Brian appears simply to rely upon the banner to ascertain whether or not his son is still alive. Yet the textual connection with the banshee’s prophecy and Brian’s own repeated ominous attention to the banner lends it a kind of supernatural aura that can be sensed in the text.

In contrast, the banner of interest among the Orcadians at the Battle of Clontarf is that of Earl Sigurðr. In *Orkneyinga saga* (Chapter 11) we are explicitly told that Sigurðr’s banner depicts a raven in flight and is magic, possessing the particular characteristic that it will lead to victory its owner but doom to death the person who carries it. And interestingly, the narrator tells us that this banner is the product of an Irish woman—in fact, Sigurðr’s mother Eithne, daughter of a king Kjarval (Cerbhall mac Dúnlainge) of Ireland. We know from annals that Cerbhall was ruler of the kingdom of Osraige, a narrow realm squeezed between Leinster and Munster, running from the Viking settlement of Waterford inland all the way to the lower Midlands. In conferring the banner upon her son, Eithne—described as *margkunnig* (“magic”)—states: “Tak þú hér við merki því, er ek hefi gört þér af allri minni kunnáttu, ok vænti ek, at sigrsælt myni verða þeim, er fyrir er borit, en banvænt þeim, er berr” (Ch. 11; 25) / “Now, take this banner. I have made it for you with all the skill I have, and my belief is this: that it will bring victory to the man it’s carried before, but death to the one who carries it” (Ch. 11; 36-37). Sigurðr has a series of military successes as result of this magical device, but gradually his men seem to learn of its effect upon its carrier and begin to avoid it. In the midst of the Battle of Clontarf, the narrator states: “Þá varð engi til at bera hrafnsmerkit, ok bar jarl sjálfr ok fell þar” (Ch. 12; 27) / “No one would carry the raven banner, so the Earl had to do it himself and he was killed” (Ch. 12; 38). The motif of the raven banner becomes more developed in *Njáls saga* (Chapter 157) as well as in *Þorsteins saga*, where it becomes a narrative hot potato passed feverishly between warriors fearing its inevitable effect. Sigurðr at last seizes the banner himself and stuffs it under his tunic, receiving a mortal blow soon after. Robert Hudson suggests that the authors of these later sagas may have had a version of *Orkneyinga saga* available to them or some other intermediary text or narrative drawing on the lore reflected in the *Orkneyinga saga* account. Significantly, although possibly Oðinnic in character and implication, the banner is depicted by the saga writer as the product of Irish sorcery, a further instance of the kind of cultural stereotyping operating in the text. Although Sigurðr is by implication half-Irish himself, and marries the daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland, his persona is presented as Norse and the magic he relies upon as Celtic.

As the above discussion indicates, in life Norse and Irish are portrayed as vastly different in comportment and temperament. In death, however, their heroes often are depicted with similar imagery of martyrdom or sainthood. Hagiography was a dominant narrative model as well as a

probable source for both texts, and the death scenes of key characters often evince striking, even surprising, hagiographic details. In *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*, King Brian takes on saintly attributes in the midst of the Battle of Clontarf. At some seventy years of age, he has grown too old to do battle and must instead rest alongside the battlefield, praying fervently. His death is depicted as that of a martyr, even while he deals his attackers deadly blows just before that death. In *Orkneyinga saga* the deaths of both Earl Magnús and Earl Rögnvaldr are also depicted with hagiographic imagery, and characters after their deaths swear upon them as saints. Rögnvaldr makes a vow to Earl Magnús to aid him in his career (Chapter 68), while Sveinn Ásleifarson vows to Rögnvaldr at his death in Dublin (Chapter 108). For Marlene Ciklamini (1970) Earl Rögnvaldr is a martyr-like figure who strove to “curb the reckless pursuit of honor and blood revenge” at the heart of Orcadian culture of his day. As Rögnvaldr becomes inscribed as a saint, Sveinn Ásleifarson becomes in turn an embodiment of the figure of the “warrior of the heroic cast and a viking who was admired by a society which, though Christian, was largely heroic in outlook” (95). Maria-Claudia Tomany (2008) explores Magnús’s sanctity further, comparing the *Orkneyinga saga* account to surviving *vitae* regarding the saint. Thomas D. Hill (1981) reminds us of the degree to which even seemingly pagan, “heroic,” or purely secular details in such texts can stem from exegetical traditions and the narrative models afforded by saints’ lives and miracle collections. In this use of hagiographic imagery in the two texts, as probably in many other of the commonalities noted above, we are in no way dealing with a case of the direct influence of one text on the other, but rather of a shared reliance on an ambient literary and cultural tradition promoted by the monastic and broader cultural institutions of the region and reflected in various literary manifestations like the texts at hand.

Conclusion

A linguistics conference in 1959 led to the first extensive publications on Norse-Celtic textual influences from scholars working within the Icelandic or Irish literary establishment, creating a set of observations open for later scholars to test or extend but that have often gone simply repeated as fact ever since. Proinsias Mac Cana’s views on the utter lack of influence of Old Norse on Irish literature were noted at the outset of this paper. Einar Ó. Sveinsson offered the Icelandic rejoinder, dismissing Celtic influence on Icelandic tradition as largely nonexistent, despite the acknowledged high rate of migration of Irish to the island of Iceland during the settlement period. Sveinsson states, “All things considered . . . it seems quite evident that Norse civilisation predominated in Iceland, the development there being the same as in many colonies, i.e., the largest immigrant population carries most weight and in course of a few generations absorbs the minority groups that come from other nationalities and have different traditions” (1957:4). Naturally, this rather simplistic rendering of colonial situations and multicultural contact no longer squares with scholarly understandings of these complex processes, and one could easily imagine that the Norse predominance asserted would be questioned by scholars of later generations. To be sure, although both Sveinsson and Mac Cana deny any degree of intercultural influence in their respective national literatures, they each go on in their articles to discuss a wide array of apparent influences and borrowings in both directions.

Characterizing such influences as insignificant and tangential to the celebrated national traditions of which each man was a recognized authority seems to have been a necessary preparatory remark in all such discussions of intercultural influences during the period.

In the last several decades, however, insightful studies have been produced by folklorists and medievalists with a strong interest in tracing intercultural influences, particularly of Gaelic tradition on Icelandic (Chesnutt 1968; Almqvist 1978-79; Sayers 1994; Gunnell 2007; Sigurðsson 2000), but to some extent in the opposite direction as well (Ní Mhaonaigh 2002; Downham 2005). Much of this work has taken place in response to the remarkable progress made in the field of archaeology regarding the Norse presence in the British Isles, work that has gone far to uncover the day-to-day life of these heretofore largely mythologized populations (Wallace 1992; Clarke et al. 1998; Larsen 2001; Downham 2007; Valante 2008; Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998). Assimilating these new understandings into their cultural perceptions and identity performances, it is no doubt accurate to say that modern Dubliners celebrate their city's Viking heritage to a much greater extent today than they would have a hundred years earlier, as evidenced by a thriving museum, public monuments, and ongoing archaeological investigations. In certain respects, both modern Irish and modern Icelanders are more comfortable with the notion of a hybrid past than they were a century ago.

If research on *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* has thus acknowledged the text's value as a rendering of medieval intercultural contact noted earlier and helped raise awareness of such processes on the popular level, such perspectives have not been extensively applied to *Orkneyinga saga*. As Michael Lange (2007) has shown, Orcadian identity has tended to stress on the one hand its Neolithic past as well as its Viking era over any acknowledgement of a specifically Celtic heritage that would tie the islands more closely to the current situation of Scottish rule. In this context, *Orkneyinga saga* has acquired the status of a national text, a chronicle that demonstrates conclusively the uniquely Norse character of these remote northern islands at the periphery of Scotland, albeit with interesting modifications in the early twenty-first century (Owen 2005; Tomany 2007).

On a broader, theoretical level, Gisli Sigurdsson (2000, 2004), Tommy Danielsson (2002) and Ian Beuermann (2006) have worked to develop a more nuanced and complex understanding of oral tradition in Old Norse literature, one that has begun to inform judgments about Icelandic literary history and the development of the sagas in particular (Andersson 2006). We are today more comfortable with the idea of a posited oral tradition that we cannot necessarily reconstruct but that we can tell existed through the renderings it receives or provokes in literary works. *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* are two such works, each decidedly literary and bookish, but each somehow engaged with an ambient historical tradition that the writers seem to acknowledge and make use of. Other texts drawing on the same immanent narrative could be added to the comparison, including the Isle of Man chronicle *Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum*, and various works in Welsh that reference the same period and some of the same figures (Broderick 1991). When we draw these works into comparison with one another, we allow ourselves to imagine a world in which oral tradition passed easily between cultures that lived alongside each other, cultures that exchanged ideas in part through literary (monastic) channels but also through more mundane secular exchanges, particularly among populations that intermarried readily over the course of centuries. Such, of course, is not hard to imagine, as it

mirrors what we know about the region from archaeology and what we can say about contact situations in many other parts of the world. Yet this very logical understanding of the Irish Sea region has not been accepted among scholars until quite recently, in part, as I suggested at the outset of this article, because of a preference for monocultural analysis and the imagined construction of independent societies, histories, and cultures. If we allow ourselves to see the Irish Sea region as an area of cultural exchange and even merger, then *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* become not outlier texts but markers of sustained cultural contact, contact impossible to appreciate or even to note without the careful and demanding work of comparative analysis.

John Miles Foley, in surveying the state of the art in contemporary studies of oral tradition, writes (2010:17):

While the orality versus literacy thesis originally helped to create a niche for oral traditions alongside “literature”—making room in the discussion of verbal art for something other than single-authored, freestanding, epitomized texts . . . we now confront a natural plethora of diverse phenomena that draw both from oral traditions and from texts, and it has become our responsibility to create a suitably flexible theory to understand this remarkable diversity.

Within this theoretical enterprise, medieval texts—“voices from the past”—offer particular insights as works that have been composed, performed, received, and subsequently adapted in contexts that straddle any rigidly defined oral/written divide. As I have tried to suggest in this essay, this fused oral and literary context may also have crossed cultural and linguistic lines, even to the extent of joining populations that regarded each other, at least on some levels, as enemies. Arriving at a narrative of contact and exchange holds interest not only on the scholarly level but also as a historical example to set alongside the many fine studies of intercultural contact that have been produced in connection with contemporary societies. A comparison of *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Orkneyinga saga* reminds us that many of the processes that scholars today may perceive as quintessentially modern have abundant counterparts in earlier eras. In this respect, works such as these two medieval texts offer powerful insights into the workings of culture, narrative, and text-making within a shared but disputed common ground.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Toward an Ethnopoetically Grounded Edition of Homer's *Odyssey*¹

Steve Reece

My contribution to this *Festschrift* for Professor John Miles Foley has its origin in an experimental course on comparative oral traditions titled “The Singers of Tales” that I have taught three times in quite different formats, once at Vanderbilt University and twice at Saint Olaf College. I began envisioning this course at the 1992 NEH Summer Seminar on Comparative Oral Traditions administered by Professor Foley in his capacity as the director of the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at the University of Missouri. The seminar was one of the most pleasant, productive, and pivotal experiences of my academic career, largely because of the warm collegiality of my eleven colleagues and the generous mentoring of Professor Foley, and it continues to this day to have an effect on both my teaching and research. In the most recent incarnation of “The Singers of Tales” I decided, at great risk to my reputation as a traditional teacher and scholar, that the *form* of the course should match its *content*—that is, that the entire course should be conducted whenever possible without the aid of reading and writing.

Almost all the material that we were studying in this course was composed, performed, and in many cases transmitted without the use of writing and reading, in an “illiterate” or, perhaps I should say, “preliterate” period of history. Each successive time that I have taught this course, I have discovered that my students relate better and better to this orally generated material. This generation of students seems to be on the verge of ushering in a new “post-literate” period of history: they are engaged by the aural pleasures of music and speech and the visual pleasures of icons, and thanks to their exposure to newer methods of technologizing the word, their concept of a text is of something much more fluid than the silent, two-dimensional, black-on-white, typographical words that so tyrannized students of previous generations.

There is a certain perverseness, is there not, in expecting our students to enjoy traditional Zuni narrative poetry or traditional Appalachian folktales by sitting alone, in a quiet recess of the library and under a fluorescent light, reading a text speedily and silently, without even moving their mouths? Hence, in the most recent version of this course I determined that textbooks, written quizzes, exams, and final papers would be replaced whenever possible by public readings

¹ Ethnopoetics as a discipline has developed partly as a response to the perception of an inappropriate imposition of Western categories and aesthetics upon non-Western forms of literature. The irony of using the term with reference to Homer, the “paragon of Western literature,” is deliberate, for I am suggesting that a bardic performance of Greek epic in eighth-century BCE Ionia would have been much more distant and foreign to our experience than we generally acknowledge. In this respect, it would have had much in common with the performance-traditions of the more recent non-Western indigenous cultures with which the discipline of ethnopoetics is primarily concerned.

(even very long readings of the *Odyssey* and *Beowulf*), by shorter musical performances (with Homeric lyres, South Slavic gusles, Southern fiddles and banjos), and by oral presentations (of final research projects). The results were gratifying: students were personally engaged in these often difficult and exotic narratives, their individual and team research projects were outstanding, the class as a whole developed into a close-knit, interactive community, and, best of all, I did not have to read any examination essays or term papers. I enthusiastically recommend it.

We began the course, naturally, with Homer's *Odyssey*, and one of the first methodological obstacles that arose on the first day was the question of the relationship between the glossy, compact, rectilinear texts that the students had recently purchased from the shelves of the college bookstore and the oral performances with musical accompaniment of epic verse by a Greek bard on (let us say) the island of Chios in (let us say) the late eighth century BCE. What vestiges of the historical oral performance do these modern texts preserve? How does one textualize an oral performance? How does one take a non-spatial utterance in time and record it as a spatial and timeless and silent sequence of symbols? It happened that on that first day of class a student who was understandably trying to save some money pulled out of his backpack a tattered copy of a prose version of the *Odyssey* that his mother had used when a student at Saint Olaf College some thirty years earlier. I was startled and overreacted. I begged him not to open it, appealing to the class with as much passion as I could muster to purchase the stichic verse version that I had ordered through the bookstore, arguing that written prose is particularly unfit for representing sung or spoken epic verse, since prose is arranged in long paragraphs without meaningful breaks, while stichic verse is arranged in short lines that allow frequent pauses for silence and for catching one's breath. Trying to wax poetic I offered that prose flows continuously, like a river following its inevitable course downstream, while stichic verse ebbs and flows intermittently, like the ocean's waves lapping against the shore. I even proposed to my students, without having thought it out fully, that prose can exist only inscribed as a written text: no one sings or chants or, for that matter, even speaks in the full and sequential paragraphs of prose. At the time the hapless student, and likely the class as a whole, thought me a bit cruel and unusual, but within a few days they began to realize from personal experience that a loosely translated prose version of the *Odyssey* could convey only a synopsis of the *story* utterly divorced of its *form*. A more literal verse translation could at least convey a sense of the rhythms, the verse lengths, and the pauses, and it could even capture some of the resonance of the repetitive formulaic language of oral performance—or, as John Foley, who has coined several of the terms now used to describe this fundamental feature of oral aesthetics, would put it, the “traditional referentiality,” the “metonymic force,” the “epic register.”

We confronted this methodological obstacle repeatedly throughout the course, as we looked at several attempts by modern anthropologists, folklorists, and comparatists to record in textual form those performances of narrative poetry and folktales that they had actually witnessed (Native American, African American, and African). As we became familiar with these efforts, it struck me that those of us in classical studies, in contrast to our colleagues in anthropology, folklore, and comparative literature, continue in large part to read and study and translate our texts in much the same way as our text-oriented predecessors. We may acknowledge the orality of Homeric epic, we may refer to it as performance, we may pay obeisance to the study of comparative oral traditions, but we remain addicted to our printed texts, our book

divisions and line numbers, our *apparatus critici*, our concordances and lexica. We rarely try to reconstruct or even imagine a production of an epic performance.²

In this regard, we Homerists have fallen behind our colleagues in anthropology, folklore, and comparative studies. For them, beginning in the 1930s, a number of intellectual forces conspired to draw more attention to the contextual and non-verbal aspects of oral performance: the Prague school of linguistics, with its synchronic and contextual approach; fieldwork in various cultures of the world, which uncovered the techniques of oral composition; the adoption of a performance-oriented approach in folklore studies generally; advances in the ethnography of speaking; and, most relevant for our purposes here, the experimentation with notational systems for capturing the nonverbal aesthetic features of a performance in print.³ In 1972 Dennis Tedlock published his influential transcription of Zuni narrative poetry, *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians*, which attempted to record by means of various typographical mechanisms such nonverbal acoustic features as pause, tempo, intonation, stress, and volume. And in 1984 Elizabeth Fine extended Tedlock's methods to record body and facial movements of the performer as well as reactions of the audience in her transcriptions of African American folktale traditions.

In my course "The Singers of Tales" we studied the attempts of Tedlock and Fine to textualize Native American and African American oral performances—they received mixed reviews from the students. On the one hand, the students faulted them for going to the extreme in their devaluation, even deconstruction, of written discourse out of their idolatry for oral performance. On the other hand, the students realized that they had contaminated the two media, the spoken and the written, not out of arrogance or ignorance, but in order to make a truly oral performance, or at least a decipherable record of it, widely available in an easily disseminated medium: the written text. Finally my colleague in the English Department at Saint Olaf College, Joseph Mbele, visited our class to talk about his fieldwork in Southern Tanzania and to read from his collection of Matengo folktales (Mbele 1999). He noted the difficulty, indeed the absurdity, of transforming a living oral performance into a typographical text; he cautioned against divorcing that text from its performing context; and he suggested that, at a minimum, the typography of such a text should reflect the performer's voice (the changes in volume, pitch, and tempo), that the margins of the text should record the physical and social setting of the performance, the time and duration of the performance, all the performer's non-verbal activity, the nature of the performer's equipment, and the audience's composition and reaction, and that the text should be accompanied by an audio or, better yet, a video recording of the performance.

This caused us to begin to wonder—and this is my main point here—how a folklorist doing fieldwork, like Dennis Tedlock in Arizona, or Elizabeth Fine in Texas, or Joseph Mbele in Tanzania, would, if miraculously transported to an eighth-century BCE social gathering in Ionia where Homer was performing a version of the *Odyssey*, transcribe that oral performance into a textual form. What would such a transcription and textualization look like? This process proved, of course, to be very difficult to conceive. There are so many unknown aspects of the non-verbal

² This is in marked contrast to the great strides we have made as a discipline in the appreciation of ancient drama as a production rather than a text.

³ For a thorough survey of the currents of development in these fields, see Fine 1984:16-56.

and contextual features of eighth-century BCE Greek epic: the social setting of the performance, the demeanor and involvement of the audience, the length of the performance units, the nature of the singing, the role of musical instrumentation, the non-verbal cues of the bard. Nonetheless, it seemed worthwhile for the purpose of the exercise—for the fundamental questions it would raise, if nothing else—to draw up a blueprint for a text that would at least attempt to accentuate, and even highlight, some of the *vestiges* of oral performance. Moreover, this exercise was not entirely hypothetical: Homer's *Odyssey* was, after all, written down at some point in history; otherwise it would not have survived.

A Modern Scholarly Edition vs. a Fieldwork Transcription

For the purposes of our exercise we began by cataloging the most fundamental features of our modern printed texts—in this case a recent scholarly edition of Homer's *Odyssey*—and considering whether or not these features would serve our purposes in our fieldwork transcription of an ancient oral performance of the *Odyssey*.

Title. As the prospective audience of an oral performance by Homer we will surely not request, nor will the bard propose, a performance of “the *Odyssey*,” and certainly not “*The Odyssey*,” since the canonization implied by such a title is still some generations in the making. We will request something more descriptive in nature: “The Tale of the *Nostos* (‘Homecoming’) of Odysseus from Troy and his Vengeance against the Suitors when he Reaches Ithaca.” (This topic is explored in much greater detail below.)

Author. The author is the bard Homer of Chios, who reiterates his gratitude and indebtedness to his teacher, and to his teacher's teacher, and to his teacher's teacher's teacher, and makes no grand claims of originality. As generations pass, some readers of the *Odyssey* will begin to regard the author not as a historical person but as a legendary figure, a cultural icon, or a mythic embodiment of the Greek epic tradition. But the slightly stooped, gray-bearded gentleman across the courtyard sipping his wine while he tightens the strings of his *phorminx* (lyre) looks every bit a real person to us.

Editor. This is our responsibility, since we, the scribes, are the ones making use of our newly acquired writing system to transcribe an epic performance in Greek for the first—possibly second—time in history. In this role we will try to remain as unobtrusive as possible as we attempt to record the oral performance accurately as a written text.

Press. The reed pens and papyrus rolls in our hands, generously provided by an aristocratic family of Chios, will suffice as the instruments for our transcription of this performance.

Date. This is the first year of the nineteenth Olympiad. But the tale goes back several hundred years, long before the founding of the Olympics, and some of the verbal formulas and poetic expressions go back even further into the hoary past.

Location. The performance is part of a six-day wedding celebration in the palatial residence of a newly married aristocratic couple on the Greek island of Chios. Most of the upper-class residents of Chios are in attendance, along with other guests from the neighboring islands and the Ionian mainland.

Copyright. None. Intellectual property is an utterly foreign concept to this bard. Future generations of poets are welcome to quote phrases, verses, and even longer passages without attribution. In fact, our bard will consider it an honor if they do so.

International Standard Book Number (ISBN). None. No comparable convention exists in Greece at this time. Cultures of the Near East have already created systems for cataloging the texts on their clay tablets and papyrus rolls, and some generations hence the feverishly cataloging librarians of Alexandria will do the same for Greek literature, but since this is one of the earliest attempts to produce a substantial text this far West, there is no precedent for keeping such records.

Dedication. The bard's invocation to the Muse at the beginning of his performance is an acknowledgment of his poetic forebears, who taught him everything he knows.

Foreword/Preface/Introduction. None. The bard will fill us in on a need-to-know basis during his performance. We have all heard versions of this tale before, and we are sufficiently familiar with its background to recognize when this bard is doing something new and different.

Bibliography. The bard assumes that we are familiar with the tales of the "Argonautica," "Heraclea," and "Oedipodea," as well as various tales about the Achaean expedition against Troy and its aftermath, including the "Iliad" (a performance of which was reportedly transcribed some twenty years ago, though we are familiar only with the oral version), all of which he will allude to in both subtle and explicit ways throughout his performance.

Sigla/Abbreviations. We are an experienced audience. We understand without further instruction the intricate "codes" embedded in the epic diction.

Table of Contents. The proem following the bard's invocation to the Muse, although not very detailed or complete, will serve as a synopsis of what is to follow.

Footnotes. None. But we may on occasion include notes in the margins about various features of the performance: pauses, both short and long; musical interludes, both between verses and between larger scenes; the bard's vocal impersonations of characters within the tale; the bard's physical movements, including gestures; the nature and level of the audience's participation; and so forth.

Apparatus criticus. None. There is no mechanism more inherently textual and utterly foreign to oral performance than the *apparatus criticus* that hangs tenaciously to the bottom of our scholarly editions. The *apparatus criticus* is a shorthand way of indicating the relative value that a modern editor places on variant readings in the manuscripts (that one scribe records the generalizing enclitic particle τε and another the more emphatic enclitic particle γε, for example). As ours is the first transcription in history of a performance of the *Odyssey*, there do not yet exist any variant readings. That said, if our bard stumbles on a word or phrase and then corrects himself, or if he stops mid-verse and goes back and starts over again with a different verse, or if he changes his mind about the way the course of the tale is going and chooses to backtrack, we will make a note of these matters in the margins.

Line Numbers. None. But the dactylic hexameter is a stichic verse, the catalectic sixth foot with anceps of the final syllable denoting a pause in performance at the end of each verse. In other words, these verse endings are not simply textual divisions but oral ones, allowing for pauses and occasional musical interludes in performance between the verses. Hence, we will lay out the text of our transcription stichically, writing from right-to-left, with the letter-forms

reversed, or possibly *boustrophedon* (“back and forth as an ox turns,” that is, when pulling a plow), as is the custom on inscriptions of this period. The roughly contemporary “Cup of Nestor” from the Euboean colony of Pithecusae in the Bay of Naples, for example, has inscribed on it one of the earliest (c. 740 BCE) examples of Greek writing, including two dactylic hexameter verses written from right-to-left in stichic form.

Paragraph Markers. None. Narrative units will be easily discernible by internal markers, such as the shift from third-person narrative to internal dialogue and vice versa, the inclusion of digressions and paradigmatic tales, the insertion of the sometimes rather long and independent “Homeric” similes, the imposition of the structuring mechanism of ring-composition, and by various other stylistic devices. No external markers, such as indented lines, are required to define these narrative units.

Book Divisions and Numbers. None. The twenty-four-book division used in scholarly editions a half millennium from now has no bearing on the circumstances of Homer’s imminent performance of his version of the *Odyssey*. But since this performance, which will require more than twenty hours, will be much too long for a single sitting, it will be divided up evenly throughout the six days of the wedding celebration. The length of the daily performances will still be substantial, and we will differentiate these six substantial performance units by committing each one to a separate roll of papyrus. (See below for much more on this topic.)

Format of the Text. Upper and lower case letters: No differentiation. Only one style of letter, the majuscule (capital) found on contemporary inscriptions, exists at this point in the evolution of the Greek alphabet. With regard to the type of alphabet, we will use the East Ionic version of twenty-five letters (including omega, koppa, xi, psi; excluding digamma; H = eta). *Word division:* None. The letters will flow continuously on the papyrus roll, without any empty spaces between them. Also, vowels elided in pronunciation will be written out in full, as is the convention of the period, while geminated consonants will be written singly. *Punctuation marks (period, comma, colon, semicolon, question mark):* None. These have not yet been invented. *Breathing marks:* None. In any case, the East Ionic dialect of Greek in which our bard is singing is psilotic—it has lost its *spiritus asper* by this time. *Accents:* None. The intonation of the bard’s voice will instead be indicated by small musical notations written above the text of each verse, with four different pitches, denoted by four letters of the alphabet, corresponding to the four strings of the phorminx. Musical notations will also be included in the margins to signify any musical interludes between verses.

Indices of Names, Places, and Other Important Items. None. We are familiar with almost all the personal and place names from our experience of previous epic performances; if not, we may signify our perplexity to the bard, who will then fill in the details with a digression or expansion.

Corrigenda and Addenda. None. This is a composition-in-performance. Composition-in-performance by nature entails metrical blunders, dictional inconcinnities, factual errors, and larger narrative anomalies, and there will be no opportunity for the bard to proofread and correct these. As the Roman poet Horace will later observe: *nescit vox missa reverti* (“a word once spoken cannot be recalled,” *Ars Poetica* 390).⁴ We will be forgiving—and we ourselves will

⁴ All translations of primary Greek and Latin sources throughout this document are my own.

resist the temptation to correct these blemishes in our transcription. (See further discussion on this topic below.)

This exercise of cataloguing the various features of a modern printed edition of the *Odyssey*, and considering how these features might or might not serve our purposes in our hypothetical transcription of an ancient oral performance of the epic, brought to the attention of my students some of the essential differences between an oral performance and a written text. The students became invested in the procedure, and we were then able to consider some of these features in greater detail. I now wish to focus on three of these—Title, Division of Narrative, and Corrigenda and Addenda—in order to show how this exercise can sustain students' interest in a deeper examination of some of the most fundamental questions about Homeric performance (and, by analogy, about performances of other oral traditions). But before we can begin, we must again face, and to some extent try to resolve, the initial methodological obstacle that confronted us: What is the relationship between the modern translated texts of the *Odyssey* that we can hold in our hands (and the scholarly editions upon which they are based) and a live oral performance by Homer in the late eighth century BCE?

An Initial Methodological Obstacle

Did there ever exist—could there ever have existed—an ancient transcription of a performance of Homer's *Odyssey*? And, if so, do our modern editions, which are eclectic in nature—being based on painstaking collations of the textual readings of dozens of codices and hundreds of papyrus fragments, supported by what can be elicited from the testimony of ancient commentaries—reflect that original transcription closely enough to preserve even a vestige of a once live oral performance?

We may begin by reassuring ourselves about one obvious point of certainty: our *Odyssey* (and everything below applies equally well to the *Iliad*), regardless of how oral its background, at some point in history became a written text, for had this not occurred, we would never have known the epic. When, where, why, and how it became a text, however, are matters of great contention.⁵ One view is that the epic poet himself learned how to write and took advantage of this new technology to record his verses in a more fixed and stable medium. Advocates of this view attribute the extraordinary length and sophisticated narratological structure of the *Odyssey* precisely to the poet's ability to write. Some have even suggested that the alphabet was adopted by the Greeks specifically for the purpose of recording such monumental epics as the *Odyssey*.⁶ This view offers a romantic notion of an individual poet and his text with which we as literates have become familiar and comfortable; it also allows an editor to strive to reconstruct *the* original text of Homer in much the same way as he would *the* original text of some literate Hellenistic poet. But it fails to account for many features in the *Odyssey* that indicate that it was

⁵ What follows is a synopsis of a proposal that I offer at great length and in minute detail in Reece 2005 and somewhat more broadly in Reece forthcoming.

⁶ M. L. West (1990) has argued forcefully for an early written text of Homer; Powell (1991) proposes that the Phoenician writing system was brought to Greece precisely for the purpose of recording the Homeric epics.

not slowly and deliberately written down, with the leisure to reread, reconsider, and revise. (See further below.) Moreover, it seems most unlikely that it would ever have occurred to a truly orally composing bard to write his song down as a text. Preservation of the exact words of his song was never his goal; he could perform it again at any time. A written text served him no purpose in performance; on the contrary, he probably performed more freely and comfortably when allowed to sing at his own pace to the accompaniment of his phorminx, not with an unwieldy text to encumber him. It must have been someone other than the bard who came up with the idea of recording his song as a written text.

A second view, the polar opposite of the first, is that the textualization of the *Odyssey* was a long and complicated evolutionary process, throughout which it remained largely oral, and therefore fluid and unstable, not only among the bards of the earliest period, but also among the rhapsodes of the Archaic period, and even into the Classical and Hellenistic periods in disparate local traditions. The *Odyssey* did not become a text as we (more or less) know it until the Alexandrian librarians of the third and second centuries standardized and canonized it.⁷ This view tends to efface Homer's existence as a human being and instead attributes the *Odyssey* to a tradition, both oral and textual, that we can call, for the sake of shorthand, "Homer." Thus the epic was actually shaped by generations of mouths *and* hands, slowly crystallized, and not really fixed until the late Classical or even Hellenistic period. This evolutionary view is attractive in many respects, since it offers an explanation for several curious developments relevant to the transmission of the epics: the relative paucity of depictions of Homeric scenes in the graphic arts during the Archaic period, followed by a surge in popularity of such scenes in the late sixth century (that is, coincident with a Panathenaic textualization); the sometimes remarkable differences between our inherited text of the *Odyssey* and the quotations of the *Odyssey* by Classical authors, the textual versions reported to have existed in the manuscripts available to the Alexandrian editors, and the longer and "eccentric" readings of the Ptolemaic papyri; and the late linguistic forms, especially the "Atticisms" and "hyper-Ionisms" that reside, at least on the veneer, of our inherited text. But the drawbacks of this view are numerous as well. It fails to account for many important features of the *Odyssey* as we know it: the overall unity of its narrative; the various types of inconsistencies that remain embedded in its narrative; the absence of multiple versions of the *Odyssey*; and the fact that the development of the epic art-language appears to have been arrested at a particular moment in time. As a practical matter the evolutionary view imposes nearly impossible challenges on the modern editor of the *Odyssey*, for all textual variants must be regarded as *potentially* authentic readings. How is the modern editor to present the fluidity and multiformity of the epic tradition in the form of an edited text that has conventionally placed readings of a supposed original in the favored position above, while demoting supposed variants to the level of the *apparatus criticus* below?

A third view, which falls somewhere in between the other two, though much closer to the first, is that Homer dictated his version of the *Odyssey* to a scribe (or scribes), who recorded his words, probably with a reed pen on papyrus. The idea of textualizing the performance did not come from the bard, who would have placed no value on a written text. It must instead have

⁷ One may trace the development of the evolutionary model, namely that our inherited texts of Homer are the final product of a long evolution of a fluid oral *and* textual transmission, by following chronologically Murray 1911:298-325; Kirk 1962:98-101, 301-34; Foley 1990:20-31, 49-61; and Nagy 1996:29-112.

come from a patron, a sponsor, or a simple admirer, who was familiar with the only mechanism capable of accomplishing this task: oral dictation. Since the alphabet with which the performance was first textualized originated in Phoenicia, and since the papyrus upon which the text was first transcribed originated in Egypt, and since many components of the song itself—the tale-types, themes, and poetic forms—originated in the Levant and Mesopotamia, it does not require too great a leap of faith to suppose that the very idea of writing down the song originated from someone acquainted with the civilizations of the Near East, where the writing down of epic songs, some even through the process of dictation, and their transmission by means of written text, had been practiced for more than a millennium. Our inherited text of the *Odyssey*, in this view, is a more or less reliable record—though passed through countless hands over many generations—of what was once an oral-dictated text, that is, a scribal transcription of a performance orally delivered by a historical Homer in the eighth century.⁸ The benefits of this view are many: Homer remains a truly oral poet, but at the same time a particular text can be ascribed to him; our inherited text of the *Odyssey* can be regarded as a vestige of a real historical performance, delivered at a particular time, in a particular place, by a real living person; several of the most serious obstacles to the other views are obviated, namely that the texts that we have inherited retain several features that seem utterly incompatible with the view of an evolutionary process and, at least in some important respects, with the view of a literate Homer. I wish to highlight four of the most prominent of these features: the unity of the narrative, the various levels of inconcinnities that remain embedded in the narrative, the absence of multiple versions of the *Odyssey*, and the fixation in time of the epic art-language.

The unity of the narrative: The *Odyssey* is not simply a collection of loosely related episodes—which would be the predictable result of a process of compilation by various hands over a long period, or of a process of gradual accretion within an impersonal oral tradition. Rather, the *Odyssey* is a unified narrative whose structure is most clearly observed, whose plots are most intelligently followed, and whose nuances are most pleasurably appreciated, whether by ancient listeners or modern readers, when experienced in its entirety and within a limited time frame. Episodes are organized in a thoughtful sequence from beginning to end and bound together by a network of interconnected references, by anticipatory and retrospective allusions, by comparative and contrasting parallelisms, and many other similar structuring devices. The unity of plot and time in the *Odyssey* struck Aristotle as a unique feature of Homeric epic as early as the fourth century BCE (*Poetics* 1451a, 1459a), and most critics and commentators since then have continued to be impressed by its architectonic unity.⁹ The *Odyssey* appears to be a work carefully arranged by a personal and inspired bard composing in a performance that was experienced *in toto* on some occasion that provided considerable leisure: perhaps, as we have

⁸ The oral dictation model proposed by Milman Parry (A. Parry 1971:451) and developed further by Lord (1953 and 1960:124-38) has been supported with strong and up-to-date arguments by Janko (1990 and 1998), Ruijgh (1995), and Reece (2005).

⁹ For a treatment of ring compositions; two-, three-, and six-part narrative and narratological divisions; and other examples of parallelism in the *Odyssey*, see Tracy 1997, which draws upon the seminal works of Bassett (1919), Myres (1952), Kitto (1966), Gaiser (1969), Fenik (1974), and Tracy himself (1990); see also Loudon 1999. On the use of type-scenes as building blocks for the architectonic structure of the *Odyssey*, see Reece 1993:189-206; on a specific use of ring composition to tie together a long stretch of Odyssean narrative, see Reece 1995.

suggested, at the wedding of an aristocratic couple.

The various levels of inconcinnities that remain embedded in the narrative: The *Odyssey* has survived to our day as a text that, even in the form that has been copied and recopied for many generations, does not have the appearance of having gone through an extensive editorial process—proofreading, correcting, reworking, and so on. On the contrary, it retains many features typical of oral composition-in-performance whose words once uttered could not be retracted. Indeed, inconcinnities remain embedded in every level of our inherited text as vestiges of its origin in oral performance: metrical blunders attributable to the pressures of oral composition-in-performance by a bard who did not go back to his verses after his performance to tidy up the prosodic loose ends (for instance, the prosody of *Odyssey* 7.89 discussed further below); dictional inconcinnities that have resulted from stock formulaic phrases being used in contextually inappropriate circumstances, and whose survival in our texts show that the poet had no opportunity or desire to summon back his words or revise them (for instance, Zeus thundering on a cloudless day “from the clouds on high” at *Odyssey* 20.104, 114); small factual errors and larger narrative anomalies that point to a one-time oral dictation of an epic composition-in-performance that was transmitted thereafter, blemishes and all, with remarkable faithfulness in its textual avatars (for instance, the contradiction regarding whether Theoclymenus was aboard the ship or on the shore when he observed the omen of the bird at *Od.* 15.495-538 and 17.150-65). These are not normal features of deliberately written texts, nor are they conceivable in the evolutionary model; they arise rather from the exigencies of live oral performance that, on the one hand, require that the bard extemporize as he composes during the very act of performance, and, on the other hand, prohibit the bard from retracting or correcting his song once it has left his mouth.¹⁰

The absence of multiple versions of the Odyssey: The evolutionary model, hypothetical in the case of Homer’s *Odyssey*, has been applied appropriately and productively to the presumed, and in some cases demonstrable, histories of several other oral epic traditions that were eventually fixed in textual forms—for instance, the Sumerian and Akkadian versions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the Persian *Shahnama*, the Spanish *Cantar de Mio Cid*, the French *Chanson de Roland*, the German *Nibelungenlied*, the South Slavic Return Song, and the medieval Greek epic *Digenis Akritis*. It is instructive, then, to compare the features of the surviving texts of these other epic traditions with those of Homer’s *Odyssey* in order to determine if the similar circumstances hypothetically posed by the evolutionary model for the composition and transmission of the *Odyssey* have produced similar outcomes. What we discover is that in these other epic traditions there have survived multiple versions that are substantially different from one another, not only in small matters of diction and detail but also in their essential poetic forms, their larger themes and narrative patterns, their overarching plot structures, and even their total lengths. These multiple versions all have equal claim to authority; hence, the search for an archetype is meaningless. In the case of the *Odyssey*, however, multiple versions have not developed. While it is true that textual variants occur in quotations of “Homer” by later Classical authors of the fifth and (mostly) fourth centuries, in the

¹⁰ For more on these narrative inconcinnities and the challenge of how to respond to such blemishes that result from composition-in-performance, see below.

reports of the third- and second-century Alexandrian scholars about what they read in earlier editions of Homer, in the readings of the surviving remnants of Homeric texts on papyri from the early Ptolemaic period (that is, the third through second century BCE), and, though to a much lesser degree, from the surviving manuscripts of the post-Aristarchean “vulgate” (after around 150 BCE), with respect to the monumental epic as a whole these variants are comparatively trivial and do not provide the evidence for substantially different versions of the Odyssean text. We have only one version of the *Odyssey*, with the same characters, the same story, and even the same sequence of episodes—all of which are, moreover, told in a very uniform meter, dialect, diction, and style throughout. There is no evidence that there ever existed any text of Homer's *Odyssey* without a Telemachus, a Nausicaa, or a Eumaeus. Nor is there any evidence of a text of the *Odyssey* that was half the size, or twice the size, of our inherited text. It seems likely, then, that, unlike these other epic traditions, our *Odyssey* goes back to a single archetype that was fixed in writing and whose text did not thereafter suffer substantial editorial tampering.¹¹

The fixation in time of the epic art-language: Our inherited texts of the *Odyssey* reveal a language that was frozen in time, a language that had previously been evolving hand in hand with the vernacular but that had in its eighth-century Ionic form become fixed. There had once existed a vibrant Mycenaean epic tradition, but our inherited texts are not Mycenaean (though there are Mycenaean words and phrases, even poetic formulaic phrases, embedded in them); thereafter there had existed a vibrant Aeolic epic tradition, but our inherited texts are not Aeolic (though Aeolic words and phrases abound, especially ones that provide metrically useful alternatives to the corresponding Ionic forms); thereafter there arose a vibrant Ionic epic tradition, and this is when the linguistic evolution that had previously so characterized the epic tradition was arrested.¹² Though the *Odyssey* continued to be performed and enjoyed—recited orally and received aurally—the epic *Kunstsprache* “art-language” in which it had for so many generations been composed had become a “dead” language. The language of the *Odyssey* attained a high degree of fixation precisely at this period, substantially in the Ionic dialect, and it continued in its later transmission to retain its Ionic forms. This fixation was surely due to textualization. Whether the writing down of the epic enabled it to gain an exceptional status, or whether an exceptional status caused it to be written down, it was textualization, the result of oral dictation and transcription at a specific time and place (in the case of the *Odyssey* during the eighth century in Ionia), that assured linguistic fixation. For the epic language did not continue to evolve linguistically—to create innovative forms and formulae—through the seventh, sixth, and fifth centuries, and thereafter, as it had in its more fluid oral form before the eighth century. The so-called “Atticisms” and “hyper-Ionisms” that occur occasionally in our inherited text are simply a veneer: metrically equivalent modernizations and modifications of an already established text.

¹¹ On the contrast between the basic fixity of the Homeric texts and the relative fluidity of some of these other epic traditions, see Merkelbach 1952:34-35; Lord 1960:198-221; Stephanie West 1988:36; Janko 1990:330-31, 1992:29, 1998:11-12; and Finkelberg 2000.

¹² For an engaging presentation of this theory of three dialectal phases from the viewpoint of oral poetics, see A. Parry 1971:325-64; from the viewpoint of legend and language, see M. L. West 1988; from the viewpoint of specific linguistic features, see Ruijgh 1957, 1985, 1995; from the viewpoint of history and archaeology, see Sherratt 1990.

In sum, not only does the oral dictation model best explain the various features of our inherited text of Homer's *Odyssey*, but it also offers us the best hope of detecting, even from evidence imprisoned in the dead texts of our manuscript tradition, at least some vestiges of a once-living oral performance of the epic. Having now confronted this methodological obstacle head on, we return to the exercise of our hypothetical transcription of the *Odyssey*, exploring in greater depth the ramifications of three possible components of our transcription: Title, Division of Narrative, and Corrigenda and Addenda.

Title

During Homer's own lifetime the title of his epic was not simply the *Odyssey*. When referring to Homer's version of the tale, people would have used a longer and more descriptive title, such as: "The Tale of the *Nostos* ("Homecoming") of Odysseus from Troy and his Vengeance against the Suitors when he Reaches Ithaca—according to Homer of Chios." Homer himself may have introduced his performance for the first transcription of his epic even more expansively, since this was an extraordinary occasion, and since he intended to deliver his tale in an especially ambitious manner. He may have announced that he was going to begin this particular performance *in extremas res* ("at the end of things"), already in the tenth year of Odysseus' return, and that he would fill in the background with a description of the circumstances at home in Ithaca and an account not of the travels of Odysseus but of his son Telemachus; then he would narrate the traditional tales of the adventures of Odysseus on his return from Troy, but he would place the majority of these tales in the mouth of Odysseus himself, as he entertains his Phaeacian hosts during his stay on the island of Scheria; this would be followed by the extended and climactic narration, upon Odysseus' arrival in Ithaca, of the sequence of recognitions by his son Telemachus, his nurse Eurycleia, his wife Penelope, and his father Laertes; and a great deal of attention would be paid to providing a satisfying account of Odysseus' just and appropriate vengeance upon his wife's suitors.

Why do we suppose that Homer and his contemporaries used a longer and more descriptive title? Although references to the poet Homer by name survive from a very early period, possibly even as early as the seventh century (Hesiod [?] fr. 357, Callinus [according to Pausanias 9.9.5]),¹³ and although there also survive many early references to the heroes and heroines of Homer's two epics (the Atreidae, Achilles, Hector, Aias, Priam, Paris, Helen, Odysseus, Penelope, Circe, and others), there is not a single surviving reference to Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey* by title until the time of Herodotus in the late fifth century (2.116.6, 2.116.15, 2.117.6, 4.29.3)—after which these titles come into general use, as often in Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle. This is because such titles as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are features of a writing and reading and cataloging culture (that is, one with booksellers, schools, and libraries).

¹³ For other early references to Homer by name, see Xenophanes fr. 10, 11; Heraclitus fr. 42, 56 (among others); Pindar *Pythian* 4.277, *Nemean* 7.21 (among others); Simonides fr. 59.1.

What were Homer's epics called during the 250-year period between Homer and Herodotus? The evidence is very slim, but Stesichorus (*Palinode* 1), in a reference to the abduction of Helen as related by Homer, mentions simply "this tale":¹⁴

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος
οὐδ' ἔβας ἐν νηυσὶν ἐυσσέλμοις
οὐδ' ἵκεο πέργαμα Τροίας

This tale is not true, // you did not travel on the well-decked ships // nor did you reach the walls of Troy.

And Pindar (*Nemean* 7.20-21) refers to Homer's "tale of Odysseus":¹⁵

ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι
λόγον Ὀδυσσεός ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἀδυεπὴ γενέσθ' Ὅμηρον

I expect that greater // did the tale of Odysseus become than his experience because of the sweet-songed Homer.

Perhaps comparative evidence can shed some light on the question: in their interviews with Milman Parry and Albert Lord, the *guslari* of Yugoslavia expressed no need for, and showed no awareness of, titles for their songs.¹⁶ When pressed to come up with one—and Parry was not shy about pressing them rather hard at times—they offered long descriptions that changed with subsequent performances:¹⁷

"The song about Marko Kraljević when he fought with Musa."

"The song about when the two pashas spent the winter in Temišvar, and all seven kings surrounded them."

"The song of how the ban captured Uskok Radovan and put him in prison, and Dulić and Velagić were there with thirty and two comrades."

Standardized titles like "The *Odyssey*" and "The *Iliad*" are accoutrements of a written text, not of an oral song. And so, in keeping with our attempt to retain in our hypothetical transcription some of the vestiges of oral performance, let us designate the title as "The Tale of

¹⁴ Fragment 15 in the edition of Page (1962).

¹⁵ Edition of Maehler (1971).

¹⁶ See also Foley's (2011-) treatment of this phenomenon in the node "The Illusion of Object" in The Pathways Project: http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Illusion_of_Object.

¹⁷ See the transcription of Parry and Lord's conversations with the singers Sulejman Makić and Salih Ugljanin in M. Parry et al. 1953-54:I: 266-67, 354.

the *Nostos* (“Homecoming”) of Odysseus from Troy and his Vengeance against the Suitors when he Reaches Ithaca—according to Homer of Chios.”

Division of Narrative

In our transcription of Homer’s performance the divisions of the narrative will be demarcated very differently from the book divisions of our modern editions. Our inherited twenty-four-book division is largely a result of serendipity—the fact that there were twenty-four letters in the New Ionic alphabet that had become the standard in the Hellenic world by the late fifth century—rather than a reflection of breaks in the historical performance of a singing bard. The book divisions are almost certainly post-Homeric, probably post-Classical, and most likely Hellenistic. The earliest actual reference to a book division to survive is by the grammarian Apollodorus of Athens (late second century BCE), who refers to *Iliad* 14 by the Greek letter Ξ.¹⁸ An ancient tradition, reflected in pseudo-Plutarch’s *De Homero* 2.4, associates the twenty-four-book division with the Alexandrian scholar Aristarchus; a scholium to *Iliad* 3.1 that appears to have as its source the work of the second-century CE scholar Nicanor attributes the division of books according to letters of the alphabet to the work of the grammarians generally, proposing that the poet himself made his work one body, in imitation of nature, and arranged his verses in an uninterrupted sequence;¹⁹ and Eustathius, in his commentary on the *Iliad* (at 1.1), attributes the division into twenty-four books to “Aristarchus and after him Zenodotus” [*sic*].²⁰ Recent attempts to date the book divisions earlier than the Hellenistic period, and even earlier than the Classical period, are largely unsuccessful, I think,²¹ and the extreme view that they go all the way back to an eighth-century Homer is utterly unconvincing.²²

While it is generally agreed that many of the transmitted book divisions have been judiciously chosen, coinciding with natural breaks in the narrative such as a scene change or the dawn of a new day, we must admit that some clash harshly with the poet’s own narrative divisions, destroying the integrity of his narrative units: for instance, the division between Books 11 and 12 of the *Odyssey* (which would better be placed at 12.7/8); or the division between Books 12 and 13 (which would better be placed at 13.17/18 or 13.92/93). This poses an interesting challenge to modern editors of the Homeric epics: M. L. West, for example, admits to the temptation in his recent Teubner edition of the *Iliad* (1998-2000) to abandon the book structure altogether and number the lines of the *Iliad* continuously from beginning to end. As a

¹⁸ According to a Milan papyrus *P. Mil. Vogl.* 1.19 (also printed in H. Erbse’s edition (1969-88) of the Iliadic scholia—on Book 14, papyrus 9).

¹⁹ The scholium is printed in J. Nicole’s edition (1891) of the Iliadic scholia on the Geneva codex (at *Iliad* 3.1). On the scholium’s significance to the issue of book division, see Nünlist 2006.

²⁰ See van der Valk’s edition (1971:I, 9, 1. 4).

²¹ See the debate on this issue initiated by Jensen (1999).

²² So Whitman 1958:283, Goold 1960:288-91 and 1977:26-30, and Heiden 1998 and 2000.

compromise he honors the *Iliad*'s transmitted book structure, but he runs the lines from one book into the next without any break.²³

In the absence of books, book numbers, and book divisions in the Archaic and Classical periods, references to episodes in the Homeric epics are made by means of titles and descriptions. The earliest surviving example is the label "The Games for Patroclus" on an Athenian black-figure vase painting by the early sixth-century artist Sophilos (Athens National Museum 15499)²⁴ depicting a crowd of spectators attending the funeral games for Patroclus—an episode that is narrated in Book 23 of the *Iliad*. Classical authors such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle refer to episodes of the Homeric epics by means of similar titles and descriptions:

The Handing over of the Scepter (viz. to Agamemnon) (Thucydides 1.9.4)

The Catalogue of Ships (Thucydides 1.10.4; Aristotle's *Poetics* 1459a36)

The *Aristeia* ("Prowess") of Diomedes (Herodotus 2.116)

The Pitiful Affairs concerning Andromache (Aristotle's *Ion* 535b6)

The Prayers (viz. of the ambassadors to Achilles) (Plato's *Cratylus* 428c, *Hippias Minor* 364e)

The Fight at the Wall (Plato's *Ion* 539b)

Achilles Rushes against Hector (Aristotle's *Ion* 535b5-6)

The Pitiful Affairs concerning Hecuba and Priam (Aristotle's *Ion* 535b7)

The *Apologoi* ("Stories") to Alcinous (Plato's *Republic* 614b; Aristotle's *Poetics* 1455a2, *Rhetoric* 1417a13)

Odysseus among the Dead ("Plato's" *Minos* 319d)

The Foot-Washing (Aristotle's *Poetics* 1454b30, 1460a26)

How Odysseus Leaps upon the Threshold, Reveals himself to the Suitors, and Pours out his Arrows before his Feet (Aristotle's *Ion* 535b3-5)

Aelian, the third-century CE rhetorician, in his summary of the plots of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, lists several (probably ancient) titles of the episodes that compose both epics (*Varia Historia* 13.14):

The Ancients used to sing the epic tales of Homer, which had previously been divided into parts.

They called these parts, for example: "The Battle at the Ships," "The Doloneia," "The *Aristeia* of Agamemnon," "The Catalogue of Ships," "The Patrocleia," "The Ransom," "The Funeral Games for Patroclus," and "The Breaking of the Oaths." These were the titles with regard to the *Iliad*.

With regard to the other [the *Odyssey*]: "The Affairs in Pylos," "The Affairs in Sparta," "The Cave of Calypso," "The Affairs concerning the Raft," "The *Apologoi* of Alcinous," "The Cyclopeia,"

²³ See M. L. West 1998:106 and also his justification (2001:65) for printing a continuous text. Three earlier editions of Homer's epics actually adopted this practice: I. Bekker's 1858 editions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, J. van Leeuwen's 1912 edition of the *Iliad*, and V. Bérard's 1924 edition of the *Odyssey*.

²⁴ See vase image at <http://www.history.pku.edu.cn/olympics/picEN/slides/P0027.jpg.html>.

“The Nekyia,” “The Affairs of Circe,” “The Foot-Washing,” “The Slaughter of the Suitors,” “The Affairs in the Countryside,” “The Affairs in the House of Laertes.”²⁵

How, then, shall we divide up the epic performance of our Chian bard in our hypothetical transcription? It seems obvious that our divisions should reflect the breaks of the live oral performance. This raises many questions: How long did a Greek bard sing without a short break? How long without a substantial break? What factors played a part in the length of a performance (desire for thematic unity, desire for roughly equal lengths of performance, or simply the comfort, patience, and level of interest of both the bard and his audience)?

On the one hand, we may reasonably assume that our historical bardic performance will be far shorter than the entirety of our monumental inherited epic: the entire *Odyssey* (12,110 verses) would take about twenty hours to perform, much too long for one sitting, even for a very strong bard and a very patient audience. On the other hand, I suspect that, although the bard will take short breaks fairly frequently between the shorter episodes (e.g., the love-story of Ares and Aphrodite at *Odyssey* 8.266-366) to pause for a rest or for something to eat or drink, he will take much longer breaks between the larger performance units—the ones that compose the entertainment for the day—and these larger performance units will be much more substantial than our transmitted single book units. In the case of our performance of the *Odyssey*, I think they will have corresponded roughly to our inherited four-book units, each taking between three and three and a half hours to perform:

Books 1-4: The adventures of Telemachus, during which we glimpse Odysseus only through the eyes of his son, his wife, his former comrades in Troy, and the suitors in Ithaca.

Books 5-8: Odysseus’ concurrent travels from Ogygia and his stay among the Phaeacians. The description of the council of the Gods at the beginning of Book 1 is recapitulated at the beginning of Book 5, a narrative device probably intended, after a night’s intermission, to recall the previous day’s story and smoothly make the transition to the narrative to follow.

Books 9-12: Odysseus’ tales of his adventures to his Phaeacian hosts. This is a clearly demarcated unit both chronologically and narratologically. Chronologically, it disrupts the sequence of time with a flashback that takes us back ten years. Narratologically, the poet allows his main character to speak in his own voice throughout; this is a “story within the story,” told by an internal character in the first person rather than by the external narrator in the third person.

Books 13-16: Odysseus’ arrival in Ithaca and his stay in Eumaeus’ hut. This unit offers a “calm before the storm.”

Books 17-20: Odysseus’ arrival at his own home and his testing of those in his household.

Books 21-24: Odysseus’ vengeance and his reestablishment of proper order in Ithaca.

²⁵ We may add Strabo 1.2.5 for possible titles of other Iliadic episodes: “The Trial,” “The Prayers,” “The Embassy”; Strabo 1.2.11 for possible titles of other Odyssean episodes: “The Wanderings of Odysseus,” “The Arrival of Odysseus in Ithaca,” “The Massacre of the Suitors,” “The Fight in the Countryside with the Ithacans.” Lucian (*De Saltatione* 13) uses the title “The Shield” in a reference to Book 18 of the *Iliad*. Similar titles of episodes are used in the ancient hypotheses and scholia of both epics, which, though later in attestation, no doubt reflect titles at least as ancient as the Alexandrian period: in the case of the *Odyssey*, for example, “The Assembly of the Gods concerning Odysseus’ Return to Ithaca from Calypso’s Island” and “Telemachus’ Search for his Father in Pylos”; see Dindorf 1855:1-6.

In Homer's portrayal of the bard and his songs within the *Odyssey*, which is surely to some extent a self-portrayal, performances are of various types and varying lengths, ranging from short comical songs such as Demodocus' love story of Ares and Aphrodite (8.266-369) (around 10 minutes) to Menelaus' story of his return from Troy (4.332-586) (around 25 minutes) to Odysseus' story of his own return (9.14-12.453) (around 3 hours and 37 minutes). The last is particularly interesting. Odysseus, as bard, is tired after 2 hours and 25 minutes and wishes to stop (11.330-31, "now it is time for me to sleep"), but the enthusiasm of his Phaeacian audience inspires him to continue for more than another hour (11.375-76: "we could listen to your story until dawn"). Is this a reflection of a real historical performance, in which the bard tailors his song to his audience, cutting his song short if they are bored or tired but continuing longer if they are receptive and enthusiastic? Folklorists and anthropologists who do fieldwork among the singers of other oral traditions often speak of how performances are affected by the demeanor of the audience.

In the case of Homer's performance of the *Odyssey* (and the *Iliad*, too, I think), we appear to have six performance units of perhaps three to four hours apiece. This raises another interesting question: What type of social occasion would have accommodated a performance of probably six days' duration? A natural candidate would be a religious festival of some sort. Poetic contests and performances of various kinds were associated with festivals from the earliest period, and rhapsodic performances of epic were regular in some of them: the Olympian festival to Zeus, the Delian festival to Apollo, and the Pan-Ionian festival to Poseidon and Apollo. Nonetheless, I prefer to visualize the occasion of performance as the celebration of a wedding of an aristocratic couple in the case of the *Odyssey* and the observance of a funeral of an aristocratic ruler in the case of the *Iliad*. The *Iliad*, after all, is a song about war and death, and it teaches its audience how to die a noble death. Funerals are a leitmotif throughout the epic, which approaches its conclusion with a long description of the funeral games for Patroclus in Book 23 and meets its end with a description of the funeral of Hector in Book 24, with bards singing a dirge in the background (24.719-22).²⁶ The *Odyssey* teaches its audience about marriage, offering paradigms of bad ones (Agamemnon and Clytemnestra), ambiguous ones (Menelaus and Helen), and good ones (Odysseus and Penelope), and after the obstacles of several improper "marriages" between Odysseus and Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa have been overcome, the tale ends, more or less, with Odysseus and Penelope returning to their old marriage bed (23.296) while a bard provides a wedding song in the background (23.130-36).²⁷

In any case, in our transcription of the *Odyssey*, we must disregard the transmitted book divisions and instead divide the epic up into the larger units that reflect actual performance. Each

²⁶ We are reminded of Hesiod's claim that on his only journey abroad he won a tripod as the poetic victor in the funeral games of Amphidamas (*Works and Days* 654-57).

²⁷ According to an ancient tradition Homer gave his epic the *Cypria* as a dowry at his daughter's wedding (Pindar fr. 265). It may have been a practice in antiquity to offer mythical paradigms of marriage (even bad ones) at wedding festivals: so Catullus 64, a wedding song that I believe was derived ultimately from a poem by the sixth-century BCE lyric poet Stesichorus, encloses a description of the marriage of Theseus and Ariadne within a description of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, and Cleitias' painting on the famous early sixth-century BCE François Vase (<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/images/pottery/painters/keypieces/tiverios/9-p70try2-medium.jpg>), which was perhaps a wedding present, depicts these very same marriages.

of these six larger units, which individually comprise about 2000 verses, will fill a single roll of papyrus that is about twenty-five feet long (a typical length for papyrus rolls in later antiquity). Our transcription of the *Odyssey*, then, will appear as six papyrus rolls deposited together in a receptacle, perhaps a decorated urn of some kind. Not only will this division into larger units better reflect the dynamics of the original performance, but it will also allow readers of subsequent generations to detect patterns and themes in the epic that would be obfuscated by the division into smaller units of twenty-four. I have often found it enlightening myself to disregard a book division and read straight through to the next book, pausing instead at the larger thematic breaks. By such a disregard of book division I detected, for example, an elaborate ring composition in the *Odyssey* that stretched from Book 21 to 22—a characteristic Homeric *hysteron-proteron* in which the suitors are slaughtered in exactly the reverse of the order in which they earlier made trial of the bow (Reece 1995). I therefore encourage my students to read through the transmitted book divisions of the *Odyssey*, just as I encourage them, in their reading of other oral narratives, to disregard the artificial breaks imposed by textualization: verse, section, chapter, and book divisions.²⁸

In sum, if we wish to retain in our hypothetical transcription of the *Odyssey* some of the vestiges of oral performance, we must do away once and for all with the transmitted book divisions in favor of larger performance divisions.

Corrigenda and Addenda

A composition-in-performance by nature entails metrical blunders, dictional inconcinnities, factual errors, and larger narrative anomalies, for there is little opportunity to pause, to reconsider, and to correct any blemishes. The Roman poet Horace complains in his *Ars Poetica* about Homer's lapses—*indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus* ("I am annoyed whenever good Homer dozes," 359)—but as we have already noted, he seems aware of the reasons for these lapses—*nescit vox missa reverti* ("a word once spoken cannot be recalled," 390). As an audience we will be tolerant of these lapses—and in our transcription we will resist the temptation to correct any blemishes that we witness in the performance.

We will resist the temptation, for example, to correct the occasional metrical blunders by the poet, such as:²⁹

²⁸ In their reading of the New Testament Gospels, for example—another fundamentally oral narrative that has suffered all the accoutrements of textualization—I find that the most artificial, and unfortunate, chapter division occurs in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew, a unified narrative that begins at chapter 4.25 and ends at chapter 8.1. Here, as in the *Odyssey*, the ring composition that unifies and sustains the narrative is utterly obfuscated by pausing at chapter divisions. It is notable that the same Richmond Lattimore who translated the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* also published a translation (1979) of the four Gospels and Revelation without any chapter and verse divisions.

²⁹ Quotations of Homer's *Odyssey* are here, and elsewhere, from the edition of von der Mühll (2005). Von der Mühll prints these two metrically irregular verses in his text and houses the "corrections" of various textual critics in his *apparatus criticus*. Other editors, such as T. W. Allen (1917-19), have elected to print "corrected" versions of these verses in their texts.

Odyssey 7.89: ἀργύρεοι δὲ σταθμοὶ ἐν χαλκῷ ἕστασαν οὐδῶ
 “Silver doorposts stood upon the bronze threshold.”

Odyssey 13.194: τοῦνεκ' ἄρ' ἀλλοειδέα φαινέσκετο πάντα ἄνακτι
 “Therefore everything appeared unfamiliar to the master.”

We appreciate that the metrical infelicities in the inner metra of these dactylic hexameter verses (specifically, that they have too many syllables and do not scan properly) have resulted naturally and understandably from the pressure of oral composition-in-performance; they may be corrected should the poet have the opportunity and leisure to review the passages, or should the text later go through an extensive editorial process. But in our transcription of a composition-in-performance, to correct them would be to apply a literary standard upon an orally produced poem.

We will also resist the urge to tidy up those oddities that have resulted from stock formulaic phrases being used in contextually inappropriate circumstances. I am not speaking of the so-called “ornamental” epithets that may strike a modern literate audience, more concerned with *le mot juste* than their ancient illiterate counterparts, as contextually inappropriate: for instance, the rejoicing Odysseus is “much-suffering” (πολύτλας); the adulterous villain Aegisthus is “blameless” (ἀμύμων); the shameful suitors are “godlike” (ἀντίθεοι), the lowly swineherd is “chief of men” (ῥαχάμος ἀνδρῶν), and the beggar has a “queen mother” (πότνια μήτηρ). Nor do I refer to the longer formulaic phrases that appear too loosely used—at least to the modern reader—when the context is not so typical, such as the several times in the *Odyssey* when the plural form of the dative pronoun is used to designate even a single addressee of a speech: τοῖς ἄρα μύθων ἦρχε (5.202), τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε (7.47, 13.374, 17.100, 17.184, 19.103, 19.508). I am speaking rather of passages where, on the one hand, the bard seems to have somewhat more latitude in his selection of phrases, and where, on the other hand, the phrases are selected with such little consideration of the context that one can scarcely deny that, should the bard have an opportunity to summon back his words and revise them, he will readily do so. For example, at *Odyssey* 20.102-19 in response to Odysseus' prayer for an omen, Zeus thunders formulaically “from the clouds on high” (ὑψόθεν ἐκ νεφέων, 104). But only a few verses later a servant-girl emerges from the house and expresses her amazement at the peculiar nature of this event: she hears thunder when there “is no cloud anywhere” (οὐδέ ποθι νέφος ἐστί, 114). This dictional inconcinnity goes beyond the tolerable extension of ornamental epithets and stock formulaic phrases to inappropriate contexts; it is a blunder, even by the aesthetic standards of oral poetry. Passages such as these are the natural result of a composition-in-performance by a bard who has no opportunity and no desire to summon back his words or revise them—a desire lacked, perhaps more surprisingly, over hundreds of years by later editors as well.³⁰

³⁰ As Janko (1998:8) says of this passage: “Neither Homer nor his putative editor makes any use of the technology of writing to correct [this contradiction]. How remarkable that it is still in our text!” On the implications of such contradictions for the composition and transmission of our texts in general, see Gunn 1970; Janko 1990 and 1998. Of course, where some find dictional and narrative inconcinnities attributable to the pressures of oral composition-in-performance, others find clever and sophisticated devices attributable to poetic virtuosity and artistic genius; see, for example, Nagy 1999.

We will also resist the urge to correct any of the factual errors that naturally arise over the course of an epic the size of the *Odyssey* (87,765 words). These errors are not serious in the context of the larger narratives, and they probably go unnoticed by Homer's listening audience. For example, in his conversation with Penelope at *Odyssey* 17.150-65 the prophet Theoclymenus assures her that Odysseus has already returned to Ithaca and is plotting destruction for the suitors. He recalls the omen of the bird that he had earlier observed, and his prophetic interpretation to Telemachus, as he sat on the well-timbered ship (160-61). But two books earlier, when the omen actually occurred, the entire crew, including Theoclymenus and Telemachus, were explicitly said to have already disembarked and to have gathered on the shore (15.495-538). It is not surprising to find blemishes of this sort in a long orally composed epic; they are a feature of most truly oral traditions. But it is rather surprising to find that during the textual transmission of the *Odyssey* the original form is faithfully retained in spite of what are perceived even in antiquity as blemishes.³¹

And of course we will not wish—nor will we be able—to tamper with the larger narrative anomalies that inevitably occur over the course of an oral performances of an epic the size of the *Odyssey*. For example, having met up with each other in Eumaeus' hut in Ithaca, Odysseus and Telemachus plan together the slaughter of their enemies (16.186-321). In the face of daunting odds, Odysseus devises an elaborate plan to overcome the 108 suitors: after they are both in the palace, he will at the appropriate moment nod to his son, who is then to gather up all the weapons that are lying about the hall and place them in a lofty chamber; if the suitors ask what he is doing, he is to claim that he is removing the weapons from the smoke of the fire, which is befouling them, and that, moreover, their removal will prevent the suitors, drunk with wine, from using them in the event of a quarrel; further, Telemachus is to leave two swords and two spears and a pair of oxhide shields in the hall for himself and his father (16.281-98). It comes as somewhat of a disappointment that this well devised and elaborate plan is abandoned with no comment three books later (19.1-46): at Odysseus' initiative both father and son remove the weapons together, with the help of Pallas Athena; there is no surreptitious nod; the false explanation for the removal of the arms is directed at the nurse Eurycleia rather than the suitors; and no mention is made of retaining a pair of arms for father and son—an oversight that challenges them sorely in the initial stages of the combat to follow (22.100-25).³² Here the bard is simply steering the narrative in one direction, but then he changes his mind in the course of his performance. He does not take the initiative, and does not have the opportunity, to go back and correct the anomaly. Neither shall we.³³

³¹ The scholia to this passage report that these verses—in some cases 17.150-65, in other cases just 160-61—were athetized in many of the texts available to the Hellenistic editors (that is, not omitted, but simply marked with an obelus, a horizontal stroke, to express some doubt about authorship), apparently because of this narrative inconsistency.

³² I still find the most articulate summary of the problems in this passage to be that of Woodhouse (1930:158-68), though it is somewhat dated by its lack of awareness of oral theory.

³³ The discomfort of later editors with this anomaly, as attested by the athetesis by Zenodotus of 16.281-98 and the asterisks attached by Aristarchus to 19.4-12 (to signal that these verses were wrongly repeated elsewhere), has not led to the expulsion of any of these verses from the textual tradition.

The examples of inconcinnities in Homer's *Odyssey* marshaled above can be multiplied many times over in each of the four categories simply by paging through our inherited corpus of Greek epic verse.³⁴ We can also find useful comparanda of all these categories of inconcinnities, from the smallest to the largest, in many other demonstrably orally composed narratives; for they are common, perhaps necessary, features of oral composition-in-performance. For example, one may compare with great benefit Homer's *Odyssey* and Salih Ugljanin's *Captivity of Djulić Ibrahim*, a South Slavic Return Tale that resembles the *Odyssey* in many of its themes and details:³⁵ a seemingly long-dead hero attempts to return home from a military mission but confronts many obstacles to his return; meanwhile, his wife is on the verge of remarrying; he finally arrives home in disguise and goes about the task of testing his servants, friends, family members, and wife; he is identified by means of a token; the tale ends in a "remarriage," followed by the departure of the hero to fulfill an oath. I encourage all students of Homer, and of comparative oral traditions in general, to consider, in addition to these thematic similarities, the many vestiges of orality that these two epic texts have in common: namely, the inconcinnities that they share at all the various levels discussed above. Like the Homeric inconcinnities, the instances in this South Slavic return song span a wide range: unfinished or metrically faulty verses; formulaic phrases that are blatantly inappropriate to the context; factual blunders, especially involving names and characters; and larger narrative anomalies. It is this last category that provides us with a most instructive comparandum to Homer's *Odyssey*. On his return home from prison the hero Djulić confronts the warrior Milutin, who refuses to allow him to pass. Djulić promptly cuts off Milutin's head, strips him of his clothes and arms, and puts them on himself; he then continues on his journey (verses 456-508). But 250 verses later (after verse 763) the singer Salih pauses in his performance, realizing that he has made an error: if Djulić is wearing Milutin's clothes and arms, those at his home will not recognize him as a prisoner who has recently escaped. Milman Parry's assistant Nikola Vujnović asks Salih to go back and start his song again from the point of the combat with Milutin; Salih does this, correcting his error by stating emphatically that although Djulić killed Milutin, he did *not* strip him of his clothes and arms (verse 810).³⁶

In the case of Salih Ugljanin's *Captivity of Djulić Ibrahim*, the causes of this and other inconcinnities are demonstrable: they arise from the exigencies of live oral performance—on the one hand, the pressure on the singer to extemporize as he, at least at some level, composes during the very act of performance and, on the other hand, the inability of the singer to retract or correct

³⁴ On metrical irregularities, see A. Parry 1971:191-239, 266-324; on formulaic illogicalities, see Combellack 1965; on factual and narrative anomalies, see Scott 1921:137-71; Bowra 1962:44-60; Kirk 1962:211-52.

³⁵ Parry Collection number 674, sung and recorded on 24 November, 1934, at Novi Pazar; transcribed in M. Parry et al. 1953-54:II:55-74; translated, with notes, in 1953-54:I:90-113, 339-58).

³⁶ For examples of similar narrative "slips" on the part of extemporaneously composing South Slavic singers, see Lord 1938 and 1960:94-95; Gunn 1970; Foley 1990:47-48, 359-61, 373-77. If left to their own devices, the singers will often begin to set the narrative anomaly straight in as unobtrusive a way as possible as soon as they recognize it. On the other hand, sometimes a singer will not perceive the anomaly and will continue to repeat it in subsequent performances.

his song once it has left his mouth. It follows by way of analogy that the same causes are probably responsible for the inconcinnities embedded in our text of Homer's *Odyssey*.

We return now to the Homer of our transcription of the *Odyssey*, who, unlike Salih, will not be given the opportunity to go back and tidy up the loose ends of his narrative of Theoclymenus' omen in Book 17, or of Odysseus' elaborate plan to slaughter the suitors in Book 16. We will resist the urge to "improve" on Homer and will transcribe the narrative as he performs it: the fact that these inconcinnities will be retained in subsequent copies of this text through hundreds of years of transmission attests to the faithfulness of the textual tradition to this original archetype. This is a stark reminder of the dire importance of our task of transcription.

Conclusion

Well, all this is quite implausible, of course. We cannot experience a live oral performance of Homer's *Odyssey*. All we possess is a text that has been passed down exclusively in written form for at least 2,500 years and has thereby experienced many of the expectable textual accretions.

But as we read our modern text of the *Odyssey*, speedily and silently, while we sit alone under a fluorescent light in a quiet recess of our library, is it not at least salutary to keep in mind that this text was in its archetypal form a transcription of an oral performance? Would it not be pleasant occasionally to try to re-create the sounds of the words and the music accompanying them, to try to observe the bard's pauses within and between verses, to try to imagine the bard's gestures and the audience's responses? Would it not offer a more historically authentic experience to disregard book divisions altogether and instead take our breaks between larger units of performance? Would it not be enlightening to craft an *apparatus* more appropriate than our *apparatus criticus* for the study of an oral tradition—one that would record performance variants instead of textual variants; one that would identify other epic attestations of words, formulas, type-scenes, and story patterns so that we could acquire an appreciation of their epic resonance and thereby become a more learned and perceptive audience?

As I have often discovered, both to my delight and dismay, when I have thought that I have stumbled upon a new and original idea, John Foley has already anticipated me. So here too he has already begun considering the potential for such an edition of the *Odyssey* and has already started mapping out some possible innovations by actually experimenting with a short specimen of text (*Od.* 23.69-103), accompanied by interlinear and marginal notations, and weighted down not by an *apparatus criticus* but by an "*apparatus fabulosus*."³⁷ Whether or not further progress down this path toward a more ethnopoetically grounded edition of Homer's *Odyssey* (and *Iliad*) is feasible and worthwhile remains to me an open question. Perhaps simply imagining one, as we have here, is adequate for the purpose of highlighting the fundamental challenges faced by those yearning to appreciate the aesthetics of an ancient oral performance on its own terms.

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³⁷ See Foley 1999:241-62; he has mused further on some of the challenges to the creation of such an edition in Foley 2005. See also the ethnopoetically grounded edition of a South Slavic oral epic in Foley 2004, which consists of a book and an electronic edition.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Matija Murko, Wilhelm Radloff, and Oral Epic Studies

Aaron Phillip Tate

Introduction

In modern histories of folklore scholarship, when the topic concerns pioneers of oral epic fieldwork prior to Milman Parry and Albert Lord, no scholars are mentioned more often than Wilhelm Radloff and Matija Murko.¹ Though the two worked in different language families and belonged to different scholarly generations (Radloff was nearly a quarter-century older than Murko), the reasons for their influence are well known: Radloff was one of the first to collect oral epics from Turkic-speaking peoples in Russia and Siberia, doing so throughout the 1860s and 1870s, while Murko, in his time as a professor in Vienna, Graz, Leipzig, and Prague, conducted extensive fieldwork in Yugoslav lands among epic and lyric singers as early as 1909 and as late as 1932.² Today both are regarded as two of the earliest observers of oral epic to have provided substantial firsthand documentary accounts of performances they witnessed in the traditions within which they worked, and both are frequently cited in debates surrounding the role played by oral epic in the twentieth-century form of the “Homeric Question.” What has never before been recognized or discussed, however, is the fact that the two were also personal acquaintances who spent time together in St. Petersburg, Russia, during the years 1887-89. In what follows I report and translate the Slovenian-language source, written by Murko himself, that mentions the friendship in a single passage (M. Murko 1951b:70-71), and I then discuss their scholarly acquaintance in a more elaborated historical context of institutions, methodological traditions, and technologies influential (but mutating) at the time.

¹ I would like to thank Prof. E. Wayles Browne for his advice in the translation of the Slovenian passages and for comments on the article as a whole; my presentation has substantially benefited from his expertise. Tanja Perić-Polonijo and the Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku in Zagreb, Croatia, also deserve thanks for their assistance with research and fieldwork during the academic year 1999-2000. Above all I would like to acknowledge John Miles Foley for his inspiring example as both scholar and teacher, as well as for his groundbreaking contributions to the study of oral tradition. In the spirit of his work as philologist, comparativist, and historian of an emergent discipline, I offer this article to a volume celebrating his research.

² Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff was born to the family of a military officer in Berlin on January 17, 1837. He died in Russia in 1918, where he was employed as Director of the Ethnographic and Anthropological Museum, in St. Petersburg. Matija Murko was born to a family of farmers in northeastern Slovenia in 1861 and died one of the most celebrated Slavicists and comparativists of his generation, in Prague, on February 11, 1952 (Slodnjak and de Bray 1952:245).

Although Radloff did produce editions of the songs he transcribed, and though Murko did publish a small number of song transcriptions (very few in comparison to Radloff³), neither was involved in the establishment of a national epic corpus on behalf of his own ethnopolitical group—a crucial point that separates both from earlier collector-scholars such as Vuk Karadžić and Elias Lönnrot. In comparison to this earlier period of epic collection, then, both Radloff and Murko can be located at a later but still significant historical moment when the establishment of new institutions, university chairs, scholarly congresses, and academic journals had become an additional impetus for the collection and analysis of folklore. When considered from this perspective, the scholarly contributions (not to mention, friendship) of Radloff and Murko can be shown to belong to a period when European institutions were undergoing various forms of transformation and modernization, a process that took place according to different disciplinary temporalities and tempos, to be sure, but which eventually gave way to an institutional landscape, and an ensemble of methodological concerns, that more closely resemble those of the post-World War II period.⁴ What is especially striking about Murko's autobiographical remembrance is the fact that every single person mentioned in it by name was intimately involved in one way or another, though in different cultural domains, with this particular period of methodological, institutional, and technological change. I return to this point, with expanded comments, in the second half of the paper and in the conclusion.

Radloff and Murko in the Field

Though research on folk epic constituted only a portion of both Radloff and Murko's scholarly corpora, their reputations with folklorists today derive to a significant degree from the emphasis placed by both on rigorously collected fieldwork, an emphasis one does not typically find in the work of their contemporaries.⁵ Outside of each's own discipline, their reports made a significant impact on Milman Parry, as has been discussed and documented on several occasions.⁶ John Miles Foley (1990:72-130), for example, included translations of seminal writings by Radloff (1990) and Murko (1990) in a group of articles devoted to early scholarship

³ Unlike Radloff, who prepared many volumes of epic, lyric, and folk narrative, Murko's published transcriptions were few. One group of them can be found in the second volume of *Tragom* (1951a:879-901).

⁴ I would like here to acknowledge the works by Regina Bendix addressing "disciplinary history" (1998; 1999; 2002), which are very much in the background of my discussion of Radloff in what follows, as well as Konrad Köstlin's work (1997) on the history of folklore in relation to the fragmentation and changes to the lifeworld effected by modernity.

⁵ Foley writes (1988:14): "Of the ethnographers who reported on living oral traditions, the most dependable in Parry's own opinion were Radloff on the Kirghiz and Gerhard Gesemann and Matija Murko on South Slavic."

⁶ Parry mentions both scholars in the same footnote on more than one occasion and cites Murko frequently. As is well known, Parry and Murko met in Paris in 1928 at the time of Murko's lectures and Parry's *soutenance*. Parry also writes in the foreword to his unfinished and only partially published work, *Ćor Huso*, that "it was the writings of Professor Murko more than those of any other which in the following years led me to the study of oral poetry in itself and to the heroic poems of the South Slavs" (1987:439). For more on Murko and Parry, see also Foley 1988:19-56, Buturović 1992:162-262, and Dukić 1995:55-57.

on oral epics. Lauri Honko (1998:177-79), in his monumental textual ethnography *Textualising the Siri Epic*, paid tribute to Radloff's rigor by giving an incisive evaluation of Radloff's transcription methods. In a more recent book on Altay oral epic, Lauri Harvilahti (2003) concluded his chapter on Altaic oral epic performance by citing passages from Radloff, one of which included Radloff's observation that "the experienced singer is able to sing for a day, a week, a month, just as he is able to speak and talk all this time" (39).

Radloff's description, Harvilahti suggests, with its emphasis on the linguistic competence by which a singer (re)composes in the epic register rather than reciting fixed, fossilized texts, agrees with much of the best work on oral epic available at the end of the twentieth century. Drawing on Albert Lord's insights, for example, Foley has long argued that something similar is true for the South Slavic epic singers whom he has studied in the field and in the Parry archive (or the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature, hereafter the MPCOL), namely, that fluency in South Slavic epic singing is the result of linguistic and artistic competence within a performance register made possible by traditional prosodological rules and networks of traditional and musical referentiality, rather than the outcome of mechanical memorization or superficial techniques of improvisation (1996, 2000, and 2005). Harvilahti closes his chapter, furthermore, by showing that Radloff's account of the acquisition, training, and mastery of Turkic epic singing agrees in many general parameters with Boris Vladimircov's description of Mongolian epic singing,⁷ with Albert Lord's account of South Slavic epic singers, and with the Altaic epic singers whom Harvilahti discusses in the same book. That we are in a position today to find so many similarities regarding the training, composition, and performance of Turkic, South Slavic, Mongolian, and Altaic oral epic singers—that is to say, the similarities in their actual *techniques* of performance, interpreted without romantic hypotheses or mystification—is a testament not only to Radloff's industry and achievements but to subsequent researchers who pushed Radloff's pioneering work on documentation and compositional process in newer, fresher, and less idealistic directions.

Matija Murko was one such researcher who became an integral, albeit slightly later, force in these developments, thanks in large part to a methodology that privileged fieldwork and attention to performance variation over fantasies of folk primitivism or romantic models of folksong production (à la the earlier period of post-Ossian and Herderian enthusiasms). Like Radloff, Murko contributed significantly to the study of folk epic in Europe and influenced every generation of Slavic scholars who came after him, including ethnologists. He was the first, for example, to investigate multiple openings⁸ of the same song from the same singer, in fieldwork conducted from 1909 to 1913 in order to test for fixity and variation in song openings or

⁷ Though Harvilahti does not give the citation, Vladimircov's description of the Mongolian epic singing language, including discussion of its dialectal admixtures and occasions of use, is a valuable account that deserves to be more widely known (1983-84:5-58). Harvilahti's comment is as follows: "The core of Vladimircov's description of Oyrat singers and the one given by V. Radloff of the Kirghiz singers basically resembles A. B. Lord's account of the Southern Slav epic 'oral formulaic' learning process" (2003:40).

⁸ The opening verses of many Serbo-Croatian epics are often flexible, malleable, and even detachable, used primarily to prepare the audience for the upcoming tale. See M. Murko 1912, 1913, 1915a, 1915b; Foley 1991:68-75; Böttcher Sherman and Davis 1990; and Pantzer 1959.

“foresongs” (*pripjevi* in Serbo-Croatian), the results of which he documented in four fieldwork reports published in German in Vienna in 1912, 1913, and 1915.⁹

We can be sure that the contents of these articles were known to Parry, too, since all four were mentioned on the seventh page of a text that Parry knew well and quoted from often: Murko’s Sorbonne lectures, which were published in 1929 (M. Murko 1929, 1990). By my count, beginning in 1932, Parry refers to Murko’s lectures at least eight times in print (1987:330-31, 334-36, 347, 361, 439-40, 458), so it is unthinkable that Parry did not know Murko’s attempts, struggles, and solutions in field recording as recounted explicitly within them. Murko’s same four reports were also discussed at length in another of Murko’s articles, “Neues über südslavische Volksepik,” published in 1919, which Parry also cited (1987:336). In other words, what we have here is evidence that Matija Murko’s experiences and methodologies when recording singers directly informed Parry’s later recording,¹⁰ which itself pushed forward in innovative directions and found ways to solve technological problems—the result of which became the clear, permanent, and auditory documentation of vast amounts of Balkan Slavic epic singing available today in the MPCOL archive.

In all of his early fieldwork-based articles, Murko explains in detail why he did not manage to record complete oral epics. For one thing, the technology to do so did not yet exist. As a result, he tells us, he decided to focus specifically on aspects that he could, in fact, observe and document with his recording apparatus: (1) the manner of epic recitation, (2) the syllabic structure of the verse form, (3) the sung rhythm and its relation to word accent, and (4) the dialectal admixtures constituting the epic language (1913:2). Parry, however, as is now well known, asked a company from Connecticut, after his first field trip to Yugoslavia in 1933, to modify two record players so that he could record continuously from one phonograph to the other without pause, by using a mechanical toggle switch (Mitchell and Nagy 2000:x). Parry was thus able to collect and record without interruption, for the first time in the history of musicology or folklore research, entire oral epics. Murko’s last field expedition to Yugoslavia ended the year before Parry began his. Though Murko never entirely managed to perfect a two-device technique,¹¹ he did find limited success recording singers using two devices in relay and succeeded in making more than four hundred separate recordings on cylinders and records.¹²

Murko also went to great lengths to combat the mystification and romanticization of oral and folk epic, a necessary task in his day (as in ours), since oral epic had already become by his

⁹ See M. Murko 1912, 1913, 1915a, 1915b.

¹⁰ In Livno, Croatia, in 2000, I had the opportunity to interview a gentleman who had been present when Parry and Lord recorded in his village of Livno in 1934. After gathering further information from local scholars, I communicated the findings in Tate 2010.

¹¹ Murko did try to use two machines to continuously record during his 1930-32 fieldwork but often lacked electricity or other necessities. He discusses the matter in the *Tragom* volume (1951a:23-27), as does his son Vladimir, who accompanied his father for six months during the 1930-32 field expeditions, in a retrospective article addressing his father’s *Nachlass* (V. Murko 1963).

¹² See M. Murko 1951a:23-27; V. Murko 1963:112-19; Bošković-Stulli 1966.

time a fashionable topic of debate throughout Europe and in Homeric philology as well¹³—a debate rarely based, in the case of Homeric scholars, on fieldwork, much less on fieldwork conducted by the same Homeric scholar referring to that fieldwork. (Parry seems to have been one of the first Homerists to take the steps necessary to experience oral epic singing for himself.) Murko had already treated the influence of German Romanticism on Czech literary thought in his 1897 study, *Deutsche Einflüsse auf die Anfänge der slavischen Romantik: I. Die böhmische Romantik*, written on Goethe's interest in Serbo-Croatian literature (1899), and published a learned review of Milan Čurčin's book, *Die serbokroatische Volkspoesie in der deutschen Literatur* (1906); he was therefore thoroughly apprised of the pitfalls stemming from a romantic conception of folklore and was not afraid to criticize them. In 1908, at the *Internationaler Kongress für historische Wissenschaften* in Berlin, and still a year before he would depart for fieldwork, Murko devoted his Berlin conference presentation to a discussion of the folk epics of that tradition—the first ever congress report or scholarly article in Europe, in any language, to discuss the Bosnian Muslim epic tradition. During the talk, Murko described how reading Croatian scholar Luka Marjanović's preface to the third volume of the seminal anthology *Hrvatske narodne pjesme* (*Croatian Folk Songs*) had helped him to jettison residual romantic hypotheses from his own thinking about folk epic (M. Murko 1909; cf. Dukić 1995:52). Murko's lecture at the *Kongress* was so well received that he decided to organize and plan his first-ever field expedition to Bosnia and Croatia for the next summer, in 1909 (1919:276-78).

As these considerations demonstrate and subsequent scholarship has emphasized, the defining feature of Matija Murko's work on oral epic—whether addressing ethnological, lexicological, linguistic, literary-historical, or performative aspects of South Slavic expressive culture (Dukić 1995; Žele 2003)—was fidelity to the phenomenon of living transmission and performance, whether in the field, on recordings, in printed texts, or in accounts given by previous scholars. This is one of the many reasons why his writings remain essential to the study of Balkan epic today. Unfortunately, the majority of Murko's publications, including his classic two-volume study from 1951, *Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike* (*On the Track of the Serbo-Croatian Folk Epic*), have not been translated into English.

In light of Radloff and Murko's mutual and widespread influence, then, it may come as a surprise to learn that no mention has ever been made of the fact that the two scholars were not only personally acquainted but spent time together in St. Petersburg in 1887-89 during Murko's postdoctoral years in Russia.¹⁴ Murko draws a vivid account of one of their meetings in his memoir, a book first published in 1949 in Czech (as *Paměti*), translated into Slovenian in 1951

¹³ Foley covers all of this ground in *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (1988:1-18). On Homeric philology and the Homeric Question, Luigi Ferreri's recent study (2007) documents the era from the late Renaissance to F. A. Wolf. Simonsuuri's study of the debates occurring during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1979) is also important.

¹⁴ According to Denana Buturović, this was the period when Murko developed his interest in folk poetry and ethnography. Murko studied under the eminent Russian folklorist A. N. Veselovski while in Moscow and, according to Buturović, also read the works of Hilferding and Radloff while there (Buturović 1992:106). It is worth noting that Buturović, whose bibliographical knowledge is encyclopedic, fails to mention the acquaintance of Murko and Radloff.

(by his son Vladimir, as *Spomini*), but never published or translated again.¹⁵ While Murko's memoirs deserve to be read by anyone with an interest in the intellectual history of Central Europe during the first half of the twentieth century—Murko's plight during the Nazi occupation of Prague and relations with Gerhard Gesemann¹⁶ are of considerable interest, to say the least—the passage from his memoirs relevant for our discussion is the one in which Murko depicts spending time in the late 1880s at a salon in St. Petersburg kept by none other than the daughter of Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff.

Radloff and Murko in the Salon, St. Petersburg, Russia

At the time of Murko and Radloff's acquaintance in the late 1880s, Radloff was an accomplished scholar who had lived, traveled, and researched widely among Turkic tribes in Central Asia and Siberia. He had recently become a member of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences, having been inducted in 1884, and had also published widely on a number of issues in Turkic philology and linguistics, including a recent two-volume account of his travels and research, *Aus Siberien: lose Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines reisenden Linguisten* (*Out of Siberia: Loose Pages from the Journal of a Traveling Linguist*), in 1884; his six-volume collection of folk epics and other Turkic folklore, *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme*, with its celebrated comparison of Turkic singers to Homeric rhapsodes, had appeared a year later in 1885. Murko's account is notable, as we will see, not only for its praise of Radloff's scholarly accomplishments but for a brief and suggestive portrait of Radloff's family life and linguistic habits—a discussion that leads, somewhat surprisingly, to a digression unrelated to Radloff in which Murko recalls a particularly humorous, and according to him insightful, linguistic lesson that he himself learned in the course of committing a minor gaffe in spoken Russian one evening at Radloff's daughter's salon. This lesson, it turns out, led Murko to conceive of an entirely new linguistic tool, the “differential dictionary,” which is still used by dialect researchers and other linguists today (see M. Murko 1951b:70-71).

In the fourth chapter of his 1949 memoir, *Spomini*, Murko recalls his student days in Russia. When describing the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, he gives a brief history of the institution from its founding in 1724 by Peter the Great down to the time of his stay there in the late 1880s. Murko mentions the presence of German scholars at the Academy whose crowning achievement in years prior had been the St. Petersburg Sanskrit-German dictionary (the famous *Petersburger Wörterbuch*), published from 1852 to 1875 under the direction of Otto von Böhtlingk and Rudolph von Roth. The passage, which I translate from the Slovenian text in its entirety but with my own intervening commentary added, begins as follows. Murko has just finished describing certain German scholars at the Academy who despite their residency in St. Petersburg had never managed to learn enough spoken Russian “to hail a taxi” (1951b:70). Murko then turns to a description of Radloff as evidence of the opposite,

¹⁵ See Murko 1951b:70-71. I have based what follows (including my translation) on the Slovenian text.

¹⁶ Klaas-Hinrich Ehlers has drawn attention to Gesemann's relationship to National Socialism. See first Měštan 2001, but also Ehlers 1998 and 2001 for further details.

namely, of a German scholar whose family had adapted comfortably to life abroad. Murko writes (71):

Najbolje sem opazoval naglo porusenje na otrocih znamenitega turkologa Friedricha Wilhelma Radloffa. Ta zaslužni učenjak in njegova žena sta bila po rodu iz Berlina; mnogo sta skupaj potovala k različnim turškotatarskim plemenom po vsej ruski državi kjer ženske še nikdar niso videle evropske damske obleke, tako da jim je morala gospa svetnikova Radloffova pokazati svoje. Po tej poti je zbiral Friedrich Wilhelm (Vasilij Vasiljevič) Radloff svoje narodopisno, jezikoslovno in besedno gradivo ter izdal "*Versuch eines Wörterbuchs der Türk-Dialekte*" (Petrograd 1888 to 1892).

I particularly noticed the rapid Russification in the case of the children of the famous Turkologist Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff. The accomplished scholar and his wife were both by birth from Berlin; the two of them together traveled widely among various Turko-Tatar tribes and throughout the whole Russian state, in places where women had never seen European ladies' dresses—with the result that Mrs. Radloff had to show them hers. On these sojourns, Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff (Vasilij Vasiljevič) collected ethnographic [*narodopisno*], linguistic [*jezikoslovno*], and lexical materials [*besedno gradivo*], and published his *Versuch eines Wörterbuchs der Türk-Dialekte* (Petrograd 1888 to 1892).

Here we see Murko, the young scholar studying abroad in St. Petersburg, demonstrating a familiarity with Radloff's work. And that is precisely what one would expect, given the fact that "linguistic" (*jezikoslovno*) and "lexical" (*besedno*) topics were Murko's focus at the time as well, and would remain so throughout his life. Particularly noteworthy, and again not surprising, is Murko's mention of Radloff's work on "ethnographic" (*narodopisno*) materials. It is this attention to ethnographic detail that later characterized Murko's own approach to the study of oral epic; Đenana Buturović, a Bosnian scholar of Muslim oral epic, has even gone so far as to call Murko the "founder of systematic fieldwork research on the traditional oral epic of the South Slavic peoples" ("utemeljivač je sistematskih terenskoistraživačkih proučavanja usmene tradicionalne epike jugoslavenskih naroda" [1992:105]), and she furthermore records that Murko's paper at the aforementioned international congress in Berlin in 1908 was the first in Europe to focus exclusively on the Muslim epics of Bosnia (1992:107). Decades later, of course, as the result of Parry and Lord's collecting expeditions and writings, the Bosnian Muslim epic tradition would become a crucial comparand for the study of international oral epic, both ancient and modern. What we find here, however, is a glimpse of the young postdoctoral student, Murko, in the late 1880s, recounting the achievements of the esteemed scholar of Turkic epics, Wilhelm Radloff, whose methods and insights would later become hallmarks of Murko's later scholarly work as well.

But let us return to the passage itself. As we saw, Murko has just made reference to the dictionary, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialekte*, which was one of many major works that Radloff published during these years. Radloff had begun collecting the material for the dictionary while working as a German and Latin instructor at a mining college in Barnaul (*Barnaul'skoe Vysšee Gornoe učilišče*) in 1859 and had waited 29 years until the publication of

the first fascicle. It would take until 1911 for the entire dictionary, in four volumes of six fascicles each, to be completed (Temir 1955:61). In the sentences immediately following those just quoted, Murko continues his portrayal of Radloff, though this time through the lens of Radloff's daughters (M. Murko 1951b:71):

Dasi so v njegovi družini govorili nemški, je bila zlasti mlajša hči povsem porusena tudi po svojem duhu, tako da se ni razlikovala od svojih ruskih tovarišic. Starejša hči se je omožila z nekim Škotom, in tako je imel akademik Radloff priložnost, študirati jezikovni razvoj svojega vnuka ali vnukinje v nemščini, angleščini in ruščini.

Although Radloff spoke German with his family at home, the younger daughter in particular was so completely Russified, even in her mentality, that she was indistinguishable from her Russian playmates. The older daughter married a Scottish man, and so Academician Radloff had the opportunity to study the linguistic development of his grandson or granddaughter in German, English, and Russian.

According to Ahmet Temir, author of the best survey of Radloff's life and work that we have, "the available sources do not tell us much about Radloff's private life" ("Über sein Privatleben, berichten die Quelle nicht viel." [1955:64]). Temir laments the lack, and adds that "about Radloff's family life, I have learned through a communication from Nicholas Poppe of the University of Washington that Mrs. Radloff moved back to Berlin after her husband's death and died there at an advanced age, while her only son Alexander later died in Paris from stomach cancer" ("Über sein Familienleben habe ich durch eine Mitteilung von Prof. Nikolaus Poppe Universität Washington erfahren, daß Frau Radloff nach dem Tode ihres Mannes nach Berlin übergesiedelt und dort in hohem Alter gestorben ist, während ihr einziger Sohn Alexander später in Paris an Magenkrebs starb" [64]). In light of this paucity of biographical information, Murko's portrait becomes still more significant for Radloff scholarship. As for how many times Radloff and Murko may have met, and the extent to which Radloff may have influenced Murko in matters of detail, we will likely never know. But implicit in the passage is more than a passing familiarity with Radloff, since we find not only the obligatory citation of Radloff's monumental scholarly works, with its explicit mention of ethnographic and ethnological focus, but also the suggestion of an intimacy, and a degree of familiarity, with the linguistic habits of the Radloff family.

What Murko recounts from the rest of the evening in the same passage bears less on the friendship with Radloff than on a particularly significant episode in Murko's own linguistic understanding, which seems to have been memorably awakened that evening (M. Murko 1951b:71):

Po nedolgem bivanju v Petrogradu me je ob prvem obisku Radloff uvedel v salon svoje hčere, kjer bodo bojda tudi ruske dame, da bom mogel pokazati svoj napredek v ruščini. Trudil sem se pošteno, toda hipoma sem opazil čudne poglede in smehljaje mladih dam. Takoj sem zaklical: "Prosim, kaj ni 'salonfähig'?" (kaj ni primerno za salon), nakar sem dobil pouk da je to bila moja

pohvala ruskega petroleja, o katerem sem se izrazil: “Vaš kerosin ne vonjajet”; ruska beseda vonj (češki *vůně*) namreč pomeni takšen smrad, o katerem se v družbi ne govori.

After a brief stay in St. Petersburg, during my first visit there, Radloff took me to his daughter’s salon, where, allegedly, Russian ladies were to be in attendance, in order that I might demonstrate my progress in Russian. Though I gave it my best effort, I immediately noticed strange looks and smiles among the young ladies. And so immediately I burst out with the question, “Excuse me, but what have I said that was not *salonfähig*?” (“suitable for the salon”),¹⁷ after which I received the instruction that it had been my praise of Russian kerosene, about which I had said “Your kerosene does not stink,” that had provoked their reaction—the Russian word *vonj* (or *vůně* in Czech), means “such a stink,” about which one does not speak in social company.

In one continuous passage Murko has moved from a description of Radloff to the memory of a linguistic misunderstanding. Most interesting is the way in which Murko treats the memory of the embarrassing moment not as a passing reminiscence but as an opportunity to recall how his confusion led to a reflection on lexicographic approaches to the modern Slavic languages. As he explains, the episode constituted a kind of epiphany, one that led him to imagine a new lexical tool. Murko first recounts the dimensions of his linguistic error-epiphany, and the reasons for it, before going on to tell how, spurred by the experience, he arrived at the concept of the “differential dictionary.” First, the error (taking up Murko’s text exactly where the previous quote ended):

V vsakem slovanskem jeziku je mnogo takšnih nevarnih besed, tako n. pr. pomeni v ruščini pozor sramoto, nesramnost, a ponos (srbskohrvatski, n. pr. Bosna ponosna) pomeni v ruščini drisko, diarrhoea. Tudi svojo mlado rusko gospodinjo sem pred kuharico spravil v zadrego, da je zardela, ko sem se pritoževal, da ne morem “privyknut k vašemu ruskomu životu” (privaditi se vašega ruskega življenja). Tudi pri Rusih pomeni v cerkvenih knjigah in pesmih “život” isto, kar v drugih slovanskih jezikih, toda v današnji ruščini ima pomen “trebuh,” medtem ko je za češko “život” (naša “življenje”) običajna beseda “žiznj.”

In every Slavic language there are many such dangerous words; thus for example *pozor*, which is “attention” in Slovenian, means “shame” or “shamelessness” in Russian, while *ponos* means “pride” in Serbo-Croatian, but means “diarrhea” (*drisko*, *diarrhoea*) in Russian. I also embarrassed my young Russian landlady in front of her cook, with the result that she turned red when I complained, “I cannot get accustomed to your Russian belly (*život*).” (In Russian, *privyknut k vašemu ruskomu životu*, intending to say “your Russian life.”) Among Russians, *život* in church books and poems means the same as in other Slavic languages, namely, “life,” or “way of life.” But in contemporary Russian it only has the meaning “belly.” In Czech, *život*, and in Slovenian, *življenje*, is equivalent to the everyday Russian word *žiznj*.

¹⁷ In the Slovenian text, Murko employs the German word *salonfähig* at this juncture, which suggests that he used German, the mother tongue of many of those in the conversation, in order to clarify the blunder that he had committed in Russian.

Murko continues (71-72):

Te napake, ki sem jo zagrešil, ko je bil Jagić še v Petrogradu, nisem skrival, tako da je prav zaslovela in so jo spravljali v zvezo z raznimi osebami; pripovedovalo se je n. pr., da sem to rekel grofici Uvarovi. Takšne skušnje so me navajale, da sem pozneje pogosto predlagal večje ali manjše diferenčne slovarje slovanskih jezikov, v katerih bi se posvečala posebna pozornost enakim besedam ali besedam z enakim korenem, toda različnega pomena.

I did not hide the mistake, which I had made when Jagić was still in St. Petersburg, with the result that my error became rather well known, so much so that people came to connect the story of my blunder with various other people; it was told, for example, that I had said it to Countess Uvarova. Such experiences led me, later, frequently to suggest bigger or smaller differential dictionaries of Slavic languages, in which special attention would be devoted to identical words or words with the same root but different meanings.

With these remarks Murko concludes his only mention of Radloff in the memoir. The recollection is mildly playful and self-effacing: not only did Murko confuse his Slavic vernaculars at Radloff's daughter's salon, he tells us, but he also embarrassed his Russian landlady and himself. After Murko had reported the incident to Vatroslav Jagić, the anecdote apparently spread through scholarly circles, eventually coming to be retold as if Murko had uttered the embarrassing phrase not to his housekeeper or landlord but to Countess Uvarova, a leading Russian archeologist at the time (on whom more below). Vatroslav Jagić, the eminent Slavic scholar and one of Murko's most important teachers (after Franz Miklosich, with whom Murko had just completed a dissertation in 1886 on Slavic enclitics), must have enjoyed the anecdote since there is the hint that it was Jagić himself who had repeated it to colleagues, which no doubt added to Murko's embarrassment—after all, it had been Jagić, one of the most preeminent Slavic linguists of the period, who had invited Murko, along with František Pastrnek, to Russia in September of 1887.¹⁸ Today there are indeed "differential" dictionaries of the Slavic languages, that is, dictionaries listing words that share the same linguistic root but have divergent meanings across the languages of the Slavic family. Murko's experience at Radloff's daughter's salon would appear to belong to the earliest period in the development of this particular linguistic tool.

Institutional Contexts, Scholarly Networks, and Radloff's Fieldwork

From today's perspective, the account of Murko and Radloff's acquaintance may appear to be little more than a neglected anecdote from the history of nineteenth-century scholarship.

¹⁸ See M. Murko 1951b:64. Jagić had taught in St. Petersburg since 1880 but returned to Vienna in 1886. He still made visits to St. Petersburg, which is why Murko mentioned that "Jagić was still in Petersburg" at the time of the episode. For his part, Pastrnek produced important bibliographical studies on the history of Slavic linguistics (1892, 1923). Jagić 1876 and 1948 represent that scholar's works that are important for the study of oral epic.

But in reality, Murko's report can help us to revisit certain methodological developments, personal associations, and historical transformations that influenced folklore studies in the last decades of the nineteenth century and beyond; at the very least, a brief reconstruction of the anecdote's context and historicity can add to what we already know about late nineteenth-century international research networks and their relation to oral epic studies. The simultaneous appearance in the same autobiographical passage of Otto von Böthlingk, Rudolph von Roth, Vatroslav Jagić, Countess Uvarova, and Wilhelm Radloff is already a clear indication of the international character of Murko's milieu, though an account of the histories and institutional affiliations of each of these scholars would require more space than we have here. For the sake of brevity, then, let me sketch briefly the career of Wilhelm Radloff in a way that shows how his fieldwork goals were irrevocably bound to the institutions that provided geographical and cultural access to those goals, and allow me to tell the story in a way that shows how Radloff's successes and achievements helped to expand the understanding of oral epic as well as the institutions in which it could be studied. First, however, we will need to begin with a brief detour through the influence of Radloff's teacher, the linguist Franz Bopp, in order to open the frame, historically, for grasping Radloff's context in relation to three trends: the development of comparative-historical linguistics, the interest in collecting folk poetry, and the history of oriental studies.

In 1816, at the age of twenty-five, Franz Bopp published the first fruits of his early years of intensive linguistic research, the famous *Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprachen* (*On the Conjugation System of Sanskrit in Comparison with that of Greek, Latin, Persian and Germanic*). As is well known, this book effectively laid the groundwork for the comparative-historical linguistic study of the Indo-European languages (Zeil 1994:31-154; Bausinger 1968:9-37; Bendix 1997:27-118). What is not always acknowledged, however, is the fact that Bopp's comparative-historical method also influenced, both directly and indirectly, the collection and interpretation of oral poetry as well, since students and scholars taught or influenced by him needed archaic linguistic forms (for example, phonological, morphological, and lexical examples) in order to do the historical linguistic comparison and reconstruction that was at the heart of the method; and of course many of those forms were thought to be preserved in fossilized form in orally transmitted epic and lyric.

There is no clearer example of this impulse and procedure than the career of Wilhelm Radloff, whose intellectual development was indelibly altered by his studies with Franz Bopp. According to Ahmet Temir (who to date has written the closest thing to Radloff's biography that we have¹⁹), it was Bopp's success as a comparative linguist that motivated Radloff to reject comparative Indo-European philology in order to strike out on his own with Turkic language research, that is to say, in order to try his hand at work on linguistic documentation and reconstruction within lesser known language areas—in Radloff's case, the languages of Central Asia and Siberia (Temir 1955:52-55). While still a student, and before deciding upon the subject

¹⁹ Denis Sinor has also provided a brief discussion (1967); what follows is my own presentation of Radloff's biography based on Temir, Sinor, and the chronologies and information given in Radloff's own publications.

of his further graduate studies, Radloff attended the lectures of Bopp, as well as those of Pott and Steinthal (both also linguists: Pott an Indo-Europeanist, Steinthal a comparativist in the mold of von Humboldt), but also studied Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Manchu, Mongolian, Persian, and Russian. According to Temir, Radloff had hoped to do for the Turkic languages what Bopp had already accomplished for the comparative study of Indo-European languages, namely, to use linguistic reconstruction and synchronic comparison to establish branches, classifications and sub-classifications, grammars, phonologies, dictionaries, and the like. The concrete example provided by Bopp's successes in linguistic comparison were thus influential not only for leading Radloff to Turkic language research but to the domain where so many of the important specimens of that archaic language could be found: oral epics. It was also during these student days that Radloff read Otto von Böttlingk's *Über die Sprache der Jakuten (On the Language of the Yakuts)*, which had appeared in 1851 (Temir 1955:54)—the same Böttlingk whom Murko mentions as an editor of the St. Petersburg Sanskrit-German dictionary in the passage of the autobiography describing Radloff (1951b:69-70).

Radloff finished his undergraduate studies in Berlin in 1854. He went next to Jena for doctoral work, and completed a dissertation in 1858 on the role of religion in folk belief. He then departed for St. Petersburg, where the Faculty of Oriental Languages had been recently established (in 1854), so that he could pursue work on Turkic languages and lexicography. Without a doctorate from a Russian institution, Radloff was unable to lecture in Russia and so was forced to seek other means of support for his research on Turkic languages. Hence, in May of 1859, only one year after beginning his postdoctoral studies in St. Petersburg, he moved to Barnaul, Russia, to take a job as an instructor of German and Latin at a mining school, a position that enabled him to travel throughout Turkic-speaking regions collecting material (epic, lyric, and prose tales) from Turkic language communities, exactly as Murko describes in the passage above. From 1859 to 1871, Radloff spent every summer but one doing fieldwork, documenting languages, observing singers, collecting songs, and notating the linguistic practices of the Turkic-language communities he visited. These expeditions furnished the materials that would appear in the multi-volume collection of folk items known as *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme*, published in 1885, where hundreds of songs and tales became textualized and available to the public for the first time, and where the now-famous comparison of Turkic singers to Homeric rhapsodes also appeared within a preface to volume five (Böttcher Sherman and Davis 1990:73-90). In addition to these volumes, during the same period Radloff also published his enormous two-volume work documenting his travels from these years, *Aus Siberien: lose Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines reisenden Linguisten*, which came out in 1884.

After a decade in Barnaul, Radloff accepted a promotion to Kazan as Inspector of Turkic Schools for the region. He held the position from 1872 to 1883, and during that time continued to travel, research, and write. Finally in 1884, the year in which *Aus Siberien* appeared and *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme* was being prepared for publication, Radloff's scholarly achievements earned him membership into the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences, a momentous opportunity that now guaranteed him the time and institutional support to work more freely. As a result, Radloff gave up his administrative position in Kazan and moved to St. Petersburg, where he was able to devote himself entirely to research and publication as a member of the Academy. It was precisely during this period, between 1887 and 1889, that Murko's

episode in the salon with Radloff took place. After ten more years of study and publication, Radloff became Director of the Imperial Academy's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in 1894, a position he held until his death in the tumultuous year of 1918. During these later years, Radloff remained productive, publishing a remarkable number of works and making important trips to study Old Turkic inscriptions in the Orkhon Valley of Mongolia in 1891 and to Turfan in 1898.

What this brief survey of Radloff's career makes clear is that his institutional affiliations were chosen first to allow access to fieldwork—fieldwork that helped him produce several *magna opera* of scholarship—but that these same achievements in turn made possible his entrance into and acceptance within institutions to which he did not earlier have access. During all of these periods, but especially after he returned to St. Petersburg as a researcher with a number of monumental publications to his credit, Radloff joined the international community of scholars whom Murko so vividly describes in his autobiography. This community, and the institutions in which they worked, eventually became venues where significant amounts of late nineteenth-century analysis of folklore and oral epic took place.

The scholarly community was not composed exclusively of linguists and ethnologists, however, since there were other analytic desiderata that motivated humanistic research at the time, including the competitive urge felt by many Russian scholars to vie with Germany and France for supremacy in the study of the "Orient." Oriental studies and the institutions devoted to them began later in Russia than in England, France, and Germany. For this reason, when the argument for a Russian oriental program was finally made, and made explicitly in writing, the belatedness of the argument meant that it needed to appeal not only to scientific goals of knowledge acquisition but to two additional tasks: competing with European universities and improving Russia's knowledge of its own non-Slavic languages and peoples. It is in this connection that one of the people mentioned in Murko's anecdote, Countess Uvarova, leads us back to Radloff, as well as to the institutions in which Radloff worked. A brief note of historical explanation regarding Uvarova's personal history will provide the necessary context and clarification.

In 1810 the aristocrat and classical scholar Sergei Uvarov, who was the godchild of Catherine the Great and on collegial terms with German intellectuals, wrote what has been called "perhaps the most politically and culturally eloquent expression of Russia's urge to take the East under scrutiny" (Layton 1994:76-77; cf. Whittaker 1984:19-29). Uvarov's document, entitled "Projet d'une Académie Asiatique" and published in the *Herald of Europe* in 1811, effectively established Russia's arrival in the field of Asian language research (Ouvoroff 1845). In it Uvarov expressed his discomfort with the notion that the "renaissance of oriental studies" seemed to be passing Russia by, and so responded by forcefully arguing that Russia devote itself intellectually and financially to the study of the languages of the empire hitherto neglected (Layton 1994:76-77). The essay won praise from many quarters, including from Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, Friedrich Maier, Langlès, and Napoleon (Whittaker 1984:23, with bibliography). Making the connection between British policy in India, the study of Sanskrit in Paris, and the new Russian plans for research, the great historian of oriental studies, Raymond Schwab, writes, regarding Uvarov's activities (1984:450):

Looking naturally to Asian languages, she [Russia] was at first particularly interested in those that served commercial or political interests. The fire of curiosity that the Calcutta Society [in India] sparked touched her at an early date: in 1810 and 1818 we see Uvarov, rector of the University of Saint Petersburg and later a government minister, planning an Asiatic Academy and inaugurating the instruction of oriental languages, with preferential attention to Sanskrit. It was the decade in which the first chair of Sanskrit was created for Chézy in Paris.²⁰

For these and other efforts, Sergei Uvarov was inducted into the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1811, and made president of it in 1818; he would later serve as Minister of Education from 1833-49, as Schwab mentions. Uvarov's son, Aleksey, would co-found the Russian Archaeological Society and the State Historical Museum in Moscow in 1864, effectively becoming one of Russia's earliest archeologists. In 1858 Aleksey Uvarov married Praskovia Sergeevna Scherbatova, a young woman of noble birth. When Aleksey died in 1884, Praskovia Uvarova became the chairperson of the Moscow Archaeological Society in her husband's place, a post she served with aplomb, pioneering archeological work in the Caucasus and elsewhere for decades. Countess Uvarova was inducted into the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1895, and thus was a colleague and contemporary of Radloff, as Murko described. She held other positions in Tartu and St. Petersburg as well, until the 1917 revolution, after which she spent her remaining years in Serbia, where she wrote her memoirs and died in 1924. Known as Countess Uvarova, she was the same person to whom the story of Murko's linguistic confusion of the terms "belly" and "life" eventually became attached. Thus in an indirect but still legible way, almost as if the founders of historical linguistics and orientalism were present in a ghostly palimpsest, we can observe through Murko's recollection that a number of intertwined and parallel scholarly streams—historical linguistics, oriental studies, intra-European scholarly rivalries, the tradition of folk poetry study dating back to Karadžić and before—flowed through the salons and academies of late nineteenth-century Russia—so vividly that Murko was able to recall the memories of this period more than fifty years later when writing his memoir in 1948.

Conclusion: Method, Technology, and History

We began with an episode from a St. Petersburg salon during the years 1887-89 when Matija Murko and Wilhelm Radloff shared a conversation that included, among other things, a discussion of kerosene. The fact of their meeting, and of their having known each other in the first place, seems to have passed unnoticed in the intervening century. What the recovery of this autobiographical reminiscence has allowed us to recall, however, are changes that were taking place in the study of oral poetry at the close of the nineteenth century—changes inextricably linked, no less, to the emerging traditions of comparative linguistics and the novelty of studying eastern "oriental" languages and peoples, among other methodological developments connected more directly to fieldwork on oral epic. These methodological developments included: (1) an increasing emphasis, as seen in the work of Radloff, on firsthand observation, description, and

²⁰ Schwab continues in his next paragraph by discussing Otto von Böthlingk and Rudolph von Roth.

documentation, which allowed for the first time an actual glimpse of the *techniques* of singing instead of mere mystifications of the content of singing and its poetic products; (2) the continued expansion of interest in oral epic and lyric traditions beyond Europe's boundaries, specifically throughout Russian,²¹ Turkic-speaking, and Mongolian-speaking lands, among others; and (3) the emphasis on linguistic tools for studying the actual language of the poems, whether those tools be dictionaries, grammars, anthologies, historical reconstruction, phonology and morphology, or other tools, as witnessed in both Radloff and Murko's published corpora.

The last point that I should like to make in connection with these three developments and Murko's autobiographical anecdote, however, refers to the emergence of a historical seam or breach, visible to us today, that separates the work of Murko from Radloff with respect to collection methods. The source of this seam has a name: technology; better yet, it can be understood as the roles played by technology and the media used to record, encounter, and study oral epic. Wilhelm Radloff devoted an enormous amount of energy and effort, over many decades as we have seen, to collecting and transcribing the words of singers and storytellers in Turkic languages, though he had no choice but to work by hand.²² Matija Murko continued this tradition, and belonged to it in an explicit fashion, as he makes clear in his autobiography, yet Murko was able to accomplish one particular task of which Radloff could have only dreamed during his fieldwork in the 1860s: recording the singers and songs themselves in analog audio form. Not only did Murko take the first important step of encoding the audible legacy of folk singing in semi-permanent form, but he used that technology to pry open the phenomenon of oral epic technique from a perspective previously unavailable to him. In conclusion, I will give one example of the innovative use of a recording apparatus in order to show how Murko's new methods revealed something about oral epic singing techniques that no scholar before Murko, to his knowledge, had known or described. I do so in the hope of demonstrating not only that Murko's and Radloff's careers belonged, to a certain degree, to a continuous tradition of concerns about oral epic transcription and documentation, but to show that they were also separated by the encroachment of an entirely new historical and technological regime, to which Murko would belong and function within—the increasing technologization of the lifeworld, which would include new and revolutionary possibilities for documenting and recording oral epic and lyric singing.

In order to bring into view an example of this kind of technological change, a change that had significant consequences for fieldwork methods, let us return to Matija Murko's field report from 1913. On the second page of the article, Murko explains how he came to discover, accidentally and to his great surprise, that an elastic variability (what we might today call a "multiformity") lurked at the very heart of the oral epic singing technique he was observing for the first time. (It is important to keep in mind that this was his first field report, written to

²¹ In the opening paragraphs of his 1908 conference presentation (published in 1909), Murko mentions the importance of Alfred Rambaud's 1876 study of Russian oral epic, which includes a chapter devoted to the possibility of "l'origine orientale" for Russian epic tradition.

²² An early discussion of the difficulty of writing down oral epic by hand during transcription, in a South Slavic context, can be found in Luka Marjanović's preface to a song collection that he published in 1864. See further Tate 2011.

describe his early fieldwork experiences.) This variability often occurred in the epics' opening segments, which are referred to as *pripjevi* or "foresongs." Murko had borrowed a recording apparatus from the Vienna *Phonogrammarchiv* for his first field excursion. When using the device, Murko noticed that epic singers never performed the *pripjevi* in exactly the same way—never were the openings word-for-word identical, and never did they follow the same sequence of verses. Quite to the contrary, he tells us, there was always variation, and sometimes quite significant variation. Verses were often substituted, resequenced, remade, added, recombined, or simply dropped. Expressing his surprise, Murko writes, "No one had observed that [phenomenon] until now, at least not on Slavic soil, and it would not have occurred to me either to get the same singer to recite the beginning of a song to me three times in succession" ("Das hat bisher wenigstens auf slawischem Boden niemand beobachtet und es wäre auch mir nicht eingefallen, sich den Anfang eines Liedes von demselben Sänger dreimal nach einander vortragen zu lassen") (1913:2).²³ To repeat, this discovery occurred in 1913, almost twenty years before Parry's fieldwork.

But how did Murko come to make the novel observation? Was it something that the contemporary folk epic scholarship of his day had predicted? Was the discovery the result of some sort of discourse-internal deduction that Murko had made prior to his first field trip? Not at all. Murko's discovery resulted from an entirely external cause—a cause unforeseen by him, he tells us in the article. As Murko explains, he had borrowed his phonograph recording device from the Vienna *Phonogrammarchiv*, which was at that time loaning recording apparatuses to fieldworkers to help them record examples of folk singers for deposit in the archive's fund.²⁴ The *Phonogrammarchiv* maintained its own protocol for recording and documentation, which included, Murko explains, a rule (*Vorschrift*) requiring that the text of every recording be written down *before* the actual recording of the song. This was a simple methodological procedure: in order to deposit a folksong text in the archive's collection, one had to first write down the text of the song from the singer and only then make the recording itself, after which the recordist was expected to supply the relevant information from the recording session (singer, date, time, place, title, genre, and related information) when donating the recording to the institution. It was precisely because of this stricture, Murko tells us, that he discovered that the openings were never performed word-for-word, identically in the same way by the same singer; when he wrote down the opening of the song to be recorded, and then moments later recorded it, the results never matched (M. Murko 1913; Graf 1975).

It is difficult to imagine a more explicit example of inflecting the technological documentation of oral epic in a new way—by means of a new medium, no less—than this one.²⁵ Though Murko had been contemplating textual examples of folk epic and oral epic for more than two decades, it would require an institutional rule, deriving from a cause external to the local

²³ Foley has referred to the phenomenon of the *pripjev* as a convincing example of "multiformity" (Foley 1990:162, n. 13; 289; 289, n. 22; 29; 360, n. 2; 364; 370; 1991:67-75; 77; 217, n. 56; 1996:14-15; cf. Lord 1960:72).

²⁴ Burkhard Stangl (2000) has written an excellent study of the *Phonogrammarchiv*'s history and practices.

²⁵ The analysis of recording technology in relation to specific media and the effects of various recording technologies has been the subject of much of Friedrich Kittler's work (for example, 1990 and 1999), a discussion of which would lead us too far afield in this present study. See also Stangl 2000:28-74, 149-78.

tradition and scholar studying the phenomenon, to open the analysis onto the possibility of a multiform lurking at the heart of the epic technique.²⁶ And yet today, the notion of multiformity—and the fact that multiformity is fundamental to the very essence of oral epic singing technique—is a bedrock component of our understanding of oral epic production. What is more, the notion of a variable *pripjev* that can be modified, expanded, added, or subtracted according to the singer's or audience's or occasion's needs, is practically a commonplace in South Slavic oral epic research. Lord, Pantzer, Foley, and others have written about the phenomenon with sagacity, and all have shown that the structural possibility of multiform variation *is built into the epic performance technique itself* and therefore not only represents a hallmark of performance but also qualifies as essential to the very production, transmission, and survival of the South Slavic epic tradition and its many other poetic counterparts around the world.²⁷

What we have then is a striking example of an initial shock to theory and analysis that came directly from an encounter with the living phenomenon—or better yet, from a technologically new medium and mode for revealing that phenomenon—rather than from speculative models of epic production or the imaginative scenarios sometimes envisioned by text-based philologists with no experience in the field. Furthermore, the example is an excellent one in which oral epic textualization, institutional procedure, and fieldwork realities have collided unpredictably to turn research in a new direction. No amount of textual criticism, comparative linguistic studies, or book-based erudition could have produced the insight that came to Murko during his first living contact—in the full experience of a private, directly observed epic performance—with the living materiality of oral epic. The point helps to illustrate just how irreducible and fundamental the observation of living tradition had become for the study of oral epic in the opening decades of the twentieth century—oral epic exists, after all, as a living phenomenon in a fluid sociopolitical, temporal, and multimedial reality—and the point also reminds us that the study of oral epic must never lose sight of the lived realities and living techniques upon which it is based, and to which all later textual analyses must likewise always bear some relation, no matter what historical conditions one finds oneself working under.

In conclusion, the identification of the friendship between Radloff and Murko has allowed us to open a new window into the world of late nineteenth-century oral epic research. The friendship can be viewed in a wider and more elaborated historical context as an example of scholarly collaboration and acquaintance among an increasingly internationalized community of researchers spread from Paris to Ljubljana to Berlin to Vienna to St. Petersburg and beyond, all of whom were working on similar and in some cases inextricably linked questions and problems. Radloff and Murko both belonged to a particular strand of scholarly tradition nested within that network, and both resembled a certain profile of scholar who very deliberately and self-consciously combined work on historical-comparative linguistics, comparative philology, and *Volks poesie* research into problem-topics that found their natural place in the academic journals, universities, and scholarly congresses of the day. Both scholars also took advantage of the many venues for publication proliferating at the time to report their findings from fieldwork to a wider

²⁶ See further M. Murko 1913:4.

²⁷ See especially Foley 1991:68-75; Pantzer 1959.

audience. It was ultimately the frequent contact, however, through fieldwork with living oral epic that led to this scholarly tradition of *Volkspoesie* research becoming a more comparative international discipline. During the 1880s, in Murko's autobiographical anecdote, we may still be far from the level of interest that erupted after the publication of Albert Lord's *Singer of Tales* in 1960, but we can at least retroactively see that these changes were beginning to become imaginable and that comparative studies of the kind carried out by Foley, Honko, and Harvilahti would one day be thinkable. Radloff and Murko were essential to this transformation, and can be located more or less on its cusp; one may even reasonably claim that they were instrumental in bringing it about. Together with the linguistic knowledge and the observations of singing that they acquired through fieldwork, the two scholars isolated questions that would pique later researchers' interests as well, and both helped to place the study of oral poetry on firmer textual, performative, and linguistic ground than existed before. What that firmer ground needed, of course, has become clearer to us from the vantage point of more recent work: further supplementation from the phenomenological viewpoint (including performance-based analysis), the analysis of epic singing from the point of view of craft and technique, attention to the folklore event *as* event, and the consideration of folklore and its event-contexts as sociocultural phenomena with communicative and political dimensions, including the roles played by gender, race, and class in the constitution, identity, and self-understanding of countless groups spread across time, space, and tradition.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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“A Swarm in July”: Beekeeping Perspectives on the Old English *Wið Ymbe* Charm

Lori Ann Garner and Kayla M. Miller
with the assistance of Chuck Crimmins and Richard Underhill

Inscribed in the margins of an eleventh-century manuscript¹ of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and crowded beneath a Latin prayer is a brief bit of advice for beekeepers in the event of a swarm (*ymbe*), a natural phenomenon in which a substantial portion of an older bee colony migrates en masse with a queen to establish a new colony. The following analysis of this enigmatic text has been inspired largely by three features central to John Miles Foley's vast body of work: interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and comparative research. While the eight lines of alliterative verse that constitute the greater portion of this swarm charm have assured its standing within canonical Old English literature, its insights into traditional apiary practices of Anglo-Saxon England make it equally appropriate subject matter for studies in folklore or even animal science. It is precisely such unlikely intersections that have long served as foci for the transdisciplinary work of John Foley, and it is thus that we now choose it as the subject of analysis for a volume in his honor.²

John Foley's work has also consistently embraced genuine collaboration—collaboration not only within the academic community but reaching outside scholarly circles to gain the fullest understanding possible of oral traditions worldwide. In keeping with this goal, we build upon

¹ The swarm charm appears in the left-hand margin on p. 182 of Cambridge College, Corpus Christi MS 41 (hereafter, CCCC 41). A full description of this manuscript along with a link to images (searchable by manuscript page numbers) is publicly available online through the Parker Library: http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=41. The manuscript itself dates to the early eleventh century, and the marginalia including *wið ymbe* was likely added by an anonymous priest or monk in the mid-eleventh century.

² Funding for Kayla Miller's research in the summer of 2010 was provided by the Fellowships Program at Rhodes College as part of a research mentorship. Lori Garner's research during the summer of 2011 was supported by a Faculty Development Endowment grant, also generously provided by Rhodes College. Thanks also to Marijane Osborn, Rebecca Brackmann, Melissa Bridgman, Chris Peterson, Scott Garner, and Susan Niditch for helpful comments on earlier drafts and to Justin Arft and Peter Ramey for additional suggestions during copy-editing. Most of all, thanks to Richard Underhill and Chuck Crimmins for so generously sharing their time and expertise in the exploration of this subject.

work with this remedy³ begun by James B. Spamer, who reminds us that “the original speakers of the charm were not Germanicists; they were beekeepers” (1978:280). Our work has also been heavily influenced by Marijane Osborn, who has thoroughly researched skep beekeeping practices as reflected across a broad range of medieval literatures and historical records in order “to open the way for further study” (2006:271, n.2). Our strategy here is to augment and complement such prior work by going a step further and bringing knowledgeable and experienced beekeepers directly into the discussion, sharing the text with them, inviting their reactions, and offering a more collaborative interpretation. That beekeeping (for purposes of honey and wax production) was an integral part of life in monasteries (Rust 1999) has been well-established and corroborates our view that the charm potentially had a vital practical role for those who had easiest access to the manuscript in which it survives.⁴ Our ultimate goal is thus to shift our “default reading” of *Wið Ymbe* from its “artistic beauty of structure and treatment” (Storms 1974:132) to one that embraces the “myriad other aspects of the given poem’s reality” (Foley 2002:60), namely its value within beekeeping practice.

The two beekeepers participating in our project both have extensive experience in beekeeping. Chuck Crimmins, Gardening and Forest Coordinator at Heifer International in Perryville, Arkansas, has been educating visitors on bees and beekeeping since 1994. Richard Underhill, founding owner of Peace Bee Farm in Proctor, Arkansas, has served as president of both the Memphis Area Beekeepers Association and the Tennessee Beekeepers Association. We would like to establish from the outset that this comparative study presupposes neither that the practice of beekeeping is the same now as in Anglo-Saxon times nor that even the bees themselves would behave in exactly the same way. As Crimmins explains, bees in the United States have been bred for qualities that produce the best honey and present minimal threat to their handlers. Similarly, materials used to work with bees have changed radically over intervening centuries, and there is obviously “a considerable difference between the hives of the Anglo-Saxons and modern hives, which is not inconsequential in our understanding of the charm” (Spamer 1978:280-81), the now-familiar white boxes of the modern Langstroth hive differing markedly from the traditional skep or basketwork hive most likely used by Anglo-Saxons (cf. Osborn 2005:7-9).⁵

In his comparative approach, John Foley’s work has always been intensely sensitive to cultural and generic difference at the same time that it is ever-open to insightful and meaningful

³ Because medical texts and classifications differed radically in Anglo-Saxon times from modern, the terms used to discuss these works are inherently problematic. We use *remedy* here as a broad category to refer to any text intended to effect a cure or positive outcome. The designations of *charm* and the native *galdor* (or *gealdor*) are limited to those particular texts involving verbal incantations. In the case of *Wið Ymbe*, the usages here are thus largely interchangeable.

⁴ On the richly powerful beekeeping metaphors employed in such religious writings as Aldhelm’s, see Casiday 2004.

⁵ Most relevant for present purposes, the Langstroth hive reduces, even eliminates, the necessity for swarming in honey production, since the removable frames allow for collection of honey without destroying the hives, whereas in skep beekeeping the original hives must be destroyed to retrieve honey, and any new honey depends on the successful division and reproduction of the colonies and the establishment of new hives via swarming.

points of unexplored or unexpected similarities.⁶ We here extend this model to the material world, limiting our comparisons to bee behaviors shared across various breeds and species and to problems confronting beekeepers of both medieval and modern times, most specifically those issues related to swarming. Crimmins and Underhill are especially sensitive to differences between modern and traditional beekeeping, and Heifer International and Peace Bee Farm are dedicated to replicating bees' natural environments to the extent possible (for instance, in not supplementing bees' honey stores with corn syrup), making their practices at least somewhat closer to that of pre-modern societies than those of many commercial beekeepers.

At the same time, however, their differing responses to the remedy attest both to the variation of beekeeping practices and the multivalence of *Wið Ymbe* itself. The fact that two beekeepers interviewed within two days and two hundred miles of each other can respond differently to the charm's advice on swarms suggests that we reevaluate unilateral assertions regarding what the text might have meant across the hundreds of years that we now know as the Anglo-Saxon period. It seems only natural that beekeepers from Aldhelm's time to that of the Norman Conquest would have possessed even wider ranges of apicultural knowledge and that reading and listening audiences of *Wið Ymbe* would have had equally diverse responses to the advice rendered, if not more so.

Consistent with our goal of foregrounding the beekeeping perspective, our analysis is organized around those aspects of *Wið Ymbe* that were most salient and meaningful to Crimmins and Underhill—specifically the instructions for oral delivery, the opening preposition *wið* (typically understood as “against”), the directive to throw “earth” over the bees, the direct address to the bees as *sigewif* (victory-women), and the closing appeal to be mindful of the speaker's well-being. Our collective efforts suggest that in early medieval times, as in modern, successful swarm management involved practical knowledge obtained person-to-person through oral tradition, an acute awareness of bees' honey-producing cycles in relation to swarming patterns, a keen sensitivity to the uniqueness of each individual swarm, and proactive, creative solutions to questions of ownership with regard to creatures essentially wild.

... and *cweð*: Beekeeping as Oral Tradition

The text in the margins of CCCC 41 itself is brief enough to cite here in full:⁷

Wið ymbe nim eorþan, oferweorp mid þinre swiþran
handa under þinum swiþran fet, and cwet:

Fo ic under fot, funde ic hit.
Hwæt, eorðe mæg wið ealra wihta gehwilce

⁶ See especially Foley's discussion of genre-dependence and the need for “legitimacy” of any proposed comparison (1990:3). For Foley's comparative work with healing traditions in particular, see 1980a, 1980b, and 1981, which offer productive and insightful comparative analyses of Serbian and Old English charm remedies.

⁷ Edited text from Dobbie 1942. Translations, unless otherwise stated, are Lori Garner's.

and wið andan and wið æminde
and wið þa micelan mannes tungan.

And wiððon⁸ forweorp ofer greot, þonne hi swirman, and cweð:

Sitte ge, sigewif, sigað to eorþan!
Næfre ge wilde to wuda fleogan.
Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes,
swa bið manna gehwilec metes and eþeles.

Against a swarm, take earth; throw it with your right hand under your right foot and say: "I seize it underfoot; I found it. Lo, earth is mighty against every being, and against hatred and against enmity and against the great tongue of man." And against that, cast dust over [them] when they swarm and say, "Sit, victory-women, sink to earth. May you never fly wild to the woods. Be as mindful of my well-being as every man is of food and home."

Clearly, the poetic portions embedded in this text were envisioned by its scribe as an "oral poem," prefaced twice in its instructions by verbs denoting speech. Not only is this *galdor* (the native term typically rendered "charm") oral in its performance, but it belongs to a tradition that is largely oral in its transmission and reception as well.⁹ As Stephen Pollington explains, Anglo-Saxon healers working with a given remedy seem to have used "the documentary material as a basis for expanding its value and relevance to their contemporaries and fellow-countrymen" (2000:45). Lea Olsan's research also indicates that "a much greater proportion of medieval charms were performed in the oral-aural environment of person-to-person contact than we find documented in writing" and that "the written evidence of charms . . . represents a fragment of the number of charms that circulated by word of mouth" (forthcoming).¹⁰

Anne Van Arsdall's comparative work with medieval and modern traditional medicine reinforces the view that "texts are only a reminder" for practitioners of traditional medicine even today and "such must have been the case with medieval medical texts" (2002:84). Even in regions where literacy is pervasive and written manuals readily available, the dominant mode of transmission of knowledge is still "person-to-person." In the *curandera* tradition in New Mexico, for instance, which Van Arsdall uses as her primary comparand, some written records explicitly assert their subordination to oral tradition. Michael Moore, for example, prefaces his survey of New Mexican *remedios* with the explanation that their "medicinal uses are known and

⁸ MS. *wið on*. Dobbie's emendation to *wiððon* seems more likely than Grendon's and Storm's *siððon* both because it is closer to the original and because it is similar to the very common "*wið ðon*" phrase appearing in the charms, often beginning the second of two charms for the same purpose in the phrase "*wið ðon ylcan*," "against the same."

⁹ Even the Old English *Herbarium*, translated and adapted from a Latin source and clearly tied to literate culture, appeals to oral tradition in validating numerous herbal remedies, frequently claiming an herb's efficacy based on what "*ys sæd*" ("is said"; for example, entry for *dragonwort*, De Vriend 1984:60) or what "*sume sæcgeað*" ("some say"; for example, entry for *brownwort*, De Vriend 1984:102).

¹⁰ Many thanks to Lea Olsan for sharing this manuscript prior to its publication.

systematized by hundreds and thousands of years of usage” and that his own compilation is “what I have learned, observed and used as of 1977, a frozen cross-section of a moving stream” (Van Arsdall 2002:83).

The implications of a medieval text as a “cross-section of a moving stream,” rather than a manual to be followed verbatim, are profound indeed. While *Wið Ymbe* is generally understood as belonging to the same genre as medical remedies, it differs in offering advice for an agricultural craft rather than a cure of a physical ailment.¹¹ This difference—which likely would not have been salient to Anglo-Saxons whose compilations do not sharply demarcate such categories¹²—makes the remedy for swarming bees an especially apt subject for comparative analysis. Medieval and modern beekeeping traditions arguably have greater affinities than medieval and modern medical practices. While numerous regions and groups, such as practitioners of the *curandera* traditions, certainly do embrace traditional and alternative medicine, most Americans today observe a fairly rigid distinction between folklore and what is understood as the science of medicine, expecting medical providers to have official academic degrees from sanctioned institutions of higher learning. Such is not the case for beekeeping. As Chuck Crimmins explains (2010):¹³

There’s no place you can go to learn about bees as far as a university setting. There are no beekeeping degrees.¹⁴ . . . It’s all pick-it-up-as-you-can, mentoring, a few classes here and there, but nothing as far as a degree program, maybe in certain universities. . . . So I’ve been picking it up still for twenty years . . . and I still learn more every day.

¹¹ The bee charm, however, is not alone in this regard. Even within the metrical charms, we see advice not specifically medical in such texts as the land-remedy charm (*Æcerbot*) and the two charms for theft of cattle, one of which appears in the margins of this same manuscript.

¹² The entry for *ueneria* in the Old English *Herbarium*, for instance, offers its remedy for swarming bees right alongside its cure for trouble urinating.

¹³ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Crimmins refer to a personal interview with Kayla Miller at Heifer Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas, on July 15, 2010. Miller herself grew up near Heifer Ranch, where she served as a volunteer assisting Crimmins with care of the bees.

¹⁴ There are exceptions, to be sure. The University of Tennessee, for instance, offers a Master Beekeeper certification through its Extension program and classes can count toward advanced degrees in Agriculture. Similarly, the Ohio State University’s Agricultural Technical Institute has offered a two-year program in beekeeping since 1977. The difference is that such degrees and certifications are neither required nor expected for most working in apiculture. For instance, Richard Underhill’s expertise—which was acquired primarily through unofficial and personal mentoring rather than through formal or institutionalized education—has been publicly and widely recognized by beekeeping communities throughout the region, where he has served as president of the Memphis Area Beekeepers Association and even the Tennessee Beekeepers Association. Underhill himself, who began keeping bees after retiring from a career in electronics, explains that many beekeepers go into beekeeping precisely because the practice is still very traditional in nature and “low-technology.” He values and is eager to share stories and traditions surrounding beekeeping worldwide: “we enjoy the tradition.”

Crimmins himself began beekeeping when, he explains, “an older beekeeper, he kind of took me under his wing and mentored me.” While Richard Underhill¹⁵ and his wife first became interested after a one-day introductory class, much of his knowledge was acquired person-to-person from an experienced beekeeper who had been practicing for sixty-four years.

The role of texts in the transmission of this dynamic tradition provides a productive model for understanding how the marginalia of CCCC 41 might have functioned in the context of an ambient oral tradition. When asked about beekeeping books, Crimmins explains that he does read beekeeping books and regularly reads emails from beekeeping groups. Similarly, Underhill states that “I read quite a bit”; however, he goes on to clarify that texts alone provide far from sufficient training: “Beekeeping I consider both an art and a science. The science you can get from the literature,” but equally necessary is what Underhill calls “art,” “the craft that’s passed on from experience” (2010a). Crimmins, too, speaks explicitly of a balance between “art” and “science.” Their elaboration of this relationship reflects what Barre Toelken refers to as the “twin laws of folklore process,” “conservatism and dynamism” (1996:39) or the “variation within limits” that John Miles Foley attributes to traditional verbal art.¹⁶ For Underhill and Crimmins, the “science” consists of more or less static facts where the “art” involves constant innovation and variation to meet situation-specific needs. Speaking of swarms specifically, Underhill explains that every swarm is different. It “depends on where it’s located, how high it is, what they’re hanging on,” and there are “numerous tricks that people have devised over time, and each occurrence involves you having to devise a plan to how you are going to capture this [swarm].” While much has of course changed with regard to beekeeping practices, the inherent variability of swarms is a phenomenon of nature connecting medieval and modern beekeepers and necessitating constant innovation within traditional practices during both time periods.

Beekeepers’ use of the Internet when handling this infinite variety of swarms is in some ways parallel to the role of oral-derived texts in Anglo Saxon times. Much more so than books, the Internet today provides a dynamic forum for exchange, through emails from beekeeping groups and electronic newsletters, as Crimmins explains. Oral tradition and Internet technology, as Foley argues, are “surprisingly similar in their structure and dynamics,” both media depending “not on static products but on continuous processes” (2011-:“Getting Started: How to Surf The Pathways Project”). Both media “invite and require active participation and support a rich diversity of individual, one-time-only experiences” (*ibid.*). It is thus quite natural that beekeepers already embracing oral traditional modes of communication would gravitate toward online media for transmission of shared knowledge and experience. This connection between Internet technology and oral tradition offers a productive way to recontextualize the poetry in *Wið Ymbe*, as a starting point for necessary innovation rather than a fixed and final solution in itself.

Like Anglo-Saxon beekeeping, at least as attested in the margins of CCCC 41, modern American beekeeping has at times also relied on the mnemonics of poetry in its transmission of practical knowledge. Comparison of *Wið Ymbe*’s incantation with a modern Internet parallel can

¹⁵ Except where otherwise noted, quotations from Richard Underhill refer to a personal interview conducted by Kayla Miller on July 14, 2010, at Peace Bee Farm in Proctor, Arkansas.

¹⁶ Oral tradition “thrives on its ability to vary within limits. Every context is unprecedented as well as generic; each poet and poem and performance is in some fashion unique” (Foley 2002:140).

help demystify perceptions of the Old English *galdor* as purely “pagan” and “magical” (Storms 1974:133-34). To cite an example relating to swarms in particular, the following rhyme is referenced with a high degree of frequency on academic, professional, and hobbyist sites alike:

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay;
A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon;
A swarm in July isn't worth a fly.

As will be discussed in more depth below, this seemingly ubiquitous¹⁷ rhyme manifests all the variations and multiforms that one would expect of a living oral tradition but consistently serves as a shared reference point for those seeking or giving advice on swarm management. Just as *Wīð Ymbe* employs the alliterative meter characteristic of Old English verse and even the metonymic *hwæt* that activates that register of heroic poetry,¹⁸ “Swarm in May” provides a memorable point of reference for those teaching and learning beekeeping wisdom through its repetitive structure and end-line rhyme. The wisdom of living oral traditions practiced today “lends credibility to the argument that by considering the presence of a common, largely unwritten, and constantly evolving tradition of healing during the late classical and early medieval periods of Europe, the medical tradition of those times can be better understood” (Van Arsdall 2002:81-82). If we view the *Wīð Ymbe* charm in its single manuscript attestation as merely a fossilized remnant of a larger living and dynamic tradition, we stand to learn a great deal more. Once again, a beekeeping perspective puts us in a much better position to understand precisely what the text might be teaching us.

Wīð ymbe. . . : The Value of a Swarm

A fundamental question when addressing this charm is whether the *ymbe* is a phenomenon to be embraced or avoided, a crux largely dependent on the polysemous preposition *wīð*. The dominant meaning with a dative, as is reflected in most translations of the remedies, certainly has a sense of confrontation, “against” (cf. Bosworth and Toller, s.v. “wip”). However, then, as now, “with” had multiple senses depending on context and could also be understood as “marking association,” translated as “with” (Bosworth and Toller). The word’s semantic range is ultimately unsurprising, since even today one can fight “with an opponent” in an oppositional relationship or work together “with a colleague.” Nonetheless, the potential ambiguity created by the lack of additional verbal cues has led to multiple, sometimes contradictory, renderings.¹⁹

The traditional and generic contexts of similar formulaic language throughout the Old English remedies argue strongly for the dominant sense of “against.” Contexts of the formulaic

¹⁷ A search via Google for the poem’s most stable phrases (“swarm in May,” “swarm in June,” “swarm in July,” and “silver spoon”) produces upwards of 36,500 hits (as of March 14, 2012).

¹⁸ On the “hwæt paradigm” and its idiomatic force in Old English poetry, see Foley 1991:218-23.

¹⁹ In this particular charm (though not in all charms), Grendon (1909) translates “against”; Gordon (1926), Storms (1974), and Barber (2011) as “for”; and Spamer (1978) “in the case of.”

“wiþ [X]” so common in Old English remedies most definitely imply an oppositional relationship, since the object of the preposition “wið” is virtually always undesirable, as even a few brief examples from the Lacnunga manuscript’s introductory pages (Harley 585) attest—*wið færstice* (“against a sudden pain”), *wið heafodwræce* (“against a headache”), *wið hwoſtan* (“against a cough”), *wið adle* (“against illness”), and *wið fleogendum attre* (“against flying venom”). The swarm referenced in this particular remedy, which is syntactically parallel to countless ailments in this formulaic opening, appears to be a phenomenon to be avoided or quelled—the proverbial “swarm in July.”

It is important to be aware, however, that the existence of advice against swarms need not suggest that swarming in general was viewed negatively in Anglo-Saxon England. A beekeeper’s perspective suggests that, even for beekeepers who depend on swarms for ongoing honey-production, certain kinds of swarms are to be assiduously avoided: most specifically, swarms late in summer after honey production has commenced, swarms that evidence overly-aggressive behaviors, secondary (or tertiary) swarms that threaten the stability of the original colony and are themselves unlikely to survive, and swarms for which a beekeeper has insufficient space for a colony to thrive.

Given that swarms are a natural part of a colony’s cycle and an essential event for honeybee production—especially in premodern contexts—some have argued vehemently against “against.” Spamer explains that “while swarming is not necessary for a modern beekeeper with the removable frames of the Langstroth hive, it was not only desirable but absolutely necessary for the Anglo-Saxon beekeeper with his skep” (1978:281). With this necessity in mind, Spamer suggests rendering *wið ymbe* as “in the case of a swarm” (281) and understands the prescribed remedy not as action against a swarm but rather as an attempt “to forestall the threat of the bees being stolen, being lured away by a rival beekeeper using a magical spell” (1978:290). Following a similar logic, Storms, even though he translates “wið” as “against” in virtually all other such headings, here translates it as “for”: the “supposition that it was used to prevent their swarming at all is wrong, as the swarming of bees is a good thing in itself and is necessary to increase the number of hives and the productive of honey” (1974:133).

More recently, Frederick S. Holton has reverted to the argument for “against,” but with a different logic. He accepts the “obvious desirability of swarming” but urges us to “leave open the possibility, at least, that the charm really is, as stated in the text, ‘against a swarm’” (1993:42) on the grounds that “we do not, in fact, know to what degree the Anglo-Saxon beekeeper would have understood the importance or significance of swarming.”²⁰ For Holton, the poem is most likely “against” a swarm, but the phrasing for him implies ignorance on the part of the beekeeper, the swarm perhaps being “an awesome and inauspicious event, to be combated by whatever means possible” (1993:42).

Such interpretations do shed important light but also risk polarizing the issue unnecessarily, operating from the premise that all swarms are either good or bad, that Anglo-Saxons either recognized the value of a swarm or they didn’t. Perspectives of beekeepers suggest

²⁰ Thanks largely to Marijane Osborn’s more recent publications on Germanic beekeeping (2005; 2006), especially with regard to literature, Holton’s claim that “we know virtually nothing about the practice of Anglo-Saxon beekeeping” (1993:42) is less true today than it was in 1993.

that the issue is far more complex, having much to do with the nature and circumstances of a particular swarm rather than with the inherent desirability (or lack thereof) of the abstract phenomenon of swarming. The reality is that not all swarms are the same. Because swarms themselves exist in multiforms, there exists the possibility—even likelihood—of an inherent polysemy in *Wið Ymbe* itself.

While a swarm is most certainly a necessary and natural part of a colony's life cycle, a swarm during harvest is devastating, as Underhill explains during an interview conducted in July, when the threat of detrimental swarms was most fully present:

If the bees swarm and leave, we've lost a year's efforts. We've lost the crop for the year. . . . The remnant that's left behind is not large enough to produce a surplus of honey in harvest. We must leave the bees 70 pounds of honey to survive over winter. . . .²¹ The remnant left behind may be a good colony the following year. . . . We work our bees, tend to the bees, for 49 weeks of the year and then for three weeks they're making their harvest. Right now [mid-July], they are making the honey that will reward us for the year's work. But if the bees swarm, we will not make anything at all this year.

Eva Crane's research suggests that the situation would have been similar with skep beekeeping—the type of beekeeping practiced in medieval England and throughout most of northwest Europe. Then as now, “the main honey flows tended to occur in mid to late summer, after flowering in deciduous forests had finished” (1999:239). Traditional beekeeping thus “depended on the production and hiving of swarms *in early summer*” (239, emphasis added).

The previously discussed “Swarm in May” rhyme itself points toward the widespread questions among beekeepers regarding when a swarm is desirable and the ongoing use of traditional wisdom as expressed through poetry to help answer. The rhyme states that a swarm's value is directly tied to when it occurs, with early spring swarms leaving time for the new colonies to produce a sufficient crop of honey (May and June) and later swarms (July) being essentially worthless. Closer examination of the contexts in which this rhyme is employed and its variation within them, however, suggests that even seemingly straightforward traditional wisdom is seldom simple.²²

The wisdom underlying “A Swarm in May” is no exception to the dynamic nature of oral and—taking into account the parallels previously noted by Foley—electronic traditions. In its

²¹ This is less the case in some commercial beekeeping practices, which feed the bees corn syrup substitutes rather than allowing the bees to rely on their own production during wintering months.

²² Wolfgang Mieder reminds us that “only a specific context will reveal what a proverb really wants to say” (2008:13) and urges us to move beyond notions of traditional wisdom as “fixed.” “Folklore at its best,” he says, “addresses both tradition and innovation and shows how constancy and change are interlinked in the dynamic process of civilization” (1987:xii).

composition, the rhyme exhibits substantial variation, “ain’t worth a fly”²³ alternating with “isn’t worth a fly”²⁴ or, in a smaller number of instances, “let them fly.”²⁵ In her comparison of multiforms of Old English theft charms, Lea Olsan convincingly argues that a “less scripted” version may “imply a reader who does not need every word and action exactly scripted,” intended for a knowledgeable “reader-performer” who can readily fill in gaps (1999:407). In this same fashion, numerous websites will quote only the opening line or two of “Swarm in May,” metonymically invoking the rest.²⁶ While alternate versions of *Wið Ymbe* do not survive in extant manuscripts, our understanding of the text can nonetheless be enhanced by viewing it within a context of dynamic and ever-evolving verbal art.

Not only does the language of “Swarm in May” vary from user to user, but so too does its purpose, sometimes providing advice, other times challenging it. One Yahoo group member, for instance, quotes the rhyme only to contradict it with his personal experience of producing a “very strong colony” from a swarm as late as November. Another asks “but what about a swarm in August,”²⁷ and an advocate of April swarms explains that “there is an old saying around here: ‘A swarm in MAY is not worth a bale of hay.’”²⁸ In a June 2011 Facebook post, the Bee Folks business in Maryland creatively invokes the rhyme in hoping for a “swarm of customers.”²⁹ Writing for the UK *Daily Mail* online, Valentine Warner puts the rhyme to use in fighting against the environmental threat of bee collapse: “Considering the plight of bees today, let us hope we don’t have a year full of Julys.”³⁰ Such evidence from this modern-day swarm poem cautions against assuming that there would ever have been a single, monolithic understanding of *Wið Ymbe* in Anglo-Saxon times.

²³ See “The Bee Journal,” <http://thebeejournal.blogspot.com/2010/05/swarm-in-may.html>. Because of the dynamic nature of online discussion forums, URLs here and throughout this essay, where appropriate, are provided for home pages and discussion groups generally rather than for individual threads and isolated responses, which tend to be rather ephemeral. In general, homepage URLs are more stable than lengthy URLs pointing to specific posts. This issue of stability in online conversations is actually an aspect of the Internet’s affinity with oral tradition, both forms of communication being, in John Foley’s words, “more process than product, more open pathway than closed canon” (Foley 2011-: “Call Numbers versus e-Addresses”).

²⁴ See <http://entomology.unl.edu/beekpg/beeswarm.shtml> (University of Nebraska) and <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/northwestnewjerseybeekeepers/message/438>.

²⁵ See <http://forum.beemaster.com/index.php/topic,5355.0.html> and <http://www.sembabees.org/toplevelpages/swarm.html>.

²⁶ See <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/northwestnewjerseybeekeepers> (search terms: “a swarm in May”).

²⁷ See <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/northwestnewjerseybeekeepers> (search terms: “a swarm in August”).

²⁸ See <http://www.beesource.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-253035.html?s=bf0ac92b65ccd0fd9aff6af26ac3e03d>.

²⁹ See “The Bee Folks,” <http://www.facebook.com/beefolks>, posted June 5, 2011.

³⁰ See Valentine Warner’s “Save the Great British Bee! Why the Mysterious Disappearance of Billions of Bees Could Mean Us Losing a Third of the Food We Eat,” <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1356391/The-mysterious-disappearance-billions-bees-mean-losing-food-eat.html>.

To further complicate the matter, not all who use the saying claim to understand its full implications. One thread on a beekeeping forum using the rhyme elicits a question about the relative worth of a May or June swarm: “Is a silver spoon worth more than a load of hay? I always thought a May swarm was best.”³¹ The intended recipients of the poem’s proverbial advice also vary. While it is often given to new beekeepers, it is also provided to homeowners wondering how to handle a swarm on their property. One site advises a resident to contact a local beekeeper to collect the swarm but also warns that the beekeeper’s response will likely vary depending on the time of year, since “[a] swarm in May. . . .”³² Far from conveying static, monolithic wisdom, the rhyme, widely known in the beekeeping community, serves as a starting point for many different kinds of discussions on how to handle swarms. Resituating *Wið Ymbe* within the context of a living tradition—with similarly diverse processes of composition, transmission, and reception—frees it from implications of rigid assumptions about what “the Anglo-Saxon beekeeper would have understood” (Holton 1993:42).

Working from the premise that, like the *curandera* remedies recorded by Michael Moore, the advice recorded in the margins of CCCC 41 represents a “frozen cross-section in a moving stream,” we can imagine an Anglo-Saxon world where the surviving text, much like “Swarm in May,” provided advice for only certain of many types of swarms and represented only a starting point for audiences to adapt to their own specific beekeeping needs.

nim eorþan . . . : Practical Ritual

As our fieldwork on this “voiced text,” to use Foley’s term, continues, we now turn our attention to what the margins of CCCC 41 suggest one should actually do in the event of an undesirable swarm. The potential efficacy of *Wið Ymbe*’s physical actions in settling a swarm has long been recognized: “throwing grit into a swarm as soon as it takes flight, does induce it to settle very quickly. It distracts the bees, and they will land in the nearest possible place. Even for a modern, scientific age, the cast of earth is of immediate practical value” (Spamer 1978:290). However, by taking into account additional aspects of swarming patterns and cycles of honey-production, we can develop a more thorough understanding of why—and, more precisely, when—it would be to the beekeeper’s advantage to avoid or control a swarm.

The bees’ instinct to swarm is a natural response to such factors as overcrowding or congestion. An old queen or an especially mild winter could also predispose a colony to swarm. As Crimmins explains, “swarming is a natural way of colonizing, redividing.” Swarming provides the mechanism for a colony to reproduce itself and is part of the natural cycle of a honeybee colony. In late spring and early summer, when bees increase their populations most rapidly, the tendency to swarm is greatest. This period also marks the time when drones (male) begin to populate the hive, to be killed off in late fall so that winter food stores are reserved for fully functioning (female) members of the hive. After weeks of preparation in the hive, a little

³¹ See http://forum.downsizer.net/archive/swarm_o_t_t_22122.html.

³² See http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/bee_removal.html.

over half of the colony flies out with the old queen, leaving the new queen and the remainder of the colony behind. Initially, they typically swarm briefly, settling in a tightly compacted ball only a few feet away. After bee “scouts” locate a more ideal location for the hive, the entire colony moves. The goal of the beekeeper is to encourage the bees to settle in the site of the beekeeper’s choice. The moments during and following the swarm are crucial since “as soon as they reach it [the location chosen by the scouts] they own it and they will defend it” (Underhill 2010a). Even though the sight of hundreds of swarming bees, which Underhill likens to the motion of a tornado, might be terrifying to surprised observers, the bees are actually at their least aggressive during and immediately following the swarm. In her brief but insightful discussion of parallels between Anglo-Saxon and modern beekeeping, Osborn recounts witnessing her father “move a swarm in his bare hands and settle it in another hive” (2006:281). If the swarm occurs early enough in the season, the beekeeper’s goal is to capture the swarm so as to have two productive colonies. If the swarm is too late in the year, or if the beekeeper does not have ample space to maintain the new colony, an entire year’s work can be lost.

With such high stakes, it seems likely that the poetic and cryptic remedy written in the margin does convey practical value, even at the same time that it serves other ritual, social, or psychological functions for the beekeeper or larger community. As Osborn astutely observes, “like many a practice that may be perceived as magic even by the practitioner, this traditional gesture has a practical value as well” (2006:280). While throwing dirt over the swarm serves a clear ritual function and “binds the bees with sympathetic magic to the beekeeper who has just thrown dirt over his head” (Osborn 2006:280), the action can also be very effective in inhibiting flight, thus encouraging the swarm of bees to settle nearby, in a location more easily accessible to the beekeeper, rather than departing entirely from the beekeeper’s domain.

The extent of the ritual’s practical value, however, is determined in large part by how one renders “greot,” which the *Dictionary of Old English* defines as “grit, gravel, sand, shingle (of the seashore); dirt, dust” (*DOE*, s.v. “greot”). Gordon translates as “gravel” (1926:88) as does Grendon (1909:169). Osborn translates as “dirt” (2006:279). Kevin Crossley-Holland (1999:271) and Marie Nelson (1984:58) both translate as “earth,” emphasizing the parallel between *greot* and *eorð* in the original, and, more recently, David Barber renders *greot* as “sand” (2011:489). While all are, from a safe academic distance, equally viable renderings of “greot,” from the perspective of a creature as small as a honeybee, the difference is one of utmost significance. For Crimmins, the logic of covering the swarm with light dust makes perfect sense:

I know when we catch them in a swarm, to keep them from flying away when we put them in the box—it’s not dirt—but we will spray them with sugar water, and it somewhat seals the wings, you know, makes it sticky. They’ll eat it off, or clean each other off, and get it as food. But when you catch a swarm on a tree branch, you’ll pop it into the hive and you’ll spray it with the sugar water first. Perhaps, the dust . . . does the same, in that they cannot fly. Because I’m assuming that what they’re talking about with the swarm is putting something—dust or dirt, earth—over it, dusting it, coating it and not throwing clods of dirt at it, you know, but fine dust particles and keeping them from being able to fly so that when you put them in the beehive—or bee skep back when, [or] in a hollow log—they will settle in, and then they would call it home. . . . So that might be the principle behind dust or earth, . . . anything just to keep them from moving.

Such evidence indicates that the value of “earth” as a combatant against a swarm extends well beyond the metaphorical realm and most likely was actually a valuable technique for Anglo-Saxon beekeepers in controlling undesirable swarms.

Parallels between the verbal and physical aspects of *Wið Ymbe* provide the remedy with additional practical value as a teaching aid and mnemonic device, the instructions to throw earth “under your right foot” paralleling the verse incantation’s half-line “I seize it underfoot” and the verbal command to “sink to earth” paralleling the desired result of the bees’ descent to the ground. Nelson has convincingly argued that *Wið Ymbe*, with its verbal reinforcement of a practical physical action, served to give “its performer confidence in his own capabilities” which in turn would doubtless have “helped him accomplish his specific objective” in quelling the swarm (1984:58). The lines of verse also surely served an educational role, enabling transmission of effective practices via poetry, much like the modern-day “Swarm in May.” This practical value does not in any way, however, diminish the remedy’s value as ritual for its performer. Shifting our perspective to that of the beekeeper, there are in fact numerous social and personal functions potentially served for the beekeeper and his or her larger community by the seemingly tangential verbal incantations.

Sitte ge sigewif: On Speaking to the Bees

It is largely *Wið Ymbe*’s verse incantation that has led to assumptions that Anglo-Saxon beekeeping relied more heavily on “magical enchantment” (Storms 1974:137) than science and that cryptic elements reflect ignorance on the part of Anglo-Saxons regarding bees and best beekeeping practices. Not only is the performer required to speak to the swarm of bees, but the bees are to be addressed in mythic, heroic terms, as *sigewif*, or “victory women.” Given that bees are ultimately responsible for the physical and societal structures that—at least in name—depend upon honey mead (for example, *medudream* [“mead-joy”], *medubenc* [“mead-bench”], *meduheall* [“mead-hall”], *meduburg* [“mead-city”], just to name a few), the casting of bees in heroic terms seems like a natural extension of the “mead-hall” culture so prominent in heroic poetry.³³

Before addressing the incantation as a speech act more broadly, let us first take up the question of swarming bees as *sigewif*, or “victory women.” This appellation has been seen by many as a metaphorical depiction of flying, stinging insects as powerful (often magical) female warriors in Germanic myth and legend known as valkyries. However, even though this reading can and has been supported with ample evidence from surviving literature, we needn’t stop there in explaining the choice. Feminine plural forms of address for bees are actually quite frequent even in modern practice, which is not surprising, since the worker bees, after all, are incomplete females. On a public beekeeping forum, one beekeeper describes venting frustration by threatening the bees, using the feminine plural: “If you girls don’t calm down, I’ll requeen

³³ This connection between heroic culture and honey produced by bees is reinforced by Patrick Murphy’s argument that honey is referenced as *dryhtgestreona* (lordly treasure) in Riddle 17 (Murphy 2011:167-68).

you!”³⁴ On this same forum, another beekeeper, convinced by the merits of speaking to bees, says he will “for sure . . . be talking to *the girls*” (emphasis added).

Where most editors and translators interpret *sigewif* as a plural noun, based on the usage of plural verbs and pronouns, Marie Nelson renders *sigewif* as singular (1984:58).³⁵ The logic is that the *sigewif*, the truly victorious woman, refers not to all of the swarming female worker bees, but rather the queen bee in particular (1990:27, n.11). But even if we accept the premise that the term would be reserved specifically for queens, nature provides a logical explanation for the plural usage. Competing queens are in fact a natural aspect of new queen selection, as Underhill explains (2010c):

Once the queen bee emerges, she begins searching for other queens in the hive. There may be other queens developing in the hive, and queen bees simply don’t allow competing queens to live in their hive. The first queen to emerge starts piping. Piping involves making a series of chirping and quacking sounds to call out to any other developing queens. Queen bees, still held in their own queen cells, respond to the piping. The emerged queen kills each of these potential competitors with her sting.

Such battles between and among potential new queens can extend into swarm stage, offering even further correspondences with the implied narrative underlying the incantation of *Wið Ymbe*. A phenomenon of swarming that can simultaneously explain the plural feminine pronoun applied in the incantation, the warlike imagery, and the negativity toward the swarm implied by *wið* occurs at times in afterswarming, an event that not only severely threatens the parent hive but also results in the swarm traveling further before alighting. In a swarm, it is the old queen who departs, leaving “a few thousand worker bees, a dozen or more queen cells” (Seeley 2010:41). On occasions when the first virgin queen to emerge feels threatened by other virgin queens, she might “leave in a secondary swarm, what beekeepers call an ‘afterswarm’” (41). “This process is repeated with each emerging queen until the colony is weakened to the point where it cannot support further swarming. At this point if there are still multiple virgin queens in the nest, the workers will allow them to emerge freely” (42), and if

two or more virgin queens emerge together, they will fight to the death, seizing each other and attempting to sting. The battling queen bees grapple and twist, each one struggling fiercely to implant her venom-laden sting in her sister’s abdomen (42).

This undesirable kind of swarm has long been observed, as M. Quinby explained as early as 1866 that “after-swarms sometimes have as many as six queens” (179). Even if the dueling

³⁴ See <http://forum.beemaster.com/index.php?topic=28742.0;wap2>. Crimmins explains that “requeening,” or replacing a queen with one of known genetic background, can be a way of addressing the problem of an overly aggressive hive.

³⁵ The singular rendering represents a minority view in scholarship on this charm. *Wif* itself is an uninflected plural, but the plural imperative verbs and plural pronoun *ge* all suggest a plural sense. Those asserting a singular sense attribute the usage to scribal error or read it as a very early instance of the plural with a singular sense in cases of formal address (such as a “queen” bee).

queens aren't observed in action, the aftermath is readily visible, as one confused beekeeper asks on a forum what to do after finding "two dead queens at the same hive's entrance."³⁶

As these various explanations suggest, allowing for a diversity of reception similar to that seen in modern beekeeping removes the obligation to ascertain "the exact extent to which the term *sigewif* is descriptive of the beekeeper's conceptualization of the bees or is merely metaphorical or cajoling" (Spamer 1978:290). Spamer's question invites us to consider more directly why the performer would be talking to the bees at all. The practice of talking to bees is actually quite common, even for beekeepers who do not necessarily believe that bees can hear. Evidence from modern swarm management suggests that literal and figurative, even "cajoling," uses of the feminine plural are not mutually exclusive categories. For Chuck Crimmins, speaking to his bees is vital to his relationship with them, in part because of his role teaching classes, where he speaks while working with the bees:

I believe someone had said or I have read, your breath, your . . . exhaling—bees can sense that, or smell that, or feel that . . . so they get to know you. . . . Every human has a scent and bees can tell that too. . . . They can tell you're the beekeeper after a while. . . . I'm talking so much during class that the bees know my voice and sense me.³⁷

Sometimes even those who don't believe that bees can hear still speak to them. "You get very attached to your bees," one such beekeeper explains, "I even sing to them."³⁸

Returning to Spamer's question of whether *Wið Ymbe*'s incantation reflects "the beekeeper's conceptualization of the bees or is merely metaphorical or cajoling," we do well to consider the enormous complexity of "belief" and to be ever-mindful of the distinction between "belief" and what folklorists have referred to as "belief behavior" (Sims and Stephens 2005:56). The following discussion of belief in practice serves as a powerful reminder that not all performers of *Wið Ymbe* would necessarily have held the same levels of belief, even if the ritual were to have been practiced in exactly the same way (which is itself unlikely)(57):

Performers or creators of texts may express complete belief ("this is true; this really happened"), some doubt or skepticism ("well, I don't know for sure, but they say this really happened; now take this with a grain of salt") or outright dismissal ("this is just an old story; everyone knows this is all made up"). They may experience these feelings even if they don't state them explicitly. Listeners or audience members—even scholars such as anthropologists and folklorists—may also hold varying degrees of belief in the expressions they observe and take part in.

Such belief behavior as distinct from unquestioned belief is readily apparent in modern beekeepers' tendency to speak to bees. Talking to bees is an issue addressed on numerous

³⁶ See <http://forum.beemaster.com/index.php?topic=21044.0>.

³⁷ Crimmins' explanation of the effects in terms of smell or feel rather than sound is due to the likelihood that bees do not possess the sense of hearing, though this question continues to be debated. For more extended discussion on this topic, see Dreller and Kirchner 1995.

³⁸ See http://www.urbanbees.co.uk/blog_1/?p=438.

beekeeping forums, the question always eliciting lively discussion and varying levels of belief in the power of such speech. Reflecting the conflicted awareness of many who speak to bees, one woman apologetically writes on such a forum, “I admit it, I talk to the bees” but quickly qualifies, “I really don’t think they listen. . . . Really. . . !”³⁹ This aspect of belief behavior is important not only for the previous analysis of speech acts in this charm but also for any speculation regarding the charm’s intended or desired outcome, whether related to the beekeeper’s social community or concerned with the swarm itself.

. . . *gemindige mines godes: Social Functions of Wið Ymbe*

Devoting a full chapter to the subject of ownership in her world history of beekeeping, Eva Crane observes that the need to establish a recognized claim is imperative among all beekeepers and that this was especially the case prior to moveable hive frames, since bees could swarm onto a neighbor’s property quite easily: “an important factor conducive to the ownership of bees’ nests or nest sites in a certain region was probably the substantial growth of a settled human population, which led to a need for more honey” (1999:107).⁴⁰

Based on the words of the incantation and on his knowledge of bee lore, Richard Underhill immediately saw the dominant issue of the charm as having less to do with the swarm itself than with claims of ownership as witnessed by the larger community. Beginning with the words “funde ic hit” (“I found it”) but even more explicitly in the performer’s final solicitation that the bees be mindful of “metes and epeles” (“food and home”) (2010a), Underhill sees reflected a universal concern of beekeepers: “Every beekeeper that has gathered swarms knows the disappointment of having a swarm take flight and fly to the woods. The last sentence of the charm speaks of the value of the honeybee as food and property.” Further corroborating this understanding of bees as property, Lea Olsan has demonstrated patterns linking *Wið Ymbe* with other charms and prayers inscribed in the margins of the same manuscript, many of which “are meant for tending to people and property.” Such texts would thus have been of great value to readers concerned with pastoral care. *Wið Ymbe*’s particular placement within the manuscript reveals an even more direct connection to issues related to ownership in the taming of wild creatures (Olsan, forthcoming):

The bee charm, which provides a way of taming wild bees, is placed in the margin at the story of how St. Cedd tamed the wilderness where he decided to build his monastery. In particular, the word ‘beasts’ (*wildeor*) in the Old English translation on this page anticipates the animal subject matter of the bee charm. Moreover, the bee formula was a means of taming the wild to men’s civilized purposes as did Cedd’s prayers. In a sense, it parallels Cedd’s actions with a contemporary practical instance.

³⁹ See <http://forum.beemaster.com/index.php?topic=28742.0>.

⁴⁰ Crane’s discussion of ownership in medieval England focuses primarily on post-Conquest laws and practices but still has significant implications for earlier periods of beekeeping in England (1999:112-13).

Just as Cedd was claiming space and taming the animals under his control, the performer of *Wið Ymbe* appeals to the bees by evoking his own *epel*, or homeland.

Modern-day parallels can help us better understand precisely what such connections might have meant in practical terms for the charm's earliest audiences. Underhill compares the rituals in *Wið Ymbe* to a traditional belief still held and practiced in parts of both England and the United States that banging pots and pans in a practice known as "tanging" would help calm a swarm. Underhill believes that such practices are "coincidental to what actually occurs with the bees." What we call a "swarm" is "the culmination of a whole series of events that have occurred in the hive and take about a month of preparation, but the actual swarm is short," usually about five minutes, or, the length of time to gather and bang the pots and pans. Underhill believes that "the communication was not actually banging the pots and pans to tell the bees to settle the swarm down but the banging of the pots and pans was to declare to your neighbor that you were claiming that swarm—because a swarm is valuable" (2010a). In an online discussion forum, Grant Jackson of Missouri further explains the practice as a way to alleviate concerns of trespassing:

"Tanging," or banging those pots, was the way you could legally hop a fence and chase the swarm, basically communicating to everyone within earshot that this was your swarm . . . and further, you were trespassing in a non-offensive way in hopes of retrieving your swarm.⁴¹

The theory that audible rituals involved in such practices as tanging or the incantation in *Wið Ymbe* are more effective as announcements of ownership than swarm control is especially logical when one considers the inevitability of swarming at this stage of a colony's cycle. As Crimmins explains, after the preparation is underway, the swarm is unavoidable: "you can't stop it. . . . That queen's gonna swarm." However, as early as 1866 even Quinby, who staunchly defended his book against oral tradition as an "investigation of apiarian science" (147), recognized that bees preparing to swarm wait for good weather, and unexpected inclement weather occasionally causes a swarm to retreat back into the parent hive (173). A thread on the question of "tanging" applies this awareness of behavior to explain the apparent success of tanging beyond mere coincidence, suggesting that "the sound vibrations may mimic thunder."⁴²

Jackson's discussion of tanging, however, elucidates the complex relationship between belief and ritual, demonstrating that the former need not precede the latter. Jackson believes, as Underhill does, that the bees will settle regardless after a few minutes and that the relationship is not one of cause and effect. Still, he "openly admit[s] that I bang pots," once again demonstrating the subtle but crucial distinction between *belief* and *belief behavior*: "Lots of swarm chasers try it and the swarms settle." A "query and reply" column of the *British Bee Journal* (*Queries* 1890) reflects that, at least for some, the practice of "tanging" was seen as potentially binding legally even in the relatively recent past. The writer asks "your much esteemed Journal" to determine whether a neighbor into whose yard a swarm landed "has a claim on the swarm as he 'tanged'

⁴¹ See <http://www.beesource.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-187229.html>.

⁴² If this kind of disturbance does in fact encourage retreat, it seems equally plausible that bees might be similarly swayed by the combination of sand being thrown on them and the vibrations of a loud voice.

them” (1890:392). For Underhill, the incantation would have had much the same binding effect, provided the incantation were recited loudly enough. If a runaway swarm of bees appeared to settle in response to the performer’s words, the apparent success could indicate ownership. Further, if we leave open the possibility that certain aspects of human nature are shared by medieval and modern beekeepers, an Anglo-Saxon beekeeper reciting the *Wið Ymbe* incantation might have done so without necessarily believing its efficacy at a literal level, just as Grant Jackson continues to “tang” bees even at the same time that he provides reasons for why it doesn’t actually “work.”

Concerns of ownership were arguably even more an issue in medieval times than modern. “Bee-theft” (“beoþeof”) was considered a serious enough crime in the laws of Alfred (Attenborough 1922:68-69) to be included alongside theft of gold and horses (“goldþeof” and the “stodþeof” [*ibid.*, section 9, 2]). Bees were precious as a source of honey, used for mead and sweetening, and also wax, a by-product of honey-production that could be used for candles and sealant. For these and other reasons, Spamer logically asserts “that a beekeeper would have been very concerned about someone stealing his bees” (1978:282) and that “the best opportunity for stealing bees is precisely when they swarm” (283), since they are at their calmest during this period, their stomachs full of honey and their full efforts focused on protecting their queen and locating a new home. One of a beekeeper’s first concerns would thus “naturally be to insure that it would not be stolen” (283). Spamer’s suggestion that the incantation serves as a “counter-charm” against “any possible spell drawing the swarm away” (283) does not preclude the incantation’s effect on anyone within earshot of the recitation or the effect of the performer’s voice on the bees’ themselves. As with the other aspects of the remedy, a modern beekeepers’ perspective here serves to complement prior interpretations and provide additional levels at which *Wið Ymbe* seems to have been operating.

Conclusion

While certainly many aspects of beekeeping have changed between medieval and modern times, the potential desirability of a swarm has been maintained. Discussions with beekeepers and examination of modern manuals all suggest that the questions of whether a swarm is good or bad, or whether the Anglo-Saxons knew a swarm was good or bad, are unnecessarily reductive. Discussions with beekeepers indicate that the issues are much more complex and that whether or not a swarm is desirable depends on numerous factors, such as what space the beekeeper has to accommodate a new swarm, the level of aggressiveness in the new swarming colony, and, perhaps most importantly, at what time of year the swarm occurs.

As Underhill explains in a blog post after being introduced to the charm during his interview with Kayla Miller, “the language of English-speaking people has changed considerably . . . ; however, I recognize some issues with dealing with honey bees . . . persist over hundreds of years” (2010b). As has been amply demonstrated in prior scholarship, the Old English *Wið Ymbe* includes elements that had already persisted in Germanic traditions for hundreds of years, even at the time it was inscribed in the margins of CCCC 41. It was only “one

of many ‘swarm charms’ that exist throughout Europe” (Osborn 2006:278), and the remedy “including the full earth-casting sequence, is one of great antiquity” (Hamp 1981:340).

Indeed, what Halpern and Foley’s own collaborative work with Desanka, a Serbian healer (or *bajalica*) demonstrated with regard to Serbian charms is equally applicable to modern and Anglo-Saxon beekeeping rituals (1978:924):

Each performance, each act of recollection, results in a new composition. The fundamental truth of the charm, and the source of its phenomenological power, lies in the ritual act of making the collective wisdom of the past the living inheritance of the present.

In short, not only can the swarm charm be read as a polysemous text; its layers of verbal and physical rituals demand that it be read so. We come much closer to understanding the text as it might have been experienced by its earliest audiences when we view the charm not as a stable text, but rather like the swarm of bees itself—untamed, ever-changing, and richly rewarding in its inherent diversity.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Cicero the Homerist

Carolyn Higbie

In six letters¹ written to Atticus over a span of fourteen years (59-45 BCE), Cicero quotes *Iliad* 6.442 in whole or in part: αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας ἐλκεσιπέπλους (“I hesitate before Trojan men and Trojan women with their trailing dresses”).² Cicero uses the line to express his hesitation to the reactions of others to a decision, political or literary, that he feels he must make. He clearly depends upon Atticus’ deep knowledge of Greek literature, as he never names the poet, cites the scene or book, or identifies the speaker. He assumes that Atticus will know the passage, in which Hector explains to Andromache why he must return to the fighting or be shamed in front of his fellow Trojans.

Cicero presents himself as Hector attempting to defend Troy against the Greeks, so he surely knows that the battle will be lost and Hector killed, despite all of his efforts on both the battlefield and in the city.³ If Cicero is Hector, then Rome is Troy, but who might be the enemy? Perhaps in the earliest citation of the passage in a letter to Atticus in 59 BCE (25.1), Catiline could play the role of Achilles. In the later ones, which come in a five-year span at the end of Cicero’s letters to Atticus (50-45 BCE), he might have cast Julius Caesar or his assassins in the role. Whether we wish to make a specific link between the Homeric verse and either the Catilinarian conspiracy or the end of Caesar’s dictatorship, we can see Cicero identifying himself as part of the Trojan ancestry that lies behind Rome, even though he himself is a *novus homo*.⁴

After he quotes the sentence in full for the first time in a letter to Atticus (25.1), Cicero never again uses the whole remark, but rather borrows only a phrase or two, usually αἰδέομαι Τρῶας. The Homeric verse seems to have become a private aphorism, perhaps shared between Cicero and Atticus from their school days, and its use can stand as a token of their easy familiarity not only with the Homeric poems but also with the Alexandrian scholarship that regularized their form. Such knowledge would have been the natural result of the kind of

¹ I am grateful to Timothy Boyd and John Dugan for reading drafts and making this essay better. The two anonymous readers for *Oral Tradition* offered many suggestions for improving it as well. Lori and Scott Garner have been kind, but firm editors, for which I am thankful. I am deeply indebted to John Foley for offering me the chance to participate in his 1989 NEH Summer Seminar that enabled me to gain a broad perspective on the field of oral tradition.

² *Ad Att.* 25.1, 124.4, 135.3, 166.2, 321, 332. For the enumeration of Cicero’s letters, I have followed Shackleton Bailey 1978a and 1978b. See Steele 1900:387-410, espec. 394-95, on Cicero’s quotations of Homer.

³ I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers for pointing this possible line of inquiry out to me.

⁴ See Dugan 2005:7-13.

education that an upper-class Roman male could have received. Early in their schooling, little boys would have been given passages of Homer to rework or paraphrase; at every stage in their education, they would have read the epics. Most schoolboys would not have read much more of the *Iliad* than books 1-6 and fewer would have read any of the *Odyssey* (perhaps books 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 18), if the few surviving papyri are any guide.⁵ Cicero, however, cites or quotes from eleven books of the *Iliad* and nine of the *Odyssey*, refers to many other Greek authors, and even composes in Greek (see *Ad Att.* 19, for example). He also makes casual reference to Aristarchus as an editor, revealing not only his knowledge of the texts that had been the subject of study in Alexandria through the second century BCE, but also some knowledge of the scholarship on those works. He is even eager to obtain a copy of a work by Tyrannio, probably his *Περὶ τῆς Ὀμηρικῆς Προσφῶδίας*, devoted to Homeric accentuation (*Ad Att.* 306.2). In no extant work, however, despite his evident familiarity with Alexandrian scholarship, does Cicero refer to a passage in the Homeric poems by book number, even though the book divisions had been established by that time (Higbie 2010).

While Cicero may enjoy a shared literary reference in letters to Atticus or to other similarly educated colleagues, his use of Homeric citations depends on genre and audience expectations. The knowledge of the Homeric texts and scholarship on them that Cicero displays in his letters is not found in either his philosophical works or his orations. He seems to be well aware that the literary sophistication and knowledge of Greek that can be shared between equals would not be suitable for works with a wider circulation and acknowledges tacitly, at least, the complex Roman feelings of military superiority, if not literary, over some conquered peoples. This attitude may lie behind Cicero's advice in *De Officiis* 1.31.111: Romans should not sprinkle their native tongue with Greek words, which exposes them to mockery, just as they should not introduce foreign ways into their behavior in general.⁶ Public speakers might thus put themselves at some political risk by exhibiting too much knowledge of Greek. Cicero, as a *novus homo*, perhaps felt this danger more acutely than the *nobiles* with a stronger family tradition of service to Rome behind them and so monitored his use of Greek carefully, especially since he was known to be such a philhellene.⁷ In this essay, I survey Cicero's uses of the Homeric epics and scholarship on them, showing how he tailors his presentation of his knowledge to his audience and occasion. In doing so, he shapes—or hopes to—his audience's regard for himself.

In his letters, Cicero may cite Homer by name or simply use a passage from the epics without identifying the poet or book number, presumably expecting that either the narrative itself or the distinctive dialect forms and meter will be known to his recipient. In general, Cicero uses the Homeric epics as a decorative element, to add a literary elegance. Once, however, in response to Atticus' critique of *On the Republic* 3.25, he cites the Homeric catalogue of ships, among other authorities, to make a scholarly point and to explain what he had written (*Ad Att.* 116.3=6.2.3):

⁵ See Morgan 1998, especially Tables 11-12; Clarke 1968:18-22 discusses the evidence available for Cicero's education; cf. Corbeill 2002, Criboire 2001.

⁶ Cicero puts a similar remark in Antonius' conversation with Catulus, *De Oratore* 2.36.153.

⁷ I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers for suggesting this point to me. See Guite 1962; Corbeill 2002:23 quotes the remark that Cicero puts in his own grandfather's mouth (*De Oratore* 2.265): "Our people are like Syrian slaves: the better they know Greek, the worse they get."

Arcadiae censebat esse Lepreon quoddam maritimum; Tenea autem et Aliphera et Tritia νεόκτιστα ei videbantur, idque τῷ τῶν νεῶν καταλόγῳ confirmabat, ubi mentio non fit istorum. itaque istum ego locum totidem verbis a Dicaearcho transtuli.

[Dionysius] thought that Arcadia included a place on the coast called Lepreon, while Tenea, Aliphera, and Tritia were recent foundations in his opinion, which he supported by the Catalogue of Ships [τῷ τῶν νεῶν καταλόγῳ], where they are not mentioned. So I took the passage over from Dicaearchus just as it stood.⁸

Because Cicero, like other intellectuals of his time, regards the Homeric catalogue of ships as a reliable source of geographical and thus, on occasion, political information, he uses it to defend a point that he has made. He does not actually say that he has checked the passage in *Iliad* 2, but cites Dicaearchus, one of the intellectuals in Aristotle's world. By doing so, Cicero also presents his credentials as a scholar.⁹

In some lighthearted remarks in his letters, Cicero further displays his acquaintance with Alexandrian scholarship on Homer. Cicero writes to Atticus in 61 BCE, describing a meeting of the Senate at which both Pompey and Crassus spoke. Cicero describes Crassus' speech (*Ad Att.* 14.3):

quid multa? totum hunc locum, quem ego varie meis orationibus, quarum tu Aristarchus es, soleo pingere, de flamma, de ferro (nosti illas ληκτύθους), valde graviter pertexuit.

In short, he [Crassus] worked up the whole theme which I am in the habit of embroidering in my speeches one way or another, all about fire, sword, etc. (you are their Aristarchus and know my colour-box), really most impressively.

With this seemingly casual remark, it is clear that if Atticus is cast in the role of Aristarchus, then Cicero sees himself playing Homer.

Atticus is not the only correspondent with whom Cicero can allude to Aristarchus. In 50 BCE, he writes to Appius Pulcher and, in the conclusion of his letter, apologizes for an earlier letter that upset him (*Ad Fam.* 74.5):

sed si, ut scribis, eae litterae non fuerunt disertae, scito meas non fuisse, ut enim Aristarchus Homeri versum negat quem non probat, sic tu (libet enim mihi iocari), quod disertum non erit, ne putaris meum.

But if the letter was, as you say, not well-expressed, you may be sure I did not write it. Just as Aristarchus denies the authenticity of any Homeric line which he does not like, so I would request

⁸ Translations of Cicero's letters are by Shackleton Bailey 1978a and 1978b.

⁹ Kim (2010:47-84) examines how ancient scholars like Strabo regarded the Homeric epics as a source of accurate geographical and historical information, but also believed them to be adorned with mythology. Smethurst (1952) discusses the evidence for Cicero's use of Dicaearchus in developing his theory of the mixed constitution.

you (being in jocular vein), if you find any piece of writing not well-expressed, not to believe I wrote it.

Cicero expects that Appius Pulcher will understand the reference and appreciate the humorous parallel that he is making: as in his letter to Atticus, he puts himself in the role of Homer.

Four years later, Cicero jokes about Aristarchus' use of the obelus in a story he tells to Dolabella about some sort of financial disagreement between two men in their circle (*Ad Fam.* 217.1=9.10.1):

profert alter, opinor, duobus versiculis expensum Niciae, alter Aristarchus hos ὀβελίζει; ego tamquam criticus antiquus iudicaturus sum utrum sint τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἢ παρεμβλημένοι.

[Vidius], I believe, is producing a couple of lines registering a payment to Nicias, who on his side Aristarchus-like obelizes these same. My job is to describe like a critic of old whether they are the poet's own or interpolated.

Again, Cicero applies the terms of literary scholarship, specifically obelizations, to another area of life—a dispute over a financial transaction—to make a small joke. This time, however, he portrays himself as a fellow critic of Aristarchus and not the poet. Cicero clearly knows the editorial work of the Alexandrian scholars on the text of Homer and expects that his correspondents will as well.¹⁰ The literary joke may be even more appropriate if Syme's identification of one of the two men involved in the financial dispute is correct (1961:25-27): Nicias may be a well known literary man from the island of Kos who seems to have enjoyed a certain amount of high living among a literary set in Rome.¹¹

Cicero's essays show a different use of Homer: his references to the poet are much less detailed and he makes no references to Homeric scholarship. He does not often cite either poem or specific passages in them, but instead uses Homer as a convenient literary allusion or as part of literary history (see, for example, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* 2.6, *Topica* 55). Ennius' dream in which Homer appears to him is referred to three times in Cicero's works (*Academica* 2.51, 2.88; *Republic* 6.10), and Homeric gods and events are useful in discussions about the differences between poetry and history (*Republic* 1.18-19; compare *De Natura Deorum* 2.70-71). But, though there are numerous references to the Trojan War, they are not scholarly; instead the citations serve as evidence of Cicero's—or his characters'—range and depth of knowledge. These citations may also suggest what Cicero and his literary friends saw as a general, and therefore acceptable, knowledge of the Homeric epics.

The difference between being able to refer casually to a range of Greek texts and showing oneself to be too knowledgeable can be seen in Cicero's *De Oratore*. Written in 55-54 BCE, the work purports to be a record of a conversation among several Roman orators and politicians in 91 BCE. Throughout the lengthy dialogue, itself modeled on Plato's works, the various speakers

¹⁰ See also Cicero's remarks to Papirius Paetus (*Ad Fam.* 190.4).

¹¹ Suetonius quotes this passage in his portrait of Nicias (*De Grammaticis* 14.2); see Kaster 1995:ad loc. for a discussion of the identification of Nicias.

reveal an ambivalent regard for Greek literature and its place in Roman life and education: although they freely refer to authors like Aristotle, Greek historians, and orators, they do not quote from any of these texts, but only summarize or mention them; nor do they give a specific reference to any particular Greek text, but merely refer casually to a work (for example, at 2.341).

In the third book of the dialogue, Cicero gives Crassus two opportunities to cite Homer. When he wants to make a point about teachers and their subjects, Crassus trots out a surely expected reference to Phoenix (3.15.57):

ut ille apud Homerum Phoenix qui se a Peleo patre Achilli iuveni comitem esse datum dicit ad bellum ut illum efficeret “oratorem verborum actoremque rerum.”

just as in Homer, Phoenix says that he was given to the young Achilles by his father Peleus to be a companion for war, so that he might make of him “both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.”

By his casual mention of the passage somewhere in the Homeric epics—“apud Homerum”—and by paraphrasing the famous line in Latin and not quoting the Homeric original (*Il.* 9.443), Crassus strikes a balance between showing his knowledge of the Greek epic and not appearing to be too much of a Graeculus.

Later, when Cicero has Crassus refer to Pisistratus and the “Homeri libros confusos,” it is in the context of a conversation about the decline in public figures: previous generations of Roman leaders are presented as knowledgeable about many things in various fields, while current leaders either lack any expertise at all or specialize in one particular area only (3.132-36). Crassus turns from Roman public figures to Greeks for “doctrinae exempla,” and begins by citing those Greek figures known as “sapientes,” the wise men: six of the seven were also political leaders. Without naming all seven, Crassus singles out Pisistratus for particular praise (3.34.137):

Quis doctior eisdem illis temporibus aut cuius eloquentia litteris instructor fuisse traditur quam Pisistrati? qui primus Homeri libros confusos antea sic disposuisse dicitur ut nunc habemus. Non fuit ille quidem civibus suis utilis, sed ita eloquentia floruit ut litteris doctrinaque praestaret.

Who is described as having been more learned in those times or whose eloquence was better trained by literature than Pisistratus? He is said to have been the first to organize the previously confused books of Homer in the way we have them now. Certainly, he was not useful to his own citizens, but he was so remarkable in his eloquence that he excelled in literature and learning.

From this praise of Pisistratus, Crassus then turns to briefer mentions of later Greek figures, but instead of citing a literary accomplishment for each, he names their teachers (3.34.138-41): Pericles, taught by Anaxagoras; Critias and Alcibiades, who talked with Socrates; Dio of Syracuse, taught by Plato; Timotheus, son of Conon, taught by Isocrates; Epaminondas, by the Pythagorean Lysis; Agesilaus, by Xenophon; Archytas of Taranto, by Philolaus; Alexander the Great, by Aristotle. Crassus argues for the importance of broad literary training, especially of

skill in oratory, for a public figure to be successful. Pisistratus, although he heads Crassus' list, does not follow the pattern that he has outlined, since Crassus identifies no teacher for the Athenian leader and says that, although he did not serve his fellow citizens in any way, he did organize the books of Homer. Perhaps because of the place which the poems of Homer held for subsequent generations not only of Greeks but also of Romans, Crassus is moved to put the Athenian tyrant at the head of his list for what he believed he did for education.¹²

Cicero, in his extant speeches, does not quote any Greek and refers only infrequently to Greek poets.¹³ When he supports the poet Archias' claim to Roman citizenship, throughout the speech he expresses his love for the study of literature, but also claims a practical value for that love: literature has provided relief for him from the stresses of public life, in the way that others relax at banquets, or gambling, or sports (see *Pro Archia Poeta* 1-2, 12-16). Cicero also points out the service that literary men such as Archias can provide to military and civilian leaders, since they can immortalize their deeds for later generations to learn about (*Pro Archia Poeta* 5, 11, 14, 19-22, 24, 31).

In only one surviving speech, *In Pisonem*, does Cicero refer to the critic Aristarchus and he does so as part of his refutation of Piso's attack on him.¹⁴ From Cicero's diatribe, it seems that Piso had accused Cicero of everything from governmental mismanagement to bad poetry, and so Cicero attempts to answer the literary criticism with this image (73):

Verum tamen, quoniam te non Aristarchum, sed Phalarin grammaticum habemus, qui non notam apponas ad malum versum, sed poetam armis persequere, scire cupio quid tandem in isto versu reprehendas: cedant arma togae.

Nevertheless, because we regard you not as an Aristarchus, but as a Phalaris as a critic, you who do not place a mark beside a bad line of poetry, but assault the poet with weapons, I long to know, finally, what you object to in this verse: "let weapons yield to the toga."

Cicero's remark depends on his audience of Roman senators knowing a certain amount of Greek literary and political history. He casts Piso as Phalaris, the sixth-century tyrant of Agrag, who had acquired a reputation for brutality and was said to have used violence on the poet Stesichorus,¹⁵ rather than as Aristarchus, who merely marked any verse of the Homeric epics that he found objectionable. Cicero further asserts that Piso has misunderstood the line, obliquely attacking Piso's literary acumen.

¹² Because so little evidence survives for the transmission of the Homeric poems, this remark in the *De Oratore* has been given more prominence in modern scholarship than it deserves and has not been placed in its context. An exception is Boyd 1995. Fantham (2004) does not discuss this passage in any detail, but see 248-49 and 261 for brief observations about Romans and Greek literary culture.

¹³ On Cicero's citations of Latin authors as well as Greek, see Shackleton Bailey 1983 and Radin 1911:209-17.

¹⁴ See Dugan 2005:21-74, in which he uses both the *Pro Archia Poeta* and *In Pisonem* to study how Cicero combines the worlds of literature and politics in his presentation of himself.

¹⁵ But for his political opposition, rather than his poetry.

All of this suggests that Cicero knows his Homer and Greek scholarship on the epics, but is also well aware of his audience's expectations and biases. He uses Homer and the epics, even Alexandrian scholarship on the poems, throughout his work, though in his public persona he maintains a façade of only passing acquaintanceship, choosing to refer only vaguely to this material. He can employ Aristarchus and the obelus in jokes in letters to friends, but nowhere does he betray any knowledge of Homeric book divisions, used at least as early as the Alexandrians as a convenient way of referring to a place in the poems (Higbie 2010). Cicero clearly knows about book divisions in general, since he routinely refers to his own works in such terms,¹⁶ but he does not refer to any part of the Homeric texts by book number, preferring instead the traditional reference to a scene or section—the catalogue of ships—if he cites anything specific at all.

From Cicero's practice, it may be fair to say that among educated, upper-class Romans there is an etiquette for the citation of Greek poets like Homer: the form of the citation and even the knowledge of Greek revealed in such a citation itself depended both on genre and on audience. Cicero does not cite the Homeric poems by book number in his extant works of any genre, despite his knowledge of their work and his own use of book divisions in his works and citation of them in others. It is also significant that Cicero never mentions any scholar of Homer other than Aristarchus. Not once does he refer to Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium, or Crates. It is as though Aristarchus, the last of the generations to work on the texts of ancient Greek literature before the breakup of the library in Alexandria, came to symbolize those scholars who came before him. To refer to Aristarchus, therefore, is to refer to literary critics and scholars. Cicero's failure to cite Crates is perhaps, in contrast, the greater oddity, if we accept both Crates' general importance to the history of literary scholarship in Rome and his particular value as a Stoic philosopher to Cicero himself.¹⁷

Cicero uses Homer in different ways and refers to the poet in varying degrees of specificity, depending on his purpose in making the reference and on the conventions of the genre in which he is writing. To friends and associates in his letters, an audience that shared his background and education, if not his extraordinary ability with language, Cicero displays the range and depth of his knowledge of Greek, especially Homer. When he composes his rhetorical and philosophical works, although he may be presumed to be addressing much the same audience as those who receive his letters, a different convention seems to govern his presentation of his knowledge of Greek: he does not quote Homer or other Greek authors very often or in any detail. In his speeches, Cicero makes the least use of his Greek learning, perhaps because he fears to seem to be not Roman enough. Cicero knows his audiences well, presenting himself in his letters, essays, and speeches as one who knows Greek, but also knows when to use it—and when not.

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¹⁶From his remarks in letters, we can see that Cicero constructs his longer works in book-length units (see, for instance, *Ad Att.* 321 and *De Oratore* 3.1.1) and sets up individual books with prefaces (for example, *Ad Att.* 89.2; 414.6).

¹⁷I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers for pointing this out to me.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Toward a Ritual Poetics: *Dream of the Rood* as a Case Study

Heather Maring

Oral-traditional and ritualistic practices rarely fall into mutually exclusive categories. Nevertheless, scholars tend to analyze oral-related Old English verse as if it were purely verbal, and tend not to seek out the potential connections between the once living tradition from which written texts stemmed and relevant ritual scenarios. But ritualization permeates multiple modes of expression. As Stanley Tambiah writes, “Although neither linguistically nor ostensibly can we demarcate a bounded domain of ritual (separated off from other domains) in any society, yet every society has named and marked out enactments, performances, and festivities which we can identify as typical or focal examples of ‘ritual’ events” (1981:116). Inattention to ritual on the part of most scholars interested in orality arises partly out of necessity: lacking ethnographic records for the performance of oral tradition in Anglo-Saxon England, we cannot speak with any confidence about the performance contexts or about the poets who composed the majority of the surviving poetic works.¹ Nonetheless, many scholars interested in “voices from the past” have been able to trace “the telltale compositional stamp” that oral-related poems bear (Foley 2002:47),² with that oral-traditional “stamp” legible in the specialized idioms—such as formulaic phraseology, themes, and type-scenes—that recur throughout the Old English corpus.³ I want to suggest that it is also possible to trace ritualistic features, whether linguistic, imagistic, gestural, or acoustic, that enhance and inform the meaning of Old English poems such as *Dream of the Rood*.⁴ Just as it is important to learn to hear the oral tradition that resounds in many textualized medieval works, so, I argue, it is important to recognize the ritual features that these poems

¹ See Amodio 2004:chs. 1 and 2; Frank 2003.

² Foley defines “voices from the past” as a category that “offers a slot for those poetic oral traditions that time has eclipsed and which we can now consult only in textual form.” He continues, “Built into that capsule definition is a necessary flexibility. Any given poem’s original composition may have been oral or written” (2002:46).

³ Old English verse employs idioms such as *hwæt* (a communal call to listen to narrative), numerous formulaic systems, themes, and type-scenes—all of which indicate a dedicated register of oral (or oral-related) poetry requiring different interpretive measures than literary ones. Since Francis Magoun’s seminal 1953 essay, scholars have traced the presence of oral-related idioms and clarified the tradition-specific features of Old English, distinct from those found in Ancient Greek and South Slavic verse. For overviews of scholarship on orality and Old English literature, see Olsen 1986 and 1988, and Amodio 2004. See also the searchable online bibliographies hosted by *Oral Tradition* at <http://journal.oraltradition.org/> and <http://www.oraltradition.org/bibliography/>.

⁴ While my focus is on verse, the discussion does not intentionally exclude prose. For examples of Old English vernacular poetics operating within prose, see, for example, Zacher 2009 and Beechy 2010.

incorporate. My hypothesis is that ritual features, when integrated within oral-related poems, preserve their association with lived, emergent ritual processes. These features do not necessarily operate as purely allusive signs, but may behave metonymically, just as oral-traditional idioms do.

Scholarship Bridging Old English Poetry and Ritual

What might happen if we allow for the possibility that Old English poems may enact a “ritual poetics” that rhetorically functions in a manner similar to oral poetics, metonymically invoking the whole by means of the part? The leap from oral tradition to ritual is not a huge one, since both rely upon performativity, that is, the process of bringing a poem or rite fully into being via performance, and both use stylized forms of communication in contrast to “everyday” speech and actions.⁵ Roy Liuzza (2008) has also posited connections between poetry and ritual while questioning the categorical distinctions scholars often make between Anglo-Saxon prayers and charms, the first usually associated with sanctioned Christian practices (including rites) and the second with “Germanic” cultural relics. Using Lea Olsan’s definition of the charm,⁶ he concludes (318-19):

Instead of a dichotomy, we might imagine a spectrum of practices, with an episcopal consecration (for example) at one end and a ceremony for the relief of elf-shot in horses at the other, and most forms of popular devotion somewhere in the middle. The defining criteria seem to have more to do with the specificity of the occasion and the extrinsic loci of authority than with the intrinsic nature of the performance. . . .

The metrical and prosimetrical charms, due to their quasi-magical character and their incorporation of utterances that conform to the expectations of Old English meter, have long been treated as literary oddities. Liuzza urges us to perceive prayers and charms on a continuum of performative utterances whose aim is to bring to bear in the world the efficacy of divine power.⁷ Liuzza situates prayers and charms on a ritualistic continuum, from practices authorized by institutions such as the Church or the crown, to those that appear to belong to popular culture.

Karl Reichl offers another model for thinking about the relationship between verbal art and ritual. He draws attention to the problem of inking a dividing line between oral epic and ritual, since “in the performance of epic a number of ritual aspects can be discerned also in traditions where a framework of religious rite and ritual for the epic does not exist” (2003:253). Even though in some cultures the oral performance of epic may not be embedded within an

⁵ The recitation of formulas is commonly practiced in many ritualized events, such as legal cases, funerals, and liturgical ceremonies.

⁶ “Oral performance to accomplish a purpose by means of performative speech in a ritual context” (Olsan 1999:403; quoted in Liuzza 2008:295).

⁷ See Jolly 1996 for a book-length study that makes a strong case for treating the Old English charms as part of a continuum from folk to institutionalized Christian activity.

overtly religious rite, the performance settings for epics tend to be highly structured, in ways that reinforce social hierarchies and cultural values. According to Reichl, the relatively fixed performance settings and “act sequence” (the temporal unfolding of the performance according to a series of relatively invariant acts⁸) justify treating Turkic epic, at least, as a species of ritual. Both Liuzza and Reichl’s examples show how we could begin to rethink the relationship between oral tradition and ritual practices in Old English literature. Liuzza offers the figure of the spectrum as a model for imagining and interpreting a range of verbal sayings that were deemed to have practical (and spiritual) efficacy. Reichl’s work expands the figure of the spectrum, treating religious rites (even those without words) and the performance of oral epic as events lying along a ritual spectrum. Ritual theorists also recognize that ritualistic activities vary in their relationship to sacrality and in the degree to which every action and word must accord with a fixed pattern, and approach everything from liturgies to baseball games as ritualistic events. However, according to Catherine Bell (1997), rituals do share many characteristics in common, including formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance, which help to distinguish ritualistic from non-ritualistic practices.

Because they often unfold in relatively invariable performance settings according to specific sets of rules, the oral performances of living traditions are arguably ritualistic, if not full-blown rituals themselves. The use of tradition-specific (and often highly formalized) verse styles and a prescribed act sequence means that many oral-traditional performances cross the liminal threshold between ordinary and special, between unmarked actions and the ritualistic. For example, Zuni tales (*telapnaawe*) may only be recounted while the snakes hibernate and after sundown, since they make time elapse more quickly and can attract the “smile” of a snake (Tedlock 1999:xxvi-xxvii). Serbian epic has been typically performed in coffee houses during Ramadan for an audience of men (Foley 2002:209). When Turkic epic is performed in a yurt, the placement of the singer and those of greater prominence follows tacit rules: the singer sits “in the place of honor . . . opposite the entrance; the other participants are placed according to the sitting order of the yurt, the most distinguished members of the gathering sitting to the singer’s right and left” (Reichl 2003:257). In the field of medieval literature, Anglo-Saxonists have elucidated some of the potential performance settings or ritualistic conditions for the composition and/or performance of Old English verse and prose.⁹ Pat Connor (2008) makes a case for reading Old English literature at guild feasts; Robert Luyster (1998) examines the possible role of the consecrated grove and Scandinavian fertility rites in the short elegiac poem, “The Wife’s Lament”; Lori Ann Garner (2004) has focused on the performance of Old English metrical charms, arguing that performance itself negates the seeming dichotomy between “living ritual” and “static text”; Peter Lucas (1992) posits the Paschal Vigil of Holy Saturday as a source for the metrical saint’s life, *Guthlac B*; Thomas D. Hill (2002) has investigated the relationship of Exeter Book Riddle 45 to a long-standing tradition involving the kneading of dough, sexually explicit

⁸ In the case of Turkic epic, the act sequence begins with a prelude or selection of short songs (*terma*) during which the singer warms up, followed by the composition in performance from sunrise to sunset of epic verse. At midnight there is a break, during which the singer leaves and payments from the guests are collected (Reichl 2003:258-60).

⁹ This overview of scholarship on performance settings, while hardly comprehensive, may provide a sense of the wide variety of genres and contexts that have been explored.

gestures, and/or chanting; and John Niles (1999, 2007) has argued that the audiences of the heroic poems *Beowulf* and *Widsith* were Anglo-Saxon nobility.

Of these authors, Niles is the only one to theorize the role of ritual in relationship to Old English verse. In *Homo Narrans* he provides a useful introduction to ritual studies and its applicability to the study of oral-related texts. He first quotes Steven Lukes's definition of ritual: "ritual is 'rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance.'" (1999:121). The focus of this definition accords with Niles's interest in the social reflexivity of early medieval texts such as *Beowulf*, which may at first glance seem timelessly mythic, but which in fact use heightened discourse to imaginatively think through contemporary issues such as lineage, kingship, and nation building. Niles's approach to the study of oral-related texts accords largely with a functionalist methodology developed in the early twentieth century that focuses on the social utility of oral traditions.¹⁰ In this vein, he writes that an oral narrative such as *Beowulf* "can thus serve important functions of education and acculturation in the society in which it occurs. . . . For adults, it confirms the nexus of understandings that constitute their knowledge of the past and of the world around them, their social structure, and their moral action" (1999:129).¹¹ By calling attention to the power of ritualistic activities to educate and acculturate, Niles's approach to oral tradition *cum* ritual echoes Bronislaw Malinowski, who wrote that myth (which is often difficult to distinguish from oral tradition) carries "the normative power of fixing custom, of sanctioning modes of behavior, of giving dignity and importance to an institution" (quoted by Zumwalt 1998:81). For Niles, defining *Beowulf* as ritualistic allows him to interpret the poem as "a socially symbolic act" (142).

Immanent Art and Ritual Studies

While focusing on the social symbolism of oral-related verse, its setting, or its place within a sequence of acts can contribute greatly to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetic forms, there remain other methods for exploring the relationship between ritual and oral-related poetry. An approach to studying ritualistic features within oral-related poems in traditional poetic terms could, for instance, examine the role of metonymic signifiers embedded in poems themselves.¹² This methodology, which I will elaborate upon in the following paragraphs, would thus take into account the modes of signification shared by both oral traditions and rituals. Unlike Reichl, who asserts that ritual features "will not be found in particular linguistic forms or

¹⁰ Like the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, and following Fredric Jameson, he also asserts that narratives serve as wish fulfillment for a society (1999:143).

¹¹ More specifically, he concludes that *Beowulf* "legitimized Anglo-Saxon institutions of kingship and thaneship, confirmed Christian ideals of sacrifice, and promoted a common culture among the English and the Danes" (1999:142).

¹² Niles equates the heightened rhetoric of epic verse with "ritualized discourse," a designation that he leaves unexplored. His chapter "*Beowulf* as Ritualized Discourse" (1999) constitutes an important step toward acknowledging the socially embedded character of early medieval verse, but it does not examine ritualized discourse *per se*.

poetic techniques” (2003:257), I suggest that the ritualistic may be located in the formal, as well as the functional, aspects of oral-traditional and oral-related poetry (*ibid.* 256). John Miles Foley’s approach to interpreting oral and oral-related works of verbal art, called “immanent art,” provides an important analytical tool for investigating ritual poetics in medieval verse.¹³ The immanent art approach treats medieval oral-related texts as works that still resonate today through oral metonyms for those who learn to recognize them. I want to extend the application of immanent art to ritualized idioms, by treating ritual not as a concrete product, but as a practice that mobilizes bodies and artifacts to create events laden with meaning.

Performance and Tradition

This description of ritual largely accords with the work of Bell, who writes that “ritualization” is a specialized type of practice (à la Bourdieu) “that is designated and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities” (1992:74). Richard Bauman makes a similar distinction between normative, less highly marked speech and verbal art by drawing attention to the manner in which performance itself is “constitutive of the domain of verbal art” (1977:11). Performance—whether of ritual or oral tradition—sets up interpretive frames (see Goffman 1974) that cause participants to adjust their expectations. Studies of ritualization and oral tradition share this central tenet of performance theory: that rituals and oral traditions live in their generation in real time by tradition bearers for communities. In Bell’s theorization of ritual, rather than existing *a priori* to a ritual event (which would amount to any performance being dead on arrival), meaning is created by ritualized bodies involved in the performance of a rite. Signification emerges or is generated by the interaction between ritual agents. For Bell, although meaning arises in the performance context, it can never be fully captured by discursive analysis: “strategies, signification, and the experience of meaningfulness are found in the endless circularity of the references mobilized, during the course of which some differentiations come to dominate others” (1992:116). These strategies and significations reference culturally- and generically-specific traditions, and for this reason no universal definition of ritual will suffice.

In the immanent art approach, the specialized idioms of an oral tradition resonate most fully only through the process of their enactment (in performance or a simulacrum of performance) in relationship to both a knowledgeable audience and to the tradition, which both the verbal “text” and the audience share. As Foley has described, such a traditional context differs in both degree and kind from the post-Gutenberg literary scenario so familiar to many readers, where an author’s individual idiolect is prized far above the use of a shared, communal poetic language. In fact, it may be difficult for readers of literature with no direct experience of oral traditions to understand how oral metonyms communicate because of strong aesthetic bias against “unoriginal” phraseology, unless such phraseology appears to be ironic or re-purposed in a clever and highly individualistic way. Such is seldom the case in oral traditions, since recurring phraseology serves as a highly efficient and powerful mode of communication.

¹³ Foley’s approach was originally developed for describing and interpreting oral-traditional verse rather than rituals.

The communicative strategies explored by immanent art apply, I would argue, to both oral and ritual traditions. Immanent art shows how the significance of an idiom depends upon its creation through performance and a shared tradition—that malleable, “dynamic, multivalent body of meaning that preserves much that a group has transmitted and invented” (Foley 1995:xii). Foley describes the interlinked phenomena of performance and tradition as “the enabling event” and “the enabling referent” (28). In other words, performance (or practice) is the primary medium for communication, but without the tradition a great deal of the communicative signal may be lost. Most works of non-oral-derived literature suffer no comparable degree of communication blackout when removed from their literary milieu. Their “enabling referents” inhere within the work itself, rather than depending primarily on tradition with its own specialized language for creating meaning. Foley summarizes the communicative mode of oral traditions in the following way: “empowerment of the communicative act results from the keying of performance—whether in the first instance by an actual experienced event or in the textual instance by its rhetorical vestige—and from the shared immersion in traditional context that is the performer’s and audience’s experiential heritage” (28).¹⁴ Since written medieval texts may evidence “rhetorical vestiges,” we may discover oral—and, as I hope to show, ritualistic—idioms resonating for readers and auditors possessing the “experiential heritage.”

Although Foley describes oral-traditional performances (in real time and on the page), his immanent art approach could also apply to many ritual contexts in which actions and words are endowed with significance. Jonathan Z. Smith comments on the communicative richness that arises when one inhabits a ritual space: “When one enters a temple, one enters a marked-off space in which, at least in principle, nothing is accidental; everything, at least potentially, is of significance. The temple serves as a *focusing lens*, marking and revealing significance” (1982:54).¹⁵ In ritual, both demarcated space and the tradition-specific features of performance help to cue ritual practice and “reveal” significance. Roy Rappaport in his chapter entitled “Enactments of Meaning” emphasizes the importance of performance (where Bell would use the term “practice”¹⁶) to ritual communication: “Performance is not merely one way to present or express liturgical orders but is itself a crucial aspect or component of the messages those orders carry” (1999:118).¹⁷ According to Rappaport, sanctioned behavior informs the performance of rituals (whether new or ancient). Thus, we may observe that in both oral-traditional performance

¹⁴ See also Foley 1991.

¹⁵ We could draw a broad comparison between the “marked-off space” of the temple “which serves as a focusing lens” and the idiomatic language of an oral tradition, which may be “marked-off” by such features as meter, prosody, special speech styles, and formulaic opening and closing phrases.

¹⁶ In her textbook on ritual, Bell surveys studies that have emphasized ritual’s performative dimension. She describes how this approach values the efficacy of performance, demonstrating “that ritual does what it does by virtue of its dynamic, diachronic, and physical characteristics” (1997:75). In *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Bell critiques implementations of performance theory for naturalizing a subject-object dichotomy created in the first place by the theorist, for essentializing the performance model of ritual, for insisting upon a feature of ritual that in itself is too broad a descriptor, and for treating rituals primarily as texts in need of interpretation by the theorist or scholar (1992:42-45).

¹⁷ Rappaport’s *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999) provides one of the most comprehensive studies of ritual since Emile Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912/2001).

and ritualization, acts of communication arise due to the “enabling event” of performance within a marked off space and are endowed with highly resonant significance due to the “enabling referent” of tradition. Immanent art also privileges the memetic richness of a shared tradition. The collective memories from which tradition is constructed, together with performance (or its “rhetorical vestiges”), create a crucible for the “richly contexted array of meanings” that emerge in oral traditions (Foley 1995:28)—and also in ritualizations.

A Metonymic Register

According to Foley, tradition and performance set up the conditions for a highly resonant and efficient mode of communication. The poetic register of a particular tradition or genre within a tradition usually does not have the broad functionality of everyday language. The trade-off is a specialized way of speaking with a “density of associative, metonymic meaning accruing to and implied by linguistic integers” (1995:16). Building on the work of Lord and Parry, Foley describes how the basic linguistic units of many oral-traditional poetic languages exceed the print-bound notion of what constitutes a “word.” In the South Slavic tradition, for instance, a “word” may be a formulaic unit, a line or pair of lines, a type-scene, and even an entire story pattern. In Old English verse, scholars have identified formulaic systems, themes, type-scenes, and conventions—all of which could be termed oral-related idioms. Such poetic words constitute (along with music and paralinguistic features) the specialized register of an oral tradition. Foley explains why oral idioms may be called metonyms: “Because registers are more highly coded than everyday language, because their ‘words’ resonate with traditional implications beyond the scope of multipurpose street language, they convey enormously more than grammars and dictionaries (based as they are on everyday language) can record” (2002:116). For this reason, registers also self-referentially point to the tradition from which they emerge, allowing them to “persist beyond live performance and into texts” (116). Furthermore, for traditional participants, every instantiation of an oral idiom recalls past experiences of similar performances.

Ritualized actions and words, like their oral-traditional kin, bear especially weighty connotations due to the narrow focus of the canon (or, in oral-traditional terms, the register). Signs are invested with greater significance. Rappaport explains: “It follows that the acceptance of an order, because it is in its nature highly restrictive, is therefore more socially consequential and significant than the affirmation of a more or less unrestrictive code” (1999:127).¹⁸ Accepting a ritual order means accepting the traditional ramifications that have accrued to that order. For instance, following the order to kneel when praying can indicate the dedication of the body and mind, in a position of servitude, humility, or vulnerability, to the object of prayer; kneeling also indicates dedication to the encompassing ritual tradition. According to Bell, the ritual process itself accords symbols with their sacrality, and allows them to index a system or experience “of a greater, higher, or more universalized reality—the group, the nation, humankind, the power of God, or the balance of the cosmos” (1997:159). Like Rappaport, she argues that the resonance of ritual symbols depends upon ritual practice itself: “in actuality, ritual-like action effectively

¹⁸ In Rappaport’s terminology, “acceptance” does not denote faith or belief; it means participation—ranging from passive attendance to the playing of a supportive role in a liturgy.

creates the sacred by explicitly differentiating such a realm from a profane one” (157), but Rappaport’s explanation of ritual significance more closely dovetails with immanent art because he explains that such symbols, in a circular manner, draw their potency from the same sacred or extra-mundane tradition that they performatively create.

Case Study: *Dream of the Rood*

When studying an early medieval poem, we may listen for the “vestige” of a ritualized word or symbol that invests the poem with a significance that both narrowly refers metonymically to its own embeddedness with a specific ritual and also escapes the attempt to nail down its “ritual meaning.” I will argue that ritual metonyms invest *Dream of the Rood* (Vercelli Codex CXVII) with the extra-textual associations of the specific liturgical situations to which these signs refer. *Dream of the Rood*, the well-known tenth-century dream vision of the Holy Cross narrating its experience of Christ’s crucifixion to a Dreamer, has long attracted scholarship attesting to its ties with ritualized and devotional scenarios. In 1919 Howard Patch suggested that the author of the poem “could hardly rid his mind of all the echoes of the hymns and responsive utterances and the liturgical offices which he was accustomed to hear at various times during the church year” (233). Subsequent scholarship on ritual and *Dream of the Rood* has generally assumed that in one way or another Christian liturgical and devotional practices inform its lines, and the majority of scholars who have written about ritual in this poem have focused their attention on the relationship between the poem and the *Adoratio crucis* or Veneration of the Cross.¹⁹ In particular, Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Sarah Larratt Keefer have demonstrated in great detail the various relationships between *Dream of the Rood*, the Ruthwell Cross, and the ceremonies of Holy Week, especially the *Adoratio crucis* on Holy Friday before Easter. Their findings, in addition to those of Patch and Peggy Samuels, serve as the basis for this essay’s exploration of ritual metonym in *Dream of the Rood*; however, in the work of these scholars the references in *Dream of the Rood* to Holy Week are treated as allusions rather than metonyms.²⁰ M. Bradford Bedingfield’s summary of scholarship on the relationship between liturgy and *Dream of the Rood* epitomizes this typical literary approach toward the study of medieval verse, and toward liturgical features in *Dream of the Rood* more particularly (2002:137):

¹⁹ See, for example, Patch 1919; Ó Carragáin 1982, 1983, 2005, 2010; Samuels 1988; Hill 1993; Bedingfield 2002; and Keefer 2005, 2008. For other liturgical and ritualistic sources: Patch explores verbal and imagistic associations with a wide array of hymns; Julia Bolton Holloway (1984) has argued that pilgrimage to Jerusalem served as the creative and spiritual model for *Dream of the Rood* (and the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses, and the *Adoratio crucis*); Earl R. Anderson (1989) has also described the poem’s association with the symbolism of the canonical hours; and Murray McGillivray (2005) has shown that the introit and gradual of the Christmas Day Mass may explain the use of the phrase “engel dryhtnes” (“angel of the Lord”) as an epithet for Christ.

²⁰ Ó Carragáin (2010) also suggests that Holy Week rituals were influenced by a poetic tradition in which crosses were dramatized, a tradition from which *Dream of the Rood* eventually emerged.

The general consensus of those looking to place *The Dream of the Rood* in some sort of liturgical context is that, due to the individual genius of the poet of the Vercelli version (and due to the fact that we know little about the liturgical forms at the stages of the poem's development), we can find only echoes of the liturgy, not direct borrowings, and that we must therefore discuss the poem and the liturgy in terms of analogues, not sources.

By using the immanent art approach, another path opens up before us, one that does not require that we analyze "echoes of the liturgy" as either analogues or direct quotations of specific sources. Instead, clear references to ritualization may operate as idioms with metonymic force.

Dream of the Rood and Liturgical Metonyms

Specific verses in *Dream of the Rood* echo the ceremonies of Holy Week, in particular the *Adoratio crucis* or Veneration of the Cross at the Nones Office on Good Friday. Ó Carragáin traces the similarities between Christ and rood in the Gospel of the Mass (Luke 22:1-23) on the Wednesday of Holy Week in which Christ is implicitly compared to the green wood (*viridi ligno*) of the forest: "this identification was probably inspired by early Christian liturgy and iconography, which regularly presented the glorified cross as a symbol of Christ" (2010:149-51; see also Ó Carragáin 2005:311-16). Keefer remarks that lines 55b-56a of *Dream of the Rood*, "Weop eal gesceaft, / cwiðdon Cyninges fyll" ("All creation wept, mourned the fall of the king"),²¹ contain an "eerie echo" of the *Dum fabricator mundi* antiphon that "recounts the moment of Christ's death on the cross when creation cried out in anguish" (2008:240) through the phrase "terre motus enim factus fuerit magnus quia mortem filii dei clamabat mundus se sustinere non posse" ("all the great earth was shaken because the world cried out at the death of the Son of God which it could not bear") (Keefer 2008:212, n. 17).²² This antiphon is sung as part of the adoration of the unveiled cross during the Veneration of the Cross ritual (*ibid.*:212).

I would also call attention to other parts of the synaxis that have vernacular echoes in the poem, since the verbal, rhetorical, and imagistic parallels function cumulatively as metonyms for the ritual event of the *Adoratio*. For instance, the hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* of Venantius Fortunatus was sung with the stanza *Crux fidelis* ("O faithful cross") serving as a refrain (Keefer 2008:212-14). The first line of this stanza may be found in the vernacular poetic idiom of *Dream of the Rood* (ll. 90-91):²³

Hymn:	Crux fidelis inter omnes arbor una nobilis "O faithful cross, among all others a singular tree"
Poem:	Hwæt, me þa geweorðode wuldres Ealdor ofer holmwudu, heofonrices Weard.

²¹ The Old English text is from Swanton 1996. All Old English translations are my own.

²² Translation from the Latin is by Keefer.

²³ Patch (1919:252) links different verses from the *Pange lingua* to *Dream of the Rood*.

“Listen, the Lord of glory then honored me over sea-wood, the
Guardian of heaven.”

Like the *Advent Lyrics* (*Christ I*), *Dream of the Rood* appears to invest its verse with vernacular translations of liturgical antiphons and hymns. Scholars have sometimes described these liturgical references as occasions for meditation. But these references also participate in a communication strategy typical to oral-related verse: metonymic referentiality. As metonyms for Latin verses and their liturgical contexts, these translations invoke generally the Latin liturgy and specifically the moments in which their referents arise. Such lines in *Dream of the Rood* as “weop eal gesceaft” (l. 155b) and “Hwæt, me þa geweorðode wuldres Ealdor . . .” (l. 90) function as ritual metonyms that link the vernacular poem to sacred liturgy, bringing to bear the promise of redemption associated with participation in the liturgy.

Furthermore, the poem invokes the entire sequence of the *Adoratio* by following the steps in which the ritual unfolds. Keefer describes the sequence of the ritual, based on composite sources, as follows:²⁴ “(1) a procession and responsory that brings forward the shrouded cross as emblem of Christ crucified and then unveils it; (2) the adoration proper, with individual prayers, sung psalms, and antiphons; (3) the singing of the *Pange lingua* (and the unique *Deposito crucis*) to complete the Veneration ritual proper” (2008:208).²⁵ She writes that the rood’s first appearance to the Dreamer resembles the revelation of the cross in the Veneration ritual: “Just as the *crux gemmata* is unveiled through vision to reveal the True Cross for the Visionary in *The Dream of the Rood*, so the processional cross or jeweled cross reliquary of Good Friday is unveiled to become, for its viewers, the Rood on which Christ died: *Ecce lignum crucis*” (240). The dream vision genre itself helps to frame the extraordinary context in which the Holy Cross could be unveiled to the minds of both the Dreamer and the poem’s audience. Descriptively, the poem enacts a process of unveiling by first presenting a “syllicre treow” (“uncanny tree”), then revealing that the tree was in fact the “beama beorhtost” (“brightest of trees”) covered in gold and adorned with five jewels, upon which all creation gazes. The mysteriousness of the “tree” is then emphasized again in such lines as “syllic wæs se sigebeam” (“uncanny was the victory-tree,” 13a) and the manner in which it shifts between bloody and bejeweled states. Such a transition, Patch has noted (1919:249-51), could signify the shift in ritual usage from a Lenten to Easter cross. Not least, the poem’s deployment of the riddle genre, when the Cross recounts its origins, further emphasizes the mental path from mystery and confusion to revelation. For an audience familiar with the Veneration ritual, the connection between the mysterious slow-reveal of the “syllicre treow” and the unveiling would, however, probably not be clear until the poem metonymically signals the subsequent parts of the Veneration sequence.

²⁴ Her sources are “Roman *ordines*, continental service books, and customaries,” as well as the *Regularis Concordia* and two recently discovered eleventh-century manuscripts: Oxford, Bodl. Lib., Bodley 120, and CCCC 422, which she describes as “the only witnesses for an Anglo-Saxon Veneration of the Cross service which demonstrate actual practice of the Good Friday service, a practice that confirms the better-known prescription of church ritual as it was laid out in the tenth century” (2008:206).

²⁵ As a consequence of these ritualized representations of the events of the crucifixion, “the congregation is actively drawn into a dramatic recreation of the past within the present” (Keefer 2008:210).

By invoking the second and third steps in the *Adoratio crucis* sequence, *Dream of the Rood* calls forth sense memories of bodily participation in ritual. In the second part, the members of the clergy and the congregation approach “the unveiled cross and pray at its foot” (Keefer 2008:210), a process that is echoed in the representation of the Dreamer prostrate at the foot of the cross (ll. 24-25): “Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange hwile / beheold hreowcearig Hælendes treow” (“Yet lying there for a long while I, troubled with sorrow, beheld the tree of the Healer”). Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Catherine Bell writes that one of the outcomes of ritualization is the creation of “ritualized bodies,” or “a body invested with a ‘sense’ of ritual” (1992:98). In the Veneration ritual the placement of the cross above the body creates the perception of a naturalized hierarchy, with the human body in the lowest position, the cross above, and beyond the God of heaven.²⁶ Thus, the ritualized body engenders the felt perception of the cross as mediator between humanity and Christ. In the third part of the sequence, the *Pange lingua* is sung, and, as we have seen, *Dream of the Rood* translates the most prominent line of the recurring refrain from this hymn. In terms of ritual poetics, then, the poem invokes the ritualized body at the Veneration of the Cross. The lines that recall the *Dum fabricator mundi* antiphon and the *Pange lingua gloriosi* metonymically call forth the lived experience of intoning or listening to them. Above all, the mirrored sequence of steps in the Veneration ritual and the multi-layered invocation of both the ritualized body and its acoustic environment all contribute to invoking an experience of the Veneration of the Cross, while locating this experience in the personal, first-person narrative of the Dreamer.²⁷

Crosses that Speak

Another important metonym operates in *Dream of the Rood* to link the narrative of the talking Holy Cross with direct experiences of ritualized crosses of stone and wood that “speak.” Two artifacts suggestively point toward the possibility that, in the Anglo-Saxon Christian tradition, material crosses could be invested with first-person identities and represented as speakers. Both the Brussels Cross (early 11th century) and the Ruthwell Cross (late 7th-early 8th century) have inscriptions that represent them speaking directly to the reader or auditor. The Brussels Cross states, “Rod is min nama; geo ic ricne cyning bær byfigynde, blod bestemed” (“Rood is my name; I once bore the powerful king, trembling, soaked with blood”), recalling some of the sentiments and lexical choices in lines 36b (“bifian”), 42a (“bifode”), 44 (“Rod wæs ic aræred. Ahof ic ricne Cyning”), and 48b (“eall ic wæs mid blode bestemed”) of *Dream of the Rood*. Even more intriguingly, the Ruthwell Cross carries a runic inscription whose lines directly overlap with a handful of those in *Dream of the Rood* (ll. 39, 40b-41a, 42b, 44b-45, 48-49a, 56b-59, 62b-64a). Verses from the Ruthwell Cross appear in italics interlineally

²⁶ Cf. ll. 155b-56 of *Dream of the Rood* describing Christ’s ascension to heaven: “þa heora Wealdend cwom, / ælmihtig God, þær his eðel wæs” (“then their Ruler came, almighty God, where his homeland was”).

²⁷ From the perspective of ritual studies, these lines would invoke, for Christians, the obligation “to act in conformity to form” (Rappaport 1999:136), that is, to approach the cross with reverence.

(Swanton 1996:94-97):²⁸

Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð, (þæt wæs God ælmihtig),
 [+ Ond]geredæ hinæ God almehttig

... gestah he on gealgan heanne,
 þa he walde on galgu gistiga

modig on manigra gesyhðe ...
 [m]odig f[ore allæ] men.

... ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan to eorðan,
 [B]ug[a ic ni dorstæ]

... Ahof ic ricne Cyning,
 [Ahof] ic riicnæ Kyniŋc,

heofona Hlaford; hyldan me ne dorste.
 heafunæs Hlafard, hælda ic ni dorstæ.

...

Bysmeredon hie unc butu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid blode bestemed,
 Bismærædu unŋket men ba ætgad[re]; ic [wæs] miþ blodæ [b]istemi[d],

begoten of þæs guman sidan. ...
 bi[goten of]

... Crist wæs on rode.
 + Krist wæs on rodi.

Hwæðere þær fuse feorran cwoman
 Hweþræ þer fusæ fearran kwomu

to þam æðelinge. Ic þæt eall beheold.
 æþpilæ til anum. Ic þæt al bih[eald]

Sare ic wæs mid [sorgum] gedrefed, hnag ic. ...
 Sar[æ] ic wæs mi[þ] sorgum gidræ[fi]d, h[n]ag [ic]

...

²⁸ Ó Carragáin (2010:138-42) contrasts the Ruthwell and *Dream of the Rood* verses.

... mid strælum forwundod.
mip strelum giwundad.

Aledon hie ðær limwerigne, gestodon him æt his lices heafðum;
Alegdun hie hinæ limwærigne, gistoddum him [. . .] licæs [hea]ff[du]m;

beheoldon hie ðær. . . .
 [bi]hea[l]du[n] hi[æ] be[r]

In the following translation, words that appear only in *Dream of the Rood* are in bold; those that occur only on the Ruthwell Cross are in italics and, when necessary, in parentheses. When the translations overlap directly, no italicization or bolding is used.

The **young hero** unclothed himself then: **that was** God almighty *When he leaped (wished to leap) onto the high gallows, mighty in the sight of many (before all men). . . . Yet I did not dare to bow down to the earth. . . . I lifted the powerful king, the lord of heavens, nor did I dare to bend. . . . They mocked us both together. I was all drenched with blood, poured forth from the man's side. . . . Christ was on the rood. Yet they swiftly came from afar to the lord (nobles [came] to the one).*²⁹ I beheld all that. In pain, I was distressed with sorrow, I bent . . . deeply wounded with arrows. There they laid down the limb-weary one, stood at his head, they beheld there. . . .

For audiences with the “experiential heritage” linking poem and standing cross, the lexical echoes in *Dream of the Rood* could have served as a ritualistic metonym for being in the presence of the Ruthwell Cross or others like it. The cross’s presence would have been associated with specific ritualizations (the Mass, Lauds, Vespers, the ceremonies of Holy Week, and so on). Although the lines on the Ruthwell Cross and in the Vercelli Codex were inscribed during different centuries, using different dialects and different alphabets, their lexical similarities suggest a shared tradition.³⁰ Two possibilities present themselves: first, that the “ekphrastic” verses on the Ruthwell Cross directly inspired *Dream of the Rood*; second, that lost oral, written, or etched versions of these texts could connect them across centuries and dialects. Either possibility creates the conditions for a relationship between the longer poem, in manuscript form (the book itself being an object highly invested with ritualistic potential), and a cross (or crosses and reliquaries containing crosses) employed in ritualized situations.

²⁹ On the translation of this line of the Ruthwell inscription, see Bammesberger 2009.

³⁰ Ó Carragáin treats *Dream of the Rood* as part of a larger tradition, including the verses on the Ruthwell Cross and the distich on the Brussels Cross. He suggests, in addition, that “some versions of the dream-vision frame of the Vercelli poem existed as early as the end of the seventh century (perhaps a generation before the Ruthwell Cross) in sung, oral forms” from which the Ruthwell tituli were excerpted (2010:141). Although no surviving testaments to these oral songs and their content exist, it is evident from the similarities between *Dream of the Rood* and the Ruthwell Cross verses that these poems were more than religious lyric (in a narrow sense); they engage the reader or auditor in the spectrum of ritualistic functions that feature the cross, ranging from the Exaltation of the Cross on Good Friday during Holy Week to personal devotion.

To generate a sense of what the metonymic invocation of the Ruthwell Cross (or others like it) may, at least in part, denote, we need to consider how the Ruthwell Cross could have been used and perceived by Anglo-Saxons. Etched vine scrolls emphasize that the Ruthwell Cross is “fundamentally a tree: an image, central to pre-Christian Germanic religion, which in Christian culture became the *arbor vitae*, an image of the *mysterium fidei*” (Ó Carragáin 2005:286). Like Christ, the figure of the Ruthwell Cross unifies seemingly opposite states: it is inert stone, but also living wood (*arbor vitae*); a bringer of death and a token of eternal life; a massive figure of stony silence and a speaking object.³¹ The four sides of the cross announce to the ear and eye its vital role in Christ’s sacred history. As an emblem of doubleness and a synthesis of contradictions, it easily fulfills the role of Christ’s simulacrum. From the perspective of ritual poetics, the metonymic invocation of the inscriptions on the Ruthwell Cross calls into the acoustic and imaginative experience of *Dream of the Rood* the experiential knowledge of a silent-speaking cross. In both sets of verses, those on the cross and those in the Vercelli manuscript, the rood is identified as Christ’s companion when he conquered death. In a parallel move, the metonymic reference in *Dream of the Rood* to the inscribed stone cross (that speaks using first-person narration) re-creates the cross-as-companion association in the mind of the audience. They, like the Dreamer, may “in breostum bereð beacna selest” (“in the breast carry the best of signs,” 118), since by hearing or reading about the speaking Cross, the lived experience of being in the presence of ritual crosses is called to mind—the mind in Anglo-Saxon verse and prose being synonymous with the heart.³²

By exploring the possibilities of a ritual poetics in medieval verse, we may glimpse how poems that already use the traditional referentiality of an oral poetics may likewise engage a ritual referentiality in order to evoke experiences of specific ritualized objects and ceremonies. By wedding the findings of immanent art to ritual theories of signification, in what I am calling “ritual poetics,” we may discover that lines of verse carry a metonymic force linking the spoken or oral-related written word to the vivid, multilayered experience of ritualized situations. I have sought to demonstrate that *Dream of the Rood* not only alludes to liturgical sources and the runic inscription on the Ruthwell Cross; it may also invoke for its audience the lived sensory experience of ritual, for both aesthetic and religious effect. By metonymically summoning the *Adoratio crucis* ritual, the poem evokes the ritualized bodies of participants, the sensory memory of obedience and humility before the cross, and experiences of revelation and adoration.

In the third phase of the *Adoratio*, the cross undergoes a ritual burial or *Depositio crucis*, an act that viscerally yokes the cross to Christ’s personal narrative. There are strong theological parallels between the *Depositio crucis* ritual and *Dream of the Rood* since both treat the Cross as a representation of “the physical body and by implication the human nature of Christ” (Hill 1993:299). In addition to expressing theological congruence with this ritual, the poem also metonymically invokes the *Depositio crucis* in the verses: “Ða us man fyllan ongan / ealle to

³¹ As Keefer notes, “the cross, as understood within the Christian aesthetic, becomes the paradox of simplicity in design, enclosing within its own semantics a great complexity of truths” (2008:204).

³² See Locket 2011, as well as Mize 2010:137-51, who writes that the phrase *in breostum* is one of “numerous examples” through which “*The Dream of the Rood* represents the dreamer’s understanding of and devotion to the True Cross, gained through his *visio crucis*, as a mental object contained within the enclosure of his heart” (150).

eorðan; þæt wæs egeslic wyrd! / Bedealf us man on deopan seape.” (ll. 73b-75a; “then one began to fell us, utterly, to the earth; that was a terrible fate! He buried us in a deep pit.”) While these lines surely reflect the *Inventio* legend (represented in *Elene* and other Anglo-Saxon texts), they also accord with the third phase of the *Adoratio crucis*, when, as described in the *Regularis Concordia* (1953:44-45), the deacons place the venerated cross, wrapped in a napkin, within an altar transformed to represent a sepulcher. Bedingfield illustrates for the ritual participants the strong association between Christ and Cross that this ritual and earlier adoration of the Cross confers: “In the *Adoratio* and the *Depositio*, then, the participants watch in awe Christ dead on the Cross, taken down, and buried, yet all the while burning with conquering power, with the promise of Harrowing and Resurrection” (2002:132). The close identification of Christ with the Cross, enacted by this ritual, suggests that as a consequence, adoring, touching, kissing, and gazing upon the cross, as well as making the sign of the cross with one’s own body, may all be a means to connect with Christ. The Dreamer expresses as much when he characterizes the rood as the vehicle that would transport him to Christ’s heavenly abode (ll. 122-43b). *Dream of the Rood* draws on the ritual tradition to evoke physically, sensorially, memorially, and spiritually the wretchedness and wonder that Christians may experience in the Cross’s presence, and their desire to move along the metonymic trajectory from Holy Cross to Christ. As the Cross concludes in *Dream of the Rood* (119-21),

Ac ðurh ða rode sceal rice gesecan
of eorðwege æghwylc sawl,
seo þe mid Wealdende wunian þenceð.

“But each soul must seek the kingdom, from the earth-way, via the rood—the soul who intends to dwell with the Ruler.”

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Oral Tradition and Sappho

R. Scott Garner

Over the last several decades there has developed among scholars an increasing willingness to examine the many possibilities that existed for the oral performance of non-epic poetry in the song culture of the early Greek world.¹ However, perhaps because archaic lyric and elegiac poets are often considered to have been individual artisans displaying unique brands of creativity, philosophy, and emotion,² there has been an unfortunate reluctance by scholars to delve beyond the ancient performance arena itself and consider how other aspects of the poetic process are themselves indebted to oral traditional practices. In a recent monograph, I attempted to redress part of this scholarly imbalance by demonstrating that much of archaic Greek elegy should be viewed in light of the oral-formulaic techniques that lay at its compositional core (Garner 2011). In this essay I would like to build on those earlier arguments in order to raise the possibility that Sappho's stanzaic poetry also might be understood as oral, traditional, and even formulaic.

Of course, the idea that Sappho's poems are to one degree or another related to oral traditional compositional techniques is not novel. Milman Parry himself raised the idea as early as 1932 (29-30):

The same forces which created the poetic epic language of Homer created the poetic lyric language of Sappho and Alcaeus. The scant remains of these two poets do not allow us to show, as we can do for Homer, that their diction is formulaic, and so oral and traditional. We do know, however, that Solon and Theognis were still following an oral tradition of iambic poetry, and that they lived at that time, always so precious for our own knowledge of oral poetries of the past and present, when verse-making was oral but writing known and used as a means of recording and keeping. All that we know of the use of writing in Greece at the beginning of the sixth century

¹ See, for example, Nagy 1990a, 1990b; Gentili 1988; for Sappho in particular and her awareness of positioning herself within this performance-based society, see Lardinois 2008 and the bibliography therein. On the dominant early Greek cultural mindset being steeped in orality more generally, see Havelock 1963, 1982; Thomas 1989.

² Sappho in particular is especially often put forward as the epitome of this Greek poetic individuality. Thus, for instance, Bowra once stated that "Sappho seems to have been sure of herself and her art" (1961:246) and Svenbro claimed that Sappho is more specifically "is the poem of an individual" (1975:49). Such issues are also at the heart of more recent debates concerning Sappho's position within or against masculine norms of behavior; see, for example, Skinner 1993, 2002; Greene 2002; Winkler 2002.

points to the same thing for Sappho and Alcaeus. Yet while we may feel some doubt as to the way in which they made their verses, there is not the least doubt that their poetic language was drawn from an oral tradition: only in an oral poetry does one ever find such a variety of forms that have each one its own metrical value.

For Parry it was this last distinctive characteristic of coexisting metrical by-forms and the corresponding thrift with which they were employed that constituted firm evidence that a given poet was working within a formulaic oral tradition.³ But since the output of poets such as Sappho and Alcaeus was not preserved in large enough quantities for such analysis to be conclusive in the same way that it was for Homer, Parry made no further effort to detail any possible relationship between the Lesbian poets and oral-formulaic compositional techniques, and in fact only a handful of other scholars since Parry's time have pursued the issue in any depth, either in relation to Sappho specifically or with respect to early Greek lyric more broadly.⁴ Instead, the few recent attempts to analyze the relationship between lyric and oral traditional poetic techniques have tended either to proceed in the quite problematic direction of exploring intertextual parallels between lyric and epic⁵ or to limit their analysis to diachronic issues of metrical development.⁶ The result, then, has been that some scholars have dismissed altogether the oral traditional nature of such poetry while others have accepted the idea of a predominantly oral context for performance and transmission of the poems but have done so without taking the additional step of considering the specific expressive means by which these poems achieved their desired effects within such traditional arenas.⁷

³ See especially Parry 1930 and 1932.

⁴ Though "lyric" originally designated only poetry sung to the lyre or another stringed instrument, here and throughout this essay I use the term synonymously with "non-epic" to include iambic and elegiac poetry as well. (Cf. Gentili 1988:32.) My choice in this matter is not meant to diminish the role that instrumental accompaniment or lack of it helped determine issues of genre in the ancient world, but is instead aimed at underlining the variability with which such accompaniment actually seems to have occurred in the early Greek poetic landscape and the interdependence that such genres had on each other. See further Gentili 1988:32-49, Garner 2011:4-6.

⁵ As a small representative sample of works exemplifying this approach in conjunction with Sappho in particular, see Page 1955, Harvey 1957, Svenbro 1975, Hooker 1977, Rissman 1983, and Schrenk 1994. More recently, Winkler (2002) has similarly suggested that "Sappho's use of Homeric passages is a way of allowing us, even encouraging us, to approach her consciousness as a woman and poet reading Homer" (46), though elsewhere he argues that archaic lyric "was not composed for private reading but for performance to an audience" (41).

⁶ See, for example, West 1973, Nagy 1974 (with further theoretical refinements found in Nagy 1979, 1990b:439-64, 1996, and 1998), Haslam 1976, Berg 1978, and Bowie 1981.

⁷ For a fuller account of these methodologies being applied to early non-epic Greek poetry, see Garner 2003:389-91. The few notable exceptions to this pattern of scholarly inattention toward oral traditional practices being present in lyric have been found in discussions of elegy, most notably in the work of Giannini (1973:61) and Barnes (1984:ch. 3; 1995). Even in these perceptive studies, however, only isolated aspects of meter and enjambement are considered without further discussion of the larger processes involved.

Sappho and Oral Performance

Before we look into the specifics of traditional compositional techniques used by Sappho, what can we first say with certainty concerning the original performance arena for her poems? We know from both internal and external testimonia, for instance, that the usual means for presenting lyric poetry to an audience in archaic Greece involved active performance, with performance modes varying from monodic to choral and with instrumental accompaniment (or the lack thereof) further helping to define the performance arena.⁸ For Sappho in particular this connection between music and poetic production is made even stronger by the depictions of the poet within archaic and classical vase painting, where musical instruments and singing play prominent roles, even when Sappho is pictured as reading the poetry from a book while sitting.⁹ Positioning Sappho's works within a more specific performance frame, though, is a much more difficult task. On one end of the spectrum, it has been argued that the majority of Sappho's poems must have been private monodic poems for limited audiences within an intimate *thíasos* and that much of the significance of the poems is thus hidden from anyone outside that original religious group; however, it has also been put forward that Sappho's poems, however intimate they may seem, were actually the remains of great choral activity on the island of Lesbos and that their content should be viewed primarily with this larger audience in mind.¹⁰ Unfortunately scant evidence remains as a basis for such speculation, and in all likelihood many of Sappho's songs were probably performed and re-performed in a variety of different contexts such as weddings and funerals where the line between private and public would have already been blurred for the audiences involved. However, even if we imagine these poems as being performed for the most intimate of audiences, it is quite clear—as André Lardinois (2008) has observed—that Sappho herself imagined her own fame and that of her subjects as carrying on through the memory of her poetry's actual performances rather than through its textualized transmission.¹¹

Nevertheless, at least in the cases of the poems that have survived to us today, textualization did indeed enter into the picture at some point. When and how this process occurred is, however, unknown, though at least three possible scenarios exist:

⁸ See further Bowra 1961:3-4, Campbell 1964, Herrington 1985:192-200, Gentili 1988:24-49, Nagy 1990b: 19-20, Gerber 1997 (espec. pp. 96-97), Garner 2011:4-6.

⁹ Yatromanolakis (2001) provides a catalogue of vases from 610-540 BCE on which Sappho is positively labeled or more tentatively identified. For a fuller discussion of these vase depictions alongside the relevant literary evidence, see also Yatromanolakis 2007.

¹⁰ This lively debate concerning issues of Sappho's audience and the circumstances of performance has now extended over several decades, and the above possibilities are only the most disparate of the many contexts that have been envisioned for Sappho's performances. A few of the more important forays into this discussion are represented by Merkelbach 1957; Calame 1977:367-72, 1996; Hallett 1979; Gentili 1988; Parker 1993; Lardinois 1994; and Stehle 1997:262-318. Cf. more recently Ferrari 2010:31-38.

¹¹ See especially fragments 16 and 94.

- (1) Sappho's poems were originally performed and transmitted orally (whether or not previous written composition was involved) before being fixed in written form at a much later point.
- (2) Sappho's poems were originally performed orally and were written down quickly afterward by Sappho herself or another individual present as either a performer or an audience member.
- (3) Sappho's poems were originally composed as written works and were always transmitted as such.

Scenario 1 is closest to the view held by scholars such as Nagy (1990b) and Gentili (1988:19) who view the fossilizing of lyric poetry in written form as a product of cultural change that occurred only later in the Greek world, with few readers of poetry existing in large numbers before the fifth century.¹² Under such circumstances, the transition of works into written form would be rather separate from the original processes of poetic composition and performance; accordingly, poets such as Sappho would rarely have been composing with the idea of written dissemination of their works as a primary goal. Instead, the impetus for such textualization would have been likely to arrive from an external source, perhaps in Sappho's case as the result of prominent families on Lesbos wishing to create poetic texts as possessions that heightened their status by strengthening their connections to the poet.¹³

On the other hand, Scenarios 2 and 3 imagine Sappho herself as the motivating force behind our texts, with the qualitative difference between the two scenarios being only whether the written words were initially the scripts or the revisions of the original performances.¹⁴ The pre-existence of written texts might seem especially likely if we view Sappho's output as primarily choral, since textualized versions might act as aids for teaching complex pieces to a company for singing and dancing in a group performance, but comparative evidence has shown that even choral output regularly occurs without reliance on writing.¹⁵ One might also point to the lack of internal and external references linking written composition with Sapphic poetry as evidence that standardized written texts came only later, but such evidence is regularly lacking for the entirety of the early Greek poetic corpus and could simply be coincidental or the byproduct of lyric poems being primarily situated in the oral performance arena. In any case, it is

¹² Cf. Ford 2003.

¹³ The suggestion is that of Davison (1968:101).

¹⁴ These two scenarios would then fall much more in line with the view held by Gerber concerning early Greek lyric more generally (1997:3-4): "In spite of the prodigious capability of the early Greeks to preserve poetry orally, it seems difficult to believe that contemporary copies of lyric poetry did not exist, especially for longer poems." Gerber does, however, admit that the evidence is slender for such written transmission without prior oral circulation.

¹⁵ Cf., for example, Gentili's discussion (1988:20-21) of a non-written choral tradition in the Gilbert Islands. Similarly, many of the traditional songs underlying the Finnish *Kalevala* circulated orally through group performance long before (and also after) they were collected and standardized by Lönnrot in the nineteenth century.

now impossible to determine at exactly what point writing entered into the composition or transmission of Sappho's poetry, and the very fact that her output has survived to us through such a variety of sources—including literary quotations, inscriptions, and scattered papyri—indicates that the circumstances of textualization may have varied quite a lot from one poem to the next.

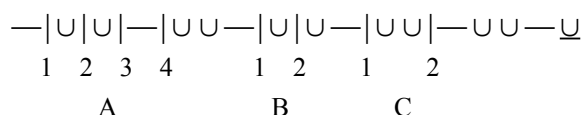
But although we cannot now locate the specific role of writing in the history of our surviving texts, wherever and whenever the written word came into the poetic process it did so—as we have seen—within an environment where the oral performance of poetry must still have been common and probably even the norm, and it is ultimately the societal expectations of these original audiences (rather than the written or oral nature of the compositional process itself) that would have been more likely to determine the particular mode of expression that Sappho employed to communicate meaningfully among her contemporaries. Even if those closest to the poet could appreciate her art through written texts, many of Sappho's poems seem to have gained fame quickly throughout the Greek world in locations far removed from their original production, and the dominant aesthetic that would have unified these widely diverse audiences would have been one steeped in oral performance along with the interpretive frame that it provided. For any given tradition, it is always possible for the boundaries themselves between oral and written to become blurred, or even for oral composition to give way entirely to the written mode. However, as long as the context of oral performance remains intact, the process of creating meaningful art will continue to make use of many enabling devices from the traditional compositional register. As Foley has maintained (1999:17), “since these forms constitute a real and singularly expressive language, rather than a standard kit of handy compositional tools, there is no reason why they should immediately cede place to an entirely new, unrelated mode of expression.” Indeed, the persistence of these traditional forms of oral communication must have been especially important in ancient Greece, where the general acquisition of literacy was a particularly slow and uneven process, and it becomes even more likely that whatever success Sappho attained in her poetry was arrived at only by the meshing of her own individual genius with what must have been a thriving and pervasive oral tradition on the island of Lesbos around the beginning of the sixth century.¹⁶

Traditional Structuring Techniques in Lesbian Stanzaic Poetry

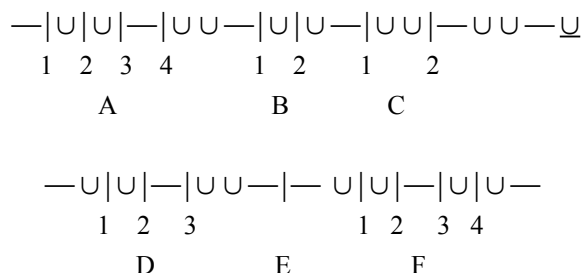
Our driving question thus moves away from whether or not Sappho used writing to compose her poetry and focuses instead on what techniques of oral traditional composition she might have employed and to what degree she might have relied on them to infuse her poems with meaning accessible to a wide range of audiences. As a starting point for investigating such issues, we might note that in both early Greece and traditions from around the world, one of the most common characteristics of oral and oral-derived poetry is the regularity with which it

¹⁶ Foley has previously explained that tradition and individual talent act as complementary and not oppositional forces (1999:xii): “tradition provides the language, but it is the speaker who breaks the silence, whether eloquently or otherwise. Remove the language and all connection to the traditional context is lost, but remove the performing poet and the silence resumes. As with any medium, while an artistic heritage is always theoretically in the public domain, artistic brilliance is the achievement of relatively few. The tradition and the poet both matter.”

partitions its phraseology into formulaic semantic units. That such semantic partitioning was used as a structuring principle in traditional Greek epic poetry has been demonstrated by numerous scholars, going back at least as far as Fränkel, who in his 1926 work showed that Homeric hexameters normally comprise four semantic units (or cola) that stand as the basic constituents of the line. Although the caesurae that set the boundaries for these colonic units have been somewhat debated, Fränkel's original schema for breaking down the hexameter remains the most commonly accepted arrangement by scholars today, though many (including myself) prefer to consider at least some of the A breaks as secondary rather than primary juncture points in the line:¹⁷



Within such a system, the first phraseological element starts at the beginning of the line and continues on to one of four possible stopping points (A 1-4), after which the next unit continues on until one of the two possible mid-line juncture points (B 1-2); the third element then starts from one of these two positions and fills out the line up to either the hepthemimeral caesura or bucolic diaeresis (C 1-2), with a final phrase then completing the rest of the hexameter. Similarly, early Greek elegy also displays four-part structuring tendencies in both the hexameter and so-called “pentameter” portions of each couplet:¹⁸



Both early Greek epic and elegy thus had built-in structuring principles for their traditional phraseology that necessitated and at the same time enabled semantic and metrical coordination.¹⁹

¹⁷ For a fuller discussion of the scholarship involved in determining such breaks, see Foley 1990:73-80. Cf. also the arguments made for varying divisions as proposed by Porter (1951), Peabody (1975), Foley (1990), Russo (1997), Clark (2004), Garner (2011:6-9). See Kirk 1966 and 1985:18-24 for possible doubts concerning the true applicability of such a four-part structuring system for Homer.

¹⁸ For the evidence of such structuring, see Garner 2011:9-17.

¹⁹ It should be mentioned, however, that this colonic structuring of the hexameter is not absolutely rigid in its employment within all Homeric lines. For instance, semantic unit endings do not occur universally in all lines at one of the B caesurae; a small but significant 1% of hexameters have these breaks “blocked,” with the semantic unit continuing on until at least the C caesura. Blockages for the A and C caesurae occur in fully 10% of all lines. (See further Foley 1990:79-82.) Archaic elegy contains a similar number of digressions from these structural norms, though in the hexameter portion there does seem to be a slightly less rigid standard of employment. (Cf. Garner 2011:9-11, 16.)

As it turns out, Lesbian stanzaic poetry also exhibits regularized structuring principles for its phraseology, though the organizational patterns differ somewhat from those found in early Greek epic and elegy.²⁰ On the island of Lesbos, rather than lines comprising four separate phraseological parts, it is tripartite structures that dominate the various poetic forms. There are of course some Aeolic meters that do not seem to be organized in three parts,²¹ and in some cases the evidence is too fragmentary to determine any underlying structural tendencies, but in general the three-part division is the one that dominates the poetic landscape. For instance, if Plutarch's quotation of the "Miller's Song" from Eresus is considered authentic (*Septem sapientium convivium* 14),²²

ἄλει, μύλα, ἄλει·
καὶ γὰρ Πιττακὸς ἄλει
μεγάλας Μυτιλάνας βασιλεύων.

(Grind, mill, grind / for even Pittakos grinds / ruling over great Mytilene.)

we have at least one example of what may be considered a Lesbian folksong to be sung in conjunction with the grinding of corn.²³ Although the poem is simple and does not employ any recognizable meter, the tripartite organization is obvious—even if nearly all of the units consist of a single word.²⁴ Of the three lines, the only place where the three-part division might be

²⁰ The following discussion draws heavily from and builds upon my remarks concerning Alcaic and Sapphic stanzas found in Garner 2003:51-57.

²¹ At least some counter-examples to such Lesbian tripartite structuring still show regularized phraseological organization. For instance, the possible Lesbian folksong quoted by Hephaestion (Campbell 1982:171-72 [Sappho fr. 168B]) does not adhere to the three-part structuring tradition and instead seems to consist of only two phraseological elements that balance each other out on each side of the line:

δέδυκε μὲν ἅ σελάννα
καὶ Πληΐαδες μέσαι δὲ
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὦρα·
ἐγὼ δὲ μόνα καθεύδω.

Such structuring, however, seems to have been the exception rather than the rule, and it had very little influence on Lesbian poetry as a whole.

²² See Campbell 1967 (*Carm. pop.* 869).

²³ This specific type of song is mentioned by Athenaeus (xiv.618c). Cf. the discussion of this poem by Bowra (1961:143-44).

²⁴ As will become clear in the analyses that follow, I do not avoid considering the possibility that single words can act as integers of traditional phraseology, though I often omit them as evidence for actual formula employment since less controversial examples can be used instead. Such worries, though, are mitigated when such isolated words appear to fill out entire cola on a recurring basis in one or more types of early Greek verse. Additionally, as Foley has shown (1990:44-50), comparative evidence suggests that traditional oral poets most often do not themselves recognize the distinction between individual lexemes and longer phraseological units that work together as a single traditional "word," and thus there seems to be little reason to deny their importance in relation to the verse-structuring techniques used on Lesbos.

raw flesh. Come, with gracious spirit hear our prayer, and rescue us from these hardships and from grievous exile. . . .)

Alcaeus 6.1-3:

τόδ' αὖτε κύμα τὸ π[ρ]οτέρ[ω] †νέμω†
στείχει,] παρέξει δ' ἄ[μμι πόνον π]όλυν
ἄντλην ἐπεί κε νᾶ[ος ἔμβαι . . .

(This wave in turn comes [like?] the previous one, and it will give us much trouble to bale out when it enters the ship's. . . .)

The above divisions are based first on major syntactic divisions and a practice of keeping together inseparable prepositive and postpositive elements, and in those cases where juncture points are still uncertain, my methodology has been whenever possible to compare the Alcaic phraseology with similar recurring elements that fill out entire cola in other archaic Greek meters or to make divisions on the basis of syntactic parallels if the phrase (or sometimes the individual word) is not found elsewhere as a unit.²⁶ Though the results may seem a bit subjective, it is worth noting that every Alcaic stanza that has survived to us from archaic Lesbos can be divided in this tripartite fashion.

Finally, the structuring of the Sapphic stanza is slightly more complex. The first two lines of each stanza consistently divide into three portions just as do their Alcaic counterparts, but the third and fourth lines—in actuality a single line as far as metrical analysis is concerned²⁷—together comprise four semantic units. Again, the following examples (which I present with the third and fourth lines combined but with their conventional line numbering) are representative:

Sappho 1.9-16:

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον
ῥέεσσι στρουθιοὶ περὶ γὰρ μελαίνας
πύκνα δίννεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω ἴθερος διὰ μέσσω·²⁸

αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
μειδιαισίσ' ἀθανάτωι προσώπῳ
ἦρε' ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι δηῦτε κάλημμι

²⁶ Importantly, in those cases where I have separated words from their modifiers, it is nearly always the case that these items fill out cola individually somewhere else in the corpus. Also, as is the case for Homeric phrase structuring, strings of more than one enclitic are allowed to be separated from each other. On specific points of phraseological parallels, see further the discussion below. For a similar methodology being used to establish the structuring tendencies of archaic Greek elegy and further details on the guiding principles being used, see Garner 2011:6-17.

²⁷ Cf. West 1982:32.

²⁸ Though Lobel and Page print ὠράνωἴθερος as a single word, I have inserted the space between the lexemes to present more clearly the phraseological juncture that occurs at that point.

(with chariot yoked: beautiful swift sparrows whirring fast-beating wings brought you above the dark earth down from heaven through the mid-air, and soon they arrived; and you, blessed one, with a smile on your immortal face asked what was the matter with me this time and why I was calling this time. . . .)

Sappho 1.21-28:

καὶ γὰρ αἱ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἱ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἱ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει κωὺν ἐθέλοισα.

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι
θῦμος ἰμέροει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὐτὰ σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

(‘If she runs away, soon she shall pursue; if she does not accept gifts, why, she shall give them instead; and if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will.’ Come to me now again and deliver me from oppressive anxieties; fulfil all that my heart longs to fulfil, and you yourself be my fellow-fighter.)

Sappho 16.1-4:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πῆσδων
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔμμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅττω τις ἔραται.

(Some say a host of cavalry, others of infantry, and others of ships, is the most beautiful thing on the black earth, but I say it is whatsoever a person loves.)

Sappho 31.1-4:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὦνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδῃ φωνείσας ὑπακούει

(He seems as fortunate as the gods to me, the man who sits opposite you and listens nearby to your sweet voice. . . .)

Sapphic stanzas, however, provide one final feature that needs explaining. Though the majority of the stanzas have final lines whose component parts are arranged in the customary paratactic fashion, a few stanzas actually demonstrate a type of expansion in which one semantic unit is

split into two parts that surround a different internal phraseological element. This phenomenon appears three times, for instance, within Sappho 1:²⁹

Sappho 1.1-8: ποικιλόθρον' ἄθανάτ' Αφροδίτα,
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα, πότνια, θυμόν,
'-----'

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κατέρωτα
τὰς ἔμας αὔδας αἰόισα πῆλοι
ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα χρύσιον ἦλθες
'-----'

(Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you: do not overpower my heart, mistress, with ache and anguish, but come here, if ever in the past you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced and came, leaving your father's golden house. . .)

Sappho 1.17-20: κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλαι θυμῳ· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω
.Ι.σάγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ Ψάπφ', ἀδικήει;
'-----'

(. . . and what in my maddened heart I most wished to happen for myself: 'Whom am I to persuade this time to lead you back to her love?³⁰ Who wrongs you, Sappho?')

Such overriding of paratactic structuring tendencies should not surprise us greatly, though, since even in Homer we find internal expansion as a method by which the poet added flexibility to his verse form.³¹ The phraseological expansion in Sappho is made even more interesting since it occurs in that portion of the verse that is most similar to the epic hexameter in general, both in terms of length (and its attendant four-part divisions) and with respect to rhythm (with the possibility of a concluding adonean in both poetries). Further, even though the partitioning systems in Lesbian lyric may seem less rigid than those that can be defined for other early Greek meters, we should also remember that the Sapphic and Alcaic stanzas allowed much less

²⁹ That the expanded units should be viewed as integral and not as two separate units is assured in at least two of these cases by similar phrases occurring elsewhere in early Greek poetry, with δάμνα . . . θυμόν paralleled by θυμὸν ἐδάμνα (a Homeric line-ending at *Iliad* 14.439) and λίποισα . . . ἦλθες being similar (though with a reversal of lexemes) to ἦλθε λιπὼν (*Scutum* 81).

³⁰ Campbell's translation is based on the emendation ἄψ σ' ἄγην ἐς Φάν. . .

³¹ Cf. Hainsworth 1968:74-109 where Ch. 6 is devoted to the expansion of Homeric formulas in general and Ch. 7 discusses particular formulas with elements separated by variable units.

flexibility metrically than did the hexameter or elegiac couplet, where alternations between dactyls and spondees are commonplace. In fact, because of the few metrical variations allowed within the Sapphic stanza, the number of different possible metrical types for its colon-length phrases (34) is quite comparable to that found in the Homeric hexameter (26), and the number actually employed within the Sapphic corpus is limited even further with only 24 attested variations. The structuring of phraseology within Lesbian stanzaic poetry, then, seems to be leading us further down the path of viewing Sappho's work as being even more steeped in traditional processes than it might first appear.

Traditional Phraseology in Sappho

But even if the stanzaic verse forms employed by Sappho had the capacity to make use of traditional phraseology, do we have any evidence that she indeed used such phrases in oral traditional—or even formulaic—ways? As we have already seen, even though Lesbian stanzaic poetry does exhibit several metrical by-forms, not enough poetry of this type remains to demonstrate any possible thrift that would be in line with the oral-formulaic practices apparent in other early Greek poetic genres. Additionally, we might look for similarities between the stanza-ending internal expansion techniques in Sappho and the traditional practice of *tnesis* in the Homeric hexameter,³² but this approach also ultimately leaves our main question unanswered. We might, however, attempt to locate any formulaic usage in Sappho through the regularity with which traditional colon-length phrases are placed within her stanzas. As O'Neill (1942) showed long ago for the early Greek hexameter, poets using oral-formulaic techniques tend to employ systematic—though not completely universal—placement of phraseology at specific positions within the verse.³³ Again, not enough Lesbian poetry remains for us to determine whether Sappho was regularly consistent herself in the localization of formulas. But we can, on the other hand, check to see whether there are similarities between the metrical placements of formulas shared by Sappho and early Greek epic, with any correspondences between the two poetries not only adding to our evidence that Sappho was employing oral-formulaic verse-making techniques but also indicating that she was doing so through a lyric tradition that was interacting with—and not just parallel to—its epic counterpart.

But what do we mean by “formula” when we are talking about phraseology shared between two different meters? Traditional definitions of formula for Greek poetry are all meant

³² On *tnesis* as an inherited technique from Indo-European poetry, see Horrocks 1980, 1981. Aeolic poetry seems to retain many such characteristics of Indo-European metrical practice, as it is conservative with respect to resolution and contraction, often maintains a single line-initial double anacrusis, and matches the oldest Indian poetic forms in the metrical shape of many of its cola. Cf. West 1982:29-30.

³³ The origin of such localization practices in Homer is a murky matter at best and is wrapped up in complex questions of metrical and linguistic development from Indo-European practice onward. (See the references provided in note 6 as well as in Russo 1997:espec. note 8.) Specifically, default Greek (and possibly Indo-European) syntactic patterns themselves may have acted as a possible systematizing influence on Greek verse so that its localization tendencies are more apparent than a random distribution might suggest (cf. Peabody 1975:30-167 on Hesiod), but rather than separate poetic processes from everyday linguistic realities, we would instead do well to recall Foley's formulation that “oral tradition works like language, only more so” (1999:6).

to analyze phraseology occurring within a given verse form and are therefore difficult to apply beyond that single meter.³⁴ For that reason, I have previously proposed a different type of formula—the lexical formula—that allows for comparison among various metrical forms. As I defined it in a previous study aimed at comparing Greek epic and elegiac forms (2011:21), a lexical formula is “a group of two or more lexemes that appear together regularly in order to fill out completely a traditionally defined colon or cola either by themselves or in conjunction with prepositive or postpositive words.”³⁵ Any set of phraseology found to meet this definition will consist of only the most systematic and mechanical elements that could be determined to be shared by different poetries, but even though it will be inadequate for demonstrating the full flexibility of a traditional system at work, it can at least provide a glimpse of just how regularized Sappho’s traditional diction is.

I have listed in the appendix the lexical formulas shared by early Greek epic and Sappho’s stanzas.³⁶ Though only 15 assured examples of shared lexical formulas can be gleaned from the small amount of surviving poetry, the patterned usage is almost startling in its regularity:

1) For single-colon-length phrases in epic, their positioning in the hexameter is nearly always mirrored directly in the Sapphic stanza.

A) If a lexical formula is primarily localized at the first, second, or third position within the hexameter, it tends to appear as the first, second, or third element respectively within an individual line in the Sapphic stanza as well.³⁷

B) If a formula is primarily localized at the end of a hexameter, it will tend to appear as the final element in a Sapphic stanza line as well.³⁸ (Such

³⁴ See further Garner 2011:19-21.

³⁵ Within this definition, metrically nonequivalent forms, dialectal by-forms, and differently prefixed verb forms are all able to be considered part of the same formula family. Such allowances are especially important for comparison of Lesbian and Homeric poetry, as the study of formula families variously employing isometrical or metrically non-equivalent Aeolic and Ionic forms could have further ramifications for investigations into the diachronic development of the respective verse forms. For the application of this system to early Greek elegy, see Garner 2011:21-38.

³⁶ In the appendix and the discussion that follows, the following editions of hexameter works have been used: Monro and Allen 1920 (*Iliad*), Allen 1917 (*Odyssey*), Allen et al. 1936 (*Homeric Hymns*), West 1966 (*Theogony*), Solmsen 1970 (*Works and Days, Scutum*).

³⁷ Such is the case for three of the four lexical formulas primarily localized in the hexameter at a non-final position. The one formula not fitting into this pattern appears at Sappho 1.13, where ὦ μάχαιρα acts as the final element in the line but its closest parallel, ὦ μάχαρ, appears in a line-initial position at *Iliad* 3.182. However, even in this case, it is possible that Sappho is mirroring hexameter usage, as the plural μάχαρες often appears by itself as the third unit in a Homeric line.

³⁸ The only exceptions are αἶψα δ’ ἐξίχοντο (Sappho 1.13) and δῶρα μὴ δέχεται (Sappho 1.22), but both of these cases involve internal expansion of one type or another from their Homeric parallels.

localization occurs consistently at the end of both tripartite³⁹ and four-part lines,⁴⁰ and it may even be a final element of a stanza that then undergoes internal expansion.⁴¹)

2) Phrases filling out two cola together in the hexameter appear in line-initial position within the Sapphic stanza.⁴²

Of these patterned employments, perhaps the most interesting is the localizing of hexameter line-ending units within the various possible line-final environments of the Sapphic stanza, as such usage shows the Sapphic tendency to prioritize line position over metrical environment. Also, it should be stressed that even though the patterns given above show how hexameter formulas adapt to their Sapphic environment, we could also express the relationship in the opposite direction to demonstrate how Sapphic formulas localize into the hexameter. If the two types of poetry were actively sharing formulaic phraseology—as indeed seems to be the case—the likelihood would not be that one genre provided the diction for another in a hierarchical fashion but instead that there was a common poetic language that continually evolved and situated itself within the specific needs of any individual performance context or poetic form; the degree to which two different poetries had similar diction would be directly related to the amount of contact the practitioners and audience members of one genre had with the other. Consequently, I would suggest that the high correspondence rates for Sappho and epic were caused much more by Sappho's contemporaries being fluent in two different but related poetic idioms rather than through any wish by the poet to emulate Homer or other hexameter poets in particular.

Sappho 1

If, then, we have evidence that Sappho's poetry was composed in accordance with oral traditional verse-structuring techniques and the patterned usage of oral-formulaic phraseology, and we know that poetry of Sappho's period was much more commonly transmitted through performance than via textualization, it would seem that we ourselves should default to interpreting her poetry not as works of a literate composer creating texts to be read privately but as pieces of art that were meant to be interpreted primarily through the traditional context of oral performance with all of its attendant strategies for aesthetic expression. And as an example of just how stark the interpretive difference can be if we drop our literate presuppositions and move closer toward this more realistic poetic scenario, I would like to close with a renewed

³⁹ For instance, *περὶ γὰρ μελαίνας* (Sappho 1.10) / *ἐπὶ γὰρ μέλαιναν* (Sappho 16.2) and *ἴσος θέοισιν* (Sappho 31.1).

⁴⁰ Examples are *κῶν ἐθέλοισα* (Sappho 1.24) and *οὐκ ἐδύναντο* (Sappho 17.8).

⁴¹ Sappho 1.3-4: *δάμνα . . . θῦμον*.

⁴² Appearing at Sappho 1.9 (*ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα*) and Sappho 2.5 (*ἐν δ' ὕδωρ ψυχρον*).

examination of the first (as well as longest and most complete) poem in the Sapphic corpus. Much of the poem has already appeared as evidence throughout this essay, but I provide it here in the full form which has come down to us (with the third and fourth lines again split apart):

ποικιλόθρον' ἀθανάτ' Αφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον,

ἀλλὰ τυῖδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κατέρωτα 5
τὰς ἔμας αὖδας αἰόισα πῆλοι
ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρῦσιον ἦλθες

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον 10
ὥκεες στρουθοὶ περὶ γὰς μελαίνας
πύκνα δίνεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνωϊθε-
ρος διὰ μέσσω·

αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
μειδιαίσαις' ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳι 15
ἦρε' ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι
δηῦτε κάλημμι

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλαι θύμῳι· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω
].σάγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ 20
Ψάπφ', ἀδικήει;

καὶ γὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κῶτ' ἐθέλοισα.

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον 25
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι
θῦμος ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὐτὰ
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

(Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you: do not overpower my heart, mistress, with ache and anguish, but come here, if ever in the past you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced and came, leaving your father's golden house, with chariot yoked: beautiful swift sparrows whirring fast-beating wings brought you above the dark earth

down from heaven through the mid-air, and soon they arrived; and you, blessed one, with a smile on your immortal face asked what was the matter with me this time and why I was calling this time and what in my maddened heart I most wished to happen for myself: 'Whom am I to persuade this time to lead you back to her love? Who wrongs you, Sappho? If she runs away, soon she shall pursue; if she does not accept gifts, why, she shall give them instead; and if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will.' Come to me now again and deliver me from oppressive anxieties; fulfil all that my heart longs to fulfil, and you yourself be my fellow-fighter.)

Whether this poem was conceived as a personal prayer or as a hymnic effort has been debated in the same manner as the general performance contexts for Sappho's poetry,⁴³ but ultimately the uncertainty here lies in the fact that both forms draw on the same traditional type-scene structure that is common not only in early Greek epic but also in lyric, with over twenty examples able to be drawn from archaic non-epic poetry.⁴⁴ That such structuring pervades lyric as well as epic provides yet another indication of traditional interaction between the different art forms, but it also allows us to observe important differences in the ways that varying genres were able to make use of the same traditional material and techniques. The first of these differences becomes apparent immediately: in a Homeric prayer, the type-scene is always introduced by the praying individual first making a prayer-related gesture—usually involving the raising of hands—and the poet also using specific verbs (for example, εὔχομαι or ἀράομαι) to indicate that a prayer is about to occur; in many cases there is also an indication as to which deity is about to be addressed.⁴⁵ In Sappho 1, the audience has none of this context to assist in interpreting the prayer. Instead, the original audiences would have been forced to draw upon the immediate performance context, their previous experiences with Sappho's poetic tradition, and possibly their own acquaintance with Sappho's particular compositions in order to interpret each new piece of information as it came forth in the poem. Whereas Greek epic tends to be determinative and direct the audience members' interpretation through previous and subsequent narrative context, Greek lyric was by necessity a more privately participatory experience with poets having less ability or desire to steer audience members' individualistic interpretations—interpretations that were not limited by traditional compositional techniques but enabled by them in the first place.

Nevertheless, Sappho's audience did not have to wait long for the patterned prayer type-scene to make itself clear, as the poem opens immediately in the traditional manner of a request for divine assistance by invoking the goddess Aphrodite in a string of epithets (lines 1-2). Of these epithets, ποικιλόθρονος is the most interesting, not only because the introductory word

⁴³ In addition to the works provided in note 10 of this article for the possible performance environments of Sappho's poems more generally, see also Cameron 1939 and Segal 1974 for discussions of this poem in particular.

⁴⁴ Alcaeus 129; Alcman 81; Anacreon 348, 357; Ananius 1; Archilochus 26, 106, 108; Callinus 2; Hipponax 3a, 32, 40; Sappho 1, 2, 5, 15, 17, 33; Solon 13; Theognis 11-14. Anacreon 348 is included, even though the actual request is now missing from our remaining fragment. I do not here include simple invocations, since these briefer appeals to the divine follow a differing though related type-scene structure.

⁴⁵ For a full discussion of the traditional template for Homeric prayers, see Morrison 1991 (who draws heavily on the analysis of Arend 1933). For scholarship on Homeric prayer type-scenes more generally, see Edwards 1992:315.

helps set the tone for the entire poem but also since it is the one word from this poem that is most disputed in meaning. The traditional interpretation of the word has been “elaborate-throned,” a meaning supported by similar descriptions in Homer:⁴⁶

Od. 1.130-32: αὐτὴν δ' ἐς θρόνον εἴσεν ἄγων, ὑπὸ λίτα πετάσας,
καλὸν δαιδάλεον· ὑπὸ δὲ θρήνυς ποσὶν ἦεν.
παρ δ' αὐτὸς κλισμὸν θέτο ποικίλον. . .

(And leading her, he seated her upon a beautiful, elaborate chair,
spreading out a cloth underneath, and under her feet was a footstool.
For himself he set an elaborate couch beside her. . .)

Il. 18.389-90: τὴν μὲν ἔπειτα καθεῖσεν ἐπὶ θρόνου ἀργυροῦλου
καλοῦ δαιδαλέου. . .

(He then seated her on a beautiful and elaborate silver-studded
chair. . .)

However, even though these two examples and others throughout the Homeric corpus describe situations in which goddesses are shown proper respect by being seated upon intricate chairs,⁴⁷ the phrases themselves are not exact parallels, and some scholars, such as Lawler (1948) and Burnett (1983:250-51), have posited a different meaning for ποικιλόθρονος, deriving the compound not from the noun θρόνος but from the word θρόνα (“flowers embroidered on cloth,” “herbs used as drugs and charms” [LSJ: s.v. θρόνον]) and thereby defining ποικιλόθρονος as something like “elaborately clad with love-charms.”⁴⁸ As with the other interpretation of “elaborate-throned,” this derived meaning would also be well-suited to Aphrodite’s character and is supported by a passage from the *Iliad* (22.440-41):⁴⁹

ἀλλ' ἢ γ' ἰστὸν ὕφαινε μυχῷ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο
δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσε.

⁴⁶ Supporters of this meaning include Page (1955:5), Cameron (1939:2), and Greene (2002:86).

⁴⁷ *Od.* 1.130-32 involves Athena being given her proper seat by Telemachos, and in *Il.* 18.389-90 Thetis is seated by Charis (a wife of Hephaistos and therefore parallel to Aphrodite herself).

⁴⁸ Skinner (2002:67) also entertains this possibility in her discussion of the poem.

⁴⁹ Burnett draws from narrative context to support this reading (1983:250-51): “An Aphrodite addressed as ‘elaborate-throned’ would have to divest herself of her epithet almost as soon as it had been bestowed, since it is not a description that could follow her into the scene of epiphany. Flowers, on the other hand, are almost required by that central scene, since they are the chief ingredients in the sort of amorous magic that Aphrodite there promises to work.”

(But she was weaving a web in the inner recess of the high house, a bright double robe, and on it she sprinkled elaborately embroidered flowers.⁵⁰)

So scholarship on this poem has, in general, focused on one of these two possible interpretations for ποικιλόθρονος, accepting it either as a term related to the respectful seating of the goddess in an arrival scene or as a particularized epithet illustrative of Aphrodite's magical powers.⁵¹ Either of these interpretations is, of course, possible—especially if we were to accept a primarily text-based context for poetic composition and transmission—however, neither suggested meaning harmonizes completely with traditional practices. In neither case do we have cited phraseological parallels occurring in traditionally appropriate colon-length positions. The usage at *Iliad* 22.441 of θρόνα ποικίλ' requires a verb to fill out the remainder of the line-ending colon, while the parallel phrases for “elaborate-throned” do not even fall within a single line. Additionally, if one wishes to see the reception of a guest as being referred to—or perhaps predicted by—ποικιλόθρονος, there is the additional difficulty of the placement of this detail so much earlier than the arrival scene in the poem, since the seating of a guest usually takes place only after the actual greeting by the host.⁵² However, in an oral traditional poetic environment there is a third interpretative possibility for epithets, since they are not always specific, context-aware modifiers but are often metonymic pathways that index the entire set of traits and actions that have been traditionally encoded for a given individual's character.⁵³ It is true that ποικιλόθρονος does not occur elsewhere in Greek poetry, thus perhaps calling its “traditional” nature into question; nevertheless, we should at least allow for the possibility that this opening word of the poem is not meant to do anything but refer metonymically to the totality of Aphrodite's character by means of a specific trait, whatever that characteristic might actually be. A reference to seating or flowers may or may not have been completely irrelevant to the poet and audience; however, the important fact is that Aphrodite is named immediately by means of an epithet that Sappho's audience would recognize—regardless of the specific interpretation by the individual audience members—and that this word together with its further elaboration by other descriptive epithets thus allows Sappho to complete the first element involved in the traditional prayer type-scene—that of identifying the divinity to be asked for a favor.

⁵⁰ For Homer, however, θρόνα is more likely to denote an embroidered pattern more generally.

⁵¹ A third possibility of accepting a textual variant of ποικιλόθρονος (“full of various wiles”) also exists; cf. Winkler 2002:42-44.

⁵² See Reece 1993:6-7. If, however, we wish to view this epithet as a collapsing of the greeting and seating of the guest, an interesting situation develops, since seating is normally followed by a feast in the hospitality type-scene. There, of course, is no actual feast present in Sappho 1, but the descriptions of love and the fulfillment that it can bring might be seen as a sort of metaphorical feast. Such a transfer of literal feasting to the realm of love is not unparalleled in early Greek poetry, as the reunion and lovemaking between Penelope and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* also occur after traditional markers that indicate a feast is to follow. See Foley 1999:185-86.

⁵³ Foley has well illustrated this type of “traditional referentiality” related to Homeric epithets in his discussion (1999:209-11) of Achilles being called “swift-footed” even in narrative contexts where the epithet is irrelevant or even contradictory to the ongoing action.

After further establishing a traditional prayer context through her employment of the conventional verb λίσσομαι (“entreat”), Sappho completes her first stanza by narrowing the focus even further by establishing that this particular prayer will concern the mitigation of love’s anguish. At this point, the poet then provides in rapid succession three separate markers that a tradition-aware audience would immediately have interpreted as indicators of this prayer’s eventual success. The first of these markers occurs on a more general level, as Sappho now embarks upon the depiction of a previous epiphany provided by Aphrodite, the mentioning of which helps to forge a link between petitioner and divinity. In Homeric prayers, there are thirteen similar narrations of previous interactions between petitioner and divinity, and in each case there is a successful outcome for the prayer.⁵⁴ In addition, within the transition from her general request for help to this former appearance of Aphrodite, Sappho includes two further forecasters of success by employing αἶ ποτα (line 5) and ἐκλυες (line 7). The phrase αἶ ποτα is a dialectal variant of εἶ ποτε, a phrase that I have elsewhere shown to have strong connections with successful prayer and supplication within the Homeric epics and Hymns.⁵⁵ Forms of κλύω also forecast success in Homeric prayers, as all 12 uses of the verb in prayers—similarly always occurring in a line-initial position—result in divine favors being granted.⁵⁶

So here Sappho seems to be using at least three conventional signals to imply a favorable response to her prayer, with these signals only being effective because of their repeated usage within recognizable poetic environments in either the epic or lyric traditions. We do not need to assume along with Rissman (1983) that such elements are meant to remind the audience of specific, fixed scenes from within the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, or that their usage is even meant to bring to mind epic contexts more generally. Given that such standardized prayers appear outside of the epic tradition in lyric—and perhaps even in undocumented prayers from daily life in Greece—the much greater possibility is that these markers of successful prayers were just as at home in non-epic environments as they were in Homeric poetry. The specific indication of a successful prayer may have been more likely to come from epic environments with its ability to direct interpretation through ensuing narrative, but the overall extralexical meaning for the signals necessarily drew from repeated employment within each of the different poetic traditions that were not always parallel but instead interacting with each other through the shared experiences of poets and audience members.

On the other hand, even though these traditional signals within Sappho’s prayer may be similar to those of epic, their employment and implied meaning again work in a fashion quite

⁵⁴ See Lang 1975 for an extended treatment of the different relationships that can be called upon within Homeric prayers and their effects upon the prayers’ results. This direct tradition-enabled link between concrete services offered in the past and a successful prayer thus seems to offset the individual importance that Burnett (1983:253) imparts to Sappho’s description of personal epiphany with her remark that “ordinarily, when a petitioner makes reference to past benefactions, he does so in terms as vague as possible, which is only common sense, since he does not want to offer any point that might be challenged or denied.” The question of specificity in Homeric prayer is not one of what the petitioner wants to avoid saying but rather what the individual has the ability to say truthfully.

⁵⁵ See Garner 1996. See also the related usage of εἶ ποτε at Callinus 2.

⁵⁶ The occurrences are at *Iliad* 1.37, 1.451, 5.115, 10.278, 16.514, 23.770; *Odyssey* 2.262, 3.55, 4.762, 5.445, 6.324, and 9.528.

different from the corresponding elements in Homer. Such predictive elements in lyric rely much more heavily than do their epic counterparts on the audience's awareness of traditional meaning in order to fill narrative gaps of indeterminacy,⁵⁷ since those gaps of interpretation must be filled not only within the poem itself but also beyond it. Therefore, when Sappho's poem reaches its end without Aphrodite's reaction being provided, audience members who draw from their knowledge of similar usages of these markers in previous traditional contexts will likely reach the conclusion that Sappho's prayer was successful. If, on the other hand, there is an individual who is unaware of such associations, the gap of indeterminacy widens and the task of interpretation becomes even greater.

In the scene of Aphrodite's arrival (lines 6-14) that these successful prayer markers help to introduce, several similarities have been observed—most notably by Svenbro (1975), Rissman (1983:9-10), and Winkler (2002:44-53)—with an episode at *Iliad* 5.720-72 where Athena arms for battle, has her chariot and horses readied, and travels down from Olympus to earth. In addition to the thematic context shared by both poems of a goddess coming to the aid of a mortal, there are two phraseological parallels that occur:⁵⁸ δάμνησι (746) ~ δάμνα (3), and πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ (749) ~ πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα (7). However, rather than seeing these phraseological similarities as direct evidence for Sappho's adaptation of a preexisting Homeric episode for a specific personal purpose,⁵⁹ it seems preferable—especially in light of our findings that formulaic phraseology can indeed be shared traditionally among different meters and genres—to view these expressions as traditional elements employed similarly for two full-blown scenes of a divinity's arrival. This reading is bolstered by the fact that Sappho's arrival scene also shares phraseological similarities with other Homeric scenes having nothing to do with *Iliad* 5.720-72 in particular. πύκνα δίννεντες πτέρ' (11) is comparable with *Odyssey* 2.151 (ἐνθ' ἐπιδινηθέντε τιναξάσθην περὰ πυκνά) and αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο (13) resembles *Iliad* 5.367 (αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκοντο . . .).⁶⁰ Also important is the usage of περὶ γὰς μελαίνας (10), since, as Harvey has shown (1957:216-17), γῆ μέλαινα was undoubtedly a fixed element of traditional poetic diction within the sphere of lyric poetry.⁶¹

⁵⁷ The term is Iser's (1971) and was used in its original form with respect to implied readers of texts, but Foley has well applied the concept to oral traditional texts also (1991:spec. 38-95).

⁵⁸ Svenbro 1975:39. Svenbro also mentions three parallels from outside the epiphany, though none are exact: πέπλον . . . ποικίλον (734-35) ~ ποικιλόθρον' (1); Ἀθηναίη κούρη Διὸς (733) ~ Ἀφροδίτα, παῖ Διός (1-2); ἐς πόλεμον (737) ~ σύμμαχος (28).

⁵⁹ For instance, Winkler (2002:46) states: "Sappho's use of Homeric passages is a way of allowing us, even encouraging us, to approach her consciousness as a woman and poet reading Homer. The Homeric hero is not just a starting point for Sappho's discourse about her own love, rather Diomedes as he exists in the *Iliad* is central to what Sappho is saying about the *distance* between Homer's world and her own."

⁶⁰ Cf. Rissman 1983:10.

⁶¹ Also, as has often been observed, the placement of χρύσιον in line 8 is quite ambiguous since it could plausibly be a modifier of either δόμον or ἄρμα. However, the observation that χρύσιον is in the first place likely an element purposely used by Sappho to expand a traditional phrase makes it more probable that any ambiguity was actually intended by Sappho, thereby creating a much more fluid transition in her removal of Aphrodite from Olympus to earth.

After yet another traditional referencing of Aphrodite in line 14 with *μειδιαίσαισ' ἄθανάτῳ προσώπῳ* (cf. h. Hymn 10.2-3: *ἐφ' ἡμερῶ δὲ προσώπῳ / αἰεὶ μειδιάει*), Sappho goes on to report Aphrodite's earlier speech to her, moving quickly through indirect to direct speech. Here, the traditional nature of the actual vocabulary within the goddess's words is less readily apparent, as fewer parallels to phraseology in early Greek poetry can be found. However, not only does the phraseological structuring of the passage stay within traditional expectations, but here we also have several rhetorical features that are most easily explained as byproducts of an oral performance context for either this poem in particular or this type of poetry more generally. For instance, in recognizing the similarity between Aphrodite's words and incantation, Segal (1974:148) has made note of the triple recurrence of *δηῦτε* with its ritualistic effect of repetition, as well as several other traditional features of incantation located specifically in the direct speech of the goddess (149):

Aphrodite, appropriately, speaks in a language which itself imitates the incantatory, hypnotic effect of love's *thelxis*. That effect depends on the repetition of the simple sentence structure ("if she flees, soon she will pursue; if she doesn't receive gifts, she will give them; if she doesn't love, soon will she love . . ."). The rhythmical echo between the first and third lines, *ταχέως διώξει . . . ταχέως φιλήσει*, almost seems to assure the success of this spell-like promise.

Other repetitions and alliterations contribute to this effect of incantation: the three-fold repetition of αἰ, the double repetition of δέ . . . δέ and of φίλει . . . φιλήσει; the analogous repetition (with an etymological play) of δῶρα . . . δώσει (22); the alliteration and rhyme of διώξει . . . δώσει (at the end of two successive lines); the strong *d*-alliteration in διώξει . . . δέ . . . δῶρα . . . δέκετ' . . . δώσει . . . δέ; the triple rhyme of -σει in the first three lines and the brilliant variation upon that in the assonance -λησει / -λοισα (*φιλήσει . . . ἐθέλοισα*) between the last two lines (23-24).

Additionally, Cameron (1939:8-9) has observed that the antithetical form of expression found here is paralleled by magical papyri that, although greatly separated from Sappho in time, "preserve old formulae and in this matter tradition was strong." Finally, Aphrodite's words end with *κῶν ἐθέλοισα*, referring to a female who does not wish to be pursued. This phrase resonates traditionally alongside usages of *οὐκ ἐθέλ-* such as those found in Homeric epic where an individual is placed in an unhappy situation against his or her will⁶² and is quite striking as a traditional phrase because of its conventionally enhanced use of the verb *ἐθέλω* rather than the usual Lesbian form *θέλω*.⁶³

After Aphrodite's speech, Sappho then concludes her prayer with a restatement of her wish for divine assistance and does so in traditional manner. First, we have a verbal echo of the wish that led into the scene of epiphany—*ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ'* (5)—in *ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν*, a phrase that effects a sort of ring composition framing the appearance of Aphrodite. Next, there is the exhortation *ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι / θῦμος ἰμέρῳ, τέλεσον* (26-27), which is quite similar to a formulaic statement found three times within the Homeric corpus (*Odyssey* 5.89-90; *Iliad*

⁶² Cf. Rissman 1983:17, Dawson 1966:48. See also the appearances of this phrase in the appendix to this essay.

⁶³ See Page 1955:10-11.

14.195-96, 18.426-27): τελέσαι δέ με θυμὸς ἄνωγεν, / εἰ δύναιμι τελέσαι γε καὶ εἰ τετελεσμένον ἐστίν. Finally, we should observe that the placement of these two commands as well as that which ends the poem—σὺ δ' αὖτα σύμμαχος ἔσσο (27-28)—follow the traditional structuring of prayers both in Homer and in early Greek poetry in general, where the ultimate wish from the petitioner comes only after the reference (if one occurs) to past interaction between mortal and divinity.

From beginning to end, then, Sappho 1 is a work wholly indebted to oral traditional poetic techniques in terms of its phraseological thematic structuring, its rhetoric, and even its extralexical encoding of formulaic phraseology, and it was the combination of Sappho's individual poetic talents with these traditional possibilities that imparted such a powerful impact to her verses. Of course, some traditional aspects of the poem are now more easily observable than others—and many specialized meanings will remain hidden altogether—since the further we are removed chronologically and culturally from the poem's original performance contexts and their ambient, dynamic tradition, the more obscured some traditional elements become. Nevertheless, recognizing these traditional characteristics and meanings for what they were can still help us approach that much closer to appreciating Sappho's poetry on the same terms that it must originally have been understood within its original sixth-century Lesbian context.

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Appendix: Instances of lexical formulas shared by both the Sapphic stanza and the epic hexameter

(line positions for the hexameter according to Fränkel 1926)

- Sappho 1.5: ἀλλὰ τυῖδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κατέρωτα
Il. 1.39: Σμυνθεῦ εἴ ποτέ τοι χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα, [A3-B1]
Il. 1.340: καὶ πρὸς τοῦ βασιλῆος ἀπηνέος εἴ ποτε δ' αὖτε [C2-X]
Il. 1.394: ἐλθοῦς' Οὔλυμπονδὲ Δία λίσαι, εἴ ποτε δὴ τι [C2-X]
Il. 1.503: Ζεῦ πάτερ εἴ ποτε δὴ σε μετ' ἀθανάτοισιν ὄνησα [A3-B2]
Il. 15.372: Ζεῦ πάτερ εἴ ποτέ τίς τοι ἐν Ἄργεί περ πολυπύρῳ [A3-B2]
Il. 22.83: αὐτήν, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον· [A3-B1]
Od. 3.98 (= *Od.* 4.328): λίσσομαι, εἴ ποτέ τοί τι πατήρ ἐμός, ἐσθλὸς Ὀδυσσεύς, [A3-B2]
h. Demeter 64: Ἥελι' αἶδεσσαί με θεὰν σύ περ, εἴ ποτε δὴ σευ [C2-X]
- Sappho 1.13: αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
Il. 18.532: βάντες ἀερσιπόδων μετεκίαθον, αἶψα δ' ἵκοντο. [C2-X]
Od. 19.458: ἔσχεθον, αἶψα δ' ἵκοντο φίλου πρὸς δῶματα πατρός. [A3-B2]
Od. 24.13: ἦϊσαν· αἶψα δ' ἵκοντο κατ' ἀσφοδελὸν λειμῶνα, [A3-B2]
h. Apollo 520: ἄκμητοι δὲ λόφον προσέβαν ποσίν, αἶψα δ' ἵκοντο [C2-X]

Sappho 1.11-12: πύκνα δίννεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω ἴθερος διὰ μέσσω·
Theogony 414: ἡ δὲ καὶ ἀστερόεντος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἔμμορε τιμῆς, [B2-C2]
Theogony 689: φαίνει βίην· ἄμυδις δ' ἄρ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἡδ' ἀπ' Ὀλύμπου [B2-C2]

Sappho 1.9: ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον
Il. 24.14: ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἐπεὶ ξεύξειεν ὑφ' ἄρμασιν ὠκέας ἵππους, [A2-C2]
Od. 3.478: καρπαλίμως δ' ἔξευξαν ὑφ' ἄρμασιν ὠκέας ἵππους. [A4-C2]

Sappho 1.10: ὠκεες στρουῦθοι περὶ γὰς μελαίνας
 Sappho 16.2: οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς' ἐπὶ γὰν μελαιναν
Il. 2.699: ζῶδς ἐών· τότε δ' ἤδη ἔχεν κάτα γαῖα μελαινά. [C1-X]
Il. 15.715: ἀνδρῶν μαρναμένων· ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα μελαινά. [C2-X]
Il. 17.416: νῆας ἔπι γλαφυράς, ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ γαῖα μελαινά [C2-X]
Il. 20.494: κτεινομένους ἐφέπων· ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα μελαινά. [C2-X]
Od. 11.365: βόσκει γαῖα μελαινά πολυσπερέας ἀνθρώπους [A3-B2]
Od. 19.111: εὐδικίας ἀνέχῃσι, φέρῃσι δὲ γαῖα μελαινά [C2-X]
h. Apollo 369: πύσει γαῖα μελαινά καὶ ἠλέκτωρ Ὑπερίων. [A3-B2]
Theogony 69: ἀμβροσίη μολπῇ· περὶ δ' ἴαχε γαῖα μελαινά [C2-X]

Sappho 1.3-4: μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα, πότνια, θυμόν,
Il. 14.439: νῦξ ἐκάλυψε μελαινά· βέλος δ' ἔτι θυμόν ἐδάμνα. [C2-X]

Sappho 1.22: αἱ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,
h. Hermes 549: φήμ' ἀλίην ὁδὸν εἶσιν, ἐγὼ δέ κε δῶρα δεχοίμην. [C2-X]

Sappho 31.1: φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
Od. 11.304: τεθνάσιν· τιμὴν δὲ λελόγχασιν ἴσα θεοῖσι. [C2-X]
Od. 11.484: πρὶν μὲν γάρ σε ζῶν ἐτίομεν ἴσα θεοῖσιν [C2-X]
Od. 15.520: τὸν νῦν ἴσα θεῷ Ἰθακήσιοι εἰσορόωσι· [A3-B1]
h. Hymn 5.214: ὥς ἔοι ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρω ἴσα θεοῖσιν. [C2-X]

Sappho 1.7-8: ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα χρύσιον ἡλθες
Scutum 81: ἡλθε λιπὼν Τίρυνθον, ἐυκτίμενον ποτλίεθρον, [0-A4]

Sappho 17.8: οὐκ ἐδύναντο
Il. 3.236: δοιῷ δ' οὐ δύναμαι ἰδέειν κοσμήτορε λαῶν [A3-B1]
Il. 8.299: τοῦτον δ' οὐ δύναμαι βαλέειν κῦνα λυσσητήρα. [A3-B1]
Il. 9.551: τόφρα δὲ Κουρήτεσσι κακῶς ἦν, οὐδ' ἐδύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 11.116: ἡ δ' εἴ περ τε τύχησι μάλα σχεδόν, οὐ δύναται σφι [C2-X]
Il. 13.552: οὐταζον σάκος εὐρὸν παναίολον, οὐδὲ δύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 13.634: Τρῳσίν, τῶν μένος αἰὲν ἀτάσθαλον, οὐδὲ δύνανται [C2-X]
Il. 13.687: σπουδῇ ἐπαΐσσοντα νεῶν ἔχον, οὐδὲ δύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 15.22: λῦσαι δ' οὐκ ἐδύναντο παρασταδόν· ὃν δὲ λάβοιμι [A3-B2]

- Il.* 15.406: Τρώας ἐπερχομένους μένον ἔμπεδον, οὐδ' ἐδύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 15.416: τῷ δὲ μῆψ̄ περὶ νηὶς ἔχον πόνον, οὐδὲ δύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 15.651: κτείν'· οἱ δ' οὐκ ἐδύναντο καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἑταίρου [A1-B2]
Il. 16.107: ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἔχων σάκος αἰόλον· οὐδ' ἐδύναντο [C2-X]
Il. 16.520: ἔγχος δ' οὐ δύναμαι σχεῖν ἔμπεδον, οὐδὲ μάχεσθαι [A3-B1]
Il. 18.163: ὥς ῥα τὸν οὐκ ἐδύναντο δῶν Αἴαντε κορυστὰ [A3-B2]
Il. 22.47: οὐ δύναμαι ἰδέειν Τρώων εἰς ἄστν ἀλέντων, [0-A4]
Il. 22.201: ὥς ὁ τὸν οὐ δύνατο μάριψαι ποσίν, οὐδ' ὅς ἀλύξαι. [A3-B1]
Il. 23.465: ἥε τὸν ἡνίοχον φύγον ἡνία, οὐδὲ δυνάσθη [C2-X]
Il. 24.403 (= *Od.* 17.144): ἀσχαλώσι γὰρ οἶδε καθήμενοι, οὐδὲ δύνανται [C2-X]
Od. 4.558 (= *Od.* 5.15): ἴσχει· ὁ δ' οὐ δύναται ἦν πατρίδα γαίαν ἰκέσθαι. [A2-B1]
Od. 5.319: τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόβρυχα θήκε πολλὸν χρόνον, οὐδὲ δυνάσθη [C2-X]
Od. 13.331: τῷ σε καὶ οὐ δύναμαι προλιπεῖν δύστηνον ἐόντα, [A2-B1]
Od. 18.230: ἀλλὰ τοι οὐ δύναμαι πεπνυμένα πάντα νοῆσαι. [A3-B1]
Od. 21.184: τῷ ῥα νέοι θάλποντες ἐπειρῶντ', οὐδ' ἐδύναντο [C2-X]
h. Apollo 192: ζῶουσ' ἀφραδέες καὶ ἀμήχανοι, οὐδὲ δύνανται [C2-X]
h. Hymn 5.7: τρισσὰς δ' οὐ δύναται πεπθεῖν φρένας οὐδ' ἀπατήσαι. [A3-B1]
h. Hymn 5.33: τάων οὐ δύναται πεπθεῖν φρένας οὐδ' ἀπατήσαι. [A3-B1]
Works and Days 134: ἀφραδίης ὕβριν γὰρ ἀτάσθαλον οὐκ ἐδύναντο [C2-X]

Sappho 1.24: κῶνι ἐθέλοισα.

- Il.* 1.112: οὐκ ἐθέλον δεῖξασθαι, ἐπεὶ πολὺ βούλομαι αὐτήν [0-A4]
Il. 3.241: νῦν αὖτ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσι μάχην καταδύμεναι ἀνδρῶν [A3-B2]
Il. 3.289: τίνειν οὐκ ἐθέλωσιν Ἀλεξάνδροιο πεσόντος, [A3-B2]
Il. 4.300: ὄφρα καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλων τις ἀναγκαίῃ πολέμιζοι. [A2-B1]
Il. 5.233: μὴ τῷ μὲν δείσαντε ματήσετον, οὐδ' ἐθέλητον [C2-X]
Il. 6.165: ὅς μ' ἔθελεν φιλότητι μιγήμεναι οὐκ ἐθελούσῃ. [C2-X]
Il. 9.356: νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐθέλω πολέμιζέμεν Ἑκτορι δίῳ [A1-B1]
Il. 9.444: ὥς ἂν ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ σείο, φίλον τέκος, οὐκ ἐθέλοιμι [C2-X]
Il. 9.678: κείνός γ' οὐκ ἐθέλει σβέσσαι χόλον, ἀλλ' ἔτι μάλλον [A3-B1]
Il. 10.311 (= *Il.* 10.398): φύξιν βουλεύουσι μετὰ σφίσιν, οὐδ' ἐθέλουσι [C2-X]
Il. 12.171: ὥς οἱ γ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσι πυλάων καὶ δῦ' ἐόντε [A3-B2]
Il. 13.106: μῖμνεν οὐκ ἐθέλεσκον ἐναντίον, οὐδ' ἡβαιόν· [A3-B2]
Il. 13.109: οἱ κείνῳ ἐρίσαντες ἀμυνέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλουσι [C2-X]
Il. 13.572: ἰλλάσιν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα βίῃ δήσαντες ἄγουσιν. [A3-B2]
Il. 15.215: Ἰλίου αἰπεινῆς πεφιδήσεται, οὐδ' ἐθελήσει [C2-X]
Il. 17.66: πολλὰ μάλ' ἰύζουσιν ἀπόπροθεν οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν [C2-X]
Il. 18.262: οἶος κείνου θυμὸς ὑπέρβιος, οὐκ ἐθελήσει [C2-X]
Il. 18.434: πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα. ὁ μὲν δὴ γῆραϊ λυγρῷ [A3-B2]
Il. 21.36: ἦγε λαβὼν ἐκ πατρὸς ἀλωῆς οὐκ ἐθέλοντα [C2-X]
Il. 21.366: οὐδ' ἔθελε προρῑεῖν, ἀλλ' ἴσχετο· τεῖρε δ' αὐτμῇ [0-A4]
Il. 21.580: οὐκ ἔθελεν φεύγειν, πρὶν πειρήσασθαι Ἀχιλῆος. [0-A4]
Il. 23.88: νήπιος, οὐκ ἐθέλων, ἀμφ' ἀστραγάλοις χολωθεῖς. [A3-B1]

- Il.* 24.289: ὁτρύνει ἐπὶ νῆας ἐμείο μὲν οὐκ ἐθελούσης. [C2-X]
Od. 2.50: μητέρι μοι μνηστήρες ἐπέχραον οὐκ ἐθελούση, [C2-X]
Od. 5.99: Ζεὺς ἐμέ γ' ἠνώγει δεῦρ' ἐλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα. [C2-X]
Od. 7.305: ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔθελον δείσας αἰσχυνόμενός τε, [A3-B1]
Od. 8.223: ἀνδράσι δὲ προτέροισιν ἐριζέμεν οὐκ ἐθελήσω, [C2-X]
Od. 10.573: ῥεῖα παρεξελθούσα· τίς ἂν θεὸν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα [C2-X]
Od. 13.277: πόλλ' ἀεκαζομένους, οὐδ' ἤθελον ἐξαπατήσαι. [B1-C2]
Od. 13.341: ἀλλὰ τοι οὐκ ἐθέλησα Ποσειδάωνι μάχεσθαι [A3-B2]
Od. 14.125: ψεύδοντ' οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν ἀληθέα μυθήσασθαι. [A3-B2]
Od. 17.226: ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὖν δὴ ἔργα κάκ' ἔμμαθεν, οὐκ ἐθελήσει [C2-X]
Od. 18.328: οὐδ' ἐθέλεις εὐδειν χαλκήϊον ἐς δόμον ἐλθὼν [0-A4]
Od. 18.362: ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὖν δὴ ἔργα κάκ' ἔμμαθες, οὐκ ἐθελήσεις [C2-X]
Od. 20.141: οὐκ ἔθελ' ἐν λέκτροισι καὶ ἐν ῥήγεσσι καθεύδειν, [0-A3]
Od. 22.31: ἴσκεν ἕκαστος ἀνὴρ, ἐπεὶ ἡ φάσαν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα [C2-X]
Od. 24.307: πλάγξ' ἀπὸ Σικανίης δεῦρ' ἐλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα. [C2-X]
h. Demeter 124: ἤλυθον οὐκ ἐθέλουσα, βίη δ' ἀέκουσαν ἀνάγκη [A3-B2]
h. Apollo 473: ἀλλὰ τις ἀθανάτων δεῦρ' ἤγαγεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντας. [C2-X]
h. Hymn 5.25: ἡ δὲ μάλ' οὐκ ἔθελεν ἀλλὰ στερεῶς ἀπέειπεν, [A3-B1]

- Sappho 1.2: παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
Il. 13.825: εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼν οὕτω γε Διὸς παῖς αἰγιόχοιο [B2-C2]
Od. 8.488: ἡ σέ γε Μοῦσ' ἐδίδαξε, Διὸς παῖς, ἡ σέ γ' Ἀπόλλων· [B2-C2]
Od. 11.604: παῖδα Διὸς μεγάλοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίλου. [0-A4]
Theogony 952: παῖδα Διὸς μεγάλοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίλου, [0-A4]
Scutum 371: παῖς τε Διὸς μεγάλου καὶ Ἐνυαλίοιο ἄνακτος. [0-A4]

- Sappho 2.5: ἐν δ' ὕδωρ ψυχρον κελάδει δι' ὕσδων
Od. 9.392: εἰν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ βάπτῃ μεγάλα ἰάχοντα [0-B1]

- Sappho 1.13: αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
Il. 3.182: ὦ μάκαρ Ἀτρεΐδῃ μοιρηγενὲς ὀλβιόδαιμον, [0-A3]

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Variation within Limits: An Evolutionary Approach to the Structure and Dynamics of the Multiform

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One¹ of Albert Lord's more surprising discoveries about living oral traditions was that no two oral performances of the South Slavic epic that he collected were precisely the same (1953).² Scholars before Milman Parry and Lord seem to have assumed that any long performance must have been of a text that had been memorized *verbatim*. It took the Theory of Oral Composition as originally developed by Parry and Lord and elaborated and refined in the decades since³ to explain why in many traditions no two performances are the same at the level of the word and sentence even though the audiences and the performers state that the "same" story is being performed (cf. Foley 2002:12-20). Recent work has shown how the influence of the "performance arena" and the differing skill sets and tendencies of individual singers contribute to the significant variation in the exact words used in any given performance of a specific song (Foley 1995:8-11). But although individual performances vary, they do not vary infinitely, for if they did, there would be no tradition. Oral Theory has used the term "multiform" to describe verbal or textual entities that display this "variation within limits" (Foley 1991:6-8, 1998:149).

Although use of "multiform" both as adjective and noun is widespread in scholarship, it remains difficult to find an agreed-upon definition. Lauri Honko's description of multiforms as "repeatable and artistic expressions of variable length which are constitutive for narration and function as generic markers" (Honko 1998:100-05; cf. Foley 1995:102) is probably as close to a consensus as one can find, but the problem that Lord noted in *The Singer of Tales* remains:

¹ I would like to thank two anonymous referees from Oral Tradition, who massively improved this paper with their detailed critiques and suggestions, and I am grateful to Lori and Scott Garner for guidance, corrections, and encouragement. Thanks also to Namiko Hitotsubashi, Jack Zipes, Bill Goldbloom Bloch, Jason Goodman, Rolf Nelson, Kathy Morgan, Tom Armstrong, the participants in the 2011 Santa Fe Institute Workshop on Computational Cultural Evolution (especially Manfred Laubichler), and the participants in Wheaton College's *Logic and Language* and *Tradition and Influence* seminars. This paper is dedicated to Professor John Miles Foley, who taught me Old English and showed me that tradition is worth studying.

² Lord provided extensive documentation on living traditions for phenomena that had been previously noted—at least in passing—as early as 1885 by Vasilii V. Radlov (xvii) who pointed out that the *Bildtheile* ("idea-parts") from which traditional poets assembled poems were "plastic, multiform entities" (the description is Foley's [1988:15-17]). Matija Murko also noted the variability in traditional performances (1929:22). For an overview of this critical history, see Foley 1988:15-17.

³ See Foley 1988.

“unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp anything that is multiform. It seems to us necessary to construct an ideal text or seek an original, and we remain dissatisfied with an ever-changing phenomenon” (1960:100). Despite the efforts of many scholars to explain the phenomenon of multiformity (perhaps epitomized by Foley’s *How to Read an Oral Poem* [2002]), it remains difficult to think and talk about the multiform without collapsing it to a single, textual entity.⁴ Scholars do not even agree completely on the *size* of multiforms: Parry and Lord’s original approach limited varying formulas to circumstances with identical metrical conditions (although Lord also discussed “themes” that were groupings of ideas [1960:68]), but more recent work has identified much larger multiforms that extend well beyond sentence length (Honko 1998:102-14), and the scholarship seems to be moving in the direction of identifying as multiforms even complete songs (Foley 1998).⁵ The work of Gregory Nagy in developing an “evolutionary” model has been influential in this area, in particular his view that the multiform should be understood in relative rather than absolute terms, so that any particular composition could be more or less multiform “along a graded continuum” (Nagy 1996, 2001:109-10). That multiforms vary at different levels from the micro to the macro is borne out by studies such as Honko’s of Siri epic or Foley’s work with the variants collected by Parry and Lord (Foley 1998). Nevertheless, significant disagreements among researchers remain, both in theoretical terms and, more specifically, about the relative multiformity—and attendant orality—of particular works (for example, the Homeric *Iliad* versus the *Cypria* [Finkelberg 2000; Nagy 2001]).

This state of difficulty is not confined to purely oral, or even primarily oral, traditions, either. In medieval studies Paul Zumthor’s discussion of *mouvance*—most succinctly expressed by Bernard Cerquiglini’s assertion that (1989:111) “l’écriture médiévale ne produit pas de variantes, elle est variance” (“medieval writing does not produce variants, it is variance”)—brought about significant changes in both theoretical approaches and editorial practices (Zumthor 1972, 1987).⁶ Although Cerquiglini’s position is seen as extreme in contemporary medieval studies, the variable nature of texts—even when they are not considered to be particularly close to an oral tradition—has become more central to scholarship. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe has demonstrated that in the Old English tradition “an oral poem did not automatically become a fixed text upon writing” (O’Brien O’Keeffe 1990:46), and more recently Gísli Sigursson’s work on Old Icelandic sagas has shown that even long prose texts are surprisingly multiform (Sigursson 2004 and 2012). Analysis of multiformity is therefore not restricted to the discipline of oral tradition studies but is instead a general literary problem (although the variable nature of texts is often masked by editorial practices).

But despite developments both applied and theoretical, the challenge that Lord identified in 1960 remains: our minds find it difficult to grasp multiformity, and this cognitive weakness hampers our efforts to analyze this extremely important aspect of traditions. Fortunately, other

⁴ Such difficulty remains even if this epistemic shift is performed unconsciously (Ramey 2011:1-5).

⁵ For the conversion of multiforms into single-text entities, see Foley 2004.

⁶ For useful discussion of these issues, see Millett 2008; for a concise introduction to the problems of variation, *mouvance*, and the current turn towards material philology, see Drout and Kleinman 2010.

disciplines have grappled with similar conceptual difficulties. Evolutionary biology, in particular, has been struggling with problems of multiformity since the “heroic age” of natural history collection in the nineteenth century, when it became apparent to scientists that the morphologies of individual animals within a species could vary substantially.⁷ For centuries biologists had spoken of individual animals as imperfect representations of the ideal morphology of a given species, but this typological approach to variation became unsatisfactory as the Darwinian revolution unfolded and it became increasingly clear that there was no way that an idealized species type could exert any influence on individual animals. In response, biologists developed the “biological species concept,” the idea that the ability to interbreed is the only non-subjective test of whether or not two variant forms belong to the same species. From the biological species concept arose what Ernst Mayr dubbed “population thinking” (Mayr 1959; O’Hara 1997), an understanding of species not as natural types but as a varying population of interbreeding individuals. This population thinking is analogous to the frame of mind that scholars in oral traditional studies try to adopt towards the problem of the multiform, which cannot be captured in a single text or performance, or even in the minds of full participants in a given tradition (Foley 1991:6-10).

The parallels between oral tradition studies and population thinking in biology are clear, but there are problems that prevent us from applying unmodified biological approaches to the problem of the multiform. Population thinking is difficult because the human mind easily thinks in terms of forms and types and is less able to visualize a statistical range of morphological differences. More importantly, the dynamics of cultural evolution are not fully captured by a purely biological approach: because our minds construct cognitive prototypes—epitomes of particular mental categories—from features detected by our perceptual systems, the multiform that scholars discuss is an abstraction based on the characteristics of a population of individual cultural entities held in different individual minds. When we think about “the multiform” we are (sometimes despite ourselves) constructing a prototype from those instantiations of the tradition that we have encountered. This process is not limited to scholars studying oral traditions; it affects participants in traditions as well.

In what follows I will argue that the existence of cognitive prototypes and the dynamics of human communication generate selection pressure that limits the variation of individual entities within a cognitive category. The population that makes up the multiform evolves towards prototypes, and this evolution supports morphological stability. The structure of multiforms can be described in terms of a *morpho-semantic* hierarchy in which formal features can, through the process of *traditional referentiality*, become associated with each other across levels of the hierarchy. This phenomenon, *feature interlink*, tends over time to bind cultural entities into stable configurations. We can conceptualize the variability space for any such cultural entity as an *adaptive landscape*, but we add to this visualization (invented for biology) the non-biological variation of the cognitive prototype exerting selection pressure on entities to evolve towards a prototypical form. The variation-within-limits of the multiform is then the expected result of the

⁷ For the types and distribution of variation that can be found within species, see Gould 1985. For the biological species concept, see Mayr 1942.

structure and dynamics of a cultural entity shaped by both the human mind and universal processes of replication and selection.

It is not the goal of this essay to obviate current theorizing about the multiform or provide evidence for one side or the other in disputes about the relative multiformity of different traditions. Rather, the conceptual framework proposed here is intended to enable the integration of various analyses by scholars working in multiple traditions and using a variety of approaches. Oral tradition studies were born when Parry and Lord combined philological analysis with sociological fieldwork and created a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Thanks to decades of good stewardship, the field has continued to bring together divergent perspectives, producing knowledge that could never have been discovered within the bounds of any single discipline. A convergence between evolutionary biology, cognitive psychology, and oral traditional studies is another step in this continuing development.

The Adaptive Landscape

Imagine a rugged landscape characterized by valleys and peaks, foothills and plateaus. The horizontal area of the landscape represents *morphospace*, all the possible forms of the particular organisms or entities we are examining. The height at any given point represents “fitness,” the degree to which the particular characteristics of the entity enable it to survive and reproduce. In biology that concept of fitness is tied to the physical competition for resources that always become scarce as population expands to the carrying capacity of the particular environment. Fitness in cultural evolution is only slightly different, but the limiting factors are not those of the physical environment but instead ones primarily associated with finite human attention and memory. Some cultural entities have forms that make them more likely to be noticed, remembered, and re-transmitted than others. We describe these reproducing morphologies as having greater fitness than those forms that are not reproduced. Therefore, by simple inspection of the landscape, we can judge the fitness of a given form: the higher up a mountain, the more fit to its local environment a form is; the lower down in a valley, the less fit. This *adaptive landscape* (or *fitness landscape*) was devised by the biologist Sewall Wright in 1932.⁸ Long used for thought experiments in evolutionary biology, the adaptive landscape can be a precise mathematical tool,⁹ but it is also a powerful metaphor that represents complex interrelations between comparative morphology and fitness in ways our minds find intuitively simple: relationships of topography.

To better understand the adaptive landscape, it is helpful to begin with a simplified model, see how it works, and then expand the model to account for more complex phenomena.¹⁰ To this end we will construct a representation of variant fitness in the Anglo-Saxon poem

⁸ For further discussion, see Arnold et al. 2001:9-32, and for critique, see Coyne et al. 1997. The discussion that follows has been guided in particular by Gavrillets 2004.

⁹ See Gavrillets 2004:21-22 on the distinction between a mathematically rigorous landscape and the more metaphorical approach that I take here.

¹⁰ I have made some modifications to the discussion of Gavrillets (2004) both in structure and terminology.

Cædmon's Hymn,¹¹ a short text from the eighth century that has long been at the heart of debates about the oral nature of Anglo-Saxon poetry.¹² According to the Venerable Bede, Cædmon was an illiterate cowherd who was given the miraculous gift of poetry. Previously unable to sing at all, after being visited by an angel in a dream, Cædmon became able to turn instruction in church doctrine or Christian history into Old English verse.¹³ The story of Cædmon has been seen as a clear example of oral traditional poetry in Anglo-Saxon, and an analysis of the story and poem was the foundation of Francis Peabody Magoun's 1955 article, "Bede's Story of Cædmon: The Case History of an Anglo-Saxon Singer," the first essay to use oral tradition approaches for the study of Old English texts. Although the precise degree to which our current texts of the poem reflect an Anglo-Saxon oral tradition is disputed, for the purposes of this argument I will adopt the broadly accepted notion that the poem represents many of the features of oral tradition in Old English. At the very least it has a greater claim on oral origins than any other poem in Anglo-Saxon, and there is no evidence inconsistent with oral origins.¹⁴

The hymn is particularly valuable for developing a simplified adaptive landscape because we have many manuscript witnesses that include a number of variants. There are twenty-one medieval manuscripts that include *Cædmon's Hymn*. These have been collected and edited in the most recent edition by Daniel O'Donnell (2005). For reasons that will become clear, we will focus on line five, which appears in Elliott van Kirk Dobbie's standard edition as "he ærest scop eorðan bearnum" ("he first shaped, for the sons of earth . . .") (1942:106).¹⁵ There are two variations in this line, one in the a- and one in the b-verse. In the a-verse the word *scop* appears in thirteen manuscripts, while the prefixed form *ge-scop* appears eight times in the corpus. (The *ge-* prefix in Anglo-Saxon can indicate a perfective sense of a verb.) Even more significant is the variation in the b-verse: eleven manuscripts have forms that mean "of earth" (the *eorðan* recension) while ten have "of old"¹⁶ (the *ylða* recension). Other minor variations throughout the *Cædmon's Hymn* corpus (with one exception)¹⁷ are orthographic or dialectal, and I interpret them

¹¹ This section of the discussion is in part inspired by David C. Rubin's work (1995:240-41).

¹² The story of Cædmon and his miraculous gift of poetry is found in book IV, chapter 24 of the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Colgrave and Mynors 1969).

¹³ There is a massive literature on the story of Cædmon, its political, historical, and religious implications, and its likelihood of being true. For analysis and bibliography, see O'Donnell 2005:1-28, 187-90.

¹⁴ O'Donnell (2005:187-90) very briefly dismisses the possible orality of the transmission of the poem, focusing on the "conservatism" of a particular line of presumed textual transmission. This critique makes the very common mistake of equating orality with extreme fluidity. For the oral origins see, *inter alia*, Magoun 1955 and O'Brien-O'Keefe 1990. (For a parallel in Classical Studies, see Nagy 2001:112-15 with discussion of the differences in variation between the *Iliad* and the *Cypria*.) A very short text such as *Cædmon's Hymn* can easily be memorized *verbatim*, thus limiting—but not entirely eliminating—variation.

¹⁵ O'Donnell reconstructs the hypothetical ancestor of the line as "he aerist scop eorðu barnum" (2005:205).

¹⁶ "Of old" is usually taken as a metaphor for "of men," that is, "conceived as the successive generations, or men of old" (Pope 2001:193).

¹⁷ In MS Tr1 (using O'Donnell's sigla), *hu* appears instead of *he*.

not as representative of substantive variation in the poetic multiform but instead as generated in the copying process.¹⁸

We can represent the total variation of the line thus:

A: scop
a: gescop
B: eorðan
b: ylða

The four morphotypes of line five—AB, Ab, aB, and ab—are represented in the manuscript record in different numbers:

AB: 9 appearances / 43% (MSS Br, B1, Hr, C, CArms, Ld, T1, P1, To)
Ab: 4 appearances / 19% (MSS M, Di, P, PSanM)
aB: 2 appearances / 10% (MSS Ca, O)
ab: 6 appearances / 29% (MSS Tr1, Bd, H, Ln, Mg, W)¹⁹

For the purpose of this argument we will treat representation in the manuscript record as a proxy for the *fitness* of a particular morphotype and therefore calculate fitness of a given form as the fraction of the total population it represents. This argument does require two potentially problematic assumptions. First, we assume that morphological variation is visible to selection so that the particular form of a line affects its likelihood of being reproduced. Without very large data sets it is impossible to prove this point with statistical rigor, but the evaluation of singers and performances by participants in traditions (and later by scholars) demonstrates that different forms of songs are considered more or less aesthetically accomplished and thus more or less likely to be reproduced, either by being remembered and performed by other singers or by being incorporated into textual records (see Foley 2004:102-06). Evaluators must be basing their evaluation on detectable variations in performances, so it is not a great leap to suggest that even subtle differences in word choice affect a variant's inclusive fitness; the model system merely isolates a few particular variants. More problematic is the assumption that the distribution of variants in the surviving documentary record represents the distribution of those variants in the original complete archive. Preservation can be evidence, albeit probabilistic evidence, for the inclusive fitness of variants, but the Anglo-Saxon documentary record is seriously incomplete, and we cannot know if preservation of witnesses of *Cædmon's Hymn* was non-random. It is possible that there were many additional manuscript witnesses of the poem that have been lost,

¹⁸ The boundary between significant poetic variation and the influence of dialect and orthographic practice can be very difficult to draw, but the particular case of line five is less muddled than many related problems. The variation between *eo* and *o* in forms of *scop* is reasonably interpreted as orthographic, and the differences in spelling between Northumbrian and West Saxon recensions as dialectal. The *ge-* prefixed forms of the “shaped” verb are at least grammatically distinct and thus potentially significant stylistically. The difference between “of earth” and “of old” is substantive.

¹⁹ Percentages are slightly rounded and therefore do not total 100%. Manuscripts in each category are identified by O'Donnell's sigla (2005:79).

and these might show completely different distributions of variants (although we have no direct evidence for this hypothesis). However, as long as we remain cautious about drawing any conclusions that rely too heavily on any specific numerical distribution, we can use manuscript preservation as a crude proxy for overall popularity. This proxy is not ideal, but we must make do with the information available to us, and in any event the point of the exercise is to develop a simplified model. A much more complex landscape could be generated by the variants of *Siri epic* recorded in Honko (1998), but using *Cædmon's Hymn* allows us to see more clearly the workings of the model before we elaborate it.

We can graphically illustrate the fitness of the population of variants by creating a three-dimensional representation in which the x-axis indicates the *scop* / *gescop*, the y-axis the *eorðan* / *ylda* variation, and the z-axis the fitness of each morphotype.

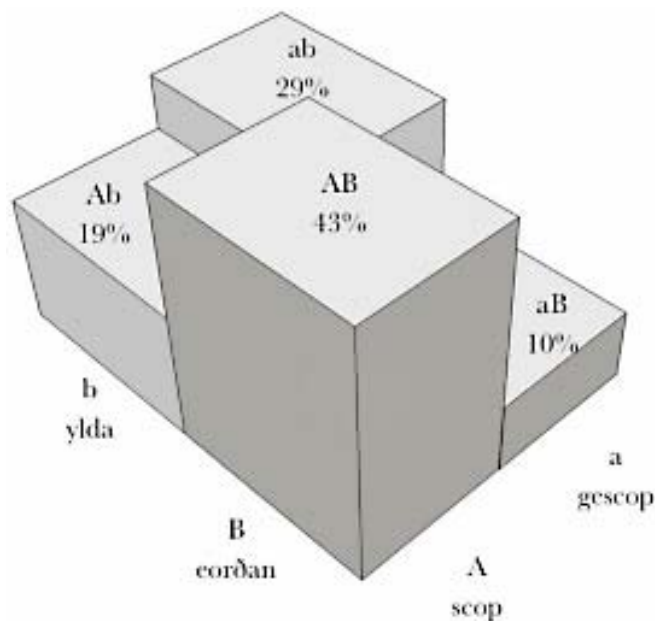


Figure 1. Representation of the relative fitness of morphotypes of *Cædmon's Hymn*, line 5.

We can also represent additional varying characters by continuing to add dimensions to the diagram (for example, adding a fourth dimension to represent the variation between *he* in 5a, which occurs in 20 manuscripts, and *hu*, which appears only in MS Tr1). But fitness landscapes in higher dimensions, while amenable to mathematical analysis, are not easily visualized, so we will work in the familiar three dimensions. This approach is justified not only because the purpose of the adaptive landscape is to help channel intuition, but because many minor characteristics may

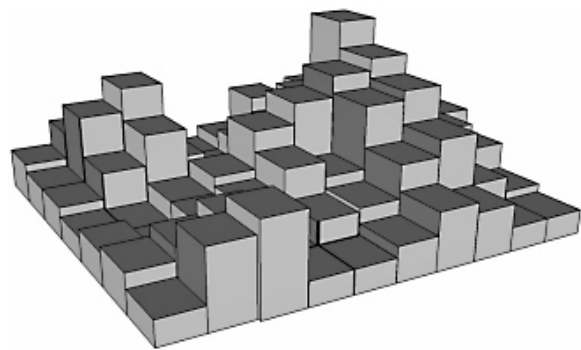


Figure 2. "Skyscraper" landscape represents fitness of multiple discrete morphotypes.

²⁰ This illustration is a variation of Gavrilets's Figure 2.4 (2004), which in turn was inspired by Nei et al. 1983.



Figure 3. Many minor variations of morphotypes create a near-gradient.

the landscape will be depends upon the underlying dynamics of the system: some characteristics, such as sentence or scene length, can vary continuously; others are discrete. But even if all characters were discrete, there are so many features in even reasonably small multiforms—such as “Silken Cradle,” “Caring,” and “Name-giving” in Siri epic as sung by Gopala Naika (Honko 1998:106-10)—that at the level of compression required for us to see its contours in a single figure, the adaptive landscape will look like terrain (see Figure 4).

The adaptive landscape represents the full range of *possible* forms for the entity in question, but not all of these forms may actually exist in the world.²¹ If we want to use the landscape to perform thought experiments on the evolution of cultural entities, we must populate it, either by scattering entities randomly (representing an initial diversity of forms) or by having them start out homogenous and therefore occupying only a small part of the landscape, as in Figure 4.

We simulate morphological evolution in the population by applying rules of change and inheritance to the entities in the adaptive landscape. For example, we might allow every entity to have offspring who are slightly different from their “parent” entities. We can then simulate competition by making the offspring with the highest fitness score reproduce in subsequent generations. We can also limit the total number of individuals, with those with the lower fitness values being eliminated in favor of those with higher fitness values. By running the simulations and examining the underlying mathematics, we can predict how varying entities will come to populate the fitness landscape over multiple generations. The most significant phenomenon we will observe is that lineages tend to “hill-climb” up the adaptive landscape to the peaks from the valleys through the replacement of less fit forms by one with greater fitness and thus greater height in the landscape (Sewall Wright 1932; Simpson 1953:154-59). Variation appears to be

be correlated, as variables are often dependent upon each other.

The “skyscraper” visualization represents only discrete changes, such as that between *eorðan* and *ylda*, so each particular morphotype is represented by a large block. But adaptive landscapes can also represent a much more finely grained morphospace simply by adding many small blocks to represent the range of minor variants such as we would find in a longer passage of text (see Figure 3). How continuous

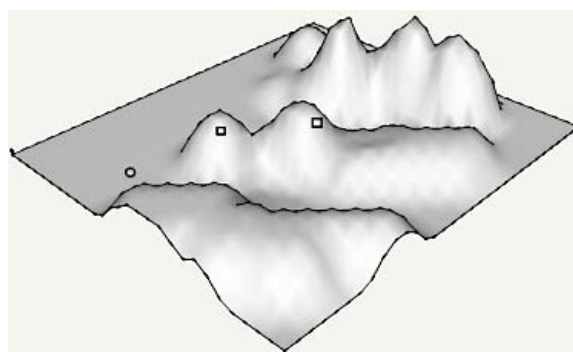


Figure 4. Adaptive landscape populated with entities.

²¹ For discussion, see Raup and Michelson 1965:1294-95; Dawkins 1996:214-22; Tursch 1997. A recent discussion (Dorit 2011) tilts at the straw man of perfect adaptationism but is nevertheless useful.

channeled towards the local optimum in morphospace because of the “ratchet effect”: improvements in fitness are noticeable because those organisms occupy new locations in the adaptive landscape, but decreases in fitness are invisible because they either put an organism into a location that is already occupied (hence not visibly different) or a lower-level spot that leads to extinction. The entities themselves are not moving; they are simply reproducing and thus bequeathing both similarity and variability to their offspring, but the effect is to populate the higher areas of morphospace that represent greater fitness. The peaks in the landscape, then, are *attractors*, locations at which lineages will eventually arrive if they continue to evolve in the fitness landscape.

The Morpho-Semantic Hierarchy

The variants we examined in line five of *Cædmon's Hymn* are lexical (*eorðan/ylda*) and morphological (*gescop/scop*). These variants do not affect the alliteration or prosody of the line because the Old English poetic system allowed vocalic alliteration (so the *eo* diphthong alliterates with *y*) and *ge-* is unstressed and so in this metrical context optional. It is not difficult to imagine other variants, however, that would affect the alliteration and meter of the line. For example, if *eorðan* were to be replaced with *manna* (“of men”) or some other word with consonantal stress, the line would no longer alliterate. If *scop* were replaced with a multi-syllabic verb, the line might no longer scan properly. Similarly, there are an enormous number of words that simply could not fill the *eorðan/ylda* slot for reasons of grammar and sense: “God shaped earth for the yellow of fish” would not be likely to be reproduced by an Anglo-Saxon poet or a later scribe.²² The limits to variation are not restricted to the grammatical and formal properties of the line but also include semantic features of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of meaning. Furthermore, the semantic fitness of a particular unit is influenced not only by its denotative meaning, but also by its connotations. A particular combination of words could be grammatical, flawlessly alliterating, and productive of an aesthetically pleasing visual image but nevertheless have low inclusive fitness because it was politically or socially unacceptable to performer or audience.

We can arrange these fitness criteria along a *morpho-semantic hierarchy*, an arrangement of attributes from those utterly essential to the most nebulous: some parts of speech simply cannot substitute for others,²³ and variation in rhyme scheme and meter is significantly limited, but a replacement for “bearnum” in line five of *Cædmon's Hymn* probably could be one of many agents, and the subtle degrees of orthodoxy in the poem's oft-debated creation theology would probably not be a complete determinant of whether or not the poem is copied. Grammatical,

²² At least while the language of the exemplar was still understood by the scribe, which is the only time frame relevant for the purposes of this argument. Note, however, that when there is significant separation between the language of the scribe and the language of the exemplar, some scribes can preserve (or produce) nonsensical readings (for example, line 2921 of *Beowulf*, in which neither scribe seems to have recognized the name of the Merovingians [see Shippey 2005]).

²³ Note, though, how e. e. cummings generates aesthetic effects by violating these constraints in poems like “anyone lived in a pretty how town” (1957:351-52).

metrical, formal, and semantic qualities are higher up in the hierarchy than are the thematic and symbolic features of a work, and orthographic and dialectal variation is less constrained than changes in lexis or morphology. However, in differing cultural environments, different levels of the morpho-semantic hierarchy will contribute differentially to inclusive fitness.

Feature Interlink

But even though the morpho-semantic hierarchy is present, it is not arranged like an onion in neatly separable layers. Rather, particular characteristics can be linked to each other across levels, so that change in one necessitates change in the other. The example given above of *manna* replacing *eorðan* or *ylða* shows that a change in meaning could be blocked by the criteria of alliteration if the variables are not independent. *Manna* may contribute more than *eorðan* to fitness in semantic terms, but the degradation in alliterative fitness may be so great that the resultant morphotype would occupy a significantly lower position in the adaptive landscape. The space between morphologies may therefore not be a smooth gradient in all directions, and when this is the case, the variation of a multiform is constrained in multiple dimensions.

The phenomenon of *traditional referentiality* further constrains variability. Traditional referentiality is the process by which a specific formula, type-scene, or other recognized pattern in a text calls up *pars pro toto*, that is, “a context enormously larger and more echoic than the text or the work itself” (Foley 1991:6-8), thus allowing “grey-eyed Athena” or “Hector of the glancing helm” to invoke not merely one attribute of a well-known character, but that character’s entire persona as developed throughout a tradition (Foley 1995:5). Traditional referentiality is generated by the combination of repetition with associative memory (DROUT 2006). As a multiform is copied and re-copied, its various features become associated with each other. Thus a particular rhyme scheme and prosody (at a lower or middle level in the morpho-semantic hierarchy) can become linked through associative memory with a theme (at a higher level). For example, in South-Slavic oral tradition the decasyllabic line, the *deseterac*, is associated with the *genre* of epic; in the written tradition of English literature, the *form* of the sonnet is associated with the *theme* of romantic love. This *feature interlink* serves to bind together the multiform into less variable configurations than a non-interlinked multiform would be.²⁴ The more a particular multiform is repeated, the more the process of traditional referentiality binds together features, and traditional multiforms are, by definition, repeated (else they would not be traditional). The binding of features together in complexes makes some areas of morphospace inaccessible to a reasonably long multiform, not only because some particular feature combinations will not be possible, but because an interlinked multiform may not be able to traverse particular regions of morphospace leading to a higher summit. The more tightly bound a multiform is, the smaller the area of the adaptive landscape that will be occupied by its variants. When we combine this process with the hill-climbing behavior of entities in a competitive, evolutionary environment, we generate an adaptive landscape characterized by mountains surrounded by plains or valleys of non-adaptive morphotypes.

²⁴ See Rubin 1995:90-121, 229-56.

The Traps of Local Maxima

There is selection pressure on every lineage to evolve toward forms that are higher up the adaptive landscape, but because the landscape is not homogeneous, not every point leads to every other point by simple hill-climbing. In Figure 5 we see that an entity that starts at point x can evolve to point y, but point z is not reachable without a significant *decrease* in fitness that would enable the entity to move lower in the landscape (crossing the valley) before moving up the peak towards the higher summit z. This decrease in fitness is prevented by all the entities that have the same form as y outcompeting those that move slightly down from the y summit. Therefore, y is a local maximum at which the form is trapped.

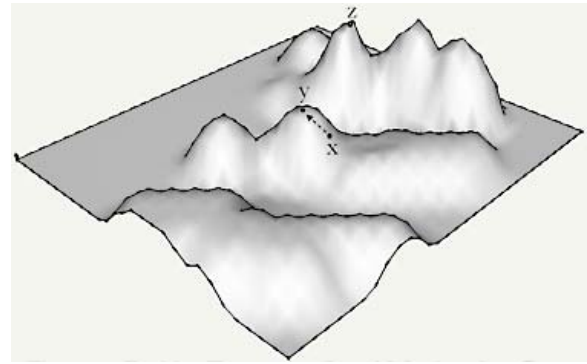


Figure 5. Entities trapped at local maxima in a rugged landscape.

In biology, a population of organisms that has reached a local maximum and becomes reproductively isolated is taken to be a species (Sewall Wright 1932; Simpson 1953:155-59). The problem of species or incipient species escaping the traps of local maxima has spawned an enormous amount of theoretical population biology that is beyond the scope of the argument in this essay,²⁵ but suffice it to say that genetic drift, external perturbation, hybridization, and movement through an adaptive landscape on “ridges” have all been shown to move species away from local maxima traps.²⁶ For our purposes it is enough to recognize that local maxima serve as attractors in the adaptive landscape, that they *can* trap lineages even though we can see that there are other locations in morphospace with higher fitness, and that some kind of significant change in the environment is required to move the lineage away from the local maximum.²⁷ Furthermore, since for the most part we examine relatively stable systems that we only notice because they have already evolved to fit their environments, the adaptive landscape at any given time is likely to be populated only at the fitness peaks, giving us the illusion that species or genres were always separate. However, if we trace backwards the movement of lineages in the adaptive landscape, we can see that what are at a given time separate species on distant peaks must have originated much lower in the fitness landscape, and while they were in these flatter locations, they had more flexibility in the evolution of form because flatter morphospace allows for greater freedom of variation. In completely flat morphospace a move in any direction is as fit as the original location. As morphospace becomes more hilly, some moves become superior to the original location, but others become inferior. Thus total variability is lessened as the relief of the landscape increases.

²⁵ See, among many others, the essays in Crutchfield and Schuster 2003. For applications beyond biology, see the essays in Ziman 2000.

²⁶ It should be noted that some of these models are controversial; Gavrillets is careful to note dissenting voices. I have found his third chapter particularly illuminating (2004:53-80).

²⁷ For further discussion, see Perkins 2000.

Attractors in Morphospace

When we recognize different instances of a multiform as being all in some way “the same thing,” as varying within limits, we are making a *Gestalt* judgment of similarity at multiple and confounded levels of the morpho-semantic hierarchy: an Anglo-Saxon hearer would recognize *Cædmon’s Hymn* in either the *eorðan* or *ylða* forms despite the minor variation in line five. This *Gestalt* recognition of similarity can occur at any level of the hierarchy, from the entire poem to the theme to the type scene, formula, or even an individual word that is “the same” as its synonym. This is not inconsistent with Michael Nagler’s concept of an “underlying *Gestalt*” (1974:18) behind Homeric formulas,²⁸ but it replaces the linguistically problematic idea of a “preverbal” or “relatively deep” *Gestalt*²⁹ with the idea that the identification of similarity is based on abstracted qualities. The recognition of fundamental similarity at differing levels of the hierarchy, then, is not limited to the formula, or even to oral traditional works; instead the cognitive processes allow us to say that *West Side Story* is in some way the “same” as *Romeo and Juliet*.

To represent all the different possible types of similarity and difference between the two artifacts, we would need to compare adaptive landscapes in multiple dimensions—a task beyond the visualization powers of our minds. However, if we isolate a given high level, such as the semantic category “love story” or the genre “Broadway musical,” or the tradition “Moslem epic,” we can visualize an appropriate landscape. The “Serbian Christian epic” mountain would be a large peak with many sub-summits that would represent, among others, the multiforms “Kosovo Cycle” and “Stories of Kraljević Marko.” “Little Red Riding Hood” would be a large massif with many large summits, representing related morphologies in different languages and traditions (that is, the similarity would be at different levels of the morpho-semantic hierarchy).³⁰ Each lineage would have moved up the peak by evolving to be more and more fit to the cultural contexts in which it existed.

The difference between literary works, which are defined by texts fixed at the level of individual words and sentences, and oral traditional multiforms, which are fixed at more abstract levels of morpho-semantic hierarchy, would be visible if we zoomed in further on the summit of the peak. A fixed text of *Cædmon’s Hymn* occupies a single point in morphospace, and even the small variants we have documented only occupy four points. But the “Stories of Kraljević Marko” summit would be made up of smaller sub-peaks: “Marko Drinks Wine During Ramadan,” “Kraljević Marko and Musa the Robber,” and “The Death of Kraljević Marko,” with each of these sub-peaks surrounded by morphospaces representing variations particular to Mujo Kukuruzović or Ibro Bašić and changing even from performance to performance.

²⁸ Nagler argues that a poet “takes in many hundreds of lines . . . from all of which he develops an intuitive feel for an underlying *Gestalt* which is retained in his unconscious mind probably in some unknown way that the phrasal impulses of any natural language are retained in the mind” (1974:18-19).

²⁹ One reason that linguists replaced the phrase “deep structure” with “d-structure” is the persistent mis-equation of “underlying meaning” (which is what Nagler means here) with grammatical “deep structure.”

³⁰ For more discussion, see Zipes 1993 and 2006.

The geometry of adaptive morphospace shapes the evolution of cultural entities in the same way that hydrodynamics shapes fish, but there is a limit to how much similarity is thus produced. Which local peak a meme-plex evolves toward is a function both of the shape of morphospace and the contingent factors of the history of the particular lineage. Entities within a multiform or within a larger genre are similar in form because the selection pressure to fit the adaptive landscape led them to the same areas of morphospace at various levels of the morpho-semantic hierarchy, but entities that evolved into similar forms are usually (though not always) similar because they have similar ontogenies. Although the forms that have risen up the mountain to reach similar peaks may not have begun at the same spot in the landscape, their passage through any bottlenecks in morphospace on their way to the summit will have forced them to have—at that specific point in time—similar morphologies.

Additionally, the shapes of adaptive landscapes are not static but evolve over time as the populations evolve. This may seem a counterintuitive proposition, as adaptive landscapes represent the full possible morphospace of an entity, but the presence of variously adapted entities in the landscape can make some forms less or more adaptive or open up new areas of morphospace, changing the relative height of different peaks. Changes in population density can affect the fitness of different morphologies: a form that is very fit when there are few same-species competitors can be a handicap in crowded circumstances (Blute 2010:81-83). But although the adaptive landscape changes, at any given time the particular features of a rugged landscape still serve as attractors.

The Pull of the Prototype

As rich and complex as our model to this point is, it has not yet gone beyond biology and so does not account for some dynamics that may be unique to cultural evolution. “*Natura non facit saltus*,” (“Nature does not make leaps”) wrote Darwin, summing up a great deal of observational knowledge. The theory of Natural Selection shows that nature does not *need* to make leaps in form, that all the existing forms in nature can be accounted for by the slow and steady processes of selection, without the need for “hopeful monsters.”³¹ Mathematical work on adaptive landscapes has further shown that even seemingly inaccessible peaks can be reached merely through genetic drift, and peaks themselves can shift through stochastic processes (Mayr 1942:54; Carson 1968; Carson and Templeton 1984; Templeton 1980; Kaneshiro 1980; Kaneshiro and Anderson 1989:43-76),³² so saltations are not necessary for biological evolution. But we do observe, at least from certain points of view, what look like saltations in cultural evolution, or at least the traversal of large areas of morphospace without the visible presence of many intermediate forms. The sonnet having evolved, Shakespeare did not re-invent the form when he wrote his first one, but we also do not view his works as having evolved from any particular individual poem that inspired him. Rather, Shakespeare had the idea of the sonnet, a *pattern* higher in the morpho-semantic hierarchy than any specific string of words. He and other

³¹ For a useful (though partisan in predictable ways) discussion, see Gould 1980:186-93.

³² For a history see Provine 1989.

poets had recognized the salient features—the generic characteristics—of the sonnet and formed a conception of what a sonnet should be. His individual sonnets evolved in part from features of individual poems but more significantly from the contours of a mental abstraction of a sonnet in his mind.

Mathematically, an attractor is simply a set towards which a dynamical system evolves over time. In an adaptive landscape, it is a location to which the combination of selection with mere stochastic variation will drive the evolution of morphology. But culture-space is not the same as physical, biological space because much of culture occurs in minds, and even though it has at its root a material cause, the mental world operates somewhat differently than physical space. Cultural entities can therefore perform seeming saltations, apparent jumps through morphospace, much more easily than can biological entities. This dynamic complicates the metaphor of the adaptive landscape. For example, impossibly deep valleys can be crossed through the ability of some cultural forms to jump from one peak to another. Because these saltations occur in minds, we must import some specifics of mental processes into the theory. This we can do by drawing on research in cognitive psychology, specifically Eleanor Rosch's classic work on the mind's categorization system and the formation of prototypes in her "Principles of Categorization" chapter (1978:27-48) in *Cognition and Categorization*.³³ Although research has continued on categorization and prototypicality, Rosch's earlier papers have not been superseded, and they lay out very clearly and at the most useful level of detail the processes that are of greatest relevance to the argument presented here.³⁴

"Human categorization should not be considered the arbitrary product of historical accident or of whimsy," writes Rosch, "but rather the result of psychological principles of categorization, which are subject to investigation" (1978:27). The perceptual and cognitive systems tend to categorize entities in the same ways even when the humans who are doing the categorization are very different from each other (for instance, if they are from different cultures or backgrounds or are of different ages). The patterns of categorization discovered by psychologists, then, can be used cross-temporally and cross-culturally.

The first principle of categorization is that of *cognitive economy*: "the task of category systems is to provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort," so that an organism can conserve finite cognitive resources. This principle leads to a balancing process, because it is beneficial for organisms both to have large numbers of categories that make fine discriminations and to reduce "the infinite differences among stimuli to behaviorally and cognitively usable proportions." A cognitive system, therefore, will evolve to a middle ground between categories that are too broad and those that are too narrow. The principle of cognitive economy means that elaborated taxonomies are unlikely to be common except in special situations when they are particularly valuable, such as when subtle distinctions can be the difference between eating an

³³ Although she summarizes her previous work in Rosch 1978, it is well worth reading the earlier studies (1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1975c, and 1977) that led up to it.

³⁴ In my investigation of research in cognitive psychology I have been guided by Rolf Nelson; errors are entirely my own.

edible or a poisonous plant (Berlin 1978).³⁵ The second principle of the human categorization system is as follows: *the world is not unstructured*,³⁶ “the material objects of the world possess a high correlational structure” (Rosch 1978:28-29). The attributes of objects are not uniformly distributed but instead connected to each other in ways that are probabilistic, so that in animals, for instance, wings most often occur with feathers and beaks, less often with fur, and never with scales. The brain has evolved to detect consistent coincidences in the environment,³⁷ so the correlational structure of objects is readily noted and remembered.

These two principles cause category systems to have two dimensions. The vertical dimension “concerns the level of inclusiveness of the category” (Rosch 1978:27). This is the level along which the terms *corgi*, *dog*, *carnivore*, *mammal*, and *living creature* vary. The horizontal dimension represents the “segmentation of categories at the same level of inclusiveness” (Rosch 1978:27). This is the level at which *dog*, *fish*, *truck*, *chair*, *lake*, and *rock* vary (see Figure 6).

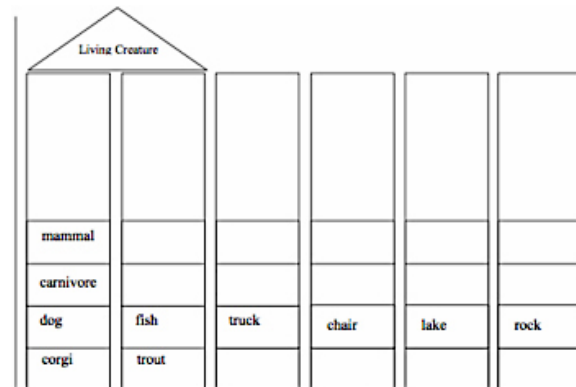


Figure 6. Cognitive categorizations on two axes.

Not all categories along the vertical dimension of categorization are equally useful, so there is selection pressure to choose the category that most effectively mirrors “the structure of attributes perceived in the world” (Rosch 1978:30). Furthermore, to increase the “distinctiveness and flexibility” of the categories in the horizontal dimension, “categories tend to become defined in terms of prototypes or prototypical instances that contain the attributes most representative of items inside and least representative of items outside the category” (Rosch 1978:30). These cognitive prototypes³⁸ shape the evolution and perception of multiforms.

Under the principle of cognitive economy, categories evolve to be separate and clear-cut, and although it is not always possible to carve the world at the joints, prototypes are those cases in a category in which membership is most clear. Research shows that judgments of typicality are consistent even in regard to categories about whose boundaries the study subjects disagree and also across age, gender, cultural and ethnic categories (Rosch 1974; Rosch 1975a; Rosch 1975b; Rosch 1975c; Rosch and Mervis 1975). Categories are formed by the mind’s judgment of

³⁵ The research on this topic is beyond the scope of this essay. For an accessible discussion in other contexts, see Davis 1997.

³⁶ Rosch is quick to note that we are discussing the perceived world as mediated through both the human perceptual system and pre-existing cognitive categories (1978:29).

³⁷ The neurological basis of the brain’s “coincidence detector” lies in the NMDA receptor, which allows calcium ions to flow only when *both* a pre-synaptic and post-synaptic signal are present (Kandel and Schwartz 1996:284).

³⁸ Nagler argues that “the aspiring poet . . . does not memorize prototypes or templates” (1974:18). Although they may not explicitly memorize an abstract model, poets think like other human beings and thus must construct mental prototypes of poems and their features in the same ways that individuals construct mental prototypes of entities that are of interest to them.

similarity and difference. Although additional models such as that of Amos Tversky (1977) are also helpful for conceptualizing the abstract process involved,³⁹ it is enough to follow Rosch's conclusion that category prototypes "develop through the same principles, such as maximization of cue validity and maximization of category resemblance, as those principles governing the formation of the categories themselves" (1978:36-37). Thus prototypes are built at the same time that categories are being developed. Once prototypes exist, subsequently encountered entities are compared to them. At times an individual entity in the real world may be a very close match for the prototype (a robin may seem like a prototypical bird), but the mental entity is not the same as the physical one.⁴⁰ The more prototypical a category member is, the more features it has in common with other members of the category (Rosch and Mervis 1975), and when it is possible to measure prototypes in terms of size or other objective metrics, prototypes tend to be at the mean of the other entities in the category (Reed 1972; Rosch et al. 1976). "Prototypes appear to be just those members of a category that most reflect the redundancy structure of the category as a whole" (Rosch 1978:37).

Prototypes, Influence, and the Adaptive Landscape

We can integrate this cognitive psychological research with our previous analysis by noting that prototypes will evolve to be like the forms at the peaks of the adaptive landscape, and having been constructed, they in turn influence subsequent evolution. If entities are clustered at various local maxima around an adaptive peak they will, due to their relative positions in morphospace, share many features. The entities closer to the summit should share the most features because these features are individually closer to each other than to any of the more widely distributed forms. Entities residing at the peaks of adaptive landscapes thus become attractors in two ways. First, they occupy those areas of morphospace that are most fit and therefore are the forms towards which other entities are evolving (although these other entities may, at any given time, be trapped on local maxima). Second, because the peak forms are the most likely to become prototypical, all other forms that are perceived as being part of the same category⁴¹ will be compared to those forms. For the purposes of pure categorization this standard of comparison does not seem particularly important, but because cultural evolution relies on the production and transmission of new forms from human minds, the prototype serves not only to categorize but also to create new forms in a particular shape. The seeming saltations we find in human culture can thus be explained by noting the pull of the prototype, to which evolving forms are compared and which thus shapes the evolution of those forms.

³⁹ Tversky's model is the subject of an enormous amount of research and is beyond the scope of this argument; see further Dehaene 2009:176-93.

⁴⁰ It seems to me that the psychologists may have independently reinvented Ferdinand de Saussure's idea (1983) of the "signified" that exists only in various minds; this is not the only place where there is some overlap between cognitive psychology and (albeit outdated) theoretical linguistics.

⁴¹ Generally, but not always, these forms are in a proximate part of the adaptive landscape—otherwise they would not be in the same category.

Figure 7 represents the first stages in this process. We begin with the multiform A, which is produced by some participant in an oral tradition. (almost any multiform in which we are interested will not have arisen *ex nihilo* or even *de novo*, but for the purpose of this argument, let us assume entry into a new area of morphospace.) Some of the features of this multiform are judged to be salient by human cognitive processes, and out of these salient features begins the evolution of a prototype, α . Another distinct but in some ways similar multiform, B, has some features that are similar to A but others that are different. If the *Gestalt* of B is similar enough to A for the two entities to be classified in the same category (as they would be if they share enough features), then features of B are also abstracted, but instead of forming a second prototype, the abstracted features of B further shape prototype α , which remains the prototype for the entire category, not just for multiform A. Prototype α will now include the shared and salient features of both A and B. As participants in a tradition experience performances C and D, they will abstract additional features from these performances and recognize patterns—this information will in turn influence α . Let us assume that this particular prototype is held in the mind of an author who is now generating a new song. That new form, \aleph , may have some features of multiforms A, B, C, or D, but only via the prototype, α . This model can be made more detailed and complex by allowing an individual entity to provide primary stimulus but having that primary stimulus be mediated through the already existing prototype, to which are added various feedback loops (see Figure 8).

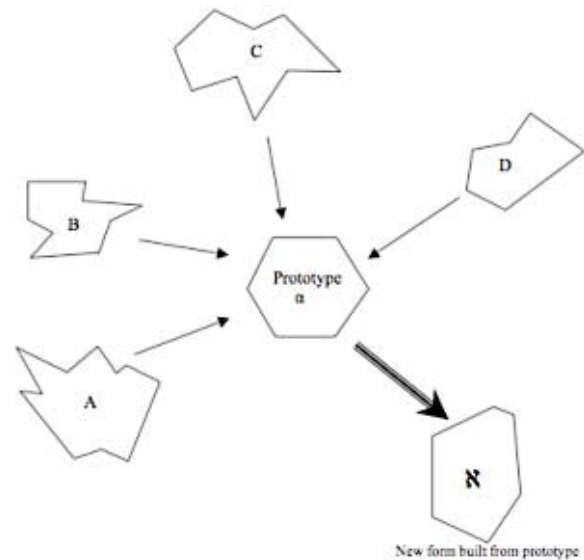


Figure 7. Influence model – oversimplified.

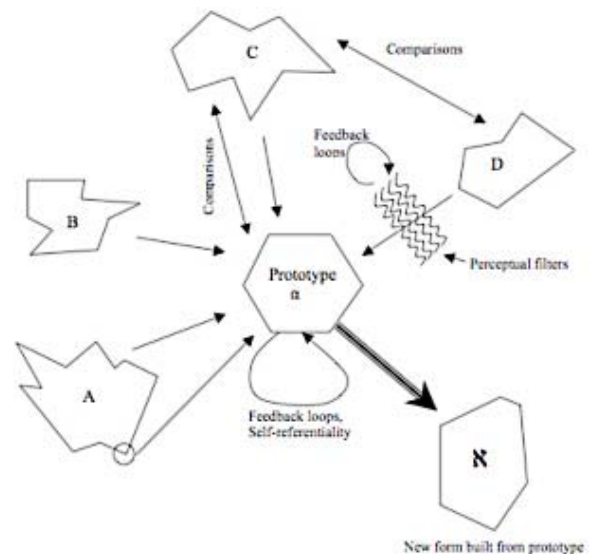


Figure 8. Influence model.

The key point is that the movement from A-D to α and then from α to \aleph is the way that the influence of the cognitive prototype works through the mediation of the human mind. From the point of view of an outside observer, the generation of a unique performance in a given tradition may appear to be a saltation: one small stimulus—perhaps hearing that United States President John F. Kennedy was assassinated⁴²—

⁴² After the Kennedy assassination, Jozo Karamatić, a guslar from Herzegovina, composed and recorded “Smrt u Dalasu” in the epic style. Although the performance was recorded in audio only, there are now many on-line versions available in which the song is used as a soundtrack to imagery of the Kennedy assassination. One of the less sensationalistic versions is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qha-q9Wr9FI>.

provokes the creation of a large and complex work that is somewhat different from the large and complex works that have come before. We can see why observers might think that something magical happened inside the human brain or that the process was simply too complex to explain or that the prototype generated spooky action at a distance. But when we recognize that there has been significant information transfer from the world to the mind—in the categorization of entities and the creation of prototypes—the seeming poverty of the stimulus is no longer a problem. A given work or event may be the proximate cause of inspiration, but the matrix in which that work exerts influence is the long-term building of cognitive categories, the evolution of mental prototypes in the adaptive landscape.

For these processes to work, however, entities A, B, C, and D must be similar enough in perceived features for the mind to try to categorize them together and build a prototype from their shared features. Such similarity can be caused by homology, analogy, or random chance. *Homology* is similarity caused by shared inheritance. The seven neck vertebrae in most mammals from shrews to pigs to giraffes is an example of homology: an ancestor had seven neck vertebrae, and the path through morphospace for longer necks has involved increasing the size of each of those bones rather than growing additional ones (except in the case of the sloth). Homology among cultural entities arises when they have common ancestors: their lineages have moved them through the same areas of morphospace. *Analogies* occur when the external world forces a particular shape on an entity. The aerodynamic properties of the wings of birds, bats, and pterosaur are the same not due to shared descent, but because the laws of gravity and aerodynamics admit no exceptions, so that any creature that flies will have wings with essentially the same cross-section. The fitness constraints force the form.

The human mind is quite happy to lump together both types of similarity (and so taxonomists must often struggle to separate homology from analogy in order to classify animals phylogenetically). The principle of cognitive economy ensures that categories will be created around the most visible and distinct features, so prototypes are based upon common features regardless of their ontogenies. The mind builds the prototype from all things that are similar in morphology, and once the prototype is built, subsequent cultural evolution will be based to a degree on that prototype. This process allows variation in non-diagnostic categories to enter the chain of transmission, as unrelated entities are treated as part of the same categories, but it also smoothes out variation, as characteristics not consistent with the prototype are less likely to be passed through into a subsequent generation. The interaction of these competing processes helps explain both the “variation” and “within limits” characteristic of oral traditional multiforms.⁴³ Smoothing is also facilitated by the sharing of prototypes throughout a culture. Although each prototype in each mind may be unique in its fine details, psychological research shows that there is a great deal of inter-personal agreement as to the characteristics of the prototypical members of categories. This shared representation requires only a shared set of cognitive capacities coupled

⁴³ Similarly the principles of *communicative economy* and *metonymy*, phenomena well known in oral tradition studies, have the capability both to add variation and to smooth it away depending upon the particular circumstances. Metonymy can cause a variant form to be incorporated into a category if the aspect of the entity that is functioning as a metonym is the same in the entity and the prototype even when the entity as a whole is significantly different from the prototype. However, because *pars pro toto* metonymy can transfer not the particular variant form but instead a stereotyped version closer to the known prototype, this kind of transmission can remove variation as well.

to the error-correction mechanisms of social interaction: humans cannot directly share their prototypes, but they can share characteristics of prototypicality by communicating, both directly and through responses to observed behavior.

To be communicated, a prototype must be converted from whatever abstract set of features is stored in the mind to some form that can be transmitted verbally, visually, or otherwise: this is the point in the process where we are able to observe instantiations of the multiform. The form that is communicated is likely to be that of a real-world example that is as close as possible to the abstract mental prototype. Communication and interaction will produce selection pressure for instantiations to be similar to the features shared in the prototypes of multiple individuals because these are indirectly compared in the production and reception of multiple performances. Correction through communication only goes so far, however; *idiolects* persist in both language and culture.⁴⁴ Thus, even evolution towards adaptive peaks plus the categorization system's tendency towards prototypicality does not eliminate all variation from the culture (which, unsurprisingly, provides the variation that allows the system to continue to evolve). The prefix "multi-" is attached to "multiform" for a reason.

Variation within Limits

The shape of oral traditional morphospace at any given time includes various peaks in the adaptive landscape. Oral traditional multiforms evolve towards these attractors, moving up the peaks but at times getting trapped at local maxima. Once some number of multiforms have arrived at local maxima near each other, such as on the foothills of an adaptive peak, these multiforms are likely to be compared to each other and categorized. (They were similar to begin with as they were evolving in similar regions of morphospace.) When the multiforms are categorized together, a prototype is constructed from their features. This prototype can be represented as an entity just above the adaptive peak for the particular region of morphospace, which in turn remains above the other multiforms, on the lower slopes of the peak (see Figure 9). There is a gap between the highest

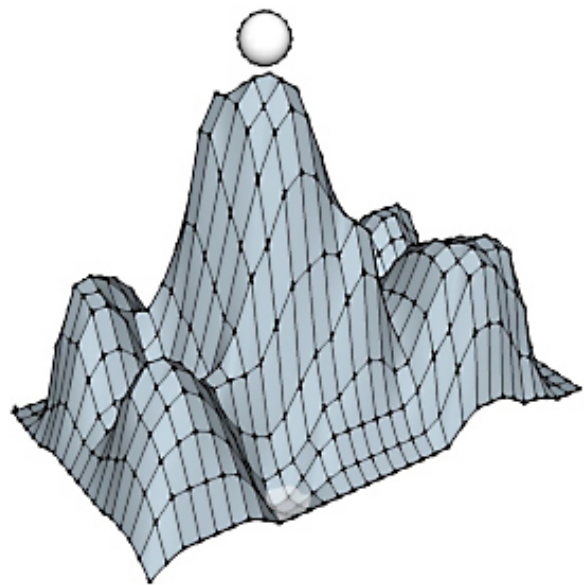


Figure 9. A cognitive prototype (represented by the sphere) influences the shape of an adaptive landscape.

⁴⁴ The existence of so-called "mondegreens," song lyrics or collocations that are misunderstood and then remembered and even re-transmitted in incorrect form (regardless of how ridiculous the form is), demonstrates that the perceptual system not only allows for but also creates a certain amount of variability (Sylvia Wright 1954). A surprising feature of the perceptual and mnemonic systems seems to be that once a lyric is misheard one way, it is very difficult to un-hear or re-hear it.

point in the landscape and the prototype because no single instantiation is a perfect match for the cognitive construction.

Selection pressure drives multiforms to evolve towards the morphology of the prototype, thus moving lineages into the higher fitness regions of morphospace. But because real-world instantiations are unable to become the prototype in all details, existing multiforms are trapped on local maxima. New multiforms, however, can enter the adaptive landscape without being influenced directly by any of the existing multiforms, instead being influenced only by the prototype. Some of these can potentially jump to the top of the adaptive peak without being trapped at a local maximum, but there is no particular reason for the multiforms at the local maximum to go extinct (nothing is out-competing them in their local morphospace, since nothing in local morphospace has higher inclusive fitness than the entity at the local maximum) and so they remain as a cluster at the top of the peak below the prototype. This cluster of multiforms—the local maxima surrounding the prototype at the higher maximum—is the population of multiforms for a particular tradition.

Cultural entities are not alive. They may evolve in ways *analogous* to biological evolution, but they do not behave in precisely the same way. Multiforms do not go out and replicate on their own once released into an environment. They must be replicated by human beings, and although this replication can be unconscious, it nevertheless is not independent from human agency. Therefore, in order to be replicated and to create an evolving lineage, cultural entities must somehow be perceived. One good way to be noticed is to be distinctive, but being distinctive means varying from the prototypical form of the multiform and thus potentially being less high up the peak of the adaptive landscape and hence less likely to be replicated. There is a balance to be found between fitting in and standing out. Be too similar to the existing population and you will not be noticed enough to be replicated, but be too different and you do not fit into any existing category and thus cannot take advantage of that category's prototype. So although there is continual selection pressure to be like the prototype, there is also pressure to retain some distinctiveness in each multiform: variation, but within limits.

These dynamics, closely analogous to the dynamics of speciation, create pressure for multiforms to maintain distinctiveness. The areas between attractors in the larger landscape are swept clear of other forms as these are pressured toward one or another of the attractors. Thus, in fully mature multiforms or well-evolved genres we do not see a smooth gradient of varying forms spreading across a flat adaptive landscape, but instead entities clustered on separate peaks (though these will have sub-summits). If a multiform enters a new area of the adaptive landscape, there is likely to be a *radiation*, a proliferation of new forms as entities rapidly diversify to fill new niches. The particular form that enters the new area of the landscape may do so based only on contingent, historical, or even random factors, but once it is there the regular processes of radiation, speciation, and evolution towards peaks in morphospace will work, limited by the original material, to shape the resulting entities. After radiation there will also be consolidation into a reduced number of stereotyped forms, a pruning of the copiously branching bush (Gould 1991).

The populations of multiforms that we observe, therefore, will appear discontinuous for three reasons. First, the pressure on multiforms to differentiate from each other will produce a gappy, island-like landscape, with clusters of entities around the attractors. Second, at any given

time we will not see all the intermediate stages through which multiforms moved through the adaptive landscape. The “fossil record” of culture, particularly before widespread writing and recording, is sparse indeed and very few forms have ever been preserved. Only with recent developments in recording technology—and, perhaps equally important, intellectual developments valuing multiformity—have we begun to attempt to capture and preserve a full range of variant forms (see Honko 1998; Foley 2004). So when we look at multiforms in an adaptive landscape, they may appear to be separate islands, with, for example, wisdom poems being separate from epics which are also separate from elegies and from religious praise poems. But like the islands in an archipelago, entities that appear discontinuous on the surface are indeed linked below as is evident when viewed from a different vantage point.

Third, cognitive processes of creating and then matching to a prototype emphasize separation in order to make the categories more clear-cut. Psychological systems have evolved to detect patterns that are “meaningful” in the sense that the information

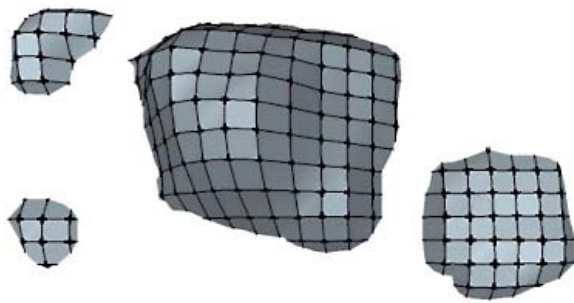


Figure 10a. At a given time, regions of adaptive morphospace appear discrete.

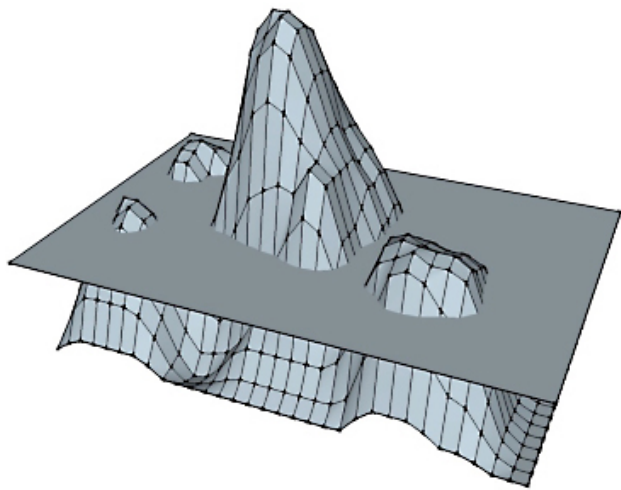


Figure 10b. Areas of morphospace that appear discrete during a certain time interval (represented by the “sea level”) are historically continuous.

detected is valuable for the organism and has good word-to-world fit. However, this large-scale development can be exploited by entities that themselves evolve to fit into the existing psychological tendencies: being like a prototype tends to cause a particular multiform to be reproduced—subject to the constraints of a dynamic balancing between fitting in and standing out. So we have co-evolution of lock and key, with various forms of selection pressure shaping the multiforms and the very existence of the particular multiform re-shaping the morphospace, which in turn changes the selection pressure. The existence of similar entities creates categories and prototypes, which are then attractors. This feedback loop leads to increasing complexity as lineages ramify through cultural space and interact with each other. The cultural ecosystem is shaped both by these consistent processes and by historical and contingent events, some of the effects of which are amplified by the ways they change adaptive morphospace.

Within that landscape, a multiform is a related population of cultural entities that are recognized as being fundamentally “the same” by the categorization systems of the human mind. Depending upon particular cultural contexts, these entities are not always identical at the level of individual words (the level that print-centric individuals often intuit as a requirement for

sameness), but are instead similar at different levels of the morpho-semantic hierarchy. This similarity has developed both by homology, when the entities have evolved to similar positions in the adaptive landscape and thus have similar features, and by analogy, when the entities were shaped by selection pressures to be like their prototypes and thus have similar features.

In examining and discussing a multiform, we can choose a particular level of the morpho-semantic hierarchy at which we compare various entities or different performances. Or we can select a particular individual performance as a representative of the entire multiform in the same way taxonomists select a type specimen for a species. Or we can construct an abstraction, an ideal case that may never have existed in that exact form, a new prototype based on our observations of various individual entities. We do all of these things because our minds have trouble thinking of a large, varying population in all its diversity. But if we reconceptualize that population as an adaptive landscape, shaped by a cognitive prototype and containing variation that is constrained by morphospace around certain peaks, we may be able to harness our intuition to understand better the multiform nature of oral traditional entities. A central question of all studies of tradition is why traditions vary only within limits even while the world around them changes. In investigating the structure, dynamics, and evolution of the multiform, we begin to see why we can recognize continuities of tradition across physical and temporal boundaries, and why traditions, despite being made of only thought and sound, persist through the centuries.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon J. Ortiz: Pathways to the Tradition

Dave Henderson

Native American¹ literature in North America has been in a self-declared state of renaissance since 1969. This rebirth is perhaps more aptly described as an attempt to recover traditions, beliefs, and even languages that were lost, suppressed, or marginalized during a centuries-long history of conquest that ended near the close of the nineteenth century, at least in military terms. The object of this recovery is to rediscover and revivify an identity uniquely Indian in its cultural and traditional affiliations (for example, Owens 1992:3-16). Native American writers such as Simon J. Ortiz and Leslie Marmon Silko have been at the forefront of this recovery, and both authors have been instrumental in suggesting how Native American oral traditions can be extended into the realm of a comparatively young literature.² Aside from the great inherent differences between oral traditional and literary modes of expression, this undertaking is rendered problematic by the fact that the majority of Native American literature is written in English. Since students of Native oral traditions have focused much of their effort on delineating an ethnopoetics of those traditions,³ it appears at first blush that scholars of the traditions and the Native American writers who are seeking to extend those traditions may not have much in common even though the traditions are of central concern to both. Certainly their priorities are different. Also, it is clear that a literary tradition, by its very nature, must utilize oral tradition in ways that are convenient to its individualized ends, resulting in an abundance of divergent approaches even within the work of a single writer. Studies in Native American

¹ Aboriginal residents of North America have been known by any number of designations: Native Americans, Natives, Indigenous Americans, American Indians, Amerindians, Indians, etc. As Roemer (2005a:9-11) explains, a plethora of personal and political reasons for adopting given usages exist, but standardization is, to put it mildly, elusive. Herein the various designations will be used interchangeably.

² For some representative samples of Ortiz's and Silko's conceptions of Native American oral traditions, see Ortiz's 1985 essay "That's the Place Indians Talk About," Coltelli's interview with Ortiz in her collection *Winged Words* (1990:103-19), and Silko 1996, particularly her essays "Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories" (25-47) and "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective" (48-59).

³ Two of the most prominent figures in this work have been Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes. See Tedlock 1972 and Sherzer and Woodbury 1987, as well as Foley 1995:67-69 for an overview. For a more recent contribution to this line of inquiry see, for example, Cowell 2002. For insights into the fusion of ethnopoetics and studies in oral tradition, see Hymes 1994.

literature are in a creative ferment; the field is very diffuse, and much of the scholarship is exploratory and tentative in nature, as we shall see.

John Miles Foley's recent work provides a convenient model on which to structure an inquiry into the links between Native oral traditions and literature. Foley's Pathways Project (2011-) likens oral tradition to a network whose nodes are "linked topics." This network "*mime[s] the way we think by processing along pathways In both media it's pathways—not things—that matter*" (*ibid.*: "Home Page").⁴ Silko's (1996:48-49) description of the Pueblo tradition as a spider's web, though placing less elegant emphasis on functionality, is analogous. The literary tradition can also be described as a network if emphasis is placed on the associative processing humans apply to it—the natural perspective to adopt here, where the goal is to link two traditions. Silko's and Ortiz's stories provide vivid examples of how pathways can be drawn. Before turning to these stories I will first briefly—and tentatively—review the conjoining of Native literature and Native oral tradition. In the context of this background, I will then show how Silko's and Ortiz's stories cut pathways from a vibrant literary tradition to an equally vibrant, living oral tradition, and how traversal of these pathways gives rise to a mode of expression that enriches both traditions.

It is worth asking what traditional features are preserved in Native literature and how students of oral traditions can apply their knowledge to that literature. The answer is simplified by the fact that Native American writers are, to varying degrees, literary conservatives, a quality observed in oral traditions in general, as Walter J. Ong reminds us in his classic study *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982:41-42). This literary conservatism has more than one source; it is to some degree the product of a conservative culture that has survived under duress and to some degree a consequence of the search for an Indian identity rooted in Indian values and practices, especially storytelling. One of Leslie Marmon Silko's goals has been to "translate this sort of feeling or flavor or sense of a story that's told and heard onto the page" (Barnes 1993:50). Similarly, Ortiz, commenting on his own poem "That's the Place Indians Talk About," identifies his desire to "achieve a ritual-chant prayer poem" carefully tailored to accommodate performative imperatives like controlled breathing, "accents on certain words (emphasis), body language in general" (1985:48).

Ong has also pointed out the homeostatic nature of orality: irrelevant elements of the tradition will disappear (1982:46). Silko, who grew up in Laguna Pueblo listening to the stories told there (Barnes 1993:51), has a feel for this phenomenon born of experience. She has said in an interview that "[s]tories stay alive within . . . the Laguna Pueblo community because the stories have a life of their own. . . . The old folks at Laguna would say, 'If it's important, you'll remember it'" (Barnes 1993:51). The importance of the malleability of oral traditions cannot be understated. If traditions could not change, their utility, which is essential for cultural as well as physical survival, would be compromised.

The community of performance, enabled by the metonymic contract elaborated by Foley in his seminal work *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (1991), reflects the ideal unity of the larger community. Foley has convincingly demonstrated that metonymy is key to understanding how oral traditions communicate. He writes (1995:7):

⁴ See <http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/HomePage>.

Traditional elements reach out of the immediate instance in which they appear to the fecund totality of the entire tradition, defined synchronically and diachronically, and they bear meanings as wide and deep as the tradition they encode. The “how” of the traditional idiom, while overlapping at some points with the “how” of the literary text, also—and crucially—contains an extratextual dimension uniquely the domain of oral traditional art. This idiom is liberating rather than imprisoning, centrifugal rather than centripetal, explosively connotative rather than claustrophobically clichéd.

Although a literature that seeks to imitate or extend an oral tradition may succeed, that success will be limited because, as Ong suggests, “audience” and “readership” are not equivalent terms (1982:74). The shared immediacy and dynamism of traditional performance is, in literature, transformed more or less into an abstraction. Nevertheless, for more than forty years one of the stated goals of Native American writers has been to conjure up the complexities and connotations of the tradition; they have shown a determination to achieve the unachievable: absorption into the tradition itself, a struggle at once poignant and exciting. If they succeed, they will have built new pathways into shared traditions and played some part in summoning the Indian diaspora.⁵

What has been called the Native American Renaissance dates from 1969, when Kiowa author and poet N. Scott Momaday was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and Lakota intellectual Vine Deloria, Jr., published his classic treatise *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Although the assigning of a date to this rebirth may seem arbitrary, 1969 remains a seminal year in studies in Native American literature whether the appellation “Native American Renaissance” is applied or not.⁶ According to James Ruppert, in 1969 “the landscape of Native American literature changed. Not only was there increased public interest in writing by Native Americans, but also Native writers felt inspired and encouraged. Suddenly it seemed possible that they could be successful with their writing and still remain true to their unique experience” (2005:173). Perhaps the most significant contribution made by Momaday and Deloria was to focus that experience through the lens of identity. Their influence has been profound, as indicated by Louis Owens (1992:5), who writes, “The recovering or rearticulation of an identity, a process dependent upon a rediscovered sense of place as well as community, [is] . . . a truly enormous undertaking. This attempt is at the center of American Indian fiction.” In *Custer Died For Your Sins* Deloria insists that an Indian identity already exists but must be allowed room to declare and define itself, characterizing Native Americans as “a dynamic people in a social structure of their own, asking only to be freed from cultural oppression” (1969:12). Momaday takes an approach that is less explicitly activist, more meditative. He writes that “the way to Rainy Mountain,” his Kiowa visioning of the Native quest

⁵ Following World War II, relocation policies that transplanted Indians from reservations to urban areas were pursued vigorously and have been blamed for damaging, even breaking, the cultural bonds that have traditionally united Native groups. For an account of the implementation and effects of these policies, see Fixico 1990.

⁶ Compare, for example, the entries for 1969 in the chronologies of Lundquist (2004:12), which uses the phrase, and Roemer (2005b:31), which does not. Ruppert (2005:173) notes: “Some scholars hesitate to use the phrase because it might imply that Native American writers were not producing significant work before that time or that these writers sprang up without longstanding community and tribal roots.”

for identity, “is preeminently the history of an idea, man’s idea of himself, and it has old and essential being in language” (1969:4). Thus, tradition is the terrain in which the quest is to be undertaken. Deloria asserts the same thing, although less directly: “Indians have survived for thousands of years in all kinds of conditions. They do not fly from fad to fad seeking novelty. That is what makes them Indian” (1969:16). The aim of recovery is more to retrieve what has been than to invent something new.

Momaday, in particular, pointed the way for later Native American writers such as Silko and Ortiz. He bequeathed to them a reflective depth characterized by a willingness to examine openly the cogs and wheels of his art. Following his lead, a number of figures prominent in contemporary Native literature have worked both as scholars and artists. Ortiz, for example, aside from his steady production as author and poet, has contributed a significant body of critical work and provided forums for the work of others. Likewise, Owens and Gerald Vizenor,⁷ well-known for their contributions as writers of fiction, have been equally or perhaps more influential as critics. The critical self-consciousness exhibited by Momaday and others has at times led to charges of insularity by scholars intent on ushering Native literature into academia’s critical fold. In a well-known article, Arnold Krupat has complained that “Native Americanists have ensconced themselves in what amounts to a position of critical Luddism, carrying on their analyses, as it were, at a virtually pretechnological level of sophistication” (1987:113).

In fact, Native American literature has been viewed through a variety of critical lenses, both before and after Krupat’s complaint; however, some Native Americans harbor very real reservations about the larger literary community. Owens claims that there is a “suspicion . . . that critical theory represents little more than a new form of colonial enterprise,” adding, however, that “we do not have the luxury of simply opting out” (1995). Critical approaches to Native American literature are proliferating,⁸ but a literature that so self-consciously announces itself as beholden to tradition should certainly be read with tradition in mind. Native American writers utilize their oral traditions, many of which are still living, not because they value tradition as an artifact but because the tradition constitutes a living, dynamic way of knowing; it is an enormous and dynamic web of story that can be added to as well as drawn upon. It is the repository of the knowledge and experiences of a people, a community, constantly changing to fit their needs, constantly changing as new wisdom is added and old is discarded.

One response to Krupat’s complaint is that this comparatively young literature needs self-definition more urgently than a critical perspective; in the present context, at least, the two are not the same. Reflecting the daunting complexity of the definitional task, Owens (1995) suggests that Native American literature is “written almost exclusively in English by predominantly mixedblood authors steeped in Western education.” Not only have the original languages been lost or marginalized, but tribal and cultural affiliations have become diffuse, transformed by personal histories and mediated by the ideology of the conqueror. Owens (1995) presses on toward a more complete definition: “I would define literature by Native American authors about Native American concerns and informed by Native American cultures as undeniably both a deeply politicized literature of resistance and an example of autoethnography.” The literature

⁷ See Lundquist’s (2004) profiles of Owens (134-51) and Vizenor (90-99).

⁸ See, for example, the cornucopia of critical approaches in the essays collected in Swann and Krupat 1987.

Owens defines is diverse, reflective, and informed by shared experience, and Suzanne Lundquist confirms his definition in her chapter on the main themes of Native American literature (2004:195-252). Two of Lundquist's "overarching themes" of Indian literature are "Indian identity" and "cultural fragmentation" (*ibid*:195-203). As Owens' work suggests, these themes find expression in a literature in which recovery of a repressed culture enables a drama of self-definition achieved, aborted, or lost. Owens' very astute characterization of Native literature as "an example of autoethnography" suggests that the critical paradigm that may fit best is one that includes the oral traditions that provide raw material for autoethnography; Owens, after all, has made explicit the act of cultural recovery that informs Native writing (1992:5).

Native American oral traditions are immensely varied, both in their content and in the range of genres they utilize; they are characterized by much borrowing and blending (Roemer 2005a:4-5). One source of this variety is the diversity of the traditions' practitioners. Lundquist identifies five hundred Native American nations speaking three hundred languages belonging to eight distinct language families (2004:1-2). Roemer emphasizes the cultural variety of the traditions: "Cultural and regional variety multiplies the genre diversity. . . . And this was (and still is) a dynamic cultural diversity" (2005a:4). One of the consequences of the centuries-long conquest of Native Americans was the suppression of indigenous traditions along with other expressions of cultural distinctness as vital as (and including) language itself.⁹ This complicating factor, a perceived prejudice and instinct for suppression on the part of the dominant culture, makes the act of recovery a difficult one fraught with fundamental questions about identity and appropriate ways to live. Owens (1995) laments "the continuing and astonishing invisibility of Native Americans and the silencing of the American Indian voice within the critical and privileged discourse of this country." Silko (1996:30) has written that "the Pueblo people depended upon collective memory through successive generations to maintain and transmit an entire culture, a worldview complete with proven strategies for survival." This collective memory was damaged, its fabric riven by discontinuities born of abortive efforts at assimilation.

The growing body of Native American literature, though microscopic in comparison to the vast corpus of Native oral traditions, reflects the traditions' variety and complexity. As Laguna Pueblo author and critic Paula Gunn Allen notes, when she does her critical work she has "to look specifically at the author's tribe and also at the tribe the author is drawing from" (Coltelli 1990:19), obviously a formidable task. Also, for readers unversed in Native traditions, whether they are of Native American ancestry or not, the concerns of Native literature may seem utterly foreign. For example, William Bevis notes the tendency of the heroes of American literature to leave the known in search of new things while Native literature concerns itself with returns: to the land, to the tradition, to the people (1987:581-93). In fact, this motif of return is at the heart of Native American literary resistance. As Bevis notes, "aspirations toward tribal reintegration . . . constitute a profound and articulate continuing critique of modern European culture, combined with a persistent refusal to let go of tribal identity . . . a refusal . . . to assimilate" (1987:593).

Native oral traditions, then, are a unifying as well as a complicating factor. Although the

⁹ See Deloria 1969 for an exhaustive recounting of ways in which intentions good, bad, and misguided have obscured Indian cultural identity.

traditions differ by varying amounts, they have many things in common, particularly their basic defining traits and their practical uses. A trait fundamental to oral traditions, as Ong reminds us, is their emphasis on community (1982:74-75). Equally fundamental, they are performative, a trait that connects neatly to communality, as Foley's discussion of metonymy evidences. A contract exists between performer and audience; knowledge is renewed, enhanced, and shared. Stories in Native American oral traditions, for instance, are known by those raised in the tradition, and variants on stories are determined pragmatically. A story that is useful and relevant will live on, while one that is not will be modified or, sooner or later, no longer told. As Silko has said, "If it's really important, if it really has a kind of substance that reaches to the heart of the community life and what's gone before and what's gone later, it will be remembered. And if it's not remembered, the people no longer wanted it, or it no longer had its place in the community" (Barnes 1993:51). Stories are useful if they provide cultural continuity and "proven strategies for survival" (Silko 1996:30), among other things. The scope of this definition is, admittedly, sweeping, but so are the utility and influence of the traditions (see, for example, Schneider 2003).

The performative requirements of oral traditions beget a disconnect between tradition and literature and may point to a shortcoming of the latter, at least in the eyes of those trying to cut a pathway from one to the other. The impact strikes at a fundamental level. For instance, although it is possible to reproduce the lineated nature of oral traditional stories in translation as well as in the original, the repetition that characterizes oral traditions, assuring comprehensibility and controlling structure and interpretation, is a feature that most writers are reluctant to introduce into their work.¹⁰ According to Silko, this "repetition of crucial points" is "something that on the printed page looks really crummy and is redundant and useless, but in the actual telling is necessary" (Barnes 1993:50). Silko understands the differences between literary and oral performance. "When I read off the page . . . I think it's more persuasive," she has said. "In a way, that's not fair; because I'm reading it out loud, I've gone back again. But I think there are some instances where I've been successful so that the reader has a sense of how it might sound if I were reading it to him or her" (*ibid.*:50-51). Ortiz has likewise tangled with the problem of performance. In his foreword to *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, he builds the performance into his text: "Now it is my turn to stand. I'm rising to stand and speak in introduction of the essays in this volume" (1998:xi).

Ultimately, however, the "shortcoming" that may be most consequential, at least to some Indian writers, is the move from Native tongues to English. Even more intimidating than the perhaps insurmountable difficulties of translating a tradition into a foreign tongue is the fact that English is the language of a conqueror, a bitter irony indeed to writers who are reacting to centuries of imperialistic brutality, displacement, and marginalization. Sherman Alexie, a Coeur-d'Alene/Spokane writer who has created a large and accomplished body of work, has asked, "How can we imagine a new language when the language of the enemy keeps our dismembered tongues tied to his belt?" (1993:152).

Silko differs. "Pueblo expression," she writes, "resembles something like a spider's web

¹⁰ See Hymes 1994, especially pp. 330-40, for examples of lineation and interpretative devices, as well as Tedlock 1972.

—with many little threads radiating from the center, criss-crossing one another. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made” (1996:48-49). It is this spider’s web that matters. According to Silko, “the particular language being spoken isn’t as important as what a speaker is trying to say, and this emphasis on the story itself stems, I believe, from a view of narrative particular to the Pueblo and other Native American peoples—that is, that language *is* story” (*ibid.*:49-50). Perhaps in spite of her belief that “the particular language . . . isn’t important,” in her 1981 volume *Storyteller* Silko indulges in a potpourri of genres—fiction, poetry, autobiography, autoethnography—and includes as well a generous sampling of photographs designed to expand and supplement the texts, lending them their performative qualities. Since then she has continued to explore the intercommunication of photograph and text, relentlessly seeking to expand the boundaries of written discourse (1996:180-86). Ortiz (1981) agrees with Silko’s de-emphasizing of language, arguing that by virtue of having been written by Indians the texts are “Indianized” regardless of the language in which they are written.

A third perspective, that of N. Scott Momaday, the dean of Native American writers, places the emphasis on registers.¹¹ In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, a collection of stories Momaday originally heard his father tell, each selection consists of three different texts, each in a distinct register: his father’s traditional story, rendered in English; a historical commentary; and a related “personal reminiscence” of Momaday’s. Momaday extends the tradition in a radical way, recovering Indian experience but achieving something else as well, a more comprehensive recounting. He writes that it is “appropriate” that these texts “should be read aloud, that they should remain, as they have always remained, alive at the level of the human voice. At that level their being is whole and essential. In the beginning was the word, and it was spoken” (1969:ix).

Native literature, then, has a highly diversified set of voices, just as Native oral traditions do. Like traditional voices, the literary ones work toward a common end: the conservation of community, tradition, and shared culture. The extension of pathways from literature to tradition will continue to take place, whatever forms those pathways may take and however effective the realizations may be. A pair of stories by Silko and Ortiz provide vivid examples of pathways to the tradition. For students of oral traditions the choice of these two stories has an added attraction because they are separate redactions of the same story. Of course, multiple redactions of a story are a staple of oral traditions; in the world of literature they are far less common and in fact are often avoided in the interest of “originality.” The story is also present in the Pueblo Indian tradition, which it joined soon after the events it describes took place. Both Silko and Ortiz heard the story as youngsters.¹² Silko also mentions the story in her collection *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. She asked students at Laguna-Acoma High School about the story (1996:58):

I asked the students how many had heard this story and steeled myself for the possibility that the anthropologists were right, that the old traditions were indeed dying out and the students would be

¹¹ For a precise and rigorous explanation of registers, or “special languages,” see Foley 1995:49-53.

¹² Lawrence J. Evers (1985) provides an excellent account of the historical event mediated by the two stories and also discusses Silko’s and Ortiz’s contact with the stories.

ignorant of the story. But instead, all but one or two raised their hands—they had heard the story, just as I had heard it when I was young, some in English, some in Laguna.

All that remains is to take a look at the different pathways these stories take to the tradition.

The stories by Silko and Ortiz originally appeared in Kenneth Rosen's 1974 landmark anthology of Indian writing, *The Man to Send Rain Clouds*, near the beginning of the Native American Renaissance. Silko and Ortiz were responsible for, respectively, seven and five of the nineteen contributions to the volume, a not-so-subtle harbinger of their future influence on Native literature. The stories that will be discussed here are based on the murder of a New Mexican state trooper by two brothers from Acoma Pueblo, Willie and Gabriel Felipe. The details of both stories differ from the historical account reconstructed by Lawrence J. Evers (1985). Nevertheless, the kernel of the story—the brothers' conviction that they are being persecuted by the trooper and the subsequent shooting from ambush, followed by the burning of the man's body—is common to both. In both stories the violent hostility of the trooper toward Indians in general and the brothers in particular is established early. Both stories can easily be understood as instructional tales illustrative of behaviors and attitudes familiar to their Native audiences. On the other hand, both stories either modify existing names or concoct new ones for the protagonists, who are brothers in Ortiz's story but not in Silko's. Both authors draw directly on the tradition, molding their sources to their different ends, creating their own emphases and thus contributing to the development of a story remembered from youth. These activities create a link between the authors and the oral storytellers who provide their material, a link that impacts the homeostatic mechanism of the oral tradition.

In Silko's "Tony's Story" the two main characters are friends named Leon and Tony. Leon, like his historical progenitor, has just returned after a tour of duty in the army. The performance of Native Americans in the armed forces during World War II was almost universally regarded as exemplary (Evers 1985:19), but it was also a source of alienation, as indicated in this story as well as in Silko's magnum opus, the novel *Ceremony*. Tony recognizes Leon's estrangement from the tribe but has been encouraged recently by Leon's anticipated performance in the Corn Dance, a Pueblo ritual, although to Leon "it's only the Corn Dance" (1974:69). Tony, however, is optimistic. "I was happy," he reveals, "because I knew that Leon was once more a part of the pueblo" (*idem*).

There is still, however, a great difference between the attitudes of the more traditional Tony and the worldly Leon. During the evening of Leon's violent confrontation with the state trooper, who in a significant omission is not named in this redaction, Tony, disturbed by the fight as well as by "the stories about witches," has a dream in which "the big cop was pointing a long bone at me—they always use human bones, and the whiteness flashed silver in the moonlight where he stood. He didn't have a human face—only little, round, white-rimmed eyes in a ceremonial mask" (*ibid.*:72). The trooper's manifestation to Tony as a witch is a consequence of Tony's immersion in the traditional stories and attitudes—the culture—of the pueblo. Sure of his interpretation, Tony urges Leon to wear an amulet "for protection" (*ibid.*:75). Leon scoffs, "You don't believe in *that*, do you," assuring Tony that a rifle will give him all the protection he needs, to which Tony responds with equal assurance, "But you can't be sure it will kill one of them" (*idem*). Tony laments Leon's insistence on fighting for his rights against the abusive

trooper: “he couldn’t remember the stories that old Teofilo told” (*ibid.*:74). Teofilo, named only one other time in the story, can be understood as a keeper of the traditional values of the pueblo, values codified in the stories he tells. In Tony’s eyes, Leon has completely misunderstood the nature of his foe.

The fissure between Leon’s and Tony’s perceptions is pried open in the final moments of Silko’s story. The trooper, intent on harassing Leon and Tony, trails them in his car. When he finally stops them, Tony importunes his friend: “We’ve got to kill it, Leon. We must burn the body to be sure” (*ibid.*:76). Clear in his intention even then to kill the trooper, Tony wishes “that old Teofilo could have been there to chant the proper words while we did it” (*ibid.*:77). The trooper prepares to beat Leon with his billy club, which is, for Tony, “like the long bone in my dream when he pointed it at me—a human bone painted brown to look like wood, to hide what it really was” (*idem*), and Tony shoots him dead. Silko does not make explicit whether or not the friends haul the body back to the patrol car and burn it together or whether Tony alone does the job, but the rift between them seems permanent. “My God, Tony,” Leon cries. “What’s wrong with you? That’s a state cop you killed” (*idem*). Tony responds, “Don’t worry, everything is O.K. now, Leon. It’s killed. They sometimes take on strange forms” (*ibid.*:78). Communication between them has been effectively sundered; the separate worlds of their perceptions have carried them into mutually exclusive orbits.

In the historical case, the Felipe brothers ascribed their behavior to the activities of witches, according to a psychiatrist speaking on behalf of the defense (Evers 1985:20-22). The psychiatrist judged the brothers to be psychotic based on their “transformations of cultural beliefs about witchcraft into private, personal, and paranoid ideas,” a determination based on the fact that the Felipe brothers reacted to the threat of witchcraft privately rather than publicly, a violation of Acoma norms (*ibid.*:21). Their belief in witchcraft was not questioned, nor should it have been. Rationalist objections to such beliefs offer compelling evidence of the radical differences engendered by different traditions. Silko’s masterful story brings these differences into vivid relief by presenting them in the context of what is either cold-blooded murder or an essential cleansing. Tony’s membership in the community of the pueblo, his participation in its traditions, removes any doubt regarding the course he must follow, just as Leon’s perspective specifies horror at what his friend does. The literary decision to make Tony the first-person narrator of the story emphasizes Tony’s values. By emphasizing Tony’s values Silko endorses traditional values. In fact, she endorses the primacy of the tradition itself, a necessary concession in view of its role in survival. A strong link between Native literary and oral traditions is thus established: shared values create shared meaning.

Although Silko’s approach is a smoothly literary one, the materials of the tradition are her primary source; her story’s meaning is unavailable without them. Ortiz, on the other hand, manages his story, “The Killing of a State Cop,” in a way that highlights tone and storytelling technique. The story’s narrator, for instance, is told of the killing by Felipe, one of the brothers. Like so many Indian veterans who had served in the military, the Felipe who returned was different, separate: “He had been in the marines and he could have gotten kicked out if he had wanted to” (1974:101). Throughout the story, the narrator’s account is interwoven with comments, reflections, and details drawn verbatim from Felipe’s account; the story conducts a dialogue with its source. This interlacing structure is a commonplace of oral traditions and

reflects the meshes of Foley's network and Silko's spider's web, which Ortiz effectively recreates. For instance, as the narrator describes the chase that will end in the death of the trooper, Felipe's voice breaks in with commentary and elaboration (*ibid.*:106):

Aiee, I can see stupidity in a man. Sometimes even my own. I can see a man's drunkenness making him do crazy things. And [state trooper] Luis Baca, a very stupid son-of-a-bitch, was more than I could see. He wanted to die. And I, because I was drunken and *muy loco* like a Mexican friend I had from Nogales used to say when we would play with the whores in Korea and Tokyo, wanted to make him die. I did not care for anything else except that Luis Baca who I hated was going to die.

Ortiz's narrative approach is different, and so are his aims. The very title of the story, "The Killing of a State Cop," makes his thrust clear; its stark bluntness has a palpable chilling effect, far removed from the comparative coziness of Silko's "Tony's Story." Felipe's distaste for outsiders is equally palpable. "He was always thinking about what other people could do to you. Not the people around our place, the Indians, but other people" (*ibid.*:101). Ortiz reveals how Felipe, still in the Marines and in uniform, is refused service in a bar because he is an Indian, an experience recorded in Felipe's own words. After being kicked out of the bar, says Felipe, "I went around the back and peed on the back door. I don't know why, just because I hated him, I guess" (*ibid.*:102). A plentiful portion of Felipe's hatred is reserved for the state trooper. These hostile feelings are shared by his brother, Antonio. When the trooper follows the brothers as they drive home, Antonio runs the trooper off the road in a fit of rage. The brothers drive ahead and lay a trap for the trooper, shooting into his car as he approaches, then finishing him off with multiple shots as he pleads for mercy, thus emphasizing the brutality of the act, which is motivated by the brothers' anger.

It is worthwhile to recall here Owens' definition of Indian writing as "a deeply politicized literature of resistance" (1995), as well as Bevis' notions regarding Native Americans' sweeping refusal to assimilate (1987:593). In his redaction of the story Ortiz focuses on the distrust expressed by Felipe not just for the state trooper but for non-Indians in general, a distrust that explodes into fury and hatred as a consequence of the acts of discrimination directed against him, both by the trooper (1974:103) and when he is refused service at the bar (*ibid.*:102). The anger provoked in the latter instance is exacerbated by the fact that he is in his Marine uniform, an emblem of honorable service that argues for the leveling of ethnic differences through mutual respect. Likewise, a furious Antonio runs the trooper off the road when he pursues the brothers.

The twin concerns of discrimination and resistance are a main theme in Ortiz's work, and he employs a deftness of touch that allows him to explore them without tiresome repetition.¹³ In a similar vein, Silko remarks that "[c]ertainly for me the most effective political statement I could make is in my art work. I believe in subversion rather than straight-out confrontation" (Coltelli 1990:147). Ortiz's story mines a long history of Indian resistance, which has found its main focus in the refusal to assimilate. This resistance has long been a part of the

¹³ See the stories collected in *Men on the Moon* (1999), especially "You Were Real, the White Radical Said to Me" (123-27).

Native oral tradition, and Ortiz skillfully channels its hortatory force.

Silko's and Ortiz's stories' most apparent referential ground is the Laguna-Acoma Pueblo tradition. By drawing on this hoard of meaning, both authors establish essential pathways between their literary efforts and the tradition, pathways that will not bear sundering. These two stories, in particular, strongly suggest that literature and tradition can form symbiotic relationships, linkages, that strengthen and embellish each other. In later works both authors continue to explore the shared space of literature and tradition, transforming their approaches as they go. There is a restlessness, even urgency, associated with their project that presses Silko, Ortiz, and other Native writers to keep experimenting, to keep moving toward their goals, to tap into their traditions and thereby revitalize their cultures and communities. Owens explains this restlessness well in his response to the hubristic notion of defining Native American literature, an explanation made, by the way, in the same breath as his own definition of Native literature. He writes that "as a writer, critic, and teacher of something called Native American literature, I feel oddly uncomfortable with these definitions. Perhaps my discomfort comes from the derivation of the very word 'define': that is 'to set a limit to, bound'" (1995).¹⁴

Defiance, Missouri

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¹⁴ This essay is respectfully dedicated to John Miles Foley, mentor, teacher, and friend, whose years of assistance and encouragement are responsible for whatever virtues it may possess and none of its vices.

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Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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“Stricken to Silence”: Authoritative Response, Homeric Irony, and the Peril of a Missed Language Cue¹

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The Formula

The formula² “Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence” (ὥς ἔφαθ’, οἳ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ)³ occurs sixteen times in Homer⁴ and has received significant treatment in a number of recent studies focusing on its referential force. Its “connotative level of signification” (Kelly 2007:6) has been projected in part for the *Iliad*, and important themes and functions have been suggested. Silvia Montiglio (1993:175-78) has considered the formula’s meaning within the *Iliad* both etymologically and more generally, and found that it suggests “une rupture anormale,” “la déchirure” of the normal communication process. John Miles Foley has linked the formula in the *Iliad* with the speech that precedes it, since “each initial speech proposes or reports a radical, usually unexpected action” (1995:13) that promises either the winning or losing of *kleos*. Foley’s research further demonstrates that the

¹ I wish to thank my anonymous external reviewers along with Casey Dué, Scott Garner, David Mulroy, and Kevin Muse for their remarks on earlier drafts of this article.

² I employ the term formula to speak of recurring words or traditional idioms, in an exactly equivalent metrical arrangement, allowing for a change in verbal number or substantive case (or even of other, lesser component parts). I also speak of formulaic phrases, lines, or systems, as patterns of words with one or more important parts repeated as component(s), but with a varying amount of replacement of parts within the system. It is agreed generally that a formula must recur at least once to be considered as such (cf. Hainsworth 1968:42, Finkelberg 1986:1, Olson 1995:224-27), but the strongest conclusions can be drawn from formulae, such as “stricken to silence,” that recur a great many times. Kelly (2007:10) works with a minimum of three in his referential commentary on Book 8 of the *Iliad*. William Merritt Sale (1993:101) calls a formula repeating fewer than six times an “infrequent formula.” My definition is not meant, however, to deny the existence of formula flexibility of the type noted by J. B. Hainsworth (1968).

³ All translations throughout are my own, and are meant, in as much as is reasonable, to match the traditional cola of the Homeric line. The chief resource for cola research was the TLG database (<http://www.tlg.uci.edu>). Quotations follow the texts of M. L. West (1998, 2000) and Peter Von der Mühll (1962), without the formatting practice of indentation, that, although welcome as a break for the reading eye, sometimes (like book divisions) obscures the formulaic junctures of the text. (For example, compare *Il.* 7.403-5 with 9.693-95.)

⁴ *Il.* 3.95, 7.92, 7.398, 8.28, 9.29, 9.430, 9.693, 10.218, 10.313, 23.676; *Od.* 7.154, 8.234, 11.333, 13.1, 16.393, 20.320. Foley (1995:25) considers two related silence phrases that fill other cola. I employ “Homer” (or “Homeric”) throughout to stand for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as texts or for the preliterate oral poet (or *aoidos*, “epic singer”) who sang each one. I will say more about my assumptions of a “poet” in due course.

formula leads, immediately or inevitably, to the “qualification if not dismissal of the proposed or reported action” (15) that precedes the silence formula. Raymond Person (1995) uses conversation analysis to suggest that the formula marks that a speaker will follow with a “dispreferred response,” essentially a response that is delayed and mitigated. Adrian Kelly’s study (2007:85-86) of the formula in the *Iliad* highlights the relationship between the speech that immediately precedes the formula and the speech that ensues, in terms of agreement or disagreement.⁵

The formula’s employment in the *Odyssey* has been less easy to demarcate.⁶ The present study will suggest a reading that spans both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. I will argue that the real heart of the formula is in what it cues in the action of the narrative that follows for the external audience attending the poetic rendition. It points to the immediately ensuing speech as authoritative in setting the subsequent narrative trajectory. In the two exceptions, where the formula’s cue is not followed in the narrative that ensues, I will argue that the poet is being ironic. The poet uses metonymic irony of narrative perspective to heighten tension and create suspense in especially central narrative moments. Our consideration of the “stricken to silence” formula begins, after a review of traditional referentiality, with a consideration of its fourteen regular occurrences, followed by the two instances of its ironic employment, one in each epic.

Traditional Referentiality, Metonymy, and Text

As John Miles Foley has shown, Homeric formulae contain meaning that extends well beyond their simple function as metrically convenient integers.⁷ Meaning is found not primarily in the individual contextual setting of a singular instance of a formula, but through interpreting the instance in connection with its repeated usage elsewhere in the tradition, with formulae being the product of generations of performance. In short, formulae are traditional, and when used, must be read by “reference” to their use within the tradition, a process of metonymy, whereby the “part stands for the whole” (Foley 1991:7).⁸ The audience informed by the tradition can in turn comprehend the meaning of specific metonyms in the text, because they share a body of

⁵ Kelly’s focus is thus on the preceding speech rather than on the significance of the ensuing speech for the subsequent narrative direction, the central point to be addressed in the current essay.

⁶ As Foley (1995:20-24) has noted, the qualification theme (cf. Person’s 1995 general category of a “dispreferred response”) is consistently present in the *Odyssey*, along with the *kleos* theme in some, but not all, cases.

⁷ See, for example, Foley 1999, where he demonstrates how traditional lexica, proverbial rules, and a sample test case from *Odyssey* 23 show traditional referentiality in action. Foley (2004) has also successfully applied his own methodology in detail to South Slavic epic. A significant application of Foley’s strategies for referential readings of Homer in particular has been carried out by Kelly (2007), who has created an impressive lexicon of formulaic diction for *Iliad* 8. See Foley 1991:1-37 and 1995:7 for other and earlier pioneers in this field. See Elmer 2011 for an excellent summary of the present state of the oral-formulaic theory. The impetus for the present study derives from consideration of the formula in light of Foley’s research methodologies.

⁸ A detailed linguistic study of metonymy can be found in various articles in Barcelona et al. 2011. See especially its included article by Carita Paradis on the change in semantic field for a metonym.

knowledge that is their cultural inheritance (45). As David Elmer summarizes the phenomenon (2011:605):

Phrases and formulae function more as metonymic than as purely denotative signifiers, allowing the performer to evoke traditional resonances that far exceed the semantic value of his or her [individual] words.

The foregoing description assumes an audience informed by a tradition of performance shared by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The research of Richard Janko⁹ supports the impression (for example, Hainsworth 1968:42-43, n.1) that both epics likely represent a common song tradition (that they were sung by exactly the same *aoidos* [“epic singer”] is perhaps less likely¹⁰) and that other early Greek hexameter traditions were memorialized in writing only later. The question of how common the tradition represented by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is usually becomes acute for the researcher whenever there seems to be a difference in the use of a particular formula between the two epics.¹¹ In the end, while the question is important, it cannot be wholly answered *a priori*. In part, the answer will always be related to whether or not we can read a common tradition underlying both epics in vocabulary, formulae, themes, type scenes, and other story elements (similes, characterization, and the like), no matter what the absolute dating is for the written memorialization of each. It is possible that the two epics’ unique and often contrasting narrative concerns (Whitman 1958:293, Steiner 2010:1-3) and slightly different temporal origins will necessarily generate similarities *and differences*. Study of formulae will shed light on the relationship between these two epics and help us to comprehend their shared, but also dissimilar lexica.¹² What can be said in the affirmative is that the present study finds a common meaning in both epics for the formula “Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence” (ὥς ἔφαθ’, οἳ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ) in fourteen of its sixteen occurrences.¹³

⁹ The changes in epic diction over time are mapped by Janko (1982:47), and his overall findings support the close dates of composition for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The neglect of the initial digamma, for example, is put at 17.2% for the *Iliad* and 17.9 % for the *Odyssey*, but at 33.7% for the *Theogony* and 37.9% for the *Works and Days*. The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* sits, unsurprisingly (considering the other indications of its lateness), at 56%. Janko’s seminal study is concerned with relative, rather than absolute dating. See also the earlier comments of Hainsworth (1968:42-43, n.1). The date of memorialization in writing is of course a different question than the relative ages of the origins of the stories themselves, an important point to remember, since the Cyclic Epic stories may be earlier than the stories contained in Homer’s epics (See Burgess 2006:150 and 2001).

¹⁰ West (2011:364), in his review of the “Homeric Question,” notes that most scholars “would now accept that the *Odyssey* is by a different poet from the *Iliad*,” but we have no way of knowing for sure and this is far from a consensus view. Milman Parry’s (1933-35, in A. Parry 1971:444-45) original pondering over the question is still of value.

¹¹ The problem of finding a common meaning for formulae within either epic is further complicated by possible interpolations of verses or even books. The disputed *Doloneia*, *Iliad* 10, contains two instances of our formula’s use.

¹² Richard Martin’s working principle of providing a grammar for each epic, followed by one for the two together, accords well with the approach taken here (1989:14, following G. M. Bolling 1946:343).

¹³ The two anomalous instances of the formula, at *Il.* 9.430 and *Od.* 20.320, will be considered afterwards.

Authoritative Response: Fourteen Narrative Moments in Homer

In each of the following fourteen narrative moments from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we will see that the formula “Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence” (ὣς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ) follows an initial speech and leads to a speech response that acts as the authoritative answer to what has just been said.¹⁴ It thus acts as the hinge from what went before, but more significantly, functions as a metonymic harbinger or traditional narrative cue for the external audience of an ensuing pattern of response. The pattern includes support by the group, who accept the reply as authoritative and representative of its own perspective. The intent of the speech is carried out in every case, and the poet’s¹⁵ narrative continues forward along the trajectory that the narrative cue has set. The poet knows where he is taking the narrative moment when he employs this formula, and his audience, informed by the traditional cue, also expects what will transpire.

What occurs immediately after the formula displays a discernible pattern that has the following, basic structure:

Initial Speech (I)—Formula (F)—Authoritative Response (AR)—Group Acceptance (GA)

The foregoing pattern can regularly include certain additional strategic elements, most notably a note of extended delay (D)¹⁶ and a speech (or speeches) that confirms (C) the intent and also sometimes partly modifies (M) the directive of the authoritative response following the silence formula, so that the larger possible pattern would be:

I—F—D—AR—C—M—GA

We turn now to consider this pattern for each of our key formula’s fourteen occurrences, first in the *Iliad*, then in the *Odyssey*.

1) The “stricken to silence” formula is first employed by Homer at *Iliad* 3.95, after which Menelaus steps forward to offer the authoritative response (3.97-110). Hector has just spoken in the space between the Trojans and Achaeans, after Paris reluctantly agreed to fight in a

¹⁴ Deborah Beck (2005) reminds us that most speeches in Homer are not solitary monologues, but part of a conversation, something true of all but one of our formula’s contexts.

¹⁵ By “poet” I mean to suggest intentionality in the placement of the “stricken to silence” formula, something that moves beyond tradition alone, to the poetic performance and performer working within the tradition, cuing his audience as to what lies ahead. I use “poet” to refer to an unknown, preliterate *aoidos* (Greek epic singer), responsible for shaping each epic song as his own. As with the more competent of the *guslari* (South Slavic epic poets), such as Salih Ugljanin, Stanko Pižurica, or Avdo Medjedović (see the CD-ROM of archival material in the updated edition of Lord 1960/2000), I assume that the *aoidos* or *aoidoi* (Greek epic singers) who gave us the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were of exceptional abilities. Having said this, I do not deny that we cannot know exactly what the original, dictated (M. Parry 1933-35 in A. Parry 1971:451, Janko 1990, Powell 1997, Haslam 1997:80-84) texts looked like (cf. Foley’s [1990:5-8] “oral-derived”); nor did the performance tradition suddenly stop with these memorializations, but continued to live on.

¹⁶ The very use of the “stricken to silence” formula, as Montiglio (1993) has suggested, itself creates a delay.

representative duel with Menelaus for possession of Helen herself. The aggrieved husband of Helen takes up the challenge, and the Achaeans, “hoping to cease from miserable war” (3.112), react with joyful acceptance of his response. The acceptance is understandable, especially since the envisioned outcome would be an immediate end to the conflict through treaty (3.92-94). The shorter pattern I—F—AR—GA is all that the poet deems necessary. Here we find no extra delay or further speech confirming or modifying the authoritative reply toward which the formula points.

2) Our formula next shows up at *Iliad* 7.92, a verse whose placement follows the narration of Apollo’s plan to turn the tide of battle in favor of the Trojans by stirring up Hector to engage in a duel with an unnamed Achaean (7.38-42). The Olympian plan is transmitted by divine means to the warrior-prophet Helenus who advises Hector privately. Hector addresses the Trojans and Achaeans. While the speech, which includes a challenge to any Achaean to meet him in a duel, bears a great affinity with the duel of *Iliad* 3 (example 1 above), it is not, as before, meant to bring peace or an end to the war, nor is Helen up for grabs. For each Achaean whom Hector addresses, it is rather a question of killing Hector and gaining his armor or being killed, dying as a “valorous fighter” (7.73, ἀριστήεις) and obtaining lasting “fame” (κλέος, 7.91). There is an added formulaic note of delay (“yet after a delay” [ὅψὲ δὲ δῆ], 7.94)¹⁷ following the initial speech and key formula (7.93-95):

αἰδέσθην μὲν ἀνήνασθαι, δείσαν δ’ ὑποδέχθαι·
ὅψὲ δὲ δῆ Μενέλαος ἀνίστατο καὶ μετέειπεν·
νείκει ὀνειδίζων, μέγα δὲ στοναχίζετο θυμῷ·

While ashamed to refuse him, they were afraid to take up the challenge;
yet after a delay, Menelaus stood forth and spoke;
scolding them with a reproach, he groaned deeply in his spirit.

After the extended delay, Menelaus’ authoritative response comes in the form of a *neikos* (“reproach”) speech, and, like other comparable speeches in the *Iliad*, has as its direct intent the shaming of the fearful and hesitating troops into action.¹⁸ The first five lines of the speech are purposely scornful and hyperbolic (7.96-100):

¹⁷ This line-initial formula ending at the A2 position and employed twelve times in Homer is regularly part of larger formulae, including “yet after a delay, he spoke” (ὅψὲ δὲ δῆ μετέειπε), used seven times in Homer: *Il.* 7.399, 8.30, 9.31, 9.432, 9.696; *Od.* 7.155, 20.321 (with an additional variant form at *Il.* 7.94). As Kelly (2007:87) observes for the *Iliad* (but I note the same to be true for the *Odyssey*), this formula is often associated with our key formula when it is deployed by the poet and usually indexes “a speech which qualifies or rejects” the prior speech. On the colometry of the epic hexameter line, see Fränkel 1955:104, Nagy 1974, Peabody 1975:66-70, Edwards 1986:4-54, Foley 1990:80-82, Sale 1993, Nagy 2000, and Garner 2011:3-17. Within the current essay, I follow Berkley Peabody’s schematization:

— U U | — | U U — | U | U — | U U | — U U — U
A¹ A² B¹ B² C¹ C²

¹⁸ James Morrison (1992:132, n.18) notes that exhortation to battle can include “advice, criticism, or warning” (cf. *Il.* 2.381-93, 4.223-421, 19.408-17); cf. Schadewaldt 1938:29-40. Louise Pratt (1993:122) and Jonathan Ready (2011:54) both conclude that a proper *neikos* is directed at the “blameworthy,” not “the praiseworthy.”

ὦι μοι ἀπειλητῆρες, Ἀχαιῖδες, οὐκέτ' Ἀχαιοί·
 ἦ μὲν δὴ λῶβῃ τάδε γ' ἔσσεται αἰνόθεν αἰνῶς,
 εἰ μή τις Δαναῶν νῦν Ἑκτορος ἀντίος εἴσιν.
 ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν πάντες ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα γένοισθε
 ἤμενοι αὐθι ἕκαστοι ἀκήριοι, ἀκλέες αὐτῶς. . . .

Ah me! Braggarts! Women and no longer men!
 To be sure your response will be shameful, dreadfully dreadful,
 unless now, some one of the Danaans faces Hector.
 No, but may you all turn to water and dirt
 sitting there, each of you, thus inanimate and bereft of glory.

Menelaus concludes his berating response by saying that he himself will don armor and fight, and after his speech, he begins to do just what he has said. Yet, unlike in Book 3, where Menelaus faced the man who had stolen his wife, he now has no intensely personal stake in who enters the engagement. There will follow not only a confirmation of his call to action, but also a modification: his brother Agamemnon will urge him to allow another to fight: “No, now you sit down among the company of your companions / and the Achaeans will raise up another champion to contend with this man” (ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν ἵξε' ἰὼν μετὰ ἔθνος ἐταίρων, τούτῳ δὲ πρόμον ἄλλον ἀναστήσουσιν Ἀχαιοί. [*Il.* 7.115-16]).

Menelaus' speech is followed not only by the confirming speech (with modification) of Agamemnon but also by a further supportive (*neikos*) speech by Nestor (7.124-60). Now the nine foremost Achaean champions stand to answer the call to battle. Even though the Greater Ajax will win the glorious right to engage Hector, group assent is everywhere evident when all the foremost heroes' lots are shaken together in Agamemnon's helmet (7.175-83). This second instance of the “stricken to silence” formula consequently provides an example of the longer pattern I—F—D—AR—C—M—GA.

3) The “stricken to silence” formula next appears at *Iliad* 7.398. Idaeus, Priam's messenger, has just spoken to the Achaeans by their ships. His message was an offer of partial indemnity, that Paris would give back everything (except Helen!) carried off by him from Sparta, along with added goods. Idaeus also requested a temporary truce for the burning of corpses. Our key formula follows, made more emphatic with an extended silence (7.399; cf. 7.94), after which Diomedes gives the authoritative response denying Paris' partial offer of indemnity. Complete group assent is immediately indicated (7.403-04):

ὥς ἔφαθ'· οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπίαχον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν,
 μῦθον ἀγασσάμενοι Διομήδεος ἵπποδάμοιο·

Thus he spoke, and all the all the sons of the Achaeans shouted in assent,
 marveling at the authoritative word of Diomedes tamer of horses;

Diomedes has remained appropriately silent concerning the request for a truce, something not his to grant. Agamemnon's ensuing speech acts to confirm the response of all the Achaeans, which is in reality the authoritative response of Diomedes (see *μῦθον* in 404 and 406),¹⁹ but further, to consent to the appeal for time to burn the corpses.

4) *Iliad* 8.28 brings the sole example of the "stricken to silence" formula played out in the narrative of the divine assembly. Zeus orders the gods off of the battlefield for the moment, to keep them away from the sort of involvement that the external audience knows is constantly part of their activity in the poet's narrative.²⁰ The move is essential, since the poet knows from his comprehension of this traditional tale that the Achaeans are to be pinned against their ships in desperate need of the stubborn-hearted Achilles (something the poet will present in his rendition of the story in Books 9 to 17). The traditional story line is clearly present in the poet's mind and shaping his narrative. He keeps the gods out of the war, since they might shield the Achaeans from their immediate, albeit temporary, "ruin" (*οἶτος*).²¹

Zeus' speech includes a threat and is followed by our key formula. An extended delay ensues (8.29-30). The subsequent authoritative response comes appropriately from Zeus' favorite child, Athena, who speaks for the other gods. Her reply is unsurprisingly accepting of Zeus' will: "But of course we shall keep away from the war" (*ἀλλ' ἤτοι πολέμου μὲν ἀφεξόμεθ'*, 8.35). She says that she and the other gods will only offer helpful counsel (8.36).²² While the narrative that ensues shows that the group assents to Athena's speech (which god would openly disobey Zeus?), the text does not include the usual retort of the crowd normally found after the authoritative response. Yet, for the moment, and as the ensuing narrative clearly indicates, Athena's word is authoritative for the group in what follows: the Achaeans suffer in the immediate aftermath of Zeus' decision and no god intervenes as one hero after another leaves the battlefield. Zeus has begun to put his plan into action, and without the gods: "there, wailing and victory shouts were heard from men / both from those killing and from those being killed" (*ἐνθα δ' ἄμ' οἰμωγή τε καὶ εὐχολή πέλεν ἀνδρῶν / ὀλλύντων τε καὶ ὀλλυμένων*, 8.64-65).

5) Agamemnon, whose incompetent hegemony is part of the poet's comprehension of his character, provides us with the fifth example of an initial speech leading to the poet's use of the "stricken to silence" formula at *Iliad* 9.29. Agamemnon, true to his ambiguous leadership ability, opines that Zeus has apparently devised for him an "evil deception" (9.21). He advises the Achaeans crowded against the ships and awaiting the Trojan onslaught at dawn, to flee (9.26-28).²³ It is a chaotic moment. Would they actually leave on their ships at night? Would they

¹⁹ The poet's use of *μῦθος* further confirms the group's acceptance of Diomedes' speech as the authoritative reply. In Martin's scheme (1989:22), the *muth-* root here indicates an authoritative command.

²⁰ Most notable in this regard in the *Iliad* are the actions of Aphrodite, Ares, and Athena in Diomedes' *aristeia* in Book 5.

²¹ This impending ruin will reach its apex in the death of Patroclus (Book 16), leading to Achilles' grief-driven and vengeful return to battle (Book 20).

²² Here as elsewhere we see that even clear agreement with the speech preceding the "stricken to silence" formula is mitigated somewhat in the speech following it, as Foley (1995:11; cf. Person 1995) has shown.

²³ As James McGlew has noted (1989:288-89; so also Hainsworth 1993:62), we cannot take *Il.* 9.9-78 as equivalent to the problematic scene in *Il.* 2.16-440. The exhortation to depart seems quite real.

wait until the morning? Nobody asked, since all were unable to speak. The extent of the silence is evident from the length of the description, three full lines in all, including the hemistich “yet after a delay spoke” (ὥψὲ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε, 9.31) that will mark the response as disagreeing with Agamemnon’s suggestion (9.29-31):²⁴

ὥς ἔφαθ’, οἳ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ,
 δὴν δ’ ἄνεω ἦσαν τετιγότες υἱεὺς Ἀχαιῶν.
 ὥψὲ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης·

Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence.
 For a long time they were speechless; the sons of the Achaeans were grieved,
 yet after a delay spoke Diomedes of the great war cry.

The authoritative response of Diomedes that ensues upbraids Agamemnon. Even though Agamemnon is displaying a decided lack of “courage” (ἀλκήν, 9.34)—Diomedes resolutely declares that the son of Atreus can leave—the rest of the Achaeans intend to stay and fight without him until Troy falls (9.42-46). A traditional affirmation by the group (9.50-51) sums up the common assent, the very one we saw used in the group response following the formula in *Iliad* 7.398. Nestor, the sagacious counselor,²⁵ adds a confirming speech to the rather impetuous tone of Diomedes’ authoritative response. He proposes a feast to enliven the spirits of the men, while reminding Agamemnon of his duty to take charge (9.68-69). While Nestor’s speech does not modify the essence of what Diomedes says, it does mitigate the intensity of the moment. By advising Agamemnon to take charge, he is telling him, like Diomedes, that he and the others must stay. By suggesting a feast, he creates a conciliatory environment, an expectable outcome for the “clear-voiced speaker of the Pylions,”²⁶ whose central task it is “to foster and preserve the solidarity of the community” (Roisman 2005:36).

6) At *Iliad* 9.693, our formula follows the embassy’s unsuccessful attempt to mitigate Achilles’ wrath with appropriate recompense from Agamemnon who has erred. Agamemnon has queried the reaction of Achilles to his attempted reparations, and Odysseus’ reply is the initiatory speech before the “stricken to silence” formula is employed. Odysseus addresses Agamemnon, rehearsing Achilles’ gravely disappointing answer that he remains angry and refuses the gifts. Odysseus advises that the foremost warrior cannot be forced to rejoin the Achaeans. The news is horrible and the reality of the Achaean situation is embodied in the following silence. The

²⁴ Compare example 2 and note 17 above.

²⁵ On Nestor’s wisdom opposed to rash action, see *Il.* 1.254-84; as a contrast to panic, see *Od.* 24.54. Homer’s extended description at *Iliad* 4.294-310 (cf. *Il.* 2.360-68) draws the listeners’ attention to the sagacious and balanced preparation that informs Nestor’s leadership style. Note Hanna Roisman’s remarks (2005:36), mediating between the poet’s high regard for Nestor and modern scholars’ legitimate reservations about his military ability (Kirk 1985:360-61, Postlethwaite 2000:82), that Nestor’s sagaciousness and balance are found in his sustaining the values of the community, not in the actual tactics he employs (18).

²⁶ λιγὺν Πυλίων ἀγορητήν. λιγὺν in this formulaic phrase includes, as Roisman (2005:24, n.23) notes, the sense of pleasantness, both “of sound and resonance of voice.” Nestor is first described by this epithet at *Iliad* 4.293, and, although not used here, the epithet would have no doubt been in the audience’s mind.

“stricken to silence” formula is present, followed by the greatest number of silence-related formulae seen so far, all of which we have encountered already (see 7.403-4, 9.30-31), but never concurrently in one locus (9.693-96):

ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ
 {μῦθον ἀγασσάμενοι· μάλα γὰρ κρατερῶς ἀγόρευσεν}.²⁷
 δὴν δ' ἄνεω ἦσαν τετιηότες υἱεὺς Ἀχαιῶν.
 ὁψὲ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης·

Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence,
 marveling at the authoritative word, for he had spoken very strongly.
 For a long time they were speechless; the sons of the Achaeans were grieved,
 yet after a delay spoke Diomedes of the great war cry.

This is clearly a desperately hopeless moment in the narrative, and the poet has chosen to emphasize it as such by adjoining four full formulaic lines of emphatic pathos before we hear the authoritative response from the group's representative, Diomedes. Diomedes is less congenial than the messenger Odysseus. He first reprimands Agamemnon for his attempt at supplicating Achilles, then further advises that they “leave him alone” (9.701). What the troops need now, so Diomedes makes clear, is sleep! Agamemnon should then lead them at the break of dawn (9.705-09). All are said to “approve” (9.710), “marveling at the authoritative word of Diomedes tamer of horses” (711). Each is said to have left for his shelter and slumber (9.712-13).

7) While the men do as advised by Diomedes, some cannot sleep, at least according to the narrative in Book 10, where we find the next two recurrences of our formula. The difficulty with assessing the two instances of the formula's use is of course the thorny question of whether or not Book 10 has belonged to the *Iliad* from the time of its first inscription, or whether it was added later from another epic performance.²⁸ Book 10, whose place in the *Iliad* is questioned in the scholia,²⁹ has been regarded as pedantic and odd at times, and yet there are traditions contained in Book 10 that are clearly very old, such as the Rhesos story (*Il.* 10.435, on which see Fenik 1964). The root of the book's peculiarities, in fact, may lie in the nature of its controlling “ambush” theme as Casey Dué and Mary Ebbott propose (2010; cf. Dué 2010). If their argument is correct, then the book's conventions and idioms only appear peculiar when read without

²⁷ Although this line is bracketed in West's edition and disliked by the Alexandrians, I see no good reason to consider it un-Homeric. Rather, the Alexandrians' view suggests a failure “to take account of the habits of formulaic composition” (Hainsworth 1993:149; cf. Willcock 1978:284).

²⁸ See Dué and Ebbott (2010:3-29) for a comprehensive overview of approaches to the *Doloneia*.

²⁹ The writer of the T scholia (Ersbe 1969-88, vol. 3:0b; cf. Eust. 785.41-45 [van der Valk 1971:2] and Cic. *De Orat* 3.34, 137) reports its tradition as saying that “the lay . . . was not part of the [original] *Iliad*, but was added to the work by Pisistratus” (τὴν ῥαψωδίαν . . . μὴ εἶναι μέρος τῆς Ἰλιάδος, ὑπὸ δὲ Πεισιστοράτου τετάχθαι εἰςποίησιν).

awareness of this theme.³⁰ As we will note, the regular pattern and implications of the formula “Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence” (ὥς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ) are in fact very much present in Book 10.³¹

The “stricken to silence” formula is found first at *Iliad* 10.218 and comes after a nighttime assembly that immediately follows a speech by Nestor. He asks for a volunteer to go on a night foray to reconnoiter Trojan deliberations (10.204-17). Promise is made of fame (*kleos*) and gifts to the man who returns with intelligence. No extended delay occurs before the authoritative response of Diomedes, who takes up Nestor’s challenge. In his speech, Diomedes says he will go, but that it would instill “more comfort and courage” (10.223) and prove more thoughtful for two to undertake the excursion together. No regular assent formula is noted in the singular ensuing line (10.227) before the poet offers us the catalogue of heroes that wish to volunteer. The overwhelming response of the seven leading warriors, however, makes the point that Diomedes’ reply is the will of the group. Agamemnon offers a confirming speech (10.234-39), but he adds a caveat as a light modifier, that the Achaean most capable in ability, rather than most prominent in social standing, be selected as a partner (10.237-39). Odysseus is chosen, and he adds his own short speech (10.249-53) that the mission be hastened before daybreak.

8) At *Iliad* 10.313, we find the key formula employed in the Trojan camp. Hector can sleep no better than Agamemnon! An assembly is called, and Hector, like Agamemnon, requests a volunteer for a reconnaissance mission to learn if their adversaries are keeping guard or planning flight.³² The reward for the potential volunteer is then identified: the best horses and chariot of the Achaeans (10.305-06). Again, as with the first passage within the *Doloneia*, there follows the “stricken to silence” formula with no extended delay. There are, however, four lines of negative character description (10.314-17) before the introduction to Dolon’s speech (10.318) that will act as the authoritative reply to Hector. The poet may wish here, through his inclusion of a biographical sketch, to enhance this narrative moment. Like digressions, which effectively “put time in slow motion” (Austin 1966:158), and like type scenes, where “Homer expands, curtails, and otherwise refashions the details . . . to fit each situation” (Reece 1993:87), these tailored lines of characterization slow down narrative time and tighten the narrative focus for the audience.

Dolon’s reply is ominous, since he agrees to undertake a reconnaissance mission straight to Agamemnon’s ship, but nevertheless desirously and acquisitively insists on obtaining the chariot and team of “the son of Peleus.”³³ The poet and audience may surmise that the prize is to be Achilles’ immortal team of Xanthus and Balius, yet Dolon’s actual naming of the hero portends his own disaster. (Who goes up against Achilles and expects to come out unscathed?)

³⁰ Such has been the case for Analysts (for example, Ranke 1881) from early on, but also for more contemporary scholars who assume an oral background for the book, such as Georg Danek (1988).

³¹ Additionally, a shared pattern associated with our key formula here and in *Iliad* 23 is considered below within the discussion of the later passage.

³² Hector then acts for the poet as Agamemnon’s character doublet. On doublets, see Fenik 1974:172-207.

³³ See Foley 1999:204-21 on the metonymic nature of noun-epithet formulae in Homer. On the history of the epithet generally, see Reece 2011.

Dolon even makes Hector swear on his scepter that he will do what he requests, a clear example of the folktale theme of a “hasty oath” that usually ends in disaster.³⁴

We are not given the usual formulaic assent by the group, but we may be meant to hear the fearful assent of the crowd in their silence. There are no detractors in the group, but a short confirmation speech given by Hector acts to endorse Dolon’s doltish offer (10.329-31). Dolon’s inherent thoughtlessness is seen, not just in his hasty wish, but also in the poet’s intended contrast with Diomedes, his greater doublet who saw safety through acting in concert with another. Hector swears what the poet calls a “perjuring” (ἐπίορκος, 10.332) oath, here of an unintentional lie, promising what Dolon will never be able to acquire, Achilles’ steeds. Hector is unaware of the poet-narrator’s judgment on his oath making. How can Hector know what Fate has in store for his doomed respondent? Dolon is sent off on his perilous mission, alone.

9) The last instance of the “stricken to silence” formula in the *Iliad* occurs in 23.676, during the funeral games for Patroclus. Epeius addresses his fellow Achaeans and challenges them to a boxing match. He defies any man to fight him for a prize, threatening to obliterate his opponent in the match. He even claims that his opponent’s friends will have to carry him away (23.673-75)! The ensuing formula leads to a response only in action, which does not otherwise occur in the passages under consideration. The representative reply comes in the form of Euryalus “alone” (23.677) taking up the challenge. The poet makes it clear that his was the authoritative response of the group; others are reticent to respond. As in the case of the night raid of Book 10, fear must be understood to mitigate their excitement. Another feature common with the second narrative moment in the *Doloneia* (10.314-17) is a four-line biography following the response in action (23.677-80). Euryalus loses, however, despite his fine pedigree.

10) *Odyssey* 7.154 is the first occurrence of our formula in that epic. Odysseus has washed up on the island of Phaeacia, met Nausicaa the princess daughter of the reigning royals, and been instructed to supplicate her parents by directly addressing her mother Arete (6.310-15), which he does. Odysseus’ entreaty (7.146-52) includes a reference to his hardships, a wish for his patrons’ prosperity, and a request that conveyance home be provided.

A note by the poet just before our key formula pictures Odysseus retiring to the ashes (7.153-55):

ὥς εἰπὼν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔζετ’ ἐπ’ ἐσχάρῃ ἐν κονίῃσι
παρ πυρί· οἱ δ’ ἄρ’ αὖ πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ.
ὁπρὲ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε γέρον ἥρως Ἐχένηος.

Thus speaking, he sat down in the hearth in the ashes
by the fire, but they all were stricken to silence.
Yet after a delay, spoke the aged hero Echeneus.

The poet has expanded the moment of silence just before our formula in line 154. He has replaced the first colon (extending to A1) consisting of the familiar “thus he spoke” (ὥς ἔφαθ’) with a whole line (153) utilizing an initial participial construction, “thus speaking” (ὥς εἰπὼν),

³⁴ On other hasty oaths, see West 1997:222.

and followed by the enjambed phrase “by the fire” (παρ πυρός; cf. Foley 1995:9) in line 154. The initial participle acts to replace the first part of the formula, something not at all surprising considering the less traditionally stable and more ambiguous nature of the first colon.³⁵ The whole line and a quarter acts to support the key formula, which is itself followed by the traditional note of delay (“yet after a delay,” ὁπὲρ δὲ δῆ, 7.155) that we have often seen previously.

Echeneus’ authoritative response (7.159-66) on behalf of those present seeks to urge Alcinous to act as the community’s leader: to raise the stranger from the dust, to show him hospitality, to pour libations, and to respect Odysseus as a suppliant. In the narrative, the assent of those present is indicated first by the poet’s description of the carrying out of Echeneus’ advisement, including a meal and libations (7.168-84).³⁶ Alcinous displaces his favorite son Laodamas to give his chair to their guest, the servants set up the feast, and Odysseus eats. Following the meal, Alcinous orders libations poured before he makes a speech promising the requested conveyance home (7.191-96). Alcinous does all that Echeneus advises in his speech, which gains the approval of the crowd (7.226-27). The poet, however, waits to note the crowd’s approval until after proper hospitality has actually been offered and the king has himself made known his acceptance of Echeneus’ admonition.

11) At *Odyssey* 8.234, the “stricken to silence” formula follows the pugnacious yet graceful reply of Odysseus to the rude testing from his youthful hosts Laodamas and Euryalus, who question the veracity of his intentions and insult his honor (*Od.* 8.213). Odysseus defiantly offers to best any comer except his host in athletic competition in any area save running (8.202-33). Odysseus’ defensive response suggests that he is no scurrilous imposter, but rather the heroic Achaean described in his references to retrospective heroic events.³⁷

Odysseus’ reply is followed by our formula without any added note of delay. The poet next informs us that Alcinous “alone” answers (8.235). To him then belongs the authoritative response. Alcinous is conciliatory in what he says. After mitigating remarks about the unrepresentative nature of the senseless youth who misspoke, he instead recommends that Odysseus see where the Phaeacians really excel, in areas not referenced by Odysseus in his counter-challenge: acrobatics, seafaring, feasting, the lyre, dancing, changes of clothes, hot baths, and beds (8.246-49). Odysseus has already experienced feasting, and now the *aoidos* Demodocus is called forward to sing an amusing story in an effort to lighten the tense mood (8.236-55). Alcinous also intends that activities such as dancing and acrobatics should follow, along with the offering of gifts to atone for the earlier slight. Even the impetuous Euryalus makes amends (8.401-11). There is no formulaic assent, yet assent is portrayed and assumed: the

³⁵ It is this least stable colon’s variability that has led to a lack of agreement over the actual positioning and existence of the A1 and A2 breaks. (See Edwards 1986:177-85 and Foley 1990:72-84 for a sketch of the possibilities.) This and the other formulaic variation bring to mind Hainsworth’s (1968:30-31 and *passim*) observations about formula flexibility and the possibility of “boosting” formula length. Compare the comments of Foley (1995:25) about the existence of “multiple phraseological pathways to the same metonymic meaning.”

³⁶ As Heubeck et al. point out (1988:32), two scenes, the meal and libation, are brought together but the close of the meal’s activities does not occur until 7.232.

³⁷ Odysseus has not yet disclosed exactly which Achaean he is, a revelation that finally and intentionally finds its moment at *Odyssey* 9.19.

authoritative response of Alcinous has unquestionably set the trajectory in some detail for the subsequent narrative.

12) *Odyssey* 11.333 constitutes the next appearance of our formula. Odysseus has just finished the captivating story of his visit to the underworld³⁸ and has concluded with his catalogue of women.³⁹ The effect of his speech is noted by an added formulaic line “And they were in a state of amazement throughout the shadowy hall” (κηληθμῷ δ’ ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα, 11.334), which acts through its descriptiveness to add a momentary delay for the poet’s own auditors.⁴⁰

The ensuing response of Queen Arete is doubly marked as authoritative, both by the preceding “stricken to silence” formula and by the words employed to introduce what she says: “Among these then white-armed Arete began her authoritative response” (τοῖσιν δ’ Ἀρήτη λευκώλενος ἤρχετο μύθων, 11.335). She points out the excellence of Odysseus and bids that the Phaeacians not send him away without an appropriate level of honorific gifts from their individual possessions (11.336-41). The Queen’s response is quickly supported by representative members of the elite gathered for Odysseus’ stories. The respected elder Echeneus advises people to obey the Queen’s order (11.344-46), and King Alcinous agrees with his wife’s response, supporting her advisement to delay sending off Odysseus until sufficient donations have been collected (11.348-53; cf. 339-41).

13) *Odyssey* 13.1, the next instance of our formula, is appropriately placed at the commencement of a new book, since the formula, although responding to what went before, more importantly, as we have been noting, sets the trajectory for what follows. Odysseus has just completed his enthralling story with a brief mention of Calypso, the same divinity he references at the beginning of his tale at *Odyssey* 9.29. The very formula that followed the last instance of “stricken to silence” we considered (11.333) is again deployed here: “And they were in a state of amazement throughout the shadowy hall” (κηληθμῷ δ’ ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα, 13.2, cf. 11.334). This time, however, it is Alcinous who steps in to provide the authoritative response.

Alcinous begins by saying that he thinks Odysseus will not be driven back from making his native shore again. Following this rather prophetic note, he charges each of the leading men present to provide gifts: clothing, gold, tripod, and cauldron, noting that a collection can later be made among the subjects of the land to restore what has been donated (13.4-15). The internal audience’s assent is first noted by the poet through a formulaic line confirming their agreement, including the use of an authoritative command in 13.16: “Thus spoke Alcinous, and to those present his command was pleasing” (ὥς ἔφατ’ Ἀλκίνοος, τοῖσιν δ’ ἐπήνδανε μῦθος). The subsequent narrative describes Alcinous’ proclamation being carried out, beginning with the

³⁸ It is possible, however, to view this visit instead as a case of necromancy (West 1997:426) or a “vision” (Louden 2011:197-221).

³⁹ *Od.* 11.235-327. On the Catalogue of Women, see Sammons 2010:74-102.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Od.* 13.2 for the full line; for the hemistich beginning at B2, see *Od.* 10.479, 11.334, 23.299.

King's own further order that libation and prayer be made for the conveyance of Odysseus home to Ithaca (13.50-52).⁴¹

14) *Odyssey* 16.393 follows a strong speech by Antinous (16.364-92) arguing for the murder of Telemachus, who has returned home alive from his voyage to the Peloponnesus after the suitors' failed marine ambush. The suitors have just entered the palace as the "noisy throng" (ἄθροοι, 361) who seat themselves in their own exclusive enclave, allowing neither agetates nor elders to join their company (16.361-62). Antinous speaks to this group. In his address he warns the suitors that Telemachus is too capable in counsel and intellect and the other citizens are no longer kind to them. In the second part of his speech, introduced by the "rhetorical fulcrum" (Foley 1999:224) "but come . . ." (ἀλλ' ἄγετε, 16.376), Antinous urges his fellow suitors to kill Telemachus before he calls an assembly, an act, he argues, that would surely prove most disadvantageous to their interests.

Following the passionately desperate speech of Antinous and the "stricken to silence" formula, Homer adduces no extra formulae emphasizing additional delay. The poet has included, however, a brief characterizing biography (16.395-98) before the authoritative reply of Amphinomus, an option he has used after two other instances of the "stricken to silence" formula we have considered to this point.⁴² The poet's characterization of Amphinomus through the formula "for he had good sense" (φρεσὶ γὰρ κέχρητ' ἀγαθῆσιν, 16.398) follows a previous note that he was more pleasing than others to Penelope in what he said. The formula is used positively elsewhere in the *Odyssey* of Clytemnestra before she was corrupted by Aegisthus (3.266) and of the pious actions of the faithful swineherd Eumaeus (14.421) when entertaining the disguised Odysseus. The referential import in the use of this traditional idiom consequently seems to characterize Amphinomus as a cut above the other suitors. The first hemistich of the last line before Amphinomus speaks, "He, being well intentioned toward them, addressed those assembled and spoke" (ὃ σφιν ἔϋ φρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν, 16.399), further suggests his reasonable disposition.⁴³ The tenor of the biography (cf. Fenik 1974:192-95, Race 1993:86) causes us to expect a mitigating response from this classy suitor, of whom even Penelope thought decently, and we are not disappointed.

⁴¹ The collection of the goods from the common folk to replace what is given by the foremost leaders is not within the range of the narrative's chronology but has clearly been accepted as a guarantee by those responding with donations.

⁴² See *Il.* 10.313 and 23.676.

⁴³ The second hemistich formula "addressed those assembled and spoke" (ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν), a "boilerplate" (Foley 1999:221-23, 256) introduction, occurs fourteen times in Homer, beginning at B1, and has "He, being well intentioned toward them" (ὃ σφιν ἔϋ φρονέων) in the first hemistich in eleven of those instances. (The other traditional possibility for the first hemistich ending at B1, "Then among these Amphinomus" [τοῖσιν δ' Ἀμφίνομος, cf. *Od.* 20.244], could not [as is the case also with other names that fit metrically in the alternative phrase, but do not end in a long vowel, such as Alcinous and Antinous] have been employed since the second hemistich of our present line begins with a vowel.) The eleven instances of "He, being well intentioned toward them" (ὃ σφιν ἔϋ φρονέων) (*Il.* 1.73: Kalchas, 253: Nestor, 2.78: Nestor, 2.283: Odysseus, 7.326: Nestor, 9.95: Nestor, 15.285: Thoas, 18.253: Panthous; *Od.* 7.158: Echneus, 16.399: Amphinomus, 24.53: Nestor) suggest not that "cheery" or "kind" (note the words of Nestor in *Il.* 1.253), but rather "well intentioned" (so Roisman 2005:31-34, espec. 32, n.42; cf. Kirk 1985:78) and perhaps "reasonable" advisement in a speech will follow.

Amphinomus' authoritative reply, which begins less confrontationally with himself as the model to emulate, is a negative wish that argues against the suitors' killing of Telemachus, followed by a recognition of the need to pursue some type of rational process for their actions (*Od.* 16.400-05):

ὦ φίλοι, οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ γε κατακτείνειν ἐθέλοιμι
 Τηλέμαχον· δεινὸν δὲ γένος βασιλῆϊόν ἐστι
 κτείνειν· ἀλλὰ πρῶτα θεῶν εἰρώμεθα βουλᾶς.
 εἰ μὲν κ' αἰνήσωσι Διὸς μέγαλοιο θέμιστες,
 αὐτὸς τε κτενέω τοὺς τ' ἄλλους πάντας ἀνώξω·
 εἰ δέ κ' ἀποτρωπῶσι θεοί, παύσασθαι ἄνωγα.

Friends, I would not be willing to be involved in killing
 Telemachus. It is an ominous matter to go about killing a royal;
 rather, first let us inquire what the gods desire.
 If the ordinances of great Zeus recommend it,
 then I will myself kill and advise all others to do likewise,
 but if the gods are opposed, I advise we relent.

A formulaic hemistich exclusive to the *Odyssey*, “and to them his advice was pleasing” (τοῖσιν δ' ἐπήνδανε μῦθος, 16.406),⁴⁴ along with the group's immediate actions indicate group acceptance of Amphinomus' response. There will be no thoughtless rush to murder Telemachus, as the intent of Amphinomus' reply makes sure (not that the suitors give over considering it: 16.448). There is no speech by any other group member, but the strength of the “stricken to silence” cue in normally plotting the immediate story trajectory is perhaps seen in the ensuing narrative, where Penelope herself echoes the sentiments of Amphinomus (16.418-33).

If the foregoing analysis of the “stricken to silence” formula is accurate, then certain conclusions can be drawn. The formula represents the inner tectonics of the poet's plan, inherited from the tradition with which he thoughtfully works. Specifically, the formula “Thus he spoke, but they in fact all were stricken to silence” (ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ) cues the external audience of each epic that an “official” or “representative” reply will come, one whose intent is normally acceptable to the group, and which will set the immediate narrative direction. The formula then has an idiomatic meaning, and it acts metonymically for the informed external audience, who expect it to foreshadow the narrative direction. This formula is of course not directly heard by the internal audience, who are not privy to the poet's authorial perspective and the tradition-laden metonym. The internal audience is, however, able to recognize the silence as a significant moment, as one that means to call forth from the group an authoritative response that it should heed. In each of the fourteen cases we have considered, they do just that.

⁴⁴ See *Od.* 13.6, 16.406, 18.50, 18.290, 20.247, 21.143, and 21.269.

Two Ironic Narrative Moments in Homer

The metonymic significance of the formula for what follows in each narrative moment has been demarcated for both epics. The external audience listening to the poetic performance awaits a particular narrative trajectory in each case, an expectation cued by the “stricken to silence” formula. The internal audience, although not privy to the formula, seems, in every case, to accept the speech following the (formula and formulaic) silence as authoritative. What happens, however, when the internal audience ignores the authoritative speech, and when the seriousness of the silence falls on “deaf ears”? What is portended when the language cue does not set the narrative trajectory for the external audience, when what should happen after the authoritative speech is overcome by the stubborn blindness of a central character or group within the story? As we will see in the first instance, Achilles will not respond to the authoritative speech of a surrogate father, despite the pleas of his closest friends, and loses his dearest companion as a result. In the second case, the suitors are deaf to warnings and lose their very lives. The result of all these “incongruities” (Muecke 1970:33) between what normally would happen and what actually transpires in these key moments, between the assuming and limited perspective of the characters and the more informed and objective perspective of the audience, is a sense of irony that operates to harbingers peril.⁴⁵ We will return to the question of irony, after considering the two aberrant examples of our formula’s employment in Homer.

1) At *Iliad* 9.430 the first of two missed narrative cues occurs during what is perhaps the central moment of the *Iliad*, the embassy to Achilles.⁴⁶ All who have come to Achilles are his closest friends in the war against Troy (9.197-204) and all have been suitably shown hospitality. Odysseus has given the opening speech, a long oration meant to persuade Achilles to restrain his “great-hearted *thumos*” (μεγαλήτορα θυμόν, 9.255)⁴⁷ and to accept the compensatory offer made by Agamemnon to atone for past wrongs (9.225-306). Minimally, Odysseus urges that Achilles act out of pity for his friends (9.301-02).

Odysseus’ speech is followed by Achilles’ long, emotional, and philosophical refusal (9.308-429) to provide any immediate assistance, and is accompanied by the “stricken to silence” formula. Achilles’ emotional response begins with anger over his lot, in a war fought for a *geras*-grabbing commander like Agamemnon. The rhetorical questions of Achilles and his comments *in toto* suggest an entrenched disillusionment. His response to any immediate aid is a firm “no” (9.345), even if he experiences some softening of his intractable position (Scodel 1989). Achilles’ speech is described by J. B. Hainsworth (1993:101) as “too egotistical to have any

⁴⁵ Irony works on two levels, through both language and situation (cf. Muecke 1970, Foley 1999:19), as we shall see.

⁴⁶ Donna Wilson’s (2002:71-108) discussion of the embassy to Achilles, while not at every point in agreement with my own, highlights the centrality of the embassy in the poet’s presentation.

⁴⁷ The traditional way to index a hero’s inner force for vitality. On the primitive *thumos* as a separate psychic part of a hero’s emotional self, see Snell 1953 and Sullivan 1988. The noun-epithet formula “great-hearted *thumos*” (μεγαλήτορα θυμόν) occurs sixteen times in Homer, always extending from the C1 position to line end. (The formula “haughty *thumos*,” [ἀγήνορα θυμόν] contains the same “essential idea” [M. Parry 1930:80, in A. Parry 1971:272] between the C2 position and line end, found in *Od.* 11.562; cf. the nominative θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ, which is found in the same position in 24 instances).

validity.” It is centered upon himself, and even the short simile of the mother bird (9.323-27) provides no relief from the pathos of personal indignation. The intensity of Achilles’ resolution is underscored through the poet’s use of anacoluthon, followed by asseveration (9.358-59). Achilles is passionate here, and so abruptly breaks away from the normal narration perspective of what he was saying, changing in mid-thought to declare emphatically what Odysseus himself will see (9.356-9):

νῦν δ’ , ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐθέλω πολεμίζεμεν Ἐκτορι δίοι,
αὔριον ἰδὼ Διὶ ῥέξας καὶ πᾶσι θεοῖσιν,
νηήσας εὖ νῆας, ἐπὶ νῆαδ’ ἄλλαδ’ ἐπὶ προερούσσω
ὄψεαι. . . .

But now, since I do not wish to make war against godlike Hector
tomorrow, after having made sacrifices to Zeus and all the gods,
after loading my ships, when I draw them down to the sea,
you will see. . . .

This change from an expected construction expresses Achilles’ heated emotional state. The asseveration continues throughout his speech, as he fully rejects Agamemnon’s offer of recompense piece by piece.

The meaning of all this forcefully expressive language is clear: he may even head home and they are free to watch! And why not, he argues, after the hubristic (ἐφουβρίζω, 9.368) treatment he has received from Agamemnon. Achilles continues his tirade of censorious statements and hypothetical refusals until, toward the end of his invective, he finally declares that it is his “haughty *thumos*” (θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ, 9.398)⁴⁸ and “wrath” (μῆνις, 9.42) that will keep the embassy’s plan from succeeding.

The “stricken to silence” formula follows this harsh response by Achilles, and joined with it are formulaic lines of delay (9.431-32) we have encountered already in Books 7 and 9, which suggest that the respondent will not endorse Achilles’ decision. Adding to the nexus of emotional undertones is the descriptive characterization of the closest of Achilles’ companions, who will provide what should be the authoritative response. Phoenix, Achilles’ surrogate father, is described with an emotionally charged formula as “having broken out in tears, for he was afraid for the ships of the Achaeans” (δάκρυ’ ἀναπρήσας· περὶ γὰρ δὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν, 9.433).⁴⁹

Phoenix addresses Achilles (9.434-605) by reviewing his own history in retrospect, which reminds Achilles and the audience that he fled from his own home and joined Achilles’, only to be made a surrogate parent to the hero, a toddler at the time. Phoenix’s intent seems to be for Achilles to accept his authority as a surrogate parent while bringing the crisis of the moment into focus by emphasizing certain themes: the need for restraint when angered and the necessity of

⁴⁸ See note 47 above.

⁴⁹ The first hemistich formula, “having broken out in tears” (δάκρυ’ ἀναπρήσας), that ends at line-position B1 is also used of Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, who in anger at the suitors’ insolence throws the royal scepter onto the ground to the gasps and pity of those assembled (2.81).

accepting supplication. Digressions abound to drive his point home, in what is the longest speech of any emissary.⁵⁰ The supplication is for Achilles to subdue his “great *thumos*” (θυμὸν μέγαν, 9.496) and to show pity, before it is too late.⁵¹

Despite the appeals and the presence of traditional formulae cuing what should follow, Achilles rejects Phoenix’s call to come and save his closest friends and heroic community through responsive action, and to gain honor by accepting gifts that betoken his martial greatness. Neither does Achilles’ reply (9.607-19) offer any real answers to the issues Phoenix has raised. Despite Achilles’ rejection, Ajax makes a few parting sallies supporting the tenor of Phoenix’s speech, but the effort falls on deaf ears. The embassy leaves in dejection. Achilles has held out, and the normal pattern of the authoritative answer setting the narrative trajectory has been broken. It is a moment of irony as the implications of what traditionally follows are muted by Achilles’ refusal to assist his friends or heed the speech of a member of his own household. Jasper Griffin (1980:74, n.46) appropriately remarks that “it is surely made clear by Achilles that it is not his ‘ethic’ that prevents his return, but on the contrary his own passionate emotion, overriding a code which for him, as for other heroes, made his return the appropriate action.”⁵² Achilles’ inaction, in Wilson’s words (2002:108), “signals dissolution of familial and friendship bonds and even of civilized existence.” The poet, through Achilles’ refusal to follow the normal narrative trajectory, highlights the significance of the present narrative moment. What follows, moreover, on the next day of fighting, as the audience who have heard the story before know, is not just devastation for the Achaeans whom Achilles refuses to assist in his recalcitrance, but also devastation for Achilles, who will lose his dearest companion.⁵³

2) A second break in the traditional narrative trajectory suggested by the missed “stricken to silence” metonym is found after the recurrence of the formula at *Odyssey* 20.320. The setting now is the palace of Odysseus after the unimpeded progress of the suitors in their hubristic and wanton behavior. Most recently, the suitor Ktessipus has hurled an ox’s hoof at Odysseus disguised as a beggar. Telemachus is of course well aware that it is Odysseus that Ktessipus has nearly hit, yet it affords him a moment to warn the suitors to cease their rude action and to affirm that he has come of age and will tolerate it no longer (20.304-19). Following the “stricken to silence” formula and a familiar formulaic line of delay (20.321; cf. *Il.* 7.94), the external audience expects the response of the suitor Agelaus (20.322-37) to be authoritative.

⁵⁰ For a detailed consideration of Phoenix’s crucial speech, see Rosner 1976 and Held 1987.

⁵¹ “Great *thumos*” (θυμὸν μέγαν), filling the colon B2 to C2, seems to be the poet’s adaptation of the more traditional epithet, “great-hearted *thumos*” (μεγαλήτορα θυμόν), employed only in the last colon, from C1 to line end. See note 47 above.

⁵² Cf. Collins 1988:29, n.6.

⁵³ Achilles’ decision not to accept Phoenix’s speech as authoritative, if read from the perspective of Ruth Scodel’s thesis about Achilles’ word (1989), may be seen to have come at the point when he first made his grievous promise not to fight until fire reached his ships. Considering the isolated position of his ships “detached from the rest of the fleet” (C. Parry 1817:340), however, this promise was destined from the moment given to provide neither meaningful nor timely assistance to his friends, nor a reasonable or merciful response to the pleas of any future embassy.

Agelaus' response (20.322-37) is quite supportive of Telemachus' concern. In the first part of his reply, he contends that Telemachus has spoken justly and joins him in advocating non-violence, admonishing the suitors to treat guests and servants with respect (20.322-25):

ὦ φίλοι, οὐκ ἂν δὴ τις ἐπὶ ῥηθέντι δικαίῳ
ἀντιβίῳσι' ἐπέεσσι καθαπτόμενος χάλεπαίνοι·
μήτε τι τὸν ξείνον στυφελίζετε μήτε τιν' ἄλλον
δμῶων, οἳ κατὰ δῶματ' Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο.

Friends, indeed no one should, in response to what has been said in justice,
assail him with harsh, opposing words.
Do not continually maltreat either the stranger or any other male
slave who is in the household of godlike Odysseus.

These same conciliatory and agreeable words were used by the poet already in his story within Book 18 (414-17), after Eurymachus had hurled a stool at Odysseus disguised as a beggar, and a common thread has been observed joining the two incidents: "In each case the poet has made one of the 'better' suitors acknowledge the validity of Telemachus' complaint" (Russo et al. 1992:123).

The second part of Agelaus' authoritative response appends a polite advisement (20.326-37), with his counsel beginning by acknowledging the propriety of Penelope's refusal to consider a marriage when there was still hope that Odysseus would return. That return day, according to Agelaus, is now past. The poet has Agelaus provide a call to action, for Telemachus to explain to his mother that she should marry the best man.

Following a chiasmic pattern, the second part of Agelaus' speech first finds confirmation of its authoritative nature in the immediate reply of Telemachus himself, who affirms that he has in fact already urged his mother to marry whomever she wishes (20.341-42).⁵⁴ The first part of the speech directed toward his fellow suitors, however, is quite another matter. What follows is anything but a clear affirmation by the group to change their insensitive and hubristic behavior as Agelaus has advised. Their impious behavior begins with veiled threats toward the prophet Theoclymenus, who has just uttered a foreboding interpretation of the suitors' own perilous dilemma (20.351-57). It continues with attempted provocation (ἐριθίζω, 20.374) directed towards Telemachus from each of the suitors (20.374, 384), threatening the very guest that Agelaus had advised them not to maltreat, but now also openly advising abusive behavior against the prophet himself (20.381-83):

ἀλλ' εἴ μοί τι πίθοιο, τό κεν πολὺ κέρδιον εἴη·
τοὺς ξείνους ἐν νηὶ πολυκλήϊδι βαλόντες
ἐς Σικελοὺς πέμπωμεν, ὅθεν κέ τοι ἄξιον ἄλφοι.

⁵⁴ Telemachus, for the sake of the imminent revenge, also goes along with the first assumption mentioned by Agelaus, that Odysseus is now dead.

But if perhaps you would listen to me, the following idea seems more advantageous:
 let's load these guests into a many-benched ship
 and send them to the Sicilians, where some profit might accrue to you!

The context for the suitors' reply, now that the response of Agelaus has been deprived of any efficacy, is a bizarre picture of a topsy-turvy, apocalyptic threat to the suitors' reality, at least as visualized through the prophet's narrative perspective (20.351-57). The prophetic visualization follows the poet's own grizzly introduction (20.347-49), as the ambience of the hall and the food being eaten by the suitors changes to portend imminent destruction: laughter is heard as lament, walls bleed, specters fill the courtyard, and darkness blankets the place. It is as though the natural order of the physical realm has been upset by the suitors' moral decadence, their imminent doom and descent to Hades proleptically portrayed.

The suitors seem blind to any reality check and haughtiness is their only response, evident not only in their suggestion to sell Telemachus' guests to the Sicilians as slaves (Russo et al. 1992:126), but also in their treatment of others in the narrative that immediately follows. The suitors as a group seem incapable of comprehending the authoritative response of their fellow suitor, Agelaus. They appear incognizant of the dark foreboding of their present position signaled by the grim portents of the prophet Theoclymenus. Destruction looms. Further, the "stricken to silence" formula, clearly operative in all fourteen cases considered earlier and controlling of the actions and attitudes of those who attend each authoritative speech, is here, as in the case of Achilles, not controlling the outcome. What is the poet doing?

Metonymic Irony of Narrative Perspective

The mechanism that the poet uses in the last two instances of the "stricken to silence" formula we have considered is metonymic irony of narrative perspective. Metonymic irony is by far the most traditional type of irony, since it operates at the level of the audience's knowledge of the greater story tradition. As outlined earlier in our consideration of metonymy, formulae, when encountered, must be read by reference to their use within the tradition; the audience informed by the tradition can thus access the meaning of metonyms in the text because they share a body of knowledge that is their cultural inheritance. Within the poet's narrative, the use of formula as metonym for the creation of narrative content relies inevitably upon the audience, who are, in some sense, co-authors through the tradition of the full story being told. Their traditional knowledge, consequently, is assumed by the poet in the creation of irony.

In the last two cases we have considered, the response of Achilles and then the suitors, metonymic irony starts to form at the phraseological level, where the external audience experiences each instance of the "stricken to silence" formula without the normal meaning inherent in its employment, and realizes that something is wrong. The traditional implications of the formula are suspended. In each case, a part or most of the internal audience (Achilles and the suitors, respectively) is not stricken by the sort of silence that produces respect for the authoritative response of the group (as in the other fourteen examples from the *Iliad* and

Odyssey).⁵⁵ This instant is the temporal beginning of irony, and, since the employment and reading of the “stricken to silence” formula deals with a form of lexical ambiguity, it is this moment that is closest to traditional “rhetorical” irony.⁵⁶

The ironic instant in narrative time, however, is in no way restricted to the question of the ambiguity of language, but rather, is intricately bound to the external audience’s superior position and knowledge as auditors of a traditional story.⁵⁷ Consequently, irony is fully achieved both through the missed metonym of the language cue and the narrative perspective created by the poet. It is found in the juxtaposition of the awareness of the external audience of the normal path of the “stricken to silence” metonym gained from familiarity with the traditional language and story patterns, set against the intractable stubbornness, blindness, and ignorance of the internal audience with regard to the true significance of the authoritative speech that follows the silence formula.⁵⁸ When the external audience first sees Achilles and then the suitors deaf to the pleas and warnings of others, intractable and unheeding of the speech that follows the silence, they sense that something is wrong. They recognize that the normal trajectory of the metonym has been broken by characters acting from a limited perspective within the action of each plot.

The effect of metonymic irony of narrative perspective is an intensification of suspense in each of the two moments in the poets’ rendition of the traditional epic stories.⁵⁹ The external audience, informed by the traditional use of the language cue, feels the jarring resilience of both Achilles and the suitors against what should be the authoritative speech of Phoenix and the suitor Agelaus respectively. A sense of foreboding is felt, and peril looms large in the auditors’ minds as they think of what will follow in the future: Achilles will lose his closest comrade and the suitors will die as a consequence of the direction they are taking at this juncture in Homer’s story.

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⁵⁵ For a formative example of metonymic irony in Homer beginning at the phraseological level, compare Foley’s comments about “sweet sleep” (1999:232). For the development of irony in various disciplines beyond the limited use of the term in early classical sources, see Kierkegaard 1965 [1841], Muecke 1970, Enright 1986, Dane 1991, Stringfellow 1994, and Colebrook 2002.

⁵⁶ Since the internal audience, unlike the external audience, cannot hear the formula, but only the silence, we do not have here an actual case of rhetorical irony for the internal audience, as it is normally described. (See Stanford 1939:1-11, among others)

⁵⁷ The prophet Halitherses, no doubt also aware of the portentousness of the moment through prophetic inspiration, acts as an exception, and consequently can be seen to join the gods, poet, and external audience in viewing events from an elevated narrative perspective.

⁵⁸ Compare the comments of D. C. Muecke (1970:44) about “dramatic” irony: “The greater the contrast between, on the one hand, the victim’s confident assumption that he is a free agent and that things will happen as he expects them to and, on the other, the spectator’s view of him as a blind wretch fixed to the wheel of an irreversible, unstoppable action, the more intense the irony.” The internal audience does not hear the formula nor understand the metonymic implications, although it does hear the peculiar silence and the authoritative response speech, and in the case of Achilles and the suitors, that part of the narrative cue is ignored. The mechanism causing failure to heed the authoritative speech may be “delusion” (ἄτη), possibly part of Achilles’, but definitely part of the suitors’ (for example, *Od.* 18.143, 20.170, and so forth) condition. On Achilles’ “unreal view of reality” see Arieti 1985:198; see Scodel 1989:93 and Redfield 1975:106 for views that do not find Achilles to be the cause of the moral dilemma.

⁵⁹ On suspense in Homer see Morrison 1992.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Vernacular Phrasal Display: Towards the Definition of a Form

Adam Brooke Davis

In Principio . . .

Mabel was the daughter of a Baptist pastor; she played the organ in her father's church. It would not have occurred to her to appear on the sidewalk without her hat and white gloves. But those hands could also slaughter a hog, or inspire an errant child to reform, and the voice that could so soulfully croon "Just As I Am" had been heard to criticize the mealy-mouthed sort that "wouldn't say *shit* if he found himself with a mouthful." It was understood that when Mabel said, "Jump!" the only conceivable response was "how high, ma'am?!" Mean enough to hunt bear with a switch if it came to that. . . . Mabel was my personal introduction to a traditional, if for the most part unrecognized, genre of verbal performance.

Crowdsourcing a Corpus

For many years, at the Missouri Folklore Society website we've maintained an archive titled "Colorful Language of the Rural Midwest, with special emphasis on Missouri and Missourians" (<http://missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu/expressions.html>). The header is descriptive, if inelegant. The collection began with my own list, accumulated over a number of years from my own family's oral history, with the nucleus of the collection consisting of speech-items collected from my famously profane grandmother. Although she lived nine-tenths of her life in Missouri, her native speech was primarily that of Western Kentucky, thus exemplifying the much-travelled nature that we will see to be common for such forms. Even within my own family, these speech-items were understood as a definable corpus that was meaningfully referred to as "grammaw's sayings."

In the years that followed, the collection's rapid growth proved both gratifying—we were clearly on to something—and frustrating, specifically for the professional folklorist. Classically, the scholar pursues a subject according to the pattern *collect—classify—interpret* (to which we might then also add *assimilate to existing theory*, and *propose modifications to theory*). But in the case of this collection, such discrete parts of the folklorist's process became quickly intermingled, thus mirroring the characteristics inherent in the medium in which we chose to archive the collection. The World Wide Web, as is now generally recognized, is not merely an extension of print culture, capable of faster turnarounds on publication and revision, but a

transformation of it. The abilities to search and collaborate have had special significance for folklorists and linguists doing corpus studies, most particularly when that corpus is maintained and developed on the web itself.¹

Evidently, in our case what was happening with some regularity was that an individual would begin by searching via Google for a recently recalled phrase that had been heard once long ago. For example, if one searched for the phrase “slick as a jar full of eels,” our site was one of the top results that would be retrieved.² Following the hyperlink, the user would find an archive of hundreds of entries provided in no particular order. And at least in some instances, there would come a moment of illumination. Reviewing our collection, the visitor would find duplicates of, or variations on, many other remembered phrases as well. Such an encounter with familiar but distinctive constructions would then act as a sort of key to a memory vault. The Anglo-Saxons called it a *wordhoard*, a treasure-chest of verbal riches.³ Commonly, visitors would even augment their visit by communicating further, often through messages with a typical form: “Your site made me laugh *so hard* . . . I remember *all* these old things. . . .” And there would then follow a list, often long, as the single key opened another box within the first. I would sometimes exchange emails with these informants, hoping to get basic ethnographic information on the sample in question, for example, the alleged originator’s native place and birth year, gender, and level of education.⁴ Without exception, correspondents focused on the vividness of the imagery in these expressions, with special appreciation for the humor involved, though they frequently felt the need to apologize for salty content. This reaction is hardly

¹ The most obvious of a great many relevant instances one could mention is Foley’s Pathways Project (Foley 2011-). As I was completing my dissertation under his direction in 1990, very few academics (fewer still in the arts and humanities) were aware of the Internet. At that early period, John was among the first to grasp the capacity of this new technology to restructure our communicative life as radically as the printing press had done. And he was utterly alone in intuiting its affinities to oral tradition, what The Pathways Project’s homepage now refers to as “the fundamental similarities and correspondences between humankind’s oldest and newest thought-technologies.” He was already speaking, at that early date, of the difference between canon and pathway, and his insistence upon verbal art as behavior that is situated within complex contexts, including other behaviors, present to the speaker and related to prior performances, provides the foundation for the present inquiry.

² Specifically, the user is directed to the “Ol’ Shep” section of the site, the title of which refers to the shaggy-dog story behind the family catchphrase with which the site began. That was a long time back (“since Hector was a pup,” “since Pat was in the army”), but it seems somehow fitting that we should now leave it as it is.

³ Admittedly, the genre at hand lacks the *gravitas* of the sustained discourse on which oral tradition theory was for the most part built. However, I am drawing on the same conception of a pre-existing set of signifiers that remain latent in memory until called forth by the performer’s recognition of a suitable situation for deployment. Once a given figure is deployed, it becomes itself part of the communicative matrix and places constraints on what may or even must come next. See further the first two chapters of Foley 1995, particularly their characterization of “performance as the enabling event and tradition as the enabling referent” (28), a *hieros gamos* solemnized within the performance arena “where words are invested with their special power” (47).

⁴ I could seldom get informants to provide such data, as is easily done in face-to-face interviews or when sampling consists of having informants fill out forms. However, attempts to gather material in those ways have proven unsuccessful, probably because of the triggering mechanisms already discussed as underlying the recollection process. Informants seem to self-select by what they choose to search for on the web. Those who find our archive in that way, and share their gems, usually seem to have little desire to tarry.

surprising, as flirting about the edges of acceptability seems—as we shall soon see—to be so common a feature of the form that it may even be functionally definitive.⁵

Genre Intuited, Not Defined

I have not yet described what is meant by “the form” or “these expressions.” There are numerous terms currently in circulation for the phenomenon we are here discussing—a sure sign to the scholar that there’s a *there* there—but a universally accepted name for that phenomenon has not yet been coined. As a starting point, we can note that the concept of a “folk simile” (or “proverbial comparison”) has previously sometimes been categorized as a genre of verbal folklore and a variety of “folksay” (described by Brunvand as “the short, verbal, non-narrative forms of folklore” [1976:57]).⁶ In English, according to the present understanding, folk similes typically use “like” or “as,” are vivid in imagery, and are in relatively broad (though perhaps geographically or sociologically restricted) circulation. They may contain humorous exaggeration and are often obscene. The form can be described to some degree in terms of grammatical structure, but also by rhetorical patterns and—though not to date in print—by social function. Typical examples collected by Max Hunter include “pretty as a speckled pup” and “ugly as a mud fence.”⁷

Other names in use for this type of speech-item reflect the particular features that investigators have wished to foreground in their individual studies. Where (as is often the case) the vehicle of the comparison (implied or explicit) is lewd, rude, or otherwise objectionable by conventional conversational standards, we find the term “Vulgar Comparative Metaphor,”⁸ with “vulgar” being used with both its deprecatory sense and with its meaning of “common” or “popular.”⁹ Alternatively, a focus on inventive overstatement as a rhetorical device gives rise to the term “proverbial exaggerations” (Green 1997:662), with the expressions often treated under the heading of “proverb” since they may imply what is essentially a proverbial insight and lack known authors. Accordingly, they may unsurprisingly later be ascribed to a given individual who has developed a reputation for facility with such expressions, frequently a family elder, for

⁵ For instance, this is certainly the case with limericks.

⁶ Brunvand (1976:57) credits the coinage to Benjamin Botkin. The scholarly prominence of Archer Taylor (1954, 1958, 1962) did much to establish the designator “proverbial comparison,” though he also used “folk simile.” In the most recent of the very few systematic studies of the genre, Revak (2005) discusses terminology to date; her bibliography lists a number of notable collections.

⁷ Such examples are mentioned in his numerous obituaries (for example, in *The Bangor Daily News*, 11 November, 1999, p. B7 col. A.

⁸ This term is used, for example, as the title of a website devoted to these types of speech-items: <http://www.yaelf.com/vcmf.shtml>.

⁹ Similarly, Taylor (1962:201) connects the genre to the Wellerism (which he has the distinction of naming) and notes the “often obscene humor and . . . lack of a moral or didactic turn. . .” (206).

example, and so become known as “Grandma’s sayings.”¹⁰ The expressions are also somewhat inaccurately but nonetheless quite insistently identified with rural or archaic folk speech, as for example in the title of Randolph’s *Down in the Holler: A Gallery of Ozark Folk Speech* (1979). As Hendricks points out (1960:245), expressions that are felt by their users to be regional often turn out to be of wide distribution and historically attested. Moreover, comparisons where the vehicle is connected to a distinctly urban lifeworld are much in evidence, as in “meaner than a junkyard dog,” a phrase that may or may not have been original to Jim Croce but that is authentically “folk” in form and feel.

In our own collecting, we hear from cyber-informants that these were “Uncle Pat’s sayings,” “my college roommate’s expressions” “my mother’s way of talking,” or “Jim-Bobisms.” Consistently, texts are ascribed to a figure of legendary eloquence—a parochial and hyperspecialized Homer.¹¹ Additionally, there was a clear sense that these expressions belonged to a bygone era and were strongly linked to rural lifeways.¹² Informants and collectors alike showed nostalgic awareness of cultural loss, implicit in the fact that the concrete details referenced in these metaphors and similes were quite often those of a lifeworld perceived as lapsed. Nearly always, those involved had a strong conviction that these expressions were distinctive to a particular area—a certainty that was nearly always demonstrably misplaced, as I would regularly receive nearly if not precisely duplicate submissions from places as widely separated as the Carolinas, Tennessee, Texas, and even the Canadian Maritimes or Australia.¹³

Thus far, my fieldwork in cyberspace told me several things about these sayings:

- they appeal to people on a variety of levels
- they evoke nostalgia

¹⁰ An anonymous informant born in Joplin, Missouri, in 1930 reported (conversation, Neosho, Missouri, November 2010) that the genre was known in his youth as “eddered sayings.” He speculated that the word was the equivalent of “uttered” but was unable to explain the precise meaning.

¹¹ Revak (2005:311, n. 1) notes that Boshears collected over a thousand such items from a single East Tennessee informant. It is certainly possible to gain a local reputation for eloquence and mastery of a genre, with such a person being credited as the originator of material in the common wordhoard. For example, a web-search for the phrase “nervous as a whore in church” reveals its presence in collections dedicated to—charmingly—“Foleyisms” (http://www.thataintnormal.com/?page_id=48) as well as to those surrounding other specific individuals.

¹² Again, the phrase “nervous as a whore in church” appears in web collections designated as “southern sayings” (<http://www.thecoffeeplace.com/jokes/aaaaabsc.html>), “hillbilly/redneck sayings” (<http://nwoutdoors.net/index.php?action=printpage;topic=685.0>), “Texas sayings” (<http://www.texasmonthly.com/1000-01-01/webextra35.php>), and “old timey sayings” (<http://clinchredroom.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=general&action=print&thread=563>), though northern cities today are not notoriously short on either prostitutes or houses of worship.

¹³ The most widely distributed example to date, claimed to be distinctive to each of these locales, is “nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.” Very early on I went through the exercise of sticking pins in a large map of the United States, and pursued it far enough to become certain that there was no point. I had thought I might see the expressions correlating to established settlement patterns, assuming that the collected items indeed proved sufficiently archaic. I still think that, working digitally (so as to be able to cut the data out in different dimensions, overlaying time-strata with location) and with a sufficiently massive database (many, many thousands of data points would be necessary), I might be able to replicate and document what is already thoroughly well-known about European migration in the United States.

- humor is regarded as a defining feature
- taboo regularly appears
- they evoke and activate passive memories; deploying a particular item can unlock and access archives of similar material
- they are believed to be linked to notable individuals
- a facility with these forms can confer a certain notability on a skilled practitioner
- they are believed to be place-linked
- these speech forms are widely distributed

Features and Variation: Structure, Content, Meaning

Meanwhile, as items accumulated, further patterns emerged. For instance, it became evident that sound-patterning and other rhetorical devices work to enhance the memorability of the speech-items and elevate their speaker's status:¹⁴

alliteration: *useless as a sidesaddle on a sow; mean as Moody's goose*

rhyme: *dumb as a box of rocks; in like Flynn*

assonance: *cool as a blue moose; drunk as Hogan's goat*¹⁵

It is of course possible for an item to lose some perceived rhetorical vividness through overuse and therefore to become a mere cliché ("pretty as a picture," "dead as a doornail"). Very much as with the proverb, the expression is relatively fixed, or at least of constrained variability. Thus, tasks that are both overwhelming in scope and tedious in their demands for detailed attention often get described through the phrase "*needle in a haystack*," but not "**pin in a pile of straw*" (though that would have the virtue of alliteration).¹⁶ Nor do we ever hear of a "**needle in a hay-bale*."

Additionally, the form is not defined by strict syntactic rules, though there are common grammatical patterns. Much effort has gone into the attempt to define a formal framework that would capture the range of items in the collections, but no satisfactory conclusion has yet been

¹⁴ Unless attributed to another source, all examples are taken from the Missouri Folklore Society archive.

¹⁵ Of course, much time has been lost trying to identify Moody, Hogan of the unfortunate goat, and other such named individuals. Cecil Adams of *The Straight Dope*, however, acting as folk informant, assures readers that Flynn was none other than Errol, and that "in" meant precisely what they are likely to think it meant, although Cecil was certain his mother didn't know that when she borrowed the phrase. These proper names may be preserved out of sheer inertia, but I suspect they have a deictic function, creating a fictive familiarity by miming the rich, shared, implicit knowledge typical of high-context communication among intimates. If this is so, it is related to the affective qualities of familiarity and intimacy that are regularly linked to the genre.

¹⁶ I use the standard linguistic convention of marking with an asterisk any form unattested or thought to be unacceptable.

reached. Nevertheless, as Orr (1976:176-78)¹⁷ has shown, four familiar formal structures predominate:

- 1) similes using the conjunction “as”:

Noisy as a cow in a rail-pile

Ugly as a blind cobbler’s thumb

- 2) similes using the conjunction “like”:

like hogs eating their young [said of an unpleasant noise]

I’m gonna beat you like a rented mule

- 3) formulations in the comparative degree using “than”:

*busier’n a cat coverin’ shit*¹⁸

- 4) proverbial exaggerations using the words “so . . . that . . .,” “too . . . to . . .,” and “. . . enough to . . .”:

So drunk [that] he can’t find his whatsis with both hands and a roadmap.

Too dumb to pour piss out of a boot with the instructions printed on the heel.

He’s got money enough to burn a wet mule.

Tall enough to stand flatfooted and screw a flyin’ buzzard.

Another feature of the genre that has escaped notice in print is that these expressions are in a strict sense *traditional*, that is, one experiences them as part of a received repertoire. My own intuition, based simply on my aesthetic experience of the genre as performance, is that hearers judge the individual expression to be authentic to the degree it seems pre-configured to the genre even when it is heard for the first time. However, a given phrase is also an individual possession insofar as the audience appreciates its creativity and vividness. The possessor’s role is to be an impressive performer and custodian of the verbal inheritance. The speaker exploits the rhetorical moment, recognizing the situation and reaching without hesitation for the right illustrative phrase to provide it with an emotional frame. For example, we get multiple attestations of the following pair:

Crazy as a pet raccoon

Crazy as a shithouse rat

And while we will find “lazy” and “mean” associated with the pet raccoon, as well as synonyms for mental disease (“goofy,” “nutty”), the shithouse rat seems to be tied pretty firmly to the

¹⁷ Orr’s appendix (pp. 184-208, consisting of her 1975 collection) is organized on this structural grid; Revak (2005:306-09) offers a nine-part structural division.

¹⁸ The full form ends “on a linoleum floor” or “on a waxed floor;” the occasion is served as well by a multiform concerning one-armed paperhangers or one-legged men in ass-kicking contests. Content is not tied to structure; “noisy as a cow in a rail-pile” is attested in this comparative form as well through the “noisier than a cow in a rail-pile.”

specific word “crazy.” Pursuing the complexities of variation from the direction of the core adjective, when “crazy” is linked to “fox,” it’s never “crazy as” but only “crazy like.” The phrase also seems to have an urban, perhaps Yiddish matrix, and the main syntactic constraint is also a semantic constraint and a genuine point of beast lore: a fox is not crazy, but a certain kind of cunning may be mistaken for mental deficiency, and the misapprehension is prevented or corrected through this essentially proverbial reminder. Moreover, our initial pair is interesting here in that a trope can be inferred; in both cases, the vehicle gets an attributive adjective that specifies it as occupying human space where it does not ordinarily belong, a contrast of wildness with domesticity. It’s the sort of gesture by which humanity has always both taught and maintained its norms.

Then we have cases of simple and clear expansion. Some instances seem to be simple *ad libitum* insertions:

Ugly as sin

Ugly as home-made sin

There is of course an inventive gesture here; the receiver is handed an active task, in that one is provoked to wonder how home-made sin differs from other kinds, or to backform the contrastive case, “storebought sin” (rehearsing that culturally important dyad may be a subordinate function of the phrase).¹⁹ The feature suggests that the speechform is in some aspects aligned with the traditional riddle, which, while often humorous, is ethnographically more closely related to proverbs and other wisdom literature than to jokes and is equally likely to invoke taboo in order to provoke deep, if prelinguistic, reflection (Davis 1992). Such expansions also act as an indicator of the genre’s close ties with performance, as the elaborations often seem geared toward drawing greater attention to themselves through added absurdity.²⁰

Ugly as a mud fence

Ugly as a mud fence stuck with tadpoles

Heightened absurdity through expansion also forces an audience to imagine the aesthetic that would involve tadpoles as an ornament or improvement upon something already bizarre and irredeemably ugly. People in a lifeworld where one builds one’s own fences, and quite laboriously, will be particularly amused by the idea of someone going to herculean efforts to construct such a hideous thing. Additionally, such expansions sometimes become so spectacular

¹⁹ An anonymous elderly informant living in Kimmswick, Missouri, claimed that the original is “ugly as homemade soap” (conversation, Neosho, Missouri, November 2010); such an origin seems on the surface entirely credible, as even within my own family’s living memory, store-bought soap was taken as an index of sophistication, urban orientation, and prosperity.

²⁰ Bizarre, surreal imagery features regularly, as does “the primitive humor of cruelty” (G. C. Bellamy’s phrase [1950:122-23] for a feature recognized in Twain, though the author does not describe it as a characteristic adapted from folk narrative): “We ain’t had this much excitement since the hogs et junior;” “That’s when the lightning hit the merry-go-round.”

with regard to absurd imagery, alliterative excess, or obscene language that one cannot help but conclude that an element of intended theatricality is involved. As Orr has noted (1976:179):

Through phrase elaboration and phrase-combination, variant forms of each comparison are created. Phrase-elaboration enables a succinct version of a comparison such as “as hot as a fox” to be lengthened to “as hot as a fox in a forest fire” and “as hot as a fresh-fucked fox.”

One notes, however, a certain decorum. “*Hot as a fresh-fucked fox in a forest fire” is unattested. Presumably there are limits.

This Too Shall Pass: A Case Study

I would now like to proceed by examining a complex of expressions that are clearly generated by a single underlying template but linked to one another through a cluster of images that show evidence of being swapped out, one for another, on a modular principle and in response to constraints encountered in performance. If we look at pairs of related traditional comparisons in terms of traditional rhetorical structure, where a thing (*tenor*) is compared to something else (*vehicle*),²¹ we can identify pairs where either one seems to be substitutable; first we see a change in at least part of the vehicle:

Shivering like a dog shitting razorblades
Shivering like a dog passing peach pits

On the other hand, substitution of the tenor is also possible, with an angry preacher reportedly being described as

Stuttering like a dog passing peach pits

This particular example can serve to illustrate the structure of a good many of these expressions, which we can schematize thus:

element 1 like/as **element 2**

element 1 consists of shaking (or quaking, stuttering, shivering, etc.)

element 2 is broken down into several subunits, any of which can be substituted or expanded, though the samples suggest limits and restrictions on such variation:

element 2a: dog (poodle, beagle)

element 2b: passing (crapping, shitting)

²¹ The famous formulation is that of Richards (1936:96); in terms of metaphor mapping as treated by cognitive linguistics, the corresponding terms are *target* and *source*.

element 2c: peach pits (razor blades, thumbtacks, kidney stones)

There is a stability underlying **element 2** that can be expressed as:

dog + excrete + sharp object

Numerically, in our collected variants of this example there is a strong preference for filling the three slots with “dog” for subject (2a), “pass” for verb (2b), and “peach pit” for direct object (2c). It would of course be desirable to follow a single speaker or speech-community in order to determine exactly how individuals or larger communities vary their substitution patterns in accordance with the performance arena. For instance, does a performer who regularly chooses “pass” as the verbal element sometimes downshift in register to “crap” or “shit,” with some situations and speech environments favoring dysphemism? Unfortunately, these expressions are by their very nature situation-bound, and to maintain unremitting surveillance on reputable performers until circumstances could call forth enough demonstrations to build a statistically meaningful sample is impossible.

The skill within this speechform, then, is in identifying the substitution slots available for adapting the image to the particularities of the occasion, and our above schema can be made even more complex by noting that further substitution possibilities exist for the first element of the expression. Setting aside what are more or less synonyms for “shaking” (“quaking,” “trembling,” “wobbling”), we still find significant variation in this first slot:

Panting like a dog passing peach pits

Crying like a dog passing kidney stones

Whining like a dog passing thumbtacks

This first element directs hearers’ attention to the occasion of deployment for the expression, and the skillful user of these phrases must quickly recognize the situation, select an image to capture it, and choose a suitable term. Present participles seem to be strongly favored in this slot. Of course, the decision must be made without hesitation, second-thoughts, or disfluencies. At this point, it is probable that further decisions about alliteration, assonance, or rhyme are made, and the second element is thus limited in its variability accordingly.

Conclusion

A future task exists that both appeals and appalls: the creation of a properly organized corpus, one in which items can be coded so as to be organized by rhetorical structure, conversational topoi, lexical choices, sphere of reference (urban, rural, animal lore, railroad culture, automobile culture, horse culture, and so on),²² or other dimensions. A digital collection

²² Taylor (1962:66-67,188) long ago made a similar proposal concerning proverbs more generally. Fifty years later, the opportunity is available.

also allows ethnographic detail on informants to be encoded, though often that information is sparse. Of these prospects, an index by rhetorical occasion seems the most useful. Within this tradition, the goal is not merely to hoard pretty phrases or even suitably flexible stock responses. Instead, a collection of these items functions as an attitudinal armory, a supply of rhetorical devices that gives the bearer definitional initiative and privilege within specific contexts, the power to set the tone and understanding of a range of recurring situations. To own these items and be adept in their use quite rightly brings repute, and this dimension of the tradition is accessible only if we move beyond formal considerations and unfounded claims of provenance to performance and function.

With such concerns in mind, then, I close by proposing the term *vernacular phrasal display* to encompass these moderately fixed expressions that cannot be completely assimilated into a single, specific grammatical or rhetorical structure. Further work is of course necessary, perhaps beginning by investigating practices in other languages, where similar sociolinguistic challenges provoke similar responses, though the particularities of a given linguistic tradition will be at least as interesting as the points of convergence. I would also encourage further inquiry into whether the use of a particular archive of imagery sometimes has group-definition functions, effectively defining its circle of speakers and listeners as the type of people who recognize that sort of imagery. For the outward form of vernacular phrasal displays (often overtly metaphorical) suggests an intention to illuminate the subject at hand, yet socially (in actual presentation) these phrases—as integral parts of a performance-genre used primarily to secure the practitioner’s reputation—in fact serve to spotlight the individual speaker.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article belongs to a special issue of *Oral Tradition* published in honor of John Miles Foley's 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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The Role of Memory in the Tradition Represented by the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles

Raymond F. Person, Jr.

Albert Lord described the concept of memory with relation to traditional singers as follows (1981:451):

They remember phrases they have heard from other singers and that they themselves have used many times before. This “remembering,” however, is as unconscious as our use of certain phrases in ordinary speech, and should be distinguished from “memorization.” We have not consciously memorized “please” and “thank you,” for example. We use them by an unconscious “remembering.” At a given stimulus such phrases come to our minds as a learned reflex. So it is with formulas. The weaving of formulaic diction exclusive of the formulas themselves, the exact repetitions, is also but a special extension of the processes of everyday speech, a special extension that embraces sung verse as a means of communication of a special set of ideas appropriate to the epic genre of story-telling.

This description of the process by which oral poets produced epics finds support in the stories of some oral poets themselves. In “Memory in Oral Tradition,” John Miles Foley explored three traditions—those associated with Old English literature (specifically *Widsith* and *Beowulf*), Serbo-Croatian epic, and Homer’s *Odyssey*—for what these oral traditional literatures themselves may contribute to the discussion of memory. Imagining his exploration as an “interview” of the oral poets, Foley concluded as follows (2006:84):

the oral singers tell us at least five things. First, memory in oral tradition is emphatically not a static retrieval mechanism for data. Second, it is very often a kinetic, emergent, creative activity. Third, in many cases it is linked to performance, without which it has no meaning. Fourth, memory typically entails an oral/aural communication requiring an auditor or audience. Fifth, and as a consequence of the first four qualities, memory in oral tradition is phenomenologically distinct from “our memory.”

Thus, rote memorization of traditional epics as a necessary means of oral performance is rejected.¹ Rather, oral composition can proceed naturally from a singer's memory as a creative activity tied to an oral performance before an audience, whose memory has likewise prepared them well for receiving the song. In this way, both the singer and his audience have, on the one hand, internalized the tradition in their collective memory, but, on the other hand, interact with the tradition in the context of an oral performance that re-creates the narrative.

Drawing from the work of both Lord and Foley on memory, I will extend arguments I made in *The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral Culture* (2010), demonstrating that their understanding of the role of memory in oral traditions provides an excellent lens through which we can view the ancient Israelite tradition as represented in the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings) and the Book of Chronicles (1-2 Chronicles). In the first section I will show how a synchronic reading of these literary works strongly suggests a similar notion of memory behind this tradition—that is, in Lord's words, a "remembering" not "memorization" (Lord 1981:451). The texts that occur within the narrative of the two works (for example, the law of Moses) are imagined as primarily oral compositions to be used as mnemonic aids for the internalization of the tradition. In the second section I will show how a fuller diachronic understanding of these literary works is facilitated by that same notion of memory, at the level of both the composition of these texts and their transmission. The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles are best understood as two instantiations of the broader tradition that existed in the interplay of the co-existing parallel texts, none of which could possibly represent the complete fullness of the tradition or the entire collective memory of the people. As such, even the material that is unique in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles can be understood as nevertheless remembering the broader tradition, rather than requiring the reconstruction of necessary theological conflicts between the authors/schools.

The Testimony of the Narrated Texts within the Texts

The three traditions that Foley "interviewed" concerning memory do not as frequently reference writing as the Bible does. However, the Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles nevertheless still portray at least some texts as oral compositions existing in written form that primarily act as mnemonic aids for their own internalization.² We will see that this is the case with the law and the temple plans and even to some extent with the source citations.

The most important text mentioned in the works at hand is the law given to Moses. In Deuteronomy, God gives the law in an oral then a written form: "These words the LORD spoke to

¹ This does not necessarily exclude rote memorization from playing an important role in some cultural traditions, for example, the recitation of the Quran in Islam. However, oral performance of the type exemplified by the Serbo-Croatian *guslari* does not require such rote memorization and is more akin to the processes found in everyday conversation.

² My work on the interplay of the oral and the written in ancient Israel has been significantly influenced by the works of Susan Niditch and David Carr. See especially Niditch 1996 and Carr 2005.

your whole assembly at the mountain. . . . He wrote them on two stone tablets” (5:22).³ Moses then gives the law in oral and written form. Deuteronomy begins by referring to Moses’ speech (“These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan—in the wilderness” [Deut 1:1]) and ends with Moses completing both the writing and speaking of these words (“When Moses finished writing down the words of this law in a book to the end” [Deut 31:24]; “And Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel” [Deut 32:45]). Thus, the law’s origins are portrayed as oral dictation or at least as having been first presented in an oral form before being written down.

The oral and written characteristics of the law are not in opposition to each other but clearly work together to ensure the proper internalization of God’s law: “Teach them [these words] to your children, talking about them when you are in your house and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut 11:19-20). The emphasis here is on having various oral/aural and visual reminders of God’s law so that the people are constantly reminded of God, God’s wondrous works, and what God requires of them. Moreover, this remembering that Moses demands of all of Israel is not simply a past exhortation, but one that is reconstituted with every performance of the text as seen here in Deuteronomy:

Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; you have been rebellious against the LORD from the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place (Deut 9:7).

Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today (Deut 15:15).

This very day the LORD your God is commanding you to observe these statutes and ordinances; so observe them diligently with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut 26:16).

That is, the historical Moses is not simply telling those who stood with him “beyond the Jordan—in the wilderness” to “remember,” but every time that the text is recited to a new audience (“this very day”) the living character of Moses is once again animated so that his voice tells his immediate audience to “remember.”

The oral and written character of the law continues throughout the narratives. Joshua receives oral words of instruction from God (Josh 1:7-8), which results in Joshua’s copying the law and reciting it to the people of Israel (Josh 8:32-35). Within the narratives of the monarchic period the law (whether oral or written) seems to have been lost, due to the lack of reference to it and then to its “rediscovery” just prior to the end of the monarchy during the reign of Josiah (2

³ All English translations of the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), unless otherwise noted.

Kgs 22-23; 2 Chr 34-35).⁴ Of course, both narratives assert that this forgetting of the law led to doing “evil in the sight of the LORD,” the cause of the Babylonian exile as divine punishment.

Although Chronicles does not narrate the events concerning Moses, the law is nevertheless referred to throughout in ways that likewise suggest an interplay between its oral and written character:

according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded (1 Chr 6:49)

as Moses has commanded according to the word of the LORD (1 Chr 15:15)

according to all that is written in the law of the LORD that he commanded Israel (1 Chr 16:40)

in all that we have heard with our ears (1 Chr 17:20)

as it is written in the law of Moses (2 Chr 23:18)

according to what is written in the law, the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded (2 Chr 25:4)

all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the ordinances given through Moses (2 Chr 33:8)

when the king heard the words of the law (2 Chr 34:19)

according to the word of the LORD by Moses (2 Chr 35:6)

Most (if not all) of these references suggest the context of oral instruction. For example, Manasseh “did evil in the sight of the LORD” (2 Chr 33:2) because he disobeyed God’s oral instruction to David and Solomon that their descendents must “be careful to do all that I [the LORD] have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the ordinances given through Moses” (2 Chr 33:8). In fact, I would interpret the phrase “all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the ordinances given through Moses” as itself involving the interplay between the oral and the written—that is, God’s oral presentation of the law to Moses on Horeb (see 2 Chr 5:10), the writing down of the law (by either God or Moses), *and* finally Moses’ oral instruction of the law to the people.

Since Chronicles does not narrate the giving of the law but assumes the existence of some other narrative, Moses is not portrayed as exhorting (or not) the people to “remember.” Nevertheless, the exhortation to “remember” occurs in Chronicles, this time in the words of David, who is the first major character in Chronicles:

Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered. . . .

Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations (1 Chr 16:12, 15).

David’s call to “remember” certainly recalls Moses’; they both admonish the people to remember what God had done for Israel and the importance of following God’s commandments, so that their actions are done “according to the word of the LORD.”

⁴ For a discussion of the similarities and differences of these two accounts of the finding of the law book, see Person 2010:121-25.

According to Chronicles, God gives the temple plans to David, who then hands them down to Solomon (1 Chr 28:11-12, 19):

Then David gave to Solomon his son the plan of the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper rooms, its rooms, its inner chambers, and the room for the mercy seat; and the plan of all that he had in mind: for the courts of the house of the LORD, all the surrounding chambers, the treasuries of the house of God, and the treasuries for dedicated gifts; . . . [David said,] “All this, in writing at the LORD’s direction, he made clear to me—the plan of all the works.”

The temple plans are described as being in David’s “mind,” probably as a result of God’s oral instructions. David then gives Solomon both oral instructions and written plans. Although Solomon’s building of the temple is portrayed as following David’s instructions exactly, nowhere in the account of Solomon’s building of the temple (2 Chr 2-6) is there another reference to the written plans that David gave to Solomon. Therefore, from the perspective of the narrative itself, Solomon requested wisdom to complete David’s plans and God granted his request (2 Chr 1:7-13) so that the plans were once again transmitted from mind to mind, this time with the aid of a written text that plays virtually no role in the subsequent narrative.

Probably the most obvious evidence of written texts in the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles are the various source citations given in the two works referring to books other than the law of Moses. The Book of Kings refers to these various books as sources:

the Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:42)

the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kgs 14:19; 15:31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39; 2 Kgs 1:18; 10:34; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 28; 15:11, 15, 21, 26, 31)

the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kgs 14:29; 15:7, 23; 22:45; 2 Kgs 8:23; 12:19; 14:18; 15:6, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5).

Chronicles likewise refers to various books:

the Book of the Kings of Israel (1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 20:34)

the Annals of King David (1 Chr 27:24)

the records of the words of Samuel the seer, the words of Nathan the prophet, and the words of Gad the seer (1 Chr 29:29)

the records of the words of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer (2 Chr 9:29)

the records of the words of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer (2 Chr 12:15)

the story of the prophet Iddo (2 Chr 13:22)

the Annals of Jehu (2 Chr 20:34)

the Commentary on the Book of Kings (2 Chr 24:27)

the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32)

the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah (2 Chr 27:7; 35:27; 36:8)

the words of David and Asaph the seer (2 Chr 29:30)

the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet (2 Chr 32:32)

the Annals of the Kings of Israel (2 Chr 33:18)

the writing of David king of Israel and the writing of Solomon his son (2 Chr 35:4)

the Laments (2 Chr 35:25)

Most of the source citations in both works occur in the concluding formulas for the king—for example, “Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, are written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel” (1 Kgs 14:19) and “Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, from first to last, are written in the Annals of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel” (2 Chr 20:34).

In *Why Did They Write This Way?* (2008) Katherine Stott undertook an extensive comparison of references to written documents in biblical texts and in classical literature. Her review of classical literature, including especially Herodotus and Thucydides, led her to the following conclusions: a reference to a source does not necessarily demonstrate that the author used the source, the lack of a reference to a source does not necessarily demonstrate that no source was used, and references are not necessarily due to first-hand knowledge of the source. That is, the authors/redactors know of a connection between their own text and a source text based on their memory of the meanings represented by the source text. Therefore, a reference to the source text can simply be a reference to the memory of the meaning taken from that source text rather than an indication that the author double-checked the written source text for the sake of accuracy according to our own highly literate standards. Therefore, even if such annals were scribal productions based on archival material completely removed from oral dictation, Stott’s analysis strongly suggests that references to such annals in later scribal works were often (if not primarily) based on the authors’ memory of what was in those texts rather than suggesting that the author had a copy of the annal on the desk for reference.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this review is, in Foley’s words, “memory in oral tradition is phenomenologically distinct from ‘our memory’” (2006:84). This remains the case even when written texts are referred to in literature from a primarily oral society like ancient Israel. The origin of many (if not all) of the written texts referred to in these two literary works are portrayed as involving both oral composition and oral performance—that is, these narrated texts live in an interplay of the oral and the written. Furthermore, these texts are clearly mnemonic aids, so that the emphasis is the internalization of the words in the minds of the characters in the literature. Even when authors refer readers to other written texts as sources, this does not necessarily imply that the authors had access to the written source material themselves or that the authors assumed the readers/hearers would have access; the references themselves may simply serve as a stimulus for remembering what the texts contain. Thus, even the use of texts as portrayed in this literature can suggest that memory in ancient Israel is “a kinetic, emergent creative activity . . . linked to performance” (Foley 2006:84).

The Testimony of the Texts Themselves

Text critics of the Bible readily accept that tremendous diversity in the ancient textual traditions undercuts significantly our attempts to reconstruct “the” original text. This is especially the case with Samuel-Kings. In fact, text critic Julio Treballe has insisted that we accept the multiformity of these texts (2006:98):

When studying the historical books, alongside the analytical model that assigns various texts to successive redactions another analytical model has to be used that accepts the co-existence of parallel editions. The final process of composition and redaction of a work can give rise to several editions that can co-exist and even intermix.

Although Treballe was uninfluenced in his text-critical conclusions by the study of oral traditions, his conclusion certainly does parallel that of Lord, who found that “in oral tradition the idea of an original is illogical” (1960:101).

The consensus model for how the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles relate to each other assumes that the Chronicler’s *Vorlage* was an early (exilic) written source from which the Chronicler made his own idiosyncratic revisions, including significant subtractions and additions; therefore, a careful comparison of the Book of Chronicles to Samuel-Kings (the main source text) provides the commentator with sufficient information to identify the Chronicler’s theological agenda in contrast to that of his source. (See, for example, Japhet 1993; Kalimi 2005; Klein 2006; Knoppers 2003.)

In *The Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles* (2010), I directly challenge and reject this consensus on the basis of the important role of multiformity within the tradition represented by Samuel-Kings and Chronicles and assert that both of these texts can be understood as faithful performances of the broader tradition they represent, even though from our modern, highly literate perspective they may appear to diverge greatly. Below I will provide one illustration of my argument that helps to demonstrate how their literary relationship (as I reconstruct it) is consistent with the role of memory in oral traditions, and by extension, in primarily oral societies such as ancient Israel.

When comparing Chronicles to Samuel-Kings, one must seriously take into consideration the diversity of the extant texts of Samuel-Kings.⁵ I illustrate this by drawing from Treballe’s analysis of 1 Kings 3-10/2 Chronicles 1-9; however, I limit my comments below to 1 Kgs 3:4-15/2 Chr 1:3-13 (Treballe 2007; see also Person 2010:107-15). Treballe’s analysis of these parallel texts is summarized in his chart for the reign of Solomon as seen below. The first column represents the received text of Chronicles (MT = Masoretic Texts); the second column the main text of the ancient Greek translation of Kings (LXX = Septuagint); the third column the received text of Kings (MT); and the fourth column the supplemental material in the ancient Greek

⁵ Although the extant textual tradition of Chronicles is not devoid of any diversity, the diversity is so much greater in Samuel-Kings that for our purposes the received text of Chronicles is sufficient.

translation of Kings (LXX Supplement)⁶ that occurs between 2:35 and 2:36 and between 2:46 and 3:1 of the received text (2007:494):

MT 2 Chronicles	LXX Kings <i>Main Text</i>	MT Kings	LXX Kings <i>Supplement</i>
			2:46l
	lacking	3:1a	
		<i>3:1b</i>	2.35c
	<u>3:2-3</u>	<u>3:2-3</u>	
1:3-13	3:4-15	3:4-15	
	<u>3:16-28</u>	<u>3:16-28</u>	
	... <i>3:1b</i> [after 5:14]		

What Treballe referred to as the “triple textual tradition”—that is, Chronicles, MT Kings, and LXX Kings agreeing in basic content and order—is bolded. The “double textual tradition” (MT Kings = LXX Kings in basic content and order) is underlined. Those verses that are found in both LXX Kings and MT Kings but in different orders are italicized.

If one were to assume a unilinear development (as is often done by redaction critics), the redactional history of 1 Kings 3:1-28//2 Chronicles 1:3-13 would be as follows. The earliest core is found in a reconstruction behind the “triple textual tradition,” 1 Kgs 3:4-15//2 Chr 1:3-13. Chronicles would generally be the more conservative text in comparison to Kings, because Kings includes the additions of 1 Kgs 3:2-3 and 3:16-28 (in both LXX and MT) and even later additions in MT-1 Kgs 3:1a (lacking in LXX) and 1 Kgs 3:1b (located differently in LXX and MT). However, Treballe resisted such simplification of the redactional process. Although he agreed that the “triple textual tradition” could most reasonably be understood as original material, he nevertheless concluded as follows (2007:496): “The texts common to LXX and MT Kings, missing in 2 Chronicles, are not necessarily more recent. . . . They can also be ancient, although of a different provenance.” That is, although these texts may also be ancient and have been preserved in the textual tradition behind LXX Kings and MT Kings, one should not assume that they were in the *Vorlage* on which Chronicles is based. Furthermore, he noted that the texts in MT Kings that are lacking in the main text of LXX Kings “correspond in a large proportion with materials present in the supplements of LXX”—that is, they also appear to be later additions (2007:496). Rather than imagining a unilinear development of these texts, Treballe allowed for a multiplicity of texts, or in his own words, “several editions that can co-exist and even intermix” (2006:98).

⁶ The LXX contains “supplementary” material following 1 Kgs 2:46 and 1 Kgs 2:35. Since the numbering system is primarily based on the MT, the standard form of citation for this additional material is 1 Kgs 2:46a-l and 1 Kgs 2:35a-o. However, as the table shows, some of the LXX supplementary material has close parallels in the MT—in this case MT 1 Kgs 3:1b = LXX 1 Kgs 2:35c, even though they occur in different locations in the text.

This multiformity is evident even within what Trebolle called the “triple textual tradition” as is illustrated in the following synopsis of a selection of only two of three texts in the “triple textual tradition,” the received traditions of Kings and Chronicles. If I had included the third text—that is, LXX Kings—the variation would have increased; however, for the sake of brevity and ease of comparison I provide only the two.

MT-1 Kings 3:4-9

⁴The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place;

Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.”

⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or

MT-2 Chronicles 1:3-10

³Then Solomon, and the whole assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for God’s tent of meeting, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there. ⁴(But David had brought the ark of God up from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.) ⁵Moreover the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, was there in front of the tabernacle of the LORD. And Solomon and the assembly inquired at it.

⁶Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷That night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him,

“Ask what I should give you.”

⁸Solomon said to God, “You have shown great and steadfast love to my father David,

and have made me succeed him as king.

⁹O LORD God, let your promise to my father David now be fulfilled, for you have made me king

over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.

counted.

⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of yours?

These parallel texts describe Solomon's sacrifices at the Gibeon altar, God's appearance to him there, God's offer of "Ask what I should give you," and Solomon's request for wisdom. Although these parallel texts both clearly describe the same events, they do so in ways that, at least from our modern perspective, differ. However, from the perspective in which multiformity is characteristic in primarily oral societies, such variation was accepted even within a faithful reproduction of the tradition. Thus, Trebelle's insistence on the multiformity behind these texts should be viewed at both a macro- and micro-level. These texts display variety in what is narrated and in the order of commonly narrated events, and even in the material that occurs in the same order they differ in their wording.

In a recent essay, David Carr discussed what he termed "memory variants" and provided examples from this same passage (2011:77):⁷

MT-1 Kings 3

4b: a thousand offerings Solomon offered

5a: At Gideon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night

8: a great people, who cannot be numbered or counted

MT-2 Chronicles 1

6: he [Solomon] offered on it a thousand of offerings

7a: On that night God appeared to Solomon

9: a great people, as much as the dust of the earth

In the first of these two examples, the variations are fairly minor. In 1 Kgs 3:4b//2 Chr 1:6 and in 1 Kgs 3:5a//2 Chr 1:7a we see a simple inversion of word order. In 1 Kgs 3:5a//2 Chr 1:7a the variation between "God" and "the LORD" also occurs. Although the difference in 1 Kgs 3:8//2 Chr 1:9 is greater, it is still what is often referred to by text critics as a "synonymous reading."⁸ Carr has argued that scribes reproducing an older tradition often worked on the basis of their memories rather than written texts. When reproducing texts from memory, the scribes introduced what he has termed "memory variants" into the texts, which he defined as "variants that show up in parallel versions of texts: exchanges of words with similar meanings, meaningless shifts in word order, variation in syntactically equivalent expressions, etc." (2011:75).

Carr noted that evidence for "memory variants" also comes from studies in other literature, including Homer, Old English, Middle English, medieval French, and Sumerian

⁷ Carr provides the examples in Hebrew; I provide them here in my own literal English translation. He also provides a Hebrew synopsis of the texts (2011:94-95). For his discussion of "memory variants," see also Carr 2010:27-29.

⁸ For my discussion of synonymous readings in the context of an argument similar to that of Carr, see Person 1998:604-05.

(2011:76n.9). He concluded that the presence of “memory variants” is a strong indication of the transmission of texts by memory. As illustrated in his analysis of 1 Kgs 3:2-15//2 Chr 1:1-13, Carr concluded that (2011:77):

these memory variants are evidence that early versions of Chronicles and Samuel-Kings were transmitted in an environment where written texts were memorized and often accessed by means of memory. . . . As a result, minor variations of this sort—typical of memory slips and switches—between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles may not point to subtle exegesis on the part of the author(s) of Chronicles but to the sorts of oral-written dynamics typical of the transmission of many ancient texts.

Although I agree with Carr concerning such “minor variations,” I also think that he may not go far enough. If the broader tradition represented by the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles existed in its fullness only through a constant interplay between literary texts and the mental “text” preserved within the collective memory, then even the distinction we may make today between “minor” and “major” variations may be anachronistic. For example, even the material that is unique in Samuel-Kings and in Chronicles only appears to be a “major” variation when compared to the other literary text with the assumption that each text must somehow preserve all of the relevant traditional material. If we assume that no text preserves the fullness of the broader tradition, then material that is unique to one of the extant texts may not be unique at all within the context of the broader tradition.⁹ Thus, co-existing parallel editions of texts, despite their apparent differences, can nevertheless equally re-present the tradition, and the broader tradition is best reconstructed by the collective re-presentation of the texts in all of their multiformity with the caveat that some of the tradition preserved in the ancients’ memory but not in extant texts is now lost. Hence, both the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles may best be understood as limited instantiations of the broader tradition that exists within an interplay of written texts and communal memory, an ancient tradition that has been lost to us except as witnessed by these two competing historiographies and the textual plurality in which they exist, especially in the various textual versions of Samuel-Kings.

Conclusion: Memory in the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles

Despite the differences between the traditions “interviewed” by Foley—that is, Homeric Greek, Old English, and Serbo-Croatian—and the Hebrew Bible concerning the frequency of references to written texts, I have demonstrated how the interplay between the oral and the written in the biblical description of oral instruction, writing, and memory as well as the similarities and differences between the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles strongly suggests that Foley’s five conclusions based on these “interviews” (2006:84) also apply to the Hebrew Bible, including the role that texts played in the collective memory.

⁹ For elaboration on this point with various specific examples of how such unique literary material nevertheless re-presents the broader tradition, see Person 2010:131-61.

First, memory is “not a static retrieval mechanism” and this insight even applies to written texts in a primarily oral society. For example, despite God’s giving Moses the law in written form and then Moses giving it to the people under the leadership of Joshua (Deut 31:23-29), God nevertheless instructed Joshua orally concerning the law (Josh 1:7-8); therefore, Joshua’s copy of the Mosaic law may not have been identical—that is, the law as written by Moses was not a static retrieval mechanism that determined the exact wording of Joshua’s copy. This understanding of memory and the role of texts in the collective memory helps us better appreciate the similarities and differences between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles (for example, the “memory variants” identified by Carr).

Second, memory is a “kinetic, emergent, creative activity.” Memory is an ongoing activity as illustrated in this quote from Deuteronomy: “Teach them [these words] to your children, talking about them when you are in your house and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut 11:19-20). By interpreting such acts of memory as creative activities, we can understand how two different groups preserving similar elements of the broader tradition can nevertheless produce what from our modern perspective appears to be significantly divergent historiographies—that is, the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles. However, when we understand how dynamic the tradition must be to keep it alive, we can envision how the ancients may have understood such apparent differences as nevertheless re-presenting the broader tradition in its multiplicity with creative faithfulness.

Third, if memory is “linked to performance” and texts act as mnemonic aids, then texts will also be linked to performance. All of the most significant texts in these two narratives are connected to oral composition and oral performance. For example, the law was given to Moses by God first in oral instruction and then in written form. Likewise, Moses and Joshua instructed the people concerning the law orally. Just as multiformity is a characteristic of the performance of oral traditions, we have seen how multiformity is a characteristic of the performance of the broader tradition represented by both the Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles.

Fourth, memory requires “an oral-aural communication,” even if in the form of reciting a written text. Memory as some abstract notion locked away in someone’s mind or embedded in a library book sitting on a shelf somewhere unread for decades has no place in the role of memory as understood in the biblical text. In the narratives of the monarchic period, the law (whether in oral or written form) plays little (if any) role in the events of the narrative until its “rediscovery” during the time of Josiah near the end of the monarchy (2 Kgs 22-23; 2 Chr 34-35). That a copy of the lawbook was preserved for later discovery (whether historical or fictional) is important for the story thereafter, but the lost lawbook and the lost memory of the law that is connected with it could not prevent the forgetting that led to Israel’s and Judah’s destruction. The lawbook once again became effective only when it was read aloud.

Fifth, when all of the four previous qualities of memory are taken together, it becomes perfectly clear that “memory in oral tradition is phenomenologically distinct from ‘our memory.’” Furthermore, the use of texts as mnemonic aids is phenomenologically distinct from our use of texts to replace memory. That is, texts in a primarily oral culture like ancient Israel are not static retrieval mechanisms that can be stored until they might be needed again, but are

devices that facilitate the creative activity of remembering (not memorizing) the broader tradition so that it can continue to live in the oral-aural communication of ongoing performances.

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Memory on Canvas: *Commedia dell'Arte* as a Model for Homeric Performance

Timothy W. Boyd

When Albert Lord began the introduction to the work in which he would synthesize and analyze the material that he and his teacher, Milman Parry, had collected in the South Slavic world, he stated that “what was needed most in Homeric scholarship was a more exact knowledge of the way in which oral epic poets learn and compose their songs” (1960:3). For Parry and Lord, their knowledge came from the performances of the *guslari*, the traditional singers of heroic material, both Muslim and Christian. In the songs of such *guslari* as Salih Ugljanin, Sulejman Fortić, and especially Avdo Medjedović, the two saw what they believed to be a convincing parallel with what appeared to be the compositional techniques of Homer—the use of basic building blocks of standardized elements such as “the formula” and “the theme.” These, however, were just that: basic blocks. A poor, inexperienced, or mediocre singer could take a traditional story in skeletal form, and, with the aid of the blocks, flesh it out into at least a modest entertainment of a few hundred lines. A talented singer could go far beyond that, making elaborate songs of several thousand lines or more.¹ This was clearly not simply a matter of memorizing and then performing—although a singer in training would indeed tend to learn blocks.² Instead, it was a matter of combining such blocks with spontaneous creativity at the moment of performance to make something new that was both traditional and improvised simultaneously.

The application of the South Slavic analogue to Homer was the next step (Lord 1960:141-97) and, for many years, the South Slavic poetic arena has supplied scholars with a working model for better understanding the traditional processes at the core of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At the same time, although this work has gone a long way toward Lord’s goal of providing “a more exact knowledge of the way in which oral epic poets learn and compose their songs” (1960:3), there is still a great deal to learn about how those who sang these songs actually performed them. What we have of Homer, after all, is something very far from the work of Avdo, coming as it does at the end of an oral tradition that began with the initial creation by *aoidoi*, passed into the later performances by rhapsodes, and ended in the collecting and reworking of

¹ See Lord 1960:78-79, 103 for a comparison of the same song as sung in succession by Mumin Vlahovljak (2294 lines) and Avdo Medjedović (6313 lines).

² For a *guslar*’s apprenticeship, see Lord 1960:13-29.

material by later generations of scholars.³ But what would an actual performance have been like if Parry and Lord had been able to record it as they had recorded those songs of the *guslari*?

The *aoidoi* who appear in Homer, Phemius and Demodocus, are not much help here. Phemius is first seen in the *Odyssey* singing an unspecified song for the suitors (*Od.* 1.155) and then, at a later moment, is reported to have performed something about the homecomings (*Od.* 1.325-27) before also possibly playing the equivalent of dance music at the evening's end (*Od.* 1.421-22). This is useful for understanding repertoire, but not for understanding performance of that repertoire, and the same is true for Demodocus among the Phaeacians (*Od.* 8.73-82, 492-520).⁴

One thing that we can learn from the work of these two *aoidoi* is that—as if already aware of Aristotle's dictum (*Poetics*:1456a) about trying to cover too much heroic territory in a tragedy—they focus upon a single topic for their songs. It is not clear which of the many homecomings Phemius chooses, but Demodocus sings about the Trojan Horse in a performance so convincing that Odysseus bursts into tears (*Od.* 8.492-534).⁵ This situation accords well with the South Slavic material, which also is a corpus formed primarily of narratively independent songs, though with nothing quite so long and complex as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.⁶ We have further hints for such discrete narratives in the surviving book titles of the *Iliad*:⁷ both in Plato's *Ion*, where Socrates, conversing with Ion the rhapsode, uses episodes from the *Odyssey* to illustrate a point (535b), and in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1459b), where he lists the number of plays derived from the *Little Iliad*,⁸ from which we can imagine that each play is the equivalent of an individual song being dramatized.

At some point in the historical process, we have a transition from *aoidoi*, such as Phemius and Demodocus, to rhapsodes, like Plato's fictional Ion.⁹ These later singers make a nice parallel with the *guslari*, as it would appear that they were not focused on producing original material, but were instead acting primarily to reproduce stories already sung. Suppose then, like Parry and Lord, that we have approached such a singer, whom we name Ion, after Plato. We have asked what songs he knows. He names, among others, the *Aristeia of Diomedes*, which is *Iliad* 5 to us. The longest of the 24 books at 909 lines, *Iliad* 5 is very tangled, perhaps suggesting a lengthy

³ For a brief but nicely balanced discussion of the problems of oral versus written, see Foley 1999:xiv-xv. See also Foley 1999:37-111 for a deeper exploration into comparing South Slavic epic and its singers and Homer.

⁴ In 8.262-65, we have an indication that Demodocus also sings a dance song (8.266-366).

⁵ Odysseus has already (8.487-92) praised Demodocus for his vivid telling, saying that he sang it as if he had been there or had heard it from an eyewitness. This narrated praise also provides us with a small clue to Demodocus' performance: it clearly was not a mechanical recitation, but dramatic, and full of convincing detail.

⁶ Even Avdo's very long (over 6,000 lines) version of Mumin's "Bećiragić Meho" is still based upon a single story, although very much expanded from within. See Lord 1960:78-79, 223-34.

⁷ See, for example, Sadurska 1964:31, 39, 49-50.

⁸ Aristotle also says, using the *Odyssey* for his example, that epics have simple plots but are expanded through the use of these shorter stories, which he calls *epeisodia* (*Poetics* 1455b).

⁹ See Nagy 1982:45-49 for an overview of the movement from early singer to later rhapsode.

time between its initial performances and its latest redaction in manuscript form, but, stripped of all the detail, the outline might be as follows:

1. Athena gives Diomedes extra strength and daring.
2. Pandarus wounds Diomedes.
3. Athena heals Diomedes, gives him the ability to see the gods, and encourages him to attack Aphrodite.
4. Aeneas, in company with Pandarus, attacks Diomedes.
5. Diomedes kills Pandarus and wounds Aeneas.
6. Aphrodite rescues Aeneas and is wounded by Diomedes.
7. Ares stirs up the Trojans against Diomedes.
8. Apollo restores Aeneas and puts him back into the battle.
9. With Athena's help, Diomedes wounds Ares.

We know, from Plato's text, that Ion does two things in performance: first, he dramatizes and does it with such flair that he moves himself, as well his audience (535c, 535e). Second, he practices *kosmēsis*, which, if we compare the term with the work of *guslari*, should mean not "embellishment," "ordering," or even simply "adornment," but something like "elaboration," that is, the expanding of a basic episode by means of detailed description and smaller internal narratives. In fact, in the view of Parry and Lord, this ability to elaborate so well was a primary reason for likening Avdo to Homer in the first place (Lord 1960:xxxv).¹⁰ Avdo was not, then, creating anew so much as re-creating while elaborating his narrative beyond his inherited building blocks, and this re-creation is what we might imagine Ion does as well when he is practicing *kosmēsis*.

Unlike Plato, whom we presume to have had real rhapsodes to employ as models for his imaginary singer, we have no real rhapsodes today that can serve as subjects for our own interviews or recordings. For that matter, outside of Ion's self-description and a few other similarly small hints, we have very little information about actual rhapsodic performance. We have *guslari* (and they have been extremely helpful), but there are also other oral and oral-derived traditions with which we might work to try to re-create a Homeric performance.

One such tradition, for which we have a good deal of useful written and pictorial evidence, is the *commedia dell'arte*, especially during its first two centuries—the sixteenth and seventeenth. By the eighteenth century, *commedia dell'arte* appears to have become sclerotic in its practices before being taken over and "reformed" by Italian dramatists such as the Venetian Carlo Goldoni, who had little knowledge of the earlier form of the drama and wished to regularize what they saw. Much has been written about the *commedia*, beginning with contemporaries and involving both performers and critics, but much modern scholarship, as well as popular writing, has seen the form most basically as an improvised skit somehow inflated into

¹⁰ See note 1 for the reference to Avdo's expansion of Mumin's song.

three acts.¹¹ More recent work, however, has returned to the primary sources and has given us a modified view, a view that will in turn bring us back to Homer and to *guslari* like Avdo.¹²

In *commedia* we see very professional actors who begin with a framework, a scenario. These scenarios, of which about 800 survive,¹³ include acts divided into scenes and can be either brief or elaborate. They are like skeletons for plays, just the sort of thing that *guslari*—and (we can assume) *aoidoi* and rhapsodes—carried with them and used as the basis of their performances. For itinerant public performers like the actors of *commedia*, having frameworks rather than complete pieces would have been useful for many reasons. They are simplified and thus very portable, as well as easier to remember, and can provide for a much wider repertoire—which can then draw greater crowds. For performers trained to combine standardized features through improvisation, as we now understand *commedia* actors to have been, such flexible scenarios would have also provided intellectual stimulation, helping the actors to stay fresh each time they performed what could otherwise be the same work, time after time, pleasing neither the actors nor, perhaps, the audience. Also, for individuals living within an increasingly literate world, such as that of the *commedia* players, there was also the question of theft: a printed text could easily be pirated by another company, but who could steal something as fugitive as the improvised performance itself?¹⁴

When there were more than two actors on stage at any one time, simple traffic control would require at least some sort of rudimentary map of the action, so we can think of the scenarios, among other things, as a useful chart for rehearsals—something a single singer would never need. Tacked to the cloth hangings around their temporary stages,¹⁵ the scenarios would also have acted as prompts, to be checked upon entry and exit as a way of understanding what should happen in a scene as well as which actors should do what and when. If we pick a scenario at random, such as that of *Il Cavadente* (“The Tooth-Puller”), we can see that, within its three acts, there are a total of 60 events we could call scenes,¹⁶ smaller actions that create (or better, re-

¹¹ For a brief survey of changing ideas about *commedia*, see Fitzpatrick 1995:7-9. Although one might ask how a dramatic form might be applied to the work of a single performer, I would propose that, at base, the two share many similarities, an issue that will be explored in detail below.

¹² For an entertaining and still useful traditional view of *commedia*, see Nicoll 1963. For a survey of literature on the subject up to about 1990, see Heck 2000. For an account that stretches across the entire period of *commedia* up to its fading, see Richards and Richards 1990. Because this article is meant to encourage further study of this material among non-specialists, only English sources are listed here, but Italian sources will be found in the notes and bibliographies of both Heck 2000 and Richards and Richards 1990.

¹³ See Richards and Richards 1990:141; for the number of scenarios, as well as for a useful description of them, see 141-44. They also provide a brief survey (4-6) of the surviving materials, both documentary and visual. For a list of the major collections of scenarios, see Heck 2000:14-17.

¹⁴ In 1611, the well-known *commedia* figure, Flaminio Scala, published a collection of scenarios, *Il Teatro delle Favole Rappresentative*. See Andrews 2008:xiv-xvi for a discussion as to his possible reasons and the consequences.

¹⁵ Hence, another name for these scenarios was “canovacci,” from “canova” (canvas).

¹⁶ Using the scenario as printed in Andrews 2008:62-68. For a discussion of what defines a scene within an act and how such scenes are employed, see Fitzpatrick 1985:177-98.

create) the plot, keeping the action moving and the spectators interested. These scenes can be described in some detail, such as in the following case (Andrews 2008:63):

Pantalone tells Pedrolino of the love he feels for the widow Isabella, and how he fears that his son Orazio is his rival, so because of this fear he has resolved to send him to the university. Pedrolino disapproves, taking Orazio's part. They quarrel and come to blows: Pantalone attacks Pedrolino and bites him on the arm, making it seem a good hard bite. Pantalone leaves, threatening him, and telling him to talk to Franceschina on his behalf. He exits. Pedrolino: that he will get his own back for the bite he got from Pantalone.

Or they can be extremely brief (*ibid.*):

Arlecchino [is] Isabella's servant. They do a silly scene together, and Arlecchino goes in to fetch Isabella. Capitano waits.

In this second scene, we can see a clear example of the particular combination of events that makes up the *commedia* method. First, we have two stock characters, Arlecchino and Capitano Spavento.¹⁷ Second, we are given only the words "silly scene" before the action ends with the exit of one character and the promise of another character to come. To create the actual scene, the actors would rely upon a combination of the traditional skill—the behavior and language expected of such stock characters as well as the comic "business" standard in such "silly scenes," or *lazzi*¹⁸—and the improvisatory skill needed to keep this scene moving and to blend it into the structure and rhythm of the act.

These *lazzi*, along with the traditional speech and behavior of characters, formed only part of what an actor needed to be able to perform in this theatre. As Andrews points out (2008:xi):

The chief preoccupation of most arte performers was to soak their brains and their tongues in words which were suitable for their roles, so that speaking in the relevant idiom would become second nature. Training in such verbal skills was even more central than developing characteristic gestures and body language, important though these would also have been. Each actor would accumulate a personal repertoire of recyclable speeches and extracts in a commonplace book (*zibaldone*, or *libro generico*—sadly no example has survived, but their use is well confirmed by other documents). Their material was constructed with constant (though certainly not exclusive) reference to literary models and styles, including the most high-flown and aristocratic examples.

Thus, we might see and hear, in any one scene, a combination of passed-down physical comedy, flowery or dramatic passages from other texts, and the expected behavior and language of stock figures—all flowing on the current of the actors' ability to make these combinations appear as believable, coherent behavior (at least within the dramatic moment). And that ability

¹⁷ For a working description of stock characters and their uses, see Andrews 2008:xix-xxxii, xxxix-xliii.

¹⁸ For examples of *lazzi*, see Richards and Richards 1990:175-78. See also Gordon 1983.

was what made individuals distinct and memorable as actors—just as Avdo’s ability to take the skeleton of a text, add the blocks, and expand the whole into an hour or two of heroic entertainment made him what Lord called him: “our present-day Balkan Singer of Tales” (1960:xxxv).

Imagine, then, as we return to the *Aristeia of Diomedes*, that a rhapsode, although he worked alone, used the same methods as the *commedia* actors with their canvas-pinned scenarios. As a whole, the *Aristeia* is too long for detailed analysis here, but we might take one scene from the larger scenario, the fifth point in my outline above, where Diomedes kills Pandarus and wounds Aeneas.

To determine what might be our rhapsode’s method, we have, besides our *commedia* knowledge, the parallels to be found in the work of Parry and Lord. We can see from their collections how someone like Avdo can elaborate upon a given story within his own tradition. First, we can read enough songs to gain a basic understanding of what kinds of blocks —“formulas” and “themes” in Lord’s terminology—a singer must have begun with. Second, we can examine other versions of the same story by other singers. From this evidence, we can then extrapolate: Avdo uses the same blocks as other *guslari*, but he expands far beyond other singers, making his songs richer than those of his contemporaries both in look and in character. Third, we can comparatively employ both formulas and themes, as well as parallel scenes from other episodes in the *Iliad*, to better imagine Ion at work practicing *kosmēsis*, elaboration.¹⁹

In its present form, the scene runs from *Iliad* 5.166-310, from the moment when Aeneas looks for Pandarus to the moment when Aeneas faints from the blow of the boulder thrown at him by Diomedes. Broken down into its suggestive essentials like one of the comparable scenes from *commedia*, the narrative might look like this—a skeleton within a skeleton:

Aeneas invites Pandarus to attack Diomedes. Pandarus at first declines. Aeneas invites him again. Pandarus agrees. Sthenelos warns Diomedes that Aeneas and Pandarus are approaching. Pandarus throws a spear at Diomedes and misses. Diomedes kills Pandarus. Aeneas tries to protect Pandarus’ body and is nearly killed by a boulder thrown by Diomedes. Aeneas faints.

Our rhapsode begins with Aeneas’ invitation. This request could, in fact, have been just that: “Come help me to kill Diomedes.” Instead, Aeneas uses a tone reminiscent of Agamemnon’s abusive language to various Greek heroes in *Iliad* 4, suggesting that he does not really believe that Pandarus will accept.²⁰ Pandarus responds through what we might call the “identifying a warrior from afar” motif (5.179-85), familiar from a number of other examples in the *Iliad*, most notably that of Helen on the wall (3.178-242), saying that the warrior who appears to be the target is Diomedes. Pandarus then declines Aeneas’ invitation, and here we can clearly see *kosmēsis* at work: his refusal is in double form. First, he says that he has tried to kill Diomedes before, but that the enemy seems to be protected by a god (5.185-91). He then adds a

¹⁹ To help in better understanding the standard structure of battle scenes like this, see Edwards 1992:299-303.

²⁰ This tone is perhaps even ironic on the part of a singer, since a major portion of this abuse (4.370-400) is directed towards Diomedes himself.

second, elaborately-told excuse: he has no chariot and team, having left them at home against his father's advice (5.192-205). Aeneas then tries again, now offering the use of his own chariot, thus varying the scene and amplifying it as well.²¹ Aeneas and Pandarus then approach Diomedes, but, in a mirror repetition of the earlier "identifying a warrior from afar" motif, it is Sthenelus who now warns Diomedes of the impending attack. Diomedes proposes to defend himself, instructing Sthenelus to see if he can take Aeneas' horses, with their important pedigree (5.260-73) (an important feature in general within the *Iliad* for animals, objects, and men),²² but also offering another opportunity for *kosmēsis*, as the story is extended through additional historical details that explain why Aeneas' horses are so worth the capture. Next, Pandarus throws a spear at Diomedes and boasts that he has hit him (5.280-85),²³ but he is then himself formulaically struck down by Diomedes, receiving his death-wound through the mouth and then falling with a clattering of armor (5.290-96). Aeneas' ensuing struggle to protect the body (5.297-302) reminds us of, among other scenes, the long fight over the body of Patroclus throughout the latter part of Book 17. The scene then ends with Diomedes, like Aeneas in his later attack on Achilles (20.285-87), felling Aeneas with a rock requiring strength beyond that of the average mortal to wield (5.302-10).

As we have seen above, the *commedia* actor, beginning with his simple and flexible scenario, could create full-scale entertainments, employing both *lazzi* and memorized verbal material, but, through the power of talented recombination, still producing it as fresh and highly entertaining. The same is true within the Greek poetic sphere, where a scene that, in skeletal form, can be telegraphed in nine short English sentences is expanded through *kosmēsis* so that it appears in *Iliad* 5 as 150 lines of vivid Greek. Beginning with a mere outline, the singer combines basic narrative blocks with a large amount of extra detail, from Pandarus' second reason for not immediately accepting Aeneas' invitation to the pedigree of Aeneas' team. Within these lines, then, the audience is taken beyond the simple narrative outline to see Pandarus as a man who feels that he has made a bad decision. He attempts a second time to accomplish what he failed to do the first time and dies for it. Additionally, the expansions present Diomedes not only as a strong warrior made even stronger by the favor of a goddess, but also as a man knowledgeable in horses and history.

Parry and Lord's original fieldwork provided us with a far greater understanding of how Homeric verse was constructed, but their methodology also pointed the way toward using other oral and oral-derived traditions and performance cultures to broaden our knowledge even further. Plato's rhapsode Ion is a winner in his oral poetic arena (*Ion* 530b) just as *commedia* actors were successful entertainers within their own performance environment. Accordingly, if we apply *commedia*'s characteristics to interpreting Homeric texts, perhaps we may come to a better understanding of rhapsodic performance itself, and thus come a little closer toward satisfying

²¹ We can see here another parallel, this time with Book 17, where Automedon joins forces with the chariotless Alkimedon in an attempt to avenge Patroclus (17.465-506).

²² Pedigrees are so important, in fact, that even a speaker's staff can have its own lineage (2.100-08).

²³ In a similar boast, Alexander/Paris claims at 11.380-83 that he has hit Diomedes with an arrow.

Lord's wish for "a more exact knowledge of the way in which oral epic poets learn and compose their songs" (1960:3).

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Changing Traditions and Village Development in Kalotaszentkirály

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This essay examines the overall health of a village community in the folk cultural region known as Kalotaszeg, the area immediately to the west of Cluj Napoca in central Transylvania. Such a broad topic may appear at first glance to fit oddly into a discussion of oral tradition. The argument for its relevance rests on five premises.

The first premise: the communities themselves generate, nurture, and maintain oral traditions. When communities die, the vestiges of traditional life are assigned in a hit-or-miss fashion to museums, archives, academic discussion and/or stage performance. The second premise: oral traditions are only one aspect of traditional life, with analogs throughout the culture. The oral performance of songs and shouts, for instance, is largely inseparable from occasions for music and dance. Music and dance, in the main, operate within the same parameters that we ascribe to traditional song. Indeed, the practice of oral traditions is but one element in a fabric of traditional life that embraces music, dance, customs, indeed all aspects of material culture: textiles and clothing, furnishings, implements, dwellings, and so forth.¹ The third premise: several features that distinguish oral traditions are also associated with other aspects of traditional life. Table 1 summarizes some of these features' patterns that are shared generally by the various forms of traditional life and contrasts them with the tendencies of post-traditional cultures. Although focused on oral traditions, with appropriate adjustments, the list of features may also be applied to music, dance, textile-working and other cultural activities.

Table 1: Traditional versus Post-Traditional Cultural Tendencies

Traditional	Post-Traditional
Oral transmission	Printed texts (or figurative equivalent)
Associative thinking	Symbolism and the application of logical thinking

¹ In examining a community in Kalotaszeg, I am returning to the folk cultural region whose men's dance furnished the example in Kraft 1989. In his editor's column, John Miles Foley characterized the article as "a comparative reinterpretation of folk dancing as a traditional idiom, adducing the discoveries made and theories formulated in the area of verse composition to provide a new perspective on the structures and meaning of the dance-performance" (272).

Metaphors have an inherent meaning, that is, a meaning based in convention or common agreement	Metaphors tend to have a conferred meaning, that is, one that the poet has conferred in order to surprise us with something new and original
The operation of traditional art forms is based in conventionality	Post-traditional culture demands originality
Convention implies a relatively closed community to which the set of conventions pertains	Literacy invites a relatively open audience of readers much less bound by shared conventions—throughout an entire language population and across the expanse of time
Oral traditions are sited in the community and presuppose community participation	Literature intended for reading is, on the other hand, generally a private pleasure
Oral traditions are manifested in live performance	Poetry resides in books
Traditional cultures practice improvisation so there is no concept of a “correct” version of a song or tale or other form of verbal expression	In post-traditional cultures, the fixed “text” is the coin of the realm and nothing less is acceptable

The fourth premise: no individual performance can be understood in isolation. Just as song, dance, music, and other forms are integrated into community life, so are they integrated into the life of any individual. An improvised dance sequence that is recorded by a researcher may, thus, not be considered a single work independent of its context, but must be seen rather as only “one part of an entire life’s work” (Felföldi 2005:28).² The fifth premise: ethnographic research methods recognize that the villagers themselves are the bearers of knowledge and expertise in Hungarian peasant culture. They are able to make intimate judgments about change, about challenges and, ultimately, about the viability of their communities. Moreover, just as the intellectual perspectives of ethnographers persist in a sort of disjunctive tension with life in village communities, so is there a critical tension between academic writing on oral tradition and the oral traditions that we study.

In short, the oral traditions that are the focus of our discipline depend on communities—for the fact of their existence and for their natural life span. Oral traditions and allied art forms must be understood as interdependent elements within highly complex village cultures and within the lives of each individual participant. The survival of traditional forms within a living, integrated culture depends not only on the choices of the villagers themselves, but also on the social fabric of their communities. Will the villagers choose to revive and conserve their

² Felföldi (2005 and also 2007) argues for the necessity of examining the dancer as well as the dance and for placing the individuality of the dancer in the context of the specific dance event and of the dance culture, and the dance community generally. Martin’s posthumous masterpiece (2004), coedited by Felföldi and Karácsony, is a realization of this approach, focusing on the life’s work and personality of a single Kalotaszeg dancer, István Mátyás, nicknamed Mundruc.

traditions? Are there reasons to expect that the villages themselves will endure as communities of families with a shared identity and shared sense of place?

International interest in Transylvanian Hungarian dance began in the 1970s as word spread of the urban *táncház* “dance-house” revival in the cities of Hungary, then in its early years. Although observers had spoken of the “final hour” of traditional folk life,³ some venerated practitioners of dance and music were filmed and recorded after World War II; some survived beyond even the fall of Ceaușescu into the 2000s. But over this span of years, the numbers of traditional musicians, singers, and dance informants have diminished greatly. I have been visiting Kalotaszentkirály with my wife and collaborator, Ildikó Kalapács, every few years since 1995. Our visits have provided us with snapshots of the community’s development during the two decades since the demise of Ceaușescu’s totalitarian state.

Under the Ceaușescu regime, Transylvanian villages had become increasingly closed off to outsiders. The fall of Ceaușescu in 1989 enabled an opening of those villages. On the one hand, this change had pivotal implications for the villagers themselves. On the other hand, outsiders have also taken advantage of the situation and used the freer access to explore Transylvanian village culture. Despite the opening of Transylvania and the return of land to peasants, village communities have faced new challenges to their viability. Kalotaszentkirály, the focus of the present study, is, no doubt, an exceptional village in many respects. At the same time, however, it confronts changes and circumstances that challenge community life throughout Transylvania.

Kalotaszentkirály (Sincraiu)⁴ is about six kilometers from Bánffyhuntyád (Huedin) in the Hungarian folk cultural region called Kalotaszeg,⁵ 48 kilometers west of Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca). The village of Kalotaszentkirály grew to absorb its smaller twin, Zentelke, and its population of some 450 households is predominantly Hungarian but with substantial Romanian representation as well. Roma presence is likely negligible or nonexistent, and Jewish habitation ended with the Holocaust. Most Hungarians belong to the Calvinist community; the Romanians are Orthodox. There is also a small Baptist church.

³ My colleague, István Pávai, confirms in personal correspondence (2012) that the earliest documentation of the “final hour” metaphor occurs in a letter Bartók wrote to Stefi Geyer on August 16, 1907, in which Bartók, writing from the Gyergyó basin of Eastern Transylvania in the course of ethnomusicological field work, expresses a certain exasperation about the displacement of old-style songs by popular and urban new-style influences. My own acquaintance with the “final hour” metaphor extends back to my Fulbright research year in Budapest (1986-87) in a discussion with my mentor, László Diószegi. In 1997-98, the Fonó Budai Zeneház in conjunction with the Musicological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Ethnographical Museum launched a major “final hour” project to record Transylvanian village musicians. The project produced an extensive archive for researchers and resulted in the publication of eighteen CDs in the series “Új Pátria: Az Utolsó Óra program gyűteményéből 1997-1998” (Kelemen and Pávai 1998-2004).

⁴ Because this essay focuses on Transylvanian Hungarian village culture, I shall give preference to the Hungarian form of the place names and provide Romanian forms in parentheses when relevant.

⁵ Kalotaszeg is represented well in the ethnographic literature as this sampling demonstrates: Jankó (1892) provides an early ethnographic sketch of Kalotaszeg. Vasas and Salamon (1986) discuss the oral traditions of Kalotaszeg associated with folk customs and holidays. Magyar (2004) collects a large number of folk sayings and tales from Kalotaszeg. Malonyay (1907) and Faragó et al. (1977) survey costuming in Kalotaszeg. Balogh and Fülemlé (2004) explore society, geography, and identity.

The inhabitants are peasant-workers, tending fields that have been returned to them since the dissolution of the collective farms in the 1990s but also seeking employment in cities within commuting distance and/or finding temporary employment in Hungary or beyond. In addition to cultivating various crops, the villagers keep animals (chickens, pigs, horses, and cows) in small yards and outbuildings adjacent to their homes. The cattle preferred by this village were water buffalo, which provided milk and also served as draft animals. In pasturing weather, a herdsman drove the cattle out of the village each morning after milking. Each evening, they returned to their individual stalls in each yard. Villagers used to deliver milk to a central collection point every morning and evening after milking.



Instruction at Kalotaszeg dance camp in Kalotaszentkirály (1995): András “Cucus” and Tekla Tötszegi from Méra are the best-known village dance teachers.

[http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture\(1\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture(1))

The village’s ability to accommodate guests also led to its development of village tourism. Szeklerland, much farther to the east and with a very strongly Hungarian population, came to be a popular destination for Hungarian tourism from after the opening of Transylvania in the 1990s; Kalotaszentkirály became a stopover for bus tours to and from Szeklerland. Arrangements for village tourism place certain expectations on an entire community; the individual houses certified to receive guests must meet certain standards of comfort and convenience. Hosts must acquire a skilled understanding of hospitality as regards the expectations and treatment of paying guests. The village also has two small grocery stores; there have always been taverns, and some households offered small convenience items for sale, but retail activity is rather negligible. There is an ice cream shop near the village center. Certain villagers have, however, had

This village also found a niche in village tourism. A week-long summer dance and music camp for the Kalotaszeg region was established here in 1991. This village was chosen not because its own dance and music traditions had remained vital, but because the infrastructure of the village was most suitable for accommodating a few hundred guests. The camp has been held there ever since, for, as the camp grew, it became less and less feasible to move it. Thus, in the summer of 2011, Kalotaszentkirály hosted its 21st Kalotaszeg dance camp.



Welcome Sign, 2010

specialties of various kinds, including sawing firewood, slaughtering animals, artificial insemination of livestock, and grinding feed meal.

Farming has long been the foundation of such village communities, and Western visitors to this village might have sensed that they were enjoying a very authentic, old-fashioned experience—a step far back in time. In season, fresh food was abundant, including meat and dairy products. Villagers used horse- and buffalo-drawn wagons, water buffalo being this village's signature livestock. The sight of the great herd of water buffalo, leaving each morning with the herdsman and returning each evening, was awesome.



Water buffalo returning from pasture (2000): As the herd returns to the village, the buffalos and cows enter their own yards/barns for the night. By the time the sizable herd reaches the further end of the village, its numbers are already greatly diminished.

[http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture\(3\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture(3))



Signage 1, 2007



Signage 2, 2007



Path marker, 2010

Small farming and village tourism, along with a revitalized cultural identity, seemed to define Kalotaszentkirály. More recent developments have begun to signal great change. For instance, in 2010 the village installed a new decorative welcome sign that perhaps responds to what local people think guests expect. There are also quaint new directional signs all around the village to help visitors conveniently find their way. At the edge of the village, walking and hiking trails also begin with their own special markers.



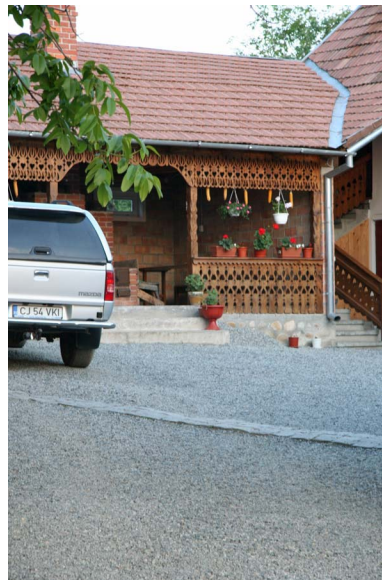
Decorative well 1, 2007



Decorative well 2, 2007



Decorative well 3, 2007



Guesthouse kitsch 1, 2010



Guesthouse kitsch 2, 2010

It is clear that things are happening in Kalotaszek, and the dynamo of economic development is tourism. The brand-new sign that welcomes tourists through its well-kept streets is a model of tidiness that village tourism requires. Three surviving public wells have been restored very nearly to picturesque status, while spruced up guesthouses have taken a turn that may strike an urban observer as kitsch. Beside one guesthouse a decorative millwheel is, rather incongruously, a few yards from a tiki lawn table.

Until 2007, villagers used outhouses. At some earlier point in time, indoor toilets had been installed in many homes, but reliance on holding tanks rendered them mostly for show. The sewer system that was built in 2007 was a milestone project. Given the convenience of outhouses, however, they too are still in use. Later in 2010, the village was in the midst of a

project to channelize its streams and some of the storm water ditches. This was a very big project and, like the sewer installation, was undertaken with grant support.

The village has recently been able to establish a Hungarian-language grade school, named for the Hungarian poet Ady Endre. The school serves Hungarian children from 13 or so villages, with the children from distant villages boarding at the school during the week and returning to their families on weekends. Most of the teachers live in the village. The Romanian children, too few for a school of their own, are bused to Bánffyhunyard. In sporting activities as in education there is a new civic initiative. Villagers also reported in 2010 that they expected to receive a grant to develop their soccer field into a stadium with seating and



Main school building and gate, 2010

even with clubhouses including dressing rooms and showers for the teams.

The everyday social life of the community is centered in the village streets and in front of the village houses. Some decorative gates and benches have appeared recently in a style that is not native to this folk cultural area, but rather imitative of that of Szeklerland. In moments of leisure, villagers sit on their benches and interact with passersby going about their business. Villagers ask one another where they've been, where they're going, whom they've seen, what they're doing,



Bench in the style of Szeklerland, 2010

chat for a while, or just exchange a greeting. The villagers of Kalotaszentkirály are very proud that nearly all the homes are occupied by actual village residents. The occasional weekend home creates a space devoid of social life, a dead space in the village.

Peasant-workers have typically



Bench and social interaction, 2010

held jobs outside the village, sometimes traveling far beyond the village to earn money. But the vitality and cohesiveness of a village's social structure depends heavily on the activity of farming. In the past, three generations of a family often lived and worked the farm together; some of these relatively successful family units were farming up to ten or twelve hectares as recently as 2004. Small farming looked to be doing well. State farms and collective farms had long since been disbanded; village lands had been re-privatized, returned to their original owners in the course of the 1990s. But villagers were worried that the rules of the European Union would complicate their lives and harm their prospects as Romania moved toward EU membership.

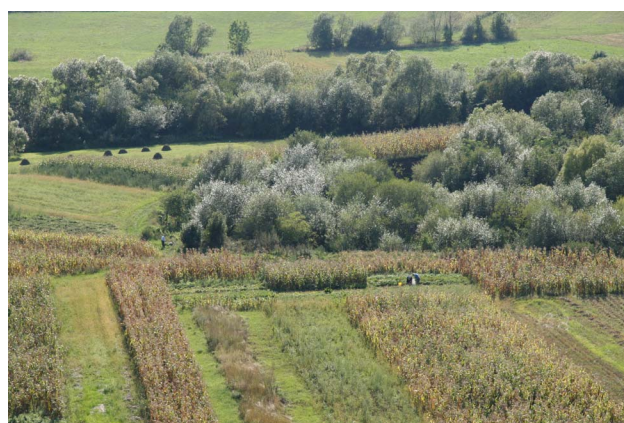
When we returned to Transylvania in summer 2007, we hoped to document that small farming was a success, that Transylvanians in the region of Kalotaszeg, by heavy investment of labor and low investment of other inputs, were able to grow locally, market locally, and eat locally. In short, we sought to confirm that small-scale farming was viable, still a source of income. We discovered instead that small farmers could no longer market their produce and had retreated to subsistence farming for household use only. Here is what had happened.

Before collectivization, a pattern of land ownership had developed by which each family owned narrow strips of fields, widely scattered. In the language of the Hungarian Transylvanians, they are called "trouser-belt" fields. When the farmland was collectivized, many a peasant is said to have buried large stones at the corners of his fields in the hope that he might outlive Communism and someday recover his lands. In point of fact, wherever practicable, families eventually did recover their old lands. Families once again came to own the same scattered, narrow strips of land that they had owned before World War II. The general insistence on the return of the old holdings was motivated partly by a not-unjustified fear of being cheated in the redistribution process. Each plot of land has its own potential. Nobody wanted to settle for inferior land and see their neighbor take their own good land. Nobody was inclined to enter into agreements to trade and consolidate.⁶

Holding scattered fields meant that it



Trouser-belt fields 1, 2010



Trouser-belt fields 2, 2010

⁶ Verdery (1996:133-67, 1999, 2003, and 2004) treats the problems of reprivatization of agricultural lands in postsocialist Romania with a focus on ethnically Romanian villages in Transylvania. Mungiu-Pippidi (2010) compares the fate of a "rebel" village that resisted Communism with that of the "model" village that was Ceaușescu's birthplace.



Potato harvest work party, 2007



First day of potato harvest, 2007

was not economical to hire a tractor or combine, for the equipment would likely have to spend inordinate time traveling between fields. Additionally, the extremely narrow, “trouser-belt” holdings meant that a tractor might not even have room to turn around after a pass through the field, although a horse-drawn plough works just fine. But as farmers have become older and have gained income from non-farming sources, they have also begun to depend more on machinery where they can.

Gradually, farmers have discovered that they lacked the necessary inputs for successful farming, as well as suitable marketing networks. Small farmers have negligible capital on hand and are considered a poor risk for loans. Since they cannot get loans, they have little access to inputs such as seed stock, fertilizer, pest control, machinery, and so forth. Were they able to form cooperatives or partnerships and/or consolidate their holdings for more efficient farming, they might devise a

viable strategy. But in the era after forced collectivization, nobody seems to be in a mood to sacrifice his independence. Nobody is inclined to trust cooperative endeavors. Instead, in growing for their own use, they have scaled back on the various crops that they have been able to produce successfully—potatoes, onions, peppers, and other vegetables for the kitchen; corn, grains, and hay for feed. Harvesting chores are generally shared by a family work party and produce is brought in by the wagon-load. So, by 2007, individual families had reduced the land they were farming to two or three hectares—enough for domestic use—leaving another eight or ten fallow. Villagers who had shown themselves willing, even quite eager, to be the subject of video field recordings in the past asked not to be filmed in 2007, and also requested that we not use their names. Although these circumstances are general knowledge, no one wants to go on record, talking about the failure of small farming. When they do speak, however, the farmers voice the concern that they lack political power and are subject to economic forces beyond their influence. They place some confidence in their mayor as the sole representative of the village who has some political influence. He has been able to secure funding for several initiatives.



Herd and combine, 2010



Herds return from pasture, 2007

With vast lands unfarmed, a sort of golden era for sheep grazing seems to have dawned, with outsiders tending large herds of sheep all around Kalotaszentkirály on land that is leased for the purpose. Also, because the European Union's rules for the dairy industry do not allow for the collecting of the milk from individual households, villagers can no longer sell surplus milk to a central collection point after morning and evening milking. The cattle herd is consequently smaller, and surplus milk goes to the pigs. The great herd of water buffalo, once the pride of Kalotaszentkirály, was gone by 2007. The relative proportion of cows to buffalo had reversed with cows far outnumbering buffalo. Water buffalo are superior draft animals and give rich milk, but who needs strong, temperamental draft animals when so little land is being farmed? When economic considerations favored cows, buffalo disappeared in very short order.

A donation from outside furnished the village with its own new slaughterhouse. There seems to be some mystery about its funding. The villagers celebrated its (near) completion, but it never opened. Perhaps the villagers lacked the necessary capital to run it, or it may have been the case that the village could not provide the economy of scale necessary to support inspectors and to meet other EU requirements. The slaughterhouse in the neighboring town of Bánffyahunyad has also closed down. The commercial slaughtering of an animal now requires transportation to Kolozsvár, about 50 kilometers distant. Villagers post signs on their gates, offering pigs on the hoof for sale, but the slaughtering and butchering are, of course, left to the buyer to solve.



Herds return from pasture 2, 2007



Part of the herd at dusk, 2007

The overall decline of village livestock has also reduced the market for hay and feed grains. The village flourmill has closed down, and the village's bakery is also gone. There is a farmers' market in Bánffyhunyard once or twice a week, but it is not actually "local." Peasants come mostly from farther away. They report that they now sell all-too-little for prices all-too-low. Unsure of why they are still trying, they seem to have no alternative way of securing even a little income. Informants say that there are fewer and fewer farmers' markets and that they have to travel further and further to reach opportunities for selling.

News reports in 2010 pegged at approximately 40 percent the amount of income that Romanians spend on food. Since food commands so large a portion of income, one might imagine that prices would be relatively high, and that local production and marketing could succeed. Yet local growers have not found a way to compete with grocery stores and with foodstuffs from the EU. Villagers understand that hygiene and health standards are necessary, but they also perceive that all the attendant factors are conspiring against them.

With the wider ownership of cars has come the decline of public transportation. And the loss of services in the villages (for instance, medical and postal) also forces greater reliance on cars. Young people tend to leave for the cities, with the mean age of village populations steadily increasing. In the past year or two, this process has been somewhat retarded by the economic collapse; young people who cannot find work in the cities stay in the villages. However, this forced choice does not equate with a willingness to adopt the farming lifestyle of the older generations.

People report that there is scarcely a vacant home in Kalotaszentkirály. In many surrounding villages, however, the population is said to have declined precipitously. Although the community is still close-knit, it appears that eventually more and more houses will become weekend retreats for urban folks. The traditional social fabric of village communities will deteriorate further. Vacation homes are still rare in Kalotaszentkirály, and, as noted above, the

few new ones are clearly not well integrated into community life.

Kalotaszentkirály is fairly bursting with progressive and good ideas. It looks like an open-air museum of village life and small farming. But small farming has collapsed. Foodstuffs increasingly come from the West where subsidized industrial agriculture undercuts the homegrown prices. Villagers bemoan the decline of community solidarity and mutual assistance, as community rituals like walking the milk can to the collection point at dawn and at dusk are vanishing.

To an outsider who has



Walking the milk can to the collection point (2000): This ritual ended as Romania began to conform to EU guidelines that do not allow for the pooling of milk from individual households.

[http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture\(23\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture(23))

visited over the span of 15 years, the village appears more and more prosperous. Houses have been enlarged, repaired, and often somewhat renovated to suit more modern tastes. Village tourism clearly helps to support these changes. It is also evident that Kalotaszentkirály, anticipating visitors, has recast itself somewhat as the imitation of a village. Authenticity and a sense of community can run somewhat shallow, despite such cheery outward appearances.

There have been recent attempts to revive the cultural heritage and identity of the village, for instance, by establishing a culture house for youth and by teaching the village's own dialect of Kalotaszeg dancing. These efforts seem to have been inspired, at least in part, by the siting of the Kalotaszeg dance and music festival in the village. The village has dance groups for children as well as young adults. And a few couples from older generations form a dance group of *hagyomány őrzők* "tradition conservators."

The tradition conservators confront several challenges. Their own life-span is limited, and, for more than a generation, Western fashions and technological change have affected traditional life. The last surviving grand old man of Kalotaszeg fiddling, Sámuel (known as Sándor) "Neti" Fodor, who lived some distance away from Kalotaszentkirály in Kisbács near Kolozsvár, died in 2004.⁷ The most celebrated Kalotaszeg singer, András Gergely, lived across the mountains in a neighboring watershed in Türe.⁸ He, too, recently passed away.



Márton and Anna Bálint, dancing in heritage dance group (1995); the center couple are Márton and Anna Bálint.
[http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture\(24\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture(24))



Márton and Anna Bálint, demonstrating Kalotaszentkirály's couples' dance.
[http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture\(25\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/kraft#myGallery-picture(25))

⁷ Halmos and Szomjas (1996-2000) provide a portrait of the musician known affectionately as Neti Sanyi or Sanyi Bácsi in their documentary.

⁸ Halmos and Szomjas (1997) also provide a documentary portrait of András Gergely.



Villager shares his life story, 2010

The once rich and well-documented inventory of songs for the Kalotaszeg region included dance songs and shouts, ballads, songs about love, songs about the life of soldiers, songs to accompany new recruits, wedding songs, funeral songs, songs for various seasons and occasions, and a very special genre called *hajnali* (“dawn songs”), sung very late at the end of an evening of dancing, singing, and feasting.⁹ In addition to songs, other oral traditions include ceremonial verses for weddings, dances, name’s days, and holidays (Vasas and Salamon 1986) as well as assorted tales, sayings and anecdotes (Magyar 2004). Personal life stories also constitute a form of oral narrative. Within the community, the villagers are the storehouse of their own life stories and of those of all other villagers. A villager whom we found tending his sheep gladly shared with us his own life story. Kalotaszentkirály seems to lack the annual village celebrations that Kalotaszeg villagers once produced as a way of marking the

seasons.¹⁰ But, proceeding from the village’s success with the annual dance camp and from their development of village tourism, they have recently promoted a fall Rose Hip Festival. It is a community event created with outsiders in mind.

Occasions for singing must now be far more limited than in the old days when the village girls gathered in the spinning room to work and sing, when Saturday night dancing was the principal community entertainment, and when, of course, television, recorded music, and electronic instruments were unknown. Eurodisco and europop music has long since been in

⁹ Ökrös (1996) and his collaborators provide an hour-long sampling of dawn songs with Kalotaszeg singers Anna Meggyesi (Mrs. János Simon) and László “Türei” Lengyel, and with legendary fiddler Sándor “Neti” Fodor.

¹⁰ Vasas and Salamon (1986) discuss various rituals, and Wiegmann’s documentary (1995) of the measuring of the sheep’s milk on St. George’s Day in Méra is an exploration of a famous example.

fashion for weddings and other social gatherings, and hip-hop is on the ascent. Since weddings entail reciprocal obligations to others in the community, once the wedding guests come to expect the new music, their expectations must be honored, and it is hardly possible, in general, to turn back time for the old music and dances.

On the example of Kalotaszentkirály, we have explored the potential for initiative and innovation, and for adaptation to circumstances. It is obvious that not every Transylvanian village can recast itself as an official "European Village" catering to tourists; the villagers of Kalotaszentkirály have been both enterprising and lucky. Yet community life is confronting perils, and change can occur quite abruptly, as has already happened with the dramatic decline in farming and the rapid disappearance of the once-mighty buffalo herd.

For all its challenges, we may easily surmise that Kalotaszentkirály is in an enviable position. Advantages of infrastructure and tourism make its survival as a village community more promising than that of so many neighboring villages of Kalotaszeg where the flight of young people and consequent "geriatrification," the gentrification as bedroom or weekend housing, and the loss of population contribute to the deterioration of community solidarity and sense of place. Ultimately, these oral traditions and their cultural analogs within village life are all subject to the setting of the sun, a sunset that has extended its final hour over the past century.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

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Intentionally Adrift: What The Pathways Project Can Teach Us about Teaching and Learning

Bonnie D. Irwin

Among the myriad books bemoaning the crisis in higher education published in 2011, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Arum and Roksa 2011) garnered the most attention both within and outside the academy. While Richard Arum's and Josipa Roksa's research deserves some of the criticism it has received (Brooks 2011), readers keep returning to the book and wondering about the authors' conclusions. There appears amidst the cacophony of praise and blame, a grain of truth: students in general seem not to be learning as deeply and broadly as their predecessors. Arum and Roksa spread the blame around: parents focus on credentials, students focus on social life, faculty focus on research, and administrators focus on rankings and budgets. No one, they claim, is really focused on *learning*. Students are left without a compass, it seems, academically adrift in a boat without a rudder.

Those of us who teach literature, however, want our students to get lost, "becoming lost in that other way that isn't dislocation but about the immersion where everything else falls away" (Solnit 2006:368). Literature professors have chosen our profession because we have all been lost in texts, reading so intently that time slips away, suspending our disbelief so that we are standing on the wall with Helen and Priam, watching the battle between the Achaeans and the Trojans. We imagine the epic poet's audience in much the same way: transfixed by the narrative, occasionally calling out to one of the characters and then surfacing above the sea of narrative and calling on the poet to sing a particular episode that will allow them to dive in once more. When our students, denizens of the eWorld (Foley 2011-), seem too distracted to follow us into the depths of story, we blame many of the forces listed above: vocationalism, budgets, helicopter parents, and the eWorld itself for their apathy. We believe students are lost because they have not followed the literary pathways we have constructed, and, indeed, often students are lost; other times they have even abandoned the journey completely, having discovered a far more interesting (to them) pathway away from the text and toward facebook, Hulu, or Pandora. The tools for guiding them back, however, are in the study of oral traditions themselves.

Certainly any professor who has been paying attention to students over the last decade has noticed that more and more of them are firmly planted in the eWorld, and the famous Beloit

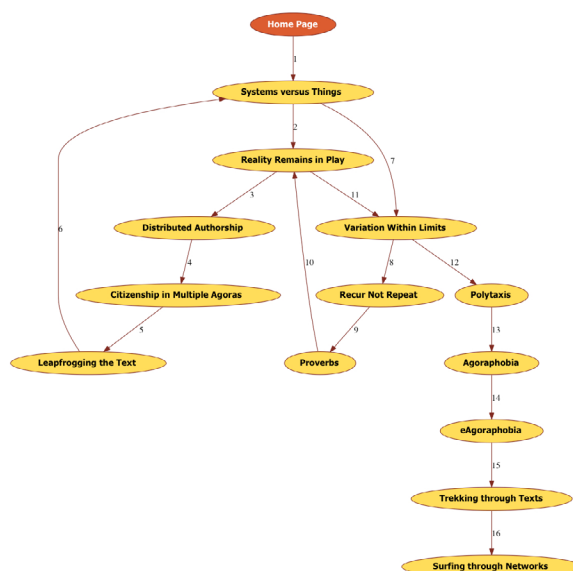
College *Mindset List*¹ has confirmed this phenomenon. The class of 2015 has grown up with Amazon.com, swipe cards, cell phones, smart boards, and music downloads (2015 *Mindset List*):

Members of this year's freshman class, most of them born in 1993, are the first generation to grow up taking the word "online" for granted and for whom crossing the digital divide has redefined research, original sources and access to information, changing the central experiences and methods in their lives.

The eWorld itself is a crucial situational factor (Fink 2003:62) that must be considered in teaching this generation of students. Just as we study the performance context of verbal art in order to more fully understand it, we need to look into the contexts of our students' learning. Given the many parallels between the eWorld and oWorld, however, this context should be particularly familiar to scholars of oral traditions.

The Pathways Project (Foley 2011-) provides us with an excellent model not only for studying texts, but also for teaching them. As I prepared to write this essay, I took the following pathway: Systems versus Things > Reality Remains in Play > Distributed Authorship > Citizenship in Multiple Agoras > Leapfrogging the Text > Systems versus Things > Variation Within Limits > Recur Not Repeat > Proverbs > Reality Remains in Play > Variation Within Limits > Polytaxis > Agoraphobia > eAgoraphobia > Trekking through Texts > Surfing through Networks ("Bonnie's Research Map"). The pathway allows readers to see how I navigated through the various topics and may encourage them to speculate about the choices I made as I read. In teaching, however, we often jump straight to the conclusion, providing students with facts or interpretation, but not with tools. What if we could amass the many conclusions we had drawn over decades of reading a text, laying the process bare for our students to see?

Readers of this essay might rightly assume that I began my own pathway with "Systems versus Things" because literary texts are things, whereas oral composition and performance are systems. One might also conclude that this writer sees teaching and learning as a system rather than a thing. Both interpretations are correct, and the fact that I returned to that first node twice more shows the process by which I began to construct the analogy that underlies this essay. One might interpret the fact that I doubled back on more than one occasion as losing my way; others will see it as a recurring theme of my study. How does seeing the context for teaching and learning as a system rather than a thing influence the way we act within it?



"Bonnie's Research Map"

http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/linkmap/Bonnie's_research_map/0

¹ See <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/2015>.

Just as we study *how a poem means* (Foley 2002:10), our students need to see *how* we read, rather than merely *what* we conclude. Lendol Carter (2006), in studying his own history survey, came to the realization that more than teaching students history, he wanted to teach them how to think like historians. This epiphany led him to explode the traditional structure of the history survey course, as sacrosanct as the literary survey is for some English professors, and focus on specific moments, concluding that if students had the tools, they could study any era of history with some measure of success. Similarly, if we teach our students the pathways of reading and interpretation, we may better prepare them for their own lives as readers and thinkers.

Each scholar and professor takes a unique pathway through a text. Interdisciplinary study further frees the literary scholar. It takes her down new pathways and generates new ideas that enhance the overall meaning of a work. In an interdisciplinary context, a work of verbal art becomes even more evocative. One reads or hears and one's mind immediately starts constructing new readings. Students, however, like poetic apprentices, do not yet recognize the more sophisticated pathways and are not fluent in the language of interpretation. They have learned, by the time they reach a college class, that there are multiple good interpretations of any work of literature, but they are not always aware that there are wrong ones. While most are not as lost as Anders Henriksson would have us believe—"The Trojan War raged between the Greeks and the Tories" (2008:11)—they can and will take missteps. In the torrent of information that overwhelms students, they will often be swept away because they lack the tools and the discipline that the scholar has acquired over years of reading and study.

If each of us reveals and explains our own pathway rather than just where that pathway has led us, students will eventually gather a range of ways of reading. They will see not only what a text means but also how. If one takes an extra step and lays this pathway over the process of surfing networks, a technique with which our eWorld students are already quite familiar, one can compare not only disciplines, but also systems. As students become more comfortable along the pathways of reading and thinking, they eventually overcome the obstacles of distraction or apathy. Subsequently, the classroom becomes a locus for distributed teaching and learning. Like "distributed authorship" in the oWorld, distributed reading and interpretation allow students to participate in the construction of meaning and integration of their own learning. As they acquire these skills, they will be able to navigate and surf more skillfully and drift more intentionally rather than finding themselves pulled under the waves.

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***Sean-nós i gConamara / Sean-nós in Connemara:* Digital Media and Oral Tradition in the West of Ireland**

Holly Hobbs

Upon an introductory visit, one might be fooled into making the assumption that the wind-ravaged fields, rock-strewn paths, quiet whitewashed villages, and backcountry roads of the Conamara region in the west of Ireland share those archetypal characteristics so many of us still ascribe to all things rural: isolated, uninfluenced by the modern world, lagging behind in technology, and richly endowed with folklore. After all, this sort of tropology is a cornerstone upon which many cultural tourism initiatives continue to be based.¹ But these tropes are certainly as old as rurality itself, for it is a common facet of the human imagination to define the unknown or the remote as that which is “beyond the pale.” Indeed, the fields of anthropology and folklore were built around the perceived need for salvage ethnography of such places, documenting and classifying a community and its intangible cultural heritage before its inevitable disappearance or decline at the hands of modernity. But even though the effects of this dark history can still be seen in academe, where the topic of folk music, for example, continues to conjure images of unchanging musicians performing an ancient and static repertoire, as researchers we no longer spend volumes seeking simply to invert these wrongs of the past, for we understand that, as with all great generalizations, they are quickly unraveled by knowledge and experience. Instead, we seek to provide nuanced understanding of specific times in specific places, informed by systems of knowledge unique to those places. Conamara (anglicized to Connemara), the *gaeltacht* (Irish-speaking district) in the west of the Irish Republic spread out beyond the cosmopolitan Gaillimh (Galway City), is a place that never stops moving; it is a place that has always been connected with travel and technology via maritime trade and is populated today by a mobile and well-traveled people; it is a place with a bilingual and highly technologically literate population where, for many, oral systems of knowledge continue to organize time and memory; it is a culture that looks outward toward the sea.

I spent two years in Conamara living, working, and doing fieldwork on different musical traditions and their roles in community development initiatives in the region. In this short piece, I am concerned not so much with detailing the specifics of *sean-nós*, the orally transmitted,

¹ For online examples of tourism initiatives in the west of Ireland, see “Connemara Tourism” at <http://www.connemara.ie> and “Discover Ireland: the West” at <http://www.discoverireland.com/west>. For interesting examples of this tropology in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century travel writing about Conamara, see Edgeworth 1833 and Gwynn 1909.

unaccompanied, highly ornamented musical tradition sung *as Gaeilge* (in Irish) I studied there, as much as I am with using it to help provide an introduction to the topic of people employing the newest forms of technology to find ways to dynamically continue and interact with the oldest forms of technology—in this case, their oral traditions.² *Sean-nós* continues to be a criminally understudied oral tradition, though newer academic work by Shields (1985), O'Rourke (1987, 1990), Mac Aodha (1996), Ó Madagáin (2005), Ó Laoire (2004, 2007), and a number of others has been particularly helpful in illuminating this fascinating genre. Studies that treat the use of digital technology in preserving, continuing, infrastructurally employing, and critically interacting with *sean-nós*—even in terms of its more straightforward use in Irish language maintenance and continuation³—have thus far been virtually nonexistent.⁴ Therefore, I provide here a survey of sorts, detailing a number of programs and organizations in Conamara that are using digital media technology to enhance, continue, and further *sean-nós*, with the hope that discussions such as these inspire further work in the field. The primarily oral culture of traditional Conamara is in a constant state of change, just as *sean-nós* is no longer a primarily rural, native *Gaeilge*-speaking tradition. Studies that treat these fluidities and complexities of tradition both as they exist today and in their historical context will necessarily provide our methodological roadmaps for future writing and thought.

The west of Ireland is home to several *gaeltachts* that exist as small geographic areas largely within the counties of Donegal, Galway, and Kerry.⁵ The Conamara *gaeltacht* in Co. na Gaillimhe (Co. Galway) is the largest of the *gaeltachts* and therefore serves as the unofficial sociolinguistic and cultural center for speakers of Irish. The main all-Irish radio station, *Raidió na Gaeltachta* (<http://www.rte.ie/rmag/>), and Irish-language television station, TG4 (<http://www.tg4.ie/>), are both located here. Of the importance and centrality of *sean-nós* to Conamara work and life, Johnny Mháirtín Learaí MacDonncha,⁶ a senior singer from the small village of Leitir Ard, tells me that while learning to sing *sean-nós* is a personal journey of lifelong apprenticeship, learning, and experience, it is most importantly a way for people to meet, remember, and think about the place they live (MacDonncha 2005).⁷ Josie Sheáin Jack

² For some classic reading in the field of digital media and traditional culture, see, among others, Browne 1996, Gaines 1991, Hall 1989, Leuthold 1998, Miller and Stam 2003, Rony 1996, Ruby 2000, Russell 1999, Sherman 1998, and Shohat 1994.

³ The Republic of Ireland has seen massive changes in Irish language usage, preservation schemes, teaching techniques, and trends over the last century. While all public school children now receive Irish language training in primary school, Ireland's percentage of native speakers is usually estimated at around three to five percent.

⁴ For readings on digital media specific to the Irish context, see Browne 1992, O'Brien 2005, Pettitt 2000, and Watson 2003.

⁵ Though the borders of the *gaeltachts* are well-defined in maps of the area, these geographical delineations were manufactured and defined by non-Irish speakers and thus belie colonial legacy more than socio-geographic reality.

⁶ A performance by Johnny Mháirtín Learaí MacDonncha can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATkwFesWEzE/>.

⁷ All personal interviews included in this essay were conducted, recorded, and transcribed by the author in Conamara in 2004 and 2005.

MacDonnchadha,⁸ a contemporary of Johnny Mhairtín Learaí's from the village of Carna, tells me in English that (MacDonnchadha 2005):

Sean-nós can be learned but it's usually better if there's someone teaching that there's a tradition behind it. It doesn't really have to be in the family, but it's better if it is, because of all the recordings, the BBC and Séamus Ennis recordings, too, many learn from tape recorders or CDs now. *Sean-nós* is important for how people think of their culture. I'd say . . . 90% of people think that way. *Sean-nós* is being put in front of people more than it has before, with RnaG [*Raidió na Gaeltachta*] and others. . . .

Caitríona Ní Bhaoill, the marketing director for *Cló Iar-Chonnachta*, the Conamara-based Irish-language music and book publishing company (<http://www.cic.ie/>), says "there is a huge resurgence in young people in music in Conamara . . . and it's most obvious in the popularity of *sean-nós*" (Ní Bhaoill 2004). Some *sean-nós* singers, like the young Áine Ní Dhroighneáin from the village of An Spidéal, a few miles outside of Galway City, tell me that *sean-nós* is merely a facet of the Irish language, and that as one is threatened, so is the other (Ní Dhroighneáin 2005). Nearly all of those with whom I spoke said that *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, TG4 (the all-Irish television station), and the University of Ireland-Galway and its extension centers in the *gaeltachts* are of importance in helping to maintain and support *sean-nós* performers and their art.

The success in the use of digital media technology in preserving, maintaining, and, most importantly, critically interacting with *sean-nós* in Conamara is a testament to the ways in which, to reference indigenous art and media scholar Eric Michaels (1994:84), there is sometimes something essential to cultural maintenance associated with *not* writing, where digital media "works" where the written word cannot. In fact, scholars such as John Miles Foley have taken these ideas even further to provide in-depth studies of the striking similarities and correspondences between oral traditions and the Internet.⁹ The *Gael Acadamh*, a locally-run development organization based in the unofficial Conamara "hub" village of An Spidéal, features Irish-language classes and apprenticeships in *sean-nós* singing and dance and has seen multiple videographers using film to document Irish oral traditions graduate from its site, including the well-known *sean-nós* dancer, Seosamh (Joe) Ó Neachtain. The *Indreabhán* (Inverin)-based publishing company *Cló Iar-Chonnachta* records *sean-nós* singers not only in order to commercially release, preserve, and market their work locally and internationally, but also to increase their accessibility in a sort of digital community of locals, researchers, and other performers. And *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, the all-Irish *gaeltacht*-based radio station, is concerned with digital preservation, radio programming, and broadcasting of *sean-nós* not only to the people of Conamara and the other *gaeltachts* but throughout the world via online streaming.

⁸ Josie Sheáin Jack MacDonnchadha can be viewed performing at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbeUwSyKvQs>.

⁹ The Pathways Project is one such study by John Miles Foley (2011-), available online at <http://www.pathwaysproject.org/>.

An hOllscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh (the National University of Ireland-Galway) as an institution provides much support and many resources for *sean-nós* singers. In addition to world-class Irish language teaching both on-site and online through the *Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge* (<http://www.acadamh.ie>), the NUIG Irish Studies Centre supports an annual *sean-nós* Singer-in-Residence¹⁰—chosen on the basis of both past accomplishments and performative knowledge—who lectures, performs, and offers support in turn to other *sean-nós* singers throughout the year.¹¹

Pléaraca Chonamara (<http://www.pleearaca.ie>) is a community arts scheme located in the village of Ros Muc in *Conamara theas* (south Conamara) and supported by *An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta* (the Irish Department of Arts, Heritage, and Gaeltacht Affairs, whose website is available at <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/>). Each year *Pléaraca Chonamara* hosts a festival of music, dancing, and boating that prominently features *sean-nós*. One of many festivals of its kind held in Conamara,¹² *Pléaraca* distinguishes itself first and foremost as an anti-poverty initiative and thus seeks to find job placements or living wages for the *sean-nós* singers, musicians, and other traditional artists that call south Conamara home. Digital filmmakers, oral historians, and storytelling enthusiasts travel great distances to attend *Pléaraca*, which is surprising only because of its more remote location and tiny size and budget. Work that examines the exponential proliferation of digital filmmaking in Conamara as a method of oral tradition maintenance is in great demand.

The *Áras Shorcha Ní Ghuairim*, an Irish-language teaching and resource facility, is located in the Conamara village of Carna and named after the well-known female *sean-nós* singer from the area. The center has, since its inception in 1998, offered academic programs and supported language-centered community development initiatives, with *sean-nós* as the center of its work (Ó Concheanainn 2005). The center offers a Certificate in Irish Folklore at the Master's level, maintains a Folklore Preservation Program, hosts the annual Seosamh Einniú (Joe Heaney) *sean-nós* festival, and has conducted an ambitious project involving the digitization of the Seosamh Einniú *sean-nós* archives, for which local people were hired and trained in the process of digitization and online cultural preservation and curation (Ó Concheanainn 2005). This digital

¹⁰ More information about the National University of Ireland-Galway *Sean-nós* Singer in Residence program can be found online at http://www.nuigalway.ie/centre_irish_studies/singer_in_residence.htm.

¹¹ The Irish Studies Centre is also home to the Joe Burke Music Archive (available at http://www.nuigalway.ie/centre_irish_studies/burke_archive.htm).

¹² Festivals often play a large role in cultural preservation and continuation and are therefore one of the most favored facets of both endogenous and exogenous cultural tourism initiatives. Also worthy of mention here is the *Oireachtas* (online at <http://www.antoireachtas.ie/>), a competitive music, dance, and literary festival dedicated to celebrating and promoting Irish-language cultural and artistic traditions.

archive, now fully online and interactive at <http://www.joeheaney.org>, has proved an unparalleled resource.¹³

Lastly, the all-Irish television station TG4 has produced a documentary film series about *sean-nós* called *Amhráin is Ansa Liom*, which airs on television but is also available online (<http://www.tg4.ie/en/programmes/amhrain-is-ansa.html>) along with an interactive online communication forum. Each of the 20 programs in the series features a prominent *sean-nós* singer speaking about the history of the tradition and their favorite songs, their influences, and the importance of maintaining local heritage, followed by a performance. Many *sean-nós* performers with whom I have spoken cite this series as an exciting and very popular development in the region.

Conamara, like many other economically peripheral regions within the global economy, is struggling to maintain strong culturally-based systems of knowledge and tradition in the face of increasing commodification of tradition and culture within a postcolonial/neocolonial context.¹⁴ But the use of digital media technologies, all the time more accessible and affordable, is providing highly effective spaces for new thought and action about cultural and community development through intangible cultural heritage maintenance. Furthering our understanding, as researchers, of the ways in which these phenomena work is therefore a critical and fascinating step ahead, and as a rhetorically flexible tradition of oral continuation/transmission of art and knowledge, *sean-nós* in Conamara provides an especially important mediation between history and future, continuity and rupture, and tradition and change. To adapt a concept drawn from John Miles Foley's work (2002) for our own purposes here, it is clear that oral systems of knowledge such as *sean-nós* indeed function as language, *only more so*.

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¹³ The program is an excellent model of rural and community development that situates its developmental policy within intangible cultural heritage. Not only is the program situated locally, which gives people who wish to remain within the *gaeltacht* a specific skill set and option for economic success through the development of cultural traditions, but it also provides work that is considered meaningful as a much-preferred alternative to the factory-employment system begun in the 1950s by the Irish government, and continuing through to the present (McDonagh 2005).

¹⁴ For more reading on this subject, see Gibbons et al. 2002, Lennon 2008, and Ó Laoire 2007.

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The Metonym: Rhetoric and Oral Tradition at the Crossroads

Catherine Quick

Metaphor is the glamor trope, getting all the attention in literary, linguistic, and philosophical circles (for instance, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). However, metonymy, the figure of association, may actually be the more important element to explain how human language and thought connect. The honoree of this Festschrift has demonstrated the centrality of metonymic referentiality to oral traditional aesthetics and noetics. Metonymy is also a concept in rhetorical studies, but generally has not been viewed as central to the rhetorical enterprise of persuasion. By adopting John Miles Foley's work as a lens through which to view the rhetorical function of metonyms, this article demonstrates that perhaps metonymy is of much greater significance to rhetoric than previously thought.

The Metonym in Oral Tradition

Oral-formulaic theory, until the publication of Foley's *Immanent Art* in 1991, seemed to portray the oral traditional artist not as an artist at all, but as a technician who put together ready-made structures—epithets, lines, type-scenes, and the like—into relatively standard packages. Because the conventions and quality of oral traditions appear so different from literary works, scholars struggled to understand how great works of literature such as the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, or countless others birthed from oral traditions could have developed from such a process. Foley, instead of asking how such works came about in spite of their origins, turned the question around—could the conventions of oral traditions be the *source* of artistic power rather than a limitation to be mitigated? The answer is, of course, yes, and his scholarship identifies metonymy as the key to oral traditional art.

Foley defines metonymy as “a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole . . . a situation in which a text or version is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact” (1991:7). For example, the epithets in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* are not simply structural elements strung together, providing a one-to-one correspondence between word and object. Rather, they serve as a portal to a larger, complex meaning inherent in the tradition. For example, “‘grey-eyed Athena’ would serve as an approved traditional channel or pathway for summoning the Athena not just of this or that particular moment, but rather of all moments in the experience of audience and poet” (1995:5). In a traditional context, the epithet is not only a convenient metrical unit, but a metonymic shorthand that allows the poet and the audience to

access a rich, complex signification inherent in their common experiences. The performance is not merely a passive event for the audience, but an opportunity for co-creation of meaning with the poet through the vehicle of the metonymic referent. The performance, in other words, is not only an aesthetic event, but a *rhetorical* event, as the performer, in a manner of speaking, persuades the listening audience to participate in and agree with his/her way of directing the communal experience.

The Metonym, Rhetorically Speaking

We can trace the rhetorical study of metonymy back to the ancient Greek rhetoricians, who considered it one of the major tropes. However, the ancients tended to define metonymy rather vaguely, depending on examples to communicate its meaning (Arata 2005:65). Metonymy, like most figures and tropes, was thought to be decorative, a feature of style enhancing the beauty of a speech but adding little to the content. More recently, rhetoric has recognized the cognitive function of metonymy, starting with the work of Kenneth Burke (1945:503), who identified metonymy as one of the four master tropes that play a role in discovering truth (along with metaphor, synecdoche, and irony). In other words, a metonym is not merely a literary embellishment, but represents the associative process that underlies much of how human beings access and create knowledge. As a persuasive tool, metonymy allows a rhetor to tap into shared associations with his or her audience.

The previous sentence is a useful, albeit reductive, definition of the Burkean concept of rhetorical identification. For Burke, “you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his” (1969:55). Essentially, Burke believed that human beings are naturally alienated from one another. The rhetoric of identification is an attempt to create connection and eliminate the division. Metonymic referentiality can be viewed as a type of identificatory rhetoric—the oral traditional poet not only creates complex, traditional meaning by the use of recognized epithets, but he also creates a commonality with and among listeners. Using and understanding the associative meanings of the epithet demonstrates that an individual belongs to this traditional community. An outsider wanting to belong must come to understand not just the words, but their associative meaning. An outsider seeking to move this audience rhetorically can do so by effectively tapping into the same metonymic system of reference used by the oral traditional poet, by identifying himself or herself with the values and assumptions that the audience traditionally associates with these words.

Tradition as Rhetoric

When I present the concept of metonymic referentiality to students in various courses in rhetoric or literacy studies, I ask them to tell me the story of the three little pigs. Most students can easily string together the appropriate phrases and sequence of events: houses of straw, sticks, and bricks; “little pig, little pig, let me (come) in;” and so on. This example clearly illustrates to

them how the structural aspects of an oral tradition allow the oral poet, with no recourse to writing, to string together long poems. But more is required to understand how these features create meaning, which is the essence of metonymic referentiality. Meaning is also the necessary element for such features to work as rhetoric.

Recently, when one student said, “and then a wolf comes in,” another student quickly corrected, “no, it’s a *big bad wolf*.” The second student’s correction is crucial. A wolf is just a large snarly dog; a *big bad wolf* is a metonymic reference to a tradition of fairy tales. Because children in the United States grow up experiencing multiple stories of big bad wolves, the sum total of every single example is evoked by the use of the familiar phrase. The idea is so ingrained that for the metonym to work, one does not even need to be telling a fairy tale. The phrase can easily be transferred to a different rhetorical context; a politician, for instance, could label an opponent a “big bad corporate wolf” who threatens working class jobs. Because of the audience’s traditional associations with the phrase “big bad wolf,” the charge resonates not only in the situation of the speech, but taps into the emotions of fear and threat to innocence represented by the wolf in the fairy tales. “Wolf” by itself can certainly work rhetorically; metaphorically, it embodies the image of a dangerous and predatory animal. But the full phrase “big bad wolf” works on a much deeper level by creating a cognitive pathway to the fairy tale tradition, perhaps long forgotten on a conscious level, but easily accessible through the familiar metonymic trigger.

More importantly, the echo of the fairy tale tradition in the rhetor’s use of metonymy is an attempt to establish a connection between the rhetor and the audience. The politician’s speech is not, strictly speaking, a traditional performance. However, the invoking of a traditional construct is a powerful rhetorical act that seeks to unite speaker and audience, to create a sense that they are indeed a community because they have a common referent from which to draw. The metonym attempts to create a shadow-tradition to convince the audience that they and the speaker have that shared experience. It says, we speak the same language, we understand each other, and we are united as a community in this moment. Thus the politician’s “big bad wolf” metonym is not only a pathway to associations of the fairy tale wolf, it is a pathway to the much more significant subconscious notion of the shared traditional experience itself, Burkean identification at its deepest level.

Conclusion

The rhetorical need to create community by metonymically tapping into shared experience has never been more apparent than in the information age. Russ Willerton (2005:10-11) demonstrates that visual images (so important in a multimedia world) with a metonymic reference to their theme, such as an apple on a desk to represent education, are easier for designers to convey and for their audiences to understand. The shared associations allow a visual shorthand for the designers that functions similarly to those used by the oral poet or the rhetor. The success of any blog or Internet discussion forum relies on a group of individuals who are complete strangers in real life to form an online community, with an emerging language that expresses the shared assumptions and values of that community. Ask any long-term participant in

the Chronicle of Higher Education's forum discussions about "hu." On the surface or to an outsider, it's a simple gender-neutral pronoun. Metonymically, in this community, it's a word to use if you are spoiling for a fight—it invokes a long (in Internet terms) history of arguments about its use and appropriateness.

Foley's groundbreaking work on The Pathways Project (2011-) demonstrates that ancient modes of communication and performance have much in common with those of the Internet age. Redefining the place of interaction for a performer or an Internet user as an Agora, or marketplace, Foley compares oral traditional performance and Internet interaction in ways that productively elucidate both. In terms of the metonym, "oWords" (oral traditional units of thought) and "eWords" (electronic units of thought) are shown to function similarly in creating idiomatic, community-dependent pathways to meaning. The key similarity, however, is in the lack of closure. Unlike a text that is static and contained, both the o-performance and the e-performance are open-ended, dynamic, and changeable. This characteristic of Internet communication is vital for scholars of rhetoric to note. It affects the choices made by a rhetor, who must adapt persuasive techniques to this changeable medium. More importantly, it enables the understanding that those choices are rooted in oral traditions—an essential part of human communication and communal identity formation that predates the formal study of rhetoric by millennia.

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Heroic Register, Oral Tradition, and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*

Rebecca Richardson Mouser

The Middle English *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (the *Morte* henceforth) begins with an appeal by the poet for his audience to listen to him as he tells his tale, thus asking them to focus on the aurality of his words. The poet implies an audience that is present in the telling, using first-person plural pronouns and mentioning the need for silence while the tale takes shape. By doing so, the poet highlights the centrality of speech in the heroic narrative about to ensue and invokes a particular performance frame, one that will be “keyed” by various aspects familiar to an audience fluent in the tradition.¹ Of primary importance to this framing are both the alliterative meter and the nature of character speech, and it is my contention that this performance frame marks the text as heroic in the same vein as Old English heroic poetry, signaling a way to “read”² the text that gives meaning to events that might be confusing for a modern audience, such as the two deaths of the Roman Emperor Lucius.

The *Morte* is an alliterative poem—a member of the so-named “Alliterative Revival,” a fourteenth-century poetic movement that employed the alliterative meter rather than the contemporary syllabic/rhyme-based verse form of Chaucer and other court poets.³ Its subject matter concerns King Arthur’s wars with the Roman Empire, his betrayal by Mordred, and his subsequent death, and, as is the case for a large number of these alliterative poems, it is usually categorized as a romance.⁴ Though much has been debated about the nature of the alliterative

¹ Richard Bauman addresses the idea of framing a verbal performance, citing several aspects that can “key” or signal such a performance to an audience versed in the tradition. Among these keys are parallelism, special codes, figurative language, special formulae, and appeals to tradition (1977:16).

² John Miles Foley, in *How to Read an Oral Poem*, explains the difficulty of defining “reading” based only on textual models: “Reading is complex. It names a diverse set of practices across the geographical and chronological expanse of human activity. It cannot be portrayed as any single practice without disenfranchising dozens of cultures, without disenfranchising out of existence a healthy percentage of possible ‘ways of taking’ from texts” (2002:74). In the case of the alliterative romances, a “way of taking” from the texts, I argue, is to understand that gaps are filled in by the traditional knowledge that an audience inside the tradition would already have access to simply by familiarity with the heroic register.

³ For a more complete discussion of the debate surrounding the poems of the Alliterative Revival and their continued poetics, see Pearsall 1982; Oakden 1968; Turville-Petre 1977; and Cable 1991.

⁴ Romance as a genre is fluid in its definitions. It will be beyond the scope of this article to engage with the various definitions and points of argument. For my purposes, I am working with the broad idea that a romance is a text that engages with chivalric behavior and knighthood.

verse itself—whether the poetics is a natural evolution from that of Old English poetry⁵ or is significantly different and thus evidence of a disconnect in the tradition—the more important question, I would argue, is why these poems warrant the alliterative meter at all. What is it about their content that calls for a certain frame of reference that the alliterative meter provides, whether or not the tradition is continuous or revived?

For me, the answer to that question lies in a two-tiered process by which the Germanic heroic register is activated, the meter being the first key in establishing the particular communication mode for the audience. Harkening back to a pre-Conquest poetics, the alliteration situates the poem as one participating in a tradition older than those Anglo-Norman romances based on ideas of *fin'amor* (“fine love,” that is, “courtly love”). In this case, the alliteration signals that, even though the poem belongs to the post-Conquest romance tradition, Old English oral poetics will nonetheless be utilized as a significant mode of communication in the exchange. As John Miles Foley explains, “entering the performance arena means opening a specific, dedicated channel for communicating and participating in a focused kind of exchange” (1999:23). Alliteration on its own, however, is insufficient to establish the particular register, since alliterative meter in Old English verse was of course used for all poetry and not limited to heroic contexts. Other aspects (such as heroic modes of speaking⁶) will signal that the *Morte* is not primarily a religious poem or one of the other types of poems encountered in Old English. Rather, it will be more specifically heroic in its thematic content. The meter thus functions to prepare an audience familiar with the oral tradition to enter into a performance arena with expectations based on Old English oral poetics, but, in order to stress the heroic nature of this exchange, the arena must be more specifically keyed by the use of character speech-acts throughout the poem.

With the general frame of Old English tradition established by the alliterative verse, the distinctly heroic register is first signaled by the poet’s direct address to the audience. A similar direct address begins the Old English poem *Beowulf*. As has been discussed by Foley (1991:214-23), the *Hwæt* paradigm signals a heroic episode and comprises three main features: *Hwæt*, a verb of aurality/orality (usually one of hearing), and the use of a first-person pronoun (often plural in order to include the audience). Like the *Beowulf* poet’s beginning lines (ll. 1-3):⁷

⁵ Some recent studies have focused on tracing the alliterative shift in the poems of the fourteenth century back to Old English poetics; see, for instance, Bredehoft 2005. However, it is beyond the scope of this investigation to address the specific metrical workings of the alliterative lines in both Old and Middle English poetry. For a discussion of Old English meter more generally, see Russom 1987 and Creed 1966. In terms of the form, the alliteration in Middle English does not seem to function in exactly the same way as its Old English relative, which relies on stress patterns rather than syllabic ones. Old English poetic meter is structured around four primary stresses per line, three of which were guided by alliteration. This function is seemingly absent from the poems of the Alliterative Revival. For discussion of alliterative verse and Anglo-Saxon oral-formulaic composition, see also Lord 1960; Foley 1990; O’Brien O’Keeffe 1990; Niles 1983; Renoir 1988.

⁶ For a discussion of heroic genres of speaking, including commands and flyting, as applied to the *Iliad* specifically, see Martin 1989.

⁷ The Old English for this article follows the conventions used in the fourth edition of Klaeber’s *Beowulf* (Fulk et al. 2008), without the use of macrons or indication of half-line breaks. Middle English quotations are taken from Benson and Foster 1994. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Hwæt, we Gar-Dena in geardagum,
 þeodcyniga þrym gefrunon,
 hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon

Listen, we have heard of the glory of the spear-Danes, of the people kings, how the nobles
 performed (deeds of) courage.

the poet of the *Morte* also invokes the audience through the use of the first-person plural (ll. 1-6):

Now grete glorious God through grace of Himselven
 And the precious prayer of his pris Moder
 Sheld us fro shamesdeede and sinful workes
 And give us grace to guie and govern us here
 In this wretched world through virtuous living
 That we may kaire til his court, the kingdom of heven. . . .

Now the great glorious God through his own grace and the precious prayer of his excellent mother
 shield us from shameful deeds and sinful works and give us grace to guide and to govern us here
 in this wretched world, through virtuous living that we may go to his court, the kingdom of
 heaven. . . .

As shown by the use of “us” in lines 3 and 4, the poet does not pray to God on his own behalf but on behalf of his audience. He then further heightens their role by directly addressing the audience and instructing them as to how they should behave in hearing the tale (ll. 12-16):

Ye that lust has to lithe or loves for to here
 Of elders of olde time and of their awke deeds,
 How they were lele in their law and loved God Almighty
 Herkenes me hendely and holdes you stille,
 And I shall tell you a tale that trew is and noble.

You who desire to listen or loves to hear of elders of old times and of their strange deeds, how they
 were loyal in their law and loved God Almighty, hearken to me courteously and hold yourselves
 still, and I shall tell you a tale that is true and noble.

As with the Old English heroic poem, the poet here assumes audience complicity and knowledge of the deeds he will relate. Notice that his opening appeal also references the deeds of these elders from olden times, just as the noble deeds of the Spear-Danes from days of old function to set the stage in *Beowulf*. This opening thus frames the performance, setting parameters for the audience members who agree to read this poem as a heroic text similar to *Beowulf*, the audience members themselves becoming the “us” who are to be blessed and the “you” the poet envisions.

The *Morte*'s close alignment with the heroic oral tradition can largely be seen through its extensive use of character speech-acts⁸ that resonate through their Old English models. The poem is alive with *beots*,⁹ commands, and instances of naming, all of which anchor the poem firmly in a heroic oral tradition even though the text was produced during a time of growing literacy in England.¹⁰ Chief among these speech-acts is the *beot*: for the *beots* issued at the beginning of the poem create end events that are often difficult for modern scholars to explain and engage with, such as the perceived two deaths of the Emperor Lucius, an event that is often avoided or glossed over by scholars.¹¹ However, as we shall see, because the *beot* to strike down Lucius is established twice—once through a collection of knights representing King Arthur himself and again through Lancelot, a heroic figure known in the Arthurian tradition not only for his betrayal of the king with Guinevere as evidenced in the Anglo-Norman tradition but also for his prowess in battle—the promised action must be fulfilled not once, but twice.

The relevant *beot* sequence follows the opening scene of the *Morte* where a banquet is being held during the Christmastime holiday.¹² As the knights are preparing for their feast, delegates from the Roman Emperor Lucius enter, demanding the tribute they claim Arthur owes to the Empire. What ensues is a chorus of *beots* in support of King Arthur. All of his knights, beginning with the oldest, most esteemed among them such as Sir Cador, “counsel” Arthur through their pledges—vows in martial support of the King should he choose to wage war against Lucius. These vows as a collective empower Arthur and enable him to seek war, thereby creating the action to follow as Arthur will depart to march on Rome. But they also function to bind Arthur himself to the specific task of killing Lucius.

But in addition, one particular *beot*, that sworn by Sir Lancelot at lines 372-77, anticipates another important deed that also must be enacted before the end of the poem:

⁸ J. L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1975:5-6) explains that a speech-act is a spoken utterance that creates an action by means of that utterance, such as the naming of a ship. Though I will be applying this label to written texts, I argue that the speech uttered by the character cannot be effectively separated from the action it creates without destroying the meaning of the action, as with commands and *beots*.

⁹ In Old English poetry, the *beot* is a promissory speech-act. A character, such as Beowulf, who vows to perform an action will fulfill that vow if he is a heroic character. An example is Beowulf's vow to cleanse Heorot of Grendel, whom he does indeed kill. His *beot* fulfills the guidelines outlined by linguist John R. Searle for a promise: that it must be included in a longer discourse and indicate a future event, that the hearer wants the proposed action to take place and it would not occur in the normal chain of events, and that the speaker is sincere and sees the promise as an obligation (1986:67-69). *Beots* in Old English fulfill all of these requirements, as does the *beot* in the *Morte*.

¹⁰ Cf. Amodio 2004. Amodio's work examines how remnants of oral tradition survive in a culture that becomes more literate and more strongly influenced by continental practices after the Norman Conquest. He argues that one should remember that the “termini” of “purely oral” and “purely literate” are theoretical and civilizations exist somewhere along the continuum, not at the “loci termini” (2004:4).

¹¹ Summaries of the poem often merely state that Lucius is slain (not mentioning the two occurrences) as is the case in Valerie Krishna's introduction to her verse translation: “Finally, the battle with the Emperor takes place. On the field Arthur's knights fulfill the vows they had made at the council; Lucius is slain, and Arthur is victorious” (1983:xv). In an earlier article, Krishna also notes that the repetitious language of the poem has often “caused critics some unease” (1982:74). In the edition of Benson and Foster an endnote to the scene merely states: “The emperor evidently recovers very quickly, for he is soon back in battle” (1994:274).

¹² In some respects, this scene also resonates with other oral traditional patterns, as it is also employed as the opening scene for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

“ . . . I shall be at journee with gentle knightes
 On a jamby steed full jollily graithed,
 Ere any journee begin to joust with himselven
 Among all his giauntes, Genivers and other,
 Strike him stiffly fro his steed with strenghe of mine handes,
 For all the steren in stour that in his stale hoves!”

“ . . . I shall be at the day’s fight with noble knights on an active steed full jollily equipped, and before any battle begins, to joust with Lucius himself among all his giants, Genoese and other kinds, (and) strike him stoutly from his steed with the strength of my hands, before all his strong ones who remain in his troop in the battle!”

Lancelot’s vow to “strike him stiffly . . . with strenghe of mine handes” creates the action that he later performs, though it must likewise be King Arthur who kills Lucius. The poet, aware of the binding nature of these traditional vows and their inseparability from the actions to come, later narrates both of these forecast events in the battle scene accordingly, a technique both typical and acceptable in oral traditional “texts.” First, we have Lancelot who spies Lucius in a vulnerable position. He rides forward and strikes him as promised (ll. 2073-80):

Now buskes Sir Launcelot and braides full even
 To Sir Lucius the lord and lothly him hites;
 Through paunce and plates he perced the mailes
 That the proud pensel in his paunch lenges!
 The hed hailed out behind an half foot large,
 Through hawberk and haunch with the hard wepen;
 The steed and the steren man strikes to the ground,
 Strak down a standard and to his stale wendes!

Now Sir Lancelot hurries and pulls up even with Sir Lucius. He loathly hits him; through the stomach guard and plates of armor he pierced the mail with the proud pennon, lodges it in his stomach! The head (of the pennon) sticks out a half foot behind him, through the hauberk and haunch with the hard weapon; the steed and stern man Lancelot strikes to the ground, struck down a standard and his stale company.

Lancelot executes his vow at this moment, striking down Lucius in completion of the speech-act. The graphic description of his attack suggests that Lucius is indeed dead at this point. After all, he is impaled with the pennon and struck to the ground with his horse. Lancelot has been true to his word and performed the deed that his *beot* promised. But the same is also true for King Arthur himself, who only two hundred lines later kills Lucius anew: “Thus endes the Emperour of Arthure handes” (“Thus dies the Emperor by the hands of Arthur,” l. 2255). Both Arthur and Lancelot have vowed to kill Lucius, and so the heroic framing in concert with the traditional register enables and compels both death events to be narrated, even if from a text-based perspective the dual narration might at first appear redundant.

Of course, I am not arguing that this text and the other romances of the Alliterative Revival are oral-derived texts, an assertion that would be folly. However, by invoking a pre-Conquest poetics through the use of the alliterative meter and by activating the heroic register more specifically through speech-acts that mirror those of Old English heroic verse, the poet effectively creates a performance frame that resonates from the earlier tradition. By doing so, he creates meaning in key scenes such as the death of Lucius, where the audience sees both *beots* by Lancelot and King Arthur come to fruition. It is not a mistake on the part of the poet, but rather an important event that can and must happen because of the traditional significance of the knights' speech-acts. Reading the text of the *Morte* on its own heroic terms, therefore, allows modern audiences to appreciate the fulfillment of such vows rather than criticize the poem as flawed in its portrayal of events.

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Prisons, Performance Arena, and Occupational Humor

Claire Schmidt

Q: What are the first three things you get when you become a correctional officer?

A: A car, a gun, and a divorce (Conover 2001:89)

As the preceding joke suggests, prisons are stressful, exhausting, low-paying, and dangerous places to work, and correctional officers must find ways to negotiate their multiple occupational stressors. Humor thus becomes an essential multi-tool for correctional officers and, as such, merits serious study. Not only do correctional officers use joking behavior to disavow and mask such seriousness under the cover of frivolity and laughter, but they also employ occupational humor to communicate nuanced meanings that may not be effectively expressed in any other mode. Correctional officer (CO) occupational humor is therefore traditional, specialized, and highly dependent on context and insider status. Though rarely, if ever, studied in detail, the messages communicated through occupational humor are often essential to occupational and institutional well-being. This note focuses ultimately on a single joke that illustrates the broader range of CO humor, which also includes practical jokes, formal jokes, observational humor, conversational humor (as proposed by Neil Norrick [1993]), mimicry, and parody. As opposed to the many studies of prison life that focus on inmates, my own ethnographic research is with largely white, generally Midwestern, correctional officers, social workers, and medical and administrative staff working within a space that can usefully be understood through what Richard Bauman (1977) calls an “interpretive frame” or John Miles Foley describes as the “performance arena” (1995:47). To illustrate the insights that can be gained from this particular approach, I offer first a general discussion of the CO performance arena based on my own research and fieldwork and conclude with a more focused analysis of a specific example of CO humor taken from literary journalist Ted Conover’s ethnographic book, *New Jack: Guarding Sing Sing*.

In my ethnographic research, my collaborators¹ emphasize the importance of humor; they assert that a successful CO must have a sense of humor in order to tolerate the job. The ability to speak the occupational language, to “speak the job,” as Tim Tangherlini describes it in *Talking Trauma* (1998), is necessary for occupational success. This success encompasses the worker’s

¹ I use the term “collaborator” to refer to the corrections workers and social workers who spoke with me, granted me interviews, and provided essential feedback on my research. I use this term for its implications of equality and cooperation, as well as shared goals and ownership of the research.

ability to perform the job while maintaining sufficient job satisfaction (including self-respect and manageable stress levels) to ensure they can remain in the job without burnout, and even advance within the institution. Successful long-term employees must be able to interpret the verbal register of the community, and part of this occupational literacy involves being fluent in occupational humor.

CO humor takes place within a physical and social space I refer to here as the “performance arena.” The performance arena, according to Foley, is “the locus where the event of performance takes place, where words are invested with their special power” (1995:47). The performance arena may be located in a correctional facility, or it may just as easily be in a bar, on the telephone, or in a state van while transporting prisoners. Therefore, when one CO mimics a supervisor for the amusement of another officer, the performance and its reception take place within a specialized context that endows the mimicry with heightened communicative power. As Foley notes (1995:28), “to be situated within the performance arena is to be alive to the metonymic referentiality that the given register institutionally encodes.” Thus, the mimicry is performed in a traditional register and carries the gravitas of tradition. The audience understands mimicry as part of their shared occupational life, and the performance communicates complicated issues of power differentials, institutional health, and moral ambiguity; at the same time, the mimic demonstrates individual skill and comedic talent. Since this “richly contexted array of meanings . . . can be communicated only through the special, ‘dedicated’ set of channels that constitute the multivalent experience of performance” (Foley 1995:28), the audience and the performer collectively construct an occupational arena that makes the multiple meanings possible.

CO humor is a form of immanent art. Immanence, as Foley defines it, is the “set of metonymic, associative meanings institutionally delivered and received through a dedicated idiom or register either during or on the authority of traditional oral performance” (1995:7). When a CO jokes about the quality of prison food, the audience understands that the laughable qualities of institutional food are emblematic of the laughable qualities of the Department of Corrections. Joking about institutional food is not unique to prison life (school cafeterias and hospital food are certainly loci of American humor traditions) but within the specialized register of CO occupational humor, the performer and the audience have access to a specific set of shared meanings and implications about their shared working life. The traditional discourse of food humor provides an opportunity for correctional officers to address anxieties about the interiors of bodies, contamination, mental health, and a lack of meaning and rational order within the setting of their job. While the surface level of a joke about mystery meat allows for the pleasure of recognizing the familiar and appreciating a successful comedic delivery—and that surface level should not be undervalued—the traditional nature of the joke and its immanent meanings within the performance arena allow for specialized communication that may not take place through any other means.

CO humor is often offensive to outsiders (and even to some insiders). The register of CO humor is so specialized and dependent on a shared identity and shared context that those who are not “literate” in that register are sometimes unable to receive the multiplicity of its encoded messages, and accordingly they tend to focus on the surface of a joke, and the often ethically ambiguous and ambivalent issues it raises. I do not wish to downplay the seriousness of

inappropriate humor about homosexuality, violence against inmates, women, and children, but it is worth emphasizing that these are real and relevant topics to those employing the CO joking register. A joke may simultaneously be funny to an insider because it feels “true” and morally reprehensible to an outsider because it feels hateful.

I would like to conclude with an exploration of a single joke told by a CO to a group of correctional officers. This joke was told to Ted Conover during his stint as a CO at New York’s famed Sing Sing prison. Conover worked as a CO for nine months in order to write *New Jack*; he was barely able to stand the prison work for that long, though he had originally planned on holding the job for a full year. This is the joke (Conover 2001:100):

How do you know when an inmate is lying?
When you see him open his mouth.

The joke can be understood as a discrete unit, a “word,” as proposed by Foley (2002). Although it is not from an oral epic or performed by a poet, the joke functions as a piece of oral art and as a speech act. The audience and the speaker recognize the joke *as a joke*—it is not everyday speech, but spoken within a joking register. Thus, as “a unit of utterance, an irreducible atom of performance” (Foley 2002:13), this joke or “word” carries meanings “larger and more complex than the literal sum of [its] parts, meanings that enrich the story being performed by reference to the implied . . . tradition” (18). The audience members receive this joke within the performance arena and the meanings that are transmitted and understood consequently range well beyond the literal level of the words, even if not every audience member understands the joke in the same way.

The officers who laugh at this joke signal much by their laughter. First, the laughter indicates appreciation of successfully delivered verbal humor. The laughter of the hearers is the measure of the joke’s success. Additionally, the performance arena—the performer, the audience, the institutional setting, and the joke-telling register—allows for a set of meanings to be created and conveyed through humor. For instance, the joke asks its audience to identify themselves with officers and against inmates, reinforcing occupational identity. Those who laugh likely understand the joke as a statement about shared identity. The performance arena also establishes CO’s as moral arbiters—those who are responsible for decoding and judging lies. This responsibility resonates with the responsibility for the safety of their fellow officers as well as the well-being of the inmates in the correctional facility and indeed of the general public, whom incarceration of inmates ostensibly protects. The joke also highlights the function of speech and its reception more broadly. By discounting everything that comes out of an inmate’s mouth as “lies,” the joke minimizes the inmate’s access to communicative strategies.

In contrast, Conover’s implied hostile silence, rather than laughter, sets him apart from the teller and the laughing audience, marking him as rejecting this attempt at communication of shared meaning. In this joke, all inmates are homogenized as untrustworthy verbal con artists. Conover resists the homogenization of inmates by means of CO humor throughout *New Jack* while simultaneously emphasizing (though unanalytically) the importance of humor in corrections work (2001:87).

It is important to note that this joke has been removed from its original context; Conover's journalistic style omits much of the performance context that a scholar of oral tradition looks for and documents. Similarly, in my own ethnographic fieldwork, I encounter context second-hand: my collaborators tell me about jokes and joking behavior that happen at work, but due to the controlled environment of correctional facilities, I will never see the inside of their offices or witness an on-the-job joke telling session. However, equipped with an awareness of the metonymic and highly communicative power of these specialized traditional registers, I can ask questions about the original performance arena and draw informed preliminary conclusions. While ultimately my ethnographic research relies on a second-hand understanding of the original performance arena, what emerges is a first-hand understanding of a new performance arena—one that includes me as ethnographer, and my collaborators as performers.

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ORAL TRADITION

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***Beowulf's* Singers of Tales as Hyperlinks**

Peter Ramey

This short essay is written in appreciation of John Miles Foley, who has done more than any other contemporary scholar to probe the analogy between oral tradition and more recent Internet technology. He has explored this correlation both theoretically (most fully in *The Pathways Project* [2011-] and *Oral Tradition and the Internet: Pathways of the Mind* [2012]) and methodologically (in, for instance, his 2004 electronic edition of *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey*), and in so doing he has opened up fresh perspectives on oral traditional aesthetics. In light of his contributions, I would like to build on his work in this area to consider an important feature of *Beowulf*, the recurring scenes of poetic performances by a singer (or *scop*), interpreting these moments as non-linear hyperlinks that connect the heroic narrative to a wider network of poetic tradition and thus help the audience navigate the thread of that heroic tale through a web of alternate songs and stories.¹

These performance scenes have not lacked for commentators. Early Oral-Formulaic approaches generally viewed such scenes as straightforward depictions of the process of oral composition (Lord 1960:200; Opland 1980; see also Magoun 1955), whereas more recent work has emphasized that, far from being simple ethnographic descriptions, these scenes of performance are themselves idealized poetic images that form part of the epic fabric of the poem as a whole (Frank 1993; Niles 2003; Amodio 2005). Yet despite their marked poetic stylization, these scenes can still offer valuable clues for how their generative oral tradition was understood to work. By examining the affinities between oral traditional poetry and cloud computing in his *The Pathways Project*, Foley (2011-) draws out some of the ways such performance scenes in *Beowulf* and other oral-derived poems display an understanding of oral tradition as a dynamic

¹ Discussions of hypertext and interactive digital media as theoretical concepts have now a long history, and the body of relevant scholarship is too vast to summarize conveniently here. A useful introductory collection of essays and excerpts on this and related subjects is *The New Media Reader* (2003), edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, and especially helpful is its included essay by Stuart Moulthrop, "You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media" (691-704). A more specific application of these concepts within *Beowulf* scholarship is Kevin Kiernan's *Electronic Beowulf* (<http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/>), an impressive editorial implementation of some of the ideas discussed here, as it integrates facsimiles of the Nowell Codex, transcriptions, and alternate readings of text through an interactive interface.

network that, much like the Internet, can be navigated by different routes according to the exigencies of the particular performance situation.²

In this brief essay I would like to press Foley's point further by exploring the way in which these scenes of performance not only *depict* the tradition as an active network but are also used to *enact* this network in terms of poetic structure. Much like embedded hyperlinks, these scenes of performance function as portals that lead out from the main narrative, allowing for sudden shifts in time and place, offering alternative narratives and themes, and as a whole helping to situate the story of the hero Beowulf within a wider poetic web of traditional song. While *descriptively* these performance scenes may not portray the actual practice of oral performance in Anglo-Saxon England with ethnographic precision, *structurally* they activate an oral traditional poetics that, even in written form, positions *Beowulf* as an ongoing performance event rather than a finished or fixed text. In short, singers recur throughout *Beowulf* because they are figures around which this traditional interconnectivity is centered; through them the greater traditional network is activated and carried within the epic itself.

Let me briefly summarize these scenes of performance that permeate the poem. In the first half of *Beowulf* they frequently occur at key junctures, intervals of relative calm following or preceding the dramatic action.³ The first of these is the *scop*'s creation song, which, along with the other sounds of revelry at Heorot, first provokes Grendel's ire (86-92). The singer's clear song (*swutol sang scopes* [89b]) and the sound of his harp (*hearpan sweg* [90a]) are crucial components of the traditional "Joy in the Hall" theme (Hume 1974). While there are other elements to this theme (laughter, pouring drink into shiny cups, and the like), when Anglo-Saxon poets wish to invoke metonymically the joy of community, they almost inevitably mention singing and harp-sounding. The song of the *scop* is not merely an element of the poetic image of *dream* (OE: "mirth, joy") but the very culmination of it, the moment where, at the height of communal delight, members of this heroic society achieve a kind of union through collective dreaming. It is this communal meaning of the *scop*'s song, naturally, that Grendel cannot endure.

Grendel manages to silence the singer for some time, and the *scop* resurfaces only upon the arrival of the Geats, as if cued by the promise of restored social order (496-98; 611-12). Following Beowulf's victory we are then given two more performances. In the morning after Grendel's defeat the king's thane recites the praise of Beowulf along with the stories of Sigemund and Heremod (867b-915b), and then again, following the repairs to Heorot, a poet sings a *giedd* recounting the bloody Finnsburh feud (1063-1160), an inset performance nearly 100 lines in length. We would expect another performance to follow Beowulf's second victory; Hrothgar's lengthy "sermon" apparently fulfills this function (1700-84). Upon Beowulf's return to Geatland the poetry shifts focus from communal *dream* to loss. The "Joy in the Hall" images of harp and song are cited only as absences or memories. Instead, individuals perform a series of

² See, for example, "The *Beowulf* Poet's Medieval English Cloud" in the "Cloud and Tradition" node of The Pathways Project (http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Cloud_and_Tradition), in which Foley (2011-) discusses the description in *Beowulf* of one such performance that follows the hero's victory over Grendel (868-70a). Here Foley points out how this description "provides inside testimony on the cloudlike tradition to which any performance of an oral poem connects." In this particular case, the *scop* draws from that cloudlike tradition two contrasting exempla in order to demonstrate to Beowulf two very different potential futures.

³ All following citations of the Old English text of *Beowulf* are taken from Bjork et al. 2008.

laments, as an anonymous and solitary “last survivor” and a heartbroken father both recite elegies (2247-66; 2444-71). The poem then comes to a close with two funeral songs; a Geatish woman utters a litany of impending horrors that will accompany the disintegration of the social fabric (3150-55), and 12 warriors, circling Beowulf’s tomb, solemnly eulogize the fallen king (3169-77).

What does this cursory overview tell us? First, poetic performances are frequently attached to crucial moments in the narrative where they operate as variations on the main action that echo and underscore it and provide alternate and contrasting scenarios. By linking the major events of Beowulf’s heroic career to other narratives or lyrics, they reveal the lateral, traditional significance of these occurrences, rather than their sole significance as determinants for the plot of *Beowulf*.⁴ In this way they give the individual events of Beowulf’s life added depth and resonance. Second, and more generally, this overview highlights the thoroughly structural role of these performances. Rather than adding a patina of oral traditional performance to the poem, these embedded singers and their songs work pervasively to structure the narrative as an oral poetic event by situating the main narrative of *Beowulf* itself within an ongoing stream of hyperlinked performance and traditional narrative. These *scop* scenes, in other words, do not merely depict traditionality; they are used continually to activate it.

The correspondence between hyperlinks and the embedded performance scenes is worth stressing in order to avoid imposing our own text-based assumptions upon the poem, as has happened with some more recent interpretations of these scenes. Roy Liuzza (2005), for example, has argued that these *scop* performances are nostalgic reconstructions of a lost oral past by Anglo-Saxon writers who now find themselves circumscribed by a literate culture. *Beowulf* as a whole, in Liuzza’s elegant formulation, is a “pastoral of pre-textuality” (105) in which the living world of song and poetic fame is set against the poet’s own textual milieu. Yet while *Beowulf*—and a great many of the world’s oral traditions—is clearly invested in images and myths of the past, interpretations such as Liuzza’s tend to understate the possibility that an oral tradition could continue to play an active role in poetry recorded or composed in writing. Such readings effectively flatten the poem, potentially reducing its dynamic poetics to a textual one. *Beowulf*, of course, *is* a text, but the fact remains that it is not especially effective *as* a text. Its early commentators noted and decried its apparent lack of cohesion, although this *liedertheorie* paradigm gave way to J. R. R. Tolkien’s formalist paradigm with its structural metaphor (1991 [1936]),⁵ which in turn was superseded by John Leyerle’s interlace metaphor taken from Anglo-Saxon and Celtic decorative arts (1991 [1967]). Now, with the advent of the Internet, we have a

⁴ In this respect these scenes operate very much within the framework of what Foley labels “traditional referentiality,” a process that “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” (Foley 1991:7). What distinguishes the *scop* performance scenes as a special case of this phenomenon, however, is the way in which it is the express function of these scenes to import songs and stories from this wider tradition into the text itself. In other words, whereas traditional referentiality can describe the metonymic character of a wide range of traditional elements (and indeed the traditional idiom itself) that metonymically invoke in the audience traditional associations, the *scop* scenes are actually used to carry that tradition *within* the frame of the narrative in the form of songs and stories.

⁵ As Tolkien explains it, the poem’s structure is “essentially a balance, an opposition of ends and beginnings” (32); it is solid, symmetrical, and static—“more like masonry than music” (33).

much more suitable and dynamic analogy. It is this analogy that John Miles Foley has so richly mined over the last decade.

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Rethinking Individual Authorship: Robert Burns, Oral Tradition, and the Twenty-First Century

Ruth Knezevich

In light of recent critical upheaval over cultural icons Bob Dylan and Beyoncé, and their alleged artistic plagiarisms,¹ it behooves us to look at the ways in which precepts of oral tradition can inform our thinking about cultural production within contexts seemingly permeated by ever-present literacy. We can thereby gain a new outlook on such situations of artistic “borrowing” or “plagiarism.” To this end, I present the “traditional” Scottish songs of eighteenth-century poet Robert Burns and his oral-to-text productions included in *The Scots Musical Museum* (Johnson 1962a and 1962b) as a case study for rethinking the model of individual authorship or genius dominating our modern ideologies of creative production. This focus on the career and creative practices of an eighteenth-century cultural icon can in turn help illuminate what is sometimes seen as a twenty-first-century phenomenon of liberally sampling from other artists and genres in the creation of a new work (Noë 2011).

The transition from oral tradition to print publication in Scottish songs during the eighteenth century has proven to be an important and complex subject for scholars of oral traditions and Scottish studies alike, such as in the recent scholarship of Dianne Dugaw (2009) and L. I. Davies (2010). In particular, the trend of Scottish song collection throughout the eighteenth century with its intersection of oral tradition and print publication has recently been well examined, with the oral-literate dichotomy being shown as quite problematic,² and even the position of Robert Burns within the fields of oral tradition, literary criticism, and Scottish song is now beginning to be explored fruitfully.³ However, a complete understanding of Burns’s adoption of oral traditional elements in his writings and its implications for understanding creative production more generally is far from complete.

¹ Bob Dylan’s display of paintings at the Gagosian Gallery in Manhattan has recently come under scrutiny as critics claim that the paintings are merely representations of pre-existing photographs, not originally inspired works, despite Dylan’s own enigmatic claims that the paintings may very well be simply reproductions of the existing photographs (Perpetua 2011). Likewise, popular singer Beyoncé has lately received criticism regarding the choreography showcased in some of her recent music videos, which appears to contain notable similarities to the choreography of Belgian choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker (Trueman 2011).

² See, for example, Newman 2007, McLane 2008, and McDowell 2010.

³ As a representative sample of such work, see Strande-Sørensen 2003, Carruthers 2009, McCue 2009, and Lumsden 2009.

The notion of authorship as an individual practice is widely attributed to the Romantic ideology of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries,⁴ and this “rather superficial sense that literary culture is invariably based around isolated individuals, around the solitary figure of the genius” (Bennett 2005:30) has meshed with Albert Lord’s assertion that “our real difficulty” in comprehending distributed authorship “arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity” (1960:100). We must, therefore, rethink the notion of individual authorship. The Scottish song production of Robert Burns—as well as the song lyrics and paintings of Dylan or the choreography of Beyoncé—demonstrates that the concept of *ex nihilo* creative genius is for the most part an ideological fallacy. Simply put, authorship cannot exist in a cultural vacuum; authors produce works by “creating and re-creating the culture around them” (Lessig 2008:28). Thus, when we examine the ready acceptance of Burns’s Scottish song production “both in oral and published contexts” (McCue 2009:74), we should challenge widely accepted literary conceptions of authorship, focusing instead on the interactions between individual genius and an ambient oral tradition, and in the process better inform our understanding of the creative production process, whether in the Romantic era or today.

As a case study of oral tradition’s intersection with literature, Burns’s contributions to *The Scots Musical Museum* offer a rich array of examples, demonstrating the ways that authorship is inherently a dynamic and interactive process. Shortly after publishing *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786), Burns entered into collaboration with the Edinburgh-based music seller and engraver, James Johnson, to assist in Johnson’s efforts of compiling an exhaustive collection of Scottish folksongs, *The Scots Musical Museum*. In response to “. . . a just and general Complaint, that among all the Music Books of SCOTS SONGS that have been hitherto offered to the Public not one, nor even all of them put together, can be said to have merited the name of what may be called A COMPLETE COLLECTION . . .” (Johnson 1962a, i:iii), Johnson undertook to present “the true lovers of Caledonian Music and Song . . . the admirers of social Music” (*idem*) with a collection of Scottish songs in a portable and affordable publication. Johnson’s efforts to create a multi-volume publication containing every “Scots song extant” (1962a, iv:iii) were finally terminated in 1803, 600 songs, 16 years, and six volumes after Johnson’s initial publication. Burns regarded the efforts he and Johnson invested in compiling *The Scots Musical Museum* as leading to a publication “that to future ages . . . will be the textbook and standard of Scottish [*sic*] Song and Music” (Johnson 1962a, v:iii).

Burns’s contributions to *The Scots Musical Museum* demonstrate the ways in which he drew upon the “communicative economy” (Foley 1995:53) of Scottish folksongs, often fashioning elements or fragments of them into his own compositions. This is demonstrated in the refrain of one of Burns’s earliest original contributions to *The Scots Musical Museum*, “Green Grow the Rashes” (1787):

⁴ The pervasive idea of Robert Burns as a poetic genius can be traced to a host of writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including William Wordsworth in *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (1816), William Motherwell and James Hogg in their introductory remarks to *The Works of Robert Burns* (1840), and Edwin Muir in “Burns and Popular Poetry” as part of *Essays on Literature and Society* (1949). Likewise, many prominent poets offered an assessment of Burns as solitary artist, for instance, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in “Robert Burns” (1880) and Algernon Charles Swinburne in “Burns: an Ode” (1904). For further criticism of this matter, see Higgins 2005.

Green grow the Rashes, O;
 Green grow the rashes, O;
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spent
 Are spent among the lasses, O.

Burns stated that he adopted the recurring refrain in the chorus above from a traditional oral version (Stenhouse 1853:82-83):

Green grow the rashes, O,
 Green grow the rashes, O;
 A feather-bed is nae sae saft,
 As a bed among the rashes, O.

This revision of a time-established song is a telling example supporting Sheila Douglas's observation that "folksingers constantly recreate and remould songs, put new words to old tunes, or old words to new tunes. They tell the story as they feel they want to tell it, create the mood the song evokes in them, whittle down or add to, as they feel appropriate" (1996). Burns demonstrates this method of remolding tradition by constructing his own composition around the refrain of a traditional song, and thereby utilizing conventional structuring techniques—and perhaps also their inherent tradition-encoded meanings—for his own more personalized creations.

In addition to incorporating Scottish folksong fragments into his works, Burns also adapted elements of English poetry into the forms and register of Scottish folksong, such as his reworking of Robert Dodsley's 1749 poem "The Parting Kiss" (LTS 2011):

One kind kiss before we part,
 Drop a tear and bid adieu;
 Though we sever, my fond heart
 Till we meet shall pant for you.

Burns's reshaping of these lines into the standards of Scottish tradition are as follows from the first stanza of his song "Ae Fond Kiss," written expressly for inclusion in *The Scots Musical Museum* (1962a:iv, 358):

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
 Ae farewell and then for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

In his revisions of English poetry, Burns met the expectations of his distinctly Scottish readership by drawing upon a written approximation and representation of the spoken dialect. In modifying the English register into the communicative economy of Scottish folksong, Burns transformed an English poem into a poem now aligned with Scottish tradition through its use of

Lowland Scots dialect.⁵ Burns's songs thus demonstrate what John D. Niles has termed "intervention by an insider," suggesting the following (1993:133):

It sometimes happens that persons born into an oral culture become familiar with the technology of writing, gain something of an outsider's perspective on their traditions, and make a concerted effort to obtain or, perhaps, fashion written texts of what can still be called traditional songs.

Burns certainly both obtained traditional texts and fashioned his own written texts in the manner of Scottish tradition, with some of his personal creations sometimes being identified today primarily as traditional Scottish songs rather than as Burns's own, perhaps nowhere as noticeably as in the New Year's anthem, "Auld Lang Syne" (Johnson 1962a, v:426):

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Burns claimed that this work was his own modern rendering of "an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man" (Lindsay 1959:9). Burns's version of the song, however, bears a striking resemblance to the opening lines of James Watson's poem published in 1711, "Old Long Syne" (1991:230):

Should Old Acquaintance be forgot,
and never thought upon;
The flames of Love extinguished,
and fully past and gone.

Burns's composition also bears resemblance to Allan Ramsay's poem of the same title, beginning "Should auld acquaintance be forgot / though they return with scars" (1724:97). However, rather than being accused of plagiarism, Burns is now often celebrated for his written additions to the Scottish oral tradition of which he was a part "by creating and re-creating [his] culture" (Lessig 2008:28); or, rather than being called solely a poet who created and re-created his culture, Mary Ellen Brown suggests (1984:46-47):

Burns might be called a savior of folksongs because in the words of many commentators, he "rescued" old wrecks of Scottish culture and saved them, often by editing and making hitherto

⁵ It should be noted that in this Scottish re-creation of an English poem, Burns maintains the trochaic tetrameter of Dodsley's, simply completing the final trochee of each line with the unstressed syllable. In maintaining this meter strongly identified with English poetry—including prominent works of Shakespeare and Blake—Burns eschews transposing his Scottish version into a poetic form deeply rooted in Scottish tradition, a form now commonly regarded as "Burns's meter" or the "Habbie Stanza" (Dunn 1997:60-61). However, it is difficult to identify whether Burns's execution of the lesser-used acatalectic form of the trochaic tetrameter rather than the catalectic form of Dodsley's stanza is a matter of taste or of tradition. For further discussion on Burns and poetic meter, see Dunn 1997 and Harvey 2007.

unprintable songs, printable; in this sense he might be called a popularizer, preparing the songs for that collection of popular taste, *The Scots Musical Museum*.

In this way, Burns played a role in shaping the forms of many of the songs included in *The Scots Musical Museum*, be it through writing a wholly new work in line with the communicative economy of Scottish oral tradition, or by simply reworking fragments of a song he had heard.

Both Burns's original and Burns's "remoulded" Scottish folksongs demonstrate his conscious intervention in writing through the appropriation of oral tradition, an authorial practice that he widely exercised in his poetry with great skill: "his efforts in collecting and writing songs were very much the result of his own awareness of the existence of an on-going tradition" (Douglas 1996). This is not to imply that Burns was unable to exercise his poetic abilities only on the basis of what would today be regarded as plagiarism. Rather, this is to point out the dynamic nature of authorship and creative production, such as those practices sometimes criticized in today's popular culture.

Despite the prominent role that Robert Burns played in shaping *The Scots Musical Museum*, his involvement with this publication remains largely overlooked by scholars today. By recognizing Burns's contribution to Johnson's canon of Scottish songs, we indeed profit substantially when we acknowledge the oral traditional roots behind much of Burns's printed work. As we strip away the longstanding Romantic assumption of the author as a solitary genius and instead recognize the author as taking part in a larger, dynamic tradition, we gain a better understanding of the multiplicity of forms that authorship can take. Although there is much work yet to be done in fully understanding Burns's compositional strategies and their exact relationship to a surrounding oral tradition, it is helpful to acknowledge as a first step the foundational presence of that tradition—and particularly its receptionally important communication arenas (or Agoras, as set forth by The Pathways Project [Foley 2011-])—to gain a more comprehensive vocabulary and methodology for fashioning potential models of authorship.

Like Bob Dylan and Beyoncé today, Robert Burns expanded on the productions of previous authors and established traditions to create his rich catalog of Scottish songs. Recognizing this reality allows us to move beyond overly simplistic accusations of plagiarism today by embracing the concept of authorship as a dynamic practice of "creating and re-creating the culture" (Lessig 2008:28) and thereby establish a more complete awareness of authorial practices occurring even in the twenty-first century.

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“A Misnomer of Sizeable Proportions”: SMS and Oral Tradition

Sarah Zurhellen

In The Pathways Project, John Miles Foley (2011-) discusses briefly the social role of SMS (Short Message Service), suggesting that “even so-called text messaging, a misnomer of sizeable proportions given that the activity really amounts to a long-distance emergent communication enacted virtually, knits people together into interactive groups and keeps them connected and ‘present’ to one another.”¹ In this essay, I propose a merger of current research on text messaging and the study of oral traditions in order to shed light on the relationship between this new mode of communication and the workings of consciousness being transformed by the eAgora. Focusing first on the limitations of text messaging as a medium that unexpectedly encouraged language innovation, we can explore how text messaging language merges effective communicative practices from both oral and written technologies in order to generate more efficient communication within a newly-limited, writing-based technology. Moreover, in addition to its efficiency, the kind of linguistic play found in text messaging can be viewed as a source of pleasure for those who engage in texting (“texters”). Thus, by employing the discourse of orality and literacy, we can explain how text messaging, while impossible to imagine without the myriad writing technologies mastered before it, actually encourages its literacy-obsessed users to practice communicative techniques more often found within oral cultures, or more precisely, communicative techniques found in cultures in the incipient stages of literacy. Such cultures are ripe for language innovation precisely because they have begun to record knowledge but have not yet standardized the recording procedure. Coincident with a perspective that sees text messaging as bridging a consciousness gap between oral and literate cultures, then, is the recognition that close study of the ways in which text messaging reworks language could lead to fruitful discoveries about the most current ways in which Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) directs human life toward ever-emerging horizons of consciousness.

When David Crystal (2008) hyperbolized the emergence of text messaging in the following passage, this form of communication was already a well-developed medium. Nevertheless, his humorous figuring of text messaging’s inception, while not quite accurate, highlights precisely the form’s limits that made it such an unlikely competitor in the tightly-wound market of twenty-first-century technologies (173-74):

¹ I would like to thank one of my anonymous reviewers for suggesting that Foley’s figuring of text messaging as “a misnomer of sizeable proportions” would make an excellent title. See the “eTools and oTools” node of the Pathways Project: http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/eTools_and_oTools.

I have this great idea. A new way of person-to-person communication, using your phone. The users won't have a familiar keyboard. Their fingers will have trouble finding the keys. They will be able to send messages, but with no more than 160 characters at a time. The writing on the screens will be very small and difficult to read, especially if you have a visual handicap. The messages will arrive at any time, interrupting your daily routine or your sleep. Oh, and every now and again you won't be able to send or receive anything because your battery will run out. Please invest in it?

SMS was originally intended as a way for mobile providers to share alerts and other service-oriented information with their networks of users. It was conceived, then, as a method of business communication, and it was imagined not as a back-and-forth process (users would not reply to the messages received from their provider) but rather as an end-to-end form of communication. In a nutshell, the idea was never to create dialogue (Faulkner and Culwin 2005:143; Thompson and Cupples 2008:143). Additionally, there were many impediments to the popularization of text messaging. For instance, during the first few years it was practiced, users could not send messages to other users outside of their network. Nor could messages be linked in order to send more than the restrictive 160 characters per text. And, of course, the keypads, which were designed with the traditional telephone in mind, required from one to four presses on a single key to produce the correct letter (Faulkner and Culwin 2005:167). Although these shortcomings have been mitigated by improvements to the networks through which messages are sent and by revisions to the keypad that made it resemble a computer keyboard rather than that of a telephone, many users continue to employ a kind of texting shorthand that is efficient, innovative, and playful. As Crispin Thurlow notes, "while much is made about the technologically imposed need for brevity in SMS, participants' messages seldom used the available space; the length (and abbreviated linguistic forms) of messages would therefore seem instead to be a function of the needs for speed, ease of typing and, perhaps, symbolic concerns" (2003:3). In considering the relationship of text messaging to oral tradition, I would like to suggest that the symbolic functioning of users' language play is of supreme importance.

Text messaging, like oral traditions, is powerfully context-driven, and the form of language innovation it engenders occurs spontaneously and organically through its users.² Crispin Thurlow (2003:6) outlines six non-standard orthographic and/or typographic forms of language development that occur in text messaging "(1) shortenings (i.e. missing end letters), contractions (i.e. missing middle letters), and G-clippings and other clippings (i.e. dropping final letter), (2) acronyms and initialisms, (3) letter/number homophones, (4) 'misspellings' and typos, (5) non-conventional spellings, and (6) accent stylizations." In addition, he takes three sociolinguistic maxims from Herbert Grice (1975) and applies them to text messaging in

² Because of late capitalism's ability to subsume any form of cultural innovation into its own machinations, these practices were picked up by the mobile companies offering texting service, who then used such linguistic play as a marketing tool, but they belong first and foremost to texters, who constantly play with and revise their practice.

English:³ “(1) brevity and speed; (2) paralinguistic restitution; and, (3) phonological approximation.” Indeed, we can already see from Thurlow’s explication of these categories various ways that text messaging seems more like speech than writing. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine a form of language that makes us more aware of language as fragmented bits that have to be put together to make meaning, which is precisely the technologizing of the word referred to first by Walter J. Ong in his seminal 1982 work *Orality and Literacy*. And with text messaging, we are undeniably still working in visual space—a visual space, in fact, of 160 perfectly segmented blocks of information, each most likely incomprehensible unless we put them together in linear order from left to right and top to bottom. However, it is precisely our consciousness of the way these 160 blocks of information, or characters, limit our traditional use of the alphabet that produces the innovative play we find in text messaging. What surfaces, moving from the unconscious to consciousness, is at least in part the phonetic meanings of our typographic symbols.

Each time a writer sends a text message, he or she must decide, often unconsciously, and always coincident with the message itself, what form the message will take—standard or innovative—and if innovative, to what extent. In its attempt to balance convenience and clarity, text messaging oddly resembles early, pre-print manuscripts. As Ong notes, “medieval manuscripts are turgid with abbreviations, which favor the copyist although they inconvenience the reader” (1982:120). Similarly, most texters utilize capitalization and punctuation, not according to standardized orthographical practices, which often require timely explication, but in order to produce the most efficient text in a highly-limited and time-consuming writing medium. Efficiency in the text-messaging medium requires the user’s balancing of brevity, speed, and comprehension.

The audience for a text message is often one person known quite well to the person sending the message. Moreover, the message, although asynchronous, is often received immediately and a reply can come almost as quickly as it could be spoken.⁴ In fact, it would not be incorrect to understand a text message, at least metaphorically, as a kind of call to which the receiver must respond or risk disturbing the discourse expectations. Such a reading of texting as engaging a call and response function is termed the “replying norm” by Ditte Laursen (2005), where it is taken as an aspect of oral conversation that has transferred to the new medium. However, as Ian Hutchby and Vanita Tanna expand on Laursen’s claim, they offer evidence that text messaging does not merely mirror oral conversational practices (2008:157):

³ Studying the text messaging practices of bilingual English and isiXhosa texters, Deumert and Masinyana (2008) provide evidence that these rules are specific to texting in English, and that although texters communicating in other languages may employ similar practices, we should not assume this to be the case. As they explain, “The isiXhosa messages differ markedly from the writers’ English-language messages in that they contain no abbreviated material, non-standard spellings, or paralinguistic restitutions. They thus violate the sociolinguistic maxims of SMS/texting as postulated by Thurlow (2003). These bilingual writers communicate in the electronic medium using two different languages as well as two, non-overlapping sets of sociolinguistic norms” (117).

⁴ Laursen (2005) and Hutchby and Tanna (2008) have conducted the most thorough analyses of the role of turn-taking and the immediacy of responsiveness in text messaging. Most recently, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published a review of Sue Adams’ research into the sleep habits of American college students in which she found that “students feel compelled to wake up in the middle of the night and answer texts” (Rice 2011).

First, in a similar way to the single-action texts discussed previously, package-texts are designed and oriented not as stand-alone epistles which happen to contain multiple action components, but as conditionally relevant interactional objects. Second, not only do they therefore occasion responses, but in their structure those responses differ from responses to multi-unit turns in verbal conversation. They do not tend to favour contiguity, with last action being responded to first, but mirroring of the action-structure in the prior turn.

Thus, Hutchby and Tanna show that “the underlying framework within which sequences of texts can be generated is organized by technological affordances and not, as is the case in conversation, by the temporal unfolding of turn-construction units” (153). Instead of simply mimicking conversation, then, text messaging utilizes components of oral thought, or patterns of thinking related to orality, rather than conversation *per se*—a form of communication that occurs equally (albeit differently) in both oral and literate cultures. Nevertheless, in either case, one’s relationship with the audience is intimately tied to a shared register. As such it is a communication of the present, primarily concerned with the moment at hand and lacking any sense of past or future temporality beyond that necessitated by the immediate relationship between participants.

The intimate relationship between most text messaging practitioners also suggests one of texting’s fundamental differences from Instant Messaging (IM)—perhaps the CMC most closely related to texting and certainly the one most thoroughly researched in terms of its oral/literate hybridity.⁵ In IM and Internet Chat, users may indeed know one another but often they do not, whereas, in contrast, text messaging is embedded in the social practices of young people as a way to stay in touch with friends, build relationships with acquaintances, and flirt with potential romantic partners. (See Kasesniemi and Rautiainen 2002.) While IM and Internet Chat can be used for these purposes, they are more often less intimate and less dependent on immediate social relationships.⁶ The impermanency of text messaging also strongly differentiates it from other forms of CMC. Unlike instant messages and emails, text messages have no automatic archive system. Most phones will store only a certain amount of texts until the memory is full and then the texts are deleted to make room for new ones. While it is possible to save a text indefinitely, it seems to be a very uncommon practice. Similarly, “oral memorization is subject to variation from direct social pressures. Narrators narrate what audiences call for or will tolerate. When the market for a printed book declines, the presses stop rolling but thousands of copies remain. When the market for an oral genealogy disappears, so does the genealogy itself” (Ong 1982:66).

Finally, we witness the return of an important somatic component in text messaging. As Kristine Faulkner and Fintan Culwin point out, “It is no accident that the Finnish word for mobile is ‘kännykkäs’ which is derived from käsi meaning hand and thus stressing the idea of the

⁵ Although a full comparison of these computer-mediated discourses is beyond the scope of this essay, my research here has been informed by Werry 1996, Baron and Ling 2007, and Tagliamonte and Denis 2008.

⁶ This claim is difficult to prove since IM and text messaging practices differ significantly according to geography with text messaging being more popular in Europe and Asia and IM-ing being more popular in the United States. Nevertheless, it is supported by Thurlow’s research, which shows that sixty-one percent of the text messages in his study were of the “high intimacy, high relational orientation” (2003:10).

mobile as an extension of self” (2005:169). From a different disciplinary perspective (that of social geography), Lee Thompson and Julie Cupples argue that while dominant culture may continue to insist on placing orality and literacy in definitely different camps, “new geographies of relations [are] com[ing] into being to reconfigure a number of spatial boundaries including those of the body” (2008:104). The pattern of memorization for keystrokes reengages the hands as important actors in the communication process and revitalizes the role of touch in the process of making meaning. Again, the role of memory in this process resembles oral rather than textual memory in that unlike textual memory, “oral memory has a high somatic component” (Ong 1982:66). Moreover, unlike for typing, there is no standardized method for learning these keystrokes. It is a process of unconscious learning at least as intuitive as it is thought-out, if not more so. And the language innovations that I have already noted are most certainly the result of intuitive rather than analytic knowledge. Although online dictionaries for text messaging abound, they are mainly a source of playfulness as opposed to utility. Very few of the “text words” one finds listed in these indexes are in use in actual text messages. Indeed, the very notion that we would even consider indexing spontaneous and transitory writing like text messaging reveals how strongly inured we are in “the ideology of the text” (Foley 2011-).⁷

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⁷ See the “Ideology of the Text” node of the Pathways Project: http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Ideology_of_the_Text.

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The Old English Verse Line in Translation: Steps Toward a New Theory of Page Presentation

Derek Updegraff

In *How to Read an Oral Poem*, John Miles Foley (2002:104-05) produces an ethnopoetic translation of the opening lines of *Beowulf*, focusing on a structural approach that highlights the poem's major units and patterns in an effort to make today's audience more fluent in the traditional register.¹ Considering the poem's previous presentations, he writes (104):

These conventional editions and translations aren't moving toward *Beowulf* and Anglo-Saxon poetics, but rather toward a "party-line" or consensus concept of what poetry ought to be—how it ought to look and how it ought to work. Since Anglo-Saxon poetics overlaps with this modern concept to some degree, since its terms converge in some ways with our terms, any such presentation can claim ethnopoetic progress. But along with that illusory progress comes the distortion inherent in converting a poem to something it isn't, in reading it into submission.

Anyone who visits a major library and looks through the dozens of translations of *Beowulf* or anthologies of Old English poetry more generally can easily see that verse translators usually give little attention to the page presentation of the poem, despite the great differences in prosodic systems employed in the target language (heroic couplets, blank verse, free verse, attempts at re-creating the alliterative meter of the original, and so on), and in terms of visual lineation most translations of *Beowulf* resemble the stacked whole-lines of Chaucer or Milton. The questions I wish to pursue in this short essay center therefore on the presentation of Old English verse in translation (rather than on the presentation utilized by critical editions): with respect to lineation, what are the default presentations typically employed by verse translators, and how might new directions in graphic representations enhance our understanding of Old English poetics in translation? To pursue these questions, I will use the short lyric *Cædmon's Hymn* as an example

¹ It is a joy to present this note in honor of John Miles Foley, who is of the mold the *Gifts*-poet described so succinctly (ll. 94b-95a): Sum bið boca gleaw, larum leoþufæst ("One is learned in books, skillful in his teachings").

text, briefly illustrating my process of translation and then suggesting some new ways to format the translated text.²

The initial task of the verse translator of Old English is to determine what if any rearranging of verses (half-lines) and smaller grammatical constituents is necessary. While it is possible to produce a verse-by-verse rendering of *Cædmon's Hymn*, some minor adjustments allow the clauses to be recast into more familiar syntactical units. Whether or not Old English meter can be reproduced in present-day English is a difficult question.³ While the short answer to this question is *no*, it is possible to re-create a likeness to the original meter. What follows is a verse translation in which I have used a base pattern of two stresses per half-line, though by necessity about a third of the verses contain three primary stresses in translation.⁴ Alliteration is generally present, but it is no longer meter-governing. The half-lines are fused together in this presentation and I have indicated in brackets to the right my slight syntactical adjustments. Other choices are too minor to warrant comment.

Nu sculon herigean	heofonrices weard,	
meotodes meahte	and his modgeþanc,	
weorc wuldorfæder,	swa he wundra gehwæs,	3
ece drihten,	or onstealde.	
He ærest sceop	eorðan bearnum	

² My desire to answer these questions is in part a response to the challenge issued by Heather Maring (2003), who has urged subsequent scholar-translators of Old English poems to employ the structural ethnopoetic techniques exemplified by Foley (2002). While my brief consideration of lineation will fall short of demonstrating the many structural ways in which ethnopoetics can aid our readings of Old English poems, at the very least I hope to promote a reevaluation of our practices of lineation by demonstrating the complex relationship between our visual and aural perceptions of lines.

³ The question involves moving away from the idea of Old English meter in collective terms and toward the individual metrical characteristics of the poem being translated (for example, taking into account how half-line types are paired in specific lines for particular effect, rather than selecting unsystematically from a grab-bag of numerous verse types and subtypes). Even in cases where present-day cognates seem to fit the pattern outlined in the original, often linguistic changes in stress or mora can alter metric values. If, for example, I wanted to reproduce the exact meter of *frea ælmihtig* (/ / \ x) while maintaining the cognate “almighty,” I could not do so with my current rendering “God almighty” (/ x / x) unless I provided a gloss for a now-unnatural pronunciation “ALL-might-y.” The two-trochee rendering I have is, of course, a very common verse structure in Old English poetry, but it is not a reproduction of the meter of line 9b. The more a translator strays from the meter of individual verses, even if translating them into other acceptable verse patterns in Old English, the more one moves away from the meter of the original poem and fails to reproduce it all.

⁴ It is often the case that secondary stress in Old English gets promoted to full stress in present-day English. For example, *heofonrices weard* (/ (x) \ x /) in my translation becomes “the protector of heaven’s kingdom” (x / x x x / x / x). Here and in the previous footnote the metrical notation is common among Anglo-Saxon metrists: / marks a primary stress, \ marks a secondary stress, and x marks an unstressed syllable. The (x) notation for the second syllable of *heofon* shows the metrical rule of resolution, which occurs when a primary stress is occupied by a syllable whose vowel or diphthong is short by nature and position, thereby sharing the stress over two syllables instead of one. The most important item to consider in this example from verse 1b and my translation of it is the shift from *-rices* (\ x) to “kingdom” (/ x). Secondary stress provides for interesting metrical discussions that this note is unable to examine more fully. But I do think that in many cases secondary stresses would have been sounded with comparable aural values to those of primary stresses; thus, allowing three primary stresses to exist in translation in a non-hypermetric verse can often point back to the original meter more authentically than a translation that seeks somehow to maintain only two primary stresses in every verse.

heofon to hrofe, halig scyppend;	6
þa middangeard moncynnes weard,	
ece drihten, æfter teode	
firum foldan, frea ælmihtig. ⁵	9

Now we must praise the protector of heaven's kingdom,	[1a / 1b]
the might of the maker and his mind's purpose,	[2a / 2b]
the labors of the glorious father—everlasting Lord—	[3a / 4a]
because he brought about each wondrous thing's beginning.	[3b + 4b]
At first he fashioned heaven as a roof	[5a / 6a]
for mankind's children. Then he—holy creator	[5b / þa + 6b]
and protector of people—prepared this middle ground,	[7b / 8b + 7a]
the whole earth, for human beings—	[9a]
everlasting Lord, God almighty.	[8a / 9b]

This is the point where the work of the verse translator of Old English often seems to stop. Whether presentation choice occurs before, during, or after the translation process, the translated work usually resembles one of a few predictable formats: lineated with fused half-lines (as exemplified in my translation above), lineated with a- and b-verse separation (utilized by most critical editions, as exemplified above by the Old English text), or lineated with each verse given the space of a full line, as in the following example:

Now we must praise
the protector of heaven's kingdom,
the might of the maker
and his mind's purpose,

Sometimes, too, in this format the b-verse is indented to illustrate a clearer connection to the a-verse:

Now we must praise
the protector of heaven's kingdom,
the might of the maker
and his mind's purpose,

The advantage of these last two displays is that they aim to preserve the verse-to-verse pulse on which Old English meter is grounded. But to my ear (and eye) the problem of maintaining this format continually, especially in a long narrative poem, is that a reader might be prompted to pause excessively at each medial verse break (now turned into a line break) and thus read aloud in a rhythm that is sometimes at odds with the less pause-friendly syntactical rhythm of present-day English. Conversely, the whole-line display with fused a- and b-verses erases the visual

⁵ Text is from Dobbie 1942:106.

rhythm offered by these short-line presentations. Yet maintaining whole-line integrity and subsuming the b-verse visually has the advantage of promoting an unbroken aural rhythm in the lines where a medial pause would be at odds with the natural grammatical rhythm of the translation, such as between the verb “praise” and its object “the protector of heaven’s kingdom” in line 1 of the above translation. To be sure, these are all productive ways to look at an Old English poem in translation since the Old English poetic line cannot be said to have any one correct graphic representation. The Old English line exists, of course, but originally at least it did not exist as a visual construction.⁶

The relationship between the visual representation of a poem and its sonic output is more complex than some readers of poetry today may realize. Like so many other readers, I was taught in school at an early age not to pause at the end of a line that did not have punctuation. But strategies for reading enjambed lines should be various, differing a great deal among works of purely oral or written composition and, as is the case for Old English poetry, among works with a compositional history that is a complex fusion of oral and written traditions. Generally speaking, an orally composed poem, particularly one with musical accompaniment, is more likely to employ a pause at the end of each line, whether or not enjambment is present.⁷ And even in purely written traditions any rules for pausing at line breaks showing enjambment seem to be more dependent on the rhythm of language than on an absence of punctuation marks.

Dana Gioia (1987:398-400) nicely illustrates this divide between visual and sonic constructions in his evaluation of William Carlos Williams’s “The Red Wheelbarrow,” which he shows to be a free-verse poem only in its visual arrangement of sound. The four-stanza eight-line poem appears thus on paper:

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

Gioia argues that what is heard is actually two lines of blank verse:

⁶ Even pointing in certain manuscripts—the scribal practice of placing an elevated *punctus* after the b-verse or, with greater frequency toward the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, after both the a- and b-verses—is a stronger indicator of a scribe’s degree of familiarity with the poetic tradition than of some widespread belief that lines or verses should be demarcated visually. On scribal pointing, see O’Brien O’Keeffe 1990.

⁷ Hear, as one of numerous possible examples, Halil Bajgorić’s performance of the South Slavic epic *The Wedding of Mustajbey’s Son Bećirbey* (Foley 2005), available online at <http://www.oraltradition.org/zbm/>.

so much depends upon a red wheel barrow
glazed with rain water beside the white chickens

Although no punctuation is present in Williams's poem, there is a natural desire to pause between the voicing of "barrow" and the past participial phrase that modifies it. Like Gioia, I too read the poem aloud in the same manner each time, whether I am reading it as an eight-line or two-line construction. In addition to the meaning of its words, then, a portion of the poem's power and enduring popularity is the result of its rearranging familiar sounds into an unfamiliar visual format.

The interplay between the visual and aural constructions of lines should be of crucial importance to the verse translator of Old English poems. Visual lineation is not an aspect of Old English prosody, but it is an aspect of all present-day prosodies in English, even including those employing some type of metrical line (since measured and unmeasured poems alike are recognized as poems first by their page-bound lineation and second, if at all, by the arrangement of their sounds).⁸ The increasingly uniform a-verse/b-verse presentation of critical editions of Old English poems is, I think, the most productive way to look at the Old English text.⁹ But I do not think verse translators should have a default presentation in mind—or at least be wedded to one—before or during the translation process. Certainly the act of translating depends on sonic representations of verses (a hypothetical 1a / 1b / 2a / 2b in Old English might be translated mimetically in present-day English, or as 1a + 2a / 1b / 2b, or any other number of ways), and the verse translator will write out whole- and half-lines in aurally pleasing arrangements on scraps of paper with an idea of those sonic properties in some kind of uniformly visual display, but the final arrangement just might be a better representation of Old English prosody if it is placed on the page in a manner that does not suggest that the Old English line has a correct way (or even a few correct ways) to be shown. Perhaps the best way to demonstrate this resistance to "correct" formatting would be to provide different side-by-side layouts of the same translated poem.

Below I have reformatted my translation of *Cædmon's Hymn* to show three alternative ways to read and view the work. This first presentation is a somewhat minor restructuring of the whole-line display shown earlier, yet the inclusion of more white space distances the poem from false alignment with later poetic traditions in which a stacked whole-line display is the norm. The spaces come at places where a natural pause in the rhythm of the language is already present, so their effect for most readers—I imagine—will show the visual parsing of units rather than adjust the sonic output of how the poem is read. In the cases of lines 1, 4, and 5, I did not

⁸ Today, there are only two exceptions to recognizing a poem first by visual lineation. The first occurs when someone is reading aloud (or reciting or orally composing) a measured poem to an audience capable of hearing the metrical divisions. The second occurs when one engages with a prose poem—which is not analogous to an Old English poem in its manuscript context. Both are written out in a run-on style, but of the two only the Old English poem contains lines, though it is not visually lineated.

⁹ But see Doane 1994, with its illustrative edition of Charm 4 (*Wið færstice*), which lays out the text in unpunctuated and heavily spaced word clusters. Doane has organized these clusters according to the scribe's word spacing, which he interprets as a reflection of the rhythm of uttered phrases. Doane's divisions of utterances often diverge from the half-line divisions of Dobbie's (1942) edition.

include medial white space because I did not want to encourage a mid-line pause; the rhythm of those lines is best read without a pause until the close of each line:¹⁰

Now we must praise the protector of heaven's kingdom,

the might of the maker and his mind's purpose,
the labors of the glorious father —everlasting Lord—

because he brought about each wondrous thing's beginning.

At first he fashioned heaven as a roof
for mankind's children.

Then he —holy creator
and protector of people— prepared this middle ground,
the whole earth, for human beings—

everlasting Lord, God almighty.

My second presentation resembles the typical look of Old English poems in their manuscript contexts, though modern punctuation has been maintained in order to avoid jarring the reader. It is not based on any of the manuscript versions of *Cædmon's Hymn* but is instead meant to show the word, word cluster, and run-on line spacing in manuscripts more generally.¹¹ An advantage of viewing the translated poem in a manuscript-inspired context is that it might encourage the reader to carve out his or her own performance of the lines:

Now we must praise the protector of heaven's kingdom, the might
of the maker and his mind's purpose, the labors of the glorious father,
everlasting Lord, because he brought about each wondrous thing's
beginning. At first he fashioned heaven as a roof for mankind's chil-
dren. Then he, holy creator and protector of people, prepared this
middle ground, the whole earth, for human beings, everlasting Lord,
God almighty.

Being perhaps the most experimental format, my third presentation places primary and secondary stresses in bold and forgoes the use of commas. Having the stressed syllables highlighted may have more of a visual effect than a sonic one (readers do not need to think about where to place stress since stress is the result either of the natural stress or stresses in a

¹⁰ Since the rhythm of the target language in this case often promotes whole-line fluidity, I do not see a solely verse-by-verse inspired presentation—which is so handy in critical editions and has been utilized uniformly by other translators of Old English verse—as a viable option.

¹¹ See the CD-ROM accompanying O'Donnell 2005 to view images of *Cædmon's Hymn* in a variety of manuscript contexts.

multisyllabic word or of a monosyllable's weight with respect to its surrounding sounds), but the use of bold for certain syllables may also allow the visual to influence the aural and thus provide a more energized reading. In either case an advantage of seeing the stresses is that it calls attention to how the rhythm has been constructed, showing a similarity to—*though not a reduplication of*—Old English meter:

Now we must **praise** the **protector** of **heaven's kingdom**
 the **might** of the **maker**
 and his **mind's purpose**
 the **labors** of the **glorious father**
everlasting Lord
 because he **brought about** each **wondrous thing's beginning**.

At first he **fashioned heaven** as a **roof**
 for **mankind's children**.

Then **he**
holy creator and **protector** of **people**
prepared this **middle ground**
 the **whole earth**
 for **human beings**

everlasting Lord
God almighty.

The above presentations are in no way definitive. They invite a rearranging, and they resist the static nature of textual display. It is possible that readers unfamiliar with Old English poetics could encounter these presentations and make mistaken assumptions about Old English prosody. Is this free verse? Is it prose? Misconceptions can always be present for those encountering a language and tradition for the first time, even in translation when the new work must be a blend—to whatever degree—of prosodic elements from the source and target languages. But the page presentation of Old English poems and their translations remains arbitrary if that presentation does not aim to highlight at least some feature of its prosody, whether structural or performative. I can imagine translations of *Beowulf* and other Old English poems that forgo visual lineation while maintaining a sonically uniform rhythm, and I can imagine other translations whose lines are sonically uniform yet whose graphic representations are assembled in accordance with other principles—principles that might vary by scene, theme, dialogue, and so on. Ultimately, such representations have the ability to highlight prosodic elements on the page while also suggesting that the content is not quite at home there.

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article is one of a series of short essays, collectively titled “Further Explorations,” published as part of a special issue of *Oral Tradition* in honor of John Miles Foley’s 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John’s tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

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Communication Then and Now

Bruce E. Shields

Characteristics of Ancient Oral Communication

Walter Ong frequently discussed the various characteristics of communication commonly found within primary oral cultures. In his essay “African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics” he lists some of these characteristics (1977:92-120):

1. Stereotyped or formulaic expression
2. Standardization of themes
3. Epithetic identification for disambiguation of classes or individuals
4. Generation of heavy or ceremonial characters
5. Formulary, ceremonial appropriation of history
6. Cultivation of praise and vituperation
7. Copiousness

A few years later, in a discussion of the “psychodynamics of orality” (1982:37-50), Ong contended that “in a primary oral culture, thought and expression tend to be of the following sorts” (37):

1. Additive rather than subordinative
2. Aggregative rather than analytic
3. Redundant or copious
4. Conservative or traditionalist
5. Close to the human lifeworld
6. Agonistically toned
7. Empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced
8. Homeostatic
9. Situational rather than abstract

With reference to biblical material in particular, Vernon K. Robbins acknowledges the important contributions of Ong and his successors, but insists that both Ong and Werner Kelber dwell too heavily in their early work on the differences between oral and written communication. These differences were central to Kelber’s (1983/1997) argument that Mark, presumably the earliest of

the gospels, changed the nature of the message of Jesus simply by writing it down.¹ For instance, in his critique of a related work by Robert Fowler (1991), Robbins writes (1996:50-51):

First, Fowler's perception of the cultural context for first-century texts is based on the dichotomy between oral culture and literate culture (i.e. print culture) perpetuated by Walter Ong and Werner Kelber (Fowler 1991:51-2). The problem with this approach, as I perceive it, is that early Christianity did not emerge either in an oral or in a literate culture, but in a rhetorical culture. . . . A rhetorical culture is aware of written texts, uses written and oral language interactively and composes both orally and scribally in a rhetorical manner. Mark did not write, as Fowler following Kelber asserts, 'to bring the spoken word under control, to domesticate it and replace it with his own written version of *euangelion*' (Fowler 1991:51). Rather, in his rhetorical culture, Mark sought to give word its *full rhetorical power by embodying it in both speaking and writing*. In antiquity a written text did not imprison words. Written texts were simply an additional tool to give language power. . . . (emphasis in the original)

Robbins goes on with his criticism, but this passage will suffice to introduce the next author on our radar.

Characteristics of Jesus' Communication

William Brosend leans heavily on the work of Robbins. In his recent book, *The Preaching of Jesus*, Brosend lists four important characteristics of Jesus' preaching (2010:23-26):

1. Dialogical
2. Proclamatory
3. Occasionally Self-referential
4. Persistently Figurative

Brosend's list corresponds well with my own findings, though I contend that the orality approach and the rhetorical approach should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. In fact, there is enough overlap between Brosend's list and the ones given above from Ong's work that we can recognize them as related, noting that Brosend is simply focusing on the rhetoric of the synoptic gospels while Ong focuses on the (from our point of view) peculiarities of communication in a primarily oral culture. Understanding that difference, we can then use a combination of both approaches as a framework by which to compare communications in the first century with those of our contemporary culture in postmodern society.

Brosend's "dialogical" category relates to several of Ong's characteristics, especially those labeled "empathetic and participatory" and "situational." By "proclamatory" Brosend means essentially what Walter Wink (1998) refers to as Jesus' resisting "the Powers That Be." He

¹ Kelber softens his approach somewhat in the second edition (1997:xxi-xxvi), but he maintains his contention that Mark's writing is more than a recording of oral communication.

rejects the terms “provocative” and “prophetic” as having become too negative in contemporary usage, yet he wants to describe Jesus as being clearly counter-cultural at times. This proclamatory nature for Jesus’ preaching thus parallels Ong’s “epithetic identification for disambiguation,” as well as his “cultivation of praise and vituperation” and his “agonistically toned.” On the one hand, Brosend’s “occasionally self-referential” seems to me to be a peculiar characteristic of Jesus in the synoptics, so we need not look for direct parallels. On the other hand, noticing this characteristic reminds us that Jesus and his earliest followers were more concerned with the subject matter of their proclamation than with their own personal stories.² Finally, Brosend’s “persistently figurative” characterization emphasizes Jesus’ use of analogies and stories to make his points. This usage corresponds nicely to Ong’s understanding of primary oral thought processes tending toward being “aggregative rather than analytic,” “close to the human lifeworld,” and “situational rather than abstract.”

A good example of all of these noted characteristics is found in Matthew 24 and 25, much of which is paralleled in Mark 13 and Luke 12, 17, 19, and 21 as well. Though it remains uncertain as to how much of the wording and context of such passages we can trace back to Jesus, whether we credit the passage to Jesus or to the gospel compiler/redactor, the categories of Brosend and their parallels in Ong are well represented. Matthew 24:1 indicates the dialogical nature of the communication, since the whole passage begins with a trip to the Jerusalem temple with his disciples who marvel at the buildings. Jesus then warns them that this will all “be thrown down” in the coming day of judgment. The rest of the conversation then takes place on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple, when the disciples ask him directly when his coming in judgment will be (Matthew 24:1-3):³

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.” When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

The rest of the passage is proclamation, using rich figurative language with only indirect personal references. Most of the self-references are to “the Son of Man,” a formulation that originated with the Hebrew prophets and was apparently often used by Jesus to refer to himself. Jesus actually quotes Daniel 7:13 in Matthew 24:31 concerning the coming of the Son of Man, and in fact Matthew 24:4-31 includes several additional quotations and echoes of various prophets.

Then come the direct warnings to be ready. In these admonishments Jesus uses a great variety of metaphors, similes, and parables. He begins with the example of the fig tree (Matthew 24:32-35) as follows:

² Such self-referentiality has commonly been viewed as important in many oral traditions, both on the level of performance (for instance, as a disclaimer or an appeal to tradition [cf. Bauman 1977:21-22]) and with respect to the meaning-creation process (see, for example, Foley 1991 on the metonymic nature of traditional referentiality, a process that often employs self-referential loops).

³ All quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible.

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Then he continues with the stories of Noah and the flood (24:36-39), the master and his slaves (24:45-51), the bridesmaids at a wedding (25:1-13), the master who entrusts a fortune to three slaves (25:14-30), and finally the picture of the separation of sheep from goats as the final judgment (25:31-46).

In addition to Brosend's four categories, we can also easily identify all of Ong's sixteen (albeit overlapping) categories in these two chapters. For instance, there are certainly many stereotyped or formulaic expressions, and there is no doubt about the distinction between the good and the bad, made clear at least partially by the generation of heavy characters. There are agonistic scenes, prophets present formulas from history, there is much praise and vituperation, and the lessons are clearly stated repeatedly over several instances. And all of this appears within two modest chapters.

The Postmodern Listener

One might expect that after two thousand years the reception of oral communication would have changed radically, but that does not seem to be the case. The increasingly common literacy of the past three centuries certainly marked a change, as people spoke and listened more attuned to visual words on a page than to spoken words received through the ears. However, what Ong has called "secondary orality" (1982:11, 133-34) has shifted the communication situation again, with the dominance of television, film, and computer screens and their use of images and narratives to communicate more directly to the emotions. So what can we learn from the ancients for effective communication today?

I find that postmodern philosophy is far removed from the way most postmodern people live their lives. Therefore, I tend to tie an understanding of communication in our age to the way people deal with life and not strictly to the work of philosophers themselves. I proceed with the following list of filters that I feel are most commonly employed in our culture today:

Pluralism: It's all around us. Nobody lives in a totally homogeneous society anymore. This means that we cannot assume that hearers of preaching share the faith or worldview of any given preacher. Such pluralism is certainly what the early Christians faced, surrounded as they were by several kinds of Judaism, as well as pagan worship and mystery religions.

Questions about truth: Such questions appear quite frequently since postmoderns are often leery of anybody who claims to have final answers to anything. Many postmoderns hold very strong views on these matters but practice broad tolerance for contrasting views held by others.

Search for authenticity: What these seekers look for is authenticity. They want to know what difference a viewpoint makes in the life of the one who holds it. Jesus and his followers

gained enough respect to be heard by showing in their lives the ethical standards of their teaching. (Cf. Acts 2:43-47.)

Yearning for real community: Following the philosophy that all language is developed in and by its community, postmoderns yearn for authentic community, where they can see lives corresponding to linguistic claims and a group holding strong convictions without being judgmental.

Finally, now that we have taken a look at the preaching of Jesus in light of the research of Ong and Broend and have added to that the four filters suggested above as relevant to today's society of "secondary orality," we now can take away four lessons for those wishing to communicate effectively about religious issues today:

1. Humility is fundamental. Except for the few who yearn for the security of a rigid legalism, people today will not listen long to a preacher or anyone else who claims or even appears to claim to have all truth. In many cases, then, the communication model of confession⁴ will thus fit nicely, since it is heard not only as one option among others but also as the option chosen by the community to which the preacher belongs.

2. Dialog or conversation is vital. This speaks to the postmodern humility *vis-à-vis* truth and also the postmodern desire for community. As Jesus began with the familiar and proceeded to the more difficult ("You have heard . . . , but I say . . ."), so should contemporary preachers be in dialog with listeners.

3. Proclamation is still needed, but it should be addressed to the powers that intimidate and manipulate people, even when those powers are dear to them. Authenticity means treating everybody and every institution the same as regards the standards of the ancient faith. None should escape prophetic scrutiny.

4. Figurative or visual language reaches out to people who are conditioned to receiving most of their information through a television or computer screen. Since much of the Bible is narrative, and since Jesus taught with parables, and since the core of the Christian confession is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, visual language is not just a helpful medium; it is part and parcel of the message.

Conclusion

As a teacher of preachers I am always on the lookout for changes in the communication situation. I have lived long enough to have seen such a change in society from modern to postmodern, which has stimulated a corresponding change in preaching from deductive to inductive. The inductive approach is more akin to that practiced by the earliest Christians and apparently by Jesus himself. The picture is not yet complete, but it should be clear enough to indicate that the communication strategies of the first century, whether analyzed as orality or rhetoric, still fit nicely with the communication needs of the twenty-first century.

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⁴ This rhetorical approach is argued thoroughly and effectively by David J. Lose (2003).

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ORAL TRADITION

Festschrift for John Miles Foley

This article is one of a series of short essays, collectively titled “Further Explorations,” published as part of a special issue of *Oral Tradition* in honor of John Miles Foley’s 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. The surprise Festschrift, guest-edited by Lori and Scott Garner entirely without his knowledge, celebrates John’s tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

<http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii>

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Remix: *Pathways of the Mind*

Morgan E. Grey

John Miles Foley has described his most recent project as “exploring the homology between oral tradition and Internet technology” (Foley:2011-:“Disclaimer”).¹ This concept, at once so simple and so complex, should lead to a re-evaluation of the teaching of oral traditions as well as the understanding of how oral traditions and the Internet “mime the way we think” (*ibid.*:“Home Page”).² It is the goal of this brief essay to show how The Pathways Project has already begun to affect scholarship,³ using as an example my own contribution to the project, the node titled “Mashups” (Grey 2011-).⁴

Before I discuss the project and related work, a few key ideas should first be introduced. Each entry in The Pathways Project is called a “node,” and within the site one node can be linked to any number of other nodes. One may think of these nodes as chapters, in that each one can stand alone and be read separately, but at the same time they are integral to and integrated within the whole. Throughout the project, the textual, oral, and electronic worlds are divided into three agoras, or “verbal marketplaces”⁵—the tAgora, oAgora, and eAgora, respectively—which allow Foley to group major ideas together and discuss them as conceptual units.⁶ One of the cleverest aspects of the project is how Foley makes complex ideas seem simple through the use of plain language and unadorned rhetoric while still incorporating specialized terminology that aids in driving home his overall points. Both the web and book versions of the project display this same

¹ See <http://www.pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Disclaimer>.

² See <http://www.pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/HomePage>.

³ The Gutenberg Parenthesis Research Forum (http://www.sdu.dk/om_sdu/institutter_centre/ilkm/forskning/forskningsprojekter/gutenberg_projekt?sc_lang=en) at the University of Southern Denmark (and overseen by Tom Pettitt) is the only external project I am aware of that is directly related to Foley’s work.

⁴ The full text of “Mashups” is available at <http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Mashups>.

⁵ See the “Agora as Verbal Marketplace” node of Foley 2011-: http://www.pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Agora_as_Verbal_Marketplace.

⁶ The prefixes o-, t-, and e- are applied frequently to other words to create The Pathways Project jargon that is both specific and broad in its usage. For example, there are the nodes “Agoraphobia,” “eAgoraphobia,” “oAgoraphobia,” and “tAgoraphobia.” Each of these nodes treats the concept of agoraphobia in relation to The Pathways Project, but clearly the e-, o-, and tAgoraphobias focus on particular “fears.”

tactic of form and function, but the website is the true heart of The Pathways Project and most fully presents Foley's ideas.

Those familiar with oral traditions know that they are based in multiformity. An oral poet continuously has options, and the audience may know the final outcome but not the path(s) the poet will take to get there. This type of performance means that no two presentations of the poem will be alike; each time the poet performs, there will be variations, though always within limits.⁷ A poet can remix elements within the tradition at his will.

Remixing is thus central to oral traditions and to The Pathways Project. That information can be delivered and redelivered in varying ways, and that multiple routes can be taken to reach the same "end," exemplifies the tenet that pathways mime the way we think. "Mashups" examines one aspect of remixing present in both the ancient and modern worlds. Though it is more commonly found within eAgora environments, remixing can be seen in at least one tAgora setting: the *cento*. *Centos* were written during the late Roman Empire and early medieval period, with the best-known practitioner of the form being Ausonius, a fourth-century poet and rhetorician whose *Cento Nuptialis* ("The Wedding Cento") is based on Vergil's *Aeneid*. Ausonius took half-lines and full lines of Vergil's epic and reorganized them to create a new poem. A short example will demonstrate how this works:⁸

Exspectata dies aderat, dignisque hymenaeis
matres atque viri, iuvenes ante ora parentum
conveniunt stratoque super discumbitur ostro.

The wished-for day was present, and with worthy wedding hymns
mothers and husbands, and the young men before the faces of their parents,
they gather together and recline at the table on top of the purple-dyed blanket.⁹

In the Latin passage, each bolded or italicized section represents a separate half-line or full line taken from Vergil. For example, the first bold half-line is from *Aeneid* 5.105; the second italicized half of that line is from *Aeneid* 11.355. The second line works much like the first,¹⁰ while the third line consists of an entire line taken intact from the *Aeneid* (1.700). This passage is representative of the entire *Cento Nuptialis*; Ausonius remixes his "samples" of Vergil to create a new poem out of an old one. While Ausonius is not strictly following an oral traditional approach toward composition, he nevertheless incorporates commonplace oAgora tactics in his tAgora work. But *centos* are unusual pieces; they were never especially popular, as they appeal to a very limited, though erudite, audience. To "read" a *cento* successfully, an audience must first be thoroughly familiar with the work on which it is based. And since *centos* take allusion to an

⁷ See Foley's (2011-) clear discussion at the "Variation Within Limits" node: http://pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Variation_Within_Limits.

⁸ The text of the Cento Nuptialis is taken from Evelyn-White's Loeb edition (1919).

⁹ The translation here is my own.

¹⁰ The line combines the first half of *Aeneid* 6.306 with the latter portion of *Aeneid* 6.308.

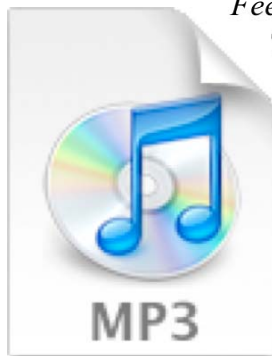
extreme, they eliminate in the process much of their potential audience. Therefore, even though the *cento* borrows the remixing practice more common within the oAgora, its limited appeal reflects its tAgora standing and the difficulty in transferring this technique from one sphere to another.

When we shift our focus into the contemporary world, we find that this practice of remixing is also especially prevalent in today's popular music. The majority of rap and hip-hop songs sample, recombine, and remix music from other genres, but a new trend that takes this practice even further has been emerging within pop music over the past two decades. "Mashups" are songs that take two or more songs and rearrange them in order to have parts of one song (vocals or melody or rhythm) playing simultaneously with parts of another. One of the clearest examples of this practice is 2004's *The Grey Album* by DJ Danger Mouse, which lays the vocals from Jay-Z's *The Black Album* over instrumentals from *The White Album* by The Beatles.¹¹



The Grey Album
"Glass Onion + Encore"

More recently the artist Girl Talk has released several mashup albums. His 2008 album *Feed the Animals* features fourteen tracks comprising over 300 song samples.



Night Ripper
"Smash Your Head"

Though Girl Talk, whose real name is Gregg Gillis, creates these mashup albums, he does not get permission from the artists whose songs he uses, claiming that his work is protected under the doctrine of "fair use" (Gillis 2008b). When Gillis performs live shows across the nation, each performance is unique. He does not play the songs from his albums, but instead creates new pieces for each show. Some pieces may resemble those from a previous show, but as he tours and new songs come out, Gillis reworks and remixes songs for the next show. Girl Talk's albums are captured performances,¹² but his live performances are dynamic and ever-changing. Girl Talk is an artist who works with oAgora assumptions and approaches to his medium.

That a contemporary mashup artist's works and the *centos* of an ancient poet/rhetorician parallel the compositions of an oral poet is not an idea that would have sprung to my mind before becoming immersed in The Pathways Project and its website, which demonstrates the strengths of oAgora, tAgora, and eAgora technologies without necessarily prioritizing or privileging any of them above each other. The site is still limited to a certain degree by some organizational needs and conventions, but overall it stands as both the host of Foley's ideas as well as the proof of them. Just as importantly, the website also demonstrates accessibility, as it is available to any and all interested parties. While an Internet connection is required, the site itself does not restrict access in any way; in fact, visitors are currently encouraged to login and submit their own linkmaps (<http://www.pathwaysproject.org/pathways/digest>), and at a future date a "Contributions" section (<http://www.pathwaysproject.org/pathways/show/Contributions>) will allow users to submit their own nodes and studies as well. Therefore, The Pathways Project will

¹¹ See [http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/grey#myGallery-picture\(1\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/grey#myGallery-picture(1)).

¹² See [http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/grey#myGallery-picture\(2\)](http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/26ii/grey#myGallery-picture(2)).

in some senses never be finished. Given the nature of the project and its encouragement of continual additions, the website will evolve and change over the years. There will indeed be a related book by Foley (2012), *Oral Tradition and the Internet: Pathways of the Mind*, which will be an excellent resource and introduction to The Pathways Project, and this book itself may appear over the years in several new editions, but these will always necessarily be only snapshots of an ever-growing project, with the website steadfastly remaining at the center of Foley's efforts.

While Foley will, of course, oversee, affect, and directly influence The Pathways Project for the foreseeable future, the hope is that other interested parties (scholars, students, performers, the computer savvy) will also contribute their ideas to the site. The topics explored in the project are numerous: copyright, technology, and ideology are but a few of the primary ones. Each node provides information as well as a starting point for further investigation within and beyond the project. Foley, as he has in all of his works, introduces his audience to new ideas and approaches, but as part of a conversation, not a lecture. And this conversation eagerly awaits your response.

University of Missouri-Columbia

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A Personal Appreciation: How John Miles Foley Laid the Foundation for My Life in an Ashram

Ward Parks

It is an honor and a pleasure to offer this personal tribute to John Miles Foley, in whom I have found not only an outstanding scholar—one of the great scholars of his generation—but a dear personal friend. In response to the kind invitation of this volume's editors I would like to devote these pages not to scholarly inquiry in a strict sense but to a personal narrative about a significant impact that he has had on my life—one that few people would have anticipated in the days of my academic association with him. For while I began my career as a scholar, and indeed occupied a tenured professorial position in one of our state universities, I left that post and have spent the last two decades in an ashram in India. And though I never expected it, much of what John taught me has played a key role in the work that I have done in this new, very non-academic setting. I have immersed myself in this new life for so long now that I no longer find myself in a position to write a conventional scholarly article as my contribution to this volume. For the world of assumptions in which I now live and operate—the world of an ashram—differs so radically from academe that, were I to write directly out of the research interests that I am now pursuing, I would have to impose too much on the tolerance and forbearance of my readers here. Instead, as my own personal appreciation for an old and dear friend, I wanted to chronicle how what I learned from John Foley transformed itself through the course of my life into a crucial foundation for a very different kind of intellectual and spiritual enterprise.

Meeting John during the early years of his professorial career, I was the first graduate student to get a master's and subsequently a doctoral degree under his tutelage. When I joined the graduate program in English literature at Emory University in 1977, he was still an assistant professor—though clearly one of the department's rising stars. I was much drawn to him and his methodological approach, which recognized the oral dimensions of literatures that conventionally had been regarded exclusively as written texts. When he left Emory for a new job at the University of Missouri-Columbia, I followed him there, earning my Ph.D. in 1983. Happily I found for myself an academic post at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and over the next decade I maintained a close association with my former mentor, contributing essays to various collections and joining him at academic conferences.

Naturally the training that John gave me included a mastery of skills that any medievalist needs. Most medieval literature arose in linguistically and culturally complex milieus; one studying this literature needs to know languages and linguistics—and has to be able to find his or

her way around in an intellectual landscape in large measure contoured by manuscripts. Beyond this, since John is a comparatist, I wound up cultivating expertise not only in the heroic literature of Anglo-Saxon England but also that of Homeric Greece. Comparative work demands that one affirm the cultural and historical specificity of particular literary acts while discovering fundamental patterns that bring the artifacts of different eras and cultural environments into significant relationship with each other. My having cultivated this facility and these habits of mind proved most useful when I subsequently shifted my seat of operations (as it were) from ancient and medieval Europe to modern Asia.

Yet what I found especially appealing in John's approach was that it called into question the presumption that "literature" is inexorably and primarily textual, that its inscription, its written-ness, belongs to its root nature, to its very core identity. Instead, it opened the possibility of a literature that resonates within the active present of speech—spoken utterance—within human interactional settings. But in fact that very "present," in the context of traditional society, is vitally linked with past and future iterations as well. The power of an oral "formula," whether one conceives this as a lexical or narrative or thematic or any other kind of structure, lies precisely in the fact that it engages not only the performer-audience group in a particular performance setting but a greater cultural inheritance transmitted through the memory. During those days of the 1970s and 1980s, structuralists and semioticians had popularized the term "intertextuality." But oral-traditional theory suggested "interperformativity" as a better descriptor of the environment and ambience and world of resonance in which an oral utterance occurs. The oral performance finds itself contextualized not as a book being read in the carrel of a library but as a voice speaking or singing in a hall that still echoes with many other voices from the near and distantly remembered past.

These kinds of cultural issues engaged me as a scholar until 1993, when my life took what must have seemed to others as an erratic turn: and here my narrative swerves from matters academic to matters personal and spiritual. From the time that I was a teenager in the late 1960s, my primary life attraction had always been toward spirituality. Only spiritual realities, I felt then and feel now, can provide ultimately satisfactory answers to the fundamental problems of human mortality and meaning. Searching through some of the world's spiritual traditions (in the way that one does when one is a teenager), in 1970 I found what was for me an authentic spiritual Master in Meher Baba (1894-1969), who had declared himself the Avatar of this age. I had accepted him as such and had been a follower of his for more than twenty years; but in 1993 suddenly an opportunity arose for me to become a permanent resident at Meherabad, the spiritual center established around Meher Baba's tomb-shrine adjoining the village of Arangaon (six miles from the small city of Ahmednagar) in Maharashtra Pradesh on the western Deccan plateau. Though I had little savings and though the ashram provided no financial support, I took the plunge anyway, left my comfortable academic job, and have lived in India ever since. Realizing that few of my academic associates had the kind of background that would enable them to understand (let alone sympathize with) the decision I was making, I made no attempt to explain and justify myself but simply, like Bilbo the hobbit, put on a magic ring and disappeared from the academic scene.

At the Meher Baba ashram my new life brought with it an array of duties that might have seemed, from the standpoint of a former professor, dull and menial. For five years I took

dictation and typed letters, filed papers, compiled lists, organized records, and performed other tasks of a secretarial sort. I fully accepted this and assumed that the rest of my life would be spent thus. For in the spiritual life the kinds of accomplishments and credentials that you would put on an academic curriculum vitae count for absolutely nothing. Renunciation means forgetting who you were. Instead, one seeks self-effacement, for this constitutes the necessary preliminary to inner awakening. The thought of pursuing scholarly research again never so much as crossed my mind. It was as if a veil had fallen over my academic past which receded like a dream vaguely and distantly remembered, while the active present was devoted to trying to experience God in the now of this moment.

But then my life path took another unexpected turn, which abruptly brought me back face to face with a universe of the mind that I thought I had left forever. For in 1998 suddenly a new trove of literary-philosophical manuscripts came to light in one of the ashram's old storage sheds (or "go-downs," as they are called in India). During the 1920s, when Meher Baba was first establishing his center at Meherabad, among the many other activities he was engaged in, he gave talks on spiritual subjects, some of them to his disciples (who were undergoing their first spiritual training), and others to boys in the school that he was operating on the Meherabad property at the time. Though Meher Baba did not himself write up any of these lectures, disciples took extensive notes. All this material—a considerable mass of it—had been stowed away in an old briefcase for seventy years; but when it was rediscovered in the late 1990s, those who read through it saw at once that it was highly substantive and revelatory, providing new perspectives on the main body of Meher Baba's writings composed and published later, in the 1940s and 50s. Since in those early days of the 1920s Meher Baba's various disciple-scribes were working without the benefit of any special literary training and under the pressure of many other duties all of which had to be carried out in difficult material conditions, the prose of these early manuscripts was raw in the extreme, sometimes the content was jumbled, it was written in several languages, and it was embedded in a nexus involving both the specific historical context of India in the 1920s and a confluence of several spiritual traditions. Despite its obvious value, by any reasonable measure this material needed extensive editing and reconstruction before it could be presented to the public.

Until this time I had been working directly under the personal supervision of one of Meher Baba's close disciples, Bhau Kalchuri, to whom Meher Baba had given various literary and philosophic writing assignments which had occupied him through much of the 1960s into the 1970s. When these new manuscripts surfaced, Bhau immediately put other work aside and plunged into the task of preparing them for publication; since my own background was in this very line, I went along with him. Thus I was inaugurated—in a sense reinaugurated—into what has emerged as my life's work. Since 1998 the research team here has edited and seen through to publication five primary editions, and more major volumes loom in prospect. I have come full circle and find myself living the life of a scholar again, though now in the improbable setting of an ashram in rural India.

To my own abiding astonishment, it turns out that the particular training that John gave me is most apt to the job in which I am now engaged. Particularly critical are skills relating to the treatment of language and manuscripts. For though raised a middle-class Indian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Meher Baba was born into a family of Zoroastrians

recently migrated from Iran. His father had left his home in Yezd as a boy of twelve and wandered alone as a dervish in the Indo-Iranian deserts for twenty years before settling in Poona (now Pune) in the 1880s and starting a family. Meher Baba himself was fluent in Persian, Urdu, Marathi (the local language in Maharashtra), Gujarati (his mother tongue), and, of course, English (the language of the British Raj). He had both Hindu and Muslim spiritual Masters. When he discoursed in the 1920s, he spoke in a patois that drew on the vocabulary of all these languages—along with their cultural resonance from their various Hindu, Muslim, and Christian backgrounds. So each day I find myself working with old handwritten diaries, transcripts of talks, and other manuscripts on a desk piled high with dictionaries, glossaries, histories, and other such reference sources in the manner of a nineteenth-century philologically trained textual editor compiling the first standard editions of classic medieval texts. And while my years under John's tutelage gave me no instruction in the particular languages or philosophical systems I am working with at present, in terms of general skills and methods, I could have had no more perfect preparation for what I now do a hundred miles from the nearest decent library collection on the outskirts of a small farming village in south Asia.

Yet even more striking has been the relevance of oral-traditional theory—in a most unexpected application. For any student or scholar of Meher Baba's "writings" has first of all to deal with the basic fact that, through most of his adult life, Meher Baba was silent. He inaugurated this complete verbal silence on July 10, 1925, and maintained it until his death on January 31, 1969. For the first year and a half he expressed himself by writing with chalk on slate; but from the beginning of 1927, but for occasional signatures, he renounced writing as well, communicating by pointing to letters on an alphabet board, and later, through his own system of hand gestures. His books and messages were never "written" by him in the ordinary sense, then, but were dictated to disciples who had to cultivate the facility of swiftly interpreting a word or phrase or facial or hand gesture—each of these a hint or cue that needed to be unpacked—and fleshing it out in suitable and fluent discourse in whatever language was called for at the time. Inevitably "formulas" and mnemonics played a major role in this process. As I have studied the matter more deeply, I have come to feel that Meher Baba's communication, emerging very literally from silence (since for forty-four years he never once spoke), occupies a curious space between the "oral" and the "literate." His verbalizations were "textualized" from their very incipience in that they began with fingers pointing to letters on an alphabet board. Yet their "reading out" and interpretation by disciples, in the accomplishment of which task these disciples had necessarily to draw on their memory of previous dictations and things that Meher Baba had "said" in the past, were radically interactive in their root articulation, public and performative, in this sense like an oral-traditional rendering—and quite unlike the process of writing, in which the writer introspects, closes the door to his or her office, and finds the right words in isolation from others.

This ambivalence between the written and the oral, between the sign visually fixed and the spoken utterance resonating in recollection, serves a purpose, I have come to feel, in Meher Baba's "teaching" to the world. Part of the significance of his silence, obviously, concerns the ancient apophatic truth that God cannot be understood through the mind or expressed in words. For the process of signification—indeed, of thinking itself—presupposes duality. You cannot think unless there is a thinker, an act of thinking, and an object of thought. Yet Reality itself—

which is God the Father, or Brahman, or Paramatma, or Yahweh, or Allah, or Wujud, or Logos, or Nous, or Infinite Intelligence, or Sunya, or Tao: words fail as one approaches this subject—inhabits a domain that precedes the first division. God cannot be thought about: anything one says about God falsifies God. To speak or write or theorize about God is to speak or write or theorize about someone else.

I feel that Meher Baba, living in an age of great intellectual development in which historically and culturally diverse religions and creeds and ideologies and systems of thought were seriously confronting each other for the first time, did not wish his own words to get fixed and invested with significance as objects in their own right, since this would only obscure the underlying Reality that it was his very purpose to unveil and bring into consciousness. Over the last two or three millennia it was precisely such reification of sacred discourse within religious life that produced the phenomenon of *scripture*—the Qur'an, the Gospels and the Torah, the Buddhist Tripitikas, the Vedas and Upanishads and Puranas, the Avesta, the Guru Granth Saheb. While this may have served the needs of the past, the urgent need of the present is to translate words into realized truth, to loosen the ties of dogma and to rediscover the primordial Light (Nur, Prakash) from whose rays these dogmas have been spun. Meher Baba did not wish his words to be scripturalized but *lived*. The process which he used to compose his books and messages—their ambiguous relationship to writing and textual fixity, indeed, to his own authorial act—serves to underscore this point. Anyone who studies Meher Baba's words closely has to realize that their real significance lies in his silence. For behind the Word of God abides the Silence of God. One finds God beyond the first inscription and before the first vibration.

Thus my own journey of discovery has led me to this deeper appreciation of my own Master and Guru, and so to a clearer perception of my own path. For as many monks and mystics in the West once knew and sometimes still know, and as Sufi dervishes and Hindu munis and yogis have known and put into practice even into modern times, scholarship as an act of devotion in the spiritual line has as its goal not the cultivation of greater understanding but the living achievement of gnosis, of spiritual realization. When I left my previous world in 1993, I did not expect that my road would spiral back to its beginnings as a way of leading me onward and up. But it has done so, and now I can see that the training I got in the world of scholarship was, for me, a providential foundation making possible the work that I do now. I don't imagine that my old friend John perceived what he was doing for me in those terms, since I did not even see it that way myself in those days. But I am deeply grateful for a gift which I believe God gave through his hands. And I am happy in the thought that all real gifts create in the inner being of the human giver a space that God fills with something greater and more, for it is by this means that humanity, and each person, find their way back to the Source.

*Avatar Meher Baba Trust,
Ahmednagar, India*

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Annotated Bibliography of Works by John Miles Foley

Compiled by R. Scott Garner

In 1985 John Miles Foley authored as his first book-length work *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*. This volume, which provided an introduction to the field of study and over 1800 annotated entries, was later supplemented by updates published in *Oral Tradition* (and compiled by John himself, Lee Edgar Tyler, Juris Dilevko, and Catherine S. Quick [with the assistance of Patrick Gonder, Sarah Feeny, Amerina Engel, Sheril Hook, and Rosalinda Villalobos Lopez]) that served both to summarize and to provide reflection upon new developments in an area of scholarship that eventually became too vast and broadly evolved to be contained by any single bibliographic venture. Given that John's own work was instrumental in effecting this sustained development—while also having importance in so many other areas of study as well—it seems only fitting to close the current volume with an annotated bibliography of John's works up through the current point in time.

In compiling this vast bibliography (which includes entries for nearly 200 essays, books, and other types of scholarly contributions), I have attempted to adhere to John's own practice of providing full citations followed by a few sentences that summarize each item's contents and its significance within the larger body of scholarship on oral traditions (or in some cases, within other fields as well). Additionally, I have continued his methodology of not annotating reviews of other scholars' books unless those discussions themselves directly contributed to ongoing discourse in the field. Variations among entries with respect to capitalization or terminology are meant to reflect the specific usages within the annotated works themselves. For those works that have previously appeared in one of the bibliographies listed above, I have here reproduced those earlier versions without alteration (except for matters of style) and with much thanks to their original authors.

1975 “Christ 164-213: A Structural Approach to the Speech Boundaries.” *Neophilologus*, 59:114-18.

Presents evidence for the assignment of speech boundaries in Lyric VII (“Passus”) on the basis of verbal echo, which is shown to be an important feature of the poem's composition.

- 1976 "Formula and Theme in Old English Poetry." In *Oral Literature and the Formula*. Ed. by Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon. Ann Arbor: Center for Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies. pp. 207-32. "Discussion," pp. 233-38.

Argues for the tradition-dependence of both formula and theme, that is, for their individual Old English character as well as cross-traditional features. A computer analysis of the meter of *Beowulf* reveals a level of metrical formularity which assists in selecting phraseological patterns. Themes take the tradition-dependent form of groups of repeated stressed morphs, again the result of a metrical scheme much different from those of Greek and Yugoslav oral epic. After redefinitions of formula and theme that suit both Old English and comparative oral tradition, the essay considers the aesthetic implications of such structures, contending that echoes proceed not from one occurrence to the next but along the lengthy traditional axis of the poetry as a whole, with traditional knowledge providing a sounding-board for each instance. Under this poetic aegis, "usefulness and aesthetics need no longer preclude one another's existence; they merge in the ritual unity of traditional art" (232).

"Riddle I' of the *Exeter Book*: The Apocalyptic Storm." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 77:347-57.

After providing a new edition for Riddle I, argues that the riddle's common solution "storm" is actually only the metaphor (involving the poet's vision of the Apocalypse) by which the real tripartite solution of God, Christ, and the Cross can be obtained.

Review of *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho (Ženidba Smailagina Sina)* by Avdo Medjedović (Trans. and ed. by Albert B. Lord and David E. Bynum. 2 vols. Serbocroatian Heroic Songs, 3-4. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). *Slavic and East European Journal*, 20:196-99.

A review of the two volumes (one focused on English translation and contextualization, and the other dedicated to the presentation of the poem in the original language), with emphasis on their value for the study of comparative epic traditions.

With Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. "Udovica Jana: A Case Study of an Oral Performance." *Slavonic and East European Review*, 54:11-24.

Text and translation of *Udovica Jana* ("The Widow Jana") as performed in April 1954 by Aleksandar Jakovljević. Includes commentary on the performance context, meter, music, formulaic phraseology, and other traditional characteristics of the poem.

- 1977 **"Beowulf and the Psychohistory of Anglo-Saxon Culture."** *American Imago*, 34:133-53.

Starting from Havelock's thesis (1963) on the encyclopedic function of oral epic, analyzes *Beowulf* for similarly inscribed patterns of psychological maturation, arguing that such patterns serve as continually repeated and thus generally available "reference works" on mental growth. As a digest of cultural knowledge, the poem performs a crucial kind of education: "The psychohistorical matrix which underlies and generates the epic narrative remains available to all members of the society through repeated oral performance; in this manner a symbolic 'casebook' on ontogenic and phylogenic growth is quite literally 'published' in the medium of traditional song" (153).

"Research on Oral Traditional Expression in Šumadija and Its Relevance to the Study of Other Oral Traditions." In *Selected Papers on a Serbian Village: Social Structure as Reflected by History, Demography, and Oral Tradition*. Ed. by Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern and Joel M. Halpern. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Dept. of Anthropology. pp. 199-236.

A report of Foley-Halpern fieldwork in the Serbian village of Orašac and surrounding areas in 1975. Survey of various genres collected, including epic, lyric, charm, and genealogy, and of informants. Includes suggestions on comparison with poems in other oral traditions.

"Riddles 53, 54, and 55: An Archetypal Symphony in Three Movements." *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 10:25-31.

Proposes an archetypal unity—the act of entry and impregnation—underlying Riddles 53, 54, and 55 of the *Exeter Book*; this unity then provides the tripartite series with cultural significance that reaches beyond the immediate solution of any individual riddle.

"The Traditional Oral Audience." *Balkan Studies*, 18:145-54.

Uses firsthand observations on Yugoslav oral epic performance, made during the Karadžić festival in Tršić in 1973, to explain the collectivity and group dynamics of the proems to *Beowulf* and the *Odyssey*. Includes photographs.

Review article of *The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Ancient Greek Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's Works and Days* (Berkeley Peabody. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975) and related works. *Poetics and the Theory of Literature*, 2:194-99.

Places Peabody 1975 in the context of studies of oral theory in ancient Greek.

With Joel M. Halpern and Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. "Traditional Recall and Family Histories: A Commentary on Mode and Method." In *Selected Papers on a Serbian Village: Social Structure as Reflected by History, Demography, and Oral Tradition*. Ed. by Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern and Joel M. Halpern. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Department of Anthropology. pp. 165-98.

A comparison of written historical population records and traditional oral recall of family history from a Serbian village, with stress on the differences in mode and their implications for sociolinguistic investigation.

1978 "A Computer Analysis of Metrical Patterns in *Beowulf*." *Computers and the Humanities*, 12:71-80.

A report on a computer-assisted pattern search to determine the aural texture of *Beowulf*. Includes a description of the metrical formula, or "basic line" rhythm, preferred by the poet.

"Education before Letters: Oral Epic Paideia." *Denver Quarterly*, 13:94-117.

Discussion of psychohistorical patterns and their significance in *Beowulf*, the *Odyssey*, and Serbo-Croatian oral tradition (along the same lines as "Beowulf and the Psychohistory of Anglo-Saxon Culture" [1977]). Sees one dimension of oral epic as the process of acquiring and dispensing knowledge about the growth of the individual in a social context.

"The Oral Singer in Context: Halil Bajgorić, *Guslar*." *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 12:230-46.

A study of conversations with and epic songs by Bajgorić, a Parry-Lord *guslar*, to compare (1) the folktale qualities of his description of the "greatest of singers" with the Old English accounts of the bards Widsith and Deor, (2) the Serbo-Croatian and Old English themes of the "heroic boast," and (3) the Serbo-Croatian and ancient Greek themes of "Readying the Hero's Horse" and "Feasting." Emphasis is placed on the tradition-dependent character of the typical scene.

"Singer of His Own Songs: An Appreciation of the Poems of Burton Raffel." *Modern Poetry Studies*, 9:134-48.

Traces the evolution of Raffel's poetry from early examples (where aural concerns dominate) through later poems (with their heightened emphasis on narrative) to a developed stage (where the aural and narrative merge into a unified aesthetic). Includes a "performance text" based on Raffel's own performance of "Further Reflections on Existence, Manner, Mode, and Function."

"The Traditional Structure of Ibro Bašić's 'Alagić Alija and Velagić Selim'." *Slavic and East European Journal*, 22:1-14.

Analyzes four versions of this epic song by the Parry-Lord *guslar* in order to show (1) how, after a pause for rest, the singer will restart his song at a traditional boundary rather than midway through such a unit, and (2) how the story-pattern of Return, as a traditional multiform, can take many shapes. Includes specific comments on the permutation of recurrent story elements and on the flexible patterns that underlie traditional genre.

Review article of *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (Ruth Finnegan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). *Balkan Studies*, 19:470-75.

Criticizes Finnegan's tautological method of including a great variety of forms and genres (among them epic, fully memorized material, and rock music) in what she calls "oral poetry" and then proclaiming the eclectic nature of her sample as evidence of the narrowness of the Parry-Lord and Bowra-Chadwick approaches.

With Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. "Bajanje: Healing Magic in Rural Serbia." In *Culture and Curing*. Ed. by Peter Morley and Roy Wallis. London and Pittsburgh: Peter Owen and the University of Pittsburgh Press. pp. 40-56.

A description of oral healing charms in Serbo-Croatian, with emphasis on the cultural significance of this verbal magic.

With Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. "The Power of the Word: Healing Charms as an Oral Genre." *Journal of American Folklore*, 91:903-24.

An analysis of variant texts of a charm against erysipelas as recorded by Kerewsky-Halpern and Foley in the Šumadijan region of Serbia. Attention is given to cultural context, linguistic and symbolic structure, mode of transmission, relationship among variants, and folkloric motifs. Serves to document and analyze another non-epic oral genre in Serbo-Croatian.

1979 "Formulaic Befuddlement: Traditional Oral Phraseology and Comparative Prosody." In *In Geardagum: Essays on Old English Language and Literature*, vol. 3. Ed. by Loren C. Gruber and Dean Loganbill. Denver: Society for New Language Study. pp. 7-17.

A plea for a tradition-dependent concept of formulaic structure in each poetic tradition. Notes that variance among formulaic dictions and their prosodies in Old English, ancient Greek, and Serbo-Croatian stems

from both synchronic generation rules and diachronic evolution. Mentions Indo-European tendencies preserved, and to some extent still functional, in the various meters.

- 1980 **"Beowulf and Traditional Narrative Song: The Potential and Limits of Comparison."** In *Old English Literature in Context: Ten Essays*. Ed. by John D. Niles. London and Totowa: D. S. Brewer and Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 117-36, 173-78.

Surveys Old English, Greek, and Serbo-Croatian materials (the last consisting of epic songs from the Milman Parry Collection) to illustrate tradition-dependence at three levels: formula, theme, and story-pattern. Reconstructs the argument for individual, literature-specific definitions of the formula; analyzes the Serbo-Croatian "Shouting in Prison" theme and the Old English "Sea Voyage" multiform from a comparative perspective on the twin criteria of narrative sequence and verbal correspondence; and considers the replication of the Return Song pattern in various avatars. Finds clear differences between the Serbo-Croatian and Old English themes, concluding that "neither the sea voyage nor 'Shouting in Prison' is less a theme for its similarity to or difference from its counterpart; rather each theme is actualized in a form governed by the prosody of the tradition involved" (133). Calls for a truly comparative scholarship willing to engage differences as well as the more obvious, and more often studied, similarities among traditions.

- "Epic and Charm in Old English and Serbo-Croatian Oral Poetry."** In *Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook*, vol. 2. Ed. by E. S. Schaffer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 71-92.

Using Serbo-Croatian charm texts collected in Serbia by Foley and Halpern in 1975 and the surviving corpus of Anglo-Saxon spells, studies the role of sound patterns from a comparative point of view. Notes the role of prosodic factors, optional and required phonemic sequences, rhetorical patterns, and so on, and then extends the comparison to epic forms.

- "Hybrid Prosody: Single Half-lines in Old English and Serbo-Croatian Poetry."** *Neophilologus*, 64:284-89.

A comparison of "triplets" (units of a line and one-half) in Old English and Serbo-Croatian, the former three verses or half-lines and the latter three halves of the symmetrical octosyllable typical of charms and lyric (women's) songs. Argues that both the line and the half-line must be recognized as viable metrical units and that the usual configuration of whole lines is occasionally overridden by compositional considerations such as sound-patterning and verbal echo. Broadens the study of repeated words to a traditional structure called "responson."

“Oral Literature: Premises and Problems.” *Choice*, 18:487-96.

A brief bibliographical survey of oral literature research, with emphasis on scholarship treating ancient Greek and medieval European traditions and a section on new directions with more extensive discussion.

“The Viability of the Comparative Method in Oral Literature Research.” *The Comparatist*, 4:47-56.

Considers the nature and logic of comparison among oral poetics, stressing the need to apply the principles of tradition- and genre-dependence in order to make more exact distinctions and to fine-tune aesthetic criticism.

1981 “Editing Oral Epic Texts: Theory and Practice.” *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, 1:75-94.

Proposes solving the problem of variant and equally authoritative texts of an oral work by employing a computerized text-processor that “reads” all variants simultaneously, giving priority to no single text. The program locates formulaic and thematic correspondences and sets them alongside each other, thus re-creating the multiformity characteristic of an oral traditional work. Includes examples of the operation of the program upon South Slavic oral texts from the Milman Parry Collection.

“Introduction: The Oral Theory in Context.” In *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers. pp. 27-122.

A four-part history, consisting of (1) Milman Parry and the Homeric Question, (2) Albert Lord and the Oral Traditional Question (an analytical review of his writings), (3) The Oral Theory and Old English Poetry (a history of formulaic criticism in Old English from 1878-1980), and (4) New Directions.

“*Læcdom* and *Bajanje*: A Comparative Study of Old English and Serbo-Croatian Charms.” *Centerpoint*, 4:33-40.

Extends comparative oral theory in Old English and Serbo-Croatian from epic to charm, using examples from the Anglo-Saxon spells and Serbian collections made by the author and Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. The comparison treats the Indo-European roots of the verb “to charm” in both languages, so-called “nonsense” charms that exhibit sound-patterning, onomastics, formulaic structure, and syntactic frames. Argues that the power of the spells derives in large part from these features common to the two traditions and that “the ultimate source of that power lies in incantation and ritual speech” (38).

“Narrativity in the *Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song.” In *Proceedings of the IXth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, vol. 1 (Classical Models in Literature). Ed. by Zoran Konstantinović, Warren Anderson, and Walter Dietze. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 49. Innsbruck: University of Innsbruck. pp. 295-301.

Using an example of story-pattern evolution in the repertoire of the Parry-Lord *guslar* Mujo Kukuruzović, explains problems of unity in *Beowulf* (especially the seam at lines 2199-2200) and the *Odyssey* (the double council of the gods in Books 1 and 5).

“Oral Texts, Traditional Texts: Some Problems in Poetics.” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 15:122-45.

Suggests a critical methodology for approaching various ancient, medieval, and modern texts either known or thought to be orally composed. Describes a five-part reading program: (1) the question of “text” (manuscript, taped recording, or other medium), (2) oral (unambiguously) or oral-derived, (3) the criterion of genre-dependence, (4) the matching criterion of tradition-dependence, and (5) the synchronic and diachronic contexts. Illustrates the discriminations made possible by such a program by applying its principles to five example texts or groups of texts: Serbo-Croatian oral epic, the *Odyssey*, Serbo-Croatian and Old English charms, *Beowulf*, and the shorter Old English poem *The Seafarer*.

“Tradition-dependent and -independent Features in Oral Literature: A Comparative View of the Formula.” In *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers. pp. 262-81.

Re-examines the question of formulaic structure in Old English, ancient Greek, and Serbo-Croatian, concentrating on a true comparison of the three meters and their phraseologies by noting differences alongside similarities. Emphasis is placed on the colonic, caesura-bound encapsulation typical of the Homeric and Yugoslav poetic lines, in contrast to the foregrounding of stressed items and rhythmic (but nonsyllabic) patterns characteristic of the Old English alliterative line. Combining these distinctions with earlier work on metrical systems, Foley offers a new definition of the Old English formula founded on the principle of tradition-dependence: “a recurrent substitutable phrase one half-line in length which results from the intersection of two compositional parameters—a morphemic focus at positions of metrical stress and a limited number of metrical formulas” (274, italics deleted).

Editor. *Oral Tradition*, a special issue of *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 15.1.

Eight essays on oral traditional literature, with emphasis on structure and genre.

Editor. *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord.* Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers. Rpt. 1983.

A contextual history of oral theory, bibliography of Lord's writings to date, preface by Robert P. Creed, and nineteen essays on various oral literatures by Patricia Arant, David E. Bynum, Francelia Clark, Robert P. Creed, Joanne De Lavan, Joseph J. Duggan, John Miles Foley, Donald K. Fry, William Gonzalez, Joseph Harris, Edward R. Haymes, Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern, Deirdre La Pin, John S. Miletich, Gregory Nagy, John D. Niles, Alain Renoir, and Bruce A. Rosenberg. Also included is an essay by Lord.

In Serbian with English summary. "Umetnost i tradicija u srpskoj i staroengleskoj narativnoj poeziji." *Književna istorija*, 14:3-26. Selections reprinted in *Kosovska epika*. Ed. by Nada Milošević-Djordjević. Belgrade: Zavod za Učbenike i Nastavna Sredstva. 1990. pp. 152-54.

In order to solve the problem of exclusive concentration either on oral traditional structure or on aesthetics, two aspects of oral or oral-derived poetics that critics have understood as contradictory and mutually exclusive, suggests a comparison not between the long Moslem epic and either *Beowulf* or the *Odyssey*, but rather between the shorter poems in Old English (for instance, *The Wanderer* or *The Seafarer*) and in Serbo-Croatian (the Vuk Karadžić poems). Shows that the Serbo-Croatian oral poet is capable of manipulating traditional structures to his personally conceived aesthetic advantage, an ability long recognized in the Old English poet but thought incompatible with oral tradition. Concludes that orality and conscious verbal artistry should not automatically be separated, and that in genres other than the long epic they can and do coexist.

1982 "Computerized Editions of Oral Poetry: The Evolution of the Text-Processor HEURO-1." In *Actes du Congrès d'Informatique et Sciences Humaines*. Ed. by L. DeLatte. Liège: Université de Liège. pp. 377-86.

A shorter account of the project more fully described in "Editing Oral Texts: Theory and Practice" (1981). The present report also suggests extensions to Old English and ancient Greek epic.

"Field Research on Oral Literature and Culture in Serbia." In *Oral and Traditional Literatures*. Ed. by Norman Simms. Special issue of *Pacific Quarterly Moana*, 7.2:47-59.

A report on the Foley-Halpern research on oral culture in Serbia in 1975, with summaries of analyses completed to date and work in progress.

“The Fourteenth Century.” In *Critical Survey of Poetry*. Ed. by Frank N. Magill. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press. 8.3238-67. Rpt. in rev. ed, 1992. 8.3757-86.

After discussing the fourteenth century as a time of great religious, political, and social turmoil in Europe, offers an overview of the verbal art that was produced in the midst of such sweeping change. Special mention is made of Arthurian legend, the Alliterative Revival, and issues of genre and originality; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, and *The Canterbury Tales* of Geoffrey Chaucer receive particularly detailed treatment.

“The Scansion of *Beowulf* in Its Indo-European Context.” In *Approaches to Beowulfian Scansion*. Ed. by Ann Hernández and Alain Renoir. Berkeley: University of California. pp. 7-17. Rpt. in *Approaches to Beowulfian Scansion: Four Essays by John Miles Foley, Winfred P. Lehmann, Robert Creed, and Dolores Warwick Frese*. Ed. by Ann Hernández and Alain Renoir. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985. pp. 7-17.

Demonstrates the individuality as well as the similarity of the Old English alliterative line to the Homeric hexameter and Serbo-Croatian decasyllable from both synchronic and diachronic points of view. Observes that the ancient Greek and Serbo-Croatian lines are mora- or syllable-count meters, while the Old English prosodeme is the stress, and that Old English verse has no true caesura and therefore no colonic structure. Traces the Indo-European features of quantity/syllabicity, caesura, and increasing metrical conservatism toward line-end (“right-justification”) in all three meters where operative.

1983 **“On Being a Successful Clerk: Some Remarks on the State and Future of Our Profession.”** *Massachusetts Studies in English*, 9.2:1-7.

A humorous yet forceful exhortation that colleagues focus their academic efforts on *learning* and *teaching*—the two activities most dear to the Clerk in the *Canterbury Tales*—in an effort to better the future of their profession. Adapted from an oral presentation to faculty and alumni at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 1982.

“Genre(s) in the Making: Diction, Audience, and Text in the Old English *Seafarer*.” *Poetics Today*, 4:683-706.

Considers two modes of generating meaning in the Old English *Seafarer*—the traditional patterns that derive from a Germanic oral past and the poet’s personal designs—that are woven into a single poetic fabric. Argues that these complementary modes, when viewed from a Receptionalist perspective, comprise not a planctus, peregrination, or any of the usual assortment of medieval genres into which the poem is forced, but rather an idiosyncratic “genre-in-the-making,” a poetic type unique to Anglo-Saxon England in the period of transition from oral to oral-derived verbal art.

“Levels of Oral Traditional Structure in Serbo-Croatian Epic.” In *East European Folklore*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Special issue of *Southeastern Europe*, 10:189-221.

After providing a short biography of Ibro Bašić and a summary of “Alagić Alija and Velagić Selim” (a song recorded in three versions by Parry and Lord), investigates the structuring of the song on the levels of story-pattern, themes, and sub-thematic units.

“Literary Art and Oral Tradition in Old English and Serbo-Croatian Poetry.” *Anglo-Saxon England*, 12:183-214.

Begins by considering the differences between the Moslem epic tradition of the South Slavs, on which the Parry-Lord oral theory is based, and the Christian tradition of much shorter epic songs, stressing the fact that the Christian songs provide an opportunity for a poet to manipulate inherited traditional patterns of language and narrative. The Christian songs thus exhibit both oral provenance and “literary” aesthetics, a combination that does not exist in the Moslem material and which therefore was thought to be impossible in other oral traditions. The Christian poems are then compared to shorter Old English poems, such as the elegies, which also combine literary art and the elements of oral tradition.

Editor. *East European Folklore*. A special issue of *Southeastern Europe*, 10.

A special issue of *Southeastern Europe* comprising seven essays on various aspects of eastern European folklore, with the majority of the essays focusing on Serbian traditions in particular.

With Joel M. Halpern and Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern. “Oral Genealogies and Official Records: A Comparative Approach Using Serbian Data.” In *East European Folklore*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Special issue of *Southeastern Europe*, 10:165-88.

Details several of the socially and poetically influenced characteristics of orally transmitted genealogies from Orašac and illustrates how several of those features shape written versions of the genealogies while other factors (such as population stability and gender issues) at the same time cause divergence between the written and oral accounts.

1984 **“Beowulf: Oral Tradition behind the Manuscript.”** In *Approaches to Teaching Beowulf*. Ed. by Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert F. Yeager. New York: Modern Language Association. pp. 130-38.

A general account of what is known or can be discerned about the Anglo-Saxon oral tradition from which *Beowulf* emerges.

“The Price of Narrative Fiction: Genre, Myth, and Meaning in *Moby-Dick* and the *Odyssey*.”
Thought, 59:432-48.

Advances the idea of a reader-response approach to the literary epic, exemplified by *Moby-Dick*, and the oral traditional epic the *Odyssey*, an approach which must take into consideration the genre and mythic pattern of each work. Discusses *Moby-Dick* in terms of its genre (literary epic) and mythic patterns (the mythic qualities of the American whaling venture and the Promethean qualities of Ahab) and describes the traditional Indo-European epic structure of the “Return Song,” the performance nature of the oral tradition, and the value of the Serbo-Croatian analog in developing a reading context for the *Odyssey*: “To the extent that we faithfully recognize phraseological, narrative, and tale-type features as traditional and read the *Odyssey* in their light, we are becoming that original Homeric audience by according these reading signals their echoic due and by reinvesting them with their traditional significance” (443). Narration, a problem in *Moby-Dick*, provides for complexity and various levels of structure, but “at the necessary expense of a seemingly peripatetic, restless narrator” (446), while the *Odyssey*’s dialectical tension between the synchronic nature of performance and the diachrony of that performance’s traditional context “is both the reward and the price of narrative fiction” (447) in the oral tradition.

1985 “Aeschylus: 525-456 B.C.” In *Research Guide to Biography and Criticism*. Ed. by Walton Beacham. Washington, D. C.: Research Publishing. vol. 1:1-6.

Provides a brief biography of Aeschylus as well as annotations of selected criticism concerning the poet’s works.

“The *Beowulf*-Poet: Before 1000.” In *Research Guide to Biography and Criticism*. Ed. by Walton Beacham. Washington, D. C.: Research Publishing. vol. 1:73-75.

Provides a short discussion and selected bibliography of *Beowulf* criticism with particular focus on questions of authorship by the anonymous *Beowulf*-poet. Argues that the poem itself should be viewed as the product of several ages, traditions, and influences, all of which should be taken into consideration alongside the recognition of any contribution by the anonymous poet who brought the work into its surviving version.

“Cynewulf.” In *Research Guide to Bibliography and Criticism*. Ed. by Walton Beacham. Washington, D. C.: Research Publishing. vol. 1:302-04.

Discusses the uncertain biographical details of Cynewulf, and then provides a brief overview of critical sources and scholarship for the poet.

***Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography.* New York: Garland Publishing. Rpt. 1986, 1989.**

The introduction contains a comprehensive history of scholarship and research in the field from its beginnings through 1982 and offers as suggestions for future work three methodological principles for comparative criticism: *tradition-dependence*, a recognition of the unique features of each oral poetic tradition which in comparing works from different traditions “admits both similarities and differences concurrently, which places the general characteristics of oral structures alongside the particular forms they may take in a given literature” (69); *genre-dependence*, “demanding as grounds for comparison among traditions nothing less than the closest generic fit available, and, further, calibrating any and all comparisons according to the comparability of the genres examined” (69), a principle which also “encourages comparison of genres if a basic congruity can be established” (69); and *text-dependence*, “the necessity to consider the exact nature of each text” (69) including the circumstances surrounding the collection, transmission, editing processes, and text diplomacy. The bibliography contains a comprehensive list of annotations on studies through 1982 in 100 language areas, as well as theory, bibliography, concordance, film, and music.

“Oral Narrative and Edition by Computer.” In *Computers in Literary and Linguistic Computing*. Ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse and Antonio Zampolli. Proceedings of the XI International Conference of the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing, 1. Paris: Champion and Geneva: Slatkine. pp. 173-82.

A companion to earlier articles on establishing computerized editions of oral epic, this article presents examples of the phraseological and narrative analyses made possible by the text-processor HEURO.

In Serbian. “Indoevropski metar i srpskohrvatski deseterac.” *Naučni Sastanak Slavista u Vukove Dane*, 15:339-44.

A brief description of the Indo-European background of the South Slavic decasyllable and of the implications of that history for the prosody and phraseology of the Serbo-Croatian oral epic. References to other Indo-European meters are included.

1986 “Tradition and the Collective Talent: Oral Epic, Textual Meaning, and Receptionalist Theory.” *Cultural Anthropology*, 1:203-22.

Suggests that oral traditional units in texts are not complete within the text but are rather “incomplete cues to be contextualized by the audience’s subjective participation in the tale-telling process” (217). Applies the methodology resulting from this concept to the “pan-Balkan” story form of the return song.

Editor. *Oral Tradition in Literature: Interpretation in Context*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Collection of essays considering how we “read” works of literature that stem from oral traditions, and what difference a work’s orality makes to its interpretation. Includes introduction and selected bibliography by Foley.

- 1987 “Formula in Yugoslav and Comparative Folk Epic: Structure and Function.” In *The Heroic Process: Form, Function, and Fantasy in Folk Epic*. Ed. by Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin, and Pádraig Ó Héalaí. Dublin: Glendale Press. pp. 485-504.

A two-part article that advocates consideration of traditional elements, such as the formula, in their own context before comparative analysis or any attempt to understand meaning. The first half outlines three principles for analysis of folk epic in context and applies them to the South Slavic formula: tradition-dependence, genre-dependence, and text-dependence. The second half discusses the principle of metonymy, according to which the meaning of traditional elements resides not necessarily in the text itself, but in the extratextual connotations invoked by the text.

“Man, Muse, and Story: Psychohistorical Patterns in Oral Epic Poetry.” *Oral Tradition*, 2:91-107.
<http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/2i/foley>

Considers how oral traditional epic encodes not only the practical life-knowledge of a culture, but also “the drama about psychological maturation—the record a culture maintains . . . about the secrets of the human psyche in its development from birth to adulthood” (94). Employs the return song in ancient Greek and South Slavic as the primary example.

“Reading the Oral Traditional Text: Aesthetics of Creation and Response.” In *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers. pp. 185-212.

Contents that “a bona fide reading [of an oral text] requires isolation . . . of exactly what the poet and tradition are communicating to their audiences through the mutually intelligible symbol” (190). Considers the place of meaning in oral art, seeking to balance out the scholarly emphasis on structure and to answer the literary critics’ objections to the idea of an oral art by suggesting that stock formulas function metonymically, that they explain the “momentary action in terms of the larger characterization, the present in terms of the timeless and unchanging” (193).

Editor. *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry.* Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers.

Interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collection of essays honoring the memory of Milman Parry as the founder of the field of oral tradition studies.

- 1988 **"Oral Traditional Poetics."** In *Usmeno i pisano/pismeno u književnosti i kulturi*. Ed. by Svetozar Petrović. Novi Sad: Vojvodjanska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti. pp. 31-57.

After exploring some of the difficulties in defining the terms "oral" and "traditional," proposes a specific program for reading traditional texts (as opposed to literary works) by considering questions of what is actually represented by a given text, where the work lies on the oral and oral-derived spectrum, how issues of genre- and tradition-dependence are important, and how the work is situated with regard to both synchronic and diachronic contexts. This program is then applied to examples drawn from South Slavic epic, the *Odyssey*, Serbo-Croatian and Old English charms, *Beowulf*, and *The Seafarer*. This essay later appears in only slightly altered form as Chapter 1 of *Traditional Oral Epic* (1990). (A summary in Serbian is also provided at the end of the essay.)

The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Rpt. 1992. (Chinese Version: Trans. by Chogjin, published by the Social Science Documentation Publishing House, 2000. Rpt. 2009.)

A comprehensive history of oral-formulaic theory, beginning with the pre-Parry debates over the Homeric question, through the studies of Parry and Lord, and concluding by discussing the impact these studies have had on diverse and interdisciplinary fields, as well as the contributions to the theory itself from these other fields.

"Toward an Oral Aesthetics: A Response to Jesse Gellrich." *Philological Quarterly*, 67:475-80.

Extends the argument of Gellrich ("Orality, Literacy, and Crisis in the Later Middle Ages," *Philological Quarterly*, 67:461-73, 480) to the realm of aesthetics, noting that the persistence of oral-derived structures in medieval texts results from their metonymic utility in encoding meaning that has reference to a larger tradition.

Entries for “Comparative Literature: Folk Literature,” “Folklore, Customs, Costume,” and “Folklore.” In *Books for College Libraries*. 3rd ed. Chicago and London: American Library Association. vol. 2:129-30, vol. 4:38-44, vol. 5:406.

Listed bibliographical entries in each area meant to act as a recommended core collection for undergraduate libraries.

In Serbian. “Estetika i metonimija u kanonu Vuka Karadžića.” *Naučni Sastanak Slavista u Vukove Dane*, 17:185-88.

Considers the roles of traditional metonymy and extratextual resonances—especially in relation to aesthetics—as important on various structural levels within the traditional poems collected by Karadžić in the early nineteenth century.

1989 In Bosnian. “Južnoslovenska usmena tradicija u komparativnom kontekstu.” *Radio-Sarajevo, Treći program*, 17:83-93.

1990 “Introduction.” In *Oral Studies in Southern Africa*. Ed. by H. C. Groenewald. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council. pp. 1-11.

An introduction to a volume comprising the proceedings of the CENSAL Symposium held in July 1986 at the University of Natal. Suggests that research on various African traditions can further inform our understanding of traditional (though often now text-bound) materials from other areas of the world and then proceeds to draw specific connections between each of the volume’s essays and ongoing scholarship from many of these comparative fields of study.

Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song. Berkeley: University of California Press. Rpt. 1993.

Begins the process of developing a traditional oral poetics by which to understand the structural and aesthetic principles underlying oral and oral-derived texts. Applies this methodology to a comparative study of the *Odyssey*, South Slavic return songs, and *Beowulf*.

Editor. *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Collection of reprinted texts that touch “in some important way on the origin, evolution, or response to oral-formulaic theory” (xiv).

Translator. “The Singers and Their Epic Songs” by Matija Murko. In *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. New York: Garland. Rpt. in *Oral Tradition*, 5:107-30.

Translation of Part I of *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1929).

- 1991 **“Foreword.”** In *Weavers of the Songs: The Oral Poetry of Arab Women in Israel and the West Bank*. Comp., ed., and trans. by Mishaël Maswari Caspi and Julia Ann Blessing. Washington, D. C.: Three Continents Press. pp. vii-xi.

Contextualizes the volume it introduces as part of an exploding movement to extend Parry and Lord’s theories to multitudinous oral traditions from around the world; also acknowledges the importance of the editors’ synthesis of firsthand fieldwork with scholarly analysis and commentary that explains the cultural significance of the materials included.

***Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Oral Traditional Epic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.**

Building on the investigation into traditional structure presented in *Traditional Oral Epic* (1990) and also upon the Receptionalist approach to literary criticism, seeks to answer the question of how we might better “interpret works of verbal art that either stem directly from or have roots in oral tradition” (xi) by understanding them on their own terms rather than through a primarily literary lens. Such texts can best be seen as generating meaning through the process of *traditional referentiality* whereby any given usage of a traditional element draws metonymically from the surrounding poetic tradition via the previous experiences of both poet and audience. Later chapters are then devoted to examining the benefits of recognizing such traditional referentiality in connection with the formulas, themes, and story-patterns of the Serbo-Croatian, ancient Greek, and Old English traditions.

“Orality, Textuality, and Interpretation.” In *Vox Intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*. Ed. by A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. pp. 34-45.

Rejects the extreme positions associated with the Great Divide model whereby oral-derived texts (such as those in the ancient Greek or Old English traditions) are either held to be perfectly similar to modern oral traditions (such as those of Yugoslavia) or are denied their oral traditional roots altogether. Instead calls for investigative approaches for such texts to be complicated in a way that looks at both similarities and differences across traditions while also reaching beyond matters of composition so that issues of aesthetics and meaning are taken into account.

“Strategies for Translating Serbo-Croatian Traditional Oral Narrative.” *Journal of Folklore Research*, 28:61-81.

Advances a methodology that combines Oral-Formulaic Theory and the Performance/Ethnopoetics/Ethnography of Speaking approach in order to create English-language renderings of Serbo-Croatian oral narratives, particularly the *narodne pjesme* collected by Karadžić in the early nineteenth century. As an example of what can be achieved through such a methodology, the process is then applied to a single poem from the collection (*Marko Kraljević Recognizes His Father's Sword*) by means of a translation and subsequent commentary.

“Texts that Speak to Readers Who Hear: Old English Poetry and the Languages of Oral Tradition.” In *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*. Ed. by Allen J. Frantzen. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 141-56, 259-64.

Advocates a pluralistic approach toward understanding Old English verse in terms of “its oral traditional as well as its written heritage and dynamics” (141), and briefly traces the oral-formulaic approach as previously employed (or rejected) in Old English studies before demonstrating how the theory can be expanded beyond issues of composition to take reception, aesthetics, and metonymic meaning into account as well. Concludes with a “Further Reading” section that includes relevant bibliography.

In Serbian. “Džon Majls Foli.” In *Sa svetskim slavistima*. Ed. by Milo Jevtić. Gornji Milanovac: Dečje Novine. pp. 485-98.

A conversation with the editor about oral tradition in the former Yugoslavia and worldwide.

1992 “Obituary: Albert Bates Lord (1912-1991).” *Journal of American Folklore*, 105:57-65.

An obituary focusing on the ways in which Lord built upon the insights of Milman Parry and thus “changed the way we think about verbal art, profoundly and permanently” (59). Includes a full bibliography of Lord’s many publications.

“Oral Traditional Aesthetics and Old English Poetry.” In *Medialität und mittelalterliche insulare Literatur*. Ed. by Hildegard L. C. Tristram. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. pp. 80-103.

A discussion of aesthetics within oral and oral-derived texts excerpted in large part from Chapters 1-3 of *Immanent Art* (1991).

“The Problem of Aesthetics in Oral and Oral-Derived Texts.” In *Homer 1987: Papers of the Third Greenbank Colloquium, April 1987*. Ed. by J. Pinsent and H. V. Hurt. Liverpool: Liverpool Classical Monthly. pp. 51-63.

A continuation and extension of earlier work on aesthetics, with the explicit argument that aesthetics and structure are complementary and mutually enabling features within oral and oral-derived works rather than oppositional forces as posited by various earlier scholars. Suggests that issues of tradition-dependence, genre-dependence, and text-dependence are all important in creating meaning in such art, and provides examples from ancient Greek (Homeric Bath type-scenes), South Slavic (the Search for a Substitute theme within the Return Song story-pattern, and Old English (the scourging theme in *Andreas*) that show how traditional structures act metonymically in the individual instance to evoke larger meanings drawn from the surrounding tradition.

“Synthetic Kinship in Serbo-Croatian Epic.” In *De Gustibus: Essays for Alain Renoir*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. New York: Garland. pp. 201-15.

After describing the South Slavic institutions of bloodbrother-, bloodsister-, and godparenthood, goes on to demonstrate how an understanding of these institutions can better inform interpretation of Christian epics such as “Marko Kraljević Recognizes His Father’s Sword” (with its narration of the pact between the wounded Vukašin and the Turkish maiden [or her brother]) and the Moslem Return Song (where a cognate relationship between the prisoner and the *banica* is formed within the “Shouting in Prison” theme).

“Word-Power, Performance, and Tradition.” *Journal of American Folklore*, 105:275-301.

Illustrates through examples drawn especially from Serbo-Croatian traditions (but also from Greek and Old English) how Oral-Formulaic Theory and Performance-centered approaches can be combined to understand the concept of “word-power,” with performance acting as an enabling event that activates the referential sphere of the tradition itself.

Editor. *De Gustibus: Essays for Alain Renoir*. New York: Garland Publishing.

A collection of 27 essays presented to Alain Renoir and covering the areas of Greek, Latin, Middle English, Middle High German, Old English, Old French, Old High German, Old Irish, Old Norse, Russian, Sanskrit, Serbo-Croatian, Welsh, and Xhosa traditions. Most essays focus particularly on oral traditions or oral-derived texts. A bibliography of Alain Renoir’s works up to that point is also included.

- 1993 **"Albert Bates Lord: A Recollection."** *Old English Newsletter*, 26.1:12.

A fond remembrance and academic biography of Lord published shortly after the death of the pioneering scholar.

"The Implications of Oral Tradition." In *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages: Selected Papers from the 1988 CEMERS Conference*. Ed. by W. F. H. Nicolaisen. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 31-58.

A discussion of traditional referentiality largely excerpted from Ch. 1 of *Immanent Art* (1991).

"Speaking of Homer." *The Sciences*, 33.5:6.

Advocates redressing the imbalance often shown in studies of texts with roots in oral performance to take into heightened account the traditional character of such works, as it is primarily such "traditional ways of 'speaking'" that "can retain some of their evocative capability even after they have been committed to written texts."

Three entries ("Formula," "Guslar," and "Oral-Formulaic Theory") and a supplement (for the "Tradition" entry). In *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. by Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 422-23, 491, 866-68, 1296.

Brief definitions, discussions, and contextualizations of each term, all of which are also provided with relevant bibliography. The "Tradition" supplement expands the entry to include oral traditions rather than just those that are literary or written.

- 1994 **"Albert Bates Lord: In Memoriam."** In *The Uses of Tradition: A Comparative Enquiry into the Nature, Uses and Functions of Oral Poetry in the Balkans, the Baltic and Africa*. Ed. by Michael Branch and Celia Hawkesworth. London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies and Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 269-71.

A tribute to Lord that focuses on his commitment to understanding South Slavic oral poetry on its own terms as well as on the personal kindness that Lord always exhibited in his academic pursuits.

"Ancient Greek Studies and Folkloristics." *Journal of American Folklore*, 107:437-49.

A synthesized review of six volumes (*Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* [Timothy Gantz, 1993], *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* [Barry B. Powell, 1991], *Literacy and Orality*

in *Ancient Greece* [Rosalind Thomas, 1992], *Homeric Misdirection: False Predictions in the Iliad* [James V. Morrison, 1992], *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* [Steve Reece, 1993], and *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* [Gregory Nagy, 1990]) in an effort to provide an overview of "some recent developments in ancient Greek studies that collectively portend major shifts in scholarly response to issues that involve—and that also, significantly, further interrelate—folklore and literature" (438).

"Explaining a Joke: Pelt Kid and Tale of Orašac." *Western Folklore*, 53:51-68.

Examines the figures of Pelt Kid and Tale of Orašac (from the Zuni storytelling and South Slavic Moslem epic traditions respectively) as illustrations of the importance of metonymic "word-power" within traditional performance contexts.

"Oral Literature Today." In *HarperCollins World Reader*. Ed. by Mary Ann Caws and Christopher Prendergast. New York: HarperCollins. pp. 2590-655.

After an introduction that discusses the importance of oral traditions and the difficulty of the designation "oral literature," provides a selection of readings drawn from Rajasthani, Sephardic, Jewish, Arabic, Malagasy, Russian, South Slavic, Mayan, Native American, Appalachian, and African-American traditions, each of which is discussed briefly with respect to its own particular cultural context.

"Proverbs and Proverbial Function in South Slavic and Comparative Epic." *Proverbium*, 11:77-92.

Examines the traditional referentiality of four proverbs drawn from South Slavic epics recorded by Parry and Lord in the 1930s.

"South Slav Oral Tradition in a Comparative Context." In *The Uses of Tradition: A Comparative Enquiry into the Nature, Uses and Functions of Oral Poetry in the Balkans, the Baltic and Africa*. Ed. by Michael Branch and Celia Hawkesworth. London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies and Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 95-104.

Proposes that the usefulness of South Slav oral tradition as a tool for comparative study can be increased by "differentiating among traditions, genres and even documents" (97) and suggests that such comparisons can be nuanced by focusing on issues of text-dependence, tradition-dependence, and genre-dependence before further fine-tuning can be accomplished by investigating specialized features of individual idiolect, local dialect, and pan-traditional language.

“Words in Tradition, Words in Text: A Response.” *Semeia (A Journal of Biblical Studies)*, 65:169-80.

As a response to Werner Kelber’s call (made previously in the same volume) for “an increased complexity in our concept of oral tradition as applied to the origins, history, and phenomenological reality of the Gospel texts” (169), provides comparative insights on metonymic referentiality, sociolinguistic register, and shifts in audience reception that might in turn be applied to the Gospels by specialists in that field.

1995 “Folk Literature.” In *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. Ed. by David C. Greetham. New York: Modern Language Association (for the Committee on Scholarly Editions). pp. 600-26.

An account of the history, achievements, and especially the methodologies of scholarly editing within the field of folk literature. After a brief sketch of early editing methodologies reaching back to the Grimms, Lönnrot, and Karadžić and proceeding through periods dominated by ethnolinguistic models (Powell, Boas, Sapir, Malinowski, Mallery) and literary models (Thompson, Taylor), demonstrates how editing after 1960 employed different methodologies in attempts at better appreciating folk literature on its own terms. Particular focus is placed on Oral-Formulaic Theory (Parry, Lord), Ethnopoetics/Ethnography of Speaking (Tedlock, Rothenberg, Hymes), and Performance approaches (Bauman, with parallel theoretical developments in various areas of folklore), and Barre Toelken’s work on Navajo tales from 1961 onward is used as an illustration of such developments. Also provides a list of exemplary editions since 1960 and suggestions for further reading.

“The Poet’s Self-Interruption in *Andreas*.” In *Prosody and Poetics in the Early Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of C. B. Hieatt*. Ed. by M. Jane Toswell. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. pp. 42-59.

Argues that 1) the *Andreas* poet draws on the persistent qualities of traditional forms in order to create an “‘indexed translation,’ in which the story told in the *Praxeis* or a close relative becomes a work of identifiably and aesthetically Anglo-Saxon verbal art” (54), and 2) the poet’s self-interruption (lines 1478-91) must be understood as negotiating the levels of performance he has created within his text through the skillful employment of his traditional register.

***The Singer of Tales in Performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.**

A volume that continues the work of *Traditional Oral Epic* (1990) and *Immanent Art* (1991) by exploring the connections between oral-formulaic and performance-based theories as they apply to oral and oral-derived texts. Chapter 1 (“Common Ground”) begins the laying of a theoretical foundation for the study by elucidating points of contact between Oral-Formulaic Theory and the Ethnography of Speaking/Ethnopoetics approaches. Chapter 2 (“Ways of Speaking, Ways of Meaning”) then extends this foundation to incorporate Receptionalism and the concepts of performance arena, register, and communicative economy, while Chapter 3 (“The Rhetorical Persistence of Traditional Forms”) explores the ways in which oral traditional art can retain performance-based meaning even past the point of transition into written

form. The last three chapters (“Spellbound,” “Continuities of Reception,” and “Indexed Translation”) then apply this established theoretical framework to the Serbian tradition of charms (*bajanje*), the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and the Old English *Andreas*.

“Sixteen Moments of Silence in Homer.” *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 50.2:7-26.

Demonstrates that within Homer the phrase οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ (“and all of them were stricken silently to silence”) acts as a traditional marker signifying a sequence in which “an initial speech proposing or reporting a radical, usually unexpected action will give way to stunned silence, followed by a response that immediately or eventually involves substantial qualification if not dismissal of the proposed or reported action” (23). In the *Iliad*, the phrase is further situated within contexts involving the winning or losing of *kleos*.

1996 “Guslar and Aoidos: Traditional Register in South Slavic and Homeric Epic.” *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 126:11-41.

Seeks to calibrate more finely the benefits and limitations of comparing Homeric poetry with South Slavic oral epic by examining similarities and differences between the two traditions’ formulaic phraseology, enjambement practices, metrical irregularities, and “artificial language” qualities including dialect variation and archaisms.

“The Performance of Homeric Epic: Homer and South Slavic Epic.” *Didaskalia: Ancient Theatre Today*, 3.3. (Web publication available at <http://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol3no3/foley.html>)

A modified lecture illustrating the benefits (and limitations) of using South Slavic epic as an analogy for Homeric poetry, especially in relation to its performance.

“Signs, Texts, and Oral Tradition.” *Journal of Folklore Research*, 33:21-29.

First provides a brief overview of Oral-Formulaic Theory as it evolved from focusing primarily on composition to the inclusion of other aspects of performance including register, meaning, and reception more generally. As an illustration of the “potential yield of yoking together the concerns of folklore and literature studies in a unified perspective” (26), then discusses Bellerophon’s tablet from Book 6 of the *Iliad* as well as the term *sêma* more broadly within Homer as examples that demonstrate traditional, metonymic strategies for creating meaning in ways that often diverge from conventional literary techniques.

Entries for “Albert Bates Lord,” “Oral-Formulaic Approach,” and “Milman Parry.” In *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. by Jan Harold Brunvand. New York: Garland. pp. 449-50, 529-31, 544.

Brief overviews and bibliographic references for each entry.

In German. “Albert Bates Lord.” In *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*. Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften. Band 8. Lieferung 4/5. cols. 1195-97.

A brief summary of Lord’s professional career and his important contributions to scholarship on oral traditions.

- 1997 “Oral Tradition and Homeric Art: The *Hymn to Demeter*.” In *New Light on a Dark Age: Exploring the Culture of Geometric Greece*. Ed. by Susan Langdon. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. pp. 144-53.

Demonstrates consistencies between Homeric epic and the Homeric Hymns in their employment of metonymic and extratextual poetic strategies with regard to both phraseology (especially the phrase *kratus Argeiphontês*) and type-scenes (particularly the “Suspicion of death and self-defilement” pattern).

“Oral Tradition and Its Implications.” In *A New Companion to Homer*. Ed. by Barry B. Powell and Ian Morris. Leiden: E. J. Brill. pp. 146-73.

Provides a history of the origins and evolution of Oral Theory as developed within studies of Homeric epic, proceeding from the early research of Parry and Lord to later replies and revisions. Concludes by considering the implications of oral tradition for interpreting Homer’s art, with particular emphasis on reception, traditional referentiality, and register.

“Oral Tradition and the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.” In *Hommage à Milman Parry: Le Style formulaire de l’épopée homérique et la théorie de l’oralité poétique*. Ed. by Françoise Létoublon. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben. pp. 201-13.

Expanded version of “Oral Tradition and Homeric Art: The *Hymn to Demeter*” (1997) with increased emphasis on dialectal and idiolectal variation as well as further consideration of story-pattern structuring in the *Hymn to Demeter*.

“Oral Tradition into Textuality.” In *Texts and Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory, and Interpretation*. Ed. by Philip Cohen. New York: Garland. pp. 1-24.

A condensed version of Chapter 3 from *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (1995). After reviewing how various strategies have been used to commit particular oral traditions (for instance, Native American and South Slavic) to a printed (and often translated) form with differing degrees of success in preserving performance-related features and meanings, proceeds to explain that “the continuity of reception of a work that stems from oral tradition but which survives only as a text will depend on the reader’s ability to recognize the rhetorical signals that are the bequest of performance and tradition, and then to credit these signals with the institutionalized meanings they carry as a dedicated register of verbal communication” (17).

“Traditional Signs and Homeric Art.” In *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Ed. by Egbert Bakker and Ahuvia Kahane. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. pp. 56-82, 238-43.

After a brief overview of oral tradition studies (with particular emphasis on theoretical developments related specifically to the Homeric tradition and detailing the specific progression in scholarship from concerns of composition to those associated with reception and meaning), discusses in detail the traditional presence and persistence of metonymic meanings and traditionally referentiality inherent within the formulas, type-scenes, and story-patterns of various traditions. Concludes with a demonstration that in Homer the word *sêma* designates a “sign that points not so much to a specific situation, text, or performance as toward the ambient tradition, which serves as a key to an emergent reality” (56), thus functioning as a specific example of the way in which traditional “signs” work more generally within such traditional poetics.

Entries for “Formula,” “Oral-Formulaic Theory,” and “Theme.” In *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art*. Ed. by Thomas A. Green. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. vol. 1, pp. 377-78; vol. 2, 614-18, 791-92.

“Formula” discusses the original definition of the term by Parry and then its gradual expansion as related to “formulaic systems” and further traditions beyond those studied by Parry. “Oral-Formulaic Theory” is discussed in its larger developments from its conception by Parry through its application by Lord and the eventual refinements that were made to the theory in the areas of performance, reception, and meaning. “Themes” discusses Lord’s work with these items in particular while also mentioning Parry’s initial usage of the term and other scholars’ application of the concept to traditions from around the world. Each entry also provides relevant bibliography.

In Chinese. “The Oral Theory: An Approach to Studies in Oral Tradition.” Trans. by Chogjin. *Min Zu Wen Xue Yan Jiu (Studies of National Literature, Beijing)*, 2.1:86-90.

A translation into Chinese of “The Oral Theory” (1997).

In Ukrainian. “The Oral Theory.” Trans. by G. Dovženok. In *Usna epika: Etnični tradiciji ta vikonavstvo*. Kiev: Nacionalna Akademije Nauk Ukraini. vol. 2, pp. 112-21. (English version, pp. 122-30)

A brief overview of the development of Oral Theory from the time of its earliest formulation by Parry and Lord to its eventual application to traditions from around the world and also to its inclusion of concerns about reception, register, and meaning as well as composition.

- 1998** “The Bard’s Audience Is Always More than a Fiction.” In *Time, Memory, and the Verbal Arts: Essays on the Thought of Walter Ong*. Ed. by Dennis L. Weeks and Jane Hoogestraat. Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press. pp. 92-108.

An application of Ong’s conception of the “fictionalized audience” to “traditional oral performers, regardless of gender, age, genre, or culture” (93) as well as to works existing now only as written records that reflect such traditional performance. Posits that a heightened effectiveness of the traditional register requires the bard and audience to be joined in co-creating a work of art through a communicative economy that itself relies on mutual awareness of traditional signals.

“A Comparative View of Oral Traditions.” In *The Eternal Storyteller: Oral Literature in Modern China*. Ed. by Vibeke Boerdahl. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute for Asian Studies. Rpt. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press. 1999. pp. 15-30.

Provides an overview of oral traditions in connection with their effectiveness as technologies of communication. Begins by investigating the pervasiveness of oral traditions—even when occurring alongside other (for instance, written) communication technologies—as well as the idea that it is better to see orality and literacy as theoretical ends of a broad spectrum of possibilities rather than to try separating them out into a false dichotomy. The essay then proceeds by discussing the role of tradition itself for the communicative process: “Tradition provides the pluralism that contextualizes the singular performance; the series of potentials to which the performer’s signals refer; the mythic background that gives dimension and reality to the citation of characters, events and developments” (22). Finally, the concepts of performance arena, register, and communicative economy are discussed as features giving rise to meaning through the process of traditional referentiality. Throughout the essay, the focus is on ancient Greek, South Slavic, and Anglo-Saxon traditions, but frequent reference is made to many other comparative traditions as well.

“The Impossibility of Canon.” In *Teaching Oral Traditions*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. New York: Modern Language Association. pp. 13-33.

After showing that many preconceptions about the idea of a “canon” derive from the realities of physical libraries (such as the one at ancient Alexandria) requiring static objects to be included as entries, goes on to show that such “canons” can never encapsulate the plurality and multiformity of oral traditions themselves. Instead, such traditions work similarly to the Internet with its ever-changing and user-individualized pathways to information. The Internet model is then used to demonstrate another aspect of oral traditions, as the traditional referentiality of traditional units is shown to work similarly to the process of clicking an Internet link that then opens onto a fuller reality than is expressed in the typed-out form of the URL itself.

“Individual Poet and Epic Tradition: Homer as Legendary Singer.” *Arethusa*, 31:149-78.

Provides a comparison of Homer with the “legendary singer” figure of South Slavic oral epic with the goals of demonstrating 1) how the legendary singer is employed as a way of designating the poetic tradition more generally, 2) that descriptions of the legendary singer illustrate the concept of “variation within limits,” thus mirroring the traditions themselves, and 3) that understanding the significance of the different legendary singer figures involves viewing them as representations of “*both* their individual, situation-specific *and* their traditional values” (150).

“Introduction.” *Teaching Oral Traditions*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. New York: Modern Language Association. pp. 1-9.

Justifies the need for a volume devoted to the teaching of oral traditions by demonstrating that 1) the subject is one of increasing importance within the undergraduate classroom and 2) it requires a fundamental shift away from the academic norms associated with most text-based analysis. Also provides a contextualizing summary of the volume’s contents.

“The Rhetorical Persistence of Traditional Forms in Oral Epic Texts.” In *The Epic: Oral and Written*. Ed. by Jawaharlal Handoo, Lauri Honko, and John Miles Foley. Mysore, India: Central Institute of Indian Languages. pp. 80-93.

Argues that even though much meaning is often lost as oral epics are removed from performance and molded into fixed texts, comparison of textualized epics having roots in oral performance (such as those in the ancient Greek and medieval English traditions) with living oral traditions can still be fruitful; some traditionally encoded meanings will bridge the transition from oral to written based on continued appreciation of such signals by both poet and audience, but their degree of persistence will be affected by the particular relationship between a given text and its traditional performance context. The variability of such relationships is then explored through examples drawn from Native American, South Slavic, ancient Greek, and medieval English traditions.

“What’s In a Sign?” In *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and Its Influence in the Greek and Roman World*. Ed. by E. Anne Mackay. Leiden: E. J. Brill. pp. 1-27.

An introduction to a volume devoted to investigating structures and patterns within ancient Greek and Roman oral traditions, with a specific goal of understanding how and/or what such features contribute to meaning and aesthetics. Begins by discussing the evolution of Oral-Formulaic Theory as it moved away from the Great Divide model toward an understanding of oral traditions that foregrounds plurality, reception, and traditional referentiality. Proceeds by providing several homemade proverbs to be kept in mind when investigating oral traditions, with one underlying theme being that of emphasizing further the “traditional” component of the “oral traditional” label. Finally, the introduction provides a contextualization and summary of each of the volume’s contributed essays.

Entries for “Albert Bates Lord,” “Oral-Formulaic Composition and Theory,” and “Milman Parry.” In *An Encyclopedia of Folklore and Literature*. Ed. by Bruce Rosenberg and Mary Ellen Brown. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO. pp. 395-96, 471-75, 493-94.

The entries on Lord and Parry focus on their backgrounds, fieldwork, and development of Oral-Formulaic Theory. The third entry explores Oral-Formulaic Theory in more detail, also discussing its later evolution to focus on further traditions and especially performance without an “absolute dichotomy of oral versus written” (474).

Editor. *Teaching Oral Traditions*. New York: Modern Language Association.

A collection of 39 essays (plus an introduction by Foley) centered on the teaching of oral traditions, particularly within the undergraduate classroom. Part I (“Canon or Cornucopia”) consists of four essays that examine how oral traditions fit (or do not fit) into normative modern conceptions of verbal art. Special emphasis is placed on continuities between oral traditions and the Internet (Foley); the need for adapting our ideas concerning comparative literature to include both oral and written traditions (Lee Haring); the confluence of orality, literacy, and gesture within medieval manuscripts (Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe); and the transition of oral traditions into textualized form (Elizabeth Fine).

Part II (“Critical Approaches”) then comprises five essays that discuss a particular methodology or methodologies relevant to studying and teaching oral traditions. Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt and Mark C. Amodio provide historical and modern overviews of many of these approaches before specific investigations are made into the Ethnography of Performance (Richard Bauman and Donald Braid), Ethnopoetics (Thomas DuBois), and Traditional Referentiality (Nancy Mason Bradbury).

The essays in Part III then demonstrate how these techniques can be employed to teach specific traditions. Covered living traditions include Native American North (Barre Toelken) and South (John H. McDowell), African oral narrative (Donald J. Cosentino), African American (Sw. Anand Prahlad), General Hispanic (John Zemke), Mexican American (María Herrera-Sobek), Jewish (Judith S. Neulander), Indian (R. Parthasarathy), Chinese (Mark Bender), Japanese (Shelley Fenno Quinn), Arabic (Susan Slyomovics), South Slavic (Ronelle Alexander), British-American balladry (John D. Niles), folktales (Steven Swann

Jones), women's expressive forms (Marta Weigle), and storytelling (Carol L. Birch). Also covered are texts with roots in oral tradition, including the Hebrew Scriptures (Martin S. Jaffee), New Testament texts (Werner H. Kelber), Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Richard P. Martin), *Beowulf* (Alexandra H. Olsen), Chaucer (Carl Lindahl), the Middle English romance and alliterative tradition (Leslie Stratyner), Old French literature (Evelyn Birge Vitz), the Icelandic sagas (Joseph Harris), and the frame tale (Bonnie D. Irwin).

Part IV closes the volume by providing further resources and background for teaching these traditions. A synthesis of a nationwide curriculum survey is presented by Lynn C. Lewis and Lori Peterson; Beverly Stoeltje and Nancy Worthington offer strategies for incorporating issues of multiculturalism within the teaching of these materials; William McCarthy demonstrates how oral traditions can be used beneficially within a composition course; and Anastasios Daskalopoulos offers a selected bibliography of audiovisual and Internet resources meant to assist teachers and students of these traditions. Finally, the collected bibliography that forms the "Works Cited" section of the volume is itself a valuable resource.

Editor with Jawaharlal Handoo and Lauri Honko. *The Epic: Oral and Written*. Mysore, India: Central Institute of Indian Languages.

A collection of essays based on papers delivered at the Eleventh Congress of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research held in Mysore, India, during January 1995. Topics covered include oral epic composition, the relationship of epics and history, and the interface between oral and written epic techniques, with particular focus on Indian, Tibetan, Irish, Greenlandic, and Homeric traditions among others.

- 1999 "Epic Cycles and Epic Traditions." In *Euphrosyne: Studies in Ancient Epic and its Legacy in Honor of Dimitris Maronitis*. Ed. by I. N. Kazazes, Antonios Rengakos, and D. N. Maronites. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. pp. 99-108.**

Argues that the concept of an "epic cycle" is for the most part a product of a textually oriented outlook rather than one that reflects emic practices. Further suggests that, even though establishing such frameworks is helpful for critical analysis, substitution of "tradition" for "cycle" in such investigations will lead to more fruitful results.

"Experiencing the Siri Epic." *Folklore Fellows Network*, 17 (June):13-23.

A combined review of *The Siri Epic as Performed by Gopala Naika, Parts I and II* (L. Honko in collaboration with C. Gowda, A. Honko, and V. Rai. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1998) and *Textualising the Siri Epic* (L. Honko. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1998), with special emphasis on placing the epic itself within a comparative context. Issues addressed include epic register and idiolect, performance, the oral-dictation process (with its effect on the epic's structure and content),

translation techniques, and the definition of “epic” more generally. Also included is a particular critique (both positive and negative) on Honko’s usage of the term “mental text.”

“14 or 40? The Singer or the Editor.” *Journal of American Folklore*, 112:555-57.

A response to R. Alexander’s review (*Journal of American Folklore*, 111:442-44) of *Immanent Art* and *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, geared specifically at interacting with Alexander’s claim that Foley mistranscribed and mistranslated the number “40” as “14” as found within *The Wedding of Mustajbeg’s Son Bećirbeg* performed by Halil Bajgorić. Explains that the poet did indeed sing “14,” and the number was thus transcribed and translated accordingly without any editorial license being exercised to “correct” what could be viewed as a possible infelicity.

***Homer’s Traditional Art*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.**

A volume devoted to answering the question “What difference does oral tradition make to our understanding of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*?” Part I begins the study by investigating the nature of Homeric *sēmata* (“signs”), both with respect to those items so designated within the epics themselves but also in reference to Homer’s formulas and other “signs” that are encoded with extralexical, metonymic meanings provided by the surrounding tradition. Part II (consisting of Chapters 2-4) then explores in great detail the advantages and limitations of the South Slavic analogy for understanding Homeric poetry, with specific discussions of the figure of the traditional singer, specialized language within the traditions, and the process by which the South Slavic tradition encodes its own “signs” with traditional referentiality. Analysis turns toward the Homeric poems in particular in Part III, with Chapter 5 considering the implications of the Return Song as the story-pattern that underlies the *Odyssey* and thus heightens the possibly ambiguous nature of Penelope within that epic. Chapter 6 tightens the focus more narrowly by moving down to the level of the type-scene, devoting particular attention to feasts in the *Odyssey* and laments in the *Iliad*. Chapter 7 then proceeds to look at even smaller traditional units and meaning embedded within Homeric phraseology. Finally, the volume concludes with an afterword devoted to the Anglo-Saxon *Deor* and its own particularized employment of traditional “signs.”

“Milman Parry.” In *American National Biography*. Ed. by John A. Garraty. New York: Oxford University Press. vol. 17. pp. 77-78. (available online at <http://www.anb.org>)

A brief biographical sketch of Milman Parry’s life, with particular emphasis on his contributions to the development of Oral-Formulaic Theory. Also includes a very helpful bibliography of others scholars’ accounts of Parry’s life and research.

“Proverbs and Proverbial Function in South Slavic and Comparative Epic.” *Journal of Indian Folkloristics*, n.s., 1:37-49.

A reprint of “Proverbs and Proverbial Function in South Slavic and Comparative Epic” (1994).

Translator. “Epea Pteroenta (‘Winged Words’).” By Françoise Létoublon. *Oral Tradition*, 14:321-35. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/14ii/letoublon>

An overview (translated by Foley) of the history of modern scholarship surrounding the phrase “winged words” in Homer and discusses the various ways in which the phrase can work in order to dovetail with additional formulaic elements within the verse.

2000 “Albert Bates Lord.” In *American National Biography*. Ed. by John A. Garraty. New York: Oxford University Press. (available online at <http://www.anb.org>)

An overview of Lord’s life and scholarship, focusing especially on his comparative methods and his role in the development of Oral-Formulaic Theory.

“Foley on Wyatt on Foley.” Response to William F. Wyatt’s review (2000.4.7) of *Homer’s Traditional Art*. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2000.5.9. <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2000/2000-05-09.html>

In responding to Wyatt’s review, reaffirms the importance of 1) giving greater significance to the “tradition” component of “oral tradition,” 2) employing the South Slavic analogy to Homer in finely calibrated ways, and 3) understanding Homeric phraseology as “words” that do not always correspond to literate conceptions of words more generally.

“Individual Poet and Epic Tradition: Homer as Legendary Singer.” In *Thick Corpus, Organic Variation, and Textuality in Oral Tradition*. Ed. by Lauri Honko. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica*. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 29-56.

Uses a comparison of Homer and the “legendary singer” figure within South Slavic oral epic to demonstrate that 1) the legendary singer (though presented as real) metonymically designates the entire poetic tradition, 2) various constructions of the legendary singer’s identity demonstrate the concept of “variation within limits,” and 3) traditional referentiality allows us to understand the legendary singer as a sign working in conjunction with both situation-specific and traditional values. Includes extensive discussion of South Slavic singers’ (and other informants’) accounts of Hasan Čoso, Isak, and Čor Huso Husović, as well as an epilogue describing the figure of Choibang as described in Inner Mongolia.

“Story-Pattern as *Sêma*: The *Odyssey* as a Return Song.” In *Thick Corpus, Organic Variation, and Textuality in Oral Tradition*. Ed. by Lauri Honko. Studia Fennica Folkloristica. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 199-249.

A slightly modified version of pp. 119-57 of *Homer’s Traditional Art* (1999).

“Textualising the Siri Epic.” *Indian Folklife*, 1.2:22-32.

A reprint of “Experiencing the *Siri Epic*” (1999).

“The Textualization of South Slavic Epic and Its Implications for Oral-Derived Epic.” In *Textualization of Oral Epics*. Ed. by Lauri Honko. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs. Berlin: Mouton DeGruyter. pp. 71-87.

A fascinating overview of the collection and publication processes employed by two separate teams of South Slavic oral epic collectors: 1) Vuk Karadžić with his team of amanuenses and 2) Milman Parry and Albert Lord along with their assistant Nikola Vujnović. Special attention is paid to the choices made by each team with regard to what was recorded and what then was published. Some concluding remarks offer the possibility that there may be some relevance of South Slavic “performatives” for understanding Homeric metrics as well as the reminder that readers of *Beowulf* today lack a traditional context and fluency for appreciating that poem in all its fullness.

Editor and Joint Author. “The Diversity of Oral Epic: Language and Meaning.” *Folklore Fellows Network*, 19 (March):13-20.

A report from Workshop II at the 1999 Folklore Fellows’ Summer School. The workshop’s dual focus was on “acquiring a ‘menu’ of approaches to understanding oral and oral-derived traditional epics” (with a particular concentration on oral-formulaic theory, performance theory, and ethnopoetics) and “demonstrating the inherent diversity of the complex expressive systems—or registers—within the traditions represented” by the group’s members (13). Includes participants’ discussions on these issues within the following areas: Romanian epic, Swedish folktales, Turkmen epic, Persian epic, Old English poetry, Tamil bow-song performance, Altay epic, Siri epic, Kalevala-metric oral poetry, Yi oral traditions, Lönnrot’s textualization of the *Kalevala*, Mongolian epic, and South Slavic epic.

In Chinese. “Present and Future Directions” and “Present Trend of the Discipline.” *Min Zu Wen Xue Yan Jiu* (*Studies of National Literature*, Beijing). Trans. by Chogjin. Special issue for 2000: 92-96.

Translated excerpts drawn from the fifth chapter and preface of the Chinese version (2000) of *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (1992).

In Chinese. Translation of “The Impossibility of Canon.” *Min Zu Wen Xue Yan Jiu (Studies of National Literature, Beijing)*. Special issue for 2000:32-48.

Translation of “The Impossibility of Canon” (1998).

In German. “Oral Poetry.” In *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*. Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften. vol. 10, i. pp. 322-32.

An overview of historical and methodological approaches toward oral poetry, moving from early misunderstanding and definition through text-based ideas of how oral poetry is somehow deficient or different from written poetry to an eventual acceptance of its complexity and dependence upon traditional processes. Also included are summaries of Oral-Formulaic Theory, the orality-literacy debate, Ethnopoetics, and performance theory.

- 2001** “Contextual Translation of Traditional Oral Narrative.” In *Jewish Culture and the Hispanic World: Essays in Memory of Joseph H. Silverman*. Ed. by Samuel G. Armistead and Mishael M. Caspi. Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Museum. pp. 162-71.

Somewhat in the same vein as “Strategies for Translating Serbo-Croatian Traditional Oral Narrative” (1991), this essay seeks “to sketch a strategy for resisting the ravages of time and intersemiotic translation, that is, for presenting English-language renderings of the Karadžić *pjesme* that recover at least some of the echoes of performance and traditional style” (191) through a combination of Oral-Formulaic Theory and the Performance/Ethnopoetics/Ethnography of Speaking approaches. Proposes that such an anthology of translations might 1) present the poems against the background of the Serbo-Croatian oral narrative tradition as a whole and the Karadžić collection in particular, 2) arrange the poems according to important figures and situational events rather than by genre, and 3) encode the translated text (through placement in the collection and consistent renderings of recurrent phraseological and narrative units that call attention to their employment) with extralexical meanings drawn from the tradition itself.

“Foreword.” In *Native American Oral Traditions: Collaboration and Interpretation*. Ed. by Larry Evers and Barre Toelken. Logan: Utah State University Press. pp. vii-xvi.

A foreword to a volume devoted to collaboration and interpretation within the context of editing and translating Native American oral traditions. Illustrates through examples the importance of “erasing some firmly drawn lines of identity and responsibility—between performance and interpretation, between insider and outsider, and between Native and scholar” (viii).

“Reading Between the Signs.” In *Incline aurem: Oral Perspectives on Early European Verbal Culture*. Ed. by Jan Helldén, Minna Skafte Jensen, and Thomas Pettitt. Odense: Odense University Press. pp. 83-110.

Begins with an “Almanac of Proverbs” consisting of homemade nuggets of wisdom to be kept in mind when appreciating oral traditions: 1) Oral traditions work like language, only more so; 2) Performance is the enabling event, tradition the enabling referent; 3) Composition and reception are two sides of the same coin; 4) *Artis causa*, not *metri causa*; 5) Read both behind and between the signs; and 6) Instance meshes with implication. Then proceeds to illustrate how Homer’s *Odyssey* and the Anglo-Saxon *Deor* can be better understood by reading their “signs” through their indexical function and thus by unlocking their traditional referentiality.

In German. “Milman Parry.” In *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*. Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften. vol. 10, ii. pp. 587-90.

A brief biography of Parry focused on his development of Oral-Formulaic Theory and the tradition of scholarship from which it emerged.

2002 *How to Read an Oral Poem*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. (eCompanion available at <http://oraltradition.org/hrop>)

Meant as an introduction for non-specialists to the contexts, plurality, and—above all—interpretation of oral poetry, the volume begins by providing four scenarios (involving a Tibetan paper-singer, a North American slam poet, a South African praise-poet, and an ancient Greek bard) that demonstrate the widely divergent possibilities that exist for oral poetry. The next section (“What the Oral Poets Say [in Their Own ‘Words’]”) then narrows the focus to what the South Slavic *guslari* have to say about *reči* (“words”), thereby moving readers away from a preconceived literate and textual understanding of words as fixed items printed on a page and thus toward a conception of a “word” as a flexible unit of utterance that varies in size and form according to its functional role in the communicative process.

The first “word,” then, seeks to answer the question “What is oral poetry?” by breaking down the oral/written dichotomy itself and by investigating common structuring techniques for four different categories of verbal art: “oral performance,” “voiced texts,” “voices from the past,” and “written oral poems” (39)—labels that designate the poetry according to its oral/aural or written nature with regard to composition, performance, and reception. “The Second Word” continues by using these categories to explore the importance of context (performance-based or otherwise) in interpreting such works of art, which in turn entails a reevaluation of what it means to “read” oral poetry, with the appropriate goal being to decode the signs provided by the poet in light of their context- and tradition-enhanced meanings.

The next few sections of the volume then provide a theoretical framework for interpreting these oral poems, with discussions of performance theory (and especially Bauman’s “keys to performance”), ethnopoetics (with specific application to slam poetry and *Beowulf*), and immanent art (involving questions of structure and word-power). These theoretical discussions are then followed by an “almanac” of

homemade proverbs that, when kept in mind, can guide a reader toward more faithful interpretation of oral poetry: 1) Oral poetry works like language, only more so; 2) *Oralpoetry* is a very plural noun, 3) Performance is the enabling event, tradition is the context for that event; 4) The art of oral poetry emerges *through* rather than *in spite of* its special language; 5) The best companion for reading oral poetry is an unpublished dictionary; 6) The play's the thing (and not the script); 7) Repetition is the symptom, not the disease; 8) Composition and reception are two sides of the same coin; 9) Read behind and between the signs; and 10) True diversity demands diversity in frame of reference.

The next two "words" provide direct application of the previously developed theoretical framework to the poems themselves. First, "Reading Some Oral Poems" demonstrates the usefulness of these approaches through investigation of Zuni *telapnaawe*, Guatemalan stories surrounding Hermano Pedro, contemporary slam poetry, the *Odyssey*, the *Siri Epic* from India, and the Medieval French *Song of Roland*. Then, the "Eighth Word" focuses on South Slavic poetry and discusses the necessity of understanding and reading these poems on their own terms as various genres that collectively make up a thriving and widely diverse ecological system of poetry and performance.

Finally, a short (and cleverly titled) Post-Script concludes the volume by discussing briefly the similarities between oral poetry and the Internet as well as the potential for new technologies to better capture and understand those oral performances that are not easily reduced into textualized form without a great loss in their signification power.

"Macpherson's Ossian: Trying to Hit a Moving Target." *Journal of American Folklore*, 115:99-106.

A response to four essays from the previous issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*, all of which addressed aspects of James Macpherson's figure of Ossian and his poetry that purportedly translated poems from an ancient Gaelic oral tradition. Suggests that comparative parallels (drawn from the South Slavic, Old English, Finnish, and several other traditions) can help resist oversimplification of the issues involved and thus contribute beneficially to the ongoing dialogue surrounding Macpherson's work.

"Selection as *pars pro toto*: The Role of Metonymy in Epic Performance and Tradition." In *The Kalevala and the World's Traditional Epics*. Ed. by Lauri Honko. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 106-27.

Begins by arguing (with South Slavic examples providing the main body of evidence) that the "pool of tradition" can be considered to encompass everything that is institutionally implied through the act of performance, an implication that relies heavily upon the ideas of the performance arena, register, and communicative economy. Successful access to this pool is then granted through the process of metonymy by which traditional signals key larger meanings generated by the tradition; however, the success of these signals is largely dependent upon both performer and audience choosing the same channel of communication. Within works of verbal art that are preserved only as texts, the persistence of these traditional meanings will then rely upon the reader's ability to understand these traditional signals and their meanings even after they have been removed from the original performance arena.

“What South Slavic Oral Epic Can—and Cannot—Tell Us about Homer.” In *Epea pteroenta: Beiträge zur Homerforschung: Festschrift für Wolfgang Kullmann zum 75. Ed. by Michael Reichel and Antonios Rengakos. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner. pp. 53-62.*

A further step toward fine-tuning the analogy between South Slavic epic and Homer through the understanding that 1) fruitful comparison between traditions must also involve acknowledgement of their contrasting or dissimilar features, 2) “oral traditions work like language, only more so” (55) with respect to their inherent structures and techniques for creating meaning, and 3) “oral poetry” exists not as a monolithic entity but as a spectrum of verbal art containing categories such as “oral performance,” “voiced texts,” “voices from the past,” and “written oral poetry.”

In French. “L’épopée du retour et le/la vrai(e) héro/héroïne de l’*Odyssee*.” In *La Mythologie de l’Odyssee: Hommages à Gabriel Germain. Ed. by André Hurst and Françoise Létoublon. Geneva: Librairie Droz. pp. 249-57.*

Uses comparative forms of the Return Song (primarily from within the South Slavic tradition but also more widely from other Indo-European traditions as well) in order to elucidate aspects of the *Odyssey*’s narrative arrangement, the ambiguity of Penelope’s character, and the *telos* of the epic.

2003 “The Challenge of Translating Traditional Oral Epic.” In *Dynamics of Tradition: Perspectives on Oral Poetry and Folk Belief (Essays in Honour of Anna-Leena Siikala on her 60th Birthday 1st January 2003). Ed. by Lotte Tarkka. Studia Fennica Folkloristica. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 248-65.*

Outlines Foley’s further-developed strategies for creating English-language translations of South Slavic oral epic. With a goal of minimizing the effects of textualization and translation, first proposes helping the reader re-create the performance arena and traditional context for a translated poem through description of the original setting, performance assumptions, and personal tendencies of the individual singer. Also suggests that the multiformity of the “text” can perhaps best be represented through hypertext media, and tradition-enabled meanings can be made apparent to the reader through footnotes and especially an “apparatus fabulosus” that functions to notify the reader of traditional, idiomatic markers that might otherwise go unnoticed. Finally, after brief discussions of how the Old English *Andreas* can act as an illustration of how such extralexical meaning is important to emphasize even in translation and how the South Slavic epic register contains other peculiarities that must be accounted for in translation, the essay concludes with an appendix providing a sample annotated translation drawn from the first 51 lines of *The Wedding of Mustajbey’s Son Bećirbey* as performed by Halil Bajgorić.

“How Genres Leak in Traditional Verse.” In *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.* Ed. by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. pp. 76-108.

Treats traditional verse as “an ecology of genres” involving constant shifting and interaction so that generic characteristics get shared across boundaries in systematized and predictable ways. Ancient Greek (where the shared hexameter and its regularized structuring allows leakage between epic and the Homeric Hymns) and South Slavic (where social function, subject matter, meter, and gender issues regulate the degree of leakage between different genres) are explored as comparisons for Old English verse where “various genres annex diction and narrative patterns that seem to attach principally to no single genre, but are shared at the level of the larger poetic tradition” (102).

- 2004 **“Comparative Oral Traditions.”** In *Ahozko Inprobisazioa Munduan*. Donostia, Spain: Euskal Herriko Bertsozale Elkarte. pp. 19-38. (available online at <http://bdb.bertsozale.com/en/orriak/get/33-bertsozale-elkartea-ahozko-inprobisazio-a-munduan-jardunaldiak>)

A survey of oral traditions from around the world aimed at providing context and background for understanding Basque oral improvisation.

“Electronic Editions of Oral Poetry.” In *Ahozko Inprobisazioa Munduan Topaketak*. Donostia, Spain: Euskal Herriko Bertsozale Elkarte. pp. 303-12. (also available online at <http://bdb.bertsozale.com/en/orriak/get/33-bertsozale-elkartea-ahozko-inprobisazioa-munduan-jardunaldiak>)

Explores some of the possibilities for employing electronic media to assist in producing enhanced and more faithful editions of oral poetry performances, with a particular focus on South Slavic oral epic and the “E-companion” to *The Wedding of Mustajbey’s Son Bećirbey as Performed by Halil Bajgorić* (2004).

“Epic as Genre.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Ed. by Robert L. Fowler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 171-87.

After illustrating the wide diversity of poems often classified as epic from around the world, posits that no specific set of criteria is universally capable of defining epic successfully across all cultures, times, and traditions. Then proceeds to examine the concept of epic in relation to Homeric poetry in particular, discussing in turn issues of length, genre absorption, diction, narrative patterning, prologues, catalogues, similes, group identity, heroic content, and authorship.

“Indigenous Traditions, Colonialist Texts.” In *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity*. Ed. by Jonathan A. Draper. *Semeia Studies*, 47. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. pp. 9-35.

Addresses the needs to “become more aware of the broad, remarkably many-sided spectrum of what we call oral poetry” and to “affirm a corresponding variety of approaches—a diversity in frame of reference—that can help us to wrap our text-bound minds around a highly elusive collection of phenomena” (12) by cataloguing several different types of oral poetry as well as particularly important methodologies helpful for understanding this poetry on its own terms.

“South Slavic Oral Epic and the Homeric Question.” In *Etnopoetika i tradiciji*. Ed. by A. I. Alieva and V. A. Bakhtina. Moscow: Nauka. pp. 384-91.

Revisits the comparison between South Slavic and Homeric epic through the framework of three homemade proverbs: comparison must always be tempered by contrast; oral traditions work like language, only more so; and oral-poetry is a very plural noun.

“Textualization as Mediation: The Case of Traditional Oral Epic.” In *Voice, Text, and Hypertext: Emerging Practices in Textual Studies*. Ed. by Raimonda Modiano, Leroy Searle, and Peter Shillingsburg. Seattle: University of Washington Press. pp. 101-20.

A lightly revised version of “The Textualization of South Slavic Epic and Its Implications for Oral-Derived Epic” (2000).

Editor and translator. *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey as Performed by Halil Bajgorić*. *Folklore Fellows Communications*, 283. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica. (eEdition available at <http://oraltradition.org/zbm>)

An edition and translation of *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey* (performed by Halil Bajgorić for Parry and Lord in 1935) augmented by a large amount of supplementary material aimed at providing the reader with a heightened awareness of the epic's traditional and performance contexts. The poem itself is presented with its original-language verses arranged side-by-side with their English-language translations, and all performatives, hyper-/hypometrical lines, and “mistakes” (from a literary point of view at least) are retained in the text. The text is then keyed to both a “Performance-Based Commentary” that “concentrates on sound, morphology, and traditional structure as well as lexicon, syntax, context, and translation” (77) and an “Apparatus Fabulosus” meant to explain the poem's structure and idiomatic meanings by glossing them through reference to their counterparts found elsewhere in the South Slavic oral poetic arena. Further information is provided through sections devoted to a “Portrait of the Singer,” a synopsis of the story (both in traditional terms and with respect to this specific performance), an analysis of Nikola Vujnović's original transcription decisions concerning this song, the role of music (by H. Wakefield Foster), and a discussion (by R. Scott Garner) of the singer's particular tendencies in his use of performatives to avoid hiatus.

- 2005 **“Analogues: Modern Oral Epics.”** In *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Ed. by John Miles Foley. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 196-212.

An illustration of how comparison with modern oral epics can provide a better understanding of ancient epic. Specifically addressed issues involve the widely divergent characteristics of what is called “epic” in various cultural contexts; descriptions of singers both real and legendary; the roles of performance and audience; epic register and language; oral transmission of epic; the ability of singers to create “new” epics; the effects of literacy, collection, textualization, and editing with respect to oral epics; and the ecology of genres surrounding epic in an oral poetic environment.

- “Comparative Oral Traditions.”** In *Voicing the Moment: Improvised Oral Poetry and Basque Tradition*. Ed. by Samuel G. Armistead and Joseba Zulaika. Reno, NV: Center for Basque Studies. pp. 65-81.

A wide-ranging overview of oral traditions from around the world provided as a context for interpreting Basque oral improvisation.

- “Fieldwork on Homer.”** In *New Directions in Oral Theory: Essays on Ancient and Medieval Literatures*. Ed. by Mark C. Amodio. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. pp. 15-41.

Proceeding from the observation that conducting fieldwork with regard to oral traditional poetry requires one to “be ready to learn the language of oral tradition from the inside out, on its own terms, as thoroughly as you can” (17), investigates Homeric poetry to uncover the traditional implications of the phrases *apereisi’ apoina* (“boundless ransom”) and *nostimon êmar* (“day of return”).

- “Memory in Oral Tradition.”** In *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Ed. by Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. pp. 83-96.

Investigates what various oral traditional practitioners themselves (namely, an Anglo-Saxon *scop*, South Slavic *guslari*, and an ancient Greek *aoidos*) have to say about the role of memory. Finds that rather than understanding it as a static retrieval mechanism, these verbal poets consider memory to be a kinetic and creative activity that enables meaning to be created for an audience through performance.

“From Oral Performance to Paper-Text to Cyber-Edition.” *Oral Tradition*, 20:233-63. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/20ii/foley>

An overview of the different components of the book-based and electronic versions of *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey as Performed by Halil Bajgorić* (2004), with the goal of explaining the rationales and advantages for each type of presentation.

“South Slavic Oral Epic and the Homeric Question.” *Acta Poetica* (Mexico City), 26.1-2:51-68.

Examines various aspects of Oral-Formulaic Theory and the applicability of the South Slavic analogy to Homer through three selected homemade proverbs: 1) Comparison must always be tempered by contrast; 2) Oral traditions work like language, only more so; and 3) Oral-poetry is a very plural noun.

Editor. *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Oxford: Blackwell. Rpt. 2008.

A collection of 42 essays meant to provide assistance to readers of ancient Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman epic. The essays of Part I (“Issues and Perspectives”) address the larger concerns and approaches toward ancient epic more generally through discussions of epic as genre; the Indo-European context for ancient epic; the relation of ancient epic to myth, performance, history, and archaeology; epic heroes, gods, and women; the textualization, reception, and translation of ancient epic; and modern oral analogues. Part II is then devoted to exploring Near Eastern epic, with contributions focusing on Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, Hittite and Hurrian, Persian/Iranian, and Israelite epic. Part III then moves on to Greek epic, beginning with its Near Eastern connections and then discussing Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (as well as their post-classical legacies), Hesiod, the epic cycle, Apollonius of Rhodes, Quintus of Smyrna, Nonnus, and the relation of epic to other genres in the Greek world. Part IV then closes out the volume by first discussing the origins of Roman epic and its defining characteristics, then proceeding chronologically from the early Republican period to Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, Silius Italicus, Claudian, and the Latin Christian epics of late antiquity, and concluding with discussions of epic’s position with respect to other Roman genres and a final overview of Virgil’s post-classical legacy. The 42 individual contributions, then, provide not only individualized treatments of specific topics, but work together to form a comprehensive volume dedicated to understanding epic in the ancient world. (A brief introduction by Foley is also included at the beginning of the Companion.)

Editor with Richard A. Horsley and Jonathan A. Draper. *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

A collection of ten essays on subjects related to Werner Kelber’s work, including orality, literacy, memory, and the Gospel of Mark. Contributors include Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, Jan Assmann, Jonathan A. Draper, John Miles Foley, Holly E. Hearon, Richard A. Horsley, Martin S. Jaffee, Vernon K. Robbins, Jens Schröter, and Whitney Shiner.

- 2006** **“Oral Tradition and the Internet: Navigating Pathways.”** *Folklore Fellows Network*, 30:12-13, 16-19.

A comparison of oral tradition and the Internet with particular discussion of 1) variation within limits, 2) the role of the performer/surfer, and 3) the phenomenon of “words” not being textual units but idiomatic addresses. Closes with discussion of electronic media as relevant to *How to Read an Oral Poem* (2002), *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey as Performed by Halil Bajgorić* (2004), and The Pathways Project (2011-).

“The Riddle of Q: Oral Ancestor, Textual Precedent, or Ideological Creation?” In *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q*. Ed. by Richard A. Horsley. *Semeia Studies*, 60. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. pp. 123-40.

After demonstrating that comparative parallels indicate that an Ur-text for Q was unlikely (though a non-textual oral traditional precursor might have been possible), reviews three papers (by Werner Kelber, Jonathan Draper, and Richard Horsley) and two responses (by Joanna Dewey and Vernon Robbins) originally presented within sessions at the Society for Biblical Literature Annual Meetings. Closes by suggesting that the concept of a “voiced text” is perhaps the one category of oral tradition most applicable to Q.

In Albanian. “Tekstualizimi i epikës gojore të slavëve të jugut.” Trans. by Arbnora Dushi. In *Folkloristikë / Koncepte Moderne*. Ed. by Agim Lluka. Prishtina: Fryma. pp. 97-122.

Translation of “The Textualization of South Slavic Epic and Its Implications for Oral-Derived Epic” (2000).

- 2007** **“Basque Oral Poetry Championship.”** *Oral Tradition*, 22:3-11. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/22ii/foley>

A report from the 2005 national championship of Basque oral poetry (*bertsolaritza*) held in Barakaldo, Spain. Frequent parallels are drawn between this improvised contest poetry and other traditions from around the world.

“New Audiences for Oral Traditions.” *American Arts Quarterly*, 24:25-31.

A history of the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition with emphasis on its embracing of the possibilities afforded by the Internet for making its materials more widely available to those most in need of them.

“Oral Tradition and Internet Technology.” In *Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Visual Media Studies: Screening Social Spaces*. Ed. by Renée Dickason and Benoît Raoulx. Caen, France: Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines. pp. 193-99.

Describes the various strategies behind the development of eCompanions and eEditions at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition as well as for the creation of the Pathways Project.

“‘Reading’ Homer through Oral Tradition.” *College Literature*, 34.2:1-28.

Demonstrates how the Homeric Question was forever changed by Parry and the development of Oral Theory, and then provides examples (alongside South Slavic parallels) of how “words” as traditional utterances work in Homer with respect to both compositional practices and traditional meanings.

“Scholarly Discussion” feature. Home-Use DVD edition of *Beowulf*. Performed by Benjamin Bagby. New York: Charles Morrow Productions.

A roundtable discussion with Thomas Cable and Mark Amodio concerning aspects of oral tradition as related to *Beowulf*.

“Video Study Guide.” Institutional DVD edition of *Beowulf*. Performed by Benjamin Bagby. New York: Charles Morrow Productions.

Provides overviews on several issues related to *Beowulf*, including oral performance, historical and traditional contexts, linguistic and archaeological concerns, manuscript history, and instrumentation.

2008 “Introduction.” In *The Canterbury Tales*. Trans. by Burton Raffel. New York: Random House. pp. xv-xxvii.

An introduction to *The Canterbury Tales* and also more specifically to Raffel’s particular translation. Includes helpful information concerning the cultural attitudes and traditions (literary or otherwise) that provided a background for Chaucer’s work; notes on the arrangement, contents, and completeness of *The Canterbury Tales*; overviews of Chaucer’s own individual genius as expressed in this and other works; reviews of the critical approaches that have been taken toward interpreting Chaucer; and an appraisal of Raffel’s techniques of translation as related to Chaucer’s own stylistic tendencies.

“Navigating Pathways: Oral Tradition and the Internet.” *Academic Intersections*, 2 (Spring). <http://pathwaysproject.org/AI-article/1-Abstract.html>

Describes several of the endeavors undertaken at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition and the Center for eResearch, with a focus on introducing the Pathways Project. Additional discussion is focused around the similarities and differences among oral, textual, and electronic technologies.

2009 “The Maleian Detour: Unlocking a Homeric Idiom.” *Aevum Antiquum*, 5:51-62.

Suggests that the logical inconsistencies of *Odyssey* 4.512-22 are the result of traditional associations with Cape Maleia being paired with the Return Song story-pattern to override any expectations of actual physical geography.

2010 “Plenitude and Diversity: Interactions between Orality and Writing.” In *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, and Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*. Ed. by Annette Weissenrieder and Robert Coote. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. pp. 103-18.

Begins by tracing developments in the theoretical understanding of oral traditions from the original comparisons of Homer and South Slavic epic to the application of those findings to traditions around the world to refinements that emphasized concerns of performance and reception just as strongly as composition. Then discusses the various possibilities for categorizing verbal art along an oral tradition spectrum before summarizing several of the accomplishments of performance theory, ethnopoeitics, and immanent art. Finally, after examining some points of contact regularly shared by oral traditions and then listing a few invented proverbs as reminders of core issues within oral tradition studies, concludes by describing some of the similarities between oral tradition and Internet/digital technology.

“‘Reading Homer’ through Oral Tradition.” In *Approaches to Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey*. Ed. by Kostas Myrsiades. New York: Peter Lang. pp. 15-41.

A reprint of “‘Reading’ Homer through Oral Tradition” (2007).

“Traditional History in South Slavic Oral Epic.” In *Epic and History*. Ed. by David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub. Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 347-61.

Posits that oral epic has the ability to create and maintain a view of history that functions on its own terms and with its own validity—even when seemingly at odds with what is often accepted as fact according to conventional historical methods. With South Slavic oral epic being employed as a test case, the argument is made that oral epic functions as a cultural charter for group identity, with “truth” being determined

dynamically according to what is important and relevant to the epic tradition's participants at any given time.

“Verbal Marketplaces and the Oral-Literate Continuum.” In *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Text, Relations, and their Implications*. Ed. by Slavica Ranković. Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 20. Turnhout: Brepols. pp. 17-37.

After discussing his medium-based model for categorizing oral traditions, moves on to demonstrate correspondences between oral traditions and internet technology and then to provide an overview of projects that illustrate how the OT-IT homology can provide a deeper understanding of both media.

Entries for “Literacy” and “Oral Tradition.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/343440/literacy> and <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1664575/oral-tradition>.

The entry for “Literacy” focuses on writing as a technology, paying special attention to the various routes by which it has arisen and developed in different societies. The entry for “Oral Tradition” emphasizes the rediscovery of oral traditions by scholars, proceeding from Parry and Lord’s early work to the eventual recognition of these traditions’ great diversity in various cultural and stylistic contexts.

2011 “Pathways in Media.” In *Language, Culture, and Identity: The Legacy of Walter J. Ong, S. J.* Ed. by Sara van den Berg and Thomas M. Walsh. New York: Hampton Press. pp. 141-57.

Argues that the Internet and oral tradition both operate at their core by means of navigation “through a network of linked pathways” (142). Parallels are also drawn between the “variation within limits” exhibited in both media, the employment of complex “words” (for example, URLs and formulas) as emergent pathways, and the role of their participants in shaping the experience. Illustrative examples are drawn from the eCompanions and eEditions produced by the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition as well as from The Pathways Project.

“Plenitude and Diversity: Interactions between Orality and Writing.” In *Word of Mouth: Collection in Honour of Prof. Dr. Nada Milošević-Đorđević*. Ed. by Mariana Detelić and Snežana Samardžija. Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies. pp. 651-68.

A slightly modified version of “Plenitude and Diversity: Interactions between Orality and Writing” (2010).

Entries for “Avdo Medjedović,” “Oral-Derived Text,” “Oral Dictated Text,” “Oral Traditions,” “South Slavic Heroic Epic,” and “Theme.” In *The Homeric Encyclopedia*. Ed. by Margalit Finkelberg. Oxford: Blackwell. vol. 1:121-22; vol. 2: 603-604, 607-10; vol. 3:815-16, 862-64.

Six encyclopedia entries with particular focus on the relevance of each subject for understanding Homeric poetry. The entry for “Avdo Medjedović” provides a brief biography of the singer before summarizing his performances and conversations recorded by Parry and Lord. Entries for “Oral-Derived Text” and “Oral Dictated Text” center on how these terms might be applied to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and affect our understanding of these works. The entry for “Oral Traditions” traces the development of several theoretical approaches toward works deriving from such traditions, with the entry for “South Slavic Heroic Epic” then providing a concrete example of how such approaches have been influential in better understanding the Homeric texts. Finally, the entry for “Theme” traces research concerning this structural entity from its early definition by Lord to its applications in various traditions and its ramifications for aesthetics and meaning.

With Peter Ramey. “Oral Theory and Medieval Studies.” In *Medieval Oral Literature*. Ed. by Karl Reichl. Berlin: de Gruyter. pp. 71-102.

A review of Oral Theory with respect to medieval literature and with a particular concentration on oral-derived Old English literature. Section 1 details early contributions of Parry and Lord as well as the philological and anthropological contexts in which Oral Theory arose. Section 2 surveys more recent contributions and methodological developments categorized under five main headings: “Expanding the Traditional Formula,” “Comparative Approaches,” “Middle English Literature,” “Manuscript Transmission,” and “Performance and Reception.” Section 3 then concludes the piece by identifying several opportunities for further research within the field.

In Bosnian. “Portret Guslara” [“Portrait of the Singer”]. *Filolog* (University of Banja Luka, Serbia), 3:73-82.

An augmented version of the “Portrait of the Singer” section of *The Wedding of Mustajbey’s Son Bećirbey as Performed by Halil Bajgorić* (2004). An English summary is appended to the end of the essay.

2011- The Pathways Project. <http://pathwaysproject.org>

An ever-evolving website focused on exploring and illustrating the fundamental similarities and correspondences between oral tradition and the Internet. Aspects of the site include a network of linked topics (called “nodes”), suggested reading-routes through those nodes (called “linkmaps”), audio and video eCompanions, multimedia eEditions, and a moderated forum for user contributions. See the entry for *Pathways of the Mind: Oral Tradition and the Internet* (2012) for a description of the book that acts as a companion to this website as well as for a description of the specific points of comparison this project makes with relation to oral tradition (OT) and Internet technologies (IT).

2012 *Pathways of the Mind: Oral Tradition and the Internet*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

A “brick-and-mortar” extension of The Pathways Project (2011-) aimed at illustrating and explaining the fundamental similarities and correspondences between humankind’s oldest and newest thought-technologies: oral tradition and the Internet. Argues that both technologies are radically alike in depending not on static products but rather on continuous processes that mime human thought by advancing along pathways within a network; in both media it is these pathways—not things—that matter most. To illustrate these ideas, the volume is thus designed as a “morphing book,” a collection of linked nodes that can be read in innumerable different ways, thereby challenging the default medium of the linear book itself while also pushing readers toward a better understanding of alternative media-technologies and the communication strategies they entail.

“Why Performance Matters.” In *Beowulf at Kalamazoo: Essays on Translation and Performance*. Ed. by Jana K. Schulman and Paul E. Szarmach. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications. pp. 235-52.

Seeks to answer the question “What difference does it make that *Beowulf* was performed?” by suggesting that an audience aware of the poem’s roots in performance (even if the specifics of the original performance context cannot be re-created with certainty) will be more receptive to the epic’s performance keys and their attendant communicative implications. By drawing upon parallels from South Slavic oral epic, the case is made that the performance tradition has embedded extralexical meanings within *Beowulf* that can be more easily recovered by understanding the formulas and type-scenes of the poem in terms of their original signification within an active performance medium.

In Press

“Oral Epic in Stolac: Collective Tradition and Individual Art.” In *Singers and Tales in the 21st Century: Legacies of Milman Parry and Albert Lord*. Ed. by David Elmer and Peter McMurray. Publications of the Milman Parry Collection. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Demonstrates that South Slavic oral epic is at the same time a collectively and individually driven phenomenon, with issues of pan-traditional language, dialect, and idiolect coming together to create individualized but pattern-driven registers within a context of “distributed authorship” inherent within the overarching poetic tradition.

Revised entries on “Formula,” “Guslar,” “Oral-Formulaic Theory,” and “Tradition, Oral.” In *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Updates to the earlier entries (1993) that take into account recent developments, especially in connection with aesthetics and meaning.

With Justin Arft. “The Epic Cycle and Oral Tradition.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek Epic Cycle*. Ed. By Marco Fantuzzi and Christos Tsagalis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Proposes an alternative to the text-based model of a Greek epic cycle through understanding the surviving texts and fragments as representing “possible instances of the epic stories surrounding the Trojan War and related events, instances that at some point took shape as fixed and stable (even if partial) entities, but which once existed as malleable story-patterns that featured and fostered variation within limits.” Oral epics from South Slavic, Russian, Arabic, African, Central Asian, and Indian traditions are put forth as examples for comparison, and the chapter concludes with discussion of Cycle scholarship built upon the combination of neoanalysis and oral traditional poetics.

Additional Editing Projects

Editor and Founder, *Oral Tradition*, 1986- (26 volumes)

General Editor, A. B. Lord Studies in Oral Tradition, 1987-98 (17 volumes)

General Editor, *Voices in Performance and Text*, 1994-99 (5 volumes)

General Editor, *Poetics of Orality and Literacy*, 2004- (5 volumes published to date; 1 in press)

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Steve Reece is Professor of Classics at Saint Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. He has published a wide variety of articles and book chapters on Homeric studies, New Testament studies, comparative oral traditions, historical linguistics, and pedagogy. He is also the author of a book about the rituals of ancient Greek hospitality, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (1993), and of a study of early Greek etymology entitled *Homer's Winged Words: The Evolution of Early Greek Epic Diction in the Light of Oral Theory* (2009).

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