Editor's Column

With this issue *Oral Tradition* offers a miscellany of essays that explore Homerica, Sanskrit epic, parallelism in improvisatory versification, and some of the social consequences of colonial ethnography manifest in man's inhumanity to man. Composed in sabbatical mode along the banks of the Ganges river, Rishikesh, Uttarkhand, India, this note's brevity is its sole virtue, unlike the multiple merits of the essays it introduces.

In 2013, Gregory Nagy delivered the the 27th Lord and Parry Lecture, "Diachronic Homer and a Cretan *Odyssey*," delighting his audience with a magisterial lesson that adumbrated the Homeric tradition's awareness of its chronological evolution, especially in the mirror of the "lying tales" of Odysseus, that reveal the existence of a "Cretan *Odyssey*." Next up, Jonathan Burgess offers a revised and expanded version of the 29th Lord and Parry Lecture, "The Tale of Meleager in the *Iliad*," that explores the Meleager tale of Book 9 in the *Iliad* pointing up the significance of its narratological construction in *traditionality* and the epic's characteristic capacity for accommodating narratives drawn from other sources. Working in the Sanskrit branch of Indo-European epic, Emily West proposes a set of diagnostic tools for assessing the degree of relatedness between parallel narratives that are developed through comparative analysis of salient variants in the "Tale of *Cyavana*" and identifies principles of narrative evolution.

We now shift to a study of contemporary poetic traditions. From interviews with practitioners of Finnish "freestyle" rap, Mallorcan singers of *gloses*, and Cretan *mandinadhes*, Venla Sykari characterizes certain principles of end rhyme verse improvisation in her essay "Beginning from the End: Strategies of Composition in Lyrical Improvisation with End Rhyme." In their reflections on poetic techniques of improvisatory compositions, the performers of these poetic forms identify the end point of a structural unit of composition as the apposite location for "strong" arguments. The author underscores how this constitutes a "reversal" of patterns of semantic parallelism.

Finally, with the essay, "'Hear the Tale of the Famine Year': Famine Policy, Oral Traditions, and the Recalcitrant Voice of the Colonized in Nineteenth-Century India," Gloria Goodwin Raheja analyzes eleven Hindi and Punjabi famine songs recorded in British colonial administration documents. She contrasts the illusory *vox populi* consent to British famine policy articulated in some apparently "compliant" songs with other dissenting voices in songs of censure and lamentation that the same authorities intentionally misrepresented to reinforce the illusion of popular approval of British famine relief policies.

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excellence established or the journal by John Miles Foley, its founding editor. Professor Foley worked tirelessly to guarantee a forum for dialogue about humanity's verbal arts, and this initiative, *Oral Tradition*, has offered itself as such a venue for thirty years. The endeavor continues with the generous support of the College of Arts & Sciences and Interim Dean Patricia Okker, of the University of Missouri.

We encourage you to take part in the dialogue and discussion of humanity's oral traditions: share your insights into the world's traditional verbal arts with us and our readers. Submissions are evaluated by double-blind review process, and the reports from specialist and generalist referees are dispositive: accept, accept with revision, or reject. That decision is generally reported to prospective authors within a trimester of receipt. Published online, in open access format, *Oral Tradition* is seen by more than 20,000 readers in 200 countries and territories.

John Zemke
Editor, *Oral Tradition*