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

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Editor's Column

With this issue of *Oral Tradition* we reach a benchmark of sorts: the end of the journal's first four years of publication and the end of the sixth year since its inception as a scholarly enterprise. Over those four volumes and twelve issues we have tried to bring before a diverse readership an equally diverse collection of essays on the world's oral traditions and their impact on literary and other written traditions. A significant percentage of *OT*'s pages have thus been devoted to miscellaneous topics, with forays into such areas as Australian, central Asian, ancient, medieval, and modem Greek, Biblical, Old and Middle English, Old Irish, Middle High German, Chinese, Arabic, Hispanic, African, Italian, Persian, Old French, Welsh, Asian Indian, Serbo-Croatian, Rumanian, and modem American traditions. Some of these essays have consisted of surveys of research and scholarship; others have been analytical articles that concentrated on a single work or subject within the broader framework. *Oral Tradition* has also mounted several special issues—a tribute to Walter J. Ong in 1987, a collection on Hispanic balladry in 1988, and, most recently, the double issue on Arabic in 1989—and annotated bibliographies of recent research and scholarship in the field.

As we look ahead to the next decade, *OT* will endeavor to maintain a similar array of contents, making every effort to act as a forum for interdisciplinary work on oral tradition. Most immediately, 1990 will see an issue devoted to Oceania, edited by Ruth Finnegan and Margaret Orbell, and other special collections will follow in future years on Yugoslav and Native American traditions. Another bibliographical supplement will appear in volume 6 (1991), while the next few issues will contain essays on the Indian folk-Mahābhārata, Old Norse sagas, Serbo-Croatian epic, Homeric poetry, and Old English narrative, as well as commentaries on and translations of works by Marcel Jousse, Matija Murko, and V. V. Radlov that significantly influenced the evolution of studies in oral tradition. At longer range we are contemplating special issues on African-American traditions as well as annual Milman Parry lectures to be delivered by Werner Kelber, Ursula Schaefer, and Richard Bauman.

The present issue represents the kind of heterogeneity we hope to continue to encourage: two of the articles concern living traditions (Hungarian folk dance and central Asian epic) on which their authors have done extensive fieldwork, while the others treat oral-derived texts best

understood, it is argued, from the double perspective of orality and textuality. Wayne Kraft opens the conversation with 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. Michael Cherniss then examines an apparent textual blemish in *Beowulf* in the light of narrative patterning, illustrating how the lacuna disappears once one understands the role of the traditional context. Two of our foremost classicists them frame the remarks of a distinguished comparatist on Turkic epic. First, Charles Segal looks at the background of tragedy and other ancient Greek poetic forms from the point of view of their origin in song and ritual; one of the most attractive features of his approach is his attention to phraseology and the implicit networks of meaning that underlie tragic and epic texts. Karl Reichl then focuses on the formulaic structure of Kazakh oral epic, showing how the talented poet is not at all a slave to but rather a master of his tradition and idiom. Finally, William Scott, Milman Parry lecturer for 1989, gives us a perceptive and extremely readable discussion of the dynamics of oral composition in the *Odyssey*, with special attention to the portrait of the singer.

We continue to seek the aid of our readership in proposing books for review and relevant research for annotation in *OT*'s bibliographical supplements. We would also be grateful to hear from individuals who would like to undertake the kind of review-article exemplified in this and other issues.

John Miles Foley, Editor

Oral Tradition, 4/3 (1989): 273-315

Improvisation in Hungarian Ethnic Dancing: An Analog to Oral Verse Composition

Wayne B. Kraft

Scholarly investigation of the mechanisms, the structures, and the aesthetics of verse composition in the study of oral traditions naturally proceeds in several dimensions—across genres, across ethnic and national traditions, across the expanse of time from ancient Greece to the present day, and across the spectrum from oral to oral-derived to highly literate traditions.[1] There has even been some interest in applying oral-formulaic theory to jazz improvisation (see Gushee 1981). Indeed, it probably makes good sense to view oral composition with some awareness of how improvisation works in other media.

A phenomenon restricted to *verbal* artistic expression would, after all, likely appear more peculiar and baffling than one that could be understood in the context of proximate relatives in other forms of expression. It is, furthermore, possible that viewing how improvisation works in a somewhat alien field will assist us in achieving a degree of detachment from the controversy which has persisted around the question of the putative orality of certain classic literary texts. Improvisation has been recognized as an established mode not only in oral verse and in music, but in theater and mime, in dance and dance therapy, in visual art.[2] In the

[1]We are fortunate to have an excellent, recent review of the field of oral-formulaic theory in Foley 1988. This present paper was conceived and drafted during the 1989 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar "The Oral Tradition in Literature" under the direction of John Miles Foley at the University of Missouri at Columbia. I am greatly endebted to Professor Foley for his very generous encouragement and for his many helpful suggestions.

[2] Even in the realm of handcrafts, the fluid shaping of clay on the potter's wheel and the more "digital" progression of weaving can proceed with a spontaneity, an inventiveness and a joy in variation which are characteristically improvisatory. I am grateful to fellow NEH seminar participant Harry Robie (Berea College) for drawing my attention to the example of weaving.

form of "adhocism," improvisation, in fact, makes the leap into architecture, engineering, technology, science, and everyday life.[3] Adhocism is the consciously and intentionally inventive cousin of the somewhat more conservative notion of improvisation. Adhocism explores, creates hybrids, innovates. Serendipity, by contrast, innovates unintentionally, by propitious accident.

With or without the allied notions of adhocism and serendipity, the concept of improvisation sweeps far and wide across all forms of human expression and endeavor. I suspect that many forms of improvisation will have rather little immediate potential for informing our understanding of oral verse composition. It has seemed to me, however, that the analogue of certain kinds of improvisation in ethnic dancing offers quite an apt complement to our understanding of improvisation in oral composition. Improvisation in dance (as well as in music and theater) shares with the oral composition of verse the urgent constraint of time. Ethnic dance shares with many genres based on oral composition and/or transmission the feature of intimate referentiality to a relatively homogeneous, relatively cohesive cultural tradition.[4]

Ethnic dance traditions vary greatly in the extent to which they allow opportunity for improvisation. I shall offer here the example of a particular Hungarian men's dance, the Kalotaszegi *legényes,* which provides an illuminating analogue to oral verse composition. I have chosen to focus on Hungarian ethnic dancing because this tradition is particularly rich in freedom and variation.[5] In order to introduce the particular role of improvisation in Hungarian dance, I will discuss briefly two other major European traditions—the Scandinavian couples turning dances and the Balkan line dances.

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[3] A source of quite varied, mainly visual examples of "adhocery" is furnished by Jencks and Silver (1972), who discuss kinds of improvisation borne of necessity and/or wit which result in a hybrid product constituted from readily available subsystems. Gleick 1987 chronicles what is, it seems to me, a stunning example of convergent adhoceries in the evolution of a new discipline of science. Good (1965:56) defends adhocery (with a slightly different spelling): "In our theories, we rightly search for unification, but real life is both complicated and short, and we make no mockery of honest adhockery."

[4] The concept of "traditional referentiality" is developed extensively in Foley 1991. I am most grateful to him for the opportunity to read the first two chapters of the book in manuscript.

[5] Other examples of highly improvisatory solo dancing are, to be sure, to be found in many places in Europe. I am thinking of dances like the Norwegian *halling* and, especially, the step-dancing traditions of the British Isles (with their reflexes in Cape Breton, French Canada, and Appalachia). I intend no cultural bias in speaking generally about European dancing: I have unfortunately had little opportunity to become familiar with non-European dance traditions.

Improvisation in Scandinavian and Balkan Regional Ethnic Dancing

The countries of Scandinavia developed traditions particularly rich in "couples turning dances."[6] Many of the couples turning dance forms of Scandinavia, for example, are manifested in a remarkable number of regional dialects, but any region's dialect of the given form may involve a very small inventory of figures or steps which are simply iterated throughout the dance.[7] In some cases, a sequence is, so to speak, bound to the unit of the musical phrase. In other dances, a walking step and a turning step alternate more or less freely (though, to be sure, there is a marked tendency to change steps at the boundary of a musical phrase). The couples turning dances with alternate walking (or "resting") step and turning step progress continuously in a counterclockwise direction around the dance floor, and this uniform progression allows each individual couple to dance the cycle of steps at its own pace without any obligation to conform to a synchronized pattern of alternation. Although such dances lack a complex vocabulary, they are generally quite beautiful and extremely pleasing, often mesmerizing, to dance. Relative simplicity, in other words, in no way amounts to negligibility. Although the number of dance forms in a given dialect is rather limited, the repertory of fiddle tunes to accompany dancing is quite large.[8] This, of course, enriches the ambient experience of dancing.

Other Scandinavian dance forms are richer in figures. Some are done in a formation of sets or, otherwise, in an established sequence which rather circumscribes possibilities for improvisation (unless the social

[6] Scandinavia, to be sure, shares many such dance types with other regions, especially the German-speaking. The term "couples turning dances" is a bit awkward, applying to dances which are turning dances for couples, and therefore both turning dances and couples dances.

[7] Here I am thinking of, say, the *polska* and *schottis* dialects of Sweden (or the *pols* dialects of Norway). A basic source for many so-called folk and old-time dances *(folkdanser* and *gammel danser)* as well as genuine regional ethnic dances *(bygdedanser)* of Sweden is the manual *Folkdanser* 1975. Bakka (1978) has written a fairly recent introduction to Norwegian dance traditions. A concise and easily accessible characterization of Scandinavian dancing is available from my late friend Gordon Tracie (1965). (Please note, however, that Mr. Tracie wrote this introduction before the revival of Swedish *bygdedanser* and beware of Swedish misspellings that were not caught before the book went to press.)

[8] This fiddle tradition, like many an ethnic music tradition, usually transmits its tunes directly by ear and imitation (not by written notation), and the master fiddler exercises considerable freedom in the improvisation of ornamentation.

interaction of dancing in sets were counted as improvisation).[9] Other dances, however, have a large enough inventory of figures and a sufficient degree of freedom in the selection of figures that they admit a relatively greater degree of improvisation.[10] This improvisatory license consists in freedom to determine the pace of progression from one figure to another and, to a lesser or greater extent, the choice of figures.

Improvisation has far less to do with an aesthetically pleasing realization of the potential of a given Scandinavian dance than do natural grace and pliant subordination to the continuous flow of movement. In addition to the inventory of steps and figures, many regional dialects allow the male dancer to spice the dance with some sort of accent: a slap to the outer side of the heel raised up behind is probably the most common. Such decorations, although somewhat eye-catching, need to be subservient to the more general aesthetics of the dance; of themselves they do nothing to make a bad dancer good.

The dancing of the Balkan peninsula manifests a particularly rich representation of line and circle dances.[11] Like the types of couples dances we have discussed, circle and line dances admit of varying degrees of complexity and freedom. In many cases, a single sequence of steps is simply repeated throughout the dance (although shifting nuances of articulation may be detectable, especially as the dance progresses to a somewhat higher dynamic level, and constitute a degree of "sub-surface"

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[9] Many such forms exist—both as figure-dances (done in sets of couples) and also among the old-time couples dances (largely vestiges of earlier court and bourgeois taste)—such as Swedish *engelska* and *kadrilj*, Norwegian *seksmannsril*, *åttetur*, and *reinlender med twer*.

[10] The Norwegian *Rørospols* and the *Telespringar* and *-gangar*, for instance, and the Swedish *Jössehäradspolska*. Although European couples turning dances vary considerably in age, the figures of the *Rørospols* are portrayed on a late medieval tapestry (ca. 1500, displayed at Gripsholm Castle near Stockholm), attesting to the age of this particular dance (as reported to me by Gordon E. Tracie and Ingvar and Jofrit Sodal).

[11] A concise and easily accessible characterization of Balkan dancing is available from Crum (1965), who notes (5) that the "dance historian approaching the Balkan Peninsula is faced with a very meager supply of sources .... However, graphic representations of the dance do exist. For example, the fourteenth-century fresco in the church of Lesnovo (Macedonia) shows that the circle dance with hands crossed in front and accompanied by drum and stringed instrument was known to the artist." Dances done in circle formation appear to have been distributed all over Europe in the Middle Ages, and continuity with this old tradition persists here and there across western Europe as well, for example, the *an dro* and *hanter dro* round and chain dances of Brittany, the Faeroe Islands song dance, and the Hungarian *lánykarikázó* ("Maidens' Round Dance," Martin 1988:15-19). On the Breton dances, see Guilcher 1976:297-305; 322-25. On the relationship of the Faeroe Islands song dance to European tradition, see Wolfram 1951:88-93; on circle dances quite generally, see Sachs 1937:144-55.

improvisation).[12] Other dances entail a sequence of figures cued by changes in the music or by the leader at his discretion. In yet other dances, the leader has considerable improvisatory freedom, whereas the rest of the line—dancing simpler figures in unison—serves as a sort of accompaniment or counterpoint to the leader's display of solo virtuosity.[13] Generally speaking, line and circle dances impose a greater obligation to conformity than do couples turning dances.[14] For a dance to be kinesthetically and aesthetically pleasing, the whole line or circle must move in concert. In this unison, harmonious, finely coordinated movement (of dancers in many cases quite tightly linked) lies a mesmerizing beauty.[15]

The traditions both of Scandinavia and of the Balkans allow a certain latitude for variation—variation, for example, in the manner of execution of figures, in the selection of figures, and/or in the pacing of changes in figure patterns. Although these traditions thus provide for some freedom for spontaneous variation, they place great emphasis on collectivity and conformity of movement. Most dance forms in these traditions entail the iteration of a very limited inventory of steps or motifs throughout any given performance of a dance, and dance forms with latitude for large scale improvisation in performance are rare.

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[12] On accelerating dances, Crum (1965:10) notes: "A common feature in the dances of Albania, Macedonia, Northern Greece, and parts of Bulgaria is an *accelerated* tempo. A dance such as the Macedonian *Lesnoto*, for example, begins rather slowly and gradually speeds up to a very quick climax. In these cases the basic step pattern usually remains the same, but the style becomes livelier through the addition of extra hops and other choreographic embroidery."

[13] This probably occurs more frequently in Serbian and Greek traditions than elsewhere in the Balkans. David Henry, who is currently writing a survey of Greek ethnic dancing, corroborated this observation and noted, citing Lawler 1964:94-96, that a leader/line arrangement appears to have been incorporated even into the dancing of the ancient Greek comedies.

[14] Crum (1965:8) alludes to a certain degree of interplay between collectivity and individuality in some kinds of Balkan dancing: "*Collectivity* is also basic to Balkan dancing. In most group dances all the performers do essentially the same movements at the same time—any individual variations or improvisations are restricted in that they must in no way hinder the movement of the rest of the line. In observing the popular Serbian dance *U šest koraka*, one may be amazed to see that every dancer in the line is doing something different. A closer look, however, reveals that all the dancers are adhering to the basic pattern and never perform movements that will interfere with the direction and rhythm of their neighbors' steps. Hence, no leader would throw in a flashy step to gain attention—he is still bound to tradition."

[15] As is generally the case with Scandinavian couples turning dances, there exists, to be sure, a rich repertory of tunes for many Balkan line and circle dance forms. In both traditions there is, however, also frequently a one-to-one correspondence between dance and music.

Improvisation in Hungarian Regional Ethnic Dancing

I would like to turn to Hungarian dancing and illustrate, in somewhat closer examination, some features of the phenomenon of improvisation in this particular tradition. Hungarian dances are generally quite rich in improvisatory freedom.[16]

The Hungarian dance forms developed over centuries in village peasant cultures into highly varied regional and local dance forms and dialects. Certain of the dance forms in some places established a set sequence of movements or otherwise regulated the dance in ways that limited possibilities for improvisation.[17] Many of the dance forms, however, became exceedingly rich in figures and allow the individual dancer or couple great freedom in realizing the potential of the dance in any given "performance.[18] The couples dances from the Mezőség, Kalotaszeg, and Székelyföld regions of Transylvania, for example, are both rich in figures and relatively free of strictures. They are, so to speak, realized in performance somewhat in the manner of American swing dancing.

A village dance cycle customarily begins with a men's dance,

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[16] I owe much of my familiarity with Hungarian ethnic dancing to an opportunity for dance study under László Diószegi with the Gutenberg Ensemble (Budapest) from September 1986 through July 1987, under the support of a Fulbright Research Grant.

[17] The *porka* ("polka") and the *hétlépés* ("seven-step") of the Széki cycle of dances, for instance, are rather highly regulated (although there are variations of the basic *hétlépés* figure). These two segments of the Széki cycle are, incidentally, rather idiosyncratic adaptations of older bourgeois social dances (cf. Martin 1988:67).

[18] It seems to me appropriate to make a general observation on what happens to highly improvisatory dance forms when a tradition is in decline. At a certain threshold, when the collective knowledge of the tradition within a community has reached the point where it will no longer support improvisation, the dance form may become solidified into a set sequence of figures and thus preserved—in a rigid, "canonical" version—for a considerable time after the disappearance of improvisatory dancing. I have the impression that this has been the fate of many Hungarian dance traditions in the villages of Hungary proper. This seems to have occurred also with such many-figured Scandinavian dances as the *halling* and *Jössehäradspolska*. We have an interesting example for this process in the waning of the Bavarian-Austrian *Ländler,* as related to us by Goldschmidt (1966: 109): "Die Tanzform des Ländlers muβ schon am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts voll entwickelt gewesen sein. Einen Beweis dafür sieht R. Wolfram in der Tatsache, daβ er bei österreichischen Siedlern in Rumänien und in der Slowakei, deren Vorfahren schon um 1735 und 1775 dort einwanderten, einen älteren Typus des Ländlers vorfand, dessen Figuren mit den bekannten bayrisch-österreichischen im wesentlichen übereinstimmten, jedoch viel freier verwendet wurden. In diesen freien, doch stilgebundenen Ländlern—bezeichnenderweise auch immer noch *'Deutsche'* genannt—machte jeder, was ihm beliebte und wann es ihm beliebte. Das freie Umwerben des Mädchens durch den Burschen, das den uns bekannten Ländlern fehlt, war bei den Alten noch bekannt. Schuhplattlerartige Schläge des Fuβes gegen die Hand scheinen schon gebräuchlich gewesen zu sein."

followed by a sequence of couples dances. Generally speaking, Hungarian couples dances progress from slower tempos to more brisk ones, from restrained energy levels to vigorous ones. There may be several distinct couples dance segments—as, for example, in the rather insular tradition of the town of Szék (in the Mezőség region). In other cases, the couples dances are distinguished primarily by a change in the tempo and rhythm which introduces a new dynamic (whereas the inventory of appropriate steps and figures does not change appreciably), as in the dance cycle of the Kalotaszeg region.

Hungarian couples dances, unlike the couples turning dances of Western and Northern Europe, are danced for the most part in place (that is, without progression around the room). Despite the relatively small geographic area in which they are represented, they vary quite strikingly in their stylistic base and therefore also in the inventory of figures built upon that base.[19] Although the various regional traditions of Hungary resemble American swing dance even less than they resemble one another, our swing dance tradition remains the most familiar analog available for someone who has not yet seen Hungarian dancing.

Hungarian dancing has invented countless ways for the couple to move as a unit, for partners to change places and to move around one another, and for the man to turn the woman.[20] In most regions, there is also provision for the partners to separate for a while—in which case the woman usually turns while the man dances some assortment of leaping, stamping, and slapping figures. Such decoration by the male dancer is, in fact, not only used when the couples separate, but is also appropriate to many phases of the dancing as a couple. The female dancer is somewhat

[19] "Stylistic base" is a personal coinage suggested to me by the impressionistic and disreputed notion of "articulatory base" in linguistics. Let me illustrate by a couple of examples. The basic step of the *lassú* ("slow") and the *forgatós* ("turning") of the Székely cycle has the couples standing side-by-side, the man's inside hand grasping the woman's inside upper-arm (outside hands usually joined in front). The couple pulls together, hip-to-hip, with an accented step onto the inside feet, knees flexing, on the first count of a 4/4 measure. Thereupon follows, on the third count, a sort of "recoil" away from the partner and onto the outside leg. The other figures of the dance take their impulse from this rocking motion and bear the "imprint," so to speak, of the down-accent and the "contraction" on the fIrst count. The basic step of the Mezőségi couples dances (excluding the *akasztós* "limping") would also place the dancers approximately side-by-side. Rather than pulling together, however, on the first count, there is an up-accent and a movement slightly apart to create the tension which impels an exchange of places (on a step pattern of slow-slow-quick-quick-slow). The up-accent and the "expansion" imprint the whole dance quite differently from the Székely and, in combination with the exchange of places, in large measure determine the articulatory and stylistic parameters for the other figures of the dance.

[20] This succinct characterization in no way does justice to the remarkable complexity of Hungarian couples dancing.

more restricted in this regard, but she is allowed, depending on the regional tradition, certain steps involving stamping and, less frequently, leaping. There is, then, generally speaking, a very high degree of freedom in the pacing, in the choice and sequence of figures, and in the decoration used in an actual performance of the dance.[21] Since the couples dance traditions are extremely rich in figures, there is rather a high premium on virtuoso display. A man who leads only the basic figures well may be a very good beginning dancer, but is nevertheless dancing only at the beginner's level.

A general aesthetic principle of Hungarian couples dancing is a continuous building of dynamics both over the course of the couples dances—which with the men's dance last "from break to break," that is, depending on the occasion, frequently a very long time. This building of dynamics from beginning to end overlays a continuous cycling or waving of dynamics on the "micro" scale—a repeated building and dropping of the dynamic level. The aesthetics of the dance require this sense of building, then, on both the micro and macro scale. This kind of dancing must always be "strong," but it is done quite badly by someone who tries to dance fullthrottle from beginning to end.

Our consideration of general characteristics of Hungarian dancing from the standpoint of improvisation has been limited, up to this point, to couples dancing, but a similar degree of freedom to improvise is typical of Hungarian men's dances as well. In some traditions the men's dances are bound to the music in a sort of verse structure.[22] In other traditions, the dances are rather open-structured, not strictly bound to units of music.[23] The *legényes* or "lads' dance" of the Kalotaszeg region is of the more highly structured type and is exceedingly rich in figures: it is, I judge, from a structural standpoint particularly well-suited to serve as an analog for oral verse composition.[24] The *legényes* is, furthermore, a form which

[21] In the fast couples dance of the Palóc region, a curious form has developed. There is a rather fixed progression of figures to a climax which consists of the couple spinning around a few times on the spot to develop some centrifugal force upon which the woman is tossed up and away and the man walks off. Then the couple reunites and the sequence begins again. In this case, the license in the choice of figures is rather limited to omitting some of the possible figures in a sequence which is otherwise roughly prescriptive.

[22] For example: Kalotaszegi *legényes,* Lőrincrévi *pontozó,* Széki *sűrű és ritka*.

[23] For example: Székely *verbunk;* Szatmári *verbunk.*

[24] Martin (1988:29), speaking not specifically of Kalotaszegi but of the lads' dance form in general, says: "Good dancers know 20-30 figures, all of a complex rhythmic pattern, while outstanding ones can perform as many as 50 to 70. Of all Hungarian dances the Lads' Dance shows the most perfect mutual adaptation of dance and music. Though it

can never be "textualized."[25] The tradition manifests itself in any given performance, but the performance—particular and ephemeral—is no way to be confused with or equated with the tradition.[26] The *legényes* thus offers an opportunity for a thorough examination of an uncompromisingly traditional form.

The Kalotaszegi "Lads' Dance" as a Traditional Form

In introducing the analog of ethnic dance, I noted that such dancing generally shares with genres based on oral composition and/or transmission the feature of intimate referentiality to a relatively homogeneous, cohesive cultural tradition. Just such a traditional domain inheres in the folk culture of Kalotaszeg. The Kalotaszeg region claims only 50 or so ethnically Hungarian villages in the mountainous western part of the former Kolozs

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has an improvised character it severely sticks to the structure of the tune. The dance is made up of what are called 'points' *(pontok)* finishing in closing formulae, which accord with the musical periods." Martin also calls attention here to the distinction between highly regulated and relatively unregulated dances of the *legényes*-family, specifically with regard to the Kalotaszegi, noting that it is "highly refined and condensed. The structure of the 'points' (a b b c), the closing rhythm and syncopated initial formula . . . distinguish it from the Lads' Dance of the Mezőség. The dance has preserved its unregulated individual character even at this high level of structural condensation."

[25] Performances which are captured on videotape (cf., for example, the video recordings cited below) are no more "texts" than is the videotape of an oral poet's performance. Verbal written dance descriptions and dance descriptions in a form of notation such as Labanotation—like those offered by Pesovár and Lányi (1982:I, 112-15; II, 116-27) for the Kalotaszegi *legényes* from the village of Inaktelke—are not the texts of the dance, but merely the texts of a given performance. In terms of Korzybskian metaphor, allowing first that "the map is not the territory," we must concede that the description of a traditional performance is not even "the map" for the traditional form. The potential of the traditional form is, to some extent, susceptible to "mapping" by the design of a sort of flow chart with furcations and loops, but that is quite another matter. Nor, by the way, is such a flow chart the "text" of the dance.

[26] Foley (1991:ch. 1) cites several epic traditions in which a given performance consists simply of any episode chosen at will from what we might conceive of as the "epic as a whole." Since the performance of the "epic as a whole" is utterly unheard of in such cultures, whatever the "epic as a whole" may be it is quite clearly something very different from a textualized epic, something in fact untextualizable. The epic is simply not conceived of by its native culture as a fixed and closed entity with a beginning and an end. A given performance of the *legényes* represents the "*legényes* as a whole" in somewhat the same manner, for whatever the "*legényes* as a whole" may be it is clearly not a fixed and closed entity which may be performed definitively from start to finish. Corroboration from several traditions has thus lent general validity to Lord's observation (1960:101) on the relationship of Serbo-Croatian performances to their song tradition: "Each performance is the specific song, and at the same time it is the generic song. The song we are listening to is 'the song'; for each performance is more than a performance; it is a re-creation."

County of Transylvania.[27] It is a folk cultural entity united not only by its dancing tradition but also by its own customs[28] and costumes,[29] by its styles of handwork and decoration,[30] and by its Calvinist faith. As in other Hungarian ethnic cultures, dancing has been a central feature of all festive social occasions and celebrations.

Although Martin (1988:64) noted that certain "older bourgeois dances (the Seven-Step and the Stork) are an organic part of their stock," the "canonical" Kalotaszegi dance cycle, so to speak, consists of the *legényes* and the *páros* ("couples dances"). The *páros,* in turn, has a *lassú csárdás* ("slow *csárdás")* part and a *szapora* ("swift"). It is worth emphasizing that the *legényes* and *lassú csárdás* dances are not merely some Kalotaszegi dances among others: they are *the* Kalotaszegi dances—both unique to the region and unique in stature.[31] To say that dancing is a central feature of village social and festive life means—or at least meant—in Kalotaszeg precisely the *legényes,* the *lassú csárdás,* and the *szapora*.[32]

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[27]Martin (1988:64) provides a description of the Kalotszeg region: "The half-hundred odd small villages of the *Kalotaszeg area,* inhabited by Calvinist Hungarians, lie in the valleys of the Kalota, Almás and Nádas brooks in the mountainous western part of what used to be Kolozs County. The town of Bánffyhunyad is the centre of the area. Kalotaszeg, well known for the high standards of folk art, the magnificent costumes . . . , embroidery, wood-carving and houses, is also noted for its dances. The villages along the Nádas in the East (Méra, Vista, Türe, Bogárelke) have best preserved dancing traditions, in spite of the proximity of the city of Kolozsvár. True enough, the dances of Kalotaszeg are not as archaic as in other parts of Transylvania, but the most highly developed forms of certain archaic dances can be found just there. Their dancing is characterized by a certain ambivalence: an almost conscious nursing of old traditions on a high standard is combined with a receptivity for filtered elements of new ways . . . . In addition to organized dances, occasional merrymaking is still important: dancing in the barn or yard still takes place just about every day . . . . Christmas dancing lasts several days, and the stock taking of milk and sheep are major occasions for dancing."

[28] For Kalotaszegi customs, see Vasas and Salamon 1986.

[29] For costumes, see Gáborján 1988, Faragó et al. 1977.

[30] For Kalotaszegi folk arts, including costumes, see Malonyay 1907.

[31] It is, indeed, typical of Hungarian regional dance dialects that they are further divisible into individual village dialects. The very lovely *páros*-dialect of Méra village, for example, has gained special attention from Zoltán Zsuráfszky and Zoltán Farkas, researcher-choreographers resident in Budapest.

[32]Martin (1988:64) noted already in 1974 that the *legényes* "used to be the first dance of the dance cycle . . .. These days only a few outstanding dancers know it in each village: they give polished performances, as a display so to speak, specially ordering the music . . .. " The actual present situation in the villages is hard to discuss. At least some Transylvanian Hungarians are trying to maintain cultural traditions in the face of policies of the Romanian government which pursue the extermination of all manifestations of non-

An actual dance event in the village establishes the following context for performance. The dance cycle begins with the *legényes*.[33] When the music starts, a less repressible (probably less practiced or less skilled but eager) dancer approaches the musicians and dances before them. The lead fiddle-player is the main focus of the dancer's eye contact. He develops his dance according to his habit, skill, and mood—proceeding from easier and simpler sequences of figures—called "points"—to more complex and energetic ones. When the end of the first dancer's performance is anticipated by another dancer, that second dancer may join the first, doing his warm-up points. After the first dancer departs, the second dancer continues to expand his performance, ultimately to be "relieved" by a third dancer and so on.[34] Since the *legényes* is a dance which is very taxing physically, it is possible that a dancer might retire, rest up, then re-enter the dance to perform more of his favorite points. In events involving trained urban dancers, the strongest tend to dance last. I suspect that this order may naturally mirror the habit in villages.[35] In this manner, as each individual dancer builds interest in his own performance, so the *legényes*

Romanian ethnic identity. The traditions that urbanization might have eradicated have thus achieved a special symbolic value as the heritage in which an imperiled ethnic identity resides. On the other hand, the Romanian policies are sufficiently severe to have a large measure of effectiveness in an impoverished land in which survival may depend on becoming Romanian. In recent years rural (and Hungarian-populated) Transylvania has for all practical purposes become closed to outsiders—in order to isolate the Transylvanians further and as a response to Hungarian and international censure of Romania's treatment of ethnic minorities.

[33] Here I am constructing a scenario from impressions I received from the teacher-choreographers from whom I began learning the dance, colored perhaps somewhat by my recollections of dance events among trained urban dancers in Hungary proper.

[34] While the men's dancing progresses, the women stand at the sidelines or form small circles, turning rapidly. The women make two- or sometimes four-versed "shouts" which are, generally speaking, highly conventional, though they are frequently personalized to refer to the dancer (and/or someone else present) in the manner of an insult or tease. Otherwise, the "shouts" may simply reflect conventionally and humorously on the realities of peasant life.

[35] In discussing the spring stock-taking of milk in the Kalotaszeg village of Inaktelke, however, Vasas and Salamon (1986:147) tell us that the *legényes*-dancing begins with the older men, doing their most beautiful and virtuoso points, later to be joined in the dancing by the younger men—and by the women, shouting out verses: "A zenészek . . . sorra járják az asztalokat, majd lassan az öregebbek kezdik a táncot a *legényessel*. A régi táncosok legszebb, legvirtuózabb *pontjaikat* mutatják. Később bekapcsolódnak a fiatalabbak is, az asszonyok is, *kicsujogatva* az öregeket . . . . Öregek, fiatalok, gyerekek—mindenki táncol."

sequence as a whole builds toward a climax.[36]

Let me now sketch the general structure and character of the *legényes,* then later proceed to a discussion of a sample sequence of figures. The *legényes* is built in units of sixteen counts which correspond to the duration of a single repetition of the accompanying tune(s). The dance is accompanied by instrumental string music using fast doubling with the bow to provide a brisk rhythm of eighth notes. Each unit of the dance has, in turn, three distinct sections: the first four counts form an **opening**, the middle eight counts form a **point**,[37] and the last four are the **closing**. The four-count **opening** is the section least susceptible to variation. The vocabulary of openings is relatively limited and any individual dancer invariably employs the set opening which he has adopted—except when it is preceded by an unusual closing figure which necessitates a special solution to the opening. The eight-count mid-section, or **point**, is the actual development of a dance "statement" of sorts, built from a potential vocabulary of dozens and dozens of figure segments. The figure segments may be relatively homogeneous or heterogeneous, relatively symmetrical or asymmetrical, but they must be unified by a sense of fit or continuity. The four-point **closing** may be a relatively simple, compatible "stock" closing or it may echo a prominent figure segment from the point.

As a general rule, the closing ends on count "four" with the dancer landing on both feet with knees flexed. The opening, therefore, generally begins with a springing up, anticipating count "one" of the opening. In this manner, there is usually a marked closure, but the flexion of the closure is at once the necessary preparation for the opening.[38] The opening itself ends with a flex-kneed closure on count "four-*and*" which, although not followed by a marked pause, nevertheless signals a definite boundary and "announces" the point.

I have often been told that the standardized opening gives the dancer time to "think up" his next point. This "thinking up" consists of remembering (or, at the very least, assembling) a point from the inventory of traditional figures, to the extent that inventory is known to a given dancer. It seems to me that there is not too much time for "thinking" and

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[36] The *legényes* is, then, followed by the Kalotaszegi couples dances. After a break the whole dance cycle begins anew.

[37] There is ambiguity in this term, which, as I understand it, may be used to refer to the sixteen-count point as a whole, but also, *pars pro toto,* to the eight-count center section of the a b b c point structure.

[38] This circumstance, indeed, generally obliges to dancer to begin the dance with some sort of partial figure, rather than with the opening, in order to prepare the flexion from which the opening takes its impulse. It seems a bit paradoxical that the dance cannot commence at the beginning of a repetition of the tune nor with the standard figure which begins most sequences of the dance!

that there are large components of habit, instinct, impulse, and, occasionally, accident in the choice of each subsequent figure. It is, in any case, a bit difficult to talk about a kind of thinking which is not verbal (bound, say, to the "name" of the figure) but rather based in visual and/or kinesthetic associations.

Although any point or closing is made up of a number of individual figure segments, I suspect that dancers usually incorporate material into their performance vocabulary as point units and closing units, in other words as a sort of "formula," tailored for a respective section of the dance sequence. Although certain closures may become associated with certain points in the vocabulary of an individual dancer (or even within the dance community generally), there is an area of relative unpredictability at this seam between two formulae.

An individual dancer expands his vocabulary of figures and points—of formulae—by observing other (often more skilled) dancers, by imitating, by learning.[39] I suppose that it is possible that conscious attempts at invention play a role in increasing the vocabulary of the tradition as a whole. But although I do not have it on any particular authority, I suspect that accident would be at least as responsible as conscious invention: doing something "wrong" (that is, unintended, uncalculated, inadvertent) in a dance, of course, often breaks the continuity of the dance and results in a failure of some sort, but it sometimes leads to the discovery of a fruitful new possibility.

A good performance is certainly not determined by the invention of new figures. A good performance is certainly not determined, in the first order, by the sheer number, difficulty, or complexity of figures. The Hungarians are very clear on this question and it is commonplace wisdom

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[39] Nearly all the observations that Lord (1960:49) makes about the way oral epic formulae (and themes) relate to the inventory of the tradition, on the one hand, and to the performance repertory of a given singer, on the other, are apropos to the situation of the *legényes* dancer:

> It would be impossible to determine who originated any of [the formulas]. All that can be said is that they are common to the tradition; they belong to the "common stock" of formulas. Although the formulas which any singer has in his repertory could be found in the repertories of other singers, it would be a mistake to conclude that all the formulas in the tradition are known to all singers. There is no "check-list" or "handbook" of formulas that all singers follow . . . . Obviously singers vary in the size of their repertory of thematic material; the younger singer knows fewer themes than the older; the less experienced and less skilled singer knows fewer than the more expert. Even if, individually, every formula that a singer uses can be found elsewhere in the tradition, no two singers would at any time have the same formulas in their repertories . . . .
>
> What is true for individuals is true also for districts.

that a man is a fool who tries to dance better than he can.[40] Technical mastery is quite important, to be sure—as are strength and stamina. But a good performance does not consist simply in the skillful and vigorous performance of many complex figures; a performance is also judged on another level by such qualities as timing, grace, pride, sense of humor, and so forth. The *legényes* is in the final analysis a vehicle for self-expression, for manifesting personality and temperament, for revealing the individual in the mantle of the collective. A really good performance is measurable somewhere between the subtle and the ineffable.

The dancer is obliged to fit his figures into the strophic form of the music, observing furthermore the division into opening, point, and closing. He is at liberty to learn and perform figure segments and/or points from an enormous inventory, depending on the dictates of his skill and temperament. He is, of course, free to invent new points and figure segments—so long as these are not too abrupt a departure from the traditional character of the dance. Stamping figures, for example, exist in the men's dancing of neighboring regions and in Kalotaszegi couples dancing, but are generally not compatible with the character of the *legényes*. Any new figure must be sanctionable within and by the tradition.[41]

The kinds of movements which are part of the *legényes* tradition include: heel-toe movements; springing backward; stepping across the standing leg; scissor-like leg movements; leg and hip swiveling; chugging; displacing the standing leg with free foot; leg circles and other quirky leg movements; leaping; clapping; feints; slapping heels, calves, and thighs. The *legényes* tradition seems particularly to delight in figures that trick the eye, that appear impossible—and frequently are comic at the same time. Steps generally mark the half-counts as well as the counts, so the units actually divide themselves into a potential thirty-two half-counts. Slapping accents may even occur on the quarter-counts.[42]

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[40] Horváth (1980:343), for instance, gives a saying reflecting this folk wisdom: "Bolond az, aki jobban akar táncolni annál, ahogy tud."

[41] This is nothing more than a corollary of the principle that only the tradition can confer meaning on the figures of the *legényes* or, in other words, that the meaning of *legényes* figures is *inherent* in the tradition (and distinguishes the *legényes* from any sequence of meaningless, unintelligible movements). In the more "creative" domains of dance—say, those of theatrical dance—meaning is to a much greater extent *conferred* on movement by the individual performer or choreographer. Foley (1991:ch. 1) establishes precisely this distinction between conferred and inherent meaning in verbal art.

[42] I am drawing here on my personal knowledge of the *legényes,* gained by work with Hungarian specialists, and from videotaped material. I studied the *legényes* under dancer-choreagraphers Sándor Michaletzky, Zoltán Zsuráfszky, and Zoltán Farkas on three separate occasions in the United States. I have continued to learn *legényes* material from

In order to consider the *legényes* as an analog for oral verse composition, we must, at the very least, be satisfied that improvisation is similarly at work in both media and that there is meaningful analogy both in the mechanisms of improvisation and in the structure of the respective products. If we can develop other kinds of correspondences, so much the better of course, but the analogy of an improvised, structured performance of duration in time is, I think, requisite. Let us, therefore, consider a brief sample *legényes*-sequence.[43] On the basis of that sampling, it will be possible to make more precise observations about the mechanism of improvisation and about the structure of the performance which is thus produced.

A Sample legényes-*Sequence—Concise Description*

[Note: This description is presented in a consolidated form to facilitate illustration of the basic structural features of this dance form. A more extended description of the same sequence is provided in the Appendix.]

	Movements	**Notes**
Introduction or Preparation (O^x and P^x)		
O^x1-4; **P^x**1-4	Pausing or marking time.	The circumstance that a standard opening generally begins with a springing up from flexed knees determines that the dance must be started somewhere in mid-unit.
5-8	Dancer moves forward and closes free foot to standing foot with a heel-click.	This brings the dancer in front of the musicians. From this position, a conventional closing is possible.
Preparatory Closing		
C^x1-4	[See appendix.]	Here one or another simple closing provides the necessary flexed-knee preparation (on count 4) for the standard opening.

published videotapes ("Hungarian Dance Cycles II" [= Vuka Video 103] and "Táncoljunk!") and from an unpublished videotape I made (in cooperation with Bennett Feld) of dancers of the Magyar Néphadsereg Művészegyüttese during my Fulbright year in Budapest.

[43]The particular selection of figures in the following sampling has been chosen with a view toward illustrating—on the basis of the "Leg-Circle Motif"—the potential variability and versatility of the individual motifs of the *legényes*.

Standard Opening

O[1]1-4	[See **O[2]**.]	Standard Opening.

A Springing-Back Point (RLRL)

P[1]1-8	[A detailed description is provided in the Appendix.]	This is a common "warm-up" point, with a heel-toe and springback motif executed frrst with the right foot, then with the left in the first four counts of the point. This is simply repeated in the second four counts of the point. This point is, so to speak, "symmetrical": RLRL.

A Simple Leg-Circle Closing

C[1]1	Does right lower-leg circle (to the inside), bringing right foot out to right side. (Down)	The circling of the lower leg from the knee is a frequently employed motif. Other applications of this motif are included in this sampling to illustrate how a common motif may be varied. The *legényes* has a sort of "accent" system under which each figure bears the "metrical" imprint of a pattern of ups (straight standing leg), downs (flexed standing leg), or leaps. Since such things are usually demonstrated and imitated when dancing is taught (rather than, say, described terminologically), I have taken the liberty of inventing a quasi-metrical terminology for present purposes.
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
3	Draws left foot up behind right knee and flexing right leg. (Down)	This is the onset of a commonplace closing motif.
3-and	Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping . . .(Up, [Leap])	[**Plates 1-3** detail somewhat the way the closure is knitted to the opening. **Plate 1** shows the leap which follows the slap to the left thigh.]

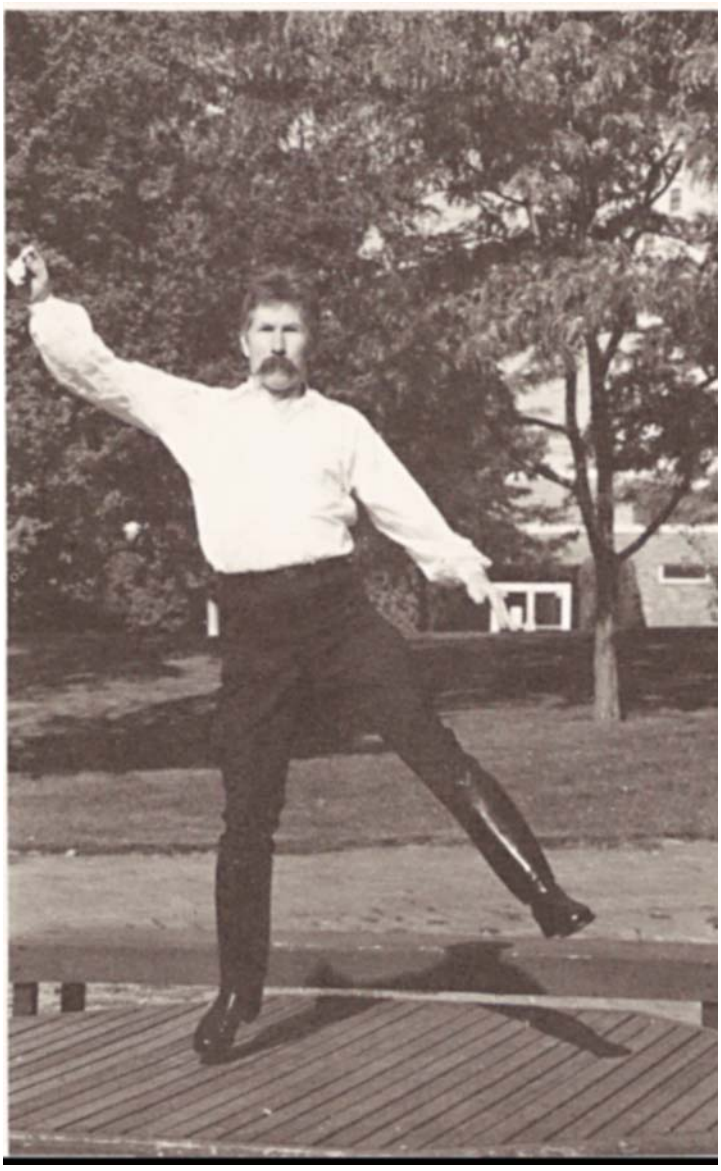

Plate 1. Closing Sequence I: A very common ending to the closing sequence entails a slap to the thigh of the left leg extended out to the side (count three-*and*) followed by a slight leap to the left onto both feet. What happens *between* counts (for example, the leap shown here) frequently demonstrates better the "airborne" character of the *legényes*—even in relatively simple motifs!—than do the postures which mark the counts.

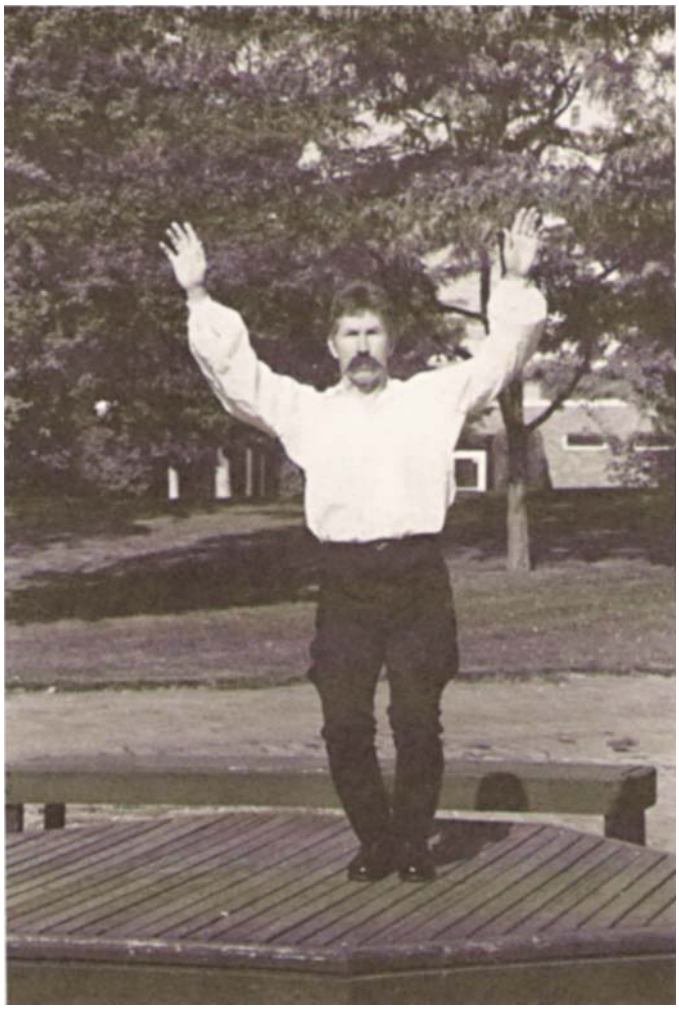

Plate 2. Closing Sequence II: The closing sequence ends with a slight leap to the left, dropping onto both feet with knees flexed (count 4). This flexion enables the springing up which anticipates count 1 of the standard opening.

4	. . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down)	This closing is asymmetrical and moves the dancer to the left. [**Plate 2** shows the drop onto both feet with flexed knees.]

Standard Opening

O²1	Dancer springs up in anticipation of this count, landing in place on the right foot and lifting his left leg forward and somewhat across the right. ([Leap], Down)	Here begins the standard opening. [**Plate 3** shows the landing posture.]
1-*and*	Steps across right leg with left. (Up)	This pause introduces the syncopation which is a characteristic feature of the opening of the Kalotaszegi *legényes*.
2	Pauses.	
2-*and*	Steps with right foot slightly sideward to right. (Down)	
3	Places left foot across and in front of right. (Down)	
3-*and*	Places left foot slightly sideward to the left. (Down)	
4	Draws feet together, clicking heels. (Up)	
4-*and*	Chugs on left foot, freeing right foot. (Down)	In the sense that this opening has been performed to only one direction it is "asymmetrical." It has moved the dancer somewhat to the right (as a typically asymmetrical closing usually moves the dancer somewhat to the left).

A Simple Leg-Circle Point (RLLR)

P²1	Begins right lower-leg circle, slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter again the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on

		the count and half-count. (This motif has the pattern DDUD.)
1-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	[**Plate 4** shows the extension of right leg and arm following the slap to right heel.]
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2-*and*	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg. (Down)	This completes the motif beginning with right leg and prepares for symmetrical repetition.
3-8	Reverses counts 1-2, beginning with the left leg (but ending with weight on flexed *right* leg). Repeats, beginning with left leg, then, a last time, beginning with right leg.	This ends the symmetrical repetition on the left and prepares to repeat the motif on the left (!), reversing the pattern of the first half of the point. The pattern of this point in its entirety becomes, then, RLLR, contrasting with $\mathbf{P^1}$ above (RLRL). This change in the pattern is not a necessary one, but it is an option which did not exist in $\mathbf{P^l}$. Exercising this option plays somewhat against predictability and introduces an engaging variability.

A Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing (With Enjambement)

$\mathbf{C^2}$1	Begins right lower-leg circle, slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	We encounter once more in the closing the motif of the circling of the lower leg. It includes slapping on the count and half-count as in $\mathbf{P^2}$ above, but, rather than ending in closure, it will be developed in way that the eye finds quite peculiar.
1-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	

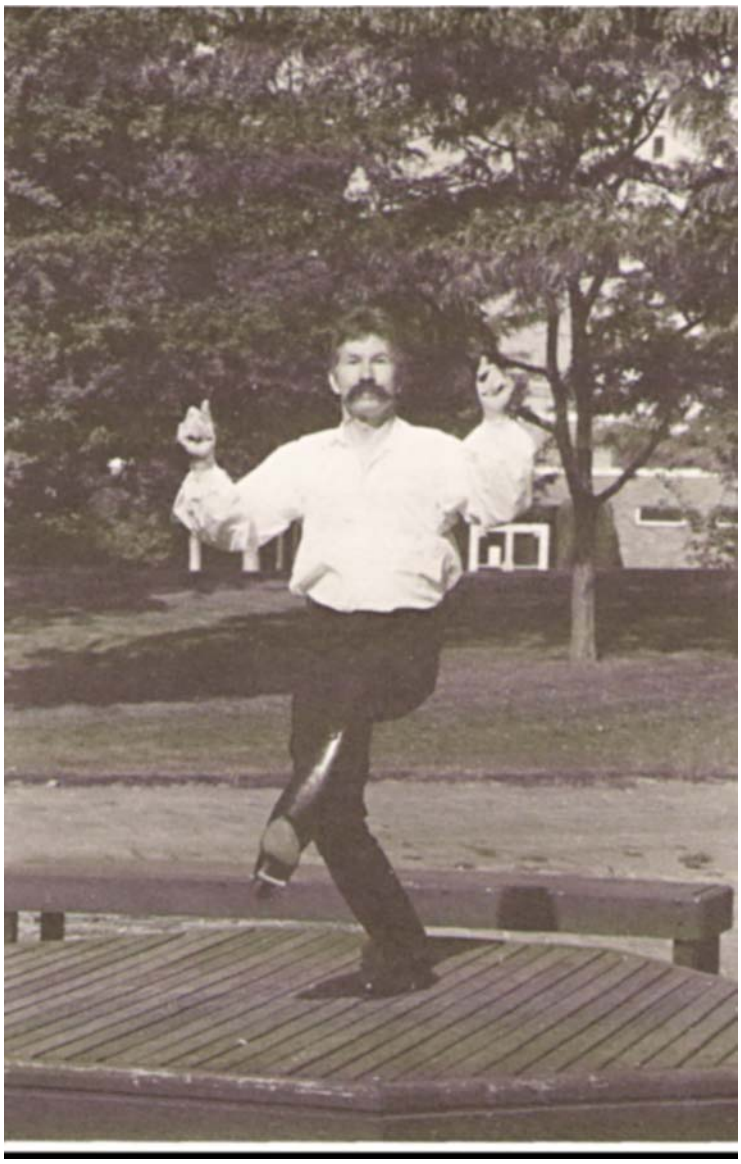

Plate 3. Standard Opening: After the springing up which initiates the standard opening, the dancer lands on flexed right leg (count I), stepping across it with left foot.

2-3	Proceeds to swing lower leg across in front of the standing knee, then out to the side, then in back of the knee, then out to the side again (while alternating slaps on calf and heel on the half-counts). (Down)	This rubber-leg motif impresses the viewer as a very improbable, likely impossible sequence of movements.
4	Rotating hips first to the left and then toward the right, the right leg swings down and across the left leg, straightening, then proceeds in a semi-circle, forward and to the right. As this is happening, the dancer's weight rolls forward onto the ball of the left foot, raising heel, while the left knee nevertheless remains flexed.	The standard closing left the dancer with his weight on both feet and knees flexed on this count—moved back toward the left somewhat and prepared for the standard opening. This variant closing has the dancer standing on a the ball of the foot of flexed left leg with the right leg floating around in the air. It is simply not possible to articulate the standard opening from this peculiar position.

Opening Modified to Accept Enjambed Closing

O[3]1-2	Steps onto flexed right leg, drawing left foot up behind right knee. (Down)	Since this alternate opening fairly flows out of the preceding closing, lacking the typical closure, there is something of the character of enjambement about this juncture. The articulation of this alternate opening is compatible with the closing and, also—bearing in mind that the closing did not move the dancer to the left—compensates by not moving him much to the right.
2-*and*	Extending the left leg forward and to the left with left knee and toes downward, kicks left toes down into the floor. (Down)	The characteristic syncopation of count 2-*and* of the *legényes* opening asserts itself here, marked by a motif with the left foot (rather than with the right as in the standard opening).

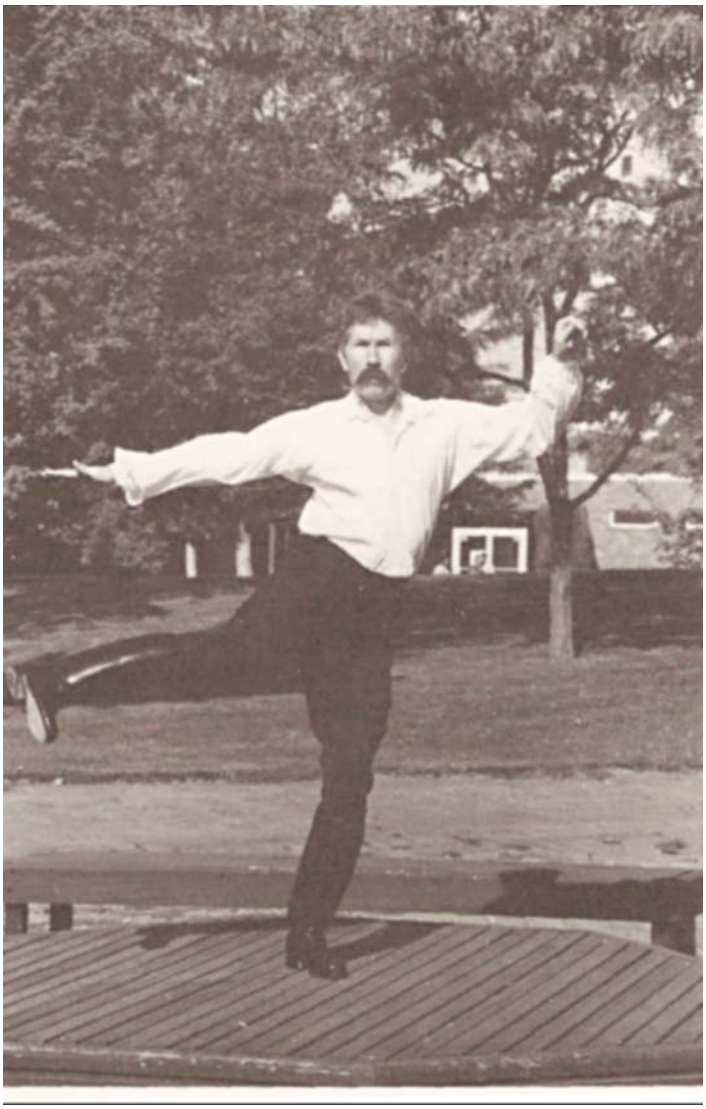

Plate 4. Leg-Circle Motif: In the execution of the leg-circle motif with slaps to thigh and heel, the arm and leg extend momentarily after the slap to the outer heel.

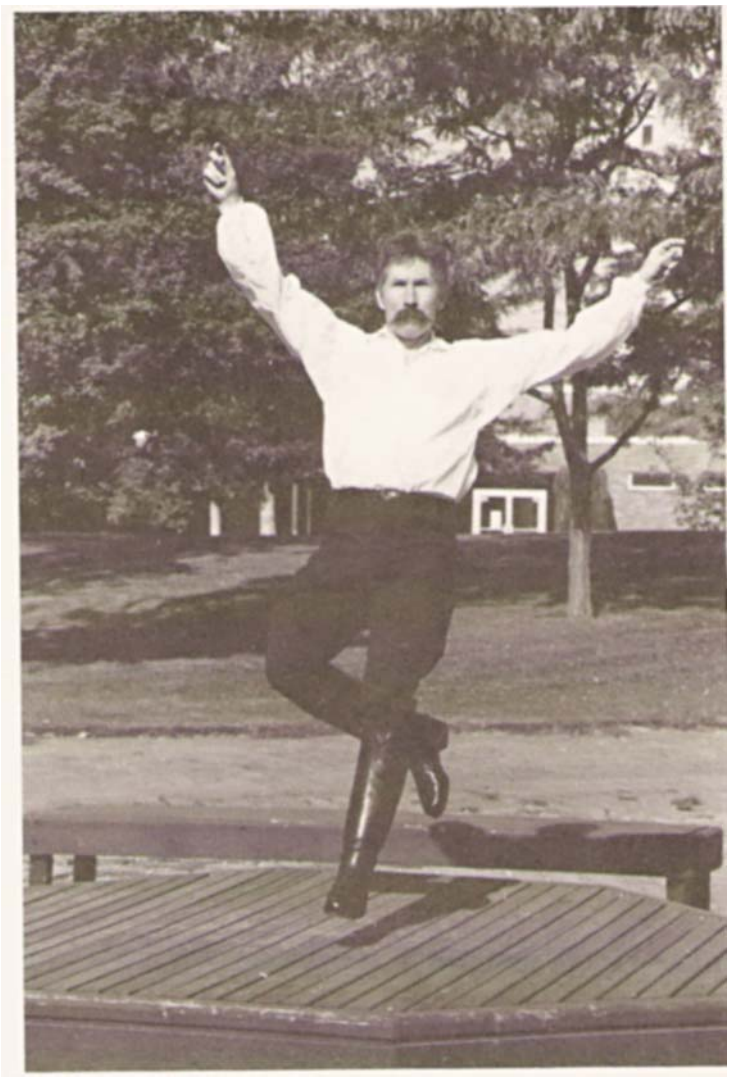

Plate 5. Leg-Displacement Motif: The dancer begins to fall back onto the displacing leg, following the moment of displacement.

3-4	Continues from here on as in the standard opening, counts 3-4. [See **O²**.]	**C²** began with a leg circle motif which could have introduced a more conventional closing (as in **C¹**). From count 2 onward, however, it diverges from such a conventional possibility. **O³**, then, took into account in its first half the enjambement imposed by **C²**. The second half of **O³**, however, retains the closure motif of the standard opening.

A Point with Tripping Leg-Displacements

P³1-8 [See appendix.]

A Closing with Double Slap to Outer Left Calf

C³1-4 [See appendix.]

The Verse Structure of the "Lads' Dance"

The sample figures illustrate the structural foundation of the dance in the 16-count units of the music and in the obligatory division into opening, point, and closing. This surface organization is comparable to the division of poetry into strophes or verses. As in poetry, the surface organization of the *legényes* is marked by distinct boundaries: the end of the opening is marked by the up-accent on count 4, followed by the chug and flexing on count 4-*and;* the end of the closing by the drop and flexing on count 4. Although frequently marked by down-accent, the end of the point is, to be sure, structurally the weakest of the boundaries.

The divisions of the unit are differentiated not only by their boundaries, but by their content. The opening, though not invariant, is standardized to a high degree. It enjoys, therefore, almost total independence from the motif-content of the point and closing which it serves to introduce.[44] The punctuated closure and the customary

[44] Like the proems of many oral traditional poems, which have a content rather independent of the poems they introduce, the opening of the *legényes* has the role of announcing the point. Since the opening recurs, however, in the manner of a refrain, it also has the function of marking the paratactic structure. Lord (1960:54-55) observes the relative lack of necessary enjambement in Serbo-Croatian song and terms Parry's reference to its "adding style" an apt one. In counterpoise to the continuum of movement of the dance—which even binds closing and opening together into an uninterruptible cycle, there is a strophic structure, highlighted by the opening, and a verse structure as well, making for heavily articulated parataxis at both levels. (Cf. also Foley [1991:ch. 1] on "traditional anaphora." The standard opening is a prominent anaphoric feature not only of each performance, but also, in another dimension, of the tradition generally.)

syncopation on count 2-*and* are its signature. The point and the closing, on the other hand, often share motif-content, so much so that the closing may distinguish itself from the point only by applying closure to a motif which was repeated—remaining open to allow continuation—throughout the point. Even where the closing does not share motifs with the opening, it needs to be "fit," so to speak, to the point. The point and the closing are compatible with one another and are, in contrast to the opening, the principal carriers of "information."[45]

In their vocabulary of movement, the divisions of the *legényes* convey a certain quasi-semantic content. Since the motifs of the *legényes* are in no way representational (say, of the weaving trade as in Scandinavian and French-Canadian set dances or of the mountain-cock courting the hen as in the Bavarian *Ländler*[46]), "vocabulary" and "semantic" are intended here as abstract metaphors.[47] As in language, there likewise prevails in dance a "syntax" to regulate inner structure,

[45] By "information," I mean here "news value," "surprise value," "novelty," "new content" in analogy to the notion of information in communication theory (cf. Cherry 1966:14). Regular patterns of alternation in "information density" are common in at least some highly structured forms of verbal expression. The second part of a line of Serbo-Croatian epic verse, for instance, generally carries more information than the first half. The repeated refrain of a song—again by way of example—has, in this sense, a low information value.

[46] Examples: the weaver's craft in the Swedish dance *Väva vadmal (Folkdanser* 1975:1,279-83) or in the French-Canadian dance *La plongeuse* (as taught to me by Richard Turcotte); the courting of the Auerhahn in the *Nachsteigen*-section of various forms of the *Ländler* and *Schuhplattler* (Goldschmidt 1966:120, 134, 136-37). The *legényes* is clearly non-representational, and this lack of literal and narrative content would seem to place it closer to lyric poetry than to epic; in the manner of the lyric mode, it expresses such abstract qualities and emotions as pride, exuberance, and humor.

[47] The use of language as a conceptual framework and metaphor for dance was elaborated extensively at least as long as a hundred years ago. Zorn (1905:16) makes the analogy more than straightforwardly: "To compare dancing to language, the positions correspond to vowels; simple movements to consonants; compound movements to syllables; steps to words; enchainments to phrases or sentences; and the combinations of enchainments to paragraphs. Simple figures correspond to verses, compound figures to stanzas, and the connection of compound figures or strophes, as in a Quadrille, to an entire poem." Of course, dance, especially from the standpoint of the very abstractness of its expressivity, is also much akin to music. Martin and Pesovár (1961:3-4) associate the structural analysis of dance with that of folk music and linguistics: "An attempt is made in the present paper to outline a method for the structural analysis and systematic classification of Hungarian folk dances in the spirit of the principles deduced from folklore research. Many analogies have been drawn, renewed incentives have sprung and valuable experience has been gained particularly from the science of folk music and linguistics. This was made possible by the fact that both these sciences have a methodologically developed morphology and a subject matter susceptible to offer analogies for the dance. This is why the terminology used in musicolgy and in linguistics readily presents itself for use in dance research, naturally in an adapted form."

proscribing impossible arrangements of dance elements and generating acceptable ones. One very elementary rule of this syntax is that you must move rather quickly to put at least one foot on the floor if you find yourself in the air. It is our metaphorical syntax, then, which also allowed us—or actually required us—to violate the norm and create an enjambement, joining the "Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing" to the subsequent opening.[48]

The constraints imposed by this syntax in concert with the structural division of the *legényes*—as well as by the need for a kind of kinesthetic and aesthetic coherence—determine that there must prevail an inner organization into phrase groupings of motifs (or "recurrent partials") within certain parameters of duration, rhythm, and accent.[49] These phrase groupings—limited as they are by constraints and parameters—are capable of great variation but must be unified by the kinesthetic and aesthetic coherence to which we have just alluded. That the *legényes* should therefore be built of groupings of motifs akin to the formulae of studies in the Parry-Lord tradition of scholarship is not so much a resort to a functional or utilitarian mechanism, but, fundamentally, an inevitable consequence of the use of a traditional form of human expression dignified by a formal structure.

We see formulaic principles at work when we are at liberty to choose between a leg-circle point with the pattern RLRL or with the "variant" pattern RLLR.[50] We see formulaic principles at work in the choice between the "Simple Leg-Circle Closing" (followed by the standard opening) and "Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing" (followed by a modified opening).[51] Even in the very abbreviated inventory of motifs provided by the sample sequence above, we can note other examples of potential substitutability: the second half of the "Simple Leg-Circle Point"

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[48] The titles for dance figures used here are, of course, quite my own invention and are merely intended to facilitate reference and discussion

[49] Martin and Pesovár (1961:5) say that the *"motive* is an explicit unit, the smallest organic unit of the dance. The motive is the smallest unit whose rhythmic and kinetic pattern forms a relatively closed and recurring structure. The motives exist in the consciousness of the dancer, can be remembered by the dancer, recur in his dance, mostly in sequences." They proceed to mention again the analogy of the "motive" in music and the "motif' in folklore. Martin and Pesovár (1961:4-11) offer terminology for an elaborate hierarchy of structural units. I have chosen, in the interest of simplicity, to let *motif* stand quite generally for both larger and smaller subunits of a kinetic phrase.

[50] Here I am not interested in the question of whether one variant is more "basic" and has a sort of normative priority over the other. In the case of openings, however, it is certainly possible to speak of a standard.

[51]In the sequence analysis above, we noted the "formula suture" of the modified opening where the characteristic syncopation asserts itself on count 2-*and*.

could have been preceded by the four counts of "Tripping Leg-Displacements." Or leg-circles could conceivably have been alternated with leg-displacements.

That is, of course, not to say that anything goes, that any motif may be patched together with any other. Quite the contrary. I have tried in this text—by alluding to such notions as "fit," "continuity," and "coherence"—to indicate that it is simply not enough for it to be physically possible to realize sequence: a sequence must also be kinesthetically and aesthetically satisfactory. A detailed analysis of the aesthetics of the *legényes* would lead far beyond the focus of present discussion, but let me give an example of a very unlikely combination. If a point were begun with the "Springing-Back" figure or with leg-circles, it would be inappropriate to follow it with a high jumping figure. My impression is that a fundamental aesthetic principle of the *legényes* (and other Hungarian dancing) seeks conservation of continuity in the flow of movement, in dynamics, and in something we might call "texture." This aesthetic principle negotiates between point and closing as well. The "Simple Leg-Circle Closing" would not be very effective after a high jumping point.

The following table models the verse structure of the *legényes,* showing a closing as the necessary preparation for the standard opening and showing some sample point-schemata. The internal organization of the point itself is susceptible of considerable variation. Point-schemata 1, 2, and 3 (on the table below) correspond to those described in the sample point sequences in this paper. For present purposes, we will consider a "motif" to be a grouping of movements which is repeated in a given point—with or without a change between right and left, with or without some degree of variation. Motifs 1 and 2 may be done to either side. Point 1 is structured on the simple alternation of a motif done to the right and then to the left through both of its "verses." Point 2 has an arrangement of motifs first to the right and then to the left in the first verse, but this arrangement is reversed in the second verse. Point 3 begins with a motif done to the right (motif A, namely, leg-circle). The second half of the first verse, however, is filled by a different motif done again to the right (motif B, namely, leg-displacement). The second verse of this point mirrors the first, beginning with the B-motif done to the left, then echoes the A-motif again on the right (but in a variant form).

Point-schemata 4-7 (in italics on the table) are not represented in this paper by the description of sample points but are included to indicate some other possibilities beyond our small sampling. Motif 4 is a grouping long enough to fill an entire verse and is done first to one side and then to the other. Motif 5 is non-directional (having neither right- nor left-"footedness"); it is repeated three times and echoed a fourth time in a variant form. Motif 6A is a non-directional motif, followed by a non-

directional B-motif in the second half of the first verse. The AB-sequence is then repeated in the second verse. Motif 7A is directional, whereas its B-motif is not. (The possible closings would be quite varied—often echoing the point—but they would most frequently end as shown.)

A Model of the Verse Structure of the *legényes*—Some Sample Point-Schemata

	1	**&**	**2**	**&**	**3**	**&**	**4**	**&**
C^{x}	...	...	...	...	...	Leap	Flex	Spring
O^{standard}	Flex	Step	[Pause!]	Step	Touch	Step	Close	Chug
P1^{a}	Ml^{right}				Ml^{left}			
P2^{a}	M2^{right}				M2^{1left}			
P3^{a}	M3A^{right}				M3B^{right}			
P4^{a}	*M4^{right}*							
P5^{a}	*M5*				*M5*			
P6^{a}	*M6A*				*M6B*			
P7^{a}	*M7^{right}*				*M7B*			
Pl^{b}	Ml^{right}				Ml^{left}			
P2^{b}	M2^{left}				M2^{right}			
P3^{b}	M3B^{left}				M3A $^{var./rt.}$			
P4^{b}	*M4^{left}*							
P5^{b}	*M5*				*M5^{variation}*			
P6^{b}	*M6A*				*M6B*			
P7^{b}	*M7A^{left}*				*M7B*			
C ^{variable}	...	...	...	...	...	Leap	Flex	Spring

The *legényes* is realized in performance by a succession of appropriately selected groupings of motifs. A phrase grouping once learned as an opening, a point, or a closing becomes a formula, susceptible to eventual variation, a grouping with an established field or zone in which substitutions and innovations may be made. It seems to me that these structural elements and the kinesthetic and aesthetic principles which regulate their content do not so much facilitate improvisation in the performance of the *legényes* (from, say, an inventory of formulae ready for adaption) as they set parameters for innovation as one learns and practices and, perhaps, tries to invent something different or reconstruct something one half saw or half remembers.[52] In the rush of performance,

[52] I have the impression that the differing nature of language (as opposed to dance) allows the Parry-Lord formulae to function as an aid to improvisation in performance both as a template for producing metrical sub-lines on the spur of the moment and also as a unit of the poetic inventory, a unit easily retrievable from memory. I suspect that the postulated "formulae" of the *legényes* are less subject to variation in actual performance (though I may perceive this matter from the perspective of my own lack of virtuosity).

however, improvisation is at work in the selection from an established personal inventory of openings, points, and closings—seldom, I suspect, in the formulaic generation of new openings, points, and closings.

If such phrase groupings do not necessarily have utility for the "composition" of new points in performance, they are nevertheless essential for memory—just as a phone number is rememberable, but a random string of numbers is not. If a dancer begins a point with a leg-circle motif, it does not actually invoke for him *all* possible points which begin with a leg-circle. But it does tend to invoke all such points in that dancer's own repertory. When the dancer once sets a course on one such leg-circle point, the dancer has considerably narrowed the options for filling out the rest of the point and will likely rely heavily on memory and habit until the unfolding performance requires a more "critical" decision[53]—generally at the boundary between the point and closing and especially at the boundary between opening and point.[54]

There is one more matter which is relevant and necessary to consider if we seek to contemplate the structure of the *legényes* as a sort of verse structure. Verses of poetry, according to the nature of the language in which they are composed, usually betray patterns of meter or accent. I suggest that an apt analog for the stress patterns common in language are the knee-flexing patterns common in dance. These "knee-feathering" patterns are quite restricted in many couples dance traditions, including the Hungarian, being limited to one or two allowable patterns. I suspect that a rather high number of such allowable (and actual) "accent" patterns is something of an idiosyncrasy of the *legényes*. I have, accordingly, noted these "accents" in the description of a sample sequence above.

In applying to the *legényes* some metaphors of language, poetics, and oral composition theory, I have not sought to prove that the *legényes* is "the same as" an orally composed verse narrative, nor that the phrase groupings of the *legényes* are "the same as" the formulae of, say, Serbo-Croatian epic narrative. I have sought to reinforce our present awareness that different forms of human expression have fundamental commonalties. We would occupy a strangely discontinuous universe if they did not. It is, for present purposes, less important to know in what respects of detail the

[53] Lord (1960:36 and *passim)* addresses the role of "habitual usage" in the creation and the utilization of the formula inventory of a singer.

[54] From the standpoint of an observer, receiving the dance as a form of communication and trying to predict its course, "redundancy" and "information" are at play here as in communication theory. The choice of an opening is *highly predictable*. The choice of a closing is *somewhat predictable*. That of a point is generally *quite unpredictable*. After the onset of a point, the predictability of the progress of point (and closing) rises significantly. Gleick (1987:256), in reviewing Claude Shannon's work, says: "Redundancy is a predictable departure from the random." For a more extensive discussion of redundancy in communication, see Cherry 1966:117-23; 182-89.

knee-flexing, for instance, is really comparable to accent in metrical systems than to know that in the Kalotaszegi *legényes* we find a phenomenon of expression which is as multi-dimensioned as that of oral verse narrative—and to know that analogy prevails in these many dimensions: both are regulated by external principles of formal structure and aesthetics, by internal principles of syntax, rhythm, and accent. Both are created in performance from an established personal (and community) repertory of meaningful groupings. Both forms of performance, however they are not to be equated with the tradition in which they are embedded, represent their respective traditions synecdochically and evoke immeasurably more than is evident in a performance taken in iso1ation.[55]

In Summary

The Kalotaszegi *legényes* has a cultural homeland in a relatively small area of Transylvania. It was a central feature of social and festive events and very much woven into the fabric of those events—a part of the traditional heritage and daily life of every inhabitant whether dancer or spectator. The *legényes* lived in its community as an immense collective inventory of motifs and formulae attached to traditional principles which governed how they were properly assembled in performance. It is a dance form of fluid, limitless possibilities within the rather strict boundaries of its three-part division of sixteen counts and its traditional style. It is a dance form with an enormous stock of conventional motifs and conventional formulae, but one in which the possibility for the creation of something new is never closed. And yet it is a dance form which has no established "texts." It manifests its existence only as it is realized in every single performance.

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[55] Foley (1991:ch. 1) expresses this quite forcefully: "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."

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Video Resources

"Hungarian Dance Cycles II" [= Vuka Video 103] with László Diószegi, Ágnes Gaug, Éva Mária Kish and Sándor Michaletzky. Somerville, MA: Vuka, n.d.

"Táncoljunk! Let's Dance!" with dancers of the Hungarian People's Army Artistic Ensemble [Magyar Néphadsereg Művészegyüttese]. San Leandro and Willits, CA:Bennett Feld and Chris Miller, n.d.

Appendix

A Sample *legényes*-Sequence—Extended Description

[Note: The following dance description is intended only for illustrating the characteristic structure of the dance. It does not have a level of specificity which would enable the learning and performance of this sequence.]

	Movements	**Notes**
Introduction or Preparation (O^x and P^x)		
O^xI-4	[Pausing or marking time in the part of the music which corresponds to an opening.]	The circumstance that a standard opening generally begins with a springing up from flexed knees determines that the dance must be started somewhere in mid-unit.
P^xl-4	Marking time by stepping slightly to the side on alternating feet and touching the toe of the free foot to the floor slightly in front of standing foot.	Marking time in this fashion is a typical preparation. It is usually accompanied by finger-snapping hand/arm movements. (Free and expansive use of the arms is in fact characteristic of this dance and of Hungarian dancing, generally. In this dance, it has very much the function of assisting balance and providing a sort of kinesthetic counterpoint to the lower-body movement.)
5-7	Dancer moves forward with leg-swiveling steps on each count.	This brings the dancer in front of the musicians.
8	Closes free foot to standing foot with a heel-click	This step marks the close of a point-section which was realized in motifs suitable only for preparation, for introducing the dance. From this position, a conventional closing is possible.
Preparatory Closing		
C^x1	Steps right leg across left foot, swiveling hips to left and bringing left foot up, crossed behind right knee. (Down-”accent”)	This common closing begins with an “open” version of a motif which is then repeated from count 3 in a “closed” version. The *legényes* has a sort of “accent” system under which each figure bears the “metrical” imprint of a

		pattern of ups (straight standing leg), downs (flexed standing leg), or leaps. Since such things are usually demonstrated and imitated when dancing is taught (rather than, say, described terminologically), I have taken the liberty of inventing a quasimetrical terminology for present purposes.
1-*and*	Steps left foot in place. (Up)	
2	Steps right foot back in place beside left. (Up)	
2-*and*	Steps left foot in place. (Up)	
3	Steps right leg across left foot, swiveling hips to left and bringing left foot up, crossed behind right knee. (Down)	This step repeats count 1 but this time introduces a closure.
3-*and*	Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping somewhat to the left... (Up, [Leap])	[**Plates 1-3** detail somewhat the way the closure is knitted to the opening. **Plate 1** shows the leap which follows the slap to the left thigh.]
4	. . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down)	This provides the necessary preparation for the common standard opening. It is therefore a very commonplace closing motif and, so to speak, the "default" choice. It has also moved the dancer somewhat to the left. Since the opening, as will be seen, typically moves the dancer to the right, a closing which moves the dancer back to the left helps to maintain his position, centered in front of the musicians. In the sense that this whole closing has been performed to only one direction it is "asymmetrical." [**Plate 2** shows the drop onto both feet with flexed knees.]

Standard Opening

O[1]1	Dancer springs up in anticipation of this count, landing in place on the right foot and lifting his left leg forward and somewhat across the right. ([Leap], Down)	Here begins a very standard opening. [**Plate 3** shows the landing posture.]
1-*and*	Steps across right leg with left. (Up)	
2	Pauses	This pause introduces the syncopation which is a characteristic feature of the Kalotaszegi *legényes*.
2-*and*	Steps with right foot slightly sideward to right. (Down)	
3	Places left foot across and in front of right. (Down)	
3-*and*	Places left foot slightly sideward to the left. (Down)	
4	Draws feet together, clicking heels. (Up)	
4-*and*	Chugs on left foot, freeing right foot. (Down)	This opening has been asymmetrical and has moved the dancer somewhat to the right. [May also chug on right foot or on both feet as ensuing point requires.]

A Springing-Back Point (RLRL)

P[1]1	Touches right heel to floor in front of left foot. (Down)	This is the start of a common "warm-up" point. It is executed beginning right, then beginning left in the first four counts of the point. This combination is simply repeated in the second four counts of the point. This point is "symmetrical." (This motif has the metrical pattern DD [Leap] DU.)

1-*and*	Touches right toe to floor near left heel, turning right knee inward and pushing into floor. (Down)	
2	Anticipates the count by pushing off floor with both feet, springing backward to land on left foot while letting right leg swing forward. ([Leap], Down)	
2-*and*	Steps somewhat sideward onto right foot. (Up)	
3-4	Repeats counts 1-2, reversing the pattern and beginning with left foot.	
5-8	Repeats counts 1-4.	

A Simple Leg-Circle Closing

C[1]1	Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans* (that is, to the inside) ... (Down)	The circling of the lower leg from the knee is a frequently employed motif. Other applications of this motif are included in this sampling to illustrate how a common motif may be varied.
1-*and*	. . . bringing right foot out to right side. (Down)	
2	Close right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
3	Draws left foot up behind right knee and flexing right leg. (Down)	This is the onset of the commonplace closing motif which we already encountered in **C**[x]3-4. This closing is asymmetrical and moves the dancer to the left.
3-*and*	Lifts left leg out to the left, slapping left thigh and leaping . . . (Up, [Leap])	

4	. . . onto both feet, flexing knees. (Down)	

Standard Opening

O²1-4	Repeat **O¹**.	Standard ("default") opening.

A Simple Leg-Circle Point (RLLR)

P²I	Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans,* slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter a variation of the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on the count and half-count. (This motif has the metrical pattern DDUD.)
1-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	[**Plate 4** shows the extension of right leg and arm following the slap to right heel.]
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2-*and*	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg. (Down)	This completes the motif beginning with the right leg and prepares for symmetrical repetition.
3-4	Reverses counts 1-2, beginning with the left leg.	
4-*and*	Chugs in place, transferring weight to flexed right leg.	This ends the symmetrical repetition on the left and prepares to repeat the motif on the left (!), reversing the pattern of the fIrst half of the point. The pattern of this point in its entirety becomes, then, RLLR, contrasting with **P¹** above (RLRL). This change in the pattern is not a necessary one, but it is an option which did not exist in **P¹**. Exercising this option plays somewhat against predictability and introduces an engaging variability.
5-6	Repeats 3-4 (beginning with left leg).	

6-*and*	Chugs in place, transferring weight to left leg.	
7-8	Repeats 1-2 (beginning with right leg).	
8-*and*	Chugs in place, transferring weight to left leg.	

A Leg-Circle and Rubber-Leg Closing (With Enjambement)

C²1	Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans,* slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	We encounter in the closing, once more, the motif of the circling of the lower leg. It includes slapping on the count and half-count as in **P²** above, but, rather than ending in closure, it will be developed in a way that the eye finds quite peculiar: the ensuing rubber-leg motif impresses the viewer as a very improbable, likely impossible sequence of movements.
1-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	
2	Slaps right hand to inner right calf as right lower leg swings across left knee. (Down)	
2-*and*	Slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)	
3	Slaps left hand to inner right heel as right lower leg swings up behind left knee. (Down)	
3-*and*	Slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)	

4	Rotating hips first to the left and then toward the right, the right leg swings down and across the left leg, straightening, then proceeds in a semi-circle, forward and to the right. As this is happening, the dancer's weight rolls forward onto the ball of the left foot, raising heel, while the left knee nevertheless remains flexed.	The standard closing left the dancer with his weight on both feet and knees flexed on this count—moved back toward the left somewhat and prepared for the standard opening. This variant closing has the dancer standing on the ball of the foot of flexed left leg with the right leg floating around in the air. It is simply not possible to articulate the standard opening from this peculiar position.

Opening Modified to Accept Enjambed Closing

O^{3}1-2	Steps onto flexed right leg, drawing left foot up behind right knee. (Down)	Since this alternate opening fairly flows out of the preceding closing, lacking the typical closure, there is something of the character of enjambement about this juncture. The articulation of this alternate opening is compatible with the closing and, also—bearing in mind that the closing did not move the dancer to the left—compensates by not moving him much to the right.
2-*and*	Extending the left leg forward and to the left and rotating hips to the right in order to turn left knee inward and left toes downward, while continuing to stand on flexed right leg, kicks left toes down into the floor. (Down)	The characteristic syncopation of count *2-and* of the *legényes* opening asserts itself here, marked by a motif with the left foot (rather than with the right as in the standard opening).
3-4	Continues from here on as in the standard opening, counts 3-4. [See **O**^{1}.]	**C**^{2} began on counts 1 and 1-*and* with a leg circle motif which could have introduced a more conventional closing (as in **C**^{1}). It diverges, however, from count 2 on. **O**^{3} took into account, in its first half, the enjambement imposed by **C**^{2}. The second half of **O**^{3}, however, retains the closure motif of the standard opening.

A Point with Tripping Leg-Displacements

P^{3}1	Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans,* slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter again the motif of the circling of the lower leg with slapping on the count and half-count. It is mixed here with a different motif—"tripping leg-displacements"—from **P**^{3}3-6.
1-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel. (Down)	
2	Closes right foot to left with heel click. (Up)	
2-*and*	Anticipating count 3 somewhat, the right leg whips around in a partial leg circle *en dehors* (that is, to the outside), wrapping the right foot around back of left knee (or upper calf). (Down)	The leg-circle motif (beginning right) has been completed and preparation begins now for the leg displacement with the right.
3	The wrapped foot slides down the back of left leg, displacing it. The dancer lands on flexed right leg as straightened left leg shoots forward. (Down)	This motif has the metrical pattern DUDD. [**Plate 5** shows the moment of displacement when dancer becomes airborne (before falling onto his right leg on count 3).]
4	Steps (unstably!) onto left leg extended straight forward. (Up)	
4-*and*	Drops back onto flexed right leg. (Down)	
5-6	Repeats 3-4 with reverse footwork.	Center four counts of point become symmetrical.
7	Begins right lower-leg circle *en dedans,* slapping right outer thigh. (Down)	Here we encounter another variation of the motif of the circling of the lower leg. This time it includes slapping on the quarter-count as well as on the count and half-count.
7-*a*	Slaps left hand to outer left thigh.	A slap on the quarter-count.

7-*and*	Bringing right foot out to right side, slaps right hand to outer right heel out toward the side. (Down)	
8	Repeats 7 above.	The leg-circle motif is repeated here at the end of the point in a variation which, being doubled, does not result in closure, but rather leaves the dancer with one foot still in the air. The final two counts of the point are only a variation of the first two counts—done, moreover, a second time to the right. The pattern of the point is then: (a) Leg-circle motif right, (b) leg-displacement motif right, (c) leg-displacement motif left, (d) leg-circle variant right.

A Closing with Double Slap to Outer Left Calf

C^{3}1	Steps sideward on right foot, weight balanced on spread legs, stretching arms and upper body upwards and, then, outwards to the left. (Down)	
1-*and*	Hits back outer left mid-calf with left hand and, following through, . . . (Down)	Since the slap creates an accent lacking in the stepping down which occurred on count 1, a syncopated effect results.
2	. . . hits back outer left mid-calf with right hand. (Down)	
2-*and*	Dancer begins to straighten torso, rotating hips to right while lifting and extending right leg. Right leg appears to wind out from under dancer, so to speak, and become airborne, flying out to the right, preparing for count 3. (Down)	
3	Slaps right hand to inner calf of right. (Up)	

4	Drops, moving somewhat to the right, onto both feet together, knees flexed. (Down)	Conventional closure motif, although the move to the right (rather than left) will perhaps require a subsequent adjustment to re-center the dance.

[A dancer might, of course, continue the performance with additional points, but a closing also serves as the end to a performance. Just as there is a vocabulary of preparatory steps, there are various ways of moving away from the ending position in front of the musicians.]

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"Beowulf Was Not There": Compositional Implications of *Beowulf,* Lines 1299b-1301

Michael D. Cherniss

During the second night of Beowulf's stay in Denmark, Grendel's mother, seeking revenge for her son's death, enters Heorot. When the warriors in the hall discover her presence, she takes flight, but on her way out she seizes and kills an unnamed warrior who, the poet says, was especially dear to his lord, Hrothgar. At this point in the narrative the poet tells us something we did not previously know (1299b-1301):

> Næs Beowulf ðær,
> ac wæs oþer in ær geteohhod
> æfter maþðumgife mærum Geate.[1]
>
> [Beowulf was not there, but rather he was in another place, assigned earlier to the famous Geat after the giving of treasure.]

Subsequently, the female monster completes her escape, leaving confusion and renewed suffering behind her.

Although so far as I am aware the lines about Beowulf's absence from Heorot during the second attack in two nights upon its sleeping inhabitants have elicited no previous commentary, they have for some time struck me as being somewhat curious. My discomfort has little or nothing to do with the narrative function of the information that the poet supplies here. Obviously, if Beowulf were present in Heorot the poem's audience would expect him to challenge Grendel's less powerful mother just as he had previously challenged her son and, if the results were the same, instead of an exciting battle in the monster's lair, we would very likely have only a much less interesting reduplication of the earlier hand-to-hand struggle. The lines explain why Beowulf fails to intervene at this moment in the story, and they prepare us for his second great fight. But why has the poet waited until the monster has attacked and is heading for the exit to tell us that Beowulf is not there? My own admittedly tainted modern sense of structure suggests that the poet should have supplied this essential bit of

[1] All references are to Klaeber 1950.

information earlier in his narrative, probably somewhere in the passage beginning at line 1232 in which everyone goes *to setle* ("to rest"). Surely anyone hearing or reading the poem for the first time would be wondering why Beowulf, who waited with his men in Heorot the night before, does nothing as Grendel's mother enters and attacks. The information that he is not there certainly comes as a surprise, but not a particularly purposeful or effective one, and it intrudes itself into the midst of the otherwise rapid movement of the action.

One simple explanation for the placement of the lines about Beowulf's absence depends upon the widely accepted view that the *Beowulf* poet works within a tradition that was at least originally oral-formulaic in character, and that he retains and exhibits compositional habits and techniques which derive from such a tradition. This view does not necessarily assume that the poet actually composed *Beowulf* orally; conclusive evidence in favor of this position does not at present exist (see, e.g., Benson 1966; Watts 1969). Still, over the years since Francis P. Magoun (1953) argued on the basis of its formulaic diction that *Beowulf* had been composed orally, research into Germanic tradition, its diction and its compositional techniques, has led many, if not most, students to conclude that an oral tradition underlies Old English poetry in general and *Beowulf* in particular.[2] One need only accept the possibility, if not the likelihood, that, in addition to his traditional diction, the *Beowulf* poet might reveal other compositional characteristics derived from pre-literate, oral, Germanic tradition.

I have suggested that the lines about Beowulf's absence do not belong, or at least are awkwardly placed, in the description of Grendel's mother's raid on Heorot. Albert B. Lord, in his landmark book on oral-formulaic poets and poetry, *The Singer of Tales,* observes that an oral poet never goes back in his song to change words and lines, even when the song has been written down and he therefore has the opportunity to do so (1960:128):

> . . . when an oral singer is through with a song, it is finished. His whole habit of thinking is forward, never back and forth! It takes a vast cultural change to develop a new kind of poetic. The opportunity offered in dictating is not sufficient.

If we assume that the *Beowulf* poet, however he got his poem written down, was still oral traditional in his habits to the extent that careful revision was alien to him, an obvious explanation for the placement of the

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[2] See, e.g., Chapter 5, "Some Remarks on the Nature and Quality of Old English Poetry," in Greenfield and Calder 1986:122-33. This is certainly not the place to review the oral-formulaic theory of composition as it has been applied to Old English verse; such a review has been undertaken by Olsen (1986, 1988). See also Foley 1985.

lines in question presents itself: the poet, as he moved from his description of the celebration of Beowulf's victory over Grendel to the next large movement in his story, neglected through an oversight to mention a crucial detail-that Beowulf and his Geats did not sleep in Heorot after the festivities. A bit later, in the midst of his description of Grendel's mother's raid, he realized that he had failed to account for Beowulf's non-response to the threat posed by the new monster, and so he inserted his excuse for Beowulf's inaction where it now appears.

The foregoing reconstruction of the poet's procedure would make sense if *Beowulf* were in fact the written record of a single oral performance, regardless of whether it was dictated to a scribe or somehow the poet wrote it down himself as he composed it in an oral-formulaic manner. This reconstruction does, however, assume that the poet's orally based habits of composition precluded his going back later to "improve" or "correct" a lapse in his narrative, and I have no doubt that many students of the poem have already balked at the thesis that our text is in any respect an unrevised, unpolished piece of work. Indeed, Kevin S. Kiernan has recently argued at length that the *Beowulf* manuscript has undergone extensive revision, by its two scribes if not by the poet himself (1981). Moreover, I myself am not satisfied to dismiss the problematic lines simply as an uncorrected mistake. A more careful, closer examination of the *Beowulf*-poet's compositional habits will, I think, yield a more satisfactory account of the placement of these lines and, perhaps, some insight into his sense of poetic structure as well. These compositional habits are best accounted for as a legacy of the oral tradition, although they do not absolutely preclude the possibility of a literate poet.

While we do not know whether or not *Beowulf* as we have it was composed in whole or in part orally, it is a widely accepted fact that the poem's diction belongs to a tradition of alliterative Germanic verse with roots extending back into a pre-literate past.[3] Patterned blocks of narrative are the materials out of which an oral traditional poet builds his poems. Within a particular tradition poets will, for example, employ the same or similar elements whenever they compose scenes of feasting or of battle, or treat the idea of exile. Another sort of compositional patterning, usually called "ring composition," has likewise been shown to be a widespread structuring device in oral traditional poetry. This device, originally identified in Old English verse as a rhetorical "envelope pattern" by Adeline C. Bartlett (1935:9-29), is characterized by the chiastic repetition of words or ideas or both at the beginning and end of a unified group of verses, resulting in a pattern which may be diagrammatically represented

[3] The presence of certain compositional patterns that are characteristic of oral traditional verse, "themes" and "type-scenes," has also been treated in Old English poetry, including *Beowulf*. See, e.g., Lord 1960:68-98, 198-202; Olsen 1986:577-88; Fry 1968.

as ABC . . . X . . . CBA.[4] This type of patterning may not belong exclusively to oral traditional composition, but if one does treat it as a characteristic of such verse, as Eric A. Havelock has wisely pointed out with reference to Homer, it would be more appropriate to describe it in oral rather than visual terms, as "echoes" rather than visible "patterns" (1982:140, 177-78). A visual analogy to something like concentric circles radiating outward from a fixed center is useful, but it suggests a kind of geometric precision and balance which one is not likely to find in even the most tightly constructed verse paragraph. An oral structure of echoes, perhaps even a musical analogy to repeated notes or chords, would seem more accurate.

In order to account for the lines about Beowulf's absence in compositional terms, I propose to examine two pairs of closely related passages in *Beowulf,* the introductions of Grendel and Grendel's mother, and the attacks of the monsters upon Heorot. I hope to show how the poet employs particular kinds of identifiable patterns as he constructs these narrative units. The two introductions and two attacks resemble each other more closely than has been formerly noticed. Like any poet whose habits and techniques of composition derive from an oral tradition, the *Beowulf* poet, perhaps consciously, perhaps not, tends to repeat himself when confronted with similar narrative situations.

The poet introduces Grendel's mother into his story immediately after the Danes and their guests go to sleep on the night after Beowulf's victory over Grendel. She enters the narrative in the sentence beginning at line l255b: *þæt gesyne wearþ* . . . ("it was seen . . . "). Despite the apparent foreshadowings of approaching disaster at lines 1233b-37a and 1251b-55a, and despite the fact that after her raid we learn from Hrothgar that the Danes had seen her with Grendel on the moors (1345-76a), an audience hearing or reading the poem for the first time would have no prior knowledge of the female monster's existence. We are clearly entering a new movement in the poem with her introduction. The sequence of ideas in this passage, lines 1255b-78, is as follows:

A. An avenger, Grendel's mother, still remained alive after the hated one (1255b-59).
B. She inhabited the dreadful water (1260-61a),
C. After Cain slew his brother and fled into exile; from him woke many fateful spirits (1261b-66a).
D. Grendel was one of these (1266b-67a),
E. He who met defeat at Beowulf's hands (1267b-74a).
F. Grendel then departed, humiliated, to seek his place of death (1274b-76a).
G. His mother wished to journey to avenge her son's death (1276b-78).

[4] In recent years such patterns have been identified and examined in Beowulf by Hieatt (1975), Tonsfeldt (1977), and Niles (1979; 1983:152-62).

The passage forms a ring or envelope with a pattern of ideas and verbal echoes which can be represented visually as ABCBA (I have indicated key words within the pattern's divisions):

> A. Grendel's mother as his avenger (1255b-59); "wrecend þa gyt" [an avenger yet] (1256b), "modor" [mother] (1258b), "aglæcwif' [female monster] (1259a), "yrmþe gemunde" [bore misery in mind] (1259b). Compare 1276b-78; "modor þa gyt" [mother yet] (1276b), "wrecan" [avenge] (1278b). Also "aglæca" [monster] (Grendel) (1269a), "he gemunde" [he bore in mind] (Beowulf) (1270a).
>
> B. Cain's humiliation and exile (1260-66a); "fag gewat" [guilty departed] (1263b), "mandream fleon" [to flee the joys of men] (1264b), "westen" [wilderness] (1265a). Compare Grendel's humiliation and flight (l274b-76a); "hean gewat" [humiliated departed] (1274b), "dreame bedæled" [deprived of joy] (1275a), "deaþwic" [place of death] (1275b).
>
> C. The core of the passage summarizes earlier events; Grendel is named and his defeat is recounted (1266b-74a).

I take the introductory portion of *Beowulf* as a whole to extend through line 193, at which point the hero enters the narrative; the introduction of Grendel occupies lines 86-137, commencing immediately after the description of the newly-built hall, Heorot. The sequence of ideas in Grendel's introduction is:

A. An unnamed monster waits with difficulty in the darkness (86-87).

B. He hears the hall-joys of the Danes (88-100a).

C. This "an . . . feond on helle" [one . . . fiend from hell] has an evil lineage (l00b-14):
   1. His name is stated (102; compare 1255b-59).
   2. He dwells in the fens (103-5; compare 1260-61a),
   3. After God condemned him along with the race of Cain (106-7a; compare 1261b-63a),
   4. Whose killing of Abel God avenged (l07b-8; compare 1261b-63a).
   5. God exiled Cain (109-10; compare 1263b-65a).
   6. From him evil progeny awoke and strove against God (111-14a; compare 1265b-67a).
   7. God repaid them for that (114b; compare 1267b-76a).

D. Grendel attacks Heorot for the first time (115-25; compare 1267b-76a):
   1. He departs to visit the hall (115-17).
   2. He fmds the sleeping Danes and siezes thirty of them (118-23a).
   3. He departs to visit his home (123b-25).

E. The Danes lament this strife (l26-34a).

F. He attacks again the very next night (134b-37).

I have noted the parallels with the passage introducing Grendel's mother: naming, dwelling place, condemnation through lineage, strife, and retribution. The idea of God's repayment of Cain's evil progeny as a group (114b) and Grendel's first attack on Heorot (115-25) are conflated in the corresponding lines of the later passage (1266b-76a), where Grendel's last attack brings God's retribution.

The introduction of Grendel forms a somewhat more elaborate ring structure than that of his mother in that it contains a sort of double center or core, and in that its echoes consist of contrastive ideas:

A. Grendel waits before attacking (86-87); "þrage geþolode" [for a while waited] (87a), "in þystrum bad" [waited in darkness] (87b). Compare his impatience to continue his raids (134b-37); "Næs hit lengra fyrst. . ." [It was not a long time . . .] (134b).

B. The Danes celebrate with joy in the hall (88-100a); "dream . . . hludne" [joy . . . loud] (88b-89a). Compare their lamentation (126-34a); "wop up ahafen" [weeping raised up] (128b), "morgensweg" [morning-cry] (129a).

C. Grendel's lineage from Cain (100b-14).
D. Grendel's first attack (115-25). This itself forms a simple ring structure:
   D^{I}. Departure (115-17); "Gewat þa neosian . . . hean huses" [He departed then to visit. . . the tall building].
   D^{2}. Attack (118-23a).
   D^{I}. Departure (123b-25); "þanon eft gewat. . .wica neosan" [then left there . . . to visit his dwelling place].

Thus, the pattern might be represented as ABC[D^{I} D^{2} D^{1}]BA.

Obviously, the earlier introductory passage is longer and more elaborate than the later one, but given what we already know about Grendel, we should perhaps expect less information about his mother. Nonetheless, each passage by virtue of its ring structure forms a self-contained unit, and the later passage parallels the earlier one at what I have above identified as its center or core. The poet repeats in considerable detail Grendel's lineage from Cain (100b-14) when he brings the female monster into the narrative (1260-67a) and, as noted, Grendel's first attack on Heorot (115-25) is paralleled by the later summary of his final defeat (1267b-76a). We learn nothing new about Grendel or his lineage at the center of the later passage. Moreover, at the center of each passage, lineage and an event which took place in the past serve to introduce the character and to prepare for succeeding events which take place in the narrative present of the poem. Finally, we might notice that the sequence of lineage plus (relevant) past events serves an introductory

function elsewhere in the poem. For example, Beowulf introduces himself to Hrothgar (407b-9a):

> mæg ond magoðegn; Ic eom Higelaces
> ongunnen on geogoþe. hæbbe ic mærða fela

> [I am Hygelac's kinsman and retainer; 1 have accomplished many glorious deeds in my youth.]

Unferth is "Ecglafes bearn" [Ecglaf's son], whose pride in his own past "mærða" [glorious deeds] prompts him to challenge Beowulf (499-505). Wiglaf is similarly introduced by his lineage and, though he has not before joined his lord in battle, remembers past favor bestowed upon him by Beowulf; the history of his old sword in battle seems a substitute for the battle-history which he lacks (2602-27).

The two monsters' attacks upon Heorot occur in the present time of the narrative and likewise parallel one another in significant ways, although some of the similarities may be easy to overlook. It also should be stated in advance that we doubtless should expect a degree of similarity between the modes of attack of mother and son; an Anglo-Saxon audience would know that members of the same species ought not to behave in completely different ways, one, for example, hunting nocturnally, another diurnally. Still, we are concerned here with compositional, not behavioral, habits.

The passage describing Grendel's mother's attack upon Heorot immediately follows her introductory passage. The sequence of ideas in lines 1279-1306a is:

A. She comes to Heorot, where the Danes are sleeping (1279-80a).
B. When she enters, terror sweeps the hall, though less than would be caused by a male of her species (1280b-87).
C. The warriors scramble for their weapons (1288-91).
D. She wishes to flee when her presence is discovered (1292-93).
E. She seizes a single warrior who is very dear to Hrothgar (1294-99a).
F. Beowulf is not there (1299b-1301).
G. There is an uproar in Heorot; she takes her son's *folme* ("hand"); care is renewed (1302-4a).
H. The exchange is not a good one when the lives of friends are traded (a maxim-like conclusion—1304b-6a).

This second attack passage exhibits a loose sort of ring structure, more echoic than visually schematic, consisting of reminiscences of and contrasts between words and ideas.

A. The monster arrives at Heorot, where the Danes are sleeping (1279-82a); "Heorote" (1279a), "geond þæt sæld swæfun" [slept throughout the hall] (1280a), "edhwyrft eorlum" [a change for the warriors] (1281a), "inne fealh" [came within] (1281b). Contrast the commotion that accompanies her departure (1302-6a); "Hream" [noise] (1302a), "Heorote" (1302a), "under heolfre" [under darkness] (1302b), "cearu wæs geniwod" [care was renewed] (1303b), "in wicun" [in the dwelling place] (1304a), "gewrixle" [exchange] (1304b).

B. The terror was less, just as a woman's strength in battle is less than that of "wæpnedmen" [armed men] (1282b-87). The evocation of a battle-scene in these lines finds an echo in the praise of the monster's victim, Æschere (1296-99a), as a companion and "rice randwiga" [powerful warrior].

C. At the core of the passage is the abortive attempt of the Danes to defend themselves and the monster's hasty retreat with her prey (1288-95).

The pattern suggested by this analysis would thus be rendered visually as ABCBA.

Grendel's final attack on Heorot, lines 702b-836, is separated from the passage in which the poet introduces him by the remainder of the general introduction, summarizing the continual suffering he inflicted for twelve years (138-93), and by the beginning of the narrative proper, Beowulf's journey, arrival, and reception (194-702a). This passage presents the central action of the first part of the narrative; it is, of course, more detailed and elaborate than the subsequent attack-passage, and its artistry has been widely admired. For purposes of comparison with the later passage, I group the ideas in Grendel's attack as follows:

A. Grendel approaches and enters Heorot, where the (Geatish) warriors are sleeping (except for Beowulf) (702b-24a).

B. In the hall, Grendel rejoices in his prospective feast and, as Beowulf watches, eats a warrior (724b-45a).

C. The fight begins: Beowulf seizes Grendel who, fearful, wishes to flee (745b-66).

D. The noise coming from Heorot causes terror among the Danes. The hall suffers severe damage (767-94a).

E. The Geats draw their weapons, but these are useless against the monster (794b-805a).

F. Beowulf tears off Grendel's arm, Grendel flees, and the victory is complete (805b-33a).

G. Grendel's arm remains in the hall as a token of his defeat (833b-36).

The ring structure of this passage has been discussed by John Niles, whose analysis I summarize briefly here:

> A. Preliminaries: Grendel approaches, rejoices (" þa his mod ahlog" [then his spirit exulted] [730b]), and then devours Hondscioh. Compare the aftermath: Grendel slinks back to the fens, Beowulf rejoices ("Nihtweorce gefeh" [rejoiced in the night's work] [827b]) and remains behind with Grendel's arm.
>
> B. Grendel wishes to flee ("fingras burston" [fingers burst] [760b], "wolde . . . fleon" [wished to flee] [755b] D. Compare Grendel forced to flee ("burston banlocan" [joints burst] [818a], "scolde . . . fleon" [had to flee] [819b-20a]).
>
> C. Uproar in the hall; Danes stricken with terror [767-70]. Compare the later uproar [782b-88a].
>
> D. Heorot itself seems in danger of falling (771-82a). Niles sees this as the "single kernel" about which the passage radiates.

Niles's analysis thus suggests a pattern, ABCDCBA, although he does not offer specific line divisions for most of the pattern's segments. He omits a few details from his discussion, but his analysis is generally convincing, especially so if one thinks of the pattern as being echoic rather than tightly geometric in character (1979:925-26; 1983:154).

I will now attempt to offer an account of Grendel's attack upon Heorot in which I have ignored or suppressed all of the elements that refer to or directly depend upon Beowulf. I acknowledge in advance the difficulty, and perhaps the absurdity, of the task of separating one of the two central actors from the scene in which he appears; my purpose in this curious endeavor is to highlight the narrative elements, words and ideas, which Grendel's attack shares with the later attack by his mother. The principal shared elements are:

> 1. A monster approaches and enters the hall, Heorot, where warriors are sleeping (702b-4, 710-17, 720-30a); "Com . . . scriðan" [came . . . striding] (702b-3a), "Sceotend swæfon" [warriors slept] (703b), "hornreced" [gabled house] (704a), "com . . . gongan" [came . . . moving] (710a-11a), "in sele þam hean" [in the high hall] (713b), "winreced" [wine-hall] (714b), "goldsele gumena" [gold-hall of men] (715a), "Hroþgares ham" [Hrothgar's home] (717), "Com þa to recede siðian" [came then journeying to the hall] (720), "Raþe . . . on fagne flor treddode" [quickly trod on the shining floor] (724b-25). Compare 1279-82a; "Com þa to

Heorote" [then she arrived at Heorot] (1279a), "Hring-Dene/geond þæt sæld swæfun" [the Danes slept throughout the hall] (1279b-80a), "sona wearþ/edhwyrft eorlum" [at once was a change for the warriors] (1280b-81a), "inne fealh" [came within] (1281b). In the later passage the female monster's intentions and state of mind go unmentioned, but they are explicitly stated in the lines of the introductory passage immediately preceding line 1279: ("gifre ond galgmod" [ravenous and gloomy] (1277a), "sunu deoð wrecan [to avenge her son's death] (1278b).

2. The monster seizes a warrior, 739-45a; "gefeng hraðe . . . rinc" [quickly seized . . . a warrior] (740a-41a). Compare 1294-99a; "hraðe . . . æþelinga anne hæfde/fæste befangen" [quickly . . . had firmly seized a nobleman] (1294-95a). The female kills ("abreat" [killed] [1298b]) but does not eat her victim while in the hall.

3. When challenged, the monster becomes fearful and wishes to flee to its home in the fens (753b-54a, 755-56a, 762-64a, 819b-21a); "on mode wearð/ forhte on ferhð" [was frightened in spirit] (753b-54a), "wæs . . . hinfus, wolde on heolster fleon" [was . . . eager to get away, wished to flee into the darkness] (755), "on weg þanon/fleon on fenhopu" [to flee from there to the fen-retreat] (763b-64a), "þonan . . . fleon under fenhleoðu" [to flee from there under the fen-slopes] (819a-20). Compare 1292-93, 1295b, 1302b; "wæs on ofste, wolde ut þanon" [she was in haste, wished to flee from there] (1292), "to fenne gang" [went to the fen] (1295b), "under heolfre" [under the darkness] (1302b).

4. There is a clamor in the hall; the warriors are terrified (767-69a, 770b, 782b-84a); "Dryhtsele dynede" [the hall resounded] (767a), "Denum . . . wearð. . .ealuscerwen" [terror came upon the Danes (767b-69a), "Reced hlynsode" [the hall resounded] (770b), "Sweg up astag" [noise rose up] (782a), "Norð-Denum stod/atelic egesa" [a horrible fear seized the Danes] (783b-84a). Compare 1282b-87, 1291b, 1302a; "se gryre " [the terror] (1282b), "se broga" [the horror] (1291b), "Hream wearð in Heorote" [there was an outcry in Heorot] (1302a). In the earlier passage, it appears that only the Danes, who are outside, are terror-stricken.

5. The warriors in the hall draw their weapons (794b-805a); "brægd . . . ealde lafe" [drew . . . old heirlooms] (794b-95b). Compare 1288-91, "wæs . . . heardecg togen/sweord" [the hard-edged sword was drawn] (1288-89a). The monster's invulnerability to weapons (798-805a) is unmentioned in the later passage, but the weapons drawn there are clearly just as ineffectual.

6. The mood of the Danes in the aftermath of the attack is described, 823b-24, 830-33a; "sele Hroðgares" [Hrothgar's hall] (826b), "ealle gebette,/ inwidsorge" [all cured of evil care] (830b-31a), "þreanydum . . . torn unlytel" [distress . . . great suffering] (832a-33a). Compare "cearu wæs geniwod,/ geworden in wicun" [care was renewed in the dwelling-places] (1303b-4a).

7. The fate of Grendel's arm is mentioned (833b-36); "hond alegde,/earm ond eaxle . . . under geapne hrof' [hand, arm and shoulder lay . . . under the steep roof] (834b-36b). Compare 1302b-3a; "under heolfre genam/cuðe folme" [she took the famous hand under darkness].

8. Closure is vaguely echoic (833b-36); "þæt wæs tacen sweotul. . ." [that was a clear sign]. Compare 1304b-6a; "Ne wæs ðæt gewrixle til" [that was not a good trade].

The second attack-passage contains a few details which are dissimilar to anything in the earlier passage. The poet's observation concerning the relatively lesser terror caused by Grendel's mother, together with the images of human battle (1282b-87), has no precise narrative equivalent in the Grendel passage, although as suggested above it corresponds to the praise of Æschere a bit later in the ring structure. The lines identifying the slain warrior (though not by name—1296-99a) have no equivalent in the earlier passage. The fact that Æschere had been a favorite of Hrothgar contributes to the king's renewed grief a bit later in the narrative. Finally, the maxim-like statement at the end of the passage (1304b-6a) just barely echoes the more concrete statement about Grendel's arm as a "tacen" (833b-36); it provides closure by generalizing upon the previous action, while at the same time recalling the earlier event in this "un-good exchange. "

The significant portions of the attack by Grendel which have no equivalents in the attack by his mother all have direct relevance to Beowulf himself as an active participant in the story. In the later passage we find no direct confrontation between a lone warrior-hero and the monster. Hence, there can be no momentous, prolonged struggle in the hall and no allusions to the monster's fearful screams or to the damage done to the hall. The earlier portion of the fight with Grendel, when Beowulf first seizes the monster (745b-94a), precedes the Geats' drawing their weapons (794b ff.); its only parallel in martial content and structural placement is the "lesser terror" passage and its reference to "wæpnedmen" [armed men] in battle (1282b-87), which likewise precedes the (Danes') drawing of weapons. After the Geats' abortive attempt to aid their leader, Beowulf concludes his fight by tearing off Grendel's arm (805b-23a); in the absence of Beowulf and his Geats the Danes similarly draw their weapons, but once again experience defeat, not victory, as Grendel's mother departs unhindered with her prey (1292 ff.). It is, I think, worth noticing that the lines that describe Beowulf's victory themselves form a brief ring or envelope: (A) Grendel's life ("aldorgedal") on this day ("dæge") should become wretched, and his spirit journey ("feor siðian") into the power of fiends (805b-8); (B) he cannot break free, his arm tears away, and Beowulf wins "guðhreð" [glory in battle] (809-19a); (A) Grendel should flee ("fleon") under fen-cliffs, seek ("secean") a joyless place, knowing his life ("aldres") had come to its end, his portion of days ("dogera dægrim" [819b-23a]). This self-contained structural unit simply drops out of the later passage, where the outcome of the monster's attack is quite different.

Each of the two attack-passages is a self-contained structural unit, a ring or echoic pattern of parallel or contrastive words and ideas in chiastic form. The *Beowulf* poet also employs a pattern of narrative elements which he includes in largely the same order as he composes each scene in which a monster invades Heorot. Very possibly the overall configuration of narrative elements in the earlier attack-passage remained in his mind and generated the later passage. However, if we consider the two passages without regard for chronological priority, we can view them as instances of a single formulaic type-scene, "A Monster Invades a Hall," perhaps. I am somewhat reluctant to label the two passages as "type-scene," though, since I have found no comparable scenes elsewhere in Old English verse. If what we have here is a type-scene, it would appear to be one invented by the poet to express the far-from-commonplace events of his story. The more important point here is that, like other poets whose traditions are rooted in oral composition, the *Beowulf* poet at least at times thinks in narrative patterns. As our earlier examination of the passages in which he introduces his monsters shows, he is entirely capable of repeating such patterns when the narrative situation calls for them.

In the second attack-passage, the location of the statement about Beowulf's absence suggests that it occupies a particular place in a particular narrative pattern, that its function is not simply informative but compositional as well. The sequence within the description of Grendel's attack is (1) the monster seizes (and eats) a victim (739-45a); (2) the hero reacts and the fight begins (745b-66); (3) a great commotion ensues—"Dryhtsele dynede" [the hall resounded] (767 ff.). Correspondingly, in the later attack on Heorot, (1) the monster seizes (and kills) a victim (1294-99a); (2) the hero fails to react (because he is not there) (1299b-1301); (3) a great commotion ensues—"Hream wearð in Heorote" [there was an outcry in Heorot] (l302a). Also, in a less precisely schematic manner, we can compare the victory in the earlier passage with the defeat in the later one. Immediately after Beowulf's retainers draw their ineffectual weapons we have the simple ring structure in which Beowulf tears off Grendel's arm and the monster retreats to the fens (805b-23a). "Denum eallum wearð/æfter þam wælræse willa gelumpen" [after the bloody conflict the wish of all the Danes had come to pass] (823b-24a). Immediately after the Danes draw their ineffectual weapons, Grendel's mother escapes to the fens with her victim because Beowulf is not there (1292-1301). "Cearu wæs geniwod, /geworden in wicun" [care was renewed in the dwelling-place] (1303b-4a).

In a strictly narrative sense, lines 1299b-1301 explain the success of Grendel's avenger; we read an implicit "because" into the caesura of line 1299. In a compositional, technical sense, I would suggest, lines 1299b-1301 actually replace the hero and his deeds within the pattern of elements

underlying both attack-passages. Put another way, Beowulf as an element in the composition of the later attack-passage is present, even though as an actor he is absent. The lines under consideration effectively subsume all of the description of Beowulf's actions and their effects in the earlier passage, thus filling a felt need on the part of the poet to provide an essential component—the hero—in the overall pattern of a comparable passage. These lines are not just an incidental excuse or explanation for the avenger's success, nor are they simply the poet's way of setting up the next movement of the narrative, the fight under Grendel's mere. They are a necessary part of a pattern of elements in the compositional unit in which they appear, the attack on the hall. The poet, consciously or unconsciously, wanted and needed these lines at the point where they now appear and, if he put his poem through a process of revision, he apparently saw no reason to move them.

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Song, Ritual, and Commemoration in Early Greek Poetry and Tragedy

Charles Segal

The relation between tragedy and song has a famous (to some, infamous) tradition in the study of Greek tragedy, for it is arguable that the modern phase of interpreting Greek tragedy opens with Nietzsche's attempt to relate its origins to the power of music in his *Birth of Tragedy,* with its celebrated antinomy between the Dionysian chorus and the Apollonian principle of individuation. I am not going to follow Nietzsche's approach (although like almost every modern student of tragedy I am indebted to it). Rather I am concerned with song as an aspect of tragedy's historical continuity with earlier literary forms, especially epic poetry and the song-culture of early Greece (to use John Herington's convenient term) from which the epic developed (Herington 1985).

We are accustomed to look at tragedy retrospectively, as a fully developed literary form and indeed as the jewel among the literary achievements that crown the culture of ancient Greece. Our familiarity with centuries of tragic drama and our use of the term "tragedy" and "the tragic" as categories that extend beyond the literary to the realm of moral philosophy make us forget how unique is the Greek's blending of the song element in their poetic tradition with that powerful, gripping staged narrative of human suffering and human questioning to which we give the name "tragic." If we view tragedy in prospect rather than retrospect, that is, as a creation that still lay ahead of the largely oral culture of archaic Greece, we become more aware of its indebtedness to some of the forms for commemorating noble deeds and lamenting suffering that the earlier poetry had developed. At the same time, we need to bear firmly in mind that tragedy is also a radically new development and that whatever it uses it also transforms.

For the predominantly oral culture of archaic Greece the commemoration of noble deeds takes the form of song, which for this period is coterminous with poetry. Theognis and Ibycus in the sixth

century make the same claims as Homer in the eighth, namely to preserve their chosen subjects into eternity with "glory imperishable."[1] Sappho too holds out such a promise (frag. 147 Lobel-Page): "I say that someone will remember us in the future;" but she can also threaten the reverse in this fragment of a curse-like poem (frag. 55 L-P):

> When you die, you will lie there, nor will there be any memory *(mnamosyna)* of you or any longing for you in after-time. For you will have no share in the roses of Pieria; but invisible *(aphanês)* in the house of Hades you will go flittering about among the dim corpses.[2]

For a Greek of the archaic age, to die without leaving a trace is the worst of fates. To pass unmarked into Hades, leaving no memory behind, is to have one's life declared void of meaning, without further resonance for those among whom one has lived. Memory not only preserves a record of one's actions; it also enables one to participate posthumously in the ongoing life of the community, to retain a place in its rituals, and to share a continuing existence on the lips of men. How much better to have died at Troy and received a tomb and glory than to perish "unseen"or "unsung" at sea *(aïstos, akleês),* Telemachus laments over his father in the first book of the *Odyssey,* and the point is made several times later.[3] The fearful thing is to vanish away, to become "invisible" *(aphanês,* in the Sappho fragment above), "unseen" *(aïstos),* or "unheard" in song *(akleês).* It is like being snatched up by a storm-cloud to some unknown place, far from the world of men.[4]

At the lower end of the social scale, even the humble, foolish sailor, Elpenor, lost not in action but by a groggy misstep on the ladder after too much wine, begs Odysseus to "remember him" *(Od.* 11.72, *mnêsasthai emeio)* and requests a "marker" or *sêma* to commemorate his end, an oar set over his grave *(Od.* 11.75ff.). This is the oar, he says, "with which I rowed with my companions when I was alive" (11.78). "Among my companions": the marker asserts the continuing validity of his bond with his community, those among whom his life had its work and its purpose. In a very different stratum of society, although in an analogous way, Pindar's victory odes renew the bond between the vigorous young winner in athletic contests and the dead father, uncle, or grandfather, often

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[1] E.g., Theognis 237-52; Ibycus, frag. 282 Page, espec. 47f. In general, see Gentili 1984: 172.

[2] For the importance of memory in Sappho, see Burnett 1983:277ff., espec. 299ff. Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

[3] *Od.* 1.234-40; cf. 14.369-71, 24.30-34.

[4] *Od.* 1.240f., 14.370f.; also 4.727f., 20.63ff. See Segal 1983:42.

addressed by name and thus made to share in the great deed and the promise of ever-fresh memory that it brings in its train. The poet's song carries a living, vital voice to the sunless halls of death. It thereby re-establishes communication between the dead and the living and thus reintegrates the deceased kinsman into the life he knew in his clan and his city.[5]

For Odysseus the greatest danger is not death but the obliteration of his humanness and with it the memory that defines him in his mortal identity. The first of the trials beyond the familiar pale of the mortal world is the amnesiac drug of the Lotos-Eaters, which would make his men "forget their return" (*Od*. 4.97), that is, leave them trapped in the never-never land outside of mortal existence. Odysseus himself is firmly in control here; but he faces a deeper threat on Calypso's island, where his "sweet life ebbs away" (5.152f.). On Circe's island the Lotos adventure is reversed, and his men have to remind him of the homeland that he has forgotten after a year's dalliance with the fascinating enchantress. She has more than one way to deprive men of their humanity.

The danger embodied in the Sirens, whom Odysseus encounters soon after Hades and Circe, is directed entirely at the realm of memory. They embody a kind of anti-memory, a paradoxical commemoration detached from a human community. Their sweet, seductive song about Troy (12.184-91) would leave the hero in a flowery meadow, a place of both vaguely erotic and funereal oblivion, where the rocks nearby are putrid with the rotting bones and skins of nameless men (12.45f.).[6] This decay and putrefaction are the complete antithesis of the "non-perishable glory" *(kleos aphthiton)* conferred by song, just as the remoteness of their voice from any human society is the negation of the context where life-giving memory has a place. The spell of their singing goes out over the remote waste of waters to lure the passing mariner. Odysseus hears it alone, the only one on the ship with unblocked ears. Nothing could be further from the bard in the human world. The Homeric singer is generally surrounded by a crowd of eager listeners and by the life of the palace. His place is at its feasts and dances (so Demodocus among the Phaeacians in *Odyssey* 8) or in its work-world (so the singer at the harvesting scene on the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18.567-72).[7]

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[5] For example, *Od* 8.77-84 and 14.20-24; *Pyth*. 5.94-103; cf. also *Nem*. 8.44-48. See in general Segal 1985.

[6] On the Sirens, see Segal 1983:38-43; Pucci 1979 and 1987:209-13; Vernant 1981:144-46.

[7] The performer of the "Linus-song" in this scene, to be sure, is a boy *(pais),* not a professional bard *(aoidos),* as is appropriate to the rustic setting; but the scene still indicates the strongly social context of song. On the other hand, the dance at the palace of Cnossus

In a culture where written records, where they exist at all, are sparse and fragile, it is largely the task of the poet to preserve the memory of earlier generations and keep alive among men the name of those who would otherwise be "invisible" in Hades. Whereas the dead are unseen and unheard, the poet brings the radiant light and the clear "hearing" of fame, *kleos*. Both the visual and acoustic metaphors are recurrent attributes of poetry and among its most important means of triumphing over the dulled, sensorily deprived afterlife in Hades.[8]

In an oral society like that of archaic Greece, the bard is the primary repository of the society's records of its past, the storehouse of the paradigms by which it asserts its values and regulates the behavior of its members.[9] The verse narrative or encomium is a monument, analogous in function and effect to the dedicatory statue or bronze tablet.[10] A sophisticated poet like Simonides can question the monumentalizing permanence even of stone in the face of time's irresistible corrosion (frag. 581 Page),[11] but he nevertheless works squarely within the commemorative tradition. Thus when he praises the fallen at Thermopylae, whose tomb "neither rust nor all-subduing time will bedim" and whose fame is eternal *(aenaon te kleos,* frag. 531 Page), he is still performing the ancient bardic function of establishing an eternal monument of fame in song.

The analogy between monuments of stone or metal and monuments of song is not uncommon in late archaic poetry but is at best only vaguely implicit in Homer. There is not, I believe, a fully developed metaphor for poetry as a temple, statue, or other monumental art-work before Simonides. This is perhaps because poets like Pindar and Simonides already have a self-consciousness of their poems as texts, tangible artifacts, shipped over the sea like merchandise, as Pindar says, crafted with an artistry that is palpable, like the diadem of coral and ivory to which he compares his poetry in *Nemean* 7. This is an artistry that demands a recognition equivalent to sight and touch. These poets, however conscious

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has no bard; instead two tumblers or acrobats "lead off the singing" (18.590-606). Are the Phaeacians, who summon the bard Demodocus to accompany their dancing of young men, more refined *(Od.* 8.250-65)?

[8] In *Od.* 11.36ff. the gathering shades cannot speak unless Odysseus permits them to drink of the blood of the freshly slaughtered animals. In 24.4ff. the newly slain suitors squeak like bats in the hollow of a deep cave.

[9] See., e.g., Havelock 1963:*passim,* espec. ch. 4 and 1982:122ff.

[10] On the poem as monument, see Detienne 1973:23; Gentili 1984:214ff.; Svenbro 1976:154f., 186-93; Hurwit 1985:345, 353f. See also Pindar, *Nem.* 5.lff., and Segal 1974. For a useful discussion of this conception of poetry in Pindar, see Auger 1987:espec. 40ff.

[11] On this fragment, see Gentili 1984:199; also Svenbro 1976:186-88.

of the performative aspect of their work and their direct, personal relation with their audience and their patron, have nevertheless already begun to cross the divide towards a poetics of textuality—that is, a poetics of an art that depends to some degree on writing and therefore also exists independently of recitation or of its immediate performative situation (see Segal 1986:155ff.)

Because he is immersed in the oral tradition, where "fame," *kleos,* is what men "hear," Homer does not draw explicit analogies (positive or negative) between the monumentalizing of poetry and the tangible monument of stone or bronze. In the few places where Homer implies an association between the intangible "hearing" of the song and the fame that it creates, the song's monumentality is associated directly with its ritual expression (the funeral monument and the communal memory), rather than with a work of art. That is to say, the commemorative function of the poet is a direct expression of the society's need to exercise and objectify its power of communal memory by remembering its heroes, as the noblest embodiments of its values. Only later does the poet produce the tangible solidity of a "monument" of song, like Pindar's treasury in *Pythian* 6 or a beautiful art-work (such as Horace's purely personal *exegi monumentum aere perennius,* to take a later instance of the poet's claim to monumentality). In Homer the monument belongs not to the poet or his song *per se,* but to the warrior.

Hector's fame, for example, the *kleos* or "hearing" among men that will live after him, is closely bound up with the visible "sign" or *sêma* of the conspicuous tomb-marker that is the reminder of a great victory *(Iliad* 7.86-91). He promises that if he is the winner in the duel to which he challenges the Greeks he will return the loser's body and they "will heap up a marker on the broad Hellespont; and some one of men of later time will say as he sails in a many-oared ship over the wine-dark sea, 'This is the marker of a man who died long since, whom brilliant Hector once killed, excellent in battle though he was.' So will some one say, and my glory will never perish."

The Homeric notion of commemoration and fame, however, is more complex than Hector's statement implies. It belongs to the larger frame of the human condition as Homer presents it and, like all things human in the epic's vision, is defined by the stark break between immortality and death. Hector himself, misled as often by confidence and optimism, misjudges the division. Indeed, it is an essential part of his tragedy that the barrier of his mortality always comes between himself and the eternal things to which he aspires. Thus in contrast to the far-seen tomb of his idealizing vision of battle and victory at the beginning of Book 7 stands the harsh reality of the wounded bodies jumbled together on the battlefield at the end. Here one can "only with difficulty distinguish each man." Both sides "wash off the

bloody gore with water" and "pour forth warm tears" as "they lift (the dead) on the wagons" (7.424-26).

Looking to the future, Hector speaks of armor, fire, the sea, and his own "imperishable glory" as "radiant Hector" (7.78-91). Death in the here-and-now, however, is a matter not of bronze or stone but of the perishable fluids that mark the vulnerability and the grief of mortality: blood and warm tears. Indeed it is the life-fluid itself, the blood splattering the dead on the earth, that negates the individuality of conspicuous fame and makes it hard to tell one warrior's body from another's. Simultaneously, the disfiguring blood momentarily effaces the difference between Greeks and Trojans, for both sides perform exactly the same actions in exactly the same words (7.427-32). Is it a measure of Hector's tragic failure that, though the Trojans weep over him at the end of the poem, nothing is said of his fame? When Andromache speaks of memory in the penultimate scene of the poem, it is in a purely personal, private sense; and her verb for "remember" is in the optative and the negative. "You did not leave me some close-set saying," she says to Hector's body, "that I might remember days and nights as I pour forth my tears" (24.744f.). Similarly, the tomb or monument that the Trojans construct for Hector—the last action in the *Iliad*—is done hastily and fearfully, with scouts watching out for a Greek attack—a far cry from the glory with which Hector had endowed the *sêma* in Book 7.[12]

Homeric commemoration never leaves the ground of mortality by escaping into images of metallic permanence or impersonal architectural solidity. Fame remains an attribute of its human bearer, and as such is always in touch with the preciousness and the fragility of mortal life. The contrast between Hector's monumentalizing *sêma* and the blood and tears within Book 7, for instance, becomes sharper and more ominous as Hector enters the danger zone where triumph changes to doom. Here the contrasts of Book 7 ramify into those between the "immortal armor of Peleus' son Achilles" that Hector dons in his moment of greatest success *(ambrota teuchea,* 17.194) and the "bloody armor" that Achilles strips from his body after he has killed him *(teuchea haimatoenta,* 22.368f.). It is a change from the special distinction of the victor to the common mortal fate, the vulnerability of flesh and blood, as that is expressed, for example, in the "bloody gore" *(broton haimatoenta)* washed off the fallen soldiers in one of the poem's common formulaic descriptions of burial. "Immortal" for Achilles, the armor for Hector is covered with the blood that marks the

[12] Among these tragic reversals that develop from this passage may be added the contrast with the terms on which Hector fights his last duel in Book 22. When he confronts Achilles for the last time he proposes not fame or a monument, but the non-violation of the corpse and the return of the body (22.256-59)—the zero-grade, one could say, of the terms of Book 7; and of course Achilles brutally refuses.

mortal condition *(broton haimatoenta)*. Between the two extremes defined by the "immortal armor" of Achilles and the "bloody armor" of Hector is the "immortal raiment," *ambrota heimata* (16.670 = 680), in which Apollo wraps the body of Sarpedon after anointing it with "ambrosia" (playing on *ambrosia . . . ambrota)*. This last phrase is also metrically equivalent to Achilles' "immortal armor," *ambrota teuchea*.

These four linguistically and metrically related formulas—"immortal armor," "immortal raiment," "bloody armor," and "bloody gore"—mark out a hierarchy of positions for the Homeric warrior in relation to death. "Immortal armor" is a sign of immortality in this life for Achilles, son of a goddess. Sarpedon's "immortal raiment" is the sign of immortality in the funeral rite and monument after death (cf. 16.675) that Zeus grants to the son whom he pities but cannot save. "Bloody armor" belongs to Hector's full participation in mortality as a warrior whose monument (*sêma*) remains remote or precarious.[13] "Bloody gore" characterizes the deadly battle and its aftermath, the basic ablutions that await the ordinary warrior in his mortal condition.

The *Odyssey* is more self-conscious than the *Iliad* about the commemorative function of poetry, as it is about all social contexts of song generally. The second *Nekyia* in particular reflects on the way in which the epic singer views himself as continuing and magnifying the memory of great deeds and great figures from the heroic past. Homer looks ahead to the future life of praise or blame that the two women will have. For Penelope, who "remembered well her wedded husband Odysseus, . . . the fame of her excellence will never perish, and the immortals will fashion lovely song for her among those who go on the earth" (24.195-98). But for Clytaemnestra, who "devised evil deeds, killing her wedded lord, there will be hateful song among men, and she has brought harsh repute to women, even to one who is of good works (24.199-202).[14] Whereas Penelope gains the *kleos* that, like Hector's in *Iliad* 7, "will not perish" (τῷ οἱ κλέος οὔ ποτ᾽ ὀλεῖται, 24.196; cf. *Il.* 7.91), Clytaemnestra receives only *aoidê* and *phêmis,* both qualified negatively. The heroizing term *kleos* is reserved only for Penelope. The episode contains both the poetry of praise and the poetry of blame, inseparable sides of a single message. Later Pindar will separate out the two strands self-consciously to

[13] This pattern of formulas has further ramifications and ironies in the story of Hector's doom in the closing books. Thus Hector taunts the dying Patroclus in 16.840f. that Achilles told him not to return to the ships without having pierced Hector's *haimatoenta chitona* ("bloody tunic"). The formula is grimly recalled in Athena's deception of Hector in 22.245f. Disguised as Deiphobus, she urges him to stand and fight Achilles: "Let us see if Achilles will kill us and carry our bloody armor *(enara brotoenta)* back to the ships."

[14] For the distribution of praise or blame as one of the social functions of archaic poetry, see Gentili 1984:141ff.; Svenbro 1976:149ff.; Nagy 1976 and 1979:222ff.

distinguish his own art, and identify the one with Homer and the other with Archilochus.

Agamemnon, the major speaker in this episode, looks back to the heroic past of which he has been a part. His mood is an idealizing, somewhat self-pitying nostalgia characteristic of his role in the poem but also well suited to the tone of self-reflective distance on epic heroization in general. He replies to Achilles' account of his "death most pitiable" (24.34) with a description of Achilles' own glorious burial. Achilles' funeral marks the pinnacle of heroic glory, and it takes the form of song from the gods themselves. The nine Muses sing the dirge at his funeral, in responsive harmony with the keening of his mother, Thetis (24.58-65):

> Around you the daughters of the old man of the sea took their places, lamenting pitiably, and they were clothed in raiment immortal. And all the nine Muses lamented over you, responding in lovely voice. Then you would not have seen anyone of the Argives without tears: so stirring a song rose from the clear-singing Muse. For seventeen nights and days we lamented over you, immortal gods and mortal men together; and on the eighteenth day we gave you over to the fire . . . .

One might compare the grandiosity of such a mourning-scene with the pictorial monumentalizing of the lament itself in the great Dipylon amphora of the mid-eighth century. What Homer achieves by the presence of the supernatural, the Dipylon Master achieves by the vast scale and complex design of his vase.[15] This passage also indicates how a bard composing in a long-established tradition can imply his self-consciousness of the memorializing function of epic song.

The implications of the Muses' presence become clearer if we contrast the lament over Hector by the women of Troy at the end of the *Iliad* (24.720-24):

> And when they brought him to the glorious halls, they set him in the well-bored bed, and they stationed singers beside him as leaders of the dirges, and they lamented him in grieving song, and over him the women groaned. Among these Andromache of the white arms began the lamentation, holding between her hands the head of Hector, slayer of men.

The two forms of lamentation characterize the two heroes: for Achilles, immortal song; for Hector, the anguish of the mortal women in his house. What for Hector is a possibly realistic description of a mourning ritual has for Achilles been transposed to the register of myth and mysterious divine intervention.

The *Odyssey* does not say that the Muses themselves wept; but their effect on the audience, both mortal and divine, is total emotional

[15] For a valuable analysis of the Dipylon amphora (Athens, National Museum 804) in relation to the Homeric style, see Hurwit 1985:93ff.

participation: "You would not have seen anyone of the Argives without tears: so stirring a song rose from the clear-singing Muse" (24.61-64). Here mortals and immortals join in the weeping. In the epic world human grief can even involve the gods emotionally; in tragedy the gods are less pitying, more distant and self-contained, as we see in the separation between mortal and immortal grief near the end of Euripides' *Hippolytus,* where the goddess Artemis states the divine law (*themis*) that she may not be "defiled" by the gasping and failing breath that herald death (*thanasimois ekpnoais,* 1437; cf. *Alcestis* 22f.).

Homer's Agamemnon goes on to describe the other, more tangible forms of monumentalization: a conspicuous tomb, overlooking the Hellespont, like the one that Hector envisages for his slain enemy, and funeral games, like those for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23. But the most striking "monument" is the song itself. It embodies divinity present among men, the extraordinary privilege of the Muses' presence in the mortal world. This is accorded only to Achilles. It is virtually a guarantee that the memory of the hero will survive in the songs that are made about him after his death, for the goddesses of both song and memory have already irradiated his life with their lyrical intensity and marked his death as a sorrow significant even to the immortals.

This passage impressed Pindar, nearly two and a half centuries later, as the ultimate in poetic commemoration. Echoing *Odyssey* 24 in *Isthmian* 8, he describes "how even at his death songs did not abandon Achilles, but at his pyre and tomb the Heliconian maidens stood, and they poured forth the lament full of glory. For the immortal gods decreed to give over to hymns of the goddesses a man of noble achievement, perished though he had" (*Isth.* 8.63-66). Pindar shifts the emphasis slightly from the anthropomorphic figures of the divinities of song to the memorializing power of song itself: "Him not even in death did *songs* abandon," (τὸν μὲν οὐδέ θανόντ᾽ ἀοιδαί τι λίπον (62). Songs, *aoidai,* not Muses, are the subject of the verb *lipon* ("abandoned"). The immediately following strophe makes it clear that the Muses' song for Achilles is a mythical paradigm for Pindar's own commemoration of the present victory: the poet's "chariot of the Muses rushes on to sing a memorial for the boxer, Nicocles" (ἔσσυταί τε / Μοισαῖον ἅρμα Νικοκλέος / μνᾶμα πυγμάχου κελαδῆσαι, 67-69). To the same end, taking his cue from his fellow-Boeotian, Hesiod, he redefines the geographically unspecific "nine Muses" in Homer as the local "Heliconian maidens." Such is the reward that song can confer on the *esthlos aner* (*Isth.* 8.66), a man who fulfills the highest aspirations of the society, as warrior and as athlete.

For Pindar song is more than just words sung to honor a great hero or a successful athlete. Song itself is a mode of energy, a liquid flow of divine power into human life. Hence it can itself serve as a metaphor for

achieving supreme happiness. In *Pythian* 3 the highest blessings of happiness have bestowed on the pre-Iliadic heroes Cadmus and Peleus. These consist in hearing the "gold-veiled Muses sing on the mountain and in seven-gated Thebes," for these goddesses came to Peleus' wedding with Thetis on Mt. Pelion and to Cadmus' wedding with Harmonia at Thebes *(Pyth.* 3.88-95). As in the case of Achilles too, the presence of the Muses and the privilege of hearing their song accompany a union of mortal man with divinity.

In a contrasting but complementary area, song is also the expressive mode for the vibrancy of the intensest grief. In the tragic poets weeping is itself a kind of song, an expressive discharge of emotional energy that focuses feeling. The tragedians are fond of using the lament of the nightingale as a motif for conveying this song-like intensity of emotion. But the nightingale is more than just a trite figure for grief. Its very voice is a distillation of unending lamentation, simultaneously songful and tearful. Such is the sorrowing chorus' cry in Euripides' *Helen:* "You, I call upon, bird most songful, tuneful nightingale, bird of tears" (σέ τάν ἀοιδοτάταν ὄρνιθα μελῳδὸν / ἀήδονα δακρυόεσσαν, *Helen* 1109f.). In this way the poet gives nature itself a voice of lamentation whose almost mechanical regularity and constancy correspond to the singer/actor's immersion in a lament that will never end.[16]

In Homer, Penelope's ever-renewed abundance of restlessness and grief finds an equivalent in the ever-moving nightingale in its dense foliage, abundant in its flow of songful lamentation (*Odyssey* 19.513-25): the queen has "dense, sharp cares close around her heart," just as the nightingale "sitting in the dense leaves of trees. . . pours forth her much-sounding cry" (516, 520f.: πυκιναὶ δέ μοι ἀμθ' ἀδινόν κῆρ. . . ; δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκινοῖσιν, / ἥ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν)[17] The assonance of *che-ei* and *poly-êchea* not only emphasizes the fullness of tearful lamentation but also suggests the equivalence between pouring *(che-ei)* forth liquid tears and pouring forth the voice in the cry or sound *(-êchea)* of grief. Homer, however, does not go quite so far as the tragedians in making song a figure for grief. The nightingale to which Penelope is compared in *Odyssey* 19, to be sure, "laments its child, Itylus" (522), but "the much-sounding voice" that it "pours forth" has an acoustic distinctness of its own: it is definitely a "voice" and a "lament," not a "song" (πολυηχέα φωνήν, ὀλοφυρομένη, 521f.). The language here indicates the oral poet's greater sensitivity to the vocality of lament, to its physical reality as sound, "a much-sounding voice." A later poet like Aeschylus, who vividly recreates the shrill sound

[16] Cf. Sophocles, *Electra* 145-52 and *Antigone* 824-33.

[17] On this passage, and the repetitions, see Cook 1984:49f.

of the voice and the thud of breast-beating in ritual lamentation, particularly in the great *kommos* of the *Choephoroe* (306-478), allows the ritual chanting to slip into metaphor. So, for example, the chorus prays that "in place of the dirges at the tomb a paean may *bring back* the beloved (Orestes) with new force" (342-45).[18]

In epic, song and its divinity, the Muse, belong to a realm apart. She is protected from the pain and destruction of her songs by the vast temporal perspective of her eternal fame. As Homer implies in his invocation of the Muse in the Catalogue of Ships, she belongs to an order of being different from that of men; we mortals only know by hearing, but the Muse has actually been there (πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα, *Il.* 2.485). As goddesses, they are free from the mortal limits of time and space. They know past, present, and future all at once *(Iliad* 2.484-87). Thus Helen in *Iliad* 6 finds it a comfort of some sort to think that her suffering will be a subject of song, much as Hector draws comfort from the "imperishable fame" embodied in the far-seen tomb in Book 7. Even Achilles, in the clarity of recognizing his fast-approaching death and the consequences of his wrath, can find solace in telling Agamemnon that "the Achaeans will long remember our strife, yours and mine" (19.63f.). Tragedy, with its far greater presentational immediacy of suffering, calls this kind of comfort into question. The potential meaninglessness of suffering itself becomes a central issue in the tragic situation, in a way that it is not in epic.

Greek culture, like many other societies, recognizes the therapeutic value of expressing sorrow openly in lamentation, whether in the family or in the larger community, and knows of the benefits of solidarity in such rituals.[19] In our society, despite the publicity given to concerts of popular singers, song remains marginal to the "serious" issues of life, at least for most adults. It is pure entertainment, and it is largely restricted to a well-defined age group. It literally makes news when medical authorities report the beneficial influence of rock music on psychotic adolescents; and of course this is observed in the privacy of the psychiatrist's office.[20]

Tragedy draws heavily on the traditional view of song in Greek culture as a quasi-tangible power, something that can cast a spell, place a curse, heal a sickness, arouse or quiet powerful emotions. Greek *aoidê,* "song," like Latin *carmen,* can carry the connotation of magical spell,

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[18] For the motif of sound in this passage, see Scott 1984:13f.

[19] See Gentili 1984:ch. 3, espec. 44ff.; Havelock 1963:154ff. Plato, of course, saw in this emotional release effected by poetry a primary reason for banning it from his ideal state.

[20] Observations on this musical treatment, at the Horsham Clinic, Ambler, Pennsylvania, were reported in the Associated Press in the summer of 1986 (*Valley News,* Connecticut River Valley, July 21,1986, pp. 17 and 19).

especially in the compound form, *epaoidê,* "incantation."[21] But tragedy goes farther than Homeric epic in stylizing songful lament and transforming it into the aesthetic frame of the work itself, the song and rhythms of the performance. It also intensifies the emotional responses to the events by calling attention to the motif of song itself and by making the song pervade even the iambic portions of the play through images and metaphors. Its choruses perform song in the orchestra, while its complex verbal structures (like the image-patterns of Aeschylus) make song an active element in the story, either directly or figuratively. Both performed and described, song in tragedy occupies a place somewhere between metaphor and ritual enactment.[22]

In Aeschylus' *Suppliants* the chorus of Egyptian maidens call down blessings on the Argive land that has received them; and among these is the prayer that no disaster "arms Ares, the one of no choruses, of no lyre, begetter of tears, nor arms violence within the city" *(Suppl.* 679-83, especially 681, *achoron akitharin dakruogonon Arê).* War is the enemy of song. The sounds within the city blessed with peace are those of the dance and the lyre. The sounds of the city at war are of tears and lamentation.[23] Stesichorus began his *Oresteia* with an invocation to his Muse to drive war away when he makes his songs. He asks his Muse to join him in "expelling wars" (πολέμους ἀπωσαμένα μετ' ἐμοῦ) as she sings of the "marriages of the gods and the banquets of men and festivities of the blessed ones" (frag. 12 D = 210 P). Such an invocation indirectly reminds the audience that in listening to this song they too, like the poet, are, at that very moment, enjoying the blessings of peace. In the case of tragedy, they are attending to the festive music and dance of the performance, not hearing the martial dissonances that Aeschylus, for example, evokes so vividly at the beginning of his *Seven Against Thebes* (cf. 83-108, 150-73). The martial sounds also have political overtones for the theatrical audience, for these are the citizen-soldiers and sailors who have faced and will face such crises when they fight in behalf of their city. Aristophanes makes Aeschylus boast that his *Seven Against Thebes,* a play "full of Ares," has filled the spectators with warlike valor *(Frogs* 1021f.).

The close association between the emotions and their musical expression applies to joy as well as grief. In Sophocles' *Trachinian Women,* for example, the chorus, at two moments of joy, not only holds

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[21] See, e.g., Pindar, *Pyth.* 3.51, 4.217; *Nem.* 4.1-5, 8.49. The notion of poetry as word-magic is perhaps most fully developed in Aeschylus; see Walsh 1984:63ff.

[22] This double character of song is especially clear, for instance, in the Great Kommos of the *Choephoroe,* cited above.

[23] For the contrast of festivity, especially in song and dance, and war, cf. *Il.* 3.393 and 15.508. See Schadewaldt 1966:63f.

out the promise of flute-song as an expression of their happiness, but in one case actually identifies their exultant mood with the song itself (205ff., 635ff.). In the first strophe of the ode on Heracles' long-awaited return, they cry out for song in the house to welcome back their lord. In the next strophe, however, they more closely identify their mood with the music, calling the flute "tyrant of my mind."[24] Conversely, Admetus, in his promise to his dying wife, would banish from his house all symposia "and the Muse who used to dwell in my halls." For, he goes on, addressing Alcestis, "You have taken the joy from my life" *(Alcestis* 343-47).

Song in tragedy not only expresses the emotions aroused by that action. It can sometimes constitute the action. The *Oresteia* carefully progresses not only from silence to juridical discourse but also from isolated, wild, and unintelligible lyrics (e.g., Cassandra's outcry at her first appearance) to the choral song that ends the play.[25] To bring the Furies into the civic framework is also to bring their utterance into the framework of the city's choral song, in this case transforming hunting cry or curse into communal lyric. Thus the resolution of the plot, with the incorporation of the Erinyes (now Eumenides) into the Athenian land, takes the form of a change from their opening grunts and shouts of pursuit *(labe labe labe labe phrazou, Eum.* 130; *iou iou popax,* 143) to their closing lyrics of celebration and blessing (996ff. and 1014ff.). There is a similar effect in the movement from the interior, metaphorical "singing" and "dancing" of fear "near the heart" when the Furies first appear to Orestes at the end of the *Choephoroe* (1024f.) to their choral songs of benison at the end of the trilogy.[26] The change renews the ritual function of song as an affirmation of communal health and solidarity, in contrast to the isolation of Orestes in incipient madness, pollution, and the solitary terror of his private vision of the Furies.

In the second stasimon of the *Trachiniae,* sung at the critical moment when Lichas exits bearing the poisoned cloak to Heracles, the flute is personified as the source of a happy sound that both returns to the house and spreads forth over the audience with its "not unfitting ringing of sound." In an untranslatable phrase, its music is "as of a lyre equal to the

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[24] "I will raise up and not drive away the flute, O tyrant of my mind," *Trach.* 216f.: ἀείρομαι οὐδ' ἀπώσομαι / τὸν αὐλόν, ὦ τύραννε τᾶς ἐμᾶς φρενός. Some understand the phrase to refer to Dionysus, but this is unlikely as the god is not named at all and is referred to only after the lines cited above.

[25] On Cassandra's cry, see Scott 1984:8ff.; also Scott 1969:344; Knox 1979:42ff.; Thalmann 1985:108ff., with recent bibliography.

[26] On this motif, see Scott 1984:19; Thalmann 1986:501ff.

divine Muse" *(theias antilyron mousas,* 642f.).[27] As he does often, Sophocles insists on the literal situation of festive music, the sign of joy in the house. But the litotes, "not unfitting," and the *anti*-compound to express equivalency with the divine music on Olympus are full of the most bitter ironies. The "shouting" of Heracles soon becomes the opposite of "lovely" *(kalliboas,* 640; cf. 787 and 790). And the "echoing" effect (another implication of *antilyron)* will be far more discordant than that of any Muse on Olympus.

In different way Sophocles' *Antigone* utilizes a movement toward more songful utterance as a device to show the reversals that Creon's controlling plans undergo. The play progresses from his pragmatic, sententious discourse to increasingly emotional, song-like cries. The birdlike cries of the captured Antigone set the stage for the conflict that will lead to the doom of both protagonists (423-25; cf. *Electra* 242f.). Crushed by the misfortunes in his house, Creon at the end has his first lyric utterances in the play (with the exception of his authoritarian anapaestic exchanges in 931f. and 935f.). Apart from a very few isolated iambic trimeters, his entire concluding dialogue with the chorus takes place in lyric meters (1261-1346). This formal change to song rhythms marks a whole new relation to the world around him and to his fellow men, one that accepts his own mortal vulnerability and with it a less authoritarian, less defensive division between himself and others.[28]

As such passages suggest, song in tragedy (like the rituals that song accompanies) is not simply a given event in the society represented but is drawn into the conflictual situation. Thus the motif of song as the release of grief often appears as part of deliberate paradox: it offers momentary relief to the mounting intensity, but it also expresses the destructive forces that dominate the tragic world.

A recurrent rhetorical figure in tragedy expresses one aspect of this paradoxical relation. This is the motif of negated song, "unmusic singing," "lyreless Muse," or "unchorused dance." By transforming the celebratory lyric of choral or symposiac music into the oxymoronic form of the "lyreless tune" or "unmusic Muse," the tragic poet marks his connection with the traditional, communal role of the poet in archaic society, but simultaneously also stakes out his unique, problematical place within that tradition. In the *Agamemnon,* for example, at the ominous moment of Clytaemnestra's symbolic victory over her husband, as he enters the palace walking on the purple tapestry, the chorus sings, "My heart within,

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[27] On the interpretation of the passage, see Easterling 1982:*ad loc*. See above, note 23.

[28] For the importance of Creon's change to lyrics and the "deepening of an emotional dimension," see DiBenedetto 1983:10-13.

self-taught, hymns a dirge of the Erinys without the lyre" (τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως ὑμνωδεῖ / θρῆνον Ἐρινύος αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωφεν, 990f.),[29] *Autodidaktos,* "self-taught," here implies the suffering mortals' isolation and enclosure within grief and anxiety for which no divine relief is envisaged. It is interesting to contrast the Homeric bard's description of himself as *autodidaktos* in *Odyssey* 22.347f. The term in Homer has a corollary in the helping presence of the gods or Muses: "I am self-taught, but a god breathed into my breast lays of every sort" (*Od*. 22.347f.).[30] The vengeful spell in the Furies' "binding song" of the *Eumenides* is "a hateful muse" and "a hymn without the phorminx" (μοῦσαν στυγεράν, 308; ὕμνος ἀφόρμικτος, 331f.). Whereas the Olympian songs of Homer, Hesiod, or Pindar are characterized by imagery of liquidity, abundant flow, and fertility, this lyreless song is "a parching for mortals" (αὐονὰ βροτοῖς, 333).[31]

Euripides is particularly fond of the figure of negated music. In the parode of the *Trojan Women,* for example, Hecuba's grief at Troy's calamity appears under the figure of an inverted Muse. Hecuba utters "elegies of tears," and the Muse "sings her disasters, unchorused, to the unfortunate" (119-21). This is a Muse of Sorrows, whose only song is lament. In the next ode the chorus of Trojan women calls on the Muse to "sing a song funereal, of new hymns, in accompaniment to tears, for now I shall cry out my tune to Troy" (511-15). "How sweet a thing for those in misfortune are tears and the groanings of dirges and the Muse who holds pain," the chorus says in iambic trimeters, just after the ode (608f.), alluding to the Homeric "joy in lamentation." These lines bring together the motifs of tears, song or music (the Muse), and the ritualized lamentation of the dirge or *threnos,* itself a form of song (see Pucci 1980:32-45). In the *Suppliants* the shared grief takes the form of "smitings that sing in harmony" and "a dancing that Hades reveres" (ξυνῳδοὶ κτύποι . . . χορὸν τὸν Ἄιδας σέβει, 73-75) or "an insatiable joy in lamentations" that "leads one forth," as in the dirge or the dance (ἄπληστος ἅδε μ' ἐξάγει χάρις γόων, 79). Iphigeneia, lamenting her loneliness in the Taurian play, sings to her attendants how she holds to "ill-dirged lamentations, unlyred elegies of a song unfavored by the Muses, in pitiful cries over the dead" *(Iphigeneia in Tauris* 143-47). The chorus replies with "antiphonal songs" that consist of "a woeful Muse amid dirges

[29] On the perverted rituals of this "self-taught" song see Fraenkel 1950:*ad loc,* 11:446: "The awful chant which the heart sings as a *threnos* of the Erinys is set against the background of that festal song which is the delight of all."

[30] On this passage, see Schadewaldt 1966:79f.; more recently, Thalmann 1984:126f. and Pucci 1987:230.

[31] The threat is to be cancelled in the song of blessings at the end: cf. *Eum*. 980ff. See Walsh 1984:76f.; Thalmann 1985:109.

for corpses that Hades hymns in his singing, far removed from paeans" (179-85). Helen, in her play, calls out to the Sirens of the Underworld to accompany her grief, "songs joined with her tears" and "deathly music in harmony with her lamentations." She would offer Persephone a grim "paean for the perished corpses in her dusky halls below" (*Helen* 167-78). When the chorus responds sympathetically, she sings "a lyre-less lament" (*alyron elegon,* 185).

In Sophocles this figure of the "unmusical song," and indeed the metaphorizing of song in general, is relatively sparse (at least as far as the limited remains allow one to generalize). Electra's lament in her opening *kommos* with the chorus comes perhaps closest, but even here, as in Homer, the lamentation remains distinct as lamentation. Thus when Electra compares her constant weeping to the nightingale (the metamorphosed Procne) that cries "Itys, Itys" for her son, her verb is the direct "lament" (*olophuretai,* 147), not a metaphor for singing. A little later she uses a bolder metaphor, "wings of sharp-toned laments" (πτέρυγας ὀξυτόνων γόων, 242f.), but here too the "laments," though qualified by an adjective that can also apply to singing, have their proper, non-figurative word, *goos*. So too the similar description of Antigone crying over Polyneices' body like a bird bereft of its young "laments in the sharp voice" of sorrow, but not actually in song (ἀνακωκύει πικρᾶς ὄρνιθος ὀξὺν φθόγγον, *Antigone* 423-25).

Where Sophocles does use a full-fledged metaphor drawn from song, he describes not the personal emotions of the speaker or chorus but the mortal situation generally. In the third stasimon of the *Oedipus at Colonus,* on the ills of old age, the chorus describes death as "the hymnless, lyreless, unchorused portion of Hades" (῎Αιδος μοῖρ' ἀνυμέναιος / ἄλυρος ἄχορος, 1221f.). The three epithets mark death's negation of the joys of social life, and therefore of festive music, as parallel to the isolation of the aged protagonist. The passage reveals the tacit assumption that the social rituals, accompanied by music, are an indispensable part of what makes life worth living for men and women in society. But Sophocles is more restrained than Euripides in relating the emotional quality of lamentation to the emotional expressiveness of music.

For all the emotionality of his characters, then, Sophocles is perhaps deliberately reacting against the Aeschylean lyricizing of grief that we have seen in the passages discussed above. Euripides, however, with his taste for archaic ritualizing effects, seems to be deliberately recalling the practice of Aeschylus (who is still closer to the pre-Sophistic song-culture) and combining it with the newer intellectual reflectiveness on the verbal representation of emotion and on the power of language to evoke and manipulate feelings (e.g. the *Helen* of Gorgias).

Even Euripides, however, works in the social and performative

context of the music that accompanies his action. He is particularly conscious of incorporating within his fictional, literary structure the rites of lamentation such as those described by Margaret Alexiou (1974) or Loring Danforth (1982). He thus calls attention to the paradox that the festive joy of the songs and· dances being performed have as their goal the representation of joylessness. Oxymora like "unmusic song" or "unchorused dance" express this tension between the mythical account of sufferings that result from the threatened disintegration of community enacted on the stage and the celebration of community inherent in the performance itself within the City Dionysia, Lenaea, or country Dionysia.

Euripides reflects explicitly on this paradox in the parode of his *Medea* (191-203):

> You would not be mistaken in calling foolish and in no way clever those men of previous time who invented songs as pleasurable hearing at celebrations and feasts and banquets. But no one has invented a way, by music and many-stringed songs, to put an end to the hateful sufferings of mortals, from which deaths and terrible misfortunes overturn houses. Yet it would be a gain for mortals to heal these things by song. But for banquets to produce their happy feasting, why do men strain (exert) their voices in vain? The present fullness of the feast, from its own self, holds pleasure for mortals.[32]

As a part of civic and religious festivity, the aim of tragic poetry is the same as that of Homeric recitation and choral song, namely *terpsis,* "pleasure." But in tragedy the line between pleasure and pain is even more problematical than it is in the case of the epic "delight in weeping." The tragic Muse shifts between dirge and hymn.

Euripides certainly knows the tradition, going back to Hesiod and indirectly also to Homer, wherein song does provide a "healing," or at least a distraction, for sufferings of this kind (Hesiod, *Theog*. 52ff.; cf. Homer, *Od*. 4.594-98). Indeed the lines in the Medea echo Odysseus' praise of Alcinous' banquet in *Odyssey* 9.1-11. But for Euripides' banquet the aim of song is not just physical or sensual, but also moral and in a sense even psychological, the alleviating of the distress and pain inherent in the condition of mortality. Whereas symposiac or hymnic song suspends the sorrows of life in joyful oblivion and beautiful diversion (Hesiod, *Theog*. 98-103), the music of tragedy produces almost the opposite effect in its performative setting and thereby constitutes a kind of inoculation against the sudden reversals and misfortunes that life may hold.[33]

The tragic poet is aware of creating a pleasure whose essential

[32] For an important dimension to this passage, see Pucci 1980:25ff.; also Gentili 1984:54f.

[33] For this view of tragedy, see Diano 1968:215-69; also Pucci 1980:28ff.

content is grief. His songs constitute a public celebration whose action at numerous points threatens to dissolve into incoherence and silence. In Aeschylus' *Niobe* or Sophocles' *Ajax* the protagonist's suffering is conveyed at the beginning of the play through a powerful stage silence that only reluctantly (and unexpectedly) breaks into the sharp painful lyric lament.[34] Aristophanes brilliantly parodied the effect in the *Frogs* (919f.). Silence, because of terror, threat, or vehement passion, is often a major theme of tragedy, as in the *Oresteia* or Sophocles' *Electra*. The worst effect of terror is the paralyzing numbness of the tongue and the silencing of the voice, for then we cannot even give shape to the fears or communicate them to others, for help or solace. We need only recall the mood of anxiety that hangs over the silenced events in the first scene of the *Agamemnon*.

The poet of tragedy is absent from the performance a way that the epic poet is not. Unlike the epic singer, he speaks only through the voice of others. When his Muse is present, it is often paradoxically, under the sign of her negation. The oxymoron of the "unmusic Muse" itself mirrors the joylessness of the tragic world. Even when the chorus celebrates its song as the source of festivity, it does so in an atmosphere of tension and paradox, as in the parode of the *Medea* cited above. In a famous ode of the *Heracles,* the chorus expresses its devotion to the Muses (673-86):

> I shall never cease mingling the Graces with the Muses, a yoking most sweet. May I not live without musicality, but may I always be in the company of garlands. The old singer still celebrates Mnemosyne. I still sing the victory-song of Heracles, in accompaniment to wine-giving Bromios and the song of the seven-stringed lyre and the Libyan flute. Never shall we cease from the Muses who have set me in the choral dance.

Interpreters have read this passage as Euripides' personal *cri de coeur,* the poet's affirmation of his calling and the steadiness of his aims. That may be so, but the expression "Never shall we cease from the Muses" is an allusion to the hymnic formula, "I shall never ceasing singing such and such a god," common as a closing motif of the Homeric Hymns. Thus it reminds us of the traditional, generic character of this song as a hymn to poetry and the Muses. As a formal hymn, it also participates in the transformations that the ritual functions of song undergo in the play.[35] In this case, the joy of celebrating Heracles in the victory-song here *(tan Hêrakleous kallinikon aeidô,* 680f.), as previously (cf. 570, 582), becomes

[34] See Aeschylus, frag. 277 in Lloyd-Jones 1971:556-62; also Sophocles, *Ajax* 333ff. See in general Reinhardt 1979:11f.

[35] For the dramatic function of these shifts in the function of a song, see Parry 1978:159ff.; Foley 1985:149f., 183f. For the implicit poetics of the ode, see Walsh 1984:116ff.

part of the massive change from songful celebration to horror (cf. 891-99), from cries of joy to sounds of lamentation (914, 1025ff.), from epinician to dirge.

In such cases the Muse of tragedy is not only the divinity behind the technical skill of the bard as singer and composer, as she is in Homer and Hesiod. She is also available to the poet as the figure who registers the horror in his world. She is the index by which he can measure the distance of this tragic world from the happiness of men, both communally and individually—the festive happiness that is associated with song in archaic culture. We may again recall the reflections on this association in the *parodos* of the *Medea*. In Euripides' *Trojan Women,* for example, as Cassandra generalizes about silence as the appropriate response to her overwhelming suffering, she reaches at once to the divinity of song itself, the Muse (384f.): "Better to be silent about shameful things; may I have no Muse as singer to hymn my woes" (μηδὲ μοῦσά μοι / γένοιτ' ἀοιδὸς ἥτις ὑμνήσει κακά). A little later in the same play, Hecuba, to arouse pity for her misfortunes, would "sing out" her sufferings (472f., *exaisai).*

Given the importance of song as the medium for articulating meaning in archaic society, not being able to sing is itself a constituent element of the suffering. Thus in the celebrated second *stasimon* of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (884-96), the chorus frames the question of justice in terms of their own choral performance in the city: if there is not reward for justice and if the unjust man can flaunt the gods, they sing, then "why should I dance?" Or, in other words, why should they participate in choral songs that honor the gods and their harmonious world if the laws of that world do not work?

Tragedy, like epic, draws heavily on the function of song in an oral culture as the ritualized expression of intense emotion and as a mode of personal interaction among friends and kin (both *philoi* in Greek) to provide comfort, solace, and security amid anxiety, confusion, and loss. But unlike epic, tragedy is everywhere stamped by the fact that it is an imitation of a ritual within a ritualized communal context.[36]

In archaic Greece song is directly tied to performance and often to a specific, ad hoc cultic performance. A *threnos,* paean, marriage-song, or encomium is sung at that specific cultic occasion.[37] The tragedian cuts the song loose from the specific occasion. His chorus, performing its song for the fictional rites within the play, is freer of its immediate social function.

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[36] I do not mean that the plays constitute a worship of Dionysus in a formal sense. There is obviously a big difference between going to a temple of the god and going to the theater. But they do form part of a celebration which is, in the broad sense, religious and therefore contains heavily ritualized elements.

[37] For the problem of specific and traditional in the occasional nature of archaic lyric, see Gentili 1984:154ff.; Burnett 1983:3ff.; Rosier 1984:200-2.

Thus in composing a particular ode, the poet can choose among the whole range of possible choral forms, or combine several different forms, or play one lyric genre off against another. To recast the famous lines of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* cited above, what song should he sing? The chorus of the *Heracles* quoted above, for example, uses a hymnic form in the opening and closing "I will not cease singing." But it also alludes to symposiac song and to the epinician ode. Eventually, it undergoes an even harsher inversion as the dirge or *threnos* for the "victor's" slain children.

This interplay among different kinds or genres of choral song not only shows tragedy's capacity to synthesize elements from the pre-existing song-traditions; it also fosters its artistic self-consciousness. The dirge that we hear and watch is sung over an actor or even a dummy, not an actually dead body. We are thus involved in the paradox of voluntarily submitting to what we would normally consider unfortunate, if not calamitous. This paradox of deriving delight from pain is already explicit in the *Odyssey.* Tragedy extends it to the area of choral lyric and expresses it through the repeated oxymora of "songless song," through the mixture of contradictory genres (e.g. epinician and *threnos* in *Heracles*), and of course through indirect discussion, as in the parode of the *Medea*.

By absorbing the cries of grief into the lyricism of choral lament, the tragic poet is able to identify the emotional experience of suffering with the musical and rhythmic impulse that lies at the very origins of the work. This transformation of cries of woe into song constitutes at least part of the creative power of the poet-maker and of his divinity, the Muse. Pindar is perhaps aware of this process when he relates how the wail of the dying Medusa is transformed by Athena into the flute-song performed at musical competitions (*Pythian* 12). Euripides specializes in this technique of tearful lament, doubtless expertly performed by virtuoso singers able to milk the emotions with the quavers that Aristophanes parodies in the *Frogs*.[38]

In tragedy the motif of the joyless song of lament occupies an intermediate stage between metaphor, enacted gesture, and the ritualized expression of intense grief as we see it in the funeral laments of Homer. How evocative and emotionally complex such moments are we can see from the end of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. These closing lines of the play seem to connect the mourning ritual evoked here with the survival of Hippolytus' story in the memory of the community (1462-66):

> κοινὸν τόδ' ἄχος πᾶσι πολίταις
> ἦλθεν ἀέλπτως.
> πολλῶν δακρύων ἔσται πίτυλος·
> τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ἀξιοπενθεῖς
> φῆμαι μᾶλλον κατέχουσιν.

[38] See *Frogs* 1309-63; cf. Euripides, *Heracles* 348ff.; *Trojan Women* 511f.; *Helen* 168ff. and 1107ff.

> This woe came without expectation as common to all the citizens. There will be an oar-beat of many tears; for the tales of the great that are worthy of grieving do more prevail.

The "oar-beat" or *pitylos* of tears in the chorus's "common grief" for the dead youth refers to the rhythmic beating of breasts, hands, and feet in communal mourning. Here the metaphor describes the tangible, physical expression of emotion, both by the chorus of Troezenian women. But it also alludes to the unexpressed emotion of the citizens in the theater, those who are thus united in a community of grief. They share in the ritualized expression of emotion as a fundamental part of the theatrical experience (cf. κοινὸν τόδ' ἄχος πᾶσι πολίταις, "This came as a common grief for all the citizens," 1462). The "tales of the great" that endure as the memory of a past suffering in the last lines also refer to the task of the tragic poet, here viewing himself as the voice of the communal memory, as the epic singer was.[39]

Pindar exploits this ancient tradition when he "directs his glorious wind of words" toward the victor and then generalizes, "For men who are gone, songs and tales attend (preserve) their lovely deeds" *(Nem.* 6.28-30: παροιχομένων γάρ ἀνέρων / ἀοιδαὶ / καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλά σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν). The situation of the tragic poet, however, is far more complex, partly because the drama contains many competing voices and because the values to be transmitted are more controversial, in fact are defined precisely by the tragedy as controversial.

Euripides' "tales of the great" also include the ritual songs promised by Artemis shortly before, in which Hippolytus' story, entwined with Phaedra's passion, will be saved from oblivion and anonymity (1425-30):

> Maidens unyoked, before their marriage, will cut their hair for you, and you throughout long time will pluck the greatest grievings of their tears. Forever there will be for you the muse-fashioned concern (in song) of maidens, and Phaedra's love-passion toward you will not fall in namelessness and be kept in silence.[40]

This cultic song is to be performed by anonymous maidens, *korai*. The metaphorization of this song, however, as a "muse-fashioned concern" and a grieving that Hippolytus will "pluck" (1427-29) pulls it away from its

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[39] For the end of the *Hippolytus* in this perspective, see Segal 1988:62-70.

[40] With namelessness and silence here cf. the motif of being "invisible" and "unseen" *(aphanês, aïstos, akleês)* in Homer and Sappho, above. The expression in 1430, that Phaedra's passion will not be kept in silence, is of course a final turn of the inversions of speech and silence in the play. Just that "not keeping silence" of the passion has in fact produced the tragic result before us now. On the motif of speech and silence see Knox 1979:208ff.; most recently Zeitlin 1986:91ff.

social function as ritual and toward the aesthetic self-awareness of the poet's art. The grief to be expressed by these future (and anonymous) performers of cultic song is made tangible as a "fruit" of tears that Hippolytus will "pluck"—in place of the sexual ripeness of such maidens that he has renounced. The distancing effect of metaphor is analogous to the geographical remoteness of the grief of Phaethon's sisters, "dripping amber-bright beams of tears into the purple wave" of their western river in the second *stasimon,* the so-called *Escape Ode* (737-41). In this last passage the aesthetic framing of grief by metaphor is reinforced by the combination of imbedded myth and geographical distance.

Such a transposition of ritualized grieving into metaphor is very different from the objectified communal moment of the Muses' dirge that joins gods and mortals at Achilles' funeral in Homer and Pindar. Artemis' words at the end of the *Hippolytus* do not even convey much sense of emotional participation on the part of the maidens (their thoughts are elsewhere anyway). Her emphasis is therefore on the contrivance of song, the artifice of the "Muse-fashioned concern." It is left for the human sufferers at the end to blend singing and grieving, to strike their breasts with the "oar-beat of many tears" and to feel the *koinon achos,* the "common grief" for loss.

The effect of tragic song and ritual is often to open rifts between the human social order and the realm of the gods rather than allow the two to overlap and communicate. Tragedy's transposition of ritual performance into the dichotomy between god and mortal renders problematical the symbolic transparency between human and divine that characterizes the celebratory songs of much other choral lyric. In the proem to Pindar's first *Pythian,* for example, the ordering and creative power of divine song, symbolized by the Golden Lyre next to Zeus on Olympus, is the divine prototype for the poet's lyre on earth in the present performance. It is the source of the immortal brilliance that the poet can bring into the mortal world through song. The ode goes on to develop a series of interlocking parallels between the beauty and permanence of song, the victory of cosmic order over chaos, and the good order of cities. The performance brings the effects of that Golden Lyre, "beginning of Radiance," tangibly among men. The lyre is a sign of the justice that song (through fame) exercises and also of the festive joy that it helps to spread.

The ending of the *Hippolytus* is characteristic of the way in which the tragic poet is both heir to the ritual and commemorative functions of poetry in early Greek society and at the same time questions, probes, and inverts those traditions. As a narrator of inherited cultural property the tragedian is, as Herington has recently emphasized (1985:chs. 5-6, espec. 118-29 and 140ff.), the successor of the epic *aoidos* and rhapsode. On the other hand, he "narrates" those myths in a unique way, for unlike the

rhapsode or choral lyricist he is himself absent from the performance and his dramatic staging of the myths leaves the action with no single, unambiguous authorial voice as a firm point of reference for evaluating the actors and the action. Instead, the questions of justice, vengeance, and loyalties to city or family are framed in conflictual situations where there is some measure of right on either side, or at least a lot that can be (and is) said on both sides.

Euripides, who is so fond of ending his plays with the foundation of a cult, goes furthest in this probing or ironizing of ritual.[41] But in Aeschylus and Sophocles too one can see this special property of tragedy, namely achieving full ritual closure on the one hand (signalled obviously by the closing choral pronouncement and exit) and on the other hand opening the myths to the maximum questioning of the social and ritual forms. Sophocles' *Ajax,* for example, ends with a burial ritual performed for a murderer and would-be traitor; but the rite deliberately excludes the man whose fairness, compassion, and eloquence made that burial possible.[42] The *Oedipus Coloneus* closes with lingering tensions between the joy of Athens in its future salvation from the heroized stranger it has received, and the inconsolable grief of the daughters who will return to their doomed family and doomed city of Thebes.

How profoundly Euripides can transform the closure effected by traditional rites and replace it with the open-ended questioning characteristic of his tragedy can perhaps best be seen from the *Trojan Women*. The play ends with a burial rite for the murdered infant Astyanax, child of Hector and Andromache.[43] Euripides introduces the original detail of having the body buried in the shield of his father, Hector. The long scene of ritual lamentation, punctuated by several exchanges with the chorus, contains Hecuba's address to this shield both at the beginning and at the end. Her lament over the child is like the lament over a fallen warrior, but this child will never grow up. The shield is a monument of a sort to Hector, but its presence is a reminder of Hector's defeat and the failure of the toils or efforts, *ponoi,* to which the shield physically attests. First she addresses the dead child (1187-99):

> Gone are my endearments, my nurture, and those sleepless nights.... What would the muse-fashioning poet write on your tomb? "This child, in fear, the Argives once did slay?" Shameful that epigram for Greece. Though you did not, as heir, receive your father's goods, receive this bronze-backed

[41] See Foley 1985; Segal 1982a:318ff., 345.

[42] *Ajax* 1393ff. On this point, see Knox 1979:151. On the tensions of the ritual at the end, see Segal 1981:138-46, 150f.

[43] For a sensitive analysis of this scene in a Derridean perspective, see Pucci 1977:182-84.

shield, in which you will be buried.

She then turns to the shield, as if it were the tomb:

You who saved the strong right arm of Hector, your best guardian is lost. How sweet the impress that lies upon your strap; and sweet in your orb's well-turned circumference the sweat that often Hector, in the midst of toilsome efforts, dripped from his brow, as he lifted you to his beard.

Everything in this ritual is a figure of absence. Hecuba herself, as she addresses the shell of Astyanax' s body and the hollow circle of the shield, takes the place of the child's parents: Andromache has just been carried off in Neoptolemus' ship (the opening news of the scene, 1123-35), and Hector is dead. Hecuba's replacement of Andromache in performing the funeral rites over Astyanax also evokes another incomplete burial of a child. Earlier in the play Andromache told Hecuba how the latter's daughter, Polyxena, was sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles, an atrocity that had only been hinted at to the mother (620-25). There Andromache, as Hecuba's surrogate, covered the body with a "robe" *(peplois,* 627) and performed the ritual lament of beating the breast. Here at the end we see the ritual breast-beating enacted onstage (cf. 1235ff.); and Hecuba buries Andromache's child, also covering the body with a "robe" *(peplois,* 1143). She is then led off to the ship of her Greek master, as Andromache had been shortly before.

The shield that serves as Astyanax' s coffin is also a figure for Hector's absence. The impress of his right arm on the leather strap is the visible symbol of the body that is not there. The sweat that dripped into the shield reminds us both of his mortality and the failure of those "toilsome efforts," *ponoi,* from which the sweat flowed. Even the "beard" reminds us of the non-adolescence of Astyanax, the truncated life-cycle of the son who, though buried in the father's shield, will not grow up to be like his father. Euripides here draws on the end of *Iliad* 6 and possibly also of Sophocles' *Ajax*; but his recasting of the traditional *threnos* adds a new intensity of pathos.

The figures of absence culminate in the closing lyrical exchanges between Hecuba and the chorus about the disappearance of the land and the name of Troy, the absence of the *un*-buried Priam, and the non-hearing of the gods (cf. 1312f., 1320ff.; cf. 1277-81). "Troy the unfortunate ceases to exist," *oud' et' estin* (1323f.). The cries of lamentation over the city, rather than perpetuating its memory, seem to "wash over it" (ἔνοσις ἄπασαν ἔνοσις / ἐπικλύζει πόλιν, 1326). Thus they add burial or drowning to the other forces of oblivion.[44]

[44] For drowning and burial in the obliteration of the monumental works of men, see Poseidon and Apollo's destruction of the Achean sea wall in *Il.* 12.17-34. Cf. the imagery of flooding and oblivion in Pindar, *Isthm.* 5.48ff., where Aegina is "set upright" by the

Addressing the shield as if it were a tomb, Hecuba had also invoked the commemorative epigram, the work of one who works with the Muse, *mousopoios,* the same word as that describing the cult song for Hippolytus (*Tro*. 1189; *Hipp*. 1428f.). But here the Muse-fashioned work is only an epigram of shame. She returns to this commemorative function of poetry at the end of her lament and again personifies the shield (1221-25):

> You, in songs of victory once the mother of myriad trophies, Hector's dear shield, receive your garlands now. For though not dead you will die with this corpse. And yet it would be better far to honor you than those arms of base and clever Odysseus.

In war's interpenetration with the house, the surrogate human mother invests the inanimate weapon with maternity. The trophy of victory is now the tomb of the defeated warrior's son; and the monument itself seems to be involved in his death (*thanê(i) gar ou thanousa,* 1223). The passing on of arms now recalls the debasing of the heroic tradition in the award of Achilles' weapons to the undeserving Odysseus. Hecuba goes even farther in these reversals a few lines later, when she calls into question the entire value of commemorative song (1242-50):

> If the god did not overturn our mortal world and enclose it beneath the earth, we would not, having vanished *(aphaneis),* be the subject of hymns, giving song to the Muses of mortals after us.
>
> Come, then, and bury the corpse in his miserable tomb. He has such garlands of the dead as he should have. It makes, I think, but little difference to the dead if they get wealthy tomb-offerings; these are the empty extravagance of those who are still alive.

As showy funeral rites are reduced to vanity for the living and indifference for the dead, so too the lasting songs of epic fame, Muses and all, become an empty, even an unwelcome tribute. Helen's reflection in *Iliad* 6 that her sufferings will make her a subject of song for later men (6.356-58) holds bitterness, but it is at least accepted as an explanation. For Hecuba in Euripides' play, everything in the heroic tradition, fame included, has disintegrated into brutality, vanity, and shame.

Euripides is clearly the most self-conscious and self-reflective of the extant tragedians in exploiting the tensions between tradition and innovation, between the communal voice and the voice of criticism and iconoclasm. In the ritual acts or cultic foundations with which he often ends his plays, he calls attention to the community of the theater, the solidarity of feeling produced by the group experience of those ritual actions (as in the closing dirge of the *Hippolytus);* but he simultaneously

"much-destroying storm of Zeus" at the battle of Salamis, in contrast to the silence that must "drench" boasting—a silence about ill-fame that might attach to those of the Greeks who did not fight but medized.

intimates the unsatisfactoriness or even the emptiness of those communal forms in the face of the suffering that the audience has just experienced (as in the *Trojan Women* and the *Bacchae).* The technique is not unique to Euripides. There is a similar divided perspective, overt or at least potential, in the endings of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Sophocles' *Ajax, Trachiniae,* or *Electra*.

One of the special properties of the dramatic form perfected by the Athenian tragic poets would seem to be just this achievement of full ritual closure on the one hand and opening the myths to their problematical dimensions as explanations of the meaning of human life on the other. May we see here a characteristic stamp of the Athenian genius, continuing the traditional function of the poet as the voice of communal norms and at the same time transforming the poet's relation to the tradition in decisive ways?[45]

In this perspective we can appreciate afresh why tragedy develops in Athens alone of the Greek city-states. The tragic poet reflects a society where values have become complex, divided, multiple, a subject of debate and discussion rather than a given. We may think, for instance, of the Mytilenean debate or the Melian dialogue in Thucydides. During the acme of tragedy, Athens in particular experimented with other models for the intellectual's relation to society. It welcomed the traveling Sophists, professional questioners of local norms in unconventional ways. And for a time at least it tolerated the gadfly-questionings of Socrates. But Socrates is also the figure for whom Plato, in the next century, creates a specifically anti-tragic memorial and (in works like the *Crito, Apology,* or *Phaedo)* a kind of non-lamenting "poetry" of death that aims at making tragedy obsolete.

If we look back to the poetry of, say, the Megarian Theognis a couple of generations before the development of tragedy, or even to Pindar, roughly contemporary with tragedy, we see a very different relation between the poet and changing social and economic conditions. Instead of deploring change or elaborating the existing edifice of the traditional values with increasingly intricate and magnificent structures (as Pindar, for example, does), the tragic poet draws on the oral poet's inherited role as spokesman for communal values and the continuities of social and religious forms. But he examines the eventuality that these forms are no longer adequate to the difficult questions of life. Like epic and choral lyric, tragedy depends upon its rich poetic heritage from the past, especially the myths and the techniques of narrative. It is

[45] For the Athenian spirit of synthesis and innovation see Else 1965:ch. 2; also Herington 1985:chs. 4 and 6. I would not want to minimize the innovative spirit of Peisistratus in reorganizing the Athenian festivals, but the tendencies must have been already present in the culture.

inconceivable without the proto-tragic vision of Homer and the use of myth as allusive, multi-leveled paradigms for events in the present. Yet by removing himself from the performance and by projecting the voice of unified truth into the dialogic structure of conflict among sharply opposing personas, the tragedian effects a revolutionary change in the conception of the poet's role in society.[46]

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[46] For this view of tragedy as marking a radical modification of the oral performance, see Segal 1982b, in 1987:espec. 266, with note 6. There is no doubt that to some extent tragedy has many continuities with the oral tradition, as has beea argued by Havelock (1980, in 1982:261-313). But the situation of drama is, I believe, far more complex than Havelock allows.

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Formulaic Diction in Kazakh Epic Poetry

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A recent annotated bibliography on oral-formulaic theory and research by J. M. Foley lists "more than 1800 books and articles from more than ninety language areas" (1985:4). Most of these are studies conducted within the framework of the theory developed by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord. The numerous applications of Parry and Lord's theory to the Homeric poems and to medieval poetry testify to the importance of the study of oral poetry for a better understanding of some of the greatest epics of world literature. On the basis of South Slavic epic poetry as studied by Parry and Lord, formulaic diction has been taken as the most salient characteristic of the oral epic, as the very sign of a poem's oral nature. It has therefore been argued, when applying the oral-formulaic theory to medieval texts, that a certain amount of "formulaic density" in a particular text implies its origins as an oral poem. Typical examples of this line of argumentation are the studies on *Beowulf* by F. P. Magoun, Jr. (1953), on the *Chanson de Roland* by J. J. Duggan (1973) and on the *Nibelungenlied* by F. H. Bäuml and D. J. Ward (1967; cp. Bäuml 1986). In these studies the Serbo-Croatian epic tradition has been taken as the paradigm of oral epic poetry. Rigorous analyses of the formulaic nature of other oral traditions are rare, a fact which explains, at least in part, why medievalists and classicists are in general little aware of epic traditions other than that of the South Slavs.

This paper is an attempt to extend formulaic analysis to the Turkic epics of Central Asia.[1] Owing to social and cultural conservatism, the traditional art of oral poetry is still cultivated by a number of Turkic peoples in the present time, in particular by those Turkic tribes who have preserved their nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life until now or at least until recently. Turkic oral narrative poetry is as manifold and diverse as the peoples composing the Turkic world, ranging from the Yakuts of Northern Siberia, via the shamanistic Turks of the Altay and the Lamaistic Tuvinians of the Tannu mountain ridge the nomadic or originally nomadic

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Turks who live in the vast area from the Tianshan and Pamir mountains to the Caspian Sea (Kirghiz, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Turcoman), the sedentary Turks of Transoxania and the Tarim Basin (Uzbeks, Uyghurs), the Turks of the South-Russian steppes and the Caucasus (Tatar, Bashkir, Nogay, Karatchay, and Balkar), to the Turks of Transcaucasia, Anatolia, and the Balkans (Azerbaijanians, Turks of Turkey). Despite some basic similarities among these traditions, resulting from their common linguistic background and cultural heritage, each people has developed its own mode of epic poetry. In the present paper the emphasis is on Kazakh narrative poetry, an oral tradition which recommends itself both by its wealth and its vigor.

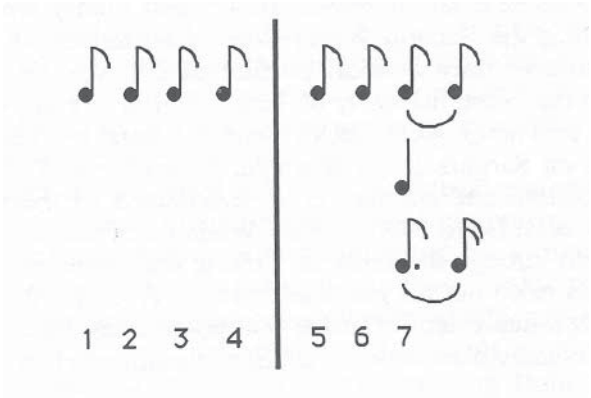
The richness and variety of Turkic oral poetry was first revealed to the European reader by Wilhelm Radloff's monumental *Proben der Volkslitteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens,* of which the first volume appeared in 1866. In his introduction to the volume on Kirghiz epic poetry, the great Russian Turcologist stressed the importance of Turkic epic poetry for comparative purposes, in particular for a solution of the "Homeric problem" (Radloff 1866-1904:V, xx-xxii). Although Radloff's material was used in H. M. and N. K. Chadwick's *Growth of Literature* (1932-40; cf. Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969) as well as in M. Bowra's study of the heroic epic (1952) and although there are occasional references to his texts in Western scholarship—as when Andreas Heusler emphatically denies the possibility of equating the art of the Old Germanic singer with that of the Kirghiz bard (Heusler 1943:174), firsthand knowledge of Turkic epic poetry has until fairly recently been limited among comparatists to those working in the Soviet Union.

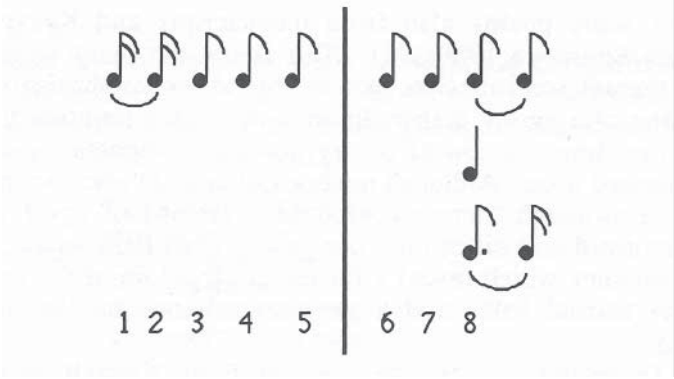
The towering figure among the latter is V. M. Zhirmunsky, a Germanist who became familiar with Turkic oral poetry while living in Uzbekistan during the Second World War. Zhirmunsky was a prolific writer; unfortunately only a small portion of his work is available in translation.[2] In the West, the study of Turkic oral poetry has on the whole been restricted to Turcological circles, with the notable exception of the important work on Kirghiz and Yakut epic poetry by A. T. Hatto (see in particular his edition and translation of one branch of the *Manas*-cycle, 1977, and, *inter alia,* Hatto 1980; 1985). When Parry decided to tackle the Homeric problem through the study of a living oral tradition, fieldwork in Central Asia was ruled out for political reasons. A. B. Lord, who has like Parry always been interested in Turkic oral poetry, has, however, recently compared the Central Asian to the South Slavic tradition (1987).

[2] See in particular Zhirmunsky 1961, 1985, and his survey of epic songs and singers in the re-issue of the part devoted to the Turkic epic in Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969:271-348. Zhirmunsky's writings on Turkic epic poetry are collected in Zhirmunsky 1974. Together with H. Zarifov (1947) he has written the authoritative account of Uzbek oral epic poetry.

Oral poetry in general is still flourishing among the Kazakhs, both of the Soviet Union and of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China. The Kazakhs are particularly fond of the *aytïs,* poetical contests somewhat in the manner of the medieval *tenzone* (see Smirnova 1968:324ff.). As to the cultivation of epic poetry, it is still singularly powerful in China, where the collection and publication of epic texts has only recently begun. The Kazakh oral singer is called either *aqïn,* the general term in Kazakh for a poet (derived from Persian *āxūn,* "preacher; orator; tutor") or *žïrši* or *žïraw,* words derived from *žïr* (Old Turkic *yïr,* "song, epic song"). The term *žïr* is also used for the seven-syllable line typical of the Kazakh heroic epic. This verse-line goes back to the eleventh century at least; it is found in the specimens of oral epic poetry recorded by Mahmud of Kashgar (see Brockelmann 1923-24) and is part of the common Turkic heritage of Kazakh oral poetry. The singer performs the epic by singing the verses, usually to the accompaniment of the *dombïra,* a two-stringed lute-type instrument, sometimes also to the accompaniment of the *qobïz,* a horsehair-stringed fiddle related to the Mongolian *xūr* and, distantly, to the South Slavic *gusle*.

The verse-lines are linked by rhyme or assonance, forming mono-rhyme groups of irregular length in the manner of the Old French *laisse*. Instead of seven syllables, there might be eight syllables to a line. In either case the line divides musically into two halves of equal length (time), irrespective of the number of syllables in each half. Thus the beginning of *Qïz Žibek,* for instance, as performed by Raxmet Mazxodžaev shows the following metric-rhythmic patterns for seven-syllable and eight-syllable verse-lines (Auezov and Smirnova 1963:331-32):





Apart from the *žïr,* an 11-syllable line also occurs, often grouped into four-line stanzas with the predominant rhyme-scheme *a-a-b-a (öleŋ)* The musical style of these two verse-forms differs: the melody of the shorter verse is simpler, every line built basically on the same melodic formula, while the melody of the longer verse is more elaborate, with a tendency to form larger melodic patterns.[3] The verse is sometimes interrupted by prose-portions, which are then declaimed in a recitative style. This *chante-fable*-like form of narrative is widespread among the Turkic peoples and certainly goes back to medieval times; the chronological relationship between pure verse epics and "prosimetric" epics is a moot point (Reichl 1985b:32-37).

Seven-syllable verse-lines and *laisse*-type stanzas are characteristic of the heroic epic *(batïrlïq žïrï),* while 11-syllable lines and four-line stanzas are typical of the love epic, lyrical narratives such as *Qïz Žibek* or *Qozï Körpeš and Bayan Suluw.* Although the division into heroic and love epics can be defended on grounds of style and content, there is no hard and fast dividing line between these two types. Eleven-syllable lines, for instance, are quite common in the heroic epic, and the seven-syllable line is also found in the love epic, as is shown by the illustration from *Qïz Žibek* above. In Xinjiang the term for epic poems with an Oriental setting is *qïssa,* from Arabic *qiṣṣa,* "story, tale." This word is also used for the chapbook-like editions of Kazakh epic poems which came out in Kazan at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. These popular editions, usually based on oral performances, sometimes also on manuscripts, exerted an enormous influence on the transmission and cultivation of epic poetry. For many singers performing in this century the situation was and is similar to that of Raxmet Mazxodžaev (born in 1881), who learned some of the epics of his repertoire orally from other

[3] On the musical aspect of Kazakh epic poetry see Beliaev 1975:78-83; see also the transcriptions in Erzakovič et al. 1982:123-52. On the performance of epic poetry among the closely related Karakalpaks see Reichl 1985a.

singers, but some poems also from manuscripts and Kazan editions (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:393). This is not the place to go into the details of textual transmission, but it should be emphasized that this contamination of a purely oral tradition by a written tradition has neither stifled the oral transmission of poetry nor has it necessarily resulted in fixed, memorized texts. Although memorization is involved in this kind of tradition and although there are recorded versions of epics which are clearly memorized and differ only marginally from their source, there are also other versions which reveal a far greater freedom of the singer from his ultimate textual basis and a stronger reliance on the art of oral composition.

The following analysis focuses on three Kazakh heroic epics, *Qambar Batïr* ("The Hero Qambar"), *Qoblandï Batïr* ("The Hero Qoblandï") and *Alpamïs Batïr* ("The Hero Alpamïs").[4] The basic story-pattern of these epics consists of the winning of a bride and the heroic fight against the enemy, combined, in the case of *Qoblandï* and *Alpamïs,* with a return story. In *Qambar* it is narrated that the Nogay bay Äzimbay has a beautiful daughter, called Nazïm. She falls in love with Qambar, who, because of his poverty, has not been invited to woo her. When, however, the khan of the Kalmucks, Qaraman, forces Äzimbay to give him his daughter, Qambar is persuaded to come to Nazïm's rescue. He fights against the Kalmucks, kills their khan and marries Nazïm. These are in outline the contents of the version of *Qambar* edited by A. A. Divaev in 1922, a version he took down from an unnamed singer, possibly Mayköt Sandïbaev (see Auezov and Smimova 1959:256), probably around 1920. His text has been edited several times; the authoritative edition, comprising 185l lines (mostly of seven syllables), is that by M. O. Auezov and N. S. Smirnova (1959).

Based on this version, three further texts (one fragmentary) have been recorded from Kazakh singers; they are preserved in the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in Alma-Ata (see Auezov and Smimova 1959:370). Very similar in content, but clearly a version on its own, is a *qïssa* edited in Kazan. There are various differences between Divaev's version and the *qïssa* version, concerning the name-form of the protagonists (Qaraman is called Maxtïmxan, for instance), the order of events (Kelmembet, the Kalmuck envoy, is sent twice instead of once to ask for Nazïm's hand), and the elaboration of individual scenes. The Kazan *qïssa* is extant in various redactions, an edition of 1888 and one of 1903, as well as in manuscript form (see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:345-46). Two further texts are ultimately based on the 1903 edition, one recorded in the twenties from the singer Barmaq Muqambaev and the other recorded in 1958 from the singer

[4] On Kazakh epic poetry see Orlov 1945; Winner 1958:54-85; Smirnova 1968:236-96; Ġabdullin and Sïdïqov 1972. On Turkic epic poetry in general see also Boratav 1965; Başgöz 1978.

Raxmet Mazxodžaev.

In order to illustrate the types of variation encountered in these poems, I shall quote Nazïm's invitation to Qambar to rest in her *yurt* ("felt-tent") when they meet for the first time. These are her words in the 1903 *qïssa* (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:15):

"Qara qasqa attï Qambar-ay,
qara atïṇda žal bar-ay,
Bizdiṇ üyge tüse ket,
šay-samawïr iše ket.
Qanša meyman rüsse de,
kütkendey bizdiṇ äl bar-ay."

"Qambar on the black horse with the white mark,
your black horse has a [mighty] mane.
Come and sit down in our yurt,
come and drink tea from the samovar!
However many guests sit down,
we have the means to serve them."

Mazxodžaev's text is identical with the text quoted above, apart from one minor change: instead of *šay-samawïr* ("tea from the samovar") in line 251 he has *šay-šekerdi* ("tea with sugar"; Auezov and Smirnova 1959:408). His text is not always as close to the 1903 *qïssa* as in the extract given here, but it follows the *qïssa* fairly faithfully, as is also shown by the length of his text, 1085 lines, corresponding relatively closely to the length of the *qïssa* (1030 lines, with some additional short prose passages).

Muqambaev's text, which comprises 2000 lines (with some additional short prose passages), is much freer. Here are Nazïm's words in his poem (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:88):

"Qara qasqa attï Qambar-ay,
qara atïṇda žal bar-ay,
bizdiṇ üyge tüse ket,
köbikti sawmal iše ket,
qaynap turġan šay bar-ay!
Batïr saġan saqtaġan
žarïlmaġan may bar-ay!
Qambar batïr kele ket,
kelip meni köre ket,
aq tösimniṇ üstinde
bir kisilik žay bar-ay!
Zamandas Qambar batïsïṇ,
qay žaqqa bara žatïrïiṇ?
Köṇlim qošï, šatïmsïṇ!"

"Qambar on the black horse with the white mark,
your black horse has a [mighty] mane.
Come and sit down in our yurt,
come and drink foamy fresh *kumiss* (fermented mare's milk),

there is [also] boiling tea!
Hero, for you we have kept in store
butter which has not yet been cut!
Qambar-batïr, come,
come and see me,
there is on my white breast
place for [only] one man!
We are of the same age, Qambar-batïr.
Where are you riding?
My heart's delight, you are my joy!"

Apart from the first three lines, this passage is a free elaboration of the *qïssa*-version. It is to be noted, however, that one line of Muqambaev's text is also found in Divaev's text (415), a fact which suggests that Muqambaev's elaboration is not completely free, but at least in part traditional.

Here is Divaev's text (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:48):

"Qayrïlmay qayda barasïŋ,
xan süyekti Qambar-aw!?
Qabaġï qatïp šaršaptï,
qara atïŋnïŋ moynïnda
ökpe-bawïr žal bar-aw.
Arïzïma meniŋ qulaq sal,
aqïlïŋ bolsa, aŋġar-aw.
Aq tösimniŋ üstinde
qol tiymegen mal bar-aw.
Söldeseŋ suwsïn išseyši,
bizdiŋ üyge tüsseyši,
žatïp, turïp ketuwge,
kütkendey bizde žay bar-aw!
Moynïŋdï beri bursayšï
qušaqtasïp ekewmiz
köriselik tursayšï
artïŋda üŋgir žar bar-aw!"

"Where are you riding without turning aside,
Qambar of noble birth?
With heavy eyelids he has become tired;
your black horse has courage,
a [mighty] mane on his neck. Listen to my wish,
if you are wise, understand me!
There is on my white breast
a [precious] good, touched by no hand.
If you are thirsty, drink water,
come and sit down in our yurt!
We have the means to serve him
who comes to lie down and sit down!
Turn your head this way,
let us embrace
and greet one another!
Behind you there is a deep gorge!"

There are no major variants of this version. A text recorded from the singer Abulxayïr Danekerov in 1954 leaves out lines 534 and 537 to 544; line 542 is, however, added to line 545, which has a slightly altered form *(Moynïŋdï beri bura ket, / bizdïŋ üyge tüse ket;* see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:377). On a recently issued record of *Qambar Batïr* (Melodija S3013449-52) by the singer Žumabay Medetbaev this passage is identical to Divaev's text. This singer has apparently memorized the printed edition, from which he hardly ever deviates. When comparing Divaev's text with the *qïssa* version, it is clear that despite obvious differences (the scene itself is constructed differently), there are also close verbal resemblances, such as in lines 535-36 *(Qara atïŋïŋ . . . žal bar-aw),* 542 *(bizdiŋ üyge tüsseyši),* and 544 *(kütkendey bizde žay bar-aw).* From this it follows—and a more careful analysis of the recorded texts would, I believe, bear this out—that both Divaev's version and the *qïssa* version derive ultimately from a common source, which has, however, in the course of oral transmission undergone considerable changes.

The date of this "Ur-*Qambar"* is uncertain. It must have been composed before the middle of the nineteenth century, because at that time Qambar was already a well-known figure. The fundamental antagonism in *Qambar,* as in the Kazakh heroic epics in general, is that between the Kazakhs and the Kalmucks. This enmity has its historical basis in the wars between the Kazakhs and various West Mongolian tribes (Kalmuck, Oirat) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Hambly 1966:155-59). A date before the eighteenth or even seventeenth century seems unlikely, although N. S. Smirnova suggests that the characterization of the Nogay as the Uzbek of the twelve tribes in *Qambar* points back to the time of the Nogay horde and the Uzbek khanate of the fifteenth century (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:257). More research is needed before the problem of dates can be solved.[5]

By comparison the epic *Qoblandï Batïr* is plot-wise more involved and textually more diverse. According to N. V. Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and O. A. Nurmagambetova, 26 transcriptions of the epic have been preserved, of which they discuss 18 *in extenso* under the heading of two basic versions (1975:9-16, 385-416). It emerges from their discussion that the transmission of *Qoblandï* has in most cases been predominantly, if not purely, oral. The fullest recorded text of *Qoblandï* comes from Šapay Kalmaganbetov (born in 1890), who wrote the poem down himself and presented his transcription to the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in 1939. His text comprises 6490 lines (of seven syllables), with some short prose

[5] For a detailed analysis of historical sources in relationship to Kazakh epic poetry on the "Nogay heroes," see Zhirmunsky's "Epičeskie skazanija o nogajskix bogatirjax v svete istoričeskix istočnikov" (1974:387-516).

passages (edited and translated in Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and Nurmagambetova 1975).

The first part of the epic (in Kalmaganbetov's version) tells of the Qïpšaq (Qaraqïpšaq) hero Qoblandï (or Qoblan) and his winning of a bride, the beautiful Qurtqa, daughter of the Qïzïlbas khan Köktim-Aymaq. The main part of the epic is taken up by Qoblandïs fights against the Qïzïlbas and the Kalmucks. After having defeated the Qïzïlbas under Qazan, Qoblandï and his friend Qaraman decide to march against Khan Köbikti and to steal his horses. The khan, however, is warned by his favorite horse and succeeds in overcoming the Qïpšaqs during the time Qoblandï is asleep. Qoblandï and Qaraman are put into prison, but Köbikt's daughter Qarlïga falls in love with Qoblandï and frees the prisoners. On their way back Qoblandï has a dream-vision, informing him that the Kalmuck Alšaġïr has in his absence subjugated his people and that his parents and his sister consequently live in great distress. When Qoblandï and Qaraman arrive at the captured city, Qurtqa hears Qoblandï's horse neigh and comes out to meet her husband. In the ensuing battle the Qïpšaqs defeat the Kalmucks and Alšaġïr is killed by Qoblandï in a fierce single combat. The valiant Qarlïga, who had followed Qoblandï, kills her own brother Biršimbay because he had been in league with Alšaġïr. Qoblandï is happily reunited with his family, while Qarlïga lives in seclusion, longing for Qoblandï, who even refuses her hospitality when he passes by her yurt on the way to Qaraman's wedding with Alšaġïr's two sisters. The last part of the epic brings the *dénouement* of Qarlïga's love story. After a new attack on the Qïpšaqs, this time by Šošay, Köbikt's nephew, the old heroes with Qoblandï at their head are once again united in war, their number now increased by Qoblandï's six-year-old son Bökenbay. Qarlïga joins the fighting and wounds Qoblandï severely, thus taking revenge for his slighting her. Bökenbay forces Qarlïga to come to his father's sickbed, where a reconcilation is brought about, not least through the mediation of Qoblandï's wife Qurtqa. The epic ends with Qoblandï's marriage to Qarlïga.

In order to carry out the following formulaic analyses, Kalmaganbetov's text has been concorded, together with the text of *Qambar* in Divaev's version. For comparative purposes a short passage from a third major Kazakh heroic epic, *Alpamïs,* has been included. The various versions of the Alpamïs/Alpamïš story have been extensively studied by Zhirmunsky (1974: 117 -348). The Kazakh poems belong together with the Uzbek and Karakalpak *dāstāns* (epic poems) to the so-called Qonġïrat version of the Alpamïš story. As in the Uzbek *Alpāmiš,* there are two brothers, Bayböri and Sarïbay, who have a quarrel, leading to Sarïbay's migration to the land of the Kalmucks. Here his daughter Gülbaršïn is sought after by the khan. Alpamïs, Bayböri's son, comes to

her rescue, fights against the Kalmucks, and wins her hand. In the second part of the epic, Alpamïs becomes, through the machinations of a witch, a captive of the Kalmuck khan Tayšïq. With the help of Qaraköz, the khan's daughter, Alpamïs regains his freedom and defeats the Kalmucks. He returns home, just in time before Gülbaršïn is married to Ultan. As in the Uzbek versions, Alpamïs takes part in the wedding festivities in disguise, but is recognized by his mother and his wife and reveals his identity at the bow-shooting contest. Zhirmunsky mentions ten Kazakh poems; the passage analyzed below is taken from Mayköt Sandïbaev's and Sultanqul Aqqožaev's *Alpamïs,* which comprises 4310 lines (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:7-105).

Kazakh epic poems are interspersed with short passages from one to several lines which contain a nature image or express in proverb-like fashion some general truth. An instance of this feature is found in the following extract from *Qoblandï,* which describes the approach of the Qïzïlbas khan with his warriors to fight with Qoblandï and his men (Kidajš-Pokrovskaja, Nurmagambetova 1975:115):

Köp äskerdi körgesin,
žaw ekenin bilgesin,
šähär žurtï žïynalïp,
Qazan xanï bas bolïp,
urïsuwġa sayalnïp,
žatïr eken žïynalïp,
Arqada bar böriköz,
žaqsïda ġoy täwir söz,
nege umïtsïn körgen köz?
Arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï
köp äskerge keldi kez.
Arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï
köp äskerge kelgende
qïrïq mïṇattï qïzïlbas
qolïna žasïl tuw alïp,
arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï
aq bilegin sïbanïp,
köṇili tasïp keledi
žawdï körip quwanïp.

Seeing the great host
and knowing that they were enemies,
the town-people gathered,
with Qazan-khan at their head
they got ready for the fighting,
they gathered together.
In the steppe the *böriköz* ("wolfs eye," a medicinal herb) grows,
in a good man speech is found;
why should the eye which has seen forget?
Qoblandï, born as a lion,
went to meet the great host.
When Qoblandï, born as a lion,

went to meet the great host,
the forty thousand Qïzïlbas on their horses
2095 had the green flag in their hands,
Qoblandï, born as a lion,
bared his white forearms,
his heart overflowed,
he was overjoyed when he saw the enemy.

The lines in question are 2087-89 *(Arqada . . . köz?);* the three lines are found again as 5697-99, the first and the second line as 2154-55, and the first and the third line as 5317-18. Furthermore, a four-line passage ending with "the *böriköz* of the steppe" *(arqanïṇ böriközine)* is found seven times in *Qoblandï*. There are similar gnomic or "imagistic" lines in the epic punctuating the text at irregular intervals (see Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and Nurmagambetova 1975:52ff.).

Another characteristic of the poetic diction of Kazakh epic poetry, and indeed of Turkic epic poetry in general, is the comparison of the hero to a wild animal, most typically the lion, the tiger, the wolf, or the falcon. Lines 2090, 2092, and 2096 ("Qoblandï, born as a lion") are a case in point. These lines are also formulaic. A formula has been defined by Parry as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (1971:272). As the verse-lines of Kazakh epic poetry (and Turkic epic poetry in general) form comparatively tightly knit syntactical units, it seems reasonable to stipulate that, at least in the case of the shorter verse-line, a formula should be metrically defined as a whole verse-line. If parts of a formula vary beyond the limits of inflectional change or other forms of minor variation, it is customary to group these formulas together into a formulaic system. According to Parry a formulaic system is "a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them not only as single formulas, but also as formulas of a certain type" (275).

In our example the line *Arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï* is a formula, in which Qoblandï can be substituted by other names or expressions referring to the hero, thus forming the following formulaic system:

Arïstan tuwġan	Qoblandï / Qoblan	2090, 2092, 2096, 2311, 3403, 4782, 5603, 47
	Bökenbay	5772
	Qambar bek	*Qamb*. 1744
	batïrdï / batïrïṇ	4178 ("hero") 5556
	qurdas žan	836 ("dear companion")

Outside the system, but related to the concept of the hero as a lion and its formulaic expression, are the lines:

Arïstan tuwġan eken dep	5411 ("the one born as a lion said")
Arïstan Qoblan batïrga	5370 ("to the hero, the lion Qoblan")

A similar formula, comparing the hero to the wolf, is:

Qoblandïday	{böriniņ / böriņiz}	907, 942 ("the wolf Qoblandï") / 1182

Compare also:

Qoblandïday žolbarïsïn	6266 ("the tiger Qoblandi"')

Another formula in the extract given above is line 2094, *qïrïq mïņ attï qïzïlbas* (lit. "the forty-thousand horse-having Qïzïlbas"), occurring six times in *Qoblandï* (2094, 2291, 2296, 2313, 2409, 2443). As a formulaic system its structure is: qualifying expression + *attï* ("horse-having") + name of the rider(s). Compare:

Tarlan	attï Köbikti		2640 ("Köbikti on his horse Tarlan")
Taybuwrïl	attï Qoblandï		3729 ("Qoblandï on his horse Taybuwrïl")
Qara qasqa	attï Qambar bek		*Qamb*. 146 ("Qambar on his black horse with the mark")
žalġïz	attï	{kedeyge / keydeydiņ}	*Qamb*. 624, 705, 1523 ("a poor man, having only one horse")

The following line, *qolïna žasïl tuw alïp* (2095), is also formulaic. Here the pattern is: *qolïna* ("in the hand") + "battle object" + *alïp* (or another form of the verb *al-*, "take"). Compare:

qolïna	{žasïl tuw / {bir-bir oqtï / bir-bir oq} / nayza / ötkir kezdiz}	al-	2095 ("green flag") / 2305 ("arrow") / 5601 / 5478 ("spear") / *Qamb*. 813 ("sharp knife")
qïlïšïn	alïp qolïna		*Qamb*. 516 ("his sword")

In 2098 we have an idiomatic phrase which generates formulaic lines *(köņili tas-):*

köņili tasïp	keledi	2098 ("his heart overflowed with joy")
köņili tasïp	šat bolïp	4496, 5122
köņili bir tasïp	ösipti	6190

Compare in *Qambar* (in passages with verse-lines of 11/12 syllables):

Qaraman qayrattandï	köņili tasïp	1252 ("Qaraman gathered strength, his heart overflowing")

Mïsalï darïyaday	köṇili tasïp	1773 (“like a river his heart overflowing”)

Such phrases and idioms are also found in other lines. In 2097 *bilek* or *qol sïban-* (“to roll up one’s sleeves”) is idiomatic, while *aq* (“white”) is a standing epithet of *bilek* (“forearm”):

Eki qolïn sïbanïp	5791 (“baring his two arms”)
Aq bilegi qan bolïp	2435 (“his white hands becoming bloody”)

The second line of the passage quoted from *Qoblandï* is also clearly a formula:

žaw ekenin bilgesin	2082, 2612, 3111, 3156, 5637, 5675 (lit. “knowing their being the enemy”)

Looking at other variants of this formula, one can specify the following structure: x x x (x) *-i-n* + *bilgesin* where *-i-n* is the possessive + accusative suffix of a verbal form (“his/their being,” normally translated as “that he is/they are”), x x x (x) symbolizes the number of syllables required to fill the line, and *bilgesin* is the governing verbal form (“knowing”). Compare:

žaw kelgenin	bilgesin	5619 (“knowing the enemy’s having come” = “that the enemy has come”)
bala ekenin	bilgesin	5885 (“ . . .that he was a child”)
žay emesin	bilgesin	633 (“ . . . that they were not common”)
žalġïzdïġïn	bilgesin	2314, 2318 (“ . . .that he was alone”)
žïġïlmasïn	bilgesin	6021 (“ . . . that he didn’t fall”)
ayamasïn	bilgesin	6115 (“. . . that she had no pity”)

These examples show the close connection between formulaic diction and syntax in Kazakh. One might argue here that any line with *bilgesin* is bound to fit the structure above on purely syntactic and metrical grounds and that it might therefore be sensible to restrict the notion of a formulaic system to semantically related lines. It is, however, difficult to apply such a semantic criterion. The line *žay emesin bilgesin* (“knowing their not being common”) does not seem particularly close in meaning to *žaw ekenin bilgesin* (“knowing their being the enemy”), yet it is precisely the line which occurs in the same context as the formulaic line *žaw ekenin bilgesin* above:

Köp äskerdi körgesin, žay emesin bilgesin	632-33 (“Seeing the large host, knowing that they were not of a common sort. . . .”

It must therefore be recognized that syntax and meter are a strong binding force for the formulaic diction of Kazakh epics and that the dividing line between formula or formulaic system and syntactic parallelism (with partly

overlapping lexical material) cannot always be drawn easily.

Similar arguments apply to other lines of the quoted passage. *Keldi kez* ("he/they encountered/came to") in 2091 (and similarly *kelgende* in 2093) is constructed with the dative, giving the pattern x x x *-ge keldi kez (kelgende),* a pattern to which other lines conform as well:

⎧Qoblandï-ġa⎫ ⎩šanšïsuw-ġa⎭	keldi kez	2158 ("he came to Qoblandï") 5702 ("they came to the fighting")

Compare also:

šatïrïm-a	keldiṇ kez	6369 ("you came to my tent")
Qoblandï, Qurtqa	keldi kez	5322 ("Qoblandï and Qurtqa came") (nominative!)

The dative is also required by *saylan-* ("to prepare oneself for something") in 2085. Compare:

⎧arttïruwġa⎫ ⎩ oyatpaqqa⎭	saylandï	257 ("he prepared for the loading") 2698 (" . . . to wake up")

Compare also the slightly different constructions:

urïsqa šïġïp	saylandï	*Qamb*. 1674 ("he prepared to go to battle")
urïsqa šïqtï	žaġdaylap	4935 ("awaiting the right moment to go to battle")
Saymandarïn	saylanïp	*Alpamïs* 725 ("preparing his gear")

The phrase *bas bolïp* in 2084 is also dependent on syntax, at least to a certain degree, as it implies a subject and an object ("someone being [at] the head of somebody"):

Qazan xanï	bas bolïp	2084, 2152 ("Qazan khan being at the head")
Toqtar	bas bop köp qïpšaq	5146 ("Toqtar being at the head of the many Qïpsaq")
qïrïq žigitke	bas bolïp	*Qamb*. 1040 ("being at the head of forty warriors")

The remaining lines of the illustrative passage are not formulaic, although similar lines can be found in the texts and a larger reference corpus might reveal closer parallels. For lines 2083 and 2086 compare:

birte-birte	žïynaldï	2309 ("they gathered one by one")
adamnïṇ bärin	žiynadï	*Qamb,* 676 ("he gathered all the men")

For line 2099 compare:

quldar körip	quwandï	493 (“seeing the slaves he rejoiced”)
žurtïn žïyïp	quwanïp	586 (“gathering his people he rejoiced”)
žawdï körip	qïzdï arqam	2355 (“seeing the enemy, I became angry”)

Marking the passage along the lines of oral-formulaic analysis (with double lines for cliches, single lines for clearly established formulas, and dotted lines for syntactically or metrically conditioned formulas), we get the following picture:

Köp äskerdi körgesin,
žaw ekenin bilgesin,
šähär žurtï žiynalïp,
Qazan xanï bas bolïp,
2085 urïsuwġa saylanïp,
žatïr eken žïynalïp,
Arqada bar böriköz,
zagsïda ġoy täwïr söz,
nege umïtsïn körgen köz?
2090 Arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï,
köp äskerge keldi kez.
Arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï,
köp äskerge kelgende
qïrïq mïŋ attï qïzïlbas
2095 qolïna žasïl tuw alïp,
arïstan tuwġan Qoblandï
aq bilegin sïbanïp,
köŋili tasïp keledi
žawdï körip quwanïp.

This means that out of 19 lines 16, or 84%, are formulaic.

Although the chosen passage is typical of the heroic epic in that it describes the beginning of a battle, it is not a type-scene in the narrow sense of the term, that is, a scene with a definite succession of motifs and formulaic expressions (see Lord 1960:68-98). In Kazakh, as well as in other Turkic traditions, such scenes or themes are for instance the description of the hero and his horse *(ta‘rīf),* the hero’s (or a messenger’s) journey on horseback through the desert, or the hero’s ride to meet the enemy. For the latter I will give an example from *Qambar,* describing the approach of the hero on his horse to fight with the Kalmuck khan (from Divaev’s text, Auezov and Smirnova 1959:71):

1565 Bastïrïp qattï qadamïn
qara qasqa tulpardï
qaharlanïp uradï;
qustay ušïp ašuwmen
tezde žetip baradï.
1570 Äzimbayġa qayrïlmay,
šatïrïna patšanïŋ
atïnïŋ moynïn buradï.

Üzengisin širenip,
aq nayzasïn süyenip,
1575 tumsïgïn tïġïp tulpardïṇ
esiginde turadï.

1565 Making his horse step out,
he beat the black *tulpar* (winged horse) with the mark,
filled with wrath;
flying in his wrath like a bird,
he quickly reached his goal.
1570 Without turning to Äzimbay,
he directed his horse
to the padishah's tent.
Standing on his stirrups,
leaning on his white spear,
1575 pressing his *tulpar's* head forward,
he came to a halt at his entrance.

In this passage we find three types of formulaic lines. Lines 1566 and 1572 are formulas belonging to formulaic systems independent of particular typescenes. The evidence for these lines from *Qambar* and *Qoblandï* is the following:

Qara qasqa	tulpar	-dï -ï -dïṇ -ġa -da		*Qamb,* 380, 420, 503, 527, 1394,1566, 1609, *Qobl*. 2217, 4822 ("the black *tulpar* with the mark")
Qara qasqa	at	-tï -qa	xxx	*Qamb*. 146, 196, 238 ("the black horse with the mark")
atïnïṇ moynïn	bur	-adï -ïstï		*Qamb*. 913, 1572 ("he turned the neck of his horse")
atïnïṇ basïn burmadïṇ				*Qobl*. 5059 ("you didn't turn the head of your horse")

Line 1569 can be classified as a metrically/syntactically conditioned formula, conforming to the pattern:

x x (x) žetip	baradï keledi	("he/they went/came reaching. . .")

Compare:

tezde	žetip baradï	*Qamb*. 1569 ("got there quickly")
šähärge	žetip baradï	*Qobl*. 3773, 5069, 5669 ("reached the town etc.")
Bayġa	žetip keledi	*Qobl*. 374, 2018, 3770, 5797, 5807 ("reached the race etc.")

There are finally four lines which are both formulaic and characteristic of the particular theme of the hero's ride (1567-68, 1573-74). For lines 1567-68 compare (*Qamb*. 230-31):

Ašuwmen ayamay
tulparġa qamšï uradï

Angrily, without pity,
he beat the tulpar with the whip.

Swinging the whip is a common motif of the hero's ride in Uzbek epic poetry as well; thus we find for instance in Fāzïl Yoldaš-oġlï's version of *Alpāmïš* the following lines (Ālimdžān et al. 1971:63, 83):

bedāw ātga	gamči čatdï	("he gave the courser the whip")
čuw-ha, dedi,	qamči tārtdï	("he said: 'Hoy!' and swung the whip")
ču-ha, dedi,	qamči čātdï	("he said: 'Hoy!' and swung the whip")

or in Ergaš Džumanbulbul-oġlï's version of *Rawšan* (Zarif 1971:77, 78; Reichl 1985b:71):

šip-šip qamči tārtdï	("he swung the whip whistling")
qamči beripču dedi	("he gave the whip and said: 'Hoy!"')

For lines 1573-74 compare:

at üstinen	širenip	*Qobl*. 174 ("on his horse with stretched-out legs")
Nayzasïna	süyenip	*Qobl*. 6239 ("leaning on his spear")

In this connection the variant *Aq nayzasï sartïldap (Qamb*. 1007, "his white spear clattering") is interesting, since the clanging of the hero's weapons and armor and of his horse's headgear, stirrups, and trappings is again a common motif of Uzbek epic poetry. This motif is, however, also found in *Qambar* (205-8), with wording practically identical to that of the Uzbek *dāstāns* (e.g. in *Alpāmïš;* Ālimdžān et al. 1971 :82-83):

Quyïnday šaṇï burqïrap,
atqan oqtay zïrqïrap,
qïladï žaqïn alïstï.

Like a storm raising the dust,
racing along like a flying arrow,
he shortened the long distance.

As a last example I would like to quote a short passage from one of the Kazakh epics on Alpamïs/Alpāmïš (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:23):

725 Saymandarïn saylanïp,

altïnnan kemer baylanïp,
abžïlanday tolġanïp,
qïzïl nayza qolġa alïp
Šubarġa qarġïp minedi,
Qudaydan medet tiledi
qarġïp minip žas bala
ašuwï kernep žönedi.
Läšker tartïp keledi,
awïzdïqpen alïsïp,
ušqan quspen žarïsïp,
key žerde bala šoqïtïp,
key žerde basïn tögedi,
Bir kün šapsa Šubar at
aylïq žer alïp beredi.

He prepared his gear,
bound his belt round his waist,
turned about like a water-snake,
took his red spear into his hand,
jumped onto Šubar,
asked God for his help,
the young man jumped up,
rode along, filled with wrath.
He went to war,
pulling his reins tight,
racing with the flying birds,
where the young man was galloping,
where he was heading for.
When the horse Šubar had galloped for one day,
he had covered the distance of a monthly journey.

There is no space here to go into a detailed discussion of every line of this passage. Briefly, we can note various motifs and their formulaic expression which have already been touched upon: the preparation of the hero *(saylanïp*-formula, 725), his taking a spear (728—here a red one rather than a white one), his riding along filled with wrath (732), and the comparison of his ride to the flight of a bird (735). With reference to *Qambar* and *Qoblandï,* lines 725, 728, 730, 733, and 735 can be shown to be formulaic. Furthermore, there is in *Qoblandï* a formula with the two variants *Endi atïna minedi* and *Endi minip atïna* ("now he gets on his horse"), with which lines 729 and 731 might be compared. Lines lexically and semantically similar or identical to lines 732, 736, and 737 can also be found in *Qambar* and *Qoblandï,* and the putting on of a golden belt (726) or the swift progress of the horse (738-39) are common enough motifs also in Uzbek epic poetry (see Zhirmunsky and Zarifov 1947:366ff.). Finally, as the editors of *Alpamïs* point out (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:491), the last four lines of the passage quoted are a *cliché* in Kazakh epic poetry.

Summarizing the results of the foregoing analysis, it can be stated

that Kazakh epic poetry is indeed highly formulaic. This formulaic character of the Kazakh epic is, however, by no means uniform. Various types of formulaic lines can be distinguished: *cliché*-like "imagistic" or gnomic lines, epithet-centered formulas or formulaic systems ("the hero, born as a lion"), formulaic lines which are part of a type-scene (e.g. the clanging of weapons), or formulas that are generated by the syntactic structure of the Turkic languages. By the same token, the diction of Kazakh epic poetry, in all its traditionality, is by no means stereotyped or merely repetitive. The singer, in particular the good singer, is no manipulator of *clichés* and formulas, but a creative artist, a master and not a slave of his technique.

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Oral Verse-Making in Homer's *Odyssey*

William C. Scott

The Milman Parry Lectures on Oral Tradition for 1989

I. The Variety of Tales

The exploration of oral poetry over the past sixty years has evitably turned scholars' interest to Homer, who offers two very lively, highly poeticized, portraits of oral poets in his *Odyssey*: Phemius, the singer for the family of Laertes in its ancestral hall on the island of Ithaca, and Demodocus, the blind singer of tales for the fabulously glamorous Phaeacians in remote Scheria. These two singers, accompanied by a lyre, performing narrative songs about the Trojan expedition, the returns from Troy, and the escapades of gods and goddesses, provide entertainment during banquets. Demodocus receives the longer introduction:

> The herald came near leading the excellent singer, whom the Muse loves above all, and gave him both good and evil; she took away his eyes but gave him the gift of sweet song. Then Pontonoos placed a silver-studded chair for him in the midst of the feasters, setting it against a tall column. He hung the clear-sounding lyre on a peg above his head and showed him how to take it in his hands. Nearby he placed a basket and a beautiful table, and a cup of wine to drink whenever his spirit urged him. The others put forth their hands to the good food that lay before them, and when they had put away their desire for drinking and eating, the Muse urged the singer to sing of men's glories, the tale whose fame rises up into broad heaven.[1]
>
> (*Odyssey* 8.62-74)

The function of these poets, at least on the level of plot, seems no more serious than entertainment. The necessity for such singers to provide entertainment is made clear on three occasions when their song fails to entertain. Twice, when Alcinous notices that one of his guests is not enjoying the song but is weeping, he stops the singer and introduces other

[1] Translations by the author.

types of entertainment. When Phemius sings about the returns of the Greeks from Troy in Book 1 of the *Odyssey,* the suitors seem to enjoy the story, and Telemachus and his strange guest Athena/Mentes are at least able to ignore it, but Penelope hearing this song in her bedroom comes down to ask the bard to find another theme since this song is not amusement for her but rather a painful reminder of her lost and wandering husband. Telemachus, however, as the surrogate master of the house, sets his mother straight on the practices of oral poets:

> My mother, why do you begrudge the excellent singer the giving of delight in whatever way his mind stirs him? Singers are not to blame, but Zeus is responsible who gives what he wishes to toiling men—each of us. For this singer there is no censure when he sings the evil fate of the Greeks; men most applaud the newest song which falls upon their ears. Let your heart and spirit endure hearing.
>
> (*Odyssey* 1.346-53)

In other words, professional singers should be free to find the story which will allow them to sing most spiritedly and to offer the best entertainment to their audiences; Telemachus acknowledges that a professional singer must sing a narrative which will earn him the greatest applause. Stories which touch a sensitive nerve in a member of the audience and cause grief are really his or her individual problem, since the singer should be free to choose any story in his repertoire. The test of a good singer in this setting is his skillful telling of a tale.

A small amount of reflection, however, will make it immediately clear that these two professional bards are not the only storytellers in the Homeric poems. A variety of characters within the poems tell stories: some of these tales are true and some consciously false; some are presented as fact and some as fiction; some are intended to entertain, and some to give information requested by or needed by another character. There are different types of tales, different types of storytellers, and different types of audiences. Storytellers range from the formal professional paid court singers to the more cracker-barrel type yarn spinners who sing to pass the long, cold nights. As storytellers vary so do their audiences and the situations of both. Yet there is a series of common features in each of the tales which suggests preconceptions of what oral verse-making and tale-telling involve. Even if Homer nowhere in his poems presents a detailed picture of these preconceptions, it is my purpose in this discussion to develop the outline of a Homeric tale-teller and then to fill in the coloration to make a fuller, yet accurate, portrait against which a modern critic can judge the performance of the individual singers in the Homeric poems.

In creating this portrait I will use as equivalents several words which have acquired sharply different connotations in contemporary analytical scholarship, but which I feel can be used interchangeably in this discussion cause they are equated in Homer's poems. Tale-tellers in Homer do tell their stories in meter, they are singers (often accompanied by the lyre), and they neither write nor work from notes; therefore storytellers are presented as oral poets or singers. Homer's storytellers can expand or contract their tales to suit their audiences or themes; thus storytellers in the Homeric poems are presented as improvisers rather than reciters of memorized texts. Therefore I will equate the terms storyteller, oral poet, singer, and improviser in describing the poets presented by Homer; but, of course, I acknowledge that none of these terms need define Homer himself.[2]

Given the variety of elements which comprise Homer's portrait of the oral poet, it is best to begin by identifying the varieties of tales told in the *Odyssey.* There are at least four types of narratives: (1) stories for entertainment; (2) stories which offer information; (3) stories intended to mislead; and (4) stories intended to educate.

The easiest stories to identify are those narrative tales which are told purely for entertainment with no serious purpose or instructional aim at all. Phemius in Book 1 tells the suitors about the returns of the Greeks. Inasmuch as the suitors were not themselves involved in the Trojan War nor do they ever allude to lost relatives whose fate remains uncertain, these songs are little more than irrelevant, innocent accompaniment for their dinner.[3] Similarly Demodocus entertains the Phaeacians with tales about the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, the affair of Ares and Aphrodite, and the Wooden Horse. For these men—both the poets and their audiences—and for these occasions, oral narrative song is expected to be solely entertainment.

The significant factors in defining such stories are the intention of the teller, the nature of the occasion, and the quality of the audience for whom the songs are sung. The suitors, occupying Odysseus' palace for at least the tenth year, have little to do; their only real problem is to devise new ways to endure a never-ending series of boringly similar days spent in each other's somewhat questionable company. Think how the suitors fill

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[2] There are distinctions among storytellers: Demodocus was taught by the Muses (8.62-4), while Phemius was self-taught and inspired by a god (22.347 f.); they sing traditional subjects, while Odysseus draws on his own experiences in telling his adventures in Books 9-12.

[3] Actually the stories of the returns might have great relevance to them—at least one of those returns; however, the suitors have so objectivized the singer and the song that they can find only entertainment in the performance.

their time: they eat, they talk, they throw dice, they sing, and they engage their minds—such as they are—in plotting petty intrigues, all of which miscarry. Similarly the Phaeacians have few pressures in their blissful kingdom and seek only diversion. Their king Alcinous explains their characteristic pursuits to his guest Odysseus, urging him to remember their excellence and

> the things which Zeus has made our activities even from the days of our fathers. For we are not blameless boxers nor wrestlers, but we do run swiftly and are the best in sailing; always is feasting dear to us and music and dancing and changes of clothes, warm baths and beds. But come now, you who are the best dancers of the Phaeacians, begin the dance so that the stranger may tell his friends at home how much we excel the others in sailing and running and dancing and song.
>
> (*Odyssey* 8.244-53)

For men who have aims or goals no higher than the suitors or the Phaeacians, narrative tales can be merely entertainment because there is no incident in their daily lives which is anything other than entertainment. Innocent tales become good passers of time.

But for the banquet songs of Phemius and Demodocus there is, in fact, another type of audience, listeners who are each in a far different situation but unrecognized by the bards: Penelope and Odysseus. Penelope does not find random tales of those Greeks who have already come back to their homes either irrelevant or innocent. Odysseus hears the tale of his own exploits at Troy following the entrance into the city of the wooden horse and he begins to weep. As Homer reports it, Odysseus' tears

> were unnoticed by all the others but Alcinous alone observed him and understood since he was sitting nearby and heard him groaning heavily. Immediately he spoke among the Phaeacians, the lovers of the oar: "Hear me, leaders and counsellors of the Phaeacians—let Demodocus now stay the clear sounding lyre, for by no means is he giving pleasure to all with his song."
>
> (*Odyssey* 8.532-38)

Both unrecognized listeners provide a test for my thesis. In both passages the situation calls for entertainment; a tale causing grief would be inappropriate to the situation and thus unprofessional for the bards. The professional singers are unaware of the few individuals in their audiences whose reception of the tale is conditioned by their special situation, and even though the singers commit no willful breach of their code, the same song is received differently by different listeners. Thus the reception of these two songs identifies neatly two of the three elements, namely audience and situation, which in differing mixes can create a highly varied series of songs.

As another test of this thesis, let me cite several occasions when the telling of narrative adventures is much more serious since the occasion and the audience have shifted. Anyone can understand the need for a highly convincing story when a girl's mother finds that her daughter's boyfriend is wearing clothes which she recognizes as clothes from her own household. In Phaeacia Queen Arete is suspicious when she first sees Odysseus and asks a dangerous question:

> Among them the white-armed Arete began speaking, for she recognized the mantle and the cloak, the beautiful garments which she herself had made along with her servant women. And addressing him she spoke winged words: "Stranger, first I myself have a question for you: who are you and from where do you come? Who gave you these clothes? Did you not say that you came here wandering over the sea?"
>
> (*Odyssey* 7.233-39)

Odysseus tactfully tells her the true story of his journey to Phaeacia stressing his helplessness, which has now been alleviated by the kindness and understanding of her daughter, Nausicaa. The convincing power of this story serves to gain him hospitality from the Phaeacians. When Telemachus has journeyed to Pylos escaping the suitors and asks Nestor for information about his father, he does not want a pretty story; the old warrior responds by telling him the factual story of his own return and the returns of others. He concludes his tale with the story of Agamemnon's death and Orestes' revenge and then lectures Telemachus on learning from the instructive model of Orestes. The presentation of clear facts is important to Nestor as the teller, and he also seeks to provide a parallel instructive example to encourage the young man to proper action. There are other primarily informative narratives like this. In Sparta after Telemachus asks for a true story, Menelaus tells him the long tale of his return focusing on the story of Proteus, the old man of the sea. This story is not told to entertain, but rather to support the reliability of his information. The story is too long and thus serves to characterize the slightly inept Menelaus, who at this point promises Telemachus three horses and a chariot. Telemachus refuses, assuring Menelaus that he enjoys his tale but asking him to keep the horses because he comes from one of the smallest and rockiest of the famed Greek isles which has no space to pasture horses or to raise feed. But the long story with all its information has demonstrated Menelaus' possession of enough true information that he is worthy of belief in his report about Odysseus on the island of Kalypso. Later Telemachus tells Penelope the true facts of his journey to Pylos and Sparta. In all these examples each listener has a strong reason from his or her situation to ask for a true account, making pleasure or entertainment at best a secondary goal, and each of the tale-tellers realizes how serious the

question is and responds with as much attention to the trustworthiness of the story as possible. Each of these speakers is careful to state that he is telling the truth (*Odyssey* 3.254, 4.349f., 7.297, and 17.108). It is, however, the occasion and the identity of the hearer which determine the aim of the storyteller.

These are two different types of storytelling: stories primarily for entertainment and stories to tell true facts. Both are easy to identify—and if there were further epics discovered, it would be no problem to identify other examples of such stories on the basis of these three variables: the intent of the teller, the willingness or receptivity of the audience, and the situation surrounding both. With the discovery of these variables and the demonstration that even a small shift in any one of them—for example, in the identity of the hearer—can radically affect the nature of the narrative told, there is a gain in discovering the outlines of the portrait of the artist which Homer has painted. But such subtle shifts produce only an outline; it is now time to apply colors and develop the shading which will bring such a poet into a more lively existence.

My method for understanding more fully the nature of the storyteller in the Homeric poems requires the introduction of a major change in one of those variables, and then the observation of the resulting responses in the others. From the evidence available in the *Odyssey,* the most obvious variable in which one can introduce a major change is the situation. There are six examples of stories which are earnestly intended to sound true—to sound as though they are the second type of story I have talked about, but are known to the teller to be lies as he speaks them. In a sense this is the storyteller's art raised to its fullest potential: making the false or fictional seem unquestionably true.[4] For this type of tale-telling Odysseus is Homer's master storyteller. He is the only teller of the six consciously false tales told in the *Odyssey:* Odysseus to Athena (Book 13), Odysseus to Eumaeus, the swineherd (twice in Book 14), Odysseus to Antinoos, the ringleader of the suitors (Book 17), and Odysseus to Penelope (Book 19). In each case the situation dominates all other concerns, because the teller will be exposed to danger if his identity is known and it is discovered that the story is fictional. There is also the false story of Odysseus to his father Laertes (Book 24), which is a special version of the disguise motif with its peculiar motivation.

In Book 13 the sleeping Odysseus is deposited on Ithaca along with his presents from Alcinous as the Phaeacians sail back home, leaving him alone on the beach. When he wakes, he does not recognize his own native

[4] As Homer admits of Odysseus at 19.203. Although this line resembles Hes. *Theogony* 27, I feel that Thalmann (1984:172) is correct to see both as expressions of a traditional conception of the singer's art as opposed to Alcinous' description at 11.364-66. Cf. West (1971) on line 27.

island because the goddess Athena has shed a mist over his eyes. When she—the goddess herself—comes to greet him disguised as a shepherd, the thoughts of Odysseus are filled with fear for himself and suspicion of danger:

> Ah me, who are the men into whose land I have come now? Are they arrogant and wild and unjust, or lovers of men and are their minds godly? Where shall I take these many goods? Where shall I myself go? . . . Now I do not know where to hide them, yet I will not leave them here to become the spoil for others.
>
> (*Odyssey* 13.200-4, 207-8)

He is alone, on the defensive, and needs information from a trustworthy source. Thus in his presentation to the first person he meets, the unknown young shepherd who is in reality Athena, Odysseus casts himself into a role which will serve his needs: he plays a noble man who has suffered a misfortune and is not only in need of aid but deserving of it.

In addition, this episode on the beach serves as the introduction to the second half of the *Odyssey*. Immediately after Odysseus' false tale Athena breaks through her disguise, compliments Odysseus on his cleverness in designing stories, helps him to conceal his goods in a cave, and begins to plan the destruction of the suitors with him. As the culminating step of this plan, she shrivels him and dulls his eyes, clothes him in rags, and transforms him into an old beggar. This change of costume, however, is merely the physical realization of the disguise which will be dependent upon Odysseus' storytelling ability for its success, an ability which Athena has already tested by meeting him in her threatening disguise as the unknown shepherd and asking him to identify himself. In other words, there is an external form to the disguise which Odysseus wears in the last half of the epic—and, to be sure, on occasions this external disguise can be removed by Athena and can even be seen through. Yet the internal discipline continually demanded to sustain the disguise, a discipline which is rooted in the will and the wiliness of Odysseus, is more important. This internal disguise can be removed by Odysseus himself whenever he desires but must be maintained even under the closest scrutiny and must never be penetrated if his presence is to be kept secret until he chooses the right moment. It is significant that at the beginning of Book 22 Odysseus reveals himself to the suitors by dropping the pretense of being the old beggar and by announcing that he has returned; but at this long-awaited pivotal moment the external costume is so subordinated to the inner-disguise that it is never specifically removed.

This tale in Book 13 adds complexities to the three variables, complexities which are also found in the other false tales:

1. The teller must consciously fashion a false tale which will be perceived as true, presenting him as a character he is not;
2. To the hearer the tale-teller must seem utterly truthful and believable as the assumed character;
3. The situation is constantly perceived by the teller as threatening while it must be seen by the hearer as an incident in one's normal, everyday life—and the story and the character it creates must serve both perceptions.

To put it simply, Odysseus' false tales in the second half of the *Odyssey,* when he has returned to Ithaca, are told in a dangerous situation, and the various hearers, whether they know it or not, are deeply involved in the success or failure of the narrator.

That is the first element of background for these consciously false tales: the dominating importance of the situation for teller and audience. The second is the series of elements from which the stories are composed. The longest of these lying tales is Odysseus' story to Eumaeus, the loyal swineherd, in Book 14. In this narrative it is possible to identify forty-eight narrative elements (i.e., objects, actions, standard phrases, and vignettes), which are joined to form the whole tale.[5] Odysseus begins with these lines:

> Now I claim to be from broad Crete, the son of a rich man. (= home and status by birth)
>
> (*Odyssey* 14.199 f.)

After telling about his illegitimate birth he continues:

> (My father) at that time was honored among the Cretans in the land as a god for his good fortune and his wealth and his glorious sons. (= his position as the [bastard] son of a rich and noble man)
>
> (*Odyssey* 14.205 f.)

Compare the beginning of the false story told to Athena on the beach in Book 13:

> I learned about Ithaca even in broad Crete far away over the sea. And now I have myself come with these many possessions—yet leaving just as many at home for my children I have fled . . . . (= his home and his position as a rich man)
>
> (*Odyssey* 13.256-59)

[5] See the full list in the Appendix.

In Book 19 when Penelope asks the old beggar who he is, he uses a much expanded form of the same two elements, but he is really only saying that he is from Crete, a rich son of a noble father whose ancestor once conversed with the gods:

> There is a certain land, Crete, in the middle of the wine-dark sea, a beautiful and rich land surrounded with water. In it are many men, innumerable, and ninety cities. Language is mixed with language. There are Achaeans, great-hearted Eteocretans, Cydonians, Dorians divided into three tribes, and noble Pelasgians. Among the cities is Cnossos, a great city where Minos was king for nine-year periods and conversed with great Zeus. He was the father of my father . . . .
>
> (*Odyssey* 19.172-80)

This passage is longer and more descriptive—and not helpful to historians who would like to use these details to structure an accurate picture of Crete, especially in the reference to the Dorians who are mentioned only here in the Homeric poems. Some critics would regard these unique lines as added to the earlier text of the *Odyssey;* if they were excluded from the passage in Book 19, a neater and tauter description would result:

> In it are many men, innumerable, and ninety cities. Among the cities is Cnossos, a great city . . . .

The catalog, then, is detail which does not seem to fit well with the phrasing of parallel passages in the other false stories and which can be removed to leave a seamless whole. Probably somebody did add this section of descriptive detail, but in all probability that someone was the singer Odysseus, who desiring to extend his story at this point acts as an oral poet in adding customary information about his subject. Later I will discuss why Homer has Odysseus extend this part of his story, but for the moment notice that the technique is based on the complementary processes of expansion and compression of elements which are typical in Homeric poetry. In addition, beginning a tale by identifying your home is common, as can be seen by comparing other characters who tell their own stories: in Book 15 Eumaeus begins to tell Odysseus who he is by describing his home, the island of Syrie (*Od.* 15.403-14); the woman in his story introduces herself to a friendly Phoenician by saying: "I claim to be from bronze-rich Sidon . . .. " (*Od.* 15.425); and Odysseus begins his lying tale to his father with these words: "I am from Alybas where I lived in a glorious house" (*Od.* 24.304; cf. also 9.19-36).

Such repetition of components is common to oral poets, yet it is so simply expressed and straightforward that a poet improvising to satisfy the demands of the moment or the situation could easily seek variation

throughout each story. There were many such items and larger story elements which could be adapted and arranged in different ways to make a tale which seemed fresh and apt in its setting. Here is a list of components in a section of the story to Eumaeus in Book 14 (these are items 34-46 in the analysis in the Appendix):

1. A man is taken on board a ship to be sold into slavery (= the Shanghai story)
2. There is a storm and the ship is destroyed[6]
3. Zeus gives the man aid and saves him
4. He clings to a floating ship timber and is washed ashore (the Robinson Crusoe / Swiss Family Robinson story)
5. He is given a friendly reception when found on the beach
6. The king of the new country sends him on a ship to his home
7. The crew of the ship is treacherous and takes him as their prisoner
8. They tie him up on the ship when they pull into shore
9. He escapes with the gods' aid and is saved

This is the tale of a rough-and-tumble adventurer who is telling his story to show that he is an able and experienced man of the world—a man to be watched by an enemy, but appreciative of good treatment and a staunch friend to a good host.

Variation of these very elements in Odysseus' false tale to Athena in Book 13 produces a different story (the numbers in the text indicate the elements from the above list):

> (The narrator has killed a man and)
> (1) I went immediately to the ship and pleaded with the lordly Phoenicians, and I gave them spoil which satisfied their hearts. I asked them to put me on board and to take me to Pylos or to shining Elis, where the Epeians rule; (2) but the force of the wind drove them from there much against their will, and they did not wish to deceive me. (3/4) Driven from that course we arrived here in the night, and eagerly rowed into the harbor; and we had no thought of food much though we craved it, but going off the ship we all lay down. (7/8) Then sweet sleep came over me in my exhaustion; taking my goods from the hollow ship they set them where I was lying on the sand. (9) Embarking they departed for well-settled Sidon.
>
> (*Odyssey* 13.272-86)

The story is completely changed in quality and tone even though the elements identified in Book 14 remain the same:

[6] This section reveals its traditional quality, since 14.301-9 are repeated at 12.403-6 and 415-9.

1. *The Shanghai story*. In Book 13 a man is taken aboard a ship and buys his passage (the difference is that the fare is paid willingly in advance rather than being collected when he is sold as a slave), but the point has been made that the man in this story is rich and thus able to avoid a threat of slavery through his influence or his strength.

2. *The storm destroys the ship*. In Book 13 the storm is not that strong, though it prevents the ship from proceeding on its course and forces the sailors to seek harbor on Ithaca. The rich stranger has arrived on Ithaca with lots of goods and thus cannot say that his ship was destroyed; he characterizes himself as an honored passenger on a ship run by respectful Phoenicians who for some reason have cared for him and his possessions. In both stories the storm is involved in creating an unexpected landfall, an opening for a new event.

3/4. *Zeus aids the man and saves him / he is carried on a floating ship beam to shore*. These are extreme expedients which are not needed in Book 13 because the Phoenicians are willing to care for the man: they pulled hard on those oars to get to shore, so hard that they were all exhausted and lay down on the beach. He has become a friend and colleague to the crew.

5/6. *He is given a friendly reception on the beach*. This is what is happening as he is telling the story to a very welcoming stranger and thus this element cannot directly be part of the story. In addition, he is told that he is already home so there is no need to send him home—and, after all, he is the king in this land.

7/8. *The crew takes him as a prisoner and ties him up on the ship when they go ashore*. In Book 13 sleep incapacitates him leaving him at the mercy of the crew, but since they were portrayed as respectful of him, they unload his goods and leave them.

9. *By the gods' aid he escapes and is saved*. Here he is saved by men's good will but now needs help and asks the Ithacan stranger; he is not in sufficiently desperate straits to need the gods' help, even though in fact he is being aided by Athena.

These stories are very different in their details even though both are structured on the basis of the same series of components. Note the difference in the situations. In Book 14 the hero and swashbuckling adventurer tells of his life of action and adventure; in Book 13 the stranger is asking for help and protection in his moment of need. He is alone on a strange island which has been revealed to be his home; yet the previous news of home has not been good and he must protect himself until he finds his bearings and learns how dangerous the situation really is. Therefore certain elements are omitted from his story—or, more accurately, deleted

from the archetypal story. He does not want to appear as destitute as the adventurer in the story in Book 14; therefore, there can be no devastating storm which destroys the ship, no lucky escape from the sea, no hostile crew which feels safe in shanghaiing him, and no trap from which he must escape. Third, he lives through none of the rugged and risky perils of the adventure story in Book 14; rather he portrays himself as the independent, righteous killer of the prince who tried to rob him of his wealth—but stealthily, at night, from a secret ambush. He was thus required to leave wife and children to seek a life on his own; he is not a man of daring, but rather an unlucky banker.[7]

Some elements which are in both stories have been modified or even reversed. The fictional hero goes aboard a ship but is not shanghaied as a potential slave; rather he buys his own ticket. In both stories the crew gets money; in the first as a kind of pirate, cut-throat group, but in the second as travel agents. He arrives at a strange destination because of a strong storm; in Book 14 the storm is strong enough to destroy the ship and all hands, thus appropriate to the chancy world in which the adventurer lives; in Book 13, because the winds are too strong, the sailors are forced to pass by their destination and make for the next good harbor. Then this crew finds him asleep and can do with him what they will, but they resist; they free him and his goods and sail off. In Book 14 there are two kidnap attempts in which the adventurer escapes with the aid of a god to triumph over the forces of evil; in Book 13, a tired man at the end of his trip is unloaded by porters and allowed to catch up on his sleep.

It may look as though I am describing two versions of the same story with the components given different values in order to make each tale fit its situation, but that is probably too simple an explanation since it ignores the omitted items. There are common elements in the Shanghai story and the Robinson Crusoe / Swiss Family Robinson story; but these do not become a part of any one single story until the poet borrows them and organizes them into the tale which he is telling at the particular moment in accordance with a plan. I am going to call this plan the "narrative conception"—or to borrow a term from current literary theory, the "matrix" for that particular story.[8] The assumption of this type of

[7] Yet there is the warning in lines 13.258-70.

[8] I use here a word discussed by Michael Riffaterre (1978:19): "The poem results from the transformation of the matrix, a minimal and literal sentence, into a longer, complex, and nonliteral periphrasis. The *matrix* is hypothetical, being only the grammatical and lexical actualization of a structure. The matrix may be epitomized in one word, in which case the word will not appear in the text. It is always actualized in successive variants; the form of these variants is governed by the first or primary actualization, the *model*. Matrix, model,

variation is strengthened when selected elements recur in the other false stories with different emphasis and order, consequently conveying a different tone and significance:

1. In book 17 where Odysseus is trying to goad the angry Antinoos into rash action, he plays the cheeky braggart who was once rich and strong and has now come on hard times; he tells how he led his men to Egypt and lost the war there through their rashness. This Egyptian expedition fits the persona being created by Odysseus in Book 17, it suits his situation, and it is a verbal representation of the underlying matrix. It is also repeated word for word from the longest version of the story in Book 14, the adventurer's story,[9] and, of course, it does not suit the righteous banker of Book 13 and is omitted there.

2. In Book 19 the fictitious Aithon meets Penelope by the fire alone at night to tell her news of Odysseus which he has picked up on his travels. He says that he saw Odysseus who came to Crete, but when Odysseus was delayed in sailing, Aithon was able to be his host for twelve days. The vignette about Odysseus being about to sail but then being delayed occurs also in the story of the adventurer in Book 14, but there Odysseus while visiting the Thesprotians had gone off to the oracle at Dodona seeking Zeus' aid in plotting his return to Ithaca. To Eumaeus in Book 14 Odysseus tells the story which shows him appreciating the real Odysseus as an active man willing to deal with the danger from the suitors because he knows that this persona will most easily gain him the friendship and alliance of Eumaeus—and Odysseus in disguise has great need of friends. To Penelope he tells a gentle story which is encouraging about Odysseus, using the delayed-voyage incident to show the successful trip of Odysseus to Troy many years ago and the warmth of his reception along the way. Both tales use the same elements, but each alters the motivation in radical ways. Analytic critics have suggested that one or the other of these elements is the original, and a later copier or reworker of the original poem then shortened or extended the basic story to imitate the real Homer. But, in fact, Odysseus is only acting like an oral singer when he repeatedly uses similar elements allowing each to be lengthened or shortened, altered, adapted, omitted, given various motives or causes, and organized in a different order.[10] He tells a story which probably was never told in that way before, but which is at the same time familiar because the elements of

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and text are variants of the same structure."

[9] 14.258-72 = 17.427-41 with small adaptations.

[10] On this whole point, see the discussion by Redfield (1967).

the story are as well-known as nursery rhymes and folk-tales to the Greeks who were raised from the cradle with stories built from these same elements.

The most convincing proof of this statement lies in the realization that the same components can be repeated word for word in passages like the battle in Egypt. Or they can be stated in phrases which are different even though the vignette is identical in each detail; for example, the form used to convey the idea that the singer comes from Crete and from the house of a rich man is varied on each occurrence. Or they can be stated in terms that are different because the item is being given a different meaning or even being treated in two opposite fashions, like the story of the sailors who take a man on board for money, some as pirates (the Shanghai story) and some as travel agents. Each story element seems to have its own life independent of the traditional diction in which the Homeric poems were composed.

So far, then, there are five prominent features in Homer's portrait of the oral storyteller:

1. At the very least he sings to entertain.
2. He can tell facts and convey correct information.
3. The variables which in different mixtures cause the poet to modify his story in its details and even its intent are: the identity of the narrator, the nature of the audience, and the pressures from the situation.
4. The method of composing tales is that of variation on the basis of standard and repeated elements and larger story components, expanding and compressing versions to suit the needs of the moment.
5. Beneath each story there is what I have called a plan, a narrative conception, an organizing theme, or a matrix which explains how the story in its details and development suits the singer, the hearer, and the narrative situation.

II. The Master Singer of Homer's *Odyssey*

Now it is time to enhance this portrait of the poet to its fullest by expanding the breadth and depth of the matrix and demonstrating its potential for subtlety in the simultaneous layering of different matrices within one story. The narrative which is most apt for such analysis is that famous series of adventures told by Homer's master storyteller Odysseus to the Phaeacians, his trip to fantasyland in Books 9-12. Homer introduces

these tales with an idealized image of an oral poetic performance presented by his hero:

> King Alcinous, renowned above all men, surely this is a fine thing, to hear a singer such as this man is—like the gods in his voice. I say that there is no more gratifying satisfaction than when festivity occupies all the people, banqueters sitting in order throughout the halls listen to the singer, the tables nearby are filled with bread and meat, and the steward drawing wine from the bowl carries it and pours it into cups. I think that this is the finest occasion. But your heart is bent on asking of my mournful sorrows so that in my suffering I may yet groan more.
>
> (*Odyssey* 9.2-13)

The company is festive, the food is excellent and plentiful, the cup is never emptied of wine, and the singer provides suitable accompaniment to the feast. But Odysseus feels himself to be the contrasting type of singer even though he sits in the midst of one of the most bountiful and freely-giving societies in his past twenty years of experience.

The problem for Odysseus in Alcinous' court is that he is the unwilling singer of his own adventures. Thus he is unlike a professional court poet in at least three of the previously listed five ways: (1) others have some idea of entertaining; Odysseus is trying to explain who he is to hosts who have been very kind and deserve a full and truthful answer; (2) other poets can tell facts and convey correct information; that is the presumption of Odysseus' adventures too, but Homer will have him sketch for his listeners an imaginary, spiritual landscape peopled with fantasy figures in the hope of conveying the truth about the nature of the world he has personally come to know. It is a paradox that those tales which seem to be the most realistic—namely the lying tales of Odysseus in the second half of the poem—are, in fact, utterly false; those which seem the most fantastic, filled with monsters and magic, are, in fact, the most truthful; and (3) other poets are professionals who perform before audiences which have little personal stake in the story sung. The only pressure from the situation which falls upon the tale-teller is the creation of a well-sung story. Odysseus, however, knows and respects his audience. He wants to explain to them who he is by telling his own story, a tale in which he cannot remain objective. Since he wants them to understand why he is not able to stay with them in spite of their most generous offers, including the offer of the princess in marriage, he is pressed to produce a higher literature by that powerful combination of elements, the extraordinary status of the narrator, the aptness and willingness of the audience, and the special demands of the situation. As the Phaeacians have been perfect hosts, he wants to be the perfect guest. In other words, Homer will have to provide a matrix shaping the story told by his hero which will allow Odysseus to present himself as a man who lives in a world different from Phaeacia, but

who can respect and admire the society which the Phaeacians have created.

Odysseus in telling his adventures is like other narrators in that he does compose his tales using standard and repeated motifs, expanding and compressing variant versions to suit his point. Further, there does seem to be a series of matrices so layered that each adventure has its own individual matrix and at the same time the series as a whole is built on a unified narrative conception; thus there is a carefully structured hierarchy of matrices. In addition, not only does Odysseus act like an oral poet and taleteller in his techniques of composition, but Homer also continually calls our attention to Odysseus' own awareness of his position as a singer among his other roles in these four famed books of adventures.[11] For example, in the so-called Intermezzo in the middle of Book 11, Homer has Odysseus stop his song for an understandable reason—he is tired: "It is now the time to sleep either going with my companions to the swift ship or here; my journey home will be the concern of you and the gods" (11.330-32; cf. 8.87 -92). The audience, however, is unwilling for such a pause: "So he spoke, and all were hushed in silence and held enchanted throughout the shadowy hall" (333 f.). The Queen honors him as man and singer in these words: "Phaeacians, how does this man appear to you in beauty and stature and the well-balanced mind within him" (336 f.). These last words "the well-balanced mind within him" in Greek are *phrenas endon eïsas* which are also found as a description of Penelope and Telemachus in the days before the arrival of the suitors (14.178 [Telemachus] and 18.249 [Penelope]). And Alcinous echoes her words:

> Odysseus, as we look on you, we in no way think you to be a cheat or thief such as many of the men scattered far and wide which the black earth nourishes, men who invent lies from things which no one could ever see. You possess a grace in your words, an excellent sense, and with understanding, like a singer, do you tell your story, your own dismal sorrows and those of all the Argives.
>
> (*Odyssey* 11.363-69)

The king lauds him for *morphê epeôn, phrenes esthlai,* and telling his story *epistamenôs* ("the grace in his word," "excellent sense," and "with understanding"; these words are used elsewhere to describe those who think and speak well or are adept craftsmen and artists).[12] Clearly there is high praise for the song of this singer. The audience response is that offered to the finest of singers, and he is described as thoughtful, wise, and intelligent—an apt husband for Penelope and father to Telemachus. There

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[11] E.g., 9.228, 9.299-305, 12.153, and 12.223-35. See the full discussion by Suerbaum (1968).

[12] *Od*. 8.179, 7.111, 1.117, and *Il*. 17.470; and *passim* for *epistamenôs*.

is something to learn from this storyteller. Ten books later on Ithaca when Odysseus finally gets his chance to string the bow in the contest with the suitors, Homer describes the event with a simile:

> So the suitors spoke, but when resourceful Odysseus had gripped the great bow and examined it, just as when a man experienced in the lyre and song easily stretches a string around a new peg, fixing the twisted sheep's gut on both ends, so now Odysseus strung the great bow without effort. Then taking it in his right hand he tested the string. It sang sweetly like the tune of a swallow.
>
> (*Odyssey* 21.404-11)

The culminating act of his return is the reestablishment of his identity before the suitors by gaining revenge on those who have wronged him, a cleansing action begun when he strings the old king' s weapon of war. The similar act at the end of the first half of the *Odyssey* is the reestablishment of his identity before others by telling his story. When Homer uses the simile of the master singer to describe Odysseus stringing his other instrument, the bow, the craftsmanship of the singer and the just warrior are united in one hero. The man who can take just vengeance is the man who can artfully explain his identity to others and justify his conduct of his own life. The bard is the warrior, and the warrior is the bard. Thus it seems to be Homer's plan that his Odysseus be included with the other storytellers in the *Odyssey* and be rated as one of the most competent bards in the poem (cf. 17.517-21).

Consequently, Odysseus' famed tales of his own return are marked in clear ways by Homer as a series of stories which are the best in his repertoire—the tales of Homer's master storyteller. Fittingly, the stories in Books 9-12 are the most complex in the relationship between tale-teller and audience. In these stories the teller still gives an accurate report, but because of the situation of the listener and the teller the story also contains a higher truth which is more fully realized in the growth of the hero and in the development of the larger poem. Odysseus after leaving Troy visits in order the land of the Cicones, the land of the Lotus-Eaters, the island of the Cyclops, the kingdom of Aeolus, the land of the Laestrygonians, the island of Circe; then he journeys to the Underworld, and finally he passes the threats of the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and the island grazed by the cattle of the Sun.

Since there has clearly been such effort in building Odysseus' characterization as an intelligent and capable singer, what are the elements for which a critic must account in describing the matrix forming and shaping the individual adventures and the whole series of tales? There are some simple guidelines. First, his tale is a series of adventures: the hero moves from one landfall to another, continually affirming his intention to return to Ithaca. The order of his adventures seems determined far more

by chance occurrences—storms, randomly selected courses, following out a direction to see where it leads—than a directed course in which each adventure leads to the next one in a deeply causal way.[13] Second, in regard to the length of each tale there is little importance whether the sailors stay for a short or a long time. They seem to stay a relatively short time with the Cyclops even though the story is long in its telling; they stay quite a long time with Circe, but the tale requires about the same number of lines as the tale of the Cyclops.[14] Third, the stories in both Books 9 and 10 are organized as two short tales followed by a long one: thus the adventures with the Cicones and the Lotus-Eaters are short and followed by the developed Cyclops story just as the short stories about Aeolus and the Laestrygonians are followed by the longer adventure with Circe. Since the length of the tale does not relate to the length of time spent in each place, it must relate to the importance which the storyteller attaches to the tale in the thematic development of his narrative.

One important principle for interpretation results from these observations: these stories do not reflect history or the historical perspective in their order, their time span, or their subject matter. In these tales Odysseus creates a fictional landscape inhabited by fantastic beings; the fact that these places are visited is more important than the reason each is visited in a set order. The time spent in telling the longer adventures of the Cyclops, Circe, and the Underworld is the storyteller's sign to look more carefully, more analytically at those adventures; there is, therefore, need for interpretation of each element in these stories if we are going to catch the storyteller's point. That point is clearly defined by the question which Homer has Alcinous ask at the beginning of the stories—indeed, it is the question which motivates Odysseus to tell his adventures: Stranger, who are you? These tales should allow Odysseus to explain to the Phaeacians and to Homer's audience who he is.

The interpretive method which seems to best suit these adventures is to ask why Homer includes each of them in providing a full explanation of who Odysseus is. Homer feels that each tale is formative and educational; in some significant way they have made him what he is and will be in the second half of the *Odyssey.* Therefore, to determine the broad educational view of these adventures one must seek to identify the essential learning experience at each stop; each tale is different in form and detail, but each is based on an individual matrix so that there is a traceable development in the whole narrative. In Books 9 and 10, Odysseus tells of three different modes of living and their effects on men: in the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,

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[13] Though Scully (1971) shows that Odysseus exercises more personal control over the route after his adventures in the underworld.

[14] Also, they stay a month with Aeolus, although this is one of the shorter tales (10.14).

the Island of the Cyclops, and the land of the Laestrygonians. There are also three other adventures in which Odysseus learns more about his own responses and those of his men, responses to a new and generally permissive atmosphere compared with the ten years at Troy: in the battle with the Cicones, on their voyage under aid from Aeolus, and on Circe's island. Book 11 with its vision of the Underworld provides a glimpse of a land where Odysseus, while alive, should never be and could never stay but which does show him what death is: what has become of the famous old heroes of the past and what will become of him. Book 12 presents a series of challenges, all of which Odysseus personally manages to withstand even though there is loss: the challenge of sailing by the island of the Sirens, the risk of either Scylla or Charybdis, and the resistance needed to comply with the stern strictures of Helios in regard to his sacred cattle. I would organize these adventures into three neatly book-bound topics: Books 9 and 10 explore the potential for humans to live cooperatively in a society with trust in one another; Book 11 presents the quality of existence after life; Book 12 illustrates the challenges which the world offers to its inhabitants.

Closer examination will reveal the educative components of the individual adventures. The easiest to identify are the tales describing others' modes of living. The Lotus-Eaters offer forgetfulness, a life of no concern or care but also of no achievement; Odysseus drives his men away knowing that such an unruffled existence allows them no hope. Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclops, represents a world completely lacking in communal civilization. Men live separately, each in his own cave. There are no laws, no tribal customs, no meetings, no community farms; here is Homer's description:

> The lawless, arrogant Cyclopes . . . who . . . neither plant crops with their hands or with plows but all grows without planting or ploughing, wheat and barley and vines which bear rich grapes, and the rain of Zeus makes them grow. For these men have no councils, nor assemblies, nor laws, but they dwell on the peaks of high mountains in hollow caves, and each one gives the law to his children and his wives, and they care little for each other.
>
> (*Odyssey* 9.106-15)

It is true that the other Cyclopes did come running to Polyphemus' cave when he was crying out in pain, but the only reason they give for coming is his loud cries which were keeping them awake; the other Cyclopes are interested in doing anything for Polyphemus which will quiet him and allow them to get some sleep. Polyphemus exemplifies the life and code of man alone, and Odysseus happily flees his island. The Laestrygonians are monstrous butchers—but, as opposed to the Cyclops, a kind of butchers' union. They do live together, do have a king, and do have a place of common meeting, but they destroy any man who comes near and drink his blood.

These three societies are not condemned by Odysseus or by Homer; neither one is a moralist. Rather each society is a possible way for a man to live provided that he will accept the total implications of living on the level of a Cyclops or a Lotus-Eater. But one cannot have both the blissful lack of concern of the Laestrygonians and a pleasant land of high culture, nor is it possible to be a Cyclops and at the same time cherish a high regard for one's fellow humans and their needs. By fleeing these societies, by continuing his quest, Odysseus declares that each mode of living is inadequate for a man who wishes to achieve a productive life in the company of others—that is, to be a Greek.

In these two books Odysseus also discovers something about himself and his crew in addition to the lessons about different human societies. The visit to the Cicones is little more than a pirate raid, leading to a battle with the inhabitants. Odysseus has just left Troy, and in making this raid he has not departed significantly from the basic warrior ethic. He and his men do gain a feast by the shore on the spoils, but there is a painful cost. When they find that six benches are now empty in each ship, they leave the land of the Cicones sorrowing for their lost comrades. It is Odysseus' last pirate raid, as he comes to realize that no prize of war compensates for the loss of his friends.

Of course, even though I have insisted that there is little which is meant to be historical or chronological in the ordering of the adventures, there is an obvious significance in having this piratical raid take place just after the Greeks have left Troy, the site of their monumental pillage. Odysseus' voyage does have a basic direction in that it starts from Troy, an experience of constant death and war for spoils, and ends with his reinstatement in Ithaca with its implications of ordered kingdom, close family, and loyal friends. There is a clear framework of development even though the individual tales do not seem to be closely linked in a cause-and-effect sequence or a chain showing a clearly developing theme.

When Aeolus gives Odysseus the bag of winds, he discovers the weakness of his own crew. Even though Ithaca is in sight, they cannot resist the basic urges of envy and greed; they open the bag, loose the winds, and lose their homecoming. Odysseus, who fell asleep at the crucial moment, almost despairs but learns that he cannot succumb to even so understandable a human frailty as exhaustion if he wants to arrive at his goal. When Aeolus hears of the failure of their return voyage to Ithaca, a voyage which he has virtually given them as a present, he can only say that Odysseus and his men are not yet qualified to undertake the challenges of Ithaca. And, in fact, when Odysseus finally lands on Ithaca, the weaknesses revealed in this incident will be gone, and he will be willing and able to pursue the goal of a civilized kingdom with fewer flaws in himself. While there is no cause-and-effect connection, it is important that the same testing

of will-power is repeated in the incident of the cattle of the Sun, where the results are much better for Odysseus although not for his men. There is enough development through these adventures in the poet's hero that Homer could not have reversed these incidents and retained the sense of the hero's growth as the framework of his story.

Finally, Circe represents a land of magic—potions, magic wands, and charms. Her beauty, her hospitality, and her song are irresistibly seductive to men who—in accepting her gifts—become kept and tamed animals with no further assertions or demands. In other words, Circe exposes to men their own weaknesses. Life with her is pleasant and easy, but there is no encouragement for individual aspiration. If a man shields himself from the lure of Circe's enchantment by being determined and on his guard, then he can be much benefitted. Odysseus does learn from her and retains enough determination that he is not changed into one of her swine and can understand the desires of his men to continue to seek Ithaca. In each of these last three encounters Odysseus learns how easy it is for men to relax, to succumb to basic desires with little recognition of the implicit costs. The warrior code inevitably involves loss, as he learns in the conflict with the Cicones; and the fulfillment of a goal requires stern and strict dedication and a refusal to surrender to desires from within—as he learns in the adventure with the Bag of the Winds, or to temptations from without—as he sees in the transformation of his men on the island of Circe. The six adventures of Books 9 and 10 are based on a broad educational experience. They each teach Odysseus about the ability of men to live together in a cooperative society, either in one of the societies which he visits or in that which he himself must learn to form by trusting in other men.

Book 11 is the first of the great series of underworld books of the Western world; in each of these, *Aeneid* 6 and Dante's *Divine Comedy* prime among others, a character learns a lesson which is beyond the reach of other mortals. To be sure, Odysseus learns few facts in the underworld, yet he does come to understand a consistent view of death which motivates his fellow heroes and is predominant in later religious practice. Odysseus first meets the helpless Elpenor and then tries to embrace his mother, who slips away through his fingers saying:

> This is the appointed way for mortals when they die. Sinews no longer hold the flesh and bone together; but the strength of the blazing fire destroys them as soon as the spirit leaves the white bones, and the soul flies away taking wing like a dream.
>
> (*Odyssey* 11.218-22)

A series of ladies, all of whom have a special claim to be famous but who are reduced to insubstantial wisps, demonstrate how complete the

deprivation of death is. Then Odysseus meets the dead heroes Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax. While Agamemnon will continue a morose existence knowing that his life ended ingloriously, he is interested in giving hints on how to live better to those who still belong to the upper world, and he is desperately eager for news of his son, who is still alive. Achilles, who has lived the most glorious life of the ancient warriors, is also unhappy in the underworld:

> I would wish to be bound to the soil as a servant for another man who had no land of his own nor livelihood than to rule over all the exhausted dead.
>
> (*Odyssey* 11.489-91)

He strides away bursting with pride, however, when he hears that his son continues to live as a brave warrior. Ajax still nurses his grudge from his living days. In the underworld each person is individualized only by his memories of life; there is nothing of interest or challenge in this unearthly existence which stretches on forever. Emotions come only from recollections of days previous or information about living relatives. Death is negation—insubstantial, floating, without aspiration or achievement. Such is the bleak view which a normal mortal has of his inevitable end in Homer's world. Yet there is a positive side: Odysseus through this experience learns the necessity of striving to gain a rewarding life for himself because he realizes that once death comes, all opportunity is gone.

In Book 12 Odysseus explains how rugged he has found the external world to be. He tells of three obstacles, all of which are rigid, stern, and inhumane in their demands. The enchanting Sirens demonstrate the hard and disheartening truth that the world's most alluring and irresistible blandishment is the offer of praise to the soul greedy for flattery; the experience is numbing. As one critic states: "the usual order is death first, renown afterwards" (Vermeule 1979:203). Then Odysseus must choose between the Planctae (the Wandering Rocks which clash together to crush a boat sailing between them) or Scylla and Charybdis, both barriers which cannot be passed without loss. Both are representative of those natural dangers or disasters which so far surpass any man's strength that they will defeat him, and Odysseus does lose six men while he, like a tin soldier, postures helplessly in his armor at the monster Scylla. Finally, the restrictions against harming the cattle of the Sun are applied to all men without regard to circumstances, both to the conscious sinner and to the desperate man who seeks to avoid death by starvation. In these four challenges the world, in which men must strive to establish a meaningful life for themselves, appears hostile and even malignant; its laws are enforced harshly while its dangers are either unavoidable or irresistible.

Books 9 and 10 contain examples of different societies in which men have organized themselves as well as insights into the weaknesses and

shortsightedness of humans in joining together in communal efforts; Book 11 stresses the importance of positive activity during life by presenting the desolate wasteland of death which awaits all mortals; and Book 12 illustrates the uncompromising rigidity of the world in which men must fashion their lives. Odysseus, as teller of these tales, shapes his story for the benefit of his listeners in order to show them the most significant lessons he has drawn from his travels and therefore who he is now. He is devoted to finding a satisfactory life for himself and his friends within a society of men. This mode of living must reward him "here and now" because death is the end of all striving, achievement, and acknowledgment. He describes several types of men who live in various societies, but finding no existence that offers him as rewarding a life as the promise of Ithaca, he leaves those islands. Yet his return has demonstrated how difficult the challenge to him is because the world throws up almost insurmountable barriers even if he has learned to focus intently on a goal of overcoming the innate weaknesses which all men share.

Obviously these are tales of a different nature from the stories of pure entertainment, or those which give true information, or the lying tales, even though they are composed in the same language and employ the same techniques as those tales. First, of course, there is a highly knowledgeable teller who has personally experienced events which court poets know only through the Muses. Secondly, the listeners by their questioning of Odysseus show that they are prepared to hear a story which offers not only information but also entertainment. Third, the situation is changed from that in the more game-oriented atmosphere of Book 8; both teller and audience want informative communication to take place and they are willing to pass up their evening's sleep to learn the full series of stories. The three variables which are so important in determining the nature of stories in the Homeric poems—teller, audience, and situation—are here adjusted to offer maximum encouragement for a series of remarkable tales. An ignorant singer, a sleepy or bloated audience, and a less attention-riveting, focused moment—any such change in these variables would have produced a narrative of lesser import.

But those are surface variables, or variables external to the story proper. There is one other difference between Odysseus' adventures in Books 9-12 and other Homeric tales, a difference which is more fundamental. Earlier I discussed the matrix—in other phrasing, the plan or the narrative conception of the teller as he tells his story. A basic definition of a narrative is a series of events told as a sequence, a definition which would apply to each of the narratives told in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* themselves. In addition, however, each narrative is formed by an individual shaping matrix or controlling idea. Thus even narrations of the same story will vary subtly

among narrators, each of whom attempts to convey his own idea in his own way even though using traditional formulaic language and story patterns. The force of such a matrix is especially clear in the shaping of the repeated sequences in the lying tales, as I have argued earlier. In addition, the epics continually show a more complex, Russian-doll structure, where one narrator tells a story which itself contains a reported story; for example, in Book 9 Homer (narrator 1) describes Odysseus (narrator 2) telling about the lies which he, as the fictional character No-man (narrator 3), told to the Cyclops. As a result the several narratives can be organized into a complex hierarchy of layers, each of which is understood by reference to the particular matrix from which it has been generated. The design of that matrix and the individualized phrasing of the tale are dependent on the external variables: the character of the teller, the nature and response of the audience, and the pressures of the situation. Thus the Cyclops is the desperate No-man's audience in a situation where the weaker victim must depend on his wit to save his life; at the same time, however, Odysseus' listeners are the Phaeacians to whom he is seeking to explain his identity by telling them about his stay with Polyphemus; and simultaneously Homer's hearers are both his fellow Greeks and later generations for whom he narrates the education of his Everyman figure.

Generally the matrix of the individual story can be reduced to a rather simple statement derived from the basic cultural experience of the people and exemplified in mottoes, proverbs, standard bits of gnomic wisdom, common social practices, and so on. The elements of guest-friendship, a societal relationship sufficiently important to be sanctioned by Zeus and invoked often in extended type-scenes throughout the *Odyssey,* are the basis of the narrator's matrix for the adventure in the Cyclops' cave. The formalized guest-friendship custom calls for a rigidly sequential series of events: (1) for the host to be present; (2) for the guest to advance and the host to greet him; (3) for the host to avoid asking the guest's name before welcoming him and extending the right to stay the night (lest there be some unrecognized animosity which would make this arrangement impossible if the name were known first); (4) for an exchange of religious thoughts—something like: "Zeus welcomes all guests and it is our pleasure to share in this custom" (e.g. *Od*. 3.43-50, 4.33-36, 7.161-66, and 14.53-61); (5) for the host to care for the guest's baggage and his horses or ships; (6) for the host to offer a banquet with an opening prayer; (7) for the host to provide some entertainment for his guest; (8) for wine to be offered by the host accompanying good wishes; (9) for the host only now to ask the guest's name and his story; (10) finally, on leaving for a gift to be offered by the host and a prayer for good fortune. This pattern is completed several times quite early in the *Odyssey,* most notably when Athena in the disguise of Mentes visits Telemachus in Ithaca, and when Telemachus visits

Nestor in Pylas and Menelaus in Sparta.[15] At the Cyclops' cave in Book 9, however, all is inverted:[16] (1) there is no host present; (2) when the host appears the guest is horrified and retreats while the host ignores him; (3) Polyphemus immediately asks Odysseus' name; (4) the host then threatens the guest and declares that he has no religious scruples; (5) Polyphemus asks about Odysseus' conveyance but not so that he can care for it but rather so that he can destroy any means of his guest's escape; in any case, Odysseus tells him lies; (6) there is a banquet—the host eats a guest with gusto; (7) in place of entertainment after dinner, the host falls into a deep sleep; (8) the wine comes from the guest who wants to make the host drunk; (9) the guest finally gives the host a false name; (10) the host extends a gift to the guest—he will eat him last; and finally the guest departs to a curse from the host.

Guest-friendship is turned systematically on its head throughout this section of the narrative in Book 9; thus a societal custom informs the matrix not only in structuring the events of the Cyclops story but also in shaping the lies of No-man to his perverse host. Similarly, I would argue that the basic division between man and god lies at the root of the adventures with Circe. Only those thoughtless enough to assume that they can live the limitless life of a god are changed into useless swine; others show more mortal behavior and realize the conditional nature of their daily, impermanent existence. As guest-friendship is a basic societal custom, so also the separation of god from man is the most fundamental element of Greek religion. The same type of culturally imbedded matrix can be shown to be employed by Odysseus in telling each of his other adventures and by Homer in designing the full narrative.

At this broader level the various landfalls during the extended travels of Odysseus represent stages in his learning as he journeys, physically and spiritually, from Troy and the individualistic honor code to Ithaca and the future cooperative society. These stages in their development reveal a narrator's matrix founded on a schematized program of education in the basic forces of human existence. This four-book learning phase is but one part of the larger preparation of the hero who must continually choose to make Ithaca the goal of his voyage; this "education of the hero" is the matrix on which Homer structures the first twelve books of his epic. Of course, the honor code and the hero are both basic themes in early Greek epic and lyric.

I have left until last the most interesting question. Why is the set of Odysseus' adventures told as a flashback which presents events out of

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[15] See the full discussion of such scenes by Arend (1933:39-53).

[16] Well explored by Belmont (1962).

chronological order? The years spent with Kalypso, the losing of his raft, and the time with Phaeacians—all occur at the end of his travels even though Homer in Books 5-8 places them prior to Odysseus' adventure stories. This placement is an important element in the matrix which is in the mind of Homer. Odysseus, telling his adventures triumphantly on the day before his return to Ithaca, presents tales in which he shows that he has learned not only *how* one can win against the world but even *why* one should choose Ithaca over the lovely islands of Kalypso and Alcinous: neither of those islands would allow him to win any victories of his own. Kalypso is so preponderant that no man could lead a life of independence in her company and Alcinous' kingdom is so plenteous and his people so generous that there is no challenge or victory when one has made an assertion. It is typical of life in Phaeacia that Odysseus is immediately offered everything, even marriage to Nausicaa, but at the same moment he is offered a trip home so that he can choose with no feeling of compulsion nor any need to win or earn either goal. However, when he asserts himself in an athletic contest, the Phaeacians are instantly overcome by a man who has developed his strength in the outside world of stress and trouble. In choosing not to remain with Kalypso or the Phaeacians, Odysseus enters a world of death, sickness, weakness, and compromise, a flawed world ruled by vindictive divinities—but also a world in which a man of determination and skill can create a life which welcomes challenge and honors achievement. And this is the strange choice which makes the *Odyssey* an epic, a choice worthy of the epic hero who embraces the chance to flee anonymity; it is also a choice which is based on the learning which Odysseus has gained in his travels. When he tells his adventures to the Phaeacians, not only is he trying to demonstrate his understanding of the world to them, but Homer is also justifying Odysseus' astounding decision to leave the pleasant island of Phaeacia and to return to the troubled kingdom of Ithaca. Odysseus teaches his audience in Phaeacia what he has seen, what the qualities and costs of various societies are, and which societies have either repelled him or been rejected by him. But Homer has a much wider audience in mind. The Cyclops is not solely a lonely savage from a distant past; neither he nor the other characters met in the adventures are limited by reality but rather embody all that unlimited range of imaginative and horrifying features available to mythological figures. All men have moments when they would like to live alone with their own possessions, without the continual bother of a neighbor's intrusions, cares, and worries, but if a man lives on that level, he should know that his community will look like him. The Cyclops is not an external being except in Odysseus' story-form; "Cyclopism" is a natural internal reflex which we can come to understand in all its complexity when it is placed in a simpler, mythological story setting. The same is true for the

concentrated brutality of "Laestrygonianism" and the complete apathy of "Lotus-Eaterism." In fact, these four books of Odysseus' adventures are a kind of basic handbook of early Greek beliefs about man and his world. In a storyteller's mode they present the nature of man, the choices he must make, the nature of his world, the necessity which presses on all men during life, the finality of death, and the ability or lack of ability of men to live successfully with one another. Edith Hamilton (1930), H.D.F. Kitto (1954), and Kenneth Dover (1980) have written books explaining in prose the elements of Greek culture; Odysseus' tales have the same goal expressed through narrative. This is storytelling at its highest level; it is well done and entertaining, but education, a powerful exploration and reinforcement of cultural values, is implicit in the whole shape and direction of Odysseus' narrative. It is appropriate that this tale is long and told by the epic's hero—and little wonder that Homer has Alcinous and Arete praise him for his wisdom.

This broadly defined matrix for the adventures is the key to their placement. Odysseus tells his tales to the Phaeacians as part of his explanation that he does not fit their society and wants to go home to Ithaca; simultaneously Homer is telling Odysseus' full return to power in Ithaca to a wide audience, showing them the cultural values of the Hellenes and how these values would naturally lead a Greek to choose a proper society. Homer often presents a character's decision and then, only afterwards, the rationale. For example, in Book 24 of the *Iliad* Achilles announces his decision to return Hector's body, a decision which is later fully justified in his remarkable meeting with old Priam; while the original decision might seem abrupt, no reader leaves Book 24 feeling that it was wrong or without motive. Only the order of the events is difficult. In Book 1 of the *Odyssey* it is decided that Telemachus will go to inquire about his father; only then is this decision fully motivated. The images of successfully functioning palace societies at Pylos and Sparta in Books 3 and 4 provide compelling justification for Telemachus' desire to seek a solution to the continuing paralysis in Ithaca. This order, decision prior to rationale, is also evident in larger structures: Book 1 of the *Iliad* shows the decision of Achilles to desert the Greek cause, but the reasoning behind this decision is not fully explored until the Greeks send the ambassadors to him in Book 9. In parallel fashion Odysseus' decision to leave the islands of Calypso and the Phaeacians is presented in Books 5 and 7—early on and with little rationale. Then in the adventures of Book 9-12 Odysseus has his chance to explain why he chose to leave these islands. Homer in designing these tales has separated out a handbook of Greek beliefs about the world. On the basis of these beliefs Odysseus explains his choice to flee the life of blanketing anonymity found in the presence of the prodigious Kalypso and the soft world of Phaeacia; neither allows him to achieve, to become

himself, or even to earn his own death on his own terms. The Phaeacians were originally neighbors of the Cyclopes, but chose to move their homes to a new land rather than to confront these uncouth savages; Odysseus in his tales makes clear that he will always want to confront that Cyclops and even shout his name in his ear as he is whipping him.

Odysseus has all the traits of the ideal Homeric storyteller: he does tell tales which entertain; he does convey facts and aim to tell truths; he is able to manipulate his stories to suit the audience and the situation in which he finds himself; he improvises using standard and repeated motifs; and he does build his stories on the basis of a matrix, thus giving a different point to each of his tales even when they are shaped from repeated details.

More speculatively—it is clear that Homer himself lies beneath this portrait of the poet. Because he draws on pre-existent folkways, folk-tales, sagas, and myths and then organizes these to express a conception or matrix in his epics, Homer is directly involved in and becomes a commentator on his culture and society. He tells his eighth-century contemporaries tales which came from their past, when their ancestors were far more organized, assertive, and confident, in order to analyze and define the conditions of their present life. His main characters become carriers of his society's culture, and their experiences question the strengths of that society's systems and values as well as illustrate its weaknesses. No character in either epic is able to write, yet many of them attempt to become storytellers in order to provide the only available kind of education in proper behavior for their hearers.[17] The success of storytelling in educating an audience is judged by the tales' effectiveness in providing knowledge of the world, in offering adequate historical/mythological explanations of the current state of affairs, and in matching the complexity of the "real" world of Homer's audience. Homer's success is demonstrated in the positive assessment which the poet leads his audience to place on the lives of his two heroes. He has fashioned his Achilles and Odysseus to be models for his contemporaries as they confront the dilemmas and complexities of their own lives. These two epics, tales of decision-making under the pressure of war and the dogged pursuit of a goal through a series of adventures, spur society's self-exploration and discovery of its nature by probing the amalgam of remembered history, folk-tale, myth, and story to find the fullest expression of the Hellenic heritage.

Both poems are potent texts because they are composed by a thoughtful and powerful storyteller who thought deeply and critically about his society, the mythical heritage of his people, and the future to which their traditional values were leading them. In few social settings have narratives played such a central role, especially since both epics represent

[17] Well illustrated by Scully (1981).

the dominant form of both entertainment and education for a non-literate audience. Any portrait of Homer's oral storyteller would be incomplete without a full assessment of the varieties of storytelling: stories for entertainment, stories for conveying true information, stories for covering up situations and misleading others, and stories to educate. There may, however, be a reflexive quality to this portrait if Homer sets himself as the standard in designing his various storytellers. It was, after all, Homer who understood the full nature of Odysseus' stories, and who understood the desires of Odysseus as a teller of stories true and false, and who appreciated the potential of storytelling for providing education as he designed the character of his hero and master storyteller, Odysseus. Homer himself is not far from this model, a poet with similar aims as he designed his two long epics to convey a view of the world which raises questions about the meaning of ambition, the seeking of honor, proper rewards for the years of a person's life, the balance which must be struck between life and loot, the ethical frailty so evident in mankind, the sternness and unfairness—even the malignity—of the world, the adequacy of the human soul or mind to live successfully in necessary dependence upon one's fellow humans, and finally the ability to come to an understanding of one's proper place in the greater universe. As a result these classic tales told by a storyteller who appreciated the power of narrative both to attract the ear and to educate the mind probably reveal much about the method and intent of Homer, sternly truthful and yet understanding, and most clearly seen in his Odysseus as he teaches his fellow Hellenes of all times about the beliefs, values, and customs of their daily lives through a series of stories.[18]

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[18] I wish to express my thanks to W. G. Thalmann and S. P. Scully for their careful reading and criticism of this manuscript.

Appendix
List of Narrative Elements in Odysseus' False Tale to Eumaeus
(Odyssey, Book 14.199-359)

1. Home = Crete (199)
2. Rich father (200)
3. Several sons in family (200-1)
4. Slave mother (202-4)
5. Noble father (205-6)
6. Division of goods at death (207-9)
7. Unfair allotment (210)
8. Marries noblewoman (211-13)
9. Old man now (213-15)
10. Warrior aided by god (216-17)
11. Boast of being good warrior (218-21)
12. Not lover of house and farm (222-27)
13. Different things please different men (228)
14. "Before the Achaeans came to Troy ...." (229)
15. Piracy (230-32)
16. Division of spoils after raid (232-33)
17. Prosperity of his house (233-34)
18. Hatefulness of Trojan War (235- 36)
19. Linked with other major leader (Idomeneus) (237-38)
20. Necessity pressing on hero (238-39)
21. Story of Trojan War (240-42)
22. Plan of Zeus (243)
23. Pirate raid to Egypt (244-48)
24. Banquet before adventure (249-51)
25. Easy voyage (252-56)
26. Arrival in Egypt (257-58)
27. Order men to remain but they disobey (259-61)
28. Men fight and are beaten (262-72)
29. "Would that I had died ...." (273-75)
30. Surrender in battle (276-79)
31. Acceptance of surrender by King (279-84)
32. Resident alien gets rich (285-86)
33. Phoenician deceives him (287 -92)
34. *Phoenician takes him on ship and tries to sell him into slavery*[19] (293-98)
35. *Storm at sea* (299-305)
36. *Destruction of ship* (305-9)
37. *Zeus gives aid to save him* (310-12)
38. *Carried on beam and goes ashore* (313-15)
39. *Friendly reception when he is found on the beach* (316-20)
40. Story of Odysseus' travels (321-22)
41. Story of Odysseus' riches (323-26)
42. Story of Odysseus' going to Dodona to find out about trip home (327-33)

[19] The italicized items are discussed on pages 392ff. of the text.

43. *King sends teller on his way* (334-37)
44. *Treachery of crew / taken as prisoner* (337-44)
45. *Tie prisoner on ship while crew leaves* (345-47)
46. *Gods aid him in escaping and finding safety* (348-54)
47. Crew sails on (354-57)
48. Gods lead him to a new site (357-59)

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The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition, Joseph Falaky Nagy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985. ix + 338 pp. Bibliography; Index.

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Although stories about the Irish poet-warrior Finn began to assume the status of written literature only late in the Middle Ages, *fiannaíocht*—storytelling about Finn's *fían* or band—has been a part of the Irish narrative tradition as far back as written records will attest. The small number of Fenian stories recorded in the earliest manuscripts indicate by their allusions to other tales that a fully developed body of material relating to Finn existed well before changing political circumstances and developing literary conditions from the tenth century onward led a rapidly growing class of *literati* to turn to these oral traditional narratives for their material.

Like the better-known tales of the Ulster cycle, the Fenian stories have a more or less regular cast of greater-than-life characters whose adventures cover a wide spectrum of activities ranging from amorous pursuits to conflicts with mortal and otherworldly enemies. At the center of the Ulster-cycle stories we find the closest thing to an Irish national epic, *Táin Bó Cúailnge (The Cattle-raid of Cooley),* in which the young hero Cú Chulainn single-handedly defends his territory against invasion by another province. Being much less tied to a specific locale or group, the Fenian tradition has no such central work. Much more typical of this material is the *Acallam na Senórach (The Colloquy of the Ancient Men),* a frame-story in which two of Finn's men who have survived the rest of the *fían* by several hundred years are met by Saint Patrick, himself an old man, with whom they converse pleasantly. Their peripatetic conversation provides the occasion for a wide variety of poems, place-name stories, and narratives recounting the adventures of Finn and the *fían* and extolling their rugged life beyond the pale of "civilized" habitation.

Fenian narrative is generally characterized as "popular" literature in contrast with the "heroic" Ulster stories. Such distinctions may provide a serviceable label, but they tend to imply the aesthetic primacy of the highbrow Ulster stories over their Fenian country cousins. Perhaps more informative is the distinction put forth some years ago by Mari-Louise Sjoestedt who observed that whereas in the Ulster cycle stories the hero functions as an integrated member of his society, the Fenian hero exists apart from society and its institutions. Until recently, this observation has been allowed to remain undeveloped; indeed, Fenian narrative on the whole has received little critical attention. Joseph Falaky Nagy's *The Wisdom of the Outlaw* takes as its starting point Sjoestedt's perception of the Fenian heroes as outsiders and develops from this a far-reaching investigation of the mythic and social dimensions of these stories.

Nagy focuses on one story, *The Boyhood Deeds of Finn,* using as his base text the earliest extant version, dating from the twelfth century. He is careful to point out, however, that any other version would have served the purpose: the scope of his study extends beyond any single version or story. Operating on the methodological assumption—strongly influenced by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss—that any given traditional narrative and its variants belong interdependently to a greater matrix of cultural reference and that each has something to contribute to our understanding of the others, the author makes free use of Fenian texts from all periods, including oral texts collected in this century in Ireland and Scotland. Bringing to bear an extremely well documented and extensive critical apparatus, he supplements his observations with references to other aspects of Irish and Celtic traditional narrative. *Macgnímrada* or "boyhood deeds" play an important part not only in Irish narrative cycles but in the broader context of Indo-European literature as well. Insofar as the behavior of a hero may provide exemplary or paradigmatic patterns of conduct, the crucial stages of his development merit special attention. Certainly

one of the most critical rites of passage is the transition into adulthood, for it is traditionally at this time in his cultural development that a youth is instructed in the traditional wisdom of his people. His initiation into adulthood—and the narrative re-creation of that event—functions at a metaphorical level to renew the world and its fundamental truths.

The choice of the Boyhood Deeds as focal point for this study of Fenian narrative, however, goes beyond the general relevance of the *"enfances"* of the hero to a narrative cycle. Nagy demonstrates that in the stories about Finn "boyhood" is a special state of being and, as such, is representative of the Fenian condition in general. Central to the argument of this book is the concept of "liminality," a transitional state in between two conditions, whether spatial or temporal, literal or metaphorical. The tumultuous period of initiation, of course, is quintessentially liminal in that, coming between two static conditions, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities; it is a time when suddenly access to special—otherworldly—knowledge is granted. It is in this context, then, that we can recognize in the extra social existence of Finn and his *fían* another kind of liminality. Living on the peripheries of society, remotely in touch with its institutions yet committed to a life in the natural world, they enjoy a special status, charged with mythic resonances. Liminal conditions are volatile ones; they have the potential of conferring special wisdom, but they can also be fraught with danger. Finn and his cohorts are *fénnidi* (sing. *fénnid),* outlaws in the literal sense of the word, obliged to live apart from society, yet they are vital links between this world and the secrets of the Otherworld.

Tying together the many liminal characteristics of Fenian narrative in a loosely chronological account of the development of its central figure, Nagy focuses on the two apparently contradictory aspects of Finn's mythological character: he is both a poet *(fili)* and a *fénnid,* and as such he spans the highest and lowest extremes of traditional Celtic society . Yet insofar as the *fili* is an intercessor between two worlds, in mythic terms his (liminal) function overlaps with that of the *fénnid*. Having first issued the useful caveat that mythological institutions may sometimes be correlated to historical phenomena but only with the greatest of caution, Nagy explores the historically documented phenomenon of *fénnidecht,* the state of being a *fénnid,* citing various conditions under which a person might leave society for a period to live the unfettered life of an outlaw. Unlike those who do so to avenge a wrong that conventional means cannot right or those who must be estranged from civilization as part of their initiation, Finn and his warriors are professional and perennial *fénnidi,* serving sometimes as a standing militia to protect the society that excludes them, sometimes as marauders. They take particular interest in young people, often seeing to their tutelage as they make their difficult transition to adulthood. But unlike their charges the *fénnidi* remain locked in their condition, unable to "grow up" and integrate themselves into society.

Nagy places his analysis through the stages of Finn's development: as the song of the *rígfénnid* Cumall whose death he avenges as part of his corning of age, as the grandson of the druid Tadg whose daughter Cumall stole, as the fosterling of two otherworldly women, Bodbmall and Líath Lúachra, as the apprentice of the smith Lóchán from whom he gets his first arms, as the pupil of the poet Finn Eices from whom he takes his name and through whom—inadvertently—he acquires the mantic skill for which he is best known: the ability to utter poetic wisdom whenever he bites on his thumb. In the chapter "Finn the Gilla" we see most clearly the degree to which Nagy has opened up the Fenian tradition to the wisdom of the structural anthropologist, for it is here that he analyzes the phase of Finn's development in which he reaches his most liminal condition. As a *gilla,* a term which can mean a variety of things ranging from "servant" to "pupil" to "youth" and which in this context encompasses the special status of those who are going though an acute period of transition and social apprenticeship, Finn achieves the full status of both *fénnid* and *fili*. Focusing on a set of stories which seem to bear no apparent relation to one another, Nagy demonstrates very deftly, using a Lévi-Straussian analysis of the texts, that the stories work together beneath the surface level of the narrative to establish some important definitions of the role Finn's unique—but mythically paradigmatic—liminal

status plays in the Fenian tradition.

The Wisdom of the Outlaw is a very welcome book. Articulate, incisive, and stimulating, it does much to give shape to the diffuse collection of *fiannaíocht,* and, perhaps most importantly, it clearly demonstrates the integral role played by the Fenian tradition in the mythic structures of Irish society.

Romancero tradicional de Costa Rica, collected and edited by Michèle S. de Cruz-Sáenz. Preface by Samuel G. Armistead. Musical transcriptions by Christina D. Braidotti. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1986. xxxiii + 138 pp. Bibliography; 3 Indexes; 2 Lists.

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The 160 texts collected by Michèle de Cruz-Sáenz represent 25 different *romance* themes gathered from 63 informants in several visits made to Costa Rica between 1973 and 1979. Given the length and persistence of the editor's search, it would seem at first glance that the harvest was lamentably poor. Yet, as we know, it is typical of the state of the *romance* in Hispanic America and is not remarkably different from that of Mexico, a much larger country, where, for example, 176 texts were collected of 29 ballad themes (see Díaz Roig 1987). However, only three of the *romances* found most frequently in Mexico are prominent in the Costa Rican tradition. On the other hand, 11 out of the 17 most popular in all of America are being sung in Costa Rica (*ibid*.). If we compare the Costa Rican situation with the present-day Peninsular tradition, out of the 154 ballad themes found during the course of field expeditions in Castile and León in the summer of 1977 (see Petersen 1982), only 11 were among those discovered by Cruz-Sáenz in Costa Rica.

More significant is the fact that barely half a dozen of these twenty-five ballad themes, *Blancaflor y Filomena, Delgadina, Bernal Francés, La vuelta del marido (Las senas del esposo), Por qué no cantáis la bella (a lo divino)* and perhaps also *La fe del ciego (La Virgen y el ciego),* were circulating in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Rather, most of them are children's songs, that is, game and dance songs, and other popular songs are classified as *romances* often for want of a better category. A case in point is the Costa Rican favorite, *El barquero,* or which there are forty versions in Cruz-Sáenz's collection. It is a short romantic song in which the boatman demands a kiss from a young girl in exchange for taking her across the sea. What is perhaps most surprising is the total absence of ballads like *Gerineldo, La dama y el pastor,* and *Conde Niño (Olinos),* which one expects to find wherever *romances* are sung.

Among other symptoms of a waning tradition is the preponderance of fragmentary texts, many only several verses long. Even when the full story is told, the ballad is usually very short. Songs of four verses are the most common, followed closely by those of eight. Together they account for over half of the texts in the collection. The small amount of variation observable in the multiple versions of certain ballads denotes a lack of creativity on the part of the singers, which suggests in turn that a printed text may have provided the model. For example, in 32 out of the 40 texts of the aforementioned *El barquero,* the first four verses remain virtually intact; six of the remainder are incomplete, while only 2 out of the 40 display variants that alter the meaning. Even though the opening of a song is the most stable part, it is more usual for there to be many small changes from text to text with an occasional more radical innovation, such as a completely different opening.

Another observable feature of these texts is their inconsistent versification. Many are made up of assonating couplets instead of having one assonance throughout. Others open with couplets and then change into a single assonance. Or the contrary may be true: the body of the *romance* may be in one assonance and the conclusion a differently

assonating couplet. The game and dance songs with their repetitive sequences and refrains display a variety of patterns. Although the texts are printed in long (that is, two-hemistich) verses, many give evidence of having been composed in eight-syllable quatrains, possibly under the influence of locally more popular forms like the *corrido* in Mexico. This is the case in the three versions of *Alfonso XII* that contain several verses borrowed from "La cucaracha." These same verses also appear in some Mexican versions of *Alfonso XII* as well as in a couple of other *romances* (Díaz Roig 1987).

Some discussion of all the foregoing matters would have been welcome as part of the introduction, in which the author tells about her collecting experiences, lists the bibliography on the Costa Rican ballad, and gives essential information, including bibliography, about the twenty-five *romance* types of the collection. Armistead's preface contributes a valuable bibliographical survey of the many areas throughout the world where *romances* have been discovered. The musical transcriptions of 36 ballad melodies are an important addition. They are followed by indices and a number of pages of photographs of informants, many of whom are remarkably young.

Although from the point of view of the student of the Hispanic ballad it is disappointing to learn that the traditional *romance* in Costa Rica is in a state of decadence from which it is not likely to recover, such results are as significant for the history of the *romancero* as are more fruitful ones. Furthermore, every text that is culled is a valuable addition to the Hispanic ballad repertoire in the New World. We can only be grateful to Cruz-Sáenz for her energy and perseverance in putting together this collection.

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Vergangenheit in mündlicher Überlieferung, Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg and Hansjörg Reinau (eds.) Colloquium Rauricum, 1. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1988. x + 348 pp.

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This volume consists of the papers presented at the first Colloquium Rauricum, a conference at which historians considered their discipline from the perspective of oral tradition. Sixteen of the twenty papers are by historians; the remainder are by scholars in the fields of anthropology, folklore, and psychology. The weight of the conference was on historical evidence from ancient Greece and Rome.[1] Half of the essays deal with the interpretation of historical data; the remainder of the papers are concerned with literary evidence and discussion of methodologies for dealing with oral tradition as evidence for

[1] The general content of the volume is: introductory materials (psychology and a review of oral studies in the United States), 15%; anthropology, 6%; Germanic subjects, 10%; the ancient Near East, 12%; ancient Greece and Rome, 40%; medieval Europe, 12%; modern history (nineteenth and twentieth centuries), 5%.

history.

The orientation of the volume and the weight given to methodology reflect the work of Jan Vansina, whose *Oral Tradition as History* (1985) was the touchstone for the conference. For Vansina, *oral history* is made up of "reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants" (12-13), whereas *oral tradition* "consists of information existing in memory" and "as messages . . . transmitted beyond the generation that gave rise to them . . ." (147, 13). Of particular importance to the conference was Vansina' s concept of the "floating gap."[2] Most of the papers made reference to this concept and found it valuable for the evaluation of historical narratives. As far as the present-ness of history is concerned, it is Vansina's contention that historians are, first of all, witness of their own time no matter what era they focus on in their research.[3]

Vansina's insights in the field of anthropology and sociology are valuable for the historian and a formidable balance to the oral studies of literary scholars who tend to concentrate on close readings of texts along lines developed from the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord. It is precisely in close textual analysis that Vansina's work is weak, and it is to be noted that the participants in the conference concentrated on his anthropological insights rather than on his conception of form and internal structure.[4]

The organizers of the conference posed a set of questions which they felt should be dealt with by the conference participants in the light of Vansina's theories. A number of participants addressed the questions directly; others used them as general outlines for their

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[2] In historical narrative, "there are many accounts for very recent times, tapering off as one goes farther back until one reaches times of origin for which, once again, there are many accounts . . . .At the junction of times of origin and the very sparse subsequent records, there usually is a chronological gap. It is called 'floating' because over time it tends to advance towards the present. . ." (168-69). Further, "the gap is not often very evident to people in the communities involved, but it is usually unmistakable to the researchers. Sometimes, especially in genealogies, the recent past and origins are run together as a succession of a single generation" (23). He also observes that "the gap is best explained by reference to the capacity of different social structures to reckon time. Beyond a certain depth . . . chronology can no longer be kept. Accounts fuse and are thrown back into the period of origin . . . or are forgotten . . . . Historical consciousness works on only two registers: time of origin and recent times. Because the limit one reaches in time reckoning moves with the passage of generations, I have called the gap a floating gap" (24).

[3] 1985:4. Claus Wilcke (113ff.) in his essay is able to show, for instance, that the Sumerian king lists were a mixture of myth and fact. Gregot Schoeler (149ff.), in his discussion of Iranian epic, shows how information about the middle eras is missing between detailed accounts of recent dynasties and their mythical origins.

[4] Vansina 1985:68-83. He views form as (a) language and as (b) rules for poetry, narrative, and formulas ("rulers"). He views internal structure as narrative beyond the level of the sentence as it exists in sub-categories of plot, episode, motif, setting, and theme. His perception of linguistics is limited to structuralism as represented by Tedlock and Jousse, and his ideas of narrative structure come from folklorists such as Propp and Nathhorst. What he offers to historians are the insights not of the literary scholar or linguist but of the cultural anthropologist.

essays.[5] By means of these questions, the organizers hoped that the participants (1) would be able to identify reliable criteria for evaluating oral evidence in historical narrative, (2) would be able to develop a screening process for such evidence, and (3) would be able to present a grammar of oral history. They felt that if the conference in any way dispelled some of the unreliable assumptions made about the advisability of using oral data in the writing of history, then it would have reached its goal (5). The papers themselves indicate that the goal was reached, and that oral sources are valuable as historical evidence because they provide validation of written sources (as correction and supplement) and reveal new insights into historical problems which could otherwise not have been gained.

Vansina's arguments are based on the psychology of memory and on the processes by which memory structures tradition. Viktor Hobi shows (9-33) how memory is not binary and how it is influenced by the perception of similarities, completions, directions, and backgrounds as well as by characteristics of physiology and personality. Guy P. Marchal (289-320) and Arnold Esch (321-24) illustrate how memory is based on personal experience and that the powers of remembering evinced by non-literate peoples are much more colorful than our own. Not only is memory influenced by personal idiosyncrasies, but memory is social; it is the collective awareness and remembering of communities of valued incidents. Dieter Timpe (266-86) points out that tradition is made secure by social authority, while Marchal indicates how memory is based on what the community has discussed and remembered. The conference participants, like Vansina, argue that history without writing cannot be chronological. This is clearly seen in the frequent references to the theory of the "floating gap" in most of the papers.

The fact that history is a living interpretation of the past was also an idea expressed frequently in the papers, especially by Rolf Herzog (72-76), Kurt A. Raaflaub (197-225), and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg (237-65). Herzog documents how two African tribes organized history differently: one from the perspective of kingship, the other from that of the clan. Raaflaub argues that the early history of the fall of the tyrants of Athens was written from the particular historical consciousness of the writer-compiler, and Ungern-Sternberg shows how Rome's interest in history was based on the desire of the ruling class to bolster its political position. Two papers on the Greek epics illustrate how these works could be used to supply historical data for historians: the geography described and the lists of ships, for instance, have been found to be archaisms which do not tally with historical evidence. For Joachim Latacz (161) this means that the epics themselves were told from generation to generation for three hundred years before finally being written down; for Wolfgang Kullmann this means that the epics were based on historical reports retold generation after generation with both contemporary and mythical additions. Meinhard Schuster (57-71) writes from the perspective of cognitive anthropology; it is his contention that real history is present in oral history, but that it cannot be easily recovered. Lutz Röhrich (79-99), a folklorist, states that folktales contain real history as archaic material, but he questions how far back such evidence goes.[6] The papers on the early historians Fabius Pictor and Herodotus (Justus Cobet, 226-33; Raaflaub; Timpe; von Ungern-Sternberg) illustrate the fact that oral tradition is not oral history and that the substance of

[5] I paraphrase the questions from p. 3 of the text: (1) What are the conceptions of time and past in your data? Is time reckoned as cyclic? Does it have beginning and end? Is it seen as having phases? (2) What is the structure of memory? How do individuals and societies remember events from one generation to another? (3) What is the content of what is remembered? What do individuals remember, and why? (4) Who are those who do the remembering: specific social groups? singers? storytellers? (5) To what is memory typically tied: burial sites? other specific physical objects such as boundary markings, buildings, ruins?

[6] His explication of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin" contains information that children actually left the town on June 26, 1284, but no one remembers why.

history is reworked by the historian as he remembers and understands it in the light of his own knowledge and style. It was a general consensus of the conference that written history is more complex than oral history and that no transmission, oral or written, is pure (Prantisek Graus, 325-27). Focus on the structure of memory from a variety of perspectives was thus a major concern of the conference participants.

Since the conference focused on history and on the writing of history, the work of Parry and Lord was only briefly mentioned. Deborah Boedeker (34-53) stresses the fact that the insights of these pioneers and the studies developed from them make up a methodology but not a doctrine. The advisability of using interviews for the gathering of historical data was also discussed and evaluated. Rainer Wirtz (331-44), a sociologist, described the LUSIR project based on interviews conducted between 1930 and 1960 in the Ruhr district of Germany, and shows how the information gained from such interviews brings the historian closer to the real experiences of the human beings who live history than do the individual, intellectualized, written accounts of historians. Heinrich Löffler (100-10), on the other hand, instead of showing how contemporary interviews are the value to historians, describes how German linguists have analyzed the interviews as valuable data for the understanding of language change.

Other approaches to historical data from the perspective of oral tradition concerned the availability of writing and the kind of knowledge possessed by historians in organizing and focusing their materials. Klaus Seybold (141-48) indicates at the outset of his essay that ancient Israel was never at any point in its history without writing, but only made use of writing when there was a political need for it to be written down. The point made here and elsewhere in the papers is that history as it has been traditionally defined is the conscious writing down of something that the community wants remembered for some specific reason.

Throughout the conference it was evident that historians think of history as the intellectualization of written evidence and that they have difficulty in dealing with the concepts of "oral history" and "oral tradition" as data for historical research.[7] In the final summing up, Martin Schaffner (347) makes a plea for oral history as a valuable and necessary adjunct for the discipline of history; he states that the importance of oral history and oral tradition in the compiling of histories requires the insights of sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and sociobiography as well as other areas of research.

Reference

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[7] Von Ungern-Sternberg and Reinau state this problem at the outset in their introduction (1): "Der Historiker europäisch-neuzeitlicher Tradition ist gewohnt, mit schriftlichen Zeugnissen zu arbeiten, aus schriftlichen Zeugnissen sein Geschichtsbild zu konstruieren. Am liebsten hat er es mit Urkunden und Akten jeglicher Art zu tun."

Allegorical Speculation in an Oral Society: The Tabwa Narrative Tradition, Robert Cancel. University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 122. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1989. x + 230 pp. Glossary; Bibliography.

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Robert Cancel's work is on the Tabwa oral narrative called the *inshimi* among the Bemba-speaking Tabwa in Zambia. The noun *inshimi,* derived from the verb *ukushimika* "to tell stories, preach or converse," reminds one immediately of the Xhosa *intsomi* of South Africa. The similarity in structure probably indicates towards a common Ur-Bantu (or Malcolm Cuthrie's Common Bantu) form. It is interesting to note, however, that the Xhosa language does not have a corresponding verb.

Cancel's research was carried out in northern Zambia in an area between Lakes Mweru and Tanganyika. His fieldwork started in 1975 and continued for approximately two years among the Tabwa (5). He admits that this is a relatively short period in which to learn a language, let alone a culture. I like his honesty; the same cannot always be said of field workers everywhere in this regard. Some have made dubious claims regarding their "fluency" or "competence" in the target language after a brief sojourn among the speakers, enabling them to interpret forms such as oral narratives in a way that would not be possible to the "uninitiated." Fortunately this is not one of Cancel's shortcomings. He openly acknowledges help he received through models from similar studies as well as from anthropological and ethnographic research conducted on relevant groups in Zambia and Zaire. This does not, however, detract from his extremely useful contribution as regards the oral narrative among the Tabwa in particular, and the oral narrative in general.

Another case in point is his acknowledgment that the tale-telling events "were rarely spontaneous events" (22). Although this would certainly not seem to be the ideal situation, the fact of the matter is that the serious field worker in Cancel's circumstances has no other option. He openly admits that his "mere presence could have altered any number of the conditions of performance" (22). There have been instances in the past where field workers were at pains to stress the fact that the storytelling performances forming the basis of their analyses were never "contrived" or "organized." They "stumbled" upon these performances and then merged with the audience so as to become barely noticeable, enabling them to witness a "spontaneous" performance. With a foreign worker in your midst, this does not seem feasible.

Cancel rightly maintains that determining a method for analyzing his data comes down to a matter of choice, although an "educated choice" (1). His view of an oral tradition as polysemic, operating on various levels, is commendable. This excludes the usage of any single approach to its structure and function. His view of the Tabwa oral narrative tradition is grounded in three disciplines: literary criticism, folklore, and anthropology. Following Alton Becker's model for exploring Javanese shadow theater, Cancel identifies three specific dimensions of the tradition: the first is the linguistic presentation or the verbal text; the second the intertextual relationship between the narrative and other narratives in the tradition or the traditional context; and the third the living context of the performance itself (18). This ties in with John Foley's insistence that in comparing oral traditions, one should keep in mind that there should be similarity regarding the tradition, the genre, and the text (1988:109-11).

It is also heartening to see that Cancel believes that literary scholarship can help in bringing together works from a written tradition and those from an oral tradition. To be sure, there are differences but it is true, as Cancel says, that the commonality between these two traditions has been played down in favor of the more highlighted differences.

In chapter 2 Cancel takes a look at the formal structure of the narratives. His basic narrative unit is the *image,* which he defines as "the visualization of a character, action, or relationship" (24). Other key concepts in his analysis are plot, repetition, theme, allegory,

and metaphor (28), and two "basic structural models," i.e. the expansible image-set and the patterned image-set (33). Cancel should perhaps have singled out "episode" as a key structural concept in his analysis too, because the term figures very prominently throughout the discussion. It is quite obvious that Cancel had been strongly influenced by the work of Harold Scheub on the Xhosa *iintsomi* (1975), as he acknowledges (33).

His reference to audience expectations being confirmed (or thwarted) reminds one of Jurij Lotman's (1973) aesthetics of identification, where the code of the sender (narrator) is the same as that of the recipients (audience) as opposed to the aesthetics of contrast (in modern literary forms, for example) when the author's code and that of his readership may differ considerably.

Cancel's selection of performances and his discussion in chapter 2 satisfactorily illustrates the concepts he introduces. I find his method of including non-relevant remarks by audience members in his translations more distracting than helpful. The aim ostensibly is to give an authentic ring to the transcriptions. The inclusion of remarks, in whatever form, by members of the audience on the narrative itself or aiding the narrator in his or her performance, on the other hand, is extremely important. It is well known that the audience and the narrator jointly shape the performance within most oral narrative traditions.

Chapter 3 deals with the performance context, the living event, and it is as Cancel rightly states a vital part of the storytelling tradition. His discussion of narrators and their individual styles and idiosyncrasies reminds one again vividly of Scheub's work on the Xhosa *iintsomi*. One wonders whether Cancel should not have adopted a different way of presenting his translations of the Tabwa narratives, given the transcription he provides on pages 61-63 to illustrate the grouping of words used by the narrator. The illustrations of narrators in action, even frozen as they are, do add a little color to the discussion. It is always extremely difficult to capture the imagination of the reader when describing narrators and their techniques such as body movement, mime, gesture, and facial expression. Cancel again (75) refers to the effect his presence may have had on the performances. Although he admits that he does not know, it is commendable of him to acknowledge the fact that the "normal" context of story-performance, as he calls it, had been altered by his presence.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6 Cancel proceeds to analyze tales that are more complex in composition. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with narratives that share a similar structural framework by way of the same basic polarities, characters, plot, and action. These related narratives constitute an "armature." In chapter 6 Cancel illustrates how the thematic argument of the narrative is composed by allegorically aligning various elements in the narrative. In all three chapters the establishing of sets of polarities or oppositions appears to be the key process.

I fail to understand the reason for Cancel's inclusion of an appendix following every chapter. After chapter 3, having discussed the performance context, he adds three narratives. The mere representations of the translated texts, admittedly with minor indications of instances where narrators had "performed," simply mean very little in terms of the foregoing discussion. One suspects that the narratives are included for comparative purposes or to illustrate variant forms of the same tale-type. If one compares the relatively short narratives in the appendices in chapters 5 and 6 with the tales analyzed in those chapters, they appear much simpler in structure. Why include them? A general appendix at the back would better have served the purpose of providing additional data for the interested scholar. One would also like to see a few tales in the vernacular together with their translations. The book is unfortunately marred by quite a few annoying and unnecessary errors in the text.

In spite of minor criticisms, Cancel has in my opinion made a valuable contribution as regards the study of oral narrative tradition among the Tabwa specifically and in Africa generally. It is quite clear that different societies in Africa share many characteristics in oral

narrative tradition. Cancel's largest contribution lies in his formal application of metaphor and allegory to the composition of story in performance and his book is a welcome addition to the ever-growing and fascinating field of oral narrative.

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