

## Editor's Column

What we might call the “bookends” to this second and final issue of *Oral Tradition* for 1993 represent a new direction for the journal. One of them consists of an interview with George Sutherlin, aka DJ Romeo, a traditional oral artist whose specialty is rap music. He responds to questions posed by Debra Wehmeyer-Shaw, their discussion covering such topics as the origins of rap, performance features, and “freestyling” (improvisation). At the other extremity of the present issue lies a transcribed performance of sorts, in this instance a group discussion of “Orality and Deafness” that was conducted on the electronic network ORTRAD-L sponsored by the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at Missouri. This collective effort is presented substantially as it occurred, the only addition being informational notes to guide the reader. Within the fascinating and often bewildering mix of media that constitutes contemporary Western expressive and perceptual repertoires, we hope these two examples of (textualized) non-print, performance-based interactions shed some light on the complex processes associated with oral tradition.

Within the bookends this issue's potpourri includes contributions on Finnish, Hispanic, Anglo-Saxon, Arabic, Greek, and French traditions. Thomas DuBois starts by confronting the knotty problem of the relationship between oral tradition and the individually crafted *Kalevala* of Elias Lönnrot. Another kind of transformation, that of a sixteenth-century Spanish ballad that has survived into modern oral tradition, provides the subject for Madeline Sutherland's subsequent essay. Miriam Youngerman Miller then considers two modern reconstructions of how *Beowulf* might have been performed, employing a scientific measuring device to compare rival metrical theories. Bridal songs by Arab women in the Galilee are described and set in social context by Mishael Caspi and Julia Blessing. Finally, William Sale closes his demonstration of the similarity of the formulaic techniques used by Homer and the poet of the Old French *Chanson de Roland* (Part I appeared in volume 8, i: 87-142). All in all, we trust that this heterogeneous selection fulfills *OT*'s commitment to maintain a broad comparative view.

In our next issue, that perspective will be focused on the tremendous variety and richness of African oral traditions. Special editor Lee Haring

has assembled a valuable collection of nine essays, plus his introduction, on topics as diverse as Chokwe storytelling, Igbo epic, Somali women's poetry, and Hausa rap artists. Number 9, ii will return to the format of a miscellany, with a cluster devoted to Editing and Oral Tradition (A.N. Doane on Old English, Dell Hymes on Native American, Joseph Russo on Homer, and Susan Slyomovics on Arabic), and additional essays by Richard Bauman (the 1992 Lord and Parry Lecturer), Mark Amodio (on *Beowulf*) Timothy Boyd (on Homer), Bonnie Irwin (on the frame tale in the Middle Ages), Anne Klein (on orality and literacy in contemporary Tibet), and Bruce Rosenberg (on African American folklore in the novels of Leon Forrest). Looking further ahead, we will present a special collection on Native American oral traditions, edited by Barre Toelken and Larry Evers, as the first issue for our tenth year, 1995.

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