ORAL TRADITION

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

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Editor's Column

Each number of *Oral Tradition* attempts to foster understanding of individual traditions through reference to the remarkable variety of forms presented to us both as living phenomena and as works now preserved only as texts. If the conversation is to prove useful and enlightening, it must be as diverse as possible, striving to place verbal arts in their widest and deepest possible context. Because the study of oral traditions—for that matter, even their discovery—is so much in its infancy, we assume and expect that this interpretive context will continue to evolve, as analogues arise, connections are made, and distinctions are drawn.

The present issue of *OT* has as much potential for further articulation of our joint field as any so far published. Even a mere list of the subjects examined bears this out: Mexican folk drama, Tibetan religious works, African American novels, international ballads, and a focused cluster on "Editing and Oral Traditions" that treats Native American, ancient Greek, Anglo-Saxon, and Egyptian. Equally as heterogeneous, however, are the perspectives and approaches used by authors, including performance studies, ethnopoetics, textual analysis, oral theory, rhetoric, and religious studies. The result is a group of extremely diverse essays, each of them adopting a distinctive line of inquiry, that collectively illustrates the remarkable variety of paths toward understanding that characterizes studies in oral traditions at this point in their development. Another way to put the same matter is to say that this issue provides a representative overview of the composite field in the mid-1990's, and might well serve as a worthy introduction for students, graduate or undergraduate, in a wide range of courses. It will be performing that function this fall in the seminar on oral tradition at the University of Missouri.

Our next issue will begin *OT*'s tenth year of existence, a sufficiently ritualistic moment that we plan to mark with essays on topics such as the ubiquitous "frame tale" in the Middle Ages, the traditional oral character of South African cinema, the infamous Achaean wall in Homer's *Iliad*, and not least the chronicling of Nelson Mandela's release by oral praise-poets. With these and other examples of how Proteus modulates, changing form

from culture to culture and genre to genre, playing so many diverse roles in the social drama, we hope to continue to provide our readership with an ever-evolving sense of the human complexity of oral traditions.

John Miles Foley, Editor

Informing Performance:
Producing the *Coloquio* in Tierra Blanca

Richard Bauman and Pamela Ritch

**The Albert Lord and Milman Parry
Lecture for 1992[1]**

The attractions of performance as a focus of anthropological and folkloristic analysis are many, but in general terms they derive from four characteristic properties of performance: 1. performances are *artful*, the locus of aesthetic behaviors, forms, responses, and values, as enacted in social life; 2. performances are *reflexive*, cultural forms about culture, social forms about society, communicative forms about communication, in which meanings and values are cast in symbolic form and placed on display before an audience; 3. performances are *performative*, in J. L. Austin's (1962) sense of the term: they are consequential and efficacious ways of accomplishing social ends; 4. performances are both *traditional* and *emergent*, contexts in which the already done is done anew, recontextualized, shaped by and shaping the unfolding agendas of the here and now. In simple terms, then, we look to performances as sources of insight into art, meaning, values, social efficacy, and the dynamics of tradition and creativity (Bauman 1992; Bauman and Briggs 1990). Little wonder, given our investment in all these sociological, epistemolological, axiological, and textual resonances of performance, that we concentrate our attention overwhelmingly on full, finished performances. If it is aesthetics we are after, we want behaviors and forms at their artful best, open to critical evaluation for the skill and effectiveness with which they are done. If it is the reflexive display of meaning and value that we intend to

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interpret, we want them in their public guise, on view before an engaged audience; if it is efficacy and consequentiality that are at issue, we want enactments that are intended to count fully; and if is the dynamics of recontextualization that are of interest, we want the fullest performed texts we can record.

But while the logic of this preoccupation with full, finished performance is to this extent readily apparent, the consequent privileging of fully performed texts and/or bounded performance events as our analytical frames of reference has largely precluded *systematic* attention to other significant dimensions of performance as a mode of social action. It is one of those dimensions that we wish to address here: if performances are all that resonant with artfulness, meaning, value, efficacy, and so on, how do they get that way? Performances are *crafted* productions, implicating displays of virtuosic skill and/or the effective marshalling of affecting symbols, and that requires work to accomplish. Yet it is surprising how little systematic and integrative attention has been paid to the production process by which performances are made.

Certainly, in the aggregate, there has been significant work on one or another aspect of the production of performance. There is, for example, a sizeable body of literature on the social organization of performance, treated largely as a problem in social or political anthropology, but with relatively little analytical attention to the performances themselves (e.g., de la Peña 1981; Smith 1977). Ethnomusicologists, for their part, have pointed to the significance of practice in perfecting one's musical skills in the service of performance (e.g., Merriam 1964:158-61), and a number of students of oral poetics have traced the process by which performers in various societies acquire the communicative competence required for artistic verbal performance (e.g., Abrahams 1983:55-66; Gossen 1974:239; Lord 1960:13-29). And part of the orality-literacy debates that have burgeoned in recent years has directed attention to forms of oral poetry that involve composition, polishing, and memorization before they are brought before an audience in performance (e.g., Finnegan 1977). What we do not find, however, with very few exceptions (e.g., Fabian 1990; Tedlock 1980), is work that focuses close ethnographic attention on the stage-by-stage process by which a performance is produced, examining each phase in terms of the same kinds of form-function-meaning interrelationships we seek in the full performance.

Richard Schechner has taken the lead among performance scholars in

insisting that our examination of performance extend in both directions beyond the performance event itself to comprehend what he calls "the whole performance sequence," consisting, in his view, of seven parts: training, workshops, rehearsals, warm-ups, performance, cool-down, and aftermath (Schechner 1985:16-21).   While this sequence may accord well with Western theatrical practice, especially the practice of Schechner's own avant-garde theater, one would certainly not want to generalize it *a priori* to other cultures, either in its overall contour or in terms of Schechner's delineation of the characteristics of the individual stages in the sequence, which also betrays a Western theatrical bias. Rather, the phase structure of the production process and the configuration of each phase should be taken as to be discovered. What are the locally defined stages in the production of performance? How are they interrelated?

One principle of interrelationship that offers a useful vantage point on the process rests on a view of the production process as being in the service of informing—in the sense of giving form to—the eventual performance. There is a teleology governing the production process and it is that end-orientation that organizes the system. This is the framework that has shaped our ethnographic investigation of festival drama in Mexico, of which this paper offers a general summary. We will give special attention to the rehearsal stage of the process, as the most elaborate and complex of the pre-performance phases. First, some background on the *coloquio* in Tierra Blanca.

The *Coloquio* in Tierra Blanca

Central among the ritual events in festivals celebrated in the municipality of Allende, Guanajuato, are nightlong performances of the traditional Nativity play, or *coloquio, Tesoro Escondido* (*Hidden Treasure*), a folk drama that dates back to the sixteenth century in Mexico and has roots even earlier in medieval Spanish drama. The *coloquio* has been assumed by most literary scholars to have disappeared from active performance in Mexico at least a generation ago, but in fact the *coloquio* performance tradition is alive and reasonably well in parts of the state of Guanajuato. We have been engaged since 1985 in the ethnographic study of *coloquio* production in several communities, with special attention to Tierra Blanca de Abajo, a relatively isolated *ejido* community that lies northwest

of San Miguel de Allende.

Tesoro Escondido is a traditional shepherds' play (called *pastorela* in other regions of Greater Mexico),[2] which centers on the journey of a group of shepherds to Bethlehem to adore the Christ child and the efforts of Lucifer, eventually vanquished by Saint Michael, to keep them from doing so. The *coloquios* are widely associated with the Christmas season, but in the region around San Miguel de Allende at least, they have been detached from Christmas and are performed as the climactic event of community festivals, the greatest number of which occur in this region in mid-May in honor of San Isidoro Labrador, the patron saint of the peasant villagers, or in early June in honor of the Santa Cruz.

Tierra Blanca's fiesta is also in honor of San Isidoro, but is celebrated not on May 15th, but on January 15th, with the *coloquio* performance beginning on the night of the 15th and running through the morning of January 16th. When asked why they honor San Isidoro on this date, the people of Tierra Blanca give two answers: (1) they have a kind of sister-city relationship with another nearby community that holds its fiesta on May 15th and having theirs on a different date allows the members of both communities to enjoy each others' celebrations; and (2) January 15th is an advantageous date because the crops are all in, there is relatively less work to do, migrant workers from the community are home from their travels, and money for the fiesta is relatively more available than in mid-May.

Coloquio performances in Tierra Blanca are lengthy and elaborate productions, twelve to fourteen hours in duration, involving forty-three actors, a band of hired musicians, and a corps of other functionaries (curtain pullers, special effects people, and so on). The play is produced each year by a shifting group of men, *los encargados* (persons in charge), who take

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[2] The *pastorela* in Greater Mexico has been the focus of extensive research, dating back to the early investigations of Bourke (1893) in the Rio Grande Valley at the end of the nineteenth century. The most important works on the *pastorela* in the Republic of Mexico are Barker (1953), Litvak (1973), Mendoza and Mendoza (1952), Rael (1965), and Robe (1954). On the *pastorela*/*coloquio* in Guanajuato, see Castillo Robles and Alonso Tejeda (1977), Chamorro (1980), Litvak (1973), and Michel (1932). Few scholars have concerned themselves centrally with *pastorela* performance; Flores (1989) and Castillo Robles and Alonso Tejeda (1977) are the principal exceptions. The history of *pastorela* scholarship is reviewed in Cantú (1982) and Stowell (1970), the latter focused on work in the American Southwest.

on the task voluntarily as a communal and devotional responsibility. One man serves as the *primer encargado* (first *encargado*) and is primarily in charge of organizing the production. In addition to the six official *encargados*, there is an additional individual who directs the rehearsals and serves as prompter during the rehearsals and the performance.

The production process begins in early November, around All Saints' Day, proceeds through the selection of actors, the distribution and learning of the parts (*papeles*), a series of five to seven rehearsals (*ensayos*) ending with the *ensayo real* (grand or true rehearsal), and culminates in the performance on January 15th. But before discussing the rehearsal process itself, it will be useful to fill in some preliminary information concerning the script that is the basic resource for the production and to account for two prior stages in the production process, namely, copying out the sides and learning the parts.

The script

We begin with the script, called the *libro*, or book, in which the *coloquio* resides between productions; the term *coloquio* can refer either to the written text or to the performed play. The script represents an authoritative textual frame of reference for the production of the play, and each community that wishes to produce a *coloquio* must have one.

The *coloquio* is composed in verse and in the version performed in Tierra Blanca it runs to more than 8,200 lines. The verse for the spoken dialogue of the *coloquio* is built on the classic Hispanic octosyllabic line, for the most part with assonant endings on the even numbered lines. In addition to the spoken or sung lines, the script gives the name of the character to whom each speech is assigned plus stage directions, such as "The Virgin appears and is seated," "Susana and Arminda dance and sing," "The Vices exit," or "The curtain is lowered."

The sides

From the script, the first transformation that the text undergoes toward performance occurs in the writing out of the parts for the actors that have been recruited for the play. The cast members receive their parts in

written form, copied out speech by speech by the *primer encargado*, sometimes with the help of the prompter.

The copied parts take the form of a small booklet, for which we will employ the theatrical term "sides." Each set of sides consists of the speeches (*declamaciones*) or entrances (*entradas*) of one character only, with each speech numbered consecutively; there are no cues or stage directions. In effect, then, the copying out of the sides disassembles the play into sets consisting of the speeches of individual characters and decouples the words of each character from all others, so that each speech in the sides stands in relation to the preceding and subsequent ones of that character alone. There is thus a time-line incorporated into the sides, which bears a synecdochic, elliptical relation to the temporal structure of the *coloquio* plot. Moreover, some of the speeches index adjacent ones by means of terms of address or response, such as "All right, Lindor, don't get excited." And, of course, calling each numbered speech an entrance anticipates its realization as performed action. In the aggregate, each set of sides constitutes a part (*papel*). When the sides are actually distributed to the actors who will play the respective parts, bringing together part and player, the part becomes a role.

Learning the part

When the sides are distributed to the actors by the *encargado* during the month of November, the process of intersemiotic translation that transforms the written word into the voiced word begins. Actors employ a variety of methods in learning their lines. Some individuals study the sides alone as time is available, in the evening, on Sunday, while out watching the livestock. The lines are read aloud, short speeches in their entirety, longer ones in sections (usually two lines at a time, which constitute an intonational and rhyming unit), until they can be recited from memory. Family members or friends may also be pressed into service at various points in the process, feeding lines to the actors from the sides to aid in the learning process and testing them in their recitations. In addition to these individual or cooperative efforts, the *encargado* offers his assistance to those actors who desire his help and otherwise assists in much the same manner as family members and friends.

It is at this learning point in the production process that certain

characteristic features of *coloquio* performance style come into play. In particular, there is a highly conventionalized style of delivery that marks *coloquio* performance, keyed to the poetic structure of the text. The basic unit, as noted, is the end-stopped octosyllabic line. Each line characteristically receives three or four regular stresses, depending upon the syllabic and accentual structure of the given line, though the three-stress lines are marked by a breath pause at the end to allow for an empty beat that normalizes a four-stress pattern. Some actors maintain a regular line-by-line intonational pattern characterized by a slightly rising inflection on the final stressed syllable, usually the penultimate syllable in the line, followed by a return to the normal tone on the final unstressed syllable. Others group the lines into longer four-line units, with a rising intonation at the end of the second line and a falling intonation at the end of the fourth. While this delivery style is in part conditioned by the formal features of the line and verse structure in which the play is composed, there are additional factors that play a role as well, factors that do not reside in the written forms of the text.

First, virtually all the actors have seen other *coloquio* performances before they set foot on the stage. From earliest infancy, when mothers bring their babies to *coloquios*, through childhood, when children excitedly crowd the front margin of the stage, through adolescence and adulthood, members of the community attend the *coloquio* year after year; it is the culmination of an already heightened festival experience. Accordingly, every actor—even the youngest Virtue—has internalized the recitational style of delivery. This extends as well to those non-actors who are enlisted in the learning process, some of whom have taken part in earlier productions. Thus the recitational style is learned in effect before the lines, as part of the conventions by which a *coloquio* is done, and is brought into play from the very beginning of the process of learning a part.

The rehearsals

A week or so after distributing the sides, usually toward the latter part of November, the *encargado* calls the first of a series of weekly rehearsals, or *ensayos*. The stated rationale for the rehearsals makes clear that these events are in the service of the performance. The rehearsals, according to various *encargados* and prompters, are "oriented toward

presenting a better performance" (*spectaculo*), undertaken "so there will be a better show." Toward this end, the actors must be "helped" or "corrected." Those who need help include especially those with "complex parts," "those who lack orientation," and "those who are a bit uneven."   Correction, of course, implies a presentational standard; the *encargados* define their task as one of correcting unacceptable deviations from that standard in rehearsal, before the public performance. We will examine shortly how this task is addressed in practice.

Altogether, in any given year, there are six or seven rehearsals of the *coloquio*, the last of which is the *ensayo real*, the grand (or true) rehearsal, different in significant respects from the preceding ones. The number of rehearsals is keyed both to the calendar, that is, the number of weeks available between late November and January 15, and to the number of cooperating *encargados*, as each *encargado* bears the expenses for one rehearsal.

Rehearsals are held on Saturday nights and run through the night to Sunday morning. As all rehearsals are full run-throughs (as we will discuss more fully a bit later), they last approximately as long as the performance itself, that is, around twelve hours or more. Variation in the length of the rehearsals depends upon how many people show up, how well they know their lines, and how closely they stick around the rehearsal area so that it is not necessary to go looking for them when it is time for their next entrance. Rehearsals are called for 9:00 p.m., and are signalled by ringing the church bells to summon the participants. The bells are rung again about twenty minutes later, and the actual rehearsal starts anywhere from 9:20 to 10:00 p.m. when the prompter and enough members of the cast are present to begin. The prompter is essential, and, being a responsible figure in the community, is usually relatively on time. Cast members continue to arrive after the rehearsal is under way and the *encargado* may send messengers to summon latecomers.

The rehearsals—all but the *ensayo real*—are held in the courtyard of the village church, a rectangular walled enclosure with the church closing off one end and a gate in the wall at the opposite end.   A short flight of steps leads up the the church entrance, flanked on both sides by a concrete bench built into the church facade. Opposite the church entrance is a small, free-standing niche for religious offerings and in one corner of the yard opposite frontstage-right is a tree with a wooden bench beneath it. During the rehearsals, the prompter sits on the church steps with the rehearsal

musicians to his right. The position occupied by the prompter and the musicians defines the upstage end of the rehearsal space, with the downstage area extending approximately thirty feet toward the opposite wall, terminating about ten feet in front of the niche.

The prompter, as suggested, is the functional center of the rehearsal; he controls the event, backed up in certain directorial functions by the *primer encargado* and perhaps one or two additional *encargados*. The prompter and the *primer encargado* are always present. Also considered essential to the conduct of the rehearsal are musicians to accompany the songs and dances that are part of the play; music and dance are introduced into the production process at this stage. Minimally, a single musician will do, but usually there are more—some combination of violin, guitar, string bass, and bajo sexto. The rehearsal band, drawn from the community, is paid a small sum for its work; they are the only paid participants. Their labors extend to the rehearsals only, as a more prestigious professional band from outside the community is hired for the performance.

As regards the cast, they are never all present at the regular rehearsals and some may be missing even from the *ensayo real*. First, the full cast may not be recruited at the time the rehearsals commence in late November. Some roles may not be filled until the fourth or even the fifth rehearsal. Second, not everyone shows up for every rehearsal. Scheduling is one factor affecting attendance: when a rehearsal fell on New Year's Eve, for example, attendance was notably thin. Scheduling aside, there are differences of motivation, responsibility, and sense of commitment that make for differential participation. The female cast members, in our experience, are the most reliable; they attend faithfully and show up on time. Least regular are the Vices, all adult men. Some of them never participate until the *ensayo real*, to the extent that other cast members may not even know who they are in any given year. There is a sense, especially among the younger shepherds, that the rehearsals are mostly for them, though even their ranks may not be filled out until the rehearsal process is well along. Of those cast members who do attend rehearsals, one in particular who was good and experienced at his role showed an occasional tendency to disappear after a while, the rehearsals being at cross-purposes with his Saturday-night drinking.

Absences are handled in two ways. If a particular cast member is expected at the rehearsal but has not yet arrived, someone else may be asked to stand in for him until he arrives—the prompter, an *encargado*, or another

actor or bystander drafted by the prompter. If a cast member is not expected to attend, his part is skipped over—more on this shortly.

All rehearsals have some spectators, ranging from as few as half a dozen on New Year's Eve to approximately eighty-five at the *ensayo real*. The average at the regular rehearsals is around twenty-five or thirty. These are relatives and friends of the cast members, devotees of the *coloquio*, and a complement of young boys simply hanging around where the action is on a Saturday night. The most stable set of spectators consists of women with their babies and young girl children, sitting on blankets against the churchyard wall beyond that portion of the rehearsal space that corresponds to stage left. In other words, they sit not where a regular audience would be, but off to the side, spectators of a different order. The male onlookers, *encargados* and others, shift positions around the periphery, congregating at times on the bench under the tree opposite frontstage-right, at times near the musicians, joined by the male cast members when they are not onstage. The teen-aged girls—friends of the shepherdesses, who join them between scenes—cluster together on the concrete bench to the prompter's left, or on the bench under the tree when it is not occupied by men. And the young boys run around wherever they like. Occasionally, a woman sets up a taco stand outside the gate, selling food and drink to the participants to carry them through the night. And finally, there is us, standing or sitting around with notebooks, tape recorders, cameras, beer, coffee, and other essential equipment. To what effect, we'll indicate a little later on. Notwithstanding their spatial displacement and the framing of the rehearsals as not-performance, the spectators do fulfill some of the functions of an audience. They laugh at the humorous words and actions of the various comic characters and a few of them applaud at those points where applause conventionally occurs—not at the end of the play, but after the *dispensas* offered by certain of the actors, scripted but frame-breaking appeals to the audience to excuse the flaws in the performance.

In their broadest scope, all rehearsals of the *coloquio* are full run-throughs, from the beginning of the play to the end. There is no deviation from this format, no selection of portions of the play to work on. With very few exceptions, to be discussed in a moment, everything is done once, in sequence. Nothing is repeated, gone back over, tried out again, no matter how imperfectly it is done. On the other hand, there are certain portions of the *coloquio*, especially the *caminata*, the dance that represents in stylized form the shepherd's travel toward Bethlehem, that recur over

and over again in just the same form, and they are done fully each time they occur. As a rule, again with a few exceptions, if an actor is absent, his part (we use the masculine pronoun because the female members of the cast attend faithfully) is skipped, and the run-through continues with the next available actor. The exceptions have to do with those instances when an actor is late to the rehearsal but is expected to attend. In those cases, as mentioned, the prompter or *encargado* may stand in or draft another person for the purpose until the latecomer arrives. In the rehearsals, then, the separate speeches of the sides are reconstituted as dramatic dialogue and the entrances are actualized, becoming elements for the realization of the plot.

While waiting for the rehearsal to begin, the assembled participants greet each other and visit, many of the men smoke (as they do throughout the rehearsal) and sip a beer or a cup of *canela* (cinnamon-flavored coffee), and the young men engage in horseplay. The prompter may use this interlude to dictate some lines to a late-recruited cast member and to dispatch some of the small boys who hang around the edges of the group after missing participants. When the prompter considers that enough of the cast and musicians have arrived, he begins the rehearsal proper by calling out *"Formense! Formense bien!"* 'Form up! Form up well!' which summons the shepherds to take their places for the *caminata* that opens the play. He then signals the musicians to play and the run-through begins. From this point through to the end, each actor or group of actors comes forward in turn to do their parts, coordinated throughout by the prompter and guided by the script of which he is the custodian.

The figure we have been calling the prompter, after one of his major functions, is not called *el apuntador* in Tierra Blanca as he is in some other communities, but *el encargado de letras*; *letra* can mean both letter (as in arts and letters) and poetic verse. As the rehearsal is conducted, the prompter's principal tasks, identified as giving the actors their lines and their entrances, assume the status of major directorial functions, coordinating the rehearsal process and providing it with momentum and continuity. As reported to us by participants, the rehearsal is "dedicated to giving the actors their *letras*," especially "those who are a bit weak." "[Memory] fails us; he responds with the word on which we leave off. He tells them, 'here we leave off and here...' [he] comes back with the following word."

In practice, the prompter keeps the rehearsal moving along by summoning and cuing the actors as their lines and other actions come up in

turn. This he does by some combination of: character name(s) or general term of address (e.g., *muchachos*), first line of the speech or song (occasionally several lines, if a song), genre (for generically identified sections), stage direction(s), and other directives to move things along (most frequently *andele* 'go on,' *venganse* 'come on,' *orale* 'now then,' 'get on with it'). Only two or three times have we heard the prompter address a cast member by his or her real name, and those occured in the course of sorting out a dance figure that had gotten confused and needed disentangling. Thus, the run-through is kept in motion by a succession of coordinating utterances by the prompter on the order of:

> —Lindor, *"Compañeros muy amados"* [role name, first line of speech];
> —Everyone speaks, *"Capitanes estimados"*;
> —Exit the Vices, now then, the Vices;
> —Lindor and Galin, to the *avecillas* [a series of songs beginning *"Avecillas cantan"*];
> —Play it, *caminata*, *caminata* of the shepherds [so labeled in the script];

or, in a more complex version:

> —Now then, boys and girls, get up on the stage. Throw away the cigarettes, put them out. Ready? *"Todos los pastores/vamos caminando."*

Some of these—character names, stage directions, lines—come from the script, which the prompter has always before him throughout the rehearsal. The remainder come from his own directorial initiative. Occasionally, when a cast member does not answer the prompter's summons promptly, other cast members will pick it up and reinforce it: "Bartolo! Bartolome, go on!" Or "Shepherds! Youngsters! Boys!" Likewise, the *encargado* may supply further reinforcement: "Kids, quickly, quickly, because it's urgent. Get on with it, youngsters, let's go quickly, kiddos. Youngsters!" When the actor playing a particular character is missing and thus does not answer the prompter's call, the prompter simply moves on to the next character in the scene.

   The characters are called up, as noted, in the order dictated by the script, and come to the front of the "stage" area to deliver their lines, cued by the first line of the speech. Those who have memorized their lines recite them straight through and then return to their places "upstage" if the scene requires their continued presence or leave the stage area if called upon to

exit, whereupon the next character is summoned, and so on through the end of the scene.

In actual practice, many of the actors do not have their scripted lines perfectly memorized, but if they proceed fluently through some semblance of their speeches they are not interrupted or corrected by the prompter, even if they misspeak or skip a line or lines, as long as they conclude with the last one. If, however, an actor falters or stops in mid-speech, the prompter feeds him or her with the next line. Even here, the actor may not repeat the offered line exactly, but if the prompt leads to a resumption of fluent recitation, that is sufficient. If not, a further prompt is offered at the next breakdown, and so on through to the end of the speech. In extreme cases, though this is not uncommon, especially for certain male actors who never bother to learn their parts, the prompter feeds an actor the whole speech line by line, setting up a kind of echoic doubling of the dialogue. It is especially noteworthy in this connection that notwithstanding the standard of full memorization, the prompter and *encargado* never take the actors to task for not knowing their lines. They may remark on it to each other, in asides like:

> *Encargado*: It still isn't memorized, right?
> Prompter: Nothing. It's that he doesn't study, I believe.

Or, they may observe to an actor that he has skipped a portion of his speech:

> *Encargado*: You left out a little bit, but that's OK for now.

But the run-through marches on.

There are, we should mention, certain breakdowns in the delivery of lines that are ultimately beyond the prompter's intervention. In one rehearsal we observed, for example, one of the actors was so drunk that he took off on a wild improvisation that was impervious to the prompter's attempts to feed the correct lines. The prompter simply sat back until the actor ran out of steam and then picked up with the entrance of the next actor.

There is one other exception to the general pattern. The Hermit, whose scripted speeches are pious expressions of his holy character, is traditionally in performance a vigorously burlesque figure. The man who

plays the Hermit in Tierra Blanca has a great comic sense, but is notably lax in learning his lines. As the prompter feeds him his speeches line by line from the script, the Hermit transforms them into punning parody. For example, for *"mi cuerpo ya sin aliento"* 'my body now without courage,' given him by the prompter, he may come back with *"mi puerco ya sin aliento"* 'now my pig has no courage'; for *"y por otro lado un fuerte collado"* 'and on the other side a rough hill,' he says *"y por acá esta mi otro cuñado"* 'and over here is my other brother-in-law.' The Hermit deserves far closer attention, but suffice it to say here that both in rehearsals and in performance the Hermit has license to parody his lines and that there is no expectation that he will repeat them as offered from the script.

While the prompter is the functionary charged with feeding lines to faltering actors, others occasionally assist him in his efforts. Some members of the community know the *coloquio*—or parts of it—well, as former actors, *encargados*, or devotees of the play, and may be seen mouthing speeches from the sidelines along with actors. If the prompter is a bit slow in offering a line to a stalled actor, one of these others may do so from memory.

This collaborative effort extends to other aspects of direction during the rehearsal in the "correction" of the actors. What is corrected are certain features of vocal delivery, movement, and blocking (that is, the management of space), which are introduced into the production process at the rehearsal stage. Here the *encargados*, onlookers, and other actors, who are not seated in a fixed spot like the prompter but can move about closer to the action, are usually in a better position to intervene. From the vantage point of the *encargado*, "correction" is the principal task: "We deal with nothing more than correcting all the people."

As regards delivery style, while there is a conventionalized, declamatory mode of delivery, learned by observation, and certain roles have special styles associated with them, the actors are allowed a degree of latitude. Thus, actors who deviate from the declamatory style, which is shaped by the prosody of their versified lines, and instead rattle off their lines with little or no attention to versification, receive no coaching or correction. Volume, however, is another matter. There is a clear concern that actors deliver their lines sufficiently loudly to be heard by the audience. The young, adolescent, and pre-adolescent actors who play the roles calling for sexually pure individuals (Mary, Joseph, the Virtues, Saint Michael) are often shy and nervous, which leads them to deliver their lines softly. This

is one major area in which coaching is offered. For example:

> *Encargado*: Speak loudly, Chabelo.
> Bystander: Don't be afraid.

Or,

> *Encargado* [to Virgin]: Tell him, *"Sí, padre,"* but say it to him without fear.

For the sung parts of the play—the music too is introduced at the rehearsal stage—some of the corrections are of the same order as those addressed to the spoken lines: speak more loudly, more forcefully. Singing raises other problems as well, having to do with voice quality and coordination of multiple voices. Some of the younger males employ a strained falsetto voice in singing, which cuts through choral singing, and if the singer's musical abilities are low this can have jarring effects. In these cases, the offending singers are urged to sing in a lower register. Likewise, if singers get too far out of unison, they are urged to get it together. The very few times that we have heard the prompter deviate from the linear run-through organization of the rehearsal and require the actors to repeat a portion of the play involved correction of singing, with special regard to voice quality and vigor. For example:

> [Tadeo and Ruben enter]
> Ruben: I can't sing like him.
> Prompter: Yes, you can. Why not? Now, then, *"esta noche nace nuestro
>   redentor."* You go ahead with it.
> Tadeo and Ruben: [sing].
> Prompter: Again. Do it with more fullness, much more fullness, not so
>   thin. Do it: *"Avecillas cantan con crecido y amor/que esta noche
>   nace nuestro redentor."*

The *encargados* are most engaged with stance, blocking, and movement, considering these physical aspects of staging as their chief responsibility. While the script does contain stage directions, these are not included in the sides distributed to the actors; they are cued by the prompter from the script, sometimes relayed to the actors by the *encargados*. The script contains no blocking guidelines, which are learned for the most part in rehearsal by observation and the teaching of the *encargados* from

custom; the standard is the way it was done *antes*, in the past.

Overall, the blocking of the play is quite simple and varies little. A few scenes, however, especially those involving Joseph and Mary, are more complex and the actors in them are among the youngest in the cast. In those scenes, the *encargado*(s) coach the actors where necessary, pointing out where they should stand and how they should move, modeling the basic dance step, and the like. Thus the *encargado*—and occasionally the prompter—will tell an actor to hold his head up, not to turn his back to the public (that is, the anticipated public, out front), to be more animated, and so on. Exhortations to be more animated occur especially when an actor lapses into perfunctory participation, walking rather dancing the *caminata*; recall that this dance occurs many times in the course of the play and is done fully in the rehearsal each time it occurs. As the night wears on and fatigue or boredom set in, an actor may key down a level in this manner, at which point the prompter or an *encargado* may urge him or her to dance correctly, with more animation, though this is not done consistently.

The prompter's contribution most often deals with the coordination of the verbal and the physical components of the action, how to articulate the spoken lines with movement, a problem that only comes into play at the rehearsal stage. For example:

> Prompter: *"Pero sentado, señor...."* Now come over this way.

Or,

> Prompter: [to Joseph] Kneel and stand up. Soon, soon. Now remain kneeling. [to Virgin] Virgin, you have to lift him up. Virgin, lift him up. *"Levantate, padre mio."*

Another task shared by the prompter and the *encargado* is keeping actors ready and available for their entrances, holding them from wandering off and getting them back into place if they do, as in "Galin, don't go away; you stay put there too," or "Stay, Gila," or "Stay there, Bartolo."

Finally, a minor function of the *encargado* in the rehearsals involves a few efforts toward coordinating props. Props figure only minimally in the rehearsal process in any event. Much of the action involving props in the performance is mimed in the rehearsals, but there are a few exceptions. The Hermit, for example, brings his cane to every rehearsal as it is an

essential part of his way of moving. Likewise, a shepherdess may borrow a hat from one of the men at the point where she is supposed to wave at the audience, or the *encargado* may call for a stone to be brought over to serve as a chair in the scenes that require one.

One further feature of the rehearsals requires comment; this concerns the overall tone of the rehearsal event. From the foregoing discussion, it should be clear that the rehearsals are framed in multiple ways that mark them as different from performance. We will discuss this in more detail in a moment, but for now we want to highlight one dimension of framing in particular. The performance frame rests on an assumption of accountability to an audience for an artistic display that is well and effectively done, subject to evaluation (Bauman 1977). Performance counts. Rehearsals, however, represent a different framing of enactment: they are doings that explicitly do not count, even when, as here, they are on view by spectators. In rehearsals of the *coloquio* in Tierra Blanca, one significant means of marking the enactment as not counting fully is the undercurrent of play that runs through the event. This is not the sort of play that Schechner identifies with rehearsal, which manifests itself as a spirit of open experimentation out of which the shape of the performance emerges (1985:20). Nor are we referring here to the striking parodic license that is accorded to the Hermit to transform his scripted lines into bawdy burlesque. Rather, we mean to identify a stream of joking and horseplay that bubbles up on the margins of rehearsal activity. Much of the cast is made up of young people, teenagers and young adults, and joking helps lighten the burden of rehearsing all through the night.

One form of expression by which this joking spirit is realized is punning on the names of characters as they are summoned by the prompter. Thus, when the prompter calls "Indio and Galateo," one of the shepherds mimics the call as "Indio and Pataleo," the latter meaning kicking or stamping. In like manner, we hear Lija (sandpaper) for Gila, Pescado (fish) for Pecado (Sin, one of the Vices), Martes (Tuesday) for Marte, and Bueyes (oxen, stupid ones) for Reyes (Kings), and so on. In addition to speech play, the course of the rehearsal is marked by other playful interludes, as illustrated by exchanges of the kind that follow:

Prompter: Gila, come on!
Shepherd: Gila, come on girl!
Prompter: Gila's not with you?

Shepherd: Come on, girl!
Shepherd: We just sold her.
Shepherd: They gave us five bucks for her.
Shepherd: They just carried her off.
Gila (arriving): What do I say?
Prompter: [gives her the line.]

Or,

Prompter: "They sing the song of the shepherds" [direction from the
          script.] Come on.
Shepherd: Are you singing also, Mario?
Shepherd: Now that Bartolo is stopping.
Shepherd: No, Bartolo, don't stop. He's not stopping. Bartolo is staying
          here in the cold till it kills him.

Or, at the point in the action where Bartolo is to lie down to sleep:

Prompter: Lie down for a little while, Bartolo. It's bed time.

Playful insults are also bandied about:

Prompter: Indio!
Shepherd: Dumb Indio!

Or,

Encargado: Get on with it, fatheads!

The verbal play is accompanied by physical horseplay, the shepherds
jostling each other, treading on each others' heels in the *caminata*, grabbing
at each others' hats, and the like. Only rarely does the play reach a point
where the prompter or *encargado* intervenes, when the horeseplay is
delaying the progress of the rehearsal.

Prompter: Enough! Shape up there!
Shepherd: No, they're fucking with me.
Prompter: Let's consider reprimanding him, *compadre*, because he's going
          to go on doing it.

One additional and irresistible resource for play is the gringo ethnographer. During the course of the rehearsals, a number of opportunities to needle or play with us offered themselves. At one point in the play, Bartolo describes Pecado, Lucifer's sidekick, in the following terms: baggy eyes, head of a badger, hands of a dog, ears of a lion, fingernails of Judas, paunch of a scorpion, feet of a burro, buttocks of a rat, nostrils of a pig. During the rehearsals, Bauman generally stood near the frontstage space with his tape recorder and it became a general shtick for Bartolo to direct the grotesque description at him, pointing out the corresponding parts of his anatomy as he reeled off the descriptive elements. The tape recorder also figured in another bit. In one scene, the Indian offers to trade his dog to the shepherds, and in the middle of the speech, at the point where he says, "now let's make a trade," he turned to Bauman and said, "my dog for your radio." And as one might expect, the Hermit took advantage of our presence as well. During a scene in which he is lost in a craggy mountain wilderness, he has the line, "I see another vision more horrible," which he transformed into "here is this one more horrible," looking pointedly at Ritch.

Ensayo real

The *ensayo real* 'grand rehearsal' is the last rehearsal before the performance. In most ways—scheduling, organization, participation, framing—it is similar to the ordinary rehearsals, though there are important dimensions of difference that set the *ensayo real* apart from the others.

The *ensayo real* is definitely framed as a rehearsal, as a doing of the play that does not count as performance but rather as practice, but it is keyed a bit higher than those that precede it. The most tangible shift resides in the move from the church courtyard to the wooden platform stage newly constructed each year in the public space adjacent to the church. At the time of the *ensayo real*, only the bare platform has been prepared; the brush screens along the sides are not yet in place and the curtains and backdrops are not set up until the day of the performance itself.

The second most apparent difference is in the number and placement of the onlookers at this last rehearsal. Something on the order of eighty or eighty-five people gather to watch the *ensayo real*, and they sit or stand head on to the stage in the area to be occupied by the full audience of

around four hundred on the night of the performance, women and children on blankets, men standing or moving around the fringes, small boys alternating between hanging on the edge of the stage and racing around all over the place. Thus, while this is not a full audience, it represents a step in that direction.

A third difference is that the prompter is now positioned off to the side of the stage. Although he is still *functionally* central to the *ensayo real*, he is no longer so *physically* central.

The run-through of the *coloquio* also moves closer in several respects to the enactment of the play in performance. To begin with, the cast is more nearly complete, with at most only one or two members of the forty-three-person cast missing. Thus, the run-through is also more nearly complete, with essentially all the lines being delivered. In addition, a number of the actors wear parts of their costumes; at a given *ensayo real*, one or two of the Vices will wear their black capes, a handful of shepherds will wear their flower-adorned hats, and the Hermit will wear his tall, peaked hat. Correspondingly, a few more props are in evidence at the *ensayo real*: a real chair instead of the makeshift rock of earlier rehearsals, one or two shepherd's crooks, and so on. The move may be only a partial one. In one *ensayo real* we observed, the Vices picked up sticks from the nearby brush to use as swords, midway between the empty-handed miming of swordplay in the earlier rehearsals and the clashing of real swords and cutlasses in the performance. Likewise, the chair—primarily Lucifer's throne—stands in also as an altar. Although the full complement of props is not employed in the *ensayo real*, this is the first stage in the production process in which we saw accountability for bringing a prop arise. The Indian is supposed to carry a staff in one scene, and when he didn't have it at an *ensayo real* the prompter queried him about it, but then said, "Well, skip it."

Finally, while we might expect the *ensayo real* to get more "serious" than the earlier rehearsals, given the imminence of the performance, the range of play may actually broaden. For example, in one *ensayo real*, during a brief lull in the wedding scene in which Joseph and the Virgin Mary are married, the boy playing Joseph jumped off the side of the stage, ran over to the taco vendor who had set up a small stand, bought two tacos, jumped back up on the stage, sat down on the chair that represented the makeshift altar, and ate the tacos—altogether a bigger playful departure from the scripted action than anything that takes place in the regular

rehearsals, made possible here by the stage, the chair, the accessibility of the taco vendor, and other features of the *ensayo real* as an event.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we want to suggest some more general implications of the framework we have sketched out for the analysis of the process by which the *coloquio* is produced in Tierra Blanca. One of the principal concerns that has motivated performance-centered analysis in its various guises from the beginning has been to carry our understanding of symbolic forms beyond the traditional conceptions of them as cultural objects, the collective products of social groups, to an understanding of how they are employed as equipment for living, resources for the conduct of social life. This led first—under the impetus of the ethnography of communication—to a focus on the performance event, the situational context of use (Paredes and Bauman 1972), a unit of analysis that was ultimately very productive in illuminating in close processual terms how communicative practice works in the telling of a tale or the enactment of a ritual or the conduct of a show trial, toward the discovery of form-function-meaning interrelationships. But the focus on bounded performance events has proven to have its own limitations: it is conducive to reification of context (Briggs 1988:12-15), it inhibits the investigation of social processes that transcend individual events, and so on. This has led more recently to efforts to identify and illuminate larger fields of discursive practice that span performance events and link them to broader social and historical processes (Bauman and Briggs 1990).

In the study of theatrical performances, there have been a number of well established problems that might be seen as relevant to this effort. Perhaps the most classic framing of such concerns is the enduring problem of the relationship between script and performance, which does, after all, set up an elementary discursive field. Most often, however, this framing of the problem calls forth a comparison between the playscript as a written text, a foundational but partial resource for performance, and the performance itself as a semiotically more complex physical enactment, variously shaped by directorial imagination and effort, actors' competence and creativity, the interpretive insights of various participants, both past and present, and so on (see, e.g., Hornby 1977). The actual process that

mediates between and effects the transformation from script to performance is seldom the focus of full, close analysis. A more nuanced but still notably abstract version of the problem is represented by the attempt to distinguish among various orders of text that make up the field of performance, such as Patrice Pavis's enumeration of six kinds of text employed in the theater (dramatic text, theatrical text, performance, mise-en-scène, theater event, performance text (1982:160)), or Jean Alter's discrimination among literary text, total text, and staged text in relation to virtual performance and actual performance (1981). More recently, but still maintaining the textual frame of reference, the problem has been cast in terms of intertextuality, opening up the investigation to repeated doings of particular performance forms (performance as never for the first time; Schechner 1985:36), as past doings resonate with, impinge upon, or shape performance in the here and now (Briggs and Bauman 1992). One claim is that this intertextual perspective historicizes performance, and well it can, provided that the intertextual field is in fact grounded in a succession of actual performances in real time to which participants actually orient themselves, and not simply a set of analytically derivable resonances among a set of abstracted texts. Even at its best, however, the perspective by intertextuality links up a succession of full performances, and we submit that that set makes up only a part of the field in which people engage with performed forms.

What we are striving toward here is a broader, fuller, more substantively processual vantage point on the discursive field within which performances are constituted. The production process offers such a vantage point, organized in locally grounded terms that are experientially real for the participants involved. The sequence encompassed by the copying of the sides, the learning of the parts, the general rehearsals, the *ensayo real*, and the full performance represents a series of engagements by the participants with the resources out of which the performance is fashioned, including not only the script and the semiotic building blocks of the *coloquio*, but past experience with the *coloquio* and the emergent shapings and reshapings of action within each stage. Nor is the perspective limited to what will eventually appear on stage within the performance frame; it comprehends as well the accompanying discourse that surrounds, enables, coordinates, comments upon, and plays with the ongoing activity. The framework thus fills in an additional dimension of the history of performances, the historical production of specific performances in particular communities.

Moreover, to underscore the point once again, it does so in locally

defined terms. In regard to the *coloquio*, each of the stages, elements, and actions that we have examined is named, talked about, and oriented to by participants. These are not externally imposed terms or concepts, nor are they analytical objectifications—Mexican *campesinos* objectify things too. Taken all together, the constituent elements and phase structure of the production process allow us to delineate ethnographically a locally defined, processual semiotics of *coloquio* performance. Each stage in the process, from the copying of the sides to the full performance, involves the progressive integration of additional systems of signification and/or the proliferation of signifiers within systems of signification previously introduced. And again, this semiotic process shapes the engagement of participants with the *coloquio*; participants do orient to the production process in terms of these semiotic transformations.

In this essay we have stopped our account short of the full performance because of practical limitations and a concern to fill in the less often described aspects of the production process. What we hope to have conveyed, however, is a sense of how the performance is informed in the course of that process, *"orientando para que se presentarse en un spectaculo mejor,"* oriented toward presenting a better performance.[3]

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Oral Genres and the Art of Reading in Tibet

Anne Carolyn Klein

> The word in its natural, oral habitat is part of a
> real, existential present.... Spoken words are
> always modifications of a total situation
> which is more than verbal. They never occur
> alone, in a context simply of words.[1]

> The evidence is substantial that it is only in relatively
> recent history, and specifically in the modern West,
> that the book has become a silent object, the written
> word a silent sign, and the reader a silent spectator.[2]

Overview

Tibetan Buddhist writings have long been intimately associated with various forms of orality. An understanding of how Buddhist texts are read or encountered in Tibetan traditions requires that we consider the forms of orality in which such textual encounters are embedded.

I see Tibetan oral genres as falling into two broad categories. The first is explanatory, such as the oral philosophy referred to here, and its primary purpose is to amplify the meaning of a text. The second is more ritualistic, for it includes oral forms in which sound rather than meaning is paramount, such as the recitation of mantra or various forms of rhythmic chanting. Tibetan oral performances vary considerably in terms of how they balance explanatory and ritual power, some utilizing one genre almost to the exclusion of the other, some having both but emphasizing one or the other. In practice, therefore, these two genres are often intertwined.

The variety of Tibetan oral genres, their relationship with written

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[1] Ong 1982:101.

[2] Graham 1987:45.

texts, and the meditative use of both oral and written media can all be brought to bear on a single question: what does it mean in a Tibetan context to *read* a text such as that of Tsong-kha-pa's?[3] Do contemporary Western concepts of *reading*, especially as practiced in Western academies or seminaries, which are modern Western culture's closest analogues to Tibetan monastic universities, suffice to explore the variety of activities encompassed by textual engagement in a traditional Tibetan setting?

We begin with a brief survey of the oral genres associated with textual engagement in Tibet, especially in the Geluk and Nyingma orders, respectively the newest and oldest forms of Tibetan Buddhism. In the second segment we consider relevant philosophical principles of Tibetan Buddhism, focusing on how its discussions of subjectivity are compatible with textual practices that include oral, conceptual, meditative, and sensory processes. The final segment illustrates how these processes intermingle in a widely used meditation text from the Gelukba tradition. I will propose that this intermingling produces a practice that includes but is not fully encompassed by modern concepts of reading, and that "reading" in the Tibetan context intertwines oral and literary orientations in a manner reflective of Tibet's situation as a powerfully oral culture with a highly developed and highly respected circle of literary achievement at its center.

Genres of Orality

A. Explanatory Forms

> Speech is seen as in direct contact with meaning: words issue from the speaker as the spontaneous signs of his present thought. Writing, on the other hand, consists of physical marks that are divorced from the thought that may have produced them.[4]

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[3] The fourteenth-century founder of the Geluk order and teacher of the first Dalai Lama.

[4] Culler 1982:100.

1. *Textual Commentary* (*gzhung khrid*).[5] Here, a text is used as a basis for lectures by a teacher or, in more intimate circumstances, for a series of discussions between student and teacher.[6] Such oral philosophy replicates, questions, and expands on the text at hand, partly by bringing related texts into the discussion and partly through the teacher's own reflections on the text. The richness of this kind of oral scholarship derives in large measure from its capacity to integrate the major genres of *written* textual commentary. Therefore, we can best consider the explanatory oral genres if we pause briefly to take account of the five main genres of written textual commentary from which they draw inspiration.

A written "word" commentary (*tshig 'grel*), as its name suggests, comments on every word of a text, often including this aim as part of its title, for example, the nineteenth-century Nyingma scholar Mipham's *Word Commentary on the "Wisdom" Chapter [of Śāntideva's 'Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds].*"[7] A "meaning commentary" (*don 'grel*) does not comment on every word but expands on a text's central issues, for example the late fifteenth-century Gelukba scholar Panchen Sönam Drakba's (bsod-nams-grags-pa) *General Meaning of [Maitreya's] "Ornament for Clear Realization.*"[8] A "commentary on the difficult points" (*dga' 'grel*) is narrower than either of these, focusing only on the most vexed matters of a text, for example *Explaining Eight Difficult Points in [Nāgārjuna's] "Treatise on the Middle Way"*[9] by Tsong-kha-pa. "Annotations" (*mchan 'grel*) is a form that provides either interlinear notes within the text itself,

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[5] Not to be confused with *gzhung bsgrigs*, to compile or compose texts.

[6] For an example of contemporary oral commentary on the Sautrāntika chapter of Janggya's text, see Klein 1991. This book also contains oral commentary, drawn from several important Gelukba scholars, on a typical debate text, in this case the *Collected Topics from a Spiritual Son of Jam-yang-shay-ba (gomang yig cha/kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bshad pa'i thugs sras ngag dbang bkra shis kyis mdzad pa'i bsdus grva)* by Nga-wang-dra-shi (ngag-dbang-bkra-shis, 1648-1721), n.p., n.d. (available from Gomang College, Mundgod, India).

[7] The *"Norbu Ketaka" (shes rab le'ui tshig don go sla bar rnam par bshad pa nor bu ke da ka).*

[8] *phar phyin spyi don.*

[9] *rtsa ba shes rab kyi dka' gnas chen po brgyad kyi bshad pa.*

or comprises a separate discussion (*zur mchan*) of the text, often moving between a focus on particulars or considering the meaning more broadly. A famous example is that of the seventeenth-century Gelukba scholar Ngawang Belden's (*ngag dbang dpal ldan*) *Annotations for (Jam-yang-shay-ba's) "Great Exposition of Tenets," Freeing the Knots of the Difficult Points, Precious Jewel of Clear Thought*.[10] Well known as these genres are in the Geluk and other orders, they are not strictly defined, and often have overlapping functions; for example, the genre known as "Analysis" (*tha' dspyod*) is like a meaning commentary in the form of a debate,[11] an instance being Panchen Sönam Drakba's *Analysis of "Entrance to the Middle Way."*[12] Another example of overlapping functions is the *Annotations* mentioned above, which is also a commentary on the difficult points of its focal text.

The broadest genres of written commentary are known as "Explanatory Commentary" (*'grel bshad*) and "Instructions on the Explanation" (*bshad khrid*). Jayānanda's *Explanatory Commentary on the "Entrance," A Clarification of Meaning* can be given as an example of both types; that is, though the names accorded these forms differ, the actual instances of them are one and the same.[13] Explanatory Commentaries and Instructions on the Explanation can be quite detailed but maintain an interest in the text as a whole. Both rubrics can also be applied to oral commentary with similar characteristics.

Oral commentarial genres also include *smar khrid*, meaning "rich, detailed" exposition, and *dmar khrid*,[14] translated here as "essential instructions" but literally meaning "naked instruction" or, even more literally, "instructions getting to the red," and glossed as "getting behind the

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[10] *grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel dka' gnad mdud grol blo gsal gces nor*.

[11] Gen Yeshey Thabgey, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, July 30, 1993.

[12] *dbu ma 'jug pa'i mtha' dpyo*.

[13] How one refers to it simply depends on which aspect of its function one wishes to emphasize, that is, whether one emphasizes the explanations it itself contains, or the fact that it is an expansion of a particular text (Gen Yeshey Thabgey and Losang Tsayden, both students of Kensur Yeshey Tupden, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, July 30, 1993; all subsequent quotations from Gen Yeshey Thabgey are from this conversation).

[14] The title of the meditation text discussed below also includes this term.

flesh, naked, getting inside the meaning,"[15] suggesting that like a surgeon's knife these instructions open onto the red blood at the heart of a text. This oral form, important in Nyingma and Bön as well as Gelukba, is considered especially lucid, and is often more condensed than the genres just mentioned. An oral genre associated especially with meditation texts is "instructions of experience" (*myong khrid*), which incorporates the meditation of both students and teachers into the discussion. Although all these terms are widely used, their boundaries are not clearly fixed, nor are they necessarily used in the context of enacting the oral genre itself. Over a period of six years between 1980 and 1986 I periodically met with Kensur Yehsey Tupden, abbot emeritus of the relocated Loseling College in Drebung Monastic University in Mundgod, India, to hear his textual commentary on a major text of his tradition. During these years he never used any of these terms; he simply referred to our activity as "looking at the book" *(dpe cha lta).*

What marks textual oral commentarial style as "oral"? Certainly, text-based oral commentary departs dramatically from the "classical" characteristics of the oral as described by Walter Ong (1982). Contrary to the works of "oral cultures" as Ong describes them, textual oral commentary such as I have heard from Kensur Yeshey Tupden or numerous other Gelukba and Nyingma Tibetan scholars is not particularly marked by reliance on mnemonics or formulas or rhythm (33). Further, these oral expressions do not "carry a load of epithets" (38). They are not redundant (though they *are* copious) (39).[16] Nor do these explanatory oral genres express their oral nature by being overly empathic or situational, nor are they experience-near. They stand also in adamant contradiction to Ong's puzzling claim that "an oral culture has no vehicle so neutral as a list" (42). Nor are the oral expressions I have recorded "highly polarized" or revelatory of "the agonistic dynamics of oral thought" (45). In short, the scholarly oral material to which we refer here is far more "literary" than its "orality" might seem to indicate.

At the same time, for all their literary affinities, explanatory genres of scholarly oral commentary are intricately intertwined with ritual oral genres, wherein, as Ong would put it, the sacredness and power of sound

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[15] Gen Yeshey Thabgey.

[16] Ong also says that oral cultures encourage "fluency, fulsomeness, volubility" (40-41).

are crucial elements. Further, though often as technical in vocabulary and overall intellectual reach as the written text in question, oral commentary is marked by a more expansive style and a willingness to try out ideas in a more experimental fashion than textual rigor allows. To the extent that a culture is oral, the immediacy with which it entertains its past dissolves some of the distance between past and present.[17] As is well known, Ong, following Goody, describes oral cultures as homeostatic in that elements contradictory or irrelevant to contemporary ideas fall into disuse, leaving little evidence that they ever existed.[18] This is to some extent descriptive of oral philosophical commentary in Tibet, and even of Tibetan textual commentary, which often had its origins in oral discourse. For example, Gelukba scholars today are extraordinarily erudite regarding diverse viewpoints within their own order, but they have long lost the Indian origins and often an awareness of various Tibetan permutations of many of their tenets. Oral or written, their commentary is highly nuanced philosophically, but the relatively weak emphasis on intellectual history is more akin to an oral orientation.

In addition, philosophical analysis is "homeostatic" in that while texts and their commentators frequently inquire into the logical consistency of various constructs, they do not erode the basic principles on which the argument is based. For example, there is much discussion regarding the compatibility between the doctrines of rebirth and of emptiness (how can the selfless person be reborn?), but I have never encountered a questioning of the fundamental principles of rebirth, or doubt in the possibility of highly developed states of concentration that aid one in ending the process of rebirth altogether. In a traditional Tibetan context, one hears about these with faith, with a mind that skillfully questions the logical outcome of specific propositions, but is unburdened or ungifted by a skepticism that

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[17] Lumpp 1976:25. I would not, however, follow Ong in suggesting that oral cultures necessarily are associated with "a cyclic understanding of time" or lack a sense of historicity. For example, this long-held generalization about India (in my estimation a secondary oral culture) has been admirably reconsidered in Collins 1991.

[18] Goody and Watt refer to this as the "homeostatic adjustment" of past oral traditions to the present (1968:59).

would undermine the basic philosophical principles involved.[19]

Oral textual commentary is typically just as rigorous syntactically and conceptually as the text on which it is based. In giving it, the teacher draws on material from other texts which supplement, or are supplemented by, his own analyses developed over a lifetime. What chiefly distinguishes it from textual discussions are its responsiveness to questions asked, its reflection on a wider range of topics than any one text is likely to include, and the insertion of nontraditional examples, often from the lives of teacher or student, to illustrate his points. In addition the Lama adds to the reading an aura of kindliness, humor, excitement, or severity, depending on his demeanor. This much is common wherever teachers lecture on texts. However, in Tibet, texts such as Tsong-kha-pa's are rarely left to speak for themselves, as texts so often are in modern secular contexts. Moreover, the "distance" between texts and persons is formulated differently than in the West. The traditional Lama "represents" the text in several senses: as often as not he has memorized it and may spontaneously recite portions of it or related texts in the course of oral commentary. Further, as a representative of the Buddha, his teaching, and his community of followers, the Lama embodies the text in concrete ways. He can in a very real sense be considered a "living text," and he teaches the texts he lives in order to produce more living approximations of the traditional values and forms of knowledge they elaborate. At the same time, the Lama whom the student regards as embodying the text also stands outside it, always taking a position of reverence toward it as he conveys to the student its meaning, whose profundity he may claim only partially to comprehend, much less embody.

In the Gelukba monastic setting, oral philosophical commentary is closely connected with another form of oral training, the daily and hours-long debates that provide an intellectual and social context for developing a

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[19] This is a difference Tibetans themselves perceive between their own and Western orientations: "In Tibet we accept many things that cannot be seen by the eye; the West does not accept many unseen things. This is the kind of difference there is" (Denma Lochö Rinboche, private taped conversation, June 1990, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, Washington, New Jersey). Lobön Tenzin Namdag made the same point during a lecture for the Ligmincha Institute, July 17, 1992, Head Water, Virginia.

community of knowledge.[20] Whereas oral commentary transmits knowledge from one generation to another, debate solidifies learning among members of the same generation.[21] Debate aims primarily to clarify the meaning of terms and textual passages, yet even this most technical and information-based form of speech typically begins with a ritual incantation of the syllable *dhīḥ*, which every Tibetan knows to be the "seed syllable" of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of wisdom. Indeed, ritual and explanatory forms are rarely wholly separate.

In addition, focusing one's attention on the spoken word of the teacher typically takes place in an arena suffused with sound. In a monastery, for example, the air is periodically filled with the reverberations of deep chanting, accompanied by drums and bells, or the incessant roar of verbiage from the debating courtyard. This barrage of sound lends richness to a setting otherwise relatively free of gifts for the senses (with the exception of elaborately adorned meditation halls, which, however, one must enter to be affected by). The sound, however, is everywhere. Listening to the commentary of Kensur Yeshey Tupden on the work of Tsong-kha-pa for example, our attention to the textual words, and my intent focus on his spoken commentary, was contextualized by rhythmic and melodic emanations from other quarters of the monastery, and by the saturation with vocalized sound that is a fact of daily life. It may even be that such a holistic experience with sound provides psychic nourishment that facilitates the long hours of textual study for which Tibetan monastic life is justly famous.

My point is that nonconceptual and ritual aspects of orality mingle in all areas of literary activity. Yet Gelukba understands spoken language and mere sound to affect the mind in quite different ways. Sound as such is an object of direct sense perception; meaningful speech must be processed by

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[20] Debate itself thus occupies an interesting place between the written and the oral. Tibetan monastic debates can be considered a form of rhetoric. However, whereas Ong has noted that in the West "rhetoric retained much of the old oral feeling for thought" (1982:110), Tibetan stylistic debate was directly modeled on Indian forms of textual disputation that, however, may well have had their origins in spoken debate. For examples of how these forms are related, see Klein 1991. For detailed discussion of Tibetan debate, see Perdue 1992.

[21] In some monastic colleges older students visit younger debaters to help them develop skills.

conceptual thought. Words and thoughts do not themselves directly get at actual objects, but produce meaning through the medium of an image that serves to exclude all objects but the one or ones in question.[22]   Oral explication also operates by way of such exclusion. Sound itself, however, including the sound of speech, is full of itself, with no need to proffer anything other than what it is.[23] In practice these epistemological processes are often combined, just as ritual and explanatory sound are inevitably intertwined.[24] Thus, in sitting for oral commentary, or in chanting the verses of a ritual, one engages in conceptual images and ideas, and also bathes in the positive manifestation of the sound that conveys these.

2. *Advisory Speech*. Oral textual instruction (*gzhung khrid*)[25] can be considered a form of advisory speech (*gdams ngag, upadeśa / avadāna ādeśa*), though advisory speech also includes discussions not directly linked with textual explication.[26] Advisory speech is associated with a wide range of philosophical,   ritual,   and   meditational   texts,   and   includes extemporaneous   reflection   independent   of   specific   texts.   A   defining

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[22] For elaboration of this topic, see Klein 1986: espec. chs. 4 and 6.

[23] However, Tibetans will stop short of saying that, for example, Avalokiteśvara is present in the mantra associated with him, *oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ*. Saying such a mantra causes help from the deity associated with it to flow to oneself but not, as in some forms of Hinduism, because the deity is *present* in the sound, but because hearing that sound is like hearing his or her own name, and he or she automatically responds to it (Denma Lochö Rinboche, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, Washington, NJ, June 1990). This said, it should be noted that much of the veneration and ritual power Tibetans attribute to sound in general and mantra in particular is derived from the Indian ritual context. See for example Bharati 1965 and Gonda 1963; for an extensive discussion of whether or not a mantra is a speech act, see Alper 1989. For a stiumlating discussion of mantra and its relation to *dhāraṇī*, see Gyatso 1992.

[24] More technically, this has to do with differences between direct perception, which is a complete engager (*sgrub 'jug kyi blo, *vidhipravrttibuddhi*) with its object, and conceptual thought, which approaches and isolates its object through a negative process, and which is known as a partial engager (*sel 'jug gi blo, *apohapravrtti*). For further Gelukba elaborations of this distinction, see Klein 1986.

[25] Often referred to as *dpe khrid*. According to Yeshey Thabgey, however, this is not a correct term.

[26] Khenbo Palden Sherab, December 1990, Houston, Texas.

characteristic of advisory speech is its simple effectiveness; it is described as "an especially quick and facile way of eliminating doubt."[27] Its facility does not lie with the informative value of speech alone. As if underscoring this point the great fourteenth-century Nyingma scholar and meditation master Longchenba, contemporaneous with Tsong-kha-pa, notes that advisory speech has a particular connection with kindness.[28] A person without such kindly intention cannot convey the same potent effect, even using the very same words.

In its most specialized sense, "advisory speech" is said to be something that the Lama holds as secret, revealing it only to a heart-disciple who, on hearing it, can develop an understanding not previously accessed. This too occurs because of its special ability to cut off doubt. How much this "facile" elimination of doubt owes to the clarity of explanation and how much to timing and the charismatic presence of a teacher is an open question. In any case, the economy associated with such treasured precepts is the kind of economy usually associated with something alive, whose limited energy needs to be preserved for just the right occasion: "If a teacher has a dearly held precept, giving this precious thing to a student who then wastes it would be sad. When one finds a special student with faith, confidence, and understanding, then the teacher gives all these to that student."[29]

An important subgenre of advisory speech is known as direct speech (*man ngag*). The contemporary Gelukba scholar Gen Yeshey Thabgey glossed this genre as something easy to understand and capable of bringing one to complete understanding of a particular topic. He emphasized also that such direct speech must not be idiosyncratic to a particular Lama, but must accord with the Buddhist canon and the great books of the Lama's tradition. A Nyingma text describes it as follows:

> Its hardship is small, its import great,
> Its approaches are multiple.
> Easy to enact, difficult to encompass,

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[27] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche, March 1991, Houston, Texas. All subsequent quotations from Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche are from this conversation.

[28] Last sentence from oral commentary on this verse by Khetsun Sangpo.

[29] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche.

This is direct speech.[30]

"Focus your mind on tantra, scripture, and direct speech" writes Longchenba, in which case "Buddhahood will be imminent."[31]   In his *Treasure of Precious Direct Speech Instructions*,[32] Longchenpa also lists "listening to the kindly direct speech of a Lama" first in a list of six helpful activities.[33]

Direct speech, like advisory speech, often involves something that is usually held secret; something, in short, that is usually *not* spoken. Whatever its informative value, it has other sources of power as well. This quality is indicated by two different etymologies of "direct speech" (*man ngag*). In one, the first syllable *man* is said to signify "mantra" and the second syllable *ngag* signifies "speech," including instructional speech. According to another explanation, the first syllable of the term *man* is related to the Tibetan word *sman,* spelled differently but pronounced the same, meaning "medicine."[34]   In both etymologies, a potency beyond conceptual import is indicated. As with anything potent, words or medicine, the effect can be good or bad. Thus one can speak of helpful direct speech (*phan ba'i man ngag*) as well as harmful or evil speech (*ngan*

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[30] *tshegs chung don che thabs mang ba/bya ba sla dpag dka' man ngag go.* From the *rDzogs chen a di bgod ba'i rgyud* in the *Nyingma rGyud 'bum*; recited by Khenbo Palden Sherab, oral commentary, December 1990, Houston, Texas. A similar description occurs in *Zab mo Yang Tig*, vol. 2: "*Tshegs chung la don che ba'i thabs dam pa'o*" (427.3—thanks to David Germano for this citation). A traditional etymology of "essential teachings" (*man ngag upadeśa*) indicates the diverse qualities of speech around which oral genres are grouped in Tibet.

[31] Printed by Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, Gantok, Sikkhim, from blocks commissioned to Saraswati Block Makers, Lanaka, Varanasi 5, n.d., p. 5a.5-6

[32] *man ngag rin po che'i mdzod.*

[33] 112.1; last sentence from oral commentary by Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche on this verse.

[34] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche.

ngag).[35]

Whereas in the modern West the term "speech" refers almost exclusively to informative or conceptually communicative vocalization, the Tibetan term here translated as speech (*ngag*, *vāca*) is defined (in the oral tradition at least) in such a way as to account for both expository and ritual significance: "Because the Lama's speech is the supreme eliminator of doubt, it is called *ngag*."[36]   In short, the ritual power of words does not preclude, but also does not depend on, their explanatory capacity.

B. Ritual Oral Genres

> Sound is a special sensory key to interiority...
> [that] has to do with interiors as such, which
> means with interiors as manifesting themselves,
> not as withdrawn into themselves, for true
> interiority is communicative.[37]

Advisory speech is a form that incorporates both explanatory and ritual aspects. There are also oral genres that do not "explain" at all. These genres are far less concerned with *what* the mind knows than with the *kind* of mind in question.   For example, there are forms of oral expression primarily concerned with producing concentration rather than understanding. Such expressions tend to find their greatest usage outside of the Gelukba and sutric context of the Tsong-kha-pa's text.   They are significant aspects of tantric practice, and prominent also in Nyingma practices.

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[35] Khetsun Sangpo noted that the terms "kindly speech" and "harmful speech" have the same meaning (etymologically) but their object of operation (*'jug yul*) is different.   "Object of operation" is a term associated with Tibetan discussions of how *instructional* speech works. The explanation of oral genres has to be discussed in those terms. Yet these etymologies themselves are part of oral tradition.

[36] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche. This is an oral etymology, not clearly expounded in the texts. Rinboche notes that he speaks of this from his own experience. Texts do not give a clear etymology of *ngag* in this way, although there are occasional statements that it may be like that.

[37] Ong 1982:117.

1. *Scriptural Transmission.* Most textual encounters begin with an oral practice known as *lung.* This term translates the Sanskrit word *āgama*, literally meaning "scripture," and *lung* is in fact the scriptural text itself in oral presentation, read aloud by a teacher to a student in order to create a connection with the entire vocal, scholarly, and ritual lineage of the text.[38] Only after receiving *lung* is one ready to hear oral commentary on the text, to study and debate its meaning and, if one chooses, incorporate it into a meditation practice. It is clear from the importance placed on this practice that, written or oral, a text is not words or meaning alone. Texts also include sound, power, and blessings. Unlike the purely visual text, which is distinctly "out there," causing the reader to shift continuously between the external physical text and his or her own internal responses, the sonorous text occupies inner and outer space simultaneously, but not necessarily conceptual space. During the transmission of *lung* the text is read so rapidly that conceptual grasp of it is minimal; this is a time when the spoken word must be heard, not necessarily understood. Complete *lung* is achieved when recited by a teacher out of compassion for a student who has faith in that teacher and focuses full attention on the reading. Merely hearing the words, or mere unfeeling articulation of them, does not fully accomplish the giving of *lung,* although there may still be some effect.[39]

In a looser interpretation it is said that as long as one has a "consciousness that apprehends sound" (*sgra 'dzin gyi shes pa)* one has received *lung.* This is because blessings are received through the sound itself, even though one has not understood the words.[40] To have the blessings means one has some power or capacity *(nus pa, śakti*) to profitably engage the text. Blessings and power are materially inseparable; both are united with sound.[41]

I did not receive a formal *lung* on Tsong-kha-pa's text, although Kensur Yeshay Tupden did read each passage aloud before discussing it,

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[38] Indeed, the scriptural teaching (*lung gi chos, āgama-dharma*) has from at least the fourth century in India been one of two major divisions of Buddhist teaching, the other being the teaching that is realized (*rtogs kyi chos, adhigama-dharma*).

[39] Khenbo Palden Sherab, oral commentary.

[40] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche.

[41] Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche. Because of its association with blessings and power, sound is considered a subtle type of form.

and according to Gen Yeshey Thabgey this too constitutes *lung,* as long as all the words are included. *Lung*, it is said, can be transmitted by anyone who has received it properly. Does this mean that I could read aloud Tsong-kha-pa's work and bestow *lung* on someone else? Gen Yeshey Thabgey and his student, Losang Tsayden laughed, perhaps uncomfortably, when I asked this. They may have laughed because this is not something a Tibetan layperson, especially a laywoman, would even think about in relation to himself or herself. Nevertheless, they stated that if I should do this it would indeed be *lung*, and that it would qualify even if I myself had not understood what I had heard, because the power *(nus pa, śakti)* and latencies *(bag chags, vāsanā),* aids to future practice carried by the sound, would still be imparted. However, since blessings in general depend both on the faith of the recipient and the good qualities of the giver, the issue of an ordinary layperson giving *lung* would not arise in Tibetan culture; there would always be qualified Lamas whose bestowal would be more effective.

At the same time, *lung* is not considered equally important for all texts. It is most significant for works directly related to practice, such as meditation texts or specific rituals. Denma Lochö Rinboche, who gave formal *lung* prior to his *khrid* (instruction) on the meditation text discussed below, had himself received *lung* on the *Stages of the Path (lam rim)* texts by Tsong-kha-pa, but not, as some Tibetans do, on the entire Canon of Buddha's word and its commentaries. He observed,

> I have not received *lung* on the Kangyur and Tangyur. I did not place tremendous importance on that.... I have had it many many times on *The Path of Well-Being (bde lam)* and also on the books of Tsong-kha-pa and his spiritual sons. But not Kangyur and Tangyur. I have faith that there is *lung* and that it is good to receive it. Yet some hold it as extremely important in ways that I do not.[42]

2. *Chanting*. There are forms of orality still less grounded in informative values than textual instruction, scriptural transmission, and advisory or direct speech. "Chanting" is a term I use to emphasize a focus on the musicality and rhythm of vocalized texts, as well as the repetitive chanting of mantras during ritual performance by a group or individual, or

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[42] Private conversation taped June, 1990, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, Washington, NJ.

during a session of meditation.[43]

Insofar as Buddhist philosophy is directed toward the nonconceptual and not only toward producing conceptual pyrotechnics (though these are present in abundance), the *tone* of philosophical expression is also important. The importance of recitation is a reminder that textual engagement does not always focus solely on a written text. In Tibet, as in many traditional cultures, the most essential religious, philosophical, or meditational texts are recited aloud from memory. Candrakīrti's *Entrance*, for example, would be memorized by monks in childhood or adolescence; years later, coming upon quotations embedded in a commentarial text, Candrakīrti's words ring in one's ear like the familiar lyrics of a song whose meaning is only now coming clear. Lugubrious as these texts often sound in English, most of them are poetry in Sanskrit and Tibetan. They can be recited rhythmically, making complex ideas music to the ears of those who hear and repeat them habitually. Memorized texts are said literally to be "held in mind." Such texts are also, in an important sense, held in the body. Chanting vibrates one's vocal cords and even some bones (Ackerman 1991). It can also take over one's inner "voice" and thereby mute or transform inner chatter that interferes with the concentration from which all meditative endeavor must flow.[44]

In meditative rituals the chanting of liturgical texts or mantras has physical and mental effects that in some contexts (especially Nyingma) override their conceptual impact. Mantras in particular are important not simply for what they mean, but for how they sound and for how that sound resonates with the chanter's mind and body. It is well known that human organisms are profoundly affected by sound.   If one sings along with or even just listens to Mick Jagger bellow "I Can't Get No Satisfaction," the effect is quite different than if one participates in a rendition of "Amazing Grace." The difference is real, palpable, and physiological. The Tibetan way of expressing something similar is to observe that because the body's inner currents affect the mind, one way to alter or subdue the mind is through breathing-and-chanting practices that, in conjunction with the

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[43] For a study of the physiological and psychological effects of rhythm, see Jousse 1924/1990.

[44] We generally acknowledge the ability of sound to take over our interior in another way; in the presence of very loud noise we say "It's so loud I can't hear myself think." See, for example, Ihde 1976:espec. 133ff.

proper posture, help smooth out the movement of these currents by straightening the channels through which they move.

Meditation texts frequently alternate between descriptions of qualities cultivated, prayers to achieve these qualities, and depictions of the visualizations done in tandem with that recitation. All are chanted during the meditation session itself, and during such recitation the words of the text may seem to pass before the mind's eye, making it simultaneously an oral and a visual text.

Tantric meditation involves an intense visual, visceral, and spiritual identification with a particular deity. That deity is understood to body forth from a particular sound, namely the mantra that one recites as part of the practice. There are three styles of practice by which one enhances oral and visual emulation of the deity: (1) the "great emulation," so-called because it is done in a group, (2) recitation done alone, and (3) alternating between solitary and group practice.[45]

Chanting is also done as a practice on its own, with concentration focused through the medium of sound itself. A particularly important form of recitation in Nyingma, and not present in Geluk,[46] is known as *dzab dbyangs* (pronounced *dzab yang* to rhyme with "up swung"). This word is the Tibetanized form of the Sanskrit *jāpa,* meaning "recitation of mantra." Here it is considered crucial to be precise about the rhythm, the melody, and, perhaps most of all, the junctures at which one inhales and exhales.[47]

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[45] From Khetsun Sangpo Rinboche's explication of the deity yoga associated with the practice of Hail Protection. According to Gen Yeshey Thabgey, Geluk speaks of *bsgrub chen* and *sgrub sogs* but not *dpa' bo gcig*, that is, they do not consider recitation done alone as a formal category (a different point from saying that individuals do not do recitation in their own personal practice).

[46] Gen Yeshey Thabgey.

[47] For example, an important Nyingma meditational practice for evoking the 100 Peaceful and Wrathful Deities who exist in the body involves such chanting. Simultaneous with the vocalization, one visualizes these figures at certain places in body. A similar effect occurs when chanting, for example, an ancient multi-line mantric poem known as the "Song of the Vajra" (*rdo rje glu*) in which the sound of every syllable is said to correspond to and affect certain parts of the body. This is a genre present in Nyingma and in Geluk Tantric practices, and I believe, though have not ascertained, that it exists in the other Tibetan religious traditions as well.

Such vocalization[48] is significant for its association with breath and other, subtler forms of physical energy (*rlung*). In this sense it mediates between mind and body and participates with both. The use of breath and *rlung* is primarily significant in tantric practice, and is also an important principle in oral recitation and mantric chant.

Many practices that emphasize sound are done in groups. Chanting with others makes sound a palpable element in ways not replicable in solitude. No wonder that, worldwide, song or other forms of vocalization are such important expressions of community. Joining one's voice with those of others, one is both an individual and part of a unity, and yet not quite either.

There are also sound practices done in solitude, often outdoors, that yield a different kind of experience. One's own sound emanates outward into space. As it fades away, the practitioner, still imaginatively extended over that space, is left in pithy silence. This silence is not an utter absence of sound, but the evanescent vanishing of the sound on which one's energy and attention had been focused. One rests the mind in this vivid and particular absence, a sensory analogue to settling the mind on emptiness, a practice that lies at the heart of both sutra and tantra. Emptiness too is a specific absence; it is not the lack of things in general, but of a characteristic described variously as substantial or inherent existence.

Chanting practices are premised on the efficacy of vocalized sound rather than on explication, on vocality over orality. Nevertheless, these are text-based practices, and instruction in them is received through a combination of scriptural transmission or *lung,* an initiation that is bestowed in part through speech, in part through the recitation of mantras and prayers, sometimes accompanied by drums, bells, or symbols, as well as through textual instruction, and including both advisory and direct speech. Again, no oral genre in Tibet is completely independent of the others.

Philosophical Assumptions about Subjectivity

Concentration is an important element in Buddhist practice. The quieting of the mind, whether merely through observing breath or through

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[48] I use this term to signify oral genres in which sound is considered as or more important than meaning.

training in deep states of calm abiding and concentration, always accompanies the training in wisdom that is a central topic of Buddhist philosophical texts. It is interesting to consider the subjective category of concentration, and its relation to insight or wisdom, in light of the intertwining of oral and literary orientations by which that relationship is expressed.

Concentration, I have argued elsewhere,[49] is central to Indo-Tibetan Buddhism's claim that a direct perception of emptiness is an *unmediated* cognition. This tradition finds the perception or wisdom of emptiness to be unmediated in the sense that the object is known nonconceptually, that is, without the intervening presence of a thought-image that occurs in all conceptual responses to oral or written words. Perception of emptiness is also considered unmediated in the sense that it does not perpetuate features of the mental states that allowed it to become manifest, such as reliance on a thought-image, conceptual analysis, or a sense of separation between subject and object.

Calm abiding is the minimum level of quietude needed to directly experience emptiness. When a mind of calm abiding knows emptiness directly, its relationship to the emptiness, which is in a sense its "object," is different from that of most other subject-object relationships. It is not a basis for concentration. It is not an object in the way that a vase is a necessary condition for a valid visual impression, that is for an eye consciousness, of a vase. Thus, unlike in ordinary sensory and mental perception, the "object" here is not a *cause* of subjective experience during the higher stages of concentration; rather the subjective process unfolds through a power of its own. The nonconceptual or direct wisdom of emptiness can exist only when it is conjoined with such a calmed mind. Indeed, although the wisdom of insight is famous for being "inexpressible," its function is far more language-associated than the faculty of concentration that forms its basis. The ritual forms of speech, whose significance comes less from meaning than from rhythm, intonation, and performance, are often associated with the contemplative elements of mental development.

Training in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions often emphasizes the complementary cultivation of concentration and wisdom. In

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[49] I discussed the Gelukba premises for this claim in Klein 1992, from which portions of what follows are derived.

these descriptions, one gets the impression of two mounting spirals of mental functioning, each supporting and furthering the other. This internally stimulated energy reveals and expresses something about the nature of consciousness, just as a bird that flies at the sight of a cat reveals and expresses something about the nature of bird. It is an implicit principle in the literature on calming and concentration that consciousness does not have to be affected *by* an object in order to express its clarity and knowing.

The tradition associated with Tsong-kha-pa, fourteenth-century scholar, master practitioner, and teacher of the first Dalai Lama, speaks of a category of calming it calls the uncommon absorption of cessation. This is a form of concentration said to facilitate the "surpassing wisdom" that is the enhanced direct experience of emptiness associated with the sixth level of Bodhisattva training. It is a description of concentration unique to Tsong-kha-pa's tradition. This very powerful form of concentration is distinguished from the cessation of discrimination and feeling described by Buddhaghosa in the *Path of Purification,* wherein nothing mental endures. Nor is this the cessation described by Vasubandhu in the *Treasury of Knowledge* as neither mind nor form. In contrast to both of these, the absorption of cessation *is a consciousness.*[50] It is, moreover, a consciousness no longer governed by the linear and subject-distancing characteristics of the visual senses. In the context of the bookish Gelukba monastic environment in which these descriptions were formulated and, to an unknown extent, practiced, this category also represents a movement beyond the powerful literary-visual orientation in which that tradition is largely embedded.[51]

As a category, this uncommon absorption of cessation serves to further interfuse the functions of calm abiding and special insight. Their initial union resulted in a type of subjectivity known as "special insight," a

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[50] See, for example, *Pan-chen bSod-nams-grags-pa, Resonse*, 51a.ff; "whatever is an absorption of cessation is not necessarily a nonassociated compositional factor" (*ibid*.: 52b.1-54a.4-54a.6; see also *idem, dbU ma'i spyi don* [General Meaning] 127.6ff., where he distinguishes between subject (*yul can 'gog snyoms*) and object (*yul 'gog snyoms*) cessations; and *rJe-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan*, *dKa' gnad gsel byed*, 89a.3ff.

[51] Indeed, the greater emphasis of Gelukba on the gradual path, and the enormous literary effort that went into charting the stages of the path, may itself partly be a reflection of the increased literary productivity that became possible after the second transmission of Buddhism to Tibet.

term that in both Tibetan and Sanskrit, as well as English, implicitly assimilates the function of calming to that of seeing. By contrast, on the sixth ground, the term "meditative equipoise," which describes the uncommon absorption of cessation, assimilates, or even masks, the function of wisdom. In both cases, differential categories are maintained; wisdom does not *become* calming, and calming does not *become* insight. The two mental gestures—of withdrawing the mind in one sense and expanding its horizons in another—are entwined, not blended.

It is interesting to consider the two gestures of expansion and withdrawal in terms of the characteristics of oral and literary orientations. In the descriptions above, the relative linearity of the analytical side of practice is assimilated to the more mentally and physiologically global model of stabilizing. There is a sense, albeit limited, in which concentration coalesces with the experience of sound, and wisdom with the experience of sight. One cannot take this analogy too far, however, before it breaks down and, in the process, reveals the artificiality of the boundaries of sight, hearing, oral, and written. The point is that the interplay of oral and visual, of concentration and insight, is complex. That complexity is the focus of our next section.

Meditation Texts: Sight and Sound

> The sensorium is a fascinating focus for cultural studies. Given sufficient knowledge of the sensorium exploited within a specific culture, one could probably define the culture as a whole in virtually all its aspects.[52]

Having summarized a variety of oral and vocal genres associated with texts and the types of subjectivity discussed in Tsong-kha-pa's and related works, let us consider the meditative context of a text in Tsong-kha-pa's tradition. We take as our focus the First Panchen Lama's *Path of Well-Being for those Travelling to Omniscience, Essential Instructions [dmar khrid] on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid thams cad mkhyen par 'brod ba'i bde lam),* usually referred

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[52] Ong 1967:6.

to simply as the *Path of Well-Being (bde lam).*[53]   This is an early seventeenth-century meditational text based on traditional Gelukba *lam rim* teachings that coalesce recitation, visualization, physical gesture, and the nonverbal interiority of concentration. All these functions can be incorporated in a Tibetan concept of "reading" because all are directly related with the texts that provide focus and structure in meditation. In another sense, "reading" is too limited a term because the primary modern Western (and therefore secular) use of this term typically excludes gestures central to the Tibetan context. The tension between these two readings of the act of reading is itself instructive and interesting.

The *Path of Well-Being,* or similar works, are familiar to all traditional readers of Tsong-kha-pa's order. In a manner typical of Tibetan meditation texts, and in contrast to philosophical works such as Tsong-kha-pa's *Illumination,* the *Path of Well Being* intersperses sections of general instruction or explanation with lines to be recited. In some meditation texts, the portions to be recited appear in larger typeface than the instructions that, once they become habit, recede to the background. For a Tibetan engaged with this text, the purpose is not to interpret the various understandings of wisdom and compassion it offers, nor to compare these with other texts familiar to him, even though such activity might indeed occupy a considerable amount of time. Insofar as one approaches this as a meditator, the wisdom and other qualities it describes are meant to be internalized. One's attention is therefore directed through the text to oneself, and not only to oneself as an intellect, or as one is presently, but as one can imagine oneself becoming, and endowed with qualities that, aided by the text, one now takes steps to manifest.

The oral genre most closely associated with this and other meditation texts is known as "instructions of experience" (*myong khrid*),[54] mentioned

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[53] Lo-sang-chö-gyi-gyal-tsen (*bLo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtsan* 1570-1661). This work has been translated, based on commentary by Denma Lochö Rinboche, by Joshua W.C. Cutler, Director of the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center in Washington, NJ. The phrase *bde lam* could be translated as "path of bliss," but because here *bde ba* clearly includes the sense of well-being brought about by the earlier stages of the path, as well as the special bliss unique to its higher reaches, the broader term "well-being" has been used.

[54] The "of" used in translating this term is ambiguously multidirectional in order to suggest that the teaching comes from and is enriched by the teacher's own past experience, though he will not necessarily describe or even refer to his own practice, and is also meant to

above as a form of advisory speech unique to meditation texts. In the course of oral instruction, the entire text is commented on by the teacher and read silently by the student. In meditation sessions, done alone or with a group, one recites the appropriate portions and puts the instructions on compassionate motivation, visualization, and so forth into practice.

Instructions of experience have a particular structure.[55] In session A the teacher discusses a portion of the text and closes with a summary of what has been said. In the interval before the next session, the student meditates on the meaning of that segment of the text as illuminated by oral instruction and tries to gain an experiential taste of what has been discussed. In session B the teacher opens with a summary of the previous day's discussion, now perhaps heard differently because of the intervening meditation, and then about midway the lecture turns to new material, which is then summarized at the close of the lecture. This new material becomes the focus of meditation prior to lecture C.

Like many texts used in meditation, the Panchen Lama's text contains a liturgy that is chanted rhythmically during a meditation session, and also offers instructions or observations that shape the meditation session but are not themselves recited during it. Before one attempts to perform the text in meditation, one receives scriptural transmission (*lung, āgama),* and instruction (*khrid)* and then studies the work in its entirety, usually with the benefit of oral commentary.

A. The Meditator and the Text

Once one has received instructions on a text such as the *Path of Well-Being*, one is ready to use it in private sessions of meditation. These will involve periods of visualization and concentration, as well as recitation of the text and reflection on its meaning. Knowledge of the words will not suffice; one must know the melody and rhythm with which to chant them,

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 produce certain experiences for the listener-mediator in the future.

[55] This discussion is based on the Denma Lochö Rinboche's teaching of the *Path of Well-Being bDe Lam* at the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, Washington, NJ, in the summer of 1990. Along with Elizabeth Napper and Joshua Cutler, I was one of the oral translators of his lectures. This text has been translated by Joshua Cutler (unpublished ms.).

as well as the posture, gestures, and visualized images that accompany them. Doing this properly involves both conceptual understanding and focused concentration.

A Gelukba trainee would have studied and orally debated the topics of meditation, and listened to oral philosophical commentary on them as well. In addition, one would have studied and heard oral commentary on Tsong-kha-pa's *Lam Rim* and other texts. Like these and other works modeled on Candrakīrti's chronicling of the Bodhisattva stages, the *Path of Well Being* presents an ordered series of meditations for the practitioner to follow. The multiplicity of media involved here—vocal, intellectual, nonconceptual, kinesthetic, visual, olfactory (often incense will be burned), and even gustatory (in longer group recitations monks are usually served tea at specific junctures)—is obvious. Their interplay is altogether typical of Tibetan religious practice.

The text proceeds through the stages of practice common to the *Lam Rim* cycle. Each of its topics[56] is presented as a four-part segment: preparation, actual session, conclusion, and instructions on what to do between meditative sessions. One is instructed to sit on a "comfortable cushion" in the lotus or other posture "that puts you at ease." As the practitioner knows from other texts and from the example of those around him, this posture requires, above all, that the back be straight, the shoulders even and relaxed, the neck slightly arched, the chin lowered, and the mouth relaxed. This is the kinesthetic frame for the rest, providing, among other things, a maximal echo chamber for vocalization as well as a stillness of body likely to facilitate stillness of mind and clarity of attention.

The body accounted for, one next examines one's mind and develops a virtuous intention. This intention is itself "textualized" through the many

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[56] These topics include: instructions on relying on a spiritual teacher, an exhortation to utilize the special situation of leisure and opportunity that makes practice possible, training in the contemplations of impermanence and death, the suffering of the bad rebirths, going for refuge, and developing conviction in the cause and effect of actions (*karma*). One then goes on to train in a desire for liberation and its associated practices; when this is complete one begins the practices unique to the Mahāyāna. These are (1) the development of the compassionate or altruistic determination to seek enlightenment in order to be in a position to maximally help and benefit all living beings; (2) having developed this intention, carrying it out by training in the Bodhisattva deeds, also known as the six perfections; (3) in particular training in the last two perfections, namely, calm abiding, described as the "essence of concentration," and special insight, described as the "essence of wisdom."

written and oral commentaries the practitioner would have heard regarding the compassionate motivation that sustains all Mahāyāna practice. In other words, one's reflection at this point, even if neither a reading nor a recitation, would most likely echo standard Mahāyāna phrases such as "For the benefit of all beings," "May all beings have happiness," and so forth that appear throughout Gelukba and other Tibetan Mahāyāna literature.

Next comes instruction on visualization: in the space directly before one's eyes the image of one's own teacher or teachers—including the one who gave instructions on text—appear in the form of Shakyamuni Buddha. Here the meditator must call upon visual texts, paintings or statues familiar since childhood, which one has perhaps recently studied again to refresh memory of particular details. Shakyamuni Buddha is in this visualization surrounded by the entire lineage of figures associated with *The Path of Well-Being* and its traditions. In front of each of these many teachers "upon marvelous tables are their own verbal teachings in the form of volumes that [like all visualizations] have the nature of light." Texts are visualized as part of a tableau that is itself a text. In its visualized presence one reflects on and recites the appropriate words.

While still sustaining this image, the practitioner is instructed by the text to "offer the seven branches of worship along with the mandala...."[57] The text does not elaborate, because anyone trained in this tradition would know from other texts as well as personal instruction how to enact the recitation, hand gestures, and visualization that these seven branches involve. Thus the simple words "offer the seven branches of worship along

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[57] The seven branches of worship are: refuge, mental or physical prostration, offering, confession or purification of nonvirtue, rejoicing in one's own and others' virtues, requesting the Lamas to continue to teach, requesting one's teacher to have a long life, and, finally, dedication of the merit of all acts of body, speech, and mind for the benefit of living beings. One then offers a mandala, representative of the entire world, including the objects of the senses of that world, to those Lamas and Buddhas. These are described in the oral commentary of Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey in classes at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, July, 1971. See Dhargyey 1974.

Physical gestures of *mudra* are also involved, for example the offerings that comprise the second of the branches are indicated by a flowing set of hand gestures that symbolize the traditional seven offerings. These are water for drinking, water for washing, flowers, incense, light, perfume, and food, and are typically symbolized on an altar by seven bowls of water. An eighth offering, sound, is not symbolized through form since sound itself has no visible form. (Geshe Rabten, oral commentary and demonstrator of the *mudras*, summer, 1971, Dharamsala, India).

with the mandala" encompasses a considerable range of oral and textual traditions. The "inter-orality" implied here is compounded insofar as these seven branches themselves incorporate verses from the eighth-century Indian Buddhist poet, scholar, and meditation master Śāntideva.

Rays of light are then visualized to arise from one's own heart, reaching the figures imagined before oneself, who thereby transform into light and dissolve onto the Lama visualized above one's head. Then, imagining one is reciting in unison with the vast array of beings on whose behalf one altruistically undertook the practice, several verses of supplication to the visualized Buddhas are rhythmically chanted. As chanting ends, five-colored rays extend their radiance through infinite space to purify oneself and all living beings. In particular, they purify those limitations that would interfere with accomplishing the purpose of that particular session, for example, with the development of compassion, calm abiding, or special insight.[58]

With minor differences, the same preparation of posture and visualization are used for all the meditative topics of this text.[59] In between the meditative sessions described in the *Path of Well-Being*, one is asked to study relevant scriptures and commentaries, or to engage in other appropriate activities such as restraining the senses through mindfulness and introspection, or "eating moderately and making effort at the yogas of not

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[58] Note the interlacing and repetitiveness; one has already taken refuge and already cultivated the compassionate aspiration of a Bodhisattva when one "cultivates" it in this sequence. Such reiteration is typical of an oral/rhetorical strategy.

[59] In addition, the preparatory section on calm abiding notes the importance of finding "an isolated place that you find agreeable" and reducing one's desire for objects of the senses, then sitting in the lotus posture and quieting thoughts by observing three sets of inhalation and exhalation through the left nostril, the right nostril and both nostrils, and then observing 21 breaths (416ff). The precise instructions on "quieting the winds" are not included in the text, but were given by Denma Lochö Rinboche in teaching the text. See Cutler 1989:60, n. 15.

The meditative sessions focused on special insight involve a rigorously text-based but otherwise free-form analysis on the meaning of emptiness. (For an extensive discussion of this analysis see Hopkins 1983.) Once conceptual understanding arises, one stabilizes one's mind on that meaning. In this way the practitioner alternates between conceptual analysis and mental concentration, technically known as analytical and stabilizing meditation. These two kinds of subjectivity are, as we have seen, crucially addressed in both the letter and media of textual and meditative engagement.

sleeping and of bathing and eating." In other words, "really" engaging the text means not only reading but incorporating such non-literary agendas as posture, recitation, movement, and behavior. At the same time, one is engaged in a complex intertextuality that assumes knowledge of other ritual, philosophical, or oral texts. Performing these is in Tibet the time-honored way of fulfilling the purpose of the "reader" and believer who engages with that text.

B. The Context of the Senses

> Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer.[60]

If, as Walter Ong suggests, sight is the sensory mode most associated with literacy, and hearing with orality, then the intertwined practices of reading, recitation, chanting, accompanying gesture, and visualization suggest the unique situation of Tibet's monastic and literary communities as sites dedicated to literacy and flooded with orality/vocality. At moments when the hands and voice are still, however, visualization practices in Tibet typically include a phase in which visions themselves literally pour into the meditator, or the meditator may visualize herself as dissolving into the figure imagined before her. In this way the visual, which in general entails some distance between observer and observed, takes on characteristics usually associated with sound: one is situated in the midst of it, is gradually suffused by it, and then experiences the fading of visualized images into space, much as one hears sound drift toward silence. This consonance between sensory experiences that are ordinarily different has its own affective power.[61]

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[60] Ong 1982:74.

[61] Likewise, the omniscient mind of a Buddha, like sound, is said to be all-encompassing. Unlike linear writing or ordinary conceptuality it does not proceed from one point to another, from past to future, but simultaneously encompasses the past, the present, and future. One could also say, though it would not be possible to argue this systematically, that the intertwining of aural and visual functions is an index of Tibet's situation betwixt and between powerful oral-aural *and* visual-textual orientations. Further, this interfusion of the visual and aural may be analogous to the third of Ong's cultural stages, electronic, where once again words and images can be embodied, can even surround

These visualizations, formalized and embedded in verbal descriptions, emerge as a kind of illuminated text that is "read" not just with ears or eyes, but with the entire mind and body, which itself becomes imaginatively transformed in the process of visualization. The meditators to whom such texts are addressed thus interact with them in a manner neither altogether writerly nor readerly, but physiological and meditative.

In visualization one's most private, profound, and "interior" experiences—those of meditation—are expressed and elicited through particular images. As with the kind of reading attributed to "writerly" texts, there is an ongoing process of interaction and mutual change between the reader/meditator and the texts/images. The visualized images are in some sense experienced as "out there" as if available to all, though at the same time they are understood to be the effect of one's own mind.[62] My point is that even works studied primarily as philosophical texts, or oral commentary valued primarily for its explanatory import, are associated with ritual forms of orality. This conjunction would be part of what the hearer/student brings to any textual encounter.[63]

The process of embodied visualization, like the textual and oral orientations that contextualize it, engages several dimensions of experience. The person is constructed by the text and its accompanying oral traditions as a meditator as well as a reader and also, given the related emphasis on posture, breath, and chanting, and on the receiving of *lung* and initiation through sound and gesture, as an embodied meditator. He or she is also, however, constructed as a philosopher who has read, debated, and understood a variety of interrelated texts and brought their ideas to a level of visceral understanding. The same person, engaged in visualization, can also be constructed as an artist who uses a trained imagination rather than a brush, with a visualized expanse as canvas. In this way one creates the image one has seen in paintings and whose descriptions one has read in texts. Ong observes that peoples from primary oral cultures are likely to externalize their psychological imbalances whereas literate cultures create

one as in the computerized, holistic construction of "virtual reality."

[62] Indeed, the most accomplished meditators are said to be able to cause others to see emanations from their own minds.

[63] In Ong's terms Tibet is a visual/oral or secondary oral culture, in which the oral/aural dimension of communication coalesces to a certain extent with the visual orientation of print culture (Lumpp 1976:18).

persons who, regarding their own interior consciousness as private, like the pages of a text read silently and in solitude, experience themselves as "holding" individual characteristics unseen by others.[64]   Traditional Tibet was *not* a primary oral culture, yet its oral orientation was sufficiently strong that if Ong is right about how such an orientation can shape interiority, the visualizations and associated textual practices just described would resonate differently for traditional Tibetans than for modern Westerners.

A visualized figure, male or female, Buddha or Bodhisattva, is experienced as embodying the qualities one seeks to incorporate, especially compassion and wisdom in unity. But this visualized figure is not a symbol only; he or she is a reflection of one's own mind as well as a projection from one's own mind. One relates to him or her as a person, pouring out faith, respect, joy, in some cases even desire, to that person.[65]

The meditator and visualized image come to resemble each other more and more, finally dissolving one into the other, thus leaving the practitioner in a nonconceptual contemplation of their absence. Language, whether the written language of texts or words orally recited, does not in the end so much govern the process of visualization and meditation as dissolve into it.   In this sense visualization, like the cultivation of concentration, though initiated through language, proceeds on a trajectory that moves further and further away from governance by language.[66]   Yet

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[64] This is a most interesting idea that probably needs further documentation; see the discussion by Ong 1982:69, citing Carothers 1959.

[65] The aesthetic function here is rather like that of the artists in Mikhail Bakhtin's description (1990:102): "Lived experiences, when experienced outside myself in the other, possess an inner exterior, an inner countenance adverted toward me, and this inner exterior or countenance can be and should be lovingly contemplated, it can be and should be remembered the way we remember a person's face (and not the way we remember some past experience of our own), it can be and should be made secure, given a form, regarded with loving-mercy, cherished with our inner eyes, and not our physical outward eyes."

[66] In the act of visualization, the meditator is rather like an artist described by Bakhtin: "language-consciousness is no more than a constituent, a material that is totally governed by the purely artistic task." For Bakhtin, "the author's creative consciousness is not a language-consciousness (in the broadest sense of the word); language-consciousness is merely a passive constituent in creative activity—an immanently surmounted material" (1990:194).

all this is encompassed by traditional forms of textual engagement, texts that may describe the subject state of concentration or form part of the basis for cultivating it.

Summary: Reading in Tibet

We have seen that Tibetan texts are typically performed in multiple ways. They can be read, silently or aloud, and if aloud, either in a drone or musical incantation; their descriptions can be visualized, instructions enacted in silent meditation, or accompanied by chants and music. Sound and words enliven not simply textual performances but the larger environment in which performances typically take place.

For all these reasons, the modern secular construct of "reading" seems inadequate to describe Tibetan textual engagement. The face-to-face and often ritualized encounter with the person whose oral commentary is integral to the experience of text is one differentiating factor; another and even more significant difference is what occurs through repeated practice of the text, that is, through performing the procedures it teaches, including recitation, visualization, and conceptual training. One is not so much reworking the written text—although this is a crucial and fundamental practice in many quarters—as reworking the self. Nor does the usual meaning of "reading" illuminate the nonconceptual processes of calming, breathing, concentration, and mental intensity so central to meditative textual practices.

Further, such meditative texts are never really extractable from the oral forms that make them part of interpersonal as well as intra-subjective communication. Partly because of the pervasive intermingling of oral and written orientations, one is rarely left alone with a text as is the custom in Western contexts. Perhaps this overwhelming enthusiasm for interpreting texts is an attempt to break out of that lonely encounter, even though the result is often simply to be alone with another text. The oral forms discussed here produce a field in which "reading" engages multiple media, senses, and persons, becoming an experience that reverberates through one's body as well as through various types of subjectivity.

The investigation of orality's place in the process of "reading" provides a pertinent cross-cultural perspective from which to consider the kind of reciprocity between reader and text that is a hallmark of

contemporary literary theory. In Euro-American literary circles, this reciprocity means in general that texts are not produced only by their authors, but that a reader also is, in Roland Barthes' phrase, "the producer of a text."[67] This perspective refers primarily to the way in which a reader "produces" texts through a process of *interpretation,* and what is produced is another text, different in meaning but not in form from the first. But in the Tibetan religious context the object of production is not a new reading or interpretation, and thus not precisely a new text, but a new experience or insight, even new ways of breathing and being. ("New," however, means "new for the individual involved"; the production of "novelty" that expresses one's new and unique interpretation is not the goal.[68]) It is also clear that the meditator-chanter-philosopher is not treated as a disembodied mind, as the reader of Western texts most typically is constructed, but very much as a material as well as a spiritual being. It is partly the interplay between oral and written gestures, as well as between concentration and insight, that in Tibet allows the faithful[69] to produce a multi-media text as well as new forms of subjectivity through various kinds of *activities* done in connection with that text.

We have noted that oral explanations of meditation texts are typically repeated three times, in between which repetitions one meditates on the topic discussed. For the person alternately constructed as a meditator and a listener, each hearing is a different experience. Within the Buddhist tradition, this is probably the most important way in which a text "differs from itself" (Johnson 1980:4). Such differences may be described as experiential rather than textual, involving nuanced shifts in social, physical, and mental states.

The text's table of contents, usually memorized at the beginning of one's study, lists the stages of practice. Reading or reciting this, the

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[67] Discussed in Johnson 1980:5ff. Texts not susceptible to such rewriting by a reader Barthes calls "readerly." For him a "readerly" text is a product consumed by the reader; by contrast, "writerly" texts emerge through a process in which the reader also becomes a producer.

[68] Thanks to Janet Gyatso for stimulating this insight.

[69] Obviously, not a category appropriate for most western "readers." Although it cannot be developed here, this is another "difference that makes a difference" between modern and traditional forms of reading.

practitioner experiences a description of her own future as a meditator, and then begins to enact this future by "meditating" the text, a process embedded in the traditional Buddhist formula of "hearing, thinking, and meditating." Like a reader, a meditator's experience is not preordained by the nature of the text; there are bound to be resistances, complications, or shifts in perspective that the text precipitates but does not explicitly anticipate or acknowledge.

In addition to being "read" differently by one's present and future self, the text is felt differently by different aspects of oneself engaged in practice, and by internal resistances that are opposed to the discipline, goals, or other elements of practice. Contemporary Western literary theorists tease out with great skill the hidden but implicit perspectives that contradict the overt message of the text. This difference is how a text differs from itself. Such reading makes it possible to experience the multiplicities that exist within an apparently singular text. As Barbara Johnson puts it, "A text's difference is not its uniqueness, its special identity, but its way of differing from itself. And this difference is perceived only in the act of rereading" (1980:4). Similarly, but differently, there are "differences" that appear only through the act of performing and re-performing the practices described in a meditative text.

In brief, the boundaries taken for granted in reading, writing, and other forms of creativity performed in a Western print-oriented environment seem not to obtain here. Philosophical texts and oral explication of them are often dense and turgid, yet these qualities are much mitigated, in my experience, by being embedded in traditions of interpersonal communication and meditative enactment. Textual expression in Tibet should always be understood as part of this larger system of the visual and the aural. To take account of this context, and especially of the variety of oral genres that supplement the written, is to be aware that the ideal "reader" is not addressed only as a disembodied mind. She or he is evoked also as a physical presence, seated erectly and breathing deeply, vocalizing with rhythmic precision chosen words received not only from texts, but personally transmitted in the voice of one's own teacher, thereby connecting him or her with a dimension not encompassed by the textual or conceptual, and so reinforcing one of the central premises, expressed variously in numerous Buddhist traditions, namely that the mind of the

subject is not enhanced through words alone.[70]

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[70] An expanded version of this article will appear as the introduction to Klein 1994. The body of this book is the most elaborate written record of Tibetan oral scholarship in a Western language. My thanks to Professors Werner Kelber and Martin Jaffee for the encouragement and suggestions they offered as I was preparing this article.

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Forrest Spirits: Oral Echoes in Leon Forrest's Prose

Bruce A. Rosenberg

Contemporary American fiction writers often are experimenters—but in different ways. The early John Hawkes (in his later writing he grew more intricately ornate) and Walter Abish—whimsical and often dark subjects aside—are fond of telegraphic fragment sentences. Meredith Steinbach and Edmund White share this fascination with dark whimsicality, cloaking their narratives in a magical realism. Kathy Acker, often combining two telegraphic fragments in an agrammatical run-on, is fond of imaginary and historical personae: for instance an imaginative Toulouse Latrec, or Vincent Van Gogh, or the young Janis Joplin. Toni Morrison challenges the reader with scrambled chronology and voice. All in their own way highlight their language, reminding the reader that a fiction is in progress. In this way they are descendants of James Joyce, even Nabakov (neither of whom was American, of course), and of Gertrude Stein. And contemporary writers are not content to comprise their works with the narrative conventions of past storytelling: they have demanded that more be understood, that their readers be familiar with popular songs, with the style of the television sitcom, and with the expressive level of street speech. Spike Lee has as much to say to us as does John Dryden. William Goldman likens Doc Levy's struggle with the assassin not with Gilgamesh versus Enkidu, but with Earl Monroe versus Walt Frazier.

If these disparate writers were to be grouped succinctly, it would be according to the self-reflexive character of their prose, which consciously foregrounds its own artifice, which constantly reminds the reader that an artificial verbal structure has been set out in print, that we are not engaged with a verbatim report of reality; metanarrativists, particularly Robert Coover, do so explicitly. Contemporary writers force the awareness that we are looking at chemically treated wood pulp, that a pseudo-reality is being purposefully constructed (the experiments of Coover and others with "Hypertext" makes this artificial medium an electronic screen). This fiction

continually draws attention to itself as artifact. Its writers have done for prose narrative what Annie Liebovitz has done for portraiture.

Chicago-based novelist Leon Forrest shares this experimental spirit, but his is a traditional, folkloric mode. Many contemporary experimentalists are by intention innovative, consciously ignoring or violating extant traditions. Forrest's inventiveness lies in his use of traditional materials, though ones not often found in written narrative: his narratives frequently incorporate the spontaneously composed and performed folk sermons of the American South. His novels reproduce the style and the tone of contemporary life, avoiding what Milman Parry and Albert Lord called a special narrative vocabulary, syntax, or verbal structure (he has his own "special" syntax and vocabulary). Like many of today's writers, Forrest recreates the world of his imagination in all its nuances of sound and sense, of tone and texture. Nothing in the writers' lives (or ours) is inappropriate. They want us to experience life as they did. Meaning is carried by Rap music, by the spy novel; sadness is evoked by Country-and-Westerns and *Bambi* as well as by *Othello*.

Leon Forrest's fiction achieves much of its muscle by encapsulating within its narrative texture not only those other genres, but the energy and the emotional and spiritual force of the folk sermon. He is particularly sensitive to the sermons and oratorical style of black preachers: the Reverends C. L. Franklin, Morris Harrison Tynes, Wilbur N. Daniel, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson. That is one of his contributions to the timbre of the contemporary novel. This sermon form, orally composed and spontaneously performed, in the main chanted or sung, is found most commonly in the United States today in African-American churches.[1] Many who have heard these sermons performed in their authentic settings feel their emotive strength, their potency; unknowingly, many urban white Americans have heard them, though in secular contexts and with social or political content, and so have not properly recognized them as sermons—or as being derived from them. When they have been accurately identified, they have often been—for reasons unrelated to their aesthetic and spiritual qualities—disregarded. We remember Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech; how many recall his "I Have Been to the Mountaintop" sermon?

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[1] For further discussion of the structure and context of these sermons, see Rosenberg 1970, 1986, 1987.

Forrest's prose is multigeneric, more thoroughly so than that of most of his novelist contemporaries; it incorporates several generically stylistic levels of social and intellectual modes simultaneously. The novels are a salad of conventional narrative, black folk sermon, popular song and Spiritual, street slang, and idiom. Not only do his characters speak the language of common people (in ways never dreamed of by Wordsworth), but Forrest's narrator does also, interspersed with the author's high style together with an astonishing playfulness. His structures are not a matter of one genre encapsulated within a frame, as authors since Chaucer have done. Forrest disregards the conventional understanding of social impropriety. Blues, folk sermons, the salient events of contemporary history, street jive are all the media of serious expression for him, and all collaborate to produce his dramatic effects. By this technique, he manages to tap into the varied strengths of several forms, extracting from each of those components what will reinforce the whole. His novels are thus more than novels. Part song, part spiritual, part record of oral performances, part sermon, part street speech—they exceed all of these constituents. Reader alert: to understand the texture of this fiction, one has to be familiar with more than the monuments of the Great Tradition. Memorizing T. S. Eliot will not be enough. The Bible is not enough. Ice Cube is not something dropped into Ice-T. In the biographical sketch of him for *Contemporary Authors*, Forrest commented that "the Black church, the Negro spiritual, gospel music, sermons, the blues, and jazz" were both "the railroad tracks and the wings for my imagination and the migrating train . . . of my sagas" (1987b:30).

In an age seldom moved by religious expression, and casual in its attitude toward religious forms, the sermon's evocative power has been largely muted. When sermons have appeared in literature, they have been verbal events often merely tangential to the main thrust of the narrative. This is the role of the Rev. Mapple's sermon early in *Moby Dick*; in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; even in Hurston and in Ellison. The *Sound and the Fury* includes a careful imitation of black oral preaching by Faulkner; the sermon is given prominence in the narrative's totality, but it is still not the central focus of the novel. More importantly, Rev. Shegog's sermon is stylistically set apart from the rest of Faulkner's prose, so that the reader is aware of reading a literate description of an oral performance that is quite distinct, situationally and stylistically, from the voice and the presence of the character—it is Rev. Shegog speaking. Faulkner's style is not that of his character.

The folk sermon described here—and as known by Forrest—begins in an Apollonian mode, and gradually drifts towards the Dionysian. The preacher, too, is caught up in the frenzy that his own performance has generated. Forrest-as-novelist does not have this luxury; like nearly all writers, he must remain contemplative throughout, recollecting great emotion in tranquility; only his words and his character's emotional state that they describe pass from oratory to chant, from the reasoned to the emotional, from the dispassionately logical to the engaged passionate. The preacher and many of the church will experience an altered psychological state. The preacher reinvents life.

Forrest invokes the form and emotional drive of the oral folk sermon within his narrative, as a rendering of the sermons delivered by his characters (who are often preachers). He recreates the folk preaching mode, what the preachers themselves call the "spiritual sermon" (a re-creation such as Faulkner did in *The Sound and the Fury)*; and Forrest does frequent replications of the Rev. C. L. Frankln's rhetorical asides. In fact, the author of *The Bloodworth Orphans* (1987a) has written to me that he has been unashamedly influenced by the late Rev. Franklin, whose style he recreates in his own work (ascribing it to a preacher of his own imagination); he thinks of it as being "quite close to the grain of oral tradition" (personal correspondence, 4/19/1991). Punctuating his sermons in *The Bloodworth Orphans*, as Rev. Franklin did with his Detroit congregation, Forrest's preacher exclaims to his flock, "I don't believe you see what I'm talking about this night, Church" (30), or "I don't believe you see what I'm talking about (32) (or its near variant, "I don't believe you see what I'm getting at" [33]), and "Church, you ain't praying with me" (35), or "Help me, Church, pray with me, if you please" (36).

Throughout, Rev. Franklin's rhythmic delivery and singing predominated: his sonorous voice, the arresting rhythms of his oratory, these brought structure to his sermons, they caught up the congregation in their music. They gave a compelling aesthetic quality to his message. His audiences were involved passionately as well as rationally, captured by the magnetic compulsion of his voice. Aretha is his daughter; she learned much from him. The family never wanted for musical expression.

The context for these exclamations is the actual sermon in performance; Rev. Franklin used them to enliven his audience when their enthusiasm—their Spirits—were flagging, to encourage them to further participate in the holy service (see espec. Titon 1989). Intensity is all.

This kind of folk preacher must quickly involve his congregation, must gain their assent, at the moment of performance, to be successful. Success means conveying to them, instilling in them, the Spirit of the Lord.   The performative situation is not that of the leader apart and distinct from the led; rather, the preacher attempts to achieve a close, simultaneous, symbiotic commitment to the Spirit.   Is the singer distinct from his song? The preacher's ostensible purpose is to gain the congregation's assent, serving as God's spokesperson; it is through the preacher's ministrations that the congregation achieves their divine union.   Analytically, the congregation does not commit to the preacher, who is God's agent; and as many of them have confided to me during interviews (see Rosenberg 1970), while they are preaching they are merely lending their lips and their tongues and their throats to God. They are speaking God's words, and they aspire to do His will; He is speaking through them; they are at such moments merely His instruments.

Rev. Franklin often punctuated his sermons with (rhetorical?) appeals to his congregation to "pray with me," or would chide them for not "praying with me"; when they were listless he chastised them for not seeing what he was "talking about" or "getting at." For the preacher these memorized and automatic exclamations are "pauses on the highway," they give a moment's rest when thoughts can be gathered for the lines to come. For the congregation such interruptions ("I don't think there's anybody praying with me") are not put-downs but signals to them to get with it more completely, to become involved; they constitute incitements to the spiritually apathetic to embrace deeper involvements.

Written and literarily composed, Forrest's conscious recreation of these sacred performances give his sermons a convincing authenticity, as though they were the verbatim records of actual oral performances. His fictional Rev. Packwood adopts the rhythms and some of the rhetoric (and consequently much of the strength) of Rev. C. L. Franklin. Forrest is the intermediary, transmuting—recreating—Franklin into Packwood. Forrest's prose sounds as though he were speaking to us, as if we were reading the transcript of a story he were relating. His voice recreates his narrative for us.

"One of the literary constants of African-American literature," he says in the *Contemporary Authors* biography, "is the reinvention of life" (1987b:31).   His fiction expresses more than a simulation of the folk preacher in performance, more than the glorification of the oratorical skills

of a gifted speaker. That has been done. Forrest recalls, in this capsule biography, that while still at the University of Chicago he perceived the sermon "as a seminal source [for his own] fledgling art" (23).

Forrest's literary voice compels with the magnetism of the spoken word. When someone speaks to us, face-to-face, we listen. This sound—the resonance of human speech—is immediate and compelling. It is holistic. It tells us that a human encounter is taking place. We cannot switch off another person's speech—at least not easily, not without offending the person whose extension it is—as we can turn off a radio or a television. A phonograph record can be interrupted, a CD performance cancelled by pushing a button. But someone speaking to me cannot be so effortlessly silenced; and his or her address will demand a reply, and then an interaction. Electronic sound waves by themselves have no such force. We will usually not brusquely terminate even an unsolicited telemarketing message.

People who hang up on us are rude. By their act they have made a meaningful statement. A human, encountered live, merits a response that the mechanically reproduced sound does not. Some people talk to the screen at the movies, true, but that response is voluntary and, by the receiver, unrecorded. If a tree falls in a desolate forest, has a sound been made? In human communication another human being is present, speaking, demanding attention, demanding to be treated with the courtesy our cultural mores require, and his or her words compel attention—and response. When we respond we become active participants in the communicative transaction. No mechanical voice simulation, however faithfully it reproduces the human voice, has this power.

Forrest's prose nearly has it. We can close his book, of course, and terminate our transaction with him, but when his characters are speaking, when he is speaking, we are less inclined to do so. Rudeness is not the point; we cannot so simply close off a speaker's address to us. We do not want to. When we read Forrest we will not likely terminate the story he is relating in its midst; we are being spoken to, we are interested to hear what is being said, we want to know what is going to be said next. He wins us over, so that we willingly give him our assent, and in that manner he can work his way into the fabric of the narrative. We follow.

The orally composed and performed sermon is not limited to the repertoire of nonliterates. Chanted sermons by learned preachers demonstrate that the same men can speak (preach?) in either style, that each

mode is dependent upon the "message" the speaker wants to communicate, appropriate to the audience. Notable examples include Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Washington Monument exhortation; his indoor speech on passive resistance; Rev. Jesse Jackson at the 1988 Democratic National Convention; Charlottesville, Va., preacher Lockett (who wrote out his sermon in prose but several minutes into his performance began to chant—his natural mode of pulpit oratory). No matter how the performance is transcribed on the page, the prose is unmistakably prose; poetic traits are almost as obvious to the reader as to the listener (rhythmic performances are not revealed because of formatting)—that is a function of literacy, of the printed page.

The folk sermon—in the form it is folkloric as well as Scriptural as preached in many black fundamentalist churches—has a structurally complex fluidity that helps make it an emotionally moving performance: as Forrest has it, "the structure of a black Baptist sermon is orchestrated, with highly associative links to group memory, the Bible, Afro-American folklore, Negro spirituals, secular blues phrases, politics, and personal testimonial" (1985:131). Thus it taps into several high intensity veins: social, cultural, intellectual, religious, racial, and so forth. The sermon conveys a holistic, unifying message, gaining strength from the union of its several components: ". . . and then one night the Word of God came beautiful, flaming, chariot-swinging sweet and low unto her ears" (1987a:34). Forrest uses sermons in several ways—in the recorded utterances of preachers and in the congregation's prayers and testimonies. Sermon oratory is also a part of the everyday speech of certain of his characters. He says as much in his condensed autobiography (1987a:23):

> as a writer who comes out of a culture steeped in the eloquence of the Oral Tradition, I've come to see the Negro preacher as the Bard of our race; and throughout my novels, that rich lodestone of eloquence has provided me with an important springboard.

These sermons have the power to effectively generate deeply felt emotions; they are guided by gradually intensifying rhythms—of the preacher's speech, of the music, of the implicit rhythm in the congregation's reception of the sermon message (1985:135):

> It is the force of the music—the obsessive and repetitive rhythm—tied to lyrics suggesting a reordering out of chaos that leads one from a state of self-possession to a momentary state of blessed assurance, when you can

"take hold of your life through Jesus Christ."

Further, he observes (130):

> The question at every turn in the service is how to keep the fire and zeal up-tempo, how to let neither the body nor the soul cool off. The service is always bound up in a keening relationship between great solemnity and the furious rhythms of body and soul.

Rev. Packwood's sermon in *The Bloodworth Orphans* (1987a:29-40) is, in its early moments, not consistently rhythmical, though the last portions of it are broken into tight metrical units (as printed on a page) divided by virgules.[2] Rachel Flowers' response is similarly regular: "I'm running on, I'm running on / I done left this world behind / I done crossed the separating line / I done left this world behind" (39). The exclamations of the congregation, an important part of the performance's dynamics, are not neglected. Rev. Packwood's sermon and Rachel Flowers' chanted prayer (70-74) are punctuated with traditional exclamatory words and phrases: "Lord," "Lord what a garment-ain't He good?," "Oh Holy God," "my God," "Witness," "church" [an address to the congregation], "stand by me." Forrest listened when he went to church. Repetition is also in the form of metonymically related series: "her name, her honor, her stride, her station, her soul, her crown, her patched-up riddled wings, her gospel shoes filled with holes, her ashy long white robe" (29-30); or related nouns in sequence: "you moving like a tot through a half-mad train of thieves, gamblers, adulterers, liars, abominators, for your victory" (37). Or in apposition (73):

> BE his floor mat, his watchwoman, His footstool, His Light-Bearer, His Messenger, His anchor to the world, His tambourine, His drum, His garment-servant, His body-servant, in the eternal clemency of the warning news about Salvation and Sacrifice. . . .

Images from the Bible are rendered metrically (38):

> For my Father is a rainmaker. Didn't he arise in a Windstorm? And He's gonna return. Return in a storm. Gonna be royal and radiant with hair like lamb's wool: eyes like balls of fire. Gonna have a rainbow like a scarf

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[2] As was done in Rosenberg 1970.

about His shoulders. Gonna set upon a *Rock* and these here storms ain't gonna be able to move you. . . .

Forrest probably imitates Rev. C. L. Franklin, whose recordings (at least) he has heard. And he gives to Rev. Packwood an anaphoric passage, addressed to a God with whom he is on intimate terms (39):

> Why-er heard you promise Hosea you would ransom them from the grave; heard you, Father, promise Moses you would stand by your people in the rages of their bondage; heard you reveal the meaning of the ladder to Jacob of a soul-collecting Nation; heard you stir the intelligence and faith to Ezekiel's tongue to know that dry bones can live. . . .

The preacher, the man of words, is a potent force in black communities. Or used to be. Forrest has called the Rev. Wilbur N. Daniel "an Awesome anchor" to his people. Words—particularly the preacher's words—have the power to move and to pursuade men, to induce the Holy Ghost to work on the earth, to walk on the earth. As the Rev. Morris Harrison Tynes told Leon (1985:131),

> I think that each man's historical perspective determines his response to this divine encounter. There is something in his life that exalts him to great inspiration. Take Handel writing the *Messiah* in less than thirty days. He must have ascended to heaven! ...I think the same thing happens in preaching at its zenith; and, yes, I do think it is the moment of a miracle.

Forrest gives this power to his characters; by making them more forceful and dynamic, he energizes his novels. How powerful is the effect of the preached folk sermon? Rev. King in Washington or Rev. Jackson at the Democratic convention supply the answer. They gradually engaged their audiences, heightening involvement on an emotional plane as well as on a rational one, gradually turning up the intensity until the audience was theirs, rocking to their rhythm, all the while assenting to their message.[3] In *There is a Tree More Ancient than Eden* (1988a), the last dying words of M. C. Browne are—by Forrest's intention—a "sermonette," beginning with "I done found jesus *ohohoh*, at *last*... at last, amen this morning i come to *know* him, mother-dear, and grandma dear-dear and little nathan, i found our jesus, you all, this morning on the altar of my heart...." (11).   In a

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[3] See espec. the analysis in Rosenberg 1986.

chapter entitled "The Dream," Nathaniel cries out to Aunt Breedlove: "Oh but auntie breedy how can I be a prophet in a strange land, where we've been stripped bare to the bone?" (87). In a section called "The Vision," the visionary sees the crucifixion in gospel song / vernacular / alliterative terms (119-20):

> ...and I could see the man upon the slab of the tree go quaking, his mouth trembling and quivering (although he did utter a mumbling word) as this soldier (bent now over the man's right hand with the same kind of precision), his liquid eyes sparkling like those of a jeweler inspecting the fairest pearl of his horde of preciously purloined gems), now hammering the nail into the unshaken right hand....

In what Forrest called "a literary sermon as eulogy" (personal correspondence, 4/19/91), Rev. Pompey c.j. Browne, another preacher from *There is a Tree More Ancient than Eden*, remembers and laments Martin Luther King, Jr., at The Crossroads Rooster Tavern in a verbally pyrotechnic declamation drawing from street slang, history, the Bible, and literature, described by the author (205) as "something of a transformation of Adam Clayton Powell, Martin Luther King, Leon Sullivan, and Richard Pryor." Here is a sample (208):

> And Mister Jefferson, that juggler sucks a slave's breast (the declaration up his snuff-box); enlightened when in the course of Pandora's box: a test case for Niggers' apartheid, shake that chain and drop your ass. To perish out of this world backwards: Lords of the land, tongues coiling, counselled by Lucifer's fruit. Fear is shot through the eye-teeth of men's rage as an inherited whirlwind. Oh the bugger-baron snorts on his rip van winkling Twilight manufactured FABULOUS behind the sanctuary chariot cadillac like a circus clown with a monkey on his back.

Faulkner, Melville, and others incorporated preachers' sermons as distinct and discrete entities within the narrative, separate from the voice of the narrator. But not only do several of Forrest's characters preach, his narrative persona itself preaches, so that oratorical strength is not only that of one of the characters, but of the narrator himself. Rev. Shegog was a man of moving words; Leon Forrest's voice has similar power in that it is composed not merely of those of his characters; consequently his story, his narrative gains strength and emotive compulsion. Not that the entire economy of the novels depends on sermons; only where the situation

requires highlighting. Preachers are important in black culture, and they are very important characters in the novels. The voice of the narrator is often that of a verbally talented folk preacher, a man with the gift of words (a black Thomas Pynchon or even a James Joyce). Forrest is no mere player of word games; although he can pun with anyone writing today and has mastered the allusions ploy, these trivial pursuits are not what his novels are about.

The comparison with Joyce is easy, and has been made by the critics; it is implicit (sometimes even explicit) in much of Forrest's prose (1988b:132):

> and now the young man Nathaniel felt in his pocket for the prayer cloth, that the blind singing-choir directress and prophetess Sister Rachel had given him; still carrying it, starched now, in his pocket and thinking suddenly how a simple prayer cloth could be turned into a snot rag (ah, mighty Joyce); or to drive the Moor mad; or to cover the hand in the basket of Aunty Foisty; or dipped in the Lamb's blood, or used to wipe the face of the bedraggled, falling and rising Redeemer's face of glory to the world, forever and ever; or to wipe the tears and then the blood from his feet... His feet.

His popular / folk / colloquial / learned / loutish / high-serious / casual register style invites comparison with contemporaries Pynchon and Barth, Hawkes and Coover, with Acker (less most of the profanity), with Vonnegut, and in Europe, Grass. Yet, despite Forrest's humor, despite his careful attention to the spoken word, he has not been found to be as accessible as they (perhaps because of that virtuosity that greatly complicates and thickens his prose). He has taken folklore and popular modes and genres seriously. And he has become one of those writers who have enlarged our concept of what is "mainstream." He is, of course, a "black writer." But he is more than that, as Graham Greene was more than a "Catholic writer." Partly by his own talents Forrest has widened the currents so that they now include his writing. Indeed, his most recent novel, *Divine Days*, transports African-American traditions to a big city.

As Forrest has said at one point, "I wanted to be a singer of the language—in the tradition of her majestic self [Mahalia Jackson] and the Negro Preacher" (1987b:34). Singer he is, and astute listener too. Faulkner had a great ear for people's speech. Like Angus Wilson, like Gloria Naylor, Forrest listened to the speech of his peers until he got it right, listened hard enough until it flowed from his pen with authenticity.

In this connection it should be noted that he is an extraordinary reader of his own writing, performing it with a preacher's histrionic skill: intonation, gesture, expression, eye contact are all active. His own sensibility is extraordinarily complex, loaded with allusions to literature, allusions to the Bible and to popular culture, expressed in a folk religious mode, in an intricate exploitation of his language's semantic and phonological complexity, in his Chicago-educated elegant, formal style, and with a whimsical playfulness. Forrest's awareness and recording of contemporary life is encyclopedic. Like Mahalia's, Leon's song is difficult; and like hers too, his performances are ultimately rewarding.

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Editing Oral Traditions

Ethnopoetics, Oral-Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts
Dell Hymes

Homer's Style: Non-Formulaic Features of an Oral Aesthetic
Joseph Russo

Performing A Thousand and One Nights *In Egypt*
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The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and
Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer
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Editing Beowulf: *What Can the Study of the Ballads Tell Us?*
John D. Niles

Ethnopoetics, Oral-Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts

Dell Hymes

John Miles Foley (1992) has opened up a consideration of the connections between oral-formulaic theory and work that has come to be called "ethnopoetics." This is much to be desired, for until recently the two have seemed to occupy different worlds, yet a general view of oral poetry requires both. Foley focuses on a major thrust of folklore today, the interaction between performance and tradition. Here I want to focus on two older concerns, the structure of texts and manuscript sources.

Constraints within and among lines

Oral-formulaic theory and ethnopoetics are both concerned with composition in the course of performance, and with constraints that must be met in doing so. In the epics and other poetry studied in terms of oral-formulaic theory, the constraint is a metrical line, commonly a sung metrical line. In oral narratives the constraint is commonly a relation among lines.[1]

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[1] Sung epic poetry is famous for oral formulae, which have been taken as enabling a narrator to meet the constraint of the metrical line in the midst of performing. (I realize that there is more to oral formulae than that). The narratives with which I have worked, not having metrical lines, do not have the same performance constraint. One does sometimes find evidence of fulfilling the constraint of a patterned sequence in an ad hoc way. Among Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, formulae seem to have two roles. Prayers and exhortations at ceremonies may be full of them, not to meet formal constraint, but to invoke tradition. Narratives employ them at major junctures, such as openings and closings, and there are classes of words to be expected as markers. All these could be said to be required by a genre. There are also words expectable for characteristic actions in the course of a type of scene or story. The choice, position, and frequency of these words is particular to a

When constraint is internal to the line, we do not hesitate to speak of poetry. In the oral narratives of many Native American peoples and many speakers of English, perhaps universally, there is a constraint external to the line. It has to do with relations among lines that count as "verses." A "verse" is usually easily recognized in speech. It is marked by one of the main intonational contours of the language. Such verses form sequences, and do so in terms of a small set of alternatives. There appear to be two fundamental principles. The usual (unmarked) alternatives may be sequences of two or four. Many Native American communities (such as those of the Kwakiutl, Takelma, Zuni, Hopi, and Navajo) make use of such sequences. Many others (such as those of the lower Columbia and Willamette Rivers), and many speakers of American English, so far as is known, connect verses in sequences of three and five.[2]

Narrators are not restricted to just these alternatives. Some command both principles, and may adopt one or the other for a particular story or situation, or part of a story, or level of organization (cf. Hymes 1990-94, 1993b, 1994b).

If organization in lines is a general definition of poetry, then these narratives are poetry. In one kind of poetry what counts first of all is a relation within the line, a relation among syllables, stresses, alliterations, tones, conventional feet. In another kind what counts first of all are relations among lines (more properly, verses) themselves. If the first kind is metrical, the second kind can be called "measured." It is sometimes called "measured verse," and its analysis, "verse analysis."[3]

Such analysis depends upon three principles. One is that just discussed. It implies that narratives transcribed and published as prose paragraphs are in fact organized in lines. The second principle is one Roman Jakobson considered basic to poetry, and called *equivalence* (1960). Sequences however diverse may count as equivalent in the organization of a

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given narrator and performance. They seem to give shape as much as to fulfill it.

[2] African American narratives collected in New York City by William Labov can be more accurately appreciated when seen to be poetry in this sense. Labov's much-used analysis of stories in terms of a set of universal functions misses their shape. The stories are not a linear sequence of temporal events, intersected by non-temporal effects, but successive arcs of arousing and realizing expectation. See Hymes 1991, 1994a.

[3] There is also of course "free verse," much of which actually has recurrences and relations of various kinds.

narrative, if some recurrent feature marks them as such. As already noted, intonation contours are usually such a mark. Sometimes intonation contours appear not to be such a mark, and verses are signalled by a grammatical feature, such as the quotative, or a combination of grammatical elements and patterning itself (cf. Hymes 1982 on Zuni, 1994c on Hopi). For texts for which we do not know the intonation contours, there still are indications of equivalence. Sometimes a certain word or words mark the beginning of units. Turns at talk seem always to count as verses. Other forms of repetition and parallelism occur.

The principle of equivalence implies a text that is a sequence of units. In addition to equivalent units (and repetition and parallelism), there is *succession*. Succession is not a matter simply of linear sequence, of counting. Successive units give shape to action.[4] In particular, patterns of succession can be ways of coming to an ending point. As suggested, one common way is by sequences of two and four, the other by sequences of three and five.

Sequences of two tend to give to action an implicit rhythm of this, then that. Pairs of pairs may have the same relation (although other internal relations may obtain). Sequences of three tend to give an implicit rhythm of onset, ongoing, outcome. A development of this last, found as far apart as the Columbia River, Philadelphia, and Finland, integrates two sequences of three within a sequence of five. It is possible (not necessary) to have the third unit a pivot, completing one succession of three and beginning another.[5] I call this "interlocking." There are other possibilities of rhythm within each type of sequence, and their representation on the page calls for a variety of solutions, and a willingness to experiment (see Hymes 1992).

The principle involved in succession became clear to me in rereading a remarkable essay by Kenneth Burke, "Psychology and Form" (1968 [1925]). Let me summarize its theme as "the recurrent arousal and satisfying of expectation." Not a straight line, but a series of arcs. What

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[4] Rhyme and stanza-forms are analogues, especially in a narrative poem. The difference is that larger units of oral narratives of the sort considered here do not have to be constant in number of lines or other parts. Narrators need not fill a fixed form. Rather, they match two sequences as they proceed, one of incident with one of formal options. The matching can differ from telling to telling. This (re-)generative competence needs to be taking into account in discussion of "entextualization" (Bauman and Briggs 1990).

[5] Examples are given below.

Burke writes of works accepted as literature is pervasively true of oral narrative, and often enough deserves the connotations of his other term for it, "eloquence" (34-35, 44).

Interlocking in Philadelphia and Yakima (3 and 5).   Here are two examples of interlocking which illustrate the arousal and satisfying of expectation, and the difference that verse analysis can make.   The first is from Philadelphia.   It is from one of a number of narratives collected by Nessa Wolfson in a study of the use of the historical present.   The narrative has five scenes.   Their foci, successively, are a situation [i], the seizing of an opportunity [ii], acceptance of a bid [iii], acceptance of a demand for certificates [iv], acceptance of a settlement date [v].   The first three scenes show an initial condition, development of it, and a proximate outcome.   The series could be taken as complete.   The third scene, however, turns out to be the first of a second series of three, concerned with stages of acceptance. The two series of scenes interlock at the level of the narrative as a whole. (The narrative is discussed in Hymes 1993a, but the text itself is not included).

Interlocking also obtains within two of the scenes ([iii] and [iv]). In each there are five pairs of verses.   The first four are turns at talk between the realtor and the narrator's wife.   The fifth relates an outcome, acceptance. In each series the third pair of verses has the couple's offer.   It is outcome to what has preceded, and at the same time an onset to what follows (she won't accept, she does accept).

Wolfson presented the text in one block paragraph.   The lines of the relevant scenes are shown below between brackets, within part of the paragraph.

<center>"She's a Widow"</center>

...So he says, "That you have to do in any house."   So she says, "Yes, we have to lay down new floors, the rugs are no good (the rugs happen to be in good shape), we have to—there's too much shrubbery, we have to tear out some of the shrubs." (The shrubbery around the house is magnificent if it's done right, if it's done right.)   So really we made up everything. [So he says to my wife, he says, "Well, what would you bid?" So she says, "It's stupid for me to talk," she says, "You got a bid for thirty-three, thirty-four," she says.   "Why should I even talk to you? It ain't gonna be anywheres near."   So he says to her, he says, "Well," he says, "the person at thirty-four backed out." So she says, "Oh yeah?" He says, "Yeah," he says, "What would you bid?" So she says, "Twenty-eight."   He

says, "Oh," he says, "No, that she'll never go for." So she says, "Okay, that's my bid, Mr. Smith. You want it, fine; you don't, fine." Got a call that afternoon. It was accepted! So I go to see the house—I go to sign the contract, I look at the contract and I says, "I ain't signing this." He says, "Why?" I says, "I want a plumbing certificate, I want an air conditioning certificate, I want a heating certificate, and I want a roof certificate!" So he says, "Really, we won't guarantee..." I says, "I don't want guarantee, I want certificates, from certified people that it's in good shape, and I want the right to bring in any of my guys." So he says, "She won't go for it... this, that..." So I says, "Aah, don't be silly," I says, "Look, you just take it to her." So I get a call back about a day later, "Okay, she's accepted."] So then I get a—now what I do is, I pick up this thing, I take it to my cousin, he goes to someone, he says, "Settlement's no good. She's got us for forty-five days." In October she wanted to settle....

Here is how the bracketed passage appears when displayed in terms of lines, verses, stanzas, and scenes.

[iii] [bid accepted]

So he says to my wife, he says,   (A)   60
        "Well, what would you bid?"
So she says,
        "It's stupid for me to talk," she says,
        "You got a bid for thirty-three, thirty-four," she says,
        "Why should I even talk to you?   65
        "It ain't gonna be anywheres near."

So he says to her, he says,   (B)
        "Well," he says,
                "the person at thirty-four backed out."
So she says, "Oh yeah?"   70

He says,   (C)
        "Yeah," he says,
        "What would you bid?"
So she says, "Twenty-eight."

He says, "Oh," he says,   (D)   75
        "No, that she'll never go for."
So she says,
        "Okay, that's my bid, Mr. Smith.
        "You want it,

                    fine.   80
              "You don't,
                    fine."

Got a call that afternoon.   (E)
It was accepted!

                                        [iv] [certificates accepted]

So I go to see the house—   (A)   85
I go to sign the contract,
        I look at the contract
              and I says, "I ain't signing this."

He says, "Why?"   (B)
I says, "I want a plumbing certificate.   90
        "I want an air conditioning certificate,
        "I want a heating certificate,
        "and I want a roof certificate."

So he says, "Really, we won't guarantee..."   (C)
I says, "I don't want guarantee,   95
        "I want certificates,
              from certified people that it's in good shape,
              "and I want the right to bring in any of my guys."

So he says, "She won't go for it... this, that...."   (D)
So I says, "Aah, don't be silly," I says,   100
        "Look, you just take it to her."

So I get a call back about a day later,   (E)

"Okay, she's accepted."

The same relations open a narrative told to Edward Sapir in Wishram
Chinook by Louis Simpson at Yakima, Washington the summer of 1905.
Here are the lines as published in prose paragraphs (Sapir 1909:139ff.)

                        The Deserted Boy

        Some time long ago the (people) said to the boy: "Now let us go
for reeds." The boy was (considered) bad. So then they said: "Now you
people shall take him along (when you go for) reeds." And then they said

to them: "You shall abandon him there." So then the people all went across the river.   They went on and arrived where the reeds were. And then they cut off the reeds and said (to them): "If the boy says, 'Are you people still there?' you shall answer him, 'Ú uu'."

And then they all ran off; straight home they ran, went right across the river. No person at all (was left) on this side; they were all on the Úother side. And then that boy said: "Now let us all go home!"—"Uuu," said the reeds to him. He looked about long, but in vain; there was nobody. And then he too started to go home, he too went following behind them; he ran until he arrived (at the river), but there were no people to be seen. So then the boy cried. And then he heard (something)....

Here is the opening in terms of lines, verses, and stanzas:

Now then they told a boy,	(A)
"Now let us go for reeds."	
Long ago the boy was mean.	
Now then they said,	
"Now you will take him for reeds."	5
Now then they told them,	
"You shall abandon him there."	
Now then the people all went across the river,	(B)
they went on,	
they came to the reeds.	10
Now then they cut them off.	
Now then they said,	
"If the boy should say,	
'Are you there?',	
you shall answer,	15
'Uuu'."	
Now then they ran off,	(C)
straight home they ran,	
straight across they went,	
not a person on this side,	20
all on that side.	
Now then the boy, too, said,	(D)
"Now let's go home."	
"Uuu,"	
went the reeds.	25
In *vain* he searched about:	
no person.	
Now then he too started home,	(E)

>he too followed behind them;
>>he arrived running: 30
>>now, no people.

Stanzas (ABC) tell of the people deserting the boy. These stanzas are linked by having the people, "they" as agents throughout.

Stanzas (CDE) tell of the boy finding himself deserted. These stanzas are linked by their endings:

>not a person on this side, / all on that side.
>no person
>now, no people

Stanza C is the pivot. The preceding stanzas (A, B) are linked by the plan to abandon the boy, first by instructions to take him for reeds, then by instructions to the reeds as to how to deceive and delay him. The following stanzas (DE) are linked by the boy's search for the others. (C) is outcome to the first pair and the onset for the second. It realizes the plan and provides the condition for the discovery of absence.

Around (C) indeed there is a chiasmus-like symmetry. The immediately adjacent stanzas (B, D) involve the instructions to the reeds, their being given (B) and their being carried out (D).[6] The outer stanzas

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[6] Stanza (D) is a brief form of what can be a full scene. It often occurs in version of the story-type "Bear and Deer." Bear has killed Deer while the two are away from home. Deer's children retaliate by killing Bear's children, and flee before Bear returns. Bear, finding her children dead, pursues them, but first asks a dog the direction they have gone. The dog has been instructed to bark in turn in directions other than the one in which the children actually go. Sapir did not record the myth from Louis Simpson (Sapir 1909), but Victoria Howard dictated it in Clackamas to Melville Jacobs (the incident is in M. Jacobs 1958:149-50), with both women bears, Grizzly and Black Bear. Charles Cultee told it to Franz Boas in Kathlamet (the incident is in Boas 1901:122), with neither woman a bear. I suspect that the doubling in Mrs. Howard's version, and the diminution in that from Mr. Cultee (to Robin [Thrush] and Salmonberry) reflects tension about the figure of a bear as a way of exploring the nature of women.

In Louis Simpson's "The Deserted Boy" presumably the reeds answer, first from one direction, then from another, so that the boy searches everywhere but in the direction the people have actually gone, to the river. We are to understand that they have taken the only canoe. The boy is left on a low marshy bit of land (where reeds would grow), too far from either side of the river for him to get back. Mr. Simpson assumes an audience would understand this, and subordinates explanation, or elaboration, to severity of form, in which

have to do with the state of abandonment, its initiation by the people (A) and its realization by the boy (E).[7]

Interlocking in Alaska and Cochiti (3 and 4). Native American narratives taken down in English can display native form. In the summer of 1924 Ruth Benedict took down a number of tales from interpreters from the Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico. In pursuit of a type of story involving Coyote, birds, water, and songs and names imperfectly mastered, I analyzed one titled by Benedict "Coyote imitates Crow" (Benedict 1931:149; cf. Hymes 1994c). The sequence in terms of actions, verses, and scenes seems clear, probably because it was carefully translated.[8] The story has one of the two examples known to me of interlocking within four-part relations.

For a five-part sequence to contain two interlocking sequences of three seems possible wherever three and five-part relations are used. Until early 1993 I knew of but one example with two and four-part relations. Early in this century the missionary John W. Chapman recorded some sixteen narratives in the language of those he served (the language has since been referred to as "Ingalik," and now, "Deg Hit'ana"). The texts have

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the next stage, an analogue of a successful guardian spirit quest, is expeditiously reached.

[7] This scene has several instances of the elementary three-step relation as well. The three spoken statements in (A) can be taken as three steps (onset, ongoing, outcome) of the initial plan. First the boy is addressed (with the transitive verb-stem *-lxam*); then the people are spoken to generally, broadcast (with the intransitive stem *-kim*): then some, not all, are addressed, as indicated by *-lxam* instead of *-kim*, presumably excluding the boy. After the first stanza, which has everyone in place, three stanzas each have changes of location with the onset, ongoing, outcome pattern. The people cross, go on, arrive at the reeds (8, 9, 10); they run off, go straight home, none are left (17, 18-19, 20-21); the boy starts, follows, arrives running (28, 29, 30). Such a three-step change of location constitutes all of (C) and (E). (B) and (D) overall have three-step sequences, but not of movement as such. Reach the reeds, cut them, instruct them (B), boy calls to go home, reeds answer, boy searches in vain (D).

The entire translation is given as an appendix below, because it will figure in other parts of this essay as well. This version replaces that in chapter 4 of Hymes 1981.

[8] Benedict herself remarks of the tales she recorded: "They give the literary style to which all the stories in Cochiti conform but which can never be completely reproduced without recording the text" (xiii). Her relative confidence about style probably was based on the fact that Franz Boas recorded a number of tales in the language itself, and published a characterization of it (Boas 1928). The translations of the stories he recorded in text are included in her monograph.

been re-elicited (Kari 1981:1-15). One is the widely known story of Raven obtaining the light of the sun (Chapman 1914:22-26, 109-15).

The patterning of verses and scenes uses relations of two and four, and the story as a whole has four acts. The four acts integrate two distinct plots. Each involves three acts (Hymes 1990-94).

In the first plot, Act I establishes that no young man can marry a certain woman, Act II has Raven succeed in entering her, Act III has her discovered to be pregnant and Raven born as her child. The woman who would not marry has been overcome.

In the second plot, Act II introduces Raven, who flies in darkness, Act III has him born to the daughter of the man who controls the light, Act IV has him make off with the light. The world has been set right.

In the narrative as a whole, Act I involves the young woman, but not Raven. Act IV involves Raven, but not the young woman. Each is in three acts, and they share the central acts II and III.

In the Cochiti narrative, there are two scenes. The first is about Coyote's attempt to imitate a bird, the second about what happens after he fails. Both scenes involve interplay of relations of three and five with relations of four, but differ in internal form.

The first scene has three stanzas, the second four. In the first scene the first and third stanzas each have four verses. The first elaborates pairing in each verse in terms of opposition between what is high (a bank of paper bread) and what is low (a pond of sweet-corn milk). The first pair of verses have to do with what is there, the second with what Crow does (sing, then bite and fly down to drink). The third stanza also has two pairs. Coyote eats and wishes to drink in one, prepares to jump and jumps (to his death) in the other. The middle stanza has five verses. They interlock with Crow's song as pivot. Coyote comes along and asks for the song, Crow agrees, Crow sings. The outcome of one three-step sequence is onset to a second: Crow sings, Coyote listens and learns, says he is ready to start.

Only after long consideration of this first scene did I realize that it is analogous to the second, if the two interlocking sequences are counted together with the stanzas on either side. In the first stanza there is only Crow, in the last stanza only Coyote. In the two interlocking sequences there are both Coyote and Crow. Three for Crow, then, and three for Coyote, in a series of four.

This interplay of three and four complements an obvious interplay in the four stanzas of the second scene. Crow takes Coyote's eyes herself, then

summons those who use fur, then those who eat meat. Finally an old man comes and takes the bones for soup for his wife. The first three stanzas show Crow in charge, the last three are about the use of Coyote's body. The first stands apart from the practical uses of the rest, because Crow simply plays with the eyes, shaking them so that they sound like bells. (An audience would recognize a popular incident, often the frame of an entire story, in which a bird takes Coyote's eyes.) The last stands apart because the old man comes without reference to Crow. The second and third stanzas belong to both sequences, involving both Crow and usefulness.

The story's two scenes are alike in beginning with Crow and ending with Coyote, each having a three-step sequence that overlaps the sequence of the other. They differ in expressive shape in ways that further analysis of Cochiti may clarify. It may be accidental that these two instances of interlocking sequences of three in a set of four—one from Alaska, one from New Mexico—are the only ones known. The device may not be as rare as it now seems.

Ethnopoetics and Editing

If organization in groups of lines is pervasive in oral narrative, then the editing of oral narratives for publication should take that into account.[9] Indeed, any presentation of a narrative on the page implies a hypothesis as to its form (cf. Hymes 1987). Yet it is still possible to encounter oral narratives presented as block paragraphs (see "She's a widow" above). Often, to be sure, oral narratives are presented as sequences of lines, carefully transcribed and edited (Tedlock 1972, Wiget 1987, Parks 1991), but the possibility of organized relations among the lines is not considered. Even when verses are identified, relations among them may not be (Kroskrity 1985).[10] In general, we should realize that complex artistry in

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[9] The communities from which come the South Slavic epic poetry studied by Lord and Foley very likely also tell unsung stories that make use of ethnopoetic patterning; see Foley 1995. L.D. Perkowski (1993) has shown its presence in a series of recently collected Bulgarian narratives.

[10] For the organization of lines in a Zuni text published by Tedlock, see Hymes 1980, 1982. Tedlock's response (1983:56-61) seems not to allow for the possibility of relations not auditorily perceptible. For rhetorical relations among verses, stanzas, and

the organization of lines may be natural to users of language, and flourish wherever language does.

Presentation in terms of lines and verses makes visible the shaping artistry of narrators, "all that complex wealth of minutiae which in their line-for-line aspect we call style and in their broader outlines we call form" (Burke 1968:38). The reading is slowed, which makes it far more possible to perceive repetition, parallelism, and succession in the particular text, and what is constant and variable among texts (cf. Hymes 1981:ch. 6; 1985). Such analysis contributes to a general theory of the competence and practices involved in oral narrative itself.

Verse Analysis and Manuscripts Interact

Relations among verses interact with the details of manuscript sources. Manuscript evidence may clarify what is otherwise puzzling about such relations. The presence of such relations may indicate the integrity of an original source, and the failings of a published one. It is fair to say that all the published sources for Native American narratives need to be examined, and re-edited, in the light of the original manuscripts and verse analysis for the choices and changes that have been made.

"The Deserted Boy." This text, dictated to Edward Sapir in 1905, has three instances. The third leads to a discovery in the one text that is remarkable for poetics comparatively. (As indicated above, the story is given in full in an appendix, because of its importance to more than one part of the paper).

(1) The first lines of the story were published as follows (using the published translation at this point):

> Some time long ago the (people) said to the boy:
> "Now let us go for reeds."
> The boy was considered bad.
> So then they said....

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scenes, disclosed by quotative particles in a Hopi performance, see Hymes 1994c. I have sketched the verses and stanzas of the first text in Parks 1991, Alfred Morsette's "How Summer Came to the North Country," and have prepared an account of the stanzas and scenes in Dewey Healing's "Bird Story" (Arizona Tewa) presented by Kroskrity 1985 (cf. Kroskrity 1993).

The field notebook shows that "Some time long ago" does not actually start the story. The story starts with "Now then" (*aGa kwapt*). The word rendered "Some time long ago" (*GanGadix*) precedes "The boy was bad (mean)." Nor is that fact accidental.[11]

The second statement in a Chinookan myth often enough describes the character of one of the actors. Usually this is done through a characteristic activity, understood to be virtuous or not. An actor characterized as virtuous will not come to harm at the end. Here the boy is characterized as bad, but the badness is displaced: "long ago."

Another of Simpson's texts, one about "Clothing" in the section on customs (Sapir 1909:182), does begin with this time expression, translated there "In olden times." A second paragraph in the same text (but about tools) begins the same way. Perhaps this is why Sapir thought the expression should be first in this story, and of course it seems right there, given our familiar "Once upon a time." In "The Deserted Boy," however, "long ago" has structural work to do. The boy will not end badly, but as a wealthy hero, taking revenge. His meanness is a once, but not a future, thing. Louis Simpson keeps faith with the convention of a statement of character in second place, letting a hearer know that what follows upon it in this case is the immediate action, not the final outcome.

As always, one has to take seriously the exact detail of what was said. Formal analysis need not displace the manuscript, but may underscore its integrity. The two together provide as sure as possible a basis for interpretation.

(2) A second instance also has to do with a formal anomaly. The narrator, Louis Simpson, marks verses regularly with an initial pair of particles, translatable as "Now then" (*aGa kwapt*), as we have seen. The common alternatives are regular too: a second sequence may have another pair, "Now again" (*aGa wít'a*) instead of "Now then."[12] A turn at talk is

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[11] This example was intended to form section 5 of the original article (Hymes 1976), but was omitted from both it and Hymes 1981. Cf. 1981:163, line 15. For the symbol G, note 12 below.

[12] In Wishram words C is used for voiceless affricate (English "ch"), E is used for schwa (like the vowel in English "but"), G is used for a voiced velar stop, L for a voiceless lateral fricative, S for a voiceless "shibilant" (English "sh"), x for a voiceless velar fricative such as in German *Ich*, X for a voiceless velar fricative such as in German *ach*. A

always a verse, however begun. Simpson builds stanzas and scenes again and again with sets of such verses. At one point in "The Deserted Boy," however, this regularity fails. Nor can it be taken to have expressive point. Where there ought to be a third pair, there is just one particle, "then." Some narrators do use this single particle as a marker of verses, but not Louis Simpson.

Sapir's field notebook III, pp. 94-97, shows that at this point of formal irregularity there is an irregularity in transcription. The words of one line are inserted above the words of a line that follows. Either the inserted words were initially missed by Sapir, who went back to write them, or they were retroactively supplied by Simpson. The latter seems more likely. The verse with a single particle completes an expected sequence of three; the discrepancy suggests recovery in the midst of distraction. (Hymes [1991:156-58] indicates what the content and context suggest was intended.)

(3) The third example involves recognition of conventions of patterning that had been missed. In the final act, the published text has the following five lines (published, of course, as prose):

> Now snow, lightly, lightly.
> There is no food among the people,
> the people are hungry.
> Now then the people said,
> "Let us go to the boy."

That is a reasonable sequence. The field notebook, however, shows that for publication Sapir changed the order of the lines. If the order in the notebook is identified as *abcde*, then the printed lines are in the order *ecdab*. The change appears to be an interpretation. The field notebook shows no insertions. What it does show are carets and parentheses. These indicate transposition in two steps. This fact, and the fact that the translation remains continuous in the original order, suggest a result of editorial attention, not of interaction with a narrator.[13]

When the relevant lines are considered in the order in which they were written down, and presumably spoken, they lead to reconsideration of the organization of the act as a whole. One gains a richer sense of the ways in which initial particles are used, of their motivation and consistency, a

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consonant followed by ' is glottalized.

[13] See Hymes 1981:161 for details.

further confirmation of "traditional referentiality" and the premise that "poetic meaning depends fundamentally on poetic structure" (Foley 1991:6, 14).

Here is the notebook order:

> Now then the people said,
>   "Let us go to the boy."
> There is no food among the people,
> the people are hungry.
>   Now snow, lightly, lightly.

Notice that the published order puts the last line at the beginning. This may be because it has initial "now." A single initial "now" (*aGa*) is sometimes used by Louis Simpson. Indeed it is used in each act of this narrative, but the circumstances are different and revealing.

(a) The last line (30) of the first act is "Now, no people." That sums up the outcome of the desertion of the act, and the condition of the act to follow. (This "now," however, does not mark a new verse. It does not begin a predication, but completes one. See note 18 below).

(b) The first scene of the second act ends with lines each beginning with a single "now," two of them. These lines conclude the fifth of a strict sequence of verses. The boy fishes five times. Four times we are told that he has caught one (two, three, four) fish, eaten half of what he has caught, and saved half for the morning. The first time begins with "Now then," the four that follow with "Now again." The fifth time we are not told what he has caught; rather:

> "Now five times the boy had fished.
> Now he had become a grown man."

A sequence of five is a standard pattern that arouses expectation of completion, but the expected completion—what he has caught—is held over for a scene of its own, an extravaganza in which the boy, discovering that a being in the river has given him, not fish, but prepared winter food, sings and waves a feathered cloak. Three of the verses indeed begin with the emphatic particle *quStíaxa* "behold! indeed!"

The lines at the end of the fishing scene sum up what has occurred (he has fished five times), and what will be the condition of what follows (he has become a grown man).

(c) The third scene of the second act ends with five lines (116-20) that each begin with a single "now." Lacking a following "then," the onward push of the narrative is suspended. There is a moment of lyric unity between the boy and the woman who comes to him. (Such moments for a man and woman occur, variously marked, in a Clackamas narrative from Virginia Howard and one Kathlamet from Charles Cultee). The lines culminate and sum up the reward of what the boy has done (food, a wife, power). The food and power are a condition of what is to follow. (In Victoria Howard's Clackamas version, so is the wife).

(d) The last line (167) of the story is "Now only the two old women remained." It sums up the outcome of revenge.

(e) In the notebook order of the five lines in question, "Now snow, lightly, lightly" occurs at the end of a stanza (III (B)). It does not sum up a state of affairs, but it anticipates what is to follow. Perhaps in this respect it complements the other instance in Act III. The uses of a single "Now" at the end of a unit in Act I (31) and Act II (78, 79; 116-20) both sum up and anticipate. In Act II one anticipates (31), the other sums up (167).

Another pattern intersects this one. There are three mentions of "snow" in the narrative. In each of the others "snow" is the third element in a sequence of three lines.

> Then now he raised the east wind,
>   the east wind became strong,
>   and it snowed
> Now again he treated them this way,
>   a strong east wind blew,
>   moreover now there was snow.[14]

It seems reasonable to take the first mention of "snow" as participating in that pattern. The people who abandoned the boy twice drown in the midst of wind and snow. Here the condition of that outcome, snow, has begun.

(4) *Couplets: Act III*. Notice that the two lines preceding the first mention of snow (141-42) are odd in terms of Chinookan patterns of verse marking. What precedes is marked as a verse by initial "Now then" and a turn at talk (139-40). What follows is marked as a verse by initial "Now."

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[14] Lines 152-55, and 162-64. Line 153 is an English explanation that is not part of the narrative proper.

What intervenes has no initial particle, no turn at talk, yet it seems to have the position of a verse.

One might think of the lines "There is no food among the people, / the people are hungry" as part of a preceding verse, "Now then the people said, / 'Let us go to the boy'." But Chinookan quoted speech always is the end of the verse of which it is a part. If the two lines in question are to be a verse, they ought to begin with a marker. Instead they begin, literally "No-thing food people-at."

It has taken me twenty years to notice that the two lines are a couplet, a semantic couplet. Each says much the same thing:

> There is no food among the people,
>   the people are hungry.

With this recognition it was a matter of a moment to consider two other lines about people as a couplet as well:

> All died in the water,
>   the people were drowned. (156-57).

So to consider these lines was to provide an answer to longstanding dissatisfaction with the form of the act. The way I had published it, after much wrestling, had never seemed quite right, and I had tinkered with it in the interval. Lines that should be structurally parallel were not. Now they could be. Indeed, now the recognition of lines 156-57 as a couplet, *and thereby a single unit*, seems inescapable.

The context is this. Line 144 is strongly marked as an onset, beginning as it does with three particles in a row, "Now then again...." A few lines later "Then now" is strongly marked as an onset, as an inversion of the usual sequence, "Now then." If each is the beginning of a stanza, then each also ends in parallel fashion. At the end of each the boy recalls of the people, "they abandoned me." Such coming round to the same point is an important device in the tradition. These two sets of lines, then, make perfect sense as stanzas, with strongly marked beginnings, parallel endings essential to the theme, series of verses, five and three, fulfilling a pattern number—if and only if "All died in the water, / the people were drowned,"

the "people couplet" in the second of the two (156-57), is a structural element.

As with the preceding couplet, these lines express a common theme in varied form, and stand apart from what precedes and follows. What follows counts as a separate verse because it is a turn at talk (and thematically parallel with the ending of the preceding stanza). What precedes is itself formed on a model repeated in the stanza that follows: he did this, a strong east wind, snow (162-64). (I set the lines apart in the earlier analysis, but did not reach the point of counting them as a verse).

Act III, then, has three instances of a three-step sequence ending with snow, and three instances of a psalm-like pair of lines involving people (141-42, 156-57, 165-66). Recognition of these patterns makes possible a coherent, pointed shape for the act as a whole.[15]

As said, I missed this shape in my published article on the story. (To be sure, it was one of the first texts I analyzed in terms of verse patterning). To discover the original order of the lines involving "Now snow," as I had done, was not enough. I was not intimate enough with Louis Simpson's style, not sure enough of its constants and those of other Chinookan narrators. Not recognizing the structural role of these two patterns (a triad ending with snow, couplets), I could not reconcile the different kinds of repetition and marking in the act with an overall expectation of three- and five-step sequences.[16]

Now a clear working out of implicit narrative logic, explicitly marked, can be seen. The first five verses form a stanza with interlocking. The third verse, the grandmothers crossing to the boy, is outcome of the preceding two, and onset of the two that follow. The next verses can be seen as a sequence of three pairs of verses. Such sequences are common enough in Chinookan narrative. The implicit rhythm of expectation within each pair is "this, then that." The first pair of verses (131-32, 133) have to do with the two old women: they go across, they are there a long time. The second pair (134-38, 139-40) have to do with the news and what is said: there is much food at the boy's, let us go across. The third pair juxtapose

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[15] For all the features of the act, please see the appendix, which replaces the text presented in Hymes 1976 and 1981:ch. 4.

[16] See Hymes 1981:159-64, for the earlier consideration. These pages and others cited above are captioned "Structural philology (a)" and "Structural philology (b)".

the couplet: the people are hungry, and now there is snow. A rhythm of "this, then that" joins irresistible motivation (no food) to incipient danger.[17]

The third stanza is the peripety: the grandmothers come, they get close to the boy's house, other people start across. The boy turns, looks, sees. Doing so, he echoes the triplet in which he discovered the fire his grandmothers left him, and remembers his abandonment. By implication, he resolves how to act.

This memory is doubled (stanzas C, D), and so is the drowning of the people (D, E). All this is part of an interlocking relation among the five stanzas. The first two stanzas (A, B) have the presence of food at the boy's discovered. The last two stanzas (D, E) have the people who come for it destroyed. The middle stanza (C) has the people start across and the boy resolve. That is the outcome of one three-step sequence (discovery, wider discovery, confrontation) and the onset of another (confrontation, outcome, further outcome).

The texture of the scene includes other three-part relations as well. The grandmothers cross three times (A, B, C). Snow comes three times (B, D, E). There are three couplets about the people (B, D, E). Each of the last three stanzas (C, D, E) actually ends with the theme of the abandonment, two with memory of those who did abandon, the third with the safety of the grandmothers who did not.

(5) *Couplets: Act I, II.* Such couplets occur in each act. In Act I they have to do with the people's abandonment of the boy:

> straight across they ran,
> straight across they went (18-19)

> not a person on this side,
> all on that side (20-21).[18]

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[17] It is possible to take the stanza as five interlocking verses, since the first three verses make sense as a three-step progression of onset, ongoing, outcome (with traditional reference to other versions in which how the news gets out is spelled out). The third step, becoming news, might in turn be the onset of another three-step progression (there is food at the boy's, let us go, now snow). But that would ignore the lines of the couplet, which have no normal place in any of the five verses.

[18] Lines 30-31 "he arrived running: / Now, no people" might seem a couplet from the standpoint of counting lines. To take it as a unit would give the stanza three elements. What we have here, however, is the conjunction of two other narrative patterns: the first

The parallelism of the lines was readily seen and expressed from the start, and the organization of the act is not affected by counting the pairs as single units.

In Act II, on the other hand, the recognition of couplets forces recognition of relations that had been ignored. The fifth stanza of the first scene is clearly strictly patterned in terms of going to fish five times, so much so that presenting it as just that seemed obvious. But if the last two lines are a couplet, and hence a unit with the status of a verse, matters are different. If lines 77 and 78-79 are a pair of verses, what precedes them does not fit in a consistent pattern with them, unless also consisting of pairs. And of course it does.

In any other narrative sequence of successive days, the occurrence of "morning," let alone "again morning," that is, of initial markers for recurrence and a new point in time, would have automatically been seen as marking a new verse. Here the obvious sequence of five days induced a false security, and the lines about eating the next day were tucked in with the catching. Five days, five verses.

Now it is evident that the stanza is expressively elaborated with not five verses, but five pairs of verses. The first four pairs have fishing one morning and eating the remaining half the next. The fifth pair has going the fifth time, and a dramatic change of perspective in a concluding couplet, the sudden disclosure that all along the boy had been achieving adulthood (78-79).

I know no other instance of such narrative couplets in the region. Such may be found, but at present it is impossible to think in terms of diffusion. Perhaps the couplets are an indigenous development of the pairing that is widespread in the three- and five part-patterns of the region, often to highlight a focus of action. They can be seen as an intensification of it. I have no hypothesis as to why they occur only here in what is known of Louis Simpson's narratives. They may be a sign of how much it meant to him to etch with decisive strokes, as a triumphant guardian spirit quest, the story of an abandoned boy.

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three lines are an example of the common three-step pattern of action (onset, ongoing, outcome): he started home, he followed behind, he arrived running. The third and fourth lines are an example of an action coupled with an object of perception: he arrived running; now, no people.

Significance of what is missing: Salmon's Myth

Manuscripts may show a published text to be missing a line or two, and restoration of the missing line(s) may show the structure of the narrative to be different (cf. Hymes 1985:406-7, Hymes 1994b). In one case missing lines reinforce interpretation by the fact of being missing where they are.

In the last decade of the last century Franz Boas searched for speakers of the Chinookan languages spoken near the mouth of the Columbia River. He found Charles Cultee, with whom he intended to stay a day or two, but whose intelligence and ability caused him to return several times. Cultee was the only person from whom Boas could obtain connected texts in either Kathlamet or Chinook proper (which I call "Shoawalter" to distinguish it). Wanting to check the accuracy of Cultee's command of Kathlamet, Boas asked him in 1894 to tell again two stories he had told in 1891. With one, "War of the Ghosts," he got a variant about people on the other side of the river. With the "Salmon's myth," he got a version elaborated in the service of a theme.

Both versions have two parts. In one Salmon returns up river in spring, and is hailed five times by plants along the bank. They insult him and assert that (in his winter absence) the people would have starved if not for them:

"At last my brother's son arrives,
            the one with maggots in his buttocks.
"If I were not a person,
            your people would have died."

Salmon shows no offense, but recognizes each plant as an aunt or uncle, gives it a gift, and places it where it will be in times to come.

In the second part Salmon and his company meet three people coming down the river toward them. They claim to have gone all the way upriver to the Cascades and be returning in a day. The leading person is a woman. Her spokesman implies the truth of the claim by speaking the upriver language, Wasco, and naming in Wasco (untranslated) a major woman's food, *camas*. Salmon takes umbrage at these, twists their necks, and denies their claim. It will take five days to reach the Cascades.

In this 1891 telling the first part begins somewhat leisurely; several lines explain the situation. The second part begins dramatically, with Salmon issuing directions three times in succession, and using ironic questions. It is accomplished in five stanzas, one scene. In the 1894 telling it is the second part that begins somewhat leisurely, as Salmon's company move on upriver. The verses are ordinary threes and fives; no dramatic pairs of Salmon's behests and responses to them, no ironic questions but questions in the passive at first ("they were asked"). There are three scenes, not one.[19] A second section deals with the three who have come downriver: Salmon pronounces what they will be. And the order in which they are dealt with is reversed, so that the last one is Flounder, whom Salmon tells to remain in the river in the winter.

Salmon is a contested figure in terms of gender. In other narratives he is shown as proud and peremptory with women. Victoria Howard transforms and ultimately excludes Salmon from a version of this very story (Hymes 1986). Here he is made to acknowledge the importance of women's food (plants) to the survival of the people. One can see his behavior in the second part as a result of suppressed anger at the insults he must suffer silently in the first part. In the 1891 telling the anger is overt. In the 1894 telling it is not. Evidently the reason is the further ending. By having Flounder be year round in the river, Salmon forever undercuts the claim of the plants to be the only winter source of food.

The field notebook makes a minor difference to the number of lines in the 1894 telling (one notebook line appears to have been missed in the printed text). What is telling for interpretation is the fact that each time Cultee skipped a line in the scene just before the second part. In the first telling he went right on. In the second telling, so the notebook shows, he remembered the omission and inserted it a moment later. What Cultee did is invisible in the printed text, because in editing Boas put the remembered line where it should have been.

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[19] The relations given in Hymes 1985 should be revised as follows:

[i] [Encounter]	(A)92, 93-94, 95
[ii] [Colloquy]	(A)(abc) 95-99, 100-1, 102
	(B)(abc) 103, 104, 105-9
	(C)(abc) (110-11, 112-17, 118-23)
[iii] [Outcomes]	(A)[Twisted] (abc) 124-26, 127-29, 130-31
	(B)[Pronouncement] (a) 132-34
	(C)[Thrown] (abc) 135, 136-38, 139-43

The notebook indicates that Cultee was quick to get to the second part in 1891, but not in a hurry in 1894. In both tellings, one can infer, he wanted the second part to offset the humiliation of Salmon in the first. In 1891 he hurried to the part in which Salmon can be in command, and dramatized that commanding role (a marked pattern of verses, ironic questions), letting go a line along the way. In 1894 he did not hurry, but paused to restore an omitted line; nor did he mark the new part expressively. He had Flounder up his sleeve.

The two tellings convey a common concern on Cultee's part. The notebooks underscore it. Differences in response to a slip in performance covary with different ways of accomplishing a purpose.

Editing and Value

Discovering Cultee's handling of omissions, discovering Louis Simpson's ordering of lines, are examples of recovering intention (cf. Gorman 1989:194, discussing Parker 1984). One is concerned with what the narrator actually said, with authenticity. That has been a primary value for many.

In these cases the recovered intention supports a form of the text that has greater aesthetic value, if, as I believe is the case, there is aesthetic value in the shape the narrators have given what they say. But what gives value is not always obvious or agreed upon. Folklorists sometimes conflate versions, choosing what appears a better passage or wording from each (eclectic editing). If each version has its own shape, however, the result may be a mixture partly without shape. Suppression of a line may suppress indication of a verse; addition may add one. Either may distort a local configuration and produce puzzling irregularity. From the standpoint of verse analysis, such a practice is to be shunned.

To be sure, a particular performance may be both authentic and inferior. Here is where a value other than aesthetic enters. Verse analysis is analysis of language, and contributes to linguistics as well as to folklore, anthropology, and literature. Noam Chomsky has led many linguists to consider it their concern, at least in principle, to analyze, through language, the abilities that underlie it, competence. For abilities in a broad sense, beyond grammar, the term *communicative competence* has been adopted by

many (cf. Hymes 1974, 1984). Imperfect narrations may shed light on the competence that underlies narrative, on how it works.

Even with splendid narrations, aesthetic value and analysis can easily be at odds. Being unfamiliar with the conventions of another tradition, or unconscious of effects deployed in our own language, we may need to have what goes on called to our attention, pointed out, in order to see it. Where alternative interpretations of form are possible, the alternatives must be shown in order to be discussed. If analysis is to contribute to understanding of competence, it must be explicit. For all these reasons, narratives must be presented in a format that makes their analysis recoverable and clear.

I call this "showing the bones of the narrative." There is analogy to an edition of *Gilgamesh* that presents precisely what is there on a certain set of tablets, as distinct from a translation that presents a continuously readable story (cf. Kovacs 1989, Sandars 1972). In some cases, it is clear that one is displaying relationships that, though marked, are not salient in the flow of words, what might be called the "flesh" (see Hymes 1994c).

At this stage of our knowledge of many traditions, such as those of Native Americans, "showing the bones" is required. When what is there is not yet publicly known, it must be presented first. After that, surrogates of all kinds, retellings, imitations, dramatizations can proceed. But bones come first. To do otherwise would be to regard Pope's *Iliad* as Homer, Lamb's *Tales* as Shakespeare, and Bible stories for children as Genesis, Job, and the Gospel according to John.[20]

Recovery of the Old

This concern is linked to the notion of *repatriation*. The notion has come to the fore in connection with the recovery of burials and other objects taken from Native American communities. There is a textual parallel. For many Native American communities, texts in the traditional languages are no longer told. What remains is what has been written down. Important as it is that Native Americans speak for themselves, texts do not. The relations of form and meaning explored by verse analysis are like other

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[20] These considerations are an instance of the general issue raised by McGann (1983), that of the need to locate editing and literary production in their particular social nexus. Cf. Gorman 1989:194ff.

relations of form and meaning in language. Mostly we are not aware of them. Analysis is necessary to make them explicit. It is a kind of repatriation, then, for those of us fortunate enough to be able to do so to help recover in older texts their lineaments of shaping artistry.

This may go against the grain of a focus on performance and theory of a certain kind. When I spoke about such work some years ago at the Smithsonian, using a text from a now extinct language of Oregon, someone asked why work with such (limited) materials, why not work with materials in which one can hear and see the performance? The short answer is that I am from Oregon. It matters to me, and to people I know, to recognize the value of what textual record there is. From this standpoint, recovery of the old as such matters. A few scholars are pursuing this kind of work. Let me illustrate its value with a few examples.

Multilingual source? About a century ago Franz Boas recorded some stories from the now extinct Salish people known as Pentlatch. Some exist now in manuscript in Pentlatch, some in published translations in German, but not all in both. It is likely that some narrations in Chinook Jargon were translated directly into German. In any case, Kinkade (1992) is able to clarify the relation between the two kinds of source, comparing a manuscript text in Pentlatch and its published German translation with the help of verse analysis.

Recovering verbal play. Berman (1992) provides a notable example of recovering the value of a text. She notes that it is not the original texts in Kwakw'ala ("Kwakiutl"), but Boas' translations of them, that have become the primary source for generations of scholars. Berman observes (157):

> Lévi-Strauss to the contrary, the meaning of a myth lies within the narrator's use of language, not outside it. Boas knew this, which is why he left us eleven volumes of Kwakw'ala texts. If Boas' translations to those texts are unreliable, I believe it is at least in part because he did not intend for them to be relied on. For Boas, the texts were in and of themselves the end products of ethnography, and the translations a necessary evil, an aid to those without fluency in Kwakw'ala.

Berman herself commands the language, and sources scattered over a number of years, so that she is able to reconstruct choices that Boas made, not only in translation, but also in composing a dictionary. She is able to

show that a text is couched in verbal play that escaped Boas and that has escaped everyone since.[21]

There is in general a need for anthropologists and folklorists to understand their field as philology—to return to manuscript sources, to discover what has been excluded, rearranged, normalized, misunderstood (cf. Foley 1992:276, 290). What can be known can be expanded in the archive as well as in the field.

Performance register (1). The manuscript sources of Boas' two volumes of Chinookan texts (Boas 1894, 1901) show an allegro style of dictation. Boas appears to have normalized elisions and published full forms. The easy style suggests that the narrator, Cultee, was not much affected by the process of dictation, and that something of a relatively spoken style can be recovered. That is the good news. The bad news is that the published texts can not be confidently relied upon until the uncorrected originals are studied. The sources of some titles and incidents, published in the language by Boas, have not yet been located in the notebooks. (There are also many supplementary verbal forms, never published, which I did not learn about until I had written a dissertation grammar on the basis of the published material alone).

Performance register (2). Even with narratives told in English, the English style of the narrator has probably been revised. Here is one scene from a narrative in Tillamook Salish which has attracted attention.[22] There are four stanzas, separated by space. Verses begin flush left. Closing

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[21] Berman does not actually indicate the verses in the text, only the two parts to each stanza. Verses can be recognized in terms of the initial element *lál'ai* "then" (pp. 130, 131-32) and turns at talk. Stanza (A) has two verbs of saying in its first part, "Then" twice initially in its second part. Stanza (B) appears to be marked by having four framing verbs of speaking, the first of each pair with initial "Then," but then a third initial *lál'ai* and a fifth framing verb (of singing). These lines (14-17) are the peripety and the only song. Stanzas (C) and (D) resume even-numbered patterning. (C) has initial "Then" and a turn at talk with a verb of saying, while (D) has twice initial "Then."

Carrying through the verse analysis, and showing it in translation, (as Berman does in other work) brings out the special status of stanza (C). The peripety is marked in form against the background of the rest.

[22] E. Jacobs 1990, with an appendix for this story by myself; the analysis into verses is slightly revised here. Cf. Hymes 1993b and Seaburg 1992. I am indebted to Seaburg for the notebook original.

braces indicate pairs of verses that go together in a pattern of three such
pairs.

> Later on his sister said to him,
> > "You are getting grown now,
> > you should hunt a woman for yourself.
> > You are old enough to get married.
> > Any old thing, a dead person, is perhaps better than no wife at all."
> "Huh! I can do that all right, sister."
> He went to look for a wife.
>
> He returned late at night.
> His sister was already in bed
> > and did not see him.
> Presently she heard him say,
> > "Oh! My wife is sticking me with her scratcher."
> His sister thought,
> > "Why, he must have a maiden bathing after her first menstruation."
>
> Daylight came.
> > The sister arose
> > >   and built the fire.
> > Split-His-Own-Head got up,
> > >   he had no wife.
> "Where is your wife?"
> > his sister asked.   }
> "In bed."
> "Is she not going to get up?"   }
> He told her,
> > "No. You told me to obtain a dead person for a wife.
> >   That is a dead woman I went and got."
> She said to him,
> > "Now you take that dead body
> >   and put it right back where you found it."   }
>
> He took it back.

Here are the words in the field notebook (in verse analysis):

> Next, she told him,
> > "You're getting big enough now,
> > you can hunt yourself a woman,
> > you can get married.

    Any old thing, a dead person.”
“Huh, I can do that, all right, sister.”
He went to look for a wife.

He came back in the night.
   His sister was already in bed,
     and didn’t see him come.
Presently she heard him say,
   “Oh! My wife is sticking me with her scratcher.”
His sister thought,
   “Oh he must have found a maiden
     just bathing after her first mensis.”

Daylight came.
   The sister arose
     and built the fire.
   He got up,
     he had no wife.
“Where’s your wife?”   }
“In bed.”
“Isn’t she going to get up?”   }
“No, you told me to get a dead person for a wife.
   That’s a dead woman I went and got.”
“Oh you take that dead body
   and go put it back where you got it.”   }

   Most changes are the sort a teacher would make to dress up spoken style for appearance in print: eliminate contractions, substitute “returned” for “came back,” “obtain” and “found” for “get” and “got.” The expansions in the fourth and fifth lines, like substitution of proper name for pronoun in the third stanza, are evidently to make sure the reader does not miss the point. A third kind of change, found in another scene, eliminates direct naming of body parts and functions. Such changes are probably widespread in what one is invited to read as a native voice: written norms, explanations, propriety. But unedited wording has more the flavor of a told story, and sometimes shows a different number of lines and local shape.

   Order of narration. Presumably fundamentalists and higher critics alike recognize that the order in which Paul’s letters appear in the New Testament is not an order he gave them, or the order in which they were written, but editorially determined by length, longest first, shortest last. Students of Native American collections may forget that the order in which

myths and tales appear is not likely to be the order in which they were told, and that inferences based on the published sequence are suspect. Recovering actual order can indicate something about style and interaction.

The order in which Victoria Howard dictated Clackamas texts to Melville Jacobs in 1929 and 1930 indicates two ways in which her style changed.[23] On the one hand, the earliest recorded narratives show a great deal of pairing of verses marked initially by "now" (*aGa*). That drops out to be replaced in favor of far less pairing and far less explicit marking of verses by any initial element. On the other hand, it is only a certain distance into the relationship that she begins to end a narrative with the formal close "Story, story" (*k'áni k'áni*). The first change seems to indicate that she was used to a style in which two- and four-part relations were very prominent, a style not otherwise known in Chinookan, and which she may have experienced in hearing Molale (which she knew) or some other language at multilingual Grande Ronde reservation, where she was born and grew up. The second change seems to reflect a growing confidence in her narratives as complete. (Various comments show awareness of some narratives as incomplete.) Both changes may reflect also a growing ease in her relationship with Melville Jacobs.[24]

Coos Bay: Repeated tellings. Let me end with a few lines from an obscure manuscript that are for me a sign of grace. I have been working on a collection to make visible to others the pervasiveness there of this kind of poetic structure in the words of Native Americans of the Northwest, and hit upon the title, "River Poets of Native Oregon." Two years ago, just as my wife and I were setting out for the coast of Oregon, we picked up a forwarded letter from a man we did not know. He was director of cultural heritage for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Siuslaw, and Lower Umpqua Indians, he knew we had visited such people many years before (the first summer of our marriage in fact), experience had taught him that linguists did not answer his letters, but how about it? We went, and found that he had patiently assembled every known bit of documentation of the

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[23] See M. Jacobs 1958, 1959 and the footnotes therein.

[24] The order of the published *Wishram Texts* (Sapir 1909) is not identical with the order of the notebooks. The Coyote cycle is interrupted by part of the Salmon Myth, and the moving observation printed at the end of the cycle does not occur there in the notebook. In *Clackamas Chinook Texts* the last section of a myth important for its performance sequence (Hymes 1986) is taken from a separate comment on a different notebook page.

languages, cultures, and histories of these people (including an old letter of mine). In the course of collaboration last summer he sent me a xerox of the field notes of Harry Hull St. Clair, 2d, who in 1903 had recorded texts in Coos that had later been published by another Boas associate who had worked with the same man (Frachtenberg 1913).

Scrutiny of the manuscript discloses that it contains two unpublished texts. Each is an earlier version of a text that was published. St. Clair recorded two versions of a text entitled "The Country of the Souls," and Frachtenberg published the second (1913:no. 23). St. Clair recorded a version of "The Ascent to Heaven," but Frachtenberg obtained a fuller version and published that (1913:no. 3). The unpublished versions have details not present in the versions published. As in many cases, so little of Coos tradition is known to us that details are precious. And in these cases there is the opportunity to compare tellings (performances) by the same narrator.[25] The opportunity has remained unknown throughout most of the century, and comes to light now through the efforts of a man of Coos descent who has made himself a scholar.

Coos Bay: River Poets of Native Oregon. But the special serendipity has to do with a notebook page preceding the narratives. On page 25, numbered lines 8-12, St. Clair wrote down a few sentences that seem to have been volunteered by Jim Buchanan, perhaps elaborating in answer to a question. The sentences are eight in number, and group in sets of four (as one would expect in Coos oral narrative). They seem a perfect epigraph for a collection conceived as representing river poets of native Oregon.[26]

> That's the only way they've been talking.
> > They didn't come from any place.
> That was their only place.
> > They didn't know where they came from.
>
> Every stream has people on it.
> > That's how they all had a stream.

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[25] Sapir's field notebooks for Wishram Chinook contain an unpublished version from the same narrator, Louis Simpson, of the first published myth. The degree to which there is something like formulaic recurrence could be established.

[26] Buchanan spoke in Coos and then provided a translation, written down by St. Clair word by word below the Coos. The last words of line 3 and line 8 are the same in Coos, "their land, earth, country, ground, place."

That's the way they know themselves.
  All other tribes had their stream as their land.[27]

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APPENDIX

THE DESERTED BOY[*]

                                        [I] [The People and the Boy]

Now then they told a boy,   (A)
    "Now let us go for reeds."
        Long ago the boy was mean.
Now then they said,
    "Now you will take him for reeds."   5
Now then they told them,
    "You shall abandon him there."

Now then the people all went across the river,   (B)
    they went on,
        they came to the reeds.   10
Now then they cut them off.
Now then they said,
    "If the boy should say,
        'Are you there?',
   you shall answer,   15
        'Uu'."

Now then they ran off,   (C)
    straight home they ran,
    straight across they went,
        not a person on this side,   20
        all on that side.

Now then the boy, too, said,   (D)
    "Now let's go home."
"Uu,"

---

[*]Wishram words:
16   A repeated vowel symbol shows prolongation.
34   The sound of the fire is phonetically a glottalized voiceless lateral affricate; that is, t plus voiceless 1 plus glottal stop.
81   The name of a delicacy, a mixture of dried salmon and mashed huckleberries, has a- (feminine gender), ts, glottal stop, schwa (as in English "but"), and p.
96   A repeated vowel symbol shows prolongation.
110   The woman is the daughter of the spirit power who lives beneath a whirlpool. His name has i- (masculine gender), ch, glottal stop, schwa, palatal voiceless fricative (as in German *Ich*), and i, a, n.

           went the reeds.   25
In *vain* he searched about:
           no person.

Now then he too started home,   (E)
           he too followed behind them;
                     he arrived running: 30
                     now, no people.

                                                 [II] [The Boy, Deserted]
                                                   [i] [He survives]

Now then the boy wept.   (A)
Now then he heard,
           "TL' TL' TL' ."
Now then he turned his eyes,   35
           he looked,
                     he dried his tears.

Now then he saw a *very* little bit of flame in a shell.   (B)
Now then he took that very same flame.
Now then he built up a fire.   40

Now again he saw fiber,   (C)
           again a little bit of it,
                     straightway he took it.
Now again he went to the cache,
           he saw five wild potatoes.   45
Now then he thought:
           "My poor father's mother saved me potatoes,
                     and fire was saved for me by my father's mother,
                           and my mother's mother saved me fiber."

Now then the boy made a small fish-line,   (D)   50
           and he made snares with string;
                     he set a trap for magpies.
Now then he caught them.
Then he made a small cloak with magpie's skin.
           He just put it nicely around himself.   55
Again he lay down to sleep,
Again he just wrapped himself nicely in it.

Now then he fishes with hook and line;   (E) (ab)

      he caught one sucker,
          half he ate,   60
             half he saves.
Again, morning, he ate half.   }

Now again he fishes,   (cd)
      he caught two,
          one he ate,   65
             one he saved.
Again, morning, he ate one.   }

Now again in the morning he fishes,   (ef)
      he caught three suckers,
          he ate one and a half.   70
Again, morning, he ate one and a half.

Now again he went to fish,   (gh)
      he caught four suckers,
          two he ate,
             two he saved.   75
Morning, now he ate all two.   }

Now again he goes to fish for the fifth time.   (ij)
      Now the boy had fished five times.
      Now he had become a grown man.   }

                                  [ii] [He sings]
Now then he examined his fish-line.   (A)   80
Indeed, *ats'E´pts'Ep* fills to the brim a cooking-trough.
      He stood it up on the ground.
Now then the boy sang.
Now then all the people watched him.
Now then they said: 85
      "What has he become?"

Indeed! he became glad,   (B)
      he had caught *ats´E'pts'Ep.*
Thus he sang:
      "Atséee, atséee,   90
          "Ah, it waves freely over me,
             "Ah, my feathered cloak."
      "Atséee, atséee,
          "Ah, it waves freely over me,

     "Ah, my feathered cloak."   95
   "Atséee, atséee,
     "Ah, it waves freely over me,
       "Ah, my feathered cloak."
Indeed! ICE´xian's daughter had given him food.

Now then the boy had camped over four times;   (C) 100
   he camped over a fifth time.
Now then he awoke,
   a woman was sleeping with him,
   a very beautiful woman:
     her hair was long,   105
     and bracelets right up to her on her arms,
     and her fingers were full of rings,
   and he saw a house all painted inside with designs,
   and he saw a mountain-sheep blanket covering him, both him and his wife.
Indeed! ICE´xian's very daughter had given him food,   110
     and plenty of Chinook salmon,
     and sturgeon,
     and blueback salmon,
     and eels,
     plenty of everything she had brought.   115

          [iii] [The two are together]
Now he married her.
   Now the woman made food.
     Now, morning, it became daylight.
       Now the two stayed together quietly that day.
        Now the two stayed together a long time. 120

         [III] [The boy and the people]
Now then it became spring.   (A)
Now then the people found out.
Now then his father's mother and his mother's mother went straight to his house.
Now then he thought:
   "The two old women are poor.   125
   "My father's mother and my mother's mother took pity on me in this way."
Now then he fed them,
   he gave the two old women Chinook salmon
     and he gave them sturgeon.

Now then the two old women started home,   (B)   130
    they went across.
A long time they were there.   }

Now then it became news,
    they said,
        "Oh! there is much salmon at the boy's,   135
         and much sturgeon,
        and eels,
        and blueback salmon."
Now then the people said,
    "Let us go to the boy."   }   140

There is no food among the people,
    the people are hungry.
Now snow, lightly, lightly.   }

Now then again first went his father's mother, his mother's mother.   (C)
Now then they were close to the house.   145
Now then a great many people went across toward the boy.
Now then the boy turned,
    he looked,
        he saw many people coming across in a canoe.
Now then he thought: 150
    "It was not good the way they abandoned me."

 Then now he raised the east wind   (D)
    (there became a Walla Walla wind),
    the east wind became strong,
        and it snowed.   155
All died in the water,
    the people were drowned.
With a bad mind the boy thought:
    "This is the way they treated me,
    they abandoned me."   160

Now again others went across.   (E)
Now again he treated them this way,
    a strong east wind blew,
        moreover now there was snow.
Now again they died,   165
    twice the people died.
Now only the two old women remained.
    Thus the ways.

Homer's Style:
Nonformulaic Features of an Oral Aesthetic

Joseph Russo

From Oral to Aural and Back Again

In the Homeric epics we have a text created within a highly traditional diction, a special poetic language, for performance before a large public situated entirely within that tradition. We do not have poetic language in our modern sense, that carefully honed personal and private idiom meant for the eye and (to a lesser extent) the ear of a small number of connoisseurs. Therefore those who make up Homer's modern audience need to know if there is a certain ideal way to hear, or read, and respond to certain stylistic habits of his that our experience of modern literature has not prepared us to understand very well. That is Question One, and the important one to answer if we are interested in experiencing Homeric poetry in its full complexity and idiomatic richness.

Are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* genuine oral compositions? That is Question Two, which I believe it is not, and may never be, possible to answer with absolute certainty. For all the disagreement and verbal combat over this issue—from Parry's earliest critics in the1930's to the pages of the *New York Review of Books* from March 5 to June 25, 1992—the fact is that recovering the exact genesis or *technique* of Homer's composition will always be beyond us. Therefore knowing exactly how he composed, just how much of his verse came from improvisation while performing and how much from prior memorization, and whether the newly available skill of writing was used to any degree, should be less important to us than appreciation of the distinctive and sometimes almost odd rhetoric found throughout his poetry, and of an underlying aesthetic that can make sense of both the distinctiveness and the oddness. Almost twenty years ago, at a comparatists' conference on Oral Literature and the Formula (Stolz and Shannon 1976), I suggested we shift from emphasis on *oral* to *aural* style

in an attempt to pursue the aesthetics of this style rather than its genesis. While it is still theoretically possible to doubt that Homer is an oral poet,[1] it remains beyond doubt that he is "aural" in that he composes in a style guided by the ear and meant to be heard, a style that pleases through verbal play based on an aesthetic of repetition and variation, and of relaxed fullness of expression wherever the context allows it. And yet while not discarding that emphasis on the style itself, I now believe it is fruitful to return to the issue of orality in connection with some salient but non-formulaic features of this style, seeking to understand all of them as counterpart phenomena to formulas per se, and some of them as most likely generated by composition in the act of performance as described by Albert Lord in *The Singer of Tales* (1960).

It is significant and perhaps surprising that none of these features of an oral-derived style has to do with the employment of formulas as such. For decades the definition and analysis of the formula dominated the argument over Homer's orality, but the presence or density of formulas in a text has proved ultimately to be an insufficient basis for arguments in favor of an oral Homer.[2] At this point in the history of Homeric scholarship, our understanding of Homer's technique may be best served by describing certain favorite devices or tropes and explaining their shared aesthetic.[3]

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[1] The safest position is to describe the Homeric texts as "oral-derived." See Foley 1990:5-8 and *passim*; 1991:22.

[2] Smith (1977) offers a classic example of a traditional epic text that is formulaic but not orally (re)composed in the act of performance. For the difficulties in using formula density to prove orality, see Hainsworth 1964, Russo 1976. For the balance between formulaic and nonformulaic language and Homer's freedom to use both, see the important study of Finkelberg 1989.

[3] Of course various studies of this kind have been done before. Edwards (1966) sharpens our awareness of Homer's style by presenting a survey of characteristic devices of word (primarily adjective) position, enjambement, and sentence structure as these are related to colon structure. His overall emphasis is on the many devices of *linkage*, and to the limited extent that his study is aesthetic as well as descriptive, he does well to emphasize "the peculiar smoothness in the progression of thought in Homeric verse" (148), which is also my concern. Occasionally his aesthetic judgement lapses into apology for a mere "filler" that "pads out the verse," a "meaningless grammatical link," and the like (see, e.g., 144-47). Yet these stylistic features embody perfectly the principle of "epic fullness," a term coined by Bassett (1926:134). In an earlier study of devices of linkage between successive speeches, Bassett (1920) illuminated a related aspect of the Homeric aesthetic,

Common Tropes of Extension

The bulk of my paper will be devoted to the description and explication of certain rhetorical tropes that give Homeric style its peculiar flavor, an archaic taste for redundancy and familiarity discreetly seasoned with variation and ornamentation. When, following Parry's epoch-making insight, we sought the key to Homeric oral style in the use of formulas, our concern was to examine style in order to demonstrate the poet's technique for producing verses rapidly in the act of performance. In moving from an emphasis on the *generation* of language to an emphasis on the *aesthetic presentation* of language, I am not abandoning my belief that Homer's style is either oral or orally derived, but moving the focus of investigation to a related question. Why is Homer's style is so uniquely pleasing, and how may the sources of its charm reside in a variety of rhetorical features *distinct from formularity but related to it through a shared aesthetic?*

It is interesting to note that scholarship on Homeric language and compositional technique has often called attention to features that are the opposite of charming and pleasing. Homer's awkward moments and inconsistencies have more recently been regarded benignly as natural products of oral genesis (Janko 1990; Willcock 1977; Gunn 1970, based on Lord's prior demonstrations of composition by theme). But earlier they were viewed as compositional gaucheries that would have been avoided by a writing poet who composed more carefully (Combellack 1965), and still earlier as clear evidence of scribal miscopying or imperfect conflation of multiply authored sections (see almost any page of the editions of Leaf 1900-02, Von der Mühll 1946). I refer to such small-scale features as redundancy, confused syntax and bad grammar, anacoluthon, traditional phraseology awkwardly transferred to new contexts, verses out of place (because of the performer's memory lapse or the copyist's oversight?), awkward or abrupt transitions, and so on. And on the larger scale of theme

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the "principle of continuity," which he pointed out was already well understood a century ago by scholars like Bougot (*Etude sur l'Iliade d'Homère*, 1888) and Zielinski (*Die Behandlung gleichzeitigen Ereignisse im antiken Epos*, 1901), with their principles of "affinity" and "continuous narrative." My study differs from these predecessors in its focus on a range of phenomena perhaps too diverse to have been accorded equally serious attention in previous discussions of Homeric style, and in its attempt to describe these seemingly unrelated phenomena as all emanating from the epic impulse toward expansiveness, which is at the heart of the oral aesthetic.

and plot, comparable phenomena would be the various inconsistencies—from unfulfilled predictions and unreconciled alternatives to outright contradictions—too well known to need repeating here. It is indeed a curious truth that the strongest evidence for Homer as an orally composing poet comes from the existence of these stylistic and narrative infelicities, which seem to suggest not that our text is inartistically composed or the product of layers of authorship, but rather that it is the transcription of a live performance (Janko 1990:328). We shall return to a detailed consideration of some of these "negative" features.

We shall begin, however, with those more "positive" qualities named above, features of style that are *both* orally (or aurally) inspired *and* aesthetically pleasing and successful as narrative devices. Consider three phenomena actively used in the construction of phrases and sentences, which I shall call *appositional, explanatory,* and *metonymic extension.* I suggest that the basic epic trope, what we might call the master trope of traditional epic phrase-making, can be conceived in its simplest essence as Item Plus. I am referring to the wide-ranging impulse toward repetition and expansion that earlier scholarship has identified under a variety of names referring to different but often related phenomena: the "traditional epithet," "hendiadys," the "adding-on style," λέξις εἰρημένη, "parataxis," and so forth, as well as Bassett's principles of "continuity" and "epic fullness" mentioned above (note 3). My own terminology attempts to identify a single aesthetic impulse that issues forth in three varieties of rhetorical expansion. In plain English, appositional extension means item + slightly different aspect of the same, explanatory extension means item + aspect that significantly widens its reference or image, and metonymic extension means item + expansion that serves as a natural bridge to the next (closely related) idea. It is my contention that underlying the various stylistic tropes and the principles named variously by past scholarship as "affinity," "continuity," and "progression," there is one major unifying impulse that shows itself in variety of ways. This is the fundamental impulse toward repetition and fullness.[4]

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[4] What I call appositional extension is essentially the phenomenon well characterized by Monro 1901 in his note on 15.175, the phrase γενεή τε τόκος τε: "the kind of hendiadys formed by two nearly synonymous words," and he compares κραδίη θυμός τε, ὕβρις τε βίη τε, ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς and similar phrases, adding "The two meanings are fused, as it were, into a single more complete conception." While this is true enough, my point is to emphasize the same reality from the opposite side, finding

Let me illustrate this feature of style with an extended passage that renders a dialogue between a Homeric hero and a lesser goddess. At *Odyssey* 4.363-90[5] Menelaos is telling Odysseus' son Telemachus about what he learned from the sea nymph Eidothea. The exchange of sentences and ideas between the hero and the goddess offers no purple patch of rhetoric, no specially climactic exchange of speeches; rather it is typical epic diction at its most representative. Note the many ways in which a word or idea is either repeated or extended, and how certain extensions are tightly bound to the next idea. I have underlined appositional extensions with a solid line, explanatory extensions with a broken line, and metonymic extensions with a dotted line.

And then all provisions would have perished, and the strengths of men,

if someone of the gods hadn't grieved for me and pitied me,

the daughter of strong Proteus the old man of the sea,   365

Eidothea; it was her spirit that I especially stirred,

who met me as I was wandering alone away from my comrades

because they were constantly roaming the island and fishing

with bent hooks, and famine was wearing away their bellies—

but she standing near me spoke a speech and addressed me: 370

You are a fool, stranger, excessively so, and a slack-wit,

or do you willingly dally, and take pleasure in suffering grief?

How long now you are held on this island, and there is no means

you are able to find, and your comrades' heart is shrunken.

So she spoke, and then I in answer replied to her: 375

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significance in the fact that an essentially *single* conception is commonly expressed in *twofold* fashion, in obedience to the epic inclination to fullness and redundancy.

[5] In all Homeric citations I use Arabic numerals for books of the *Odyssey* and Roman numerals for the *Iliad*. All translations are my own.

I shall speak out to you, for all that you are a goddess,

that it is no way willingly I am held here, but rather I must have

given offense to the gods, they who keep wide heaven.

But you now tell to me—the gods are aware of everything—

who of immortals fetters me and binds me from my passage,   380

and the homecoming, how I will make it over the fishy sea?

So I spoke and she answered at once, bright among goddesses:

Now indeed O stranger will I speak to you without guile.

A certain one frequents these parts, the unfailing old man of the sea,

immortal Proteus the Aigyptian, the one who knows   385

the ocean's every depth, Poseidon's underling.

They say he is my father and that he gave birth to me.

If somehow you might be able to lie in ambush and to seize him,

he would be able to tell you the way and the measures of passage

and the homecoming, how you will make it over the fishy sea.   390

In this passage we can see the three categories of extension deployed as natural and graceful functions of epic poetic diction, serving the crucial principal of linkage. The exchange between hero and goddess is unhurried and easygoing in its natural-seeming inclination to say things twice (and occasionally thrice), as if to clarify the presentation of most ideas by re-presenting them in other wording or under another aspect. Some of my distinctions may be disputed—it may not always be clear whether an extension adds a merely appositional or a more explanatory aspect to a basic idea, or whether it moves primarily towards explanation or metonymic connection—yet I remain satisfied that however we draw the distinctions, the overall effect is one of a heavy reliance on doubling and metonymic connection to give the idiom its characteristic epic grace and fullness. The norm is to present ideas and persons with a slight redundancy, and to avoid

the abrupt or unexpected. It is against this normative background that the surprising phrase or thought, when introduced, will strike us with special force.[6]

More Specialized Tropes of Extension

More specialized tropes of extension may be added here by adducing two characteristic phenomena of Homer's style, single word appositional doubling, or glossing, and hysteron-proteron, or prothysteron.

Single word apposition is commonly used throughout the epics to restate the identity of a noun in terms usually more specific (a distinct trope from the more commonly cited doublets based on synonym or hediadys, cf. note 4 above). A complete inventory would be impossible, but representative examples follow. It is apparent that around a centrally important noun like "man," ἀνήρ, epic diction has accumulated something very analogous to a formular system. Since the epic world is less a woman's world, a smaller system exists for the noun γυνή.[7]

men heroes	ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων *Od.* 4x, ἀνδράσι ἡρωέσσι xiii.346
men shepherds	ἄνδρες τε νομῆες
men hunters	ἄνδρες ἐπακτῆρες
men spearmen	ἀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων *Il.* 2x
men shieldbearers	ἀνδρῶν ἀσπιστάων
man bronzesmith	ἀνὴρ χαλκεύς
bronzesmith men	χαλκῆες. . . ἄνδρες
carpenter men	τέκτονες ἄνδρες
leader men	ἡγήτορες ἄνδρες
cowherd men	βούκολοι ἄνδρες
suppliant . . man	ἱκέτεω . . . ἀνδρός *Il.* 2x
king man	βασιλῆι . . . ἀνδρὶ

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[6] The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* prologues offer good illustration of the opposite pole of Homeric style. They show minimal repetition and extension; instead, the sentences move swiftly and almost confusingly in their rapid changeover of subjects and swift piling up of causes and effects. The poet sets out to excite and attract his audience by putting off his redundant, extended, and relaxed manner and making them pay heightened attention to his words.

[7] Book and line citations are given only when significant distinctions might be made between the two epics. The interested reader may consult the Concordances or Ibycus.

doctor man	ἰητρὸς . . . ἀνήρ
human man	βροτῷ ἀνδρὶ
man hunter	ἀνδρὸς θηρητῆρος
Sintian men	Σίντιες ἄνδρες
Arkadian men	Ἄρκαδες ἄνδρες
Thracian men	Θρῆκες . . . ἄνδρες, θρηκῶν ἀνδρῶν *Il.* 3x
Koan men	Κόων . . . ἀνδρῶν
Phoenician men	Φοίνικες . . . ἄνδρες
woman household-manager	γυνὴ ταμίη
woman house-mistress	γυνὴ δέσποινα
woman corn-grinding slave	γυνὴ . . . ἀλετρίς
woman female-day-laborer	γυνὴ χερνῆτις
person(s) wayfarer(s)	ἄνθρωπος ὁδίτης, xvi.263, ὁδιτάων
	ἀνθρώπων 13.123
ox bull	βοῦς . . . ταῦρος
eagle bird	αἰετὸς ὄρνις
birds. . . vultures	ὄρνισιν . . . αἰγυπίοισιν
pig boar	συὶ καπρίῳ, συὶ . . . καπρίῳ *Il.* 2x
falcon hawk	ἴρηξ κίρκος 13.86-87

Since the doubling most often consists of a more narrowly descriptive noun added to a more generic noun, this phrase habit has something in common with the familiar noun-epithet combination so fundamental to epic diction. Both figures embody Item Plus in the form of noun + descriptive word. The similarity is all the more pronounced when the epithet of the combination—Parry's "traditional epithet"— is not an adjective but a noun, a not uncommon occurrence, typically when *nomina agentium* or patronymics are used as modifiers (e.g. Κρονίδης Ζεύς, νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς, ἱππότα Νέστωρ, Πηληιαδέω Ἀχιλῆος, Λαερτιαδέω Ὀδυσσῆος, Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρείδαο, Κυλλήνιος ἀργειφόντης, and so on). What I am proposing, then, is that the trope long familar to us as the epic "noun-epithet combination" be classified as one of several "common tropes of extension" as described above, the epithet bestowing an extension that is always appositional and is explanatory to the extent that it enlarges the idea or image.[8]

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[8] After creating my threefold classification of tropes of extension and expansion, I realized that O'Nolan (1978) had anticipated me in one point. In his "Doublets in the *Odyssey*" he defines doublet as "a combination of two terms that are to all intents synonymous" and equates it with the hendiadys noted by Monro (above, note 4). He then explicitly connects the doublet to the noun-epithet formula as being "twin tool[s]. . . of the

With hysteron-proteron we encounter a more curious type of expression through extension. This is the extension in reverse causal or chronological order of an action through its immediate coupling with another act that must have preceded it. Some of the results would be humorous in their illogic or the impossible images they conjure up, were this trope not such a fundamental piece of archaic Greek language and thought that all scholars of ancient Greek—and we assume *a fortiori* all Greek authors—habitually accept it as normal. What strikes a modern reader as out of sequence according to strict literal or logical criteria, is for an ancient Greek quite proper: the resultant state or final action is named first, *because it is nearer to hand*, and then that which preceded and/or caused it is named second. A far from exhaustive Homeric sampling, largely Odyssean, is as follows. (For the Iliadic examples I am indebted to Macleod 1982.)

4.49-50	When the servants bathed them and rubbed them with oil, then they put cloaks around them and tunics
4.207-8	. . . a man to whom Zeus gives prosperity in his marrying and his being born
4.723	. . . of all women who were reared with me and born with me
5.264	. . . having clothed him with fragrant clothing and having bathed him
10.352-53	One of them spread fine cloths on the armchairs, purple ones over the top, and underneath she spread linens
12.134	And their lady mother rearing them and giving them birth
13.274	I asked them to drop me at Pylos and to take me on board
14.200-1	. . . and many other sons grew up in the palace and were born there
14.279	He [the king] saved me and took pity on me
15.188	there they slept the night and he set guest-gifts for them
16.340-41	. . . when he gave the message

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epic composer's craft," both being "formulae of the *style* of heroic narrative" (22).

           he went to the pigs, and left the yard and the palace

l6.173-74   first she put a well-washed cloak and a tunic
            around his torso

xxi.537   they opened the gates and pushed aside the bolts

xxiv.206   for if he is going to capture you and see you with his eyes

xxiv.346   [Hermes, dispatched by Zeus to aid Priam]
            arrived quickly at Troy and at the Hellespont

Some of these cases admittedly give less awkwardness than others. In 15.188 and 16.340-41, for example, we may feel the effect only of a mild afterthought supplementing the main activity as if offering a piece of background information. In most instances we feel the reversed order more forcefully. And yet the recurrence of some of these formulations shows that some prothysteronic expressions tended toward formular status. Forms of the verb for being born (γίγνομαι) are regularly localized at the end of its verse, and the act of putting on a heavier outer covering and a lighter under covering—whether on couches or men's bodies—seems to be formulaic in a sequence that must begin with the second, outer layer and then pass to the inner. The act of bathing seems, in comparison, less formulaically fixed in second position. In 5.264 the bathing of Odysseus illogically follows the maids' clothing him, but in 4.49-50 the first sequence of actions presents bathing followed, properly, by rubbing with oil, but then presents the servants putting cloaks on the guests before putting on the underlying tunics.

Most prothystera can be absorbed easily enough by a reading or listening audience, apparently because the two acts often form a closely connected sequence in behavior that is highly familiar and to some extent ritualized (bathing, clothing, and hospitality are often elaborated in the familiar "typical scenes" well documented by Arend 1933). In effect they merge in the mind as if a single two-part activity. The least familiar and truly unique prothysteron, however, that of 13.274, occurs in a lying tale of Odysseus that is furthest from a typical epic description, and may be an ad hoc creation improvised (by the poet as well as by his character!) in performance. The awkwardness is remarkable: not only does the description lack the cushion of familiarity, but the two actions of dropping

off and picking up a passenger are too formally opposed to permit easy merger into a single two-part activity.

Ambiguous syntax, bad grammar, and anacoluthon

Some of Homer's rhetorical features can be seen as more distinctively "negative" in the resistance to lucidity they offer the hearer or reader. Usually on a larger scale than the tropes of extension, but far less frequent, we find perplexing instances of ambiguous or incorrect syntax or grammar, sometimes in the form specifically called anacoluthon, where a construction is begun but dropped in favor of a new construction, and sometimes resumed after an interval in an inappropriate or awkward form. From the perspective we have established, we may understand anacoluthon as the unraveling of tightly organized syntax in deference to the impulse to take in new matter too quickly, an aspect of what we have called epic expansiveness or fullness. A simple example is found in the simile comparing the Myrmidons to wasps in *Iliad* xvi.264-65:[9]

> They, having a brave heart,
> each one flies forward and defends his own children

The Greek begins with a plural participle for "having," then surprisingly switches to the singular "each one" and a singular verb for "flies." The apposition of plural and singular may be felt as slightly awkward or strained, but is not unduly distracting. But more severe cases can be cited.

At xvi.317-22 Nestor's two sons, Antilochus and Thrasymedes, each slay a Trojan opponent in battle. The poet begins with the plural subject, "sons," as if intending to describe the success of each in turn, "the one did this, the other did that." But it looks as if an afterthought takes over once

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[9] I am indebted to Janko 1992 for singling out the anacolutha of xvi in his exemplary *Commentary*. Throughout his volume he shows a strong interest in oral phenomena, but I should warn the reader that he uses "oral apposition" in a sense different from mine, as equivalent to anacoluthon such as at xvi.317-22 (1992:359; and at 353 he calls anacolouthon "oral syntax"). Some of the anacolutha of xvi are also discussed by Chantraine 1953:15-16, who notes that in xvi.265 the word πᾶς, "each one," eases the transition; and he adduces 9.462-63 as showing a "similar freedom of movement" to 12.73ff.

the first slaying is underway: the interesting and unexpected intervention of the brother of the just slain Trojan, who lunges into the scene to take revenge. The syntax is admittedly ragged and the sequence jerky, as Atymnion's brother Maris attacks Antilochus and is intercepted by Thrasymedes who dispatches him. The literal translation is:

> And the sons of Nestor—one wounded Atymnion with a sharp spear,
> Antilochus, and drove the bronze point through his flank,
> and he fell forward. But Maris from close up with his spear
> lunged at Antilochus in a rage over his brother
> standing in front of the corpse; but godlike Thrasymedes
> got him first before he could wound, and did not miss him. . . .

The anacoluthon need not be felt as a blemish, since the slightly disorganized and abrupt movement of the description nicely captures— perhaps mimics—the presence of confusion and the unexpected on the battlefield. There are, however, still stronger anacolutha to cite.

Consider xvi.401 ff., where Patroklos' stabbing of Thestor is a complete syntactic mess, hard to follow with the eye or the ear. I translate literally, keeping close to the Greek word order, to capture the full confusion of the original:

> He fell with a thud. But he [Patroklos] to Thestor, Enops' son,
> in his second onrush, he sat huddled back in his well-polished chariot,
> he had lost all his nerve and the reins had slipped
> from his hands—him did he come up close to and stab with a spear.

The impulse to expansiveness here seems to have overrun all the boundaries of clear syntactic organization. It is from a passage like this that we can make the strongest case for our text as the record of a live performance, for what writing poet, with the capacity to review critically what he had created, would have let such language stand?

Homer's lengthiest anacoluthic fault is probably at *Od.* 12.73ff., the very long delay of 28 verses before the second member of a pair is named. It will take a close look at the Greek to appreciate the full awkwardness here. Verse 73 begins with "The two peaks, the one reaches the wide sky," οἱ δὲ δύω σκόπελοι ὁ μὲν οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἱκάνει. Both "peaks" and "the one" are in the nominative case, a forgiveable instance of "oral syntax," where a writer of correct Greek prose would have put the plural in the

genitive case and said "Of two peaks, the one. . . ." The serious awkwardness does not lie here, however, but in the way the second peak seems for twenty-eight verses to have been forgotten, although "the one" included the untranslatable particle μὲν that implies that a second parallel and related item will soon follow. But the poet instead enlarges upon details surrounding the first peak, then upon other details to which he rambles rather loosely. When, at verse 101, he finally comes around to mentioning the second peak, he has of course lost any notion that it was to be in the nominative, part of the nominative apposition used in 73. "The other peak you will see," Odysseus is told, τὸν δ᾽ ἕτερον σκόπελον ὄψει, with the peak now in the accusative case. Homer does retain a thin fiber of connection by using the particle δέ answering to μὲν 28 lines earlier— probably the longest deferment of δέ after μὲν in Greek poetry and perhaps in any surviving Greek text!

Anacoluthon of this breadth certainly suggests a poet composing and expanding his description in the act of performance, and the combined presence of all the anacolutha throughout the Homeric text certainly must count as likely markers of an oral style.[10] By this I mean a style that may be based in part on memorization and more or less faithful reproduction of some passages, but which in passages like those we have examined is very likely obedient to the vagaries of momentary inspiration and ad hoc creation of verses.[11]

There are many more instances of careless or incorrect grammatical constructions we could cite. The famous description in xxiv.527-28 of Zeus' two jars containing good and evil gifts for humankind is marred by a construction so unclear that Pindar apparently mistook Homer's meaning

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[10] Chantraine's (1953:12-21) chapter II, "La construction appositionnelle et la syntaxe d'accord," although not presented as an argument for oral composition, implicitly makes a good case for Homer's style as oral. Chantraine was one of the early scholars to endorse Parry's work, and his discussion of Homeric syntax seems often to assume "oral syntax."

[11] See Willcock 1977 and 1978 for an excellent discussion of ad hoc language in the *Iliad,* with the assumption Homer is an oral poet.

and understood that there were three jars.[12]   And this is only one of many cases where we must abandon strictly grammatical readings of the text and construe *ad sensum* rather than *ad litteram*, as the commentaries repeatedly remind us.[13]

If we see anacoluthic and grammatically weak construction as signs of oral composition on the restricted level of phrase, verse, and passage, we can go further and add another kind of non-sequitur on the level of thematic construction. Homer's composition by theme and scene-type has been well documented and hardly needs further illustration. But there exist passages where the thematic sequence seems to have been tampered with. Although such inconsistencies have traditionally been condemned by modern scholars as textual corruptions (and were suspected or athetized by the Alexandrian editors), some recent studies have shown how these incongruities may well be inevitable in the oral recomposing of traditional material. Gunn (1970) has two good examples of this phenomenon. He analyzes *Od*. 5.85-96 and l5.130-50 and makes a good case for the text as the transcript of a performance in which the singer has momentarily skipped a beat, moving either too soon or too late to the appropriate verse, and thereby slightly muddling a sequence that should have been perfectly clear. Other examples of such orally derived awkwardness are given by Willcock (1978) and Russo (1987). Such "mistakes" must naturally seem more grievous to the eye, on the printed page, than to the ear of those immersed in the flow of a live performance. One is tempted to imagine what cannot be historically confirmed for Homer—but is in fact experienced by a modern audience in a live performance of drama, music, or song—namely that the audience instinctively compensates for the mistake, be it omission or intrusion, by supplying what is needed or subtracting what is inappropriate, and soon has forgotten that anything was amiss.

If we are fully aware of these and similar oral stylistic features of our

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[12] *Pyth*. 3.80-82.   I owe this observation to Macleod 1982:133.   The literal rendering of Homer's Greek actually does suggest three jars: "A pair of jars lies at Zeus' threshold, of the evil gifts that he bestows, and another one of good." It is the force of a long tradition of construing the passage *ad sensum* that gives the generally accepted picture of two jars.

[13] The General Index in vol. II of Leaf 1900-02:658, for example, has an entry "Constructio ad sensum," listing xi.690, xiii.564, xvi.281, xvii.756, xviii.515, 525, and xxii.84.

text, what does it mean for our editing of such texts? Regarding such features as repetition, apposition, expansion, and other forms of the Item Plus trope, we need do nothing more than relax and enjoy a slower tempo for unfolding the segments of a story. But regarding those features of style that have often been criticized as awkward and mistaken use of language, we must give up the centuries-old project of emending them to make more correct Greek or more consistent expression. Richard Janko (1990) has recently suggested that we must always have an eye on the apparatus, wary of modern editors' tendency to normalize differences or awkwardnesses that we now recognize as likely to be orally generated. He goes on to remind us that we still possess no Homeric texts edited with a full post-Parry mentality. Janko's article is an excellent starting point for any future editor of a Greek oral epic text. He gathers several paradigmatic examples where, for two similar passages, the manuscripts offer variation in one word and the editors—both the ancient Alexandrians or the modern Oxford scholar—have ignored this difference and made the passages entirely uniform.

Conclusion

My arguments in the course of this paper may have some aura of paradox about them. I have claimed that stylistic redundancy bordering on "padding" is really an aesthetic plus (no conscious pun was intended here), and that anacoluthon and other inconsistencies of sequence are acceptable and in fact the natural products of a great poet's technique. There is an entire realm of comment left untouched here, the extensive comment that could be made on Homer's very obvious excellence as a wordsmith and a story-teller, which I and others have offered elsewhere.[14] An unfortunate tradition continues in Homeric criticism whereby opponents of the oral school of criticism imagine themselves as defenders of the poet's

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[14] See my recent commentary on *Od*. 17-20 (Russo et al. 1992), as well as my previous publications. Contributions to the appreciation of Homer's uniqueness and creativity with both diction and theme, written under the influence of Parry and Lord, are too numerous to list here, but include Hainsworth 1964, 1970; Russo 1968; Segal 1970; Nagler 1974; Willcock 1977, 1978; Edwards 1980; Sacks 1987; Finkelberg 1989; Martin 1989; Foley 1987, 1990, 1991. See also Holoka 1973 for an excellent survey of "Homeric Originality" that includes many orally oriented studies.

individuality and creativity, and see the followers of that school as promoting a Homer who is little more than a mechanical reproducer of traditional fixed phrases. Such objections to the oral theory began with some of the earliest critics of Parry's work, who at least had some justice when they disputed Parry's exaggerated claim that Homeric verse is virtually all formulaic, a claim long abandoned by Parry's successors. But anti-oralist critics continue to publish earnest defenses of Homer's capacity for unique language, subtle allusion, successful plot construction, brilliant handling of character, imagery, and so on.[15] I must point out that Homerists in the Parry-Lord tradition have not overlooked excellences of this sort, as the bibliographical record shows. But the oralist perspective has also been able to make unique contributions to criticism beyond the more obvious kinds of observation that show Homer to be a fine poet in some of the same ways that literate poets are fine poets. The originality of the best criticism in the Parry-Lord tradition lies in its development of a new aesthetic, one that finds a particular kind of beauty in features of style, construction, allusiveness, and referentiality[16] that would not strike the reader as obvious virtues in contemporary literature. This paper will be successful to the extent that it has unfolded a few of these virtues, and taken steps toward integrating them into a larger vision of Homeric style.

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[15] A good case in point is Richardson 1987. He shows that *hapax legomena* have a greater place in Homeric diction than one would expect if one believed (but who nowadays does?) Parry's claim that epic verse is almost entirely formulaic, and that these unique elements contribute moments of great poetry. This is a good observation, but there is no reason why it cannot be harmonized with the belief in a great oral poet capable of fine poetic effect both by staying within his traditional diction and occasionally reaching beyond it for a new word, phrase, or idea. It is unfortunate that Richardson concludes his insightful study with an uninformed swipe at oralist critics, whom he crudely caricatures as believing in a poet "tied to the apron-strings of his tradition" and simply "reshuffling the index cards." Such criticism can only stem from limited acquaintance with the best scholarship in the oralist tradition.

[16] I use the term in Foley's (1991:38-60) technical sense, which opens up a new perception of the great "depth" behind some of Homer's traditional language.

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Performing *A Thousand and One Nights* in Egypt

Susan Slyomovics

Many of the tales that make up the written corpus of *A Thousand and One Nights* were once orally recited. While their oral provenance is indisputable in many instances, the precise relationship between writing and orality, manuscripts and traditional spoken narrative is open to speculation. It is possible that certain tales thought to be written down or transcribed in manuscript or print were actually never recited or performed but rather consciously molded by a redactor or author to mimic the prevailing style of oral storytellers (Molan 1988). For other tales, there exist both authentic Arabic oral variants and written versions that, however "improved" or conflated, may be records of what was once a storytelling event. In the Arab world oral and written literature continue to interact in complex ways.

An observation of Edward William Lane, the English translator of *The Thousand and One Nights*, serves to illustrate the complex relationship between storytellers who operate in the context of an oral tradition and printed versions of their stories. In his renowned account of Cairo in the early nineteenth century, Lane notes that evening storytelling and public recitation of the *Nights* had long been a tradition. Yet he points out that the Cairene reciters were known to depend upon manuscripts for source material; this is proved by an anecdote about the diminishing number of poets who chose to recite the *Nights* because of the high purchase price of manuscripts (1978:409). While this anecdote shows that by the nineteenth century the reciters were literate and relied on written versions, the question remains whether the manuscripts that storytellers relied upon were transcriptions of earlier performances (made literary) or literary imitations of performances.

Further obscuring the relationship between the oral and the written is the fact that there exists no fixed, definitive written collection of tales to serve as a basis for comparison. Either thematically or historically, scholars have tried to distinguish a fixed set of repeated tales. H. Zotenberg (1888), in his study of an Aladdin manuscript, spoke of a "core" element of less

than three hundred stories around which redactors freely added material borrowed from other story collections; perhaps we might add that they may have been borrowed from storytellers as well. Zotenberg identified a nucleus of tales that have since been called "la rédaction moderne d'Égypte" and referred to as ZER or the Zotenberg Egyptian Rescension. More recently, Muhsin Mahdi's Arabic-language critical edition, published in 1984, returned to the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript (known as Bibliothèque Nationale 3609-3611) that was the basis for Antoine Galland's famous French translation (1704-1717). Mahdi's English translator, Husain Haddawy, asserts that this Syrian manuscript is "of all existing manuscripts the oldest and closest to the *original* (italics mine)" (1990:xii). To understand competing notions of what constitutes an "original" text of the *Nights*, it is worth recapitulating the history of its appearance in the West.

Galland's translation first introduced *The Arabian Nights* to European readers. His edition startlingly continues the Arab tradition of borrowing from the oral to supplement the written, for its text clearly owes many episodes not to a Syrian manuscript but to a Syrian storyteller (MacDonald 1932):

> . . . a living source of the very best story material. On the morning of March 25, according to the entry in his *Journal* . . . , he [Galland] went to call on Paul Lucas, the oriental traveler. Paul Lucas was going out, but Galland remained and talked with Hanna, a Maronite of Aleppo whom Lucas had brought with him from that town, and Hanna at once began to tell him stories in Arabic which Galland recognized as *fort beaux*. From Galland's *Journal* we learn that this went on at intervals up to June 2, and that he received in this way a large number of stories and held them either in his memory, aided by abstracts in his *Journal*, or in actual transcripts furnished to him by Hanna.

In Antoine Galland's encounter in Paris with the living tradition of the Arab storyteller, it is as though Galland structurally reproduces the plight of Shahrazād in the tale that frames the *Nights*. She must narrate each night to avoid death at the hands of her king and husband, while Galland is driven by his publishers to produce one thousand and one nights of tales from any available sources. In Galland's case, a storyteller arriving unexpectedly from the East enables him to satisfy the demands of his Parisian publishers by incorporating additional oral material into his collection of stories from the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript in order

to reach the number of one thousand and one nights of stories. Among the sections of the *Nights* that Galland drew from Hanna of Aleppo orally or asked him to write down are "Aladdin," the adventures of the Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid, and "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

Galland's *Mille et une Nuits* opened this work to Western readers and has had an enormous impact upon popular literature and culture. It has also influenced literate Arab readers, whose appreciation of the *Nights* is largely due to its popularity in the West.[1] Among the educated Arab elite, the work had previously been despised for its vulgar origin and vernacular language expression; it was associated with the storytellers and public performances beloved of the illiterate lower social classes.[2]

Galland's insertion of Hanna of Aleppo's oral stories allows us to reconsider spoken narrative complete with teller and audience. Though Galland followed the device of merging oral vernacular performances with written texts to create what folklorists call a "composite" text, contemporary Egyptian storytellers of the *Nights* distinguish between stories delivered from books and those orally performed. In interviews with Egyptian tellers, folklorist Hasan El-Shamy quotes a narrator who is informed that his tale is a variant that appears in the written *Nights:* "'Yes it is the same, but still it is not the same. This comes out of a book; that one is something we just know'" (1980:xlix). El-Shamy also gives examples where oral and printed versions exist simultaneously in the Egyptian community, the two never merging, and with the oral teller usually unaware of the existence of a written counterpart (1980:xlviii-li).

The subject of this paper is the multiple intersections between oral performance and the written narrative of one tale from *A Thousand and One Nights*, the story of Anas al-Wujūd and al-Ward fi-al-Akmām. This tale does not appear in the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript that was the basis of Galland's translation nor in the tales of Hanna of Aleppo, but

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[1] See al-Qalamāwī 1966. Even Galland, according to MacDonald's account (1932:398), did not consider these stories to be of any importance in comparison with his translation of the Koran.

[2] Strong elitist literary bias is still present; for over a century there have been attempts to refine dialectal vulgarities and to eliminate bawdy elements: in 1985, an Egyptian court banned a new unexpurgated edition published in Beirut on moral grounds. The controversy over the court's decision is to be found in *Al-Ahrām*, Egypt's premier newspaper.

it is included in the ZER or Egyptian recension.[3]

By exploring the public performance of this oral tale as it is sung today in southern Egypt, the Ṣaʿīd, I claim that performance adds an element to the tale that should enter into considerations of the nature of orality in relation to writing: the discipline of performance studies also enables an analysis of live Egyptian performances within their socio-cultural context. This perspective leads to a second issue that appears to have no relationship to the nature of orality and writing, namely the literary question of genre and typology that has preoccupied students of *A Thousand and One Nights*, such as Sir Richard Burton, Enno Littmann, and Mia Gerhardt.[4] These scholars attempted to classify stories from the corpus into mutually exclusive literary genres. Burton, for example, in an essay appended to his translation of *A Thousand Nights and One Night*, divides the *Nights* into fable, fairy tale, and anecdote. Littmann, the German translator, distinguishes the following categories: Märchen, Romane und Novellen, Sagen und Legenden, Lehrhafte Geschichten, Humoresken, and Anekdoten. A third scholar, Mia Gerhardt, speaks of love stories, crime stories, travel stories, fairy tales, and finally, a category of learning-wisdom-pious tales. Under their systems of classification *The Story of Anas al-Wujūd and al-Ward fi-al-Akmām* might be categorized as a fairy tale, a romance, or a love story. All of these categorizations stress the sentimental and emotional, the nonhistorical and fantastic qualities of a tale. Similarly, Peter Heath's study of genres in *Nights* places this tale in the narrative domain of romance because "on the semantic level, the primary theme of romance, a fundamental aspect of the genre's informing drive, investigates the concerns of honor as balanced between the demands of love and social propriety, within the context of Fate" (1987:13).

It is in the nature of performance, an exchange between the poet and his audience, that an audience rereads and rewrites the romantic aspects of the literary tale to conform to local social mores and conventions. In contrast with scholars of the literary texts, I propose literary categories that

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[3] The Arabic written version of "The Story of Uns al-Wujūd and al-Ward fi-al-Akmam" is from the Būlāq edition of *Alf layla wa-layla*, and the English translation is from the reprint of the 1838 edition by Lane (1980).

[4] Burton 1962, Littmann 1954, Gerhardt 1963. See also Heath 1987-88. von Grunebaum (1946:305-6) compares this tale to the Greek novel that combines travel adventures with love action.

emerge from performance and are based on truth value and the verifiability of history: the anecdote, the historical anecdote, or the legend.[5] In order to do so, I summarize the written manuscript versions and then compare them to an Egyptian oral performance, a performance mediated by the southern Egyptian (Ṣaʿīdī) audience's unarticulated knowledge of a shared, historical narrative context of the oral version.

Written Version

In the written manuscript versions of *A Thousand and One Nights*, the narrator, Shahrazād, spends eleven nights—from the three hundred and seventy-first to the three hundred and eighty-first night—reporting the love affair between the handsome soldier, Anas al-Wujūd, and the vizier's daughter, al-Ward fi-al-Akmām, the two protagonists who lend their names to the tale title. A summary of the manuscript version of the tale of Anas al-Wujūd is as follows.

> A king of ancient times, called King Shamīkh, had a vizier, named Ibrahīm, whose daughter, al-Ward fi-al-Akmām (Bud in the Rose),[6] was exceedingly beautiful. Each year the king gathered nobles of his realm for a royal ballgame. From her window, Rose spied a handsome player, and fell in love with him so deeply that when he rode by her, she dropped an apple on him. He raised his head, saw her, and fell in love. Rose's nurse told her the handsome man's name, Anas al-Wujūd.[7] Rose improvised amorous couplets to her beloved, wrote them on paper, and placed them under her pillow. A maid stole the paper, learned of her mistress' secret love, and offered to act as an emissary. The maid brought the poems to Anas, who composed in reply a set of poems written on the reverse side of the paper.

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[5] See also Mahdi 1989.

[6] The heroine's name, al-Ward fi-al-Akmām, is literally a rose in its calyx or sleeve, or a rose springing from the clefts of its hood, a rose in bud or a bud in the rose. For the English translation I use "Rose," or "Bud in the Rose."

[7] Anas al-Wujūd is a pun whose double meaning is "delight of living," or with the *wu* functioning as "and" (*anas wu jūd*), "love and liberality." In spoken Ṣaʿīdī Arabic the hero's name is pronounced "Anas al-Wujūd" and in the written version "Uns al-Wujūd." I have retained the Arabic dialect form in my text and translation.

Rose sent back more verses. On one of her trips, the maid was intercepted by a palace chamberlain and accidentally dropped the love correspondence. Only later was Rose informed of the loss. A passing eunuch seized the dropped letters and gave them to the Vizier Ibrahīm, who, realizing the author was his daughter, wept so copiously that his wife was driven to devise a plan to save the family honor. The parents exiled Rose to a remote castle where they left her with provisions and attendants; they then destroyed the ships that had conveyed their daughter to her new prison. Before her departure, Rose pinned on the palace door a message in verse to her lover describing her plight. Thereupon Anas disguised himself as a religious mendicant and wandered in search of his lost love composing poetry. On his way he had numerous adventures: he charmed a fierce lion to help him track Rose's footsteps in the desert; a hermit, hearing Anas declaim his verse, helped him fashion a boat out of a palm tree to sail across the sea to Rose's castle. Meanwhile Rose escapes by tying together clothes to lower herself from the high castle windows. She encounters a fisherman who takes her across the sea; she finds shelter with Prince Dirbās, who hears her story, takes pity on her, and sends his ministers to King Shamīkh to demand that the two lovers be reunited. After many misadventures, in the cause of which many disguises are donned and discarded, Anas and Rose are wed with much music-making and poetry recitation.[8]

The written versions occupy eleven of Shahrazād's one thousand and one nights. These written texts alternate between prose narrative and dialogue in verses. There is a large cast of characters who all divert and complicate the plot by recounting their stories along the way. They have a "once upon a time" beginning, a middle, and an ending that happily concludes in marriage.

Oral Version

In contrast, the oral version of the Anas al-Wujūd story presents a variety of distinctive stylistic, performative, and narrative features. The oral version of this tale was recorded in 1983 in the village of Maḥamīd,

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[8] The summary is from the Egyptian branch of manuscripts as well as translations of Burton and Lane. Mahdi's critical edition in Arabic, *Alf layla wa-layla* (1984) and its English translation by Haddawy (1990) are both based on the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript that Galland used. They end at night 282 and do not include the later Egyptian branch to which this tale belongs.

Aswan Governorate, Upper Egypt. It was performed by a southern Egyptian epic singer named ʿAwaḍallah ʿAbd al-Jalīl ʿAli, whose life history, poetic artistry, and epic recitation are the subject of my monograph *The Merchant of Art*.[9] ʿAwaḍallah is a professional epic singer, the son and grandson of professional epic singers who have for generations recited the cycle of Arabic heroic tales called *Sīrat Banī Hilāl*. ʿAwaḍallah is illiterate and at the time of the recording he would give his age as either 63 or 73. ʿAwaḍallah recites the epic and other tales in his repertoire in the marketplace, in local small cafes, and at saints' pilgrimage sites. He is also commissioned to perform at certain festive occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, Ramadan breakfasts, and welcome parties to celebrate the return of pilgrims from the hajj to Mecca. ʿAwaḍallah recites accompanying himself on the *ṭār*, the large Nubian frame drum. Both the epic and this tale are sung in rhymed quatrains, called *murabbaʿāt*, as well as in cascading, interlocking couplets, tercets, and quatrains with complex rhyme schemes (cf. Cachia 1989).

It is noteworthy that ʿAwaḍallah, the southern Egyptian epic singer, speaks and sings to his live audience entirely in verse, while in the written versions, in contrast, verse is used only when characters address each other directly in speech or writing. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that poetic discourse in both the written and oral versions involves a teller recounting a tale to a listener. In the written text, the tellers are protoganists *within* the tale and they extend their rhymed speech over eleven manuscript nights. However, in oral performance, ʿAwaḍallah is the living, reciting teller who speaks in poetry to his listeners of Upper Egyptians. Consequently, we are pointing to a major difference between oral and written versions of this tale: written manuscripts (employing both prose and poetry) characterize and unfold through the story and narrative in prose, while the oral tale characterizes and unfolds through the powerful language of poetry and erotic punning (Slyomovics 1987b). Performance is in verse, reading is primarily in prose but with marked poetic "speechifying." The pleasure of the text is in reading, while the pleasure of the performance is in hearing.

What is performed is a (mock) romance in a complex style, marked by erotic punning, framed by a larger, well-known legend familiar both to the epic singer/storyteller and to his audience. To ʿAwaḍallah's Upper

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[9] See Slyomovics 1987a:6-20 and 1986.

Egyptian audience these are historical events that actually took place in their region. The Egyptian audience is obviously familiar with the relevant background information: the geographic details, the personal history of the characters, and even the final outcome can therefore be omitted. Again this does not resolve the question whether this tale is a fiction turned into history or local oral legends grafted on to a written narrative by a storyteller or an oral variant co-existing with its written form.

‘Awaḍallah’s sung version consists of approximately three hundred lines of verse (see Appendix). This elicited version (the usual performance venue is a wedding party) was completed in forty minutes. After an opening invocation to the Prophet Muhammad, ‘Awaḍallah begins with a description of the hero Anas, his beauty and renown, and how beloved he was to the king. The king’s love for Anas is so great that he vows to forgo wine-drinking until Anas has safely returned from a mission. Anas passes by the window of the vizier’s daughter, Rose. They see each other and fall in love. Rose confides her love of Anas to her nurse, who conveys to him a passionate erotic love letter to which he replies in the same fashion.

The erotic content of Rose’s letter to Anas is specific to the style of oral sung performance because performance allows for the use of a range of paronomastic devices characteristic of Egyptian folk narrative in the vernacular. These devices can convey both sexual and political double meanings (cf. Slyomovics 1986). ‘Awaḍallah, the storyteller, calls this punning performance a *mawwāl maqfūl*, or “closed mawwāl ballad,”—a ballad full of hidden multiple meanings. For example, it is in the voice of the storyteller that Rose writes to her lover. The erotic play of meaning in the heroine’s lyrics is perhaps rendered permissible only by their being uttered by a male voice. In addition, the notion of intoxication, both sexual and alcoholic intoxication, may diminish verbal modesty throughout the poem. The poet sings about the feelings of lovers, the metaphors they use to describe them, and his own intoxication as well as the audience’s. Words that phrase love’s embraces are intensified by drinking as “the wine cup goes round again” for the poet, the audience, and the lovers:

line 195: O how lucky is she that embraces another!

[poet’s aside: “Ah more words! Speech increases”]

line 196: and the winecup goes round.

line 197: ʾaskar ana w-inta ya anas ilwujūd wa law alf I ʾām
  Let us be intoxicated, you and I, O Anas al-Wujūd, for a thousand
  years!
line 198: ʾaskar ana w-inta law alfēn sana
  Let us be intoxicated, you and I, two thousand years—

line 199: kaʾinnahu
  as if

line 200: laḥẓa fi huḍni ʾana
  only a moment in my embrace.

line 201: ma tunẓur iššagīn
  look upon my cleavage

The word for "cleavage," *iššagīn*, would be interpreted by the audience as the cleft of the vulva or buttocks or breasts. In the latter case it would be translated as "cleavage."

line 202: wi šayxi ʾana
  1) and I an "old man" (i.e. "young girl")
  2) and my sash

The first translation reflects the poet's use of oppositional substitution (*tabdīl*). *Šayx* or "shaykh," literally "old man," conveys its opposite, namely "young girl." The second translation shows that the words "and shaykh" may also mean, less erotically, a "sash" (*wišāḥ*).

line 203: abyaḍ wi maḥṭūṭ lu ḥalag
  white and wearing an earring

This phrase would be interpreted as "nipple" or "clitoris," depending on one's interpretation of the "cleft" metaphor in line 201.

line 204: wiyya -lxuzzām
  with a nose-ring

"Nose-ring" would be understood as designating either the aureola of the nipple or the vaginal opening.

line 206: dagg ittiyūr

> like the beating of bird

This phrase would be understood as a metaphor comparing the folds of the genitals to delicate bird tracks. "Dagg" may also mean "thinness, subtlety," that is, "thin or subtle as a bird."

The nurse conveys this letter from Rose to Anas, who replies with a letter of his own. He describes Rose's beauty beginning with her bow-shaped eyebrows and languorous eyes and traveling down along her body. After reaching her belly and navel, his verses pick up on Rose's erotic self-description of her genitals as a *shaykh* or "old man." Rose's use of "old man" for "young girl" is baffling until the lover's reply is heard. He compares the pleasures and dangers of sex to the benefits and obligations of a religious pilgrimage to a *shaykh's* shrine:

> line 276: You look at her venerable *shaykh*, around him a shrine
> line 277: You look at a venerable *shaykh*, around him a mausoleum.
> line 278: The ill who visit him are sure to find rest.
> line 279: You deposit a pledge to the *shaykh*.
> line 280: You visit the mausoleum.
> line 281: Enter without permission, you will soon be harmed!

On the way to her mistress, the nurse meets the vizier, who confiscates and reads the letter. He is horrified and hastens to his wife. At this point, recall that in the written manuscript it is the vizier's wife who concocts the scheme to imprison her daughter in order to secure the family honor. In the oral version, however, the mother sides with the smitten daughter and ends the sung ballad by addressing these cautionary verses to her husband:

> line 296: O Prince of the Arabs,
> line 297: did I love you because of silver and gold?
> line 298: What happened to me also happened to my daughter.

The oral version of the recorded performance is not only a briefer, truncated variant of the written version; it ends happily if the listener assumes implicit parental approval for the lover's eventual union as stated by Rose's mother in the closing verses. However, this is not the case, nor is my earlier claim that oral performance is entirely in verse a true statement. There is another aspect of the oral tale, a prose narrative, never musically performed and not even necessary to recount, but known to the audience

and storyteller. Perhaps we can call it the contextualizing prose narrative that frames and, even more importantly, undermines and contradicts the oral version performed in poetic ballad form. In other words, the storyteller's insistence on an underlying historicity for his oral version goes against the structuring narrative of a proper Proppian folktale whose happy closure lies in marriage. The oral version, unlike its written counterpart, appears to end happily but in fact does not. The oral version seems to consist of rhymed verse yet also includes the following historical narrative.

The "history" agreed upon by both the audience and the storyteller is that all characters in the tale are attested historical figures. For example, the king in ʿAwaḍallah's rendition is named Asfūn and he is believed to have reigned in the recent past. The proof for the Upper Egyptian storyteller and his audience is to be found in the southern Egyptian governorate of Aswan, between the towns of Esna and Armant, where there is indeed a place called Asfūn al-Maṭʿāna, believed to be the historical seat of the king Asfūn. Not just individual figures but also the narrative itself is subject to historicizing elements. Significantly, these additional non-performed facts result in a different, opposite ending to the oral tale. For example, the performed version concludes with the vizier's wife convincing her husband of the power and necessity of love. But the storyteller recounted to me what the audience did not need to be told, namely that Rose's father, the vizier, imprisoned his daughter in a castle in Aswan, a castle still standing to this day. According to ʿAwaḍallah, a mausoleum built by the Agha Khan, head of the Shia Ismailis, is in fact Rose's castle. On its wall, according to ʿAwaḍallah's account of local history, are inscribed Rose's famous verses to her lover Anas, still recited as a folk poem familiar to many southern Egyptians:

law kan arēt ḥubbak tifūz	if you see your love escaping
isʿī wi ruḥ-lu wadi -lkunūz	try to go to the Valley of Treasures
tilga ḥubbak waṣt buḥūr iẓẓalām	you will find your love among the
	Seas of Darkness . . .

The crucial, historical fact claimed by ʿAwaḍallah the storyteller is that Anas drowned in his search for his beloved Rose. Then, when Rose saw his corpse washed ashore, she died of grief. Anas is believed by the inhabitants to be buried in the temple of Philae, to this day known locally as the island of Anas al-Wujūd. The same local legend was recorded by a nineteenth-century traveller, Jacob Burckhardt, in his book, *Travels in*

Nubia, in which he reports the existence of a mighty king called al-Wujūd, who was the builder of the temple at Philae. In the eighteenth century, Edward Lane mentions the same legend of a king named Anas al-Wujūd who died of love and was buried at Philae near Aswan.[10]

In conclusion, the orally performed version, which appears to be a briefer, though eroticized, rendition of the written one, with both written and oral versions ending the same way, namely in the marriage of lovers, is seen to be reversed by the social and historical context in which performance takes place. Thematically, the oral tale deals with the relationship between the vizier-father and his princess-daughter, around whom issues of obedience versus sexual emancipation arise. The performed tale suspends history and allows us to believe the fiction of romantic love in which the intervention of the mother, who married for love as her daughter wishes to do, permits the daughter to pursue her own erotic inclinations. Once the tale is seen in its sociocultural perspective implied by the actual performance, however, the patriarchal cast of Upper Egyptian male-female arrangements are represented in an untold tale-within-a-tale: a father chooses his daughter's groom or death to the couple ensues. It is an instructive tale that opposes uncivilized sexual needs, all the more persuasive because the audience understands that the events actually occurred in recent history.[11] It is more convincing because performatively the masculine perspective, voiced by a male poet, need not articulate the known principles of patriarchal hierarchy or the penalties for their subversion during the wedding ceremonies of an arranged marriage.

Therefore 'Awaḍallah's tale—the oral not the written—occupies a coherent historical time and place and as a practice points to his impulse toward the historical. It is not merely that 'Awaḍallah, the storyteller, is an epic poet who insists that all he recounts is the true history of the Arabs in verse and ballad (Slyomovics 1987a:7). Rather, let us return to the erotic subtext of the story, which offers a metaphorical analogy to this complex process of reversal. While it is the case that erotic Arabic manuscripts exist, it is also the peculiar nature of an ephemeral, oral performance that

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[10] See Jacob Burckhardt cited in Lane 1980:517.

[11] For the role of the female-narrator, her relationship to female sexuality, and the female body as text, see Attar and Fischer 1991, Malti-Douglas 1991:11-28, and Nadaff 1991.

privileges rhetorical, erotic tropes and puns that must be performed and heard as opposed to being read or seen. The result is that for the purposes of a festive occasion, such as a wedding where love is triumphant, the historically significant event of the death and the parting of a historically attested king and his beloved is never mentioned. But the linguistic process by which the oral tale is recounted, namely the double meanings, oppositional metaphors, erotic possibilities in naming women's sexual parts, and literary figurations that mean one thing as well as its opposite, ought to alert the listener to contradictory elements joined together by an unspoken narrative formation.

The full significance of the performance rests upon its silent assumption of your knowledge of well-known historical events. The intersection of the performed event (with a happy ending) and the non-performed context (with a tragic ending) repeats the terms and the situation of the poetic style used in the song that expresses erotic subversion. It is what it is and it is its opposite. Many written Arab folktales begin with the formulaic "once upon a time": *kān wa mā kān*, "it was and it was not so." Significantly, oral Upper Egyptian tales use this formula with a change in one letter: *kān Ya ma kān*, with a different meaning: "it was, and O, it was really (emphatic form) so." The oral tale, in spite of, or perhaps because of, its linguistic virtuosity, may be considered to be a literary marvel, but what is equally significant is that the oral tale also directly points toward the real. Thus it is this compacting of literature and historical reference that gives the contemporary orally performed recitation its unique narrative force.

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Appendix

Notes on Translation and Transliteration

Translation

For the purposes of smoother translation and easier reading, the following names of characters are substituted for pronouns in lines of the performance text: lines 24 (king, Anas); 31 (king); 50 (king, Anas); 60 (Anas); 148 (king); 150 (Rose); 223 (nurse); 225 (Bud in the Rose); 287 (nurse); and 294 (Rose).

[Bracket] = poet's aside.

Transliteration

For the protocol governing the linguistic transcription of Ṣaʿīdī Arabic, see Slyomovics 1987a:269-73.

The Tale of Anas al-Wujūd and al-Ward fi-l-Akmām

Praise the Arab, the Hashemite of noble lineage.
Whoever prays to Taha blots out sins.
I begin: I make art about poor Anas al-Wujūd,
a youth weary from love and passion.
The tale begins: once there was Anas al-Wujūd
of amazing beauty
that deceived the envious.
He had a pair of eyes,
he had a pair of eyes, liquid,
black without kohl,   10
cheeks like candles,
as if to bring light to darkness;
cheeks like candles
in darkness brought light—
and love and the beloved
enflamed him.
The moon
above the roof shone.
The king loved him.
Asfūn was ensnared with desire.   20

The king loved him,
ensnared with desire.
God had endowed him
with so much beauty!
If the king spent an hour without Anas next to him,
he would send down an envoy to bring him instantly—
        [Love, love, what an ordeal, O my Lord]
he would send down an envoy for the slightest reason.
And they made wine,
wine-making
from vines bearing grapes.   30
The king said: "O envoy,
and all who respond passionately,
bring it to me, so I may drink
from mellow wines
when companionship is fulfilled."
Anas came and arrived
(No harmful government can remain in authority)
and his anger rose, and he poured out the wine jug.
Anas said that wine-drinking was forbidden.
When he walked proudly,   40
Anas al-Wujūd, O men,
when Anas al-Wujūd walked proudly,
he gave good evening greetings to the Sultan.
Anas said to him: "I need a well-ordered entourage
of regal quality and fully equipped.
I will patrol with the troops and come to you here,
and we ask of God the Beneficent, Our Lord,
that you be our honor, O King,
until we form a dark narrow grave."
The king said to Anas: "Mount from here. Beware of spending the night   50
far from my sight, I cannot bear that in silence.
If I were informed of the coming of
the bridegroom of death,
I would ransom my soul! None would reproach me!
I would ransom my soul, my soul, my soul—
and the rest of my body!¹²
Nor would I live
a single night
after you in the homeland."
Anas mounted the glorious steed,   60

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¹² Alternate trans.: "I would ransom my soul and the rest of my *people*."

Anas al-Wujūd mounted the steed,
and he drew himself up.
Servants surrounded him
like the scattering of stars.
He mounted the glorious steed and Anas al-Wujūd
rode expertly,[13]
making the envious sad.
The sultanate
looked upon him
and soldiers surrounded him.   70
He came below the palace window and sang a request,
below the palace window
he sang and waved his turban.[14]
He had two cheeks that shone, and above them a turban.
The vizier's daughter, Bud in the Rose,
looked down wearing rich cloth.
He lifted his glance—
ah!
He saw her face and her smile.
He lifted his glance—
he saw her face, the lovely one!   80
He became, in the ardors of love, humbled, wounded.
He concealed his secret;
he could not reveal
nor express to others the meanings of words.
He concealed his secret,
He concealed his secret.
He saw her face, the beautiful one!
He became, in the ardors of love, wretched, overcome.
        [O God Who is One, *about love*]
He concealed his secret,   90
he could not complain
nor find the strength to rein in horses.
O, Bud in the Rose,
when she saw his entourage,
more distinguished than the sultan's
on the day he rode,

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[13] Lit.: "he bent forward and straightened" to describe the motion of a mounted rider.

[14] "He waved his turban" is a pun with two additional translations: "he whispered" or "he caused trouble."

she was enflamed, Bud
in the Rose,
with love for him!
And the heart submitted to passion for him, and desire.   100
She said: "I wish you joy,"
        [Whoever reproaches a lover is reproached]
She said: "I wish joy
to whoever joins you
on the bed cushions and spends
time with you.
We are ensnared by love,
O Anas al-Wujūd,
may God cause you to be ensnared with me!
God willing, may years and a year turn in our love."
My words return   110
and the song is certain:
when Anas al-Wujūd walked about the city
there was a clamor
that would burst a lion's gall bladder.
He returned to the Sultan Asfūn and spoke these words to him,
he returned to the Sultan and said: "Ah, O passion,
I beheld waterwheels set in motion by love,
and both breasts like pomegranates,
white, and on them a ring and an ornament.
I beheld waterwheels bringing forth water, and flowing   120
beneath the trees, branches watered morning and night.
Woe to he who encounters passion! He is seared, ended;
He is bewildered; he thrashes in seas of darkness.
Muhammad, we praise him.

PAUSE

O, how happy are you who praise the Prophet Ahmad Muhammad,
Ahmad Muhammad
Who dwells in the city of Yathrib.
Anas al-Wujūd,
a youth weary from love and passion!   130
I have seen peaches ripened;
the beloved's spittle is sweet, to the ill a cure.
O woe to those struck by passion, he is ended and seared.
He weeps for himself, branded by passion.
My words return to Bud of the Rose—
Come, little daughter of the vizier!
She weeps, she has tears, one following another, flowing.

Suddenly—
she had a nurse from among the women—
The nurse entered; she found Rose   140
weeping,
tears soaking the veil.
The nurse said to her:
"For whom do you weep, do you weep?
Are you weeping in pain or over loved ones who are absent?
Your father is the vizier of the kingdom,
the vizier is seated on the king's right hand.
He rules the ministers, all listen to his word."
Rose said to her:
"O nurse   150
I only weep
for love of a leader, one whose beauty sears me.
I intended to conceal the secret—
love
overcame me! I wept,
I was enflamed by him!
Before, I was innocent."
Rose said to her nurse:
"Can you be the go-between
for our love,   160
for our passion?
Can you ensnare him in ardor?
If he is free
of any attachment, then ensnare him!
Do not be afraid of him, you have my surety."
The old nurse said to her: "I will go to him,[15]
but I lack the courage to speak to him directly."
Rose said: "Take the letter,
a missive that he will accept.
It will not require you to speak or converse."   170
The nurse withdrew,
not required to speak or converse.
Bud in the Rose
took out a pen
and a sheet of paper.
Tears from the beauty's eyes poured forth:
"To whom shall I lament!
In your love and passion I am ensnared!

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[15] Lit.: "I take it upon myself to go to him."

Bitter is the drink after so much tastiness,
bitter is the drink after the fountain of Paradise. My strength is lost—   180
in love, one's strength diminishes.
We heard a proverb
from those experienced:
'when are lovers to be reproached?'"
The beginning of the letter—
        [intoxication, my brother, everything has meaning]
the beginning of the letter, in the letter
(and the words are explained)
and the grapevine cast shadows on the face:
"To whom shall I lament?
I am wounded by your love.   190
Bitter is the drink, the savor of food is gone."
The beginning of the letter
(again the words are explained),
the garden's blossoms fall on the beauty's face:
"O lucky is she who embraces another!
[Ah, more words! Speech increases]
and the wine cup goes round.
Let us be intoxicated, you and I, O Anas al-Wujūd, for a thousand years!
Let us be intoxicated, you and I, two thousand years—
as if
only a moment in my embrace.   200
Look upon my cleavage
and my sash:
white, and on it, an earring
with a nose-ring;
white, wearing earrings,
delicate as a bird;
two eyebrows and the eyes ablaze
when they dart back and forth.
You strut upon the cushions
with measured steps,   210
you cure the ill whom love sears.
They weren't wrong who named you
Bud in the Rose."[16]
She said: "Or
they weren't wrong who named you
Anas al-Wujūd!
O you whose glance conquers all lions—

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[16] ʿAwaḍallah makes a mistake in line 213 that he corrects in line 216.

you make whoever loves you rejoice,
you make whoever loves you rejoice!
You are surrounded by soldiers! From the day I loved you no one could
      reproach me.”   220
She sent the letter
with the nurse, who went forth.
The nurse was sent
to Anas al-Wujūd, O listeners,
Bud in the Rose sent the letter because of her love for him.
The nurse found Anas al-Wujūd seated cross-legged.
She bowed low before
his right foot. She kissed it.
She said: “The one who concerns us
gives greetings.”   230
She said: “The one who concerns us
loves you greatly,
Bud in the Rose, the vizier’s young daughter,
a queen equal to you (she wears silks),
a queen
equal to you (and of the rarest kind).”
He interpreted the letter.
He understood it came from a suffering lover!
Bitter is his drink after such joy—
tears fell from his eyes,   240
poured out like a watercourse.
Then he called angrily like a male dove,[17]
then Anis al-Wujūd called angrily while his tears flowed.
He had tears upon the cheek descending copiously.
Those experienced in love say:
When are lovers to be reproached?
He read the letter and his tears welled up,[18]
his tears fell heavily
upon the cushions, his cheeks were wet.
Anas al-Wujūd wrote her a letter.   250
O, in his letter he composed poems and odes!
He brought forth the letter and brass slate
saying “May my cheek be a trampling place for my beloved!
By God, have pity, O Rose,
O woman of languorous eyes!

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[17] Lit.: “he squawked.”

[18] “He read”; lit: “he interpreted. . . .”

Passion for you has flared, and for that there is no reproach.
Your eyebrows are two bows, O Prince's daughter,
and your mouth,
a date in the hands of the gourmet,
and your mouth, O Rose,   260
beautiful!
Other than a tiny bean, O beauty, nothing could find room there.[19]
Your full breasts! O vizier's daughter,
from the day I loved you my tears flowed."
Anas al-Wujūd, the Prince, said:
"Beware of reproaching
those who love.
Her belly folds are pure silk
that are expensive
in price and light in weight.   270
If you consider
her navel,
you would say, O Merciful God!
You look at her venerable *shaykh*, around him a shrine.
You look at a venerable *shaykh*, around him a mausoleum.
The ill who visit him are sure to find rest.
You deposit a pledge to the *shaykh*.
You visit the mausoleum.
Enter without permission, you will soon be harmed!
Your feet, O Rose, like cakes of soap,
your tresses, O Rose, incense against madness,   280
you strut on cushions with measured steps.
You captivate the languid made ill by passion.
Your spittle, O Rose is a cure for the languid."
He wrote the letter, his tears flowing.
Love tortured him,
Anas al-Wujūd, the Prince.
He said to the nurse: "O nurse, listen to my words."
The nurse took the letter and she went forth,
but she was thinking about the Prince's love.
While entering the house, she met the vizier,   290
and the letter fell instantly from her hand.
The letter fell, and the vizier picked it up,
He said: "Whoever lives long enough sees all."
He hastened home like a bird to Rose's mother saying:
"What happened to your daughter? She is ensnared by passion?"

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[19] Lit.: "other than a bean . . . nothing could find room."

She said to him: "O Prince of the Arabs,
did I love you because of silver or gold?
What happened to me, happened instantly to my daughter."
Muhammad let us praise Him."

Arabic Transliterated Text

1	ṣalli ʿala -lʿarabi -lhāšimi ʾaṣīl iljidūd
2	ya -lli -f ṣalātu ʿala ṭaha timḥi -zzinūb
3	ʾabdi w- afannin ʿa -lmaskīn anas ilwijūd
4	šabb I ẓana -lhawī wiyya -lġarām
5	ʾaṣl ilḥikāya kān ānas ilwijūd
6	fi - lḥusn I mutbadaʿ
7	wi kād ilḥasūd
8	lī jūz ʿuyūn āh āh
9	lī jūz ʿuyūn dubbal
10	balā kuḥl I sūd
11	ilxadd I šamʿa
12	kēf nawwarat fi -ẓẓalām
13	ilxadd I šamʿa
14	fi -ẓẓalām nawwarat
15	wi -lḥubb I wi -lmaḥbūb
16	fīh tiwallaʿat
17	gamar
18	fōg issiṭūḥ šallaʿt
19	ḥabbu -lmalik
20	ʾaṣfūn w- inšabak fi hawā
21	ḥabbu -lmalik
22	wi -nšabak fi hawā
23	min kutr I ma taḥaff
24	jamālu -lilāh
25	iza gaʿad saʿa wala jā ḥadā
26	yinizzilu mirsāl bayjību gawām
	[ya -lḥubb ya salām ya salām ilḥubb wi -lbala ilḥubb wi -lbalā ya rabbi]
27	yinizzilu mirsāl kān ʿala -hwān sabab
28	wi -lxamr I ṣanaʿū
29	isṭināʿ ilxamr
30	min itāq ilʿinab
31	gal-lu ya mursāl
32	wi kull min ṭarab
33	hātūh li ašrab
34	min ʿatīq ilmudām
35	iza tammit iṣṣuḥba
36	wala jā haḍar
37	matibga ʿala -ssulṭān ḥakūma ḍarar
38	yigūm miʿā ilġulba yikibb ijjirār
39	yigūl baga šurb ilmudāma ḥarām
40	lama xaṭar
41	ʾanas ilwujūd ya rijāl

42   lama xaṭar anas ilwujūd ya rijāl
43   massa ʾala -ssulṭān amsa fi haza -nnīhār
44   gal-lu ʾaʿūz-li wakba bi -liḥtidāl
45   bi -lmamlakiyya bi -lwazar ittamām
46   ʾatūf bi -lʿaskar wa ʾajīlak hinā
47   wi nuṭlub min allāh ilkarīm rabbinā
48   tibga līna ṭayyib ya malik ʿizzinā
49   lama niʾanis gabr I ḍayig ẓalām
      [ya salām]
50   gal-lu ʾirkab min hinā wi ḥissak tibāt
51   ʿan nāẓri ma gdarš I ʾadūg issukāt
52   ah law šawarbūni
53   ʿarūs ilmamāt
54   ʾafdīk bi rūḥi lam ʿalayya malāma
55   ʾafdīk bi rūḥi bi rūḥi bi rūḥi
56   ʾana wi bagiyit ilbadan
57   wala -īšīš
58   lēla waḥda
59   baʿdīk fi -lwaṭan
60   rikib jawīd ilʿizz
61   rikb- ijjawād
62   anas ilwujūd wi -ʿtadal
63   wi -lġuzz I ḥawalē
64   misl I rašš ilġutām
65   rikib jawād ilʿizz u kān anas ilwujūd
66   māl wa -ʿtadal
67   xalla -lḥawāsid kamūd
68   issulṭana
69   -tfarrajit
70   wi ḥawlu junūd
71   jā taḥt I ṭāg ilgaṣr u ġanna suʾāl
72   taḥt I ṭāg ilgaṣr
73   wi ġanna wi dašāš
74   lī jōz xudūd yiḍwi wi min fōgu šāš
75   bint ilwazīr ilward fi -lakmām
76   ṭāla min ġāli -lgumāš
77   gall innaẓar
78   ah gall innaẓar
79   šāf wijhihā wi -lbusām
80   gall innaẓar
81   šāf wijhihā da -lmalīḥ
82   ʾaṣbaḥ bi lōwʿāt ilmiḥabba zalīl jarīḥ
83   katam bi -sirru
84   magidirš I -ybīḥ
85   wala yigūl li -nnās bi maʿna -lkalām
86   gall innaẓar
87   gall innaẓar
88   šāf wajhiha da -jjamīl
89   ʾaṣbaḥ bi lowʿāt ilmiḥabba miskīn zalīl
      [ya wāḥid ya wāḥid ʿa -lḥubb]
90   katam bi -sirru

91 lam gidir ynīn
92 wala -ltagāš guwwa yigirriš ḥuṣān
93 ah ilward I fi -lakmām
94 lama šāfit wakbitu
95 ʾamyāz min issulṭān
96 fi yōm rukbitu
97 tiwallʿit ilward
98 fi -lakmām
99 fi miḥabbitu
100 wi -lgalb I ṭīwaʿa ila -ʿšgu wi hām
101 gālit haniyān
     [ah wallah illi yilūm ahl ilhawa yitlām]
102 gālit haniyān
103 li-lazi yijmaʿk
104   ʿa -lfarš I -w yigaḍḍi
105 zamānu miʿak
106 ʾaḥna -nšabakna
107 ya ʾanas ilwujūd
108 rabbina yišbukak
109 in šā -llā tidūr fi ḥubbina ʿāmmān wi ʿāmm
110 yirjaʿ kalāmi
111 wi -lġunā lu mustanad
112 lama xaṭar anas ilwujūd fi -lbalad
113 lī ṭanṭana
114 tifgaʿ mararit -lasad
115 ʿāwid ʿala -ssulṭān iṣṣifūni gal-lu kalām
116 ʿāwid ʿala -ssulṭān wi gāl ah ya -lhawa
117 ʾarēt issawāgi dayra ʿa -lhawa
118 wi -lnuhd ki -rrumān -litnēn sawa
119 ʾabyaḍ wi maḥṭūṭ li ḥalag wi -lḥuzām
120 raʾayt issawāgi tijbid ilmā wi sāḥ
121 taḥt ilġuṣūn ilʾaġṣīn tizgi lēl wiyya ṣabaḥ
122 ya wēl li-laʿšu ilġarām itkawa wi rāḥ
123 yiḥtar yiglaʿ fi buḥūr izzalām
124 muḥammad niṣalli ʿalēh

[pause]

125 ya masʿadak ya -lli tiṣalli ʿala -nnabi
126 aḥmad muḥammad
127 aḥmad muḥammad
128 sākin madīnt ilyasribī
129 ʾanas ilwujūd
130 šabb izzanā -lhawa wi -lġarām
131 raʾayta kumitra wi- xūx istawā
132 rīg ilmaḥbūb sukkar li -lʿalāla dawā
133 ya wēl I min lāšu -lġarām rāḥ wi -tkawā
134 yibki ʿala ʿala nafsu kawāh ilġarām
135 kalāmi ʾila -lward I fi -lakmām
136 taʿāli bnēt ilwazīr
137 tibki ya ʿēni wi liha damʿ I sābig yasīl

138 ʾilī kānit
139 liha dāda mn- ilḥarīm
140 daxalit ildāda tilga -lward
141 tibki
142 timišš iddamaʿ bi -llitām
143 gālit liha
144 ildāda bitibki tibki li mīn
145 biki ʾalam wala ḥabāyib
146 yikūnu ġāyibīn
147 ʾabūki wazīr issulṭana
148 wazīr ʿa -lyamīn
149 yuḥkum bi wizarā yismaʿū lu -lkalām
150 gālit liha
151 ya dāda
152 ʾana ʾana ʾana lam bakit
153 ilā bi ḥubb ahyaf jamālu -tkawit
154 jēt aktim I -b sirru
155 ilḥubb
156 ġalabni bakēt
157 tiwallʿit ana bi min baʿd I ma kunt I xām
158 gālt - ilward I li -ldāda
159 tigdari ʾinti tuwṣali
160 bi ḥubbina
161 bi ġarāmina
162 bi hawāna tušbikī
163 ilkān xāli
164 min ilmiḥabba ʾašbīki
165 matifzaʿīš minnu ʿalēki -lʾamān
166 gālit liha -ldāda -lʿajūz ʿalayy bawṣalu
167 lakin matajīnīš jalāda baga ʾasālu
168 gālit xud maktūb
169 farāman bayigbalu
170 mayiḥwajikši li -lḥadīt wala -lkalām
171 saḥabit ildāda
172 yihwajikši li -lḥadīt wala kalām
173 ilward I fi -lakmām
174 saḥabit galām
175 wi firx ilwarag
176 wi -ddamʿ I min ʿēn ijjamīla ya ʿēni -ndafag
177 ʾirti li mīn
178 fi ḥubbak wi hawāk inšabak
179 wi marr I mašrūbu baʿd I dāk ittiʿām
180 u marr I mašrūbu baʿd sansabīl wi ḍāʿ ilgiwa minnīh
181 min ilḥubb I ʿazmu galīl
182 simiʿna masal
183 min ilʿarifīn
184 mita ʿala ʿala ʾahl ilmiḥabba malām
185 ʾawwal ilmaktūb
     [taxdīr kullu ʿād ya xāy taxdīr kull li maʿna]
186 ʾawwal ilmaktūb fi -lmaktūb
187 wi -lgōl inšaraḥ

188 wi -l‘anab ‘ala wajh I ya ‘ēni ṭaraḥ
189 ʾarti li mīn
190 fi ‘išritak injaraḥ
191 wi marr I mašrūbu ya‘ni wi tarak itt‘ām
192 ʾawwal ilmaktūb
193 tāni wi -lgōl inšaraḥ
194 ward ijjanīyin ‘ala wajh ijjamīla ṭaraḥ
195 ya baxt I min ḍamm
     [ah kitir ilḥadīt ‘ād]
196 wi dār iggada‘
197 ʾaskar ana ana w -inta ya anas ilwujūd wa law alf I ‘ām
198 ʾaskar ana w -inta law alfēn sana
199 [kaninahu] kaʾinnahu
200 laḥẓa fi ḥuḍni ʾana
201 matunẓur iššaqīn
202 wi šayxi ʾana
203 ʾabyaḍ wi maḥṭūṭ lu -lḥalag
204 wiyya -lxuzzām
205 ʾabyaḍ wi maḥṭūṭ lu -lḥalag
206 dagg ittiyūr
207 wi -lḥajibēn wi -l‘ēn wāl‘īn
208 laman tiḥum
209 tuxṭar ‘ala -lfarša
210 bi xaṭra ganūn
211 tišfi il‘alīl illi kawā -lġarām
212 wala xāb min sammāk
213 ilward I fi -lakmām
214 gālit wala wala
215 xāb min sammāk
216 anas ilwujūd
217 ya -lli bi laḥẓak kitt I kull ilʾisūd
218 ʾafraḥt I min ḥabbak
219 ʾafraḥt I min ḥabbak
220 wi ḥawlak junūd min yōm ḥwītak ma ‘allayya malām
221 ʾarsalit ilmaktūb
222 ma‘ -ldīda ṭil‘it tisīr
223 marsūla
224 ʾila ʾanas ilwujūd ya sami‘īn
225 ʾarsalit ilmaktūb li maḥabbitu
226 tilga ʾanas ilwujūd jālis ‘ala tanšitu
227 ṭīṭit ‘ala
228 gadamu ilyamīn ḥabbitu
229 gālit warāna warāna mīn
230 bayigra -ssalām
231 gālit warāna mīn
232 tiḥibbak katīr
233 ilward I fi -lakmīm bnēt ilwazīr
234 malaka kida zayyak wi tilbis ḥarīr
235 malaka
236 zayyak w- atḥaf niẓām
237 fassar ilmaktūb

238 ligyu min miḥabb I -nẓanā
239 wi marr I mašrūb baʿd I dāk ilhanā
240 nizl- I dumūʿ ilʿēn
241 tiṣabṣib ganā
242 baga yitarjim zayy I dakar ilḥamām
243 baga yitarjim anas ilwujūd wi damʿu yasīl
244 līh damʿ ʿa -lxadd nāzil ġazīr
245 galū ʾahl ilġarām ilʿarifīn
246 mita ʿala -lahl ilmiḥabba malām
247 fassar ilmaktūb wi damʿu ṣadūd
248 damʿu ḥaṭal
249 ʿal -lfarš I ball ilxidūd
250 katab ilmaktūb liha ʾanas ilwijūd
251 yamā fi -lmaktūb gaṣṣad wi gāl
252 saḥab ilmaktūb wi farx inniḥḥās
253 yigūl xaddi li maḥbūbi yikūn madās
254 bi-llāhi ʾalṭūf ya ward
255 aya -mm ilʿuyūn inniʿās
256 šabb I hiwēki wala ʿalēhiš malām
257 ḥawājibīki gisān ya bint ilʾamīr
258 wi fummik
259 balaḥa fi ʾīd ilwakkil
260 wi fummik aya ward
261 jamīl
262 ǧīr ilfūla jamīla mayzarigš I -mkān
263 nuhūdik ilburāz ya bint ilwazīr
264 min yōm hiwītik wi dumūʿi tasīl
265 gāl anas ilwujūd ilamīr
266 ʾawʿa tilawwim
267 ʿala ʿala ʾahl ilġarām
268 ilbaṭn I ṭayāt ilḥarīr innaḍīf
269 illi ġili
270 tamanu wi ḥimlu xafīf
271 in jēten
272 fi -ṣṣura tigūl ya laṭīf
273 tunẓur li šēx ʿāli wi ḥawlu magām
274 batunẓur ila šēx ʿāli wi ḥawlu -ḍḍarīḥ
275 wi min zāru -lʿayyān lāzim yistariḥ
276 tixuṭṭ I nadr iššēx
277 tizūr iḍḍarīḥ
278 tudxul bala dustūr yiḍurrak gawām
279 xufūfaki aya ward I walūḥ iṣṣabūn
280 ḍufūraki aya ward I baxūr li-jjunūn
281 tuxṭir ʿala -lfaršīt bi xaṭra ganūn
282 tisbi ilʿalīl illi kawā -lġarām
283 rigāki aya ward u šifa -lʿalīl
284 katab ilmaktūb wi dumūʿu tasīl
285 ʿaẓẓabu -lḥubb
286 anas ilwujūd ilamīr
287 gāl liha aya dāda ʾismaʿī li -lkalām
288 xadit iddāda -lmaktūb wi ṭilʿit tisīr

289 lākin tifakkir fi hawā -lamīr
290 hiyya wi daxla fi -lbēt itlgāha -lwazīr
291 wi -lmaktūb ṭabb I min īdha gawām
292 ṭ abb ilmaktūb w-itlafā -lwazīr
293 gīl ya ma -lli yiʕīš tuwirrī -ssinīn
294 rawwaḥ li ʾummiha ka-ṭīr wi yigūl
295 ēh illi jarā li bintik inšabakit bi -lġarām
296 gālit-lu ya ʾamīr ilʕarab
297 yaʕni ʾana hwētak ʕaškān faḍa wala ʕaškān dahab
298 illi jarā-li jarā li binti gawām
299 muḥammad niṣalli ʕalēh

The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer

A. N. Doane

What is the nature of writing and what is the role of the scribe in a culture in which speech has not lost its primacy? If we think of Anglo-Saxon scribal writing in terms of "ethnopoetics," we can think of human responses to the voice, of a scribe obeying the somatic imperatives voice imposes, with text being as much act, event, gesture, as it is thing or product, with its origins not just in prior texts, but in memory and context. John Miles Foley has shown how written documents can never be equivalent to spoken acts and yet he also stresses and demonstrates that we can and must derive performance traces from them (1992:290-91). And Dell Hymes has often stressed the personal and particular as an essential category in the study of "ethnopoetics." In his view, traditional texts are not just vessels of trans-individual "meaning" deriving from a tradition or of linguistic facts reducible to one structuralist patterning or another. As he has demonstrated in "Language, Memory, and Selective Performance: Cultee's 'Salmon's Myth' as Twice Told to Boas," traditional texts must be put to the test of what he calls "practical structuralism" (1985:393):

> "Practical structuralism" . . . or "descriptive structuralism," has to do with the elementary task . . . called "gathering," as distinct from "collation." Linguistic controversy today usually presupposes the results of "gathering." The argument is not about what exists (in one sense at least) as it is about how what exists is to be understood in terms of a model or general theory. Of course a theory directs attention to some facts and away from others.

In ethnopoetics he sees the arguments circling around the issue of stylistic analysis, how to see some features as more significant than others (394-95):

> The choice will be the larger patterning that best accounts for all the data, that best fits the covariation of form and meaning in the text. In this respect

'texts fight back'.... A pattern that is formally feasible may do violence to content, forcing reconsideration of what the possibilities of marking and patterning are.

Analysis of traditional texts can transcend the structuralist concerns favoring meaning over sound or vice-versa by considering a third plane: what Hymes calls "act and event."[1]

The hypothesis of this paper is that the Anglo-Saxon scribe copying vernacular texts, and particularly vernacular poetic texts, is in many cases a special kind of speaking performer and, as such, has a status analogous to that of traditional performers of oral verbal art, but who as part of his performance situation has the task of copying a designated register of utterance from one sheet of sheepskin to another. In the course of doing this job, moving back and forth between inner and outer speech and spoken and textualized utterances, the scribe recreates the transmitted message

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[1] In a fundamental way my argument, while sharing some of Hymes' assumptions, will move in the opposite direction from his, as a result of the historical development of editing in the different fields of ethnopoetics and Anglo-Saxon. While I want to stress the signs of the purely individual and transient in the manuscripts, Hymes is trying to find the fundamental structurating principals of Charles Cultee's two somewhat varying versions of the same story: "A tape recording of Cultee's performance, if one existed, would add to our understanding, but it would not much affect the form/meaning relationships discoverable through the words themselves. These relationships would still obtain, whatever the tone of voice, intonational contour, and distribution of pause. Cultee's voice might be found to reinforce some relationships, clarify others, override and play off against still others. Or his voice might demonstrate the pace at which Boas had instructed him to dictate. In any case, the text still permits inference as to what he meant. . ." (1985:396-97).

But performance, as I understand it, consists precisely in those interpretive and exoteric gestures that are given it by the voice, that make it to rise out of the matrix of "the text," so that text and performance coexist in interpretive tension. From an editorial standpoint, the same tensions exist between "the text" (an editorial ideal) and a (writing) author's own various extant material versions. Peter L. Shillingsburg has made the important distinction between "work" and "version." The work is "the product of [the author's] imagination. It is shaped variously, grows, is revised, changes, develops in the author's mind. The author's notes and drafts are aids to his memory and imagination. As the work achieves completeness of form in the imagination . . . the written representation of it achieves not only a fullness but a stasis or rigidity" (1986:45). The version "is one specific form of the the work—the one the author intended at some particular moment in time" (47). The version is, in other words, an author's performance or idea of the work as he realizes it in a particular stint of writing.

through his own performance within the tradition.[2] It is enlightening to an Anglo-Saxonist, constrained to work with mysterious texts copied in unknown circumstances 1000 years ago and more and attempting to discover some of the life that was once in them, to see Dell Hymes, an ethnographer working with much younger traditions, struggling with the same problematic, straining the elusive documentary traces of performance confected by Franz Boas a century ago from oral events he witnessed and recorded and trying to tease out of them, not text, but performance (1985). It is also poignant to see Hymes, in another place (1981:341), evoking the experience of Anglo-Saxonists as if they were a model for ethnographers, as if Anglo-Saxonists had perfected the art of deriving living texts out of dead documents.

Would it were true! But over the past century theories about the formula- and verse-structure of Anglo-Saxon poetic texts and the morphology, syntax, and phonetics of Old English language, as well as the assumption that the model of text-production that governs modern mentality and textuality also applies equally to Anglo-Saxon texts, have virtually swamped the documentary facts, the manuscripts, and if not making them exactly invisible, have imprisoned them within the vast armature of modern editorial and critical practices, rendering them almost irrelevant beside the edited products. Yet these manuscripts are the handiwork and the performance traces of Anglo-Saxons themselves and may have much to tell us about the nature of the ethnopoetics of the Anglo-Saxons if they are

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[2] Basso, who used the term "ethnography of writing," outlines an important goal of research, which I hope impinges on this paper (1974:426): "In contrast to earlier approaches, which have dealt almost exclusively with the internal structure of written codes, the one proposed here focuses upon writing as a form of communicative *activity* and takes as a major objective the analysis of the structure and function of this activity in a broad range of human societies. Such a perspective does not obviate the need for adequate code descriptions . . . but it intentionally goes beyond them to place primary emphasis upon an understanding of the social and cultural factors that influence the ways written codes are actually used. In this way, attention is directed to the construction of models of performance as well as models of competence, to the external variables that shape the activity of writing as well as to the conceptual grammars that make this activity possible." Unfortunately, in his analysis of texts Basso chooses to look at the difference between informal and formal letters: the distinctive factors he analyzes arise not from performative elements but from differences of genre and convention. It would seem that to analyze performance effectively one would have to stay within the same set of genre expectations in the different data sets under analysis.

allowed to display themselves in the light of "practical structuralism."

When I speak of the scribe as performer I mean to apply the ethnographic sense of "performance" as expressed by Richard Bauman, that "performance . . . consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence" (1975:293). In literary studies this is a power reserved to writing authors. The elision conceals what for folklorists is the most important element of Bauman's definition, the one that makes the difference: performance is "a mode of spoken verbal communication." The notion that the present argument strives to emphasize and recuperate is that the scribe's performance is the product not only of the power of writing, but also of the power of speaking, and the scribe's performance is therefore considered not as faithful duplication, but as the exercise of his own "communicative competence" within the tradition that normally resides in speaking and traditional memory.

For exactly forty years, since Magoun's famous founding article on "the oral-formulaic character of Anglo-Saxon narrative poetry" appeared in 1953, it has been widely assumed that in its origins much Old English poetry was in some sense "oral." But, as Ward Parks has pointed out recently (1991), the net result of the oral-formulaic theory has been the radical textualization of orality even as it maintained an impermeable conceptual barrier between writing and orality. In French and German medieval studies since the 1970's, the dichotomy of orality and writing has been increasingly rejected as false and a long period of productive interaction and mutual influence has been recognized.[3] The interface of orality and writing has not been so generally acknowledged in Anglo-Saxon studies; in fact in the past decade there has been a wide backlash against orality as an important concept at all. Whatever the position of individual critics in the debate, the almost universal setting of the terms as "oral" vs. "lettered" has tended to divert Anglo-Saxonists' attention from the truly essential insight of oral traditional studies, that "oral texts," are, to use Bauman's terminology, "emergent," subject to ongoing reformulation

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[3] Michael Curschmann wrote in 1977, referring to early Middle High German: "We have forgotten . . . that in a culture which is still predominantly oral, in the general sense, there is no room for an absolute juxtaposition of oral and written, in a specific sense, and that when we use the term 'oral' in speaking about the Middle Ages we are of necessity speaking of a cultural phenomenon that is infinitely more varied and complex than that from which the Theory derives" (71).

throughout their traditional lives.[4]

This insight, which seems to me to have so much explanatory power in individual cases of early medieval poetic practice and manuscript manifestations, continued in specific instances to yield to the brute power of the closed written texts that confronted medievalists in their manuscripts and editions. Even the most ardent oralists seemed paralyzed in the face of these fixed texts. An "oral text" got written down once and for all and thereafter was closed, finished—to be succeeded only by written operations. It became a collection of formal properties (such as formulism, parallelism, stock scenes, and so forth) that might be evidence of pretextual oralism, but the textualization or objectification of what were in reality events or actions was not contested. The traditional text, once written, lost its warrant of traditionality and had to be regarded in the same way as any written text, subject to the same operations. As for editors, if they considered orality at all, it was only to recover the "original" first written form (usually in a past far removed from the date of the manuscript) closest to some mythical defining oral moment. This first writer and any successors, far from being regarded as possibly sympathetic and knowledgeable participants in the traditional cultural exchange, were assumed to be outside the oral loop, mere recorders whose duty was to subsume the traditional material entirely into the realm of written culture. The "impermeable barrier" contributed to a reified notion of the scribe as a non-traditional writer who could receive and transmit language without participating in its emergence.

Let us turn to the other side of the gap: the "written residue" of the tradition, the manuscripts themselves. The most striking fact, even allowing for the passage of a thousand years and more, is the suspiciously

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[4] The recent groundbreaking work of Mary Carruthers (1990) on the primary role throughout the Middle Ages of memory and voice in the composition of learned Latin writing, her understanding that "works" exist ideally in the memories of the educated and that "texts" have the status of cues or prompts for memory, doubtless has much to contribute eventually to our understanding of the development and preservation of traditional oralistic vernacular texts during the same period. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between Carruthers' idea of *memoria*, an elaborately learned behavior reserved to a cultural elite (and from which scribes are, almost by definition, excluded), and "traditional memory" as used here, a competence for elaborated utterance in the vernacular widely diffused as part of the ordinary language apparatus available to all normal speakers. Bede's story of Cædmon is, after all, not the miracle of how the angel taught one man to sing where nobody could before, but how the angel overcame one man's inability to sing in a cultural situation where even all the farmhands practiced the oral-formulaic technique.

low survival rate of manuscript evidence for Anglo-Saxon poetry. Of upwards of 1000 manuscripts that have come down to us from Anglo-Saxon England (as listed by Gneuss 1981), a mere *five* contain vernacular poetic texts as a significant part of their contents. A few dozen others hold various short poetic texts and fragments, but these are often preserved as marginalia, additions, or metrical liturgical texts. The facts of preservation suggest that Old English poetic texts never did exist in any great numbers, and for good reason—their natural mode of existence was in orality, with the result that they only got written down in rare and unusual (if now mostly irrecoverable) circumstances.

Nevertheless a few poetic texts, amounting to several thousand lines, are preserved in two copies; not much perhaps, but enough to make clear another striking fact: never are these two-copy texts written in such a way that they could be said to be identical—even discounting the inevitable sprinkling of scribal errors. Yet when they are compared in their two versions line by line, they are clearly the "same" texts, not different recensions. And the variations are not of the nature of random error; they are for the most part "indifferent" variations—that is, they could not be detected as erroneous or ungrammatical if there were only one uncontested copy (as is the case with the vast majority of poetry): all but a handful of the variants make sense—there is usually nothing to choose between them in this regard, though sometimes one variant breaks the rules of alliteration. Variation is the norm, it would seem, not the exception in the copying of poetic texts.

Moreover, the textuality of the manuscripts shows, beyond verbal variation, various irregular features that seem to be the product of gestural imitation of speech—marks in the writing that are analogous to the concomitants of speaking beyond the phonemic string—variable spacing, free morphemic word division, and diacritics, which tend to make sense as marking, albeit in an unsystematic manner. These seem to stand for the very features of phonic speech that modern textuality does not formally mark, such as rhetorical pauses, rhetorical word-stress, and variations of pitch and loudness. This textuality is always unstable within and between texts in matters of layout, beginnings and endings of texts, capitalization, punctuation, spacing, and diacritics—in fact it is as "emergent" in its way as the texts that it conveys. I will call this a speaker-based, writer-based textuality that differs radically in its features from the textuality of Latin texts in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts copied from the eighth century on, which

were developing a much more reader-based and regularized textuality, a textuality that seems rather familiar to a modern reader (Parkes 1987).

For example, the poem *Soul and Body* has an overlapping section of 120-odd lines preserved in two late tenth-century manuscripts, the Exeter Book and the Vercelli Book. Here are parallel extracts from those two texts[5] transcribed from the manuscripts and arranged comparatively to show how they differ in many details even as the gist remains substantially the same in both versions (orthographic/phonetic variants are ignored). (The first version of each line is from the Vercelli text; the second version is from the Exeter; verbal variation is in bold; grammatical variations are underlined; present lineation follows the Vercelli manuscript; the lineation of the Exeter manuscript is indicated by slashes.)

V: Hwæt druhðu dreorega tohwan drehtest ðu me eorðan
E: hwæt druguðu dreorga tohwon dreahtest / þu me eorþan
  What have you done, bloody one? Why afflict you me, earth's

V: fulnes ealfor **wisnad** lames ge licnes lyt ðu ge **mundest**
E: fylnes   eal for **weor nast**   lames gelicnes / lyt þuge þohtes
  foulness? You decay (are dried up) completely, figure of clay. Little
      thought you

V: tohwan þinre sawle **þing** siðþan wurde syððan oflic
E: towon þinre sawle **sið** siþþan wurde / siþþan heo of lic
  what your soul's fate afterwards would be after it from the body-

V: homan læded wære : hwæt wite ðuðu me **weriga** hwæt
E: homan læded wære · hwæt wite þume / **werga** hwæt .
  case would be led. What? do you blame me, weary (damned) one? Lo,

V: ðu huru wyrma gyfl lyt ge þohtest **þa ðu lust gryrum**
E: þu huru wyrma gifl · lytge þohtes
  you worms' food, little you thought [, when you pleasure (leading to)
      terrors

V: **eallū ful geodest hu ðu on eorðan scealt wyrmum to**
   all fulfilled, how you upon earth must (be) for worms

V: **wiste . hwæt ðu onworulde ær lyt ge þohtest** hu þis is
E: hu þis / is
   (some) food. Lo, you in the world had little thought] how this is

V: þus lang hider <u>hwæt þe la engel</u> ufan of roderum sawle
E: long hider <u>7þeþurh engel</u> ufan ofroderum sawle
   (thus) long here <to abide> (V): .Lo you indeed an angel down from
                                      heaven a soul
                           (E): and to you by means of an angel down
                                    from heaven a soul

V: onsende þurh his sylfes hand meotod ælmihtig of
E: on/sende þurh his sylfes hond meotud ælmihtig of
   sent through his own hand, lord almighty, from

V: his.mægen þymme . 7þege bohte blode þy halgan .7
E: his / mægen þrymme   7þe þa ge bohte blode þyhalgan 7
   his power-strength and you (he) redeemed by means of holy blood and

V: þu me <u>mid</u> þy heardan hungre gebunde 7ge hæft nedest
E: þume / þy heardan   hungre gebunde   7ge hæft na dest
   and you with hard hunger bound and imprisoned me

V: helle witum . **eardode** icþe on innan nemeahte icðe
E: helle / witū <u>ic þe</u> In in nan noicþe of meahte   flæsce bifongen
   with hell-torments. . . .

They further differ in the strategies of spacing. Vercelli is in general spaced according to lexical categories—almost every word is separated by a minimum space, as in modern textuality, and thus a minimum of rhetorical meaning can be attributed to the spacing. Exeter, in contrast, is spaced according to phrase groups, so that there is a directed rhetorical effect that breaks the text into a series of imprecations by the indignant soul against the guilty body. On the face of it, the Exeter presentation encourages a rhetorical, "histrionic" oralization, which seems natural for a text occurring in an anthology of poetry, that is, rhetorically heightened pieces. Equally naturally in a text found in a book of homiletic and doctrinal material (mixed prose and verse), the Vercelli presentation is relatively flat and

"prosy" in its presentation and is perhaps meant for private reading and meditative, private oralization (see C. Sisam 1976:44).   As written performances, apart from the textual variations, these are completely different texts, implying different genres and expectations for reception. A "performance edition" of each manuscript would want to emphasize these differences, not mask them by the conventions of modern print textuality.[6] As presented below, the Exeter version should be read as a series of dramatic, personal accusations, while the Vercelli version should be read in a calm, steady voice that emphasizes the expository value of the statements about the relation of soul to body. (The relative size of spacing indicates relative length of pause. The signal "-" indicates a measured beat, roughly equivalent to an eighth rest.)

Exeter

     hwæt druguþu - dreorga?
     tohwon dreahtest þu me? - - eorðan fylnes - eal for weor nast -
lames gelicnes - - - lyt þuge þohtes towon þinre sawle sið siþþan wurde -
- siþþan heo of lic homan læded wære

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[6] Contrast the "normal" edition of Moffat, designed to facilitate silent, private study and recuperation by the eye. It conflates the two texts into a third "performance," one resembling a modern text in punctuation and verse-division, while calling attention to all the changes to the originals (text from Moffat 1990:50):

    Hwæt drug<e> þu, dreorga? Tohwon dreahtest þu me,
    eorþan fylnes? Eal forweornast
    lames gelicnes. Lyt þu geþohtes
    to<h>won þinre sawle sið siþþan wurde
    siþþan heo of lichoman læded wære.
    Hwæt, wite þu me, werga? Hwæt, þu huru wyrma gifl,
    lyt geþohtes, <þa þu lust gryrum
    eallum fuleodest, hu þu in eorðan scealt
    wyrmum to wiste. Hwæt, þu in worulde ær
    lyt geþohtes> hu þis is long hider.
    Ond þe þurh engel ufan of roderum
    sawle onsende þurh his sylfes hond
    meotud ælmihtig of his mægenþrymme
    ond þe þa gebohte blode þy halgan
    ond þu me þy heardan hungre gebunde
    and gehæftnadest hellewitu(m).

hwæt - - wite þume werga?

hwæt - - þu huru wyrma - gifl - - - lyt ge þohtes hu þis is long hider
- -7þeþurh engel - - ufan ofroderum sawle onsende þurh his sylfes hond -
- meotud ælmihtig - - ofhis mægen þrymme - - - 7þe þa ge bohte - blode
þyhalgan - - 7þume þy heardan - hungre gebunde - 7ge hæft nadest -
helle witum

Vercelli

Hwæt druhðu dreorega? tohwan   drehtest ðu me eorðan fulnes
ealfor wirnad lames gelicnes? lyt ðu ge mundest tohwan þinre sawle þing
siðþan wurde syððan oflichoman læded wære :

Hwæt - - wite ðu* me weriga? hwæt - - ðu huru wyrma gyfl lyt
ge þohtest þa ðu lust gryrum eallum ful geodest hu ðu on eorðan scealt
wyrmum to wiste .

hwæt ðu onworulde ær lyt ge þohtest hu þis is þus lang hider

hwæt þe la engel ufan of roderum sawle onsende þurh his sylfes
hand meotod ælmihtig of his mægen þymme . 7þege bohte blode þy
halgan . 7þu me mid þy heardan hungre gebunde 7ge hæft nedest helle
witum.

* MS: ðuðu

Now, the merely verbal variation between these versions has long
been noted and has been explained in two ways. The older tradition, still
quite lively among editors, chalks up variation to the deficiencies of scribes
and treats points of variation in multiple-copy texts as "hot spots" requiring
emendation (Dagenais 1991:254). Kenneth Sisam went further and thought
that the fact of variation, which he no doubt rightly assumed was just as
operative in the rest of the corpus existing in unique copies (though we
can't see it for lack of comparative material), impugned the general
"authority" of poetical manuscripts and warranted the introduction of
editorial emendations on grammatical, aesthetic, or other grounds whenever
the text didn't satisfy.[7] The other response, more in vogue at the moment

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[7] Sisam follows, with less rhetorical aggressiveness, in the tradition of A. E.
Housman, according to which scribes can do very little right and editors are derelict in their
duties who take scribal doings seriously. Invoking Sisam's argument to authorize
emendations is practically a convention in Old English editorial practice. The tendency to
denigrate the authority of manuscripts because of the indubitable fact of scribal intervention
has recently been carried to almost solipsistic lengths by Hoyt Duggan, who argues that we

(Orton 1979, Moffat 1987), is to see variants as evidence of scribal "revision," and to regard variant copies as deliberate rewritings that must be judged as versions, usually with one version being judged superior and hence "more original" than the other (it is never supposed that a reviser might actually improve a text, though that is the ostensible purpose of revision; maybe sometimes the "better" text is less original). Of course, both models in their different ways are textualist and working from origins to closure.

The strange, inconvenient, and often puzzling textuality of manuscripts is for the most part totally disregarded in critical discussions and reformatted out of existence in modern editions, textual variants being eliminated by emendation or compromise between preserved versions, while spacing, pointing, and so on are reduced to the conventions familiar in modern texts. Recently Anglo-Saxon textuality and literacy have been foregrounded and the discussion greatly advanced by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, who has introduced the concept of "developing literacy" among scribes, showing that in all likelihood vernacular literacy was quite different from our own, because its reading worked by a process of anticipation and guessing that depended as much on memory and knowledge of traditional expression as it did on accurate scanning of texts. She has also suggested some ways of taking account of the textuality of manuscripts.[8]

If we move from the manuscript facts to the concept of scribe as performer we can attribute to the scribe a dynamic and determinative role that he is normally denied; just as the storyteller of folklore was once seen as a "passive and anonymous mouthpiece or conduit," so is the scribe of vernacular texts—while his glaring marks of innovation and individuality are seen as irrelevant or deplorable. Bauman, who privileges the performer further than perhaps anyone else, sees "narrated events" as being evoked by verbal means in a narrative text that emerges only in performance. If we can put the scribe in the place of the storyteller, we might say that he takes

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have no basis for establishing Old English meter because we can never be certain of a given spot whether we have an authorial reading or a scribal "corruption" (1988: espec. 160-63).

[8] On the question of the authenticity of scribal versions, I want to separate myself somewhat from the position of O'Keeffe in *Visible Song* (1990), who, if I understand her aright, sees the competencies of the native speaker as essentially interfering with the transmission of the message, as being a source of error, however rich and interesting these phenomena might be in their own right. For her there is still a privileged original message with which scribes interfere without authorization.

not a "narrated event"—something held in the memory before performance—but an "event of narration," a preexistent text, and restructures it in the memory in the moment between reading and copying (cf. Bauman 1986:6).

The concept of the scribe as performer seems to me to deal more successfully with both the realities of the material texts as we have them in manuscripts and the requirements of the "emergent text" that is at the heart of the oral theory. The idea runs something like this. In Christian Anglo-Saxon England of all periods most scribes would be members of monastic houses. Several essential conditions are thus entailed: as patrons of these houses and suppliers of high-placed recruits to them, the secular nobility would maintain practical and cultural connections with monastic readers and writers that would encourage the continuing practice of "traditional poetics"[9]; a practical dependence on texts and writing would be normal and universal in the monastic environment, whatever the personal literacy of individuals; the practice of oralizing utterance through the liturgy and monastic *lectio* (see Leclerq 1977:18-22) would be the norm of textual reception and reproduction. But an Anglo-Saxon scribe, when writing his or her mother tongue rather than Latin, though having in most cases been trained to the technical skills of writing as a scribe of Latin, would, in the writing of the vernacular, hear as well as see what was being written; scribes would receive it from within the social penumbra of speaking in general and their competencies as speakers of the language in particular. Knowledge of the traditional discourse and native-speaker competencies would impinge on the writing to a much greater degree than would the less internalized cultural and linguistic competences imposed by written Latin. While doubtless scribes copying Latin tended to pronounce it

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[9] As we know must be the case from the large number of biblical and liturgical/monastic poetic texts preserved in the format of traditional Anglo-Saxon poetry. Wilhelm Busse argues that in the later tenth century the claim of ecclesiastical reformers that written texts had greater authority than oral traditions was being vigorously opposed by aristocratic forces (both secular and ecclesiastical), and that this gave rise to a plethora of texts asserting the superiority of writing; specifically, "the danger to this claim to authority of the books seems to originate from the resistance of laymen. In their world, this claim encounters norms of behavior which have been established by historical experience, which were then transmitted orally; on their part, these norms were at least partially threatened by the monks' claim to the superiority of the written tradition, when they intended to transform these behavioral patterns, to adapt them to the teaching of the books"(1988:33).

aloud as they wrote (and in fact we tend to forget that most of the Latin writing copied by Anglo-Saxons was also destined for the voice, since it largely consisted of prayers, litanies, liturgy, hymns, sermons, saints' lives, and so forth), they had to follow the script more rigorously in what they pronounced when writing Latin, for they would *see* a language that was not their native tongue and they would *hear* forms of words fixed in their ears by liturgical practice, which was always aural. Both eye and ear would reinforce the fixity of the text: the very speaking aloud would act as a check on the relation to the script, for when an average scribe became disconnected from the script he or she would no longer be able to speak or copy at all.[10] The formulaic rigor of this discourse would enforce a pretty clear line between the text and "error." This is apart from any questions of the greater prestige and authority of Latin texts.

It would be quite different for a scribe writing the vernacular: the scribe could speak and write from words heard in both the outer and inner voices, regardless of what the script "said." Texts would exist in a shifting zone of "gists," and would not be made familiar by daily, seasonal, or annual repetition, as liturgical texts were. What would be "heard," "spoken," and thus written would be partly determined by an untraditional medium, the preexisting script—even though its words might be entirely traditional—and partly by the tradition which the scribe possessed as a native speaker and knew to be appropriate to the genre of the script being copied. The script would be a kind of prompt or cue in two registers—presenting fixed words in one register that would suggest and promote words in another. The performing scribe thus produces a palimpsestic text in which the old text largely predetermines the new but is authoritatively overridden by the words of the new oral/written text. It is important to remember that even the worst botch of copying, by any theory, still conveys accurately the overwhelming majority of the forms of the text being copied. In the standard editorial view the "correct" forms belong to the pre-existing text (and insofar as they have persisted correctly through the tradition, to the author), while all the "incorrect" or "deviant" forms belong solely to the scribe.

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[10] There has been a tendency to overestimate the Latin accomplishments of English monks, doubtless as a reaction to the general marginalization of Anglo-Latin literature in mid-century Anglo-Saxon studies. See the corrective remarks of Hohler (1975:71-72) on the poor level of Latin literacy of English clerics and the poor execution of Latin documents in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

If we look at the text for what it was as far as its producer was concerned, a synchronic structure, the pre-text functions as a kind of external memory to the scribe, who produces the new text by a combination of this synchronic "memory" or set of cues *plus* an active, diachronically acquired competence of linguistic and discourse skills that have long since been internalized, including traditional oral memory.[11] Thus *all* the forms belong to the scribe, or rather to the present "event" of writing, even though they have a variety of sources. The fact that the texts so transmitted/performed consisted largely of formulaic presentations of well-known stories, ethical aphorisms, and ecclesiological truisms made it all the easier for "anybody" (that is, the scribe) to textually perform with some authority. Granted that some "writing events"/performances are richer than others and that doubtless there would be conflict and static between the underwritten and the overriding texts, nevertheless as part of the performance of a normal language event, a performing scribe would resolve these in a writing that made sense in terms of the living tradition of vernacular discourse as he or she possessed them at the time of writing and in ways that made harmonic sense with the understanding of the text by its writer and contemporary users (vernacular texts were not copied to preserve them for posterity but to make them available for present uses).[12]

In the transmission of traditional vernacular verbal art, whether in a purely oral medium or in the mixed vocal/writing medium of manuscripts, there is no single authorizing voice; rather, in the preservation and passing along of traditional genres and messages, even in writing, a particular message continues to be authorized by its status as a performance. The concept of error (except for mechanical writing faults) is irrelevant, if by error we mean a failure to reproduce exactly what the exemplar contained.

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[11] See Parks 1987 (espec. 512) on diachrony and synchrony in the transmission of traditional narrative.

[12] Cf. Benjamin 1968:86: "All this points to the nature of every real story. It contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, in a proverb or maxim. In every case the story teller is a man who has counsel for his readers. But if today 'having counsel' is beginning to have an old-fashioned ring, this is because the communicability of experience is decreasing. In consequence we have no counsel either for ourselves or for others. After all, counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding."

Perhaps it might have been theoretically possible for a scribe to have copied verbatim the text of an "oral traditional" message from a pre-existing script. But it seems in practice that scribes did not do that. From what we can tell, they always varied the text, as if the mere copying of a text was bad form, or empty form. The authenticity of the message was in its voice, and the voice, in the absence of any other agent, had to be the scribe her- or himself.

Meanwhile, in the act of writing, the somatic event of speaking or "mouthing" the received words transferred itself at least partly and unconsciously to the motions of writing, contributing to the wavering and unsystematic signals that we can see as part of the as yet unfixed textuality of the vernacular. In fact, if the expectation for scribes was "performance," then variability would have been seen as a positive value, as a kind of authorizing afflatus in itself. From this point of view, the scribe-as-performer would see the rewriting as enhancing the traditional text by giving it life in the present, by making it "more real." Various somatic gestures, such as exaggerated spacing, unexpected accent-marks to enhance rhetorical meaning by indicating pitch, signs of hesitation, changes of letter size, might have reinforced meanings more real to the scribe when heard than when seen. The particular "gestures" traced in the manuscripts may have been learned from the habits of writing "oralistic" Latin texts, specifically neumed liturgical texts, which show analogous spacings and markings (though much more emphatically and systematically marked).[13] We see one such scribe ('Scribe A') in Corpus Christi College Cambridge, MS 201, writing out on paginated folios 1-7 parts of the *Regularis Concordia* in an Old English version *along with* neumed Latin responses (that is, Latin texts marked for oral performance); in another place the scribe writes out as well an Old English verse version of Bede's poem *De die iudicii* (*On Judgment Day*); the totality of this scribe's performance suggests fluency in and familiarity with both traditions of writing.[14]

It is hard to keep in mind, yet it is crucial to remember that the moment of performance is probably the only moment these texts ever knew:

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[13] See Berry 1988 for a brief and clear discussion of liturgical singing practices in late Anglo-Saxon England, along with good plates of two Anglo-Saxon musical manuscripts (Oxford Bodley 775 and Corpus Christi College Cambridge 473).

[14] 'Scribe B' of CCCC 201 shows similar abilities, writing out extensive passages of Old English prose and verse and Latin prose, side by side.

how can we trace back to the original *Beowulf* as if there had ever been a single originary moment producing a text precisely reflecting what the "author" consciously intended as the perfect form to be preserved exactly as produced. It is unlikely there was a concept of stable preservation, of stable textual markers (such as marked verses in modern editions), or of closure. The "text" existed in memory and performance. If we could trace *Beowulf* back to some impossible original performance, we would find along the route a jumble of genetically linked variations, some longer, some shorter, some better, some worse, but with a tendency towards simplification the further back we went, as if we were dismantling an artichoke. We might get to the heart, but it would be a fuzzy and simple, if essential, kernel. It is more likely that the text became *more* complex and articulated over the course of transmission within a living tradition rather than "trivialized" by scribal changes.   The text of *Beowulf* we possess in British Library manuscript Cotton Vitellius A. xv of the late tenth century is the sum total of all the writings that ever took place, including the final (that is, scribal) one within its line of memorial/written transmission.[15]

To sum up: performance as I have been defining it is to be understood as centering on the scribe as transmitter of traditional vernacular messages. Such a scribe differs in his behavior from a scribe preserving authoritative messages in Latin; the performing scribe transmits a traditional gist to an audience for present use, not for future generations. As such, the scribe is part of an emergent tradition, and he is responsible to that tradition, not to an unknown "author" or to a dead piece of sheepskin, as he exercises his memory and competence to produce the tradition for a particular audience on a particular occasion.   The tradition itself is the

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[15] The attitude must have gradually changed, though the practical reality did not. For example, as a reality, scribes of the fifteenth (!) century copy Middle English alliterative poems with considerable variability, so that, for example, the four manuscripts of *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathylyne*, while not intelligible as the product of deliberate revision, are completely at variance with one another in hundreds of spots, in completely random and indifferent ways that suggest scribes are free to vary the details so long as the message and verse forms remain more or less intact (Gates 1969 presents all the variants of the four versions).   One of these fifteenth-century scribes, Robert Thornton, of whose practices we know a considerable amount, transmitted many of the Middle English alliterative poems that have come down to us; he had a tendency to freely rewrite the ends of lines, but at the same time he had internalized a new ideal of textuality, so that he tended to go back to his exemplar and cancel his free variations and rewrite according to the exemplar (see Triggs 1990:143; also Duggan 1988:150-51).

dynamic but unrealized amalgam of lore and story frameworks, of linguistic and cultural competencies that were stored in the heads of people linked within that tradition. The performing scribe produced the text in an act of writing that evoked the tradition by a combination of eye and ear, script and memory.[16]

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[16] This paper is slightly modified from one delivered at the Seventh International Interdisciplinary Conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship, New York, April 15, 1993. I thank John Miles Foley, who invited me to be on his panel, and Dell Hymes, whose work stimulated this paper in the first place; the generous advice and encouragement of both during the conference discussions have been most helpful to me as I revised this piece.

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Editing *Beowulf*:
What Can Study of the Ballads Tell Us?

John D. Niles

After setting forth the editorial principles underlying the publication of the final volume, "Melodier," of the magnificent collection of narrative song published under the title *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, Thorkild Knudsen called attention to an impasse in recent ballad research. In his view, the lack of productive new work in this field derived from a mistaken assumption about origins:[1]

> Det er mit indtryk at balladeforskningen er nær stilstand samtidig med at balladeudgivelsen er nær afslutning. Grunden til denne situation er, efter min mening, at såvel udgivning som udforskning har været bundet og er bundet til en fejl grundopfattelse som er: balladen begynder som højkulturel digtning og musik. Tværtimod denne ide er min erfaring: *alt som er meningsløst om det skal forstas i forbindelse med en historisk højkultur bliver forunderlig enkelt om det sættes i forbindelse med en traditionel folkekultur*.

> It is my impression that ballad research has nearly come to a halt at the same time as the ballad edition [i.e. *DgF*] is nearing its conclusion. The reason for this situation is, in my opinion, that both the editing and the research have been and are tied to a mistaken fundamental conception, which is that the ballad began as the poetry and music of an educated culture. My experience is exactly the opposite: *everything that lacks meaning if it is to be*

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[1] Knudsen et al. 1976:73. The translation is from this source with emphasis added, and with one comma added for clarity. The present essay is based on a paper I presented in Manchester in 1991 at a conference on "Editing Old English Texts." I am thankful to the organizers of that conference, Donald G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach, for providing the opportunity for me to present my ideas in preliminary form in a context of lively discussion of the issues involved in textual editing.

understood in the context of an historical educated culture becomes wonderfully simple if set in relation to a traditional popular culture.

By citing these words as a prelude to an essay that addresses the principles of editing *Beowulf*, I do not mean to urge a corresponding attitude in regard to Anglo-Saxon poetry, a large part of which is clearly the work of learned authors. Still, Knudsen's remarks have a bearing on at least a few Old English texts whose stylistic features may at times seem anomalous from a learned perspective. Little but error can come from reading such works as *Beowulf*, *Waldere*, the *Finnsburh Fragment*, *Widsith*, *Deor*, *The Wife's Lament*, and *Wulf and Eadwacer* as if they were either the fully formed creations of a lettered class or the debris of work of this kind. On the contrary, much in these poems that lacks intellectual or stylistic coherence when read in the context of Bede's and Alcuin's mental world becomes transparently clear when set in relation to a native tradition of oral narrative verse.

Although we can know of Anglo-Saxon oral tradition only by extrapolating from written documents—by its nature, oral poetry is not inscribed on vellum—we can be confident that for some generations, narrative or eulogistic songs dealing with the Germanic past had an honored place in the culture of the upper reaches of this society.[2]   During most of the Anglo-Saxon period, the arts of literacy seem to have remained chiefly the privilege of an ecclesiastical elite despite a strong turn toward bookmaking in both Latin and English, as well as toward vernacular literacy, in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Wormald 1977, Kelly 1990, Keynes 1990). Regardless of the advance of literacy, the ruling class did not give up its oral culture overnight. A poem like *Beowulf*, clearly directed toward an audience with aristocratic status or interests, had a socially central function whether it was performed aloud or recorded in writing. By invoking ancestral history and a common set of values, it helped to acculturate new members of the aristocracy and served to bind the members of society together in a sense of common identity and purpose. To judge from the examples of it that happen to have come down to us,

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[2] See Opland 1980, with his citations to the scholarship on this subject. For a review of scholarship concerning the oral-formulaic theory of the composition of certain Old English texts, as this theory was stated by Magoun 1953 and Lord 1960 and has since been challenged and advanced by many scholars, see Olsen 1986 and 1988, Foley 1988:65-74.

Anglo-Saxon heroic verse was composed according to formal principles whose understanding would have been practically the birthright of the wealthy and privileged sectors of society, even though some effort of historical reconstruction may be required if we are to understand these principles with precision today.

Few people will quarrel with the idea that important features of some Old English poems derive ultimately from the praxis of generations of poets pursuing their craft in relative independence from the Latinate educational tradition (which also influenced these poets profoundly through its effects on the mentality of any thinking people). I am thinking of nothing arcane here, but rather of stylistic or formal features that tend to stand out at a glance. These include a reliance on traditional Germanic plots and characters, together with an allusive way of calling these legendary materials to mind; a pleonistic and additive style, coupled with a weakness for all things deictic and gnomic; a peculiar mixture of dialect forms, including many archaisms; a habit of invoking the authority of words heard aloud, rather than read; a blind eye to the time-line of clerical history; and a reliance on stock themes, interlocking systems of formulaic diction, and parallel, chiastic, or echoic patternings that serve or could serve a mnemonic function.[3] The concept of "oral-derived" works (rather than "oral" ones *tout court*) is one that has received much attention of late (e.g. Foley 1990:5-8 and ff.) and is a key one in my formulation. It is meant to leave room for debate as to whether, in a particular instance, a text derives closely from oral antecedents or not.

Elsewhere I have discussed the probable nature of those acts of transmutation, or intersemiotic translation, by which some Old English poetry that was normally sung aloud may have been converted into written documents, or legible song (Niles 1993). Here I wish to make what I hope is a less controversial point, one that Richard Janko has made in relation to the Homeric poems and that A. N. Doane has advocated in the Old English context: that in preparing for print an Old English text that is not of obviously learned derivation, editors should refrain from smoothing out its

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[3] The features of an oral style and of the oral-traditional mentality that goes along with it have been discussed of late in the Anglo-Saxon context by Irving (1989:15-30) and by myself (Niles 1992), each drawing in different ways on Ong 1982.

ragged or rugged features in favor of textbook norms.[4]

It is by now a commonplace of anthropologically oriented literary research that wherever oral poetry occurs, it tends to have its own rhetoric that departs from the conventions of script or print.   When a text is recorded from oral performance, it often displays vestigial features of orality even when mediated by well-educated scribes. However anomalous such features may seem in a literary context, they relate directly to how language functions when voiced aloud for a listening audience.[5] Editorial methods that work splendidly when applied to texts composed pen in hand may falter when applied to ones that derive from oral perfomance, even at some remove. When oral performances yield written documents, whether through the process of dictation to a scribe (or scribes) or by being called up in the memory of a singer who has gained competence in the uses of writing, the resulting texts are a secondary phenomenon. Despite their material solidity, they remain an alter ego of the literature in question, a kind of shadow self—though admittedly, the shadow may dwarf the object that projects it. As cultural artifacts, such texts may be found just as interesting as their sources (if not more so), and they may have puzzling features. To take one hypothetical example, I suspect that Cædmon's orally dictated verses, once they were written down—not his celebrated nine-line "Hymn," but rather the other works, not now extant, that Bede attributes to him in Book IV, Chapter 24 of his *Ecclesiastical History*—would have looked strange and unpolished, as texts, in the eyes of Anglo-Saxon readers who were familiar with the norms of lettered poetry. Scribes might have been tempted to improve those texts by correcting imperfect meter, adjusting faulty alliteration, fixing vague pronoun reference, standardizing

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[4] Janko 1990 (with a slightly different rationale than the one adopted here). Doane (1991) argues vigorously for a closer scholarly engagement with the status of Old English manuscripts as records of the human voice. His remarks should be read in conjunction with the discussion of Anglo-Saxon "transitional literacy" that is offered by O'Keeffe 1990.

[5] Throughout this discussion I use the word "text" in a deliberately narrow sense to refer to the product of a scribe's labors as opposed to the voicings of singers or speakers. If, more generally, a text can be thought of as "a weaving, woven thing," then oral works are such things, but here I wish to make a distinction between the written artifact and the spoken word. For a nuanced discussion of "textual communities" in a larger sense, one that encompasses acts of oral performance as well as of scribal record, see Stock 1990.

dialect forms, and so on. With very few exceptions, these are the sorts of things that nineteenth- and twentieth-century ballad editors have done routinely when they have got their hands on some unimproved text from oral tradition. When a modern scholar with high literary standards is faced with the task of editing a ragged Old English text, the temptation to correct its errors or anomalies is strong. My argument is that while this process of improvement may make the work more readable, it may also obscure our understanding of it in period-specific terms.

As one example of a broader phenomenon, I wish to call into question the specific practice of emending Old English texts for the sake of improved meter or alliteration. But first, let me justify my argument by a brief digression.

About twenty years ago, I began to supplement my armchair study of Old English, early Greek, and Old French epic poetry by embarking upon what has proved to be deeply rewarding research into living oral tradition. Lacking the fortitude to follow in the footsteps of those literary scholars who have learned South Slavic, I undertook to find out what I could about how popular ballads are learned, performed, and occasionally recorded from oral tradition in the British Isles and North America, sometimes studying the records of the past and sometimes bringing my tape recorder into the field.

It soon became evident to me that in the British-American context, it is damnably difficult to distinguish genuine expressions of traditional balladry from literary imitations. Particularly when sifting through the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century records, where literary reworkings and impostures abound, one may feel at a loss as to how to identify texts that come reliably from popular sources. Still there is one good rule of thumb: meter. If the meter of a ballad text is good, then the text is literary. If the meter is bad, then the text may well be a record of what a singer sang or dictated. For the sake of clarity, I should specify that by "good," what I mean here is "correct according to the standards taught in schools and normally observed in print," while by a "literary" text, I mean either one that was composed pen in hand by an educated author or one that was improved substantially by whoever prepared the song for print. Rarely, texts that are recorded faithfully from oral sources also scan well; but if they do, these texts were probably memorized verbatim from print and hence never entered into the orally recreative thought-world of a traditional singer. The texts have remained literary artifacts even though sung aloud.

Albert Lord has made a similar point about epic songs recorded by oral dictation in the Balkans. In his field experience, only when the scribe repeatedly stopped the singer to request lines with a "correct" syllable-count did a metrically smooth text result.[6] In such a situation the scribe serves as *de facto* editor, as he perhaps inevitably will do to some extent. His literary sensibility affects the poem from its first entry into written form as he renders into normal metrical lines a flow of words that, when voiced by a singer, has a distinct *rhythm* but not necessarily a well-defined *meter*, to make a distinction that is useful in the realm of balladry.

To appreciate the kind of metrical fluidity in ballad tradition to which I refer, one need only consult Bronson's monumental anthology of the tunes of the Child ballads, in particular his appendix to Volume 4, which includes among many other materials some transcriptions of songs recorded since the 1950s by fieldworkers in Scotland.[7] Here I will cite just one example.

In 1803, the gist of the first part of the ballad that is generally classified as Child 106, "The Famous Flower of Serving Men," found compelling expression in a poem, "The Lament of the Border Widow," that Scott published in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Although once well known, this poem is perhaps not so familiar today as to preclude my quoting it in full (Scott 1802-3:381-82):

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[6] Lord 1960:126-27. Lord quotes one passage of 9 lines transcribed from a phonograph recording that Milman Parry made in 1934 of a singer from Nozi Pazar. The song was recited, not sung, and the lines vary from 6 to 14 syllables, with some admixture of prose. John Miles Foley finds Lord's conclusions to be too sweeping. "The Stolac singers I am editing," he writes, "compose metrically in full singing stride." Where singers get into trouble, he notes, is "when they try to perform without the instrument and the mnemonic support [that] melody and rhythm provide." (Personal communication of Jan. 15, 1993.)

[7] Bronson 1959-72. Bronson's anthology serves as a companion piece to Child 1882-98. The large scholarly literature on British-American balladry is reviewed by Richmond 1989; two studies that remain central to the field are Fowler 1968 and Buchan 1972. For additional records of recent ballad tradition in Scotland, see Henderson and Collinson 1965.

My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it a' wi' lilye flour;
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see,
Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man, by middle day,
He spied his sport, and went away;
And brought the King that very night,
Who brake my bower, and slew my knight.

He slew my knight, to me sae dear;
He slew my knight, and poin'd his gear;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

I sew'd his sheet, making my mane;
I watched the corpse, myself alane;
I watched his body, night and day;
No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him with the sod sae green.

But think na ye my heart was sair,
When I laid the moul' on his yellow hair;
O think na ye my heart was wae,
When I turn'd about, away to gae?

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

Despite the cloak of anonymity that Scott cast over this poem, which he claimed to be a "fragment, obtained from recitation in the Forest of Ettrick," there is more than one sign of a literary hand at work here. The northern dialect forms ("sae," "wae," "gae," and so on), embedded piecemeal in what is essentially an archaic English matrix, seem occasional and decorative rather than the substance of common speech. The threefold repetition that links stanzas 2 and 3 ("and slew my knight... He slew my

knight... He slew my knight") stands out as artful, as do the reiterated rhetorical questions of stanza 6 ("But think na ye... O think na ye... "). The striking motif of the widow's bearing the corpse on her back before she buries it (stanza 5) seems a precise (if rather grotesque) echo of the image of the faithful doe in the well-known seventeenth-century part-song "The Three Ravens" (Child 26). In another example of literary theme and variation, the poem's bleak closing couplet ("Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair...") echoes two lines of another poem of Scott's, one that in turn reads like a precise literary parody of "The Three Ravens." This "anonymous" lyric, "The Twa Corbies," includes the couplet "Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair / We'll theek our nest when it grows bare" (Scott 1802-3:338, lines 15-16).

But my main point here is with meter. Like any crafted poem, "The Lament of the Border Widow" can be scanned. In 28 lines I find only 3 departures from regular scansion, each time by the substitution of an anapest for an iamb (in line 1 and, twice, line 22). The unusual metrical form that Scott adopted—iambic tetrameter quatrains rhyming AABB—points unmistakably to his chief source, an English broadside ballad that enjoyed rather frequent reprinting under the title "The Famous Flower of Serving-Men."

In June 1656 this song was entered in the Stationers Register to John Andrews, London, its authorship attributed to "L.P."—presumably the broadside writer Laurence Price, whose career Dave Harker has reconstructed in some detail.[8] Reading this 28-stanza broadside ballad side-by-side with Scott's poem offers an instructive lesson in literary taste. Absent from Scott's "Lament" are the circumstantial details, the female ingenuity, the romance, the discovery, that make Price's ballad a charming and slightly risqué song of love and adventure that served as the prototype of dozens of light broadside ballads on the theme of female cross-dressing. Instead, Scott presents a bleak landscape of treachery and violence brightened only by one woman's heroic faith.

The broadside ballad scans, too. Price may have written for the streets, but like most of his colleagues in that trade, he had enough

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[8] Harker 1987. Price's broadside became detached from his authorship soon after it appeared, going through numerous anonymous printings. To be precise, Scott probably first became familiar with it in the fancy-dress version that appeared in Percy's *Reliques* (1765), a book that was a staple of his youth.

education to compose a correct bit of verse. When we turn to versions of this same ballad that have been collected from British singers in recent years, however, we enter a different world. These versions regularly derive from late printings of the English broadside ballad rather than from Scott's poem, and sometimes they show unmistakable signs of reworking in oral tradition. One example is the fragmentary version, part sung and the rest recounted, that the great Aberdeenshire singer Jeannie Robertson recorded for Hamish Henderson in 1954 (Bronson 1959-72:IV, 483-84):[9]

3.2. "The Famous Flower of Serving Men"

Archive, School of Scottish Studies, rec. No. 1954/103/A1. Sung by Jeannie Robertson, Aberdeen; learned from her mother. Collected by Hamish Henderson. Transcribed by Francis M. Collinson.
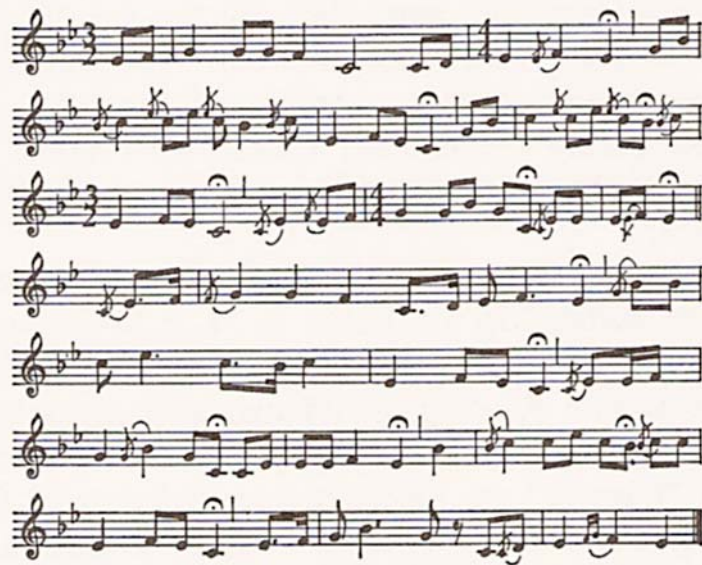
My father built me a dandy bow'r
Wi' some fine roses and some fine flow'rs.
But my stepmother showed me her spite
For she sent that robber for to slain that knight.

For to rob my bow'r and to slain that knight
And they could not do me a greater harm
Than to kill the baby

> That lay in my arms.
>
> And they left me nothing
> For to roll it in
> But the bloody sheets
> That my love lay in.
>
> She laid her haid down upon a block
> And she cut off her golden locks,
> And she changed her name from young Elleanor fair,
> She changed it to young Willie Dare.

There is a good deal more substance to the plot as Robertson then proceeds to tell the remainder of the story (484), but my interest here is in that part that she sings. Only if you fit this text to its tune does its stanzaic structure make sense. What seems at first to be a major metrical shift in the middle of stanza 2 comes to appear unremarkable, for the six short lines of stanzas 2 and 3 function musically as three long lines. With equal justice, an editor printing this text could render it as four 4-line stanzas (as above); as three stanzas consisting of 4, 5, and then 4 lines respectively; or as 13 lines with no stanza breaks.

No matter which editorial choice one makes, the lines evidently reflect Robertson's indifference to textbook rules of scansion—even her unconsciousness of these rules, perhaps. Whereas "The Lament of the Border Widow" keeps to even octosyllabic lines and regular 4-line stanzas, Robertson's lines contain anywhere from 8 to 11 syllables, and their average length of 9.7 syllables is well above the norm in tetrameter poetry.[10]

In this kind of orally generated verse, as Linda Williamson has documented in a study based on extensive fieldwork in Scotland (1985), the terms "meter," "metrical variation," "line," and "stanza" cease to bear much meaning. No succession of metrical feet through regular stanzas can be traced, while rhyme (or off-rhyme) is incidental. Instead, what one finds is the steady advance of a basic rhythmic pulse in accord with a governing melodic idea.

Robertson's version of "The Famous Flower of Serving Men," unpolished as it is (for the song seems not to have been a regular part of her

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[10] For the sake of comparison here, I am counting each pair of short lines as a single long line.

repertory), represents something other than a freak performance. It serves as a fair example of what Scottish traditional narrative song can consist of before ballad editors get their hands on it. While the style of this particular song is characteristic of Robertson's specific subculture, that of the traveling people or "tinkers" of Aberdeen, it does not differ substantially from that of other versions of the song that have been recorded from traditional singers in Great Britain. Examples are the curious version that the Dorset gypsy queen Caroline Hughes sang to Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger in 1963 in ten stanzas of varying length (Bronson 1959-72:IV, 484-85)[11] and the version in seven flexible stanzas that Henderson recorded in 1958 from the singing of Martha Reid, a Perthshire woman of traveling stock (485-86).

There is much in these latter examples that will strike the educated reader as corrupt. Whether Hughes' or Reid's *listeners* would have considered the songs corrupt is another matter. Certainly a breakdown in scansion does not indicate a breakdown in sense. On the contrary, it often results from a singer's efforts to maintain the integrity of the narrative. In general, in reading these texts, it is essential to keep in mind a point that Gower and Porter have made with emphasis in relation to Jeannie Robertson's Child ballads: "what the ear accepts when a text is sung sometimes strikes the eye as an incongruity when the line is scanned on the printed page" (1970:35).

The main point to which my remarks lead is that *the primary medium of traditional singers is the voice, not the printed page*. The point may be obvious but it is essential to keep in mind. If songs from a living tradition do sometimes happen to be frozen into documents thanks to the efforts of collectors like Henderson, Williamson, MacColl, Seeger, Gower, and Porter, then these museum texts are the secondary reflex of an oral phenomenon. We should not be surprised if, stripped of their human context, these texts seem to us to lack coherence. As educated readers

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[11] For a transcription and discussion of a different performance of this song by Hughes, see MacColl and Seeger 1977:81-86. A recording of another performance by Hughes can be heard on *Classic Ballads*, vol. 2 (Child 85-215), ed. by Peter Kennedy, Folktracks Cassette FSB-90-502 (Totnes, Devon, n.d.). To judge from these examples as well as other recorded ones, Hughes must be counted one of the most freely recreative of English traditional singers. A collation of her performances, both words and tunes, makes one uneasy with the assumption that the mode of transmission of British balladry is uniformly memorial, as is accepted for example by Jabbour 1968.

separated in time and space from the song-culture in question, we can scarcely claim competence in the systems of verbal signification that singers and their audiences took for granted. In an oral context, listeners normally have no difficulty perfecting a song in their own mind. The song has been heard before. Its story is well known. Its strains may evoke powerful memories of family and friends, some of whom may no longer be living.[12] Only a few lines of a song, even the merest humming of its tune, can thus evoke powerful emotions on the part of people who associate the song with particular people or situations of the past and who have full competence in this culture's symbolic codes.

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With this much of a preface—"Now," said the Friar, "this is a long preamble of a tale!"—I would like to argue my main point: that in the absence of clear evidence indicating a work's learned provenance, editors of Old English texts should respect the metrical freedoms and disjunctions that they discover, honoring them as possible signs of a human voice.

There are at least five reasons why emendations *metri causa* should generally be avoided in the Anglo-Saxon context.

(1) An editor can only emend the text in accord with a compelling theory of Old English meter. To date, there are almost as many theories of Old English meter as there are scholars who have written on the subject.[13] Although some of these theories may seem more plausible than others, I can see no sure way to choose among them in the absence of an Anglo-Saxon singer whom we can hear perform.

(2) Even if a convincing theory of Old English meter could be derived from the extant poetic records, one would still have to show that

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[12] Williamson (1981) has made this point with regard to traditional storytelling, which often has the effect of calling up the ghost of a person from whom the teller learned the story or with whom the story is indelibly associated.

[13] For a review of early metrical theories and for justification of a comprehensive theory of his own, see Pope 1942. More recent approaches–for the most part mutually irreconcilable ones—include Bliss 1967, Cable 1974, Luecke 1978, Hoover 1985, Russom 1987, Creed 1990, and Kendall 1991. Hoyt Duggan sensibly suggests that "metrists should more steadily exercise skepticism about the manuscript readings on which they base their work and... should be less eager to account for *all* the data as metrical" (1988:162).

Anglo-Saxon poets composed self-consciously according to this system. No Anglo-Saxon *ars metrica* has come down to us, no *skáldscaparmál*. Most accounts of Old English meter are descriptive, not proscriptive, and they do not necessarily explain very much. As Donald Fry has remarked, "Try collocating two important stressed Old English words in a grammatical unit with alliteration rules satisfied and enough particles to yield four to eleven syllables; the result almost invariably fits one of Sievers's five types" (1975:60). The question remains open as to whether the literary concept of meter, as opposed to the oral/aural principle of rhythm, had much meaning for poets working in the medium of vernacular verse.

(3) Emendations that are made *metri causa* eliminate poetic license by fiat. They can take no account of departures from the norm for special reasons or effect. If poets are not metrical automatons but poets, it seems presumptuous to remake them in our own metrical image and likeness.[14]

(4) One would expect a good theory of meter to account not only for normative alliterating two-stress verses, but also for those "orphan" verses (or isolated, non-alliterative half-lines) as well as those hypermetric verses (those with "extra" stressed and unstressed syllables) that abound in some texts. There is also the special problem of Ælfric's rhythmic, alliterative prose—or is it poetry? As far as I am aware, no current theory of Old English poetic meter deals adequately with more than a percentage of the data. An argument can be made that no one theory should even attempt to do so; but since the beauty of a theory usually lies in its simplicity and comprehensiveness, the justification for any theory worthy of the name is thereby undermined.

(5) Metrical anomalies are almost the *sine qua non* of a text that is a faithful record of an oral performance. These anomalies tend to vanish like ghosts in the light of day when one turns from the printed page to a tape-recording of a singer or, better yet, to the singer herself. Even a singer who is musically and textually illiterate may have an effortless command of the art of fitting sung or spoken words into a seamless sequence that fulfills a given melodic idea. Metrical anomalies are a function of the process of text-making and text-reading, not the process of singing and listening.

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[14] Here I am paraphrasing from a personal communication of 6 August 1990 from J. R. Hall, whose articulation of this point seems to me forceful. I am also grateful to Professor Hall for calling several articles to my attention.

If these five points have merit, then there is no need to emend an Old English poetic text except in very limited circumstances, when a lacuna appears in the manuscript or when some obvious breakdown of sense has occurred.[15]   I am advocating a conservative stance here not out of a blind respect for medieval scribes, whose efforts may not always deserve it (Sisam 1953; Moffat 1992), but rather out of regard for the singers or speakers the traces of whose words may linger in scribal records.

This conservative stance may gain some credibility if I review some instances where texts have been improved unnecessarily on metrical grounds.   The specific examples come from *Beowulf*, a work that many people take to have a relation to oral tradition, but the point that I am making is a general one.   For the sake of brevity, I will cite only the textual emendations in Klaeber's edition (henceforth K), comparing them with Zupitza's 1959 facsimile and transcription of the manuscript (henceforth Z), since K is the edition normally taught at the advanced level and cited in scholarly publications.[16]

A comparison of K and Z reveals 28 instances (some of them redundant) in which K emends although the manuscript reading is acceptable in both sense and syntax.   The instances can be grouped into four categories.

(1) Suppletion of a whole verse or addition of several verses to fill out the shape of a line or passage.
(2) Supplementation of a word, a syllable, or several syllables to a verse for the sake of better alliteration and sometimes also better meter.
(3) Substitution of one word or simplex for another for the sake of better alliteration.
(4) Minor emendation for the sake of syllable-count.

Let me review each category in turn.

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[15] What is obvious to one reader may not be so to another, of course, and thus debate concerning the need for editorial interventions is bound to remain healthy.

[16] Quotations from the text of *Beowulf* are from Klaeber 1950, diacritics and italics omitted.

(1) *Suppletion of a whole verse or addition of several verses to fill out the shape of a line or passage* (3 instances). This is a standard editorial practice. Still, as several dissenters have argued, editors ought to give more weight than they have generally done to the possibility that an "orphan" verse may stand on its own if the demands of sense and syntax are met, particularly if its two main stressed syllables are linked by alliteration or if alliteration is carried over from the preceding line.[17] Likewise, a line that is adequate according to all criteria but alliteration may be allowed to stand. The first example from *Beowulf* falls at 403b. For the sake of clarity I will quote the verse in context. Having been granted leave to enter Heorot, Beowulf's band of Geats are ushered into the hall by Wulfgar, Hrothgar's chamberlain, a *wlonc hæleð* "proud warrior" (331b):

> Snyredon ætsomne,   þa secg wisode,
> under Heorotes hrof;   [heaþorinc eode,]
> heard under helme,   þæt he on heo[r]ðe stod.
>   (402-4)

> They hastened along together while the man guided them under the roof of Heorot; the warrior advanced, bold under his helmet, until he stood at the hearth.

There is no breakdown of sense or, for that matter, of rhythm or alliteration if one reads continuously from 403a to 404a, omitting the interpolated verse and changing the editorial semicolon to a comma. What one discovers is a pattern of rich alliteration whereby initial *h* links five stressed words in three successive verses.[18] Nothing is missing; there is a redundant *a*-verse.

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[17] Bliss 1971; Kiernan 1981:185-91. Foley (1980) draws on his field experience with South Slavic oral poetry to add to the strength of this argument. Moffat (1992:819-21), perhaps unaware of this comparative evidence, still finds reason to regard "orphan" verses as probable sites of corruption. Kiernan bases his argument on trust in the overall accuracy of the two *Beowulf* scribes. Whether or not this trust is misplaced, the point about free-standing half-lines may still have independent validity.

[18] See Kiernan 1981:189 for discussion. A similar phenomenon can be noted in lines 15-17 of *The Seafarer*:

> [ic] ... winter wunade   wreccan lastum,
> winemægum bidroren,

Accepting K's incidental emendation of *heoð* (of uncertain meaning) to *heorð* 'hearth,' one can paraphrase the lines: "They hastened along together while the man, bold beneath his helm, guided them under Heorot's roof until he stood at the hearth."

Another instance of unnecessary whole-verse suppletion is at 2792b. Again I quote the verse in context. Wiglaf stands over the mortally wounded Beowulf, reviving him from the swoon into which he has fallen:

> ... He hine eft ongon
> wæteres weorpan,   oð þæt wordes ord
> breosthord þurhbræc.
> > [Biorncyning spræc]
> gomel on gio*hð*e   —gold sceawode—: ....
> > (2790-93)

> ... Again he began to cast water over him until the
> first word of speech broke from his chest.
> > The king spoke, aged, in sorrow; he gazed on the
> gold....

The verse supplied by K is superfluous, for Beowulf's ensuing speech is adequately introduced by 2790-92a. If one reads through from 2792a to 2793a, capitalizing "Gomel" and taking it as a substantive ("The old man") that serves as the subject of *sceawode*, while deleting the editorial dashes with which K sets off 2793b, the demands of sense are met. Line 2793 can be paraphrased: "The old man, sorrowing, gazed on the gold." One formula of direct speech has been introduced and no second one is necessary. The absence of an alliterating *b*-verse to respond to 2792a can be taken as signaling an appropriate dramatic pause. For a similar instance of the strategic use of a dramatic pause signaled by a half-line, one can refer to line 172 of *The Battle of Maldon*. This consists of a single orphan verse that refers to the mortally wounded Byrhtnoth: "He to heofonum wlat" (He

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> bihongen hrimicelum....(Krapp and Dobbie 1936:143)

> [I] ... lived out the winter   on paths of exile,
> cut off from friendly kindred,
> covered with ice and frost....

Here the rich alliteration is on *w*, and editors resist the temptation to emend.

looked up to heaven). Coming as it does just before Byrhtnoth's last words
(173-80), the *Maldon* verse provides a fair analogue to the one from *Beowulf*
and, to my mind, as artful an example of the uses of silence as can be found
in English literature before Chaucer.

A third and more substantial emendation for the sake of alliteration
occurs between verses 389a and 390b, in the standard lineation of the poem.
Here Klaeber and other editors introduce two whole verses to supplement
the sense and fill out the alliteration of two lines. Without the emendation,
the passage reads as follows. Hrothgar is speaking to Wulfgar, granting
Beowulf's men permission to enter the hall:

> "... Gesaga him eac wordum,   þæt hie sint wilcuman
> Deniga leodum."   Word inne abead:
> "Eow het secgan   sigedryhten min...."

> "... Tell them more, say that they have come as welcome visitors to the
> people of the Danes." He [Wulfgar] spoke to them within [the hall]: "My
> victorious lord commanded that you be told...."

While the transition between speakers is slightly abrupt, all demands of
sense are met. The lines should stand unemended, as both Kiernan
(1981:187) and Frantzen (1992:338-39) have argued.

(2) *Supplementation of a word, a syllable, or several syllables to a*
verse for the sake of better alliteration and sometimes also better meter (6
instances). This practice of emendation will be sufficiently clear, I believe,
if I simply list the verses in question, leaving the reader to pursue their
reading context if necessary:

	K	Z
149b	forðam [secgum] wearð	forðam wearð
	because [to men] it became	because it became
586b	no ic þæs [fela] gylpe	no ic þæs gylpe
	not that I boast [much] of this	not that I boast of this
1329a	[æþeling] ærgod	ærgod
	a preeminent nobleman	preeminent

2139a	in ðam [guð]sele	in ðam sele
	in that [war]hall	in that hall
2525b	ac unc [furður] sceal	ac unc sceal
	but [in addition] it shall come	but it shall come
	about for the two of us	about for the two of us
2941b	[fuglum] to gamene	to gamene
	for the amusement [of birds]	for amusement.

K's additions to these verses hinge on the faith that the *Beowulf* poet always maintained a prominent alliterative scheme and did not tolerate verses of fewer than four syllables; but the existence of these six verses can be taken as evidence for a contrary assumption, namely that the poet was sometimes content with good sense regardless of the normal pattern of alliteration and syllable-count. Nowhere is the manuscript reading defective in a prose sense (and we should bear in mind that all Old English poetry is written out as prose). Verse 1329a still satisfies the rules of alliteration if unemended, while the initial *g-* of *gamene* in 2941b could be taken as rich alliteration in conjunction with the two *g*-initial words of line 2940. Since verses 149b and 2525b, if unemended, lack substantives and are too light to function independently, each is probably best printed conjoined to 150a and 2526a, respectively, as a set of 3 syllables in anacrusis:

> forðam wearð ylda bearnum   undyrne cuþ (150, revised)
> because it became openly known to the sons of men
>
> ac unc sceal weorðan æt wealle,   swa unc wyrd geteoh (2526, revised)
> but the two of us will experience what fate devises at the wall

These editorial choices would leave the verses that are now printed as 149a and 2525a as orphan verses analogous to 2792a.

(3) *Substitution of one word or simplex for another for the sake of better alliteration* (14 instances). The most forthright examples of this editorial practice are K's emendations of *handgripe* 'handgrip' to *mundgripe* 'handgrip' (965a) and *hildplegan* 'battle play' to *lindplegan* 'lindenwood play' (1073b). In each instance the two nouns are virtual synonyms. While the emended readings restore correct alliteration for the lines, the manuscript readings may still be preferable.   They point to a rough and ready quality in the poet's artistry that reveals itself in an

indifference to alliterative norms even when these norms could easily be satisfied. What counts is the sense, which here is bluntly expressed in the less poetic of the two synomyms. *Hand*, not *mund*, is the normal word for "hand." *Hild* likewise is the prosaic word for "battle," while *lind* denotes battle only metaphorically. Other examples of the same kind of editorial adjustment are *hilde gefeh* 'rejoiced in battle' (2298b), which K renders as *wiges gefeh* 'rejoiced in war'; *heal hroden* 'hall adorned' (1151b), which K emends to *heal roden* 'hall reddened' so as to maintain the rule that alliteration on the fourth stressed syllable of the line is to be avoided, although the bitterly ironic phrasing whereby Finn's hall is "decorated" with corpses is therefore lost; and *synsceaþa* 'evil harmer' (707a), which K gives as the more evocative *scynsceaþa* 'demon harmer' for the sake of more exact alliteration with *sceadu* (707b), even though *synsceaþa* makes good sense and is used of Grendel elsewhere in the poem (801b), while *scynsceaþa* is an unattested conjecture that should here be rejected (O'Keeffe 1981:485). While the line as unemended departs from the normal habits of alliteration in *Beowulf*, the poet as well as the scribe may have tolerated such liberty.

A special subtype of this kind of emendation consists of the change of *h*-initial words that are written out quite clearly in the manuscript, where they make good sense, to vowel-initial words. Instances are *æfter hæleðum frægn* 'he inquired about the heroes' (332b), which K emends to *æfter æðelum frægn* 'he inquired after their lineage'; *handlean* (1541b) and *hondlean* 'hand-reward' (2094b), which K gives as *andlean* and *ondlean* 'reward,' respectively; and *hondslyht* 'blow delivered by hand' (2929b and 2972b), which K changes to *ondslyht* 'counterblow.' As Taylor and Evans have argued, none of these emendations is necessary if one accepts that on occasion the poet allowed vowel-initial words to alliterate with words having initial aspiration.[19] Such collocations may have been his equivalent to the off-rhyme that is characteristic of Jeannie Robertson's, Caroline Hughes', or Martha Reid's singing style, or indeed that can be heard in the recordings of virtually any singer (including contemporary pop and rap recording artists) whose primary audience consists of auditors, not readers of texts. The notorious change whereby the man whom the scribe four times names *Hunferð* (499a, 530b, 1165b, 1488a), with an emphatic capital

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[19] Taylor and Davis 1982; Bevis 1965:165. Nicholson holds that the alliterative patterns in these lines invite both *hond-* and *ond-* readings (1984:274-75).

H the first time the name appears, is renamed *Unferð*, a form that has been adopted in all current editions and in almost all commentary on the poem from the late nineteenth century until the 1980s, is an equivalent phenomenon. In this instance an intelligible and well-attested Anglo-Saxon proper name—one that in the context of this poem may carry somewhat sinister overtones, connoting "the one of Hunnish spirit"—is rendered into a name of debated meaning ("mar-peace"? "folly"?) or of no particular meaning at all.[20]

(4) *Minor emendation for the sake of syllable-count* (5 instances). Of first interest here are the following four verses:

	K	Z
652a	[Ge]grette þa Then he greeted	Grette þa Then he greeted
1404b	[swa] gegnum for [just as] he went straight on	gegnum for he went straight on
1546a	brad [ond] brunecg broad and shiny-edged	brad brun-ecg broad, shiny-edged
3124a	hilderinc[a] of warriors (gen. pl.)	hilderinc warrior (nom. sg.)

The same defense of these manuscript readings can be made as for the second group cited above. The rule that a verse requires a minimum of four syllables is a modern one, and there is no way to test for a consciousness of it on the part of Anglo-Saxon poets. Retention of *hilderinc* in 3124a requires that we construe the noun in apposition to the

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[20] Defenses of "Hunferð," with differing justification, are offered by Nicholson 1975, Vaughan 1976, Kiernan 1981:188, Taylor and Davis 1982:619, and Dahlberg 1986. Kiernan also suggests retention of MS *handlean*, *hondlean*, and *hondslyht*, as does Vaughan 1976:39-40, n. 4. Vaughan's postulate that the initial phoneme *h-* was lost in certain words in *Beowulf* that keep a conservative spelling is not confirmed by Scragg 1970 (see 176-79 for examples from *Beowulf*) but is inessential to the question of emendation. Nicholson 1984 suggests that there is deliberate ambiguity between the two significant names "Hunferth" and "Unferth." For a full review of the controversy relating to the Danish *thyle*, see Fulk 1987. Not all readers will follow Fulk, however, in his suggestion that Unferth is an otherwise unattested character out of Germanic legendry.

pronoun *sum* 'one' in 3123a, referring to Wiglaf, whereas emendation to the genitive plural form *hilderinc[a]* requires construing it in apposition to *eahta* 'of eight' in the same verse, an inconsequential distinction. Retention of *brad brunecg* in 1546a would require insertion of an editorial comma between the two adjectives. There is precedent for this kind of verse elsewhere, specifically 2829a, *hearde heaðoscearpe* 'hard, battle-sharp,' and 2863a, which however K emends from *sec sarigferð* 'sick, sad in spirit' to *sec[g] sarigferð* 'a sad-spirited man.' Preferable to K's readings for these two verses are Heyne-Schücking's *hearde, heaðo-scearpe* and *sec, sarigferð*, respectively (Von Schaubert 1958:*ad loc.*).

Also falling into this category of emendation is 9b, *þara ymbsittendra* 'of those neighbors,' which K curtails to *ymbsittendra* 'of neighbors' on the basis of an assumed rule that precludes anacrusis in this type of E-verse.[21] The rule should be considered to be of too uncertain authority to override the manuscript reading, which again is accepted in the Heyne-Schücking edition.

What is accomplished by this analysis?

Not being passionate on the subject of minor textual issues that do not affect our basic understanding of a poem like *Beowulf* one way or another, I am reluctant to work up a grandiloquent plea that my proposed non-emendations be adopted. I can enjoy an improved text as much as anyone else. But it has not been my primary intention to argue textual details. Many of these details have been discussed in more probing manner by E. G. Stanley, who for his own reasons arrives at conclusions much like the ones advocated here, while still reluctantly accepting the need for several emendations for the sake of alliteration.[22]   What I am proposing is *a different way of reading Old English verse*, or of reading some Old English verse, at least: namely, as the textual record of a kind of literature that did

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[21] In an effort to eliminate anacrusis of this kind, Pope (1988) proposes emending *þara* "of those" to *þær* "there," while appending this adverb to the end of the preceding verse.

[22] Stanley (1984) is willing to accept emendation to *mundgripe* (965a), *lindplegan* (1073b), and *Unferð* (4 instances) and suspects loss of at least three verses at line 402. Distinguishing metrical emendations from alliterative ones, he affirms that "metrical anomalies . . . should, however, not be regarded as requiring editorial improvement unless the sense is deficient too" (250-51).

not need texts for its existence.

The manner in which this poetry carried itself in its primary medium of the human voice—the style, the rhetoric, the aesthetics of it—did not necessarily correspond to what we expect from the products of a highly educated hand. We look for a flawless text arranged in lines and half-lines on the page. What we find at times is metrically unkempt, in the manuscript version that underlies our critical editions. We look for inner consistency in a story. What we find at times is an additive style by which individual narrative passages have their own authority, almost independent of what is said elsewhere, as when the hero is said to have been considered a slack youth (2183b-88a) even though we hear of him in the Breca episode as having been a young man with an extraordinary propensity for action. We look for a poet sensitive to mistakes. What we find is one who at a critical moment of Beowulf's fight with Grendel's mother curiously refers to his Geatish hero as *freca Scyldinga* 'lord of the Danes' (1563b), just as later on, an unnamed messenger refers to the time when Beowulf ruled over the *Scyldingas* 'the Danes' (3005b), not the Geats. Yet oddities like these—the first of which Klaeber lets stand, while the second one he corrects—can go unnoticed in an absorbed reading of the poem, just as they would have been unnoticed by a listener intent on what happens next in the narrative. And this absorbed reading or hearing of the poem is the better one; that is, the one that is closest to the spirit of *Beowulf* as an act of interpersonal communication.

What I recommend is that as readers of *Beowulf*, we approach it in two ways. First, we can take it as a textual document, one that unknown people saw fit to bring into existence to suit some kind of literary, political, or educational purpose. As we do so, we should use all our usual philological and literary expertise to make sense of it, guided by the recognition that when a work of oral literature is taken down in writing, it may acquire features of style that depart from those of oral performance. Second, and equally importantly, we can try to hear *Beowulf* as a poem. This means projecting ourselves into the vanished world of sound to so as to read through the text, not merely read it (Niles 1983). This is a difficult task. All our education cries out against it. Still it is one that is in accord with the primary agenda of what has recently been called the New Philology, which, in the words of Suzanne Fleischman, should aim to "recontextualize the texts as acts of communication, thereby acknowledging the extent to which linguistic structure is shaped by the pressures of

discourse" (1990:37). It is a task worth attempting if we are to hope to understand *Beowulf* not only in our own literate terms, but also in terms of its primary medium of spoken words—words in their ornamental splendor, words voiced by living people and heard by other people, all of whom formed parts of a community knit together, bound to their ancestors, and armed for life, by what in a more humble and convivial context (Dunn 1980) has felicitously been called the fellowship of song.

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The Study of the Orally Transmitted Ballad: Past Paradigms and a New Poetics

Teresa Catarella

The study of the orally transmitted narrative and of the ballad in particular has been, up to now at least, relatively homeless, spoken of and treated by many—linguists, philologists, literary critics, folklorists, sociologists, anthropologists—but wholeheartedly adopted by none.

What is the orally transmitted ballad? Is it folklore? Partly, but as Alan Dundes points out, not everything orally transmitted is folklore and some forms of folklore are not orally transmitted (1966a:7). Is it literature? Wellek and Warren defend oral poetry and narrative as indeed worthy of serious literary consideration: "clearly, any coherent conception [of literature] must include 'oral literature'" (1973:22). Is it anthropology? Lévi-Strauss tells us that the anthropologist studies oral traditions because he sees in them the keys to unconscious thought processes (1963:25).

Categorizing the oral ballad as a genre is difficult because it is interdisciplinary and all-encompassing. It is hard to define and delimit. It is anomalous, neither wholly linguistic nor literary; it is associated with certain marginal social classes and groups (the illiterate, the semi-literate, the rural peasantry, women, children), and thus has an important sociological and ethnological component. Further, its often dreamlike symbolism and mythic themes reach into the complex areas of mythology, legend, and psychology.

Oral ballads are complicated to study because there are no fixed, correct, or archetypal texts. There are no authoritative texts. In fact, there are no texts at all. Compared to the long history of literary criticism of written works, with all its various movements and critical orientations, the study of oral narratives has been somewhat unfocused and diffuse and has lacked appropriate theoretical supports and apparatus, namely, a poetics of balladry, a poetics of oral transmission.

My purpose in this brief contribution is to characterize what I take to

be the four dominant paradigms of past ballad studies, which still, in a way, influence modern research and to offer a few comments on the present state of affairs and on the need to develop a transformative poetics for the orally transmitted ballad.

With regard to the notion of paradigm, I am following Thomas Kuhn's well-known *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970). Each scientific community bases its research on a set of received beliefs, which define procedure and expectations and affect the selection, analysis, and interpretation of data—these are "paradigms." Science students are given prolonged exposure to the consensus of opinion regarding the universe and its laws as determined by the scientific community that they enter. These paradigms are not only the preconditions for scientific work, but they also preempt any other approach that would ignore or undermine these basic, shared assumptions.

Paradigms are not exclusive to the natural sciences; humanists, as well, proceed from a store of received beliefs and favored methodological techniques and critical approaches. We are all aware of cases where theory for theory's sake seems to be the starting point and *a priori* literary, psychological, or sociological assumptions are imposed upon the texts at hand. "Popular," "folk," and "traditional" materials have also been susceptible to paradigm-dominated approaches.

Let us begin with Bishop Thomas Percy's decision, in 1765, to publish *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Percy's interest in these poems was purely antiquarian. He saved them from the fire only after consultation with some learned friends "who thought the contents too curious to be consigned to oblivion" (xiii). Percy appreciated the ballads as rare specimens of archaic poetry, which reflected earlier customs, language, and manners, but noted that "these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them" (xiv). Even though the attitude toward ballads and the concept of balladry has been substantially refined since Percy's publication of his collection, the Percian vocabulary of preterition has been and still is one of the most widespread ways of talking about ballads. From this we derive our first paradigm: *the ballad as relic, as an antique*.

The reaction to Percy was swift, especially in Germany. Johann Gottfried Herder combined an emotional anti-Enlightenment ideology with a hostility to everything tainted by French classicism and called for a return to Germanic national self-consciousness through mythology and balladry.

He sought out "natural" poetry as ardently as his French contemporaries sought "natural" man and posited the purer Naturpoesie to the artificial and affected *Bildungspoesie*.

Herder's notion of the *Stimme des Volkes* left its mark on succeeding generations. The organic primitivistic paradigms of this period were further developed and articulated in the next century with the advent of the Romantic movement. The glorification of the unspoiled *Volk* and their poetry reached new heights. The major spokesman for this view and the first serious theorists and collectors of folklore (fairy tales, ballads, and so on) were the Grimm Brothers. The polarization between Art and Nature had, by this time, reached full flower and the Grimms restated Herder's popular distinction in terms of the individual, known poet of "art poetry" and the collective, anonymous poets of "folk poetry." Their contemporaries Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Achim von Arnim published the earliest collection of German folksongs under the title *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806-8) and the Grimms published their own collection of fairy tales in 1812.

As the Romantic movement spread, collections of ballads appeared in greater numbers throughout Europe, most of these ballads being taken from old chapbooks and songbooks and not from contemporary oral tradition. At this time, the disciples of the movement shared the basic conviction of the communally poeticizing folk. This "folklore mysticism," as Arnold Hauser dubs it (1951:I, 162), has been almost unanimously disavowed, yet to this day the basic intuition it contained, that of the essential collectivity of oral poetry, remains valid. Our second paradigm: *the ballad as the voice of a people, the voice of a nation.*

The last part of the nineteenth century marked a period of transition as numerous ballads collected from contemporary oral tradition in different European regions began to be published. Some important early collections were, in France, the Comte de Puymaigre's *Chants populaires recueillis dans le Pays Messin* (1881); in England, F.J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98); in Italy, Constantino Nigra's *Canti popolari del Piemonte* (1888); in Germany, L. Erk and F.M. Böhme's *Deutscher Liederhort* (1893-1894); in the Portuguese area, Almeida Garrett's *Romanceiro e Cancioneiro Geral* (1843 and 1851) and Theophilo Braga's *Cantos populares do Archipelago Açoriano* (1869); in the Catalán area, M. Milá y Fontanals *Romancerillo catalán* (1853); and in Spain, Juan Menéndez Pidal's *Colección de viejos romances que se cantan por los*

asturianos (1885).

Ballads had ceased to be a patrician amusement, a model of nationhood and communal poeticizing, and became subject to more serious historical and philological consideration. However, perhaps partly as a reaction to Romantic extravagance but also as a consequence of the study of the relation of epic to ballad, French and German theorists embraced the other extreme, namely, the literary and cultured origins of *all* poetry, written or oral. The "people," the *Volk*, do not create; all poetry is the product of a certain individual at a certain time.

Furthermore, according to this view, this individually composed poetry, when popularized and assimilated by the lower social and educational strata, undergoes a process of decay. The main spokesman for this *Rezeptionstheorie* was John Meier, whose book *Kunstlieder im Volksmunde* (1906) stresses this higher to lower movement. This notion received its most memorable formulation from Hans Naumann in his term *herabgesunkenes Kulturgut* (1935:112), "deteriorated artifact or mentifact" in Heda Jason's translation (1975). According to Meier and Naumann, the logical consequence of this apparently indiscriminate absorption of cultural goods by the lower classes is a process called *zersingen*. The concept of *zersingen* expresses the inevitable deterioration that the poems experience within the process of oral transmission: the "sunken" poems are "sung away." This theory, which revolves around the idea that change is equivalent to deterioration, is still with us today. Alan Dundes dubs it the "devolutionary premise" and notes that it is based on the assumption that "the oldest, original version of an item of folklore was the best, fullest or more complete one" (1966b:17-18). Our third paradigm: *the ballad as an inferior adaptation and assimilation of "higher" culture.*

In Spain and the British Isles, however, a different approach developed as a direct result of the strength of orally transmitted balladry in those countries, as opposed to the relative paucity of oral balladry in France and Germany at the beginning of this century. The English and American ballad collectors acquired firsthand experience of the vicissitudes of oral transmission, and turned away from the problem of origins and dates to the study of ballad variation and style. Child printed all available texts, rather than select the most complete or most perfect. F.B. Gummere urged his colleagues to "forget the tyranny of dates" (1907:79). Phillips Barry wrote that "the same ballad as we know it is represented by an indefinite number of versions" (1914:76). In the introduction to his edition of Child's ballads,

Kittredge claimed "we have no thought of the author of any ballad, because... he had no thought of himself.... [H]e is a voice rather than a person" (1932:xi, xxiv).   Cecil Sharp maintained "the method of oral transmission is not merely one by which the folk song lives; it is a process by which it grows and by which it is created" (1907, rpt. 1965:12). In Spain, Ramón Menéndez Pidal affirmed "la variante no es un accidente fortuito y adverso... sino que es el modo normal de vivir del romance" ("the variant is not a fortuitous and adverse accident but the normal way of life of the ballad," 1943:397).   That the variant, previously viewed as deterioration, could also be admitted as positive transformation was an important step toward the understanding of oral poetry. In the English- and Spanish-speaking worlds, the concepts of "author" and "archetype" were rethought and the Romantic notion of the poeticizing masses reasserted, but with precision and subtlety: Sharp's "communal choice," Kittredge's "communal composition," Barry's "communal recreation," Menéndez Pidal's "autor-legión." An evolutionary, dynamic model was being developed in contrast to the previous static descriptive principles. Thus, our fourth paradigm: *the ballad exists through change and is defined by its variability.*

We are now at the threshold of modern work on the orally transmitted ballad. It would be foolhardy to try to summarize the immense amount of work accomplished since Bogatyrev and Jakobson's groundbreaking essay "Die Folklore als eine besondere Form des Schaffens" (1929). I think we can characterize the general tendency of late twentieth- century oral poetry studies by stressing its eclecticism. Many different approaches are being employed parallel to each other: historical-philological, comparative and geographic, stylistic, formalistic, semiotic and structuralist, narratological, performance and context-centered, and so on.

This is a positive development. However, I think it is hard to break the spell of the paradigms of the past. Are we still unconsciously influenced by the old *Kunstpoesie-Volkspoesie* dichotomy? Can we study and grasp the workings of the oral narrative without automatic dependence on the safe, familiar, and permanent categories of the written? What should be the parameters of an oral poetics?

As I see it, this new poetics of balladry would be composed of three main approaches that would complement and unite each other like the three sides of a triangle. On one side would be the classical historical-

philological approach, on another the folkloristic approach, and on the third what I would call a transformative approach. Let us look at these more closely.

I think the philological, historical, comparative approach to balladry cannot be deemed obsolete. It includes such necessary activities as the collection, organization, and codification of oral ballad material and of the relevant manuscript and printed versions, stylistic studies and linguistic analysis, the establishment of diachronic correspondences (or lack of same) between the archaic ballads in early collections and broadsides and their modern versions. It encompasses the study of the interaction of the written and oral word, the selection and reediting process of the early printed versions, broadsides and chapbooks, the adaptation or rejection of printed ballads by oral tradition, the influence of modern commercial recordings, and the establishment of synchronic comparisons, for example, the relations between the same theme in different areas and among different ballad traditions.

The folkloristic aspect is equally important. Here I would include the study of the ethnological, anthropological, and context-centered elements of the oral ballad including the functions of the oral narrative in society as work ballads (harvesting, sheep-shearing, sewing, washing), ritual ballads for different occasions (weddings, Christmas, funerals), lullabies, children's play ballads, religious ballads, ballads that report historical or contemporary events, and so on. It also encompasses performance: when the ballads are sung, where, with whom, to whom, and what the audience's reaction is, as well as the sociocultural environment in which ballads are transmitted. The musicological component is important here as well: the different types of melodies and rhythms, singing styles, the influence of tunes on the verse line, and the significance of the danced ballads, for which we have evidence from all over Europe.

These two, the philological and the folkloristic, are essential and important aspects for the understanding of the oral narrative. But the third side of the triangle deals with the heart of the ballad, with its nature and essence, namely, its potentiality, or in Eco's terminology its "openness."

This aspect has been the most neglected. Several factors have hindered the study of the ballad's potentiality. Two of the most important are a) the need for easily accessible, multiple versions of the same ballad in order to analyze the phenomenon of transformation and variation and b) the paradoxical nature of the oral narrative itself. I would like to comment

briefly on each of these.

First of all, the establishment of a representative working ballad corpus is essential to the analysis of oral narratives. It is not sufficient, as in Propp's study of the fairy tale, to select one version or one tale as representative of all the rest. As far as possible, we need a substantial number of authentic oral discourses either collected in the field or gleaned from reliable collections. This involves compilation, codification, and international cooperation.[1]

Secondly, the orally transmitted ballad is a paradox. It presents us with a Heraclitean situation—the only stable element is change. The ballad is constrained by fixed rules and conventions, yet it allows the generation of an infinite number of texts. It obeys certain grammatical, syntactical, and metrical requirements, yet offers open-ended expressive possibilities. A new poetics would need to recognize that oral poems are essentially different from written texts. Thus the methods, categories, and principles of what we call "literary criticism" or any other kind of text-oriented approach do not apply to the oral mode.

The difference between the oral and the written is not degree, but essence. Specifically, whereas written narratives are transmitted through manuscripts, books, periodicals, broadsides, and so forth, oral narratives are transmitted directly from person to person. The written work, preserved by paper and ink, can be long forgotten, then suddenly resuscitated in essentially the same fixed form. An orally transmitted poem must remain relevant and meaningful to survive. Since nothing is set down on paper (until the folklorist comes along, of course), the same narrative or poem will never be recited twice in exactly the same way. As William J. Entwistle notes, "The ballad exists only at the moment of performance"

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[1]Unfortunately, there is often a lamentable lack of information shared among ballad scholars studying different national traditions. For example, in a recent article, the respected scholar Lutz Röhrich, ex-director of the German Folk Song Archive, stated that a completely uninfluenced oral tradition can hardly be imagined ("eine völlig unbeeinflußte orale Tradition kann man sich ohnehin kaum vorstellen" [1988:356]). This might be true for the Germanic tradition, but it does not apply to others, such as the Hispanic. The Hispanic ballad tradition offers numerous examples of ballads evolving independently of any literary influence. Furthermore, contemporary field work in the past few years has brought to light some sensational finds of ballads thought to be extinct in modern oral tradition and which have been recently discovered; see, for example, Catalán 1989:29-47 and Trapero 1986 and 1989.

(1939:29). The oral poem is variable, the written poem is fixed.

The writer has a deliberative audience—a reader—who can pause, speed ahead, or turn back to refresh his memory. The writer can establish his or her own style, handling language in an unorthodox way, using difficult, arcane, willful syntax, demanding chronological jumps of the reader. The oral poet, on the other hand, must depend on the auditory memory of the listeners. This is an immediate and non-reflective situation. We are all familiar with the techniques the oral poet uses: conventional diction and versification, fixed formulae, phrases and epithets, rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and parallelism. The oral word is dictated to the ear, the written word to the eye.

The oral ballad is suprapersonal. It transcends individual expression and makes one version of a ballad theme part of the ballad corpus or network of a certain ballad. In this sense, we can characterize one ballad sung by one individual as a collective phenomenon. Only within the context of collectivity is the individual version of a ballad possible. The oral poem is collective, the written poem individual.

The crux of these dichotomies is the temporality of the oral mode and the relative permanence of the written. This brings us back to the paradox that is the theoretical axis around which our poetics should revolve, namely, potentiality. Potentiality is double-pronged, extending from the past and into the future. It predicates and hypothesizes all the many versions that were uttered but never preserved; those that were lost, forgotten, and destroyed, as well as those that are still to be sung.

In conclusion, the task facing oral poetry scholars today is the formulation of an oral poetics that would define and mark out the uniqueness of oral poetry and describe its workings and its nature. And how can this be achieved? As Lucien Goldmann points out in *Le Dieu caché*, "la méthode se trouve uniquement dans la recherche même" ("only through research itself can the method be found," 1959:7). Therefore, we can analyze multiple versions and accept all versions, including those fragmented, poorly remembered, and containing narrative gaps and lacunae. We can reject the idea of "text" and accept textual pluralism, vague boundary lines between groups of versions, overlappings, borrowings, mutual interaction, incoherencies, and illogic. Further, we can allow not only for the observed but also for the potential elements of the system. We should consider not only what is said, in all its fluidity and variability, but what is unsaid; not only what is present, but what is absent as well.

The elaboration of a new oral poetics is, at the same time, the search for its definition. And perhaps it would be based on this paradigm: oral narratives are living forms—materials that are still being actualized and will be complete only when, in Gordon Hall Gerould's words, "the last ballad has been sung by the last singer."[2]

Seminario Menéndez Pidal

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Some of the meetings summarized in *Oral Tradition* will receive fuller treatment in subsequent issues. Readers are encouraged to write to the editor about notices and reports of conferences they attend.

IMPROVISED POETRY IN THE HISPANIC WORLD

Samuel G. Armistead

Compared to the abundant scholarly activity centered around the memorized traditional ballad (*romance*), improvised poetry has largely been neglected by Hispanists interested in oral traditional literature. Aimed at redressing such unwarranted neglect, the *Simposio Internacional de Estudiosos de la Décima*, organized by Professor Maximiano Trapero, of the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, met at Las Palmas, from December 17 to 22, 1992.

The *décima*, which originated in sixteenth-century Spain as a learned poetic form, typically embodies a ten-line octosyllabic stanza, with the rhyme scheme *abba-accd-dc*. Despite its prosodic complexity, the *décima* has become a vehicle for oral traditional poetry in many areas of the Hispanic world and, where it exists, it is often, though not always, improvised: that is to say, it is composed during performance, frequently by two oral poets (*decimistas*) in competition.

The *Simposio* brought together specialists in Hispanic oral poetry from the Canary Islands, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, and the United States, who presented papers on all aspects of the *décima*, as an oral, as well as a learned or semi-learned form. Also present at the conference were a number of individual singers, as well as singing groups, from various islands of the Canarian Archipelago, as well as from other Hispanic areas: Cuba, Louisiana, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, who participated in a *Festival de Decimistas*, offering public performances of *décima* singing on the evenings of December 17–20.

While the *Simposio* was concerned primarily with the *décima*, in its variegated popular and erudite manifestations, the meeting's emphasis on the phenomenon of improvisation offered an opportunity to survey, chronologically and geographically, available evidence for the existence of orally improvised poetry—in whatever metrical form—in the Hispanic cultural and linguistic domain. Though my conclusions must remain tentative, the first instance I could cite is embodied in a tenth-century Hispano-Arabic anecdote that clearly involves an example of improvised poetic dueling. There is good evidence for competitive improvisation—often of a highly aggressive, insulting, and even obscene character—in sixteenth-century Spain. Evidence from the nineteenth century and the contemporary tradition is astoundingly rich. Improvised poetry, in a variety of forms (in addition to *décimas*, *sextinas* [6 verses], *quintillas* [5 verses], and 4-verse assonant *coplas*) can be documented at the present time, or from the recent past, in Basque-speaking areas; in various Castilian-speaking regions: Spain, the Canary Islands, Louisiana, Mexico, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Chile,

Argentina, Uruguay, and Bolivia; in the Portuguese-speaking domain: Galicia, Continental Portugal, the Azores, Madeira, Cape Verde, and Brazil; and also in Catalan-speaking areas, both on the mainland and in the Balearic Islands. Improvised poetry has, then, been an essentially Pan-Hispanic phenomenon up to relatively recent times and, in various areas, particularly in the Canary Islands, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Portuguese Atlantic Islands, and Brazil, the practice is still very much alive.

Any doubts that I, personally—as a specialist in memorized ballad poetry—may have had were altogether dispelled by my witnessing (and recording) the totally spontaneous, unplanned, competitive improvisation between two master *decimistas*, Bernardo Gutiérrez Viana (from the Canarian island of La Palma) and José Miguel Villanueva (from the town of Morovis, Puerto Rico), which took place on December 19, between 2:00 and 4:00 A.M., in the lobby and later in the bar of the Hotel Sansofé, in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Had these astoundingly accomplished *repentistas* (improvisers) not been obliged to participate in various performances later in the day, I had the impression that they could have effortlessly continued to improvise for many more hours—perhaps 12 or even 24 hours, such as has been reported for nineteenth-century Ecuadorean *puetas* and Argentine *payadores*. As much can be said of the two Mexican singers, who accompanied us on a two-hour bus tour on the last day of the Symposium and improvised song after song during the entire trip.

To sum up, the *Simposio* called attention to an important, though much neglected, aspect of Hispanic oral poetry, opening new horizons for future study and suggesting a great variety of problems. Particularly urgent is the need not only to achieve a panoramic view of the various forms of improvised poetry in the Hispanic world, but also to explore in depth each of the living subtraditions, as well as to record recollections (memorates) concerning the existence of improvised poetry in communities where it has now ceased to be practiced. Urgently needed and essential to future work is a meticulous analysis of the system of formulaic diction that informs the oral improvisation of *décimas* and other poetic forms. The proceedings of the conference are currently in press: *La décima popular en la tradición hispánica: Actas del Simposio Internacional, Las Palmas, 17 al 22 de diciembre 1992*, ed. Maximiano Trapero (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria).

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