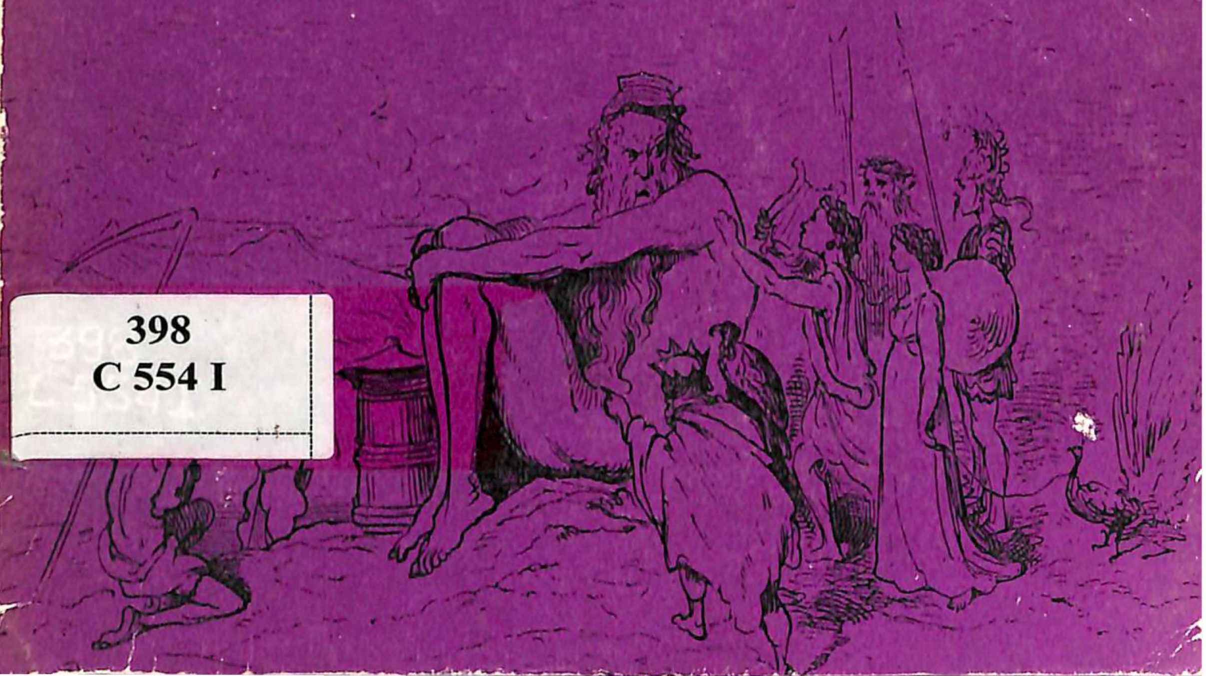
KENNETH & MARY CLARKE

INTRODUCING FOLKLORE



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Introducing Folklore

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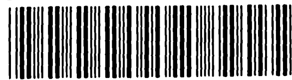
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To Stith Thompson and MacEdward Leach, friends, counselors, and teachers in the higher reaches of folklore scholarship, this small contribution of teaching the beginnings is dedicated.

— Kenneth and Mary Clarke

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Preface

THIS TEXT HAS grown out of our need to provide students with uniform reading assignments. Some of the material contained in the following chapters represents an accumulation of mimeographed notes handed out to students in our folklore classes, which were sometimes too large to be expected to gain access to reserve library sources from week to week.

The circumstances of large classes and limited library resources had sometimes tempted us to distribute volumes from our private library, but such a practice is extravagant of time and books, and it still falls short of the undergraduate ideal of a reading assignment to which every student has ready access.

We have long delayed assembling the whole text for the same reason that many of our colleagues have. Folklore is such a varied subject, taught from so many approaches, that even a rather basic text would have to be encyclopedic if it were to contain all the information various specialists would like to see presented. We have sought to prepare what seems to be the only practical solution: a book containing elementary concepts which most folklorists of our acquaintance could agree upon, a text widely adaptable, available, and economical. We have aimed at what surveys have shown to be typical: one or two undergraduate courses which ordinarily will be the students' first and last exposure to academic folklore.

Bibliographic references have been chosen with this assumption in mind. Hence our choice of what to list in suggested readings is likely to be based upon our knowledge of what is familiar, available, and inexpensive rather than upon some other criteria that might be more appropriate for graduate seminars or highly specialized courses.

Several colleagues have given assistance by reading our manuscript and offering constructive criticism. For these favors we are indebted to Stith

Thompson, Archer Taylor, Ralph Steele Boggs, Thomas Quincy Wolf, Grace Donehower, Lew Girdler, and Lois Henderson.

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ONE

Introduction to folklore studies

> The essential of all folklore study is collecting and attempting to understand that which has been collected.
>
> —*Stith Thompson*

WHEN YOU BEGIN READING this book, remember that you are one of the folk, not in the older sense of being a member of a special social class, but in the modern American sense of being one of the people. Remember too, that of all the folk in the world, you are a member of a special group who can read. Most of the world's population is "non-literate," made up of people whose education is dependent on hearing and remembering, seeing and imitating.

Then reflect that in the thousands of years of man's slow social development, reading came into being only recently, only yesterday in the long historical view. In the vastness of man's accumulated knowledge—which only recently a few learned to preserve in books—are his entertainment in song, story, and dance; his beliefs in myth and ritual; his fears in superstitions and tabus; his attitudes buried in his narratives and expressed in their very language. Out of these has come much of what we call folklore. For the many who do not read, folklore is the equivalent of schools and libraries. For the few who do read, folklore is that powerful, all-pervading portion of knowledge acquired apart from formal education, knowledge gained from environment.

As one of the folk, you find that your own beliefs and practices are perfectly natural and that only the beliefs and practices of other folk are odd, that is, odd enough to call folklore. If you are acutely aware of the traditions of the folk, you have some of the makings of an amateur folklorist.

If you remark on Aunt Polly's faith in skunk oil as a healing agent, if you ask "How come it's called that?" when you pass through a town named "Likely" or "Paradise," if you wonder about the background of the creation myth of a primitive tribe, if you enjoy a good ballad, or if you sing ballads yourself, then you are already an amateur folklorist; and, like most amateurs, you probably confine your interest to some special areas of folklore that interest you or are a part of your special background.

Since folklore is as universal as climate, people feel as free to deliver an opinion on it as they do to comment on the weather. The country is full of self-proclaimed experts on both. Like the weather, folklore can be studied systematically, and like the weather, it has a profound effect on our lives. The effect is subtle; the roots are deep, reaching back through generations of perpetuation and refinement.

Realizing how great the appeal of some of the entertainment aspects of folklore are, occasional self-proclaimed experts deliberately misuse the term for profit or personal advancement. Still others, realizing the potential of a knowledge of cherished beliefs and attitudes for propaganda, delve into the archives of folklore to find tools to promote their causes. Whether the cause is to propagate fears and hatreds or to strengthen the cultural heritage of a nation, the propagandist finds effective materials in the folk heritage of a people. And some students, though very few, pursue the study of folklore to acquire professional skills, but most people are content to acquire a basic knowledge which will help them better understand the world in which they live.

The information presented here is not designed to make the reader a specialist; it is, rather, designed to introduce him to a fascinating area of scholarship that has many complex ramifications and many applications to other areas of study. The purpose of this introduction is to provide the student with sufficient orientation to dispel some of the illusions of the uninitiated. It is to indicate, for instance, that the student of folklore will not "study" stories about Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, or Joe Magarac—all members of a company of spurious folk heroes, having little or no relationship with true oral tradition. It is to indicate that the student is not likely to study "fairy tales" or other forms of children's literature except where they occur as true examples of oral tradition set in a scholarly background of serious study. He is, rather, to be introduced to a new dimension of humanistic studies with concepts that are fully as varied and difficult as those he might encounter in any other field.

The Substance of Folklore and Its Study

The substance of folklore is that part of any culture which depends more on imitation and oral transmission than on formal instruction or written sources. The academic discipline of folklore is the systematic study of some

portion of this subject. Folklore is a universal topic, its substance includes material from all areas of life; but the particular study of this material as a distinct topic and the methods of this study distinguish folklore from other disciplines, though there is, of course, some overlapping and disagreement among scholars as to the exact provinces of their studies.

Folklore in anthropology

If it is true that all knowledge derived from imitation and oral tradition rather than from formal instruction and written sources is folklore, then most of the crafts and verbal traditions of "non-literate" people (such as the Australian Bushmen) could be classed as folklore. The songs, tales, myths, rituals, dances, and arts of such people are studied by anthropologists. Thus if we confine ourselves to this view, anthropologists are, indeed, folklorists.

However, the focus of anthropology is *man*. The methods and materials used by anthropologists enhance understanding of their subject, physical man or his culture. Folklore is one of the many artifacts of culture which may shed light on the nature of man. In contrast, the folklorist is concerned directly with folklore as the object of his study. The cultural anthropologist frequently has a strong secondary interest in academic folklore. Similarly, the folklorist frequently has a strong secondary interest in cultural anthropology.

Folklore in history

Myths, legends, popular beliefs and practices—in short, the lore of the people—affect the studies of historians. They have always recognized the value of so-called "oral history," which may or may not be accepted as "genuine" folklore. Appendix A is an example of oral history. It is localized and unverified, and it affects the attitudes of the people who maintain it as a legend. Some historians have taken keen interest in folklore. Richard Dorson, for example, a competent historian and specialist in American civilization, published *American Folklore*,[1] in which he sampled and explicated some major areas of American folklore against a background of American history. At the time of the publication in 1959, Dorson was serving as editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*.[2]

Folklore in literature

As any society develops its literary tradition, much of its mythology, oral tales, and popular song will finally emerge in print. Some of the oldest

[1] Richard Dorson, *American Folklore*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

[2] To avoid many cumbersome footnotes, source references will ordinarily be given in brief parenthetical notes in the text. General usage permits abbreviations of journal titles after their initial identification: *Journal of American Folklore*—JAF; *Western Folklore*—WF, etc.

writing in the world consists of examples of mythology taken out of oral tradition and fixed into permanent form. From the inscribed clay relics of Babylon, from the papyri of Egypt, and from the Sanskrit literature of ancient India the literary historian learns of the amazing persistence and diffusion of certain folk motifs. Conversely, certain paper-bound volumes on the newsstands today reflect the collecting and publishing of folk materials designed to cater to a continuing interest, both scholarly and popular, for example, *American Folk Tales and Songs,*[3] by Richard Chase.

Folklore in music

The study of folk song has long been one of the most clearly defined areas in the academic pursuit of folk materials. From the anthropologist-musicologist's highly specialized analysis of the ritual songs of primitive tribes to the popular treatment of old ballads for modern television programs, from careful annotations for variant lyrics of "Child"[4] ballads to capturing the vibrant music of the steel bands of Trinidad, the student of folk music has many rewarding avenues to explore.

Folklore in arts and crafts

Fabrication of hand tools, fence-making, home-canning techniques, weaving designs, ornamentation of house and barn—these and many other activities may represent the traditions of family or community, skills learned by imitation rather than by formal instruction. Artists and designers have much legitimate interest in the study of physical manifestations of folklore.

Folklore in language studies

When we say "Haste makes waste," or "as much chance as a snowball in Hell," when we say "Adam and Eve and Pinchme went down the river to swim," or "This little piggy went to market," we are expressing some of the varied store of folk expressions (similes, proverbs, riddles, epithets, jingles, to name a few) current in our language experience. The language scholar is interested in the extent of such usage, its persistence, its diffusion, and how and why it changes. Sometimes he may apply his knowledge of folk expressions to his studies of literature, and be able to shed new light on

[3] Richard Chase, *American Folk Tales and Songs.* New York: New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1956.

[4] Francis J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* 3 vols. New York: The Folklore Press, 1956. A reprint of the 5 vol. edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1882–1898. Professor Child's pioneering as a ballad scholar has caused his name to be associated with the ballads he annotated.

studies of authors and their works by explaining an author's use of folklore in novels, short stories, and poems.

Folklore in other related fields

The knowledge of folklore in some of its various forms has frequent application to studies other than anthropology, history, literature, music, art, and language. A review of scholarly journals devoted to folklore will show that the psychiatrist may dip into the literature of folklore to explain certain deep-set attitudes, beliefs, and practices of his patients. The sociologist may use the collections and analyses of folklore to explain certain social motifs that arise from localized rituals or prohibitions. The physician may delve into the empirical knowledge of folk medicine and discover to his amazement that his grandmother had once applied the principles recently "discovered" by research scientists. The geographer may take an excursion into folk materials for the origins of place names, folk explanations of curious topographical formations, or popular legends about unusual places. The educator can deepen his understanding of children through studies of children's traditional games, rhymes, and sayings.

It is easy to see, then, why the substance and study of folklore may be likened to the skeletal structure of society's body of knowledge. In our age knowledge has been developed and complemented by formal education. The great monuments to man's intellectual pursuits in the culture of Western society are his universities and libraries. Yet if we penetrate far enough beneath the surface of our literate, sophisticated activities, we are likely to find that even the modern scientist retains a surprising amount of folklore, the common denominator of all branches of knowledge.

Therefore we can see how unprofitable it is for members of any academic specialty to try to claim folklore as a branch or subdivision of their discipline exclusively. The one academic specialty which may most reasonably claim interest in all kinds of folklore is the one which bears the name of the subject. A few scholars who have made the study of folklore a specialty rather than a sideline call themselves folklorists. Yet even a person who has acquired a doctorate in the subject (a few such degrees exist) can not be a specialist in all aspects of his field. Though he may have a more general acquaintance with general folklore than someone trained in another area, to be thoroughly acquainted with his specialty he must confine his principal activities to folk song, mythology, classification, or some similarly restricted body of investigation.

Even the folklorist whose profession it is to deal with folk materials can not reasonably seek to exclude sociologists, historians, or artists, for as we have seen, the *substance* of folklore has no bounds, and the interest is universal.

General definitions

The Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend[5] assembles an interesting group of definitions of folklore, each one written by a prominent scholar whose name is in some way associated with the subject. These definitions are expanded, ranging from a short paragraph to an essay of several hundred words. Careful analysis of these reveals quite clearly that (1) there is no "official" definition, and (2) the definitions given vary according to the professional bias and experience of the definers. However, analysis of the whole cluster of statements reveals reasonable agreement on "accumulated wisdom." "Verbal arts" and "unwritten literature" also occur. "Remnants" and "survivals" appear often enough to make us aware of earlier studies which concentrated on antiquities. The words "peasant," "common," "unsophisticated," and "irrational" appearing in some definitions indicate that a few writers still carry the bias of early gentleman-scholars who were condescendingly interested in the quaint beliefs of peasants. Mode of transmission (oral) and *change in transmission* are important considerations. Arts and crafts, dance and music receive relatively little attention. In two instances anthropologists specifically exclude dance and music, feeling apparently, as some do, that folklore must be confined strictly to verbal arts. But when folklore is considered as the accumulation of oral wisdom and verbal arts handed down by tradition through oral channels, changing as it is transmitted, it may include ritual, song and dance (song and dance frequently being inseparable), depending on the orientation of the student.

Anthropologists sometimes exclude song and dance from folklore studies because they feel that rituals in primitive society are a part of a whole cultural complex which only the trained observer is capable of evaluating. This attitude is complicated somewhat by some assertions in the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* that folklore is a "branch of cultural anthropology." However, in South American countries this difficulty does not arise, for the general working agreement there confines folklore studies to the traditions of people immigrated from Europe or their descendants; it leaves the Indian traditions to anthropologists. The obvious interplay of these two disciplines, however, seems to indicate that anthropologists in either North or South America will not be content to confine their studies to primitive cultures, and that folklorists will not be content to ignore them.

Even today some European scholars are oriented largely to so-called peasant lore. In the United States, where no well-defined peasant class exists, this is obviously impossible. It is true, nevertheless, that the bulk of collecting

[5] Maria Leach, ed., *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, 2 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1949-1950.

in the United States has taken place in areas generally considered "backward" in terms of literacy, industrialization, and social change.

Still another way of defining the nature of the study of folklore and the people who participate in it is to examine the programs for various regional or national meetings of folklore societies. The program for the meeting of the American Folklore Society in 1959 is especially useful for this purpose in that the meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, in Mexico City, thus illustrating in a small way the cosmopolitan nature of membership and the interdisciplinary connections which have always characterized folklore activities. Abstracting from the ninety-three page printed program only those sessions devoted to folklore, we find an interesting variety of presentations: papers on the analysis of folklore texts, American popular beliefs, naming of persons and places; area studies of folk song and folk medicine; and studies of the mythologies of ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient India, ancient China, and others. Papers offered such specific titles as "Measles in Fact and Fancy" and "Gentleman Killer." These were presented by specialists in such diverse academic areas as linguistics, German language and literature, English literature, anthropology, Spanish language, political science, and sociology. This variety of backgrounds is reflected in the variety of definitions of folklore in the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend.*[6]

The folklore of folklore

Another note about the substance of the study of folklore is actually many definitions, most of which are so vague as to be mere impressions. These might be called the "folklore of folklore," in that they are the untutored beliefs, uncritically held by the folk. Often the popular conception is that folklore is roughly synonymous with falsehood or error. Much of the substance of folklore, superstition, for example, falls into the category and gives some support to such an impression. Obviously, this would exclude much of the substance and all of the study of the subject. To add to the popular misconceptions, some opportunists have become self-styled experts, exploiting the natural public interest by lecturing, writing, and anthologizing with little or no regard for the accuracy of their materials or statements. Because much of the substance of folklore is in the public domain, it offers a seemingly inexhaustible source for the popularizer of both story and song. This should not be taken to mean that popularization is bad in itself. There is, however, a significant difference between irresponsible exploitation which leads to error, and responsible, informed presentation. The latter does not necessarily lack public appeal. Many scholars have been delighted by the response of the presumably unintellectual and fickle public to programs of real educational merit.

[6] *Op. cit.*

The authors' definition

For the purposes of this book, the authors present their definition as follows: *Folklore consists of all lore (knowledge, wisdom, action) transmitted by tradition.* This broad definition is justified by observation of current practice in the United States as reflected by the products of folklorists' studies presented in their scholarly journals. Brief review of recent folklore publications reveals such varied interests as cookery, costume, impudent gestures, hoaxes, children's games, song, dance, musical instruments, historical events, and even hangover cures.

Backgrounds: From "Popular Antiquities" to "Folklore"

It is impossible to tell just when the study of folklore began. In a limited sense, some of the activities of the folklorist—collecting, examining or remarking on "curious" or "ancient" beliefs, stories, songs, and dances—must be as old as the history of mankind. Indeed, the pleasure many students find in their studies in folklore derive from the universal interest in antiquities or those material and nonmaterial traditions of "other" occupations, races, ages, or cultures.

The collection of tales and mythological motifs skillfully blended into the Greek epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, represents the work of a person who performed the functions of the folklorist. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a collection of traditions which were ancient in Ovid's time. The Babylonian hero tale of *Gilgamesh* may have existed in oral tradition for centuries before some unknown scholar took the trouble to put a good version into writing for our admiration and wonder. *The Arabian Nights*, the *Panchatantra*, and *Aesop's Fables* are among many other examples one might cite to illustrate the various uses of the oral lore of various cultures put into writing—and frequently escaping back into oral transmission—which illustrate interest in and use of folklore.

Early folk tale scholarship

Collections and studies by professional scholars, however, had to wait until relatively recent times. The early appearance of folk tales in European literature reflected an interest in folk material, but little or no scholarship. Authors collected the tales and presented them with elaborate literary trappings. One early monument to this kind of collection is the *Pentamerone* (fifty tales) by Basile. This work was presented in the native Neapolitan dialect in 1634–1636. The modern reader is more familiar with an earlier work in a similar style, the *Decameron* by Boccaccio, written in 1353, the

first edition published in 1471. Both Basile and Boccaccio's books fall into the classification of the Italian *novella*. Basile's work is of greater interest to the folklorist because comparative study has shown that his fifty stories are genuine folk tales, dressed up in the literary trappings that were in vogue at the time, yet clearly drawn from oral tradition. Basile's work was influential in promoting the growing interest in "fairy tales" which spread over Europe, especially in the eighteenth century, at which time many publications appeared. Unfortunately for the folk tale scholar, who needs to know what is genuinely oral tradition and what is not, many "fairy tales" were fabricated to meet popular demand. As we shall see in later chapters, the fabrication of "fakelore" was not confined to the European literary markets in the past. Inflation of minor folk heroes into literary demigods and outright fabrication of legends create much confusion for the uninitiated and are a source of irritation for contemporary scholars.

Charles Perrault, a dignified French professor, had enough interest in "*contes populaires*" to collect and publish eight French tales, *Contes de ma mère l'oie,* in 1697. But because collecting and studying folklore was not yet a respectable academic pursuit, he refrained from claiming credit for his labors and brought the book out under his son's name. The French vogue caught on well, with numerous other publications of *contes de fées,* but the most popular were fabricated, and scholarship was lacking. The interest in this kind of material, however, may have contributed to a translation of a large body of Persian literature of significant importance to folk tale studies: Galland's translation of *the Arabian Nights* (1001 tales), which appeared between 1704 and 1717. Acceptance of academic interest in folklore studies came slowly in the nineteenth century. Baron Charles Walcknaer, a member of the Académie française, published his *Lettres sur les Contes de fées, attribuées à Perrault, et sur les origines de la féerie*[7] anonymously in 1826, more than a century after Perrault's collection. He did not associate his name with a study which colleagues might think too trivial for serious consideration.

Before Walcknaer's timorous venture into folklore publication, two German scholars had set out confidently on a course that was to establish the general trend of European study in the nineteenth century. Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, philologists, brought together a collection of folk tales (*Märchen*) which, in all probability, represents the best-known collection in the world. *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* (translated into French as *Contes de l'Enfance et de la famille,* better known in England and America as *Grimm's Household Tales* or *Grimm's Fairy Tales*[8]) appeared in Berlin in 1813. Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were engaged in philological research. Their studies

[7] Gédéon Huet, *Les Contes Populaires.* Paris: Ernest Flammarion, Éditeur, 1923, pp. 5-6.

[8] A good English-language translation is *The Grimm's German Folk Tales,* trans. F. P. Magoun and Alexander Krappe. Carbondale, Ill.: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1960.

led them to peasants' tales, where archaic language elements abound; the tales led them to a scientific curiosity about origins. The Grimm brothers made their first statement concerning the theories of origin and dissemination in the second edition of their collection (1819), and a more elaborate discussion appeared in 1856. By this time, however, folklore studies had made much headway in most European nations. Instead of seeming a slightly frivolous hobby, the serious study of myths and tales attracted many of the best literary and linguistic scholars of the century.

Early ballad scholarship

While interest in folk narrative was gaining momentum, the study of folk song, too, was attracting attention. Folk songs were mentioned in English literature as early as the Middle English period, but the attempt to collect them was begun only in the eighteenth century. The serious study of folk songs developed only in the latter half of that century, corresponding roughly with the beginnings of the romantic movement in literature.

In 1765, Bishop Thomas Percy, an English clergyman, published *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. He had, quite by accident, discovered an old handwritten manuscript containing texts of ballads. Aware of the popular interest in ballads, he proceeded to edit the texts for publication, thus finding an avocation which occupied him until his death in 1811. In 1775, Bishop Percy published a theory concerning ballad origins which started a running debate between him, Joseph Ritson, and other English scholars. Since a debate is a great stimulus to collecting and studying, it got ballad scholarship off to a good start in England. Interest continues to this day with the publication of hundreds of excellent books and articles.

The romantic period in literature undoubtedly stimulated ballad scholarship also. Romantic poets eagerly imitated traditional song in "literary ballads" both in England and in America. Furthermore, such interests as one sees reflected in Wordsworth's "Michael," Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and "The Eve of St. Agnes," and Longfellow's "The Skeleton in Armor" pointed toward the growing interest in collecting curious beliefs. rituals, dances, and sayings, all of which were known as "popular antiquities." An example of such interest is found in an article by Richard Dorson. Writing of four pioneer folklorists, who wrote numerous books and essays on popular beliefs and related subjects in the nineteenth century, he had this to report of one Thomas Wright:

> Wright perfectly typifies the early Victorian antiquary-scholar, with his prodigious output, his sweeping range of interests in the records of the past from literature to artifacts, and his vigorous espousal of learned societies. One hundred and twenty-nine titles in the British Museum catalogue carry his name; he served as secretary of both the Camden and Percy Societies

for many years, editing numerous volumes in their behalf, and founded several abortive enterprises such as an Historical Society of Science, and the *Archaeologist and Journal of Antiquarian Science.* (*Journal of American Folklore,* January-March and July-September, 1955)

This emphasis on antiquarianism suggests one limited definition of folklore: *literary archeology.* It is obviously inaccurate and too limited to be of service.

Early folklore studies

William John Thoms, another English antiquarian, made what seems now to be the inevitable coinage in 1846. He joined the word *folk* (which had the special connotation of peasant or country people) with the word *lore,* suggesting craft or knowledge. This simple hyphenation to folk-lore (now generally compounded to *folklore* in the United States) produced the semantic advantage of broadening the scope of studies included under the term, since "antiquity" no longer had to apply. Thoms also participated in the founding of the English Folk-Lore Society in 1878, the first society in the Anglo-American tradition dedicated to folklore; it continues to flourish today.

Other European nations exhibited growth of folklore studies roughly paralleling that seen in England and the United States. Outstanding names associated with these movements are Paul Sébillot and Emanuel Cosquin in France, Svend Grundtvig and Axel Olrik in Denmark, Elias Lönnrot and Julius Krohn in Finland, Reinhold Köhler and Theodore Benfey in Germany, and many others. As the work of the pioneers gradually gained an audience, the circles widened; societies formed, and archives, journals, and "schools" of thought about origins, dissemination, and survivals of unwritten literature of the "folk" appeared.

Pioneer studies in the United States

The most significant early work in the United States was accomplished by a Harvard professor, Francis J. Child. His name seems now to be permanently associated with the traditional ballads of England and Scotland. When one speaks of a "Child" ballad he refers to one of the 305 ballads carefully studied and edited by Professor Child.

Using the utmost patience, this quiet Harvard scholar assembled all the variants he could locate of each ballad. He was greatly assisted in this enterprise by European students of the ballad, most notably by Sven Grundtvig in Denmark. He was indefatigable in his labors, using a cloistered ivory-tower technique typical of the Victorian "armchair" scholar. Apparently he did not seriously consider large-scale collecting directly from folk singers. Not until almost three decades after Child had published his impressive five-volume study did a collector show what a rich heritage of folk song living singers

could display. Ironically, that collector was an Englishman, Cecil Sharp, who found English and Scottish popular ballads in the Appalachian Highlands, ballads that collectors could no longer find in Europe!

Between the publication of the first and last volumes of Child's study (1882–1898) a group of Harvard men founded the American Folklore Society. The first volume of the *Journal of American Folklore* appeared in 1888, just ten years after the founding of a similar journal, *Folk-Lore*, in England.

The *Journal of American Folklore* is one of the most distinguished scholarly publications in the United States. Beginning with Francis Child and others in the "Harvard group," it has had a series of members and editors whose names read like an honor roll of American professors. Although the interests of the founding group were primarily literary, anthropologists naturally gravitated to the society, dominating it from time to time. The practice of alternating the editorship between individuals whose interests are primarily literary or humanistic with those whose interests are primarily anthropological has tended to keep a reasonable balance in membership and journal orientation.

During the nineteenth century, when anthropology, sociology, and folklore were nebulous academic disciplines not so closely defined by specialization, the Victorian scholar could apply his energies and speculations wherever his interests and training led him. Exploration, missionary activities, new translations, expanding trade, and a host of other sources often provided him with masses of unauthenticated, unclassified, undigested facts. The volume of scholarship by some of the men of the period is truly astonishing. From their labors have come some classic studies, for example, Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*,[9] unrivalled even today. Their energetic speculations, however, produced some conclusions which seem ludicrous in the light of today's knowledge. Like Francis Child's assumption that no significant number of songs remained with the folk, the assumptions of some other investigators might have been altered had they taken the trouble to investigate instead of to assume. Ultimately though, after much wrangling over premature conclusions, folklorists in both Europe and America did turn to systematic collecting and classifying as a means of piling up evidence for truly scientific analysis. In brief, the nineteenth century may be designated as a period of awakening and premature conclusions (as will be demonstrated in appropriate subsequent chapters); and the early twentieth century may be designated as a period of cautious collecting and classifying (resulting in archives bulging with authentic materials). The archiving of folk materials in some European countries is far in advance of anything yet developed in the

[9] Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., 12 vols. London: The Macmillan Company, Ltd., 1907.

United States, principally because national archives and even field collecting have long been subsidized by the national governments alert to the value of preserving the record of folk cultures. More recent years have seen more mature and cautious attempts at synthesis based on adequate evidence.

The study of folklore is not essentially different from any other systematic investigation, be it botany or geology. A systematic approach in any field consists of three basic steps:

1. *Collection:* In botany—specimens of plants; in folklore—specimens of oral traditions.
2. *Classification:* After enough specimens have been collected to form a valid sampling, they must be arranged and classified so that the collection can be studied in an orderly manner.
3. *Conclusion:* The study may result in any conclusion clearly warranted by the honest evaluation of the material.

Status Today: Publications, College Courses, and Developments

The sections of this chapter dealing with definitions and backgrounds have shown that the studies in folklore grew up in much the same way and at the same time studies in many other fields were developing. The early-nineteenth-century student of "natural philosophy" could claim to have a reasonable fund of knowledge in all areas of science. With the advance of the century and rapid accumulation of knowledge in all areas of science, he found himself hard put to keep abreast of chemistry alone. The twentieth-century chemist soon found the whole field progressing too rapidly to keep up, and devoted himself to a broad area such as organic or inorganic chemistry, but here again the rapid accumulation of knowledge piled up such an array of specialized literature that the true specialist has found it necessary to identify himself with a smaller segment of the whole range. Similarly, a single handbook long ago ceased to be adequate; a variety of special handbooks appeared. Professional societies and their respective journals proliferated, and they continue to do so.

Professional publications

The story of accelerated growth, accumulation of literature, formation of learned societies, and specialization can be repeated with little variation for practically any subject field listed in a modern university catalogue. Folklore follows this pattern in every detail. The *Journal of American Folklore* appeared as volume seventy-three in 1960. That year saw *Western Folklore* (formerly *California Folklore Quarterly*) in its fourteenth volume: *Midwest Folklore Quarterly* (formerly *Hoosier Folklore*) in its tenth volume:

Southern Folklore Quarterly in its twenty-fourth volume; and *New York Folklore Quarterly* in its sixteenth volume.

In addition to these leading journals, various other regional or state societies had made their appearance, sometimes intermittently, sometimes early as a mimeographed newsletter, later to develop into a printed journal. Among these are *Arkansas Folklore, The Illinois Folklore Society Newsletter, Keystone Folklore Quarterly, Kentucky Folklore Record, North Carolina Folklore, Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin, West Virginia Folklore,* and *Northeast Folklore.* The result has been that a person engaged in folklore scholarship could, by mid-twentieth century, join a society and attend occasional meetings, no matter where he resided in the United States. Enough regional publications exist to allow a fair opportunity for publication of any collection or study a serious student makes.

The extent of publication can be indicated by the annual bibliography published as a feature in a special supplement to the *Journal of American Folklore.* In 1958 this bibliography listed 1147 articles; in 1959 it listed 1224 articles; a smaller number in the 1960 supplement reflected a change in bibliography method and criteria for inclusion rather than a smaller volume of publication. An annual annotated bibliography has long been featured in *Southern Folklore Quarterly.* The most complete cumulative bibliography, now in its second revision, is Charles Haywood's *Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong.*[10] As graduate studies in folklore continue, various universities accumulate unpublished dissertations involving many aspects of folklore study. Many of these have become available through University Microfilms Incorporated, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

College folklore courses

In spite of all that has been reported above about increasing numbers of societies and publications, folklore studies represent a very small segment of the total academic spectrum. In some colleges and universities folklore is not identified in the curriculum as a separate entity, though many aspects of it may be integrated with literature, anthropology, sociology, or history courses, depending on the interests and qualifications of the instructors. In some other schools a course, usually related to literature, may be labeled "folklore" or "mythology," but examination will reveal that it consists largely of reading classical Greek and Roman mythology as literature. Such a course carries a confusing label, and it is far enough out of touch with modern folkloristic concepts to provide yet another source of popular misconception.

Until the last two decades, the addition of college courses specifically

[10] Charles Haywood, *A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong,* 2d rev. ed. New York: Dover Publications, 1961.

devoted to folklore studies has been hindered by lack of qualified instructors, lack of textbooks providing basic vocabulary and concepts, and lack of library holdings related to the subject. With the growth of graduate studies in folklore, however, all these factors have been gradually changing.

The study of folklore justifies itself on the undergraduate level in much the same way other subjects in humanities and social studies are justified. One studies any subject to know and understand the world about him, and perhaps even more important in many studies, to know and understand himself. Any person in any society lives much of his life in folklore, from which he derives his attitudes on morality and propriety, his bearing among his peers, his preference in recreation, and the beliefs and fears which make up the real foundation of his personality.

"It is the task of the folklorist," said Francis Lee Utley, "to perceive eternity in a grain of sand, to turn the dull fact into its living totality, to turn detail, as Ruth Benedict is said to have done, into meaning rather than to leave it as lumpish data. . . ." (*JAF*, April-June 1952). This statement is a bit poetic, but no less true. The whole body of literature is too large to be studied in a lump. Folklore is a necessary entity standing between literature and anthropology, too large to be absorbed successfully by either of the other two disciplines, yielding insights into the richness of our heritage and the complexity of our behavior that are uniquely the products of the methods and literature of folklore scholarship. This becomes increasingly apparent with the increase of formal instruction in higher education.

Richard Dorson attempted to evaluate the growth of college-level folklore courses at mid-century by using a questionnaire. The results of his survey (*JAF*, July-September, 1950) showed a healthy growth and a still more healthy interest. He referred to a similar survey conducted ten years earlier by Ralph Steele Boggs, reported in *Southern Folklore Quarterly*. Dorson, interested in new developments during the intervening ten-year period, found encouraging growth throughout the United States. He reported a graduate program at Indiana University leading to both master's and doctor's degrees. The similar program at the University of California at Los Angeles, which he reported at that time as developing, has subsequently developed as promised, offering a rich graduate program and undergraduate studies as well. Both of these universities have a folklore department or committee which draws on various other departments for part of the instructional staff. The report found only Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with a completely independent folklore department. Rather extensive studies in folklore are being carried on in the several curricula known as American studies or American civilization in some of the nation's leading universities. Most of the "new" courses in folklore (started between 1940 and 1950) were "introductory" or "American" folk-

lore. Dorson's analysis suggested that these tended to overlap somewhat and to complement each other where both were taught, the introductory course establishing the fundamental concepts which could then be employed in the study of American materials. Not all "new" courses were introductory, however; the survey noted upper division or graduate courses with varying degrees of specialization at the University of Arizona, Cornell University, Florida State University, Harvard University, University of Kentucky, University of New Mexico, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, Wayne University—all of these in addition to the more elaborate programs already cited at Indiana, University of California at Los Angeles, Franklin and Marshall, and one not previously mentioned, University of California at Berkeley.

Professional folklorists assess the field

This steady growth is encouraging to folklorists, but, like a rapidly growing youth who checks his weight and height frequently, folklore organizations frequently try to assess their accomplishments and direction of growth. They may feel more constrained to indulge in self-evaluation than other, more cohesive groups because of their relative lack of sharp identity. Whereas a meeting of chemists may program four successive papers to be read by chemists, a meeting of folklorists may program four successive papers by a literature professor, a historian, an anthropologist, and a musicologist. Of course, these four specialists have a common interest, yet their widely varying backgrounds may tend to pull the common interest in various directions.

The desire to strengthen the common interest and to promote the harmony of the organization is reflected in the frequency with which articles on the aims and functions of folklore studies and organizations have appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* during the decade of 1950 to 1960. In the July-September issue of 1950, the "Editor's Page" contained an article warning against the tendency of the more extreme followers of various approaches to "regard their own interests as the only true faith and to be antagonistic to other uses or approaches to folklore. . . ."

Francis Lee Utley's presidential address to the sixty-sixth annual meeting of the society appeared as the lead article in the April-June issue of 1952. In his address, "Conflict and Promise in Folklore," he identified four areas of conflict: literary folklorist versus anthropologist; poet versus scientist; researcher versus popularizer; and regionalist versus nationalist. In his discussion of these areas of conflict President Utley developed the thesis that varied interests and methods could be destructive if they developed antagonism, but they could be constructive if they were recognized and accepted,

"I have no brief to make for a society which is without controversy but I urge that those controversies be helpful rather than ill-tempered, objective rather than personally motivated, strategic rather than tactical, honestly conciliatory rather than bitter. . . ."

In the presidential address to the society at its sixty-fifth annual meeting, William R. Bascom presented a paper which later appeared in the October-December, 1954, *Journal of American Folklore*. Bascom indicated his awareness of the gap between the humanistic and the anthropological points of view (he is an anthropologist). His speech was, naturally, anthropology-oriented, yet it was clearly designed to appeal to the interests of both groups.

Herbert Halpert, whose early orientation was in the field of literature, delivered the presidential address at the sixty-eighth annual meeting of the society. His address, "Folklore: Breadth Versus Depth," later appeared in the April-June, 1958, issue of the journal. The address refers to the Boggs and Dorson surveys of college folklore courses; it develops a discussion about teaching college folklore classes and directing student collections for maximum effectiveness. His suggestion that much of the manuscript material in college archives was ill-documented and poorly supervised was to be well substantiated at a later date in a survey conducted by William Hugh Jansen, reported in *Archivist,* March, 1958.

Richard M. Dorson presented a paper, "A Theory for American Folklore," at the joint meeting of the American Folklore Society, The American Anthropological Society, and the American Studies Association, in 1957, the paper later appearing in the July-September, 1959, journal. His well-documented article reviewed the existing approaches: (1) Comparative folklorists, (2) Cultural anthropologists, (3) Folk song and folk music specialists, (4) Special pleaders, (5) Regional collectors, (6) Literary historians, and (7) Popularizers. In developing his thesis on folklore and American civilization, Dorson followed his own academic bias (American civilization specialist): "The facts of American history create problems for the American folklorist—for instance, in the study of immigrant folk materials—which are central to his concern but peripheral or nonexistent for the comparative folklorist. Hence the American folklorist should be trained in American history and civilization as well as in folklore. Conversely, scholars trained in American studies or in American literature should be schooled in folklore if they intend to deal with folkloristic, subliterary, and popular materials of American culture." He went on to review briefly some of the aspects of American folklore-in-history, later to be revealed as some of the substance of his *American Folklore.*[11] His frank thesis that students of American folk-

[11] *Op. cit.*

lore must integrate their studies of scientific folklore with the history of American civilization has much merit, though it has been sharply attacked for being based on a too restrictive definition of folklore.

Wayland Hand delivered the presidential address to the seventieth annual meeting of the society, later printed in the journal's January-March, 1960, issue. In his article, "American Folklore After Seventy Years: Survey and Prospect," Dr. Hand, who is chairman of the flourishing folklore studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, made a broad survey of the activities of the society from its founding in 1888 to the time of his address. He noted a report that "about 230 institutions of higher learning" in the United States offered courses in folklore. Remarking on increasing availability of instructors, he expressed the hope that courses could be instituted in areas not reporting them so that collecting and archiving might be stimulated. Speaking of folk tale studies, he remarked that "the folk tale is perhaps the one great field of folklore where the work of folklorists and anthropologists must inevitably coalesce . . . they provide perhaps the only means of reconstructing the spiritual and intellectual life of the primitive groups they study. Neither pots nor pans, nor other kinds of artifacts will tell these scholars of the science of man much about the mental life of primitives, nor of their intimate beliefs about the world in which they live. . . . Why should we be so self-effacing, holding as we do, the many keys which enable us and others who will use them, to unlock not only the very recent past but to open doors far back into the intellectual and spiritual history of mankind?"

Stith Thompson, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Indiana University, world folklorist, has long been unofficially known as "Mr. Folklore" in the United States. He stands unchallenged as the one scholar best versed in the European traditions of folklore scholarship. He formed the folklore curriculum at Indiana University, and as its chairman until his retirement, built it into the foremost center for folklore studies in this country. His early indoctrination under Professor Beatty at Wisconsin, Professor Gayley at Berkeley, and Professor Kittredge at Harvard prompted his first trips abroad, where he had the opportunity to become personally acquainted with many of the great European folklore scholars who were prominent in the early years of the twentieth century. His own half-century of devotion to the subject has produced an impressive bibliography, the most important works being his *The Types of the Folk-Tale*[12] and the encyclopedic six-volume *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*.[13]

[12] Antti Aarne, *The Types of the Folktale*, translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson, Folklore Fellows Communication No. 184. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961.

[13] Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, rev. ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955.

It was singularly appropriate, then, that the lead article in the first issue of *Midwest Folklore* (April, 1951) should be "Folklore at Midcentury" by Stith Thompson. With the assurance born of maturity and experience, Thompson ignored the many disputes which had marked his long career in the field. He chose instead to comment generally on long-range growth, both academic and popular, and to express his confidence in the future of folklore studies. He indicated his distaste for extreme attitudes: "I think I may not be alone in saying that I have heard often enough to last at least three lifetimes the few adventures of Paul Bunyan and his big ox, padded out, as it often is, to fill a full-sized volume. There does get to be a time when folk tradition runs thin and the repetition of the same material ceases to be amusing, emotionally stirring, or otherwise satisfactory to the reader or hearer accustomed to the tradition of great literature or great music . . . it is a debatable question as to how far we should try to condition a new generation to an indiscriminate acceptance of the songs, tales, dances, and art forms of their pioneer ancestors." Remarking on the scholar instead of the popularizer or anthologist, Dr. Thompson wrote, "He recognizes folklore for what it is, that part of culture which is handed down by tradition from one generation to another. . . . He observes that each item has had its history and that the tracing of its history often takes one very far in an understanding of the great complex of forces which have produced a people." He concluded by indicating that just as there had been debates in the past, so there would be more in the future, yet "in spite of all this, there is so much vigor in folklore studies that we may well be optimistic about their future in the United States during the new half-century."

Suggestions for Further Reading

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TWO

Folklore as prose narrative

> *Mythology*, n. The body of a primitive people's beliefs concerning its origin, early history, heroes, deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true accounts which it invents later.
>
> —*Ambrose Bierce*

THE LONG, COMPLEX INTERPLAY of oral tradition and written literature has created many fascinating opportunities for investigation. As specialized studies have proliferated, so has terminology. The beginning folklore student should keep in mind a few minimal definitions: *Märchen*, fairy tale, legend, etiological tale, fable, myth, and motif. To this list one might add *folk tale*, which is a rather loose collective term embracing any or all the foregoing except *motif*.

Definitions of Narrative Forms

Märchen

There is no exact English equivalent for the German word *Märchen*. It is so appropriate, however, that it has been widely adopted for use in English-language studies. *Märchen* refers to a narrative involving wonders, lowly heroes who win fame and fortune in an unreal world of improbable characters and creatures. Magic, transformations, ogres, and quests abound in these tales. The characteristics of European *Märchen* are illustrated in "The Frog King," sometimes known as "Iron Henry."[1]

A princess playing with a golden ball loses her prized toy when it bounces into a spring or well. She looks down and discovers that an ugly

[1] The fact that folk tales may be known by a bewildering variety of titles has led to various means for making uniform designation. The canon established by the brothers Grimm would make this tale Grimm No. 1; by Thompson's index it is Type 440.

frog has her ball. In answer to her tearful request that he return it, he extracts a promise that he may be her companion, eat at her table, and sleep in her bed. She agrees, but when he returns the golden ball, she ignores his request that she wait for him and runs away.

The next day when she is seated at dinner, a voice at the door calls her. She refuses to answer. When her father questions her, she relates the episode of the lost ball. Meanwhile, the voice at the door is more insistent:

> *"Königstochter jüngste,*
> *mach mir auf,*
> *weisst du nicht, was gestern*
> *du zu mir gesagt*
> *bei dem kühlen Brunnenwasser?*
> *Königstochter, jüngste,*
> *mach mir auf."*
>
> (Youngest princess, let me in;
> don't you recall what you
> promised yesterday at the well?)

The king, properly strict about promises made by royalty, insists that his daughter live up to her bargain. She helps the frog to the table.

After the frog has satisfied his hunger, he declares that he is tired and wishes to be taken to bed. The reluctant princess, prompted by her scrupulous father, carries the frog to her room, but, repulsed by his ugliness, tries to leave him in a corner. Again he insists that he be taken to bed. She is so overcome by her anger that she hurls him against the wall.

Instead of falling to the floor dead, the frog falls transformed into a beautiful young prince. He relates to the astonished girl the circumstances of his being transformed into a frog by a "*bösen Hexe.*"

The next day the young couple set out for the prince's kingdom in a coach driven by the young man's faithful servant, who has had three iron bands around his heart to keep it from breaking during his master's enchantment. As the coach moves down the road, the iron bands break, one by one. The prince hears the sounds, and each time asks *treue Heinrich* if the coach is broken:

> *"Heinrich, der Wagen bricht."*
> *"Nein, Herr, der Wagen nicht,*
> *es ist ein Band von meinem Herzen,*
> *das da lag in grossen Schmerzen,*
> *als Ihr in dem Brunnen sasst,*
> *als Ihr eine Froscht wast."*

("Henry, the coach is broken."
"No, Master, it is not the coach.
It is a band around my heart
Which was in great pain
While you were a frog in the Well.")

Regardless of which of the versions of Type 440 we examine, the tale is characteristic of European *Märchen* in many ways:

1. It is not set in a particular time or place.
2. It deals with royalty: princess, king, palace, servants.
3. The heroine is the youngest daughter.
4. The tale involves magic, transformation in this instance, with, of course, return to normal shape.
5. There is a promise as a major plot device, with the implication of a task to be performed. Tasks, riddles, quests, and their undertaking serve to provide the narrative thread in many *Märchen.*
6. There was a wicked witch who transformed the prince, although she is not a character in the action of this tale. Witches, ogres, dragons, and giants abound in *Märchen.*
7. The familiar device of the faithful retainer is represented by the faithful servant, True Henry, although he is not important in this plot.
8. The tale contains narrative elements in a series of three. The princess is commonly the youngest of three daughters; the frog's demands are made in a series of three (door, table, bed); True Henry has three bands around his heart. In more elaborate versions of the tale, other elements in three's may occur.
9. There are verbal formulas (rhyme and song) such as the two little rhymes embedded in the tale. Other formulas one may encounter involve obsolete vocabulary and nonsense words, especially in riddles and magic spells (*Rumpelstilzchen,* for example).
10. The "good guys" win in *Märchen,* as in "horse operas" of the movies and television. Kings and princes are, of course, not only good, but also rich and beautiful. If an old king is "bad" there is ordinarily a "good" young prince who is victorious.

Fairy tale

Although we tend to refer to European folk tales generally as fairy tales, relatively few *Märchen* actually deal with "little people" of the supernatural world. Depending on the country of origin, these (usually helpful) creatures

may be called fairies, elves, sprites, pixies, gnomes, dwarfs, brownies, or leprechauns. (Thanks to the recent collecting in Jamaica by MacEdward Leach—see "Jamaican Duppy Lore," *JAF*, July-September, 1961—the less familiar term *Duppy* may be added to this list.) They are capable of performing magic, and they tend to ally themselves with the hero of the tale.

A good example is found in the well-known story of Snow White (Grimm No. 53; Type 709), whose wicked stepmother, jealous of the child's beauty, orders that the child be killed. The faithful servant, unable to carry out the cruel order, releases Snow White in the forest and brings a stag's heart to the queen as a token.

Snow White finds haven at the home of dwarfs, who are charmed by her beauty and wish to protect her. The stepmother queen, however, learns that her rival still lives. She seeks to destroy Snow White, first with a poisoned garment, second with a poisoned comb, and third with a poisoned apple. The third effort seems successful; Snow White appears to be dead, but she is actually in a state of suspended animation. She is finally awakened by a handsome prince, who then aids in the destruction of the stepmother queen. Presumably the young couple live happily ever after.

Here again we see with the fairy story characters, the *Märchen* elements, the series of three efforts to destroy Snow White, the royalty, the faithful servant, the magic, and the ultimate triumph of the young, beautiful heroine.

Legend

Narratives about persons, places, or events involving real or pretended belief are legends. Tales about local places such as lovers' leap, hangman's tree, or robbers' roost; tales about a murder, a miser, or a local disaster may fall into this class.

Legends about rulers, military leaders, and religious figures tend to idealize. The folklore of Europe and America perpetuate many apocryphal tales about Saint Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and other saints. Medieval literature is especially rich in allusion to legends of this kind. A good example of religious legend is "The Prioress's Tale," from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

The Prioress's tale is the legend of a seven-year-old-boy, ignorant of Latin, who learned *O Alma Redemptoris* by heart so that he could show proper Christian reverence. He sang his song loudly and sweetly every day as he went to and from school. His route took him through a ghetto, where the Jews were infuriated by his Christian song. They seized him, cut his throat, and cast his body into a privy pit.

The boy's distraught mother searched the city for him. Her search finally carried her to the ghetto street where her child's body was concealed. Then, in answer to her piteous cry, the boy (or his body) began to sing the song of adoration. The song brought a crowd of Christians to the scene;

the body, still singing, was carried to a nearby abbey, where holy water stilled the song. Then, in answer to the abbot's question, the boy explained that Christ, in honor of his mother, had permitted the song to continue. Mary, drawn to the dying child, had bidden him to sing until the time of his burial, and had placed a seed on his tongue to maintain the song. The abbot removed the seed, thereby permitting the child to give up the ghost and be buried.

At the end of her tale, the Prioress related it to a more recent legend, now known in ballad form: "Hugh of Lincoln."

Etiological tale

Etiology has to do with beginning or causes. The etiological tale, or *pourquoi* story, is a narrative which explains the origin of a natural object or characteristic. Animal tales of primitive tribes may allude to the origin of the vulture's bald head, the skunk's stripes, or the dog's bark. Classical mythology contains many etiological episodes which seem unrelated to that part of mythology which deals with origins of peoples, customs, and rites. An example is the story of Echo and Narcissus:

Echo, a lovely nymph, offended Juno by talking too much. Juno decreed that thereafter, Echo would be deprived of the power of speech except to repeat what was said to her. Later, when Echo fell in love with Narcissus, she pursued him, but could not speak of her love.

When Narcissus was lost in the forest one day, he shouted; she answered. Again he shouted, this time a question; again she answered, but only to mock his words. And when he inquired about her identity she could only echo the question. The result was so awkward that he spurned her, and she fled to the forest, overcome by grief and embarrassment. There she faded away into nothingness, leaving only her voice, which remains to this day.

Narcissus had to pay for his cruelty, however. In answer to the prayer of a frustrated maiden, the goddess decreed that Narcissus must also suffer the pangs of unrequited love. One day as he bent over a clear pool of water to get a drink, he saw his own reflection in the water, and he immediately fell in love with the image. He sought to converse with it and grieved that it would not return his affection. Finally he pined away and died.

When the nymphs came to attend his last rites, they found no body. It had been transformed into tiny purple and white flowers. Thus both unhappy lovers were memorialized forever, one as a disembodied voice, the other as a delicate bloom.

Fable

The fable is a short tale, usually involving animal characters, which expresses, either implicitly or explicitly, a moral principle. The *Panchatantra* for example, is a complex cycle of animal fables. Aesop's fables are best

known in our culture, and the verse fables of La Fontaine are, perhaps, the most artistically developed fables in literature.

The boy who shouted "Wolf!" too often, so that when a real wolf appeared, the villagers failed to respond to his cry, is a good example of the fable in Aesop's tradition. Some fables are so well known that they have worked into proverbial expression such as "dog in the manger" and "sour grapes."

The art of fable composition is not lost. James Thurber's *Fables for Our Time*[2] presents the tradition in a modern setting.

Myth

A myth is a narrative dealing with gods, demigods, or culture heroes. The myth is concerned with creation of the world, the establishment of the present order, the origins of a people, tribe, or culture trait. *Culture hero* and *culture trait* are terms frequently employed by folklorists and anthropologists. *Culture hero* refers to a mythical character credited with conferring upon mankind special artifacts or instructions. Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to man, is an example. *Culture trait* is the designation for a way of doing things, an artifact, or some other element of a culture which may be catalogued in a description or an analysis of the culture in which it is found. Myth, then, frequently explains certain culture traits by attributing their origins to a culture hero.

Mythological narratives, as indicated above, are sometimes retained as folk tales when the elements of religious or nationalistic belief subside. Hence it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between myth and etiological tale or legend. In general, the element of religious belief or belief associated with ritual, past or present, serves to identify those narratives which are called myth. An example is the following brief synopsis of the typical myth of emergence and establishment of the present order as it exists in many variants among the Pueblo Indian tribes of the American Southwest:

In the time before, the people lived in darkness beneath the surface of the earth. They lived in the fourth cave, or on the fourth level beneath the surface. They had no clans; their skin was slimy, and they had no light.

When the culture hero told the people to seek a way to climb out to the surface, they searched for a path. They searched to the east, then to the south, then to the west, then to the north. Finally they found a road to the top, but it was straight up, and they could not climb out. The priests prepared a seed of corn and planted it. They sang over it, and as they prayed the cornstalk grew until it made a gigantic plant reaching clear to the surface.

Then they emerged and saw that the outer world was good. They went in different directions, one clan to the west, another to the east, and thus

[2] James Thurber, *Fables for Our Time*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1952.

the clans were formed. The culture hero showed them how to make fire, how to harvest wild grasses, and how to make gardens.

This composite (partly Zuni, partly Hopi) is presented to show some of the typical elements of American Indian origin myths of the area. Emergence from a dark, indefinite place below the surface of the earth is a common motif. Similarly, the magic of ritual song occurs frequently. The emphasis on *four* (four times, four directions, etc.) is similar to the emphasis on *three* in European *Märchen*. The culture hero (frequently Spider Woman) is usually credited with originating many culture traits.

The creation of man by a culture hero or god is not unknown in American Indian myth. One version has the first couple created from the dead cuticle rubbed from the god's skin and kneaded into the images of man and woman.

The creation myth of the earth itself occurs in many narratives of nonliterate people. Quite often the story begins with the god or culture hero afloat on a limitless expanse of water. By various means, often by sending an aquatic animal to the bottom for mud, the god procures a small piece of earth. This bit is expanded by magic (usually song) to form the land.

Like the Biblical Genesis story, many primitive creation myths include the spoiler—a trickster who deprives the world of Eden-like tranquility. Among the American Indian tribes, Coyote often performs this satanic function. (See Appendix D.)

Motif

As used in folklore, *motif* refers to a single narrative element; it can be described in general terms. It may be thought of as the smallest divisible narrative unit of a tale. Stith Thompson, who devised and developed the *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*,[3] described a motif as being "the smallest element in a tale having the power to persist in oral tradition."[4]

If we check *The Types of the Folktale* for Type 440 ("The Frog King," discussed earlier) we find that the tale is made up of several motifs: the promise, the disenchantment, and the marvel of Henry's iron bands. The *Motif-Index* is a catalogue of narrative motifs in which the cataloguing method is similar to book classification in a library. Here, for example, all motifs relating to magic are arranged in the "D" chapter and all motifs relating to marvels are arranged in the "F" chapter. The specific motif for the disenchantment of the prince is D 712.2, and the specific motif of the marvel of the iron bands around Henry's heart is F 875. A more detailed explanation of the organization and use of the index volumes will be found in Chapter 6.

At this point it should be made clear that these bibliographical aids do

[3] *Op. cit.*

[4] *Folktale, op. cit.*, p. 415.

not in themselves represent a "school" or "method" of the study of folklore any more than the Dewey decimal system represents a "school" of the study of English literature. Preferring not to use an available index because of its bulk and complexity is like preferring not to use the card catalogue of the library because one would have to expend some effort to become oriented to it.

The great expanse of man's varied cultures through the centuries prior to the recent invention of printing—and, indeed, the infinite complexity of narrative development since then—makes extensive cataloguing a necessary prerequisite to any systematic study of folklore. Current or recent manifestations are relatively meaningless if contemplated apart from their backgrounds. The study of American folklore, for example, assumes its full potential only when considered in relation to its European, African, and Asian ancestry. Even American Indian materials may be studied with greatest profit in the light of analogous and antecedent materials in the stream of world folklore.

Myth: From Grimm's Theories to Freud's

Wilhelm Grimm stated some germinal ideas which were to dominate nineteenth-century speculation. The *Märchen*, collected and studied by him and his brother, he suggested, were like broken and scattered fragments of some larger, more significant original. Since linguistic research had established the theory of the Indo-European language family and linguistic evidence had pointed to a common parent language probably spoken in ancient India, the Grimm speculations set the stage for many-sided dispute:

1. *The philological school*, through linguistic analysis and analogy, saw much of the mythological narrative of the European-Mediterranean area (and ultimately even America and Oceania) as imperfectly understood relics of myths which no longer expressed their original ideas because of a "disease of language," whereby the words had changed meanings in a variety of ways. This school had great stimulus from studies of Sanskrit literature—a vast library of ancient writings in an Indo-European language. Max Müller, a Sanskrit scholar, was most prominent as the leading spokesman for the philological school.

2. *The anthropological school*, influenced by the budding science of ethnology and vigorously led by Andrew Lang, depended in varying degrees on the idea of *survivals* of ancient beliefs and rituals from the infancies of the various cultures of the world. Darwin's recent impact on nineteenth-century concepts of biological evolution had stimulated thinking about analogies in cultural evolution. E. B. Tylor, a pioneering anthropologist, had presented the general idea that all cultures necessarily evolve through a series of stages from savagery to civilization. Lang refined elements of this general

theory to make them apply directly to his survivals theory in opposition to the theories of the philologists or solar mythologists.

3. *The Indianist school*, following the lead of linguistic scholarship, saw the ancient literature of India and its traditional prototypes as the source of the traditional oral narratives of Europe and culturally related countries. Under the leadership of Theodore Benfey, the Indianist school attracted many followers whose vigorous collecting made solid contributions to folklore scholarship, regardless of the ultimate fate of their theories. The theory of India as the origin of most European folklore motifs could not remain unmodified, though, after enough evidence had been collected. Ancient Egyptian records revealed certain tales and motifs in existence there too, and with further evidence collected from all over the world, it became apparent that, although the Indianists were probably right about India as the source of some elements of European folklore, they could not be right about everything. One modified theory offered was to the effect that India may have acted as a kind of reservoir of folklore, receiving, preserving, and releasing again much unwritten literature.

The philological school

Max Müller, a German-born philologist, resided at Oxford. His early pronouncements on the solar theory at about mid-century attracted much favorable attention, for they explained the puzzle of seemingly incongruous elements in Greek and Roman mythology. His emphasis on the sun-god led to a second name, solar mythologists, for him and his followers. Generally speaking, he tended to show that the mythology of all Aryan nations had its source in ancient India. Early in the language life of a people, he explained, lack of scientific terms of cause and effect demands metaphorical expression. The primitive animistic concepts of the people may express the thought "the sun shines" as "he shines," or "the golden one shines." Also, because of the fluidity of a language not suited to abstractions, a multiplicity of terms will develop. This multiplicity of terms for the same referent (polyonomy) would appear especially around solar observations (with which weather-conscious early man was preoccupied). Certain words, because of their inherent meanings, suggested personal gods, and these suggested an analogical treatment for other words and phrases. Before the words and phrases jelled into a full-blown mythology, migrating Aryan tribes carried them away into what was to be a proliferation of many languages, but these languages still carried the "seeds" or suggestions which could develop into mythology. Müller felt that the northern people built their sagas and Eddas; the Greeks built their Olympian family of gods; and the Hindus built their mythology all out of the inspiration of a common language source, yet independently of each other.

Müller was able to offer apparent proof of his findings through his knowledge of Sanskrit, whereby he could show word relationships to support the "disease of language" hypothesis. Some of his followers, however, extended his methods to theories less plausible.

G. W. Cox, in his *The Mythology of Aryan Nations*[5] used analogy extensively to show that Perseus, Hercules, Oedipus, and others illustrated a single concept: the struggling sun-god, the struggle of night versus day, or the struggle of light versus darkness. In his sweeping analysis all the Greek mythical characters seemed to be acting out the same story: Bellerophon destroying the Chimera, Perseus destroying Medusa, Oedipus destroying the Sphinx, and Hercules strangling snakes in his cradle—all these and more were merely sun-god struggling against the powers of darkness. By further analogies, Greek myths could be shown to be basically the same as the myths of other nations. Argus with his many eyes was equivalent to Indra with his many eyes; both represented the starry heavens. Sigurd winning his wife, Brynhild, must hand her over to Gunnar; this represented Sun delivering his bright Spring over to cold and darkness. Paris stealing Helen and holding her for ten years represented darkness stealing light and holding it for ten hours. Orpheus lamented for beautiful evening stung by the serpent of night. As the analogies progressed, weapons and projectiles became the sun's rays. Hence the rays could be Indra's powerful spear, the mighty bow of Odysseus, Achilles' lance, Sigfried's Gram, Arthur's Excalibur, or Roland's Darandle. Penelope's web became cirrus clouds, formed by day, destroyed by night.

Carrying Cox's method of analogy still further, Angelo de Gubernatis, an Italian mythologist, published *Zoological Mythology, or the Legends of the Animals* in 1872.[6] His analogies were sometimes so tenuous that they seemed quite arbitrary. For example, *wolf* suggested *rapacious,* which suggested *grasping,* which suggested *constrictor. Horse* suggested *swiftness,* which suggested *winged horse,* which suggested *hawk* or *bird.* The mere mention of golden slippers in the *Rig-Veda* foreshadowed Cinderella's slipper. Gubernatis extended his conclusions beyond mythology to simple folk tales, much farther than the speculations of either Cox or Müller.

The principal opponent of the philological group was Andrew Lang, who debated with Müller through numerous articles and books, developing and modifying his own progressive theories as he grew in his studies.

Polygenesis and diffusion

Lang's opponents maintained that he erred on the side of polygenesis.

[5] George William Cox, *The Mythology of Aryan Nations.* 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green, 1870.

[6] Angelo de Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology, or Legends of the Animals.* 2 vols. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1872.

This position, taken in an extreme form, is that cultures tend to evolve from savage beginnings toward a civilized state, and that all cultures pass through similar stages, but at different times or at different rates. Since the basic conditions of human life—birth, growth, mating, begetting children, providing food, finding shelter, sickness, and death—are the same everywhere, they produce similar solutions to similar problems. Just as the discovery of making a canoe or a war-club may arise repeatedly and independently in the course of human events, so a story of a dragon-slaying hero can arise repeatedly and independently. Fears centering around want, suffering, and death, or aspirations to strength and power will lead to the dramatization of daydreams and fantasies which can take only a limited number of basic forms. The limited number of possibilities will account for similarities in folk narratives drawn from widely differing environments.

Diffusion rather than independent origin can be shown when certain motif-clusters exist which are too complex to be duplicated repeatedly, and in detail, by mere chance. This requires assembling a large number of variants for close analysis, though. Marian Emily Roalfe Cox published a study, *Cinderella,* in 1893, involving analysis of a tale which appears in no less than five hundred variants in Europe.[7] It showed the way to eliminating much of the error of earlier speculation. Since Miss Cox's study, many similar monographs have appeared, supporting the diffusion theory. An excellent summary of the Lang-Müller debates is "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," in the special issue of *JAF: Myth: A Symposium,* October-December, 1955.

Other approaches to mythology

Some of the uncertainties concerning the status of knowledge of myths is reflected in a college textbook used around the turn of the century, *Classic Myths in English Literature,*[8] by Charles M. Gayley. This widely available text devotes its first three chapters to a general discussion of myth. Gayley outlined prevailing thought as follows:[9]

Kinds of Myth

1. Explanatory—"Naive guesses at the truth."
2. Aesthetic—Originating in the "universal desire for amusement." These may be:
    a. Historic, utilizing events which have a "skeleton of fact."
    b. Romantic, in which the hero is more independent than in historic myth, sometimes allowing him "adventures that weary the imagination and offend the moral judgment."

[7] *Folktale, op. cit.,* p. 127.

[8] Charles M. Gayley, *Classic Myths in English Literature.* Boston: Ginn and Company, c. 1893.

[9] *Ibid.,* pp. 3–8.

Reasonable Myths

1. Imagination: We moderns bestow personification upon inanimate things just as the ancients did. We do not refer to the "arrows of Apollo, but of a sun-stroke; our poetry abounds in symbols of the moon, the swift-winged wind, of the ravening sea. . . . Nor is hyperbole any less in use among us than it was among the ancients; we glorify our political heroes with superlatives; they dignified theirs with divinity."
2. Belief: Although moderns personify, they do not believe.

Unreasonable Myths: "How, then, did the senseless and cruel stories come into existence? And were they ever believed?"

1. Theory of deterioration: Man has degenerated, and in his depravity has created "unlovely conceptions."
2. Theory of improvement: Man began with crude fancies, but he has grown beyond them.

To the theory of "deterioration" Gayley assigned the historical, philological, allegorical, and theological interpretations. To the theory of "progress" he assigned the anthropological school of Lang and Tylor.

Modern evaluations of the debates of the last century point toward moderation. The monistic (one, and only one explanation) theories can be explained as the results of imperfect knowledge, enthusiasm for one's special line of inquiry, and the very atmosphere of debate, which leads to exaggerated claims. Investigation tends to support all theories to some degree, but none of them exclusively. Certain mythological motifs can easily be traced to India, others cannot. Certain motifs have been borrowed by one culture from another, others apparently have independent origin. A degree of evolution may be demonstrated in all cultures, but they do not "evolve" in a parallel way.

Yet in spite of the lessons of the past, some modern specialists seem inclined to advance favorite theories with the same kind of vigorous monistic assertions as those displayed in disputes of the past.

Some modern considerations of myth

The origin, meaning, and function of myth continue to be examined and debated. Stith Thompson, writing in *Myth: A Symposium*, suggested that a century hence, scholars will review some current pronouncements with the same degree of amused incredulity that we express on reviewing some of the theories of a century ago.[10]

Because of the great complexity of some theoretical considerations, especially in linguistic and psychological approaches, no extensive review of

[10] *Myth: A Symposium, op. cit.*, pp. 482–488.

any theory is appropriate in this introductory text. Rather, this brief survey will allude to various publications with the implied suggestion that interested students explore as far as their interests and abilities will permit.

Apropos of the remark on the complexity of various studies, Bronislaw Malinowski, as early as 1926, in his "Myth in Primitive Psychology,"[11] complained that the various specialists in archeology, historians, sociologists, students of literature, "the grammarian, the Germanist, and the Romanist, the Celtic scholar and the Slavist discuss, each little crowd among themselves. Nor is mythology quite safe from logicians and psychologists—to say nothing of such visitors as the theosophist, the modern astrologist, and the Christian Scientist. Finally, we have the psychoanalyst . . . when the poor anthropologist and student of folklore come to the feast, there are hardly any crumbs left for them."[12]

Malinowski felt that much misunderstanding had resulted from the study of the printed page rather than the context of living society. Any printed text is, indeed, far removed from its cultural context. Ordinarily it suffers from translation. Also, it may suffer—more or less, according to the competence of the recording ethnologist—in being abstracted from its cultural setting. The observer may try to evaluate belief and sacredness, but these are difficult to evaluate in his own culture and language. Certainly the difficulties would be multiplied many times in a strange cultural setting. And apart from the question of interpreting complex elements of primitive societies, the European mythologies have been subjected to literary reworking. The epics of Homer, Beowulf, and other similar examples are works of literature which reflect some mythological motifs. Certainly the Oedipus story as seen in the great drama by Sophocles is far removed from the Oedipus motifs collected in our time by William Lessa.

To discover the nature and function of myth, then, Malinowski held that one should abandon the reinterpretation of the interpretations of ethnologists. One should take to the field and see myth at work. There one would find myth to be "not symbolic, but a direct expression . . . a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements."[13] According to his observations, the primitive people whom he had observed were not concerned with theory or with analysis of what to them was a simple, practical truth; their myths were so interwoven with their whole outlook on life that they had to be taken for granted. Ultimately though, in another age,

[11] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion.* New York: Anchor Books, 1954.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

the motifs might be abstracted: "Myth contains germs of the future epic, romance, and tragedy; and it has been used in them by the creative genius of peoples and by the conscious art of civilization."[14]

Malinowski reminds his readers that myth exists in all cultures, our own as well as those of other times and places, as an indispensable ingredient which strengthens tradition by tracing it back to "a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events."[15] The alacrity with which we react to the suggestion that our own sacred beliefs are part of a mythology, finding reason to see them as different, somehow better or more sensible than the mythologies of other cultures, may serve to illustrate the acuteness of Malinowski's observation.

Do ordinary folk tales become myths in certain circumstances? Do myths become ordinary folk tales? Are myths invented to describe or validate rituals? Or is ritual a sacred observance of preexisting myth? Is belief a nonessential factor in identification of myth? Does myth become some other form of narrative when belief ceases to exist? Does myth have its origin in narration of dreams? Is the prevalence of certain widespread motifs an indication of a collective subconscious? These and other questions have been explored by modern theorists.

Ritual origins

The most vigorous exponent of the theory that myth has its origin in ritual is Lord Raglan *(The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama.)*[16] In his contribution to *Myth: A Symposium,*[17] Raglan outlined his views, supporting them most copiously with reference to many studies, most of which dealt with the "literary" mythology of Europe and the Mediterranean area. His summary suggests his single-origin bias: "Myths are similar because they arise in connection with similar rites. Ritual has been, at most times and for most people, the most important thing in the world. From it have come music, dancing, painting and sculpture. All these, we have every reason to believe, were sacred long before they were secular, and the same applies to story telling."[18]

Stanley Edgar Hyman supports Raglan in the same volume with an article entitled "The Ritual View of Myth and the Mythic." Hyman similarly cites numerous studies, though his documentation is more varied, as it is used to suggest ritual origin for much more than myth. He would include

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[16] Fitz Roy Richard Somerset Raglan, Baron, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama.* London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1936.

[17] *Myth: A Symposium, op. cit.*

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 461.

modern literature, the ballad (as a possibility), and he even suggests that it might be worth while to attempt to show ritual origin for the blues.

These articles drew a sharp protest from William Bascom in "The Myth-Ritual Theory" (*JAF*, April-June, 1957). Bascom detailed several points wherein he felt that Raglan had made indefensible generalizations. Raglan's response, "Reply to Bascom" (*JAF*, October-December, 1957), attempted an effective answer to Bascom's earlier criticism. The final statement in this spirited exchange, "Rejoinder to Raglan and Bidney," appears as a note (*JAF*, January-March, 1958).

To the observer who does not enter the dispute, the question of Myth-From-Ritual is akin to "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" The answer to the alternative propositions is that neither did, since chickens and eggs have a complex evolutionary history tracing back to simpler forms. So it is with myth and ritual. It seems inconceivable that any well-developed ritual could exist prior to some mythological ratification. It might be more reasonable to postulate that myth and ritual grew together, making reciprocal contributions, one to the other. In a very primitive society where animistic concepts flourish, minor ritual acts of propitiation and supplication need not be complex or specialized. Simple recognition of all-pervading spirits, good or bad, requires libations, sacrifices, certain ways of doing things safely. These acts may be ritualistic, though their simplicity and unconscious performance would require no more explanation than modern man's tossing salt over his shoulder, or going around a ladder instead of under it.

With the growing complexity of culture and specialization of occupations, the priestly class emerges, formally assuming functions formerly unassigned. Assuming powers and controls, generations of these specialists rationalize their actions with historical, pseudohistorical, and supernatural ratification. As the mythological concepts draw together into an increasingly codified structure, so do the associated rituals support and validate their explanations, thus a cumulative effect of a three-way growth: priesthood, myth, and ritual.

As the wise man, shaman, witch-doctor, or similarly designated emergent priest makes his contribution to the accumulating myth, he may be inspired by the built-in suggestions of his language (disease of language theory), he may derive inspiration from his dreams (dream origins theory), or he may weave in motifs borrowed from other cultures (diffusion theory). With the passage of time form and structure of the myths are improved upon by the expert narrators (poets) of the culture. Thus it is possible to hypothesize a complex origin which encompasses elements of several of the monistic theories, showing that they may not err so much in fact as in degree. Such a theory would not be in conflict with generally accepted anthropological concepts of the structure and growth of various elements of man's diverse culture.

Psychology and mythology

With the advent of Freudian psychology, whole new frontiers of speculative interpretation opened to students of literature and folklore. New terminology, new techniques, and new theories led to investigations not previously dreamed of. Freudian psychologists have written much literary criticism, adding new dimensions to our insights into various kinds of literature, old and new. Interpretation of symbols has led not only to new evaluations of works of literature, but has even analyzed the authors, revealing strange new biographical data previously unsuspected.

Narrative folklore has been subjected to the same kind of study that psychoanalyzed the romantic poets, Mark Twain, and James Joyce. Certainly it is true that an academic discipline can offer concepts and techniques which may be useful in other areas of study. One interesting example of the psychoanalyst's use of folklore to support a theme is "The Mythology of Dark and Fair: Psychiatric Use of Folklore" by Eric Berne (*JAF*, January-March, 1959). Dr. Berne's recognition of deep-set attitudes toward the connotations of *Dark* (dirty, villain, etc.) and *Fair* (purity, princess, etc.) had led him to understand certain attitudes of patients. His examination of a considerable body of *Märchen* and myth as examples of these attitudes produced an article of interest to both psychiatrists and folklorists. His citation of the literature and of his own case histories illustrated how one discipline might make unexpected contributions to another.

Sigmund Freud, greatly interested in myth, made frequent reference to it in his writing. It is significant that certain complexes and illnesses bear names derived from Greek mythology. Freud's disciples and a whole new generation of theorists making use of various modifications of Freud's basic contributions have built up a bewildering array of commentaries on the interpretation of myth.

Although folklorists were discussing dream origins as the "happenings" from which folk narratives could derive before the Freudian era, Freud's theories of dream analysis influenced their speculations subsequently. Carl Jung, who broke with Freud in 1913, developed his theory of the mythopoeic factor as free of external association, intrinsic within the individual, hence a collective, genetic element in the human psyche. He felt that the primitive mentality did not invent myths, but rather, experienced them. This collective unconscious experience of archetype ideas would conveniently account for some of the puzzles of polygenesis, but the explanation has not been supported well enough to gain wide acceptance.

The objection raised frequently to the elaborate dream analysis techniques employed on folklore is that the theory is applied to *texts*, written tales or myths, then extended to the culture from which they have been

derived. The practicing psychoanalyst will insist, however, that he can not attempt to interpret a dream outside the context of his whole, intimate association with his patient, further, that even his patient's dream is not subject to accurate interpretation outside the context of events associated with a particular dream.

Numerous theorists deal extensively with interpretation of symbols, wherein objects or actions named do not really have their ostensible meanings, but rather, represent something else. Traditional scholars have occasionally voiced objections to this trend, for, as Stith Thompson expressed it in *Myth: A Symposium,* "One continually gets a sense of unreality, of living in a world of phantasmagoria, in a never-never land where nothing ever says what it means, or means what it says, where people have only one thought and only one interest."[19] Malinowski, in "Myth in Primitive Psychology" expressed his distaste by characterizing the psychologist as "diving deep into the dark pools of the subconscious, where at the bottom there lie the usual paraphernalia and symbols of psychoanalytic exegesis."[20]

The objection often advanced in both literary criticism and folklore theory is that the psychologists' system of interpretation may become so complex and tenuous that the subject under consideration is lost, or it is distorted into a hopeless caricature. One sometimes asks whether the investigator is investigating the subject or using the subject to investigate himself.

The Folk Tale

In a discussion of narrative folklore, myth cannot readily be dealt with apart from other forms. Much of the foregoing discussion of myth has some application to *Märchen,* especially with respect to various psychological interpretations. In fact, it is not always easy for the student to differentiate sharply between tale and myth. Some investigators have held that in a primitive culture the carriers of oral traditions do not differentiate between mythical and non-mythical narrative, that the distinction is applied only by the more sophisticated observer. Still, members of some primitive societies may make even finer distinctions, as in the assignment of particular narratives to special occasions and even to special narrators. Boas[21] maintained that North American Indians readily distinguished between myth and tale, but that the material of the tale, even one involving near-contemporary events, could be incorporated into mythical structures. Further, a tale on one occasion could

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 483.

[20] Malinowski, *op. cit.,* p. 99.

[21] Franz Boas, ed., *General Anthropology* ("Mythology and Folklore"). Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1938.

be myth on another. Boas preferred to think in terms of *mythical concepts*. David Bidney, in his *Theoretical Anthropology*,[22] follows this general thesis in an elaborate and more up-to-date discussion of the nature of myth.

If we recall that the original Grimm hypothesis was that *Märchen* were merely fragments of larger mythical structures, we can see that the matter of distinction has been one of concern throughout the history of folklore scholarship. For practical purposes of classification and study, however, *Märchen*, legends, jests, proverbs, and riddles may be collected, recognized as belonging to one of these categories, and studied for comparison, distribution, or any other problem suggested by the material.

From the brief review of the backgrounds of folklore study given in this text, it will be apparent that scholars have repeatedly attempted certain sweeping generalizations about folk tales. It will also be apparent that such generalizations have not stood up to critical analysis. With the passage of time and with the growing volume of materials for examination it becomes more and more apparent that origins, routes of dissemination, and other problems related to folk narrative are extremely varied, suggesting that the study will not develop explanations as simple or all-encompassing as those developed in the past.

Studies of the folk tale

For the best available study of the folk tale in the English language, the student should consult Stith Thompson's *The Folktale*.[23] This volume deals so extensively with the nature and study of folk narrative that its organization is presented here to encourage its use.

The table of contents shows the book to be divided into four parts: Nature and Forms of the Folk Tale; The Folk Tale from Ireland to India; The Folk Tale in a Primitive Culture: North-American Indian; and Studying the Folk Tale.

In Part One, Dr. Thompson considers the universality of the folk tale and forms of the folk tale. In Part Two, he considers the "complex tale," the "simple tale," the folk tale in ancient literature, and European-Asiatic folk tales in other continents. In Part Three, he considers the North American Indian tales, creation myths, the trickster cycle, tests and hero tales, journeys to other worlds, animal wives and husbands, and other miscellaneous categories. In Part Four, he discusses theories of the folk tale, international organization of folk tale study, collecting, classifying, the life history of a folk tale, and the folk tale as a living art.

[22] David Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.

[23] Stith Thompson, *The Folktale*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1946.

The reader is immediately familiar with the most commonly anthologized European tales such as those included in the Grimm collection. Most adults can readily recall "fairy tales" which do not involve fairies, but do involve tests and wagers, unlikely heroes, supernatural helpers, ogres, witches, and transformations. Upon consideration, adults who have unreflectingly read *Märchen* in their childhood might observe that many of the tales contained elements which must have been "survivals" of beliefs or customs of an earlier age—superstitions, rituals, applied magic, even domestic arts of a bygone era. These "literary fossils" may be as exciting to students of cultural history as fossil bones may be to physical anthropologists.

Quite apart from consideration of "survivals" is the question of distribution and variation. The fact that a well-identified tale exists in hundreds of variants in several languages scattered over most of the world raises interesting questions as to how it has moved from one place to another and how and why certain variations in content or structure developed.

Throughout the Thompson folk tale text one theme is fairly consistent. It is that folk tales are artistic forms, that they are a form of literature—*unwritten literature.* This phrase seems at first to be self-contradictory, but we should reflect on the orally transmitted knowledge in a "non-literate" culture: the history, science, art, and all other accumulations of wisdom stored in the mental libraries of the individuals who make up the society. Non-literate people do have an unwritten literature, one which we may translate into the great body of written literature of Western culture. The folk narrative as unwritten literature is free to change, to improve when told by an artistic narrator, to degenerate when artistic skill is lacking, to borrow episodes from other narratives, to lose motifs which do not fit a new environment.

For a summary of the theories of the principal folklorists of Europe, the student should consult Emma Emily Kiefer's *Albert Wesselski and Recent Folktale Theories.*[24] This volume boils down numerous monographs in various European languages to present in English the principal theories of Friedrich von der Leyen, Kaarle Krohn, Martti Haavio, Carl von Sydow, Walter Anderson, Jan De Vries, Albert Wesselski, and others. Considering the difficulty of definition, we should not be surprised to discover much attention given here to terminology. In their efforts to classify, the European scholars have proposed names for various kinds of folk tales. Only within the framework of references supplied by these names and their sometimes complex definitions can many of the theories of origins and dissemination be fully understood. Leading American scholars have followed the European scholarship, but in general, modern American studies manage well enough with the

[24] Emma Emily Kiefer, *Albert Wesselski and Recent Folktale Theories.* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, Folklore Series, No. 3, 1947.

terms already introduced in this text: Myth, Legend, and *Märchen.* Other terms such as trickster tales, animal tales, hero tales, tall tales, and jests are largely self-explanatory.

An obvious need for classification can be seen if one considers that archives of various nations now contain hundreds of thousands of manuscript and mechanically recorded folk tales. To gain access to the variants of a single item, one must identify it by a cataloguing system generally agreed upon. The loose international organization known as Folklore Fellows, with its publishing headquarters in Helsinki, Finland, has contributed much to international cooperation and understanding. The publications of Folklore Fellows (FF Communications, or FFC) numbered 180 by 1960, making up a distinguished series of monographs dealing with many aspects of folklore studies.

Type and motif indexing

A useful FF Communication appearing in 1928 was FFC 74, *The Types of the Folktale,*[25] by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. This volume represented the greatest step taken up to that time in the task of bringing order to the classification of folk tales.

The plan of *The Types of the Folktale* is to assign a number to each *type* (a recognizable tale for which variants are known). A brief synopsis is given for each type, and principal variants are indicated. In addition, a few bibliographical notes make it possible to consult the *Type-Index* to see the basic pattern of a particular tale, then find additional examples. Further, if the researcher speaks of Type 480, for example, he speaks of a particular tale known to other folklorists by the same number. The 1928 version of the *Type-Index* (alternate, shortened title of FFC 74) is organized to present simple animal tales first, then to add other types and numbers in an order suggesting the growing complexity or sophistication of folk tales through several major categories. This index has proved itself invaluable to students and researchers in both Europe and America. Its value has been enhanced by Thompson's completion of its revision and enlargement, published as FFC 184 in 1961.

Useful as the *Type-Index* is, it cannot cover the multitude of narrative situations in which a fragment of one tale has been grafted to the body of another, or in which elements which seemingly come from several tales are found in one. Many researchers early recognized the need for a list of shorter episodes or even for a list of tag-words as the basis for classification. Stith Thompson, who had become involved in just this kind of problem while writing his *Tales of the North American Indians*[26] had already begun an

[25] *Op. cit.*

[26] Stith Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929.

index of motifs when he undertook the completion of the Type-Index after Aarne's death. He was well enough established in the motif project at that time to work motif numbers into the synopses of tales in the Type-Index. The planned Motif-Index grew to larger proportions, and it finally appeared in six volumes: *Motif-Index of Folk Literature.*[27] This large work proved to be so useful that reference to its classification was widely adopted, making it apparent that it should be enlarged. Dr. Thompson undertook this task, bringing out the first volume of a greatly enlarged six-volume edition in 1956. When the final volume appeared in 1958, he had devoted much of his energies to this encyclopedic work over a period of about thirty years. The enlarged *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* contains many thousands of motifs conveniently arranged and cross-indexed, thus providing an unusually fine bibliographical tool for the student who deals with folk literature, mythology, or literary history.[28]

Folklore in Literature

Folklore in ancient literatures

In spite of the vigorous criticism of the nineteenth-century India-origin theories, the main stream of studies seems to have centered on the literature which so strongly attracted Grimm, Benfey, Müller, and others. The continuing interest in the folk literature of India is indicated by two relatively recent publications: *The Oral Tales of India,* by Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys,[29] and *Types of Indic Oral Tales,* by Stith Thompson and Warren Roberts.[30] The former is a motif-index, the latter a type-index. Both works are based on the same classification systems used in the larger works mentioned heretofore.

Much early interest centered on translations of the *Panchatantra,* a book of animal tales in the fable tradition. This work had its origin in India about two thousand years ago, and has gone through numerous translations and changes in its complicated history. Though the hypothetical Sanskrit version is not extant, a Jain version is known. The book is known to have passed through Persian and Syrian forms in the sixth century A.D., and its eighth-century version is in existence. Another version, known as *Textus Ornatior,* is the source of Benfey's 1859 translation.

[27] *Op. cit.*

[28] The details of the structure and use of the Motif-Index will be found in Chapter 6, "The Student Folklorist."

[29] Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys, *The Oral Tales of India.* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1958.

[30] Stith Thompson and Warren Roberts, *Types of Indic Oral Tales.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Folklore Fellows Communications No. 180, 1960.

The eighth-century Arabic version passed to a tenth-century Hebrew translation, which then was translated to Latin, thus making it available to European readers. Actually, this was only one of the three main routes by which the *Panchatantra* came to Europe, passing into literatures of various languages enroute.

The *Panchatantra* has an interesting structure, being a number of stories within stories, making up a complex framework. Students who are familiar with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or Boccaccio's *Decameron* will recognize the device. The *Panchatantra* has a similar but more complicated structure. Its characters are animals; the stories are moral; but unlike the explicit morals of *Aesop's Fables*, *Panchatantra* morals are generally implicit.[31]

The framework device for enclosing a group of unrelated tales seems to be very ancient, for numerous examples of such collections from various periods may be demonstrated, and some can be shown to be clearly related.

Though the titles mentioned above are forms of written literature, they interest the folklorist because of the interplay of written and oral transmission. Each new written version of an older work showed much change in content and style. Authors or translators felt free to add stories from their own traditions, so that a book such as the *Panchatantra* could grow as it passed from country to country and century to century.

Changes and additions were particularly easy to make before the era of printing. In the days of laboriously handwritten books, few copies existed, and few people could read them. If a scribe read the contents aloud or told the stories from memory, his auditors could add the tales to their stock of oral literature. Similarly, from the richness of the unwritten literature about them, writers could abstract useful motifs or morals to enrich the works they copied and translated. Furthermore, to authenticate the additions taken from oral sources, a writer could attribute them to some known work or author. Such seems to be the case in the large collection which we know as *Aesop's Fables*. The collection seems to have grown through a natural tendency to assign any fable to the prestigious name of Aesop.

The Arabian Nights is another large collection of written tales within a framework. It is likely to be known by modern readers, though few are familiar with the full, unbowderlized text. Forms of this collection antecedent to a Persian manuscript are not known, though Indian groundwork and Egyptian influence seem apparent. So many different versions exist that no particular one can be called the authentic or official text. One translator sees Arabic, Syrian, Egyptian, and Jewish elements in a collection that is basically

[31] Much of this discussion of the history and content of the *Panchatantra* follows the presentation of Gédéon Huet in his *Les Contes Populaires.* Paris: Ernest Flammarion, Éditeur, 1923. The best available English language translation of the *Panchatantra* is by Arthur W. Ryder, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Persian. The variety of tales suggests gradual accretion which built up the group over a long period. Some tales are recognizably recent additions, whereas some belong to types considered to be among the oldest forms of storytelling.

The framework device which brings together a collection of tales serves a practical need of the professional storyteller to provide an adaptable form of continuity. The professional who sets up shop in the marketplace and tells stories to a non-literate audience is still to be seen in cities of the Orient and Middle East. Because he has a shifting audience, some leaving, others arriving, much like the audience of a modern movie, he must deliver a series of relatively brief episodes, each a satisfying tale in itself, yet all tied together with some contrivance. The marketplace storyteller's art has been suggested as the source of the ribaldry in *The Arabian Nights*.[32]

Some of the tales in these collections concern themselves with the heroic exploits of kings or princes; some of the more recent additions allude to historical or semi-historical characters. This is legendary material.

Folklore in modern American literature

The people of the United States have never been noted for their reluctance to proclaim the values and superiority of their culture. If native legends were lacking, enterprising writers were usually at hand to manufacture them. If frontier environment was crude, local colorists were ready enough to exploit the crudities and glorify them in literature. Royall Tyler's Jonathan (a New England rustic-comic), in the play *The Contrast* of 1787, does not differ markedly from similar stock characters of twentieth-century comedy. James Russell Lowell's use of folk idiom in humorous verse is representative of the recognition of folk culture we see in *Huckleberry Finn* or *Taps for Private Tussie*.[33]

Out of the American Frontier came the locally adapted tall tale which we tend to associate with Davy Crockett, Mike Fink, and Paul Bunyan, without realizing that many of the principal motifs have been in circulation for centuries. Among still more recent subtypes are stories about newly-rich Texans and American millionaire playboys. Some of these are anecdotes having a factual basis; some are examples of "fakelore" which have never had oral circulation; and some are drawn from literature, but have achieved genuine oral circulation.

Such collectors as Marie Campbell *(Tales from the Cloud Walking*

[32] For an available abridgement of a standard English translation, see Richard F. Burton, ed., *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, arranged by Bennett Cerf. New York: Random House, Inc., 1932.

[33] Jesse Stuart, *Taps for Private Tussie*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1943.

Country)[34] and Vance Randolph *(The Talking Turtle and Other Ozark Folk Tales)*[35] have contributed to our literature and our understanding with tales taken directly from oral tradition, enriched by source and comparative notes. On the other end of the scale, from the academic point of view, is the anthologist who combs literary and sub-literary sources to compile vast, disorganized anthologies of various forms of "folk" narrative.

Out of the better collections and studies a reasonable understanding of the folk tale in America is emerging. We find that our folklore, like our language, is a product of long-established tradition frequently enriched by liberal borrowing. The most comprehensible, the most intriguing, and the most adaptable of the tales from the many ethnic and national streams entering the melting pot tend to be preserved. The others, like the languages which bring them, fade away.

We find that the tall tale, the ghost tale, and the hero tale, among others, can readily be collected in our culture. We find that certain tales may tend to cluster within ethnic or occupational groups. Some ghost tales are perpetuated in particular geographical areas; certain more sophisticated tales remain with the college students; still others tend to stay with the military. Needless to say, many are unprintable; thus their continued oral circulation seems to be insured.

Quite apart from the various ways of setting up classifications of stories by types is classification based on national or ethnic sources. We are generally familiar with dialect stories which purport to relate the characteristics of identifiable minorities. Stories which draw from the folklore about the stinginess of Scotchmen, the pugnacity of Irishmen, the endurance of Swedes, the earthiness of Frenchmen, the shiftlessness of the Negroes, and the cleverness of the Jews come quickly to mind. Many of these are merely anecdotes, born on the vaudeville stage, borrowed endlessly by one newspaper or magazine from another, having limited oral circulation perpetuated by literary iteration.

American Negro folklore

Of the body of folktales having their origin and perpetuation among members of the Negro race in America and in some literature, a significant number may be traced to Africa. It is obvious that the longer the American Negroes mingle with whites of European descent, and the more distant in time the African origin of the Negro race becomes, the more the folklore of the two races will tend to merge. At the very beginning of their new life

[34] Marie Campbell, *Tales from the Cloud Walking Country*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1958.

[35] Vance Randolph, *The Talking Turtle and Other Ozark Folk Tales*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957.

on this continent, Negro slaves began substituting local allusions drawn from their new environment for allusions to details of their earlier experience. The change of language from native African to English, French, or Spanish, the change of flora and fauna demanded change in detail of story content, even though main story motifs persisted. Two examples will suffice for the generalization: (1) The rabbit plays a major role in some tales of African origin, yet the rabbit is not found in many areas of Africa from which the narrators came. The native African tales were about a dwarf antelope noted for its elusiveness. The animal in the United States which most closely resembles the dwarf antelope is the rabbit. (2) The transplanted Negroes came from cultures in which the chief was absolute ruler, having the power of life and death over his subjects. In narratives adapted to the new environment the chief was replaced by the despotic owner of slaves, so that the commoner-chief relationship became a master-slave relationship. With these necessary changes of detail in mind, one can read Americanized African tales with an understanding which gives due respect to unique heritage of the American Negro. In spite of criticism of the methods used by Joel Chandler Harris, many of the stories he collected and published are remarkable in the way they parallel stories carefully collected in native Africa.

The degree to which the folktales of the American Negro have had their origin in Africa has been somewhat obscured by arguments based on racist notions rather than on established facts. Stories of European origin are, naturally, circulated among Negro storytellers after several generations of the Negroes' living in an essentially European culture. To exaggerate European origins by insisting that even Negro stories from Africa are European stories which found their way to Africa and became acculturated there seems to be reasoning based on racist or nationalist bias rather than on research. The fact is that no competent study has yet established the exact relationship of cognate European and African folk tales.

American Indian folklore

A second group of tales which is important in American culture and in some literature is the one drawn from the American Indian. Interest in the narrative lore of Indian tribes began with the earliest days of colonization and has never subsided. Field collecting continues in spite of dwindling resources of Indians uncorrupted by acculturation.

As has been true elsewhere, the contact of American Indian and European cultures brought about an exchange of folk narrative. Some of the earliest collecting gave evidence of Indian adoption of the folk tales of Europe. Great difficulty has been experienced in trying to determine to what degree international tale types existed on the North American continent prior to the coming of the white man. One complex motif cluster, The

Magic Flight (Type 313), has tentatively been established as having had currency among Indians in the West before it could have reached them from European immigration. And the authors have encountered an Achilles heel motif (Z 2311. Invulnerability except in one spot) in a seemingly indigenous tale from northern California (see Appendix B). This motif had been noted by an earlier collector in an adjacent tribal area. These are examples of the sparse indications that some tales or fragments of tales known in Europe and Asia were also known by American Indians before the time of Columbus. Yet in spite of the great volume of collection and study, no sweeping statement can be made about the certain presence of European tale types in pre-Columbian America—at least not in the light of present knowledge. Stith Thompson's *Tales of the North American Indians*[36] is primarily a study of the currency of European tale types among selected Indian tribes. His study helps to show why a generalization cannot be made in that it reveals how widespread and acculturated imported tales became early in Anglo-American history.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's extensive writing in the first half of the nineteenth century reported much narrative lore. Of special interest is the Ojibway material, from which Longfellow's culture-hero poem, *Hiawatha,* is derived. But Schoolcraft, like his contemporaries, was hampered by lack of an established methodology for ethnographic or folkloristic research and reporting. Not until relatively recent times did ethnologists and folklorists take pains to record the narratives of their Indian informants with absolute fidelity. Even though they started late with their accurate recording, thereby losing forever the narratives of some rapidly disappearing tribes, they have made up in energy for what they lacked in foresight. Franz Boas, working around the turn of the century, collected an impressive volume of texts in the native languages. Of special interest is his ambitious project of deducing the details of a vanished material culture by abstracting references to them as they were preserved in traditional narratives. An example is *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl.*[37] This is an illustration of using folklore keys to unlock doors to the past. Many other anthropologists trained to omit no significant detail, and perhaps more important, able to recognize the significance of details, have accumulated a vast store of Indian texts, much of which remains to be adequately translated and analyzed.

Memoirs of the American Folklore Society and the publications of the American Bureau of Ethnology contain many examples readily available to interested students. Additional texts may be found in the anthro-

[36] *Op. cit.*

[37] Franz Boas, *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 35th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 2 vols., 1913–1914.

pological publications of major American museums and universities. Examination of literal translations of original texts will show the reason for the extensive modifications made by writers for the popular press. European and Indian cultures are so different, even in traditions governing narrative structure, that unaltered texts are usually incomprehensible to the uninitiated. The inept interpreter may so garble the content that he infuriates ethnologists who see the final product as gross misrepresentation. A writer reasonably familiar with Indian culture from which the text derives, however, may anglicize a tale without too great distortion of either the mood or the culture traits of the original. An example may be seen in the sensitive treatment of California Indian texts by Theodora Kroeber, in her *The Inland Whale*.[38] Mrs. Kroeber combined her talents as a writer with her experiences in the field in the company of her anthropologist husband to produce a perceptive transition from native American oral lore to modern American literature. Obviously, few writers enjoy the special background of living and working with a prominent anthropologist. For writers less sensitive to the subtle allusions in Indian texts, even the seemingly simple legends about place names contain numerous hazards.

Legend and Literature

Legends play a prominent role in literature. Historical or pseudo-historical literature is especially dependent on legendary materials. The usual distinction between history and legend centers on the fact that legend is unverified narrative handed down by tradition, whereas history has been verified as far as possible by study of available records. The distinction becomes blurred where history, especially ancient or local history, relies more on tradition than on records. For an example of local legend which borders on history, see Appendix A.

So many legends concerning Christian saints have accumulated in Western culture that some European authorities confine the term *legend* to saint's legend. There is good reason for this in that the Latin term *legenda* indicated that which was to be read in church—miracles or acts of a saint on a particular saint's day. Because of this, many European folklorists prefer the German term *Sage* for legendary material which does not deal with saints. *Sage*, however, is not in common use in the United States.

[38] Theodora Kroeber, *The Inland Whale*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1959.

Gesta Romanorum[39] is a collection of medieval exempla, a sourcebook for sermon-making, which illustrates the profusion of legendary lore about saints. The *exemplum* is a short allegorical narrative, usually represented as true, used especially by medieval preachers to illustrate morals of sermons. Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale" is an example of the exemplum and its delivery. One should distinguish the *exempla* from the *novella*, short, realistic tales, usually humorous or satirical, well illustrated in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

The collection of exempla in *Gesta Romanorum* existed in various manuscript collections prior to the advent of printing. It contains the interesting device of a detailed explication beginning "Dearly Beloved" following each tale. In this work as in others of its type one sees evidence of certain mobile motifs, appealing characteristics or episodes which may attach themselves to various story situations. A glance at the appropriate sections of the *Motif-Index* will show, for instance, that legendary heroes frequently have marvelous births or marvelous conceptions (such as special omens, virgin births, animal parents). It is not uncommon for legendary characters to be able to communicate with animals, or to receive extraordinary tolerance or assistance from them. Marvelous feats of strength, endurance, or self-denial seem to attach themselves readily to narratives about folk heroes.

The student can probably think of good current examples of this tendency to "make a good story." Perhaps he has indulged in the practice himself. That is, the good hunting or fishing story may be narrated about one's own relatives to give the story a personal touch. Better yet, the tendency of some narrators is to change a good story to first-person. Some raconteurs regularly use first-person narration.

The American legend of Johnny Appleseed is a familiar example of mobile motifs clustering around a colorful figure. The motifs of animal companions and heroic endurance have attached themselves to a growing legend about a person who left a reasonably clear trail for historians to follow. The real man, John Chapman, was an unusual pioneer businessman, but he would not be able to recognize himself as he has been depicted in recent literary and film productions. The American legend of John Henry, the steeldriving man, may be cited as another familiar example of the typical hero motifs tending to cluster around a well-known figure whether that figure has a historical existence or not. Both Johnny Appleseed and John Henry have been studied by folklorists who have tried to unravel the complicated history of the growth of a folk legend. Robert Price, in his *Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth*,[40] successfully traced the essentials

[39] Wynnard Hooper, ed., *Gesta Romanorum*, tr. by C. Swan from the edition of H. Oesterly. London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1905.

[40] Robert Price, *Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1954.

of the history of John Chapman. Guy B. Johnson, in his *John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend*,[41] was not successful in establishing a distinct historical figure.

Distinction is sometimes made between *national heroes* (such as Lincoln), *popular heroes* (such as Babe Ruth), and *folk heroes* (such as Jesse James). To these categories one should add *fake heroes* (such as Bowleg Bill). Although popular heroes capture the public imagination, they seem to lack staying power. National heroes take on some of the characteristics of folk heroes as the folk assign to them unauthenticated anecdote, such as the Washington and cherry tree legend.

It is not easy to establish to what degree legends are also the products of political promoters and journalists. Dorson, in *American Folklore*[42] and elsewhere, has indicated that the Davy Crockett material points to literary or "sub-literary" origins. Still, to show literary origins does not rule out valid oral transmission. Regardless of how the legend originates, it may pass into the stream of folklore, where it continues to change and grow. Marie Campbell has found an extreme case of literary-to-oral change, for example. She found non-literate or semi-literate storytellers narrating episodes from Homer. The episodes had taken on local color and local dialect, but they were still recognizable. The tradition had been handed down from literate ancestors whose recital of tales of Greek heroes narrated from knowledge of the literature had passed into folk memory. The later storytellers from whom Miss Campbell collected the stories were not personally familiar with the Homeric literature.

The writers' use of folk material

The example of Marie Campbell's discovery illustrates some of the interplay of oral and written narrative. Earlier mention of Homer, Boccaccio, and Chaucer suggested that folk narrative finds expression in written literature as the printed page gradually supplants the unwritten literature of culture. In this example we can observe the reverse process—written literature feeding back into folk narrative.

Casual examination of folklore journals will show that studies of literature for folkloristic content are quite common. One may examine an author's use of folk customs in "local color" fiction; another may abstract proverbs or proverbial expressions; and still another may examine an author's use of other elements of authentic folk speech. Both folklore *in* literature and folklore *as* literature are of interest.

Two texts, widely separated in time, will serve to illustrate some changing concepts of the study of folklore in literature: The first is Hubert M.

[41] Guy B. Johnson, *John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1929.
[42] *Op. cit.*

Skinner's *Readings in Folk-Lore.*[43] Mr. Skinner included "An Indian Story," a poem by Bryant; "The Death Lament of the Nadowessie Chieftain," a poem by Schiller translated from German to English; and "The Culprit Fay," a poem by Joseph Drake. For the English folklore, Skinner included Book II, Canto X from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene;* "Boadicea," by Cowper; "Tristram of Lyonesse," by Swinburne; "Guinevere," from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King;* and other similar selections. For other countries the table of contents lists Goethe's "Faust," Fitzgerald's "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," and Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum."

Folklore in American Literature,[44] edited by John T. Flanagan and Arthur Palmer Hudson is more restrictive as indicated by the title, yet it also reveals much change in emphasis and interest. The book is divided into twelve sections: The Indian, Devil Tales, Ghost Tales, Witchcraft and Superstition, Buried Treasure, Frontier Humor and Tall Tales, Literary Ballads, Heroes and Demigods, Yankees, Negro Tales, Folk Songs and Ballads, and Folk Wisdom. Selections from American literature range from Irving and Hawthorne (Devil Tales) to William Faulkner (Tall Tale) and Carl Sandburg (Folk Wisdom).

In addition to revealing a wider range of interest and a more useful definition of folklore, the modern text provides a greater variety of illustrations of folklore at work in literature. The reader may observe that Nathaniel Hawthorne and Carl Carmer, authors of two separate centuries, employed folklore in a similar manner. Hawthorne blended devil lore of his New England heritage with his own creative skill to produce an original story: "Young Goodman Brown." Carmer blended a hitchhiking ghost story, widely popular in our century, with his skill to produce a spine-chilling, sophisticated story of his own time and place: "The Lavender Evening Dress." Though the hitchhiking ghost motif has had a great deal of attention in recent years, it is older than American literature.

This blending and reworking of folk narrative into conscious literary art is widely recognized. Every writer is the carrier of some oral traditions. His employment of them may be deliberate and extensive or merely casual: Lowell's use of folk speech,

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,

in his "The Courtin' " is as deliberate and knowing as Faulkner's "Flem would trim Eck or any other of his kin quick as he would us."[45] Neither

[43] Hubert M. Skinner, *Readings in Folk-Lore.* New York: American Book Company, 1893.

[44] John T. Flanagan and Arthur Palmer Hudson, *Folklore in American Literature.* New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958.

[45] William Faulkner, *The Hamlet.* New York: Random House, Inc., 1940, p. 319.

Lowell nor Faulkner could be classified as a folklorist, but there can be no doubt of their keen appreciation of folk speech and folk customs.

It has become something of a literary cliché to point out Shakespeare's ready use of literary sources—plot situations already used by someone else. Volumes of studies of his works establish clearly many of his known literary sources such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* and plays previously written by other dramatists. Studies also indicate other sources not as certainly known, but likely enough to warrant educated guesses. Shakespeare's greatness is recognized to lie in his *treatment* of his material rather than in his *invention* of it.

What is not known to literary scholars. and what is not likely to be known, is the degree to which this greatest of all English poet-dramatists may have drawn upon oral traditions of his own background, the songs, proverbs, riddles, and tales most certainly current during his youth. As a boy in rural England in the sixteenth century, he was necessarily exposed to much folklore. What we indirectly know of his quick and retentive mind suggests that very little would escape his notice and that any or all of it would be potentially useful in his productive writing period. His use of folk wisdom; his allusions to superstitions about witches, fairies, comets, remedies, omens, and magic; his use of proverbial lore; and his allusions to folk music are obvious and frequent. Students will have little difficulty locating articles which point out elements of folklore in the works of Shakespeare and of other great authors.

Even more interesting in the context of this discussion is the frequency with which plot situations common in literature close to oral sources appear. The use of a love potion (real or imagined) or of a poison—widespread in the exempla and novella traditions—appears in *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Cymbeline, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra,* and *Othello.* Feigning death appears in *Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles,* and *Romeo and Juliet.* Remarkable wagers or bargains, a large category in the *Motif-Index,* appear in *The Merchant of Venice, All's Well That Ends Well,* and *Cymbeline.* Somewhat associated with the wager or bargain device is the trial of love or the riddle with reward or penalty attached. We see these devices in *King Lear* and *Pericles.* Soothsayers and omens appear in *Julius Caesar, Troilus and Cressida, Macbeth,* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* Ghosts are seen in *Julius Caesar, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth.* Madness, real or feigned. appears in *King Lear, Twelfth Night,* and *Comedy of Errors.* Love tokens are seen in *Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, All's Well That Ends Well, Cymbeline, Troilus and Cressida,* and *Othello.* Disguise or confused identity—still a much used stage device in comedy—is seen in *Comedy of Errors, Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure For Measure, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Pericles, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale, King Lear,* and *Coriolanus.*

Many of these plot devices are to be seen in *The Golden Ass of Apuleius, Gesta Romanorum, Arabian Nights, The Panchatantra, The Decameron, The Pentamerone, Canterbury Tales,* and other works previously mentioned as standing close to, or drawing from, oral sources. All this does not "prove" that Shakespeare used sources directly from oral tradition. Such proof is as impossible to establish as is proof of the lunatic claim that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare. It does suggest, however, that even if all his sources were literary, many of his effective story-telling devices existed in both literary and oral traditions. It suggests also that the literary scholar should not leap to the conclusion that a particular story from *The Decameron* was Shakespeare's literary source for a particular plot situation. The same motif might exist in the Spanish novella, in the *The Arabian Nights,* and also in some delightful story young Will heard at the fireside in his adolescence.

For contrast, we might shift from our consideration of Shakespeare to a consideration of Jesse Stuart, a modern, popular American author. Jesse Stuart, born in the hills of Kentucky, is well known for his use of the folk idiom in his stories and poems. He was honored as the recipient of a five thousand dollar prize at his election to the American Academy of Poets in 1961. At the time of the award he was a visiting professor at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. The honor of the award and his distinguished position at the time he received it hardly reflected his humble origins or his long, fierce struggle to teach himself to write and to bring an authentic presentation of a rapidly vanishing phase of folk culture to American literature.

Jesse Stuart did not achieve recognition because he rejected his background but because he used it. In spite of some early rejection of his writing by professorial ranks, the sheer weight of public approval brought recognition of his interpretation of the speech, customs, and manners of the Kentucky hill folk. And as the number of his published works increased, serious studies of the man and his works began to appear. Although this author's contribution to American literature has not been finally assessed, current studies credit him with preserving in literature some elements of our folk culture which otherwise may not have received interpretation by a native.

Many aspects of folklore in literature are discussed in a symposium in *JAF*, January-March, 1957. This symposium includes "The Identification of Folklore in American Literature," "Folklore and Literary Criticism," "Folklore in the Literature of Elizabethan England," and "Folklore in Literature: Notes Toward a Theory of Interpretation." Although the rather strict criteria noted there for excluding words "folk" and "folklore" from literary studies, unless the user has applied rigorous tests to the material being discussed, may be laudable from the purist's point of view, there is little likelihood that all users of these terms will heed the restrictions. However, it is well to deplore such loose usage of these terms that they cease to have any real meaning for the average reader.

Tall tales, anecdotes, stories about ghosts, tricksters, and numskulls may be considered as special forms of folk narrative. Specialized studies abound in the literature of folklore, especially in the FFC series. The greatest difficulty associated with setting up such subdivisions of the folk tale is that one does not know where to stop. Having segregated ghosts, tricksters, and numskulls, one feels inclined to go on to designate preacher stories, cowboy stories, sea stories, and so on, creating so many subdivisions that classification becomes a burden rather than an aid.

In our time and place, story-telling has given way to other forms of education and amusement. The printed page, the television screen, and other forms of modern communication have displaced the shaman, the granny in the chimney-corner, and the village wit. The nonspecialist is not likely to have much contact with orally transmitted myth, *Märchen,* and legend. But people in some geographical areas and in certain occupations are exposed to a moderate amount of legend in oral tradition. Anecdotes and shorter verbal formulae still flourish. Recent examples are the so-called "shaggy-dog" stories and "sick" jokes.

It seems quite clear that the best of orally transmitted narrative folklore no longer persists as a common element in Western culture. It does persist, however, in manifold ways, in our speech and in our literary heritage, exerting subtle but powerful influences on our attitudes and our actions.

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THREE

Song, music, and dance

In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro,
And pleyen songes on a smal rubible,
Therto he song som-tyme a loud quynyble;
And as wel koude he pleye on a giterne.

—*The Canterbury Tales*

MODERN PRACTICE is to distinguish quite sharply between folk song and folk narrative. This distinction arises because the two art forms have been almost entirely separate entities in the experience of contemporary investigators. If one could hear the oral literature of previous centuries, however, he might discover that song and story were once more interwoven than they are today.

Students of the folk epics have concluded that the long narratives concerning gods, heroes, and demons were, at least at the time they emerged into the written record, sung by minstrels. *Beowulf,* for example, was probably recited (or chanted) to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The Scop or Gleeman may have used his lute more for keeping time or creating emphasis than for harmonious music as we know it, yet the use of an instrument and the musical quality of the verse are clearly evident. Somewhat the same kind of presentation has been postulated for the great Greek epics attributed to Homer.

Scholars who attempt the reconstruction of the narrative or folk song

creative process are, once more, confronted by a kind of "chicken-or-egg" riddle. On the one hand, one may theorize that a simple narrative song or group of songs might grow into epic proportions through centuries of repetition and addition; on the other hand, one may theorize that a long story may be memorized conveniently if the mnemonic devices of rhythm and other forms of repetition are added, so that what was originally a simple prose account may have developed into song or chant.

Cante-Fable

In modern American collecting some folklorists have encountered the *cante-fable,* or song-story. This is a prose narrative which contains elements of chant or song, sometimes only a line or two, sometimes much more. Such a simple story for children as "The Gingerbread Man" (Type 2025) will serve as an illustration. The story is padded out with repetition of a rhythmic recitation which grows as the story progresses, much to the delight of both the storyteller and the audience. Some evidence suggests that these little fragments of verse or song are the remnants of what was once a much larger body of *cante-fable* in the American-European tradition. As the story-telling art has declined the portions of stories once sung have been corrupted into nonmusical rendition or have disappeared entirely. This hypothesis is supported by the observation that in some less literate countries where the art still flourishes, the song element is much more evident than in the European tradition. The great collections of African folk tales, for instance, contain many examples of the *cante-fable* form.

Unfortunately, even in African materials, adequate indication of song is lacking in many of the collections made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before good portable recording equipment was available. Missionaries and others, whose knowledge of the native languages was limited at best, and whose knowledge of native music was even weaker, tended to distort or even omit the musical portions of the tales they collected. Traditional songs frequently contain nonsense refrain lines, archaic language forms, and verbal elements whose main function is to maintain rhythm, thus making it difficult for even the singer himself to give an adequate translation to a collector. It is little wonder, then, that tales recently collected with tape recorder reveal an emphasis on song that was not at all shown in older collections containing the same tales. In fact, it appears that some seemingly pointless tales have existed primarily as vehicles for song rather than the song being adornment of the tales.

Folk Song

Folk song may take various forms such as religious music, lyrics, incantations, and narrative. In our culture, most of the scholarly attention has been paid to the largest and most evident category: narrative song, or ballad. The ballad, as indicated in the introduction to Sargent and Kittredge's abridged edition of Child's collection, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*,[1] is a "song that tells a story, or—to take the other point of view—a story told in song." This definition is expanded in more formal terms with indication of tradition, anonymity, simplicity of plot and structure, and impersonality on the part of the singer or author. Much of the key to the enduring qualities of traditional ballads is contained in these few remarks. The carriers and preservers of traditional tunes, the *folk*, have responded to events which have aroused their admiration, their wonder, or their sympathy. In relatively unadorned language set to simple tunes they have told and retold accounts of stirring events: Sir Patrick Spens sent on a voyage at a dangerously stormy time of year, Robin Hood outwitting the legal authorities, a clever maid outwitting an amorous knight, or a long lost brother forcing his attentions on a sister whom he fails to recognize. The tendency of the folk to memorialize a stirring event in song is not confined to bygone centuries. In modern America, train wrecks, shipwrecks, and murders have been reported by folk singers. We can readily observe, however, that a story of a twentieth-century murder, even if it achieves a considerable oral circulation, does not have the same marks of tradition we see in "Lord Randal" (Child No. 12). As Kittredge remarked in his introduction, "To this oral literature, as the French call it, education is no friend. Culture destroys it, sometimes with amazing rapidity. . . . What was once the possession of the folk as a whole becomes the heritage of the illiterate only, and soon, unless it is gathered up by the antiquary, vanishes altogether."[2]

Although Child and Kittredge both underestimated the degree to which ancient song still circulated in rural America, they were right in their general conclusion. Education had destroyed most of the tradition, and certainly education (and its communications products) has significantly altered the way in which a narrative song is produced and circulated in our time.

[1] Helen C. Sargent and George L. Kittredge, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

Folk song revival

Because of a revival of popular interest in folk music following World War II, entertainers and entrepreneurs have resurrected some genuine folk music as well as much that has never been truly traditional. This includes old music hall songs, popular tunes of the nineteenth century, and hillbilly music composed for recent radio entertainment. To satisfy popular demand, and incidentally adding to the confusion, entertainers have composed songs and presented them with the strong suggestion that the songs are recently "discovered" antiquities, just as some dealers in spurious antiques "distress" new furniture with hatchet and acid. In such a situation it is little wonder that still another confusing element should arise: the distortion and degradation of fine old folk songs by entertainers who warp them into "jazz," "bop," or "rock-and-roll" renditions.

The modern citizen, bombarded by the questionable contributions of modern communication media, is likely to think of folk song as anything sung to an ill-played guitar or banjo, anything ungrammatical, anything that sounds hillbilly, or anything that appeals to the musically uneducated. Since some journals have admitted the practice of reviewing the veritable niagara of records of folksy song and music, and since an increasing number of serious articles on hillbilly, jazz, and blues singers are appearing in learned journals, it is becoming difficult for the neophyte folklorist to separate the wheat from the chaff—to decide on what is truly the product and possession of the folk and what is purely commercial and imitative.

The English and Scottish popular ballad

The largest single category of songs, and one which we can be reasonably sure of, is that which is a part of our folk and literary heritage, the ancient ballads maintained in tradition for centuries. A few of these are so commonly anthologized in public school literature texts that anyone is likely to be familiar with them only in that setting; people frequently express surprise on learning that these selections are drawn from a singing tradition.

The English and Scottish popular ballads deserve the intense study they have received on several counts: (1) Some of them provide the only historical record we have concerning certain events or individuals. (2) Some provide us with valuable insights into social customs, attitudes, and beliefs otherwise not well documented. (3) Some provide useful insights for language scholars through grammatical structure, spelling, and word meaning. (4) Some provide rewarding studies for musicologists, who find in them modal scales and other devices rarely employed in modern music. (5) The whole body of ballad scholarship has contributed richly in methods and materials to literary, musical, and historical studies. (6) Important above

all other considerations, many ballads have great intrinsic merit as art objects, arousing delight and admiration in each new generation which experiences them.

Ballad studies have added many examples to Francis Child's impressive collection of 305 examples with variant texts. Each year several new volumes of collections and studies are published, so that even in a busy university seminar devoted exclusively to the English and Scottish ballads, the students find it impossible to expose themselves adequately to the extensive literature on the subject.

Some recent writers have indicated that the "Child tyranny," an excessive emphasis on the 305 selections in the Child collection, is a deterrent to good scholarship. The fact remains, however, that no other American collection approaches the scope of this great nineteenth-century work, and the literature of the ballad in America is keyed to the numbers Professor Child assigned to his examples. Therefore the canon is likely to remain with us, and it behooves every beginning student of folk song to acquire some familiarity with the Child collection. If the bulky unabridged edition is not readily available, the one-volume abridgement by Sargent and Kittredge[3] has long been widely used, and it is easily acquired.

Folk Music

Music

Ballads collected from singers have shown that the tune is often a matter of individual performance. The focus is usually on the narrative, so much so that some field informants unable to sing have recited excellent versions of ballads as poetry. The relative simplicity of ballad meter and stanza make many ballads easily adaptable to a few stock tunes. Yet the very fact of oral transmission has permitted numerous minor variations and adaptations in both words and tunes. One element of the traditional ballad which is more closely related to primitive music than to cultivated music is the irregular time. Quite often the time shifts repeatedly within a single stanza. In this connection one should observe that the flexibility of musical rendition will compensate for what seem to be faults in meter.

A nineteenth-century musical curiosity in America, not strictly in the folk tradition, but associated with white spirituals, was the "shape" or "shaped" note for the use of musically illiterate singers. In the hymnals prepared for singers who could not read music, notes indicated their tone (do, re, me, etc.) by the shape of the individual note (square, triangle, etc.) instead of by position on the musical score.

[3] *Op. cit.*

Instruments

Students not close to folk music tradition are likely to think of folk music as being typically associated with guitar or banjo. It is true, however, that the fiddle, guitar, banjo, harmonica, and dulcimer also figure in untutored folk music, and that fife and drum figured in an earlier era. And it is also true that a plucked instrument such as the harp or lute is known to have figured in the minstrel tradition before the rise of the genre of folk song considered here. However, many of the finest performers of true folk song use no instrumental accompaniment. Certainly the miner in the mine, the cowboy on his horse, the sailor at the capstan, the farmer at his plow, or the housewife in her kitchen will have no free hands for instrumental accompaniment. A sampling of transcriptions of field recordings available from the folk music archives of the Library of Congress will show how frequently informants in this country sing without instrumental assistance of any kind.

Musical accompaniment in America, when it has been used, has followed the patterns established in Europe. The guitar has had a long historical development in the family of stringed instruments. The violin, or "fiddle," to the majority of the folk, has been especially associated with the play-party and folk dance in general. Fiddle tunes are collected by students of folk music in much the same way ballads are collected by students of folk song. In an earlier period fife and drum music was common; it has persisted into this century in some eastern communities. The accordion, mandolin, and reed organ have played lesser roles, but have had some clear association with folk entertainment. The dulcimer, a plucked instrument which is not as difficult to play as is an instrument requiring precise fretting, has undergone a specialized, local development in the Southern Highlands. With a revival of its popularity brought on by dulcimer-playing professional entertainers, mountain craftsmen skilled in the folk art of its manufacture have had more orders for hand-made instruments than they could fill.

The one uniquely American instrument of any significance is the banjo. Its history traces to prototype instruments of native Africa, and its use, along with the special musical styles of Negro spirituals, blues, and jazz, should be credited to the rich contribution of the Negro race to American culture.

Studies of folk music

The most ambitious single project in the study of folk music since the assembly of the Child collection is now being carried out with the assistance of some modern technological devices. Bertrand Bronson's *Tradi-*

tional Tunes of the Child Ballads, With Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America, volume I,[4] was published in 1959. This first volume in a planned series covers the Child ballads from No. 1 to No. 53. Dr. Bronson has searched out so much valuable information on ballad tunes and texts that he has turned to the use of punched cards and machine sorting as a means of analyzing the data. His project, when completed, will do much to make up for the omissions of most of the nineteenth-century collectors, who saw the ballad as a species of antique poetry, to be collected and sometimes "improved" by antiquarians.

Bronson's study will be of such great bulk and expense that the non-specialist is not likely to come in contact with it outside the reference section of a library. Quite a different book is Bruno Nettl's compact *An Introduction to Folk Music in the United States*.[5] Professor Nettl, an ethno-musicologist, briefly surveys the whole spectrum of folk music, including the primitive music of the American Indians, the American Negroes, and the music of other ethnic groups. He also presents his views on professional folk singing, urban and rural folk music, and collecting. Clearly introductory, uncluttered by highly technical considerations and verbosity, this book is well worth the beginning folklorist's time. Nettl indicates (as do other investigators) that the amount of genuine folk performance in the United States tends to decrease approximately in direct proportion to the increase of literacy, acculturation, and urbanization.

As the unselfconscious, unsophisticated performances of the true folk musicians decrease, we observe the paradox of an increasing interest in professional performance of music originally drawn from traditional sources. In addition to the lucrative trade in song books, nightclub performance, and recordings, we see carefully planned revival movements and festivals. Many serious composers have used folk materials for both orchestra and ballet. The hillbilly music of radio and records has long been standard fare for a segment of the mass audience. The study and performance of traditional music by artists who stand somewhere between the serious music and the hillbilly music represents a more recent development, and it has stimulated enough interest to make the general public more aware of the existence of folk traditions than it has been in previous decades. The music student cannot afford to ignore the vast reservoir of folk art from which composers have been drawing for many generations.

[4] Bertrand Bronson, *Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads, with Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America*. vol. 1. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959.

[5] Bruno Nettl, *An Introduction to Folk Music in the United States*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960.

Characteristics of the Ballad

Narrative

The traditional English and Scottish ballad is a narrative song. The phenomenon is not confined to England and Scotland (and by importation to America) ; however, we tend to confine our attention to a local manifestation of an international phenomenon. Research has shown that the story told in song easily crosses language barriers, just as prose narrative will pass from one language to another, and ultimately, from one culture to another. Such a widely known example as "Edward" (Child No. 13), which seems to "belong" to an English setting, is well established as a Scandinavian folk song. With a change to American idiom and the title "Son Davy," the song seems to "belong" strictly to rural America. Thus we see that the narrative element may persist in a recognizable form even though the language, the local detail, and the music undergo repeated changes.

Substance of the narrative

The Child collection exhibits a wide variety, ranging from carol to comedy and from gloom to gaiety. If we exclude the large block of Robin Hood material, the border ballads, the few humorous ballads, and the religious items, we find that the remainder suggests a tabloid quality—reports of cruel murders, revenge killings, feuds, seductions, incest, illegitimacy, and infanticide! Consider these few stanzas chosen from the first twenty-five of the 305 ballads:

"Now you have had your will," quoth she,
"I pray, sir knight, will you marry me?" (1-A)

Dishonour not a ladie's name,
But draw thy sword and end my shame, (9-A)

"O sister, sister, what have I done!
O have I done this ill to thee! (14-A)

It is talked the world over, . . .
That the king's dochter gaes wi child
to her brither. (16-A)

And there she has her two babies born. . . .
She has taen out her wee pen-knife
And there she ended baith their life. (20-C)

"O Willie, O Willie, let me alane this nicht,
O let me alane till we're wedded richt." (25-A)

The general tone is rather grim, but it has some occasional relief. We see a bit of sparkle in some of the refrains. And the clever maid who baffles the amorous but too-thoughtful knight, taunts him with a statement that has delighted generations of performers:

> "Ye had me also amid the field,
> Among the rushes that were so brown,
> Where you might had your will of me,
>   But you had not the face to lay me downe." (112-A)

The preoccupation with romantic love and its various frustrations is not markedly different from that in modern popular song. The main difference seems to be that the older songs are somewhat more direct regarding the facts of life.

Another parallel between modern and ancient popular song is seen in the small proportion of distinctly humorous or comic song. The best known ballads of this kind in the Child collection make up a rather small group: "Our Goodman" (274), "Get Up and Bar the Door" (275), "The Wife Wrapt in Wether Skin" (277), and "The Farmer's Curst Wife" (278).

Anonymity

Traditional ballads have no known author. It may be true that the original composition was the product of a single minstrel or folk poet, but after generations of refinement and change as it passes from singer to singer, being transmitted orally rather than by the printed page, it becomes a possession and product of the folk.

Impersonality

The folk shaping of the ballad tends to flatten out the striking personal touches it might have had at the time of its composition. Rarely does it express a moral, though a moral may be implicit. Even strong feeling is subdued, so that depths or heights achieve their effect on the listener through understatement and anticlimax. First-person phrasing is rare, but it may exist in a dialogue which is itself enigmatic and unstaged. Among the best examples are the most familiar, such as "Lord Randal" and "Edward." A single episode, succinct and impersonal, is presented without antecedent action, without comment on the conclusion, and often without identification of the characters. Like a single scene torn out of the context of a play, it intrigues the listener, leaving him with unanswered questions. The full impact of the scene comes later, its shocking power magnified by its delayed action.

Conventional ballad diction

Like the stock epithets of epic poetry, the stock adjectives of the ballad represent one easily recognized trait of the English and Scottish popular ballads. The term *commonplace* is sometimes used to designate the ballad cliché, but its use seems to be largely confined to a larger stock unit than the phrasal element. *Commonplace* is often used to designate such an element as the conventional will: "What will you leave your brother John?" "The gallows-tree to hang him on," or the romantic rose briar motif: "Lord William was buried in St. Mary's kirk,/Lady Margaret in Mary's quire;/Out o the lady's grew a bonny red rose,/And out of the knight's a briar."

Concentration on the dramatic episode seems to have stripped away peripheral elements such as characterization and unique description. Lovers are trueloves whether they are true or not; horses are milk-white steeds with gold and silver shoes; horns are loud and shrill; and woods are bonny and green. Ladies play at ball, live in bowers, wear scarlet robes, and have seven brothers. The following excerpts from ballads identified by title and number will illustrate several varieties of situation and phrasal commonplaces. The numbers in parentheses refer to Child numbers.

LADY ISABEL AND THE ELF KNIGHT (4)

She lap on her milk steed
And fast she bent the way,

GIL BRENTON (5)

"But, bonny boy, tell to me
What is the customs of your country." . . .
"He gae to me a gay gold ring.

EARL BRAND (7)

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple gray, . . .

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa,

ERLINTON (8)

And he has warn her sisters six,
Her sisters six and her brethren se'en, . . .

They hadna gane a mile in that bonnie greenwood,
  They had na gane a mile but only ane, . . .

He's luppen off his milk-white steed,

THE TWA SISTERS (10)

She's taen her by the milk-white han,
An led her down to yon sea stran.

THE CRUEL BROTHER (11)

There was three ladies playd at the ba,
  With a hey ho and a lillie gay
There came a knight and played oer them a'.
  As the primrose spreads so sweetly. . . .

"What will you leave to your brother John?"
"The gallows-tree to hang him on."

BABYLON: OR, THE BONNIE BANKS O FORDIE (14)

"It's whether will ye a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?"

THOMAS RYMER (37)

She turned about her milk-white steed,
  And took True Thomas up behind . . .
And till seven years were past and gone
  True Thomas on earth was never seen.

CLERK COLVILL (42)

He mounted on his berry brown steed,
  And merry, merry rade he on, . . .

"But out ye tak your little pen-knife,
  And frae my sark ye shear a gare;"

THE BROOMFIELD HILL (43)

"Take ye the blossom of the broom,
  The blossom it smells sweet,
And strew it at your true-love's head,
  And likewise at his feet.

Various explanations for the commonplace elements of ballad diction have been advanced. We note such combinations as "berry-brown," "bonny boy," "gay gold ring," "sisters six," and "sea strand." The constructions are alliterative, and have the staying power of all such memorable combinations—as modern advertising copywriters repeatedly demonstrate. That these are remnants of an earlier form of English alliterative verse is a tantalizing suggestion which chronological facts established about ballads do not clearly support. A more reasonable explanation is that among the folk the familiar is more appealing than the unique. A well-worn phrase, especially if it has a memorable lilt, has the stamp of validity.

Commonplace situations and commonplace stanzas reflect a phenomenon known as *ballad drift*. Some appealing stanzas can fit into more than one situation. They can be lifted from one ballad and become attached to several others. The romantic idea of the rose growing out of one lover's grave, a briar growing out of the other's, and the two plants growing into a lovers' knot is so appealing that it has drifted from one situation to another.

Still another factor which contributes to commonplace elements is the fallibility of memory. A folk singer may know dozens of ballads, some of which he has not learned as well as others. An ill-learned new song may easily combine with a half-forgotten old one. Also, the singer may deliberately fill in with stock phrases if he finds that his memory has failed.

Incremental repetition

The traditional ballad frequently seems more repetitious than it really is. Whereas the song seems to be standing still, we suddenly discover that we have been exposed to a story. In "Lord Randal," for example, the mother's questions use a certain amount of repetition, as do the son's answers. Yet each new question and each new answer advance the dramatic dialogue one step further toward the revelation. These small advances or *increments* of the story seem to lull the listener so that realization of the truth at the end has some of the impact of surprise or relief. G. H. Gerould, in *The Ballad of Tradition*,[6] describes this trait as "cumulative iteration."

Leaping and lingering

Because the emphasis is on a dramatic episode, without explanation of antecedent action or transitions, the movement of the narrative has been described as "leaping and lingering." The modern newspaper comic strip provides a useful analogy. Each picture in the strip represents lingering on a brief scene, followed by an abrupt leap into the next. Transitions are

[6] George H. Gerould, *The Ballad of Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932, pp. 105ff.

sometimes provided by the graphic art in the comic strip; the leap is unaided in the ballad. Two stanzas from "The Douglas Tragedy" (Child No. 7-B) illustrate:

"Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
  And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sister,
  For your eldest's awa the last night."

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
  And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
  And lightly they rode away.

The lack of transition forces the reader or listener to supply what is missing. Far from a defect, this demand for participation of the auditor greatly strengthens the ballad in its poetic effect. As Evelyn Wells pointed out in *The Ballad Tree*,[7] often what is unsaid in the ballad is more important in its effect than what is said. This is true of poetry in general: much of its power depends on the reader's creative participation.

Stanza

The illustration above shows a common form of ballad stanza. We can observe that the meter is predominantly iambic; there are four stresses in the first and third lines, three stresses in the second and fourth lines. The rhyme is ABCB. The page arrangement follows the influence of literary ballads or ballads in writing rather than the structure deduced from song. The stanzas above become seven-stress couplets if the quatrains are altered on the page to make two lines instead of four. In reality, the couplet is the commonest form in the Child collection—and in folk poetry in general. Some ballads have rhyming triads, also of a seven-stress pattern; others have six stresses per line. Some of the oldest ballads are made up of four-stress lines in rhyming couplets. The question of meter is somewhat complicated because of the variety of known tunes to which some ballads are sung and our total ignorance of what tunes were used for the ones for which we have only written texts.

Refrain

The stanza arrangement of the ballad is affected by the presence or absence of refrain. Although many Child ballads do not show a refrain in the printed text, it does not mean that they were sung without refrains.

[7] Evelyn K. Wells, *The Ballad Tree*. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950, p. 88.

Many old ballads are known only from manuscript which may have contained only narrative lines as a means of saving space and labor. The function of the refrain is fairly obvious, whether the song be ancient or modern. Refrain lines add to the sense of rhythm. Even nonsense lines add to the lilt and charm of a ballad rendition. It is not uncommon for a group to listen to a singer through a stanza and then join in on the refrain. The rhythm is also suggestive of movement, particularly a dance. It has been pointed out that both dance and group singing were commonly associated with refrains in earlier centuries when the ballad flourished as folk expression. Nonsense refrain lines such as "With a hie downe downe a downe-a," or "Lillumwham, lillumwham!" will serve as well as lines that make sense for rhythmic purposes. Some words which seem to be nonsense words in a particular context (and which are presented as nonsense) may be corruptions of phrases which made sense at one time, but which have lost their meaning through being incorrectly interpreted through oral transmission. Still another accounting for nonsense refrain is seen in the long "tongue-twister" type which the folk singer takes pride in delivering rapidly to show his virtuosity.

In *The Ballad Tree,* Evelyn Wells describes three kinds of refrain: (1) internal (refrain line within the stanza), (2) external (refrain line following the stanza), and (3) mixed (refrain lines both within and following the stanza).[8] One stanza of an American version of "The Twa Sisters" (10) illustrates both internal and external refrain:

> There lived an old lady in the North Country,
> Bow down,
> There lived an old lady in the North Country,
> The bow has been to me.
> There lived an old lady in the North Country,
> She had daughters one, two, three.
> True to my love, my love be true to me.

Antiquity

Antiquity is clearly suggested in "Hongar ys Scharpper than ys þe thorne, þonder ys lodder than ys þe horne." But the suggestion of great age is in the spelling rather than in the statement. Early ballad scholarship tended to exaggerate antiquity. Research has shown that, with few exceptions, the bulk of the ballads represented in the Child collection had its greatest currency in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some can be clearly established as being known earlier; very few of the texts we know are likely to have been current earlier than the thirteenth century. Scraps of evidence or allusions to old songs are dredged up from earlier sources,

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 93–97.

but they do not prove prior existence of any ballad *as we know it.* They do show that some early writers were aware of old songs and alluded to them. There is no reason to doubt the widespread use of traditional songs long before the beginning of our literature.

The most frequently cited early literary allusion is the one found in *Piers Plowman* (c. 1377), in a dialogue between Repentance and Sloth:

> "What! wake up, man!" quoth Repentance, "prepare for confession!"
> "If I did," quoth he, "this day, I doubt very seriously
> If I know perfectly my paternoster, as the priest recites it.
> I know rimes of Robin Hood and of Randolph, Earl of Chester;
> But of our Lord or of our Lady the least that ever there was."

The "rimes of Robin Hood" alluded to here might well be some portion of the several Robin Hood ballads we find in the Child collection. An amusing sidelight here is William Langland's moralistic attitude toward folk entertainment. Judging by the stern attitudes toward frittering time away at fiddling (the Devil's instrument), song-ballets, and dancing as they are found among some contemporary rural Americans, the moralistic attitudes have not changed remarkably in six centuries.

As Professor Kittredge and many others have observed, the earliest known written text or the earliest known allusion to a ballad does not give any indication of the time of its composition, or, even of its date of maximum oral circulation. Some ballads seem to have become extinct in popular tradition long before manuscript texts were discovered and printed. It seems clear, too, that the finest of the English and Scottish popular ballads represented a culmination of a literary and musical genre in its full flowering, not the rude beginnings of poetic art.

By fortuitous circumstance, the wide oral circulation of popular ballads coincided in time with the colonization and settlement of the New World. European immigrants brought their traditions with them, and in some areas of America, ballads persisted with greater tenacity than in the lands of their origin.

The Ballad in the United States

As indicated earlier, the time of immigration to the New World coincided with the period in which traditional song flourished in oral circulation. The many American versions received little attention until this century; however, Cecil J. Sharp[9] did much to stimulate interest when he began dis-

[9] Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Songs From the Southern Appalachians*, ed. by Maude Karpeles, 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

covering both words and music to songs no longer sung in England. Various other collectors and regional folklore societies were awakening to uncollected lore of their areas at about the same time. See for instance an account of Virginia's folklore society in *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*[10] by Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr. A glance at the list of memoir volumes of the American Folklore Society (MAFLS) will reveal that publications of regional collections have not been neglected. Also, many serious commentaries are now readily available, so that one need not depend on casual impressions to acquire an accurate knowledge of folk song in America.

Eager ballad hunters still scour the Appalachian highlands, the Ozarks, and other remote areas of the United States in search of new tunes or new variants of tunes already collected. The harvest is still coming in, but the crop must continue to diminish in the face of forces already mentioned: education, acculturation, and urbanization.

On the whole, English and Scottish ballads have fared in the United States about the way one would expect them to. The Robin Hood ballads have not been well preserved. The border ballads, partly a product of high feeling over local situations, have not been well preserved. Some ballads which depended on outmoded belief or practice either died out or underwent radical changes. Romantic and humorous ballads flourished, but in some cases changed markedly to adapt to the new social and linguistic environment. Changing styles in song caused additions to some ballads, usually with damaging effect. In a few cases the change has been so great that the original point of the story has been lost entirely.

A few parallel examples, the Child version followed by an American version, will illustrate:

"What d'ye leave to your brother, Lord
Randal, my son:
What d'ye leave to your brother, my
handsome young man?"
"My houses and my lands; mother, make
my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain
wad lie down." (12-A)

"What will you to your brothers, Jimmy
Randolph my son?
What will you to your brother, my oldest
dearest one?"

[10] Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr., *Traditional Ballads of Virginia.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929.

"My mules and my wagons; mother make
  my bed soon,
For I am sick-hearted, and I want to lie down."

She laid him on a dressing board
  Where she did sometimes dine;
She put a penknife in his heart,
  And dressed him like a swine. (155-C)

She took me then by her lilly-white hand,
  And led me in the kitchen,
She laid me down on a golden plank,
  And stabbed me like a sheep.

"What bluid's that on thy coat lap,
  Son Davie, son Davie?
What bluid's that on thy coat lap?
  And the truth come tell to me." (13-A)

How come that blood on your shirt sleeve,
  Pray son, now tell me?

Then Sir Rylas drawd his broad sword
  with might,
And he fairly cut his head off quite.
  For he was a jovial hunter. (18-C)

Old Bangum drew his trusty knife
And deprived the wild boar of his life.
  Dillum down, kimmy-ko, kwam.

"In behint yon auld fail dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair. . . .

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een; (26)

There is a horse on yonder plain
That very lately has been slain. . . .

We'll sit upon his old backbone
And pick his eyes out one by one.

The first stroke that little Musgrave
  stroke,
He hurt Lord Barnard sore;
The next stroke that Lord Barnard
  stroke,
Little Musgrave nere struck more. (81-A)

The very first lick Little Mathey struck,
  He wounded Lord Darnold deep;
The very first lick Lord Darnold struck,
  Little Mathey fell dead at his feet.

These are not selected as extreme examples. Rather, they indicate in a general way some of the inevitable changes that occur in oral transmission. They also illustrate one of the paradoxes of folklore: the conflicting forces of (1) the power of pressure to change, (2) the power of tradition to preserve.

The American Song Environment

One can break the corpus of American folk song into two general considerations for the purpose of discussion. One, already considered, is that portion which has been imported and has persisted in its new environment. The other is song which originated in the New World. Many of the latter have some circulation suggesting folk song, but they lack other criteria. Such songs as "Yankee Doodle," "America," "John Brown," and "Tenting Tonight" have long been sung from memory and have frequently been learned by imitation, but they do not change. Their form is well fixed by the printed page. Louise Pound (*American Ballads and Songs*)[11] designated songs of this kind as "national" songs. A similar group includes the popular or sentimental songs of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Some of these have the air of traditional pieces because they have been learned in school by generations of American children. The old grade school songbooks made group or family singing favorites of such selections as "The

[11] Louise Pound, *American Ballads and Songs.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922.

Spanish Cavalier." "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," "Nellie Gray," and "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton." Some of Stephen Foster's compositions belong to this group. Other home favorites are songs which derived from music hall, vaudeville, or other similar entertainment mediums. Of these are such songs as "The Letter Edged in Black," and "The Baggage Coach Ahead." Still another type not strictly folk song but having some limited oral circulation is the typical selection used by trained recreation directors at children's camps, picnics, and similar gatherings. The recreation leaders' favorites are rounds, antiphonal selections, and cumulative songs easily taught for group response.

Because these songs are easily learned they do achieve some limited oral circulation, which tends to be confined to children's groups, the military, school groups, and fraternal organizations. The ways in which these songs differ from traditional songs kept in tradition and altered by the folk are obvious.

An early native American ballad, which is reputed to have had its origin in an actual event, is "Springfield Mountain." This lachrymose narrative about a young man who died from a rattlesnake bite has persisted so well in tradition that it has developed into types of renditions; one is an extremely doleful song; the other, a reaction to the extreme, is comic. Some other indigenous narrative songs which are related to events or persons are "Pearl Bryan," "Omie Wise," "The Jamestown Flood," "Jesse James," "Sam Bass," and "The Chisholm Trail." This small abstraction from a long list of American folk songs can tell much about the nature of native materials. The first song is about a murdered girl. It is one of a whole family of similar songs, some of which have had only local circulation following a murder or execution. The folk preoccupation with the grisly details of such events is indicated in Arthur Field's "Why Is the 'Murdered Girl' So Popular" (*Midwest Folklore*, Summer, 1951). The author suggests that many of the approximately fifty songs about murdered girls are related. There are also many songs as memorials to stirring events; "The Jamestown Flood," like "Casey Jones" and "The Jam on Gerry's Rock," reflect this desire. And "Jesse James" and "Sam Bass" belong to a class faintly reminiscent of the Robin Hood group in the Child collection. The folk urge to make a hero of a villain has never been adequately explained, but it did not originate in the United States. There is an old tradition of British broadside ballads about criminals and executions. "The Chisholm Trail" is one of the American cowboy songs, some of which are native and some of which are older songs adapted to the cowboy environment. John and Alan Lomax, experimenting with collecting techniques and working extensively in the field, have made a major contribution to the large volume of Western and cowboy music now in the folk music archives of the Library of Congress.

Folk song scholars will probably continue to reveal various song relationships and antecedents for songs which are seemingly unique in the United States. A well-documented example is "The Dying Cowboy." This song has been traced to an eighteenth-century Irish song. The descendants of the early European versions are numerous, and have been discussed in folklore journals by Phillips Barry, Kenneth Lodewick, Wayland Hand, and Kenneth Goldstein. For a recent note see the latter's "Still More of the 'The Unfortunate Rake' and His Family," in *WF*, January 1959. "The Raggle-Taggle Gypsy," a song well established in western tradition, is immediately recognized as a variant of "The Gypsy Laddie" (Child No. 200). John Q. Anderson, in " 'The Waco Girl'—Another Variant of a British Broadside Ballad" (*WF*, April, 1960) presented another of the many illustrations that a localized song, even with such a promising title as "The Waco Girl," may be local or recent only in its title or in some minor detail of local adaptation. This article points out still another source of American folk song, the British broadside ballads. They are the prototypes from which many of the American variants were derived. The effect of the broadside ballad (so called because they were printed on a single sheet of paper and sold on the streets) is discussed at length by Malcolm G. Laws in his *American Balladry from British Broadsides*.[12] The broadside, or broadsheet, flourished as a kind of newspaper from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Newly composed and traditional ballads were printed and peddled on the street, both in England and in America. Since broadsides drew from and contributed to oral tradition, they provide another example of the interplay of written and unwritten literature.

The many collections and studies of American folk song can leave little doubt that the history and growth of the nation is reflected in song. We have songs for various phases of the expanding frontier and for the many occupations. Songs reflect the tensions of the Revolutionary War period, and later, of the War of 1812. Songs keep pace with the Westward Movement, from the building of the Erie Canal to the gold rush of 1849. Songs record the emotional uplift of revival movements in the white spirituals, and later, in their special adaptations as they were enriched by tradition of American Negroes. The major American rivers and mountain ranges, the major American cities, and the agricultural areas—from the old plantation South to starving on a government claim—all these and many more are celebrated in song. There are sailor songs, railroader songs, lumberjack songs, miner songs, and cowboy songs. As Alan Lomax points out so eloquently in his *Folksong: U.S.A.*[13], this has been a singing nation.

[12] Malcolm G. Laws, *American Balladry from British Broadsides*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series No. 1, 1951.

[13] Alan Lomax, *Folk Song: U.S.A.* New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce—Meredith Press, 1947.

Yet, judging by the trend already established in comparative studies, more original authors and text antecedents for American folk songs are likely to turn up, whether the songs are regional or occupational. The whole picture suggests that settlement on this continent came too near the age of general literacy and mass communications to permit the refining and leveling process of long tradition, and that much American folk song that is native in its origin is imitative and inferior, that the English and Scottish traditional ballads represented the flowering of the whole process of folk song genesis.

Even though the public has become a spectator group instead of a participant group in the enjoyment of folk song, the phenomenon is well worth study, for folk song is as much a part of our heritage as is the Battle of Waterloo, a poem by Browning, a painting by Reynolds, or a novel by Conrad.

The Folk Dance

Even the nondancing student has had some limited experience with certain elements of folk dance. Children's singing games such as "London Bridge" and "The Farmer in the Dell" are only a step removed from adult play-party games such as "Skip to My Lou" and "Weevily Wheat." The more elaborate movements of the maypole dance and the serpentine have their origins in pagan rituals reaching far back into the dim, uncertain origins of our culture. If we categorize dance movements as line, circle, and serpentine, we find all three represented in such widely separated dance activities as the primitive dances of the American Indians and modern revivals of country dancing.

We have ample evidence of the circle dance as a widespread folk custom in Europe in medieval times. That many of the refrains of folk song developed in that period to accomodate dancing seems beyond doubt. Further, that social or ballroom dancing developed as a refinement of folk dance already well established is in the progression one would expect. In short, the evolution of dance seems to be from primitive ritual to folk entertainment to social accomplishment.

The study of dance is complicated by the number of variables. First, the fact that the whole body may be involved in a variety of movements is made more complex by the fact that the movements of the individual are integrated with the movements of other participants. This makes any notation system complete enough to describe the whole dance virtually impossible. Second, the integration of music (singing, clapping, stamping, and instrumental) with complicated movements presents an additional problem in notation or description. Third, the configuration of the whole circle or double line has its own sequence, apart from the movements of individuals or groups within the configuration. It is little wonder, then, that one learns folk danc-

ing by doing rather than by study. The typical participant learns his role by rote, and not infrequently he is so involved with his own part that he remains relatively unaware of the appearance of the total group.

Observers of modern urban folk dance may remark on the pains the members of the group take to wear appropriate costume. Although it is true that they are only imitating (often inaccurately) the costumes worn by the rural people of generations ago, when the dance was truly *folk dance*, not a consciously directed revival, there is an important connection between costume and dance. Evidence ranges from the elaborate costumes and masks of the Hopi (ritual) Kachina dances to the colorful, anachronistic costumes of peasant dancers of the countries of the Old World, and further, to the similarly anachronistic "formal" dress of special-occasion ballroom dancing of the present.

The play-party is a special development of the folk dance in America. It figured prominently in the folk entertainment of rural environment and the frontier during the past century, and it is still the euphemistic term used in some rural areas where dancing is not considered a proper pastime. The play-party dances allow singing and clapping for line, square, and circle dances, but they do not permit "solo" dancing by couples. Bodily contact is limited to swinging one's partner by the hands or hooked arms. Closer contact is bootlegged into the party by special adaptation of games which require forfeitures of hugs and kisses. The play-party has contributed to or preserved for American culture a number of folk songs which are characterized by a great number of verses improvised to keep the games going. "Old Joe Clark" and "Skip to My Lou" are examples of seemingly endless songs. One aspect of the entertainment has been to improvise new verses by turns, the verses being interspersed by group singing of the refrain.

Traditional dance performed and preserved by the folk in America has declined in much the same way and for the same reasons that traditional song has declined. In this era of specialization and spectatorship a growing number of young citizens have their only observation of folk dance through television. They see troupes of costumed professionals perform highly skilled circle dances as interpreted by professional choreographers—whose function is not to preserve authentic dance, but rather to present a spectacle. Unfortunately, even the urban folk dance groups, who had tended to preserve at least the broad outlines of the dance, have been affected by the fancy footwork of the unrealistic interpretations of the professionals. Since one definition of folklore is that which is learned by imitation, we may be observing a new kind of folklore: an imitation of an imitation! What this will do to the professional callers, who were formerly distressed to keep up with variations they invented and contributed to each other via their own professional journals, remains to be seen.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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FOUR

Folklore as the language of beliefs and attitudes

> You can't tell the depth of a well
> by the length of the handle on the pump.
> —*Folk Wisdom*

MAN STUDIES MAN AND HIS WORKS because he finds there the mirror that lets him see and understand himself. He studies man both past and present, for the present is meaningless without the perspective of what came before. When students of an ancient culture study its artifacts to gain an understanding of man in the past, they give their first attention to the larger or more imposing elements; buildings, fortifications, altars, roads, and monuments are studied immediately. Later, smaller elements such as clothing, weapons, decorations, and domestic utensils are examined to refine first impressions and bring the daily life and preoccupations of a vanished people closer to the investigator. But even with the smaller artifacts catalogued and analyzed, true insight into the system of values by which a people lived may be out of the investigator's reach. He must search further and examine details very closely to gather some understanding of the motivations that shaped the cultural configuration.

Sometimes the smallest detail provides a clue to the real meaning of large but uncomprehended elements. A detailed painting of a ritual sacrifice on a small decorated vase could explain more than could a sacrificial altar covering an acre of ground. The process of collection, classification, and analysis of folklore is similar to the study of material culture. It will yield more and deeper understanding than the study of material culture, for the

most profound motivations in society have always been those deriving from the nonmaterial—the beliefs and attitudes by which people have lived. Indeed, the material culture is only a tangible reflection of the nonmaterial.

The myths, *Märchen*, legend, and songs are, in a way, the larger elements of folklore. In them we see the expressions of folk belief and entertainment which are consciously employed and recognized by the participants. Some of the smaller elements are so woven into the habitual expressions of daily life that their users are as unconscious of them as they are of grammar.

Beliefs and Superstitions

The use of the word "superstition" in a discussion of beliefs and customs raises a number of communications problems. We associate the word with notions of backwardness, irrational fears, and the practice of magic. Those who are skeptical of religious beliefs and customs may relegate all practice of religion to the category of superstition. Those who firmly believe in and practice the customs of one religion may think of all other religions as superstitions. In fact, the more fundamentally doctrinaire a person's religious views are, the more likely he is to reject all but his own as superstition.

But we can agree in a general way that a superstition is a belief not universally accepted as being based on sound scientific knowledge or reason. And since all religious belief demands acceptance of certain premises on faith, a priori, it is useful to avoid unprofitable religious dispute by designating superstitions as those beliefs and practices which are not universally accepted as scientific and reasonable, and which are not a part of the doctrine of a major religion. However, this approach to a definition has only a limited utility, for there is no good reason for excluding minor religions. Minor religions shade off into sects and cults of various kinds and include beliefs some people would unhesitatingly call superstitions. Furthermore, even among the accepted rites of major religions are ritual acts of purely symbolic nature which may be combined with pagan rites or corrupted into superstitious expressions not condoned by church doctrine.

In Silone's *Bread and Wine*,[1] for example, we find a scene which illustrates such a combination. Although the event is fictional, it is typical of factual accounts. When a strange priest approaches a group of Italian peasants, one of them shouts an alarm, whereupon his fellows scramble to make the sign of the cross and touch iron. The sign of the cross is generally recognized as

[1] Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*, tr. from the Italian by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1937; A Signet paperback, New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1946.

symbolic, associated with church ritual and prayer. In Silone's scene, the peasants used the sign in combination with a magic act (touching iron) to ward off the effects of the evil eye. A common European belief is that iron and steel are especially potent protection against witchcraft. The belief in the malevolent effects of the evil eye is confined to certain areas, but it is capable of arousing great fear where it is held. Thus the scene shows peasants reacting to an irrational (superstitious) fear of a malevolent power by making appropriate (magic) signs and finding protection in a powerful (magic) antidote.

To the outsider these beliefs and actions are superstitious, but the people who believe in the evil eye and the efficacy of their preventive measures can cite instances to support their actions.

Everyone is familiar with some common superstitions: Finding a horse shoe will bring good luck, walking under a ladder will bring bad luck, a black cat crossing one's path will bring bad luck. It should be noted that these are usually *reports* of superstitions, that a true superstition is manifested in belief and resulting action, and that if this is so, the believer does not recognize his belief as a superstition.

The popular fallacy that superstitions are common in other countries or among the uneducated, but rare in modern, literate society, can be exploded by examining critically some of the common assumptions upon which modern urban Americans act. Their motivations arise from their environment, which differs markedly from that of the peasants of Italy or from that of their own parents and grandparents. The peasants acquired their convictions from voices of authority repeating principles considered to be important in their culture. The same is true of our contemporaries. Since ours is a highly competitive commercial economy, we can find our clues in some of the elements stressed in advertising, which, if successful, must employ correct insights into the attitudes, assumptions, and resulting actions of the consuming masses.

Television screens, billboards, and other advertising media bombard us with a mumbo-jumbo of pseudo-science. It urges us to buy products recommended by actors dressed in white coats, wearing stethoscopes, or posing beside microscopes or other paraphernalia of the laboratory. We spend freely on products that are vitaminized, homogenized, and irradiated. We rush to procure products made by formula X, or energized and fortified by M-X, 74-P, or XYZ additives.

The fact that close analysis of much of what is brazenly claimed for products and services reveals the claims to be utter nonsense bothers us not at all. We are hypnotized by "science." The man in the white coat influences attitudes and actions in ways remarkably similar to those used by the masked voodoo priest. We can argue that science *is* more reasonable than voodoo,

and so it is; but our prompt, unthinking responses to ridiculous claims in the name of science are as superstitious as the prompt, unthinking response of Silone's peasants. The true scientist, incidentally, who is most often a methodical seeker of nature's truths, may be the first to be horrified by the senseless commercialization and exploitation of his image. Yet the petroleum engineer who scoffs at claims for XLZ fortified gasoline may rush to buy toothpaste with CBY added, and the dentist who scorns CBY in toothpaste may take pains to have his car's tank filled with XLZ gasoline. Other attitudes subject to critical examination are those toward mortuary practices, the healing arts, and fraternal organizations.

The collector should not overlook the particularly interesting aspect of folk belief associated with biology. In addition to a host of beliefs about the human body and its functions, especially those concerning sex (puberty, menstruation, reproduction, pregnancy, childbirth), many curious beliefs about lower animals may be collected with ease. Because of the nearly universal element of dread, popular unscientific lore about snakes appears to be more abundant than the lore of other members of the animal kingdom. (See Appendix J.)

Folk have given much attention to plants also. In addition to the extensive lore about medicinal plants, we find much symbolism associated with flowers and numerous beliefs concerning planting (in the right phases of the moon, for example) and harvesting. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia says, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for thoughts." We observe conventional symbolism for ivy, myrtle, and laurel all through our literature, and we have a general awareness of which flowers are appropriate for display or personal decoration on special occasions. For brief indication of the extent of plant lore, see the two-part article by Katherine T. Kell, "The Folklore of the Daisy," *JAF*, January-March; October-December, 1956.

Remedies

Some students may have been required to take a spring tonic (usually a laxative) sometime during childhood or adolescence. The spring tonic was taken to thin the blood and clear away the corruption that had accumulated during the winter months. Sassafras tea is commonly used in Eastern and Midwestern states, sulfur and molasses in other areas. The spring tonic is one of the many folk remedies associated with folk beliefs about bodily functions. In general, the nature of the remedy and the emphasis on kinds of ailments will vary according to local conditions. Where poison oak or poison ivy is common, one will find various remedies for poison oak. Where

poisonous snakes are common, so are the remedies for snakebite. Warts, being a universal human ailment, are treated by literally hundreds of folk remedies.

Furthermore, the remedy itself will vary according to time and place. In the frontier household one could always find a supply of kerosene and lard. Consequently either of these or a combination of the two became dependable remedies for injuries. Gunpowder, too, was once easily available in ordinary domestic circumstances, and was used both internally and externally. The same may be said of chewing tobacco or the spittle thereof, fresh cow dung, sheep droppings, mare's milk, and lamp soot.

A list of home remedies in a modern community reflects the changed environment in that the modern housewife has no ready access to gunpowder, nursing mares, or tobacco-chewing sons. We do find, however, beliefs in the healing power of naphtha soap, clothes blueing, brown paper, and finger-nail polish. Aspirin and vitamins, of course, are good for practically any sickness.

Changing times also bring about changes in the nature of common ailments. The housewife of a century ago frequently had no choice. With a large family and no readily available medical assistance, with her children afflicted by maladies ranging from colic to deadly typhoid and cholera, she employed, out of desperation and necessity, the remedial lore of her community and the healing agents available. Because the human body has remarkable recovery powers, the ill and injured sometimes recovered in spite of the treatment rather than because of it. And what better testimonial could there be to the efficacy of lard and kerosene, with a dose of gunpowder thrown in, than a fully recovered child who had been at death's door only days before? Fortunately, most of the dangerous epidemic diseases which drove parents to desperate measures a few generations ago are no longer common, and when they do occur, scientific medicine provides more suitable treatment.

Certainly not all home remedies are harmful. Empirical knowledge accumulated over generations of trial and error has led to many sound healing principles in home remedies, especially in the field of medicinal herbs. The housewife who treats "summer complaint" with the juice of canned blackberries gets good results, and often she has the approval of the family physician. The common use of hot herb teas for fevers promotes fluid intake, if nothing else. The use of a cobweb to stem external bleeding is mechanically effective, if not sanitary. Since the discovery of antibiotics folklorists have renewed their interest in reports of old remedies making use of poultices of moldy bread or scrapings from cheese. Medical historians have noted that the use of quinine for treatment of malaria was a traditional remedy used by the natives of South America before it came to the attention of Europeans.

Similarly, rauwolfia was used in its crude form in India as a treatment for hypertension before it was investigated by modern science—and from that investigation has sprung the modern miracle of tranquilizers. However, no reasonable medical principle can be associated with the home remedy for car sickness: wrapping the abdomen with brown paper. But as we learn more about psychosomatic ailments and their treatment, we begin to realize how seemingly useless folk remedies could produce results. (See Appendix I and Appendix L for more examples of folk medicine.)

One point brought out by serious investigators is that the folk remedies for warts work as well as do the clinical remedies, presumably because the minor skin ailment is susceptible to the power of suggestion. If the sufferer believes in the folk remedy he may get results; if he believes in the clinical remedy he may get relief from that. In any case, a list of folk remedies for warts will contain many that are clearly associated with principles of magic. Warts may be sold. If the sufferer accepts a token payment from another person his warts will disappear. Warts may be wished off, or they may be charmed off by a person who has the power. A remedy collected in northern California by the authors directs the owner of the warts to scratch them with kernels of corn until the warts bleed, then to feed the bloody kernels to the chickens. Presumably the warts are transferred to the chickens, although the magic involved here may be similar to that in the familiar dishrag remedy in which the warts are supposed to disappear as the buried rag, which has been in contact with warts, rots.

Magic

Sir James Frazer[2] established the classical division of sympathetic magic into (1) the principle of similarity or imitation, and (2) the principle of contact or contagion. In the first principle, like action is assumed to produce like results. In the second principle, objects which have once been in contact are presumed to continue to exert an influence on each other after they have been separated. Frazer cited many examples to illustrate both of these principles, one being the practice of torturing the image of the person the torturer wishes to afflict. The principle of similarity or imitation prompts the belief that the person whose image is injured will be similarly injured. This same practice may be complicated or rendered more effective by adding the second principle of magic, that of contact or contagion. Thus the image may be made to incorporate the hair clippings, fingernail parings, bits of clothing, or other items once a part of or in contact with the intended

[2] *The Golden Bough*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–13.

victim. The widespread belief in the power of such malevolent practices accounts for the special care people of many cultures take with their nail parings, extracted teeth, and navel cords. It is believed important that these articles be kept out of the hands of enemies. Further, it is believed that the owner might suffer harmful effects if objects that were once part of his body were to be discarded at random, to decay or be molested by animals. It is because of a belief in these principles that some people make strenuous efforts to avoid being photographed. Although the magic practices of witchcraft are not common in the modern American community, they do exist, and they are practiced more frequently than most students suppose. Because the very nature of malevolent magic demands secrecy, such activities rarely receive public attention; thus we receive an exaggerated impression of their obsolescence. But in spite of the undercover nature of witchcraft, several instances in which resulting violence brought police investigation and publicity have been recorded in the press during the past decade. In one such instance, the suffering victim's husband discovered that the "witch" had been mutilating his wife's photograph. In this curious mixture of witchcraft and blackmail, the witch demanded an exorbitant ransom for the photograph. (For a recent example of violence associated with witchcraft beliefs, see Appendix K.)

Charms, Spells, and Divination

Magic lies behind the use of spells, charms, incantations, and divination. We find some confusion and overlapping in the use of these terms. A "spell" is a verbal formula, a saying presumed to have magic power. From it we derive the phrase "to cast a spell" and the word "spellbind" (to bind or make immobile with a magic spell). A "charm" is also a verbal formula used for magical purposes. Etymologically it derives from a word meaning "song;" hence a charm should be sung or chanted. If we were to distinguish between "spell" and "charm" on etymological grounds, we would say that a spell is merely recited, a charm sung or chanted. "Incantation" also derives from a word meaning "song," hence would not differ markedly from "charm" (to enchant) in its application. In common usage, however, we observe that the three terms are used more or less synonymously, with the minor exceptions that "incantation" sometimes refers to any practice of magic, and "charm" is used to refer to amulets of various kinds, such as those worn on charm bracelets. The buckeye carried in the pocket to ward off rheumatism is frequently called a charm. Medals and other religious devices worn for protection from evil are also called charms. Reciting the Lord's Prayer backward, however, is a spell. One charms off a sty with the chant, "Sty,

sty, leave my eye; go to the next man passing by." Perhaps the best known charm is the poem children recite on seeing the first evening star:

> Star light, star bright,
> First star I've seen tonight;
> I wish I may, I wish I might
> Get the wish I wish tonight.

In ancient times certain wise men were considered to be especially powerful in the recitation of spells or charms. In times of stress, such as a battle, they would be called upon to do their part with verbal magic. In some of the oldest English literature we find samples of spells. A portion of one for curing a wen (*Wenne*): "Do thou become as small as a linseed grain, . . . and become so small that thou become nothing at all." Another fragment, a healing spell, goes as follows (*Wyrta*): "Out little spear, if thou be in here." In some older civilizations priests were oracles who could read omens and predict the future. Their counterpart in more primitive societies is the shaman, one gifted in skills of the occult and magic; and their counterpart in modern American society is, of course, the fortuneteller. Classical literature makes many references to omens and divination. Dreams are prominent among the omens in ancient times and in our own as well. The most familiar Old Testament dream interpretation is the one Joseph was called upon to make for the Pharaoh. In spite of modern psychological explanations of dreams, the folk seem to prefer traditional dream lore and to think of dreams as tokens of events in the future.

Readers of Homer are familiar with the practice of seeking omens in the flight of birds or in other natural phenomena. The custom seen in the *Iliad* of consulting the entrails of a newly slaughtered animal for divination purposes, especially the liver and gall bladder, is still observed among some primitive tribes. The markings on an animal's scapula are also used for divination. The authors have encountered a contemporary practice of examining the "melt" of a newly slaughtered animal for weather prognostication. Divination may be used to detect criminals, to plan a course of action, to locate lost articles, or to predict the weather. A highly specialized form, water-witching, has received a great deal of attention by folklorists of this country because this form of divination is used so widely and defended so stoutly by the folk. A California well driller, for example, stated that he preferred to have his drilling locations witched because he did not care to waste time "wildcatting."

The typical instrument for divining water locations is a forked branch of a tree or bush. Hazel is often specified. Other species frequently encountered are elder, willow, and peach. The two ends of the forked branch are held, one end in each hand, so that the point of the branch extends

straight ahead or upward. The diviner walks slowly over the area being explored. When he crosses a spot containing subterranean water, his divining rod tilts or tugs toward the ground. The strength of the attraction is reported to give some indication of the depth and the amount of water. Numerous refinements and variations are practiced, but the principle remains the same. The folk advance various hypotheses as to the nature of the attraction, most agreeing that certain people are gifted with the ability to make a divining rod work, whereas others cannot learn. Some diviners claim that they can transfer their power to others by bodily contact. If they hold the hands of the ungifted, the power is temporarily transferred, but only while the contact is maintained.

Weather Lore

Since man has always been subjected to the whims of weather, it is understandable that he should give weather signs much of his attention. Presumably, early man, lacking some of the conveniences of modern shelter, and other control of environment, was even more absorbed by weather phenomena than are his contemporary descendants. We still feel helpless when confronted by hurricane, flood and blizzard. Since the more one is affected by nature the more attention he gives weather lore, it is not strange that farmers are a richer source of such lore than their urban neighbors. The farmer's almanac, still a handy guidebook for rural families, is a source of traditional beliefs about phases of the moon, weather, and planting signs. If we trace the history of this sub-literary device, we find that it reaches back to a time when astrology and astronomy merge—when magic was a part of the science of our culture. Jonathan Swift satirized the serious efforts and methods of almanac writers of his time in "The Progress of Beauty" with these stanzas:

And this is fair Diana's Case:
For all Astrologers maintain
Each Night a Bit drops off her Face
When Mortals say she's in her Wain.

While Partridge wisely shews the Cause:
Efficient of the Moon's Decay,
That Cancer with his pois' nous Claws
Attacks her in the Milky Way;

A few easily remembered weather signs are rhymed:

Rainbow in the morning,
Sailors take warning,
Rainbow in the night,
Sailors delight.

But most sayings are traditional statements in prose: If it rains on Easter it will rain for seven Sundays following. If it rains on Monday it will rain three days during the week. We observe in these two sayings the numbers which occur most frequently in folklore. The use of the numbers three and seven occurs in the belief in and practice of magic. Things happen in threes and sevens: Seven brothers, the seventh son, seven years of bad luck, seven times seven; the third light on a match, an incantation repeated three times, and the many events that occur in threes in *Märchen*. Rain, being important in human affairs, is signified by hundreds of signs. A horned moon tilted up (to hold water) signifies dry weather; tilted down (to spill) signifies rain. When flies are bad, it will rain. Killing a spider will cause rain. Note that some signs, such as the bothersome flies, have a degree of validity, deriving from generations of accumulated folk wisdom. Others, such as the belief that killing a spider will cause rain, have a cause and effect relationship only in magic.

In America, the folk have given considerable credit to the nature lore of American Indians. In pioneer times especially, Indian remedies were prized and Indians were thought to have remarkable abilities to read nature's signs. This tradition continues in a widespread practice of consulting Indian seers for predictions of hard or easy winters. The signs usually cited have to do with the thickness of bark on certain trees, the thickness of fur on certain animals, or the size of the crop of fruits and nuts. Caucasians have adopted many of these traditions and have added others by analogy.

Various methods for classification and study of beliefs and customs have been advanced. Superstitions may be collected by the thousand, and such collections are subject to study for distribution, variety, association with national or regional groups, and for other problems commonly dealt with in folklore studies. They can be classified on the basis of their general application, such as weather beliefs, animal beliefs, and healing beliefs. For encyclopedic treatment they can be arranged alphabetically and keyed to the first important word in the statement.[3]

The importance of belief, whether it is rational or not, can not be overemphasized. As we may witness in almost any area of interpersonal relationships, people act, often violently, not upon what is true, but upon what they believe to be true.

[3] For a detailed discussion of classification, see Chapter 6, "The Student Folklorist."

Proverbs

A collection of proverbs, like a collection of superstitions, is made up of a great number of small items. The importance of the item in society is reflected to some degree by its prevalence. If one considers how his decisions to act have been influenced by proverbs and how his habitual expression is molded by proverbial expressions, he may find that the proverb is a subtle, powerful factor in his life. "Look before you leap." "A stitch in time saves nine." "He who hesitates is lost." "See no evil; hear no evil; say no evil." "Two's company. . . ." "Early to bed and early to rise. . . ." "Birds of a feather flock together." "Barking dogs never bite."

We bow before the superior venerable wisdom of quoted maxims. Not infrequently an argument is settled when one of the participants injects an apt proverb at an opportune time. The defeated opposition too often fails to realize that some proverbs contradict others. Contrast, for example, "He who hesitates is lost" with "Look before you leap." Also contrast "Early to bed and early to rise. . . ." with "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy."

The proverb, like other verbal lore, flourishes in folk cultures where literacy and specialization have not yet promoted specialization even in verbal expression. In some African communities the folk habitually recite proverbs in decision-making. Arguments are settled by quoting proverbs to such an extent that disputants in legal cases acquire the assistance of consultants versed in proverbial lore just as we hire attorneys.

Many of our proverbs are derived from literature. Whether Alexander Pope drew from popular tradition or not, we can credit him with contributing his "A little learning is a dangerous thing," to our speech habits. Shakespeare's rich contribution of proverbial phrases includes "star-crossed lovers," "something rotten in Denmark," "a plague on both your houses," "to hold a candle," "the fool multitude," "the better foot before," and "bag and baggage." Other authors, such as Emerson and Melville, have had a reinforcing effect, drawing proverbial lore from tradition and giving it new currency. In our culture the proverb, more than some other forms of folklore, has been involved in the interplay of written and oral tradition. Almanacs and newspaper fillers have made copious use of this form.

One should observe that a phrase like "star-crossed lovers" is not a proverb. Whereas the proverb is a full statement which contains some element of wisdom or commonly accepted belief, proverbial phrases are phrases drawn from proverbs, suggesting the whole expression, or phrases

which have achieved a currency suggestive of the proverb. Often they are comparisons, usually called folk similes, involving the folk wit, hyperbole, or imagery which gives them currency. "Busier than a cat on a tin roof," "as much chance as a snowball in hell," "mad as a hornet," and "meek as a mouse" are convenient examples.

A special form of proverbial expression is named for a Dickens character, Sam Weller, who was depicted as having a fondness for the form. The Wellerism, of course, existed long before Charles Dickens invented his character. The Wellerism is characterized by "As ______ said," or "They say. . . ." or some similar "said" phrase. It is ordinarily a humorous device rather than an aphorism, in which the humor is attained by misfitting or unexpected applications of the quotation to the situation. " 'I see,' said the blind man." " 'Every man to his own taste,' said the old maid as she kissed the cow." " 'It won't be long now,' as the monkey said, running over his tail with the lawnmower," are examples of the Wellerism.

Archer Taylor's *The Proverb*[4] is the major work on classification and study of the proverb. *Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California*[5] by the same author gives a good regional sampling of proverbial materials.

Riddles

What is black and white and red (read) all over? What grows on its tail? What has eyes but can not see? We recognize these familiar riddles as belonging to the large and important class of children's lore. This age specialization is recent. Literary evidence points to a previous age—perhaps when men had greater leisure or when they placed greater emphasis on sharpening their wits with verbal play—of the riddle being an important part of unwritten literature. Of the various allusions to riddles in the Old Testament, Samson's riddle is probably the most familiar: "And they said unto him, 'Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.' "

"And he said unto them, 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of strong came forth sweetness.' And they could not in three days expound the riddle." The abundant evidence of the Old Testament and other Hebrew literature points to a fondness for proverbs and other forms of witty verbal lore, including riddles, in Jewish culture. Riddles also occur in Latin literature, and from that have been drawn into some Old English writings. An example in alliterative verse is the description of an anchor:

[4] Archer Taylor, *The Proverb*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931.

[5] ———, *Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California*. Berkeley: University of California Press Folklore Studies No. 3, 1954.

Oft I must strive with wind and with wave,
Battle them both when under the sea
I feel out the bottom—a foreign land.
In lying still I am strong in the strife;
If I fail in that they are stronger than I,
And, wrenching me loose, soon put me to rout.
They wish to capture what I must keep.
I can master them both if my grip holds out,
If the rocks bring succor and lend support,
Strength in the struggle. Ask me my name![6]

More direct evidence of the popularity of the riddle in oral circulation is seen in *Märchen* and ballads, wherein the point of the narrative turns on one or more riddles. One popular *Märchen* motif is a task set for a lowly hero. He must accomplish seemingly impossible tasks or quests to save his head, to win the hand of the princess, or to be otherwise rewarded. Not infrequently the task is to present the solution of a riddle. In the usual happy ending, the hero supplies the answer on time, either through his own cleverness or with the secret aid of a helper. A group of European *Märchen* involving this type of plot was studied by Jan De Vries in *Die Märchen von klugen Rätsellösern* (FFC 73).

A few of the older English and Scottish popular ballads also employ riddling. See "Riddles Wisely Expounded" (Child No. 1), and "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship" (Child No. 46).

Stith Thompson suggested that the stories involving clever riddle-solving had come from Oriental literary sources.[7] These, he thought, had achieved oral circulation soon after literary emergence. Because of the popularity of riddles and clever solutions in the Orient, there seems to be no good reason to doubt that the Oriental stories drew upon riddles already in tradition when they first achieved literary status.

Riddles take many forms, but the most common is one which requires identification of an object which is indirectly described in the terms of the riddle. Often the text ends with the question, "What is it?" In a typical riddle the text describes the object, but the description is in terms which misdirect attention. The riddle may call for identification of a tool, but the terms (ears, feet, etc.) suggest an animal. Many traditional riddles are rhymed, and are preceded by a set phrase which is, in effect, a challenge.

Riddle, raddle ree,
Such a riddle couldn't be. . . .

[6] From *The Earliest English Poetry* by Charles W. Kennedy. Copyright 1943 by Oxford University Press, Inc., pp. 135-136. Reprinted by permission.

[7] *The Folktale, op. cit.*, pp. 156–158.

Riddle come riddle come rarelet
My Petticoat's lined with scarlet,
A stone in the middle and a stick at the tail,
Tell me this riddle without any fail.

Lives in winter, dies in summer,
And grows with its root upward.

Little Nannie Etticoat
In a white Petticoat
And a red nose,
The longer she stands
The shorter she grows.

Some specialization of riddles is seen in the built-in pun, in which case it becomes a form of humor instead of a guessing game. Still another is the droodle, in which a cryptic fragment of a drawing is presented for identification. Usually it is impossible to guess what is intended; the entertainment value is in the telling.

Vocabulary and Other Verbal Lore

Colorful vocabulary abounds in folk speech. Often special usage is confined to ethnic groups, geographical regions, occupations, and ages. In vocabulary for parts of the body we find such slang as "mitt" and "kisser," to name two innocuous terms. Occupational slang such as "babylifter" and "Irish baby buggy," onomatopoeia such as hog calls, and special nicknames for people and places can provide long lists which reflect folk inventiveness and humor. Conventional phrases change with the times, but a phrase of description (Old sourpuss) or of derision (foureyes) or of retort (Yer Ma wears Army shoes) suggests other forms found in taunts, toasts, blessings, and curses. Verse also has much conventional use. Sentimental rhymes (Roses are red; violets are blue) find their way into memory books, autograph albums, and flyleaves. Word play involving puns, spoonerisms, and tongue-twisters provide entertainment for all ages.

Ineptly used, folk speech, like other forms of communication, may result in cliché-ridden, uninspiring utterances. In the expression of an intelligent, articulate person it seasons and delights, reflecting his easy familiarity with the most intimate reaches of native idiom. (For a sampling of folk speech of a particular area, see Appendix H.)

Folk etymology

Folk etymology is that process by which the folk change a loan word so that it makes sense within the limits of their own vocabulary and understanding. Over a period of time the word undergoes change in its pronunciation, spelling, or both. The term also applies to popular explanations of the derivations of words, usually through analogy, associating them with similar words which are thought to be related. By extension the term may also apply to popular explanations of the meaning or origin of place names.

H. L. Mencken[8] lists many words adopted from the Indians of America, most of which underwent radical changes, presumably to make them convenient to spell and pronounce. Some of the words he listed are raccoon, moose, skunk, hickory, squash, caribou, pecan, paw-paw, terrapin, and catalpa. "Woodchuck," he indicated, came from the Indian word *otchock,* and the French *route de roi* became "Rotten Row" in English. A favorite pair of illustrations are the folk changes of *cole slaw* to "cold slaw," and *asparagus* to "spear grass." Some Americans of English descent who have had enough contact with German-speaking neighbors to corrupt the terms they have heard call cottage cheese "smearcase." If one listens to children's jump rope rhymes, he may hear a frequently used line, "Charlie Chapman went to France." Apparently *Chaplin* was a popular comedian too long ago to affect the children of mid-century. His name was once used in the rhyme, but it has shifted to *Chapman,* probably because the latter is the more common name.

Place names

A convenient way to observe folk etymology at work is to begin an inquiry about place names. This project will yield a great deal of oral history, and incidentally, some unverifiable and often contradictory legendary material. Squaw Peak, which happens to be convenient to the authors at this writing, has been explained in different ways. One explanation, as might be expected, concerns the romantic love motif of an Indian woman who threw herself from a cliff on the mountain when her brave failed to return from war. *Beowawe,* a place nearby, is reported to be named for an Indian term meaning approximately "big behind." Naturally, local citizens have several amusing stories concerning its origin (See the authors' note in *WF,* April, 1961). No one has counted the Lovers' Leap and Robbers' Roost place names in the United States. That they are numerous is clear, and every one must have its local legend.

[8] Henry L. Mencken, *The American Language.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1937.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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FIVE

Lore of special ages, ethnic groups, and occupations

John O'Gudgeon he was a wild man,
He whipt his children now and then;
When he whipt them, he made them dance,
Out of Ireland into France.

—*Mother Goose*

Children's Lore

AS CHILDREN DEVELOP into adults they pass through stages that can be associated with different kinds of oral tradition. Before the infant can speak, he is pacified by the mother's lullaby—a song that one can learn out of a book, but rarely does. The lullaby and an assortment of crooning and chanting used to entertain or quiet infants are generally a product of the mother's traditional background. Here is an old nursery song, well-known in our culture, but lacking the two middle lines as many know it:

Bye, Baby Bunting,
Father's gone a hunting,
Mother's gone a milking,
Sister's gone a silking,
And Brother's gone to buy a skin,
To wrap the Baby Bunting in.

When the infant has grown enough to respond to the playful sallies ot his elders, he will enjoy a few of the many kinds of tickling and counting games of the "This little piggy" type, still a part of the parents' tradition.

Nursery rhymes have many obviously archaic survivals in speech and allusion. For example, the thesis of Katherine Thomas, as presented in her *The Real Personages of Mother Goose*,[1] is that the seemingly harmless nonsense lines of the rhymes carry memories of court intrigue, the Tower, or the executioner's block. Her book suggests that the rhymes we know as nursery rhymes originated as barbed political lampoons in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Consulting many rare chapbooks, chronicles, and works on popular minstrelsy, she assembled her arguments to show that Richard III ("A horse! A horse!") was the target of "Humpty Dumpty," and that Little Jack Horner was someone being sent by King Henry VIII with a "pie" of grants of land, and when he literally put his thumb, or whole hand, and pulled out the deed to Mells Park, he was the same "Jack" who had to be nimble and quick.

Miss Thomas also suggests that the maid in the garden, hanging out her clothes, was none other than Anne Boleyn, and that the blackbird (executioner) did eventually snip off her whole head. The king in the counting house, counting out his money, according to this source, was Henry VIII, and this is but one of many popular verse references to his rapacious appetite for Church moneys and lands. A more direct reference to him is in "Robin the bobbin, the big-bellied Ben, . . . He ate the Church, he ate the steeple, . . . And yet he complained his belly wasn't full."

Mistress Mary, quite contrary, as Mary, Queen of Scots, is depicted in one poem as a woman surrounded by gaiety. In another, she is Little Bopeep who lost her sheep. The nursery rhyme characters' relationship with historical figures is ambiguous in some cases, in which the author presents alternative possibilities; nevertheless, the effort to associate the rhymes with actual political situations in history makes a fascinating study, and the way in which some rhymes have lived on beyond their application to current events is still another illustration of the tenacity of certain verbal formulas.

Although the book by Miss Thomas is an entertaining exploration, the author fails to present conclusive proof for many of the associations she suggests. A more conservative and dependable volume of scholarship devoted to nursery rhymes is *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*[2].

About the time the child begins to lisp "Now I lay me down to sleep" other verbal lore from siblings and playmates begins to enlarge his horizons. Before long the mother is surprised when her child comes in from play chanting, "Liar, liar, pants on fire,/Hang them on a telephone wire." The child has begun to communicate traditional lore which will play a major role

[1] Katherine Elwes Thomas, *The Real Personages of Mother Goose*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1930.

[2] Peter and Iona Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.

in his entertainment, socialization, and acquisition of verbal and manual skills.

Despite numerous publications of songs, jingles, and games available to parents and teachers, the children continue to acquire traditions from their peers, probably because motivation to learn is stronger in the play group. Children are also stubborn in their refusal to learn what is "good" for them or easy to understand. The well-intentioned efforts of adults to eliminate difficult anachronisms in nursery rhymes and fairy tales by "writing down" to children rarely succeed. The lilt of "Little Miss Muffet/Sat on a tuffet/Eating curds and whey" competes with "Oh, see, see, see the dog," even though curds and whey lie outside the experience of most modern children.

As a child progresses through the lower grades he learns new games and rhymes, and discards older ones as he advances. Old-time favorites such as jump rope and hopscotch involve coordination skills. Hide-and-seek or other games requiring that one player be "it" make use of traditional counting-out rhymes. Game terms often reflect a remarkable conservatism in that the players unthinkingly use symbols of a considerably earlier age. "King's X," suggesting the immunity of royalty, is used without thought of its connotation. The girls jumping rope seem to see no incongruity in the juxtaposition of "king and queen" with "old submarine." The ubiquitous lady with the alligator purse[3] is never explained, but apparently she works her way from one rhyme to another because the meter of the line is well suited to jumping rope. Local allusions and current events are found:

> Hi ho Silver on the air,
> Tonto lost his underwear;
> Tonto say, "Me no care,
> Lone Ranger buy me 'nother pair."

Because jump rope rhymes are easily collected on the playground, the neophyte folklorist frequently tries his hand at field collecting on this genre. The rhymes have also been subjected to some serious scrutiny. See, for example, "Jump Rope Verses around the United States," by Catherine Ainsworth (*WF*, July, 1961).

Probably prompted by adults, and possibly reflecting a growing awareness of racial equality, even among the children, the counting-out rhyme which once included "catch a nigger by the toe" has become "catch a tiger by the toe" in many parts of the country.

[3] "Measles," said the doctor.
"Mumps," said the nurse.
"Nothing," said the lady
With the alligator purse.

Taunts and retorts in rhyme have a place in children's lore. Some of the better known are:

Fatty, Fatty, two-by-four. . . .

John's mad, and I'm glad. . .

What's my name? Puddin' Tane. . . .

Riddles, "knock-knocks," Little Audrey, and "sick jokes" are among the verbal devices which give young people an opportunity to exercise their wits and participate in the speech activities of their peers. Grade school children are remarkably irreverent. They will make parodies of anything, and they seem to prefer to be irreverent toward songs and speeches respected by adults. For the National Anthem they sing, "Oh, say can you see/any bedbugs on me." For a popular revival and patriotic air they provide the words, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Ford."

Narrative lore, mostly in the form of anecdotes, and often unprintable, assumes greater importance as the children advance in school. In addition, a considerable body of sex lore circulates among young people, who are intensely curious and dissatisfied with the amount and kind of information received through other channels. In recent years the parents and teachers have made some self-conscious efforts to counter the misinformation of teen-age sex lore by approved educational methods, but the peer group continues to dominate. The reticence of both parents and teachers is a reflection of their own secrecy and confusion of earlier years.

Community Lore

Although the schools provide the standard curriculum for the intense learning period of adolescence, extracurricular learning involves traditions of many kinds. The boy's elders give him hunting and fishing lore. The girl's elders teach her domestic arts and crafts. The community at large gives boys and girls alike the legendary lore of local heroes, place names, and memorable events. Depending on their status, ethnic background, and geographical location, they will learn about jinxed cars, haunted houses, and hitchhiking ghosts; they will learn drinking songs and toasts; they will learn to bake bread, brand cattle, and paint a fancy design on an old car to give it the appearance of being "souped up." In short, they will acquire mental and manual skills which are not a part of their formal education. Not the

least of these will be courtship skills. Play-party games, kissing games, dating tabus, and dozens of other boy-girl contact situations create a body of knowledge for the adolescent, who must learn by precept and oral transmission enough to guide him through a critical phase of development.

Ethnic Lore

By the time the young adult has finished his public school education and has absorbed the general lore of his sex and age group, he has also acquired the specialized lore related to race and national origin. If he is an American Indian, his acquisition of tribal lore and customs will depend on the degree to which his family and community have retained their tribal identity. For some, such as the many descendants of once discrete tribes of California Indians, absorption into the white culture is virtually complete; for others, such as the Navaho, language, dress, religion, practically the whole pattern of living remains a culture apart.

The major public orientation of the young Jew conforms to the general American pattern, but where orthodoxy prevails, a whole calendar of fasts and feast days, with all the accompanying terminology, special culinary arts, modes of dress and address, deference to elders, and reverence for law and learning, make up an easily identifiable body of well-preserved tradition, much of which reaches back into the centuries in which books of the Old Testament were written.

Like the young Indian, the young Negro faces adult life as a person well integrated with general American traditions and practically without special ones to give him a separate sense of identity if he has not lived in a family or community which has maintained separate traditions. Needless to say, separate traditions have been best maintained in the South, especially in the rural areas. A special complication presents itself when a folklorist attempts to identify Negro anecdotes, idiom, and superstitions. The black-face or minstrel stage tradition, beginning in the nineteenth century, has preserved a stereotype of these elements which has affected the whole culture—including the self-image of the Negroes themselves.

In areas where lynch law and suppression of civil rights have been openly practiced, Negroes "play the nigger," that is, assume the bumbling, shuffling, deferent role expected of them to avoid white hostility. Since the young learn their unaffected roles by imitation, we can observe here another paradox of folklore—a real role assumed by imitation of an imitation.

That Negroes sometimes adopt and tell "nigger stories" in a role of self-abasement seems inexplicable, but it can be explained by examination of

the peculiar defense psychology of an abused minority. The same phenomenon has been observed in the telling of Jewish dialect stories by Jews. Certainly many Jewish dialect stories have their origins among gentiles, some being clearly antisemitic. Yet the fact that Jews will repeat them has been taken to mean that they are in Jewish tradition. The dialect stories truly in the Jewish tradition appear to be those which derive from cultural stratification in the Jewish community, where language differences, such as Yiddish, make opportunities for humorous imitation and play upon words.

Other racial or immigrant groups retain special traditions and pass them on to the next generation in varying degrees, depending largely on social approval. In some city enclaves, Old World traditions are stalwartly upheld, but the facts of economic life and the mobility, both geographic and social, of modern Americans produces an inevitable attrition. The traditions most likely to live beyond the immigrating generation center around domestic arts, especially recipes for holiday dishes, proverbs, and beliefs.

During the late nineteenth century and early in the twentieth, first generation American-born children sought social approval by rejecting language, costume, and other evidences of the family's foreign origin. Children commonly felt ashamed of the atmosphere of their homes, thus losing the advantage of forms of entertainment, domestic arts, and other traditions of great value. In more recent years, however, foreign origin is less common, less associated with slums, and hence has less stigma. The result has been a change in attitude which allows young people of some communities to participate in folk traditions of their elders with pride.

Urban Lore

Because of its large labor market, Detroit is a city of numerous settlements of workers of foreign origin. The folklore classes of Wayne State University, under the direction of Professor Thelma James, have pioneered in techniques of collecting and classifying the folklore of more than sixty different urban ethnic groups. The project has been underway long enough to build up substantial archives, representing the various kinds of lore to be found in a cosmopolitan setting. This collection has proved useful in several unanticipated ways. It has promoted understanding of customs and beliefs in particular urban centers so that municipal workers were better able to cope with their problems of dealing with immigrants. The broad ethnic survey resulted in useful maps of the city which gave unique information about the distribution of beliefs and practices. The cataloguing of informants

provided useful finding lists for individuals or organizations seeking special information or talent. Publications drawing on the archived material began as early as 1950, and promise to continue indefinitely.

Conservative Groups

Having established the general observation that much of the Old World folklore dies with the generation that brings it, we should hasten to observe that there are notable exceptions in the United States.

One exception is the Pennsylvania Dutch. Their feeling of identity and pride in their traditions may be accounted for by the fact that settlement was established long before the great nineteenth century waves of immigration set a new pattern for rapid acculturation. In addition, the conservatism rigidly enforced by the Amish forced preservation of language, garb, and domestic arts far beyond the normal life expectancy for immigrant traditions. The religious music and folk customs of the Amish are of perennial interest to field collectors. See, for example, "Amish Wedding Days," by William L. Schreiber (*JAF*, January-March, 1960).

Another exception to the general trend of rapid acculturation is the folklore of the Spanish-speaking people of the Southwest. We note a circumstance which parallels one of the Amish in this case. The settlement by Spanish-oriented immigrants was early in the history of the nation. The Latin influence is also reinforced by the proximity of the national boundary and the normal local traffic in and out of Mexico. In addition to these factors, the special historical association with the native Indian population, its adjustment to the Catholic missionary influence and relative isolation until late nineteenth century have contributed to the maintenance of some unique folklore. One form, folk drama, is rare elsewhere. For one of the several recent articles on the drama, see T. M. Pearce's "The New Mexican 'Shepherds' Play'" (*WF*, April, 1956). Also see Terrence L. Hansen's "*Corridos* in Southern California" (*WF*, July 1959), for specialized forms of folk song.

Settlements of Japanese and Chinese immigrants have maintained the traditions of their homelands where the families have been numerous enough to reinforce each other with mutual approval. Up until World War II, some Oriental settlements were successful even in maintaining Japanese or Chinese language schools for their American-born children. The impact of the war, however, did much to uproot these islands of Oriental tradition and to promote new attitudes which are not conducive to keeping traditions alive.

The Creole culture of the lower Mississippi is still another example of an

enduring cluster of distinctive folklore which came early and stayed late. Here, too, early settlement created social patterns stable enough to be relatively unaffected by the "foreign-born" stigma attached to immigrants of a later century.

Immigrant Lore

Scattered over the face of the nation are small communities which were settled predominantly by immigrants who shared a common language. Whether they were Armenian, Italian, Basques, or Finns, they have made their local contributions to the varieties of place names, slang terms, dialect jokes, house and barn architecture, farming methods, costume, and cookery. Since much of this will pass under the various leveling influences of American democracy, the folklorist of mid-twentieth century hurries to collect what he can. Evidence in the journals suggests that it is already too late to get the best of many forms of immigrant folklore. "Norwegian Tales from Minnesota" (*MF*, Spring, 1954) is a sample of dialect stories—actually anecdotes about Scandinavian immigrants rather than traditional tales from their homeland. And even these dialect stories are truncated reports of stories rather than the full-blown burlesques of language difficulties one sometimes hears from the lips of American workmen. Comedy based on language differences is not confined to the American scene. Shakespeare's delightful portrayal of the Welchman, Fluellen, is an example from the literature of another time and place to remind us that dialect comedy is just one of many kinds that can result from the mingling of people with different backgrounds.

Certainly it is useful to sample immigrant lore as widely as possible to record this element of folk culture in a growing and changing nation, but it would be an error to overemphasize its importance to the extent of believing it is the very essence of American folklore. It merely represents an ephemeral detail of a passing historical situation. Countries all over the world have had emigration, immigration, wars, and invasions; they have had intrusions, peaceful and military, of foreign ways and tongues. The adaptation of the folk of all the world and of all time to their changing environment has given a common characteristic to world folklore. A century hence, field workers in the United States will have little to collect if they depend on recently imported songs, tales, and beliefs, or if they seek anecdotes based on racial prejudice or the language differences of the foreign-born. Yet the folk will still be here, talking, singing, dancing, believing, and acting on their beliefs. Their oral literature, whatever form it takes, will still be collected and studied, and it will continue to contribute information which will help students of man and his works understand their subject.

The Lore of Special Occupations

The young adult's absorption of community and family folklore during his public school days is prologue to his adult role, wherein more learning from tradition will be colored by his occupation. If he continues to be a student by enrolling in a college or university, campus lore will enrich his experience. If he turns to military life, much of the oral tradition he will encounter will parallel elements of campus lore. Specifically, on a campus or on a military base, the young learner is likely to be exposed to fools' errands, special slang nomenclature for places and people, parodies of songs and speeches, especially in the form of drinking or party songs, legends of students or privates who succeeded in confounding higher authority, dogs who received college diplomas or honorable discharges, and hilarious blunders of colonels or professors. Hair-raising tales of infirmary maltreatment, food poisoning, and fatal hazing circulate with equal ease in college or military circles. A favorite in recruit training camps for generations has been the story, always with local detail, of the recruit sentry who followed orders to the letter and kept his own commanding officer at bay until his post was relieved by the Sergeant of the Guard.

Remarkable folk expressions in song, story, and handcrafts appear to be most clearly related to frontier life or occupational conditions which throw people upon their own resources for entertainment. The logging camp, sailing ship, and cattle range, like the backwoods farms, are particularly noted for the richness of their folklore.

The logging camp

The bunkhouse of the isolated logging camp was an ideal place for the folk artist to sing and play his fiddle or accordion, or to spin a yarn. The songs and yarns did not need to be confined to lumberjack lore, for the boomer could, and often did, follow his season in the snow with a tour of the harvest fields, a turn before the mast, or a trip to the mines. It now seems reasonably clear that none of the tall tales of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox that we find in our literature had their origins in lumberjack lore. Even the seeds of the tales in the form of proverbial expression or occupational hyperbole are seriously questioned. Oddly, however, the literary creations have worked back to the men in the woods, not in the form of painfully contrived stories, but as allusions and proverbial expressions. For example, the authors have heard men working in the woods say, "That's a tough one. We'll have to get the blue ox to get it out."

In the woods of the Pacific Northwest the legendary figure for modern yarn-spinning is the high-topper. His tricky occupation is extremely hazard-

ous, and its nature demands that he be as much a lone performer as a trapeze artist. The high-topper, using special climbing irons with long spurs to dig deeply into the thick bark of the Douglas fir, and a special safety belt that will cast a loop about the massive bole of the tree, climbs the spar tree, limbs it, cuts off the top, and rigs it with guy wires and tackle for moving logs. His theatrical performance is much admired, providing material for telling and retelling yarns of clever solutions for problems encountered high up the spar tree, accidents, and hair's-breadth avoidance of disaster. In the retelling, these episodes often take on the extra glamor that makes a good story.

The shanty-boy song, "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks," reflects the hazards of the life of the river rat when log drives were common as a means of moving timber to the mill. Only where conditions for log drives are exceptionally good is this method still employed. A fine example is the drive down the Clearwater River in Idaho. On the banks of the Clearwater on a spring day when the river is running high, the tourist or Sunday driver can still have the treat of watching cat-footed loggers work with pike-pole and peavey to break up the jams and keep the logs moving to the mill. For a recent article which gives some insight into the use of traditional tunes in lumberjack circles, see Norman Cazden's "Regional and Occupational Orientation of American Traditional Song" (*JAF,* October- December, 1959).

A folk art that has received little attention is the skill with which the woodsman fashions furniture and decorations out of the natural forms about him. Using only his sharp axe and an eye trained to see useful or unusual shapes in the branches of trees, he selects arms, legs, backs, and braces to fasten together porch chairs, settees, and other furnishings in keeping with his environment. A closely related folk art is the skillful use of broad axe and adz. These tools and the plumb-bob were the mainstays of the pioneer architect, who accomplished remarkable construction feats without formal training in their use.

Sailing ships

When sailing ships were at sea for weeks or months on a routine voyage, members of the crew were thrown on their own resources for entertainment. Like the loggers in the bunkhouse, the crew in their quarters were fortunate if one of their number could fiddle, play the accordion, or sing. The songs below decks might be of any subject or language; whereas those at the capstan or halyard were traditional chants or work songs used to lighten the load and maintain the rhythm necessary for coordinated effort. The utility of the worksongs is reflected in the specialization of types, that is, furling, capstan, walk-away, and short haul.

A traditional folk art associated with long sea voyages is the intricate,

time-consuming art known as "scrimshaw." In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*[4] we find it described as "... lively sketches of whales and whaling scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on Sperm Whale-teeth, ... and other like skrim-shander articles ... they elaborately carve out of the rough material, in their hours of ocean leisure."

Modern machinery has virtually eliminated the use of work songs aboard ship, yet traditional sayings and beliefs abound. The sailors superstitiously avoid whistling up a storm or inviting the wrath of the gods by killing an albatross or dolphin. They still learn the maritime rules of the road by rhyme, and they still send apprentices to fetch red oil for the port running light. Long watches on quiet seas call forth the talents of the yarn-spinning raconteur. His first-person narratives of improbable adventures ashore and afloat are borrowed by raconteurs-in-the-making for first-person narratives to be told on another watch and another sea.

The cowboy

No other element of Americana has made such a mystifying, many-faceted impact on the imagination of the whole people as the one produced by the cowboy. He rides in a seemingly endless dusty circle, passing through millions of television and movie screens. He is depicted by writers of every level of talent on the pages of enough magazines to deforest a state to produce the pulp for their manufacture. Small boys pack their belongings and head west to become cowboys, and credulous adult males in foreign countries cherish their ambition to go to America and ride the range. Year by year, as generations of story writers and stage directors copy ideas from each other, the fictional hero of the range moves further and further from reality.

The pageantry of cowboy regalia has, then, become something quite apart from that which could be genuinely utilitarian. Hollywood ranch hands sport red, green, and blue "cowboy" boots, sequin-spangled "cowboy" shirts, and snow-white "cowboy" hats. A prominent accessory is the heavy gun belt glittering with bullets, a fancy, low-slung holster tied to the thigh (for lightning-fast draw), and a revolver suitable for "fanning." This elaborate, expensive costuming is especially in evidence at parades, where the official "posse"—usually a group of city businessmen who can afford their whim—exhibit their finery.

The puzzling part of this picture is that the American worker chosen for such elaborate idealization did not—and generally does not—dress, ride, or work as he has been depicted. The typical cowhand of the cattle range works long hours for low pay. During the age of the great cattle drives,

[4] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, reprinted in Rinehart Editions. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1948, p. 269.

he was noted, if noted at all, for being dirty, smelly, and likely to transmit body lice to other people. His clothing was strictly utilitarian, his saddle and bridle (if he owned any) were work-scarred and patched, and his mount (owned by the outfit) was mean, hard, and quick, but not necessarily attractive. He rarely wore a gun when he worked, for the sensible reason that it would be uncomfortable, awkward, and likely to get lost. Such an encumbrance would be intolerable to a hard-working cowhand. And if he did own a gun, he was likely to pawn it to prolong his payday spree in town.

Yet in some strangely romantic way, all the unattractive features of the man and his lot have been ignored, while the appeal of riding in the wide open spaces has created a mythical figure that has never existed outside the collective imagination of the cowboy fans.

Several side developments are worthy of note. Some real-life ranch hands have taken to modeling dress, gear, and behavior after the fictitious model, so that in a sense, the model is no longer fictitious. We can now find, mostly at rodeos, but also on ranches, cowboys who dress in the style set by high fashion for western wear.

Some investigators have called the cowboy lore an American myth. It does have mythical elements, such as ritual (rodeo, parade), costumed actors, belief (or desire to believe), and a composite story which continues to grow. It has devotees by the million, who worship at the movie or television screens, pretend to act out the role, and even undergo painful sacrifice by squeezing city-conditioned feet into cowboy boots to hobble about in. Others have offered up their personal safety and have shot themselves in hip, leg, or foot, trying to perfect a "fast draw"—not a mythical accomplishment of ranch hands, but attributed to some small-town law officers or bad men.

Although the "West-that-never-was" is a falsification of history frequently deplored by historians, the phenomenon is not necessarily devoid of cultural values, and its study may be of considerable interest to the serious student of myth and myth-making. The amount of belief and the *will to believe* associated with western lore can make a fascinating study. The deliberate, costumed play-acting by adults as well as children has ritualistic aspects deserving of analysis. The willingness of the people to invent, if necessary, a background of legendary heroes which suits the aspirations of the current generation can be studied as an unfolding phenomenon instead of being reconstructed out of scraps of ancient literature and history. Perhaps Ambrose Bierce, the cynic, showed more insight than we realize at first reading when he wrote the definition of "myth" quoted at the beginning of Chapter 2.

To avoid the error of playing down the lore of the West too much, we should grant that the western frontier did have numerous sordid outlaws,

shootings, and lynchings. We should observe also that the setting and conditions of the job did provide opportunities for special hazards and adventurous escapades for the men who herded cattle. Furthermore, the appeal of the great open spaces is a genuine one. The cowboy has been self-consciously aware of his rugged, lonely life, and he has contributed extensively to the folklore of his calling.

John Lomax pioneered in extensive field collections, producing his *Cowboy Songs* in 1910.[5] Other collections have followed, building up the largest single element of strictly American folklore in the archives of folk music of the Library of Congress. This singling out of western music is done in the light of the presumption that much of the Negro and plantation lore is African and European in its origin, and much of the seagoing lore is imported from various European countries. As indicated in Chapter 3, we find that many seemingly indigenous cowboy songs are adaptations of European ballads, but the remaining material clearly emanating from conditions of the American West is significant. For more recent collections than those mentioned above, see John and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*,[6] *Our Singing Country*,[7] and *Folk Song: U.S.A.*[8]

Folk art associated with the West is most easily recognized in the rawhide and horsehair saddle and bridle gear fabricated by the men who use it. Here we see the worker using the materials of his environment to create useful and frequently attractive articles for his everyday use. The western ranch hand is also adept at the use of rawhide to fasten corral fences, to make gate and door latches, and to perform general minor repairs on a multitude of other objects. Construction of fences and gates out of inadequate materials taxes ingenuity and originates folk traditions for the devices that work. The design of cattle brands is utilitarian, but it also reflects much local history and tradition. An investigation of the cattle brand register in a typical western county courthouse will uncover a mine of folk wit and ingenuity.

Aside from the folklore of workers in the woods, at sea, and on the cattle ranges, the songs, tales, and legends of many other occupations enrich the folklore of America. The romance of railroading, especially in the recent era of the steam locomotive, has called forth an extensive specialized vocabulary which colors the songs and stories to be found in railroad lore.

[5] John Lomax, *Cowboy Songs*. New York: The Macmillan Company. Copyright 1910, 1916, 1938 by the Macmillan Company; copyright 1938 by John A. Lomax.

[6] John and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.

[7] ——— and ———, *Our Singing Country*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

[8] *Folk Song: U.S.A., op. cit.*

Miners

Miners have their special superstitions and tabus. The gold rush of '49 produced a few local-color songs, and out of the importation of Cornish miners for the hard-rock operations in California came folk singing that has persisted to this day in the Cornish settlements. George Korson's *Coal Dust on the Fiddle*[9] and *Songs of the Anthracite Miner*[10] reveal a significant body of folk song and folk music in the coal mining areas. Legends of lost mines and buried treasure are found from Maine to California; some are real, well-founded accounts, but most persist through the will to believe, sparked by the lure of sudden wealth.

Canallers and rivermen

Canallers and rivermen still ply their trade, but the era of folklore of these freshwater sailors passes with the passing of the importance of river and canal transportation. The great period dates back to the construction of the Erie Canal and the heavy traffic on the major tributaries of the Mississippi. Though stories of Mike Fink may be exaggerated by literary inflation, Mark Twain's description of the life of a cub pilot on the Mississippi seems true to life in its depiction of the traditions associated with river navigation.

Not attached to a specific occupation, but rather, dispersed over the nation, is the folk song of work. The plaintive songs, shouts, and hollers of men who bear the burden of heavy labor, whether it be laying rails, lifting bales, or "made-work" in jails, are mostly associated with the Negro race. Excellent field recordings of work songs and "hollers" have been transcribed from the archives of the Library of Congress. On a single recording edited by B. A. Botkin (AAFS L 18) are "Unloading Rails," "Tamping Ties," "Heaving the Lead Line," "Mississippi Sounding Call," "Quittin' Time Song," "Track-Lining Song," and eleven others.

When we consider occupational or ethnic folklore, we should be aware of the fact that most legendary lore is localized. True, legends of national figures are sometimes so publicized that they spread over the whole nation, but for every Lincoln, Johnny Appleseed, or Jesse James, hundreds of events and characters are known only in restricted areas. The remarkable liar, the strong man, or the exceptional hunter may have established a legend which has never traveled far from the community or county of its origin. Feats of extraordinary bravery and endurance may live long in the folk memory

[9] George Korson, *Coal Dust on the Fiddle: Songs and Stories of the Bituminous Industry*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Press, 1943.

[10] ———, *Minstrels of the Mine Patch: Songs and Stories of the Anthracite Industry*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938.

and become embellished with the retelling, even though they do not travel far.

The artistic quality of the products of leisure of lumberjacks, sailors, and ranch hands, as well as of other callings, will vary with the skill and artistic impulses of the worker. In general, folk art is the esthetic expression of those who do not have formal or academic training in art forms.

Among the examples of folk art one may find in museums are various woodcarvings—especially cigar-store Indians and ships' figureheads. Carpenters untutored in sculpture made many of them. Less imposing but more numerous are smaller objects such as butter molds, tableware, and farm implements. When the material, craftsmanship, and utility blend with each other, as they often do in wooden hayforks and scythe cradles, the esthetic quality is undeniably appealing.

Other forms of folk art one may easily examine in most American communities are decorative barn painting, sign painting, fireboard painting, weather vanes, ornamental ironwork on gates and fences, and quilt block design. Also some folk arts show much patience and ingenuity, but lack esthetic appeal. Examples of these are watch chains braided from human hair, finger rings made of horse-shoe nails, and picture frames decorated with seeds and stones of fruits, flowers, and weeds.

As John Mason Brewer remarks in the introduction to his *Dog Ghosts and Other Texas Negro Folk Tales*,[11] the soul of a people is revealed in its folklore. Certainly the folk arts and occupational folklore will do much to effect that revelation.

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SIX

The student folklorist

> He is not a reformer, either of artistic taste or the amusement habits of his generation. He recognizes folklore for what it is, that part of the culture which is handed down by tradition from one generation to another. . . . He observes that each item has had its history and that the tracing of its history often takes one very far in an understanding of the great complex of forces which have produced a people.
>
> —*Stith Thompson*

Collecting Folklore

THE FIRST STEP in the study of any kind of folklore is to make a suitable collection. Beginning students are sometimes urged to collect, either to have them demonstrate to themselves that traditional materials of many kinds are all around them, or to make contributions to college or area archives.

Professional archivists have been rightfully suspicious of indiscriminate student collecting for these principal reasons:

1. The unsupervised beginning collector may overlook more than he brings in.

2. The blunders of eager but unskilled collectors may alienate potentially good informants.

3. A large volume of miscellaneous folklore may accumulate without adequate facilities for classification, resulting in materials relatively useless for study and interpretation.

4. When a pattern of improper maintenance is set, the collection continues to grow, eventually becoming a hodgepodge of uneven, badly organized manuscripts and tapes.

However, where a good classification system has been established, materials and clerical help are available, and adequate instruction and supervision are maintained, mature students of college level can make major contributions to area archives.

Too often the student feels that he must begin by setting out for some remote area to find old people for informants. He can save himself a great deal of trouble and he can gain valuable experience by following an easier procedure. His first informant should be himself. Once he has a definition of various elements of folklore in mind, he should ask himself these questions:

1. Do I know any tales like these I have been studying? If so, are they very like the ones in a particular collection? Are they different in any remarkable way? Can I match the ones I know with a Grimm number? With a tale-type number? If the answer is *yes* to these or related questions, have I checked the appropriate collection or index to make some comparative notes? Have I prepared a manuscript or tape recording and submitted my materials?

2. Do I know any legends about people, places, or events in my community? If so, are they similar to any I have studied? Can I make a note on the source, the circumstances under which I have acquired my material? As a final check-list, do I have a story to tell about a fatal or near-fatal school or fraternity hazing? A jinx or death car? A haunted house? A death premonition? A phenomenal streak of good or bad luck? An extraordinary feat of strength or endurance? A remarkable tragedy? Have I prepared the information on any of these or similar narratives and submitted the tape recording or manuscript to the appropriate collection?

3. Do I know any songs that might be of special interest in regional collecting or comparative studies? If they are ballads, have I checked them against other collections? Do they correspond with any of the Child ballads? Are they different in words or music? Do I know any parodies of songs? Drinking songs? Bawdy songs? Have I checked any of these against available collections? Can I make source notes, comparative notes, and a record of my material?

4. Do I have any special sayings or beliefs that might add to a regional collection? Do I know some humorous limericks, aphorisms in rhyme, tongue-twisters, weather forecasting formulas? Do I have some remedies for nosebleed, warts, colds, or other ailments? Do I know some nature or animal lore, such as hoop snake or joint snake beliefs? Do I know any beliefs about dogs, cats, mules? Have I written them down and added the circumstances under which I have learned them?

After the student folklorist has asked himself these and obviously related questions, the next step is to turn to family and friends. In the process of checking his own lore, he will inevitably be reminded of a story that he knows only as one his father tells, a remedy he has heard his grandmother mention, a song his uncle sings, or a set of limericks an old school friend recites. Even then, though he knows where to go and already has rapport with his informants, the student collector will still face a few problems of access which sometimes confront the field collector. And with family or friends as with himself, he should make as much of his identification and comparative notes as his knowledge and library facilities will allow. He should not neglect to learn from his informants the circumstances of their acquisition of traditional lore. A collector's note on his rough materials might be something like this:

> Song: "Barbara Allen," collected June 15, 1961, in Oak Park, Illinois.
> Collector: Jack Brown.
> Informant: Mrs. Nellie Sparks, age 72, the collector's aunt. Mrs. Sparks stated that she learned this song in Ithaca, New York, when she was about twelve years old, from her mother, Mrs. Agnes Fay, who had it from her childhood memories in Liverpool, England.

When collecting from family and friends, the student should be especially aware of family traditions he may have taken for granted, but which may be of special interest to others. Special holidays other than universally observed national or state holidays should be noted. Holiday cookery, costume, folk art, Old Country sayings and beliefs which are traditional within the family or neighborhood should not be overlooked. To report, "My mother puts a silver coin in the churn to make the butter come," is not as good as to report *why* she believes the coin will make the butter come, and *how* and *when* and *where* she learned to take this precaution.

As the collector moves through his circle of relatives and friends he will discover that his interest is contagious. One informant usually leads to another, setting up a chain reaction likely to swamp the collector with more than he can conveniently handle. When a friend says, "I don't know all the verses, but I know a man who does," the collector has his cue to make an informant note. He will soon find that his growing informant file suggests certain priorities or some specialization in his collecting. By judicious use of one informant's introduction to gain access to another, he may never have to use the generally undesirable method of approaching a stranger "cold."

Whether one has an introduction or not, he is not likely to get best results by bluntly announcing that he is collecting folklore, and almost certain to fail are the questions, "Do you know any folklore?" and "Do you know

anyone who knows any folklore?" More likely to lead to success is a particular question concerning a line of a song or a detail of a legend. The informant may be unaware that he knows any folk songs, but he will be eager to share his knowledge if questions are specific. Even if one good informant takes the collector to another, the collector is usually wise to keep tape recorder or notebook in the background and break the ice with a friendly visit. If he does, he may find that the two informants stimulate each other, each reminding the other of songs and stories. If the collector's cue comes, he may casually ask about a particular song or story—or even sing or tell one himself to suggest reciprocation. Much good collecting is carried out in a song or yarn-swapping atmosphere. One precaution: The collector should build a genuine swapping situation by displaying friendly, unfeigned interest. Nothing else will freeze the collector out of the good graces of an informant as quickly as a lofty attitude toward an informant's knowledge or surroundings—or the opposite extreme: a phony, forced folksiness.

The collector should avoid forcing attention on his desires. If he wants a ballad and the informant wants to tell a tale, the collector should interest himself in tales for a time. By shifting his interest, the collector may get something better than he came for, and by maintaining rapport, he will have an opportunity to come back for more.

Recording frequently presents a special problem. Many people are "mike-shy." They freeze up when confronted by recording equipment. This problem is usually overcome if the collector has enough patience to introduce recording devices gradually and naturally. The mike-shy informant may be intrigued if he is entertained by selections already on tape. He may rise to the challenge by wanting to record something of his own which is better than the sample he hears. Playing with the machine, talking and playing back, may break the ice. If notebook is used, it can be played down so that little attention is drawn to it. If folklorists work in pairs, one can maintain the conversation while the other unobtrusively takes notes.

An example is the experience of a collector who took his tape recorder to the remote mountain home of an Indian family. He had patiently negotiated with a student who was a relative of the family to get a Sunday dinner invitation. The circumstances of the large family gathering for Sunday dinner and a leisurely visit seemed good for recording, but the prospective informants warily gave the tape recorder a wide berth. After dinner, and after two or three tentative approaches to recording, which were not well received, the collector gave up and resolved to relax and enjoy the experience. Later, when the whole atmosphere was one of friendly visiting, the head of the household disappeared for a few minutes and returned with heirloom bones and counters for the traditional hand (gambling) game

of his people. The family divided into teams, men against women, and the collector was invited to join the men's team.

The game included a variety of traditional game songs, which were sung continuously as long as the game lasted. Once the players were engrossed with their pastime, they had no objection to the tape recorder since it did not focus on a particular individual. The result was more than an hour of good recording. It included a variety of songs, side comments, the rising tension toward the end of the game, and the victorious shouts of the women's team. A playback of part of the tape delighted the players. The collector was invited to return for another visit.

One common error is to seek out the old people exclusively. Although it is true that some older lore may be collected from them, it is also true that the orientation of both collector and informant is likely to be toward history—which may or may not be properly called folklore, depending on its nature. The historical recollections of a talkative old-timer may be interesting and worth collecting, but the collector should avoid the popular error of confusing folklore and local history to the extent of making the terms synonymous.

Collecting Equipment

Only in very recent years has it become possible to make accurate field recordings conveniently, regardless of location. The battery-powered, transistorized tape recorder eliminates many of the frustrations formerly experienced by collectors who interviewed informants where it was not possible to plug a bulky recording device into a convenient source of electric power. Some relatively inexpensive battery-powered recorders are now on the market. The very cheap models are not adequate, however, and the prospective purchaser would do well to secure information about performance before making a choice. The authors use an American-made transistorized recorder powered by a set of mercury batteries. The device weighs six to seven pounds, depending on the amount of auxiliary equipment carried. It has the additional advantage of converting readily to ordinary household current through a small transformer, so that editing and playing back may be done without consuming battery power. It has been satisfactory in every way, and its fidelity is good enough to make it convenient for classroom use. The small (three-inch) reels give about forty minutes of playing time on each side. These have turned out to be unexpectedly advantageous in that most items are short enough to be recorded on a small reel which can be stored separately. This makes a particular song or story readily available, whereas a single item tends to get "lost" if it is one of several on a larger reel.

Another piece of collecting equipment which is not essential, but is highly desirable, is a camera. Quite often a photograph of an informant or the site of the collecting is a useful addition to the lore collected. In addition, the environment from which much folklore is collected may have examples of handcrafts and folk art well worth photographing.

Finally, the collector should give his informants respectful attention and some expression of appreciation. It is worth while to explain briefly some of the reasons for collecting the folklore of the nation. The informant's realization that his material will be added to an area or national collection, possibly to be studied or published by scholars, is a source of pride which should not be denied to those who cooperate. The collector should respect confidences, live up to his word if the informant requests anonymity, and take other reasonable precautions to insure his welcome if he should wish to return.

Archiving

In systematic preservation of folklore collections, several European countries are superior to the United States. The Scandinavian countries, whose scholars tend to blend folklore and ethnology, have created outdoor museums and national archives in their efforts to record their folk histories. The Swedish Index, for example, is a detailed classification system which takes in considerably more information than the typical American collector would consider to be within the scope of his interests and activities.

The Finns long ago associated folklore studies with a rising national pride, creating conditions for archiving and study that were the envy of American folklorists. The work of the Irish Folklore Commission, too, was strengthened by the strong feelings of nationalism following the Irish Renaissance. The Irish handbook for collectors presents a system of classification taking in considerably more ethnological scope than is ordinarily seen in American collecting. Early studies in Germany, Denmark, and France produced archives, handbooks, encyclopedias, and mammoth collections, many of which have no equal in the United States.

Even the relatively new state of Israel forges ahead in folklore and ethnology. Her scholars realized early in the blending of the new state's heterogeneous population what a significant role folklore could play in the development of a sense of national unity. A scientific knowledge of the subject has been fully exploited in a utilitarian, political way to aid in building the state. The Russians, of course, have been alert to the potential political uses of a scientific study of folklore and have promoted both its study and its use.

Progress has been somewhat slower in the United States. Much of the collecting and archiving has been regional, and as yet, no national system has been worked out, this in spite of important, growing collections in the Library of Congress. A quarterly publication, *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist*, published at Indiana University, its first issue coming out in March, 1958, may do much to bring order to folklore collections. However, William Hugh Jansen, writing in the first issue of the *Archivist*, began his article with, "No greater chaos can be imagined than that which prevails among the various set-ups which are, or might be, termed folk archives in the United States." The remainder of his article indicates clearly that no standard practice yet exists. More recent articles in the same publication have featured various collections, both in this country and abroad. This display may promote an effort to bring order to the scattered efforts to unify the folklore archives of the United States.

To comprehend the complexity of the problem, the student should try to visualize a major collection of small units—proverbs and riddles, for example. Remembering that the system devised should form a filing system which will accommodate all the collection, distinguish between similar items, and make them readily available to the researcher, he should try to devise a classification, preferably one that is a part of a larger system taking in the whole range of folklore. We can see at once that success will depend partly on a firm definition of folklore.

The Swedish index

To understand why the great Swedish Index or the Irish system (based on the Swedish) would not apply well to the United States concepts, consider their scope: The Swedish Index sets up major categories or chapters indicated by the letters A, B, C, and so on, then follows through with traditional outline format. A is for settlements and dwellings; B is for industries and labor; C is for communications and trade; and so on. To illustrate the design, here is a brief excerpt from section B (industries and labor):

B. Industries and Labor.

- I. Manner of Village Life in General
  - 1. Memories of olden times.
  - 2. Cultural influences and changes.
    - a. Before and after partitioning of the village.
    - b. Before and after lumbering took place.
    - c. Industrializing and emigration.
      People living in outskirts of the forest. . . .

The Irish handbook

A Handbook of Irish Folklore, by Sean O'Suilleabhain[1] shows similarly a greater emphasis on ethnological features than American folklorists usually consider. In the Irish handbook we find Chapter I devoted to Settlements and Dwellings, Chapter II to Livelihood and Household Support. Not until Chapter X does mythology appear, and popular oral traditions come even later, in Chapter XIII. The Irish handbook has been admired for its detail and utility and has been proposed as a model for adaptation to American collectors' needs.

The Boggs system

An American classification devised by Ralph Steele Boggs reflects the difference in emphasis mentioned above. The Boggs system distinguishes A: prose narrative; B: folk song; C: drama; D: custom and festival, etc. Relatively little ethnological detail is indicated in this system. See "classification" in the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore.*[2]

American folklore society system

A general folklore classification considered by a committee of the American Folklore Society bases its main divisions on numbers from 000 to 999, with a break-down of subjects corresponding to the Dewey Decimal System of library classification. Under this system, which can be expanded indefinitely, 400–499 includes home and family. A brief selection from this series follows:

460–469 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD
- 460 General
- 461 Roles, duties, and relations of the members...
- 461.1 Man—husband, father...
- 461.2 Woman—wife, mother...

- 461.5 Boarders
- 461.6 Servants...

The system here illustrated seems to be, in the final analysis, easily adaptable to a variety of classification demands. Its similarity to library classification is obvious, and since the decimal system can be expanded without limit, there is little or no reason to avoid its use on any folklore category. A further advantage is that anyone likely to use the classification is already familiar enough with libraries to have some ready-made orientation.

[1] Sean O'Suilleabhain, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore.* Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland, Ltd., for the Folklore of Ireland Society, 1942.

[2] *Op. cit.*

The motif-index

The *Motif-Index*[3] classifies motifs by major chapters identified by letter, then breaks down the chapters by the decimal system. This system follows rather closely the library classification used by the Library of Congress. The chapters run from A to Z, each letter representing a large category of narrative motifs. Chapter A deals with mythological motifs; Chapter B deals with animal motifs; and so on to Z. The internal arrangement is a break-down by hundreds, then further subdivision by tens.

Examination of the D (Magic) chapter shows that the numbers from D 0 to D 699 deal with transformations. Within that series, D 500 to D 599 deal with means of transformation. Within that series, D 550 to D 599 deal with transformation by eating or drinking. A portion of the series reads as follows:

D 550. Transformation by eating or drinking. . . .
D 551. Transformation by eating. . . .
D 551.1 Transformation by eating fruit. . . .
D 551.1.2 Transformation by eating apricot. . . .
D 551.1.3 Transformation by eating pear. . . .
D 551.2 Transformation by eating vegetable. (Cf. D 983.)—Type 567; *BP III 6; *Aarne MSFO XXV 143ff. (Cf. D 132.1.)

All entries above except the last one omit bibliographical reference where indicated by ellipses. The last entry (D 551.2) illustrates the bibliography. With its aid, students can turn from the index to works wherein the motif is illustrated in narrative or to studies wherein the motif is discussed. Entries are highly abbreviated, keyed to the extensive bibliography presented in the first volume of the index. A motif with a longer bibliographical note is given below to illustrate further:

D 621.1 Animal by day; man by night. *Types 425, 552A; *Köhler-Bolte I 315ff.; *Fb "hund" I 678a, "bjørn" IV 43a.—Irish myth: Cross; Icelandic: Hrolfs saga Kraka 50; Spanish: *Boggs FFC XC 62 No. 451; Bohemian: Hartland Science 246.— India: *Thompson-Balys; Hawaii: Beckwith myth 135; Mangaia (Polynesia), Samoa, Union Group, Tahiti: Dixon 55f.; Melanesian, Indonesian: ibid. 56 nn. 75, 76; N.A. Indian: Thompson Tales 347 nn. 247, 248; S.A. Indian (Arawak): Jijena Sanchez 23.

The several sources given following the motif direct the researcher to selected publications in which it appears. The *Motif-Index* is a valuable library aid, not only for the folklorist, but for researchers in anthropology and comparative literature as well.

[3] *Op. cit.*

The type-index

A common source of confusion for the beginner is the difference between Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature,* an index of motifs, and Aarne-Thompson's *The Types of the Folk-Tale,*[4] an index of whole tales, commonly called the *Type-Index.* This index was published in 1928 as FFC No. 74. It has three main divisions: Animal Tales, Ordinary Folk-Tales, and Jokes and Anecdotes. Numbers 1–299 are devoted to animal tales; of this series, numbers 1–99 are devoted to wild animals; numbers 100–149 to wild animals and domestic animals; numbers 150–199 to man and wild animals; numbers 200–219 to domestic animals, and so on. Where a sub-type exists, it is designated by a letter following the number of the tale type. An example is the series of tales involving the stupidity of wild animals who lose their prey. Type 122 is called "The Wolf Loses his Prey." Type 122A is called "The Wolf (Fox) Seeks Breakfast." Type 122B is called "The Rat Persuades the Cat to Wash her Face before Eating."

A whole tale may contain a number of motifs; each tale in the index is presented as a short synopsis, the motifs being indicated by numbers in brackets where they occur in the synopsis. The following example is taken from a recently published type-index, *Types of Indic Oral Tales,* by Stith Thompson and Warren Roberts (FFC 180, Helsinki, 1960). The bibliographic references are to collections of tales from India:

> 122C. *The Sheep Persuades the Wolf to Sing.* Cf. 227. [K 561.2]. Bødker, No. 626, 627.—Borooah, 72–78 (woman caught by jackals offers to teach them to dance; her singing attracts her dogs) [+176].—Crooke-Rouse, 72–75 (goat given permission to sing before wolf eats him summons help).—Thorburn, 221–222 (kid persuades wolf to sing).

A portion of the synopsis of a more complex tale (856. *The Girl Elopes With the Wrong Man*) is presented here to illustrate further the motifs contained within a tale:

> II. *The Elopement.* (a) While acting as a servant the hero pretends to be unable to read [K 1816.0.3]. He intercepts a message and learns that the princess intends to elope with the son of a court official [K 1317.9]. (b) He informs the court official who locks up his son. (c) The hero takes his place and elopes with the princess [K 1371.1, N 318.2]. When daylight comes the princess realizes she cannot return to her parents [T 92.4].

The *Motif-Index* with its supplements and the *Type-Index* with its supplements represent the most elaborate interlocking bibliographic aid for folklore studies.

[4] *Op. cit.*

Classification of proverbs

As Warren Roberts pointed out in his discussion of classification of the proverb in *Studies in Cheremis Folklore*,[5] proverbs have been classified in three principal ways: (1) alphabetically, according to the first word, (2) alphabetically, according to the most important word, and (3) according to subject-matter. The faults in the first two methods are apparent as soon as one observes that variants are common and that collections often deal with more than one language. Furthermore, two scholars do not always agree on the identity of the most important word. Regardless of language or variant texts, however, subject-matter classification remains stable and brings together proverbs associated in thought.

Warren Roberts illustrates a number and decimal system in his arrangement of Cheremis proverbs. In this system, the first number indicates a large class (cleverness and foolishness, man and wife, youth and old age, etc.). The second number indicates the subgroup (the clever person and his actions, etc.). The third number gives the position of the proverb in the subgroup, and the last number indicates the variant, if any. Accordingly, the Cheremis proverb, "A fast man tires (ages) quickly," is classified under number 7 (youth and old age). The subclass "school of life" places it in 7.4, and since it is number 14 in the subclass, the proverb is listed as 7.4.14. If several variants were listed, they would appear as 7.4.14.1, 7.4.14.2, and so on. It is apparent that this system can be expanded to accommodate as many variants and subgroups as the collection presents.

Archer Taylor, writing on the classification of riddles in the same publication, presented a similar device. Pointing out that riddles involve comparisons of "more or less everything in the physical world,"[6] he gave five broad categories for main divisions: (1) comparison to a living creature not identified as an animal or man, (2) comparison to an animal, (3) comparison to a man, (4) comparison to a plant, (5) comparison to a thing. Subdivision in the first sections was established on the basis of form and function; in the last section it was established on the basis of a series of arbitrarily designated qualities likely to apply to most objects that appear in riddles.

The Cheremis riddle, "One of my geese is four-nosed (pillow)," is classified as 2.2.4.1.2. Since the riddle involves a comparison to an animal, it is in a class beginning with 2. Since it applies to a definite kind (bird), it is in 2.2. Of the birds, geese are in the fourth category, hence 2.2.4. The riddle is the second variant of a group involving geese.

[5] Thomas Sebeok, ed., *Studies in Cheremis Folklore.* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, Folklore Series No. 6, 1952.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

This brief sampling is intended only to show that systematic arrangement has been applied to all forms of folklore for comparative studies. Incidentally it shows that an expandable decimal system analogous to library classification has the advantage of being easily understood and widely applicable.

The student folklorist

The folklore class, perhaps more than any other, offers the student an opportunity to make a valid contribution to the discipline he is studying. The bulk of many university collections has accumulated from field work done by students. If they take care to contribute unaltered, properly documented texts in the locally prescribed form, their work provides the raw material for subsequent classes to analyze. If the collecting student can make some initial analysis of what he brings in, he greatly enhances his learning experience.

Once the raw material has been put in proper manuscript form, the student should familiarize himself with the bibliographic aids at his disposal. If he has a legend or a tale, he should check the *Type-Index* and *Motif-Index* to see if he has traditional narrative elements familiar enough to appear there. If his search leads him to a published collection containing the same or similar material, his contribution should include a comparative note to that effect.

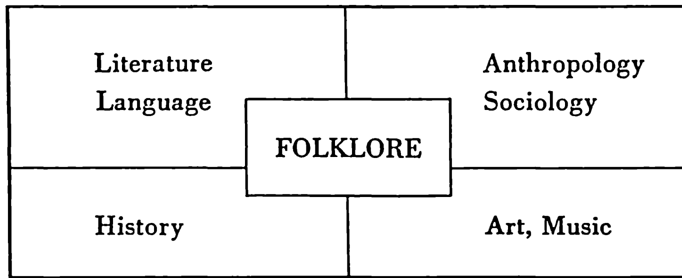
Using Tristram Coffin's *An Analytical Index to the Journal of American Folklore*,[7] the student can begin a search of the journals for scholarly articles which apply to his collectanea. He may also turn to Haywood's bibliography and the annual bibliography of *Southern Folklore Quarterly*. Through the documentation of books and articles, one source leads to another as long as library facilities hold out. The student folklorist is in for an interesting academic adventure if he hits upon a rich vein of folklore inquiry.

Conclusion

If studies in folklore were to focus only on the relics of the past, on the myths, tales, beliefs, and customs of our ancestors and their occasional survival into the present, the studies would be an adjunct to history. If studies in folklore were to focus only on elements of literature which could be related to oral traditions, the studies would be an adjunct to literary history. As has been demonstrated in the foregoing chapters, folklore

[7] Tristram P. Coffin, *An Analytical Index to the Journal of American Folklore*. Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series, No. 3, 1958.

studies do make their unique contributions to the materials and methods of literary and historical scholarship, also to anthropology and sociology. Some relationships can be suggested by this diagram:



The four corner blocks represent large academic areas with all their subdivisions. Each one extends into the central block representing traditional knowledge and skills learned by imitation. The literature specialist is familiar with some portions of folklore scholarship as they pertain to his interests and abilities; the historian thinks of folklore in terms of oral history; the anthropologist sees it as material from which he can abstract culture traits; the musicologist singles out traditional tunes for analysis. Each of the various specialists warps the definition of the subject to conform to his interests and skills, and none of them has reason to explore beyond the small area represented by the portion of the central block which extends into one of the four corner blocks.

Still another specialist sees the whole central block of folklore, but he sees it through a haze of superficial knowledge and self-interest. This is the popularizer, who retails his wares, crumbs of folklore dipped in the gravy of salesmanship, on records, in anthologies, and in public performances. The popularizer can create confusion instead of clarification when he aims at the children's market, either with affectations of cuteness or by playing up the fakelore of advertising and special pleading. Tristram Coffin, reviewing a book seemingly designed for profit instead of information, reported an opinion expressed by MacEdward Leach to the effect that "scholars should turn the word 'folklore' over to the trade publishers, the disc jockeys, and the antiquarians and then come up with a new word. . . ." (*JAF*, July-September, 1960).

The collection and analysis of folklore has a greater significance than that which derives from examination of survivals. The surviving elements from the past give us a focus for study of their equivalents in the present. The nation is still populated by the folk—more literate and mobile than their forebears, but still the folk. Hex signs on barns are on their way out, but amulets hang from rear-view mirrors of automobiles. Haunted

houses are still with us, but more immediate concern is directed toward "jinx" or "death" cars. Kissing games in the parlor are giving away to kissing games on the highway. The modern equivalent of the chimney-corner tale of the dragon-slaying hero could be the barroom shaggy-dog story. The legendary warriors with invincible swords have become legendary warriors in jet-propelled aircraft, and the invincible swords themselves have become mysterious death or distintegration rays. The Loch Ness monster has been crowded out of the newspapers by flying saucers. The myth of victory in war under the aegis of Jupiter gives way to the myth of perfectibility of man through the twin gods of Progress and Science.

Folklore studies in full perspective—ancient and modern, literary and historical; primitive and advanced, sociological and psychological—promise great rewards in the understanding of man and society. Theories and techniques of folklore have only begun to yield their full potential of knowledge.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Halpert, Herbert, "Folklore—Breadth versus Depth," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 71, no. 280 (April-June, 1958), pp. 97-103.

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O'Suilleabhain, Sean, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore.* Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland, Ltd., for the Folklore of Ireland Society, 1942.

Scarborough, Dorothy, *A Song-Catcher in Southern Mountains.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.

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Appendix

Contents

	Selection
The Slaves of Stonyford	A
The Giant Cannibal of Nimshew	B
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THE FOLLOWING SELECTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM THE AUTHORS' FILES TO ILLUSTRATE A VARIETY OF FOLKLORE DISCUSSED IN THE TEXT.

Local Legend

Selection A is not a direct transcription from tapes because the original tapes contain a rambling, digressive conversation from which the principal narrative was abstracted, originally for a television show. The version presented here is a synopsis of that narrative, in which the principal editing has been the deletion of visual references.

The student should observe that some collection data is given at the end of each selection. For selection A, all pertinent data is given except the name of the informant, the grandson of one of the captives, who did not give permission to publish his name.

The selection is a good example of the area in which the work of the folklorist overlaps with the work of the historian. The story is not history, in that it is not documented and has not been verified. It is a local legend, but subsequent investigation could prove it to be history, or investigation might prove the legend to

be partially history, colored by the imagination and indignation of the folk who preserve it in tradition.

This legend is an important social document because it gives a fresh point of view. Most modern citizens are familiar with some of the history and legend of California missions from the romantic, white pioneer point of view, or from history colored by modern tourist promotion. Here we see that phase of California history from the point of view of the people most profoundly affected by it: the displaced Indians, whose culture was permanently destroyed by the invaders.

Selection A
The Slaves of Stonyford

If one travels west out of Williams in California's Sacramento Valley, he will come to Elk Creek as he approaches the coastal mountain range. Passing through Elk Creek, the traveler continues up Stoney Creek to Stonyford, a hamlet which will not impress him much if he is traveling through. Unless this community is his destination, he is not likely to stop, though he may remark on the picturesque false front on an old blacksmith shop, an occasional log structure, or other evidence of pioneer life. The traveler will be unaware of an Indian rancheria, now nearly depopulated, hidden from the road by a screen of trees. He will be unaware of an old Indian burying ground, even though it is in his line of vision. He may remark on the grey-white streaks and encrustations on the banks at the side of the road as he approaches Stonyford, but unless he is extremely curious, he will not stop to taste the substance and find it to be salt deposited by brine springs seeping from the side of the hill.

The salt springs, the burying ground, the rancheria, and some citizens of Stonyford who trace their ancestry back to the inhabitants of the Indian village once on this site, combine to form a story which began taking shape when a folklore student and his instructor called on a resident to follow up a lead in their informant file. Several visits followed, and several reels of tape recorded the interviews. From these tape recordings this bit of previously unrecorded California history has been abstracted.

In the days before the coming of the white man, the village of the Che-e-voka prospered on Stoney Creek. Che-e-voka means *salt people.* The village got its name from its trade in the salt deposited on the hillside. The salt was easy to harvest. A woman could go to the deposit and fill a basket with slabs of salt in a few minutes. The monopoly could make unfriendly relations with Indians of other villages who wished to steal the salt, or it could make friendly relations with those who were willing to barter for it. Apparently, both kinds of relations developed, for the Cortina Indians were traditional enemies of the Che-e-voka; whereas the Bloody Rock people of the mountains were traditional friends. Some kind of balance of power developed, however, and the various villages were well established, carrying on their largely peaceful pursuits for generations until the

coming of the white man. With his coming, all patterns of ordinary life were violently disrupted.

Tradition has it that the first whites to come were some "Spaniards." Miguel and Nick Berryessa and Paolo Vallejo are still recalled by name. There were others. They swooped down on the village at dawn, rounded up the Indians, and herded them off like cattle. They took only the healthy young people, leaving behind the old, the infirm, and the nursing mothers. One young man who was widely known as a fast runner made a dash for freedom and managed to get away, but his wife was among the captives, so he followed as the Spaniards herded the Indians down Bear Valley.

The captives did not know where they were going, and after the first day's march, they no longer recognized landmarks, for they were not great travelers. They did know and remember the site of the camp at the end of the first day's march, approximately at the foot of Bear Valley, near what was to become the old Godfrey Ingham homestead. There the captors built three large campfires and arranged the male captives in circles, one for each fire. They tied the men, left leg to left leg, with McCartys (braided horsehair rope). The men were tied loosely, so that they could lie down and turn from side to side.

The captors killed a grizzly bear to feed the Indians. It was their first sample of this strange food, for they had grown up with a tabu against hunting the grizzly. That first night, Bush, the fast runner, came into camp, holding his bow before him as a token of surrender. He had decided to join his wife and friends as a captive.

The march continued for several days. The exact time it took has been lost from tradition, but one dramatic incident has been preserved. As the captives passed a marshy area with thick groves of willows and other trees, two couples lagged behind, then made a dash for cover. The Spaniards shot and killed them. No other Indians attempted to escape.

The destination was a mission. When they arrived, they were christened with Spanish (or Mexican) names, baptized, and taught civilized occupations. The men worked in the fields at agricultural tasks and learned building trades. The women learned domestic tasks. Though they learned a great deal, the captive Indians were not happy with their new life. Some made efforts to get away, but they were tracked down, returned to the mission, and punished. The standard punishment was flogging with leather straps. Only one couple managed to make good their escape, and their success led to their doom. Apparently they had managed to reach their old home area when they were overtaken by a fierce late spring blizzard in the mountains. They sought shelter in Red Rock Cave, where they froze to death. Some of their friends discovered their bodies and mourned for them.

Just how long the mission life lasted for the main group of captive Che-e-voka has not been retained in tradition. Eventually, however, they managed to escape in a body. There is the story that some of the men slipped out night after night to make tule canoes, keeping them hidden until the night of departure. There is the story of crossing a body of water at night, some paddling the tules, some swimming and hanging on.

On the long march back to their homeland, they traveled by night and hid by day to avoid detection. On one occasion they covered themselves with leaves in a grove of willows to hide from mounted men they presumed to be searchers. The men made bows and arrows to hunt small game for sustenance.

At some unnamed spot, the party divided, one group returning via the old captive trail up Bear Valley, the other returning via Sacramento Valley, past the site of Williams. This party had the misfortune of encountering a party of Cortina Indians, their traditional enemies. In the ensuing battle, several men were killed, but the Che-e-voka claimed the victory and continued their journey.

When they finally arrived at Stoney Creek, they found their old village deserted. The people who had not been captured, fearing another raid, had moved up into the mountains. However, the home-seekers knew about the probability of the mountain retreat and its likely location, so they took the mountain trail.

The Che-e-voka who had moved to the mountains had felt so insecure they always kept a lookout at the head of the trail. It was he who joyfully ran into camp, shouting the names of friends and relatives he had seen toiling wearily up the last leg of their long journey home.

Though their experience in the outer world had not been pleasant, the Indians did not discard their new names. They added them, rather, to the Indian names they already had. One example was *Mala-cho-cho*, meaning *Ashes-Quail-Top*. *Mala-cho-cho* had been christened *Thomas* at the mission. Still later in his life, when he had some association with white men, he became known simply as *Jim*. Other Spanish names which stayed on at the rancheria were Maria, San Diego, Julian, Guadalupe, Manuel, Malito, and Bonito.

The smattering of Spanish language brought back to the rancheria stayed on too, mingling with the native dialect of the Che-e-voka. Later, these two carried over a special local flavor to the English language as it ultimately predominated in their valley.

Those who suffered the indignity of slavery are now long dead, but their children and grandchildren have kept alive the memory of the Slaves of Stonyford.

Collected by Ray Rinehart and Kenneth Clarke at Stonyford, California in 1959 and 1960. This presentation is adapted from the script of a television narration made by Kenneth Clarke over KHSL-TV (Chico, California), February 27, 1960. The television script was abstracted from tape recordings of interviews.

North American Indian Narrative

Selections B, C, and D are directly transcribed from a tape recording of the narration of an elderly Eudawe Indian woman. The recording was made shortly before the informant's death. Ideally, this narrative would have been recorded at least fifty years earlier in her native language. English, however, was her best

medium of expression in her advanced years because speakers of her native tongue had died, leaving her with only rare opportunities to use her dialect of Maidu, the language spoken by a tribe once inhabiting a section of the Sacramento Valley in California.

Because she had resisted making recordings earlier, this one tape was her first and last mechanical recording. The recording was made by a young woman of the Michopdo village, one of the numerous villages in the upper Sacramento Valley. The Michopdo and the Eudawe had been neighboring villages before the area was settled by whites.

Observe that Selection B, "The Giant Cannibal of Nimshew," terminates in the remark that "it must be true" since the giant had been buried by the Nimshew trail. This suggests that the narrator knew of a landmark which had been explained as the giant's burial place. Nimshew is a place name in the Sierra foothills not far from the informant's childhood home.

Selection B is a legend. The Achilles heel motif (Z 311 Invulnerability except in one spot) is an element of special interest (see "American Indian Folklore" in Chapter 2).

Selection B
The Giant Cannibal of Nimshew

About the giant man, as far as I know, he lived at Nimshew. They didn't say how big, but he was a tall man. . . tall man . . . not so heavy-set, but tall. He killed a lot of people. He would be keep eating people. He come to that widow-woman's place, had two little girls. He come there in the evening, and they heard him coming. And that woman told the two little girls it was Giant Man, and she said, "When he come in, I'll make believe I'm going after water, and you children just pick right out with me and don't hang back."

When he come in he had bundle on his back and throwed it down, and he looked up and seen deer—venison—hanging up there, and he reached up and he pulled some down and roasted them on the fire. And he take them out and was eating.

Then the woman said, "I'm going after water; I'll be right back." And she grabbed up her little basket where she dipped water, and she start out, and the children start out with her. And he say, "Oh, she'll be back. Stay. Stay." And he want to grab them. But they just flew right out.

So soon as they got where they get water, she just dropped that basket there and they ran. They ran not too far—it was Indian village—not more than a mile, and they scream and she holler. And he was about catching up with that. And that woman scream.

Then the people heard her, and they got the bow and arrow and come on out to meet them. They know that the Giant Man because they warn about him already. They come out where they live and commence shooting at him all over, with bow and arrow—shoot him all over, and he just pull the arrow, and he just keep a-going.

And one man say, "Shoot him in the heel." And his heart was there . . . and he fell. And then they shoot him till he die.

And they buried him right there on the (Nimshew) trail. Seems like there were more giant men too. I guess that one they kill right there was Nimshew (name Wíctole). So this must be true . . . no story . . . I think it must be true. And so that's how they kill him and bury him on the trail.

The Etiological Tale

Selection C is probably truncated, a scrap of a longer pourquoi *tale, representing all the narrator could call up from her failing memory. That Thunder is personified suggests a mythological background not made clear in the tale. That the mosquito said, "Ma—," the beginning of the dialect word for "people," suggests that the tale might have had a play on the word, with a prolonged "m" sound to imitate the mosquito. The etiological tale is discussed in Chapter 2.*

Selection C
How Mosquito Kept Thunder from Killing Men

They say long time ago Mosquito bite people and take the blood to Thunder. And Thunder, he liked that blood. He say, "Where'd you get this blood—so good?" (There were two mosquitoes.)

And he was going to say "person," you know, "Maidu," he was going to say (Indian for "person"), "Maidu."

Say "Ma—," and that's far as he got. The other one nudged him.

He say, "What you say? What you say?" Thunder wanted to know it. But no, far as he went. He never tell it. If he had told, Thunder would kill all the people.

That far as I know about that.

The Myth

Selection D is an extremely interesting example of syncretism, *a merging of two religious concepts. The informant had been subjected to Christian missionary teaching only after her childhood indoctrination into aboriginal mythological concepts. Rather than reject her deeply rooted native concepts, she blended them with her Christian beliefs. She habitually spoke of people in "Bible times" in the same context with Indians of "old times," equating their spiritual qualities and wisdom. Although the Devil role is played by Coyote in Maidu mythology, this informant preferred to avoid reference to Coyote, apparently because the animal figure was difficult to rationalize into her blend of concepts.*

This selection gives us examples of ethnological data which may be abstracted from folk narrative The discussion of mourning and the burning ceremony, though

not detailed, is accurate. It is not clear from this narrative whether the episode of the plant (Equisetum?) *turning into a rattlesnake is the myth of the origin of the species or not. Myth is discussed in Chapter 2. Note that the wagering between Devil and God has a parallel in the* Old Testament book of Job.

Selection D
How Devil Made People Die

Devil, he was foolish man. Tell lies and try to trip people and everything. That was his duty. . . . God speaks right to your heart. You don't hear that *sound* in here; it comes right to your heart. Indians was spiritual in them times. They *know*, just like these white people in Bible times know—they're spiritual. And if they Christian today, they're spiritual. Lots of people don't believe that, but that's really true. . . . And they believe in prayer—*huchslawe*, they call it. . . . God made it so people not die when they get old . . . just jump in the pond. He made the pond already, one above Oroville and one way up somewhere near Susanville, and Indians know where they are, too. They got a name for all them ponds, different places. He made them ponds already, to jump in there when people get old. Pretty soon you see bubble come up, bubble come up, and he come out young. That's the way God want to have it, but old Devil, he say, "No, that won't be good. That won't be no fun in that," he say. "Let them be; let them die, and people can mourn; people can cry. And widow-women will sing cry songs. And they will mourn so many years and then call up a burning time. Burning time to get out of mourn."

They burn what they make for burning, baskets, maybe deer hide, clothes. . . . They know the dead won't get it, but just to satisfy themselves, then they get out of mourn.

But old Devil won't have it that way, say, "No, that won't be no fun in that. Let them die. Then we call up a burning time. They have all kinds of fun—run a race, and they'll play hand games and all kinds of games, and have a good time. Plenty to eat and lot of people come at that burning time." So he stopped that.

So, why did God—I always say—why did God believe Devil? If he going to have it that way, why don't he go ahead and have it that way? . . . Acorn tree, he said, would have apple, and people just have apple and eat. And Devil say, "No, just give them acorn on that; don't let them have apple." So that apple turn into oak ball. That was going to be apple, but Devil won't have it that way, said it would be too easy for people, so that turn into oak ball. I hear old people say that. . . .

And God said all right, and he made his son and Devil's son run a race. And Devil's son was ahead of God's son, was way ahead of him. And Iaponi (that's God) said, he pulled up a giant. . . . I don't know what white people call that. You know . . . grow along the slough, the pretty kind of jointy . . . rough like sandpaper, joint all like that. Right up on end like a rattlesnake tail. And

he pulled one up and he prayed, and he shot it. And that thing turned right into rattlesnake. Coiled up, and Devil's boy come down, and it bit him. He fall right down. . . .

So people went up to see and they saw rattlesnake coiled up there, and say, "That's the one that bit him, and he's dead."

And Devil, he come to God and he begged and begged, and said, "Let's have it like you had it. Make my boy come to." Say, "I know you can make my boy come to." See how he know. God can make the boy come to?

God say, "No, that's the way you want it. Bury him." . . . Say, "Bury him. He's dead. You want it that way, so you can call up a burning time."

Old Devil, he just begged and begged. So he went and got yellow-hammer and bearhide and beads and everything. And he just put that dead body on there. And they say them times they make him round, you know, and dig a hole like digging a well, round, and they have rope, . . . you know, Indians make good rope. . . .

And Devil say, "How I'm going to see my boy?" And he say, "You'll see him some day when you die."

Collected by Miss Thelma Wilson, Chico, California.

Three narratives abstracted from a tape recording of an interview with Mrs. Emma Cooper, Chico, California, 1958.

The Tall Tale

Selection E is a tall tale which blends two European tale types: Type 1881, The Man Carried Through the Air by Geese; and Type 1900, How the Man Came out of a Tree Stump. This same combination has appeared in literature. The informant seemed sincere in his belief that he had "created" the tale from his own imagination. An explanation could be that he had heard the tale so early in life that he had forgotten the circumstances. This is a fairly typical tall-tale rendition in that the narrator used first-person. The tall tale is one of the folk narrative forms discussed in Chapter 2.

Selection E
The "Champion Liar" of Colusa County Tells His Favorite Story

Once I lived up at Stonyford in a little white house next to the Catholic church. I had four children then, and I was having a hard time making a living, only getting a dollar and a half a day then, you know. So I said to myself, "Charlie, you got to do something, that's all, or the family's going to starve to death."

So I went out and bought two hundred turkey hens and nine toms, and that year I hatched off the most wonderful hatch of turkeys you ever saw—twenty-one birds to a hen. That's over a hundred percent increase.

Well, I raised them birds up till they was half growed, and then I went over to Colusa and rented a stubble field—barley and wheat stubble. Then I put up a tent there and put my turkeys out on the stubble. But I didn't have a gun or anything else to do with. There was a big pond there, a lake, I guess, where it had washed out of the river. And every day thousands of geese—thousands of them—come in there, just waiting for me to get them. I sure wanted some of them geese bad to send up on the stage for my folks; I knew my kids were just dying to get some of them geese, but I didn't have a gun.

So one day I was thinking about it, and I thought I'd just try this little scheme on them geese. So I went out and stepped around the lake—clear around it up to an old dead tree, you know. Then I went to town and bought me a rope long enough to go clear around that lake. So then I stretched that rope around the lake right up to the tree and waited for them geese to light.

Pretty soon here they come, thousands of geese, and set down right on the water. And I pulled up on that old rope and caught them all by the legs. And "Boy," I thought, "I got 'em all now." But I had forgot to tie the rope to the tree, and the first thing I know, them geese started to fly away, and I was seventeen feet up in the air, just hanging on to that rope. I just hung on, and they got way up in the air, circled three or four times, and headed straight for Stonyford. Yes, Sir.

"Now," I said to myself, "I wonder where they're going now. Ah! they're headed for that big dam at Stonyford, and they're going to drown me." Well, brother, they just flew right over that dam and kept on going, just went straight on. And then I said to myself, "I'll bet they're going to take me on out to the ocean—that's what they're going to do, Charlie; they're going to drown you in the ocean."

Well, them geese went right over my house. I looked down and there was my kids playing out in the yard. A couple of them got in a fight, and my wife come out and gave them a paddling. That made me mad, but I thought about the geese for the kids, so I climbed right up that rope, jerked out seven geese, wrung their heads off, and throwed them down to the kids. I said, "You'll have something to eat anyway. Goodbye," I said, "You'll never see Daddy again; he's being carried off to the ocean to be drowned."

Them geese was headed straight for Snow Mountain. They flew over that little range of hills first, and there was old Fouts Springs, you know, and there was old Wagstaff, the cook, out in the yard. And I hollered, "Goodbye, Wag, You're never going to see old Charlie no more. He's going to be drowned in the ocean."

Well, we went right over the top of Snow Mountain, 7,000 feet high. "Well," I said, "I hope this rope will reach the ground here." But it wouldn't reach. I was still seventy-five feet up in the air. Pretty soon I seen something coming at me that looked like a stovepipe or something, and pretty soon I could see it

was a big pine tree standing up there with its top broke out. And I'm telling you, when we went by there, I let go that rope and landed right in that tree. Wow! That tree was holler all the way down, and I went clear to the bottom. Like to tore off all my clothes. There I was, down in the bottom of the tree, looking way up there at that little round hole at the top, wondering how I was ever going to get out.

So then I felt in my pocket, and there was my old pocket knife. See? I got it right here, and it's got a big blade. And I said, "Charlie, you're going to wear this blade all the way out before you ever cut your way out of this tree. You'll starve to death before you get out." Then something touched my leg. Wow! Something alive in there. I reached down real careful, and my hand touched fur. Well, some kind of animal. It was so dark I couldn't see, so I reached in my pocket and got out a match and lit it. There was two little bear cubs, cutest things I ever saw—not over this long. "Yeah," I said to myself, "I'll live several days on them cubs while I cut my way out of here." So then I just sat down and got a cub on each knee, and I was having lots of fun with those cub bears.

Well, after I sat there about thirty minutes, something hit me on the head, and it got awful dark in there. I looked up at that hole, and there was the old mother bear, backing down the tree. "Charlie," I said, "you're a goner now for sure. That old mother will feed you to these cubs instead of you eating them." When she got down close to me, I thought of that knife, so I got it out and opened it. I stood there waiting for her, and I said, "Listen, Old Sweetheart, when you get down here, you're going to get in trouble." When she got down, I just grabbed her hind leg, and I soused that knife into her. Wow! She took off right up that tree, and me hanging on. When she got almost to the top, she started slipping back, but I soused her again, and she went right out over the top. I grabbed the top of the tree and soused her again, and she let all holds loose, fell all the way down, and rolled down the hill sixty yards or more.

Well, I come down that tree as fast as I could, figuring she would come to pretty soon. And she did, when I got ten or fifteen feet from the ground. Here she comes up the hill after me. I ducked around the tree, me on one side and her on the other. And we ducked around for a while, but pretty soon she came at me, and I kicked her in the chest—gave her a good jar and knocked her down. Well, she rolled down the hill a few rods, and I took off down that steep mountain. Man! I was a fast runner—I got another story about how I could run—but that old mama was right behind me, and I could feel her breath every jump. When she was just about to get me, I seen a big rock. I ducked behind it quick as I could, and she slid right on past. There was a little canyon right there, and I took off down the canyon hard as I could. Then I went on down to Fouts Springs and had supper with Old Wagstaff, the cook there. After that I went and stayed all night with the folks. And then I went back to camp. It took me two days to round up all them turkeys. They was scattered all over the country.

Collected by Mary and Kenneth Clarke.
Transcribed from a tape recording taken from Mr. Charles Hanes, Colusa, California, 1958.

For the storyteller's close adherence to his story under different circumstances, see the text of the same story in "Another Note on Münchausen Motifs," JAF, April-June, 1961.

The Cante-Fable

Selections F, G, and G-1 have been transcribed from tape recordings of interviews with Nigerian college students in the United States. F and G are tales, both recalled from oral tradition. The best examples of these tales would be in the native language, but for our purposes, they are better as they are translated by the narrators themselves, both of whom spoke good English. The magic song in Selection F and the song of the bones in Selection G are only two of the several songs volunteered by these informants. Judging by their performances, they favored the cante-fable *form. For an interesting puzzle in relationships, the student should examine the principal motifs of "Singing Bones" and compare them with the motifs of the ballad "The Twa Sisters" (Child No. 10). The Cante-Fable is discussed in Chapter 3. Magic song (charm) is discussed in Chapter 4.*

Selection F
Right Is Might

Once upon a time there were two small villages situated very close together. The chief of one of the villages was always demanding offerings from the other one. At one time, the dwellers of the second village refused to give the offering. Then the chief of the first village used his power to take their goats and sheep by force.

There was a little boy in this town who was tired of this atrocity. He called the members of his village together and asked them to decide what they intended to do. Before this time, the head of the second village gave them an ultimatum that if they did not give the offering within seven days, he would send his men to destroy the village; this young man sent a note to the chief of the second village demanding that he should send some of his men to fight one of their villagers to prove who is more powerful. To this, the head of the second village agreed, knowing fully well that his men were more powerful than the dwellers of the second village.

This story was about right is might. That is, when you have the right, you are always right and mighty. There was a little boy called Asiki. He volunteered to fight the men sent by the head of the second village, trusting that what he is

doing is right. His mother refused to let him go and fight because he was a young man of about seventeen years of age. But Asiki, trusting that he was right, and that he would be supported by the fact that he was right, volunteered to fight.

Now, this song: When they were fighting, the mother was standing in the midst of the mob. So the mother started to sing:

Asiki, ma jo ija le ja,
Ko pa ra ko fida ija le ja
Ko ye ge le bo ija le ja
Aja wo le terinkan, ija le ja
Asiki, ma jo ija le ja.

A - si-ki ma - jo i - ja-le -

ja Ko pa ra ko fi - da i - ja - le -

ja Ko ye - ge le____ bo - i-

ja le - ja A - ja wo

le te - rin-kan-i - ja-le - ja

This song was giving the boy a moral support, and consequently, the boy defeated each and every one of the men sent by the chief of the second village. And since that time, Asiki's village was freed from the terror of the powerful chief.

The song translated into English says this: "Fight on, Asiki. The gods of our land will help you because what you are doing is right."

Collected by Kenneth Clarke.
Collected from Adeyemi Kuyoro, a native of Ijebu Province, West Nigeria, during his stay in Bloomington, Indiana, 1957. Tale learned in native dialect during the informant's boyhood in Nigeria.

Selection G is one of the many variants of Tale Type 780, The Singing Bone. This tale has nearly world-wide distribution. The principal motif (E 632.1, Speaking bones of murdered person reveal murder) is found in both story and song. The relationship of African and North American folklore is discussed in Chapter 2.

Selection G
Singing Bones

Once upon a time there was a king who had two sons. When he became old and he died, the people of the city were looking for who should become the king of the town. These two sons are supposed to be the next heir to this throne. In the whole city there were some people who were interested in the young one, and there were some who were interested in the elderly one. The whole city agreed that the only thing they could do to decide who should be the king of the city was to send these two sons to the forest, and to bring a fine flower. The man who brings the best flower or the most beautiful flower will be the king of the city. This was announced to these two sons. They both went into the forest. Luckily for the young one, he found the most beautiful flower. The elderly brother was very much unfortunate, so much so that he couldn't get any flower at all.

When they were both returning, they met to compare their flowers. When the brother seen this young one having the most beautiful flower, he killed him and took his flower home. When he got to the city, he showed his flower to the people, and everybody was interested in the flower, but a group of people were waiting for the young one to come back because they felt that this young one will likely bring the better flower. Well, unfortunately, this young one never came back again. Eventually, this elderly brother was made the king of the city.

One day, a hunter went into the forest—this happened now after three years—he found a bone on the ground, and as he saw the whole skeleton of the body, he was interested, and then touched one of the bones. The next thing that happened, to his surprise, was that this bone began to sing. Now, the bone began to sing and say,

Egungun mi, egungun mi
Egungun mi lo nfon
Egbon mi pa'me s'oko
Omu ododo mi lo
Egungun mi, egungun mi
Egungun mi lo nfon

(My bone, my bone,
My brother killed me in the field
And took my flower away.
My bone, my bone, my bone.)[1]

E - gun - gun mi, E - gun - gun mi, E-
gun - gun mi lo nfon Eg - bon mi pa'
mi s'o ko O' mu o-do - do mi
lo E - gun - gun mi, E-
gun - gun mi, E - gun - gun mi lo nfon.

This hunter, on hearing this bone singing like this, took it and went back to the city because he was so much amazed. He called the people of the city together and then brought this matter to their hearing—of what he had found in the forest. He again touched this bone, and the bone began to sing again. The whole city were amazed. And then, knowing fully well that this man on the throne was not the rightful owner of the throne—but the young one, now eventually, the whole city got together and dethroned him out of the city.

Collected by Kenneth Clarke.
Collected from James Ogunsanya, a native of Ijebu, West Nigeria, during his stay in Bloomington, Indiana, 1957. Tale learned in native dialect during the informant's boyhood in Nigeria.

[1] The informant states that this song makes an allusion to a bone whistle (understood). Hence, the usurper is playing the dead man's tune.

Musical notation by Mrs. Margaret Vance, Chico State College: Chico, California.

Selection G-1 contains only the Ibo song-equivalent for the one found in Selection G. There is no essential difference in the singing bone tale in Ibo and Yoruba as it is known by these informants.

Selection G-1
Singing Bones, No. 2

Mrs. Samiri Nzeribe, an Ibo-speaking Nigerian informant, also tells the singing bone story, which differs in no important detail from the story told by Mr. Ogunsanya. The song, however, is different both in text and tune:

Bonu me onye nta
Bonu me onye nta
Na nwa-nnem gbulum na ime ofea
Welu flower'm nabaa
Na nwa-nnem gbulum na ime ofea
Welu flower'm naba.

Bonu me on - ye nta Bonu me on - ye nta

Na nwa nnem o gbu - lum na ime ofea We - lu

flow - er'm na - baa Na nwa nnem o

gbu-lum na ime ofea We- lu flow-er'm na - ba

Collected by Kenneth Clarke.
Collected from Samiri Nzeribi, a native of Owerri Province, Eastern Nigeria (Ibo), during her visit in Chico, California, 1957. Tale and song learned in native dialect in Awo-Omamma.

Musical notation by Mrs. Margaret Vance, Chico State College: Chico, California.

Folk Speech

Selection H is a small abstract from a Ph.D. dissertation which deals with the folklore of the Cumberlands. The study compares the original folk material with the folklore of the same area as it appears in the fiction of a modern American author, Jesse Stuart. The material in this selection is a sampling of the folk speech of Jesse Stuart's region. Vocabulary and other verbal lore are discussed in Chapter 4.

Selection H
Folk Idiom in the Cumberlands

Primitive living and working conditions have contributed many characteristics to the vocabulary of hill people of the Cumberlands. A few from home life include the *dabblin' pan,* or wash pan; the *drinking gourd,* or *gourd dipper,* hanging over the water-bucket or at the *well-gum* (a hollowed-out log serving as a well-box); the *milk gap,* or enclosure near the barn, to which the cows were brought for milking; the *gritter,* a crude home-made grater for grating the not-quite-hard corn to make *gritted bread;* a *capper* of corn (popper); *sallet greens* gathered in the spring for food. Most houses had *puncheon floors* (split logs) and *dog-trot* or *entry* as a passageway between the two sections of the structure; and a *scuttle-hole* to the loft where the children slept. In the nearby *chip yard* wood was chopped for the open fireplace, cookstove, and the big iron kettle outdoors in which home-made lye soap whitened the family wash. *Bed ticks* (home-made mattresses) were filled with broom sage, corn shucks, straw, or feathers, according to the family resources.

The most primitive dwelling and *house plunder* (furnishings) were those of the *squatters* and tenant farmers. The poor and the well-to-do had their *gin-work* (chores) to do. *Ginnin'* and *ginnin' around* could also mean moving from one place to another, doing whatever odd jobs were available. Some unsettled persons living in this way carried their few belongings across the shoulders in a *turkey,* or bundle of clothing tied to an axe handle. This term probably derived from timber-cutting days.

Implements used in the cane, corn, and *terbacker patchin'* were often crude: heavy *bush blades, briar scythes, one-eyed sprouting hoes* (the *darb* for cutting

sprouts) with home-made handles came into action in the ever-recurring fight to reclaim the soil from undergrowth. When the sprouts had been windrowed up the hill, everyone, including the *women folks,* helped *burn off the newground,* which the hill farmers considered especially fertile crop land. Next the mule-drawn *cutter plows* tore out the stumps and the big *bull-tongue plows* broke the soil for planting. Most farmers *planted in the signs,* that is, according to the signs of the zodiac and the phases of the moon as dictated by family or folk tradition and by the almanac. As the crops grew, they *bore down on their hoe handles* and *made that hickory handle bend* until they had *murdered the weeds* and *got the crops laid by* (hoed or plowed for the last time), leaving the fields so clean that *a crow would have had to carry his grub across them.* They worked until they felt *as holler as gourds* and *as thirsty as a dry goose.* When a hill boy could *stand on the head of his shadder,* he knew it was *time for beans.* Only the lazy farmer ever had to *snake his corn* (take a stick and drive the snakes out of the weeds); and only the rare weakling ever *white-eyed* on the job (gave up and deserted because of exhaustion). *It takes a strong back and a weak mind to make a crop in the hills,* the men sometimes said; *but the smell of cornfields gets in your craw.*

Drought could dwarf a crop to *bumblebee corn,* so stinted that a *bumblebee sucking the tassels would drag his starn-end on the ground.* Some land was so worthless that *it wouldn't sprout black-eyed peas.* A rainstorm could wash out *gully ditches big enough to bury a mule in.* But if the farmer *got a season,* the *awfullest* corn or *terbacker* would *come poppin' out'n the ground* and he would harvest a *gollywhopper of a crop.*

Abstracted from *The Folklore of the Cumberlands as Reflected in the Writings of Jesse Stuart,* by Mary Washington Clarke, Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Folk Medicine

Selection I is a sampling of the folklore of one informant. She is a highly educated, capable woman now living in a Western urban setting, yet she enjoys the memories of her folk origins and relishes the speech of the mountains. Folk medicine is discussed in Chapter 4.

Selection I
A Woman from the Ozarks Writes Her Pharmacopoeia

1. Pole cat oil applied generously to the neck and covered by a woolen cloth prevents croup.

2. Senna tea is a good cathartic, blood thinner, and is good for sallow skin, pimples, and warts.

3. Sassafras tea is a must each spring to thin heavy, tired blood.

4. A round of calomel (tiny white pills) taken for three days during which time no food may be eaten because it would cause the teeth to fall out—this is a *must* cathartic for spring to get ready for the coming summer and in the fall to get ready for the coming winter.

5. Black draught is an excellent purgative, especially for summer.

6. Smoke life-everlasting to cure catarrh.

7. Smoke mullein for a stopped-up nose.

8. Smoke crushed coffee beans for a sore throat.

9. For an insect bite or sting make a poultice of mustard greens, dried and then boiled for eight hours. Pour the liquid over stale bread and apply to the bite.

10. For inflammation of feet, legs, hands, or arms, make a poultice of chicken intestines. Keep the poultice warm for faster results.

11. For snake bites take one quart of blackberry brandy within an hour after the bite has occurred. Apply a mustard poultice, and kill the snake before sundown.

12. To cure morning sickness eat big helpings of salad. Combine poke, dock, lamb's quarter, dandelion leaves, and wild onions. Boil for three hours and eat with vinegar and corn bread.

13. For bloody flux, swallow an Indian penny. Purge with senna tea or Black Draught. Double the dose if the penny doesn't pass soon after the first dose has been taken.

14. Dip snuff to prevent rheumatism. Force bee stings to cure it. The worse the rheumatism the more bee stings. Bee stings around the face and neck are more potent than on feet and legs.

15. Asafoetida as a thick grease put in a bag (Bull Durham sack is best) and worn around the neck inside of clothing wards off any catching disease.

16. Swab the inside of a sore throat with equal parts of coal oil and turpentine. Apply it with the soft end of a turkey feather, which will go deep down the throat real easy.

Submitted by Mrs. Vonnie Eastham, Chico, California, 1959.

Animal Lore

Selection J reveals how an educated, observant person who has an opportunity to observe the folk beliefs and the natural phenomena which give rise to them may give a rational explanation for what seems an absurdity to the casual observer. Beliefs are discussed in Chapter 4.

Selection J
Lucian Jones Explains the Hoop Snake

You know, I've thought a lot about that hoop-snake yarn so many of the folks around here tell—and believe, too! Some people swear up and down they've seen a snake make up a hoop and roll itself down a hill.

As much as I've been in these woods around here, I've never seen a snake make a hoop and roll itself, and I know there's no snake with a spike in the end of its tail. But I'll tell you what I *have* seen, lots of times. I've seen a blue racer hump himself so fast going down a hill you'd have to look twice to make sure he wasn't a hoop—looks for all the world like a hoop rolling and bouncing along, the way one throws himself up in humps when he's really in a hurry.

It wouldn't take much imagination to see a hoop, but it might take a little more to see the spike in that lightning-fast flick of the end of his tail. I believe a lot of those yarns about snakes have come from what people really saw—or thought they saw.

Collected by Mary Washington Clarke, December, 1950, in East Lynn, West Virginia.
Collected from Lucian Jones, a life-long resident of Wayne County, West Virginia. Presented originally as a portion of a folklore seminar report, University of Pennsylvania, 1950.

Folklore in the News

Selection K has been drawn from a file of clippings. The reasons for choosing this newspaper clipping are its brevity and its currency. Students looking for items of this kind will find it relatively easy to build up a file of folklore in the news. Magic and witchcraft are discussed in Chapter 4.

Selection K
Trying to Break Voodoo Hex, Man Kills His Former Boss

A federal grand jury brought a formal murder charge Tuesday night against Ernest G. Walstrom Jr., who admitted firing six bullets into his former boss to break a voodoo hex.

Walstrom, 46, Sacramento, was charged with the fatal shooting of Alex Edwards, 51, in a housing area at the Sierra Ordnance Depot in Herlong, California.

Walstrom told police he and Edwards got in a fight about two years ago when they were working together at the depot. The Sacramento man said Edwards twisted his neck, thereby putting a voodoo hex on him.

The suspect said he quit his job recently and moved to Sacramento, but he was unable to rid himself of the hex. He said people laughed when he told them about it.

Walstrom said he began hearing voodoo drums under his window at night and decided that the only way to escape the hex was to kill Edwards.

He drove along Herlong Monday, confronted Edwards with a gun and reminded him of the voodoo hex.

Edwards dodged behind a parked car and managed to elude Walstrom for a few moments, but Walstrom clambered to the top of the vehicle and emptied the gun into his victim.

A federal grand jury acted in the case, because the shooting occurred on a federal reservation.

News item, Ely (Nevada) *Daily Times,*
October 11, 1961.

Ancient Medicinal Plants

Section L is from a National Geographic News Bulletin. It underscores the suggestions in Chapter 1 that folklore is not made up of popular fallacies. It is, rather, the accumulated wisdom and skills of a people. The accumulation persists in tradition, perpetuating both sound observation and error.

Selection L
Scientists Take a New Look at Ancient Medicinal Plants

Wahoo bark may be on the way out, but snakeroot and other old remedies are coming into their own as medicines.

Wahoo bark, once widely used to stimulate the liver, has waned in popularity. A species of snakeroot *(Rauwolfia serpentina),* however, is increasingly in demand as a source of tranquilizing drugs.

For centuries medicine men in India prescribed snakeroot for emotional disturbances, the National Geographic Society reports. But the root did not come to the attention of Western chemists until about 10 years ago when their tests showed it contains reserpine, an effective sedative.

Search for simples

The success of snakeroot has aroused new interest in medicinal plants, or simples, and touched off a wide search for them. Most folk remedies have proved largely useless; many are dangerous. Others, however, are beneficial.

In the past decade, the value of drugs produced from plants has risen from about $50,000,000 a year to $250,000,000. The major drug companies are inclined to listen to the elderly Blue Ridge Mountain herbalist who said, " 'Tain't nothin' grows ain't good for something."

Pharmaceutical firms send scouts to the jungles of Africa, South America, India—and to the hills of Kentucky. They talk shop with medicine men and herbalists, and look for promising plants.

The Mexican yam is an important find. The tuber is a source of diosgenin, which yields cortisone as well as other hormones and steroids used in treating rheumatic diseases and some forms of cancer.

African natives long have used willow bark tea to relieve the pain of rheumatism. They claim that the graceful, flexible willow transfers its attributes to the stiff joints of the patient. Physicians scoffed until they found salicin, a pain-killing drug, in the bark.

Africans also treat rheumatism with meadow saffron. The British find it valuable for gout, an affliction more common in England than Africa.

As long ago as 5,000 years, Chinese doctors dispensed *ma huang,* an herbal drug containing ephedrine, now prescribed in combatting asthma and hay fever.

Indian druggists

The Collahuaya Indians of South America are known as the "druggists of the Amazon." They make excellent cough medicine from certain tree barks, an invigorating tonic from sarsaparilla roots, and a powerful poison, curare, from plants of the Strychnos family. Curare is widely used as a muscle relaxer.

While herb hunters concentrate on the profusion of plants in tropical regions, they do not ignore the temperate zones. Foxglove tea, for example, was recommended for weak hearts in Wales long before chemists discovered digitalis, a heart stimulant, in leaves of the plant.

Plant detectives read medieval herbals for clues to old remedies that may actually be useful. Renaissance herbalists recommended, among other things, marsh marigolds for toothache; French lavender for headache, apoplexy, and "falling sicknesse"; juice of lily root for snake bite; onion juice for baldness and burns.

Modern drug researchers may even be able to verify that European cucumber soup is, as one herbalist claimed, a cure for "red and fierie noses."

Reprinted from the National Geographic News Bulletin *released on February 10, 1961, written by Paul Sampson.*

Some recordings of interest to the folklore student

THESE ARE a few of the hundreds of available recordings recommended for their intrinsic entertainment values, variety, and authenticity.

Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads. Library of Congress, AAFS L3. This collection is listed in the catalogue *Folk Music* issued by the Library of Congress (*See* Bibliography). The contents of the record reflect the importance of the Negro contribution to American folklore.

Anglo-American Shanties, Lyric Songs, Dance Tunes, and Spirituals. Library of Congress, AAFS L2. The contents of this record may be contrasted with the contents of the Afro-American selections as an aid in identification of the English heritage persisting in a new nation.

Animal Tales Told in the Gullah Dialect. Library of Congress, AAFS L44. This record illustrates the blending of African narrative tradition with the new language and environment of the narrators.

The Ballad Record. Riverside RLP 12-601. This record was edited by a competent folklore scholar to illustrate some of the texts in *The Ballad Book* (*See* Bibliography).

Jack Tales. Library of Congress, AAFS L47. The tradition of "Jack Tales" is illustrated in *American Folk Tales and Songs* (*See* Bibliography). This Library of Congress record is a woman's narration of the tales as she recalled them from childhood environment. The record is a refreshing example of the art of oral narrative.

Folk Songs of Four Continents. Folkways, FW 6911. This record contains songs from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Leadbelly's Last Sessions. Folkways, FP 2941. Leadbelly was one of the great Lomax discoveries. His vigorous, authentic rendition of folksong should be sampled by every student of the folk arts.

The Unfortunate Rake. Folkways, FS 3805. Arranged by the editor of *The Ballad Record, The Unfortunate Rake* presents a short history of an Anglo-American ballad as it is traced back to its origins.

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