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# Oral Literature and »Pučka književnost«: Toward a Generic Description of Medieval Spanish and Other Narrative Traditions

Richard M. Dorson in his introduction to a highly useful and long needed collection edited by Felix J. Oinas of 15 introductory essays covering European, Asian, and African traditions of extended folk narrative and related forms indicates general agreement among experts regarding the existence of ancient and medieval oral traditions which were related to the extant texts.<sup>1</sup> The major problem, he adds, is the precise relation between such oral traditions and the works we possess. In my opinion, the most stimulating and extensive work on any one tradition addressing itself to that question is the research on the medieval Spanish epic by scholars in Great Britain and Ireland, which I have discussed at some length elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Such attempts constitute the best models

<sup>1</sup> Heroic Epic and Saga (Bloomington and London, 1978), p. 2. I use the term "folk narrative" throughout the present essay rather than "oral narrative" or "traditional narrative" in order to minimize possible misunderstanding in the context of a discussion dealing with different theoretical positions such as the Parry-Lord oral theory and Menéndez Pidal's neotraditionalism, keeping in mind, however, Lord's and Bošković-Stulli's remark in that regard — Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York, 1965), pp. 6–7, originally vol. 24 of *Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), and Maja Bošković-Stulli, "O pojmovima usmena i pučka književnost i njihovim nazivima", *Umjetnost riječi*, 17 (1973), 171–173, 252.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion of A. D. Deyermond, M. Chaplin, and K. Adams in my "Hispanic and South Slavic Traditional Narrative Poetry and Related Forms: A Survey of Comparative Studies (1824–1977)". Albert Bates Lord Festschrift, ed. John Miles Foley (forthcoming); also my "Repetition and Aesthetic Function in the Poema de mio Cid and South Slavic Oral and Literary Epic", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* (forthcoming). By "medieval Spanish epic" I refer to the Poema de mio Cid and the Mocedades de Rodrigo, the two most extensive versified epic texts that we possess in Old Spanish.

since they are based on close investigation of South Slavic authentic folk narrative texts either in translation, for the study of motifs and narrative organization, or in the original, for such microstructural aspects as repetitive diction. Through such empirically oriented studies we can proceed more confidently from the realm of possibility toward the most probable hypotheses regarding this question.

The South Slavic context provides us not only with authentic folk narrative materials and related forms but also with a detailed description of the oral poesis of epic proper (Parry-Lord) as well as with a sound theoretical system for viewing Spanish and other Western European medieval literatures in a new light (Maja Bošković-Stulli).<sup>3</sup> The object of the present essay is to construct a generic framework incorporating primarily the Parry-Lord findings and the Bošković-Stulli model in an attempt to describe versified narrative more precisely. Although special attention will be paid to the medieval Spanish epic, especially for the reasons mentioned above, the model is proposed as a tentative framework for versified narrative generally, a framework which is subject to modification as we learn more about the poetics of various language traditions.

Generally the problem of the relation between oral tradition and the extant medieval Spanish epics has been discussed from too limited a perspective, namely, the circumstances of composition and transmission — "improvisational", "memorial", and "written".<sup>4</sup> Recently Albert Lord has emphasized the crucial point that the mentality or attitude of the composer toward his or her materials must be duly taken into consideration in order to avoid the automatic identification of non-written composition with the Parry-Lord notion of oral composition ("improvisation").<sup>5</sup> Underlying this position is Lord's thesis that the composer of versified narrative makes use of either the oral mentality or the mentality of written composition but does not employ both mentalities in the production of a particular work. A given product, then, will reflect either the poetics of the oral mentality or that of the written mentality. The distinctive features of the latter can, of course, include some features characteristic of the oral style (*na narodnu*), but the mentality behind such productions is substantially different, that is, it is no longer totally bound by the oral poetics as the oral mentality is. Thus Lord has

<sup>3</sup> Lord, *The Singer*; Maja Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena književnost u sklopu povijesti hrvatske književnosti", *Usmena književnost*, ed. Maja Bošković-Stulli (Zagreb, 1971), pp. 54-58, originally in *Umjetnost riječi*, 11 (1967), 257-260; same, "Uz dva članka o usmenoj književnosti", *Umjetnost riječi*, 16 (1972), 205-206; same, "O pojmovima", pp. 149-184, 237-260, esp. 184 (including German summary).

<sup>4</sup> See summary of possibilities in Charles B. Faulhaber, "Neo-traditionalism, Formulaism, Individualism, and Recent Studies on the Spanish Epic", *Romance Philology*, 30 (1976), p. 97 and n. 53; furthermore, regarding the transmission of different versions of the same epic, such distinctions fail to account for the version transmitted by writing and emended to some extent by a poet-copyist, which may be difficult to distinguish from a memorially transmitted version, a point which Faulhaber overlooks (p. 98) and which weakens the arguments presented in Alan Jabbour, "Memorial Transmission in Old English Poetry", *Chaucer Review*, 3 (1969), 174-190.

<sup>5</sup> A. B. Lord, "Discussion" of Ruth Finnegan, "What is Oral Literature Anyway?", *Oral Literature and the Formula*, eds. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III (Ann Arbor, 1976), pp. 175-176. Note also the attention paid to the importance of tradition in the discussion of "improvisation" in Slavic folkloristics, M. Bošković-Stulli, "Postojanost epskog modela u dvije pjesme iz dubrovačke okolice", *Usmena književnost kao umjetnost riječi* (Zagreb, 1975), pp. 77-93, esp. 79-81, revision of original in *Narodna umjetnost*, 4 (1966), 15-28 (with summary in German).

(since 1949) adhered to the thesis of a "transitional" style (*na narodnu*) understood in this sense, but not to the notion of a dual mentality responsible for a "transitional" process of composition.<sup>6</sup> There appears to be some confusion on this point in some quarters.<sup>7</sup>

In an attempt to provide a generic system that takes both the circumstances of composition/transmission as well as the mentality of the composer/transmitter into account, I propose the following model based primarily on the South Slavic context: (1) three major types comprising the circumstances of composition/transmission – "folk narrative", "literary composition with writing", and "literary composition without writing" and (2) four sub-types accounting for the mentality toward composition/transmission – "microstructurally completely folk-tradition bound" ("the folk style"), "microstructurally less folk-tradition bound" ("the quasi-folk style"), "microstructurally least folk-tradition bound", and "not at all so bound". The next to last sub-type is further subdivided into "the elementary-learned style" and one form of "the sophisticated-learned style" while the last sub-type comprises another form of "the sophisticated-learned style". Finally, the Bošković-Stulli concept of *pučka književnost* will be incorporated into the above scheme.<sup>8</sup>

Before developing each category and situating each sub-type in its appropriate slot, some explanation of the general notions underlying the sub-types is necessary. It seems to me that the level at which clear distinctions can be made between different kinds of narrative texts is what I have here called the microstructural level, the stratum at which such features as the nature, distribution, function, and frequency of repetitive diction and its patterns in all its manifestations and not only in its "formularly" aspects<sup>9</sup> can be investigated.<sup>10</sup> Although such macrostructural levels as subject matter and narrative organization are also significant in this respect, they are more likely to be carried over with little or no change in deliberate imitations of folk narrative and in the extant ancient and medieval texts and therefore are less likely to serve as sufficient bases for such

<sup>6</sup> Lord, *The Singer*, pp. 128–129, 132, 199–200 and n. 5 above.

<sup>7</sup> Faulhaber, "Neo-traditionalism", p. 87, n. 9; John D. Smith, "The Singer or the Song? A Reassessment of Lord's 'Oral Theory'", *Man*, N.S., 12 (1977), 143–144.

<sup>8</sup> I prefer to leave the Serbo-Croatian term untranslated in an attempt to minimize confusion (see Bošković-Stulli, "O pojmovima", pp. 173–184, 252–257) and to stress more effectively that it is the Bošković-Stulli notion that I draw on for my system.

<sup>9</sup> I refer here not only to the single hemistich and verse-line manifestations, but also to the extended passages recurring in more or less similar "formularly" diction and expressing groups of ideas (Lord's "themes"). For a detailed assessment of Parry-Lord "formularly" analysis covering several language traditions, see my "The Quest for the 'Formula': A Comparative Reappraisal", *Modern Philology*, 74 (1976), 111–123, "Stilističke razlike između usmene i pisane književnosti: savremeni metodološki pristupi", *Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukove dane: referati i saopštenja* (Beograd, 1977), 6, vol. 2, pp. 117–122 (summary in English), and "Études formulairees et épopée européenne", *Charlemagne et l'épopée romane: Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals*, Liège, 28 août – 4 septembre 1976, eds. Madeleine Tyssens and Claude Thiry (Paris, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 423–431; with primary emphasis on the Spanish epic, Margaret Chaplin, "Oral-Formulaic Style in the Epic: A Progress Report", *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton*, ed. A. D. Deyermond (London, 1976), pp. 11–20.

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of my latest work involving a form of microstructural analysis, see n. 2 above.

differentiation, a point which I have discussed and documented elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Hence the prime importance of generic classification based on the extent to which versified narrative makes use of a folk-tradition bound microstructure — how conservatively the composer/transmitter governed by a given mentality preserves it and the extent to which he may depart from it or reject it altogether. Using the microstructural level of folk narrative as a point of departure viewed, naturally, as completely folk-tradition bound, we can then speak in terms of types that are less, least, and not at all folk-tradition bound.

Returning to the general scheme, I view the first principal category, folk narrative, as a verbal structure marked by considerable variation according to traditional patterns, a variation resulting from oral presentation and include here not only the products of the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition but also the Hispanic traditional *romance* or ballad. Thus, under the rubric of folk narrative, I include texts that can be accounted for by two different theoretical processes, composition along traditional lines during oral performance (Parry-Lord oral composition) and greater or lesser variation along traditional lines of a memorized whole (Ramón Menéndez Pidal's theory of neo-traditionalism). In constructing a generic system, I prefer to subordinate such circumstances of composition as "improvisation"<sup>12</sup> and "memorization" to the crucial notion of the mentality or attitude toward tradition. Such distinctions as "improvisational origin" and "memorial origin",<sup>13</sup> for example, are of little use in attempting to construct a clear-cut system of genres since there is no appreciable difference in the poetics of a text "improvised" by one singer and that of the same "improvised" text memorized by another singer. The important point is not only how the texts were produced, but how such production has affected the generic character of the texts. However one may view the validity of the Parry-Lord or the Menéndez Pidal theories, the authentic folk character and the consequent highly folk-tradition bound microstructure of South Slavic epic song and of the *romance tradicional* are accepted facts, which have been further corroborated by extensive application of a form of microstructural analysis indicating a similarity of "elaborate style" in both traditions and distinguishing them clearly from such written compositions as deliberate imitations and literary epic.<sup>14</sup>

Under the first main category of folk narrative, for the South Slavic texts the following four divisions can be made: "the aedic", "the rhapsodic", "a combination of aedic and rhapsodic", and "the text involving intervention".

The aedic text refers to the work composed according to the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition, of which different versions by the same singer would show some

<sup>11</sup> J. S. Miletich, "Société Rencesvals Discussion Session on History, Narrative, and Diction in the Late Castilian Epic: Trends in Contemporary Research, December 28, 1977", *Olifant*, 5 (1978), pp. 262–265, "Elaborate Style in South Slavic Oral Narrative and in Kačić Miošić's *Razgovor*". American Contributions to the Eighth International Congress of Slavists, ed. Henrik Birnbaum (Columbus, Ohio, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 522–531, "Comments on 'The Guslar Nods': Narrative Inconsistency and Story Structure in Serbo-Croatian Oral Epic' by John Miles Foley" (unpublished commentary). MLA Oral Literature Meeting, presiding — Ruth Webber, New York, December 28, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> See Albert Lord's call for caution regarding "improvisation", *The Singer*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Faulhaber, "Neo-traditionalism", pp. 97–98.

<sup>14</sup> For a summary of my latest published analysis, see "Medieval Spanish Epic and European Narrative Traditions", *La Corónica*, 6 (1978), 90–96 and for forthcoming work, n. 2 above.

significant degree of microstructural variation. This is the standard type designated by the Parry-Lord theory. It can appear in three forms – a mechanically recorded sung or recited text,<sup>15</sup> a manually recorded sung or recited text, and an “autograph oral” text (an approximate transcription by the singer of the song as he would execute it).<sup>16</sup> The rhapsodic text is an attempt at reproducing from memory another’s (normally) orally composed text.<sup>17</sup> In a memorized version such as this, the degree of microstructural variation, if at all present, would of course be negligible. The combined aedic and rhapsodic text involves both oral composition and memorization, and can occur when singers who have learned to write attempt to memorize rather than to compose orally. Such singers, Albert Lord indicates, reproduce some parts of an oral song they have tried to memorize but revert to composing orally when their memories fail them. The result is thus a song revealing a spectrum of combinations of memorization and of oral composition.<sup>18</sup> The final subdivision of South Slavic folk narrative, the text involving intervention, is characterized by some emendation of the oral text itself, but in such a way that the essential folk character of the text is preserved intact.<sup>19</sup> Such intervention occurs in the form of editorial and transcriptional changes<sup>20</sup> and could hypothetically appear in the form of the falsified oral text, that is, the mechanical rearrangement of the metrical units of orally composed texts.<sup>21</sup> Thus, all four kinds, because of their primary genesis in the process of oral composition and their essential preservation of the features resulting from such a process, can be perceived as highly folk-tradition bound at the microstructural level.<sup>22</sup>

The second principal category, literary composition with writing, designates the text which is composed either with a freer attitude toward the use of a folk-tradition bound microstructure than exists in the composition of folk narrative or which involves the rejection of such an attitude altogether, and which is composed with greater or lesser deliberation with the aid of writing. The first sub-type under this heading, “the quasi-folk style” is certainly microstructurally less folk-tradition bound than folk narrative but appears, nevertheless, very close to it in style. Nevertheless, it can be distinguished

<sup>15</sup> For singers who both sing and recite, see Lord, *The Singer*, p. 289, n. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Vuk Stef. Karadžić, *O srpskoj narodnoj poeziji*, ed. Borivoje Marinković (Beograd, 1964), pp. 97, 138, drawn from Vuk’s original prefaces in *Narodne srpske pjesme* (Leipzig, 1824), vol. 1 and (Beč, 1833), vol. 4, respectively; Lord, *The Singer*, pp. 124–129.

<sup>17</sup> Lord, *The Singer*, pp. 129–130.

<sup>18</sup> Lord, “Discussion” of Ruth Finnegan, p. 175.

<sup>19</sup> Lord, *The Singer*, p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> For detailed discussion, see Svetozar Matić, *Naš narodni ep i naš stih* (Novi Sad, 1964), pp. 21–34 and 35–47, originally appearing in *Naš jezik*, 9 (1958) and in *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost*, 6/7 (1959), respectively; M. Bošković-Stulli, review of Matić, *Naš narodni ep*, in *Narodna umjetnost*, 4 (1966), 259–261; Lord’s comments on Vujnović’s transcriptions in Kenneth Adams, “The Yugoslav Model and the Text of the Poema de Mio Cid”, *Medieval... Rita Hamilton*, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> A. B. Lord, “Homer as Oral Poet”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 72 (1968), 15–16.

<sup>22</sup> Within the above framework, I wonder whether it may be possible to view as follows the question of the degree of change within the context of the Parry-Lord theory: no change (the rhapsodic text), more change (the combined aedic and rhapsodic text), and the new song (the aedic text), a question raised in Vido Latković and Nada Milošević, review of Lord, *The Singer*, in *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor*, 28 (1962), 109.

as a type apart from folk narrative.<sup>23</sup> In order to emphasize the stylistic difference between the folk production and such deliberate imitations as Andrija Kačić Miošić's *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga*, I prefer to designate this sub-type as "the quasi-folk style" and reserve the expression "the folk style" for the characterization of folk narrative. Even microstructurally less folk-tradition bound than the quasi-folk style is the next sub-type, least folk-tradition bound, which is further divided into the elementary-learned style and the sophisticated-learned style. In the elementary-learned style, the folk-tradition bound microstructure, although less pronounced than in the quasi-folk style, is to a greater or lesser degree vital since the text is intended for a public that is still more or less orally oriented and hence must meet accordingly the expectations of such a public. Examples of such texts are medieval saints' lives and medieval romances.<sup>24</sup> The sophisticated-learned style under this sub-type, on the other hand, characterizes the text in which the folk-tradition bound microstructure is not vital but serves as a kind of citation or allusion which is used to mark the text with folk elements so that microstructurally there is an emphasis on the difference between a folk tradition and a dominant learned tradition, the latter constituting the basis for this kind of text.<sup>25</sup> The text, in this case, is intended for a primarily literary-oriented public. An example is the literary epic *Smrt Smail-age Čengića* of Ivan Mažuranić. The last sub-type, the text that is not at all microstructurally folk-tradition bound, is also sophisticated-learned in style in that its mainstay is a learned tradition and that it is intended for a literary-oriented public. An example is the Miltonic epic.<sup>26</sup>

The third principal category, literary composition without writing, suggested by Albert Lord's expression "written composition without writing",<sup>27</sup> follows in all respects the description for the second main category, literary composition with writing, with the following exception – the text of the third category is composed with greater or lesser deliberation only mentally entirely unaided by writing. In this context I would like to examine three recent suggestions dealing with Old English, Irish, and African literature.

Donald K. Fry views the composition of *Caedmon's Hymn* as marking the invention of "formulaic" Anglo-Saxon Christian poetry: scholars read to the apparently non-literate Caedmon sacred narrative and/or doctrine, which he memorized and which formed the subject matter of the hymn he then composed in a "formulaic" style overnight, reciting it from memory the following day when the scholars wrote it down from

<sup>23</sup> Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena književnost u sklopu, pp. 56–57; Lord, *The Singer*, pp. 132–133; Miletich, n. 14 above.

<sup>24</sup> Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena književnost u sklopu, p. 56; Divna Zočević, "Pučki književni fenomen", *Povijest hrvatske književnosti*, ed. Slavko Goldstein et al. (Zagreb, 1978), vol. 1, p. 389.

<sup>25</sup> I am indebted to Professor Svetozar Petrović for the basis of this observation conveyed to me in a written communication. For an example of microstructural analysis documenting this point, see Miletich, "Repetition and Aesthetic Function."

<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to accept G.S. Kirk's view of Milton's cumulative technique as a feature of folk (oral) style, stated in his discussion of Milton's debt to Homer, precisely because of the departure from such technique, a fact which Kirk himself notes. Such departure is atypical of at least the known folk (oral) South Slavic tradition, a fact of which he is aware. See G.S. Kirk, *Homer and the Oral Tradition* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 94–99, 161.

<sup>27</sup> Lord, "Discussion" of Ruth Finnegan, p. 176.

Caedmon's memory in order to memorize it themselves. *Caedmon's Hymn* thus served as the model for the composition of "formulaic" Christian poetry by other Anglo-Saxon poets whether they composed in writing or without writing. Fry accounts for Caedmon's use of "formulaic" style by suggesting that he adapted the poetics of a "formulaic" Germanic secular tradition to Christian uses.<sup>28</sup>

Within the generic framework I propose, it is possible to view Fry's conception of Caedmon's art only as literary composition without writing either as microstructurally less folk-tradition bound (the quasi-folk style) or least so bound (the elementary-learned style). This appears so for the following reasons. If we proceed from the assumption that the poetics of *Caedmon's Hymn* served as the model for subsequent compositions which reflected such poetics, as Fry suggests,<sup>29</sup> works like *Beowulf* would then reveal the features of a model such as this. If we were then to regard *Caedmon's Hymn* as an authentic folk song revealing a microstructure comparable to South Slavic folk songs, then such works as *Beowulf* would be expected to show the characteristics of folk narrative. From the Parry-Lord type of "formulary" and related "theme" analyses of *Beowulf*, we find, however, that the Old English epic departs significantly from the "formulary" microstructure of the highly folk-tradition bound model of South Slavic oral epic.<sup>30</sup> In my scheme, only one other possibility remains — namely, a Caedmon comparable in great measure to a non-literate Kačić Miošić or nonliterate composer of medieval religious literature with the mentality of literary or written composition, drawing to a greater or lesser extent on the poetics of folk narrative to produce, just as they did but without writing, a "formulaic" "written" composition. It is also possible to conceive of Caedmon in that role as drawing on a style that is already once or twice removed from the folk tradition itself, that is, on an already developed quasi-folk style

<sup>28</sup> Donald K. Fry, "Caedmon as a Formulaic Poet", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 10 (1974), 227-247, reprinted in *Oral Literature: Seven Essays*, ed. Joseph J. Duggan (Edinburgh and New York, 1975); D.K. Fry, "The Memory of Caedmon", *Albert Bates Lord Festschrift*, pp. 1-17 (pre-publication paper). Fry here refers to the Parry-Lord conceptual framework. For other models, see Bošković-Stull, "Postojanost epskog modela", pp. 77-79; same, "Usmena književnost", *Povijest*, pp. 29-40; and Miletich, "The Quest", p. 121. Regarding a significant departure from Lord's 1960 position, see David E. Bynum, "The Bell, The Drum, Milman Parry, and the Time Machine", *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 1 (1979), 245-249.

<sup>29</sup> Fry, "The Memory", pp. 11, 14. I do not note in Fry's work cited above any suggestion that the Caedmon model was substantially changed by later singers or writers.

<sup>30</sup> A.B. Lord, "Perspectives on Recent Work on Oral Literature", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 10 (1974), 209-210, reprinted in *Oral Literature: Seven Essays*; Sherman Kuhn, "Response" to John Miles Foley, "Formula and Theme in Old English Poetry", *Oral Literature and the Formula*, p. 234; Francelia Clark, "Discussion" of Foley in preceding collection, pp. 235-236; Miletich, "The Quest", p. 117; F. Clark, "Flying in *Beowulf* and Flying in Lord's Theory of the Oral-Formulaic Theme", *Albert Bates Lord Festschrift*, pp. 1-28 (pre-publication paper). I would, however, like to stress that the nature of the "formulary" microstructure of South Slavic oral epic to which I here refer is that described in the theoretical stance of Albert Lord's 1960 *The Singer of Tales*. Future extensive analysis of "formulary" microstructure may, of course, lead to a different view of such microstructure which would then necessitate a reconsideration of my classification of Caedmon's Hymn. I am indebted to Professor Alain Renoir for the basis of the foregoing comment, communicated to me when this essay was presented at a meeting of the Société Internationale Renccontres, American-Canadian Branch, held at the University of California at Berkeley, June 20-25, 1980.

or perhaps elementary-learned style, respectively. This may in part account for the relatively short period during which he was supposed to have composed his poem.<sup>31</sup>

Seán Ó Coileáin suggests that later Irish bardic poetry (ca. 1200–1650), which apparently was also composed only mentally entirely apart from the act of writing, is not a folk production but rather a written-style work, which, according to the model I propose, can, like *Caedmon's Hymn*, also be regarded as literary composition without writing. The process of composing such poetry appears analogous to that described for *Caedmon's Hymn*. The Irish poets, however, were literate. They were given one or more subjects on which they composed their poems according to a definite system of poetics known to them. They composed in the dark without the aid of writing materials and afterwards committed their poems to writing, apparently from memory.<sup>32</sup>

Another example of what also may possibly be classified under the third main heading of my generic model is at least one form of the Xhosa *izibongo*. The latter, however, is essentially eulogistic, and allusive rather than explicitly narrative, and has lacked a satisfactory definition of meter, which thus has ruled out analysis based on a suitable "formularly" framework.<sup>33</sup> In spite of a number of differences which he indicates, Jeffrey Opland states that the Xhosa *izibongo* tradition cannot at this point safely be used as an argument against the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition viewed in a comparative context. However, Opland notes that when the skilled *imbongi* or tribal poet composes on subjects other than chiefs, particularly subjects which Opland has and the poet relies for his wording on the inspiration of the moment. One cannot, without close investigation, discount the possibility that this particular type is not a folk production in the first instance, but rather literary composition without writing, where the mentality of the composer toward a microstructurally folk-tradition bound genre is considerably freer — the mentality of literary or written composition.

The final stage in the formulation of a possible generic model covering all versified narrative is the incorporation of the Bošković-Stulli model of *pučka književnost* into the above scheme. That phenomenon, according to Bošković-Stulli, draws on both folk literature and learned literature, but constitutes a separate type. It involves a traditional orientation of both readers and composers, close contact with folk literature, and also close contact with "high" written literature.<sup>34</sup> In order to provide the broadest possible framework and to account for such situations in which close contact with "high" written literature may not be possible either because it may be totally lacking, or, if it should exist, may do so in such a way that it does not influence a given composer, for my scheme I exclude such contact from the notion of *pučka književnost* as a feature which is obligatory in all cases.<sup>35</sup> In this respect, I have in mind particularly such possibilities

<sup>31</sup> Fry, "Caedmon, p. 233.

<sup>32</sup> Seán Ó Coileáin, "Irish Saga Literature", *Heroic Epic*, pp. 177–178.

<sup>33</sup> Jeffrey Opland, "Huso and Mqhuyi: Notes on the Southslavic and Xhosa Traditions of Oral Poetry", *Oral Literature and the Formula*, pp. 120–124.

<sup>34</sup> See Bošković-Stulli in n. 3 above, esp. "O pojmovima, p. 184.

<sup>35</sup> In my scheme the term *pučka književnost* does not, of necessity, refer to what is considered to be aesthetically or socially inferior to the main literary tradition of a particular period, but can designate that tradition itself. See Bošković-Stulli, "O pojmovima, p. 181. I am indebted to Professor S. Petrović for indicating to me in a written communication the necessity to stress that point.



as may arise in literary composition without writing but at the same time would not exclude such possibilities in literary composition with writing. Thus I view *pučka književnost* within my model as including both texts composed in writing and those composed entirely unaided by the act of writing with the quasi-folk style and the elementary-learned style both appearing as subdivisions of each major category.

The complete generic framework for versified narrative described above is summarized in the chart below.

	MENTALITY	FOLK NARRATIVE (Parry-Lord and Menéndez Pidal theories)	LITERARY COMPOSITION WITH WRITING	LITERARY COMPOSITION WITHOUT WRITING
pučka književnost	microstructurally completely folk- tradition bound	folk style		
	microstructurally less folk- tradition bound		quasi-folk style	quasi-folk style
	microstructurally least folk- tradition bound		elementary-learned style	elementary-learned style
			sophisticated- learned style	sophisticated- learned style
	not at all so bound		sophisticated- learned style	sophisticated- learned style

Which one or more of the above types are most likely to account for the style and mode of composition/transmission of the medieval Spanish epics in their extant forms? It appears that the sophisticated-learned style in any form can be safely discounted as a probability right from the start. The medieval Spanish epic, scholars agree, is not based on a highly learned tradition of classical epic such as the Vergilian so that the Spanish phenomenon does not represent literary epic similar to the Mažuranić or the Miltonic texts.<sup>36</sup> A recent study dealing with the aesthetics of microstructural repetition in the Mažuranić epic and the *Poema de mio Cid* also suggests a clear-cut generic difference.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Regarding Latin and other traditions and their role in the medieval Spanish epic, see Colin Smith, "Further French Analogues and Sources for the *Poema de mio Cid*", *La Corónica*, 6 (1977), 14–21 covering other studies along similar lines since 1971; A. D. Deyermond, *Epic Poetry and the Clergy: Studies on the "Mocedades de Rodrigo"* (London, 1969), pp. 182–185; H. Salvador Martínez, *El "Poema de Almería" y la épica románica* (Madrid, 1975). Thus far I have seen no evidence of a Latin versified narrative tradition that is comparable in its overall repetitive microstructure to the extant Spanish texts.

<sup>37</sup> Miletich, "Repetition and Aesthetic Function".

Neither is it probable that the extant texts represent folk narrative or any of its slightly modified manifestations, which are due to intervention, as described above for the South Slavic texts. Most comparative studies based on detailed research of both the South Slavic and Hispanic texts (including authentic Hispanic folk narrative) indicate marked differences between the known folk texts and the extant medieval epics.<sup>38</sup> Since those differences, which occur mostly in the very fabric of the microstructure, are so pronounced both qualitatively and quantitatively, it is difficult in the case of the Spanish texts to argue safely for the kinds of intervention that we have seen in the South Slavic tradition discussed above. In the latter case, such intervention did not significantly alter the folk character of the text, whereas in the hypothetical folk texts on which the medieval works may have been based, the changes made would have ultimately had to be so great that to explain the extant or similar texts, we would have to posit an in-depth transformation, a considerably free adaptation of the folk narrative microstructure, which would have resulted in a different genre — *pučka književnost*, not folk narrative.<sup>39</sup> According to this line of reasoning, we cannot then view the extant epic texts as folk narrative either in the Parry-Lord or the Menéndez Pidal senses, but rather as a related but separate type with its own set of poetics typologically different from that of folk narrative. This kind of distinction is clearly noted by Yugoslav scholars, who have divided the first volume of a history of Croatian literature into *usmena književnost* (oral or folk literature) and *pučka književnost*.<sup>40</sup>

Viewing the extant epics as *pučka književnost*, it is unlikely that they can be included under the rubric of literary composition without writing. Although relatively little is known about the details of that main category, we can, nevertheless, speculate on the basis of what has been said above about the Anglo-Saxon, Irish, and African cases. That the production of the extant Spanish texts or of a closely comparable *pučka* type could occur along lines similar to the African and Irish cases seems improbable. The African model is intimately bound with a tribal culture, in which a learned tradition comparable to the medieval Latin, even if it exists, would not be so familiar to both performer and audience. The Irish later bardic poetry, on the other hand, appears (at least from the description) to be a more studied learned tradition than is evident in the extant Spanish texts. The closest possible model appears to be the Anglo-Saxon as described above, in which writing, under the influence of an early medieval Latin tradition, eventually played an important part in the composition of the surviving Old English poetry. The analogy, however, breaks down from the initial stage proposed for the invention of the Anglo-Saxon *pučka* model, which posits a Christian religious oriented stimulus for the invention of a new tradition, a stimulus which continued to inform Old English narrative poetry to a notable degree. For the medieval Spanish narrative tradition, on the other hand, there is no evidence for a comparable religious motivation and tone which had such far-reaching effects. Although it certainly may be possible to view the initial nucleus of the extant Spanish epics as the result of literary composition without writing,

<sup>38</sup> See n. 14 above.

<sup>39</sup> Only in this light can I view the remarks on learned handling in Samuel G. Armistead, "The Mocedades de Rodrigo and Neo-Individualist Theory", *Hispanic Review*, 46 (1978), 323-324.

<sup>40</sup> M. Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena, and Zečević, "Pučki književni, *Povijest*, pp. 7-353 and 357-638, respectively.

there appears at this point no cogent argument based on other similar existing traditions of which I am aware that might make this position probable.

The only possibility remaining in the above scheme, *pučka književnost* as literary composition with writing, appears to be the most probable explanation of the style and mode of composition of the extant Spanish epics. Here the analogy based on a known tradition — such deliberate imitations as Kačić Miošić's *Razgovor* — holds up to a striking degree. Maja Bošković-Stulli indicates that Kačić, a Franciscan priest, wrote his secular, heroic poems so as to instill pride in the common people by recalling the heroic exploits of past warriors with a view to inspiring his audience to continue the expulsion of the Turks from Western Europe. He did so by making use of both written and oral sources, adapting folksongs he heard to the *pučka* style and composing in the same style others which he had not heard.<sup>41</sup> Such details are paralleled by the suggestions of British Hispanists, in particular, who for the production of the extant medieval epics affirm learned origin, propagandistic purposes, and the use of folk elements.<sup>42</sup>

This notion of *pučka književnost* may be even further extended so as to view other medieval Spanish and other works in a new light. For example, Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* and saints' lives may reveal a repetitive microstructure that to some extent reflects the patterns occurring in the extant Spanish epics. After detailed research of such microstructural levels, we may be able to distinguish within the *pučka* style, a quasi-folk style text like the *Poema de mio Cid* on the one hand, which may be less folk-tradition bound, and elementary-learned style texts such as Berceo's on the other, which may be least folk-tradition bound but which to some extent still may reflect the microstructure of a folk tradition.<sup>43</sup> In this light we can probably view Joseph Duggan's results<sup>44</sup> on Old French narrative poetry — the *chansons de geste* which reveal a higher frequency of "formulas" may be quasi-folk style texts and the romances indicating a lower frequency may be elementary-learned style texts. Various kinds of microstructural analyses may also prove useful in determining within a comparative context the extent to which we may be able to classify as *pučka književnost* such works as the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Iranian *Shāhnāma*, or African written epics, which, although related to folk narrative, may be typologically distinct from it.<sup>45</sup> In brief, such analyses

<sup>41</sup> Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena, Povijest, pp. 229–231.

<sup>42</sup> P.E. Russell, "Some Problems of Diplomatic in the Cantar de Mio Cid and their Implications", *Modern Language Review*, 47 (1952), 340–349; same, "San Pedro de Cardena and the Heroic History of the Cid", *Medium Aevum*, 27 (1958), 57–59; *Poema de mio Cid*, ed. Colin Smith (Oxford, 1972), pp. XXX–XXXVII; same, *Estudios cidianos* (Madrid, 1977); A.D. Deyermond, *A Literary History of Spain: The Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1971), p. 49 (Spanish translation with revisions, *Historia de la literatura española: La Edad Media* [Barcelona, 1973]); and n. 36 above.

<sup>43</sup> Brian Dutton, *La "Vida de San Millán de la Cogola" de Gonzalo de Berceo: Estudio y edición crítica* (London, 1967), pp. 175–182; John K. Walsh, "Juan Ruiz and the mester de clerezia: Lost Context and Lost Parody in the Libro de buen amor", *Romance Philology*, 33 (1978), 62–86.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph J. Duggan, *The Song of Roland: Formulaic Style and Poetic Craft* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 21–30.

<sup>45</sup> The following in their highly useful summaries of those traditions lead me to the above suggestion: Johannes M. Renger, "Mesopotamian Epic Literature", William L. Hanaway, Jr., "The Iranian Epics", and Daniel P. Biebuyck, "The African Heroic Epic", *Heroic Epic*, pp. 27–48, 76–98, and 336–367, respectively. The medievalist unfamiliar with such more "exotic" traditions must especially exercise caution in discussing them as well as in attempting to draw similarities between

within the context of the generic framework proposed above, may help in drawing more precise distinctions between different kinds of texts and their mode of composition/transmission, especially between such types as folk (oral) literature and *pučka književnost*, particularly in the case of extant ancient and medieval texts.\*

the latter and medieval Romance traditions. For example, a clear distinction must be made between deliberate imitations such as Kačić Miošić's "Razgovor" and the South Slavic literary epics, which is lacking in Faulhaber, "Neo-traditionalism, p. 98 and n. 55. Also, the latter's remark that the irregular syllable count and monorhymed laisses of primitive Turkic versification are "strikingly reminiscent of *Mio Cid*" (p. 100, n. 63) cannot be viewed in isolation from the following facts – the importance of grammatical rhyme in Turkic poetics, which is due to the agglutinative character of Turkic languages linked with the use of syntactic parallelism (Nora K. Chadwick and Victor Zhirmunsky [Žirmunskij], *Oral Epics of Central Asia* [Cambridge, 1969], pp. 337–338) and the fact that derived learned traditions readily make use of folk meters (Bošković-Stulli, "Usmena književnost u sklopu, p. 56). For an illuminating recent introduction to Turkic heroic narrative, see İlhan Başgöz, "The Epic Tradition among Turkic Peoples", *Heroic Epic*, pp. 310–335.

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