

INTRODUCTION

WHY STUDY MEDIEVAL FOLKLORE?

Three groups pose this question, each requiring a different answer. Most of the nonacademics I know are not convinced of the value of either medievalism or folklore, and have defied me, with repeated success, to make either study significant to them. The second group--medievalists--often dismiss folklore as a pseudoscience which rests on the faulty premise of "elevating the commonplace to explain the exceptional."¹ Not without justification, medievalists tend to view folklore as an anti-esthetic, communalist fantasy which distorts the true nature of the materials they study. Assuming that medieval creators were as learned as we ourselves must be to understand their works hundreds of years (and countless linguistic and cultural changes later), medievalists have repeatedly denied that the stories of King Arthur could have spawned "in the fancies of plowmen, goose-girls, blacksmiths, midwives, or yokels of any kind."² One of my aims in this introduction is to defend the folklorist against such attitudes as these.

For the most part, however, for the special purposes and readership of this issue, I am required to do something my medievalist colleagues may feel is utterly perverse--defend medieval studies to a third group of questioners: folklorists. There is evidence that such a task may be necessary: for example, when told that a lively debate had recently erupted at the end of a panel on folklore and medieval studies, one of America's most eminent folklorists said drily, "It's good that people can still get excited over things like that." The lack of regard in which American folklorists and medievalists hold each other seems somewhat strange in light of the overlapping histories of these disciplines, which fall together under the

umbrella of the **humanities**, and which once aspired to every meaning implicit in that term. Both studies were created to enlarge the scope of learning beyond the limits of the classical past, to justify the study of modern artistry and languages, to trace the cultural and social heritage of individual nations, regions, and towns--in short, to make a place for popular art and contemporary social concerns in the rarified climate of higher learning. Both disciplines have strayed from this goal, but anyone convinced of the value of either folklore or medievalism may consider a spiritual return to their common original path. Perhaps the best start in this search for relevance would be for medievalists and folklorists to make their respective disciplines relevant to each other.

There was a time when such an undertaking would have required no effort whatever, for folklore and medievalism shared the same title, "popular antiquities." As Richard M. Dorson has demonstrated, folklore's roots extend farther back in time than the Romantic era--to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a handful of determined scholars, motivated perhaps more by nationalism than by any other single factor, sought to establish vernacular literatures as worthy objects of learning.³ Before the seventeenth century, scholarship had been of two types only: Biblical and classical. Philosophy, theology, literature, and science had been studied and perpetuated principally in two seldom-spoken languages: Latin and Greek. But a new group of thinkers, styling themselves the "Moderns," took issue with the classically-oriented "Ancients" and maintained that cultural development of some sort had in fact taken place outside the shadows of the Church and the Coliseum, and that the "popular literature" in the modern vernacular did have something to say to the present. In England, John Leland, William Camden, and Robert Aubrey studied medieval literature and oral traditions with the aim of throwing light on national development. At roughly the same time in Scandinavia, Vedal made the earliest collection of folk ballads (*It Hundred uduaalde danske viser*, 1591) and Arne Magnusson began his monumental collection of Icelandic saga manuscripts. For these men, there was no distinction between vernacular medieval literature and folklore: both were the stepchildren of the

Classical past, whom the Moderns sought to return to the good graces of the human family.

The early devotees of medieval popular culture often approached their materials with strikingly modern aims and insights. Bishop Thomas Percy, ridiculed by later folklorists for his sloppy treatment of texts, listed four reasons for reading the **Reliques of Ancient English Poetry**. Three of these were more scientific than literary, and reveal Percy to be one of our earliest ethnologists:

. . . such specimens of ancient poetry have been selected, as either show the gradations of our language, exhibit the progress of popular opinions, display the peculiar manners and customs of former ages, or throw light on our earlier classical poets.⁴

Percy was not so much the first of the Romantics as an heir to the Moderns; for the Romantics are distinguished from their predecessors by the belief that "popular" (or "folk") poetry, being closer to nature and to natural man than was sophisticated poetry, was worthy not merely of study, but of veneration.

For one hundred and fifty years after the appearance of Percy's **Reliques**, the Moderns (now, ironically labeled "antiquaries") and the Romantics worked side by side. Though they had their philosophic differences (principally over the status of the folk poet; the Moderns condescended to the figure whom the Romantics worshipped), these two groups had something in common: all were folklorists and all were medievalists. Among the Romantics, the Grimms not only collected folktales, but also edited the Old High German **Hildebrandslied**; Sir Walter Scott collected oral ballads and researched medieval romances; Frances Gummere developed the communal origins theory for the ballad and translated **Beowulf**. Among the antiquaries, William John Thoms coined the term "folk-lore" and collected Middle English prose romances; Thomas Wright studied witch beliefs and edited Chaucer; Francis James Child compiled the most famous collection of British ballads and taught the first courses in medieval English literature in the United States. The list runs on in a seemingly unbroken stream to the present day: Sébillot, Bédier, van Gennep, Gerould, Kittredge, Thompson, Whiting, Taylor, Spargo, Wesselski, Utley, Magoun, Bronson, Richmond,

Friedman, Andersson, Ward, Harris, Toelken, Rosenberg, and Jabbour are just a few of the more recent scholars who have been both folklorists and medievalists.

But something began to happen at the close of the nineteenth century which set the two disciplines on widely diverging paths. In France, Bédier, whose monumental work on **Les Fabliaux** is a milestone in folklore research, began to question the value of the folkloristic method, which at that time was essentially historic-geographic in nature and consisted mainly of the collection and study of variant texts.⁵ His colleagues Baldensperger, Carré, and Van Tieghem proclaimed in strong terms the end of the marriage between folklore and medieval studies; as Baldensperger writes,

. . . this **folklore** of **Stoffgeschichte**, toward which a whole branch of Comparative Literature tends to gravitate, represents a mode of investigation which is more interested in subject matter than in art, and for which the hidden survivals are of greater concern than the craftsman's initiative.⁶

Thus, the real value of literature could never be revealed by historic-geographic studies: surface variation is not the key to the meaning of a work of art. Now it is clear to us, looking backward, that these critics were not really attacking the study of folklore per se, but rather the dominant folkloristic method of the time: the Finnish method, which has since been seriously challenged by folklorists as well as by literati. Still, the study of medieval folklore nearly died with that method, just as--at roughly the same time--the anthropological study of folklore nearly died when the doctrine of survivals was dismissed.⁷

In America, a similar rupture occurred, and as in France, the two disciplines were driven apart by a man who had served them both with great distinction: George Lyman Kittredge. Kittredge, a student of Child, continued his master's ballad studies, but also brought an unprecedented depth of insight into the study of such medieval literary masters as Chaucer. After he had passed under the scrutiny of Kittredge, Chaucer could never be read as simply as before.

When Kittredge wrote *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1915), the views of Matthew Arnold were still in fashion. According to Arnold, Chaucer's is the only Middle English poetry worth reading, but it is not great. True, Chaucer's verse "transcends and effaces, easily and without effort, all the romance poetry of Catholic Christendom." Yet greatness "was altogether beyond Chaucer's reach. . . [and] necessarily out of the reach of any poet in England at that stage of growth."⁸ Thus, Arnold read medieval literature in much the same manner as Percy had read the *Reliques*: its value was not artistic, but evolutionary, and its greatest virtue perhaps was to show the men of modern times how much they had progressed in the interim. Had Arnold been a folklorist, he could not have presented a better reason--given the theoretical tenets of the time--for studying medieval literature as folklore: such literature was undistinguished. True, Arnold had considered Dante one of the world's great poets, but by a fiction still in existence in some circles, Dante can be considered the father of the Renaissance rather than a son of the Middle Ages, leaving us with a clear time-line of demarcation behind which no poetry of value can be found. The Middle Ages produced simple poetry, unexceptional poetry, folk poetry.

But Kittredge's book, which saw the *Canterbury Tales* as a Human Comedy worthy of comparison to Dante's Divine one, broke down the neat classificatory scheme which had set the Middle Ages in an ignominious place apart. Kittredge affirmed that Chaucer was a consummate artist who did not waste words, who drew his characters strongly and deeply, who was worthy of reading by the most serious and sophisticated audiences. The critical world responded positively to Kittredge's call and began to question the worth of lumping all medieval literature together with folklore. A hierarchy was developed, in which a handful of authors--notably the Pearl Poet, Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and more recently Marie de France and William Langland--joined Chaucer on the list of literary giants, while the anonymous romance authors were relegated to the folklorists. With the advent of New Criticism, the rupture was complete, and despite the efforts of Archer Taylor, Stith Thompson, and Francis Lee Utley, the formid-

able connections between Chaucer's tales and oral folktales went largely ignored. Even the possibility that Chaucer read his works aloud--a thesis well documented by Ruth Crosby's collections of internal textual evidence and bolstered by late medieval accounts of oral performance⁹--has been discarded by most modern critics, though their evidence for doing so is scanty.¹⁰ The modern critic, accustomed to reading silently, assumes by force of habit, against all evidence to the contrary, that the authors he studies--as well as their audiences--did so as well.

Yet it is partly the folklorists' fault that medievalists have abandoned them. In past years folklorists, too, have condescended to the folk and failed to study folk creations according to artistic criteria. If we are to believe, with Walter Anderson, that the primary cause of change in folktales is lapse of memory, we have already discarded the idea that folklore may have artistic value.¹¹ If the folk simply repeat word-for-word, to the best of their faulty memories, the stories they have heard, they can teach the literary critic nothing about the value of oral art.

But, in the decades since medieval studies and folklore parted company, folklore has made enormous advances, few of which have yet been introduced to students of literature. The most conspicuous breakthrough is that of Parry and Lord, who demonstrated that illiterate epic singers can improvise complex and artful stories according to an intricate system of oral composition.¹² The Parry-Lord theory has acquired a well-deserved audience among students of literature, but its fame has to a great extent obscured folkloristic advances more pertinent to the study of medieval literature. Most surviving medieval texts--especially those which date from the twelfth century onward--were certainly not composed according to the methods described by Parry and Lord. In the late medieval period, most entertainers whose works survive were literate authors. Still, we must consider the probability that these artists heard oral tales and that they read their own written creations to aural audiences.

More pertinent to the study of late medieval texts are the works of Azadovskii, Dégh, and Delargy, who describe oral narrators of exceptional talent--tellers with

highly developed and individualized styles who can captivate demanding audiences for half a day at a time.¹³ In addition, Abrahams, Başgöz, Bauman, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett have shown how much and how subtly an aural audience can influence an oral performance.¹⁴ Others--including Goody and Ong--have developed theoretical statements on the general interrelationships of oral and written artistic expression.¹⁵ The idea of mixed written-and-oral transmission, a concept which most strongly pertains to surviving medieval texts, has been studied by Dégh and Stahl, but much can still be done along these lines to make medieval literature and folklore studies useful to each other.¹⁶ Even the most sophisticated medieval audiences played a more immediate and formative role in the creation of aural poetry than do the scattered groups of silent readers who form the literary audiences of today. The folklorist has the tools necessary to clarify the role of the audience in medieval creativity.

A partial return to the older days, when folklore and medieval studies were studied as inseparable complementary elements of the same cultural whole, is now in order. Now that a century of literary critics and several decades of folklorists have insured that the creative aspects of medieval literature will not be ignored, such a partnership can only lead to a better understanding of the Middle Ages. D.S. Brewer has described the late medieval period as a time of "complex cultural pluralism" marked, in literature and in life, by a style which "accept[s] conflicting elements"; within this variegated whole are "elements of folk-culture."¹⁷ A scholarly model which divides folklore from literary studies cannot adequately depict the special nature of the Middle Ages. An accurate portrayal of medieval culture must be as fluid and eclectic as the original, involving such currently conflicting academic pursuits as medieval studies and folklore.

It still remains for me to justify medieval studies to American folklorists. Partly because American folklore rests upon a relatively young body of material, partly because the genres (such as **Märchen**, novella, and saints' lives) favored by medievalists are not common in North

America, and partly because most previous methods of historic folklore research (such as historic-geographic studies) have emphasized **items** of folklore to the neglect of the folk, American folklorists have generally not been partial to time-depth studies--particularly to studies of medieval folklore. In spite of the diverse and important historical approaches of Deetz, Dorson, Glassie, and Montell,¹⁸ the majority of American folklorists show little impulse to look backward beyond the recent past in their examinations of the folkloric present. An audience composed principally of American folklorists thus deserves some explanation for an issue devoted to medieval studies. Here I present three reasons for pursuing such studies, in the hope that most readers will find at least one of them pertinent to their own work.

1. **The medieval period is a fountainhead of modern forms and functions.** This is perhaps an antiquary's explanation, but it still conveys a certain force. As Archer Taylor and Linda Dégh have noted, the folktale--as we know it--cannot be traced past the Middle Ages.¹⁹ Thus, all who are interested in the development of oral storytelling as a facet of general human experience derive their earliest useful data from this period. As Trevor-Roper and others have noted, witchcraft--as practiced, described, and believed in--in modern times stems from a mixture of folk and elite cultural elements that first came together near the close of the fifteenth century.²⁰ The ballad and other folksongs whose verse structures are based on the musical contours of repeating melodies probably date no earlier than the twelfth century. There are numerous other examples of folklore forms which originated or underwent fundamental changes in the Middle Ages.

Therefore, if one is interested in origins, the medieval period has much to offer. Although most such explanations --notably Gummere's communal origin theory for the ballad and the cultural evolutionary theories advanced by Tylor and Frazer--have been largely, and justifiably, dismissed by function-oriented folklorists, the question of origins will never be entirely abandoned. It is too much a part of human nature to test the temporal, physical, and spiritual limits of human institutions. As Dégh has

explained, the questions of how the tale was shaped and how its form originated remain among the "key questions in folktale study."²¹ The desire to answer these questions meets a scientific as well as an emotional need. For, by probing the past as deeply as we can, we find one more means of measuring what is universal, what particular, in human experience--a goal of great importance to all students of culture. If the search for origins does no more than enlarge the data base on which we can make or invalidate general statements, it has proven its worth.

Take, for example, the story of Hugh of Lincoln, a child said to have been murdered by Jews in the thirteenth century. According to a host of legendary accounts assembled by Carlton Brown, a pious young schoolboy was traveling through a Jewish ghetto when the Jews, angered by his songs in praise of the Virgin, attacked him, slit his throat, and tossed his murdered body on a dungheap.²² The corpse was discovered when--even after death--it continued to sing the hymn, a miracle which elevated the child to sainthood and caused the Jews to repent their crime and convert to Christianity. In addition to its literary treatments by Chaucer and Wordsworth, this story has endured in folk balladry (Child 155) for at least three centuries to the present day. Outside the realm of art, the plot has persisted in legendary accounts purported to be true. Folklorists have found reflexes of the Hugh story in tales by modern white Americans, in which blacks still kill a white child; in nineteenth-century Afro-American narratives, in which the roles are reversed; and again among whites, with gypsies playing the murderers' roles.²³

This one tale, already seven centuries old when it was told of Hugh seven centuries ago, reveals much about the comparative values of the various groups which have passed it on in the form of art or rumor. In Protestant versions, there is no miracle at the end of the story; an element of religious doctrine has had a shaping influence here. The villain varies from version to version, but in each he is identified with that particular ethnic group which the teller, for one reason or another, finds more threatening than any other. Thus, the story provides an index of the fears of a given group. The settings in

which the crime takes place (in the older versions, a Jewish ghetto in daylight; in Southern black versions of the last century, nighttime forests and other places considered off-limits to blacks after dark; in modern white versions, shopping centers in ethnically-mixed neighborhoods) provide cognitive maps of these locales, times, and events which one group considers most threatening for spawning violent contact with the rival group.

Beyond these specific cultural differences, there is a series of universal traits revealed in the legend: these can be taken as expressions of deep-seated concerns in all human societies. Mutilation, for example, occurs in all the tales, revealing a strong tendency by all tellers to consider disfigurement a crime perhaps as appalling as murder itself. In addition, the victim is almost always a child--a trait used universally to emphasize the cowardice and cruelty of the alien group, as well as to play upon the emotional value of the child. An innocent child butchered by one adult or (more frequently) a group of adults: the image embodies a contrast which polarizes the victim's group from the villain's--making the former appear absolutely perfect and the latter consummately evil. Finally, the impulse apparent in all the stories (to dehumanize the villain) and the obvious function of most of them (to marshal sentiment against a rival group) combine to reveal a basic, if unappealing, aspect of folk groups in general: nothing can unite a community more readily or more surely than the presence of a common enemy. Thus, the substantial amount of surviving medieval lore can serve as a useful complement to more recent material in determining the age, extent, universality, and diachronic development of certain kinds of traditional art, thought, and behavior.

2. **The study of medieval folklore can clarify the concept of the community, or folk group.** No debate in current folklore study is more complex or more important than that which centers around the definition of the folk. All ongoing discussions of ethnicity, regionalism, and the relationship of folklore to mass culture must sooner or later embrace the question of what constitutes a folk group. There is general agreement among folklorists that the very concept of folklore requires a community of some

sort. Even Alan Dundes' definition of the folk as "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" introduces the rudimentary idea of community.²⁴ The traditional scholarly definition of a folk group as an insular, homogenous, self-sufficient community has long been under fire. Yet even the most progressive sociologists and urban planners now hold the impression that there is something fundamentally stable about such groups--that communities foster a feeling of security, a sense of identity, and a basic day-to-day positivism which provides sustaining influence on individual inhabitants of even the most complex and pluralistic societies.²⁵ Folklorists are beginning to discover that the traditional scholarly concept of the folk group is indeed the ideal which modern folk themselves strive after as they develop emotional attachments to a variety of fragmentary subcommunities--nuclear families, occupational groups, recreational clubs--which now characterize daily life in Western society.

For the Western world, the Middle Ages mark the most revolutionary time of transition from community to society. As such, this period can be studied to good effect by folklorists as well as by others interested in similar transitions now occurring in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The funds of information available from the Middle Ages are far richer than most non-medievalists would imagine. The study of modern community mores and social deviance can benefit from the extant records of medieval England. The earliest transcripts richly document community-style systems of justice, wherein the Lord of each manor (or, occasionally, the commoners themselves) passed down judgments according to the norms which had long been operative in a specific locale. What is at work in these documents is not an abstract concept of the law, but varying and particularized traditional codes of social behavior: folk justice. The skilful researcher can use these records not only to study social deviance, but also to illumine family structure, customs and holidays, folklife pursuits, verbal behavior, and oral art in community situations.²⁶

Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, the English kings attempted to create a unified system of justice by bringing local and manorial courts under a

common legal standard. The transition was long and painful. Records reveal a persistent struggle between community practice and legal ideal. Because the communal impulse was strong even within the courtroom, records from as late as the seventeenth century reveal much more about community behavior than about the letter of the law. Martha Francois has remarked that sociologists working with modern problems are amazed at the amount and quality of the data she has amassed to illustrate community deviance in Elizabethan England.²⁷ Because the ecclesiastical and commons courts of that period made it their business to "legislate morality," we have surprisingly rich accounts of sexual behavior, verbal abuse, and other sorts of daily conduct which are nearly impossible to document so thoroughly in modern Western culture. Thus, the study of medieval community helps the folklorist in two ways, presenting both a general model of conflict between community and society and an enormous amount of data on traditional group attitudes and activities.

By the same token, modern literary studies could gain greatly from the folkloric concept of community. Critics who conceive of literature as they practice and enjoy it--as a silent communion between author and blank pages, which, when successful, creates a second communion between written page and numberless anonymous readers--forget that the medieval period marked the transition between community and society for literature as well as for law.²⁸ The vernacular literatures of the Middle Ages were created for small localized groups of listeners and readers who themselves constituted folk groups of various kinds. Such acknowledged literary masterpieces as the *Roman de la Rose* (which enjoyed a medieval literary life of two hundred years and was translated into several languages) were exceptional. The great majority of vernacular texts appealed to specific regional and social communities. The work of the Pearl Poet, an exact contemporary of Chaucer, was composed for a rural Midlands audience and contains little which Chaucer's urban audience would identify with or, perhaps, understand. Chaucer's own audience, though urban, and to some extent international, was also a very small circle by modern standards: a few hundred nobles and wealthy bourgeois whose life

histories can be traced with relative ease through the public records of London, at that time a city with less than 40,000 inhabitants. The medieval artistic situation finds its echoes in modern regional and minority literatures. Recent folkloric studies of audience effect upon the shaping of a text should help describe not only the performance dynamic at work in Chaucer's time, but also the relationship between audience, print, and spoken word in literatures now emerging from oral cultures.

3. **The temporal distance and fragmentary nature of medieval records can help the folklorist clarify the basic issues and methods of his discipline.** This final point may seem a weak attempt to "maken vertu of necessitee," to transform a frustrating, almost paralyzing lack of contextual information ironically into a scholarly strength. But there is more than a hint of truth in such a view. Although the paucity of medieval data is often stunning, and although we still have not developed the methodologies needed to answer some of the most basic questions pertaining to medieval folklore, such impediments have often served to sharpen the minds of medievalists and have given rise to remarkably ingenious methods of problemsolving.

Students of modern culture often lose themselves in formless mountains of data from which they must try to extract relevant information. The medievalist is faced with the opposite problem. If he is clever enough and his solutions work, he may be able to help the modernist identify relevant trends which could otherwise be obscured by less pertinent data. A classic example is M.M. Postan's study of crime and economy in medieval England.²⁹ With only two sorts of evidence--crop-yield statistics and criminal court records--Postan was able to show that crime invariably rises in times when food supplies are limited. An embarrassingly obvious conclusion? Perhaps; but there is evidence to suggest that the resourcefulness demanded of the medievalist has inspired scholarly breakthroughs which have served the needs of students of more recent history. In 1941, George C. Homans, working with records similar to Postan's, skilfully created a holistic description of day-to-day life on an English manor. **English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century** is a landmark study of the lifestyles of lord and peasant alike. Almost thirty

years would pass before John Demos' *A Little Commonwealth* (1970) would use similar methods to produce a holistic study of New England folklife in the seventeenth century, though there were certainly more available records for the latter book.³⁰

More recently, Le Roy Ladurie's enormously insightful study of *Montaillou* used inquisition records as its sole source for reconstructing the cultural economic, social, religious, and artistic life of a parish in Southern France at the beginning of the fourteenth century.³¹ Le Roy Ladurie's work demonstrates that Dundes' concept of "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview" can indeed be applied to community studies.³² *Montaillou* provides many methodological hints and theoretical inspirations useful to folklorists now embarking on contemporary community studies. Even the most glaring shortcomings of medieval studies lend strength to other disciplines.

There is yet one more aspect of this fragmentary record which I invoke as a justification for medieval folklore studies. In her recent and very popular book on French medieval history, Barbara Tuchman proposes that the fourteenth century is *A Distant Mirror* of our own--that the events, attitudes, hopes, and fears of that time can both comfort and inform us now.³³ Behind that notion there seems to lie a conviction that if we do not know all of what happened then, we at least know what we **have to know**. This conviction, in turn, would be rooted in a belief that, somehow, the most important information will survive--that indeed, its survival is the final proof of its importance. This belief is not so different from one of the guiding tenets of oral history studies: that what people remember and consistently recall from their past is the best measure of their own view of the present.

Therefore, at the risk of being labeled a fatalist or a mystic, I propose that the medieval period has given the folklorist all he needs to work with outside the knowledge of his own time, because the most important information has survived, and that, through a gradual process of attrition and reinterpretation, it has passed down less of what we do not have to know than have all more recent times. The folklore of that time still survives in abundance and needs only a clear intent and a sound methodology

to come to light. Once these things are brought into play, what remains may reveal as much about the folklore of the present age as can be discovered in studies which lack a similar time-depth. If students of medieval folklore must study fragments, they have at least some very substantial fragments to work with. Like the weathered statues staring down from the tympanums of Chartres and Notre Dame, medieval folk culture rewards the watcher who looks long and hard into its face:

Fragmentary stone faces reflect.
 Time discerns.
 You are enabled in retrospect.
 Age erases
 easy smiles
 and half-earned pain
 from earthly faces.
 The past is pieces,
 but it's all your worth.

Carl Lindahl

NOTES

1

This quote, a paraphrase from Edgar Wind's **Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance**, 2nd ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 238, has been employed by medievalists to show their dissatisfaction with folklore theories and other interpretations which overemphasize elements of social determinism in the works of great medieval authors.

2

Roger Sherman Loomis, "Arthurian Tradition and Folklore," **Folklore** 69 (1958): 2.

3

Richard M. Dorson's **The British Folklorists: A History** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 1-43, provides an excellent summary of this formative period of folklore studies. For information on the battle between the Ancients and the Moderns, particularly as it pertained to ballad studies, see Albert B. Friedman,

The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Vedal's contributions are summarized by Sigurd B. Hustvedt, **Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries** (New York: American Scandinavian Foundation, 1916), pp. 21-25. For a summary of the works of Arne Magnusson, see Theodore M. Andersson, **The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

4

Bishop Thomas Percy, **Reliques of Ancient English Poetry**, ed. Henry B. Wheatly, 3 vols. (London, 1886; reprint New York: Dover, 1966), vol. 1, p. 8.

5

Joseph Bédier, **Les Fabliaux** (Paris, 1893). For a brief history of this period in French folklore studies see Harry A. Senn, "Gaston Paris as Folklorist (1867-1895): The Rise and Decline of French Folklore Studies," **Journal of the Folklore Institute** 12 (1975): 47-56.

6

Fernand Baldensperger, "Littérature comparée: Le mot et la chose," quoted in Ulrich Weisstein, **Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 4.

7

For an account of the decline of the anthropological folklorists, see Dorson, **British Folklorists**, pp. 266-315.

8

Matthew Arnold, "The Study of Poetry" [1880], in **The Works of Matthew Arnold**, 15 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1903), vol. 4, pp. 23-24.

9

Ruth Crosby, "Chaucer and the Custom of Oral Delivery," **Speculum** 13 (1938): 413-32; Mary Giffin, **Studies on Chaucer and His Audience** (Québec: Editions L'Eclair, 1956); Mary N. Hallmundsson, "A Collection of Materials for a Study of the Literary Scene at the End of the 14th Century," unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1970.

10

A typical reaction to Crosby's evidence is Dieter Mehl, "The Audience of Chaucer's **Troilus and Criseyde**,"

in **Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins**, ed. Beryl Rowland (London: George Allen, 1974), pp. 173-89.

11

Walter Anderson, **Ein volkskundliches Experiment**, Folklore Fellows Communications, no. 141 (Helsinki, 1951), pp. 3-45.

12

The best and most thorough summary of the Parry-Lord theory is Albert B. Lord, **The Singer of Tales** (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960).

13

Mark Azadovskii, **A Siberian Tale Teller**, trans. James R. Dow, Center for Intercultural Studies in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, monograph no. 2 (Austin: University of Texas, 1974); Linda Dégh, **Folk-Tales and Society: Story-Telling in a Hungarian Peasant Community** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969); James H. Delargy, **The Gaelic Story-Teller** (London: British Academy, 1945).

14

Representative works by these scholars include Richard Bauman, "Verbal Art as Performance," **American Anthropologist** 77 (1975): 290-311; and the articles by Roger D. Abrahams, İlhan Başgöz, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in **Folklore: Performance and Communication**, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

15

Jack Goody, ed., **Literacy in Traditional Societies** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 27-68; Walter J. Ong, S.J., **The Presence of the Word** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

16

Linda Dégh, "The Impact of Literature," in **Folktales and Society**, pp. 146-63; Sandra K.D. Stahl, "Style in Oral and Written Narrative," **Folklore Preprints Series** 3:1 (1975); see also Carl Lindahl, "On the Borders of Oral and Written Art," **Folklore Forum** 11 (1978): 94-123.

17

Derek Brewer, "Gothic Chaucer," in **Writers and Their Background: Geoffrey Chaucer** (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), pp. 23-24.

18

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