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## BEHAVIORISM AND THE TEXT<sup>[\*]1</sup>

In his recent survey of "Concepts of Folklore and Folk Life Studies," Richard M. Dorson points out the "emergence" of a new movement of "energetic younger folklorists in the United States" who do not yet "form a cohesive school."<sup>2</sup> Using one of the key concepts recurrent in the writings of members of this group, he assigns them the "umbrella-name 'contextual'"<sup>3</sup> and points out the behavioristic nature of their studies. "The emergence of this sophisticated circle of youthful academic folklorists," Dorson continues, "heralds a new departure in the writing of folklore books of the future. Texts and annotations will be *subordinated* [my italics] to close analysis of group dynamics and psycho-cultural relationships. Field work will become a more elaborate enterprise than the securing of verbatim texts."<sup>4</sup>

An underlying current of skepticism countervails this positive view; Dorson refers to members of this movement as "young Turks," an idiom impregnated with suggestions of internal strife, for it refers to "any of a group of younger people seeking to take control of an organization, party, country, etc., from an entrenched, usually conservative group of older people"<sup>5</sup>--from those to whom Dorson refers as "orthodox" folklorists. There is no evidence that the transition of influence (or "power," if you will) is going to be easy or one of normal development within folkloristic circles.

Reacting specifically to Richard Bauman's proposal "Towards a Behavioral Theory of Folklore,"<sup>6</sup> D.K. Wilgus expressed the general mood and attitude held by the majority of "text" oriented folklorists toward this new "behavioral" approach. Wilgus cites the unfavorable reaction of an unnamed European colleague to the most representative production of the new approach. *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, which are labeled "turgid" and "jargonese."<sup>7</sup> Dorson has also pointed out this characteristic of the contextual (and behavioral) approach when he states that "As yet, this rising generation of folklorists has not produced the single monolithic work expressing their thought, but rather they have advanced their views in highly theoretical papers,"<sup>8</sup> which have been characterized by conspicuous absence of texts. Similarly, Herbert Halbert in his eventful address to the 1974 <sup><146></sup> American Folklore Society Meeting<sup>9</sup>

\* Published in: *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie and Felix Oinas, eds. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1976), pp. 145-160.

[\*Note: Endnotes in the original are given here as footnotes. Original pagination is indicated within angular brackets: <>: <146> = p. 146 in the original].

<sup>1</sup> Adapted in part from Hasan M. El-Shamy, "Folkloric Behavior: A Theory for the Study of the Dynamics of Traditional Culture" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore and Folklife Studies," in *Folklore and Folklife Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972) p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 2nd ed.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Bauman, "Towards a Behavioral Theory of Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore* 82 (1969):166-70.

<sup>7</sup> D.K. Wilgus, "The Text is the Thing," *Journal of American Folklore* 86 (1973):241.

<sup>8</sup> Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore," p. 45.

complained of the dominance of abstract "jargon" and the absence of actual studies based on texts.

Wilgus sums up the orientation of the new group by pointing out the fact "...that the behavioral approach in simple terms is concerned with action, performance, process" consequently, in spite of the expressed interest in the "text," in addition to "texture" and context<sup>10</sup> the "text is rapidly becoming a dirty word and 'thing oriented' a favorite purgative expression,"<sup>11</sup> and he concludes that "The Text is the Thing."

As Bauman's call for a behavioral approach indicates, these recent "behavioristic" studies seem to have been guided by the need for an adequate methodology permitting the treatment of lore in an objective manner congruent with the general dictates of the philosophy of science. The outcome of the application of such a methodology would naturally be the establishment of models and laws which explain the occurrence of lore and ascertain the different forces which govern its dynamics. In the search for these models and laws, folklorists have adopted concepts which have proven their worth in other fields--or as Dorson puts it, they have developed a "leaning toward the social sciences, particularly anthropology, linguistics, and the culture aspects of psychology and sociology."<sup>12</sup>

From various branches of psychology and especially more recently from behavioral psychology, the borrowing has largely been limited to concepts and characteristic terms. Such terms, used by folklorists as a matter of course, are often employed out of their systemic relevance. For example, "behavior" and "behaviorism" are two key words presently recurring in the majority of literature in the socio-cultural sciences, yet in folklore (and also in anthropology, for that matter) they are most loosely applied and are rarely used in accurate conformity with their meanings in their home psychological context. The conceptual changes were abrupt; most of the borrowed terminology still remains alien to the parlance of the mainstream studies on lore, and therefore, there is a communication gap between the "new" and the "old" approaches, and the conceptual "behavioristic" writings do appear jargonistic. More significantly is the complaint "...that we're all unsure as to what we're supposed to be studying and why."<sup>13</sup> Specifically, in view of the ways in which "behaviorism" is perceived and practiced by this influential and prolific team of folklorists, and the strong reaction it generates in folkloristic circles, an explanatory statement of behavioristic psychology, its previous impact, and its potential for the future of folklore scholarship is necessary.

## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND FOLKLORE

To set behaviorism in its psychological context, a brief review of the basic contributions of "psychology" in general to the study of lore would be <sup><147></sup> helpful in clarifying the current guidelines for folkloristic studies. We may speak of three different types of psychological theories, each adopting an essentially different model of man. Abraham S. Luchins has described these three models as the *homo volens* which views man as a creature of striving motivated by blind unconscious inner urges; the *homo mechanicus* which views man as a machine that can be programmed to produce certain responses to specific stimuli; and the *homo sapiens* which views man as a cognitive creature capable of guiding his own behavior.<sup>14</sup> These models represent psychoanalytic, behavioristic, and cognitive psychologies  
(. . . continued)

<sup>9</sup> American Folklore Society Meeting, Portland, Oregon, 31 October to 3 November 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Alan Dundes, "Texture, Text, and Context," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 28 (1964):251-65.

<sup>11</sup> Wilgus, "The Text is the Thing," p. 244.

<sup>12</sup> Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore," p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Wilgus, "The Text is the Thing," p. 241.

<sup>14</sup> Abraham S. Luchins, *Group Therapy: A Guide* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 93-95.

respectively.

The one type of psychology which has most dominated folkloristic studies is the psychoanalytic. Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) introduced theories concerning the subconscious and cultural phenomena which have had profound influence on the modern fields of folklore and anthropology. Surveys of various theoretical orientations by M.S. Edmonson<sup>15</sup> and J.H. Brunvand<sup>16</sup> present the psychoanalytical orientation as *the* psychological theory of folklore. Dorson has maintained this same viewpoint in two articles published a decade apart.<sup>17</sup> In their comprehensive survey of various psychological theories employed by anthropologists, George and Louise Spindler indicate that during the period between 1929-1952 (and in fact until the mid-sixties) psychoanalytic and neo-psychoanalytic (Jung, Kardiner, Linton, Fromm, Erikson) interpretations have dominated psychologically oriented anthropology.<sup>18</sup> Scholars contributing to psychoanalytic studies have been prolific, producing an abundance of theories and approaches which concern the folklorist and the anthropologist.

Freud's hypothesis as outlined in his *Totem and Taboo* (1913) emphasize the universal symbolic expression in myth of historically *inherited* subconscious traits characteristic of all mankind. This claim rested on evolutionary tenets of human "primordial horde" suggested by W. Robertson Smith and biological tenets of "the inheritance of acquired cultural traits" claimed by Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829).

C.G. Jung, one of Freud's early followers, diverged from Freud on the nature of symbols by proposing increased emphasis on the universal nature of certain mystical symbols. In agreement with Freud, however, he suggested the possibility of genetic transmission of cultural material. In this respect both the Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic arguments are clearly Lamarckian in their account for cultural continuities. They stand in sharp contrast with the later view of culture as an exclusively acquired entity.

The most significant criticism raised against the psychoanalytic approach, which is currently well-accepted, is its blindness to the social and other forces peculiar to certain cultures.<sup>19</sup> The psychoanalytic theory emphasized man's role as the originator of his culture more than his role as a product of socio-culture forces. Although the neo-Freudian school, especially those thinkers identified with the Berlin psychoanalytic center (Adler, <148> Horney, and Fromm)<sup>20</sup> revised Freud's original theories in this respect; the role of culture in their schemes is a minor one, especially when compared to cognitive, and, to a far lesser extent, behavioristic learning theories.

The psychoanalytic approach to the study of culture has also been attacked on theoretical grounds which are of less immediate importance to the practical problems in folklore scholarship *but* which are

<sup>15</sup> Munro S. Edmonson, *Lore, an Introduction to the Science of Folklore and Literature* (New York:Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), pp. 39-42.

<sup>16</sup> Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore, An Introduction*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), pp. 85-86.

<sup>17</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Current Folklore Theories," *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963):105-09, and Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore".

<sup>18</sup> George and Louise Spindler, "Psychology in Anthropology: Application to Culture Change," *Psychology: A Study of a Science* in Sigmund Koch, ed., *Investigation of Man as Socious: Their Place in Psychology and Social Sciences*, 8 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) 6:510-51.

<sup>19</sup> For a concise account of this criticism, see Dorson, "Current Folklore Theories" , and Hasan El-Shamy, "Folkloric Behavior," pp. 3-5.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1925); Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Horton, 1939); Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1955). <159>

relevant to the systemic congruence in this field. The issue here is a philosophical one regarding the ontological aspects of culture and the allied "levels" of human activities: the psychological, social, and cultural. In 1911 Franz Boas observed that the explanation of cultural phenomena in terms of innate biological differences leads to the assumption that "the whole problem of the development of culture is...reduced to the study of psychological and social conditions which are common to mankind as a whole and to the effects of historical happenings and of natural and cultural environment."<sup>21</sup>

Boas' criticism that the psychological treatment of culture is a reduction of cultural phenomena to a psychological level was elaborated by Alfred Kroeber, whose theory of the "super-organic" sought to explain cultural phenomena without reducing culture to the plane of purely psychic activities and products. In 1917 Kroeber wrote: "The reason why mental heredity has nothing to do with civilization is that civilization is not mental action but a body or stream of products of mental exercise...Mentality relates to the individual. The social or cultural, on the other hand, is in its very essence non-individual."<sup>22</sup>

Kroeber, pursuing Franz Boas' criticism, denied that the three levels of human existence--the individual, the social, and the cultural--were linked together. "As against Spencer and other sociologists, Kroeber maintains the complete disparity of biological and cultural evolution."<sup>23</sup> Thus he concluded, "The dawn of the social...is not a link in any chain, not a step in the path, but a leap to another plane."<sup>24</sup> David Bidney states:

"...Kroeber came to regard the abstract mental products of society, which he called culture or civilization, as reality *sui generis*, subject to autonomous historical process of development which were independent of psychological experiences and actual social behavior."<sup>25</sup>

Thus culture, being "the superpsychic product of special mental process," would not accept psychology as a tool for investigating its phenomena and measuring its dimensions. This superorganic view of culture led to the "...rejection of psychologizing by some anthropologists; they see such a focus as a form of reduction (from the cultural level) that is likely to lead nowhere."<sup>26</sup> In other words explaining such cultural phenomena as the mythology of a nation or ethnic group in psychoanalytical terms of the "ego" and the "subconscious" would be as meaningless as measuring weight in feet and inches and distance in pounds and ounces. Accordingly, the superorganic theory of culture would necessitate avoiding psychological as well as sociological explanations of cultural phenomena. In folkloristic terms, if we were to accept, for example, C. Lévi-Strauss' superorganic structural viewpoint that man does not think himself through myths, but myths think themselves through man,<sup>27</sup> then the application of psychological principles to the study of "myths" would be erroneous. According to the superorganic view it is reductionism, while according to the "new" proposition "Towards a Behavioral Theory of Folklore," it would be unsystematic. Similarly as Wilgus has observed, the definition of "folklore forms" as "superorganic" by a leading contextualist would be inconsistent.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, such a definition should also entail dismissing the social context altogether.

The dominance of the psychoanalytic approach in folkloristics may be attributed to two main

<sup>21</sup> Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York 1938), p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> Alfred Kroeber, "The Superorganic," *American Anthropologist* 19 (1917):192.

<sup>23</sup> David Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology* (New York: Columbia Press, 1953) p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> Kroeber, "The Superorganic," p. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Spindlers, "Psychology in Anthropology," p. 543.

<sup>27</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le cru et le cuit*, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1964) p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Wilgus, "The Text is the Thing," p. 242.

factors. First, the search for explanations for the uniform cross-cultural phenomena led anthropologists and folklorists to accept theories which are applicable to mankind in general and transcend the particular characteristics of single societies. Thus it was only logical that the kinds of psychology contributing most to anthropology were primarily psychoanalytically oriented models which were most analogous to anthropological models.<sup>29</sup> Another reason that psychoanalysis has had such a major influence on folklore scholarship is that as a technique it derives its basic data about human experience from verbal descriptions of that experience which it (erroneously) views as the equivalent of a person's experience. For example, a dream and the verbal report by the dreamer about his experience are *not* the same thing. Because of the predominantly verbal nature of lore as then perceived, both psychoanalysts and folklorists discovered that verbal reports by the patient and the verbal expression of "myths" may stem from the same experiential conditions and believed that the psychoanalytic postulates can explain both groups of verbal phenomena.

In this regard (as will be demonstrated at a later stage in this paper) the psychoanalytic approach differs radically from the behavioristic.

Although the psychoanalytic approach has largely declined in anthropological studies, it still lurks in numerous recent folkloristic writings.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LEARNING AND CULTURE

The idea that culture is "acquired" was introduced by Edward B. Taylor in 1871 in his opening statement to *Primitive Culture*. This concept was supported by such anthropologists as Clark Wissler, Ruth Benedict, and Ralph Linton, in opposition to the previously accepted theory espoused by Lamarck, Darwin, and Spencer which attributed cultural phenomena to biologically determined conditions. However, the idea that culture is "behavior" was introduced and defended in 1934 by Kimball Young,<sup>30</sup> a sociologist and social psychologist who is virtually unknown in the field of anthropology. Subsequently Herskovits presented and maintained the view that "The clearest definition of culture in psychological terms states: <150> *Culture is the learned portion of human behavior.*" Herskovits stressed the learning process as the mechanism which keeps culture alive.<sup>31</sup>

The concept that culture is acquired through learning has undergone constant modification and clarification since its introduction to the field of anthropology. Under the influence of learning theories the idea that culture is acquired gained a sharply empirical dimension. The impact of behavioristic learning theories on the study of culture led to insistence on empiricism in defining cultural phenomena, and to the denial of superorganicism. E.A. Hoebel suggested that the rejection by anthropologists of Kroeber's classical superorganic theory was "...a legacy of behaviorism in psychology."<sup>32</sup>

Experimental learning psychology inevitably had some impact upon cultural studies which at the time were trying to steer away from viewing culture as an abstract logical construct, rather than an actual, behavioristic entity. The Spindlers report that "If stimulus-response reinforcement theory, the frustration-aggression hypothesis, and aspects of cognitive theory can be lumped together as broadly representing what can be called 'learning theory,' this field of psychology runs a close second to the

<sup>29</sup> Spindlers, "psychology in Anthropology," p. 543.

<sup>30</sup> Kimball Young *Introduction to Sociology* (New York: American Book, 1934), pp. 18-19.

<sup>31</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works, The Science of Cultural Anthropology*. (New York: Alfred Knopf Co., 1964) p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> E.A. Hoebel, *Man in the Primitive World*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949).

psychoanalytic and neo-psychoanalytic category in extent of influence upon anthropology."<sup>33</sup>

The empirical approach to the study of culture resulted in the use of the term "culture" to denote basic empirical principles: culture is learned behavior which is necessary for problem solving and adjustment in society. The influence of learning theory, particularly that advanced by Clark Hull, reached a high point between 1936 and 1948;<sup>34</sup> however, a few of the psychological attempts to develop a framework within which to analyze cultural stability and change employed learning theory. Studies on cultural diffusion began to emphasize the role of the individual as a culture carrier--a factor which had previously been ignored.

A. Irving Hallowell, for example, states that individuals are never passive culture bearers; abstract "cultures" never meet, only individuals meet. His concept of cultural diffusion is built on psychological factors in learning, such as motivations in contact situations, stimuli and responses, anxiety reduction, and rewards and punishments.<sup>35</sup> All these factors first appeared in Neal E. Miller and John Dollard's 1941 psychological account of *Social Learning and Imitation* which adopted Hull's learning theory and served as the theoretical basis for anthropologist Hallowell's work. However, the new approach represented in such pioneering investigations did not radically alter the existing state of culture studies.

These psychological concepts had their greatest impact in the 40s and early 50s. By the mid 60s the general attitude was that "Aside from the Hullian theory, attention to the process of learning and thinking, and to the nature of intelligence, has been minimal in anthropology."<sup>36</sup> The utilization of psychological concepts in anthropology declined considerably during the 50s and early 60s.

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## BEHAVIORISM

Behaviorists and learning psychologists assert that "The essence of behaviorism is its philosophy of science," which dates back to Auguste Comte's *The Positive Philosophy* (1830-1842). In referring to behavioristic learning theories, W.F. Hill states that "For those theories the only acceptable basic concepts in theory-building are those that have directly observable referents...subjective experience is clearly regarded as a secondary phenomenon to be inferred from observed behavior."<sup>37</sup>

It is this type of behaviorism that Bauman's call for a "... Behavioral Theory In Folklore" belongs. As such, behaviorism is not alien to folkloristics. The historic-geographic method represents a strict behavioral-objective approach to the study of lore. Although recently it has not received wide attention and has been criticized as inadequate and costly,<sup>38</sup> the problems of the Finnish school are ones of omission of such vital data as age and sex of the narrator, semantic and para-linguistic narrative devices, rather than the commission of non-behavioristic (i.e., subjective or impressionistic) research practices.

Behaviorism as a philosophy of science represented by a rigorous methodology must be

<sup>33</sup> Spindlers, "Psychology in Anthropology," p. 535.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 519.

<sup>35</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, "Sociological Aspects of Acculturation," *Science of Man in the World Crisis*, ed. Ralph Linton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945) pp. 171-200.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Gladwin, "Culture and Logical Process," *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Ward Goodenough (New York, 1964) p. 168.

<sup>37</sup> John W. McDavid and Herbert Harari, *Social Psychology: Individuals, Groups, Societies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) p. 33. See also Winfred F. Hill, *Learning, A Survey of Psychological Interpretation* (Scranton: Chandler Publishing Company, 1971), p. 216.

<sup>38</sup> See Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore," pp. 9-10.

differentiated from the legacy of the behavioristic school of learning as represented in the works of Thorndike, Hull, Miller and Dollard, Mowrer, Spence, Skinner, and others. All these scholars used the basic stimulus-response (S-R) formula with varying degrees of application of the cue (intermediate stimuli) and effect (reward and punishment).

When applied to lore, it is imperative that two aspects of a response be differentiated: (1) the initial response *per se* such as narrating, singing, dancing, performing, etc., (i.e., the initial action) and (2) the style, "texture," form and content, or what may be referred to as *the measurement of that response* (i.e., the folkloristic item itself as a whole--whose details, in turn, may also be studied behavioristically).<sup>39</sup> In folkloristic terms the case may be stated in the following manner: what makes (stimulus and cues) a person (organism) tell (response) a tale (the measurement of the response) under which conditions (cues) and with what results (effect)? Naturally, the same is true of any other category of lore--material, kinesic, musical, and so forth.

Folklore research, while emphasizing the regularities of traditional behavior as they are transmitted from one person to another and from one generation to the next,<sup>40</sup> and the "unbelievable stability" of lore, to use Walter Anderson's words, has made only minimal use of behavioristic learning theory. It is ironic to observe that in the first quarter of this century leading folklorists were dealing with problems contingent to behavioristic learning psychology; learning, forgetting and remembering were recognized and examined by leading folklorists and yet this aspect of their work exerted practically no influence upon the field.

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Antti Aarne may be argued to have been the pioneer of viewing lore in behavioristic terms as early as 1913.<sup>41</sup> While the Grimm brothers interpreted the similarities in tales told by different peoples as proof of an original Indo-European common source, Aarne, in contrast, thought that questions of stability and change were answered in "the inner life of Märchen," leading him to conclude that "The changes follow 'specific laws' of thinking and imagination."<sup>42</sup> He proceeded to formulate laws of change according to these rules. However, he dealt only with "changes in the Märchen,"<sup>43</sup> which constituted only "forgetting" and "changes,"<sup>44</sup> leaving his proposed laws of "learning" and consequent "stability" unexplained.

In 1920, shortly after Aarne introduced his laws of change, Frederick C. Bartlett,<sup>45</sup> a psychologist, conducted an experiment on remembering folkloric material. In a later work,<sup>46</sup> Bartlett stated that his purpose was to test the effect of "Repeated Reproduction by the Same Individual," and "Serial Reproduction" on a "...story<sup>47</sup>...[which] belonged to a level of culture and a social environment

<sup>39</sup> Hasan El-Shamy, "Brother and Sister Type 872\*, A behavioristic Analysis of an Arab Oikotype, Pt.1" (Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, Portland, Oregon, 31 October to 3 November 1974).

<sup>40</sup> See El-Shamy, "Folkloric Behavior," pp. 29-35.

<sup>41</sup> Antti Aarne, *Leitfaden der Vergleichenden Märchenforschung*, Folklore Fellows Communications No. 13 (Helsinki, 1913).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick C. Bartlett, "Some Experiments on the Reproduction of Folk Stories," *Folklore* 31 (1920): 30-47.

<sup>46</sup> Frederick C. Bartlett, *Remembering, A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932).

<sup>47</sup> Actually a belief-legend titled "The War of Ghosts" from Franz Boas' "Kathlamet Texts," *Bureau of American Ethnology* 26, (1901):182-84.

exceedingly different from those of...[the] subjects."<sup>48</sup>

Bartlett noted that "When a story is passed on from one person to another, each man repeating, as he imagines, what he has heard from the last narrator, it undergoes many successive changes before it at length arrives at that relatively fixed form in which it may become current throughout the whole community." Thus he was dealing with two distinct problems: the mechanism of transmitting material from one person to another, and the effect of perceiving alien cultural and social values on that mechanism. Thus he was partly concerned with, in today's psychological parlance, cross-cultural perception and cognitions.

Bartlett, unlike his psychoanalytic counterparts, did not theorize or hypothesize, rather, he experimented "...to discover the principles according to which successive versions in such a process of change may be traced."<sup>49</sup> Bartlett's major concern was discovering the social and cultural factors which exerted change and instability on the folktale. He took it for granted that changes would take place and was interested in the socio-cultural aspects of these changes. However, we can infer a second conclusion implicit in the context of his experiment: that lack of repetition caused instability in the text in both cases of "Repeated Reproduction by the Same Individual" and "Serial Reproduction".

A controversy developed between Walter Anderson and Albert Wesselski which reflects their awareness of the behavioristic nature of the forces governing the stability of lore. In conclusion to his monumental work, *Kaiser and Abt* (1923), Anderson offered some "General remarks" resulting from his study. The first observation was "The Law of Self-correction of Folk Narratives,"<sup>50</sup> a law intended to explain J. Bédier's remark on the changes occurring in a folkloric item as it is expressed in various cultures.<sup>51</sup> In a <153> footnote, Anderson stated that the "law of self-correction" is not limited to narrative genres of folklore but it "is also applicable to songs, riddles, proverbs, etc."<sup>52</sup> The law which Anderson formulated sought to establish the factors through which "this unbelievable stability" is to be explained.<sup>53</sup>

Anderson introduced two psychological factors. The first, explicitly formulated, was the "law of frequency," "law of exercise," or "repetition," a concept expressed in the Latin proverb "*Repititio est mater studiorum*,"<sup>54</sup> and the second was the concept that *cues* elicit and guide responses to drives.<sup>55</sup> Although Anderson did not use these psychological terms, his concepts were surprisingly identical with the current psychological ones. Anderson's inclination towards some principles of learning psychology had little effect on the orientations of other folklorists, just as Bartlett's experiment had failed to draw the attention of psychologists to lore.

Eight years after Anderson's theory of the stability of folktales appeared, Albert Wesselski presented

<sup>48</sup> Bartlett, *Remembering*, p. 63.

<sup>49</sup> Bartlett, "Some Experiments," p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Anderson, *Kaiser und Abt*, Folklore Fellows Communication no.42 (Helsinki, 1923), p. 397. For a detailed discussion and critique of Anderson and related works, see Linda Dégh and Andrew Vazsonyi, "The Hypothesis of Multi-Conduit Transmission in Folklore," *Folklore, Performance, and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben Amos and Kenneth Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton & Co., in press).

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Bédier, *Les fabliaux* (Paris 1895), p. 228.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, *Kaiser Und Abt*, p. 397, n. 1. <160>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 399.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 400-2.



a rebuttal in the form of a demonstration experiment which was the first non-psychological experiment.<sup>56</sup>

Wesselski attributed the idea for his experiment to Fredrich Schlegel's comment that folksongs were produced through the inevitability of degeneration in elite literary poetry through the process of transmission.<sup>57</sup> Schlegel suggested that this degenerative process could be verified through a hypothetical demonstration experiment and provided the outline for such an undertaking. He also envisaged the results which he forecast as inevitable, namely that a "first class poem" will degenerate through oral transmission into a folksong.

Following this pattern Wesselski set up a demonstration experiment to establish the amount of retention "older children" achieve from one hearing of a folktale (Type 410, Sleeping Beauty). Wesselski was certain that the results would coincide with Schlegel's predictions and defined his own purpose as the establishment of only the "degree" of "disintegration."<sup>58</sup> Wesselski refused as "the exception"<sup>59</sup> rather than the rule Anderson's explanation of folktale stability in terms of oral repetition.

Sixteen years later Anderson refuted Wesselski's conceptual attacks and tried to avoid what he called Bartlett's methodological "major errors" with a second demonstration experiment designed to establish "the effect of serial reproduction on oral transmission." This demonstration experiment was conducted between 16 June and 22 July 1947 and involved 36 students from the University of Kiel divided into three "tradition-chains."<sup>60</sup> The results of this demonstration experiment and those of an earlier experiment which he had conducted in Tartu (Dorpat<sup>61</sup> whose manuscripts were lost), prove to be "exactly the same."<sup>62</sup>

Six demonstration experiments are known or reported to have been conducted in this field--Bartlett's Cambridge experiment in 1920; Anderson's Tartu experiment in the 20s; Wesselski's Komotau experiment in 1931; <154> Anderson's second Kiel experiment in 1947 (published in 1951); Gyula Ortutay's Budapest experiment in 1953,<sup>63</sup> and Kurt Scheir's Gauting experiment in 1955.<sup>64</sup> All have led to the same conclusion: lack of repetition results in failure to reproduce the material correctly and the ensuing distortion is produced by idiosyncratic and cultural differences characteristic of the individual subjects. More significantly, all these studies were concerned with specific *texts* and the derivation of theory from actual live behavior contexts.

Finally, it should be pointed out that Bartlett's experiment, as conducted by Anderson, virtually served as a model for all of the experiments which followed. It will be remembered that Anderson was interested in *positive* aspects, such as learning and stability, but under Bartlett's influence he (as did Aarne) turned to negative aspects of transmission process, such as forgetting and change, without ever trying to [rove his original assertion that stability in folk narrative relies upon repetition.

With the exception of the Bartlett-Anderson approach, which itself when compared to the Freudian

<sup>56</sup> The term "demonstration experiment" is used to distinguish this form of experimental investigation from "control experiment" or laboratory experimentation which is carried out under definite, controlled conditions.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Albert Wesselski, *Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens* (Reichenberg, i.B., 1931), p. 127.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> Walter Anderson, *Eine Volkskundliches Experiment* Folklore Fellows Communication no.141 (1951).

<sup>61</sup> Walter Anderson gives a resume of this work in "Ein Volksunliches Experiment; see p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Walter Anderson *Eine Neue Arbeit zur Experimentellen Volkskunde*, Folklore Fellows Communications, no. 168 (1956), p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Anderson, *Eine Neue Arbeit*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>64</sup> Unpublished PhD diss. discussed in Anderson's *Eine Neue Arbeit*, see especially p. 6.

approach has had only sporadic impact on folklore scholarship over the past half century, learning psychology has largely been ignored by folklore studies. This situation persists in spite of attempts by leading folklorists to establish laws for stability and change in folklore. Although concepts and terms of learning theory have been unwittingly adopted by folklorists, no learning theory has yet been applied in a field which is primarily concerned with the regularities in traditional behavior.

An example of such independent endeavors is Gyula Ortutay's "Principles of Oral Transmission in Folk Culture,"<sup>65</sup> in which he discusses "acceptance by public," "repudiation," and "refusal,"<sup>66</sup> without reference to the law of effect in learning theory. He also discusses "modeling,"<sup>67</sup> following Hans Naumann's concept of "imitation," and introduces the concept of "affinity" and the "law of attraction"<sup>68</sup> without reference to the theory of contiguity and association as explained by Guthrie and Watson or Thorndike's sublaws of "polarity," and "belongingness," or the cognitive psychological concepts of "cognitive system," and "grouping."

Numerous other folklorists have used individual learning principles in connection with psychological characteristics. However, these attempts are mainly applications of fragmented concepts and not total theoretical systems.

As pointed out earlier, in psychological parlance the term "behaviorism" refers mainly to the S-R school of learning theories. As such, behavioristic psychology is by no means a total newcomer to folkloristic research. Through the functional school, it has indirectly influenced folklore scholarship over the past two decades or so. Although psychological terms for motivation (stimulus) were not used in folklore scholarship. Malinowski's influence brought such concepts as the "derivation of cultural needs," "basic <155> needs and cultural responses," and "the nature of derived needs" into use among anthropologists, and, in modified forms, among folklorists. It should be noted that Malinowski used the terms "need"<sup>69</sup> and "drive" synonymously.

Under direct influence from Miller--an exponent of Hull's learning theory--Malinowski developed his functional theory.<sup>70</sup> It states that there are basic, organic needs which create a state of distress within the organism; the organism must act to reduce the need, eliminate the drive, and restore a state of equilibrium. According to the stimulus-response formula, "Habits...; learned responses and the foundation of organizations...[are developed] to allow the basic need to be satisfied."<sup>71</sup>

For Malinowski, "origin" is an analysis of biological and geographical needs (drives) and conditions, and the devices (responses) for their satisfaction which have become social and cultural institutions. The current function of these devices is their *de facto origin*, because the original function and the present function of a cultural or social item are the same, time having no influence on function. Timeless, biological conditions, are the only factors necessary to the invention (origin) of a social or cultural device: it is recurrent universal motivations (or primary drives) which produce the cultural responses, which in turn reward the organism through the reduction of the drive state and thus becoming an

<sup>65</sup> Gyula Ortutay, "Principles of Oral Transmission in Folk Culture," *Acta Ethnographica* 8 (1959): 175-221.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Malinowski attended a graduate seminar given by Miller at Yale in 1939.

<sup>71</sup> Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, p. 90.

established habitual cultural institution.<sup>72</sup>

Since function and origin are one and the same, and origin and needs are collateral, motivation and function are inseparable. In a sense, functions *denote* drives as much as drives *determine* functions; this was the basic concept upon which Malinowski formulated his ethnological theory. theory is based on the Hullian behavioristic learning theory, with particular stress on the concept of reward or satisfaction; the formula for both the Hullian learning formula and Malinowski's function formula being Drive-Response-Reward. Unfortunately, both the process of learning and the learning mechanism have been ignored by folklorists and anthropologists, who have sought to establish the "function" (goal or result) of cultural objects in a community without referring to learning mechanisms involved in the process of achieving satisfaction.

Folklorists and cultural and social anthropologists alike had adopted Malinowski's principle of functionalism, without necessarily accepting his biological interpretation. For them, "functionalism" simply designated the instrumentality of a certain item in reducing a drive through satisfying a particular need generating that drive. In application, functionally oriented folklore studies are those which attempt to ascertain the motivation behind a specific activity which is the response. Similarly when we speak of the diverse manifest and latent functions of a single folkloristic item, we are in fact discussing the multiplexity of stimuli to which the item is elicited by its carrier as a response. In other words, the functional school actually belongs <sup><156></sup> to the S-R behavioristic school and has been concerned with the instrumentality of full institutions and total practices and *texts* in reducing certain needs in society.

Behaviorism, as pointed out earlier, adopts the *homo mechanicus* model, which "views man as a machine analogous to a complex computer that may be programmed to link certain kinds of input to certain kinds of output." As social psychologists John W. McDavid and Herbert Harari have observed, in its early forms "This model perhaps lends itself most readily to neat theoretical formulations about man's behavior,"<sup>73</sup> yet it recognizes only one aspect of man, and unlike cognitive theories, ignores human cognitions and intelligence in interpreting stimuli and adaptation to new situations. This is the most significant criticism levelled at the behavioristic learning school, especially the Skinnerian branch. It is also the main objection to Malinowski's schema.<sup>74</sup>

One possible reason that behavioristic S-R psychology has had virtually no direct influence on folklore scholarship is its procedural and experimental requirements; behaviorism stressed only overt behavior and regarded experience and consequently, the verbal description of the experience as secondary phenomena. Thus folklorists, who until recently were overwhelmingly concerned only with *verbal* lore found little attraction in the findings of behavioristic psychology in themselves, and less overt relevance in these findings to their interest in their overwhelmingly verbal-bound field.

Behavioristic learning theories however have never entirely ignored verbal learning. As pointed out by Hill "For the most part...[they] have regarded verbal learning as *too complex* [my italics] for use in theory building and have preferred to seek basic laws of learning at the level of conditioning and animal learning, leaving for later the job of applying these laws to human memory."<sup>75</sup> Evidently the so-called "behavioral" and "contextual" folklorists have found "texts" (as did behavioral psychologists) too complex to deal with, thus turning their attention to issues peripheral to the folkloristic phenomenon.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.,pp. 202-03. Malinowski's basic arguments reappear in "modern" parlance of the cybernetics psychological theory; see Hasan El-Shamy, "On Darwinian Psychological Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 15 (1974):90-91.

<sup>73</sup> McDavid and Harari, *Social Psychology*, p. 35.

<sup>74</sup> See Talcott Parsons, "Malinowski and the Theory of Social Systems," *Man and Culture*, ed. Raymond Firth (London, 1960) pp. 66-67.

<sup>75</sup> Hill, *Learning*, p. 216.

The study of lore as behavior rests on a multitude of principles and certainly can not ignore the text which, being the response around which behavior revolves, is central to all behavioristic learning formulae, as well as being the *raison d'être* for the field of folklore scholarship. Therefore, it may be concluded that the current contextual and the so-called behavioristic approaches in folklore concentrate on the immediate component of the behavioristic formula--namely the cues or the intermediate stimuli; in their schema both the stimulus (motivation, want, etc.) as well as the response as a whole (the text or the folkloric item) occupy at best only a secondary position.

In conclusion, the legacies of the three major types of psychology to folklore--that is, the psychoanalytic, the behavioristic, and the cognitive are <157> far from being equal. The psychoanalytic has decidedly dominated the scene for nearly three quarters of a century. The behavioristic-empirical, which gained some momentum in folkloristics during the second decade of this century as a matter of empirical "common sense" practiced by some eminent folklorists, was never heeded, while the behavioristic S-R theory was sidetracked and overwhelmed by the search for origins. The cognitive only appears sporadically and timidly in various recent works.

Folklorists need not seek explanation in a single type of psychological theory adopting only one model of man and excluding the other two. Psychologists themselves have come to recognize the applicability and relevance of all three types. McDavid and Harari state that "...as psychology has matured as an intellectual discipline, there has been recognition that each of these models alone is inadequate. Man is a synthesis of all three."<sup>76</sup>

Historically folklore scholarship has been concerned mainly and often exclusively with "texts". The study of specific, fairly stable, traditional, complex, formularized expressions constituted the contents of the field. Recent attempts to improve the understanding of these expressions have brought new issues into the field, such as "social interaction," and "the interpersonal behavioral event" which are the core entities for sociology and social psychology respectively and may *not* be goals in themselves for the folklorist, just as the text *per se* is not the goal for the sociologist or the social psychologist. The problem is how to achieve a balance among the individualistic or psychological, the social or folk, and the cultural or lore, in a manner that accurately reflects their state in real life situations without losing sight of the central core of the field namely the folkloristic product, be it a verbal text, a dance, or a finished material product.

Behaviorism in either one of its meanings is "text" oriented. The emphasis by Dorson, Wilgus, and other so-called orthodox folklorists on the text may be viewed as behavioristic in part, just as the new so-called 'contextual and behavioral groups' emphasis is behavioristic in part. However, behaviorism in its psychological context cannot be taken in bits and pieces, nor can behaviorism *alone* account for the entire folkloric phenomenon. What is needed in folklore scholarship is an integrative approach which would lead <158> to a better understanding of the theoretical nature of previous folkloristic studies and the development of these early accomplishments in light of recent thinking in collateral fields, rather than the abrupt abandonment of "old" theories and the adoption of fragmentary elements from "new" theories from other fields.

<sup>76</sup> McDavid and Harari, *Social Psychology*, p. 35.