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TFH: The Journal of History and Folklore, sponsored by the History and Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society, is an online peer-reviewed journal devoted to connections of folklore with history and history of folklore studies. It continues and expands on the section's print journal *The Folklore Historian* which has been published annually since 1983. *TFH's* purview includes oral history, narrative, museology, local and regional history, and historiography. We accept research articles, bibliographic studies, historiography, and translations, among a range of other types of pieces that can elucidate the intersections of history and folklore studies. The journal's contents include reports on the annual winners of the section's Wayland D. Hand Prize. Articles are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*, and back issues (from its founding in 1983 to 2008) are available online at the HathiTrust Digital Library. Back issues from 2009–2018 will be made available online in the near future.

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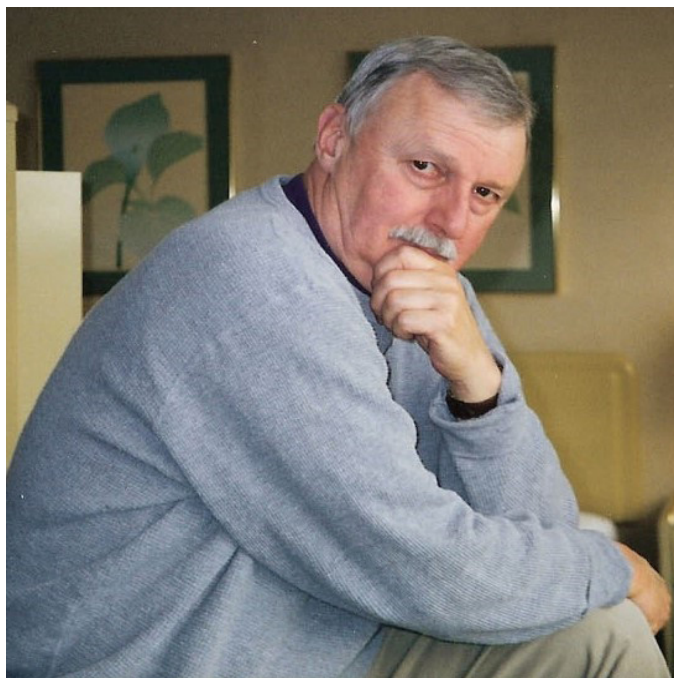
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Ronald L. Baker, 2005. Photo by Simon J. Bronner.

Simon J. Bronner

RONALD L. BAKER, FOLKLORE HISTORIAN

Ronald Lee Baker, known to his many friends and colleagues as “Ron,” epitomized in his scholarship and teaching the appellation of *Folklore Historian* that was both journal title and academic persona. A founding leader of and editor for the History and Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society that sponsors the journal, Ron died in an Indianapolis hospital on June 1, 2023, just weeks before what would have been his 86th birthday. He was interred in Clearview Cemetery in his boyhood town of Brazil, Indiana. As an organizer, he contributed to the growth of the Section and the emergence of the journal as a major scholarly source. As a folklore historian, Ron provided historical contexts of expressive traditions—including legends, jokes, songs, and proverbs—and historical interpretations of figures who contributed to the formation of a folkloristic discipline. Yet he was probably best known, deservedly so, for demonstrating the folk cultural complexity and dynamism of Indiana, often perceived in popular media and even among folklorists as epitomizing the folk notion of a vapid or insipid, even acultural, “Middle America.” Thus my tribute to Ron as eminent scholar and beneficent person is necessarily intertwined with the historiography of midwestern culture and the history of folklore studies as a discipline.

Ron is renowned for many achievements: as an author of ten books and scores of essays on literature, legend, history, onomastics, and humor; as English department chair and program developer at Indiana State University for a remarkable run of 25 years; as an honored teacher, adviser, and mentor at Indiana State University (Terre Haute), Indiana University (Bloomington and Fort Wayne), and the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign); as the primary surveyor of North American folklore courses and programs from the 1970s to the 1990s for the American Folklore Society and a leading commentator on the academic status of folklore studies; as a thoughtful consultant on integrating folkloristic pedagogy and purpose into the humanities classroom; as organizer, editor, and president of the Hoosier

Folklore Society, devoted to Indiana and midwestern cultures; as an authority on the field of nomenclature he defined and serving as vice-president of the American Name Society; and as prominent chronicler of folklore studies and interpreter of the rise of a folkloristic discipline. In one way or another, all these contributions have as their source Ron's broad historical vision for folklore studies that builds on a humanistic foundation of philosophy, language, and literature to understand the nature of tradition (see Baker 2000b, 2006, 2007c). That interdisciplinary document-centered perspective and the pragmatic work he initiated as a folklore historian prompts reflection on his impressive legacy of scholarship, teaching, and professional service.

Ron was born in Indianapolis on June 30, 1937, to a family of immigrants from Yorkshire, England, who came to the United States to work in coal mines. His background sparked an interest in his British working-class roots and the transplanted traditions of his fellow Hoosier forebears. He was raised to the southwest of Indianapolis in Brazil, Indiana, not far from Terre Haute, the home of Indiana State University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in business and economics in 1960 and a Master of Arts degree in philosophy and literature in 1961. As a boy, he joined various sports teams and was active in the Boy Scouts, rising to the highest rank of Eagle Scout. Ron recalled that his induction into the Order of the Arrow, the honor society of the Boy Scouts—with its invocation of Native American folklore and use of invented rituals and customs—piqued his interest in the study of folklore. He was indeed proud of achieving the highest Scout rank and included it on his resumé. At his funeral, his Eagle Scout sash hung on a panel with his Order medal and certificate.

Thinking that his life path should be in business to ascend to the middle class, Ron worked for Allison Aircraft Engines in Indianapolis after high school, but during his last two years of undergraduate studies in business administration and economics he was drawn to literature and philosophy classes. He subsequently enrolled in Indiana State's graduate philosophy program, unsure of where his studies would take him. He married Catherine "Cathy" Anne Neal in 1960, also from Brazil, who shared literary and cultural interests with him, but before he could advance his studies he was called to active military duty and was deployed in France.¹

Upon his return to the United States, Ron enrolled in graduate work in English at the University of Illinois, and there he was most excited by the teaching of folklore by literature professor John T. Flanagan (1906–1996). Flanagan, whose specialty was American frontier literature, impressed on Ron the dire need for folkloristic research on the Midwest as a distinctive, if underappreciated, regional culture. Flanagan included in the anthology *Folklore in American Literature* (1958)—edited with folklorist Arthur Palmer Hudson (1892–1978)—the neglected writing of Philadelphia-born Presbyterian clergyman Baynard Rush Hall (1793–1863), who contributed observations of African Americans and other rural settlers of antebellum backwoods Indiana (Hall 1958). “Rev. Mizraim Ham’s Discourse,” included in a section on “Negro Tales,” described the African American frontier camp meeting and highlighted, in Flanagan’s words, “the strong folk quality of the [African American] preacher’s language” (Flanagan and Hudson 1958, 415). Ron also discovered in the volume the writing of Vermont local color writer Rowland E. Robinson (1833–1900), who Ron later researched and whose characterization of the rustic Yankee raised comparisons with the boorish Hoosier (Robinson 1958).

To encourage Ron’s midwestern folkloristic interests, Flanagan pointed him to folk material collected from Indiana residents in the *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, published by the Hoosier Folklore Society (established in 1937 by Indiana-born folklorists Paul G. Brewster and Robert E. Allen, both of whom left the state to study and teach during the 1940s). Edited by Indiana University doctoral student in English Herbert Halpert (1911–2000), whose dissertation was on folklore from New Jersey, the *Bulletin* first appeared in 1942 but its contents were not restricted to Indiana and the featured speakers at the meetings covered international folklore (see Baker 2011). Halpert, in fact, was rather tentative about the publication’s future prospects; he wrote “[f]urther numbers will follow if sufficient interest is aroused” (1942, 1). More issues did appear, and to elevate it to a reliable journal status, the “Bulletin” in the title was dropped in 1946. *Hoosier Folklore* was replaced in 1951 by *Midwest Folklore*, edited by New Hampshire-born Scandinavian ballad scholar Edson Richmond of Indiana University; and both publications continued to print material on mainly international topics until ceasing publication in 1963. New York City-born Richard M. Dorson, head of the Folklore

Institute at Indiana University, launched in 1964 the *Journal of the Folklore Institute* (morphing into the *Journal of Folklore Research* in 1983), that in his words would “bring into focus the folklore research now being vigorously prosecuted by *dedicated scholars around the world*” (1964, 3; emphasis added). He promised that the new globally oriented journal would “maintain a section on midwestern and Hoosier matters,” but the regional coverage never materialized (Dorson 1964, 3).

Swept up in the rise of folklore interest in the United States during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ron began his doctoral studies in folklore at Indiana University in Bloomington in fall 1962 after he came back from active duty with the Indiana Air National Guard. Most of the courses he took were on comparative international folktale and folk song research, but in 1966 he attended the Summer Folklore Institute at Indiana University, which—notably for Ron—included presentations by Maine-born Indiana University professor Warren Roberts on Hoosier crafts and cemeteries. These presentations validated for Ron the significance of Indiana as a relatively untapped location for historical and ethnographic folklife research and the value of local contextual knowledge that he could bring to the material. Fresh out of his experience at the Institute, Ron became an instructor in English at Indiana State University, which began a forty-year relationship as educator and administrator with the public institution populated mostly by students from Indiana. At the university, Ron rose quickly from instructor to professor, and then in administration from folklore program director/adviser to department chair.

Ron received his Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University in 1969. Influenced by his doctoral adviser Richard Dorson (1946), who had written on New England tales and legends in historic literary sources, Ron’s dissertation covered folklore in the writings of Vermont novelist and farmer Rowland E. Robinson (1833–1900). Indeed, Ron states in his dissertation that the work “borrows both its method and thesis” from Dorson (Baker 1969c, 6; see also Baker 1996c; Dorson 1957, 1–8). With a nod to Warren Roberts’s introduction of regional material culture, Ron added in his dissertation discussion of the social and material traditions of Vermont villagers to analysis of Robinson’s use of legends and storytelling. Yet more than identifying the worthiness of Robinson’s documentation of nineteenth-century

regional folklife, Ron's special contribution in the dissertation was to show in social history the special role of local color writers, who illuminated grassroots attitudes toward race, ethnicity, and class that other early American literati omitted. More than Dorson, Ron applied a psychological principle that folklore was a performative means to deal socially with issues that were difficult to broach in everyday conversation. Ron's first published journal articles pulled from his dissertation and in 1973 he revised it as a book titled *Folklore in the Writings of Rowland E. Robinson* (1973a; see also Baker 1969b, 1969c, 1969d).

Ron's ties to local Indiana communities attracted the attention of the ethnographically oriented Hungarian folklorist Linda Dégh, who began teaching at Indiana University in 1965. After listening to Ron's accounts of Hoosier legends, Dégh had students collect local material and in 1968 she established the journal *Indiana Folklore* (publication ceased in 1980). She called on Ron to contribute regularly with his native knowledge of the region. In the two years following the journal's founding, he contributed three articles on legends that included field material collected from Indiana residents (Baker 1969a, 1970a, 1970c). As Dorson had asked about whether folklore emerged in the United States or had a historical source elsewhere, Ron asked in his essays whether local legends were unique to the region, migratory phenomena, or cognitive responses to historical and environmental circumstances (Baker 1978a; Dorson 1978; see also Baker 2004). This was a driving question that Ron pursued as the founding editor of the *Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore* in 1975 and its 1987 successor *Midwestern Folklore*, the new journal of the Hoosier Folklore Society that took a more regional approach than its predecessor. The subtle change from "Midwest" to "Midwestern" in its title not only differentiated it from the predecessor of the *Journal of the Folklore Institute* but also indicated the editorial interest in material of a distinctly midwestern character.

Ron found the attributive question especially relevant in place-name legends that he had heard all his life about his hometown with the curious name of "Brazil" amid the supposedly ordinary names of other nearby towns like Harmony, Prairie City, and Billville (the city of Brazil was named for a pioneer farm whose owners called it Brazil after the South American country, which was in news headlines at

the time). He began integrating folklore and history with onomastics in a series of articles beginning in 1970 for *Indiana Names* that grew out of the Indiana Place-Name Survey headquartered at Indiana State University (Baker 1970a, 1971a, 1973b). Based upon this work, he explored the folkloristic side of the onomastic equation with an important essay titled “The Role of Folk Legends in Place-Name Research,” aimed at folklorists (Baker 1972). He pointed out in the American Folklore Society’s flagship journal the frequent scholarly assumption that the place name always comes first and stories arise to explain that name. Yet he provided several examples in Indiana, including two Monstervilles in Vermillion County and the supposedly bottomless Blue Hole Lake in Vigo County, in which the legend came first and the place name derived from the story (Baker 1970b, 191; 1972, 370; see also Baker 1970c). While noting the particular historical and geographical contexts of these legends in west-central Indiana, he also found parallels in other places where traditional naming practices were used to respond cognitively and socially to supposedly scary locations and bottomless lakes. He concluded that place names are a “community result” that derive “as much from history and geography as they do from any other factors” (Baker 1972, 368; see also Baker 1991).

Ron’s other folkloristic explorations of names in historical context included building on the folk speech of “Goodman” as a seventeenth-century New England reference to a married man to view the progression of the journeyer Brown in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story “Young Goodman Brown” from youth to adulthood to old age (Baker 1976–1977). Ron combined a structural analysis that revealed a rite of passage sequence and a psychoanalytic interpretation of sexual symbolism as Brown proceeds through different environments aligned with phases of life. He also wrote on “Place-Name Jokes” (Baker 1976b) about insecurities concerning resident locations and, later, names in bawdy adolescent recitations about Lady Lil and Pisspot Pete (Baker 1987a; Baker and Bronner 2005). Working with linguist Marvin Carmony, also of Indiana State University, Ron co-authored *Indiana Place Names*, published by Indiana University Press in 1975. Ron felt dissatisfied with the balance of etymologies in the book with what he called “namelore,” and in 1995, he self-authored a study on place-name narratives in *From Needmore to Prosperity*:

Hoosier Place Names in Folklore and History (1995a; see also Baker 1996b).²

As an authority on Indiana names, Ron understood that he needed to enter the discourse on the origins of the term *Hoosier*, and in 1995 he published what I consider the definitive study of the matter (Baker 1995b). As with his other onomastic studies, he valued historical legends and humorous folktales as social-historical documents. He identified a trail of usage in metanarratives that included reference to variations of “Hoosier” from the upland South to Indiana. He found linguistic evidence that the term derived from English folk speech for a person of rustic background who was characterized as uncouth, ignorant, and rambunctious. Upper class individuals used the term pejoratively and Ron concluded that, aware of this ridicule, intrepid migrants from Appalachia entering the hardscrabble, unattractive Kentucky-Indiana frontier adopted it as a source of oppositional pride (2001). With the term’s characterization of Indiana residents as white English rubes, Ron explored legends from white Christian settlers that identified “outsiders,” even those with similar attributed characteristics such as Kentuckians (2002) and African Americans (2000a, 2009).

The folklore archives that Ron established at Indiana State University and relied on for many of his publications was brimming with many legends collected from Hoosiers besides those for place-names, and Ron organized them into an annotated volume of *Hoosier Folk Legends* which was published in 1982. With his knowledge of the Indiana cultural landscape, Ron was able to provide historical context for many of the apparently “local legends” and in many cases connect them to themes of emerging comparative textual scholarship on “urban legends,” even though what Ron found was not confined to cities (Brunvand 1981; Dégh and Vázsonyi 1978). Noting the number of contemporary legends concerning new technology, sports figures, and media celebrities, he broached the question of the intersection of popular and folk in modern culture (Baker 1975a, 1976a, 1978a, 2005a, 2005b). Related to this consideration of popular connections to folk legends was his identification of the significance of print media in the dissemination of folk belief narratives (Baker 1988b). With his interest in the use of narrative in different genres, he studied the kind of stories—usually tragic events—that became part of both legend and

song (Baker 1992, 2007a).

As Ron studied storytellers as creative agents of tradition, so too did he develop an approach to the history of folkloristics focused on shapers of the discipline, whether organizations or individuals. He was inspired by Dorson's admonition that a central criterion of a discipline is an awareness of its own intellectual heritage (Dorson 1973a, 128; 1973b, 201–2). Ron's entrée into the history and folklore section of the American Folklore Society at its founding in 1983 was his personal story as a member of the first generation of doctoral degree holders in folklore that symbolized the emergence of a discipline, or as he described it in an alumni magazine, "a serious academic study" (1974; see also 1975b). Ron's engagement with disciplinary history also arose beginning in 1971, when he undertook the task of surveying courses and programs in folklore for the American Folklore Society and using this data to make longitudinal comparisons of academic inclusion of folklore (1971b, 1978b, 1996a, 1997a). Indeed, he wrote the essay on "The Folklorist in the Academy" for the American Folklore Society's centennial history in 1988 (Baker 1988a). His search for the roots of the literary approach to folklore resulted in his first article in *The Folklore Historian* in 1987, attending to Stith Thompson's notes from Harvard Professor George Lyman Kittredge's 1912 lectures on medieval romance. He followed this documentary history with an analysis of his own notes from fall 1962 of Richard Dorson's Seminar in Folklore Theory and Techniques that was required of all folklore students at Indiana University (Baker 1987b, 1996c). In 1990, he brought *The Folklore Historian* to Indiana State University as a supplement to *Midwestern Folklore*. For the 150th anniversary of William John Thoms's famous letter calling for the replacement of "popular antiquities" with what he called "a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore,—the Lore of the People," Ron organized a special issue on the historical, literary, and anthropological roots of a folkloristic discipline with an introduction that suggested an intellectual genealogy of William John Thoms, Francis James Child, and Franz Boas (1997b; see Thoms 1965 [1846], 5). For his leadership and exceptional scholarship, the History and Folklore Section bestowed on him its Lifetime Achievement Award at the American Folklore Society Centennial in 1988 and he was elected to the Fellows of the American Folklore Society in 1996. He also received the President's Medal for

exemplary scholarship, service, and teaching from Indiana State University in 2000. Upon his retirement in 2006, he received a festschrift with essays from fifteen internationally renowned folklorists at a special tribute meeting of the Hoosier Folklore Society (Bronner 2005).

Ron's thinking on the history of folklore studies followed from the biographical approach he used in literary and academic history. One can read continuities between his early study of Rowland E. Robinson and later biographical books of writer-educator Jesse Stuart (1906–1984) and linguist Joseph S. Schick (1910–1987) (Baker 2007b, 2015). Unpublished at the time of his death was his biography of Indiana-born farmer and bard James Buchanan Elmore (1857–1942), whom Ron called a “Literary Ethnographer and Folk Poet” (see Shumaker 1962, 232–34).³ This project brought him back to his first literary history of farmer-documentarian and proto-folklorist Rowland Robinson. As subjects of study, these rustic, non-canonical writers attracted Ron not for their style, but rather for their contribution to cultural observation and understanding of life and traditions at the grassroots. And one might see in Ron's last work a full circle from rural New England at America's founding to the Indiana frontier that Ron called his homeplace to learn and teach. In the academy, in the discipline, in the state and region, Ron made a name for himself inspired by his folk identity as a spunky, perspicacious Hoosier.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to Cathy Baker for sharing with me documents of and stories about Ron. See note 3 for his final dedication to Cathy, written in their 63rd year of marriage. I also want to acknowledge the generosity of their daughter Jill Baker who shared memories and provided support.

² At the time of his death, Ron was working on another place-name project structured similarly to *From Needmore to Prosperity* that he labeled “Indiana Place Names in History.”

³ Cathy Baker kindly shared Ron's 199-page manuscript with me. The title on the cover page is “James Buchanan Elmore (1857-1942): Literary Ethnographer and Folk Poet.” It is dated 2023. The dedication is:

For Cathy:
 “A smile adorns her lovely face;
 No statue ever bore her grace.
 She loved through years of toil and strife—

The angel that I call my wife.”

—From James Buchanan Elmore, “Dedication”
of *Autumn Roses* to his wife, Mary.

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Simon J. Bronner

ARNOLD VAN GENNEP'S *LE FOLKLORE* IN HISTORICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Arnold van Gennep's *Le Folklore* is an important document in the history of folklore studies because after its publication in 1924, van Gennep (1873–1957) turned his attention from ethnography to folklore study and focused on establishing a discipline of folklore studies in France (Belmont 1979; Zumwalt 1988). French scholars in the early twentieth century differentiated folklore studies from ethnography by linking non-European groups to ethnographers and connecting European folk groups to folklorists. It was van Gennep who helped to integrate these then-divergent categories. Van Gennep's "ethnographic" folklore work culminated in the ambitious *Manuel de folklore française contemporain* (A Manual of Contemporary French Folklore, 1938–1958; see also Lecotté 1958, 179).

Van Gennep's work was affected by his alliance with intellectuals with ideas outside the mainstream of social science thinking. Van Gennep describes the situation after 1890 in *Manuel*:

[T]here grew up a fairly violent antagonism between all the sciences of man constituted in previous years as a result of the revival of Comtist sociology instigated by Durkheim. The latter drew his support from the teaching staff of the universities, while his opponents had their headquarters in the College de France and the Institut de France. Closing ranks, the Durkheimists instituted a siege of these positions and within about twenty years successfully reduced them to subjection. Anyone who was not a member of their group was a "marked man." (quoted in Belmont 1979, 2)

Van Gennep considered himself one of the marked men, and his rhetoric reflected the institutional antagonism that he felt. Rejecting evolutionary doctrine, dismissing the purported objectivity of science, and defying academic authority, he cast his lot with a diverse humanistic crowd. In *Le Folklore*, this is evident from vocabulary such as

élan vital (“vital spirit” or “force”) that stems from the philosophy of Henri Bergson. In his unpublished notes he points out the context of his rhetoric by claiming that there were multiple perspectives and vocabularies running through the writing of those who were attempting to counter the Durkheimian positivist “scientific” ways of conceiving interesting questions. Ultimately, a number of ideas centered on the human spirit as an organizing force expressed in the power of long-standing traditions informed his work (see Turner 1969, 128–130).

Van Gennep took risks in endorsing what he called a “populist” ideological perspective—in opposition to the regnant theory of cultural evolution with its elitist, colonialist connotations. Operating in this manner calls for one to adopt some of the vocabulary of the opposition, if only to modify or reject it. Additionally, van Gennep shared common cause with scholars with whom he did not wholly agree. He reflected:

A certain reticence prevents the scientist from displaying the feeling he puts into his work, a reticence imposed on him by indoctrination, by fashion, and often by a belief in himself as a creature existing above all passions. I do not feel this reticence myself, partly, I suppose, because my temperament happens to run quite counter to it, but also because I have spent time with other men who, in my presence at least, did not feel it either: Maspero and Oppert, Curie and Kropotkin, Matruchot and Bohn, Havelock Ellis and Westermarck, Phillipe and Rene Berthelot, Leon Brunschvig and Meillet, Rivet and Sebillot, and [those from] a number of other fields, poets, painters, sculptors, musicians... (quoted in Belmont 1979, 13–14)

Although dedicated to establishing a discipline of folklore studies, van Gennep’s was a mixed Cubist canvas of Egyptology, ancient Arabic, philology, and linguistics. He was proud to mix with people from all walks of life, spending, in his words, “hours at sea with the fishermen while they sang their sad, tuneless laments, hobnob by special dispensation with the smugglers in Beaulieu, and also, during the school walks to Villefranche on Thursdays and Sundays, vanish suddenly at a bend in the path with a few close chums, scramble down the cliff, and visit certain disreputable open-air bars, where we were able to enjoy the favors of welcoming girls, American cigarettes, and

a few glasses of white wine” (van Gennep 1914, 122–23; see also Belmont 1979, 6–7). Yet he was remembered by his daughter Ketty van Gennep as “the hermit of Bourg-la Reine” (1964, 2). In her biography of van Gennep, Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt expands on these paradoxes:

Arnold van Gennep has puzzled intellectual historians for years. His work was one of prolific publication, beginning in 1894, and ending posthumously in 1975. Yet he is remembered primarily for one book, *Les rites de passage* (1909), which was translated into English in 1960. He was founder and director of four journals, and officer of many organizations, yet he never taught at a French university. His only academic appointment was at the University of Neuchatel, Switzerland. And though he delivered lectures at numerous universities, none of these were in France. (Zumwalt 1982, 299; see also Zumwalt 1988)

Although van Gennep’s structuralist theory of rites of passage is, as Zumwalt states, his best-known legacy, van Gennep’s *Le Folklore* (1924) deserves attention for its relevance to the development of a distinctive folkloristic discipline that in his vision had its own niche apart from anthropology, literature, and history. The book is often overlooked among his published works perhaps because of its brevity and breezy tone. But in its modest size it profoundly presents a paradigm shift with the decline of evolutionary theory and popular attention to folklore. In French folklore studies, he voiced, as Charles Rearick states in *Beyond the Enlightenment* (1974), “the most decisive declaration of independence from the historians” who had dominated nineteenth-century scholarship. The study of social history had taken a cue from evolutionary natural history that pervaded anthropology and sociology in addition to zoology and geology. Van Gennep sought to reposition the study of folklore in the social sciences by drawing on biology as the study of “living facts,” as opposed to the dead facts of the archaeologically oriented theory of cultural survivals from savage and barbarian stages of evolution in contemporary customs.

Van Gennep’s comparison of folklore research to biology was metaphorical. He railed against the “mania” of nineteenth-century

scholarship for its evolutionary natural history and its search for obscure origins. He favored a functional biology, or social ecology: still scientific, but stressing process, change, movement, and interrelation. Moreover, biology brought the researcher out into the field, in a manner of speaking, because of the raised importance of direct observation and the opportunity to experience one's subject—a precursor to the participant-observer approach. In 1934, van Gennep acknowledged his intellectual debts to the biological metaphor:

You should know that my father, a well-known laryngologist, had me making up microscope slides from the age of fifteen, since it was his hope that I would succeed him in his practice at Challes-les-Eaux. And a Pasteurian training stays with one for life. Then I fell in love with biology; but gradually human biology came to fascinate me more than that of plants or animals. Despite myself, I applied to ethnography and folklore the great biological method whose "gods" in France are Claude Vernard, Pasteur, and Giard. I took to approaching the facts of civilization from a biological angle, to examining all its manifestations, however primitive or highly evolved, in accordance with the methods of embryogeny and the comparative natural sciences, and this meant that I was innocently setting myself in opposition to the historical method on the one hand and to the official sociological method on the other. I was consequently regarded for a long time as a pariah, even though I had also assimilated the two latter methods as well, as any French person must who has been through high school and a university Arts faculty. But when one is faced with facts, then all labels lose their value, except for the label "Biology." For we ethnographers and folklorists are dealing with living facts, and therefore with facts in a perpetual state of transformation whose constants—if not their variants too—are governed by cosmic laws. (van Gennep 1934, 25)

Methodologically, he was attracted to amassing collections that invited comparisons of repetition and variation. Referring to being possessed by a mania for research, van Gennep's obsession with aggregating material items indicated his yearning for completeness and expansion (see Dundes 2007). In 1911, he admitted his search for global collections of old pennies, bones, fibulas, and pottery. "These

two passions for coins and prehistory,” he notes, “brought a double benefit: not only did they teach me how to draw up a bibliography unaided, how to establish a meticulous classification of my finds, based on minor characteristics, and how to deal with source material; they also brought me into contact with a great variety of people, not only in cities and villages but also in the very depths of the countryside” (van Gennep 1911, 10).

Van Gennep drew criticism for the polarities he constructed between history and biology. Giuseppe Cocchiara, writing in Italian in 1952, took van Gennep to task for narrowly defining history. Cocchiara asserts that van Gennep’s premise that folklore is the study of living and present facts, as opposed to history, which is the study of dead facts, is erroneous. Cocchiara argues that “living and present facts, are also a part of history, nor can one exclude from the folklorist’s area of investigation those usages and customs that belong strictly to times past...And although the comparative method that Gennep contrasts to the historical method is occasionally guilty of naturalistic procedures, it should be considered as heuristic research that the historian must raise to the level of history through appropriate modification” (Cocchiara 1981, 486). The modification that Cocchiara sought was to examine traditions contextually in local communities rather than to objectify them as pieces of a global collection.

Some historians of anthropology have noted that more reliance by van Gennep on his substantial linguistic expertise might have allowed him to mediate the poles of history and biology. Indeed, his analysis of rites of passage is often likened to a grammar of cultural behavior (Dundes 1976; Evans-Pritchard 1981). Van Gennep wrote, for example, that “It is not the rites in their detail that interest us but rather...their relative situations within ceremonial wholes” (1960, 191). But in her biography of van Gennep, Nicole Belmont observes, “Always a weak theoretician, he was incapable of conceptualizing sufficiently what he perceived intuitively, so that he literally lived the relations between linguistics and ethnography without ever being able to state them theoretically. In the scientific context of his time it was not yet possible for linguistics to play midwife to a structuralist anthropology” (1979, 10).

The polarity for van Gennep between biology and history suggests a difference in scope as well as method. Van Gennep’s *Le Folk-*

lore makes a contrast between what he considered a narrowing devotion to oral traditions among his natural history predecessors and expanding biological attention to material and social traditions such as folk arts, dress, and architecture. For the study of such traditions, he turned to the rural countryside where he presumed that traditional ways of life were best preserved. One can discern attention common to material culture research of questions pertaining to regional and community integrity. His call to action has the familiar ring of “get it before it is gone.” The call takes on urgency, van Gennep claimed, because the disappearance of many folk arts meant that the opportunity to analyze crucial social and psychological (as opposed to historical and archeological) questions was fleeting. Still, he insisted on the *living* tradition of folklore and folklife. Van Gennep’s intentional titling of his folkloristic manual with *contemporain*, or contemporary material, underscored the idea of folklore as living tradition and set the manual apart from predecessors taking an evolutionary approach in England (see Burne 1914).

In 1985, *The Folklore Historian* published the first English translation of *Le Folklore* by folklorist Austin Fife. His translation gravitates toward literal renderings of the French, often giving readers the closest English equivalents to maintain the flow and tone of the original. As Fife fell ill and died in 1986, Roger Abrahams, then at Scripps College, edited the manuscript to maintain what he perceived as van Gennep’s flow of thought. In his new translation presented in this volume, Lee Haring works to capture more of van Gennep’s intentions, as his translator’s notes indicate.

The original French version of *Le Folklore* is a pocket-sized book, measuring a modest 3.5 by 5.5 inches and containing 125 pages. It sold for two francs. The book was part of a series on “modern culture” published under the direction of F. Fels and intended to “keep the public up to date concerning contemporary intellectual activity, in the realm of science, the arts, and philosophy.” Other volumes in the series included works on psychoanalysis, Roman sculpture, biology, and contemporary philosophy.

In recognition of the centennial of the book’s publication, a new translation is welcomed to reopen reflection on Arnold Van Gennep’s contribution to folklore studies broadly as a discipline in historical and psychological contexts. The volume also draws attention to the inter-

pretation of French folklore, for which van Gennep is often viewed as its greatest advocate. The work is emblematic of van Gennep's desire for synthesis or wholeness in the study of folklore and folklife first in France, and then in the wider world (see Belmont 1979, 123).

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Lee Haring

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

Le Folklore marks an historic moment in the history of folklore studies, being a hinge point in van Gennep's thinking. In this short book, says his biographer Nicole Belmont, van Gennep acrimoniously dismisses the historical orientation that had previously dominated folklore studies. Austin Fife—seeing its importance—translated it, and his translation was published in *The Folklore Historian* 2: 2 (1985) with some revisions by Roger D. Abrahams and a valuable introduction by Simon Bronner. Fife's translation is a model of conservative lucidity. In revising it, I have tried for simplicity and directness, which are virtues of Van Gennep's style. A few clarifying terms are inserted in brackets. Ellipsis marks are original. To illuminate the book's historical value, I have also inserted a number of bibliographic references to the author's French sources. Most of the illustrations have been omitted because of difficulties with retrieval and reproduction.

Arnold van Gennep

LE FOLKLORE

CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORY

Folklore is a loan word from the English *folk*—people—and *lore*—common knowledge. Hence it is the science whose goal is to study the people. W. J. Thoms coined this word in 1846 to replace another term: the all too clumsy *popular antiquities*, title of Brand's famous book wherein the beliefs and customs of England's rural populations are described (Brand 1900–1902). That ill-conceived expression could neither define the domain of the science it denoted nor even form a convenient adjective, whereas *folklore* gives us the terms *folkloric* and *folklorist*, just as its German equivalent—*Volkskunde*—gives us the adjective *volkskundlich*, and treats an area of study which is not merely historical but contemporary too.

The word was quickly adopted by Scandinavian scholars, and shortly thereafter by the Finns, Russians, and others. The same happened, less quickly, among romance-language scholars, for the same reason: grammatical convenience. In Spain and Portugal, where the scientific study of folklife began somewhat later, and where no previously adopted term had yet been imposed, adoption of the English term encountered even less difficulty, since scholarly relations between the Portuguese, Spaniards, and English have always been close and enduring, even more than between them and us. As for the French and Italians, whose early investigations in this area and numerous important scholars and publications made them exemplary, they initially used the term *tradition populaire* (*popular tradition*). This term has been used to name the French *Revue*, founded and directed by [Paul] Sébillot; in Italy the *Archivio delle tradizioni popolari*, directed by [Giuseppe] Pitré; in Switzerland [Eduard] Hoffmann-Krayer's *Archives suisses des traditions populaires*; and also for the collections of the publishers Maisonneuve et Leroux, which constitute a unique assembly of excellent monographs. Two other folklorists, Carnoy and Beaurepaire-Froment, did indeed try to give this complicated term a livelier luster and readier usage by coining the term *traditionnisme*,

which yielded the adjective *traditionniste* (Beaurepaire-Froment 1906). At one time there were lively discussions about this matter. For a long period, there was an effort to “boycott” (another word introduced into our language from English!) *folklore* and the words derived from it. The problem was that *tradition*, *traditionalism*, and *traditionalist* sometimes could take on a political meaning. They could mean not merely the study of traditional mores and customs, but also a mental and political attitude that posed tradition, or a particular tradition, against its supposed opposite, namely innovation. Since tradition keeps accumulating as the years roll by—while innovations keep piling up against tradition simply by being new and not yet classed in established categories—the possible confusion was quite undesirable for those who wanted to study folkloric behavior without referencing any political system. A similar phenomenon occurs with regionalism, which touches folklore at many points but which also encompasses the study of other elements of popular life, such as economic, demographic, and urban factors.

Hence the word *folklore* must be considered in the same utilitarian way as scientific terms derived from Greek or Latin, like *psychology* or *astronomy*, which have the advantage of being international. In fact, *folklore*, *folklorist*, and *folkloric* have now been adopted everywhere except in Germany and Austria, where there is still a preference for *Volkskunde* and its derivative *volkskundlich*. But in the absence of their own word for the person who deals with it, there is no native term; *Folklorist* or *Volklorist* is used.

Likewise in Italy, the late Giuseppe Pitré tried to coin the term *tradizionista*. Towards the end of his life, he replaced *tradizionista* with *démopsychologue*, but his students and followers found this word rather crude; they all now use the term *folklore* as we do. The acceptance of the word *folklore* in France and neighboring countries was signaled by the publication of two books by Paul Sébillot: *Le Folk-lore de France* (1904–1907) and *Le Folk-lore: littérature orale et ethnographie traditionnelle* (1913), and also by the recent publication of a short treatise by Raffaele Corso, *Folklore* (1923).

Despite the novelty of the word *folklore*, one must not think that the science it denotes is so too. Setting aside those authors who have been interested in popular ways of thinking, reasoning, feeling, and behaving, like Montaigne, one can trace the systematic development

of our science in England to Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* (1646), and in France to Jean-Baptiste Thiers's *Treatise on Superstitions* (1697). These two works have been the bases upon which other investigators and theorists in each country have subsequently built: in France Jacques-Antoine Dulaure (1829) and in England John Brand (1777). Nearly a century and a half was required for the "study of the people" to acquire autonomy, thanks to the zeal of innumerable scholars and a few artists—such as Olivier Perrin, whose *Briz-Igel, or Breton life in Armorica* dates from 1838 (Perrin and Bouët 1918).

If we consider a single branch of folklore, namely the collection and study of folktales, France again occupies a notable place, by reason of Charles Perrault's celebrated collection from 1697 (Perrault 1907). But instead of stimulating fieldwork among country folk, this work gave rise to a literary school, which was later reinforced and rejuvenated by Galland's translation of the "Thousand and One Nights." A publication comprising more than thirty volumes, the *Cabinet des Fées* (The Fairies' Room), which enjoyed great success in France in the eighteenth century, contains only fairy tales composed out of whole cloth (1785). Only a few of the tales of Madame d'Aulnoy or in the *Magasin des enfants* by Madame Leprince de Beaumont are popular, and those were probably obtained by those court ladies from their nurses or servants. Moreover, they did not boast of having called on lower-class collaborators. Perrault himself gave his fairy tales to the public not under his own name, but under the name of his son. The latter, P. Darmancour, apologizes for having dedicated them to the Grande Mademoiselle: "You will not find it strange," he says in his prefatory letter, "that a child should have enjoyed writing the tales of this collection." He hastens to add that if he did dare to do so, it was because "each one contains a very sensible moral precept." So, this cornerstone of an entire scientific domain, like La Fontaine's fables, had to be cloaked in morality to be accepted as a literary work by the fine minds of the seventeenth century.

The Brothers Grimm, who liberated the study of folktales from mundane or moralizing tendencies, are to be recognized as Perrault's successors; with the same stroke they became the founders of Germanic dialectology. Far from literarizing their collected texts, they published them with all their phonetic and grammatical peculiarities; when they were told tales in dialect, they wrote the dialect down ex-

actly as they heard it. The first volume of the Grimm tales was thin; little by little it grew, as Tonnelat has shown so well (1912), whereas unhappily for France, Perrault, upon seeing the success of his collection, never thought of adding to it.

In England, too, Perrault's tales had considerable influence, notably upon Walter Scott. Scott, however, added local legends and actual customs to their harvest. Appropriately enough, what struck educated people most in the mores of the folk, whatever their profession or scientific specialty, was what had long been called "superstitions." I have already cited Thiers's *Treatise on Superstitions*, but in content and method, this treatise is connected to an enormous literature dealing with witches, demons, and heresies, a whole body of research encompassed under the name of demonology. This literature goes back to the high Middle Ages; its points of departure were both the Fathers of the Church—and through them Greek literature itself—and the Acts of the Councils, through which it draws on theological literature. But the descriptions encountered in that heap of texts are seldom detailed and are unscientific. They are pragmatic in that they mention such-and-such a custom—for example the divining rod to find water—as a custom contrary to the Church dogma, which must be destroyed. It would be improper to regard these few descriptions (often found in the *Constitutions synodales* of the various dioceses) as having paved the way for folklore, or their authors as precursors. Studying the mores of the people with no theological agenda would have seemed to them all a new sort of crime.

A real precursor, nonetheless, does appear in Greece: the geographer Pausanias, who had the patience to cover his whole country, visiting even its least known sanctuaries, and to record everything the local people told him, without taking a position himself, and especially without ridiculing them. Thus, his *Description of Greece* is a true folkloric inquiry—much better than the descriptions of Herodotus, who associated mostly with priestly circles, the best educated and (if I may say so) the most stylish people of his time. Strangely, Pausanias had neither disciples nor imitators until the mid-nineteenth century. Many travelers from the fifteenth century onward, of course, have described for us the customs of foreign societies, but to describe those of one's own country, as Pausanias did, seemed if not paradoxical at least useless. If Perrault, Dulaure, Walter Scott, or Grimm ever felt

the same scruple, they quickly suppressed it. Rather, we must believe they possessed the essence of the born folklorist, a direct and spontaneous sympathy for the very group they themselves belonged to, and for what folklife genuinely is: its simplicity, its naïveté, its rusticity, even its vulgarity, if you will, the penalty of its vital force.

Thus we had to wait until the mid-nineteenth century to see the shape of this movement, which is now attaining its full scale. For this movement to become possible, a return to Greek democratic concepts was necessary: i.e., doing away with the social barriers that still, in the eighteenth century, decidedly separated country folk from city and court people. Rousseau, who claimed himself as “folk,” did not describe the mores and customs of the Savoyards amongst whom he lived; he preferred high society in Chambéry and Annecy, insofar as it accepted him into its ranks. Only little by little, especially through the broadening of primary education, have those old barriers fallen. Politics has also helped this process, since under universal suffrage direct contact between electors (who in all European countries are nearly all farmers), has forced the social classes to intermix, if only the better to fight each other. Chatting with peasants, being sympathetically interested in their needs or their ways of judging and feeling, has thus ceased to be a step downward for the elite. But the impress made by the earlier attitude of the bourgeoisie upon the popular mind did not disappear all at once. That is one of the stumbling blocks the folklorist comes up against: this defiance the peasants have inherited towards those who come and ask them questions about their tales, songs, beliefs, or rites. Being bourgeois in attitude if not in class, folklorists are often received at first with some suspicion; they are treated much the way botanists and mineralogists were a hundred years ago, and geologists a bit later. I shall come back to this topic later, when I discuss field methods. But first I must indicate what the scope of folklore is.

CHAPTER TWO: SCOPE

In the beginning the scope of folklore was quite limited. Only fairy tales and other tales of the supernatural were considered folkloric. Careful study of their content revealed these stories to be bringing into play much more than fantasies; they also preserved vestiges of

beliefs and customs which once formed autonomous systems. Thus, fairies are clearly survivals of ancient divinities, which were the object of an actual cult. The spread of Roman paganism, and later of Christianity, caused the cult to pass first into superstition and later into poetic fantasy and literary themes. There, if I may say so, the field of folklore had an extension in depth.

Simultaneously there occurred an extension in breadth: fairy tales had to be augmented by all the other stories that circulate in rural areas. It was necessary to determine to what extent they might be of literary origin. Thus, saints' legends do not all come from hagiographic manuscripts or books. Some of them were born on the spot; are adaptations to the Christian saints of tales formerly told about pagan divinities. In the same way, songs gathered from the mouths of country folk do not all come from medieval collections. Some of the themes are in fact rural creations, again a domain requiring extensive comparative and historical studies.

The activity of country folk is still shown in the original and personal way in which they arrange all kinds of ceremonies—in pilgrimages, marriage rites, and funerals. Also independent of the superior production of towns and courts is their aesthetic production, in some ways at least—notably in everything to do with everyday objects and their ornamentation.

Nowadays folklore is seen to include branches touching literary study, linguistics, and the study of music, as well as the decorative arts. As a result, the frontiers of folklore are not always precisely drawn; this has provoked criticism. But trying to trace the exact boundaries of any other science dealing with human behavior encounters the same obstacle. Where does political economy, for example, begin and end, or fine arts and aesthetics, or linguistics, or geography? So great is this difficulty that in the past thirty years, we have seen the birth of disciplines that piggyback on one or several sciences formerly regarded as independent: we hear of "physical chemistry," "astro-mathematics," "human geography," and so on, while the etymological meaning of these terms would seem to preclude such verbal juxtapositions. If, however, this is the point we have reached, it is because in nature—and I include human behavior too in nature—there are no clear demarcations, but rather continual flux and reflux, and imperceptible transitions from one pole to the other. That is why

pure linguistics comes in to flow into folklore with its own particular methodology, by way of semantics and that bastard discipline the Germans have invented, which is called *Wörter und Sachen*, “words and things.”

The point is that folklore deals first of all with one special element of social life that no other science privileges. That element is the one denoted by the word *populaire* [folk]. The history of literature deals with works by named, identified persons—in short by individuals. Folktales and popular legends, however, do not have individual authors. They circulate orally and are classified according to a number of universal categories. Nothing in their literary creation permits them to be attributed to an individual, ascribed a date of origin, or classified according to any other literary categories. They form a group by themselves.

This difference is especially clear in fables containing animal characters. Fables by Aesop, Phaedrus, and La Fontaine appear in a particular, individualized literary form, but these same fables circulate in a great many countries today in an amorphous or come-as-it-may form, which is anything but individualized; in other words, they are folk or popular. Perrault’s *Cinderella*, in its precise literary form so typical of the seventeenth century, can even be distinguished from tales of the same type gathered from the folk, which are literarily humdrum, badly told, and chaotic.

The same may be said for songs, for household furnishings, for designs on pottery as contrasted with the designs on crockery and porcelain—for all aspects of folklife, in fact. These observations permit us to narrow the problem somewhat more: while literature, music, and art history deal with *individual* creations, folklore deals with *collective* creations. Moreover, while “high” literary and artistic creativity address themselves to a limited public above the national average at a given place and time, productions of the folk, by contrast, are destined for the mass of that nation in the same time and place; they are, if we dare risk an anachronism, a product of “big business.”

But this immediately suggests an observation. In our time, objects made for the masses are manufactured industrially, on an assembly line—from stable lanterns to cowbells; from the dime novel to music-hall songs spread around the countryside by soldiers; from saints’ images made around the church of Saint-Sulpice to the color

supplements of newspapers. All are produced and sent in great quantities to our rural areas. Therefore, little by little, in several directions, uniformity is being shaped; it used to be national, now it is even tending to become international. For example, saws, spades, and kitchen utensils, many of more or less American origin, are imparting to French rural life a uniformity similar to that of other European countries.

It was not so in former times, in a period more or less remote according to the proximity of big cities. The folklore of the suburbs of Paris vanished long ago; folklore near Lyon or Marseille is also tending to disappear. Yet a few kilometers outside Grenoble, Lille, Nantes, or Bordeaux, one can still hear folktales and folksongs and realize that some very old customs are surviving. Big modern-day industry is a factor for the disintegration, if not the complete destruction, of folklife, especially of folk activities that are of both a practical and an aesthetic order. In how many corners of France do they still carve butter molds or scythe handles, hearth tablets, or lintels for the front door? Few indeed. Look, too, at the disappearance of local crafts, of which admirable specimens were once known, such as carvings for churches and cathedrals and their furnishings—anonymous and collective works just as much as *fabliaux* or rural house furnishing are.

When I use the term *collective*, I do not mean made by a group. These words must not be confused. The carved porches of the Romanesque churches, which transpose into stone decorative elements and images borrowed from miniatures (see in this series the excellent little book by Miss Jalabert (1924)), were not made by the whole assembled population of a village, but by a few specialists, who doubtless made the rounds of the country. Only in each particular case, we do not know how many there were, what their names were, from whence they came, or where they got their plans. But we notice in their decorative motifs common elements used over and over, especially in costumes and the expression and type of characters; these are traits borrowed from itinerant life which correspond not to individual conceptions or particular moods but to collective feelings and communal beliefs. It is the same with literature and music: the vocabulary, the literary form, the theme, the rhythm, the melody, have no individuality of their own, but spread from one place or village to

another, because they consist of elements that are general, communal, and collective.

Sometimes, moreover, it is possible to find the point of departure or source of this collective trait. At any rate, it is this particular point of departure that scholars try to find. The essential problem for folklore, as for the other branches of sociology, is to determine, insofar as is possible and in each particular case, the relationship between the individual and the mass. Not all people can be credited with the gift of invention, or even the gift of transformation: each time we have analyzed closely the factors at work, we find that the product itself is the act of one single person. The product is modified thereafter by other individuals who have encountered the first innovator or their production. These persons already constitute a small collectivity, which influences others; these become more and more numerous, until the popular "mass" has been formed. With the invention of printing, and especially with the spread of periodicals, the individual nature of discoveries or of very important changes has become visible.

In an earlier day, though, the inventor (save for rare exceptions) remained unknown. We do not know who might have conceived the buckle or brooch, or even that wonderful invention the threaded screw, made in Champagne probably at the beginning of the second Iron Age, which, along with the bolt and nut, is the turning-point for the principal industrial improvements of modern society. Under these circumstances, we can justly assert that the threaded screw is a popular collective invention, for once found (the whole of Egyptian and classical antiquity knew nothing of it), the idea was so simple and so easily applicable that the replacement of the peg by the screw, immediately upon its invention, became common property. Thus, the invention of the screw is a phenomenon of folklore, if only because it is relatively old and consequently of concern to archaeology.

Here we have a necessary limitation on the study of folklore, lest it encroach too much on other related sciences. Though folklore is concerned with ancient, historical, or archaeological data, its concern is only indirect, because each present-day fact has a previous history, which must be perceived in order for the present reality to be understood. What is of concern to folklore is the immediate living thing: it could be called sociological biology, like what ethnography does. It is a good thing to assemble in museums the objects used in our vari-

ous provinces, but that is only ancillary to folklore. What interests us is the use of these objects by real live people, the customs actually carried out before our eyes and the investigation of the complex conditions, especially the psychological ones, that are involved. Social life is constantly changing; hence folklore research must not cease.

If that aspect of folklore had been better understood, we would now have works of inestimable value on life in our rural regions and on the psychology of our rural folk over the last two centuries. But in this realm of investigation, we must content ourselves with a few travelogues, like those of Young or Ardoin-Dumazet, and some fragmentary descriptions like those of George Sand and Balzac, which get imitated by the entire school of regional novelists. But literary concerns have constantly distorted the scientific research of these writers; rare are the regional novels that describe true local folklife rather than its exceptional cases, comic or tragic.

In this realm, folklore connects with "collective psychology," which appears in rural life quite differently than among the industrial or urban masses. In fact, it gets expressed in all manner of customs, often very old ones, sometimes poetic and sometimes vulgar. Because of the number of people who practice them, such customs are the true links in the "chain of tradition" which forms the constant element of national life as a whole.

The deeper study of rural life has been neglected for so long exactly because it was of no interest to the so-called higher circles; it even horrified them. It is no use, I suppose, addressing the attitude of seventeenth-century authors towards peasants; even in the eighteenth century, only very few writers expressed an interest in the ways of the folk. That is why there were so few to understand the popular expressions of the Revolution in terms that were not purely political or economic. In our day, there is progress, but a great deal remains to be discovered, as much in folklore as in dialectology, another victim of the same bias.

Hence folklore is not, as has been imagined, the simple collecting of disconnected facts that are more or less curious or amusing. It is a science of synthesis that concentrates on country folk and rural life and on what persists of them in industrial and rural environments.

Folklore thus connects with political economy, the history of institutions, and of law, literature, art, technology, and other disciplines,

without merging into them, since they treat facts in and of themselves rather than their interactions in the milieux where they evolve. Nor do folklorists study merely the fragments of ancient institutions—so-called superstitions and survivals—but living facts as well, those which I suggest should be called “emergent facts,” or facts being born. Our science therefore borders on psychology, both individual and social, but it is distinguished therefrom by the kinds of beings and facts which are its proper domain. Pilgrimages, for instance, belong to folklore, though they also make up a special branch of collective psychology, just as popular songs are in folklore’s jurisdiction, though their texts belong to literature and their melodies to musicology. The folklorist studies their formation and diffusion in a particular setting, the same one where Chopin, Schumann, and other individual musicians came to draw inspiration.

The scope I am assigning to folklore here is much more extensive than was admitted by the first “traditionalists.” To them, what was “passed on by tradition” included only tales and legends, songs, beliefs and observances, the practices of witchcraft, and the like. The evolution of our science has compelled us to add on the study of all ceremonies, of games and dances, popular saints’ cults, (rural) houses, village and household utensils, tools of all categories, major and minor arts, institutions created by the people or surviving from ancient times, and finally the ways of feeling and expression which differentiate between the “popular” and the “sophisticated.”

At the same time, our methods have become more extensive and precise.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Folklore uses first of all the *method of direct observation*, virtually by definition, since, as I said above, it deals with contemporary living facts. Then, a present fact has a history, which can be discerned only by use of the *historical method*, which in turn encompasses several secondary methods, like the use and evaluation of witnesses and of written sources. This technique is so well taught and so well known that there is no need to dwell on it. But what must be dwelt on is that folklore is not just historical; it is not a branch of history. Only little

by little have we begun to recover from a nineteenth-century sickness that might be called the historical obsession, according to which everything in the present is of account only in relation to the past—so that, as a well-known novel has it, the Living count only with reference to the Dead.

That psychic and methodological aberration is so widespread that few educated people in the presence of an object or an event can avoid estimating its value by referring to history or archaeology alone. A recent case: a friend of mine acquired a Negro statuette. Noticing that it is modern and bears traces of European influence, he told me, "Since it isn't ancient, I'm going to give it to my granddaughter to play with." "No, don't!" I said. "Preserve it carefully. It is a first-hand example of contemporary modification. With that we can grasp the mechanism of change, whereas ancient modifications can be reconstituted only by analogy or by hypothesis." The living analyzable fact, the real stuff of science, was thus being disdained. I might have added, "For your great-grandchildren that statue will be 'historical and archaeological,' hence an object of value." Still, we must admit that it is easier to study a past three-quarters of which has disappeared than a present that is there and open to observation in all its complexity and variability.

The person who wants to take up folklore thus has to abandon the historical point of view and adopt the attitude of the zoologist or botanist, who studies animals and plants (collective facts like folklore, since the individual can change nothing by himself alone) alive and in their own live setting. He replaces the historical method with the *biological method*. This remark is of the greatest importance. It explains why historians have long scorned folklore, and why the best folklorists of the past century were generally naturalists, geologists, biologists, painters, or artists, or at least scholars possessing the gift of direct observation, as well as the gift that characterizes the learned man. The supremacy granted to history over the natural sciences, i.e., to learning over the observation of nature, which had been highly esteemed in the eighteenth century, also explains the archaeological obsession, which stands in the way of progress in folklore.

Follow a group of visitors walking through any French village. If they are the least bit informed, they will visit the church, look for the old houses, get entranced before a carved lintel, and inquire ev-

erywhere about old furniture. It will not occur to them to observe the local people or inquire about their current ways, or ask how they work wood *now*, how they furnish their houses, if there are any cabinetmakers or skilled blacksmiths in the village. Nor will they attend a dance, a pilgrimage, a marriage or baptism, unless, as in Brittany, literature and tourism have made them fashionable. In short, they look for what is dead, and they scorn what is happening and what is alive. They do not even suspect that "once upon a time," when these stones and wood were being carved, it was done by real beings, whose creativity at the time was scorned as mightily by their own more educated contemporaries as they scorn theirs.

I hope I have conveyed what psychological point of departure, so to speak, folklore requires. This observable present is not to be seen even as a present, but rather as the germ of a future. Because it adapts the historical method to its own purposes whenever the study of the past is required, folklore places immediate observation into that sequence which may be called the "chain of tradition" (a term coined by H. Husson); it knows that the chain keeps adding new links. So, the folkloric perception is that the observed fact contains germinative possibilities, whereas the historical fact says that all the possibilities of this fact have already been expressed.

This, too, is a biologist's point of view; when one knows how to adopt this method, the large number of forms and components (causes, if you prefer)—far from being an encumbrance or obstacle—yields that superior intellectual pleasure which consists of bringing order out of apparent chaos through reason and knowledge. Other branches of sociology, I know, require the same effort and give the same pleasure; for example, the in-depth study of modern industrial conditions. Take any industry—the glove or glass trade for example—and try to determine its forms and components; you will see what daunting complexity is involved. This kind of study generally takes on a dry statistical shape; to interpret it, the living element must be added, and this can be done by combining a scholarly monograph with direct and raw descriptions, such as those of Pierre Hamp (1918). In fact, a scholar who could combine these two parts—the static and the dynamic—in political economy would be doing exactly what modern folklorists are doing; they must, by definition, attend to those two modalities of social life.

Folklorists in an earlier time did not feel that necessity and followed all too closely in the rut of antiquaries and curio collectors. So it was that Paul Sébillot, a Breton, never devoted a comprehensive work to Brittany. He never gave a full description of the inhabitants of his area, but contented himself, like [François-Marie] Luzel and others, with collecting tales and legends or noting small curiosities (Luzel 1881, 1887). [Charles] Le Goffic and others, on the other hand, did not apply the rigorous methods of biological observation (Le Goffic 1902, 1910, 1912). Nearer to the stated goal have been several, though not many, English, German, and Italian folklorists, notably Richard Andree and Raffaele Corso (Andree 1901; Corso 1923).

Obviously, in observing current facts, it is difficult to describe them as if they were wholly two-dimensional, because social facts are, so to say, not surfaces but volumes. We should have to bring in spatial geometry, since each social fact appears with an infinity of different facets, all interdependent, yet the whole constituting a particular entity. It would take us too far afield to labor this, for I would have to set forth a general theory of the entire field of sociology. Besides, most sociologists are not good observers. Almost all of them have contented themselves with transposing the historical method and psychological method onto sociology. They have neither applied the biological method nor made direct or prolonged observation in the heart of any collectivity. So, it might be said that the whole of sociology must be made over.

General problems demand another methodological tool, namely the comparative method. Historians and comparatists used to struggle fiercely with each other over religion and literature. Everywhere the comparatists have won. It was inevitable, for the natural sciences have been comparative from their inception, and it seems almost silly to object to the comparison of facts grouped by species rather than by locality. A zoologist compares the fish of the Mediterranean with those of the Gulf of Bengal without being criticized. Yet objections are raised if we compare a Breton folktale with a Polynesian tale, or a sacred Roman offering with one from Mexico! Of course, this theoretical obstacle is not wholly eliminated in other sciences. There is no treatise so far on the psychology of the Persians or the Chinese. All our psychology is a science founded on the examination of a few thousand central Europeans (or North Americans, which amounts to

the same thing). Lévy-Bruhl is the only scholar in France who has tried to enlarge the domain of psychology to include a comparative dimension, but even he has kept the central European as the norm.

Here again folklore provides important new evidence. The psychology of country folk has not yet been scientifically established. Numerous indications are found in regionalist novels, but they always tend to the exceptional, if not pathological. What has been said of the "Breton Soul" or the "Basque soul" is really trifling: it is the same old stuff, like the "mystical Breton," repeated to the detriment of other psychological types with their subordinate variations. This domain of folklore is still almost entirely neglected; I hope this short volume will foster a wider program of research. There are so many professors in universities and high schools, so many teachers, doctors, and affluent landlords who could be studying the "soul" of the rural population around them, following the rigorous methods of modern psychology, studying them without romanticizing or sensationalizing them, and accumulating the data on which at last will be built a truthful "psychology of the French people"!

Using such varied methods requires not only knowledge but also tact and adroitness, and to some degree a certain natural gift. To observe well, you must know in advance what to observe, bring to the subject under investigation a certain amount of general knowledge, know which theories have been rejected and which are now accepted, and be willing to see them modified as needed under the influence of new discoveries. What is true of the natural and physical-chemical sciences is also true of folklore, to the extent that it is a biological science. Moreover, you must not make comparisons helter-skelter but use only data that are in the same category. Finally, the questions you ask country folk must neither produce a negative psychological reaction nor suggest an answer that will be false or distorted.

Country folk often feel a certain reserve with respect to people who seem to belong to another social milieu, or whom they believe are better educated. When being questioned about their mores and customs, they fear that they are being mocked. At times, a shade of self-interest even comes into play. While in Algeria studying Kabyle pottery, I had a good deal of trouble because the sheikhs and women potters took me for an inspector of finance looking for taxable products and businesses. In France, this is a lesser obstacle, yet it is not al-

ways easy to gain access to the interior of houses, to examine popular utensils, or to sketch the floor plans of rural buildings.

Here, however, is a strategy that works in all folklore fieldwork: to tell first how things are done elsewhere, and to inquire if it is the same in the village being studied. In Savoie, the dried skin of a toad is hung in the barn to ward off insects. You tell them that, and then ask how they go about achieving the same goal here. You begin by singing them a few folksongs, and right away the people of the village begin singing their songs to you. You describe the marriage ceremonies of various regions, and the people describe for you those being used in their own region.

It is certainly more difficult to gather folkloric materials than to make a collection of plants or rocks, but there is a way of going about it that will succeed if you love the discipline and if you also love rural life. To put it briefly, you must add to scientific work the sympathy, or "humanity," as they called it in the eighteenth century, which eliminates social and intellectual barriers.

Direct inquiry is best, but since you cannot do it for a large area, it should be supplemented by questionnaires. Those published by the *Revue des Traditions Populaires* and the various scholarly societies are usually too detailed. Experience has taught me that the best questionnaire is very short and devoted to two or three particular problems, but very specifically so. Rather than heap up facts, it is best to proceed methodically: to begin, for example, with marriage ceremonies, studying them in depth; or, in a different direction, studying means of transportation, or means of illumination, or the statues of saints and pilgrimages, or the belief in witches...when a questionnaire is short and specific, the chances of getting exact responses are higher.

Even negative answers are important: they often show that such-and-such a custom or belief has disappeared, whereas more ancient texts certified its existence. In this case, it would be useful to determine the causes and factors of that disappearance, which is an important element in the general and comparative science of civilizations. In this domain, again, a great number of discoveries are yet to be made.

Finally, it is advisable to make a map of the data gathered. Of about 630 communities in Savoie, I have data for around 400. Mapping these has made it possible for me to discern "zones of distribution." The location of these zones permits the formulation of problems

I did not suspect before. Use of the *cartographic method* in folklore is quite recent. I am sure that in Brittany, for example, it would provide unexpected results.

CHAPTER FOUR: FRAMEWORKS

Being willing to observe and gather facts is not sufficient: one must also know how to arrange them. Or, rather, to get good results from one's research, one must know in advance which categories previous investigators have used to organize their data. The more one knows, the more and the better one perceives. But since folklore is a burgeoning science, and since there are thousands of facts yet unknown waiting to be described, the folklore manuals and monographs are necessarily incomplete. All the better for us, since thus we still have the opportunity to make discoveries, whereas in botany and zoology these opportunities are now limited.

I have already said that social data are presented in the form of "volumes" with many angles. To describe them, each angle must be considered in turn. One may begin wherever one likes, but thereafter that same order must be preserved. The numbering of these angles I call a framework. I shall cite three using different points of departure: that of the *Folklore de France* by Paul Sébillot (1904–1907), that of the *Handbook* of the English Folk-Lore Society (Gomme, G. L. 1890), and that of Hoffmann-Krayer's annual *Bibliographie folklorique*, sponsored by the Swiss Society for Popular Traditions (*Volk-skundliche Bibliographie* 1917–1937–1938). Future progress in our science will require more complex and flexible categories. In these matters, one must above all avoid preconceived ideas and theoretical rigidity.

Paul Sébillot regarded his facts from the outside; he classified them according to their visible forms, not their internal linkages. Hence his broad grouping into four parts: volume 1, "Sky and Earth"; volume 2, "The Sea and Fresh Waters"; volume 3, "Fauna and Flora"; and volume 4, "People and History." Subdivisions come naturally: for example, in volume 3, two books, "Fauna" and "Flora"; in the first book, (a) "wild mammals," (b) "domestic mammals," (c) "wild birds," (d) "domestic birds," (e) "reptiles," (f) "insects," and

(g) "fish." Each of these branches is divided in turn into paragraphs, arranged insofar as possible in the same order. Hence, for domestic animals: (1) "origins," (2) "mating and birth," (3) "milk," (4) "errors and prejudices," (5) "omens and encounters," (6) "man and his animals," (7) "spirits of barn and pasture," (8) "spirits in animal form," (9) "witchcraft," (10) "sickness and medicine," (11) "rabies," and (12) "tales and legends." Evidently, to study witchcraft, for example, all of Sébillot's work must be redone. Likewise, tales and legends are scattered throughout the various branches, and we must remember too that those he has analyzed represent only a small portion of the tales and legends collected in France. Still more widely scattered are the data on folk cults and on the rites of marriage, funerals, and pilgrimages; songs are few, and still fewer are data on art, crafts, and the household. What Sébillot has described under the label of folklore is only a small part of French folklore behavior, only that part which used to be called "traditionism." Also, the influence of this book on local collectors has been relatively weak.

It is to them, indeed, that the *Handbook* of the Folk-Lore Society (London) is addressed; but this *Handbook* extends the scope of folklore so as to encompass a whole branch of ethnography, the branch dealing especially with half-civilized, non-European populations. Here is the plan of the *Handbook*, from the second edition, edited by Miss Charlotte Burne:

PART I. BELIEF AND PRACTICE

Chapter

- I. The Earth and the Sky
- II. The Vegetable World
- III. The Animal World
- IV. Human Beings
- V. Things Made by Man
- VI. The Soul and Another Life
- VII. Superhuman Beings
- VIII. Omens and Divination
- IX. The Magic Art
- X. Disease and Leechcraft

PART II. CUSTOMS

- XI. Social and Political Institutions

XII. Rites of Individual Life

XIII. Occupations and Industries

XIV. Calendar Fasts and Festivals

XV. Games, Sports, and Pastimes

PART III. STORIES, SONGS, AND SAYINGS

XVI. Stories; (a) Told as True; (b) Told for Amusement

XVII. Songs and Ballads

XVIII. Proverbs and Riddles

XIX. Proverbial Rhymes and Local Sayings

APPENDICES

A. Terminology

B. Questionary

C. Types of Indo-European Folktales

D. Authorities Cited. (1914, ix-x)

This handbook clearly utilizes a much more extensive scope than Sébillot's descriptive treatise does. Their goals, anyway, are not the same. Miss Burne has sought mainly to give general guidelines not only to local collectors but also to scholars generally. The book is not a complete description of the folklore of Great Britain (a work that is far from being done), but rather a kind of general theory based upon a certain number of English facts, which Miss Burne interprets by means of comparative ethnography.

Finally, here is the framework adopted by Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer for his annual folklore bibliography. The years 1917, 1918, and 1919 have appeared in Basel. I am giving only the principal divisions, since the subdivisions are for the most part geographic: I, "Generalities" (bibliography, methodology, etc.); II, "The Village"; III, "Buildings" (houses, barns, churches, etc.); IV, "Objects"; V, "Signs" (property markers, etc.); VI, "Crafts and Folk Arts" (textiles, carvings, pottery, wood, metal, etc.); VII, "Psychology of the Folk"; VIII, "Costumes and their Components" (jewelry, etc.); IX, "Food and Drink"; X, "Customs" (rites of passage, associations, brotherhoods, cyclical ceremonies; games and playthings, etc.); XI, "Folk Law"; XII, "Beliefs" (religions and myths, the cult of saints, witchcraft, ghosts and revenants, premonitions, amulets, etc.); XIII, "Folk Medicine"; XIV, "Generalizations about Folk Literature" (theories, etc.); XV, "Folk Poetry" (songs, sayings, inscriptions and graffiti,

music, dance, etc.); XVI, "Tales" (fairy tales, jokes legends); XVII, "Folk Theater" (mysteries and pastorals); XVIII, "Calendars" (almanacs, etc.); XIX, "Folk Speech" (dialectology, riddles proverbs, special languages and argots); XX, "Names" (of places, people, families, first names, divinities, animals, plants, heavenly bodies, etc.).

The growth of folklore study in our time is clearly visible. For some of these branches French scholars have been the initiators. Folk cults, for example, were first studied by Dulaure at the end of the eighteenth century (1825), then in a masterful way by Gaidoz in the nineteenth (1878–1912). The special science of names given by the folk to plants and animals has as founder and unrivaled master Eugène Rolland (1896); riddles, proverbs, and sayings were studied in detail by Collin de Plancy and Leroux de Lincy almost a hundred years ago (Leroux de Lincy 1836); the scientific study of rural houses was founded by de Foville (1894–1899); and so on.

All these special studies, up to the first years of the twentieth century, were individual and disconnected. Only in our time have they been grouped systematically, according to an orderly arrangement which has determined the form of folklore as an independent science. The *Bibliographie* for the year 1917, though incomplete because of the nature of current international relations, contains more than 1,700 titles, which certainly manifests the interest generated by our folklore research. Moreover, there are more than twenty special periodicals and more than ten university chairs, notably in the Germanic and Slavic countries, uniquely devoted to the research and teaching of folklore.

A person who wishes to take to heart the call made in this book may choose from among the systems delineated by Sébillot, Burne, and Hoffmann-Krayer. My preference goes to the last, because it is more complete; it is also flexible enough to lend itself to modifications required by the direct study of the facts and by unforeseen discoveries. One must always be guided by observed data and consider the scientific arrangements only as a chest of drawers modifiable according to new needs. That is why I do not use the term "classification," but instead "framework."

Suppose that under the influence of local circumstances and personal possibilities one has chosen a particular branch of folklore as a topic of research. It is justified at this point to consult monographs

on the same subject from which to borrow subsidiary headings. Thus, one has a kind of guide, and one sees more clearly in which directions gaps remain. Let us suppose for the moment that one is dealing with songs. One will be able to adopt the frameworks in Tiersot's *Chansons des Alpes françaises*, or Millien's *Chansons du Nivernais*, or Trébucq's *Chansons de la Vendée et des Pyrénées* (Millien and Pénavaire 1906; Tiersot 1903; Trébucq 1912). Here is Millien's outline, which is relatively complete:

Volume I. Narrative songs. (1) "Imaginary or romantic subjects"; (2) "war and garrison"; (3) "familiar topics and little adventures"; (4) "pleasant and jocular songs."

Volume II. Plaintive songs. (1) "Religious songs, miracles, the supernatural"; (2) "legendary, tragic, and dramatic plaints"; (3) "plaintive songs of crime"; (4) "historical songs."

One objection to this framework is that it lacks a special slot for ceremonial songs, such as songs of marriage, harvest, etc. But such materials are not numerous in Nivernais, whereas in other provinces they are more so. In short, any previously constructed framework must be adapted to local conditions.

CHAPTER FIVE: TALES AND LEGENDS

Arranging data in order is not everything; they must still be interpreted. This is possible only by referring to a general theory showing how a given isolated fact is connected to other facts of the same kind. The complete general theory for folklore does not yet exist. Among the few attempts so far, those of Paul Sébillot and Charlotte Burne (previously cited) are among the best. Certain branches of folklore have, however, been studied in depth; for example, agrarian rites and ceremonies by W. Mannhardt (*Wald- und Feldkulte*) and by Sir James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*) (Frazer 1911–1915; Mannhardt 1875–1877); the *rites de passage*, or ceremonies of birth and death, by the author of these lines (van Gennep 1909); the various types of rural houses in Europe by the German scholars; the primitive and evolved forms of folksongs by Weckerlin and by Tiersot (Tiersot 1889; Weck-

erlin 1903). But these, after all, are only incomplete syntheses. Rural Europe is still so little and so unevenly studied that its great currents, and the movements that have determined the psychology of our country folk from prehistoric times to the present, cannot yet be discerned. I am thus limited to citing only some general theories concerning the different subdivisions of folklore considered separately.

I begin with those concerning folktales, the branch that initiated the whole of folklore study. What characterizes the folktale is not so much the supernatural character of its personages—fairies, ogres, elves, and so on—as their impersonality. Besides, the place of the action is not specified; finally, the psychology is rudimentary—all virtues are reduced to beauty, goodness, and strength, and all flaws and vices are reduced to ugliness, meanness, and weakness, with no shading:

Once upon a time (when is not known) there was a king (name and country are not known) who had taken as a second wife an ugly and evil woman, but he had from his first wife a daughter as good and as lovely as the day.

That is one of the formulas which with minor variations is imposed upon all the characters in folktales.

Though the psychology is simple, the episodes are a bit less so. These are being catalogued, and the number of entries keeps increasing. The most extensive such catalogue is Antti Aarne's, edited for the Finnish Folklore Society and continued by Hackman and other Nordic folklorists (Hackman 1911). Recently Maurits de Meyer has been using this catalogue for the classification of Flemish folktales (1921). Even in a country so small, the number of new variants is considerable. At the present time, it is estimated that about 3,000 types have been catalogued by the Folklore Fellows Communications (FFC), thanks to which it is becoming possible to mark zones of distribution for a few tale-types.

Though the tale-type of Cinderella is widely distributed, others are much less so. An example is "The Deceived Merchant" (Aarne's no. 1592B*): "While he is making calculations, he asks the age of his youngest daughter, the elder daughter, and the mother, and always adds this to the number that he has recorded" (Aarne and Thompson

1961, 459).

The number of folktales collected in all countries in the last fifteen years or so has increased so greatly that, for comparative study, it has become necessary to label them with a catchword like "John the Bear," "Psyche," "Beauty and the Beast," "The One-Eyed Man and the Hunchback," etc., and catalogue them as dryly as that. But these catalogues are mere study tools; they help to place the thematic and literary comparisons on an ever-expanding base but do not replace detailed study of the texts.

Given the practical goal of this short book, I do not need to dwell here upon general theories of the folktale, but rather upon the circumstances of collection. It is sufficient to recall that several schools of thought have proposed various explanations for folktales.

The mythological school saw in them vestiges of ancient myths. A branch of that school, called *naturist*, recognized myths about the sun, dawn, clouds, and rain (Max Müller, de Gubernatis, Gaston Paris, and others) (Gubernatis 1875; Müller 1909; Paris 1890). Its arguments have been supplanted by the anthropological school, led by Lang, Gaidoz, and others, who show that identical tales exist among "savages" and that there are no precise cases in which a myth falls into the category of folktale (Lang 1885). The literary school has been represented especially by Cosquin, who sought, like some other scholars (Benfey for example), the origin of folktales in India (Cosquin 1886). Another member of this school, though proposing different theories of origin, is Gédéon Huet, who in his book *Les Contes populaires* presents the current state of the problem and a critique of previous theories (1923). Then comes the ritualist school, represented by English scholars (Miss Weston and others (Weston 1920)) and in France by P[ierre] Saintyves, who in his study of Perrault's tales insists that in these tales and in similar tales are to be seen the last traces of old rites that are now neglected (Saintyves 1912). His argument is convincing in certain cases, less so in others, but it is always interesting, and it has the merit of having provided new importance and a new direction to the comparative study of folktales. If to the books of Huet and Saintyves we add Cosquin's *Folktales of Lorraine* and his study of the Frame-Prologue of the Arabian Nights (1909), we shall have enough general guidance to situate the tales we might collect on our own in some still unexplored locality.

But to have real scientific value, that collection must be presented in a particular way. The words of the narrator must be noted accurately, not worked over on grounds of style. Patois and dialectal features especially must be preserved; an effort must also be made to collect the same tale from other informants, and to note, if possible, individual variations and literary or learned influences. The sex, age, and social position of the narrator must be noted. René Basset in France and Henri Basset in Algeria have shown how much sociological interest is inherent in studying the storytellers who are descendants of medieval troubadours and minstrels (Basset, H. 1920; Basset, R. 1887). A few professional female storytellers still live in our rural areas, such as Marie Gay of Bonneville, whom I have described elsewhere; and the Breton tailor-storytellers are fairly well known.

The absence of such informant data reduces the authentic value of published texts. This observation is all the more necessary here because two writers, H. de la Villemarqué and Prosper Mérimée, have acquired some fame for publishing counterfeit folktales and legends (Mérimée 1827; Villemarqué 1842, 1859). Others, like Gérard de Nerval and Charles Nodier, destroyed all possibility of checking their sources, under the pretext of literature. To gain insight into the complex problem of how folktales take shape and are diffused, their localization must be precisely known.

Although Perrault gave the first impetus to the study of literary folklore, it was in Germany, thanks to the brothers Grimm, that that impetus acquired its full force. The three volumes of Bolte and Polívka, *Commentaries on the Tales of Grimm* (in German), are the source for comparative study of the details of each tale (1913–1932). It is to be hoped that a French scholar will at least establish the *Corpus* of French folktales. For the present, to find variants, one must look to the collection of “Popular Traditions of All Nations” published by Maisonneuve, the collection of “Tales and Folksongs of All Nations” published by Leroux, and many regional articles and local monographs. This *Corpus* would have not only scientific but also literary interest, for we could see better how differently the same themes have been handled in each province or *pays* (the primitive regional unit), and how they have occasionally passed into “superior” literature.

Are there tales truly invented by our country folk? This question has been asked, but since neither fieldwork nor archival research is

yet finished, no answer can be given. Accordingly, I introduce the problem without being able to resolve it. An affirmative answer to that question can be given regarding legends—that is to say, folk stories in which characters are named (their family connections are sometimes given) and the action takes place in specific localities, often described in detail. The highest influence of the legend was achieved during the Middle Ages in the French verse chronicles (*chansons de geste*). For a general interpretation of these, I suggest Joseph Bédier's four admirable volumes (1908–1913). Our verse chronicles also contain elements borrowed from folktales, as Huet has shown so well in the volume I cited, but these elements have been transformed: anonymous characters have received names, and imprecise places have become a county or duchy of France.

Legends were fairly quickly classified into categories, since their themes are less numerous. For the general theory of legends, I refer to my *Formation des Légendes* (van Gennep 1910). To the known categories of legends, a new one must now be added: World War legends. So far as I have been able to find, these introduce only a few new themes. They are for the most part the rebirth of old themes which tended, under the influence of schools and of printing, to escape from folk memory, which is much less retentive than one might think. I have explained, in the work cited, how the power of retention was approximately measured by comparing legends with historical documents on the same events. Beyond five or six generations, time for the folk is not much more than a kind of chaos.

Very important and widespread in France are saints' legends. The study of these is called hagiography, which from the literary perspective is a specialty of the Bollandist fathers of Brussels. Many legends in this category are still to be collected, with the same precautions as with folktales. For a general theory, I cite Father Delehaye's excellent treatise on hagiographic legends (1906). P[ierre] Saintyves's recent book (1922) complements the book by Sir James Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament* (1919).

Just as hagiographic legends are found everywhere in France, so are certain specific cycles of these localized in certain provinces, with the result that studying them gives direct information on the particular psychology of the inhabitants of that province. A typical case is Brittany, a region where there has developed over time a group of

tales, legends, and beliefs related to the Ankou, a personification of death. This cycle has been studied and explained carefully by Anatole Le Braz in his *Legend of Death* (1912). But he is not the only one; in Lorraine and in some central provinces of France, the "Wild Hunt" cycle has generated. This has been studied by L. Sainéan, who designated it with one of its names, "La Mesnie Hellequin," in the *Revue des Traditions Populaires*; "La Bête du Gévaudan" is quite a different cycle; so is "Mélusine," which has had great success outside of France. What characterizes these cycles of legends is not only the theme, which comes to connect in some details to international folklore, but rather how they are localized and personalized. That is, the events described are situated in a particular place and attributed to perfectly recognizable, genuine historical persons. Here again, maps of distribution could supply solutions for various literary problems.

CHAPTER SIX: SONGS AND DANCES

When dealing with songs, to the literary problem the musical problem is added. If the themes of folktales are so readily transformed as they pass from mouth to mouth, what shall we say about how easily tunes are transmitted and how much they can be modified? In the introduction to his *Folksongs Collected in the French Alps, Savoie and Dauphiné*, Julien Tiersot rightly says,

All those concerned with folklore know that folksongs are too often wrongly attributed to the regions where they are gathered. A song is not Norman, Berricheon, or Dauphinois because that is where it was collected. The same songs keep reappearing in all the provinces of France. They often differ in form, but always they are based upon the same themes and built on the same models. (1903, xxii–xxiii)

They are even found throughout northern Italy, Catalonia, and to some extent in Portugal. "This general observation," Tiersot goes on:

does not prevent the existence of local preferences. Thus, the repertoire of rounds for dancing is especially abundant in the western provinces, from Normandy to Gascony; other materials, however,

like certain May songs or the ancient love plaint Pernette, seem to have found a home more particularly in the east or center, from Lorraine to Provence and Auvergne. (1903, xxiii)

Even there one must be careful: I have found in Savoie not a single May song of the type current in Franche-Comté, or in Romanic Switzerland to the north, or in Dauphiné to the south. Though my field-work is not yet completed, it is nonetheless sufficiently developed to indicate an empty space not easily explained.

Now is the time, though, to complete at last the project of cataloguing the whole corpus of French folksongs. This project, conceived about 1850 by Jean-Jacques Ampère, was approved and encouraged by Hippolyte Fortoul, the minister of public instruction, but his successors and our academies have shown no interest in it. Completing this corpus would require mapping. I believe we would discern not only large areas of diffusion like the ones indicated by Tiersot, but other smaller zones for one or another specific type of song. For example, I found at Bonneville a lovely song which Tiersot also found in the same region, with variants. Claudius Servette collected six variants of it in Chablais; Ritz collected two in the Annecy region; an inhabitant of Bresse told me he had heard it near Nantua. That is all. No other collection of songs outside this very restricted region mentions it. Thus, it is a song that does not belong to the common stock, but which must have been created in Haute-Savoie—probably in the eighteenth century, judging from its dialogue form, its rhythm, and its tune. Since it is so lovely and so rare, I translate it here:

ROSE

Do you remember, Rose my love
When we were together in the fields
Did I not say a hundred times and more
That I would put the ring on your finger? *twice*

When we were in the field together
I was so young and so pretty;
But now that I am grown up
I recognize you as a bad boy *twice*

Am I not handsome, am I not rich,
Am I not a boy without malice,
Am I not gentle and gracious,
My lady, to please your lovely eyes? *twice*

Though you be handsome or though you be rich
Though you be a boy without evil intent,
Though you be gentle and gracious
Never will you have my lovely eyes. *twice*

I'll buy you a lovely gown
A gown made in the latest style,
A beautiful calico velvet gown
My lovely, for everyday wear. *twice*

So what do I care for your lovely gown
Your robe made in the latest style,
Your robe of calico velvet
Never will you have my love. *twice*

I'll go away from town to town
Make love to other girls,
If all girls are like you
I'll go away and serve the king. *twice*

This case cannot be unique; in France there must exist other songs whose zone of distribution is very small, and which hence might be called indigenous to their region. But most of them conform to Tiersot's general remarks, not only regarding their text but quite as much regarding their tune.

Folksong tunes are even more fluid and out of reach than words. Our science has much work to do to distinguish and classify folk tunes:

Often you do find variants of the same song [Tiersot writes], but I assure you that never were all these variants sung to the same tune, and even that never was the music absolutely identical for any two

variants. A simple change of key or rhythm can impart such new features that the subtlest analysis may be powerless to distinguish its original material. (Tiersot 1903, xxviii)

Tiersot's observation does justice to the attempts to reconstruct the original form of a song like Pernette by comparing its different variants. The most interesting of these is the work of Georges Doncieux in *The French Romancero* (1904). Doncieux attempts to discard the nonessential or secondary elements of the variants in favor of a literary form of the words and tune, which he considers to be the one first made up. But the reasoning behind his deletions is entirely personal and subjective, and despite the meticulous rigor of his research, in the end he convinced no one.

Certain songs tell facts of history and form cycles. For these, one should consult J. B. Weckerlin's *The Folksong* (1886). Examples in this text include the cycle of Henri IV, that of Biron, and that of Napoleon I. Here we must assume a single author. When songs of this type are collected in the country, they often derive from booklets printed in Paris. Other folksong cycles allow less certainty, for example the secular songs made up to religious melodies in the Middle Ages. There is good reason to believe that these old hymns and anthems had first been appropriated by the Church from contemporary popular songs, some of which could date from Roman times. We see here, in any case, how folklore manages to combine the biological method and the historical method.

The active bearers and disseminators of folksong are the same ones I described in my *Formation of Legends*: settled or itinerant professional singers, pilgrims, gypsies and other nomads, soldiers, and even scholars, not to mention the centuries-old trade guild travelers, who toured France learning their trade—they were great singers. When Damase Arbaud began collecting *Folk and Historical Songs of Provence* (1862), he heard a song everywhere which had become popular after only a few years:

As soon as children or youth were in large enough groups, you could hear them repeating,

Quand te cousteroun tes esclops

Quand erun, quand eroun noous?

How much did the wooden shoes cost you

When they were, when they were new?

I was curious enough to look into the reason for the sudden and widespread infatuation with this song. I found that a journeyman cabinetmaker, who had come from the Cévennes region to conduct his tour of France, had been planting the song, with its highly singable tune and its insignificant words, all along his route. What took place with this song from the Cévennes region must have happened many times. All that was needed was one man, traveling through a wide expanse of terrain one short day at a time, to disseminate a song which took root everywhere among folk who heard him sing it and liked it.

Patronal festivals, saints' day celebrations, large competitions at pilgrimage sites, and royal ceremonies must have also been occasions for bringing together and disseminating songs; our rural marriages must have had the same effect, since it is tradition for each person to "go to his own!"

It is in the religious domain that we can still observe the gift of folk creativity. I am referring here to the famous group of songs known as Christmas carols. Some of these, of individual origin, have known authors, especially the seventeenth-century ones: Saboly in Provence, La Monnoye in Burgundy, Nicolas Martin in Maurienne (end of the sixteenth century), and many others. But carols were invented long before that; they appear in the liturgy from the fourth century on, and they constitute an entire literature, half-sacred and half-profane, fostered by the clergy and the faithful. Where the folk came in was in their localization of traditional themes and their provision of the characters in the Nativity Story with a notably rustic flavor. The folk have made endless variations on these themes and have transferred tunes of highly profane origin into their carols. Most folksong collections contain carols of this kind. A general introduction is Noël Hervé's *French Christmas Carols* (1905).

The study of dance tunes and rhythms leads to the formulation of some interesting speculations. One fact is that genuine folk dances do not travel as easily as tales or songs. They are to music what legends

are to literature: relatively fixed, localized, and individual in origin. In the Alps, for example, the *rigadoon* is danced only in southern Dauphiné, the *farandole* in the north of Provence, the Sword Dance or *Bacchuber* in and around Briançon, the *Monferrine* in Haute Tarentaise. Similarly, the *bourrée* is above all an Auvergne dance, the *bail* a Catalan one. In Brittany each region has its own characteristic dance; in the Côtes-du-Nord the *dérobée*; in the Gallo region the *ronde* with embracing; in Morbihan the *bal breton*; in the Vannes region the *ridée*; in Finistère the *jabadao*; and so on. No one has yet made a comparative and scientific study of these folk dances. What little we know leads us to the idea that most of them are vestiges of ancient ritualistic celebrations that reach back not merely to the Druids or Romans, but rather as far as the neolithic age. Dances then, according to recent discoveries, seem to have had essential elements in common with the dances of today's "savages": violent poundings of the heel and a kind of vertical movement of the knee that suggests a horse walking. Round dances were primitively a rite of circumambulation in a "magic circle." A guide for describing folk dances is Raphaël Blanchard's excellent monograph on the *Bacchuber* (1914). For an extended comparison, consult Ridgeway (1915).

CHAPTER SEVEN: GAMES AND TOYS

Folk games and toys are another branch of folklore not represented in France by a single general scholarly treatment, whereas Switzerland has the work of Züricher (1902); in Germany, the excellent treatise by Wehrhan (1909); in Holland and Flanders, a beautiful collection by de Cock and Teirlinck (1902–1908); and in Great Britain, the two volumes by Lady Alice B. Gomme (1894–1898). The study of the games and toys of French children extends much farther than is commonly believed: it demands a search for parallels all the way back to classical antiquity and among relatively primitive non-Europeans.

Ethnographers showed long ago that many rural games in Europe are vestiges of ancient ceremonies. But that is only one aspect of a complex problem that must be solved separately in each case. Games may also be regarded as the point of departure for a whole category of activities which, under the more sophisticated name of "sports,"

have long been a way for humanity to keep itself “in shape,” bearing in mind the goal biologists have shown to be the reproductive instinct. Karl Groos’s books on “The Play of Animals” and “The Play of Man” (in German) have clearly revealed the biological importance of rhythmic exercises, more or less strenuous, executed either by a few individuals or (sometimes) by fairly large groups (Groos 1898, 1899).

That the play of children and of adolescents should be a pre-exercise—that is, a training program—for activities that will be practically or physiologically useful in adult life is all too obvious; however, this has become clear only recently. Now things have gone too far, since the way games and sports are handled in our time tends to overtax and weaken the participants.

I do not mean to say, however, that ancient and primitive games did not also cause some degree of over-exertion, but that was temporary—not sustained or even cumulative—as it is in sports today. Nothing is more exhausting, for example, than the famous Norman game of *soule*, the ancestor of football (soccer), or cricket, or a game of *paume* on horseback, so fashionable in old France, known also to Indians of North America, and now back with us in the more orderly form known as polo.

For information about our games, one must make use of local monographs. Even there, many descriptions are too brief, or visibly the work of observers who, because they have not played the game themselves, have not been precise about essential details. The majority of adult games during the nineteenth century descended to being children’s games, though some still preserve a kind of sacred character. It is still a rule in the Alps, for example, that children are not allowed to play either *quilles* [ninepins] or *boules* [bowls] in the public spaces reserved for those games: village squares, alleys, café terraces, or bowling greens. These games are reserved for adult males; boys may not play them until they are fifteen or sixteen and neither women nor girls are traditionally allowed to play them. It is not a question of strength or dexterity; it is a sort of prohibition or taboo—a very ancient exclusion.

The only classification of French games that could be established would have to be along very general lines, unless we accept the biological division between games of the senses and games of the intellect. Among the former we could divide those of sight and hearing on

the one hand from muscular games on the other. In the second class we could put riddles and guessing games. The popular games that have attracted most attention are those requiring muscular strength and louts as participants: jumping in Provence and wrestling almost everywhere.

Some games believed to be folk became so only through an influence from a court or a castle. So it is with *quintaine*, in which a rider would direct his horse towards a wooden shield on a dummy and strike the middle of its chest with a wooden lance. This game descended from the tournaments of royalty. In Touraine, it took on a special form, studied by Carré de Busserolle in his *Curious Customs of Touraine* (1880). The contest took place exclusively upon a river; the millers, boatmen, and fishermen attached to a manor were obliged to take part by the lord of that manor; "and if they pretended to break their poles, or if they defaulted as to the day, place, or time, there was a fine of sixty sous." This rule was in effect for a long time in all the manors of Touraine; the game took place on the day of Pentecost in certain localities, on the day of Trinity at others. But we must not, I think, see in this contest a survival of older aquatic jousts as they existed elsewhere, notably in Italy, and which are still seen in the South Sea islands. Rather, it was a clever transposition perpetrated by the lords upon their subjects of a noble diversion par excellence; it amused them greatly because the makeshift knights usually fell into the water.

Children's games are sometimes—but not always—a deformation or imitation of adult games. For example, boys' ball games are left over from the version of tennis played by young adults and soldiers; but marbles (*billes*), leapfrog, and the bear game (today almost gone, although it got me some mighty bruises at the lycée in Nice) are quite specifically games for children. So is *barres*, a children's running game, and the like. "Blind Man's Buff," on the other hand, which also derives from modern customs, was still a game for adults in the eighteenth century, as is testified in many prints.

Still more complex is the problem of children's rounds and singing games, especially scenes in dialogue and song, such as *La Tour prends garde; Pass'pass'les allumettes, la dernière y restera*.¹ Must we see in *Qui marierons-nous* or *Les yeux d'amour* remains of magical incantations, as Saintyves claims? Or are they, as I prefer to think,

adult songs from the era of courtly love and chivalry which later fell, if not into ridicule, anyway into the children's domain, in the same way as Blind Man's Buff? These questions can be answered only when a complete study of French children's rhymes and jingles has been made, classified in scholarly order, and with comparative studies which are as extensive as possible.

Research on folk toys is more advanced. The rattles, for example, that our children buy in the marketplace and keep shaking all year long, come straight from the rattles that were supposed to be shaken during the *Tenebrae* service, and which represent the primitive bells of our churches. During the first centuries of Christianity, when the chapels had no bells, the faithful were called to worship by castanets and rattles. Some were enormous, like those still used in some chapels in the Orient. Similarly, our girls' dolls once represented various divinities. In Morocco, dolls representing rain are still promenaded ceremonially in times of drought. They were hence sacred portable statues, which lost that meaning only at a relatively late date in Europe—I mean only three or four centuries ago—to become a common plaything for all our girls. That is not to deny that girls have always and everywhere made “babies” for themselves. Playing “mama” is a biological pre-exercise, just as using a stick for a horse is a pre-exercise for boys in every country on earth.

Animals made of clay have been found in neolithic tombs. Were they playthings, or representations of animal divinities? As a general rule we simply do not know. But we do know that earthenware animals still serve as playthings in many a countryside. Heimberg, in Switzerland, made a specialty of producing them. Similarly, the sheepfolds of the Black Forest recall the animal and human likenesses that, since the Middle Ages, have been made for Christmas crèches. The *santons* of Marseille are well known. Among earthenware animals there is one curious group, namely bird whistles. Having assembled a fairly good collection of these, I think it is correct to assert that originally, they were objects used for certain agrarian ceremonies. Some are hollow; by putting in water, one can imitate the song of the nightingale. The sacred character of this bird's song is very ancient; it is preserved in many popular songs, and a weakened echo of it is found in *Romeo and Juliet* (III, v, 1–7).

Once also originally sacred were the small flags that children in

the north of France carry in parades; in Belgium these still preserve their ancient meaning in the form of pilgrimage pennants. Toys, in short, are not just a curious and amusing subject of study. Behind their apparent triviality it is a study that elicits all manner of ancient and primitive customs and beliefs. Besides, children all have something primitive about them; only very late do they become civilized, in accordance with norms during the era in which they live.

The toys that derive from literature must not be omitted. Punch, Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine date from the seventeenth century. What corresponds to them in our time are the stuffed animals inspired by what I may call the “zoological novel” of Kipling, Pergaud, Colette, and still farther back the fable—although La Fontaine is too complex and adult-oriented to have piqued the flexible imagination of children. Thus we touch on literary history, and child psychology as well, which has made remarkable progress these last few years.

Among games of chance, only a few have fallen into the children’s realm. Though dice and cards are still amusing to adults, the teetotum and the knucklebones have lost their original meaning as tools for divination, which is what they were among the Romans, and still are among most black peoples. Among the Baronga, magicians alone play knucklebones: they have contrived a regular system of divination according to the fall of the individual bones and their grouping. At times the game of marbles also had a divinatory character—the marbles replacing pebbles and walnuts—but in France, this magical function has greatly diminished, if not, indeed, entirely disappeared.

This chapter may not end without recalling that Rabelais made a catalogue of games in vogue in his day; I refer the reader to that for an understanding of the importance of games in sixteenth-century social life, and how much educational value Rabelais saw in them. A great many of the games listed by Rabelais have been better preserved in Alsace than in any other of our provinces. Finally, for the history of several categories of toys, one may consult a lovely and well-illustrated work by Henry d’Allemagne (1902). The collections in our regional museums are seldom complete.

By ceremony I mean a group of acts carried out in a fixed order, by a specified group of people, whose purpose is to alter the relationships of certain individuals with each other or with the secular world. Thus, the ceremony of the Mass, executed by the priest following an order by fixed ritual, puts the believer in communion with God. There are liturgical ceremonies and secular ceremonies. To the former, in folklore, belong individual or collective pilgrimages; to the latter, ceremonies like the ancient shooting of the popinjay (*Papegai*) and celebrations connected to fair days (patronal festivals, feasts). But in most instances, the two aspects—secular and sacred—are closely intermixed; in the ancient mysteries and feasts of fools, in baptisms, marriages, churchings, and funerals.

In each of these cases, there is a ceremony at the church, which is surrounded by a system of traditional actions executed outside the church. Some of these actions are vestiges of pre-Christian religions. In many localities, for example, people still hold an actual banquet immediately following any funeral ceremony, a meal in which all members of the family must participate. This is a survival of Roman funeral rites and also, in all probability, of pre-Roman practices, if not Celtic or Druidic. Conceptions that date from still farther back are apparent in all these ceremonies; these are expressed by rites designed to prevent the influence of dangerous spirits, or, in marriage ceremonies, to assure the fertility of the young married couple.

A second important group of ceremonies has to do with work in the fields. Here again some very old conceptions survive, like the personification of summer and winter, or of each of the twelve months, or of certain periods like the Dog Days (*la Canicule*) and Saint Martin's; one of the best known of these is the St. John's Festival (June 24). Most of these were introduced into Christian church ritual from the earliest centuries, as Mannhardt, Frazer, Monsignor Duchesne, and other scholars have so well shown (Duchesne 1915; Frazer 1911–1915; Mannhardt 1905).

By being incorporated into Christian ritual, these ancient rituals have preserved their calendrical character. That is, the annual sequence of ceremonies has followed the successive modifications of the calendar. Consequently, the rites of spring are now a part of the cycle of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost; the summer cycle, of Saint

John and the Assumption; the winter cycle, of the cycles of All Saints' Day and the Twelve Days, including Christmas, Saint Sylvester, New Year's and the (Three) Kings or Epiphany. These are only the main cycles; there are secondary ones as well, like the May cycle, which includes May Day, May 3, and Rogation Days (the blessing of the fields and harvests during the growing season).

Still, not all the ancient rural customs dealing directly with work in the fields have been absorbed into the Christian calendar—for example, the old harvest-time and grape-picking festivals. Others are the deep-seated custom of keeping in the harvested field a sheaf of grain, which personifies the very old divinity of Vegetation, or rather of the Cereals; that of disguising oneself with leaves representing the Vegetation deity of fruit trees; even the embellishment and preservation of the last sheaf, the purpose of which was preserving the productive powers of Mother Earth in the fields from one year to the next. And there are others, less widespread or less assiduously practiced, all taking place without any participation from the church or clergy. They have been banned time and again; they are difficult to observe if one has not been forewarned about the possibility of their survival.

These ceremonies, taken together, form a special group which I have called "transition rites" (*rites de passage*), because they always entail a transition from one stage or station to another, and because they are similarly structured by a pattern that is more or less simple and direct. For example, the analysis of marriage ceremonies shows that their goal is to unite simultaneously two individuals and two families; these are "limited collectivities" which formerly were socially separated, but which through a steady progression have come closer together, forming at last what the Le Play school called a new "cell" (Le Play 1884). Similarly, baptism introduces into the Christian world a new individual who, until then, remained outside the Christian community. The same system has been worked out by all societies on earth; the forms, details, and symbolic elements differ, but not the internal structure.

It is unfortunate that no preliminary study exists for ceremonies of this type in France, like Sébillot's *Folklore of France*, cited above (1904–1907). Only rarely have these local customs been described in sufficient detail; the known facts are scattered left and right in a host of journals and pamphlets. My monograph *From the Cradle to the*

Grave applies only to Savoie (van Gennep 1916); for Brittany there is a good little book by Eugène Herpin (1904); for the Macon region there are four excellent pamphlets by Gabriel Jeanton (1920–1923); and for Touraine there are several fascicles by Jacques-Marie Rougé (1901, 1907, 1911, 1913); for the other provinces, a partial synthesis has scarcely even gotten under way.

Ceremonies are, as they should be, the expression of firm beliefs; most are no more than Christian adaptations of prehistoric beliefs. Others, on the contrary, have always been attacked by the Church, particularly those that depend upon what is called magic, witchcraft, or folk medicine. The study of comparative religion has shown that there is no internal difference between magic and religion in either their psychological mechanism or their practical procedures. The difference depends only upon the application symbolized by the two poles: Good and Evil, God and the Devil, the Priest and the Sorcerer. Nor is witchcraft made up wholly of survivals. Quite the contrary: it is a domain in which a great degree of technical invention can be observed during the Middle Ages, and a strong tendency towards creating a genuine science in opposition to orthodox Christian science. Lynn Thorndike's *History of Magic and Experimental Science* shows how complex and varied the relationships between these intellectual tendencies have been.² People believed in the real existence of spirits and the real power of witches. Everything that was still unintelligible, yet not explainable by modern physics and chemistry, was attributed to powers other than those of Christianity. This conception persisted until the middle of the seventeenth century; so learned and intelligent a saint as Francis de Sales is known to have exorcised goblins, devils, and diseases with conviction.

These beliefs once played a considerable role; a formidable quantity of writing has been devoted to them, almost unreadable though it is in our day (such as Jean Bodin's *Demon-mania of Witches*) (Bodin 1587 [1995]). But these beliefs disappeared from our countryside much more quickly than might have been expected. In the middle of the last century, several inquiries revealed the survival of numerous witches, healers, and "evil women" in every province. Today a few of them remain, though more than it seems at first glance, for country folk are naturally reticent about such matters. Still, there is no coherent system of witchcraft anymore, as there was in the Middle

Ages; there is no doctrine of magic like that of Albertus Magnus, and no regular recruitment of sorcerers and witches. All that remains is a residue of facts, the greater part of which have fortunately been assembled by Paul Sébillot in his *Folklore of France*, which must be supplemented by works published after 1906.

For general concepts, one will do well to consult first the *Sketch of a General Theory of Magic* by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1902–1903). Publications by spiritualists and occultists, which have nothing in common with scientific research in folklore, are to be avoided. Everything that can be observed should be noted, without trying to systematize during the spur of the moment. In any case, the fundamental principles of religion and magic are well known and fairly simple: the efficacy of physical contact, identification by absorption, the direct power of speech (charms, incantations), belief in the effect of like on like, of opposites upon opposites, simple and complex symbolism, and especially reasoning by analogy. French folkloric facts in this area are so fragmentary that there is no need to browbeat oneself concerning theoretical classifications.

Close to witchcraft, in many cases anyway, is folk medicine. Once again, we have no general critical work on the topic in France, though there is some excellent work concerning Germany and several Slavic countries. It would be a fascinating project for a group of country doctors to publish the corpus of our folk medicine. Some fragmentary facts can be found in monographs and journals, but they are rarely presented systematically. Folk medicine is also related to pilgrimages and to the cults of healer-saints, a branch of hagiology that has been studied relatively well. Besides, not everything in folk medicine is contrary to science. The use of medicinal plants and herbs, for example, is positively recognized these days due to the increasingly precise knowledge we are acquiring about the characteristics of alkaloids. Where superstition intervenes is when to a brew of carefully chosen herbs, with wormwood looming large among them, the old hag adds a dried snakeskin, a viper's tongue, a toad's skin, or certain organs of a hare.

Accordingly, in order to study folk medicine, one must have a wide range of preliminary knowledge—knowledge which our first folklorists did not possess, since they were deficient in botany, organic chemistry, and medicine proper. As a model, I cite Emile van

Heurck's booklet *Armaire Ointment and the Powder of Sympathy in Science and Folklore* (1915); on the medicine of the pilgrimages, a beautiful volume by the same author, *Pilgrimage Shawls in Belgium and Neighboring Countries* (1922); and for general concepts, the monograph by P[ierre] Saintyves on wart cures (1913).

Of all the branches of folklore, the one dealing with beliefs is the one that has penetrated most deeply into literature. I am not alluding merely to the pastoral novels (*romans champêtres*) of George Sand (1848, 1856, 1865), nor to the numerous regional novels or tales such as *Luroue le Braco*, by Pierre Lelong, or *Jacquou le Croquant*, by Eugène Le Roy (1899), for which Beaurepaire-Froment prepared a bibliography (1913), but also to the use by poets of primitive concepts that are still normal in rural milieux. One of the most important is animism, according to which all forces in nature possess a soul of the same type as the human soul. That concept, like the concept of *mana* (a non-personified magico-religious power, transmissible by contact or at a distance; *poder* in Occitan, *baraka* among the Semites), goes all the way back to the very origins of humanity. It is to the credit of Denis Saurat to have drawn attention to non-Christian elements in modern poetry in a recent article (1923), and to have thus initiated a new critical orientation by combining the results of ethnography and folklore with those of literary history.

CHAPTER NINE: HOUSES, UTENSILS, AND COSTUMES

However fully the folklore topics we have reviewed so far are represented in published materials, to the same degree house types, household utensils, and tools are disregarded. In France, we are not even familiar with the methodology to be followed, though it has been worked out with the greatest care by scholars from Switzerland (Hunziker 1898), Germany (Meitzen 1895; Rhamm 1905), Austria (Bancalari 1893; Meringer 1906), and the Slavic world. This fact is all the more remarkable in that the first incentive came, as I have already said, from France. *An Inquiry Concerning the Conditions of Rural Housing in France* was begun in 1880, the results of which were published in two volumes under the direction of A. de Foville and Jacques Flach (1894–1899). Incomplete though most of the an-

swers were—and the collaborators in the *Inquiry* were seldom up to the undertaking—that was a worthy effort, which ought not to fall into oblivion.

In fields other than folklore, of course, interest has been expressed in our rural houses. Artists, architects, and, since the war, literary critics such as Léandre Vaillat and many more, have published albums (Vaillat 1917); but the “picturesque” dominates the scene. These authors concentrate on relatively complex houses, which are still lived in today; elements they regard as fortuitous and innovative have been shown by folklore to have actually been essential from the beginning.

So, we turn to regional monographs, such as *Picardy*, *Morven* and so on, published by Colin, and to Jean Brunhes’s first volume of the *History of the French Nation*, for some conception of general types and local variation in folk housing (Brunhes 1920). Brunhes’s book, unfortunately, contains some errors of judgment. The author, a geographer rather than a folklorist or ethnographer, sees the roof as the typical element of houses; he mapped the distribution of various kinds of roofs and house coverings in France. He also ascribes great importance to the building materials used. In fact, however, prolonged and careful research carried out in other European countries has shown that the materials may change with no change in structure; it is the structure that is the constant element.

As everyone knows, France was peopled successively by numerous groups of varied origins; each had its particular house type, and people continue to build that type up to our own day, in accordance with the traditional norm. That explains the extraordinary difference among house types as one goes from Brest to Clermont to Nice. The Roman house, with its central courtyard, entrance porch, dwelling house to the rear, and secondary structure on the sides, is encountered almost everywhere; the “country villa” was the initial stage for the large farms of Île-de-France, Picardy, and elsewhere. But all manner of house types are also encountered, notably the “room with stove” type where one enters directly into the principal room of the house without either antechamber or hallway. Here, in short, we have a very interesting topic of investigation, especially so if the types observed can be transferred onto a large-scale map.

On the subject of the construction materials: as a general rule, the invaders continued to build utilizing the same materials their forefa-

thers used. Accordingly, the Burgundians and the Allobroges, who came into the French Alps from flat forested countries, continued to build their houses out of wood (those are the forerunners of the modern chalets), despite being in a region where there was an abundance of stone. Then, when over the course of centuries their Savoyard descendants began to build using stone, they preserved certain components and original elements, like exterior stairways and balconies, which no longer had any purpose, since the materials were not nearly as susceptible to fire. Similarly, inhabitants of rocky regions, pushed out onto the plains by newcomers, have replaced stone with wood or brick while preserving for their houses features explainable by the original lithic material.

Another characteristic element is the location of the hearth. The neolithic house is round, dug down into the earth, with a central hearth and a hole at the peak of the roof for a chimney. This type is still found here and there in France in the form of a shepherd's hut, wine cellar, or some such building. When there are genuine chimneys, the house plan is different depending upon whether the hearth is at the back of the room opposite the outside door or on the side, or if it is situated in a separate room (which is the starting point for the modern kitchen). It seems that the general house plan depends upon the placement of the hearth. In any case, the hearth is an essential feature of folk housing, one that all too many investigators have ignored.

Another fact is the arrangement of the outbuildings. In some places, the living quarters, the barn, the hayloft, the wood house, the sheep pen, and the pigsty are constructed as one unit; they form a kind of bloc. In other places, they are built separately, at some distance from each other. In the Arves valley of Haute-Savoie, for example, clothing is not stored in the dwelling house; instead, it is laid out on planks in a small, separate square building called *le greni* or a similar term, erected upon small pillars to avoid rats. It is a curious spectacle, these little houses fifty meters or more from the house, where on Saturday people go to get their Sunday clothes. The custom is explained by fear of fires; it must, indeed, be very ancient.

The floor plan must also be studied. In Île-de-France, we are accustomed to seeing the entrance door open onto the street. But in many regions, a plain wall or a wall with an occasional window faces the street, with the entrance opening into a minor passage to which

the barn doors open, along with the doors of secondary houses. Certain villages are made up of houses in a single line along a main street or through road, and several streets run perpendicular to that. Other villages, by contrast, are made up of houses isolated from each other, so that the street forms a maze. Still others, especially in the south, arrange their houses in a circle around a central plaza. Finally, the old Germanic system also persists in many regions of France: there is no village, really, but isolated houses, or little hamlets consisting of three or four houses, so separated from each other that the "village" is spread out over the whole area of the community. Those are some of the principal types, but there are others, and each principal type offers many secondary variations. A trip by train, or better still by automobile, over a distance of five or six hundred kilometers demonstrates how much the types of houses in France differ from each other according to province or region. A major investigation of this complex matter would certainly be valuable.

In household furnishings and utensils, somewhat less variation is encountered. Perhaps the most interesting topic would be beds. In earliest times, these were attached to a wall; the Breton types are fairly well known. Present-day movable furniture—like benches, tables, chairs, cupboards, kneading troughs, and cabinets—do not contribute much important evidence to folklore, as their basic forms do not vary greatly. What does vary, however, is how they are decorated; as we shall see below, the influence of cities and of the centers of artistic production is strongly felt.

Utensils are of greater interest. Some of these still take form from the Bronze Age and the early Iron Age; others, notably in Provence, are known Roman survivals. Gilliéron and Edmont in their *Linguistic Atlas of France* and Albert Dauzat in his *Linguistic Geography* show several variations in the types of utensils, for instance the scythe, the sickle, the bush-hook, the hatchet, and the adze (Dauzat 1922; Gilliéron and Edmont 1902–1910). The collection of these tools is particularly interesting to regional museums; the one in Champagne, organized by Dr. Octave Guelliot, which was destroyed during the war, was a model of its kind. Few regional museums, however, have thought to make a systematic collection of the utensils made in villages by craftsmen in wood and metal. At present, except in isolated places, the industrial production of Peugeot and other big manufac-

turers has standardized utensil types, though if one studies the catalogue of these establishments, one becomes aware that local customs have obliged them to mass-produce even some archaic types.

When it comes to regional costumes, on the other hand, variety is considerable; this is one of the most interesting topics for study. It is this variety that has always given our rural areas and our villages, especially on Sundays and holidays, that picturesque aspect that has attracted so many designers and painters. Since the seventeenth century, folk costume has been a fashionable topic: in the eighteenth century, sets of engravings in black and white and albums in color were published, and in the twentieth century, local costumes, especially Breton costumes, are a normal element of romantic and impressionist painting. They are found in all museums, and they quickly became a postcard subject.

Does this mean that this vogue has helped bring about a scientific study of our folk costumes? Far from it. Little has been noticed beyond the picturesque; rarely has anyone sought their origins, still less the techniques of fabrication. Of course, historical evidence is often not available. What we know of medieval costume comes to us from seals, miniatures, and church sculptures, sources that are aesthetic rather than realistic or scientific. Costumes are arranged for the sake of artistic effect instead of a concern for exactness. Regarding court costumes, or fashion among the rich, we are better informed. Though these are not folk costumes, although in certain cases, over the course of time, court styles have exerted an influence on folk costume.

The general principle is that court styles were imitated by noble families in the provinces, the provincial castles established taste for local folk, and there was thus a constant movement from the center (Versailles and Paris) to the periphery. Several instances strongly suggest that this flow did happen, in a rather slow rhythm. A Versailles style of the eighteenth century would take about fifty years to arrive in a provincial region, not without some modifications—especially simplifications—along the way.

Any more rapid adoption of rich or stylish fashion was opposed not only by distances, slowness of communications, differences in fabrics, and so on, but also by the folk conception that costume is a distinctive symbol of one's region and social class. This conception was regularized in the Middle Ages by laws against extrava-

gant expenditures on clothes, and their effects on folk psychology are still visible. Besides, the World War had a great influence in this domain: Paris styles are now adopted immediately in the country by the younger generations, because class distinctions have been greatly weakened, and because the postwar period has greatly enriched farmers. Paris fashion magazines nowadays make their way right into the thatched houses.

There is no scientific treatise on modern folk costumes, only albums and scattered records. A study of the topic must be done quite differently from the study of archaeological records, which are inevitably incomplete. An important element of this study is the pattern or arrangement of needlework, and for headgear, the structure of the frame. As for bonnets, a few good collections exist, notably that of Miss Koenig in the Trocadéro. For old-time costumes, one must visit the regional museums. More often than not, however, these have been put together by amateurs who had no general or comparative knowledge of the subject, and who have made the most maladroit groupings of models under the name of the picturesque. This is one more domain urgently needing study, before Parisian standardization stifles all local differences.

CHAPTER TEN: FOLK ART

Costumes are to some extent a collective artistic manifestation. Is it deliberate or unconscious? That is a question for folk psychology that is not easy to answer. Though many a headdress frame a woman's head well and soften her features, and though some costumes bring out the lines of the female body, most headdresses are ridiculous scaffoldings, and most costumes have the effect of stiffening and weighing down the wearer. A pretty and shapely girl can wear dresses of heavy cloth, a corset with wooden stays, a pancake hat with a mushroom on top, or a round fluted bonnet—if her hair is well combed—without looking like a monster. Yes, this does happen, but we must avoid judging by the exception. To see people coming away from Mass, a pilgrimage, or a shrine is to get the impression that our rural women are ill-shaped. Men's costumes are usually more flattering. From a purely aesthetic point of view, present-day styles are more ac-

ceptable; and from the economic point of view, they are cheaper and more practical. A beautiful Breton costume, a pretty coif from Normandy or Touraine, an Arlésienne shawl of genuine lace (otherwise it is only a frill),³ a costume of Maurienne (Savoie)—any one of these costs an enormous sum. The impression we get from folk costumes has more to do with their novelty than with harmony of cut and color.

Clothing is enhanced by jewelry. French country folk, we must admit, have not historically been preeminent at crafts in ornamental metal. To the extent that folk jewelry was original and sumptuous in the late Bronze and early Stone Ages (called Merovingian and Burgundian art in French), to that extent our provincial craftsmen simply adopted the tastes of the nobility. All kinds of influences can be seen there, especially Italian. In Italy, a true folk art in rare metals existed, but not in France. Nor can we call local productions such as the Limoges enamels, or the porcelains and earthenware of specialized art centers like Moustiers, Marseille, Nevers, or Strasbourg “folk art.” It might be that the point of departure for certain schools of decorative arts in crockery and porcelains was strictly local, but most often that sort of work had an individual origin, both regarding the designers’ choice and the form and decoration of the objects.

Apart from such high quality production, there have always been village shops that worked not for the nobles or the courts but for the country folk themselves. Now that we are beginning to learn something about medieval pottery, it seems that in many localities everyday pottery-making has kept going since Gallo-Roman times. That explains the persistence of certain shapes of jars, pitchers, goblets, and basins whose contours are exactly those of the classical era. This persistence can be observed in Normandy, in Languedoc, in Provence, in Dauphine, and elsewhere. The decoration (of pottery or earthenware) also goes a long way back: incisions, small bands in relief, and carvings on the body of the object date from the neolithic era. As for painted decorative elements, they follow the general rule for the origins of art rather than the principles of survival: floral and vegetable motifs like leaves and ribs have simply been taken by local artists from surrounding nature.

Fine monographs have been published on our high-quality earthenware of Nevers, Rouen, or Moustiers, but up to now, there are no well-done monographs, and certainly no general works, on genuine

folk pottery. As an example of method, I take the liberty of citing my "Notes on folk pottery designs in Savoie," in the *Revue de Savoie* for 1912, in which I analyze the historic, aesthetic, and economic factors of that local production. In this particular case, we should no doubt discern a Swiss influence, analogous to urban influences in the wood or metal work of our provinces. If we examine in museums or in albums and monographs on rural furniture the types and ornamentation of cupboards, tables, chairs, sideboards, and clocks, we see at work the same combination of characteristic elements as in the sophisticated arts we call Gothic, Renaissance, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV. But in rural construction, these elements are less numerous and at the same time less well put together, less well executed, and coarser. The Strasbourg Museum, the Museon Arlaten, and many private collections, as well as temporary exhibitions organized in recent years to bring "rustic art" to prominence, enable us to see that furniture obeys the same law as costume. Style penetrated slowly from Paris into the depths of our provinces during the three hundred years before the Revolution.

Then, with the pillaging of convents and castles and the sale of national property, the Revolution put into farms and small village bourgeois homes many elegant examples of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century styles, which served as models for rural woodworkers and cabinetmakers. The influence of secondary artistic centers and deposed capitals like Aix, Nevers, and Nancy must also be considered important, for often these cities—though having lost their former political importance—have remained literary and artistic centers, and some royal governors have made it a point of honor to keep them alive. So, we must not think always in terms of the direct influence of Paris and Versailles, but rather of a second level of influence—even a third level, in the case of great aristocratic families living in their castles. Another factor whose importance cannot be overestimated is that of the trade guilds and their *tour de France*. The general scheme is well known: the guild members went for instruction to the best-known craftsmen; upon returning to their province, they brought back designs, techniques, models, and more or less deliberate trends, which spread the style of their era to the four corners of the land. If some rich farmer was marrying off his daughter, he would order a closet or chest from the nearest cabinetmaker, who

would follow Parisian models, but with several years' lag by comparison to the style then fashionable in the big city shops. Anyone who has lived in a French province must have seen the mechanism of this lag up close, though today it is somewhat attenuated, if not abolished, by the railways and the catalogues of the big manufacturers.

In other words, the terms "folk art" and "rustic art" are misused by the public and in the art reviews. Under these catch-all terms are lumped all kinds of productions that have nothing "folk" about them but their place of manufacture. That is not enough basis for judging the genuine aesthetic gift of the folk. Here again, folklore needs a more rigorous methodology. This folk style or gift is best seen in utilitarian articles of use only in the country. Examples include chests for clothing or wood, salt boxes, mantelpieces, inn boards and shop signs, chandeliers for houses and churches, statues of saints, and toys.

The illustrations in this book show clearly the directions taken by folk artists influenced by local inspiration and local demands. Dressing Martha and Mary in Mâcon costumes as they carry Lazarus from the comb, and guardian saints as Bretons; copying a devil on a fresco and making a toy out of it; creating a whole set of sturdy male figures, symbolizing gestures and customs of the region, to populate a Christmas crèche; borrowing the conventional two-headed eagle from heraldry and conventional cookie designs from pastry for the design of the backs of chairs; hiding barrel staves in the wine cellar and carving them carefully in the shapes of fantastic fish to entertain wine-tasters or terrify drunkards; putting a frightful or soulful mask at the outlets of the bran chutes on mills; capping the roof with the simplified shape of a pigeon, so soft it could fly away; ornamenting milk jars and bowls with little flowers and domestic animals: these are but a few of the many examples of authentic—meaning direct—folk art, which, while accepting certain symbols or certain techniques from external sources, permits only a few foreign influences.

That origin has so influenced the common psychology of the French that a customs officer, Henri Rousseau, outside school walls, has created folk painting without having wanted to, and is perhaps not even aware that he has done so.



Credit: Henri Rousseau, *The Sleeping Gypsy*. 1897. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Private collection.

The domain of folk arts is immense and has not been explored nearly as much as it deserves. What Stephen Chauvet says of his region in *Ancestral Normandy* goes more or less for all the other French provinces, except perhaps for Alsace, which has been studied more fully:

There is as yet no study of any sort on Norman household furnishings. It is impossible to know precisely when Norman chests or boxes began being made and when they stopped. It is impossible to find evidence enabling us to know from when to when certain types of boxes were made, or when certain decorative motifs were used. The same difficulties come up for cupboards, clocks, and fountains...A great number of clockmakers do not even know the different types of dials [in Normandy]; they know even less about the chronological order in which they followed one another, for that chronology is nowhere noted; this is the only study where this chronology is indicated even approximately. And, to give an idea, the museum of Coutances has not one coffer, chest, dish cabinet, ancient clock, or even a traditional utensil from an old Norman farmhouse. (1921, vi-vii)

I admit that my appeal to the public comes at the very last moment, for large-scale industry and the War have both contributed to putting an end to rural production and to preventing apprentices from being recruited for arts and craftsmen's ateliers. If only fifty years ago a few scholars had been sufficiently well informed about the requirements of scientific folklore, we should now have a whole body of documents on folk arts, at least of that period, arts which in their turn have become historic and archaeological, and whose psychological and sociological factors have become impossible for us to analyze.

Folklorists also lack practical knowledge about woodwork, metalwork, and so on. If the system of Rousseau's *Émile* had prevailed, and middle-class children had learned a handicraft along with intellectual techniques, the study of folk arts, and of art in general, I may say, would have turned out better—more realistic and less theoretical. Painters and sculptors will understand what I mean; literary critics and historians are in opposition, yet it is they who mostly regulate the destiny of anthropological studies and oppose their development. By way of a few exceptions in France, we have Camille Jullian, Salomon Reinach, Edmond Pottier, Émile Mâle, and Joseph Bédier.⁴ But how many there are in opposition, especially among the historians, archaeologists, and paleographers.

Yet what is more "French" than the steady interaction between what is intellectual and what is rural? What is truer or franker than the temperament of a Michelet? What is more "folk" than the prudent and enthusiastic attitude of a Renan? What is more genuinely "country" than the tenacity of a Pasteur? Few countries have given to humanity so many universal minds, but few universal minds anywhere express themselves as much as ours do the style of the folk in country where their ancestors lived and have preserved from their villages such a rhythm of mind, such a stamp of intellect, that the soil can always be felt in their writings.

Folklore is the science which explains the link between the human communities of our countryside and the superior individuals who came out of them. More than a collection of incomplete analyses, it is a science of synthesis on the grand scale. Many scholars cited earlier, and others still more numerous, have cleared the path. May this short book help folklore win the race, in the best interest of the public good.

NOTES

¹ [Fife's note:] It is difficult, perhaps misleading, to translate the names of these games into English (especially American English). The games are often similar but not identical; names of the music of the rounds and games listed by van Gennep are translated literally here for whatever use that may be: "Watch Tower Beware," "Pass the Matches," "The Last One Must Stay," "Whom Shall we Marry," "The Eyes of Love."

² [Haring's note:] Van Gennep is referring to the first two volumes of Thorndike's eight-volume *History*, which had been published by Macmillan in London in 1923 (Thorndike 1923).

³ [Haring's note:] Van Gennep puns that the *fichu* (cape or shawl) must not be a *chiffon* (rag).

⁴ [Haring's note:] Camille (Louis) Jullian (1859–1933) (Jullian 1908–1926, 1922) was also the editor of a much-used anthology of French historiography (Jullian 1921), probably the source of van Gennep's quotation. Salomon Reinach (1858–1932), author of a popular history of art (Reinach 1906), and an equally popular history of religion (Reinach 1909), was interested in archaeology and wrote on topics such as wine-making in antiquity. Edmond Pottier (1855–1934) was a classical archaeologist. Émile Mâle (1862–1954) was an art historian (Mâle 1908). Joseph Bédier (1864–1938) was the greatest of the French medieval literary scholars, whose work van Gennep often praised (Bédier 1893, 1908–1913).

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Michael J. Bell

POLICING LOUISE POUND

INTRODUCTION

Though Louise Pound (1872–1958) is not truly a forgotten American ballad scholar, she is not a well-remembered one either. Most of her great work in ballad and folk song studies was conducted over a hundred years ago. And despite the occasional modern nod to the scholarly brilliance of her scourging of Francis Barton Gummere, her own theory of balladry in *Poetic Origins of the Ballad* (1921b), and her publication of the first book length scholarly collection of American folksongs—*American Ballads and Songs* (1922)—she was not well liked by the coterie that dominated academic ballad studies in the first quarter of the twentieth century. D. K. Wilgus, trying to be polite, noted that their reception of her major theoretical work, *Poetic Origins*, “was, to say the least, mixed.” The truth is that it was vicious. Those who liked the book, Wilgus continued, “regretted the overlappings, repetitions, and polemical tone...[and] the weaknesses of what constructive argument she offered.” Those who did not, suggested that, like Gummere, she buttressed her argument by “quot[ing] out of context” (Wilgus 1959, 98; for his full discussion of Pound’s ballad work, see 1959, 89–99). The harshest of Pound’s critics was Gordon Hall Gerould (1877–1953), who in the very public pages of *The Literary Review* of *The New York Evening Post* chided her lack of Child and Gummere’s “exquisite literary tact,” declared that she was “obviously incapable of orderly thought,” and ended by pronouncing her anathema: “Wherefore, I submit, she should not be writing about ballads at all” (Gerould, G. H. 1921, 14).

Gerould’s 1921 review so traumatized Pound that, offered the opportunity to review his new book *The Ballad of Tradition* in 1933, she spent most of her review pointing out how it had only taken him twelve years to come around to her way of thinking and then cataloguing in detail the terrible things he had said about her. Her summary of what she called his “brickbats” spoke volumes:

The author is obviously incapable of orderly thought...the results are practically worthless and deserve no praise...a dull, confused and unconvincing book...Some very good minds have gone over the same material before and come to very different conclusions...and [Child] had exquisite literary tact which Miss Pound seems not to possess...she has never learned...how to deal fairly with evidence...so led away by her theories as to argue the impossibility of ballad composition by European peasants because the cowboys haven't really done it...a quite abysmal lack of understanding of the psychological and social differences between the conditions in which popular ballads have been made and those in which they cannot be made...her habit of distorting evidence...She seems to have no inkling that people in different states of society think and behave quite differently; and she has apparently never even surmised the real nature of folk-ballads. (Pound 1933, 125; for a discussion of the use of the claim of "disordered minds" as an attack on women, see Busfield 2003, 36–47)¹

Gerould's scorning of Pound as a disordered mind would be easy to dismiss as just another example of the appallingly sexist things that male intellectuals say/said when confronted with a women scholar engaged in serious work that challenged both the prevailing wisdom—in this case the definition and theory of the traditional popular ballad—and the critical edifice that it supported. But to call her tactless is damning. Tact is the highbrow version of politeness. Whereas politeness is the ordinary display of sensitivity towards others, tact is that sensitivity plus delicacy. It presents itself as a knowing intimacy. To be tactful is not only to wish to be kind, but also to know how to choose the right words and actions to ensure that one is graceful and elegant in their relationships. As David Russell notes, tact is "an aesthetic of handling over more abstract conceptualization or observation—whether of people or objects" (2017, 1).

To be accused of lacking exquisite literary tact is doubly damning. Literary tact is the aesthetic perfection of ordinary tact. In the right hands, it imbues a writer's choice of words and manner of outreach with what T. S. Eliot described as "the direct sensuous apprehension of thought" (Eliot 1921, 285; see also Cottom 1985, 1–34; Cox 1994, 212–233).² In Gerould's version of this concept, the unity

of thought and feeling was embodied to near perfection by Child as a scholar and realized perfectly in his collection in which everything included was genuine and everything excluded was not. Gerould said as much in 1908, writing that the recently discovered ballad "The Bitter Withy" was the only claimant to have passed the three accepted tests of ballad genuineness required to be considered a genuine Child ballad: the first and most important of which was the "purely personal, the critical sense of the scholar who has learned by long-continued and careful study to distinguish the false from the true, to separate the chaff from the wheat" (Gerould, G. H. 1908, 142). This embodiment of mind and manners, what George Santayana described ironically as "the genteel tradition"—and Lionel Trilling called less politely, "Anglo-Saxon Toryism"—turns Gerould's desire for exquisite tact into an academic policing of Pound's thoughts and words (Santayana 1911 [1967]; Trilling as cited in Sedgwick III 1984, 50; see also Dawidoff 1992; Foucault 1995, 135–141).

Pound's misfortune was that the ballad fraternity found in Gerould someone who was temperamentally inclined to be a vehement defender of the Harvard communalist approach. Born in New Hampshire into modest middle-class prosperity, Gerould attended Dartmouth College where he received his B. A. in English in 1898. After college, at the encouragement of a favorite professor, he continued his education at Oxford where he completed a B.Litt. in philology and language with two leading philologists: Arthur S. Napier and Joseph Wright. Upon returning home in 1900, he joined the English Department at Bryn Mawr College as an Associate in English Philology. He taught at Bryn Mawr until he was recruited by Woodrow Wilson to join the faculty at Princeton. While at Bryn Mawr, he met his future wife Katharine Fullerton, who had begun teaching English Composition at the College after graduating from Radcliffe College in 1901. Though there is no direct evidence, it is most likely that Gerould's interest in balladry was magnified by his relationship with Francis Barton Gummere, who was just a mile down Montgomery Avenue at Haverford College, another Quaker institution. The two men shared common ground; both published editions of *Beowulf*, for example, and Gummere would have appreciated Gerould's extensive work in Medieval Studies.³

Across the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Ger-

oulds were the power couple of Trilling's Anglo-Saxon Toryism. She was out in the world more than he—she published 114 stories, poems, and essays in magazines like *The Century*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and *Scribner's*. He only had thirty or so publications, but he did have two novels and his scholarship and teaching at Princeton to fill in the gap. Despite their disparity in output, both Geroulds were regarded in the world of letters as two of the leading voices for the “plight of the genteel” (Gerould, K. F. 1922, 446). They wrote on a variety of subjects and opposed so much—bad books, bad taste, bad culture, circus trips with children, the end of high culture, movies to which they seldom went and at which Katharine was seldom entertained. She did not get Chaplin, for example (Gerould, K. F. 1912b; Gerould, K. F. 1915; Gerould, K. F. 1921a, 29; Gerould, K. F. 1926, 446). Together they despaired of American provincialism, held no hope for the assimilation of the working class or immigrants, and preferred to model themselves on their English and New England forefathers. It may be unfair to saddle each with the other's words, but it is probably fair to say that these sentiments were constantly present at their dinner table. Certainly, the critics noticed their similarities: “He writes,” one anonymous reviewer noted, “with none of the disdainful tension, lapsing into grisliness, of his wife, Mrs. Katherine Fullerton Gerould. His style is amorphous within and fuzzy without. But he, too, is by implication a violent anti-modernist and intent on showing the strength, serenity, and comeliness of an older order of American life” (Anonymous 1920, 454).

In another essay, I have dealt with Gerould's “handling” of Pound as part of a larger discussion on the debate over American balladry at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bell 2022). At this moment, however, my narrower intention is to analyze three of her writings for evidence of the validity of Gerould's accusations. I will begin with her 1896 essay in *Modern Language Notes (MLN)* on Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* (c. 1320), which marked the formal beginning of her professional career as a literary historian; proceed to her first folklore publication, an 1899 pedagogical essay designed to promote the teaching of the ballad, simply entitled “The Ballads” and published in the *North-West Monthly*; and conclude with her first definition of folksong offered in a footnote within the “Introduction” of *Folk-song of Nebraska and the Central Middle West: A Syllabus*,

published in 1915.

I have chosen these three texts from Pound's career because they offer the chance to observe Pound's academic style in development, and thus to discover what in the attacks from Gummere might have brought forth such rancor. My hypothesis is simple. If she is the person Gerould describes, then the evidence should be most visible in those moments before she brought her training as a philologist and literary historian to bear on Gummere's hypotheses. All publications are inherently acts of apprenticeship. Subjects, theories, and methods are impermanent. But repeated demonstrations of solid technique coupled with attention to writing for the audience and not for oneself are signals that allow readers to identify the tone and passion of any scholar. In Pound's case, these criteria allow for an exploration of the moments before she became a target of Gerould's sharpened axe, when she still had choices about how she wished to transform her subjectivity into her scholarly persona, and thus when she might have been most likely to display Gerould's list of flaws.

I will not, however, use this essay to defend Pound's *Poetic Origins*. By any standard except received history, the book rivals in substance anything published by her contemporaries H. M. Belden, John A. Lomax, Phillips Barry, Gordan Hall Gerould, and George Lyman Kittredge. But, as Wilgus's tepid description makes clear (1959, 89–99), even a strong counterargument to Gerould's review would not work at this point. The truth is that Pound does not have a folklore scholarship problem. She has a folklorist problem, and until that problem is resolved, even the best reading of *Poetic Origins* is unlikely to prevent her from being marked down as a disorderly woman as opposed to a dedicated scholar in action. Such a claim may seem hyperbolic. But there is no doubt that Gerould's review colonized her memory, slipping, as Emmanuel Levinas suggests all trauma does, through "the tight weave of [her] consciousness" before she was ready for it, trapping her into repeating "a past that was never present" (Levinas 1987, 75).⁴ For the remainder of her career, Pound would return to Gerould's attack to challenge its credibility, to reveal as her arguments became part of the new wisdom of ballad studies, and to complain that her ideas had been absorbed without appropriate credit.

Louise Pound was trained for greatness. Her father Stephen

Pound was a prominent jurist in Lincoln, Nebraska and her mother Laura a civic activist most noted for her work with the Lincoln Public Library. Along with her two siblings—her older brother Roscoe who would become a celebrated legal professor and dean of Harvard Law School and her younger sister Olivia who would become the family classist—Pound was taught by her mother from an early age about the natural sciences, ancient and modern languages, and literature. Pound was then sent to a local preparatory school, at sixteen to the Latin School in the School of Fine Arts, and finally at eighteen to the University of Nebraska (for a complete biography, see Cochran 2009; see also Botkin 1959a; Botkin 1959b; Krohn 2008; Lowenthal 1999).

Pound was an active student throughout her university years. She participated in the full range of college activities, including joining the Drama Club and Literary Society alongside her close friend Willa Cather, with whom she performed in several plays.⁵ She also produced her first academic publication, a translations exercise from *Beowulf* she had written for L. A. Sherman—Chair of the department and her mentor—in her required sophomore class on Anglo-Saxon literature, which he used as an example in his *Analytics of Literature* (Sherman 1892, 407). Always among her class's leading students, she was an orator for senior Class Day Exercises, presenting a speech entitled "The Apotheosis of the Common," which drew high praise within and outside of the University.

Upon graduation in 1892 with an A. B. in English, she became a reader for the Department of English and then Assistant Instructor until she received her A. M. in 1896. She also published her first professional paper in *Modern Language Notes (MLN)*, "*The Romaunt of the Rose*: Additional Evidence that it is Chaucer's," in 1896, most likely prepared as a part of her graduate work. According to Sherman, during this time Pound "carried all Anglo-Saxon work" in the English Department. She continued to work in the department for the next two years while taking full summer schedules at the University of Chicago, including advanced language courses in Phonology and Morphology. In addition to being an outstanding summer student and a nationally recognized tennis champion while at the University of Chicago, she published in 1898 an educational pamphlet titled "A List of Strong Verbs and Preterite Present Verbs in Anglo-Saxon" through the University of Chicago Press for use in her courses at the

University of Nebraska (Pound 1898).

In the summer of 1899, Pound left her instructor position at Nebraska to pursue her Ph.D. at the University of Heidelberg, where Ph.D.'s could still be obtained through examination and presentation of a dissertation without first taking a prescribed course of study. Pound attended a good number of lectures while in Germany, but with remarkable diligence she completed the required exams, had her dissertation accepted, and graduated *magna cum laude* in the unheard-of time of one year. Her dissertation, *The Comparison of Adjectives in English in the XV and XVI Century*, was supervised by the noted German philologist Johannes Hoops. Dr. Pound returned to Lincoln, Nebraska where she taught until her death in 1958 at the age of 86.

POUND'S "THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE: ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT IT IS CHAUCER'S"

As was common in academic publications in philology at the time, Pound's essay in *MLN* applies a focused scientific method to a narrow literary question. Pound invokes W. W. Skeat (1835–1912), the noted philologist⁶ who had "proved to his satisfaction" that the English translation of the thirteenth century French poem *The Romaunt de la Rose* "could not be Chaucer's." "Professor Skeat," Pound explains, had then reasserted "this opinion, with some modifications, in his recent edition of Chaucer's complete works." According to Pound, Skeat's proof was based on "internal, philological grounds, relating to the vocabulary, to the dialect, to the grammar, and to the rime." Specifically, Skeat had proposed seven tests through which he could prove his point, and even though the work of "certain German scholars" and Thomas A. Lounsbury of the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale had demonstrated that several of Skeat's tests failed on merit, Lounsbury still claimed "that as concerns the remainder, the main body of the translation, his tests hold good" (Pound 1896, 97; all quotes hereafter indicated by *MLN* and page number). Pound informs her readers further that she does not think it was necessary to provide a detailed analysis of either Skeat's or Lounsbury's work, noting simply that Lounsbury had demonstrated that "the dialect test" which Skeat claimed would "alone prove decisive," points, "if to anything,

to a Chaucerian authorship” (MLN 97). Pound concludes her summary of previous research by asserting “though there may seem to be difficulties in the way of the translation’s being Chaucer’s, there are much greater difficulties in the way of its not being Chaucer’s” (MLN 97–98).

Having laid out her problem, Pound explains her intention to apply the “tests of sentence-length and sentence-structure” to determine if they shed a different light on the issue of authorship. She does not imagine that these tests would be conclusive. Rather, stating her hypothesis formally, she writes:

it is obvious that comparisons of the sets of figures here presented, calculated from Chaucer’s genuine writings, from those unquestionably spurious, from the English version of *The Romaunt of the Rose* and from the French original, should throw some light upon the question, either on one side or on the other. It is also obvious that such testimony should have equal weight with that resting on vague theorizing or speculations, or on the uncertain foundations of personal opinion. (MLN 98)

Pound’s open questioning of the value of personal authority is a stark reminder that she saw Philology as an experimental science. It was no accident that Lounsbury taught in the Scientific School at Yale, or that Francis James Child’s earliest teaching of Anglo-Saxon literature was in the Scientific School at Harvard (Bell 2022). Language study and philology were highly technical subjects whose primary methods were grounded not only in direct evidence but also in the accurate measurement of that evidence. “Vague theorizing or speculations” about style or potentially damning “uncertain foundations of personal opinion” had no place in the process. Pound was interested in how one manipulated and controlled variables in cause-and-effect relationships to *measure* style. Her method led her to provisional conclusions, and her chosen verbs were should, might, and could.

Accordingly, Pound takes special care to explain her methodology. At one level her experiment is simple. She makes word and sentence counts of the three types of ‘Chaucerian’ poetry: genuine, spurious, and questionable. To make her calculations possible and to make her tests uniform with Skeat’s, she “adopt[s] and carr[ies] out

consistently his system of punctuation as shown in his 1891 edition of the 'Prologue'" (MLN 98). Pound indicates that following Skeat in this fashion was a choice and not a necessity, since he did not always follow his own principles as an editor. Despite this caveat, she was determined to play fair and as such makes clear that she "repunctuated to render the whole uniform...[with] the 858 lines of the 'Prologue'" and then does the same with the other test poems and *The Romaunt* so that they too are "made uniform with the 'Prologue'" (MLN 98).

The resulting fourteen tables are staggering. Each is broken down by the number of sentences, indicated by the number of periods and words, and then further broken down by predication, simple sentences, initial contractions, and internal contractions. Each table displays in units of one hundred sentences the exact number for each column, which are then totaled and averaged. For example, Pound calculates that in Chaucer's "Knights Tale" there are 763 periods (sentences) which contain 17,044 words, within which there are 2,018 predications, 219 simple sentences, 246 initial contractions, and 1,148 internal contractions. These produce sentences that average 22.31 words, 2.69 predications, 0.028 simple sentences, 0.30 initial contractions, and 0.30 internal contractions. This procedure is conducted on the five genuine Chaucerian poems, five recognized spurious Chaucerian poems, and all 2,205 lines of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, all of which are then compared to the averages on the genuine Chaucerian poems and with those of the *Romaunt*. Pound's conclusions are meticulous: "Not only does the *Romaunt of the Rose* fail to show any of the variation from Chaucer's manner, demonstrated in the poems long attributed to him but now rejected, but it seems to stand on the same literary footing as those which are Chaucer's beyond dispute" (MLN 99).

Pound was not done upsetting apple carts. As she notes, Skeat had admitted that some of the English *Romaunt* might possibly be Chaucer's. Pound proceeds to subject this new claim to the same experimental process and once more demonstrates that the variation was within the sentence limits found in Chaucer's recognized works and thus lent "no color" whatsoever to Skeat's theory (MLN 100). Continuing her sweep through Skeat's claims, Pound reports that he had also suggested that John Lydgate (c. 1370–c. 1451) and John Gower (c. 1330–1408) were potential authors for pieces of the Chaucerian oeuvre. Once more applying her sentence test to Lydgate's

"The Complaint of the Lover's Life" and Gower's "Confessio Amantis" (a 33,000-line Middle English poem), she demonstrates that "the sentence test verifies and would point, even if there were no other proofs at hand, to the conclusion that the five works classed as spurious could not be Chaucer's." Moreover, she declares the "same test seems to point just as plainly to *The Romaunt of the Rose* as Chaucer's. Add the correspondence in the number of predications, simple sentences, and conjunctions, and the matter gains increased conclusiveness" (MLN 101 and 102).

Pound's final paragraph leaves no doubt about the scientific status of Professor Skeat's claims. Her mentor L. A. Sherman had previously shown that Chaucer wrote shorter prose sentences than any of his contemporaries. Now, she compared his facts to her data. "Not only," she states, "does the *Romaunt of the Rose* fail to show any of the variation from Chaucer's manner, demonstrated in the other poems long attributed to him but now rejected, but it seems to stand on the same literary footing as those which are Chaucer's beyond dispute" (MLN 102). She had begun with two goals: to investigate the validity of Skeat's claims and to establish the principle that scientifically acquired evidence should matter as much as personal insight. Now, she applied that second principle dauntlessly. It is possible, she writes, that another unknown writer might have the same sentence averages as Chaucer, but, until they appeared, her results "should seem decisive." After all, she continues, one writer who stood "ahead of his contemporaries as far as Chaucer" was quite enough for any nation. "That there should have been two, and that the name of the second should not have survived, seems more than we should be asked to believe," Pound concludes (MLN 102).

POUND'S "THE BALLADS"

Pound's 1899 ballad essay was a very different document for its era. It was one of several pedagogical pieces she wrote for Professor Sherman's larger project to provide college and normal schoolteachers with precise outlines of potential topics in English literature. Sherman's series was one of several produced monthly by Nebraska's University Extension program for teachers of English, Economics,

and European and American History. They were designed first to answer a need identified by John Dewey that normal schools, “where the bulk of teacher training took place, rarely prepared students in the rigors of subject knowledge while those who graduated from universities and decided to teach were well versed in subject knowledge but had no skills in or knowledge of the craft of teaching” (Dewey 1896, 363). The second objective was more political. Sherman was the primary advocate of what was known as “The Nebraska method” of English Studies, an attempt to shift attention away from the traditional heavy focus on renowned authors and towards the literary historical study of periods, genres, styles, and authors that we know today.

Pound’s interest in ballads was a result of her working with H. M. Belden, the great Missouri folklorist, whom she met in 1893 when he was her colleague for a year. He encouraged her to become involved in gathering Nebraska ballads soon after his arrival in the department, sparking her lifelong interest in folklore and folklife. Pound’s essay was modelled formally on Child’s 1874 essay on ballad poetry, though in actual content it was closer to Wellesley Professor Katharine Lee Bates’ “Introduction” to her high school/undergraduate textbook *Ballad Book*, published in 1890, which Pound knew and recommended,⁷ and, to a lesser degree, on Gummere’s short 1896 “Ballads” and “Folk-songs” entries for the Warner Library’s sections on both subjects (Bates 1890; Gummere 1896a; Gummere 1896b; see also Bell 2021). The essay itself broke no new ground. Pound’s objective was to present a short, accurate, neutral description of ballad facts with little or no editorializing or prescription. Her points, she writes, were only “suggested” and “introductory,” and her injunction that they should be “followed out by the student as far as his interests will carry him” indicates that she saw as her responsibility promoting understanding and not rote learning (Pound 1899, 880; all quotes hereafter TB and page number).

She begins by listing the four essentials of ballad teaching: “(1) Nature and definition of the ballad as a lyric type. (2) Characteristics of ballad poetry; leading kinds of distinguished. (3) Brief historical sketch of the ballad in English. (4) The ballad revival in the eighteenth century, and its part in the English Romantic Movement” (TB 880). Taking up the first, she explains:

Ballads are generally classed as lyrics, not pure lyrics, but merging into the latter in musical origin, stanzaic form, and the frequent appearance of the lyric note. In their origin ballads seem to have been sung as an accompaniment to a dance, as suggested by the name, from the Old French *baller*, to dance, and were rather the product of improvisation than strictly of individual authorship. In this latter respect, their “communal” authorship and in that their nature is primarily narrative, they resemble epic poetry, are epic rather than lyric. Briefly, then, the type ballad is a miniature epic, a short narrative told lyrically. (TB 880)

What is immediately apparent is how hard Pound is working to maintain a scholarly voice. Ballads are “generally classified” as a form of lyric poetry, but she swiftly clarifies that they are “not pure lyrics,” and only become lyrics by being of “musical origin,” having “stanzaic form,” and possessing “the frequent appearance of the lyric note,” a phrase she assumes her audience of English teachers will understand. The ambiguity is intentional. Pound intentionally does not lay out any ballad laws. Her adverbs and verbs throughout the piece are as conditional as her conclusions. Nouns that might be solid are softened by terms like “generally,” “seem,” and “resemble,” or modified curiously, like the phrase ballads “were *rather* the product of improvisation than *strictly* of individual authorship,” for example (emphasis added). Moreover, her placement of “communal” in quotes renders the central tenet of contemporary scholarship—Gummere’s communal theory—as a possibility and not a fact. Likewise, she consciously remains neutral on the hot button topic of whether epics were stitched together from ballads or ballads were remaining fragments of epics. This neutrality results in a wonderful hodgepodge of a subsequent sentence in which ballads first “resemble” epic poetry, then “are epic rather than lyric,” until, in their ideal form, their “type,” as she calls it, as a ballad becomes a “miniature epic, a short narrative told lyrically” (TB 880).

Pound’s struggle with language only grows. Concentrating on the “types” ballads form, she writes:

The first of these is the pure, or so-called “communal” ballad, the traditional ballad, orally transmitted, characterized by *fluctuating text*, and “popular” in that it has come down anonymously, without

individuality of authorship behind it, as if arising from the people. The pure ballad is necessarily antecedent in time, is a "distinct species" both historically and theoretically. (TB 880)

This initial sentence is a compressed listing of too many conventional markers of ballad forms and features in too little space. The result is a tumbledown of equivalence without explanation. Indeed, according to Pound, ballads are "pure," "so-called communal," "traditional," "orally transmitted," "anonymous," have a "fluctuating text," and lack "individuality," all of which coalesce to create the "as if" illusion that they "arise from the people." There is no question that there is confusion here, but it is not until her final sentence in this discussion when she borrows from Child's unattributed claim that the popular ballad is a "distinct species," and "necessarily" antecedent in history and theory to other forms of poetry that she almost takes a stand on something. Unfortunately, that stand, with its reliance on Child, does not reduce the flow of definitional ambiguity.

Pound resolves this confusion by directing her readers to Child's collection. Its "monumental" ten volumes, she tells the reader, contain "almost exclusively ballads of this type, which he has followed to their sources and accompanied by information as to their history and shifting texts." Pound's reliance on Child as arbiter and on the idea that ballad texts by their very nature will make plain sense of her wealth of information was the common solution for almost all ballad scholars during this era. Scholars could not explain or replicate Child's method, so they relied on the supposedly self-evident ballads to do the work for them. To this end, Pound recommends some examples that might be profitably read: the "Robin Hood ballads, the Battle of Otterburn, Sir Patrick Spens," and two—Waly Waly and Helen of Kirconnal—which demonstrate how pure ballads can almost be "carried out of balladry proper by the predominance of the lyrical" (TB 881).

Pound then proceeds to repeat this definitional work with the "so-called Broad-sides," which she suggests are better defined as "vulgar" literary ballads. The first she describes as "a degeneration of the pure ballad, a cross between it and the literary ballad," brought about by the introduction of print. This foregrounding of the textual intersection between oral and print picks up on her earlier discussion

of the relationship between the epic and lyric impulses in the pure (type) ballad and anticipates her similar description of the literary ballad, which she makes clear are a modern form resulting from “the disappearance of the ballad stage in society, sequent upon the growth of civilization and the coming of letters.” Literary ballads are imperfect, “polished and regularized” attempts by modern, civilized poets to “imitate” the “pure ballad in diction and simplicity,” Pound asserts (TB 881).

In both cases, though Pound does not explicitly say so, the textual history of the ballad is written as a degeneration from an initial purity to a hybrid mixture of the worst of orality and print to an imitation in print of the initial state of purity. The result is a hierarchy of value and a melancholy discourse that details the descent from pure, oral, traditional ballads to ill-mixed story song and finally to civilized pale copies. Pound does take some space to connect the historical context of the broadsides to cultural advancement, concluding that they flourished “in large numbers in the sixteenth century and later, emerged as the street ballads and popular songs in concert halls today.” This extension to the concert hall was uncommon. The prevailing consensus drew a hard and fast line between the street life of the broadside ballad and musical hall performance. Again, on this topic Pound does not comment. Instead, she supplies potential texts of both types for her readers to use, though she cautions against using Kipling’s *Barrack Room Ballads* too freely to exemplify the literary ballad, since they “in their suggestion of musical origin, pseudo-tradition, and seeming impersonality of authorship [seem to] approximate the strict ballad type, [but] are scarcely in the ballad spirit” (TB 881).

Pound then sums up her presentation thus far:

Roughly speaking, the characteristics of the ballad are simplicity, objectivity, the absence of the personal note and of self-consciousness, imperfect presentation of the narrative, which often shows violent omissions, iteration, and rude and unornamented diction, marked by the recurrence of stereotyped epithets and lines. As regards sources and motives, the ballads deal variously with themes of popular history, love, chivalry, feud, fighting, outlawry, adventure, romance domestic calamity, and the superstitious and supernatural. The dominant note is pathos, often tragic. In meter the ballads show,

conventionally, the resolved seven-stress line, or the four-stress line with refrain. (TB 881)

Finished defining, Pound begins her explanation of the literary history of the ballad by declaring that if “the test of stanzaic form is disregarded,” then pure ballads now named the “English ballads...may be said” to be ancient, and further that “some episodes of *Beowulf*” and perhaps also the “rhythmical narratives of the battles of Brunanburh and Malden” might have been ballads as well. If, she continues, the “conventional ballad form” is the test, then the first English ballads—those in the Child collection—strictly “date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,” and only continue to be popular “down to about the middle of the eighteenth century.” Again, this dichotomy is an uncomfortable compromise between the prevailing communalist interpretations and more historical study of ballads. Pound uses this dichotomy, however, to shift her attention to the history of ballad study. She begins with Bishop Percy, his folio “rescued from its use to kindle fires,” and comments on his inappropriate “treatment of his materials.” Pound aims to start her history off on the right foot. She acknowledges that the *Reliques* were “epoch-making,” but pointedly indicates that they were “as much the result as the cause of the Romantic movement,” and that the good Bishop “simply did more adequately what had been attempted by his predecessors, and in a way that won and held popular attention, reaching men’s hearts at a critical time” (TB 882).

Pound follows her stringent framing of Percy’s role within the study of ballads with an equally stringent survey of German influence, Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, and Child. She provides appropriate quotes for pedagogical use to note the impact of ballads on these scholars, and more importantly “a partial list of ballads collections accessible to the student,” citing all the relevant possibilities: Percy, Scott, Gummere, Bates, Allingham, Hales and Furnivall, and, of course, Child, as well as her recommendations of Bates’ *Ballad Book* and Walford’s edition of Percy’s *Reliques* as being “best suited for popular beginning study.” Finally, Pound supplies references to the pertinent scholarly discussions by Lang, Child, and Gummere on ballads and Phelps on English Romanticism, ending with Child’s bibliography at the end of his tenth volume for the more serious student

(TB 883).

Pound concludes her syllabus by printing a Scot's version of Edward in full dialect as a teaching aid, a technique Kittredge would later adopt in his "Introduction" to his and Helen Child Sargent's one volume ballad collection (Kittredge 1904, xxv–xxvii). She provides no direct comment on the text, but, following Bates' teaching discussion, gives instead a short list of representative questions that might be asked of students:

(1) Note the verse form, rime, stress, and the use of refrains. Note also characteristic points of diction, stereotyped expressions, repetitions, vocabulary. (2) What is the theme, the situation? How is the story told, and emotional appreciation of it secured at the same time? How much is said by the speakers? How much suppressed? (3) Why the questions in stanzas 2 and 3? Why the questions in stanzas 4, 5, and 6? What new light on the story and new characterization in the last stanza? (4) Whence has the ballad derived its power? (5) How far is the ballad lyrical? (TB 883)

POUND'S *FOLK-SONG OF NEBRASKA AND THE CENTRAL WEST*

My final example of Pound's emerging scholarly voice is a paragraph and a lengthy footnote taken from her *Folk-song of Nebraska and the Central West: A Syllabus* (1915). This collection was the outcome of the work she had begun at Belden's suggestion twenty years earlier. It was presented as "syllabus only"—that is, as a temporary publication displaying only the content's initial stanza or most familiar lines, with the goal of making available evidence of Nebraska folksong until a more complete collection of music could be published (Pound 1915 2; hereafter FN and page number).⁸ Pound was forty-four, had been a full professor for four years, and was on the cusp of laying waste to Gummere's theory. The syllabus, however, makes no mention of Gummere's work. It is, as she writes, an attempt to chart "the themes and motives of the popular song of recent times" to determine the narrative forms, sentiments, and humor that were "strong enough to secure preservation." Specifically, her question is: "What is the general character of the material commending itself to the Ameri-

can folk-consciousness in the period just passing? Of the thousands of songs having currency, which types have the people liked well enough to remember and to hand on?" She does not preview her answer, but notes that her materials are sufficient to allow for comparative analysis with other American versions and, as always, she it makes it clear that her conclusion would be based on "widespread collection, followed by analysis and comparison of the materials secured" (FN 4).

Pound follows her initial remarks on her purposes and sources by dropping a bombshell. "A collection of folk-song" she states, "should be what its name implies. It should register what the people have cared to preserve, regardless of questions of origin, or quality, or technique" (FN 4). To make her point, as she had in her *MLN* article, Pound lists her formal "tests for inclusion." The "chief requisite, she writes, for "belonging to folk song...was recovery from oral tradition." She includes the songs in her syllabus because they "were learned by their singers not from the printed page but from the singing of others, and have by this time an existence not dependent on a written original" (FN 5). This two-fold test is important. Most folklorists agreed on the necessity of oral transmission, but the idea that ballad authenticity could no longer be diminished by learning "dependent on a written original" suggests openly the novel and uncomfortable possibilities that "pure" ballads are neither the exclusive product of a pre-print environment nor a distinct, pre-writing communal product. But she does not stop there. "The main essential" of a folksong, she continues, is:

that the people sing it; that it has "lived in the folk-mouth," and that it has persisted for a fair number of years. Entries have not been limited to song-narratives, i.e. to ballads proper but popular lyrics of many classes have been admitted, provided, in the sense noted, that they have existence in folksong. As already indicated, for some of the pieces entered no printed original has ever been found; on the other hand, a ballad or song was not omitted because it happens to have been or to be still well known in print. Scrapbook collections of clippings from "Old Favorites" columns of newspapers have often afforded variant texts and have helped in identifications; but pieces found in such form only have not been included. An attempt was also made to include children's songs and singing games and

rhymes of various kinds. Here again the fact that many of these are accessible in books was not allowed to stand in the way of their admission, provided those reporting them had not learned them there. (FN 5)

For Pound, ballads and folksong are not inherited survivals from a lost age. They are a process of transmission. A ballad or folksong is folk poetry for no other reason than “the people sing it”—that it persisted “in the folk mouth...for a number of years.” This was not business as usual. Though the ballad consensus depended on Child’s collection to carry the weight of tradition, Pound allows data to dictate relationships between “American folk-consciousness in the period just passing,” and the “thousands” of songs which Americans have liked “well enough to remember and to hand on.” Furthermore, she had found that “popular lyrics of many classes...provided, in the sense noted, that have existence in folksong” (FN 5). In Pound’s work, there are remnants of Child’s ballads, no doubt the best parts of the collection; on the other hand, Pound does not omit other types just because they happen “to have been or to be still well known in print. Songs from any source are acceptable, just as long as it could be proven that the bearer reporting [songs] had not learned them solely from print” (FN 5). Folksongs are made folk by oral transmission. They last because of oral tradition.

Pound knew she was on dangerous ground and thus clarifies her approach in a lengthy footnote. First, she addresses a long-standing worry: the use of style and taste, especially as derived from personal authority, as acceptable criteria:

To the present writer it seems a mistake to make style standard-giving in a collection of folk-song. There are many who seem to hold as standard-giving the style prevailing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; all forms of whatever times conforming to these in tone and diction are “genuine”; all other are spurious. (FN 5)

Her targets are hard to miss. For Gummere, Kittredge, and especially Gerould, Child’s sensibility was the final arbiter of all ballad matters. Consider again Gerould’s full rationale for accepting “The Bitter Withy” into the Child canon:

Yet the very rarity of the treasure makes the question of its genuineness an important one, and every such find should be submitted to all possible tests before it is accepted as belonging to the family of traditional ballads. The tests by which it must be judged, I take it, are three. The first is purely personal, the critical sense of the scholar who has learned by long-continued and careful study to distinguish the false from the true, to separate the chaff from the wheat. The second is the external evidence with reference to the circumstances of discovery, whether the collector or collectors can be trusted. The third is the source of the material, whether the narrative is the product of tradition, or of some clever inventor. (Gerould, G. H. 1908, 142)

Pound's rejection of Harvard's test of genuineness leads her to question their remaining central axioms. "Usually, too," she writes about their thesis on the origin of traditional ballads, they "are assumed to have some romantic-mystic 'communal' origin as opposed to the individuality of modern 'art' poetry." But, she asks, "Is there such a thing as a permanent or eternal style in folk-song?" and answers "Not unless reference is had to the circumstance that folk-song is addressed to the ear only; that on its appeal to the ear depends its vitality. There is a 'history of taste' for folk-poetry as there is for book-poetry. There are as great differences between the folk-poetry of the sixteenth and twentieth centuries as between the book-poetry of the sixteenth and twentieth centuries" (FN 6).

Two things are happening here. First, following up on her emphasis on transmission, she lays out the contrast between ear and eye music to distinguish folk from written. As she puts it, folk artists "composed for the ear; otherwise [their] work was in vain. The newer writes for the eye, both words and music." The result, she continues, is that older folksong and ballads are better and more long lasting because the need to preserve them through memorization requires their creators to use memorable forms and phrases. New composers of broadsides and popular songs could rely on print to fix their songs as they move between the worlds of ear and eye, but, as she continues, the consequence is that "Much in modern song is unsingable and unrememberable; no one can expect to make a deep impression on

the popular mind” (FN 8). Moreover, she writes, oral musical eras, in which “connection and delivery were very close,” make the evidence even stronger:

In the sixteenth century song was as nearly universalized as it is likely to be for a long time. Some musical proficiency was demanded of nearly everybody, whether belonging to the upper classes or to the lower. The Renaissance lyric, words and music, seems to have had its origin in the higher culture of the times, but it attained unparalleled popularity. (FN 6)

Pound had quietly made clear her belief that the existing examples of the ballad of tradition contained in Child’s collection were best understood as a Renaissance lyrical form. Now she stated it loudly:

Acknowledgement that the period of the English Renaissance had the most memorable style in folk-song is not the same thing however as acknowledging that only such folk-songs as conform to this style are “genuine.” The making of popular ballads—that variety of folk-song having special interest is not a “closed account,” though the making of ballads and songs in the older and more memorable style might be; nor is some hypothetical communal-mystic manner of origin, based on this older style, a valid test for determining what folk poetry is and what it is not. (FN 8)

Since all of Child’s choices were enshrined in the Gummere-Kittredge theory—the formal distinction between art and popular poetry, the necessity of a formal ballad age, the closed nature of his collection, un-self-conscious artistry—communal creation fell to the wayside. Pound, on the other hand, believed that ballads were not a closed account, and thus any group could pass down genuine ballads representing the imaginations of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Such ballads would be as different from each other as were their centuries of origin. Early texts, in Pound’s opinion, were more aesthetically pleasing because oral worlds relied on the rhetorical tropes of memory, but the social differences between Renaissance England and twentieth-century America did not make the latter’s ballads and folksongs impossible, or inferior in the present or in the future.

American scholars did not need to posit mystical campfire singing, as John A. Lomax had done in 1911, or to deny that America could ever have ballads as he did in 1915 (Lomax 1911; Lomax 1915; see also Bell 2004; Bell 2006). So long as Americans kept songs alive by singing them from memory and passing them on in song, there would be a living American folksong tradition.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that Louise Pound's scholarship was neither disorderly nor tactless. If anything, her writing was the model of a modern scientist's. Her response to W. W. Skeat's opinion of Chaucer's authorship works because her careful application of sentence-length and other tests show that *The Romaunt of the Rose* is more like Chaucer's other writing and less like the list of other potential claimants. It does not, however, prove Chaucer's authorship, and Pound does not try to make it do so. Her attempt to parse the ballad for teachers is hampered by a lack of scientific precision in the romantic, mystical language she uses to explain it. But, she tries to present the facts so that interested teachers could decide for themselves how to prepare their own lessons. Likewise, her explanation of folksong is no screed. She did not decide what the outcome of her collecting should be and then go searching for examples to prove her point. She was not tied by birth and background to the New England Brahmin world, of which George Santayana wrote its "'heredity' philosophy...had grown stale, and [its] academic philosophy...[had] caught the stale odor from it" (Santayana 1911 [1967], 39; see also Brooks 1915, 5–15 and 165–183). Her process is modern and inductive. She collected the songs people knew and sang and then asked where they had gotten them, how they had preserved them, and how they had passed them on. Those songs and singers determined what a folksong is and shaped the argument she would make.

It is equally obvious that Pound did not defer to age, reputation, or received wisdom. No one who made a career by taking on Child, Skeat, and Gummere could have done so. As much as anyone in her generation, she exemplified the idea and practice of the New Woman: that first generation of women intellectuals who came of age be-

tween 1890 and 1920 and upended the male status quo through their presence in the academy. As Einav Rabinovitch-Fox describes them, “New Women” rejected the stereotype of the Victorian “True Woman,” with its emphasis on domesticity and submissiveness (Rabinovitch-Fox 2017; for further discussion of the concept of the “True Woman,” see Cogan 1989; Patterson 2005, 1–2 and 25; Strange and Brown 2002, 615–616; Warner 2006, 177–195; Welter 1966, 151–174). They were the Gibson Girls in their shirtwaists, rode 100 bicycle trips—as Pound was famous for in Lincoln, were written about in the *New York Times* for their tennis skill, and were fearlessly unconcerned as they built and staffed settlement houses, social service agencies, and public health clinics, all while collecting folksongs. In doing so, they trampled the man’s supposed God-given authority to explain everything.

And herewith is the crux of Pound’s folklorist problem. She would not chant the breviary with the ballad boys’ choir.⁶ She was a member of the cadre of twentieth century collectors of ballads and folksongs who listened to what twentieth century people sang, and memorized, and sang again—a scholar who allowed that singing to dictate the borders of American folk musical traditions and who used that new land to describe an American folk and their folksongs which were neither frozen in time nor trapped in amber. Undoubtedly, her portrait of these American circumstances was more radical than those of many of her colleagues. But, like all members of the new generation of folklorists who started collecting folksongs from actual singers—like W. W. Newell in his groundbreaking essays in the *Journal of American Folklore* at the turn of the century, Belden in Missouri, Barry in New England, Shearin and Combs in Kentucky, Reed Smith in South Carolina, Lomax in the Southwest, and the rest—she sought out the folk alive in the American here and now. Unfortunately, as Pound made clear, the very singing of those people threatened the edifice which Child’s progeny had built.

In Gerould, then, the ballad clerisy found the perfect person to put Pound in her place. I do not think he thought long or hard about his locutions. Why should he have? The stakes demanded harsh words and a stern rebuke. American ballad studies had placed its faith in a nineteenth-century literary theory dressed up in the finery of eighteenth-century aesthetics, which, at its most extreme, denied

that America could have ballads (Bell 2006; Lomax 1915, 1; see also Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998). In the mind of the ballad boys, Louise Pound just did not understand that better minds than hers understood America's need for the ballad's ability to model true community, to demonstrate the union of innocence and reflection, or to resist contemporary mendacity and mediocrity. What better way to chastise her than to announce to the world that better minds had come to better conclusions than she because, unlike her, they were Eastern, elite, old-schooled, mannered, had finer sensibilities, and, importantly, were men.

NOTES

¹ Pound responds to Gerould in the March 26th issue of *The Literary Review*, accusing Gerould of "creating views, label[ing] them as mine, then bludgeon[ing] his straw-men." She goes on to discuss several of his errors in fact and opinion, but, unfortunately, like in all such attempts to set the record straight, correcting the impression that she has "the habit of distorting evidence" or "starts from an absurd chronology" of ballad creation was a no-win situation. Facts seldom win arguments; it is difficult not to appear defensive no matter how offensive critical comments are, and, like with all loaded comments, any answer contains the presumption of guilt (Pound 1921a, 14).

² For Eliot, such fusion of thought and feeling was last evident in the work of the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century who were the last to feel "their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility" (Eliot 1921, 287). Interestingly, of their number, George Herbert was actually described by the critic Joan Bennett thusly: "His most characteristic gift is the power of controlling the movement of feeling in his poems. The emotional pattern is managed with exquisite tact" (Bennett 1934, 65). The concept stuck to the point that an "A-Level" Revision Question asked to "Examine 'exquisite tact' in the poetry of George Herbert" (Bennett 1934, 92).

³ Despite the importance of his *The Ballad of Tradition* (1932) and *The Grateful Dead: The History of a Folk Story* (1908) to folk studies, the bulk of Gerould's scholarly work was in medieval and Arthurian Studies. He was a founding and leading member of the Medieval Society of America. His most important works include his *The North-English Homily Collection* (1902), his first academic essay in 1904, "Forerunners, Congeners, and Derivatives of the Eustace Legend" (1904, 335–448), his *Sir Guy of Warwick* (1905), a modern literary reading of the medieval story, his translations of *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, his *Saint's Legends* (1916), and his "The Making of Ballads" (1932).

⁴ Another perspective on Pound's trauma would see it as an example of the experience of those subjected to subaltern positions (for further discussion, see Caruth 1996, 3–6; Gilligan 1982 [1993], 128–151; Spivak 2010, 82–82).

⁵ There is now an extensive literature on their relationship, especially since the emergence of the assertion that Cather “viewed herself as a lesbian” (O’Brian 1987, 6). As Robert Cochran notes, whatever Cather’s sexual orientation might have been, there is no evidence that it was reciprocated by Pound. For a discussion of Pound’s relationship with Cather, see Cochran 2009, 60–65.

⁶ Walter William Skeat was a preeminent English philologist. He was the Eirington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon studies at Cambridge University and the founder of the English Dialect Society. He is most known for his work on Old and Middle English, including his seven-volume edition of *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1899) as well as his edition of William Langland’s *Piers the Plowman* (1886).

⁷ Bates may have returned the favor of Pound’s suggestion by copying Pound’s scientific approach in her 1904 revision. For a discussion of Bates’ revisions, see Bell 2021, 329–332).

⁸ For an example of another syllabus from the era, see Shearin and Combs 1911.

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