

THE SINGER OF TALES

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the early thirties of this century, when Milman Parry began to write the book from which this one takes its name,¹ what was needed most in Homeric scholarship was a more exact knowledge of the way in which oral epic poets learn and compose their songs. Now in the late fifties of the same century the need is still great; in spite of the number of books about Homer and his poems, about epic poetry in general, and about specific epic traditions in various parts of the world, the student of epic still lacks a precise idea of the actual technique of *poiesis* in its literal meaning. Thanks to Parry, however, we have the material for the research necessary to determine what this technique is. He has left us his collection of South Slavic texts, which is the record on phonograph discs and in manuscripts of experiments in the laboratory of the living epic tradition of the Yugoslavs.²

In 1935 Milman Parry was Assistant Professor of Classics at Harvard University. He had already made a name for himself in classical scholarship by his masterly analysis of the technique of the formulaic epithets in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.³ This work had convinced him that the poems of Homer were traditional epics, and he soon came to realize that they must also be oral compositions.⁴ He therefore set himself the task of proving, incontrovertibly if it were possible, the oral character of the poems, and to that end he turned to the study of the Yugoslav epics. In the autumn of 1935, he wrote: "the aim of the study was to fix with exactness the *form* of oral story poetry, to see wherein it differs from the *form* of written story poetry. Its method was to observe singers working in a thriving tradition of unlettered song and see how the form of their songs hangs upon their having to learn and practice their art without reading and writing. The principles of *oral form* thus gotten would be useful in two ways. They would be a starting point for a comparative study of oral poetry which sought to see how the way of life of a people gives rise to a poetry of a given kind and a given degree of excellence. Secondly, they would be useful in the study of the great poems which have come down to us as lonely relics of a dim past: we would know how to work backwards from their form so as to learn how they must have been made."⁵

In Part I of this book I shall attempt to fulfill Parry's purpose of setting forth with exactness the form of oral narrative poetry, drawing my illus-

trative material from this collection; in Part II I shall use the principles presented in Part I in studying the form of some of the great epic poems from the past. Because I intend to limit the scope of this book to a consideration of oral form and manner of composition, a discussion of a broader sort which would aim at seeing "how the way of life of a people gives rise to a poetry of a given kind and a given degree of excellence" will not be fully entered upon. Yet considerations of this kind will inevitably occupy us to some extent in this book. It is hoped that what is said here will be of use for future comparative study of oral poetry.

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The burden of the first few chapters of Part I will be to work out in fullness of detail a definition of oral epic song. Stated briefly, oral epic song is narrative poetry composed in a manner evolved over many generations by singers of tales who did not know how to write; it consists of the building of metrical lines and half lines by means of formulas and formulaic expressions and of the building of songs by the use of themes. This is the technical sense in which I shall use the word "oral" and "oral epic" in this book. By formula I mean "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea." This definition is Parry's.⁶ By formulaic expression I denote a line or half line constructed on the pattern of the formulas. By theme I refer to the repeated incidents and descriptive passages in the songs.

These definitions are but the bare bones of the living organism which is oral epic. We shall peer into the structural heart of the formulas to discern the various patterns which merge to give them form. We shall see that the formulas are not the ossified clichés which they have the reputation of being, but that they are capable of change and are indeed frequently highly productive of other and new formulas. We shall come to realize the way in which themes can be expanded and contracted, and the manner in which they are joined together to form the final product which is the song. We shall note the difference both in the internal structure and in the external connection of themes as they are used by different singers.

Finally we shall turn our attention to the song itself. We shall see that in a very real sense every performance is a separate song; for every performance is unique, and every performance bears the signature of its poet singer. He may have learned his song and the technique of its construction from others, but good or bad, the song produced in performance is his own. The audience knows it as his because he is before them. The singer of tales is at once the tradition and an individual creator.⁷ His manner of composition differs from that used by a writer in that the oral poet makes no conscious effort to break the traditional phrases and incidents; he is forced by the rapidity of composition in performance to use these traditional elements.⁸ To him they are not merely necessary, however; they are also right. He

seeks no others, and yet he practices great freedom in his use of them because they are themselves flexible. His art consists not so much in learning through repetition the time-worn formulas as in the ability to compose and recompose the phrases for the idea of the moment on the pattern established by the basic formulas. He is not a conscious iconoclast, but a traditional creative artist. His traditional style also has individuality, and it is possible to distinguish the songs of one singer from those of another, even when we have only the bare text without music and vocal nuance.

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The need for a clarification of the oral process of composition is reflected in the many terms which are used for oral narrative poetry. To no small degree difficulties have arisen because of the ambiguity of terminology and because each school has chosen a different facet of this poetry as distinctive. The term "oral" emphasizes, I believe, the basic distinction between oral narrative poetry and that which we term literary epic. But it too carries some ambiguity. Certain of the misunderstandings of Parry's oral theory arise from the failure to recognize his special use of the word "oral." For example, one often hears that oral poetry is poetry that was written to be recited. Oral, however, does not mean merely oral presentation. Oral epics are performed orally, it is true, but so can any other poem be performed orally. What is important is not the oral performance but rather the composition *during* oral performance.⁹

There may be ambiguity also when we say that the oral poet learns his songs *orally*, composes them *orally*, and transmits them *orally* to others. Like so many statements made in the debate on the oral theory, this one too is perfectly true if the word "oral" is understood in the technical sense in which it will be presented in this book. But if the reader interprets oral learning as listening to something repeated in exactly the same form many times, if he equates it with oral memorization by rote, then he will fail to grasp the peculiar process involved in learning oral epic. The same may be said for oral composition. If we equate it with improvisation in a broad sense, we are again in error. Improvisation is not a bad term for the process, but it too must be modified by the restrictions of the particular style. The exact way in which oral composition differs from free improvisation will, I hope, emerge from the following chapters. It is true also that oral epic is transmitted by word of mouth from one singer to another, but if we understand thereby the transmission of a fixed text or the kind of transmission involved when A tells B what happened and B tells C and so on with all natural errors of lapse of memory and exaggeration and distortion, then we do not fully comprehend what oral transmission of oral epic is. With oral poetry we are dealing with a particular and distinctive process in which oral learning, oral composition, and oral transmission almost merge; they seem to be different facets of the same process.

The word "epic," itself, indeed, has come in time to have many meanings. Epic sometimes is taken to mean simply a long poem in "high style." Yet a very great number of the poems which interest us in this book are comparatively short; length, in fact, is not a criterion of epic poetry. Other definitions of epic equate it with heroic poetry. Indeed the term "heroic poetry" is sometimes used (by Sir Cecil M. Bowra, for example) to avoid the very ambiguity in the word epic which troubles us. Yet purists might very well point out that many of the songs which we include in oral narrative poetry are romantic or historical and not heroic, no matter what definition of the hero one may choose. In oral narrative poetry, as a matter of fact, I wish to include all story poetry, the romantic or historical as well as the heroic; otherwise I would have to exclude a considerable body of medieval metrical narrative.

That whole body of verse that we have now agreed to designate as oral has been called by many names; the terminological battle is a serious one. Those who call it "folk epic" are carrying on a nineteenth-century concept of composition by the "folk" which has long since been proved invalid. At one time when "folk epic" referred to a theory of composition, it was a justifiable term. It pointed to a method of composition as the distinction between oral narrative poetry and "written" poetry. It was looking in the right direction. But when its theory of composition was invalidated, because no one could show how the people as a whole could compose a poem, then the technical meaning of the term was lost and it came to be equated in a derogatory sense with "peasant." The attention was then shifted from the way in which the poetry was made, first to the social status of those who practiced it, and then to the content and quality of the poetry itself. Although it may be true that this kind of poetry has survived longest among peasant populations, it has done so not because it is essentially "peasant" poetry, but rather because the peasant society has remained illiterate longer than urban society.¹⁰ Indeed this poetry has more often been aristocratic and courtly than of the folk. It would seem even from its origins to have belonged to serious ceremonial occasions, to ritual, to celebration. The term "folk poetry" becomes more and more inadequate, more and more restricted in time and place. To apply the term to the medieval epics or to the Homeric poems is ever more inadmissible.

Another reason why this poetry should cease to be denominated as "folk epic" is that outside the circle of folklore enthusiasts the connotations of "folk" in many countries tend to be derogatory. One thinks of the simple peasant with his "quaint" ideas, his fairy stories, and children's tales. The use of folk stories as entertainment for young children has its ironic aspects; we are beginning to realize the serious symbolism and meaning of folk tales, which, if rightly understood, would be far from proper fare for children. Moreover, if we mean by "folk epic" to indicate that oral epic shares some of its subject matter with folk tale and all that is seriously

implied in that term, we are ignoring or underestimating all the other subjects of oral epic, historical, legendary, and heroic: we have outgrown the appellation "folk epic." It is no longer exact, and in time it has come to misrepresent oral epic poetry rather than to describe it.

Similar objections can be brought against the term "popular," the Latin derivative equivalent to "folk." While this term avoids the "simple peasant" connotations of "folk," its literal meaning has been overlaid with another set of unfortunate implications from its use in English to denote "popular music" and "popular songs."

The fever of nationalism in the nineteenth century led to the use of oral epics for nationalist propaganda. The poems glorified the heroes of the nation's past; they depicted the struggles of the nation against outside foes. Hence the hero emerged as a "national" hero, and the poems themselves were labeled "national" epics. In some of the Slavic countries the word *narodni* has a useful ambiguity, since it means both "folk" and "national." As a term to designate oral epic "national" is woefully inadequate and an insidious imposter.

Some scholars have sought to avoid the pitfalls of the three terms already discussed, folk, popular, and national, by recourse to the word "primitive." It sounds somehow more "scientific" because it has been borrowed from the social science of anthropology. But here too the ambiguity is great and the connotations hardly less flattering than those of "folk" in some countries. If the idea behind the use of "primitive" for this poetry is that oral epic poetry precedes written poetry in time in the cultural growth of a society, then its use would be legitimate, because as a rule oral poetry does precede written poetry, but it would, like the other terms, still miss the fundamental difference in form between the two.

In summary, any term that is used to designate oral narrative poetry in an attempt to distinguish it from written narrative poetry must contain some indication of the difference in form. It is because the terms which we have discussed above failed to comprehend this distinction that they have proved themselves to be inadequate. Any terms, also, carrying implications derogatory to either oral narrative poetry or written poetry (as, for example, such terms as "authentic" and "artificial"; "primary" and "secondary") must be abandoned, for they represent an attitude that is neither scholarly nor critical. Both these forms are artistic expressions, each with its own legitimacy. We should not seek to judge but to understand.

If the need for a clarification of the process which produces oral narrative poetry is reflected in the confusion of terms which have been used to designate that poetry, this need is even more apparent, of course, in the variety of theories put forth in the last two centuries (and which still survive in one form or another today) to explain the peculiar phenomenon of oral epic. On the one hand there has been a solid block of loyalists to the literary tradition who have maintained through thick and thin that the

Homeric poems, as well as the great epics from medieval times, are written literary productions by a single author.

These loyalists have found themselves defending their position from attacks by those who from time to time raised annoying questions. One of the earliest questions posed was whether writing existed in the ninth century B.C., the traditional date of Homer. This was first raised by Josephus;¹¹ it came to the fore again in D'Aubignac¹² in the early eighteenth century and reached its classic expression in Friedrich August Wolf's famed *Prolegomena* (1795). A second problem was formulated during the seventeenth century and played a great role in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*; this was the problem of the "errors" or inconsistencies in the Homeric poems. D'Aubignac, Perrault, Giambattista Vico, Robert Wood, and others led once again to Wolf and the later Separatists. A third question concerned the unusual length of the Homeric poems. If there was no writing in Homer's time, how could such long poems be preserved until the time of writing? In fact, how could poems of such length come into being at all without the aid of writing? Clearly this was a corollary of the first question raised. Among the earlier scholars who attempted to answer this question the name of Robert Wood stands out. A fourth problem arose from the increased knowledge of and interest in medieval minstrelsy and contemporary oral poetry during the eighteenth century and later. Here again we may begin with D'Aubignac and continue with Thomas Blackwell, Percy, Macpherson, Herder, Goethe, and a host of others. There was, fifthly, also the problem, inherited from ancient times, of the meaning of the Peisistratean legend about the recension of the Homeric poems. And finally with the development of linguistic studies in the nineteenth century the question was raised about the possibility of one man using dialect forms from several regions and archaisms from different periods.

These were the chief questions that were current in Homeric scholarship and still are. In answering them some scholars have gone so far as to deny even the existence of Homer, but the usual answer has been some form of multiple authorship for the poems with Homer at one end or the other of a series of poets. Sometimes he was the originator whose poems were carried through oral tradition or whose works were modified by later poets; more often he was the last of the redactors or compilers or, in an attempt to bridge the gap between Unitarians and Separatists, he was the great poet who reworked oral tradition into a "literary" poem. The concept of multiple authorship led scholars naturally to the dissection of the Homeric poems in an attempt to see what parts were done by different authors. They were thus led also to seek the "original" or archetype of the poems.

The doubt as to the existence of writing in Homer's time has given Homerists three choices: to seek proof that the doubt was ill founded and that there was writing as early as the traditional date of Homer; to change Homer's date, bringing it down to a period when writing was possible; to

leave Homer's date where it was and to cover the intervening years to the age of writing by oral transmission of Homer's poems.

The most significant step in proving that writing was possible and indeed existed not only in the ninth century but earlier has been made only recently in the discovery that Linear B is Greek. Although none of the texts yet deciphered is literary,¹³ the old argument of Josephus and Wolf has had the ground cut from under it. Ironically enough, however, the proof has come at a time when many scholars realize that the existence of writing or even of a literary tradition does not necessarily mean that Homer's poems belong in the category of "written" literature; and many realize, and have realized for some time, that obviously our Homeric texts could not have been preserved had there not been writing in Homer's day. Valuable as the decipherment of Linear B is, it is no longer relevant to the Homeric problem.

Unless not only literary texts are discovered in Linear B but also some evidence can be unearthed to prove that epic poetry was being written down during the period of Linear B, its decipherment cannot help us much in determining Homer's date. Some Homeric names seem to have been deciphered, Hector and Achilles, for example, but this might indicate no more than that these were common names or that songs about these heroes existed; it tells us nothing about our poems. There is no evidence at all at this point that Homer was written down in Linear B and later copied in the Greek alphabet that we know. Were there such evidence, we would be justified in moving Homer's date back. So the problem of the date of Homer still remains with us.

Wolf and some of his predecessors turned to the Peisistratean legend to answer the question of date, as has Carpenter in our own century, although the latter's reasons are different from those of Wolf. Carpenter reflects our growing knowledge of oral literature and seeks a time when the writing down of the poems would make sense in the context of this knowledge. To him Peisistratus seems the most likely person to sponsor this. Certainly he is right that the Peisistratean legend is an invaluable clue, one that cannot be ignored but which demands explanation and interpretation. But Carpenter has been little heeded, and the date accepted now by most scholars is the second half of the eighth century.

Those scholars who made the third choice were moving in the right direction, namely towards oral tradition, but in putting the poet of our Homeric texts before the period of writing, they were unwittingly creating more problems than they were as yet equipped to handle. Their choice was a compromise. Oral tradition was a fickle mistress with whom to flirt. But scholars could call in to their help the "fantastic memories" so "well attested" of illiterate people. They felt that a text could remain from one generation to another unaltered, or altered only by inconsequential lapses of memory. This myth has remained strong even to the present day. The main points of confusion in the theory of those scholars who made the third

choice arose from the belief that in oral tradition there is a fixed text which is transmitted unchanged from one generation to another.

The quarrel about the errors and inconsistencies in the Homeric poems, inherited from the seventeenth century, has continued steadily until our own times. In its narrower aspects the strife has resulted in a stalemate; the real inconsistencies still remain unexplained in spite of the ingenuity of the Unitarians, who have to their credit the checking of the excesses of the Separatists.¹⁴ The picture of the great Homer nodding has looked more like an excuse than an explanation. Bowra's remark in *Tradition and Design in the Iliad* that the oral poet concentrates on one passage at a time is closer to the truth. We have been gaining much perspective on the inconsistencies, despite the hard core of apologist opinion. Of far greater importance than the labeling of the inconsistencies themselves has been the theory of multiple authorship which emerged when the quarrel over the "errors" began to find added fuel from the attention paid to still living bards and bardic traditions and to medieval minstrelsy. The many theories of multiple authorship of the Homeric poems have contributed more to Homeric scholarship than any other single concept. Not that they were right. But they led in productive directions. They were honest attempts to meet the challenge offered by the growing body of oral ballads and epics as well as of medieval epic.

The theories of multiple authorship can be divided into two general classes. The first, and the earliest, saw the Homeric poems as compilations of shorter songs, stitched together by their compiler. D'Aubignac presented this in his *Conjectures* in 1715, but it was Lachmann and his followers in the nineteenth century who made serious attempts to dissect the poems according to this *lieder theorie*. The attempts were unsuccessful and unconvincing; for the dissectors could not agree on where to use the scalpel. The theory was discredited.

A second general approach moved in vertical rather than horizontal lines. The scholars who used this approach abandoned the idea of a compilation, even of poems of different times and places, and conceived of an original kernel which was modified by a succession of later authors. Usually to them Homer was not a compiler but the last and greatest of the redactors. They too whisked out the scalpel and began to peel off the layers in the Homeric poems. Linguistic and dialect evidence came to their assistance. But they were equally unsuccessful and their theories too have been discarded, although with considerably less finality than those of the first group.

The work of the first group of dissectors led to several valuable compilations. Lönrot put together the Finnish *Kalevala*, the Estonians entered the competition with the *Kalevipoeg*, and the Serbs attempted a number of "national" epics on the Kosovo theme. But nothing comparable to the Homeric poems was produced. The problem of the way in which the

Homeric poems had attained their length, if they were not literary productions of a single author, remained unsolved.

So also did the problem of the variety of dialect and archaic forms in the poems. One of the attempts to solve this problem was the theory of a special poetic language, a kind of artificial dialect which was the property of epic poets. This of course did not solve anything. It merely put a label on the diction as found in the poems and pushed into the background the question of how such a diction could have been formed.

Hand in hand with the theory of multiple authorship went the emphasis on a search for the archetype. Leaf's work is typical of this trend. His five strata began with an original and then discerned expansions and interpolations of later periods. One still hears echoes of this kind of dissection, for example, in MacKay's *The Wrath of Homer*.

The work of all these theorists should not be dismissed as without avail, certainly not with the tired yet vituperative cynicism of Allen in his *Origins and Transmissions*. The service of these scholars has been in essence to point out the peculiarities of language and structure of the Homeric poems, peculiarities that we now recognize to be those of oral poetry. The inconsistencies, the mixture of dialects, the archaisms, the repetitions and epic "tags," and even the manner of composition by addition and expansion of themes have been noted and catalogued by these scholars. The questioned existence of writing led them to use the word "oral" and their experience of folk epic seemed further to justify this term. The elements that were needed to crystallize the answers to their questions were there. It is a strange phenomenon in intellectual history as well as in scholarship that the great minds herein represented, minds which could formulate the most ingenious speculation, failed to realize that there might be some other way of composing a poem than that known to their own experience. They knew and spoke often of folk ballad and epic, they were aware of variants in these genres, yet they could see only two ways in which those variants could come into being: by lapse of memory or by wilful change. This seemed so obvious, so much an unquestioned basic assumption, that they never thought to investigate exactly how a traditional poetry operated. They always thought in terms of a fixed text or a fixed group of texts to which a poet *did* something for a reason within his own artistic or intellectual self. They could not conceive of a poet composing a line in a certain way because of necessity or because of the demands of his traditional art.

I believe that the greatest moment in recent Homeric scholarship was expressed by Milman Parry when he wrote his field notes for his collection of South Slavic texts and spoke of his growing realization that what he had been calling traditional was in fact oral: "My first studies were on the style of the Homeric poems and led me to understand that so highly formulaic a style could be only traditional. I failed, however, at the time to understand

as fully as I should have that a style such as that of Homer must not only be traditional but also must be oral. It was largely due to the remarks of my teacher M. Antoine Meillet that I came to see, dimly at first, that a true understanding of the Homeric poems could only come with a full understanding of the nature of oral poetry."¹⁵

The real impact of this revelation of Milman Parry has not yet been fully felt in Homeric scholarship, which has chosen to disdain oral epic and to move into the more abstruse kinds of literary criticism.¹⁶ Although often referred to, the oral theory of Milman Parry is at best but vaguely understood. It is the purpose of this book to present that theory as fully and yet as simply as possible. Parry himself did not live long enough after making his monumental collection to think out his theory in detail, let alone to develop it and present it to the learned world in completeness. Working from the clues that he left, I have tried to build an edifice of which he might approve.

CHAPTER TWO

SINGERS: PERFORMANCE AND TRAINING

Were we to seek to understand why a literary poet wrote what he did in a particular poem in a particular manner and form, we should not focus our attention on the moment when he or someone else read or recited his poem to a particular audience or even on any moment when we ourselves read the poem in quiet solitude. We should instead attempt to reconstruct that moment in time when the poet wrote the lines. Obviously, the moment of composition is the important one for such study. For the oral poet the moment of composition is the performance. In the case of a literary poem there is a gap in time between composition and reading or performance; in the case of the oral poem this gap does not exist, because composition and performance are two aspects of the same moment. Hence, the question "when *would* such and such an oral poem be performed?" has no meaning; the question should be "when *was* the oral poem performed?" An oral poem is not composed *for* but *in* performance. The implications of this statement are both broad and deep. For that reason we must turn first in our analysis of oral epic to the performance.

We must grasp fully who, or more correctly what, our performer is. We must eliminate from the word "performer" any notion that he is one who merely reproduces what someone else or even he himself has composed. Our oral poet is composer. Our singer of tales is a composer of tales. Singer, performer, composer, and poet are one under different aspects *but at the same time*. Singing, performing, composing are facets of the same act.

It is sometimes difficult for us to realize that the man who is sitting before us singing an epic song is not a mere carrier of the tradition but a creative artist making the tradition. The reasons for this difficulty are various. They arise in part simply from the fact that we are not in the habit of thinking of a performer as a composer.¹ Even in the realm of oral literature most of us in the West, at least, are more accustomed to the ballad than to the epic; and our experience has been formed in large part by "folk" ballad singers who are mere performers. The present vogue of revival of folk singing on the concert stage and elsewhere has distorted our concept of the essence of oral composition. The majority of such "folk" singers are not

oral poets. The collector even in a country such as Yugoslavia, where published collections have been given much attention for over a century, some of which have become almost sacrosanct, must be wary; for he will find singers who have memorized songs from these collections. In spite of authentic manner of presentation, in spite of the fact that the songs themselves are often oral poems, we cannot consider such singers as oral poets. They are *mere* performers. Such experiences have deceived us and have robbed the real oral poet of credit as a creative composer; indeed to some extent they have taken from epic performance an element of vital interest. Our task in this chapter is to restore to performance and performer their true significance.

When we realize that the performance is a moment of creation for the singer, we cannot but be amazed at the circumstances under which he creates. Since these circumstances influence oral form we must consider them. Epic poetry in Yugoslavia is sung on a variety of occasions. It forms, at the present time, or until very recently, the chief entertainment of the adult male population in the villages and small towns. In the country villages, where the houses are often widely separated, a gathering may be held at one of the houses during a period of leisure from the work in the fields. Men from all the families assemble and one of their number may sing epic songs. Because of the distances between the houses some of the guests arrive earlier than others, and of course this means that some leave earlier. Some very likely spend the whole night, as we learn from a conversation with Alija Fjuljanin (I, p. 291).* The singer has to contend with an audience that is coming and going, greeting newcomers, saying farewells to early leavers; a newcomer with special news or gossip may interrupt the singing for some time, perhaps even stopping it entirely.

What is true of the home gathering in the country village holds as well for the more compact villages and for towns, where the men gather in the coffee house (*kafana*) or in the tavern rather than in a private home. The taverns are entirely male establishments, whether the district is predominantly Moslem or not. Neither Moslem nor Christian women are ever allowed in these places. This is a man's world. Here the men gather at the end of the day. The farmers of the nearby villages may drop in for a short while to sit and talk, sip coffee or raki, and listen to songs. They come and go. The townspeople join them. There are shopkeepers and caravan drivers who

* In this book the texts of songs, conversations, and music in the Parry Collection as yet unpublished will be referred to by their number as catalogued in the Collection in Widener Library (for example, Parry 427). Those texts published in *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, Parry and Lord, Cambridge and Belgrade, 1954, will be referred to by volume number (I for the English translations and II for the Serbocroatian texts) and by their number within that volume (for example, II, No. 24). Conversations with singers, published in *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, will be referred to by volume and page number (for example, I, p. 63). Texts collected by Lord, beginning in 1950, will be referred to by their number as listed in the Collection in Widener Library (for example, Lord 102).

For information about the Parry Collection, see Chapter One, note 2.

have come in with merchandise from other districts or are stopping on their way through. Frequently the tavern is also an inn, a "han," and here the drivers will spend the night. Many of these men are also singers and the carriers of tradition from one district to another. They are a critical audience.

In market centers such as Bijelo Polje, Stolac, Novi Pazar, and Bihać, market day, the one day in the week when the town is crowded with people from the countryside who have come in to buy and sell, will be the busiest day in the han or in the kafana. Some of the business is done there during the day, and some of the money which has changed hands will be spent in the kafana at night before the men return to their own villages. They may even stay the night there and return the next morning, if they feel so inclined, or if the day has been particularly profitable. This is a good opportunity for the singer because, although his audience may not be stable, it does have money and is willing to reward him for his pains. He is not really a professional, but his audience does buy him drinks, and if he is good they will give him a little money for the entertainment he has given them.

When the singing takes place, as it occasionally does, at a wedding festival, the amount of confusion is increased by the singing of lyric songs and dancing carried on by the young people. The evenings offer the best opportunity for the singer of the old songs, when the older men are not watching the games or gossiping with their neighbors and are content to relax and sit back and listen to the bard.

Among the Moslems in Yugoslavia there is a special festival which has contributed to the fostering of songs of some length.² This is the festival of Ramazan, when for a month the men fast from sunrise to sunset and gather in coffee houses all night long to talk and listen to epic. Here is a perfect circumstance for the singing of one song during the entire night. Here also is an encouragement to the semiprofessional singer to attain a repertory of at least thirty songs. It was Parry's experience that such Moslem singers, when asked how many songs they knew, frequently replied that they knew thirty, one for every night of Ramazan. Most Moslem kafanas engage a singer several months in advance to entertain their guests, and if there is more than one such kafana in the town, there may be rivalry in obtaining the services of a well-known and popular singer who is likely to bring considerable business to the establishment.

In Novi Pazar Đemo Zogić kept a kafana, and Salih Ugljanin and Sulejman Makić had at one time or another been engaged in it as singers. Đemo paid the singer a hundred dinars in advance, or a hundred oka of grain for the singer to leave with his family for food, because the singer stayed in town and ate at Đemo's house. After the bard had sung a song in the kafana, Đemo circulated among the guests and took up a collection for him. According to Đemo some gave one dinar and some five, but Sulejman told us that they usually gave two dinars and that he made as much as sixty

dinars a night (I, p. 238 and p. 265). Murat Žunić was much sought after in the district of Cazin and Bihać in the north, both places competing for his talent. He had sung in Banja Luka for six years during Ramazan (Parry 1915). Đemo Zogić was himself a singer and would sometimes sing for his own company, but he told us he was generally so busy serving coffee and greeting guests and talking that he had to hire someone to do the singing. Once when the singer had been indisposed during his engagement, Đemo had taken over, and the guests had given him great praise for his singing, so he tells us (I, p. 240).

In an account of the occasions for singing and of the audience which fosters it, mention at least should be made of the courtly entertainment of the earlier days in Yugoslavia. What we have been describing up to this point was in existence in Yugoslavia in the 1930's and to an extent still continues. In medieval times, before the Turkish conquests, the Christian courts had undoubtedly fostered the minstrel's art as had the courts of other countries in Europe at that time. When these courts re-emerged, however, after the expulsion of the Turks, they were no longer interested in the bards but sought their entertainment from abroad or from other sources. Hence in the Christian courts oral narrative poetry played no role for many generations. The local Moslem nobility on the other hand with its rich estates had fostered the art, and since this local nobility was still alive in some districts, such as Novi Pazar, Bijelo Polje, and Bihać in the 1930's, it was still possible to obtain firsthand information about the practice. It actually differed little from our account above except that everything was on a grander scale; the settings were more luxurious and the gifts to singers richer.

The records of the Parry Collection abound in stories, some fairly full, of how the Moslem bards used to sing at the "courts" of the Turkish nobility. Here the professional or semiprofessional singer was afforded the best opportunity for practicing his art. There seems to be little evidence, however, that the beys and aghas actually maintained a court minstrel. They not infrequently called in singers for special occasions when they entertained guests, but they did not keep a singer in their courts. In the old days the ruling class of Moslems celebrated the feast of Ramazan in its courts rather than in the kafana. When the Turkish rule was overthrown, the celebration took place more commonly in the kafana than in private Moslem homes.

Whether the performance takes place at home, in the coffee house, in the courtyard, or in the halls of a noble, the essential element of the occasion of singing that influences the form of the poetry is the variability and instability of the audience.

The instability of the audience requires a marked degree of concentration on the part of the singer in order that he may sing at all; it also tests to the utmost his dramatic ability and his narrative skill in keeping the audience as attentive as possible. But it is the length of a song which is most affected by the audience's restlessness. The singer begins to tell his tale. If he is fortunate,

he may find it possible to sing until he is tired without interruption from the audience. After a rest he will continue, if his audience still wishes. This may last until he finishes the song, and if his listeners are propitious and his mood heightened by their interest, he may lengthen his tale, savoring each descriptive passage. It is more likely that, instead of having this ideal occasion the singer will realize shortly after beginning that his audience is not receptive, and hence he will shorten his song so that it may be finished within the limit of time for which he feels the audience may be counted on. Or, if he misjudges, he may simply never finish the song. Leaving out of consideration for the moment the question of the talent of the singer, one can say that the length of the song depends upon the audience. One of the reasons also why different singings of the same song by the same man vary most in their endings is that the end of a song is sung less often by the singer.

* * *

If we are fully aware that the singer is composing as he sings, the most striking element in the performance itself is the speed with which he proceeds. It is not unusual for a Yugoslav bard to sing at the rate of from ten to twenty ten-syllable lines a minute. Since, as we shall see, he has not memorized his song, we must conclude either that he is a phenomenal virtuoso or that he has a special technique of composition outside our own field of experience.³ We must rule out the first of these alternatives because there are too many singers; so many geniuses simply cannot appear in a single generation or continue to appear inexorably from one age to another. The answer of course lies in the second alternative, namely, a special technique of composition.

The major part of this book is concerned with the special technique of composition which makes rapid composing in performance possible. For an understanding of this technique it is necessary to introduce the Yugoslav singer and to examine the way in which he learns his art of singing. Let the singers speak for themselves from the phonograph records of the Parry Collection.

"My name is Sulejman Fortić, and I am Salih agha Forta's grandson. . . . Today I am a waiter in the coffee house" (I, p. 225).

"My name is Đemail Zogić. . . . I am thirty-eight years old. . . . I keep a coffee house" (I, p. 235).

"Nikola (the interrogator): What is your name? Sulejman (the singer): Sulejman Makić. . . . N: How old are you? S: Fifty years old. . . . N: What do you do at home? S: I plow and I reap. N: Do you have any sheep? S: I cut wood. No, by Allah, I have cattle" (I, p. 263).

"My name is Alija Fjuljanin. . . . I am a farmer. . . . I'm twenty-nine years old. . . . We occupy ourselves with stock and with the land" (I, p. 289).

"Nikola: What's your name, old man? Salih: Salih Ugljanin. N: How old are you? S: Eighty-five. . . N: Tell me what your life has been like, Salih. S: My life has been good. I lived like a bey. I had cattle, and I traded. . . I drove my cattle and sheep to Salonika, and up until the wars I had plenty. . . Afterwards I came to Novi Pazar. . . I kept a coffee house. . . N: But how do you live now? S: We live well enough. God sends me my daily bread. Someone asks for me to help him with something, and he gives me something. Another calls me, and I help him, and he gives me something. N: How can you help anyone at your age? S: I help him with my brains . . . I fix up a deal for someone, which is to his advantage, and he sees. I buy oxen or sheep for him, if they're worth while. If anyone breaks his leg, I set it so you can't tell where it was broken. N: What, you're a doctor? S: Doctor, practitioner, whatever you like. . . N: When you stopped trading, what did you do after that? S: For a while after that I worked the land, reaped and ploughed, and worked as a farmer. . . I would sell the hay which I cut and take the money and buy cattle, and then buy grain, plough in a little, get some grain, feed my family, and all was well" (I, pp. 59, 62).

The example of Ahmet Musović in Bijelo Polje shows that even well-to-do Turkish beys used to sing. In 1934 he was sixty-four years old and until 1912 he had had his own land and tenant farmers and had been a merchant; he kept a store. He had two servants, one a Christian, the other a Moslem. Every Ramazan Ahmet and his family kept singers at their house. In fact, even a Christian tenant farmer used to come during Ramazan and sing both Christian and Moslem songs. These singers were paid, but when Ahmet himself used to sing it was not for pay. Only after the wars in 1912 when he lost everything had he himself gone from town to town and sung for pay (Parry 12390).

We can thus see that no particular occupation contributed more singers than any other, and professionalism was limited to beggars. There was a kind of semiprofessionalism among the Moslems during Ramazan, but only beggars lived completely by singing. In our field experience beggars, blind or otherwise, were not very good singers. In Yugoslavia in 1934-35 blind singers were not important carriers of the tradition. Our experience would not tend to verify the romantic picture of the blind bard. Nikola Janjušević in Gacko and Stjepan Majstorović in Bihać were both blind, but although they were picturesque characters, they were not skilled singers, either in respect to the outward aspects of their performance or in the fullness of development of their texts.

Majstorović's story is worth relating. He had been blind since he was a year and a half old (in 1935 he was fifty-five). He had had to care for his father and mother since the time he was fourteen. When he was twenty he had learned to sing to the *gusle* (the one-stringed bowed instrument used to accompany the singing) which he kept always with him in a bag, to prevent

pranksters from putting soap on the string and thus spoiling it so that he would have to get a new string for it. He lived as a beggar and had not done badly for a number of years. When hard times came with the wars, the merchants in town had helped him and given him credit. In spite of his blindness he had married and had a married son. After the war his situation improved, and up to around 1928 or so all had gone well again, but for six or seven years prior to 1935 his luck had changed for the worse. He admitted that he could no longer sing very well because he was getting old and was not strong. He therefore liked short songs, because they did not tax his energies and he could sing them all the way through. Now, however, nobody listened to him, and in only one village (Bosanska Krupa) was he able to pick up any money. He sang his songs according to the company he was in, since he had to please his audience or else expect no reward. Thus when he was with Turks he sang Moslem songs, or his own songs in such a way that the Moslems won the battles. When he was with Serbs, whose company was more congenial to him, he sang their songs.⁴ Although he had learned most of his songs from listening to singers, he told us that he had also learned at least three or four songs from the songbooks, strangely enough. A neighbor, or whomever he could find with some schooling, had read them to him. Occasionally some kind soul would tell him that a particular song would be pleasing to his audience, and though they had not been able to sing it for him, they had related it to him, I do not know whether in verse or prose, but I suspect the latter. He knew of some singers who had made up new songs, and he himself sang a new one about King Wilson. He told us that another singer had composed it, written it down, and had read it to him. When he was young, he had had to hear a song only once in order to pick it up, but now he found it hard to learn new songs (Parry 1912).

We do not mean to say, of course, that blind singers may not play an important role in the practice of their art in other cultures, or that they may not have done so in the past even in this one, but, for what it is worth, our experience in those years seemed to indicate that blind singers were not usually good singers. Against that evidence, however, one should place the information which we heard indirectly concerning the blind singer Ćor Huso, whose name has become closely associated with the Parry Collection in this country. He was blind in one eye (though some say blind in both, in spite of the fact the name Ćor means blind in one eye), and was a really professional singer according to the accounts which the collection contains. Huso was from Kolašin in Montenegro, and he wandered from place to place singing to the *gusle*. His fame spread abroad, and some of our best singers had learned songs from him. According to Salih Ugljanin's story, Huso had even gone to the court of Franz Josef and had been richly rewarded by him. He seems to have been a good showman. His dress and the trappings of his horse were distinctive, and he cut a romantic figure.

It is a great pity, of course, that someone did not collect songs from him a couple of generations ago, but he seems to have escaped the attention of collectors — just why would be interesting to know. Hörmann did not get so far west as Kolašin in gathering material for his most excellent volumes on the songs of the Moslems in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Luka Marjanović was working in the north for the *Matica Hrvatska*. From later accounts of singers who learned from him, we can get some picture, however inaccurate, of the songs which he sang and of the influence which he had on the tradition. His example demonstrates the role which the prestige of a singer plays in the life of a song or of a theme; for the singer of fame will make a deeper impression on the tradition than will others of less repute.

What I believe is significant in this survey of the occupations which singers follow is that the singers do not seem to form a special class. They can belong to any group in society. The oral singer in Yugoslavia is not marked by a class distinction; he is not an oral poet because he is a farmer or a shopkeeper or a bey. He can belong to the "folk," the merchant class, or the aristocracy. His place in society tells us nothing about him as an oral poet. We must look elsewhere, then, for what distinguishes this man who sits before us and creates epic song from his fellow men and from those who write epics.

There seem to be two things that all our singers have in common: illiteracy and the desire to attain proficiency in singing epic poetry. If the second of these sets them apart from their fellows, it is the first, namely their illiteracy, which determines the particular form that their composition takes, and which thus distinguishes them from the literary poet. In societies where writing is unknown, or where it is limited to a professional scribe whose duty is that of writing letters and keeping accounts, or where it is the possession of a small minority, such as clerics or a wealthy ruling class (though often this latter group prefers to have its writing done by a servant), the art of narration flourishes, provided that the culture is in other respects of a sort to foster the singing of tales. If the way of life of a people furnishes subjects for story and affords occasion for the telling, this art will be fostered. On the other hand, when writing is introduced and begins to be used for the same purposes as the oral narrative song, when it is employed for telling stories and is widespread enough to find an audience capable of reading, this audience seeks its entertainment and instruction in books rather than in the living songs of men, and the older art gradually disappears. The songs have died out in the cities not because life in a large community is an unfitting environment for them but because schools were first founded there and writing has been firmly rooted in the way of life of the city dwellers.

In order best to appreciate and to understand the process of composition that we call oral, and thus to eliminate our prejudice against the "illiterate" singer, we must follow him during the years which he devotes to learning the art. If we take our future oral poet in his unlettered state at a tender age,

let's say fourteen or fifteen, or even younger (singers tell us that this was the age at which they learned, although they usually mean by it only "when I was just a young boy"), and watch him learning the art, we can understand what this process is.

We can trace three distinct stages in his progress. During the first period he sits aside while others sing. He has decided that he wants to sing himself, or he may still be unaware of this decision and simply be very eager to hear the stories of his elders. Before he actually begins to sing, he is, consciously or unconsciously, laying the foundation. He is learning the stories and becoming acquainted with the heroes and their names, the faraway places and the habits of long ago. The themes of the poetry are becoming familiar to him, and his feeling for them is sharpened as he hears more and as he listens to the men discussing the songs among themselves. At the same time he is imbibing the rhythm of the singing and to an extent also the rhythm of the thoughts as they are expressed in song. Even at this early stage the oft-repeated phrases which we call formulas are being absorbed.

One of the best accounts of the learning process is to be found in Parry Text 12391 from Šećo Kolić. As a boy he used to tend sheep alone on the mountain. Here are his own words: "When I was a shepherd boy, they used to come for an evening to my house, or sometimes we would go to someone else's for the evening, somewhere in the village. Then a singer would pick up the gusle, and I would listen to the song. The next day when I was with the flock, I would put the song together, word for word, without the gusle, but I would sing it from memory, word for word, just as the singer had sung it. . . .⁵ Then I learned gradually to finger the instrument, and to fit the fingering to the words, and my fingers obeyed better and better. . . . I didn't sing among the men until I had perfected the song, but only among the young fellows in my circle [*družina*] not in front of my elders and betters." Šećo here roughly distinguishes all three stages of learning; first, the period of listening and absorbing; then, the period of application; and finally, that of singing before a critical audience.

The second stage begins when the singer opens his mouth to sing, either with or without instrumental accompaniment. It begins with establishing the primary element of the form — the rhythm and melody, both of the song and of the gusle or the *tambura* (a two-stringed plucked instrument). This is to be the framework for the expression of his ideas. From then on what he does must be within the limits of the rhythmic pattern. In the Yugoslav tradition, this rhythmic pattern in its simplest statement is a line of ten syllables with a break after the fourth. The line is repeated over and over again, with some melodic variation, and some variation in the spacing and timing of the ten syllables. Here is a rhythmic fixity which the singer cannot avoid, and which gives him his first real difficulty when he sings. His problem is now one of fitting his thoughts and their expression into this fairly rigid form. The rigidity of form may vary from culture to culture,

as we shall see later, but the problem remains essentially the same — that of fitting thought to rhythmic pattern.

It will be argued that this is what the literary poet does also. This may be true, but there are two factors in oral composition that are not present in a written tradition. We must remember that the oral poet has no idea of a fixed model text to serve as his guide. He has models enough, but they are not fixed and he has no idea of memorizing them in a fixed form. Every time he hears a song sung, it is different. Secondly, there is a factor of time. The literate poet has leisure to compose at any rate he pleases. The oral poet must keep singing. His composition, by its very nature, must be rapid. Individual singers may and do vary in their rate of composition, of course, but it has limits because there is an audience waiting to hear the story. Some singers, like Ćamil Kulenović in Bihać, begin very slowly with fairly long pauses between lines, working up gradually to very rapid rhythmic composition. Others insert many musical interludes of brief duration while they think of what is coming next. Still others have a formulaic phrase of general character addressed to the audience which they use to mark time, like Suljo Fortić with his *Sad da vidiš, moji sokolovi*, "Now you should have seen it, my falcons." But these devices have to be used sparingly, because the audience will not tolerate too many of them.

If the singer has no idea of the fixity of the form of a song, and yet has to pour his ideas into a more or less rigid rhythmic pattern in rapid composition, what does he do? To phrase the question a little differently, how does the oral poet meet the need of the requirements of rapid composition without the aid of writing and without memorizing a fixed form? His tradition comes to the rescue. Other singers have met the same need, and over many generations there have been developed many phrases which express in the several rhythmic patterns the ideas most common in the poetry. These are the formulas of which Parry wrote. In this second stage in his apprenticeship the young singer must learn enough of these formulas to sing a song. He learns them by repeated use of them in singing, by repeatedly facing the need to express the idea in song and by repeatedly satisfying that need, until the resulting formula which he has heard from others becomes a part of his poetic thought. He must have enough of these formulas to facilitate composition. He is like a child learning words, or anyone learning a language without a school method; except that the language here being learned is the special language of poetry. This is the period in which the teacher is most important.

In the first stage it generally happens that the neophyte has chosen one singer, perhaps his father, or a favorite uncle, or some well-known singer of his neighborhood, to listen to most closely, but he hears other singers, too. Sometimes, as we have seen in the case of Šećo Kolić, he has no single model, but picks up what he can from all whom he hears. Sulejman Makić, however, told us that he learned all his songs from a certain Arif Karalješak,

who had stayed an entire year at Suljo's house when the boy was about fifteen years old. According to Suljo, he had brought this man to his house and kept him there to teach him to sing, but Arif also worked on the farm for them. Alija Fjuljanin said that his grandfather had given him a gusle when he was ten or twelve years old, and that he had learned most of his songs from three singers.

Sometimes there are published versions of songs in the background. Šaban Rahmanović in Bihać told us that he did not learn to sing until he was about twenty-eight (he was forty-five in 1935), and that he had learned his songs from the song books, the *Matica Hrvatska* collection in particular. Although he could not read, somebody had read them to him. But he had also heard the older singers in his district (Parry 1923). The entrance of these song books into the tradition is a very interesting phenomenon, and one that is open to gross misinterpretation. Yet as long as the singer himself remains unlettered and does not attempt to reproduce the songs word for word, these books have no other effect on him than that of hearing the song. In the case of Šaban it is very possible that he had heard many singers when he was young. He admits having heard his uncle sing, but says that he did not attempt to learn the art until later. Thus the first period in his learning was unusually long and casual, and the second period was taken up largely with having songs read to him from the song book.

More typical is the case of old Murat Žunić from the same district, a district which has been strongly influenced by the song books. Murat had learned his songs from singers, not from the song book versions being read to him, but he was aware of the song books, knew the names of the singers who had contributed songs to be published in them, and was conscious that some of those from whom he had learned had picked up their songs from the books. He had heard songs from Hercegovina read from books and was very critical of the singers of that province. He said that they made mistakes in geography because they didn't know where Kladuša, the home of the famous Hrnjići, was. His own songs he had learned chiefly from two members of his family (Parry 1915).

Franje Vuković knew only that he had first learned to sing from a cousin, Ivo Mekić Jerković, but he couldn't remember from whom he had learned each song which he knew. Like Šaban Rahmanović, he too had been a little late in learning. Until he was nineteen or twenty he had been too busy about the farm, but when he married, his wife took over the work, and he had leisure in which to listen to singers and to learn to sing himself. Strangely enough, Franje sang without any musical accompaniment. He told us that he had learned to sing to the gusle, but that when his house and mill had been burned to the ground he had lost his gusle, and since that time he had sung without it (Parry 1912).

Learning in this second stage is a process of imitation, both in regard to playing the instrument and to learning the formulas and themes of the

tradition. It may truthfully be said that the singer imitates the techniques of composition of his master or masters rather than particular songs.⁶ For that reason the singer is not very clear about the details of how he learned his art, and his explanations are frequently in very general terms. He will say that he was interested in the old songs, had a passion (*merak*) for them, listened to singers, and then, "work, work, work" (*goni, goni, goni*), and little by little he learned to sing. He had no definite program of study, of course, no sense of learning this or that formula or set of formulas. It is a process of imitation and of assimilation through listening and much practice on one's own. Makić was a bit more explicit than some. He said that his teacher would sing a song for him two or three times until he learned it (I, p. 264). Fjuljanin said that he sometimes asked a singer to sing a song for him (I, p. 292). Since the singer hears many songs, he uses the language and formulas that belong to them all; for the accomplished singer whom he has been imitating does not have one set of expressions for one song and another for another, except when there are themes in the one that are not in the other, and even in these cases the formulas and formulaic techniques are the same in all songs.

The second stage ends when the singer is competent to sing one song all the way through for a critical audience. There are probably other songs that he can sing partially, songs that are in process of being learned. He has arrived at a definite turning point when he can sit in front of an audience and finish a song to his own satisfaction and that of the audience. His job may or may not be a creditable one. He has very likely not learned much about "ornamenting" a song to make it full and broad in its narrative style. That will depend somewhat on his model. If the singer from whom he has learned is one who uses much "ornamentation," he has probably picked up a certain amount of that ornamentation too. Whether his first song is fully developed or not, it is complete in its story from beginning to end and will tend to follow the story as he heard it from his master. If, however, and this is important, he has not learned it from one singer in particular, and if the stories of that song differ in the various versions which he has heard, he may make a composite of them. He may, on the other hand, follow one of them for the most part, taking something from the others too. Either way is consistent with the traditional process. One can thus see that although this process should not be described as haphazard, which it is not, it does not fit our own conceptions of learning a fixed text of a fixed song. Already at this second stage, and to an extent also in the first, the singer has found, though the knowledge may not be conscious, that the tradition is fluid. His unlettered state saves him from becoming an automaton. Yet, in this period he is also closer to his originals in themes and possibly in language also than he will ever again be in his experience as a singer. Even the songs that he learns at this time will change as his repertory increases and his competence grows.

This increase in repertory and growth in competence take place in the third and last stage of the learning process. We can easily define its beginning as the point at which he sings his first song completely through for a critical audience, but it is much more difficult to set the other limit. That is a question of when a singer is an accomplished practitioner of the art, a matter to be considered shortly. Let us look more closely at what goes on in the third stage. First the singer learns to sing other songs all the way through. If he has already learned them in part, he finishes the process. But again this does not involve memorizing a text, but practicing until he can compose it, or recompose it, himself.

Our proper understanding of these procedures is hindered by our lack of a suitable vocabulary for defining the steps of the process.⁷ The singers themselves cannot help us in this regard because they do not think in terms of form as we think of it; their descriptions are too vague, at least for academic preciseness. Man without writing thinks in terms of sound groups and not in words, and the two do not necessarily coincide. When asked what a word is, he will reply that he does not know, or he will give a sound group which may vary in length from what we call a word to an entire line of poetry, or even an entire song. The word for "word" means an "utterance." When the singer is pressed then to say what a line is, he, whose chief claim to fame is that he traffics in lines of poetry, will be entirely baffled by the question; or he will say that since he has been dictating and has seen his utterances being written down, he has discovered what a line is, although he did not know it as such before, because he had never gone to school.

While the singer is adding to his repertory of songs, he is also improving the singing of the ones he already knows, since he is now capable of facing an audience that will listen to him, although possibly with a certain amount of patronizing because of his youth. Generally speaking, he is expanding his songs in the way I have indicated, that is, by ornamenting them. This process will be treated in a later chapter, but it will suffice here to say that this is the period in which he learns the rudiments of ornamentation and expansion. The art of expanding the old songs and of learning new ones is carried to the point at which he can entertain his audience for a full evening; that is one of his goals.

Here, then, for the first time the audience begins to play a role in the poet's art. Up to this point the form of his song has depended on his illiteracy and on the need to compose rapidly in the traditional rhythmic pattern. The singers he has heard have given him the necessary traditional material to make it possible for him to sing, but the length of his songs and the degree to which he will ornament and expand them will depend on the demands of the audience. His audience is gradually changing from an attitude of condescension toward the youngster to one of accepting him as a singer.

It is into the world of kafana, informal gatherings, and festival that our young singer steps once he has mastered the singing of a song. Here he learns new songs. The form of his singing is being perfected, and its content is becoming richer and more varied. This audience and this social milieu have had an effect on the length of the songs of his predecessors, and they will have a similar effect on the length of his songs.

We might say that the final period of training comes to an end when the singer's repertory is large enough to furnish entertainment for several nights. Yet it is better to define the end of the period by the freedom with which he moves in his tradition, because that is the mark of the finished poet. When he has a sufficient command of the formula technique to sing any song that he hears, and enough thematic material at hand to lengthen or shorten a song according to his own desires and to create a new song if he sees fit, then he is an accomplished singer and worthy of his art. There are, to be sure, some singers, not few in number, who never go beyond the third stage in learning, who never reach the point of mastery of the tradition, and who are always struggling for competence. Their weakness is that they do not have enough proficiency in formula-making and thematic structure, nor enough talent, to put a song together artistically. Although such singers can show us much about the workings of the practice and of the tradition, it is the finest and longest songs and the most accomplished singers in whom we are interested for comparative purposes in the study of individual singers and individual songs.

The singer never stops in the process of accumulating, recombining, and remodeling formulas and themes, thus perfecting his singing and enriching his art. He proceeds in two directions: he moves toward refining what he already knows and toward learning new songs. The latter process has now become for him one of learning proper names and of knowing what themes make up the new song. The story is all that he needs; so in this stage he can hear a song once and repeat it immediately afterwards — not word for word, of course — but he can tell the same story again in his own words. Sometimes singers prefer to have a day or so to think the song over, to put it in order, and to practice it to themselves. Such singers are either less confident of their ability, or they may be greater perfectionists.

Sulejman Makić, for example, liked to have time to put his song in order. In Parry Text 681, Records 1322-23 (I, pp. 265-266) we can hear his own words: "Nikola: Could you still pick up a song today? Sulejman: I could. N: For example, if you heard me sing a song, let's say, could you pick it up right away? S: Yes, I could sing it for you right away the next day. N: If you were to hear it just once? S: Yes, by Allah, if I were to hear it only once to the gusle. N: Why not until the next day? . . . What do you think about in those two days? Isn't it better to sing it right away than later, when you might forget it after so long a time? S: It has to come to one. One has to think . . . how it goes, and then little by little it comes to him, so that he

won't leave anything out. . . . One couldn't sing it like that all the way through right away. N: Why couldn't you, when it's possible the second or third day afterwards? S: Anybody who can't write can't do it. N: All right, but when you've learned my song, would . . . you sing it exactly as I do? S: I would. N: You wouldn't add anything . . . nor leave anything out? S: I wouldn't . . . by Allah I would sing it just as I heard it. . . . It isn't good to change or to add."

Demo Zogić also gave us information on this point (I, pp. 240-241).

"N: We have heard — we've been in those places in our country where people sing — and some singers have told us that as soon as they hear a song from another singer, they can sing it immediately, even if they've heard it only once, . . . just as it was word for word. Is that possible, Demail? Đ: It's possible. . . . I know from my own experience. When I was together with my brothers and had nothing to worry about, I would hear a singer sing a song to the gusle, and after an hour I would sing his whole song. I can't write. I would give every word and not make a mistake on a single one. . . .

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"N: Does a singer sing a song which he knows well (not with rhymes, but one of these old Border songs), will he sing it twice the same and sing every line? Đ: That is possible. If I were to live for twenty years, I would sing the song which I sang for you here today just the same twenty years from now, word for word."

In these two conversations we have accomplished singers discussing under

tradition. It may truthfully be said that the singer imitates the techniques of composition of his master or masters rather than particular songs.⁶ For that reason the singer is not very clear about the details of how he learned his art, and his explanations are frequently in very general terms. He will say that he was interested in the old songs, had a passion (*merak*) for them, listened to singers, and then, "work, work, work" (*goni, goni, goni*), and little by little he learned to sing. He had no definite program of study, of course, no sense of learning this or that formula or set of formulas. It is a process of imitation and of assimilation through listening and much practice on one's own. Makić was a bit more explicit than some. He said that his teacher would sing a song for him two or three times until he learned it (I, p. 264). Fjuljanin said that he sometimes asked a singer to sing a song for him (I, p. 292). Since the singer hears many songs, he uses the language and formulas that belong to them all; for the accomplished singer whom he has been imitating does not have one set of expressions for one song and another for another, except when there are themes in the one that are not in the other, and even in these cases the formulas and formulaic techniques are the same in all songs.

The second stage ends when the singer is competent to sing one song all the way through for a critical audience. There are probably other songs that he can sing partially, songs that are in process of being learned. He has arrived at a definite turning point when he can sit in front of an audience and finish a song to his own satisfaction and that of the audience. His job may or may not be a creditable one. He has very likely not learned much about "ornamenting" a song to make it full and broad in its narrative style. That will depend somewhat on his model. If the singer from whom he has learned is one who uses much "ornamentation," he has probably picked up a certain amount of that ornamentation too. Whether his first song is fully developed or not, it is complete in its story from beginning to end and will tend to follow the story as he heard it from his master. If, however, and this is important, he has not learned it from one singer in particular, and if the stories of that song differ in the various versions which he has heard, he may make a composite of them. He may, on the other hand, follow one of them for the most part, taking something from the others too. Either way is consistent with the traditional process. One can thus see that although this process should not be described as haphazard, which it is not, it does not fit our own conceptions of learning a fixed text of a fixed song. Already at this second stage, and to an extent also in the first, the singer has found, though the knowledge may not be conscious, that the tradition is fluid. His unlettered state saves him from becoming an automaton. Yet, in this period he is also closer to his originals in themes and possibly in language also than he will ever again be in his experience as a singer. Even the songs that he learns at this time will change as his repertory increases and his competence grows.

This increase in repertory and growth in competence take place in the third and last stage of the learning process. We can easily define its beginning as the point at which he sings his first song completely through for a critical audience, but it is much more difficult to set the other limit. That is a question of when a singer is an accomplished practitioner of the art, a matter to be considered shortly. Let us look more closely at what goes on in the third stage. First the singer learns to sing other songs all the way through. If he has already learned them in part, he finishes the process. But again this does not involve memorizing a text, but practicing until he can compose it, or recompose it, himself.

Our proper understanding of these procedures is hindered by our lack of a suitable vocabulary for defining the steps of the process.⁷ The singers themselves cannot help us in this regard because they do not think in terms of form as we think of it; their descriptions are too vague, at least for academic preciseness. Man without writing thinks in terms of sound groups and not in words, and the two do not necessarily coincide. When asked what a word is, he will reply that he does not know, or he will give a sound group which may vary in length from what we call a word to an entire line of poetry, or even an entire song. The word for "word" means an "utterance." When the singer is pressed then to say what a line is, he, whose chief claim to fame is that he traffics in lines of poetry, will be entirely baffled by the question; or he will say that since he has been dictating and has seen his utterances being written down, he has discovered what a line is, although he did not know it as such before, because he had never gone to school.

While the singer is adding to his repertory of songs, he is also improving the singing of the ones he already knows, since he is now capable of facing an audience that will listen to him, although possibly with a certain amount of patronizing because of his youth. Generally speaking, he is expanding his songs in the way I have indicated, that is, by ornamenting them. This process will be treated in a later chapter, but it will suffice here to say that this is the period in which he learns the rudiments of ornamentation and expansion. The art of expanding the old songs and of learning new ones is carried to the point at which he can entertain his audience for a full evening; that is one of his goals.

Here, then, for the first time the audience begins to play a role in the poet's art. Up to this point the form of his song has depended on his illiteracy and on the need to compose rapidly in the traditional rhythmic pattern. The singers he has heard have given him the necessary traditional material to make it possible for him to sing, but the length of his songs and the degree to which he will ornament and expand them will depend on the demands of the audience. His audience is gradually changing from an attitude of condescension toward the youngster to one of accepting him as a singer.

It is into the world of kafana, informal gatherings, and festival that our young singer steps once he has mastered the singing of a song. Here he learns new songs. The form of his singing is being perfected, and its content is becoming richer and more varied. This audience and this social milieu have had an effect on the length of the songs of his predecessors, and they will have a similar effect on the length of his songs.

We might say that the final period of training comes to an end when the singer's repertory is large enough to furnish entertainment for several nights. Yet it is better to define the end of the period by the freedom with which he moves in his tradition, because that is the mark of the finished poet. When he has a sufficient command of the formula technique to sing any song that he hears, and enough thematic material at hand to lengthen or shorten a song according to his own desires and to create a new song if he sees fit, then he is an accomplished singer and worthy of his art. There are, to be sure, some singers, not few in number, who never go beyond the third stage in learning, who never reach the point of mastery of the tradition, and who are always struggling for competence. Their weakness is that they do not have enough proficiency in formula-making and thematic structure, nor enough talent, to put a song together artistically. Although such singers can show us much about the workings of the practice and of the tradition, it is the finest and longest songs and the most accomplished singers in whom we are interested for comparative purposes in the study of individual singers and individual songs.

The singer never stops in the process of accumulating, recombining, and remodeling formulas and themes, thus perfecting his singing and enriching his art. He proceeds in two directions: he moves toward refining what he already knows and toward learning new songs. The latter process has now become for him one of learning proper names and of knowing what themes make up the new song. The story is all that he needs; so in this stage he can hear a song once and repeat it immediately afterwards — not word for word, of course — but he can tell the same story again in his own words. Sometimes singers prefer to have a day or so to think the song over, to put it in order, and to practice it to themselves. Such singers are either less confident of their ability, or they may be greater perfectionists.

Sulejman Makić, for example, liked to have time to put his song in order. In Parry Text 681, Records 1322–23 (I, pp. 265–266) we can hear his own words: "Nikola: Could you still pick up a song today? Sulejman: I could. N: For example, if you heard me sing a song, let's say, could you pick it up right away? S: Yes, I could sing it for you right away the next day. N: If you were to hear it just once? S: Yes, by Allah, if I were to hear it only once to the gusle. N: Why not until the next day? . . . What do you think about in those two days? Isn't it better to sing it right away than later, when you might forget it after so long a time? S: It has to come to one. One has to think . . . how it goes, and then little by little it comes to him, so that he

won't leave anything out. . . . One couldn't sing it like that all the way through right away. N: Why couldn't you, when it's possible the second or third day afterwards? S: Anybody who can't write can't do it. N: All right, but when you've learned my song, would . . . you sing it exactly as I do? S: I would. N: You wouldn't add anything . . . nor leave anything out? S: I wouldn't . . . by Allah I would sing it just as I heard it. . . . It isn't good to change or to add."

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In these two conversations we have accomplished singers discussing under

guidance the transmission, not of the art of singing, but of songs from one well-trained singer to another. They are also telling us what they do when they sing a song. Here the creative performer speaks. In the case of Đemo Zogić we can test his statements and thus we can learn how to interpret this information that singers can give us about their own art.

Note that both singers express some attitude toward writing. Makić gives the opinion that only a person who can write can reproduce a song immediately; whereas Zogić's boast is that although he can't write he can reproduce a song an hour after he has heard it. In other words, one says that the man with writing is superior; and the other, that he is as good as the man with writing. They reflect the unlettered man's admiration of the lettered, but their statements are inaccurate. Their admiration goes too far, for the man with writing cannot do what they believe he can and what they in actuality can do.

Both singers stress that they would sing the song exactly as they heard it, Zogić even boasting that he would sing the song in the same way twenty years later. Makić indicates that changing and adding are not good, implying that singers do change and add; and Zogić states plainly that two singers won't sing the same song alike. How do we disentangle these contradictions?

Zogić learned from Makić the song under discussion in his conversation, and both versions are published in Volume I of the Parry Collection (Nos. 24-25 and 29). Zogić did not learn it word for word and line for line, and yet the two songs are recognizable versions of the same story. They are not close enough, however, to be considered "exactly alike." Was Zogić lying to us? No, because he was singing the story as he conceived it as being "like" Makić's story, and to him "word for word and line for line" are simply an emphatic way of saying "like." As I have said, singers do not know what words and lines are. What is of importance here is not the fact of exactness or lack of exactness, but the constant emphasis by the singer on his role in the tradition. It is not the creative role that we have stressed for the purpose of clarifying a misunderstanding about oral style, but the role of conservator of the tradition, the role of the defender of the historic truth of what is being sung; for if the singer changes what he has heard in its essence, he falsifies truth. It is not the artist but the historian who speaks at this moment, although the singer's concept of the historian is that of a guardian of legend.

Although Makić's and Zogić's versions of the same song differ considerably, Zogić's version itself changes little in the course of years. It was my good fortune to record this song from him seventeen years later, and it is remarkably close to the earlier version, though hardly word for word. It even still contains a glaring inconsistency in the story which was not in Makić's version.

But when Zogić is not defending himself as a preserver of the tradition, when he is thus freed to speak of the art of singing as such, in other words

when he can talk about someone else's practice, he can be more objective. Then he states that two singers won't sing the same song alike; then he can recognize changes, additions, and mistakes, and give us a clearer picture of what happens in transmission.

And the picture that emerges is not really one of conflict between preserver of tradition and creative artist; it is rather one of the preservation of tradition by the constant re-creation of it. The ideal is a true story well and truly retold.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FORMULA

There came a time in Homeric scholarship when it was not sufficient to speak of the "repetitions" in Homer, of the "stock epithets," of the "epic clichés" and "stereotyped phrases." Such terms were either too vague or too restricted. Precision was needed, and the work of Milman Parry was the culmination of that need. The result was a definition of the "formula" as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea."¹ By this definition the ambiguity of "repetitions" was eliminated; we were henceforth to deal with repeated word groups, not with repeated scenes, although Bowra uses the term "formula" still to apply to both.² At the same time, Parry's definition broadens "formula" to include within its scope more than the repeated epithets. Furthermore, the opprobrium attached to "clichés" and "stereotyped" has been removed.

Students of epic have now willingly applied themselves to the study of the repeated phrases by textual analysis, by counting repetitions, classifying similar phrases and thus extracting the technique of composition by formula manipulation. Yet in following this method they tend to treat all texts alike, whether by the same singer or not, whether sung or dictated, whatever, indeed, the circumstances of their collection may have been. Much has been gained from this type of analysis, and from it surely much more remains to be learned concerning the details of the process in any given tradition. Yet it seems to me that in confining ourselves to this method we tend to obscure the dynamic life of the repeated phrases and to lose an awareness of how and why they came into being. Are we not conceiving of the formula as a tool rather than as a living phenomenon of metrical language? In this chapter we shall attempt to look at the formula not only from outside in terms of textual analysis, but also from within, that is, from the point of view of the singer of tales and of the tradition.

The stress in Parry's definition on the metrical conditions of the formula led to the realization that the repeated phrases were useful not, as some have supposed,³ merely to the audience if at all, but also and even more to the singer in the rapid composition of his tale. And by this almost revolutionary idea the camera's eye was shifted to the singer as a composer and to his problems as such.

At all stages in our musings about oral epic we find it necessary to re-create in our imagination not a general but a specific moment of performance. The singing bard must be our guide; and the singing bard is never a type but an individual. Whenever we say "the singer does this or that," we must make it clear that our statement is based on experience with a specific singer, or on the combined experience of various singers. Our method will be to follow the developing career of the young singer, beginning even from the time when he starts to absorb the tradition by much listening to the songs about him and continuing with each advance of his own flight of song.

It may seem strange that we have very few texts from singers in the earliest stage of apprenticeship, as it were, in their art. But collectors seek the best singers, and the best singers are usually the older men. Their reputation is great; they are brought forward by those whom the collector questions. On occasion a younger singer in his twenties or thirties may be suggested, often because he has a good voice or a fine manner of singing, more rarely because he is a narrator of quality. Yet it should surprise us that it has not occurred to anyone to make a special study of the youngest group. It is a commentary, indeed, on the force of the belief that the songs are set and that younger singers have not had time to memorize a song as well as an older man. Perhaps exposing this belief as false will encourage giving more attention to songs of the youngest singers, imperfect though they may be.

Surely the formula has not the same value to the mature singer that it has to the young apprentice; it also has different values to the highly skilled and to the unskilled, less imaginative bard. We may otherwise think of the formula as being ever the same no matter from whose lips it proceeds. Such uniformity is scarcely true of any element of language; for language always bears the stamp of its speaker. The landscape of formula is not a level steppe with a horizon which equalizes all things in view, but rather a panorama of high mountains and deep valleys and of rolling foothills; and we must seek the essence of formula at all points in the landscape. Moreover, with the penetrating eye of the mind we must look for this essence backward through the centuries which formed the mountains and the valleys. For the singing we hear today, like the everyday speech around us, goes back in a direct and long series of singings to a beginning which, no matter how difficult it may be to conceive, we must attempt to grasp, because otherwise we shall miss an integral part of the meaning of the traditional formula.

Or to use another figure, the formula is the offspring of the marriage of thought and sung verse. Whereas thought, in theory at least, may be free, sung verse imposes restrictions, varying in degree of rigidity from culture to culture, that shape the form of thought. Any study of formula must therefore properly begin with a consideration of metrics and music, particularly as confronted by the young singer first becoming aware of the

demands of his art. Later we shall have to consider the question of why story becomes wedded to song and verse, to ask ourselves what kind of tale finds its expression in these very special methods of presentation. These are not problems that the contemporary singer of tales faces; for he has inherited the answers. The fact of narrative song is around him from birth; the technique of it is the possession of his elders, and he falls heir to it. Yet in a real sense he does recapitulate the experiences of the generations before him stretching back to the distant past. From meter and music he absorbs in his earliest years the rhythms of epic, even as he absorbs the rhythms of speech itself and in a larger sense of the life about him. He learns empirically the length of phrase, the partial cadences, the full stops.

If the singer is in the Yugoslav tradition, he obtains a sense of ten syllables followed by a syntactic pause, although he never counts out ten syllables, and if asked, might not be able to tell how many syllables there are between pauses. In the same way he absorbs into his own experience a feeling for the tendency toward the distribution of accented and unaccented syllables and their very subtle variations caused by the play of tonic accent, vowel length, and melodic line.⁴ These "restrictive" elements he comes to know from much listening to the songs about him and from being engrossed in their imaginative world. He learns the meter ever in association with particular phrases, those expressing the most common and oft-repeated ideas of the traditional story. Even in pre-singing years rhythm and thought are one, and the singer's concept of the formula is shaped though not explicit. He is aware of the successive beats and the varying lengths of repeated thoughts, and these might be said to be his formulas. Basic patterns of meter, word boundary, melody have become his possession, and in him the tradition begins to reproduce itself.

In the months and years of boyhood, not very long indeed after he has learned to speak his own language, the future singer develops a realization that in sung stories the order of words is often not the same as in everyday speech. Verbs may be placed in unusual positions, auxiliaries may be omitted, cases may be used strangely. He is impressed by the special effect which results, and he associates these syntactic peculiarities with the singing of tales. Moreover, the linking of phrases by parallelism, balancing and opposition of word order become familiar to him; the verb, which occurs, for example, just before a syntactic pause, is repeated at the beginning of the next phrase or is balanced by a verb just before the following stop: (The verbs in the passage are italicized.)

De sedimo, da se veselimo,
E da bi nas i Bog veselio,
Veselio, pa razgovorio!

Where we sit, let us make merry,
And may God too make us merry,
Make us merry and give us entertainment!

In these pre-singing years, together with a sense of new arrangements of ideas and the words which express them, the boy's ear records the repetitions

of the sounds of the words. His instinctive grasp of alliterations and assonances is sharpened. One word begins to suggest another by its very sound; one phrase suggests another not only by reason of idea or by a special ordering of ideas, but also by acoustic value.

Thus even before the boy begins to sing, a number of basic patterns have been assimilated in his experience. Their form may not be precise—the precision will come later—but it can be truly said that in this youth the idea of the formula is in process of becoming. What we shall soon designate as melodic, metric, syntactic, and acoustic patterns are forming in his mind.

The chief reason, of course, that the formula does not take precise shape at this stage, is that only the necessity of singing can produce a full-fledged formula. The phenomenon of which it is a manifestation arises from the exigencies of performance. Only in performance can the formula exist and have clear definition. Besides, not all the singers whom the boy hears in his family or community have the same formulas for a given idea or the same manner of treatment of formulas. There is no rigidity in what he hears.

What has been described so far has been an unconscious process of assimilation. Consciously the boy has been thinking of the stories themselves which are related in this unusual way. But when he begins to sing, the manner of presentation comes for a long time to the fore. Then the formula is born for him and his formula habits are acquired.

One of the first problems for the young singer from the very beginning is to learn to play the instrument which accompanies the song. This is not a really difficult task, since most of the instruments which accompany chant are not intricate. In the Yugoslav case, the boy has to learn to bow a one-stringed instrument, the gusle, the range of which is open string plus four fingers, an ambitus of five notes. The rhythm is primary; the grace notes are ornamental. Some older singer may show him how to finger the instrument, or the boy may simply imitate his elders by himself in private. He may make a small gusle for himself, because the grown-up size is too big for his hands, or his father or mentor may make one for him. He imitates the fingering, the melody, and the manner of his elder. Rade Danilović in Kolašin has told us how his father, Mirko, used to put the boy's hand on his own as he fingered the string (Parry 6783).

Thus begins the stage in which the rhythmic impressions of the earlier period of listening are fitted to the restrictions of the instrument and of a traditional melodic line. Usually the rhythms and melodies that the youth learns at this period of initial specific application will stay with him the rest of his life. He may acquire others from singers of great reputation or striking manner of performance, but they will be in addition to the earlier ones or, at most, they will only modify, not replace them.

At the same time, the boy is trying to sing words. He remembers the phrases he has heard, sometimes whole lines, sometimes only parts of lines.

From now on, for a considerable period of time, he will listen to his elders with more attention to the lines and phrases. He will pick them up from any singer whom he hears. As he practices singing by himself he realizes the need for them and he uses them, sometimes adjusting them more or less consciously to his own needs, sometimes unconsciously twisting them. They are not sacred, but they are useful. In this way he acquires the formulas of his elders and establishes his own formula habits. He is doing what all singers before him have done.

The most stable formulas will be those for the most common ideas of the poetry. They will express the names of the actors, the main actions, time, and place. Thus in the line, *Vino pije Kraljeviću Marko*, "Kraljević Marko is drinking wine," *Kraljeviću Marko* presents the hero in a complete second-half-line formula. Kraljević, properly a title, "king's son," or "prince," is treated as a patronymic. In another line, *Sultan Selim rata otvorio*, "Sultan Selim declared war," the title "Sultan" makes it possible to name Selim in a four-syllable initial formula. The young singer learns that patronymics, titles, and indications of city of origin, for example, *od Orašca Tale*, "Tale of Orašac," are of great use in naming his heroes. Epithets are not so frequent in this tradition because the shortness of the line does not present a need for them that cannot be fulfilled by title or patronymic. They come into usage either when there is no title or because the make-up of the line does not allow a long patronymic, or when the singer wishes to express the actor in a whole line, frequently a vocative, as in *Sultan Selim, od svijeta sunce*, "O Sultan Selim, light [sun] of the world."

The most frequent actions in the story, the verbs, are often complete formulas in themselves, filling either the first or the second half of the line, as in *Govorio Kraljeviću Marko*, "Kraljević Marko spoke." If the verb is a syllable short, a conjunction often completes the formula, as in *Pa zasede svojega dorata*, "Then he mounted his brown horse." The length of the action formula is naturally in part determined by whether the subject is expressed in the same line and by the length of the subject. The singer finds that he can say, "Marko said," in the first half of the line with subject expressed, *Marko kaže*, or in the second half line, *govorio Marko*, or in the whole line, *govorio Kraljeviću Marko*. Obviously here the length of the subject is influenced by the length of the verb. If the subject is not expressed, if the singer wants to say merely, "he said," *govorio* does very well for the first half of the line; the addition of a conjunction and the personal pronoun come to his aid in the second half line, *pa on govorio*, as does also very frequently a change of aspect of the verb, *pa odgovorio*, "then he replied." But in order to accomplish this in a whole line, the singer must repeat the idea in the second half of the line: *Govorio, riječ besedaše*, "He spoke, he uttered a word." This example illustrates that the object of a verb forms an integral part of the verb formula, and shows as well how and why pleonasm is so common in oral style. Many of the formulas for

the second half of the line are made up of verb and object: *rata otvorio*, "opened war"; *knjigu napisao*, "wrote a letter." By a change of tense this last formula is often expressed in the first half of the line as *Knjigu piše*, "writes a letter." In both cases the other half of the line is left for the subject.

A third common set of formulas indicates time when the action occurs. A typical example, with Homeric overtones, is: *Kad je zora krila pomolila*, "When dawn put forth its wings," or *Kad je zora i bijela dana*, "When it was dawn and white day," or *Kad je sunce zemlju ogrijalo*, "When the sun had warmed the earth."

The singer must learn another category of common formulas indicating the place where an action occurs. "In Prilip," for instance, can be expressed in the first half of the line *U Prilipu*, in the second half of the line by *u Prilipu gradu*, and in the whole line by *U Prilipu gradu bijelome*, "In Prilip, that white city." Similarly, "in the tower" can be expressed in the first half of the line by *A na kuli*, with the conjunction *a* as a filler; in the second half line by *na bijeloj kuli*, "in the white tower," and in the whole line by *Na bijeloj od kamena kuli*, "In the white tower of stone."

The formulas represented by the preceding examples are the foundation stone of the oral style. We have seen them from the point of view of the young singer with an essential idea to express under different metrical conditions. Their usefulness can be illustrated by indicating the many words that can be substituted for the key word in such formulas. For example, in the Prilip formulas above, any name of a city with a dative of three syllables can be used instead of Prilip: *u Stambolu*, *u Travniku*, *u Kladaši*. Instead of *a u kuli*, "in the tower," one can say *a u dvoru*, "in the castle," or *a u kući*, "in the house." These formulas can be grouped together in what Parry, when studying the traditional epithets in Homer, termed "systems."⁵ It is often helpful to write them as follows:

$$a u \begin{cases} kuli \\ dvoru \\ kući \end{cases}$$

Such a substitution system expresses graphically the usefulness and the relationship of a group of formulas.

A style thus systematized by scholars on the foundation of analysis of texts is bound to appear very mechanical. Again we may turn to language itself for a useful parallel. The classical grammar of a language, with its paradigms of tenses and declensions, might give us the idea that language is a mechanical process. The parallel, of course, goes even further. The method of language is like that of oral poetry, substitution in the framework of the grammar. Without the metrical restrictions of the verse, language substitutes one subject for another in the nominative case, keeping the same verb; or keeping the same noun, it substitutes one verb for another. In studying the

patterns and systems of oral narrative verse we are in reality observing the "grammar" of the poetry, a grammar superimposed, as it were, on the grammar of the language concerned. Or, to alter the image, we find a special grammar within the grammar of the language, necessitated by the versification. The formulas are the phrases and clauses and sentences of this specialized poetic grammar. The speaker of this language, once he has mastered it, does not move any more mechanically within it than we do in ordinary speech.

When we speak a language, our native language, we do not repeat words and phrases that we have memorized consciously, but the words and sentences emerge from habitual usage. This is true of the singer of tales working in his specialized grammar. He does not "memorize" formulas, any more than we as children "memorize" language. He learns them by hearing them in other singers' songs, and by habitual usage they become part of his singing as well. Memorization is a conscious act of making one's own, and repeating, something that one regards as fixed and not one's own. The learning of an oral poetic language follows the same principles as the learning of language itself, not by the conscious schematization of elementary grammars but by the natural oral method.

Any thorough grammar of a language notes exceptions to "rules," dialectal differences, "irregular" nouns and verbs, idioms — in fact those divergences from the systematized rules that arise in usage and in the normal organic change constantly in operation in a living spoken language. If we analyze oral epic texts that are recorded from actual performance rather than texts taken from dictation and normalized to some extent, we can observe the oral poetic language in its pure state, with its irregularities and abnormalities arising from usage. Then it is clear that the style is not really so mechanical as its systematization seems to imply.

The value to us of drawing up a number of substitution systems is that we immediately begin to see that the singer has not had to learn a large number of separate formulas. The commonest ones which he first uses set a basic pattern, and once he has the basic pattern firmly in his grasp, he needs only to substitute another word for the key one. The actual basic formulas which any given singer may learn first would be practically impossible to determine; it would vary from singer to singer. Probably if the first song learned by the singer concerned Marko Kraljević, Marko's name and the varieties of it used in making lines would set the basic pattern for similar names, which would fall into a four-syllable plus two-syllable pattern. The fundamental element in constructing lines is the basic formula pattern. There is some justification for saying indeed that the particular formula itself is important to the singer only up to the time when it has planted in his mind its basic mold. When this point is reached, the singer depends less and less on learning formulas and more and more on the process of substituting other words in the formula patterns.

Although it may seem that the more important part of the singer's training is the learning of formulas from other singers, I believe that the really significant element in the process is rather the setting up of various patterns that make adjustment of phrase and creation of phrases by analogy possible. This will be the whole basis of his art. Were he *merely* to learn the phrases and lines from his predecessors, acquiring thus a stock of them, which he would then shuffle about and mechanically put together in juxtaposition as inviolable, fixed units, he would, I am convinced, never become a singer. He must make his feeling for the patterning of lines, which he has absorbed earlier, specific with actual phrases and lines, and by the necessity of performance learn to adjust what he hears and what he wants to say to these patterns. If he does not learn to do this, no matter how many phrases he may know from his elders, he cannot sing. He does this in performance, not before an audience at first, of course, but by himself. This style has been created and shaped in performance; it has been so with all singers since time immemorial, and it is so with him. The habit of adjustment, the creation of lines in performance, this is acquired from the moment the boy begins to try to sing.

What is meant by "adjustment" can best be comprehended in terms of the establishment of various kinds of patterns and rhythms of expression. These the boy has picked up in his pre-singing years and he now finds his own means of forming them naturally and readily. We may begin again with the melodies of the singing itself. The boy learns that there is a special pattern for the opening of a song, with its own beginning and cadence. There is at least one oft-repeated melodic pattern for sustained narrative. Sometimes in the course of his life the singer acquires from one to three variations of this most important pattern. It is quite possible that he has discovered that by changing the melody he rests his voice. On occasion, but by no means regularly, the melodic pattern shifts for dramatic emphasis. There is a modified version of the singer's main pattern for stopping before a rest and another somewhat modified version for reprise after a pause. The song also has its concluding cadence. An example of these patterns can be seen in the appendix to Volume I of *Serbo-croatian Heroic Songs* in the musical transcriptions of the "Captivity of Đulić Ibrahim," sung by Salih Ugljanin in Novi Pazar with music notations from the records by Béla Bartók.

From these musical examples one can see also the rhythmic patterns, generally trochaic. Here the play or "adjustment" between melody and meter can be observed in operation. We note the inadequacy of our texts without music in presenting a picture of epic song. The line is syllabic, or better, syllabo-tonic, a trochaic pentameter with an invariable break after the fourth syllable. It is simple, yet subtlety has entered from the interplay between melody and text. There is a tension between the normal accent and the meter. The accent of the meter does not always fall on the normal prose accent,⁶ nor are all five stresses of the same intensity. The ninth sylla-

ble is the most prominent, has the strongest beat, and is held longest; the seventh and eighth are the weakest. The tenth may be lost entirely, completely swallowed, or hopelessly deformed. It may be carried over to the beginning of the following line,⁷ or it may be an ordinary short beat. The first and the fifth syllables tend to be of the same intensity because they are the initial beat in the line and the first after the break; but when a proclitic stands in these positions, as is very common at the beginning of the line and not unusual in the fifth syllable, the first and third feet are sometimes iambs rather than trochees, and the melody follows this rhythm. Occasionally the first foot, sometimes even the second or third foot, is a dactyl in the regular practice of some singers; and they have sets of formulas adjusted to this rhythm.⁸ In these cases the extra syllable is often supplied by a word without meaning.

It is noteworthy also that Serbocroatian maintains a pitch accent, rising or falling, and pays much attention to long and short vowels. The subtlety of the rhythms is, of course, further complicated by these characteristics of the language. The metric differences here demonstrated required at an early stage an adjustment of formula by the singer, or perhaps were called into being because of an adjustment. Individual variations in melody and rhythm are greater than one might expect, and only when the actual melodies of recorded songs are published will this fact be properly realized.⁹ Some idea of the range of variation can be obtained from sample lines from three singers (see pages 39-41).*

Under the pressure of rapid composition in performance, the singer of tales, it is to be expected, makes occasional errors in the construction of his lines. His text line may be a syllable too long or a syllable too short. This does not trouble him in performance, and his audience scarcely notices these lines, since they have an understanding of the singer's art and recognize these slight variations as perfectly normal aberrations. The singer himself adjusts his musical line to the text by making a dactyl out of a trochee or by holding one syllable for two rhythmical beats rather than for one.

An additional set of patterns, related to the rhythmic patterns, which the singer must learn to control in these first years, is that of word boundaries, or more properly, length of accentual groups (that is, a word plus proclitics and enclitics). This need is especially important to the singer because the feeling for the mid-line break is very real. An accentual group cannot, and in practice only very rarely does, bridge the fourth and fifth syllables, although neither the melodic nor rhythmic patterns show this. When listening to the song one hears no pause at the break. The end of the line is very clearly marked, and run-on lines are few. In the first half of the line the most common word-boundary patterns are 2-2, 1-3, and 4: *vino pije*, "he

* A. "The Captivity of Đulić Ibrahim," sung by Salih Ugljanin (I, pp. 437, 439)
 B. "Osman Delibegović and Pavičević Luka," sung by Avdo Međedović (Parry 12389)
 C. "Junaštvo Đerđelez Alije," sung by Avdo Međedović (Parry 12379)

INTRODUCTION

The musical score consists of three systems of three staves each, labeled A, B, and C. Each system represents a different singer's performance of the same formula. The notation includes bass clefs, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. Various tempo markings are present: *J-146*, *J-108*, *J-120 accel. al J-138*, and *J-145*. There are also markings for *accel.* and *alleg.*. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped with beams and slurs. Some notes have accents (^) above them. Small numbers in boxes (e.g., 6, 3, 4) are placed below the notes, possibly indicating syllable counts or specific rhythmic values. The systems are arranged vertically, with A at the top, B in the middle, and C at the bottom of each group.

acc. ----- $\text{♩} = 160$

LINE 1

VOCE

Ej! — De se-di - mo, aj! da se ve - se - ljim-[o]

GUSLE

ca 78

VOCE

Oj, Ri - hi-ječ pr-va Bo-že ni po-mo-zi

GUSLE (probably)

$\text{♩} = 168$

VOCE

Oj, Ri - ječ pr-va Bo-že ni po-mo - zi

GUSLE

LINE 12

VOCE

(12) Sto - ji ze - mlje | cr - ne tut - lja | vi - na (13)

GUSLE

VOCE

Što su to-me | ve - li - kom ze-ma-nu

GUSLE

VOCE

K'o na ku - či | lo - še do - ma - či - ce

GUSLE

drinks wine"; *pa govori*, "then he says"; *Kraljeviću, or a vodi ga*, "and he leads him" (where *a* is proclitic and *ga* is enclitic). In the second half of the line the most common patterns are 2-4, 4-2, and 3-3: *jurīš učinio*, "he made an attack"; *zametnuše kavgu*, "they started strife"; and *besedi serdaru*, "he says to the sirdar." Most of the formulas that the singer hears are in these patterns, and he will make new ones on the basis of them.

Closely allied to the word-boundary patterns, to no small extent helping to form them, are the syntactic patterns of the formulas. The order in which the parts of speech appear, hence the relation of ideas, is involved. In a style in which actions or things are added one to another in series, the conjunction plays a large role, and the most common patterns for the beginning of the line naturally begin with a conjunction. In fact conjunction-verb in the first half line is very frequent. For example:

A česar se na me naljutijo,
Pa na mene naljetjemu dao,
Pa me danas surgun učinijo,¹⁰
A prati me k tebe u Bagdatu,
(II, No. 1:1194-1197)

And the emperor was angered at me,
And he inflicted outlawry upon me,
And today he has exiled me,
And sent me to you in Bagdad,

There are many initial formulas beginning with a conjunction, especially when an uncompounded form of the verb is used, for example, the narrative present, the imperfect, or the aorist. In the case of compound tenses, the auxiliary appears in the first half of the line and the participle or infinitive in the second. In the latter half of the line one finds most of the noun-epithet combinations: *knjigu šarovitu*, "well-writ letter"; *visoku planinu*, "high mountain"; *gradu bijelome*, "white city."¹¹

A tasevi od srme bijele,
A sindiri od žežena zlata.
Ej, Spanula bagdatska kraljica;
(II, No. 1:1143-1145)

The cups were of white silver,
And the chains were of 'fined gold.
Ej, Then appeared the Queen of Bagdad.

Such are the syntactic patterns which the boy now begins to store in his experience and to use as a basis for new phrases.

The second half of the line is dependent not only syntactically on the first, but is also to some extent suggested by the sound patterns with which the line opens. There are a number of lines that have become set through the pattern of internal rhyme: "Kud god *škita*, za Aliju *pita*," "Wherever he wanders, he asks for Alija"; "*Zveknu* halka, a *jeknu* kapija," "The knocker resounded, and the gate echoed." The importance of alliteration is apparent in such a line as "Kazaše ga u gradu Kajniđu," "They pointed him out in the city of Kajniđa," in which the k-g alliteration is arranged in chiasmic order, k-g-g-k. Nothing would seem to have hindered the singer from using *u Kajniđu gradu* in the second half of the line, but he appears to have preferred the chiasmic order, in part also perhaps under the influence of the a-u-a-u assonance in the middle of the line. The singers have a sensitivity to proportion and completeness of form even within the limits of a single line. Whatever feeling for such sound patterns the boy has absorbed in his pre-singing days is crystallized when he begins to perform.

This period in his training is pre-eminently one of learning to produce lines. Part of the process is accomplished by remembering and using phrases heard from other singers. This constitutes one element in the continuity of oral epic style. The phrases help to establish in the singer's experience a series of patterns, and these patterns are also an element in the continuity of the style. At the same time, by necessity, because he does not remember all the phrases which he needs, he is forced at the moment of his private performances to form phrases on the basis of the patterns. Since they follow the traditional patterns, they are indistinguishable from the other phrases that he has remembered, and may unconsciously be actually identical with them. To him the first matter of importance is certainly not the source

of the phrase but the phrase itself at the critical time. For anyone, however, who is trying to understand how a particular style comes into being, it is necessary to note that there are two ways by which a phrase is produced; one is by remembering it, the other is through creating it by analogy with other phrases; and it may well be impossible to differentiate between the two. While both remembering and creating (in the sense of making, not necessarily "originating") play important roles, the latter, creating, is especially significant. The singer cannot, and does not, remember enough to sing a song; he must, and does, learn to create phrases. Hence the most important elements in the style are the basic patterns which we have illustrated, and which are established at this period.

In the course of time and of much practice, the need for a particular phrase arises over and over again. Whether it is one remembered from other singers or one created anew (and perhaps re-created several times as the need recurs), a phrase becomes set in the poet's mind, and he uses it regularly. Then, and only then, is the formula really born. The remembered phrase may have been a formula in the other singer's songs, but it is not a formula for our singer until its regular use in his songs is established. The remembered phrases from other singers are more numerous, of course, in the early years of training, and decrease gradually as the ability to make phrases is developed, although both processes continue during the singer's lifetime. The phrases for the ideas most commonly used become more securely fixed than those for less frequent ideas, with the result that a singer's formulas are not all of the same degree of fixity. Indeed, the creating of phrases continues always as well. I believe that we are justified in considering that the creating of phrases is the true art of the singer on the level of line formation, and it is this facility rather than his memory of relatively fixed formulas that marks him as a skillful singer in performance.

The very fact that the practice of oral narrative song has endured so long is proof enough that it can absorb new ideas and construct new formulas. But the process of building formulas is so quiet and unspectacular and so slow that it is almost imperceptible. Since the patterns of thought and the rhythm of presentation remain unchanged, the new words in the formulas are not noticed except when the ideas behind them are in striking contrast to the surroundings in which they occur. Thus proper names, recent foreign or international words, and the inventions of a mechanized age, when they find their way into the songs, as they do and must, provide us with the means of studying new formulas. It would be nonsense to suppose that the singer in whose songs these novelties are found is their originator. He may be, but the chances are against it.

New formulas are made by putting new words into the old patterns. If they do not fit they cannot be used, but the patterns are many and their complexity is great, so that there are few new words that cannot be poured into them. Salih Ugljanin's song of the Greek War (I, No. 10), a song

which he claimed to have made up himself, contains some new ideas. He uses the word *Avropa* in the sense of "the rulers of Europe," *Avropa me odi zatvorila*, "Europe imprisoned me here," and *Avropa me* is only a variation of *Ibrahim me* or *Mustafa me*. The Queen of England, although a newcomer, is perfectly at home in the line *Misir daše ingliskoj kraljici*, "They gave Egypt to the Queen of England"; we are familiar with both the *moskovska kraljica*, "the Queen of Moscow," and the *bagdatska kraljica*, "the Queen of Bagdad." When, however, we come upon *Ti načini sitne teligrafe*, "Prepare short telegrams," the newness strikes us in the face. Salih is singing of a new age and he has simply substituted the new means of communication for the old type of official document, the *bujruntija*. *Ti načini sitne bujruntije* was his model. But when he tries to use the three-syllable nominative singular *teligraf* he runs into difficulty. The nominative singular *bujruntija* has four syllables, and the other most common missives, *knjiga* and *ferman*, have two. Formulas for communication have been built with either four- or two-syllable words in mind. He is thinking of *Od sultana brže knjiga dođe*, or *Od sultana brže ferman dođe*, "A ferman came swiftly from the sultan," when he sings *Od sultana brže teljigraf dođe*. In the last appearance of the word in his song he has solved the problem and found the right pattern: *Pa kad takav teljigraf dolazi*, "When such a telegram arrived."

Even in a song of olden times new words have crept in. Avdo Međedović uses terms that he must have picked up when he was in the army. In Parry Text 12389, the action of which, at least in Avdo's imagination, is placed in the days of Sulejman the Magnificent, we find *Moja braćo, moje dve kolege*, "My brothers, my two colleagues" (line 415), *O kolega, Fetibegoviću*, "O my colleague, Fetibegović" (line 2376), *Ja sam na to riskirao glavu*, "It is for that that I risked my life" (line 1570), *A na njima careva niforma*, "They were wearing imperial uniforms" (line 4085), and *Sve soldata, sve pograničara*, "All soldiers, all men of the border" (line 6794). One can thus observe that the Yugoslav tradition was still very much alive in 1935 and still receptive to new ideas and new formulas.¹²

We have seen a bard's formulas coming into existence from the earliest period of his singing and we have noted the significant fact that they are not all alike either in their genesis or in their intensity of "formulicity." We have also suggested that the formulas themselves are perhaps less important in understanding this oral technique than the various underlying patterns of formulas and the ability to make phrases according to those patterns.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, we must hasten to assert that in speaking of "creating" phrases in performance we do not intend to convey the idea that the singer seeks originality or fineness of expression. He seeks expression of the idea under stress of performance. Expression is his business, not originality, which, indeed, is a concept quite foreign to him and one

that he would avoid, if he understood it. To say that the *opportunity* for originality and for finding the "poetically" fine phrase exists does *not* mean that the *desire* for originality also exists. There are periods and styles in which originality is *not* at a premium. If the singer knows a ready-made phrase and thinks of it, he uses it without hesitation, but he has, as we have seen, a method of making phrases when he either does not know one or cannot remember one. This is the situation more frequently than we tend to believe.

* * *

Thus far we have attempted to show the way in which the formulaic style enters into the consciousness of a young singer as he learns to use it for the telling of tales. Such a living art, so closely united to individual experience, cannot help but leave its peculiar stamp upon the songs and their texts. Because of this mark left upon them we can with a high degree of certainty determine whether any text that is before us was formed by a traditional bard in the crucible of oral composition.

Formula analysis, or even more generally textual analysis, must begin with a scrutiny of a sample passage in order to discover the phrases in it that are repeated elsewhere in as much of the work of an individual singer as there is available. In doing this we are following Parry's example. He took the first twenty-five lines of the *Iliad* and of the *Odyssey* and underlined those groups of words which he found repeated elsewhere in Homer. One needs only to glance at his charts¹³ to see how many formulas there are in those samples. Chart I does the same for the Yugoslav material.

From Volume II of the Parry Collection we have chosen a passage of fifteen lines from the "Song of Bagdad," which was sung for phonograph recording by Salih Ugljanin in Novi Pazar in 1934 (II, No. 1). The singer was an old man at the time of recording and an accomplished performer with a large repertory, which he claimed included one hundred songs. His style, therefore, is not that of a beginner. The sample has been selected from the middle of the song rather than from the very beginning, because many of the Yugoslav songs open with an invocation which can be used for any song. Most Yugoslav epics are shorter than the Homeric poems, and we have had to use several of Salih's songs for corroborative purposes, rather than just two, in order to have sufficient material for analysis.

We have attempted, moreover, to choose a passage that did not contain one of the more frequently recurring themes such as those of letter-writing or of the arrival of an army on the field of assembly. In other words, the sample has been selected with an eye to making the experiment as valid as possible and to anticipating any objection which might be brought that the passage is of a sort that would be more formulaic by the very nature of its position or of its contents. For a similar reason, we have not admitted as

supporting evidence for establishing a formula any repetition which occurs in the same passage in the two other versions of the same song by the same singer which are included in the material analyzed.

CHART I¹⁴

	<u>Jalah reče,/zasede đogata;</u>		With "By Allah" she mounted her horse;
790	<u>Đogatu se/konju zamoljila:</u> ----- "Davur, đogo,/krilo sokolovo! ----- Četa ti je/o zanatu bila;	790	She implored the white horse: "Hail, whitey, falcon's wing! Raiding has been your work;
	----- Vazda je Mujo/četom četovao. ----- Vodi mene/do grada Kajniđa!		Ever has Mujo raided. Lead me to the city of Kajniđa!
795	<u>Ne znam đadu/ka Kajniđi gradu."</u> ----- Hajvan beše,/zborit' ne mogaše, ----- Tek mu svašta/šturak umijaše. ----- Ode gljedat'/redom po planini. ----- Uze đadu/ka Kajniđi gradu,	795	I know not the road to the city of Kajniđa." It was a beast and could not talk, But the steed knew many things. He looked over the mountains And took the road to the city of Kajniđa,
800	<u>Pa silježe/planinama redom,</u> ----- Pa ga eto/strmom niz planinu, ----- I kad polju/slježe kajničkome, ----- Kome stati/polje pogljediti, -----	800	And crossed one range after another, Until lo he rushed down the mountain, And when he descended to the plain of Kajniđa, Were anyone to look out over the plain,

In Chart I we have underlined the four-, six-, and ten-syllable phrases found more than once in the perusal of about 12,000 lines from the same singer. The chart is designed to show that in relation to 12,000 lines of diverse material from a given singer a certain number of phrases in a given passage are formulas. Twelve thousand lines is the approximate length of the longest of songs and will serve as a basis for comparison with the Homeric poems and others. These 12,000 lines constitute eleven different songs, three of which are recorded on the phonograph discs, four recited,

but not sung, for the records, and four taken down from dictation. They give a good cross section of the more than 30,000 lines available from this singer.

From the chart we can see at a glance the number of repeated phrases that without any hesitation can be called "formulas." These phrases we know by demonstration that the singer has come in time to use regularly. Even within the limited number of lines used in the experiment, that is, 12,000, one quarter of the whole lines in the sample and one half of the half lines are formulas. It is most significant that there is no line or part of a line that did not fit into some formulaic pattern. In certain instances the pattern was a very common one and there was no difficulty in proving the formulaic character of the phrase. In a few instances the evidence was not so abundant, but it was still sufficient to make one feel certain that the phrase in question was formulaic. A number of the formulaic expressions could very easily have been classified as formulas, had we relaxed our established principles and standards. For example, *davur đogo* in line 791 misses being a formula because the evidence lists only *davur šuran* and *davur doro*. But *đogo*, *šuran*, and *doro* are all terms for horses. We could thus have easily increased the number of formulas.

Had we gone beyond 12,000 lines, the number of formulas would have continued to mount, and had we included material from other singers it would have increased still further, until it became clear that almost all, if not all, the lines in the sample passage were formulas and that they consisted of half lines which were also formulas. In other words, the manner of learning described earlier leads the singer to make and remake phrases, the same phrases, over and over again whenever he needs them. The formulas in oral narrative style are not limited to a comparatively few epic "tags," but are in reality all pervasive. There is nothing in the poem that is not formulaic.

Moreover, the lines and half lines that we call "formulaic" (because they follow the basic patterns of rhythm and syntax and have at least one word in the same position in the line in common with other lines or half lines) not only illustrate the patterns themselves but also show us examples of the systems of the poetry. Thus, although the beginning of line 790 was not found repeated exactly in the material analyzed, it belongs in a system of initial formulas made up of a three-syllable noun in the dative followed by the reflexive. Another example of the system is *junaku se*. The system would be written:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{đogatu} \\ \text{junaku} \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{l} \text{đogatu} \\ \text{junaku} \end{array}} \right\} \text{se}$$

Similarly, in line 791 *davur đogo* belongs in a system with

$$\text{davur} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{doro} \\ \text{šuran} \end{array} \right.$$

Any two-syllable word for a horse can fit into this system with *davur*. Finally, around the second half of the first line in the chart a lengthy system can be formed:

zasednu zasedem zasede zasedi zaseo	}	đogata
		kočiju
		dorata
		paripa
		hajvana
		maljina
		binjeka
		mrkova
		vranina
		menzila
šturika		
žekana		
eždralja		

Since the singer learns his art from other singers and in his turn influences them, there are many formulas which are used by a large number of singers. For example, the following formula, line 789 from Chart I, is to be found in the songs of other singers from Novi Pazar:¹⁵

Jalah reče, zasede đogata.
"By Allah," she said, she mounted the white horse.

Sulejman Fortić

Jalah reče, posede đogina.
(II, No. 22:433)
Jalah reče, posede hajvana.
(II, No. 23:308)

"By Allah," he said, he mounted the white horse.
"By Allah," he said, he mounted the animal.

Đemail Zogić

Jalah reče, sede na dorina.
(II, No. 24:746)
Jalah reče, posede hajvana.
(II, No. 25:31)

"By Allah," he said, he mounted the brown horse.
"By Allah," he said, he mounted the animal.

Sulejman Makić

I to reče, posede dorata.
(Parry 677:714)

And he said this, he mounted the brown horse.

Alija Fjuljanin

A to reče, zasede hajvana.
(Parry 660:435)

And he said this, he mounted the animal.

One should not conclude, of course, that these singers learned these formulas from Salih or he from them. Salih learned them bit by bit from the singers whom he heard, and they from all whom they heard, and so

forth back for generations. It would be impossible to determine who originated any of them. All that can be said is that they are common to the tradition; they belong to the "common stock" of formulas.

Although the formulas which any singer has in his repertory could be found in the repertories of other singers, it would be a mistake to conclude that all the formulas in the tradition are known to all the singers. There is no "check-list" or "handbook" of formulas that all singers follow. Formulas are, after all, the means of expressing the themes of the poetry, and, therefore, a singer's stock of formulas will be directly proportionate to the number of different themes which he knows. Obviously singers vary in the size of their repertory of thematic material; the younger singer knows fewer themes than the older; the less experienced and less skilled singer knows fewer than the more expert. Even if, individually, every formula that a singer uses can be found elsewhere in the tradition, no two singers would at any time have the same formulas in their repertories. In fact, any given singer's stock of formulas will not remain constant but will fluctuate with his repertory of thematic material. Were it possible to obtain at some moment of time a complete repertory of two singers, no matter how close their relationship, and from that repertory to make a list of the formulas which they know at that moment of time, there would not be complete identity in the two lists.

What is true for individuals is true also for districts. Differences of dialect and vocabulary, of linguistic, social, and political history will be reflected in thematic material and in formulas. The songs of Christian groups will have themes and formulas distinctive from those of Moslem groups, and *vice versa*. The formula stock of the Serbocroatian speaking district as a whole will be the sum total of the formulas known to its singers, but not all the singers will know all the formulas. One is ever being forced to return to the individual singer, to his repertory of formulas and themes, to the quality of his practice of the traditional art. One must always begin with the individual and work outwards from him to the group to which he belongs, namely to the singers who have influenced him, and then to the district, and in ever enlarging circles until the whole language area is included.

There would, however, be a large group of formulas known to all singers, just as in any speech community there are words and phrases in the language known to and used by all the speakers in that community. Even as these represent the most common and most useful ideas of the community, so too the stock of formulas known to all practitioners of the art of traditional narrative poetry represents the most common and most useful ideas in the poetry. Again they can be correlated with the thematic material. This common stock of formulas gives the traditional songs a homogeneity which strikes the listener or reader as soon as he has heard or read more than one song and creates the impression that all singers know all the same formulas.

The question whether any formula belongs to the common stock of formulas cannot be decided merely on the basis of its relative frequency in

the songs of any given singer. In order to find the answer we must know its distribution among the singers of the tradition. For work of this sort a formula index is necessary, but this is a labor of many hands over many years. Only by compiling such an index could we determine with any degree of accuracy the frequency and distribution of formulas and the number of different formulas within a tradition. It would readily show us what formulas comprise the common stock of two or more individual singers, of a given district, or of a group of districts, and of the language tradition as a whole. This would do for formula study what the great motif indexes have done for thematic study.

Once a singer has solved a particular problem in verse-making, does he attempt to find any other solution for it? In other words, does he have two formulas, metrically equivalent, which express the same essential idea? Parry has shown how "thrifty" Homer was in this respect. Bowra has indicated that this thrift is not found in other oral poetry.¹⁶ What facts can we deduce from our Yugoslav songs in the Parry Collection?

In order to test the possibilities, we have taken one of the formulas in Chart I and traced the instances in some nine thousand lines of Salih Ugljanin's songs of the essential idea of the formula. The purpose was to discover whether Salih had only one formula to express that idea under any one set of metrical conditions or whether he had several. This would show his "thrift," if any. The essential idea chosen was that of the second half line, "zasede đogata" (line 789), "he [or she] mounted his [or her] white [or black, or gray, etc.] horse." Horses play a very large part in Yugoslav traditional poetry, and the action of mounting them is frequently mentioned in Salih's songs.

In 3-3 rhythm in the last half line, with another clause ending at the break, and with a singular verb, Salih uses the following:

Jalah reče, zasede đogata. (II, No. 1:789; No. 2:912)	"By Allah," he said, he mounted his white horse.
Jalah rekni, zasedi đogata! (II, No. 1:1103)	Say "By Allah" and mount your white horse!

Under the same conditions but in 4-2 rhythm, he uses:

Jalah reče, zasednuo vranca. (II, No. 18:795)	"By Allah," he said, he mounted his black horse.
--	--

This change of rhythm was necessitated by the use of a two-syllable word for horse. In 2-4 rhythm, with a clause ending at the break, and with a plural verb, he uses:

Pa skočiše, konje zasedoše. (II, No. 17:323)	Then they leaped up, they mounted their horses.
---	---

Here the first question arises. Since *zasednuo vranca* and *konje zasedoše* both contain a four-syllable word and a two-syllable word, why is the

rhythm of one 4-2 and of the other 2-4? There is a sound answer to this question. *Zasednuo vranca* is used in conjunction with *jalah reče* in the first half line, and the balanced chiasitic pattern (object-verb, verb-object) of this common whole-line formula is in Salih's mind, so that *jalah reče, zasednuo vranca* follows along in the series with all the other instances of this full line. On the other hand, as we shall see shortly, when Salih uses *konje* he invariably puts it in this position in the line, and he is also following a different syntactic pattern. He has in mind such lines with *skočiše* as *Svi skočiše, seljam prifatiše*, "They all leaped up, they received the greeting" (II, No. 2:248), where another balance of verbs prevails, namely subject-verb, object-verb, as well as internal rhyme. When the subject of the verb "to mount" is expressed, it must be put in the first half line:

Svi konjici konje zasedoše. (II, No. 1:880)	All the horsemen mounted their horses.
A svatovi konje zasedoše. (II, No. 4:1282)	And the wedding guests mounted their horses.
Ta put hajduk šajku zasednuo. (II, No. 11:593)	Then the hajduk mounted his mare.
A Mujo svoga pojaše đogata. (II, No. 11:694)	And Mujo mounted his white horse.
Jalah Suka sede na menzila. (II, No. 2:99)	With a cry to Allah, Suka mounted his post horse.

The two instances of *konje zasedoše* here bear out what we said in the preceding paragraph. Salih always uses *konje* in this rhythmic pattern. But with *šajku zasednuo* we think back to *zasednuo vranca* and wonder why he did not say *zasednuo šajku*, following the same pattern in the second half of the line. First, however, we see that the syntactic pattern of the whole line is different from that of *jalah reče, zasednuo vranca*, the chiasitic arrangement of which has already been indicated. Second, *šajku* usually occurs in this penultimate position in Salih's singing, especially in the common noun-epithet formula, *šajku bedeviju*, in the second half of the line. Added, then, to the pull of a whole-line syntactic pattern of subject, object, verb, is the influence of other formulas with *šajku*. In fact, such formulas begin in line 575, *I sa šnjime šajku bedeviju*, and continue with *Helj da ostane šajka u aharu* (576), *No najprijem šajku izvodičeš* (580), and *Pa odriješi šajku bedeviju* (584). In one of these cases the syntactic pattern of the second half line is the same as *šajku zasednuo*; namely, object, verb, *šajku izvodičeš* (580). Third, the two preceding lines end with the syntactic pattern, object, verb, and the rhythmic pattern, 2-4: *Jedno hebe zlata napunili* (591), and *Pro konja hebe proturiše* (592). Fourth, the vowel pattern discloses a chiasitic order in the repetition of aj-u in the third to the sixth syllables, a-u-aj-u-aj-u-a-e-u-o. *Šajku* nicely repeats *hajduk* in the play of vowel sounds. *Zasednuo šajku* had no chance of breaking into such an aggregation of forces.

With *Mujo svoga pojaše đogata*, the principle of vowel alternation is again operative. Although *pojaše đogata* and *zasede đogata* mean essentially the same thing and the metrical conditions are identical, the back vowels of the first half of the line and the "o-a" pattern of *svoga*, repeated in *đogata* at the end of the line, call forth *pojaše* rather than *zasede*. We can see that the two formulas are not real equivalents in the phonological context. The next line, *Jalah Suķa sede na menzila*, is a peculiar one. *Sede na menzila* and *zasede menzila* both have the same meaning, although they are not true alternates, because the rhythm is different; the former is 2-4 and the latter, 3-3. The second half of the previous line was *careva fermana*, "imperial firman"; the 3-3 might have called forth a 3-3 in the following line, but not necessarily. The intrusion of the subject *Suķa* in the first half of the line has caused a change in the line. *Suķa* has taken the place of *reće*; the singer has in his mind *jalah reće* and also *Suķa reće* and *Suķa sede*. The two-syllable *sede* plays not only its own role but also that of *reće*, with the same vowel arrangement. The line is an irregular and awkward one. In line 242 of the same song, *E! Jala, sede, krenu řa Budimu*, "With a cry to Allah, he mounted, and set out for Budim," one also finds the omission of the verb *reće*, and further adjustment in the line because of its absence. So far we have found no true alternates.

When a modifier is added to the idea "horse" or when an adverbial idea is to be added to the idea "mounted," the verb moves to the first half line. Or to state it in another way, if the verb is put in the first half line, some modifier must be added to the idea "horse" or an adverbial idea must be added to the idea "mounted." Thus we have:

Pa zasede krilata đogata. (II, No. 1:1121)	Then he mounted his winged white horse.
Pa posede řajku bedeviju. (II, No. 11:627)	Then he mounted his bedouin mare.
Eh, zasede njezina đogata. (II, No. 2:862)	Well, she mounted her white horse.
Zasedoše konje u avliju. (II, No. 4:1538)	They mounted their horses in the courtyard.
Pa zaseše konje na jaliju. (II, No. 17:702)	Then they mounted their horses on the bank.
Zasedoše dva konja menzila. (II, No. 1:248)	They mounted two post horses.

Here there is only one violation of the principle of thrift. *Posede* and *zasede* are interchangeable. There is so slight a difference in meaning between these two perfective aspects of the verb that they can be considered as identical. Very likely the alliteration of *posede* with *pa* and *bedeviju* has played a role in its choice. Thus far there has been variation, but no clear-cut departure from the principle of thrift.

There are three more instances of mounting in the material studied:

E! Jala sede, krenu řa Budimu.
(II, No. 2:242)
Đulić sede svojega dorata.
(II, No. 4:1541)
A gotove konje zasednuše.
(II, No. 13:112)

With a cry to Allah, he mounted and departed for Budim.
Đulić mounted his brown horse.
They mounted their ready horses.

In the first line *Jalah reće zasede đogata* has been telescoped into the first half of the line by omitting the verb "said" and the idea "horse," and by using the uncompounded verb *sede*, "he sat." Strictly speaking, the "essential idea" is not the same as the one that we are investigating, because the idea "horse" is omitted, but even if it had been expressed, as in the line which follows it above, it would not break the principle of thrift, because the uncompounded verb is forced on the singer by the preceding two-syllable word. The following line bears this out. Nor does *konje zasednuše* affect our thesis. It is the same as *konje zasedoše* except that it uses the momentary aorist instead of the simple aorist. The singer undoubtedly had in his mind the verb *krenuše*, "they departed," in the third and fourth syllables of the following line, so that the last two syllables of one line rhyme with the third and fourth of the following line.

When our judgment concerning thrift takes into consideration the acoustical context, there are few if any instances where substitution of one word for another even if they have the same essential meaning and metrical value is justified.

There has been a tendency to come to conclusions from an examination of all the songs in a collection regardless of whether they are from the same singer or even from the same district. Under such circumstances one would scarcely expect to find thrift. A *singer's* thriftiness is significant; that of a district or tradition less so (if it exists) for our purposes.

Indeed, it seems to me that the thriftiness which we find in individual singers and not in districts or traditions is an important argument for the unity of the Homeric poems. Homer's thriftiness finds its parallel in the individual Yugoslav singer, but not in the collected songs of a number of different singers.

Our brief excursion into the principle of thrift in actual oral composition among Yugoslav singers has served to emphasize the context of the moment when a given line is made. In order to understand why one phrase was used and not another, we have had to note not only its meaning, length, and rhythmic content, but also its sounds, and the sound patterns formed by what precedes and follows it. We have had to examine also the habits of the singer in other lines, so that we may enter into his mind at the critical creative moment. We have found him doing more than merely juggling set phrases. Indeed, it is easy to see that he employs a set phrase because it is useful and answers his need, but it is not sacrosanct. What stability it has comes from its utility, not from a feeling on the part of the singer that it

cannot or must not be changed. It, too, is capable of adjustment. In making his lines the singer is not bound by the formula. The formulaic technique was developed to serve him as a craftsman, not to enslave him.

In the foregoing, for the sake of clarity, we have spoken only of single lines and their parts. In actuality, lines cannot be isolated from what precedes them. The singer's problem is to construct one line after another very rapidly. The need for the "next" line is upon him even before he utters the final syllable of a line. There is urgency. To meet it the singer builds patterns of sequences of lines, which we know of as the "parallelisms" of oral style. As we have said, some sense of these is gained in the pre-singing period, but when the singer begins to practice and to train himself the patterns here too must become specific. Moving from one line to another is not merely, perhaps not even correctly, the adding of one ready-made phrase, or group of ready-made phrases, to another. Oddly enough, because of the variety of patterns for sequences of lines there is greater flexibility possible and greater skill is needed than in pure juxtaposition of formulas. The complexity and artistry of the result are often surprising to anyone who feels that illiterate singers can produce only simple structures. The passages below, chosen almost at random, will serve to illustrate the potentialities of the style.

In South Slavic song, the end of a line is marked by a pause for breath, by a distortion of the final syllable or syllables, frequently by an ornamental turn in the musical accompaniment. Since it is the close of a unit of composition, it is clearly emphasized. Very rarely indeed does a thought hang in the air incomplete at the end of the line; usually we could place a period after each verse. Of 2400 lines of Yugoslav epic analyzed, 44.5 per cent showed no enjambement, 40.6 per cent showed unperiodic enjambement (that is, the sense was complete at the end of the line, but the sentence continued) and only 14.9 per cent involved necessary enjambement. The greatest number of exceptions in Yugoslav epic involve a preceding subordinate clause, or a line consisting of a noun in the vocative case plus modifiers,¹⁷ and even in these cases a thought, even if it is not the main thought of the sentence, has been presented whole by the end of the line. This absence of necessary enjambement is a characteristic of oral composition and is one of the easiest touchstones to apply in testing the orality of a poem. Milman Parry has called it an "adding style"; the term is apt.

In rapid, almost staccato, style the singer may add together a series of actions, moving the story quickly forward: (I have italicized the verbs.)

Kud god *škita* za Aliju *pita*.
Kazaše ga u gradu Kajniđu.
Kad tatarin pod Kajniđu *dode*,
Pa eto ga uz čaršiju *prođe*,
Pa *prilazi* novom bazdrđanu,
Te *upita* za Alino dvore.

Wherever he went, he asked for Alija.
They said he was in the city of Kajniđa.
When the messenger came to Kajniđa,
He passed along the main street,
Then he approached the new shopkeeper,
And he asked for Alija's court.

Bazdrđan mu dvore *ukazao*.

Kad tatarin na kapiju *dode*,
Pa *zadrma* halkom na vratima.
Zveknju halka a *jeknu* kapija.
(II, No. 3:108-117)

Or he may break in on a series of actions with description, providing at one and the same time a more leisurely tempo and a richness of detail. The following passage has an almost Homeric touch:

Tevabije *brže* u podrumu;
Izniješe takum na *dogata*,

Vas u srmi i u čisto zlato,
Pa konjičko *preturu* oruže,

S obe strane dvije puške male
Sa dva grla a zrna četiri.
Preložu hi surom međedinom,
Da mu rosa ne kvari oruže.
Pa *preložu* pulu abrahiju;

Zlatna pera biju niz dogata.

Vezlje su je četiri robinje
U Dubrovnik za četir' godine.
Pa *udriše* đema nemačkoga.

Ej! Stasa *đoga*, *žešće bit'* ne more!
(II, 1:737-750)

The shopkeeper pointed out the court to him.

When the messenger came to the gate,
He beat with the knocker on the door.
The knocker rang and the gate resounded.

The retainers went quickly to the stable;
They brought forth the trappings on the white horse,

All in silver and in pure gold.

Then they placed on the weapons for fighting from horseback,

On each side two small pistols

With two barrels which take four bullets.

Over them they placed a brown bearskin,
That the dew might not rust the arms.

Then they placed on a blanket with sequins;

Its golden tassels beat against the white horse's flank.

Four slave girls had woven it

In Dubrovnik for four years.

Then they put a German bit into the horse's mouth.

The white horse stood there, he could not have been prouder or fiercer!

This last line, beginning with a shout and sung in a different and cadential rhythm, marks the close of the passage. We have italicized the series of verbs which carry along the actions of caparisoning the horse, and also the lines which break this forward movement by providing ornamental, descriptive details that add color and poetry to the actions themselves. The vivid adornments may be added one to another: to the idea of the sequined blanket is added that of the golden tassels striking against the horse; then the blanket is made more glorious by the story of its creation by four slave girls; and finally, this detail is heightened by the fact that they were in the famed city of Dubrovnik and that they worked on this blanket for four years! When we reach the last line of the passage, we cannot but admit that the white horse "could not have been prouder and fiercer!" The method of addition seems simple; yet in the hands of a skillful singer it has a cumulative effect that is telling.

The total impact, however, is due to more than the adding style. The connections between the parts of lines and between lines and between groups of lines is far more intricate and subtle than that. The singer has a

strong sense of balance which is shown by the patterns of alliteration and assonance and by the parallelisms.¹⁸ Take the first passage, for example. Note the positions of the italicized verbs. There is internal end rhyme in *škita* and *pita* in the first line; and an internal initial rhyme in *zveknū* and *jeknu* of the last line. The play of "k" alliteration, caused, no doubt, by the proper name *Kajniđa* is clear in the first three lines, which have two "k's" in each line. This same "k" alliteration recurs at the end of the passage, namely in the last three lines, where the key word is *kapija*, "the gate"; line 115 has two, line 116, one, and line 117, four "k's." The central part of the passage, lines four to seven, is dominated by "p," "b," and "z" alliteration around the dominant word *bazdrđan*. In lines three and four the verb comes at the end of the line; in lines five and six the verb is in second position after the conjunction; in lines seven and eight the verb is again at the end of the line; and in lines nine and ten, as in lines one and two, the verb is in the first half line. Moreover, in lines three and four, *dođe* and *prođe* rhyme, and the second half of line four is syntactically parallel to that of line three: *Pod Kajniđu dođe* and *uz čaršiju prođe*. Both have the pattern: preposition, noun, verb. This pattern is repeated in line eight, *na kapiju dođe*. Indeed, line eight is the same as line three in the first half of the line as well.

The singer in this passage is guided for his acoustic patterns not only by the alliteration but by assonance also. The vowel patterns are set by *Aliju*, *Kajniđu*, and *kapiju*. "A-i" and its opposite "i-a" predominate: but "a-u" plays a role also, influenced by the key words as well as by *gradu* and *bazdrđanu*. Its opposite, "u-a," is found, but is not so important. *Dođe*, *prođe*, and *dvore* establish an "o-e" pattern, which modulates via "u-o-e" and "o-o-e" to an opposite, "e-u" in the last line. But this pattern is subsidiary to the "a" and "a-i" patterns. The following table, columns one and two, will make the chief alliterations and assonances apparent at a glance.

K-D, G-Đ, sK-T-, Z-, -I-- , P-T-	u-o-I-A-a-A-I-ju-I-A	2-2, 4-2
K-Z-š, G-, -, Gr-D-, K-n-Đ-	a-a-e-a-u-a-u-AJ-I-u	4, 3-3
K-D, T-T-r-n, P-D, K-n-Đ-, D-Đ-	a-a-A-I-o-AJ-I-U-O-E	1-3, 4-2
P-, -T-, G-, -Z, č-rš-, PR-Đ-	a-e-o-a-u-A-I-JU-O-E	1-3, 4-2
P-, PR-I-Z-, n-v-m, B-ZD-Đ-n-	A-I-A-I-o-o-A-R-A-U	1-3, 2-4
T-, -P-T-, Z-, -l-n-, Dv-r-	e-u-I-A-A-A-I-O-O-e	1-3, 4-2
B-ZD-Đ-n, m-, Dv-r-, K-Z-	A-R-A-U-o-e-u-a-a-o	4, 2-4
K-D, T-T-r-n, n-, K-P-- , D-Đ-	a-a-A-I-A-A-I-JU-O-E	1-3, 4-2
P-, Z-D-m-, h-lK-m, n-, Vr-T-m-	a-a-r-a-a-o-a-A-I-A	1-3, 2-4
Zv-Kn-, h-lK-, -, -Kn-, K-P--	e-u-a-a-a-je-u-A-I-JA	2-2, 3-3

The singer is also influenced by the rhythmic and word-boundary patterns as he moves from line to line. The analysis of this passage continues, in the third column, with a list of rhythmic sequences.

The alternation of the patterns of the second half of the lines is worthy of particular notice. After the parallelism of 1-3, 4-2 in lines three and four of the passage, there follows a series of 2-4 alternating with 4-2, which is

not broken until the 3-3 of the last line. The pattern is too persistent and regular to be accidental. Moreover, it forms a nice counterpoint to the syntactic parallelisms; there is, indeed, a kind of syncopation between the syntactic parallelisms and the word-boundary patterns. Lines three and four are parallel both in respect to word-boundary patterns and syntactic patterns, but whereas the first half of five and six are both syntactically and rhythmically parallel, the second halves are 2-4 and 4-2 respectively, following an alternation beginning in line four with a 4-2 pattern. One has, therefore:

.....dođe	4-2
.....prođe	4-2
.....prilazi.....	2-4
.....upita.....	4-2
.....ukazao	2-4
.....dođe	4-2
.....zadrma.....	2-4

The syntactic and rhythmic parallelism of lines three and four modulates into a pattern of syntactic and rhythmic opposition in lines four and five, six and seven, eight and nine, at the same time that syntactic parallelism is kept between five and six, seven and eight. Had Ugljanin been a literate poet who sat down with pen in hand to devise these lines with their inner balances and syncopations, he could not have done better. One can even fancy the overliterate "interpreter of literature," innocent of Salih's ignorance of such matters, extolling the syncopation as the artful intent of the poet to indicate the zigzag search of the messenger for Alija!

A perfectly natural consequence of building passages by syntactic parallelisms and acoustic patterns is that passages so built tend to have a comparative stability, or better, a continuity in time both in the habit of the single singer and, to a lesser degree, in the current of a tradition. Just as formulaic lines with internal rhyme or with a striking chiasmic arrangement have a long life, so couplets with clearly marked patterns persist with little if any change. For example:

Bez eđelja nema umiranja,
Od eđelja nema zaviranja.
(II, No. 24:631-632)

Without the fated hour there is no dying,
From the fated hour there is no escape.

or:

A zečki je polje pregazio,
A vučki se maši planinama.
(II, No. 24:41-42)

Like a rabbit he crossed the plain,
Like a wolf he ranged along the mountains.

It seems preferable to keep such couplets in a class by themselves and not to call them formulas, reserving that term for the components of a single verse. Some singers, however, have a tendency to sing in couplets, and in

their songs the cadence really comes at the end of the second line; with them it would be perfectly defensible to extend the formula to the couplet.

There are, in addition, larger groups of lines which the singer is accustomed to use often, and through habit they are always found together. The repetition of these groups is sometimes word-for-word exact, sometimes not. Often enough the order of the lines is different. But these clusters of formulas or of lines, which are frequently associated together and are recurrent, also mark one of the characteristic signs of oral style.¹⁹ They are useful to the singer; for they emerge like trained reflexes. The example (in Chart II) from Zogić's favorite song about the rescue of the children of the bey by Bojičić Alija will illustrate. The first passage is from a version sung and recorded in 1934, and the second is the parallel passage in the dictated version of the same year.

CHART II

Pa proklinje careva fermana:

"Bor ubijo careva fermana!
Ferman care od Stambola sprema,

Oprema ga Alibegu mome,
Pa mi bega traži u Stambolu.

Hasi mu se narod učinio,

Nit' mu porez ni vergiju daje,

Nit' mu asker ni mazapa daje,

Da bi l' malo narod umirijo.

Od fermana nema varakanja.

Pa kad begu ferman degdisao,

Beg se spremi na bijelu kulu,

Na njegova široka dorina,

Isprati' ga do dimir kapije.
Ode beže preko polja ravna,

A zečki je polje pregazio,

A vučki se maši planinama,

Dok preskoči dvije tri planine,"

(II, No. 24: 26-43)

I proklinje careve fermene:

"Ferman care od Stambola sprema,

Pa mi bega traži u Stambolu.

Hasi mu se narod učinijo;

Nit' mu porez daje ni vergiju,

Nit' mu asker daje ni mazapa,

Da bi l' kako narod umirijo.

Od fermana nema varakanja.

Kad mu begu ferman degdisao,

Beg se spremi na bijelu kulu,

A pripasa silah i oružje,
I opremi široka dorata.

Navali mu pusat i saltanet,
Jalah reče, poscede hajvana,

Pa ga nagna preko polja ravna.

Oh zečki je polje pregazijo,

A vučki se maši planinama,

Preturijo dvije tri planine,"

(II, No. 25: 18-35)

CHART II, TRANSLATION

Then she cursed the imperial firman:

"God destroy the imperial firman!
The sultan sent the firman from Stambol,
He sent it to my Alibey,
And he sought my bey in Stambol.
The people were in revolt against him;
Neither tax nor tribute do they give him,
Neither soldier nor sailor do they give
him,
That he might quiet the people a little.
There is no avoiding a firman.
And when the firman reached the bey,
The bey prepared himself in his white
tower;

And mounted his broad-backed chestnut
horse,

I accompanied him to the iron gate.
The bey departed across the level plain.
Like a rabbit he crossed the plain,
Like a wolf he ranged along the moun-
tains,
Until he had leaped over two or three
mountains."

How persistent such a "run" may be can be seen from the same passage sung for the records in 1951, seventeen years after the two excerpts in Chart II.

Pa proklinje careva fermana:
"Bog ubijo careva fermana,
Što ni care ferman opremijo!"
Pa mi traži Alibega mlada.
Traži bega care u Stambolu.

From *Hasi mu se* through the line *Na njegova široka dorina* in Chart II the 1951 text is word-for-word the same as the 1934 sung text in the first column above. Then it continues:

Krenu beže preko polja ravna.

The next two lines are the same in all three texts. And the last line in 1951 is:

Dok preturi dvije tri planine.
(Lord 200:21-37)

And she cursed the imperial firmans:

"The sultan sent the firman from Stambol,
And he sought my bey in Stambol.
The people were in revolt against him;
Neither tax do they give him nor tribute,
Neither soldier do they give him nor
sailor,
That he might somehow quiet the people.
There is no avoiding a firman.
When the firman reached the bey,
The bey prepared himself in his white
tower,
And girded on his belt and arms,
And prepared his broad-backed chestnut
stallion.
He put on him his arms and trappings,
With a cry to Allah he mounted his beast,

And he drove him across the level plain.
Like a rabbit he crossed the plain,
Like a wolf he ranged along the moun-
tains,
He passed over two or three mountains."

Then she cursed the imperial firman:
"God destroy the imperial firman,
Which the sultan sent to us!"
He sought my young Alibey.
The sultan in Stambol sought the bey.

The bey set out across the level plain.

Until he passed over two or three moun-
tains.

Another excellent example of a cluster of formulas, or a "run," is afforded by the following six lines from Ugljanin's colorful description of the hero Tale and his horse:

Na kulaša sedla ni samara,	On the mouse-gray horse was neither saddle nor pack-carrier,
Sem na kula drvenica gola.	But only a bare wooden frame on the mouse-gray.
S jedne strane topuz od čeljika; On ga tiče, on mu se spotiče.	From one side (hung) a steel mace; It struck the horse and caused him to stumble.
A na Tala od jarca čakšire, Dlake spolja; sva koljena gola. (II, No. 1:627-632)	Tale was wearing goatskin trousers, The hairy side out; his whole knee was bare.

This description is word-for-word the same in the song, "Ženidba Čejvanović Meha" (II, No. 12:485-490).

If one takes two texts of the same song, as we have above, and underlines the verses that are common to both, one discovers a characteristic picture. There will be a series of lines unmarked followed by a series of underlined verses with occasional small breaks perhaps, followed in turn by another "clear" spot. If a singer sings a song many times the underlinings, as in Zogić's case, will be many, but this will not be the case with a song infrequently sung. One obtains thus a photograph of the individual singer's reliance on habitual association of lines and of the degree to which habit has tended to stabilize, without fixing or petrifying, passages of varying length. One might well contrast, for example, the comparative stability of Zogić's passage from his favorite song with the fluctuation and sparseness of underlining in the following passage (Chart III) from Halil Bajgorić's song of Alijaga Stočević, sung for the records in 1935 and again for the records in 1950 at Stolac, Hercegovina.

CHART III

	1935	1950
	Razbolje se Stočević Alija	Razbole se Stočević Alija
	Usred Stoca grada kamenoga.	Usred Stoca grada bijeloga.
	-----	-----
	Pa boluje za punu godinu. Vazda misle age Stolačani, Da j' Alija svijet mijenijo.	
5	Pa boluje za dvije godine, -----	Te boluje za dvij' godine dana. -----
	Pa boluje i treću godinu. Vazda misle age Stočevljani, Da j' Alija i umiro davno.	

1935

1950

		Bože mili, na svemu ti fala! No Alija nikoga ne ima, Samo imade sestru svoju Fatu. Niko ne zna u bijelu gradu, Da li Alija boluje al' ne boluje. Neko misli da ga tuka nema, 10 Da je Alija izgubijo glavu. To se čudo na daleko čulo. Za to začu crni Arapine
10	Za to začu sivi Arapine	-----
	Preko sinja mora debeloga, -----	Preko mora sinja debeloga, -----
	Pa on jaše svoju bedeviju, A crna je kako gavran crni,	
		Da je umro Stočević Alija, 15 I zakuči sebe i kobilu, I ovako junak progovara: "Hajte, sič' ću Stocu kamenome, Tome Stocu na Hercegovinu. Ima tamo ljepih devojaka, 20 Kako čujem u bijelu Stocu, A danas nema nikakova junaka, Da će meni stanut' na mejdanu. Ja ću sići u polje Vidovo. U njemu ću čador razapeti, 25 I nametnut' namet na vilajet, Svaku nojcu po jalovu ovcu, I po kab'o preljete rakije, Sedam oka crvenoga vina, Rujna vina od sedam godina, 30 I ljubiću svaku nojcu po jednu devojkju. Kad se svane i ograde sunce, Ja je oca i materi spremam, Ali drugu do večera tražim." Što govori Arapine crni, 35 On je tako isto učinijo, Te zapuči sebe i kobilu, I on vodi četiri sejiza, Što mu nose skute i rukave. Silan Arap pa se posilijo. 40 'Oće Arap da mejdana traži, 'Oće Arap da devojke ljubi, 'Oće Arap pa da vina pije, 'Oće Arap i rakiju da pije, 'Oće Arap da je junak na mejdanu. 45 Eto ga kamenome Stocu. -----
	Pa eto ga Stocu kamenome.	
15	Dođe Arap u Vidovo polje. (Parry 6697: 1-15)	(Lord 83: 1-45)

CHART III, TRANSLATION

- Stočević Alija fell ill
Midst Stolac, stony city.
He was ill for a full year.
Ever the aghas of Stolac think
5 That Alija has changed worlds.
He was ill for two years,
And he was ill also a third year.
Ever the aghas of Stolac think
That Alija has long since died.
- Stočević Alija fell ill
Midst Stolac, white city.
- And he was ill for two years of days.
- Dear God, thanks to Thee for all things!
- 5 But Alija has no one,
Except his sister Fata.
No one knows in the white city,
Whether Alija is ill or not.
Some think that he is not there,
10 That he has lost his life.
That marvel was heard afar.
A black Arab heard of this
Across the sea, dark blue, deep,
- 10 A dark Arab heard of this
Across the dark blue sea, the deep,
And he mounted his bedouin mare,
Black as a black raven she was.
- That Stočević Alija had died,
15 And he secured himself and his mare,
And thus the hero spoke:
"Come, I shall go to stony Stolac,
To that Stolac in Hercegovina.
There are beautiful maidens there,
20 As I hear in white Stolac,
And today there is no hero,
To meet me in single combat.
I shall go to Vidovo plain.
On it I shall pitch my tent,
25 And impose tribute on the province,
Every night a gelding sheep,
And a bucket of fine brandy,
Seven pounds of ruddy wine,
Red wine seven years old,
30 And every night I shall love a maid.
When it dawns and the sun rises,
I shall send her to her father and
mother,
But I shall seek another by evening."
What the black Arab said,
35 The same he did,
And he secured himself and his mare,
And he took with him four squires,
Who carried his sleeves and train.
The mighty Arab strengthened his
might.

- 40 The Arab will seek single combat,
The Arab will seek to love maidens,
The Arab will seek to drink wine,
The Arab will seek to drink brandy
too,
The Arab will seek to be a hero in
combat.
- 45 Lo, here he is in stony Stolac.

And lo, here he is in stony Stolac.
15 The Arab came to Vidovo plain.

It is clear that Bajgorić is actually re-creating the song with little reliance on habitually and frequently sung passages. The importance of these observations for the comparatist lies in their possible application to divergent manuscripts of the same song which we may be fortunate enough to have from medieval or ancient times. The answer to the question of how the divergences arose may possibly be found in some cases in the fact that one is dealing with two oral texts rather than with a text modified by a scribe or by a second poet working from an already written text.

All singers use traditional material in a traditional way, but no two singers use exactly the same material in exactly the same way. The tradition is not all of one mold. We can differentiate individual styles in the epic technique of oral verse-making. The significance of this for the Homeric songs is clear. It should be apparent that if we make proper use of our knowledge gained from testing the Yugoslav sample, we should be able at some time to answer with some degree of certainty the question of whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are by the same singer.

We have three texts from Zogić (all of the same song), two from 1934 and one from 1951, totalling 3495 lines, and from Makić four texts (all of different songs) from 1934, totalling 2873 lines. One could be sure that these two groups are by different singers, in spite of many similarities, by noting that the formula series consisting of conjunction, plus *evo* or *eto*, plus a personal pronoun in the genitive, for example, *pa eto ga*, is used only twice by Zogić but twenty-two times by Makić.

Zogić	Makić
Kad eto je hanka na kapiju (II, No. 24:370)	Kad eto ga jedna sirotinja (II, No. 26:585)
Pa eto je kafezli odaje (Lord 200:157)	Pa eve ga šarena kafaza (26:31)
<i>closely related:</i>	Pa eve ga na odaju dođe (26:36)
Ėto ti je kafezlji odaji (II, No. 24:649)	Pa eve ga na planinu dođe (26:582)
Ėto ti ga kafezlji odaje (Lord 200:734)	A eve ga muhur sahibija (26:8)
	E eve ga đadi dolazijo (26:584)

- Ej eve ga do Bagdata pride
(26:597)
 Pa eve ga na kapiju side
(27:39)
 Eh, eve ga kod vezira dođe
(27:429)
 Helj eve ga kralje Rakocija
(27:144)
 Pa eve je kod devljeta stigla
(27:268)
 Pa evo ga među đamovi[ma]
(27:17)
 Pa eve ga boja najgornjega
(28:772, 29:325)
 I eve je na noge skočila
(28:14)
 Pa eve je u avliju side
(29:94, 128)
 Pa eve ga do kapije dođe
(29:361)
 Pa eve ga kod kočije dođe
(29:548)
 I eve ga pijanoj mehani
(29:508)
 I eto ga poljem zelenijem
(29:545)
 I eto je na kapiju prođe
(29:129)
closely related:
 On, eve ga pod ravnu Semen[tu]
(27:336)

The use of this formula in the material from the two singers is a clear and statistically measurable mark of a difference between the two men.

Another distinguishing mark between the same two singers is the form of the couplet expressing the idea "he who was nearby looked at the ground; he who was farther off pretended not to hear." Zogić says:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Ko je bliže, ka zemlji gledaše,
Ko je dalje, čini se ne čuje.
(II, No. 24:463-464, 588-589; 25:297-299; Lord 200:440-441) | He who was nearby looked at the ground,
He who was farther off pretended not to hear. |
|---|--|

In No. 25 he inserts the line *Kako raste trava na zavojke*, "To see how the grass was growing in spirals" between the two lines of the couplet. Makić's form of the couplet is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Ko bi dalje, čini se ne čuje,
Ko bi bliže, zemlji pogleduje.
(II, No. 29:260-261) | He who was farther off pretended not to hear,
He who was nearer looked at the ground. |
|---|--|

The two lines are reversed, the aorist is used instead of the present, *ka* is omitted in the second line, and an aspect of the verb *gledati* is used which allows rhyme between *pogleduje* and *čuje*. Although we have only one instance of this couplet from Makić, it is of the kind that becomes fixed in a singer's usage, and one can be certain that he would not change it. These are but samples to illustrate one kind of distinguishing characteristic in individual formula styles.

* * *

The poetic grammar of oral epic is and must be based on the formula. It is a grammar of parataxis and of frequently used and useful phrases. Usefulness in composition carries no implication of opprobrium. Quite the contrary. Without this usefulness the style, and, more important, the whole practice would collapse or would never have been born. The singer's mode of composition is dictated by the demands of performance at high speed, and he depends upon inculcated habit and association of sounds, words, phrases, and lines. He does not shrink from the habitual; nor does he either require the fixed for memorization or seek the unusual for its own sake. His oft-used phrases and lines lose something in sharpness, yet many of them must resound with overtones from the dim past whence they came. Were we to train our ears to catch these echoes, we might cease to apply the clichés of another criticism to oral poetry, and thereby become aware of its own riches.

For while I have stressed usefulness and necessity in composition as essential considerations in studying formulas and the whole formulaic style, it may well be that these characteristics belong to the preservation and development of that style and of the formula rather than to their origins. It is certainly possible that a formula that entered the poetry because its acoustic patterns emphasized by repetition a potent word or idea was kept after the peculiar potency which it symbolized and which one might say it even was intended to make effective was lost — kept because the fragrance of its past importance still clung vaguely to it and kept also because it was now useful in composition. It is *then* that the repeated phrases, hitherto a driving force in the direction of accomplishment of those blessings to be conferred by the story in song, began to lose their precision through frequent use. Meaning in them became vestigial, connotative rather than denotative. From the point of view of usefulness in composition, the formula means its essential idea; that is to say, a noun-epithet formula has the essential idea of its noun. The "drunken tavern" means "tavern." But this is only from the point of view of the singer composing, of the craftsman in lines.

And I am sure that the essential idea of the formula is what is in the mind of the singer, almost as a reflex action in rapid composition, as he makes his song. Hence it could, I believe, be truly stated that the formula not only is stripped to its essential idea in the mind of the composing singer,

but also is denied some of the possibilities of aesthetic reference in context. I am thinking especially of what might be called the artistically weighted epithet: what later literary critics find "ironic" or "pathetic." Indeed one might even term this kind of criticism "the pathetic fallacy" in that it attributes to an innocent epithet a pathos felt only by the critic, but not acknowledged or perhaps even dreamed of by either the poet or his audience. Being part of the tradition, they understand its characteristics and necessities. Nevertheless, the tradition, what we might term the intuitions of singers as a group and as individuals who are preserving the inherited stories from the past—the tradition cannot be said to ignore the epithet, to consider it as mere decoration or even to consider it as mere metrical convenience. The tradition feels a sense of meaning in the epithet, and thus a special meaning is imparted to the noun and to the formula. Of course every adjective and epithet can be said to do this, but I am not thinking in this case about the surface denotative meaning of the adjective, but rather of the traditional meaning, and I would even prefer to call it the traditionally intuitive meaning. For it is certain that the singer means on the surface "drunken tavern" to mean a tavern in which men drink and become drunk, but it could well be argued that the epithet is preserved in the tradition because it was used in stories where the tavern was the symbol for an entrance into the other world and the drinking involved is the drinking of the cup of forgetfulness, of the waters of Lethe, and that the drunkenness involved is not that of the ordinary carousel, but is itself a symbol for consciousness in another world, perhaps even death. This meaning comes to it from the special, peculiar purpose of oral epic song at its origin, which was magical and ritual before it became heroic.

This sense of "drunken" becomes clear when one follows the various stories of Marko Kraljević and his brother Andrija, for example, in which Andrija is lured by a tavern maid into her tavern, where he is made drunk by a band of Turks and then killed. Some of the variants have him asking for water rather than wine because he has been contending with his brother to determine which could stand thirst the longer; and Andrija breaks a taboo imposed by his brother in that he dismounts from his horse although instructed not to do so, and enters the tavern. Other variants have Marko reporting his brother's death to their mother according to the elaborate instructions given by the dying Andrija, and saying that Andrija has fallen in love with a girl in a far-off country who has given him of the waters of forgetfulness so he will not return. This last is from our earliest version in the sixteenth century; other examples can be found in the songs in Volume I of the Parry Collection.²⁰

Webster may well be correct in regard to his tracing of the meaning of formulas, such as "ox-eyed Hera" and "bright-eyed Athene" to cult songs,²¹ although it is not entirely clear what he means by them. These epithets do seem to refer to the epiphanies of the goddesses and thus to strengthen the

power of the invocation of the goddess by the repetition of the goddess in several different ways, that is to say, not only by invoking her by her name but also by her epiphany. I think we are safe in assuming that the repetition was there in two forms originally, not for the sake of meter, nor for the sake of convenience in building a line, but rather for the sake of redoubled prayer in its hope of surer fulfillment. The metrical convenience, or even better, the metrical necessity, is probably a late phenomenon, indispensable for the growth of epic from what must have been comparatively simple narrative incantations to more complex tales intended more and more for entertainment. This was a change concomitant with the gradual shift toward the heroic and eventually the historic. It is quite likely that the later stages could not have developed until the formula became a compositional device; yet because of its past it never could become merely a compositional device. Its symbols, its sounds, its patterns were born for magic productivity, not for aesthetic satisfaction. If later they provided such satisfaction, it was only to generations which had forgotten their real meaning. The poet was sorcerer and seer before he became "artist." His structures were not abstract art, or art for its own sake. The roots of oral traditional narrative are not artistic but religious in the broadest sense.