A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO ORAL LITERATURE:
A PROPOSAL

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Fig. 1—Assumed relations between the determinants
In a recent paper M. Jacobs (1966) expressed the opinion that the bulk of folklore research today lags behind the current developments in the neighboring disciplines, be they social or humanistic (for summaries of the past scholarship see Dorson 1963, Hand 1965, Thompson 1946). Jacobs' critique arouses serious thought, and it seems worthwhile to survey the literature and see whether the work done in recent years justifies his harsh judgment or whether it might perhaps hold the germ of a new start.

Going through the older works and summarizing their approaches, one is led to ask the question: How should we approach oral literature? Is it a survival of some previous stage of development of the society (its own society or some other)? Is it a reflection of its contemporary society? Is it created in order to express the psychological problems of the members of its society? Does it exist to be used as a weapon in some social conflict, or as a means of entertainment, whether of adults or children?

Let us adopt an eclectic standpoint and consider the recent work done in the following framework: oral literature is none of these alone—rather it is and does all of them together: it is a survival in that it grew together with its society in an uneven historical process (which included a diffusional give and take from cultures of other societies), and bears the marks of its past: it is a kind of reflection of its contemporary society in that it is fitted to express
the problems of it, be these social, psychological or others; it may be used for harmless entertaining or as a weapon in some social conflict (inside a society, or between competing societies); it may be used ("function") in a serious ritual, central to the society's survival, or as a lubricant to keep the minor wheels of the society going; etc. And above all these—the item of oral literature is a work of art, a work of artistic presentation and as such can be handled by the methods of literary criticism (see Erlich 1955, Bogatyrev and Jakobson 1929, Konkka 1959, Nikiforov 1936, Todorov 1966).

The following discussion is in great measure a spinning out of hypotheses, a bringing together of available bits and pieces of analysis, in order to build a tentative framework which may facilitate the continuation of the work. It is inevitable that many of the proposed hypotheses will prove to be false and should be replaced as insight grows. (As my familiarity is primarily with Eurasian material, the reasoning will unfortunately draw disproportionately heavily on this material.)

Let us roughly sketch out some assumptions of our framework.

In the approach here discussed, the item of oral literature will be put at the center of interest, i.e., the question will not be "what can I learn about the society I happened to be interested in from its oral literature?"
(see for example J. L. Fischer's work, Colby 1966, Hart and Hart 1966:84, Spencer 1957), but the opposite: we begin with the oral literature and ask, what are the innate laws which shape an oral literature, what are the outer forces which shape it, and what are the interrelations of oral literature with its contexts (literary, cultural, social, etc.)?

Two units are considered:
(a) The term "item of oral literature" will be used to refer to the text and its performance. This includes the interpreter and the audience, as well as the social context, of the performance.

In order that an orally used text can be considered as belonging to oral literature, it must have an artistic form: a greeting, a dream portent or a weather-prediction are, although traditional and orally transmitted, not artistically shaped (the constant form of dream portents or weather-predictions, "if...then...", is the form in which the knowledge of the group can easily be communicated to an inquisitive outsider, but not the form used in in-group relations (see, e.g., Degh 1965:80). On the other hand, an incantation, a proverb, a riddle or an anecdote, however short, will have an artistic form. Attention has been paid recently to material in the written medium (such as latrinalia—Dundes 1966).
It does not seem in this case to be an essential
difference whether the items are found in written
form; they are not copied or reprinted as is written
literature, but remembered and reproduced from
memory as is regular oral literature. They depend on
the same criterion of the "censorship of the society"
(Bogatyrev and Jakobson 1929) for their very survival,
exactly as other kinds of folk culture do. Some items
of these texts may have an artistic form, and these
would belong to oral literature; others would not.

The above is thought to be a working hypothesis,
not a definition. All of the three criteria mentioned
for delimitation of oral literature—traditionality,
oral transmissibility and artistic form—are given by
rule of thumb and need further clarification.

(b) The "repertoire of the oral literature of one society"
will be considered an organized unit. It is assumed that
a system of relationships underlies this unit and that it
may be analyzed as other systematically organized items of
a society may be analyzed, such as the kinship system of
the language (see Erlich 1955:169–181 for similar ideas
held by the Russian formalists and the Prague school).
The task would then be to devise a model for a synchronic
description of the whole repertoire of oral literature
of a single society. The description would account for
the factors mentioned above, namely the inner organization
of the material and its system of relationships with its synchronic contexts (see Bogatyrev and Jakobson 1929).

Parallel to historical linguistics, oral literature scholarship has also used a diachronic approach. The questions of historical change—reconstructing past stages of development, ascertaining how a particular oral literature came to look as it does today, or predicting the changes it will undergo tomorrow—lie outside synchronic description. Here oral literature is interrelated with its contexts, taken diachronically, and has to be handled diachronically too. This would be a separate task, and is excluded from our present framework.

It may be further assumed that other forms of traditional artistic expression, music, kinetic and visual arts, may be treated in a similar framework, and that all these together with oral literature, on some higher level of organization have a common framework. Of the three, the products of "verbal art" (see Bascom 1955) seem to have the most transparent structure; the other two seem to be "encoded" in a more complex way (see, e.g., Boas 1927; Fischer 1961; Levi-Strauss 1963:245-273; Munn 1966; Nettl 1958).

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A brief review of the recent literature has shown that the problem of a structural approach has already been discussed at various levels. A rough enumeration of the levels at which an analysis has been attempted would be as follows:
(a) models for a particular item of oral literature (e.g., Berndt 1966:267-270: the structure of the "message" in an Australian myth; Levi-Strauss 1958: an Amerindian myth in relation to its society);

(b) models for a group of single items from related cultures, without emphasis on "genre" (e.g., Dundes 1964b: narrative structure of Amerindian myths; Fischer 1956a: narrative structure of myths from two related Oceanian societies);

(c) models for single items of a genre of oral literature from a particular culture (e.g., Ben-Amos 1967: narrative structure of Jewish-Hellenistic exempla and fables and "message" of sacred legends; Dundes 1962b: narrative structure of a kind of Lithuanian legends; Maung Than Sein and Dundes 1964: textural structure of Burmese riddles; Jason 1965: the narrative structure of Jewish-Near Eastern sacred legends; Jason 1966b: the narrative structure of certain Chinese legends; Jason 1966c: the narrative structure of Indian swindler tales; Sebeok and Ingermann 1956: the textural structure of Cheremis charms; Sebeok 1956, 1959: the texture of Cheremis songs; Silverman-Weinreich 1964: the narrative and textural structure of Yiddish proverbs; Silverman-
Weinreich 1965: the narrative structure of Yiddish sacred legends;

d) models for single items of one genre of oral literature from different cultures (e.g., Georges & Dundes 1963: the narrative structure of riddles; Nikiforov 1927 and Propp 1928-58: the narrative structure of fairy tales; Shklovskij 1929: narrative structure of formula tales);

e) a certain aspect of the whole repertoire of some genre in one culture (e.g., Fischer 1956b, 1958: the relationship of certain content items in tales to similar items in the society in two Oceanian groups; Fischer and Swartz 1960: Oceanian songs and their relationships to a certain aspect of their society; Jason 1965: the "message," temporal and spatial schemes in Jewish-Near Eastern sacred legends; Kardiner 1945: a whole repertoire as the reflection of the personality of the members of the society; Radin 1933:369, 1948:8-9: a time scheme for Winnebago myths; Silverman-Weinreich 1965; a time, space and "purpose" ("message") scheme for Yiddish sacred legends; the so-called content analysis: Jacobs 1959; Pool 1959; Sebeok 1957; Sebeok & Ingemann 1956);
(f) a basic model to account for all items of oral literature from all cultures (e.g., Kongas & Maranda 1962: narrative structure, sometimes combined with the "message," and see Waugh's 1966 comment on this);

(g) the structure of the relationships between several items from a single culture (e.g., Levi-Strauss 1960, 1963:206-231: Greek and Amerindian myths: in both cases it is the "message" of the content which is analysed);


The last approach we have enumerated is the conceptualization of oral literature as multidimensional. Let us start from here and suppose that a multidimensional network of coordinates underlies oral literature. A coordinate can
be labeled "determinant." Each item of oral literature can be measured by every determinant, that is, it will have a "value" in terms of this determinant. (See below on the relations between the determinants and the position of the items on the coordinates of the network).

So far it has been possible to establish 13 determinants; further work will no doubt change the list:

A. Formal determinants
   A1. textural structure of the oral-literature-item
   A2. dramatization of the item
   A3. narrative structure of the content

B. Content determinants
   B4. plot elements
   B5. "message" which the oral literature bears

C. Cultural determinants underlying the content
   C6. value system
   C7. temporal aspects
   C8. spatial aspects

D. Social determinants manipulating the item of oral literature
   D9. "function" of the item in the social system
   D10. "use" of the item in the social situation
   D11. conscious shaping of the item by the individual

E. Real world determinants
   E12. the real world (physical, social, cultural)
   E13. psychic make-up of the individual.
The following brief discussion of the determinants will describe what is meant by each determinant, indicate some problems and give examples of works dealing with this aspect of oral literature.

A. The formal determinants seem to be the most highly-structured qualities of oral literature and to be rather autonomous, having little feedback to the rest of the determinants (see in figure 1 a summary of the assumed relationships between the determinants). The structure of the formal determinants resembles in several aspects the structure of language. The resemblance is so close that once basic units and relations between them have been established, the material can be handled by concepts developed by modern linguistics. The texture (det. A1) and the dramatization (det. A2) seem to be more closely related to each other (the texture being the more important) than either is to the narrative structure (det. A3).

The formal features of oral literature seem to be one of the most important aspects of what comprises the "traditionality" of the oral literature; the features least connected with "traditionality" seem to be 'B4. plot elements' and 'Dil. conscious shaping of the material.' Determinants 'E' seem to be external to this problem.

det. A1. The analysis of the texture includes such aspects as the grammatical structure (phonology and syntax), prosodic features, style, etc. As the texture presupposes
a certain language, it ends at the sentence or verse level. The texture operates with traditional poetic means, which are varied by the idiosyncrasies of the performers; the range of this variation has not yet been explored. In fixed-phrase genres, which have as their basic unit the sentence of the language, the narrative structure and the structure of the texture will, possibly, coincide (e.g., Dundes and Georges 1962; Herzog 1936; Rybnikova 1961; Sebeok and Ingemann 1956; Silverman-Weinreich 1964); in other cases they will form two separate structures (e.g., Dundes 1964c; Fischer 1959; Hymes 1959, 1965; Jakobson 1933, 1952; Lord 1956, 1960:30–67; Jason 1966d:99–100; Lotz 1942, 1954; Maung Than Sein and Dundes 1964; Nikiforov 1930; Sebeok 1956, 1960, 1962; Stroback 1966; Suppan 1966:41; Vansina 1965).

**det. A2. Dramatization of the item:** the texture is presented in a dramatized form, by a single performer or by several (as in large rituals). The situation of performer(s) vs. audience exists when the audience does not partake actively in the performance, merely adding encouragement to the performer(s) and checking on the accuracy of his interpretation; as soon as the audience is expected to take a necessary (even if small) part in the performance—it becomes a performer itself.

The texture is dramatized by voice (including music), facial expression, and gesture (any traditional ethnography
may contain descriptions of such performances). All three seem to be transmitted, at least in the outlines and organizing patterns, together with the verbal material, the texture. A structural description of these three and of their interrelationships with the repertoire of the same entities outside the performance is needed to clarify their "langue" qualities and their relations to the structures of texture and narrative. Of the three means of transcription—verbal description, photographs and sound recordings, or sound film—the last seems to be the only adequate one (see e.g., Bascom 1954:334; Haiding 1955; Jansen 1957; Kriss-Rottenbeck 1965).

\textbf{det. A3. The narrative structure} starts where the textural structure ends: it does not presuppose a particular language because it operates on units larger than the sentence and is not correlated to a verse or prose form of the texture. The narrative structure can be compared to a kind of "syntax," according to which the plot-elements—a "vocabulary" (det. B4)—are arranged into tales. The most productive units so far have been designed by V. Propp (1928-58) for fairy-tales. He designed a unit of action in the tale (a "function") which can be compared to a syntactical function in a sentence of language; several such action-units form a higher-level unit (a "move") which may be compared to a sentence. "Moves" are organized into "whole tales." The latter have a "deep" and a "surface"
structure. The "function" can again be understood as a "sentence" and broken down into smaller units. The content which "fills in" the "function-slots" is the "plot-element" (det. B4), which serves as a kind of "vocabulary." The basic features of this structure seem to be, at least nearly, universal (European, Near Eastern, Indian, Chinese, African Negro and North Amerindian texts have so far been successfully analyzed). The universality of the narrative structure and its close similarity to the structure of language allow us to assume that investigation of the narrative structure will have feedback to the analysis of language. (For attempts at analysis following Propp's concepts see: Ben-Amos 1967: Jewish-Hellenistic fables and legends; Dundes 1964b and Georges 1966: North Amerindian myths; Horner 1967: African tales; Jason 1965: Jewish-Near Eastern legends; Jason 1966b: Chinese legends; Jason 1966c: Indian swindler tales; Jason 1967a: Yugoslav epic songs; Jason 1967b: Amerindian tales. For discussions of Propp's model see: Bremont 1964; Dundes 1962a; Greimas 1965; Jason 1967c; and Lakoff 1964. The latter adapted Propp's analysis to Chomsky's (1957) concepts. For some other attempts to describe the narrative structure see: Bascom 1949: Yoruba riddles; Dundes 1962b: Lithuanian legends; Georges & Dundes 1963: riddles; Fischer 1956a: Oceanian myths; Kongas & Maranda: various items from different cultures; Luethi 1960:37ff.: Nikiforov 1927: fairy-tales; Petsch 1899: riddles;

The acting character is a somewhat autonomous component of the narrative structure. Being a tale–role, it is part of the unit of action (the "function"). Each acting character has, however, besides his tale role, a social role (i.e., he is a priest, a woman, a cobbler), and many have an individual identity (i.e., he may be a historical or pseudo–historical figure). These qualities relate the acting character closely to several other determinants. The social role of the acting character was found in one case to express the problematic points of the society's value system (see dets. B5, C6); a historical or pseudo–historical figure will place the item in the historical frame (det. C7) and sometimes aid in placing the item in the right geographical scheme (det. C8). (See e.g., Jason 1965; Propp 1928–58:18, 72–3, 79–81; Radin 1933:356–8; Silverman–Weinreich 1965:208; several chapters of Aarne's Type Index 1910 are based on the identity of the actor.)

B. The content determinants, in contrast to the formal determinants, are rather culture–bound. They too can be compared to the structure of language, but in a somewhat looser way. The two content determinants are closely related:
the plot-element expresses the "message" of the narrative, and vice versa, the intended "message" will determine which plot-element will be used.

B4. The plot-element can be loosely compared to the "lexicon" of a language. If the units of the narrative structure, Propp's "function," are conceived of as "slots," just as syntactic functions can be, then the plot-element "fill in" the "slots," as a lexical entry "fills in" a "syntactical function-slot." The "function-slots" seem to have more or less standard "fillers" which will form the "vocabulary." (The work of the comparative folklorists is based on the recognition of this "lexical" unit as the basic entity. Hence their need of "motif"—and "type-indices" which list those units; the main indices are Aarne's type-index and Thompson's motif-index; most regional indices have been published by the Folklore Fellows Communications series; see also Jason 1966d:100-101.)

Det. B5. The "message" which the oral literature bears can be very roughly compared to a kind of "semantic component": what does a certain item of oral literature "mean" to its bearers? Certain items center around the crucial points of the society's value system: they pose a problem and solve it in a narrated picture. One of the elements of this picture is the social role of the dramatis personae (a rich and a poor man shown competing, for example, will be seen to express a certain social conflict). The problem
may be only posed, or it may be solved in some way, for instance so as to contribute to the stability of the existing social order; the official values of the society may be affirmed. When subsystems of a society are in conflict, each subsystem may have its own oral literature-items, centered around its own problems, and affirming its own values at the expense of the total society. Different genres of oral literature handle different kinds of problems and thus carry different "messages" (sometimes even contradicting each other). The problematic points to which the "message" responds are determined by the value system of the culture (det. C6). (See e.g., Ben-Amos 1963: English and Scottish ballads handling conflicts between demands of different social roles on the same person; Ben-Amos 1967:86-113, 159, 163ff.: the "message" of Jewish-Hellenistic fables and sacred legends; Jason 1965: Jewish-Near Eastern sacred legends handling a wide gamut of human, social and national problems. It seems that Levi-Strauss' work on myth can be related to this dimension; see also Bascom 1954:343; Fischer 1966:120-123: "conflict resolution"; Littleton 1965: "sacredness"; Silverman-Weinreich 1965: "purpose"; Waugh's 1966 comment on Kongas and Marada's work 1962:173; Luethi 1960:76ff. on fairy-tale as opposed to other genres; "content analysis" could give material for consideration in this direction, see e.g., Colby 1966; Jacobs 1959; Pool 1959; Sebeok and Ingemann 1956; Sebeok 1957).
C. Cultural determinants underlie the content determinants (det. B). The value scheme of the culture (det. C6) is the most important one and shapes certain aspects of the other two (det. C7, C8) to a great extent. While the first two groups of determinants (A and B) are qualities of the material itself, in this third group we begin to encounter determinants external to the material. The temporal and the spatial schemata have both internal and external aspects.

C6. The value system of the culture, itself interrelated with the social system, will determine the problematic points and the conflicts to which a "message" (det. B5) will respond. The value system will determine to a great measure the shape of the historical and the geographical frames as well as the qualities of the various segments of time and space. The more central parts of the value system and the more severe conflicts arising in the social system will get greater attention: a greater proportion of texts will handle them. (We use here the concepts "social system" and its "value system" as developed by Parsons 1951, 1961.)

C7. The temporal aspect can be subdivided into:

(a) the historical frame in which the items of oral literature are set. Every item explicitly or implicitly happened "some-time." These "sometimes" can be arranged into a sequence, divided into epochs. The basic and universal division is between mythical and historical epochs. Some other divisions
may be: unspecified historical past, time within a re-collected number of generations, contemporary time. Further divisions will vary from culture to culture. The choice of epochs or events (these are supplied by the real world, det. E12) which are remembered and which have oral literature relating to them will depend on the contemporary value system of the culture, i.e., events having a live, present "meaning" to the narrating society will be emphasized. If an acting character has an individual identity, his being mentioned will place the item explicitly in the historical frame. (With the introduction of the concept of a historical frame as a dimension of the whole oral literature, the special genre of "historical legends" or "historical songs" dissolves. See for comment Dega 1965:79–80 on Hungarian oral literature: Ben-Amos 1967: tall-tales anchored in a time-scheme; Hurley 1951: treasure legends anchored in a time-scheme; for historical frames of repertoires of a genre in a particular culture see Jason 1965: Jewish–Near Eastern sacred legends; Littleton 1965; Radin 1933:369, 1948:8–9: Winnebago myths; Propp 1963 distinguishes genres along a time-scheme.)

(b) the quality of time-segments in which the item of oral literature is set: the main break is between the mythical and the historical epochs (see Garber–Talmon 1951; Levi–Strauss 1963:203–231). The properties of the time-segments will be in some measure determined by the value system of the contemporary culture.
(c) the sequence of events in a particular item of oral literature, which is arranged in an orderly way. It may be that this inner temporal structure will have stable models for particular genres in particular cultures; it may be assumed that this temporal structure will be connected somehow to the narrative structure (det. A3) (see a discussion of a single item by Fischer 1966:113–115).

det. C8. The spatial aspect can be described in the same terms as the temporal aspect:

(a) the geographical framework in which the item of oral literature is set. Every item explicitly or implicitly happened "somewhere." These "somewheres" can be arranged into a frame, the dwelling-place of the narrating community being in the center of the scheme, surrounded by concentric circles of progressively more distant geographic entities. The basic division is between "this" world and the "other" (supernatural) world. Both are further subdivided (e.g., "our village," "our country," "symbolic places," "Hell," etc.). This scheme seems to be universal. The exact content of the different segments will be supplied by the "givens" of the real world and imaginary cosmology (det. E12). The introduction of the concept of a geographical frame as a dimension of the whole oral literature dissolves the special genre of "place legends." (See e.g., Ben–Amos 1967: Jewish–Hellenistic tall tales anchored in a space–scheme; Hurley 1951: treasure legends anchored in a space–

(b) The quality of the space-segment in which the item of oral literature is set: again, the main break is between "this world" and the "other world." There seem to exist borderline areas, one of them being "symbolic places." The nature of the qualities and their distribution will be determined partly by the actualities of the real world (det. E12) and partly by the respective society's value system (det. C6).

(c) The space involved in a particular item of oral literature, like the sequence of events, is arranged in an orderly way. It may be that this inner spatial organization, like the temporal, will have stable models for particular genres in particular cultures, and, similarly again, it may be proposed that the spatial structure will have some connection with the narrative structure (det. A3). (See e.g., Fischer 1966:115-117: Oceanian myth; Levi-Strauss 1958: Amerindian myth.)

D. The social determinants manipulate the item of oral literature from "outside." The three determinants of this group are interrelated to some extent but it is not yet clear how.
det. D9. The oral literature "functions" in its society, it seems, partly in the expression and promotion of the value system and normative system. It seems that certain kinds of oral literature-items (such as sacred tales--Jason 1965) serve the highest parts of the value system of the respective culture (see Parsons 1961). Other kinds, such as certain proverbs, may prove to be crystallized prescriptive norms of conduct, or may serve as verbal "rites of rebellion" (Gluckman 1963, ch. 3), as ballads idealizing illicit love-relationships do. The scheme of the value system underlying the material will determine the function of particular items. As the value system will vary from culture to culture, the "function" of particular oral literature-items and genres will vary too (especially when items cross cultural boundaries). (See, e.g., Malinowski 1926 on the function of origin myths: Colby 1966:385 on tales as models for socialization; Eisenstadt 1965:20:22; Herskovits and Herskovits 1958:20-22; Levi-Strauss 1960, 1963: myths solving insoluble problems of human existence and society; Vansina 1965:50-51.)

det. D10. The "use" of the text in social intercourse is distinguished from its "function." A proverb, a song or a story will be "used" (performed, see det. A2) in order to fulfill some need--perhaps a role in a "ritual," which is made up, among other things, of verbal materials. (We take "ritual" to refer to any structured social situation, including instances of entertainment.) The "use" lies on
the surface of the oral literature-item, is readily observable and hence is often recorded. The recording is, however, not done in a systematic way, i.e., as a functional part of the structure of the "ritual" (for an attempt to analyze the structure of "ritual" see Dundes 1964a on games; the verbal material is not included in his analysis). Since the use, the texture (det. A1), and the dramatization (det. A2) lie on the surface of the oral literature-item, they are readily accessible not only to the ethnographer but also to the native. Therefore, conscious changes are easily made in these aspects of the oral literature, and the quality and range of this variability is a question to be explored at the levels of the individual performer and of the community (see det. D11). (See Abrahams 1966: "rhetorical theory"; Bascom's 1954 discussion of "social context"; Dundes' 1964b discussion of "context"; Hain 1966:53-55: riddles; Herskovits and Herskovits 1958:25,55; Jason 1966d:94-96; Vansina 1965:50-51; by the East and Central European scholars this determinant is called the "function" of the material--see Degh 1962, 1965: 85-86 for recent summaries of the research in this direction regarding prose narratives; see Hain 1951 and Blacking 1961 for special studies of proverbs and riddles as "used" in the social situation; many ethnographies contain notes on the "use" of oral literature-material in various "rituals.")

det. D11. The role of the performer in the conscious shaping of the material seems, astonishingly, to be quite
small. An analogy may be drawn to language in order to explain the nature of the relation: the individual performance of the oral literature-item can be looked upon as the idiosyncratic de Saussurean "parole," the item of oral literature as an object is compared to the "langue." The sum of the idiosyncrasies does not affect the "langue" to any great extent because the "preventive censure of the society" keeps the shape of the object—the "langue"—oral literature—constant (after Bogatyrev and Jakobson 1929; see also Bascom 1955). It may be assumed that the role of the interpreter in the conscious shaping of the material will be greater in the changing of the features of the performance (the texture, dramatization and use) than in the shaping of the other determinants. It may well be that in certain situations which are critical for the society, the performer (who will then be a leader) may be seen to have a greater role in shaping those features of the oral literature-item which center around crucial problematic points of his society's value system (as tribal myths or sacred legends may—see, e.g., Aberle 1951:72; Herskovits and Herskovits 1958: 18–19; Vansina 1965:29).

There are a few occasional observations on transmission of oral literature-items from performer to performer, and some observations also of changes which occur in the text in the course of transmission, but a systematic field study of them, either synchronic or diachronic, has not as yet
been undertaken. (See Benedict 1935:I, XXXVII-XLII; Goldfrank 1949; Anderson's experiment 1951, 1956 tested merely the memory of college students, and not the transmission of tales.)

E. The real world determinants stand completely outside the oral literature-item and supply, so to speak, the "building stones" of it, which the other determinants organize.

det. El2. The real world: features of the physical surroundings, the social organization and the culture will be taken for granted, mentioned and described in oral literature. These "ethnographic particulars" will supply material: the language used in the texture; the kinetic and musical patterns of the dramatization; the individual identity and the social role of the acting characters; the events of the historical frame (which are evaluated by the value system); the features of the geographical frame (perceived through the culture); material objects and social relationships, implicitly or directly mentioned, etc. The plot-elements (det. B4) will be built of these particulars (real ones or from the storehouse of supernatural imagery). It has long been assumed that these particulars can be related from the literary text directly to the real world, i.e., that the culture is reflected in the tales in a direct way. This seems, however, not to be the case: between the real world and its mention in the oral literature
stands the whole complex structure of the oral literature. When appearing as a "building stone" in this structure, the ethnographic particular will have another "meaning" than when appearing in the real world. (For the view of a direct relationship of the two see, e.g., Bascom 1954: "cultural context"; Boas 1916, 1935; Colby 1963, 1966; J. L. Fischer's papers; Lessa 1961:15–75, 1966: the discussion of the tales supplies, to the reader who is not familiar with the culture in question, the minimal information needed to comprehend the texts—but this is not yet an analysis; Propp 1963; Radin 1949. See Levi-Strauss 1958, 1960 for a departure from the assumption of a direct correspondence of reality and literature in favor of an inverted one.)

**det. El3.** The interrelations of the oral literature—item (text and performance) and the psychic make-up of the members of the narrating community (both the interpreter and his audience): what is the kind and the measure of the unconscious shaping of the oral literature—item? It may be safely assumed that the psychic make-up of the members of the narrating community will have some bearing upon the item, especially on its "function," its "use" and the conscious shaping of it. (dets. D9, 10, 11) (See for a special case Boyer 1964: it is not yet clear what the significance of the findings is.) The process of unconscious handling of the material by the interpreter is still not known. Statements
about "wish-fulfilment," "tension releasing," etc., which imply a direct relationship between the text and its contemporary society, will hardly do. Such a relationship does not exist: both the society and its culture (of which oral literature is a rather autonomous part) developed in time, and did this in an uneven way. Oral literature is not so flexible as to respond to every change in the real world. The detailed psychoanalytic interpretations of various items of oral literature in Freudian, Jungian, and other terms, amount already to a considerable library (see the bibliography by Grinstein 1950-64). A verification of this approach could help to bring us forward, either by supporting the findings or by invalidating them.

The so-called "culture and personality" school brought forth the concept of oral literature (and certain other mental artifacts) as a "secondary institution," which owes its qualities to the particular "personality structure" of its bearers, the projection of which the oral literature is supposed to be. Such a conceptualization equates oral literature to products of psychiatric tests. This amounts to a disregard of the peculiar structure of oral literature. In addition, this approach does not intend to explain the oral literature, but the "personality" of its bearers, and thus is outside the scope of the framework we have imposed on ourselves. (Since here the "personality" is inferred from, among other things, the oral literature, there is of course no way to explain the oral literature "back" from the "personality").
(For a review of "culture and personality" studies and problems see Barnouw 1963 and Kaplan 1961; Kaplan's 1962 study may serve as an example of the approach; for an exposition of the concept see Kardiner 1945; for a recent discussion of the dilemma in a particular instance see Lessa 1966).

The establishment of manifest symbolic signs only shows that they exist in the culture as well as in the oral literature as an integral part of the communication system of the society - a quite obvious thing. The knowledge of them is as essential and basic for the understanding of the respective culture as the knowledge of the society's language (see det. D12: these symbols are part of the "building stones" that are the material of oral literature, and should not be confused with supposed unconscious symbols).

A knowledge of the variability of the oral literature-item (text, its dramatization and use) could eventually give clues to the possible role of the interpreter's psychic make-up, at least in the "parole" - shaping of the oral literature-item. To date no systematic study has been undertaken on the subject.

Another aspect of the psychic make up which promises interesting results, but has not received attention to date, is the question of the "grammar" which must exist (analogous to the grammar of the language - see Chomsky 1959) in the head of the performer if he is to reproduce the oral literature-item, which includes at least five formalized parts (the texture /det. A1/, the dramatization /det. A2/, the narrative structure /det. A3/, the inner time /det. C7c/, and space /det. C8c/)
structures) and several schemes ("message" /det. B5/, historical /det. C7a/ and geographical /det. C8a/).

**Relationship between the determinants:** this part of our framework is even more hypothetical than the descriptions of the determinants themselves. In the descriptions the inter-relations have occasionally been mentioned. So far no investigation of them exists.

Some of the relationships seem to be hierarchical, others to be a relation of mutual interdependence, still others merely parallel. The determinants can be pictured as coordinates: some of them, such as the historical frame, are linear continua; others, such as the models for the narrative structure, will be discrete points on a line. Every concrete text will find its place on each coordinate, i.e., assume a value in terms of each coordinate (value zero included). This place will depend on the relations between the coordinates (see fig. 1). The coordinates form a multidimensional network: the oral literature "space." Texts of the same "genre" will cluster in certain parts of the "space." The dimensions of the cluster will define the "genre." These "genres" will be analytical concepts and may not correspond either to native categories (where such exist) or to the current labels in the scholarly world, such as anecdote, myth or proverb, which are now actually determined by rule of thumb.

A rough scheme may illustrate the relations between the determinants (the chart is not proportional; the boxes are arranged so that the inner qualities are in the middle, surrounded by the outer determinants; the details were arranged
for the convenient drawing of the arrows. As the structure is multidimensional, and the interrelations obviously very complex, a realistic two-dimensional presentation of the "space" is presumably impossible).

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We have tried to devise a framework for a descriptive analysis, with the emphasis on "how?" Although systematic exploration along these lines will answer many implicit "whys," it will be possible to formulate systematically the significant "whys" only after we have a reasonable body of adequate descriptive studies. So far we have reviewed the first sprouts only.
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