

Malek of something and he was not attending. "Oh," she said, exasperated, "One hundred ants just went through that hole." She then proceeded to tell me a story about a man who felt his young boy needed a serious talking to. The man waxed eloquent and was pleased to see his son, head down, apparently drinking it all in. After he finished talking he waited for his son's response. After a pause the youngster looked up and said, "Oh Baba, one hundred ants just crawled through that hole in the wall!"

35. In other words, cut so close to him with the scythe that he could have shaved off his mustache (with the additional meaning of emasculating him).

36. Although hikayat often have a rather anti-establishment or heteroprax flavor, they also frequently develop the possibility of fakes and exploiters.

37. For one reason or another, most Kelibians, male *and* female, now consider these practices "un-Kelibian." Either the practices are felt to be ineffective, scams perpetrated on ignorant people by charletans, or they are seen as a kind of black magic—effective, but irreligious, uncultured, and dangerous. Vows to town holy figures or shrine celebrations are not in the same category. Although vows are made more by women than by men, and celebrations at shrines are practiced more by women, they often occur on behalf of men. I have not met even a young man who dared scoff at the practice. Celebrations take place at a woman's expense, if she is holding the celebration, and represent an unusual public display of affection and regard for a son or spouse.

38. An egg dish mixed with vegetables, olive oil, and tomato sauce.

39. Reluctance among traditionalists to say, "five," because of its association with the evil eye.

Chapter 4

In Defense of (Maghribi) Folklore

... the resolution of the problem of communication between rival paradigms lies largely in the domain of history.

(Bob Scholte)

[Hayden] White's scheme is of interest to us here precisely because it translates the problem of historical (and anthropological) explanation, most often conceived as a clash of theoretical paradigms, into the writer's problem of representation.

(George Marcus and Michael Fischer)

If the professional applies himself to the task of listening to what he can see and read, he discovers before him interlocutors, who, even if they are not specialists, are themselves subject-producers of histories and partners in a shared discourse.

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In Egypt in the summer of 1987 I was introduced by a French anthropologist friend and colleague to two young French ethnographers. "She is a folklorist," he explained, "but not," he hastened to reassure them, "in the usual sense." In the last two chapters I have addressed the Kelibian contexts of place and time upon which hikayah tellers draw creatively in order to endow their hikayat with a rich depth and breadth of meaning. In this penultimate chapter I want to step back to address directly the fourth chronotopic situation mentioned in Chapter 2—that of me, the writer-ethnographer, and you, the reader-scholar—as that situation defines and affects a western study of a Maghribi folklore genre. In doing so I will be unpacking from the simple phrase "folklore in the usual sense," a complex of contradictory notions that have accrued to the terms "folk" and "lore" and the study of folklore over at least the last century and a half.

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As we have seen, Kelibians are very aware of their exposure to diverse cultural models and influences through time and evaluate them in terms of

their possible effects on themselves and on the community. The study of such a cross-culturally aware people has taught me that this anthropological folklore study also needs to be situated in its time and place. It needs especially to come to grips with two conflicting scholarly (partly folk) paradigms (world-view touchstones) concerning the folk, folklore, and North Africa and the ways each of these paradigms have fashioned and are fashioned by our representational strategies and traditions.¹ Just as Kelibian units of world-view are formed by as well as form hikayat, so western paradigms of folklore can both project certain acceptable ranges of cultural representation and be challenged by representations too spirited to remain within "acceptable" boundaries. Opening up dialogue among paradigms will help ensure the negotiability of boundaries, provide a spectrum of perspectives, and broaden discourse.

Only by understanding something about this process of communication (cultural and cross-cultural) in our own academic subculture, about how we arrived at our own time and place vis-à-vis the study of folklore and culture (folklore "in the usual sense," for one), can we come full circle, back to the teller(s) and the tale(s) and to a more complete understanding of that dialogue about culture-in-process that Kelibia carries on continuously with its citizens and with the outside world. For, in making explicit what Marcus and Fischer refer to as "the underdeveloped, relatively implicit side of ethnographic description focused on a cultural other . . . the reference it makes to the presumed, mutually familiar world shared by the writer and his readers" (Marcus and Fischer 1986), we also illuminate one of the worlds, the colonial or neocolonial world, in which Kelibians operate and to which they must formulate understandings and responses (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 29), including those embedded in the narratives found in the last two chapters.

For purposes of reconceptualizing the anthropological and ethnographic process as level with, and not superior to, Kelibian community process, I suggest we acknowledge that the "work" of formation and dissemination of the basic premises (the paradigm) of a particular school of social scientists is accomplished to a greater degree than is usually taken into account, through negotiation carried out informally in small (folk) groups before those premises become all-pervasive as disciplinary doctrine. Scholarly paradigms of folklore are fashioned through a process very similar to the process through which a Kelibian world view is put together. Thomas Kuhn's research into the formation of scientific paradigms, despite

his ambiguous use of the term "paradigm," is still a powerful tool for looking at the scientific community precisely because it provides insight into this folk history behind rival paradigms, including the "central role played by personality and passion," and thus provides the opportunity to re-perceive and rethink aspects of those paradigms. "[Kuhn] maintains that the practice of science is monitored by 'local' traditions of thought" (King 1980: 104). Viewpoints on scientific, including social scientific, authority rest on certain "unstated premises which underlie the thought and action of a given group of people, . . . the building blocks of . . . world view. . . ." (Dundes 1971: 905-996), what Braudel would call a group's *mentalité*. These (folk) ideas result in a certain (folk) ethos, including aesthetic evaluations that in turn help formulate folk ideas. These are developed and negotiated in much the same way that a Kelibian world-view is constructed. In the scientific world too, traditions are negotiated toward possible change, and "changing patterns of consensus are formed and reformed" (King 1980: 106).

In the fashioning of this narrative of place and time, I am looking at the convergence of four contexts: that of French folklore scholarship in the Maghrib (folklore in "the usual sense") during the colonial period, that of the folk/folklore component of post- or neo-colonial research in the Maghrib, that of my own folklore scholarship about Tunisia as it has emerged both from certain North American folklore practices and theoretical touchstones (anthropological and literary) and from the Maghribi research of other scholars, and that of Kelibian culture itself as I was taught to understand it—my own fieldwork. Loosely speaking, the first two contexts result in one paradigm or tradition about folklore and the latter two the opposing paradigm. As will become clear, approaches to, theories about, or uses for folklore are, in all these cases, subsumed within much broader cultural discourses. Here, I find and foreground the effect of these broader concerns on folklore and folklore studies (and vice versa). This retracing and juxtaposing of the development of two basic sets of powerful but opposing ideas about the significance of folklore for a culture group makes explicit some of the ideas that have been implicit, and thus not heretofore subject to much needed scrutiny.

To trace here just how the intellectual history of folklore scholarship in the Maghrib and of my grappling with it affects and is affected by the hikayat of Si Hamdan, of Bidwi, and of each storyteller, is to confront more directly than I have done thus far the unavoidable complexities to be faced

in the anthropological study of verbal art and just how much cultural baggage both the student of a culture, the studier, and the teacher, the studied, bring to the casual tea-drinking, storytelling sessions discussed in the previous chapters.

Colonial Folklore Studies and Ethnographic Representation

The most important historical fact for the current problematic state of folklore research in the Maghrib is that France colonized the area. The effect of that colonization was, and is, felt in three interrelated ways. First, the French were facilitators for the imposition or privileging of a good many, especially southern, European societies—primarily Spanish, Italian, and French—with their special traditions and culture theories, including that asserting the superiority of the West. Second, French scholarship past and present dominates western scholarship on the region (and much Maghribian scholarship, for that matter). Third, this very fact of colonization with the trauma of subsequent separation and the guilt and thus rejection of colonial scholarship (including folklore scholarship) resulted in a post-colonial “escape into theory” from the pain and awkwardness of their new, raw, and more vulnerable relationship with these proximal ex-colonies.

The French entered Algiers in 1830 under the pretext of protecting the honor of the French consul whom the bey (ruler) had swatted with a fly swatter during a financial dispute. They gradually extended their occupation to include all of Algeria and, around the turn of the century, Morocco and Tunisia as well. There they remained until the second half of the twentieth century.

French colonialists described their presence in the Maghrib as a continuation of the Roman “civilizing mission” aborted more than a millennium earlier. The hardships encountered during this new *mission civilisatrice* were made tolerable in part by the inspiration drawn from archeological and literary evidences of the ancient Roman accomplishments in the region. In his study, *Le Cap Bon*, Joseph Weyland paid tribute: “aux pionniers de la première heure, [qui] sans doute, quelques-uns se sont-ils rappelés la prospérité qui y renaît à l’époque ancienne et ont-ils trouvé dans se [sic] souvenir un encouragement” (Weyland 1926: i).³

Folklore was appropriated to support this colonial vision. Colonialist interpretations of the indigenous folklore had to be consistent with other

representations of a people in need of civilizing. After all, “the colonized’s devaluation . . . [extended] to everything that [concerned] him . . .” (Memmi 1965: 67). Items of, especially, Berber folklore—certain rituals, tales, and even material culture and folk medicine practices—were selectively appropriated by some French scholars to give proof of the prior Roman occupation (the Arabs would not arrive until the seventh century C.E.), and thus lend legitimacy to their own occupation as heirs to the Romans. “Civilized” attributes of Arabo-Berber society discovered by the French were ascribed for the most part to the Roman, Greek, or Carthaginian legacy. Since Arabs and Berbers themselves were considered to be groups still at a cultural level between savage and civilized (Desparmet 1932), they were lower on the evolutionary scale than the colonialists, and thus the colonialists, having been civilized themselves by ancient Rome and Greece, felt they had an historical mandate to relight the old lamp of civilization in North Africa.

At the same time, some folkways were perceived, quite rightly, I would argue, as powerful forms of resistance to colonial rule. One example is the study of folk or popular religion in practice by Louis Rinn, a military officer fluent in Arabic who was attached to the *Service des affaires indigènes*. He warned in his text on Muslim brotherhoods in Algeria that France had an interest in looking into those orders because, by emphasizing pan-Islamism, they were a danger to European interests in Africa and Asia and interfered with attempts by the West to draw the Orient into the current of modern civilization. He wrote:

Sous prétexte d’apostolat, de charité, de pèlerinages et de discipline monacale, les innombrables agents de ces congrégations parcourent ce monde de l’Islam, qui n’a ni frontières ni patrie, et ils mettent en relations permanentes La Mecque, Djerrboub, Stamboul or Bar’dad avec Fez, Tinbouktou, Alger, Le Caire, Khartoum, Zanzibar, Calcutta ou Java. Protéés aux mille formes, tour à tour négociants, prédicateurs, étudiants, médecins, ouvriers, mendiants, charmeurs, saltimbanques, fous simulés ou illuminés inconscients de leur mission, ces voyageurs sont, toujours et partout, bien accueillis par les Fidèles et efficacement protégés, par eux, contre les investigations soupçonneuses des gouvernements réguliers. (Rinn 1884: vi).⁴

E. Michaux-Bellaire, head of the Mission Scientifique in Morocco from 1906 until his death in 1930, also justified study of the Moroccan brotherhoods as almost that of an intelligence mission to discover the implications for political resistance to the French of their ties with the greater Muslim world. After the Moroccan uprisings of 1907–8, 1911, and 1912 against

colonialist rule, he wrote a history of Moroccan brotherhoods claiming that the Derqaoui [Darqawi] brotherhood, for example, was organized solely to group together all elements of resistance to foreign penetration (Michaux-Bellaire 1921).

Joseph Desparmet, a French colonial scholar, interpreted the folk poetry of the colonized as grass-roots resistance to the colonizers. In a series of articles in *Revue Africaine*, *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger*, and *l'Afrique Française*, he linked oral epics, ogre stories that "almost unconsciously" equated ogres with the French, and the formal Arabic-language Reformist Movement by demonstrating that all three represented linguistic resistance to the French conquest (Colonna 1976a; Lucas and Vatin 1975).

Other lore was perceived as benign, amusing, or useful for paving the way to smoother daily interaction between masters and subjects. Collectors simply collected and presented folklore texts, for example, riddle or proverb collections, items of embroidery, or samples of bread or pottery appreciatively, or with an eye to ensuring that these charming folk practices were preserved even as they regrettably, but necessarily, were lost from everyday practice as Maghribians became more "civilized." Sometimes markets for indigenous goods were found among Europeans. Hikayat of the Kelibian sort were not studied, perhaps because of their semi private nature and perhaps also because their regional and individual specificity made it difficult for scholars to fit them into the universalistic mold expected of folk expressive culture like myths, riddles, or proverbs.

An assumption widely held about folklore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries makes even such seemingly benign attempts to appreciate and preserve folklore suspect today; most researchers assumed that folklore would fade away when a culture became truly civilized. European collectors, for example, talked about folklore "survivals" found in out-of-the-way rural and lower class areas of Europe. Thus, signs that the Maghrib was a folklore-ridden culture implied that it had a long way to go on the road to social evolution.⁶ So those who studied these folk phenomena in the Maghrib today stand convicted of fussing with details, ignoring the essentials for the peripherals, and trying to freeze the culture into their own romantic image of it (Lucas and Vatin 1975). Rather than perceiving folklore as barbaric or rebellious, some colonialists sterilized and then popularized the lore of the colonized, rendering it trivial. Jean-Claude Vatin and Philippe Lucas point out in *L'Algérie des anthropologues*

that Algerian-Muslim culture was reduced through its popularized folklore to a decor (Lucas and Vatin 1975: 12). North Africanist Fanny Colonna disdains colonial ethnography because it was "folkloristic" and degraded Algeria "to the status of a rather exotic province." Although she admires the work of the folklorist Desparmet, she sees most folklore studies in Algeria, at least during the twentieth century, as having contributed to making Algerian culture appear simplistic (Colonna 1976b).

Unfortunately, most scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries agreed that a folk for whom this folklore represented a collective world-view and who belonged, unlike the fieldworker, to closed, traditional, or lower class culture groups were little differentiated and had little individual control of their worlds. "Thus the living speech of human beings in their specific social relationships in the world was theoretically reduced to instances and examples of a system which lay beyond them" (Williams 1977: 27). Speech was converted to texts, and texts given priority over "what were described as 'utterances' (later as 'performance')" (Williams 1977: 27). The colonial observer

was observing (of course scientifically) within a differential mode of contact with alien material: in the texts, the records of a past history; in speech the activity of an alien people in subordinate (colonialist) relations to the whole activity of the dominant people within which the observer gained his privilege. This defining situation inevitably reduced any sense of language as actively and presently constitutive. (Williams 1977: 26)

A further unfortunate effect was that "the 'language habits' studied, over a range from the speech of conquered and dominated peoples to the 'dialects' of outlying or socially inferior groups, theoretically matched against the observer's 'standard', were regarded as at most 'behavior' rather than independent, creative, self-directing life" (Williams 1977: 27). Thus, for example, Basset described "Moorish" speech as "incorrect language" of "coarse rhythm" (René Basset 1901: iv). The Kelibian storytellers spent their youths and, for some, much of their adult lives in this oppressive atmosphere, where they were treated as objects or subjects, but never actors (Lucas and Vatin 1975: 50). Their language (and therefore its artistic products like hikayat) was considered a "given" system that lay beyond the control of the speaker, rather than an instrument that the speaker could use creatively.

Cognitive Remnants and Anachronistic Social Mechanisms

In sum, as throughout the colonial world, scholarship was harnessed to the colonizers' ends. Folklore data were "used" by colonialists to portray North African Arabo-Berber culture as picturesque, shallow, barbaric, or rebellious, inferior to western culture and in need of civilizing by the culturally superior French. By pointing to "survivals" of Roman, Greek, or Carthaginian folk culture, the colonialists also skewed folklore in order to prove the rightness of the colonialist presence.

Compounding this complicated picture of colonial perfidy-in-folklore is the fact that often material was acquired under duress. E. Laoust in his introduction to *Mots et choses berbères* indicates that he got some of his best data from political prisoners (Laoust 1919). Obviously (almost) no one is comfortable doing research "on" occupied peoples. The political manipulation of cultural materials and the resort to the cultural hierarchies that justified the colonialist enterprises have become anathema to modern scholars. Folklore studies produced during the colonial period are now understood by a new generation of French, among others, to be perniciously tainted by colonialism. Research done during the colonial period was inextricably linked, whether the researcher wished it or not, to political struggles for domination. The control of folklore became part of the colonizer's booty.

Given this legacy of dubious practices, it is understandable that many social scientists studying the Maghrib today are suspicious of research centering on traditional lore and only use the term "folklore" or "myth" as a pejorative. The *mythe kabyle*, for example, is used to mean the incorrect and self-serving manner in which the colonialists chose to interpret Kabyle (mountain-area Berbers in Algeria) history and culture (Ageron 1976). Edmund Burke III labels late French colonialism a "producer of irrelevant folklore" (Burke 1980).

Certainly postcolonial scholars are not incorrect to criticize these phenomena, but the devaluation of the word "folklore," along with its scholars and its folk, has spilled over into folklore studies and has inhibited the study of Maghribian traditional expressive culture. Thus we lack the opportunity to hear what North Africans themselves have to say in their most widely accessible media about their colonial past and their future plans. Some reputable scholars do not want their names associated with either folklorists or folklore "in the usual sense" (Jacques Berque, personal communication).

But the implicating of folklore field studies in the colonialist enterprise, and the subsequent delegitimizing of the word and the field, is not the entire story. Folklore studies are not simply tainted by unfortunate associations with colonialist practices. Unfortunately, ideas about the nature of traditional expressive culture are not much different now from the colonialist assumptions Williams discusses above. American folklorist Richard Bauman, writing in 1986, noted that perspectives on verbal art forms,

strongly colored by ethnocentric and elitist biases that privilege the classics of western written literature over oral and vernacular literature and by nineteenth-century conceptions of 'folk' society, have established an image of oral literature as simple, formless, lacking in artistic quality and complexity, the collective expression of unsophisticated peasants and primitives constrained by tradition and the weight of social norms against individual creativity of expression. (Bauman 1986: 7)

Everywhere there are fieldworkers, whether anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, or folklorists, who continue to define folklore and the folk very much as the collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did. That is, folklore is regarded as the collective world-view of a people (a folk) who belong, unlike the visiting fieldworker, to closed, traditional, or lower-class culture groups. From this point of view derives the rejection of colonial folklore studies as attempts to preserve and romanticize the "quaint" ways of a "backward," *tradition-bound* people, an attempt that prevents them—by design or by misplaced enthusiasm—from participating in struggles for social, political, and economic parity with the "First World," to render them more vulnerable to exploitation and control by the world system. Folklore, from this perspective, is always disabling, a set of social mechanisms perhaps viable in simpler times, but anachronistic for dealing in the world system, another snare for those living on what western scholars perceive as temporal or geographical peripheries.

For this reason, scholars working in the Maghrib since the colonial period often interpret folk traditions as phenomena that separate and isolate the "folk" from mainstream culture.⁷ They have found folklore, even as private group dialogue, repressive, controlling, mystifying, and falsifying. In his utopian sociological study of a southern Tunisian village, *Change at Shebika*, French scholar Jean Duvignaud finds both folklore and folk language inadequate to provide its people with an effective modern-day

discourse. For him, Shebika's inhabitants are guided by a cultural myth that actually hinders their facing and dealing with current circumstances. Living in the "mythic" past, getting poorer and poorer, the Shebikans wait passively on the edge of the desert for the Tunisian government to make good the promises it has made them via Radio Tunis. According to Duvi-gnaud's interpretation, Shebikans do not manipulate their folklore and language; rather, they are manipulated, isolated, and held back by their lore. They need dialogue with outsiders to help them re-perceive the unproductive "myth" in which they are living.

French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu, in his study of Berber Algerians of the Kabyle mountains (again, an "isolated" group), found the proverbs, magical practices, and tales of the Kabyles gentle forms of mystification through which the potential negotiability of economic and political situations was masked. All of expressive culture in homogenous, isolated societies such as Kabylia (as Bourdieu perceives it) reinforces the status quo and serves to hide economic and political inequities. A person's actions within this symbolic sphere "are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery" (Bourdieu 1977: 79). Culture members are homogeneous, according to Bourdieu, and therefore every aspect of the community from religious and agricultural practices to the interior design of the home to language tends to reinforce one circular, unchanging, *doxa*. The possibility of self-re-evaluation of the culture is not possible:

When the conditions of existence of which members of a group are the product are very little differentiated, the dispositions which each of them exercises in his practice are confirmed and hence reinforced both by the practice of other members of the group (one function of symbolic exchanges such as feasts and ceremonies being to favour the circular reinforcement which is the foundation of *collective belief*) and also by institutions which constitute collective thought as much as they express it, such as language, myth and art. (Bourdieu 1977: 167)

For Bourdieu, performance of traditional expressive culture (myth, art, festival, ritual), like other community practice, constitutes and expresses collective thought and maintains an institutionalized status quo harmful to the community. Even in capitalist societies, he says, "The denial of economy and of economic interest . . . finds its favourite refuge in the domain of art and culture" (Bourdieu 1977: 197), the aesthetic realm again.

Any possible role folklore might play in cultural innovation is over-

looked or ignored for yet another reason. There is a long time scholarly and popular fascination with the "timeless" components of folk phenomena—the persistence of a folktale, an epic, a ballad, a certain design of plow or boat, or an irrigation technique. Concomitantly there is the persistent notion that oldest is best, that bits of lore become adulterated over time through folk contact with outsiders or with "modernity." Thus, Fanny Colonna considers the verbal art of the proletariat not worth studying precisely because it has become sullied by modernity and contact with other ways of life. She observes that the proletariat has neither culture nor history, but only a badly integrated *mélange* of the knowledge of the upper class and its own class of origin (Colonna 1976a; see also Dundes 1969). One again gets an image of folklore as the province of the noble peasant—pure but isolated from the mainstream of society, and not in cultural control. Again, because the folk are defined as "not us," as the other, as peasant, folklore is relegated to the preindustrial world. It cannot and should not endure in a modern age.

As for Bauman's second point, as long as literary criticism derived for written literature sets the artistic standards for analysis of verbal art forms, oral literature naturally will be found a flawed imitation of written. In such studies, the folk genre under consideration will tend not to be considered within a spectrum of verbal and nonverbal artistic communication, and crucial situational, social, historical, and cultural context is overlooked. When verbal art (not to mention material culture) is approached as merely an inferior or incomplete form of communication—doing what texts do, but not as well—rather than responded to on its own terms and in its special contexts using the range of folklore theory available for looking at traditional expressive culture, the conviction that folklore is not seriously viable as artistic commentary in a modern global context is reinforced. Again, this accords well with colonialist perspectives on the language and verbal art of the colonized, perspectives that overlooked the fact that speech activity is presently constitutive.

The usable sign . . . is a product of . . . continuing speech-activity between real individuals who are in some continuing social relationship. The 'sign' is in this sense their product, but not simply their past product, as in the reified accounts of an 'always given' language system. The real communicative 'products' which are usable signs are, on the contrary, living evidence of a continuing social process, into which individuals are born and within which they are shaped, but to which they then also actively contribute, in a continuing process. (Williams 1977: 37).

Although Williams does not mention verbal art as a specific instance of speech activity, it is clear that his observations on the defects of colonialist language study can be applied not only to colonial researchers but to those scholars today who assume that interesting verbal art, like interesting dialects, belong to the people on what they consider the peripheries—dominated and socially inferior—and that speech activity is something over which these people have no control, by which they are controlled, in fact.⁸

In sum, folklore is perceived still today by nonfolklorists as an artistically inferior mystifier that not only indicates a less developed culture or sub-culture (isolated, unchanging, homogeneous), but reifies those very traits that inhibit a culture from improving its status in the world arena, from moving from “traditional” to “modern.” Of course, this perspective of folklore as preindustrial and repressive rather than enabling has serious implications for the study of Maghribian language, and thus its verbal art. Folklore, thus situated, is denied its artistic place as one medium through which change, either imposed or invited, is confronted and through which new cultural configurations may emerge.⁹

In this first paradigm, as I have “recovered” it here from a set of ideas embedded in colonial and postcolonial scholarship, folk cultures and lore like hikayat have become stigmatized to the extent that they are considered not viable within the current world system. The very doing of folklore qua folklore arouses suspicions that the folklorist possesses a repressive colonialist mentality or is hopelessly politically naive or is being intellectually irrelevant.

That recent ethnographic studies continue to see the culture or culture members they study as isolated in time or space¹⁰ accords well with and helps reinforce the interpretation of folklore as cognitive remnant or anachronistic social mechanism. When a culture or culture member is perceived as trapped in time-past or in timelessness, its, or his or her, traditional expressive culture (myths, legends, folk religion) can be portrayed as partly to blame for an inability to adjust to a modern world that has outgrown such coping mechanisms. When the culture in question is isolated in space, scholars can perceive this isolation as ensuring both the continuity of folklore and the inability of culture members to imagine alternative ways of life.

But what happens to the perception of folklore as anachronistic remnant if we acknowledge that non-western culture groups are not isolated either in time or in space and are not homogeneous? Recently, some anthropologists have come to agree that most of the “isolated” groups we are fond of

studying are not isolated after all. Addressing cultures as if they were isolated in space or time has been a convenient literary conceit arising more, perhaps, from geographical naiveté than from expediency. The most perfunctory perusal of Kelibian hikayat shows that individuals are very much differentiated, that the community is not timeless and is, in fact, very historically aware, and that the Kelibians are not and have not been isolated.

And, in the Maghribian context, it is not only in Kelibia that the folk demonstrate an immense awareness of cultural difference across time and space. It is evident, for example, simply from reading *Shebika* itself that Shebikans, like Kelibians, were not living in a vacuum before the advent of the French and Tunisian scholars. They had traveled, soldiered, married out or outsiders, owned distant plots of land, had visitors, and so on.

Bourdieu's *Outline* makes no reference to the rich Kabyle and extra-Kabyle exchanges of verbal art and material culture that occurred over centuries of religious, scholarly, occupational, or military cross-cultural contact.¹¹ Although Mouloud Mammeri, the Algerian Berber poet and intellectual, tells Bourdieu that even before the advent of the French there was a good deal of movement in and out of Kabylia by “les colporteurs, les poètes, les femmes, les imusnawen, les marabouts, les simples gens” (Mammeri and Bourdieu 1978: 53), this movement is not taken into account in *Outline*. Since Bourdieu is addressing in his study a circular, curiously static sort of Kabyle time, cupped within a very bounded mountain space, cross-cultural movement holds no place in his theory of Kabyle practice.

Ignoring this cross-cultural movement of diverse sorts of people, including women, gives an erroneous impression of Kabyle culture as static and isolated, unaware of historic process, untouched by the outside world. We know from other sources that the success of the Algerian independence movement depended very much on the effort from Kabylia. At the very time Bourdieu was conducting fieldwork among the Kabyles, they were struggling, along with other Algerians, for their freedom. As a “periphery,” they were vital to the “center” of the struggle, Algiers (or Paris, if you will), and Kabyles were not “innocent” of their strategic significance nor of their historical “situation.” If this situation had been addressed in Bourdieu's study, the “uses” of tradition in changing times might have come to light. Simply knowing as one reads the book that the Kabyles were in the midst of their struggle for freedom makes it difficult to think of them as a people who are isolated or stagnant or whose folk traditions mask from them the fact that they are economically exploited.

Is it not we anthropologists, some scholars are now asking, who have tended to play down cross-cultural communication and historical process in the groups we study because of the difficulty of incorporating such *variable* variables neatly within an anthropological model? Today cross-cultural contact surely is only a question of kind and degree. Is it imposed or sought after, frequent or infrequent, with similar or very dissimilar groups? And what is the degree of cultural or political control the culture group has vis-à-vis these outsiders? Not incidentally, these are the sorts of questions Kellian hikayat often address as well.

That cultural change or cultural reevaluation is likely to be stimulated by cross-cultural contact is also evident. Surely change depends most anywhere on a pool of local and extra-local processes.

Anthropologists are also rejecting now the ethnographic “faceless natives,” the portrayal of culture groups as if members were more or less interchangeable with others of similar age and sex—the “peasant,” the “worker,” the “woman”¹²—and fundamentally different in their responses to their natural and social environs from the researcher and her or his culture—separate but equal. Such representations arise from western folk ideas about the nature of Third World villagers or of tribal groups, as well as from difficulties in “penetrating” close-knit communities, getting to know well a number of group members, and then writing about their differences in addition to their similarities. In these times of the global community, the “savage mind” becomes increasingly elusive. “We are all natives now, and everybody else not immediately one of us is an exotic. What looked once to be a matter of finding out whether savages could distinguish fact from fancy now looks to be a matter of finding out how others, across the sea or down the corridor, organize their significant world” (Geertz 1983: 151). This perspective has resulted in a leveling of difference between us and the other, broadening and personalizing our range of subjects. North American anthropologists and folklorists now see the value of “studying up,” and anthropologists now more frequently study those like North Africans and southern Europeans who are geographically and historically close. Studies of people geographically and historically close render representational conceits of isolation useless, and they leave us vulnerable to the responses and evaluations of our subjects, who can no longer be an unnamed mass from which the ethnographer draws to support a theory or construct a model. This experience in turn is teaching us that all culture groups must be approached in a spirit of reciprocity. The

studied are also the students. No longer can we confine our research to people we assume are unable to respond. No longer can we interpret for them as if they have not the resources to speak for themselves.

In much of North American traditional anthropological and folklore theory I feel there is a tendency to look for the familiar, oneself, in the strange, another culture, as well as to look for the strange in the familiar,¹³ to learn about one’s own community by studying another.¹⁴ This tendency provides another touchstone through which to construct a new paradigm for folklore, for it implies not only the basic “aliveness” of folk but, further, an interest in what we can learn from the historically or geographically removed other that we cannot learn at home. This idea of “traveling” among strangers to look for alternative, adoptable strategies for conceptualizing the world is very “American.” I will quote Robert Pirsig:

By going very far away in space or very far away in time, we may find our usual rules entirely overturned, and these grand overturnings enable us the better to see the little changes that may happen nearer to us. But what we ought to aim at is less the ascertainment of resemblances and differences than the recognition of likenesses hidden under apparent divergences. Particular rules seem at first discordant, but looking more closely we see in general that they resemble each other; different as to matter, they are alike as to form, as to the order of their parts.” (Pirsig 1974: 259)

And James Boon says,

Our own streetcorners are perhaps microsocieties, and our own quadrangles enclose semantic universes; but studying them alone cannot reveal the ultimate culture that they contrastively represent. Hence anthropology’s apparent inefficiency, its worldwide circumlocution, and its most distinctive fetish. (Boon 1985: 4)

Similarly, anthropologist Stephen Tyler writes, “For it is not for us to know the meaning for them unless it is already known to us both, and thus needs no translation, but only a kind of reminding” (Tyler 1986: 138).¹⁵ All that is lacking in these quotations in order to legitimize cross-cultural dialogue is acknowledgment that the other can knowingly participate in this process—also teaching, learning, adopting, and adapting within the arena of common humanity.¹⁶ We “tend to allow our senses to penetrate the other’s world rather than letting our senses be penetrated by the world of the other” (Stoller 1984: 93)

Each of these quotes addresses the break with the “savage mind” in

which “natives” are thought to have a completely different way of thinking about their natural and social environs—separate but equal. The move back from this perspective is a delicate one, liable to accusations of a return to the old, culturally relativistic, nonevaluative anthropology of the first half of the twentieth century, but a move that is particularly important when studying a people like Kelibians who are a part of the same circum-Mediterranean tradition out of which much of western culture is formed. Kelibians are so close to us culturally that we may miss the differences or we may emphasize the differences to *make* a difference. What sets Kelibians off from us culturally is not a “savage mind” but small surprises about communicative techniques and aesthetic standards, and larger variations from at least what most of us are used to in social structure, and very large differences in historical baggage.

It is from this leveling process wherein we are “all natives now,” and the other has something to teach us, that an important basis is established for a shift in emphasis within the field of cultural anthropology to a folklore paradigm with productive potential for the representational challenges in the doing of ethnography that we will face in the twenty-first century. It is only a small step from the jettisoning of the savage mind to the realization that folklore is not the product of a special kind of mind, whether savage, rural, or preindustrial.⁷ At a certain level of abstraction we have, at least potentially, access to similar, mutually comprehensible ways of dealing with the world-in-process. We all share the potential of drawing upon diverse rhetorical media, some folk and some not, depending on specific historical, social, and cultural situations in which we (as individuals or members of folk or nonfolk groups) find ourselves.

There are several potentially powerful ideas floating around now in the mainstreams of anthropology and folklore that when pulled together form a paradigm of folklore useful, perhaps even essential, as one component for meeting the demands of the “new” ethnography. Among the several fronts on which folklore theory and anthropological theory are reaching basic points of accord that would allow for this more profitable role for folklore within the arena of cultural representation, the most important is this leveling of basic barriers among culture groups. For many North American folklorists the similar leveling premise in folklore to “we are all natives now” is “we are all folk now” too. Reference to North American folklore studies in the *Journal of American Folklore* indicates that, in fact, folklore—from lullabies to foodways to jokes, proverbs, riddles, and stories—is

found in all strata and spectra of society. Most of us are members of several folk groups—familial, academic, religious, regional, linguistic—some with more powerful performative resources than others. It is this concept of common folkness⁸ in addition to my involvement in the worlds of Kelibia and academia that enables me to see that the two perspectives on folklore presented in this chapter are formed in very much the same way Kelibians form their community “paradigm”⁹—often starting with face-to-face interaction in congenial small groups sharing very particular historical and cultural (including, in this case, scholarly) contexts. In turn, these folk ideas about folklore, embedded and sometimes hidden in larger scholarly or social discourses, inform two different kinds of social-scholarly rhetoric about how folklore appears (or does not) in ethnographies.

American folklorists’ long tradition of studying folklore not as the province of a specific class or social setting, but as a vital component of our common humanity (one of the touchstones of the second paradigm) derives from a cultural and intellectual history very different from that described in the first half of this chapter. Under the influence of the American populist tradition and Thoreauian celebration of the rural, folklorists neither confine lore to the peasantry nor use the term “peasant” to describe rural farm folk. Américo Paredes points out that most folklorists in the United States cannot use the term “peasant” without feeling they are being insulting and elitist, or undemocratic. Since many American folklore studies are reflexive rather than directed at the other, it is not surprising that the definition of “the folk” has gradually expanded so that “the folk” in its broadest sense is “*any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor” (Dundes 1965: 2). We are all, then, members of several folk groups—I, no less than the Kelibians. Besides the folklore of those who traditionally have been studied as folk groups (the rustic, isolated, homogeneous, unsophisticated), the lore of groups such as college professors, students, Wall Street brokers, pilots, and the patrons of singles bars and fast-food restaurants must be taken into account.¹⁰

A second point of accord that mainstream anthropologists and folklorists as well as other scholars are beginning to reach is that folk communication is not an inferior form of communication. Folklore can be as powerful a cultural tool for change or aggrandizement in cross-cultural or intra-cultural dialogue as any other artistic medium. On the one hand, this is evident when looking at the folk forms of Emersonian civil disobedience with their accompanying folksongs, folk poetry, folk heroes. In this

context we realize the power of our folkness and folklore to use tradition artistically in the cause of change as much as to resist change. Since 1888, when folklore was established as a discipline in America, folklore has been perceived as emergent. Scholars have watched as traditions have been adapted to unique personalities and new lifestyles, Old World to New World, country to city to suburb, cornfield to oil field. Those folk most visible were those ethnic, occupational, or age groups militating through song and story for social change, or those involved in physical, dirty, and dangerous occupations. Thus, the rhetorical dimension of folklore as significant in the fashioning of emergent culture was very evident. In addition, as the lore of the lumberjack, for example, was adopted and adapted by the oil-field roughneck, and the protest songs of the dust bowl 1930s were evoked in the anti-war 1960s, the adaptability of traditional forms to new expressive needs was demonstrated.²⁰ Even when the lore of the folk was romanticized, and distinctions made between folk and nonfolk, American folklorists seem always to have felt that the "folk" were our teachers, that we needed to listen and learn from them. Many folklorists emphasized and were proud of their own "folkness."

"Activist" folk traditions in the United States from sit-ins (lunch-counters, all men's clubs, university presidents' offices) to marches (integration, women's rights, anti-Vietnam war, gay rights, abortion rights) to burnings (books, flags, bras, draftcards) are recycled with similar structures but new content. As cities expanded, scholars began to appreciate the power and vitality of the lore of city folk. Little wonder, then, that the lore of the people (all of us) came to be perceived not as mystifying or static but, complexly, as ammunition on a cultural battlefield—a source of strength for any community, even a Mediterranean town or a Kabylia or a Shebika to draw on, no matter how lacking in financial or formal institutional strength.

At the same time, we now are realizing that despite the potential for powerful insight that literary criticism brings to an analysis of folkloric forms, be they verbal, material, or textual, the impulse in our culture (and, even more, in the Arab world) to privilege institutional or establishment literature and art is one factor that can lead us to overlook in less overt folkloric performances, especially of the other, artistically and rhetorically powerful strategies, especially *strategies of intimacy*, that are not possible (or not possible in the same way) in so-called high culture forms. From the examples of the hikayat, however, we can see that oral folk performance is

far more than a text, and even that performance itself exists in a dialogue both about and with tradition and the past, with insiders and outsiders, with the present and the future. We need to respond to orality (or traditional material culture or any folk form) on its own terms and in its special contexts, whether we draw upon analytical techniques such as narratology, new criticism, formalism, or structuralism or not.

To understand and participate in the potential richness of folk dialogue, scholars are now paying close attention to logical connections among the corpus, its situational context, and its cultural matrix as well as to the structure and processual unfolding of specific performance events. Only thus can one discover the unique qualities that "performer" and audience together bring in the details of a specific performance (the social context in which society and folklore merge) to a traditional folkloric item—be it poem, riddle, game, or artifact—qualities that potentially allow for transformation of the social structure.²¹ As has been shown, the "message" of a hikayat, for example, is not contained simply within the narrative itself, but is a product of relationships among narrator, narrative, audience, and their cultural and personal past, present, and (projected) future histories.

In this way we are continuously reminded that it is as impossible to exhaust the multivocalic range of a particularly good piece of folk literature performed over time as it is to "complete" an analysis of Hamlet, for example. A study like this one of the meshing of the aesthetic and the social in Kelibian hikayat can touch only some of the most significant and surprising messages or meta-messages realized by the interplay of the texts and contexts I participated in.

Anthropologists today are rejecting old methodologies and ideologies and casting about for methods of ethnographic representation that are dialogic,²² that include the voice of the other, that include both affective and objective components of a society, and that seek to describe groups as they are situated in space and time. If we accept our common "nativeness," our common "folkness," and attend to folklore as a powerful artistic and rhetorical resource for subversion or celebration, then the interpretive potential of folklore and folkloristics to speak to these issues is evident. It is through folklore that we can look into social groups more thoroughly, to find displayed, to have described to us, and to discuss with members of another folk group the centripetal forces that bolster them. And we can look outward with them to understand better, to have explained from their centered point of view, their micro-place in the macro-scheme of things.

When one turns to study traditional anthropological communities in their neglected historical and cross-cultural contexts, community resources available for handling that outside contact seem pitifully inadequate when gauged by western standards. At first glance, Kelibia, Shebika, and Kabylia would seem vulnerable to the impositions of outsiders. They are all members of former colonies peripheral from a western perspective in the global scheme. They are also all peripheral, geographically and culturally, to the centers of power within their own countries. What resources would such groups have through which to maintain a sense of cultural control or pride? I am convinced that, as in the case of Kelibians, Shebikians, and Kabyles, more attention to the affective (including folkloric), in conjunction with the objective, dimensions of other cultures, including those beloved of ethnographers, will reveal that these communities too are neither isolated from awareness of historical process and from the outside world nor helpless before them.

Once we acknowledge our common folkness and the right to privilege other artistic media than the written, it is clear that Kelibians could not, any more than we in similar circumstances could not, be ignorant of the nature of the colonizer discourse on the colonized. In a very real sense, the hikayah-telling events presented in the last two chapters are a response by the narrators to outsiders in positions of power who would devalue their way of life and their very means of communicating. They are a part of this larger dialogue whether I choose to recognize that or not. What we have begun to see is that colonizers and "culturally superior" outsiders of yesterday and today are an unseen presence to which the male storytellers are responding across genres, across channels (written-oral), across time, and across cultures even while, and also because, they are engaging in conversation with the young men and children of Kelibia. If outsiders would assert that Kelibians lack control of their lives, their past and future, their individuality, their very speech, hikayat are a forum for revealing various configurations of folk power. Their aggrandizement of Kelibia and Kelibians vis-à-vis the outside world is necessary precisely because of the devaluation of their culture and is, I argue, one thing that makes the old stories so attractive to the young—part of what gives them, both men and women, their remarkable self-confidence and success in the face of political, linguistic, and economic devaluation and difficulty.

A look at one Kelibian folk form has revealed that Kelibians are aware of their vulnerability vis-à-vis the outside world and of the devaluation of

their folk culture as homogeneous, isolated, nonviable, inferior, and so on by that world. Kelibians know at least some of the ways in which they are stereotyped by outsiders, and (as is their custom) they couch an oblique and embedded reply to me, to the outside world, in hikayah-telling events as one level of their multivocal communication. Are Kelibians homogeneous, passive, "constrained by tradition and the weight of social norms"? Are they insular, unchanging, unlettered, "peripheral" culturally and geographically? As we have seen, every narrative event moves Kelibia center stage. Cultural standards are set by the narrator in collaboration with his or her audience and their shared communal and cultural context. We see individual cultural "deviance" or defiance or change valued along with conformity or continuity. In two different sequences we witness the negotiation of beliefs about magic practices and about genies—examples of community change both influenced by and influencing hikayah-telling. We find cosmopolitan Kelibians listening to war news on the radio and following battle progress on a map. Insularity is belied as well, in the person of the narrator and audience, many of whom have traveled and have distant connections. And, of course, community coherence itself has been forged around the fact that every family traveled to Kelibia in the not too distant past. We see Kelibian respecters of knowledge arranging for their children to study at night because they are needed to work during the day. We hear stories where Kelibians get the best of improperly behaving (by community standards) Germans, Italians, French, Tunisians, Ottomans. We see cultured Kelibians harvesting, hunting and tracking better than migratory country folk, and traveling Kelibians besting those they encounter on the road. One day the young men in the group will tell similar stories. In sum, the stories demonstrate control, rather than passive fatalism. They signal "Do not underestimate us—the richness of our dialect, the resourcefulness of our people, our love for and understanding of our community."

Listening when Kelibians tell me about their strengths through their hikayah-telling events forces a kind of response. Taken together these storytelling events are at one level of abstraction an answer to any non-Kelibians who would marginalize or underestimate the affective and practical power of the community and its individual members. Kelibians have powerful national and international connections never mentioned in these stories—doctors, politicians, scientists, artists, media personalities, lawyers. But these people too need to prove themselves by Kelibian standards of family and community loyalty, including weekly returns, participation

as “one of the boys” in the evening sahrab, as “one of the girls” in the drama of motherhood and in the serious talk and banter involved in the lengthy communal preparation for an extended family meal, a wedding, or a holiday celebration.

Most of the stories I heard had to do with notable community members of the recent (twentieth-century) past—heroes, tricksters, walis, or devishes. Most were told by older members of the community to younger. It quickly became obvious that the stories were not just accounts of the past, but prescriptions for the future—prescriptions that consistently emphasized certain values, including both the importance of community ties and the desirability of travel, adventure, and extra-community contacts. Further, it became clear that community reality too was being negotiated. Had a certain man or woman led an exemplary life or was he or she a rascal? How should our community members relate to the outside world—city or countryside? How are certain situations dealt with ethically? Do we or do we not believe in individual encounters with jnoun (spirits)?²³ A host of significant community concerns are juggled, using a medium that communally celebrates the experiences of individual town members. Observed in this way, Kelibia emerges not as a helpless, isolated, homogeneous, unchanging community needing external attention to “teach” it how to keep up in the twentieth century, but one that (in the opinion of a group of its older families, at least) through its folklore and the uniqueness of its community members is able itself to give social meaning to alien events. The various sets of both synchronic and diachronic relations among myriad actors (insiders and outsiders, tale-tellers and protagonists, tale-tellers and audience) contain the tensions and contradictions that may lead to change and new structures or may simply provide community members with the means to cope as gracefully as possible with inevitable changes.

What happens if we turn to look at the Kabyles, or Shebikans, or an individual, Tuhami, with this alternative set of analytical touchstones? Vincent Crapanzano wrote in *Tuhami*, his sociopsychological study of one Moroccan individual, “Where . . . there is no longer any relevance in the cultural code to the ‘on going social process,’ there can be no adjustment. The gap is too great. The individual is destined either to lead his life in terms of the frozen symbols of the now irrelevant cultural code . . . or to be cast adrift in the flux of meaningless social activity” (Crapanzano 1983/1980: 83). Certain communities, like Shebika, founder as well. But need small communities always be helpless in the face of changes imposed by

the world system? I think that we have seen that they need not. Has not the privileging of persistence over change in the study of folk or traditional culture, and the school of thought that perceives lore as “anachronistic” or “remnant,” obscured the alternative notion that the very “stuff” of folklore is a tool for which people, including ourselves, find new applications over time and in response to varying circumstances, even cataclysmic circumstances like invasion and upheavals in the world market? Could not Tuhami’s problems be the result not of frozen traditions, but of a loss (for him personally, at least) of the very traditions that can be a resource for navigating the shoals of change? Cannot culture codes and their “symbols” embedded in traditional expressive culture, as well as elsewhere, be made to be relevant by the people and communities who use them? Perhaps it is those lost souls like Tuhami, family-less misfits who cannot master their own Moroccan culture code well enough to lead successful lives, who suffer. Could not one argue that such significance as life holds for Tuhami comes precisely from certain folkloric options open to (but not only to) misfits in Morocco—storytelling, magic, and possession?

Even the people of Shebika, after spending time with Duwignaud’s research team, showed signs finally of effectively reuniting symbol and practice toward practical results: “They no longer regarded themselves as objects of outsiders’ curiosity: they began to question and think things out on their own account” (Duwignaud 1970: 229). But, on the one hand, might not this process have occurred even without the unsettling, *thought-provoking* presence of the research team from France and Tunis? When they went on strike to resist the plans that the central government had for them, I, at least, got the impression that the Shebikans were resisting in ways that emerged from the encounter between Tunisiois’s (the city folk’s) views of what was best for them, and the Shebikans’ own set of traditional values and expectations. Waiting, perhaps more patiently than many of us can imagine, for a propitious moment and a small victory is, after all, as we have seen from the Kelibian narratives, something that colonized people have learned to do. It would not be surprising if Shebikans had sized up and used the advent of the research team to their own benefit.

And finally, Mouloud Mammeri observes of his own folk tradition that the Kabyle poet is “capable non seulement de mettre en pratique le code admis, mais de l’adapter, de le modifier, voire de le ‘révolutionner’”²⁴ (Mammeri and Bourdieu 1978: 64). Later he adds, “Le rapport public-poète est tel qu’une performance poétique peut être véritablement une

espèce de pièce jouée à deux, le poète et son public. Le poète n'est pas seul à créer"²⁵ (Mammeri and Bourdieu 1978: 65)

I would not argue that Kelibia is Kabylia, of course, or that Kelibia is Shebika, for that matter. Kelibia is bigger; it is on the Mediterranean periphery rather than in the mountains or on the desert periphery. Kabyles are of Berber origin. Ethnographic or ethnography-of-speaking studies of each of these three places would look very different, for these and many other reasons. The people of Shebika or Tuhami's fellow Moroccans do not necessarily count change as such a central part of their tradition as Kelibians must. I do maintain, however, that for change to be addressed gracefully and effectively anywhere, tradition must be the conduit and the inspiration and that an approximation of the lively engagement of tradition and change found in Kelibia can be found in the other two places as well. The cultural strength that Kelibia or Shebika or the Moroccans maintained during the colonial period must stem from a powerful counterhegemonic discourse that can in some circumstances as much be appropriated by subgroups within the culture as be directed towards outsiders.

And folklore, particularly the hikayah, relies on its intimate nature not only for its rhetorical and artistic power but for its noncapturability. It is debatable whether the lore itself could be effectively appropriated or damaged.²⁶ The dynamic intra-cultural communication that takes place when a verbal art form or an item of material culture is shared is elusive, not easily harnessed except most superficially by outsiders for their own purposes—be they scholarly or political (Keesing 1974: 88). Colonial scholars often seemed to feel that some essence was constantly eluding them, that they could never quite get behind the cultural "veil."²⁷ This failure may be the very reason that present-day scholars like Jean-Claude Vatin, Philippe Lucas, Kenneth Burke, and others find these old studies somewhat vapid.

In my study of Kelibian hikayat, I have found folklore to be not a fetter, but a potential weapon to be used by people against repression or domination by cultural outsiders. The ambiguity, the multivocal nature of aesthetic communication, so central a concern to many American folklorists and anthropologists working with traditional expressive culture today, should be especially useful in studying a postcolonial or minority group where traditionally what one wanted to say to one's own group often was precisely what one wanted to avoid saying to the dominator. Rather than finding that a folk are stultified by, or open to manipulation through, their

lore, I have found in my research that at least one community of folk take control of the communicative and shaping potential of their lore.

Much of Kelibian folklore, not simply the hikayah, works to enlarge the realm of the possible for the culture group or subgroup presenting the lore in the face of various sorts of pressures and repressions—not simply those of the colonial or western world, but the governmental, the "professional," the natural worlds, and even the domination of men over women or of learned speech over colloquial, of age over youth.

The consequences of ignoring the folk component of any culture become clearer as well. It is not in our own best interests to limit discourse by insisting that it be carried on in one medium only, the textual medium of western "high" culture. Failure to attend to traditional expressive culture as powerful and viable means that certain culture groups, most certainly a majority in the world, are thus denied the right to carry on a philosophical defense of their own culture using the media that most of them have best mastered, and the only ones to which those we most need to hear have access, folk media. (Those we do hear often are those who consent to speak to us in western modes of discourse and using western theory and, to some extent, perspective.) As in the case of Kelibian hikayat, this fact may be more to our detriment, as scholars of the workings of cultures than to theirs, for until we find a way to understand the affective strengths of cultures perceived through western eyes as peripheral, we will not comprehend the centripetal forces that hold these cultures (and our own) together to one degree or another despite their economic and political vulnerability before more global forces.²⁷

Furthermore, if folklore (or attention to it) is blamed for the nonviable aspects of a Third World person or traditional community, practically speaking, that attribution diverts attention from more likely culprits (imperialist, postcolonialist, anti-Islamic or Islamic, anti-Arab, government, even of urban folk ideas of certain scholars about the non-western and the nonscholarly in general)—many of which are dealt with via the structure and content of hikayah-telling sessions themselves.

In sum, we do these cultures and ourselves no good if we refuse to listen to them in their most culturally evocative media. More attention is needed to folk idioms, both theirs and ours. In my Kelibian studies I have shown that it is precisely a genre of folklore that assists Kelibians as we have seen in coping with this "modern age." Nevertheless, when I posit an enabling role for folk expressive culture and study it as an agent of effective cultural

process and as part of the Kelibian dialogue with the outside world, I am not, to borrow Michel Foucault's term, "dans le vrai" for a large segment of the scholarly community (Foucault 1972: 224).

Finally, there are a number of scholars who would not privilege western classics over folk art,²⁸ in one sense, that is, that both are judged equally liable to be tainted through cooptation by the status quo. This is the school of western thought that argues that we are all trapped by culture or the world system (and especially trapped by language) but that Third World people, except, perhaps, for some intellectuals in large cities, are more trapped, because unaware of their plight. "As in the utopianism of the eighteenth century, the other is the means of the author's alienation from his own sick culture, but the savage [or the North African] of the twentieth century is sick, too, neutered, like the rest of us, by the dark forces of the 'world system,' IT has lost the healing art" (Tyler 1986: 128). It is accepted today that we are channeled into certain ways of thinking and acting, but as I have suggested in previous chapters, folklore like all aesthetic culture and like cross-cultural and historical study (not necessarily or even primarily that performed by "scholars") is not a cultural trap but a resource potentially useful for reconceptualizing and enlarging the cultural discourse. This brings us back to Kuhn and the observation that "traditions [including scientific traditions] are not passive entities helplessly battered about by circumstance, capable only of adapting to a concrete, externally defined given" (Hollinger 1980: 201).

In sum, if we avoid perceiving folklore (including traditional practice) as only the province of the other and as inferior art forms that evolved in more "advanced" circles into "high" culture (the value of which is pronounced upon by a cultural elite of intellectuals, experts, and scholars), we then can escape seeing it as the cause of unenviable positions in the world system. We can acknowledge a commonality with the other that will enable us to listen for dialogue rather than find (or impose) structure. This leveling leads to discourse where the folklore of the other can be taken seriously at its community value. Only then can we hear Kelibians, for example, telling us what their situation is in the media they feel are most compelling.



Notes

1. In the last few years social scientists have been particularly concerned with the effect on their research directions and perspectives of the historico-philosophical

climate in which they live and work. Personal or national backgrounds of researchers have been evoked to account for theoretical differences as well as discrepancies in data. There is danger, Bob Scholte points out, in thinking all scholarly differences are factual. (My thanks to Alan Dundes for first drawing my attention to this line of inquiry.) Rather, they derive from culture-specific learning about ways of thinking and perceiving. Thus, in his article "Epistemic Paradigms," Scholte accounts for the often very different French and American approaches to anthropology by taking into consideration implicit historico-philosophical as well as explicit socio-anthropological differences. "I believe," he writes, "that the resolution of the problem of productive communication between rival paradigms lies largely in the domain of history" (Scholte 1966: 1192).

More specifically, Edmund Burke maintains that to understand the discrepancies between French and American scholarship in North Africa we must look as much at the observers as at the observed. Two sets of traditions—those of French and American scholars, the observers—inescapably influence how we perceive and interpret the traditions of an observed third—those of the Maghribian other, the observed. As Burke notes, because of our own political and intellectual backgrounds we begin our studies with certain "inherited" assumptions about society in general and North African society in particular (Burke 1980).

I cannot divide attitudes about tradition, traditional expressive culture, and folklore theory by national schools of thought (French versus American), or even by discipline. These concerns are, in fact, rather peripheral to the main foci of many of the scholars I mention, especially those considered in the first half of this chapter. Scholte's and Burke's insistence on making explicit the historico-philosophical, political-intellectual forces implicit in theoretical differences among scholars is, however, basic to the discussion in this chapter. The "rival paradigms" concerning folk and folk tradition between which I am trying to "establish communication" are those of certain folklorists, anthropologists, literary theorists, sociolinguists, and historians of a populist bent versus those French *sociologues* and others, including Americans, closely associated with them who are of a more traditional western Marxist intellectual inclination and who, unlike most in the first group, have worked in the Maghrib and suffered the legacy of colonialism. I find that the two groups of scholars do not fall into two camps but rather along a continuum. Thus I quote Williams in *Marxism and Literature* to support my "populist" understanding of the power of verbal art. Sometimes their earlier works seem to be mediated on this subject by their later. The populists' paradigms are often informed by western Marxist social science theory as well, but this theory is diluted for them in interesting ways by an overlay of populism that empowers individuals and small groups or the underdog in ways not attended to by the former. To the question "can groups—ethnic, national, village, neighborhood—still make a difference, manage to maintain an effective sense of identity," the former populists would be more likely to make the positive answer, the idealistic choice. (See Clifford 1980b for a short discussion of the usefulness of "culture" as an organizing principle.) (For a more general discussion of some implications of western Marxist theory for folklore studies see José Limón 1983: 34–52.)

2. Much of my research on the subject of French folklore scholarship in the Maghrib during the colonial period was done with the help of a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship. If my interpretation or chosen examples seem to some social science scholars who are devoted to this region and time period to be a bit skewed, I ask them to keep in mind that my central focus was and is fieldwork done on traditional expressive culture: verbal art forms (riddles, jokes, myths, proverbs); visual presentation of self (tattooing, hair design, clothing, body decorations); folk religion; rituals, festivals, and carnivals; material culture (handicrafts, folk architecture, boat building); or folk medicine. Thus I may seem to slight at times the more well-known scholars of the day for the relatively obscure.

The study in progress on French folklore scholarship in the Maghrib from which I have drawn much of the material for Chapter 4, is designed with two objectives. The first is to describe the development of French colonial folkloristics in the Maghrib in the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century western scientific thought. What shared scientific and historico-philosophical background led French sociologists, ethnographers, and linguists to make so many folklore studies in the Maghrib? Which traditional aesthetic structures did they choose to concentrate on? What did they expect to find?

The second objective is to analyze the best early French works in light of the very different theoretical tools and fieldwork methodology of current trends in American folkloristics and anthropology. This analysis will be used to answer two questions: How can contemporary folklore theory be employed to give new perspectives on early materials and on the colonial context in which the materials were gathered? And how can those older and colonially tainted texts (which are often ignored and attacked today) be drawn on to enhance the work of contemporary social scientists?

3. "to the pioneers of the first hour, some of whom no doubt remember the prosperity that the ancient era revived there and find encouragement in this memory."²

4. Under the pretext of apostleship, of charity, of pilgrimages, and of monachal discipline, numerous representatives of these bodies of worshippers travel throughout the Islamic world, which has neither borders nor country, and they put in permanent contact Mecca, Djibouti, Istanbul, or Baghdad with Fez, Timbuctu, Algiers, Cairo, Khartoum, Zanzibar, Calcutta, or Java. Taking a thousand forms one after the other, these merchants, preachers, students, doctors, workers, beggars, charm-makers, showmen, fools deliberately shamming others, or visionaries unaware of their mission are, often and everywhere, well received by the faithful and effectively protected by them from the underground investigations of governments.

5. See, for example, Jean Besancenot's short work on Moroccan clothing or S. Biarney's ambitious ethnographic and linguistic study of North Africa.

6. This perspective fits in with the psychology of the day. C. G. Jung traveled to Tunisia in 1920 and observed a festival for a "marabout" down in Nefta: "This scene taught me something: these people . . . are moved and have their being in

emotion. . . . the ego has almost no autonomy" (Jung 242). In his widely known *The Philosophy of History*, G.W.F. Hegel observes:

We now leave Africa never to mention it again. For it is not a historical continent, it shows neither change nor development, and whatever may have happened there [that is in Africa] belongs to the world of Asia and of Europe. (Hegel 1900: 99)

7. Please notice that I am not directing myself necessarily to folklorists, but to scholars who work with or comment upon folkloric material (verbal art, folk architecture, ritual, festival) in their field studies in the Maghrib. Also, I am not considering those scholars, either French or American, who confine themselves to literary, textual analyses of verbal art forms.

8. The oral-written division is as effective in its own way as the folk-nonfolk dichotomy in inhibiting the development of a dialogic anthropology. See, for example, Finnegan (1973) for a careful look at how our assumptions about literature affect our attitudes toward nonliterate groups.

9. In the study of folkloric events as in the study of any sign system:

'Sign' itself . . . has to be revalued to emphasize its variability and internally active elements, indicating not only an internal structure but an internal dynamic. Similarly, 'system' has to be revalued to emphasize social process rather than fixed 'sociality' . . . Here, as a matter of absolute priority, men relate and continue to relate before any system which is their product can as a matter of practical rather than abstract consciousness be grasped or exercise its determination. (Williams 1977: 42)

10. Eickelman notes that ". . . until the last three decades the main thrust of anthropology has not been in the study of complex societies or civilizational traditions. As late as the 1950s most anthropological studies of the Middle East concentrated upon villages and pastoral nomads" (Eickelman 1984: 282). Or, as Elizabeth and Robert Fernea observe, ". . . until recently much anthropological research has assumed that the group being studied exists in a kind of isolation, a never-never land of self-containment . . ." (Fernea and Fernea 1983: 315). Also see Rosaldo (1980: 24-28) and Marcus and Fischer (1986: n.1) for useful discussions.

I am very much taken by the similarities between critiques of orientalist approaches to the study of the Third World and critiques of the study by some folklore scholars of women in American culture. Debora Kodish writes of two women folksingers, "Both women are described [by the folklorist researcher] as . . . awakened to the new worth of their heritage, transformed by the folklorist's visit" (Kodish 1987: 574). She continues:

We have descriptions of silent folk waiting for discovery by outsiders. Taking these accounts at face value, some scholars have debated the marginal status of expressive and creative individuals within folk society. While opportunities for creative expression may vary within small-scale rural communities (especially for women), it is still true that the depiction of such encounters has the power of a convention, functioning as symbol rather than fact. However marginal, individuals have voices and identities within their communities. (Kodish 1987: 575)

"Folklore Theory," she concludes, "[no less than literary theory, writing, or ethnography] is constrained by powerful and patriarchal subtexts. [The studied] are our guides in deconstructing standard or canonical texts" (Kodish 1987: 577).

11. What seem impassable to us, Kabyle mountains, the Sahara, the Mediterranean, get us "stuck" in geographical and thence cultural clichés.

12. This definition limiting "the folk" to peasants is shared by Latin American folklorists. Thus folklorists should properly study only peasant culture. "To the [Latin American] folklorist belongs the peasant, and he must be careful not to step out of bounds into the other social groups" (Paredes 1969: 31).

13. See also Roy Wagner, "Whether [the anthropologist] knows it or not, . . . his 'safe' act of making the strange familiar [by calling the situation he or she is studying 'culture'] always makes the familiar a little bit strange. And the more familiar the strange becomes, the more and more strange the familiar will appear" (Wagner 1978: 11). In other words, self-knowledge is drawn "from the understanding of others, and vice-versa" (Wagner, 16).

14. Dundes (1971: 101).

15. Eickelman writes, "Anthropologists are particularly concerned with eliciting the taken-for-granted, shared meanings that underlie conduct in given societies and are so familiar a part of routine that they are taken to be 'natural'" (Eickelman 1989: 21). When David Schneider writes about American kinship or Erving Goffman gave a lecture on "The [Academic] Lecture" or Mary Douglas writes about British working class eating patterns or Danielle Roemer writes about her college students' visual riddles, then certain "ways we go about things" that seemed natural suddenly do not. Surely other societies have culture members who reconceptualize for everyone what has been going on under their very noses, and outsiders, like anthropologists, might, as outsiders, be very good at this. This is something members of social groups, *sans rancune*, can do for themselves and each other. But it is for community members themselves to acknowledge or deny that crucial "flash of recognition" that comes from an astute insight, well presented.

16. Jane Bachnik writes, for example,

process, reflexivity, and understanding are increasingly acknowledged in the social reality of the ethnographer, but they have not been similarly acknowledged for the native in the cultures we depict ethnographically. This oversight creates a gap between ethnographic texts (which are increasingly self-conscious, multi-leveled, and dialogic) and their depictions of social life that are markedly devoid of the same characteristics. (Bachnik 1986: 76)

And Wagner adds, "every time we make others part of a 'reality' that we alone invent, denying their creativity by usurping the right to create, we *use* those people and their way of life and make them subservient to ourselves" (Wagner 1978: 16).

17. See Linda Dégh (1988) for a concise summary of this "new folkloristics," which, as she indicates, is no longer very new.

18. This perspective is not that of all mainstream American folklorists. It is one I acquired from the scholarship of Alan Dundes, from Richard Bauman's early penchant for looking for folklore "in all the wrong places" (among Quakers and at the La Have Island General Store, for example), from Ellen Steckert's emphasis on

"subtle" folk singing performance styles, and from my own already formed inclinations and interests. Patrick Mullen points out that national culture scholars (e.g., Henry Glassie, John Vlach) tend at times to idealize the folk as other (than the scholar), being "lower-class, communal, and sharing" rather than "middle-class, hierarchical, and acquisitive" (Mullen, personal communication). Obviously some of the exploited also exploit or would if they could. As Mullen also points out, many American scholars of urban legend, like Jan Brunvand, at times slip into "debunking," thus implying a certain contrastive lack of sophistication and subtlety for the legend tellers.

19. It should be emphasized that a folkloric study of these groups would focus on their expressive culture (verbal art, material culture, visual presentation of self) as communication. In this text, a restricted range of storytelling phenomena is being treated ethnographically: so, only certain, albeit highly significant, aspects of Kelibian culture are being attended to.

Although one study of culture-in-general cannot "speak for" all members of a culture—men and women, rich and poor, young and old—I do feel that my observations on the communal aspects of the hikayat are valid and central to their interpretation. While making some general observations about the Kelibian world view, my particular emphasis is on the implications of the hikayat for a group of older and younger men from some of the older, more established families in town. Class is very fluid right now because of the opportunities, educational and otherwise, opened up since the end of colonialism. Even the richest of the old families have poor members and vice versa. On the other hand, some of the wealthiest families in town (the wine merchant's and that of a man who is a member of the secret service, for example) are not considered quite respectable. One claim to high status in the town, however, is membership in one of the older, respectable town families, including but by no means limited to those of Ottoman descent. All of the people, rich or poor, men or women, who contributed stories share this long-time resident status.

20. See as well Bruner in Turner and Bruner (1986) for an illuminating account of how ethnographic "stories" change from acculturation stories to resistance stories.

21. For further discussion of the viability of this perspective see Bauman (1977b) and Keesing (1974: 92–94). Pierre Bourdieu cautions against the "occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation," but although "the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction" the seeds of change, or strategic responses (imposed or possible) to change are sown in those settings (where else?) and so some truths can never be arrived at without attention to specific occasions. See Bourdieu (1977: 81).

22. See Dwyer (1982), Crapanzano (1985/1980), Lacoste-Dujardin (1985) for self-conscious examples of other attempts to right the dialogic balance.

23. For more discussion of the social phenomenon of "agreeing to agree" or the necessity of negotiating reality consult Berger and Luckmann (1966) or Blount's

"Introduction" (Blount 1975b: 1-10) and "Agreeing to Agree on Genealogy: A Luo Sociology of Knowledge" (Blount 1973a: 117-136).

24. "capable not only of putting into practice the accepted code, but of adapting it, modifying it, even 'revolutionizing' it" (Mammeri and Bourdieu 1978: 64).

25. "The public-poet relationship is such that a poetic performance actually can be a kind of play for two actors, the poet and his public. The poet is not the only one who creates" (Mammeri and Bourdieu 1978: 65).

26. Lore can be lost (see also story 23): Musical, artisanal, foodways traditions, and so on can be jettisoned even by a group itself in favor of something that seems to speak more appropriately to the moment or is more convenient—listening to music rather than making it, harvesting by machine rather than by hand, buying food or pots rather than making them, or making another kind of pot, music, or food. These phenomena are inherently neither good nor bad though to folklorists the more or less wholesale adoption of outsiders' productions would seem culturally impoverishing. This is how a person (or group) might lose the "healing art" to which Tyler refers.

27. Perhaps for this reason, Gans sees the economic and military superiority of western civilization as grounded in "a superior ethic":

If Mohammed and Marx are understood, as they should be, as heirs of the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is virtually no nation in the world today in whose reigning ideology this tradition is not dominant, however much it may be tempered with or colored by a particular regional heritage. Those countries that are the least successful are precisely those that have found the assimilation of western culture most difficult. (Gans 1983: ix-x)

28. In the sense that is, western bourgeois "aesthetic responses," perhaps even more than "folk" art, lead "almost inevitably to new kinds of privileged instrumentality and specialized commodity":

Yet it is clear, historically, that the definition of 'aesthetic' response is an affirmation, directly comparable with the definition and affirmation of 'creative imagination', of certain human meanings and values which a dominant social system reduced and even tried to exclude. Its history is in large part a protest against the forcing of all experience into instrumentality ('utility'), and of all things into commodities. (Williams 1977: 151)

Final Remarks

In the tale, in the telling, we are all one blood. Take the tale in your teeth, then, and bite it till the blood runs, hoping it's not poison; and we will all come to the end together, and even to the beginning; living as we do, in the middle.

(Ursula K. Le Guin)

The Kelibian hikayah-telling events in this study define and redefine the town and situate it *vis-à-vis* the outside world by means of accounts of its past inhabitants and their concerns. They do this both for Kelibians and for the outside world too, if we choose to pay attention. They represent themselves to themselves, and to us, but they also overtly, obliquely, or by implication represent us. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that the kind of "resistance" that Kelibians mount to outside hegemony is always or even usually reactive. The most powerful "resistance" is to have a community that demonstrably works. The community coheres because it effectively fulfills its own value criteria—close-knit families, hospitable neighbors, opportunities for education, a decent living for most, a certain cosmopolitan outlook in a beautiful and healthy setting—none of which, as we have seen, comes without effort.

Despite the increasing pervasiveness of the modern, technologically adept nation-state, a significant number of the world's population still live within towns that until recently were walled and that still retain a sense of cultural distance from both city and surrounding countryside. These communities have been the largest organized social systems that could provide some security and continuity to most individuals and groups, and that could provide a reputation and identity for a person traveling in the world outside them. As Richard Bauman points out, there have been few folklore studies oriented toward the community level of organization. "The community, representing the social matrix within which much of folklore is learned, used, and passed on, has been largely overlooked" (Bauman 1982: 8). Thus we miss an opportunity to understand more fully by means of