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Generic Distinctions in the Aggadah

Dan Ben-Amos

Introduction

Literacy in traditional societies has a dual, conflicting function, bringing about a reduction in oral performances and, at the same time, the preservation of folklore.[1] When historical societies become extinct, their verbal art is still extant in a variety of documentary and literary texts. These range from religious, ethical, and judicial compilations, to dramas and novellas, to historical accounts, and to personal, administrative, even commercial correspondence. The Mishnah, the midrashic books, and the Talmuds are among the best and most relevant examples of works in which oral narratives and sayings are used in the validation of religious and ethical precepts and in the establishment of judicial precedents. Ancient writers quoted oral tales in their books,[2] or embellished narratives into dramas and novellas, as the classical Greek dramatist[3] and the anonymous writer of the Book of Tobit did.[4] Historians often assigned to folktales a truth value equal to reports.[5] Proverbs and parables appear in the speeches and letters of public figures in a way that is similar to their occurrence in conversation.[6]

Yet the disparity between the social contexts in which verbal art existed and the documentary contexts in which it is currently available poses a serious methodological difficulty. No matter how much the dialects in the written text resemble the spoken language of the time, or how much their style is formulaic and hence reflects oral delivery,[7] or how much their themes parallel folklore subjects in other languages,[8] the extant narratives and proverbs only approximate folktales in their social contexts, but rarely

duplicate them. The reconstruction of folklore from written texts suffers, inevitably, from an information gap. While often there is internal and external evidence that those narratives and proverbs are clearly derived from oral culture,[9] they have remained extant in a secondary context that is only accidental to their dynamic use in society. Consequently, the historical reconstruction of folklore in society must rely on incidental clues, circumstantial descriptions, and comparative studies. The texts themselves have undergone inevitable modifications by their very incorporation into the secondary, documentary contexts.

Form criticism of the Old and New Testaments is an attempt to uncover the oral-traditional elements that writers and editors included in the Scriptures. This has been done through the examination of oral-literary forms (types) and their styles.[10] Jacob Neusner suggests that this research should be extended to the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees before 70 c.e., and has successfully demonstrated the similarity in forms, formulas, and types between this Jewish tradition and the contemporaneous Synoptic Gospels.[11]

However, form criticism, its merits and achievements not withstanding, does not release itself from the double-bind of oral forms in written garb. The method cannot extend itself beyond the documentary confines of the secondary context of written texts. The most that form criticism can do is to explain the literary manner of interweaving oral into written literature. This has been the great achievement of the *Formgeschichte* school.

However, in order to reconstruct the reality of folklore in historical society, in the talmudic-midrashic period, it is necessary to reach out beyond formalism, yet remain within the boundaries of the exploration of verbal art. One of the ways of achieving this task is by the examination of the generic distinctions that were made by the speakers and which are available to us explicitly in genre terms and implicitly in genre structures.

Such an approach differs from form criticism in two respects. First, at the basis of form criticism there is an analytical system of genres which presents a deductive model for the categorization of forms. In contrast, we shall attempt to establish the talmudic-midrashic system of folklore genres inductively, inferring it from the generic terms and from the classificatory schemes that appear in rabbinical texts.[12] Second, in most cases the basis of form criticism is a correlation between at least two of the following three features: style, theme, and parallel comparative subjects. The identification of oral traditional forms is based upon the existence of similar themes in other cultures, or the reoccurrence of stylistic features in the Scriptures themselves. In

contrast, we will attempt to uncover internal structural distinctions in narratives. That is to say, we assume that there is a distinctive distribution of rabbinical figures, and their actions, between the various forms. The relationship between actions and personalities marks off aggadic narrative genres from each other. Consequently, even in those cases in which there is no nominal system of generic terms, there are generic distinctions by which the speakers would understand the significance of a narrative. Since these distinctions are implicit in the narrative plot, and are not dependent on stylistic features, they transcend the particular rendition of a narrative in the available written texts and could possibly indicate the perception of folklore forms as it was current in the Jewish society of the talmudic-midrashic period.

Generic distinctions are necessary for appropriate communication in folklore and literature. They provide frames for meanings, casting any narrative or song within cultural paradigms of speaking that enable listeners to interpret it adequately. As I have proposed elsewhere,

implicit in the cultural system of genres is the grammar of folklore communication and performance. Genres have a prescriptive capacity by which they delineate distinct specific forms. They have also a distinctive capacity. The particular features of genres signify the boundaries of interpretations of folklore expressions, establishing relations of belief, humor or amusement in regard to narrated or sung messages. Last, but not least, genres have a taxonomic capacity, relating individual expressions of folklore to a verbal tradition, and placing any new folklore utterance within the established cultural system of artistic communication. Genres function in culture by means of sets of distinctive features which are operative on cognitive, pragmatic, and expressive levels. The taxonomic features, the conceptual categories, and the terms to name them are indicative of the cultural concepts of folklore forms, and underscore their symbolic meaning. The performance in distinctive social contexts, by socially designated persons, in relation to, or within the frame of, sets of appropriate occasions and situations, comprise the pragmatic generic features. The actual substance of genres, their themes, particular vocabulary, stylistic qualities of content and performance, and the structural relations in narrative plots, proverbial and metaphoric expressions, constitute a set of expressive means for genre delineations and definitions. Together, all these distinctive features of all three levels, of cognition,

behavior, and expression constitute a cluster of features which is a set of signs and meanings defining the symbolic significance of each genre in culture.[13]

In the case of historical reconstruction,[14] as the present study is, not all the generic features are available for scrutiny and analysis. The Talmud and the Midrash offer us only glimpses into the social use of folklore forms, and these are insufficient for the reconstruction of the complete system of genres in their performing contexts. The nature of the documentary context imposes its own constraints. The religious and ethical writings of the Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmuds draw upon narrations that were current in the social contexts of religious worship and learning, such as the synagogue and the *beit-hamidrash*. Consequently these compilations contain allusions to, and examples of, the narrative activities in these locations, but hardly any mention of storytelling in secular places, at home, in the marketplace, or even in the drinking parlors of the time.

The Talmuds and the midrashic books span a period of more than five hundred years in which Jewish society underwent great cultural changes. The length of this era and the absence of definite periodization of the texts imposes a second constraint upon the historical reconstruction of the folklore system. Genres, their classification, and the distinctions between them were subject to variations and modifications. In folklore, as in any other aspect of society, continuity and discontinuity are mutually effective. Some biblical forms of oral tradition could have persisted well into the postbiblical period, yet others could disappear. Even within this long period of the Talmuds and the Midrash, genres could emerge and submerge.

Third, the mutual influences between the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian societies of that time often defy any attempt to formulate a logically consistent system of genres in the aggadah. Jewish society itself was heterogeneous, including people from different regions and different schools of thought. All this is compounded by the errors that scribes inflicted on these texts throughout the ages. Certainly, all these difficulties contribute to the general, and tentative, nature of the present study. Hopefully, in the future it will be possible to refine this preliminary work.

The Taxonomic Terms of Tradition

Folk taxonomy is an ethnic system of order. It reveals the cultural conceptual organization of social and natural reality. The terms speakers of a language use to describe such areas as health, kinship, flora, fauna, and so forth, reflect the cultural order of these domains. A society systematizes reality by the very selection of categories, by their significant attributes, and by their organization in terms of inclusion and contrast. Abstract categories relate to lower-level categories in terms of inclusion and exclusion, whereas categories on the same level have a relationship of contrast with each other.[15] Genre terms in a language thus reflect the systematic order of folklore in a society.

Ethnographers who are concerned with cultural cognition have designed various research methods for the elicitation of folk-taxonomies. Fortunately, talmudic and midrashic texts often provide us with such categorization of tradition in their description of the extent of knowledge of one rabbi or another, and in reference to a particular body of tradition.

The basic categorization in Jewish tradition involves the attribute of transmission, distinguishing between oral and written *torah*. As Jacob Neusner has already pointed out,[16] while the distinction is probably early, the actual terminology appears only in later sources, albeit in tales *about* early figures, and usually in a polemic context. The story about Hillel, Shammai, and the prospective convert, is, by now, a classic example.

> Our rabbis taught: A certain heathen once came before Shammai and asked him, "How many Toroth have you?" "Two," he replied: "the Written Torah and the Oral Torah." "I believe you with respect to the Written, but not with respect to the Oral Torah; make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the Written Torah (only)." (But) he scolded and repulsed him in anger. When he went before Hillel, he accepted him as a proselyte. On the first day he taught him, *Alef, beth, gimmel, daleth;* the following day he reversed (them), to him. "But yesterday, you did not teach them to me thus," he protested. "Must you, then, not rely upon me? Then rely upon me with respect to the (Oral) Torah too."[17]

The distinction between oral and written Torah appears first in the writings of Philo[18] and Josephus,[19] and hence could have been common to Jewish as well as Hellenistic rhetorics as David Daube suggests.

> Hillel's assumption of a written Torah and an oral Torah is highly reminiscent of the pair νόμοι ἔγγραφοι and νόμοι ἄγραφοι or *ius scriptum* and *ius non scriptum* (or *per manus*) *traditum*. It is superfluous to adduce references but it may be worth noting that the terms νόμοι ἄγραφοι and

ius non scriptum do not always signify the natural law common to all men. They frequently signify the traditional customary law of a particular community as opposed to its statute law.[20]
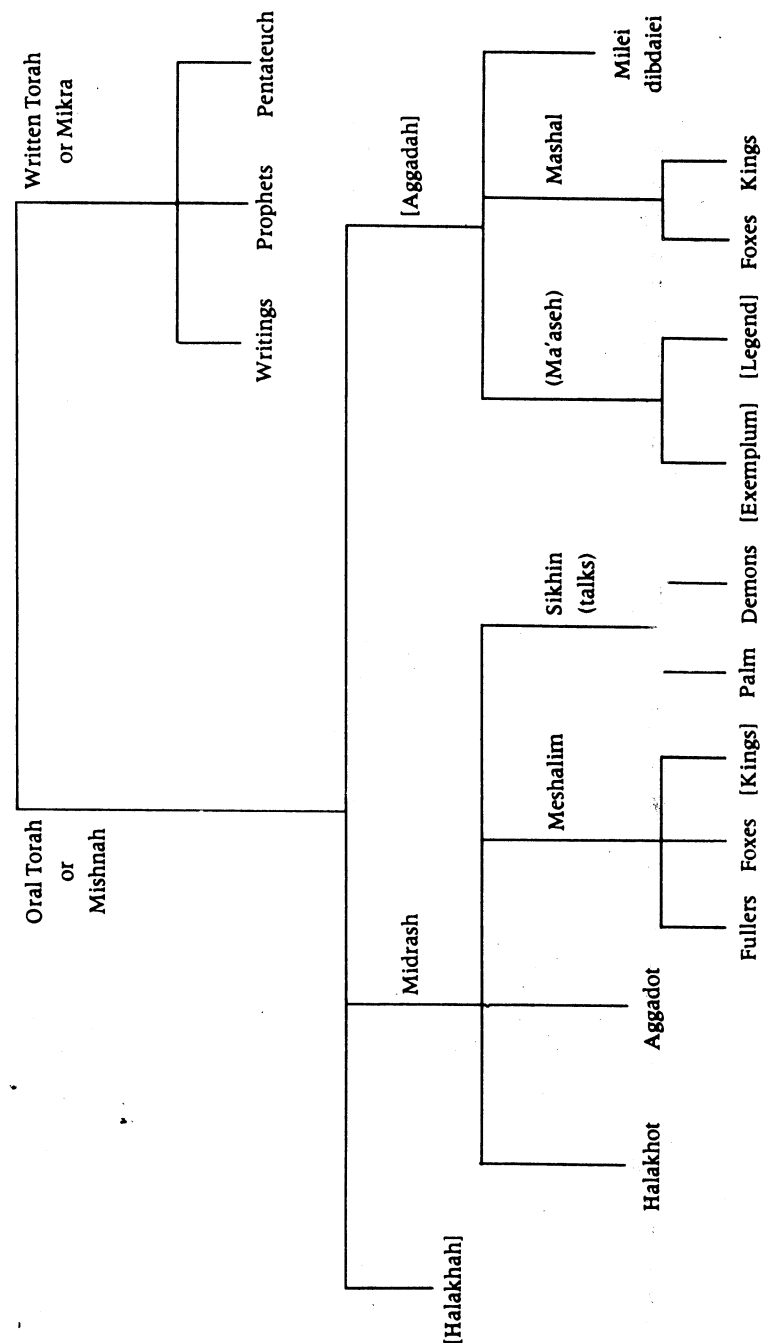
As Daube continues to demonstrate, there are ample Hebrew phrases that could have served as a basis for this idiomatic expression, and it need not have been a Greek cognate. While the terms *torah she-be-al peh* and *torah she-bi-khtav* (Oral Torah and Written Torah) are rare in the texts, the parallel terms *mikra* and *mishnah* are rather common, expressing the same contrast, yet emphasizing the attributes of public reading from a text, and repetition, or learning, without the aid of a script. The most detailed categorization of forms of knowledge applies to Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai.

> They said of R. Johanan b. Zakkai that he did not leave (unstudied) Scripture, Mishnah, Gemara, Halachah, Aggada, details of the Torah, details of the Scribes, inferences a minori ad majus, analogies, calendrical computations, gematrias, the speech of Ministering Angels, the speech of spirits, and the speech of palm-trees, fullers' parables and fox fables, great matters or small matters; "Great matters" mean the Ma'aseh merkabah, "small matters" the discussion of Abaye and Raba; in order to fulfill what is said, *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries* (Prov. 8:21).[21]

On the basis of this categorization, omitting from it methods of reasoning and learning as genres, and on the basis of other schemes of genres found in the Talmuds and the Midrashic books it is possible to formulate a construct model representing the taxonomy of genres in the talmudic-midrashic period (see table). In brackets are terms assigned analytically, which do not appear in folk-taxonomic systems in the literature of the period. The most general categories of *mikra* and *mishnah* contrast with each other in terms of their performance: the first is read aloud from the script, whereas the second is recited without the aid of writing, being a repetition of an orally learned text. The *mikra* is further divided into the three parts of the Old Testament and would not concern us here any further. The *mishnah* stands in these classification systems as a general category which is more abstract than midrash, *halakhot*, and *aggadot*.

The midrash itself constitutes an inclusive category distinguished as a literary mode. As Addison Wright has recently suggested, it is a "literature

TAXONOMY OF TRADITIONAL GENRES

Written Torah or Mikra — Pentateuch, Prophets, Writings

Oral Torah or Mishnah — [Halakhah], Midrash, [Aggadah]

Midrash — Meshalim (Sikhin (talks)), Aggadot (Mashal (Ma'aseh), Milei dibdaiei)

Meshalim — Fullers [Kings], Foxes [Foxes], Palm [Legend], Demons [Exemplum], Kings

Milei dibdaiei — Foxes, Kings

Halakhot

about literature."[22] Functionally, exegesis, as the midrash is, inherently depends upon a previously existing text. The taxonomic systems in the Talmuds and the midrashic books recognize two forms of Midrash, *halakhot* and *aggadot*, which differ from each other in terms of their subject matter and social significance. The *aggadot* refer mostly to narratives and metaphors and have no religious binding power, whereas the *halakhot* refer to custom and law and are socially and religiously binding. The plural form, rather than the abstract noun *halakha* and *aggada*, is employed in these taxonomies, though in other contexts the abstract nouns do appear. Parables are rarely listed next to *aggadot* and *halakhot*, yet they do appear in reference to the knowledge of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. The abstract nouns *halakhah* and *aggadah* are used in the constructed taxonomic system as equivalent categories to the midrash, whereas the plural forms designate only those *aggadot* and *halakhot* that employ the literary form of the midrash, that is, exegetic mode of narrative or judicial exposition.

In fact, while the abstract term *aggadah* does appear in the Talmuds and the midrashic books, it is not quite clear whether it is restricted to midrashic *aggadot* or extends, as later generations employed it, to narratives of biographical historical nature, and parables. The historical-biographical narratives that relate to the postbiblical rabbis-political events, and social reality—are presented, and presumably were accepted, as true accounts of actions that occurred. The term *ma'aseh*, not yet a generic designation as much as an opening formula, reflects the attitude of the narrators and the listeners toward the story. They considered it an account of an historical event. Within this body of narrative *aggadah* which is not dependent on scriptural texts, there are apparently no generic terms that reflect an explicit awareness of forms of historical narratives and their thematic scope. Only fictive or metaphoric genres have names. However, structural analysis of factual narratives will demonstrate that there was a cultural awareness of the different capabilities of each genre, and that each form has its unique thematic domains and relationship between actions and characters.

The Aggadic Legend

Within the body of talmudic midrashic literature, it is possible to discern a narrative form which is unique in its plot, and distinct from other aggadic tales. In correlation with the delineation of forms, there is a limited and specific range of themes and characters that are associated with this genre. The designation of this aggadic genre as legend is done in the absence of a

Hebrew term from that period and in conformity with the current use of the term in folklore studies. One hopes that this resort to an analytical generic term will contribute to comparative-structural studies of similar narratives in other languages.

Within the plots of aggadic legends it is possible to distinguish three narrative actions: intrusion, mediation, and outcome. The basic purpose of the legend is to tell about the abolition of boundaries between the two domains of supernatural and the natural worlds through the intrusion of one reality into the other. While the contact between the two realities is conceived within the realm of possibilities and hence is believeable, it is a major event of extraordinary dimensions and therefore narratable.

The mediation between the natural and supernatural realities is generally carried out by human beings. In terms of Jewish religion, it is impossible to attribute any supernatural power to the miracle-workers themselves. Their only unique capacity is the establishment of active mediation between the divine and the human, usually by means of prayer. Honi the Circle-Drawer[23] and Hanina ben Dosa[24] do not produce rain and cure the sick by themselves, but merely mediate between God and the needy. The third narrative action, the concrete outcome of the mediation between the two realities, establishes a condition which contrasts with the initial narrative situation. It rains in time of drought, the sick are cured, and the dead are revived.[25] The only neutral element in the legend is the domain of the natural world, which does not have an inherent value. Only the particular initial narrative situation has a temporary value which is changeable. All other narrative elements, the actions of intrusion, mediation, and outcome, and the domain of the supernatural world have the capacity of obtaining either positive or negative valences, depending upon the story. The intrusion can be either positive or negative, the mediation benevolent or malevolent, the outcome ameliorative or regressive, and the supernatural world either divine or demonic. A change in the valences of any or all narrative elements does not involve a structural transformation of the genre, since only the valences changed, not the relationship between the narrative elements. Thus, this structure sets the thematic boundaries of the genre: both tales of demons and angels, miracle-workers and witches, redemptions and disasters, could all be legends. After all, in most cases the attachment of value to heroes and actions depends upon the narrator's point of view and attitude and does not necessarily affect the basic narrative structure. Rather, such transformations of valences reflect the range of thematic and structural possibilities of the aggadic legends.

It is possible to delineate four basic patterns of the legend structure which differ in terms of directions and mode of intrusion between the supernatural and the natural worlds.

1. Intrusion of the supernatural into the natural reality through a mediator.
2. Intrusion of the natural into the supernatural reality through a mediator.
3. Intrusion of the supernatural into the natural reality through its agent.
4. Failure of intrusion of the supernatural into the natural reality.

The First Structural Pattern. The first pattern involves the intrusion of the supernatural reality into the natural world through human mediation, the outcome of which is a reversal of the initial narrative situation. There are three subgroups within this pattern, differing from each other in terms of the valences that each of the narrative elements has.

The first subgroup includes tales in which all three actions and one domain have a positive value. The narrative cycles about the benevolent miracle-workers whose prayers are effective exemplifies this legend pattern, as in the stories about Ḥoni the Circle-Drawer, Nakdimon ben Gorion,[26] and others.

> Once it happened that they said to (Ḥ)oni the Circle-Drawer, "Pray that rain may fall." He replied, "Go forth and bring in the Passover ovens so that they might not be softened." He prayed but no rain fell. What did he do?—He drew a circle and stood within it, and said before Him, "Master of the Universe, Thy children have set their faces to me, for that I am as a son of the household before Thee. I swear by Thy great Name that I will not stir hence until Thou shalt have compassion upon Thy children." Rain commenced to trickle. He said, "Not for such rain did I pray, but for rain which will fill the cisterns, pits, and caves." The rain began to fall with violence. He said, "Not for such rain have I prayed, but for rain of benevolence, blessing, and graciousness." The rain fell according to their wont until the Israelites had to go up from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount because of the rain. They came to him and said, "Just as thou didst pray for the rain to fall, so now pray now that it may depart." He answered them, "Go and see if the Stone of Strayers has been washed away." Simon ben Shetach sent to him saying, "Hadst thou not been

> (Ḥ)oni I would have pronounced a ban of excommunication against thee! But what could I do to thee, since thou art petulant before God and He performed thy will like a son who importuneth his father and he doeth his desire?"[27]

In this particular story, there is a dual repetition of the narrative structure, and the access of rain becomes an initial negative situation for the second episode, requiring a secondary mediation before balance is restored.

The tales of this subgroup cluster around certain characters, such as Ḥanina ben Dosa,[28] Simeon ben Yoḥai,[29] Simeon ben Ḥalafta,[30] and Nakdimon ben Gorion, who are known for their benevolent mediation between the human and the divine worlds. They produce rain, cure the sick, and occasionally bring wealth to the poor. These pious men are interchangeable in different versions of the same legend, and in the folklore of the period they have a similar image of humility and devotion. In other words, there is a thematic correlation between the form, themes, and the characters of this genre that is culturally recognized.

The second subgroup includes tales in which the supernatural reality has a negative valence. However, the substitution of a negative for a positive value does not require the successive transformation of the other two variables. A pious man can still mediate between the realm of the spirits and the human reality. For example:

> Once Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Gamliel went to Rome. They came to a certain place where they saw children playing, gathering piles saying: "Thus the Palestinians do and say: 'This is a donation, this is 'one-tenth' gift.'" They said to themselves, "Evidently there are Jews here!" They entered a guest house, and when they sat at the table (they noticed) that every single dish was brought into a small chamber before it was served to them. They suspected that they might have been eating from sacrifices to the dead. They said to their host: "Why do you bring every dish to this chamber before you serve it to us?" He said to them: "I have an old father who took upon himself not to leave that chamber until he would be able to meet Jewish sages." They said to him: "Go tell him: 'Get out since they are here.'" He came out to them. They asked him: "What is the matter?" He told them: "Pray for my son because he does not have children." Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Joshua: "Well, Joshua ben Ḥanina, watch out whatever you are doing." He said to them: "Bring me a seed of flax." They brought him a seed of flax. He seemed to them saw-

ing it upon the table, watering it. The seed looked growing and he seemed pulling till he raised up a woman holding her hair. He said to her: "Untie whatever you did." She said: "I cannot, I threw them to the sea." Rabbi Joshua ordered the Prince of the Sea and he threw them out. They prayed for him and he merited to have Rabbi Judah ben Bethera as a son. They said: "Had we come here only for the purpose of that pious man, we were satisfied."[31]

For obvious reasons, in the Talmuds and the midrashic books there are only few tales involving a negative supernatural reality of demons and witches. Hence it is impossible to establish any correlations between the structural and the thematic features of these subgroups and the characters that function in them.

The third subgroup of the first pattern would have been a legend in which all three actions—intrusion, mediation, and outcome—and the domain of the supernatural world would have had negative valences. Stories about harmful witches that bring destruction to the world would have been the subjects suitable for these narratives. It is quite possible that such tales were current in the folklore of the period. Jews believed in witchcraft, and its associations with women,[32] but the Talmuds and the midrashic books do not include such legends. Yet as a secondary literary context, they do not reflect the entire range of folklore as it existed at the period. Theoretically, at least, we could hypothesize the existence of such tales, which would structurally be conceived as legends.

The Second Pattern. The second structural pattern of the legend involves a change in the direction of the intrusion: the human world intrudes into the supernatural domain and affects the situation there. The actions that people perform upon earth in response to a request from the other world change an initial negative condition to an ameliorative state. For example:

> Rabbi Akiba was passing by a certain place. He met a man carrying a load of wood on his shoulder which was so heavy that he could not walk and he was crying and sighing. Rabbi Akiba said to him: "Why are you doing this work?" He answered: "There was not a prohibited thing in the other world which I did not do, and now they watch me and do not let me rest." Rabbi Akiba said to him: "Have you left a son behind?" He said to him: "Please do not detain me lest the angels strike me with fiery whips saying: 'Why don't you come quickly.'" He said to him: "How can I ease your suffering?" The man said to Rabbi Akiba: "I left a woman preg-

nant." Rabbi Akiba went to his homeland. He said to the people there: "Where is the son of mister so and so?" They said to him: "May his name be blotted out, may his bones be ground into powder." He asked them: "Why?" They said to him: "That thief. He robbed and grieved the people. Moreover, he raped a betrothed girl on Yom Kippur." Rabbi Akiba circumcised him and brought him up. Rabbi Akiba passed by the same place and the man appeared before him. He said to Rabbi Akiba: "You can have peace of mind now for you have given me peace of mind."[33]

Significantly, the mediator in this tale is not a miracle-worker, but Rabbi Akiba, who does not appear in any of the legends of the first pattern. There are not enough texts of this group in the available literature that would allow us to draw any meaningful correlation between themes, figures, and patterns. The paucity of texts also does not enable us to examine the range of possible valences and transformations of this legend pattern. However, it seems worthy of note that in later Jewish folk-literature, the position occupied by Rabbi Akiba in this version is filled by a miracle-worker mediator, such as the Besht.[34]

The Third Pattern. In the third structural pattern of the aggadic legend, the action of mediation is eliminated. The supernatural world intrudes into the natural reality directly through an agent or a miracle. There is a narrative necessity for such a transformation. The prolonged-negative initial situation is missing, and instead there is an emergency condition which only an intrusion through direct intervention can effectively change. There are three principal supernatural agents which intrude into the natural reality, with positive, negative, and neutral valences respectively: angels, demons, and inanimate objects. The angel is a part of the supernatural world, and in the legend it appears on earth for a specific, immediate purpose. For example:

> Once Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa saw the inhabitants of his city taking vowed offerings and free-will offerings up to Jerusalem. He exclaimed: "All are taking vowed offerings and free-will offerings up to Jerusalem, but I take nothing!" What did he do? He went out to the waste land of his city and saw there a stone which he chipped, chiselled, and polished. He then said: "Behold, I take it upon myself to convey it to Jerusalem." He sought to hire workmen, and five men chanced to come his way. He asked them: "Will you carry up this stone for me to Jerusalem?" They answered: "Give us five *sela's* and we will carry it up to Jerusalem." He

wanted to give them the money, but he had none with him at the time; so they left him and departed. The Holy One, blessed be He, arranged for five angels to appear to him in the likeness of men. He asked them: "Will you carry up this stone for me?" They answered: "Give us five *sela*'s and we will carry your stone up for you to Jerusalem, but on condition that you place your hand and finger with ours." He placed his hand and finger with theirs and they found themselves standing in Jerusalem. He wanted to pay them their hire, but could not find them. He entered the Hall of Hewn Stone and inquired about them. (The man in the hall) said to him: "Probably Ministering Angels carried your stone up to Jerusalem."[35]

Hanina ben Dosa is, of course, one of the positive mediators in the postbiblical folklore but in this particular tale the intrusion occurs without a deliberate mediative effort on his part. Actually, in this legend his poverty rather than his piety becomes his most significant attribute, and it is this quality that makes him an appropriate recipient of a direct divine intervention.

While the angels are agents of God, demons represent the world of evil spirits; they have a negative valence, and consequently the outcome of their intrusion is destructive. As is the case with witch stories, complete narratives about demonic interventions are rather sparse in the Talmuds and the midrashic books. Most allusions to demons are in terms of warnings and admonishings rather than fully developed legends. But these, as Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi point out in another connection,[36] could refer to an implicit story that either informants, or in this case, editors, were reluctant to include in their report or compilation. The rabbinical precautions about drinking water on certain days reflect this concern with demonic intrusion into the natural world.

> Our rabbis taught: A man must not drink water either on the nights of the fourth day (Wednesdays) or on the nights of the Sabbath, and if he does drink, his blood is on his own head, because of the danger. What is the danger? An evil spirit. . . . Our rabbis taught: A man should not drink water from rivers or pools at night, and if he drinks, his blood is on his own head, because of the danger. What is the danger? The danger of blindness. But if he is thirsty, what is the remedy? If a man is with him he should say to him, "So-and-so the son of So-and-so, I am thirsty for water," But if not, let him say to himself, "O So-and-so, my mother told me, 'Beware of Shabrire': Shabrire, berire, rire, ire, re, I am thirsty for water in a white glass."[37]

The third type of supernatural agents that intrude into the natural world are neutral objects. These agents are immobile and lack an assumed willpower. The effectiveness of their intrusion depends upon their use by human beings. Usually, ordinary people, with neither saintly nor demonic qualities, find them and exercise their magic power accidently. Often their deliberate use yields unexpected results. For example:

> It once happened that a certain person was coming from Babylon, and sat down to rest on the road, when he saw two birds fighting with each other and one of them killed the other. The survivor went and fetched some herb and, placing it on the other, revived her. It will be a good thing, he thought, if I take some of this herb and revive therewith the dead of the Land of Israel. As he was running along he saw a fox dead and decaying on the road. It will be a good thing, he thought, if I try it on this fox. He placed it on him and revived him. He went on until he reached the Ladders of Tyre. When he arrived at the Ladders of Tyre he saw a lion slain and decaying on the road. It will be a good thing, he thought, if I try it on this lion. He placed some of the herb on him and he came back to life and devoured the man. This bears out the popular saying: "If you have done good to the bad, you have done a bad thing! Do not do good to the bad and no harm will befall you!"[38]

Theologically, this herb is a divine agent, and it is God's will that it fulfills; narratively, its intrusion is accidental, and its outcome depends upon the man and his use, or rather misuse, of the agent. In most cases those who activate these neutral agents are anonymous characters, referred to as "a man," and in that sense these legends differ from others which involve the actions of a historical, or at least, folkloristically named, person. The anonymity of the characters and the unexpected nature of the outcome transform this particular subgroup into a comic form of the legend.

Unique among the legends of the third structural pattern is the Elijah narrative cycle. In the biblical tradition Elijah fulfills the role of the benevolent miracle-worker. He produces rain (I Kings 18:19–46), supplies food to the poor (I Kings 17:8–16), and resuscitates a dead child (I Kings 17:17–24). The resemblance between him and postbiblical benevolent mediators has already been studied by Gad Ben-Ami Sarfatti,[39] who demonstrates the similarities in action and verbalization between these tales. However, in the *aggadah*, Elijah himself assumes a completely different role. In his appearance upon earth he has changed from a mediator to an agent of the divine

world. In popular stories, not messianic or mystical statements and narratives, Elijah appears in different guises in a situation of emergency, rescuing rabbis.

> Others say: Rabbi Shimi ben Ashi swallowed a snake; thereupon Elijah came, appeared to him in the guise of a horseman, made him eat cuscuta with salt and run three miles before him, (and) it issued from him in strips.[40]

In other tales, he appears as a Roman official, a harlot, and as an Arab merchant. Sometimes his actions are unpredictable, as in the following legend:

> There was once a man who prayed at the rear of a synagogue and did not turn his face toward the synagogue. Elijah passed by and appeared to him in the guise of an Arabian merchant. He said to him: "Are you standing with your back to your Master?" and drew his sword and slew him.[41]

Elijah's punitive action enforces normative behavior. The negative outcome, which zealots may regard as positive, changes only the valence of the action, not the narrative structure itself. His sudden and unexpected appearance is an intrusion of the supernatural into the natural world.[42] The notion of, and the stories about, miracles constitute the fourth form of an unmediated supernatural intrusion into the natural world. Miracles are manifestations of the divine upon earth through the performance of an extraordinary act. While the validity of the tales depends mostly upon religious belief, the subjects of miracles could relate to known historical circumstances, as, for example, the Hanukka story, and the explanations of the death of Titus. Historical events provide the narrative context to miracle legends, which explain the known facts by unknown actions of divine intrusion into the world of man and nature.

The Fourth Structural Pattern. The martyr legends constitute the fourth structural pattern of this genre. Indeed, at first glance the narratives about this theme appear to lack the basic domains and actions of the legend. The plot takes place upon earth and any supernatural intrusion is absent. However, closer examination reveals that God is not completely indifferent to the suffering of his believers, nor do they expect him to be unconcerned with their fate. The whole act of martyrdom is directed toward God and is accompanied with the expectation of a last-minute divine intervention. A talmudic traditional saying expresses this belief: "Even if a sharp sword rests on a

man's neck, he should not desist from prayer."[43] A rabbinic decree also reflects this expectation.

> (If) anyone gives himself up (to the Romans) so that a miracle will befall him, (then) a miracle will not happen to him. And (if) anyone gives himself up not for the sake of a miracle, (then) it will happen to him.[44]

Certainly, for theological reasons, Judaism denied the possibility of direct divine intervention in cases of martyrdom, and hence, in the narratives, the divine intrusion is postponed until after the execution. Then the heavenly voice is heard announcing the eternal life earned by the martyr. Thus there is a spiritual rather than actual rescue of the martyr and a belated intrusion, the outcome of which is not observed, but narratively manifested.

> It is related that soon afterwards Rabbi Akiba was arrested and thrown into prison, and Pappus ben Judah was also arrested and imprisoned next to him. He said to him: "Pappus, who brought you here?" He replied: "Happy are you Rabbi Akiba, that you have been seized for busying yourself with the Torah!" Alas for Pappus, who has been seized for busying himself with idle things! When Rabbi Akiba was taken out for execution, it was the hour for the recital of the *Shema*, and while they combed his flesh with iron combs, he was accepting upon himself the kingship of heaven. His disciples said to him: "Our teacher, even to this point?" He said to them: "All my days I have been troubled by the verse, *'with all thy soul'* (which I interpret) 'even if He takes thy soul.' I said: 'When shall I have the opportunity of fulfilling this? Now that I have the opportunity shall I not fulfill it?'" He prolonged the word *eḥad* until he expired while saying it. A *bath kol* went forth and proclaimed: "Happy art thou, Akiba, that thy soul has departed with the word *eḥad!*" The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He: "Such Torah, and such a reward?" (He should have been) *from them that die by Thy hand*, O Lord (Ps. 17:14). He replied to them: *"Their portion is in life.* (Ps. 17:14). A *bath kol* went forth and proclaimed, "Happy art thou, Rabbi Akiba, that thou art destined for the life of the world to come."[45]

Even within the legend genre, there is an implicit selection in the distribution of themes and figures between the four narrative patterns. The mediators of the first pattern hardly function in any of the other legends. Formulaically the martyrdom narratives involve ten figures, but the number and

the exact characters change. However, none of the miracle-workers of the talmudic-midrashic period appears in the martyrdom legends. This mutual exclusiveness could be based upon historical reasons: Ḥoni the Circle-Drawer and Ḥanina ben Dosa are figures that were assumed to live in the first century C.E., whereas the martyrdom stories are told against the historical background of the second century. Yet in the Jewish history of that period there was never a time when miracles were superfluous or martyrdom was not a potential reality. Narrators could attribute acts of mediation and personal sacrifice to a variety of characters, yet they maintained a clear correlation between narrative structures and personalities. Each pattern of the legend has its own thematic domain and appropriate actions; all of them, however, are given within the general framework of its generic structure.

The Exemplum

Overtly there are no apparent stylistic distinctions between the aggadic legend and the exemplum. The opening formula *ma'aseh b* ... or the Aramaic *'uvda b* ... is an invariable element, and though not obligatory, it appears with about the same frequency in both forms. However, structurally and thematically the two genres are clearly distinct. The aggadic exemplum is a narrative form at the core of which lies an ethical, social, or religious value. Unlike other folklore genres from which values can be inferred, in the exemplum the cultural value plays a dynamic role in the narrative structure itself.[46] The value is not the moral of the story and does not appear in the coda;[47] rather, it is an integral part of the plot. Often the value is implicit, and both narrators and listeners are aware of it as a cultural fact that needs no verbal enunciation

The manifestation of values in the narrative occurs in the conscious choice between two alternative ways of conduct. This action can be either an explicit free choice between two possibilities or a value-motivated deviation from a previous course of life. Any further narrative developments, such as future rise or decline of the hero, are conceived as direct results of this act.

The central exemplary deed is a single action that can be a repeated behavior pattern, such as honoring the Sabbath or devotion to study.

It is possible to distinguish two major patterns of aggadic exempla. The first involves a sequence of events in which the initial and the final situations are in opposition with each other. The second pattern centers around a single test episode. Success restores the balance that was disrupted by the trial situation; failure, on the other hand, has tragic consequences and the initial balance completely disintegrates.

The First Structural Pattern of the Exempla. The starting point of this genre is the cultural, historical, knowledge of the hero's attained social position. Accordingly, there are two subgroups of this structural pattern. The first revolves around famous personalities and the way they have achieved their reputation. The second concerns lowly people whose reward of higher status is still in the future. The two groups start with the hero in an initial lowly position, albeit in the first group the orientation of the story is toward the past, recounting earlier events that changed his status, while in the second group the narrative orientation is toward the future, telling about greatness to come. There is, also a clear complementary distribution of personalities and values between the two groups.

The most common narratives of the first exempla group are the biographical narratives of well-known rabbis. Their reputation, leadership status, and scholastic attainments are common historical knowledge, but not so their childhood and early development. In the light of the traditional narratives, their achievements are not a simple direct continuation of their previous activities, but are a result of a value-loaded conscious act of deviation from a previous course of life.

The biographical exemplum is inseparable from its hero. Although personalities of equal status can replace each other in parallel versions, each exemplum is told with the implicit knowledge of the hero's image in society. This information serves as a final narrative situation that often does not require actual verbalization.

The narrative cycle of Rabbi Akiba is perhaps the most elaborate in this group of stories. Non-narrative talmudic tradition quotes him as saying: "When I was an *am ha-arets* I said, 'I would that I had a scholar (before me) and I would maul him like an ass.'"[48] The narratives are quite explicit about his choice of action that transforms his social position.

What were the beginnings of Rabbi Akiba? It is said: When he was forty years of age he had not yet studied a thing. One time he stood by the mouth of a well. "Who hollowed out this stone?" he wondered. He was told: "It is the water which falls upon it every day continually." It was said to him: "Akiba, hast thou not heard *the water wears away the stones?*" (Job 14:19). Thereupon Rabbi Akiba drew the inference with regard to

himself: If what is soft wears down the hard, all the more shall the words of the Torah, which are as hard as iron, hollow out my heart, which is flesh and blood! Forthwith he turned to the study of Torah.[49]

His actual departure for the academies has romantic aspects which are in keeping with his ideas as a rabbi.[50]

Rabbi Akiba was a shepherd of Ben Kalba Sabua. The latter's daughter, seeing how modest and noble (the shepherd) was, said to him, "Were I betrothed to you, would you go away to (study at) an academy?" "Yes," he replied. She was then secretly betrothed to him and sent him away. When her father heard (what she had done), he drove her from his house and forbade her by vow to have any benefit from his estate. (Rabbi Akiba) departed, and spent twelve years at the academy. When he returned home he brought with him twelve thousand disciples. (While in his hometown) he heard an old man saying to her, "How long will you lead the life of a living widowhood?" "If he would listen to me," she replied, "he would spend (in study) another twelve years." Said (Rabbi Akiba): "It is then with her consent that I am acting," and he departed again and spent another twelve years at the academy.[51]

The contrast between humble beginnings and later achievements characterizes several rabbinical exemplary biographies. Hillel the Elder experienced poverty in his student days,[52] Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus left his rich father and went to study the Torah,[53] and Rabbi Johanan sold his property in order to be able to devote himself to his studies.[54] Thus the biographical exempla which revolve around rabbinical figures implicitly contrast their final attainments with their humble beginnings, relating the transition between the two phases to a conscious and persistent adherence to the ideal of learning.

In contrast to these tales, anonymity of the characters is the rule in the second group of exempla. They achieved neither social distinction in their community nor the reputation of following a righteous conduct. Their piety becomes an object of narrative revelation, uncovering their secret conduct, which is contrary to their apparent behavior, or profession.

Rabbi Beroka Hoza'ah used to frequent the market at Be Lapat, where Elijah often appeared to him. Once he asked (the prophet), "Is there anyone in this market who has a share in the world to come?" He

replied, "No." Meanwhile, he caught sight of a man wearing black shoes and who had no thread of blue on the corners of his garment and he exclaimed, "This man has a share in the world to come." He (Rabbi Beroka) ran after him and asked him, "What is your occupation?" And the man replied, "Go away and come back tomorrow." Next day, he asked him again, "What is your occupation?" And he replied, "I am a jailer, and I keep the men and women separate and I place my bed between them so that they may not come to sin; when I see a Jewish girl upon whom the Gentiles cast their eyes I risk my life and save her. Once there was amongst us a betrothed girl upon whom the Gentiles cast their eyes. I therefore took lees of (red) wine and put them in her skirt and I told them that she was unclean. (Rabbi Beroka further) asked the man, "Why have you no fringes and why do you wear black shoes?" He replied, "That the Gentiles amongst whom I constantly move may not know that I am a Jew, so that when a harsh decree is made (against Jews) I can inform the rabbis and they pray (to God) and the decree is annulled. He further asked him, "When I asked you, 'What is your occupation,' why did you say to me, 'Go away and come back tomorrow?'" He answered, "They had just issued a harsh decree and I said, 'I would first go and acquaint the rabbis of it so that they might pray to God.'"[55]

While in the biographical exemplum the value of learning is in the central narrative position, in the exempla of the second subgroup, modesty, charity, and honoring the Sabbath are the key action of the characters. The distinction between the two groups is based partially on the extraliterary factors, such as the reputation of the rabbis. However, theoretically at least, narrators could have attributed to the rabbis adherence to other ethical values. Yet such behavior rarely has narrative manifestations in the talmudic midrashic literature, probably because righteous behavior is expected from religious leaders and hence is not worthy of narration.

The Structure of the Second Pattern of the Exempla. This pattern involves a trial situation which rabbis and students confront. The normal observation of righteous ideal behavior is essential for any trial narration, and hence the characters in this exempla pattern are mostly well-known personalities, or at least their students or relations. The hero confronts a temptation to deviate from the cultural values which challenge his adherence to his ideals. His reaction determines the consequences of the trial episode. A rejection of this tempting element, which is foreign to the hero's world, restores the disrupted balance, but failure results in the disintegration of his entire world.

Thematically, the areas of trial are in opposition to the ideals of the rabbinical society and involve the temptation of material goods and sexual pleasures.

> When (Rabbi Akiba) went to Rome, he was slandered before a certain *hegemon*. He sent two beautiful women to him. They were bathed and anointed and outfitted like brides. And all night they kept thrusting themselves at him, this one saying, "Turn to me," and that one saying, "Turn to me." But he sat there in disgust and would not turn to them. In the morning they went off and complained to the *hegemon* and said to him: "We would rather die than be given to this man!" The *hegemon* sent for him and asked: "Now why didst thou not do with these women as men generally do with women? Are they not beautiful? Are they not human beings like thyself? Did not He who created thee create them?" "What could I do? Rabbi Akiba answered, "I was overcome by their breath because of the forbidden meats they ate!"[56]

The most striking example of the tragic narratives of this genre is actually found not in the Talmud itself but in Rashi's commentary on it. Hence it is of a later era, although he may have learned it from oral tradition of earlier periods.

> Once Beruria scoffed at the rabbinical saying "Women are light-minded" (Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 80b), and her husband (Rabbi Meir) warned her that her own end might yet testify to the truth of these words. He charged one of his disciples to endeavor to seduce her. After repeated efforts she yielded, and then shame drove her to commit suicide. Rabbi Meir, tortured by remorse, fled from his home.[57]

Conclusion

The narrators of the *aggadah* distinguished the legend and the exemplum structurally and thematically from other folklore genres and from each other, even though they lacked a term to designate them as specific narrative forms. The absence of specific linguistic generic terminology may be due to the fact that conceptually, if not factually, the events recounted in both genres were regarded as truly historical. The opening formula *ma'aseh b* . . . or *'uvda b* . . . with which many tales begin reflects this attitude. Thus, the

opening formula indicates the believed historicity of these two genres. This is also the feature that they share in common.

In contrast, fictive genres are clearly marked. The opening formula of the aggadic parable, the *mashal, mashal le-ma-hadavar dome*, clues the listeners to the fictive nature of the tales and to its metaphoric relationship to reality. The figures in these short narratives are either animals or type characters, such as the king, the bride, the bridegroom.[58]

The hyperbolic narratives are also distinguished from historical accounts by theme, structure, and, at least in the early period, by a term. A witty dialogue between the wise men of Athens and Rabbi Joshua ben Hanania (2nd cent.) could illustrate such a tale and the need for terminological designation of fictive narratives.

> They said to him: "Tell us some stories." He said to them: "There was a mule which gave birth, and around its neck was a document in which it was written, 'There is a claim against my father's house of (one hundred) thousand zuz.'" They asked him: "Can a mule give birth?" He answered them: "This is one of these stories."[59]

The term used is *milei dibdaiei*, which indicates the fictional, even false, nature of the account. In a later period most of the hyperbolic talmudic narratives were attributed to Rabbi Bar Bar Ḥanna. Their fictive quality has become their central communicative feature, since the narrator had to indicate their falsity, yet at the same time pretend, and allow his listeners to pretend, to believe in their veracity. To achieve this goal, all the stories are about distant lands and seas, which prevents, so to speak, the narrator and his listeners from exposing the true nature of the reality in those locations. At the same time, the narration develops in a gradual manner until the description reaches dimensions that could not possibly be real any more, thus revealing the essentially fictive quality of the tale.[60]

In contrast to the *mashal* and the *bedaia*, the fable and the tall tale, the telling of truth needs no name. It is not a marked verbal activity. The rabbis assumed that they told the facts of the past. However, implicit in their tales there is a clear distinction between narrative structures correlated with complementary distribution of themes that indicate the significance and capabilities of each of these narrative forms.

Notes

1. For a general discussion see Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968). The concept of folklore is used throughout this paper as defined in Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore*, 84 (1971), 3–15.

2. For example, in his *Satyricon*, Petronius introduces a version of tale type 1510, "The Matron of Ephesus (Vidua)," as one of the stories told by Eumolpus, who "to save our jollity from falling dumb for want of good stories, began to hurl many taunts at the fickleness of woman" (*Petronius*, ed. Michael Heseltine, Loeb Classical Library [London: Heinemann, 1913] p. 229, secs. 110–111). In Jewish sources an early reference to the story appears in the Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 80b (Tosafot). On the general problem of the relationship between storytelling and literature in ancient Greece, see Sophie Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), and also H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York: Dutton, 1959), pp. 286–304.

3. For a comprehensive survey of the traditional Oedipus story, see Lowell Edmunds, "The Ancient, The Medieval, and the Modern Oedipus," Ms.

4. See Frank Zimmermann, trans. and ed., *The Book of Tobit* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958).

5. Wolf Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen*. 2d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1969).

6. See, for example, W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 280–281.

7. Following the work of Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), a research direction in literature has developed, the main purpose of which is the uncovering of the formulaic, hence oral, elements in many medieval epics. For a bibliography on the subject, see Edward R. Hymes, *A Bibliography of Studies Relating to Parry's and Lord's Oral Theory*, Publications of the Milman Parry Collection, no. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1973). Two of the more recent collections of studies on this subject are Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, eds., *Oral Literature and the Formula* (Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, University of Michigan, 1976), and Joseph J. Duggan, ed., *Oral Literature: Seven Essays* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975). For an application of this method to a biblical text, see Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), and for an examination of early *piyyutim* in the light of the "oral theory," see Joseph Heinemann, "Remnants of Ancient *Piyyutim* in the Palestinian *Targum* Tradition," *Ha-Sifrut*, 4 (1973), 362–375.

8. Richard M. Dorson considers the existence of parallel folklore motifs as one of the corroborative evidences for the appearance of folklore themes in a literary context. See "The Identification of Folklore in American Literature," *Journal of American Folklore*, 70 (1957), pp. 1–8.

9. For a general discussion see Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis, 22 (Uppsala: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1961).

10. For surveys see John H. Hayes, ed., *Old Testament Form Criticism* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), and Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical*

Tradition: The Form-Critical Method (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969). Basic studies on the form-criticism of the New Testament are Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d., originally published in German in 1919), Rudolph Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), and Rudolph Bultmann and Karl Kundsin, *Form Criticism: Two Essays on New Testament Research* (New York: Willett, Clark & Co., 1934).

11. Jacob Neusner, "Types and Forms in Ancient Jewish Literature: Some Comparisons," *History of Religion*, 11 (1972), pp. 354–390, and his *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden: E. J. Brill), III, pp. 5–143.

12. For a discussion of the distinction between analytical and ethnic genres, see Dan Ben-Amos, "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), pp. 214–246. See also the Introduction to this volume.

13. Dan Ben-Amos, "The Concepts of Genre in Folklore," in Studia Fennica 20: *Folk Narrative Research: Some Papers Presented at the VI Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research*, ed. Juha Pentikäinen and Tuula Juurikka (Helsinki: Finnish Literary Society, 1976), p. 40.

14. Compare with Hans-Robert Jauss, "Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres," *Poétique* 1, pp. 79–101; Paul Strohm, "Some Generic Distinctions in the Canterbury Tales," *Modern Philology*, 68 (1971), pp. 321–328, idem, "Storie Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie: Generic Distinction in the Middle English Troy Narratives," *Speculum* 46 (1971), pp. 348–359; idem, "Passioun, Lyf, Miracle, Legende: Some Generic Terms in Middle English Hagiographical Narrative," *Chaucer Review* 10 (1976), pp. 62–75, 154–171.

15. The anthropological research direction that is based on this method is known as "cognitive anthropology" or "ethnoscience." Some key studies have been collected in Stephen A. Tyler, ed., *Cognitive Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), and James P. Spradley, ed., *Culture and Cognition: Rules, Maps, and Plans* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1972). For a bibliography see Harold C. Conklin, *Folk Classification* (Yale University: Department of Anthropology, 1972).

16. "Oral Tradition and Oral Torah: Defining the Problematic," in this volume.

17. Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbath* 31a. For another version of this story, see *Aboth deRabbi Nathan*, A, 30b. Compare with the story about Rabbi Shmuel and Rav in *Midrash Rabba Ecclesiastes* 7:8.

18. For a discussion of the usage and the concept of oral tradition in Philo, see Isaac Heinemann, "Die Lehre vom Ungeschriebenen Gesetz im jüdischen Schrifttum," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, IV (1927), 152–153; and Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947). I, 188–194.

19. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 10:6, in *Josephus*, trans. Ralph Marcus, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1926), VII, p. 377.

20. "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and the Hellenistic Rhetoric," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 22 (1949), p. 248

21. Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 28a. Compare also with statements about Rabbi Meir in *Sanhedrin* 38b and about Hillel the Elder in *Masekhet Sofrim* 17:9.

22. Addison G. Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1967), p. 143. In connection with the concept "midrash" see also Roger Le Deaut, "Apropos a Definition of the Midrash," *Interpretation*, 25 (1971), pp. 259–282;

Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "Midrash and Mishnah," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 6 (1915–16), pp. 23–95, 303–323; Solomon Zeitlin, "Midrash: A Historical Study," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 44 (1953), pp. 21–36; M. Gertner, "Terms of Scriptural Interpretation: A Study in Hebrew Semantics," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 25 (1962), pp. 1–27; E. Margaliot, "The Term *drs* in Talmud and Midrash," *Leshonenu*, 20 (1956), pp. 50–61; Isaac Heinemann, "The Development of the Terms of Biblical Interpretation," *Leshonenu*, 14 (1946), pp. 182–189.

23. Mishnah, *Ta'anit* 3:8; Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 23a; Palestinian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 3: 9–10. About his custom of drawing a circle around himself while praying, see Judah Goldin, "On Honi the Circle Maker: A Demanding Prayer," *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), pp. 233–237.

24. Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 34b.

25. Compare with Claude Bremond, "Morphology of the French Folktale," *Semiotica* 2 (1970), 247–276, and *Logique du Recite* (Paris: Edizions du Seuil, 1973), and Denise Paulme, "Morphologie du conte africain," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 45 (1972), pp. 131–163.

26. Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 19b–20a.

27. See above n. 23.

28. Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 24b, 25a, *Yoma* 53b, *Berakoth* 33a, 34b.

29. *Midrash Rabbah Exodus* 52:3.

30. *Midrash Rabbah Ruth* 3:4.

31. Palestinian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 7:13.

32. Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 67a, *Erubin* 64b, *Tractate Sofrim* 6. For recent studies about witchcraft accusations see Mary Douglas, ed., *Witchcraft: Confessions and Accusations*, ASA 9 (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970). Several of these studies deal with the accusation of women in witchcraft.

33. Tractate *Kalla Rabbathi* 2.

34. See Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, eds., *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov (Shivhei ha-Besht)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), pp. 183–184.

35. *Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes* 1:1; *Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs* 1:4.

36. Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, "Legend and Belief," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: University of Texas Press), pp. 93–124.

37. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 112a.

38. *Midrash Rabbah Leviticus* 22:4; *Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes* 5:5; *Midrash Rabbah Numbers* 18:22.

39. Gad Ben-Ami Sarfatti, "Pious Men, Men of Deeds, and the Early Prophets" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, 26 (1956), pp. 126–153.

40. Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbath* 109b.

41. Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 6b.

42. See also Beatrice Silverman Weinreich, "Genres and Types of Yiddish Folk Tales about the Prophet Elijah," in Uriel Weinreich, ed., *The Field of Yiddish: Studies in Language Folklore and Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), pp. 202–231.

43. Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 10a.

44. *Sifra*, Emor, chap. 9.

45. Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 61b.

46. For another genre in the structure of which the cultural value has a central position, see Dan Ben-Amos, "The Situation Structure of the Non-Humorous English Ballad," *Midwest Folklore*, 13 (1963), 163–176.

47. For a discussion of the coda in narratives, see William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 365–366.

48. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 49b.

49. *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* 1; quoted from the translation by Judah Goldin (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 41.

50. See Judah Goldin, "Toward a Profile of the Tanna, Aqiba Ben Joseph," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 96 (1976), pp. 38–56.

51. Babylonian Talmud, *Kethuboth* 62b–63a.

52. Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 35b.

53. *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, trans. by Judah Goldin, pp. 43–44.

54. *Midrash Rabbah Leviticus* 30:1.

55. Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 22a. For a literary history of this exemplum, see Bernard Heller, "Gott Wünscht das Herz: Legenden über einfältige Andacht und über den Gefährten im Paradies," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 4 (1927), pp. 365–404.

56. *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, version A. Quoted from the translation of Judah Goldin, op. cit., p. 84. For an exemplum of a rabbi who rejects financial gain, see *Midrash Rabbah Deuteronomy* 3:3.

57. Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, *Avoda Zara* 18b.

58. See Ofra Meir, "The Wedding in Kings' Parables (in the Aggada)," in Issachar Ben-Ami and Dov Noy, eds., *Studies in Marriage Customs*, Folklore Research Center Studies, vol. IV (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1974), pp. 9–52 (in Hebrew).

59. Babylonian Talmud, *Bekoroth* 8b.

60. For an analysis of this genre, see Dan Ben-Amos, "Talmudic Tall Tales," in *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, ed. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, and Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1976), pp. 25–44.