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Saga Form, Oral Prehistory, and the Icelandic Social Context

Jesse L. Byock

THE Icelandic family sagas (the *Íslendingasögur*) are anonymous prose stories.¹ They are not heroic epics, folktales, chronicles, or romances but plausible vernacular tales about often real people who lived in Iceland in the period from the settlement in the 980s until about 1030. More than thirty major family sagas are extant; there are also many short stories called *Þættir* (sing. *Þáttir*). As a written literary form the sagas suddenly appeared at the end of the twelfth century, and their production ended abruptly in the early decades of the fourteenth century.² Although no one denies a mixture of oral and literary elements, theories differ widely as to how much the sagas reflect an oral compositional prehistory and how much they reflect the artistry of a literate self-conscious author.

The bitter controversy in the first half of the twentieth century over the extent of orality evidenced in the family sagas polarized scholars into "freeprosists" believing in the oral origin of saga narrative and "bookprosists" advocating a written origin.³ The two groups debated the issue of whether the family sagas were factually accurate and hence memorized and essentially fixed texts or whether they were nonhistorical, late literary fictions. By the mid-1950s the bookprosists, led by the Icelanders Sigurður Nordal and Einar Ól. Sveinsson, had prevailed.⁴ In their view the sagas, though owing a small and undetermined debt to an oral prehistory, were literary stories created by Icelanders of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵

In recent decades many saga scholars have bogged down in their attempts, largely frustrated, to prove that the family sagas as sophisticated narratives stemmed from some discernible European narrative model. Those who search for European influences fall into two broad categories. One of these looks to the pre-Christian Germanic and Norse past carried to Iceland by the settlers. Continentalists of this group, inspired by the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writings of W. P. Ker and Andreas Heusler,⁶ have sought to prove that the origin of the sagas lay in heroic poetry. Since the connection between the murky past of the Germanic peoples and thirteenth-

century Iceland spans many preliterate centuries, these continentalists often argue for an oral transmission.⁷

The second continentalist approach, by far the predominant one, builds on the concepts of the earlier bookprosisists. It treats the sagas as a literary development arising from the narrative styles of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin Christian culture. The chronicles, lives of saints, homilies, and histories that came to Iceland in the twelfth century, along with the French romances that appeared sometime after 1226, are thought to be inspirations for saga narratives. Contemporary scholars who argue for this second approach divide between the positions taken by Björn M. Olsen and Paul V. Rubow in the early decades of the twentieth century. These two early advocates of bookprose agreed that late continental models were essential to the Icelanders' creation of a great literature. Olsen stressed native innovation and the importance of indigenous traditions; Rubow tended to see the sagas as more indebted to European culture.⁹

In its different aspects, continentalism has played a major role in shaping contemporary views of written and oral saga forms. With a few major exceptions,¹⁰ the larger social context has not been considered in terms of its influence on the compositional technique of saga construction. In this article I survey the related issues of saga form, oral prehistory, and compositional technique in light of the proposition that a key to understanding saga construction lies in an awareness of the modeling systems that link saga and social form. The discussion is divided into three parts. In the first I consider the social context of medieval Iceland and discuss recent studies dealing with it. In the second I review the conclusions reached by four writers who, beginning in the late 1960s, have produced Formalistic studies with genre-wide implications. These studies are built on one another and share the core assumption that the overall structure of the family sagas arises from sources foreign to Iceland's insular traditions. In the third I present an alternative view suggesting that the form of the narrative can be more readily understood in light of Iceland's social forms than through comparisons with European literary traditions.

I. The Social Context

The issue of the sagas' orality is complicated by the very nature of Icelandic society. The sagas are not a standard form of medieval narrative, and Iceland itself was an atypical medieval European culture. Although the sagas are not a mirror of actual events, these

repetitive stories of feuds, written during a period of over one hundred years in different parts of the island by different kinds of people, give us an idea of the ambience of medieval Iceland. Iceland had no military, was never invaded, and had no king or hierarchical form of government—all social aspects that are often highlighted in epic and romance. Much of the governmental and social decision making on the island resulted from feuds which were settled in and out of court. The single national official was the *lögsögumaðr* (law-speaker), elected every three years to recite a third of the law annually and to verify legal precedents. Free to participate in feuds as readily as any other Icelander, he had no authority to influence decisions in court. Iceland had two bishoprics; although many of the bishops are memorable figures, they were never able to exert the will of the Church over the traditional forms of feud. Authority did not function in the same way as in Viking, feudal, or monarchical societies. Decisions were legitimated through a complex but dependable system of local and national courts.¹¹ Although certain kinds of conduct were illegal,¹² there existed no governmental apparatus to punish lawbreakers.

In such an acephalous society, one would expect that the protection of the individual lay in the corporate structure of the family, hut not in Iceland, where the individual usually had to depend on created political bonds, including *vinfengi* and *handsal* agreements.¹³ A leader was called a *goði* (pl. *goðar*), a term that means priest-chieftain. Chieftains did riot control specific territories; instead, they were leaders of interest groups. Farmers, though required to be retainers, "in thing," with a chieftain, could change chieftains annually. Chieftaincies (*goðorð*) could be inherited, bought, or traded, thereby making it possible for ambitious individuals and families to gain the status of chieftain. The accessibility of a chieftaincy tended to stabilize the society by rewarding success within the framework of the nationally leaderless system of decision making. In most respects Iceland was an anomaly in medieval Europe.

The lack of an easily definable social system, the detailed way feuds are represented in the literature, and the sagas' concern with farmers and plausible action have complicated the study of the family sagas. Narrative forms thriving on the continent—epic, tales of chivalry, hagiography, even chronicles—focused on military ventures, kings and aristocracies, secular and ecclesiastical courts, mythic heroes, and saints. The Icelanders, well aware of continental society and literature, wrote sagas about the kings of Norway (*konunga sögur*), the lives of saints (*heilagra manna sögur*), and mythic heroes such as Sigurd the Volsung (*fornaldar sögur*). In the third decade of the thirteenth cen-

tury, the Norwegians began to translate chivalric romance (*riddara sögur*),¹⁵ and these too; like some *chansons de geste* (*Karlamagnús saga*), found their way to Iceland. The stories in these genres are about events in Europe. The sagas the Icelanders wrote about their own rural island existence have a different subject matter and a distinctly different tone. We have come too far in our understanding of medieval Iceland—including the balance of native and foreign cultural influences—to continue to contrive analogies with foreign story patterns in order to explain the existence of Icelandic feud tales. The past few decades have seen much fresh research into different aspects of Old Icelandic society. Anthropology, sociology, folklore, and sociohistorical and literary studies have all come into play. Today we have an expanded picture of the workings of this society on an island one-fifth larger than Ireland and 1000 kilometers northwest of Europe in the Atlantic.

Of special note is the renewed interest in Old Icelandic law. Peter Foote, examining the syntax and style of Old Icelandic legal entries and comparing them with the Swedish *Dalalagen*, previously considered more primitive and less literary, has concluded that "the plain, accumulatory style of the Icelandic laws as we know them is after all close to the general style of the laws in their oral existence."¹⁶ He queries whether this fresh evidence that the Icelander's ability to transmit a large amount of legal information in prose without mnemonic devices such as formulas might be worth considering in light of the preliterate background of saga transmission.¹⁷ In an older essay that fits well with these studies, Ólafur Lárússon considered the information that *Grágás* offers about behavioral norms, such as the right to take revenge.¹⁸ Björn Sigfússon has explored legal and ethical interpretations of *Hænsa-Póris saga*,¹⁹ while Alan Berger stresses the role of "lawyers" in the literature.²⁰

The legal nature of property ownership in medieval Iceland has also been subjected to scrutiny. Magnús Mar Lárússon has investigated the system of landholding, whereby valuable land remained under family control.²¹ Building on the growing awareness that large farmsteads, called *aðalból* and later *höfuðból*, are allodial forms of property, Sveinbjörn Rafnsson contends that the purpose of *Landnámabók* (the Book of Settlements) was to verify twelfth- and thirteenth-century landownership.²² Studies such as these help to throw new light on many saga conflicts over inheritance and dowry.²³

The supposition that Iceland was the first "new society" of migrating Europeans is developed by Richard Tomasson.²⁴ Starting from the sociological studies of Seymour Martin Lipset and Louis Hartz,²⁵ Tomasson draws parallels between the Icelandic experience

and the forces at work in other societies created by transmarine migration. According to Hartz, when a fragment of Europe becomes the whole of a new nation, it becomes unrecognizable in European terms.²⁶ Tomasson argues that Iceland is a fragment society, and that some of the traits and dynamics shared by new societies are evident in medieval Iceland. Such research supports the premise that Icelanders were developing new modes of literature, law, and decision making. In a similar though more literary vein, Kurt Shier asserts the existence of inherent formal tendencies arising from oral traditions that predated foreign influence.²⁷ He considers the sagas in light of the concept of *terra nova* and the unique quality of Icelandic society: "Neither writings in Latin nor any European national literature in the middle ages explains fully the complexity of saga art, its characteristic combination of subject, art and style, historical or pseudohistorical connections and a system of ethic values."²⁸

Gunnar Karlsson and Björn Sigfússon have considered the relationship between the social and political structures of the tenth and eleventh centuries and those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁹ Through such research we begin to doubt the long-held assumption that Icelandic culture may be neatly divided into discrete periods, such as the saga age (*söguöld*, ca. 930-1030) and the thirteenth-century age of writing (*ritöld*). The continuity of Iceland's rural settlement pattern is underscored by Helgi Thorláksson's review of the lack of urbanization tendencies throughout the history of the Free State (ca. 930-1264).³⁰ Literary evidence of cultural continuity has been put forward in the textual studies of Jonas Kristjánsson and Dietrich Hofmann and the folklore-oriented work of Oskar Halldórsson. Kristjánsson proposes that the poem *Íslendingadrápa*, which lists Icelandic leaders and speaks of events known from several sagas, was composed about 1200.³¹ If he is correct, then this poem by Haukr Valdísarson is further evidence of an oral tradition underlying the saga story. Emphasizing the presence of variants, Hofmann argues that *Reykðæla saga* is one of the oldest sagas.³² Because the saga shows little or no influence from the kings' sagas and is not based on information supplied by skaldic verse, he concludes it must be strongly influenced by an old oral tradition. Hofmann also reassesses the possible oral prehistory of the story about Hallfreðr's dream in *Hrafnkels saga*.³³ This research led Óskar Halldórsson to publish a short monograph also concluding that important oral traditions underlie *Hrafnkels saga*.³⁴ Both scholars reject the position argued by Sigurður Nordal in his famous monograph *Hrafnkatla* that *Hrafnkels saga* lacks a significant oral prehistory.³⁵

Gunnar Karlsson, Björn Sigfússon, and Helgi Thorláksson have

investigated the political and social bonds existing between the *goðar* and the farmers (*bóndi*, pl. *bændr*).³⁶ Karlsson and Thorláksson in particular examine the role played by the large farmers, the *stórbændr*, in the mid-thirteenth century. The feuds and the intricate dealings of these landholders permeate the sagas about Iceland, where much of the motivation for specific action depends on the give-and-take of both formal and informal obligation and upon reciprocal kinship and political bonds. Decision making was usually influenced by the giving of gifts and accumulations of wealth which might have an effect on power politics. Aaron J. Gurevich has pointed out the importance of such transfers of property throughout medieval Scandinavia.³⁷

Studies such as those noted above have contributed to a growing conviction that the unique aspects of Icelandic culture are not explained by hypotheses tracing Icelandic usages to continental origins. The new perception has pitted an older descriptive and romantic form of historical analysis against a more sociocultural one. A case in point is Hans Kuhn's 1971 study *Das alte Island*,³⁸ in which Kuhn describes the society, the climate, and the daily life of Iceland. He traces the careers of historical personages, such as the first settler Ingólfur Arnarson and the outlaw Grettir Ásmundarson, who according to Kuhn died in 1030.³⁹ The determination to assign specific dates to saga characters did not sit well with modern scholars, who had left that question behind with the old freeprovisists. The aspect of Kuhn's study which aroused the sharpest criticism was his assumption that many of Iceland's social and literary developments arose from European practices, especially those of the ancient heroic past. Björn Thorsteinsson's response to Kuhn's determination to find in non-Icelandic sources explanations for Icelandic phenomena was that Iceland's literature was the legitimate offspring of an extraordinary society rather than the bastard of an ordinary society. If the structure of Icelandic society was thus different from that of other European societies in the Middle Ages, then a study of that society must offer a key to an understanding of the literature it produced."⁴⁰

The shift toward recognizing the sagas as products of the indigenous culture rather than as borrowings from a foreign ethic is evident in two broad studies of the family sagas—M. I. Steblin-Kamenskij's *Mir sagi* (tr. as *The Saga Mind* [1973]) and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen's *Saga og samfund* (1977).⁴¹ Both Sørensen and Steblin-Kamenskij emphasize the connection between the content of the tales and the unique nature of Iceland's social and cultural forms. Sørensen especially explores the importance of family groupings and kinship networks in establishing the kinds of obligations found in Old Icelandic society and its sagas. He marks the change from the

ancestor-oriented kinship system the Norse settlers brought with them to the more nuclear-egocentric family structure that developed in Iceland.⁴² In arguing indigenous aspects of the sagas, Sørensen emphasizes the role of the audience, with its interest in the common Icelandic heritage and the island's social forms.⁴³

Steblin-Kamenskij also weighs the participation of the medieval audience, arguing that the sagas had for their hearers a sense of verisimilitude which he calls syncretic truth. According to Steblin-Kamenskij's formulation, syncretic truth did not separate, in the modern sense, historical truth from artistic truth. This factor contributed to the cohesion of the sagas and is evident in the stories' concentration on feud. "Reality interested the people of that time in one definite aspect—they were interested in events. And an event in Icelandic society was first and foremost a violation of peace—a feud. Therefore, feuds are the basic content of family sagas, and feuds determine their internal logic, their composition."⁴⁴

II. Formal Studies

However reasonable it may seem to link the form of the sagas to the operational structures of the indigenous society, this connection is seldom made in genre-wide studies of saga form. The authors of such studies see the saga author as an individual steeped predominantly in Christian thought or in Germanic heroic ideals. According to the different proposals, these values are translated into a writing technique learned from sources as disparate as epic lays, hagiography, Latin chronicles, or French romance. It is assumed that the sagaman borrowed foreign narrative styles and patterns in order to tell stories about Icelanders. In the rush to prove that the origin of the sagas is found either in heroic traditions or in medieval Latin culture, theories of saga composition and form in the past two decades have largely ignored the fact that the family sagas are stories by an island people about violence in their society. Certain aspects of the Icelanders' traditions came from Europe, but others, owing to Iceland's status as a new society, are uniquely Icelandic. Because of this mixture, a precise definition of the oral tradition in Iceland remains elusive.

In *The Icelandic Family Saga* (1967) Theodore M. Andersson concluded that Iceland's oral tradition came from an ancient Germanic heroic legacy, a legacy shared with Europe and transmitted from the presettlement past by means of heroic poetry. Although numerous scholars had commented on the presence of heroic ethics and tradi-

tions in the sagas, Andersson shifted to a new stance in arguing that the inheritance provided an overall structure for the sagas: "It is therefore a reasonable contention that heroic poem and saga have a basic structural identity. They both adhere to a heroic literary pattern, from which they derive the same standard of values and the same sense of dramatic pitch. It is plausible to suppose that this structure and this sense are a legacy from the older heroic poetry to the younger prose saga."⁴⁵

In contrast to the martial world portrayed in the heroic Eddic poems, the setting of the family sagas is the daily life of a settled agricultural people. Animal husbandry and the growing of hay are consequential subjects in the narrative. So too are dispute and litigation over insults, slander, fields, shared meadows, and livestock. Eddic poems, as Bertha Phillpotts noted in 1931, are different: "The activities mentioned are wholly warlike: no one in the heroic poems is concerned with agriculture, or indeed with any occupation other than war and sport. The great kings of the ancient world and their companions are seen through a haze of antiquity and glory."⁴⁶

Andersson contends that the saga, like the heroic lay, reduces "the drama to a single carefully construed climax.... The author's mode of thought and many of his stylistic habits are certainly heroic. His interpretation of the action as conflict and climax and his polarization of the conflict are a clear legacy from the heroic pattern."⁴⁷ Using the analogy with Eddic poetry, Andersson argues that the sagas follow a fixed form.⁴⁸ His six-part theory of saga structure (introduction, conflict, climax, revenge, reconciliation, aftermath) is derived from a blend of epic and folktale attributes. Andersson acknowledges that the importance of climax is borrowed from the heroic lay. Joseph Harris has observed that the theoretical framework is "derived principally" from V. I. Propp's theory of folktale structure.⁴⁹ The separation of form and content is, as Harris notes, a prerequisite of such an analysis.⁵⁰ The syntagmatic sequence of Propp's thirty-one functions follows the action of Russian folktales rather closely.⁵¹ On the other hand, the six elements of Andersson's analysis provide only the most general rubrics of saga progression, telling us little of the action within the saga. The pattern forces the action of saga story into a strict epic sequence of conflict, climax, and resolution. This is an ill-fitting concept for a story form full of small feuds, each containing conflicts and resolutions, one following the other in no fixed order.

Since the sagas are multicentered, Andersson's fixed sequential structure applies only tenuously to many sagas. In *Eyrbyggja saga*, Andersson suggests the sagaman blundered by not adhering to the "normal" order.⁵² Vésteinn Ólason took issue with Andersson's pro-

about it as oral *literature*" (p. 207). Lönnroth fills the gap by proposing that the episodes and other small narrative blocks formed a tradition of storytelling known to Icelanders through generations of oral saga entertainment (*sagnaskemtan*). He interrupts this fruitful line of inquiry by making it conform to his concept of the sagawriter's intention, an intention governed by the anonymous writer's clerical mind. In *Njáls saga*, he says, "Several times, our author's clerical mind rests while he is carried away by the traditional patterns of oral saga narrative. Yet he succeeds much better than any previous sagawriter in unifying these patterns until they become 'directed toward a single goal,' which may be called both Christian and didactic" (p. 163). One problem with this theory is that the texts, including *Njáls saga*, do not readily conform to Lönnroth's structuring principle. Lönnroth leaps over the obvious and dismisses the sagas' remarkable attention to social detail as a repetitious series of digressions, a weakness of oral literature in general rather than as the core of a traditional storytelling technique.

The same conclusion is the premise of Carol Clover's 1982 study *The Medieval Saga*, in which she argues that the saga, as a sophisticated narrative form, does not originate in native tradition. In Clover's work the search for foreign origins and the separation of form and content reach an extreme. Casting about for suitable continental styles and analogous forms, she declares that "whether saga composition is to be explained as the result of independent development out of Latin practice, or as a direct imitation of prose romance, or as a combination of the two, the larger point is clear: it belongs to the general European development of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries."⁵⁹ Clover places herself squarely in the tradition of assessing the oral nature of the saga by using folktale criticism. Early in the book she states that her "chief conclusions follow from the negative inference: if the admired composition of the Icelandic sagas has origins in learned sources and analogues in contemporary French prose, then it cannot be part of the oral legacy."⁶⁰

Despite what Clover terms "circumstantial evidence" of the influence of French romance,⁶¹ the sagas have little in common with either the romance or the chronicle. In the 1920s the Danish literary critic Paul V. Rubow argued that the family sagas found their genesis in French vernacular romance. In "Den islandske familieroman" Rubow wrote: "The romance, like the rest of medieval literature, came to the North from France, which on the whole is the point of origin for all intellectual life in the Middle Ages after the year 1000."⁶² For Rubow the decisive year in the creation of the sagas came in 1226 when, at the court of the Norwegian King Hákon Hákonarson, a man called

Brother Robert translated the story of Tristan into Old Norse.⁶³ Brother Robert Rubow determined, "is in all probability the founder of Old Norse prose entertainment literature. Hereafter the Scandinavians' great contribution to the history of the romance was the alteration of a romantic court poetry to a realistically colored folk prose."⁶⁴ But then, as now, the hypothesis faced insurmountable problems. In 1226, when *Tristrams saga* first appeared in Norway, Icelandic family saga writing was already flourishing.⁶⁵ Further, the only real similarity between romance and saga is that both are sometimes long and complex prose stories. Romance and saga differ in almost every aspect. Sir Gawain at the quarter courts of the Althing is as unthinkable as Snorri goði searching for the Grail.

In Iceland people knew who their ancestors were. Kinship obligations for both revenge and inheritance were reckoned out to the fifth degree. This meant that Icelanders could be affected by the actions of individuals with whom they shared a great-great-great-grandparent. It is not likely that the Icelanders needed the example of a chronicle to spark the idea of telling stories about their ancestors and their island existence.

Clover returns to an equation prominent at the turn of the century, which asserted that oral equals natural or chronological form and that literary equals artificial or sophisticated form—that is, form that can double back on itself and can adopt simultaneity in its narrative style. Accompanying these determinations is the assumption that an unlettered Icelander would not have had the ability to tell a saga longer than a *Pátttr*, which Clover defines as the largest oral component composed in "natural order." According to Clover's view the preliterate Icelander had no tradition of "artificial" order in his histories and laws. Therefore, his oral tradition lacked the narrative tools necessary to assemble into a saga the small bits of his oral tradition. Whereas Lönnroth related saga structure to a feud pattern, Clover's theory of narrative construction correlates the sagas with tales of chivalry and is devoid of contact with Icelandic social processes.

Clover bases her analogy of romance and saga on a common use of stranding but associates the overall organization of the saga with the intricate design of skaldic poetry and "Viking" art forms developed during the preliterate ages.⁶⁶ Clover develops a very broad concept of stranding which forms the basis of her analysis of the sagas. She defines "strand" as a linear plotting of almost any possible mention of character, place, or abstract idea which occurs more than once in a saga. Her definition causes one to wonder if there is much that cannot be attributed to this means of linear indexing. I include her definition:

A strand may be brief and enclitic or it may be a full biography or anthology of events which, separated from its context, itself constitutes an independent narrative entity. In the latter case, an episode is interrupted to be resumed at a later point in the midst of a second episode, whose further development is thus postponed—to be continued, in its turn, in the midst of still a third episode. Or a strand may be a person, or a group of people (family, berserks, hand of attackers), or a place (Bergþórshváll, a ship, a royal court), or an abstract vector in the plot (as in *Eyrbyggja saga*. or *Heiðarvíga saga*)—whatever, indeed, one might expect to be narrated in a single unit but is instead rendered piecemeal. Nor are strands fixed in form: they divide and merge according to the vicissitudes of plot.... Moreover, matter that is integral in one context may be subdivided in another.... Finally, although they in no sense constitute separable stories, certain leitmotifs in the sagas may also be counted as manifestations of the stranding aesthetic.....⁶⁷

While stranding is certainly a viable literary concept, the basis of Clover's strands seems in some instances to be the old idea of theme tracing; in others, motif identification. Such a concept tells us little about form and little about the sagas beyond providing a convenient means for a critic to illustrate that a good saga refers more than once to many people, places, and things. Most of Clover's strands would fall into the category that Anne Heinrichs has called the "primitive forms (mere names, family connections, repetitions)" of intertexture. In contrast to this, Heinrichs notes a second category, the intricate forms in intertexture (the relationships among people).⁶⁸ It is in this second category that the cohesion of the saga, with its many strands, could be sought. "This, of course, requires an understanding of how Iceland functioned in terms of kin and political bonds. Anne Heinrichs comes to the conclusion that "the essentials of saga-style were developed in oral form."⁶⁹ Clover, as supportive evidence for her position that the use of stranding could not have been a practice of oral saga telling, turns repeatedly to the work of two scholars writing at the turn of the century. One is Axel Olrik, who in 1908 contended that the sagas, by showing stranding, are a more complex literature than folktales whose linear nature is "genuine folk narrative."⁷⁰ Since Olrik's time, however, folklorists have come to doubt superorganic laws.⁷¹ In the case of the family sagas, a narrative form so intimately connected with a unique island society, such general laws are more than usually inadequate. Because the sagas are not short folktales, it does not follow that they have to be a written form of story. More recent research has brought to light many forms of complex narratives which belie the assertion that "sophisticated" means "written." For example, the *Mwindo epic* from west central Africa is a long prose tale that demonstrates stranding.⁷² So does "The Song of Bagdad,"

a Serbo-Croatian poem.⁷³ Both these tales are oral and were collected by the use of modern field techniques.

The second scholar from whom Clover draws support is the freeprosisit Andreas Heusler. Three times Clover cites Heusler's 1913 statement: "This sophisticated procedure [stranding] lies far beyond the capacity of the preliterate saga tellers. In addition, the narrative parameters, the scope of the work, exceeds the limit of oral performance."⁷⁴ At least one problem in employing this statement to support a general view about the family sagas is that Heusler was not referring to an anonymous family saga. As Clover herself notes, the statement is about the king's saga of St. Olaf (*Oláfs saga helga*), the biographical work written by Snorri Sturluson in *Heimskringla*. Although Heusler considered the kings' sagas to be literary constructions, he did not view the family sagas in the same light.⁷⁵

To a large degree Clover's theory is founded on the assumption that the sagas were not meant for a cross section of the population but were written literature designed to be read by a small elite.⁷⁶ She discounts the possibility of a compositional technique and presupposes that the oral saga was a simple, memorized story. When the sagas were read aloud the listening audience at best is assumed to have received some entertainment and to "have followed the general drift of the plot (with which they were presumably familiar in some degree)."⁷⁷ Since the capacities of the Icelandic oral audience and the oral storytelling techniques were, Clover asserts, limited to simple tales in "natural order," anything more than the bare chronological story is ruled out. If we accept this notion, we must assume that for centuries a whole nation contented itself with short bursts of scenes, episodes, terse *Þættir*, genealogies, and the simplest of histories.

III. An Alternate View

No literary tradition is pure and certainly foreign influences are present in the sagas, but the compositional technique and the cognitive core of the tales are Icelandic. The sagas provided a medieval people with a means of exploring the ways by which violence was harnessed and the individual was protected within the confines of their insular society. The bulk of saga narrative reflects issues inherent in decision making, the acquisition of status and wealth, and the formation and maintenance of networks of obligations.

Feud is central to the family sagas, and analysis of the workings of feud is a method of reassessing the relationship between Iceland and

its saga literature. In order to approach feud, two suppositions common in studies of saga narrative must be dispelled. One is that sagas, like folktales and epics, follow a fixed sequential pattern. The second is that narrative patterns in the sagas center on a single epic-like climax. Dropping these two presumptions frees us from the need to make one conflict more narratively central than another. The result is a wider freedom to explore the action of the narrative in light of the multicentered nature of saga feud and in line with Icelandic social and legal tradition.

Saga form is built up from a series of small feuds, and these narrative units do not follow fixed patterns. For example, within saga feud, acts of revenge or peaceful reconciliations are the most usual forms of resolution. The determination that only one resolution can occur in the "normal syntagmatic order" of sagas or *Þættir* is an unnecessary stricture on form, for in saga narrative one act of resolution often follows quickly on another. For instance, a peaceful settlement may be marred by an act of blood vengeance, which in turn engenders new acts of confrontation or resolution. These may set the stage for additional punitive undertakings and further imbroglios. In general, resolutions in the sagas fall into the categories of violent solutions (often blood vengeance) and nonviolent resolutions. The forms of feud may be simple but the arrangement is not fixed. Employing the elements of feud, the sagaman shaped his tale according to the choices and the logic of Icelandic procedure. The action unfolds within a societal setting that the sagaman shared with his audience. In the sagas, dispute resolution is not a series of random moves but a process dependent on the ways that the society functioned.

Like acts of resolution, acts of conflict are recurring elements in saga feud. The continuous presentation of incident after incident of dispute and settlement, so similar in their essential makeup but so varied in their specifics, reflects the anxiety surrounding the operation of power and the possession of wealth. Anxiety over wealth arose primarily from the limited availability of land as the major source of economic stability; anxiety over power derived from an absence of a commanding authority and the resulting need to legitimate feud.

Unlike conflict and resolution, the third element of saga feud has escaped the attention of the writers of the formal studies noted above because this element arises from the unusual nature of Iceland. This element is the active bonding that takes place both formally (kinship, *vinfengi*, *handsal*) and informally. The bonds spur participation in saga feud. Revolving around the brokering of power and position, the repetition of this active element is the key to establishing and maintaining obligations. Its presence explains how reciprocity, gift-giving,

and kinship come into play. Its workings make possible the ways in which feuds pull in more and more farmers and chieftains until resolution, whether violent or peaceful, becomes a social necessity. It is this element of social interdependency, not an analogy with chivalric romance, that holds the strands of saga prose together. Feud stories blend with one another through the networks of kinship and political ties. The process springs from the society, not from a foreign narrative form. The activity takes place in an atmosphere of making decisions on the basis of peer pressure rather than fiat.

The three active elements, the third of which may be called advocacy, especially in the form of brokerage, give an indication of how feud operated in both saga text and the social context.⁷⁸ An awareness of the repetitions of these three feud elements gives us a sense of how a sagaman built his tale from small units into expansive prose stories of feud. By concentrating on mapping the small active elements of saga dispute, we begin to see the repetition of these actions, similar in form but different in detail, was the means by which stories of Icelandic feud were constructed. Repetition, rather than being a puzzling aspect of saga narrative, is the key to saga composition.

The abundance of information (such as genealogies and economic dealings) appears digressive to a modern reader uninterested in how feud works in a country such as Iceland. However, folklorists, anthropologists, and sociologists are aware that cultural aspects which appear to be the most chaotic fall into well-ordered schemas when one traces the patterns of behavior. Saga studies could profit from looking to concepts such as modeling systems—approaches that take into account both the society and the audience. If we accept the fact that the Icelanders were intelligent and capable enough to create an efficient system of decision making and a state form different, from the ones they knew on the continent, then we should allow for the possibility that they could create a form of narrative sufficient to tell stories about themselves.

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NOTES

1 *Íslenzk fornrit*, the current standard edition of the family sagas, was edited by Icelandic scholars; the individual volumes appeared between 1933 and 1968, published by Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, Reykjavík.

2 The concept of dating the sagas to the years surrounding the thirteenth-century "age of writing"—a bookprose concept upon which all current literary chronologies

are based—is more a matter of faith than of fact. Although I do not here question the issue of dating, Hallvard Mageröy's astute comment should not go unnoticed "A chief argument for placing the production of the *Íslendingasögur* in the thirteenth century is that only by this means can saga literature be seen as a natural branch of European literature of the high Middle Ages." Hallvard Mageröy, "Kvar star sagaforskningin í dag?" *Nordisk tidsskrift för vetenskap, konst och industri*, 54 (1978), 167 (my translation). A few of the scholars who have stirred the debate are Jónas Kristjánsson, *Um Fóstbræðrasögu* (Reykjavík, 1972); Kristjánsson, "Elements of Learning and Chivalry in *Fóstbræðra saga*," *Proceedings of the First International Saga Conference, University of Edinburgh, 1971*, ed. Peter Foote, Hermann Pálsson, and Desmond Slay (London, 1973), pp. 259-99; Dietrich Hofmann, "Reykðæla saga and mündliche Überlieferung," *Skandinavistik*, 2 (1972), 1-26; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Dating the Icelandic Sagas* (London, 1958). In his overview of saga scholarship, Peter Hallberg begins with a discussion of dating, "Nyare studier i islandsk sagalitteratur," *Sammlaren*, 93 (1972), 211-16. See also Kurt Schier's summary "Chronologie and Datierungsfragen," in his *Sagalitteratur* (Stuttgart, 1970), pp. 38-41.

3 Different aspects of the bookprose/freeprose controversy have been reviewed by Theodore M. Andersson, *The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins: A Historical Survey*, Yale Germanic Studies, I (New Haven, 1964), and Marco Scovazzi, *La saga di Hrafnokull e il problema delle Saghe islandesi* (Arona, 1960). Also see Peter Hallberg, *The Icelandic Saga*. tr. Paul Schach (Lincoln, Neb., 1962), pp. 49-69, and Anne Holtsmark, "Det nye syn på sagaene," *Nordisk tidsskrift för vetenskap, konst och industri*, 35 (1959), 511-23. That the controversy continues to evoke interest is evidenced by the appearance of two collections of older articles pertinent to the debate. These are Walter Baetke, *Die Isländersaga*, Wege der Forschung, 151 (Darmstadt, 1974), and Else Mundal, *Sagadebatt* (Oslo, 1977). See also Else Mundal, "Til debatten om islendingasogene," *Maal og Mime*, Nos. 3-4 (1973), 105-26.

4 The bookproseists often expressed their views in the introduction to the *Íslensk fornrit* editions. See also Sigurður Nordal, "Sagalitteraturen," in *Litteraturhistorie*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, Nordisk Kultur, 8B (Stockholm, 1953), pp. 180-273; Nordal, *The Historical Element in the Icelandic Family Sagas*, W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture, 15 (Glasgow, 1957); Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Njáls saga: A Literary Masterpiece*, ed. and tr. Paul Schach (Lincoln, Neb., 1971).

5 A thoughtful and somewhat conciliatory summary of the bookprose position is Einar Ól. Sveinsson's "Íslendingasögur," *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, VII (Malmö, 1962), cols. 496-513.

6 W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature*, 2nd rev. ed. (1908; rpt. New York, 1957); first edition appeared in London, 1896. Andreas Heusler, *Die Anfänge der islandischen Saga*, Abhandlungen der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Classe, 1913, No. 9 (Berlin, 1914).

7 For a treatment of the issue of transmission that concentrates on the *fornaldarsögur*, see Peter Buchholz, *Vorzeitkunde: Mündliches Erzählen and Überliefern im mittelalterlichen Skandinavien nach dem Zeugnis von Fornaldarsaga und eddischer Dichtung*, Skandinavistische Studien, Beiträge zur Sprache, Literature und Kultur tier nordischen Länder, 13 (Neumünster, 1980).

8 See for example Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Thorkil Damsgaard Olsen, and Ole Wilding, *Noreen fortællekunst: Kapitler af den norsk-islandske middelalderlitteraturs historie* (Copenhagen, 1965), and Lars Lönnroth, "European Sources of Icelandic Saga-Writing: An Essay Based on Previous Studies," Diss. Stockholm 1965.

9 Björn M. Olsen, *Um íslendingasögur*, Safn til sögu islands, 6 (Reykjavík, 1937-39).

Paul V. Rubow, "Den islandske familieroman," *Tilskueren*, 45 (1928), pt. 1, pp. 347-57, reprinted in *Sagadebatt*, ed. Else Mundal, pp. 188-98.

10 See for example Heinrich Beck, "Laxdæla saga—A Structural Approach," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 19 (1977), 383-402; and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, "Some Traits in the Patterns of Social Balance in the Laxdæla Saga," *Alþjóðlegt fornsagnaÞing* [International saga conference], *Reykjavík 2.-8. águst, 1973: Fyrirlestrar*, Vol. II (available from the University of Iceland Library, Reykjavík).

11 For a discussion of Iceland's legal system and government see Jón Jóhannesson, *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth: Íslendinga saga*, tr. Haraldur Bessason (Winnipeg, 1974), pp. 35-93; Ólafur Lárússon, "Stjórnarskipun og lög lýðveldisins íslenska," in his *Lög og saga* (Reykjavík, 1958), pp. 55 - 90; Björn Thorsteinsson, *Íslensk miðaldasaga* (Reykjavík, 1978), pp. 44-66; Gunnar Karlsson, "Frá Þjóðveldi til konungsríkis," in *Saga Islands*, ed. Sigurður Líndal, II (Reykjavík, 1975), 29-54; Peter Foote and David Wilson, *The Viking Achievement* (London, 1970) offer a brief summary, pp. 56-58.

12 Much of Iceland's traditional law, called *Grágás* (the Greygoose law), is retained in several extensive law books, the most important of which date from the middle- thirteenth century. The standard editions are edited by Vilhjálmur Finsen. They are: Ia and Ib: *Grágás: Islændernes Lovbog i Fristatens tid, utgivet efter det kongelige Bibliotheks Haarudskrift* (Copenhagen, 1852); II: *Grágás efter det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Staðarhólsbók* (Copenhagen, 1879); and III: *Grágás: Stykker, som findes i det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 351 fol., Skálholtsbók og en Række andre haandskrifter* (Copenhagen, 1883).

13 *Vinfengi* was a formalized political friendship. Many legal and business contracts in the sagas were solemnized by a witnessed handshake or handclasp called *handsal*. Lars Hamre and Magnús Már Lárússon, "Handarband; handsal," *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon*, VI (Malmö, 1961), cols. 110-14.

14 Jón Jóhannesson writes: "No known forms of administration outside Iceland could have served as models for the Icelandic chieftaincies," *History*, p. 53; see pp. 53-63.

15 The Norwegians are presumed to have made these translations. When the stories came to Iceland is not clear. Geraldine Barnes, "The Riddarasögur: A Medieval Exercise in "Translation," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 19 (1977), 403.

16 Peter Foote, "Oral and Literary Tradition in Early Scandinavian Law: Aspects of a Problem," in *Oral Tradition—Literary Tradition: A Symposium*, ed. Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Peter Foote, Andreas Haarder, Hans Frede Nielsen (Odense, 1977), p. 54.

17 Foote, p. 55. See also Foote, "Some Lines in LögrettuÞáttur." in *Sjötú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni* (Reykjavík, 1977), pp. 198-207.

18 Ólafur Lárússon, "Hefndir," in his *Lög og saga*, pp. 146-78.

19 Björn Sigfússon, "Staða Hænsa-Þóris sögu í réttarÞróun 13. aldar," *Saga*, 3 (1960613), 345-70.

20 Alan J. Berger, "Old L, New Law, and Hænsa-Þóris saga," *Scripta Islandica*, 27 (1976), 3-12.

21 Magnús Már Lárússon, "A höfuðbólum landsins," *Saga*, 9 (1971), 40-90.

22 Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, *Studier i Landnámabók: Kritiska bidrag tilt den isländska fristatstidens historia*, Bibliotheca Historica Ludensis, 31 (Lund, 1974).

23 Jesse Byock, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga* (Berkeley, 1982), esp. ch. 8, "The Importance of Land in Saga Feud."

24 Richard F. Tomasson, *Iceland: The First New Society* (Minneapolis, 1980).

25 Seymour M. Lipset, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Com-*

parative Perspective (New York, 1963), and Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies* (New York, 1964). Neither of these scholars wrote of Iceland's status as a new society.

26 Harts, p. 4.

27 Kurt Schier, "Iceland and the Rise. of Literature in 'Terra Nova,'" *Gripla*, I (1975), 168-81

28 Schier, p. 169.

29 Gunnar Karlsson, "Goðar og bændur," *Saga*, 10 (1972), 5-57. An abridged English version is "Goðar and Höfðingar in Medieval Iceland," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 19 (1977), 358-70; Björn Sigfússon, "Full goðorð og forn og heimildir frá 12. öld," *Saga*, 1 (1960), 48-75. See also Sigfússon, "Gamli Sáttmali endursvarinn 1302," in *Sjöttu ritgerðir*, pp. 121-37.

30 Helgi Thorláksson, "Urbaniseringstendenser på Island i middelalderen," *Urbanisierungsprozessen i Norden: Det XVII. nordiske historikermøte, Trondheim 1977*. Vol. I: *Middelaldersteder*, ed. Grethe Authén Blom (Oslo, 1977), pp. 161-88. See also Thorláksson's study of certain heavily populated regions, "Miðstöðvar stærstu byggða: um forstíg Þettbýlismyndunar við Hvítá á hámiðöldum með samanburði við Eyrar, Gásar og erlendar hliðstæður," *Saga*, 17 (1979), 125-64.

31 Jónas Kristjánsson, "Íslendingadrápa and Oral Tradition," *Gripla*, 1 (1975), 76-01.

32 Dietrich Hofmann, "Reykdeala saga und mündliche Überlieferung"; see also Hofmann's "Die Bedeutung mündlicher Erzählvarianten für die atlisländische Sagaliteratur," in *Sjöttu ritgerðir*, pp. 344-58; and his "Die Einstellung der isländischen Sagaverfasser und ihrer Vorgänger sur mündlichen Tradition," in *Oral Tradition—Literary Tradition*, pp. 9-27.

33 Dietrich Hofmann, "Hrafnkels mid Hallfreds Traum: Zur Verwendung mündlicher Tradition in der Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða," *Skandinavistik*, 6 (1976), 19-36.

34 Óskar Halldórsson, *Uppruni og Þema Hrafnkels sögu*, Rannsóknastofnun í bókmenntafræði við Háskóla Íslands, Fræðirit, 3 (Reykjavík, 1976). In his detailed review of Óskar Halldórsson's monograph, S. F. D. Hughes surveys the scholarship about *Hrafnkels saga*, citing many pertinent and often hard to find articles: *Scandinavian Studies*, 52 (1980), 300-308. See also the review by Peter Hallberg, "Hrafnkels saga á nýjan leik," *Tímarit málls og menningar*, 38 (1977), 375-80. For a discussion of *Hrafnkels saga* in light of formal and social characteristics, see Byock, *Feud*, pp. 141-42, 201-4.

35 Sigurður Nordal, *Hrafnkatla*, *Studia Islandica* (Íslensk fræði), 7 (Reykjavík, 1940) (*Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða: A Study*, tr. R. George Thomas [Cardiff, 1958]). An early important response to Nordal's view is Knut Liestal, "Tradisjonen i Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða," *Arv*, 2 (1946), 94-110.

36 Gunnar Karlsson, "Goðar og bændur"; Björn Sigfússon, "Full goðorð"; Helgi Thorláksson, "Stórbændur gegn goðum: Hugleiðingar um goðavald, konungsvald og sjálfræðishug banda um miðbik 13. aldar," *Söguslóðir*, Afmælisrit helgað Ólafi Hanssyni sjötngum 18. September 1979 (Reykjavík, 1979), pp. 227-50. In response to Helgi Thorláksson see Gunnar Karlsson, "Völd og auður á 13. öld," *Saga*, 18 (1980), 5-30

37 Aaron J. Gurevich, "Wealth and Gift-Bestowal among the Ancient Scandinavians," *Scandinavica*, 7 (1968), 126-38; see also Gurevich, *Feodalismens oppkamst i Västευropa*, tr. Marie-Ann e Sahlin (Stockholm, 1979), esp. pp. 37-94.

38 Hans Kuhn, *Das aite Island* (Düsseldorf, 1971).

39 Kuhn, pp. 41-42.

40 Björn Thorsteinsson, rev. of *Das alte Island* in *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 5 (1972), 186. Less critical is Óskar Halldórsson's review in *Scandinavica*, 11 (1972), 153-55.

41 M. I. Steblin-Kamenskij, *The Saga Mind*, tr. Kenneth H. Ober (Odense, 1973). Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *Saga og samfund: En indføring i oldislandisk litteratur*

- (Copenhagen, 1977). For a discussion of Sørensen's book (and Lars Lönnroth's *Njáls saga*), see Vésteinn Ólason, "Frasagnarlist í fornum sögum," *Skírnir*, 152 (1978), 166-202.
- 42 Sørensen, pp. 30-36.
- 43 Sørensen, p. 123.
- 44 Steblin-Kamenskij, p. 78. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg make a similar formulation in *The Nature of Narrative* (New York, 1966), pp. 47-48.
- 45 Theodore M. Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 83.
- 46 Bertha S. Phillpotts, *Edda and Saga* (1931; rpt. Millwood, N.Y., 1973), p. 10. See also p. 8. In a reasonable formulation Phillpotts recognizes in the sagas a continuity with the older heroic ethic in spite of a "diversity of form and subject and treatment" (P. 11).
- 47 Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 93.
- 48 "An analysis of the saga plots leads to the conclusion that there are recurrent structural features and patterns. The patterns are in fact so repetitive and the similarities so great that, without doing undue violence to the plots, one can abstract from them a standard structure, to which all the sagas under study, with the exception of *Vamsdela* saga, conform to a greater or lesser extent." Andersson, p. 29. Hartmut Röhn, in his formal study of five family sagas (*Untersuchungen zur Zeitgestaltung und Komposition der Íslendingasögur*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie, 5 [Basel, 1976]) that directs much attention to the configuration of time, disagrees: "Die in der bisherigen Forschung hervorgehobene weitgehende formale Einheitlichkeit der Ísländersagas hat der erzähltechnischen Analyse nicht standgehalten" (p. 152) ("The extensive unity of form of the family sagas, which has been emphasized in previous research, has not withstood the test of the analysis of narrative technique"). For Röhn the structural similarities are on a deeper level and involve compositional principles.
- 49 Joseph C. Harris, "Genre and Narrative Structure in Some *Íslendinga Þættir*," *Scandinavian Studies*, 44 (1972), 5.
- 50 Harris, p. 6.
- 51 Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, tr. Laurence Scott, introd. Alan Dundes. 2nd rev. ed. (Austin, 1968).
- 52 Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 162.
- 53 Vésteinn Ólason, "Nokkrar athugasemdir um *Eyrbyggja sögu*," *Skírnir*, 145 (1971), 6-7 (my translation).
- 54 Steblin-Kamenskij, p. 78.
- 55 Richard F. Allen, *Fire and Iron: Critical Approaches to Njál's Saga* (Pittsburgh, 1971), pp. 73, 97. hereafter cited in text.
- 56 Allen chides Lönnroth for laying stress on the influence of continental historical writing on the family sagas, concluding that "it is impossible to demonstrate any extensive direct linkage between family sagas and medieval European literature" (p. 45).
- 57 Lars Lönnroth, *Njáls saga: A Critical Introduction* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 68-76. Hereafter cited in text.
- 58 Harris, pp. 1—27. Since many of the *Þættir* are concerned with travels by Icelanders in foreign lands in order to win fame and fortune and end with their return home, the structures of these short tales are different from sagas set in Iceland. As Harris notes, these *Þættir* resemble folktales.
- 59 Carol J. Clover, *The Medieval Saga* (Ithaca, 1982), p. 188.
- 60 Clover, p. 17.
- 61 Clover, p. 203.

- 62 Paul V. Rubow, "Den islandske familieroman," rpt. in Else Mundal, *Sagadebatt*, p. 195 (my translation).
- 63 Rubow, p. 196. Brother Robert was probably an Englishman or perhaps an Anglo-Norman. See E. F. Halvorsen, "Tristrams saga," *Kulturhistorisk lexikon*, XVIII (Malmö, 1974), cols. 640—43.
- 64 Rubow, p. 196 (my translation).
- 65 A different formulation is Bjarni Einarsson's proposal that French epic and Provençal lyric influenced the poets' sagas, a type of family saga that is highly biographical: *Skáldasögur: Um uppruna og eðli ástaskáldasagnanna formu*. (Reykjavík, 1961).
- 66 Skaldic poetry appears fully formed in the middle of the ninth century in the verse of the Norwegian poet Bragi inn Gamli (the old). Intertwined Scandinavian ornamentation was already hundreds of years old when the Viking age began at the start of the ninth century.
- 67 Clover, p. 65.
- 68 Anne Heinrichs, "Intertexture and Its Function in Early Written Sagas," *Alþjóðlegt fornsagnaÞing* [International saga conference], *Reykjavík, 2.-8. ágúst 1973: Fyrirlestrar*, vol. I, p. 7 of Heinrichs's paper.
- 69 Heinriche, p. 21.
- 70 Clover p. 61. This definition, Clover notes, is found in Axel Olrik, "Epische Gesetze der Volksdichtung," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 51 (1909), 8.
- 71 Juha Pentikäinen, *Oral Repertoire and World View: An Anthropological Study of Marina Takalo's life History*, Folklore Fellows Communications, 219 (Helsinki, 1978), esp. pp. 17-19. For a more general theoretical discussion see Dan Ben-Amos. "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore*. 84 (1971), 3-15.
- 72 *The Mwindo Epic*, ed. Daniel Biebuyck and Kahombo Mateene (Berkeley, 1969).
- 73 *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, ed. Albert Lord, I (Cambridge., Mass., 1954), 68-89.
- 74 Clover, pp. 59-60, 62, 198, quoting Andreas Heusler. For Heusler see footnote below.
- 75 Andreas heusler, *Die Anfänge der isländischen Saga*, esp. sec. 32, pp. 66-69. The quotation used by Clover is found in sec 31, no. 3, p. 65.
- 76 Returning to Heusler's statement about *Ólafs saga helga*, Clover writes, "The question is whether those features of the saga which are 'far beyond the capacity of the preliterate saga tellers' were not also in some sense beyond the capacity of listeners ..." (p. 198). See also Lars Lönnroth, "Indoktrinering i den isländska Sagan," *Banners litterära magasin*, 39 (1970), 660-66.
- 77 Clover, p. 201.
- 78 For a discussion of advocacy see Byock, *Feud*, pp. 37-38, 41-42, 74-97.