

ETHNOPOETICS

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ETHNOPOETICS. (1) A comparative approach to poetry and related arts, with a characteristic but not exclusive emphasis on stateless, low-technology cultures and on oral and nonliterate forms of verbal expression. (2) The poetry and ideas about poetry in the cultures so observed or studied. (3) A movement or tendency in contemp. poetry, lit., and social science (anthropology in particular) devoted to such interests.

The history of such an e. covers at least the last 200 years, during which time it has functioned as a questioning of the culturally bounded poetics and poetry of "high European culture." While the designation "e." is a much later coinage, the interrogation has been carried forward in sometimes separated, sometimes interlocking discourses among philosophers, scholars, poets, and artists. It is clearly linked with impulses toward primitivism (q.v.) in both romanticism and modernism (q.v.) and with avant-garde tendencies to explore new and alternative forms of poetry and to subvert normative views of traditional values and the claims of "civilization" to hegemony over other forms of culture. Yet for all its avant-gardism, the principal ethnopoeitic concern has been with classical, even hieratic forms, with fully realized, often long preserved traditions.

The emergence in the later 20th c. of e. as both a poetry movement and a field of scholarly study was the culmination of projects that arose within modernism itself. In that sense, e. clearly paralleled the ethnoaesthetic concerns in the visual and performative arts with their well-documented influence on the form and content of contemp. art both in the West and in third-world cultures under European domination. In turn, the growing restiveness of the Western avant-garde allowed a contemp. viewing of culturally distant forms that revealed both those that resembled familiar Western forms and others drawn from previously unrecognized areas of visual and verbal art. The interests of poets—both formal and ideologically—were accompanied or bolstered by scholarly investigations of the contexts and linguistic properties of the traditional works, incl. the nature of oral poetics (see ORAL POETRY) and the particularities of translation from oral sources. Like much modern and postmodern poetry and art, these investigations involved a necessarily intermedial point of view, calling conventional genre boundaries into question.

Prefigured by such work as Johann Gottfried Herder's *Volkslieder* (1778), the ethnopoeitic focus—influenced by philology and archaeology, later by anthropology—moved from the archaic/pagan European past and its historic present, to literate non-European civilizations, to the later 20th-c. concern with oral and tribal cultures. At the center of modernist movements such as

cubism, expressionism, dada, and surrealism (qq.v.), poets like Tristan Tzara, Blaise Cendrars, Benjamin Peret, and Antonin Artaud gathered from scholarly sources or themselves explored the oral poetics of Africa, the Pacific, and the Americas, while others like Ezra Pound appropriated and recast the literate poetics of non-Western civilizations such as China.

The term "e." itself came into the discourse late, a product of the ferment in postwar Am. lit. that expressed itself in the "new Am. poetry" (e.g. Black Mountain, Beats, Deep Image; see AMERICAN POETRY; BEAT POETS) and in a proliferation of movements concerned with ethnicity and gender. First introduced by Jerome Rothenberg in the wake of his 1968 anthology, *Technicians of the Sacred*, its initial public outlet was the magazine *Alcheringa* (1971–80), edited by Rothenberg and the anthropologist Dennis Tedlock. The first international symposium on e. was held in 1975; a second symposium held in 1985 attempted to extend the range of poetics and cultures even further. From its inception, the ethnopoeitic discourse implicitly involved a questioning of the traditional literary canon (q.v.).

While varying in emphasis between poetry and scholarship, the themes of e. have included the questioning of a primitive-civilized dichotomy (particularly in its post-Platonic, Western manifestations), the idea of a visionary poetry and of the shaman as the paradigmatic proto-poet, the idea of a "great subculture" (Snyder) and of the persistence of an oral poetics in all the "higher" civilizations, the concept of the wilderness and of the role of the poet as a defender of biological and psychic diversity, the issue of cultural imperialism and pluralism, the question of communal and individual expression in traditional societies, and the reemergence of suppressed and rejected forms and images (e.g. the goddess, the trickster, the human universe). By raising such issues under a single term, e. has left its mark on a great range of contemp. poetry and, through its emphasis on performance and ritual, on a number of related performative arts. E. has also found a place in literary and cultural scholarship, though direct collaboration between scholars and practitioners has rarely been attempted since the mid 1970s. See also AMERICAN INDIAN POETRY.

TEXTS AND ANTHOLOGIES: B. Cendrars, *The African Saga: Anthologie nègre* (1927); R. M. Berndt, *Djangawul: An Aboriginal Religious Cult of North-Eastern Arnhem Land* (1953); R. Callois and J.-C. Lambert, *Trésor de la poésie universelle* (1958); U. Beier, *African Poetry* (1966); W. Trask, *The Unwritten Song* (1967); J. Rothenberg, *Technicians of the Sacred* (1968), *Shaking the Pumpkin* (1972); D. Tedlock, *Finding the Center* (1972)—Zuni Indian; H. Norman, *The Wishing Bone Cycle* (1976)—Cree Indian; R. Finnegan, *A World Treasury of Oral Poetry* (1978); J. Cleason, *Leaf and Bone: African Praise Poems* (1980); A. Estrada, *Maria Sabina: Her Life*

EUPHONY

and Chants (1981)—Mazatec.

HISTORY AND CRITICISM: E. Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (1918); R. Graves, *The White Goddess* (1958); M. Eliade, *Shamanism* (1964); C. Olson, *Human Universe* (1967); G. Snyder, *Earth House Hold* (1969); *Alcheringa*: E. (1970–80)—journal; M. León-Portilla, *Pre-Columbian Lits. of Mexico* (1969); Lord; R. Finnegan, *Oral Lit. in Africa* (1970); *Oral Poetry* (1977); S. Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive* (1974); K. Awoonor, *Breast of the Earth* (1975)—Africa: *Teachings from the Am. Ea. th*, ed. D. and B. Tedlock (1975); D. Hymes, "In Vain I Tried to Tell You": *Essays in Native Am. E.* (1981); D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interp.* (1983); *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native Am. Oral Lit.*, ed. B. Swann (1983); R. Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (1985); *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an E.*, ed. J. and D. Rothenberg (1985). J.R.

ETHOS (Gr. "custom," "character"). In Cl. rhet., one means of persuasion: an audience's assessment of a speaker's moral character (e.g. honesty, benevolence, intelligence) primarily as reflected in the discourse although at least secondarily dependent upon the speaker's prior reputation. In the *Rhetoric* (Book 1.1356a), Aristotle distinguishes three ways of achieving persuasion: ethical (*e*), emotional (*pathos* [q.v.]), and logical (*logos*). and although Aristotle comes close to affirming *e*. as the most potent means of persuasion, he gives it the least theoretical devel.; that devel. mus. for the most part be traced outside rhet., in the works of moral philosophers on virtue. From the standpoint of education, however, *e*. became historically the most widely addressed principle of rhet., as theorists from the Sophists through the Ren. humanists made the study of ethics a central means of preparing students for civic responsibilities. Along with *pathos*, *e*. serves to distinguish rhetoric's inclusive concerns from dialectic's more exclusive concentration on formal validity in *logos*. Although *e*. centers in the speaker, and *pathos* in the audience, the force of *e*. consists in arousing emotions; and the nature of *pathos*, or what emotions *can* be aroused, depends upon the character of their host. This conceptually close relation between *e*. and *pathos* is evident not only in Cl. rhetorical treatises but also in the long trail. of writing "characters." This literary genre, comprised of short disquisitions on personality types and behaviors, originated with Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus and achieved high popularity in the Ren. The devel. of "humoral psychology" and such works as Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor* further reveal the traditionally close union of *e*. and *pathos*. From the standpoint of rhet., *e*. in poetry bears obvious relations to persona (q.v.) and authorial identity: *e*. is, in sum, the strategic rationale of both, a determinant of the audience's response to the speaker or speakers in a text as well as to the artist as speaker of a text, investing

the latter speaking role with something of the *e*.-driven quality of *auctoritas*, famously described by Virgil as belonging to that orator who. "influential in piety and deeds," can rule the ignoble mob with words (*Aeneid* 1.148–53). Among modern critics, *e*. has figured in the discussion of such subjects as the distinction between dramatized and undramatized speakers, or between dramatic monologues and lyric poetry (see MONOLOGUE; LYRIC), as well as in discussions of the morality of impersonal narration and the character of implied authors. See also RHETORIC AND POETRY.—St. M. Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Lang.* (1947), ch. 5, 9; G. Wright, *The Poet in the Poem* (1962); E. Schütrumpf, *Die Bedeutung des Wortes E. in der Poetik des Aristoteles* (1970); Lausberg; Group Mu. ch. 6; S. Greenblatt, *Ren. Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (1980); W. Booth, *The Rhet. of Fiction*, 2d ed. (1983). *The Company We Keep* (1988); C. Gill, "The E., Pathos Distinction in Rhetorical and Lit. Crit.," *ClassQ* 34 (1984); J. M. May, *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian E.* (1988); Corbett, esp. 80–86. T.O.S.

ETYMOLOGY. See LEXIS.

EULOGY. See ELEGY.

EUPHONY. The quality of having pleasant, easily pronounced, or smooth-flowing sounds, free from harshness; the pleasing effect of such sounds; the opposite of cacophony (q.v.). *E*. is an elusive subject: critics often sense it without being able to explain it, or admit it to be recognizable by the sensitive "ear," considering it, rather, an unanalyzable quality of poetry. But those researchers who have worked on the problem agree that *e*. does lend itself to stylistic analysis. Recent researchers make no apology for using quantitative parameters in studying a delicate subject like *e*. Indeed, it is not dehumanizing *e*. to evict it finally from the already overpopulated realm of the certain *je ne sais quoi*. Wherever there is *e*., there are underlying phonological structures that can be objectively analyzed.

In the first place, the *presence* of *e*. in a literary text can be ascertained objectively by critical consensus. In Fr. poetry, for example, such a consensus exists with regard to the work of Racine, Lamartine, and Verlaine: *e*. is commonly mentioned in histories of Fr. poetry as one of the most salient features of their style. A similar consensus exists among Hispanists with regard to the *e*. of the *Cantar de Mio Cid* and much of the poetry of Ruben Darfo, José Martí, García Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and the Afro-Antillian poet Nicolás Guillén. The Ger. symbolist Georg Trakl is considered a euphonic poet "by all acclaim," as one scholar has written.

In the second place, it is obvious that some sounds are more pleasing to the ear than others. At least as early as the Gr. rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st c. B.C.), vowels were considered