1

Introduction

Danish folktales have captured the imagination of audiences around the world. Their popularity is in part due to the erroneous yet widely held belief that the extraordinary literary tales of Hans Christian Andersen are part of Danish folk narrative tradition. H. C. Andersen, as he is known in Denmark, was a literary author, and his tales were the written artistic expressions of a single individual—in that sense, they can hardly be seen as part of Danish folklore tradition.[1] Despite this unusual state of affairs in which many readers come to Danish folk tradition essentially by mistake, many of Andersen's tales were inspired by Danish folk stories and an intriguing overlap exists between his tales and stories from oral tradition. Like Andersen's fairy tale world, the world of Danish folk narrative is seductive, populated by trolls, mound folk, elves, werewolves, nightmares, mermaids and mermen, ghosts, witches, robbers, murderers, Satanic apparitions, church-wrecking serpents, corrupt government officials, violent manor lords, pestilence, princes and princesses. Yet a simple encounter with this narrative world raises more questions than it answers. To understand Danish folk tradition, one must get closer to the culture in which the stories and songs circulated, and the lives of the people who created, told, and listened to these stories.

What lies behind this narrative world? Who told these stories, and for what reasons? Were these stories only told by

poor people, a major premise of early folklore scholarship? Were they told by people living in rural areas, another artifact of that scholarly orientation? Were the people who told these stories literate? How did the storytellers make their livings? How did they get around? When did people tell these stories and sing these songs? What was going on at the time, politically and culturally, when the storytellers told their stories? Does that context matter, or are these stories politically irrelevant and culturally nostalgic? Are these stories and songs really old, or are they fairly recent inventions? Who collected the stories and songs? Why would anyone spend so much time collecting them? Did the collector or someone else publish the stories and songs? Were they changed from the time they were collected to the time they were published and, if so, why? Who read these collections when they were first published? And why are almost all collections of folklore presented thematically? Does that make a difference? Do these stories say something about all Danes at all times? Or do they say more about some Danes at some specific times? This book and the accompanying digital content are an attempt to address these questions while presenting for the first time in English a substantial, fully annotated and thickly described collection of folktale repertoires from Denmark.[2]

Folklore and Folk Narrative

Folklore emerges out of the dialectic tension that exists between the individual and tradition—a tension that animates all the processes of composition, transmission and variation that characterize folkloric expression (Chesnutt 1999, 11). Individuals grow up in cultural environments, become enculturated through their long and repeated interactions with other individuals, and learn how to behave competently

within the close and often homogeneous groups in which they live, work and play. Among the many aspects of culture to which individuals necessarily develop a relationship during the simultaneous processes of enculturation and performing culture is tradition.

Some scholars have misinterpreted tradition as a static, superorganic identity that has a stable life of its own and is able to survive outside of the minds of the people who create and perpetuate it.[3] But tradition is not a superorganic entity. Quite to the contrary, it is bounded entirely by the people who perpetuate it. Tradition is not immutable, timeless, a product of the collective imagination, or a survival of the ancient past. Rather, tradition is a dynamic process that relies on the creativity of individuals who recognize that on some level they are part of a larger group (a family, a village, a guild, a region, a political party, a nation, a pan-national group, etc.), and who indicate, through their expressions, a willingness to perpetuate the traditional expressions of the groups to which they belong. As Alan Dundes suggested, a "folk" is any group of people who have at least one thing in common (Dundes 1977). Sometimes, the only thing that members of a group have in common is their traditions.

Not all traditions are folklore, yet all folklore is traditional. This important distinction helps limit the scope of folkloristic enquiry. Folkloric traditions are those cultural expressions that are characterized by their transmission during informal, predominantly oral interactions between individuals in a group or across groups. A folkloric expression (song, story, joke, gesture, basket, tool, etc.) is considered traditional if at least some members of the group perceive the expression to be part of their tradition, and indicate a willingness to perpetuate that expression. In this sense, tradition can be seen as a "will to persistence" rather than any generically limited set of expressions.

As part of everyday life, individuals struggle to make sense of the social, political, economic and physical environments in which they live. One cultural resource for making sense of environmental stressors is tradition, particularly folkloric traditions. In a study of Bolivian copper miners, for example, Michael Taussig discovered that, when confronted with rapid change, people often appealed to folkloric traditions as a means for understanding and adapting to that change (Taussig 1980). Through the performance, reception and re-performance of such traditions, people can impart to others in their group a sense of history, belonging and identity. At the same time, such traditional interaction allows individuals to debate the boundaries of the norms, beliefs and values (taken together, cultural ideology) that their traditional expressions convey.

Because an individual is often a member of multiple groups, he or she engages the traditions of all the groups to which he or she belongs. Consequently, an individual might find himself attempting to reconcile traditional expressions from various groups that are contradictory. This constant struggle between the individual and tradition results in the ongoing, dynamic negotiation of the contours of tradition. Folklore is much more about change than it is about stasis. Importantly, one of the dominant forums for the negotiation of cultural ideology is folk narrative, an observation holds true even in contemporary society. It is a particularly apt description for the small agricultural communities of Jutland where most of the stories in this book were collected.

The following chapters and accompanying digital content reveal how a small number of individuals appealed to and refigured folk traditions as part of their ongoing negotiation of the ideological landscape of their communities in the rapidly changing social, political, economic and physical environments of rural Denmark during the last decades of the

nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. The storytellers whose repertoires are presented here were all members of various groups—families, village communities, churches, occupations, the imagined communities of smallholders or farmers, the similarly imagined communities of political parties, the larger imagined community of Jutlanders, and the imagined national community of Danes (Anderson 1983). All these groups were in a state of flux as participatory democratic institutions replaced the absolute monarchy of previous centuries, as free market economies replaced earlier controlled economies, as monetized transactions replaced barter, as literacy and education became the norm rather than the exception, as transportation and communications infrastructure were rapidly expanded, and as early modes of production, land use, and class structures were fundamentally refigured.

The individual lives of the storytellers are presented in the context of local and national change, and their storytelling is situated not only in its proper performance context, but in the larger context of Danish and, in some cases, Nordic folk narrative tradition. None of the five narrators considered in this work knew any of the others even though some of them lived quite close to each other. Their circles of acquaintances at times overlapped, and each one of the storytellers told stories with themes echoed in the others' storytelling.[4] Of course, that is not surprising, as each of them relied on the deep cultural resource of rural Danish folklore tradition for their own storytelling. Intriguingly, none of the repertoires are alike. Even similar stories are told with widely divergent features—an excellent illustration of the dialectic relationship between individuals and tradition. Each one of these storytellers appropriates, adapts and performs the stories in their repertoires in ways that allow them to negotiate an

individual stance on a host of issues that were of paramount concern to each of them as they went about their daily lives.

Change in Nineteenth Century Denmark

The nineteenth century was a time of complex change in Danish society. The change actually started in the waning decades of the eighteenth century, and continued at surprising speed through the beginning of the twentieth century. At the start of this period, Denmark was an absolute monarchy, and its primarily agricultural economy was organized as a manorial system. The crown, the church, and the aristocracy controlled the vast majority of the land and, by extension, production. Market towns and cities held privileged economic positions and controlled the flow of most commerce. Similarly, the residents of market towns and cities had legal status that separated them from the peasantry [*bondestanden*] on whose sole shoulders rested the obligation to serve in the military. Peasants were often born poor, lived their lives poor and died poor. There were few avenues for upward mobility. Travel was hampered by bad roads, farming was inefficient because of antiquated technology and the constraints of the outmoded manorial system, and communication was difficult because of widespread illiteracy and an obsolete postal system.

Yet by the end of a period of little more than one hundred and twenty-five years, Denmark had become a constitutional democracy, private land ownership was widespread, the manorial system was a thing of the past, the privileged status of the market towns and cities had evaporated, literacy was widespread, a well-functioning railway connected virtually all parts of the country, high speed communication via telegraph was commonplace, and the

popular press had become an accessible and important factor in people's understanding of community, region and nation. Furthermore, the legal divide between peasants and town dwellers had disappeared, the centralized Lutheran church had lost its stranglehold on religious expression, political parties were emerging that challenged the conservative interests of the wealthy urban elites, the beginnings of a social welfare system had been established, and significant reforms to health care along with scientific advances in medicine had changed the way people perceived health and welfare.

The land reforms of 1788 were the first step on this remarkable journey of social transformation. Up until that point, Danish agriculture had been organized as a classic manorial system.[5] In 1788, royal estates, large land holdings held by aristocrats (counts, dukes, manor lords, etc.), and church holdings accounted for 98% of all arable land in Denmark and their agricultural output (primarily grain and cattle) accounted for nearly all of the country's gross domestic product. Manor farms had by far the largest holdings, accounting for 63% of the farmland measured in barrels of *hartkorn* (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 213).[6] The manor lords exercised a great deal of control over the economic, social and political lives of the people working their lands, helping to appoint the local minister and making all significant decisions concerning the local economy. The largest manor farms were granted status by the crown as judicial districts (*birk*), which operated as independent legal entities. Because the aristocrat whose district had been granted this status was allowed to appoint the presiding judge of the largely autonomous district court (*birkeret*), he held, for all intents and purposes, absolute control over his property and the people who lived there.

Before the land reforms of the late eighteenth century, most farmers lived on copyholds—farms that had been

leased for a fixed number of years or, more often, a lifetime, from the manor. Less fortunate peasants either lived in leased houses with little or no land, or on the manorial estates themselves. Lease payments were predominantly made in kind and a significant proportion of a farmer's output was owed to the manor farm as part of these payments. One of the most important reforms of the late eighteenth century was the move away from in-kind lease payments in favor of cash payments. This change gave farmers more control over their economic decisions and much needed freedom from the potentially capricious and destructive demands of the manor. At the same time, it guaranteed the manor farms consistent value for their leased lands.

Most leases called for villeinage (*hoveri*), a requirement to supply a set amount of labor per year to the manor, which constituted a significant burden on farmers and smallholders. While villeinage guaranteed manor farms a ready labor supply, it disrupted work on the leased lands usually at the most crucial times of the growing cycle. The abolition of villeinage started at the beginning of the nineteenth century but took nearly a century to complete, largely because of resistance from some aristocrats to do away with this system. Its abolition was a major and necessary stepping stone on the way to the modernization of the Danish agricultural economy. As a result of these reforms, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, most Danish farmers owned their own land and had no work obligations to large landholders.

Prior to the land reforms, fields were spread helter-skelter in long strips throughout the manor's properties. It was not uncommon for a farmer to have dozens of "fields"—narrow strips of land hundreds of meters long the width of two plows—that he had to care for. During the plowing season, he would have to move his heavy four-wheeled plow and animals from strip to strip. Similarly, he would have to

coordinate his activities with all the other farmers in the village who worked the same fields. This system of coordinated farming was known as the *fælleskab*, or collective, and the decisions concerning what to sow on which fields, which fields to leave fallow, when to plow and when to harvest were always taken collectively in a guild known as the *bylav*. All the farmhouses were physically concentrated in villages, and fields could be quite distant from these village centers.[7]

To make matters worse, after 1733, any male who was born in a house or farm under the purview of a manor farm was subjected to adscription (*stavnsbånd*), a system that required a person to seek permission from the manor lord if he wished to leave the area. At first, adscription applied only to boys and men between the ages of fourteen and thirty-six, but by 1760, it had been expanded to cover all men from age four to forty. The original intent of the *stavnsbånd* had been to keep men on their farms after the abolishment of the rural militias in 1730. Up through the mid-nineteenth century, only members of the peasantry—the *bondestand*—were required to serve in the military, the rationale being that the defense of the country was part of the obligation of the manor farms toward the Crown to protect the very land that they farmed. In practice, the *stavnsbånd* meant that people were bound for life to the manor on which they were born. While the system was supposed to allow for more efficient military conscription, it mainly guaranteed manor lords a captive work force.

The manorial system was spectacularly inefficient and completely incapable of reacting to the increasingly global marketplace for grain and animal products of nineteenth century Europe (Christiansen 1996). The biggest problems were related to coordination and modernization—achieving consensus among all the farmers on decisions related to crops,

crop rotation, and growing methods was essentially impossible. Similarly, advances in agricultural techniques and new technologies were for all intents and purposes impossible to implement on a manor-wide scale given the broad resistance to change among the peasants, an uneven distribution of capital to pay for improvements, and a wide range of workers with dissimilar economic interests. Since payments to the manor farm were closely tied to productivity, farmers had little or no incentive to increase production. Consequently, manor lords found their economic fortunes tied to a rigid system that made it difficult for them to react to significant changes in market prices, while farmers and peasants found themselves tied to a system that had structural disincentives for individual initiative and ambition (Christiansen 1996 and 2002).

Under increasing pressure from the aristocrats, who found the manorial system to be both unwieldy and utterly inefficient, and the farmers, who found the system to be exploitative, the Crown relented in 1788 and agreed to a far ranging series of land reforms. Although A. P. Bernstorff and the brothers Ludwig and Christian Ditlev Reventlöw were among the main aristocratic proponents agitating for change, the push for the elimination of the *stavnsbånd* and other reforms in land organization and apportionment would have come to naught had it not been for the willingness of King Frederik VI (1768-1839) to move ahead with these reforms.[8] The implications of these land reforms were far reaching, and marked the beginning of the dismantling of the manorial system that reached its culmination with the propagation of the democratic constitution in 1849.

Perhaps the two most important aspects of the land reforms of 1788 were the dissolution of the *stavnsbånd*, and the sale of the leased manorial lands and crown estates. These two changes in the organization of the rural economy had

huge demographic, social and political implications—not to mention an obvious economic impact—that resonated into the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the most significant changes to rural organization as part of the dismantling of the manorial system was the reapportionment of the fields (*udskiftning*) and the subsequent removal of farms from concentrated village centers out onto the fields (*udflytter gårde*).

The reapportionment of the fields eliminated the inefficient organization of land, and concentrated all of a farm's land in several adjacent plots. The task of reapportionment was complex and was based on the historic yield of different strips of land. The goal was to consolidate each farmer's holdings without a change in the overall potential yield. Moving farmhouses onto the fields would create efficiencies by eliminating the time-consuming process of moving equipment from farm buildings to fields and back again. These two endeavors took nearly half a century to implement and were not completed until well up into the nineteenth century. These changes in the organization of the Danish agricultural economy and landscape fundamentally altered the manner in which people farmed and interacted. As Bjørn notes, "Det kulturlandskab med den på én gang spredte og samtidig ret tætte landbrugsbebyggelse, der den dag i dag er karakteristisk for det åbne land i Danmark, blev i det væsentlige skabt i denne periode" [The cultural landscape with its at once diffuse and relatively closely built agricultural areas which to this very day characterizes the open spaces of Denmark was shaped to the greatest degree during this period] (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 13). Farmers and smallholders alike moved from being strongly tied to a manor that governed nearly all aspects of their economic and social lives to being individual players who had great personal freedom,

responsibility and independence in an emerging free market system.

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, nearly 60% of Danish farmers owned their own land; the remaining ones were tenant farmers, cotters, day laborers or craftsmen. Still, there was a growing eagerness among the farmers who did not own their own land to do so. Once the major inefficiencies and inequities had been addressed, legislative attention shifted to the question of the tenant farmer. Although many farmers now owned their lands, a large group held land as part of a tenancy agreement (*fæste*). By the mid-nineteenth century, reform of this system had become the most pressing issue in Danish agricultural politics, and significant steps were taken to end the tenancy system in the 1860s. By the time that Tang Kristensen began his collecting, not only was the age of the large manor farm long gone, but the age of tenancy was also on its way out. Small farms and cottages (with or without land), owned and managed by individuals had taken their place.

A second important development in the 1850s and 1860s that helped shape the rural landscape was land reclamation, accomplished through draining and the aggressive use of fertilizers and marl. Through these efforts, thousands of previously non-arable acres comprised primarily of swamps, meadows, low-lying wetlands and heath were all brought into cultivation (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 82). Government programs including low-interest loans, subsidies and land give-aways were instituted to encourage people to take on this back-breaking labor. As a result of these reform policies, Danish agricultural output increased dramatically.

Perhaps one of the most important technological developments in mid-nineteenth century Denmark was the introduction of the swing plow; over the course of little more than a decade, the Danish farmer switched from using four

wheel plows to much more efficient and far less damaging swing plows (Johansen 1979, 25). Other technological advances included a better understanding of the use of fertilizer and marl. Better, more consistent seed along with changes in crop rotations, and more sophisticated approaches to irrigation and drainage all contributed to the increased yields on the Danish farms. The end result of all this change and development was a dramatic reorganization of the economic landscape of agricultural Denmark: where before there had largely been manor farms and the people who worked directly or indirectly for these large scale enterprises, there were now numerous classes of people working in the rural areas: at the top, there was a still a small group of aristocrats and large land holders, and below them a large and growing group of farm owners whose fields produced anywhere from 1 barrel to 12 barrels of *hartkorn*. By 1835, nearly 85% of all agricultural production in Denmark took place on privately held farms with a valuation of 1-12 barrels of hartkorn (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 28). Another very large group was comprised of smallholders whose fields produced less than a barrel of *hartkorn* (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 26).[9]

In the middle part of the nineteenth century, prices for grain on the European market were good and Danish farms' productivity increased steadily. This period from 1830-1876 is referred to in Danish agricultural history as the grain sale period (*kornsalgsperioden*) and is considered by historians to have been a time of relative plenty (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 76). A major factor in the rise of the grain market was the decision by the British to remove their protective tariffs on foreign grain in 1849. As a consequence, Danish grain exports tripled during the 1850s and 1860s over levels from the 1820s (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 43). By the 1870s, however, the grain market in Europe had become globalized, and inexpensive grain from the post Civil War-era United

States flooded European markets, driving prices down dramatically. While this collapse in grain prices could have spelled economic doom for Danish farmers, it did not. How did the Danish farmers and smallholders adroitly sidestep this calamity? The success of Danish agriculture in the face of the collapsing grain economy can be attributed in part to the structural changes in farm organization from the earlier part of the century, in part to technological advances and a better understanding of milk production and animal fodder, and in part to the emergence of the cooperative movement. Although animal husbandry had always played a part on most Danish farms and smallholdings, it took on far greater significance in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Danish farms large and small alike switched from grains based production to animal based production. This shift was in part out of necessity, since the average size of the Danish farm was becoming less than optimal for grain production, while advances in the understanding of animal husbandry made it possible for farmers to greatly increase the size of their dairy herds. The cultivation of fodder beets, a cattle feed that was high in carbohydrates, had diuretic properties and had the added bonus of being easily stored during the winter, was an important advance in Danish dairy farming. By shifting some of his land to fodder beets, a farmer could diversify away from grain and simultaneously increase and stabilize his dairy output throughout the year. Prior to this advance, Danish dairy cows, particularly on the smaller farms, had been fed mostly hay, which, as the winter wore on and the hay deteriorated, led to rapid decreases in both milk output and quality. Other advances in the science of milk storage and treatment, animal feed, drainage and field fertilization, propagated by the Danish agricultural university and by the

folk high schools, greatly increased the productivity of Danish milk cows and the quality of Danish dairy products.

By aligning themselves in cooperatives—first dairy cooperatives and later slaughter house cooperatives primarily for swine—Danish farmers and smallholders were able to compete effectively with the larger land holders who previously had an insurmountable advantage in regards to consistent quality of their pork and dairy products. With the explosive growth of urban centers in England and their almost bottomless demand for Danish butter and bacon, Danish farmers were able to increase their output even on the smallest plots of land. Consequently, while Norway and Sweden experienced massive emigration (primarily to the United States) during this period of collapsing grain prices, the emigration from Denmark was not nearly as dramatic. Although the Danish cities continued to grow, the large number of smallholders who were able to make a living off of their farms, coupled with various government incentives for people to continue farming, slowed what could have been unsustainable growth in the cities.

Along with changes in agricultural practice and organization, social organization changed during this period as well. The parish (*sogn*) as opposed to the village (*landsby*) became the main organizational unit for local government and social engagement. The town guild (*bylav*), which had regulated agricultural activity, ceased functioning as smallholders and farmers alike became individual market players. The festival guild (*gildelav*), which had organized local social activities, was largely replaced by associations (*foreninger*). These associations were no longer constrained by local demands, but rather represented interest groups that were more regional or even national in scope. Economic associations, educational associations, political associations and so on all developed at this time, and people soon found

opportunities to explore interests that were not constrained by the local (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 383). In short, decision-making was opened to more people while demands on individuals to secure their own financial well-being increased dramatically. Social life expanded beyond the local village to include people from neighboring parishes organized in groups that focused on common interests and issues.

The increasing emphasis up through the nineteenth century on the individual as both a market actor and as responsible for his or her own financial well-being is seen best in the ongoing debate over poverty assistance during the nineteenth century. The first attempts at a unified approach to the problem of rural poverty were expressed in the poverty laws of 1708 (Jørgensen 1940). Begging was outlawed, severe punishments were instituted, and the principal of public assistance was affirmed (Jørgensen 1940). Prior to the land reforms of the 1780s, the most common form of poverty assistance was rotation care (*omgangsbespisning*), where a poor person was assigned to different farms for a number of days throughout the year. Interestingly, this form of "controlled wandering" looked from the outside no different from begging. Yet it was fundamentally different because control over the poor accrued to the individual community and the level of support was decided by the individual farmer owners. Smallholders, to the extent that there were any, and leaseholders rarely participated in this system. Instead, the entire system relied on the good will of the local farmers. Furthermore—and quite importantly—the system let farmers offer assistance in kind, thereby avoiding the monetary tax burden that arose with later poverty assistance laws. While this solution appeared good to the local farmers, it was utterly inadequate to meet the rising demands of rural poverty. Fortunately, after the land reforms during the last decades of the 1700s and the subsequent dispersal of farms onto their

fields, this type of assistance became less common and consequently new models for providing poverty assistance and combating begging began to take shape (Jørgensen 1940, 6-7).

It was not until the very early nineteenth century that laws offering a more consistent approach to the care for the poor were enacted (Jørgensen 1940). While a new law governing care for the poor was signed in 1803, the absurdities of legislative deadlock made it impossible to pass a reform of the law until 1891 despite continued efforts throughout the nineteenth century (Jørgensen 1940). The negotiation of changes to the 1803 law was a constant business item for parish commissions. Not surprisingly, these formal discussions filtered into informal discussions and storytelling and *vice versa*. The underlying principle of the law—that localities were responsible for their own poor—resonated with calls for increasing decentralization, particularly from the farm owners' political party *Venstre* at the same time as it raised concern among these same farm owners (the new tax paying class as it were) that an unusually high burden was about to befall them, particularly given the cries from the cities' economic elite that the urban poor be "sent back to where they came from."

In comparison to poverty legislation, educational reform was relatively swift. Public education was already a concern at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and from 1721-1727, King Frederik IV instigated the establishment of two hundred and forty cavalry schools (*rytterskoler*) on the royal estates.[10] The pietism of the day was one of the main inspirations for these schools that were based on the idea that education could help produce good Christian citizens from the young peasantry. The Reventlöw brothers who were crucial in the land reform efforts were equally crucial in educational reform efforts. A national committee was established in 1789 to

focus on the question of public education and this resulted in the School Law of 1814, with two separate ordinances: one for schools in rural areas and one for schools in urban areas. As a result of these reforms and those to the poverty laws, power became increasingly concentrated in the local parish councils (Nørr 1981 and 1994; Jørgensen 1979 4, 126). Another result of this legislation was the establishment of teacher colleges throughout the country and the development of standard curricula both for teacher education and for the new public schools.

In 1856, new school legislation gave parents more control and choice in local schools while, up through the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the folk high schools (*folkehøjskoler*), started by the theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig, grew. Consequently, by the second half of the nineteenth century, most Danes had some schooling and the vast majority of the population was literate. In a study from 1859, for instance, 88.3% of the population could read and write, 8.9% could read, and only 2.8% were illiterate (Dybdahl 1982, 107). Similarly, the folk high schools offered young men and women—predominantly from the farm owning class—an opportunity to learn new agricultural techniques while also receiving a general education in Danish history and culture.

Along with land reform, progressive poverty legislation and the development of a broad public education system, the health care system was systematized during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1803, the Health Collegium (*Sundhedskollegium*) was established and charged with overseeing the development of a modern heath care system. The emphasis was largely on urban areas, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the number of physicians was sufficient to handle the urban population. In the countryside, the situation was dire with only one hundred rural doctors for the entire country in 1870 (Johansen 1979,

298). Despite the strong quacksalver laws that the collegium had supported in an effort to stamp out local "cunning folk," these same local healers were often given permission to set bones and treat other injuries (Rørbye 1976a and 1976b). Throughout Denmark, a well developed network of usually competent midwives delivered the majority of babies. By 1910, the situation had changed significantly and the number of physicians available in the country had more than doubled (Dybdahl 1982, 35).

Changes in transportation and communication also contributed to the fundamental changes in social organization and daily life in rural Denmark during the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of that century, roads in Denmark were predominantly dirt roads and in the vast expanses of Jutland were often little more than rutted wagon wheel tracks. Although a systematic improvement of roads had begun in 1763, progress was largely halted on these projects with the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath. The work was restarted in earnest in the 1820s and, by the mid-1800s, work on completing the 1100 kilometer long highway system was in full swing in Jutland helped considerably by a shift away from communal villeinage toward bid contracts (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 10, 20-22).

Since Denmark is a country of islands, the numerous channels and sounds were main impediments to travel between regions of the country. Improvements in the ferry system, particularly the introduction of steamships in 1828 on the Storebælt channel between Sjælland and Fyn, helped linked distant parts of the country. These developments also greatly reduced the travel time for mail, in many cases halving the delivery time. Nevertheless, by the middle of the century, only the large cities and towns that had benefited from the development of the road network and the steam boat lines. In Jutland, these improvements were largely constrained to

the east coast and the main axis of towns from Vejle in the south, Skanderborg, Århus, Aalborg and Frederikshavn in the north.

The most dramatic change in Danish transportation and communication came with the advent of the railway in the 1860s. The debates concerning possible railway lines through Jutland were complicated with competing interests advocating different routes. Some advocates thought that east-west routes would serve the expansion of trade with England, whereas others were more interested in moving livestock to Germany along a north-south axis. The intervention of the British entrepreneur Samuel Morton Peto (1809-1889), who proposed a zig-zag route up through Jutland, along with the masterful political maneuvering of D.G. Monrad, minister of the interior at the time, resulted in a solution that appeased many of the competing interests. As a result, the railways on Jutland that were begun in 1861 were essentially complete by 1869, offering people access to nearly five hundred kilometers of railway (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 51-52).

The development of the railway changed the manner in which goods and people circulated. Although early railway ticket prices were high, these dropped along with increased ridership and continued investments from the state. The rail network made postal correspondence speedier, and also allowed booksellers and newsprint vendors access to markets in towns and urban centers throughout the kingdom. Along with the railways came the widespread introduction of the telegraph. The first telegraphs in Denmark were already installed in the early 1800s, but these were "optical" telegraphs—a series of very high posts, usually seventy feet high, where semaphore signals were read and relayed from mast to mast using telescopes. In 1854, the Danish government installed the first telegraph in Denmark on a stretch between Copenhagen and Fredericia (Olsen et al.

1988-1991 vol. 11, 53). This electro-magnetic telegraph, based on the technological innovations of the Dane H. C. Ørsted, the Brit William Sturgeon and the American Samuel Morse, allowed signals to be sent long distances over electrical wire. C. F. Tietgen, a Danish entrepreneur, developed an international telegraph company that linked Denmark and Norway with England via underwater cable already in 1869, and later connected Europe to Russia and China (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 53). Although the telegraph was largely reserved for business transactions, it aligned well with the greater globalization of the Danish market, and mirrored the dramatic changes in communication presaged both by the expanded railway and postal service, and the dramatic increase in literacy.

By the time Tang Kristensen began his folklore collecting, Denmark was no longer the manorial world that inspired nostalgia in the Romantic nationalists. Rather, it was a rapidly modernizing country, one that had emerged from several crushing military defeats and economic setbacks as a dynamic young democracy. The division of society into citizens and peasants had evaporated, people now played a significant role in determining their own economic success, education was widespread, health care was rapidly improving, and the beginnings of a progressive social welfare net were being developed. The class of smallholders was slowly but surely becoming a political force to be reckoned with. Indeed, their movement, the Cotters' Movement (*Husmandsbevægelsen*) with literary political figures such as Tang Kristensen's one time protégé, Jeppe Aakjær, in the lead became a major political force in Denmark at the start of the twentieth century (Tangherlini 1999a). Danish agriculture had shifted away from inefficient and outdated modes of production toward nimble distributed models of organization best exemplified by the cooperative movement. Parts of the country that had

been disconnected and distant from each other at the start of the 1800s were now connected physically through greatly improved transportation networks and virtually through greatly improved communication networks. Widespread literacy, a result of a massive reform of the educational system making education not only free but compulsory, made it possible for Tang Kristensen to realize his folklore collecting project. As a schoolteacher himself, he could rely on a newly developed network of teachers to supply him with local knowledge. At the same time, the people in these rural areas were now aware of Denmark as a unified conceptual cultural category and could act not only as storytellers but also as audiences for printed folklore collections.

These changes in macro-organization had noticeable effects on micro-organization, influencing everything from the rhythms of everyday life to the distribution of household work. One of the most marked changes in the rural household was the differences that emerged in daily life among the three main classes that made up the majority of the rural population: farmers, at the top of the socio-economic ladder; smallholders (or cotters) and successful craftsmen, on the middle rung; and the rural poor consisting mostly of daylaborers, young journeymen, and less successful craftsmen, on the lower rungs. On the very bottom rungs of the economic ladder were people who were unemployed, sick or elderly.[11]

As farmers became more self-sufficient and the production emphasis shifted from grain to animals, women's role in household work shifted markedly. Whereas at the start of the nineteenth century, women and men played equally important roles in running farms (*gårde*), by the end of the century, women's roles had generally moved toward food preparation and care of children (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 391). One important exception was in the dairies. Although dairy

production was becoming increasingly industrialized, female dairy workers still constituted the majority of this workforce. Unfortunately, despite the increasingly rigorous and systematized training for these dairy workers, the management positions were still largely reserved for men (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 387-391). In smallholders' households, things remained relatively static, with the division of labor much as it had been before. Men worked in the fields and with the large animals, while women worked in the house and with the small animals. At planting and harvest times, everyone including the children pitched in. Among the day laborers, the situation became increasingly worse, as mechanization displaced many of their jobs.

As dairies and slaughterhouses became centralized, an increased mechanization of farm labor also took hold. Automatic harvesters and threshers, as well as the first examples of tractors began appearing on Danish farms toward the end of the nineteenth century. Milling equipment that did not rely on water or wind and could be installed easily in a farm began to make broad inroads in Jutland. Consequently, seasonal work related to harvesting and threshing—the latter a source of income for many smallholders and daylaborers during the relatively quiet winter months—disappeared and the role of the miller became less important. Finally, the railroad greatly increased access to industrially produced and lower-cost goods, including shoes, clothing, furniture, and equipment. Ultimately, the daily life on the farm and smallholdings became transformed as the economy shifted toward greater specialization and people began to purchase, rather than produce or obtain through barter, the staples of daily life.

Notes

[1] The debate over what is and is not "folklore" has raged for years in academic journals (Oring 1986, 1-22). Without getting too caught up in this important, yet maddening, debate, I propose that, for the purposes of this work, folklore is taken to be the traditional, primarily oral, expressions of individuals. Consequently, a literary author's production is not "folklore" because it is neither oral nor traditional. "Traditions" are those cultural expressions that individuals (the "folk") hoped would persist. By remembering and performing such expressions, they gave voice to this "will to persistence." The "folk," for the purposes of this work, are taken to be Danes living in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Jutland. Of course, a lively tension exists between individuals and the groups to which any individual belongs, and this dialectic tension between individual goals and desires, and the expressive culture of the group as a whole, gives rise to the dynamic processes that animate folklore.

[2] The concept of "thick description" is borrowed here from Clifford Geertz (1973). Lauri Honko applies this concept of thick description to the issues of repertoire and corpus (2000).

[3] The notion of folklore having a life of its own is known as the "superorganic" theory in folklore, and can be found in the scholarship of late nineteenth and twentieth century scholars such as Olrik (1908). The superorganic view holds that there is a level of culture that is not controlled by the organic level—i.e. the level of human control—but which guarantees a consistency in human behavior (Pentikäinen 1978, 17; Dundes 1965, 129-130).

[4] All the stories are cross-referenced across the five repertoires, to allow for easy comparisons between variants.

In addition, a large group of variants referenced in the annotations by collection, volume and number from other storytellers' repertoires are included in the accompanying digital materials. Navigation through the digital materials allows for multiple avenues of inquiry into this complex material.

[5] An excellent overview of the Danish manorial system can be found in Palle O. Christiansen (1996).

[6] The standard method for valuing farmland in Denmark was to calculate the potential output of the total acreage in barrels of *hartkorn*.

[7] The description of agricultural organization in Denmark presented here is necessarily abbreviated. The best and most accessible overview of Danish agricultural can be found in the four volume history published by the *Landbohistorisk Selskab* in Denmark (Bjørn et al. 1988).

[8] Although Frederik VI did not officially become king until the death of his father Christian VII in 1808, his father's insanity made it impossible for him to rule. Instead, crown prince Frederik essentially ruled as regent from 1784, when he was made a member of the privy council.

[9] The smaller farms, with a valuation of one to two barrels of hartkorn were known as *bolsted*.

[10] These were called *rytterskoler* or cavalry schools because they were established on those of the royal estates that supplied men and materiel for the cavalry

[11] These categories were by no means fixed, and people often moved up and down the socioeconomic ladder over the course of their life.