Cycle Construction and Character Development in Central Algonkian Trickster Tales

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Perhaps no character from Native American folklore is more widely recognized than the Trickster. The stability of certain Native American Trickster episodes such as The Dancing Ducks/Prairie Dogs, The Eye-Juggler, and The Bungling Host are so well known to scholars of Native American folklore that, despite the lack of motif or tale-type indexes for native American folklore, there is little hesitation about recognizing them as tale types.[1] However, the ease with which such tales can be combined into cycles or fragmented or compressed into motifs raises important formal and structural questions about the nature of these familiar tales.

At the same time, Trickster has been subject to a variety of interpretations. Those who employ cultural-thematic or structural analysis in response to the gnomic character of individual tales tend to find in Trickster a static, structural foil who facilitates cultural critique through an inversion of cultural values (see Dundes 1964; Wiget 1987, 1990). Others point out that some episodes seem to conclude with acts of self-reflection and evaluation that, coupled with Trickster's beneficial transformative actions, appear to mark his growth and development as a model of self-realization (Jung 1972; Babcock 1975). One can also sketch, albeit quite roughly, the relationship between these questions of interpretation and debates about the historical priority of Trickster. To the degree that the

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[1] The closest published analogue to a motif and tale-type index of Native American tales is the classification prepared by Stith Thompson for his *Tales of the North American Indians* (1966), which was obviously meant as only a preliminary guide to the vast ethnographic and folkloric literature. A close examination of Boas 1916 indicates the distribution of many types along the Northwest Coast. Fisher prepared the first comparative study of Algonkian materials (1946), though she focused on northeastern, not central Algonkians.

developmental model sees Trickster as evolving from undifferentiated Trickster/Transformer to differentiated Culture Hero, it conflates a model of "progress" with a model of cultural evolution, thus suggesting the historical priority of the Trickster over the Culture Hero. Structuralist interpretations, on the other hand, appear to presume at least a parity between the two figures who serve as mutual foils, or, in the extreme, the priority of the Culture Hero who establishes the conventions against which the Trickster must rebel. The attractiveness of the developmental model for many is that it offers a representation of the trickster more complex, and thus more aesthetically (and perhaps morally) satisfying to some Westerners, than Trickster as simple structural foil.

Overlooked in both interpretive tendencies are the material conditions on which they are based. Polyvalent structural interpretations require the isolated and decontextualized presentation of a single tale as a condition for ambiguity and polysemy; in its most expansive application, this has been extended to considerations of variants of a single tale-type. Conversely, the developmental sociological or psychological interpretation depends on the context of other tales performed in a cycle to create the conditions for defining Trickster's emerging character; the key source here is the Winnebago Trickster cycle published by Radin (itself an anomaly, since it was written by one Winnebago in syllabary from dictation by the informant, not recorded from an oral performance), together with Jung's commentary on it. Moreover, almost invariably the sources for both the structural and the developmental interpretive traditions have been published translations of texts. The fundamental question is whether these conclusions about the nature of the Trickster figure, dependent as they are upon the material conditions of the received texts upon which they are based, can be sustained by an examination of trickster cycles as actually performed.

With few exceptions, such as Bloomfield's recording of Maggie Achenam's Cree Trickster cycle performance discussed here—the performance that first alerted me to these questions—the publication of trickster materials has usually taken the form of collections of single tales, regardless of whether they were originally performed singly or as parts of cycles. The methodological problem posed by the present inquiry is how to assemble a coherent corpus of trickster cycles that represent a valid record of performances, which can then be made available for analysis. In this respect, the methodology proposed and demonstrated with great effect by Dell Hymes proves useful. Hymes has shown that utterance-initial particles are customarily used in a number of American Indian oral narrative traditions to mark stylistic and structural units of narration. Adequate linguistic transcriptions would record these linguistic markers, and, coupled

with necessary contextual information such as the informant's name and the place and date of performance, provide the data necessary to reconstruct cycles-as-performed from published materials that had been dismembered by the editor for his own purposes of analysis or representation. This article reconstructs and analyzes nineteen Central Algonkian Trickster cycle performances to provide a valid performative basis for understanding some important aspects of Central Algonkian narratology and for testing historical and thematic interpretations of the Native American trickster.

The Structure of a Trickster Episode

A Central Algonkian Trickster story has six specific elements, the identification of which make possible an aesthetic appreciation of the structure of the tale on the part of the audience, while at the same time providing the creative resources with which the raconteur can work. These are: (1) an Opening Formula, which differs between cycle-initial and cycle-internal stories; (2) an Entitlement Address; (3) an elaborate construction of episode into linguistically Marked Scenes; (4) an Exclamatory Element; (5) an Explanatory Element; and (6) a Closing Formula. The Entitlement Address, the Exclamatory Element, and the Explanatory Element are in this sense not absolutely necessary for maintaining audience engagement or the momentum of the narrative, though, given the frequency of their occurrence, their presence would seem to be preferred.

Opening Formula

The Opening Formula of Central Algonkian Trickster stories is very similar to those generally associated with Trickster stories, whatever their provenance. The Maggie Achenam cycle provides many typical examples:

Once upon a time Wishketchak[2] got ready and went forth. Then he saw a

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[2] The name of the Central Algonkian Trickster is variously transcribed as *Menapus*, *Nenabuc*, *Nenabush*, *Nanabush*, *Nanabusha*, *Nenabojo*, *Wenabojo*, except among the Cree, where he is known as *Wishketchak*, *Wisahketchak*, or *Wisateketchak*. The name of the class of Central Algonkian spirits is variously transcribed as *manido*, *manitou*, or *manito*. I have preserved these variant spellings throughout the article.

buffalo. It started to run away. (Bloomfield 1934:279:l. 1)[3]

Or:

As he walked along, he saw some geese. The geese tried to get away. (*ibid*.:289, l. 112)

Or:

He was hungry; he had nothing to eat. He decided to try and kill some game. He saw four buffalos; he had no way of killing them. (*ibid*.:l. 121)

None of these openings is very complex, but they are formulaic nevertheless.
        The standard pattern requires four parts. The first part is a direct reference to Trickster, which in the Opening Formula for the first episode of the cycle, and hence for the cycle itself, takes the form of the trickster's proper name or title; for cycle internal episodes this reference is made deictically. Of the eleven Ojibwa texts for which Performance Closing Formulae were recorded, the Performance Opening Formula mentioned Trickster by name, while subsequent internal episodes used only a pronominal reference at the episode Opening Formula. As self-evident as this correlation may appear upon reflection, it provides another reference point for reconstructing performances from previously recorded texts that the transcriber/editor may have divided for his own purposes (cf. Kendall 1980). Where proper names are used at internal boundaries between episodes within a cycle, the narrator has also deepened the boundary by adding information that establishes a strong temporal or spatial link between episodes (a very unusual practice):

And so *there* for a long while continued *Nanabushu*. Now, once on a time *to another place* moved *Nanabushu* and his wife. (Jones 1917:429, italics added)

The full name reference then, seems to alternate with the deepened boundary and to vary with the pronominal reference. The Lac du Flambeau cycle (Oj D; see Table 1 below for sources and abbreviations) and the Bois Fort (Oj A) cycle both consistently employ the deepened boundary/pronominal

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[3] Line numbers in citations or quotations refer to the line numbers originally ascribed to the text in the original publication, and not to line numbers as defined by the author of this paper in reconstructing those original texts according to the methods outlined herein.

reference contrast, the first leaning more toward deep boundary and full name, the second toward pronominal reference. Oj E seems equally divided. The same contrast pattern appears in Plains Cree, Menomini A, and less obviously in Menomini B. In the Timiskaming Algonkian cycle, the exact correlation between Full Name Reference Cycle Opening Formula and the Cycle Closing Formula obtains, but the contrast does not appear at all strongly in the internal episodes.

The second part of the Opening Formula is a verb of indefinite movement, that is, goal-less motion without an explicit destination or motivation. The Cree preference is for *pimihtaw*, "to walk along," and in these stories it seldom occurs with nouns that have locative forms. Consequently, Trickster can never be said to be going anywhere in particular. And if the formulaic nature of these openings were not sufficient to make this clear, the verb of motion was frequently reduplicated, a grammatical form that commonly marks the recurrent, habitual, or perpetual character of an activity in many languages, not only Native American ones. Hence, several stories show *pa-pamuhtaw* ("he was continually walking along") or *sa-sipwahtaw* ("he continually went from place to place") (Bloomfield 1934:282, l. 33; 292, l. 144; 292, l. 151).

The third part is an Encounter Verb. Here the Cree prefer *wapimaw*, "to see," though another verb may be used when the story makes it more appropriate. In the case of the Sun Dance of the flies in the buffalo skull, for instance, it is *pahtam*, "to hear." Nevertheless, the verb reflects an encounter not resulting from prior intention, at least not in the beginning of a tale or episode.

The fourth part is the denomination of the antagonist, done simply and most frequently by saying, "He saw (buffalo, geese, a fox, and so on). A fifth (very infrequent) part is a statement of Trickster's condition: "Now it was winter; he was very cold" or "He was hungry; he had nothing to eat" (Bloomfield 1934:279, l. 12; 289, l. 121). Moreover, these conditions are not specific enough to motivate a particular story; instead they provide the narrator a chance to select one story of a particular kind, for example those associated with hunger, and so permit the thematic sequencing stories. These conditions, however, are so much a part of trickster's character—he is perpetually underfed and oversexed—that they seldom if ever seem to be the consequences of the outcomes of previous stories, which may be a way of saying the same thing. In sum, the Opening Formula makes clear that Trickster is purposeless. He does not go to some particular place in order to accomplish some particular end. Instead, he wanders into a non-place and transforms it into a place by making something happen there.

Entitlement Address

The second element in the Trickster stories is very interesting in a number of ways, not the least of which is the fact that it has been overlooked. This is the familiar form of address that Trickster employs when he first meets his antagonist. Almost without fail he will address the other animals as "Little Brother" (Plains Cree, *Nisim*; Ojibwa, *Nicima*; Menomini, *Nehsi'meh*; Fox, *Nesi'i*). The form of address is also found in the English translations of stories from the Eastern Cree and the Wisconsin Ojibwa, cycles for which no Native text was provided in the publication. The familial form refers to the belief that Trickster was among the firstborn of the Earth, and that his brothers were the ancestors of the animals (Jones 1917:75). This kinship link makes him their uncle and establishes the possibility of the joking relationship among them. A similar situation is found in other Native American oral literatures, in which Trickster addresses everyone as "cross-cousin," as in Kiowa or Apache, for instance (Parsons 1929, Evers 1978). Interpreting this address as motivating a joking relationship would explain the compulsive trickery that dominates Trickster's relationship with other creatures. Further, as David Turner has pointed out, Cree society is clearly "inside/outside" oriented along lines of primary brotherhood denominated as "*nisim*" (1978:68). Indeed, if the naming provides a kind of entitling, like that of which Crocker speaks, we can interpret trickery as a form of compelled status negotiation and consequently understand plot as a narrative that moves from ambiguity of encounter to clarity of outcome.[4]

There is some verbatim evidence that relationships with Trickster are compelled relationships. One of Speck's Timiskaming Algonquin informants told him that Trickster "had the power to make everything in creation answer him when he spoke to it; trees, water, animals, and all other little creatures would reply when he spoke" (1915:21). This compulsion is clearly manifest in the narratives by the fear-and-flight response that some of the antagonists display when Trickster hails them as "Little Brother." When

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[4] Dundes (1971:180-81) observes that "while American Indian trickster tales, like African trickster tales, do employ deceit and deception motifemes (Dundes 1964:72-75), the friendship frame is conspicuously absent. Similarly, the violation of a contract is not a common structural sequence in American Indian tales." All of this may indeed be true, but it misses the point because it does not directly address the kinship entitlement.

Trickster first meets the pack of wolves with whom he will later run, they warn each other, "Go you not so very close, for he wishes to say something to you" (Jones 1917:73). Before Trickster can even address the caribou he will later kill, the animal is on to him: "Without fail he will have something to say to me" thought the Caribou. "I think I will draw him on" (Jones 1907:11).   If there were any doubt about the fatal consequences of conversing with Trickster, the Beaver in the Eastern Cree cycle eliminates them (Skinner 1911:84):

> He saw one beaver swimming about. "Come here, brother", he said, for he was the older brother of all the animals. The beaver refused to go. "Why do you call me?", said the Beaver, "when you only wish to kill me?"

The purported familial relationship can also provide opportunities for levity, however, as when animals begin to think too deeply that there might be some substance to the ruse. In the Lac du Flambeau version Trickster moves immediately from the familial address to explain to the moose that "'I've been looking all over for you! They told me you were here. Come here! We were brought up by different people when we were small babies, so it's a long time since I last saw you. You wouldn't remember me.' The Moose thought maybe Wenebojo was telling the truth, so he went up to him." (Barnouw 1977:24). This, it turns out, is to be a very brief encounter between longlost relatives. Wenebojo proceeds to tell the story of one brother who murdered the other, and while acting out the story, slays the Moose. In the Eastern Cree version of the same story, it is a dull-witted Bear who remarks, "I didn't know you were a brother of mine" (Skinner 1911:86).

The widespread occurrence of this element and its function as establishing a basis for compelled negotiating of status through trickery seem to make it an essential component. Just as Trickster's inherent condition of unsatisfied appetite is not explicitly stated but is nevertheless understood, so too it appears that even when the "Little Brother" address does not occur, the acknowledged relationship that underlies it is motivating the interactions in the tale.

An interesting note along this line is the difficulty encountered by Charles Hockett (1964) in reconstructing Proto-Central Algonquian kinship terms.   Twenty-four different kinship terms were reconstructed, most confidently.   The two doubtful ones were "cross-uncle" (*/*nesihSa*/ or */*nehSe.nha*/) and "younger siblings" (*/*nehSi.ma*/ or /*nehSi.me.nha*/ or /*nehSi.me.hsa*/). The longer forms are Proto-Ojibwa and Proto-Potowatomi,

the shorter are Proto-Cree, Proto-Menomini, and Proto-Shawnee, and, with the diminutive */-*e.h*-/, Proto-Fox. What makes this pair peculiar is that the successful reconstruction of these terms required the postulation of a Proto-Central Algonkian consonantism, */-*hs*-/, which literally was found in only these two terms. This scenario suggests a strong, yet unconventional relationship between the two terms. The transformation of "cross-uncle" (Trickster's relationship to other animals who are offspring of the first-born family, which included Trickster) into "Brother" is accomplished through what Lounsbury (1964) has called the "skewing rule."

Putting aside for a moment the more complex discussion of story construction, we can take up the three concluding elements of Algonkian Trickster stories.

Exclamatory Element

As customary as it is for these stories to begin with some direct address that engages the protagonists, it is equally stereotyped that the stories conclude with some parting words that serve to define the relationship of Trickster to his actions. These closing words, usually no more than a single line, are of three types. Most frequent is a curse, hurled by Trickster at an animal who has turned the tables on him, usually in a very humiliating way. It is the humiliation, in fact, that is the source of the humor in the curse, for the curse is usually accompanied by a forest-shaking proclamation—"It was I who created the Earth!"—and a threat of revenge, which seem absurd coming from someone so easily duped. The second type of Exclamatory Element is a remark about Trickster's character most often made by others but sometimes by Trickster himself. These remarks create a reflective distance from which to see Trickster. So after Trickster flies with the geese and is shot down, or after he falls into the lake and finally breaks off the animal skull he had been wearing, others remark to our delight, "Why, it's Wisateketchak again!" and even he is forced, after beating the trees that snared him, to reflect, "Now I regret it." A final kind of statement usually accompanies a transformation. As an expression of gratitude, it is differentiated from a conventional Explanatory Element (Waterman) describing the appearance of something. So after the Weasel helps Trickster to kill the Windigo or after Kingfisher tells Nanabush where the manitos are hiding so that he can kill them, he rewards each not only with a change in appearance but also with an expression of thanks.

Explanatory Element

Explanatory Elements are of two kinds in Trickster stories: dramatic and transformative. The transformative ones are the familiar changes in appearance caused by elements in the tale itself—why buzzard's neck is bare—or as the result of an action of trickster, such as the Weasel's appearance. Either instance represents the first type of Explanatory Element: one that is meant to account for changes to something presented to us as first having been another way. The second kind of Explanatory Element is a statement by Trickster that declares, but does not change, the nature of the object, as when he says of the Laxative Bulb, "We make people windy in the stomach, I was told. Oh, why I am breaking wind! That is what the people, my uncles, shall say till the end of the world." In these Explanatory Elements, Trickster declares the nature of something that has transformed him. Waterman has argued that the Explanatory Elements have no necessary logical or scientific connection with Trickster stories. This statement is true only insofar as one uses Trickster stories as a vehicle to satisfy inquiries derived from Western scientific categories or even from native ethnoscience. The stories remain explanations, though metaphysical ones, in the sense employed by the Navajo storyteller, Yellowman, when he told Barre Toelken (1976) that Trickster "makes all this possible."

Closing Formula

This last and simplest element encountered in an Algonkian trickster story can present some complications when it is met in a cycle. The preferred Cree ending is *Akah sipwahtaw*, "Then he went away from there." Like the Opening Formula, in other words, it entirely lacks specificity. It closes off the episode and that is all. Though one can imagine innumerable alternative endings in terms of setting ("He left on toward evening" or "He went on towards the waterfall"), action ("He searched for the fox") or motivation ("He left vowing revenge"), these do not occur. Consequently, an episode ends without providing motivation for subsequent episodes. Where motivations are filled in, they usually suture two, smaller incidents into a larger episode, itself destined to be finally resolved in the customarily ambiguous way. Both the Opening and Closing Formulas, then, are extremely shallow, a matter of one line or two, and very weak, providing no thematic, causal, or dramatic connection between episodes. A cycle of episodes was normally concluded by a performance-ending formula though several Ojibwa cycles lack them.

Episode Construction

We can now turn our attention to the very elaborate form of episode construction involving the use of sentence-initial particles and key shifts to mark thematically related units of plot. Dell Hymes pioneered the use of this technique to discern the artful structure of oral narrative frequently obscured by the form of the printed word mass, discriminating in this way the dramatic structure of the performance.

Particles often manage the business of narration by sequencing, bounding, co-relating, and otherwise defining events. In narrative there is no "wasted" time because all time is "narrative time," that is, organized through the use of particles and other means towards a particular end through a dramatic conceptualization we call plot. What makes this particular technique so useful is that particles like "then," "now," "so," and "thus" do not necessarily have to come at the beginning of the sentence, and in writing frequently they do not. But with notable regularity, the opposite is true in oral narrative, where both narrator and audience seem to share the expectation of first invoking a narrative frame before developing a scene. This makes sentence-initial particles useful markers of large plot elements. As Hymes points out, however, construction of narrative is not mechanical and certainly involves more than the manipulation of sentence-initial particles. A second key element is the use of key shifts, which change the mode of narration. In any single story the two principal keys employed, besides narration, are quotation and meta-narration. It is also necessary to check parallel structures because frequently the linking of sense and structure is accomplished in a sentence-final element like a verb root. (Hymes 1980a:12-14, 23-24, 31)

Combining these elements in skillful ways to illuminate the sense of the text is a measure of the narrator's artistic skill. There is, in other words, a covariation of form and meaning, so that "verses are recognized, not by counting parts, but by recognizing repetition within a frame, the relation of putative units to each other within a whole" (Hymes 1977:438). These parts, each of which Hymes calls a Verse, may be made up of any number of Lines, each marked by the presence of a single verb. Stanzas consist of individual Verses grouped into clusters customarily determined by culturally preferred pattern numbers, usually four or five, which in some instances Hymes has associated with continuous language groups. So that while, he asserts, Karok, Zuni, Takelma and Tonkawa—totally unrelated languages—favor patterns of two and four, "in the Chinnookan languages,

and in the neighboring Sahaptin and Kalapuyan languages, the formal pattern is built up to threes and fives." (1980a:9). This pattern, he believes, also extends to the organization of Stanzas into Scenes and of Scenes into Acts, so that one can speak of a native "rhetorical conception" based on patterned sequences of action (*ibid.*:9). Beyond Acts, longer narratives may be organized into Parts along the same principle (1980b). Ghezzi (1993) has recently employed Hymes' methodology in the analysis of Ojibwa storytelling.

Given adequate native-language transcriptions of original performances, Hymes' method can be employed to "reconstruct" performance-based texts, reconfiguring the text from the published, translated form in which it appeared according to Western conventions for representing prose, in order to disclose the dramatic conception that first motivated the oral performance. This is a process that requires, as Hymes observes, a "sympathetic imagination, and acquaintance with the nature of such story-telling" (1980a:32). In an earlier, independent work Scollon has shown how elaborate the use of particles can become. In examining Chipewyan narratives, he found that "a section of text marked by *Reku* boundaries must begin with a full noun reference. It also suggests that a section of text must close with a full noun reference" (Scollon 1979:63). This is very complex grammatical construction indeed (there is nothing at that grammatical level in the narratives Hymes has explored), but it does demonstrate the possibilities of this kind of stylistic device.

It was in fact the narrative and linguistic complexity of Maggie Achenam's Trickster cycle that first attracted my attention. Bloomfield had divided the text into 194 paragraphs, a few of which had but one line and not more than a handful of which had up to ten. The regular use of sentence-initial particles to organize the narration seemed apparent from a review of the transcription of the Cree language text, but whether this was actually a systematic series of aesthetic-rhetorical choices required further exploration. It was also unclear whether this rhetorical strategy was an individual, tribal, or language-group preference. Thus, the scope of the investigation was widened to include a limited comparison of texts collected from other members of the language group.

Applying the method first described by Hymes reconfigured the Maggie Achenam text into 710 discrete lines. Immediately obvious was the recurrence of the sentence-initial particle, *akwah*, which Bloomfield most frequently translates as "then" when it occurs initially and as "and" when it occurs linking two clauses. Wolfhart translates it as "then" and Hockett (personal communication, 1980) has suggested that it functions "like the Biblical 'and'." It is, in other words, a sequencer of different but related

actions. In this it differs from the Cree phrase *asa mina*, which sequences identical actions, and is best translated as "again." Trying to perceive an inherent organizational scheme structured around the use of sentence-initial particles was frustrating, because there were simply too many of them, dozens in a single episode like the Dancing Ducks story. Clearly an episode of that length, like so many others in the cycle, seemed to have larger parts, intermediate between the level of Verse and Stanza and the level of Act, for which I suspected that Maggie Achenam used four and eight as pattern numbers.

The marker for Scene and for scene changes most of the time is *katahtawa* (K), which Bloomfield translates most frequently as "presently." It clearly functions to initiate a new series of actions, and in this sense it occasionally varied with *sipwahtaw* (S) or *akwah sipwahtaw* (AS), "he left there" or "then he left there." Both shifted scene, one temporally and the other spatially. Frequently they occurred together, and when they did they corresponded very neatly with the folklorist's sense of episode juncture gained by reading the English translation (Bloomfield 1934:286-87, l. 99)

> *sipwahtaw akwah. Akwah pa-pimuhtaw. Katahtawah ka-patahk ah-nipakwasimowiht.* Then he went from there. He went along. Then at one time he heard a Sun Dance going on. He ran.

Here the combination of *Akwah sipwahtaw* (AS) and *katahtawah* (K) make a boundary between episode.

Within episodes, however, either one can also be used to mark incidents or scenes. A close examination of the Dancing Ducks episode reveals it to have four related parts (*ibid*.: ll. 36-64)

> *Wisahketchak* walks up to the ducks:
> (36) "Wait a bit, Little Brothers," he called to them.
> (37) "No, Big Brother. You mean to kill us."
> (38) *Wisaketchak* carried something on his back. He deceived them, <u>Then</u>
> he went away. <u>There</u> was a lake; it was a very big lake. He went thither.
> (50) "First I shall take a walk. Afterwards I shall eat."
> (52) He left his roasts. * As he was walking he saw a fox.
> (53) "Hey, stop a bit, Little Brother," he said to him.
> (64) <u>He went from there</u>; he looked for the fox. Then, <u>at one time</u>, as he
> walked about, he found him sleeping in the tall grass.

A first reading of the English translation might divide this episode into two parts or perhaps even into two distinct episodes, the deception and slaughter of the ducks and the Trickster's Race and Revenge incident, on the basis of

the *akwah sipwahtaw* (50), the *katahtawah* (not translated, 50), and the *waptawaw* (52). A closer reader might have further divided the latter into two parts by making a second division at line 64, observing the recurrent combination of *sipwahtaw*, the first underlined element, and *katahtawah*, the second. But the "then" provided by Bloomfield in line 38 and underlined is another *katahtawah* like the one in line 52, and it follows another *akwah sipwahtaw*. This suggests that however underdeveloped this piece is in line 38, it must be counted as a scene. In fact, in some other Algonkian versions of this story, because Trickster's reputation has preceded him, a failed attempt *does* occur before Trickster is successful in bringing them out of the water (Jones 1917:409).

Using either the *Katahtawah* (K) or *Sipwahtaw* (S) or *Akwah sipwahtaw* (AS) to mark scene boundaries demonstrated Maggie Achenam's proclivity for Acts with two or four scenes. Of eleven identified episodes or Acts in the cycle, six were found to have four scenes and five to have two scenes.

But there is a second question that needs to be asked about these boundaries: why cannot those containing both AS and K elements and the Encounter Verb (50-52, 64) be called episode boundaries? The answer to that question provides one of the main clues to the flexibility of an Algonkian performer in generating Trickster cycles.

The normal episode boundary is composed of the Closing Formula of the preceding episode and the Opening Formula of the succeeding episode. Consider the following instances:

Menomini
Then he went away from there; to some place or other he went.
As he tramped along, after a time he saw a dwelling. So he went toward it. When he entered that dwelling, there sat a wolf. (Bloomfield 1928:175).

Plains Cree
He went away; he tramped along. He saw a house, a very ugly little house. (Bloomfield 1934:293, l. 151)

Ojibwa
So then upon his way he slowly went along. And once while traveling along he saw some creatures. (Jones 1917:113).

The external (episode) boundary is general, that is, unspecified in time or place or motive, and shallow, perhaps only a few lines, even a few words. Both of these characteristics make it very weak—weakness being defined

both positively, as providing good opportunities for satisfactorily terminating the narrative or radically changing its course, and negatively, as providing no causal motivation for a specific sequel. Internal (incident- or scene-internal) boundaries, on the other hand, are usually strong. They establish the change of scene by employing the appropriate formulaic elements, but either specify them through localization in time or space or deepen them by extending them over several lines during the course of which other information is added to correlate the incidents. If one re-examines the boundaries of the Dancing Ducks-Trickster's Race story (ll. 50-53) quoted earlier, it is clear that the boundary has been deepened to four lines. Additionally, information has been added between boundary elements to specify the temporal relationship of the incidents ("First I shall take a walk. Afterwards I shall eat."). A similar strengthening is found in line 64 with the addition of motivational information that specifies the closing formula: "He went from there; he looked for the fox." Such specifying and deepening alterations make clear that we are dealing with internal boundaries. The storyteller's advantage, however, becomes the folklorist's problem. In presenting such material, the folklorist-ethnographer might casually divide the more complex stories, like the Dancing Ducks, on the basis of the apparent similarity of these boundaries, or based on his or her prior knowledge that these stories do occur independently. Radin, in fact, did just that with with this particular story.

Opening Formula ————————————— CHOICE

Closing Formula

Weak/Shallow
Opening Formula

————————————— ADD

Deep/Strong
Opening Formula ————————— EMBED

Closing Fomula

Performance
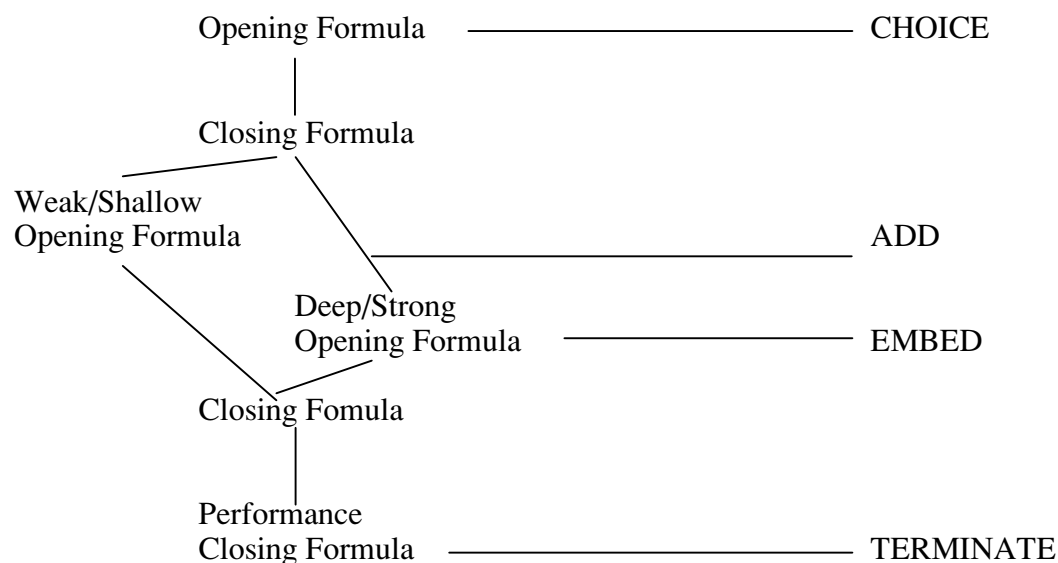Closing Formula ————————————— TERMINATE

Figure 1. Options for Narration in Cycle Development

The advantage of this weak/strong, shallow/deep, external (episode)/internal (incident) framing system for the narrator is that it provides for three choices at a boundary: adding, embedding, and terminating or reforming. Opening and Closing Formulas and initial particles serve the same purposes in other Central Algonkian texts as those identified for Plains Cree. I want to emphasize that these are particles that serve equivalent functions, although the various instances of particles serving identical rhetorical functions in different languages may not be derived from the same Proto-Central Algonkian reconstruction. Nevertheless, the presence of the particle-and-pattern rhetorical strategy in texts from different native genres from other Algonkian literatures tends to support Hymes' contention that this is a performative mark of a general Native American narrative style. Episode framing, as a similar combination of Opening and Closing Formulas such as that described here for the Plains Cree, is also common enough elsewhere for it to be considered a generic feature of importance even across boundaries between language groups. Finally, with some modifications ("Little Brother" becomes "Cross-Cousin"), the same may be said for the Entitlement Address.

Using these particles and Opening and Closing Formulas in the same manner as for the Plains Cree, it is possible to determine episode boundaries, incident boundaries within episodes, and verse patterning. In this manner, even performances that have been broken up—often quite badly—by the recorder/translator can be reconstructed and their actual shape determined. Consider, for instance, the text presented in Table 1 below as Ojibwa C. In this case it was possible to determine that Michelson, who edited Jones' transcriptions and published them as a series of thirteen separate stories, actually had before him a record of five discrete performances, consisting of 9, 1, 4, 2, and 1 episodes, respectively.

Cycling Trickster Episodes in Perfomance

Publications of Native American folklore reveal that Trickster episodes are often performed singly. Based on the previous discussion of Cree tales, it is apparent that the potential for combining episodes into a cycle during performance is made rhetorically practical by the weak/shallow boundaries between episodes. The more urgent question before us is what motivates the selection of any particular episode as the "reasonable" successor to the the episode just narrated.

A review of the nineteen Central Algonkian trickster cycles listed below, reconstructed according to the method outlined above, was

undertaken to see if the larger questions associated with cycle form and structure could be answered. Here are the texts examined:

Oj A	Wasaganuackank, Bois Fort Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj B	Midasuganj, Bois Fort Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj C1-5	Pinessi, Fort William Ojibwa	(Jones 1917, pt. 1)
Oj D	Tom Badger, Lac du Flambeau	(Barnouw 1977)
Oj E	Nizebeng, Sarnia, Ontario	(Radin 1972)
Oj F	Yellowhead, Rama, Ontario	(Radin 1972)
Oj G	Aleck Paul, Timigami, Ontario	(Speck 1915)
Oj H	__, Ojibwa	(Skinner 1911)
Me A	__, Menomini	(Hoffman 1893)
Me B	Misen Makapiw (Michael Macoby), Menomini	(Bloomfield 1928)
Fx	__, Fox	(Jones 1907)
Al	Benjamin Mackenzie, Algonquin	(Speck 1915)
PC A	Maggie Achenam, Sweet Grass, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield 1934)
PC B	Buffalo Bull, Star Blanket, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield, Ms. 101)
PC C	Buffalo Bull, Star Blanket, Plains Cree	(Bloomfield, Ms. 102)

Table 1. Reconstructed Performances of Trickster Cycles

In Table 2 below, Culture Hero stories are distinguished from Dupe stories by referring to the former as N episodes (for *Nanabush*) and the latter as T (for Trickster episodes), despite the acknowledged variety of tribal appellations. This is a purely analytic category, but not an *a priori* one, as discussed later. In this corpus of materials, 21 distinct Culture Hero episodes and 26 distinct Trickster episodes can be performatively defined:

Culture Hero (Nanabush) Episodes

N 1   Birth of Nenabush
N 2   Theft of Fire
N 3   N Slays Stone Brother
N 4   Death of Other Siblings
N 5   Wolf Pack
N 6   Wolves and Bone Chip
N 7   Wolf Nephew Killed
N 8   Wounds Manito
N 9   Advised by Kingfisher
N 10   Kills Toad Woman

N 11   Manitos' Underwater Home
N 12   Deluge; Earth-Diver
N 13   Threatens Spirit
N 14   Spirits Appeased
N 15   Medicine Dance Given
N 16   Transforms Snake
N 17   Revenge/Turtle
N 18   Underwater Manito
N 19   Fish Trap
N 20   Marriage
N 21   Domestic Life

Trickster Episodes
T 1   Deceiving rushes
T 2   Big Game Feast
T 3   Tree Snare
T 4   Skull Trap
T 5   Tree Guides
T 6   Soiled Fat
T 7a   Dancing Ducks
T 7b   Dinner Stolen
T 7c   Burned Anus
T 7d   Scab Food
T 8   Intestine Necklace
T 9   Reflected Fruit
T 10   Flies with Buzzard
T 11   Hollow Tree Trap
T 12   Animal Transformation
T 13   Snared Geese
T 14   Bagged Geese Freed
T 15   Sex Transformation/Marriage
T 16   Windigo
T 17   Wood Weapons
T 18   Eye Juggler
T 19   Slays Buffalo
T 20   Laxative Bulb
T 21a   Winged Startlers
T 21b   Revenge of Winged Startlers
T 22   Flies with Geese
T 23   Failed Beaver Hunt
T 24   Popokwis
T 25   The Little Fishers
T 26   Bungling Host

Table 2. Culture Hero (N) and Trickster (T) Episodes

These nineteen reconstucted Central Algonkian Trickster cycles have been arrayed in Table 3. Each episode, defined performatively by its being bounded by Opening and Closing Formulae, is assigned an alphanumeric item number. The item numbers themselves are simply convenient codes and are not meant to reflect the length or complexity of the material they encode (motif, incident, or tale), which is properly signaled by performance boundaries. An item number followed by a circumflex is one that is not developed and more resembles an incident than a tale. An item followed by a v is a variant of the well-known motif represented by the item number. Likewise, the alphanumeric designations do not necessarily represent the transcriber/editor's divisions; the Bungling Host story, to take only one example, can be presented as a single tale or may have been divided by an editor in any number of ways. Episodes so identified are arrayed in vertical columns in which they follow each other in my reconstructed order of their occurrence in the cycle, beginning at the top of the column. Incidents or scenes within episode boundaries are linked horizontally by a dash (e.g., T 7a-b-c). A dashed vertical line between episodes indicates the absence of one or more episodes in a shorter cycle of episodes that are found in the same narrative space in fuller versions.

A quick glance at Table 3 reveals that the Culture Hero episodes, here designated by N, form a very coherent body. Not only are these episodes of a different type from the Trickster episodes (T), but they apparently have a sequence dictated by custom and internal necessity, of which more later. For now, let us turn our attention to the Trickster episodes.

The weak external boundaries of the Trickster episodes make it possible for the storyteller to combine these episodes in nearly any sequence he or she chooses. This is not to say that there may not be other constraints operating to sequence the stories; but if there are, they are not literary in terms of plot or text. Nothing in any one story seems to demand that the next story be one particular episode as opposed to another. This is true even of the most favored sequences of motifs, such as *Dancing Ducks-Burned Anus* (exception: Plains Cree) or *Big Gamed Killed-Feast Spoiled by Tree Snare* (exception: Eastern Cree). Because such freedom is possible, the kind of order that might occur can tell us something about the dramatic conception underlying the cycle.

Trickster episodes can be unified in any number of ways. As with other episodic constructions, one can use recurrent themes, recurrent actors, recurrent stylistic features, even mnemonic devices like geographical or temporal matrices to anchor a story. To some degree all of these are present in the Central Algonkian Trickster cycles reviewed here.

OjA	OjB	OjC1	OjC2	OjC3	OjC4	OjC5	OjD	OjE	OjF	OjG	OjH	AL	ME1	ME2	FX	PC1	PC2	PC3	WC
N1						N1	N1		N1	N1	N1								
N2									N2	N2	N2								
N3						N3	N3		N3	N3	N3								
N4		—				N4	N4		—	—					N4				
T21	T2		T7				T20	T13	T7	T7		T23				T6	T2/16	T10	T23
T1	T1		T25				T12	T11	T7b	T21a		T1				T21	T3	T18	N12
T24	T3						T20	T9	T7c	T21b						T7a	T21a	T7a	T23^
N5	T4		T26	N20			T8	T2	T7d	T2^		*				T7e	T7a	T7e	T7a
N6	T5			N21			T9	T3		T3^		T7b				T7f	T7c	T7c	T7b
N7	T7A						T2	T4		T6^		T7a				T18	T20	T7d	T7c
N9	T7B		T20				T4	T12		T4		T7c				T4	T7d	T6	T7d
N8	T7C						T3	T14		T5		T6				T22	T4	*	T6
T7a	T7D						T12	T1		—		T5				T2/19	T6		T23^
T7b	T9		T22	N22			T14	T21a		—		T4				T3			T22^
T9	T1						T1	T21b		—		T3				T7c			T3
T2	T16						T21a	T7a		—		T23				T17			T6
T20	T25/N18						T21b	T7b	N7^	—	N7	T12				T16			T25
T7c	N18						T7b	T7c	N8^	—		T15				T15			
T7b	T24						T7c	T7d	N9	N7	N7								
T7a	T21						T7d		N16	N8^									
T5	T20						—		N10	N9	N10								
T4	T1						—		N11	N16	N11								
T3	T9						—		N12	N10	N12								
T2							N5			N11									
T9							N6			N12									
T15	T22					N5	N7		N7	N7					N6				
T11	T10						N8		N8						N7/4				
T10	T7						N9		N9						N17				
N10	T6						N10		N10						N18				
N11	T5						N11		N11										
N12							N12		N12						N11				
							N13								N2				
							N14								N13^				
							N15								N14				

Table 3. Central Algonkian Trickster Cycles (Reconstructed)

Given the freedom of the raconteur, they function as a reservoir of creative possibilities. Performatively, the first difficulty for the narrator will be to generate some overarching pattern that organizes the cycle by maintaining audience expectation and providing plausibility, that is, not merely any sequence but a sequence that satisfies. The second difficulty will be to realize these goals in performance while moving from episode to episode This is not to deny the emergent quality of performance, of course, but rather to assert that form emerges along particular lines and is always realized in performance as word choice.

Certain recurrent activities are characteristic of Trickster figures. Preoccupied with all the orifices of his own and everyone else's body and with bodies in generally, he customarily wanders into the spotlight to eat, defecate, have sexual intercourse, or exchange his body for another's. For want of more economical terminology, I would thematically encode these action categories as Oral, Anal, Sexual, and Transformational.[5] At this point, I do not want to open a lengthy discussion of Trickster's nature or function. Suffice it to say that these are spheres of interest as defined by the character's most frequent actions. They are also for the most part actions that societies have tended to circumscribe with a great deal of ritual and custom, precisely because the body serves as boundary and interface between the self and others, and through its symbolization most social-personal values can be polarized (Douglas 1966, 1970; Leach 1964). The performative question, however, is whether Trickster episodes are grouped thematically.

An examination of the Central Algonkian Trickster cycles before us suggests that the Trickster episodes are easily grouped thematically. In Ojibwa G, for instance, anal themes govern one sequence: Trickster first burns his anus for not watching the food, then defecates on the Young Partridges (Winged Startlers), and is revenged by the Partridge Father who scares Nanabush into falling down a cliff, on which he leaves the scabs of his behind. In the Maggie Achenam (Plains Cree) cycle, hunger organizes several stories around Oral themes. Trickster first kills the buffalo but loses the food while snared in the tree; he tries again, but his anus scares away the buffalo; finally he ends up in a berry patch, seeking magic weapons to help him get food, when he is attacked by a bear whom he defeats with the help of a buffalo skull. In the same cycle one sequence is organized around Transformations that fail: *Eye-Juggler, Skull Trap, and Trickster Flies with*

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[5] The use of these terms is meant only to be descriptive. I expressly disavow any psychological interpretations, conventional or otherwise, associated with these terms.

the Geese.

These are very high-level generalizations, however. While they very vaguely gather groups of stories into sets, the immediate difficulty for the storyteller is how to sequence episodes within these groupings to make the narrative seem plausible. Like the linking of episodes, the creation of links between episodes is associative, not causal. Whatever connections are made between two episodes in one cycle performance most probably will not appear in another cycle perfomrance. Furthermore, these connections usually modify the opening frame only slightly—just enough to make the connection—and then the story is off and running on its own power. Some examples of the Associative Means employed are:

OBJECTS:
1. In order to link the *Deceiving Rushes Episode* with the *Dancing Ducks* episode, Trickster takes some rushes from the former to stuff his pack for the latter (Me a).
2. *Popokwis'* story about sturgeons and berries prompts a second story about killing the giant sturgeon (Oj B).

ACTIONS:
1. One Ojibwa version of the *Deceiving Rushes* ends with Trickster "crawl [ing] out to the edge of the swamp." The next episode begins, "And once, when he was crawling about . . ." (Oj B).
2. In the Maggie Achenam cycle, Trickster is ridiculed by people after being shot down while flying with the geese; so when he approaches the buffalo he deceives them by pretending to pass on ridiculing comments he heard about them from the same people, though he really is pointing to rock constructions while referring to the humans (PC).

SETTING:
1. One narrator links the *Popokwis'* story with the *Pack of Wolves* story because both were supposed to have taken place on a frozen lake (Oj A).
2. Another sequence: the *Killing of the Windigo* and the *Killing of the Great Fisher* are linked because they both happened while Trickster was "going along the shore" (Oj B).

The preference for weak episode boundaries and thematic groupings of episodes creates a pressure to find some stronger, more explicit means of organizing the sequence of episodes. The Timiskaming Algonkian version (Al 1) is not unique in establishing a geographical matrix for locating each of the episodes, but as Speck (1915) pointed out such matrices vary greatly from band to band. They are, in other words, merely a device, and not an intrinsic part of any shared Trickster biography. The Nenebojo cycle that

Speck heard from Nizibeng in Sarnia, Ontario (Oj E) was organized by means of interepisodic sutures that attempted to provide a temporal matrix for the episodes. Trickster is always sending his grandmother ahead of him, having an adventure, catching up with her, staying a few days, then sending her on again before starting off again himself. The important thing about these textual features is that they do not determine the theme, but rather seem designed to facilitate linking together stories with similar themes.

Effecting this linkage satisfactorily can be quite a complex process. For example, in Ojibwa G the narrator organized her short cycle by beginning with the Dancing Ducks. After Trickster burns his anus and discards the abandoned legs of the Ducks, he discovers a group of baby fishers, whose legs he breaks and on whom he also defecates. When she returns, the mother takes revenge by turning him into a log and then savaging it with her teeth. Off again, he comes to the baby partridges on whom he defecates; he is found by their father and frightened off a cliff. While tumbling down he leaves his scabs and food. While not expressly stated in this incident, in most variants of this widely distributed story the scabs become tobacco and food. Hungry now, he deceives a moose into being killed. The story concludes with the Tree Snare and Skull Trap incidents. The associative pattern is elaborate. The ducks, fishers, partridges, and moose have all been caught in an elaborate psychodrama of aggression and punishment, wherein all of Trickster's attempts to inflict his will on the world are turned against him. Nevertheless, this highly generalized theme does not enable either us or the storyteller to distinguish any principle for moving the performance from one specific episode to the next. A closer examination reveals that there are several kinds of links, but the primary connection between episodes is an associative one. The legs of the discarded ducks are associated with the wrists of the fishers and the pain in his behind. The parents of the fishers and the parents of the partridges are linked in their revenge against Trickster. And the moose is linked to the partridges first by similarity—his antlers being explicitly identified metaphorically as feathers—and by an implied haughtiness ("a very handsome man was he") that contrasts with Trickster's humiliation.

But even these textual links and the recurrent aggression/punishment pattern do not tell the whole story. What begins as a search for food and ends on the same Oral Theme becomes diverted into an Anal Theme in the middle of the sequence. These transitions are accomplished by what I will call Double Domain Incidents. These are incidents associated with two themes, one by virtue of the story that precipitates the incident, the other by virtue of the outcome of the incident itself. In this case, the Burned Anus event is such a Double Domain Incident, beginning with a quest for food or

Oral Theme and ending with Anal Theme. By the same token, the Scab Food incident is a reversal of that order, beginning as an Anal Theme and ending as an Oral one. The use of Double Domain Incidents helps us to understand how the story proceeds on thematic as well as textual levels, as represented in Figure 2 immediately below.
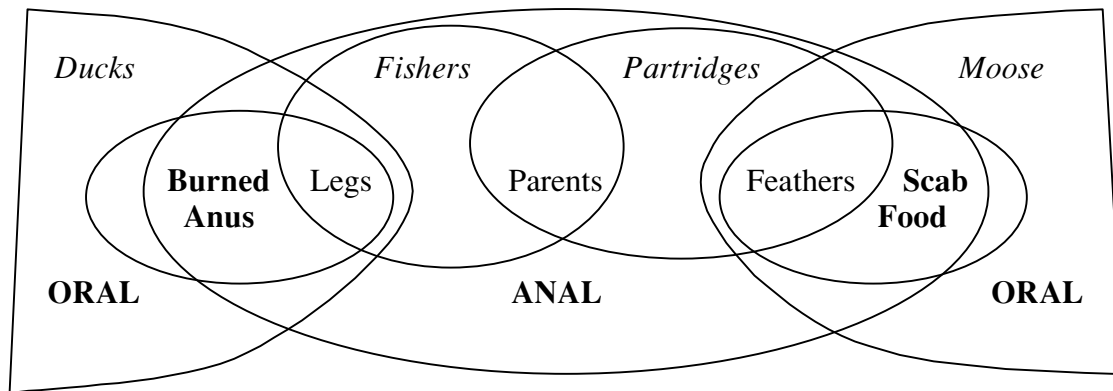

Figure 2. Double-Domain Incidents

Several other such Double Domain Incidents recur. The *Skull Trap* effectively moves a story from the food quest's Oral theme to a Transformational Theme. The Intestine Vine, like the Scab Food, is another Anal/Oral incident, while the Laxative Bulb is an Oral/Anal one. These Double Domain Incidents make possible the thematic progression of the narrative through thematically distinct sequences of episodes.

There also appears to be a preferred order implied in the ways these thematic groupings are arranged in the Trickster cycles. The favored pattern present Oral-thematic stories first, Anal-thematic stories second, and Transformations third. Stories about women, when they do occur, precede Transformation episodes if they are about passive women as the object of Trickster's desires (Sexuality); they follow Transformation episodes if they are about agentive, aggressive women (Aggression). This latter suggestion is hypothesis only, however, because one of the most remarkable features of Central Algonkian Trickster cycles is the absence of familiar sexual episodes such as the *Long-Distance Intercourse* or the *Penis Flag*. Then too, the sequence itself is only a tentative assessment based on clear patterning in several of the cycles; others are less clear. In any case, we are dealing not with a strict order but a matter of preference, one that provides those raconteurs who close their cycles with *Nanabush* stories a choice of several

useful points of re-entry into the Culture-Hero biography. This set of tendencies is presented schematically in Figure 3.
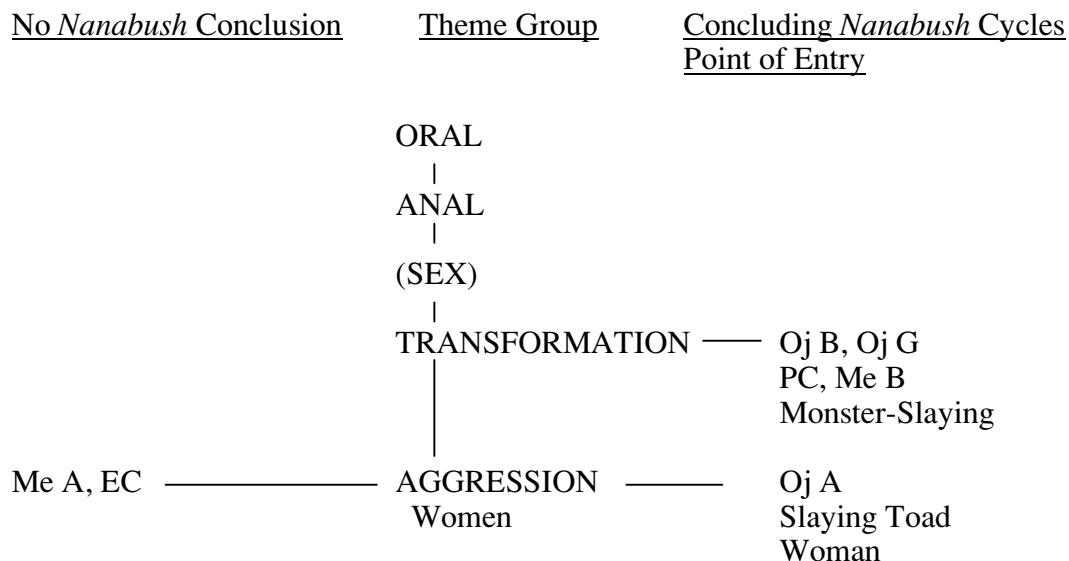
<u>No *Nanabush* Conclusion</u>   <u>Theme Group</u>   <u>Concluding *Nanabush* Cycles
Point of Entry</u>

ORAL
|
ANAL
|
(SEX)
|
TRANSFORMATION —— Oj B, Oj G
                    PC, Me B
                    Monster-Slaying

Me A, EC ——————— AGGRESSION ——— Oj A
                 Women   Slaying Toad
                                      Woman

Figure 3. Thematic Structuring of Cycles

The Culture Hero Biography

In contrast to the thematic patterns of association made possible by the weak boundaries of Trickster episodes, the Nenabush biography appears incredibly coherent because of the degree to which boundaries between episodes have been deepened and strengthened. Those boundaries for Nenabush episodes that appear not to conform to the strong/deep pattern seem, on closer examination, to have been contrived by the editor. When one searches for genuine performative boundaries, they usually appear at the end of Nenabush's genealogy, a convenient term to cover those episodes that include:

N 1   His Birth
N 2   His Theft of Fire
N 3   His Slaying of One Brother
N 4   The Slaying of His Other Brother, Leaving Him Alone

This pattern, or something approximating it very nearly, occurs in all *Nanabush* biographies. The *Theft of Fire* may be replaced by *Taming of the Winds* (Oj G) and the nature of his brothers may change. In Oj A his

brothers are *Hair-Knot* and *Skin-Hewer*: by killing the first, *Nanabush* creates death; by killing the second, he creates war honors. In Oj D, the first brother "didn't have human features exactly but he looked like a human baby to some extent" (Barnouw 1977:15). The second brother was a Stone. Unlike Oj A, which features elder brothers, Oj D has *Wenebojo* slaying his younger brothers because he slowed down the brothers when they wanted to travel. It is the death of the not-quite-human brother that occurs second, and that establishes the absolute nature of death. The most important elements in this biography are the Culture Hero deed (N 2) and the establishment of death. Among the Timigami Ojibwa they are combined when *Nanabush* subdues the Four Winds who are his brothers.

The consequence of having killed his brothers, the narrator of Oj D points out, is that "Now that *Wenebojo* was all alone, he traveled wherever he wanted to go" (Barnouw 1977:15). This kind of frame, which is more meta-narrative than narrative since it does not so much tell what he did as tell about what he did, occurs after this episode in those cycles that incorporate Trickster (T) episodes. Here are two examples:

> Timigami Ojibwa
> Now *Nenabuc* grew up and was alone. He was a man and began to travel. He knew all kinds of things concerning the trees, the world, and everything which his grandfather had taught him. (Speck 1915:31).

> Ojibwa A
> And so then was the time that he started away, and from there he traveled doing all manner of things. And now everywhere over the earth he went. For look and see what he has done here upon the earth. (Jones 1917:41).

What is interesting about such sutures is that they do not in any way motivate a specific episode; they hardly even require a sequel. As summary statements, however, they function as useful pivotal points in the narration. The raconteur has the option of terminating here or going on to narrate some episodes (T).

Interestingly, when portions of the Culture Hero biography are narrated separately from the Trickster episodes, there is little indication that Trickster episodes need follow. In the Fox version (which admittedly is also different in other ways, but not on this point), after the death of the Younger Brother the Culture Hero prepares to retaliate against the *manitos*. In a Plains Cree version, evidently quite abruptly ended, the narrator concludes with the incident of *Wisahketchak* being separated from his dying brother, who utters at the end, "All I can do is turn into a wolf" (Bloomfield

1934:278). This, of course, anticipates the *Wolf Pack* story, which is not really a Trickster episode.

According to Victor Barnouw (1977:69), Johannes Gille argued in 1939 that the *Wolf Pack* episode is an extremely coherent story composed of three episodes that are almost never related separately. In the first (N 5), *Nanabush* joins a pack of wolves, but his performance and attitude leave much to be desired; he can neither run and hunt with them nor can he cope with the raw winter, and he is ungrateful for their assistance. In the second (N 6), he is selfish and disobedient; because he is hungry he spied on Old Wolf, who is cracking marrow bones, and since this is forbidden he is punished by having a splinter fly into his eye. In the third and last episode (N 7), the Old Wolf decides *Nanabush* and the pack should part company, relations between them not having been amicable. He gives *Nanabush* one of his sons to hunt for him, but this "nephew" of *Nanabush* is drowned in a stream after *Nanabush* had dreamed the event would occur.

Both Barnouw and Fisher have adequately determined the range of this tale and its origin among the Algonkians. What is of interest about the sequence for the purposes of the present inquiry is the ability of the *Death of the Wolf Nephew* episode to assimilate the *Death of the Brother*'s episodes and so recoup any momentum lost in the developing Culture Hero biography by interpolating Trickster episodes between these two episodes. This assimilation is accomplished in several ways. The first, exemplified by the Cree version of the *Younger Brother's Death* cited above, has the younger brother turn into a wolf. His skin then becomes the door covering for the underwater *manitos*. The second is to have the younger brother die by drowning so that his death can be identified with the wolf's; this event is also in the Cree story. The third is to attribute hidden intentionality to the Culture Hero for the death of the wolf; this development identifies the wolf's death with the Culture Hero's earlier murders of his brothers. Portrayal of such intentionality can be accomplished by giving the Culture Hero prior knowledge, in this case a portentous dream. It is not enough that he tells the young wolf to be careful as a result of his dream. Dreaming violent dreams was considered a sign of much repression that required externalizations in order to relieve the psychological pressure. In this sense the young wolf's death was "caused" by the Culture Hero in the same way that he "caused" the death of his older brother by refusing to readmit him to the land of the living.

That these two episodes can be subsumed into one is illustrated by the Fox tale, which has the *Menapus* avenge the death of the Younger Brother against the underwater *manidos* while a Menomini version and one from the Court Oreilles Ojibwa (Barnouw 1977:62-69) use the Wolf Nephew for the

same purpose. What is notable about these three narrations is that none features *both* sets of episodes. The appearance of both sets of episodes seems co-occurrent with intervening Trickster episodes. This interdependence supports the notion that the *Wolf Pack* episode recoups biographical momentum vitiated by the interpolation of Trickster episodes. The unprefaced appearance of Trickster episodes before the *Wolf Pack* episodes, as in Oj D, does not jeopardize this argument because the Trickster episodes do not intervene between an earlier portion of the Culture Hero biography and a later one. It is also interesting in this regard that in Oj G, where the Culture Hero's brothers are the winds and where he tames but does not kill them, there is no real motivation for the slaying of the underwater *manidos* or the *Toad-Woman* who doctors them; rather these are simply treated as Monster-Slayer stories.

Moving from Trickster episodes to the *Wolf Pack* episode is accomplished thematically and textually. The thematic link is Trickster's ingratitude and deceit, which make us feel right at home with an all-too-familiar character. This impression is reinforced in both Oj A and Oj B by preceding the *Wolf Pack* story with that of *Popokwis, the Pilferer* (T 24). In this story, Trickster lives with some people during the fishing season, and they make an arrangement whereby all the fish caught by their group will be shared and eaten before those caught by Trickster. Of course, when all the first group's fish are gone, the people discover that Trickster has been quietly consuming his. On the verge of starvation, the people are magically assisted, and because they follow instructions are rewarded with plenty. Trickster is given the same opportunity, but cannot follow instructions and shows up badly, ready to run with the wolves. But here too he cannot follow instructions, cannot share, cannot cooperate, and is ever ungrateful. Textually, the linkage is accomplished by having Trickster join the wolves in winter after the end of the fall fishing season, and by having both wolves and fishermen addressed as "Little Brother," thus presenting the possibility of trickery.

These textual arrangements would suggest that the first two wolf episodes are more closely related to each other than they are to the third, the death of the wolf nephew, and that in fact the first two may be true Trickster episodes and the third a transformer episode. Some support for this analysis comes from the Northern Saulteaux version recorded by Skinner that begins with the Wolf and *Wisahketchak* living together and *Wisahketchak* dreaming of the other's death. The power of the *Wolf Pack* setting, however, is strong enough to keep the three linked in the minds of most narrators.

The next important section of the Culture Hero's biography is his attempt to avenge the death of his brother, perhaps to exculpate himself.

The inevitable sequence is a wounding of the underwater *manitos* (N 9), often after a warning from Kingfisher (N 8), and a final successful assault in their underwater home (N 11), often preceded by slaying Old Toad Woman (N 10) who is on her way to doctor them. The slaying precipitates a deluge, which in turn prompts the *Earth-Diver* story, and a measuring of the Earth (N 12). Occasionally, in Christianized versions, the raft of the deluge may become a kind of ark and a blessing of the animals, as in Genesis, may be appended. A final section that recurs in Oj D and in the Fox version is the gift of the *Medicine Rite* or *Midéwiwin* to restore life (N 13-15).

Combining Trickster and Culture Hero Episodes in Performance

Because of the deep, strong sutures between the various episodes in the Culture Hero biography, it is almost impossible for Trickster episodes to be introduced. The only place that such an insertion can be accomplished satisfactorily is after the genealogical portion, and one senses that the summary created there is precisely for the purpose of effecting this transition, by delocalizing and detemporalizing the boundary.

Elsewhere such intrusions, when they do occur, are rare and never satisfactory. Speck was shocked to find one of his narrators concluding the *Earth-Diver* story this way (Speck 1915:21):

> After a while *Nenebojo* sent out the Caribou to see how large the island was. He soon returned, saying that it was not large enough, so *Nenebojo* blew some more sand into the water. Then he stopped making the earth and said, "Tomorrow I am going to give a feast to all the animals. I will make a large leaf-house and invite all the ducks to a dance."

The story then proceeds to its familiar conclusion, burned anus and all. Two things are interesting about this sequence of episodes. It is shocking to find such behavior coming from an acknowledged Culture Hero; there is a violent clash in affective responses to these two contiguous episodes. On the other hand, the narrative of the Culture Hero is essentially finished (the Midé origin myth is an amendment), which is to say that the Trickster episode has not really penetrated the biography so much as it has been awkwardly added on.

On the other hand, thanks to the very weak and shallow boundaries between Trickster episodes and their loose thematic association, it is very possible for narrators to introduce episodes from the Culture Hero biography among Trickster tales. It is significant that most do not choose to do so,

because once that coherent narrative is initiated it is difficult to exit it. The narrator of Oj A moved from the *Popkwis* Trickster episode to the *Wolf Pack* episode and soon was caught up deeply in the biography. He then took advantage of the traditional first, failed attempt (N 8) to precipitate a minor flood that, once receded, permitted Trickster to continue on his way. This re-entry into the Trickster cycle is made early because the weak episode frames require nothing. The narrator recovers momentum after several trickster episodes by having the protagonist meet the Old Toad Woman on her way to doctor the *manidos* that *Nanabush* had wounded earlier in the cycle. It is, in all, a competent achievement of narration that contrasts strongly with Speck's example.

The differences in the nature of both kinds of narratives, the Culture Hero biography (N episodes) and the Trickster cycle (T episodes), are stylistic, structural, and thematic. This has implications for understanding the historical development of the present cycle-form. Because these two kinds of narrative are so radically divergent, I would suggest that they were originally distinct:

I.   a)   N 1-4, N 8-12
         b)   T1 . . . . . Tn

With the addition of only two transformations:

II.   a)   T 5-6 > N 5-6
       b)   N 4 = N 7

the prototypical combination emerges:

III.   (N 1-4) + (T . . . . .Tn)

from which the combined cycle form preferred at the beginning of this century evolved:
IV.   N 1 - N 4, T1 . . . . Tn, N 5-6, N 7, N 8-12

This latter form easily accommodates the addition of Midé myth episodes:

V.   (IV) + N 13-15

Other combinations of episodes, like Speck's example (N 12 + 17), are clearly not favored.

Conclusions

This essay suggests that given adequate linguistic and contextual materials, performative boundaries can be identified that enable the reconstruction of coherent cycles from episodes that had been separated by the editor for analytical purposes during the process of preparing materials for publication. This reconstructive method has been shown to provide important evidence useful for addressing historical, thematic, and formal questions.

One fundamental matter central to ethnographic and folkloric questions surrounding the Native American Trickster figure is the debate over the historical priority of this form: whether the figure originated as a single, undifferentiated Trickster-Transformer figure and subsequently evolved into two distinct figures—a Transformer/Culture Hero and a Trickster/Dupe—or whether indeed these two figures were original and subsequently merged into a single Trickster/Transformer. The analysis of textual evidence presented here suggests that, for Central Algonkians at least, these two were originally distinct figures and were only subsequently merged. This is not a claim that could be extended to other Native American traditions without an equally rigorous examination of materials from other tribal traditions. Nevertheless, this Central Algonkian example is telling, especially given the preponderance of evidence that a wide variety of tribal traditions from every region of Native North America (except the Arctic) focus the dramatization of foundational cultural institutions through a pair of brothers who often reflect polarized values in their behaviors.

Another, equally important question recurring in the literature associated with Trickster is whether he is a static or a dynamic character. Those who favor the former position point to his unvarying inventory of habits that inevitably lead to his disappointment: Trickster as Overreacher. Others point out that some episodes seem to conclude with acts of self-reflection and evaluation that, coupled with his beneficial transformative actions, appear to mark his growth and development as a model of self-realization. It is important to note that these opinions emerge from different materials. Those favoring the former, static character definition cite his behavior in isolated episodes, while those favoring a dynamic, developing character advert to his apparent growth throughout the course of a cycle.[6] If, as the present analysis of Central Algonkian cycles suggests, these characters were originally represented by distinct bodies of tale traditions,

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[6] Radin's publication of the Siouan Winnebago cycle (1972), not reviewed in this article, is most often the textual basis of these judgments.

the appearance of growth and development in the trickster figure is purely an effect derived from the merging of these two traditions in performance. This is not to say that the peoples who generated these cycles might not believe today that Trickster is a single, developing figure, especially given the fact that a single name now often denominates the merged figure. However, fieldwork to investigate such a cultural judgment generally has not been undertaken, even by those who propose this position[7]; rather the evidence is presumed to fit a universal model of psychosocial development.

Finally, Trickster tales are often regarded as relatively simple forms. Perhaps this is because familiar episodes can be as easily condensed into anecdotal form as expanded into a detailed narration. Structuralists see them as instances of taboo violation or simple narrative inversions of cultural values. Far from a string of simple jests, however, Trickster cycles are complex narrative phenomena. Focusing on the performative dimension of Trickster tales makes possible an informed appreciation of the multiplicity of aesthetic choices in which the storyteller must succeed in order to create a cycle of tales that creates, manipulates, and fulfills audience expectations in a culturally satisfying manner.

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[7] Interestingly, see the commentary of Felix White, Sr., a Winnebago, who subscribes to the developmental model and whose cycles are consciously constructed along the developmental line (Danker 1993). The Winnebago are a Siouan-speaking people, however, and are not included within the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, Radin's earlier publication of another Winnebago Trickster cycle (1972) is the basis for most developmental hypotheses concerning Trickster's character. Trejo (1974) offers a Paiute commentary more consonant with the structural interpretation of Trickster as Overreacher. It remains an open question whether or not Trickster is viewed as a developing character in most Native American oral literatures.

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