

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

All USU Press Publications

USU Press

---

2001

## Native American Oral Traditions

Larry Evers

Barre Toelken

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress\\_pubs](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress_pubs)



Part of the [Indigenous Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Evers, L., & Toelken, B. (2001). Native American oral traditions: Collaboration and tradition. Logan: Utah State University Press.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the USU Press at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All USU Press Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



# NATIVE AMERICAN ORAL TRADITIONS



Collaboration & Interpretation



Edited by  
Larry Evers and Barre Toelken

Foreword by John Miles Foley

Native American Oral Traditions:  
Collaboration and Interpretation



Native American Oral Traditions  
Collaboration and Interpretation

Edited by  
Larry Evers and Barre Toelken

Foreword by  
John Miles Foley

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Logan, Utah

Copyright © 2001 Utah State University Press  
All rights reserved

Utah State University Press  
Logan, Utah 84322-7800

Manufactured in the United States of America

Printed on acid-free paper

This work was originally published, without the foreword, in *Oral Tradition* 13, no. 1 (March 1998).

Cover photo: Zonnie “Grandma” Johnson, a Navajo woman from Blanding, Utah, and Barre Toelken (1970s). Photo by Van E. Porter.

08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data

Native American oral traditions : collaboration and tradition / edited by Larry Evers and Barre Toelken ; foreword by John Miles Foley.

p. cm.

“Originally published, without the foreword, in *Oral tradition* 13, no. 1 (March 1998)”–T.p. verso.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-87421-415-7 (cloth : alk. paper) – ISBN 0-87421-416-5 (pbk : alk. paper)

1. Indians of North America–Folklore. 2. Oral tradition–North America. I. Evers, Larry. II. Toelken, Barre.

# Contents

Foreword

*John Miles Foley*

Introduction:

Collaboration in the Translation and Interpretation  
of Native American Oral Traditions 1  
*Larry Evers and Barre Toelken*

“Like this it stays in your hands”:  
Collaboration and Ethnopoetics 15  
*Felipe S. Molina and Larry Evers*

Tracking “Yuwaan Gagéets”:  
A Russian Fairy Tale in Tlingit Oral Tradition 58  
*Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard L. Dauenhauer*

Reading Martha Lamont’s Crow Story Today 92  
*Marya Moses and Toby C. S. Langen*

Collaborative Sociolinguistic Research  
among the Tohono O’odham 130  
*Ofelia Zepeda and Jane Hill*

“Wu-ches-erik (Loon Woman) and Ori-aswe (Wildcat)” 157  
*Darryl Babe Wilson and Susan Brandenstein Park*

Coyote and the Strawberries:  
Cultural Drama and Intercultural Collaboration 176  
*George B. Wasson and Barre Toelken*

“There Are No More Words to the Story” 200  
*Elsie P. Mather and Phyllis Morrow*

About the Authors 243





# Foreword

John Miles Foley

“Oral traditions work like language, only more so.”

“True diversity also means diversity in frame of reference.”

We customarily think about edition and translation as before-the-fact activities, as the preliminary things one has to do before getting down to the real work of interpretation. This reflex is the unexamined assumption of a highly print-oriented, text-determined culture, one that is also rapidly becoming adept at electronic circulation of prepared bytes of reading matter. Correspondingly, we tend to think of verbal art as a finite item with a Library of Congress call number, a paperback to be carried off from the local bookstore or captured by clicking it off the internet, or a coded file sent instantaneously and whole from another city or continent by a colleague or friend. For us verbal art is usually a product, and it is edition and translation that make it so. Only too often we conveniently overlook the processes that generated it.

Nowhere is this reflex more crippling than in the case of oral traditions, which dwarf written literature in both size and diversity.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere do we stand to lose more than with performances that use—or transcriptions that derive from—the spoken, enacted word. Consider an all too familiar scenario: an outside scholar, complete with a carefully organized outside agenda, invades a culture for a limited period of time in order to sample its verbal wares. Recording apparatus in hand, the investigator imposes an external frame of reference from the start, proceeding from convictions that may well have little internal validity or, at worst, may actively deform the reality of the experience he or she seeks to collect and eventually to represent to other outsiders. Once the audio or video inscription is accomplished, itself inevitably

---

1. For a sense of the international variety of oral traditions through time, see Foley 1998.

a reduction, the outside scholar then performs the ritual act of textualization: he or she extrudes an acceptably inert, bookish object from the once-living, recorded experience, forever eliminating much of the meaning that had managed to survive that far. Gone are all of the performance parameters (voice, music, gesture), gone is the interactive audience and its participatory influence, gone is the network of indigenous-culture knowledge and belief that informs and quickens any verbal event by implication. The performance of verbal art, now repackaged for ready consumption by modern Western cultures, has become but a dim shadow of itself. In doing the “preliminaries,” the outsider has already twice transmuted the very phenomenon to be represented. Ripping the event out of its context and editing it into an object constitute the first translation; fashioning an English-language facsimile from the edited, original-language epitome is the second.

Such is the tried-and-true way of dealing with oral and oral-derived works: we edit, translate, and then read them into submission. But can we do any better? Given the limitations associated with what is still the dominant technology of communication in our culture (and we must recognize that even forward-looking dot-coms like NetLibrary are still shipping items rather than experiences from their servers to our desktop monitors), can we hope to escape or at least counteract this tiered series of reductions? How can we begin to reanimate texts in the face of an outsider-centered, bookish medium that amounts to the colonialist instrument par excellence?

The collaborative strategy advocated and illustrated by Larry Evers and Barre Toelken in this volume offers promising answers to such questions by erasing some firmly drawn lines of identity and responsibility—between performance and interpretation, between insider and outsider, and between Native and scholar. These stubborn dualities, built up over decades of well-meaning research and fieldwork in anthropology and folklore, have proved less and less useful over the last fifteen to twenty years, as an increasing number of theorists have come to appreciate the rich potential of collaborative techniques. Instead of delegating duties so absolutely, and in the process segregating participants and parochializing the eventual presentation, many scholars have sought to engage the performer (or tradition-bearer) at every possible stage of the inquiry, as well as to acknowledge the subjectivity that the investigator necessarily brings to the study from the initial stage of planning all the way through fieldwork and publication. As evidence of this new awareness and initiative, Evers and Toelken cite what many have called *reflexivity*, as well as a movement

within Native communities to exert more influence over the collection and representation of their traditions.<sup>2</sup>

I personally saw the same kind of impetus toward shared perspectives even in the early stages of fieldwork among Serbian peasants during the 1970s and 1980s, undertaken with anthropologists Joel Halpern and Barbara Kerewsky Halpern, and with the people who lived in Orašac and the surrounding Šumadijan region. From the outset our work depended essentially on the informed guidance of the “performers,” who became commentators to the project, as well as fully acknowledged the subjective lens imposed by the “investigators,” who could not keep from predetermining some of the directions taken by the joint inquiry.<sup>3</sup> One brief example must suffice. In seeking to understand the practice of healing charms as a curative and verbal art in central Serbia, we felt our way gingerly and learned to proceed in careful compliance with social and religious rules that lay just below the surface. We did not at first know that black magic (*vračanje*, from *vrag*, “devil”) was a forbidden area; nor did we initially realize that even the curative genre of white magic (*bajanje*, from *bajati*, “to speak”) was a practice strictly limited to postmenopausal females, who learn the spells before puberty and do not perform them during their fertile years. Furthermore, our preconception of the Balkan crone huddled furtively in a darkened inner sanctum was shattered by the reality that remedies were publicly administered. Most surprisingly of all, we needed tutoring as to why professional curers (*bajalice*) were at the start so reluctant to share their charms for the tape recorder, though quite willing to speak them to us openly when the machine was switched off or absent. We came to learn that *bajanje* is an important element in a young woman’s dowry, a talent and a resource she brings to her spouse’s extended family and the village into which she marries. By recording these precious possessions in a circulable format, we threatened to destabilize the local network of exchange and interaction. None of this context—crucial for an understanding of the charms as verbal art embedded in social reality—was readily apparent to

---

2. Among the earliest landmark studies they mention are Clifford and Marcus 1986; and Deloria 1969.

3. We hope that the publications that resulted from this fieldwork—“joint” both because it involved a team of scholars and because it aimed to engage the Serbian village informants as full partners in the inquiry—reflect both the reflexivity and the performer-centered contributions that Evers and Toelken so rightly emphasize. See, e. g., Foley 1995:99-135.

outsiders; it had to be taught to us by native performer-investigators. This was one type of collaborative effort.

But collaboration has no universal blueprint, as Evers and Toelken explain and as their collection clearly shows. Every project has its own set of variables: the tradition to be explored and represented, the performer(s) who investigate, the investigator(s) who are part of the performance, and so on. As anthropological analysis emerges from yesterday's tidy Newtonian certainty to today's messy, quantum-mechanics uncertainty, it presents us with fewer sharp edges, fewer theoretical sinecures, and a much reduced "comfort zone." We may choose to characterize a group of joint explorations as sharing the methodology that Dennis Tedlock labels "ethnopaleography,"<sup>4</sup> for example, in which the scholar takes a textualized work back to the people who produced it some generations before to ask for what amounts to their coedition and cotranslation. Tedlock has advocated bringing the *Popol Vuh* to present-day Mayan peoples and into dialogue with their current genres of verbal art, in order to help gloss the mysteries of the ancient oral-derived text. That method might well be applied more widely—with the problematic Finnish *Kalevala* collected (and created) by Elias Lönnrot, for example, or with still extant ballad traditions around the world.<sup>5</sup> What sorts of collaboration would best suit the multivocality of the Indian *Ramayana*, for instance, which exists not only in Valmiki's classic Sanskrit version but also in many hundreds of tellings throughout contemporary India, southeast Asia, and elsewhere (not to mention as a highly popular television show)?<sup>6</sup> Any project worth doing must take account of the cultural constellation surrounding each *Ramayana*, and that in turn means a different performer-investigator for each tradition, not to mention the multitude of investigator-participants likely to initiate research over this broad linguistic and geographical expanse. It is of course in the nature of any methodological umbrella to shelter an enormous variety of approaches, assumptions, dynamics, and outcomes. But each collaboration will inevitably be *sui generis*, just like the always unique performances it seeks to understand and present to others.

---

4. See especially "Hearing a Voice in an Ancient Text: Quiché Maya Poetics in Performance," in Sherzer and Woodbury 1987:140-75.

5. On the special challenges of the *Kalevala*, see "Text as Process and Practice: The Textualization of Oral Epics," especially pages 7-8, in Honko 2000; and, illustrating a variety of perspectives, DuBois 1995. On the ballad, see, e.g. Andersen 1985; and Toelken 1995.

6. See Richman 1991.

The way in which the collaborative team is constituted has significant bearing on what they can accomplish and on how their results are to be interpreted. We may, for instance, enlist the services of a member of the target culture to serve as interviewer, advisor, or general resource person. Consider the case of Nikola Vujnović, whom Milman Parry and Albert Lord hired on as chief interviewer and transcriber for their famous fieldwork on South Slavic oral epic as an analogue for Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>7</sup> Few have acknowledged the fact that Vujnović was perhaps the ultimate bicultural intermediary: as a *guslar* or oral epic singer as well as an integral member of the scholarly team, he was both insider and outsider, both performer and investigator. His work needs to be understood as the culture-straddling balancing act it was. Nor do collaborations once formed ever stand still. Toelken's joint work with his Navajo colleague Yellowman, which developed and deepened in such a fascinating and informative way over the years they worked together, testifies that even an established team and sustained research focus will continue to evolve and break new ground.<sup>8</sup> Evers and Felipe Molina's *Yaqui Deer Songs* also gives strong evidence of what such evolving partnerships can achieve.<sup>9</sup> Collaborations, being plural and many-faceted, simply multiply the natural mutability of cultural realities, problematizing both their study and their representation. If we're honest about it, we will judge their results on an ongoing basis. No perspective can ever be fixed in stone, any more than oral traditions themselves can be fossilized, in either their composition or their reception.

To provide two final analogues to the case studies presented in this volume, projects that share the goal of erasing the customary dividing lines between insider and outsider, I turn to the Malian-American collaboration that produced a deeply contextualized version of the Son-Jara epic as performed by the bard Fa-Digi Sisòkò, and to the Indian-Finnish team whose work resulted in the recently published edition and translation of the Siri epic by the singer Gopala Naika.<sup>10</sup> Both projects are exemplary, both are parallel to the Native-outsider collaborations sampled below, and in quite different ways both reveal the largely untapped potential inherent in this

---

7. The story of their fieldwork and the scholarship it generated is told in Foley 1988.

8. See Toelken 1969; Toelken and Scott 1987; and Toelken 1987.

9. Evers and Molina 1987. See especially the editors' articulate statement on pages 8-9.

10. Respectively, Johnson 1986 and Honko 1998b.

kind of cooperative research. The Son-Jara collaboration is best described by the American translator-editor John William Johnson, who was given the 1968 acoustic recording of the performance by its original collector, Charles S. Bird (Johnson 1986:x):

. . . I set off with my family to conduct field research in Mali on the Son-Jara epic, and Bird turned the tapes over to me to take back to Mali for transcription, translation, and annotation. I also collected five other texts during this field project, all of which were involved in the overall process of analysis of this form of oral literature in Mali. The present text was transcribed and translated twice. It was initially transcribed in Mali by my assistant Cheick Oumar Mara. I executed the translation and extensive annotation with the help of two other Malian assistants, Ibrahim Kalilou Tèra and Checkna Mohamed Singaré. Later the text was again transcribed, by Bourama Soumaoro, and a second translation was accomplished in sessions involving Bird, Soumaoro, and me. The final translation constitutes a synthesis of the two series of work sessions.

*The Epic of Son-Jara* as it stands is thus a work of many hands, with all of the contributors forthrightly acknowledged on the title page of the volume for their complementary roles in the presentation, from the foundational contribution of the bard himself through the supportive co-editors and co-translators who struggled to make an implicit frame of reference explicit enough for the contemporary Western reader. The notes are awash with the kind of background information and ethnic perspectives that only members of the target culture could provide, including the occasional group befuddlement over a term, a custom, some bit of history, or the rules for a game portrayed in the epic story. Even such a superbly orchestrated collaboration as this one leaves a few chinks unfilled; indeed, that untidiness is an honest and realistic reflection of any person's or group's necessarily personal grasp of the massive cultural inventory on which any performance of verbal art is forever contingent.

To pluralize that kind of individual awareness and thus to enhance intelligibility by evoking some fraction of the coded implications behind the performance, a team of Indian and Finnish scholars combined their training, perspectives, and disciplinary expertise to assist the Tulu bard Gopala Naika with the singer's own wish to bring the Siri epic to the wider world of texts and readers. What emerged from ten years of close cooperation among the bard and specialists on comparative oral epic (Lauri Honko), Tulu epics and possession rituals (Amrita Someshwara, Chinnappa Gowda, S. A. Krishnaiah, and Ashok Alva), comparative Indian folklore (Viveka Rai), and

linguistics (Anneli Honko) is a three-volume publication that presents the December 1990 performance in context. Along with facing-page Tulu and English renderings of the two main volumes, the third volume, *Textualising the Siri Epic*, houses major sections on comparative oral epic structure and composition (from an international point of view), other major fieldwork projects on oral epic around the world from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, a synopsis of the Siri story, and enormously thorough and detailed comments on the epic, the singer, the people, the ritual context, and the morphology of performance.

To give some small idea of the many-sided collaboration that made this project possible, let me quote a few remarks by Honko from section C.7 on “The Finnish-Tulu Project Team.” He is referring to an interview held with the singer five days after his 1989 performance, on February 23, which provided persuasive early notice of the intriguing possibilities to which the team would have access as well as of the collaborative methods that would be required to plumb their depths (Honko 1998a:261-62):

The latter discussion, conducted with the help of Chinnappa Gowda as expert interpreter, contains, in retrospect, an amazing number of focal research topics to be scrutinized in more detail later. By way of content, the three-hour session convinced me that Gopala Naika’s performance abilities were matched by his cooperative skills in epic interpretation. By way of form, the session showed the kernel of the Finnish-Tulu project team to be engaged in the long process of documenting and publishing the largest Tulu oral epic. By way of method, the technique of “triangle” interview and dialogic anthropology paved the way for the performer-centred analysis of oral epic and the “voice” transmitted therein.

Honko goes on to describe a collaboration that evolved in response to the challenges presented by the particular tradition under examination, a joint inquiry that would not have taken place without the instigation of the outsider but that, once established, became very much a mutual enterprise (Honko 1998a:515):

Intensive interaction covering a longish period may sometimes result in a situation in which the term “informant” begins to seem inadequate. “Interlocutor” is one degree better, so long as the researcher remembers that he is involved in discourse regulated by a “working contract.” The term “co-researcher” may be used when the research proceeds symmetrically, with both the researcher and the performer of tradition influencing the course of the discourse, both giving and receiving. In this process the researcher becomes trained, so to say, as the expert in some

small sector of tradition, while the informant acquires a research dimension to his own tradition.

This is an exciting moment in cultural anthropology, folklore, and studies in oral tradition, with new awareness and novel methodologies promising to open up long-ignored avenues to understanding other cultures and therefore ourselves. In future years, emerging electronic media should allow us to extend collaborations to include readers of cyber-editions. Hypertext can already reflect traditional morphology by making multiple versions of a performance available concurrently, and linked glossaries, companions, and archives of sound, video, photography, and much else are either already possible or on the near horizon. Navigating such an architecture—always in a personal but informed way—will bring the reader/user into the collaborative fold, adding another participant to the team studying and (re)presenting the performance or oral-derived work. Collaboration of all sorts offers vital new perspectives, not least because (as one homemade proverb that stands as epigraph to this foreword maintains) “Oral traditions work like language, only more so.” Idiom is the heart of the matter at every level, and the native speaker is the prime resource in that regard. And why should we seek a collaborative dynamic? Let me point to Evers and Toelken’s own words and their collection of essays by summoning the pseudo-folk wisdom of the second facsimile proverb: “True diversity also means diversity in frame of reference.”<sup>11</sup> In situations like those described below, two (or more) heads really are better than one.

### References

- Andersen 1985                      Flemming G. Andersen. *Commonplace and Creativity*. Odense: Odense University Press.
- Clifford and Marcus 1986        James Clifford and George W. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Deloria 1969                         Vine Deloria, Jr. *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan.

---

11. For more on these and other homemade proverbs, coined to capture elusive aspects of oral tradition in idiomatic, capsule form, see Foley 1999:5-7, and 2001.



- DuBois 1995 Thomas DuBois. *Finnish Folk Poetry and the Kalevala*. New York: Garland.
- Evers and Molina 1987 Larry Evers and Felipe S. Molina. *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*. Sun Tracks Series, 14. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Foley 1995 John Miles Foley. "Spellbound: The Serbian Tradition of Magical Charms." Chapter 4 of *The Singer of Tales in Performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 99-135.
- Foley 1998 \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Teaching Oral Traditions*. New York: Modern Language Association.
- Foley 1988, rpt 1992 \_\_\_\_\_, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Foley 2001 \_\_\_\_\_, *How to Read an Oral Poem*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Honko 1998a Lauri Honko. *Textualising the Siri Epic*. Folklore Fellows Communications, vol. 264. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Honko 1998b \_\_\_\_\_, ed. and trans. in collaboration with Chinnappa Gowda, Anneli Honko, and Viveka Rai. *The Siri Epic as Performed by Gopala Naika*. Parts I and II, Folklore Fellows Communications, vols. 265 and 266. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Honko 2000 \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Textualization of Oral Epics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Johnson 1986 John William Johnson, notes, translation, and new introduction. *The Epic of Son-Jara: A West African Tradition*. Text by Fa-Digi Sisòkò, transcribed and translated with the assistance of Charles S. Bird, Cheick Oumar Mara, Checkna Mohamed Singaré, Ibrahim Kalilou Tèra, and Bourama Soumaoro. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Richman 1991 Paula Richman, ed. *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Sherzer and Woodbury 1987 Joel Sherzer and Anthony Woodbury, eds. *Native American Discourse: Poetics and Rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Toelken 1969 Barre Toelken. "The 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman: Genre, Mode, and Texture in Navaho Coyote Performances," *Genre*, 2: 211-35.
- Toelken 1987 \_\_\_\_\_. "Life and Death in the Navaho Coyote Tales." In *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*. Ed. by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. pp. 388-401.
- Toelken 1995 \_\_\_\_\_. *Morning Dew and Roses: Nuance, Metaphor, and Meaning in Folksongs*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Toelken and Scott 1987 \_\_\_\_\_ and Tacheeni Scott. "Poetic Retranslation and the 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman." In *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations*. Ed. by Karl Kroeber. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. pp. 65-116.

# Collaboration in the Translation and Interpretation of Native American Oral Traditions

Larry Evers and Barre Toelken

During the summer of 1992 we sent out a call to scholars to submit work for a special issue of this journal. Our letter of invitation suggested some assumptions we brought to this project. We wrote:

We are interested in publishing a group of essays that share several features: 1) presentation of Native American text(s) with commentary, 2) joint authorship that represents collaborative research on the text(s), and 3) reflections on the way collaborative research worked (or did not) in this instance. In more general terms, we would like to publish essays that explore dimensions of perspective, discovery, and meaning which emerge when Native and non-Natives work together on Native oral texts. The scholarship we wish to publish will not be based merely on “cooperation” between working scholars and “friendly” Natives, nor, we hope, will it repeat that all-too-familiar division of labor: “you perform—we interpret.” Rather, the work we seek will question such commonplace oppositions as “scholar” and “Native,” “investigator” and “informant.” It will take up issues associated with the positions of insider and outsider—in the academic context, in Native American community settings, and perhaps even in some situations where the two overlap. We assume that when Natives and non-Natives share equally the analytic process, the possibilities for generating insight, promoting awareness of depth and complexity, and encouraging sensitivity to cultural issues increase dramatically. Moreover, we assume that collaborative work of this kind has the capacity to yield more and better information and more practically applicable knowledge from a given text—with reduced chances for ethical blunders. At the same time, we are acutely aware that the verb “collaborate” has a special resonance in the context of any Native American community which the second meaning in the following entry captures well: “1. to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort; 2. to cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one’s country” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*).

Critiques of past practice are of course needed and welcome. However, our intention with this project is to try to point a way for future work, to promote kinds of scholarship that will help to create a common

ground of good faith and understanding from which mutual respect can grow among all of us. We wouldn't mind having a little fun along the way; essays on humor are welcome!

We quote from this letter at length to make visible our plans and assumptions. We have been able to follow these plans fairly closely and in large measure our assumptions have been borne out. However, as the correspondence grew and work came in, we encountered the unexpected. We did not foresee that some topics proposed by our colleagues would become problematic. Toelken and a Navajo colleague came to a point in collaborative discussion of their text where they felt they could not continue, so they dropped the project. The Dauenhauers, paragons of patient long-term collaboration, could not resolve the issue of who owned the text they originally wanted to discuss; when they changed to another story, a death in the family prevented further work, for the story was closely related to the clan of the deceased man; their final option brought to light the unexpected account of a Russian folktale being told as a Tlingit story. We did not know we would find out about Tohono O'odham "female breathy speech." We could not have anticipated the excitement of a young Indian scholar working with an elderly anthropologist to bring her fragile field notes back to life for the benefit and renewed use of his tribe; nor did we suspect—in a work on translation—that one of our essays would deal with a story told by Native people in English. In addition, neither of us anticipated that life's dosage of operations, trips abroad, sabbaticals, and family obligations would extend the project for several years beyond its planned completion date.

Still, we believe that this project is timely, for over the past ten years or so there has been a great deal of writing and discussion about reflexivity in the relationships between scholars and "natives." Indeed, at this juncture, the names of the key works and scholars spill out in a familiar litany: James Clifford's and George W. Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1986), Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), Dennis Tedlock's *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation* (1983), among others.

At the same time, there has been in recent years a renewed commitment in Native communities to assert much more control over the way their traditions are represented. A spark for this community-based renewal was struck by Vine Deloria, Jr., (*Custer Died for Your Sins*, 1969) in the early 1970s. It was fueled by Columbian quincentennial hoopla and, most significantly, it has been carried into action by a generation of Indian leaders who were schooled in the 1960s and 1970s and who are now

beginning to take up responsibilities of local tribal governance and to contribute to the development of policy on the national level.

Admittedly, Native communities and academic communities have been trying to work together for a long time in the study of language, culture, literature, art, and dance. Yet the rapprochement has always been awkward and imbalanced in favor of the academics. The complexities of this history of interaction have received significant treatment in recent years. Roger Sanjek writes: “While professional ethnographers—usually white, mostly male—have normally assumed full authorship for their ethnographic products, the remarkable contribution of [their] assistants—mainly persons of colour—is not widely enough appreciated or understood” (1993:13). The problem Sanjek poses here has been taken up vigorously by scholars who have returned to archives to scrutinize correspondence and manuscripts as they attempt to unearth the complexities of who contributed what to early anthropological field projects. The relationship between George Hunt and Franz Boas has been subject to intense review (Murray 1991; Berman 1994), as have those of Francis LaFlesche and Alice C. Fletcher (Liberty 1978) and Black Elk and John G. Neihardt (DeMallie 1985).

Extensive archival work has enabled Douglas Parks to begin to tell a fuller story of the life and work of James R. Murie, a mixed-blood Pawnee (born 1862, died 1921) and a prolific field worker and writer. He worked with a number of anthropologists and was a key participant in what many think of as the “golden age” of American anthropology. Parks’ work with the papers that Murie left behind has yielded compelling examples of what “collaboration” meant during that time (Murie 1981). The most severe case to surface thus far in this ongoing reassessment is that of Murie’s relationship with the famed anthropologist Ralph Linton. It is now clear that Professor Linton “used Murie’s field notes deposited at [The Chicago Field Museum] in writing five papers on the Pawnee, a group he had never worked among, and without any mention of Murie” (Sanjek 1993:14). Based on cases such as this, Sanjek urges a thorough reassessment of the history of American anthropology. Moreover he suggests that anthropologists “need to revise our textbooks—and write new ones” (16) in order to reconsider and reevaluate the contributions of these early Native American collaborators.

Recent works on Native American literature have moved in the direction of engagement and involvement with Native materials on Native American scholars and commentators. Brian Swann’s *Coming to Light: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America* (1994) is an excellent representation of the work in this area. In this major

anthology, Swann has gathered attempts to find and foreground a Native “voice” through fieldwork collaboration, involvement of Native scholars and commentators, and deep-level engagement with Native languages. Another collection, *Stories that Make the World* (Frey 1995), represents Native efforts to let other Natives “speak” through publication. Direct collaborations like *Ugiuvangmiut Quliapyuit/King Island Tales* (Seeganna and Kaplan 1988), *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam* (Evers and Molina 1987), and *Haa Shuká/Our Ancestors* (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987) have demonstrated the texts and insights into the expressive systems of Native peoples that are available to those who take a collaborative approach. The essays we have gathered in this collection attempt to build on this work and to develop ways of meeting the demands of a fully collaborative approach to translation and interpretation.

Although we circulated our proposal nationwide, all of the essays that we selected for publication are from the American West. The tribal traditions they engage range from the Yupik in the Arctic to the Yaqui in the Sonoran desert—about as wide a spread as can be imagined in a relatively small collection. But while the collection offers variety, we do not want to represent it as an omnibus treatment. What we have provided here, we hope, is a benchmark of the collaborative work that is being done with Native American communities at this time.

Felipe S. Molina and Larry Evers have worked together on research and writing projects for many years. In *Yaqui Deer Songs* they wrote: “In all, we work for two goals: for the continuation of deer songs as a vital part of life in Yaqui communities and for their appreciation in all communities beyond” (Evers and Molina 1987:8).

A key point of their essay in this volume is that Native American participants need to be involved in research projects as planners and writers as well as transcribers and translators. One challenge their work poses is to the recruitment and retention practices of academic institutions. Since ethnopoetic projects usually take shape within the academic world, more, many more, Native Americans must come to occupy academic positions so that they may launch projects from that institutional base. An alternative possibility, which the essay printed here describes, is also desirable: academics must seek arenas outside the university setting in which to conduct their research agendas collaboratively with community-based Native American intellectuals. Collaboration must come to be seen as a standard dimension of research in Native American communities.

Few collaborative teams have worked together so long, so well, and so productively as Nora and Richard Dauenhauer. Scholar and Native, husband and wife, poet and critic, teacher and student are some of the roles

that they have reshaped during their unique collaborative work. In their essay, they pursue a traditional historical-geographical approach as they describe a continuing search for variants of “Yuwan Gageets,” the first and only European story they have encountered to date in their very extensive research on Tlingit oral tradition. The Dauenhauers find that the story, a variant of a well-known Russian folktale about a young nobleman who marries a Frog Princess, is “Tlingitized in some obvious ways” but, finally, occupies a precarious place in Tlingit oral tradition. They suggest that one reason for this is that the story “does not fit into the Tlingit social structure in terms of origin or content.” Furthermore, they believe that “the rarity of European stories in the Tlingit repertoire suggests a connection between ownership and lack of widespread borrowing from groups with whom the Tlingit had not established a meaningful pattern of exchange.” They feel that the relatively minimal European influence on Tlingit oral tradition is especially striking when considered in comparison to the “widespread exchange of songs, stories, and motifs among the Indians of the Northwest Coast.”

The Dauenhauers have written on aspects of their collaborative research in several of their previous publications (*Haa Shuká* 1987; *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís* 1990). In the essay published here, they add a dimension that has previously remained unremarked. They explain that they were motivated to turn to this particular story as an illustration of their collaborative approach only after they had taken up two other topics that they were unable to pursue to publication at this time because of cultural considerations. This in itself is an example of how culturally sensitive collaborative projects are significantly shaped by the authors’ awareness of—and attentiveness to—cultural values in the planning stage.

Toby Langen and Marya Moses present a new transcription and translation of a traditional Snohomish story about Crow’s search for a husband, a journey that gives Crow the opportunity to reject a dizzying succession of suitors before finally choosing one named Whyaliwa, Prized Shell. The story was originally recorded by Leon Metcalf from Martha Lamont in the early 1950s, and is restorative in that it recovers important work by Metcalf and Lamont that is in danger of being lost. Working with tape recordings, Langen and Moses create a new translation that is careful and accurate but at the same time a translation that is not afraid to be bold in providing coherent interpretive direction. An especially valuable aspect of their discussion is that they make available, insofar as they are able, the exact nature of the interaction and the labor of each of the collaborators/authors.

Three findings of their essay seem very important to us: first, great tension exists between the way traditional marriage customs and women's behavior are depicted in traditional narrative and the way the same customs and behavior have functioned and have been experienced in the lives of Snohomish women; second, the Lushootseed language text and the English language text exist for different purposes, hence the decision to use the Lushootseed transcription to emphasize "acoustic features" and the English language translation to emphasize "structural features";<sup>1</sup> and third, the tension between what the Native commentator and the non-Native commentator value is made available to us in the discussion of those powerful Native expectations about what is "acceptable" and "safe" discourse in various settings. Marya Moses comments, "I'm very careful, because they'll take your words and change them around and maybe make fun of you." Langen offers a hopeful perspective on the challenge this tension poses: "My students come to value their own way of speaking English when they see in it reflections of the rhetoric of a traditional storyteller whose language, though 'foreign,' turns out to be familiar too."

The Wasson and Toelken essay centers on a story about Coyote from the Coquelle tradition of George Wasson. Though the Coquelles' language was lost during the last century, their stories continue to be told in English. In this one, Coyote has a series of misadventures in several very specific places along the shoreline near Coos Bay, Oregon. An important question raised by Wasson and Toelken is, "Why retain a story like this in a cultural world that is falling apart?" One answer is that the story gives continuing significance to a landscape more and more out of the control of the Coquelle peoples who were originally responsible for it.

Although the story is now traditionally told in English, it is so packed with cultural significance that it still requires translation, for—as the narrator illustrates by constant interruptive explanation—the most meaningful aspects of the story reside in tableau scenes of culturally constructed actions that are not immediately apparent to the outsider (a category that today may include young people of Coquelle lineage who have not grown up hearing the stories). Thus, Toelken points out that it is important to recognize that some questions about such traditions "can come only from the questing outsider," because only the outsider is puzzled, and has the temerity to ask about something which is "there" but remains unarticulated in the text itself. To Wasson's proposition that "Coyote represents the dramatic embodiment of cultural values," Toelken asks,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ease of reference between the two is achieved by the use of line numbers without forcing an absolute typographic correspondence between them.



“Then, what exactly is it that is being dramatized in this story?” and finds that the clusters of action seem to focus on concepts of behavior in connection with lightning, sacred or powerful trees, sharing of food, self-destructive actions, misuse of natural objects or disrupting of natural processes, bragging, treatment of relatives, disruption of ritual processes, and cheating others of their ability to see clearly—just a few of the Coquelle cultural issues that are considered important today.

The story Darryl Wilson and Susan B. Park tell about their collaboration is a familiar one in many respects. An eager young student travels out from a university campus to assist a neglected elder in the preservation of traditional stories. The elder has worked for years to keep an endangered group of stories alive but has received little support. The elder welcomes the fresh energy, enthusiasm, and new technologies the university student brings. The elder and the university student decide to work together to publish the stories the elder has preserved.

But what is decidedly unfamiliar about the story Wilson and Park tell are the roles each plays. Rather than a young Euro-American university student going out to work with a Native American elder, we encounter the reverse. Darryl Wilson, a Native American university student, seeks out Susan B. Park, a Euro-American elder, to assist her with preservation and publication of the traditional stories that she recorded from his own tribal elders years before.

Such a reversal realizes a promise long explicit in the work of early field workers in Native American communities: that they were recording material not only for their own “scientific” purposes but also “for future generations of Native American peoples.” Too frequently, however, this promise seems to have been forgotten as cartons of field notes and recordings languish on metal storage shelves in the archives of various research institutions, as well as among the private papers of individual scholars. The work of Darryl Wilson, and of other university educated Native Americans of his generation, holds enormous promise in this regard.

Says Wilson, “My goal is to bring Susan Park’s materials into publication and in doing so to bring them back to my tribal people and to the society at large” (1992:88). Wilson and Park characterize their work as restorative and foundational. They “mend baskets” that they hope to return for use to the community from which they were originally taken. This restoration of a significant body of Atsuge-wi stories creates a foundation upon which a multitude of issues, concerns, and questions may rise within the Atsuge-wi community and beyond.

Ofelia Zepeda and Jane Hill demonstrate their collaboration by weaving stories of how their academic careers brought them together in the

early 1990s to work on a dialect study of Tohono O'odham. We learn that the O'odham language exhibits significant regional variation and supports some unusual traditional speech patterns, one of which is the tendency of O'odham women to use a "pulmonary ingressive air stream" in certain situations. "The speaker breathes in, not out, while talking," Hill explains. This "female breathy speech" provides the oral traditional "texts" for Zepeda and Hill's discussion.

Ofelia Zepeda emphasizes the perils and challenges that face Native scholars who choose to work as academics in the communities from which they have come. She observes that research work done in the university context where she was trained (and became a Ph.D. in linguistics), when viewed from a position as a worker in the community, is research work conducted in "what is seemingly a vacuum." Those who think that being a Native American and being a fluent speaker of a Native language automatically grant an "insider" status have likely fallen into the polarizing and essentializing distinction between a "native" anthropologist and a "real" anthropologist (Narayan 1995:677). Zepeda's discussion brings many complexities of the perceived "insider" position forcefully into the discussion. Her self-reflections on her role in the collaborative O'odham dialect study stand as a powerful statement of the dilemmas faced by American Indian scholars who choose to do "fieldwork" in their own communities. Similarly Hill's frank discussion of her own position in the collaboration—"I needed protective coloration, both as a collaborator with a member of the O'odham community, and, not least, as a 'linguist' instead of as an 'anthropologist'"—is exemplary.

Phyllis Morrow and Elsie Mather have worked together for years on the translation and interpretation of Yupik texts. Here, they offer an unusual solution to the problem of audience in connection with what is appropriately discussed outside of the in-group community contexts, by considering a story told in the Inuit language over the radio by a skilled narrator who knew that his performance would be broadcast. Even though the radio has become a daily medium of communication for the widely dispersed "Eskimo" populations in Alaska, it has not replaced the close cultural contexts in which stories and conversations usually take place: at home or on a hunt, when people integrate their performances with the dynamics of everyday life. So finely interwoven are the stories and the life processes, that the stories are perceived not as discrete texts, but as personal experiences within culturally meaningful settings. So obvious are the understood "meanings" of these experiences that Elsie Mather hesitates to interpret them for others; so delicate are the nuances that Phyllis Morrow insists they *need* to be discussed and interpreted. Because the story on the

radio was purposely performed for a large and open audience, the collaborators knew that they were not intruding. Their longstanding friendship and mutual respect allow Mather and Morrow to approach the story interactively in a way that enriches the text for the non-Yupik while preserving the validity of the Yupik view that the text's "meaning" should remain open to the experiences of the listeners.

## Collaboration

Several issues concerning collaboration and interpretation raised in the essays invite retrospective comment. First of all, the familiar divisions between "scholar" and "Native" are just too easy and need to be complicated by attention to particular cases. Most obviously, "Natives" can be—and often are—scholars too. And in terms of intellectual achievement and engagement over the past 100 or so years, it has usually been the Native "source" or "informant" who was bilingual and who brought cultural depth into the enterprise. In the introduction to his brilliant book, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (1977), Gary Witherspoon writes of his exciting engagement with Navajo intellectuals and philosophers, and quite properly claims, "These people are the Navajo Aristotles, Freuds, Webers, and Darwins" (8), yet in the typical fashion of that era (the 1970s), the title page of the book bears only Witherspoon's name. George Hunt, Franz Boas' prolific Tlingit "informant," contributed most of what we now know of the Kwakiutls over a period of forty-five years (from 1888 to 1933), but in Boas' extensive bibliography on that subject, two items out of fourteen are shown as co-authored (Berman 1994:483, 512-13). In Brian Swann's more recent collection, *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* (1992), which even features the bothersome question, "Who benefits by translation?" in its introduction (xvii), none of the twenty-four prominent essayists is identified as a Native American, although all the complications discussed would clearly have benefitted from direct Native involvement. This is not to fault Swann's anthology so much as to note that—in spite of several years now of championing the dialogic view—we are not very much closer to its promises than we were one hundred years ago. One reason, no doubt, is that even in the best of collaborations, the tone and agenda may still be set by the more powerful partner, and the realities of academic publication are driven by powerful gears indeed.

Another important consideration is that "collaboration" means different things to different people, and in a very significant way each of the seven collaborations reported here is unique. In "Beyond the Lonely

Anthropologist: Collaboration in Research and Writing,” Alma Gottlieb surveys collaborative efforts in anthropology. “The point here,” she writes, “is that collaboration may exhibit infinite variations, each posing its own range of problems” (1995:23). She calls for “long and continuing conversation” about these variations. Coming out of these conversations will be a renewed understanding of the centrality of collaborative efforts: “The more we read of such collaborative tales, I suspect, the more we will come collectively to realize how our discipline overall is characterized to a great extent by a pervasive structure of cooperation in one form or another” (23). This is a realization that, as the essays published here suggest, we must change not only our intellectual understanding of collaboration, but also the practical and political ways we acknowledge authorship, assess responsibility, and bestow rewards.

The Native American coauthors of these essays (Nora Dauenhauer, Elsie Mather, Felipe Molina, Marya Moses, George Wasson, Darryl Wilson, and Ofelia Zepeda) draw on large, generally unstated, interpretive contexts provided by their tribal backgrounds and their own personal intellectual consideration of those cultural matrices. Their interpretive work on this project has provided a depth we could never have achieved otherwise, and their contributions go far beyond the basic question of what a story, or phrase, or style has meant in its cultural milieu over the years. For in their sustained engagement in these essays, they have also shared with us their insights and interests in what the “texts” tell us about living as an Atsuge-wi or Coquelle or Yoeme or Yupik or Tlingit or Snohomish person today. One aspect of this phenomenon—beyond the impetus of personal commitment—is, as Ohnuki-Tierney points out, that “Native” perspectives frequently provide “emotive dimensions” to the study which might otherwise be elusive or even imperceptible to the outsider” (1984:584). Add to that the “Native’s” competence at culturally constructed metaphor, knowledge about ritual and performance proprieties, assumptions about season and occasion, familiarity with context—all of which are directly and not peripherally related to meaning—and we can see what an indispensable role our Native coauthors have played. Moreover, they make it quite clear that they are interested in far more than clarity of text; they want to be sure that the stories may be translated into living, dynamic constellations of cultural meaning which can be told, read, and responded to as organic parts of real ongoing cultures, and not as fossils on a university workbench.

It is clear that if we are going to include American Indians in all aspects of collaboration, including interpretation, then we will need an approach and a set of critical attitudes something very much like what Tedlock has called a “dialogical method.” In distinguishing analogical

anthropology from dialogical anthropology, he observes that a “law” of analogical anthropology seems to be “that the ethnographer and the native must never be articulate between the same two covers” (Tedlock 1983:324). Approaches such as those included in our collection provide opportunities for ethnographers and “Natives” to speak to one another through dialogic analysis, and virtually require that the process continue onward through publication. A key point here is that collaborators are given the status of writers, not just “independent enunciators” (Clifford 1988:51).

But of course many other challenges remain. As Elaine Lawless pushed to make her own fieldwork dialogical, she discovered that the hard part of a “dialogical method” is not its implementation, but rather “writing about it in such a way that the reciprocal aspects of the ethnography are evident in the presentation of the material” (1992:312). A related consideration is raised by Alma Gottlieb: “when we read a coauthored work, it is rarely clear which scholar did what” (1995:22), and this is of course potentially true of coauthored works in a single culture, let alone collaborations between distinctly different cultures where the aspect of clarity and “fit” may indeed be rare and difficult to attain. And even when everything works smoothly and reciprocally between intercultural partners, subsequent discussion and dialectic over a longer term may continue to turn up problematic issues and discrepancies not envisioned by either participant, as Toelken’s forty-year work with the stories of Yellowman illustrates (Toelken and Scott 1981; Toelken 1996).

In trying to maintain a dialogical model in these essays, contributors have made clear what contributions have come from which participants in the collaboration by separating and alternating voices of the participants with the presentation constructed under the editorial hand of both. The method seems to have worked well, if very differently, for each of the collaborations published here. Still we are wary of any idealization of particular form for presentation or narrating the collaboration because it may suggest that what the collaboration is about can be fully represented, even contained, within this particular textualization.

Even so, it is true—as Gottlieb writes—that “collaborative projects often contain hidden sources of discomfort, accommodation, and compromise that may keep them at least distantly allied to . . . problematic political terrain” (1995:23). And as Lawless points out, in any case we need to acknowledge the effect our “cultural baggage” has on what we see, hear, and understand on both sides of the cultural interface (1992). Collaboration will always be an interactive standoff in one sense, with practitioners on each side obligated to take their own cultural constructions as well as those of their partners into consideration—with the realization

that in many cases there will be no middle ground for sweet agreement. In this spirit, we feel that what we have accomplished with this collection is not in the realm of the impossible; rather, we have tried to do the possible, the plausible, the necessary, and we have tried to do it in the appropriate and responsible ways available to us. It remains for us, and for our many colleagues engaged in the study of Native American oral traditions, to continue opening up the mutually responsive, mutually responsible, dialogues that will bring forth the hundreds of other tribal literatures and languages of America. And it remains for all of us to learn how to hold them properly in our hands.

*University of Arizona  
and Utah State University*

### References

- Berman 1994                      Judith Berman. "George Hunt and the Kwak'wala Texts." *Anthropological Linguistics*, 36:482-514.
- Clifford 1988                      James Clifford. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford and Marcus 1986      James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dauenhauer and  
Dauenhauer 1987              Nora Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, eds. *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Dauenhauer and  
Dauenhauer 1990              Nora Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, eds. *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, Ceremonial Speeches for Healing Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Deloria 1969                      Vine Deloria, Jr. *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan.
- DeMallie 1985                      Raymond J. DeMallie, ed. *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- Evers and Molina 1987      Larry Evers and Felipe S. Molina. *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Frey 1995                      Rodney Frey, ed. *Stories that Make the World: Oral Literatures of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Gottlieb 1995                Alma Gottlieb. "Beyond the Lonely Anthropologist: Collaboration in Research and Writing." *American Anthropologist*, 97:21-26.
- Kennedy 1995                Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. "In Pursuit of Connection: Reflections on Collaborative Work." *American Anthropologist*, 97:26-33.
- Lawless 1992                Elaine J. Lawless. "'I was afraid someone like you . . . an outsider . . . would misunderstand': Negotiating Interpretive Differences Between Ethnographers and Subjects." *Journal of American Folklore*, 105:302-14.
- Liberty 1978                 Margot Liberty. *American Indian Intellectuals*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing.
- Murie 1981                  James R. Murie. *Ceremonies of the Pawnee*. Ed. by Douglas Parks. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Murray 1991                 David Murray. *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Narayan 1995                Kirin Narayan. "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist*, 95:671-86.
- Ohnuki-Tierney 1984        Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. "'Native' Anthropologists." *American Ethnologist*, 11:584-86.
- Sanjek 1993                 Roger Sanjek. "Anthropology's Hidden Colonialism: Assistants and their Ethnographers." *Anthropology Today*, 9:13-18.
- Seeganna and Kaplan 1988    Margaret Seeganna and Lawrence D. Kaplan, eds. and trans. *Ugiuvangmiut Quliapyuit/King Island Tales*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.
- Swann 1992                 Brian Swann, ed. *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

- Swann 1994 \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Coming to Light: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America*. New York: Random House.
- Tedlock 1983 Dennis Tedlock. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Toelken 1996 Barre Toelken. "From Entertainment to Realization in Navajo Fieldwork." In *The World Observed*. Ed. by Edward D. Ives and Bruce Jackson. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. pp. 1-16.
- Toelken and Scott 1981 Barre Toelken and Tacheeni Scott. "Poetic Retranslation and the 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman." In *Traditional Literatures of the American Indian: Texts and Interpretations*. Ed. by Karl Kroeber. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. pp. 65-116.
- Walker 1992 Willard Walker. "Investigators and Informants, Collaboration, and Drinking at the Well of Native Understanding." *Reviews in Anthropology*, 20:139-48.
- Wilson 1992 Darryl Babe Wilson. "The Gift of an Anthropologist." *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*, 17:85-97.
- Witherspoon 1977 Gary Witherspoon. *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.



## **“Like this it stays in your hands”: Collaboration and Ethnopoetics**

**Felipe S. Molina and Larry Evers**

The responsibility that comes with knowledge in an oral tradition is the subject of a talk by Yoeme deer singer Miki Maaso, which we translate and discuss in this essay. How knowledge and responsibility are linked in ethnopoetics is our subject.

Projects that produce American Indian oral traditions as “oral literature”—as texts for ethnopoetic analysis, discussion, and appreciation—have been sponsored most frequently in institutions of “higher education” (colleges and universities) and conducted by individual scholars as a part of their own research agendas. These projects generally have proceeded from conception to publication through four phases: planning, performing/recording, transcribing/translating, and analyzing/writing. Community-based American Indian intellectuals have been most involved in the second phase, as performers, and in the third phase, as transcribers/translators, and most uninvolved in the first, as planners, and the last, as writers.

We understand “collaboration” as a process of working together cooperatively on projects. We recognize that in studies of oral traditions what have been called collaborations are highly variable endeavors. The field worker who buys an hour or two from a narrator may come away saying that he or she collaborated in the recording of an oral tradition. And from one perspective they did. More commonly and in our own usage, collaboration connotes a much more intricate sharing of the work of recording oral traditions as well as an aspiration to make that work less hierarchical than it has been in the past. Judging by our own experience, collaborations, even those that involve the same participants at different times, are never static processes. Goals—such as “equality”—may be invoked, but just what constitutes “equal” participation in a given project is determined not only by the roles and desires of the participants but also by the particular historical context within which they work.

A much more negative connotation of collaboration looms large in

most particular historical contexts concerning American Indians. Collaboration in this sense is well expressed by a definition from the *American Heritage Dictionary*: “to cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one’s country.” Frances Karttunen’s *Between Worlds* (1994) is a very wide-ranging, careful study of a dozen such collaborative contexts. At the center of each is an individual torn between a desire to cooperate in a joint intellectual effort with someone from the “other side” and the recognition that such cooperation will constantly raise the issue of treason in the native community. Karttunen demonstrates in very specific ways that these “interpreters” throughout the world have acted as “bridges between their own worlds and another, unfamiliar one” (Karttunen 1994:xiv). The span to be bridged has frequently been opened and defined by paired roles: visitor/resident, colonist/native, ally/enemy, administrator/ward, investigator/informant, teacher/student, employer/employee, and so on.

Sorting through the ways in which these pairs are or are not equivalent with each other and with the roles the two of us assume in our own project is too large a subject for us here. What we acknowledge at the outset is a history of differential power relations between Indians and non-Indians in “collaborative” work that we renounce but cannot escape. This is a sense of collaboration we work vigorously not simply to resist but to transform.

In this essay we ask narrowly focused questions in relation to these large issues: what difference does it make when collaboration between community-based American Indian scholars and university-based non-native scholars extends through each of the four stages we have outlined above? What happens when Native Americans are involved as planners and writers, as well as performers and translators? We will address these questions together in this essay. Everything we have written we both have read, considered, and edited. Still, we have maintained our separate experiences and voices here. The original author of each section is identified as FM (Felipe Molina) or LE (Larry Evers). In addition, we use four asterisks as a marker to signal a shift between our voices.

\*\*\*\*

FM: I have become interested in the many aspects of the deer dance songs since I first worked with Larry Evers on the deer songs back in the 1970s. Since that time I have learned and studied many deer songs. The young boys I have worked with are now adults and some have continued to practice and participate in the village *pahkom* (ceremonies). It seems as if more and more young folks are interested in the deer songs all the time. I



Luis Maaso, deer dancer, performs to the deer singing of his brother Miki (third from right) in the *rama* (ceremonial shade structure) at Felipe S. Molina's home, Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona, December 22, 1987. As he sings, Miki Maaso plays *hirukiam*, wood rasps held on a half gourd resonator. Two of his sons (first and second from right) also play *hirukiam* as they accompany Miki. Another son (fourth from the right) plays a water drum, a half gourd floating in a basin of water, as he too joins in the singing. Audience members visible behind the deer dancer are Yaqui men who are learning the arts of Yaqui deer singing and deer dancing. Photograph taken by David Burckhalter and included here with his permission.

continue to teach them if they are willing to learn with their good hearts.

The songs say and teach so much. It is really a remarkable way to learn and then teach. As the elders say in their sermons, a Yoeme must learn and then teach to the young the Yoeme truth as well as the elders' truth. This knowledge will make it easier for a person to go into the spirit world after his or her time is up here on this weeping earth. With all that I had already learned and a great desire to learn still more from the elder deer singers, I came up with an idea to hold a deer singers' conference. I brought this idea to Larry's attention. Larry also liked the idea. We dwelt on the idea for days. I even mentioned the singers I would invite to participate in such a conference. We made a list of them. We talked about this conference for many weeks. I imagined the many deer singers sitting in a big circle and talking about certain words and ideas that I wanted to learn more about. I was really excited about the whole thing.

Finally, after talking and thinking about it, we decided that such a conference was possible and that it was a great idea but that we weren't quite ready for it. Finding the money and organizing it would be a big job. We both had many other things to do. Maybe someday in the future it would be possible, but for now, we said back then, it was a little too much work. But it was definitely something we wanted to do.

Then one day I was casually browsing through some books at the University of Arizona Main Library when Joseph Wilder came by. Joseph is the Director of the Southwest Center at the University of Arizona. His father, Carleton Wilder, wrote a book about the Yaqui deer dance. Joe has had an interest in the Yaqui people for a long time. We greeted one another, and he invited me into his office. After we talked for a while, he asked me what projects Larry and I were doing. I mentioned the continuing work with the deer songs. "You and Larry are always making things happen," he said respectfully. Then he told me that he had some funding monies and asked if we wanted to work on a project. I was completely surprised and happy at the same time. Right away I mentioned to him my idea for a deer singers' conference. Joe was all for it. I thanked him and left his office feeling elated. I couldn't wait to run over to Larry's office and tell him the great news.

Larry and I talked over how we could best use the funding to make my conference idea happen. We concluded that we would not try to bring all of the many singers on my first list and talked now about whom we should actually invite. Finally we decided that we would go to Potam and talk with some people there about it before we decided. So we started planning and the project was underway.

\*\*\*\*

LE: The two of us have worked together on a number of projects during the last fifteen years. Some have resulted in publication: a videotape on the deer dance, *Seyewailo* (1978); books on two song genres, *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam* (1987) and *Wo'i Buikam: Coyote Songs* (1990); and a monograph on Yaqui history, "*Hiakim: the Yaqui Homeland*" (1992). Our common goal in these publications has been to reproduce texts that we hope will interest and serve both Yaqui and non-Yaqui audiences.

Felipe Molina has participated actively in all stages of these projects, though I initiated each. In the context of our work, then, the deer singers' conference was unique because Felipe took a lead role in the collaboration. He had the idea for the deer singers' conference, secured the funding, and took the lead in both conducting the conference and carrying it through to publication on audiotape and in print.

The conference was held December 21-25, 1987, at Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona. The featured participants, who traveled from the Rio Yaqui area in Sonora to participate, were Luis Maaso, a deer dancer, and his brother Miki Maaso, a deer singer. Three of Miki Maaso's adult children—Julian, Cresencio, and Ramon—accompanied him in his deer singing. Guillermo Amarillas Flores from Potam served as their *moro*, or manager. About ten young deer singers (their ages ranged from 12-26) from Old Pascua and New Pascua, Yaqui communities in the Tucson area, as well as other residents from Yoem Pueblo, participated. Miki Maaso and his group talked, performed, and worked with interested members of the Yaqui communities almost every hour during the four day visit. Some of these sessions we recorded; some we did not. In one sense the conference could be said to have included all the interactions Miki Maaso and his group had with the Yaqui community from the time they arrived in Yoem Pueblo until they left on Christmas day. I think that is the way Miki Maaso thought of the conference. There were a number of more "bounded" performances. On December 22, Miki Maaso conducted a long afternoon session for a group of the younger Arizona singers. He began with a talk about deer singing and followed with the performance of a number of songs. His sons accompanied him in singing, and his brother, Luis, performed as deer dancer. We invited a number of non-Yaquis to this performance. These were mostly friends who have a long acquaintance with the Yaqui community but also included several acquaintances who happened to be visiting Tucson during the winter holidays. We have transcribed the text that we discuss later in this paper from that performance. The following day, December 23, the conference continued

with a closed session. Miki Maaso, Luis Maaso, and the others in their group met all day with Arizona Yaqui singers at the Yoem Pueblo community building. Though many things were discussed during this extended session, we recorded only the talk about the *maso me'ewa* ceremony, which is a special form of the deer dance sometimes performed on the anniversary of the death of a loved one, and Miki Maaso's versions of the songs associated with that ceremony. On the following afternoon, December 24, Miki Maaso took it upon himself to call the people of Yoem Pueblo together. He thanked them for hosting him and his group with a lengthy sermon and followed this with deer singing and dancing. By late afternoon, it had begun to snow, an unusual event in the lower Santa Cruz valley. We drove Miki Maaso and his group into Tucson where they had been invited to perform at a ceremony a family was sponsoring there. The group performed throughout the night for a large audience of Yaqui people from the Old Pascua community. At the request of the family sponsoring the ceremony we did not record any of the deer singing at Old Pascua that Christmas Eve and morning. The snow continued to fall during the night, and the deer dancer went out several times to "play" in the snow. About midday on Christmas, Joseph and Margaret Wilder drove an exhausted Miki Maaso and his group back to Sonora.

Thus far, we have published material recorded during the conference in several forms. We duplicated the tape recordings that we made on December 22 and 23 and gave copies to all the Yaqui participants. When we completed transcription and translation of the material recorded on December 22, we had copies spiral-bound and then circulated these for comment to many who were present, as well as to others in the Yaqui community and in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona. Subsequently, we published a revision of the complete transcription and translation of Miki Maaso's performance on December 22 as "The Elders' Truth: A Yaqui Sermon" in the *Journal of the Southwest* (Maaso et al. 1993). An audiocassette of the performance published there is available from the Southwest Center, University of Arizona. Not to be lost in this litany is the fact that the audiocassette includes the talk by Miki Maaso that we discuss and present later in this essay. Those who would like to listen to the Yaqui we transcribe and translate below should contact the Southwest Center at the University of Arizona for a copy.

\*\*\*\*

FM: "*Ala ini tua Yoem hoara!* / This is really a Yoeme home!" Miki said when our van drove into Yoem Pueblo in December, 1987. He was



Miki Maaso, deer singer (first on right), and Luis Maaso, deer dancer (fourth from right), pose with Miki's sons in front of Felipe S. Molina's home, Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona, December 22, 1987. Photograph taken by David Burckhalter and included here with his permission.

very happy to arrive. When we parked in our yard, my mother came out to greet us. Usually the elder man of the house gives the formal greeting to visitors. I regretted that, since my grandfather had died, our household lacked an elder man to fill this role. Miki himself gave a formal speech to us at the house, and we all responded politely to his speech and welcomed him and his party in. My mother had prepared supper for them. I sensed that Miki and his sons were comfortable because the Yoeme language was being spoken in our house.

My house is small, but we managed to get everybody in and to find room for them to sleep. It was December and cold, so many were reluctant to go outside. Timothy Cruz, a young man who was staying with me at that time, worked hard to make Miki and the others comfortable. He had a big stereo and played Mexican music. Also, he rented Mexican videos to entertain our guests. We played the video we made of the Yaqui deer dance, *Seyewailo*, over and over at their request. Luis Maaso is the deer dancer on that videotape, and he and the others seemed to enjoy watching it very much.

\*\*\*\*\*

LE: I liked the conference idea when Felipe brought it up, but I was reluctant about it too. About that time I had taken on an administrative job in my department and was finding it more and more difficult to make time. I preferred some of the other project ideas Felipe and I had talked about pursuing, and I pushed in those directions: how about working on another genre of Yaqui verbal art, maybe stories? Or finding someone from another tribal background, say one of the Pueblos, to work with us on a comparative study? Or how about writing a novel together, an idea we had talked about for years? We had already worked together extensively on deer songs, and, for my part, I felt the work with deer songs had gone far enough. I was wary of pushing. Deer singing is a life's work for Felipe, but not for me. I remember saying that I was ready to work on something "new." Felipe and I talked through different ideas several times, but each time he returned to the conference. It was what he really wanted to do. I said, fine, but let's wait awhile on this one. Since my role in our continuing collaboration has usually included proposal writing and fund raising, I recognize that this suggestion was a kind of trump card. What pushed me into action on this project was the meeting between Felipe and Joseph Wilder in the University Library. The excitement and the eagerness have never been more visible to me than when Felipe came over after that



meeting: guess what, Larry, it's time for the deer singers' conference after all!

What motivated the conference project for Felipe seems very clear to me. It was an opportunity to learn more about the tradition in which he participates, and through his participation to contribute to its continuance in his community. What motivated my participation was a desire to support Felipe in work he felt was important. What I wanted from the project, my "research agenda," took shape within the framework Felipe established in initiating the project. To divide and assign motivations this way is too simple, for I am sure that as we have worked together over the years we have each internalized and assimilated the other's agenda. But the fact remains that if I had been the one doing the initiating I would have tried to start us on another kind of project.

Once Felipe had established the conference as the project, I began to think of it as a setting that might generate a community-based discourse on deer singing and its place in contemporary Yaqui culture, a subject that we had opened in our book *Yaqui Deer Songs* but had not adequately explored. During our planning discussions I tried to foreground this consideration with a number of questions: when and how are deer singers motivated to "explain," to talk about what they do? What form do these explanations take? How might such explanations be generated during this conference? These questions brought up a list of phrases and ideas that we had discussed and thought about together before. Finding out more about these became a part of our agenda.

The absence of commentary from community-based Native American intellectuals, "real Yaqui thinkers" in Felipe's phrase, haunts and undermines the burgeoning ethno-poetics movement. A "you perform, we interpret" division of labor is not only pervasive, but is frequently assumed to be inevitable. Moreover, the fact that when community-based American Indians do participate in ethno-poetic projects their contributions are rarely represented on title pages and in copyrights further bedevils the field. The inaugural volume in an ambitious new series on Native American literatures from the Smithsonian Institution, *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*, edited by Brian Swann, is unfortunately exemplary in this regard. The book collects articles on Native American poetics from some twenty-three authors. Not one is a Native American. This is an absence noted by the editor. He quotes Judith Berman on the subject in his introduction: "The meanings and uses of Native American literature can be very different to the Native Americans who make it than to the scholars that study it," she says. "The question must be raised whether we really want to confine the privilege of explaining native culture to those who have

mastered Western academic discourse” (1992:xix). I join a chorus (that I am sure includes the contributors to the Smithsonian collection) in answering quickly: “no.” But the challenge remains: when, where, and how will other kinds of explanations emerge? Where are the community-based “explainers”? How can we listen to them? What places can be created to make what they have to say available to more of us outside their communities who would listen? How can they be encouraged to author their own explanations?

I have used the phrase “community-based American Indian intellectuals” several times now. Let me comment briefly on what I am trying to get at with this identification, for it is a distinction that will raise very sensitive identity issues for some. I mean the phrase to be descriptive, not evaluative. What I am trying to describe are those “real Yaqui thinkers” whose intellectual authority is recognized within a Yaqui community. People in the community may or may not agree with what they say but they do recognize a “community-based intellectual” as a “real thinker” and as a member of the community. A “community-based American Indian intellectual” may well participate in other arenas as well. He or she may have an appointment at a university or community college or a school district. “Community-based” and “university-based” are not mutually exclusive in this distinction. Still, there are many American Indian intellectuals whose authority is recognized within higher education who are unrecognized, even unknown, in the tribal communities with whom they claim affiliation. The authority they claim as American Indian intellectuals is certainly real and valid, but it is significantly different from the authority of someone, like Miki Maaso or Felipe Molina, who is community-based. I understand that this opens a very complex issue, one that I am not able to pursue here. What, for example, is a “community” in this usage and how does “community” relate to family, clan, village, or the corporate entity known as tribe? What of the very real and vital urban Indian communities that exist in so many cities? What is an “intellectual” in this context? Are “real Yaqui thinkers” only those with a special, or even exotic, ritual knowledge? What other community knowledges are valued in this way?

In any case, I believe that Felipe proposed a “conference” as an activity familiar both within the mission of our sponsor, a university research center, and within his work in various school-based, bilingual, cultural programs. During our planning we worked together to redefine “conference” to suit our needs: the featured participants would be those recognized for their knowledge in the Yaqui world; the setting would be a *heka* (a shade house with one or more open sides, also called a *rama*, from Spanish, *ramada*; see Molina and Shaul 1993) at Felipe’s house, not on

campus or in a convention center or hotel; the language of the conference would be Yaqui, not English or Spanish; and the conference “proceedings” would be published in forms that were useful and readily available to Yaqui communities as well as academic communities. For us, that meant making audiotapes as well as printed versions published both in Yaqui and in English translation.

Although we redefined the setting considerably, Miki Maaso, the featured “visiting scholar,” was quick to remind us that in order to participate he must accomplish redefinitions of his own. Early in his talk, translated below, he stresses the unconventionality of the occasion: “like this, nobody said it to me nicely.” How one learns about deer singing, and how members of the community react to how one learns, became a major theme of his talk. “Nobody taught me,” he says repeatedly, “I just caught it on the blowing wind and put it together in my head.” Miki Maaso thus raised a set of issues for himself: what are “traditional” settings for the transmission of the special knowledge of deer singing in Yaqui culture, how does he as a singer relate to them, and how does an unconventional setting such as this “conference” figure in? Our previous work with Don Jesus Yoilo’i, a respected elder deer singer from Potam, touched on some of these questions. Don Jesus described his participation in sessions during which he and his peers gathered to practice the songs they had learned from elders. He called these occasions schools, *ehkuelam* (Evers and Molina 1987:65-66). From Don Jesus and other singers, we learned that an “apprenticeship” is common. Such an apprenticeship might include hanging around with a deer singers group, sitting with them during a ceremony, then being given a chance to sing during the early morning hours of a ceremony or at other “off” times, and eventually coming into a group as a water drummer or assistant (second or third position) rasper (Evers and Molina 1987:77). Miki Maaso acknowledges these opportunities but says they were not available to him. He heard the songs and more of the elders’ truth from singers at Pitaya Pueblo, “but those Yoeme elders did not teach me” (lines 157-169). He suggests that they in fact used a series of cautionary customs to keep him from the instruments of deer singing: “not just anyone can pick up these rasps.” “Like this,” he says, “they used to scare me.” Rather than the “schools” of Don Jesus or an apprenticeship process, Miki Maaso emphasizes a more individual source for his knowledge about deer singing. He locates this knowledge in a solitary, spiritual encounter with the powers that reside in the mountains surrounding the Rio Yaqui pueblos, in the *yo hoaram*, the enchanted homes, of the *huya ania*, the wilderness world.

\*\*\*\*

FM: Miki Maaso tells us that many people claim that he received his knowledge from the *yo ania*. However, he tells us that he received his knowledge from the freely blowing wind. To hear a statement like this is not uncommon in Yoeme communities. During the deer singers' conference, Miki Maaso was confident and comfortable with the audience listening to him. He felt they could understand him, so he wanted to convey what he had in his heart and mind.

Sometimes it is hard to bring up personal and spiritual thoughts to a group because many times the listeners are not ready for such information. When I myself have to talk about Yoeme culture, I am sometimes uncomfortable because people may not understand or accept the talk. I say this because Miki tells us that he received knowledge from the blowing wind. He says it this way to mean that it could come from the *yo ania*, the *huya ania*, or directly from God. He does not want to be more specific than that. He brings it up because he is comfortable with his audience, but even with this audience he does not want to be too specific.

The Yoeme spiritual worlds are still discussed and they have been written about to some extent. By now knowledge of them has reached many non-Yoeme people. I think Miki stressed this subject during the deer singers' conference to expose the young audience to what is out there for them. He doesn't go into detail about these worlds, but he does touch on them. When elders talk about certain people with special talents, they say, "*a miiki* / he is given it" or "*a mikwa* / he is being given it." These talents are received from those spiritual worlds and from God. Parents and elders talk to their children and friends about those spiritual worlds and point out that through the will of God or involvement with the spiritual worlds their children might receive some of these talents in their lifetimes.

It was good that Miki Maaso decided to share this personal information with the group because it teaches and helps the young people understand and to respect those aspects of Yoeme life, especially the spiritual worlds.

\*\*\*\*

LE: How are we to understand "*waa yo'ora lutu'uria* / the elders' truth"? And how does the truth that Miki Maaso has acquired and now discusses relate to it?

Reading the published literature on Yaqui culture I learn that the

elders' truth may be thought of as knowledge about living in the Yaqui world that, by virtue of being held in the memories of respected community members, is considered to be central. The role of the community looms large in the definition of this knowledge. Knowledge could only be considered to be "the elders' truth" if it is enacted in the community and recognized by the community. Edward H. Spicer writes that those who actively recognize the obligations of Yaqui religion and who submit themselves throughout their lives to fulfilling them are "said to have *lutu'uria*, to have demonstrated this highest of all human qualities" (1980:85). Acts in the world of Yaqui ceremonialism are a key element: "Whatever goodness of spirit one may have must be expressed in ceremonial labor if it is to be recognized and spoken of as *lutu'uria*" (Spicer 1980:95). *Lutu'uria* cannot be realized merely by having thoughts or dreams or visions of certain kinds.

There is then a sense in which the *pahko* becomes a kind of "proving ground." Not just anyone can pick up the deer singers' rasps. Whatever misgivings the community may have about an individual who does pick them up are quieted when that individual answers a sacred request and performs during a community *pahko*. Miki Maaso is quick to remind us of this in his discussion of the sources of his own knowledge about deer singing:

I continue to stand up with that,  
the sacred request that settles in my hands.

The *pahko* is a place where an opposition between knowledge gained in the towns and knowledge gained in the mountains is negotiated.

Certainly, as Miki Maaso describes it, his knowledge, his *lutu'uria*, has an oppositional quality. He is explicit in saying that it does not come from "the eight holy churches that sit side by side," that is, from the traditional religious centers of the eight Yaqui pueblos. Rather this knowledge comes from the mountains where another world exists that mirrors the one that occupies our everyday senses. Subsequent performance during the ceremonies in the towns will be the occasion for this knowledge to be recognized and validated. Service performed in the context of community-sanctioned ceremonialism marks Miki Maaso's knowledge as "*lutu'uria*."

\*\*\*\*

FM: *Waka uhwanta*, the sacred request, is an important Yoeme custom. Miki Maaso dwells on it in his sermon. The noun *uhwani* is closely related to the verb *bwaana*, to cry or to weep. The sacred request is an essential part of every *pahko*. The *waka uhwanta* is made by the sponsors, who are called *pahkome*. They approach the ceremonial groups they need for the *pahko*. Usually this is the church group and the deer dance group. Formal speeches are given and other customs follow. For example, to request the services of the deer group, the *pahkome* go to the *moro ya'ut*, the lead manager. After he agrees that he will get the necessary performers together for a deer dance, the *moro ya'ut* accepts a lighted cigarette from the *pahkome*. This seals the agreement. The *moro ya'ut* then carries the sacred request to the various performers taking along cigarettes provided by the *pahkome*. Once accepted, this agreement cannot be broken. This is the way we approached Miki Maaso about participating in our conference.

\*\*\*\*

LE: Our use of traditional customs when we approached Miki Maaso is one reason that he chooses to respond to our conference as a *pahko*. He goes to some length to note that he is participating in response to a sacred request and comments on how hard it was for the sponsors of the event, us, to deliver that request. He regards and treats us, self-described “project directors,” as the *pahkome*, the sponsors of a *pahko*. In positioning himself to “lecture” at the conference, he takes a place in the *heka*, just as he would for deer singing during a *pahko*, seated on mats facing the area in which the deer dances take place. Perhaps more importantly, he chooses to use the Yaqui sermon, *hinavaka*, as the genre in which to talk about deer singing. Throughout he emphasizes that the elders’ truth is not easy, that it is not just a matter of talk. It may be easy to talk about, he says, but it is hard to live. Talk must be lived to be “truth,” and living the truth is not easy. Spicer writes, “the harsh disciplines of Yaqui religious life are inextricably connected in Yaqui thought with the hard times of ordinary life and regarded as the essence of the Yaqui lot in the universe” (1980:312).

“Saving” or “preserving” oral traditions “for future generations” is easily the most frequently cited goal in ethnopoetic projects launched from institutions of higher education. But, as a rhetoric, it has frequently been used to enable goals very highly distanced from any context for community-based learning.

Felipe's most constant institutional affiliation during the years I have known him has been with the schools and more specifically with bilingual, multi-cultural projects in the schools. He links "study" and "explanation" with teaching and sees the schools as a place for the perpetuation of Yaqui culture through formal education. A major reason that he is motivated to bring Yaqui oral traditions into print and onto electronic media is so that they can be used in the schools. I think it likely that many other community-based Native Americans who speak their languages, who are knowledgeable about their cultures, and who are willing and able to enter the dialogue on how their cultures are explained are similarly situated in the schools. Thus, we advocates of ethno-poetics who sit in our English, anthropology, or linguistics departments at universities and wait for American Indian peoples to walk in and begin a dialogue are likely to continue to talk to ourselves. Significant numbers of American Indian people are hard at work in the schools, trying to bring their traditions into print and onto electronic tape, thinking about the issues of cross-cultural communication that arise when they do so. Community-based bilingual or "cultural" programs—in community schools, in tribal cultural affairs offices, or in community museums—are neglected opportunities for those who would like to find common ground on which to develop cross-cultural explanations.

\*\*\*\*

FM: How do we know a sermon is a sermon? Well, first of all it is sacred. God and all the saints are mentioned, then the ancestors, and so on, usually at the beginning of the sermon. Miki Maaso, however, does this to close out his talk (lines 393 and following). Maybe he did not begin in the traditional way because we threw him off by rushing in and telling him what to do, or perhaps it was because this was a new situation for him. I know he was wondering, "what am I supposed to do? This isn't a *pahko*, but it's sort of like one. . . ." He had to figure out how to make his words and ideas fit the occasion.

Also, we know that this is a sermon because it is not ordinary language or speech. It sounds different: the tone changes, the rhythm is more abrupt, not harsh, but measured. Also, it contains much of the elders' truth, the Yoeme truth, and goodness, which is the same as truth. The Yoeme say *tu'uwata nooka*, "talking about goodness," in reference to the content. A sermon can include nothing bad, no insults, but only goodness.

The Yoeme say that it is hard for one who is *ka bwe'um hiapsek* ("not having big heart") to give a sermon. Speakers are said to be *ka*

*bwe'um hiapsek* when the voice is unsteady or the volume is inconsistent. The speech used in a sermon should be very pleasing to hear.

\*\*\*\*\*

LE: Muriel Thayer Painter writes that sermons or ritual speeches are a part of almost all Yaqui ceremonies, and that they are “thought of as general instruction for the people in ancient Yaqui spiritual and religious beliefs and moral codes, as well as explanations of the meanings of the ceremonies” (1986:112). A *hinavaka* is a formal speech delivered on a wide variety of Yaqui occasions: baptisms, weddings, wakes, and all village *pahkom*. In English, Yaquis refer to a *hinavaka* as a sermon. The sermon is usually delivered by elders who have particular roles in the ceremonies. Deer singers, for example, give a sermon at a prescribed time during each ceremony they perform. This time is early in the morning, an hour or two before dawn. They may talk about the difficulty of accepting the sacred request to participate in the ceremony, about how they made it through the long night, and about the thanks they have for the sponsors of the ceremony. Painter writes that Yaqui sermons “are delivered in a formal, authoritative tone and with dignified demeanor. All are, or are by tradition expected to be, couched in the Yaqui language. . . . When an informant quotes from a sermon or speech, his conversational, informal manner changes, and he speaks in a loud and measured tone” (1986:113).

The particular “sermon” we are considering here was delivered at what we called a “conference,” so a comparison with the “lecture,” the genre most closely associated with a conference, is useful. Erving Goffman writes that “a lecture is an institutionalized extended holding of the floor in which one speaker imparts his views on a subject, these thoughts comprising what can be called his ‘text.’ The style is typically serious and slightly impersonal, the controlling intent being to generate calmly considered understanding, not mere entertainment, emotional impact, or immediate action” (1983:165). In a lecture, as in a Yaqui sermon, evidence of a “high style” is desirable: elegance of language, and other aspects of “expressive” writing allow the audience, as Goffman puts it, “to feel that its producer has lent himself fully to this particular occasion of communication” (189). “Truth” is an issue as well: “constituent statements presumably take their warrant from their role in attesting to the truth, truth appearing as something to be cultivated and developed from a distance, coolly, as an end in itself” (165). A key difference between the aim of a lecture in higher education and a sermon in Yaqui culture, then, is where truth is located. A truth without heart, one held only in the head, is no truth at all in Yaqui



culture.

\*\*\*\*

FM: The common phrase “like this it stays in your hands” is usually said right at the end of a formal speech, a sermon, or general advice. It means that the talk contained good information and knowledge, that it was related to others, and that it can now be used to benefit oneself or others while they are here on earth.

In a sermon when the elder speaks in a formal voice, he talks about different aspects of Yoeme work or ritual. The sermon contains information or knowledge that has been passed down from one generation to another. Connections are made to ancient Yoeme truths and to modern Christianity. The one who gives the sermon relates to the audience why it is important to carry on the Yoeme traditions and the Yoeme truth. In one part of the sermon the sermon-giver will say that all adults have the responsibility to teach the little angels (children) the Yoeme truth because when adults die, they are asked up in heaven if they did their duty on earth. The sermon also explains why a person on earth may be required to serve the community and God in song, prayer, or dancing. So like this the sermon continues, and towards the end the following words are always said:

Inia velekika itom achai Hesu Krihtota mampo taawak  
 itom ae Maria Santisimata mampo taawak  
 wame si'ime santorata mampo taawak  
 si'ime anhelesim mampo taawak  
 Aet chukula inia velekika enchim mampo taawak  
 Tua Dios emchiokoe u'utteasiavu

This much in our father Jesus Christ's hands stayed  
 in our mother the most Holy Mary's hands stayed  
 in all the saints' hands stayed  
 in all the angels' hands stayed  
 After that, this much in your hands stayed  
 True God will bless you strongly.

When these words are said, the person receiving the knowledge is given blessings to receive the help of divine forces to work with the duty that has been given to him or her. It is now the hearer's responsibility to use the knowledge for personal benefit and also for the benefit of others, especially children and the people who are in need.

\*\*\*\*

We have shown how the involvement of community-based American Indian intellectuals in the crucial initiating/planning stage affected the collaborative project we have described. As usual, much more remains to be said. We look forward to developing more extended commentary on the role of audience: how various audiences, Yaqui and non-Yaqui, have responded to our work and other ethnopoetic scholarship like it.

In concluding, we want to join others who have called for involvement of American Indian intellectuals in all stages of university-based projects that focus on Indian communities. Peter Whitely, for example, has recently issued a passionate call for such involvement in "The End of Anthropology (at Hopi)?" (1993). How can we make research on American Indian traditions something more than "a bourgeois language game about the oppressed?" Whitely asks. In answer he turns to a speech delivered on January 23, 1991, by Vernon Masayesva, chair of the Hopi Tribe, at Northern Arizona University titled "Native Peoples and the University Community." In this talk, Vernon Masayesva proposes "involving Indian people in formulating research questions." He predicts that "any university-sponsored project, regardless of how noble its aim might be, will surely fail if consultation with Indian tribes is not part of the planning process from the project's inception." Whitely, Masayesva, and others during the last two decades have issued the calls. What remains in very short supply are responses. Reports on action, what has happened when community-based American Indian intellectuals were involved in all stages of research projects conducted in their communities, are few and far between. This is what we have begun to provide here.

Waa Yo'ora Lutu'uria

Miki Maaso

Yoem Pueblo

12/22/87

transcribed, translated, and annotated by  
Felipe S. Molina and Larry Evers

Miki Maaso (MM):

a pos empo vea ameu vicha a teuwane  
uka lutu'uriata in nokaka'u

vempinto kaivu tua ne hikkaine  
 nepo vea enchi tehwa bwe kia vea emowa teuwane empo vea

Felipe Molina (FM):

heewi  
 nian hia ori . . .  
 bwe nianta pensaroa  
 empo witti a teuwane heewi  
 uka lutu'uriata ameu a teuwane  
 wate enchi hikkaine  
 wate into revereveti a hikkaine ta 10  
 ka si'imek hikkaine  
 ta chukula ni vea im vea empo gravaroa  
 num vea epo si'imek teuwane  
 nepo vea chukula veana  
 ringo noku vicha yechane  
 vempo'im na makak  
 vempo vea a nokne  
 nuen vea nuen hia . . .  
 tu'isi witti yeu simneta

MM:

heewi 20

FM:

empo vea kia witti a weiyane Yoem nokpo  
 nuen vea a hu'uneiyan

MM:

heewi  
 pues uusim itepo  
 inim te hokame itepo  
 vahikai  
 waka **woi vahi** lutu'uriata ket inen kechia  
 eme a waata  
 into wa enchim hiapsi  
 enchim mamni sentidom ket inen ket eme 30  
 a waata kechia eme inika waka  
 lutu'uriata polove erensiata hakwosa iat  
 tiempopo  
 waka yo'ora lutu'uriata eme waata  
**eme aet hiapsek**

eme aet hiapseka na kuakte  
 into eme aet hiapseka yeu matchu  
 into eme aet hiapseka to'ote

si'imeta eme aet pasaroa waka severiata

si'imeta  
 hi'ibwapewamta va'ahipewamta 40

kotpewamta yeetem si'imeta eme aet pasaroa  
 ta eme inika ta'avae a waka woi vahi lutu'uriata waka  
 yo'ora lutu'uriata hakwosa vea tiempopo  
 ite huni ka

itepo huni ka huname yo'oram itepo ka am ta'a  
 into inepo ka am ta'aeme san si  
 waka woik vahik lutu'uriata ket inim wame maso

**bwikleom huevenakai**

inim bwiapo emou kom yaaha  
 inim bwiapo emo mak na kuakte  
 wawatekai achaim 50

hunaman itom

hiak vatwe vetana avo emou kom yaaha  
**waka uhbwanta** weiyakai inim wain emou kom yaaha

inim wain vicha rehte

ta waka inika polove erensiata inika a hu'uneiyakai  
 inena hu'uneiyakai emou inim kom yaaha

eme intoket hunaitwelichi

eme a hikkahak waka nokta

eme amet a mammattek

ta eme tua a hu'uneiyavaeka 60

hunaman in hoara solarpo

ket neu yahak **inime achaim** tua ne wok hiawak

haksa in katekapo

into haksa in na weyepo

tua net cha'aka waka

pasota wokita yak

aet tatavuhtek

iansu ket inim oora weye wa enchim uhbwani into wa

inen enchim teuwaka'u into inen enchim ne

hikkaevae'u

inimi'i enchim

pweplopo inimi'i enchim na kuahktepo 70

waka woi vahi lutu'uriata

eme a hu'uneiyavae

ne huni kechia inepo kechia

waka yo'ora lutu'uriata

haksa chea inepo waka yo'ora lutu'uriata chea tu'ik

inepo teune

- ta inepo kechia  
 neu ka eteowak ini'i  
 komo ian enchim eteho  
 inian kave newa teuwak into inian kave tulisnia newa teuwak  
     waka woi vahi lutu'uriata  
 haisa ina ta'ane'u 80  
 ka newa teuwak  
 tane  
 aam hikkahak ala waka hiawata ne hikkahak como emo venasia  
 ta inena bwikne into im wami into ineni ti kave neu hiak  
 porke hunak wa yo'ora lutu'uria  
 hunak tiempopo nakwan  
 yo'oriwan ini'i inim vo'okame  
     itom hoka'apo  
**wa karpeta yo'oriwan**  
 into wame hirukiam inim to'okame 90  
     woika vahika inim to'okame  
 ka kia have huni amet mammamtetuawuan  
 porke hunak wa yo'ora inika naken  
 hunait mamtekatek haivu kia  
 noki ama aune  
 ka kia have huni aet mamtene  
     hakkuvo weyekai  
 tua ama aune . . .
- inika itom waka hirukiata tovoktako aet mamtekatek  
**wa ka bwe'um hiapsekame**  
**tenku aniapo** vea a vitne inika'a  
 itom inim polove lutu'uriata 100  
 inian a teuwasuk
- e achai  
 e nuhmeela  
 kat aet mamma iniachi  
 nim vo'okamtachi
- hiovukun hune ka kotne ti hiune  
 porke ni wa yo  
 yo ania  
 inian lutu'uria katek  
 inian vempo a naksuk 110
- yo ania ini'i**  
 ka kia huni have aet mammane  
 inian a teuwak huname wame yo'ora  
     inim bwan bwiapo na kuaktisukame  
 ne huni ka am ta'ak

into vempo huni ka ne mahtak  
 poke inian neu hiusuk  
 inika ne mahau tetewasuk  
 ka ian emo venasia in emo vicha a teuwa venasia  
     kave inewa teuwak  
 into ke in achaitakai  
 into wa chea in sai yo' o takai huni'i 120  
 ka inian newa teuwak  
 kave ne mahtak  
 ne kia waka hekata chasisimemta hunaka inepo  
 inepo a bwisek  
 into in kovapo namyak  
 into wa Dios humak hunen hia  
 into wa hua ania vetana wa  
 yo ania humaku' u into wa  
 huna humak hunen hia yo hoara humak  
 inika humak ne makak 130  
 huntukson inepo  
 waka hekata . . .  
 vem hikka vem bwiksuka' u into vem hikkaisuka' u  
     chea vatnataka vem hikkaika' u hunaka lutu' uriata  
     in kovapo taawak in mamni sentirompo taawak  
 hunuen na hu' uneiyak  
 ka iniani  
 enou vicha  
 ina teuwa kave inewa teuwak  
 inian ket eme aet mammattene  
 ma inepo nim kateka emou vicha a teuwa ho  
 tulimaisine emou vicha kateka a teuwa 140  
 ta ini itom hakwo . . . yo' oriwa nakwa  
 tua wa maso bwikreo yo' owe ka amau vicha  
     ye viiva mimika  
 into wa sewundo ka amau vicha  
     ye viiva mimika  
 into wa chea ultimou katekame huni ka  
     ye amau vicha viiva mimika  
 into wa vaa hiponreo huni' i into ka au  
     viiva netanwa  
 into ka amau vicha nooka  
 into wa maso bwikreo yo' owe huni ka amau  
     vicha nooka  
 iyimin kaveta yopna  
 amau vicha kaveta yopna  
 intoke tua ka nooka huni' i 150  
 anaka a nokria waka hua aniapo waka  
     **sea yolemta**  
 hunaka nokria ala

- porke inian katek  
 inian a teuwasuk wame yo'ora lutu'uria  
 inian a tookokok ta inepo ka am  
     vichak  
 inian waka hekata waka vuitemta  
 inen ne amet a hikkahak  
 hunamani  
 pitaya pweplopo  
 inen ket ne amet a hikkahak 160  
 ta huname yo'ora kokosuk  
 Jose Maria Hapachituka'u  
 intuchi wa Galavis  
 ket inian a teuwak intuchi ket wa senu yoeme  
 Luis Chone'elateame  
 Aldamasteame ket inian teuwak  
 tua inian in mampo a tosiika huna'a  
 tua huname kechia hu'ubwela au haptek  
     ta ian wame . . . chea yo'ora lutu'uria inian a  
     hikkahak  
 ta huname yoem yo'owe ka ne mahtak  
 huntuksam inepo vea hunaitchi 170  
 yeu sikapo vea inepo vea inika'a  
 waka bwikata haisa ina natene'u  
 ta huname ka ne tehwak  
 ta hunaka waka hekata  
     waka chasisimemta polovesi ina mavetakapo amani  
 hunaka lutu'uria  
 ta ne . . . ta inepo huni ka hunea . . .  
 ta ne waka polove waka erenciana  
 neu toosakawakamta  
 wame pahkom
- o chea malatune 180  
 o chea achalitune  
 chea ito venasia polovetune  
 hunaimak ne kiktesime  
 waka uhwanta in mampo yehteko
- tua ne hunaka hiokoleka ne na weye  
 ubwanta  
 weiyamta  
 polovesia waka vatorata  
 santorata  
 wohnaiki pweplom santa iglesiam 190  
     vellekatana hokame  
 into waka vihperam yumako  
 wame bwere pahkom

inen tam mavetak  
 inen te amet paso wakte  
 tua inia veeki tiempo weye  
 inen ne amet ne  
 ka tu'ik  
 into waka tu'ik  
 inen ne amet a vitchime  
 inen ne a hu'uneiyak inepo 200  
 eme ket inen a pasaroane inimi'i  
 tua polovesimachi  
 tua ka aou pappewasimachi  
 ta ket eme inian a inene  
 tua chea vatnatakai apo señor Díos achai o'ola  
 tua inika'a ka emou chupane  
 ta inian machi wa . . .  
 Díos Señor achai o'ola apo enchim aniane  
 enchim takaa into waka enchim hiawai  
 tua kave emou omtine 210  
 tua kave emou waka huenak pensaroane  
 porke ka tu'i  
 porke hunama ka ye ania  
 wa ubwanta itom mampo yechakame  
 ka ye ania  
 waka ko'okoata ama aukapo  
 ka ye ania  
 chewa polove  
 inen ubwanta hosuk  
 ian into te aman kechia 220  
 wa **ili hittoata** vetchivo te aman a makne  
 polovesi ko'okoe  
 aman ta vikne  
 ti kave eu hiaka eu hahaptene  
 hunaka enchi tu'ika weamau ala  
 wa tui servisio en mampo yehtene  
 tua hunak empo  
 hunama vo'oka petensiapo vo'oka vea  
 ili vaa emo mimikaka  
 o wana 230  
 ka pappeaka vo'oka huni empo yehteka vea  
 empo pensaroane  
 si'imeta pensaroane  
  
 ne wana tu'ika weamau  
 into ke have huni waka ubwanta in mampo yechane  
 hiva empo pensaroane  
 e'e ta ket Díos ket apo enchi aniane  
 into wa hua aniapo wa yoeme



huna ket wa sea yoleme ket enchi aniane	
huna ket ito vetchivo	240
santik iglesiam	
wohnaiki pweplo santik iglesiam hooka	
wam hua aniapo	
kaupo	
haksa ha'ani	
wam pocho'oku	
chea yo aniapo	
hunama hooka	
hunama si'ime ayuk	
wa enchim inim itou nattemai'u	250
into wa enchim neu nattemai'u	
inian a hu'ueniyaka ket eme	
vichau vicha ket eme at tekipanoane	
inepo kechia	
ket emo venasi ne ket	
inian a ta'apean	
ta inepo ka inian a makwak	
into ne ka inian a hu'unciyak	
inian a hu'ueneiyaka	
wame enchim	260
chikti mammi sentidom	
hikau tahtahti tonnuatuaka vellekatana	
eme aet mammatteka aet paso waktine	
into eme aet kupteka totene	
aet remtisakane	
aet emou temaine	
eme chea uusim	
ka yo'owe	
inen enchim mampo taawane wa lutu'uria	
enchim sentidompo inen ket eme a mammattene	270
enchim mampusiam enchim nunubwa vetana	
vatan vetana waka mamni sentidota haisa eme a hippue	
hanum katek wa enchim wa enchim mampusiampo	
natekai vatan vetana ayuk	
nu wa enchim sentidompo katek	
mamni sentidom ti katin hihia wame yo'ora inian na	
kuaktisukame	
tua inian eme a hu'unciyaka	
aet yeu matchusakane	
aet kuptisakane	
nuhmeelam inim hokame	
into waka sewa yolemta	280

waka nokta

inen ket eme a waata  
 into ket inen ket eme a hu'unekiyavae  
 iniet chukula kechia  
**waka kanaria** naate  
 inika huni ka ne mahtasuk  
 inika si'imeta ka ne tehwasuka  
 polovesi ne im katek  
 polovesi te inim hooka  
 in usimmake

290

vahimmake inim ne katek  
 inepo am usek inime'e emo venasia  
 como haisa enchim yoemiam  
 yoemiamtukapo amani  
 inien nam uusek  
 ta inime huni ne  
 waka woi vahi lutu'uriata ka teuwak  
 ta ket vempo ket haisa auka  
     polovesi ket inim kechia  
 waka inika'a  
 kaveta au yumao  
 kaveta au pappeo'u  
 ket inen kechia  
 netwelisi ket humak a makwak  
 wa yo ania humak ke inen ket a  
 waka . . . inen ket

300

inien ne

aet

vem na kuaktinepo huma inien a makwak  
     kechia vempo humaku'u  
 ta tuasu tu'i kechia  
 ket halekisia ket  
     au hapsakane  
 ta inepo ne im aane  
 wa Diosta taewaim ne mikau  
 inepo ne waka tui lutu'uriata ket  
     inepo wam in hoara solarpo  
 in na kuaktepo inen ne am tehwane inepo

310

tua inien ket eme a hu'unekiyane  
 into inien eme am hu'unekiyane  
 inime in uusim  
 emo venasi uusim  
 inim emo vicha hokame  
 vaataponamta

320

Julian

iyim neu katekame into  
Cresencio

wannavo neu katekame into  
Ramon

nen ket eme a hu'uneiyan  
inime waka hua aniata  
vichau vicha eteho  
yo aniata  
kaupo aukamta 330

waka yo'ora lutu'uriata kaupō  
vem na kuaktisukapo  
waka kutata  
waka huyata  
kauta tetata va'ata si'imeta  
inen a eteho waka yoawata aet  
na weesuka'u  
wame yoawam  
haksa sene'ekapo nau yahaka  
waka va'ata vem haiwa'u  
inen ket a eteho 340  
inian natwelisi a ta'a  
huntuksan ama na vuhti achaim  
wa woi vahi lutu'uria

waka kanariata  
enchim hikkaivaepo amani  
into inen enchim a ta'avaepo amani

hakkuvotana yeuwa sikapo  
into hakkuvotana yeuwa weye'u  
into haksa orapo yeuwa weye'u

inen eme a hikkaivae waka si'imeta 350  
nokta

nen eme a waata  
into inien eme a hikkaivaeka  
nim wakim vicha  
waka woi vahi lutu'uriata net hikkaivaeka  
ket avo vicha eme ne nunuk  
avo vicha te paso waktek  
chikti im yoremiammake mochalanawi  
nim te yeu yahak  
enchim hoara solarpo 360

ta inen ket te waka woi vahi lutu'uriata  
 haksa chea inepo a teune waka  
 chea yo'ora lutu'uriata  
 ven aet na kuaktisuka'u  
 huname kave

polove  
 tolochiataka hehheka  
 hakun tiempopo luutek huname'e  
 waka see'eta veletchik  
 huni te hakam vitne  
**tua te kantelammak am haiwaka huni'i**

kantela taimachiriamake haiwaka huni'i 370  
 te kaveta te hak vitne

ta inen in mampo taawak wa lutu'uria  
 wa woh naiki pweplom santik iglesiam vellekatana  
 in tekipanoane'u  
 ka in mampo a sutohak vempo  
 wa hiawai wa vem teuwaka'u  
 inen ket in kovapo taawak  
 huna

hunatuka'u wa woh naiki pweplo santik iglesiam  
 vellekatana

inepo a teumasuk 380  
 into inepo aet hikkubwawa  
 into inepo aet ta'ewa

inian ket eme a hu'uneiyane  
 nuhmeelam inim hokame  
 ni wa woi vahi lutu'uria  
 inen ket chea vatnaataka

señor itom achai Diosta  
 vatan vetana mampo tawak  
 into wa intom aye María santisima  
 vatan vetana mampo tawak  
 aet chukula ket inen enchim mampo tauwak 390  
 eme inen ne aet nok hikkahak achaim  
 nuhmelam yeu tahtia wa woi vahi lutu'uriata

FM:

heewi

MM:

tua su tu'i

## The Elders' Truth

Miki Maaso

Yoem Pueblo

12/22/87

transcribed, translated, and annotated  
by Felipe Molina and Larry Evers

Miki Maaso (MM):

Well, you will speak the truth that  
I have spoken to them.  
They really will not understand me.  
I will tell you. Well, so you will be able to tell them.

Felipe Molina (FM):

Yes  
like this says . . .  
well, like this we are thinking.  
You will say it straight, yes?  
The truth, you will say it to them.  
Some will understand you  
and some will understand pieces but 10  
will not understand it all.  
But later this here that you are recording,  
all you will say, will be there.  
Later I will  
put it in the English language  
when I give it to them.  
They will read it.  
Like that, like that says.  
They say it will come out good, straight.

MM:

Yes. 20

FM:

You will just give it straight in the Yoeme language.  
Like that you will know it.

MM:

Yes.

Well, children, we,  
 the ones who are sitting here, we,  
 three,  
 the **two or three** truths, also, like this, also,  
 you want it.  
 And your heart,  
 your five senses, also, like this, also, 30  
 you want it, you also want this  
 truth, the poor inheritance, from somewhere in the past  
 at that time.

You want the elders' truth.

**Your heart is in it.**

You walk about with your hearts in it,  
 and you get up in the morning with your hearts in it,  
 and you go to bed with your hearts in it.

You suffer everything in it, the cold,

everything,  
 the hunger, the thirst, 40  
 the sleeplessness, drowsiness, you suffer everything in it.  
 But you want to know this, the two or three truths, the  
 elders' truth. Somewhere in the past at that time,  
 we did not even,  
 we did not even, we did not even know those elders,  
 and I did not know them.

At least you,

the two or three truths, also here,

**many deer singers**

arrive here on this land to you.

They walk about here on this land with you.

Some fathers, 50  
 over there, from our

Yaqui River, arrive here to you.

Carrying **the sacred request** they arrive here to you,  
 come over here.

But knowing this, the poor inheritance,  
 like this, knowing, they arrive down here to you.

And you also, exactly,

you heard it, the talk

you understood it from them.

But you really wanted to know it. 60

Over there at my home place

**these fathers** also came to me, really sought me out

where I was sitting  
     and where I was walking around.

Really they made the  
 steps after me,  
 they sweated for it.

And now the hour of your sacred request is happening, and,  
 like this is what you said, like this is what you wanted  
     to hear.

Here in your  
 village, here where you walk around, 70  
 the two or three truths,  
 you want to know it.  
 I also, also I, also,  
 the elders' truth,  
 where am I going to find the best of  
     the elders' truth?

But I, also,  
 To me, this was not told.  
 Like, the way you are talking now,  
 like this, nobody said it to me, and like this nobody said  
     it to me nicely, the two or three truths.

How I could have learned it, 80  
 and how I could have known it?  
 Didn't say it to me,  
 but I

heard them, at least I heard the sound like you.  
 But nobody said to me, "sing it like this, and in this way."  
 Because then the elders' truth  
 then, in that time, it was cherished.  
 It was respected, this, that is lying here  
     where we are sitting,

**the carpet was respected.**  
 And the raspers lying here, 90  
     the two or three lying here,  
 not just anybody could lay hands on them,  
 because the elder valued this then.

If someone laid hands on these, already  
 there would be talk.

Not just anybody could lay hands on it,  
     walking in from somewhere,  
 really there would be . . . .

If someone picks up our rasper, lays hands on it,  
 if he is **one who does not have the big heart**  
**in the dream world** he will see this, 100  
 our poor truth here.  
 Like this it was said,

“no, father,  
no, young man,  
don’t touch this,  
that is lying here.

“You might not sleep,” would say,  
“because this is the enchanted,  
enchanted world.”  
Like this truth sits.  
Like this they valued it,

110

**this is the enchanted world.**

Not just anyone can handle it.  
Like this, the elders said it. Like this,  
the ones who walked around on this weeping earth  
I did not even know them,  
and they did not even teach it to me.  
Because they used to talk  
to me like this, they used to scare me,  
not like now, to you the way I am saying it to you.

Nobody said it to me,  
and not even my father,  
and moreover not even my older brother,  
said it to me like this.  
Nobody taught me.

120

I just, on the blowing wind, I . . .  
I caught it  
and put it together in my head.  
And maybe God says this,  
and from the wilderness world,  
the enchanted world, and maybe the . . .  
maybe that, like that, the enchanted home says, maybe,  
maybe, it gave me this,

130

and then I  
I, the wind . . . .  
What they heard, what they have sung, what they have heard,  
what they have heard in the beginning, that truth  
stayed in my head and in my five senses.

Like that I knew it.  
Not like this,  
the way I am saying it  
to you, nobody said it to me.  
Like this, you should pay attention to it,  
do you see? I am sitting here saying it to you.  
Beautifully, I am sitting here saying it to you.  
But in the past our . . . this was respected.

140



Really, the elder deer singer did not give **cigarettes**  
to those behind him.  
And the second singer did not give cigarettes  
to those behind him.  
And the last one who sits with us did not give  
cigarettes to those behind him.  
And the water drummer also, cigarettes were not requested  
from him,  
and he could not talk to those behind.  
And also the elder deer singer could not even talk  
to those behind.  
He doesn't answer anybody behind, here.  
He doesn't answer anybody behind him,  
and does not even really talk at all. 150  
Yes, they talk for it, for the wilderness world,  
**the flower person.**  
For that, they talk.  
Because like this it sits.  
Like this, they said it, the elders' truth.  
Like this, they left it when they died, but I did not  
seek them.  
Like this, the wind, the one that is blowing,  
Like this, I heard it from them,  
over there,  
in Pitaya Pueblo.  
Like that I heard it from them, 160  
but those elders have died:  
Jose Maria Hapachituka'u,  
and also, that Galavis,  
like this also he said it, and again also that one Yoeme,  
the one who is called Luis Chone'ela,  
the one who is called Aldamas also said it like this,  
really like this that one left it in my hands.  
Really, they stood up to it in recent times,  
but now the . . . more of elders' truth, they heard it  
like this,  
But those Yoeme elders did not teach me.  
That is why I, on that 170  
which happened, I, this,  
the songs, how I should begin?  
But they did not tell me.  
But the swirling wind,  
is how I received it poorly.  
That truth,  
but I . . . but I do not even know . . .  
but I, the poor inheritance  
that was left to me,

the *pahkom*,

or perhaps it could be a mother, 180  
 or perhaps it could be a father,  
 perhaps like us they could be poor.  
 I continue to stand up with that,  
 the sacred request that settles in my hands.

Really I walk about, I pity him  
 the one who carries  
 the sacred request.  
 Poorly, the baptized ones,  
 the saints, 190  
 the Eight Pueblos, holy churches,  
     the ones that are sitting side-by-side,  
 when the vespers occur,  
 those large *pahkom*,  
 like this we are accepting them.  
 Like this we make our steps on them.  
 Really it has been for this much time.  
 Like this I, on it, I . . .  
 the bad  
 and the good.

Like this I continue to see it on them.  
 Like this, I learned it. 200  
 You also like this will experience this here.  
 Really it is pitiful.  
 Really it is a burden.  
 But you also like this will feel it.  
 Really in the very beginning He, the lord God, old father,  
 really he will not create it this way for you  
 but like this it is the . . .

Lord God, old father, He will help you.  
 Your body and your sound,  
 really nobody will get angry with you. 210  
 Really nobody will have evil thoughts about you.  
 Because it is bad,  
 because there it does not help us,  
 the sacred request, the one that was placed in our hands,  
 does not help us.

The sickness that is there,  
 it does not help us.  
 Even the poorest  
 like this made the sacred request  
 and we, also, over there 220  
 as a **little medicine** we will go and give it to him.  
 He is pitifully sick.

"Let's go over there and see him,"  
 nobody will be standing there and saying that to you  
 of course, when you are well and walking around. Then  
 the good fortune will settle in your hands  
 then you will really,  
 while lying there in your suffering, lying there will  
 give yourself a little water,  
 or there, 230  
 lying there without any energy, you will get up.  
 You will think,  
 you will think about everything.

When I walk about there in good health,  
 "anybody could place the sacred request in my hands,"  
 you will be thinking.  
 No, but God himself also will help you,  
 and the person in the wilderness world,  
 that one also, the flower person, also, will help you  
 that one also is for us. 240

The holy churches  
 the Eight Pueblos, the holy churches that are sitting  
 there in the wilderness world  
 in the mountains  
 wherever  
 there in the desert  
 in the most enchanted world  
 they are sitting there.  
 Everything is there.  
 What you are asking here from us 250  
 and what you are asking from me.  
 Knowing it in this way you also  
 will go forward and you also will work on it.

I also  
 also like you, I also  
 would have liked to learn it in this way,  
 but I was not given it like this,  
 and I did not learn it like this.  
 Knowing it like this  
 with all 260  
 your five senses,  
 all the way to the top, giving it parts side by side,  
 you will think about it and make steps on it.  
 And you will lie down with it in the evening  
 and it will continue to open your eyes.  
 You will question yourself about it.  
 You are very young,

not old.

Like this the truth will stay in your hands.

In your senses like this you will study it.

270

On the side where you carry your fingers,

on the right side, you see how you have your five senses?

it is in your . . . your fingers.

It starts, it is there on your right side.

That is in your senses.

Five senses, remember? This is how those elders used to talk

about it, the ones who used to walk about like this.

Really, like this you should know it.

On it you continue to awaken in the morning.

On it you continue to reach the evening.

You young men who are sitting here.

And the flower person,

280

the talk,

like this, also, you want it,

and also like this you also want to know it.

On this also later,

when the *kanaria* begins . . .

not even this was I taught.

They never told me all these things.

Pitifully I sit here.

Pitifully we sit here

with my children

290

with the three I sit here.

These, I fathered these, like you

the same way your people . . .

you became people in this way

like this I fathered them.

But even these I

have not told the two or three truths.

But also they also for whatever reason

are also here pitifully.

This one,

even though nobody could attain it,

300

even though nobody had the energy for it,

also, like this, also

maybe what was given to me was also given evenly to them.

Maybe the enchanted world also like this, also, it . . .

the . . . like this, also,

like this, I

on it,

where they will move about, like this, there they were

also given it, maybe.  
 But really good, also  
 also little by little they will also continue 310  
     to stand up to it.  
 But I, I am here.  
 When God gives me the days,  
 I, I, the good truth, also  
     I, there in my home place,  
 where I move around, like this I will tell them, I  
  
 really, like this, you will know it.  
 And like this you will know them.  
 These are my children,  
 children like you,  
 here the ones who are sitting facing you:  
 the one who plays the water, 320  
 Julian,  
  
 and here the one that is sitting next to me,  
 Cresencio,  
  
 and the one that is sitting on the other side of me,  
 Ramon.  
 Like this you also will know it.  
 These are the ones that are bringing forward  
 the talk about the wilderness world,  
 the enchanted world  
 that is in the mountains, 330  
 the elders' truth in the mountains,  
 where they used to move about.  
 The stick,  
 the plants,  
 the mountains, the rocks, the water, everything  
 like this they talk about it, where the animal  
     used to walk about.  
 The animals,  
 where they came together at a spring,  
 they searched for the water.  
 Like this also they talk about it. 340  
 Like this they all know it equally.  
 And that is why from there on, fathers,  
 the two or three truths,  
  
 the *kanaria*,  
 because you want to hear  
 and because you want to know it, like this

where it came from,  
and where it is coming from,  
and what time it comes out,

like this you want to hear everything. 350

The talk,

like this, you want it,  
and like this you want to hear it.

From here on

you want to hear the two or three truths from me.

That is why you invited me here.

We made our steps over here.

With all my children grouped together  
we arrived here,

here in your home place. 360

But like this, also, we, the two or three truths,

where am I going to find it,

more of the elders' truth,

what they walked around with?

They are not here.

Poor,

they are blowing as dust.

They passed away in the past.

They are grains of sand,

we will not even see them anywhere.

**Really we will be looking for them with candles.**

Even looking for them with candlelight, 370

we will not see anyone anywhere.

But like this the truth stayed in my hands.

The Eight Pueblo Holy Churches side-by-side  
in which I work,

they did not leave it in my hand.

The sound, what they said,

like this also stayed in my head.

That,

that which is in the Eight Pueblo Holy Churches

that are side-by-side,

I have said it.

And I am pointed at for it 380

and I am known because of it.

Like this also you will know it,

young men who are sitting here,

this the two or three truths.

Like this, also, more in the beginning,

Lord, Our Father,

it staved in God's right hand,

and in Our Mother Mary's most holy  
 right hand it stayed,  
 and later like this also it stayed in your hands. 390  
 Did you hear me talk about it like this, fathers,  
 young men, throughout, the two or three truths?

FM:

Yes.

MM:

Really it is good.

### Line Notes

A note on the transcription: We transcribed this performance from audiotapes we made with the assistance of John Crouch. Copies of the tapes are available to readers of this translation from the Southwest Center, University of Arizona, Tucson. Roosters, barking dogs, children at play, trucks and farm machinery, adults buzzing in the kitchen, not to mention airplanes overhead, will all be apparent to those who listen to the audiotapes, but we did not try to represent any of these sounds in this transcription and translation.

During the last twenty years, an extraordinary amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to the challenges posed by transcribing oral performances into print form. Brian Swann's collection, *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* (1992), provides a representative selection of this work. The necessity of "truth-in-packaging" seems to be a lesson to be learned from all of it. We should not assume that the practices of various transcribers and translators are all the same. Scholars must try to be self-aware and to describe their own practices as clearly as possible.

Our practice in transcribing Miki Maaso's talk is as follows. We transcribe his speech into lines because we think that method better represents the rhythm of his talk than paragraphs, and we think it results in a more readable translation. A line break indicates a pause on the tape. Longer pauses receive a double line break. What we heard as we listened to the tapes is what we set down on the printed page. Our ears were our guides. We listened to the tapes several times, together and individually. In some places it was a tough call for us. We felt the transcribing could go

more than one way. Was that really a pause or not? Longer line or new line? Playing questions like these out has led some to stopwatches, computers, and other electronic devices to validate their decisions (see, for example, Sherzer 1992). That kind of science is not our interest in this project. We listened, listened again, made a decision, and went on. In any case, each new line is represented flush left. If the transcribed line runs beyond the right margin, we indent and complete the line. Thus the line numbers that we provide for convenience of reference count only those lines starting flush left. Ellipses indicate suspended or incomplete statements.

- 27    **woi vahi**: literally, two three; two or three, in the sense of several.
- 34    **eme aet hiapsek**: Your heart is in it. Painter notes that “Hiapsi means the heart of a living person and the soul of a dead one” (1986:87) and that “complete fulfillment of an obligation with consequent divine favor cannot be accomplished without faith, love, and devotion. This is more important than carrying out correctly the details of the ritual. *Tu’i hiapsimak* (with good heart) and *chikti hiapsimak* (with whole heart) are phrases often heard in sermons and among the people” (97).
- 47    **maso bwikleom huevenakai**: many deer singers. The reference is to the deer singers from the Yaqui villages in Sonora who come frequently to the Yaqui villages in southern Arizona to perform at various ceremonies.
- 53    **waka uhwanta**: the sacred request. From the noun *uhbwani*: sacred request (and the verb, *bwaana*: to cry or to weep). A special request that is made by the sponsors of a *pahko*, who are called the *pahkome*, to the church group (*maehtom*, *kopariam*, *temahtim*, *matachinim*) or the deer dance group (*moro*, deer singers, deer dancer, *pahkolam*, and their respective musicians). Formal speeches are given as a part of the request and other customs followed.
- 62    **inime achaim**: these fathers. The reference is to the sponsors of this event: Larry Evers, Joseph Wilder, and particularly Felipe Molina and Ignacio Amarillas Sombra, who walked all around the Vicam-Potam area looking for Miki Maaso in order to give him the sacred request to come to southern Arizona.



- 89 **wa karpeta yo'oriwan**: the carpet was respected. Traditionally the deer singers put down a *hipetam*, a mat woven from *carrizo* (a native cane, *arundo donax*). It is now common for singers to sit on a small rug or blanket as they perform. Miki Maaso uses *karpeta*, from the Spanish *carpeta*, to refer to this space, which is reserved only for the deer dancer, singers, and their helpers.
- 98 **wa ka bwe'um hiapsekame tenku aniapo**: one who does not have the big heart in the dream world. FM: In order to pick up the deer singers' instruments, a person must have the power, the ability. Otherwise bad dreams or sickness could result. Many singers have dreams that test their courage. Perhaps a big snake or other large animals threaten them. If they are brave and do not fear what appears to them, they will gain the power to sing or dance the deer songs.
- 111 **yo ania ini'i**: this is the enchanted world. The enchanted world and the enchanted homes are places in the wilderness world that surrounds the Yoeme villages. They are a source of knowledge and power. The deer singers' instruments, the raspers and other instruments, contain the powers from the enchanted world. No one outside the deer group should handle them. See *Yaqui Deer Songs* (Evers and Molina 1987) regarding the enchanted world, wilderness world, and dream world.
- 142 **viiva**: cigarette. During a *pahko*, the sponsors are expected to provide cigarettes for the *pahkolam* to distribute to the audience. It is thought that when people smoke together there is a feeling of unity, of agreement and harmony. Miki Maaso explains that it is not the proper role for the deer singers to give out these cigarettes. During the *pahko*, they should not chat and banter with the audience the way the *pahkolam* do, but rather should only talk for the wilderness world and the flower person.
- 151 **sea yolemta**: the flower person, the deer.
- 221 **ili hittoata**: little medicine.
- 285 **waka kanaria**: the *Kanaria*. The reference is to the deer songs that Miki Maaso and his sons will perform when he completes this

sermon. See Maaso et al. 1993 for a transcription and translation of those songs.

*University of Arizona*

### References

- Evers and Molina 1987      Larry Evers and Felipe S. Molina. *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*. Sun Tracks Series, 14. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Evers and Molina 1990      \_\_\_\_\_. *Wo'i Bwikam: Coyote Songs from the Yaqui Bow Leaders' Society*. Tucson: Chax Press.
- Evers and Molina 1992      \_\_\_\_\_. "Hiakim: The Yaqui Homeland." Special issue of the *Journal of the Southwest*, 34, i.
- Goffman 1983                Erving Goffman. *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Karttunen 1994              Frances Karttunen. *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Maaso et al. 1993            Miki Maaso, Felipe S. Molina, and Larry Evers. "The Elders' Truth: A Yaqui Sermon." *Journal of the Southwest*, 35:225-317.
- Molina and Shaul 1993      Felipe S. Molina and David Leedom Shaul. *A Concise Yoeme and English Dictionary*. Tucson: Tucson Unified School District, Bilingual Education and Hispanic Studies Department.
- Painter 1986                 Muriel Thayer Painter. *With Good Heart: Yaqui Beliefs and Ceremonies in Pascua Village*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Painter et al. 1955          \_\_\_\_\_, Refugio Savala, and Ignacio Alvarez. *A Yaqui Easter Sermon*. *Social Science Bulletin*, 26. Tucson: University of Arizona.
- Seyewailo 1978              Seyewailo, *The Flower World: Yaqui Deer Songs*. Videocassette. New York: Norman Ross.
- Sherzer 1992                Joel Sherzer. "Modes of Representation and Translation of

- Native American Discourse: Examples from the San Blas Kuna." In Swann 1992: 426-40.
- Spicer 1980                      Edward H. Spicer. *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Swann 1992                      Brian Swann, ed. *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Whitely 1993                      Peter Whitely. "The End of Anthropology (at Hopi)?" *Journal of the Southwest*, 35:125-57.

# Tracking “Yuwaan Gagéets”: A Russian Fairy Tale in Tlingit Oral Tradition

**Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard L. Dauenhauer**

*Dedicated to the Memory of  
Anny Marks / Shkaxwul.aat (1898-1963)  
Willie Marks / Keet Yaanaayí (1902-1981)  
Susie James / Kaasgéiy (1890-1980)  
Robert Zuboff / Shaadaax' (1893-1974)*

Tracking “Yuwaan Gagéets” has involved many levels of the collaborative process in folklore transmission and research. The borrowing and development of “Gagéets” as a story in Tlingit oral tradition, as well as its discovery and documentation by folklorists, offer complex examples of collaboration. Neither the process of borrowing nor of documentation would have been possible without the dynamics of collaboration.

In general, comparatists and folklorists today seem less concerned with problems of direct influence, borrowing, and migration than they were in earlier periods of scholarship. But now and then a classic migratory situation affords itself, and a story comes to light, the uniqueness of which is best illuminated by a traditional historical-geographical approach. Such a story is the tale of “Yuwaan Gagéets,” which we analyze here to study the process of borrowing in Tlingit oral tradition and to contrast the minimal European influence in the repertoire of Tlingit oral literature with the widespread exchange of songs, stories, and motifs among the Indians of the Northwest Coast. Our study also presents an example of collaborative research. This paper, revised in 1994-95, subsumes research activities that go back as far as sixty years. Although the story of “Gagéets” is older, our story here begins with the childhood of Nora Marks Dauenhauer, who grew up hearing oral versions in Tlingit, and with the academic training of Richard Dauenhauer, who read the Russian version as a student of that language.

Before continuing, we would like to describe the principles and working procedures that have guided our collaboration for over twenty-five

years. It has been our goal to produce high quality transcriptions and translations of texts from the moribund Tlingit oral tradition and to do so in a manner culturally acceptable to the Tlingit people, technically acceptable to the scholarly community, and stylistically accessible to the general public. To do this, both partners are involved in all phases of the conception and execution of each project. Ideas and first written drafts can originate with either partner, but are ultimately discussed and approved by both.

Who actually does what is determined by many factors, including inclination and comfort related to personal and professional background. Nora Marks Dauenhauer has an academic degree in anthropology; Tlingit is her first language, and she grew up hearing the stories in a traditional family and culture. A published poet in English, she is grounded in oral literature but also enjoys books and literacy. Richard Dauenhauer has academic degrees in Russian and comparative literature; he is grounded in books and the literate tradition but also enjoys the style and dynamics of oral literature; he comes to this particular project from the point of view of folklore and comparative literature. Although Nora Dauenhauer has drafted essay material and Richard has done fieldwork and has drafted transcriptions and translations, it is our general practice that Richard work more with archival aspects of the project and with drafts of the introduction and essays (usually after much discussion and compilation of notes). Nora, for whom Tlingit is a first language, does most of the fieldwork, first draft transcriptions in Tlingit, and draft translations into English. All written drafts of essay, text, and translation have been read, reviewed, discussed, revised, and finally approved by both partners.

As co-editors, Nora has final say and makes all decisions related to the content of a given project, especially those regarding inclusion or omission of a given text for reasons of cultural context, and Richard makes decisions related to the academic context of the project, fitting the new collaborative work meaningfully into the academic scholarly tradition. The history of this essay is a good example. The present topic is our third choice. Our original idea was to work on texts related to oral accounts of the Battles of Sitka of 1802 and 1804, in which the Tlingits initially defeated the Russians but were subsequently overpowered. The events are far more complex than suggested by the popular stereotype of a group of disgruntled Sitka Tlingit revolting against the nasty Russians. Several Tlingit clans may have been involved; the Tlingits attacked Russian positions simultaneously on at least three fronts (Yakutat, Sitka, Kake); white American sailors fought on both sides; a British captain appears to have been free-lancing, supporting, and double-crossing both sides. The

problem with this topic was that the collaboration required too broad a community base, and consensus was not possible at the time. Central to the topic are questions and concepts regarding who owns history and who has the right to talk about it. Tlingit and Western points of view do not agree on these issues. Also, significant differences of opinion remain to be resolved within the Tlingit community and among the clans involved. It would be easy to do such a paper exclusively within an academic context, ignoring the Tlingit point of view regarding the research, but a truly collaborative project was not workable.

Our second choice was a spirit acquisition story by Nora's father dealing with a category of spirit power called "yéik" and its representation in visual art. This is a very important genre and concept in Tlingit and other Northwest Coast oral literatures. A given story typically explains how the progenitors of a particular clan acquired certain spirits and therefore have the exclusive right not only to tell the story and perform the related songs and dances, but also to depict and use them as clan crests in the form of visual art (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987, 1990, 1994). We had the "right" and "permission" to work with this story. Richard had been attracted to the story for a long time and remains excited about it because of the style of the storyteller. Willie Marks was one of the finest carvers of his generation. His skill and training in visual art are also evident in his verbal art through his treatment of color, perspective, and point of view. However, spirit stories are especially sensitive in Tlingit tradition, since it is not appropriate to work with them in times of mourning or during other periods of spiritual vulnerability. Because of two deaths in the immediate family, it became culturally inappropriate for us to pursue the project.

The present topic is less spiritually complex; at the same time, it fulfills many requirements for being collaboratively complex. It is important to note that in the case of both abandoned projects, the problems were not with the literary text but with the cultural context. This is probably the most distinctive feature of our partnership. In the short term, collaboration makes a project more difficult and time consuming, but in the long run, we feel that it makes the results more meaningful. The cross-cultural dimension is crucial. Many community projects (with no external dialogue) often fail to meet the professional standards to which they aspire and generally overlook important questions. Likewise, many exclusively scholarly or academic projects fail to meet local cultural standards and are not acceptable to the communities from which they are derived; they, too, often overlook important questions. It has been our experience that the two sets of standards are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the collaborative dialogue that shapes the method and outcome of a given project increases

our understanding of the text and context of the folklore being studied, while enhancing our ability to communicate this deeper meaning to a wider, multiethnic audience.

### Marks Family Tradition

The current project began when Nora Marks Dauenhauer (Keixwnéi) at one point in the early 1970s recalled and described the story of “Yuwaan Gagéets,” reputed by all Tlingit storytellers to be a Russian story, and asked Richard Dauenhauer if he knew any Russian stories like it. He recognized it instantly as one of the best-known Russian fairy tales (*skazki*). Coincidentally, it was the first Russian fairy tale he had ever read in the original as part of his undergraduate education in Russian.

In the Marks family, the story is associated with Anny Marks, (Shkaxwul.aat), who until her death in 1963 was one of the main tradition bearers, especially for the children, in the household of the descendants of Jim Nagatáak'w of Juneau. “Aunty Anny” was the principal baby-sitter, especially for the little girls. The story was remembered by Nora, a niece of Shkaxwul.aat, and research on the story was conducted primarily with Willie Marks (Keet Yaanaayí; Nora’s father, the brother of Shkaxwul.aat), now deceased, and with Emma Marks (Seigeigei; Nora’s mother). To date, only two tradition bearers outside the Marks family have been located who know the story, although others may exist with whom we are not acquainted. These are the late Susie James (Kaasgéiy) of Sitka, and the late Robert Zuboff (Shaadaax') of Angoon. We are greatly indebted to these tradition bearers for their help.<sup>1</sup>

Because part of this paper describes a retrieval process, data from the various research sessions have been kept distinct and not blended into a reconstructed text, although a prototype is posited. We begin with the plot outline of Keet Yaanaayí’s version. It was recorded October 5, 1974, in Haines, Alaska, under adverse conditions. Keet Yaanaayí was tired, and he had not had an opportunity to reflect on the story before telling it. When asked if he knew the story, he replied “yes,” and agreed to tell it. We emphasize the retrieval and reconstructive nature of the interviews and research sessions on this particular story, in contrast to the “performance” of polished material in the active repertoire of a tradition bearer. In a real sense, the elders are part of this collaboration, not as performers, but as fellow researchers.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987 for texts, 1987 and 1994 for biographies.

### Plot Outline of the Version by Willie Marks (Keet Yaanaayí)

Yuwaan Gagéets is a young Russian nobleman. While his two brothers are getting ready for their weddings, they ridicule Yuwaan for being the only one without a fiancée. A shooting contest ensues, Yuwaan to find his bride where the arrow falls. He finds his arrow in the mouth of a frog. He knocks the frog off his arrow and speaks derisively toward it, saying, "Why are you biting my arrow, you four-legged little creature?" When he returns home, he finds the frog sitting on his pillow. The wedding hour arrives, Yuwaan still without a bride. The frog disappears, and in place of it is a woman, who says, "I am here for you to marry." He goes to the wedding with her, and all approve. At the wedding ball, Yuwaan's bride performs magic, pouring duck soup into one sleeve and a bone into another. She shakes a lake from one sleeve and ducks from her other sleeve (the one with the bone). In the meantime, Gagéets goes home, finds the frog skin, and burns it to keep her from changing back. The bride returns and asks for her coat. She looks in the stove and finds the ashes that still look like a frog. She says, "I'll leave you forever. No matter how long you search for me, you'll never find me, even if you make a pair of metal shoes." Yuwaan sets out to find her, not knowing where he's going. He finds an elderly woman and explains the situation. The woman tells him his wife comes at a certain time on a boat. He waits for her. The elderly woman announces the arrival of the wife, who sees Yuwaan and runs off when the woman opens the door. She runs to the lake, and he follows. She makes a boat out of a bubble and sails away. Finally, Yuwaan Gagéets retrieves his bride, but Keet Yaanaayí is uncertain how, because he has not heard the story in at least ten years.

### Some Russian Versions

The Tlingit story of "Yuwaan Gagéets" is unmistakably the Russian fairy tale (*volshbnaya skazka*) of the Frog Princess (Aarne-Thompson type 402). The plot outline for this tale type is as follows (Aarne 1928:63):

*The Mouse (Cat, Frog, etc.) as Bride.*

The youngest of three brothers (H1242) succeeds best in the quests set by his father (H1210.1). He brings the best cloth (H1306), the most beautiful bride (H1301), etc. (H1300 ff.). The mouse (cat) who has helped him (D 142, B 567.1) changes herself into a beautiful maiden (D711, D735).



Stith Thompson comments that the tale is popular in all parts of Europe, that the nature of the bride varies, and that the tale has been told at least since the Middle Ages (Thompson 1968:436). We have located several versions of the story, and three are discussed here: a version in Russian by N. V. Kolokol'tsev (1960), and English versions published by H. C. Stevens (1967) and by Stith Thompson (1968). Norbert Guterman is the English translator of the standard Russian collection by Afanas'ev (1945:119-23) from which Thompson's version derives. Kolokol'tsev's publication is a sixth-grade anthology for "non-Russian schools," that is, the linguistic ethnic minorities in the former Soviet Union learning Russian as a second language in school. Stevens' is also a children's book, yet it offers the best version of the tale in comparison to the Russian version in Kolokol'tsev, the folklore source of which is not identified. In fact, the story in Stevens' collection corresponds closely enough to the Kolokol'tsev's Russian version to be considered a translation. Stevens does not cite his source, but the plot outlines are the same, except where noted. The plot outline of the Russian fairy tale is as follows. Readers familiar with Russian fairy tales will recognize the stock characters: Ivan Tsarevich, Vasilisa Most Wise, Baba Yaga, and Koshchey Bessmertny.

A tsar has three sons. The sons are to find their wives by shooting arrows; where the arrow falls, each will find his wife. The arrow of the eldest lands in a noble's courtyard (in Russian, *boyar*), the second son's in a merchant's, and the third son's in a marsh. The youngest son, Ivan Tsarevich, retrieves his arrow and is compelled to marry the frog near whom it landed. Then follow the three tasks. The Russian and English versions differ with regard to the sequence of the tasks and the items involved:

Russian (Kolokol'tsev 1960): bread task, rug task, banquet task

English (Stevens 1967): shirt task, bread task, banquet task

Regardless of detail, the structure of the first two tasks is the same in both English and Russian: the tsar commands a task to be done. Ivan is dejected because a frog can't do the task. On the advice of his frog wife, Ivan goes to bed. The frog sheds her skin, turns into Princess Vasilisa, and calls her attendants to perform the task. In the morning, Ivan finds the completed product and takes it to the tsar, who prefers it over the products of the other two brides. In Stevens' version, the other wives send a spy during the baking task, but the frog outwits them. This element is also present in the translation by Guterman anthologized by Thompson, but not in Kolokol'tsev's Russian version.

Next, the tsar orders his sons to bring their wives to a banquet and ball. Ivan is dejected again at the thought of showing up with a frog, but the frog tells him to go alone, saying she will follow. Ivan is taunted by his brothers and their wives. Finally, Princess Vasilisa (Vasilisa the Most Wise, Vasilisa Premudraya) arrives in splendor in a gold coach driven by six (in Stevens' version, white) horses, accompanied by thunder. The guests eat and drink. Vasilisa pours wine into her left sleeve and swan bones into her right. The other wives see this and imitate her. The ball commences, and as Vasilisa dances, she waves her left hand and creates a lake in the hall. She waves her right hand and swans appear on the lake. The other wives try to do the same, but spill wine on the guests. The bones fly out of their sleeves, one into the eye of the tsar. Angry, the tsar then chases the two wives out.

In the meantime, Ivan returns home and burns the frog skin. In the Russian version his wife says, "If only you had waited a little (in Stevens, three days more) I'd have been yours forever. But now, farewell. Search for me beyond the three times nine lands, in the thirtieth kingdom, with Koshchey Bessmertny [Koshchey the Deathless]."<sup>2</sup> The numbers in Russian are not in everyday language, but in fairy-tale style. Stevens' and Guterman's versions are essentially the same, but Guterman has "thrice ninth land, in the thrice tenth kingdom." Details at the end of the scene also differ slightly: in Russian the wife changes into a swan and flies off; in Stevens' English version she changes into a cuckoo and flies away, and in Guterman's English translation she simply vanishes.

Ivan looks for her and meets an old man who explains the curse. Vasilisa was turned into a frog (in Stevens, for three years) by her father who was jealous of her cleverness. The old man gives Ivan a ball with instructions to follow it wherever it rolls. While following the ball, Ivan comes upon and nearly kills the following: a bear, a drake, a hare, and a pike, each of whom says, "spare me, and I will be of help to you." The ball leads Ivan to Baba Yaga, who helps him by explaining how to track and defeat Koshchey Bessmertny. The death of Koshchey Bessmertny is located on the point of a needle, the needle is in an egg, the egg is in a duck, the duck is in a hare, the hare is in a chest, the chest is in an oak tree, and Koshchey carefully guards the tree. Baba Yaga gives Ivan directions to the tree.

Ivan finds the tree. Suddenly, a bear uproots the tree, and a chest falls from it and breaks open. A hare runs from the chest, and a second hare overtakes and tears up the first. A duck flies out of the shredded

---

<sup>2</sup> All translations from Russian texts are by the authors.

rabbit. A drake hits the duck, who lays an egg, which drops into the sea. A pike swims up with an egg in its mouth. Ivan breaks the egg, takes the needle out, and breaks off the point. Koshchey Bessmertny then dies. Ivan goes to Koshchey Bessmertny's palace, retrieves Vasilisa, and takes her home.

### Further Research with the Marks Family

Approximately one month after the first recording session with Keet Yaanaayí, Nora Dauenhauer held a second session with her mother, Seigeigei, Emma Marks, who recalled the following additional details, but who did not retell the story:

—People ridiculed Yuwaan Gagéets for marrying the frog.

—The girl stirred ashes into her cake mix.

—Her parting words are, “You won't see my little tracks again.”

On the basis of these details, we can possibly reinstate the baking and sewing tasks in the Tlingit prototype. Because of the mention of ashes, we might also posit the existence of a spy motif. Because people ridiculed Yuwaan, we can safely assume that the wedding and the ball were separated in time, and that the sewing and baking tasks likely intervene. The sewing task probably came first, and the frog-bride's success motivated the other wives to send spies to watch her bake. Seigeigei's mention of Yuwaan's being ridiculed suggests that his bride may still have been in frog form. This would further align the Tlingit prototype with the Russian version. It is still unclear how the parting words in the second session relate to the enigmatic metal shoes in the first. The metal shoes may be a clue of some sort or a challenge of the impossible task.

Keet Yaanaayí's version shares with the Russian language version the following components: the arrow sequence, the frog bride, the magic at the ball, Ivan's burning the frog skin, the bride's resulting departure, and Baba Yaga. We should note that in the Tlingit story Baba Yaga is not mentioned by name, but her function is filled by the elderly woman who helps Ivan. Also, some details of the frog-bride differ; for example, Keet Yaanaayí collapses the wedding and the ball and has the frog turn into a maiden before the wedding rather than after. But again, we must remember that Keet Yaanaayí had not heard the story in at least ten or fifteen years, and he had not been given sufficient time to refresh his memory.

From the second interview came suggestions of sewing and baking tasks, and through them the possibility of reconstructing a Tlingit prototype more similar to the Russian. The possibility remains that further incidents

might be recalled by other tradition bearers, but as of the present writing the Tlingit version lacks the two animal sequences in which Ivan first spares, then is helped by, the bear, drake, hare, and pike. The presence and death of Koshchey Bessmertny are also absent in Tlingit, as is the character of the tsar, although Yuwaan is identified in the opening line as a young Russian nobleman.

The Tlingit version adds two and possibly three motifs not found in the Russian. The metal shoes and bubble-boat are exclusively Tlingit, and at the end of his narration, Keet Yaanaayí suggests that Yuwaan may have gone to the land of the frog people to retrieve his bride.

We could note here that the version in Thompson's collection translated by Guterman also lacks Koshchey Bessmertny as a character, but his function is fulfilled by a rival suitor who pursues the couple as they flee, but who ultimately fails to overtake Ivan and his bride (Thompson 1968:93-97). This version, like Stevens', has spies in the bread task sequence but lacks the old man with the ball sequence, the animal sequence, and the animal helpers. There are three old women in three huts, the bride being with the third, who changes her into a spindle and her dress into gold thread upon the arrival of Ivan; Ivan then finds the key to the thread and spindle box and retrieves his bride by following the advice of the second old woman. The couple flees on a magic carpet pursued by the suitor.

Keet Yaanaayí's version is Tlingitized in some obvious ways. The wine and swans become duck soup and mallards, for example. At the structural level, the Tlingit version follows a common pattern in Tlingit oral literature: the protagonist insults another form of life and then must marry it, the marriage usually resulting in the acquisition of wisdom and spirit power though often at the cost of one's life (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987). A more rigorous analysis of the structures of the Tlingit and Russian stories may well disclose more subtle adaptations. Such a study is impossible at the present writing because a complete Tlingit prototype as told repeatedly by Shkaḵwul.aat has not yet been reconstructed from the memories of those tradition bearers who in the 1970s had not heard the story in ten or twenty years (and now, in the 1990s, thirty or forty years). Such a comparison would, however, provide a "laboratory situation" for experimenting with folklore theory, such as testing Propp's theories on a story of Russian origin prior to running a Proppian analysis of indigenous Tlingit material, and of other Tlingit stories such as the story of the Cannibal Giant, Raven stories, and bear stories that are shared with neighboring groups (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987).

### Further Research in the Tlingit Community

The position of “Yuwaan Gagéets” in the Tlingit repertoire remains enigmatic. The story was remembered by all who lived in the household with Shkaxwul.aat (Annie Marks), who was one of the principal storytellers in the family for many years. The older generations were entertained by and the younger generations raised on her stories, and Gagéets is remembered as one of her personal favorites. Our next task was to explore how widespread the story was in Tlingit oral tradition beyond the Marks family. We soon learned that in the mid-1970s the story was virtually unknown outside the family. The name Yuwaan Gagéets was recognized by some older tradition bearers in Hoonah, for example, but none could remember the story. Most other elders had never heard the name. The remarkable exceptions are discussed below.

Regardless of minor details, the story is definitely of Russian origin and most likely entered the Tlingit repertoire either by direct contact with the Russians or possibly through intermediate contact with Aleuts or Creoles. There are two probable routes of migration to Shkaxwul.aat in Juneau. One is through her brother-in-law, a native of Sitka, who moved to Juneau. He was himself Presbyterian, but could have been exposed to the story in Sitka. The second route is through the Orthodox Church in Juneau. Shkaxwul.aat was a member of the Orthodox Church and active in church affairs, including choir. Orthodoxy was the first Christian religion introduced in Alaska; it became indigenized and remains strong in many communities. Many Tlingits, whether now still Orthodox or not, remain proud of this historical connection with Russian culture, just as many Russians feel a special attachment to Alaska.<sup>3</sup>

It can never be determined if the version learned by Shkaxwul.aat came directly from oral tradition, or from printed sources in Russian or English. If printed, the source was almost certainly told to and not read by her, especially if in Russian. At any rate, the tale was transmitted by her orally in Tlingit.

We kept asking if others knew the story. In December 1975, further research was conducted with Kaasgéiy (Susie James), an eighty-six year old tradition bearer from Sitka. No new details of the plot were obtained, but the interview with Kaasgéiy verified a number of aspects of the tale. Kaasgéiy knew the story, but, like the other tradition bearers, could not remember the ending. But more than plot verification, the example of

---

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1994 and Kan forthcoming.

Kaasgéiy was revealing and provided more evidence with theoretical implications.

Like Willie and Anny Marks, Kaasgéiy was both Orthodox and Chookaneidí (a clan of the Eagle moiety). Significantly, she was the first person whom we had located outside the immediate family of Shkaḵwul.aat (Annie Marks) who knew the story. Of equal importance, she was of the same clan and religion as Shkaḵwul.aat. In part, this confirmed our suspicion that persons likely to know the story would be among the older generation Orthodox from Sitka. But Kaasgéiy's clan affiliation cast a whole new light on the problem, and a fascinating (though tentative) pattern of distribution began to emerge.

The story was known up to that point of our research only by members of the Chookaneidí clan who were also Orthodox or who were raised in the Orthodox Church. (Seigeigei is not Chookaneidí but was married to a Chookaneidí, and was the sister-in-law of Shkaḵwul.aat.) Traditional Tlingit marriage is based on exogamy and requires that a person marry into the "opposite" moiety and not within the same moiety. Emma Marks is of the Raven moiety and Lukaax.ádi clan. Children follow the maternal line; thus Nora Marks Dauenhauer and her siblings are all of the Raven moiety and Lukaax.ádi clan.<sup>4</sup> Those older tradition bearers in Hoonah who recognized the name "Gagéets" but did not know the story also had a long affiliation with the Orthodox Church and the Chookaneidí clan. Hoonah is traditionally an Orthodox village, and the Chookaneidí, who retreated to Hoonah from Glacier Bay when the ice advanced, have been a predominant clan there for over 200 years. The Chookaneidí have also had a documented historical presence in Sitka since the beginning of the Russian period (c. 1800); but, even though they had a clan house there, they have never been a populous and politically predominant clan in Sitka.

This Orthodox-Chookaneidí distribution pattern was tentative, but we had reached the point of diminishing returns on our inquiries about the story. As part of our continuing search for further information on the Gagéets story, Richard Dauenhauer read earlier versions of this paper at three conferences in Alaska: first at the Alaska Humanities Forum Conference in Sitka (December 1975), then at the Third Alaskan Anthropology Conference (Anchorage, March 1976), and later in 1976 at the Northwest Coast Conference at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. In the Anchorage audience, a teenage Tlingit girl commented that her grandmother from Yakutat used to tell a story of

---

<sup>4</sup> For more on Tlingit social structure and its connection to Tlingit literature, see Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987, 1990, and 1994.

acknowledged Russian origin about a man named “Gaagee.” Yakutat had much Russian contact in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and intermittent Orthodox contact into the early twentieth century. We were not in a situation at the time to follow up on this new lead, and the grandmother is no longer alive. But as far as we could tell, the story was no longer in any tradition bearer’s active repertoire, and was in the memory of only three, all of whom were of Orthodox and Chookaneidí affiliation. The evidence of Kaasgéiy expanded the distribution pattern of the story from one immediate family to the clan level. We began to entertain the possibility that Gagéets was, or was perceived as, a Chookaneidí story. At the present writing, the precise roles and interaction of family, clan, and religion in the tale acquisition and distribution remain unclear.

### Robert Zuboff

The next episode in the continuing research mystery of “Yuwaan Gagéets” was written (literally and figuratively) by yet another team of collaborators—the Tlingit elder Robert Zuboff of Angoon and the linguists Constance Naish and Gillian Story of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Wycliffe Bible Translators.<sup>5</sup> Naish and Story had worked with Robert Zuboff and other Tlingit elders on linguistic research, designing a popular orthography for Tlingit, writing instructional materials for Tlingit literacy, and translating scripture into Tlingit. To aid in their linguistic analysis, they elicited traditional stories and ethnographic texts, especially from Robert Zuboff and George Betts. Richard Dauenhauer had sent Naish and Story an earlier working draft of the present paper, and we received the following reply on May 21, 1976:

Dear Dick and Nora,

Please excuse a hurried typing of what we have found that we have of the Yuwaan Gagéets story. . . . I’ve read your paper and very much enjoyed the reinforcement of what you were telling me. Maybe Bob’s telling of it will open up some other useful leads and even serve to locate some others who know it. . . . Greetings from us both,

Gill.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Wycliffe Bible Translators are essentially the same group of linguists with two separate affiliations, each dedicated to different practical applications. The Summer Institute of Linguistics is the secular organization and works with training in linguistics, and Wycliffe Bible Translators is the religious organization, dedicated to Bible translating.

Enclosed were two more versions of the Gagéets story, one an English telling by Robert Zuboff, undated, but estimated by Gillian to be from around 1959 or 1960, the other a dictation in Tlingit dated January 22, 1963, in Angoon. The Tlingit text transcribed by Naish and Story along with an English translation by Nora Dauenhauer are included as an appendix to this paper. Zuboff's English version is presented below. The arrangement here into short lines and breath units is our own, and is based on our own reading of the text, but with a general sense of Robert Zuboff's style from having worked with other stories by him (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987). We generally listen to the tape recording and use a line turning to represent a pause in delivery. In this case, tapes were no longer extant and Robert Zuboff had died two years earlier, so we were forced to reconstruct hypothetical line turnings both in English and in Tlingit.

Married to a Frog  
 told in English by Robert Zuboff  
 around 1959-60  
 transcribed by Constance Naish and Gillian Story

Yoowan Googeets  
 is the youngest brother  
 of all his brothers.  
 They were Russian—very religious.  
 He was always praying as a little boy—he wants a wife.  
 One day he was playing in a field,  
 shooting his arrow,  
 and he shot way far out  
 and found a little frog  
 had got hold of it.  
 The frog refused to give it back unless he married her.  
 He didn't want to,  
 but finally the little frog won  
 and had Yoowan for her husband.

One day Yoowan's father was having a big party.  
 Little Frog said, "You can go to the party.  
 I'll stay behind  
 and if I come I'll be on a young horse  
 and with lots of bells.  
 You'll hear me come.  
 Where I sit I want mallard duck soup in my dish  
 and I want a duck bone in there too."  
 So when she came in,



she was the prettiest girl in the whole world.  
 She came on a horse with bells.  
 Yoowan looked all around  
 and found her skin  
 and he grabbed it and threw it in the stove  
 and burned it up.  
 She came home  
 and found she had lost her frog skin.  
 She said, "I'll leave you for good  
 and I don't want ever to see you."  
 She left  
 and he was real sad  
 and he began to cry.  
 He went over to his wife's sister and said,  
 "I want my wife."  
 She said,  
 "She doesn't want you—  
 when you burned her skin up  
 you hurt her pretty much.  
 If I use you for a plate  
 and let her eat out of you,  
 she'll change her mind."  
 That's what happened,  
 and while she was eating,  
 the older sister mentioned,  
 "I just wish Yoowan was eating with us."  
 The younger sister got to thinking about it  
 and she changed her mind.  
 Then she and Yoowan went way up on a lake  
 and lived happily.  
 Nobody heard any more about them.

The Zuboff version is unique in the plate motif, the horse with bells, and in the "happily ever after" ending. Finding the story in the repertoire of Robert Zuboff was exciting, but in retrospect not surprising, for many reasons. Robert Zuboff was among the most eclectic tradition bearers with whom we have worked: he was Orthodox, with Russian ancestry and cultural connections. On the other hand, he was of the Raven moiety, whereas all of our other storytellers to date had been Eagle and Chookaneidí. Clearly, our hypothesis about the clan connection was no longer valid, but the Orthodox and Russian thesis remains—though not at all certain. This may be the end of the search. We have found no other versions in twenty years of research, although we have by no means asked every living Tlingit elder.

### Linguistic Borrowing: Gagéets and Muromets

The name Yuwaan Gagéets is not of Tlingit origin and raises interesting problems. Linguistic evidence would suggest that it derives from Muromets, the great Russian *bylina* (verse epic) hero, rather than from Tsarevich, the stock character of the (prose narrative) fairy tale or *volshebnaya skazka* genre. The investigation of the name is both linguistic and literary. We will first look at the linguistic considerations before exploring Ilya Muromets and the question of the epic hero in the prose narrative fairy tale tradition.

The Tlingit language has no bilabials or labio-dentals—no “p,” “b,” “f,” or “v.” “M” appears only as a dialect variation of “w.” Also, there is no “r,” and “l” appears only as a dialect variation of “n.” An “m” is normally transferred into Tlingit as a “w,” as evidenced in these borrowed words.

machine	=	<i>washéen</i>
watchman	=	<i>wáachwaan</i>
commissioner	=	<i>kawishan</i>

English and Russian “r” are usually transferred as “n:”

rum	=	<i>naaw</i>
<i>krest’</i>	=	<i>kanéist</i> (cross)

Some Russian bilabials have been transferred as Tlingit “w:”

<i>batyushka</i>	=	<i>wáadooshka</i> (priest)
------------------	---	----------------------------

But it is also common for foreign bilabial sounds to be transferred as a Tlingit velar:

<i>pivo</i>	=	<i>géewaa</i> (beer)
peanuts	=	<i>gwéelats</i>
molasses	=	<i>ganáashish</i>
<i>la table</i>	=	<i>nadáakw</i> (table)
<i>le pretre</i>	=	<i>nakwnéit</i> (priest)

Also, in English words spoken with a Tlingit accent, bilabials are commonly realized as velars. Thus “tip” becomes “tick,” and “helicopter” becomes “helicoockter” or “henicoockten.”

Tlingit does have initial and final “ts” and “ch.” Therefore, we could expect to find the following transfers:

Tsarevich	=	Tsaneiwich
-----------	---	------------

Muromets = Gunagets

The most convincing argument for deriving Gagéets from Muromets remains in the formula of a Russian series of two bilabials and a final “ts” paralleling a Tlingit series of two velars and a final “ts.” Because all consonants in the Russian except the final “ts” are foreign to Tlingit, it is conceivable that the “r” could have been dropped. Moreover, a series of three open syllables is unstable in Tlingit, so that the dropping of the middle syllable of the original Russian is consistent with patterns of Tlingit speech rhythm.

Underlying form: gu- na- geets  
 Consonant drops: gu- a- geets  
 Vowel lengthens: ga- a- geets (Marks)  
                           or go- o- geets (Zuboff).

To derive Yuwaan from Ilya is more difficult, as it would seem infinitely closer to Ivan. It seems almost certain that the names were switched in Tlingit. There does, however, exist the remote possibility that the Tlingit did indeed derive Yuwaan from Ilya by metathesis or by somehow changing the morpheme boundaries in the borrowing process. This adaptation is common. For example, the English word “study” is perceived in Tlingit grammar as consisting of a stem (“-tudy”) and an “s” classifier, so that the perfective becomes “wudzidádi.” The morphemes are:

wu	=	perfective marker
Ø	=	subject pronoun
dzi	=	appropriate form of the “s” classifier
dádi	=	the verb stem.

It is therefore remotely possible, but highly unlikely and not linguistically convincing, that the final “n” of Yuwaan derives from the initial “m” of Muromets.

Also possible, but equally unconvincing if we seek a linguistic answer rather than a simple switching of names, is that the Russian “l” of Ilya was perceived as Tlingit “n.” “L” exists in some Tlingit dialects as a substitute for “n,” so the equation is normal. Consider the following loan words:

dollar	=	<i>daanaa</i>
gold	=	<i>goon.</i>

If this is the case, after “l” is replaced by “n,” the word contains three vowel sounds: “i,” “y,” and “a,” which may have somehow metathesized into

Yuwaan. This is highly unlikely, and linguistic explanation should not be produced like a rabbit out of a hat. It seems more likely that Yuwaan, a Tlingit version of Ivan, was simply substituted for and not derived from Ilya. The choice may have been influenced by the name Ivan Tsarevich, or more probably, the name Ivan is better known than and fits the Russian stereotype better than Ilya.

### Folklore Borrowing: Gagéets and Muromets

If, indeed, Gagéets derives from Tsarevich, then there is no need to search further; but on the hypothesis that it may derive from Muromets, there are two possibilities: that the names were mixed in Tlingit tradition, or that the Russian oral source of the fairy tale has Muromets rather than Tsarevich as the main character. There is literary as well as linguistic evidence for Gagéets deriving from Muromets. On linguistic grounds, we posit that if the hero of the Russian fairy tale that passed into Tlingit oral tradition were named Tsarevich, the name would have been transferred as Tsanéiwich. The Tlingit name Gagéets, however, suggests a Russian source with Muromets as the main character. The logical literary evidence would be a *volshbnaya skazka* of the Frog Princess with Muromets as the hero.

Ilya Muromets does in fact exist in the fairy tale tradition. A. M. Astakhova writes that “tales about Ilya Muromets are very diverse in content, character, and origin” (1958:502).<sup>6</sup> Some of these tales are simply *bylinas* told in prose while others combine *bylina* plots and motifs with those characteristic of fairy tales. Finally, there are pure fairy tale plots with *bylina* heroes such as Muromets as the main character. In other words, fairy tales are told using the heroes, or names of heroes, of the epic genre. It is this category in which we are most interested. Discussing as an example the story of Ilya Muromets and the Dragon (or Snake), Astakhova writes that, “the text is an excellent example of the riveting to the name of Ilya Muromets a tale plot with the characteristic attributes of a fairy tale” (1958:507). Astakhova also provides a bibliography of collections of fairy tales about Ilya Muromets and notes that they have not yet been sufficiently researched in Russian folklore and in the folklore of the peoples of the Soviet Union (503).

---

<sup>6</sup> Translations in this section of Astakhova 1958, Pomerantseva 1966, and Matveeva and Leonova 1993 are by Richard Dauenhauer.

Soviet essays on folklore support the possibility of a Muromets version of the Frog Princess. Pomerantseva, for example, writes (1966:157):

To the fairy tales it is also possible to relate the so-called heroic tales (*bogatyrskie skazki*), that is, tales about the *bylina* heroes—Ilya Muromets, Sadko, Dunaj Ivanovich. In all of these tales magic personages and magic situations are present. . . . All this brings tales about heroes together with fairy tales.

Recent Soviet and post-Soviet Russian scholarship on the genre reconfirms the findings of the 1950s and 1960s regarding the existence in Siberia of fairy tales with characters from the epic genre. The English edition of Afanas'ev's collection has a prose version of "Ilya Muromets and the Dragon" (1945:569-75). We do not have the original at hand, so we do not know if it is originally prose or epic verse. In their introduction to a recent Russian Academy of Sciences edition of Russian fairy tales from Siberia, collectors R. P. Matveeva and T. G. Leonova note that "Siberian fairy tales partially owe their epic style, subjects, and poetics to Siberian *bylinas*. The tales often use phraseology characteristic of *bylinas*" (1993:345).

Therefore, although as of this writing we have not located an actual Russian version of the Frog Princess story with Muromets as the main character, it seems reasonable on the basis of the evidence (Astakhova 1958, Nikiforov 1965, Pomerantseva 1966, Matveeva and Leonova 1993) to assume that such may exist somewhere in print and must have certainly existed in oral circulation. Moreover, from Tlingit evidence, it seems almost certain that the form of the Russian fairy tale that reached Sitka was not the standard version as commonly anthologized with Tsarevich as the hero, but was a variant with Muromets. If this theory is correct, it would extend the range of the Russian variant and tale to the New World.

### **Folklore Borrowing as a Collaborative Act**

Traditionally, the Tlingit were relatively uninfluenced by non-Indian oral traditions, and "Yuwaan Gagéets" is the first tale clearly of European origin that we have found to date. The adaptation of Christianity has greatly influenced Tlingit thought and the accompanying worldview, as is reflected in Tlingit stories that attempt to synthesize Christian and traditional views. While we have found much syncretism, even to the

extent of parallelling the Tlingit social structure with the Pentateuch, the borrowing of a given, distinctly identifiable European folktale is rare.

There was, on the other hand, much trading of oral tradition among the Tlingit and adjacent Indian groups to the south and in the Interior. Such trading is reflected in the Tlingit repertoire. The Lukaa<sub>x</sub>.ádi clan, for example, sings a number of trade songs in Athabaskan and Tsimshian. In prose narrative, such similarities, in whole tales and in motifs, abound so that migration and influence are difficult if not impossible to trace. Stories of the Cannibal Giant, the Woman Who Married the Bear, and many episodes of the Raven cycle are shared by the Tlingit and their neighbors.

The story of "Yuwaan Gagéets," however, is clearly of Russian origin, and remains one of the very few clearly non-Indian borrowings directly taken into Tlingit oral tradition and kept by storytellers as a Russian story. But its influence was marginal, and its position precarious at best. There are several explanations for this. One explanation is that Gagéets does not fit into the Tlingit social structure in terms of origin or content, even though some motifs are comparable. It is not a crest story about clan progenitors or spirit acquisition (with attendant clan ownership, prerogatives, and custodianship), and it is not didactic. It has no narrative frame, and the closest thing to a genealogy is the identification of Gagéets as Russian by Willie Marks and Robert Zuboff. Thus from the opening line, the story is marked as foreign.

The rarity of European stories in the Tlingit repertoire suggests a connection between ownership and lack of widespread borrowing from groups with whom the Tlingit had not established a meaningful pattern of exchange. Meaningful exchanges must be commercially advantageous or at least mutually beneficial. Such patterns of exchange allow for transfer of prerogatives to stories and songs. In the absence of such intellectual and cultural reciprocity with the Europeans, it is probable that few stories were transmitted, and those that were remained alien. We can assume that at its peak of influence, "Yuwaan Gagéets" was probably of limited geographic or demographic distribution.

A second possible explanation for the marginal influence and precarious position of the story is the Tlingit attitude toward fiction and fantasy. Catherine McClellan writes that in theory, at least, no deliberately fictitious stories were ever told, although she detects a difference between the "drive toward standardization" in the Coastal Tlingit oral literature and the Interior groups' "delight in free variation" (1970:118, 123, 128). "Gagéets" appears to be an exception, but its limited distribution would seem to validate the theory of social constraints against deliberate fiction

and fantasy, in contrast to mythic and legendary accounts identified with specific places, clans, and genealogies.

To summarize thus far: it is difficult for a European folktale to be borrowed in the first place, possibly because of a lack of reciprocity in trade relations probably based in turn on the difference in social structures. (We are leaving economic, military, and colonial considerations out of the discussion for the present.) At any rate, the trade relationship that obtained with the adjacent Indians did not obtain with the Russians; therefore, folklore items could not be traded along with material goods. The difference in social structure and worldview may also explain the Tlingit lack of concern in general with foreign (i.e. non-Indian) material observed by McClellan and others.

Once borrowed, it would be difficult for a foreign tale to attain popularity and enter the mainstream of oral tradition because of the seeming constraints against fiction and fantasy. As far as we know, Gagéets thrived in a limited context only, among eclectic storytellers with Russian Orthodox connections. It is possible (but unlikely) that other storytellers perceived the Gagéets story as some kind of a clan story and refrained from telling it out of respect for clan ownership—in this case the story being viewed as a trade item. The constraint against fiction must ultimately derive from the social structure with its emphasis on clan identity. In Tlingit oral literature, most stories are clan-owned and record the accounts of one's progenitors and the clan's acquisition of spirit power. This would explain the preference for legend to the exclusion of folktale in Tlingit oral tradition (legend defined as true, and folktale as fiction).

The theoretical implications of the Gagéets study may also be observed in the visual arts. During the period of our earliest Gagéets research, Nathaniel Tarn raised the suggestion of "open" and "closed" artistic traditions in the visual arts, connecting this with heraldry and totemism (1975). We are oversimplifying here, but, for example, Eskimo art would be an "open" tradition, whereas Tlingit art would be "closed." That is, Tlingit visual art is open to experimentation and innovation only within a certain heraldic framework. This concept of the heraldic dimension of Tlingit art and oral tradition again returns us to social structure. All folk traditions seem to have an aesthetic expectation of new items, beyond which a given item is no longer recognizable or acceptable as folk art of the group (Toelken 1979). On a theoretical level, we might ask what connection—if any—exists worldwide between the social structure of a given group and its attitudes toward 1) legend vs. folktale (history vs. fantasy—non-fiction vs. fiction); 2) artistic experimentation and change ("open" vs. "closed"); and 3) folklore borrowing.

For example, the European experience shows how easily folktales transcend political frontiers and language barriers. But how would they transcend barriers of social structure? Unless we are grossly oversimplifying, Europeans would seem to share a common concept of social structure that allowed for widespread tale migration. Despite social classes and varying concepts of household groups, kings and peasants alike would share a common concept of aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on. In this way tale migration situations would be more easily established, and the stories transmitted would not be alien to the social structure even if unfamiliar in plot. Such stories would not easily have been transmitted to the Tlingit, who differed radically in social structure from all immigrant groups—Russians, Americans, Norwegians, and Europeans in general, as well as Filipinos, Chinese, and Asians in general. There was no reciprocity in oral literature, and therefore no tale migration despite proximity and intermarriage. In sharp contrast, this lack of reciprocity is not the case with food. Tlingit has adopted from Russian and Asian cuisine, and many of the immigrant families adapted to indigenous Tlingit foods and their preparation. However, the oral traditions of each group remained alien to the other. In contrast Russian oral traditions influenced Pacific Gulf Yupik (Sugcestun or Chugach Eskimo) folklore. Another contrast to the Tlingit-Russian relationship is the similarity of Tlingit verbal and visual art to other Northwest Coast verbal and visual folk art, and the mutual borrowing that occurred. The social structures are similar, even though the languages are different.

This lack of understanding continues: non-Tlingit Alaskans (Whites, Filipinos, Eskimos) in general cannot appreciate Tlingit stories without some training. Whites for example, often treat Tlingit legends as fairy tales and do not understand the rules of ownership and transmission. Whites tend to view Native oral tradition as simple children's stories and treat the literature accordingly; such treatment is viewed by the Tlingit as racism and abuse. Conversely, Tlingit seem to have no place in their system for European folktales, but, interestingly enough, they do borrow extensively from European *legend*, especially religious legends of the Old Testament.

This paper is still very much a report of work in progress, although little progress has been made in twenty years, and we have probably reached the point of diminishing returns. We set the Gagéets story aside to work with major genres and classics of Tlingit oral literature (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987, 1990, 1994). As we resume the search for "Yuwaan Gagéets," we find that we have little new to add. We are still searching for more versions of the story among the Tlingit and in Russian and Siberian folklore studies; likewise, the theoretical conclusions presented here are



tentative, and simply indicate the direction of our present thought. The dynamics of folklore borrowing on the Northwest Coast are oversimplified in the present paper. It is clear that there was much borrowing among the Tlingit and their neighbors. It should theoretically follow that this abundant interchange of folklore is accompanied by a great similarity in social structure. Thus, despite the differences in language, a folklore reciprocity would be possible and the Northwest Coast situation, when self-contained, would be analogous to such reciprocity in Europe. All of these theories need further research.

However it was learned, "Yuwaan Gagéets" remains in the final analysis an example of a personal story within two families, and a family story within a culture. It is a tiny and shaky monument to pure fantasy and irrelevance, a small vestige of a vast personal repertoire. Above all, it is a tribute to the memories of some of the most eclectic storytellers of Tlingit tradition, men and women who loved new stories, and who loved to tell them.

*Juneau, Alaska*

### References

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Aarne 1928                        | Antti Aarne. <i>The Types of the Folk-Tale: A Classification and Bibliography</i> . Trans. and expanded by Stith Thompson. New York: Burt Franklin. Rpt. 1971. |
| Afnas'ev 1945                     | Aleksandr Afanas'ev. <i>Russian Fairy Tales</i> . Trans. by Norbert Guterman. New York: Pantheon Books, Random House. Rpt. 1973.                               |
| Astakhova 1958                    | Anna Mikhailovna Astakhova. <i>Ilya Muromets</i> . Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR.  |
| Dauenhauer and<br>Dauenhauer 1987 | Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard L. Dauenhauer. <i>Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives</i> . Seattle: University of Washington Press.           |
| Dauenhauer and<br>Dauenhauer 1990 | _____. <i>Haa Tuvunáagu Yís, for Healing Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory</i> . Seattle: University of Washington Press.  |
| Dauenhauer and<br>Dauenhauer 1994 | _____. <i>Haa Kusteeyí, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories</i> . Seattle: University of Washington Press.   |

- Kan forthcoming                    Sergei Kan. *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity through Two Centuries*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Kolokol'tsev 1960                    Nikolai Vladimirovich Kolokol'tsev. *Literaturnoe Chtenie na Russkom Yazyke: Khrestomatiya dlya VI Klassa Nerusskikh Shkol*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Uchebno-Pedagogicheskoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Prosveshcheniya RSFSR.
- Matveeva and Leonova 1993        R.P. Matveeva and T.G. Leonova. *Russkie Skazki Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka: Volshebnye, O Zhivotnykh*. Novosibirsk: Nauka.
- McClellan 1970                    Catharine McClellan. "Indian Stories About the First Whites in Northwestern America." In *Ethnohistory in Southwestern Alaska and Southern Yukon: Method and Content*. Ed. by Margaret Lantis. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. pp. 103-34.
- Nikiforov 1965                    A.I. Nikiforov "Skazka, ee bytovanie i nositeli." In *Russkaya Fol'kloristika: Khrestomatiya dlya Vuzov*. Ed. by S.I. Mints and E.V. Pomerantseva. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vysshaya Shkola.
- Pomerantseva 1966                Erna Vasil'evna Pomerantseva. "Skazki." In *Russkoe Narodne Tvorchestvo*. Ed. by P. Bogatyrev. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vysshaya Shkola. pp. 137-73.
- Stevens 1967                    H.C. Stevens. *Russian Folk Tales*. London: Hamlyn.
- Tarn 1975                    Nathaniel Tarn. "The Heraldic Vision: A Cognitive Model for Ethnopoetics." Paper read at the Ethnopoetics Symposium, Center for Twentieth Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, April 1975.
- Thompson 1968                    Stith Thompson, comp. *One Hundred Favorite Folktales*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Toelken 1979                    Barre Toelken. *The Dynamics of Folklore*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Appendix 1A: Tlingit Text of Willie Marks  
 Yuwaan Gagéets  
 Told by Willie Marks  
 Haines, Alaska, October 5, 1974  
 Transcribed by Nora Marks Dauenhauer

Yuwaan Gagéets yóo duwasáakw wé káa.	
Du keek' hás	
du hunxw hás áwé akgwasháa.	
Yá Anóoshi aan yátx'i áwé	
wé ku.oo yu.a.	5
Áwé yá hu kwá hél du shát sákw koostí.	
Áwé wé du húnxw hásch kwá kaawashóok.	
Aatlein at shooqx wududliyéx,	
yoo l du shát sákw koosteeyí.	
Áwé sáks áwé át yei s anasneich,	10
has at t'úkt.	
L dakát át has at'úkt.	
Waa nanéi sáwé wooch keekx' kéi has akawjit'úk.	
Át góot áwé du aayí,	
xíxch'ích áwé satáx'.	15
Anáatx áwé yóox aklaxeet	
wé xíxch'.	
Yá du chooneidí astáx'.	
Hél yóo awudlákkw.	
Áwé yóodei kei akawlixít.	20
Yóo kei wdzigít.	
"Daat sákw sáyá isatáx' chooneidí,	
ch'a daax'oon lax'oosk'í?"	
tláakw adaayaká.	
Tle akát seiwax'ákw.	25
Neil góot áwé—gwáa!	
ch'ú shóogoo wé xíxch' gwáa wé gé	
du shayeidí kát áa.	
Tlél adaat tooshtí.	
Ch'a át áa, hél wáa sá ash daa uné hu tsú.	30
Ách áwé tle at kuhaa áwé wé wedding	
du hunxw hás, has akgwasháa,	
hu ku.aa wes tlél du shát sákw koostí.	
Aagáa áwé tlél aax kuwustée wé xíxch'.	
Gwáa!	35
Wáa sá kawahayi shaawát áyá du xánt hán?	
Daa sá oowayáa?	
"Xat geesháat áyá,"	
yéi gíyá ash yawsikaa.	
Ách áwé tle góok.	40
Tlél tsu kúxdei yóo wdatee.	

Aan woo.aat, tlé yú weddingdéi aan woo.aat. Tle <u>kaa waakgáa</u> wootee, hu tsú tle. Áwé yóo l'éix̄ yaa yagaxéex, 45 aagáa áwé <u>kaa waksheeyix'</u> yéi adaané. Wé du jin tóodei ayawsixaa wé gáaxw héeni, a s'aagí tsú héinax̄ á. Aagáa áwé yóo awsineí 50 wé a héeni áa yéi yateeyi aa á áwés át déin, wé t'áa digiygé. Wé héinax̄ aanax̄ du jin tóonax̄ <u>ku.aa</u> wés wé kindachoonit yóot akawlináash, aa wsíkee. 55 Du at góogoo áwé. Tle ch'a a guwanáax̄ yaa nastéeni teen áwé yéi tuwdisháat <u>ka</u> awsikoo xíxch'ix̄ sateeyí wé káach. Ách áwé néildei wjixeex 60 wé a kinak.ádi káx̄. Aagáa kujéil. Ch'u aagáa <u>kujeilí</u> áwé akáx̄ <u>kuwajeil</u> wé shayeit tayeex' . Áwé tlé sdoox tóot aawaxích. 65 Yan shushxéén wé weddingdax̄ neil góot wé shaawát, ash x'eiwawóos', "Goosú ax̄ kinak.ádi?" "Tlél xwasakú," yóo áwé yawaḵaa. Aagáa <u>kushée</u> . 70 Awsiteen wé sdoox tóodei. Ch'u shóogoo gwáa wé géi aadei kaaxadí yé, ch'u shúgú xíxch' áwé wé kél't'. Ch'a yei sú áwú, awsiteen. Ách áwé 75 yéi yaawaḵaa, "I náḵ <u>kḵwagoot</u> . Tle wáa yei kuwáat' dei sá, wáa yei kuwáat' dei sá ax̄ eegáa <u>keesheeyí</u> , tlél xat yakgeedlaaḵ, 80 tsu gayéis' téel yilayeix̄í i x'óos yís." Wudulyeix̄í ch'a aan tlél du x'óos yís wududliyex̄. Aan áwé gunéi uwagút. Tlél awuskú goodéi sá yaa nagúdi, koogéiyi. 85 Waa nanéi sáwé akáx̄ <u>koowashee</u> . Shawat shaanákw áwé, hít aya.óo. Hítk' akáx̄ <u>koowashee</u> .
--

“Wáa sá keeyanóok?” aan akanéek. “Aḵ shát áyá aḵ náḵ kei wjixíx.”	90
Gwál a saayí shákdéi awsikóo. Ash een akaawaneek, “Yáadu hú.” Tle yóo ash yawsikaa tle. “Yóot gaawx’ ási yáax kooḵ, yáax kuteen.”	95
“Yak’éi!” “Áx’ yaḵ kaawagaa wé shawat shaanákw xán. Ash een akaawaneek, “Haadéi yaa kunatín.”	100
A yayeet áwé hán. Héidei ashunatáan áwé x’awool wé shaawát. Ash yát awdligén. Tlé kuḵ wujixíx tle.	105
Tle tsu góot aa aandéi kei wjixíx wé shaawát. Tle a itḵ woogoot. Kúḵdlaa, áwé yaakwx awliyéx. Héen xuká át kawlis’ees.	110
Akáx koowashee tsu, ayaanadlaak dé. Ayaawadlaak.	

**Appendix 1B: English Translation of Willie Marks  
Yuwaan Gagéets  
Told by Willie Marks  
Haines, Alaska, October 5, 1974  
Translated by Nora Marks Dauenhauer**

Yuwaan Gagéets was the name of that man. His younger brothers, his older brothers were going to be married. They were Russian nobility so they say.	5
As for him, there was no woman for him to marry. His older brothers laughed at him. They made him the laughingstock, that he didn’t have someone for a wife. They carried bows, they shot their arrows.	10
They shot at everything. At one point, they competed shooting their arrows up and away. When he went to get his arrow, a frog had it in its jaws.	15

He tried to shove  
 the frog off.  
 It was biting on his arrow.  
 He couldn't retrieve it.  
 Then he shoved it aside. 20  
 It fell off the arrow.  
 "Why are you biting on my arrow,  
 you four-legged creature?"  
 he scolded it.  
 Then he forgot about it. 25  
 When he got home—hey!  
 it was the very same frog, wasn't it,  
 squatting on his pillow.  
 He didn't pay attention to it.  
 It just sat there, he didn't do anything to it either. 30  
 This was why, when time came for the wedding,  
 when his older brothers were getting married,  
 he didn't have anyone for a wife.  
 About that time the frog disappeared from here.  
 Hey! 35  
 Who was this woman standing next to him?  
 How did she look?  
 "I'm here for you to marry,"  
 perhaps is what she said.  
 That's why he went ahead. 40  
 He didn't hesitate.  
 He went with her,  
 he went with her to the wedding.  
 Then everyone approved of her too.  
 As the dance was taking place 45  
 is when she performed for the party.  
 She poured some duck soup  
 down her sleeve,  
 the bone she dropped into the other sleeve.  
 This is when she swept her arm wide, 50  
 the one with the soup in it,  
 and a pond formed there,  
 in the middle of the table.  
 And from the other sleeve  
 she shook out several mallards that landed in the pond. 55  
 This was her talent.  
 As soon as he separated from her  
 the man  
 thought about it and he knew she was a frog.  
 This is why he ran home 60  
 for her coat.  
 He searched for it.

While he was searching for it he found it  
under a pillow.

Then he threw it into the stove. 65

After the wedding party ended,  
when the woman had come home,  
she asked him, "Where is my coat?"  
"I don't know," he said.

She started searching for it. 70

She saw it in the stove.  
It was still the same coat.  
The ashes were in a form of a frog.  
It was still there; she saw it.

This was why 75

she said,  
"I'm leaving you forever.  
No matter how long,  
no matter how long you search for me,  
you won't find me, 80

even if you make metal shoes."  
When they made them, they weren't made for his feet.  
He set out with them.

He didn't know where he was going,  
he went without direction. 85

At one point he found someone.  
It was a little old woman, she owned a house.  
he found the little house.  
"What are you doing?" she asked him.

"My wife ran off on me." 90

Perhaps he knew her name.  
"She's here," she told him.  
This is what she said to him.  
"She comes along here at a certain time,  
she travels along here." 95

"Good!"  
He waited for a little while by the little old woman.  
She told him,  
"She's coming in."

He stood there in her path. 100

The woman  
was opening the door.  
She saw his face.  
She ran back.

Then the woman 105

ran off to another village.  
Then he followed her.  
She went into a boat that was a bubble.  
It blew along on the surface of the water.

He searched again,  
until at long last he got her,  
he got her.

110

**Appendix 2A: Tlingit Text of Robert Zuboff  
Yuwaan Gagéets<sup>7</sup>  
dictated by Robert Zuboff  
Angoon, Alaska, January 22, 1963  
transcribed by Constance Naish and Gillian Story  
(line turnings reconstructed by Nora and Richard Dauenhauer)**

Anóoshi sh kálneegí áyá.  
Yá du hunxw hás yax ayawlisháa.  
A áyá, hú ku.aa, a káa x'eidagáx'ch awushaayí.  
Ch'a tlákw gaaw áyá sh káa x'eidagáx'ch agashaayít.  
Át ku.aa áyá nagútx; 5  
at t'úkt yéi adaané.  
A áyá, wáa nanées áyá, naalee yéidei áyá kei awshit'úk yá du chooneidí.  
Át góot áyá xíxch'ích áyá satáx' yá du chooneidí.  
Tlei át x'eiwatán,  
“Haa, yá ax chooneidí, ax jeet satán ax chooneidí.” 10  
“Tléil aadéi.”  
Ch'u tlei, “Xat yeeshaayí tsáa i jeedéi kkwasatáan yá chooneit.”  
Yuwaan yéi x'ayaká, “Tléil aadéi i kashaayi yé.”  
“Haa, daat yís sáwé a káax' x'eedagáx'x ageeshaayít?”  
“Haa, yak'éi dei. 15  
I kkwasháa; ax shátx i guxsatéé.”  
Á áwé aan neil áat áwé wé xíxch'ik',  
du húnxw hásch áwé yáa kanashóok Yuwaan.  
Yuwaan ku.aa xíxch' aawashaa.  
Tayeedéi has na.áat áwé, 20  
wé xíxch'ik' Yuwaan leedéx't áwé áa ganúkch.  
X'oon ooxí sáyá a ítdáx,  
yá du wóo áyá yei kukgwa.éex'.  
Aagáa áwé sakwnéin gwéil áwé yaa ndool.át  
yá du yitshátxi yán jeex. 25  
Cake áyá gaxdoos.ée.  
Hú tsú du jeet aa wdudzitée yá sakwnéin gwéil,  
yá xíxch'i jeet.

---

<sup>7</sup> We have edited the Tlingit text of Robert Zuboff's dictation slightly to reflect current orthographic conventions. Most noticeably, many of his vowels are phonetically long, but we have standardized them as (phonemically) short, other than in verb stems. Thus, Yoowaan becomes Yuwaan. His character's last name is Yoowaan Googeets, and we have standardized to Gagéets.



As.ée yá xíxch'ích ch'a yá du wóoch aadéi daa ya <sub>ka</sub> yé yá <sub>x</sub> . Yan as.ée áyá yá cake, góon héenich áyá akawsheexít yá ayanáak. Ch'a ldakát yá du yitshátx'i yán aayée yáaná <sub>x</sub> áyá wook'éi yá góonch akawooshxeedí. Át koohaa áyá, kugáa yaa anagút ya ku.éex' yís. Yéi x'aya <sub>ka</sub> yá xíxch', “Áa yéi k <sub>k</sub> wanook yé x'wán, kindachoonéit áa x <sub>d</sub> us.ee a héeni teen.” Du x <sub>u</sub> x yéi adaaya <sub>ka</sub> , “Ch'u tlei kgeegóot. Dei wáa xat yaa kxagút <sub>ni</sub> sáwé, gaaw yátx'i ga <sub>x</sub> du.á <sub>x</sub> ch. Ch'a ldakát gaaw <sub>x</sub> gu <sub>x</sub> satée yá a kát yaa n <sub>x</sub> agút gaawdáan yádi.” Aa neil góot áwé, ch'u tlei áyú tóoná <sub>x</sub> akdeegán, kúná <sub>x</sub> áyá góos' toodá <sub>x</sub> wudzigeet. Ch'a ldakát shaklagéiyi át tlei du ée x'awduwaná <sub>k</sub> . Yá áa yei kgwaanuk yé ch'a chooch x'ayá <sub>x</sub> kindachoonéit áa wududzi.ée a héeni teen, aax yoo x'atánk. Sh tóogaa datée yoo x'atánk yéi adaanei nóok áwé, shee yéiná <sub>x</sub> aaná <sub>x</sub> du jín yóo anasnée, ch'u tlei wé nadáakw káx' áwé woaxeex wé áak'w. Héiná <sub>x</sub> aaná <sub>x</sub> du jín yá s'át' yeenaana <sub>x</sub> á aaná <sub>x</sub> yóo anasnée, yá aawaxayi kindachoonéit ch'u tlei yá áak'w kát wusihoo. Á áyá tla <sub>x</sub> kúná <sub>k</sub> áyá áyá shakligéi yá du shát. Du tuwáx' áyá sigóo ch'a tleix yéi teeyí. Ách áyá du shát shookát áyá gáant wujixix neildéi. Aagáa áyá awsiteen yá du shát doogú. A tóoda <sub>x</sub> yóot uwagút. Ch'a tleix yéi ngatéet áyá, yá du shát doogú aax aawasháat. Ganaltáat aawagíx'. Du ítná <sub>x</sub> áyá neil uwagút yá du shát. Aagáa kushée yá du doogú, a x'anawóos' áwé du x <sub>u</sub> x,	30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75
---	--

- “A<sub>x</sub> doogú gé tléil yisateen?”  
 “Aaá,  
 wéidáx̄ x̄waatee,  
 ganaltáat x̄waagíx̄.”  
 Ch'u tlei áwé kawdigaax̄. 80  
 “I x̄sax̄ánin.  
 Ch'u tlei yáa yeedátx̄' yándeí shukkwatáan.  
 Tléil áyá a<sub>x</sub> tuwáa i wushgóo.  
 I góot.”  
 Yáat yakáan áyá, 85  
 gáant wujix̄ix̄ du shatxi hás x̄oodéi.  
 Cha ayáx̄ sh kalneek du shatxi hás téen.  
 Tléil tsu du tuwáa ushgóo a x̄áni kux̄ wudagoodí.  
 Yuwaan ku.aa áyá tléil yan tuwoojaakw.  
 Kúx̄dei áyá asayahéi yá du shát. 90  
 Ách áyá woogoot Yuwaan ku.aa  
 tlei yá du shát shátxi x̄ánt áyá,  
 x̄ánt áyá uwagút.  
 “Kúx̄dei áyá sax̄aahéi  
 yá a<sub>x</sub> shát.” 95  
 “Tléik'.  
 I wlitl'éet x̄á;  
 tléil áwé du tuwáx̄' eeshgú.  
 I eedéi áwé sh tóon wuditee.”  
 “Haa, ch'a aan x̄asix̄án wé a<sub>x</sub> shát.” 100  
 “Daatx̄ sgi s'e gé ix̄wliyéx̄?  
 S'íx̄' k'áatl'x̄  
 gwáa i kalayeix̄.  
 Gwál i kaax̄ atxa núkni,  
 ch'a góot yéidei ngwaatee du tundatáani.” 105  
 Ayáx̄ áwé s'íx̄' k'áatl'x̄ wududliyéx̄.  
 Du shátxi hásch áwé woo.éex̄' atx̄á yís.  
 Nadáakw yaax̄x̄' wududzinook.  
 Ayáx̄ áwé ch'u tlei a káa wduwaxwéin  
 yá s'íx̄' kúnáx̄ yak'éiyi atx̄á. 110  
 Kúnáx̄ yándeí yaa at nax̄éini,  
 a yeenéé kawoohaayí,  
 aagáa áwé yéi yaawa<sub>k</sub>aa wé shátxi aa,  
 “Yeedát s'é ch'as Yuwaan tsú haa x̄'éitx̄ atx̄á.  
 A x̄áawé du éex̄ tux̄dataan. 115  
 Yeedát s'é ch'as héit.”  
 Aagáa áwé sh daatx̄ naná akawdzix̄eex̄ wé s'íx̄';  
 Yuwaanx̄ woositee.  
 Ch'u tlei ch'a tleix̄ x̄ix̄ch'i kwáani x̄oox̄' yéi wootee  
 yá Yuwaan. 120

**Appendix 2B: English Translation of Robert Zuboff  
Yuwaan Gagéets  
dictated (in Tlingit) by Robert Zuboff  
Angoon, January 22, 1963  
transcribed in Tlingit by Constance Naish and Gillian Story  
translated into English by Nora Dauenhauer**

This is a Russian story.  
 Each of his older brothers were married.  
 He would pray to be married.  
 He prayed all of the time to be married.  
 He would go around 5  
 hunting with his bow and arrow.  
 At one point he shot his arrow far.  
 When he got there, a frog had his arrow in its mouth.  
 And he asked it,  
 "Give me my arrow, hand over my arrow." 10  
 "No way."  
 It added, "Only if you marry me I will give you your arrow."  
 Yuwaan said, "I can't marry you."  
 "Well, why do you pray to marry?"  
 "Well, it's okay then, 15  
 I'll marry you; you'll be my wife."  
 When he took that little frog home,  
 his older brothers kept on laughing at Yuwaan.  
 But Yuwaan married the frog.  
 When they went to bed, 20  
 the frog would sit at Yuwaan's neck.  
 How many nights following,  
 her father-in-law was going to invite people.  
 This is when flour sacks were being distributed  
 among his daughters-in-law. 25  
 They were to bake cakes.  
 They also gave a sack of flour  
 to the frog.  
 The frog baked  
 the way her father-in-law was saying to her. 30  
 When she finished baking this cake,  
 she wrote in liquid gold on the top of it.  
 Better than all of his daughters-in-laws'  
 was the one inscribed with liquid gold.  
 When time came, someone was going along inviting guests. 35  
 The frog said,  
 "Set a place for me.  
 Cook some mallard with soup."  
 The frog said to her husband,  
 "You will go ahead of me. 40

When I'm coming down,  
 you will hear little bells.  
 There will be little bells all over the pony  
 when I set out on it."

When she came in 45  
 she was translucent,  
 she surely fell from the clouds.  
 She was more beautiful than anything.  
 At the place where she was going to sit,  
 mallards had been cooked 50  
 in a soup,  
 just like she wanted.  
 When she was beginning to make  
 her thank-you speeches,  
 when she waved her right arm, 55  
 a lake fell on the table.  
 When she waved her other arm,  
 the left side,  
 the mallard she had eaten  
 was swimming on the lake. 60  
 And you know,  
 this wife of his was very cute.  
 He wanted her to remain  
 the way she was for always.  
 This was why 65  
 he ran home ahead of his wife.  
 This was when he saw his wife's skin.  
 She had taken it off.  
 So that she would remain the same for always,  
 he grabbed his wife's skin. 70  
 He threw it in the fire.  
 This wife of his  
 got home after him.  
 Then, when she was searching for her skin  
 she asked him, this husband of hers, 75  
 "Did you see my skin?"  
 "Yes,  
 I took it from there.  
 I threw it in the fire."  
 Then she began to cry. 80  
 "I loved you  
 But now it's over.  
 I don't want you.  
 Get lost."  
 As she said this, 85  
 she ran out to her older sisters.  
 She told this to her older sisters.

She didn't want to go back to him.  
 But Yuwaan couldn't settle his thoughts.  
 He wanted this wife of his back. 90  
 That's why Yuwaan left,  
 and went straight  
 to his wife's older sisters,  
 "I want her back again,  
 this wife of mine." 95  
 "No!  
 she left you, you see,  
 she doesn't want you.  
 She was hurt by you."  
 "Well, even then I love her." 100  
 "What can I make you into?  
 Shall I make you  
 into a plate?  
 Then maybe when she eats off of you,  
 her feelings will change." 105  
 Accordingly, he was made into a plate.  
 Her older sisters invited her to eat.  
 They sat her at a table.  
 Very nice food was spooned out  
 onto this plate. 110  
 As she was finishing her food,  
 when she was halfway through,  
 is when the older sister said,  
 "If only Yuwaan were eating with us too.  
 I keep thinking of him. 115  
 If only he were here."  
 That's when the plate became real.  
 It became Yuwaan.  
 Yuwaan remained  
 with the Frog people forever.

# Reading Martha Lamont's Crow Story Today

Marya Moses and Toby C. S. Langen

## Translator's Introduction to the Text<sup>1</sup>

In the early years of this century, probably about 1915, a white teenager dropped out of high school and went to work in a logging camp, an event that eventually led to the Crow story told by Martha Lamont that is printed here. Because of a hearing disability, the young man, Leon Metcalf, had run into trouble in a high school in Marysville, Washington, a town bordering the Tulalip Indian Reservation. In the logging camp Leon met some Snohomish Indian loggers, who took him under their wing, advised him, and taught him some of their language and something about their culture. In time, fortified by this care, Leon returned to school, finished college as a music major, toured the country as a member of a circus band, earned a masters degree, and became band director at Pacific Lutheran College (now University) in Seattle.

While he was at Pacific Lutheran, Leon became interested in the work of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and took classes in fieldwork methods through the Summer Institute of Linguistics. In the early fifties, remembering the kindness of his Snohomish friends forty years earlier, he returned to Tulalip to record texts in what he and many others thought was a dying language: Lushootseed, the closely related group of tongues belonging to the Native peoples whose ancestral lands extend from the mountains to the salt water along the eastern shore of Puget Sound between Bellingham and Olympia. He worked chiefly with Martha Lamont, a Snohomish elder who was a generation older than he.

Martha was married to Levi Lamont, who had been a logger and may have known Leon as a youth. At any rate, they enjoyed each other's company, as the laughter and high-jinks on Leon's tape-recordings testify.

---

<sup>1</sup> Translator's Introduction to the Text, Translation, and Notes to the Texts were written by Toby C. S. Langen. Commentary on the Story was written by Marya Moses and Toby Langen as indicated in the text.

Martha and Levi lived on an unpaved road known as Dogs' Alley. (Not only did the Lamonts take in strays, but their neighbors also had numerous dogs. These, along with roosters and chickens, ran in and out through the Lamonts' ever-open door and were immortalized on the tapes not only of Leon Metcalf, but also of Thom Hess, who worked with the Lamonts ten years later.)

Leon, who did not speak Lushootseed and could recognize only isolated words, recorded perhaps a dozen stories from Martha Lamont. Talking about this work with an interviewer in 1986, he said he thought that Mrs. Lamont had recited her stories by rote. Perhaps the rapidity of her delivery kept him from questioning this belief; but we know from versions of the same stories told to Thom Hess a decade later that Mrs. Lamont, speaking rapidly and making excellent use of Lushootseed rhetorical and narrative convention, was improvising. Leon did not pay the people with whom he worked at Tulalip and other reservations; instead, he brought food, chopped wood, and provided transportation in his Volkswagen.<sup>2</sup> It is said that Leon's chopping wood and bringing food actually saved the life of one elder with whom he was working.

Martha Lamont died in 1973 at the age of 93; Leon, in 1993 at the age of 94.

When Marya Moses and I presented our commentary on "Crow, with her Seagull Slaves, Looks for a Husband" at a 1993 conference, a Lushootseed elder criticized the equation of *siʔab* status with the possession of wealth that is suggested in the following passage: "[He was a man of] very high standing—a good deal of money he must have had, a good deal of money. . . ." Because the story itself and not our commentary connected wealth with *siʔab* status, at that time we could not accommodate the elder's discomfort. However, I do respond to it now by including a few words of explanation about *siʔab* here. *Siʔab* has often been translated as "upper class;" but, whereas in English "upper class" sometimes means nothing more than "rich," in Lushootseed culture *siʔab* assumes the employment in everyday behavior of wisdom, a thoughtfulness that precludes haste, benevolent manners, and self-control under provocation. In this system, wealth results from extensive knowledge—both practical and spiritual—and from good relations with a large number of people and is best understood as a by-product rather than a prerequisite of *siʔab* status. There does not seem

---

<sup>2</sup> Stories tell that he was a health enthusiast at the time, and the peanut-butter-and-alfalfa-sprout sandwiches he brought produced considerable cross-cultural strain. The Volkswagen is also legendary because Leon, over six feet tall, spent nights in it when he was on the reservation.

to be the antagonism between practical and spiritual in the Lushootseed system of values that there is in the European.

In Martha Lamont's telling of this story, however, wealth is the only characteristic of *siʔab* that is mentioned explicitly. The father of the groom is Prized Shell, whose Indian name, *xwčítqs*, is the name of a shell used as an item of exchange long ago. Levi Lamont thought it was somewhat like an oyster (Bates et al. 1994:65); others have identified it as the shell of a very large northern clam, so valuable that two such shells could buy a slave (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930:29). In a version of this story in which the bride and groom are human (Hatch 1940), the bride is named *cisʔuləḥ*, "Dentalium Woman," *dentalium* being another shell used as an exchange item. In that story, the groom (named, like the groom in Martha's story, Whyaliwa) is identified as "Mother of Pearl." It is a story of the marriage of money to money. None of these valued shells were consumable and thus they lasted longer and traveled farther than items that were consumed. This story may be addressing the relative value of consumable wealth and monetary wealth, an issue that may have extended to a consideration of the meaning of *siʔab* in that context. "This story" in the above sentence refers to the entire assemblage of stories about this bride and groom, not strictly the single rendering of Martha's that we concern ourselves with here. Martha's story stands in a parodic relation to the assemblage as a whole, and the symbolic shorthand of equating *siʔab* with "wealthy" becomes in her telling intentional impropriety.

It has often been noted that translation is interpretation. My presentation of the printed text of this story seeks to emphasize the parallel truth that decisions made concerning native-language transcription are also interpretive. Thus, the Lushootseed text is formatted in a style different from that of the English. In the Lushootseed text, a new line begins where a pause in the taped performance is preceded by falling intonation; double spaces mark pauses of more than two seconds or the occurrence of a pause accompanied by a change of delivery style (for instance, from straightforward style to declamatory, chanting, or otherwise marked style). Italics identify words and phrases spoken in characterized voices (for Crow or the seagulls), in chant form (characteristic of content that implies spiritual valence), or in a form that emphasizes the innate rhythms and internal echoes of the phrases being spoken (characteristic of formulaic portions of the story). My purpose was not to distinguish among these forms of speech, but merely to indicate the amount of specialized speech in Mrs. Lamont's storytelling.

The most obvious difference in appearance between the Lushootseed text and the English is that the English is more copiously lineated. This is



because Mrs. Lamont marked episode boundaries often by intonation rather than by pause, and the differences between the ways the Lushootseed and English pages are filled is simply an acknowledgement that I cannot represent the sound of her voice on paper.

The English text, unlike the Lushootseed, is formatted to emphasize structural, not acoustic, features: spacing indicates not pauses, but episode boundaries and bridge passages between episodes; indentation calls attention to circular or concentric figuration and variations on episodic patterns. Italics in the English version mark features of the storytelling, such as formulaic passages and rhythmically heightened delivery, that cannot be fully conveyed in English via diction. Crow's voice on the other hand, can be, and is, characterized in English by her diction and so is not italicized. These functions of the formatting are explained more fully in the notes.

For the last two decades, much discussion about the production of printed versions of works from Native American oral tradition has revolved around two points of view: that of Dennis Tedlock, whose scripting provides typographical cues about such acoustical data as length of pause, volume of sound, and speed of delivery (e.g., 1971) and that of Dell Hymes, whose formatting reflects his analysis of narrative structure (e.g., 1977). For those readers who are interested in this discussion about text production, it may be well to point out here that I take neither side—or, perhaps more accurately, that I take parts of each side.

Both Tedlock and Hymes argue that their lineated texts indicate that they are transcribing poetry, not prose. Though each conveys in English characteristics of oral performance that elude the other, it needs to be noted that any such lineation is constructed not for purposes of storytelling but for purposes of transcription. It sometimes seems that lineation on the printed page is all that distinguishes some poetry from prose in modern English-language literature. But in verbal art (assuming for the sake of discussion that a distinction between "poetry" and "prose" were valid in the oral tradition under discussion, though this is not the case for Lushootsheed) cues signalling that distinction would have to be intelligible by ear, which means that if such cues were transferable in translation, they would be intelligible, to those familiar with the tradition, in a transcription without lineation.<sup>3</sup>

Another group of researchers of oral narrative, whose work is less often cited in the study of American Indian narrative than that of Tedlock

---

<sup>3</sup> One thinks of the scribes of Old English and Old Norse verse, who wrote from one edge of the vellum to the other, and of their readers, who had no trouble realizing qualities of verse in their reading aloud.

and Hymes, is the oral-formulaic school, whose inquiries stem from Milman Parry and Albert Lord's research on Homeric and South Slavic epic. Their formulations suggested to later scholars that storytellers may vary the degree to which their language is rhythmic, esoteric, idiomatic, formulaic, and so forth from one performance to the next, according to the demands not only of a particular performance, but of the tradition as a whole (Foley 1991:2-60). This awareness of register is very important in understanding characteristics of Martha Lamont's storytelling. In preparing the texts that follow, I have not treated Mrs. Lamont's utterance as poetry—though portions of it are certainly poetic—and I have tried to demonstrate that, though her narrative is structured, only portions of it are patterned. The acoustic features of performance (pause, intonation, speed, style of delivery) sometimes illuminate the structural features and sometimes obscure or even counterpoint them, and the difference in appearance between the Lushootseed text and its facing-page English version reflects this changing relation between narrative surface and depth.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Marya Moses spent many hours with me going over the transcript and the translation. Thom Hess and Dawn Bates have also devoted time to these projects. In addition, I was able to consult a transcription made by Vi Hilbert (1985b). The errors and infelicities that remain are my own, some of them a result of indecisiveness in the face of a story that is working on at least three vastly different levels at once. The story is recorded on Reel 38 of the Metcalf tapes in the collection of the Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum, and I thank the Museum for permission to transcribe. Laurel Sercombe, University of Washington Ethnomusicology Archivist, provided a sound-enhanced version of the tape that continues to be extremely helpful. I thank Dawn Bates for her careful review, not only of the English and Lushootseed texts of the story, but also of my part of the commentary and notes.

**ləbəq̄ix<sup>w</sup>q̄ix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?**  
**syəhub ?ə tsi səswix̄ab**

1. ?ista?əb tsi?it̄ ka?ka?
2. dx<sup>w</sup>qaləp tsi?it̄ ka?ka?
3. huy g<sup>w</sup>əl ?abs(s)tudəq tsi?ə? ka?ka? ?ə ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s.
4. huy? u?u<sup>x̄</sup>w tsi?it̄ stadəy? Xuabs̄cis̄cistx<sup>w</sup> dx<sup>w</sup>?al k<sup>w</sup>ədi? di?i? bəda? ?ə k<sup>w</sup>i x<sup>w</sup>çit̄qs.
5. si?ab.
6. cick<sup>w</sup> si?ab—qahaŋ talə g<sup>w</sup>əqahaŋ taləs
7. ti?ə? bəda? ?ə k<sup>w</sup>i x<sup>w</sup>çit̄qs.
8. x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə? ti sda? ?ə ti bəda? ?ə x<sup>w</sup>çit̄qs: x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.
9. huy cutəx<sup>w</sup> tsi?ə? ka?ka?, “Xuəbəx<sup>w</sup> čəd ?u?u<sup>x̄</sup>wəx<sup>w</sup>. x<sup>w</sup>i? g<sup>w</sup>əXu<sup>x̄</sup>ax̄tub ?ə k<sup>w</sup>i cədit̄. x<sup>w</sup>i? k<sup>w</sup>i g<sup>w</sup>at g<sup>w</sup>ək<sup>w</sup>əd<sup>w</sup>x<sup>w</sup>.”
10. huy ?u<sup>x̄</sup>wəx<sup>w</sup> tsi?ə? ka?ka? g<sup>w</sup>əl cutəbəx<sup>w</sup> cədit̄ dzəŋ k<sup>w</sup>i g<sup>w</sup>ək<sup>w</sup>əd<sup>w</sup>x<sup>w</sup> k<sup>w</sup>ədi? si?ab, tsə ka?ka?.
11. tu<sup>x̄</sup>w huy ?u?u<sup>x̄</sup>w ?ab(s)studəq ?ə tsi?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s.
12. q<sup>w</sup>ibicutəx<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? studəqs huy ?uluŋtubəx<sup>w</sup>—cick<sup>w</sup> ?uha?əlb ti?ə? swatix<sup>w</sup>təd.
13. dayayəx<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? ?acəc q̄ilbid ?ə tsə ka?ka? ti?ə? ləbik<sup>w</sup>əb.
14. huy ?ux<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup>, huy ?u?uluŋtəbəx<sup>w</sup> dx<sup>w</sup>?al ti?it̄ dx<sup>w</sup>ŋəc ti?ə? tudəx<sup>w</sup>çis̄cistx<sup>w</sup>s.
15. huy tiləx<sup>w</sup> ?uča?k<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? ?acəc, ti?ə? ?acəc, stəb x̄a?x̄alus; ləx̄alus, ?əx<sup>w</sup>liq̄<sup>w</sup>us ti?ə? x̄a?x̄alus.
16. huy taliləx<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? cədit̄ kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s stətudəqs.
17. taliləx<sup>w</sup>, g<sup>w</sup>əl ləçičit̄il—?əx̄ ləx̄alus ti?ə? ?acəc ləx<sup>w</sup>liq̄<sup>w</sup>us ti?ə? stubš.
18. ?əx<sup>w</sup>scutəb diŋ g<sup>w</sup>ədəx<sup>w</sup>x̄a<sup>x̄</sup>ildub ?ə tsi?ə? ka?ka?, g<sup>w</sup>a x<sup>w</sup>i? ləcədit̄.
19. huy cucutəx<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s: “X̄al mələli?, X̄al mələli?, ləli?, mələli?, mələli?!”

### Crow with Her Seagull Slaves Looks for a Husband

A Story Told by Martha Lamont  
Translated by Toby C. S. Langen

*<sup>1</sup>This is how it was with that Crow:  
<sup>2</sup>That Crow had never been married.*

<sup>3</sup>Now, she had some slaves who were seagulls.

<sup>4</sup>And this young lady Crow was going to go and get a certain person to be her husband, the son of someone named Prized Shell,

<sup>5</sup>A man of high standing in the community,

<sup>6</sup>Very high standing—a good deal of money he must have had, a good deal of money, <sup>7</sup>the son of Prized Shell.

<sup>8</sup>Whyaliwa was his name, the son of Prized Shell: Whyaliwa.

<sup>9</sup>So now Crow said, “I’d better get going. This man doesn’t seem to be in love with anyone, and no one has managed to get ahold of him yet.” <sup>10</sup>So now Crow goes around thinking of herself as just the person to get ahold of a wealthy man like this one.

<sup>11</sup>Anyway, her slave seagulls get going.

<sup>12</sup>The slaves get everything ready and then take her on her way over the water—

*Utterly calm was the sea*

*<sup>13</sup>Except for a little wash from Crow’s canoe.*

<sup>14</sup>So now they go, so now they’re taking her on her way over the water, toward her destination, the place where she’s going to find a husband.

<sup>15</sup>But now coming down toward the shore is this person, this Raccoon.

He’s marking his face, going along with his face painted, “Little Marked Face.”

<sup>16</sup>So Crow’s slave seagulls put in to shore;

<sup>17</sup>They’re putting in and getting a little closer—

He comes onto the beach marking his face, this man with the painted face. <sup>18</sup>He thinks of himself as just the person Crow might fall in love with—

but no, it won’t be him: <sup>19</sup>For the seagulls all call out: “*Once again, not the one, still not the one, not the one, not the one, not the one!*”

20. “*ča?g<sup>w</sup>ustx<sup>w</sup> ti?ə tə gədu?—cədit d<sup>z</sup>ət k<sup>w</sup> i cəx<sup>w</sup>udəx<sup>w</sup>ʔa, ʔəx<sup>w</sup>balg<sup>w</sup>usus!*”
21. *ti?əʔəx<sup>w</sup> ʃa?ʃalus ti?it ʔuq<sup>z</sup>atəb.*
22. *ʔu<sup>z</sup>x<sup>w</sup> bəhiwil tsi ka?ka? ləiilib.*
23. *liilib tsi?ə? ka?ka?:*
24. *ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal k<sup>w</sup> i bəda? ʔə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.*
25. “*bəfaliltx<sup>w</sup> ti! ʔacəc tudi? ʔuča?k<sup>w</sup>.”*
26. *ča?k<sup>w</sup> k<sup>w</sup>ədi? di?i? bəstab, sqig<sup>w</sup>əc, x<sup>w</sup>uʔələ?*
27. *huy g<sup>w</sup>əl bəcutəb ʔə ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s: “Xal mələli?, mələli?, mələli?, mələli?”*
28. “*čag<sup>w</sup>ustx<sup>w</sup> ti! bələli?. dit d<sup>z</sup>ət cəx<sup>w</sup>uʔəʃ tə gədu? ti dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔuča?k<sup>w</sup>s.”*
29. *bəʔu<sup>z</sup>x<sup>w</sup> ti?it, bəʔuluʔ:*
30. *ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal k<sup>w</sup> i bəda? ʔə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.*
31. *dit k<sup>w</sup> i bəsuča?k<sup>w</sup> ʔə ti?ə? bəscət<sup>w</sup>ədəx<sup>w</sup>.*
32. *ləsʃalabac ti?it scət<sup>w</sup>əd ʔə ti?ə? ləsha?lək<sup>w</sup>ił.*
33. *huy ʃalil; g<sup>w</sup>əl cut, “dit k<sup>w</sup>əda? stab tudi? ʔuk<sup>w</sup>it!”—*
34. *bək<sup>w</sup>it ti?it sʔušəbabdx<sup>w</sup> lətab, lədx<sup>w</sup>sčəg<sup>w</sup>asəb dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal tsi?ə? ka?ka?.*
35. *ʃal bəcutəb ʔə ti?ə? cədit kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s: “Xal mələli?, mələli?, mələli?”*
36. *huy ʃubəq<sup>z</sup>atəb ʔə tsi?ə? ka?ka? ti?ə? šʔušəbabdx<sup>w</sup> scət<sup>w</sup>əd ʔuk<sup>w</sup>ił  
lədx<sup>w</sup>sčəg<sup>w</sup>asəb.*
37. “*cədit d<sup>z</sup>ət k<sup>w</sup> i dəx<sup>w</sup>uʔu<sup>z</sup>x<sup>w</sup>s.”*
38. *huy bəhiwil tsi ka?ka?, bəiilib:*
39. *ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal k<sup>w</sup> i bəda? ʔə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.*
40. “*ʃaliltx<sup>w</sup> ti! ʔa tudi? bəʔuča?k<sup>w</sup>.”*
41. *bək<sup>w</sup>ił ti ʔacəc x<sup>w</sup>uʔələ?, stab, stiqaYu? x<sup>w</sup>uʔələ? ti?ə? bəʔuča?k<sup>w</sup>, ʃal  
bəha?ləg<sup>w</sup>əb—“Xal bələli? ti?it” bəcutcut ti?ə? studəq ʔə tsi?ə?  
ka?ka?, ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s,*
42. “*Xal mələli?, mələli?, mələli?” ʃəłti ʃux<sup>w</sup>isicut ti?ə? stətudəqs.*

20“Shove off, you slaves! Away from that bum—as if I’d come here on account of someone like him, with his smeared-up face!”

21It was Little Marked Face, now, who was getting insulted.

22*She went, went on ahead, this Crow, singing.*

23*She sang, this Crow:*

24“Crow is still making her way

Crow is still making her way

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

25“Put in again, you slaves! There’s someone over there down by the water.”

26He came toward the water, that—who was it, again?—Deer, I guess.

27And once again the seagulls call out the same thing: *Once again, not the one, not the one, not the one, not the one.”*

28“Shove off, you slaves! Still not the one. As if I’d come here just because that bum was down by the water!”

29*They went on, traveled on over the water:*

30“Crow is still making her way

Crow is still making her way

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

31There’s another person who’s come toward the water; this time now it’s Bear.

32That bear was wearing clothing of the finest as he came to the water’s edge.

33So she puts in to shore and says, “There’s someone or other over there who’s come to the water’s edge” —

34He, too, came to the water’s edge, that poor thing, wanting a wife and thinking of Crow.

35*Once again those seagulls called out the same thing: “Once again, not the one, not the one, not the one.”*

36So someone else was insulted by Crow in her usual way, this poor Bear who came to the water’s edge wanting a wife:

37“As if anybody would go and travel on account of someone like that!”

38*So she went on ahead, this Crow, went on singing:*

39“Crow is still making her way

Crow is still making her way

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

40“Put in, you slaves! There’s another one over there who’s come toward the water.”

41He came to the water’s edge, whoever this one was—Wolf, I guess, who was coming toward the water this time,

Once again a fine young man.

“*Once again, not the one,*” they all said, these slaves of Crow, these seagulls. 42“*Once again, not the one, not the one, not the one.*” The seagulls were sort of shaking themselves off, these slaves of hers.

43. *bə?uǰw, bəhiwil, bəʔilib tsi?it ka?ka?*
44. *ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?, ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?,  
dxw?al kwi bəda? ?ə xw ayaliwə?, xw ayaliwə?.*
45. *bəča?k w ti?ə? stab xw u?ələ? swəwa?, gʷəl Xubəcutəb ?ə ti?ə?  
kiyuuqʷs, “Xal mələli?, mələli?, mələli?” bə?uǰw ti?it, bə?uluʔ.*
46. *ǰwul lələli? ti?ə? ləča?k w, ?absčəgʷasəb əlgwə? dxw?al tsi?ə? ka?ka?,  
ləshiqʷabid həlgwə?.*
47. *ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?, ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?,  
dxw?al kwi bəda? ?ə xw ayaliwə?, xw ayaliwə?.*
48. *bəʔalil; bəʔiləb bəbu?qʷ w ti?ə? ?uča?k w, ha?ʔ ləʔiqʷ i? ti?ə? ləkʷi iǰəw.*
49. *yu? kʷədi? səsXalabac ?ə ti?ə? ləʔiqʷ i?.*
50. *Ducksəxʷ.*
51. *huy bəcutəb ?ə ti?ə? kiyuuqʷs, “Xal mələli?, mələli?, mələli?,  
mələli?”*
52. *bəčəgʷucut; bə?uǰw, bəʔilib tsi?it ka?ka?:*
53. *ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?, ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?,  
dxw?al kwi bəda? ?ə xw ayaliwə?, xw ayaliwə?.*
54. *bə?uǰw;*  
*bəča?k w ti?ə? ǰatǰatəxʷ.*
55. *ha?ʔ ?əsqʷib ti?ə? ǰatǰat; put ha?ʔ ti?ə? səsʔu?qʷs ?uləli?cut.*
56. *kʷi lə?absčəgʷas, diʔ dʔəʔ kʷi gʷəsXaX ?ə tsi?ə? ka?ka?.*
57. *xʷi: “Xal bələli?, bələli?, bələli?”*
58. *bə?uǰw, bəčəgʷucut.*
59. *“cədiʔ dʔəʔ kʷi cəxʷdəxʷ?a kʷi dəxʷ ?uča?k w ?ə tə ?əs?istə?”*
60. *bə?uǰw, bəhiwil, bəʔilib tsə ka?ka?:*
61. *ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?, ləbəqixwqixw kayayə?,  
dxw?al kwi bəda? ?ə xw ayaliwə?, xw ayaliwə?.*

<sup>43</sup>*She went on, on ahead, went on singing, that Crow:*

<sup>44</sup>*“Crow is still making her way*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

<sup>45</sup>Someone else came toward the water—Cougar, I guess—and as usual the seagulls said the same thing:

*“Once again not the one, not the one, not the one.”*

*They went on, went on their way over the water.*

<sup>46</sup>It was just a lot of different ones who were coming toward the water.

They wanted Crow for their wife, they had her on their minds.

<sup>47</sup>*“Crow is still making her way*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

<sup>48</sup>They put in again—

This time it's water birds who came toward the shore, beautiful Buffleheads who were coming to the water's edge.

<sup>49</sup>It was just gorgeous, what the Buffleheads were wearing. <sup>50</sup>(They are ducks.)

<sup>51</sup>But the seagulls said the same thing: “Once again, not the one, not the one, not the one, not the one.”

<sup>52</sup>They shoved themselves off again.

*She went on, went on singing, that Crow:*

<sup>53</sup>*“Crow is still making her way*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

<sup>54</sup>They went on.

It's Mallard now who's coming down this time.

<sup>55</sup>Very well turned out Mallard was; very lovely his little feathers looked as they changed colors.

<sup>56</sup>He came down to the water's edge

wanting a wife of his own, as if he would be the chosen one of Crow.

<sup>57</sup>Not him: “Once again, not the one, not the one, not the one.”

<sup>58</sup>They went on, they shoved off again: <sup>59</sup>“As if I was here on account of him! What reason could someone like that have for coming down to the water?”

<sup>60</sup>*Crow went on, on ahead, went on singing:*

<sup>61</sup>*“Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*



62. ča?k<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? ?acəc ʃək<sup>w</sup>aʃad.

63. yu? ha?ɬ ti?iɬ sʃalabac ?ə ti?iɬ ʃək<sup>w</sup>aʃad, hik<sup>w</sup> “ducks.”

64. hay g<sup>w</sup>əl bəcutcut ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s, “ʃal six<sup>w</sup> mələli?, mələli?, mələli?”

65. bəhiwil tsi?ə? ka?ka?, bəlib.

66. ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>?al k<sup>w</sup>i bəda? ?ə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.

67. bəča?k<sup>w</sup> six<sup>w</sup>, bələk<sup>w</sup>iɬ ʃix<sup>w</sup> ti?iɬ stab.

68. bələča?k<sup>w</sup> ti?iɬ stab.

69. x<sup>w</sup>u?ələ? ɬulac stab.

70. ?aʃalus, ?əsʃal ?əsʃad<sup>z</sup> ?ə ti?ə? ʃətti ti?ə? ?əsq<sup>w</sup>əq<sup>w</sup>il.

71. ɬalil; ʃ<sup>w</sup>i?: “bələli?” ʃal cutəb ?ə ti?ə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s.

72. “bələli?, ʃal bələli?, mələli?, mələli?” ʃətti ʃux<sup>w</sup>isicut ti?ə? studəq  
?ə tsi?ə? ka?ka?.

73. kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s.

74. bəhiwil, bə?uʃ<sup>w</sup>, bəlib tsi ka?ka?.

75. ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>?al k<sup>w</sup>i bəda? ?ə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.

76. bəɬalil; bələča?k<sup>w</sup> k<sup>w</sup>ədi? di? hik<sup>w</sup> bu?q<sup>w</sup>, x<sup>w</sup>u?ələ?, stab; ʃək<sup>w</sup>aʃad ?u  
stab—x<sup>w</sup>i? ləbəʃək<sup>w</sup>aʃad, diɬ ti?ə?—stab k<sup>w</sup>i ʃusda?ətəbs tə? hik<sup>w</sup>hik<sup>w</sup>,  
ti?ə? bəsbəq<sup>w</sup>a?; ?i, bək<sup>w</sup> stab diɬ ləča?k<sup>w</sup>.

77. diɬəx<sup>w</sup> ?uqʃatəbəx<sup>w</sup>. “cədiɬ d<sup>z</sup>ət k<sup>w</sup>i cəx<sup>w</sup>ubəsübəscisçistx<sup>w</sup> tə x<sup>w</sup>i?  
ləha?ɬ k<sup>w</sup>i bədəx<sup>w</sup>?učag<sup>w</sup>səbuɬs.

78. hiwil ti, hiqicut ti, bə?uʃ<sup>w</sup> čəɬ, bəhiwil!” bəlib six<sup>w</sup> ka?ka?.

79. ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayə?  
dx<sup>w</sup>?al k<sup>w</sup>i bəda? ?ə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwə?.

80. bələ?uʃ<sup>w</sup> six<sup>w</sup> g<sup>w</sup>əl bələtiləx<sup>w</sup> bələča?k<sup>w</sup> ti?ə? ?acəc s<sup>w</sup>uʃəbabdx<sup>w</sup> bu?q<sup>w</sup>  
stab.

81. iəiɬq<sup>w</sup>i? ?u; x<sup>w</sup>i? leiəiɬq<sup>w</sup>i? ti?ə? stab.

82. stab təʃusda?ətəbs ti?iɬ—?a?agi?.

83. ha?ɬ ti?ə? s<sup>w</sup>a?agi?, ?əsʃalabac ?ə ti?ə? ha?ɬ put ti?ə? ta?ə? ɬuq<sup>w</sup>s.

<sup>62</sup>This certain goose, a *χəkwaxad*, came toward the water.

<sup>63</sup>Real nice clothes this goose had (*χəkwaxad*, big ducks).

<sup>64</sup>And then the seagulls said again: "*Once more, like before, it's still not the one, not the one, not the one.*"

*<sup>65</sup>On she went, this Crow, on she sang:*

*<sup>66</sup>"Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa."*

<sup>67</sup>Once more, someone came toward the water, once more something was coming down to the shore; <sup>68</sup>this something was coming, <sup>69</sup>maybe it was Brant or something.

<sup>70</sup>He was decorated on his upper part, he had markings, he had a necklace, something white.

<sup>71</sup>They put in—

*"No, not the one,"* the seagulls said once more:

*<sup>72</sup>"Not the one, still not the one, not the one, not the one"—they were always kind of shaking themselves off, Crow's slaves.*

*(<sup>73</sup>After all, they were seagulls.)*

*<sup>74</sup>On she went, on she traveled,*

*On she sang, this Crow:*

*<sup>75</sup>"Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa."*

<sup>76</sup>They landed again—

Again someone over there was coming toward the water, some big water bird, Goose or something. (No, not Goose again, it was this—what's the name of that great big—) this Great Blue Heron and everything coming down toward the water. <sup>77</sup>That's who it was getting insulted now:

*"As if I'd be considering any of them for a husband, these good-for-nothings who keep coming toward the water to meet us! <sup>78</sup>Go on, you slaves—push off, let's travel!"*

*Crow went on again, singing again as before:*

*<sup>79</sup>"Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa."*

<sup>80</sup>They went on as before,

and at this moment, as before, there came down toward the water some poor duck. <sup>81</sup>Was it Bufflehead? No, not Bufflehead, this one. <sup>82</sup>What is the name of that, that—Oldsquaw!

<sup>83</sup>Oldsquaw was handsome, wearing clothes of the finest, especially with that feather of his.

84. ča?k<sup>w</sup> ləx<sup>w</sup>čəg<sup>w</sup>asəb dɔ<sup>w</sup>ʔal tsiʔə ka?kaʔ.
85. huy g<sup>w</sup>əl bəcutəb, “*ʔal bələliʔ, ʔal bələliʔ, ʔal bələliʔ,*” cutəb ʔə tiʔə? kiyuuq<sup>w</sup>s.
86. “hiwil ti! diʔ dʒəʔ cəx<sup>w</sup> dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔa tə ʔəsʔistəʔ k<sup>w</sup>i bədəx<sup>w</sup>ʔučaʔk<sup>w</sup>s ʔəx<sup>w</sup>gəlgəʔdət.”
87. *bəhiwil, bəlilib tsi ka?kaʔ:*
88. *ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayəʔ, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayəʔ*  
*dɔ<sup>w</sup>ʔal k<sup>w</sup>i bədaʔ ʔə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ.*
89. *bəʔuʔ<sup>w</sup>, bəhiwil tsi ka?kaʔ.*
90. tiləx<sup>w</sup> ʔučaʔk<sup>w</sup> tiʔə? bəstab.
91. g<sup>w</sup>ahawəx<sup>w</sup> diʔ tiʔə? bəsʔəq<sup>w</sup> tiʔə? bəʔučaʔk<sup>w</sup>.
92. ča?k<sup>w</sup> tiʔə? sʔəq<sup>w</sup>.
93. huy g<sup>w</sup>əl ləcutəb ʔə tsiʔə? cədiʔ:
94. “diʔa? tudi? ʔuk<sup>w</sup>iʔ. hiwil ti! ʔalil!” bəʔalil. diʔ bəsʔəq<sup>w</sup> hawəʔ.  
 “*ləliʔ, ʔal bələliʔ, mələliʔ, mələliʔ,*” cutəb tiʔə? sʔətudəqs.
95. huy g<sup>w</sup>əl ləčaʔk<sup>w</sup>.
96. “čag<sup>w</sup>us ti! diʔ dəx<sup>w</sup> cəx<sup>w</sup> dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔa ti ʔudx<sup>w</sup>ʔuq<sup>w</sup>ucutig<sup>w</sup>əd.
97. bələčayʔ k<sup>w</sup>i dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔučaʔk<sup>w</sup>s.
98. cədiʔ dʒəʔ k<sup>w</sup>i cəx<sup>w</sup>ubəʔuʔ<sup>w</sup>.”
99. *bəhiwil g<sup>w</sup>əl bəlilib:*
100. *ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayəʔ, ləbəqix<sup>w</sup>qix<sup>w</sup> kayayəʔ*  
*dɔ<sup>w</sup>ʔal k<sup>w</sup>i bədaʔ ʔə x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ, x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ.*
101. *hay bəhiwil tsi ka?kaʔ.*
102. diʔəx<sup>w</sup> k<sup>w</sup>i sʔəʔ ʔə tiʔiʔ ʔuk<sup>w</sup>iʔ.
103. *k<sup>w</sup>iʔəx<sup>w</sup> tudi? diʔ ʔə tiʔiʔ hik<sup>w</sup> qaʔ ʔalʔal tiʔiʔ dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔa ʔčils.*  
*hik<sup>w</sup>hik<sup>w</sup> ʔalʔal k<sup>w</sup>ədiʔ səshuys.*
104. haʔ ʔadʒəʔig<sup>w</sup>əd tiʔə? dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔa ʔə tiʔə? hawəʔ x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ.
105. huy g<sup>w</sup>əl ʔčil: x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ tiʔiʔ sdaʔ ʔə tiʔiʔ x<sup>w</sup>čitq<sup>s</sup>.
106. tiʔiʔ x<sup>w</sup>čitq<sup>s</sup> tiʔiʔ cədiʔ x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ hawəʔ tiʔiʔ sdaʔs.
107. stab k<sup>w</sup>i x<sup>w</sup>čitq<sup>s</sup>; haʔ siʔab “Pearl” x<sup>w</sup>uʔələʔ ʔal tiʔə? pəstəd.
108. hay ʔaliləx<sup>w</sup> k<sup>w</sup>aʔ.

<sup>84</sup>He gets closer to the water, wanting Crow for a wife.

<sup>85</sup>And then again, “*Still not the one, still not the one, still not the one,*” the seagulls said.

<sup>86</sup>“Go ahead, you slaves—as if I’m here for him, as if he’d have any reason to come down toward the water, with his mumble-mouth!”

<sup>87</sup>*She went on ahead, she went on singing, this Crow:*

<sup>88</sup>“*Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

<sup>89</sup>She traveled on, on ahead, this Crow.

<sup>90</sup>Just then, someone else came toward the water. <sup>91</sup>It turns out to be Beaver who has come down this time. <sup>92</sup>Beaver comes down toward the water.

<sup>93</sup>And Crow in the canoe is saying, <sup>94</sup>“There is someone over there who’s come to the shore. Go on, you slaves, land the canoe!” They land again:

it’s just Beaver, for goodness sake!

“*Not the one, still not the one, not the one, not the one,*” the seagulls all say.

<sup>95</sup>So then they’re putting out to deep water again.

<sup>96</sup>“Out to sea, you slaves! As if I’m here on account of him and his strapped-in guts! <sup>97</sup>Why should he go down toward the water, anyway?

<sup>98</sup>As if he’d be the one I’m traveling for!”

<sup>99</sup>*She went on ahead and went on singing:*

<sup>100</sup>“*Crow is still making her way,*

*Crow is still making her way*

*Toward the son of Whyaliwa, Whyaliwa.”*

<sup>101</sup>*Indeed, she went on ahead, this Crow.*

<sup>102</sup>Way, way over there, there was someone who had come to the water’s edge and was standing there. <sup>103</sup>He had come to the water’s edge over there, and at the place where he was standing, there was a large number of houses, big, big houses that had been built there.

<sup>104</sup>It is a beautiful spot, the place where he is, this man who really seems to be Whyaliwa.

<sup>105</sup>*And so they are arriving.*

Whyaliwa is the name of that Prized Shell, *xw̓c̓itqs*. <sup>106</sup>Prized Shell is who it is—Whyaliwa is really his name. (<sup>107</sup>What is *xw̓c̓itqs*—“Great and Noble Pearl,” maybe, in the white man’s language.)

<sup>108</sup>So they must be just about beaching the canoe now.

109. *cutcutəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ cədit studəqs: "niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə, niʔ tə." cutcutəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ kiyuuq<sup>ws</sup>; huy kəyitcutəx<sup>w</sup>.*
110. *huy k<sup>w</sup>iʔəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ ʔacəc cədit bədaʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ, x<sup>w</sup>çitq<sup>ws</sup>.*
111. *k<sup>w</sup>iʔəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔiʔ cədit.*
112. *haʔt stubš.*
113. *bədaʔ ʔə tiʔiʔ.*
114. *k<sup>w</sup>iʔəx<sup>w</sup> g<sup>w</sup>əl ləʔçil dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal tiʔəʔ ʔacəc ʔilg<sup>w</sup>iʔ. g<sup>w</sup>əl huy ʔaliltubəx<sup>w</sup> tsiʔəʔ kəʔkəʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ cədit studəqs. hay g<sup>w</sup>əl huy ʔəxtəbəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔəʔ cədit, ʔəxtəbəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔiʔ x<sup>w</sup>çitq<sup>ws</sup> tiʔiʔ q<sup>w</sup>astəduliçəʔ tuʔʔal tiʔəʔ qilʔid dx<sup>w</sup>ʔal tiʔiʔ ʔalʔal. hik<sup>w</sup> ʔalʔal g<sup>w</sup>əstabəb ʔalʔal tiʔiʔ ʔalʔal ʔə tiʔiʔ x<sup>w</sup>çitq<sup>ws</sup>.*
115. *hik<sup>w</sup> ʔudəx<sup>w</sup>uq<sup>w</sup>uʔq<sup>w</sup>uʔ.*
116. *huy siʔab.*
117. *ʔalil g<sup>w</sup>əl huy q<sup>w</sup>ibitəb tiʔəʔ kəʔkəʔ, g<sup>w</sup>əl hay ʔibəš. yəhawəx<sup>w</sup> liʔʔal tiʔiʔ cicalšaditəbəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔəʔ q<sup>w</sup>astəduliçəʔ, huy g<sup>w</sup>aʔ<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> əlg<sup>w</sup>əʔ.*
118. *g<sup>w</sup>aʔ<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> əlg<sup>w</sup>əʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ shuyg<sup>w</sup>ass.*
119. *šəšəg<sup>w</sup>əlaʔbitəbəx<sup>w</sup> tsiʔəʔ sʔušəbabdx<sup>w</sup> kəʔkəʔ g<sup>w</sup>əl ʔuʔ<sup>w</sup>tubəx<sup>w</sup>.*
120. *ləx<sup>w</sup>i k<sup>w</sup>icut tiʔəʔ sʔalabac ʔə tsiʔəʔ kəʔkəʔ. put ləg<sup>w</sup>iliçəb.*
121. *ʔuʔ<sup>w</sup> çubatub tsi kəʔkəʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ. huy diʔəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ tusʔəsbəlyiʔs tiʔəʔ ʔacəc x<sup>w</sup>ayaliwəʔ, bədaʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ ʔacəc x<sup>w</sup>çitq<sup>ws</sup>.*
122. *haʔt siʔab sqaqag<sup>w</sup>əʔ tiʔəʔ dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔaʔilex<sup>w</sup> ʔə tsiʔəʔ kəʔkəʔ.*
123. *ʔəshaʔəlbəx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ swatix<sup>w</sup>təd, put haʔt qəqil tiʔəʔ dəx<sup>w</sup>ʔuluʔ ʔə tsiʔəʔ kəʔkəʔ.*
124. *ʔ<sup>w</sup>uləx<sup>w</sup> tuʔaʔiləx<sup>w</sup>, huy tuʔəg<sup>w</sup>əlbəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔ ʔacəc tustətudəqs tsiʔiʔ kəʔkəʔ, huy ʔuhuyg<sup>w</sup>asəx<sup>w</sup>.*
125. *ʔuʔ<sup>w</sup>tubəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔəʔ dəx<sup>w</sup>q<sup>w</sup>uʔq<sup>w</sup>uʔəx<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔiʔ ʔaciʔtalbiç<sup>w</sup> ʔə tiʔiʔ hik<sup>w</sup> ʔalʔal ʔə tiʔəʔ siʔab dəx<sup>w</sup>içils.*
126. *huy g<sup>w</sup>əl sasaq<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ sʔušʔušəbabdx<sup>w</sup> kiyuuq<sup>ws</sup> studəqs.*

<sup>109</sup>Those slaves all said now, “That’s him! That’s him, that’s him, that’s him, that’s him, that’s him, that’s him, that’s him!” The seagulls all said it now, pretending to talk.

<sup>110</sup>So he comes to the shore now, this son of Whyaliwa, Prized Shell. <sup>111</sup>That man comes to the shore.

<sup>112</sup>He is a good man, <sup>113</sup>Prized Shell’s son.

<sup>114</sup>He comes to the shore now and gets to the very edge of the water.

And at that moment Crow is brought ashore by those slaves of hers.

And then there is spread out by this man, spread out by Prized Shell, this ceremonial weaving made of rare and costly wools, spread all the way from the canoe clear up to the house; a big house it must have been, the house of Prized Shell: <sup>115</sup>A big place where people could gather, <sup>116</sup>for he was an important man.

<sup>117</sup>They land and then Crow is made ready and then she walks.

She proceeds along the path where the weaving has been made, a carpet for her feet. So now they are walking together. <sup>118</sup>They are walking together, she and this fiance of hers.

<sup>119</sup>He took poor, wandering Crow’s arm and brought her with him. <sup>120</sup>Crow’s dress rustled; it shone.

<sup>121</sup>They went, he brought her up from shore.

So that was who she married, that Whyaliwa, son of Prized Shell, <sup>122</sup>a fine young man of good family at this place that Crow had come to.

<sup>123</sup>*Calm and bright was the world.*

*It was a beautiful day at this place that Crow had come to by water.*

<sup>124</sup>When she got to the place where Prized Shell’s house was, her slaves left her, because she was married now. <sup>125</sup>She was brought into the place where all the people were gathered, the big longhouse of this great man where she had arrived. <sup>126</sup>And then her poor little seagull slaves flew away.

127. dił tiʔəʔ ʃʷiqʷəqʷəqʷ ʔə tiʔəʔ kiʷuuqʷs tiʔiʔ dəxʷəsKədisəbs ʔə tsiʔəʔ  
KaʔKaʔ, dəxʷəshuyuds studəq.

128. tiʔiʔ ʃʷiqʷəqʷəqʷ gʷəl xʷiʔ kʷi shaʔts, ʔəshuyudəxʷ ʃub ʃʷul  
studəq. dił kiʷuuqʷs. dił tiʔəʔ sʃʷiqʷəqʷs. gʷəl tiʔəʔ səshuys  
ʃibəč gʷəl dił dəxʷəshuys siʔab ʔal tiʔiʔ sgʷ aʔs ʃəčs tiʔiʔ  
ʔəxʷscutəbs.

129. hay dił sšac ʔə tiʔiʔ tusbəscistxʷ ʔə tsi ʔacəc sʔušəbab dxʷ KaʔKaʔ.

130. ʔaliləxʷ tiʔəʔ ʔacəc siʔiʔab dəxʷhuygʷassəxʷ gʷəl huy  
tədəxʷqʷuʔqʷuʔəxʷ, tədəxʷəfədəxʷ ʔə tiʔiʔ ʔacitəlbixʷ; huy huygʷas  
tiʔəʔ siʔab bədaʔ ʔə tiʔəʔ xʷayaliwəʔ.

131. dił shuys tiʔiʔ syəhub.

*\*A Note on Pronunciation and Orthography*

ʔ        glottal stop

With the exception of the following, Lushootseed consonants, unless glottalized, sound similar to English consonants:

c        “ts” as in mats

ʈ        unvoiced “l”

ʃ        glottalized “tl”

ʃ        “ch” as in German “ach”

ʃʷ      rounded version of the sound above

xʷ      “wh” as in why

q, qʷ    like “k” as in king and “qu” as in queen, except the sounds are further back in the mouth

<sup>127</sup>It was the whiteness of the seagulls that was the reason for Crow's attitude, the reason she made them slaves. <sup>128</sup>Their being white and therefore not good for much was the reason they did all right as just slaves. They were seagulls. It was their whiteness.

And her being black it was that made her a great person in her own mind. That was how she thought.

<sup>129</sup>*So that was the end of the wedding of poor, wandering Crow.*

<sup>130</sup>When she got to those noble people at the place where she was married, then the people had reason to get together, they had reason to feast. Thus, the noble son of Whyaliwa got married.

<sup>131</sup>That's the end of this old, old story. [Martha laughs.]

Consonants appearing with apostrophes over them are glottalized.

Lushootseed vowels are pronounced as follows:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a | “ah” as in father  |
| ə | “uh” as in some  |
| i | “ee” as in machine or “ay” as in may                     |
| u | “oo” as in tool, long “o” as in hole, or “oo” as in foot |



### Notes to the Texts

*Lines 3-10, English version.* The indentations are intended to bring into prominence the concentric organization of this passage. Lines 3 and 11 concern the slave seagulls; lines 4 and 9-10 concern Crow's purpose; and lines 5-8 concern Prized Shell and his son. This figure (ABCBA) may be referred to as a *chiasmus* or *chiastic inclusio*; for a fuller discussion of such figures in the work of Martha Lamont, see Langen 1989-90.

*Line 8.* Here, Whyaliwa is the name of the son. In Crow's song and later in the story, Whyaliwa is the name of Prized Shell himself. Possibly, Mrs. Lamont misspeaks here.

*Lines 12-14.* This is a bridge passage carrying the story from its prologue to its first episode. Such passages also separate the episodes throughout the story. In the English version they are centered and italicized to indicate their formulaic content and changed delivery.

A literal translation of the passage would read as follows: "Very good-weathered was the world. Alone now this certain canoe of Crow's was [verb of motion, exact gloss unknown; "ripple" has been suggested]." The interesting question here concerns the meaning of "alone": is Mrs. Lamont saying the canoe was the only thing moving on a calm day or that it was moving by itself without being paddled? In another telling of this story, Mrs. Lamont makes it clear that Crow, like other *siʔab* people long ago, could make the canoe travel without paddlers. In the present version, the chanting delivery seems to suggest this power, but the rest of Crow's portrait at this point seems to indicate that she is not really *siʔab*. Another thing to keep in mind is that all the other bridge passages contain Crow's singing of her song: is it the very song with which she makes the canoe travel?

*Line 14.* Midway in this line, Mrs. Lamont reverts to ordinary speech. The Lushootseed version shows several instances when the chanting delivery "bleeds" into what is probably unmarked utterance.

*Lines 15-21.* This is the first of twelve episodes in which hopeful suitors come down to the shore to meet Crow. Each episode is formatted to display the selection and arrangement of the parts of a common underlying pattern.

The event structure of the episodes invites characterization as a group of pairs centered around a refrain:

- Pair A: a suitor comes down to the water, is identified (A)  
 he is left by the water or goes up from the shore, is  
 named again (A')
- Pair B: he is described, praised (B)  
 he is insulted (B')
- Pair C: the seagulls (are commanded to) put in (C)  
 they (are commanded to) shove off (C')
- Refrain: the seagulls cry "*nit tə*," it's not him (D)

A complete chronological narration of each episode would be structured ABCDC'B'C'. We never find this pattern perfectly realized in any episode; indeed, part of our pleasure in the storytelling lies in the way the particular realization plays off the generic structure.

Mrs. Lamont typically varies her narration of episodes in one of five ways. (1) She omits one or more elements: her shortest episode, for example, Cougar's suit, contains only A and D. (2) She reduplicates one or more elements so that they encircle another: in Raccoon's episode, for example, B is restated on the other side of C before the storyteller moves on to D.<sup>5</sup> (3) She substitutes one element for another: B', the insult, for example, may take the place of C', the order to shove off, as it does in Bear's episode. (4) She varies the order of elements: in Wolf's episode, for instance, the initial sequence is CAB. (5) She inserts intercalary material, such as the description of the seagulls shaking themselves off in Wolf's episode.

The functions of this figuration and the contextualizing role of the prosody, the audible vehicle for the figures, cannot be discussed adequately in a text note, but the formatting of the suitors' episodes is meant to remind the reader of the pervasiveness of figuration in the story and to suggest that the art of repetition was one of the chief skills of storytellers in this tradition. The A and A' elements are flush left on the page; B and B' are indented five spaces from the left; C and C', ten spaces; and D, fifteen.

*Line 24. Crow's song:* One of the resources of Lushootseed is that it accepts the distortion of words as they are used in song lyrics and in the speech of Myth Age characters: syllables may be added or subtracted, stress may wander, and individual consonant and vowel sounds may be transformed. The first line of Crow's song, which is both song and Crow language, is a puzzle. When Marya first heard it, she said it sounded as if it

---

<sup>5</sup> Raccoon comes down to the water (A), he has his face painted (B), the seagulls put in (C), he is going along painting his face (B), the seagulls all cry "*nit tə*" (D).

were about dried salmon being taken upriver. *Kayayəʔ*, which I (and others) have taken to be a song version of *kaʔkaʔ* (“crow”), could be a song version of *kayayəʔ*, “dried salmon;” and *qixw* has a separate non-song existence as “upriver” or “to the East.” As Martha sings, it is hard to hear a difference between *q* and *k*; Bates et al. transcribe the word as *kixw*, “Myth Age word for [ . . . ] husband” (1994:121). I have used their definition, but retained the spelling *kayayəʔ*, partly because that is what I hear and partly because it keeps open a level of the story that may be concerned somehow with the circulation of wealth.<sup>6</sup> The story is not necessarily about the circulation of wealth, but it may resound in that direction, as the song words did for Marya.

*Line 52.* As the Lushootseed text shows, Mrs. Lamont begins the strongly rhythmic delivery she uses on the bridge passages early here, in the last sentence of the episode. From this point on, her delivery increasingly blends bridge passages and episode borders.

*Line 94.* *dit bəstəqɣw hawəʔ* (“It’s just Beaver, for goodness’ sake.”): In some renderings of the story the bride-to-be is wise enough to see through the pretenses of her suitors, each of whom falsely claims to be the one she is seeking (e.g., Hatch 1940). Each episode demonstrates her powers of discernment. In her diction here, Mrs. Lamont may be referring to this alternate way of telling the story. *Hawəʔ* (“for goodness’ sake”) may be reminding us that Crow has to rely on her slaves’ discernment. In this context, her outrageous rudeness might be seen as an attempt to cover her embarrassment, for in Mrs. Lamont’s story, all the suitors seem like honest fellows.

Although the allusion here is not overt, Lushootseed literary records indicate that storytellers often did refer explicitly to stories related to the ones they were telling, as well as to traditional storytelling customs and content.

*Line 96.* *ʔudɣwχuqʷucutigwəd*: Many Beaver stories refer to his stomach as noisy or protruberant. In one story (Moses 1993), Beaver uses a cedarbark girdle to get himself into shape when he goes courting.

*Lines 114 ff.* At this point, as Crow prepares to step ashore, the narration abandons the episode pattern. The narration is punctuated by words that refer to landing, going ashore, moving up from the water, getting to the

---

<sup>6</sup> See Translator’s Introduction to the Story above.

place where people are gathered, and going inside. The disquisition about the seagull's color is framed by two such statements, as are the two descriptions of the woven runner. In this final passage, there are two echoes of the beginning of the story as well. In line 114, the phrase "a big house it must have been, the house of Prized Shell" echoes lines 6 and 7, "a good deal of money he must have had, a good deal of money, the son of Prized Shell." Likewise, line 123, "Calm and bright was the world. It was a beautiful day" echoes line 12, "Utterly calm was the sea"—not only in diction (more evident in the Lushootseed than in the translation), but also in marked (chanted) delivery. In Lushootseed tradition, storytellers bring full circle in this detailed way stories that are thousands, not just hundreds, of lines long.

*Line 119.* *sʔuʃəbābdxw* ("poor, wandering"): The root of the word is *ʔuʃəb*, "pity," and it is often translated as "pitiful," with connotations spreading from "poor, without proper upbringing" and "in need of help" to "dear." From this constellation I chose "dear" to mark the affection we and her new husband feel for Crow in spite of herself (poor dear), and I added "wandering" to invoke the part of the spectrum that concerns being in need of instruction, since Crow is in so many ways without a clue.

*Line 127.* *ǰwəqʷəqʷ* ("whiteness"): This is a term for color and is never used when referring to "white people."

### Commentary on the Story

In the course of transcribing the Crow story from the Metcalf tape, the authors of this commentary often discussed with Marya's family both this story and the version of it told to Thom Hess ten years later. From these discussions there emerged a clear sense of the discrepancy between the storied world of opportunity for Crow in her youth and the remembered hard times women faced in the years when the storyteller and the oldest member of her audience were young. According to what people remembered, it seems that during the early part of this century most women could find their way to a marriage of choice only by breaking up previous marriages, abandoning children, or being left by husbands. The Crow story contests not only the ethnographic record with its appeal to precontact custom, but people's current sense of what their relatives' experiences were. We came to feel that the best audience for the Crow story would come to the account of her bridal entrepreneurship with words such as these

sounding in their ears: “Do you remember when they sold Georgina’s grandmother to the man from La Conner?” “Yeah, he give a horse and wagon for her; that was a lot in them days.”

In what follows all of the personal names (as well as Georgina’s above) are fictitious, except for those of the authors of this article and the storyteller. The passages headed with Marya Moses’ name have been edited by her from transcripts of tape-recorded discussions; the passages headed with an asterisk or enclosed within square brackets were drafted by Toby Langen and co-edited with Marya Moses, and the passages headed with her name were written by Toby Langen.

*Marya Moses*

[Marya Moses married in 1928 at the age of seventeen. Her husband, Walter, came from the Sauk River region, in the mountains, and she went there to live with him and her in-laws. When she arrived there, some young men began to tease her about another marriage, one in which the arrangements had been made by the bride’s parents and in which a much older man had taken a young wife from Tualip.]

I heard them—there were a bunch of young fellows when I first got up there about 66 years ago, 67—they were all laughing, and they said, “I guess we’ll have to wait until we’re old men before we get a young girl.” They said, “How do you like that, them old men get them girls?” Walter was about ten years older than me.

But they were really referring to long ago, before even that time (1928). Maybe over a hundred years ago. The girl would *bay ʔsǰəb* (have her first period) and they’d put her with this old man. Not any man, someone who would be a good provider.

And I said, “Why did they put a young girl with an old man?”

And they said, “To prevent her from going boy-crazy.”

Not in our day, now. That was in the old days. They were just kind of joking about it up there. But to go up to Sauk River in those days [1928] was like going back two hundred years. Now, when I got up there, women—my mother-in-law, sisters-in-law— didn’t eat at the table with the men; they waited until the men got through. Down here at Tualip our men treat us equal. You sit with them. So I went and sat with the men at the table. I said to my mother-in-law, “Aren’t you going to eat?” But I didn’t know. When I did catch on, I said, “I’ve got a stomach too, not only you folks. And I get hungry too, so I’m going to eat.” I wouldn’t change.

At gatherings, the women did sit with their husbands. They were called to the table by couples according to rank.

The women didn't look around and talk to the men; they just sat back. Being up there was just like going back two hundred years. Long ago, the girl had no say in her marriage. Now, this didn't apply to every family. It was among the people who had higher standards for themselves. They lived a little bit better, not meaning they came from chiefs, but they were above the average. Now, they would notice a girl when she just *bayʔsǰəb*. If the girl was trained by the family to be a good worker, to make baskets or cook, and to behave (stay back quietly), then the boy's family would pick a friend of the family who was known for his eloquence to go and speak to the girl's family. This friend would tell them what a fine young man he was, what skills he had, how he could be a help to the girl's family. Then they would offer gifts to that family, a horse or whatever they had. And the girl's family could accept it or reject it. But usually they always felt it was kind of an honor, I imagine, to be selected, so they accepted the gift.

The way they would recognize the marriage would be with a gathering. They would have the couple stand up, and they would feed the people. That's one way.

There are others. Willard tells me that when he took Francine, he built a fire. She was not to accept it right away; she was to kick it and put it out. Then he was to build it again, in front of all those people. That's a different way; I can't really talk on that.

But I think the way they recognized a marriage then was most often a big gathering. They would feed the people—not fancy, just whatever they had: fish, berries, dried berries, dried salmon, deer meat, ducks, clams, according to the season. If there was food left over, they'd distribute it. Ladies would wrap it in whatever cloth they had and take it home.

\*

Ten years after telling the Crow story to Leon Metcalf in 1953, Martha Lamont offered a sort of commentary on it in remarks she made on the traditional upbringing of Snohomish children (Lamont 1963). This was only a few days before telling what has been called "The Marriage of Crow" (Lamont 1991), a revision of the Crow story presented here that

takes it from the realm of light satire to the realm of cultural credo.<sup>7</sup> In her remarks on the upbringing of children, Martha Lamont values the arrangement of a good marriage equally with the training of youngsters for the spirit quest as a way for parents to ensure a happy life for their children. Arranged marriages, according to Mrs. Lamont, grow out of a long-standing regard that the parents have had for each other's families, as well as from careful observation of the prospective bride and groom as they have been growing up. Community life makes this careful planning and observation possible. All of these elements of the well-conducted marriage process are missing from "Crow, with Her Seagull Slaves, Looks for a Husband" and yet, despite doing everything wrong (or, as Marya Moses puts it, living as if she were two or three centuries ahead of her time), Crow evidently ends up with the best husband any parents could want for their daughter.

The story, lightheartedly revolving around its central irony of undeserved success, seems to have had great appeal for women of Martha Lamont's generation and of the one following it, the generation of Marya Moses. In the decades around the turn of the century, when Martha Lamont was a young woman, the community structures that made the traditional arrangement of marriages possible had all but broken down. In the late 1920s, when Marya Moses married, the support offered to young people by the system of arranged marriages was no longer readily available. But young married couples without the support of an extended family network were often nonetheless expected—or expected themselves—to carry on as if that network were intact: to be generous and hospitable even though there were only one or two people to provide food, to be patient in the face of a spouse's failings even in the absence of advice or emotional support from older family members, and to take care of however many children came along even though there were fewer and fewer family members available to share in the duties of childcare.<sup>8</sup> The topsy-turvy plotline of the Crow story might well be perceived as alluding to the breakdown of the system without particularly evoking nostalgia. Such allusions may have offered women of Mrs. Lamont's and Mrs. Moses' generations the opportunity to deal with their awareness of this breakdown in an atmosphere free of anger and regret.

---

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of "The Marriage of Crow," see Bierwert 1991; for a discussion of the differences between versions, see Langen 1995.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the ways these conditions continue to affect marriages, see Suttles and Lane 1990.

The custom of arranged marriages continued in diminished form at Tulalip into the 1950s. The marriages from that era most often discussed today were arranged for men who were having difficulty in their lives. Such arrangements, however, are viewed as unusual solutions. Although widowed or divorced women traditionally were free to choose husbands according to their own inclinations without family approval, men could still ask for them in the same way they asked for young brides. This custom survived at Tulalip well into this century. In the 1950s, Emma, a widow with a grown daughter named Maryanne, was out in the fields picking berries. She saw two men, who had evidently been drinking, making their way toward her: Enoch, who had recently lost his wife, and his friend Roy, a well-known public speaker. They came up to Emma and tried to stand decorously before her, but Enoch kept falling over and had to prop himself up on Roy. Roy said, "My honorable relative has asked me to speak for him. He wants to know if you would consent to become his wife." Emma answered, "You'll have to ask Maryanne"—elegantly invoking a traditional constraint on behavior (the need for family approval of such arrangements) to get herself out of an embarrassing situation.

The traditional literature paints a much darker picture of the effect of constraints on women's behavior. Most often a woman is seen as exercising power over her own destiny only by leaving a bad situation, rather than by being able to avoid it. Susie Sampson Peter's story of the abduction of the dutiful but neglected Sockeye wife comes to mind.<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Peter invokes a traditional motif—the woman who is bathing in a river and looks up to find a strange man sitting on her clothes—and employs it to display a conflict between the neglected wife's injured pride (which prompts her to go with the stranger) and her as yet unwounded pride in her domestic skills and good relations with her in-laws (which prompts her to stay in the marriage). Whatever course of action the woman takes will lead to pain of one kind or another, a circumstance Mrs. Peter's story dramatizes by marking each stage of her disobedience with an icon of her obedience: before she abandons her home, she cleans it up; as she deserts the old people, she worries about who will get their firewood for them now; as she disappears into the woods with the stranger, she rips up a piece of the clothing she is famous for making and drops bits of it along the trail. The story is from the Upper Skagit but examines a knot of interwoven and conflicting themes that surface frequently in Tulalip narratives as well.

---

<sup>9</sup> The story is translated in Hilbert 1985a and discussed in Langen 1992; for a discussion of the kidnapped bather motif, see Langen 1991.



*Marya Moses*

[When Marya Moses, temporarily defeated by the constraints of life on the Sauk River, returned to Tulalip several years after her marriage, her mother had a story for her.]

Well, Mom kind of cut it short. It's a lesson to some men that don't appreciate a good woman, I imagine.

Well, this man had a woman. He came and got her from somewhere down here, *sx̄wəlč*, the salt water, and brought her up there. She must have been up there quite a while, and she was a good homemaker—good cook, could do all that. And after a while he spots a real good-looking girl, I guess. Not only that, he gets her. Then he brings her home and says to this woman, “Well, uh, I've got another woman; I guess you can go home now.”

And she said, “*χub, χub*” [all right, fine].

So this woman went around and she started dismantling her house, took the mats—there were mats all around—started taking them down, taking her cooking utensils, took her blankets—because she was a worker. And she came on home.

And after a while, pretty soon that man comes back down there and he asks her to go back, because that young woman couldn't cook. He was hungry, he was cold—no blankets.

And instead of answering him, she just started singing a song: “Am I a salmon, that I should go back up again?” Because she was already up there once and came back.

Mom sang the song. It was in Indian, of course. What do you use, *təyil* [going upriver]? Because the salmon goes up and spawns and then they die and they drift back. But she wasn't a salmon, she wouldn't go up again.

It must have been a couple of generations before my mother, long ago, because they came down in a canoe. During my mother's time they didn't go up and down in a canoe. So that must have been, oh, about two, three hundred years ago. The woman couldn't pack all her mats out, made out of cattails. See, she made a lot of them, and I imagine she'd make baskets, too. That's what they cooked in. She was a woman who could work. Usually, if a man had a brain, he chose that kind of woman. And another thing, if there were a couple of brothers, if one died and his wife was a good worker, the other brother could take her. If she was a good worker, he would.

It must have been long ago: they traveled in the shovel-nosed canoes, so you can see. In Mom's time, when she was a little girl, they traveled on

*?utǎs* [ocean-going canoe]. *ǎǎlay?* is a river boat. Now, no one, I think, has ever seen any of that. So you could just judge how long ago that was. It was an old, old story.

\*

The information offered here about traditional marriage customs and women's deportment is not intended to be definitive of Lushootseed practice. The value of this information is rather that it records the responses to Martha Lamont's Crow story that came up in the course of several months' discussion within one family group.

There is, as a matter of fact, no definitive study of traditional Lushootseed marriage. Each published ethnography contains information contrary to that provided in another.<sup>10</sup> To a question like "Who gave the marriage feast?" the answer seems to vary from place to place, indicating that no single answer can serve as a standard for the people of the region and that there was no pan-Lushootseed way.

Although we know that there were and continue to be variations in marriage customs among classes within tribes, most of the ethnographic information available concerns upper class families. Marya Moses' information reflects a slightly different point of view. In the literature, Lushootseed society is often schematized as comprising three classes: the *si?ab* people, who held the wealth and power and whose behavior was supposed to reflect the highest moral values; those free people who were not *si?ab*; and slaves. Today the position of one's ancestors within those class divisions still influences the way people are valued within the reservation community at Tulalip, but it is only one of a number of factors that contribute to a person's status. The somewhat changeable nature of "*si?ab*" in the twentieth century may be seen as providing much of the surface fun in the Crow story.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> See Haeberlin and Gunther 1930, Smith 1940, Smith 1941, Suttles 1960, Waterman 1973, Collins 1974, Tweddell 1974, Amoss 1978.

<sup>11</sup> For discussions of the changes in attitudes toward status in the post-contact period see Collins 1950, Suttles 1958, and Amoss 1977.

*Toby Langen*

Even in the context of Tulalip Reservation life, which provides a running commentary on what everyone says and how they say it, Marya Moses stands out as a commentator on discourse in general, especially as it reflects cross-cultural differences, and she is unremittingly self-conscious when it comes to her own speech. In working on this paper, she edited herself stringently, removing from the record of her speech all kinds of idiosyncratic expressions and oral rhetorical structures that I had hoped she would leave. She was annoyed with me for not having wielded the blue pencil on her transcript myself, for, as she pointed out, she as a speaker is not the subject of this paper: Martha Lamont is. However, insofar as her awareness of her own speech affects her performance as a reader of Martha Lamont's story, Marya is interested in going on the record. One of the habits she criticizes most in herself is the way she tends to get off the subject. Since in my view one of the glories of traditional Lushootseed storytelling is the ability to manage artful departures from and returns to topics, I have been especially interested in the way Marya Moses' self-consciousness about this practice in her own speech affects her ability to appreciate the repetition and the circular structuring of discourse in traditional narrative.

The role of the Tulalip Indian Boarding School in shaping the attitudes of its students toward both Lushootseed and English has been the subject of much comment recently at Tulalip as a committee of elders and teachers has worked to incorporate the memories of former students into a tribal history for use in schools. Many people described the education at the Tulalip Indian Boarding School as rendering students inarticulate, as they were prohibited from and punished for speaking their native language. Not only was Lushootseed prohibited, but the English that students learned at home was criticized. Such lessons about voice did not stop when students left the school. When Marya Moses draws attention to the fact that she has digressed from the subject of a conversation, she often refers to the following experience, which took place when she was serving on the Tulalip Tribes Board of Directors, decades after she had left the Tulalip Indian School.

*Marya Moses*

I don't know what year it was that the Bureau—I think it was the Bureau of Indian Affairs—invited us [tribal officers] to a meeting. We

didn't know at the time what their intention was, that they wanted to see if we were ready to be self-governing. They invited me as the chairman of the Health, Welfare, and Education Committee. Teresa, my daughter, went with me. The meeting was held at Bremerton, I think it was; you had to cross the ferry to get to that place, what would it be—a university or college? There were professors there, real smart men, but we didn't know what we were getting into. They didn't tell us.

As we entered, we signed our names, what tribe we were, the like. There were all different tribes, from Montana, Idaho, Oregon. They separated us: they took one Yakima, one Spokane, one Snohomish, like that; they didn't want two from the same tribe in one group. They gave us a set time: "Now you folks get together and choose a subject. We give you so many minutes. Then from there you pick out a chairman." That was all right.

But I sat beside a woman and the first thing we did was start asking each other, "Where are you from?" And all that while, I guess, that panel from the BIA or whatever, they were monitoring what we were doing. They were watching. Of course, I asked her where she was from, and we got to exchanging addresses. As women, we were introducing ourselves, and that man [chairman of the group] started getting real nervous. He said, "What will be our topic?" He had to give his report.

I spoke on education. I said, "I think the trouble with this education is that the teacher's place is to help those that need it, but it seems like they place the emphasis on the ones who are smart and let these others go. Just on this already smart one they focus attention, and then they pass these others on condition."

Then they closed the meeting. Then we knew now: the professors and all the head people there told how we didn't even know how to conduct ourselves. We started out talking about the weather, or started in on one thing and went way off on another thing. It showed right there we weren't able to take care of business.

I think we proved to them beyond a shadow of a doubt that we weren't ready, because some of the groups couldn't come to any conclusions, couldn't even decide on who should be their chairman or on the problem they wanted to discuss. But anyway we proved that we weren't ready.

*Toby Langen*

As I listen to this story, it seems that it was the women's insistence on greeting people before starting a meeting that got one group into trouble, that some groups fell into factional disarray (possibly mirroring pre-existing tensions between some tribes and bands), and that other groups came to grief because their discussion took the recursive shape that is typical of much oral discourse, whether in English or in an Indian language. I also hear with amazement Marya Moses' characterization of herself as not ready for self-government at the very time when she was instrumental in securing a reliable water supply for the reservation and in instituting the Head Start program at Tulalip. What is it about those professors that is more convincing to her than the achievements of her own life experience? I can only conclude that criticisms of one's way of speaking are very powerful.

For a number of reasons, then, Marya Moses does not take pleasure in the repetitions and digressions in Martha Lamont's storytelling. The one discussion about such matters that I have on tape followed the narration of the trip to Bremerton quoted above. I tried to suggest that conversations that repeatedly leave and return to a topic may operate as a successful process for consensus decision-making, and I tried to go further and suggest that recursive structures in traditional storytelling may likewise succeed in gathering an audience's attention and commitment. But Marya decisively rejected any kind of similarity between storytelling style and business discussions. (In the passage that follows, I have lettered the paragraphs for ease in referring to them later. Other than the lettering, the passage is an unedited transcription.)

*Marya Moses*

[A] Now, you're talking on two different things. I think you're applying this repeating over—it's on Indian stories and on your behavior, how you behave at funerals or other times like that: now, that doesn't apply to business. I think you didn't quite understand what I'm saying.

[B] What I'm talking to you about is the Indian way. The old Indians that were illiterate—you know, nothing to go by—told you again and again.

[C] I'm not saying each household did that, because they didn't. Very few people that cared enough to want it, to carry on, did that. Not everyone; there were very few. It's the same way today. How many follow our Indian ways? No one, no one. They think you're nuts.



two elements: “illiteracy leads to repetition about behavior” rather than (A’) “repetition about behavior” and (B’) “repetition because of illiteracy.” This structure occurs in the rhetoric of traditional storytelling, too, but less frequently than in conversation.

The brackets { } enclose what I term “breaches of frame.” Their function is to reach outside the shape of the structure by an appeal to the way the listener is feeling about what is being said; note that here one appeal is to the listener right there in the room and one is to the listener of yesteryear. And note the symmetrical placement of the breaches of frame in the structure as a whole.

Mrs. Moses increases the cohesion of her structure by verbal echo in B and B’ (“nothing to go by, so they told you again and again”: “no written language to go by, you know, so they told you”). Various forms of rhetorical coloring are also employed in C and C’. C uses verbal echo (“very few,” “very few”) and asks a rhetorical question (“How many?”) whose answer is a more extreme form of “very few,” “very few” (“no one, no one”). C’ uses parallelism (“every day, every month” and “certain people, not all”) to further comment on the concern about “very few” expressed in C.

What looks like a digression in the middle of the structure, the “core” is in fact an introduction to the topic that Mrs. Moses is leading up to and that she takes up in detail at the close of the structure in the pendant: the fact that even the very few traditionalists nowadays are changing the old ways to suit themselves, as evidenced in a catalogue of abuses, chief among which is that they don’t listen. In this succession of topics Mrs. Moses may seem to be straying from the subject of repetition’s not being suitable for business. But at the end of her catalogue of ways in which young people are changing things she asks, “Now, to come back to it, what was it you didn’t understand [note the verbal echo of the first breach of form {you don’t understand}] about the repeating? Ask me again.” By the time she asks me to ask her again, I know that the pendant’s discussion on change and not listening is her way of saying that she feels I am in danger of changing her testimony because I have ideas of my own that prevent me from hearing what she is really saying. The whole structure has been a way of advising me without directly criticizing me, and the message is conveyed by the circularity of her rhetoric, by the words as they are perceived to participate in an aesthetic architecture, not by the words as lexical entities or as constituents of syntactic patterns alone.

I had thought for years that one way back into an appreciation of traditional rhetoric for readers of Lushootseed stories at Tulalip today was to encourage people to value the way they speak their own English. But

recent experience as a teacher of Lushootseed to Snohomish people has shown me that the process works more often the other way around, as my students come to value their own way of speaking English when they see in it reflections of the rhetoric of a traditional storyteller whose language, though “foreign,” turns out to be familiar, too. People of Marya Moses’ generation, thanks to their Tulalip Indian Boarding School education and their life experience, do not enjoy exploring the connection between traditional rhetoric and their own English. This component of reading traditional stories at Tulalip today is valued more by younger people who have never spoken Lushootseed, but whose English is influenced by the Lushootseed-influenced English of their grandparents and great-grandparents.

*Tulalip Reservation  
Tulalip Lushootseed Program*

### References

- Amoss 1977                      Pamela T. Amoss. “The Power of Secrecy among the Coast Salish.” In *The Anthropology of Power: Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*. Ed. by Richard Adams and Raymond Fogelson. New York: Academic Press.
- Amoss 1978                      \_\_\_\_\_. *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Bates et al. 1994                Dawn Bates, Thom Hess, and Vi Hilbert. *Lushootseed Dictionary*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Bierwert 1991                 Crisca Bierwert. “The Figure of Speech is Amatory.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 2nd ser., 3:40-46, 66-79.
- Collins 1950                     June M. Collins. “The Growth of Class Distinctions and Political Authority among the Skagit Indians during the Contact Period.” *American Anthropologist*, 52:331-42.
- Collins 1974                     \_\_\_\_\_. *Valley of the Spirits: The Upper Skagit Indians of Washington*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.



- Foley 1991 John Miles Foley. *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Haeberlin and Gunther 1930 Hermann K. Haeberlin and Erna Gunther. *The Indians of Puget Sound*. University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, 4. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Hatch 1940 Effie V. Hatch (Connie Chiosi). "Significance of the Totems." In *Kla-Ha-Yah, a program for the dedication ceremony for the Totem Entrances on the Tulalip Indian Reservation*. Box 492, National Archives, Seattle.
- Hilbert 1985a Vi Hilbert. *Haboo: Native American Stories from Puget Sound*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Hilbert 1985b \_\_\_\_\_. "Crow and her Seagull Slaves." Transcription of Crow story from Metcalf Reel 38. Unpublished ms. on file at Lushootseed Research, Inc., Seattle.
- Hymes 1977 Dell Hymes. "Discovering Oral Performance and Measured Verse in American Indian Narrative." *New Literary History*, 8:431-57. Rpt. in *"In Vain I Tried to Tell You": Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.
- Lamont 1953 Martha Lamont. Tape-recording of story titled "Crow with Her Seagull Slaves Looks for a Husband." Recorded by Leon Metcalf. Reel 38, Metcalf Collection, Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum, University of Washington.
- Lamont 1963 \_\_\_\_\_. *Information on the Training of Snohomish Children*. Tape-recording by Thom Hess, September 5, 1963. Collection of Thom Hess.
- Lamont 1991 \_\_\_\_\_. "The Marriage of Crow." Trans. by Crisca Bierwert (Hess version). *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 2nd ser., 3:48-65.
- Langen 1989-90 T.C.S. Langen. "The Organization of Thought in Lushootseed (Puget Salish) Literature: Martha Lamont's 'Mink and Changer'." *Multiethnic Literatures of the United States*, 16:77-94.

- Langen 1991                    Toby C.S. Langen. "The Type-Scene of the Kidnapped Bather in Lushootseed, Chinook, and Tewa Examples." Paper presented to the Northwest Anthropological Conference, March 29, Missoula, Montana.
- Langen 1992                    \_\_\_\_\_. "Translating the Classical Literature of Native America." In *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Ed. by Brian Swann. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. pp. 191-207.
- Langen 1995                    \_\_\_\_\_. "Nostalgia and Ambiguity in Martha Lamont's 'Crow and Her Seagull Slaves.'" In *Memory and Cultural Politics: New Approaches to Ethnic American Literature*. Ed. by Amritjit Singh, Joseph Skerritt, Jr., and Robert Hogan. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Metcalf 1986                    Leon V. Metcalf. Interview. Tape-recorded by Toby Langen, Phoenix, Arizona, April 1986. Collection of Toby Langen.
- Moses 1993                    Raymond Moses. "Beaver and Fieldmouse." In *Tulalip History and Culture: Supplementary Class Materials*. Ed. by Ann M. Bates. Marysville, WA: The Tulalip Tribes, the Marysville School District, and Catholic Community Services. p. 9.
- Rygg 1977                    Lawrence Rygg. "The Continuation of Upper Class Snohomish Coast Salish Attitudes and Deportment as Seen Through the Life History of a Snohomish Coast Salish Woman [Harriette Shelton Dover]." M.A. thesis, Western Washington University.
- Smith 1940                    Marian Smith. *The Puyallup-Nisqually*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Smith 1941                    \_\_\_\_\_. "The Coast Salish of Puget Sound." *American Anthropologist*, 43:197-211.
- Snyder 1964                    Sally Snyder. "Society and Its Existential Basis: An Ethno-folkloristic Reconstruction." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington.
- Suttles 1958                    Wayne Suttles. "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish." *American Anthropologist*, 60:497-507. Rpt. in Suttles 1987.
- Suttles 1960                    \_\_\_\_\_. "Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige Among

- the Coast Salish." *American Anthropologist*, 62:295-305. Rpt. in Suttles 1987.
- Suttles 1987 \_\_\_\_\_ . *Coast Salish Essays*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Suttles and Lane 1990 Wayne Suttles and Barbara Lane. "Southern Coast Salish." In *Northwest Coast*. Ed. by Wayne Suttles. Handbook of North American Indians, 7. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. pp. 485-502.
- Tedlock 1971 Dennis Tedlock. "On the Translation of Style in Oral Narrative." *Journal of American Folklore*, 84:114-33. Rpt. and rev. in *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- Twedell 1974 Colin Ellidge Twedell. *A Historical and Ethnological Study of the Snohomish Indian People*. American Indian Ethnohistory. Indians of the Northwest, 2. Ed. by David Horr. New York: Garland Press. pp. 475-694.
- Turner 1976 Harriet Turner. "Ethnozoology of the Snoqualmie." Unpublished ms.
- Waterman 1973 T.T. Waterman. *Notes on the Ethnology of the Indians of Puget Sound*. Indian Notes and Monographs. New York: Heye Foundation.

# Collaborative Sociolinguistic Research among the Tohono O'odham

Ofelia Zepeda and Jane Hill

## Ofelia: Reading and Writing the Native Language

I was still at Central Arizona College, a small junior college on the outskirts of Coolidge, Arizona, when I first saw written O'odham. This part of my recollections has as much to say about mentoring as collaboration. At Central Arizona College I had an English teacher who took a special interest in O'odham students, possibly because he was married to an O'odham woman.

On one occasion he brought a small group of us to the University of Arizona campus. It was on this visit that I bought two books, *Legends and Lore of the and Pima Indians* (Saxton and Saxton 1973) and the *Papago and Pima to English Dictionary* (Saxton and Saxton 1969). I recall reading only the English translation and being immediately curious about the content of the stories. The O'odham text of the book looked much like gibberish. I was able to make out only a few words in O'odham after looking at them for some time and looking at the English translation. I didn't understand what the problem was. Why couldn't I read it? I could speak it. The dictionary was a little easier only because it was a word list. I realized shortly that I could "say" the words and not have to read them. This was in 1973. I put these books away until I arrived at the University of Arizona as a student in 1975.

When I came to the university I made a most uncharacteristic move: I searched out two scholars who did research on the O'odham tribe. I learned about these two men from my Pima friends who came there ahead of me from Central Arizona College. They told me about Bernard Fontana and Daniel Matson. Both of these men had office space in the Anthropology Department and also conducted research for the Arizona State Museum. This was the first time I had ever met individuals whose job it was to study and describe the lifeways of the O'odham, my tribe. They were writing about us for mostly non-O'odham people. They were anthropologists, and one had even been a missionary.

Daniel Matson had done missionary work among the O'odham and lived for a while at Ajo, Arizona. He spoke O'odham and could write the language. Ironically, he tested my proficiency in O'odham so that I could use English as a foreign language to fulfill the university's requirements. Eventually he became my first language teacher of written O'odham. Dr. Matson told me he learned to speak O'odham from women speakers and said, "I speak like a woman." I didn't know what he meant until he gave me an example of the ingressive air stream characteristic of women's speech. This was perhaps the first linguistic feature I learned about the language I had spoken all my life.

Bernard Fontana was approaching the end of his teaching activity when I met him. He was concentrating on research and writing. I spent time with him listening to him tell stories about how the O'odham people behaved and why he thought they behaved in that way. It was odd for me to sit and listen to someone talk about what seemed to me to be everyday behavior, behavior I lived and never thought interesting.

During this time I was still an undergraduate filling my schedule with courses on social statistics, juvenile delinquency, and the sociology of minority groups. I was a sociology major. During this time I also arranged to meet with Dr. Matson regularly so that he could teach me how to read the O'odham language. I became literate enough to enjoy the books I had bought a few years earlier. I also read the New Testament and other stories from the Bible that had been translated and printed for the Christian churches on the reservation. I was raised Catholic, mostly Sonoran Catholic, and so was not accustomed to reading so much of the Bible. Now these were my texts. After all of these hours spent on the O'odham language, I never received, as far as I can recall, one hour of college credit. At the time it probably never occurred to any of us to suggest that I receive some kind of credit for this work. Thus, my study of the written O'odham language was certainly significant, but it was outside of the context of a university classroom. No one was doing this kind of teaching then. I was alone.

As a native speaker, I was beginning to learn aspects of O'odham linguistic structure, never realizing the potential for study in this area. The following semester Dr. Matson introduced me to Professor Kenneth Hale, the renowned Uto-Aztecan linguist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ken Hale was a visiting professor at the time and was part of the transition team for the Linguistics Department, which at the time was becoming a separate department from Anthropology. Part of the transition was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that specifically supported the training of native speakers of

American Indian languages in the field of linguistics. When I met Ken Hale, he was very surprised and excited to learn that I had only been a couple of buildings away from him working on O'odham while he was running a small O'odham language class. He had two students: one was an O'odham student who couldn't speak O'odham very well and was interested in working on his skills. The other was the late Adrian Akmajian. I joined them, not as a student, but as Ken Hale's co-teacher. During that semester I spent a couple of hours a week teaching this course with Ken; after these sessions I would spend a couple more hours with him so that he could begin teaching me the basic rudiments of English syntax, which we would then apply to the O'odham language. The examples we used were primarily from my own speech. Although Ken did have many sample sentences from other speakers with whom he had worked in the past, my understanding of the structure of O'odham was primarily based on my own competence in the language.

After Ken left and went back to Cambridge, I changed my major to linguistics with much encouragement from him. I began taking the core courses within the field. Many hours of credits were earned via independent study sessions in which I continued to work on the structure of O'odham. This study of O'odham structure evolved into what would be my masters thesis on lessons on the Papago language. It was eventually published as the first pedagogical grammar of the O'odham language. *A Papago Grammar*, issued by the University of Arizona Press, is essentially comprised of sentence samples that come from my speech (1983). The grammatical judgments are also mine, based on knowledge gained from graduate courses and discussions with various non-speakers of the language whose evaluations I never questioned.

### **Jane: Becoming a Sociolinguist**

I was trained in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the tradition of American structuralism and philological linguistics began to divide into at least two major directions. The first, associated especially with the work of Noam Chomsky, aimed to be a science of the human mind, part of the "cognitive sciences." The second, led for many years by Dell Hymes (who calls it "sociolinguistics"), continued to focus on aspects of language that

are “historical rather than biopsychological”<sup>1</sup> and to retain close ties with disciplines like anthropology, sociology, history, and literature. Some well-known scholars contributed to both dimensions. (Sociolinguists read Chomsky’s work on mass media with great interest.) This two-way division is crude but will suffice for present purposes.

By historical accident I am a sociolinguist. When I completed my master’s degree in linguistics in 1962, the University of California, Los Angeles, which was later to develop a great department of biopsychological linguistics, did not yet offer a Ph.D. in that discipline. Since Americanists like William Bright and Harry Hoijer were members of the Department of Anthropology, I chose to continue my graduate work there. My dissertation was a grammar (of Cupeño, an Uto-Aztecan language of Southern California), and the linguist Robert Stockwell was on my committee. Bright and Hoijer, however, made me aware of exciting issues in language history and variation. One (an unfortunate issue that all who study indigenous languages face) was the problem of “language death”: what happens to a language as it goes out of use? How is a “dying language” spoken? Comparing texts that I had collected in the early 1960s in collaboration with Roscinda Nolasquez and a few other Cupeño speakers with material collected in 1920, I realized that the usage of the last generation of speakers was different from that of their own parents and grandparents. How might this be explained? I could not test hypotheses about this kind of variation in the tiny population of less than a dozen speakers of Cupeño—the accidents of individual life history would have obscured regularities. However, in Central Mexico a very large bilingual population speaking a related Uto-Aztecan language, Nahuatl (known by speakers as Mexicano), could be found, so I went to Puebla and Tlaxcala with this new question.

There I found that the way speakers juggled and combined Mexicano and Spanish to manage their precarious socioeconomic situation was more interesting than the question of language death, so I ended up paying more attention to the way that Mexicano was being maintained than on the way that it was dying. Mixing the two languages turned out to be an active, strategic, and positive project on the part of the speakers, and not merely an

---

<sup>1</sup> By “historical” Hymes meant aspects of language produced by the processes of human social life. By “biopsychological” he meant those aspects resulting from the species-specific nature of the human mind, produced by the processes of biological evolution.

attrition of some pure essence called “Nahuatl.”<sup>2</sup> With this realization, I moved even more towards a “Hymesian” view in which linguistic “competence” involves skillful speaking. While I believe that a biopsychological capacity for language ultimately constrains what Mexicano speakers do, this belief doesn’t help me understand the publicly contested claims and counterclaims about speech that are for me the most interesting part of “speaking Mexicano.” Unfortunately, the biopsychological concept of language competence as homogenous knowledge is easily (although not appropriately) recruited by purists who condemn the usage of modern speakers of Mexicano as worthless jargon. Others use this ideal of language as an excuse to try to eliminate modern Mexicano, to “Castilianize” its speakers, and to preserve only ancient documents, written in the “Classical Nahuatl” that had become the exclusive property of a scholarly elite and the state that supported their efforts, not of those who continue the linguistic tradition that it represents.

### **Ofelia: Learning the Hard Way**

During my graduate career I had the opportunity to teach courses on elementary O’odham. These courses were often requested by teacher aides and teachers from the Tucson Unified School District, whose jobs required them to learn some aspects of written O’odham. Many of these individuals were raised in urban areas and had limited proficiency in speaking O’odham. None of them could read and write the language. I then had the advantage of being a better speaker than most of them and also had the expertise to teach them how to read and write O’odham. In these classes what I taught about O’odham was, for the most part, not questioned.

This situation changed when I was requested to teach the same language course on the main reservation in Sells. This class also consisted of instructors and bilingual aides for the elementary schools; however, the majority of these people spoke O’odham and spoke it very well. Some, of course, spoke differently than I did. This experience during my budding career as an O’odham linguist and language teacher made me realize that other speakers of this language could and would disagree with what I had to say about the structure of the language; furthermore, they would have strong opinions about my own proficiency with the language.

Such disagreements and opinions were often handled in at least one of two ways, both very typical O’odham social behavior mechanisms: (1)

---

<sup>2</sup> This research is summarized in Hill and Hill 1986.



humor and (2) talking behind one's back. I received both barrels, as the following examples illustrate.

In the first lesson that I used for these language classes, a sentence reads, "*Gogs 'o med*" and translates as, "The dog is running." This simple example illustrates, among other things, an intransitive sentence, imperfective verbs, and the third person auxiliary. This sentence, in natural O'odham speech, should be, "*Gogs 'o 'am med,*" which essentially means, "The dog is running." The difference, however, is the inclusion of the locative '*am*, meaning "there." Typically, native speakers prefer to indicate the location of action. In this instance the '*am* translates simply as "there" or "non-specific place." In the sentence without the locative the dog is running, but not running in the same way a "real world" dog runs. The students jokingly interpreted the dog in question as a battery-operated toy running in place. And when the sentence was negated, "*Pi 'o med g gogs*" ("The dog is not running"), the class said that the battery-operated dog had run out of batteries and simply stopped. This type of semantic ambiguity was generally clarified when I later introduced the various locatives. For teaching purposes, lessons progressed from simple to complex sentence forms. Another thing that became very clear was the need to explain that the O'odham language could be put into "textbook language" form, a form of the language that native speakers don't generally speak but do acknowledge as grammatical.

The second way in which I was duly notified that my written grammar on O'odham was somehow inaccurate was through second-hand comments about what had been said concerning my work. One particular incident stands out because I was very hurt by it. One day my friend pulled me aside after class and said:

You know what [Mr. So and So] is saying about your book? He is saying that many of the things you wrote about how the language works [are] all wrong. He is telling everyone [with emphasis on "everyone"] you just made up some things about the language and the white people believed you and let you publish it. He says you probably don't really speak the language anyway.

She went on to say, "You know he's just jealous." She continued to comfort me and tell me that she and others did appreciate what I had done with the grammar: "People will find problems with it or disagree with what you wrote, but we will all learn from those differences and your mistakes." She made a great deal of sense to me then and still does now.

My training in graduate school did nothing to prepare me for dealing with this hurt and sense of despair. In linguistics, particularly theoretical linguistics, the research is essentially done in what is seemingly a vacuum. The audience for the various theoretical treatments is generally a small, select group of faculty and graduate students, not an entire population of speakers with opinions, emotions, and attitudes about the language in question. None of my professors were really aware of the situation I was dealt in exposing my work on O’odham to a reservation full of speakers. Like other linguists who work on their native languages, I learned the hard way about working with fellow speakers.

### **Jane: Linguistic Theory and Linguistic Politics**

Research in biopsychological linguistics focuses on subtle linguistic judgments, best accomplished by native-speaker linguists, that reveal fine-grained details of the “knowledge of language.” Among biopsychological linguists, “good intuitions”—the ability to notice grammatical and semantic distinctions that can shed light on the most pressing theoretical questions—indicate expertise. Generally speaking, biopsychological linguists have *not* borrowed from scientific psychology the experimental tradition that emphasizes statistically oriented research design, control populations, and double-blind methods. Most do realize that their intuitions can be biased by their theoretical commitments and try to solve this problem by consulting with colleagues and students. They often encounter linguistic variation, but to say that a particular judgment presented as evidence for an argument is not acceptable—“Not in my dialect!” as the saying goes—is often considered a vulgar line of criticism, definitely inferior to the thrust and parry of pure theoretical argumentation. From 1960 to 1990 in the area of biopsychological linguistic research in the United States, the number of papers that explicitly attended to problems of variation probably numbered under a dozen. Research on variation was the domain of sociolinguists, working at different institutions and under different influences from (although often in reaction to) biopsychological linguistics. With a few exceptions, this separation of disciplines continues to this day.

Because the “Universal Grammar” was believed to underlie all languages, the narrow range of languages native to those holding advanced degrees in theoretical linguistics did not concern most biopsychological linguists. However, in the late 1960s, Kenneth Hale showed that certain kinds of evidence for the nature of human language capacity were simply not going to emerge from such a small sample of languages—instead,

evidence had to come from indigenous languages of Africa, Australia, and the Americas, from speakers who had not traditionally had access to higher education (see, e.g., 1972). Hale's solution that the study of these languages be accomplished by a new cadre of trained native speakers was satisfying for many reasons: (1) it was consistent with the emphasis on subtle grammatical judgment as the most important raw material for linguists; (2) it promised to empower people who had often been oppressed and exploited under colonialist regimes (including the scholarly and academic dimensions of these regimes); and (3) it in effect allowed native speakers to replace scholars engaged exclusively in theory of phonology and morphology, many associated with sociolinguistics rather than the biopsychological approach, such as the great Algonquianist and theoretician of phonology and morphology, Charles Hockett (e.g., 1977). Hale's proposal was politically brilliant: even those scholars excluded from this proposal could not but be impressed by the theoretical logic and obvious justice of the plan. Hale's proposal (not accidentally) coincided with the rise of indigenist political movements in Australia and the Americas that found linguists struggling to position themselves as handmaidens within indigenist projects rather than as lordly outside experts pursuing their own agendas.

Another interesting coincidence was that many linguists excluded from Hale's proposal were, by training and academic affiliation, anthropologists. Anthropologists were easy targets for indigenist politicians. Not only were they relatively powerless (being regarded in most of their "home societies" as fuzzy-minded and irrelevant intellectuals), but over the years in the communities they studied they had also compiled a dismal record of offenses, ranging from countless instances of inevitable intercultural clumsiness and individual poor judgment, through racist and imperialist claims on what was not rightfully theirs, to blatant exploitation, theft, and fraud motivated by the desire for career success and personal gain. "Anthropologists" became the "white men" indigenous people loved to hate, and it was highly unlikely that a young indigenous scholar would elect to study a kind of linguistics that was "anthropological."

By the mid 1960s biopsychological linguists were largely split off into their own academic departments, aligned with philosophers and psychologists, and focused on the study of such languages as English, Italian, and Japanese. Consequently, they had no particular political identity as far as most indigenous groups were concerned. But those biopsychological linguists who had studied indigenous languages were very aware of the new political trends. While established scholars continued in old relationships, new "fieldwork" could hardly be respectably undertaken

(it sounded too anthropological), and “informant” came to be synonymous with “victim” or “dupe.” At the University of Arizona, courses in linguistic field methods were not offered for twenty years, requiring those students who became interested in any of the thousands of non-Western languages that lacked a native-speaker grammarian to depend heavily on published sources or else to reinvent the fieldwork wheel (often by sneaking down the street to consult with anthropologists).<sup>3</sup> Biopsychological linguists often flaunt their ignorance of anything “cultural.”<sup>4</sup> “Linguistics”—of the biopsychological flavor—was certainly a politically safe choice for a young indigenous scholar looking for a disciplinary home, and biopsychological linguists were eager to recruit native speaker grammarians in whom they could instill a thirst for theoretical intelligence and a gift for subtle grammatical judgment.

### **Jane: Starting O’odham Sociolinguistic Research**

The above discussion illustrates the unlikely political climate—and one that was especially acute at Arizona—in which Ofelia Zepeda, with a freshly minted Ph.D. from Arizona’s Department of Linguistics, was gracious enough to agree to a collaboration with a linguistic anthropologist! She may not have felt she had much choice. In 1983 I joined the Department of Anthropology at Arizona as a professor committed to developing a research program on Southwestern languages to fill in the gap between my dissertation work in California and my subsequent work in Central Mexico. Ofelia, then still a graduate student, was offering her one-year course in Tohono O’odham, and I asked her permission to sit in on it—and she agreed. Since I had worked on two other Uto-Aztec languages (the family to which Tohono O’odham belongs), the director of her dissertation, Susan Steele, suggested that she invite me to serve on her dissertation committee, and she agreed again. When I suggested a possible collaboration (I did wait until after she defended her dissertation), Ofelia

---

<sup>3</sup> “Linguistic field methods” is once again offered at the University of Arizona and is a course thoroughly grounded in the ethical issues involved. Many “anthropologists,” of course, are now engaged in a very penetrating critique of colonialist and postcolonialist discourses and practices, including the ethics of crosscultural scholarship, to which most biopsychological linguists are oblivious.

<sup>4</sup> I once asked a colleague, famous for important grammatical scholarship on a Native American language, about the great historical ethnography of its speakers. The reply was, “Why would I want to read that?”

said “yes” yet again! I’m afraid that as a full professor and a member of her dissertation committee, even though I always asked nicely, I was a bit like the 500-pound gorilla who sits wherever she wants to sit!

My research idea was that we would study Tohono O’odham regional dialects. There were several important reasons to do this. First, Tohono O’odham people are interested in dialects, and the existing literature on the regional variation in the languages was both contradictory and perfunctory. Second, dialect differences in the language complicated bilingual education programs in reservation schools because parents did not like their children to be taught by instructors who spoke a dialect different from their own. Since bilingual education is one of the main avenues for language maintenance available to O’odham people (before the 1991 Native American Language Act,<sup>5</sup> it was the only way to get funding to teach the language), it seemed important to develop a sound understanding of dialect differences that could provide a basis for training parents and teachers. Finally, a dialect survey allowed us to obtain a sample of the usage of elderly people, speakers who could provide not only the basis for a mapping of the most conservative regional variation, but also samples of what was generally accepted as “good” usage. Such samples would be useful for language curricula. There were also “sneaky” reasons. For example, my Mexican fieldwork had given me very good experience with the necessary methodology: I knew how to study the language variation that regional dialects embody. Also, research on dialects would not step all over Ofelia’s own research (which was then on morphology, especially derivation). In fact, it could even help it by providing a large sample of usage. Further, since Ofelia used O’odham language in her poetry, I thought she might like the idea of being able to go out and listen to turns of phrases from the best speakers. Finally, I knew I didn’t have a prayer of ever getting onto the reservation as a researcher unless I had her help! I needed protective coloration, both as a collaborator with a member of the O’odham community, and, not least, as a “linguist” instead of as an “anthropologist.” The importance of this last point can be easily shown. After we had been working on the reservation about three years, we were sitting one morning in the kitchen of the (then) tribal chairman. He was enthusiastic about the

---

<sup>5</sup> The Native American Language Act of 1991 is a federal law acknowledging the status of Native American languages and encouraging the use, protection, maintenance, teaching, and research of these languages. The Native American Language Act of 1992 appropriated funds to meet some of the conditions in the 1991 bill. These funds are dispersed by the Administration for Native Americans through a competitive grants program.

dialect study and I'd had many pleasant conversations with him. He looked sternly at me and said, "You're in the Department of Anthropology, aren't you?" I admitted that I was.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, he didn't withdraw his support for the project.

The project was eventually funded by the National Science Foundation. Our first job, even before the grant proposal was submitted, was to get permission from the Tohono O'odham Nation to do the work. Ofelia dealt with the politics, including the essential informal networking and the formal presentations, while I sat quietly and tried to look like anything except an anthropologist. Once approvals and funding came through, we worked with two research teams, each with a native speaker and a support person. Interviews had to be conducted in O'odham, so Ofelia and Mary Bernice Belin, a bilingual aide and researcher on language and health issues, did most of the work involved in the field survey. Our goal was to interview at least one speaker (and preferably more than one) from every village on the reservation that had been inhabited during the lifetime of the generation of speakers over 55 years of age. While I and Molly Dufort, then a graduate student in anthropology, did the endless driving and worked the tape recorders, Ofelia and Bernice did the talking, making initial contacts (usually in O'odham, since many people of the generation in which we were interested don't like to speak English) and interviewing in the O'odham language. Bernice Belin did most of the transcription of the interviews. Ofelia did some, and I did a very little bit, mainly word lists.

### **Ofelia: Starting O'odham Sociolinguistic Research**

My work with Jane Hill began with the sociolinguistic research on O'odham dialect variation. When she first approached me with this proposal, I was immediately interested because many speakers are themselves aware of salient features in speaker variation. Documenting this information seemed worthwhile. My greatest worry in such a study was acquiring the permission from various people that was necessary for such extensive collecting on the reservation. The O'odham tribe, like other tribes, had become much more selective in granting permission for research

---

<sup>6</sup> I had never hidden this fact, since my *curriculum vitae* was included with the grant proposal that was submitted to the tribe when we requested permission to do the research, but he hastened to add that I was "really" a linguist. He proceeded to lecture me for several minutes on the sins of anthropologists and how I should behave.

carried out on the reservation and among the population as a whole. I knew we would have to get approval from many people, and it was apparent that, even as a member of the tribe, I would be treated as an outside researcher first and as a tribal member second. Luckily, I had gotten much favorable publicity from the tribe because of an earlier publication, *Mat Hekid O Ju: / When It Rains* (1982), a collection of Pima and Papago poetry published by the University of Arizona Press. As a result of this book, my name was familiar to more people. I also volunteered as a radio announcer for a popular half-hour weekly O'odham program on the local PBS station. It seemed that these two factors were more significant than my publication of a major grammatical work on O'odham. Even less significant was the fact that I had a Ph.D. We began speaking with the various committee members, and their acknowledgment of my other work and of my contributions to the tribe was especially significant to those who did not know me or my family. Jane and I received endorsements from the tribal chair and other politically significant figures. Some tribal council members who served on the committees that reviewed and eventually approved our proposal knew me personally or knew of my family. Such acquaintances did not hurt our chances either.

Now I want to discuss some specific aspects of fieldwork that I found uncomfortable while researching O'odham dialect variation: (1) working with other O'odham speakers and (2) explaining how and why we would be asking strangers various questions. I mentioned earlier that during my graduate career I never used the language of other O'odham speakers in any of my work. I had a few dialogue exercises that others wrote for me, but otherwise all information and examples on the O'odham language came from my own speech. This project gave me the opportunity to rely quite heavily on others' speech. And now we were faced with the ominous task of finding willing speakers. Jane and I began with my friends and relatives. The friends were mature people all in their mid-sixties. These were O'odham speakers from Tucson and the San Xavier area. Some of these were women who did demonstrations of their basketry for mixed audiences and so were accustomed to being asked questions, sometimes annoying ones at that. I thought that they would make cooperative participants, and they did. Others were parents or relatives of friends. This is easy, I thought. I believed that Jane expected other participants to be almost as easy to meet and to offer their cooperation. I knew, however, that once we finished with my friends, acquaintances, and relatives, there would be complete strangers to locate and approach, an exercise I did not look forward to.

It was fortuitous that we found out about the gerontology program, a federally funded program designed to meet the special needs of tribal

members fifty-five years and older. I vaguely knew of this organization from an O'odham friend who used to tell me of the "elderly feedings." I thought that this feeding only took place at San Xavier, since that was the one that he attended. He told me the tribe would bring the elderly together for a communal lunch once or twice a month. He said he would go there, invite himself to lunch, and just visit with them. My friend was particularly interested in talking to other speakers about O'odham songs and traditional dances. At these lunches he gathered information from some of the elders. He warned me though that some of the elders "were kinda mean, you know how they are." And then he quickly added, "but some are very eager to talk and give information. They like to share their knowledge." Originally, I thought of these elderly feedings as a place we might be able to solicit volunteers from one geographical area and that we still had the main reservation to consider.

As it turned out, this "elderly feeding" was part of a federally funded gerontology program for the entire tribe. It seemed that each political district had one of these regular meals for their elders. Such meals were weekly or biweekly, depending on the size of the district's budget. We made appointments to meet with the administrator of the program and her assistants. They were very helpful but somewhat guarded at the same time. The staff members who had the most regular contact with the elders were the most helpful because they knew the various personalities of many elders. They told us which elders liked to talk to people and which would be less helpful in the survey because of poor hearing, poor eyesight, or senility. Some elders, they warned us, had extremely protective children with whom we would have to deal first. This background information was definitely a time-saver in compiling our list of elders in the various districts, areas that roughly corresponded to the earlier proposed dialect regions. This was the beginning point for the entire project. We solicited other speakers at district and village meetings where we asked to be put on the regular agenda so that we could inform the public about our project and ask for volunteers. When we had obtained volunteers or names of potentially willing elders, we sought them out and began knocking on the doors of strangers.

Another uncomfortable part of the project for me was explaining what we were looking for in the study. Dialect variation, we said. And, yes, people we approached seemed to understand this point at least. However, there was some doubt as to what else we wanted. No, we had no ulterior motives, I tried to tell them as convincingly as possible. Some continued to doubt us throughout the entire interview. Some also convinced themselves that we wanted to ask questions about more exotic



cultural, ritual information even though I said only, "Taiccu 'ac matt 'ab o ha'icu m-kakk'e 'ab 'amjed g O'odham ñi'okĩ mo has masma gawulig g O'odham ñi'okĩ" ("We want to talk to you about the O'odham language and how there are differences in how O'odham is spoken"). Even with several such explanations, some people tried to refuse us by saying they did not remember the "old things." "We just want you to say some words for us to collect and compare to other speakers," we explained. Perhaps some could not believe the task could be so simple. Surely we wanted more for all this trouble of driving out to find them, setting appointments, and coming all the way from Tucson to see them.

Some individuals, male participants in particular, said such things as, "I will need to think about things before you ask me about them. Why don't you come another day later?" On one occasion I told a gentleman that this wasn't the kind of information he would have to spend time thinking about. As I reflected on this remark, I thought it a rude thing to say. I had misunderstood his intention. His hesitation was perhaps a way of hiding his nervousness. Others confided after the interview was completed that they had been worried about what we were going to ask them. They lost sleep, anticipating potential questions that we might pose. Again, when they confided such anxieties, I felt badly for having imposed such a burden on them, an unnecessary burden. Had I not made myself clear when I told them what we wanted? Why had I thought they understood when either they hadn't or they had some doubts? Such doubts may have resulted from my being perceived as an "outsider," conducting the interviews with a white person at my side. Whether it was Jane or our graduate student assistant, Molly, there was always a white person from the university present. Fear that one of these "outsiders" wanted to know the exotic elements of O'odham ritual and custom must have prompted many of them to worry about what they were going to be asked. I believe the majority of the interview participants did understand what we were going to be asking questions about, but even they experienced considerable anxiety simply because they were chosen to respond to our interview.

### **Jane: Doing Fieldwork**

I now want to discuss survey research in the O'odham community from my own perspective as an English-speaking American and as an anthropologist. The dialect survey gave me endless opportunities to be a clumsy outsider in full view of competent adult insiders, including Ofelia, the director of the project. The experience has been humbling, but also

very enlightening in terms of my anthropological concerns at the broadest level. Through my work with Ofelia, I discovered that fundamental differences stemmed not only from ethnicity, but from our having been trained in distinctly different scholarly cultures. I found myself working not simply with an O'odham person, but with an O'odham person trained in biopsychological linguistics!<sup>7</sup>

While biopsychological linguistic analysis is difficult, survey research can also be painful and embarrassing. This is often true even in English-speaking American culture, where many of us detest religious proselytizers who knock on the door to offer us literature and people who call us on the telephone during dinner to sell us bargain carpet shampooing or ask for our donation to the Fraternal Order of Police Rodeo. Survey research is not the most favored form of ethnographic research because most ethnographers emphasize seamless participation in contexts that would go on even if outsiders were not present. So, if survey research is so humanly alienating, why do it? The answer to this question is deeply rooted in the ideology of knowledge of the Western academic tradition: knowledge is inherently good and its pursuit is so important that every doubt and difficulty must be set aside. If a scholar wants to understand language variation, survey research is the best way to study it. So, just as physicists sometimes stay up all night in the laboratory destroying their health with dangerous radioactive materials, sociolinguists get up in the morning, dragged down by the existential dread, and take to "the field," hoping to construct survey techniques that exploit, as far as possible, local interactional contexts and ways of obtaining knowledge. "As far as possible" is very much restricted when the techniques employed involve getting approximately one hundred strangers to speak into a tape recorder.

I won't burden readers here with the esoteric details of populations and sampling, but it should be fairly obvious that no single speaker, even if that speaker is a highly trained linguist working on her native language, will encompass all its variations in her speaking competence. Furthermore,

---

<sup>7</sup> In my field research in Mexico, my assistant was Alberto Zepeda Serrano, who conducted the interviews and prepared a rough transcription and translation. Alberto is now a high school principal and has several times represented his community on international television. However, the dynamics involved in this fieldwork were different from my work with the O'odham. As a *gringa* in Mexican indigenous communities in the 1970s, I was perceived as simply very exotic and strange and was usually very welcome as a possible contact with the United States. Alberto was an employee, not a full collaborator. (He was a teenager at the time.) I was speaking mainly Spanish, and much of my cultural incompetence was written off by the locals as linguistic incompetence. I've written about some of the interactional difficulties of that fieldwork in Hill 1980.

since language variation is often freighted with social values, the problem of having one's conclusions shaped by ideological preconceptions is acute. One must simply enter the community with an open mind and a good research design, find a way to get people to talk in the language being studied, and listen carefully. Unfortunately, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have, at times, compromised on method. Since their results (unlike those of, say, clinical trials of new drugs) are not a life-or-death matter, researchers often justify the use of less than ideal techniques such as the so-called "snowball" samples.<sup>8</sup> The reason for this is that a number of societies aren't accustomed to random sampling, where it is frankly dangerous to knock on doors without an introduction. The O'odham Reservation is not such a place, but a minor variation on a "snowball" sampling was still our choice; before knocking on a door, we always knew more or less who was going to be behind it, and had good reason to believe that we had some chance of recruiting them to our study. Yet every stage of finding study participants and conducting interviews was complicated by crosscultural interactional traps and moments of awkwardness.

Before focusing on such difficulties and embarrassments of our enterprise, I want to say that O'odham country is breathtakingly magnificent, that many O'odham villages are picturesque and charming, and that individual O'odham people are warm and hospitable. Indeed, I have seen extraordinary things and met extraordinary people during our research. We've picnicked "under the mountain"—Baboquivari, center of the universe—in April with all the flowers in bloom and watched the long blue summer rains sweep across its peak in August. I remember sitting under a ramada at Ku:pik in June, looking far out into the desert at horses running through the heatwaves (we could barely hear their hooves), while an old man and his sister told us stories of the Apache raids. I've sat in the receiving room of a great shaman and heard deep discourses on plants and animals. Mild-mannered elders have quietly shared with us lives full of wisdom and courage and drama. Every time I listen to the tapes, there is something new and wonderful to ponder.

But to the details. First, we could not telephone to make appointments. When we first began our fieldwork, only district offices and stores had telephones. So we had to go out in the car and find participants, a process that took as many as three two-hundred-mile round trips for each

---

<sup>8</sup> In this method, a mutual acquaintance introduces the fieldworker to the first respondent, who then suggests a second or third, who in turn suggests a fourth. As each new respondent is met, the name of the previous one is mentioned. For example, "Mr. Lewis suggested that I talk to you."

potential consultant. Second, O'odham communities usually consist of a very loose agglomeration of widely separated and anonymous house compounds, spread over a square mile or so of desert and linked by a tangle of dirt tracks that seem to branch in every direction. Third, O'odham people are generally known locally by nicknames that we often didn't know, and local people didn't know the formal baptismal names that we had in our files. Confusion also resulted from the O'odham custom of giving directions by gesturing vaguely toward the relevant horizon. The outsider is forced into a process of triangulation that involves a long series of embarrassing requests for directions and might even include knocking, eventually, on the wrong door. Bernice Belin and I had a running joke in which she, as knowledgeable passenger, would gesture in what seemed to me an indeterminate semicircle towards the car windshield in order to tell me, the ignorant driver, where to go. I would say, "Bernice, I don't know *which* road you *mean*." She would then perform a hilarious parody of a non-native person pointing, and I would turn the car in the appropriate direction.

Once we were fairly sure we had the right house when looking for a potential respondent, we had to get to the door. There always seemed to be dogs. Fear of strange dogs turns out to be fairly evenly distributed among O'odham and non-O'odham people. I am afraid of dogs. Bernice is afraid of dogs. Ofelia and Molly are not afraid of dogs. Unfortunately, Bernice and I usually worked together, with no help from the two dog lovers. So we would sit uselessly for long minutes, joking nervously about the dogs, and which side of the car the small mean ones might be on, and about who would get out of the car first.

Often, as we pulled up to the last reasonably polite place to park a car (and I made many embarrassing mistakes in determining where this was, since the line between someone's yard and the open desert was often indistinguishable to my outsider's eyes), there would be someone in the yard around the house. That person, ninety percent of the time, would disappear, strolling far way behind an outbuilding, or, astonishingly, going into the house and closing the door. Only twice, in my recollection of over fifty such embarrassing moments, did an O'odham person actually come out to the gate and ask what we wanted! This disappearing act usually is simply polite: O'odham people believe that visitors should be able to make their own decisions about whom they want to talk to, without anyone asking invasively, "Can I help you?" Sometimes, of course, it simply means that the potential respondent *does not want to talk to you*. The possibility of this meaning (and, for an English-speaking American, the erroneous sense that this is the probable meaning) makes this form of O'odham politeness

extremely frustrating and tempts one to leave without venturing further. But science requires that one forge ahead.

How does one get to the door of an O'odham house? A non-native, like me, calculates a trajectory that is roughly a straight line between the gate and door, walks briskly, straight ahead, and knocks in the middle of the door. This is not the O'odham way. I learned how to walk up to an O'odham door from Ofelia and Bernice. They calculate not a straight line, but a sort of semicircle that provides the dogs (who are at best barking in the near distance and at worst growling and making phony charges, teeth bared) plenty of time to size visitors up and decide they mean no harm, and potential respondents plenty of time to get out behind the shed or wherever they want to be when visitors knock on the door. Then the visitor walks, very slowly, looking almost anywhere except at the door, usually at the house wall on the hinge side. The visitor, far enough from the door to fully extend an arm, then reaches out and taps lightly. Then one must wait (and wait, and wait, from my point of view). After a decent interval—and I never figured out the length of this interval—if the householder wishes to converse, he or she will come to the door, peek out, and give the visitor an opportunity to make a pitch. On occasions when I had driven over one hundred miles, asked local directions five times or so to get to a particular door, and was absolutely determined not ever to walk past particular dogs again, I would often knock repeatedly until I was dragged away by a desperately embarrassed Bernice. On other days I remembered that O'odham people like to be given a great deal of interactional space, would leave after one knock and a minute or two, and be reproached later by the householder who would say something such as, "Oh, we saw you come, but then you went away again."

The interactional niceties of what to do once the door was opened a crack for us were fairly tricky and involved a good deal of local improvisation. The whole scenario was utterly unnatural in O'odham terms, but Ofelia and Bernice would generally start out with some bland and obvious opening like, "Well, we've been going around hereabouts," and would gradually lead up to the issue at hand, describing the project in a way that, for them, was excruciatingly and embarrassingly direct, but the best they could do under the circumstances. Eventually they asked tentatively if the householder would like to participate. I would generally lurk in the background, again trying not to look like an anthropologist and providing a limited type of moral support (in the form of the dubious presence of someone who insanely believed that knowledge was worth going to any lengths to obtain). As we left I would often try out one of my few reliable

O'odham phrases, "*Nt o a ep m-ñei*" ("I'll see you again"), hoping that it was appropriate.

### Jane: Female Breathy Speech and Other Dilemmas

In 91 instances (out of approximately 100 contacts) we were actually able to arrange interviews, and my role in each of these seemed equally bizarre. Conducting interviews involves speech acts that are normally unheard of in O'odham society, such as asking elderly people direct questions. My (or Molly's) silent presence made it clear that what was happening was probably not Ofelia's or Bernice's fault—everybody knows that O'odham people sometimes have to do strange things because some *milga:n* (white person) insists on it. Further, Ofelia and Bernice found ways of phrasing questions as if they were not really questions. I would generally sit quietly, try not to stare,<sup>9</sup> chuckle a little bit when other people were laughing (hoping that the joke had not been on me), operate the tape recorders, and try to take notes. I don't speak O'odham. I hardly understand it. After a while, though, I had almost memorized the way that Ofelia and Bernice asked questions and was able to understand the more routine parts of answers. I could partially transcribe and translate recorded material, but I had to keep running to Ofelia for help, and I made hilarious interpretive mistakes.

O'odham people seemed to be very tolerant of my linguistic inadequacies, and I decided that they simply didn't expect a *milga:n* to speak the language. It was extremely common, however, for O'odham people to discuss among themselves, in my hearing and at some length, those remarkable cases of *milga:n*, such as priests and traders, who spoke excellent O'odham. I listened to these discourses for several years, thinking of them as interesting anecdotes that people for some reason wanted me to hear. I finally realized that they were probably a form of reproof. The first lesson of working with O'odham people is that they will not directly criticize. They will tell a friend about inappropriate behavior (on the theory that it will get back to the guilty party eventually). Or they will praise someone who is acting appropriately in the offender's presence. Ruth Underhill, the great ethnographer of the O'odham, described how parents instructed misbehaving offspring; they would deliver sonorous

---

<sup>9</sup> In O'odham terms this means hardly looking at your interlocutor at all. Molly claims to have timed Ofelia and an elderly man for an hour and a half without ever seeing their gazes meet.

monologues (in the morning darkness, after the Morning Star was visible, but before the sun was up), about the virtues of the neighbors' children: for example, how Maria was always first out of bed to make the fire (in the presence of a child who lay drowsily under the blankets), how Catalina was so modest and virtuous (in the presence of a child who knew well that she had danced too long with handsome Husi at last weekend's feast), about how Felipe had gone far into the desert to recover a lost calf (while the stock that were another's responsibility wandered who knows where). In much the same way, I heard about the linguistic virtuosity of Father This and Mister That, but for years these gentle reminders of my responsibilities rolled right off me, because when *my* parents were disappointed with me, they spoke right up: "Frances Jane Hassler [no question about who was being talked about], I told you two hours ago I wanted the bathroom clean, and pronto! Now hop to it!" And when a friend is really disappointed in something I have done (but wants to go on being my friend, rather than quietly disappearing forever from my life), she'll come and say, "We need to talk. I want you to know I'm very upset by what you did last week." Thus goes interaction among many *mimilga:n*, but not among the O'odham.

An unexpected problem for me was the O'odham preference for speaking very quietly. Indeed, to be "noisy" (*s-nakosig*) is considered childish. The most extreme forms of quietness are employed by women of middle age and above (like me) in one-on-one conversation. (O'odham people are perfectly capable of making themselves heard in settings such as public meetings, although not at the amplitude that an English speaker would achieve.) During the interviews I would strain to hear, desperately wanting people to "speak up," but knowing that I could not ask them to do that. I could often hear flies buzzing in the distance and trucks on the highway half a mile away, but not what a speaker on the other side of the table was saying. After many minutes, through a sort of self-invented meditative process of focusing all of my attention on the barely moving lips of a speaker (this had to be done with the mind, not the eyes, since it's very rude to look at people), I would finally be able to tune in. After a day of this I'd be whispering myself, and my husband would ask, "What did you say?" One research consequence of this voice quality preference was the need to use lavalier microphones, attached as close to the speaker's mouth as possible, in order to get decent recordings; less intrusive microphones built into our tape recorders were useless. This experience made me aware that the relatively loud voices and clatter of my own culture may suggest that many people really don't pay very much attention to one another. English speakers who feel they deserve attention generally "speak up" to get

it, while the O'odham assume that if someone is speaking those who want to hear will take the trouble to listen carefully.

An articulatory device that I found enchanting and genuinely exotic, used by O'odham people (especially by older women) in the service of respectable quietness, is what linguists call “pulmonary ingressive air stream.” The speaker breathes in, not out, while talking. The discourse context in which this is most common is when speakers repeat themselves for emphasis—exactly where an English speaker might talk a little louder! Probably the most frustrating uses of the ingressive air stream during our project occurred when speakers were going through our picture book. We had a big book picturing items whose corresponding words we expected to exhibit regional variation. Respondents would look through the book and name the pictures. Often I wouldn't quite hear them the first time they said a word and would wait eagerly for them to repeat it so that I could check my transcription. Fortunately for us, O'odham people use repetition for emphasis. Older women would repeat words—but on the ingressive air stream! Gone would be the hope of hearing whether the constricted or spread glottis final consonant had been used, or the hope of hearing unstressed /u/ versus /e/. We found, though, that exact characterization of the interactional and discourse functions of ingressive airstream was an inviting research project, and one to which Ofelia (who ingresses without thinking, while I turn slightly blue even on a one-syllable word) could contribute native speaker intuition.

Before Ofelia discusses “pulmonary ingressive airstream,” I'll provide a short example of its use in a brief reminiscence by Marie Velasco, who grew up at Pi O'oikk in the extreme southwestern corner of the Tohono O'odham Reservation. Bernice Belin talked to Mrs. Velasco on a cloudy day in March, 1987, at her house in Ge Wo'o. When we came to the dialect-survey item *hakko*, or “head-ring,” a ring of soft material (basketry in the old days, more recently cloth) used by women when they carried buckets and ollas on their heads, Mrs. Velasco did not remember the word. Bernice reminded her, and the word triggered memories from Mrs. Velasco's childhood. The pulmonary ingressive airstream speech comes at the climax of her reminiscence, and continues as she jokes about how her head must have been hard if she could carry water with her mother. The ingressive airstream speech is marked by underlining. Whispered speech is double underlined. Bernice's responses are in parentheses; sequences such as “*hhh*” indicate Bernice's chuckling.

*Hegi mo ge sikol?* (aha)

B 'o 'a'aga, mmm . . . (Long pause while Mrs. Velasco thinks)



Bernice: *Hakko*

Mrs. Velasco: *Hau'u.* (hmmm)

*B 'o cei g ñ-je'e, "I be'i g ñ-hakko, nt o wa'igam."* (ah, aha)

*Matt 'am 'I cea k 'am 'aş hihhim c gahu wa'ig 'abi.* (uhhuh)

*Wenog 'o pi b mas mo hemu 'ab haha 'I-ku:g g şu:d.* (aha)

*Pş o wa'igk o wa'igk o şu:dad g walin.* (hhhhh,uhhuh)

*Hekaj 'o t-wapko, hekaj 'ep 'o t-waccwi.* (hm)

*Ş 'I masma* (mhm)

*Woho 'o mo:t hegi mo d five gallon,*

*'in o dai 'e-mo'o 'an* (ah, uhhuh)

*'In 'ep o gi'acugad g bucket*

*'Añ we:maj* (hhhm)

*kihu kawka g ñ-mo'o,*

*hem s-kawk g ñ-mo'o!* (hm! uhhuh, hhh)

That thing like a circle? (aha)

That's called, mmmm . . . (Long pause while Mrs. Velasco thinks)

Bernice: *Hakko*

Mrs. Velasco: Yes. (hmmm)

My mother used to say, "Get my *hakko*, I'll go get water." (ah, aha)

Then we did what she said and just went and got water over there. (uhhuh)

Back then it wasn't like it is today where the water is right here. (aha)

She'd just be getting water and getting water to fill the barrel. (hhhhh, uhhuh)

Because we used it for washing, we'd also use it for taking baths.

That is the way it always was (mhm)

Really she carried on her head that five-gallon can.

She'd set it on her head (ah, uhhuh)

and also she would carry the bucket.

I'd go with her (hhhm)

My head was probably getting hard then,

now my head is hard! (hm! uhhuh, hhh)

## Ofelia: Female Breathly Speech

Jane has discussed the pulmonary ingressive airstream practiced by female speakers and the problems it can cause for those not accustomed to listening to words spoken in this manner. Here I want to make a few observations based on our fieldwork. To put it briefly, the manner of speaking by breathing in, or sort of "swallowing" words, is certainly more common in female speech. Men ingress to a certain extent but not to the same degree. Earlier I mentioned my first written O'odham language teacher who said he learned to speak from females and so spoke like a woman. He was, of course, referring to the ingressive speech, which he did

quite well although it seemed slightly exaggerated. My other linguistics teacher, Ken Hale, learned O'odham from adult male speakers and did not exhibit this characteristic. He sounded like a typical mature male speaker.

Female ingressive speech is more common, and, as Jane points out, I exhibit this speech form myself. In fact she has a habit of saying, "Oh you're doing it" and pointing at me when I do it in mid-speech, even in English. I noticed in some of the taped interviews that if a woman I spoke with ingressed noticeably, I would pick up on her rhythm and ingress more so than with women who did not ingress as much. I recall my mother mimicking my aunt who had an extreme practice of this ingressive speech. My aunt also had a shrill voice that made the ingressive airstream speech that much more noticeable. And because she would ingress continually in her speech, she made the events she was relaying sound exciting and as if they needed emphasis. Even though my mother did ingress in her normal speech, she was so aware of the unusual form of speech that my aunt used that she would mimic her.

Jane perceives this particular style as a feature of being quiet and says that being quiet is a desirable characteristic for O'odham. This ingressive speech is undoubtedly a quiet way to talk; however, it is not quiet in the manner that whispering is for most English speakers. This ingressive speech form for O'odham is an ordinary volume of spoken O'odham that simply happens to have the airstream moving inward instead of outward. This inward movement of airstream is something English speakers' ears are not accustomed to. O'odham people also whisper. In fact, whispering is a very intimate act, much as it would be in English, and speakers tend to whisper very close to the listeners' ears, requiring that the participants be of the same gender, typically females, or otherwise adolescents. With the ingressive speech style, however, women don't need to be as close to one another physically when they speak. To the extent that it doesn't require any physical repositioning by the listener or the speaker, I consider the volume of ingressive speech to be "normal" for O'odham women.

Molly, our graduate assistant, told me of an incident during one of the interviews with a female speaker conducted by Jane and Bernice. Apparently Jane was quite conscious of the quiet speech between the two O'odham speakers when she found herself having to ask the interviewee to repeat a word for clarification. Jane made the request by whispering very softly. It took Bernice a second to realize Jane was whispering, and she adjusted so that she could understand Jane's request. Later Molly confided that both Bernice and the interviewee mentioned they were not sure why Jane was whispering; both women were surprised by it. Bernice thought that Jane was trying to mimic the ingressive speech of the O'odham female

speakers, or that she felt self-conscious, fearing that her natural female voice would seem loud in contrast to the soft voices of the two O'odham women. Instead of letting out a booming *milga:n* voice, she attempted something in the middle, which for the O'odham ears did not work. Whispering was too quiet and, perhaps more importantly, out of context.

I would now like to comment further on this exotic speech form by describing occurrences other than those in O'odham women's normal speech. I have observed that it is common for O'odham males to repeat women's speech or to quote a woman by using this ingressive speech form. This is done most often when the quote relates excitement, drama, or humor. At other times, men may quote or paraphrase women and use the ingressive speech form when they are very familiar with the the woman being quoted. For instance, elderly women or women who ingress noticeably, such as my aunt, will have their speech represented in this way. Ingressive speech can also be used as a performance device when talking about women or when talking for them. This speech form helps to embellish an anecdote and so fulfills a specific function for both the listener and the speaker. I often use the following example from my own experience to illustrate variation in speech. My father would use the ingressive speech form as a way of kidding around, especially with his own children. He would only ingress certain words, in particular the word for "yes." In O'odham the word for "yes" has quite a bit of variation in normal speech: *hau' u*, *heu' u*, *hau*, *heu*, and so on. My father would produce the last form in this list, *heu*, with an ingressive airstream. When ingressed this form of the word "yes" sounds much like someone very quickly slurping up a big spoonful of soup. Hearing him say this was funny to us as children, and what was funnier is that he would not say it only once but a couple of times in a row. For instance, he might use the ingressive "yes" if we asked him whether he wanted the last orange in a bag, when he knew that we probably wanted it too. As children, we knew using the ingressive airstream on "yes" usually meant it was not a serious "yes" on his part.

### **Jane: Conclusion**

The "disappearing act" pulled on visitors, the vague gestures when giving directions, the avoidance of mutual gaze, the long silences between interactional moves (exemplified here by the "decent interval" waiting at the door), the reluctance to ask questions, the idea that comfort in human relationships may be more important than knowledge, the indirect forms of instruction and reproof, and the quietness of O'odham speech seem to me a

part of a coherent interactional package. Through these interactional forms (and no doubt through others that I have not yet noticed) people give one another enormous autonomy and respect. No interaction is forced because people are expected to care enough about one another to be keenly attentive to subtle signals. Forms of knowledge that do not involve such careful attention are not as highly valued. Such characteristics reflect a special form of individualism that is quite at variance with the type that has developed in the middle class of American English communities in which I was raised. In many such communities, people engage in a constant noisy battle for attention, by questioning, interrupting, staring, outshouting one another, and defining many superficial human relationships through needs for knowledge, rather than permitting knowledge to emerge through deep attention to a few other people. Such a conclusion can easily sound very negative, and I don't intend that. As a member of my own culture, I am convinced that its forms of knowledge and human relationships have their own value. However, the work that I've done with Ofelia has reinforced my conviction that these values are local, the product of a particular history. Their worth does not come from their universality, but emerges from a specific historical context. O'odham forms of knowledge and relationships are similarly worthy, and, one hopes, new forms of value may emerge from the engagement of these two historical trajectories.

### **Ofelia: Conclusion**

As I reflect on my own role as a researcher in this project, I know that many speakers of this language who either participated in the research or are familiar with it know that we have not conducted any interviews in the community of San Lucy, and therefore the study is flawed in their eyes. Similarly, others from the village of Ge Wo'o know that we interviewed a speaker in Ge Wo'o who was not originally from that village, and so for them the study is flawed. Some are also aware that one particularly prominent village would not agree to allow any member from there to be interviewed, and so for those particular villagers, as well as for others who were interviewed, the study is incomplete.

And so in typical O'odham fashion some let us know what they thought about us, and some made jokes about our adventures out on the reservations as we went looking for people to talk to. In fact, a running joke for a while was that Jane and I were looking for men, old men at that. This joke was a result of our having had particularly bad luck in finding willing males to interview. Still other speakers spoke behind our backs

about the quality of our work, remarked on our intrusive natures, and said that we were asking questions we shouldn't. Although I realized that these responses were possibly going to occur, I was never fully prepared for them. Fortunately, the negative response to our work was minimal.

I do agree with our critics that our project was an intrusive one, but intrusive only in that we had to rely on the speech of others. While there is no other way to collect this kind of data, we worked very hard at minimizing the intrusion. We made appointments for the interviews, appointments that could only be met by driving to the person's home on one day and two days later driving back. The distance of trips ranged from 40 to 200 miles roundtrip. Sometimes we made these trips two or three times if appointments weren't kept for any variety of reasons.

For some speakers, our intrusions were a nice distraction. They relished the opportunity to talk to willing listeners. These were individuals who spent time alone for long periods because of their isolated location or because children visited only on weekends. One elderly woman refers to Molly and me as her guardian angels because we came by her house, which was in an isolated area, and found her ill and bedridden. The weather was particularly bleak, and rain and wind were blowing through the cracks around the door and windows. We helped move her bed so the drip from the ceiling would miss her and closed all the cracks as best as we could. We felt badly that we had to leave her there like that, but she promised us that her son was coming that day and that the sisters from the church were going to visit her in the evening. Needless to say, she was a very willing participant in the project. Molly and I thought of her after the study was done and said we should go visit her, but we never did.

I would have preferred not to have interviewed certain individuals. I never said this to Jane because it would have been unprofessional. I thought we had intruded greatly on one man in particular whose wife was near death, but for him we were a welcome distraction.

I went back later to some homes, especially of people I knew, and brought payments of watermelon, cantaloupe, and squash. Jane went back to one area for a burial of one of the participants. Molly still spends time with some of the families from one part of the reservation because they are her friends, and her subsequent work requires her to travel in those areas. And so as we intruded we became connected to a group of people in a special way. Sometimes when I see some of the elders at gatherings, they shake my hand and smile, not really curious about what transpired from

their interviews with us. I only imagine they felt good that they were able to assist in the best way that they could.

*University of Arizona*

### References

- Hale 1972                      Kenneth Hale. "A New Perspective on American Indian Linguistics." In *New Perspectives on the Pueblos*. Ed. by Alfonso Ortiz. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. pp. 87-110.
- Hill 1980                        Jane H. Hill. "Culture Shock, Positive Face and Negative Face: Being Polite in Tlaxcala." *Central Issues in Anthropology*, 2.i:1-14.
- Hill and Hill 1986            Jane Hill and Kenneth C. Hill. *Speaking Mexicano*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hockett 1977                 Charles F. Hockett. *The View from Language*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Saxton and Saxton 1969     Dean Saxton and Lucille Saxton. *Papago and Pima to English Dictionary*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Saxton and Saxton 1973     \_\_\_\_\_. *Legends and Lore of the Papago and Pima Indians*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Zepeda 1982                 Ofelia Zepeda. *Mat Hekid o Ju: / When it Rains*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Zepeda 1983                 \_\_\_\_\_. *A Papago Grammar*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

## “Wu-ches-erik (Loon Woman) and Ori-aswe (Wildcat)”

Darryl Babe Wilson and Susan Brandenstein Park

Susan Brandenstein Park's home is small, white, trimmed with green. We went up to her door in Carson City, Nevada, and were greeted by loud barking from her daughter's puppy. My twin boys and I had traveled to Susan's home to look over her original Atsuge-wi field notes. It had been sixty years since she talked with a person from Atsuge-wi. Susan, an anthropologist, born in 1908 and a former student of Alfred L. Kroeber and Robert Lowie, opened the door. Later she said,

I did not know what to expect. I thought you would be older and I did not think you would have children. You are much younger than I thought you would be. You seemed to be more pulled together, more . . . better educated than most of the Atsuge-wi people would be. That is a snobbish kind of thing to say, but it's true.

I thought you would be older, I thought you would be without children, I thought you would be smaller. In my mind I keep thinking about the people I talked to as being small and thin, very shabbily dressed, but clean—most of them. Not all of them. You didn't look like any of the people I talked to. I don't know exactly what I did expect. I was surprised. You looked different than I expected, but I don't know what I expected. Somebody skinny, I guess.<sup>1</sup>

Susan was a wisp of a person, soft spoken, and fragile. With a quick handshake we got down to business. She had a huge stack of field notebooks on her desk. They were very old and very worn—a green that had turned almost gray-yellow.

I quickly studied her materials. There in her scrawling handwriting in number-two lead pencil were the stories my people told her long before I was born. The more I studied, and the more the voices materialized, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on June 24, 1992, Carson City, Nevada.

more I could see my elders talking with Susan long ago. I could see them gesturing as they spoke, their hands, bodies, eyes telling as much of the story as their words—perhaps more.

I could see the twinkle in their eyes and hear their gruff giggles whenever they told about Coyote getting caught in a trap. As we talked, Susan kept softly stroking her old field notes as if they were sleeping kittens. She looked into the distance and remembered the land and the people, the sweat bath that she took in Dixie Valley, and the long evenings with Sampson Grant on the edge of the pine forest in Goose Valley.

I had only enough gas money to go back to the University of California, Davis, and I dared not take the responsibility of possessing her original notes. So, I made an instant plan to return to the university and secure funding, then return to Susan's home and photocopy her materials in Carson City—in order that her very valuable originals not be separated from her; besides being precious, they were very fragile. We agreed that this was a workable plan. My ten-year-old twin boys and I returned to Davis late that night, excited but exhausted.

I trace my ancestry to two peoples: one residing north of the Pit River, Iss (Ajuma-wi), and one residing south of the Pit River, Aw'te (Atsuge-wi). Often the government combines these two people into the Pit River Tribe. Our homeland is in the area now known as northeastern California. We have always lived along Hati-wiwi (Hat Creek), one of the larger tributaries of It-Ajuma (Pit River). Hati-wiwi travels east from Tetta-jenn-a (Mt. Lassen) until it enters It-Ajuma just south of Lake Britton several miles from Jema-wehalo Tiwiji (Burney Falls) and thirty miles south of Ako-Yet (Mt. Shasta). Farther east, and along Horse Creek, are the Apwerake (Dixie Valley People). These two areas make up the land of my father's people. After years of humiliation by the local white ranchers and business people, Atsuge-wi and Apwerake still reside close to the old home places—as close as permitted.

In too many instances, the whites have systematically maneuvered my people away from the best grazing land and into the rock piles; land was usurped from Atsuge-wi while clouded, random titles to the earth were issued to the white people through a variety of American legislative measures. The Dawes Allotment Act (1887) was the most damaging for this purpose. No doubt most of Nil-la-du-wi (wanderers) presently living on our homeland wish that we somehow would vanish—as their history books constantly promise. But we cannot.

Atsuge-wi and Apwerake are languages of our ancestors, and we have our own history of the universe. Our elders remember when the moon was an "earth," but then the two powers clashed. One power wanted to exhaust



the resources because it was within their ability to do so. The other power wanted to save the “earth,” since they believed that there was an obligation to future generations to preserve and share it. In the battle over these issues, the “earth” was used up. In the end, each side consumed the resources of the “earth.” Eventually, a great fire began, and there was not enough water remaining to put it out.

Our ancestors also tell how this universe was made. A thought manifested itself first as a voice, then as the being *Kwaw* or *Qon*,<sup>2</sup> in English “Silver Grey Fox” (Silver). Silver, after dwelling in the silent vastness for many seasons, decided to think another being into existence. He failed to formulate his thought completely, and the resulting being emerged in the form of *Ma-ka-da* (Coyote). Together Silver and Coyote sang and danced for “a million years or more” and made a mist that floated to them. Silver caught the mist and breathed upon it, creating a substance that jelled and then hardened into a fragment of earth. Silver and Coyote continued to sing and dance, kneading the earth until it was an island large enough to stand upon. Then they stretched it in all directions, making the earth as we know it today.

Those of knowledge say there is a dwelling beyond the sky that Silver Grey Fox made but later abandoned when he grew tired of Coyote’s changing and challenging his creations. He could not teach Coyote in the land beyond the sky, so he lifted up the center post of the *chema-ha* (sweat house), and, after carefully replacing it, came here and made this earth. First there was only water, but Silver Grey Fox sang until there was a little land floating upon the water. He sang more. The land mass grew, and, when it was large enough, he sang another song, causing a new *chema-ha* to appear upon the little island. He then began to make the mountains and rivers, animals and fish, birds and forests until everything was made perfectly. Using his own magic, however, Coyote came down onto this earth through the center-post hole of the *chema-ha* beyond the sky. Since then, nothing has been right.

My elders tell of the first white men entering the land and damaging all that they touched. They tell of the “Americans” who came in uniform and upon horses. The Americans rounded up my people like wild cattle and around 1862 marched them over the mountains in winter to Redding, California. My elders were then marched to Red Bluff on the Sacramento River, where they were put on large ships and sent downriver. Some were taken to Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay; others were thrown into the

---

<sup>2</sup> Depending upon who is telling the story (and where), *Kwaw* and *Qon* are interchangeable.

ocean; and still others were taken to Round Valley and Eureka, eventually being sent to Quapa, Oklahoma, Indian Territory. Some of those placed on Alcatraz returned; others from Round Valley escaped the military confinement and, like shadows, also returned to the old home places. My people have always been attached to our homeland. My people were connected to the land even before there was enough earth to walk upon, and after being brutally removed, we always found a way to return. Our stories explain why we cannot vanish: we were created from a dream and a song long ago, and, even before this earth was made, we were thought of and planned for.

### **Susan Brandenstein Park among the Atsuge-wi**

Susan Brandenstein (Park) graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1930, with a degree in anthropology. After graduating, she asked to join an anthropology expedition to Fiji organized by the Anthropology Division at Berkeley, but her professors Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie both said that she should cut her teeth on a “simpler” culture, suggesting that she go to the land of my father, east of Mt. Lassen in the extreme northeastern corner of California.

Susan graduated just before John Collier’s term as Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the legislation creating the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. John Collier was convinced that he was doing his utmost to advance the natives into modern society while protecting their societal rights. Compromises in Congress caused the IRA to promote government-created tribal and business councils. These tribal councils generally ignored tradition, opting to deal directly with the American government. They rarely allowed participation of traditional councils in their meetings and in their decisions. This tendency caused divisions in tribes and in families—an injury that has not been remedied to date.

When Susan Brandenstein entered our land, it was still the American policy to take native children from their parents and from their homelands and to ship them to boarding schools in distant places: Chemawa, Oregon; Stewart, Nevada; or Riverside, California. The children were forced to attend these schools and were forbidden to use native languages or to participate in their native culture. At this time my father, Herman Ira Wilson, along with many of my tribe, was at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, although he was not an academic. Growing angry with administrative policies, he fought physically with the administration and was expelled before graduating. Susan was only vaguely aware of the

struggles my father and others were going through at this time:

I asked them [Atsuge-wi] what the effect of the school was on the children or the young people who were supposed to learn cleanliness and how to cook and how to dress themselves, and so on. And they all laughed. They said that is nonsense. As soon as they come back they fall into their old ways. They don't bring what they learned in these schools. They don't feel it is any good. It doesn't fit in with the way they live. But now I can't remember who I talked with. It was the older people who told me this. I don't remember talking to anyone who had been to the school. There was probably a lot going on that I wasn't aware of. I'm sure. I wish I could go back. Now I feel I have learned a great deal more. I could probably be more intelligent in my questions.<sup>3</sup>

Twenty years old, just out of college, and bringing only her trusting curiosity and a smile, Susan entered my father's homeland. Instead of walking in the soft sands of the Fiji Islands, she was sent by her professors into the land of lava beds, rutted roads, rattlesnakes, coyotes, and volcanoes and to a people who had every reason to be hostile to the American process. Of this experience she said, "To me, it was like going to the moon":

You asked how and why the Atsuge-wi people talked to me; it is simply that they loved to talk. They loved to talk about their histories. Today a man or woman going out to do fieldwork would have a list of questions that long: how to start, what to say.

I did not know where to begin, so I went to the Post Office in Cassel, California. There were many Indian men sitting around. Not talking, just sitting. I approached Lee Bone because he was a roly-poly, sweet-looking man and asked if he would like to talk with me about the histories of his people. He said that he would, very much, and asked if I would like to go to his home. So, we got in my car and we drove down to his home and sat on the porch, a dilapidated, old porch, and we talked and talked.<sup>4</sup>

Susan paid those who cooperated with her one dollar per day. At that time, those were good wages for the Atsuge-wi, especially when compared with nothing per day. Soon she learned of others who wanted to share their histories. So she drove around the Hat Creek and Dixie Valley areas, taking notes and capturing on paper the voices of anyone who would talk with her: Ida Piconum, Coyote Jack, Kaize Buckskin, Sampson Grant, Mary Wilson,

---

<sup>3</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on June 24, 1992, Carson City, Nevada.

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on July 14, 1992, Carson City, Nevada.

John and Lyman LaMarr, and Bob Rivers. Soon her notebooks were filling with narratives. Although my people told her many stories, they kept her away from ceremonial practices:

They were very pleasant, but I was never allowed to go to a shamanistic curing. They would tell me that it was going to be Thursday. There was going to be a doctoring. So, come Thursday, the doctoring had taken place on Wednesday. It happened over and over again. In Wintun, I did go to a curing. But not in Atsuge-wi, never, ever.

I did not go to a Big Time [gathering of many people]. The Fourth of July, they would tell me, would be celebrated on the third, but it was celebrated on the fourth. So I never went. It wasn't unpleasant the way they told me, it was just that if I had been at a curing my presence would have interfered with the doctor's curing. It wouldn't be effective. That is the way I interpret it. And, I would spoil a Big Time.<sup>5</sup>

After assembling some of her field notes and narratives, Susan attempted to locate a publisher, but there seemed to be little interest in her labor. Finally, after a long battle with the editor, "Sampson Grant, Atsuge Shaman" was mimeographed for *Occasional Papers of the Redding Museum* (1986). Of the 1,000 copies printed, Susan said there are still 995 left in the Redding Museum.

Lacking support or encouragement from her professors, Susan worried that her field notes would never be widely read despite their value:

It was like living in another dimension—which is exactly what it was. It was a wonderful experience. In the version, for instance, that Dixon took he talked about earth-maker (1908). They didn't talk about earth-maker. The Indians, not any Indians—not your people—talked about earth-maker. It is a term that some fancy folklorist may have used. But what I wonder is, did some of these concepts such as the sky ladder and fe-fi-fo-fum kind of thing, were they imported from elsewhere or are these spontaneous thoughts that the people themselves have? I don't know.

I came from San Francisco. I went to Sacramento, then I went to Redding, and from Redding I went to Burney. From Burney I was headed for Cassel. That's where Dr. Kroeber told me to go, to Cassel. I went to the Post Office. Cassel was named after a German city which, curiously enough, is where my ancestors came from. I rented a shack for nine dollars a month, thinking it would impress them. But they didn't care, the Indians didn't care where I lived or the conditions. They didn't care. So, when I found that out, I thought "why not be comfortable?" So, I went to the Rising River Inn.

---

<sup>5</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on June 24, 1992, Carson City, Nevada.

I wasn't a bit apprehensive. I have had this feeling ever since a small child, that if you smile at someone that wins half the battle. So I smiled every place. This was true in Ethiopia,<sup>6</sup> too, when I had gone places where there was a great deal of hostility. I guess I am just lucky because I smile at people; then there is no problem. Not always, but nearly always. Certainly it was true with the Atsuge-wi.

I got a house. The next day I went, because there was nothing to do in this house. I asked Mr. Williams where I could find some Atsuge-wi Indians. First of all he didn't know what I meant by Atsuge-wi Indians. He finally figured it out and told me to go to the Post Office, and there I would find a lot of people sitting around. And that was true. I don't know what they were doing because they didn't get any mail. That's how I started out. Having met Lee Bone and—what was his brother's name—Jackson.

The best stories were told by Lyman LaMarr and John LaMarr. They were the best storytellers. At least I thought they were. . . .

I came to see him [Kroeber] in the middle of my first semester. I was all excited. I said that it was wonderful to go and talk with the people and to hear what you have read about come out of the mouths of these people. For instance, you have a joking relationship with certain people and you have an avoidance relationship with other members of your group. Those who are a possible spouse, you had a joking relationship with. For instance, if you died, your wife would marry your brother. And that is very common. That is a very widespread practice. And that is the kind of thing he [Kroeber] was interested in.

Today the people go into the lives of the Indians with much more detail, with much more education, and with much more support. For instance, I went out with no preparation except reading about the Indians in that area.<sup>7</sup>

After her early attempts to publish her work about the Atsuge-wi, Susan turned to other work. Still she remembered her unfinished project. In 1991, Susan Brandenstein Park read an article of mine in *News from Native California*, a Berkeley based quarterly magazine published by Malcolm Margolin. I had signed my article with my name and with my tribal identity, A-juma-wi/Atsuge-wi, the very people Susan had studied sixty years earlier. Susan contacted Malcolm Margolin, and he gave her my address at the University of California, Davis, where I was a student majoring in English. Soon we were communicating. She told me about the thousands of pages of notes she had compiled concerning my father's people of Hat Creek and Dixie Valley. I arranged to visit her with my twin

---

<sup>6</sup> Susan's husband was assigned as an anthropologist by the State Department to work in Ethiopia for several years.

<sup>7</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on July 14, 1992, Carson City, Nevada.

sons at her home in Carson City, Nevada.

After this first encounter, the twins and I returned to Davis, where I immediately began a search for funding. Seeking support from the Rare Manuscripts and Special Collections Division of my own university as well as other libraries in the California system, the California Historical Society, the California American Indian Heritage Commission, and various other funding agencies, I learned that there was little immediate interest in supporting such a project. "Maybe next year," was the common response. Finally, the Women's Research and Resource Center at the University of California, Davis, came through with two hundred fifty dollars, and we were on our way. The Saturday after the funding came through, we left Davis in the early darkness and before sunup were having breakfast in Carson City. Susan was up and ready for us and suggested that I take her original field notes back to Davis and photocopy them when I had the time. Although I worried about risks involved in taking such valuable materials, her suggestion made sense because the fragile notebooks had to be handled very carefully and would require several days to photocopy.

When I called Susan to tell her that we had finished photocopying and would be returning her originals the following weekend, I thought she would be delighted, but she was almost in tears. A strange and awful event had occurred. She had been gathering old photographs, genealogies, names, and addresses, as well as words and partial thoughts scribbled on small scraps of paper, in a cardboard box to give to me on my next visit. She had placed the box on top of her typewriter. While Susan was resting in her bed and her daughter Nancy was away from the house, children from across the street had entered her home and set fire to the box. Metal in the typewriter likely slowed the fire and prevented the entire house from being destroyed. When Nancy returned, she discovered the door of the house open and the house on fire. Later, the children confessed to the police. A precious box of Atsuge-wi memories had vanished. Susan explained,

The newspaper delivery boy called the fire department because he'd seen the fire. My daughter had gone out for about ten minutes. . . . I was still in the house. I was lying down. I made the mistake of telling the kids from across the street that they could come in and play with Gesha (her Keeshound puppy). So, the door was unlocked and they came in. It was very dangerous. This is an old house and it would go up in a couple of minutes. The fire department came and they called the police and the police sent some social workers. The child (a boy, twelve or thirteen) was taken and put in jail overnight. He turned out to be quite a nice boy in my opinion. It was just a couple of days before Christmas and I begged them

not to take him.<sup>8</sup>

If her original field notes had not been with us in Davis, her life's work could have vanished along with the other precious memories of my people. That next weekend we returned the original notes to Susan. None of us thought they were safe in her wooden home, and we considered placing them in a library. We talked at length about alternatives, but, in the final analysis, Susan thought that her children might want something original of her history. With some hesitation, she kept the original field notes at home.

With financial support from Malcolm Margolin and the Flow Fund (a branch of the Rockefeller Foundation), I then began the labor of deciphering Susan Park's handwriting and entering narratives into my word processor. Reading the pages was a lengthy process because Susan's handwriting, in her own words, is "horrid, ghastly!" I began by searching the pages for a word that I could clearly identify and then read again until a pattern emerged: a shadow, then the story gradually became clear on the page, like the watery image of a photograph in a dark room. I then typed quickly, page after page. Finally, there it was, a narrative, an "old story," readable. Eventually I managed to decipher and enter drafts of forty different narratives from Susan's notes.

Then the process of editing began. No matter how hard I tried, or how many attempts I made, I was unable to decipher narratives in their entirety because of the "ghastly" handwriting. I felt like a paleographer of ancient written documents, probing, pondering, wondering, and seeking. By transcribing the voices speaking in the narratives, I felt I had the power to bring my people back to life as they were sixty years ago, standing, breathing, dancing, singing, and teasing. Piecing the narratives together from the notes, I also felt like a basket maker, taking a shattered basket, studying it, inserting new ribs, and then weaving the original pattern with new and fresh materials. The basket recovers its original shape and, when mended, has a purpose again. I worked with Susan, polishing the narratives. I read the materials I had typed from the notes, and Susan followed along, reading (with a huge magnifying glass) from her originals. Soon we were satisfied that what I had typed was what she recorded long ago.

The journey that began with Susan seeing "Atsuge-wi" in *News from Native California*, her letter to editor Malcolm Margolin, and his letter to me concerning the Susan Park field notes has been an upward climb, but

---

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with Darryl Babe Wilson on April 18, 1992, Davis, California.

this work cannot be considered a complete reconstruction, nor should it. To continue the process I now must take the mended “baskets” to my people. Furthermore, there is now a missing link in the reconstruction. Susan Brandenstein Park has, as my people say, “gone on ahead.” She died just before Thanksgiving, 1993. She rests just outside of Carson City, Nevada.

## The Story

Lee Bone told this story to Susan Brandenstein (Park) on June 24, 1931, at Dixie Valley, California, and it appears in the third volume of Susan B. Park’s original field recordings (9-21).<sup>9</sup> The story was restored by Susan B. Park and Darryl B. Wilson, December 19, 1992. The major characters are as follows:

<i>Wu-ches-erik:</i>	Coyote’s Daughter who later turns into Loon Woman
<i>Ori-aswe:</i>	Wildcat or Mountain Lion
<i>Nichnika:</i>	Old Lizard, who has lots of magic
<i>Naponahai:</i>	Cocoon Man or Night Flying Butterfly, who helped to create the world
<i>Itui-minumu:</i>	Daughter of Eagle Woman
<i>Yadi-ow-mas:</i>	Cousin of <i>Ori-aswe</i>

We have chosen to leave the text exactly as Susan recorded Lee Bone’s narration in order to retain the narrator’s voice. To alter the words or to “correct” the grammar would detract from the original performance.

### Wu-ches-erik (Loon Woman) and Ori-aswe (Wildcat)

There was a *chema-ha* and these two girls lived outside. Wu-ches-erik (Coyote’s Daughter) and Itui Minumu (the daughter of Eagle). They were outside by themselves. The two were in one house and all the boys were in the *chema-ha*, and no women were there.

This boy, Ori-aswe (Wildcat) and Yadi-ow-mas, went out to Wu-ches-erik every night. The girl sleeps too sound and she not found out who did this to her because nobody would come there, not her brothers would come.

She thought. One at a time they went, these two, to that girl. And this girl went out trying to get pitch. “I’ll find those boys!”

And she got pitch and put it all over her arms and legs and body.

---

<sup>9</sup> I have a complete copy of Susan’s field notes. Her daughter, Nancy, in Carson City, Nevada, has the originals.



And Wildcat (Ori-aswe) went that night and so this girl sleep sound and he went right in and Ori-aswe got pitch all over him. All over his body. And he knew he'd be caught because he had little specks of pitch all over him.

And that morning Wu-ches-erik got up and she wants to get the boys. She want to know who it was and she got on top of the *chema-ha* and she was singing and she wanted them to come up. She wanted to see who it was.

And Old Coyote went up first because that was his daughter. And Old Coyote told her she'd better go back. "Don't tell me anything."

"And tell all the animals that are in there to go on," Naponahai (Caterpillar) told them that.

Then Naponahai told them to go up. "She wants to know," that what Naponahai told us long ago.

He said, "You fellows go up! Go with her!" The last, the two boys, wouldn't go up. And she sent all the others back. "Go back, I don't need you and this hair, this long hair, that's the one I want," she said.

When they didn't come up, that's what she wanted, Yadi-ow-mas. And Yadi-ow-mas and Ori-aswe had to follow. And they went up this ridge up here. She took them wherever she wanted to go and she stopped overnight about eight miles from here.

And they made a little *jouts-che*, a little wind break, and they all stopped that night and early, daylight, the girl slept soundly and the two boys got up and got little log, dry logs, and put one in each of her outstretched arms. And the girl slept all the time.

They went home, the two boys, to the *chema-ha*. And everybody was ready to go in the basket. They knew the boys were coming.

And Old Lizard (Nichnika), the smallest lizard, was there.

And the girl woke up and looked at her arms and saw the logs and she got up and she said, "That's all right! Those boys! I'll find you boys!"

So, she came back, right down here, with the fire and went into the *chema-ha* and everybody had gone up, already to the sky.

Nichnika had made the basket. He was the boss. And this girl stood around and her power had come ahead of her and set the *chema-ha* on fire. And she thought, "Everybody inside has burned out already." And she watched outside with a long stick of skunk berry and she twisted it and twisted it and watched from outside.

And Lizard was in the center of the basket and he opened a little hole in the basket. "I want to see how my *chema-ha* is, see if it still burned out."

And he opened a little hole in the basket and they all fell down into the *chema-ha* and they fell into the blaze and one man popped first. His heart popped out like a bullet and Wu-ches-erik caught that one. And everyone's heart popped and she caught them as they did this and she missed one, Yadi-ow-mas. And she thought, "Oh! I missed one!"

And she got scared and she knew she had missed one. And she missed Naponahai's heart. His heart went way out to Klamath.

And little snake, Olop-kai-na invenbai, she missed their hearts. And eagle was way up, too. And she couldn't find him and everybody was

burned out of the *chema-ha* and Wu-ches-erik listened and she got all the hearts.

Wu-ches-erik fixed the hearts like beads on a necklace and she put it around her neck like a necklace and she looked at it all the time and thought that the hearts were pretty.

But, she lost her husband, Yadi-ow-mas, and she was thinking about that all the time. She went in the water, in a big lake so they couldn't find her. And Eagle went around and looked all over in this island. All her brothers used to be camping all through and used to be camping through here.

She made a little mountain and made a big mountain the second time and she found the bone—good bones. And she took some of these good bones because she thought then she'd take everything. She'd go to the two boys and live.

And she went over there, this Eagle Woman, to the two boys and she went into these boys' house and they hadn't come back. They had gone to hunt for a deer as they did all the time and she only saw the old lady, the two boys' grandmother.

And the old lady was lying when she told her, the old lady said, "They went out to hunt little ducks. They'll be back pretty soon."

And the two boys came back and she, Eagle Woman, told them she, Wu-ches-erik, killed everyone.

And the two boys, when she told them that everyone was dead, then they said, "Tsnu-na, wah hah hah." And that meant they were sorry. And Ori-aswe said, when they stopped, "No use to do that. I'm a man, too."

And Eagle asked these boys if they see that kind. "Well," these two boys said, "I never know. But early in the morning she makes a noise, 'oh, oh'—like that."

That's what they told Eagle. "Well, I guess that's the one," Eagle told the two boys, "and I guess that the one we see early in the morning she comes down when the water is like glass," that's what they told her.

"Looks like it's people—doesn't look like they'd kill nobody"—that's what they thought. And they said, "I haven't any way to kill that woman," and Eagle went out and she brought back this bone and she gave the bone to the two boys. "Well," they said, "I can use this," they said, and there were two bones. And Eagle told them to divide the two.

They fixed the bones one day and when everything was ready and fixed the bones like arrows with a point, "Well," they said, "We can get that one. She comes early in the morning."

And they went early in the morning before she came and they went with their tule boat and close to the shore so she wouldn't see them.

And they went in the thick tules and made a round hole so they could see her when she comes and they watched for her.

At daylight she made a noise and they knew she was coming. "She's coming" they told themselves.

"Let me shoot!"

"No, let me shoot first!" The old [other] fellow said.

“No, let me!”

And as they were talking she came pretty close, looking at herself and admiring her necklace.

Then the two shot at the same time and they got her and she dived down and they thought they missed but they saw the blood, and it came up for a long time.

And they took her out and put her on their boat and when they put her in they wanted to get some duck for their breakfast and they took her back and they took some duck.

And they went back and they said, “We couldn’t get her,” they told them.

“Maybe that’s not the one,” Eagle told them. And they went out to see who it was. Eagle went out to see and she looked at it and said, “That’s the one! That’s the one!” And she took the necklace of hearts off her and they got the hearts and took them back to the *chema-ha* and took them off the string and put them in *ko-pai* [burden basket] and dragged them back to the house.

They took Wu-ches-erik’s heart out and they were going to dance with it, and they made a war dance.

The old lady, when the dance was over, she said, “Don’t kill people like that.” And then she said, “A doctor will know you and then it will be power for him.”

And when this was done Eagle said, “We got to go home,” she told the two boys. So Eagle went back to her *chema-ha* and she fixed over again her *chema-ha* and she cleaned it up everything that was inside, pine needles, put all around and she lay down that night and she put the hearts in the water and then she fixed the pine needles for a bed in the *chema-ha* and Eagle lay down in the *chema-ha* with her head in her arms so she couldn’t see.

And at daylight, early daylight, they all hollered. Everybody was happy when they came back and they all came back to the *chema-ha* and Eagle didn’t get up yet and everybody came back and she heard with her ear which one came back.

And everybody came back. And she got up and she went out. She had another house where she belonged. That’s the end of it.

## Discussions

### *What the narration meant to Susan Brandenstein Park*

Susan traveled into my father’s country for two years, collecting a variety of narratives that often change from teller to teller with different meanings applied to various situations. One moment in 1993 while we were verifying my typing, I asked Susan what the particular meaning was in

this story:

She [Coyote's Daughter] was kind of a narcissist. To me it is just a story. I am not able to go beyond that. I am sure there is some hidden meaning. It must have meant a lot to the people who told the story. It is very widespread in California and in the Great Basin.

Why did some hearts pop and others not pop? What is the reason for that? There is no reason given. Coyote was her father. Coyote was not a very nice character, anyway. Why would she want the hearts to make a necklace? Why would just the hearts pop out?

She was killed by the hunter. Then the hearts all came back to life. They hollered and came back. So many times the people come back to life in these stories, over and over again.

*What the narration means to Darryl Babe Wilson*

Imagine you were Lee Bone, sixty-five-years-old in 1931, sitting at the Post Office at Cassel, California. Your language is Atsuge-wi, and you are stumbling over a second, English. You have watched the Americans flood into your ancestral homeland. You witnessed them systematically denying your riparian rights, your rights to travel, your rights to equality, and your rights to the land where you were born and that you identify as home. You and other members of your tribe use the Cassel Post Office as your "employment center" and location for social gatherings. No mail is expected; day after day you sit on the worn board porch, waiting for a job and hoping that eventually a local rancher will ask you to dig a ditch or mend a fence.

Hope is all that you and your people have—hope and the Post Office. The Post Office is the best location to be because people on federal property are not easily charged with trespassing. The American government continues making laws that confuse you, and they are now taking the children to distant places to teach them other ways of life. Sitting at the Post Office all summer and surviving in this society is oppressive. In this atmosphere, a young woman, a smiling American anthropologist approaches and asks to talk with you about your people. She will pay one dollar per day for work. Not only is your opinion wanted, but it is also immediately valuable. You now have an avenue whereby you can express your thoughts. An American has looked at you and has seen something more than a "coyote."<sup>10</sup> Finally, you are invited to tell "your side" of the history that is

---

<sup>10</sup> "Coyote" has often been used as a derogatory term referring to Native American people.

unfolding. “Pay just for talk!” The old ones would say, “Look out! Americans must be crazy!”

Such was the situation Susan Brandenstein discovered in 1931 at Cassel, California. Given this context, perhaps it is not surprising that the vindictiveness, the contrariness, and the ugliness of Coyote are reflected in many of the narratives that Susan managed to collect across Hat Creek and Dixie Valley. Coyote’s Daughter is a silent-lake reflection of her father—contrary, vindictive, and unworthy of trust. In the narratives of the Atsuge-wi, the power of Coyote and his offspring lies in revenge, especially through fire. Coyote always manages to use fire in a wrongful way, threatening all forms of life that can be eradicated by this means.

In this particular narrative we see the animal and bird beings gathered after Coyote’s Daughter has caught the boys who had fondled her every night. She is able to find them because of the “long hair” that she had in her possession. Hair has always been a mysterious and extremely personal element within the lives of my people. With a single hair an Atsuge-wi “doctor” can either cure or kill the person from whom the hair comes. Such a doctor is one who has the power to harness a part of nature, often through the aid of a “helper.”<sup>11</sup> The helper must obey the doctor’s command, responding to the wishes of its father or mother. Sometimes the effects are helpful, sometimes fatal—but always beyond common understanding, reaching far into the realm of magic. The doctor must be in total control of the helper or the helper may attack and kill its mother or father. Coyote’s Daughter has a hair belonging to Ori-aswe (Wildcat) and providing proof of a wrong-doing.

A large *chema-ha* used for ceremonies is generally at center of the community. In addition, other *chema-ha* are constructed as dwelling places. In this story, the boys leave their *chema-ha*, one used for ceremonies, and go outside to where Coyote’s Daughter and Eagle’s Daughter are sleeping. Coyote’s Daughter, because of her lustful reputation, receives little respect from any male in the community. She is viewed only as their source for immediate pleasure. Eagle’s Daughter, on the other hand, is respected by males and is not bothered by the boys. Further, in the concluding cycle of the narrative, she returns life to all of

---

<sup>11</sup> A “helper” is an object of personal power that my tribal people need in order for us to cope with life more effectively. The “helper” can be in the form of an animal, a star, a tree, a thought, or even a dream. Without such a helper, a person is weak and alone. A helper comes to a person while he or she is seeking guidance on a spiritual quest. Sometimes this power is mischievous, but usually it is serious and assists the person who “owns” it whenever there is need. Often a person has more than one helper.

the beings whom Coyote's Daughter killed in the fire. In contrast to Eagle's Daughter who can give life, Coyotes have only inherited the power to *change* things, not the power to *create*.

When she discovers who has been bothering her, Coyote's Daughter decides to wield her power to invoke fear. She takes advantage of her authority over Ori-aswe and Yadi-ow-mas and forces them to travel with her. In this way she shows the other beings, who are studying the situation very carefully, that her every wish must be fulfilled. Through this process she thinks that she can also show that she is loved, thereby honored—that she is not something simply to be used and then abandoned. She, like her father, slips across the earth, knowing that either she will be satisfied or there will be war.

Embarrassment, to many Atsuge-wi, ushers in a sense of shame, and perhaps a hesitation to move among the other beings. Embarrassment to Coyote, however, means an instant retaliation—in this case, destruction by fire. In this story, the boys have deeply embarrassed Coyote's Daughter. They like her neither for her personality nor for her beauty but only for the momentary pleasure she can offer. She, however, decides that once the boys have fondled her, they have no choice but to love her; it is their obligation to curtail her embarrassment. By making the boys obey her wishes, Coyote's Daughter displays her elevated position to the other beings and alleviates some of the pain of being used. She feels used despite the fact that she may have intentionally “slept too soundly” to notice their advances.

Coyote's Daughter takes the boys on a journey. Together they construct a small hut in which to sleep, but the boys flee to the *chema-ha* of Nichnika (Old Lizard). All of the beings know that Coyote's strongest power is fire, and, in anticipation of Coyote's Daughter's retaliation, Lizard prepares a magic basket to lift the beings away to the safety of the world above. Everybody, including Old Coyote, expects a vicious revenge. The burning *chema-ha* serves as a symbol of Coyote's destructive nature and teaches young people not to be possessive, to love one's self above reason, or to covet. Instead, one should accept only those things that are one's own, given by nature.

During the fire, the beings are in the magic basket prepared by Lizard for this burning. As the basket hovers, moving skyward, Lizard wants to look back to see the condition of his *chema-ha*. “Looking back” has always meant disaster. Making a small hole, Lizard looks back, and the magic causing the basket to fly vanishes; the beings then fall from the small hole in the basket into the burning *chema-ha*. Old Coyote helps his daughter catch the hearts of the beings as they cook and then pop out of the fire.

However, they miss some. Coyote's Daughter then strings these hearts on twine made from the skunk berry bush. She makes *Yoken-aswi Yusji*, a necklace of animal hearts. Of all of the kinds of twine, she most likes the kind made from skunk berry bush, the fruit of which coyotes often eat.

The heart of Naponahai (Night-Flying-Butterfly), one of the beings assisting in the creation of the universe, was not caught as it popped from the burning *chema-ha*. Therefore Naponahai could help Eagle Woman bring all of the people back to life. Coyote's Daughter now knows that she is not in total control, although she has effectively shown the beings that, if they choose to cross or disobey her, their scorched hearts will also hang around her neck! The beings tremble as they plan to preserve themselves.

Eagle Woman (Itui minumu), who is no longer a companion of Coyote's Daughter, and the hunter-boys, who are out gathering food for their grandmother, are not in the *chema-ha* and thus escape the inferno. Eagle Woman then assists in killing Coyote's Daughter by supplying the hunters with a special leg bone from deer, bones which are then sharpened and used as arrow points. No other bone would do for this specific assignment. Because Coyote characteristically kills and disturbs deer, even digging into the earth to eat their bones, the arrow points made from the deer's leg used to kill Coyote's Daughter signify the bond between the deer and the hunters against their common enemy, Coyote, and teaches the beings to work together.

By powers in nature similar to magic, Coyote's Daughter transforms into Loon Woman the moment she places the necklace of hearts around her neck. She accomplishes this transformation so that she can admire herself and her necklace on the mirror surface of the lake. Still loving herself above all else and adoring her necklace, she swims early in the morning while the lake is placid, her reflection with the necklace crystal clear. Loon Woman, with her necklace of hearts, is beautiful; however, she must die, and the necklace of hearts must be taken to the *chema-ha* so that the people whose hearts make up the necklace can return to life. The hunters hide in the tules and shoot Loon Woman and then return to the Eagle Woman. When Eagle Woman sees the necklace of hearts, she knows that justice will now prevail and that the beings burned in Lizard's *chema-ha* will return. She then cleans and purifies the *chema-ha* for this returning.

In a weak moment the beings are as vindictive as Coyote's spirit: they take out Loon Woman's heart, impale it on a lance, and begin dancing around, "mocking" her. A wise elder woman tells Eagle Woman and the rest of the beings not to dance in mockery because there may be a time when a doctor could use the knowledge of their revenge against them—perhaps even a "Coyote Doctor" with very strong powers. They

cease to dance, and Eagle Woman takes the necklace of hearts into the *chema-ha* and puts them in a basket of water. At daylight all of the beings, whose hearts have been in the basket soaking, return to life after having been killed by the fire. The return of the beings shows that good will overcome evil in any situation. The story tells Atsuge-wi that all people must struggle and make sacrifices but that by working together with the aid of wisdom and magic, we can prevail.

In this narrative the Coyote spirit possibly represents weaknesses in our characters—adversaries within each of us. Some of us are capable of suppressing, while others of us are not. Therefore, it is necessary to study the destructive nature of Coyote and Coyote's children in order to establish a better life. Coyote's Daughter, then, embodies the conflict for which we must prepare in order for there to be a better life for all of the elements of nature.

## Conclusion

In my imagination I see my people gathered at the Cassel Post Office. Susan Brandenstein, a very young white woman, walks into the gathering of men, causing a ripple. She introduces herself to Lee Bone and they talk for a while; then to everyone's surprise, Susan and Lee drive away in her coupe. Goomes Mullen looks at Bob and Style Rivers sitting in the shade of a juniper and hooks his lip while swinging his head in the direction Susan and Lee just traveled. It is very clear that everyone waiting for a fence mending job or a ditch digging job is now wondering about Lee Bone departing and saying that he is going to "work."

A few days later, Lee Bone arrives at the Cassel Post Office at the regular time in the morning. He waits for a rancher to hire him to construct a barn or dig a ditch. The rest of the men look at him, wondering what type of "work" he did with that young white woman. Lyman LaMarr and Joe Wilson stop talking. Instantly the gathering quiets, everyone waiting for Lee to explain his activities. "Akh waisa" ("I talk"). "Waisa!" Somebody whispers that they all could talk a hundred days for a dollar a day, and all wonder how much money the white woman from down below has to give away just for talk. They laugh. They settle down, waiting for a ditch-digging job, wondering if Susan will someday record their thoughts, their worries, their concerns, for even a half dollar.

They could not have known that "just talk" may have resulted in a collection of Atsuge-wi narratives that in the 1990s would help revive interest in the language, culture, and tradition of the Atsuge-wi, a revival



much needed by a generation dangerously close to assimilation and acculturation and one that is generally only able to speak selected words in Atsuge-wi, and these words often out of context. Through these narratives we hear the voices of our ancient people who display a vivid, colorful history that refuses to fade away.

*San Francisco State University  
Foothill College, Palo Alto, California*

### References

- Dixon 1908                      Roland B. Dixon. "Achomawi and Atsugewi Tales." *Journal of American Folklore*, 31:159-77.
- Park 1986                        Susan Brandenstein Park. "Sampson Grant, Atsuge Shaman." *Occasional Papers of the Redding Museum*, 3.
- Wilson 1991                     Darryl Babe Wilson. "How the Great Canyon Was Made." *News from Native California*, 5, iii:4-6.

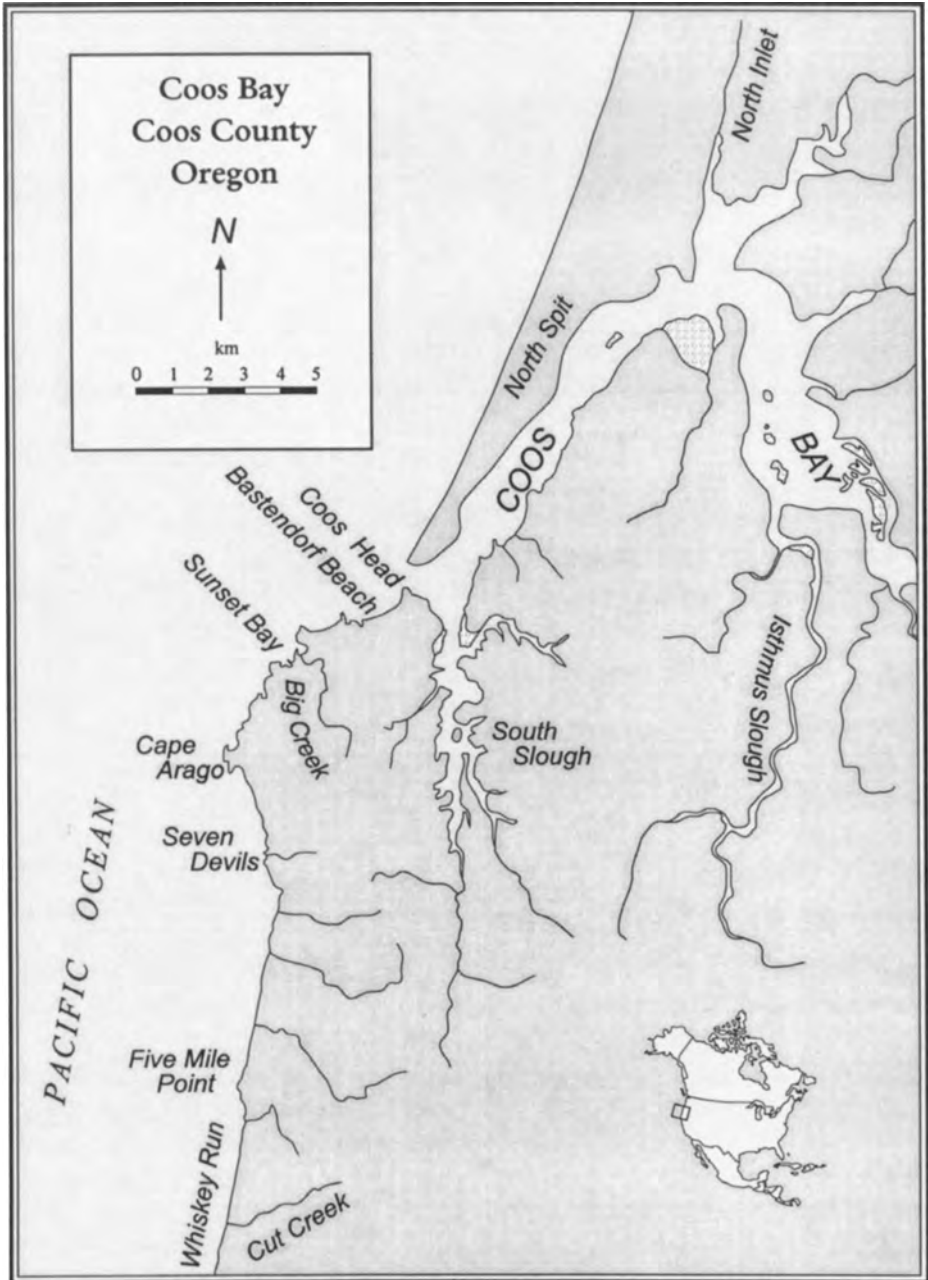
## **Coyote and the Strawberries: Cultural Drama and Cultural Collaboration**

**George Wasson and Barre Toelken**

*BT:* The collaboration in this essay is of a different—though parallel—variety from that illustrated by the other chapters in this collection, for here the text is articulated in English, the original language of the Coquelles having been demolished in the last century. As has been the case with many small tribes, however, the culture did not entirely disappear with the eclipse of the language that carried it; indeed, one could argue that in their retention of certain foods, basket designs, and stories, many of the smaller northwest coastal tribes actually intensified parts of their endangered culture by adapting them—translating them, if you will—to contemporary contexts and social needs.

In any case, it is clear from George Wasson's recollections that the stories were told in relatively recent times by old-timers in his tribe who were bilingual; that is, the original translations or renderings were articulated by intellectually capable people who felt some need to continue the performance of these dramatic narratives. Among other considerations, then, is the question: why? What was there in a story like this one that was so important that it needed to be retained in a world that was falling apart? Other stories no doubt dropped out of use, but not this one. Others were maintained as well, and those that illustrate the breaking of sexual taboos (for example) might be seen provisionally as representing tribal views of sexual conduct that were under attack by settlers, missionaries, and teachers. But what about sleeping in a hollow tree, eating too many strawberries, escaping from a whale, and exchanging eyes? How do these represent timely concerns, or tribal values too important to lay aside in the confusion of traumatic events?

We could, of course, take the know-nothing stance and simply claim that this is an engaging story, that its actions are funny and entertaining, that "Indians" just seem to enjoy coyote stories in the same way Anglos seem to like traveling salesman jokes: it's just what they do, and we don't need to encumber the merely entertaining dimension of their discourse with



our scholarly agenda. But it is perfectly evident in performance that George Wasson enjoys many aspects of this story that are not manifest in the “text” itself. The utterance is only a part of the total meaning—which is of course the case with most traditional narratives. Wasson not only savors the story and enjoys telling it, but he also has his own personal memories of growing up in the very area where the story takes place. He recollects family and tribal value systems that inform the meaning of coyote’s actions in the story—an important matter on which we have been well-instructed by Clifford Geertz, among others. Wasson also visibly registers the physical and emotional sensation of having sounds and gestures coming from his own vocal cords and hands that unite him with his father and his aunts, from whom he first heard the story. These and other factors emerge not from the fossil of the “text,” which is, after all, only a visualized skeleton of a live, interactive performance, but from a sense of the cultural matrix out of which the story has grown and to which it refers.

Our job in this essay, then, is not to cope with the difficulties of translating Coquelle into English, for this step has already been achieved by earlier Coquelle intellectuals, living tribal repositories and articulators whose expertise far outreaches ours. Here, it is a network, a constellation of cultural beliefs and assumptions, which is to be approached and understood. The primary basis for this understanding must come, of course, from the narrator’s own culture and experience. But since we know it is especially difficult to examine consciously and rationally the assumptions in one’s own culture, assumptions that seldom come up for critical review, we also need to recognize that there are a number of questions—perhaps even impertinent ones—that can come only from the questing outsider who, presumably alert and respectful of the possibilities of meaning, has not internalized or rationalized the cultural norms and “obvious” assumptions, and thus may pose questions that the insider might never need to consider.

This story, narrated on tape by George Wasson for friends, and the discussion that follows it represent an ongoing interaction between the essay’s authors. The comments of each author will be preceded by his initials, but each segment has been reviewed and revised several times collaboratively. The story text is broken up into numbered segments for clarity in the explanatory notes, but since we did not subject the narrative to a performance study (which would have included intonation, pacing, audience response, and so on), these segments are provisionally dictated by their principal themes or images.

## Narrator's Introduction

*GW*: This story, "Coyote and the Strawberries," has been a Wasson family favorite for many generations. I've heard it told time after time by various family elders, mainly my dad (George B. Wasson), Aunt Daisy, Aunt Mary, and Aunt Laura (Lolly). Various cousins have been told the story also, but it seems that few of them carried it so personally in their memories as did my late brother Dr. Wilfred C. Wasson and I. In fact, most Coos/Coquelle tribal members do not bother to practice telling such stories, and so for many the chain of direct aboriginal contact with our ancestors has been broken. I learned the story by listening to people who had listened to the last generation of traditional full-bloods before the coming of the Whites. My learning of the story in English was from native-speaking ancestors who selected their own form of translation from the original Milluk renditions.<sup>1</sup> Whatever interpretation took place was done by the Coquelle themselves as they coped with the problems of maintaining meanings in the new language—not by outsiders who had not grown up in the aboriginal cultural context. Variations on some of the themes in this story can be found in a tale called "The Trickster Person Who Made the Country" (Jacobs 1940:184).

I've told "Coyote and the Strawberries" to many different groups of people—some Native, some who were totally unaware of the genre, and some who know it so well that they couldn't wait to be titillated by the retelling in a good comfortable setting. The story must be told when there is complete control over the audience by the storyteller. The occasion must be one of suitable respect for the topic, for although the story contains humor and elicits laughter, there is no room for ridicule, disrespect, or derision in response to its content. I try to limit the number of times I tell the story each winter and to select the most auspicious occasions to present it.

This story has held fond memories for me as brother "Will" and I often listened to one another telling it and each offered corrections or additions when the other forgot an important point or aspect. Will often deferred to my telling of it since my rendition included more of the old gestures and vocal inflections of our older relatives as we remembered how they told the story to us. I'll always remember my first telling of "Strawberries" after his death. He and I had shared that story so many

---

<sup>1</sup> Milluk is a division of the Kusan language, a member of the Athabaskan family. The Coos and Coquelle (later spelled "Coquille" by whites) are closely related tribes who often intermarried.

times and so personally that I can recall the places in the narration where he might “correct” me, or remind me of the next episode, should I appear to falter in my presentation. I was just starting to tell it to a group of over 200 listeners in a nicely darkened arena room late one evening during a men’s symposium in Eugene, Oregon. As I began telling the story, retreating into my own world of memory, experiences, and emotions, I heard Will make an ever so slight comment of approval—something like “Ah, yes, that’s a good one to tell now.” I was startled, and actually glanced to one side of the room where it seemed to me he was sitting back contentedly in a chair. Realizing what was happening to me, I held the state of suspension for myself and absorbed the emotional glow of his presence. His death had not been a full year prior to that event, and my mourning for his passing continued to be painful and humorous simultaneously. At length, I had to explain to the listeners why I’d stopped talking and stood crying in front of them. After a lengthy pause I resumed the story; it was a good experience for me, and I knew that that particular reincarnation of it was especially poignant and enlightening for the listeners as well.

In keeping with the taboo against telling Coyote stories out of season (winter being the Coyote story telling time), I have seldom allowed anyone to record my telling of it. However, this particular rendition was recorded at my home in the winter of 1993, in the company of a few non-Native friends including Carson Bowler, an attorney. The recording was for Suzi Jones and was included in *The Stories We Tell: An Anthology of Oregon Folk Literature* (Jones and Ramsey 1994:125-30).<sup>2</sup> Even so, I request that each reader respect the cultural dictates of my Coos/Coquille ancestors and read aloud or discuss this story, “Coyote and the Strawberries” only during the winter. If readers do not heed such warnings, I am not responsible for any dire consequences that might befall them, their loved ones, or anyone who knowingly listens to it “out of season.”

“Coyote and Strawberries”  
told by George Wasson

(1) Coyote was going down South Slough off Coos Bay, and he was going along when a hail storm came up.

(2) Big hailstones came down and started hitting him, pelting his body, and he was jumping around, saying, “Oh, that hurts! Oh! Oh!” And

---

<sup>2</sup> See also Susan Wasson Wolgamott’s Coquille story, “The Girl Who Married a Sea Otter” (Jones and Ramsey 1994:262-63).

he had to get out of the hail storm, so over on the side of the trail there he found this big tree. I think it was a cedar tree.

(3) It had been burned, maybe even hit by lightning (which would make it a taboo tree to mess with), but anyway this big cedar tree that had a hole down in the bottom of it, a cavity had been burned to the bottom and partly hollow down there. So he rushed over, and he got down inside there, and he huddled up to get out of the hail storm. But it didn't quite protect him, so he used his magical powers, his *tamanawis*, and he commanded the tree to grow shut around him.

(4) So he said, "Tree, grow shut. Grow shut around me." And the tree did that. But he left a little hole he could see through, little hole he could look through, and he was looking through that hole and he could see outside, and he felt really proud of himself, saying how smart he was, how good he was. He had commanded that tree to grow shut.

(5) Well the hail storm passed by, and Coyote was sitting in there, and he decided, "Well I guess it's time to get out of here now," so he used his power again, his *tamanawis*, and he said, "Grow open."

(6) Nothing happened.

(7) Then Coyote says again, "GROW OPEN!"

(8) Still nothing happened. He thought, "Well, I'm not doing something right here," so he commanded the tree, "Grow open." And nothing happened, and on the fourth time, he still said, "Grow open." Nothing happened at all, and there was Coyote stuck inside of the tree. He must have been too proud of himself because his power wouldn't work, the tree wouldn't grow open.

(9) So he was looking out that little hole, and pretty soon he saw one of the Woodpecker Girls flying by, and he looked through the hole, and he called out through the hole, "Oh Miss Woodpecker!"

(10) She looked around, and she said, "Where's that coming from?"

(11) And he says, "Come over here, over here to this hole." And she flies over the tree, and she looks in there. And he says, "Yes, in here. Peck this hole bigger so I can get out."

(12) Well, she starts working away. She starts pecking on the hole, and she pecks on it and pecks on it, and it gets bigger and bigger.

(13) As the hole gets bigger, Coyote can see a little more of her, and he looks out and says, "She's pretty nice looking."

(14) He reaches out there, and he thinks, "I'm just going to stroke her on the tail feathers." And he reaches out and just starts to touch her on the tail feathers, and he grabs her, and she jumps back and says, "What are you doing?" He says, "Oh, oh, I didn't mean to do anything." He'd grabbed her by the tail feathers, grabbed her by the tail. "Oh, oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do anything. I won't do that." And she starts work and says, "Okay. I'll work some more."

(15) She had started to fly away, and he said, "Oh, I won't do that again." And so she starts working away, pecking away, and the hole gets bigger, and she's inside pecking away, getting it bigger, working away.

(16) And he looks up. By that time he can see the front of her, and he says, "She has nice beautiful round breasts." He said, "Oh, she's got her head up in the air, she won't even notice me. I'll just reach up and just kind of, I'll just kind of stroke and just touch them a little bit."

(17) And he gets so excited, he grabs her, and she jumps back and flies away, says, "No more. I'm not going to help you."

(18) Well, you might know, there's a little woodpecker down the coast that has two marks on it: white marks across its tail and across its breast also. That's probably where they came from, Old Coyote messing with her when she was trying to peck the hole bigger.

(19) So anyway, she flew away and left Coyote inside the tree, the hollow tree, and he's trying to figure out what he's going to do to get out.

(20) Then he has a bright idea: "Aha." So he reaches up behind his braid, behind his ear, in his braid, and he pulls out his clamshell knife, and he takes his clamshell knife, and he starts cutting himself up in little pieces.

(21) Reaches down to his foot, and he cuts out a piece and he pokes that out through the hole. Then he cuts off another piece and he pokes that out through the hole, and he just goes like mad. He starts cuttin' himself a little piece, poke, cut off a piece, poke it through the hole, cut off another piece, poke it through the hole. Working up his legs, all the way up his body, he cuts himself all up in little pieces, pokes 'em out through the hole, and then he's going to put himself together when he gets outside.

(22) But while he's doing this, he's cutting out his intestines, his guts, and he throws 'em out through the hole, but while he's doing this, here comes Bluejay flying along. Bluejay flies along and looks down and says, "What's all that?" Looking around, down the bottom of that tree, all that interesting stuff, coming out of that hole over there, falling on the ground. Nobody's around any place.

(23) Bluejay swoops down and grabs a string of intestines and flies away.

(24) Well Coyote gets all finished, gets all poked out through the hole, gets outside, puts himself all back together [narrator pats hands against various parts of his body, as if assembling himself]—back here, back there, everything back into place. He doesn't notice that Bluejay has flown away with part of his intestines. And he just thinks he's just fine, so he's all put back together, and he goes on his way.

(25) Walking on down, and he goes on down South Slough and comes upon where Coos Head is now, and he gets up on there, and here are strawberries all over. And Coyote says, "Oooh. Oh, look at that, nice strawberries." (Well, you can tell that this is an unusual year because here's a hail storm when the strawberries are ripe out on the bluff out there, so unusual things are happening). And here's Coyote, "Oh, I love strawberries!" And he reaches down and starts picking strawberries. And he picks a strawberry and he eats it, and he picks another one and he eats it and says, "Oh, these are so good." He just keeps eating strawberries, picking and eating, picking and eating. (Well, you know right away he's doing something wrong here because you're not supposed to pick



strawberries and eat them yourself. You're supposed to take them back home to share with other people. So here's Coyote doing the wrong thing again. Picking and eating, picking and eating. )

(26) But he just can't get full. He just can't—he tries eating faster. So he picks faster and eats faster, picks faster, pick and pick, and he just goes as fast as he can. But he can't get full at all.

(27) When eventually he looks around behind him, he sees a whole string of strawberries lying on the ground, and they come right up to his rectum because that's when he discovers that Bluejay flew away with the lower end of his intestines and flew away with his rectum. And he's just got a straight line right through, and the strawberries just go right in one end and out the other.

(28) And Coyote's looking, and he says, "I've got to stop that." So he got an idea. He said, "I'm going to have to plug it up." (Aunt Mary always said his "bung-hole," "plug up his bung-hole.") And so Coyote figured what's he going to do.

(29) So he looks around there and says, "This'll do." And he walks over, and here's this old rotten log, and he kicks on one of the knots sticking out of this old rotten log, knots sticking up, everything's rotted away. These knots are out there, and he kicks one off, and he grabs that, and he says, "Oh, I'll take that." And he takes it, and he shoves it up in his bung-hole and jumps—"Ouch!" And he throws it down, "Oh, that hurts! That's rough, that hurts." And he says, "That won't do. I want something that's more smooth."

(30) And he looks over, and here's a rock down there. He says, "Well, I'll try that." So he picks up this rock, and he takes it, and he starts to shove it up, and, "Oh, that's cold." And it's too big and it falls right back out. "No, that won't do it. I've got to have some way to plug it up so I can keep strawberries inside of me."

(31) So he's thinking about it, and he looks down the trail there, and here's a wild carrot, a wild carrot growing down there. And he says, "Ah, that's just the right thing." You know it's just about so long, and it's tapered, and it's nice, soft and pliable, and that's just what he wants so he reaches down and picks it and very carefully turns it and pulls it out of the ground. Yes, that's just right.

(32) He breaks off the stem and throws it away. But he's thinking, "You know, I ought to have something to make sure it stays in better." And right over on the side a little ways there's this great big fir tree that's been hit by lightning, and it's dripping pitch, pitch falling down there. So he takes this carrot—(Well, you know something's wrong here also, 'cause he shouldn't mess around with a tree that's been hit by lightning). But here's this tree hit by lightning, and Coyote goes over and takes this carrot and rolls it around and around in the pitch, gets it all pitched up, and then he takes it and very carefully slides it up into his bung-hole and pushes it up and takes some more pitch and packs it in place.

(33) Oh, he gets it all nice and glued up there and pats it real tight, and it's all sealed up. And he's really happy with himself.

(34) So then he goes back to eating strawberries, and he's eating with both hands just as fast as he can go, eating and eating, more and more and more and more—eating strawberries until he gets so full he can hardly walk. His belly's just puffed way out, and by this time he's worked himself way down to the edge of the bluff.

(35) And he looks over there, and he can see a fire out there. He'd worked way out toward Bastendorf Beach. And he gets off out there, and he looks way out there, and he goes closer and closer, and he gets up on the edge of the dunes, and he looks out, and there are people out there with this fire on the beach. And he's thinking, "Oh, someone's cooking something."

(36) Well, you know, Coyote's such a glutton he's always ready to eat something more. And he calls out, "Halloo." And the people look up.

(37) And it's the Seagull Boys out there, and they say, "Oh, hello mother's brother." And he says, "What are you doing?" And they say, "We're playing 'Jump over the Fire.'" He says, "Oh, well I'm very good at that." "Well, come over and show us."

(38) So Coyote goes over there, and he goes along and he runs over by the fire. He's disappointed it's not food, but he comes down there, going to show off, and he runs up—here his belly's so big he can hardly walk—runs up there and he takes a little jump over the fire.

(39) And they say, "Oh, well that was very good, but you really ought to jump over here where the flames are. That's where the contest is. Jump over the fire."

(40) "Oh, well, I can do that too." So Coyote circles back around, and he goes over, and he takes another run at it. He takes a run, and he jumps over, and he just barely gets over the fire, and he drags his tail right through the flames, and his tail suddenly explodes into fire.

(41) And he looks back there, and oh, his tail is burning, and flames shooting up. And he starts batting at the flames, batting at his tail, and he's running in circles, and it gets too hot, and suddenly the pitch melts, and POP!—out goes the carrot.

(42) And Coyote's running in circles. Strawberries start spewing out. He's running in circles, batting at his tail, strawberries spewing out, and they're flying all over the Seagull Boys, just spewing out, covering everybody, strawberries everywhere. And the Seagull Boys are mad. They grab rocks and they start throwing rocks and sticks at Coyote.

(43) And he runs and heads for the ocean as hard as he can go, runs and jumps out into the ocean, going to put his tail out. And he jumps out there, and what happens, but he jumps right out into the waves, and out in the waves is a big whale. And he jumps—right as the whale is coming up, he jumps right into the whale's mouth, and the whale swallows him.

(44) He goes clear down inside the whale's stomach. And everything's all quiet down in there. Coyote's down inside the whale's stomach. The tail is not burning any more; it's gone out.

(45) Coyote's feeling his way around: "How'd this happen? Where am I?" And he's wandering around in there, and BUMP, suddenly he hits his head on something. He reaches up, and there's the whale's heart, and

Coyote bumps right into it. And he says, "Aha." And he has an idea, so he takes his clamshell knife again, and he says, "I'll get out of here."

(46) So he takes his clamshell knife and reaches up and cuts off the whale's heart. And the whale dies.

(47) There's Coyote, inside the whale, out in the ocean. The whale dies, and it floats up to the surface, and there's Coyote, standing up inside the whale, with his arms out, holding on. He can tell they're out in the big swells because the whale's going back and forth, real slow-like with the great big swells out there. Back and forth, back and forth.

(48) And pretty soon it gets a little rougher. They're going a little faster, and he can tell they're coming into the breakers on shore, and it gets faster and rolls some more, and the breakers are tossing him around, and he gets tossed around.

(49) Pretty soon there's a bump, and rolls over, and then everything's still. Aha, he knows then that they've washed up on the beach because the whale came ashore and washed up on the beach, and so Coyote is going to get out of there.

(50) Once again he takes his clamshell knife, and he starts cutting between the ribs, through about this much blubber, about a foot thick or more of blubber. Coyote starts cutting, and he starts cutting, and cutting between the whale's ribs, trying to get a place to get out of there.

(51) Well, that whale washed ashore right at Sunset Bay. (And that's a very famous place where whales come ashore because there's another old story about a woman who went out in the ocean and married the sea otters, and she had them send a whale ashore every year [as a present to her people]. So whales are very important to the people.) And they had been watching it. Now, they didn't know Coyote was inside it. The whale comes ashore and washes in at Sunset Bay, and all the people are watching. They've all come down. All the people come down. This great gift from the ocean. And they're coming down to Sunset Bay, and the whale is on shore. And they're all waiting for the ceremonious occasion to cut up the whale and share it with everybody.

(52) And just as they all arrive, here comes Coyote. He cuts his way, finally cuts through between the ribs, last strike just as the people arrive, and here comes Coyote, squeezing out between the ribs, and he's just covered with oil and whale blubber, just covered like Crisco all over him, just really tight. His hair is all matted down, and he's real skinny, sliding out, and his tail's all burned off. Coyote's just squeezing his way out between the ribs, and everybody's mad.

(53) Well, the Seagull Boys are there too, and they haven't forgotten the strawberries yet at all.

(54) All the people are mad because Coyote's contaminated the whole thing, this great gift from the ocean for all the people. Coyote's contaminated it.

(55) Everybody starts throwing rocks. Seagull Boys throwing rocks. Everybody throwing rocks at Coyote.

(56) He can't see anything because of all this blubber in his eyes, and it's all blurry. But he can hear. Down south he knows where Big Creek is; he can hear it running in down there, and he takes off running as hard as he can down the beach.

(57) And all the people throwing rocks at him, and he runs and runs and goes way down the beach. And he goes way up to Big Creek, and he starts running up Big Creek, and he hears the Salmon Girls going up Big Creek, and they're out there paddling, paddling in the water. And he gets ahead of the people real fast, and he runs up and he says, "Oh Salmon Girls, oh come over here."

(58) All the people are still trying to catch up with him. He says, "Oh you're so pretty. Come here, let me scratch your sides." And he reaches down and he's scratching their sides for them. He says, "Oh, you're so lovely. I could scratch better if you get up here in my lap." And so they let him. They get up in his lap, and Coyote's taking both hands and scratching both sides.

(59) Well, he's probably got other things on his mind, too, but he hears the people coming too soon. They're right on his tail.

(60) And he's scratching both sides so casually, rubbing their sides, and he gets right up to their heads, and he grabs their eyes, pulls their eyes out of their heads.

(61) He takes his own eyes out, which are all blurry and greasy, and he sticks them in the salmon's head.

(62) Because at that time salmon had bright shiny eyes, and Coyote had greasy eyes, and now he traded with them, so salmon now always have greasy eyes, and Coyote's got the bright shiny ones.

(63) And that's the end of that part of the story, as they told it.

### **Narrator's Notes**

Section 1: The South Slough estuary is now a federal sanctuary. It was the central area of the Milluk (a division of the Kusan language) speaking Coos people on Coos Bay. My paternal grandmother, Susan Adulsah Wasson, was the daughter of the principal headman Kitzen-Jin-Jn at the main village on South Slough, when the Jedediah Smith Expedition camped there in 1828. The area still holds strong family significance because the Wasson family cemetery, located on the original allotment land of Grandma Wasson, is now protected within the sanctuary boundaries.

Section 3: Port Orford "white" cedar was a special tree to the coastal people of Southwest Oregon. Its straight grain, pungent aroma, and superb durability made it especially desirable for carving special high prow

canoes.<sup>3</sup> Along with being a white cedar tree, this tree had been struck by lightning and thus had special qualities of spiritual honor and sacred power. This particular tree was not to be “trifled with.” When striking a tree, lightning often splits out a long strip of bark and sap wood as it usually runs vertically with the grain along the cambium layer. In the process, that narrow strip or sliver of wood becomes endowed with the power of the lightning and is considered highly special for medicine power and healing purposes. Therefore, both the tree and the split-out strip of wood must be treated with great respect.

Sections 3-5: *Tamanawis* is a word from Chinook Jargon (the lingua franca of the Pacific Northwest Indians that was later adopted by the early white traders, trappers, missionaries, and settlers). It means magical power, “supernatural” power, in non-Coquelle concepts. However, such powers of magical or mystical abilities were considered common and natural to native people.

Section 4: In learning this story, I don’t recall any special number of times required for Coyote to command the tree to “grow shut.” However, when his power seems to have failed him, he employs the undeniably sacred repetition of four times. When there is no response to his commands, he somewhat nonchalantly begins another approach as though he doesn’t even care about his abusive attitude (feeling proud of himself) toward his spirit power.

Section 9 ff.: Red-headed woodpecker scalps are highly honored and prized as “wealth” and medicine power items. Woodpeckers were likewise granted respect for their spirit power potential contained in their red scalps. It would have been considered disrespectful for anyone to tease or taunt a being of such high spiritual status. As unmarried women were protected from casual male interaction, it is quite forward of Coyote even to call to the woodpecker girl for assistance. His attempt at molesting her is even farther out of bounds in the acceptable social rules of the Coos/Coquelles.

Sections 20 ff.: Only the memory of clamshell knives has been retained through stories such as this. I don’t know of anyone who has actually seen one, but there are examples of clamshell cutting tools among various coastal archaeological collections. Unfortunately, clamshell does not survive well in the coastal middens. It usually decomposes quite rapidly, breaking into many small fragments within a few decades.

Sections 22-24: Bluejay is commonly a mischievous character in the tales of coastal peoples. Perhaps the noisy nature and curiosity (or plain

---

<sup>3</sup> The information here is from George B. Wasson, the author’s father, as told to John P. Harrington in 1943 (unpublished fieldnotes in the Smithsonian Institution).

thievery) of Bluejay establishes an air of caution or expectation when the name comes up in a story. The act of stealing some intestines is therefore fitting for the character of Bluejay.

Section 25: Coos Head is located on the south side of Coos Bay, just between the mouth of South Slough and the south jetty, or Bastendorf Beach. It's only a few miles from the head of South Slough to its confluence with the main bay and the ocean beach.

Section 29: Knots from old rotten logs held no special sacred significance to the people but were gathered for burning in a cooking or heating fire, as they contained highly concentrated resins and burned hot. However, spruce knots were prized for their superior burning qualities. The pitch content in spruce knots allowed them to burn a long time, and, therefore, spruce knots could be used for torches to light one's way in the dark. Family stories relate the time when George R. Wasson, "Grandpa Wasson," used a spruce knot to light his way home in a rain storm one dark night, after failing to save his lead ox, "Longhorn Swan," from drowning in the rising flood.

It's interesting to note that Aunt Mary used an old New England term for rectum, "bunghole" (the hole in a wooden barrel or keg through which the contents are emptied by means of inserting a wooden spigot). Mary's father, George R. Wasson, came from a rich maritime tradition in New Brunswick, having relatives in New England, and therefore taught many Euro-American terms to his half-Indian family.

Sections 29-33: Insertion of objects into the rectum or any other means of bodily insertion or ingestion for the purpose of "plugging up" one's excremental functions borders on a form of insanity or perhaps even witchcraft. *Berdaches* (who performed an intermediate, alternative gender role) were often the shamans or doctors; indeed, such male-females were known to function among the southern coastal tribes of Oregon—e. g., "Old Doctor" of the Tolowas (Williams 1986:60)—as wives of other men. In some tribes, however, pregnancy and childbirth among *berdaches* were often faked for emotional reasons by ingestion of certain herbal concoctions to induce constipation, and then a "stillbirth" delivery was claimed by the "mother," after a painful excretion of the rectal plug (Devereaux 1961:160). Undoubtedly such practices were known to the Coos and Coquelles, and such references to plugging up the rectum as in this story would elicit responses of humor, surprise, or even shock among the listeners.

Sections 31-32: The "wild carrot" was possibly *daucus carota* (Walters 1982:108). However, the blossoms, used for burning or smudging medicines to cure migraine headaches, were the important part of this plant, and the relationship might be in name only. Most likely the plant called

“wild carrot” in this story was one known by several different names, *yampah*, or *year-pah*, *carum gairdneri*, or *carum oreganum wats* (Haskin 1959:237).

Section 35: Nowadays, Bastendorf Beach is about a mile or so from Coos Head. In olden days, before the building of the jetties, it was a little closer, but due to the sand buildup on the south side of the south jetty, the beach is now farther away.

Section 37: When the Seagull Boys refer to Coyote as “Mother’s Brother,” they are using an honorific term generally applied to the person in one’s extended family who is most respected as a teacher and disciplinarian in place of one’s own or biological father. In many matrilineal societies, the husband, or the biological father of the children, has no responsibility or control over their discipline and education. That duty falls to the mother’s brother, perhaps as an assurance that a male with the mother’s genes will control and shape the development of offspring. Because the Seagull Boys are playing a game and have invited Coyote to join, there is the suggestion that they are deferring to his superior magical powers and are willing to enjoy the entertainment he provides.

Section 37: One can expect that Coyote is going to have problems with his attempts to participate in the game “Jump over the Fire,” since he just bragged about himself as being “very good at that.” Bragging about one’s prowess is not a socially acceptable trait.

Section 51 ff.: Sunset Bay, where this scene takes place, is just a couple of miles south of Bastendorf Beach. The gift of whales being sent ashore by the underwater people is told in “The Woman Who Married a Merman” (Frachtenberg 1913:157)<sup>4</sup> and represents an important cultural backdrop to this story. A chief’s daughter who is dedicated to taking care of her widowed father and his family is secretly courted by a sea otter. Eventually he persuades her to join him under the sea. Later, when she becomes homesick, the two try to visit her family but are driven off by hunters shooting arrows at them. They turn themselves into a handsome young couple, visit her family, and work out a family agreement in which the Sea Otter sends a whale to his in-laws every now and then, and they in turn leave a bundle of arrows in the sea for her children to play with. The story dramatizes the special meaning of a beached whale and accounts for why the Coos and Coquelle would not hunt sea otters.

Section 59: I’ve heard reference to another story in which Coyote seduces the Salmon Girls by scratching their sides and enticing them onto his lap where he proceeds to copulate with them. The resulting pregnancies

---

<sup>4</sup> See also “The Woman Who Married a Merman” in St. Clair 1909:27-32.

are a puzzlement to them and all the people as well, but I don't know the details of the outcome.

### Analytical Comment

*BT*: It is tempting, in trying to comment on and analyze a tale like this, to employ a standard folkloristic approach and look for other "variants" characterized by the same or similar motifs, themes, and plot structures and then compare all the variations and constancies to see where the basic story lies. For example, in a Nehalem Tillamook tale, South Wind gets himself imprisoned in a tower of rocks and asks Woodpecker and the Yellowhammer to peck him loose. (They break their bills and get angry when he tries to touch their legs.) He gets out by cutting himself to pieces and throwing the body parts out a hole, where Raven and Seagull eat his eyes; he gets new eyes by trading with Eagle. In a Chinook story, Coyote is caught inside an immense cedar tree;<sup>5</sup> the birds try to peck a hole for him, but to no avail; he cuts himself up and throws the parts out through a Yellowhammer hole; Raven steals his eyes; he swindles a woman out of her eyes by claiming that the rose petals he has inserted in his sockets allow his *tamanawis* rays to work better. In a Cheyenne story, a character called White Man throws his eyes up into the air and, after doing it too many times, loses them; he catches a mouse and steals one of his eyes, meets a buffalo and begs one from him; now one tiny eye rolls around back in its socket, while the other hangs out over half his face. A Columbia River story describes how Coyote creates a rock fortress around him so he can perform fellatio on himself without being seen; but then he requires the birds to help him escape, and the deed becomes known. A Navajo story has Ma'ii (Coyote) beg the birds to teach him how to throw his eyes up into the air so that he can see great distances. They pry his eyeballs out and later replace them with pitch (which accounts for the yellow eyes of coyotes today). Afterwards he gets too close to the fire and the pitch melts (which accounts for the brown streak seen under coyotes' eyes). A Nez Perce tale describes how Coyote gets swallowed by a huge monster who has consumed all the local animals;<sup>6</sup> Coyote kills him by cutting his heart off with a knife and leading all the animals out through the monster's anus. In many

---

<sup>5</sup> See "Coyote in the Cedar Tree" (Judson 1910:74-76).

<sup>6</sup> See "Coyote and the Swallowing Monster" in Phinney 1934:26-29 and reprinted in Ramsey 1977:9-12.



Eskimo stories, the removable eyes of the loon are related to the seeing powers of shamans. And one could go on, *ad infinitum*, for this particular group of motifs is really quite extensive.

The problem with this “comparative” approach, however, is that it skims along the surface of a hypothetically conceived story, focusing on clearly identifiable motifs—that is, noun concepts (in this case, confinement, hollow trees, berries, plugs in the anus, eyes, and so on)—and conveniently overlooks the more complex issues of relationships, ritual and social obligations, moral behaviors and responsibilities, issues that are usually the crux of Native American stories and that vary considerably in their organization and meaning from tribe to tribe. Thus, while a survey of “eye juggler”<sup>7</sup> or “swallowing monster” stories will demonstrate that the images were indeed used by a number of tribes in the northwest and west, this fact itself does not help us very much in determining what the motifs “mean” to the Coquelle who told—and still tell—the story.

For me, one of the most telling illustrations of this principle came when I took George Wasson with me to visit my friend, Yellowman, in Blanding, Utah, one winter. After we listened to Yellowman telling Ma’ii stories to his family for a couple of hours, I asked the Navajo family if they would like to hear some of the Old Man Coyote stories from George’s Coquelle background. Yellowman was clearly interested, but as George’s stories went on (and they included the one we discuss here), I could sense a kind of impatience growing in Yellowman’s demeanor. Finally, he asked me, “Where did he learn such things—from a missionary?” I explained that these were the Coyote stories from George’s tribe. “But they’re not Coyote stories,” said Yellowman. “They even describe Coyote eating fish!” he whispered. I told him that the Coquelle themselves eat fish, and so naturally Old Man Coyote would also eat fish. He shuddered and changed the subject. I had thought that especially the eye exchange motif would sound familiar to him, but as far as Yellowman was concerned, other culturally unsavory actions (like eating fish) far outweighed such insignificant details. Clearly, although Coyote seems to be the personage who can do whatever he wants (acting as what I have elsewhere called the “exponent of all possibilities”), he is limited in some ways, for if his actions fall too far outside the realm of cultural allowability, he becomes unreal. Of course, here we are speaking not of what a character like Coyote can or

---

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the Cheyenne story “The Eye Juggler” in Feldmann 1971:151-52; the Paiute story “Coyote the Eye-Juggler” in Jones and Ramsey 1994:121-22; and the Nehalem Tillamook story “South Wind Loses his Eyes and Gets New Ones” in Jones and Ramsey 1994:123-24.

cannot do, but about those culturally constructed concepts in which people will or will not think.

Motifs and story structures are among the easiest of factors to deal with because we can “see” them, and think them, but for that reason they tell us very little about the unstated, relatively invisible, assumptions on the basis of which a certain pattern of motifs may be said to achieve a cultural meaning beyond simple entertainment. Yet, especially in a case like this Coquelle story, the text may be the bulk of what we have available to work with, since we may not have access to enough people who know and can articulate the particulars of their culture’s values and logical assumptions. If motif and tale-type (the standard tools of European-based narrative scholarship) are not totally satisfactory for our purposes, then, what recourse do we have in our attempt to speculate on the meaning of “Coyote and the Strawberries”? For one thing, of course, we have the performance, and the continuing performances, of George Wasson and his family; we have the intonations, smiles, and nuances of the narrator, plus his recollections and explanations (as provided in his notes to this essay); and, combining these resources, we have a greater possibility of judging the “logic” of actions in the story by their own cultural context rather than by our own. Thus the text becomes a potentially richer document for us to work with than it would otherwise be, and we can ask better questions of it than “I wonder how many tribes believe one can exchange eyes with others?” or “Do Indians really believe that’s why Coyote has yellow eyes?” We are not as “thick” into the story or the culture as Clifford Geertz might wish us to be, but we’re further in than we were.

Another temptation in dealing with this story is to jump to the assumption that there is actually a universal macro-tradition of “The Trickster,” a concept that has become not only a handy carrying bag for anthropologists, but a passionately faddish focal point for Jungian analysts, literary critics, and New Age gurus. Although the term is widely used as if it represents an actual, consistent, self-sustaining archetype floating in the cultural air or inherited through our psychological DNA, the fact is that the conventional figure of the Trickster is so amorphous as to be useless for critical purposes: for one thing, if we look at him cross-culturally, including all the details from all cultures who seem to relish his adventures, we note that in most traditions he seldom plays tricks on anyone (though he is not above cheating and lying to gain his ends). More than a tricky personage, he is a sacred creator, a buffoon, a clown, a selfish egomaniac, and an oversexed opportunist (usually at one and the same time). When we look at him in each specific instance, however, we see that his character is constructed somewhat differently in every tribal tradition. Far from

representing the random childish urges of an unsocialized personality, the Coyote (in some tribes he is a spider, a rabbit, or a raven) usually is depicted as doing things that humans cannot achieve because we lack the power (ordering the world, killing monsters, inventing death) or that we are not supposed to accomplish because of taboo, propriety, or custom. Thus, coyote stories usually show us not tricks but colorful dramas that create vicarious experience in specific matters which are important to us but in which we normally cannot, or should not, have personal experience.

To the western mind this odd combination of sacred and secular, wise and foolish, in one character is perhaps a “tricky” idea, but in fact it makes palpable a fairly common concept among Native American tribes: good and evil, sacred and secular, smart and dumb, are not mutually exclusive qualities, but are overlapping, interdependent aspects of each other. This is a much more complicated idea than trickery would account for, and, in its avoidance of contrastive values (like Good versus Evil, which is a common construction in Euro-American worldview), it represents a set of assumptions far more rare in western thought than Trickster fans are likely to appreciate. Rather than a binary computer, in which [a] and [not-a] are mutually exclusive, the coyote character is more like an analog computer in which [a] can also be [not-a]. This is by no means an easy abstraction to deal with, especially in western culture; but it may be the reason why a dramatization of the concept works better than an explanation—in anyone’s culture.

For critical purposes, we can use this knowledge to help phrase some of the questions we wish to pursue in regard to the possible meanings and functions of any coyote story, including the one under examination here. (1) If Coyote is usually a combination of value-charged elements important to moral or cultural survival, how do his actions function to foreground or articulate some of these values in this particular story? (2) If Coyote’s actions are possibly sacred as well as secular, what do his actions here mean in cultural terms? (3) If Coyote usually is observed to be breaking significant rules or challenging meaningful taboos, what do his actions in this story suggest about rules and taboos among the Coquelle? (4) If we accept the proposition that Coyote represents the dramatic embodiment of cultural values, then what exactly is it that is being dramatized in this story? The following comments and observations apply questions like these to the principal scenes of the story narrated by George Wasson:

Scene 1: Coyote in and out of the hollow tree: Coyote gets into the tree for his own comfort and convenience, in spite of the suggestion that the lightning-struck tree is taboo; can we not read it as a culturally moral consequence that he cannot get back out without dismembering himself and

losing an important part of himself in the process? Selfish disregard for taboo, propriety, and behavior is self-destructive, if we understand this scene as a dramatic enactment of cultural value.

Scene 2: Coyote and the strawberries: berries and other gathered foods were normally brought home and shared with others. In this vivid tableau scene, because of his self-destructive behavior in scene one, Coyote is shown stuffing himself endlessly, a hyperbolic enactment of selfishness, since it does not nourish him, and indeed leads to even more anti-self (and culturally questionable) behavior.

Scene 3: Coyote and the Seagull Boys: where in scene one, Coyote is in the tree and cannot get out without trauma; now, strawberries (and the wild carrot) are in Coyote, and cannot get out without an equally traumatic explosion. That this release of selfishly-consumed-and-contained food has a negative impact on respectful relatives seems to me to be no accident: dramatically, it says that selfishness, self-destructive behavior, disregard of taboo, and now (with the fire-jump game) bragging, are like defecating on your relatives.

Scene 4: Coyote in and out of the whale: just as he has entered a powerful tree without regard for propriety and taboo, now Coyote has entered a whale, a sacramental, familial gift from the ocean. (See Wasson's explanation, and the synopsis of the Sea Otter story.) Just as he cannot get out of the tree without cutting himself up, he cannot get out of the whale without killing it and tainting its sacred flesh by digging through it like a maggot. Because the error here is intrusion into a ritual process (once again, to save his neck) and is not connected to selfish diversion of food, as it was in scene one, the consequence is not constipation but a kind of blindness.

Scene 5: Coyote and the Salmon Girls: partially blinded by the blubber, Coyote can still hear what's going on and locates the Salmon Girls, whose eyes he needs; in order to escape his current predicament, he requires clear eyes, as do we all. In another story common along the southern Oregon coast, Coyote wipes his penis off on his grandchildren's eyes as they awaken so that they will not see clearly that he has spent the night copulating with their mother, his daughter-in-law; today, when we clean the white mucus from our eyes in the morning, we are reminded to avoid incest and not to trust what we see until we can see clearly.

Overall, we have Coyote in and out of a storm, in and out of a tree, in and out of a strawberry patch; then a knot, a stone, a wild carrot, and strawberries are in and out of Coyote; Coyote is in and out of the fire; Coyote is in and out of the whale; Coyote is in and out of trouble. Strangely enough, he is not shown as sexually in and out of the Salmon

Girls, which would have been a typical possibility, given his tastes. (Clearly, the story here focuses on other modes of selfishness.) But his eyes are in them, and theirs in him. The story dramatizes several Coquelle concepts of behavior with respect to lightning, sacred or powerful trees, sharing of food, self-destructive actions, misuse of natural objects or disrupting of natural processes (knot, stone, and wild carrot in anus), bragging, respect for relatives, disruption of ritual processes (tainting the whale offering, which also entails disrespect for the familial rituals embodied by the whale), and cheating others of their ability to see clearly. Indeed, no one in the story sees very clearly in the figurative sense: in addition to Coyote, it is clear that Woodpecker Girl does not anticipate Coyote's immoral actions, Blue Jay cannot see who owns all those nice tidbits on the ground, the Seagull Boys do not anticipate getting showered with half-digested strawberries, the whale opens its mouth without seeing that Coyote is going to jump in, the people gather on the beach without knowing that their whale is inhabited by Coyote, and the Salmon Girls get up on Coyote's lap without sensing that they are about to lose their clear eyesight. The action is very much like a Greek play, in which characters act their normal parts without seeing what the aggregate consequences will be, while we as audience members, armed with the shared perspectives and values of culture, obtain vicarious experience and depth of meaning (including irony) as we witness the dramatization of abstract ideas.

It seems to me that these are only the most obvious possibilities in the story, and in fact the narrative may contain many others which are "there" by nuance only, to be registered most richly by those for whom the cultural matrix is familiar. But even at this, I think it is striking to note first of all how many cultural issues are dramatized in the story, and secondly how differently these familiar "motifs" structure a particularly Coquelle, not a pan-Indian, constellation.

*GW:* Some people have remarked to me that this is just a funny story, created with improbable situations that we know couldn't happen in real life. It seems obvious that no one could actually cut himself into small pieces, poke them through a hole, and then reassemble the parts in the manner so matter-of-factly demonstrated here by Coyote. I'd suggest that there might be a subliminal message in that event, either explaining or dictating the limits of Native medical practice, which were of course almost entirely herbal and spiritual, with almost no use of surgery on the human body.

Contemporary listeners also seem to assume that the story, while "cute," is somewhat odd or illogical: Coyote jumps into the mouth of a

whale. Yet many Judeo-Christians are familiar with a similar concept in the story of Jonah and the whale and often read or hear it as a narrative with serious philosophical implications—whether or not they believe it actually happened.

There is still another aspect of the story that I've never heard anyone accept as historical fact: Coyote picking ripe strawberries just after a severe hailstorm just doesn't seem to depict a probable situation. Today, hailstorms hit the Oregon coast in February and March, and strawberries don't ripen until about June. However, in the past 20-30 years, scientists (and west coast dwellers) have been observing a phenomenon of nature known affectionately by the Spanish term "El Niño," (The Christ Child). Due to the constant blowing of winds far out on the Pacific, a layer of water builds up, raising the sea level in the South Pacific to the point at which it dissipates in a great surge or wave. As this surge moves toward South America, the ocean currents are strongly affected, welling up water from far below, dramatically changing the food supply of plankton, and moving currents of warm water northward along the west coast of North America. These dramatic changes result in severe weather pattern changes, which in 1995 produced more rainfall in southern California than ever recorded in written history. The weather pattern also brought a heavy snowfall of up to four inches in southern Oregon. At Coos Bay and South Slough snow fell as late as the first week of April. Although the evidence is circumstantial, it could very well be that this story carries forward—along with all its cultural meanings—a record of remarkable weather changes in earlier times that were taken to have some connection with human and animal behavior.

*BT:* Consistent with the metaphorical aspects of "seeing," characters spend a lot of time in this story looking: Coyote looks out the hole in the tree, looks out and sees Woodpecker Girl, looks at her while she's working on enlarging the hole; Bluejay comes along and looks over the pile of body parts lying all around; Coyote looks at the strawberries; he looks around for something to stop up his anus; he looks out on Bastendorf Beach and sees the Seagull Boys; he looks at his burning tail. But when he is inside the whale, where it's dark (perhaps reflecting his spiritual blindness at this point), he doesn't look; he feels and hears. As he comes out of the whale, he can't see, but only hears and runs until he gets the clear eyes of the Salmon Girls and makes his escape. Does he regain his vision through the mediation of the Salmon, whom the Coos and Coquille still reverence with a salmon bake every year? Does his return to normalcy come about through his acknowledgement that the salmon provide the basis for life? After all,

he does not take them, or eat them, or desecrate them: he gains clear vision from them. Perhaps so do we, according to this drama.

In any case, it is clear to me (with the new eyes provided by this exercise) that no single answer will suffice, for the living contexts in which the story reaches articulation each time are changing constantly, and the text changes continually according to the audience, the occasion, and the feelings of the narrator; and we can probably assume (or at least allow for the possibility) that this dynamism has been a part of the picture, and thus the meanings, down through time. This was no better illustrated for me than by George's response to my editorial suggestion that we take out all the parenthetical asides in the story text and place them among the explanatory notes, leaving the story itself clear of contemporary commentary. "First of all, it's not accurate," he insisted, "because those words were actually there when I told the story that time. And besides, in that case the story was being told to some people who were non-Coquelles, and the explanations were a necessary part of the story, just as on some other occasion, maybe with my family, some of those things need not to be said, while others might be said anyhow, just so we could share the recollection of 'Yes, that's how it was,' or 'Yes, that's where it happened, all right.'"

*GW:* The reason for retaining comments is that the story itself is alive, and so, of course, it changes from one telling to the next, depending on the situation, context, or audience. Those "incidental comments" are part of the story itself and are always there. They vary depending on when, why, and where the story is being presented. Separating those explanatory parts included at that particular telling from the rest of the text would give the impression that they resulted from later analysis and could mislead the reader as to how the telling actually took place.

*BT:* Omitting explanatory comments would also add to the impressions, harbored far too long by most scholars of folklore and literature, that the text of a story has a single, discrete form and content, that a story can exist without its context, that a narrative can mean something without reference to information about the real physical and cultural world in which it operates, that the actions of a story character are understandable without reference to the culture that constructed the story.

*GW:* Coyote stories are truly like Coyote himself: each time a story is told, it experiences a new birth, a regeneration, or a fresh reincarnation. Each telling is in a different setting or location, with a different audience,

with a different reason for telling it. Therefore, each telling requires a new set of explanatory remarks for the benefit of the new audience. Some know more than others about the content and the meaning of the story elements, but—since repetition is a standard aspect of traditional oratory—there is never a need to apologize for telling or explaining something that some, or even most, of the listeners might already know. The present story, along with our discussion of it, is no exception.<sup>8</sup>

*University of Oregon  
Utah State University*

### References

- Devereaux 1961                    George Devereaux. *Mojave Ethnopsychiatry*. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution.
- Feldmann 1971                    Susan Feldmann, ed. *The Storytelling Stone: Myths and Tales of the American Indians*. New York: Dell.
- Frachtenberg 1913                Leo J. Frachtenberg. *Coos Texts*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harrington 1943                 John P. Harrington. Unpublished notes of interviews with some Coquille people at Siletz. J.P. Harrington Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.
- Haskin 1959                        Leslie L. Haskin. *Wild Flowers of the Pacific Coast*. Portland, OR: Binforde and Mort.
- M. Jacobs 1940                    Melville Jacobs. *Coos Myth Texts*. Seattle: University of Washington Publications in Anthropology, 8, ii.
- Jones and Ramsey 1994         Suzi Jones and Jarold Ramsey. *The Stories We Tell: An Anthology of Oregon Folk Literature*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press.
- Judson 1910                        Katherine Berry Judson. *Myths and Legends of the Pacific Northwest*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg.

---

<sup>8</sup> Special thanks to Mark Tveskov for the map of the Coos Bay area in Coos County, Oregon.



- Phinney 1934                      Archie Phinney. *Nez Perce Texts*. Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, 25. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ramsey 1977                      Jarold Ramsey. *Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- St. Clair 1909                     Harry St. Clair. "Traditions of the Coos Indians of Oregon." *Journal of American Folklore*, 22:25-41.
- Walters 1982                      Anthony B. Walters. "A Reconstructed Ethnobotany of the Coquilles, Emphasizing Microves and Cryptogams." Unpubl. M. A. research paper, Oregon State University.
- Williams 1986                     Walter L. Williams. *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.

# “There Are No More Words to the Story”

Elsie P. Mather and Phyllis Morrow

The following *quliraaq*<sup>1</sup> was told by Phillip Charlie of Tuntuliak,<sup>2</sup> a small community near the mouth of the Kuskokwim River in southwest Alaska, one of more than fifty Alaska Native communities in the region. About 15,000 people in this area speak Yupik, which is related to the language spoken by other Inuit<sup>3</sup> in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland.

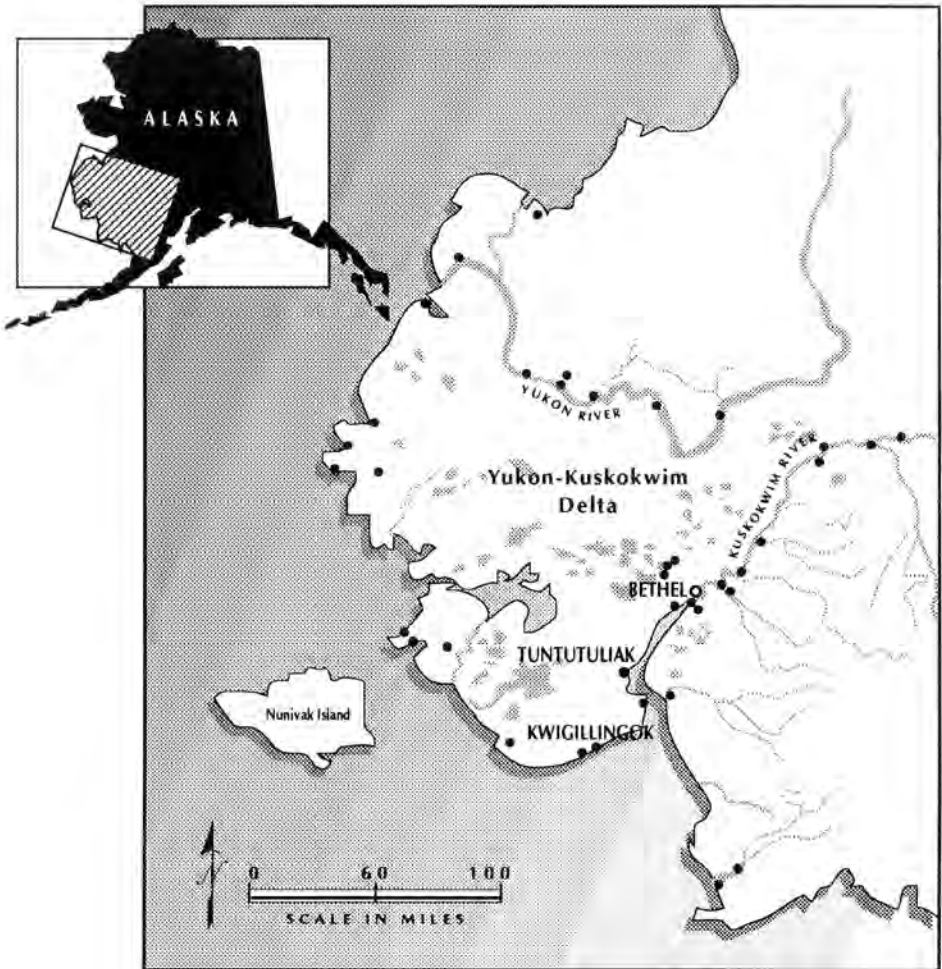
Phillip Charlie was about 70 years old when he told this tale for a popular series broadcast throughout the region over KYUK radio in Bethel, the regional center. He had just told another story that was similar in some respects, and it took him a moment to disentangle the two. The narratives were recorded by Dorothy Cyril Dahl. This series was broadcast in the Yupik language, and the tapes were not edited in any way. During the early 1980s, at least five years later, we transcribed and translated many of the audiotapes of stories that had been collected by institutions such as KYUK. We have retranscribed and retranslated the story for this article.

---

<sup>1</sup> A *quliraaq* is a traditional story said to have taken place long ago. The category subsumes the folklorist's genres of folktale and myth. Yupik tellers would classify what English speakers call legends, memorates, news reports, and anecdotes in a second category, that of the *qanemciq*. This latter category includes more recent stories of events that are generally attributable to named individuals. Some tales do not fall clearly into one or the other genre; it is not a rigid system of categorization.

<sup>2</sup> This form is the common Anglicized spelling of the Yupik name, *Tuntutuli/Tuntutuliar*, literally, “having many caribou.” Caribou herds no longer frequent the area, but were once commonly hunted.

<sup>3</sup> Inuit is a cover designation accepted for political purposes by the indigenous peoples of the Far North in Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. Inuit means “people” in the languages spoken in most of these areas; the analogous term in southwestern Alaska is *yuut*, and the local self-designation is Yup'ik (pl. YUPIIT: “real people”). The apostrophe, generally left out when writing in English, indicates the gemination (doubling) of the /p/. Other Inuit languages form a dialect chain across the North, but Yupik is actually a separate language, as is Aleut, the other member of the Eskimo-Aleut language family.



The lower Kuskokwim River village of Tuntutuliak, home of Phillip Charlie. Also identified are Kwigillingok, Elsie Mather's home village (which Charlie used to visit as a lay preacher), and Bethel, the regional center of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Mather's current home. Phyllis Morrow currently lives in the interior community of Fairbanks (not shown), some five-hundred air miles from Bethel. Map credit: Penny Panlener.

### About the Transcription

Yupik prosody entails a complex interplay between intonation contours, pause groups, content, and affect.<sup>4</sup> The general contours of the oral performance are preserved in the following transcription, which is best read aloud. The line breaks broadly correspond to pause groups (usually also characterized by recognizable pitch contours), with single, double, and triple spaces indicating progressively longer pauses. Triple spacing also tends to correspond to larger narrative shifts such as a change in setting or action within the story. Readers should note that Yupik pauses are longer than those that most English speakers are accustomed to hearing.

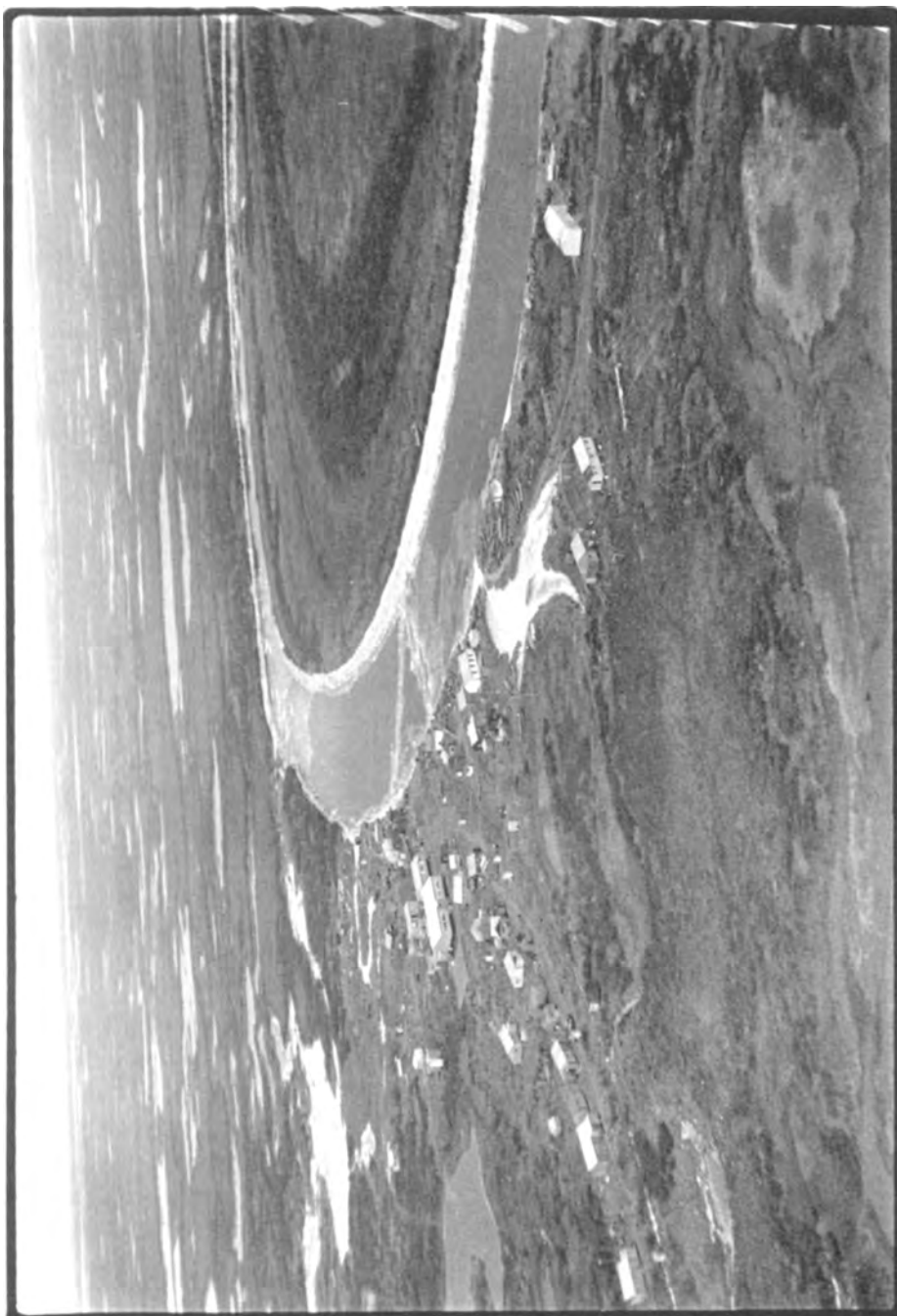
Except where it would interfere with easy comprehension, the translation corresponds line-by-line with the Yupik transcription. In addition, since the syntactic order of a typical Yupik word is roughly the reverse of an English sentence (with suffixes indicating person, case, number, and various modifications of meaning following a stem), details may be presented in a different order than is customary in English narratives, but this order often serves to heighten drama or anticipation. Cohesion may also be provided by the repetition of a stem with a different grammatical ending in the following line. Where possible, these rhetorical devices are mirrored in the translation.

Other conventions used are as follows:

indentation	indicates continuation of a line; no break
!	marks the beginning of an emphasized line or phrase
a-a-all	vowel extension as intensifier
'caribou'	word was spoken in English
<i>qangiar</i>	Yupik word defined within the narrative; also used for some essential cultural concepts that are not easily glossed, e.g., <i>nukalpiaq</i> ; these words are explained in notes

---

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of prosodic phrasing, pause phrasing, syntactic constituency, and adverbial-particle phrasing in Yupik narrative, see Woodbury 1987.



Tuntutuiak, Alaska, taken around 1975. Aerial photograph by James H. Barker.

alikti!/aling!	untranslated exclamations (meaning is readily glossed from context)
[     ]	tape unclear
21.	“verses” are numbered for ease of matching transcription with translation, and for reference in following discussion
ellipsis	indicates hesitation or false start
parentheses	indicate parenthetical comments by narrator

### *Quliraq*

Told by Phillip Charlie  
Translated by Elsie P. Mather and Phyllis Morrow

1. I think it is ‘August 20’ today.  
Yaa.  
I’m going to tell a tale for my *qangiar* here,  
who came and asked me to tell one,  
here in Tuntutuliar in my house.
2. My Yupik name is Kunuin.  
I’ve always been called that.  
And this, my name . . .  
Now my name is Phillip Charlie, Sr.
3. I’m from Tuntutuliar.  
We originally lived in Qinaq.  
Then we ‘moved’ to Tuntutuli.  
We ‘moved’ to Tuntutuli in ‘1945.’
4. That is all  
I will explain.
5. This then,  
the start [     ] before I tell the tale.

6. You who are listening, listen to this tale.

7. This one here, she is  
Maarraaq's grandchild,  
this one here who came to fetch a tale.  
She is a niece to me.  
That's who she is.  
'KYUK' sent her here to fetch a tale.

8. She is the grandchild of our father's brother Maarraaq.

9. So now I'm explaining this about her.  
Now,  
her father and I were small boys together, grew up together.

10. At the time we were growing up,  
it seems like this land was a good place to be.  
There was nothing so bad that we couldn't endure it.  
We suffered—  
But even though we suffered things didn't get really bad.  
That is all.

11. This time  
I am going to tell a tale,  
the first of the tales.<sup>5</sup>  
It is an authentic tale; I'm not making it up.  
It is one I heard  
from those two old men.

12. It was in Qinaq when one of them  
called the other,  
"Arenqillraa,<sup>6</sup>  
my side here, where I hurt myself, would you place  
your hands on it sometime?"<sup>7</sup>  
And the other replied,  
"Then, would you tell a tale?  
Would you tell the first of the tales?"

---

<sup>5</sup> Meaning one of the oldest tales.

<sup>6</sup> This is a common term of address used in a specific relationship unknown to us. With the wide extension of kinship-like ties in Yupik society, there are numerous names that partners of various types (especially cross-cousins) have for each other.

<sup>7</sup> Some people could heal by this method.

He said yes, he would  
tell the first of the tales.

13. And then I thought, "I'll probably sleep.  
I'll probably sleep through it all."<sup>8</sup>

14. So then,  
that  
man . . .  
no . . .  
A man and his wife  
were living.  
They were living.

15. Maybe I'm telling it wrong.  
I'm not telling it right, wait.

16. Yes, now.

17. Then that man . . .  
A man and his wife, yes, this time . . .

18. A man and his wife were living.

19. They went on making their living,  
and the ocean was within their sight.

20. That earlier part was not right.  
I was afraid I got it mixed up  
with another story.

21. A man and his wife went about their living.

22. And that man,  
since they were close to the ocean,  
would bring in young bearded seals in the springtime,  
and would hunt the seals also in the fall.  
They never went without them.

---

<sup>8</sup> In the men's house, where adult men and boys older than six or so lived, boys often fell asleep while stories were being told. Since the men's houses were discontinued about forty years ago, today men sometimes do not know the endings of stories because they did not hear them as adults when they would have been able to stay awake to the end.



23. And also,  
when cold weather came,  
deer,  
those real deer.

24. Those of you listening will know the real deer, the  
‘caribou.’<sup>9</sup>  
That’s what they were.  
They say those were  
the only kind of deer around here.  
‘Caribou.’  
There were no other kind.

25. And so  
that couple lived there always in their place,  
and they didn’t know any other people.

26. And then,  
one time  
that man  
went down early in the morning.  
He got to the water and traveled all the way out to the sea.  
But the seals  
were nowhere to be seen!

27. Finally, when the sun was nearly setting  
he caught a seal,  
and then came back.

28. As soon as he reached the shore,  
he went on home.  
When he got home,  
he said to his wife, “Aling!  
I am very tired after paddling all day.”  
(The ocean was within their sight.)  
“Would you go and get my kayak  
and the seal I caught?”

---

<sup>9</sup> Reindeer were at one time introduced into the area to encourage pastoralism. The Yupik word *tuntu* refers to either reindeer or caribou, so he clarified by using the English word.

29. It was daylight.

30. And so,  
that woman left.

31. The man stayed there after she left,  
since she also left behind a pot of food she  
    had started cooking,  
back when they used clay pots for cooking,  
    not the kind of pots we call *egatet*.<sup>10</sup>

32. And this . . .  
The sun was almost setting now.  
He'd go out to look  
but there was nothing down there.

33. And then the sun started to set.

34. And so, becoming alarmed,  
he went toward the ocean.

35. When he got down there  
he found that his kayak—  
!his kayak was not there.  
!And there was no one there.

36. Then he saw footprints, !where someone had been running.  
“Aling! Why didn't she go toward the house?  
Why didn't she run toward the house  
screaming?”

37. But he could see on the ground that the woman  
    had fled from her pursuer.  
Someone came by water,  
paddling,  
got out and took her.

38. Someone caught her and took her away.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Egatet* (literally, “devices for cooking”) is a term generally applicable to all kinds of cooking pots, but a more specific term can be used to designate the older clay pots.

39. So then, the poor man went back up.

And when he came into the house  
he was overcome with remorse.

“I gave in to my exhaustion.

My exhaustion got the better of me  
and now I’m going through what was bound to happen.”

40. And the poor thing cried there beside his wife’s place.  
That grown man cried.

41. And now his kayak was gone, too.

42. So, he stayed there all that spring,  
because he didn’t have a kayak, and since he had enough food.

43. So then, when the ice went out of his river,  
he took his old kayak—  
the kayak his wife used for picking berries—  
!and patched it up.

44. He smeared it with oil.  
He oiled it.  
He also patched the places where the water  
might seep through.

45. When it was fixed he got himself ready  
by putting food into his *kevirautaq*.  
(A *kevirautaq* is a food bag taken on trips. It  
is an *aikarraq*,  
*kevirautaq*.)  
He filled it with dried fish and other dried meat.

46. And then he said,  
“I am just not going to be here by myself.  
I’m going to head toward somewhere where I  
might find something.”

47. So then, when he reached the mouth  
of his river,

their river!<sup>11</sup>  
 he said,  
 "I wonder which way—  
 to the left or to the right—  
 would lead me more quickly to other people,  
 if there are any people.

48. Aa, I'll go this way toward my right."

49. !He went on, traveling by the ocean.

50. And so when the time came  
 he went to sleep after having his evening meal.  
 It was in the spring,  
 when nights are not very dark.

51. When he woke up in the morning  
 he went on again all day.

52. And again when night came, he slept again.

53. And then the next day when he was  
 traveling along the shore,  
 he began to see places where people had been chopping wood.  
 He saw signs that people had been there.

54. Well then, what does he do now!

55. He kept on going.

56. So then, when the sun was getting low,  
 on the third day,  
 he suddenly came to a river.  
 !The grass there was a-a-all flattened out.  
 It was toward early fall.

---

<sup>11</sup> The grammatical order of the Yupik and a parenthetical reminder that the river was now ice-free makes the first three lines slightly awkward to render in English. A translation closer to the original would be: "So then, his river / their river, / when he reached the mouth of it, because it had already broken up."

Falltime was not far away.  
There were many old roasting sticks there,  
back then when people always roasted their food  
over the fire.

57. He stayed and slept.

58. He woke up from his sleep, startled,  
and heard two people talking, upriver from him.  
“Alikti!  
Someone has already traveled down this river!”

59. Then the other one said to him,  
“Aling! Look how strange this kayak is!  
This kayak here  
doesn’t seem to be from our river.  
It is different.”

60. So,  
he peeked and saw two men  
coming downriver paddling two kayaks.

61. When they reached the shore where he was  
parked, they were talking  
(down there by the cutbank).  
“Is someone there?”  
He answered, “Yes, there is someone here. Someone’s here.”

62. So they came ashore, pulling their kayaks up to the shore.

63. The two of them were very friendly to the man,  
and they ate their morning meal together.  
They ate a meal of whatever food they had instead of  
drinking tea.

64. So then, when they had had their fill,  
the man asked him,  
he asked them,  
“So, have either of you  
happened to hear anything unusual lately?”

65. And the two said,  
“Well,” (one of them said)  
“Well, you see  
this spring

when it was beginning to thaw,  
 after it got warm,  
 the *nukalpiaq*<sup>12</sup> of that village up there brought  
 home a woman.”

66. And the man said,  
 “Yes, she is the one,  
 my wife.  
 I gave in to my exhaustion  
 and asked her to do what I should have done myself,  
 and caused this to happen to us.  
 Yes, she is the one.”

67. Then one of them said,  
 “No!  
 You should not try to get her back.  
 If you try to get her back, you will only cause  
 your own death.

68. But since she is your wife,  
 you could go up there and take a look at her.”

69. And the man replied,  
 and said he would not try to take her back right away.  
 He said he would go with them later to see her.

70. So then, when it was time,  
 and when the tide came in,  
 he went upriver.

71. When they began to approach the place,  
 there below a large house was a woman washing  
 something in the river.  
 The man looked at her a while  
 and saw that she was indeed his wife.

72. He had come upon her quite suddenly.

73. When she saw him,  
 she smiled briefly  
 and touched the rim of his kayak and said,  
 “Oh! When did you get here?”

---

<sup>12</sup> A *nukalpiaq* is a good hunter, a man in his prime whose abilities are respected. The man whose wife was abducted is also a *nukalpiaq*, and is later referred to as such.

And he said he had just now arrived.

74. And then that wife of his said to him,  
“I know you are my husband,  
and I have loved you all these years.

But now  
you must not take me back.  
You are not going to try to take me back.  
I’m saying this only to save your life.  
But you could come  
here  
and we’ll see each other.  
We can at least look at each other.”

75. He said he was staying down at the mouth of the river,  
that he would stay there.

76. So then, he was glad to have seen her, and he went  
back downriver.

77. And then again,  
the next day, he went back upriver and saw her.

78. And then her new husband found out about him.

79. So then,  
that  
*nukalpiaq*,  
after the third time,  
maybe after the third visit,  
went back downriver.  
After he put up his kayak,  
and after eating his evening meal,  
he gave in to his sorrow  
and started weeping.  
The poor man sat there and wept,  
back when people lamented in sorrow.

80. “Oh! my wife—I know now  
that I cannot take her back with my own two hands.”

81. While he was lamenting,

he heard another sound along with his weeping,  
and listened.  
and there from beyond his kayak  
!was a sound muffled by the earth.  
There was something making noises.  
It also sounded like something was snorting.

82. He scrambled back and listened  
and found where it was coming from.  
Then he used his paddle and scraped at the earth.  
And there appeared a skull of a walrus!  
It was an old walrus skull!

83. It was hard to tell how it had gotten there.  
It was a whole skull.

84. So he pulled it out  
!and brought it to the water and washed it.  
!He washed it thoroughly  
until not a trace of dirt was on it.

85. And then, when he got through washing  
that bone,  
after cleaning it completely,  
he placed it down there on the shore side of his kayak  
with its tusks touching the ground,  
facing it toward the bank, and then went back up the shore.

86. It was starting to get dark,  
and he started weeping again because he felt so sad.  
“Oh! I feel so helpless about my wife.  
What a *nukalpiaq* that man must be that no one can oppose him.  
I see now that I can do nothing about my wife.”

87. So then . . .  
The tide was starting to come in.

88. While he was again weeping,  
he started to hear, along with his crying,  
something,  
as though someone was breathing heavily.  
And he stopped to listen and heard,  
“Toh,h,h,h!”  
Loud snorting breaths



were coming from below the bank.

89. He got up quickly  
and saw over the bank  
!a hu-u-uge walrus  
with its tusks buried in the mud.  
!It was such a hu-u-uge walrus.

90. And then he said to it,  
“Kitaki!  
I am in great need of a helper now,  
since I have been in such a predicament.”

91. When the walrus did something and its mouth flew open  
the man thrust himself inside its mouth!

92. When he turned around  
and emerged partly through its head,  
he found himself looking out  
through the eyes of the walrus.

93. Aling, now he wasn't helpless anymore!

94. Then, kicking his kayak out of the way  
he slid backwards.

95. And so,  
he stayed there all night in the water.

96. So then, in the early morning,  
after sleeping all night,  
being wide awake,  
after sleeping since early evening,  
he woke up.  
And that *asveq*, that ‘walrus,’  
allowed the tide to drift him up into the river.  
That one which he had cleaned now had a body.  
!the one he had cleaned.  
“Well then, I hope now that my body  
will be clean of all dirt.”

97. He moved on  
letting the water roll him over, and he would surface.  
That man was able to look around through the eyes  
of that walrus!

Incredible!!

98. So then, when the tide was high,  
!that huge walrus surfaced  
down there below the village.

99. !How that village stirred,  
when one of them saw it and called out "Walrus!"

100. And everywhere up there people ran  
to their kayaks  
!to chase that walrus.

101. The women also came down to the riverbank  
and took pieces of wood  
which they used like drumsticks  
to beat the water downriver of him.<sup>13</sup>

102. And since he was looking around through its eyes  
he could recognize that man over there.

103. His wife up there also came down to the riverbank  
and beat on the water.

104. !Those men quickly positioned themselves downriver  
from him.

105. !That hu-u-uge walrus which was surfacing  
was being faced by those men.  
So-o-o many arrows flew at him!

106. !But none pierced him.

107. And then after a time,  
before any of the arrows pierced him,  
that mammoth walrus suddenly disappeared under the water.

108. And it wasn't long after it submerged  
when the abductor's kayak  
(the husband of that woman)  
!suddenly capsized, just like that.

---

<sup>13</sup> This action was intended to drive the walrus towards the hunters.

109. When the man tipped over,  
that great walrus plunged its tusks into the man's chest!  
!He smashed him down there at the bottom of the river,  
probably burying him.
110. Nothing else surfaced except for the man's overturned  
kayak!
111. The other men were still hunting it.
112. His wife [ ]—when he was all done  
he went over and heaved himself up to the beach  
below his wife,  
and yanked his wife by the arm  
!pulling her in with him.  
They say that walrus looked like a great ship when he  
moved about in the water.
113. And then he headed downriver!
114. And when he reached the mouth,  
he headed out to the ocean,  
!w-a-a-ay out.
115. Then it was time to do something about his wife.  
He came to an island which was never covered over by tides,  
and there he sat her down, and she became a rock.  
And he said to her,  
"You will stay here.  
On some days, future generations will see you here,  
here on this island."  
He told her that he was going back to his people,  
to the walruses.
116. It was from  
then on  
that he went on his way  
with nothing to trouble him.
117. "Well now,  
let all be well with me from now on."
118. That is the end.

119. There are no more words to the story.

## Yupik Text

Told by Phillip Charlie  
Transcribed by Elsie P. Mather

1. Unuamek August 20-iuyugnarquq.  
Yaa.  
Quliriqatartua uum wani qangiarama  
quliriyartuusqenganga  
wani Tuntutuliarmi maani enema iluani.
2. Atengqertua yugtun Kunuin.  
Nutem tuay Kunuingulua.  
Una-w' at'ma . . .  
nutaan atqa ciuqliq Phillip Charlie, Sr.
3. Tuntutuliarmiungulua.  
Ciuqlirmi Qinarmiungullruukut.  
Tuntutulimun-llu move-arluta.  
Tuntutulimun move-allruukut 1945.
4. Tua-i tuaten pitauq  
augna nalqigararuteka.
5. Tua-ll' waniwa una  
waniw' ayagnir [     ] qulirivailegma.
6. Niicugniriani niicugnikipiciu quliraq.
7. Una wani, imum wani  
Maarraam tutgarqaa,  
una waniwa quliramek aqvatellria.  
Wiinga usrukuku.  
Taunguuq tua-i,  
KYUK-m cakuyuikun tekilluni waniw' qulirassaagluni.
8. Maarraam tutgarqaa ataatalramta.
9. Tua-ll' tua waniwa nalqiga'artaqa kangiquluku.  
Tua-i waniw'  
tan'gaurluullruukuk ata'urlua-llu, anglillguteklunuk.

10. Camek tamatum nalliini anglillmegni  
 tuarpiaq nunam qainga nunanirqellruuq.  
 Nangteqnarqelriartaunani arcaqalriamek,  
 nangtequraa—  
 nanteqnginanemteni tuay ilalqertaunata.  
 Tuay tuaten pitauq.

11. Tua-ll' nutaan  
 waniw' quliriqatartua  
 quliraat ciuqliatnek,  
 iqluyugnaunanii quliramek.  
 Niicugnillemmek-wa  
 awkugnek angullualleraagnek.

12. Qinarmi, aipaan pia  
 tuqlurluku,  
 "Arenqillraa,  
 man'a tang ingluka navemcatelqa caavekumiaraqtaqaiu."  
 Tua-ll' ciunran kiugartaa,  
 "Kitak qulirikina  
 quliraat ciuqliatnek."  
 Aa-gguq, piciquq-gguq  
 quliraat ciuliatnek.

13. Tua-i umyuarateqa, "Qavarciqlua-llu.  
 Qavarciqlua-ll' iquklisvianun."

14. Tua-ll'tua-i  
 tauna  
 angun tauna . . .  
 qang'a . . .  
 Taukuk nulirqelriik  
 yuullinilriik.  
 Yuullinilriik tua-i.

15. Iqlulliunga.  
 Iqluqatartua una wani uitaqaqaa ataki.

16. Yaa, nutaan.

17. Tua-ll' tauna angun . . .  
 Nulirqelriik, ii-i nutaan.

18. Nulirqelriik yuulliniuk.
19. Tua-i yuungnaqu'urlutek  
una-i imarpik alaunani.
20. Augna pillrunrituq  
kipullgutnayuklukek piciatun piyuklua piunga,  
allamun quliramun.
21. Nulirqelriik yuungnaquralliniuk.
22. Tua-i angun tauna  
gasqicami unaken imarpigmek  
taguquriaqelliniuk maklaarmek iqukvami  
uksuami-llu maliqluni.  
Tua-i piutaicuunatek.
23. Cali-llu  
kumlangaqan pavaken  
tuntunek  
imkunek tuntupianek.
24. Tuntupiat, niicugnilriim elitaqniarai, caribou.  
Tamakuugut.  
Mat'um kiingita  
nunamta tuntukellrullinii.  
Caribou.  
Allamek tuntutaunani.
25. Tua-i  
tuantara'arqellinilriik nunarramegni.  
Yugmek-llu nallulutek.
26. Tua-ll' tua-i  
cat iliitni atam  
unuakuarmi atrarluni  
angun tauna.  
Imarpigmun ekluni ketmurcaaqqellinilriim,  
qayuwa ciin imkut unguvalriit  
tangrruqeryunripakartat.
27. Atam tuay akerta qertunrirluku

pitlinilria.

Tua-i pirraarluni taggliniluni.

28. Egman tua-i

tagngami taggliniluni.

Tua-i tekicamiu nuliani

pillinia, "Aling,

tua-i tang taqsuqelrianga emerpak anguarpakaama."

(Una-i meq alaitelaan.)

"Angu atak tua-i qayaqa aqvau,

pitaqa-wa."

29. Erenriqsaunani tanqigcenani.

30. Tua-ll' tua-i

tayima tuay ayaglutun' taun' arnaq.

31. Atam tuay kinguani tauna uirua,

kenirluni-llu pillruan egan manirraarluku.

Egatngunrilnguq-llu qikunek egatengqetullermeggni.

32. Man'a tang . . .

Akerta tang ing' ava-i patgutqatal.'

Anluni meciknauryaaqnauraa

un'a tua cataunani.

33. Aren tua-i imna akerta tevirtuq.

34. Tua-i arenqaliqercami

atralliniluni.

35. Atraami

qayani tekitellinia

!qayartaunani.

!Yugtaunani.

36. Maa-i tuay makut tumet !aqvaquallret.

"Aling, kitak kelutmun tungiinun enem,

enemek tungiinun aqevli

aaraluni."

37. Maa-i-gguq tua qimagayaaqellinilria taun' arnaq

mat'um kanaken kana-i merkun yuuluni

anguarluni

tua-i tayim' teguluku.

38. Teguluku ayautelliniluku.

39. Tua-i tageurlurluni  
eneminun itrami tua-i arenqiatuq  
qessanayugtuq,  
"Taqsuqniteklua,  
taqsuqniteklua-am tua-i waniwa  
atu'urkaqngamku atuqeka tua-i."

40. Qiiyaurlulliniluni tuay caniaraani,  
qiaurlurluni taun' angulvall'er.

41. Tua-i qayaunani-llu.

42. Tua-i up'nerkarpak uitalliniluni.  
Qayailami tuay, neqkaitenrilami tua-i.

43. Tua-i un'a kuini cupngan  
atam qayallni imna—  
aiparmi taum iqvarcuutek'lallra—  
!umerqellinikii.

44. Tua-i uqumek apiterrluku.  
Uqurruluku.  
Unkut-llu usgui imangvigkai-w' tuay umciqluki.

45. Upingarian tua uptelliniluni neqkanek  
keviraautani imirluku,  
(Kevirautaq taquarviuguq.  
Aa tuay, aikarraq-wa tuay,  
kevirautaq.)  
neqerrlugnek, canek-wa tuay kemegnek piciatun.

46. Tua-i qanlliniuq,  
"Tua-i kiiqapigma uitangaitua tua-i.  
Kemyukek'ma tungiinun ayagciqua."

47. Tua-i kuini,  
kuigtek,  
pailliarcamiu cupellruan ak'a,



qanlliniuq,  
 “Natatmun waniwa  
 naliagnegun carumitmun tallirpitmun ayakuma  
 nerinitsiyaagpek’nii yugmun,  
 yugnun tekitniarcia yugtangerqan.

48. Aa, tua-i ukatmun pili tallirpitmun.

49. !Cenilliniluni imarpigkun.

50. Tua-i pinariami  
 qavaqcaaralliniluni tuay atakutaarraarluni,  
 up’nerkami waten,  
 unuguami.

51. Tupiimi unuakuan  
 tuamtell’ emerpak.

52. Unuan-llu qavarluni cali.

53. Tuallitua unuaquan ayagluni  
 cenakun pinginanermini  
 yuut tang makunek muragiuqallritnek tangerqalangelria,  
 yullialleruarnek.

54. Tuallitua piciquartuq!

55. Tua-i ayagluni tua.

56. Atam tua akerta una avavarluku,  
 pingayuagni erenret,  
 kuigem painganun tekiartellinilria.  
 !Cakneq-lli tua-i elivumaluni.  
 Uksuaryartumi-ll’ piami,  
 uksuaryartuurcami.  
 Ik’iki-gguq paingani maniarutellret.  
 Maniarturatullermeggni.

57. Tua-i tuavet qavarluni.

58. Qavainanermi ayuqucini qunglullaga'rcan uigartelliniuq,  
qanerturaliik amkuk kiatiinek.

“Alikti!

Ak'a-lli tanem cetulriartangellrullinivaa!”

59. Tuallu aipaan am'um pillinia,

“Aling, qayami-ll' uumi tangnerranaqvaa!

Qayaq tang una

pikegkumiutaunricugnarqelria.

Tangnerranarquq.”

60. Tua-i

igvaussaakarlukak piak maa-i

cetulriik qayak malruk anguarturlutek.

61. Tua-i cama-i ketairamegnegu qanertuk,

(ekvigaam ekvicuaraam aciani)

“Yuuguq-qaa?”

Kiulliniak, “Aren, yuulira-w' tuay waniwa. Yuuguq.”

62. Tag'llinilutek tuay qayatek qukaqmikarluku.

63. Tua-i taukuk ilaliurluku tekitestegken arenqiataak.

Nerliluteng-llu.

Makyutarluteng yuurqeryugnaunateng tua-i neqallernek  
neqalleruarnek.

64. Tua-ll' tua-i kainriqerrluteng

taum wani angutem aptellinia,

aptelliniak,

“Waqaa tuay ukuuk

camek tua-i alanguksaitutek tua-i?”

65. Tua-ll' taukuk qanertuk,

“Tangerrluku, (aipaa qanlliuq)

tangerrluku,

up'nerkaq

urugyungqerluku

urunerturiluku

pikegkut nunat nukalpiarat tekiutellrulria aramek.”

66. Tua-i pilliniuq,

“Tua-i-wa taungullinilria,

aipaqa.

Tua-i wii taqsuqnitekluva

ellimerluku tamaatmun catmun ayalriakuk waniwa.

Tua-ingulliniuq.”

67. Taum tua-i aipaan pillinia,

“Agu!

tua-i tegungnaqsaqunaku.

Tegungnaqkuvgu tua-i elpenek taugaam unguvan ayemqauciiqan.

68. Tua-i aipaqan

itrarluten tangvalarniaran tua-i.”

69. Tua-i pillinia,

tegungnaqngaitaa-gguq egmian.

Waniku-gguq itraqagnek maligglukek tangersarturciqaa.

70. Tua-i pinariami

ulngan

itralliniluni.

71. Tekicartuaralliniut

yaa-i enerpallraam ketiini arnaq ingna camek kuigmun

eruriuralria.

Maaten tang tangvaurallinia, aren,

!nulirra ingna.

72. Tua-i egmilruluni tekiartelliniluku.

73. Tangerqaamiu

quuyumiqerluni

waniw' paingakun ayapqerluk' pillinia,

“Waq' qangvaq tekicit?”

Nutaan-gguq waniw' tekituq.

74. Tua-ll' tuay taum nulirran pillinia,

“Tua-i waniwa uiksaaqamken

inumirpak kenekluten.

Taugaam waniwa

teguciqenritarpenga,

tuay tegungnaqciqenritarpenga.

Unguvaaraan elpet pitekluku waten mat'umek piampen.

Tua-i maavet

tailuten

tangvautelarcikukuk,

tangvautelarniartukuk.”

75. Kuigem-gguq paingani uani uitauq,

uitaurciquq.

76. Tua-i tangvalnguamiu cetulliniluni.

77. Tua-i  
unuaquan tuamtell' asgurlun' tangvalliniluku.

78. Taum-llu tua-i uilinqigutiin nallunrirluku.

79. Tua-i atam,  
tauna  
nukalpiaq,  
pingayuagni,  
pingayuagni pilliuq,  
anelraami,  
qayani tua-i mayurqaarluku  
atakutaarraarluni,  
tua-i ayaniicullni maliggluku,  
qiiyaurtura' urlulliniuq.  
Qiaurlulliniuq qiaqcaarurlulliniuq  
yuut qiaurlutullratni.

80. "Arenqialnguq tua-i aipaqa  
tegusciigatlinilria unatetgun."

81. Atam tua-i qiaqcaarainanrani  
ca imna man'a qiallran camek avunga'rcan  
murilkartelliniuq,  
qayaan pamaken kelulimeranek ca imna  
!eviungruyagaluni qalrialria.  
Qalrialalria.  
Tuar-llu-gguq qutullagalalria.

82. Taq'errluni tagluni niicugniqallinia  
waniwa waken uum nalliinek pilria.  
Anguarutminek kalguurluku marayaq  
alailliniuq !asevrem asvekuyuum qamiquorra!  
Qamiquorra!

83. Cam-llu nalliini tuavet elgartellrullinia.  
Qamiquq tua tamalkuq.

84. Tua-i nuggluku  
!atraulluku mermun erulliniluku.  
!Erunqegcaarluku.  
Tua-i camek iqairulluku.
85. Tua-i-llu taqngamiu  
enerrlainaq,  
erunqegcaarraarluku  
kanavet qayami ketiinun tamlura'arrluku  
kelutmun caugarrluku unitaa mayurluni.
86. Tua-i tan'geraraan  
qiaqcaararlulliniluni tua-i ayaniitellni maliggluku.  
"Arenqialnguq aipaqa.  
Anglill' tua-i nukalpiarullinivaa cayunaunani.  
Tua-i waniwa qaill' pisciigatlinilria."
87. Tuallitua . . .  
Un'a-llu ulqaarluni.
88. Qiaqcaarainanrani-am  
qiallra man'a  
camek imumek  
anemerrliqelriamek  
tap'nga'rcan niicugniqalliniuq,  
"Toh,h,h,h!"  
Camaken ekvigaam acianek  
aneryillagallinil'.
89. Maaten mak'arrluni  
uyangartellinia  
!asvekayak!  
Ciklarcessimaluk' qamiquni.  
!Asevpakayall'er!
90. Tua-ll' tua pillinia,  
"Kitaki!  
Waniwa tua-i camek ikayurtekarramnek kepqua!  
Arenqiapakaama."
91. Qaill' piqalria aitaqercan qanranun  
puukcautellinilria!
92. Mumigarrluni

qamiqurranun pugluni  
kiartelliniuq,  
asevrem iik aturlukek.

93. Aling, aa kalivqinanripakar!

94. Qayani tuckerluku  
kingupialliniluni.

95. Tua-i tamaani  
unupak mermenani tua-i.

96. Atam tua unuakuarmi,  
unupak tua qavarraarluni,  
qavarniicugnaunani,  
iquggaaraanek ayagluku atakumek  
qavarraarluni tupiimi,  
ulqaarmun itruqu'ur cetlinil' taun' asveq.  
Walrus.  
Imna carrillra temengluni.  
!Carrillra  
"Kitak tua temka man' carriuskili,  
carrinqeggiluni pikili."

97. Arenqiatuq tua-i atam  
akagcequ'urluni pug'aqluni.  
Iigkenkun taum angun kiarqurlun' asevrem!  
Ngaren!!

98. Atam tua-i, taukut tua-i . . .  
ulerpaurcan, ketiitni,  
!asveckayak piinanratni pug'araralliniuq.

99. !Arenqiapaa-ll' imkuni nunani  
pawkut iliita tangrramiu qayagpalliniuq !asveq-gguq.

100. Tua-a aqvaqulriarurtellinilun' paugna,  
qayamegnun,  
!asviuqatarluteng.

101. Arnat tuaten paugna cenamun atrarluteng  
muragnek  
meq kaugluku qasiarluku  
uataurluki ugkut.

102. Imna-ll' tua-i yaa-i  
iigken'gun kiarcami elitaqu'urluku.

103. Nulirra-llu pia-i cenamun atrarlun' meq kaugluku.

104. !Uataiqallinikiit atam tuay tamakut angutet.

105. !Asvekayak pug'ara'arluni  
caulara'arqit.  
Ik'iki-gguq pitegcautet!

106. !Kakiksaunaku.

107. Atam tuay caqerluni  
kakivailgatni, aa,  
asvekayak im' tayima kip'allinil'.

108. Kip'akarluni  
imna arnam uinga  
(imum allanrem uinga)  
!paluartelliniluni qail' piqarraarpek'nani.

109. Asvekayim paluarcan  
qat'gaikun cikelvagluk' camani!  
!Kuigem terr'ani passilliniluku.  
Elauulluku-w' pillikii.

110. Tua-i ca pugevkenan' qayaa taugaam palungqaqerluni!

111. Ukut-wa tua puggsualriit.

112. Nuliani [ ] caarkairucami  
nuliami ketiinun ugiyaqaarluni  
nuliani teguqerluk' talliakun  
!ek'arulluku.  
Tuarpiaq-gguq sun'aq ketmun ceqçillakayanermini  
nutaan taun' asveq.

113. Cetulliniluni!

114. Imarpigmun-llu anngami  
ketmurtelliniluni

!camavet tua-i.

115. Pinariamiu tua taun' nuliani  
 natmun-llu qikertamun tuavet qaingiyuilkiinun  
 qiuruluku aqumtelliniluku qanrulluku,  
 "Tuantelkina kitak tua-i,  
 kinguliaraat tayim' ertem iliin' tanglarcicqaatgen tuani.  
 Qikertami."  
 Ellii tuay waniw' ilaminun ayakatarniluni.  
 Asvernun.

116. Tua-i tuaken ayagluni  
 nutaan  
 ciunermikun ayagtuq nak' riluni.  
 Camek tua-i pinerrlugutaunani.

117. "Kitak tua-i  
 makut wani wiinga-llu qelapegutenka kitugikilit waken  
 ayagluteng."

118. Tua-i iquklituq.

119. Qaneryararkairutuq.

### Explanatory Notes

26-28 Hunters often refer to game animals indirectly. Although it is contextually clear that the man caught a seal, Phillip Charlie refers to the quarry as "living things; animals" in 26, or his "catch" (in 27 and 28).

45 *Aikarraq* is another word for these food bags.

47 "the mouth of their river"—The possessive ending customarily refers to a river or lake on which a group of people live, travel, and fish.

50-56 Time frame—He hunted seals along the coast in the early spring, when the ocean would have been ice-free although the river was still frozen. Later in the spring, he could travel on the river. Break-up of the river ice usually occurs around May. The shift to "it was almost falltime" is not explicable, and may have been an



error. It would probably be a mistake to assume that this shift is meant to indicate “mythic time,” given that narrators tend to point out unusual time shifts directly, such as when a person enters another world where the season is opposite to the one s/he has just left.

- 63-64 When strangers meet, or a visitor arrives in town, Yupiks are typically hospitable before business is broached.
- 79 The numbers four and five are culturally significant in Yupik society (as in most other Native American societies). It was on the fourth day of his travelling that he met the two men along the river, and the fourth day of his stay at the camp that he became a walrus.
- 84-85 Yupik listeners would be familiar with the obligation to clean improperly disposed bones. Proper disposal (depending on the situation and the species) might involve such things as keeping the bones of the animal together and placing them in a designated area, often a pond or river, so that the animal’s person-like spirit (*yua*) can rejoin others of its kind. Sometimes the skull must be faced in a prescribed direction (here, it seems to be placed so that the walrus can back into the water). Polishing the flesh off bones is also a way of showing respect to an animal by using it completely, as well as making it clean. Animals treated with respect can regenerate and allow the hunter to catch them again. *Carriuskili* suggests a double meaning of “cleaning” and “straightening out troubles.”
- 115 This reference is undoubtedly to a particular rock on a particular island. The collector did not ask which one it was, although this would have been an acceptable question.

### **The Collaborative Process**

We have collaborated on the representation of Yupik folklore and traditions on and off since the 1980s. The result is usually a co-authored piece with a unified voice. For this article, we wanted to highlight the collaborative process by including some of the dialogue between us. We now live several hundred miles apart, so our collaboration takes place by telephone, facsimile, and mail when we cannot sit at the same table. What follows is a joint commentary on Phillip Charlie’s *quliraq*, highlighted with

direct quotations from our correspondence and conversations. These are presented as “interludes” in the text, identified as either Elsie Mather’s (EM) or Phyllis Morrow’s (PM) voice. We also present our metaconversation about collaboration.

We found that this writing gave us an opportunity to discuss for the first time aspects of our relationship that we had both pondered. We also repeat here some of the insights gained from collaboration that we have discussed many times before, and that are addressed to the reader more than they are to each other. The “dialogue,” then, is not strictly between us—it is with you, in some sense the most problematic partners in this collaboration. “You” includes everyone who made comments on our work in the past, or whose comments on related topics we have heard or read. In our imaginations, you include perceptive critics with a deep level of understanding and a ready store of relevant personal experiences, and you include our own worst stereotypes of those who misconstrue, misappropriate, over-romanticize, and/or overanalyze Native Americans and their folklore. You include Yupik people, to whom we feel responsible and of whom we remain constantly conscious, whether or not you eventually read this article. To complicate this process even more, what we imagine you to be is also what we sometimes project onto each other. We collaborate as both our most eager and appreciative audiences, and as the alternately frustrated, misguided, and reluctant representatives of our respective cultures.

As reluctant cultural representatives, we have found that collaboration underscores a basic contrast between our traditions, which is also reflected to some extent in our personal intellectual styles. A Yupik generally grows up encouraged to reflect on the personal meaning of stories, but discouraged from detailed analysis and public explication. From this perspective, a preoccupation with hidden meanings and symbolism can lead to confusion precisely where Yupik oral tradition tries to avoid confusing or misleading the listener. Much of Western schooling and socialization, on the other hand, encourages probing, contending that addressing conflicting interpretations openly can illuminate subtle meanings and generally enrich an audience’s understanding. We acknowledge these as cultural differences that can be difficult to negotiate. As individuals, we also often delight in each other’s tradition; it is not a simple dichotomy. We both indulge in curious speculation; we both stop to wonder without drawing conclusions. Leaning towards each other’s traditions, we try to construct a middle ground where we can collaborate.

## Commentary on the Narrative

Kunuin's contextualization of the story was a common way to begin a narrative. He set himself, the recorder, the story, and the two men from whom he heard the story in a web of relationships—a network of people, places, and events. In effect, he made it clear that his story was a situated performance of a repeated tale, authentic and faithful to the way he had heard it. One effect of this kind of opening is to invoke the collective authority of many storytellers. Part of what makes this story a *quliraq* is the way it points towards a timeless past and many retellings, not towards any individual's experience or authority. He did not make it up; "it is truly a tale," and one of the "first of the tales."

"A man and his wife were living." Like so many Yupik *qulirat*, this one begins with an isolated couple, a minimal social pair, an incomplete group. This initial state of isolation is unstable. In some stories, the couple longs to have a child. In others, one of them goes off to find other people. If this were a grandparent-orphan grandchild pair, the orphan would soon have a benefactor—the great hunter in the village, possibly a marriageable young woman, perhaps a supernatural helper. Having been rejected by everyone, he would eventually prove himself indispensable to the community by providing them with game or shamanistic assistance. A woman who is abandoned or rejected might bring disaster on the entire village, such as an earthquake or a storm. In fact, the preceding story with which Kunuin at first confused this one begins with a man and wife living alone. The husband leaves her, and the eventual result of this abandonment is that the village to which he moves is destroyed by her actions. These structural parallels suggest one underlying theme that is so obvious to Yupik listeners that it seems almost unworthy of comment. While it is certainly not offered here as an explanation of the story, it will, perhaps, make the story more effective for a non-Yupik audience.

EM: Why do people want to reduce traditional stories to information, to some function? Isn't it enough that we hear and read them? They cause us to wonder about things, and sometimes they touch us briefly along the way, or we connect the information or idea into something we are doing at the moment. This is what the older people say a lot. They tell us to listen even when we don't understand, that later on we will make some meaning or that something that we had listened to before will touch us in some way. Understanding and knowing occur over one's lifetime. I am born into a culture that values certain things and ideas, but most of these I absorb during everyday experiences.

Storytelling is part of the action of living. I do not question it much. The phrases, the themes, or ideas expressed become a part of me, yet I do not understand half of what is said. But they are there. They are part of why I pick my berries or why I ask someone to have tea with me. Whenever my mother had the urge to pick on my head for lice or nits, she yanked me from whatever I was doing and proceeded. I rarely ever asked her to tell me stories. To quiet my protest at having my head picked on, my mother told me stories. The time was both pleasant and painful—a part of life.

Why would I want to spoil the repetition and telling of stories with questions? Why would I want to know what they mean? Is not the hearing and the comforting repetition enough? They brought comfort and added to my well-being even when (in my case) they added to my discomfort and annoyance. I really don't suppose my mother had grandiose ideas about instruction and knowledge as she told the stories. She just wanted me to be still so she could get rid of the little beasts while she had the pleasure of hunting for them.

This underlying assumption has to do with the individual's responsibility to the community and the community's responsibility towards each individual. Expressed in its simplest form, those who reject others end up ashamed and/or punished. In more subtle expressions of the theme, peoples' violations of the many Yupik rules for living end in lonely isolation or community tragedy. This interdependence includes non-humans as well, and the stories explore the costs of breaching the codes of behavior that create and reflect that interdependence, too.

Across Inuit societies in general, including Yupik society, the actual consequence of a social breach was commonly isolation (ostracism, or in severe cases, abandonment—which in the Arctic meant death). The simple threat or fear of isolation most certainly helped to keep people from transgressing, as well. The oral tradition subtly reflects these pervasive truths about Yupik society: that transgressors may be rejected, abandoned, or permanently separated.<sup>14</sup>

In this story, it is a very small breach that leads to the couple's separation. The man says, "I gave in to my exhaustion / and asked her to do what I should have done myself, and caused / this to happen to us." The

---

<sup>14</sup> In *qulirat*, those who are rejected (especially if they are innocent) may bring shame or disaster to all. Some dramatic or emotional tension in the lore seems to derive from a basic discomfort with the fact that it is not always easy to take care of everybody (e.g., supporting orphans or infants whose mothers die in childbirth) but that neglecting those who have done no wrong is a terrible thing to do.

man is left behind, with neither wife nor kayak, an impossible way to survive. Ironically, it is his wife's kayak, old and patched, that he resorts to using. Since animals selectively choose hunters with well-maintained equipment, this is indeed a pitifully inappropriate kayak for a *nukalpiaq*. He goes to look for other people, hoping to find his wife. The woman is abducted and becomes part of a community. She is no longer alone, but the situation is still arguably unstable, because the initial breach has not been resolved. In the end, they are transformed, separated both from other humans and from each other.

PM: This narrative seems to include a powerful message about the difficulties of living up to moral standards and the fear of what can happen in a single moment of human frailty. At the same time, it is a reminder that right behavior results in some restoration of relationships. It is when he cleans the walrus, showing it all proper respect, that help comes to the man. Maybe the man succeeds in repairing his relationship with the game world by dealing properly with the walrus (having failed to show due respect to the seal he had caught). The walrus helps him take revenge against the abductor, and incorporates him into the community of walruses: "he was now going to return to his people, / to the walruses." So, in the end, he finds his people "with nothing to trouble his well-being," while his wife remains a visible reminder to future generations of their story.

EM: The part of the story I like best is when the walrus comes to his aid. It's when the man reaches the very bottom that something unexplainable happens. It makes me think of rebirth or redemption happening when a person loses hope. The powerful players, the supernatural entities, seem to be provoked. By his pitiful condition? It may or may not be because he performed what was then the very ordinary act of cleaning the walrus skull. Phillip Charlie gives the sense of how unusual it would be for a *nukalpiaq* to lament like this, and perhaps the words to his lament (was it originally a song? so often songs have this kind of power) made something happen. On the other hand, there is the Yupik belief that things just happen with no explanation.

PM: Cleaning the walrus skull in a sense prepares the walrus for rebirth—and the man's transformation occurs simultaneously. When I read this story to a university class, one Yupik student commented that you have to be careful what you wish. The story does seem to resonate with that Yupik care with words, the idea that words may make things real.

EM: I have also always heard that when someone does something bad to you, you should not try to take revenge. Eventually that person will get his punishment. I think this part appeals to the Native hearers of this story. It is not enough for the man to get his wife back by his own strength. What the abductor did is so cruel and unacceptable that the only fitting punishment is by some unnatural means, a "punisher" more fearsome than a mere man.

PM: When I read the story, a student also questioned how the abductor could be so formidable. From your comments, I think that he symbolizes an insurmountable problem. I found it interesting (although not surprising) that non-Yupik students were also disturbed because they couldn't figure out a "moral" to the story, and because the couple didn't "live happily ever after."

EM: The ending to the story disturbed me once until I realized that it is not about resolving some conflict then "living happily ever after." To reach the state of "nothing to trouble his well-being" seemed to require some transformation. There is a sense of permanence afterwards, a feeling that they went to their rightful place, where they belong.

PM: We should bring that out. The idea of transformation is at the same time disturbing and satisfying. It's disturbing because the man's actions set something irreversible in motion, but in its inevitability and naturalness in the context of Yupik stories and beliefs, it feels appropriate.

## On Collaboration

The term "collaborative," these days, is often used to cloak a standard researcher-informant relationship in politically correct garb. For us, collaboration is a process that ideally involves both of us in judgements and decisions at all stages of work. This method seems to us the only possible way to walk the shaky tightrope between two traditions. It is no guarantee that we will maintain our balance, that the result will be an ethical and credible translation or commentary, but without it the chances of failing are enormous. In the process there are numerous forces to balance.

The first has to do with what each of us notices in the text, performance, and context. This process keeps us in constant motion as we try on each other's perspectives, reading and rereading a text. We each provide a variety of insights, and offer numerous tentative comments, many of which ultimately fall by the wayside, and some of which become foundations for our writing.

One obvious perspective that the "insider" brings is a sense of the life of the lore, from the pain of picking head lice that went along with the pleasure of hearing stories to evocations of the storyteller's voice in other times and places:

EM: My appreciation of Phillip Charlie's speaking goes back a long way. He used to come to Kwigillingok as a lay pastor, and in his loud, forceful way of speaking, seemed to move people. He had a way with words; he always seemed so enthusiastic, no matter what he said. He made ordinary words sound artistic. What I did not know was that he was interested in old

stories that express the Yupik worldview, and this interest makes him even more interesting to me. Many Yupik pastors do not want to have anything to do with these things.

For the “insider,” then, collaboration invites an exploration of personal associations, and by extension, situated meanings of the story. Clearly, a Yupik collaborator may also be sensitive to cultural patterns and details that the outsider would not notice, but the reverse is also true.

PM: I tend to notice and get excited about connections with other Inuit stories, and I contribute ideas that come from studying folklore and cultural anthropology, interwoven with my thoughts from living in Yupik places over the years. I’m also the one who looks at the whole process of collaboration as a “discourse.”

Throughout these discussions, we discover that anything that makes one read and re-read a story, listen and re-listen to a tape, is worthwhile. Each of us mulls over thoughts that would not otherwise have occurred to us. We appreciate the specific contributions that derive from our personal and educational backgrounds: we both like to read, observe, and talk. Although we are both involved in all phases of the work, we bow to each other’s expertise in certain areas.

The process of translation, for example, is one in which our strengths are often complementary, particularly because sensitivity to connotative meanings is highly culture-dependent. For example, in Phillip Charlie’s story at lines 35-36, Morrow at first thought that the storyteller left open the possibility that the wife did not strongly resist her abduction. If this had been the case, then the woman’s failure to act appropriately would have paralleled the husband’s failure to bring up the seal. Mather pointed out, however, that the Yupik in line 36 implied that the husband’s question in line 35 was rhetorical. An adjustment in the translation of line 36 made it clearer in English that the hunter was convinced that his wife had been forcibly abducted.

The situation was reversed in our discussions of line 74. Here, Morrow rejected an early English gloss of “*tangvautelarcikukuk, / tangvautelarniartukuk,*” on the grounds that “seeing each other,” although true to the Yupik, had a euphemistic sexual meaning in English. This confusion was aggravated a few lines later by the translation of line 78 as “and then her new husband found out what was going on.” Mather was convinced when Morrow confirmed that listeners invariably giggled at these points when she read the piece out loud. We subsequently left one part of line 74 as “we’ll see each other,” but adjusted the other to read “we can at

least *look at* each other.” The translation of line 78 was changed to “and then her new husband found out *about him*.”

In each case, we were able to preserve the Yupik sense while averting a misinterpretation. Obviously, a reader’s understanding of Charlie’s story would be very different if the wife cooperated with (or at least did not sufficiently resist) abduction, and/or if the abductor had found out that his (stolen) wife was having sexual relations with her (former) husband! Either of these problems might have escaped the notice of a single translator; here, two cultural and linguistic backgrounds proved to be better than one.

Although our strengths can, in situations like these, balance each other, dividing the labor according to each individual’s expertise can also threaten to unbalance the collaboration.

PM: Because my Yupik will never approach my collaborator’s native fluency, I trust her with the final transcription decisions. At the same time, I feel uncomfortable when she entrusts the final editing of an entire article to me, trusting my judgement of the academic context. I worry that I may reframe her thoughts or subsume her voice and that she will not tell me.

Imbalances of this sort may be delicate to redress:

PM: I am more than willing to listen to criticisms, and I want to have any of my ideas that seem out of line with truth or cultural preference questioned. That places a tremendous burden on you, as Native collaborator, in two ways. First, you are cast in the role of representative of your culture, and second, you have the unpleasant task of telling me if you think I’m wrong.

EM: What is accurate information? Accurate for whom? Even if an explanation is not wrong, it is not always complete.

I find myself fluctuating between wanting to discourage some of your conclusions and at the same time wanting to follow the Yupik way of respecting what others have to say. The Yupik expression for tolerating what is questionable is the saying that “what is true will prevail.”

PM: And that is a burden for me, too, because I can’t always know when you are leery of some of my conclusions. I do think that there are wrong interpretations. At least there are objectionable ones. You are often critical of commentators who perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions, too, at the same time that you are open to multiple viewpoints.

EM: I do have problems with interpretations of the Yupiks made by outsiders. I am also uncomfortable with making interpretations. I like the idea of people making meaning of life in their own terms.

The most difficult issues in our collaboration lie here: collaboration creates a working space for the recognition of cultural difference, but it is merely a staging area for a more honest and self-aware interaction than that



represented by the old researcher-informant dichotomy, not a solution. In this constructed space, for example, a Yupik collaborator becomes both researcher and informant.<sup>15</sup> As researcher, she becomes curious to ask inappropriate questions, and knows that older cultural contexts need explication for current audiences (both local and distant). The culture bearers make and convey meaning in the context of certain cultural expectations and implicit understandings. When we need to explicate these, we are often in the position of emphasizing that which culture-bearers intentionally do *not* explicate. In short, interpretive writing invites an authoritative stance that is at odds with Yupik cultural knowledge and preferences.

EM: The Yupiks know and feel that the world is experienced in different levels. There is much to wonder about. To learn to live comfortably in these multiple levels is being Yupik. The world speaks to us, for one, in and by our feelings. It does not articulate clearly, but we make inferences and leave it at that. I feel strongly that interpretations should be very limited, leaving the information in the stories open. We are on shaky ground when we presume to know what the message is for the Native hearers. The most respected conveyors of Yupik knowledge are those who express things that listeners already know in artful or different ways, offering new expressions of older concepts.

Since many in our audience do not share this implicit frame, the question is how much explanation to offer. We agree that it is important to limit explanatory notes and to state openly that they are incomplete. We also point out that these notes are addressed to non-Yupiks, and to those younger Yupiks who may be out of touch with narrative traditions. We restrict ourselves primarily to explaining aspects of the motifs, themes, and general cultural setting that are clearly necessary for readers to understand. Beyond this goal, defining the limits and topics of discussion is not easy. In the Western academic tradition, authors are expected to contribute original, individually “owned” insights. For the academic member of a collaborative team, this expectation creates a certain pressure towards high-risk interpretations; that is, going out on an intellectual limb to say something new, or at least to express oneself in a new way. In the Yupik tradition, the ideas most valued are those that have been said by others and that carry the benefit and unique perspective supplied by the speaker’s own experience. When a Yupik speaker has something innovative to say, he or she refers to

---

<sup>15</sup> For an extended discussion of cultural differences in our collaboration, see Morrow 1995.

the authority of oft-repeated wisdom. Using the academic style with a Yupik audience may sound presumptuous; using the Yupik style with an academic audience may cause an idea to be overlooked. Obviously, these divergent cultural preferences make it difficult to write a unified collaborative commentary. At the same time, providing a metacommentary on the difference does not solve the problem, since, again, an explicit discussion of such differences is unwelcome to many Yupik members of the audience.

PM: My nine year old son came home from school today and told me a story he had made up. For this assignment, he said, each child in the class had to create a “legend.” The teacher had posted a chart, with columns conveniently pre-labelled—they included categories such as “trickster” and “human-animal transformation.” Each third-grade folklorist was then to match appropriate motifs or character types with those he had “invented.” The effective point, I suppose, was to demonstrate to each child that she bears a considerable folk tradition. But there was something less conscious going on here. Despite the fact that these narratives looked more like folktales (as I found myself ironically explaining), my son was insistent that they were legends. The situation seemed typically Western or “Anglo”: what was consistently highlighted was genre, individual invention, categorization, and analysis.

I juxtapose this anecdote with some of my earliest experiences learning about Yupik preferences. I remember, for example, practicing grammatical patterns with the help of a tutor. I was translating a series of words with third person absolutive endings: “He goes; she speaks; it is big,” I intoned. “How do you know it’s a ‘he’?” snapped my tutor. She could be a difficult person to get along with, and this pickiness seemed the last straw in a degenerating teacher-student relationship. “Because it’s awkward to say ‘he, she, or it’ every single time,” I replied, wondering why I had to tell her again that I knew gender is not grammatically marked in Yupik.

Some years later, my absolutes no longer in question, I began collaborative efforts to write language-learning materials and to transcribe and translate Yupik folklore. By this time, my main concern was to “get it right.” I understood the resentment that came with seeing poor translations in print, accompanied by inaccurate commentary. Now, however, another problem emerged. The non-Yupik writers on the team wanted to include sociolinguistic information, an area not considered in the existing teaching grammar. The Yupik members of the group supported the idea, but were uncomfortable with most of the sociolinguistic observations that were made. “No, it’s not wrong,” one person said. “In fact, it’s very accurate. It’s just that we’re not sure we want people to know about it.” Again, I thought I understood. Inaccurate information was harmful, but accurate information could be, too, since it violated the protective boundary between insider and

outsider. In the past, outsiders had done a lot of harm with what they had learned, suppressing a variety of customs.

The final anecdote is a current one. We recently prepared a story for publication; meant for a general audience, the introduction carefully explained some of its cultural context. The well-known story tells about a woman who returned from the afterlife and told people how to “improve” their ceremonies for the dead (Morrow and Mather 1994). We explained something about the historic ceremony for the dead and the naming customs that perpetuate relationships among the living and dead. We also wrote about a metaphoric value of the story, its reminder that people should not remain aloof to the needs of others. I thought that this time the problem was solved. Someone passed on to me the comments of one Yupik reader, however, who said he wished that he had not read it. He thought he’d rather not know why his people did the things they did.

Reflecting on these incidents, I find myself facing a serious dilemma with respect to “the work of interpretation,” as Tedlock calls it (1983). The three interactions can be seen as progressive steps towards an impasse. Each demonstrates a basic distress associated with specifying meaning. The grammar lesson overtly recognizes a Whorfian distinction between Yupik, where gender is contextually implicit, and English, where speakers have to specify gender even when they can not know which gender to specify. My teacher’s annoyance was not with my lack of grammatical knowledge, but with my ignorance of a cultural preference for expressing the ambiguous as ambiguous. The second interaction underscores the dangers of making generalizations that may become truths. It is related to the first interaction in that both represent an untoward blending of the descriptive and the prescriptive (for in some ways, saying makes it so). Such tendencies can be related to the protection of cultural boundaries, but the third incident suggests a more inclusive understanding.

The third incident is the most problematic of all, for here a work was produced collaboratively, with an awareness of cultural differences between the collaborators, and of the need to write in ways informative to non-Native readers while accurate and acceptable to Native readers. In fact, the piece described some of the cultural differences I have just mentioned. Yet, the response of that Yupik reader was not “I do not want you outsiders to know why we do things,” but “I do not want to know why we do these things ourselves.”

And so we limit our discussion, aware that readers who know nothing whatsoever about Yupik culture may respond by imposing their own explications, founded in misinformation and stereotypes. While suggesting one explanation rather than another results in a kind of harm, providing none may result in another. Phillip Charlie offered explanations in this story that he must have thought necessary for a contemporary Bethel-area radio audience. Because he addressed his story to unseen listeners, he

provided one level of decontextualization, moving the oral performance from an immediate and interactive context to a delayed and distant one. What he chose to explain were practices and items related to material culture and subsistence—the presence of caribou in the area, the use of clay cooking pots and foodbags for dried meat and fish, and so on. He seemed to be comfortable at stopping when “there are no more words to the story.” In transmitting stories in a print medium, in another language, to another audience, we are never as sure when to stop.

Perhaps the best we can hope for is that truths will prevail. If the Yupik reader feels that we have already said too much, and the non-Yupik reader is hungry to know more, then we have left you with the tension that we feel. It is an honest compromise; we satisfy our consciences and leave the rest of the meaning-making up to you. Perhaps this exchange is the ultimate in collaboration.

*University of Alaska, Fairbanks  
Bethel, Alaska*

### References

- Morrow 1995                      Phyllis Morrow. “On Shaky Ground: Folklore, Collaboration, and Problematic Outcomes.” In *When Our Words Return: Hearing, Writing, and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and the Yukon*. Ed. by Phyllis Morrow and William Schneider. Logan: Utah State University Press. pp. 27-51.
- Morrow and Mather 1994      \_\_\_\_\_ and Elsie P. Mather. “The Woman who Returned from the Dead.” In *Coming to Light: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America*. Ed. by Brian Swann. New York: Random House. pp. 37-56.
- Tedlock 1983                      Dennis Tedlock. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Woodbury 1987                    Anthony C. Woodbury. “Rhetorical Structure in a Central Alaskan Yupik Eskimo Traditional Narrative.” In *Native American Discourse: Poetics and Rhetoric*. Ed. by Joel Sherzer and Anthony Woodbury. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 176-239.

## About the Authors

*Nora Marks Dauenhauer* was raised on a family fishing boat in a traditional Tlingit-speaking family and has been working with Tlingit oral tradition for thirty years. Her work in creative writing and Tlingit folklore has been widely anthologized. Her most recent work is in *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, and her second book of creative writing is being published by the University of Arizona Press.

*Richard Dauenhauer* has lived in Alaska since 1969 and is former poet laureate of Alaska. Major works in progress include completed drafts of *Erotic Epigrams*, love poems translated from the Greek Anthology, and the first English translation of the Buriat-Mongol oral epic, *Young Alamzhi Mergen*. Among Richard and Nora Dauenhauer's collaborative work is the bilingual series, *Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature*, published by the University of Washington Press.

*Larry Evers* is Professor of English and head of the English Department at the University of Arizona. He is the author of *The South Corner of Time: Hopi, Navajo, Papago, Yaqui Tribal Literature*. Larry Evers and Felipe Molina have collaborated on several projects in the past, including *Yaqui Deer Songs*, *Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*.

*Jane Hill* is Regents' Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of Arizona. Among her most recent publications is *The Life of Language: Papers in Linguistics in Honor of William Bright*. Her research interests include the sociolinguistics of Native American languages.

*Toby Langen* works for the Tulalip Tribes' Lushootseed Language Program and writes about Lushootseed curriculum development and about traditional narrative. She contributed "Translating the Classical Literature of Native America" to *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*.

*Elsie P. Mather* is the author of *Qessanqu avelnqaq* as well as *Cauyarnariuq*. She is the continuing editor for the Old Testament Translation Project of the Moravian Church and the American Bible Society. Her research interests include transcription and translation of Yup'ik Eskimo narratives.

*Felipe S. Molina* works for Native Seed Search, where he directs a study of the effect of native foods on diabetes in Native American communities. He has collaborated with Larry Evers on such projects as *Yaqui Deer Songs*, *Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry*.

Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, *Phyllis Morrow* is co-editor of *When Our Words Return: Hearing, Writing, and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and the Yukon* and has contributed "Oral Tradition of the Alaskan Arctic" to the *Dictionary of Native North American Literature*. Her research interests include Alaska Native folklore, translation, and collaboration.

*Maria Moses* has served as a consultant for the *Lushootseed Dictionary* (1994) and for the *Lushootseed Readers* series (1995 and forthcoming). She is a past member of the Tulalip tribes' board of directors and a Korean War Gold Star Mother.

An anthropologist and former student of Alfred L. Kroeber and Robert Lowie, *Susan Brandenstein Park* conducted extensive fieldwork among the Atsuge-wi in the 1930s and collected many oral narratives. In the early 1990s she collaborated with Darryl Babe Wilson to restore the original field notes.

*Barre Toelken* is Professor of English and History at Utah State University, where he has directed the Folklore Program since 1985. He has made a forty-year study of Navajo oral narratives and is the author of *Dynamics of Folklore*. Toelken met co-author George Wasson when they were both involved with the Native American Program at the University of Oregon.

*Darryl Babe Wilson* is an instructor at San Francisco State University, where he teaches Native American oral literature, and also at Foothill College in Palo Alto, California, where he teaches English. His publications include a collection of his poetry entitled *Waves Upon the Ocean of Time* and his autobiography, *The Morning the Sun Went Down*. His mother belongs to the Iss tribe in northeastern California, and his father is from the Aw'te tribe, also in northeastern California.

Coquelle elder and oral traditionalist, *George Wasson* has been a member of the Coquelle Tribal Council. He is the author of essays on southwest Oregon cultural history and is currently a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Oregon.

*Ofelia Zepeda* is Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Arizona. Her interests include the linguistics of the Tohono O'odham language with a focus on language development and lexicography. *Ocean Power*, a collection of her own poetry in English and Tohono O'odham, is her most recent publication.