Notes on Form in Some Northwest Coast Tales

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Alan Dundes wrote The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales to combat the notion that Indian narratives have no perceptible structure. As a corrective to the view that episodes in a story are combined at the whim of the storyteller, Dundes proposed the idea that the plots of most stories could be analyzed in terms of three "motifeme sequences" which could occur singly or in combination: Lack/Lack Liquidated, Task/Task Accomplished, and Interdiction/Violation/Consequence/Attempted Escape.[1] What had hidden these sequences from the eyes of his predecessors, he felt, was that in their discussions of story patterns they could not separate content from form. Content is infinitely variable; form is not. Dundes' proposed formal unit, the motifeme, is like Propp's "function" in that it is a statement of the role a given episode plays in a plot, and the slots for actor, action, setting and so on can be filled in a variety of ways. The term "motifeme" protests against the confusing and inconsistent use by other critics of such terms as incident, episode, element, theme and motif to define the building blocks of narrative, a confusion still obtaining twenty years after the publication of Dundes' book.

For those of us accustomed to thinking of narratives as having a beginning, a middle and an end -- or, in terms more recent than Aristotle's, a situation, a turning point (this being either an action or the establishment of a motivation for an action) and a new status quo — it is unsettling to see a morphological model composed of only two parts, such as Lack/Lack Liquidated. Is Lack Liquidated the action by which the Lack is redeemed or the situation that obtains afterwards, or some combination of the two?

> A people on the Columbia had no eyes or mouths. They ate by smelling the sturgeon. Coyote opened their eyes and mouths.

This is the whole of Sample Text I, analyzed by Dundes as Lack/Lack Liquidated (Dundes 1964:12). Yet it is possible here to see Lack/Lack Liquidated as the frame for a story, the middle part of which might be Task/Task Accomplished. In this model (L/T/TA/LL) T is the motivation; TA is the action by which the Lack is remedied; and Lack Liquidated is the new status quo. (T is the unstated "They wanted to eat"; TA is "Coyote opened their eyes and mouths"; and LL is the unstated "They could now eat.") Dundes freely admits that some elements of a motifeme sequence can be considered present though suppressed. He discusses the Star Husband story in terms of the sequence Interdiction/Violation, though no one in the story ever tells the girls not to make fun of the stars (1964:88-89).

There is another way in which Sample Text I and its analysis fail to satisfy: if you were to ask someone to tell you a story and she responded with Sample Text I, you would feel cheated, because it is not a story. It has no literary values at all. It is only a plot outline. If Sample Text I provides Dundes with enough material for an analysis, then his analysis is not of a story, but only of a plot. Dundes himself acknowledges this by referring to his motifeme sequences as "plot structures."

Obviously, there is more to a story than its plot. There are character, setting and theme; such narrative colors as irony, sarcasm, caricature, pathos, burlesque, suspense, ambiguity, etc.; the personal style of the narrator; devices such as parallelism, rhythm, etc. All of these Dundes would term non-structural elements. But since we often define the form of a piece by reference to its color -- as a burlesque, a tragedy, a suspense story -- we have to contend that though these elements may be non-structural, they certainly are not non-formal. A morphology should therefore include them.

If narrative colors are non-structural but are formal, then there must be a difference between form and structure. Dundes uses these terms almost interchangeably, preferring "structure" when he is discussing motifemic analysis and reverting to "form" when distinguishing between form and content (1964:67). If a morphological analysis is an analysis of form and form is something distinct from content, then a morphological analysis should not turn out to be an abstraction of content. Yet it seems to me that Lack/Lack Liquidated and the rest are, at however abstract a level, ultimately brief references to content.

Dundes resists the idea that there are stories which seem to be made up of two subtales between which the relationship is not reducible to a motifeme sequence. There are no examples of such refractory narratives in his study, and yet such narratives do exist One such is the story that Susie Sampson Peter tells that begins:

> 3. ti sḵa' 'əslalil 'al ti'il 'əceladi'.
> These royal people lived at Utsaladdy.[2]

The story goes on to say that Bluejay is a chatterbox; Magpie warns her not to be so noisy because when the Yakima warriors come they will find her and enslave her. Bluejay claims that she can scare the warriors off by flying up into a tree and barking like a dog. When the warriors arrive, this is what she does, saving her people from enslavement. Magpie apologizes, and Bluejay sings her new spirit power song: "Woof, woof, woof!" The story continues. Bobcat, Magpie's grandson, now makes himself look as if he is covered in sores. The people despise him. He makes the daughter of an important man pregnant by supernatural means, and the villagers move away, leaving him, the woman and the child to starve. Magpie manages to leave some food behind for them. It turns out that Bobcat has a spirit power that enables him to get large quantities of game. Later, when the villagers are starving, he saves their lives.

This story is called by Vi Hilbert, its transcriber and translator, "Grandchildren of Magpie." To an earlier version she gave the title "Nobility at Utsaladdy," echoing a note made by its collector, Leon Metcalf, in his catalogue of tape recordings. "Grandchildren of Magpie" runs about 1300 lines, of which 69 have to do with the episode of Bluejay and the warriors. Yet, years ago, when Vi Hilbert asked Susie Sampson Peter, "What do you call this story?" Mrs. Peter replied, "'The Bluejay Story,' of course." The conclusion to be drawn here is that Mrs. Peter felt that the short episode informed the narrative as a whole. Many people who read the story -- or hear it -- only once come away with the impression that Bluejay plays no further part in it after she frightens the warriors. In fact, she does make one more appearance, when the people of Utsaladdy decide to abandon Bobcat and his family:

> 230. 'əḵcəb tsi'ə' 'adad.
> Magpie was come for.
>
> 231. 'əḵcəb tsi'ə' kaykay'.
> Bluejay was come for.
>
> 232. qilə̓b ti kawqs.
> Raven loaded his canoe.
>
> 233. tadi' liɬd^{z}ix^{w} ti su'ux^{w}s.
> There he goes first.
>
> 234. saq^{w}ax^{w} tsi'ə' kaykay'.
> Bluejay flew now.

235. ʔalcutexʷ swatixʷted.
She put herself in a tree.

236. "ʔu łuʔalcut čed swatixʷted.
"Oh, I'll put myself up in a tree.

237. łuʔaʔ kʷi łudsʔaʔ, łuʔaʔ."
That's where I will be."

238. ƛ̓ileb tsiʔəʔ ʔadad.
Magpie loaded her canoe.

story goes on to say how Magpie, who is unhappy at leaving her grandson, decides to est. Her grandson persuades her to go in order to save her life, but she has a chance to leave food and firestones for him.

The sudden irruption of Bluejay into the story and up into the tree is a signal. We remember that her spirit power is strong when she is up in a tree. (There may be a pun here: ʔalcut may recall ʔalacut, to go on a spirit power quest.) We see by the repetitious speech in 235-237 that she is still the same chatterbox that she was when she was despised the way Bobcat is now despised. We note that Magpie is identified with her old friend (parallel structure of lines 230-231) but also in part identified with the disapproving majority of villagers (parallel structure of lines 232 and 238). Under the birdseye view of Bluejay, however, Magpie's strength grows until she can defy Raven and the rest and do right by her grandson, as she has previously done right by Bluejay. Quite simply, Bluejay's reappearance here is a thematic marker designed to recall for us at just this point the episode with which the story began.

A careful look at the beginning of that episode reveals Mrs. Peter's intentions for it.

1. həbuʔ.
(signal that a story is beginning)

2. həbuʔ kʷəɬ sixʷ gʷəl ʔəsɬaƛ̓lil ti dəbəɬ sƛ̓aʔ.
Indeed, it seems people lived there who belonged to royalty.

3. ti sƛ̓aʔ ʔəsɬaƛ̓lil ʔal tiʔil ʔəcəladiʔ.
Royalty lived at Utsaladdy.

4. ʔəsɬaƛ̓lil tiʔəʔ sƛ̓aʔ.
Royalty lived there.

5. ʔəsɬaƛ̓lil tiʔəʔ pəčəb.
Bobcat lived there.

6. ʔəsɬaƛ̓lil tsiʔəʔ kaƛ̓kaƛ̓.
Bluejay lived there.

7. ʔibəc ʔə tsiʔəʔ ʔadad tiʔəʔ pəčəb.
Bobcat was the grandson of Magpie.

8. ʔibəcs.
Her grandson.

9. ʔaˑ gʷəl tusʔubədiʔ tiʔəʔ pəčəb.
There was Bobcat and he was a hunter.

10. ƛ̓uxʷiʔxʷiʔ, ƛ̓uxʷiʔxʷiʔ.
He would hunt, he would hunt.

11. gʷəl ƛ̓uʔugʷadgʷəd tsiʔəʔ kaƛ̓kaƛ̓.
And Bluejay would talk.

12. ƛ̓uʔugʷadgʷəd, ƛ̓uʔugʷadgʷəd.
She would talk, she would talk.

Lines 2-4 state three times that the people who live at Utsaladdy are of high status and have been for generations. The variation of word order in these lines is probably not just ornamental but conveys some indication of the storyteller's attitude. Line 4, the last line of this group, is also the first line of the next group of three lines which share a pattern. In this group, the pattern is parallelism with one word variable. In order to construct this parallelism, Mrs. Peter has changed the ti sƛ̓aʔ of lines 2 and 3 to tiʔeʔ skaʔ in line 4, a closing-in of focus from "the" to "this." The parallel structure of lines 4-6 emphasizes for us the fact that both Bobcat and Bluejay are of high rank and that they are of equal rank with each other. Lines 7 and 8 introduce Magpie in her relation to Bobcat. Lines 9-12 return to Bluejay and Bobcat; and, while the parallelism is not perfect, we are aware of an A-B, A-B pattern: A consists of gʷəl plus aspective (tu, ƛ̓u) plus hallmark action of subject (not parallel parts of speech in this case) plus t(s)iʔəʔ plus name; B consists of ƛ̓u plus hallmark verb, ƛ̓u plus hallmark verb. These lines equate hunting and talking. At first, this seems an unlikely equation, and I suspect these lines made Mrs. Peter's audience smile. But later on, we realize that successful hunting and successful vocalism are the manifestations of the spirit powers of Bobcat and Bluejay. Lines 13 ff. revert to the subject of lines 7 and 8 -- Magpie, this time in relation to her friend, Bluejay.

It seems clear that the patterning in lines 1-12 has as its purpose the signalling to us that our understanding of Bluejay's story is to serve as a guide to our interpretation of Bobcat's: Bluejay's story is a prologue to Bobcat's. There is no structural (plot) expression of the relationship between the two stories; it is not reducible to a motifemic sequence. The function of Bluejay's story is conveyed by formal means: the patterning of the first lines; the recurrence of the word saxʷəb (to go from a motionless state into activity, whether it be flying away, jumping up or running off) at key points in the story when people are manifesting their spirit powers or receiving the benefits of others' spirit powers; the strategic reappearance of Bluejay in Bobcat's story; and the similar endings of both stories, when Bluejay and Bobcat sing burlesque spirit songs.

From this one example, we may abstract a definition of "prologue," though with the understanding that there may be other types. A prologue is a short narrative which comes before the main narrative in a story. The prologue's protagonist is a member of an older generation than the one to which the protagonist of the main story belongs. The situations of both narratives are related at an abstract level (A person despised by the rest of the villagers turns out to have spirit power which enables her to be of benefit to the very people who despised her). There is no plot link between the prologue and the main story. Characters who are major in the prologue are minor in the main story, and vice versa. Treatment of theme is burlesque in the prologue, serious in the main story. The thematic relation between prologue and main story is conveyed by formal and stylistic means. Can this definition in any way be said to be a contribution toward the morphology of prologue? In Dundes' terms, no. Our definition concerns itself wholly with function and relationship, which Dundes holds are separate from morphology.

Bluejay's story and Bobcat's are detachable from one another; each can stand on its own. Is there any sense in which Bluejay's story can be said to add something to the main story which the main story would lack altogether without a prologue? By the time Bobcat is pretending to be covered in sores, we know that he lives among people whose pretensions lead them to despise the foolish and unfortunate. His reaction to this social climate,

indeed, may be nstated motivation for Bobcat's pretense. Further, the prologue provides a cont. for Magpie's enlightened behavior when the villagers abandon Bobcat. With the prologue behind her, she is a three-dimensional character in the main story, not just a walk-on. Characterization, then, seems to be a task carried out for the main story by the prologue. If we wish to describe the form of "Grandchildren of Magpie," it seems to be that we will have to talk about it as made up of two parts different in size and opposite in tone, with the larger a thematic mirror of the smaller.

Using the definition of prologue above as a basis, we can posit a definition of what an epilogue might be like. We might expect an epilogue to concentrate on the adventures of characters in the next generation younger to that of the characters in the main story. We would expect the same themes to be handled in both narratives, but in different tones. There would be no plot connection between the two narratives, but there would be formal signals of a thematic connection. Since it comes after the main story, we cannot expect the epilogue to provide characterization in the story as a whole; perhaps its contribution will be some refinement of theme. Although the two examples I am about to discuss do not conform exactly to this abstract, I think the concept of "epilogue" satisfactorily accounts for the presence of these episodes in the stories in which they are found.

Victoria Howard's "Fire and His Son's Son" tells how one of Fire's grandson's two wives deserts her husband and baby boy and returns to the village in which her brother is headman. Fire's grandson follows her and is taken prisoner by the brother; the pursued wife denies that she was ever married, and there is a hint that she is too fond of her brother. Meanwhile, Fire's grandson's two boys (one by each wife) grow up. To convey this information, Mrs. Howard uses a familiar device, the hunting-growing up-finding out bridge passage. A boy gets his first weapon, kills a small animal and brings it home. As he grows up, he gets larger weapons and brings home larger game. One day, he returns early or leaves late and overhears something; when he reaches a certain age, he is prohibited from hunting in a certain direction. These last two elements can occur in any order, and sometimes only one is present. As a result of what he has overheard and/or of the prohibition, the boy does something which precipitates the next plot development. As Mrs. Howard uses this stock device, the two boys bring home at first small things and so are gone all day. As their game gets larger, they arrive home earlier and finally see that their mother (in one case, step-mother) and grandfather have been crying. Finally, they find out the reason for the weeping: the captivity of their father. It is to be noted that the prohibition part of the sequence ("Do not hunt in that direction") is not used here at this time. The boys go into training in order to obtain spirit power, and when they are ready they set off to find their father. At the village, the younger boy's mother denies she has ever had a child. The boys defeat the brother, kill most of the villagers (including, inevitably, some relatives) and rescue their father.

But the story does not end here. It continues:

> Now they lived there. He himself (Fire) did nothing. Only the youths hunted. After some time they said to their mother [the older son's mother], "There are now no deer where we have been going (when we hunt)." "Indeed," she replied to them. "Do not go in that other direction."
>
> (Howard 1929/30 per Jacobs 1959:42)

The boys hunt in the proscribed direction, see two women who are in seclusion in a menstrual hut and sleep with them. The local villagers kill the youths. Their mother arrives and tells the villagers who the boys were. It turns out that one of the women in the menstrual hut was the younger brother's maternal aunt. The relatives of the younger brother take revenge on the other villagers. Finally, everyone is changed into an animal or a star.

The portion of the story that begins, "Now they lived there" is an epilogue. In this case, however, there is a connection with the main story that is reducible to a motifeme sequence: Interdiction/Violation/Consequence. The interdiction, never stated,

is that one is not to kill one's relatives; the violation is the ki of the younger brother's uncle, grandmother and mother; and the consequence is the ' death. There is another way of looking at this, though. The main story abounds in violated interdictions; indeed, the springboard for the whole plot is the younger wife's interdicted behavior. But in the main story the violators know full well what they are doing, while by the time of the epilogue, the boys do not know, for example, that they are committing incest. It is as if the situation in the main story, where everyone seems to be conspiring to keep knowledge from the boys (the older boy's mother, their grandfather and the younger boy's mother all either try to hide information or to deny facts) creates a world full of unknown or nonsensical-seeming taboos for them in the epilogue. In a world where the younger boy does not know who his relatives are, and his relatives don't know who he is, the usual safeguards against incest do not exist. Having violated one taboo by killing his relatives, the younger boy may assume in sleeping with a menstruating woman that he is above the law; but motherless (and therefore uninformed) he does not know what taboo he is really breaking. The larger picture of the social consequences of the breakdown of family relationships is the contribution of the epilogue to the story as a whole. Without the epilogue, the main story remains a solitary instance; with the epilogue, it becomes a paradigm.

The cause-and-effect focus of the motifeme sequence I/V/C conceals rather than reveals the relationship between the main story and the epilogue. The point is that there is not just one cause and one effect; the point is that in certain circumstances the causes of disorder multiply and the effects become all-encompassing. It is in an appreciation of how this particular epilogue fulfils the requirements of the form that insight into the whole story is achieved.

The epilogue of "Fire and His Son's Son" does not conform in every particular with the definition posited at the beginning of this discussion. Its protagonists are already protagonists in the second half of the main story; there are some structural links to the main story; and the tone of the epilogue, like that of the main story, is serious. On the other hand, the epilogue's protagonists are descendants of the protagonists in the beginning of the main story; the themes of the main story--incest, questing, restoration of justice--are handled, if not in a different tone from the main story's, certainly to a different purpose. (In the main story, one parent knowingly commits incest, or so it is hinted; in the epilogue, the child unknowingly does. In the main story, questing brings sucess; in the epilogue, destruction. In the main story, an attempt to restore justice results in the reconstituting of a family group; in the epilogue, in the dissolution of the social structure of a whole village.) Perhaps we should revise the requirement for a difference of tone in the handling of themes between epilogue and main story and look instead for any sort of inversion in the handling of themes. And, finally, the strongest link between this epilogue and its main story is formal, not structural. When Mrs. Howard's audience heard the hunting-growing up- finding out device in the main story without the prohibition of hunting in a certain direction, they may have assumed she was just using a short version. But when at the beginning of the epilogue they heard the completion of the device, they would have known at once that the epilogue was to present a completion of ideas broached in the main story.

It cannot be said that this epilogue is as detachable from "Fire and His Son's Son" as Bluejay's story is from Bobcat's. "Fire and His Son's Son"'s epilogue has a complete plot, but what it means is not ascertainable without reference to the main story. Perhaps this is another characteristic of epilogues. The contributions of characterization and thematic pointing that a prologue makes are proleptic, and so a prologue has to be completely achieved. But an epilogue means something only in comparison with what has gone before.

Because prologues and epilogues do not depend upon structural links with their main stories, it is interesting to note how the two we have considered so far are integrated at the surface level with their larger narratives. Bluejay's story is linked to Bobcat's by the reiteration of the word <u>ʔəsłaɬlil</u>: they (both) lived there. The epilogue of "Fire and His Son's Son" is linked to its main story the same way: "Now they lived there."

But when an epilogue introduces a new character, one who does not already live there, this method will not work. Students of Susie Sampson Peter's "Starchild" have commented on the difficulty Mrs. Peter seems to have had in introducing the story of Mink into the narrative; they have also wondered why Mink's story was introduced.

Mink's story fits our definition of epilogue rather well; in fact, one of the ways of appreciating this part of "Starchild" is to take note of the playfulness of Mrs. Peter's fulfilling of the requirements of epilogue form. "Starchild" is the story of two young men who are (one rather indirectly) the sons of a powerful star. They live on earth and, because one has been kidnapped as a baby and the other enslaved, they are not aware of their parentage and cannot assume their proper roles in the order of things. Their troubles have been brought about by their parents' marital difficulties. Just before Mink's entrance into the story, the two boys have come into their own, assuming the roles of sun and moon. The older brother has received the younger brother's assistance in making a marriage which is, in contrast to their mother's, prudent, and he is preparing to take his wife away with him into the sky. The concerns of the main story have been paternity, marriage and status. The epilogue is a burlesque treatment of these themes. In contrast to the brothers, who seek to know their true paternity, Mink is an imposter when he claims to be Diaper Child's son. In contrast to the success of the brothers, who on repeated trips to the sky carefully adjust the expression of their powers until they are just right, Mink's attempts to play the sun result in partial and total eclipses. Instead of finding his place in the sky, Mink gets lost in the Milky Way. And precisely because Diaper Child has been the embodiment of prudence in marriage, it is to his new wife that Mink expresses bogus surprise at not finding his "mother" at Diaper Child's house. Mrs. Peter prefaces her story of Mink with the statement that he always lies, so we are never in any doubt about the validity of his claims; the momentary discomfiture of Diaper Child's new wife, whose thoughts are expressed by the narrator, is comic.

The concept of epilogue form helps us to accept the legitimacy of Mink's story as part of "Starchild"; but, although it is an epilogue, it does not occur at the very end of the narrative. It occurs at the end of the plot, after all the problems surrounding paternity, marriage and status have been resolved, but of "Starchild" as a whole there is still to come the documentary portion, the list of names that the brothers give to places and peoples. Mink's story is actually an insertion into the summary narration of Starchild's preparations for his wedding journey into the sky:

525. kʷədad tsiʔəʔ čəgʷass.
He took his wife.

526. kʷədatəb ʔə tiʔəʔ tiʔəʔ ʔixʷʔixʷads; təddəxʷʔasəxʷ
His little blanket was taken; thus it is that

tiʔəʔ wəẇlis ʔal ti słukʷalb (xʷčasusəxʷ ʔə ti słukʷalb).
little Green Frog is there on the moon (that which is marked on the moon).

527. xʷuiəxʷ ləʔaʔil ʔə kʷi dəxʷcuts gʷəl ləstitəsəwičəbəxʷ.
When it comes to the time, as he said, then he warms his back.

528. ʔuɣʷ ti spičikʷ ʔəsləɣəd tiʔəʔ swatixʷtəd, mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
Diaper Child went lighting the world.....

529. xʷuiˀ buusał tiʔəʔ suʔuxʷs gʷəl łčil tiʔəʔ bəščəb.
He had gone just four times when Mink arrived.

(Mink's story)

579. ʔuʔatəbəd xʷuʔələʔ cutəb tiʔəʔ bəščəb.
"Maybe he died," they said about Mink.

580. xʷiʔəxʷ kʷi basʔuɣʷ ʔə tiʔəʔ cədił sqaʔs, xʷiʔəxʷ gʷəsʔuxʷ ʔə
This older brother of his had not yet gone, this Moon had

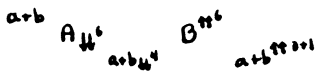
tiʔəʔ diʔəʔ słukʷalb.
not gone yet.

(The brothers meet to plan their naming journey.)

The effect of the positioning of Mink's story is this: we leave a story in which order has been established and participate in a comic interlude in which disorder is vanquished; then we return to serious documentation of the new order. The epilogue has facilitated the transition between "fiction" and "list" but has also underlined the identity of purpose between fiction and list. The epilogue's position in the middle of a bridge passage constitutes its formal relation with "Starchild."

We have shown how prologues and epilogues, though parts of a story, are not parts of its structure. We have shown that their relationship to the rest of the story is thematic and is embodied in certain formal principles: parallelism, inversion, entire repetition, part-variable repetition, rhythm, tone, etc. One can speak of these principles in music or plastic arts as well as in literature, and in literature they can be used to order a whole work or just a part, narrative material or descriptive. And yet, our discussion of the terms "epilogue" and "prologue," which are meant to be the names of forms, seems to have been only slightly less dependent on content than Dundes' discussion of motifeme sequences. Although critics somewhat glibly talk of distinguishing form from content, it is not very easy in practise to separate the two. Words themselves ("lack," "deception") seem to tie us to content, though some words ("inversion," "repetition") are not names for types of content, but descriptions of relationships between content elements.

A description of the relation between content elements in a story is a description of its form. I submit the following diagram as a recognizable formal description of Martha LaMont's "Pheasant and Raven":



It would not matter if we replaced the letters with colored shapes. The relationships between them and the trend of the whole would still be intelligible. The story has two halves which are mirror images of each other, though the parallelism (vertical lines) of the B half is inverted in purpose and tone (change of direction of arrows). Each half consists of a main part and a subsidiary part. Each subsidiary part contains ingredients from both halves and also stands in the relation of inverted parallelism to the other subsidiary part. The story starts with an adumbration of material in the subsidiary parts. Martha LaMont's "Pheasant and Raven" is an interesting story because its formal beauty is its most memorable quality.

a-b: Pheasant and Raven are neighbors. A: Pheasant is poor and his children are hungry. He wanders into the mountains and meets two hunters, whose dogs attack him. They tell him to call his dogs, and he says they are not his. There is a slaughtered elk lying nearby, and they ask him if it is his. Pheasant says no. The hunters wrap up the elk for him, telling him not to look back on his way home. Pheasant follows directions and is able to feed his family. a-b: Raven sees the Pheasant children with food and sends his own children over to find out about it; he hears about the hunters. B: Raven goes to find the hunters. He pretends that the dogs are his, that the elk is his. He disobeys instructions on the way home and arrives with rotten wood instead of meat. a-b: The only way Raven gets meat is to send his children over to Pheasant's house. The heart of the tale is the two inversely parallel mountain trips: Pheasant sets a good example, Raven sets a bad one. Though the first interlude with the children provides Raven's motivation for his mountain trip, the children's scenes are basically

bridge passage ...ey mark the passage of time and underline the situations created by the mountain... ...nes. The meaning of the story resides in its form, in the inverted parallelism which Marth LaMont is scrupulous to observe.

The mountain narratives consist of six episodes each: 1) announcement to one's wife of one's intention to travel; travelling; 2) the hunters' dogs; 3) whose game is it? 4) butchering and wrapping the game; 5) instructions and trip home; 6) arrival. Each episode in Raven's trip is told in such a way as to answer the corresponding one in Pheasant's. There are variations in emphasis and pace between the two narrations, but Mrs. LaMont keeps a firm grip on the correspondences between individual elements.

Let us examine the first episodes of each trip in some detail to see how this works:

Pheasant's trip[4]

1a. huy ʔibəšəxʷ tiʔəʔ sgʷəlub. 1b. cuucəxʷ tsiʔəʔ čəgʷass:
Now Pheasant took a walk. He said to his wife:

2. "łučuba čəd, łuʔibəš. paƛaƛ čəd tuxʷ łuʔibəš.
"I am going to walk upland. I am just going for a walk without any special destination in mind.

3. łuʔibəš čəd, łuʔuxʷ dxʷtaqt."
I am going for a walk. I am going toward the mountains."

4. huy ʔibəšəxʷ tiʔəʔsgʷəlub.
Pheasant now travelled.

5. ʔi·, ʔibəšəxʷ dxʷčad. paƛaƛ ʔuʔibʔibəš.
Yes, he wandered aimlessly. He just wandered.

6. xəł ti ʕuʔəstagʷəxʷ həlgʷəʔ.
They seem usually to be hungry.

Raven's trip

1. tiləbəxʷ ʔucut:
Then he said:

2. "tiləbəxʷ ʔu ʔəca gənəxʔimaligʷəd kʷi xʷiʔ gʷəʔuʔəydxʷ kʷi sʔumənəʔ.
Would it not be me, Cenəxʔimaligʷəd, who could find the hunters?

łučubastxʷ čəd qʷəlqʷəlwič.
I am going to climb up to them, Qʷəlqʷəlwic.

3. ʔuʔiməš čən."
I am going to travel."

4. huy ʔibəšəxʷ.
Then he travelled.

5. čubaʔəxʷ.
He climbed.

6. haʔlicutəxʷ kʷa tiʔəʔ sgʷəlub tuʔuƛiligʷəd ʔə tə ʔiiščds[...]
Pheasant pleased himself as he generously gave food to his friends and relatives ...

The first three lines of each of these episodes are speeches and s... ...titute a scene; the second three are summary narration. In Pheasant's story, e... group of three lines is initiated by huy ʔibəsəxʷ, and this line also marks the transition between scene and summary narration in Raven's story. In his speech to his wife, Pheasant repeats the word ʔibəs six times, modifying it with paƛaƛ (worthless, of no importance) to indicate lack of specific destination, when the milder tuxʷ (only, merely) is more common. The vagueness and repetitiousness of Pheasant's speech indicate unease of mind, and the aimlessness of his actions (reduplication in ʔuʔibʔibəs indicates repeated trudging around, not motion directed toward a goal) echoes the circularity of his thoughts. Indeed, the last sentence of the summary narration voices his thought, as though all his footsteps had been worries. It is very clear that in telling what he said and what he did, Mrs. LaMont's main agenda has been to depict Pheasant's state of mind. In going into the mountains, he is making himself open to whatever may present itself to him in his need: he is not hunting.

Raven's speech to his wife begins abruptly. It is syntactically muscular where Pheasant's is atrophied; it states a definite purpose where Pheasant's is vague. We notice Raven's emphatic ʔəca (I myself), which replaces Pheasant's uncolored čəd (I), and Raven's completive ʔuʔiməs čən (I'm going), which replaces the expective łuʔibəs čəd (I'm going to go) of Pheasant. Raven's progress toward his destination is stated briefly: contrast čubaʔəxʷ with line 5 of Pheasant's story. Raven is not a suppliant in the landscape; he has designs on it. So far, the correspondences between lines 1 through 5 of these two stories have been close and inverted, and the parallelism has been visible in the text as verbal, syntactical and proportional. But what corresponds in Raven's story to Pheasant's thoughts about his hungry family (line 6) is not a thought of Raven's: instead, it is the picture of Pheasant's generosity with the food he has been given. Along with the textual parallels, it seems that Mrs. LaMont is managing a conceptual or allegorical system of correspond nces. Because we have had parallelism both visible (audible) and conceptual in the first five lines of these episodes, we expect that the sixth lines will also correspond. When there is no visible correspond nce, our experience of the form of the episodes so far leads us to look for conceptual parallelism (or its inversion). What does it mean that in place of Raven's thoughts, line 6 in his story gives us Pheasant's feasting? It means that Raven spares no thought for his family and so probably will not succeed in feeding his family as Pheasant has.

A much briefer survey of the other five episodes in the travel narratives will suffice to demonstrate that Mrs. LaMont carries this system of conceptual correspondences right through. In the second episode, Pheasant meets the hunters by chance. When he tells them the dogs are not his, they ask him where he is from. He says, "tuxʷ čəd łuʔibəs paƛaƛ" twice and then mentions that he is worried about his children. When Pheasant denies that the elk is his, Mrs. LaMont points out that the hunters think well of him for this. They tell Pheasant to sit down nearby, as they are going to butcher the elk for him. Raven's story contrasts with this not just in outline, but in particular. Instead of wandering around, Raven goes straight to the hunters. Instead of having to ask him who he is (and thereby elicit his worries about his family), the hunters exclaim, "mʔi" (Aha!) when he approaches, because they know him of old (and he is not thinking about his family). In a line verbally parallel to the one in Pheasant's story, they ask him to call his dogs. When the dogs pay no attention to Raven, Mrs. LaMont enters the story to point out that Raven, unlike Pheasant, is a liar. When the hunters begin to butcher the elk Raven claims is his, they do not invite him to sit down, but in a line to be echoed later by Pheasant's children when they talk to the little Ravens, they tell him, "lilcut!" (Get away!) twice.

The fourth element in Pheasant's story begins with his profuse thanks to the hunters on behalf of his family. Raven's story, however, shows Raven busy gulping down all the scraps. As Mrs. LaMont tells how the hunters prepare the bundle of meat for Pheasant, she goes into some detail about how the cedar ropes were made. In other Skagit stories, a character's association with technical expertise means he is virtuous or spiritually

gifted. Here, although the knowledge is not Pheasant's, its presence in his story -- in contrast to Raven's, where Raven seems to be ignorant of butchering techniques and no details about wrapping the elk are given -- speaks well of him.

In the fifth element of his story, Pheasant is told not to look at his pack if he stops to rest. He thanks the hunters again. In Raven's story, when the hunters give him the meat, they tell him it is for his wife and children. Raven replies, "s'umani cən" ("I am the hunter"). Pheasant has to rest several times on his way home but never looks at the pack. Raven looks the first time he stops to rest. When Pheasant gets home, the whole family unwraps the pack, and everyone eats. When Raven gets home, he sends his wife out to unwrap the pack. She reports that it is full of rotten wood, and he vomits.

Raven's story is intelligible as an inversion of Pheasant's. The contrasts are phasized by presenting an element in summary narration in one story and in dramatic narration in the other. The comparable particulars are kept track of in almost call- and refrain fashion, despite the fact that the travel narratives are not told back- to-back, but with another part of the story intervening. Mrs. LaMont has taken pains to make the parallelism of the narratives the vehicle of the moral of the story. The other (subsidiary) portions of her story are not so carefully told, but this does not seem to lessen the impact of "Pheasant and Raven" as a whole. Apart from the parallel travel narratives, the story consists of a brief introduction of Pheasant, Raven and their families and two episodes in which the children of Raven try to trick Pheasant's children out of their food. There are three other Skagit versions of "Pheasant and Raven" among the stories collected by Sally Snyder in the early 1950's. At this writing, I have not been able to get permission to quote from these versions. But if I could quote from them, the point I would illustrate is this: each of these versions provides more detail and/or a more intelligible order of events for the subsidiary narrative, but none of them keeps track of the parallelism of the travel narratives the way Mrs. LaMont does. In these other versions, elements may be present in one travel narrative and lacking in the other, or the order of events may be interrupted. The result is that while Mrs. LaMont has drawn the moral of the story very clearly by the time Raven's trip is over, the story- tellers in Dr. Snyder's collection, where the parallelism is not maintained, all feel the end of their versions that the moral has not been sufficiently pointed. They all eel it necessary to append an explanation of what the story means. Content is not the vehicle of meaning: form is.

At this point it may be useful to try to distinguish structure from form. As Dundes hs seen content as the specific filling-in of the outlines of a motifeme sequence, we may call the specific fleshing-out of a form "structure." The structure of "Pheasant and Raven" is this: A good character takes a six-element journey and comes home with a reward. A bad character sees the reward and undertakes a similar journey in hopes of a similar reward. But his way of doing things and thinking about things is opposite to that of the good character, and he fails. He is left to contemplate the good character's reward. Insofar as we are talking about A as a good character or the vehicle of the parallelism as a six-element journey or the comparison between characters as comic, we are no longer talking about form only, but about how the form is made to function to bring meaning to a specific group of content elements. The functioning of form in a specific conte t is structure.

One wonders, after all of this, whether the concept of form, as opposed to structure, had any value for storytellers in the tradition. Information concerning their thoughts bout their work is almost impossible to find. We hear, however, two statements often de about the storytellers of yore in Skagit tradition: first, that they could lengthen or shorten a story at will; and second, that they never pointed a moral at the end. I suspect that these two statements are an instance of defining a medium in terms of its best practitioners and that there were always storytellers who went on too long or who felt unsatisfied with a performance and attempted a remedy in the form of a sermon at the end. Yet if a situation arose in which Martha LaMont felt the need to shorten a performance of "Pheasant and Raven," it is easy to see what she would do: she would eliminate the subsidiary sections; she might even subtract one or more pairs of elements from the

parallel sections. What we are sure she would not do is to interfere in any way with the formal relation between the two journeys. And no matter how truncated her version turned out to be, she would never feel the need (nor would the audience) for a pointed moral. Such mastery of a story comes about only as a result of a firm grasp of its form.

FOOTNOTES

1. Deceit/Deception may be considered a variation of Task/Task Accomplished.

2. Line numbers are from a transcription and translation in progress by Vi Hilbert. I have silently normalized spelling, deleted false starts and made a few minor changes in the translation for the sake of consistency.

3. Transcription, interlinear translation and line numbering are from an unpublished ms. by Vi Hilbert dated 12-20-84.

4. Transcription and translation from an unpublished ms. by Vi Hilbert dated October 1980. The "line" numbers are mine and are assigned only for convenience in referring to comparable elements in the two narratives.

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