A Textual Reading of the Coos Tale "He Eats (Human) Children"[1]

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Introduction

Melville Jacobs (1939, 1940) published two volumes of Hanis and Miluk Coos texts, which were dictated and translated by Annie Miner Peterson of Charleston Oregon in 1933 and 1934. Unlike his Clackamas Chinook texts, Jacobs did not publish content-and-style analyses of the Coos corpus. He did, though, prepare analyses of two Coos texts for an anthology of regional oral literature texts-in-translation that was never published (Jacobs ca. 1959).[2] I have chosen for analysis one of these two Coos stories--a Miluk narrative text entitled "He Eats (Human) Children."

In this paper I will present first a content-and-style analysis of the story, incorporating what I believe to be the essential points of Jacobs' interpretation as well as my own reading of the text. Then I will discuss the tale from a preliminary comparative frame of reference, including tale type, motifs, and regional variants. Finally I will present what I am calling Coos 'world knowledge' or 'cultural literacy' as evidenced in the text, either explicitly or implied or presupposed by it, in a more formal, proposition-and-implication type format.[3]

The Text

The following text in English translation is an amalgam of the published version and Jacobs' unpublished manuscript rendition. The differences between the published and unpublished translations are slight; I have sometimes chosen one variant and sometimes the other, based upon my reading of the interlinear translation in the original field notebook (Nb. #95, pages 135-155). I have not added to or deleted from Jacobs' translations.

Regarding his published translation Jacobs says, "The translations have been kept as close as possible to the Indian feeling and meanings. The rendering is only so free as to escape becoming insufferable and unreadable. ... Words and phrases in parentheses are added to clarify meaning." (Jacobs 1939:5) I am unable to evaluate the accuracy of Jacobs' translations or to restructure the text in a

verse/line type format because I do not know the Miluk language. (We lack even a rudimentary grammatical sketch or word list for this language.)

He Eats Human Children[4]

"Children were being lost all the time when the children were at play. It was always the child of a very well-to-do person (a village headman) who vanished. They could never be found anywhere. All of them who were anywhere up the bay were losing children. They never found them anywhere. Children were being lost every year.

"Once two children vanished, [atsí·xis] (Marshfield village) children. One of the (remaining) children came into the house, she ran in. 'Mother! I saw old people, and it was they who packed away my older brother and my younger sister.' Now the people who had lost their children wept. That man (the father of the last two children to be lost) cried a whole night. Very early in the morning he must have fallen asleep, and this was his dream. 'You will go down the bay to [lá·xai] (a Miluk site between the modern communities of Empire and Charleston, Oregon). A rock is standing out from the land with bushes all over the top of it. That is their (the kidnappers') house. That is where they took the children they stole. There you will find your children.' That was the man's dream. Now he woke up. And this is how he told it to his wife. 'I had a queer dream. (A person in my dream said to me,) "You better go there to [lá·xai]. A rock is standing there. Climb it there. Ferns stand there, and that is their door." I am to lift them (the ferns and bushes) up. Then I will see my children.' 'Oh sometimes a dream is indeed (so). You had better go to there!' Thus his wife spoke to him. Indeed others accompanied him, and they went to there then. Sure enough that rock was there, and indeed it was just like his dream had told him. Then he climbed up it there, and to be sure he saw the ferns. Then he lifted them indeed, and then he did see his children there. It was a house sure enough. Now they saw their father. He talked with his children then. (The children informed him,) 'They travel around the entire night, and all day long they sleep.' That was what they told their father. 'Oh we will come again tomorrow.' 'All right.'

"That evening the old man (one of the kidnappers) did it (to the boy he had stolen). The old man seized the boy, and he just touched his ear, (saying) 'Here is your (little) ear ornament.' That is what the dangerous being said. Indeed there it hung (at once) from the boy's ear.

"The next day the people arrived there indeed, many people came. Boards, pitchwood, all the people were packing

pitchwood. Then they spoke to the children. Numbers of containers for valuables were hanging from the walls, and the children handed out all that money (which came from previously stolen children of headmen). Now they gave them quantities of pitchwood, they stuck it in here and there all around inside the house, and then they set fire to it all. Now they took them (the two children) out, when all the fire (wood) and pitchwood were burning. Quite a while (it was) before the dangerous beings woke up, and then they leaped upward to the door, but they could not open it because a lot of people were sitting upon the boards there. A dangerous being said thus, '(You) child of a very rich person![5] The stored food (the children we kidnapped) was (kept here by us) much too long!' Then they killed the two (kidnappers).

"And this is what the children said. 'They were away all night long. Sometimes they would be gone a very long time. And when you found us, that was when he touched my younger brother, and then that thing hung from his ear.' When they had brought the children back home, they talked and talked about what to do about it (about the ear pendant which actually was heavy and tightly attached). Then they cut off what was hanging from his ear, and thereupon the child died.[6]

"Now that is how my tale goes."

Content-and Style Analysis

I will start with a content-and-style type of analysis, beginning with a discussion of the text's genre and its dramatic structure, then analyzing the text from its opening lines to its epilogue.

Genre

Jacobs catagorized each of his Coos texts into one of three genres: myths (Hanis hɛ́·djit, Miluk bá·saq̓), semi-mythic tales or narratives (H. laɣáuyátas, M. laɣáwiyátas), and ethnologic texts (H. ta·má·ɬis, M. ta·má·ɬis). It is not always clear, though, on what basis Jacobs assigned particular texts to a genre. Sometimes Jacobs seems to have taken his cue from a text's closing line, which occasionally includes either the word for 'myth' or the word for 'narrative'. For example, in Miluk narrative #16, "He starved his mother's sister," Mrs. Peterson concludes with the line [x̣-wɛ́·n tɬə-cdjít̓əs laɣawiyá·t̓as] which Jacobs translates as, "That is the way it was with the kingfisher in the narrative." But, in "He eats (human) children" Mrs. Peterson closes with the line [tsí-x̣-wɛ́·n x̣wə-'nəbá·saq̓], suggesting that she considered it a myth [bá·saq̓] dictation. Jacobs, though, translates the line as, "Now that is how my tale goes" and he groups this text with the other texts he calls Miluk narratives. Jacobs defines [laɣáwiyátas]

'narratives' or 'tales' as texts "about events that the natives place in a category of relatively 'recent history'" (Jacobs 1939:3). It is apparently on the basis of this definition that he considered "He eats (human) children" to be a narrative.

Prologue

The text opens with a straightforward, matter-of-fact statement: *Children were being lost all the time when the children were at play.* Jacobs notes the lack of a prescribed opening phrase, "To my knowledge, no northwest-states recitalist commences a tale with the formal words or the phrase required to begin a myth. Mrs. Peterson starts out with an ordinary conversational discussion of conditions in the recent past." (Jacobs ca. 1959:363)[7] The other Miluk narratives in Jacobs' corpus begin in a similar style.

The next sentence adds an important qualification to the first. It is not just any children who are being lost--*It was always the child of a very well-to-do person (a village headman) who vanished.* Jacobs remarks, "Almost everywhere along or near the Oregon coast a myth presentation focuses upon upperclass people. This tale does so, too. It is as if a coastal audience must identify with and hear almost exclusively about its richest people. They are projected interminably onto the myth and tale screens, with only rare instances of poor persons and slaves appearing." (Jacobs ca. 1959:363)

The third, fourth, and fifth lines emphasize the tragedy of the situation: *They could never be found anywhere. All of them who were anywhere up the bay were losing children. They never found them anywhere.* The sixth sentence brings the opening paragraph of this text to a close by reiterating the first line: *Children were being lost every year.*

This nicely structured prologue serves three purposes: first, it quickly establishes the focus of the text--the disappearance of children of upper-class families; second, it provides general background information for the specific incident which will occupy the rest of the text; finally, the lost children in the prologue, who "could never be found anywhere," serve as a contrast to the specific children in the body of the text who are found.

Dramatic Structure

Jacobs groups the body of the text into four paragraphs, indicating that "Paragraphing and punctuation are my own, of course; though they may capture something of the Indian rhetoric and sentence form, their essential duty is to assist in making the English form acceptable to

English readers." (Jacobs 1939:5) His division into paragraphs may have reflected his perception of the dramatic action of the story, as I outline it below:

Paragraph 1

The children are stolen
The children's father dreams of their location
The children are found

Paragraph 2

The ogre externalizes the boy's heart as an ear ornament

Paragraph 3

The villagers rescue the children
The villagers kill the ogres

Paragraph 4

The villagers sever the boy's ear ornament (ectopic heart)
The boy dies.

The first paragraph of the body of the text begins as abruptly as the prologue did: *Once two children vanished,* [atsí·xis] *(Marshfield village) children.* Jacobs informs us that [atsí·xis] was the principal and, hence, wealthiest of the Coos villages. The setting, then, reinforces the story's focus on the well-to-do.

One of the (remaining) children came into the house, she ran in. 'Mother! I saw old people, and it was they who packed away my older brother and my younger sister.' These lines illustrate two stylistic features of Mrs. Peterson's dictation. One is the general lack of explanatory or descriptive detail, e.g. a sibling of the kidnapped children escapes capture but we learn nothing of how this happened. Jacobs (1972:16) has described this "abstract expressionism in the medium of words and verbalizations of relationships and actions" as a northwest states areal feature. Certainly, it is a stylistic component of all of Mrs. Peterson's texts. A second stylistic feature is the use of dialogue to advance the story by conveying new information. This is especially effective in the dream episode discussed below. The significance of the ogres being described as 'old people' is not clear. Jacobs would probably have interpreted this as an example of displaced hostility of younger Coos toward their elders. It would be interesting to know if 'old' is not simply an emblematic feature of Coos supernatural beings.

Now the people who had lost their children wept. That man (the father of the last two children to be lost) cried a whole night. The second line may reflect Coos mourning practice; it also represents a stylized way of referring to feelings--the only permissible way to indicate sentiments in Coos oral literature.

Very early in the morning he must have fallen asleep, and this was his dream. 'You will go down the bay to [lá·xai] *(a Miluk site between the modern communities of Empire and Charleston, Oregon). A rock is standing out from the land with bushes all over the top of it. That is their (the kidnappers') house. That is where they took the children they stole. There you will find your children.' That was the man's dream.* Jacobs (ca. 1959:363-364) explains the cultural significance of the dream: "... the grieving headman and father of the children has a typical spirit-power dream, for such dreams come to people especially often in times of trouble. ... The headman's dream reveals that his stolen children are being kept three or four miles from the village, at a rock house with a door of ferns. The setting and situation smack of a customary spirit-power encounter. Dreams, which Coos subsumed in an inclusive category of spirit-power experiences and mere dreams, may tell where lost persons and things can be located."

Now he woke up. And this is how he told it to his wife. 'I had a queer dream. (A person in my dream said to me,) "You better go there to [lá·xai]. *A rock is standing there. Climb it there. Ferns stand there, and that is their door." I am to lift them (the ferns and bushes) up. Then I will see my children.'* Notice how the entire content of the father's dream is conveyed through dialogue, first through the persona of the spirit-power speaking to the man, then in the husband's retelling of his dream to his wife, and finally, embedded within the husband's conversation with his wife, through the dream-power persona once again. Note also how the husband's retelling adds details to our knowledge of what he dreamed. This stylistic device for relaying a dream message is not unique to Coos oral literature. It can be found, for example, in The Iliad (Book II) when Zeus sends a False Dream to Agamemnon. The Dream speaks to Agamemnon, relaying Zeus' message. The next day Agamemnon recounts his dream before a meeting of the Royal Council by quoting the Dream's speech.[8]

'Oh sometimes a dream is indeed (so). You had better go to there!' Thus his wife spoke to him. Indeed others accompanied him, and they went to there then. Sure enough that rock was there, and indeed it was just like his dream had told him. Then he climbed up it there, and to be sure he saw the ferns. Then he lifted them indeed, and then he did see his children there. It was a house sure enough.

The wife's urging of the husband to act on his dream suggests that for the Coos it was not always clear when a dream was merely a dream and when it represented a message from a spirit-power helper. But from our knowledge of Coos and adjacent cultures we would expect a village headman to be a wise leader who would correctly choose to follow his dream's injunctions. We would also expect fellow villagers to accompany and assist him.

Now they saw their father. He talked with his children then. (The children informed him,) 'They travel around the entire night, and all day long they sleep.' That was what they told their father. 'Oh we will come again tomorrow.' 'All right.' In keeping with the style of other Coos myth and narrative texts the reunion of father and children is devoid of any reference to feelings or emotions. The one piece of information that the children provide about the ogres--that they travel all night and sleep all day--serves two purposes. First, knowledge of the ogres' inversion of the natural order of working during the day and sleeping at night enhances their horribleness. Second, such knowledge informs the father and fellow villagers of when it would be safe to rescue the children. Jacobs (ca. 1959:364) suggests that the postponement of the rescue of the children is stylistically motivated: "As in myths, the style decrees that important action is never undertaken on the same day. One waits until 'the next day.'" Stylistic or not, the delay is crucial to the development of the plot for it leads to the death of the headman's son.

That evening the old man (one of the kidnappers) did it (to the boy he had stolen). The old man seized the boy, and he just touched his ear, (saying) 'Here is your (little) ear ornament.' That is what the dangerous being said. Indeed there it hung (at once) from the boy's ear. The ogres in this story are not described--no Coos character ever is except in a stylized way. Our knowledge of them is built up gradually: in the first paragraph we learn that they are old people, that they steal children, and, at the end of the paragraph, that they are nocturnal in their habits; in the second paragraph we learn that they possess the supernatural power to effect an external heart; in the third paragraph we discover that they are attracted to the children for their flesh and for their money, and that they can be killed by fire. According to Jacobs (ca. 1959:365) the ear pendant/heart ectopia shows that the ogre has prevision of the children's rescue, a fact which "magnifies his awfulness." He also notes the irony of an ear ornament which would ordinarily have been a fine gift but which results in the boy's death. The external heart motif is international in distribution; it is, though, more usually the <u>ogre's</u> heart which is misplaced in order to foil attempts to kill him.

The next day the people arrived there indeed, many people came. Boards, pitchwood, all the people were packing pitchwood. Then they spoke to the children. Numbers of containers for valuables were hanging from the walls, and the children handed out all that money (which came from previously stolen children of headmen). Once again we see fellow villagers coming to the aid of their headman, just as the canons of Coos social relationships would prescribe. We also learn in this passage why the ogres steal the children of the very well-to-do--only children of wealthy families would wear money beads, which the ogres covet. It is clear that the villagers are interested in these money pouches, too, since the first thing they (presumably) tell the children is to retrieve the valuables which are hanging from the walls.

Now they gave them quantities of pitchwood, they stuck it in here and there all around inside the house, and then they set fire to it all. Now they took them (the two children) out, when all the fire (wood) and pitchwood were burning. Quite a while (it was) before the dangerous beings woke up, and then they leaped upward to the door, but they could not open it because a lot of people were sitting upon the boards there. A dangerous being said thus, '(You) child of a very rich person! The stored food (the children we kidnapped) was (kept here by us) much too long!' Then they killed the two (kidnappers). Jacobs (ca. 1959:366) indicates that the killing of the most dangerous supernaturals by burning them up is an areal trait: "The Clackamas Chinook not only incinerate their hated Grizzly Women. They blow the ashes to the winds in order to be sure that the fiendish murderesses never return to plague the community. People's angry feelings about the cruelest spirit-powers, especially those addicted to cannibalism and here, among the Coos, to pilfering precious coin of the realm, are released by purging baths of fire." 'Child of a rich person!' was apparently a common type of Coos swearing. (In the original notebook Mrs. Peterson translates the phrase as 'You son of a bitch!'.) Predictably, Jacobs felt that it represented the venting of repressed hostility toward rich people. It may, though, have been a thoroughly conventional expletive, representing its literal meaning for the Miluk Coos no more than our 'son of a bitch!' does for us today. One wonders if a Coos audience would have found the ogres' procrastination in eating their captives or the ogress' curse of their misfortune to be humorous. Notice that the narrator does not state here that the ogres are cannibals nor does she tell us that they eat children. Instead, their anthropophagy is neatly conveyed by the ogress' lament, *The stored food (the children we kidnapped) was (kept here by us) much too long!*

And this is what the children said. 'They were away all night long. Sometimes they would be gone a very long

time. And when you found us, that was when he touched my younger brother, and then that thing hung from his ear.' This passage appears to have two functions: first, it reiterates the nocturnal and hence strange habits of the ogres; their sleep pattern parallels that of the dead. Second, it explains to the family and other villagers how the boy's ear pendant came to be there.

When they had brought the children back home, they talked and talked about what to do about it (about the ear pendant which actually was heavy and tightly attached). Then they cut off what was hanging from his ear, and thereupon the child died. This final passage of the body of the text brings the tale to its tragic ending. The people are in a quandary about what to do with the ear ornament. Even the headman, who in ideal Coos society could be counted upon to be wise and knowledgeable, is helpless in the face of this strange phenomenon. After much discussion they make the wrong decision and the boy dies. The situation is doubly ironic--the boy dies after having been rescued and he dies at the hands of those who rescued him. Says Jacobs (ca. 1959:366), "The boy's death suggests that a special anxiety about the health of a headman's male successor might be a factor in the selection of that actor as the ogre's victim. No more tragic martyr could be found for purposes of the drama."

Epilogue

Now that is how my tale goes. Jacobs (ca. 1959:367) avers that the epilogue is "not a stylization of significance but merely Mrs. Peterson's spontaneous way of completing the tale for the sake of the visiting anthropologist." I do not know why Jacobs comes to this conclusion. Perhaps it is because he feels that in its canonical form a tale dictation does not employ a stylized ending.[9]

A Comparative View

To those familiar with Jacobs' writings on folklore his aversion--perhaps better, hostility--toward the historical-geographical approach to folklore is well-known.[10] Basically, he felt that the method's plotting of the distribution of tale types and motifs "never contributed worthily to substantial or systematic theoretical knowledge." (Jacobs 1972:10) I agree with this assessment of the comparative method as it has been applied to folklore.

Nevertheless, I believe that placing a text in a comparative framework can provide a useful perspective. First, a comparative picture can guard against the mistake of analyzing a widespread tale as if it was the product of

local sociocultural conditions. Sven Liljeblad (1962:99-100) discusses several instances of this mistaken assumption in Jacobs' analyses of his Clackamas Chinook texts. Second, knowledge of "cognate" tales can sometimes provide important clues for the interpretation of a tale being analyzed. Both Dell Hymes (1981) and Jerold Ramsey (1983) effectively employ comparative notes for their re-interpretations of Jacobs' Clackamas Chinook text, "Seal and Her Younger Brother Dwelt There."

Aarne-Thompson Tale Types

There is not a good fit between this Miluk tale and the types postulated by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson (1961) in The Types of the Folktale. The tale type which comes closest is Type 327, The Children and the Ogre. But "He Eats (Human) Children" is clearly not similar enough to be considered a token of this type.

Motifs

A search of Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature (1955-58) has netted the following relevant motifs:

R 10.3 Children abducted
G 440 Ogre abducts person
G 422 Ogre imprisons victim
D 1810.8.2.1 Dream shows where stolen girl is hidden
E 714 Soul or life kept in special part of body
G 312 Cannibal ogre
G 501 Stupid ogre (?)
G 551 Rescue from ogre by relative
G 512.3 Ogre burned to death

A comparison with regional variants of the tale (below) suggests the following additional motifs; I have been unable to find them in the Motif-Index:

Grieving person weeps all night (or, for days)
Ogre lives in rock house
Ogre travels all night, sleeps all day.

Regional Variants

I have found cognate tales from the Hanis Coos (Frachtenberg 1913:71-77) and the Upper Coquille Athabaskan (E. Jacobs 1935). However inadequate they may be as theoretical constructs, it is apparent that plot structure and accompanying motifs are the means by which we recognize a story as being a 'variant of' or 'related to' another story. Consequently, I will compare the three versions by means of a flowchart schema (Chart 1, below) of their plot

structures and dominant motifs and comment on their similarities and differences.

The Hanis version was recorded in the Hanis language by Frachtenberg from Jim Buchanan in 1909. The Upper Coquille Athabaskan text was recorded in English by Elizabeth D. Jacobs from Coquille Thompson in 1935. In the Miluk (M.) text the ogres are identified as [xú·tɬuc] 'dangerous beings, ogres,' in the Hanis (H.) version they are called [nōᵘsk·íl̄] 'Giantess(es)' (in a different text Jacobs records this word as [nú·sgili] and translates it as 'pitch dress ogress'), and in the Upper Coquille text (U.C.) they are referred to as [tɬəsɛ́·tcu] 'pitchwomen'. The pitchwomen characters may be related to the Nehalem Tillamook Wild Woman and the Clackamas Chinook Grizzly Woman as well as to the widespread basket ogress figure (Thompson 1929:351).

The H. and U.C. texts include three motifs which are absent from the M. text. Both versions indicate that part of the ogresses' motivation for kidnapping young boys is to secure husbands. They also include the motif of eating/serving strange foods, which the Indians would have found repulsive. Finally, in both versions the ogresses sleep with their heads resting against each other. This allows the children to tie the ogresses' long hair together in order to impede their attempts to escape.

Despite these similarities, the H. text more closely resembles the M. than the U.C. version because both share the external heart motif, lacking in the U.C. version. Consequently, the U.C. text does not have a sense of irony and tragedy. It is the presence of this motif and its consequences which suggests to me that "He Eats (Human) Children" may well have been considered [bá·saq̓] 'myth' by the Miluk Coos. (Incidentally, Frachtenberg's (1913:76) text epilogue includes the Hanis word for myth, [hätct!].)

Stylistically, the three versions are quite different. Both the H. and the U.C. renditions suffer in comparson with Mrs. Peterson's dictation. The H. text begins with an inventory of the customs [tamáɬîs] of the Giantesses: they enslave people; they carry away the grave goods of dead men; they steal children of well-to-do families; they sleep in the mornings and sit up all night. From this prologue we move abruptly to the dream sequence of a younger brother who has escaped being kidnapped. This opening contrasts with the stage setting (including geographical details) of the M. version. There are several other stylistic curosities in the H. text. The brother who dreams of the whereabouts of his siblings is referred to as 'younger brother' but his captive brother and sister are both described as being younger than he is. Also, there are several instances of dialogue which do not sound like the dialogue in Mrs. Peterson's texts. For example, when the rescuer-brother

Chart 1. A Comparison of Miluk Coos "He Eats (Human) Children"
with Hanis Coos and Upper Coquille Athabaskan Versions

Miluk:	PROLOGUE		ogre couple		steal children		for food, moneybeads			live in rock house	
Hanis:	PROLOGUE	→	two giantesses	→	steal children	→	for husbands, moneybeads	→			
Coquille:	PROLOGUE		two pitchwomen		steal children		for husbands, moneybeads			live in big stone mountain	

Miluk:					travel at night, sleep in day		father			cries all night	
Hanis:	feed children clams full of sand			→	travel at night, sleep in day	→	brother	→			
Coquille:	feed children snakes and frogs				travel at night, sleep in day		father			cries for two days	

Miluk:	dreams of location of		son and daughter		rescuer aided by villagers					rescue delayed one day	
Hanis:	dreams of location of	→	brother and sister	→	rescuer aided by villagers				→	rescue delayed two days	
Coquille:	dreams of location of		son		rescuer aided by villagers						

Miluk:	ogre externalizes boy's heart								valuables removed from ogre's home		
Hanis:	ogre externalizes girl's heart			→	ogresses' hair tied together			→	valuables removed from ogre's home		
Coquille:					ogresses' hair tied together						

Miluk:	pitch put in ogre's home		children rescued		ogres burn up		boy's heart cut off, dies			EPILOGUE	
Hanis:	pitch put in ogre's home	→	children rescued	→	ogres burn up	→	girl's heart cut off, dies	→	EPILOGUE		
Coquille:	pitch put in ogre's home		children rescued		ogres burn up		boy returns home safely				

finds the ogres' house, the younger-captive brother informs him, "Nothing has happened to me as yet." Later, the older brother says to the younger sibling, "You must take care of yourself." And again, when the rescuers return with ladders and pitchwood, the kidnapped son says, "Father, I am still well." Finally, at the end of the story when they cut off the girl's external heart and she dies, they say, "It would have been good if it had not been cut off." I suspect that none of these statements would have been included in a well executed Coos narration.

Perhaps because it was told in English, the U.C. text differs even more than the H. version does from the canons of style one expects from northwest states texts dictated in the native language. The U.C. prologue, like the H. version, provides background information about the pitchwomen: they steal children; they live in a stone mountain; they travel at night, sleep in the day; they feed their prisoners snakes and frogs. I think that this descriptive material may be primarily for the benefit of the anthropologist. Together with descriptions of the activities of pitchwomen Mr. Thompson adds, "I don't know what the boys and girls did for a toilet, but no one could get out the door when the pitchwomen left, although they [the pitchwomen] could open and close it easily." After indicating that the pitchwomen wanted husbands, Thompson says, "I don't know why they stole girls." Such asides would not have been included in a 'proper' Upper Coquille recital. Throughout the body of the text the informant adds descriptive details which jar with our expectations of native style: the about-to-be captured son passes Pitchwoman "about twenty feet to one side." In gathering firewood, he comes upon a branch "about ten feet long of vine maplewood." When the boy is discovered missing, "At home, everyone, fifteen or twenty men were hunting all over the mountain for him." After the pitchwomen have been set afire, Thompson says, "About two hours it took to burn them." These references to specific dimensions of objects, numbers of people, and lengths of time are, I believe, influences from English.

Coos World Knowledge

One of the criticisms of Jacobs' Clackamas Chinook studies concerns methods of evaluating the validity of his analyses, especially of expressive content. Liljeblad (1962:98-99) sums up the problem as follows:

> [Jacobs'] procedure is consistent but lacks rigorous control and invites ambiguity. Despite the absence of verbalized emotions, in most of the tales Jacobs finds "major feeling constellations

> in social relationship." These interpretations are taken as evidences that such were the feelings that generated the stories. Vice versa, the presence of these feelings in the tales is taken to denote that they were harbored in the Clackamas society. In other words, information can be gleaned from the stories about sentiments in social relationships postulated in order to explain the stories; the stories, once explained, document the assumed sentiments.

I would like to try to avoid this problem of circularity in my analysis of "He Eats (Human) Children" by supplementing the content-and-style analysis with an analysis of a different kind. In this analysis I will set forth a series of statements which, I propose, represents some of the cultural presuppositions or world knowledge which a Coos native would bring to the hearing of this tale. In support of the proposition(s) I will cite, where possible, (1) evidence from other Coos texts, (2) evidence from the ethnographic data, and (3) evidence from adjacent cultures. I will also append certain speculative statements (which I am unable to document) or suggestions for further research. In this way I hope to bridge the gap between the world of the text and the world in which the text was told and understood.

I will group my cultural propositions under the following general headings: **children, headmen (and fellow villagers), dreams, ogres, wealth, expletives.** I am not sure that these superordinate categories have any theoretical significance. I have tried to select terms which would be generally applicable to western Oregon Indian culture groups. Under a particular heading I arrange the propositions in descending order of specificity. For the sake of brevity I have restricted myself to the category of Children in this paper.

Children

Propositions:

- Children are important, valued members of Coos society.
- Children's physical safety is an object of fear/anxiety for the Coos.
- Children are especially vulnerable to supernaturals.
- Children should not play out-of-doors after dark.
- Caretakers should not leave children unattended for long periods of time.
- Children were told stories such as "He Eats (Human) Children" to warn or scare them about the dangers of straying too far from home or of playing

outdoors after sunset.

Evidence from Other Coos Texts:

One Miluk ethnologic text which documents fears about the well-being of children is Text #8, "The care of nursing babies". This text explains that after the birth of a baby parents (ideally) could not have sexual intercourse until their infant began to walk. "The people feared for their children until then, because the children always became ill (if there were sexual intercourse). The people were extremely afraid of that."

There are a number of texts which were told to instruct or warn children, including Hanis narrative #1, "Stone hammer baby" (Jacobs 1939:34-35), Miluk narrative text #1, "The person who died from cold" (Jacobs 1939:39), #6, "A girl became a dangerous being of the woods" (Jacobs 1939:43-45), and #10, "Salmon did ill to boys" (Jacobs 1939:52-53).

Evidence from Coos Ethnographic Data:

"They said to children, 'If you play qutside in the evening or night some dangerous being (xu·tɬuc) will do something or other to you and you will die.'" [Box 96, folder 6]

"Children are not allowed out of the houses at night." [96:11]

"Children were not taken to a weather-prediction shaman's seance for fear of their being poisoned or hurt." [96:11]

"Boys were kept away from shamans." [96:11]

"Children were more subject to shamans' poisoning than adults largely because they were more of a nuisance and annoyance and hence more likely to be a bother to shamans. Anyhow shamans were sort of 'mean' and so more likely to be 'mean' to nuisances." [96:11] (Jacobs 1933-34)

Evidence from Adjacent/Nearby Cultures:

The Alsea believe in a 'monster-girl of the woods' (Frachtenberg 1920:225-226). She was feared because she was always carrying people off. "The children never went anywhere far alone, because it was known that she always carried off children. So for that reason she was watched everywhere carefully, because she obtained (by force) all the children everywhere. And for that reason children were usually not left (alone) in the house, because she always obtained (by force) children only. ...And (also) she carried off two children long ago. For that reason were the children not allowed (to go) outside at night, because she just stayed everywhere."

E. Jacobs reports for the Upper Coquille Athabaskan (1935), "There was no more play for children at sunset. If they played at nighttime, a ghost might come and play with them."

Among the Tillamook, "Small children were kept in the house after dark. They were told never to eat in darkness or illness would result. 'Sunset, when the sky is red, is the most dangerous of all times for children to be outdoors. Red sky is bad luck. That's when the Wild Woman looks at kids.' A child was safe enough outdoors at this time of day if an older person were with him to see that he did not eat anything or point at the sky." (E. Jacobs 1976)

According to the Santiam Kalapuya (Jacobs 1945:76), "'... In the nighttime there are many dead people going about outside.' That is what they always said. 'Children should not play outside when it gets dark.' They would say, 'There are many dead people outside. Dead people are always going around outside in the nighttime.' That is what they would say."

In the Santiam myth "Flint Boy Kills his Grizzly Father," Flint Boy's grandmother cautions him, "'Do not play at a distance.'" (Jacobs 1945:126)

Speculations:

The ogres may be projections of fears about slave raiders from northern communities, such as the Tillamook.

Among the Alsea, the Coos, and the Tillamook there is an interesting cluster of taboos and concerns around red sunsets, red berries (especially red huckleberries), various dangerous beings, and children.

Conclusion

Jacobs' content-and-style analyses generally suffer from three major problems: 1) they are too heavily dependent upon neo-Freudian psychologizing, 2) they do not situate the texts within a regional (or larger) comparative context, and 3) they are not supported by citations of ethnographic or comparative ethnologic data. In this paper I have tried to show how a Jacobs type content-and-style analysis might be supplemented and enhanced by the addition of comparative folklore and ethnographic evidence.

Notes

[1]This paper is dedicated to the memory of Melville and Elizabeth D. Jacobs.

[2]Permission to copy this manuscript was granted by the late Elizabeth D. Jacobs.

[3]The terms 'world knowledge' and 'cultural literacy' come from Hirsch (1987). Inspiration for such an analysis comes, in part, from McLendon (1977), Polanyi (1981), and Hirsch (1987).

[4]Jacobs (1939:56-58). Jacobs' footnote #45 states: "All the Coos knew this. Among those who told it Mrs. Peterson cited Old Tar Heels, a Miluk."

The title in Miluk Coos is [tɬə-ḵá'-hí·mɛ dlá·u] "He eats human children". In footnote #46 Jacobs provides an alternative title: [hi·mɛ-dlá·u] "he eats children".

[5]Jacobs' footnote #47 states: "A violent imprecation directed by the cannibal ogress at her cannibal husband. She continues in what sounds like a queer, alien accent, using [gláitɬ] for M. [ḵléitɬ]." [In the original notebook Mrs. Peterson translates the oath as 'You son-of-a-bitch!'.]

[6]Footnote #48 reads: "Just why severing it killed him Mrs. Peterson had not heard or remembered: perhaps the cord on which the pendant hung 'belonged to his heart.'" In the Hanis version (Frachtenberg 1913:73) it is the kidnapped sister who is touched by the ogress and the resulting externalized heart is stated explicitly: "(In his dream) he saw his younger sister. Something was hanging from her ear. She [the Giantess] had put her heart there. His sister twisted to one side as he looked at her. Thus the sister said: 'My heart is caused to be there, that's the thing you are looking at. ...'"

[7]Since we do not have any recordings of 'ordinary conversational discussion' in either of the Coos languages it is impossible to know whether or to what extent narratives may have differed from conversations. There is, though, a hint in one of Jacobs' field notebooks (Nb. 94, pg. 35-36) that <u>responses</u> to narratives and to conversations may have been similar. "When tales are told to adults, one adult 'answers' the raconteur, repeats every word. Mrs. P[eterson] goes on to say that that was done in everyday conversation. A person came home with news, the person to whom it is told repeats it verbatim. Their reason for such repetition by the auditor is to impress it on the memory. Lottie used to get angry at her mother

Fanny (who may have been as much as 15 years older than Annie) who repeated verbatim whatever news she [Lottie] brought home, in old Coos fashion."

[8]I am grateful to Howard Berman for bringing this example to my attention.

[9]In his "Areal Spread of Indian Oral Genre Features in the Northwest States" Jacobs (1972) sets up 21 classes of features of style which he discerns in Oregon-Washington-Idaho oral literature. Class #2 comprises myth and tale introductions and Class #3 consists of myth epilogues. No mention is made of a class of tale epilogues. Jacobs' most complete discussion of northwest states oral literature genres can be found in an unpublished paper, "Genres in Northwest States Oral Literatures" (Jacobs 1965) and Jacobs (ca. 1959), pages 23-27.

[10]A lengthy attack on the historical-geographical method in folklore is a major focus of Jacobs' (1966) retiring president's address, "A Look Ahead in Oral Literature Research," presented at the December 1964 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society.

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