

Mrs. Peter's Bluejay Story:

Narrative Modes

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I

Leon Metcalf recorded two versions of the Bluejay Story from Susan Sampson Peter, the first in April of 1951 and the second in March of 1954. The versions are very different, and so far only one of them has been printed in translation -- the 1951 version, which bears the title "Nobility at Utsaladdy" in Vi Hilbert's collection Huboo (1980:62-78). In the catalogue of his collection made when the tapes were donated to the Burke Museum, Metcalf annotated the listings for Reels 3 and 4, on which the 1951 version is recorded, as follows:

Reel #3 4-6-1951 SSP Artist. (Wildcat & Chief's Daughter). Bluejay story, setting at Utsalady. Told by Mrs. Susie Sampson Peter. Recorded at Swinomish Village on this date. - Metcalf[.] The conclusion is on the record of Mrs. Purdy's following the LOUSE STORY.

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Reel #4 4-6-1951 3 3/4 [ips]. Songs by Mrs. Purdy.
 Story in Twano - Blue Jay & Seal
 Race. Story in Twano - Louse
 Sweeping. Conclusion of Bluejay
 Story by Mrs. Susie Sampson Peter.
 Recorded at Swinomish Village
 April 1951.

These annotations illuminate Metcalf's practice of using up blank portions of partially recorded reels rather than devoting fresh reels to each session. Although Reel 4 shares the date April 6, 1951, with Reel 3, it is evident that the session with Mrs. Purdy (Reel 4, side 1) took place before the recording of Reel 3 and of Mrs. Peter's section of Reel 4.

At some point in the '70s, the staff of the Burke Museum made cassette copies of all the reel-to-reel recordings. From that time on, working copies of Metcalf-collection material requested by members of the public were made, not from the reels, which had become too fragile for the purpose, but from the cassettes. Reels 3 and 4 were reproduced on three cassettes. Cassette 3a bears the label: "Bluejay story: Susie Sampson Peter (continued on tape #3b)"; 3b is labelled "Bluejay Story:" Susie Sampson Peter (End)"; and 4 is labelled "Songs by Mrs. Purdy. Stories in Twano [...] 22 min." In fact, cassette 3a contains two full sides of the Bluejay story, though the second-side label is blank; 3b contains about one minute of Mrs. Peter's

narration, the rest of side 1 and all of side 2 being blank; and 4 contains Mrs. Purdy's songs and stories and then goes on the with conclusion of the Bluejay story, all on side 1, while side 2 is blank. If a member of the public requests a recording of the Bluejay story as listed in Metcalf's catalogue on reels 3 and 4, the Museum might well, in keeping with its own labeling, provide copies of cassettes 3a and 3b, inadvertently omitting the end of the story. In response to a request for copies of Reels 3 and 4, the first sides only of cassettes 3a, 3b and 4 might be provided, with the result that the middle of the story would be omitted.

The process of making cassette copies of the reel-to-reel tapes introduced a lot of hiss and roar; in addition, the original reels already contained background noise, machine noise, fading and reverberation. In the mid-'80s, friends of the Burke Museum embarked on the project of remastering the old reels, not only for archival purposes, but also in order to produce the best possible sound with the modern recording facilities now available at the University of Washington. Because Vi Hilbert expressly wanted to obtain a clean recording of Reels 3 and 4 for a new project of her own, these reels were among the first remastered.

In listening to the new master tapes, Mrs. Hilbert made an important discovery, which is reflected in the fact that "Nobility at Utsaladdy," her 1980 version, is approximately 780 lines long in lineated transcription, whereas her

revised version (1987) runs 1369 lines and has a new title: "Grandchildren of Magpie."¹

The lacuna of approximately 589 lines in "Nobility at Utsaladdy" begins when the story is interrupted -- Mary Willup, who is listening to Mrs. Peter, says, "Wait a minute," because Leon Metcalf needs to change the reel -- and ends where Burke Museum cassette 4 takes up the story again. Mrs. Peter is interrupted in the midst of a section of narrative made up of repeated pattern-episodes involving hunting, and cassette 4 takes up the narrative near the beginning of another stretch of repeated episodes employing a different pattern, but also involving hunting. The omitted material corresponds closely to what is on Museum cassettes 3a, side 2, and 3b.

As far as "Nobility at Utsaladdy" goes, the lacuna is signaled by no obvious break in content. The only clue -- and it is visible mostly to hindsight -- is the abrupt reintroduction into the story of Bobcat's young brother-in-law in what we now know is the second line of narrative after the end of the lacuna. But this is a story famous for its prologue featuring Bluejay, who is abruptly dropped from the main plot at one point and then just as abruptly reintroduced much later: the treatment of Bobcat's brother-in-law's reappearance was felt to be stylistically in keeping with the treatment of Bluejay's reappearance.

Those of us who over the years have admired "Nobility at Utsaladdy" have been interested to note about ourselves

that we had no trouble in accepting as complete a story that was in fact missing 43 per cent of its text. In fact, our first response to Mrs. Hilbert's discovery was a suspicion that, perhaps unsettled by the reel change, Mrs. Peter had recapitulated episodes already told, in the manner documented for Peter Seymour in Anthony Mattina's edition of The Golden Woman (1985). A cursory run-through of the new master tape seemed to indicate an abundance -- perhaps even a surfeit -- of episodes in which Bobcat goes out after game, kills it, guts it, packs it home, roasts it, etc. But a formal analysis of the narrative shows that, while her present-day audience may lose its way among these episodes, Mrs. Peter did not. What we learn from "Grandchildren of Magpie" is that sets of pattern-episodes may be managed in such a way as to delineate the progress of relationships or of psychological states and that to seek only contributions to plot from parallel narrative passages is a mistake.

II

"Grandchildren of Magpie" consists of a prologue followed by a narrative in three parts. The prologue tells how Bluejay², despised as a foolish chatterbox, manages by her very chatter to save the high-ranking people of Utsalady from being taken as slaves by marauding Yakima warriors. At the prologue's beginning, Magpie, her grandson Bobcat, and Bluejay are all identified as of high rank; and a set of four parallel lines equates Bluejay's incessant talking with Bobcat's activity as a hunter -- an unlikely parallel, but

one which we come to understand. Magpie, who has been after Bluejay to quiet down, apologizes at the end for having misjudged her; and Bluejay's new power song is the sound of a dog barking, which is what she uttered from the treetops to scare away the Yakimas. The tone of this little story is light-hearted; in fact, the prologue is a burlesque of a certain genre of stories about spirit power. However, its message -- that a person who seems of no account may turn out to be someone of consequence -- is serious: it is the message in light of which we understand the longer narrative that follows.

The second part of "Grandchildren of Magpie" is the story of how Bobcat by supernatural means arranges for the well-brought-up daughter of the leading family at Utsalady to have his child out of wedlock; how the baby cries out, "That's my Daddy" when it catches sight of Bobcat; and how the young family is abandoned, as the girl's father decides to leave the cause of his shame behind and found another village further along the coast.

The prologue casts a strong light over this second part of the story: Bobcat, famous as a hunter, is for some reason pretending to be sick: covered with unsightly sores and seemingly too frail to hunt any longer, he is inviting the people of Utsalady to make about him the same mistake they made about Bluejay. Only two people in the entire village give Bobcat any respect -- his grandmother, Magpie,

who has learned her lesson in the prologue, and the youngest (and smartest) of Bobcat's in-laws-by-default:

tilə b ʔucutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ ʔiʔtisu bədaʔs,

Quickly, his youngest son spoke up:

ʃwul d=ət ʔu ʔ(u)asʃəl tə cədiʔ.

"Is this man always going to be sick?

tud=alalcut tə ʔaciʔtalbixʷ.

After all, people have turned themselves

around:

diʔ səsʃəls gʷəl bəʔkubil.

There is a time when they are sick, and then

things get better again.

[] kʷ(i) ad(d)əxʷəsd=ilid.

[Is that any] reason to condemn someone?"

cutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ bədaʔs ʔiʔtisu.

This is what was said by his youngest son.⁴

The importance of this speech to the story is signaled by the circular figure in which it is presented (and by the fact that Bobcat himself repeats part of this speech later on.) Since wisdom and forbearance are components of the quality known as siʔab, it is remarkable to find only two people at Utsalady, where all of the households are reputedly siʔab, who actually demonstrate the possession of these virtues. In fact, there is little to choose between the behavior of Raven, a parvenu who tries to claim paternity of the baby in order to advance his own fortunes,

and that of the baby's maternal grandfather, the leading citizen of the village: both are portrayed as irascible buffoons.

The prologue, then, stands as a gloss to the second part of the story. It is a vehicle for theme, while the second part of the story is devoted to the service of plot. In terms of the story as a whole, the events of the prologue are functional less in reference to themselves than in reference to the events in the second part. We may call this mode of narration allegorical, in that it operates only as constituents of the prologue are matched up with corresponding constituents of the second part and the resulting pairs translated in relation to each other. In terms of the story so far, the events of the second part have thematic valency as parts of allegorical pairs; but on the level of plot, their function is to move the characters who are really the subject of the story (as Bluejay, the heroine of the prologue, is not) into position so that whatever is going to happen may go ahead and happen. In terms of plot, the narrated events are meant to imitate actually occurring events, events that must actually take place if the story is to continue on track. This mode of narration we may call mimetic.

Although the second part of the story is, like the prologue, highly amusing -- it contains a farcical set piece in Raven's audience with the new mother's family, and Mrs. Peter employs various comic vocal effects (the tremolo

delivery of lines about how weak Bobcat is, the nasality of Raven's expressions of hauteur) -- it is not like the prologue a burlesque. For one thing, we know of the people of Utsalady that they are in the process of making a mistake for the second time, so that the narration of the events contains latent criticism of the actors. For another thing, the presentation of character is more complex. From the start, we know that Bobcat is only pretending illness, and this circumstance makes his position a foil to, rather than a replica of, Bluejay's: Bobcat, offering a false pretense of illness, is believed and his former competence forgotten, whereas Bluejay's valid claims to competence were not accepted and her habitual silliness was insisted upon as defining her.

Why Bobcat should pretend illness is an interesting question. The answer at one level is that he wants to see what people will do. "You all know me," he says, enjoying the fact that all the girl's family can understand about him is that he looks like a scabby derelict. But why he needs to test people this way is not a question that is answered at this point.

The work of this second section also includes the presentation of Bobcat in relation to his future wife. In subverting the forms in which spirit power usually manifests itself, Bobcat's behavior presents a contrast with that of his future wife and sets up the probability of future conflict. Like all of Mrs. Peter's heroines, this young

woman is a prodigious worker, and the lines introducing her are full of references to the things she makes. Usually, Mrs. Peter's introductions of such characters are in the form of ornamented circular figures, with statements about the woman surrounding lists of what she makes. In "Grandchildren of Magpie," however, the woman is introduced twice: once before her pregnancy and once after. The first introduction begins in the customary way with a few lines about the woman and the clothing she makes. When Mrs. Peter gets to "leggings," which are worn by people going into the brush, especially hunters, she switches to the subject of Bobcat, a hunter who has leggings but no longer uses them. This transition-by-association forestalls the completion of the circular figure and would, I think, have been recognized by Mrs. Peter's audience as unusual.

After the circumstances of the young woman's becoming pregnant are narrated, she is introduced again, this time with a completed circular figure that is itself enclosed within references to her pregnancy, the whole forming an annular structure:

huy d=id=ihitəx^w tsiʔəʔ sʔadəyʔ.

This woman is now pregnant.

huy, (lə)cuqitcut.[□]

This woman now finds herself in trouble.

huy, qitcutəx^w tsiʔəʔ qič dx^wqaləp.

This unmarried woman of good family now finds
herself in trouble.

qaləp sʔadəyʔ

An unmarried woman.

(dxʷ)syayus.

A real worker.

huyud tiʔəʔ jəsgwičəʔ ...

She made goat-hair blankets ...

[a list of items]

bəkʷ stab syayuss.

She could do just about everything.

huyud [...]

She made [another list of items]

hikʷ dxʷsyayus sʔadəyʔ.

A very hard-working woman,

ʔu, bəkʷ stab syayus.

yes; she could do just about everything.

xwiʔ gʷəgʷat gʷ(ə)uʃudxʷ.

There was no one who ever saw her.

diʔ kwi d=id=ihiʔs

Yet somehow she is pregnant.

That she is a virtuous person whose troubles are not her fault is conveyed not only by statements, but by the form in which the statements are produced. Not only do we see here an annular structure, itself an ornament (by reduplication) of the circular figure, but at its close the structure is ornamented further by an additional overlapping circular figure.←

A third character with whom Bobcat is set in significant relation is Raven, who dresses up (but not, like Bobcat, in sores), claims the baby (Bobcat: "I have not claimed this child.") and is rejected by the infant (who recognizes Bobcat as its father). Despite his unacceptable behavior, Raven is included in their party by the people who reject Bobcat (mainly because of his appearance, it seems, and not so much because of his misdeed). Raven's canoe, in fact, is the first to leave, a circumstance that Bobcat notes and that launches a subplot.

At the end of Part II, the characters are poised in the following relations to each other:

	A.	B.	C.
<u>character</u>	<u>is si?ab</u>	<u>presents as si?ab</u>	<u>accepted as si?ab</u>
Bluejay*	yes	yes	yes
Magpie	yes	yes	no
Bobcat	yes	no	no
wife	yes	yes	no
Raven	no	yes	yes
father-in-law	no	yes	yes

*Boldface type indicates "on Bobcat's side."

Obviously, what is going to happen by the end of the story is some change in this network of relations, so that each character's "C" is brought into harmony with its "A"; at

the moment, only Bluejay's storyline is resolved. The harmonizing of C and A is the task of Part IV of the narrative. Before this happens, however, we would expect to see more characters enlisted on Bobcat's side, so that the resolution can be brought about believably and without acrimony. This is the task of Part III.

Part III is introduced by a bridge passage stating that the people who went away with Bobcat's father-in-law built a new village at čubəʔalśəd and that time passed. The people of čubəʔalśəd are described as eating flounder, crab, clams and mussels -- the same food they had at Utsalady. The information about food at Utsalady is given just after it is first said that Bobcat is "sick":

[Description of Bobcat's pretended sickness].

gʷəl ʔa tsiʔəʔ kiaʔs ləcuʔaʔxʷuʔb.

And there his grandmother would be, clamming.

ʔaʔxʷuʔ tiʔiʔəʔ; ʔkuʔaʔxʷuʔb.

These people went clamming; they would gather clams.

ʔkuʔukagwič ʔə tiʔəʔ ʔuaʔ kwi bəsqʷ.

They would spear flounder, perhaps crab.

[Bobcat begins thinking about the young woman].

Vi Hilbert believes that it is because Bobcat is sick that his old grandmother has to go out after her own food. If this is so, possibly the passage is also telling us that

the people have only bottomfish and shellfish because their hunter is sick. (However, nothing is said at this point about this diet's being a hardship, and we must not forget that women characters of whom Mrs. Peter has a favorable opinion are ususally mentioned in connection with the work they do.) At any rate, this catalogue of flounder, crab, clams and mussels reappears throughout the story in all the bridge passages, and in these passages it is always said that the people go hungry on this diet.

In the bridge between Parts II and III, it is said that the weather is often bad, and when the wind blows the people can get only mussels. This time, the information about food is given in the form of a circular figure whose core contains a picture of Bobcat's wife back at Utsalady weaving sails. Evidently Bobcat can go fishing for halibut and salmon, while the young men of čubə?alšəd for some reason cannot. The reference to sails is somewhat puzzling, as Bobcat's fishing is not mentioned again. But the convention for bridge passages is now established: things go increasingly ill for čubə?alšəd; increasingly better for Utsalady.

Like the bridge that precedes it, Part III has as one of its functions the summarizing of the passage of time. Bobcat goes hunting on five occasions, bringing back game that is more and more choice. The hunting sequences are told in parallel, so that there is much motif-for-motif repetition. This trope -- repeated hunting with increasing

success -- is often used in Skagit literature to convey someone's growing up or strengthening over time. The trope may be slightly dramatized by the inclusion of snatches of dialogue (Cf. Mrs. Peter's Starchild story in Hilbert 1980:44-45), or it may be made fully scenic, as in "Grandchildren of Magpie," where each repeated detail -- how the game drops at the feet of the hunter, how he always finds four raccoons -- delineates Bobcat's power. The five hunting sequences have practically no plot function at all: it is not news to Mrs. Peter's audience that Bobcat's illness is a pretense; we have known it all along. It is news to Bobcat's wife, but she is not present on these expeditions.

Each hunting sequence is introduced with a short scene between Bobcat and his wife, and each is followed by a longer scene of the same kind. It is in the tracking of these changing interactions that the work of Part III of the story is done.

In these framing scenes, Mrs. Peter makes use of an image employed the world over to represent the relationship between the sexes: fire. The image has already been introduced in Part II, as it is the young woman's unwitting use of Bobcat's fire drill that has made her pregnant. At the beginning of the first episode in Part III, Bobcat gets firewood. He keeps the fire going all night, lying away from his wife on the other side of the hearth, able to keep warm only on one side at a time. (He has given his blanket

to his wife.) Because they sleep apart, the woman does not waken when Bobcat leaves to go hunting. While he bags a deer and four raccoons, she sleeps on. "Then," Mrs. Peter says, "She woke up. The fire was out." In the scene that follows, Mrs. Peter demonstrates to what extent the fire is out: the young woman looks off into the distance and sees a man running toward her, appearing and disappearing as he crosses hills and valleys. Suddenly, her husband arrives. The young woman warns him about the distant runner, who she thinks may be from a hostile tribe. "It was me," Bobcat says. Like her father, the young woman does not know Bobcat well enough to recognize his power when she sees him: figuratively and literally, the fire is out. "Do you have a fire going?" says Bobcat, having brought dinner. "No," she replies irritably. "I was busy keeping an eye on that runner." As she perceives that he is not sick after all, she wonders why he embarked on the pretense that has brought them such trouble. She grows angry, but says nothing.

The next episode begins as Bobcat tosses and turns again, trying to keep warm. (His wife now has a raccoon blanket.) As he leaves to go hunting, his parting words to the woman are: "You build your fire and eat." But, as Vi Hilbert points out in a note to her transcription, he says this in an unusual way, as if drawing a contrast between his being out in the cold and her having a fire: ʔiʔhudiʔup ʔaxʷa ʔuʔəʔəθd [partitive (ʔiʔ) + firewood (hudiʔup) and you (ʔaxʷa) eat (ʔuʔəʔəθd)]. In addition, he still uses his fake

feeble voice when talking to her, though he knows she cannot any longer accept this evidence of illness as valid. He is giving her more of a chance than he gave her father to see through the false evidence of his illness.

The second day's hunting yields two deer and four raccoons. This time, Bobcat's wife offers to help carry the game so he won't have to make so many trips; and, by the time the second deer is brought, she has a fire going. This evening after dinner, they both build fires to dry the surplus meat and the hides.

The third episode again sees Bobcat tossing and turning. (His wife has two raccoon blankets.) Before he leaves, he again addresses his wife, again using the partitive: "For your part, you just get up and make a fire and eat (x^vwul³ čəx^w ?iŋg^wədil čəx^wa hudičup, cəx^wa ?u?ələd). On this third time out, he gets a bear and four raccoons, and by the time he arrives home, his wife has the fire going. Mrs. Peter explains the significance of this fire:

ləshudičup tsi[?]ə[?] čəg^wass. [pause]

His wife has a fire going.

ha[?]ɬ.

Much improved,

ha[?]ɬəx^w tə xəč[?] ?ə tsi[?]ə[?].

This woman's mood is much improved.

ha[?]ɬəx^w.

Much improved now. [pause]

ɬəqəd ti[?]ə[?] spaac.

He laid down the bear.

After dinner, they butcher the game and prepare the hides. Their work requires that they have several fires going now: ʔəshudhudičup (the reduplication signifying "many"). At this point, his wife invites Bobcat to sleep in the bed.

On the fourth morning, Bobcat says nothing about "your fire" to his wife, instead consulting with her about his plans. This signals the end of the use of fire as an emblem for their relationship, but it is not the end of Mrs. Peter's interest in the image. When Bobcat returns from the fourth day's hunting, he asks his wife to take food to her family. But, since her family has gone away, they are not there to be fed: she is to take the bony and gristly parts of the previously butchered animals and pile them around the cold hearths of her family's abandoned houses. The image of fire is now being expanded to include messages about the couple's relationship to the people of Čubəʔalšəd.

When, shortly after this, Magpie flies in for a visit, she locates Bobcat's house by the smoke from his fires. She looks down and sees all the backs, necks and heads of the game piled around the hearths of the roofless houses, and she is reminded how hungry the people of Čubəʔalšəd are on their diet of flounder and shellfish. The image has not so much traveled from its original meaning of goodwill between spouses as it has accumulated the additional connotation of

material prosperity. In Lushootseed culture, prosperity is hard to achieve if the spouses do not work together.

The idea of fire has not been the only vehicle of the concept of warmth in these first episodes. Bobcat has been cold because he has given his blanket to his wife; the raccoon and bear skins have been used to make blankets for her and their son. But, as the symbol of fire expands its reference beyond the couple, so does the notion of blankets. Bobcat's quarry on the fifth day is mountain goats, and he is hunting now no longer for food, but expressly for blanket-making material. Bobcat's first dinner with his wife was raccoon meat, but now he kills raccoon so that she can put fur borders on her goat-wool blankets. She weaves many of these, just as if she were preparing for a potlatch. Blankets are in real life both bedding and prestige goods, so the variation in their significance between these two referents in the story cannot be called symbolic. Yet in the formal plan of each episode, blankets and fire perform the same amount of work in forwarding the story. The mode of narration that employs both blankets and fire in the ways described cannot be said to be either allegorical or mimetic, because it is both and something larger than both.

When one image is used in a prismatic way, we call it a symbol. But when entire blocs of narrative containing many images and motifs are themselves used prismatically, we must speak of emblematic narration -- in this case, emblematic parallelism. Each episode in Part III stands in a relation

of parallelism to each other, the parallelism more exact in the hunting sequences, less exact in the framing scenes. The formalism of the parallel narration signals to us that the events narrated are not significant literally, but rather in their relation to each other -- that is, figuratively. The interruptions of parallelism signal a closer correspondence between literal and figurative. Each episode, then, includes both mimetic and allegorical components; but, while narrative in both of these modes requires a 1:1 density of reference (narrated action to real-life action or literal meaning to figurative meaning), the emblematic mode plays over a richer field of reference.⁷

The parallelism here holds together two different directions of story: the first three episodes chronicle the wife's reconciliation with her husband; the last two delineate the growth of Bobcat's wish to stand well in the community again. (In terms of the table above, both Bobcat and his wife are now "on his side.") Perhaps there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the first three and the last two episodes, but this is for the audience to infer. The emblematic quality of a stretch of narrative is established cumulatively: since the lacuna in "Nobility at Utsalady" begins just after the second hunting sequence in Part III (most of the last framing scene of the second episode is omitted, along with all of episodes three through five, all of the bridge between Parts III and IV and the beginning of Part IV), there was no chance in that version

for the narrative of Part III to establish itself as emblematic in distinction from Parts II and IV, which are mimetic and allegorical.⁹

The bridge between Parts III and IV is dramatized, and it is foregrounded in an interlace with the barely suggested on-going hunting of Bobcat. The bridge passage tells how Magpie flew to visit her family, how she noted the evidence of their prosperity, how she had to wait until Bobcat returned from hunting, and how she flew home with enough food for everyone. The scene shifts to Bobcat, who plans a lethal surprise for Raven and then leaves to go hunting again. Now Magpie persuades the people of Čubəʔalšəd to come back with her to Utsalady. Raven gets there first, eats what has been set out for him, and dies. As the canoes bearing the rest of the people arrive, Raven's body is seen floating away. Bobcat is still offstage, hunting.

This bridge leading out of Part III is in several ways symmetrical with the one leading in, not only because the earlier passage narrates a journey away from Utsalady and the later one, a return. We remember a puzzling reference to cattail-mat sails in the earlier passage, set in the midst of a circular figure and associated with Magpie's frame of mind and with the scarcity of food (the pattern is food -- sails -- Magpie's sadness -- food); and we find cattail-mat sails included in the later passage, also set into a circular figure, again associated with food and with Magpie's frame of mind: Magpie's mind is strong -- she

harangues her in-laws, saying that Bobcat has so much food that he uses only the choicest bits and that he has lots of new sails; she orders cattail mats (now surely an emblem) fetched so the food from Utsalady can be laid out -- her mind is strong now, and she no longer fears her in-laws.

The bridge passage between III and IV also recapitulates several motifs from the end of II: as Raven was the first to leave, so he is the first to return; as Magpie was told, "You might be killed" if she did not leave her grandson, now as she goes to find Bobcat, she counsels the people of ČubǾʔalšǾd to stay inside: "You might get killed"; as Magpie once fed Bobcat, now he feeds her; as Bobcat's wife was given no blankets when she went to live with him, so now the couple use prized goat-wool blankets as ordinary bedding. There is a sense in this part of the story of a balance's being righted; to accomplish this function, a 1:1 reference-density is employed, and we recognize the allegorical mode.

But the bridge passage also includes the culmination of the emblematic handling of fire (Magpie's sighting of smoke) and the making emblematic of the differences between the diets of Utsalady and ČubǾʔalšǾd, which has only been handled allegorically up to now. Since both villages are on the salt water, why is it that Bobcat and his family eat only game? (How is it that he can get mountain goat on Whidbey Island at all?) Why is a diet of flounder and shellfish so despised? I have suggested elsewhere (Langen

1986) that, though Mrs. Peter had family in both Skagit delta villages and upriver, she identified herself as an upriver person. Change came more slowly to people living away from the salt water, and some upriver people in Mrs. Peter's lifetime came to think of themselves as more conservative of old ways, more truly "Skagit," than saltwater people. Some people from the salt water, on the other hand, held upriver persons in low esteem. [Both attitudes are reflected in John Fornsbys's "autobiography (Collins 1949; see especially pp. 302-303).] What, then, does it mean in a story told by Mrs. Peter that the imperfectly si?ab people formerly of old Utsalady, having been chastened on a diet of seafood, are now being rehabilitated on an upriver diet?

One of the rigors of hunting in the mountains is the need to get the food back to the hunter's house from the place where it is killed. Part of the hunter's spiritual gift is the strength to carry game. In Part III, we have seen Bobcat making many trips back and forth to bring his kill home: he is, of course, the only man around to carry it. This feature of an upriver diet is precisely the thing that Bobcat seizes on to work out the confrontation with his returning in-laws: he will use the fact that people need strength to secure an upriver diet as a way of turning his feeding of his in-laws into their punishment.

In Part IV, Bobcat feeds the people five times. The first feast, when he cooks for them, is the occasion of much

acrimony: Bobcat's youngest (and smartest) brother-in-law sarcastically invites his family to partake of food provided by the one with sores all over his body; Bobcat's wife and her mother fight over the baby ("Why are you picking up that child? Don't you know that his father is covered with sores?"); and Bobcat and his wife also argue ("They're going to say I turned you against your parents."). This first feast, then, is graphically realistic: the mode is mimetic.

The other four feasts are told in parallel: each day, Bobcat kills ten elk and leaves them where they have fallen. The young brother-in-law then invites the people to eat, only they must go up into the mountains, butcher the game and pack it down. On the first day, they are so stiff they cannot straighten up; on the second, they are so exhausted that they leave parts of the game behind. So far, this is pure allegory. But on the evening of the third day, the part of the pattern usually devoted to the exhaustion of Bobcat's "guests" is devoted instead to a dramatized argument between Bobcat and his wife, as she refuses to help him sing his spirit power in a setting that includes her family. On the evening of the fourth day, Bobcat calls on his young brother-in-law to listen to the song, and this is how the story ends. He sings:

ds?i?i?i?d t? dsq?lalitut

My food is my spirit power

We cannot help wondering whether by "food" he means specifically "game," which his power has made him strong enough to carry overland, in contrast to his spiritually weaker fish-eating in-laws. Mrs. Peter announces that in her opinion, Bobcat is not singing his real song, but is mocking his in-laws. We notice, too, the use again of the partitive (ʔiʔ) and wonder if the construction conveys a rift not only between Bobcat and his in-laws, but also between Bobcat and his wife.

Certainly, we are in the presence of an emblem at the end of the story. Most stories that end with a once-despised member of a community now using his power to feed people and then singing his power are spirit-quest stories with happy endings. At some level behind "Grandchildren of Magpie" we see the familiar framework. But "Grandchildren of Magpie" does not end happily. The tensions, far from being resolved by Bobcat's success, are instead exacerbated. At the beginning of Part III, just after the young couple has been abandoned, Bobcat counsels his wife not to succumb to anger against her parents; but at the end of the story they are both vocal in their anger at having been treated badly. This is not the only story on the spirit-quest model in Mrs. Peter's repertoire that ends in acrimony: her version of the widely told "Cripple Legend" ends with the cured boy's family split apart. Possibly for Mrs. Peter in the 1950s the old story models had accumulated so much

ironic freight that they had become perforce emblems themselves.

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FOOTNOTES

¹The remastering was done under the direction of Laurel Sercombe, Ethnomusicology Archivist at the University of Washington School of Music.

²In "Grandchildren of Magpie," Bluejay has been rechristened "Steller's Jay," which is what she is in the bird books. It seems, however, an artificial name for a real person; and since she is famous (and infamous) in several West Coast literatures as "Bluejay," this paper will continue to refer to her under that name.

³A discussion of the prologue, its formal qualities and its relation to the story as a whole, may be found in Langen 1986.

⁴Transcription copyright by Vi Hilbert and Lushootshead Research, Inc.; used by permission. All quotations in this paper are from the Hilbert transcription. (The translation is my own, made in consultation with Mrs. Hilbert's gloss.) The passage quoted here corresponds to lines 191-197 in the 1987 version. Square brackets indicate that there is a problem with the transcription and that the translation is tentative. In constituting the line at issue here as a question, I follow the lead given by Mrs. Hilbert's translation.

⁵It is possible that Mrs. Peter is saying "qičcut" (to keep things to oneself) here and that there is a pun on "qič" (literally, "expensive") in the next line. Since unmarried

women of good family led secluded lives, it is possible that this line means, "She always kept to herself" ("lecu" indicating continuative aspect). This interpretation adds another ring to the annular figure (cf. the penultimate line of the passage quoted).

¶This introduction of Bobcat's future wife is very similar in form to Mrs. Peter's introduction of the Sockeye woman in "Sockeye Salmon in Baker River." See Langen (forthcoming) for a discussion.

⁷Most critics (e.g., Castle 1987) distinguish mimetic (literal) from allegorical and emblematic (figurative). But in terms of density of reference, it is the emblematic that must be distinguished from the other two modes.

⁸In the printed version of "Nobility at Utsalady" (Hilbert 1980) the lacuna occurs between the words "voice" and "Then" on page 73.