A Bella Coola tale

Hank Nater

Abstract: Most Bella Coola stories belong in one of two categories: (1) *sma* 'publicly shared parable (involving animals and/or animated objects)' and (2) *sʔalac'i* 'familially owned account (with human participants)'. However, in a few tales, we find, beside realistic (*sʔalac'i*) components (location, human participants and activities), purely imaginary (*sma*) elements as well (e.g. supernatural places, people interacting with animals in an unusual manner, transformations). The text presented in this paper provides a good sample of this intermediate category.

Keywords: Salish, Bella Coola, oral traditions, story genres, genre overlap

1   Introduction

The text displayed in Section 3 below is a transcription-interpretation of "The Frog Children", a story told by the late Dr. Margaret Siwallace, and recorded, over forty years ago.

In terms of native genre, this tale is neither entirely realistic nor wholly otherworldly. The narrator initially identifies the story as a *sʔalac'i* 'report', but subsequently uses the verb *smsmayamk* 'to tell as a parable' (← *sma* 'parable'): see the underlined sequences in the text (lines 1–3). This story is a *sʔalac'i* insofar as it belongs to the narrator, yet it has – like a *sma* – a moral: ***DO NOT DISDAIN THOSE THAT MAY APPEAR INFERIOR TO YOU***. Realistic elements are location (Kitlope), the main character (a chief's daughter, though unnamed), and seasonal activity (Indian rice harvest), but the Frog Clan is certainly of a more fictitious nature, as are frog-human interaction and frog-to-human/human-to-frog transformations.

From a European perspective, this story might be considered a myth or legend, and is similar to "The Frog King or Iron Henry", the well-known fairy tale (as recorded by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm) about a frog to whom there is more than meets the eye.

2   Symbols and abbreviations, grammatical information

The symbol ˯ ("Combining Inverted Bridge Below") follows proclitics and precedes enclitics, a hyphen follows prefixes and precedes suffixes, a colon precedes a reduplicated consonant; ACC accidentally, APP applicative, ART article, BEN benefactive, CAUS causative, CL enclitic or enclitic cluster, CONN connective, DEF definite, DEM demonstrative, DIM diminutive, DIR directional, FEM feminine, HYP hypothetical, INCH inchoative, INDEF indefinite, INT intensive-distributive,

MED medium, NOM nominalizer, OBJ object, PASS passive, PL plural, PREP preposition, PRG progressive-durative, PROX proximate, RECIP reciprocal, REM remote, REP repetitive, SEP separated, SG singular, SUB subject.

Prepositions (PREP␣) found in the text are: *ʔał␣/ʔal␣* 'at', *x␣* 'via', *ʔuł␣/ʔul␣* 'towards'.

Proclitical articles (ART␣): *ʔił␣/ła␣* 'INDEF.FEM.REM', *ta␣* 'INDEF.NON-FEM. REM', *ti␣* 'INDEF.NON-FEM.PROX', *ci␣* 'INDEF.FEM.PROX', *tu␣* 'INDEF.REM.PL', *wa␣ /a␣/Ø␣* 'INDEF.PROX.PL'.

Deictics (␣ART and (␣)DEM) encountered in the text are: *ʔac* 'DEM.PL.PROX', *ʔił* 'DEF.FEM.REM', *ʔiłaʔił* 'DEM.FEM.REM', *tx* 'DEF.NON-FEM.PROX', *c* 'DEF.PROX. PL', *cx* 'DEF.FEM.PROX', *c'ayx* 'DEM.FEM.PROX', *tχ* 'DEF.NON-FEM.REM', *tχ^w* 'DEF.REM.PL', *t'aχ* 'DEM.NON-FEM.REM', *t'aχ^w* 'DEM.REM.PL', *t'ayx* 'DEM.NON-FEM.PROX'. These occur both as free forms and as enclitics.

Most enclitical adverbs (␣CL) appear both alone and in clusters. In the text, we find (combinations of): ␣*alu* 'tentatively', ␣*ʔi(t)...k* 'contrastive', ␣*k^wu* 'somehow', ␣*k^w* 'quotative', ␣*k'^w(u)* 'frequently', ␣*lu* 'still', ␣*ma* 'possibly', ␣*su* 'alternately', ␣*ck* 'allegedly', ␣*c'/␣c'i...* 'now', ␣*tu* 'really', ␣*tuu* 'exactly'.

3   The text

(1) way   ʔalac'i-c␣suc'   x␣ti␣λ'χ^wcaytχ^w-ł␣c'
    well tell.story-1SG␣CL   PREP␣ART␣Kitlope-from␣CL
        ti␣sʔalac'i␣t'ayx
        ART␣story␣DEM
    'Well, I'll tell you another story now, this story from Kitlope.'

(2) ʔal␣a␣ʔayk'   ʔał␣λ'χ^wcaytχ^w
    PREP␣ART␣old   PREP␣Kitlope
        s-<u>sm:sma</u>-y-amk-im␣k^wk'^wu   ʔac
        CONN-tell.parable.REP-APP-PASS.3SG␣CL   DEM
    'Long ago, such legends were often told in Kitlope.'

(3) tix-s␣c'   ta␣k^wuk^wpi-ł-c␣tχ
    be.him-3SG␣CL   ART␣grandfather-late-1SG␣ART
        ti␣<u>sm:sma</u>-y-amk␣t'ayx   ʔuł␣ʔnc
        ART␣tell.parable.REP-APP␣DEM   PREP␣me
            ʔal␣a␣pacał-ił␣ck   ʔał␣λ'χ^wcaytχ^w
            PREP␣ART␣first-1PL␣CL   PREP␣Kitlope
    'It is my grandfather who told me stories that we inherited from our
    Kitlope ancestors.'

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(4) ʔal̕a̕ʔayk̕'̕kʷ   s-qʷlχʷuɬ-cut-aw   wa̕xnas-uks
    PREP̕ART̕old̕CL   CONN-engage-REFL-3PL   ART̕woman-PL
        s-ka̕ƛ'ap-aw   s-ka̕ɬq'ʷm-aw   x̕a̕ʔilk
        CONN-HYP̕go-3PL   CONN-HYP̕dig-3PL   PREP̕ART̕wild.rice
            ʔul̕a̕ʔumat-aw   s-ɬq'ʷm-aw
            PREP̕ART̕destination-3PL   CONN-dig-3PL
                x̕a̕ʔilk
                PREP̕ART̕wild.rice

'A long time ago, a number of women decided to go digging for wild rice, and they went to a place where they dug for wild rice.'

(5) ʔaɬʔnayx-s̕kʷc'   ʔiɬ̕mnamim̕ʔiɬ   ʔal̕a̕ɬq'ʷm̕ʔac
    accepted -3SG̕CL   ART̕chief's.daughter̕ART   PREP̕ART̕dig̕DEM
    'And the chief's daughter went along with these diggers.'

(6) ɬq'ʷm-s̕kʷ   ʔiɬaʔiɬ
    dig-3sg̕CL   DEM
    'And she started digging.'

(7) ƛ'ap-s̕kʷ   s-ka̕ɬq'ʷ-aynix-i-s   ti̕mack̕'ʷ
    go-3SG̕CL   CONN-HYP̕dig-ACC-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB   ART̕frog
    'And she unintentionally proceeded to dig up a frog.'

(8) tayamk-i-s   ta̕mack̕'ʷ̕tχ
    discard-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB   ART̕frog̕ART
    'She threw away the frog.'

(9) sx-uu:xʷc-m-i-s̕kʷ   ta̕mack̕'ʷ̕tχ
    bad-mouth.REP-APP-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB̕CL   ART̕frog̕ART
        s-tayamk-i-s
        CONN-discard-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB
    'She was swearing at the frog as she threw it away.'

(10) ʔaɬ-ʔay̕kʷʔiluc'ik   c'ayx   x̕ci̕ʔaɬ-ʔawɬ-im̕cx
     PRG-be.thus̕CL   DEM   PREP̕ART̕PRG-follow-3SG.PASS̕ART
         x̕ta̕mack̕'ʷ̕tχ   s-ɬq'ʷ-aynix-i-s̕kʷtuc'
         PREP̕ART̕frog̕ART   CONN-dig-ACC-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB̕CL
     'But she seemed to be followed constantly by the frog, as she kept digging it up.'

(11) ʔaɬ-ʔay-uc-m-i-s̕kʷtuc'
     PRG-be.thus-mouth-APP-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB̕CL
     'And she kept talking to it like that, over and over.'

(12) ta:tyamk-i-s
     discard.REP-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB
         s-ʔix-sx-uu:xʷc-m-i-s
         CONN-INT-bad-mouth.REP-APP-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB
     'She kept throwing it away and swearing at it.'

(13) ʔux-uq'χ-tmaxʷ-a‿kʷʔic'ik   tu‿xnas-uks‿tχʷ
     INT-call-RECIP-3PL‿CL   ART‿woman-PL‿ART
         s-c'usm-s‿c'   ʔal‿a‿ʔac
         CONN-dusk-3SG‿CL   PREP‿ART‿DEM
     'Then the women called each other as dusk had arrived.'

(14) λ'ap-s‿c'   s-ka‿kɬ-s   ta‿snχ‿tχ
     start-3SG‿CL CONN-HYP‿fall-3SG   ART‿sun‿ART
     'Now the sun began to set.'

(15) ʔux-uq'χ-tmaxʷ-aw‿c'   s-ka‿lip'cut-aw   ʔuɬ‿ta‿suɬ‿tχ
     INT-call-RECIP-3PL‿CL   CONN-HYP‿return-3PL PREP‿ART‿village‿ART
     'They called each other and started going back to the village.'

(16) k'x-i-s‿kʷc'   c'ayx   ti‿ya:yaasii   ti‿caacti
     see-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB‿CL   DEM   ART‿handsome   ART‿young
         s-ya:ya-liwa-s‿kʷtuu   ti‿caacti‿t'ayx
         CONN-good-…like-3SG‿CL   ART‿young‿DEM
     'Then the girl saw this handsome young man, a well-built young man.'

(17) ʔay-uc‿kʷc'   t'ayx   s-ka‿ʔaɬ-kʷn-i-s
     be.thus-mouth‿CL   DEM   CONN-HYP-PRG-take-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB
         s-ka‿kaw-aɬ-i-s   ʔuɬ‿tu‿suɬ-s‿tχʷ
         CONN-HYP‿deliver-foot-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB   PREP‿ART‿home-3sg‿ART
     'He said to her that he would take her, that he would walk her home.'

(18) k'iɬ-txʷumat-tu-m‿kʷmakʷuc'   c'ayx   x‿ta‿mackʷ
     without-direction-CAUS-3SG.PASS‿CL DEM   PREP‿ART‿frog
         ta‿caacti‿tχ
         ART‿young‿ART
     'Then she was made to lose her way by the young man who was a frog.'

(19) tix̣ k^wmak^wuc'   ta ʔix-ta:tyamk-i-s   ta mack'^w tχ
    be.him CL   ART INT-discard.REP-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB   ART frog ART
        ta caacti tχ   s-ƛ'mstn-am-timut-s
        ART young ART   CONN-person-become-CAUS.REFL-3SG
            ʔuɬ ʔiɬ
            PREP DEM
    'It was the frog that she had been casting aside who had become a
    young man to her.'

(20) ʔaɬ-k^wn-i-s c'   ʔuɬ ta suɬ-s tχ,
    PRG-take-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB CL   PREP ART village-3sg ART
        ʔuɬ ta ʔamat-s tχ   s-ʔapsuɬ-s   ti mack'^w-mx
        PREP ART location-3SG ART   CONN-dwell-3SG   ART frog-clan
            ʔaɬ ƛ'χ^wcaytχ^w
            PREP Kitlope
    'He now took her to his home, to the place where the Frog Clan resides
    at Kitlope'.

(21) talaws c'   ʔuɬ ʔiɬ
    marry CL   PREP DEM
    'Now he married her.'

(22) xɬ-mna-lx-s k^wc'   ʔiɬ caacti ʔiɬ   x a ɬnús
    have-child-INCH-3SG CL   ART young ART   PREP ART two
        wa mn:mnnck'^w-i
        ART frog-DIM
    'Then the young woman had two frog babies.'

(23) ʔalac'i-tu-ti-s k^wʔitk'^wuk   way   tu mn:mnc-s tχ^w
    tell-BEN-3PL.OBJ-3SG.SUB CL well   ART children-3SG ART
    'Well, she told her children:'

(24) "ɬay   t'aχ^w   wa suɬ-s   ta man-ɬ-c,   ɬay t'aχ^w"
    "far   DEM   ART house-3SG   ART father-SEP-1SG   far DEM
    "Way over yonder is my father's house, way over yonder."

(25) "ɬnús   wa ʔasqayaɬ c   ʔal a ʔasuuc c"
    two   ART totem.pole ART   PREP ART front of house ART
    "There are two totem poles in front."

(26) "q'lum-ap‿ʔic'ik ʔaɬ‿ti‿mn:mnnta‿tx   ka‿ƛ'ap-ap   s-ka‿ʔanayk-ap
    climb-2PL‿CL   PREP‿ART‿steps‿ART HYP‿go-2PL CONN-HYP‿want-2PL
      s-ka‿k'x-i-p   ta‿kʷukʷpi-ɬ-ap,
      CONN-HYP‿see-3SG.OBJ-2PL.SUB   ART‿grandfather-SEP-2PL
         ta‿man-ɬ-c   ʔn   ɬa‿stan-ɬ-c"
         ART‿father-SEP-1SG   and   ART‿mother-SEP-1SG
   "Climb the steps if you go and want to see your grandfather, my father
   and mother."

(27) cu:cut-s‿kʷtuu   c'ayx   ʔaɬ‿tχʷ
    say.REP-3SG‿CL   DEM   PREP‿DEM
    'She told them this repeatedly.'

(28) ʔay-na‿kʷʔiluc'ik   tu‿mn:mnnck'ʷ-i‿tχʷ s-ka‿ƛ'ap-aw
    be.thus-3PL‿CL   ART‿frog-DIM‿ART   CONN-HYP‿go-3PL
    'And the frog children did go on their way now.'

(29) k'x-i-t‿kʷalu   ta‿kʷukʷpi-naw‿tχ
    see-3SG.OBJ-3PL.SUB‿CL   ART‿grandfather-3PL‿ART
    'They tried to see their grandfather.'

(30) q'lum-a‿kʷaluk'ʷu   t'aχʷ   ʔaɬ‿ta‿mn:mnnta‿tχ   ʔu-ƛ'uk'
    climb-3PL‿CL   DEM   PREP‿ART‿steps‿ART   DIR-high
    'They tried to climb up the steps.'

(31) c'χɬn-tim‿kʷk'ʷu   t'aχʷ
    kick-3PL.PASS‿CL   DEM
    'But they were kicked [off the steps] over and over.'

(32) ʔaɬ:ʔaɬ-ʔay-naw‿tu   ʔac
    PRG.REP-be.thus-3PL‿CL   DEM
    'This happened to them again and again.'

(33) "qi:χyu Ø‿mack'ʷ‿ʔac!"
    useless   ART‿frog‿ART
    "These useless frogs!"

(34) cu:cut-m-tim‿kʷk'ʷ
    say.REP-APPL-3PL.PASS‿CL
    'That is what they kept saying about them.'

(35) q'lum-a‿kʷaluk'ʷ
    climb-3PL‿CL
    'But they kept on climbing.'

(36) ʔay-tu-tim‿kʷk’ʷ
 be.thus-CAUS-3PL.PASS‿CL
 'And they were treated the same way again and again.'

(37) χapa-ti-s‿kʷaluc'   ta‿q’ʷalm‿tχ
 carry-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB‿CL   ART‿older.sibling‿ART
   ʔiɫ‿susqʷii-s‿ʔiɫ
   ART‿younger.sibling-3SG‿ART
 'The older brother tried to carry his little sister.'

(38) ʔaɫ-ʔay-tu-tim‿kʷtuc'   s-c’χn-tim
 PRG-be.thus-CAUS-3PL.PASS‿CL   CONN-kick-3PL.PASS
   s-ka‿kɫ-tim
   CONN-HYP‿drop-3PL.PASS
 'But again, they were kicked and made to fall [off the steps].'

(39) ʔin:ʔixaʔii-na‿kʷaluluk’ʷ   s-ka‿c’kt-aw
 almost.accomplish.REP-3PL‿CL   CONN-HYP‿arrive-3PL
   ʔuɫ‿ta‿kʷuɫiiχʷ‿tχ   s-ʔay-tu-tim
   PREP‿ART‿top‿ART   CONN-be.thus-CAUS-3PL.PASS
 'And every time they almost reached the top [of the steps], they were
 treated the same way.'

(40) lip’cut-lx-a‿kʷ   ʔac   ʔuɫ‿ʔiɫ‿stan-aw‿ʔiɫ
 return-INCH-3PL‿CL   DEM   PREP‿ART‿mother-3PL‿ART
 'They had to go back to their mother.'

(41) ʔalac’-amk-cut-aw   s-ʔaɫ-ʔay-s   wa‿c’kta-tu-tim
 tell-APP-REFL-3PL   CONN-PRG-be.thus-3SG   ART‿event-CAUS-3PL.PASS
 'And they described to her what had happened to them.'

(42) "ʔay   ka‿ʔaɫ-kʷn-tuɫap‿ma"
 alright   HYP‿PRG-take-1SG.SUB+2PL.OBJ‿CL
 "Alright, maybe I should take you to them."

(43) cut‿kʷʔic’ik ʔiɫaʔiɫ   (ʔiɫ‿)stan-aw‿ʔiɫ
 say‿CL   DEM   (ART‿)mother-3PL‿ART
 'So she, their mother, spoke.'

(44) s-ƛ’msta-nalus-am-timut-s‿kʷc'   ʔiɫaʔiɫ
 NOM-person-joined-become-CAUS.REFL-3SG‿CL DEM
 'Then she changed herself into a human being.'

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(45) ʔic'ama-y-anm-s   s-ka‿ƛ'ap-s
blanket-become-3SG CONN-HYP‿go-3SG
    s-ka‿ʔaɬ-kʷn-ti-s
    CONN-HYP-PRG-take-3PL.OBJ-3SG.SUB
'She wrapped herself in a blanket and carried them with her.'

(46) c'kt-s‿kʷu   ʔuɬ‿ti‿ʔapsuɬ‿t'ayx   s-k'x-im‿c'
arrive-3SG‿CL   PREP‿ART‿village‿DEM   CONN-see-3SG.PASS‿CL
    s-cix-s   ʔiɬ
    CONN-be.her-3SG   DEM
'When she arrived at the village, the people saw that it was her.'

(47) wa-s   s-ʔaɬ-k'iɬ-txʷumat-s   c'ayx
who-3SG   CONN-PRG-without-direction-3SG   DEM
    ʔaɬ‿ta‿suɬ‿tχ
    PREP‿ART‿village‿ART
'That she was the one who had strayed from the village.'

(48) ʔay-uc-s‿kʷ   c'ayx
be.thus-mouth-3SG‿CL   DEM
    s-ka‿nu-t'xʷ-als-m-aw
    CONN-HYP‿inside-sweep-house-MED-3PL
        s-ka‿nu-ʔayaw-als-m-aw
        CONN-HYP‿change-house-MED-3PL
            ʔal‿a‿ka‿pacaɬ   s-ka‿ʔustxʷ-s   ʔuɬ‿tχʷ
            PREP‿ART‿HYP‿first   CONN-HYP‿enter-3SG PREP‿DEM
'She told them to sweep and change [the sand in] the house before she would go in.'

(49) ʔay-na‿kʷʔiluc'ik   s-nu-t'xʷ-als-m-aw
be.thus-3PL‿CL   CONN-inside-sweep-house-MED-3PL
'And they did sweep the house.'

(50) ʔustxʷ-s
enter-3SG
'And she went inside.'

(51) "χ:χl-tu-ti-c   wa‿mn:mnc-c‿alu‿ʔac
sent.REP-CAUS-3PL.OBJ-1SG.SUB   ART‿children-1SG‿CL‿DEM
    ʔuɬ‿ʔinu   s-ka‿k'x-tap   x‿c"
    PREP‿you   CONN-HYP‿see-2PL.PASS   PREP‿DEM
"I sent my children to you for you to be seen by them."

(52) "c'χɬn-tim‿kʷʔitk'ʷuk   ʔaɬ‿ti‿mn:mnnta‿t'ayx   si-ʔay-naw
     kick-3PL.PASS‿CL   PREP‿ART‿steps‿DEM   CONN-be.thus-3PL
          s-lip'cut-aw   ʔuɬ‿ʔnc"
          CONN-return-3PL PREP‿ME
     "But they were kicked off these steps over and over, that is why they
     came back to me."

(53) "ʔalac'-amk-cut-aw   s-ʔaɬ-kʷn-ti-c‿ʔic'ik   ʔuɬ‿ʔinu
     tell-APP-REFL-3PL   CONN-PRG-take-3PL.OBJ-1SG.SUB‿CL   PREP‿YOU
          s-ka‿k'x-ti-xʷ"
          CONN-HYP‿see-3PL.OBL-2SG.SUB
     "They told me what happened to them, so I brought them to you for
     you to see them."

(54) cut-s‿kʷc'   ʔiɬ‿caacti‿ʔiɬ   ʔuɬ‿ta‿man-s‿tχ
     say-3SG‿CL   ART‿young‿ART   PREP‿ART‿father-3SG‿ART
     'That's what the young woman said to her father.'

(55) sk'ʷ-uuɬ-m-s‿kʷc'   ʔiɬaʔiɬ   s-ka‿kʷλ'-ti-s
     untie-garment-MED-3SG‿CL   DEM   CONN-HYP‿place-3PL.OBJ-3SG.SUB
          tu‿mack'ʷ   tu‿mn:mnc-s‿tχʷ   ʔuɬ‿ta‿kʷuɬulmx‿tχ
          ART‿frog   ART‿children-3SG‿ART   PREP‿ART‿ground‿ART
     'Then she opened the blanket she was wearing, and placed her frog
     children on the ground.'

(56) xʷplχs   t'aχ
     end   DEM
     'That's the end [of the story].'

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