

SPLIT-HIS-OWN-HEAD:

ENGLISH WORDS, TILLAMOOK PATTERNS?

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In the preface to Nehalem Tillamook Tales Elizabeth Jacobs writes (1959: viii):

"Early in the work I suspected that Mrs. Pearson, while telling the stories in English, was doing so by means of a rapid and close translation from the native into English. She had certainly learned all the tales in the medium of the Tillamook language. As a check on the closeness and precision of her translation I asked Dr. [Melville] Jacobs to record in phonetic transcription the story, "Split-His-Own-Head," after she had dictated it in English. The fact that the two accounts were almost identical for this tale does not prove that Mrs. Pearson always held so closely to the native original. But this experiment strengthened my constant feeling that, in the case of Mrs. Pearson, there was a minimal amount of distortion of content and style in a procedure where a literature was being noted in the inadequate and frustrating terms of another language. Dr. May M. Edel, who recorded texts from Mrs. Pearson about three years before, in 1931, has discussed some of the factors responsible for the few features of difference in her recordings and the dictations that were offered to me in English.¹"

May Mandelbaum Edel's article (for a copy of which I am indebted to Abraham Edel) notes 'a greater [explanatory] expansiveness in the English version' obtained by Bess Jacobs, and that 'Some new episodes are included...without affecting the order, point, or treatment of other episodes' (1944: 116). The new episodes are explained as 'Mrs. Pearson's recollection was obviously improving. She remembered omitted episodes just as she remembered a number of whole tales she had not been able to think of three summers before' (*idem*). The same reason perhaps enters into the explanatory expansion in the English versions, 'the more explicit statements of motivation and explanation of the unusual' (126). Dr. Edel writes: "Some of these additions were explicitly parenthetical; others were incorporated as

¹ The footnote identifies Edel 1944.

part of the tale" (125). Improved recollection might enter into the fact that "There is also a greater richness in details of conversation and the delineation of character" (in the English versions), but Dr. Edel considers that "The relative thinness of the [Tillamook] texts is in part due to the slow and repetitious telling which the Tillamook recording involved" [*idem*]. Another factor may be that Mrs. Pearson was not accustomed to telling the stories in Tillamook. She "had never been a raconteur, though she did have a genuine flair for story-telling. She had told the stories occasionally before, but in English, to white neighbors" (117).

In sum, Bess Jacobs' work in 1934 appears to have benefited from the stimulus to memory of the work of May Edel in 1931, from the stimulus to explanation that telling Tillamook stories in English may bring, and from the fact that Mrs. Pearson's previous practice in telling the stories had been in English. Obtaining the same stories, a second time, in a second language, was not redundant, but enriching.

The close fit between the Tillamook and English versions, and the indications of authentic performance of the English versions, encourage one to think that the English words may exhibit Tillamook form with respect to relations among lines. The story recorded a second time in Tillamook by Melville Jacobs, 'Split-His-Own-Head', would seem an especially favorable case. It may be possible to detect something of the nature of poetic, or rhetorical, discourse form from the English version.

One might understandably think that the place to begin is with Tillamook. The texts in Tillamook have not as yet been published, and there is one advantage in beginning with English. Patterning detected in the English has not been shaped by acquaintance with the Tillamook. If subsequently the patterning in the English telling is found to coincide with that in the Tillamook, the result confirms the conclusion earlier arrived at by Jacobs and Edel. Indeed, it does so in a deepened way. When Edel affirmed that 'the actual style differences appear startlingly slight' (126), the examples indicate that she was considering differences in the handling of incident, especially dialogue, its wording and elaboration. It may be possible to establish that in respect to Tillamook tradition the narrative competence of Clara Pearson was constant across two languages in fundamental principles of form.

The story in question, 'Split-his-own-head, has value for the light it sheds on a Clackamas Chinook story, 'Bluejay and his older sister' (Jacobs 1959: 366-9, no. 41), a story which in the repertoire of Victoria Howard has become part of a series with others involving a mother, daughter, and younger brother, and, I think, part of a use of the figure of Seal (mother, older sister) as a focus of narrative reflection on cultural catastrophe. (For the first link, see Hymes 1981, chs. 8, 9; the second is sketched in unpublished manuscripts).

With regard to form, the English telling appears to make use of verses of three and five lines within stanzas grouped in sets of two and four. This may seem surprising. Most traditions so far studied appear to use either three and five, or two and four. Yet pairing may occur as a marked pattern in traditions in which three and five constitute the normal, 'default', case, and three-part marking may occur expressively in traditions in which two and four are normal. Moreover, among the Karok of the Klamath River one narrator may make use of three and five, another two and four, for the same story, and the same narrator make use of each for different stories. (See Hymes 1985). And Bess Jacobs observes (116, n. 21): 'Note that four is the pattern number of feminine contexts, five of masculine contexts, in Tillamook folklore'. The immediate reference is to the number of siblings in a set, not of course to verses and stanzas, but the number of siblings, and associated repetitions of incident, regularly is the same as the larger pattern number for discourse units.

The 'logic' of the action among the sets of three verses in each stanza appears to be like that of Chinookan triads, an onset, something ongoing, an outcome.

The 'logic' of the action among the sets of four stanzas in each scene appears to be like that of paired sets in Tonkawa, an initiation, an outcome; an initiation, an outcome.

Specific to this story in scenes [i, ii] is the four-part pattern: misinterpretation, wrong action; correction of interpretation, correct action.

In scene [iii] the first stanza establishes two instructions, where to be in the canoe, and what to do with the dentalia. The second stanza has the wrong action, correction of interpretation(?--"Oh, I suppose your sister told you to do that") and remedial action for the first instruction. The third and

fourth stanzas give the wrong action, correction of interpretation (?), and remedial action for the second instruction.

In scene iv the first stanza gives the instruction, and a second stanza has a [report of] wrong action, and correction of interpretation. [The error, eating all the fish, admits of no correction]

In scene v the first two stanzas parallel the first two stanzas of scene [iii] in that there is instruction as where to be in the canoe in (A), wrong action, correction of interpretation, and implied remedial action in (B). There is a further parallel between the last stanzas of scenes iii and v: they buy whale meat and return home. But scene v has no intervening third stanza. The pairing of the instruction and its outcome in the two stanzas seems simply to be given a coda or epilogue.

Scene vi is the most structurally complex of the six. It has an additional level of organization. It has four main parts, but these are not stanzas, but sections that contain stanzas. The common theme of getting a wife is developed in four successive incidents. In each of the four there is an instruction, misunderstood in the first three sections, understood correctly in the fourth and last.

The first three sections have the four part pattern of action of the first two scenes. The instruction is followed by a wrong action, a correction of the interpretation, and a correction of the action. Only the first and third express this in a four part organization. The second and fourth sections have just two parts. In the second the first stanza has the instruction, and the second stanza has the wrong action, correction of interpretation, correction of action. In all of these the fourth element, the corrective action, is quite brief (cf. the concluding element in scenes iii and v).

The fourth section has one instruction, one action. The first stanza has a common pattern of instruction, response, departure. The second stanza has simply a correct action, evaluated as such.

Possibly the full story has two main divisions, one of five parts, one of four. Going to buy whale meat occurs as third and fifth scene. That is analogous to five part patterns in Chinookan, where the third element is an intermediate outcome, the fifth a final outcome. Perhaps these scenes are focussed upon Split-His-Own-Head as male. Perhaps the conclusion, having to do with getting a wife, could be taken as having four parts because it is focussed on a woman. This is speculative, but it would be in keeping with Jacobs' observation as to gender linkage of five and four part series.

Here is a profile of 'Split-His-Own-Head' (Jacobs 1959: 118-20 (no. 37).

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Stanza</u>	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Lines</u>	
<u>i</u> [canoe]	A	abc	1-2, 3-8, 9-12	
	B	abc	13-15, 16-19, 20	
	C	abc	21-22, 23, 24-27	
	D	abc	28-30, 31, 32-34	
<u>ii</u> [stick]	A	abcde	35-37, 38-39, 40-41, 42-44, 45	
	B	abc	46, 47-49, 50-52	
	C	abc	53-56, 57-58, 59-60	
	D	abc	61-62, 63-64, 65-66	
<u>iii</u> [whale]	A	abc	67-73, 74, 75-78 [79-82]	
	B	abc	83-87, 88-90, 91	
	C	abcde	92-4, 95-9, 100-2, 103-4, 105	
	D		106-7	
<u>iv</u> [salmon]	A	abc	108-110, 111-113, [114-116]	
	B	abcde	117, 118-20, 121-3, 124-6, 127-31	
<u>v</u> [whale]	A	abc	132, 133-134, 135-136	
	B	abcde	137-41, 142-4, 145-6, 147-51, 152-3	
	C		154-156	
<u>vi</u> [wife]	(1) (dead)	A	abc	158-162, 163, 164
		B	abc	165-167, 168-169, 170-171
		C	a(bc)(de) (f)g	172, (173-4, 175-6), (177-8, 179) (180, 181-3), 184-6
		D		187
	(2) (old)	A	abc	188-91, 192, 193-194
	B	abc	195-197, 198-202, 203	

(3) (baby)	A	abc	204-207, 208, 209
	B		210-212
	C	abcde	213-7, 218-9, 220-1, 222-3, 224-6
	D		227-229
(4) (young)	A	abc	230-235, 236-237, 238
	B		239-241
Close			242

Notice that the interpolated explanation of lines [79-82] appears to stand outside the verse and stanza organization, while the interpolated explanation of lines [114-116] appears to fit within it.

The organization of 172-186 is complex. Seven verses belong to the stanza. There appear to be three pairs of verses, indicated by enclosure in parentheses, between single opening and closing verses.

Further study of Tillamook narratives is of course likely to modify some of the interpretations indicated above.

[i] [Canoe]

Split-his-own-head was living with his older sister.

They had no mother or father.

One day she told him,

"Oh, I am tired.

"I am getting so tired of it. 5

"I go on foot all the time to dig yetska roots.

"Why do you not make a canoe for me?

Even one of rotten wood would be better than walking all the time."

"Ha!",

he said. 10

"Your brother certainly can do that.

Nothing will stop me from making a canoe."

He made a canoe for her.

That canoe was quickly finished.

It was very fine looking. 15

She made preparations to go digging roots.

She threw her root digger into the canoe.

That stick went right through the bottom of that canoe,
because that canoe was made of rotten wood.

She became angry. 20

She came back in the house.

"Oh goodness, you made a canoe of rotten wood."

"Well, sister, you told me to do that."

"Oh, I did not really mean rotten wood.

"I just said it that way, 25

"because I meant

"why on earth can you not make a canoe for me."

She started out on foot then to go for roots.

Before she left, she said

"You must make a canoe out of a good cedar log." 30

"Oh, indeed, nothing will stop me."

When she came home,

he had it already finished,

another canoe made from a good cedar log.

[ii] [Digging Stick]

One day she said, 35
 'My digging stick is becoming worthless.
 'Go split that head end.'
 He understood her to say,
 'Go split your face'.
 She should have said, 40
 'Go split that head end of a spruce limb'.^o
 'All right,'
 he told her,
 'I can do that.
 He went. 45

 Presently he returned with his head all wrapped up.
 She noticed,
 'Your head is all wrapped up.
 'What for?'
 He replied, 50
 'Oh, I nearly died.
 'You told me to go split my face.'

 She scolded,
 'No! I told you to hunt up spruce limbs,
 split one, 55
 and make a root digger for me.'
 'Why, you did not tell me that, sister.
 'You told me to split my face.'
 She told him,
 'You should have known that I did not mean that.' 60

 He went,
 obtained a spruce limb,
 brought it home,
 he made a root digger for her.
 That was all right then, 65
 he had done it right.

^o 'head end' not followed by anything else led him to understand that she meant 'of yours'.

[iii] [Whale meat]

One morning she sent him,
 "You go along.
 "Some people are going to buy whale meat,
 "You go with them. 70
 "In some manner you can fasten yourself in the stern of the canoe.
 "If the boat is crowded,
 "you can hang on to the stern."
 "All right, sister."
 She gave him some dentalia. 75
 "Maybe you can take these money beads,
 "and remember,
 throw your money beads on any old woman's privates".
 [By that expression the native would understand,
 "Buy whale meat from anyone 80
 who gives you a good trade.
 "Do not just trade with some special one."]

They went in that canoe.
 Those people were paddling along.
 They noticed that the stern of the canoe seemed to drag. 85
 They looked,
 there he was in the water, hanging on to the canoe.
 They said,
 "Oh, I suppose your sister told you to do that.
 "Get into the canoe." 90
 He got in.

When they got there where that whale was,
 Split-His-Own-Head did not attempt to buy any.
 He just stood about watching the old women.
 One went outdoors, 95
 he followed her.
 He watched her squat down,
 he sneaked up close to her
 and threw those money beads between her legs.
 "Why did you throw your money 100
 "where I would urinate on it?"
 she asked.

He replied,

"I came to buy whale meat."

"Oh, I suppose your sister told you to do it that way."

105

After that he bought whale meat
and they all went home.

[iv] [Dried Salmon]

His sister gave him a dried salmon,

saying,

"We are nearly out of dried salmon now."

110

She did not tell him not to eat it all at once.

But she said,

"Today you will throw rocks at the sun all day."

[By that was meant,

"Do not eat it all at once,

"save some for your supper."]

115

He was gone all day.

In the evening he returned,

saying,

"Goodness, I am all sore and lame."

120

"Why?"

she asked.

"Where are you so sore?"

"My arm is almost worn out

from throwing rocks at the sun all day,

like you said."

125

She told him,

"You are very foolish.

"I did not tell you to throw rocks,

"I told you to save some fish for summer

"because we have not very much left to eat."

130

[v] [Whale meat]

Again some people were preparing to go buy whale meat.

She told him,

"You can sit on a mat or blanket on the floor of the canoe."

He answered,

"I can certainly do that."

135

People got in the canoe,

they sat down to paddle.

They sat on him,

they did not see him

140

because he was under those ferns that were in the canoe to sit on.

He became tired.

He grunted

and attempted to change position.

The people said,

145

"Why, it feels as if someone were underneath us."

They looked,

there he was.

"Oh get up!

"Sit up and help paddle!

150

"I suppose your sister told you to do that!"

"Yes, she told me,"

the little fool answered.

They arrived at that [market] place.

They all purchased some whale meat

155

and returned home.

[vi] [Wife]

[vi-1] [Dead woman]

Later on his sister said to him,
 "You are getting grown now,
 "you should hunt a woman for yourself. 160
 "You are old enough to get married.
 "Any old a thing, a dead person, is perhaps better than no wife at all."
 "Huh! I can do that all right, sister."
 He went to look for a wife.

He returned late at night. 165
 His sister was already in bed
 and did not see him.

Presently she heard him say,
 "Oh! My wife is sticking me with her scratcher."^b
 His sister thought, 170
 "Why, he must have found a maiden bathing after her first
 menstruation."

Daylight came.
 The sister arose
 and built the fire.

Split-His-Own-Head got up, 175
 he had no wife.
 "Where is your wife?"
 his sister asked.

"In bed."
 "Is she not going to get up?" 180
 He told her,
 "No. You told me to obtain a dead person for a wife.
 "That is a dead women I went and got."

She said to him,
 "Now you take that dead body 185
 "and put it right back where you found it."

He took it back.

^b During her first mensis ceremonial period a girl used a body scratcher.

[vi-2] [old woman]

Then she said to him,

"I told you to get a live person.

"I meant to marry a live person, 190
"no matter if she were old".

"All right, sister."

He took that body
and went.

That evening he brought home an old, old woman with a walking cane, 195
nearly blind,

who could scarcely stand.

His sister objected,

"Why, that old woman might drop dead any minute!

"What are you going to do with her? 200

"An old woman ready to die!

"You go take her home."

He made preparations to take the old woman home.

[vi(3)] [baby]

His sister emphasized,

"Young! Young! 205

"A young girl, a youngster,

"that is what you want to get for yourself."

"All right, sister, I can do that."

He went.

He waited till late at night. 210

Then he went

and stole a woman's baby.

He arrived home during the night.
 Soon that baby cried.
 He got up 215
 and tossed that cradle.
 "Oh, my wife! My wife! Keep still, my wife!"
 His sister thought,
 "Perhaps he has gotten a widow with a baby."
 She asked him, 220
 "Have you a woman with a baby?"
 "No, sister.
 "This baby herself is my wife!"
 "Oh goodness!
 "You take that baby right back 225
 where you got it."

He arose,
 dressed,
 took that baby back to her mother.

[vi(4)] [young woman]

Then his sister knew 230
 she must explain carefully.
 She said,
 "I told you
 a young woman, a young girl,
 not an old woman, not a baby." 235

"All right,"
 he said.
 He went.

He found a young woman in her basket cap.
 He brought her home. 240
 He had done all right then.

That is ended.

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