

TELLING ANIMALS: A HISTOLOGY OF DENE TEXTUALIZED ORATURE

by

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(English)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

July 2017

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I create an interpretive framework based on deictic constructions to analyze Dene/Athabaskan poetics in four print collections of dual-language textualized orature—Denesuline/Chipewyan (Alberta), Dena’ina/Tanaina (Alaska), Dene Dháh/South Slavey (Alberta), and Diné Bizaad/Navajo (Southwest). Using this framework, I focus on the epistemological power of animals via the critical metaphor of animal tissue (muscle, bone, blood, and breath)—thus “histology.” My Introduction describes my framework. Chapter two, “‘Grandson, / This is meat’: Wolf and Caribou on How to Live in *This Is What They Say*,” focuses on ʔetθén, the word for both “meat” and “caribou,” and the homophonic relationship between meat and caribou. Chapter three, “‘I will be popular with the Campfire People, so ha, ha, ha’: Porcupine and Lynx on How to Love in *K’it’egh’i Sukdu/A Dena’ina Legacy*,” on k’etch eltani, the prophetic practice of true belief. Chapter four, “‘What will you do now?’: Wolverine and Wolf on How to Die in ‘The Man Who Sought a Song,’” told by Elisse Ahnassay, on the (a)historical function of wodih, “news,” an oral genre that shapes the future. Chapter five, “‘If it floats, we will all live forever’: Coyote and Badger on How to Live Again in *Diné Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story*,” on the reincarnational exchange figured by niłch’i bii’ sizinii, the inner wind. My Conclusion, “Histologies,” considers how the above concepts correspond to: flesh (ʔetθén), mind (k’etch eltani), breath (niłch’i bii’ sizinii), and bone (wodih): an animal that is a dream, a dream that is an animal. One of the primary ideas in my dissertation is the concept of narrative revitalization, which I define as cognate to and coeval with community practices of language revitalization, by comparing our conditions for who we are, how much space we believe ourselves to share, and how much time we have to share it in.

Lay Abstract

In my Introduction, I offer a language-based interpretive framework for animal narratives in Dene/Athabaskan languages Denesuline/Chipewyan, Dena'ina/Tanaina, Dene Dháh/South Slavey, and Diné Bizaad/Navajo, and in English. Chapter two, “Grandson, / This is meat’: Wolf and Caribou on How to Live in *This Is What They Say*,” focuses on ɤtθén, the word for both “meat” and “caribou.” Three, “I will be popular with the Campfire People, so ha, ha, ha’: Porcupine and Lynx on How to Love in *K’tl’egh’i Sukdu/A Dena’ina Legacy*,” on k’etch eltani, prophecy and belief. Four, “What will you do now?’: Wolverine and Wolf on How to Die in ‘The Man Who Sought a Song,’” told by Elisse Ahnassay, on wodih, “news.” Five, “If it floats, we will all live forever’: Coyote and Badger on How to Live Again in *Diné Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story*,” on niłch’i bii’ sizinii, the inner wind. My Conclusion compares these concepts.

Preface

Chapter Two will be published in the form of a book chapter as “‘Grandson, / this is meat’: Hunting Metonymy in François Mandeville’s *This Is What They Say*” in *Activating the Heart: Storytelling, Knowledge, Sharing, and Relationship*, with the permission of the publisher, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by a three-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (2011-2014) and by the University of British Columbia; it is important to state that UBC is situated on unceded Musqueam territory. I was further assisted in writing this dissertation with the funding provided by the Navajo Language Academy/Diné Bizaad Naalkaaah (NLA/DBN) to attend the Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) 2016 in Fairbanks, Alaska. The people who have made this project possible are many—there are the storytellers, listeners, interpreters, transcribers, translators, editors, publishers, readers, and commenters. There are the animals, too. Anything good in any of my chapters is theirs, and those whom I thank here. At the University of Victoria, Leslie Saxon is to be thanked above all, for her outstanding past, present, and future scholarship and mentorship. Adar Anisman, John Tucker, Trish Baer and her husband Richard, Iain Higgins, and Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins are also wonderful colleagues. At the University of British Columbia, my dissertation committee has made this project possible. Margery Fee is a scholar and mentor whom I can never thank enough. Her conviction, tolerance, humor, and breadth and depth of knowledge are unparalleled. I am proud to work with her and very grateful for her contributions to the field of Indigenous literary studies. Thank you, Margery, for being such an inspiring interlocutor. You have also given me many books, all of which I treasure. And you have read so much of my writing in so many forms! Your gift of time is better than gems. Barbara Dancygier and Patrick Moore have made it possible for me to draw upon cognitive-linguistic theory and ethnopoetics for my language-focused approach, and I am deeply grateful for their indispensable support. Barbara, your gift of a copy of *Diné Bahane*’ helped to form the direction of my project and, I hope, will help to shape the rest of my life. Pat’s

time and thought over the years, as we have discussed Dene stories and ethics, is a kind and ever-helpful gift, and I will always remember it. Pat's archive of Wolverine stories is extremely special; thank you, Pat, for allowing me to have a listen—I was delighted. Also at UBC, Deena Rymhs, Bo Earle, Bożena Karwowska, and Martina Volfová are wonderful colleagues.

The Navajo Language Academy is a place where I can learn in a very real way. Irene Silentman, Lorene Legah (Diné College), Ellavina Tsosie Perkins, and Leroy Morgan: your linguistic and cultural knowledge is very beautiful, and I learn so much from your classes. I am also deeply grateful to Ted Fernald (Swarthmore College) for his excellent mentorship and for many outstanding books. Milton and Warlance Chee, practitioners, shared their insights on Navajo ceremony with the NLA experientially. Other NLA people I thank include Alessandro Jaker (Goyatikö Language Centre), Barsine Benally (Diné College), Elizabeth Bogal-Allbritten, Ignacio L. Montoya, Irene Tsosie, Joan Cooley, Joaquin Cooley, Johnny Harvey, Kayla Palakurthy, Kelsey Dayle John, Louise Ramone, Paul Platero (Navajo Technical University), Peggy Speas (University of Massachusetts Amhurst), Rose Gambler, Sam Gray, Theresa Begay, and Willem de Reuse. I cannot thank everyone in the NLA by name, but I am grateful always for the work that goes on. I also thank very much Melvatha Chee and her husband Joey, who take the time to connect in a sincere and uplifting way that defines real friendship; Melvy possesses as well the gifts of a true colleague. Also to be thanked for the best of support are Paul Zolbrod and his wife Joanne McCloskey; their books have helped to shape my understanding of ethics and poetics, and Paul's interview, so generous, uplifts me each time I read it. Also in Albuquerque are my great colleagues Michelle Arviso Devlin (Navajo Technical University) and Lukas Denk. And I am very grateful to Shawn San Roman at the Museum of Northern Arizona. Other friends and scholars of Dene studies! Cindy Allen practices Dene and Euro-Canadian law and is like a

butterfly. Siri Tuttle (University of Alaska Fairbanks) suggested the phrase “poetics documentation”; Jim Kari gifted me with a rare copy of Peter Kalifornsky’s *K’tle’egh’I Sukdu: Remaining Stories* (1984) and described what it was like to work with Kalifornsky; Alan Boraas (Kenai Peninsula College, University of Alaska Anchorage) shared with me materials and insights that I would not otherwise have access to: on receiving Alan’s permission, I include his very moving comments in my footnotes; also in Alaska, Susan Paskvan and her husband Steve were incredibly hospitable. Keren Rice (University of Toronto) is making a huge difference in my life in such a huge number of ways. Nick Welch (University of Toronto) is a great colleague and sci-fi expert. Chris Cox (Carleton University) and Andrea Berez-Kroeker (University of Hawaii Mānoa) taught excellent classes on language documentation, and Andrea kindly served as my very helpful external dissertation reader. Fibbie Tatti (Sahtu Renewable Resources Board) is a mesmerizing storyteller; Suzanne Wong Scollon has been a lovely email correspondent from before the start, reading my early work and encouraging me to write about Copper Woman and other Dene stories in ways that apply to now and to the future as well as to the past. Thank you, Suzie. I’ll always think of you and of Ron. Anthony Webster (University of Texas Austin) does work on Navajo poetics which deeply inspires me—thank you, Tony, for loving the word *ch’agii*, too. Kawenniiostha Wakathahionni, Klara Bilić Meštrić, Melanie Frye, Mangyepsa Gyipaayg, Farhat Faheem, Susan Smythe Kung (University of Texas Austin, Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America), and Susan Gehr (Humboldt State University, Karuk archives) at CoLang 2016; friends and mentors Erin Debenport (University of California Los Angeles), Larry Kimura (University of Hawaii Hilo, who, with his gentle way taught me a great deal about teaching Indigenous-language stories), and Julian Gunn (Camosun College, whose poetry kills me); Sylvan Goldberg (Colorado College), Will Lombardi (Feather River College),

and Laurie Ricou at the WLA; Alejandro Pérez, whom I have never actually met but who is a very good friend; and Summer Baird, strong, beautiful, and kind—thank you.

My family are beyond thanks, but I still thank my parents, my sisters, my darling niece, my brother and his wife and adorable children, and my grandparents on both sides.

Dedication

To my parents Rachael and Will Spencer

Chapter One: Introduction—Histories

“The stories never die” (Madelaine Drybone to Sally Anne Zoe and Alice Legat; Legat 36).

Overview of the Project

In this introduction, I provide a history of some of the concepts important to my project, integrated with a description of my approach. In my dissertation, I research the oral-textual literary histologies,¹ or embodied, living narratives, of four published works of traditional and yet also contemporaneous Indigenous Dene (northern and southern Athabaskan) narratives concerning dreams, visions, hunting encounters, and instances of reincarnation between animals and humans that lead to renewal, revival, and revitalization. All of the works I analyze here are in the “told-to” genre (McCall 2011; cf. Miller 1984). Using theoretical and informational cues from linguistics research to construct an approach to Indigenous literary studies that permits engagement with Dene-language narratives, I construct a reading framework using deictic reference, expanding on it in places, and drawing together definitions of deixis from linguistic and literary approaches to discourse analysis. By deictic reference, I mean deictic centers, flexible grammatical markers of personhood, place, and time. I also mean deictic shifts, the formation of intersubjective understanding through overlapping pronoun references and through cross-species constructions of personhood, as well as overlaps between locations (e.g. sacred mountains) and temporalities (e.g. pre- and post-Indigenous/European contact and reincarnational iterations of animals and humans) and divergences between referential and expressive meaning (e.g. phonological variation, and onomatopoeia). In brief, I look at deixis

¹ Jacques Derrida writes of the “graphic relations between the living and the dead: within the textual, the textile, and the histological,” that we must “keep within the limits of this tissue: between the metaphor of the histos and the question of the histos of the metaphor” (*Dissemination* 71).

and sound metonymy in chapter two, deixis and the archive in chapter three, deixis and expressive markers of animacy in chapter four, and deixis and the limits of animacy in chapter five. All chapters' focuses require attention to voice.

I use this framework to address the possibilities to understand something in the stories about the importance of voice in Dene poetics: the means by which form and structure transform the referential nature of speech into reflexive and regenerative systems. These living systems are demonstrably alive in that they produce unique responses in listeners and readers and also persist through time. The phenomena which constitute poetics are language—but are also body-based, contingent upon social realities, and consistent with ecological and often esoteric truths which guide the speech and actions of contemporary Dene people. The poetics of traditional stories perpetuate themselves: you can tell that a story is good when you feel the urge to re-tell it.

It is my thesis that traditional Dene textualized orature uniquely regenerates its own interpretive meaning through the deictic movement, centerings and shiftings, of ecologically and culturally significant animals of the regions within which the orators live or lived. The animals in Dene orature *tell and are telling*—both denotatively and connotatively. They are more than symbols in that they operate as flexible but specific centers for reference to time, place, and most importantly personhood. Listeners and readers learn from animals how they should interpret the historical meaning of the narratives as well as how to enact the potential in these narratives for revitalization of and through the narratives, an animating process available to reading and listening communities who would learn how to live, how to love, how to die, and how to live again.

The four main books that I write about are Denesułine (Chipewyan) *This Is What They Say: A Story Cycle Dictated in Northern Alberta in 1928*, orated by François Mandeville (ca.

1878-1952) (Mandeville 2009; see also Mandeville 1976); Dena'ina (Tanaina) *A Dena'ina Legacy, K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky*, orated and written by Peter Kalifornsky (1911-93) (Kalifornsky 1991; see also Kalifornsky 1977 and 1984); Dene Dháh (South Slavey) *Wolverine Myths and Visions: Dene Traditions from Northern Alberta* (Moore and Wheelock 1990); and Diné Bizaad (Navajo) *Diné Bahane': The Navajo Creation Story* (Zolbrod 1984) along with some accompanying, related texts. These cultural texts are outstanding examples of northern- and southern-Dene narratives that together reveal epistemological values important in Dene cultures, while, at the same time, serve as richly contrastive works of beauty and knowledge.

The production of four books usefully contrast so as to provide insights into different historical stages and circumstances of collaborative narrative documentation, analysis, and poetic translation and interpretation. Mandeville, a polyglot, made notes on the order and episodes of the stories he wished to orate (Bringhurst, *Tree* 76); his stories were transcribed by himself and Li Fang Kuei (1902-87) and translated twice by Ronald Scollon (1939-2009) in 1976 and 2009. Kalifornsky heard the stories told and wrote them down himself, often translating them in consultation with Alan Boraas and James Kari (“Writing” xxx-xxx). The Elders who told the Wolverine stories wished to create a Dene narrative collection which served the epistemological role that the Bible does for some, and these stories were recorded, transcribed, and translated by a team of community scholars and Euro-American scholars, including Patrick Moore (see chapter four). And Paul Zolbrod, whose project took decades, drew from a myriad of written and oral sources for his translation of the Navajo emergence narrative (see Appendix D for an interview with him on his process). Each book was thus produced with a high degree of documentary fidelity in word-for-word transcriptions from the oral Dene languages to written

English. So the collaborative nature of these stories, in conjunction with their traditional roots and ongoing power, suggests to me that I need a specific yet flexible approach to their comparison and contrast within and between the languages in which they were told and translated. I focus on the implications and potentials of deixis, in a broadened, narratological sense, within this genre in its sense of medium: poetic—or more precisely “ethnopoetic”—renditions of oral narratives; and in its sense of mode: oral narratives shared across ontological, spatial, and temporal limits. The narratives I study belong to the “told-to” genre and exist in the form of “textualized orature.” Some explanation of these terms follows.

Genre, Medium, and Mode

Genre is a question of both media and modalities and the constraints, possibilities, and expectations about both of these kinds of conditions on these components of genre. The orature which I study in this project is written, in terms of medium, and, due to the practicalities of technologies of reproduction, this orature is primarily verbal in mode. Although of course gesture, gaze, and audience cues must also at least be acknowledged. For this reason, the reason of multimodality, however invisible it is in print, this orature must also be read in terms of its interactive, intersubjective, and interpretively dynamic nature. It is meant to be shared: it was orated for specific listeners in specific times and places. These stories were “told to” someone. Sophie McCall defines the “told-to” genre of Indigenous verbal arts as the product of the juxtaposition of multiple media and cultures—as an “interpenetration of authorship and collaboration between storytellers, recorders, translators, editors, and authors” to produce the literary and filmic works sometimes described as Boasian salvage ethnography (see Boas 1895), ethnopoetics, and life narratives (McCall 2).² The question of genre, especially a genre that is

² Of orature wherein personal and mythic narratives are especially coeval, Julie Cruikshank’s comments in full are, “recording a life history is usually a social activity. It is the collaborative product of an encounter between two

constituted by multiple stages and kinds of collaboration and mediation, must address the problem of function as well as of form; and as Carolyn Miller writes, a “rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance of the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish” (151). The reception of the narratives I write about is indeed a crucial one, and at times, written versions of these narratives have been recontextualized by Euro-American scholars for ends that have served imperial, colonial agendas. However, context and content are not held so easily apart; Miller writes further that genre is always a socially-cued, historical, “ethnomethodological” act (155) that entextualizes the situation—whatever it is, in each instance—even as it aims to conserve the originary situation for the verbal art form in question: “Genre, in this way, becomes more than a formal entity; it becomes pragmatic, fully rhetorical, a point of connection between intention and effect, an aspect of social action” (153). So genre, through the contemporaneous effort at conservation of its typical rhetorical devices, brings the historical into the present, driving innovation. Thus the power of the “told-to” genre is that any conditioning social cues are cross-cultural, meaning that a diachronic, or historical, sense of action is inherent. As Miller suggests, “genre is a rhetorical means for mediating private intentions with the public, the singular with the recurrent” (163). For Miller, genre is the constituent center of small-scale and large-scale contexts—the nexus of meaning that derives its

people, often from different cultural backgrounds, and incorporates the consciousness of an investigator as well as that of a subject. Crapanzano has charged that orally narrated life histories are too often written as though the narrator were addressing the cosmos when in fact narration is occurring in a very specific context. Yet oral testimonies are more than just the spontaneous product of an encounter between an interviewer and a subject: the narrative has symbolic qualities—a kind of autonomous life that simultaneously reflects continuity with the past and passes on experiences, stories, and guiding principles in the present” (Cruikshank, Preface x). This “autonomous life” in the “symbolic qualities” of the narratives refers to a form of recurvature or renewal of past and present for the future through some kind of narrowing (dispersion)/reflection (inference)/substitution (adaptation)/expansion (regathering) at work where self-consciousness itself becomes an indexical category through transformative movement—or, rather, punctuated movements, movements framed by moments of ontological stillness—being becoming by way of encounter and momentary unity with glaciers or bears.

meaning from its network and, in this, imbues its network with meaning. Told-to orature, then, is a form of temporal, as well as spatial and ontological, reference. It is both collectively social and deeply personal; it is both a literal and a literary animal as it reincarnates, like animals do in Dene systems of thought (see, e.g., Blondin 1993, Mills and Slobodin 1994).

Dene orature is structured in special ways: this was my starting assumption, in comparing Dene narratives across related Dene languages. These special structures go very deep. They go down into esoteric and spiritual levels of meaning that are sometimes meant to be discovered, and sometimes not. But the potential, in Dene orature about animals, in particular, is always there. Of these levels of meaning that go very deep, Ronald Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon write that the “fuller the version, the deeper into the hierarchical structure it looks,” while the “shorter the version, the closer it sticks to the top of the structural tree” (“Cooking” 189)—a hierarchical tree that is structured by “intonation, pausing, and sequencers” (187)—even in English (192-93). This deeply structural approach to retelling serves highly pragmatic cultural ends: the “Athabaskan listener responds in a traditional storytelling” with the practice of “making of sense, building a new sense out of the materials provided by the author” to “mak[e] his [the listener or reader’s] own sense, not the author’s sense”—even when the text is being read rather than heard (187). Scollon and Scollon emphasize that this combination of structural fidelity and narrative compression, even including patterned silences, to demonstrate a cross-linguistic Dene value, from “from Athabaskan oral tradition,” of a “high degree of respect for the original [narrative], which is shown in the careful abstraction of the main themes of the story” in retellings, and, at the same time, of an “assumption of the individual’s right to make his or her own sense of the situation”—all while “carefully attending to the other’s sense” to make “negotiated sense making in non-focused interaction” (193). This is a negotiation that expresses

an intersubjective process of language-based transformations in the meanings of those linguistically-constituted expressions.

This language-based process of transformation occurs in many ways, but the way that I investigate it, in this project, is through the framework of deixis: through the understanding of story events emerging from the construction of deictic centers—the here, now, with you—and through the necessarily flexible, faithful yet personal, renditions of oral narratives that characterize Dene oral genres, as Scollon and Scollon describe. I construe these narrative phenomena to be examples of narrative-level deictic shift, which is an “imaginative capacity” that “allows the reader [or listener or viewer] to understand projected deictic expressions relative to the shifted deictic centre” between one point of view and another (Stockwell 47). Viewpoint is key: and thus being—ontology, position, needs, and desires—is the key to the sharing of viewpoint. Intersubjectivity is key: and thus the viewpoints of both animal people and human people must be inferred from Dene genres. I have stated above that modality is key: but in Dene orature, media are also key—and through animals, it becomes more possible to reconnect the oral and the written, since genre is, as Miller suggests and McCall especially confirms, *social and active*.

The problem of understanding exactly what is being “told to” the reader is one that cannot be overstated. Oratorical intention, when interacting with Dene narratives, is easily misunderstood. In other words, to use an example which I explore further in chapter two of my dissertation, a caribou both is simply and always a caribou and is also not at all the same caribou for orator and transcriber—and for translator and reader. The signifying power of the synchronic figure of the caribou in the moment of its oration diverges from there as the narratives are re-mediated in written and oral re-iterations, in translations, re-translations, and back-translations

into their source languages, i.e., as they are interpreted through field notes, book culture, linguistic data, and critical and/or personal responses. This recurrent practice of meaning composes genre and that composes, in the case of Dene textualized orature (see below for further commentary), the told-to genre. Because, as Miller writes, “What recurs cannot be a material configuration of objects, events, and people, nor can it be a subjective configuration, a ‘perception,’ for these, too, are unique from moment to moment and person to person”; so then, as Miller states, the thing that recurs must by definition be an “intersubjective phenomenon” (156), which I suggest is the animal, in a Dene-orature context. The further we come from the caribou in the minds of the orator and all those who follow, the greater the divergence of the caribou’s significations—the more profound the link between inter- and -subjective—and thus the broader, the greater, the range of the caribou’s total historical meaning. Intersubjectivity grows along with the stories: and that is always a good thing.

Because the caribou-as-story is already conditioned by the social action of centuries of tradition, its pragmatic resilience has already been temporally defined backwards into the past preceding the moment of oration—of the formation of the narrative within the “told-to” genre—and forwards from that social act as well. Thus I believe that the reception of the narratives I shall study is a process that must actually be viewed atemporally because these narratives are animated by animals whose powers are culturally inflected but never entirely appropriated by any genre. Indeed, it is only in the gap between sign and referent, source and target languages, story and context, *caribou* and *caribou* that reference as an epistemological act of intersubjectivity occurs at all. As “point[s] of connection between intention and effect,” then, orature—and, I believe, animal-centered orature in particular—recurrently references and thus transmits cultural and zoological truths that readers and translators—and re-readers and re-

translators—can re-read, re-translate, re-tell, and revive in order to pursue the ends of language and narrative revitalization (for my definition of this latter phenomenon, see below). And just because animals may be said to revivify does not mean that they are not hunted, killed, and eaten—just as humans sometimes are, both literally and, in a corporate age, figuratively. But with animals, the objective is to avoid hurting those with whom one has become family, and to treat the remains of game in a respectful way that will feed the land (e.g. Kalifornsky 1991).

Thus the “told-to” genre of traditional Dene animal stories rests between the specificities and universalities of the animal in contexts both deeply personal and broadly transpositional: as Dell Hymes writes, “In practice a community, and individuals, have foci of concern, local cycles, favored figures and formats. Widespread elements and types of story may be given new meaning through structural context and expressive form” (“Mythology” 595). Miller proposes a hierarchy of contexts that can drive new meaning making, which are these: experience, language, locution, speech act, episode or strategy, genre, form of life, culture, and human nature (162); animals bridge *experience* and *nature*—and not just human experience and nature. If animals are the embodiment of communicable thinking from experience through to nature, then these stories must effect change and yet maintain referential relationships. The question to begin with, then, in order to consider these constructions of personal, temporal, and spatial reference and shift, is: what do specific animals actually reference in order to achieve narrative—and generic—action? By focusing on one form of reference—deixis—in English and in the Dene source languages, I ground my interpretive framework for reading these stories in the historical conditions of reference from the specific “experience” of one place, time, and relationship between a human and an animal (here, now, with you), with my own historical conditions, in order to infer a more general interpretive—futural—framework.

These narratives are expressed in the medium of textualized orature, or oral narratives transcribed into print, forms of remediation that extend the temporality but curtail the spatial dimensions of their epistemological effects. “Textualized orature,” as the term is defined by Susan Gingell, refers to oral narratives that have been recorded into writing, though also, at times, as film or audio, for the purposes of circulation, analysis, or curation for a multitude of intellectual, imaginative, and social reasons (286). Gingell contrasts the aesthetics of oral verbal arts that “operate inside a closed community, in a context in which the story, poem, or chant is widely known” (289) with the printed arts, as they are delivered today, with punctuation grammatical and rhetorical and with circulation that is not necessarily predicated upon historical speech communities. Gingell also suggests that, following Walter Ong, in “verbomotor cultures,” language as “sounded words, being dynamic,” are “conceived of as having great power,” so that “Language . . . is understood as a mode of action, not as an encoding of thought” (290). This expectation that desire, word, and action enact an incarnational epistemology is, as Gingell suggests, one of the contexts for some oratorical events that have been remediated into print (290).

I thus analyze how the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of the production, transmission, and reception of both the context and content of some examples of Dene textualized orature can contribute to research on practices of Indigenous narratives arts in the nation-states Canada and the United States from the deep past through to the present—with a view to the future meanings of these narratives, a set of possibilities I describe as narrative revitalization.

Narrative Revitalization

While this project does not integrate my experiences in language revitalization into the analysis for ethical reasons (see Preface), I look to the notion of revitalization through language

to suggest that narrative revitalization could become a useful practice within language classes. Narrative revitalization I define as cognate to and coeval with community practices of language revitalization³ (Canese 462-63; Hinton 2013; Meek 2010) that have emerged from earlier, and very important, Indigenous-Euro-American cross-cultural projects such as ethnography and ethnopoetics, where translators seek, in Indigenous-language texts, the “lineaments of poetic patterning that were ‘there all the time,’ but that an earlier philology, ‘applied’ in the format of published text collections of Boas, Sapir, and others, had obscured” (R. E. Moore 295-96). Poetic form is present in very old stories but also even in life narratives, the making of which is a “social activity” that has “symbolic qualities” that form a “kind of autonomous life that simultaneously reflects continuity with the past and passes on experiences, stories, and guiding principles in the present” (Cruikshank, Preface x). The term narrative revitalization is meant to describe the possibilities of 1) revitalization of the narratives in how they continue to be interesting and useful for survival of all kinds and 2) revitalization of the languages in that stories are more memorable ways to engage with language than grammar lessons alone. But I think they

³ Broadly, the issues implicit in the project of recognizing and documenting Indigenous language loss and thus language documentation and revitalization are those of sovereignty, identity, and cultural or epistemological diversity. The *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education* suggests that the “process by which languages become extinct is known as language loss, language obsolescence, language death, or extinction,” and, in a combination of rather capitalistic and animistic registers, defines language revitalization as the “other side of the language coin,” where “efforts to instill vitality in a language that is either extinct or in the process of becoming so are referred to as *language maintenance*, *language revival*, *language renewal*, and more generally, as *language revitalization*,” which “refer[s] to efforts to impart vigor and restore vitality to a language that is experiencing a decline in use” through “increasing the number of users and promoting new uses of the language, by expanding its domains and instituting learning programs (Canese 462-63). These efforts are meant to counter what Patrick Wolfe claims to be the heart of the settler-colonial agenda, cannibalism at one remove—specifically, the cannibalisms of slave labor and of reterritorialization that “characteristically involve alienation . . . natal . . . [and] spatial” (886). While Indigenous languages are considered minority languages that have been deliberately eroded by the genocidal policies of Canada and the United States (see especially Article II.b, c, and e of the UN General Assembly’s *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*), the reasons for their revitalization are as many as there are speakers and students of those languages. Salvage ethnography, ethnopoetics, and life narratives are each defined by historically situated reasons for pursuing the study and preservation of Indigenous languages. While each of these movements is fraught with Euro-American assumptions about Indigenous cultures, they also represent ineradicable expressions of cross-cultural intellectual and imaginative power and deserve to be recuperated as both products—in the published texts—and processes—in analyses of the same and in the ongoing work of cultural renewal in Indigenous communities.

also enact the possibility of 3) revitalization of humans and animals in the way the identities and relationships of both are articulated in the languages and in the narrative patterns, which I began to analyze in terms of deictic reference and shift but which has become more singly about references to personhood, and to the embodied and emotional or expressive implications of personhood as flesh or meat, bone, mind, and breath.

Why Animals? Why Deixis?

Animals are the origo, the reference point on which deictic relationships are based, of deictic constructions because animals preface everything else in Dene worldviews. Thus the origo, in everyday speech, might be “I,” but because animals are the source of life, I suggest that the origo of flexible forms of reference, which traditional oral narratives constitute in a sequential, sustained way, must always be the animal. Further, in Dene cosmologies, reincarnation and recreation renew human and animal lifeworlds cyclically (Blondin 2006; Mills and Slobodin 1994; Zolbrod 1984). Likewise, then, the oral-textual cosmologies of the narratives I am researching are likewise produced through cyclical recreations in the forms of re-mediated, re-read, re-translated, re-stored, and re-interpreted textualized orature. The antecedents of narrative reference may thus shift, while the animal origo consistently remains the animal. In other words, the “deictic field” may shift spatially, temporally, or, most interestingly to me, there may be “perceptual” and “relational” deictic shift (Stockwell 47). Perceptual deictic shift, Peter Stockwell suggests, occurs where “expressions concerning the perceptive participant in the text” change to a new perceiver, which he suggests is a necessary interpretation of referential language because “taking cognition seriously means that reference is to a mental representation and is a

socially located act and is therefore participatory and deictic” (45).⁴ Relational deictic shift, Stockwell suggests, occurs when

expressions that encode the social viewpoint and relative situations of authors, narrators, characters, and readers, including modality and expressions of point of view and focalisation; naming and address conventions; evaluative word choices. (46)

I suggest that perceptual and relational deictic shift occurs in animal orature as different audiences and interlocutors are referenced in different transformations of oral narratives, while all the anchors of reference, all the animals, remain the same, just as they always are. Because the many related oral versions, written editions, and re-translations of the four main books I focus on demonstrate how textual production, transmission, and reception are mutually interpenetrating and regenerative in both analogical but also (a)historical ways, a consistent but flexible approach to epistemological reference is crucial to understanding that the content of such narratives comes both to prescribe its own re-interpretation and to describe the history of its making after the fact. Indexicality, while crucial to all communication, is not specific enough a concept in the components of its figuration to describe and trace the work of the animal in such orature. Deixis, in its components of figuration which are both open and definite, permits the pointing and shifting that occur at sub-lexical levels all the way up to whole stories. Animals that serve as the origo of deixis thus both anchor those stories and, at the same time, also demand attention to context to such as degree that both the textual and the biological become crucial to a materially-grounded approach to reading.

Because the narratives I write about give voice to the animal, I use and expand on the concept of deixis, a uniquely flexible form of reference to person, time, and place in lexicon,

⁴ See Stockwell for an interesting taxonomy and assessment of various kinds of deixis in narrative: perceptual, spatial, temporal, relational, textual, and compositional (45-46).

grammar, and narrative that demands—and thus imputes—knowledge about the contexts of these references, to read closely the ways that animals tell us what to do. Spatiality—what direction to go—is crucial in Dene narratives, and as Keren Rice writes, for example, of movement through space:

The deictic/directional system of Slave is elaborate. Most deictic/directionals consist of two morphemes. The first is a locative noun, generally a bound form, specifying location in time or space. The second is a postposition indicating the relationship of the speaker to the location. (Rice 319)

Spatial deixis has been especially well-researched in Dene languages (see especially Moore 2003, Moore and Tlen 2007, and Berez 2011). Naming practices using spatial coordinates derived from a larger network of anchors, Kari has shown, permit movement across not just space but also time. Kari describes this as his “Athabascan Geolinguistic Conservatism Hypothesis,” in which he argues for hydronymic (“Concept” 205) (water-named) and oronymic (204) (mountain-named) reference practices that are grammatically encoded in many Dene languages north and south, from archaic times to the present (194). Spatial deixis, Andrea Berez-Kroeker has shown, works differently in different kinds of narratives such as animal stories versus travel accounts. She comments that:

In some superficial ways, frog stories and Ahtna travel narratives are similar: animate referents move across the countryside in pursuit of animal(s). But in many ways, particularly cultural ways, they are different. In *Frog, Where Are You?*, referents engage in activities that do not happen everyday . . . speakers telling travel narratives make full use of the grammar of path and location available to them, including adverbial verb prefixes, a class of riverine directionals, and highly systematic toponymy. Interestingly,

while all of these are also available to frog-story narrators, speakers in this genre seem to restrict themselves to only a narrow range. (Berez 118-19)

Spatial references in frog stories are more limited than in travel stories; in animal stories, animate referents move under narrative conditions that are not everyday happenings.

It is in deictic reference to person that I find my focus for my dissertation—specifically, references to animal people. Animals guide humans in Dene narratives by serving as both references and as frames of reference. Animals often situate references spatial, temporal, and personal through visionary and practical advice. Of course, all three kinds of reference are interconnected (Dancygier, *Language* 118). For example, in Kaska, the directional prefix

ah- is used when someone other than the focal character (or other than those who are part of their immediate group) determines the direction taken. These characters may include people making a side trip, people belonging to another group, and animals. (Moore, *Point* 61)

Such forms of reference do not necessarily require animal figuration for articulation. However, as many Indigenous Elders from a range of different cultural communities have commented, voice, landscape, personhood, and language are deeply interconnected: and they have a voice.

From a Cree Elder in a recent collection on Indigenous poetics in Canada: “when Edwin Tootoosis was visiting my father, he told me ‘Môy ê-kistawêt’ (‘It does not echo’). He was referring to the land, and the fact that it no longer had sound in the way it had before” (McLeod

6). From an Interior-Salish scholar: the land is

constantly communicating. Not to learn its language is to die. We survived and thrived by listening intently to its teachings—to its language—and then inventing human words to retell its stories to our succeeding generations. (Armstrong 176).

From a Pueblo verbal artist:

The memory of my ancestors and their story resides in part with the high, dark mesa. For as long as the mesa stands, people within the family and clan will be reminded of the story of that afternoon long ago. Thus the continuity and accuracy of the oral narratives are reinforced by the landscape. (Silko 35)

In Dene stories as well, animals most definitely speak, teach, and remember, often persistently.

The connection between voice as sound and deixis is something that I have developed as my research has progressed, and I discuss it further in my chapters and conclusion. This *deixis of sound itself* inheres within phonomorphological constructions, but also often exceeds them in what Edward Sapir (1884-1939) called the “feeling-tone” of words, which is a phenomenon like a “sentimental growth on the word’s true body, on its conceptual kernel”—and a phenomenon which is “exceedingly variable and elusive” (39-40). Yet his ensuing discussion of storms, tempests, and hurricanes is quite beautiful.

Sound can function as an expressive deixis of vocal emotion, and therefore of viewpoint, position, relation, and being itself; thus animal voices tell and are telling—they point to the meanings of the stories which they inspire and which they inhabit. Pointing through sound is an old concept. As Karl Bühler (1879-1963) writes of deixis,

These lexical items, so simple in their sound structure, might induce the language theorist into philosophical abysses or to respectful silence, when challenged to determine their function. . . . In the sound form, in the phonetic pattern of the words *now, here, I*, there is nothing conspicuous; it is only peculiar that they ask, each in turn: look at me as a sound phenomenon, take me as a moment marker, as a place marker, as a sender marker (sender characteristic). (Bühler qtd. in Galbraith 21)

Sound *is* powerful: it moves between our inner and outer worlds in a way that is unique to the senses. Mary Galbraith's response to Bühler's early claim concerning the aural force of deixis is to assert that the "key to [the] intersection between the linguistics of subjectivity and the phenomenology of language is the term deixis" (20), suggesting that this speech phenomenon is "extralinguistic, subjective, and occasion-specific" (20). Galbraith's focus is on the grammaticality of deixis, while Bühler's sense—and indeed, I think even Sapir's sense—is that sound itself points—a topic that is taken up in sound-symbolism studies in the form of proximal and distal deictic forms (e.g. demonstratives), as well as phonologies of size (Ulan 1978).

So deixis is aurally compelling, while the aural is inherently both expressive and referential—for example, as I explore in chapter two, homophony is both lexical and polysemic; for another example, in chapter four, phonological variation in combination with evidential constructions of viewpoint permit an extralinguistic emotional response to the spiritual work of the animal at a morphological level. And animals are, in many Dene frames of reference, both spiritual and physical: they are the teachers through which knowledge becomes power, the organ through which sound becomes voice.

Because I am engaging with cultural texts, my premise is to begin with the assumption that these animal teachings are true. If so: how? And from there: what does it mean, and then what more does it mean? The voice of the animal must come through loud and clear in the human storyteller's voice if indeed certain animals teach humans who look for this kind of knowledge. There is no one answer to the question of meaning, just as there is no one kind of deictic reference that does not implicate other references, ultimately constructing a unique viewpoint from which to say: here I am, now, with you. It is thus experience of animal power that ultimately lends significance to the question of meaning and of interpretation. Dene wisdom

is based on direct experience for the sake of personal survival (Mandeville, *This* 23, 199).

Human encounters with animals, if they occur in the right way, lead to wisdom. This wisdom persists as contexts change; animals still permit survival as history exacts its deaths and its births.

In other words, deictic centers and shifts in reference across multiple cultural and disciplinary collaborative contexts constitute historical and personal—face-to-face, skin-to-skin—

histological—revitalization because the analogical with the (a)historical places the reader at the intersection of embodiment, language, and narrative, demanding that the reader integrate their personal interpretive context with the intersubjective contexts of everyone, both animal and human, who contributed to the formation of the narratives in their never-final forms.

Because animals are embodied, social, *and* discursive, they are therefore ecologically cogent, which permits a system of constraints and flexibilities in how narrative meaning can move across time. The importance of constraint and flexibility—the connotative and denotative powers of deixis, in fact—cannot be overstated in the language-focused construal of narrative meaning-making. And the very act of interpretation is both crucial to survival and a compulsion that can overtake survival in a form of intellectual gluttony: this is action that always proliferates wherever it is found. Miller writes, “at the center of action is a process of interpretation” (156) that is meant to make the “new . . . familiar through the recognition of relevant similarities” that become “constituted as a type” (156-57). These “types” allow for groups to “create recurrence, analogies, similarities” such that “What recurs is not a material situation (a real, objective, factual event) but our construal of a type” (157). Humanity, that elusive self-concept, can never be fully rendered without lapsing into a fascistic standing reserve, on the one hand, or a transcendent miasma, on the other: problems that Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Derrida, as I discuss below, did much to contest. Constraints on self-description that are very much alien,

totally other, yet still animate, are therefore one way to counter the syndrome of human exceptionalism and permit what Miller calls construal through group creation. In this group creation of meaning that is not limited to the human, in animal stories, we find a cure for the impossibility of total and totalizing self-reference that invades invasive colonial thought, which I always risk perpetuating. This is how to both excise the human and yet continue to live: only with others.

In many Dene stories, animals are more-than-human (see Abram 1996 for one iteration of this term). As Dene-Tha Elder Willie Ahnassay teaches,

Animals have special abilities which they depend upon to live, giving us only the powers which they no longer need. . . . An animal chooses someone to receive these leftover powers, a person who has treated the animals with respect” (Moore and Wheelock 7); “Wonlinghedi yet’áin ghedi ehsíin ju. Gáa xónht’i a’onht’e. . . . Gúhyeh xónht’e dene ewón xónht’e. Ghedi ewón xónht’e edu íhk’eh kawots’edeh wonlinghedi edu mbéhchehts’edah.” (111)

The ways in which this statement is true are intersubjective, through the mutuality of language—through showing how all viewpoints are intelligible, and showing this truth through not just spatial or temporal but also *ontological deixis*, which I examine further below in relation to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s theory of “cosmological deixis,” which interrogates Euro-American theories of nature versus culture, animal versus human. The Euro-American obsession with self-description as ontologies of human exceptionalism, in which, at least in a post-structuralist age, discourse is the only animator imbued with an agency that operates beyond the limits of the human self, is cured through reference, or more precisely *formalisms* of reference—Miller’s recurrences of type. Her point that analogues—central ideas, set relations, allegorical

forms of intersubjectivity—recur in new contexts that inflect or derive new meanings in relation to old ones suggests that narratives of animals can be dreams that one climbs into like the skins of animals in acts of radical spiritual revision. This skin-to-skin interplay, as it were, is that which Miller defines as “substance”—and is “considered as the semantic value of discourse, [and] constitutes the aspects of common experience that are being symbolized” (159). But “form”—the “ways in which substance is symbolized” is that which “shapes the response of the reader or listener to substance by providing instruction, so to speak, about how to perceive and interpret” and becomes a “kind of meta-information, with both semantic value (as information) and syntactic (or formal) value” (159) so that “form at one level becomes an aspect of substance at a higher level” of meaning (160). The formalisms accessible through an expanded interpretive framework focused on deixis permit a specific focus on what Miller calls the phenomenon of “communication” that “must rest on experience” (161). Through open forms of deictic reference that demand interpretation through the application of context, communication itself becomes conceptualized as experience. In this way, the fact that we point, and how we point, are crucial questions of a poetics that attends to *being*, to *relationship*, and to the *survival* of relationships across time, space, and being through an intersubjective experience of emergent meaning-making.

Formalisms within orature are intersubjective, in certain genres, and perhaps in more than has been attended to in ethnopoetic history. As Dell Hymes writes,

Those who produce texts and those who interpret them vary in their attitude toward the significance of form. Let me leap past the view of historians and critics to observe that there are texts in which significant form is difficult to discover, texts whose form is mainly an external constraint, and texts in which form is interwoven with meaning to

such an extent that interpretations which neglect the form are inadequate. Many Native American narratives have proven to be of this kind. (“Arikara” 264)

The formal deictic features I attend in this project to are the material (biological, embodied) and spiritual personhood of animals because references to personhood are both derived from, hermeneutically, and construed, contextually, by relations between human and animal forms, voices. Animals are more than metaphors in Dene narratives: I argue that they are in fact essentially and existentially deictic, organizing both centers of reference for experiential narrative encounter and shifts in reference for renewed meaning and narrative revitalization. For example, in chapter three, I consider how collaborative relations between multiple kinds of entities—bone and flesh, breath and word, Dene-language speaker and linguist, story and song—permit the revitalization of the archive. And in chapter five, I consider how it is that the tension between ever-present Coyote and almost-always absent Badger permits the cyclical intercalation of air and earth—sky and stone—life and death—through the ceremonial, narratological, and grammatical movement of pollen in Navajo genres.

I preface my introduction with a quotation from Madelaine Drybone: “The stories never die.” Put this another way. Deictic reference, especially to personhood, permits the construal of viewpoint, which is an always-already intersubjective process. Viewpoint is special: it connects, and, when given by the animal, it permits perspectives beyond the human. These viewpoints move through stories. The viewpoints within and *of* animal stories are mobile in that they push against the limits of human understanding. Certain viewpoints never die.

Framework: Theory

My theoretical framework for analyzing the content of these narratives recuperates a wide range of kinds of textualized orature, including Boasian ethnography and Hymesian ethnopoetics

(e.g. Hymes 1996, 2003), by applying ecocritical, cognitive-linguistic, and structuralist approaches to deixis to the question of context and content, with a special focus on “cosmological deixis,” or references to ontology conditioned by positionality, as Viveiros de Castro (1998) has termed it, and which I explore below. I believe these approaches are especially fitting for two reasons: first, the theoretical framework can be used to examine the ways that textualized orature is animate, according to both Derridean ideas of writing and to Dene ideas of the power of stories; second, the ethos which emerges in my analysis is one in which semantics is pragmatics (Evans 47), since, in textualized orature, social context *is* form—social context is the referential structure that articulates the flesh and bones—the content—of the stories to create intelligible messages. And the question of context is always open: there can be no limit to the layers of context which contribute to the emerging meaning of narrative art. At the same time, the nature of narrative is such that, whatever its organizational nature (for example, life story, history, travel account, hero stories, transformer stories, and so on), its sequential structure allows for certain constraints to be placed on the interpretive cues derived from context. These constraints are themselves sequential: they are the production, transmission, and reception of orature, in this case. Further, the conditions for the production, transmission, and reception of orature can be hermeneutically defined by (here I do not use the word constrained) interpretive cues within the stories themselves: deictic forms of reference permit, even demand, both an awareness of context and a sensitivity to interaction: who it is that is actually here, now, with us.

To consider the stories we tell about the stories we tell—to make the contexts talk with one another—thus challenges readers to identify deictic links between the context and content of the narratives. As William Hanks writes, “Deictics mediate precisely between the speech event (*Es*) and the narrated event (*En*) . . . and this mediation inherently alters the former,” so that

“What is actual prior to an utterance and what is actual after it are not the same, since reference reflexively alters the context of its own production” (*Referential* 519). In order to perform the move from the speech to the narrated event—and, I would argue, of necessity, back again—one must first identify the deictic center, contextual information in the content of the stories such as “topicalization, focus, extraposition, foregrounding and backgrounding, presentatives, anaphora, tense, aspect, and spatial deixis” (Zubin and Hewitt 140-41) and second identify deictic shifts, which occur when the deictic centers are changed by “voiding a component” of these elements of the deictic center or “by shifting them apart” (143). These centerings and shiftings of meaning occur across the contexts of production, transmission, and reception within which the texts as products must be read into texts as processes. Because if Bruno Latour is right about how meaning is reified in Euro-American approaches to discourse, many “moderns have confused products with processes” (115)—leading to a paradoxical and destructive effect of purification and translation. One of the most important ways that deictic centers shift within these narratives is through the intersubjective connections that emerge through animal-human conversations—dialogical deixis—and, as a result, ontological animal-human convergences and, thus, epistemological conversions: we come to see history in new ways by reading such stories and by allowing these stories to change us.

An example of how trans-species dialogue can enact the work of contextualization is to be found in Mandeville’s story “The Man Who Became a Wolf,” which I focus on in chapter two. In this story, the protagonist, Spread Wings, is a human man who has the special ability to become a wolf whenever he is old and in need of renewal—he “from time to time became a wolf. This is what they say” (Mandeville, *This* 157). When he becomes old on the occasion of Mandeville’s story, a wolf who is always a wolf approaches Spread Wings and speaks to him to

remind him that “If you want to live longer on the earth / you must live with us again” (157). Spread Wings “thought, ‘I don’t want to be a wolf again’”—and although he only thought the words, the wolf answers him by stating that if he does not, he will die soon (157). Spread Wings realizes that he “want[s] to live longer on this earth” (157) and so “He immediately became a wolf” (158). This centering and shifting between discursive speech-thought-speech with human-wolf-human communication leads to utterance so powerful it becomes relational ontology: Spread Wings replies to his wolf guide, “I will become a wolf again” (157), and instantly he does so. Thus a wolf becomes a “grandmother,” a close relation, one who has engendered him—or, perhaps more accurately, a human becomes a wolf’s pup. This reversal shifts the deictic center of personhood in this narrative—the human, wolf, threat of death, and life sustained in death—when the subjectivity of the human-animal divide shifts—reference to personhood shifts such that both animal and human are shown to be people.

The result of ontological shifts in reference in this story about the man who becomes a wolf is that the context shifts from the strictly human to incorporate references to both human and animal, so that a story about communicating across massive differences enacts the intersubjective working relationship between Mandeville, the transcriber Li, and the translator Scollon. Their respective frames of reference converge to add layers of meanings to the story as they contribute to its transmission. For Mandeville, much of his practical motivation came from looking for ways to create a Dene-specific syllabics (Scollon, “Narrative” 229-30); for Li, the stories attested to a search for a broadly comparative linguistics;⁵ for Scollon, the stories meant Mandeville’s search, but also Li’s, although not comparative between Asian and Indigenous

⁵ “It was Sapir who provided him with funds . . . Sapir had considered the possibility of a relationship between Sino-Tibetan and Athabaskan . . . When asked about this idea of Sapir’s more than thirty years ago back in the Mid-West, Li smiled and answered, ‘Distant as the floating clouds!’” (Yue-Hashimoto 6).

languages, but sociolinguistic, between the local languages of Fort Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, and Denesuline (Scollon, “Variable” 223). For me, their cooperative textualizations permit an ever-clearer picture of how these stories serve as vessels of ontological instruction through remediation into written form. Semiotic negotiation through collaboration occurs with wolves and humans—so perhaps humans are also capable of the same.

The hermeneutical struggles associated with meaning-making—through living, loving, dying, and being reborn—revivificate in that they require the epistemological work of identifying the bones and the flesh of stories that narrate and enact these struggles. There is no point without specificity, the bones and flesh of our creatures which we love. The bones and the flesh: in intersubjective, discursive terms, these are the deictic centers thereof and the deictic shifts that are required as meaning moves. My methodological framework extends the theoretical scope of deixis as is demanded by these unique narratives through four levels of meaning making. Dene oral contexts are often quite personal and yet intersubjective—expressed through contextual cultural frameworks, allowing for “multiple indexical links to a single linguistic form” (Bucholtz and Hall 475-76)—in other words, one verbal or narratological form connotes multiple frames of reference, permitting an intersubjective construction of meaning through convergence on form. One of the most significant kinds of intersubjectivity occurs when “different temporal and spatial environments are talked about as if they were exchanged in the course of a conversation, in a shared environment” so that the “original input spaces (of the two opponents’ individual views) are now blended into one” (Dancygier, “Personal” 168).⁶ When

⁶ This form of compression can even be expressed, in Apache, through “speaking with names” that convey old meanings in novel contexts by using the interface between landscape and toponyms to reference cultural frameworks and personal situations. As Keith Basso’s collaborator Lola Machuse explains, “We gave that woman [i.e., Louise] pictures to work on in her mind. We didn’t speak too much to her. We didn’t hold her down. That way she could travel in her mind. She could add on to them [i.e., the pictures] easily. We gave her clear pictures with placenames. So her mind went to those places, standing in front of them as our ancestors did long ago. That way she could see what happened there long ago. She could hear stories in her mind, perhaps hear our ancestors speaking. She could

this happens, even though a “speaker and his opponent [or interlocutor] may never have met,” an “emergent structure of . . . interaction” (168) occurs; the form, I believe, of conversation permits atemporal epistemological inferences to be construed between ontological positions to compose cosmologies.

Such cosmologies are founded on “transspecific” exchanges of and shifts in perspective (Viveiros de Castro, “Exchanging” 465) in a phenomenon Viveiros de Castro calls cosmological deixis (1998), where shifting into an animal world permits shifts in the construction of personhood through changes in ontological reference:

The fact that many “natural” species or entities were originally human has important consequences for the present-day state of the world. While our folk anthropology [in Euro-American culture] holds that humans have an original animal nature that must be coped with by culture—having been wholly animals, we remain animals “at bottom”—Amerindian thought holds that, having been human, animals must still be human, albeit in an unapparent way. Thus, many animal species, as well as sundry other types of nonhuman beings, are supposed to have a spiritual component that qualifies them as “people.” Such a notion is often associated with the idea that the manifest bodily form of each species is an envelope (a “clothing”) that conceals an internal humanoid form,

reknow the wisdom of our ancestors. We call it speaking with names. Placenames are all we need for that, speaking with names. We just fix them up” (Basso 82-83). This is an act of shifting, expanding reference comparable to that of Mandeville, Li, and Scollon: “‘in front of’ (*bádneyú*) the site; and it is here, centuries ago, that ancestors of the Western Apache are believed to have stood when they gave the site its name. Accordingly, consultants from Cibecue explain that in positioning people’s minds to look ‘forward’ (*bidááh*) into space, a placename also positions their minds to look ‘backward’ (*t’aazhi*) into time. For as persons imagine themselves standing in front of a named site, they may imagine that they are standing in their ‘ancestors’ tracks’ (*nohwizá’yé biké’è*), and from this psychological perspective, which is sometimes described as an intense form of ‘daydreaming’ (*bil’onaagodah*), traditional accounts of ancestral events associated with the site are said to be recalled with singular clarity and force” (89). In other words, by evoking detailed pictures of places, together with specific vantage points from which to picture them, placenames acquire a capacity to evoke the past for the future, transforming references to place into references to time, and vice versa, by using flexible modes of reference that permit the simultaneous maintenance and convergence of two deictic centers.

usually visible to the eyes of only the particular species and of “transspecific” beings such as shamans. This internal form is the soul or spirit of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity formally identical to human consciousness. If we conceive of humans as somehow composed of a cultural clothing that hides and controls an essentially animal nature, Amazonians have it the other way around: animals have a human, sociocultural inner aspect that is “disguised” by an ostensibly bestial bodily form. (“Exchanging” 465)

While every kind of animal is actually unique in Dene stories, this passage demonstrates a way of thinking structurally but also Indigenously about referential constructions of ontology as deictic reference to person not just at a grammatical level but through narrative: in Euro-American binaries between nature and culture, there is always an accompanying opposition between intelligence and language and inarticulate, irrational instinct. But as many Indigenous stories demonstrate, intelligence and language are about position: are you outside the bear’s cave, or have you been permitted to enter?

Thus rather than viewing “nature” as an object that can be empirically dissected or merely metaphorized, Viveiros de Castro suggests that, in Amerindian thought, the categories of “nature” and “culture” are better expressed as a “spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity” so that “culture or the subject would be the form of the universal, whilst nature or the object would be the form of the particular” (470). Rather than a “nature” that always exists independently of “culture,” there is culture—which I am construing to pertain specifically to language—that exists independently of any given creature’s apparent nature—their skins. In this sense, cosmological—as ontological—deixis coheres with the important lesson in Dene stories that animals are people—although this principle is ever-changing in its applications and implications.

Viveiros de Castro thus redefines culture and ontological reference as a self-conscious universal in Amerindian thought and nature as a highly-specific but ever-changing order of forms or bodies. In other words, forms or bodies—animal, human, glacial, stony, vegetal, and airy—are merely inflections of a shared category of (self-)consciousness. And the physical appearance of a body as an object (not conscious) or as a subject (conscious) depends on one’s position or point of view: “animals are people, or see themselves as persons” (470). Thus the “manifest form of each species is a mere envelope (a ‘clothing’) which conceals an internal human form . . . This internal form is the ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity formally identical to human consciousness” (470-71). Like clothing, a consciousness can slip animal, human, or even glacial, bodies on or off. Each body provides a unique perspective on the world—so to be human is not to be a species but to live in a certain state or condition: the “common point of reference for all beings of nature is not humans as a species but rather humanity as a condition” (Descola qtd. in Viveiros de Castro, “Exchanging” 472). Reversal for metamorphosis is thus a key relational process in the construction and maintenance of the world. The means of metamorphosis is, in Viveiros de Castro’s opinion, cosmological deixis—the movement of culture through a variety of natures.

Viveiros de Castro writes, then, of cosmological deixis as one of the capacities of “Whatever possesses a soul,” which, as a “subject,” is “capable of having a point of view,” and thus “Amerindian souls, be they human or animal, are thus indexical categories, cosmological deictics whose analysis calls not so much for an animist psychology or substantialist ontology as for a theory of the sign or a perspectival pragmatics” (Viveiros de Castro, “Exchanging” 476). Viveiros de Castro’s “theory of the sign” or his “perspectival pragmatics” is based on the contrast between form and consciousness, departing from the “Saussurean formula: *the point of*

view creates the object” to arrive at an Amerindian perspectivism where the “*point of view creates the subject*” (476). Self-consciousness in this sense becomes an ever-changing historical force through relational movement. So then the

human bodily form and human culture—the schemata of perception and action ‘embodied’ in specific dispositions—are deictics [that are] . . . reflexive or apperceptive schematisms by which all subjects apprehend themselves, and not literal and constitutive human predicates projected metaphorically (i.e. improperly) onto non-humans. (477)

This is the problem of anthropocentrism and radical human exceptionalism. Most importantly, Viveiros de Castro writes that “deictic ‘attributes’ are immanent in the viewpoint, and move with it” (477). Which means that telling stories—and transmitting them across media and modes—changes people.

The important key here is, again, that the stories I examine are cultural texts: taking the truths of these seriously is crucial; cosmological and ontological deixis permit me to do so through discourse.

Framework: Method

Thus, in each of my chapters, I analyze how the deictics of narratives I look at motivate viewpoint by re-mediating four levels of context. Many events in Dene narratives occur in sets of four: four acts of violence, four revelations, four songs, four worlds (Scollon and Scollon, “Cooking” 188, 191). I think there are four deictic levels that can be considered for each of the four main works, in two modes, content and context, which are fundamentally all retellings of the stories for various interconnected purpose. These levels are: 1) animal utterances in connotative or reported speech and conversation with humans and in denotative or direct speech and conversation with humans (dialogical deixis); 2) the occasion for, social context of, and

process of recording these narratives—the human interlocutors (social deixis); 3) the pedagogical and disciplinary methods that contribute to the framing and reframing of the narratives (cultural deixis); and 4) the epistemological systems that result from reading these books from textual products back into epistemological processes (cosmological deixis). From these four levels, I also suggest that it is useful to trace the deictic shifts between: 1) the encounters that occur between humans and animals (sourced in the content of the narratives); 2) the orator and the transcriber and, often, translator (accessible through archival research and oral interviews); 3) comparisons of the cultural methods and theories followed by translators and re-translators to produce different textual iterations of the same narratives (remediation); and 4) historical receptions of the narratives by reading and listening communities (language and narrative revitalization).

The question of content and deixis is intended to focus on the intersubjective heart of the narratives: animals that can tell us what to do. Of course, these hearts of the narratives signify differently depending on the context—thus grammatical and narratological levels of meaning both function deictically. While the narratives are the work of many minds and have the capacity to be interpreted in multiple modes with multiple conclusions, the question of context and deictic analysis is meant to consider these nested contexts cumulatively—to make the contexts talk with one another—to consider the stories we tell about the stories we tell. While this synthesis is conditioned by the scope of this project and needs to be expanded in future work, it is my hope that, through writing this dissertation, I have come to gain a more detailed and accurate understanding of Dene narrative principles so that I can begin to see what kind of chimera a comparative Dene orature looks like—what kind of animal.

“La pensée mythique est par essence transformatrice” (Literature Review and Discussion)

This introduction, besides summarizing my project, also serves as a literature review of some of the anthropological and literary concepts which have inspired my thinking in the theories and methods sections of my chapters, primarily via structuralism and post-structuralism. This is my cultural context from within which I come to Dene stories in both the languages of their telling and their translations into English. It is my hope, as I try to convey throughout this project, that Dene narratives will come to instruct me about some of the problems inherent in and addressed by my own cultural tradition.

In the traditions that I come from, I am conditioned by a linguistic ideology of dialectical transcendence, and a recognition of the possibility of a disruption in the perception of the synthesis required for transcendence through attention to the absolute limit of uncertainty about limitation itself. It is from this context of certain uncertainty that I look at the production, transmission, and reception of Indigenous textualized orature as *chimera*—as *animate discourse entities*—via two concepts proposed by structuralist Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) and poststructuralist Derrida (1930-2004): the mythographic and pharmacographic—“La pensée mythique est par essence transformatrice” (Lévi-Strauss, *Naked* 603), which births the “literal parasite: a letter installing itself inside a living organism to rob it of its nourishment and to distort [like static, = “bruit parasite”] the pure audibility of a voice” (Derrida, *Dissemination* 128). This tension between inner and outer defines the tensions between the contexts and contents of shifting—i.e., transformative—animal epistemologies: organic yet not anatomical. In other words, mythic thought persists even in print. The nature of mythic thought—that which makes it “mythic”—is its life-like, perhaps animated, effect on those who are exposed to it. To hear one of these stories is to experience a fundamental change in one’s pattern of thinking. It has been

my experience that Dene stories expose a way of thinking fundamentally organic but also deathly and lively: these oppositions play out at semiotic levels but also more expressive, language-based levels, through the animating effects of sound, where animals speak, and humans are changed.

Of the relations between humans and animals and objects and subjects, Latour writes, “All natures-cultures are similar in that they simultaneously construct humans, divinities and nonhumans,” and that “All of them sort out what will bear signs and what will not” (106); while Derrida writes of the “graphic relations between the living and the dead: within the textual, the textile, and the histological,” that we must “keep within the limits of this tissue: between the metaphor of the histos and the question of the histos of the metaphor” (*Dissemination* 71). More specifically, Latour describes this interstitial form of embodied intersubjectivity as a network of “translations” between objects as agents—as “hybrids” of “nature and culture” or “exact knowledge and the exercise of power” across the linguistic and semiotic margins of—within the bounds of my project—cross-cultural and re-mediated modes of encounter (Latour 3). Just as the cross-cultural encounters that Dene narratives represent necessitate remediation, witnessing change in itself—as such—is central to the structure of the Dene narratives I study—much more so than linear narrative arcs of conflict and resolution found in some mainstream, contemporary Euro-American narratives. And because these narratives are “traditional” and have been and continue to be told and re-told orally, visually, in print, and because they concern the realities of life and death for animals and humans within Dene worldviews, their multitudinous instantiations are, like Latour’s “sociotechnological network” (5), very much “*simultaneously real, like nature, narrated like discourse, and collective, like society*” (6). Latour’s networks are patterns that play across media spaces to enact the nature of their agential hybridity; as I discuss in chapter two of this project, the Copper Woman’s caribou are patterns that play across media

spaces through the animal that indexes, as Alyce Johnson writes, a “time when animals and humans interchanged and interacted within both worlds spatially,” that “measures time, projects space, socializes people, identifies place, and narrates practice” for affirming ways that Dene “belong to the trails that memory ancestors . . . through narrative genres of stories, songs, dances, and ceremonies” (137). Thus such stories signify the wisdom of intersubjective ontologies—ontologies that intermingle species, human collaborators, and cultural perspectives on the same—on time, space, life, and death.

An example of intermingling from another Indigenous cultural system, but one that is also intercultural. As Margery Fee writes of the kinship system espoused by Grey Owl, an early conservationist who was European but married into Anishnaabe and Iroquois families and immersed himself in Anishinaabeg languages and cultures:

Of course, to live harmoniously and morally is a wide-spread human ideal, but not all cultures share an epistemology that entails egalitarian relationships with such an array of material and spiritual beings. (Fee, ““They” 149).

Aside from the charming pun on “entail,” Fee’s point is especially salient as I seek both to contextualize and changefully renew my ability to engage with Dene animal stories. Grey Owl was not, contrary to his choices in appearance and behavior, Indigenous—although he did marry into two Indigenous families whose kinship systems worked differently from colonial definitions of status and blood quantum. His life is a cautionary example of the epistemological mobility of white privilege. But he also serves as a much-needed lesson in the impossibilities of any kind of purity—racial, ethnic, linguistic—even ontological. His love for beavers (and again, animal language practically pushes itself into a ludic mode of creativity) crosses the boundaries not just of ethnicity and language but also of species, and his work was good. In the name of

environmental and social justice, Grey Owl promoted, with his second wife, the “beaverly charm” (150) of their chosen animal affiliates—so much so that Fee suggests that it is not so much that Grey Owl “went Indian” as he “went beaver” (150)!

They say the interior of a beaver’s lodge smells sweet and fragrant with the tree sap, grasses, wet rock, and clear water which it is constituted by—possibly also by castoreum, beaver musk, which is used an ingredient in some perfumes. But the only way really to know what it is like in a lodge would be to enter a lodge myself. It is this entering into the homes of animals that the subtleties of their unique peoplehoods become apparent. Likewise with humanity: empathy comes through proximity; and at least theoretically, animal-based, told-to orature permits a unique opportunity to draw near. As such, it is a unique construction of intersubjectivity, where the animal prefaces, prompts, and perpetuates the human. But to what end? How does collaboration in the textualization of these narratives transform its participants, and how might narratives of collaboration transform readers’ understandings of Dene textualized orature concerning the animal as a formalizing medium, where its patterns persist across multiple contexts? The bounds of print and the skins of animals recirculate like a vision of the afterlife up close or like a vision from outside life, or from inside the afterlife till the past before this afterlife feels more like a beforelife. Thus the title of my dissertation, “Telling Animals,” is meant to express the hermeneutics of animals as they literally and literarily tell humans how to live, how to love, how to die, and even how to live again through the work of narrative revitalization.⁷

⁷ Of rebirth in Indigenous narratives, Dell Hymes writes, “It would be a mistake to think of a strict linear sequence, one age wholly replacing another. It would be more useful to think of a center and a periphery. . . . The established world is a center, which the events and beings of the narratives encircle at a distance. One can go out to that periphery, as on a quest for spiritual power (Elmendorf 1984:290). The periphery can come closer, as in the winter sacred season, when power may be displayed in dramatic story and dance, and myths brought to life in words. Especially when the myths are travels of a trickster or transformer, they bring within the confines of the winter house origins in a world of summer” (“Mythology” 593).

While the narratives I am focusing on exist as historically-situated instances of meaning-making within Dene communities, because they are also collaborative in their production, transmission, and reception they are cyclically proliferated in their many productions, transmissions, and receptions both oral and written, in both the archive and in translation. They are mutable examples of negotiated meaning-making. In these Dene narratives, Latour's question concerning the imputed Euro-American experts of epistemics, scientists, is answered by the animals themselves. While "Scientists are scrupulous representatives of the facts," Latour suggests that it remains to be understood "Who is speaking when they speak?" (28). He argues that who is speaking is, in fact, the "facts themselves, beyond all question, but also their authorized spokespersons"; and so he must, in turn, ask, "Who is speaking, then, nature or human beings?" (28). Likewise, I ask: who is speaking, then, animals or humans? However, while I embrace Latour's vision of an anthropology that addresses Derrida's discursive play of meaning outside of the text as meaning spills across the margins and folds of our cognitive categories, the precise instances and means by which this inescapable form of intersubjectivity occur need a focal point.

In discursive terms, intersubjectivity is expressed through acts of indexing, of deploying "linguistic signs" that "point to (or "index") aspects of the communicative context" that are linked by "ideological associat[ions]" that through cultural frameworks of association—these are the phenomena which allow for "multiple indexical links to a single linguistic form" (Bucholtz and Hall 475-76). These questions of referential pragmatics are embodied by nuanced messages delivered by orators who undertook the laborious projects of creating textualized orature as intelligent and powerful agents of their own artistic and pedagogical intentions. However, the question of the exact nature or structure of these highly intersubjective texts remains. What is

transmitted, and what cannot be transmitted? The signs and the gaps between them—between the words and the pauses—the oral and the written—the source and the target languages—constitute a challenge to readers to identify not only the deictic center of these nested production, transmission, and reception processes that define these texts, but also to identify the deictic shifts of meaning that occur across the nested contexts within which the texts as products must be read into texts as processes. Yet discussing the two, products and processes, is like trying to discuss the production of butter as if it were done in a “butterly” way (Latour 116). One way to organize concerns about the temporal and spatial implications of interpenetrating natures and cultures is to identify the intersubjective center of the texts through the figure of the animal, who, after all, serves as both an inscrutable and, in these narratives of cross-species communication, entirely scrutable vessel of meaning. They are telling precisely because they do not speak for themselves without the discursive encounters of narrative—but also, within Dene practices, of dreaming, of prophecy, and of close, personal observation of accurate animal behavior.

The pragmatics of the oral performance of traditional Dene narratives often encompasses cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and even cross-temporal collaborations between Dene orators and Euro-American—or other Dene, or Chinese, French, German, Russian, Jewish, etc.—linguists, linguistic anthropologists, anthropologists, and translators. Once transcribed, these narratives are often translated from the Dene language in question into English while also undergoing adaptation from breath to verse and from field notes to books, incorporating the anthropological practices of ethnography and the literary practices of ethnopoetics.⁸ The work of Franz Boas

⁸ Bauman describes in detail the interconnections of ethnographic and ethnopoetic practices: “no less philological than the others[. . .] is the Americanist anthropological tradition of Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, Paul Radin, and Melville Jacobs (Bauman 2003; Briggs and Bauman 1999; Hymes 1981). Boas gave explicit priority to the textual documentation of Native American cultures and his program for the collection and analysis of textual materials still shapes anthropological practice in the United States, especially in linguistic anthropology. In the Americanist tradition, texts constitute data for three principal lines of investigation: culture-historical, as evidence of historical processes such as diffusion, migration, and culture contact; cultural, as reflections—though selected and refracted—

(1858-1942) was, in part, motivated by the discipline of philology, a discipline that has also, in part, given rise to literary studies (Harpham 71, 76).⁹ Boas states, in a 1905 lecture addressed to both anthropologists and philologists, that anthropologists must “acquire the habit of demanding such authenticity [a record of the customs and beliefs and traditions of the people in their own words] as can be guaranteed only by philological accuracy of the record” even though “in many cases this ideal cannot be obtained,” leaving the “student, much against his will, to adopt methods of collecting which he recognizes as inadequate” (“Some” 185). Yet over the decades and between the disciplines of anthropology and literary studies, this documentary inadequacy evolved into a form of interpretive surplus. In an interview in 1987 on the state of ethnopoetics, Karl Kroeber (1926-2009) comments that:

Family [his anthropologist parents] must have had its effect. . . . But my professional work as a comparative Romanticist was probably decisive. Romantic art gives voice to victims of Enlightenment rationality and technological conquests. So when my attention moved to America, I was naturally drawn less to apologists for Western progress like Emerson and Whitman, than to the peoples exploited by Eurocentric imperialism. And

of culture; and linguistic, as extended, natural discourse. While thematic concerns are foregrounded in the investigation of texts as projections of culture, there has always been a significant interest in form in the Americanist tradition, and the analysis of form in relation to function and meaning is a prominent concern in Americanist linguistic anthropology” (33-34).

⁹ Karl Kroeber states that “American anthropology had the benefit of coming out of the German tradition which starts with Herder. Herder’s view is that all cultures are different but equally valuable. I understood completely the argument of someone like Leslie Silko, you know, who says these ethnologists come and steal our stuff. I think she’s wrong; she’s historically mistaken, although I understand why she says that. But American anthropology is distinct from most other anthropologies. The vision that Boas had was: here are these hundreds of cultures, and they’re dying, vanishing. So get out there and preserve what you can, because this is the evidence of human diversity. We all lose if this material is lost. I don’t mean that there weren’t other elements in it. But basically I think the preservation motive dominated. In its heyday, 1890-1940, American anthropology collected and saved, rather than classifying and judging. There are more than a dozen languages about which we’d know nothing if an anthropologist with a notebook hadn’t reached a last living speaker, but as a result nobody paid much attention to possible aesthetic dimensions in the material collected” (“Interview” 1987, 8). Cf. Fee 1987.

once I had stumbled into the unwesternized world of aboriginal literatures, a wilderness unlittered by academic critical trash, I felt intellectually reborn. (5)

In Boas through to Kroeber, it seems that two shared disciplinary interests inform the textualization of orature: a formalizing interest expressed through close language study, both in anthropological linguistics and in the lyric ethos of Romantic literature and criticism; and an interest in transcendence, where the critic or scholar can discover a “wilderness” of new material to meditate upon and mediate. If the past is just a story we tell ourselves, so is the future.

By comparing ethnography, then, as the primary genre of anthropology, with practices of literary criticism in the form of ethnopoetics as a form of close reading, the primary methodology of literary studies, I hope to acknowledge some of the ways that the two disciplines intersect

historically through philology¹⁰ and ethnopoetics,¹¹ but also my comparison of some of their theoretical analogues, structuralism and post-structuralism. As well as exerting an influence on methods of cross-cultural interpretation in their respective disciplines, Lévi-Strauss has also profoundly influenced Derrida's thinking concerning the human and the animal as textual vitalities—as materials, beings, and ideas that, intercalated through the practices of hearing, touching, and reading, animate narratives for readers. I refer to this intertextual process as histology, where transposition, transformation, or translation is the membrane between writing

¹⁰ Geoffrey Galt Harpham's chapter "Roots, Races, and the Return to Philology," describes philology as a "mirror" of scholarship in which to discern "scholarship's highest aspirations and darkest fears" (79). He states that the "ongoing challenge" is "how to tell them apart" (79). Speculative "neohumanists" such as Winckelmann (1717-68), Herder (1744-1803), Lessing (1729-81), Schiller (1759-1805), Hölderlin (1770-1843), Alexander Humboldt (1769-1859) and Wilhelm Humboldt (1767-1835), Goethe (1749-1832), and Hegel (1770-1831) helped develop philology (48). They believed ancient Greek culture is "encoded in language" and sought to "render[. . .] the vivifying spirit of ancient civilizations in a form that could inspire imitation" (49). But imitation led to "speculative boldness . . . on an ever-larger scale as the discipline matured" (50). One of the key concepts in the development of philology is formulated by Böckh (1785-1867), who defined the discipline as the "knowledge of the known" (qtd. in Harpham 50). Thus the scope of philology as language study, according to Humboldt in 1836, could extend to comparative reconstructions of the "origins" of "Volk" through a "philosophical understanding of human nature" (50). This latter goal governs much of the subsequent development of philology (51), and human nature as "race" in philology occupies much of Harpham's chapter (55). The "concretizing" effect of race on theories of culture as an extension of language motivated a shift in the focus of philology from the "origin of language as such" to the "historicity of languages" (55), and inspired Herder (55), Schlegel (1772-1829) (55), Humboldt (55), and Darwin (1809-82) (56-58) to develop biological explanations for linguistic origins and vice versa (56). Harpham suggests that Darwin's "speculations" are based on "analogies" (57-58) between genealogies of biology and of linguistics (57). Genealogical "tree diagram[s]" used in philology and evolutionary biology functioned as "brilliant" ways to organise wide arrays of "empirical data and speculative inference" (59), but also allowed Haeckel (1834-1919) (60-61), Müller (1823-1900) (61-64), and Renan (1823-92) (65-69) to invert "contrastive relations" between "protocommunities" (62) into "root" (65), or characteristic, "linguistic . . . hardwir[ing]" (65). Harpham suggests that philology is revived in literary studies through philologist Bernard Cerquiglini's (1947) landmark essay *Éloge de la Variante* (1989) and the 1990 special issue of *Speculum* on the "New Philology" (74) as well as in subsequent new-philological work (75)—but that philology remains undefined (75). Harpham concludes that philology's influences on humanistic scholarship are threefold: "origin" as explanation (76), analysis as a "duality" of "empirical" and "subjective" approaches (77), and the text as a source of information about "identity" (77). These influences require analyses from multiple vantages rather than one totalizing narrative of philology (78). Harpham's re-examination of the history of the history of language is useful because he suggests philology is both originary of and analogous with the humanities. Harpham's focus on Darwin as a pivotal influence on the humanities allows him to reflect on the ethics of analogical thinking, revealing, in comparison with other readings, some of the dangers of Kantian idealism in university models (Fichte 1988). However, Harpham's less well-developed historicizing of recent examples of "new philology" should also be noted. Harpham's chapter thus illustrates as well as analyzes the tension between analogical and empirical scales of thought for developing future multiple "philologies" for the humanities, and serves as a justification for multidisciplinary.

¹¹ E.g. Dell Hymes's work with Kenneth Burke (1897-1993; see Burke 1962) (Hymes 2003) or Robin Ridington's (1939-) and Jillian Ridington's (1936-) use of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) dialogism (Ridington and Ridington 2006).

and meaning. I quote Lévi-Strauss above, when he writes, “La pensée mythique est par essence transformatrice” (*Naked* 603), and again here as I take this punning paradox to be playing off of an earlier book’s title, *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962/1966)—untamed human thought—which is, in turn, a play on “wild pansies” (“Claude”)—“And there is pansies, that’s for thoughts,” says Ophelia (*Hamlet* 4.5.176-77). For “naked” man, i.e., the hermeneutical reader, to think mythic essence that is transformative is a punning paradox because the phenomenon of transformation contains the “matrix” of its own becoming—thus progeny is enfolded into progenitor, a form of containment that, by nature, essentializes non-essence. Wild pansies are always already seeds that were and will be wild pansies. Transformation is always already transformed. Translation, though, requires a more relational form of dissemination, non-originary and non-essentializing.

Derrida’s formulation of mythology and translation is “pharmakographic aggression” (*Dissemination* 128), where, in the Platonic mode of the play of language for the sake of Language, the letter as supplement must first penetrate the logos and then be excised, so that “exteriority as a supplement, inessential yet harmful to the essence, a surplus that ought never to have come to be added to the untouched plenitude of the inside” is restored in a mythopoeic imperative to “reconstitute, recite—and this is myth as such, the mythology for example of a logos recounting its own origin” (128). Derrida adds, “Such are the relations between the writing supplement and the logos-zōon,” clarifying that “In order to cure the latter of the pharmakon and rid it of the parasite, it is thus necessary to put the outside back in its place”—prolapse, as it were—in order to “keep the outside out” (128). In mythopoeic, almost transpositional contrast, Lévi-Strauss argues for the reverse—the matrix that keeps the inside in.

Before histology comes history—that of collaboration between the people who made the books I read and find very special.¹² The collaborative process of the production, transmission, and reception of textualized orature thus requires analysis at the “midway [point] between literary criticism, which focuses on works, and bibliography, which focuses on books as books” (Williams and Abbott 54). While, in literary studies, close readings of texts combine attention to form and content so that form illuminates the critic’s understanding of content and content the critic’s understanding of form, the ethnographic means of producing many of the oral narratives I analyze here, in combination with the mediation of these narratives into print, require that I treat the social context of the production of these narratives as part of their form. After all, social context, in textualized orature, is narrative form. I also take as my cue Clifford Geertz’s statement that ethnography is a genre poised between the “uncertainty that appears in signature terms as how far, and how, to invade one’s text [and uncertainty that] appears in discourse terms as how far, and how, imaginatively to compose it” (20). This uncertainty is a question that literary critics also grapple with. However, while literary studies and anthropology exist in a state of shared uncertainty concerning the question of mediation (e.g. the ethics of collaboration, orthographies, and access to records), they seem to me to do so with opposite premises: if anthropology entextualizes culture, literary criticism enculturates textualization.

¹² Of the many American scholars, critics, and poets who have contributed to ethnopoetics by developing various methods for formalizing, on the page, performative and linguistic aspects of Native American oral narratives, some of the key figures include: Dell Hymes (1927-2009), professor of linguistic anthropology in the departments of English and Anthropology at the University of Virginia (1981, 1990, 2003); anthropologist, poet, translator, and Tlingit elder Nora Marks Dauenhauer (1927-) and her spouse, poet, translator of German, Classical Greek, and Tlingit, and once professor at Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University), Richard Dauenhauer (1942-2014), who have together produced the series “Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature” published in 1987, 1991, and 1994 (see for their perspective on these projects Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1995, 1998) ; Gary Snyder (1930-), a poet and ecologist; Jerome Rothenberg (1931-), poet, anthologist, and translator of German and Native American narratives, as well as co-editor with Dennis Tedlock of the experimental ethnopoetics magazine *Alcheringa* (1970-78); and Dennis Tedlock (1939-2016), State University of New York at Buffalo professor of English and Anthropology.

Paul Zolbrod (e.g. 1992b, 1995), Anthony Webster (e.g. 2006), and Sean Patrick O’Neill (e.g. 2013), whose work inspires me throughout my dissertation, may be considered ethnopoets also.

The textualized orature that results is the outcome of a complex set of collaborative poetics that contain each step of what textual studies terms the production, transmission, and reception of a book in each of its iterations: oral, transcription, translation, and re-translation. These essentially deictic transformations by definition must occur across ontological boundaries—animal and human, breath and flesh. So, in more recent iterations of discourse theory, Derrida responds with an open-ended skepticism to Lévi-Strauss’s transformation of Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic structuralism into mythic structuralism in Lévi-Strauss’s 1964 *The Raw and the Cooked*. In doing so Derrida transforms Lévi-Strauss’s certainty into uncertainty without changing the fundamental claim, revealing the two sides that are both troublesome and absolutely necessary to critical thought: “There exists no veritable end or term to mythical analysis, no secret unity which could be grasped at the end of the work of decomposition” (Lévi-Strauss qtd. in Derrida, “Structure” 233). Yet Lévi-Strauss makes the point that, in ritual, humanity “vainly tries to reduce the demands of thought to an extreme limit” (*Naked* 675) to revise the “resistance of man’s thought to man himself” (681), while Ruth Benedict’s Apollonian/Dionysian critical analogy plays on the limits of “Revision,” which “comes by way of revolution or breakdown” (249). The tension between critical “ritual” and critical “re-vision” is, therefore, one of my motivations for following animals whose biological and metaphysical logics migrate like the wind or like breath. In English, the words animal and animate come from the word anima, air, wind, breath, soul. The word for animals in Dene languages are often circumlocutionary, which for me emphasizes their unknown power—in Denesuline, ch’adí or ’ech’ër, which in a terminology workshop on ecological contexts I learned refer contrastively to predator and prey¹³—in Dena’ina, ninya or ggagga, which means creature

¹³ Predator: kech’adie (Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board 72), prey: ’ech’ëre (73).

or animal, literally bear, a fierce yet protective icon of all animals (Kalifornsky, *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu/A Dena'ina Legacy* 71)—in Dene Dháh, wonlinghedi, something alive¹⁴—in Diné Bizaad, naaldlooshii, the one who trots about on all fours (Young and Morgan 581). This movement, so animal in its nature and action, expresses not just the power of the intersubjective, then; it also expresses the importance of an open mind. It seems safer never to assume we know absolutely. Uncertainty as the only shared certainty, then: this is re-vision as animalesque play.

Chapters Summary

Thematically, each chapter is framed by attention to key animals, which I chose based on my attention to the movements of animals in the stories and some key messages that each set of animal conveys to me, about how to live, how to love, how to die, and how to live again. The wolf and caribou in chapter two teach us how to live: how to survive. The porcupine and lynx in chapter three teach us how to love in a serious way, in terms of friendship and in terms of self-sacrifice. The wolverine and wolf in chapter four teach us how to die, literally and figuratively, in order to gain true knowledge. The coyote and the badger in chapter five teach us how to live again. These are not the only animals in these stories, nor are these the only lessons which these animals teach. But these animals and lessons speak to me, and so each chapter attends to the animalesque play within and across stories, focusing on key forms of reference, especially that of personhood—an animal word, a logos-zōon that does not require excision but, rather, re-birth.

Theoretically, each chapter synthesizes each of the levels of deictic reference to these animal forms of discourse as I describe above—deixis and sound metonymy in chapter two, deixis and the archive in chapter three, deixis and expressive markers of animacy in chapter four, and deixis and the limits of animacy in chapter five. I take a particular interest in deictic

¹⁴ Wonlin can mean “something” (Moore and Wheelock 162), and ghedi can mean “living [thing]” (155), “being,” or “animal” (168).

references to personhood through the aural dimensions of voice, focusing on centers and shifts in lexical items through homophony and metonymy in chapter two; in chapter three, through articulations of personhood (animal and human) with the archive; in chapter four, animating markers of emotion in expressive speech; and in chapter five, discursive hierarchies between pollen, animals, humans, and rocks as a test or limit-case for that which is animate and intersubjective, the wind itself.

Methodologically, in chapters two and three, I comment on several stories from the same collection. In chapter four, I compare the transcription and interlinear translation of one story with the audio recording from which it was textualized. In chapter five, I branch out to include textual examples from many Navajo sources in both Navajo and English. I also, at times, integrate other relevant texts into my archives for each chapter. And chapters three and five, in particular, are informed by my experiences learning from and lending a hand with language documentation, maintenance, and revitalization communities in Alaska and in the Navajo Nation. I also, at times, integrate Euro-American poetry, poetics, and theory, since that is the frame of reference which I start from.

Eventually, I want the stories to change me as I spend years thinking about them. Thus in each chapter, I adapt my framework to the issues I am interested in examining and then at the end, I comment on the framework briefly as it pertains to the texts I focus on. I also focus on the dual-language nature of each primary work to varying degrees, always integrating some analysis of the Dene languages in which the stories were told to address the aural, grammatical, and animal features of the narratives I engage with.

Specifically, chapter two, “‘Grandson, / This is meat’: Wolf and Caribou on How to Live in *This Is What They Say*,” focuses on ʔetθén, the word for both “meat” and “caribou,” and the

homophonic relationship that the grandmother wolf above reveals between meat and caribou. Chapter three, “I will be popular with the Campfire People, so ha, ha, ha’: Porcupine and Lynx on How to Love in *K’tl’egh’i Sukdu/A Dena’ina Legacy*,” focuses on k’etch eltani, the prophetic practice of true belief through seeking visionary dreams (Boraas, “Work” 3). Chapter four, “‘What will you do now?’: Wolverine and Wolf on How to Die in ‘The Man Who Sought a Song,’” told by Elisse Ahnassay, focuses on the (a)historical function of wodih, a speech-act genre that “influence[s] an audience by establishing a common base of belief, by sharing the experiences of others, and by suggesting what will happen in the future” (Moore and Wheelock xix). Chapter five, “‘If it floats, we will all live forever’: Coyote and Badger on How to Live Again in *Diné Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story*,” focuses on the reincarnational exchange between inner and outer figured by nilch’i bii’ sizinii, the “inner-dwelling silent wind” that “interacts with and shapes the outer wind which animates the entire world” (Toelken, “From” 7).

My Conclusion, “Histologies,” considers how the above concepts correspond roughly to: flesh (zetθén), bone (k’etch eltani), mind (wodih), and breath (nilch’i bii’ sizinii): an animal that is a dream, a dream that is an animal. In the motivic, cumulative, ardent, and terrifying afterlife of the hearts from which, into which, and between which these narratives have, do, and will emerge, I hope to compare our conditions for interpretive uncertainty—fundamentally fleshly, histological uncertainty—about our historical moment: how much space we believe ourselves to share as well as how much time we have to share it in—as forms of narrative revitalization.

Summary of Introduction

This sub-section meets a university requirement; as such, there is some reiteration of content. Identification and Design of the Research Program. In this dissertation, I contribute to my field of Indigenous literary studies by taking a language- and literature-centered approach to

northern and southern Dene (Athabaskan) textualized orature—oral stories written down. Indigenous literary studies, often defined by Indigenous literary nationalism, permits a focus on cultural specificities defined by various markers of identity.¹⁵ I focus on poetics in Dene and English as indicators of unique epistemics which model ways for thinking that permit intellectual and spiritual survival. To do so, I draw on some of the valuable theoretical, methodological, and factual contributions of cognitive linguistics, Dene linguistics, and linguistic anthropology as well as some Euro-American contributions to critical animal studies and ecocriticism—but the focus is on Dene theories of the animal inasmuch as I am able, so that problems in Euro-American theory, such as that which divides animal and human, or the materiality of discourse, are examined using Dene narrative theory rather than the reverse.

I focus almost exclusively on Dene narratives since little literary criticism has been done on narratives in the Indigenous Dene languages in which they are told and which contain both translatable and untranslatable knowledge; the practices of translation in fact reflect the already intercultural construction of these texts—an effect with impacts positive and negative, depending on the relationships enacted by such transformations. I do reference neighboring narratives and epistemologies at times, finding particular inspiration in Okanagan orator Harry Robinson, and some Haida and Apsáalooke (Crow) narratives. Dene languages are far-flung, ranging from Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, northern British Columbia, northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan, and northern Manitoba; to southern, coastal Oregon and northern, coastal California; and down to the Southwest, in Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. While these languages are very widespread geographically and, according to some theories, temporally, they retain remarkable similarities in grammar. My project is thus to begin

¹⁵ I am grateful to Margery Fee for specifying the issues of Indigenous literary nationalism in relation to Indigenous literary studies.

a comparative and contrastive study of Dene-language narratives in the languages in which they were told and in translation—dual-language form—focusing on their expressive poetics and philosophical implications for survival in multiple senses of the word.

By comparing Dene oral narratives both northern and southern, I seek some depth as well as breadth—I focus on the narrative features of only one Indigenous language-family, but one which is widespread and with protocols for verbal arts that are, quite often, based on respectful pedagogical relationships. I have identified my research program based on the connections between Dene languages and have designed my research program based on my interest in potential connections between Dene narratives.

Performance of the Various Parts of the Research. I have performed my research on four published works of traditional and yet also contemporaneous Dene-language and translated narratives concerning dreams, visions, hunting encounters, and instances of reincarnation between animals and humans that lead to renewal, revival, and revitalization. Using theoretical, methodological, and informational cues from linguistics I have constructed an approach within Indigenous literary studies that permits engagement with Dene-language narratives: a reading framework using an expanded definition of deictic centers—flexible references to personhood, place, and time—and deictic shift—the formation of intersubjective understanding through overlapping pronoun references and through cross-species constructions of personhood, as well as overlaps between locations and temporalities and divergences between referential and expressive meaning—to address some of the possibilities in the stories for their interpretation. I link key instances of grammar-level references to personhood, in particular, to narrative-level embodiments of voice; my focus in doing so is on the personhood of certain animals.

The four main books that I write about are Denesuline (Chipewyan) *This Is What They Say: A Story Cycle Dictated in Northern Alberta in 1928* (Mandeville 2009); Dena'ina (Tanaina) *A Dena'ina Legacy, K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky* (Kalifornsky 1991); Dene Dháh (Slavey) *Wolverine Myths and Visions: Dene Traditions from Northern Alberta* (Moore and Wheelock 1990); and Diné Bizaad (Navajo) *Diné Bahane': The Navajo Creation Story* (Zolbrod 1984) along with their variants in translation. These texts belong to the told-to genre and exist in the form of textualized orature. These cultural (Subarctic, Pacific, Arctic, and Southwestern) texts are outstanding examples of Dene narratives that together reveal epistemological values important in Dene cultures, while, at the same time, that also serve as richly contrastive works of poetic forms and which do not as far as I know violate any ethical protocols.¹⁶ While dual-language texts are the most useful for deepening understanding, I have often had to look at older editions of the stories as well as the newer translations, two of which include English only (*This Is What They Say* and *Diné Bahane'*). All such iterations of the stories are useful and of interest to those studying Dene knowledge and experience through Dene aesthetics. Attention to poetics in the Dene-language texts I look at is possible because each of the texts I look at was produced with a high degree of documentary fidelity in word-for-word transcriptions from the oral Dene languages to written English at different methodological stages of documentary work on recording Indigenous texts; subsequent translations and retranslations were undertaken by community and ethno poetic experts with knowledge of the social as well as linguistic dimensions of the texts. For further information on the intentions and qualifications of the orators and transcribers, please see the first sections of each chapter and Appendix D.

¹⁶ I am grateful to Margery Fee for suggesting that I expand commentary on texts produced through intercultural work.

By performing this research, I have contributed to my field in the form of the following thesis: traditional Dene textualized orature uniquely regenerates its own interpretive meaning through the deictic figures of ecologically and culturally significant animals of the regions within which the orators lived. These animals *tell and are telling*—both denotatively and connotatively. Listeners and readers learn from animals how they should interpret the historical meaning of the narratives as well as enact the potential in these narratives for revitalization of and through the narratives, an animating process available to reading and listening communities who would learn how to live, how to love, how to die, and how to live again.

Analysis of the Research Data. While the term data is one used by my university in some contexts, a better term in the context of my work is narratives texts. The narrative texts I study were gathered through the passionate labor of Elders, Dene-language speakers of all ages, linguists, and anthropologists. For the last one-hundred years or more, much work has been done to record oral narratives, archive them, transcribe and translate them, and publish them. Of course Indigenous artists continue to use oral traditions in profound ways—Vancouver, British Columbia’s Jordan Abel; Winnipeg, Manitoba’s Garry Thomas Morse, Alaska’s dg nanouk okpik; and the Southwest’s Orlando White are all experimental, language-based, and tradition-oriented Indigenous poets, while science-fiction and fantasy author Richard Van Camp weaves together contemporary lives with deep Tłıchǫ knowledge—however, less has been done to interact with Dene-language narratives at a detailed interpretive level in Indigenous literary studies. Thus my analysis of the texts is artistic, not scientific, although linguistics is often defined productively as a science in pursuit of falsifiable data sometimes drawn from texts. In this project, I draw upon the stories as they are, looking at their contexts of production as well as within them, hermeneutically, for cues to their own interpretation.

There are key sources and supports who have made it possible for me to look at the stories at all to analyze some of the creative knowledge enacted by them. First, the Navajo Language Academy, where I am a student and teacher, has provided community beyond saying. By studying Navajo linguistics with Elders, Navajo-Nation language teachers, Dene linguists, and graduate students, I learned both factually and emotionally what narratives have the potential to represent in Dene cultures. Second, Patrick Moore and Leslie Saxon have provided first-hand insight and expertise in Dene languages, speech communities, and archives. By spending a great deal of time with me to discuss possibilities and realities, they have corrected many of my misapprehensions in my analysis. Remaining misinterpretations are mine. Third, Keren Rice's *A Grammar of Slave* (1989) and Robert Young and William Morgan's *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* (1987) are monumental contributions to the field, and my analysis of grammatical markers of deixis as it pertains especially to animacy, and various etymologies, have been cued by merely scratching the surface of these invaluable references; I am also excited at every turn to read the continued work on ethnopoetics by Anthony Webster, as in his book *Intimate Grammars* (2015). Fourth, the kind mentorship and collegial help of experts in the field have taught me a great deal about the power of presence, which is to say the importance of context as form when interpreting the content of orature: for example, Paul Zolbrod and Siri Tuttle have helped guide my analysis of Dene poetics by providing a great deal of information about the arduous work of translation and about the importance of documentary poetics.

These two forms of knowledge, interpretive and documentary, have inspired me to pursue analysis in a narrative framework, which is both sequential, like didactic texts, and, I have found, often obliquely descriptive rather than linear: i.e., causation is relational via a kind of

positionality (a moving ontology) rather than psychological in the Euro-American sense, with its roots in dialectical theories of an unconsciousness. Rather than an unconscious, in Dene narrative theory, it seems to me that there may be multiple consciousnesses, all different, all requiring respect expressed as deep knowledge of those differences in combination with unfailing reciprocity through sacrifice and through—at times—secrecy: a form of privacy in a time of explication. The stories which have nonetheless been shared represent a revealing generosity on the parts of those involved in constituting those stories.¹⁷ Thus I have interpreted the texts using an explanatory ethnopoetics as well as pursued some knowledge of what might be called ethnopoiesis—or, more accurately, given the influence of animals on the formation of the narratives as grammatical and narrative patterns of reference to animacy—zoopoiesis: you think about what the stories mean to you.

The relevance of this project to Dene or other readers of any given heritage or identity is fundamentally indeterminable by me; I will not and cannot speak for others' responses to the stories or to my approach. To do so would be to presume, to intrude, to ascribe, and to impute. Please see footnotes 96 and 97 of chapter five for further comments on ethics, which I will also quote here. From footnote 96: "I would very much like to draw on information and insights offered while I was a student in the Navajo Language Academy classroom in my discussion of this question in this chapter, but there are university ethics, at this stage of my research, that determine what and who can be quoted. I can only say that I am deeply grateful to all those who participate in the NLA for their knowledge and wisdom as I have tried to learn about Dene speech community perspectives on language and narratives." From footnote 97: "In a class on orthography which I attended at Institute for Collaborative Language Documentation (CoLang)

¹⁷ I am grateful to Patrick Moore for useful discussion of this point.

2016, Keren Rice and Mike Cahill observed that, in their experience working in northern-Dene contexts, unique enunciation as well as dialectical variations express valuable information about identity. While variation may be a widely held value in the north, there are many in Navajo territory who believe that a standardized vocabulary as well as orthographic practices are better: this depends in large part on how the speakers whom I have heard discuss this engage with their language. However, standardization means, in the Navajo context, not just a mastery of regional variation; it also refers to a deep understanding of the underlying forms of words that enables sophisticated contemplation of the philosophical relations between words.” My future postdoctoral fellowship research will address the questions of poetics documentation in the context of language maintenance and revitalization; for more information, please see my Conclusion.

Chapter Two

“Grandson, / this is meat”: Wolf and Caribou on How to Live in François Mandeville’s *This Is What They Say*¹⁸

“The caribou are walking across the ocean,
but they don’t come back.

There is no land I can see in that direction
so there must be land lying right underneath the surface.

I’ll follow the caribou” (Mandeville, *This* 23).

“[A] style of being wherever there is a fragment of being” (Merleau-Ponty 256).

Introduction

François Mandeville (1878–1952) was a Métis-Chipewyan trapper, fur trader, interpreter, and storyteller who lived in a region of northern Canada that is defined by Great Slave Lake to the north and Lake Athabasca to the south, connected by a system of waterways that leads, eventually, to the Arctic Ocean (Bringhurst, Foreword 7). Mandeville worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company until he became ill; throughout his convalescence, he built boats and trapped for himself (Scollon, “Narrative” 228). Eventually, he returned to the HBC, retired, and passed on at the age of seventy-four in Fort Chipewyan. His was the life of a true translator; he was, in addition to a navigator of a landscape riddled with muskeg, lakes, rivers, and boreal forest, accomplished in oral and written communications and a polyglot, and thus he was also a navigator of multiple cultures and worldviews (229). In 1928, he narrated twenty stories to a

¹⁸ Chapter two will be published as ““Grandson, / this is meat’: Hunting Metonymy in François Mandeville’s *This Is What They Say*” in *Activating the Heart: Storytelling, Knowledge, Sharing, and Relationship* with the permission of the publisher, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, secured thanks to one of the editors of the book and of this chapter, Christopher Cox. I am very grateful for his editorial support, as well as that of Barbara Dancygier, who oversaw the development of this chapter in a cognitive-linguistic framework through a directed reading she did with me, which started me on this dissertation. Without her detailed feedback and support, I could not have written this chapter.

young Chinese linguist, Li Fang-Kuei, who was seeking to study Dene languages. Five of these stories were elicited by Li (Scollon, “Narrative” 238). The elicited stories are highly pragmatic, containing descriptions of how Indigenous peoples educate their youth, how to fish, how to make a canoe, how to tan a moose hide, and how to hunt beaver. But fifteen stories were chosen and arranged in the order of their delivery by Mandeville himself (238). Most importantly for the place where I would like to begin my analysis, Mandeville collaborated with Li on the transcriptions of those stories, editing many of the discourse markers and contributing to an exhaustive collection of paradigm slips (236-37), a textual trace of his attention to the structural qualities of the narratives. Mandeville was as fully cognizant of the way text is put to page as he was of how to live off the land and as he was of how to negotiate cultural difference: in other words, he was aware of and adept at signification and interpretation in multiple modes—oral, written, environmental, and ontological, in the figures of animals and of their tracks and trails.¹⁹

Mandeville was also sensitive to literary style. He served language in both legal court contexts and liturgical church contexts (Scollon, “Narrative” 229, 258). Indeed, Ronald Scollon, who translated Mandeville’s stories from Denesuline (Chipewyan) to English twice, once in 1976 and again in 2009, writes that “when Li asked Mandeville for stories, Mandeville took it as an opportunity to produce his ‘highest liturgical style’ . . . developing a ‘high’ or, if you prefer, literary language” (257). In the same vein, Robert Bringhurst suggests, in his Foreword to Scollon’s 2009 translation, that

[Mandeville’s] tales of hunters and animals are Athabaskan [Dene] metaphysics incarnate. He achieved, with the Chipewyan language, the kind of symbiotic relationship

¹⁹ The titular quote refers to the tracks of a moose (Mandeville, *This* 162). In an earlier translation of the same story cycle (1976), the phrase is rendered, “(This which left these) tracks which we are looking at is meat” (Mandeville, *Chipewyan* 324).

that literature demands. He knew not just the meanings of the words, the permutations of the verb, and the syntax of the sentence. He had learned the motivic form of those much larger units of Chipewyan thought that we call stories. This made it possible for Mandeville and the stories to speak through one another, and that is what they did. (10)

“Metaphysics incarnate”: this phrase leads me to consider the incarnate, the carnal, further. The carnal, the fleshly, sensuous, embodied, material: what does this mean in narratives that are, after all, patterns of thought that inhere—are incarnated—in the mind or on the page, neither of which are “motivic” in the usual musical or mechanical senses?²⁰ In a literary sense, Mandeville’s narratives have been and continue to be intensely mobile; or, if the stories are not mobile, they motivate the minds and bodies of their hearers and readers to carry them around. Historically, Mandeville’s narratives have circulated the sub-arctic, made their way to the eastern seaboard of the United States, Hawaii, Taipei, and, now, again, Canada (Mandeville 1976, 2009). And that is just in terms of their printed circulation; oral versions of these narratives were before Mandeville’s time and still are very much in use in northern Dene communities.²¹ So Mandeville’s conversation with these narratives infiltrates and reverberates within the

²⁰ But as Margery Fee suggests, cf. Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950); see also footnote 11 of my Introduction on Burke in ethnopoetics.

²¹ These continuously circulating narratives continue to be instantiated in print. For example, Copper Woman’s story, a version of which is the first of Mandeville’s stories proper, is extant in the following publications: an unknown teller to Samuel Hearne in 1771 (published in 1795), Rabbit’s Head to John Franklin in 1820 (1829), Ekunelyel to Émile-Fortuné Petitot in 1863 and Alexis Enna-aze to Petitot in 1881 (both published in 1886), Jean Baptiste Ennou to Pliny Earle Goddard in 1911 (1912), François Mandeville to Li Fang-Kuei in 1928 (1976, 2009), Joseph Naedzo to June Helm in 1978 (2000), and Anne Cameron’s novel *Daughters of Copper Woman*, published in 1981.

I am grateful to Christopher Cox for telling me about a version of the Copper Woman story recorded in Edward S. Curtis’s *The North American Indian* (1928), Volume 18, “The Chipewyan. The Western Woods Cree. The Sarsi.” The story is titled “Tseqi Tsatsane Hehohl'ai, Woman Copper She-found” (127-28). This version links a wolf guide with caribou food, and it also associates beaver excrement with the appearance of copper.

imaginings of those who encounter them.²² The conversation continues, but the entities participant in it have yet to be well defined.

I am particularly interested in the idea of the “carnal” in Mandeville’s narratives because flesh, particularly animal flesh²³—meat and the eating of meat—is such an important motif in almost all the narratives. Because the corollary to the presence of flesh is ingestion, and this is a pattern that recurs throughout Mandeville’s narratives: flesh and ingestion. In the north, hunting, trapping, snaring, and fishing were—and many argue are—essential to survival. But if Bringhurst is correct in asserting that Mandeville’s narratives are Dene metaphysics incarnate (and their intensely communicable qualities suggest to me that this must be so), then “meat,” while the essence of bodily survival, must imply much more than metabolic fuel; meat or flesh animates the narratives at the level of structure, such that the plots themselves “ingest”—and sometimes regurgitate—the stuff of their own making.

Perhaps Bringhurst has read Maurice Merleau-Ponty on the phenomenology of flesh where he writes that

flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term ‘element,’ in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea,

²² Ronald Scollon, who, with his wife Suzanne Scollon, did fieldwork in Fort Chipewyan in the 1970s with Mandeville’s surviving community and family members, were told in conversation with Mandeville’s son, Philip, that “[a]fter hearing many telling of his father’s stories as well as the stories of many others over the years, [he] held the view that each storyteller has a different version of a given story, but that each person would have only one of them”; Philip states, “[t]hat’s the story and that’s it: That’s the way it goes on right now. A different person tells it and it’s all out of shape” (Scollon, “Narrative” 230). Philip’s words about his father suggest to me that, in addition to the conversational structure identified by Bringhurst (one might even call it polyphonic), Mandeville’s stories extend some of the unique form of his cognitive outlook—a possibility beyond the scope of this chapter, but one that could be pursued in a chapter comparing versions of the same stories told by other people.

²³ There are examples of human flesh—muscle divided from spirit—but always as instances of inter-tribal conflict, and almost never as examples of ingestion, except in one narrative concerning a monstrous but non-human Cannibal—story 8, “The Cannibal” (Mandeville, *This* 117-24).

a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. (256)

Flesh is a “style of being wherever there is a fragment of being”: this is an assertion I would like to take seriously in regards to Mandeville’s stories because it evokes a kind of metaphysical frame metonymy, a figure structuring thought where source and target are both materially and conceptually incarnate and mutually interpenetrating. And if I have learned anything from Mandeville’s narratives, it is that ethics and aesthetics both are interpenetrating, inherent in the metaphysics and the pragmatics of narrative, and essential to survival.²⁴

Metonymical structure requires a sense of the whole as well as of the interconnection of its parts. A sense of transformation that retains its origins even as it moves. In Mandeville’s narrative of “The Man Who Became a Wolf,” for example, ontological survival is premised on embodied and interpenetrating relationships between wolf and humanity. Such relationships or connections lead to the renewal of the protagonist’s life through his transformation into a wolf—and back again—and through the discursive and embodied transformation of tracks into meat—of hoofprints in the bush into caribou or moose and caribou or moose into meat or food. In other words, the “this” in “Grandson, / this is meat” refers not to the animal but to its trace, a discursive trace that enacts its embodiment as food. Just as Mandeville’s work with Li crosses disciplinary, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, this narrative enacts its own meaning, revealing metonymical connections in the mind and in the material world in the mouth. I say this because

²⁴ See, for example, story 5, “Scabby” (Mandeville, *This* 75-92), where the protagonist has a pragmatic affinity with rabbits, whose soft fur skins makes it possible for him to manage a potentially-debilitating skin condition, and, perhaps as a corollary to wearing their skins, with rabbits as game who make their bodies abundantly available to his snares when he is tested by his elders.

For a full overview of the narrative arc of Mandeville’s collection as well as notes on each of the animals who occur within it, see Appendix A.

the word for “caribou,” in Denesuline, is “zetθén,”²⁵ the same as the word for meat or flesh—while it cannot easily be translated as such in English, caribou is an icon of meat; it is a form of deictic reference that, in Denesuline, simultaneously points to the sustaining nature of the caribou and to the sustaining nature of the word for it that persistently connects the notions of the animal and of the role it serves in survival.²⁶ These words come from the same places in the tongue and teeth. They are breathed into and spat out of the mouth in the same order. They talk to each other in that cave. By encompassing one another so that prey is always already food through the work of interpretation, the signs—the words for animal tracks and the animal tracks—becomes sustenance—meat. This is one of Mandeville’s messages in this story, a message that becomes very good “eatin’,” as it were, in, I think, both source and target languages—in translation.²⁷ Because, as Jacques Rancière writes, it is translation “under the sign of equality” (11) where interpretation—and the teaching of the skills necessary to interpretation—reveals that “all sentences, and consequently all intelligences that produce them, are of the same nature,” so that “Understanding is never more than translating, that is, giving the equivalent of a text, but in no way its reason” (9). “In no way its reason”: the reason that “zetθén” works with itself in the story is not merely aesthetic. It is also practical. But how does this shared lexical quality permit practical as well as conceptual exchange beyond the body of

²⁵ In Li and Scollon's orthography (Mandeville 1976); also spelled, respectively, “zetthén” and “-etthén” as in “denetthén,” “flesh, a person’s” (South Slave Divisional Education Council 2012).

²⁶ I am grateful to Leslie Saxon for this insight. Further, I am very grateful to her for overseeing an early version of this paper when I was a MA student, for re-reading it during my PhD, and for her all-round incredibly kind guidance and support. I am also grateful to Iain Higgins for supervisory support during my entire MA and for overseeing the early version of this paper along with Leslie. As well, Suzie Wong Scollon read my MA project and continues to encourage me via correspondence in ways to make my engagement meaningful.

²⁷ In fact, the words for star, caribou, meat, and trail all come from quite similar places in the mouth: respectively, (ze)thén, zetθén, zetθén, zetèn (South Slave Divisional Education Council 2012). It is not impossible to imagine that Mandeville would have been aware of the cross-linguistic echo in the English word “eatin’.” In this longer possible “chain or network of metaphorical representations,” as Anselmo Urrutia and Joel Sherzer suggest in their discussion of esoteric lexical associations in Kuna healing songs (147), these echoes promise to transpose anatomy, to form strange new animals. Stars become meat, tracks become a trail of meaning, innards become skin. Bones rearticulate perpetually to form resolutely historical articulations of Dene truths.

the animal through its tracks on the land into its *narrative* traces—through intersemiotic transformations? While Roman Jakobson defines intersemiotic translation as an “interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (“On Linguistic” 233), Mandeville begins with the interpretation of non-verbal signs by means of verbal signs. If as Jakobson writes there is “no *signatum* [meaning] without *signum* [sign]” (232), then Mandeville’s homophony becomes sustenance. But how do words come alive—or reveal themselves to be already alive—in Mandeville’s stories? How does he make visible the interconnections between words and wisdom? How does he embody—make flesh—his intelligence? In the following section, I use the concept of frame metonymy from cognitive-linguistic theory to explore the connections between the oral and the embodied, the track and the animal.

I conclude that the one constant, “meat”—the cultural frame (2) always evoked by variable references (1)—thus emerges as a consistent metonymical target domain emerging from networks (3) coordinated by opposing yet overlapping nexus that come into “dual focus” often through bodily exchanges (in whole or part) to generate transformative blends (4)—blends that are the product of intensive, almost volcanic, fusions and fissions between ontological positions for the sake of generating life.

Frame Metonymy

I take a particular interest in deictic references to personhood through the aural dimensions of animism by focusing on centers and shifts in lexical items through homophony and metonymy in this chapter. I use the concept of frame metonymy from cognitive-linguistic theory to analyze the meat of Mandeville’s narratives because this theoretical approach is flexible yet highly specific, much as a hunter’s approach to navigating the muskeg must be. As well, there are at least two well-defined examples at a grammatical level where animals, or their

tracks and trails, metonymically refer to meat: “His meat is certainly here” references a living bear in his den (Mandeville, *This* 130),²⁸ while, as I describe above, a wolf states, “Grandson, / this is meat” in reference to some moose tracks (162). These sentence-level examples illustrate in quite a visible way some of the interconnected parts of Mandeville’s larger narrative principles.

Klaus-Uwe Panther provides a definition of frame metonymy that draws on cognitive linguistic research and semiotics, stating that “metonymy is an indexical relation between source and target meaning” (147). He fleshes out this indexicality by suggesting that “metonymy is a kind of meaning elaboration whose result is a conceptually prominent target meaning, an integrated whole that contains the backgrounded source meaning and novel meaning components resulting from the process of elaboration” (147) where the “target meaning resulting from a metonymic shift is an elaboration of the source meaning” (151). This “metonymic shift can be regarded as a substitution operation, but one in which the source meaning does not vanish but remains part of the conceptual structure of the target meaning” (151). These points are salient not only for the emphasis they place on discursive metonymy as a retroductive (hermeneutically achieved) cognitive phenomenon but also because narratives, in Mandeville’s milieu, provide important information for physical as well as social survival: it is unwise, in the immediacy of survival in the north, to identify some components of narrative discourse as real and dismiss the rest as unreal.²⁹

²⁸ In the 1976 translation, the phrase is rendered, “His meat is certainly here again” (Mandeville, *Chipewyan* 266).

²⁹ In *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power Among the Dene Tha*, Jean-Guy Goulet suggests that in a Dene world-view “true knowledge is personal knowledge” (247) but also comments on the holistic necessity of narratives as instruments of survival; in order “to apprehend a social world ‘as a whole in the form of a personal experience’ (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 272) [it] is necessary to depict adequately that world to oneself and to others” (247)—to depict adequately that which is inner as well as outer, apparent and unapparent.

To define fully my usage of animal referentiality within frame metonymy, I will adopt two additional points from Panther's discussion of metonymy. First, metonymical source and target are often structures that elaborate segments of concepts, not always entire domains:

In elaborating a source concept, metonymy relies in general on pre-established inferential patterns. The kinds of conceptual realms in which metonymic shifts operate are not necessarily whole cognitive domains (and subdomains) stored in long-term memory, but they might be more like mental spaces, i.e., "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action." (161)

Panther makes the point that elaboration is a matter of referencing and networking mental spaces, or "conceptual packets," a cognitive phenomenon not unlike to Bringhurst's narrative motifs but with the additional parameter of anatomy, as it were: sometimes the flesh of the narrative operates by parts, not wholes—by intermittent analogies, not just zoological realities—by moving to change one's position for the revivification of muscle with breath. Panther also makes the point that elaboration by a way of these domains and subdomains or "packets" of "local" relations are often "a matter of perspective," where the scholar may or may not immediately or wholly be able to determine "what to regard as the superordinate domain and what as the subdomain(s), respectively" (158). I find this point particularly salient in relation to Mandeville's animal referentiality because position—geographical, ontological—as a determiner of meaning seems to be very nuanced in the narratives. What I mean by this kind of position has to do with relations or even alliances between species—human and caribou, human and wolf—but also between much more conceptual values such as ingestion and projection (who or what is eating whom or what), or, even more abstractly, predation and perpetuation (which comes first, destruction or renewal?). These values seem to come into dual focus due to frames defined by

the contiguities (spatial relations) and contingencies (temporal relations) of lived experience—where environmental factors such as landscape or the cycles of seasons bring together entities in ways defined by a hierarchy of relations—but also by more fragmented yet syllogistic visual analogues such as colour, texture, or even in moments of fury, or of song, or in acts such as the putting on human clothing (as with the man who becomes a wolf and then returns to his human form).

Thus existential (contiguous and contingent) as well as ontological (morphological) states seem to be a major factor in overlapping frames and generating blends. So which predicates which: narrative contiguity and contingency or narrative analogy? The key to understanding the structure and directionality of Mandeville’s unique metonymies is found by examining the total context of their deployment—their total ecological topography. Barbara Dancygier’s definition of frame metonymy expands upon Panther’s point about metonymical “elaboration” by showing that narratives provide powerful contexts for indexing between source and target. Frame metonymy is a “set of directional associations between culturally-rich concepts, or domains, that are activated by combining lexical and grammatical entities through narrative” (Dancygier, *Language* 33).³⁰ This definition is composed of four key components that specifically address the

³⁰ To provide an example of how frame metonymy, works, from a cluster of concepts readers have encountered in my Introduction: pansies. Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962/1966), which describes untamed human thought, is, in turn, a play on “wild pansies” (“Claude”)—“And there is pansies, that’s for thoughts,” says Ophelia (*Hamlet* 4.5.176-77). The lexical pansy, modified grammatically by its French *sauvage*, is activated as a metonymical frame through the historical directional association of literary allusion, for the author of Lévi-Strauss’s biography (see “Claude Lévi-Strauss: Biography,” The European Graduate School, 2012). The domain of pansy in *Hamlet* is madness; this value is combined through allusion to that narrative with Lévi-Strauss’s title, and, although the languages are different, the syntax of the French versus English is, interestingly, reversed: pansies for thought becomes thought for pansies—a wildness that is madness to the patriarchal, colonial Modern, but which counteracts the Modern colonial process by remaining *sauvage*, maintaining the referential and expressive, playful meanings of the smallest thing (a flower), and then inverting the judgement value of just what it is that is *sauvage*—so that wild thought is shown to be not savage in contrast to the warfare that characterizes much of Modern politics, but, rather, quite sane in comparison and by the default of delegitimization. Thus wild thought is shown to be subversive, uncontrolled, and ultimately coherent according to its own frames of reference. The pansy is thus a metonymical frame not just for rebellion (Ophelia’s, against the irrational male-dominated state of biopolitical hysteria which characterizes the play), but for resurgence. The pansy as resurgence cannot be read as a metonym in sole reference

structure of frame metonymy in a cross-cultural context. These components are 1) associations as reference; 2) domains as cultural frames; 3) lexical and grammatical networks; that 4) produce transformative blends. In the figure below, I propose to apply the metonymical template below, with its core idea of the frame as a transformative dual foci, to Mandeville’s metonymical narrative structures.

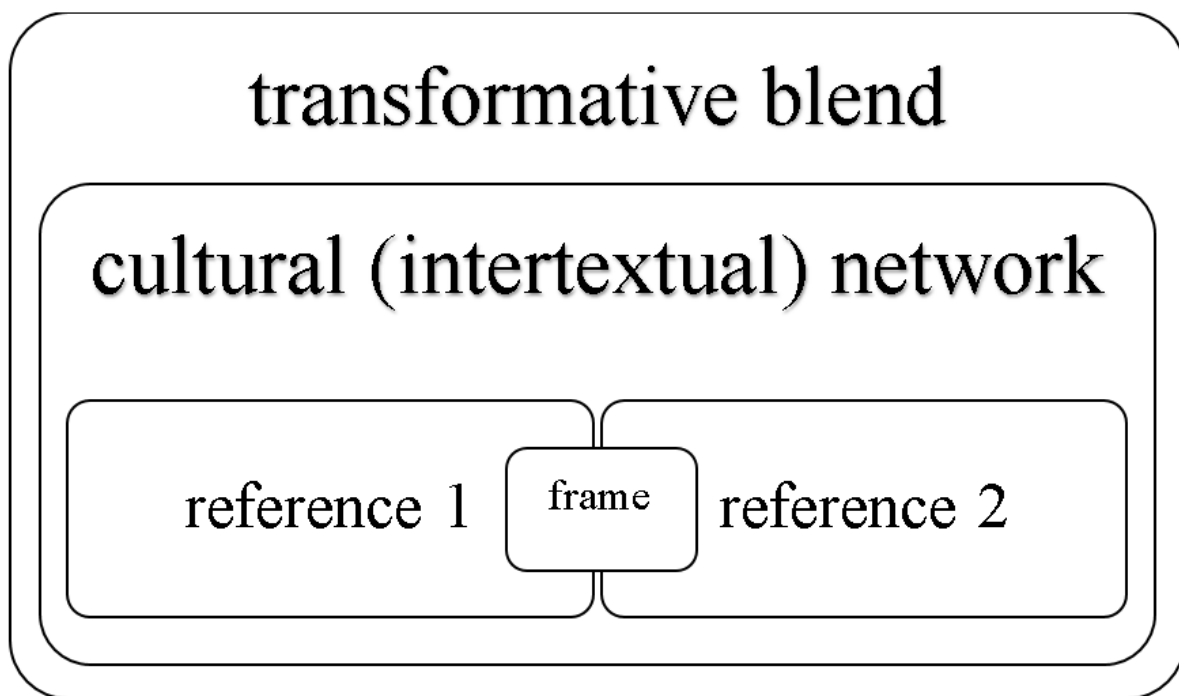


Figure 2.1: Frame Metonymy

There is one additional component—an “incarnate principle”—that underlies, “midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea,” all four components: 5) some latent ground or

to *Hamlet*, nor alone in *La Pensée Sauvage*, either. Both domains are needed in order to interpret Lévi-Strauss’s punning, yet also totally real, political message. The pansy both is a pansy, fragile yet important, and more, an idea, also fragile, constructed only between the associations between a primary text, an ethnographic text, and a critical-biographical text.

conceptualization of lived experience. This latent ground is laid, I believe, by Mandeville’s narrative topography—the verbal signs of his narrative collection or “cycle,” as it has been titled, that construe the “nonverbal sign systems” of lived experience by permitting the listener or reader to experience his story world as its own ground for intersemiotic as intertextual transformation.

Panther writes of lived experience that “metonymic meanings provide generic prompts that are fleshed out on the basis of background knowledge (world knowledge), the situation of the utterance and the linguistic context (co-text) in which the metonymic expression occurs” (148). As a southern student of literature, it is not easy for me to define all that lived experience entails for Dene inhabitants of the north, especially as it would have been during a time of great transition such as that which Mandeville witnessed. However, Mandeville’s story collection—or “story cycle,” as Scollon’s 2009 subtitle suggests—offers a rich array of literary—“intersemiotic”—life experience as a context for interpretation. After all, Mandeville states in the first of his elicited narratives, “Education,” that

It’s been said that our people didn’t teach each other,

but that isn’t true.

We have always taught each other.

Now I will tell you how people taught each other. (*This* 199)

He then proceeds to orate and transcribe narratives that overwhelmingly concern meat and the source of meat: animals.

In order to work towards a view of the narrative “situation of the utterance and the linguistic context (“co-text”) in which the metonymic expression occurs,” then, I will next summarize my findings of the work of the two “big-game” animals, caribou and moose, and then

conclude by applying the schema of frame metonymy to “meat” as it is embodied by these animals, which are the most “meaty” of sources of sustenance for hunters in the north. I will focus my “experience” of the presence of and narrative frames evoked by caribou and moose,³¹ who compose “meat” in the pragmatic sense, because they also operate in especially transformative ways, in story 1, “How Copper Was Discovered” (Mandeville, *This* 19-31) and story 11, “The Man Who Became a Wolf” (157-73). These animals serve as such—animals, biologically-bound creatures whose personal lives intersect in realistic landscapes with those of the protagonists—but also as “fragments of being” that evoke the dual foci of intertextual comparison in which the components of frame metonymy—1) reference; 2) cultural frame; 3) networks; 4) transformative blends—inform one another mutually, i.e., in an intertextually lively manner.³² In analyzing the presence of caribou and moose in Mandeville’s cycle, I hope to trace an emergent set of textually salient cultural frames for these animals—and thus to come to understand better their “motivic” blending through metonymical referencing—and thus I hope eventually to touch upon and to touch narrative animals as carnal matrices of Mandeville’s story cycle, where life and death—predation and perpetuation, affinity and affiliation—are worked out in mythopoeic ways. The motif that ultimately emerges, I anticipate, will be that of “flesh” in Merleau-Ponty’s sense of the living fragment, as indicated in the second epigraph to this chapter, but inflected peculiarly by Mandeville as “meat” to evoke and work through the hermeneutics of

³¹ There are, by my count, sixteen kinds of animals mentioned at least once in Mandeville’s story cycle, bears and wolves, maggots and puppies among them. See Appendix A for full details.

In future projects, I think it would be fruitful to include the significations of all these animal presences in an intertextual analysis of the story cycle. However, in order to come to understand more fully the metaphysical structures that animals surely embody in Mandeville’s narratives, I focus on caribou and moose in this chapter because they are such a common source of sustenance in the stories—and in northern lived experience—and therefore richly embody key cultural domains.

³² I read once that one cannot know the meaning of any story until it is finished; in the case of Mandeville’s story cycle, perhaps one cannot know the meaning of any one of the stories without reference to all his other stories.

ecological transformation—of contiguity and contingency—as an interpretative problem within lived experience.

Meat

Caribou appear in nine of the stories in Mandeville's story cycle (1-4, 6-8, 10, 11). First, I will give a quick schematic outline of each story, and then I will analyze how the schemas operate. Some of the most significant of these appearances occur in the first story, "How Copper Was Discovered" (Mandeville, *This* 19-31); in this story, caribou serve as guides to Copper Woman, a woman captured by enemies who runs away from them through an unfamiliar landscape. At the beginning of her flight, at the shore of the ocean, Copper Woman carefully observes caribou migrating through the water and decides that because the caribou are almost always walking, not swimming, she could follow them (12-25). Later, one caribou from the herd she follows serves as a source of meat for her; she spears, butchers, and cures the meat by laying it out on the ground to dry (25-27). Later still, when she notices a bright light in the sky and walks towards it (abandoning the route of the migrating caribou and the son she has borne to an enemy) she discovers "native copper" (naturally-occurring chunks of copper) that resembles meat lying on the ground (26, 28-29). After this point, her journey turns from the horizon and goes downwards when she guides some men to the copper and they rape her, although she enjoins them to act in a good way (30). Because she is angry, she and the copper sink down into the earth in four increments—the copper and Copper Woman become less and less visible and available until they are completely gone, hidden underground and therefore unattainable (30-31). In the second of the nine stories that mention caribou, "How Iron Was Discovered" (32-36), caribou trails guide Beaver Orphan, a powerful man, and his people to meat on the shore of the northern ocean, in the barren land, in the same territory of the enemies who took Copper Woman

(32). Beaver Orphan and his people discover caribou, which they kill for meat (33), and then chunks of iron, a material that initially, for them, bears only a partial analogy to more familiar materials such as stone and wood (33). The discovery of iron goes differently than copper; Beaver Orphan has a dream that guides him to sing over the iron, blow on it, and so split the hunk into more workable pieces (34-35). From these “small pieces like wood” (35), the people make arrowheads and speartips (35-36). So the metonymical process at work in story 1 can be schematized as: 1) trail; 2) guide, meat; 3) new alliance (with metal); 4) new environment and in story 2 as: 1) trail; 2) meat; 3) new encounter (with metal); 4) new weaponry (arrowheads and speartips for hunting and warring).

In stories 3 and 4, “Raven Head” (37-71) and “His Grandmother Raised Him” (72-74), tribal fortunes likewise change due to the absence or presence of caribou, but rather than caribou bodies serving as guides to migration, meat, or innovations in technology, in these two stories, caribou serve to form new kinds of human community. “Raven Head,” told in four parts (an important number in Dene cognition) vividly examines conflicts between leader and followers, brother and sister, and one tribe with another. The protagonist, Raven Head, is something of a trickster figure³³ who rises in power in the first two parts of the story and falls and dies in the latter two; caribou appear at the end of the second part of the story. Raven Head tells his brother that their dead relatives spear caribou “up north / at a caribou crossing” on the sandy edge of a lake (60), so the trickster and his brother canoe to the “lake with the caribou crossing” to be with their dead relatives, including their mother and father (60). Part two of the story ends with a short “epilogue”: “If people have done no wrong, when they die / they go to that place where Raven Head / and his brother canoed. This is what they say” (61).

³³ See especially the formation of a tail of snow when Raven Head runs unnaturally quickly through the snow ahead of his people (Mandeville, *This* 40, 48).

“His Grandmother Raised Him,” story 4, was narrated by Baptiste Forcier, an elder in Mandeville’s community in Fort Chipewyan; Mandeville, believing Forcier to be a superior storyteller, chose the story and asked Forcier to narrate it to Li (Scollon, “Narrative” 237). In this story, the protagonist, His Grandmother Raised Him, takes his grandmother away from a group of people who displeased him (72) and then goes and lives with caribou for a long time (73). When he returns to her, he brings a belt full of caribou tongues for them to eat (73). In another version of the story that is told by Fred Marcel (who is from the same community as Mandeville), it is stated that the protagonist “*was found in the moss by his grandmother*” and that he “*killed caribou by biting the end of their tongues*” (Scollon, “Narrative” 259-60). The presence and power of the tongue is intriguing: it suggests that the extraction of parts from metonymical wholes is transformative. Compare the extraction of body parts from wholes with the suction of blood from the body in order to become a better hunter in a Dene culture adjacent to Dene Suline, the Dane-zaa (Beaver), whose territory lies on the border between Alberta and British Columbia. A spiritual guide—“a big fat man” (Ridington and Ridington 155)—teaches a hunter how to go under the earth and form an affinity with his prey by sucking on the hunter’s forehead until he draws blood:

The big fat man leaned down
and put his lips to the man’s forehead.

He sucked and drew out blood.

He did the same thing on the back of his head—
and again he drew out blood.

“That’s why no animals like you,” he said.

“Now you can make friends.”

The big fat man took him with him
and he opened a doorway in the lick and they went inside. (Ridington and Ridington
155)³⁴

In the emergence system of the Dane-zaa, all animals originate from giant animals who live under the earth (Ridington, *Swan* 65). Robin Ridington comments that a “moose lick is a place where, the Dane-zaa say, the bodies of moose emerge from beneath the earth. It is a cosmic center where game trails converge and change direction. It is a place of shamanic transformation,” and, just as the “initiate [the hunter advised by the big fat man] himself passes through the portal of the moose lick, a place where moose lips touch the earth,” so the shamanic “lick sucks an initiate inside itself and into another world” (Ridington and Ridington 236). The acts of sucking blood and eating, perhaps even biting out, caribou tongues in these stories are, I think, analogous ritual acts upon transformative bodily thresholds that induce fleshly affinity with animals. This latter story in particular illustrates the power of the mouth as a source of life—in a sense, special words and stories are small animals that emerge from the cavern of the larger. But sucking is an act of atomic transfusion across membranes or transfiguration across boundaries. Biting, on the other hand, is a muscular cross-boundary act of ingestion leading not merely to exchange by passing through a portal from human to animal, but, rather, to an aggressive internalization of the threshold itself to induce total transformation, where that which once resided on the distal side of the boundary is drawn through to the aggressor’s proximal side of the boundary. In Forcier’s story, *His Grandmother Raised Him* and his grandmother return to the caribou who have, tongueless, died by a lake; the old woman butchers and dries all the meat,

³⁴ A “lick” is a place in the landscape where mineral salts have naturally accumulated. These deposits draw wild terrestrial ungulates much as a blue salt block in a goat pen draws goats. It seems likely to me that the big fat man is a moose—large and rather jowly as they are—in his human form, which is to say in a form that recognizably signifies personhood to the hunter, but this is conjecture at this point in my research.

which they then take to the protagonist's uncle's community to make a new life—and “since that time the caribou have lived together with people” (Mandeville, *This* 74). So in story 3, the schema for caribou is: 1) lakeside crossing; 2) meat; 3) new camp; 4) new life (heavenly). In story 4 it is: 1) tongues ingested; 2) meat; 3) new species alliance; 4) new human community with a new way of life.

In stories 6 and 7, “Old Axe—Story One” (93-105) and “Old Axe—Story Two” (106-16), the protagonist, Old Axe, suggests that his people invade another people's territory because there are lots of caribou and fish in that territory (story 6, 101) because there is a caribou crossing on a large lake full of fish (story 7, 106). Both stories involve the prospect of aggressive migration into others' territories for access to caribou migration. In story 8, “The Cannibal” (117-24), a human is captured by the Cannibal in an invisible snare and pretends to be dead when the Cannibal finds him (117). The Cannibal ties him up in “sunbeams” (117) and carries his prey home where his children call the human man the Cannibal's “caribou” and warn their father that he is “coming back to life” and escaping (119). This story suggests two things: one, that “animality” does not always predicate “meat”: rather, animality is, sometimes, a subcategory or subdomain of meat—to be prey is to be animal—to be *signum* (a sign) is to be *signatum* (the meaning). What a “caribou” is in a figurative sense, then, depends on who is hunting and who is being hunted. So in story 6, caribou work as: 1) trails; 2) meat; 3) invasion and takeover; 4) new territory. In story 7, caribou work as: 1) trails; 2) meat; 3) invasion and takeover; 4) new territory. And in story 8, as: 1) prey; 2) meat; 3) mutual predation; 4) undesirable new species that infiltrates the territories of skin itself. Interestingly, in story 8, the skin is infiltrated swarmwise: a Cannibal is decapitated; the human protagonist burns the skull which was following him; it turns into mosquitoes like a cloud of smoke who bite him (122-23).

Story 10, like stories 6 and 7, involves caribou trails and conflict; in “The Adventures of Beaulieu” (133–56), the protagonists, Mandeville and Beaulieu, infiltrate a camp of people by saying that they got lost hunting caribou since they could not find any tracks where they came from (140). These three stories suggest that caribou tracks and trails cross human camp and territorial boundaries in politically destabilizing ways. This destabilization also suggests that camps and lakeshores intersect with trails in a schematic sense: they are, as Panther suggests, “mental spaces” that “tap portions of frames stored in long-term memory,” so that “whenever a metonymic operation takes place a whole conceptual frame is activated” (161). This activation occurs when camp boundaries are penetrated by caribou tracks or trails and by those following them. Beaulieu and Mandeville also hunt moose, a high-stakes, high-yield game meat that increases their social leverage in the camp because they can provide a supply of meat even as they consume others’ supplies of meat (Mandeville, *This* 144, 152-54). Thus caribou/moose function in story 10 as: 1) trails; 2) meat; 3) invasion and takeover; 4) new community.

In the final story concerning caribou in Mandeville’s cycle, story 11, “The Man Who Became a Wolf” (157-73), caribou—and also moose—serve as prey for wolves. The ontological status of the wolves is defined by their relation to one another as hunters; the protagonist, Spread Wings, is actually a human man who has the special ability to transform into a wolf when he is old and in need of renewal—he “from time to time became a wolf. This is what they say” (157). When he becomes old on one occasion, a wolf who is always a wolf approaches him and speaks to him to remind him that “If you want to live longer on the earth / you must live with us again” (157). Spread Wings is initially reluctant—he “thought, ‘I don’t want to be a wolf again’”—and although he only thought the words, the wolf answers him by stating that if he does not, he will die soon (157). Spread Wings realizes that he “want[s] to live longer on this earth” (157) and so

“He immediately became a wolf” (158). This crisscrossing between discursive speech-thought-speech with human-wolf-human communication leads to utterance so powerful it becomes relational ontology: Spread Wings says “I will become a wolf again” (157) and instantly he does so—a chiasm between desire and transformation comparable to the relationship between fury and sinking down for Copper Woman or biting and eating caribou tongues for His Grandmother Raised Him.

It is only once Spread Wings has assented to becoming and so becomes a wolf that he realizes the wolf who is always a wolf is actually an old woman. She addresses him as “grandson” and guides him north to hunt caribou (158). Spread Wings’s reluctance to transform into a wolf becomes understandable in the narrative that follows: it is always difficult for them to find meat. But not only does the grandmother/wolf guide Spread Wings to meat, she also teaches him how to hunt caribou, to eat it slowly so as not to become ill, to howl or sing for others who may be nearby and hungry to share in the game, and to cache the excess meat in the snow for others to use if they are hungry (158-61). This suggests to me that although Spread Wings has become a wolf before, each time he transforms, he must relearn how to hunt and survive. Such skills are a matter of pragmatic survival, to be sure, but they are also, more conceptually, a kind of epistemological movement across ontological boundaries where that which is known is peculiar to and therefore predicated by species-specific relations, i.e., to “herds” or “packs”—or to human “camps.” Movement for transformative knowing demands—must be predicated by—trans-species affinity: so a wolf becomes a grandmother—or, perhaps more accurately, a human becomes a wolf’s pup.

Moose occur less frequently than caribou in Mandeville’s story cycle, but they are an integral part of Spread Wings’s story. After hunting caribou for some time, the grandmother/wolf

and he come to find it extremely difficult to find meat. They begin to starve. At last, the grandmother/wolf guides Spread Wings away from the barren land and into the forest to look for moose (162). Moose are more difficult to find because they make tracks, not trails³⁵ (less permanent signs according to less predictable foraging movements) and are also much, much larger and therefore more difficult to kill even when using the cooperative hunting techniques that the grandmother/wolf teaches Spread Wings. However, in the woods, the grandmother/wolf eventually finds moose tracks, and says, “Grandson, / this is meat” (162). The triumph and assurance implied by this metonymical statement is predicated upon hunters in difficult hermeneutical situations in all the stories leading up to this one; just as Copper Woman, Raven Head and his younger brother, His Grandmother Raised Him and his grandmother, Old Axe, and the two Métis looking for a camp to make their own persist in seeking sustenance by observing and then manipulating the natural and social metaphysics of their environments,³⁶ so do the wolves. The moose they catch together by its leg tendon, nose, and belly (163-64) is meat intensified. It is harder to catch and kill, and it must be consumed in even more explicitly incremental stages, organized by substance, than caribou—first, the wolves are to drink the blood; second, to eat some muscle; third, only after their stomachs have readjusted to food, to eat some fat; and fourth, they must howl or sing for others who may be hungry to join them (164-65). This high-stakes meat demands an anatomy of ingestion that is three-parts flesh and one-part social.

In the latter portion of “The Man Who Became a Wolf,” the grandmother/wolf reproduces (but not with Spread Wings) and together they teach her pups to hunt caribou in the winter (169) and moose in the spring or summer (169-71). They hunt and sing until meat again

³⁵ And are, as Margery Fee comments, not herd animals.

³⁶ Likewise but inversely for the human who escapes being caribou for the Cannibal.

becomes scarce. This time, the grandmother/wolf sends Spread Wings back to his own “pack,” which is to say his own species’s camp. Her pack is weak from hunger and could use his hunting skills, yet the grandmother/wolf—who is also, now, a mother by filiation as well as a grandmother by affinity—tells Spread Wings to go back to live with his relatives and to always leave a little meat for wolves when he hunts and kills (172). He is to “remember this as long as you live when you kill something” (172). She then says, “Now we’ll sing, / and then you go back to your people” (172). And so “They all sang for him, / and then Spread Wings left them” (172). Just as Mandeville’s wordplay fills the mouth with food (“ζεθέν”) so that homophony becomes sustenance, the wolves’ polyphonic song is shown to fill the muskeg with the intersemiotic—yet metonymically unified—transformations necessary not just for their own survival but also others’ survival.

Spread Wings’s transition back to humanity seems, then, to follow from two events: 1) deliberately self-aware yet selfless animal sacrifice; and 2) human retention of the principle of sacrifice learned while allied with the animal, for Spread Wings and his kin are always to remember to leave a sampling—a signature—of meat for his affiliative kind. So Spread Wings retains a “style of being” by reserving a “fragment of being” (meat) for wolves as he becomes emergent from wolves, although he could not do the opposite (retain hunting techniques in his shift from human to wolf in the first place). This story suggests to me that humanity is dependent upon animality to learn the ethics of survival but also for direction in the aesthetics of living—i.e., empathy through sacrifice but also communal discourse raised to the affective excess of song—song as an excess of homophony and polyphony that takes the human back to itself by way of the animal. It is only through song that the meat can be shared.

Spread Wings, still in wolf form, encounters a lone human on the edge of a lake, approaches him “on four legs” (172) and speaks to the human, explaining that he is one of his own. Although the man is scared and has a gun, he does not shoot (173); instead, he quietly goes back to his home and brings Spread Wings human clothing, saying nothing to the other humans in the camp (173). Spread Wings goes into the woods to don this clothing and emerges human; together, they go back to the people” and Spread Wings tells them “about how he had been a wolf”—and “That’s how he became a person again” (173). Thus caribou/moose in story 11 might be said to follow the schema: 1) trails and tracks; 2) meat; 3) new species alliance; 4) new hunting practices and new body.

Discussion and Conclusion

To summarize cumulatively, then, using the four key components of frame metonymy—1) reference; 2) cultural frame; 3) networks; 4) transformative blends—caribou/moose across Mandeville’s narratives can be observed most often to move from a reference by 1) signs, symbolic trails or tracks; to 2) signify the cultural frame of “meat,” or sustenance, whether animate and on the move or butchered, eaten, shared, and cached; which leads to 3) networks of transformation between groups—herds, camps, swarms, packs—whenever a protagonist comes into contact with a caribou or moose; in order to 4) bring two points of view together and achieve transformation. Ultimately, I think this transformation leads to the mental space 5) phenomenological flesh as a mutable perpetuation of multiple ways of being that are predational according to relational rules of sacrifice. Sacrifice in the sense of becoming animal—and of becoming human.

The target frame “meat” evoked by the source “trails” brings into dual focus disparate species to generate networks of predation and perpetuation that might be characterized by

“alliance” (affinity, affiliation, extension, elaboration, transfusion, transfiguration, transformation). These networks operate within and between the narratives by coeval contradistinctions, i.e., by overlapping frames to produce co-texts—“co(n)texts,” in other words. For example, tribes are defined by different languages spoken (story 1), caribou meat and native copper by the surfaces and depths of the earth (story 1), iron from wood (story 2), the before life from the after life (story 3), human comestibles from nonhuman comestibles (stories 4 and 8), the leader’s loyalty towards his chosen camp versus false affiliation with his target (enemy) camp (stories 6 and 7), warm-blooded beings from parasitical swarms (story 8), allied individuals and divided camps (story 10), and wolf packs from human settlements (story 11). The one constant, “meat”—the cultural frame (2) always evoked by variable references (1)—thus emerges as a consistent metonymical target domain emerging from networks (3) coordinated by opposing yet overlapping nexus that come into “dual focus” often through bodily exchanges (in whole or part) to generate transformative blends (4)—blends that are the product of intensive, almost volcanic, fusions and fissions between ontological positions for the sake of generating life.

These fusions and fissions operate by environmental contingencies conducted by caribou trails and moose tracks and by cognitive analogies between like and unlike—culture and language, colors and shapes, textures, life and death, physical anatomy, spraying blood and swarming insects, charisma, and the ethics and aesthetics of hunting. But to return to a question I ask above—which predicates which, contingency and contiguity or analogy?—I would like to suggest that the mutual semiological interdependence that always characterizes the emergent ground of meaning in Mandeville’s transformative narrative “syntax” ultimately demands mental

agility—analogue thinking—before, but not exclusive of, experiential ability—mastery of ecological contiguity and contingency. Panther suggests that

metonymy involves semantic contiguity, which manifests itself as positional similarity. . .

The metonymic operation occurs in a specific syntactic position in the sentence and is therefore paradigmatic, but the relation between the metonymic source and its target is one of semantic contiguity. (150)

And he elaborates by proposing that “[i]f it is assumed that metonymy is a case of indexicality, the contingency of the metonymic relation follows automatically” (155). But in the context of Mandeville’s story cycle, it seems to me that both contiguity and contingency between competing species in a challenging physical environment compete with multivalent analogy in an equally challenging discursive mental environment. Thus there are no automatic allies, but only alliances formed by great struggle between analogical entities that converge and diverge to generate their interdependent significations. Just as meat and story are interdependently constructed, for Mandeville, then, interdependent hermeneutics require deeply analogical creative construals of contingency and contiguity. These construals are mental “packets” that mutually index each other.

While the scope of this chapter permits only a sampling of the work of animals in Mandeville’s narratives, I would like to suggest that some of the domains or mental packets conjoined by networks such as caribou trails and moose tracks in the stories are: planes—sea, ice, barren land/muskeg, forest, perhaps sky; circles—tribe, herd, metal mine, stomach, shoreline, inlet, lake, snare, net, camp, tent, firepit, skull/brain, swarm, pack, den, cache; and centres that are penetrated—a woman’s body by rape; lakes by canoes; mouths by tongues removed; atomised skulls by fire and club; forest groves by tracks; packs by song. So, to return

to the metonymical structure predicated on the core idea of dual focus, Merleau-Ponty's proposition that flesh as a "style of being wherever there is a fragment of being" is, in Mandeville's story cycle, growth that blends perspective or position between domains or packets with attributes that are defined by exchange—a sort of intersemiotic transfusion—between interior/exterior, not just between biological species or chemical composition or even instrumental function.

For the figure I show below, the ground from which the transformative blend of meaning that emerges from meat as flesh may be described, alternatively to interior/exterior, as emergent from networks between containment/penetration, ingestion/regurgitation, extension/intension, or predation/perpetuation. I call this ground flesh, flesh revealed as such by the hunter (interpreter), because flesh signifies the "connective tissue of exterior and interior horizons" (Merleau-Ponty 131) that storytelling demands. Because hunting is a transitional or peripheral activity like sickness, rape, and death,³⁷ it enacts and thus makes visible the connective tissue that narrative brings forth. In other words, hunters go beyond the edge of their camp or herd or swarm or pack where they encounter the edge of another "herd"; the boundaries between groups blur in the process, which is hard work requiring predictive empathy for the quarry so radical that often the hunter merges with and emerges from her or his prey. Figuratively, Mandeville hunts the inner animal across the convex horizon of the skull; in hunting it he becomes it, inverting the inner horizon to become an ever-concaving extension of his lived physical and conceptual environment.

³⁷ Margery Fee suggests that childbirth could also be construed to fit this category.

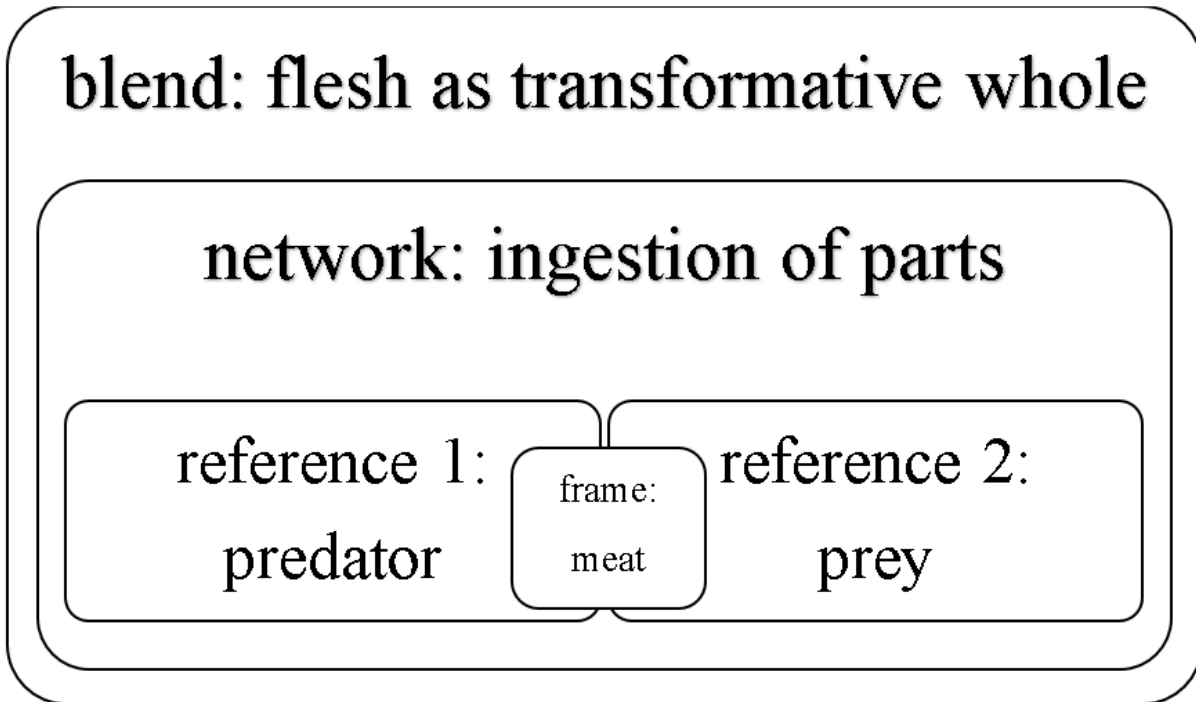


Figure 2.2: Frame Metonymy—*zetθén* (Caribou/Meat)

Mandeville’s story cycle, then—its cursive artistry, its verbal specificities, and its intertextual sequencing—is a working translation, a translation that works for its transformation, a kind of hunting that moves between the fissions and fusions of spoken and written language. It is an intertextual text, a body of narrative in which predator and prey encompass one another “to speak through one another,” as Bringhurst puts it, demonstrating how verbal- and non-verbal signs encompass—engulf—ingest—one another—for there is no *signatum* without the *signum*—but there is also no sign without its meaning. One animal needs another. Thus Mandeville’s story cycle has the potential to make a zoology of humanity—this is his “motivic” ontology, the movement of cognitive positions and of movement between positions. If so, Mandeville’s theory of humanity and animality—constructed by and between perspectives cursive, discursive, incursive, recursive—“meat” that is flesh self-aware, not merely a “thing, but a possibility, a

latency” that, recurved in narrative form, becomes a “veritable touching of the touch” (Merleau-Ponty 133)—is as complex as and comparable to the insights of other philosophers of being. Michel Foucault’s “zoophyte”—where “[p]lace and similitude become entangled” and “we see mosses growing on the outsides of shells, plants in the antlers of stags, a sort of grass on the faces of men” to make some manner of “strange zoophyte” that, “by mingling together the properties that make it similar to the plants as well as to the animals, also juxtaposes them” (20–21)—Jacques Derrida’s “l’animot”—the animal-word that seeks to “open[. . .] onto the referential experience of the thing as such, as what it is in its being (416)—or even to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s “anomal” (42), which is constituted by an “Alliance or the pact” that is a “form of expression for an infection or epidemic constituting the form of content” (45) in order to “border each multiplicity,” to be the “precondition for the alliance necessary to becoming,” and to carr[y] the transformation of becoming or crossings of multiplicities always farther down the line of flight” (46-47) advocate a similar textual ecology, although none of their works might guide a hungry hunter to meat in the tundra. So Mandeville’s narratives compose a uniquely northern mode of becoming-animal—that is to say, becoming-new through ever-new relations. His metonymical alliances lead to new forms, to a metonymical form of forms that is forever in conversation with itself, forever translating breath and words and blood and flesh between enemies and allies.

In traditional Dene hunting practices, a man who wants to hunt successfully sleeps with his head towards the rising sun so that the approaching light will cast his dream self forward onto the right trails to find meat (Ridington, *Little* 69). And Dene hunters can find in their dreams the “source of trails and the origin of game” (Brody 45). Good hunting depends on knowing these trails (45). Those who have the skill of dream-hunting can also tell others how to find trails to

“get to heaven” while avoiding “wrong trails”—“heaven is to one side of, and at the same level as, the point where the trails to animals all meet” (47). Perhaps similarly, then, Mandeville is a hunter who stands in front of a sun that is story; his narrative shadow streams in front of him as the hermeneutic incarnate,³⁸ as game that goes before him on a trail that travels between and across all the world’s boundaries—like and unlike Dante’s Virgil. Likewise, Copper Woman stands on the shore and looks out across the horizon to observe that “caribou are walking across the ocean, / but they don’t come back” (Mandeville, *This* 23). As she contemplates leaving her captors, she reasons that although “There is no land [she] can see in that direction,” there “must be land lying right underneath the surface” (23). Thus she decides, “I’ll follow the caribou,” for “If I die, I am not with my relatives anyway” (23). And when a wolf follows game spoor to say, “Grandson, / this is meat,” the utterance signifies that moments of death or near death are recurrent nexus of exchange. This is why a hunter endures blood-letting by a “big fat man”—so that he can “renew contact with the animals and continue the hunter’s ‘holy occupation’ of transforming animals into human food” (Ridington and Ridington 244). There is perhaps, in Dene poetics, a bloody relationship between enemies and allies—the line between enemy and ally seems not to follow categories of kin, filiation, or language, but rather broad, cyclical movements between fleshy and meaty domains. This continual form of return is essential to

³⁸ The shadow is cast by the rising sun and is the dreaming hunter moving forward on trails that he will subsequently follow in waking life. The shadow moves in front of the dreamer because that is the vision of the dreamer in the senses of sight and of prescience. This resembles the culture hero, who, in Kaska, is called:

Suguya [and who] may be considered a medicine man or shaman of mythic times. He is also called *Yamadeya*, a name derived from *yd* ‘heaven’, *md* ‘edge, boundary’, and *deya* ‘he goes’. His exploits in killing the giant animals that preyed on humans established a boundary between the world of the mythological giant animals and the contemporary world. (Moore, *Point* 189)

Like the swan, this hero follows the course of the sun (Ridington 1978). It is also interesting to note that in the subarctic, the shadows at the beginning and end of the day are very, very long: they reach much farther than they do in the south of Canada, and for much longer during the spring and fall: so the idea of a shadow traveling a great distance in dreams makes sense once one has seen the long shadows of trees cast on to trees in the low northern light.

Mandeville's symbiotic metaphysics of life and death. There is a continuous sinking down and rising up, a going in and a coming out. These stories are "reincarnation" embodied, as an ever-unfinished migration between the two sources for analogy, contiguity and contingency, necessity and dream, a hermeneutics of sacrifice for working through the interpretative problem that is lived experience.

If this is so, then the "human" as a positional construal of narrative topography must constantly be rearticulated; it is constantly shifting with letters on the page and oral sequences and migrating caribou that follow patterns according to a germ of anatomical articulation—schema—so that that which is inner, flesh, is exposed as meat, sustenance, and that which is exposed becomes hidden. "ῥεθέν" is one example of how language draws to the attention of the listener and the reader of Mandeville's narratives the unity and translatability of the world within itself, for itself, by itself.

In terms of my larger framework, where narrative revitalization is defined by centering and shifting at all levels of context and content to renew languages, narratives, and interlocutors, Mandeville's stories exemplify a form of deictic reference and shift based on sound: sound itself references the interconnections between species—most importantly, in this chapter, through homophony, where shifts in reference function as a sonic whole: meat is caribou, caribou is meat—sound is life, life is sound.

Analogically, Mandeville composed his collection as a sonic whole, such that deictic references arise between: 1) the encounters that occur between humans and animals in the narratives (sourced in the content of the narratives): occur between wolf and caribou; 2) pertain to the orator and the transcriber and, often, translator (accessible through archival research and oral interviews): who are Mandeville, Li, Scollon, and Scollon; to allow 3) comparisons of the

cultural methods and theories followed by translators, re-translators, and back-translators to produce different or new textual iterations of the same narratives (media transformations, re-translations): which I hope to do by someday interviewing Suzie Wong Scollon; and considering 4) historical receptions of the narratives by reading and listening communities (language and narrative revitalization): by visiting Fort Chipewyan and the tar sands.

In terms of deictic centers: 1) animal utterances in connotative or reported speech and conversation with humans and in denotative or direct speech and conversation with humans within the narratives (dialogical deixis): are focused squarely on “Grandson, / This is meat” as frame metonymy (Panther 2006); 2) the occasion for, social context of, and process of recording these narratives—the human interlocutors, artists, thinkers, scholars (pragmatic deixis): is the collaborative work between Li and Mandeville; and 3) the cultural and disciplinary methods and objectives that have contributed to the framing and reframing of the narratives (cultural deixis): include sociolinguistics, ethnopoetics; while 4) the epistemological systems that result from reading these books from textual products back into epistemological processes (cosmological deixis): imply, for me, an interstitial intertextuality. Deictic shifts include, then: 1) human and animal: wolf and human; 2) orator and textualizer: Mandeville and Li; 3) spaces geographical and cosmographical: mythic time, 1929, now; and 4) times past and future: including those of Mandeville and Li, Li and Scollon, Scollon and Scollon—and myself, as reader.

In a way, teaching listeners and readers how to “read” all things is one of Mandeville’s many objectives. But it is not just reading. He teaches his listeners and readers how to translate. Mandeville advocates a hermeneutics of intersemiotic translation—in Jakobson’s words, this is a form of “intersemiotic” translation that is really “*transmutation*” (“On Linguistic” 233), a transmutation fully embodied, translation made flesh, wherein hunger for the word and hunger in

the world motivate cognitive exchanges between species—human and wolf—as signs that indicate a shifting of radically different perspectives. Perhaps the point is not so much where one ends up but that one is in motion—a point of view very much in keeping with the work of literary interpretation and with lives human and animal moving across a deadly beautiful northern landscape shot through with permafrost and pocked with muddy depths. Both demand pursuit of mutable forms of sustenance along dually-intermittent lines of sight that pass over depths of unknowable threat. To return to my epigraphs. Both, in a sense, follow the caribou. Ontological sympathy—alignment, homophony, polyphony—is essential to the perpetuation of both self and other. This is a form of excess that feeds itself. This is a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. This is meat. This is what they say.

Chapter Three

“I will be popular with the Campfire People, so ha, ha, ha’: Porcupine and Lynx on How to Love in *K’tl’egh’i Sukdu/A Dena’ina Legacy*”³⁹



Introduction

I open this chapter with two visual epigraphs. The first photo is of a mountain in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska. The day which I took this photo was dark and cloudy, and the holy mountain, Denali itself, was not visible. A Navajo colleague with whom I was traveling said a pollen prayer in any case. This mountain, part of the same chain, was more visible and still heady in its steepness and height, so I took its photo. I took the second photo in the basement of the Alaska Native Language Archive, a major archive for Dene-language documentation, in particular—and a potential source for Dene-language revitalization. The labels on the files represent many lifetimes of collaborative work, and, in the case of the label on the far right, the mountains of work still to come in properly cataloging these lifetimes of language—and,

³⁹ I am very grateful to include a number of comments throughout this chapter from Alan Boraas, who kindly read this chapter, shared a number of helpful insights about his work with Peter Kalifornsky, and gave me permission to quote him, which I do in the form of footnotes.

implicitly, of story, relationship, connection. I did not realize until after I took both photos how similar they are—they represent anchors to navigations physical and intellectual; they record a contiguity of inconvenience—both are iconic but not *the* icon (many of these files have yet to be catalogued); their colors encode a stormy background, illuminated by a middle ground. Perhaps this last similarity is rather too metaphorical in the case of the cloud-grey archival files and sky-white labels, but as with any human undertaking, the archive has seen its stormy days.

In this chapter, I want to integrate my experiences in Alaska with encountering a Dene scholar of Dene whose strong vision concerning Indigenous languages and literatures inspired him to create a remarkable archive for future readers and speakers to learn from. His name was Peter Kalifornsky (1911-93), and he lived most of his life in Alaska, in one of the few Dene territories situated next to the ocean (southern Oregon and northern California are the others). His residency on the northwest coast gave him access to Seattle, California, and New Mexico, among other places, while the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska is where Kalifornsky's Dena'ina people have a long history of interaction with other Dene and Inuit peoples as well as Russian settlers.

Today, there are perhaps eighty people who speak Dena'ina. Kalifornsky was the first Dena'ina person to write in his language, Dena'ina Qenaga, and he did so for many decades, working to revitalize his language and culture and producing, with a linguist named James Kari and an anthropologist named Alan Boraas, the dual-language collection *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu/A Dena'ina Legacy: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky* (1991).⁴⁰ This collection contains

⁴⁰ Two earlier books by Peter Kalifornsky also exist: *Kahtnuht'ana Qenaga: The Kenai People's Language* (1977), and *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: Remaining Stories* (1984). Both are dual-language, like *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu*. This chapter can engage with only a very small portion of Kalifornsky's total work, which I hope to write about further—in addition to Shem Pete's narratives.

However, in Appendix B, I summarize the contents of each of these works and compare them for the purpose of fleshing out the archival process that is shaping Kalifornsky's legacy.

Because I quote only from *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu/A Dena'ina Legacy*, in the body of this chapter, all parenthetical references to Kalifornsky's work belong only to that book.

many dense and very direct traditional stories, or sukdu, as well as Kalifornsky's original poetry, word lists, and language-lessons. It was transcribed by Kalifornsky and translated by Kari, Kalifornsky, and Boraas.⁴¹ It is this collection that remains the sole focus of this chapter as I, unlike elsewhere in my dissertation, try to infer from it all the interpretive cues necessary to address one of the central themes of my dissertation, narrative revitalization.

As his collaborators put it, "Kalifornsky believed the stories in *A Dena'ina Legacy* . . . had meaning in today's world and would affect current and future generations," and "His intent was not only to archive stories of a distant time, but also to provide conceptual tools through which the present could be informed by the wisdom of the past" (xviii). What, then, are some of these conceptual tools? I identify these in my methodology section, deploy them further in a section on close reading, and conclude with the suggestion that, in this chapter, the archive itself may be interpreted to function as a manifestation of k'etch eltani, the prophetic practice of true belief through seeking visionary dreams (Boraas, "Work" 3), and that this is one of Kalifornsky's primary conceptual tools for teaching people how to connect, form community, and even express cross-species love—as loyalty, sacrifice, and respect.

Method: Some Conceptual Tools (Aural, Animal, Grammatical)

If it was Kalifornsky's literary praxis to create an archive not just of cultural knowledge but of linguistically-encoded, multi-functional, culturally-mobile knowledge, then he created a dual-language published archive for wide circulation within and beyond his community that was meant to be used for its own interpretation. Kalifornsky traversed the orality-literacy divide, the

⁴¹ A full description of this relationship is given in Jim Kari's introductory essay: "Peter usually adds the English translations in a second phase. For the 1977 and 1984 books, Peter and I often discussed the English and made minor modifications in the translations. This process has continued with Peter, Alan, and me during the editing of this book. Some of the earlier translations were adjusted, especially as we coordinated the numbered paragraphs for this edition. Also many of his writings since 1985 were initially written only in Dena'ina. For most of these, I did the first English translation, which Peter and Alan reviewed and amplified. I supplied most of the literal translations in the book, which are presented within square brackets []" (Kari, "Writing" xxx-xxx).

divide about which so much has been written and theorized. He has also traversed generic divides by recording sukdu and composing lyric poetry. Yet his teachings are resolutely traditional.

I take a particular interest in deictic references to personhood through the aural dimensions of animism by focusing on articulations of personhood (pronouns) with the archive. And so I am interested in how to interpret Kalifornsky's archival praxis in terms that come not solely from institutional or technological contexts but hopefully from the content of the archive itself—from the teachings offered in Kalifornsky's sukdu—which mainly concern how to treat animals in a good way, so that animals in turn will allow humans to survive. Further, I am interested in how his approach conjoins dichotomies of media (oral/written), time (pre-/post-contact), language (Indigenous/European), genre (traditional/original), and personhood (human/non-human).

I try in this chapter to mobilize clearly my core methodology concerning the animal and the grammatical by identifying and aligning this method with some of the conceptual tools inherent within Kalifornsky's work. These tools may be meant, in part, to permit the interpretation of the many dualisms listed above by deriving certain linked elements from Kalifornsky's stories, songs, poems, and word lists. My linkages between them are also my conceptual tools: the aural, the animal, and the grammatical, just as it is in my other chapters. But unlike the other chapters, this chapter also suggests a material link between Kalifornsky's thoughts and his pages: it was his method to write certain key words on a blackboard that he owned and then think about them before incorporating them into his stories.

The Aural

Breathing flesh, bone, sedimentary slate, and limestone are brought together in his mind to extend his thoughts past his mind, past these materially intercalated sites of transcription, and onto the page. Kalifornsky's method began with slate and sound:

Peter does some preliminary outlining prior to writing. This is often in the form of a few key words or concepts placed on a blackboard that he keeps for this purpose. These words become part of his next written work. (Kari, "Writing" xxx)

These words are like bones that are necessary for the rebirth of animals—a concept which I comment on further below. First, some examples of Kalifornsky's word/bones, based on the g—gg sound, quoted in the sequence he listed on the blackboard and then typed up for the archive and eventual publication:

gini, this here

gindi, here it is

gindu, this here?

gundu, this guy here?

gudi, over here

guni, horse

guluba, cow

gushga, cat

glabi, bedbug

gega, berrys [sic]

gedlut, seaweed

gantsa, huckleberry

dghelggey, white

itgguy, white grey

k'guggesh, belly lining

k'ggukena, blubber

k'ggena, claws

lega, squirrel

lik'aggwa, puppy

ggagga, bear

ggenaga, word language

beyiga, his shadow. (434)

This is not the whole list, but this example illustrates two things about the power of sound for Kalifornsky: 1) word-initial sounds move inward as he progresses in his contemplation of sounds; and 2) the interplay between sound and that which is referenced by the word to which it belongs is not always grammatical in terms of conjugation but also poetic derivation. For example, “ggenaga” leads to “beyiga”—word language to his shadow. I also think the deictics “gini” and “gindi” are a fascinating way to begin this meditative list—perhaps deictics make a good starting point for theory (mine) as well as practice (Kalifornsky’s).

These words in the list above are mnemonic, metonymic, and etymological at the level of sound. Their deposition reanimates the life of language in Kalifornsky’s mind. It seems to me that these derivational tools form the core of Kalifornsky’s narratives and his lyrics. It is a precept of cognitive-linguistic theory, upon which I draw at times for my project, that form-meaning pairings are significant—potentially iconic, in Peircean terms—all the way from the

phonological to the discourse levels of human speech (Dancygier 6-7).⁴² This creative form of generating words is ratified, at least in Navajo, by Robert Young's comment that:

In the verb system of Navajo lexical derivation involves four broad processes: (1) the straight forward use of verbal roots and adverbial-derivational prefixes, with their base meanings; (2) extension of base root meaning, often by metaphor, to permit application to disparate concepts; (3) figurative use of adverbial-derivational prefixes and prefix compounds; and (4) idiom. (1)

While Young refers to derivation, not conjugation, and stops at the level of the word, his principle implies the necessity of creative interpretations of creative iconicities apart from, or at least in addition to, indexical meaning-making (cf. Field 2009).

And as Anthony Webster writes, in *Intimate Grammars* (2015a) of poetic iconicity, or expression of felt attachment, phonological variation in Navajo is crucial to the freedom of marking emotions as a form of expanding the possibilities of referential meaning imaginatively. Or, as Webster puts it in another place, echoing (quite intentionally) Sapir,

one way of thinking about linguistic relativity is in the ways that languages eventuate imaginative potentials. Such imaginative potentials, of course, will run the gamut of syntax, semantics, morphology, phonology, etc. ("In Favor" 122)

The purpose of these iconicities of emotion is, according to Bakhtin, that chorister of texts, to move through quietude, whereby "disturbance of quietude by sound is mechanical and physiological (as a condition of perception)" to silence, wherein "somebody speaks (or somebody does not speak)" (133-34). From silence, which he conceptualizes similarly to the soundscape in my Wolverine chapter, there is derived the word.

⁴² For example, $\gamma\epsilon\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu$, the word/s for meat and caribou in Denesuline, as I show in chapter two, allow for sound-based metonymy that shapes the entire logic of a narrative.

Bakhtin defines the meaning of sound, which I call the soundscape, as “Silence—intelligible sound (a word)—and the pause constitute a special logosphere, a unified and continuous structure, an open (unfinalized) totality” (134). This totality has the “word as the final (highest) goal” (134). Thus, the range of meaning moves from quietude>silence>word>logosphere.⁴³ Within this range, the soundscape of Kalifornsky’s work permits the “eventuat[ion of] imaginative potentials,” as Webster puts it, from sound>word>breath>story. The prosodic power of sound of course varies depending on genre; but even in less well-analyzed genres, as I quote Dell Hymes pointing out, in my introduction, have a persuasive aural quality—and this is true even in written form. In Kalifornsky’s words, “We’re talking. But by studying the writing, you see the movement behind the words. Then they go into higher words, too” (McNamara 497). I think Bakhtin might have come to understand Kalifornsky’s point: from the silence of print—intelligible sound: that which goes higher—a logosphere that, cloudy, windy, snowy, stormy, lives and breathes life into the animal and human people who embody, bone and flesh, the sound of love.

Close Reading

It starts with Kalifornsky’s song, “Potlatch Song of a Lonely Man,” “Hqquetitl’ K’elik’a Ch’tunik’naszeden” (Kalifornsky, *Dena’ina* 466-68). This song comes at the end of his collection, but it was one of the first things he dreamed before writing his first Dena’ina story—in English. He dreamed the melody for first part of this song just a few months before he met Jim Kari, his long-time writing teacher, collaborator, student, and friend, in 1972, at a potlatch, an

⁴³ Which is defined as a duality of that which is unrepeatable and that which is always repeated: “Understanding—recognition of repeated elements of speech (i.e., language) and intelligent understanding of the unrepeatable utterance. Each element of speech is perceived on two planes: on the plane of the repeatability of the language and on the plane of the unrepeatability of the utterance. Through the utterance, language joins the historical unrepeatability and unfinalized totality of the logosphere” (134).

instance of a revived practice at that time (Kari, “Writing” xxix). He dreamed the second part of this song in 1974, as he was learning to write in his language (Kalifornsky 481).

In an early, English-language piece of writing about the potlatch that inspired his dream, Kalifornsky says, the “song mentions the relatives, friends, aunts, and so on. That they may come in with love and cheer,” while in the “second part of the song, the same words are used. That was to everyone. . . . That’s why the song can’t be sold, but the song could be used by any tribe under permission. That is, permission for their respected” (374). The old relatives are sung about first, and then new people are sung about—using many of the same words but for new—or seemingly new—people. Boraas writes, in a biography of Kalifornsky included near the end of Kalifornsky’s collection, that the “concept of community included land and animals as well as human beings. It is the rebirth of this concept of community that Peter is talking about in the second verse of this song” (qtd. in Kalifornsky 481). There are other songs that are meant to be sung all day (Kizzia A1).⁴⁴ Kalifornsky’s potlatch song is meant to be sung over many lifetimes. And it is a gift to be used in a good way.

In the song, Kalifornsky first sings slowly of loss. Then he sings a second part that is faster in tempo, almost twice as fast. I have learned to play this song on my guitar because the musical notation is included in his book.⁴⁵ I learned through practicing the song on my guitar that the melody reaches and then returns to a repeated range. I also learned that it is hard to replicate voice with strings—grace notes do not represent the “(unfinalized) totality” of the voice very well. I learned that, to approximate the voice, harmonics work better than plucked strings—

⁴⁴ “Kalifornsky also learned the traditional Dena’ina songs that were hummed all day to focus the mind. ‘Like prayer, something like praying all the time,’ Kalifornsky said of the songs in 1991” (Kizzia A1).

⁴⁵ Alan Boraas comments, “I had a tape of Peter singing the two verses and asked a local concert pianist, Maria Allison, if she could/would write it as a musical score. She did, I then bought a music template and staff paper and with a drafting pen wrote the score on page 468.

Peter had several version of this song. One includes the line ‘where are we scattered to like dust in the wind.’ The line came to him while he was sweeping the floor and dust swirled up from his broom.”

suggesting that even instruments are better when they echo certain values or ranges: aural plurality, in the sense of resonance, permits a more organic logosphere.

The words are also relevant: Kalifornsky sings, slowly and low, “Endi’ina ya bach’a’ina ya ada il shu nagh qinqtudeł? / Uhi yuhi” (466). Then in the next verse, faster and higher, he sings, “Nał ch’indaqna ya nagh qinqudatl’, nagh qinqtudeł. / Uhi yuhi” (466). In his English translation: “Where are our loved ones who might come to us with kindness? / *Uhi yuhi*” and “Our relatives have come back to us, have come back to us. / *Uhi yuhi*” (467). Maybe Kalifornsky was singing in the silence lest it become quietude. Boraas comments that “The second verse, said Boraas, was a testament to the power Peter Kalifornsky had found in words” (Kizzia A1). The structure of the lyrics demonstrates this pattern of repetition with renewal. Besides the refrain, vocables are retained in the English translation, a form of cross-linguistic repetition.

The Animal

Here I wish to pause and relate the English version of the key story from which I quote for the title of my chapter, where Porcupine is talking with Lynx. I first realized what animals can mean in a Dene context by thinking about this story. The story concerns prophecy, setting one’s mind to something and seeing it come true: k’etch eltani, the prophetic practice of true belief through seeking visionary dreams (Boraas, “Work” 3). However, unlike my Euro-American expectations of prophecy, which include statements about the future of humanity, this story concerns the future of Porcupine in conversation with Lynx. As with my dissertation chapters on Wolverine and Wolf (fourth chapter) and Badger and Coyote (fifth chapter), two quite different animals are often consistently linked, in Dene narratives, perhaps esoterically, but

also in ways that make ecological and narratological sense.⁴⁶ As with Badger and Coyote, one animal, Porcupine, serves to secure the future of humanity and the other animal, Lynx, may serve as a transformer figure like Coyote and Wolverine. Stories about linked but very different animals illustrate the truth that in life, as in true stories, there are always two interconnected ethical values: chaos and clarity, sound and speech, loss and love. Both are needed.

The story from which the title of this chapter is taken is titled “The Dreamer and the Doctor,” and it teaches about the roles of human visionaries. In its entirety, in the English translation, it goes like this.

The Shaman, the Prophet, the Sky Reader, and the Dreamer could picture things in their minds. They would get together and tell each other things. The Dreamer told them about his dream.

The animals had gotten together, they say, and were joking. Lynx said, “Porcupine, you are really ugly.” And Porcupine said to him, “I will be popular with the Campfire People,⁴⁷ so ha, ha, ha [in the Dena’ina version: hi, hi, hi].” So when he climbed up a spruce, Lynx climbed up after him, and Porcupine slapped him with his tail. And that Lynx fell off and was hurt badly. His ribs and bones were broken. The animals used various plants to cure with. Porcupine came back down and said, “Some plant medicine may cure you.” He said, “You’ll turn into an animal again.” And the Lynx got up. And they hollered at him and he ran away.

⁴⁶ Social sense, too. Boraas comments, “Traditional Dena’ina has partners, a formal relationship between two men or two women. Partners hunted, berry picked etc. together. It was a lifelong relationship. All animals and plants had partners as well. See “When the Animals Divided Into Pairs’ [Kalifornsky 78-81]. Note it starts ‘in the beginning . . .’”

On looking up this story, I find this commentary on love by Kalifornsky: “This story is a lesson laying out a pattern to live by. People should live by choosing one another as friends, to be happy, to joke with one another, and to love one another” (81).

⁴⁷ Footnote 1, from the text: “This is the name for human beings as used by the animals” (Kalifornsky 29). Animals have circumlocutions for humans just as humans do for animals.

Thus he told how he dreamed. (29)

Note that the frame of the story is a human dream, prophetic in that it reveals Porcupine's future as a small, useful, and seemingly easy prey.⁴⁸ The temporality of the dream is interesting, given that most animal roles are determined outside of Cartesian time. Thus the dream of the future is of the past, in which an animal future is foretold by that animal: "I will be popular with the Campfire People, so ha, ha, ha." As well, the nature of that popularity is paralleled by Lynx's ordeal, where he breaks his bones and then is brought back to life again, as an animal. Porcupine, as it turns out in other stories written down by Kalifornsky, is a prophetic tool—his bones are often used for scapulomancy. Thus this story is prophetic through the retrogressive for prophecy of prophecy.⁴⁹ And it all concerns bones.⁵⁰

The importance of care for an animal's bones cannot be overstated: they must be buried whole in earth or water. I examine this further in the section below, through the grammatical.

⁴⁸ Note this hunting story posted on an Alaska hunting forum in 2008: "One winter my cousin and I were snowmachining up into the mountain to hunt for caribou, had all our camping gear and enough supplies and gas for a week. First day on the trail after reaching the mountains we spotted a porcupine, my cousin told me he hasn't eaten porcupine for a few years and when he saw it he really started craving for the meat. So he shot it with his 22 cal. I told him he would have to skin it and cook it for our evening meal, so after we set up our camp he started skinning it, he threw the hide beside a stand of willows near our camp. Freshly cooked porcupine is pretty good eating especially out in the mountains on a cold winter evening. We slept good that night, next morning we could hear something rustling around outside of our tent, my cousin looked out and there was a red fox and he was wearing the porcupine hide on his side. Guess the fox got trapped by the porcupine and had no way of getting loose. My cousin felt sorry for the fox so he shot it. Foxes are supposed to be pretty smart, well this fox got out smarted by a dead porcupine, must have been hungry or just too darn curious for his own good.

Back to porcupine; my grandmother told me back in the old days hunters would not use guns or clubs to kill porcupine, they would just sharpen a good stiff stick and poke the porcupine in the eye pushing the stick all the way back into the brain.

On another winter hunting trip a few years back two Elder hunters that we were hunting with decided that they wanted porcupine for dinner. So the first one they spotted they killed. Porcupine is very good eating when your out camping with a couple of Elders that are constantly telling hunting story after hunting story while your having dinner. *There's more to a porcupine than just the meat*" (Nukalpiaq; emphasis added).

⁴⁹ I.e., is recounts a past story of a prophetic dream in which the potential for prophecy inherent in Porcupine and in porcupine bones is recounted as mythic history for future use—just as this story is recounted from the past for future use. Linear temporality is shown to be cyclical when the principles contained within such enactments of history are taken to be true. Through belief, stories are renewed, and through stories, belief is renewed.

⁵⁰ Boraas comments, "Porcupine hip bones have a very unusual shape, good for climbing trees but they waddle when they walk."

The importance of porcupine bones is fascinating, because this animal is both so spiny and so defenseless. Porcupine is shrouded in spines but is small, a herbivorous rodent. The opposite, in many ways, of Lynx.

In “Porcupine and Beaver #1,” Porcupine dies by jumping into the fire of the Campfire People during the winter, and He comes back to life in the autumn and scares Beaver. Beaver claims that Porcupine is “dumb” for sacrificing Himself, but Porcupine explains: “That’s how brave I am. To make them aware of it, I jumped in the fire for them” (111). This willing sacrifice speaks to a voluntary affiliation between porcupines and humans, defined by words—or at least the semiotics of prophecy—and by bones—since, as is described below, animals only reincarnate and this remain available for food and as companions and teachers if their bones are treated in a good way.

In the next story, “Porcupine and Beaver on the Other Side,” Porcupine seeks passage across a body of water. The whole story signifies as prophetic method, in that by traveling over the water with Beaver, Porcupine is able to say,

“There will be more stories about us. They will respect your body. If you are caught, they will put your bones in the water, and you will become an animal again. That is what you said, and everything is fine with me.” (113)

In a coda to this story, “About the Porcupine and Beaver Story,” Kalifornsky writes, “This story describes water transportation by boat to seek food. And there are big and small shipwrecks” (115). The footnote to this statement explains, “This refers to the Dena’ina hunters’ practice of scapulomancy, which is divination about hunting by tossing the hipbone of the porcupine” (115, note 1). Thus a picture emerges in which Porcupine embodies, quite literally, a connection between the future for the past for the future, human for animal for human, body for bone for

body. At a conceptual level, this is a form of reciprocity based not on exact exchange, but on exchange through alternations in linked, but contrastive, values. This form of alternation is evident also in Navajo narrative structures (see Salabye, Jr. and Manolescu 2016); in my fifth dissertation chapter, on the Navajo emergence narrative, alternation through reversals becomes productive of life, reanimation, for connection—for love: thus here, also, I suggest, “There will be more stories about us. They will respect your body.”

In the story “The Moose and the Porcupine,” Porcupine makes this reversative renewal explicit. He says to Moose:

“The Campfire People will toss my hipbone in order to tell the future. They will laugh when they know the truth; that there is something missing in my stomach. What they learn will be for the bad, or the good.” (117)

The missing thing is a test of knowledge for humans—“porcupines have no gall bladder” (117), as a note in Kalifornsky’s text explains, and when disposing respectfully of a porcupine’s remains, one should be knowledgeable about this or suffer the consequences—which are, in this story, the divorce of an ignorant spouse who lies and claims that they have disposed of the gall bladder, thus revealing their ignorance about important animal protocols.⁵¹

In these stories, Kalifornsky deliberately teaches what is and is not Porcupine, and, by extension, what is and is not prophecy—conceptual tools for preserving the future. He does so not through the prophetic itself, but through embodying the prophetic animal, Porcupine, voicing His words, which are strange, even grotesque and pathetic, but certainly powerful—they concern divining the fracture. The place where there is both conjunction and disjuncture—which is to say, articulation, that double-edged word for words and bones.

⁵¹ Boraas comments, “Peter had at least a rough English draft of all of these stories. I helped him flesh out these English drafts, sometimes Jim helped—but they are definitely Peter’s basic work.”

The Grammatical

Porcupine, as with all the animals I write about, is a person—a more-than-human person who enables personhood—and this is marked not just through his bones and his narrative events but also through grammatical features in his narratives. Here I will focus just on the deictic category of personhood and how it is expressed through some grammatical categories of animacy and inanimacy in Dena'ina, and consider how it relates to the animal, whose skin, blood, meat, fat, bones, mind, and breath, I suggest, compose a literal and literary method of making a story live—or live again.

I will start with one of Kalifornsky's original poems. In "The Work of the Mind," Kalifornsky teaches that "Our body and brain come together [to make the mind]. / Through our senses we become totally aware. / The world is represented in our mind and becomes part of us"—and so "we imagine" (457).⁵² Let us compare that message with what he writes in one of his sukdu, "Beliefs in Things a Person Can See and in Things a Person Cannot See," or, in Dena'ina, "K'elən İł Ch'qghe'uyi Ch'u K'ech'eltani [something, k'ech'-belief, eltani]."⁵³ It begins, in English, the "Dena'ina, they say, had some beliefs about animals," which involve hunting and eating them and then "put[ting] the bones in one place" so that the "animals would

⁵² Boraas comments, "Usually twice a week during the four-year course of this book, I would get Peter at his place in Kenai and we would come to the Anthropology Lab at Kenai Peninsula College and spend 4-5 hours working on the stories. Then I'd take him home. One day, as we were driving through Kenai, I noticed a Kenai Library book sale and we stopped to look around. Peter saw a book on 'mind and body.' I forget the title or author and I bought it for him, probably a dollar. The next time I picked him up he had this piece—'The Work of the Mind,' and we included it in the book. So it's not a traditional story, but it is also not a translation of a part of the book. Peter looked for key words and phrases and put them into Dena'ina."

⁵³ Boraas comments, "Similarly, 'Belief in Things . . .' came from our discussion of why there are few artifacts or bones in Dena'ina sites. He said there was a story about that, and the next week he had written 'Belief . . .' The phrase also occurs in the Old Testament (maybe New Testament) as well as many other religious texts. It is possible Peter heard it in an Orthodox service, I don't know. I never asked him. Either way, the Dena'ina is the key to the story."

be in good shape as they returned to the place where animals are reincarnated”—and born again, for themselves and for further sustenance (41).

So we have three key concepts here, coming together from the poem and from the sukdu. The first concept from Kalifornsky is the power of the mind and of focusing *entirely* on what one wants—so that we might become, in a sense, the archive we wish to construct. The imagination is generative.

The second concept from Kalifornsky is the power of the body and of its *regenerative* potential when treated right—when all the articulatory parts are kept whole.⁵⁴

The third concept from Kalifornsky is the power of putting the mind and body together—but although neither his poem nor his sukdu states this, I think it is fair to say that it is the animal body and mind that must come together, not just the human, for there to be imagination and life. Further, I think it is the animal and the human who must come together; when that happens, “The world . . . becomes part of us,” even the part of the world that is reincarnated—regenerated and renewed.

This is a big claim, so let us look at the whole opening passage of the sukdu to see how this might work:

The Dena’ina, they say, had some beliefs about animals. After they killed and butchered an animal in the woods while hunting or trapping, they would put the bones in one place. In the winter they would cut a hole in the ice and put the animal bones in the water. At home in the village, too, they put all the animal bones into the water, either into a lake or in the Inlet, or they would burn them in the fire. They did this so the animals would be in

⁵⁴ Boraas comments, “Traditional Dena’ina cremation was like animal bone cremation. It ‘recycled’ the soul to become an animal/person again.”

good shape as they returned to the place where the animals are reincarnated. They say they had that kind of belief about animals. (41)

In Dena'ina, this opening runs as follows:

Dena'ina lu [it is said] k'elenhqghe'u ninya [animal—*no plural form*] egh [*postposition*, “to, near, around”—a “purely relational quality” (Boraas, *Introduction* 133)]. Tik'teh k'uhu qel'eh, yadi chihutulnił ninya ghes [*postposition*, “around, outside of”] ghen [that, *unmarked*], luq'u ts'ił nihiyilish. K'uhu ch'el'ani q'aq[hole]ghenush qun, ben at ten qyagh łqel, ch'u ninya ghes ghen yet [after] tunuqyeliš [water]. Ch'u q'ıldu qayeh k'u [too], ninya ghes ghen miłni n'at tunuqyeghelik [water], ndahduh k'u qula, qughusht'a nuggagganuk'edlaht qan'udałi ghuda lu. Dach' k'ech' [something] qulyu lu ninya egh. (Kalifornsky 40)

The rest of the story concerns the violation of this principle and what comes of it. The story concerns a man who needlessly kills mice and is then overrun by them, where they overwhelm him as punishment, while game animals become inaccessible. It concerns a dream, a mountain under which animal people live, and a beautiful giantess who is also a mouse woman. By the end, the man has learned much but is “not himself anymore” (45).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Here again we see the chthonic animal, this time with the lesson attached that abuse of bones—not interring them back in the ground, for example—will lead to the animals regressing back to their underground source, away from human access, so that humans will starve. Mouse Woman teaches this abusive hunter a valuable lesson which changes him forever.

Cf. the *Popul Vuh* and in contemporary Mayan hunting practices, a comparable relation exists between flesh and stone with a consciousness of the spiritual powers of animals and gods; cf. “And then, all at once [when the sun rose for the first time], Tohil [a serpent being who creates fire but withholds it from humans until they promise to sacrifice to him and let him suckle on them (46)], Auilix [a moon being who may also be a swallow], and Hacauitz [a zoomorphic mountain being who may also be a yellow wasp] were turned to stone, along with the icons of the puma, jaguar, rattlesnake, fer-der-lance, which the White Sparkstriker [a small being who escapes petrification to become the keeper of the stone animals and a “gamekeeper with volcanic concretions, fulgerites, and meteorites that resemble animals in his personal care . . . [who] may be encountered in forests and caves, or on dark nights and in dreams; he appears in contemporary masked dramas dressed entirely in red, the color of dawn” (47-48)] took with him into the trees. Everywhere, all of them became stone when the sun, moon, and stars appeared. Perhaps we would have no relief from the voracious animals today--the puma, jaguar, rattlesnake, fer-de-lance—and perhaps it wouldn't even be our day today, if the original animals hadn't been turned to stone by the sun when he

I want to point out a few features of the Dena'ina-language version that demonstrate how important some study of Indigenous languages are to the literatures in which they are composed, and then I will summarize some of the features inherent in Kalifornsky's content as they relate to his archive.

The word for animal in Dena'ina that Kalifornsky uses is "ninya," and this is very consistent. I think it is notable that there is no plural form for animal nouns, although whether this fact determines a different point of view on animal ontology is debatable since every language has the capacity to express everything it needs to. The opening sentence of this paragraph, "The Dena'ina, they say, have some beliefs about animals," is "Dena'ina lu k'elenhqghe'u ninya egh." "Egh" is a postposition glossed as "about." But egh literally means "to, near, or around," and more generally, it is a morpheme that expresses—and I quote here

came up" (Tedlock, *Popul* 161) and "Hunting shrines are places in the landscape used for ritual negotiations with the animal guardian who is associated with animate topographic features in the forests (Brown 2005). As hunting rites occur at these animate features, hunting shrines are thresholds between realms where interactions between community and forest agents occur. . . . hunting shrines are clearly identified by several physical markers including the presence of a faunal cache consisting of curated wild animal bones deposited by the hunters during ceremonies" (Brown and Emery 301) as well as "non-human agents" who "let individuals know which topographic feature is animated, and thus can serve as a portal, and which is not. One participant in our study mentioned Don Jesus Cog (now deceased), who was the founder of the hunting shrine associated with a local finca community. The current shrine is positioned at exposed rock outcrop along a small stream. However, when Cog started doing hunting ceremonies, he used a rock outcrop further downstream from the current one. After performing several rites in this early location, the animal guardian visited Cog in a dream telling him explicitly that 'this place is not the door.' The door was actually upstream a bit. With this communicate, Cog performed a ceremony at the shrine's present location. In a subsequent dream the night after his first ceremony in this new location, the animal guardian told him that he would find a deer 9 days later, which he did. The dream message about finding prey, followed by the successful hunt on the day specified in the dream, confirmed that this outcrop was an animated portal and the right location for negotiations with the animal guardian" (312) and "The bones of wild animals are important participants in hunting ceremonialism. Bones retain a latent agency that allows for the regeneration of species. As one collaborator from San Pablo la Laguna told us, the animal guardian 'makes a new animal from each bone you return - even the smallest toe bone. That is why you have to return them all' to a sacred site. As a result, the butchering of animals and the subsequent handling of animals bones includes ritual prescriptions. of animals bones includes ritual prescriptions. These ritual requirements are not just associated with the return of the bones to a hunting shrine (i.e., the threshold of the realm of the animate forest) but also with the entry of the remains into the human community (i.e., the threshold of the domestic realm). For example, many hunters told us that the bones should be curated and returned to shrine whole, thus they were careful to not cut through bones during butchering" (313). Finally, "Hunting is a cyclical event in which 'flesh is reduced to bone and bone is regenerated as flesh' (Braakhuis 2001:395). While our concept of the hunt embraces the former, it does not acknowledge the latter. Yet this latter part—clearly influenced by the agency of non-human beings—is equally if not more important in indigenous concepts and directly impacts where animal remains enter an archaeological context" (332).

from Boraas’s grammar—a “purely relational quality” (*Introduction* 133). So these beliefs are relational in terms of being proximal in regards to animals in the visible world and in their linguistic presence.

The phrase for “animal bones” is “ninya ghes ghen,” and this literally means “animal around/outside-of that,” or perhaps “that (which is) around/outside of the animal.” Kalifornsky glosses this phrase as “animal bones,” which I used to think of as being *internal* to the animal, not “around” or “outside” it. However, I now think that, for Kalifornsky, these remains are whatever it is that is around/outside of the animal, that contain or contained its life and breath, important to that animal even in death. So the ninya ghes ghen is part of the life of the animal, waiting to be brought back through reincarnation. And it is strong. And it endures. And it requires a specific and whole set of forms and connections—or articulations.

Animals may be stronger than humans in many ways, but they are not exactly the same as humans, or, to use the phrase from some of Kalifornsky’s stories, the “Campfire People.” We use fire—and are to use water, ice, and earth—not only to kill but to resurrect. To summarize: what we can see between the Dena’ina and in the English translation of this sukdu in conjunction with Kalifornsky’s poem content is a form of symmetrical kinship between bodies—shared flesh—but of asymmetrical reciprocity between minds. This asymmetry means that the body of the animal and the mind of the hunter come together. In this way, “we imagine” (457), where “we” comes to mean a reciprocal, respectful proximity—to animal stories as well as to animals. This is a form of interspecies love, manifested as loyalty, sacrifice, and respect.

Discussion and Conclusion

When I was in Alaska, I was there for CoLang, the Institute on Collaborative Language Research, which is a two-week workshop that is offered every two years by the Linguistic

Society of America. It was a challenging experience in many ways because it was so intensive: I would learn cutting-edge approaches to language documentation and revitalization several hours a day and then study at night. When I was not working on CoLang-related material, I was in the archives. All of this work became a transformative experience, not only because I met so many passionate scholars of Dene, both Indigenous and Euro-American, but also because I experienced for myself the truth about this place, Alaska, which I had idealized in my imagination.

To be utterly clear, I was treated very kindly by the people I met there. These people allowed me to see the mountains, the community, and the hot springs! Their kindness has literally changed my life because I have now been able to experience something of Kalifornsky's stories.⁵⁶ At the same time, Fairbanks, Alaska, like many places, can also be a place where racism, poverty, and violence against women is accompanied by the psychological pressure of the bush. The bush takes many, both men and women; and few, once they have disappeared, are found. The Alaska Native Language Archive is a beacon to the world; it is also, given its monumental significance, underfunded. The holy mountain Denali is a remarkable giant of the atmosphere that makes its own weather; and in its massiveness, it tends to obscure itself. I cannot wait to go back.

Because the archive is there. This archive is not just the paper and magnetic tape held by the university—though it is crucially that—it is also the animals, their bones, the rocks, the caves, the open mouth of the bush that eats us up and its open hand that feeds us. It is most especially the humans, too, who read the archival in many different ways. By hanging on to the words and to the mountains, the chaos and obscurity that Kalifornsky witnessed will remain just that—a necessary, negative force that stands in obligatory contrast to the forces of devotion,

⁵⁶ And I am very grateful for the Navajo Language Academy who, through a NSF grant, funded my CoLang experience.

respect, and sacrifice which love demands—such that even when something dies, it can come back. Or even such that a thing is not really dead when it is kept whole and cared for, as with Kalifornsky’s many verbal artforms. This happens through love—not romantic love, but sacrificial love—however unwitting. The link between archival documentation and living language revitalization is not always clear, but it is monumental. And it takes life.

If we take Kalifornsky’s teachings as true, then this is true of the life of a language as well as of animals since animals are the source of continued life. In doing this, his work conjoins dichotomies of media (oral/written), time (pre-/post-contact), language (Indigenous/European), genre (traditional/original), and personhood (human/non-human). This is a form of kinship that is alliance with great specificity: one is taught to eat and to speak this animal, and that is both a terrifying and transformative imperative.

Thus when Kalifornsky suggests, in his poem, that “When that [imagination] happens, / there is transformation into awareness. / Then the body and brain become one whole” and the “result is something higher—it goes beyond” (457), he combines the recursive and the discursive through the verbal arts, using a northern-Dene epistemological framework based upon reincarnation (Blondin 1990; Brody 2004; Mandeville 1976, 2009; Moore and Wheelock 1990; Ridington 1978)—we are left with skin (not media; cf. Martin 2012), blood (not colonial law), meat (not just or not solely content), fat (not translation—and fat is important to survival!; cf. Venuti 2013), bone (not just literary formalisms), imagination (not strictly genre; McCall 2011), mind (which is not restricted by species; cf. Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2004), and even love (where relations between beings, as such, can die but live again). Thus it is that “Our relatives have come back to us, have come back to us.”

In terms of my larger framework, where narrative revitalization is defined by centering and shifting at all levels of context and content to renew languages, narratives, and interlocutors, Kalifornsky's teachings cohere with my notion of expanding referential deixis thanks to Porcupine, who, with the impetus of Lynx, teaches us about breakage and rebirth—most importantly, in this chapter, through true belief, where shifts in reference function through reverence for the animal. Love is animal, animal is love—sound is life, life is sound.

Analogically, Kalifornsky accumulated his collection as a sonic whole, such that transformative deictic references arise between: 1) the encounters that occur between humans and animals (sourced in the content of the narratives)—as Kalifornsky remembers that which he has heard about bones in order to inscribe those words in another form of calcium, the chalk on the blackboard, and thence the page; 2) the orator and the transcriber and, often, translator (accessible through archival research and oral interviews)—who are, in this case, and so remarkably, one person; so that 3) comparisons of the cultural methods and theories followed by translators and re-translators to produce different textual iterations of the same narratives (media transformations) are perhaps not necessary—but instead, a re-articulation of the Dena'ina and English is always waiting, thanks to the persistently dual-language publication of Kalifornsky's works; and so 4) historical receptions of the narratives by reading and listening communities (language and narrative revitalization) is always immanent, just as the reincarnation of animals textual and physical comes from their articulatory structures all the way from the smallest and lowest to the highest.

Deictic shifts include: 1) human and animal: porcupine and Dreamer; 2) orator and textualiser: Kalifornsky himself; 3) spaces geographical and cosmographical: Alaska as a colony, Alaska as home; 4) times past and future: traditional narratives with Kalifornsky's

metacommentaries, meant to ensure a way of receiving his teachings beyond his own death—these metacommentaries model a way of thinking about thinking, which, if Porcupine is to be emulated, require the self-fulfilling prophetic practice of true—faithful—belief.⁵⁷ In this: death to rebirth, loss to love. This is done indexically through the prophetic power of Porcupine’s bones, paradoxically, in both biological and cultural terms, broken for rebirth. Or at least fractured.

Divining⁵⁸ the fracture—the place where there is both conjunction and disjuncture, which is also the character of the paradoxical concept of “true belief”—is a problem common to the interpretation of all narrative bodies—all archives. Anthony Grafton states, in a lecture on divination and philology, that “testing to destruction” is the extreme aim of interpreting fragments of texts; he suggested the critic ask, “do your tools or your texts break?” in the process of analysis, comparing, in the discussion period following his lecture, the violence of exegetics to scapulomancy, the interpretation of events and states of being by burning scapulae to create or refine cracks in the shoulder-blade bones of animals (Grafton, “Marriage”). Scapulomancy can also involve staring at the pattern of shadows on and translucencies within raw bone held up to the fire.

Grafton related scapulomancy to early alchemical practices of divination and, essentially, to the gut feeling of filling in gaps in texts, especially classical texts recuperated during the Renaissance. How does this relate to the interpretation of textualized orature? On one level, it does not: the resurgence may or may not be televised, and it is not up to me. But on another

⁵⁷ Boraas comments, “During our work, Peter would try to make me understand what he called ‘the background of the stories.’ I never got it, could never understand what he was getting at. Finally I say, Peter why don’t you write it in Dena’ina and we’ll translate it into English. Hence the background. I think there is much, much more to what he was getting at. But we had the ultimate deadline. Peter did not live long after the book was completed.”

⁵⁸ And diving; I am grateful to Margery Fee for this point.

level, there are narratives that were formed according to circumstances now difficult to uncover, and “divination” is one way to think about textual desire (or, more precisely, narrative desire and textual consummation).

It is, in fact, terribly easy to break textualized orature against one’s interpretive tools. Yet bone is more difficult to break than breath, where bone is the story and breath my reading of it. It seems to me important to make interpretive tools very light, as light as possible—as light as feathers or as a bird skin still covered in its feathers. Or as the hipbone of a fragile porcupine.

This is allegory at a hermeneutical level. At a practical level, this means: hypothesis, not thesis; multiple modes of analysis cumulatively linked but also conjoined by their counter modes (i.e., construction of and deconstruction of constructed meaning); as much social/occasional context as possible; as much literary-ecological context as possible (the textures of granite, the stashing behavior of chickadees, and the morphologies of littoral seaweeds matter); as much critical context as possible (but there is a limit); what are the points of destruction and renewal in a story?; do these points operate by oppositions or by analogies?

Perhaps most crucially: what more does it mean? How does a story move and become? I do not want to snap the iridescent wings or pierce the mucous-bright mollusk membranes in Haida narratives; I do not want to puncture the rough, tawny-furred hillsides or char the encircling, coniferous bivouacs in Kalifornsky’s. I want to sit and just take a look. Porcupine teaches us this: If anything breaks, let it be me.

Kalifornsky believed that his archive, bone by bone, would let his language and the truths of his speech community live again. In this way, the animal and the human come together; when that happens, “The world . . . becomes part of us,” even the part of the world that is

reincarnated—regenerated and renewed—not just for any old thing, but for the terrifying love that exists between animal people and human people.

Chapter Four

“What will you do now?": Wolverine and Wolf on How to Die in “The Man Who Sought a Song,” told by Elisse Ahnassay⁵⁹

Introduction: Animal Grammar

I recall Margot Astrov, and Ruth Underhill, too, once asked why so few words are used in the songs. Because we know so much, they were told” (Swann and Hays 6).⁶⁰

In this chapter, I take a particular interest in deictic references to personhood through the aural dimensions of animism by focusing on expressive repetition in represented speech and thought for humans and animals. I have explored the potential usefulness of the methodological framework I am developing to engage with ways that expressive registers of speech function extralinguistically, at the level of sound, in traditional, textualized orature such as Peter Kalifornsky’s word lists and other writings. In this chapter, I focus on expressive repetition such as phonological variation within words and phrases and the ways in which such features inhere within and go beyond articulate language because certain animals “know so much,” as the first epigraph suggests of very deep knowledge. It seems that narrative-bounded semantics condition the syntax of word formation in Dene Dháh, demonstrating that the feature “human”/animacy/agent/control is extralinguistic in an intra-linguistic context. Orature looks like

⁵⁹ I am deeply grateful to Patrick Moore for his hours of discussion on this story, his comments on the book from which it comes, and access to the audio recording of Elisse Ahnassay, who is clearly an extremely special storyteller.

I will be submitting Chapter four to *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* under the title ““What will you do now?": Wolverine and Wolf on How to Die and Live Again in ‘The Man Who Sought a Song.’” Certain passages from Chapter four are drawn from my contribution to the 2016 Dene Languages Conference proceedings, to be published by the Alaska Native Language Center working papers under the title of “Animal Grammar: Wolverine’s Soundscape,” and I have been given permission to reproduce these here. I am also very grateful to Alex Jaker and Leslie Saxon for reading drafts of that paper.

⁶⁰ Brian Swann’s re-quotation of Margot Astrov’s and Ruth Underhill’s quotation of their Indigenous collaborators (unfortunately, the names of the Indigenous collaborators are not given) concerning the characteristic use of vocables in North-American Indigenous music, from *Song of the Sky: Versions of Native American Songs and Poems* (1985).

literature, but its semiotics are voice-based, not text-based, and so the usual approaches to interpretation do not work very well. Instead, we need a system for identifying phonological iconicity and other special effects of voice (cf. Webster 2015b), even—perhaps especially—when the oral story has been transcribed into print. I base my framework on the ways that sound symbolism in narrative suffuses syntactic markers of animacy with more-than-linguistic meaning to heighten referential constructions of personhood.

By “animacy,” I mean the communicative language categories that convey ontological information about subjects, objects, and other entities involved in verbal constructions. In English, one way to convey animacy is through pronouns such as she or he rather than it. Where entities whose ontological statuses are culturally “fuzzy,” such as animals or sometimes babies, in mainstream Euro-American culture, pronoun selection becomes an important statement. I analyze certain linguistic features which mark animacy in relation to other sonic features of storytelling such as ambient noise, stammering, repetition, onomatopoeia, and cadence on a continuum of breath from song to speech. This continuum is essential to the oral context, where the moment, including audience, place, and time, are crucial to the intended and contingent emergent meaning. I then demonstrate my framework by analyzing a Dene-Dháh⁶¹ language story about music, since music pushes at the limit of semiotics. The story is titled, in English, “The Man Who Sought a Song,” orated in Dene Dháh by Elder Elisse Ahnassay, in the 1980s, in northern Alberta. The story is about Wolverine and His song. I use both the audio recording of

⁶¹ The Dene-Dháh language, also called the Dene-thah, Dené Dháh, or Dene Zhatié language, belongs to the southern group of a larger group of languages and dialects called Slave or Slavey, which also includes Deh Cho. Slave, in turn, belongs to the Dene, or Athabaskan, language family, which stretches across much of northwestern Canada and with more speakers on the coast of Oregon and California and in the Southwest—Navajo and Apache. Dene Dháh is spoken in northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Alberta, and the southern Northwest Territories. There are about 1,200 speakers of Dene Dháh (Statistics Canada 2006), and there are about 2,900 people who are registered as members of the Dene-Tha First Nation as of 2015. There are a few key differences in orthography between northern and southern dialects; one of the main differences is that in the Northwest Territories, nasal o is represented as “-o”; in northern Alberta, nasal o is represented as “-on.”

the story⁶² and its textualized and translated form to analyze some of the musicality of the story, for it is in musical expressiveness as such that this man finds his song. Expressive—as in what people mean, besides the meaning, by meaning things.

To summarize the first part of Ahnassay's story, Wolverine, a transformer with immense power, along with His companion Wolf, brings a lost and dead hunter back to life by circling his corpse, singing him a song, licking him, breathing on him, and speaking to him. The hunter is lost because he is seeking a vision from an animal, an animal who will give him a song that is meant to help him survive in the bush. The hunter fails, at first. He is treated harshly by his father, overwhelmed by a talking spruce stump, and deceived by fox people who care for him, feed him, and then tear him apart and desecrate his body. The hunter is left dead, splayed open, frozen, and alone in the snow. But it is through this suffering that the hunter ends up finding a song. Or rather, he is brought it by the last person one might expect: Wolverine.

And once Wolverine has resurrected this man, He and Wolf ask the human: “What will you do now?” (Moore and Wheelock 31; English translation). This question is asked in the middle of the man's story. It is an interrogative that implies an *I* as the *you* by virtue of the oral context in which interlocutions are received by listeners, thus inverting the focus of the story between speaker and listener: the speaker gets the words and the listener the results—the results which are not just the rest of the story, but also the effect that the story has on the life of the listener. These results are therefore of a mysterious kind, for in the moment of the question, no answer is given. The hunter does not, at this point in his story, have an answer. And no one can

⁶² Patrick Moore and Elisse Ahnassay, June 1981, “Wolverine Stories,” Tape 048; Elisse Ahnassay, “Nógha's Song,” 15/10/1983, Tape 051. Type: Sound. CD name: CD 45. Contributors: Elisse Ahnassay (orator). Archive of Patrick Moore, Vancouver, BC. 1981, 1983 (2010).

tell the story of their life while living it because life is not a story. That is the thing about being human.

Instead, Wolverine's answer is the story itself, as it continues. Its continuation is the fulfilment of Wolverine's gift to the hunter, which is his gift of spiritual animal power, which He gives while singing a song—a song which is not sung in the story. To finish summarizing, after Wolverine poses his question, the man goes on to defeat a bear, avenge himself on his betrayers, and show mercy to one of the very same fox people, a woman. The story ends with everyone very much alive and very well fed. The man who sought a song finds hunting power, and love. Because the story testifies to this event, the story could not exist without it and is thus constituted in part by the spiritual event. So the story itself is more-than-human. Thus the story's sonic features, its telling as its unfolding, are composed of a somewhat animal, and not an entirely human, grammar.

Dene-Tha⁶³ Elder Willie Ahnassay explains animal power this way: “Animals have special abilities which they depend upon to live, giving us only the powers which they no longer need. . . . An animal chooses someone to receive these leftover powers, a person who has treated the animals with respect” (Moore and Wheelock 7)—or, in Dene Dháh: “Wonlinghedi yet'áin ghedi ehsíin ju. Gáa xónht'i a'onht'e. . . . Gúhyeh xónht'e dene ewón xónht'e. Ghedi ewón xónht'e edu íhk'eh kawots'edeh wonlinghedi edu mbéhchehts'edah” (111). These “special abilities” are the powers of breath, of life—of that which constitutes the gift of a song, which brings a special ability to survive.

The soundscape of the story that I try to analyze here is thus a superlative example of the power of animal song. But just as the hunter does not answer Wolverine in his own words,

⁶³ Also spelled Dene Dháa, from dene, people, and dháa, ordinary, regular. The self-designation Dene Tha represents the voiced interdental fricative using English “th.”

Ahnassay's story about His song does *not at all* include the song. Her story never marks song *as such*. There is no song in this story.⁶⁴ So only attention to the sound of the voice *as voice* remains, in its combination of expressive as well as referential performance, which “musically . . . articulate[s] meaning through paralinguistic communication” (H. Johnson 173). This is why I try to reintegrate sound and sense by reading the story as a soundscape.⁶⁵ While the song may be absent from narratives such as “The Man Who Sought a Song,” the story that is quietest might be the most expressive, just as it is possible that animals, whose speech humans understand the least, might, in view of this ethos, be believed to know the most of all. The language of these stories is not constituted just by grammar but by “animal grammar.”

I base my interest in the extralinguistic (i.e., more-than-verbal) expressive dimensions of animal speech on two related phenomena in Indigenous North American verbal arts. Indigenous North American music traditions include vocables, which are vocal-musical phrases that exceed human speech (Golla 225), while Indigenous North American oral performance traditions have been shown to include forms of more-than-linguistic sound symbolisms such as special animal voices, where the speech of Coyote, for example, is sometimes characterized by the consistent substitution of shibilants for everyday-speech sibilants and by the replacement of liquid consonants l and r by nasal n (225). This is true of the storyteller Ishi's performances of Coyote speech in Southern Yana; in the language-isolate Takelma, Coyote's reported speech is prefixed by /s/ and Bear's by /ʔ/; in the Yuman language Hualapei, Coyote speaks with the voiceless interdental fricative (IPA [θ] or /th/ as in thought, not this) plus elongated vowels, with a whinyyyyy eeeeffect; in Hupa, a coastal Dene, or Athabaskan, language, Frog often has a

⁶⁴ Animal songs given in visions are often personal, and are not shared directly (Goulet, “Reincarnation” 159-60)

⁶⁵ To do so, I draw upon linguistic knowledge and approaches; my purpose is not to prove a hypothesis about sound in a Dene language—to do so would require a scientific approach to falsifiable data—but, rather, to engage with the total narrative experience in both print and voice. Much research remains to be done to move from affect to fact.

“mushy” voice (shibilants replace sibilants); in another Yuman language, Cocopa, Mountain Lion’s favorite sound is /r/ and Rabbit’s is /f/ (225). Paul Zolbrod notes that Coyote in Navajo stories often speaks using nasal, whiny vowels (“Navajo” 250). Of animal songs in California, Sean Patrick O’Neill notes, with Richard Keeling, that the “animal songs of the Karuk often feature an element of polyphony, with many voices joining forces in a single performance, the animal songs of the neighboring Yurok rely heavily on glottalization in vocal quality” (Keeling cited in O’Neill 242). Animals prompt humans to speak in ways that humans otherwise would not, so that narrative emotion nuances grammar and lexicon in ways that altar the meaning of each word. The animal grammar of the soundscape encompasses all the seemingly non-referential phenomena which the poetics of traditional Dene animal narratives and songs convey. In the analysis that follows, I define what I mean by soundscape and animal grammar and then explore some of the ways that a Dene theory of the animal may be reciprocal yet hierarchical, and defined by the ways in which we speak, particularly about how to die—and, perhaps, live again.

Methodological Framework: The Soundscape

“The Wolf joined Wolverine and put the young man’s ribs back together. He sealed the wound with his saliva, then blew on the wounds in a magical way” (Moore and Wheelock 31). –Elisse Ahnassay, orator of “The Man Who Sought a Song”

In order to define and deploy the concept of the soundscape in a culturally appropriate way, some understanding of oral genres and the life experiences which they evoke is needed. In Dene Dháh, one word for a vision is mba’awodi, literally “something talking to or sounding for someone” (Moore and Wheelock 59). This word in itself is profoundly telling, for the phrase emphasizes voice. The phrase refers to a cultural practice in which some Dene-Tha men and

women seek visions for power and wisdom through visions from animals. The animal people who choose to communicate with humans share animal songs that perpetuate or even renew life. The visionary power of animal song is an important view informing many Dene, or Athabaskan, verbal arts: in fact, animals sing so powerfully in visions that to seek this kind of visionary encounter is often referred to indexically, in Dene Dháh, as seeking a song: thus “shin kaneyah,” “go for a song!” (155).⁶⁶ He finds a song. And as Elisse Ahnassay says, “This song, this vision, is what Dene use to help each other survive” (28). But the song is too sacred to be shared publicly. Consequently, “it is through the telling of [Dene] stories that one gathers samples of these [animal] songs” (Beaudry 75)—thus offering access to survival through story. Vision stories told using animal grammar are another way to share the power and wisdom of the unseen world that is so fundamentally necessary to survival in this one. Stories stand for songs so powerfully that they convey the power of those songs.

The songs are never shared in their entirety, for the sake of the intimate relation that is established between the animal and the human: for the sake of the song (Goulet, “Reincarnation” 159-60). It is for the sake of the song that it is both shared and kept silent. It is also for the sake of the animal and of the human that total respect through discretion is required. Humans must treat animals in a “good way” (Blondin 57) to receive songs given in visions and to share the power and wisdom of those songs in vision stories. Animals are powerful and good—but power can be used for many different things. Discretion conserves power and maintains balance, manifesting the intelligence of humility. In other words, part of responding in a good way to the animal’s gift of a song is to keep that song quiet. You keep your song quiet out of respect for the animal who gave it. So one way to look at it is that the voices that first mingled in the visionary

⁶⁶ I am grateful to Patrick Moore for this insight and many others.

encounter—the animal’s call and human’s response—must fall silent for the song to keep singing itself.

But look at the same truth the other way around: it is when an animal addresses humans that meaning is felt. The animal sings. The human feels. The voice warps and bends to fit more-than-human emotion. The story sounds good. It is animated by the animal from the most basic ambient level to the most complex grammatical level. Music and language combine, and this is where narrative derives its power. It is the musicality of language that intensifies everyday speech into narrative. Music thus transforms the arbitrary nature of the relation between sign and referent in a magical way.⁶⁷ With music, words take on emotion, where the meaning of meaning is found. Consequently, a storyteller deviates from anticipated forms of everyday speech acts by incorporating into basic grammatical markers of a given utterance expressive features that convey emotion beyond basic referentiality.⁶⁸

Animals, with their generally incomprehensible communicative practices, are, by this very incomprehensibility, powerful icons of the exceptional: so when an animal speaks human language, it means that they offer information that goes beyond everyday messages to express an intensely heightened experience that conveys more-than-words or even more-than-human meaning. Yet we also still need referentiality beyond doubt—not as an immovable set of

⁶⁷ I am grateful to Margery Fee for this insight and many others.

⁶⁸ Cf. Robert Moore’s “rhetorically lengthened (i.e., non-phonemic) vowels” as per Dennis Tedlock’s style of ethnopoetics (“Reinventing” 20; 2013), Anthony Webster’s chapter “We Don’t Know What We Become” in *Intimate Grammars* (2015a) on the expressive morpheme -x- in Navajo poetry, and Keren Rice’s observation in her chapter “Learning As One Goes” (2001) that in Slave, “verbal concepts” are often expressed in paired verbs that “convey[. . .] largely the same information, [but that] have a very different sense about them”; speakers will alternate between these paired verb forms in the same paradigm to express the appropriate contextual sense, which in this expressive phenomenon is either unmarked or marked for a “way of carrying out the event that is highly valued culturally—it is humble, polite, and so on” (238). Siri Tuttle quotes McAllester on Navajo song-language as being consistently modified in terms of “vowel length and lexical tone,” commenting that “every meaningful word is altered” through deviating from everyday speech practices such as syllabification, linguistic rhythm, and lexical melody (“Language” 93).

relations between word and world, but as, in fact, a profoundly moveable pattern of relationality itself: relationality in time, space, and person, as well as in narrative. This is the soundscape.

Wolverine’s soundscape is like the “roar which lies on the other side of silence” (Eliot 70).⁶⁹

Nicole Beaudry writes, of sound and power in Indigenous North American, that the relationship of sound and spiritual power is not a new issue with respect to native North America. A discussion on the topic, then, is mostly a matter of understanding which elements are more relevant to one group or the other and perhaps to see how, historically, some phenomena have derived from one another. (72)

She adds, of Dene music, that “songs are mediators between human beings and the rest of the universe” (73) and that “spirits confirmed their ties with individual persons through sounds and songs” (77). To understand the formal nuances of oral stories and songs and how their form and content combine to make the aesthetic and epistemic dimensions of meaning, one must listen hard, dispensing with dichotomies of self and other as well as of animality and personhood.

Animacy, or who gets to be alive, is quite different in Dene Dháh than in English. While English requires the selection of pronouns marking *either* the feature of animacy *or* of inanimacy (i.e., English speakers must select a pronoun that either points to animate personhood—I, you, s/he, and we—or to “it”), Dene-Dháh pronoun selection for animacy is *optional* and therefore used either to indicate unusual ontological conditions, topicalization, or to focalize the primary agent within a proposition. For example, as I show below, flies are not usually marked animate; when they are, it is because they are agents in a spiritual vision. In other words, there are pronominal forms that are unspecified for animacy and agency—that may refer to either an

⁶⁹ The full quotation is: “If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel’s heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence” (Eliot 70).

animate or an inanimate subject or object—or there are different pronominal forms that belong to the same lexical category as the unspecified forms but that specify what Keren Rice refers to as “humanness.”⁷⁰ Leslie Saxon writes of the personal use of *ts’e* in Dogrib and Chipewyan that:

The personal use of *ts’e-* has a clear discourse function in this Dogrib text [about wolverine], to set apart episodes centrally important to the protagonist and to the action of the story—the confrontation with matters of life and death. Interestingly, the actions by which the problems are solved do not have this distinctive linguistic mark. This seems to be reserved for the time of mental turmoil surrounding the realization of the difficulties. (353)

This profound implication, for *ts’e* as a marker of “proximate third-person human” (342-43), is that it is variation in markers of animacy that heightens narrative meaning, while at the same time narrative meaning conditions markers of animacy.

Rice writes of animacy and pronoun choices for all lexical categories (i.e., parts of speech) in Dene Dháh (including emphatic pronouns independent of other words; subjects, direct and oblique objects, and possessive subjects and objects), that “In choosing the correct form of the pronoun, reference must be made to the grammatical function the pronoun has in addition to features of person, number, and humanness” (*Grammar* 1021-23).⁷¹ Thus when humanness is marked, it indicates a very significant statement about the ontological status and epistemological potential of the referent. This is also true in English. For example, simply to refer to a cat as “she” or “he” is actually quite a counter-cultural act in many Euro-American contexts.

⁷⁰ For example, the Dene-Dháh pronominal forms *ts’e-* (subject), *go-* (direct and oblique object, possessive subject and object) specify “humanness,” while the pronominal form *e-* is unspecified for humanness (Rice, *Grammar* 1005).

⁷¹ Because Dene Dháh belongs to a widespread dialect continuum, some but not all of the semantics described in this reference will apply to the Elisse Ahnassay’s narrative; my purpose in drawing on Keren Rice’s grammar is to begin to draw together existing insights and resources as a form of response to and interpretation of her narrative.

Crucially, Rice also notes that Dene-Dháh stories include attestations of violations of both broad selectional restrictions on who counts as animate and agentive (in stories, these selectional “violations” may include animals that are not usually marked as animate) and very specific violations of selectional restrictions on pronoun combinations, such as the following sentence in a story about a sacred vision of flies as medicine animals possessing agency, where a nonhuman third-person subject *is* combined with an oblique object: “ts’o yek’e wela gú goghq náwetj,” which can be glossed as “fly 4.on pl.is COMP area.about 3 dreamed” (1022), i.e., “fly fourth-person-oblique-object-on are complementizer s/he dreamed.” Rice renders this as “s/he dreamed that flies were on him/her” (1022). The English translation does not permit animacy marking, as the source version in Dene Dháh does, to show that the flies are referents with the feature human selected for them by the orator. In the dream, they are agents just as humans are.

In a sense, then, this example demonstrates one way in which grammatical reference can show that animals have personhood as intelligible human speech, and sometimes human form—human speech gives animals life.⁷² But in all other senses, we cannot live without animals—the constructions we create are prefaced by and premised on their pre-existence, their power, and their re/cognition of our own ways of being alive, moving, and speaking.⁷³ These powers of life itself, as fundamental to survival as breath, are the willed gift of animals through language that has the power to change us. Thus, while it might be true to claim that animals are more-than-human beings that yet exhibit the human traits of animacy and agency, the *reverse* might be more true in this context: that humans sometimes exhibit the animal traits of animacy and agency, and when humans do not resemble animals in these capacities, they least approximate

⁷² See my dissertation Conclusion for some further discussion of animacy.

⁷³ This is literally as well as discursively true, of course; for example, without bees to pollinate and worms to decompose, human life would end.

animacy and agency—in language or in life—and are thus at their most lifeless and helpless—both breathless and wordless. Animal grammar crosses referential boundaries through breath: breath, which is life, is given by the orator to the animals who give humans life. Breath becomes song and story.

The continuum of expression constituted by breath is the soundscape, which is the relation between song and story. The components of this continuum of relations, in order of least intentional to most intentional, are: 1) background noise and audience responses in the audio recording of the story (the external boundaries of the story soundscape); 2) breath as verbalized in the story (the external boundaries of the internal boundaries of voice); 3) stammering, repetition, and onomatopoeia (the intensification of the soundscape at certain points in the narrative); 4) intonation and modulation in dialogue (the soundscape within the soundscape); 5) rhythmic repetition of and variation in anaphoric evidential particles (the orator's emotional response toward her soundscape); 6) epistemic strengths of represented speech and thought (which interlocutors construct the soundscape in what ways); 7) pronominal prefixes in verbal constructions that mark the feature of human/animate agent versus unmarked entities or objects (what kind of interlocutors construct the soundscape and when); and 8) narrative boundaries between animals and humans (when are interlocutors heard).

Table 4.1: Soundscape

SONG			ANIMAL GRAMMAR			STORY		
ANIMAL GRAMMAR								
EMOTION			NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE			ARTICULATION		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
SOUNDSCAPE								
PROXIMITY			DEICTIC REFERENCE			DISTANCE		
BEING			ANIMACY			TRUTH		

Both literally and figuratively, animal song emerges as meaningful speech in Dene stories when the same conditions that are required for the constitution of a recognizable musical note are met in animal-human conversations: there must be sufficient loudness on the part of the animal for the human to hear their utterances (many animals usually communicate beyond the range of human hearing)—and, concomitantly, sufficient quietness of the part of the human (perhaps this is one reason why sleep is sometimes conducive to visions as dreams); there must be sufficient duration to the animal-human encounter for a meaningful exchange to take place—devotion—or even desperation—is required; there must be a bounded field of meaning within which notes or words are embedded to permit meaningful recognition of their references (here, I suggest, musical scale has its narrative corollary not in the relative size of species but in relative distance or proximity—in the proximal rather than the scalar—since one must draw close to be heard and to hear well; this is a possibility which I hope to study further); and there must be a sense of timbre—of the unique voice of each animal as an “instrument” of power.

This kind of soundscape, devoted as it is to Wolverine, and perhaps Wolf, too, is animate: the multi-modal techniques that Elisse Ahnassay uses are not merely an array of interesting poetic devices, but a voicing of a coherent, ecologically powerful animal—a more-than-human person. The soundscape breathes, so that ways of speaking effect epistemological and ontological revivification through the material conditions of musical discourse and discursive music, which both evoke and demand interpretation: the expressive is that which people mean by meaning things. The specific ways of speaking and living through the animal require expanded definitions of the expressive linguistic forms of these more-than-linguistic phenomena.

Close Reading: How to Listen

“What will you do now?” (Moore and Wheelock 31). –Wolverine to the hunter in “The Man Who Sought a Song”

What I will do now, in the remaining pages, is offer a sample of close reading using my framework to try to listen to Wolverine, focusing only on A) stammering, repetition, and onomatopoeia and B) rhythmic repetition of and variation in anaphoric evidential particles.

A. Stammering, repetition, and onomatopoeia

In this section, I look at moments where the orator herself is moved to expressive extremes in her cadence. Either by refocusing after some distraction or by the intensity of the events she is narrating, she sometimes stammers. Similarly, moments where she voices onomatopoeia function as repetitions of noise in an emotional way to heighten the meaning of the soundscape. Onomatopoeia as a form of repetition, while on the surface similar to stammering, is different from stammering in that it mimics the repetitive actions of animal.⁷⁴

Stammering, on the other hand, is sometimes referential, but not always. In the examples of it

⁷⁴ See some discussion of the onomatopoeic words for birds, for instance, in chapter five of my dissertation, on Navajo stories. In such names, repetition is often a characteristic of birds marked by the words for them.

which I examine below, the transcribers did not record the stammers, indicating that such moments are not part of the referential meaning of the sentence. However, I include them because, while some stammering may simply be physical, if one uses the principle of the whole soundscape, some stammering may also be interpreted as emotional, as a product of awe, belief, conviction—and even as a form of animalesque voicing, which tends to repetition. In this way, stammering may sit somewhere between onomatopoeia and repetition for rhetorical or dramatic effect.

By linking these two forms of phonological repetition, I mean to emphasize the potentially euphonious quality of stammering and the obviously rhythmic quality of Ahnassay's performances of onomatopoeia. Beaudry writes of Dene music,

a typical older Dene style characterized by the repetition of short, three or four note phrases with a descending melodic contour. These contrast with the animal songs which feature a more flattened contour, sometimes the repetition in a sing-song voice of a single note interrupted occasionally by a skip to a different note. (76-77)

Euphony approaches music, and, as Beaudry describes Dene music, the voice qualities I analyze here echo those of Dene shin—song.

Starting with a more autonomic example of stammering, there is the moment at 8.06-8.40,⁷⁵ “i i sóon” (of Moore and Wheelock 157) where Ahnassay speaks to someone who comes into the room and is not part of the audience from the beginning of the story; as I note in section V.B.1 above, Ahnassay uses mnemonic parallelism to reintegrate her words into her narrative. Here the narrative concerns serious transformations in the hunter's status as an adult. He first lies down on his mother's moccasins, where he was born (156). This might evoke the moment when

⁷⁵ These numbers refer to the audio recording, which I include for the sake of further comparison.

the amniotic sac ruptures and soaks one's feet and the ground. The effect is to take him back to childhood, since animal people are compassionate toward young people of any species, and it is the compassion of animals which permits a vision.⁷⁶

The hunter then sucks on his mother's breasts again as he did as an infant. This might be congruent with shamanic practices of sucking to extract a life essence.⁷⁷ It is efficacious; it turns his black beard lighter, even blonde, and therefore he becomes younger, less mature:

“mbedonhghácho díjadhi éhsán (ndéét'e),” “his-big-beard blond [light] then (like-you)” (157).⁷⁸

It is after this that Ahnassay stammers, as she relates how the hunters sucks again, “i i sóon na'inhlúnh,” “he-sucked-again,” or more literally “that that then he-sucked again” (157).

Contingently or not, this stammer is phonetically mimetic of the repetition at the level of mnemonic parallelism and of the demi-reincarnational act of regressing to one's childhood state and way of feeding.

At 9.40, the hunter encounters a stump which speaks. Here we have “eyi” (158), and Ahnassay pauses and stammers; *eyi* is repeated in the oral but not written version of the story. *Eyi* or ‘eyi is a deictic distal demonstrative; as an independent deictic pronoun used for contrastive

⁷⁶ I am grateful to Patrick Moore for this insight.

⁷⁷ Cf. a Dane-zaa/Beaver vision-quest story, which comes from the border between north-eastern British Columbia and north-western Alberta, little to the west of Dene-Tha territory. The story is about an animal guide sucking blood from the forehead of a dreaming hunter to open a way up into the earth for the hunter to find the source of moose. The source of moose is a giant moose who lives under the earth (as with all animal sources for all the animals). Charlie Yahey, one of the last Dane-zaa Dreamers, says of moose salt licks: “Under the springs there is a great big moose, a giant moose. That is why all the moose on this world stay near those places. Before Usakindji [Saya, the cultural hero] made everything right on this world there were giant moose on this world too, but he sent them down to the world beneath this one. Where he sent them down there are now springs coming up from that world still. The moose like it there because they know the giant moose are underneath. There is just like a house under there” (Ridington, *Swan* 61). In this vision-quest story, told by Mary Pouce-Coupe, sucking blood is cognate with naturally occurring salt licks, where moose congregate such that moose trails converge and form a circle, as the animals lick the salt, thus marking points of their emergence from under the earth. In the story, a young man converses with a more-than-human person, a big, fat man who is probably a Moose in spirit form, to gain power; then, “The big fat man leaned down / And put his lips to the man's forehead. / He sucked and drew out blood” (Ridington and Ridington 236). After this exchange, the big fat man leads the young man through a salt lick and under the earth to where giant animals dwell (155).

⁷⁸ In reference to another of the interlocutors in the audience.

focus, ‘eyi “is used to refer to nonhumans” (Rice, *Grammar* 253), emphasizing that the stump is animate but not necessarily a person. Ahnassay’s stammer here seems to be less autonomic (physical) and more meditative (creative).

At 10.30, “Mbetá sóon,” “His-father then” (Moore and Wheelock 159) in print is more like “Mbe-mbetá” in the audio version, meaning something more like “His-his father.” In this moment in the story, Ahnassay moves from representing the thoughts of the hunter in the form of oratorical direct quotation to representing the father’s words in the form of dialogical direct quotation, i.e., a double quotation where Ahnassay quotes the hunter quoting his father. Intersubjectivity is a struggle. Rendering dialogue is a difficult performance act in any language, and in Dene Dháh, construal of perspective in represented speech is governed by the relationship between the subjects and objects of the matrix and embedded verbs, with the matrix or governing verb as the head of the construction but coming at the end of the sentence.

Then the crux of the story occurs when the fox people say “Táuts’edóshul édé,” “Cut him open then” (12.29, 160). The phrase is not repeated in the written text, but it is repeated in Ahnassay’s oration. Ahnassay says it twice with nearly the same cadence and volume, very measured and quiet. The emotional, aural effect is understated—this instance of “stammering” (where, after all, is the line between the repetition of emotion and of intention?) is akin to that of the figurative intensification of meaning through litotes. Deep feeling does not always have to be loud.

Similarly to the example of phrase-level repetition in the preceding paragraph, but included in the written text, at 12.48, Ahnassay repeats “ndáts’edeh,” “[inside him/his stomach] him they went [urinated]” (161). This, too, is a crucial moment—the fox people pollute the hunter, they mark his meat in a way that challenges Wolverine’s habit of marking meat with

urine, and in a very literal, realistic sense, they must hurt the hunter since acid in an open wound must burn. At the same time, uric acid is a disinfectant and a preservative—so to extend this rather earthy consideration of the physical implications of this narrative moment, the foxes' urine would extend the agonizing afterlife in this life of the hunter's body as it lies eviscerated on the trail. Thus “ndáts'edeh, ndáts'edeh,” “they went, they went” extends the moment of this polluting act within the soundscape beyond the temporal bounds of the verb-phrase's referential function to suggest expressively either the difficulty of accepting the fox people's act, or to emphasize the fact that the fox people urinated copiously on the hunter, or to emphasize that his body has not only been violated but totally desecrated, his inner body ripped out and exposed to the outer world.⁷⁹

The fox woman has many focal moments later in the story, but her presence is important in the first part, too. Around 13.28, Ahnassay pauses, clears her throat, and repeats herself at “Úh k'ihdue ju. K'ihdue ju onlá,” “And jacket too. Jacket also she-made” (161) referring to the clothing that the fox woman makes for the dead hunter and leaves with him when her people move camp. Here an important point about women's work is being made, because this phrase belongs to a longer list of kinds of clothing that the fox woman makes for the hunter before he ran into trouble with her people. There is also the more metaphysical implication of the transformative work that animal skins do. The clothing would have been made from animal skins, and donning different skins shifts the origo epistemologically and therefore ontologically in many Indigenous narratives concerning animals.⁸⁰ In this instance, then, the struggle that is

⁷⁹ I am grateful to Margery Fee for this final possibility.

⁸⁰ As an example of how changing skins changes perspectives, as well as an example of how entering animal houses changes perspectives, the Haida story “The Sealion Hunter” shows what this can look like. A hunter uses a whetstone around his neck to dive into a pool:

He found himself in front of a large house,
And they invited him inside.

. . .

discursive intersubjectivity for a cross-species multiperspectivism is a sonic negotiation for an embodied materiality: in other words, Ahnassay labors over an important narrative moment concerning transformative labor. There is also the fact that a woman who makes clothing for man sets her mark on him through her labor and through her distinctive way of embroidering or beading the clothing.

At 14.16, we find the first of two instances of onomatopoeia in this story: Wolverine's footsteps sound as he approaches the dead hunter: "du du du du," a "[pitter patter sound]" (162). Keep in mind that there is snow muffling everything! So Wolverine would be moving quickly, given the short vowel length of the *-u*, and yet tremendously heavily, with a tread that sounds even in snow. That is power.

In between the two onomatopoeic moments, which occur at the most intense moment in the story, Wolverine runs around the dead hunter and sings. Ahnassay repeats this moment through three parallel phrases: "Ée, yedhondetl'eh edhin," "Hey, he-ran-around-him sounds-like," then "Áán, yedhondetl'eh edhin úh ejin," "Yes, he-ran-around-him sounds-like and while-singing," followed by "úh yedhondetl'eh úh éhsán," "and he-ran-around-him and then." This pattern of echoing parallelism has at its heart "ejin" and is the single most important moment in the story. Yet the song is not included.

However, I think it is residually manifest in the one of the most immediately adjacent extra-lexical utterances in the soundscape, "ghans, ghans." At 14.49, we find the second of the

In a pool in the corner of the house,
 he saw two baby killer whales spouting.
 Those, they say, were the headman's children playing.
 In all four corners of the house, he saw the dorsal fins of killer whales
 hanging up in bunches. (Ghandl, *Nine* 99)

The hunter's hosts, killer-whale people, proceed to offer him lunch, which is halibut boiled with hot rocks that have all been dropped into the stomach of a whole sealion. The whales then try to glue a dorsal fin on to the back of the hunter, but fail repeatedly because of his whetstone.

two instances of onomatopoeia in this story, and the contrast with the heavy footfalls (“du du du du”) of Wolverine is immense: Wolverine makes a guttural, nasal, sibilant gnawing noise as He cleans the urine from the heart of the hunter: “ghans, ghans” (163). I cannot think of a more evocative extra-lexical evocation of this abject lingual act. Finally, for the purposes of my analysis, at 15.21, Ahnassay stammers, in the oral but not written record, “ye-yechonth’ené” (163) which would be something like, “his-his-ribs.” In this moment, Wolverine has approached, circled, sung to, licked, and interrogated the hunter, asking him, “What will you do now?” In this act of healing, Wolverine puts the hunter together again from the inside out—or rather, having restored the innermost workings of the hunter, Wolverine now knits back together the constitution of the hunter’s intermediary structure, his bones, before, in the following lines, spitting on the hunter’s skin, the outermost layer of what makes the hunter alive, before breathing on the hunter “in a magical way.”

In the next section, I explore some of the expressive implications of cadence in terms of phonology and rhythm, focusing on the habitual punctuation of phrases with evidential particles, and addressing some of the reasons why, in the above sentence, Ahnassay says “ehsín” just in that moment rather than the more usual form éhsán and why added emphasis on “úh” carries expressive force.

B. Rhythmic repetition of and variation in anaphoric evidential particles

If it is given that all narrative speech is intrinsically represented—always remediated from the face-to-face encounter—even direct quotations⁸¹—then evidentials, grammatical markers of truth, inflect the speaker’s feelings about every speech act as they represent it. In Wolverine’s story, evidentials occur very frequently and are typically formulated as úh soon and

⁸¹ I am grateful to Barbara Dancygier for this insight and many others.

éhsán along with the variation éhsín, all of which are variously glossed as “then,” “and then,” “so,” “thus,” “maybe,” or “it must have been” are so common that they help to instill a rhythmic sense of the soundscape in the story. When the memory of the music is gone, the rhythm remains.⁸² Thus, in combination with the fact that musical deviations contribute to memorable moments in songs, the prosodic effect of variations in the enunciation and combination of these evidentials helps to mark as memorable the moments where the usual forms differ.

Given the prosodic value of evidentials, at least within Ahnassay’s style of performance, I think it is important, in relation to the question of expressive ranges within grammar, to look at where phonological and phrasal difference and narrative events might intersect meaningfully. I do not want to assume potentially different meanings for these evidential particles—i.e., I do not want to try to decide if different combinations of these evidentials imply a greater or lesser epistemological claim made by any given narrative statement. Rather, I want to trace the effect of difference as difference—of places where the soundscape changes in the quality of its truth through phonation as the intonational stances and prosodic shifts of the orator—and to connect these shifts, transcribed by the community and linguistics team who created the book, with what is happening in those moments. I also look at places where the usual order of evidentials changes (usually it is “úh sóon” then “éhsín”).

Phonological variation is a complex question in itself. There must be some “collapsing together [of] a wider range of observed forms” since “abstraction like this is necessary to make sense of the variation” (Milroy and Gordon 137). And given the range of glosses for the evidentials in question here, it is obvious that the exact meaning of their expressive variations are difficult to specify and translate. Unlike English, which is usually written according to rigidly

⁸² I am grateful to Chris Russell for this insight.

standardized phonemic and orthographic conventions, Dene Dháh, in *Wolverine Myths and Visions*, has been transcribed with a high degree of sensitivity to variation at the level of dialects, individual speakers, and unique moments of enunciation by those speakers. Thus while I cannot determine the larger social meaning of variation in the evidentials I analyze here, I can treat their variation as a continuum with potential for narrative intensity within the total soundscape of the story.

Phonological variation in evidentials unites the emotion of the orator with the truth-content of the words—in literary terms, one might construe phonological variation in evidentials as the variations in tone that, together, compose the mood of a narrative. Thus phonologically-varied evidentials reference the orator and, in textualized orature, the orator’s performance. Below, then, I comment on the expressive meaning of Ahnassay’s deviations from the usual articulations of these evidential particles in order to determine where such differences coincide with important narrative moments.

The first example of variation is that of éhsín rather than éhsán. It occurs when the hunter’s father becomes angry. The hunter says, “‘Edulin wónlin ínt’ónh,’ éhdi.” (“‘Nothing exists all,’ he said.”) The father replies, “‘Úh dóndih úh sóon aht’e éhsín?’” (“‘And what’s-the-matter-with and then I-am maybe?’”) (156). Given the unsympathetic nature of the father’s response, the variation “éhsín” (from the more usual éhsán) has a tight vocalic quality to it, evoking a closed-mouth, teeth-gritted kind of response.

There then is a high density of particles when the hunter is addressed by a stump. “‘I t’áh éhsán i, yéh ndáitth’e úh sóon ndahtsodadi úh éhsán” (“‘That because-of then that, there he-fell and then he-came-to[woke] and then’”) (158) evokes an intense moment in the narrative where stump speaks and the hunter faints. Indeed, in this passage, there is a great deal of repetition

beyond the evidentials, which the high density of evidentials may be echoing as well as mediation. For example, there is the repetition of fainting and breath stopped in “Ndáidlo mbeyí ededéhdhe, kón ts’ín ni’íyah ínyá mbeyí ededéhdhe” (“He-fainted-away his-breath stopped, fire toward he-got-up then his-breath stopped”). Note the sequential nesting of fire by breath (“mbeyí,” “kón,” “mbeyí”). Note also the way that the hunter loses his breath, i.e., faints, foreshadowing, through this echoing emphasis. Note Wolverine’s gift of breath, when he approaches the center of the circle, the fire, which, in terms of Dene sacred directionality, governs memory, community, and seasonal and reincarnational revitalization through Tea Dances (see Beaudry 83)—while the center of the fire governs eternity. For another example, there is the repetition of falling and of the hunter getting up/coming to—“Yéh ndáitth’ed úh sóon” “Nía’íjá,” and “I t’áh éhsán i, yéh ndáitth’e úh sóon ndahtsodadi úh éhsán,” (“There he-fell and then,” “He-got-up,” and “That because-of then that, there he-fell an then he-came-to[woke] and then”). This foreshadows, through this echoing emphasis, the hunter’s next fall, from which he cannot revive and rise without help.

Later on, the peril of eating meat is highlighted with more phrasal variations in the evidentials: the hunter is fed meat and fat by the fox woman: “I ts’éu íie sóon yets’ín újon éhsán, yegha etthén théht’ee úh sóon yatáthe’on. Tleh ehdah, xónht’i xeda tlehé xónht’i tené, ehdah sóon yenihchu úh éhsán” (“That woman one then to-him good then, for-him meat she-cooked and then put-out. Grease too, like-that moose grease like-that hardened/frozen, too then she-gave-him-some and then”) (160). Here, there is much meat plus grease—the substance and essence of life—but grease is also dangerous, as is shown later in the story when the fox people die with grease frozen around their mouths. There is a kind of mimetic relation between grease

and ice.⁸³ There is also a mimetic relation between these excesses and the repetitions of evidentials.

This seduction leads to the low point in the hunter's search for a song. After tearing the hunter apart, the fox people urinate inside his chest cavity and then go on living for one month where he is lying: "I mbet'áin zonh ts'inh ndats'edel, úh sóon dódéhthah éhsán, gáa, híe sa ndáts'edeh éhsán" ("That inside-him only out they-were-going, and then quite-a-while-living then, yes, one month they-were-living then") (161). The intensity of this moment is made evident through phrasal variation in evidentials as well as the stammering or echoing effect I analyze above.

Yet evidential intensity is also evidence of love and concern, even after someone has died. The fox woman sits with the dead hunter and leaves clothing that she made for him, as emphasized through phrasal evidential variation and through echoing repetition. The fox woman checks on the hunter: "I ts'eu híe sóon yek'ehdiya éhsán" ("That girl one then by-him-she-went then") (161).

In the next scene is a wonderful example of phonological variation in evidentials because the same variation, éhsín, is used to connote a completely different intensity of feeling, as the fox woman is sad to leave the hunter to follow her camp: "Gáa, gulaa éhsín guk'eh déhya úh sóon héé, mbadzáhdáawónht'e" ("Yes, finished maybe after-them she-went and then hey, she-was-sad") (162). The same issues prevail as my point in the previous paragraph—love and pain go together—but the emotional effect of the father's heightened, tight vocalic "éhsín" (156) that I

⁸³ Cf. Julie Cruikshank's work *Do Glaciers Listen?*, in which she writes about giant ice worms in Tlingit narratives and prohibitions about cooking fat near glaciers lest doing so cause the worms to come out and a glacier to surge or to release a flood from behind an ice dam (69). Note also that ice worms are quite real, and come in black, blue, or white; they are not giant, but they do come out to the surface of the glacier pack in the billions when it is not too sunny—if they are exposed to temperatures above five degrees Celsius, they liquefy.

analyze above has a different emotional impact here—the sense of emotion belongs to the orator, not the character, and it evokes the tightness of pain. Note also that the usual order of evidentials is reversed here: “éhsín,” then “úh sóon.”

Then Wolverine and Wolf speak together to the hunter, saying: “‘Kont’úh ni dáunleh?’ sóon yéhdí éhsán. I Ts’iuné, Nóghe úh Ts’iuné, Ts’iuné éhsán” (“‘Like-that you what-are-you-going-to-do?’ then he-said-to-him then. That Wolf, Wolverine and Wolf, Wolf then”) (163). In this compelling moment, we see more phrasal variation in the ordering of the evidentials in an unusual way. I will comment in detail below on the animacy marker encoded in the verb yéhdí, but for now, note that the two animals speak together, in total unison and glossed as singular, and that it is from this moment that the hunter begins to develop his new spiritual gift. There are thus two indications of expressive intensity in this phrase—the ordering of the evidential in combination with the collective verb of speech.

This collective verb of speech recurs when Wolverine and Wolf say to the hunter: “‘I t’áh i ekoín ts’ín uht’íen úht’íen úhtl’a, nódehgáhi úhtl’a édé, i k’éh tíduntl’a,’ sóon giyéhdí éhsán” (“‘That because-of that that-way to martin ran, fisher ran then, that after you-start going,’ then they said to him then”) (165). In this moment of phrasal variation, the hunter is prompted by Wolverine and Wolf to hunt in a way that leads to hunting powers and to revenge by following other kinds of animals. The ability to follow an animal is the whole point of seeking a song, after all. Next, the hunter meets again with his traitorous host: “Gáa, ketáhteyá úh sóon, i kólaa yets’ín újon úh sóon” (“Yes, he-came-up-to-them and then, that old-man to-him he-was-nice and-then”) (166). In this moment of phrasal repetition, the hunter finds a member of the camp who betrayed him; this moment of repetition heightens the tension—who will be affected by the hunter’s revenge? After this, the hunter cooks some moose meat provided by Wolf and perhaps

Wolverine: “I éhsán ndadéht’ee úh sóon” (“That then he-cooked-again and then”) (168).⁸⁴ In the phrasal reversal of the usual order of the evidentials as úh sóon and then éhsán, the hunter survives *on* meat (moose meat), in a reversal of his former state where he perished *as* meat (wasted meat).

It is not easy to survive, even with power. The restored hunter is afraid to go out hunting for grouse: “‘Sóon ts’ih’áh ehsóon,” kudi sóon, héé, ndejid” (“‘Then I’ll be discovered then,’ he thought then, hey, he-was-afraid”) (168). Here is a really interesting phonological variation on *éhsán*, “ehsóon,” which evokes a mouth rounded in horror and vowels extended in a whine of fear.

After this, the hunter puts on the clothing the fox woman made for him: “I xónht’e on sóon káa, káa, gúlaa i tl’onh seniandétl’ún éhsán, i ts’uu ke yanila éhsán” (“That like-that but then yes, yes, finished after he-got-dressed then, those girl’s moccasins she-gave-to-him then”) (168-69). This is really more of a moment of echoing repetition with “káa, káa,” “yes, yes,” as a phonological variation on the more usual *gáa*. But this moment is also marked by echoes of the evidentials. The combined effect suggests an expressive dimension in the use of the phoneme /k/ rather than /g/. The change might be simply allophonic, where conditioning from the phonetic context, the voiced nasal /n/ in “sóon,” makes the voiceless allophone *k*- the easier option. However, the embodied emotional effect might also be a voiceless version of “yes” in order to heighten the erotic drama of the moment with an especially quiet, understated style of enunciation.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Barbara Dancygier suggests that the final position in the sentence of this evidential may indicate that the narrative continues on to another event.

⁸⁵ An example of phonological marking for dramatic emphasis in English might be the difference between someone saying “yes” and an aspirated “hyes,” indicating anger or strong conviction in the answer.

After the hunter puts on the fox woman's clothing, he lets go of his fear. It is then that he caches some grouse: "Dahé újon ayínlá úh éhsán xahniedet'in úh sóon" ("Some well he-did and then he-saved-it and then") (169). This phrasal variation marks a special moment in which another form of the hunter's suffering is reversed—the hunter is no longer afraid to hunt grouse after he dons the fox woman's new moccasins. This is a reversal enabled by another animal gift—or, rather, many—that of the fox woman and that of the animals whose skins were sewn into clothing. Compare this, too, to the beginning of the story when the hunter sleeps on his mother's old moccasins: another reversal with the anchor of skin. Note, too, that the next event in the narrative is the sun rising. The rising sun is a good influence on spiritual animal power.

Then, the fox woman camps nearby and finally reveals herself to the hunter: "Héé, eyi ndehtin éhsán i thetin edu yíndidính'a sóon" ("Hey, there she-lay then there she-slept not he-noticed-her/he-paid-attention-to-her then") (170). Marked by a phrasal reversal, the fox woman comes closer to the hunter after following him for many days. He wishes to kill her because she is an animal. A few lines later, the fox woman reconciles with the hunter and stays: "Ée, ndatsiedéhtlah endádla úh sóon k'ahju éhsán gáa kaa yek'éh at'in" ("Hey, again-snow-drifted lots and then again then still [kaa is unglossed—does it mean "yes"?] after-him she-was") (170).

It is only then that the hunter realizes that the fox woman is the person who left clothing for him: "Úh sóon, 'Dene i lonh, ke sek'eh dathehla iin,' kudi éhsán, kudi éhsán" ("And then, 'Person that must-be, moccasins on-me she-hung before,' he-thought then, he-thought then") (171). Here is another moment of echoing repetition, this time of a key verb of thinking in combination with an evidential, doubling the emotional marking of this moment in the story through at least three soundscape features, that of stammering/repetition, that of represented speech and thought, and that of rhythmic evidential repetition: "kudi éhsán, kudi éhsán," "he-

thought then, he-thought then.” In this moment of realization that is re-cognition, the hunter finally sees the fox woman as a mate. As Siri Tuttle writes, this is also a musical end-phrase, where there is “a tendency for repeated tones at the ends of lines or sections” (“Language” 91). In a sense, this is the moment that they become simply the hunter and the woman. For a only a few lines later, the hunter wakes up to the woman and to many fish!: “Ts’enedhed úh sóon ts’enedhed éhsán” (“He-woke-up and then he-woke-up”). Here again is another moment of echoing repetition of a key verb in combination, in contrast to the preceding line I analyze in the paragraph above, with phrasal variation in the evidentials. In other words: he wakes up. And he wakes up!

The hunter finally speaks to woman in the form of direct discourse and offers her food: “‘Síin diáa ghunk’ah éhsín sóon” (“[Question] this-little you-want-to-eat maybe then”) (172). The phonological variation “éhsín” on the more usual éhsán is special in two ways: first, it evokes emotion, again, as it did with the father and when the woman has to leave the hunter; second, it is an example of an evidential being incorporated into the direct discourse of a character, not the orator. In this moment, Ahnassay and the hunter overlap in the soundscape in terms of their cadence, rhythm, and emotion, modelling a larger viewpoint—a vision.

Discussion and Conclusion: How to Die (and Live Again)

She thinks of the frog beneath the earth, spread out as if flying, as if parachuting through the darkness. She thinks of the mud eating away at the tips of those fingers, trying to absorb them, to dissolve the soft tissue till no one can tell any longer (certainly not the frog itself, lost as it is in its cold sleep of hibernation) what is earth, what is flesh. Yes, that she can believe in: the dissolution, the return to the elements; and the converse moment she can believe in too, when the first quiver of returning life runs through the

body and the limbs contract, the hands flex. She can believe in that, if she concentrates closely enough, word by word (Coetzee 219-20).

Visionary encounters with animals imbricate music, language, and lived experience to make real, in a material yet mind-based way, relations between emotion and reference such that musicality works in a magical way. Here I want to return to a key an example from “The Man Who Sought a Song” of how animate “they” can function as an agentive yet subjectively closed narrative phenomenon. The verb is *giyéhdi*, “they said to him/her.” This verb is associated mainly with animals. A couple of contrastive attestations of this verb. A mysterious, trouble-causing stranger appears in the camp where the hunter mistakenly believes he has found a home. It is never stated who, but it is *possibly* Wolverine. The stranger speaks to the fox people. The verb used is “*giyéhdi*,” and is glossed as “He said to them” (Moore and Wheelock 160). Disaster strikes, perhaps because this stranger causes it, and the hunter is killed by the little fox people. Later, Wolverine and Wolf restore the dead hunter to life. After that, They instruct him in direct speech to clothe himself in the moccasins made by the fox-woman (compare these moccasins to his mother’s human-made ones). The verb used is “*giyéhdi*,” and is glossed as “they said to him” (163).

The point here, of course, is that while third-person singular and plural subjects are unmarked in Dene Dháh generally, both third-person forms are marked for animacy by way of the patients or objects of the verb, which occur in the fourth person plural and singular with the pronominal prefix *ye-*. In Dene Dháh, the fourth-person object form is used only when the subject is in the third person and is animate.⁸⁶ Thus the agency of the subjects is both manifested

⁸⁶ Fourth person refers to pronouns that substitute for third-person pronouns when special marking is needed in order to avoid ambiguity of reference, to mark which pronoun is more animate or more salient, or to otherwise indicate a special usage for the non-first- and non-second-person pronouns involved in the sentence. For example, in English,

through the marking of the objects, propositionally, and manifested through the marking of the animate plural pronominal prefix, which can be used for either subjects or objects (Rice, *Grammar* 1005). Thus the agency of these speakers is construed, respectively, by the otherness of verbal patients and of a communicable state of plurality.

And yet animals, in Dene-Dháh lexical categories, are not so distinct from humans that they are referred to using utterly separate linguistic means. Rice states that the pronouns *ke-/ge-*, *ku-* and *go-* are used to refer to humans, but that “Human” is “actually a cover term for something much broader”—it really “represents beings that are considered to be intelligent, to be able to control” and that “This feature can be used for animals when they have the ability to speak and control in human fashion” (1019). Thus many animal words also are formed through the prefix *go-*, where *go-* signifies “animal”—thus, for example, “goweri,” “animals” and “godih,” “large game” (164). It is not clear if *go-* as a nominalizer and *go-* as a pronominal prefix indicating animacy and agency are the same word.

Rice goes on to add, the “feature [human] is probably better thought of as a control or agent feature”—such that “When a nonhuman is vested with control by being given the ability to speak,” then this is an indication that “nouns marked by this feature that have volition or will” (1020). In other words, just as context is form, speech is being. After reading this story and hearing it, I would like to suggest that a Dene theory of the animal may be reciprocal yet hierarchical, and defined by the ways in which we speak, particularly about how to die—and, perhaps, live again.

There are a few wolverine habits in particular and animal principles in general that help me understand the more mysterious or intense moments of “The Man Who Sought a Song”:

“one must be polite” may be considered a fourth-person form. See my dissertation chapter five, on Navajo, for discussion of the fourth person using the *yi-/bi-* pronouns.

wolverines are known to be fierce and destructive; they raid cabins, caches, and traps to eat as much meat as they can; they eat frozen bones and meat (Banci 99); “Urination [in addition to some vocalizations] appears to be the primary means of communication, often occurring at raised and traditional landmarks” (119); and the wolverine is not a hunter: s/he depends on wolves and other predators to provide carrion (100). This means that Wolverine’s affinity for Wolf, for urine, and for frozen carrion all help to explain, in terms of natural logic, His encounter with the hunter. Like the hunter, He depends upon others—upon Wolf, but also the hunter—for food. Not that He eats the hunter, exactly. But He cleans him; and even His words, “What will you do now? is as much predicated upon the hunter as is the hunter’s actions on His words. In other words, Wolverine would not have occasion to ask this questions without the hunter looking for a song and dying in the attempt. Indeed, the soundscape, like Wolverine Himself, is dependent upon the bodies of the people within whom and between whom it circulates. It is a very human, as well as a very sacred, kind of exchange. It is like breath moving on both sides of the skin, where the skin is like that of an animal whose interior is composed of the exterior contours of other animals.

Not every culture holds to the Dene idea that animals are more-than-human; and not every culture holds to the Dene idea that animals are quite separate from human (cf. Viveiros de Castro 1998 and, as quoted above, Moore and Wheelock 7). As one last grammatical example of the distinction between human and inhuman in Dene Dháh, Rice states that body parts, which are always inalienably possessed, are constructed using different prefixes for animals than for humans: “’e- is used with body parts to indicate possession by an animal”; she elaborates by stating that this prefix “indicates an unstated possessor, but one whose reference is culturally understood,” adding that this prefix “does have a referent but this referent need not be explicitly

stated as it is understood”—for example, “’efíghó,” “moose brain” (209). In contrast, body parts of unspecified humans are “generally indicated by *dene* ‘person’ or by the possessive *go*-unspecified number”—for example, “denefíghó,” “(someone’s) brain” (226).

This conceptual contrast, which is made at a morphemic level, shows that, in an embodied way, humans and animals are viewed as physically similar yet somehow ontologically distinct. This distinction between animal and human is also made in modern, Euro-American conceptions of human and animal, where “everything happens as if, in our [modern Euro-American] culture, life were *what cannot be defined, yet, precisely for this reason, must be ceaselessly articulated and divided*” (Agamben 13). This includes biological species and (most importantly for Euro-American, modern uses of animals such as factory-style meat production) the ontological categories of human and animal. Likewise, animals in Dene culture are sources of both food and wisdom—likewise insofar as both cultural theories of the animal are not a homogeneity of sentiment, but of bumpy interconnections.

So much remains to be written even about this one story. But in terms of my larger framework, where narrative revitalization is defined by centering and shifting at all levels of context and content to renew languages, narratives, and interlocutors, Wolverine’s stories exemplify a form of deictic reference and shift based on sound: sound itself references the interconnections between species—most importantly, in this chapter, through expressive variation, where shifts in reference simultaneously maintain multiple centers: story is song, song is story—sound is life, life is sound.

Analogically, all of Wolverine’s stories—and Wolf’s—may be interpreted, then, as sonic wholes, such that deictic references arise between: 1) the encounters that occur between humans and animals in the narratives (sourced in the content of the narratives): through Wolf and

Wolverine; 2) the orator and the transcriber and, often, translator (accessible through archival research and oral interviews): who are Moore, Wheelock, George Ahnassay, the Dene Wodih Society, and members of the Dene-Tha Band; and 3) comparisons of the cultural methods and theories followed by translators, re-translators, and back-translators to produce different or new textual iterations of the same narratives (media transformations, re-translations): including Patrick Moore, Dene Wodih Society records; for 4) historical receptions of the narratives by reading and listening communities (language and narrative revitalization): where the question remains, how have these dual-language narratives been used for language or narrative revitalization?

Deictic centers include: 1) animal utterances in connotative or reported speech and conversation with humans and in denotative or direct speech and conversation with humans within the narratives (dialogical deixis): Wolverine revives a dismembered hunter; 2) the occasion for, social context of, and process of recording these narratives—the human interlocutors, artists, thinkers, scholars (pragmatic deixis): who wished to create a Dene “Bible”; with 3) the cultural and disciplinary methods and objectives that have contributed to the framing and reframing of the narratives (cultural deixis): including prophetic and oneiric personal narratives that become shared knowledge once those who dreamed them have passed on the story before they passed on; linguistic anthropology; and 4) the epistemological systems that result from reading these books from textual products back into epistemological processes (cosmological deixis): include hunters who have no power without the hunted. Deictic shifts may be construed as: 1) human and animal: two kinds of violence; 2) orator and textualizer: elders and younger community members; 3) spaces geographical and cosmographical: camp and bush

through the nexus of animal encounters; 4) times past and future: mythic and contemporary time through the nexus of dreams of animal encounters.

Looking closely at the statement from an Elder about animal encounters, the one with which I began this article, but this time in Dene Dháh along with an interlinear translation, it becomes quite apparent that, in Dene Dháh, animals and humans are utterly separate kinds of beings—humans are “dene” and animals are “wonlinghedi,” “wonlin,” or “ghedi.” To return to Willie Ahnassay’s statement in greater detail, now that the relationship between animals and humans as defined by, or at least manifested as, the soundscape, has been discussed, let us examine his meaning in the words and the ordering of those words as he chose them:

“*Wonlinghedi* ehsíin edahdíh wonlin edahdíh,” kuts’edi, on héé, shinze onht’e.

[“Animals/ that are/ I know/ something/ I know,”/ someone thinks,/ but/ hey/ for nothing/ it is.]

Di i wonlin, wonlin láts’ut’ah íin kuts’edi.

[This/ that/ something,/ something/ they give each other/ before/ they want.]

Ndahxin *dene* ídlin óon.

[Us/ people/ we are/ then.]

Wonlin enlándít’ah igha édé.

[Something/ we give each other/ [future]/ then.]

Mbeyoan, eyóon *dene* ts’inhze ahthít’e.

[Old/weak,/ that/ people/ side/ we are.]

Wonlinghedi yet’áin ghedi ehsíin ju.

[Animals/ they depend on/ they live/ that are/ also.]

Gáa xónht’i a’onht’e.

[Already/ like that/ it is.]

Wonlin yet'áin ehsiin yutón úh di yek'ewoghintheda ehsiin kek'íneshíh.

[Animal/ depends on it/ that are/ it holds/ and/ that/ they used up/ that are/ on someone throw.]

Gúhyeh xónht'e *dene* ewón xónht'e.

[That's the way/ like that/ people/ even/ like that.]

Ghedi ewón xónht'e edu íhk'eh kawots'edeh *wonlinghedi* edu mbéhchehts'edah.

[Animals/ even/ like that/ not/ brave/ speaking with/ animals/ not/ bothering them.]

Gúhjúh xéwónht'e.

[And again/ it's like that.]

Aunét'e dah óon, tee sedadi.

[Many/ ways/ then,/ father/ told me.]

Eyóon aht'e.

[That way/ I am.]

Endádla wohteh wodih edahdíh i á'aht'e.

[Really/ very/ story/ I know/ that/ I am.] (111; emphasis added)

In this quotation, a systematic ontological alternation between human—“dene”—and animal—“wonlinghedi,” “wonlin,” or “ghedi”—recurs throughout this statement on epistemological relationships. These very different living beings are brought together in one statement—entwined in a sequence that runs: animal-human-human-animal and then animal-human-animal-animal.

This alternation⁸⁷ is systematically contrastive—in other words, wonlinghedi, wonlin, or ghedi have special abilities that humans do not.⁸⁸

The form, in this statement, is thus a nesting of humans by animals in the first half of the sequence and also again in the second half, with animals being mentioned, in the second half, more than humans. The meaning of this form is relationship—but with difference. Thus one of the major differences between Dene and Euro-American ethnozoologies, as exemplified by the distinctions in indefinite pronouns above, is that animal anatomy may not have a referent “explicitly stated” because Dene attitudes of respect regarding power or medicine are often expressed through understatement or even keeping secret the abilities that animals sometimes pass on to humans.

In a Dene-Tha view as expressed through this narrative example of Dene-Dháh, when certain conditions are met by animal interlocutors, it becomes evident that animals are not divided from us because they are mere, inarticulate, perhaps even inarticulable, meat, possessed of very little cognitive or emotional power (and therefore fit for the abattoir, to be “*ceaselessly . . . divided*”). In fact, they are instead highly *articulate*, and, in this, divided from us—but nonetheless in communication with us for the purpose of spiritual as well as physical sustenance, as indicated in Willie Ahnassay’s statement, “Animals have special abilities which they depend upon to live, giving us only the powers which they no longer need.”

The words for animals in the story which I focus on in this paper reveal an indirect way of referring to animals, wonlinghedi: wonlin can also mean “something” (Moore and Wheelock 162), and ghedi can also mean “living [thing]” (155), “being,” or “animal” (168)—so, to

⁸⁷ See chapters three and five of this dissertation for more on alternations as patterns of reversal.

⁸⁸ Leslie Saxon poses the fascinating question of whether all animals are people in Dene narratives: a question I hope to pursue further in future research. I am also grateful to Alessandro Jaker for reading, commenting on, and correcting a version of this work for publication.

paraphrase from a literal translation: *some kind of being*—whether in whole or part—is an animal.⁸⁹ So then the song, the story, and even this chapter might become a little bit animal if I am lucky, or dead, or both.

⁸⁹ Wónlin can mean “exists” (Moore and Wheelock 156), but the high tone, indicated by the accent over the /o/, requires further consideration of the possibilities of euphony and the limits of homophony.

Chapter Five

“If it floats, we will all live forever”: Coyote and Badger on How to Live Again in *Diné*

Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story

“As Madelaine Drybone said to Sally Anne Zoe and me [Allice Legat], ‘The stories never die. We are still using the story. We live our lives like the stories. These stories are from my grandmothers, my grandfathers. I am talking with my grandparents’ stories. Their words are very important because they will help you live in the future. Their words will help you to think for yourselves’” (qtd. in Legat 36).

“I am surrounded by the rocks from Dibé Ntsaa. At my desk, the rocks sit and write with me. The story penetrates like early spring wind, creamy and spread evenly along my spine. The rock crystals breathe and rest. Their sharp edges speak in rhythmic high tones trailed by melodious low tones, inviting me to speak” (Belin 39).

Introduction

Burning crystals, watery turquoise, rainy mountains, glittering pollen. Fluttering bluebirds, rough-pelted deer, down-to-earth badgers, radiant bears.⁹⁰ These are the sources of life and of the narrative source in the Navajo, or Diné, creation, or emergence, story. The nature of the relations between these animals and rocks is the primary focus of this chapter. Two recent ecocritical works on the animacy of stone: Jeffrey Cohen’s *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*,

⁹⁰ E.g. the “First Song of the Exploding Stick” in free translation from Washington Matthews’s *The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony*:

Young Woman Who becomes a bear set fire in the mountains
 In many places; as she journeyed on
 There was a line of burning mountains.
 The Otter set fire in the waters
 In many places; as he journeyed on
 There was a line of burning waters. (462)

Songs from ceremonies are sacred; I quote the published translation to illustrate the link between animals and mountains, the earth, rocks, stones, minerals, and so on.

and Ian Hacking's chapter "Rocks" in *The Social Construction of What?* Cohen writes, of his focus and approach,

Stone is primal matter, inhuman in its duration. Yet despite its incalculable temporality, the lithic is not some vast and alien outside. A limit-breaching intimacy persistently unfolds.

Hurl a rock and you'll shatter an ontology, leave taxonomy in glistening shards.

(2)

While Cohen's approach involves Euro-American texts and philosophies, his engagement with animacy to push at the limits of agency permits him "methods [which] stress alliance, continuity, and mutual participation over elemental solitariness and human exceptionalism" (9)—an effort crucial to reading Dene cultural texts. I use his preoccupation with a "limit-breaching intimacy" both ontologically and grammatically to engage with the notion of rocks, animals, and animacy in Navajo discourse. Rocks do not alienate, in the Navajo emergence narrative: they permit human continuity. Hacking writes, with an equally instructive awareness of the humanness of stone, "One way to do philosophy is to take a careful look at some corner of the world. That ensures some rigor, but accuracy must not be myopic" (186). He unfolds the story of dolomite as a human phenomenon by comparing the stability of beliefs about the stability of dolomite as a lithic substance, concluding that the evolution of the discourse around dolomitic stability demonstrates that, as much as anything else, stone itself has proved the substrate of the process whereby belief is enfolded into scientific factuality: "there is no stability to explain. Nobody knows for sure" (206). Belief is a difficult thing to write about, especially in cultural texts. The language of animals is only slightly less elusive, which precisely one of the reasons why their voices are so important to listen for.

I take a particular interest in deictic references to personhood through the aural dimensions of animism by focusing on, in this chapter, discursive hierarchies between pollen, animals, humans, and rocks as a test or limit-case for that which is intersubjective, the wind itself. This chapter on Navajo stories concerns animals and it also returns to the mineral world that I address in chapter two, on François Mandeville’s stories, where caribou, and moose, are important animal words. But copper is also crucial to Mandeville’s narrative world, neither totally animated nor totally inert. In the language in which Mandeville told his stories, Denesuline, the word for meat comes from $\text{zet}\theta\acute{\epsilon}\text{n}$, caribou, while the word for copper, $\text{sats}\acute{\alpha}\text{n}\acute{\epsilon}$, comes from the excrement of the sun.⁹¹ Wolves speak and eat; the sunshit that looks like meat sinks into the earth when intelligent advice is not heard. Metonymy holds together a bloody tissue of essential life. This is one of the lessons that I try to explore in chapter two.

Chapter four of my dissertation is about animacy as a form of deictic reference of person. In that chapter, some of the things that I analyze include: 1) under what conditions animals are marked at a grammatical level as animate and agential people and 2) how stories come alive in how they are “marked,” at the discursive level, by what I am calling “animal grammar,” where expressive features of language exceed everyday enunciation. Where expressive marking exceeds everyday speech, the musicality of language references deeper spiritual truths, such as Wolverine’s reanimating power. My conclusion is that the whole story is, in essence, Wolverine’s song—even though His song is too sacred to be sung in the story itself. The soundscape of the story resonates with His music.

⁹¹ Cf. Navajo Copper $\text{béesh fíhíi}^{\prime}\text{ii}$ (Blackhorse, Semken, and Charley 103), metal [that is] red—and cf. the definition of yáidíhíł in the section on pollen, below, which suggests that díl refers to blood in terms of its qualities of life, redness, and, in the dark, blackness.

In this chapter, I look at the emerging message, as I compare Dene orature, which concerns land as animal—not *like* an animal, but *animal*: certainly animated, possibly a condition that can be experienced only from inside—inside the animal, inside animacy. Alice Legat writes, in her ethnography of Tłı̨chǫ-Dene narratives, that her colleague Romie Wetrade shows in his teaching that “how, when, why, and where knowledge originates are as important to know as the knowledge itself,” and that he “did not tell . . . stories in temporal sequence but rather moved between times, tying them back to his life” (34).⁹² She further notes that “Temporality, then, is an aspect of the places where events and therefore stories reside” (34)—but I think one could add that place itself constitutes the perspective necessary to story. She does state that “all beings, including different human beings, experience different places and therefore have different ways of perceiving the dé” (64). The “dé” is one of the words for world in Tłı̨chǫ, including “everything that is associated with ‘land, ground, dirt, earth,’ and with whom Tłı̨chǫ have a relationship that is responsive to their attention, action, and behavior” (208). This relationality is comparable to but the opposite of Heidegger’s concept of Dasein, which is unobservable except for in the phenomenon of its observation.⁹³

Dé, in contrast to Dasein, requires the closest experiential observation in order to generate the phenomenological relationality that it contributes to the total entity (Legat 17). The word-component -dé is also a component of the words for some place names such as those which refer to the territory of Dene peoples: Denendeh in the north, including those who speak

⁹² Cf. the very similar narrative protocols exemplified in *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (1991), ed. Julie Cruikshank, where three Elders of Dene and Tlingit descent share cultural texts and personal memories combined.

⁹³ “However, this cannot mean that Dasein is to be construed in terms of a concrete possible idea of existence. . . . because average everydayness constitutes the ontic immediacy of this being, it was and will be *passed over* again and again in the explication of Dasein. What is ontically nearest and familiar is ontologically the farthest” (Heidegger 43). While the dé encompasses, it is meant to be closely observed, unlike Dasein, which is “to be uncovered in the indifferent way in which it is initially and for the most part” (43).

Gwich'in, Sahtu, Deh Cho, Tłı̨chǫ, and Akaitcho (*Dene Nation* website); and Dinétah in Navajo territory, referring to land surrounding the place of emergence, Hajínáí.⁹⁴ Diné Bikéyah, “Navajoland” (Young and Morgan 951), is perhaps comparable to Tłı̨chǫ nèèk’e, “The place where you expect to find Tłı̨chǫ within the dé” (Legat 210).⁹⁵ Legat shows, for the Tłı̨chǫ whom she works with, position in land defines perspective and therefore personhood through position in relation to everything in the dé.

In this chapter, as I pursue the question of animals and rocks, I thus juxtapose some of the implications of the Tłı̨chǫ concept of land with the Navajo concept of land as stone and the relational implications of animals and animacy—restricted primarily to the context of the Navajo emergence narrative, but integrating other sources into my archive for analysis from a variety of genres: songs; an art display at the Navajo Nation museum in the capital of the Nation, the town of Window Rock; visual representations of Dinétah and the sacred mountains; pedagogical articles in a community magazine; a personal essay from a Navajo woman, composed as theory; a variety of Navajo-English dictionaries; a memoir of a Navajo man which integrates the emergence story with his life; and an interview with Paul Zolbrod, the translator of *Diné Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story*.⁹⁶ I draw on these sources topically in a sequence which follows the progression of the four primary sacred mountains in Navajo culture to structure my enquiry. In drawing together these sources for insight, I ask: is land—earth, stone, rock, mineral,

⁹⁴ Cf. Kweedoò, “Rock Blood,” which is a “small, steep hill where Yamoòzaa’s grandfather was killed” (209). This grandfather was the source of knowledge for Yamoòzaa but not the source of life; he and his brother Yamoògaa “as babies” were “yellow and very tiny as they came from the space in the caribou cleft hoof” (Jean Wetrade, qtd. in Legat 43).

⁹⁵ Cf. -k’e in “Tłı̨chǫ nèèk’e” and Navajo -k’eh, place (Young and Morgan 967).

⁹⁶ See Appendix D for full interview.

crystal—itself in certain Navajo contexts not *like* an animal, but *animal*? Is it animate?⁹⁷

Sometimes? If so, how?⁹⁸

The concept of the animacy of non-human and non-animal entities manifests as being able to speak in contemporary Navajo culture, as evidenced by a statement from Clarendia Begay, curator at the Navajo Nation Museum concerning a new exhibit:

“The words Jo’ Jini’ [they say] just came to me one day. We get into conversations and everyone always talks about life.”

Begay wondered, what if objects could talk.

“What if the objects at the Navajo Nation could tell stories of themselves?” she asked. “Viewers can make decision as to where these objects came from. When we hear the word, jini, our eyes get bigger and we become more interested. We form our own opinions. People really want to know more when they hear the word jini.”⁹⁹

Hence, that is the name of the first 2016 Navajo Nation Museum exhibit: [“]Jo’ Jini’—If These Objects Could Talk.” (Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources 2016)

⁹⁷ The approach I take here is somewhat different in that I focus on the links between discourse and geology to posit an embodied logical process enacted in the emergence story. But this is just one of any number of approaches.

⁹⁸ I would very much like to draw on information and insights offered while I was a student in the Navajo Language Academy classroom in my discussion of this question in this chapter, but there are university ethics, at this stage of my research, that determine what and who can be quoted. I can only say that I am deeply grateful to all those who participate in the NLA for their knowledge and wisdom as I have tried to learn about Dene speech community perspectives on language and narratives.

⁹⁹ Cf. Legat’s observation that “Discussion on the oldest and most appropriate term to use in a current context is consistent with the extent to which Tłı̨chʔ discuss concepts and ‘what things are called’”; she adds, “I have been present when family members—in particular husbands and wives who speak different dialects—ask each other what they call something and then have a lengthy discussion on associated concepts” (4). If this is a Dene cultural practice, perhaps then it is fitting that Edward Sapir began his work on linguistic relativity while working on Navajo.

In a class on orthography which I attended at Institute for Collaborative Language Documentation (CoLang) 2016, Keren Rice and Mike Cahill observed that, in their experience working in northern-Dene contexts, unique enunciation as well as dialectical variations express valuable information about identity. While variation may be a widely held value in the north, there are many in Navajo territory who believe that a standardized vocabulary as well as orthographic practices are better: this depends in large part on how the speakers whom I have heard discuss this engage with their language. However, standardization means, in the Navajo context, not just a mastery of regional variation; it also refers to a deep understanding of the underlying forms of words that enables sophisticated contemplation of the philosophical relations between words. One might call this the discussion of “how things are spelled.”

Land as mineral: quartz, turquoises, sandstones. Do these breathe, move, speak? Are these animal as well as animate, or animate but not animal? What is the relation between animal and stone, animacy and land? In what sense does the lithic participate in language?

Rather than expressing a general chthonic principle, I feel, reading the emergence narrative, that it is describing a very specific kind of monumental discursive-autochthonous structuralism belonging to the Dene world. In part, my feeling was informed by a concept linguist James Kari proposes, that of the “Athabaskan Geolinguistic Conservation Hypothesis” (194; see Kari 2004) in which the language of place names manifests navigable coordinates for travel across a continent, durable through centuries and even epochs of change, especially, in the Southwest, through an “oronymic organizing principle” when “intervisible mountain are present” (204). In this way, place speaks (cf. Basso 1996).

In essence, I argue in this chapter for a world made by words, crystallized in a lattice leading from small components to larger worlds, as I discuss in the chapter two of my dissertation. This is a phenomenology mutually conditioned by geological and grammatical truths. The world is a crystal, where form manifests itself through time and establishes itself in space. This is what crystals do.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Crystals grow, over time, according to their microstructure, into expanding macrostructures that reflect their molecular formulae. For example, quartz crystals are made of a polymorphous semi-metal that is brittle yet highly bondable calcogen; they require more kinetic energy to precipitate liquid to solid than that contained by the requisite yet infinitesimal threshold ratio wherein entropy balances enthalpy, wherein the one does not supersede nor the other negate the power of the constituent elemental numbers. These crystals precipitate along three dimensions, but, by latticework structuring, extend into the fourth dimension as they coalesce, over time, according to one pattern in space and no other. Thus quartz crystals are silicon interpenetrating diatomic oxygen so that unglass unairs air and, unliquid, holds unair apart and crystalline; because from air into this tetrahedral atmosphere lightwaves refract into the rainbow spectrum. So quartz crystals are anisotropic fascicles that would otherwise be mere isotropic diametrics, liquid and gas; but combined, they make prisms. As I note below, the Navajo word for quartz is “tséghádi’nídínii (tsé-, rock + ghá, through + di’nídín, light shines + ii, the one)” (Young and Morgan 729).

Theory: Some Crystals

Rocks, stones, crystals, gems, caves, cliffs, lava flows, dust, mesas, and especially mountains feature importantly in many Navajo stories and place names—many of which reference stories. Stone cleaves, glints, glitters, scintillates, shears, shatters, pulverizes, ignites, burns, encircles, shelters, empowers, emblemizes, insemminates, generates, destroys to perpetuate. The powers of stone is especially important in the Navajo emergence story. While not all Navajo stories are meant to be shared, or only at certain times of year, the emergence story is told frequently, and to cultural outsiders, so that its wisdom is remarkably accessible.

A quotation from Paul Zolbrod’s translation of the emergence narrative will illustrate just how geological this narrative world is. This excerpt comes from the point in the story where disaster has come not once but many times. Difficult circumstances and foolish actions have converged to destroy several previous, lower worlds. But here, again, the world is being re-made:¹⁰¹

It is also said that soon after the *Kii ’sáni* moved away *Áttsé hastiin* the First Man and *Áttsé asdzáá* the First Woman decided to embellish this new world.

So together with *Bits ’íís lizhin* the Black Body, and with *Bits ’íís dootl ’izh* the Blue Body, they first set out to build the seven mountains sacred to the Navajo people to this very day. They built those mountains out of things they had brought with them: things they had taken from similar mountains in the fourth world below.

...

¹⁰¹ In this chapter, I include some long quotations from the primary texts for three reasons. First, my analysis focuses on the cogency of Navajo narrative logic, and it is important to share the effect of that cogency with readers. Second, cultural narratives are theory and may be read as such, just as Euro-American cultural theory may be read as literary texts. Third, many readers may not be familiar with the information shared in these cultural texts; in order to engage, some experience of the narratives is necessary.

Unless otherwise noted, quotations from Paul Zolbrod’s work are from *Diné Bahane’*.

Through *Sisnaajiní* in the east they ran a bolt of lightning to fasten it to the firmament. Then they decorated it with white shells. They decorated it with white lightning. They decorated it with white corn. They decorated it with dark clouds that produce the harsh and sudden male rain.

On the summit of *Sisnaajiní* in the east they placed a bowl of shells. In that bowl they placed two eggs belonging to *Hasbídí* the Gray Dove, for they wanted feathers on the mountain. They then covered those eggs with a sacred buckskin so that they would hatch. Which explains why there are so many wild pigeons on that mountain to this day. All that they had placed on *Sisnaajiní* in the east they now covered with a sheet of daylight. And from small stone images which they had carried with them from the world below they fashioned *Tséghádi'nidínii ashkii* the Rock Crystal Boy and *Tséghádi'nidínii at'ééd* the Rock Crystal Girl. These two they stationed there to dwell forever as the male god and as the female god of *Sisnaajiní*, or Sierra Blanca Peak as it would be called today in the language that *Bilagáana* the White Man speaks.

...

From top to bottom through *Tsoodzil* in the south they ran a great stone knife to fasten it to the firmament. Then they adorned it with turquoise.¹⁰² They adorned it with dark mist. They adorned it with many different animals. They adorned it with the heavy mist that brings the slow, gentle female rain.

¹⁰² Turquoise is cryptocrystalline in form—it is crystalline at such a microscopic scale that only thin cross-sections under a microscope, lit by polarized light, reveal this. In contrast, quartz is microcrystalline in form. This contrast in kinds of crystal in two very important ceremonial and narrative entities speaks to the materiality of Navajo geology: both turquoise and crystal are important stones, and share a common structure although at very different scales. But as I suggest in chapter four of my dissertation, the proximal may be more important than the scalar when it comes to Dene poetics.

On the peak of *Tsoodzil* in the south they placed a large bowl of turquoise. In that bowl they put two eggs of *Dólii* the Bluebird, for they also wanted feathers on that mountain. They next covered those eggs with a sacred buckskin to make them hatch. Which explains why so many bluebirds dwell there to this very day.

All that they placed on *Tsoodzil* in the south they now covered with blue sky. And from a portion of substance which they had brought with them from the world below they fashioned *Dootl'izhii náyoo 'alí ashkii*, the Boy Who Is Bringing Back Turquoise. And they fashioned *Naadaá 'la 'i náyoo 'la 'i at 'ééd*, the Girl Who Is Bringing Back Many Ears of Corn. These two they stationed there to dwell forever as the male god and as the female god of *Tsoodzil*, or Mount Taylor as it is called in the language that *Bilagáana* speaks. (Zolbrod 86-88)

Smaller patterns lead to larger ones. This wisdom is perdurable like the geological features described in the emergence narrative. But this wisdom is also changeable—changeable according to patterns of compression and erosion that cohere with the immutable internal structures and microstructures of the mutable materials, just as sandstone is formed from crystal conglomerates held in a crystalline matrix of smaller crystalline stone; it wears away in the wind and water to red powder on the desert floor which is microscopically crystalline, and, some time in the future, it changes again from powdery sand, crystalized back into some new form in the world such as sand paintings or new geological formations.

In keeping with the cognitive-linguistic principle that form and meaning pairings go all the way from the smallest phonological patterns up to the largest narrative units,¹⁰³ I suggest that

¹⁰³ As per my expansion of deixis to include narrative constructions of reference to person, time, and place. See Barbara Dancygier: “Meaning is often talked about in terms which seek to divorce it from the situation in which it emerges, and to propose formal constraints on what counts as a meaningful utterance,” but it is more productive, in close linguistic analysis of narrative, to “assume that meaning construction is a process which affects numerous

micro-constructions and macro-claims about emergent meaning are true because they are part of a deeply realized philosophical system every bit as socially pervasive and as epistemologically flexible as Platonism or Hegelianism. It is a system that works. Crystallization is not a new metaphor in Euro-American systems of thought any more than it is in Navajo, where quartz signifies power, both that of sun and rain.¹⁰⁴ Claude Lévi-Strauss knew it worked; here I wish to explore *why*. His interest in how discourse permeates embodiment and cognition to perpetuate itself, always with a difference, but always a recognizable difference, is expressed in his Canonical Formula—(Fx(a):Fy(b)::Fx(b):Fa-1(y))—rather nicely.¹⁰⁵ As Andrew Von Hendy comments,

levels, and that the overall meaning does not arise as a simple addition or compounding of the lower-level constructs” (6). Note the fascinating parallel between her next words and the process of flood in a previous world, fleeing to a hole in the sky leading up to the next world, and emergence to create a new world in the Navajo emergence story: “On the contrary, meaning-construction processes invariably involve selection and narrowing on the one hand, and emergence of new configurations on the other” (6-7). Form-meaning pairs, then, are not merely a hierarchy of sound up through syntax, but the recreation of new form-meaning pairs based on a selection process that is, in the case of the Navajo emergence story, geologically configured. One pair points to, while also reconstituting, the next.

¹⁰⁴ See Zolbrod, p. 90, on the sun: “First they [the First Man and First Woman] fashioned the sun. They made an object round and flat something like a dish, out of a clear stone called *tséghádi’nídínii* or rock crystal, as *Bilagáana* would call it today. / They set turquoise around the edge of the dish. And just beyond the turquoise they placed rays of red rain. Beyond that they placed bars of lightning. And beyond those they placed shimmering swirls. . . . / Then they fashioned the moon. They made another object round and flat, something like a dish but smaller than the first one they had made. This they made out of *tsésq’*, or rock-star mica as the White Man would call it”; and p. 365, note 13, on quartz as a mirage stone that, like mirages, signal rain. Cf. Young and Morgan’s etymology for the surface form *tséghádi’nídínii*: “tsé-, rock + -ghá, through, + di’nídín, light shines + -ii, the one” (729).

¹⁰⁵ On defining the Canonical Formula: Walter Benjamin writes that “Allegory . . . is . . . a form of expression, just as speech is expression, and, indeed, just as writing is” (“Allgeory” 162), while Robert Bringham writes, “To think is to behold . . . the allomorphs of earth: / pebble, boulder, bedrock” as well as “carbon and lead, tin and antimony, / tilling the windowbox of the page” (“Focal” 254-55). Benjamin and Bringham articulate a form of allegorical transformation described by Lévi-Strauss’s “Canonical Formula,” “Fx(a):Fy(b)::Fx(b):Fa-1(y)” (Lévi-Strauss, *Structural* 228), where actors (a, b)—in Latour’s terms, I believe, processes—and values (x, y)—products (“The moderns confused products with processes” [Latour 115]—i.e., effects with causes, subjects with objects)—are transposed, negated, and revealed transformed—like the sign which consists of signifier and signified to reference the object, a *transformation* in meaning can only happen through partial change if a sense of change is to be sustained, rather than generating a radical rupture in meaning to create a newly arbitrary sign referencing some irrelevant other thing. Thus the product Fx remains the same so that the product Fy can be transformed to take up the position of process (a)—and the process enacted by actor (a) is transposed twice to be negated, first in its ontology, from actor to value, and second in its value, or reference. The result is a four-way sign-system where the referent becomes enfolded into the sign that signifies it. Bringham’s formula articulates an ecology of earthy temporality in the transfusion between breath and mineral, flesh and printed page—all variants on, rather than contrastive with, one fundament of meaning—a self-sustaining materiality, an aesthetics that does not abandon ethics.

Like crystal, myth grows ‘spiral-wise . . . in a continuous process whereas its structure remains discontinuous . . . until the impulse which has originated it is exhausted.’ In the case of myth, of course, this impulse is ‘intellectual’ and a myth’s exhaustion of it signifies a limit at which, for whatever reasons, a people have built new stories out of the ruins of the old. (240)

That is, the “:” in the Canonical Formula where products and processes of meaning are transposed at phonological, grammatical, formal, and cognitive levels occurs by means of intersubjective shifts in and transformations of perspective. These shifts and transformations are asymmetrical in some way, although the Canonical Formula does not specify what way.

Nor can it, since the poetics of meaning are always story-specific even as they operate according to a self-generating structure, just as crystals do. Thus Lévi-Strauss literally writes of crystallization as the outcome of myth, which, in his view, is meant to “provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction” (*Structural* 229). Myth, then,

grows spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted. Its growth is a continuous process, whereas its structure remains discontinuous. If this is the case, we should assume that it closely corresponds, in the realm of the spoken word, to a crystal in the realm of physical matter. (229)

Lévi-Strauss is accustomed to transposing others’ mythic methods in order to develop his own; famously, he took the concept of structural linguistics and applied it to anthropological questions. My aim here is to explore how word and matter belong to the same realm, in the Navajo creation story: and if this can be true, how crystals and perspectives and animals and stories have a four-fold “:” process inherent within them. The key is new mountains which grow from the seeds of former mountains—and this same key is inherent in language.

There are four primary sacred mountains in the Navajo cosmos. These are located on a Cartesian map as roughly encompassing Diné'tah to the east, south, west, and north:

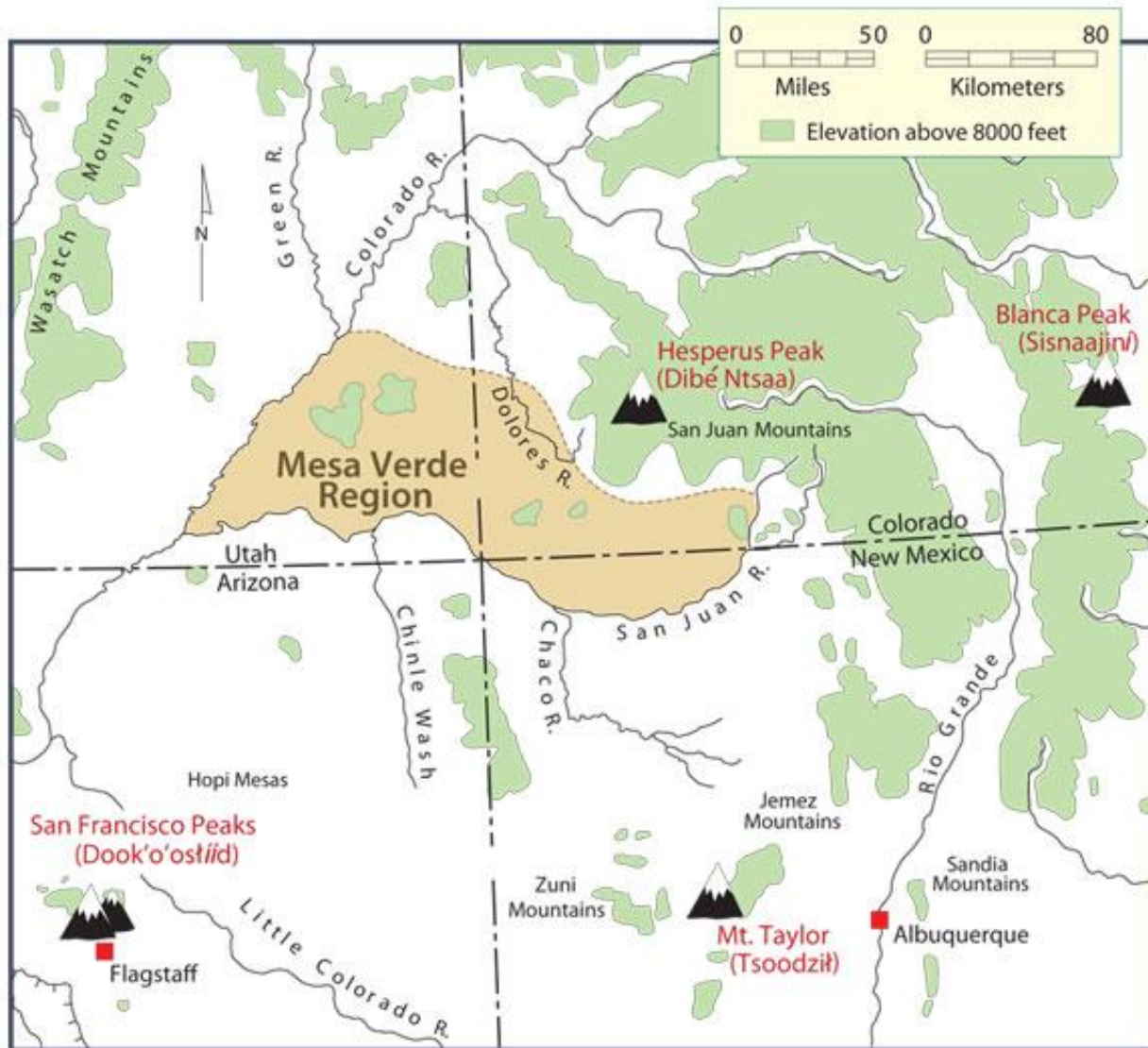


Figure 5.1: “Four Sacred Mountains of the *Diné'tah*” (Morris 2014); reprinted with permission of the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

These mountains have been represented schematically many times.¹⁰⁶ Compare this image to two others. The first represents the four mountains in the Navajo nation’s seal. The second represents the four mountains adapted to a guide to the Navajo verb template structure, designed by Navajo Language Academy participant Clayton Long. The logic of the diagram is that the “wedding basket in the center represents the hooghan [traditional house and ceremonial structure], with its doorway in the east”; it follows that, “Since the hooghan is the home, first person is oriented towards the east. Beyond the pronoun [shí] is the first person singular form of the verb ‘speak’”—and the “farther from home one travels the more people there are, so the dual form of the verb is outside the singular form, and the plural is outside of that” (Fernald, Perkins, and Silentman 2011).¹⁰⁷

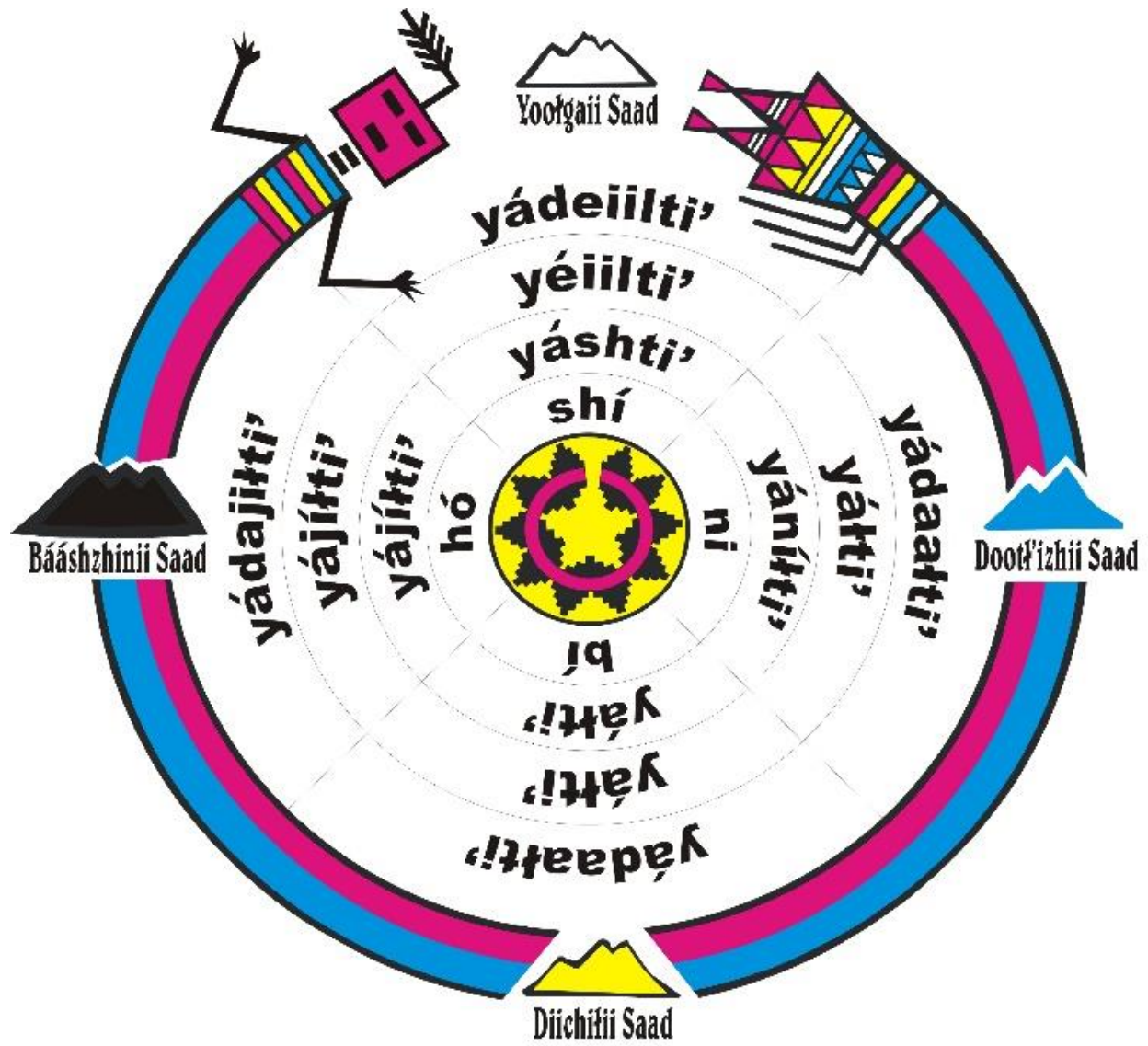
¹⁰⁶ In this chapter, I use Navajo and semiotic sources to consider their schematic configurations; cf. Johnson 1987, Mandler and Cánovas 2014 for theorizations of image schemas—their simplifications may be comparable to the Navajo complexifications exemplified through the sacred mountain system, a possibility that requires further research.

¹⁰⁷ The remainder of the description is: “The south is the direction of warmth, which is how we respond to you, and so second person is to the south. The north is the direction of reverence and awe, and so fourth person is oriented in that direction” (Fernald, Perkins, and Silentman 2011). Clayton Long designed this for the NLA. Cf. fourth person in my chapter on Wolverine and Wolf.



Figure 5.2: “Great Seal of the Navajo Nation” (Hawkins 2013)¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Bobby C. Hawkins, “Great Seal of the Navajo Nation,” *Wikipedia*, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, 2013.



Saad, Saad Nizhónigo Niilyá

Hózhóójí Sin

Figure 5.3: The Verb Wheel (Fernald et al. 2011); permission to reprint requested¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ “Saad, Saad Nizhónigo Niilyá” translates literally to something like “word, language good place,” i.e., “words set out beautifully,” with Niilyá coming from “lyé: to be moved, handled—a slender flexible object, objects in pairs. Niilyá is of frequent occurrence in the legends with reference to the placing of sacred mountains and other features of the world at creation” (Young and Morgan 1987).

Compare these to two even more esoteric images, the first from the cover of the October 2016 issue of *Leading the Way: The Wisdom of the Navajo People*, the second by artist Harrison Begay.

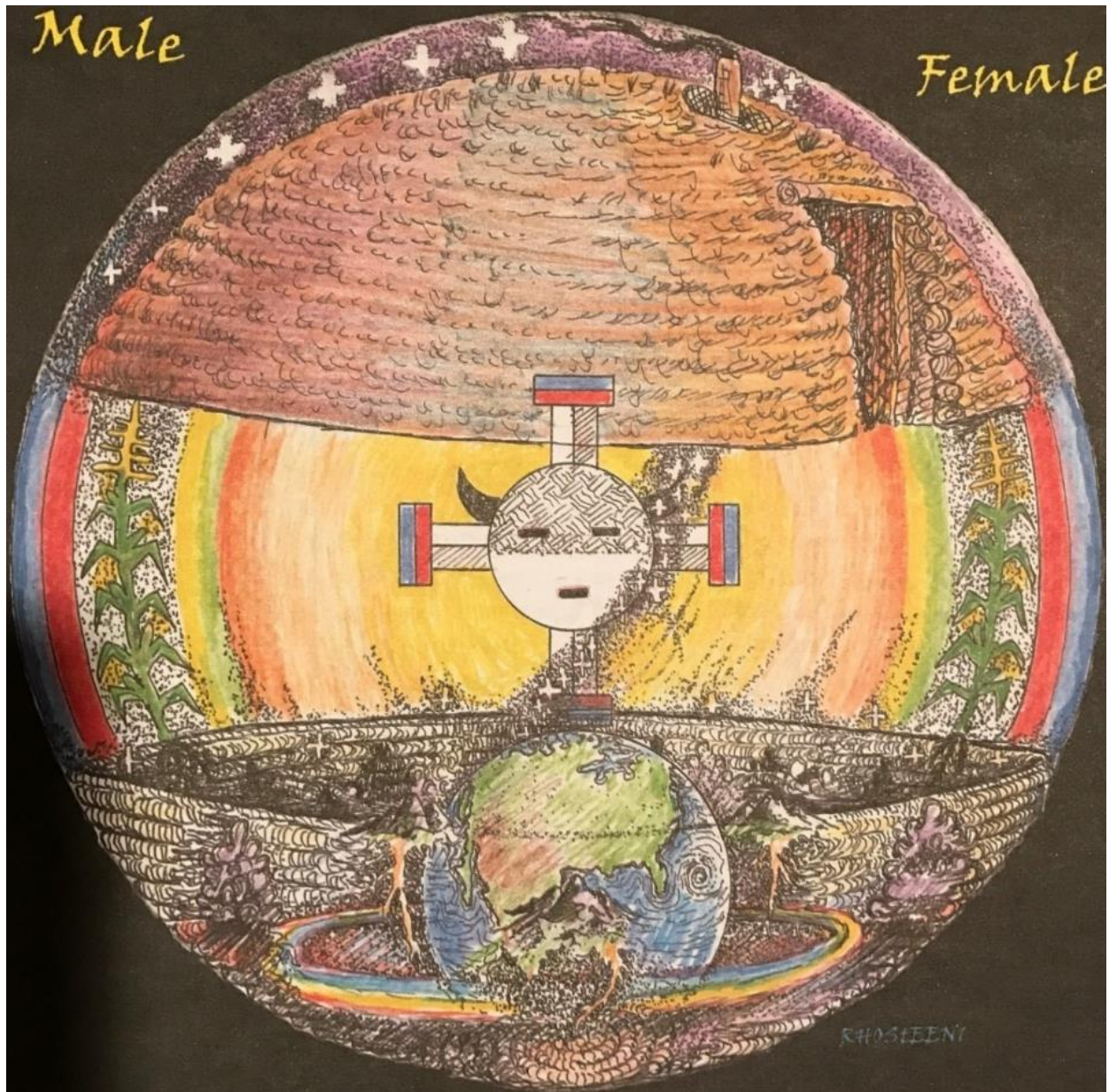


Figure 5.4: Cover image from *Leading the Way: The Wisdom of the Navajo People* 14.10 (2016): 25-27; permission to reprint requested



Figure 5.5: “West Mountain” (Begay 1967); reprinted with permission of the Museum of Northern Arizona

Leading the Way is a magazine published and distributed within the Navajo Nation which explores contemporary interpretations and continuities of tradition. The cover image demonstrates the array of colors and values associated directionally with the Hogan, the

biosphere, and the cosmos. The Begay image¹¹⁰ shows how these values are anchored to the holy mountains: colors, animals, stones, weathers, divinities, and special acts of creativity.

Each mountain represents a time of day and direction to which ceremonial and narrative values are anchored: the white mountain is east, dawn, the start of the day and of life; the direction of movement, intellectually and ecologically, is clockwise, like the sun, and the return to the start signifies passage through an ending (the black mountain, north, night, past the end of the day and of life)—so when one returns to the start, one begins again—but with a difference.

This is a mountain-system that proves endlessly generative, intellectually as spiritually, as the verb wheel demonstrates. It is a system that works somewhat as a Greimas Square works: a semiotic set of relations expressed not through polarities, or algebraic values (as in the Cartesian axes x , y , and sometimes z), but through mountains. Algirdas Julien Greimas proposed a poststructuralist elaboration on the structuralist tradition to which Lévi-Strauss and Merleau-Ponty contributed such that the transformations which occur within narrative syllogisms are shown to follow a philosophical pattern, or “*epistemic axiology*” (Greimas 547) for resolving paradoxes of meaning: “meaning can be apprehended only as articulated meaning,” i.e., “meaning as structure” (539).

Schematically represented as a semiotic square, Greimas’s proposed axiological tool resembles superficially the four-mountain Navajo system.¹¹¹ This system is philosophical and pervasive. As one practitioner states,

¹¹⁰ Harrison Begay, “West Mountain,” Fig. 4, *The Sacred Mountains of the Navajo in Four Paintings by Harrison Begay*, with Leland C. Wyman, Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1967, n. pag.

¹¹¹ Greimas and Rastier’s explication of the square’s constituent relations, structural dimensions, and semic structures is charted, which I quote from here: Under column one, “Constituent relations,” there are: a) “contrary,” b) “contradiction,” and c) “simple implication”; these are followed by column two, “Structural dimensions,” which includes a) “S axis (complex)” and “ \sim S axis (neutral),” b) “schema 1” and “schema 2,” and c) “deixis 1” and “deixis 2”; under column three, “Semic structures,” there are a) “S1 + S2” and “ \sim S1 + \sim S2,” b) “S1 + \sim S1” and “S2 + \sim S2,” and c) “S1 + \sim S2” and “S2 + \sim S1” (90).

These mountains don't move as the rest of the Earth and the Sky. They hold everything down for us. They are our strength, *Dziil*. They are the key to our thinking, decision-making, and life as Diné people. (Klopfenstein 2)

See also this quotation on rocks from a personal essay by Esther Belin, composed as Diné theory—this is the end, and the start serves as the second epigraph to this chapter:

The rocks sit with me. I am eclipsed by their still outer layer, elucidated by the inner layer—a melody holy on the side of protection, peaceful on the side of order. I live in the sun-setting shadow of Dibé Ntsaa, practicing stillness, fastening my prayers tight around the rainbow at its base. (43)

Belin creates an array of oppositions that are perpetuated rather than resolved. The pattern of perpetuation, rather than resolution, is, to me, regenerative. By comparing Greimas with the Navajo mountain system, I am not trying to legitimize the mountain system—there is no need, and I am not qualified; rather, I wish to start with a cultural context in which I was raised and engage with the mountain system from within my experience to experience something of its perpetuity. Thus the Greimas square.

The contrary relation refers to a value and its opposite. The relation of contradiction refers to the negation of the hyponymic (embodied examples) instantiations of S and ~S. The simple-implication relation, or deixis 1 and 2, refers to the directional mapping of the contrary relation between S and ~S onto the chiastically arranged hyponyms. These hyponyms are chiastically arranged so that the initial negation process from S1 to ~S1 and S2 to not ~S2 can be inverted once again, not bidirectionally—back to what they were—but relationally—and atemporally, such that hyponym S1 is linked with negated-hyponym ~S2 and vice versa. The effect of doing so is to bring into contiguous juxtaposition two values that cannot be linked contingently, for example in a linear fashion via “time’s arrow.”

Greimas and Rastier do not explain their choice of “deixis” for their glossing of the structural dimensions of these semic structures, but I think it is safe to say that, like grammatical deixis, the reference makes no sense without the context, centered here on the existence of the square as such—but not only such, since the square and its values are always drawn from some pre-existing context.

Greimas Semiotic Square

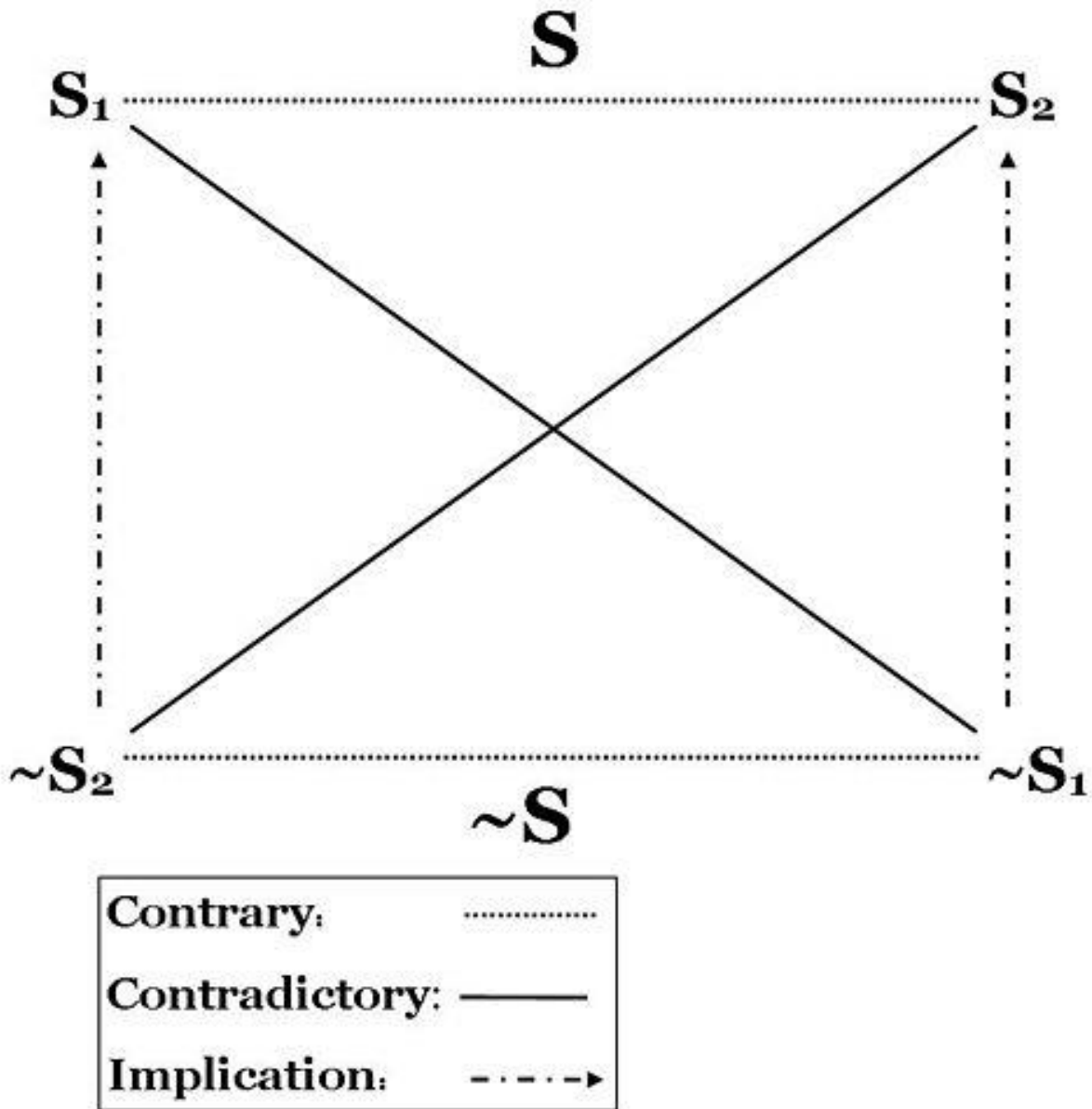


Figure 5.6: Greimas Square (EmmaSofia515 2010)¹¹²

¹¹² EmmaSofia515, "Greimas/Semiotic Square," *Wikipedia*, public domain, 2010. Diagram is similar to Greimas and Rastier, p. 88.

In the Greimas square, S and ~S are contrastive values and generate not a two-way set of relations (as with the “::” of the Canonical Formula), but, rather, six. For the sake of exploring a more-than-superficial resemblance, I propose the following diagram of the Navajo mountains and values.

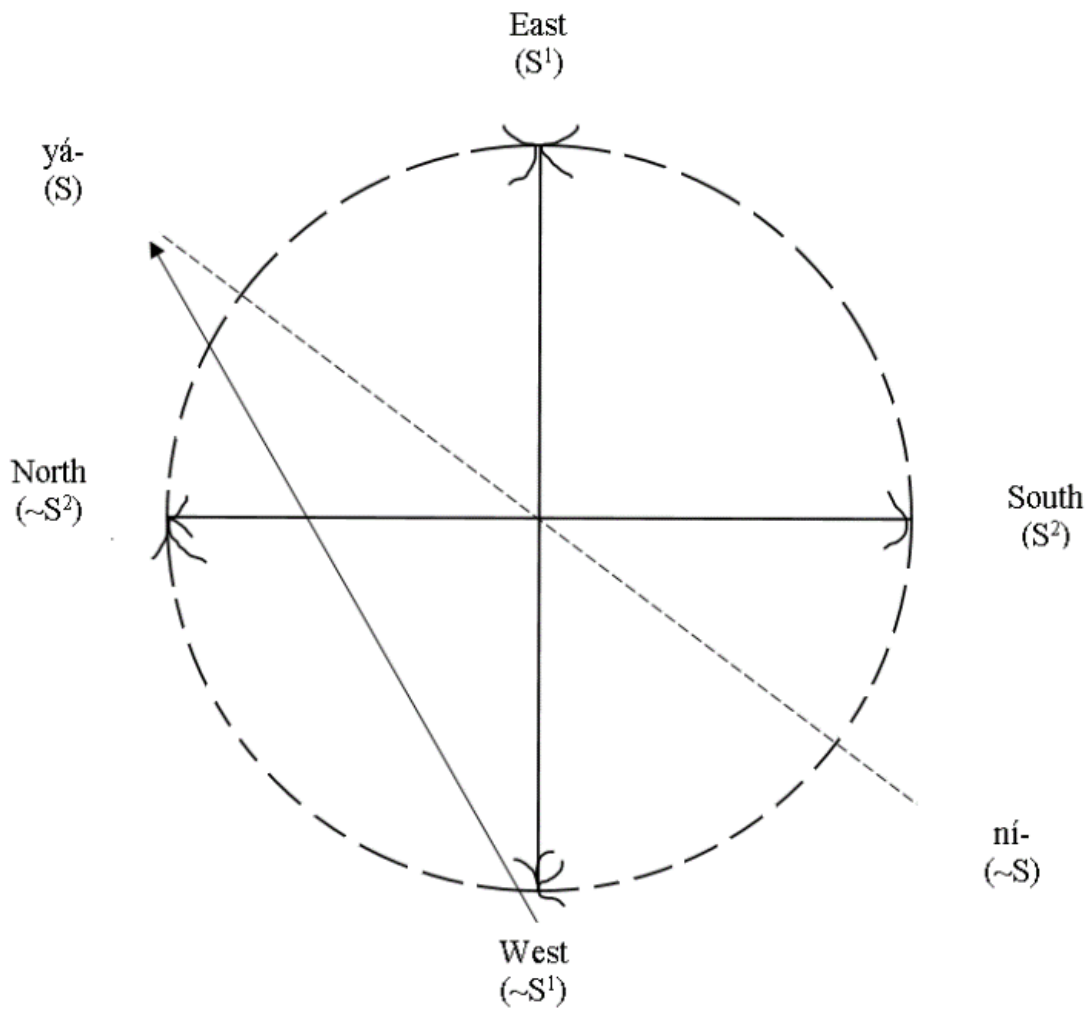


Figure 5.7: Greimas Square and the Sacred Mountains

In this diagram, S and ~S determine not six sets of relations but seven: the seventh is the axis yá-, above, and ní-, below: this axis refers to the former world below, the world in which we now are, and the next world above, whatever that may be. S and ~S thus sit not between the poles of S1 and S2 and ~S1 and ~S2, respectively, but at the center of all four values. Further, when one attempts to describe the semic structures generated by mapping S and ~S vertically rather than horizontally, one arrives not at S1:~S2 and S2:~S1 (which would require counterclockwise movement in the case of S1:~S2, which is not good in the Navajo system), but, rather, and again following the sun, S1:S2:~S1:~S2:S1, etc.

In this interconnected deictic dimensionality is a progression signifying transformation upward from ~S to S (the opposite of the directionality of the Greimas square), so that each cycle of S1:S2:~S1:~S2:S1:S2:~S1:~S2:S1, etc. must actually be noted to include a difference not of contrary values but of nested values. Thus we might indicate this as something like this.¹¹³

S1:S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2:~S1:~S2.

Figure 5.8: Greimas Coordinates in the Navajo System

I use color-coding to indicate the nested relations; these colors follow the progression of the colors of the minerals associated with each direction: crystal (clear/none) to abalone (yellow) to

¹¹³ Bringhurst makes the claim that traditional oral narratives are “fractal”—this is one way in which his claim may be illustrated:

Ghandl's stories are remarkable in *how these [numerical, ethnopoetic] structures are employed*: how the movements and the sections fit together; how the structures, whether simple or complex, stand up and dance.

The patterns are *fractal* in the sense that they repeat at varying scales. It may also be the case that, like many fractal structures, they cause the story to behave like something larger than it looks. They are, it seems to me, something like the nervous system of the story. Branching and rebranching as they do, they multiply the information-bearing capacity, and I suspect that, as it travels from one teller to the next, they encourage and restrain its evolution and mutation. (Bringhurst in Ghandl 29)

Cf. the concept of form-meaning pairs in cognitive-linguistic theory.

turquoise to jet.¹¹⁴ In using this form of notation, where colors are many and varying, I begin to see why the lower worlds in the emergence narrative were one color, but this world is called the “glittering world.”¹¹⁵

The especial relation, the arrow drawn at an angle between West and yá-, is included here because I believe that this correlates to the transformation in the Canonical Formula Fa-1(y), which is the first transformation in Greimas’s square. It becomes apparent through this marking of transformation that the Canonical Formula is, if at all descriptive, descriptive only of a small

¹¹⁴ This nested, directional organization of color by mineral is evident in this song taken from the Blessingway—remember that the door of the Hogan always faces east:

“Talking God’s Song”

Changing Woman’s child am I, as such I go about,
 In the rear of my Hogahn a Turquoise Prayer
 Stick stands,
 In the centre of my Hogahn a White Shell Prayer
 Stick stands,
 Near the fireplace in my Hogahn an Abalone Prayer
 Stick stands,
 At the side of my Hogahn a Jet Prayer Stick
 At the doorway of my Hogahn a Crystal Prayer
 Stick stands,
 Around my Hogahn plants grow,
 Around my Hogahn stones lie about (millstones),
 Around my Hogahn four sacred mountains stand,
 From within my Hogahn waters flow away,
 Talking God blesses my Hogahn,
 Calling God blesses my Hogahn,
 Yellow Corn Girl blesses my Hogahn,
 White Corn Boy blesses my Hogahn,
 Pollen Boy blesses my Hogahn,
 Corn Beetle Girl blesses my Hogahn,
 Then I go on as one who has long life,
 I go on as one who is happy,
 I go with blessing before me,
 I go with blessing before me,
 I go with blessing below me,
 I go with blessing above me,
 I go with blessing around me,
 I go with blessing in my speech,
 I go with happiness and long life,
 I go mysteriously. (Wilson 9)

¹¹⁵ To glitter and to be multicolored are linked semantically through versions of the Navajo narrative, some of which describe our world as glittering and some of which described it as the “Many Colored Earth and some the Changeable Earth” (O’Bryan 12).

component within a larger system of transformation, where form-meaning pairs are selected, narrowed, and re-emerge through an embodied system of natural logic. This system includes language as well as rocks—breath and flesh as well as mind and mineral.

In the Navajo case, this system is orographical, according to a mountain-based semiotics, rather than algebraic, but there is a mathematical component. This mathematical component (the precise and accurate semiotics of descriptive reference) is expressed temporally, through directional reference to time of day—dawn, afternoon, evening, and night, as the sun rotates around the mountains that anchor Navajoland. Perhaps more esoterically, but certainly narratively, there are anchored, to these directional and temporal values, shaded by qualities of light and perhaps other ecological conditions, other forms of reference: crystals, animals, weathers, and divine beings. These are encoded in experience and in reality, just as they are in a Tł̣chq̣ context: “individual experience both augments personal knowledge and contributes to the stories held by all Tł̣chq̣; all individuals have the possibility of enhancing their knowledge as stories ‘go around’ . . . all stories, including these old ones, are reaffirmed as truth through experience” (Legat 18).¹¹⁶ There are bluebirds on *Tsoodzil*.

Before continuing, two points. First, my interpretation of the Navajo mountain system is just one of any possible number. My interpretation is meant only to demonstrate that this system of thought is indeed a system, endlessly regenerative, and may be used to contemplate reference at both small and large scales. Second, the Navajo mountain system is more-than-logical. I do not wish to claim that I have special insight into this system, which goes far deeper than I am

¹¹⁶ The full quotation is: “individual experience both augments personal knowledge and contributes to the stories held by all Tł̣chq̣; all individuals have the possibility of enhancing their knowledge as stories ‘go around.’ The stories account for personal experiences, which in turn are told and used by others—intertwining with other occurrences that are remembered through telling and listening to oral narratives—added to and changed, and start and stop depending on current conversations. Although some very old stories have a beginning and ending in the telling of them, all stories, including these old ones, are reaffirmed as truth through experience” (18).

qualified to go. Because it does go so deep, it has spiritual dimensions to it as well as embodied and discursive ones. In this chapter, I stick to discursive ones.

The way that I do so is by following the mountains, using the values of breath, flesh, mind, and mineral, with mineral as “S”—“yá”— the “Niilyá” in “Saad Nizhónígo Niilyá.” Rather than starting with word-level form-meaning pairs to get to discourse-level form-meaning pairs, I will follow the opposite approach, using four emergence-story episodes, in plot sequence, to examine smaller issues surrounding the nature of form-meaning pairs constituent of animacy. In this system, then, S=breath and ~S=mineral, with flesh=S1, mind=S2, and narrative discourse=~S1. For ~S2, I suggest pollen.

Method

Four emergence-story episodes in particular illustrate this astonishing truth: that we are, in part, made of breath and dirt, and that we move in it and are moved by it. This principle follows from the relation of crystal to words. The episodes that teach about this include the following. 1) Sky and earth touch to generate Coyote (and sometimes Badger). 2) Humans are created from a combination of earthy as well as airy elements, from two ears of corn, between two deerskins, and the wind, in the presence of many other kinds of beings. 3) Coyote throws a stone upon the water and declares that, “If it floats, we will all live forever.” (It did not, and so we do not.) And 4) most importantly, after the disaster of the previous world, the four sacred mountains of Dinétah, the Navajo homeland, are re-created using potent juxtapositions of gems and shells (formed equally strangely as gems in the heat of volcanic and shells in the cold of oceanic activity), birds, land mammals, and sky-features such as lightning, rainbows, and soft and hard rainfalls.

My objective is to compare these attestations to infer how animacy is remnant even in English-language narrative discourse. I adapt Sean Patrick O’Neill’s method of translating stories across adjacent Indigenous cultures to identify indexical tags of inter-cultural difference (O’Neill 225, 226), comparing intra-culturally, instead of interculturally, constructions referring to stones in Navajo discourse.

O’Neill writes, of his inter-cultural translation project involving translation of stories from Yurok (an Algonquian language) and Karuk (possibly a Hokan language) into Hupa (a Dene/Athabaskan language) by a Hupa translator:

In the course of the translation project, it became clear that almost any element of a given performance could be ethnically marked. As parallel narratives were carefully compared line by line, apparently minor differences appeared to act in a profoundly indexical fashion, serving as badges of group membership by signaling belonging within a given community. (216)

These differences could be repetitions, deletions, or switching the temporal constructions (aspect and/or tense), genders of characters, formulae, structures, and social functions. One great example he gives is the shift in a name for a little bird in a story; in Hupa, its name is “*tse:-q’eeet*,” which “literally means ‘the one who fucks rocks,’” and in the Karuk version of the tale, the “bird is simply left to eat the moss in the beds of rivers; his name, *’asaxvanish’ámvaanich*, means ‘the little one who sucks at the floors of the rivers’” (220). This remarkable difference is much less about comparing than about contrasting identities. This contrastive value works between language-culture areas in the Canonical Formula. In my analysis, I use the mountains.

I analyze four episodes where stones and animals co-occur using the values S=mineral and ~S=breath, with S1=flesh, S2=mind, ~S1=narrative discourse; ~S2=pollen. In this way, I

elaborate narratively on the cline of relations between stone, human, and air by: a) identifying differing hierarchies of animacy as marked in Navajo and b) considering the narrative conditions for these hierarchies.

Hierarchies of animacy in Navajo, and in the Dene-Tha story I write about, can be used to mark animacy, agency, or merely topicalization. In Navajo, unlike in some Indigenous systems of thought, not everything is animate to the same degree. Hierarchical markings of animacy, in their articulation, serve to help constitute the total reality of stone – human – air.

Ellavina Perkins writes, of the question of markers of animacy in Navajo, that the usual syntax in Navajo is SOV, but that this order can change to focus on the object when both nouns are “both of equal rank (e.g. both human)” (93) but the object is construed to rank higher in terms of animacy. She adds that “when NP1 [the subject] is of higher rank than NP2 [the object] the transformation is blocked” (93). The example she gives is perfect for my exploration of narrative conditions for animacy:

(a) Diné dził yoo’í.

(man mountain 3.P. sees)

‘The man sees the mountain.’

(b) *Dził diné boo’ í.

(mountain man 3.P. sees) (93)¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Note that this example is ungrammatical in everyday discourse, as indicated by the star, *. Note also that the change in verb prefix in constructions that are grammatical is from yi- to bi-; Perkins summarizes this marker of animacy for subject-object inversion elegantly as: “NP1 and NP2 invert position and the /yi/ changes to /bi/” (109). Thus syntax and pronouns, as with Dene Dháh, indicate the ontological statuses of agent and patient in relation to each other.

When the subject is of a “lower rank” in terms of animacy, then the “‘transformation’ is obligatory” (94). To summarize the discursive effect of these rules, I place them in the table below.

Table 5.1: Summary of Animacy Hierarchy in Navajo

rank (meaning)	syntax effect of OSV (form)	pronoun (form)	implication (meaning)
Equal	Topicalization	bi-	focalization on object
S higher than O	*	yi-	subject more agential than object
S lower than O	Obligatory	bi-	subject, although with a lower animacy ranking than object, is imbued with agency under larger conditions of some kind

Mary Helen Creamer’s ranking system, as summarized by Perkins is: group 1: humans (except babies) and lightning; group 2: large and medium animals who are noticeably intelligent (dogs,

predators); group 3: medium animals; group 4: small animals; group 5: insects; group 6: natural forces; group 7: plants and “inanimate objects without special status”; group 8: abstractions (95-96). Notably, insects are some of the first intelligent beings in the emergence story. Also notably, the lithic is not mentioned in this list. Creamer does include sentence examples concerning motion and rocks, suggesting, that, in group 7, when an object is possessed of more motion than a subject, no matter the ranking of that object, it is inverted and yi- changes to bi- (Creamer 36). The point of this useful principle, summarized in the chart, is that it allows me to determine if the narrative cline for animacy is ever different from the everyday ranking system—to determine when mountains, or any lithic entity, might be thought to have agency.

Indeed, every speech act in Navajo requires the speaker to infer “who can be expected to be able to act upon whom” in order to be grammatically correct (Creamer 30). However, some kinds of “nouns are occasionally ‘personified’ in legendary writing or story telling . . . and either noun may be the subject or the topic, at the storyteller’s option” (37). So I am interested in the narrative contexts for what the animal-stone hierarchies are as well as what kind of discourse-function these hierarchies fulfill—ontological (animacy), narratological (agency), or grammatical (focus). My analysis then summarizes *some of* the power of stone-animal schemas for the orators, singers, and writers whose sources I read. To do so, I offer a short note hypothesizing that pollen is a form of stone at its utter limit of what stone can be.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Constructions of animacy which are counter to the usual hierarchies (see my dissertation Conclusion for a brief review of theoretical discussions of animacy) are possible in any language. In English, one can personify entities typically considered inanimate objects. However, the distinction, as I understand it, between personification in English and the yi/bi markers in Navajo is that personification in English is still considered grammatical because it relies on the same syntactical patterns as more typical animacy constructions, whereas in Navajo, some yi/bi constructions are normally considered ungrammatical except within the bounds of certain kinds of narrative or musical discourse. See Creamer 1974 for further information on these boundaries.

Close Reading and Commentary

Below, I look at English translations of the following episodes along with short excerpts in Navajo from other versions of the emergence narrative. These four episodes are listed above; here I list them again, this time with a correlation to the Navajo mountain semiotic system in order to structure my analysis: S=breath and ~S=mineral, with flesh=S1, mind=S2, narrative discourse=~S1, and pollen=~S2.

My commentary focuses on the semiotics of the following emergence events since they involve stone in order to compare kinds of agency according to a narrative sequence rather than syntax in order to enact the theoretical guide that is an implicit effect of this narrative. This I take from Dell Hymes, who writes that we must try for

recognizing repetition within a frame, the relation of putative units to each other within a whole. Covariation between form and meaning, between units and a recurrent (culturally established) pattern of narrative organization is the key. (*In Vain* 318)

While Lise Dobrin writes,

In other words, the poetic status of any given element or stretch of text can only be evaluated in light of the overall structure of the particular narrative under analysis, while taking into consideration the patterning of narratives in the relevant speech community as a whole. (5)

Hymes as an early pioneer of, and Dobrin as a contemporary participant in, ethnopoetic analysis, both encourage micro-analysis within a narrative frame: co-variation occurs within nested semiotics of structures both narrative- and community-based. To do so is to accept that meaning can emerge at all levels of language, not just that of sentence-level syntax (though that, too, is crucial).

Thus: 1) Breath=S: Humans are created from a combination of earthy and airy elements, from two ears of corn, between two deerskins, and in the presence of many other kinds of beings. 2) Flesh=S1: Sky and earth touch to generate Coyote (and sometimes Badger). 3) Mind=S2: Coyote throws a stone upon the water and declares that, “If it floats, we will all live forever.” (It did not, and so we do not. Coyote made up our minds for us on this.) And 4) Mineral=~S: after the disaster of the previous world, the four sacred mountains of Dinétah, the Navajo homeland, are re-created using potent juxtapositions of gems and shells (formed equally strangely as gems in the heat of volcanic in the cold of oceanic activity), birds, land mammals, and sky-features such as lightning, rainbows, and soft and hard rainfalls. Together these permit a consideration of narrative discourse as embodied yet also disembodied meaning=~S1, with pollen as=~S2.

Episode 1) Breath=S: Humans are created from a combination of earthy and airy elements, from two ears of corn, between two deerskins, and in the presence of many other kinds of beings.

From *Diné Bahane*’:

They continued to listen and wait, listen and wait, until they heard the voice a third time as before, all the nearer and all the louder.

Continuing to listen as before, they heard the voice again, even louder than the last time, and so close now that it seemed directly upon them, exactly as it had seemed before. And as before they found themselves standing among the same four *Haashch’éeéh dine’é*, or Holy People as *Bilagáana* the White Man might wish to call them.

Bits’íis dootl’izh the Blue Body and *Bits’íis lizhin* the Black Body each carried a sacred buckskin. *Bits’íis ligaii* the White Body carried two ears of corn.

One ear of corn was yellow. The other ear was white. Each ear was completely covered at the end with grains, just as sacred ears of corn are covered in our own world now.

Proceeding silently, the gods laid one buckskin on the ground, careful that its head faced the west. Upon this skin they placed the two ears of corn, being just as careful that the tips of each pointed east. Over the corn they spread the other buckskin, making sure that its head faced east.

Under the white ear they put the feather of a white eagle.

And under the yellow ear they put the feather of a yellow eagle.

And then they told the onlooking people to stand at a distance.

So that the wind could enter.

Then from the east *Nilch'i ligai* the White Wind blew between the buckskins. And while the wind thus blew, each of the Holy People came and walked four times around the objects they had placed so carefully on the ground.

As they walked, the eagle feathers, whose tips protruded slightly from between the two buckskins, moved slightly.

Just slightly.

So that only those who watched carefully were able to notice.

And when the Holy People had finished walking, they lifted the topmost buckskin.

And lo! The ears of corn had disappeared.

In their place there lay a man and there lay a woman.

* * * *

The white ear of corn had been transformed into our most ancient male ancestor.
And the yellow ear of corn had been transformed into our most ancient female ancestor.

It was the wind that gave them life: the very wind that [50] gives us breath as we go about our daily affairs here in the world we ourselves live in!

When the wind ceases to blow inside of us, we become speechless. Then we die.

In the skin at the tips of our fingers we can see the trail of that life-giving wind.

Look carefully at your own fingertips.

There you will see where the wind blew when it created your most ancient ancestors out of two ears of corn, it is said. (50-51)

While this remarkable passage enacts the emergence of humans from the gods, animal skins, corn, and the wind, and as such enacts its own interpretive commentary, I wish to provide one more example, in Navajo:

And then all of that by means of which (people) are to live was made, they say when they tell this story. The four-footed ones, the birds were human beings then, now they moved up. This, now, is what we are: white corn and yellow corn [107] having been put under one cover, then we came into being. (Sapir and Hoijer 107-08)

ʔá·dó· be·daʒi·ná·do·le·ʔi· t'á·ʔáʔco ʔáda·lya·, daʒinî·go dahoʒilniʔ. na·llo·ši·, na·t'agi·
dadinédá·ʔ, ʒó ʔéi ha·zná. dí·, k'ad, nihíhígí : na·dáʔáʔgai na·dáʔáʔcoibiʔ ʔaʔt'aná·lyâ·go,
ʔá·dó· hosi·ʔí·ʔ. (106)

In this account, titled “The Origin of the Shaking Chant and an Account of Culture Origins,” which was “told and translated by Barnie Bitsill with the help of John Watchman” (484, note 6:1), humanity was before it is in order to become. The word na·t'agi· refers to birds, dadinéda·ʔ refers to plural former Diné (dá·ʔ, ago). The verb hosi·ʔí·ʔ is based on the verb root “Líí” with

the “primary meaning ‘be(come) come into being, be’” (Young and Morgan 282, root index)—being and becoming are mutually articulated. This portion of Bitsill’s emergence narrative makes explicit that the creatures of the air became that which humans now are. It also makes explicit that these former beings are animate. Further, this passage demonstrates that air emerges from earth, the upper from the lower.¹¹⁹

The phrase *dažinî go dahožilni?*, “they say when they tell this story,” is an important attestation to the continuity between experience and narrative; this narrative begins with the statement that “Now, this (story begins) when we came into being. Now, at the time, it began, it came into being” (Sapir and Hoijer 73). A little later, the orator expands on this concept, that of the mutual origin of narrative and emergence, in the English translation, where a practitioner speaks:

“At some time (long ago) we came into existence. This (chant), I am the one who stands for you, you see. We are living by means of it,” he said, they say. That, here, had happened so, they say. And then, “This (chant) now we shall live in accordance with it. In accordance with it, there will be births.” Then that one now (said), “I shall be the one who goes about at the brink of old age, I shall be the pleasant one.” That same one, this now (he said), “Whatever I say for you, so it shall be.” That one, this now (he said), “We shall be numerous. That I know for you. From now on, there will be everything for you. There will be corn for you. Now, this which grows in the fall, those (plants) will ripen, that will come into existence for you. There will be yucca fruit for you. Pine-nuts also, and pigweed, and Chenopodium,¹²⁰ (and all those with) different names.”

This is their story of long ago. It is not just their story of recent times. (77)

¹¹⁹ See section on pollen below for more on regenerative reversal.

¹²⁰ Wild quinoa; seeds and leaves are eaten.

Prophecy thus becomes teaching.¹²¹ This teaching is that breath is the beginning, the being, and the becoming of everything: “We are living by means of it.”

Episode 2) Flesh=S1: Sky and earth touch to generate Coyote (and sometimes Badger).

One day soon thereafter, while the elders were giving a penis to a boy who had come of age, and while they were giving a vagina to a girl who had come of age, the people saw the sky swooping down. It seemed like it wanted to embrace the earth. And they saw the earth likewise looming up as if to meet the sky.

For a moment they came in contact. They sky touched the earth and the earth touched the sky. And just then, at exactly the spot where the sky and earth had met, *Mq'ii* the Coyote sprung out of the ground. And *Nahashch'id* the Badger sprung out of the ground.

It is our belief that *Mq'ii* the Coyote and *Nahashch'id* the Badger are children of the sky. Coyote came forth first, which leads us to suppose that he is Badger's older brother. (Zolbrod 56)

Much is published about Coyote, but little about Badger, who is his younger brother. As Badger is part of the same animal family as Wolverine, I feel that the elusive character of both Wolverine and Badger, physically and discursively, is telling. Badger does not receive much discussion, but He is present at the creation of Coyote, and badger skin and other body parts are important in ceremony (Pavlik 283); thus songs are some of the places where I have found mention of Him after His mutual creation with Coyote when sky and earth, *yá-* and *ní-*, become chiral and touch, hand to hand.

¹²¹ Cf. nested quotatives in “*dažin̄: go dahožilni?*” (emphasis mine).

In other versions of the emergence narrative, I find a passage on His movement along with a circumlocution which speaks to His position in the west, which is yellow: “Son-of-sunshine (small badger) went above (?) they say. Badger he came down they say” (Goddard, *Navajo* 23), or, in Navajo: “*candinbiyaji kadjiya djin. nahactc’it bidadzodza djin* (22). (son-of-sunshine went-above they-say. Badger came-down they-say (22). Badger’s association with yellow is also to be found in this passage:

After the water sank there appeared another person. They did not know him, and they asked him where he had come from. He told them that he was the badger, *nahashch’id*, and that he had been formed [10] where the Yellow Cloud had touched the Earth.

Afterward this Yellow Cloud turned out to be a sunbeam. (O’Bryan 10-11)

However, from the *Beautyway* (which is for curing snake illnesses), Toad Man’s song suggests another possibility:¹²²

Badger . . . Yellow Bill, badger tail *owene* . . . flash

lightning *a-wene yo-awo hai-i-ye* Rain is close . . . rain passed by . . . Bear *owene*

. . .

dim yellow flashes *owe-ne* . . . *ha-ayo ye-yehe* (Haile, Oakes, and Wyman 86)

Later in the *Beautyway*, there is a part of a song that goes:

Badger by means of [on] cloud I go along, Badger by means

of [on] cloud I go along, [on] cloud I go along, corn

meal heap, [on] cloud I go along, corn meal heap

hayi ehe hayoye (90)

¹²² Ceremonies are sacred and often to be shared only in the context of a face-to-face understanding with a singer (practitioner); however, because this and the others I quote from are published, I am using them to supplement other genres for my dissertation. Sharing protocol is an issue that I hope to come to understand further.

There are other attestations of Badger in the Blessingway, but these examples illustrate two main points: 1) Badger may be the son of lightning or of sunshine—and lightning is as animate as humans are (see animacy hierarchy above); and 2) Badger is associated with water as well as sky, sunlight, lightning, or fire.

In fact, Badger may serve as not only as an earth-diver, on His creation, but then also as a sky-climber:

First Man and his people saw four dark clouds and four white clouds pass, and then they sent the badger up the reed. This time when the badger returned he said that he had come out on solid earth. So First Man and First Woman led the people to the Fifth World, which some call the Many Colored Earth and some the Changeable Earth. They emerged through a lake surrounded by four mountains. The water bubbles in this lake when anyone goes near. (O'Bryan 12)

But before He helps those who are alive to emerge, He is marked with mud—earth and water—on His pelt:

Now two dark clouds and two white clouds rose, and this meant that two nights and two days had passed, for there was still no sun. First Man again sent the badger to the upper world, and he returned covered with mud, terrible mud. First Man gathered chips of turquoise which he offered to the five Chiefs of the Winds who lived in the uppermost world of all. They were pleased with the gift, and they sent down the winds and dried the Fifth World. (12)

In both these actions, Badger serves, in some way, to save those who are alive from water, lifting them up into the glittering—or “Many Colored”—world. In this, He may come second in narrative syntax to Coyote, but His body, or flesh, saves people from death, both in songs and in

the emergence narrative—in contradistinction to Coyote, whose devious mind institutes it—although this, too, becomes part of the total system of beauty.

Episode 3) Mind=S2: Coyote throws a stone upon the water and declares that, “If it floats, we will all live forever.” (It did not, and so we do not.)

Again from *Diné Bahane*’:

When everyone at last reached the mainland, the people all wanted to know what would become of them. So someone threw a hide scraper into the water and had this to say.

“If it sinks we will eventually perish. But if it floats we shall all go on living.”

It floated, and everyone was glad.

But then *Mq’ii* the Coyote stood up. And he had this to say:

“Wait a minute here. Let me do this,” he said.

And before anybody could object he picked up a stone and spoke this way:

“If it floats, we will all live forever. But if it sinks, everybody will die sooner or later.”

Of course the stone sank, and everyone grew angry. They called *Mq’ii* names and they cursed him. Some of the people even threatened to throw him in the water. But he cried out, and this is what he said.

“Wait!” he said.

“Listen to me.”

“If we all go on living, and if the women keep having babies, there will be too many people. There won’t be any room. Nobody will be able to move around. There will be no space to plant corn.

“Isn’t it better that each of us should live here for just a while, until old age slows us down?”

Not just until we can’t hunt. Not just until we can’t plant and harvest. But until we can’t think. Until we can no longer speak.” (82)

Scapulomancy is common (cf. chapter three of my dissertation); floating a stone for divination is less so. Coyote’s seemingly silly actions, following the usual laws of physics, where stone is more dense than water, reveal the necessity of death.

But contrast this episode with the recession of the flood that happens just previously: Mountains tower above that lake now, but they were not yet there when the people emerged into the fifth world.

At first the people could find no way to get across the water from the island to the other shore. So they called on *Bits’iis dootl’izh* the Blue Body to help them.

It seems that he had brought four stones with him from the world below. And he now threw one of them toward the east. Then he threw one toward the south. Then he threw one toward the west. And toward the north he threw one.

When a stone landed against each of the cliffs it made a hole in the rock. And through each of the holes the water flowed off in four different directions. (81)

These stones, brought up from the fourth world, are so dense that they penetrate the stony boundaries of the fifth world. They drain it until it evokes the first world, at “*Tó bil dahisk’id*,” where four streams flow out in the four directions, east, south, west, and north (Zolbrod 35).

This hearkening back to a watery intersection is deeply navigational: as Kari has noted, “Most Athabascan language groups (other than Apachean) are oriented to the major rivers, and

these rivers can have totally different geographic axes” (199). The x and y axes between the first and fifth world are perhaps the same, but the z axis has changed drastically.

But why, if the values of water remain, perhaps quite specifically, in the linguistics of directionality, do the stones change so greatly? The older stones are much heavier than the new mountains. Are fourth-world rocks more particularly real in a way that the fifth world stone is not? Does a fragment of being set in relation not only temporal but spatial precedent? Perhaps so, but in a *reversal* of the harm that led to the floods in each of the worlds below.

The fourth world is described as “unlike the surface of any of the lower worlds. For it was a mixture of black and white. The sky above was alternately white, blue, yellow, and black, just as it had been in the worlds below” (45). Perhaps the widdershins emergence from the black (north) to blue (west) to yellow (south) to black and white (northwest and overshot) is corrected when, in the glittering fifth world, the zenith of the four directions, becomes, like *Tó bil dahisk'id*, the central convergence point for water, through fragments of the four values from the most misaligned world of all, the black-and-white, northwest and overshot world.

Here I would like to return to the first epigraph of this chapter, which comes from a distant—yet also near—Dene storyteller:

As Madelaine Drybone said to Sally Anne Zoe and me [Alicia Legat], “The stories never die. We are still using the story. We live our lives like the stories. These stories are from my grandmothers, my grandfathers. I am talking with my grandparents’ stories. Their words are very important because they will help you live in the future. Their words will help you to think for yourselves.” (qtd. In Legat 36)

In the context of this chapter, telling a story about death perpetuates life through the juxtaposition of experience and narrative, past and present, animal and human, agential and inert, flesh and stone, bygone and nascent.

This reversal is axiological, as Greimas might put it, in that it is formal, relational, discursive, embodied, and ecological. According to some, it is fundamental to Navajo philosophy. In a commentary on the Enemyway Ceremony, reversal is shown to be integral to renewal:

In the first Mother Earth song, the male attributes of clouds and rain are mentioned first in association with Earth. In the second verse, the female attributes of clouds and rain are mentioned first in association with the Sky. The songs and prayers always respect the pairs and order.

The practice of switching order shows reciprocity between male and female. Reversing them in the songs and prayers gives them motion, making things come alive. It produces a sound and shows that they are speaking to one another. It creates a cycle. The continual switching of the order perpetuates birth and growth.

Things come alive in the ceremony by reversing entities. (Salabye, Jr. and Manolescu 27)

This commentary, where reversing things “gives them motion,” thus “making things come alive,” to “produce[. . .] a sound,” where they are create a conversation, is accompanied by an illustration, on the same page, which looks to me to simultaneously resemble a sound wave, light wave, and mountains reflected in water.

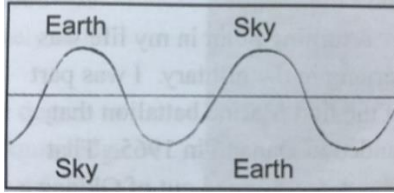


Figure 5.9: Reversals from *Leading the Way: The Wisdom of the Navajo People* 14.10 (2016): 25-27; permission to reprint requested

Through reversal, then, the inert animates that which is dead—or rather, through multiple and reciprocal reversals.

Compare the principle or reversal for animation to the “Hyǫ́dǫ́zná” or “Waking Song.” It begins,

Bǫ́'tha hayolká'li hyǫ́dǫ́zná (twice).

Among the-lands-of-dawn he-stirs.

Hayól bí'thadǫ́'íni hyǫ́dǫ́zná.

Dawn its-pollen he-stirs. (Matthews, *Night* 283)¹²³

The transcriber and translator Matthews comments that “Hyǫ́dǫ́zná, translated, he moves, or he stirs, is usually said of vital movements only. It is said when a man or animal, previously at rest, shows signs of life” 285). The song continues, with double repetitions of the phrase hyǫ́dǫ́zná at the end of every verse,

Kat ǫ́'nkǫ́lǫ́z althasaíe [hyǫ́dǫ́zná, hyǫ́dǫ́zná].

¹²³ Matthews’s textualized song introduces the issue of orthography in terms of both transcription and spelling. Some Navajo people feel that standardization is crucial, while some feel that variation is crucial. The debate centers on regional phonological variation but also applies to orthographic convention—which letters represent which sounds. Young and Morgan have created a reference which serves as an orthographic standard which people can choose to follow or not; with texts published before their work, it can be difficult to rely on transcription in terms of vowel length, tone, and nasality especially, all of which can be lexical—although this does not preclude expressive variation, euphony, or homophony. Transcription accuracy, although many transcribers worked closely with the orators and other speech-community members, is made more complex by pre-IPA variations in orthographic convention. This is why I consider a variety of possible points of comparison.

Now jewels,-brittle-things of-all-kinds [he-stirs, he-stirs].

Songs allow for syntactical and phonological creativity, but if this phrase can be read as one utterance (though Matthews does not transcribe it, and so it is difficult to know how he would have glossed it), then the verb referring to “he” may be read as transitive—“he stirs them.”

Compare Matthews’s verb with “hidishnááh,” glossed as the transitive verb “to move it, to make it move,” and the intransitive verb “hidish’nááh,” with “higishnaah,” which is glossed as “to live on it,” with the verb stem “Ønaah,” which is glossed as “to live, move” (Young and Morgan 441). It is not clear from Matthews whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. The form where this stem occurs with the “hi-thematic” plus “Ø-classifier” composes the verb root for “come to life, live” (Young and Morgan 283, root index). Matthews comments further that the word *hyǫ́dę́zná* is “related to the name for life-pollen, *i’yidezná*” (*Night* 286). According to Robert Young and Henry Morgan, the verb root “NAAD/NA’’: live, and NÁÁ’’: move, are treated separately, although they apparently derive from a common root” (283, root index). However, it seems that when mind moves and drastic decisions are made, words make words, bringing that which is to life. In this, from great imbalance comes balance. Even the gestational, heavy mountains and Coyote’s brim-full lake, glittering in a disastrous light, are made proportional.

Episode 4) Mineral=~S: After the disaster of the previous world, the four sacred mountains of Dinétah, the Navajo homeland, are re-created using potent juxtapositions.

The mutually real nature of this cosmos is ratified when comparing *Diné Bahane’* to another version of the emergence story written down by Ethelou Yazzie, whereby it becomes clear that kernels and skins function similarly: just as skins enclose being in Mandeville’s stories, kernels of the old world can become skins or clothing, in the new one, for the mountains themselves. In Yazzie’s version of the emergence story, there are only four worlds—but the

principle is the same (or similar): the old mountains from the previous world (the third world in her account) help to remake them in this one. In her account, the substance of the old world covers the peaks of the new world's mountains, and the whole assemblage is planted and grown (ratifying the connection between seed and stone):

In the Fourth World, First Man and First Woman formed the four main sacred mountains from the soil that First Man had gathered from the mountains in the Third World. When the Beings had assembled the things with which to dress the mountains, they traveled by rainbow to the east to plant the sacred Mountain of the East, *Sis Naajini*. They put down a blanket of white shell. On top of that they sprinkled some of the soil First Man had brought from the world below, and they [17] placed more white shell. This was wrapped up and planted to the east. *Yoolgai Ashkii* (White Bead Boy, or Dawn Boy) was told to enter the Mountain of the East.

Tsoodzil (the Mountain of the South) was planted the same way, except that it had a turquoise blanket, soil and pieces of turquoise. *Dootl'izhii At'eed* (Turquoise Girl) was told to go and live in the Mountain of the South.

Dook'o'oosliid (the Mountain of the West) was made on an abalone blanket and out of soil and pieces of abalone. *Diichili Ashkii* (Abalone Shell Boy) entered the Mountain of the West.

Dibé Nitsaa (the Mountain of the North) was made of an obsidian blanket, soil and pieces of obsidian. *Bááshzhinii At'ééd* (Obsidian Girl) entered the Mountain of the North.

First Man and First Woman fastened the various mountains to the earth. *Sis Naajini* was fastened with a bolt of white lightning. They covered the mountain with a

blanket of daylight and decorated it with black clouds and male rain. The *Shash* (Bear) was sent to guard the doorway of White Bead Boy.

Tsoodzil was fastened to the earth with a stone knife. This Mountain of the South was covered with a blue cloud blanket. The mountain was decorated with dark mists and female rain. *Tl'iish Tsoh* (Big Snake) was sent to guard the doorway of Turquoise Girl.

Dook'o'oosliid was fastened with a sunbeam. This mountain was covered with a yellow cloud. It was decorated with black clouds and male rain. *Nilch'i Dilhil* (Black Wind) was told to guard the doorway for Abalone Boy.

Dibé Nitsaa was fastened to the earth with a rainbow. The mountain was covered with a blanket of darkness, and it was decorated with obsidian. *Atsinittl'ish* (lightning) was sent to guard Obsidian Girl's doorway. (Yazzie 17-18)

This version of the emergence narrative is as edited by Ethelou Yazzie and can be compared to the first excerpt of the emergence narrative opening this chapter. It becomes clear, I hope, that the emergence narrative is theory. Thus the ordering of entities is crucial. Compare the sequencing above with that of the following excerpt from a version of the Night Chant:

These (things): turquoise, white shell, abalone, black jewels, black face pigment, pollen, (and) blue pollen are gathered together. (Sapir and Hoijer 171)

dí: do·líži· [turquoise], yo·łgai [white shell], di·čihí [abalone], básžini· [black jewels], t'é·ščí·h [black face pigment], tádí·n [pollen], do·líž tádí·n [blue pollen]
 ʒáłahna·ščí·d ʒáidí bini·ʒé. (170)

Here we see an even more compact sequencing, where turquoise=south moves to white shell=east to abalone=west to black jewels=north. This half-counterclockwise and half-clockwise

movement is not a topic which I wish to discuss further, except to say that there is reversal and balance.

Compare that sequence of minerals with the one following, where the ordering of gems and other substances is reiterated again and again. The following instructions are for creating a prayerstick from a reed:

Make it of a large jointed reed (painted white). Thus make it white. On each of the four sides make zigzag lightning lines. Make them black. Lay down whiteshell, turquoise, abalone and jet. Small bits of these hard substances put down. Similarly put down sparkling rock. Put water with the sparkling rock. Put down cattail pollen. Then lay [37] [a] bluebird feather on it. Lay canary feathers and oriole feathers on it, (lay) feathers of a red-winged blackbird on it, and feathers of Arizona jay. (Use) an owl feather as a prayerstick tamper. . . . Then rock crystal was held toward the sun and with it, it (prayerstick) was lighted. Thus they extinguished it with water and sealed it with pollen. (Reichard 37, 39)

The result of this prayerstick, in combination with singing and prayer, is that Bat, at dawn, receives flint moccasins, leggings, shirt, and hat, which create lightning when he moves. In Navajo, this passage again reveals an ordering which is defined by a greater degree of repetition than the English translation, as well as by the directionality of the emergence narrative:

lok'a-tso [large reed] k'é-gij līgaigo [white] 'óle [make it]. t'á-'ako [thus] lǵai [white] 'olya· [make it]. dǵ·'gó· [four] bik'ino·lt'i·jo 'óle· dǵxǵ be· 'áko·lya·. yoǵgai [whiteshell] do·tǵ'iji· [turquoise] di·tcǵi [abalone]¹²⁴ bá·cjini· [jet] niñil ntǵ'iz bizǵi ni·dja·' [put down]. t'·'áko [similarly] de·stci·' [sparkling rock] ni·dja·' [put down]. tó

¹²⁴ "Lit. the sparkling one" (Young and Morgan 340).

[water] be· de· stci· ' [sparkling rock] ni· dja· ' [put down]. te· ł [cattail] bitádídí· n [pollen] ni· dja· ' [put down]. 'áko [then] 'ayá· c do· t'ij [bluebird] bit'a [feather] bika· ' nínil [lay on]. tsídí· łitsoi [canary] bit'a' [feather] 'ayá· c tco· jxá· li· [oriole] bit'a' [feather] biká· ' nínil [lay on]. tca· gitso [?] bit'a' [feathers] biká· ' nínil. djo· gi.¹²⁵ [red-winged blackbird] bit'a' [feathers]. né'édja· ' bitse· ' k'e· t'án [prayerstick] be· bi· do· dji. . . . 'ánda tséxánt'ini· [rock crystal] djóxona· 'ái [sun] bitc'j' xolya· be· 'edi· ltla. t'á· 'áko [thus] tó [water] bináne· stsis. tádídí· n [pollen] tó [water] be· dade· dlé· j. (38)

The reed is important because a giant reed served as a vessel and ladder from the lower, flooded world to this one. The order of minerals follows the directional progression from east to south, to west, to north—white, blue, yellow, black. A crystal brings the bundle to life, and its life is sustained through water, the opposite of fire, for which crystal was the conduit, and through pollen, which is fluid like water but is not wet, shines like crystal but is not hard, grows in the sun but is not hot, and floats like feathers but is not burnt.

And the order of the sentence “tádídí· n tó be· dade· dlé· j” is such that it could mean that the orator suggests that pollen is more animate than water or that pollen is the focalized object of this sentence, meaning that it is emphasized—as Creamer writes, sometimes “either noun may be the subject or the topic, at the storyteller’s option” (37). There is marked, then, an animacy that is grammatical, narratological, and ecological.

¹²⁵ Ch'agii, in Young and Morgan's orthography: “ch'ag, onomat., for a glugging sound + -ii, the one. Lit. 'glugger'” (Young and Morgan 274). Many birds have onomatopoeic names, and the word for bird is onomatopoeic: tsídii, “tsíd, onom., imitates chirping sound = -ii, the one. Lit. the chirper” (Young and Morgan 733). The verb yádíshthi means “to chatter, to warble (a bird). (Cf. yáshti', to talk)” (748)—a very nice connection, then, between speech, singing, and expressive music. The roles of bird feathers and of bird down are also crucial—and like their names and their songs, their feathers and down are carried on air. And according to at least one emergence narrative, before this world, “The four-footed ones, the birds were human beings then” (Sapir and Hoijer 107). The connections in Dene languages and literatures between sound and being, as marked by onomatopoeia, and in the explicit form of birds, require further research.

The next example is a fascinating one, because it follows the opposite order of the example above in the preparation of another prayerstick. It is from the same narrative, but comes next, in the story, in the preparations for ceremonial medicine:

Oriole feathers, canary feathers, bluebirdfeathers, eagle down, turkey down, (turkey) beard, cotton, Arizona jay down, red-winged blackbird down, oriole down, canary down, bluebird down, these being made into a ball, were tamped into it (the reed). Then tobacco was put in. A crystal was held up to the sun. Thus it was lighted. The fire was put out with water. With water and pollen it was sealed. (43)

This reversal of colors signifies a reversal in direction, also. I do not have the space to comment on this further here except to say that reversal, as is discussed above, is generative, animating entities through sequential narrative discourse; and this, too, is the function of the semiotic square.

To contrast with narrative discourse, here are a few examples of minerals in everyday discourse, from a text on silver-smithing:

A rock that is alkaline is dropped into water and is dissolved. (Sapir and Hoijer 427)
 cédók'óži· tó bihilneʔgo ʔá· dó· ndóʔoł. (426)

In this example, the syntax is [S] DO IO V, as one would expect when the subject is of a higher rank in the animacy hierarchy, where inversion is grammatically impossible since the subject is more agential than the object. In the next example, turquoise is the DO, and it comes first:

Turquoise they get from the Americans and the Pueblo Indians. (427)
 dołíži· [turquoise] bilagá· ná ʔínda ki·sʔâ·ni· bićá· dé·ʔ ʔádeıłʔí. (426)

Here the syntax is again as would be expected.

Narrative Discourse=~S1

Language is like stone. Stories are mountains. In many versions of the emergence narrative, the four worlds are also called languages: *saad ła'í*, first language, the second *saad naakií*, second language, the third *saad táá'*, third language, and *saad dǫ́í*, fourth language—or form (Witherspoon 34, from Haile 4-5). In the fourth world, there are four mountains. These mountains orient the inhabitants just as the four rivers once did in the first world. First Man, *Áltsé hastiin*, teaches the other inhabitants about these mountains:

Sisnaajini lay to the east, he taught them. Exactly what that [57] name means is unknown, but now the mountain is called Sierra Blanca Peak. *Tsoodzil* lay to the south, he taught them. In the language of *Bilagáana* that peak is called Mount Taylor. To the west lay *Dook'o'oošlíd*, he taught them, which means, Never Has Thawed on Top; but that mountain is now called San Francisco Peak by the White Man. And to the north lay *Dibé nitsaa*, which in English means Big Mountain Sheep.

Those four names have been kept in the present Navajo world, too. And *Áltsé hastiin* the First Man taught the people that *Haashch'ééh dine'é* the Holy People lived in those mountains. He explained to them that they were a different sort of people. For they were intelligent people who could perform magic. They could travel swiftly and they could travel far. They know how to ride the sunbeam and the light ray, and they knew how to follow the path of the rainbow. They felt no pain, and nothing in any world could change the way they were. (Zolbrod 57-58)

The mountains, however, were flooded; but their names remained although their bodies changed—just as Kari points out that the axes of rivers can change even as the directionals and

other forms of navigational nomenclature remain (Kari 199). Navigational relationships persist despite spatiotemporal transformations.

The inhabitants of the mountains change, too. In the fifth world, the mountains are remade through populating them with an assemblage of entities, some of them stone, some plant, some animal, some divine.

The way by which the mountains are remade is a matter of some debate. Zolbrod notes, in his extensive and informative endnotes to *Diné Bahane'*, that the debate concerns what constitutes the “inner forms” of things that enable remaking. Thus Zolbrod writes,

Luckert (1975), p. 161, denies the relationship implied or asserted by Haile and Witherspoon between the presence of “inner forms” in such things as animals and inanimate objects such as rock and mountains, on the one hand, and the concept of the soul as commonly employed in Western tradition, on the other. (362, n. 7)

This question of animation, Zolbrod continues, is, whether a question of spiritual soul or intellectual concept, relationally a matter of inner-outer.

Zolbrod cites, as an example of this way of thinking, of inner forms animating outer, a conversation that George Thompson Mills had with a Navajo woman from the Rimrock area. In this conversation, Mills shows the woman a painting of a rainbow arching over a bear, and she wondered, in response, how the bear would get out of the mountain:

he showed a Navajo woman from the Rimrock area a professional Indian painting of a bear standing under a rainbow, [and] “she interpreted the rainbow as a mountain and was perplexed as to how the bear would get out.” (Mills qtd. in Zolbrod 363, note 7)

Zolbrod uses this conversation to illustrate how an inner animal can animate the outer world—a world where a rainbow can be as thick as stone. Or where solid earth can be lit up like a prism, filled with rainbow glints of transported light.

Thus when Zolbrod writes that the “‘inner’ forms occupy rocks, hills, mountains, and even the sun and moon,” and that “we find them presented not as spiritual essences but as real characters,” that possess a “palpable animus, seen in terms of flesh and blood, as fully material and corporeal as real people or real animals” (364), we see that both inner and outer prevail as real. The question that remains for me, then, is in what sense are the *relations* “real”?

The correlation between inner animal and outer stone illuminates some of the principles of northern-Dene teachings about animals, where giant animals live under the earth and serve as the sources for the usual-sized animals (e.g. Ridington and Ridington 155).¹²⁶ Compare this teaching to the story of “The Origin of Horses,” for example, where a protagonist climbs down a ladder into the “undisturbed soil, they say,” and, opening a door to the east, find a place “so large it extended as far as one could see, they say,” and, in this place, “white shell was prancing about, they say, white shell in the likeness of a horse”—in fact,

All of different kinds, white shell horses extended off in great numbers, they say. A great amount of mist-like rain falling on them continuously, they extended off in great numbers, they say. Blue birds fluttered over their heads, they say. (Sapir and Hoijer 121)

¹²⁶ Cf. Perkins’s summary of Creamer’s hierarchy of animacy, in which large animals are more animate than medium and rocks less animate still. In this Dane-zaa cultural framing of animacy, however, the lithic may outrank large animals since they outrank the smaller ones—though the smaller ones are the most immediately essential to survival.

The assemblage of the diffuse, the mineral, the animal, of color, texture, and movement is, by now, a beautiful and familiar narrative experience. The inner and outer, like the lower and the higher and the former and the future, answer my question of what is real by enacting renewal.¹²⁷

Or perhaps the other way around is true, too: the principle of giant, chthonic, originary animals illuminates the way that former worlds are not really former at all, but become inner worlds: the kernel of an old mountain becomes the source for the divine being that inhabits a new one. And both are just as real as the other. If there were a migration south from the north, the riverine directionals have been retained in a persistently structural way, still useful for thinking with—for moving with, for survival.

Pollen=~S2

My discussion of pollen here is meant to focus on discourse—words, sentences, and narrative patterns—though at the same time, one cannot separate the spiritual from the linguistic. Pollen is special, important, and a part of sacred prayers. When it is sprinkled on one’s body, on plants, or on other holy objects, it brings those entities into harmony. People have shared their pollen with me in a context that was accepted by my Navajo colleagues, and I am grateful. It is my hope, by looking at words for pollen from Elders and storytellers, to make some connections between them, given that the Navajo philosophy is whole, and makes people whole.

It may be that one can believe pollen to be pure rock and pure wind in combination. How so rock, if rock at all? Perhaps through that which has no form but that which carries it, pollen on currents of air. Pollen is all and none of those things which compose S=breath and ~S=mineral, with flesh=S1, mind=S2, and narrative discourse=~S1.

¹²⁷ Cf. “Other preparations may also be regarded as pollen, *yă’ nānighād*, powdered dust from places where the deer, antelope, big horn, etc., have stood” (Matthews, *Ethnologic* 400).

There is at least one attestation of corn pollen described as crystalline. A beggar who is really a son of the Sun is dressed by White Bead Woman, and there is a chant that goes, according to O'Bryan,

She dressed me with the perfect crystals of pollen, the beautiful goods pollen,

which were her words

And with which I can call for beautiful goods and pollen and they will come

at my word. (O'Bryan 148)

These lines are from the "White Bead Woman's Chant" within the emergence narrative told by Sandoval, Hastin Tlo'tsi hee (Old Man Buffalo Grass) and interpreted by Sam Ahkeah, Sandoval's nephew (vii).¹²⁸ Compare this passage to the following one, told and interpreted by the same people:

On the fourth morning her father gave her a white shell basket and filled it with all the mixed chips of stone, white beads, turquoise, white shell, black jet, and red stone, and over the stones in the basket he sprinkled a shining mineral called deschee. Still over that he sprinkled blue pollen, tqadidin, and yellow pollen, also called tqadidin; then the pollen from the cattails, tgel tqadidin, water flags they call them, and the crystals found along the shore, which are called tqo bit ech'chee'. These last they sprinkled on the very top of the basket. (118)

¹²⁸ According to O'Bryan's preface, Sandoval, "During the 17 days of his stay with us on this occasion,"

spent the greater part of each day narrating the legends and checking them for correction. He would often stop and chant a short prayer, and sprinkle the manuscript, Sam, and myself with corn pollen.

He believed the Mesa Verde to be the center of the old cultures, and he said that it was fitting that the stories should be reborn, written down, in "the Place of the Ancients."

Sandoval died the following January. (vii)

These two passages make quite explicit two qualities of pollen which link pollen to the mineral:

1) the “crystals of pollen”—which may be crystals immersed in pollen ceremonially,¹²⁹ but which may also be the glittering effect of pollen—just as all vegetation can shine in the sun and wind.

¹²⁹ “Pollen (Navaho, *thadítín*) is obtained, for sacred uses, from various plants, but Indian corn is the chief source of supply. The pollen is carried in small buckskin bags, which also usually contain small sacred stones, such as rock crystal and pyrophyllite, or small animal fetiches. The administration or sacrifice of pollen is a part of all rites witnessed, and almost always follows or accompanies prayer. It is used in different ways on different occasions; but the commonest way is to take a small pinch from the bag, apply a portion of it to the tongue and a portion to the crown of the head. For some purposes, the shaman collects a quantity of pollen, puts it in a large bag, immerses in it some live bird, insect, or other animal, and then allows the prisoner to escape. This is supposed to add extra virtue to the pollen. In one kind called *i’yidězná* a bluebird, a yellowbird, and a grasshopper are put in the pollen together. In note 49 we have a mythic account of pollen put on the young of the sea monster and then preserved. Pollen which has been applied to a ceremonial dry-painting is preserved for future uses. Pollen in which a live striped lizard has been placed is used to favor eutocia. . . . Captain Bourke, in ‘The Medicine-men of the Apache,’ 295 chapter ii., describes many modes of using pollen which exist also among the Navahoes” (Matthews, *Ethnologic* 213).



Figure 5.10: Corn pollen on a corntassel (Spedona 2007)¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Spedona, "Corntassel," *Wikipedia*, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, 2007.



Figure 5.11: Tulip Stamen Tip with Glittering Pollen (Harrison 2009)¹³¹

¹³¹ J. J. Harrison, "Tulip Stamen Tip," *Wikipedia*, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, 2009.

And 2) pollen is interposed between the sacred mountain minerals and a “shining mineral called deschee,” and crystal “sprinkled on the very top.” The progression is from whole pieces to particulate mineral matter, then particulate so fine it appears to be dust, then back to larger pieces of crystal.

Compare these comments on pollen in relation to air and to other minerals. On the one hand, it resembles air made visible—air filled with particulate water or earth, dust:

The term *thadítín* is applied to various things having the appearance of an impalpable powder, such as the misty hues of the horizon in the morning and evening, due in Arizona more frequently to dust in the air than to moisture. (Matthews, *Ethnologic* 213)

Further, it manifests the movement from air or the wind, as evidenced by the etymologies of the following words. “‘Adeezhjool” means “to start moving (vapor, gas, cloud, pollen). K’ad shinaadáą’ bitádídíín ‘adeezhjool, my corn pollen has started to blow now./ (*Øjool: to move—vapor, gaseous substance, pollen.) (‘adi-((1)).)’” (Young and Morgan 14). The verb stem “*Øjool” is a classificatory verb, a transitive verb whose form differs depending on the specific kinds of qualities of its patients or objects—in this case, what some linguists call “non-compact matter” such as a bunch of hair or grass, cloud, or fog. It is productive of verb-words for movement—movement of a specific quality—that of “vapor, gaseous substance, pollen.” There is also the phrase “Tádídíín ‘ąąh nanoogáád, pollen shaken from various birds and animals for ceremonial use (‘ąąh, alongside something, nanoogáád, it was shaken down)” (697). Thus movement of a glittering, drifting, powdery, wind- or breath- or weather- shaped kind is a commonality of both dust—the earth, rock—and air—“vapor.”¹³²

¹³² Cf. this pairing from Euro-American scholar Steve Pavlik, who worked closely with those who come from a Navajo context: “life, air, light/fire, water and earth/pollen” (43).

There are other things that glitter. This world into which humanity has now emerged is often called, by Navajo people, the “glittering world”—where there are stars—unroofed.¹³³ The word for quartz, in Navajo, is often tséghádi’nídínii (tsé-, rock + ghá, through + di’nídín, light shines + ii, the one) (729). Note the potential homophony between pollen, tádííín, and light shines, di’nídín. It is possible that this aural resemblance informs the interpretive decision “crystals of pollen.”¹³⁴

Other attestations of pollen demonstrate its status as transformative. Matthews, an old record, notes that to “vivify[. . .]” the pollen, a practitioner may

put[. . .] a live animal into a bag of the substance, allowing it to remain there for some time and liberating it. The more it struggles in its dusty prison, the better. It is supposed to impart some its character or spirit to the medicine while imprisoned. (*Night 41*)

Some of the language used here is not what I would choose. But I admit that I see a correlation here between immersion in some analogue of earth, struggle, emergence, and renewal of the total system.

This encompassing by pollen occurs at multiple scales. In the Hail Chant, four kinds of pollen are sprinkled according to the cardinal directions around the fire, emphasizing the centrality of the vertical axis between fire and the sun:

From the east blue pollen was sprinkled in a line to the fire, from the south a line was made of cattail pollen, from the west one of tree pollen was drawn, from the north one of (corn) pollen was sprinkled. (Reichard 71)

¹³³ See, for example, Irvin Morris’s memoir *From the Glittering World: A Navajo Story* (1997) and Ethelou Yazzie’s chapter “The Fourth World—The Glittering World” in *Navajo History*, Vol. 1, Many Farms: Navajo Community College Press, 1971, both of which I quote from below. See Matthews 1897/1994 for a third version.

¹³⁴ I am not interested in debating the intention of the interpreter, merely in pointing to this resonance between two forms and meanings of two words that are linked narratively.

In Navajo, this description varies less and is much more succinct, using juxtapositions of syntax to generate the semantics of directionality:

xa'a'ahdę́' [to the east] tádídí·n [pollen] do·tł'ij [blue] ts'idza·lt'i' [was scattered]
 cáda'á·hdę́' [to the south] te·ł [cattail] bitáadí·n [pollen] ts'idza·lt'i' [was scattered]
 'e'e'a·hdę́' [to the west] tsin [tree] bitáadí·n [pollen] ts'idza·lt'i' [was scattered]
 náxo·kqsdę́' [to the north] tádídí·n [corn pollen] tsidza·lt'i' [was scattered]. (7)

The progression from one direction to the next begins with dawn and ends with night; the pollens begin with blue larkspur pollen, move to an older source of pollen (Matthews, *Night* 41), then include tree pollen, which would have to be gathered at a very high elevation, and culminate with a form of pollen shared between cultural neighbors—corn pollen.

I am struck first of all by the ordering of pollens—a syntax of deposition—then the variety of pollens, and finally by the truth that gathering so many different types of pollen would require intensive time spent within Navajoland, with detailed knowledge of where and how to gather these—and other—ceremonial components. Perhaps that is the point—to spend time in place, learning the connections—somewhat as is required for the language. From a version of the Night Chant included in Sapir and Hoijer, this practice seems to suggest that in doing so, perpetuation:

At that point, when this had happened, even then he was still under a spell from over yonder for the purpose (of getting) jewels, for the purpose (of getting) specular iron ore, for the purpose (of getting) blue pollen, for the purpose (of getting) cotton twine, for the purpose (of getting) pollen. (233)

Pollen leads to pollen. The passage continues,

Of these, they owned many, they say. Wherever they over yonder (i.e., the Gods) had gone about with him, many (things) were to be placed as offerings for that reason. So, if many (things) were placed as offerings, then, in exchange for them, the things (which had been made known to him would exist (for all time). This was their (the offerings') purpose. (233)

Knowledge is perpetuated through gathering and making offerings of jewels, iron, pollen, twine, pollen—this act of gathering is itself a sacrifice, and one that enacts longevity—one is not likely to forget the labor involved in assembling this ordering of language, place, and living things.

Klopfenstein states that pollen encompasses the application of Navajo philosophy to the marriage ceremony, describing how pollen is strewn, within the wedding basket, from east to west and back to the center of the basket, and then south to north and back to the center, and then around the circumference of the basket in the direction of the sun and with an opening to the east:

When these two cross in the center, life emerges, *anooséél*, Everything comes back to the center, back to the home The pollen around the outside is our spiritual journey, *tádidíin bee ahzée'átiin*, which always has an origin and a beginning place, as well as a path for release and continuation. (2)

In this way, pollen unites all other qualities—all values and variations on S—and creates the world of meaning within which to live—the glittering world.

The world that glitters is everything. A synonym for glittering or shining is “disq̄s,” which means “it is sparkling, glittering (Cf. sq̄', star.)” and which has as its verb stem “*Øsq̄s: to glitter, shine” (Young and Morgan 332), and “disxq̄s,” “it glitters, sparkles” (341, root index),

has the expressive intensifier -x-.¹³⁵ A star, sɔ', forms the root of the verb word for glittering.

The word for all that contains the stars is “yádihil,” which, according to the website *Navajo*

Word of the Day, is a:

general word for ‘outer space.’ If you were to break this word down the first part would be yá-, as in yá’át’éeéh, which means ‘up’ or ‘sky.’ The rest of the word, dihil, is understood to be ‘dark black (in some cases, red).’

This word fits into the different words that Navajo has for the atmospheres.

Depending upon the context, this word can also be used to mean ‘the next world’ in both the traditional and religious sense. (“yádihil”)

According to this same website, the word has further narrative meaning attached to it in its constituent parts:

The Navajo word dił refers to blood. . . . Besides the literal aspect of dił, there are some implied meanings in ceremonial usage. Dił, being red, is often grouped together with black (if you can recall, the fire god is also called “the Black God” when translated to English). There is also the name for the traditional Navajo First World that is known as Red world. It is symbolic in many cases of both fertility and of destruction, and the cycle as a whole.

There is also the the [sic] traditional Navajo story of a group of animals that asked woodpecker to kill the owl. It is said that the animals that wear red on their coats, like the reddish-colored bellies of some squirrels, were part of that group, the red being the blood of the owl.

¹³⁵ See Anthony Webster’s excellent synthesis of and argument for -x- in “The Expressive Work of -x- in Navajo,” pp. 144-48 and application in Navaho poetics, “-x- Marks the Spot,” pp. 149-52, in *Intimate Grammars: An Ethnography of Navajo Poetry* (2015). Cf. “hóchxq’ and . . . hózhq’” (Witherspoon 35).

. . . Without a broader understanding of *dił*, it would be hard for one to tell why *dił* is part of the word for the stars and the rest of the universe – *yádiłhił*. (“*dił*”)

This online “word of the day” commentary demonstrates the same truth which the whole emergence story demonstrates: that color, animal, spirit, and humanity compose the cosmos. Not in an undifferentiated, chaotic way, but in a deeply systematic way that is systematic from its smallest parts—parts of words—all the way up to the stars—and beyond, to the next world.¹³⁶

In sum, pollen mediates by resembling but differing from the other basic values of the semiotic system I am engaging with. I am thinking here of the birth of *Mą’ii* and Badger when sky and earth touch in the fourth world and of *Mą’ii*’s meddling with mortality by divining it with a rock thrown into the water, and especially of the wondrous recreation of the sacred mountains in the fifth world using fragments from the fourth world—where rocks and breath and corn and buckskin and bird feathers and kinds of heavy and soft rain are all mingled generatively, but not without a very specific kind of beautiful logic ordering the relations among these things. Sky and earth touch in the birth of Coyote and Badger—this is an analogue for the function and form of pollen.

Pollen is—perhaps—a form of stone at its utter limit of what stone can be. Pollen is a form of the qualities of stone at its utter limit of what stone can be before it enters non-existence, or a different category of being than stone, that of air, or the wind. As such, it brings those who

¹³⁶ “A Navajo-English Thesaurus of Geological Terms” (Blackhorse, Semken, and Charley 2003) includes a wide variety of phenomena in its approach to geology—for example:

Crevice (in the rock) *tsék’iz*
 Crystal *tséghadi’nídínii*
 Crystalline (as clear water) *niłtólı, niłts’íli*
 Crystalline basement rocks *ni’bit’ááh tsé ní’t’i’*
 Dam *be’ek’id, dá’deest’in*
 Dark (ness) *chahalheel*
 Dawn *hayoolkáál*
 Decay *dıldzıíd, dıldzid yileeh*
 Deposit (e.g., coal, ore) *hadadeeskq’*. (103)

pray with it into a more intimate relation with the wind. Pollen is the mediator between rocks as inert and rocks as alive—it is rock with maximum wind in it, but also it is the least-contained and least-articulatory form of glittering power—instead, it is articulated by the wind and other animals who move in and through it. Pollen is rock with a great deal of air in it—yet it functions as an emergent home for beings, also. So—is pollen highly animate rock, or highly distributive animacy?

Discussion and Conclusion

“If it floats, we will all live forever”—rocks patently do not: but pollen does. Shift the deictic center and you have a shift in reference. Pollen may be read as the mediation of all values between animals and rocks—minerals and the narrative discourse that enworlds humanity. Pollen, then, is the dialectical manifestation of the wind—the wind that changes the earth. The wind also inhabits humans: it is the *niłch’i bii’ sizinii*, the “inner-dwelling silent wind,” is that which “interacts with and shapes the outer wind which animates the entire world” (Toelken, “Entertainment” 7).

When I began this analysis, I began with crystals, minerals, rocks, stones. I thought perhaps “S” would correlate with minerals. However, as I worked through the axiological epistemology cued by Greimas and made specific by the Navajo mountain system, I realized that S was breath: S begins it all. I changed my mind. Sound can do that, even across languages. As Zolbrod has shared,

Each language—each speech community’s own regional or local vernacular—has its signature poetic quality in full symbiosis with its syntax. Thereby syntax becomes an integral part of a language’s rhythm, evident even in its prose, for which I gained enough of an appreciation to take careful measure of the English I was using in my retranslation.

So that while the cadence of a fairly standard written English differs markedly from Navajo formal discourse, it seemed possible to establish an English rhythm at least somewhat analogous. (Zolbrod and Spencer)

He adds of his work, “Thus began a life changing trajectory that continues to this day—an ongoing series of “deictic” experiences, you might say” (Zolbrod and Sepncer). His translation forms the primary voice of this chapter. All the important passages come from *Diné Bahane*’, and my investigation is in response to his work. The emergence story is fundamental, a bed rock.

At the same time, the emergence story teaches that all living beings came from below the earth—from the worlds before this one. In this sense, just as the wind animates living beings, living beings animate earth. Each world is both stone and wind, and so are we. The relation of each to each is an infinitesimal cline of animacy, in which stone, living beings (stone-wind), and the wind consist in nested variations on the ratio of each to each. In this discussion and conclusion, I return to the objectives I describe at the start: a) identify differing hierarchies of animacy as marked in Navajo by syntax and pronominal prefixes and b) consider the narrative conditions for these hierarchies.¹³⁷

A) Identifying differing hierarchies of animacy as marked in Navajo by syntax and pronominal prefixes:

Here a table combining the values being discussed becomes useful.

¹³⁷ Cf. Sally Midgette’s work on Navajo imperfectives in narration, where she identifies narrative conventions for verb aspects and modes. Extended action, which falls in the middle of the range from internal to the story and external to the story, is where imperfectives are often used (80). Midgette’s cline is both grammatical and narrative and as such inspires me to focus on similar questions.

Table 5.2: Animacy, Greimas, Sacred Mountains

Greimas system	Mountain system	emergence narrative	rank and implication
S=breath	up, yá-	wind, sky, rebirth	6
~S=mineral	down, ní-	mountains, earth, rebirth	5
S1=flesh	East (white)	dawn, birth, humanity	4
S2=mind	South (blue)	day, adulthood, intention and experience ¹³⁸	3
~S1=narrative discourse	West (yellow)	dusk, old age, Badger	2

¹³⁸ Cf. “individual experience both augments personal knowledge and contributes to the stories held by all Tł̥chq̓; all individuals have the possibility of enhancing their knowledge as stories ‘go around.’ The stories account for personal experiences, which in turn are told and used by others—intertwining with other occurrences that are remembered through telling and listening to oral narratives—added to and changed, and start and stop depending on current conversations. Although some very old stories have a beginning and ending in the telling of them, all stories, including these old ones, are reaffirmed as truth through experience” (Legat 18).

Greimas system (cont'd from previous page)	Mountain system (cont'd from previous page)	emergence narrative (cont'd from previous page)	rank and implication (cont'd from previous page)
~S2=pollen	North (black)	night, death, Coyote	1—subject, although with a lower animacy ranking than object, is imbued with agency under larger conditions of some kind—those of the relations between ranks 6-2—thus by pollen's constitution by negation, this substance ranks as 6 to 5, 5 to 4, 4 to 3, and 3 to 2

To return to my question of whether or not pollen is highly animate rock or highly distributive animacy, I suggest that as a subject, although possessed of a lower animacy ranking than object in most examples I have found thus far in my research, it is imbued with agency under larger conditions of some kind—those of the relations between ranks 6-2—thus by pollen's constitution by negation, this substance ranks—in a cline meant to represent a series of narratological-syntactical qualities—as 6 to 5, 5 to 4, 4 to 3, and 3 to 2. In other words, it moves between

values, just as is taught—this is the “*tádííin bee ahxéé’átiin*,” the circular pollen path or circular path by means of pollen,¹³⁹ re-animating movement itself, that of breath, the great animator.

Thus also, to return to my questions about stone—is land—earth, stone, rock, mineral, crystal—itself in certain Navajo contexts not *like* an animal, but *animal*? Is it animate?¹⁴⁰ Sometimes? If so, how? Land as mineral—quartz, turquoises, sandstones. Do these breathe, move, speak? Are these animal as well as animate, or animate but not animal? What is the relation between animal and stone, animacy and land? In what sense does the lithic participate in language? World is made by words, crystallized in a lattice leading from “fragment” to “style”

¹³⁹ Tádííin, pollen; bee, “with (instrumental), by means of, of, at, from, about, on” (Young and Morgan 157); ahéé’á-, “around a circle” (49), -tiin, path (962), with -x- indicating intensification if it is not simply orthographic variation.

¹⁴⁰ See Witherspoon (e.g. 139-40), Perkins (1978), and Farella (306) on animacy in Navajo as well as Zolbrod’s endnote on pp. 362-64 which discusses animacy and inner forms; the approach I take here is somewhat different in that I focus on the links between discourse and geology to posit an embodied logical process enacted in the emergence story. But this is just one of any number of approaches. “I found it!” as the Hafez poem says:

All day long you do this,
with movements and thoughts,
and then even in your sleep—
pan for gold.

We are looking to find something
to celebrate
with great enthusiasm,

wanting all our battles and toil
and our life to make sense.

“I found it, I found it, I found it!”
a hermit once began to shout,
after having spent years in solitude,
meditating.

“Where?” a young shepherd boy nearby asked.
“Where?”

And the hermit replied, “It may take a while,
but I will show you. For now,
just sit near to me.”

All day long you do this,
with movements and thoughts,
and then even in your sleep—
pan for gold.

The world is a crystal, where form manifests itself through time and establishes itself in space. This is what crystals do. “The hogan was (made) of rock crystal, they say” (Sapir and Hoijer 205)—“céxázdíndíni· be·ho·ranlá, žiní (204). This is—not the answer, but—the way of looking at things that I have arrived at, for now, personally, provisionally, and heuristically.

The world is stone, and it is home. It is also crystalline and airy, and so are we. The relation of each to each is an infinitesimal cline of animacy, in which stone, living beings (stone-wind), and the wind consist in nested variations on the ratio of each to each. Thus, as Jeffrey Cohen writes, a “limit-breaching intimacy persistently unfolds” (2). But stones are special and also unspecial. Heartblood of earth and skin, organs, pulse. But you can toss them after a hundred years of treasuring them. And they won’t mind.

B) Considering the narrative conditions for these hierarchies within my larger interpretive framework.

In terms of commentary as it coheres with my larger framework, where narrative revitalization is defined by centering and shifting at all levels of context and content to renew languages, narratives, and interlocutors, the many multimodal and multimedia forms of the emergence narrative exemplify a form of deictic reference and shift based on sound. Sound itself references the interconnections between species—most importantly, in this chapter, through the language of animacy made referentially intelligible through a narrative schema that is mountain deep and sky high. Stone is pollen, pollen is stone—sound is life, life is sound.

Analogically, the emergence narrative may be construed as an interconnected, multi-directional system of ontological references systematizing and regenerating reversals between: 1) the encounters that occur between humans and animals in the narratives (sourced in the content of the narratives): to refer conflict between Man and Woman, with Coyote getting in the way

between them; 2) encounters between the orator and the transcriber and, often, translator (accessible through archival research and oral interviews): as are evident as Zolbrod acknowledges and cites his many sources; 3) comparisons of the cultural methods and theories followed by translators, re-translators, and back-translators to produce different or new textual iterations of the same narratives (media transformations, re-translations): which are everywhere, while Zolbrod's retranslation is exemplary of re-emergence; and 4) historical receptions of the narratives by reading and listening communities (language and narrative revitalization): that are certainly evident here in the most comprehensive Diné epic I have found.

In terms of deictic centers I would say that: 1) animal utterances in connotative or reported speech and conversation with humans and in denotative or direct speech and conversation with humans within the narratives (dialogical deixis): are a matter of who speaks for and through Coyote?; 2) the occasion for, social context of, and process of recording these narratives—the human interlocutors, artists, thinkers, scholars (pragmatic deixis): must be looked at in terms of whose social contexts frame which parts of the epic; 3) the cultural and disciplinary methods and objectives that have contributed to the framing and reframing of the narratives (cultural deixis): are made evident through cross-cultural friendship, ethnography and ethno-poetics; and 4) the epistemological systems that result from reading these books from textual products back into epistemological processes (cosmological deixis): demonstrates that re-creation requires destruction. In terms of deictic shifts I would say that: 1) human and animal shifts: refer to Coyote and the sexes; 2) orator and textualizer shifts: refer to Zolbrod and sequentially cited sources; 3) spaces geographical and cosmographical: refer to from beneath the earth up through the sky into another earth many times; and 4) times past and future: refer to the truth that what was sacred will be sacred again through reading and remembering the epic of

creation. In sum, the emergence narrative demonstrates that stone itself is regenerative. It gives birth through a variety of means just as asexual reproduction in biological life forms can occur through fission, rhizomatic propagation, or fragmentation.¹⁴¹

Reproductively speaking, the focus of Zolbrod's translation of this epic (re)creation narrative revolves around questions of sex and death—and the emergence narrative doesn't mind. It works. In the excerpt above, the First Man and First Woman drag certain remnants of the fourth world below up into the fifth world with them. The fourth world flooded due to hubris. Likewise was lost the third world below the fourth and so on back down into the earth. And back down into time, in a form of anti-time that undoes and remakes time. Thus the recreation of the world that occurs in northern Dene and other plains accounts, where some animal dives down under the water—the water from which emerged the last earth and into which the last earth sank or by which it was flooded—to bring up some little bit of earth that grows again into all the dry land, is, in this account, kind of the other way around.

Each time disaster occurs, in this account, the survivors rise up to the ceiling of the heavens of the world below. This is the work of Coyote and Badger. Somehow these survivors dig and climb up through a hole in the sky to emerge onto the floor of the world above, where they construct or “embellish” a new home on mountains who are feral and puissant, covered in feathers and crystals, knives and lightning. Skins that breed eggs and sexed gods that preside. The rock crystal gods are bright-eyed but blank-eyed, translucent eye sockets filled with nothing but glassy, slow-shifting humors. They see, with those blank eyes, with a radiance that comes from within.

¹⁴¹ Compare these systems of perpetuation with the structural perpetuation of quartz—a stretch, but a fascinating consonance nonetheless.

It is notable that there is no Heaven mentioned in the versions of the epic I focus on here,¹⁴² unlike some other Dene cultural texts. There are gods greater and lesser that approach from and retreat to the horizon. Every ascent seems to be into a new earth. These new earths emerge as a result of a tremendous amount of conflict between men and women. A river grows between them and Coyote gets in the way. Thus, in addition to creation through ecological embellishment, Coyote embodies destruction through emotional cacophony that causes the river between the sexes to flood; in a sense, he acts as an agent of ethical transposition between men and women, muddying the waters and failing to make his ideas float. “If it floats, we will all live forever” (Zolbrod, *Diné* 82), he says, but of course, “it” never does and neither do “we.” Yet there is wisdom in Coyote’s destruction both in terms of the limits of reproduction and in terms of undoing binaries such as gender, for with a plurality of genders the importance of (re)production recedes in favour of processes of emancipatory transformation. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari discuss the problem of gender in this way:

For us, on the other hand, there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis, as many differences as elements contributing to a process of contagion. We know that many beings pass between a man and a woman; they come from different worlds, are borne on the wind, form rhizomes around roots; they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming. The Universe does not function by filiation. All we are saying is that animals are packs, and that packs form, develop, and are transformed by contagion.

¹⁴² Although there is a Sky World in some other Navajo narratives: “Yát’ah, ‘Sky World’ (yá-, sky + -t’ah, niche)” (Young and Morgan 752). Cf. yá, sky, heaven and yak’e, heaven, in Tł̨chq̨ (*Tł̨chq̨ Yatii Multimedia Dictionary*). There is also a source that states that there are two sky worlds: “Some medicine men tell us there are two worlds above us, the first is the World of the Spirits of Livings Things, the second is the Place of Melting into One” (O’Bryan 13).

These multiplicities with heterogeneous terms, cofunctioning by contagion, enter certain assemblages; it is there that human beings effect their becomings-animal. But we should not confuse these dark assemblages, which stir that which is deepest within us, with organizations such as the institution of the family and the State apparatus. (Deleuze and Guattari 41)

This approach hints at a regeneration that is but is also more than filiation—though including it—because the prospect of affinity is also a form of life. Driving through filiation are mounds and bolts, curves and lines, wild air and gendered rains and gems made of memories of things that were gigantic and now seem not to have their old names, only images or shades of their new fecundities.

This epic effects a becoming-animal that is, in this medium, as least partly a matter of affinities between kinds of unknowing, of blinding sheets of daylight and blue sky that are acts of textualization, collation, translation, interpretation. Underneath—or is it overhead?—dark assemblages stir that which is deepest within us. Images piling up on images. Surprise on surprise. Touch touch. So breath is a bivouac on the border between the skin of the self and of death. Is the embellishment of embellishment its negation or amplification? Are we swimming or flying, drowning or breathing? Is this the contagion of disaster? And if so, where to next? Do we ever run out of skies? Does becoming ever become unbecoming? Or does becoming ever unbecome becoming?

To illustrate this more-than-human ontology, in which we depend on stones but they, perhaps, do not depend much on us, the last words should belong to Irvin Morris, from his memoir *From the Glittering World: A Navajo Story*. Morris begins his life story with the emergence narrative, and he has carried a very small, very red stone with him everywhere; it had

been in his family since Fort Sumner. But in an airport, after a long life of struggle within a superstructure imbued with crushing racism, then travel of many kinds, then finding balance, Morris drops his stone when a purse-snatcher rushes by him. The stone falls into the bottom of an escalator shaft. Instead of mourning it, he prays:

I fish out the pouch of pollen from my luggage and ignoring stares and whispers sprinkle a pinch on the spot where the stone vanished. Then we leave. (231)

Chapter Six: Conclusion—Histologies

“Compare them. See if you can see something more about it. Kind of plain, but it’s pretty hard to tell you for you to know right now. Takes time. And then you will see”

(Wickwire 455).

On the Soundscape as the Transformatrice (Literature Review)

In this conclusion, I first discuss further some of the concepts that pertain to my reading framework and second look ahead to next steps in my research. Ingestion and regurgitation, as modeled in the Copper Woman story of my dissertation chapter two; bones brought back to life, as in chapter three; story and song, as in chapter four; stone and flesh, as in my chapter five: all these are reversals that create flux. And the greatest of the values which may be reversed is dream, vision, belief, animal song—that which is the most unknown—where the articulable lifts off into the inarticulable for that which is, in daily life, inarticulable, to become strangely animated. If the nature of human thought is—at least at times—cyclical, then reversals help to move things forward by permitting re-articulation with a difference. Reversals make life. The most impenetrably irreversible makes the most life of all. Because animals embody deictic references to being, but *not always*, they serve as potential figures for deictic reversal. Thus, further, animals tell and are telling in this way: they permit and perpetuate ontological reference to movement, intention, and knowledge; and through the reversal, in narratives, of every-day conventional constructions of animate humans versus (sometimes) less-animate animals, constructions of humanity’s every-day animate force is re-articulated. This is narrative revitalization of language, literature, and personhood through both auto- and allo-poiesis—these stories, because they are old and new, re-thought many times in many contexts, always the same and always different, construct a narrative animal that is airy and earthy, exterior and interior—

not ubiquitously, but keenly, and sometimes keening: breath and voice which is a wise musicality reaching deeply into difference.

Isabelle Stengers recuperates the notion of a “textual animism” (1), where the written and oral are not different to the point of ethically or ontologically irreconcilable, but, rather, interconnected to reject colonial divides and reclaim animacy in a Euro-American context. They are interconnected as we try for “recovering the capacity to honor experience, any experience we care for, as ‘not ours’ but rather as ‘animating’ us, making us witness to what is not us” (7). That which is not us animates us through the double-edged polysemy of witnessing—to both listen and see, and to speak and write what we have heard and seen. Stengers warns against an animacy that comforts through quotation—“ We are protected by the references we quote”—and suggests that these quotations ought to be described as magical insofar as we ought to “accept being mystified” by them (7)—these are Deleuzian assemblages which, while not, perhaps, strictly biological, are alive, in that they “generate metamorphic transformation in our capacity to affect and be affected—and also to feel, think, and imagine” (9). Stengers’s animacy, then, and in the broadest terms, requires rejection of cultural boundaries for those who believe or do not, on the one hand, and acceptance of ontological boundaries, on the other, such that difference permits communication: in this way, the unknown may become known—at least, and only ever, in part. Intersubjectivity, like signification itself, relies on partial but never whole referential coincidence for consonance. The special link between animal and story, for me, then, in the Dene narratives I study here, is the way in which the impersonal becomes personal—a way that involves different languages, different epistemologies, and very different voices that, in combination, permit life in a magical way.

It is my thesis, in this dissertation, that traditional Dene textualized orature—a textual animism, as it were—uniquely regenerates its own interpretive meaning through deictic figures of animacy that are embodied—they are ecologically and culturally significant animals of the regions within which the orators live or lived, voiced as such by orators who believe the words they share go deep and go beyond. These animals *tell and are telling* both denotatively and connotatively. They are more than symbols in that they operate as flexible but specific nexus of reference to time, place, and most importantly personhood. They do so through the stories which attest to them in grammatical constructions, in dialogue, and in more-than-linguistic expressive reference to not just the ontological but also the existential status of the speaker. Sound is life, life is sound—as voice. Listeners and readers learn from the voices of animals about how they should interpret the historical meaning of the narratives which animate and are animated by these animals. In this, traditional story and song¹⁴³ enact the potential for revitalization of and through the narratives, an animating process available to reading and listening communities who would learn how to live, how to love, how to die, and how to live again—referential transformation of time, place and being, not merely for the sake of change, although that is crucial, but, through reversal, for the sake of rebirth.

Deictic transformations across multiple cultural and disciplinary collaborative contexts constitute historical and personal—in other words, histological—revitalization.¹⁴⁴ Bodies are knit

¹⁴³ By traditional, I refer to habitual and repeated use, sometimes word-for-word—especially with songs—and sometimes context-to-context—where changes in versions accord with the needs and identities of listeners (cf. Basso 1996)—so that the stories always mean something both old and new.

¹⁴⁴ On the question of collaboration and transformation, Barre Toelken, a thoughtful scholar of Navajo culture, describes the interpretive work of “folklore” as being akin to a snail shell in that folklore is both its own culture and the medium of Native American culture: the “expressions of folklore are directed toward others, in the process of engaging those others as cultural participants—either audiences or coperformers” (*Anguish* 13); but various factors of culture are “almost always interpreted in the evaluative framework of culture, and the medium for this ongoing interpretation is folklore” (19). This tension between the idea of culture’s collectivity and the materiality and partiality of mediation is, according to Toelken, only sometimes atemporal in that a “printed book or a written letter can exist long after its contents have immediate interest for anybody; when an orally transmitted story ceases to

together with stories: and this happens through sound. The poetics of collaboration are thus intrinsic to the interpretation of these narratives. Thus one of the main critical challenges inherent in my project is that of intersubjectivity within the literary-historical provenance of each publication. However, because most of the narratives included in these publications are recorded in Dene languages and then translated into English, their present and future hermeneutical histories are also important questions.

While deixis has formed the basis of my inquiry, I have come to see that my primary focus within this framework expanding the concept of contextual reference to persons, places, and times, is personhood, which is to say, animacy, since there are many more-than-human people in Dene philosophy. That is, in animalesque play across the boundaries of texts and

make sense or be interesting, however, people simply quit telling it, and it is no longer there. The survival of an orally transmitted story is in itself a testimony to its ongoing validity as an expression of cultural meaning in dramatic terms” (14-15). Thus this tension, in textualized orature, might be construed as a material “dramatization” of an elusive truth. Because inevitably, Toelken, for his folkloric part, promises, “Nor will we start with the ‘hidden meaning’ premise . . . Instead, we will ask, ‘What’s being acted out . . . or made concrete here’” (10) and then seems to proceed to answer back not so much to Navajo levels of meaning as to Greek or European debates about hermeneutics and progressive revelation. His definition of asymmetrical collaborative collectivity leads him to conclude that “Each tale, each dance, each traditional food, each dwelling is full of cultural meaning because its articulation has been subjected to a cumulative process which changes, discards, or sloughs off the transitory, the trivial, and the inessential. Like the snail shell, the part which survives expresses the aggregate ‘feel’ of the group because, in the long process of distillation, it has lost the marks of the original contributors and has compacted the talents and values of many performers who have repeatedly contributed their expression’s to the group’s ongoing and ever-developing aesthetics” (15), where the essence of the realities of each contributing person and culture “are nonetheless understandings about reality, not necessarily of it” (19). I question whether or not this is the instrumentalism of a standing reserve of experience—for “culture originally had something to do with making things better or more productive,” he claims (17), a troubling claim in light of his supposition that “there is a lot of evidence for the existence of imagery that reaches beyond the experience or recollection of single individuals” (19). However, Toelken’s suggestion that the “same themes and images are there all right, but rather than assuming they have a universal value, we usually expect them to be different every time we encounter them. But this doesn’t mean they do not exist as inherited symbols of deeply rooted meaning; on the contrary, their existence testifies to the ability of a culture to interpret and reconstruct something meaningful from inherited materials” (20) makes a great deal of sense to me. It is almost as if Toelken is saying that he starts with the surface level of truth about lore, when, in fact, he starts with the most mystical level of all, what all the lore means to him; when Toelken asserts that his starting place is literal meaning and yet claims that his own position is one where “unpredictable, uncontrollable moments became so central to my view of the Navajos that they became the bases of things I never would have learned otherwise” (1-2), does he manage to invert the process of interpretation so that the most literal level of meaning becomes personal non-meaning? If so, are we actually looking at the snail shell from the inside, not the outside? And who, then, inhabits that shell? Also, would not a creature with some form of quadrilateral symmetry be more in keeping with the Diné levels of meaning? For example, humans have bilateral symmetry on a vertical plane; to achieve quadrilateral symmetry, we need to be half-immersed in water.

bodies. I wrote chapter one with the homophonous link between caribou and meat in mind; this focus on sound expanded radically in chapter four—which I wrote after chapter two and before chapter five. It was at this time, while contemplating song and the aural archive, thanks to Patrick Moore’s generosity in sharing the audio recording from which “The Man Who Sought a Song” was transcribed, that I began to believe that the soundscape helpful for engaging in the meaning of Dene oral poetics. In the next few pages, then, I flesh out my theory of the soundscape as it applies to reading textualized orature.

John Leavitt writes, of the Sapir-Whorf paradigm, that Sapir’s poetics of grammar, if taken seriously, reveal a demand for attention to meanings that exceed words:

If a given grammar lends itself to certain connections, metaphors, metonyms, rather than to others, then a translator is dealing with an underlying poetics that is there in the very weave out of which any text is made, however referential it may look. (207)

So as I discuss in chapter four, attention to the sound of the voice *as voice*, in its combination of expressive as well as referential performance, “musically . . . articulate[s] meaning through paralinguistic communication” (Johnson 173). When I consider how animals sing to humans in vision narratives, for example, it is the “soundscape” of the stories about these events that I think of—a soundscape composed of expressiveness¹⁴⁵—what people mean by meaning things—and

¹⁴⁵ For an instructive discussion of expressive phonology in a totally different context, see Nancy C. Dorian’s article “Celebrations: In Praise of the Particular Voices of Languages at Risk” (1999). On the difficulty but importance of studying expressive markers, she states, “By comparison with the attention lavished on the consonant mutations of Scottish Gaelic in most grammars, the emphatic suffix, the chief feature to be discussed here, is only briefly mentioned in most treatments of Gaelic dialects. One reason for the disparity in treatment is natural enough: the consonant mutations affect a large number of different consonants and appear obligatorily in many different environments (and optionally in still others), whereas the emphatic suffix takes a limited number of forms and can be suffixed to only a limited number of elements, while its use largely optional. Still, there is most likely another reason as well. The emphatic suffix serves above all to create discourse effects, rather than to express grammatical categories, and both traditional grammars and linguistic descriptions show a tendency to concentrate on grammatical elements whose domain is the sentence. Some of the expressive force of the emphatic suffix can be seen within the sentence, or across one or two sentences, but to see its most striking effects it’s necessary to look at longer stretches of discourse” (n. pag.).

sound symbolisms (see examples in chapter four) that, together, serve to evoke the natures of animal people and of the human people they teach and of the relations between them, which are, to put it mildly, complex. Dangerous, but necessary. Sometimes joyful. Thus sonic performance in vision stories about animals is human but never only human. The language of these stories is not just grammar but “animal grammar.”

Washington Matthews writes, in his Introduction to *Navaho Legends* (1897), that Navajo “songs all contain significant words” that are, for “poetic requirements,” “greatly distorted” (24), but—crucially—the distortions are “not always left to the whim of the composer,” but are “made systematically, as a rule” (25). He adds that “If the language were reduced to a standard spelling, we should find that the Navaho poets have as many figures of these [expressive variation] classes as the English poets have, and perhaps more” (25)—an assertion I take seriously in relation to expressive distortions in animal stories about animal songs. While I believe that spelling standardization can obscure expressive variation as well as—as Matthews suggests—reveal it, I think Matthews’s and others’ calls to orthographic fidelity have the potential to permit much more nuanced close readings of expressive marking in Indigenous narratives. Matthews also comments on vocables that accompany expressive “distortions,” stating that even the most meaningless-seeming vocables “in all songs must be recited with a care at least equal to that bestowed on the rest of the composition” (25). It seems to me that this principle is transferable to northern-Dene music, also: these culturally unique sonic registers, both vocables in music and animal voices in narratives, then, are affected extralinguistically and share an extralinguistic effect. To combine these widely held aesthetic values with *stories about* animal songs makes speech more meaningful. In other words, where they are conjoined, in narratives about holy encounters with animals in visions—and dreams—language comes closer to music. Conversely,

then, it is narrative that reveals the power of sound as such: as Robert Bringhurst writes of prosody in Indigenous narratives, “I wonder what would happen if we started with the story and worked our way both up and down from there: to mythology on one side; on the other to the sentence, phrase, word, morpheme, phoneme, tagmeme, and other sublogical particles” (“Prosodies” 211). By starting with the story, its soundscape emerges as a meaningful epistemological practice.

The most memorable forms of expression are not words but music. And the most memorable songs are ones that, here and there, deviate from the anticipated musical pattern. Language comes closer to music and thus to something holy—something beyond the human that somehow yet makes real the desires of the human heart.¹⁴⁶ Memorable utterances that deviate here and there from strictly grammatical statements or even strictly causative narration include howls of grief, moans of pain, roars of disgust, ardent invitations, or shouts of triumph. Note that these synonyms for intense expression also index non-linguistic animal calls, at least in English-language discourse. And this is no coincidence. Mikhail Bakhtin, father of dialogism, pondering the intersubjectivity of speech acts, writes, commenting in fragmented, late-in-life notes on the quality of sound itself,

Quietude and sound. The perception of sound (against the background of quietude).

Quietude and silence (the absence of the word). The pause and the beginning of the word.

The disturbance of quietude by sound is mechanical and physiological (as a condition of perception); the disturbance of silence by the word is personalistic and intelligible: it is an

¹⁴⁶ Cf. lyric poetry in the Euro-American tradition, which is derived from performance, and for which, therefore, the “relation between music and lyric is paramount”—but as Susan Stewart writes, “lyric is not music,” for it is at a remove historically, in contrast to “musical sequences [that] are themselves encoded in relation to expectations of musical sequence” (31). As well, the “sound recalled” in lyric poetry “is the sound of human speech” (29), but, while poetry and oratory are both more-than-talk, Indigenous oratory about animals often recalls the sound of *animal* speech, as much as that of the human, in the human—for the reverse purpose, that of human speech in the animal. But the importance of immanence might be the same.

entirely different world. In quietude nothing makes a sound (or something does not make a sound); in silence somebody speaks (or somebody does not speak). Silence is possible only in the human world (and only for a person). Of course, both quietude and silence are always relative. (133)

He is on the right track with his attention to the boundary between quietude and silence, the first automatic and the second autonomic, defining that boundary as a question of personhood. He does not know that animals, too, are people.

Bakhtin goes on to ask what the “conditions [are] for perceiving a sound, the conditions for understanding/recognizing a sign, the conditions for intelligent understanding of the word,” suggesting that, whatever those conditions are, “Silence—intelligible sound (a word)—and the pause constitute a special logosphere, a unified and continuous structure, an open (unfinalized) totality” (134). This bounded space of not-silence, the word uttered by the animal and repeated by the orator, is the soundscape, a connective tissue of meanings held between phonology and intonation, sometimes invading the lexical level of the word, sometimes invading the level of the phrase, and certainly invading the level of the story. But rather than invading: pervading, resonating, animating.

Animal grammar (re)animates narrative. Animals are more-than-human beings who exhibit the human traits of animacy and agency—yet also extend grammatical expressions of reference to encompass more-than-reference. Mutsumi Yamamoto writes of the animated effect of animacy in human language that

it is of significant interest to linguists to capture the extra-linguistic framework of the animacy concept, because, as it were, this concept is a spell which strongly influences our

mind in the process of language use and a keystone which draws together miscellaneous structural and pragmatic factors. (180)

Note the resonance between *wodih* as an influence on human audiences and animacy as an influence on the human mind. Yamamoto bases this claim concerning this power of animacy on the larger linguistic-typological claim of Bernard Comrie, who suggests that animacy is a “unifying theme” across many languages, and in this sense is “extra-linguistic” (185).

John Lucy calls for an approach to animacy that recognizes categories such as animacy as phenomena found in all languages to “reflect[. . .] something about the organization of experience *for the purposes of speech* rather than solely some independent regularity in the world”; he adds, “languages (both individually and collectively) construe entities *from the point of view of language as a referential and predicational device* and not solely or consistently in terms of extra-linguistic (or natural) characterizations” (58). And I love his point about animacy serving the “*purposes of speech*” because stories and songs are alive in some sense. However, I believe one can also conceptualize animacy as extralinguistic at the level of the definitional boundaries of language as such, which require attention to the boundaries between species (human animals, other animals, more-than-human beings) since traditional Euro-American zoology and cognitive sciences have only relatively recently begun to reconsider to whom language can belong across species lines.¹⁴⁷

To return to Lucy, I very much agree with his point that “we need a metalanguage for the description of noun phrase types (typical linguistic meanings) that will be independent of the formal categories of any particular language yet dependent for its terms on the way languages in general construe reality” (59). This is why I articulate an animal grammar (terms of construal) of

¹⁴⁷ See *The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness* (2012).

the soundscape (metalinguage). But I do think that, especially in old stories about animals, animals as animals are extralinguistic, since animals, as well as speech about them, are also very much alive. Animals vitalize language both from within and without, then. In this case, “All is allegory. . . . Each creature is key to all other creatures” (Coetzee 229). Cultural theorists have certainly considered animacy as a conceptual return to the vitalism of Victorian science; but while Jane Bennett and others¹⁴⁸ have engaged with the agency of objects as a matter of hopeful assertion—“I believe that this pluriverse is traversed by heterogeneities that are continually *doing things*” (Bennett 122)—the difference in the Dene teachings I have read concerning the animal is that, where Bennett is trying to make *everything* into a story—to narrativize the cosmos—the point of Dene stories in which animals help humans is that *not* everything is a story, and this is why animals, who give help and power, are needed. It is the animals who give humans stories in the most desperate of unstoried moments.

In giving humans stories, animals manifest as animate in a heightened way. They give life to humans, and thus they animate humans imaginatively, intellectually, and physically. This remarkable phenomenon emerges from the stories themselves: it is the boundaries of narrative that make the speech acts of animals (or of any other sentient and self-aware being, including spruce stumps), which are marked grammatically for the feature of animacy, as actions carried out with agency and controlled willpower. In Dene Dháh, for example, the grammatical habits of marking for animacy in every-day speech contexts—non-narrated experience—usually do not

¹⁴⁸ See Timothy Morton’s ecocritical philosophy of object-oriented ontology and his more literary theory of “ambient poetics,” which encompasses a “materialist way of reading texts with a view to how they encode the literal space of their inscription . . . the spaces between the words, the margins of the page, the physical and social environment of the reader” (*Ecology* 3). Morton’s concern with context as form in a critical sense (somewhat like allegoresis) helped me to take an interest in context as form, also, in the sense of performance.

allow for animals, except dogs, to be marked as animate; but in and through the heightened state of narrative, pragmatics invade semantics, and animals make meaning (Rice 1019).

When I say “animate,” I feel that there is some ambiguity in the term, even within the focused works on specific languages. Thus commensurate with my concern with animacy and narrative boundaries is my concern with animacy and hierarchies. While many linguistic theories of animacy demarcate a hierarchy of animate beings (Comrie 185; Yamamoto 14), the narrative boundedness of *animal* animacy in Dene stories is characterized not by hierarchy but by proximity. Ontology is locational. If it is a heightened state of narrative awareness that animals permit humans, this permission comes by and through face-to-face encounters with humans. This is especially exceptional in the case of wolverine encounter, because wolverines are extremely elusive—they prefer solitude. But it is always an astonishing thing to be addressed by an animal. Astonishing to a transformational extreme. Every time your eyes shift the direction of your gaze, new meanings proliferate. The absurdity of existence changes form, or perhaps comes to have any form at all, when we are surprised by the horror or the joy of meeting the animal. Story transforms lived experience into a world, a soundscape of heightened thought and feeling. Thus I take Yamamoto’s call to look at extralinguistic features of animacy as an opportunity to look at the extralinguistic in terms of the expressive features of narrative language—the emotion attached to grammar as expressed by humans, yes, but especially by animals. More specifically, the expressive possibilities for personhood beyond basic grammar in, for example, Dene Dháh are extralinguistic insofar as animacy is an optional but important feature that does not affect basic syntactical meaning, yet affects semantic meaning greatly.

Keren Rice writes of animacy and pronoun choices for all lexical categories (i.e., parts of speech) in Dene Dháh (including emphatic pronouns independent of other words; subjects, direct

and oblique objects, and possessive subjects and objects), that “In choosing the correct form of the pronoun, reference must be made to the grammatical function the pronoun has in addition to features of person, number, and humanness” (1021-23). This is done similarly in English language, where pronominal choice, as well as some choices in demonstratives, indicate who is alive, but, more than that, who is capable of independent action or agency.

Further to the ontological and epistemological significance of this optional and therefore deliberate selection of specified-human pronominal forms in a narrative context is the concomitant exceptional significance of violating a customary pronominal selectional restriction within narrative bounds. In other words, in Dene Dháh, certain referents are usually not designated as “human,” and this includes most non-human animals (Rice 1019)—except in stories. Rice clarifies that the grammatical feature “human,” in Dene Dháh, while it usually covers humans and dogs, is “actually a cover term for something much broader,” that “represents beings that are considered intelligent, to be able to control”—and that this “feature can be used for animals when they have the ability to speak and control in human fashion” (1019). Speaking and control, or agency, are mutually manifest. Thus when animals or other entities speak, in Dene Dháh narratives, narrative pragmatics condition the syntax of animacy rather than every-day semantics. In narrative, then, animals and humans are drawn close enough together to converse in an exceptional, life-giving way. The difference between Euro-American animal stories and Dene Dháh ones is precisely the question of life: animals are “brought to life” in fiction, whereas animals bring people to life in wodih.

The “violation” of customary or every-day marking of animacy, or, more specifically, agency, in Dene Dháh, is heightened through the highly specific rules of combining pronoun references. There is a customary selectional restriction on third-person subjects and oblique

objects such that it is usually ungrammatical to have a nonhuman third-person subject combined with a nonincorporated (i.e., inflected independently from the verb) oblique object. Rice writes, “It initially appears that there could be a lexical condition on word formation to insert the fourth person object pronoun (or no object pronoun) if the subject is third person and the third person object pronoun if the subject is nonthird person. There could be a similar condition on lexical insertion for nonincorporated oblique objects. However, the situation is not this simple” (1022).

By analogy, in other words, oblique objects might be predicted to follow the same +/-animacy/agency selectional restrictions as direct objects. Instead, as attestations from the narrative corpus demonstrate (see the example concerning animate and agentive blackflies, below), oblique objects can occur in the fourth person where direct objects would occur in the third person—when the subject is non-agentive. Thus it seems that narrative-bounded semantics condition the syntax of word formation in Dene Dháh, demonstrating that the feature “human”/animacy/agent/control is extralinguistic in an intra-linguistic context. I think this form of meaning-making also demonstrates that insofar as language can be said to constitute reality, narratives contribute to the constitution of reality; it follows that narratives about animals constitute a reality-shift whenever those narratives are instantiated. Flies are not usually animate and agentive; the nature of their “extra-linguistic” animacy lies in the power of the narrative boundary—or the boundary of a vision. Rice describes such boundaries, which allow for semantically meaningful grammatical violations of pronominal reference, as “unreal world contexts” and as the “context of a dream” (1022). Without this boundary, semantics would not allow for this combination of lexical and syntactical choices that mark the feature of humanness.

To summarize the implications of the feature “human” in Dene Dháh, the language allows for linguistic animacy, but the stories allow for extralinguistic animacy. Given the

narrative nature of extralinguistic animacy in Dene Dháh, I would like to suggest that Rice's remarkable linguistic analysis of Dene-Dháh animacy can be summed up, with the following implications for my central question concerning animals and emotion: the feature of humanness, i.e., agentive animacy, is control of actions and of speech—indeed, in the context of vision narratives, action and speech are one and the same, since control is a matter of volition—of intentional semiosis—i.e., of conscious desires manifesting externally an internal reality in a sequential and transformative way. Since pronouns are deictic referents of personhood, when animals give humans songs in visions the stories that recount those visions require a deictic shift, where every-day habits of reference are transformed into narrative practices of reference: the semantics of personhood remain the same, grammatically, but the pragmatics of meaning change radically at the traversal of that narrative boundary.

However, it is always the animal traversal of the visionary boundary that comes first, even though the human traversal of the narrative boundary is the listener's and reader's first experience of the holy (unless one has a vision of one's own). The visionary song from the animal animates the visionary story, so that the true deictic shift is in the human perception of what reference to agents even means: in the context of Dene-Dha' visions, animals reference humans as agents before humans reference animals as agents, turning grammatically impossible—or at least unusual—selectional restrictions into transformative possibilities. One might as well view the narrative boundary that allows for these miracles of speech to be defined by the animal as by the human. In a sense, it is only by first crossing over into and becoming a part of animals' stories that humans are able to make animals a part of human stories. Indeed, given that it is in the animal's power to endow humans with visions (and not within a human's power, except to seek such gifts), one might best view animals as the agents

who bring into their stories willing and determined (desperate) humans. Only once the animal has drawn the human across that narrative boundary into the animal's story does the human become capable of controlled, intentional, volitional, agentic, animate, transformative speech and action (speech-action).

So then the Dene-Dháh visionary narrative expression of “extra-linguistic” animacy in *speech*—which is also controlled, intentional *action*—is doubly extralinguistic, in that transformative practices of reference are grammatical and also musical—and thus, I suggest, the soundscape of the story of the song is super-referential. In this way, animal grammar sits between the linguistic and the extralinguistic in a holy “spell,” where music and language are intercalated to heal that frustrating divide between feeling and meaning—that arbitrary nature of the relation between sign and referent. Or perhaps the barrier is really that we cannot, at all times and in all ways, realize the sacred in the everyday.

Because animals in Dene Dháh narratives—and especially Wolverine—give life (and sometimes take it away), a sense of respect for the visionary gift of animal grammar is crucial, expressed through markers of personhood. As I state in chapter four on Wolverine, in a sense, it is grammatical reference that gives animals personhood, human form—human speech gives animals life. But in all senses, we cannot live without animals. Thus animal speech and human speech are coeval. In Old English, one word for human is *reord-berend*, “voice-bearer.” To speak is to be a person. In Dene Dháh, one word for a person is *dene*, from the prefix **də-*, a “common nominal prefix found also in names of animals” (Leer 292), and the stem *-ne*, which is used for human groups. Animals are people too, as Ahnassay attests when she describes the foxes with whom the lost hunter first stays as “*denáa*,” “small people” (Moore and Wheelock 159) and when she states, “*Nóghe, dene elin*,” “Wolverine, person he-was” (162). Given

Ahnassay's assertions about the personhood of animals in her story, and given that her story is also the narrative condition under which animals speak and sing, and given that her story is a report about Wolverine's address to the lost hunter, it seems to me that voice is precisely the boundary between breath and personhood. To speak is to be a person. To be spoken to, by Wolverine, so superlatively a person that even his breath has power, never mind his song, is to become a person again. To respond is to be agentive. To bear a voice in a body. To sing the experience of that.

Song and story meet through the figure of the animal, but that, while animal grammar is breath, breath is not animal grammar without both *shin* and *wodih*. This is multi-species narrative reciprocity—so when humans recount vision narratives about animals, that is a kind of offering, derivational, secondary, but necessary. In other words, if animals give vision seekers songs, it seems to me possible that perhaps those who give back stories about those songs also give something back to the animals. It seems to me that this form of revitalization is so powerful that it even functions through remediation: song and story resonate in the passage from living flesh to the mineral page and back into our minds. This reciprocity for the sake of gratitude and of survival is the process of narrative revitalization.

It is my feeling that an animal song, even when absent from a vision narrative, is supra-linguistic—it continues to resonate in the expressive, grammatically non-essential elements of the narrative discourse—as animal grammar. While animal grammar deviates memorably from every-day human grammar, it must also fall within a range recognizable by humans. By considering where the large-scale boundary is between song and speech, I can consider where the small-scale boundaries are between the “harmonics” that compose the total “notes” of speech to identify range and deviation—the expressive markers of emotion from the level of sound up to

a lexical level where animal grammar animates every-day grammar to make stories like songs, narratives that resonate in the ear and in the mind and in the heart at an expressive level.

Steven Feld writes, in *Sound and Sentiment*, that the Kaluli musical-performance ritual of *gisalo*, which is performing music in such an emotional way that it evokes tears in the audience, “can be understood as a ceremonial crystallization of Kaluli concern about reciprocity, the structure and content of its sound modes and codes can be viewed as expressive means for articulating those same shared feelings and emotions” (7). I adapt his idea of the “mode” or expressive message, plus the means for conveying it, the grammar or “code,” to address the narrative features of “The Man Who Sought a Song” from performance through to writing. Therefore I analyze the following points in the structure and content of *wodih* as the “crystallization”—or, more literally, the configuration of meaning, its range and boundaries—of the expressive soundscape of this kind of story.

Several of these features of the soundscape are characteristic of ethno poetics as a practice that attends to structural patterns at a narrative level and also transposes performance patterns into textual form; however, while I use ethno poetic practices as a starting place to note key features of the important stories, I choose to engage in interpretive commentary that turns back to sound rather than focusing on translational practice of text-making since an immense amount of work on this feature has already been accomplished by orators, transcribers, translators, and editors.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ If ethno poetics has four poles of consideration (oral performance and written archive, linguistic structure and paralinguistic aesthetics) for the sake of translation along two axes (respectively x-axis, content, and y-axis, form), ethno poiesis would be to ethno poetics as allegory is to allegoresis; and it would form the z-axis (context).

The Range of the Soundscape

Usually, animals do not speak in ways that can be understood by humans. Likewise, although song and speech bear many comparisons—primarily, for the purpose of my analysis, that of a range of harmonics and other features that belong to one category of *scale*, the musical “note,” compared with a range of phonological expressions that belong to one category of *articulation*, the “phoneme”—usually, song and speech are differentiated. But music is set apart from noise by a “language” of notes, a language that is defined by four key conditions: 1) loudness, 2) duration, 3) pitch (frequency position on a bounded scale), and 4) timbre (the unique voice of the instrument on which the note is sounded). Proximity is required for the perception of each of these features of music, while, at the same time, each of these features extends the moment of initial musical articulation such that the experience becomes perceptible to humans—it is music that is 1) loud enough, 2) long enough, 3) pitched within the range of human hearing, and 4) contains sufficient harmonic complexity to evoke unique responses to all the other features combined.

Thus, as I state in chapter four, both literally and figuratively, animal speech emerges as meaningful in Dene stories when the same conditions that are required for the constitution of a recognizable musical note are met in animal-human conversations: 5) there must be sufficient loudness on the part of the animal for the human to hear their utterances (many animals usually communicate beyond the range of human hearing)—and, concomitantly, sufficient quietness of the part of the human (perhaps this is one reason why sleep is sometimes conducive to visions as dreams); 6) there must be sufficient duration to the animal-human encounter for a meaningful exchange to take place; 7) there must be a bounded field of meaning within which notes or words are embedded to permit meaningful recognition of their references (here, I suggest, musical scale

has its narrative corollary not in the relative size of species but in relative distance or proximity—in the proximal rather than the scalar—for one must draw close to be heard and to hear well); and 8) there must be a sense of timbre—of the unique voice of each animal as an “instrument” of holy power.

Thus the field of sound is both immanent and abstract. It is embodied and conceptual. Yet there must be one more thing, beyond what is required for noise to become music, for animal speech to be made intelligible to humans: the animal must *will* it. Thus these four conditions can be divided into phenomena conditioned by two kinds of gifts from the animal, proximity and reference. By proximity, I mean the narrative boundaries that enclose the gift of a song in a story. By encounter, I mean intentional encounters—in time, in place, between persons—in other words: here, now, with you. Deixis.

Deictic reference requires interlocutors to share an awareness of absent (extralinguistic) objects and subjects, which is true at both grammatical and narrative levels of discourse. In Dene Dháh, evidentials indicating direct discourse are quotative and yet also reportative in that they express modality by requiring the listener or reader to construe the viewpoint of any given verb complement as belonging to an individual, according to their presence or absence from the conversation, that is true for that individual. Either way, relations are key to interpretation, which requires the construction of an intersubjective ground of shared understanding.

Thus the deictic center for the transmission of wisdom is the shared understanding constituting any given illocution. In Dene languages, deictic information is conveyed through unique grammatical categories. These categories include grammatical mode and aspect, which serve to construct temporality—the time of speech, the time at which an event takes place, and Reference Time. This is the “now” of “here, now, with you.” Another of these categories

includes lexical spatial directionals, special words describing movement in relation to the speaker and hearer. This is the “here” of the “here, now, with you” which I am interested in defining. But what of the “here” when “here” is pointing back to other times, places, and personhoods than the contemporaneous context of the performative narrative act? In answer, we must reconsider what here means in terms of viewpoint: each time viewpoint is reconstructed in the relationship between story and listener, a new here is created, one which occurs in the text and also in the world, as the text influences the listener or reader and becomes part of their experiential framework within which they make decisions and communicate about those actions.

Animal grammar, as animals and humans converse, requires a shared ground and deictic center for this intimate and extended kind of encounter conjoining multi-species senses of time, space, and personhood. This is the *expressive field of reference*. Johanna Rubba (1996) looks at this phenomenon in terms of the “*default ground*” and the “*alternate grounds*” for discourse “settings,” i.e., contexts; these are “possible because the deictic structure of the mother discourse space is available (via pragmatic connectors) in all the emerging daughter spaces” (Dancygier, “Personal” 170). With traditional oral narratives, the mother discourse space is never available, although a precise genealogy of teaching and intangible cultural wealth is included in these stories back for centuries. But the precise meaning, for the first orator and listeners, is not conveyed in its entirety—rather, it is the fact that it has meant so many things to so many people that the mother discourse space is constituted. And it is through the always personal, always epistemologically real relationships with animals that the Dene orature I focus on in this project that those discourse spaces are maintained.

Oral stories, as they are transcribed into print and translated from Dene Dháh to English, requires a shift in that shared center to create new centers of shared understanding: so how does

this emerge from such different viewpoints? It is done through the projection of the grammatical features of represented speech up to the level of conversation with animals to define the shared deictic center of narrative contexts that are quite epistemologically demanding in terms of their interpretation within their historical context and their transformative re-interpretation in and through contemporary contexts. Such *animal transformations*, especially in stories, have the potential to reconfigure what a *human* sense of what the task of living can mean—here, now, with you—by the art of talking with one another (Moore and Tlen 2007; Sanders and Redeker 290).

This shared center is constituted by narrative boundaries, which are in turn defined by a deictic field of sound—the soundscape—or the narrative-conversational pragmatics of the soundscape conditioning the selections of the feature animacy. To combine my idea of deixis and especially deictic shift as transformative speech acts with my concern with soundscape as a pragmatics of transformation, I draw on William Hanks’s theory of “deictic practice” in a “deictic field” where he combines the “social field” concept of Bourdieu and Goffman with the “semiotic structure of deixis” to closely read every-day “deictic practice” as an “emergent *construal*” (emphasis original) of “practical equivalences, counterpart relations among objects, and rules of thumb” (Hanks, “Explorations” 191). Hanks deals with every-day speech acts rather than narrative; however, he treats deixis as “basic to language in its capacity to constitute both subjects and objects” (191) through detailing the integration of speech with context in a way that is both experiential and symbolic. For an example with some comparison to the Navajo system, animacy in the Mayan context where Hanks works extends to humans through two word-based concepts, “-*ool*, which covers roughly the will and the capacity for involvement and sensate experience, and the *-iik*’, ‘wind’, understood in this context as ‘awareness’” (*Reference* 87).

Hanks comments further that the same term *-oól* is used for a variety of material beings, including the “heart of a tree, the sprouting center of a palm tree or plant, and the loaded ammunition in a rifle” (87). The term *-iik’* can also be used to express an “individual’s oriented awareness in his [or her] current context” (88). This same wind can work “abnormal[ly],” so that crystals can be used to divine problems by virtue of those crystals “provide[ing] the shaman with a representation of the patient’s earth” (87). Similarly, the relationship between the wind and the crystalline is, in Navajo narratives, both discursive and animating.

Hanks also demonstrates that speech shapes experience—and experience speech—in a cyclical way, further grounding my interest in tracing the potential action of narrative revitalization inherent in animal grammar. After all, it is one thing to claim that story language lives, and that it lives in a way that feels animate and navigable to its speakers—as a soundscape; it is another to try to demonstrate how that might be true. Hanks’s insight that the deictic field “orients attention, effectively converting sheer copresence into a social act of individuated referring” (“Explorations” 193) reveals how the constitution of “both subjects and objects” structures and is structured by breath (“speech”), proximity (“copresence”), sound (“language”), and emotion (“individuated referring”). He states that “Copresent subjects in the situation become participants with roles in the *Zeigfeld*,¹⁵⁰ and these in turn become social positions in the embedded deictic field” such that a “deictic field relates a *Zeigfeld* to a broader social world” (194). Hanks thus nests physical immanence within a “*Zeigfeld*” of demonstrative verbal

¹⁵⁰ This is a concept Hanks borrows from Bühler, who theorized transformative meaning as composed by two fields, the “*Symbolfeld*” which is “made up of words, other signs, and the concepts they represent,” and the “*Zeigfeld* (demonstrative field),” which is the “experiential present of utterance production,” which he “labeled ‘Here Now I’” (Bühler as described by Hanks, “Explorations” 192). The *Zeigfeld* is “based on (inter)subjective context, understood in terms of speakers’ perception, attention focus, bodily orientation, and gestures” such that the “basic function of deixis in any language is to orient the subjective attention of the interactants” (192).

action—here, now, I—within a deictic field of immanent temporal, spatial, and ontological anchors constituted by language that can flexibly shift into there, then, you.

Thus the deictic field encompasses embodiment and absence to generate a place where language is “alive” in the sense that speaking perpetuates and yet also transforms ways and truths of being(s). Hanks’s deictic field is composed of

(1) the positions of communicative agents relative to the participant frameworks they occupy (that is, who occupies the positions of speaker [*Spr*], addressee [*Adr*], and others as defined by the language and the communicative practices of its speakers), (2) the positions occupied by objects of reference, and (3) the multiple dimensions whereby the former have access to the latter. To perform an act of deictic reference is to take up a position in the deictic field. Likewise, to be the object of reference is to be thrust into a position. (193)

The deictic field may thus be described using Hanks’s study of the every-day work of the expansive, flexible deictic forms of reference which I look at in narratives. The soundscape is a pragmatics of utterance, a soundscape of reference. Hanks’s subjective positionality (1), when inflected by narrative conditions, becomes an issue of proximity and encounter; his objective referents (2), under narrative conditions, become linguistic and extralinguistic references to and from proximal encounter; and his multiple dimensions of access (3) are reconfigured, specifically to my analysis, to become the range of the expressive soundscape (1-8).

This reconfiguration emerges from a fundamental response to the pragmatics of the story—in its received, social effect as framed by Dene Dháh teachings about animal wisdom—but it also happens at a semantic level, as the syntax of represented speech—of conversations between humans and animals as reported by the orators of such stories—organizes ontological

viewpoints for ways of seeing and thus epistemological possibilities for ways of speaking. In essence, I want to suggest that the differences that divide languages, cultures, historical eras, and even species are a matter of proximity: where we can get close enough to see animals of a different stripe than ourselves, we can see, and so speak. And in speaking, we can share viewpoints. By doing so, we become animal and animals become people. By reading traditional, oral stories about this phenomenon, we become connected not only to the past but, as is the function of oral stories even in print, we become new, just like the stories. This is a unique kind of power that can be found only by drawing close, in the moment, to another.

In other words, rather than emphasizing the field of meaning as grounded in “oppositions among linguistic forms” as with the concept of the *Zeigfeld* (192) so that the work of deictic reference, both linguistically and extralinguistically, is characterized by the “highly regular way in which deictics covary” (195), I am interested in the way that reference—through grammatical but also extra-grammatical features of utterance—may function not through *oppositional* forms of covariance but through a “highly regular” or all-pervasive range or spectrum—a soundscape as *harmonics*—of the poetic interplay of centering and shifting moments of (re)cognition—so that the range 1-8 that I use to describe the soundscape composes concrete instances of how the context (social field) and the content (narrative speech act) form one living thing. The story is, in a sense, an animal—and that “sense” is that of song. Hanks’s idea of covariance, in, for example, his point that “‘Here’ may be wherever you utter it, but that is already a powerful constraint: ‘here’ must be (part of) a speech setting,” and that “Anyone can be an ‘I,’ but only by engaging in speech” (195), is indeed useful in my consideration of animal grammar and narrative revitalization, but perhaps my concept might be termed something like “multivariance.”

It is easy to write and speak of multiplicities such as multivariance, and it is more difficult to describe multiplicitous, uniquely Dene ways of being and speaking truth through visions, songs, stories, and grammatically artful semiotic techniques. My iteration of the soundscape of a story, then, is intended to address the work of the deictic field through not just verbal speech acts but through the complexified and self-containing yet replicative relation of subjects and objects of a story as defined by narrative boundaries that are really the boundaries of vision that is a kind of ontological sonation¹⁵¹—the mind singing in the body—but not just any mind in any body: unique minds in bodies specific to the uniqueness of species— and not just any “orient[ation] of the subjective attention of the interactants,” but the orientation of interactants to and through a deictic field that is composed by animal grammar, with the animating effect of narrative revitalization through reference—but not only reference of time, place, and person, but also of emotion, of feeling the truth of “animating” grammar through the existence of expressive speech—animal grammar. The only way to achieve specificity—even along such a provisional gradient of variant, expressive, referential emotion as that which I have identified in the range 1-8, above—is to do some close reading.

Translation: Animal Texts

While I address the question of translation theory in relation to Indigenous orature in other avenues of research, including on Haida and Crow stories, I want to touch on it briefly here by narrating and discussing the approach of one particular encounter. Last year, I attended a talk by Lawrence Venuti on the Instrumental versus Hermeneutical models for understanding translation. He theorizes that these abstract models, which exist at an ideological level for the reception of translation always, if not always—but often—for the practice of translating, have

¹⁵¹ Non-syrinx sounds made by birds; cf. stridulation, insect song.

been in circulation since antiquity to the present day. He was careful to point out, in his talk, that he is not working with these terms in quite the same way that the German Romantics were, especially since Heidegger advocates destruction through ahistorical decontextualization in order to avoid cultural norms in the interpretive act of translation and then proceeds to translate like a good fascist should.

Yet Venuti also made the point that, in Schleiermacher and others, there is a shift toward an understanding of translation as an inscription (in the Derridean sense) of the always-already mediated experience of the source text. Schleiermacher called it the image, or “Bild,” that is transmitted through translation, and he mostly advocates for a translation that will bring the bilingual target reader into an uncomfortable and therefore productive reaching back toward the source author. Venuti’s main thesis, in his talk, was that the instrumental model of translation does not exist. His main utopian target is to instill a more conscious sense of the hermeneutical model for authors, translators, readers, publishers, everyone. So that the translator might come to see themselves, and be seen by others, as a writerly scholar—intelligently creative and creatively intelligent (how is that for hermeneutical!). I am not sure, but I think Venuti’s hermeneutical model, besides being perceptive, humble, and Derridean, is also devoted to language specificity even as it crosses language boundaries—it seems to me radically relativistic, but hopefully so. Instrumental translation, on the other hand, which advocates word-for-word or sense-for-sense interpretation, is impossible (and here I slip into Free Indirect Discourse) because it requires a belief in an invariant of some kind—and it is this belief in an invariant that even permits the instrumental distinction between word and sense levels of translation to exist.

But all varies, all. (And here I slip into narrative commentary, enthusiastically.) Variation is the effect of mediation, and mediation is the effect of perception, and perception is the effect

of being, and being is the effect of disjuncture, and disjuncture is the effect of waking up. To wake up is to see the split in all things, which hermeneutics tries to do, and which can only be done in parallax, in the comparing act that is hermetically rather than merely exegetical. The crux between hermeneutical and instrumental translation modes, then (not models), is: Do you want commentary or not? If not, you dream that the target text is pure signifier.

How to detect the difference between target and source texts? By examining, for one thing, variations from the standard dialect—since, as Venuti argues, there is a world-wide discursive regime dictating translation methods such that target texts are almost always to be written in the current standard dialect to increase consumability (but also, I would add, and I think Venuti would agree with me, desirability—money for food for words for ideas). Ironically, as Venuti pointed out, copyright law honors form, not content. This is a tension that the translator much negotiate: to make the target text universally edible yet individually proprietary. Very body-and-blood.

The idea of eating divinity—power—is an old one, at least in Near-Eastern and European contexts (ecstasis and omophagia, the sacrament). What about the edibility of stories in Indigenous North-American contexts? If such a broad stroke can be made at all, I would guess that Indigenous consumption of signifiers permits the perpetuation of life in place, while colonial consumption of signifiers permits the perpetuation of life in another place. It is mediation for land or for ascension. If this is so, how to construe Benjamin's "afterlives" of translation (1923)? The word in German is *überleben*, "survival"—and I think we should remember, here, the word *übermensch*, with its sense of a visionary, non-collectivizing dialecticalism that is, like Benjamin's later word, *fortleben*, "forthlivingness," which Benjamin theorized, in relation to texts, to be the perpetuation of texts not dead and lost but always still alive every time they are

disseminated (cf. Derrida!) into hands, paper, minds, bodies, languages again. I would call this a kind of linguistic vitalism. Perhaps the Navajo word *hózhó*, walking in harmony, might be a better, language-but-more, approach to life and death in texts and in people. This would be *hózhó* as forward movement with direction, through a string of beautiful reference points, where perception and experience are deeply attuned. As when you walk through the most-loved and most intimately known landscape of your childhood in a dream, seeing brightly and clearly every hill and turn of water and twist of tree, knowing that, although this dream of home is a visionary abstraction, it is also deeply, utterly a true memory of that place. This is not just linguistic vitalism, then, nor linguistic animism, but lucid linguistics—lit language.

I find Benjamin's German title for his classic essay far more telling than the English equivalent: "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers"—the *übersetzer*, from "over" + "setter," as in "typesetter." The overlife of the forthliving text is especially from and in and through the oversetter, the reproductive scribe. In the context of philological transcriptions in the Boasian tradition, the metaphysics of the transcriber is organic, but organic in a chimerical way, is sutured into the linguistic vitalism inherent in Indigenous stories. So that the body itself begins to dream lucidly. This is true at least as much as the reverse is true. The question, the crux, is that nuance of commentary yes or commentary no, as I note above. So narrative revitalization as I have been trying to state it is a dialectical, utopian, yet also embodied (material, "corps verbal") process not only of retranslation back to the source story (insofar as one ever touches the source of anything), but also, it is this process made material in us. It is forthlivingness that presupposes life. Thus the dialectical is really more dialogical at best. This is especially crucial since Hegelian dialecticalism envisions a future that is fixed—a future target metaphysics from a swelter of sublated source metaphysics. But the future must remain a space for the visionary to

form, ever-open, ever-ou-topian, unless we wish to end in judgement. The utopian is always made of the past, but it never stays there—it is forth-historical but indeterminate, even if, as Venuti reminded us, translation is “always partial.” So the visionary is the crucial third space—the space where the “interpretants” themselves become signifiers.

To return to Venuti’s talk, his framework for hermeneutical translation is useful, especially his commentary on the third space of the interpretants, outlined it below. In hermetical interpretation, there are always three categories constituting a target text—and these are not always consciously recognized (hence the messianic bent of Venuti’s work toward a progressive revelation through comparative labor over multiple retranslations). The three categories are: I) source text; II) target text; III) a “set of interpretants.” These three categories are always present in every translation, no matter how practical the translation is meant to be—although the possibilities in the third category narrow as one moves along a gradient of translatorial intention from the humanistic to the pragmatic to the professional. The third category, which is often mystified or altogether obscure, the “set of interpretants,” is, in turn, composed of several key considerations:

A) The formal:

- 1) the “concept of equivalence” (the structural relationship established between source and target text, however it is decided upon—a second-order formalism);
- 2) the “concept of style” (the unique lexical and syntactical figures in the source and target languages);
- 3) the “concept of genre” (this is not natural but cultural, and source genres should be understood by the translator before they undertake a translation)—this includes ideologies of dialect (though

I might put this last sub-point under the “concept of style”) and other traditions of generic expectation/reception;

B) The thematic (paratextual codes or meanings of words and texts):

- 1) derived by consulting dictionaries, pre-existing translations, or literary criticism in order to guide translation decision—to illuminate readers in new ways (I would add poetic lexicons, references to extra-linguistic features as marked in attested phrases, and the stories themselves);
- 2) ideologies motivating the representation of politics; and
- 3) the function of the translation.

Because, as Venuti pointed out, translation is always interpretation, it is best to make the Derridean inscription legible through inscribing the translated text as such in some way—e.g., through commentary (however disruptive to easy reading).

Can a translation be a dream in which the dream navel, its omphalos, is fixed? No. But like the very old Indigenous stories that reference themselves interpretively through the profound effect of millennia of mediations, I would argue, following Venuti, that the hermeneutical target text must reveal the scar that permitted the text to emerge from the translator’s matrix. Wombs within wombs, so that one womb becomes the seed in the next. Thus, just as Venuti put so beautifully (to move back into FID), translation does not negotiate but proliferates cultural differences. It is “performative interpretation.” It is an act that creates the source as much as the target text. We do not know the results of translation because it is never done any more than it is ever fixed. But translation can produce two things: 1) semantic correspondence and 2) stylistic approximation.

In ethnopoetics, the complication of translating oral performance may also transpose some of the productivities of translation, so that there is 1) semantic approximation and 2)

stylistic correspondence. My final thought here is to compare Venuti's models with Latour's point about never having been Modern: Latour shows that purification and translation are both Modern processes, but that purification is an illusion, while translation is very real but often hidden (he speaks of translation as eco-political vitalism, but perhaps so does Venuti, and perhaps even Benjamin does). This, instrumentalism is the visible lie of purification, while hermeneuticalism is a wild proliferation of Leviathan networks.

It is easy to write about European thinkers and harder to write about Indigenous ones. This is why I include as an epigraph Harry Robinson's advice, which is much like Benjamin's vision of a linguistic shekinah through translation, except that Robinson's words are radically hopeful and direct: "Compare them. See if you can see something more about it. Kind of plain, but it's pretty hard to tell you for you to know right now. Takes time. And then you will see" (Wickwire 455). This is an omphalos that goes all the way: the point where the articulable lifts off into the inarticulable and that which is, formerly, in daily waking life, inarticulable, becomes strangely animated. Life takes life: reversals make life. The impenetrably irreversible makes the most life of all.

Animal Tissues: What Kind of Animal

I try to demonstrate, in my dissertation, that traditional Dene textualized orature uniquely regenerates its own interpretive meaning through the deictic figures of ecologically and culturally significant animals. In chapter two, this argument takes the shape of the conclusion that, in Mandeville's stories, one constant, "meat"—the cultural frame always evoked by variable references—thus emerges as a consistent metonymical target domain emerging from networks coordinated by opposing yet overlapping nexus that come into "dual focus" often through bodily exchanges (in whole or part) to generate transformative blends—blends that are

the product of intensive, almost volcanic, fusions and fissions between ontological positions for the sake of generating life. In chapter three, this argument takes the shape of the conclusion that, in Kalifornsky's stories, the archive itself functions as a form of *k'etch eltani*, the prophetic practice of true belief through seeking visionary dreams, and that this is one of Kalifornsky's primary conceptual tools for teaching people how to connect, form community, and even express cross-species love—as loyalty, sacrifice, and respect. In chapter four, this argument takes the shape of the conclusion that, in Wolverine stories, a Dene theory of the animal is reciprocal yet hierarchical, and defined by the ways in which we speak, which is to say die—and, perhaps, live again. In chapter five, this argument takes the shape of the conclusion that, in the Navajo emergence narrative, the world made by words, crystallized in a phenomenology mutually conditioned by geological and grammatical truths, where form manifests itself through time and establishes itself in space at repeating scales, enabling death, but also the chance to live again.

In the time that I have taken to read and write about these stories, I come to see—however provisionally—that the central concepts from each of my dissertation chapters correspond roughly to: flesh (*zetθén*), bone (*k'etch eltani*), mind (*wodih*), and breath (*niłch'i bii' sizinii*): an animal that is a dream, a dream that is an animal. The chimera that a comparative Dene literature looks like—what kind of animal—includes myself. Always, the metaphor is the animal, an incarnational flesh that is teeming with breath and blood that is partly other and partly ourselves. So Derrida declares,

The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web; a web that envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. There is always a surprise in store for the anatomy or physiology of any

criticism that might think it had mastered the game, surveyed all the threads at once, deluding itself, too, in wanting to look at the text without touching it, without laying a hand on the ‘object,’ without risking—which is the only chance of entering into the game, by getting a few fingers caught—the addition of some new thread. Adding, here, is nothing other than giving to read. (*Dissemination* 63)

He further adds that “One must, then, in a single gesture, but doubled, read and write,” clarifying that the “reading or writing supplement must be rigorously prescribed, but by the necessities of the game, by the logic of play, signs to which the system of all textual powers must be accorded and attuned” (64). Ultimately, in the motivic, cumulative, ardent, terrifying afterlife of the hearts from which, into which, and between which these narratives have, do, and will emerge, I have wished not to arrive at authoritative conclusions nor to establish any definite taxonomies but to compare our conditions for interpretive uncertainty—fundamentally fleshly “histological” uncertainty about how much space we believe ourselves to share as well as how much time we have to share it in.

By using the centers of language, body, and environment, I think it may become possible to compare imaginings of pasts for futures across, for example, instances of narrative textualization, of language revitalization, and of cultural concepts of reincarnation because stories of rebirth have been recorded in Dene languages, then translated into English, then published in dual language editions that in turn facilitate language revitalization. If I were to make an argument for what kind of animal the Dene animal is, the *logos-zōon*—and this is absolutely and merely my personal response at this time—I would say it is an animal that in its most abstract sense is composed of reversal—but in its always-embodied sense, an animal always reborn. In this way, we have an animal unafraid either to give birth or bestow death, an

animal that does not resist excision and remains, no matter what, a transformatrice imbued with the persistent gift of life.

Beliefs about cyclical time for certain consciousnesses, certain souls, certain animals, or even the cosmos as a whole are touchy and evasive areas of study in and between any individuals and cultures. But perhaps pasts can recur into presents in the forms of discursive reincarnation, the recirculation of ideas, definitions, intentions, hopes, beliefs. Because if there is to be any emancipatory decolonization (Smith 1999) at the levels of nations, universities, communities, homes, individuals, it begins not with assertions of meaning situated in the figures of critics (myself), translators, or even orators. Emancipation must begin by realizing that meaning is distributed unevenly but inextricably across the deictics of body, environment, time, and space. Meaning is situated and distributed intersubjectively. From my position as a Euro-Canadian, I wish not to speak on the behalf of the communities to whom the orators in question belong. Rather, I wish to read and re-read these narratives in their multiple iterations of context and content as a form of *lectio divina* in which meditation on the mediating power of animals might, given enough time, change how I think. If we can think about the implications of referential language, can we talk about the implications of non-referential thought? Or thought that does not yet know what it is like.

Next Step: Documentary Poetics

Having read these stories for what they have come to mean to me, I hope, in my next research project, to document how such stories have meant things to speakers of the languages to which they belong. As Rice writes, if Indigenous-language materials are “truly meant for the community, [they] must be designed in such a way that the members of the community can use [them]” (“Ethical” 148) to sustain “ethical responsibilities not only to individuals and

communities, but also to knowledge systems” (149). Focused on the oral performance of stories, I hope for this project to document multimodal poetics of Dene storytellers in two ways. Through community-based research I hope to document the poetics of sound symbolism and visual cues in contemporary Dene narrative performances, and apply the stylistic principles observed to the (re)analysis of archived audio and video recordings of narratives of an earlier tradition. A multimodal Dene poetics is realized in intonation, phonation (special animal voices), poetic silence, and gesture, as well as in the stylistic integration of songs within stories. I hope for my project to generate a comparative inventory of these features. In doing this, I also hope to contribute to a sustainable multimodal framework for interpreting oral narratives in narrative and linguistic theory. I term this framework an animal grammar—my construct in narrative and linguistic theory of the poetics of Dene animal stories and related songs. As a Dene-Tha Elder Willie Ahnassay teaches, “Animals have special abilities which they depend upon to live, giving us only the powers which they no longer need” and an “animal chooses someone to receive these leftover powers, a person who has treated the animals with respect” (Moore and Wheelock 7). A storyteller’s multimodal manipulations and arrangements of linguistic and more-than-verbal extra-linguistic expressions give full life to the grammatical and narratological meanings of Dene animal stories and songs. At the same time that documenting the sound poetics of Dene narrative meaning remains an underdeveloped yet rich area of work, a non-Indigenous researcher must engage with Indigenous verbal arts in full solidarity with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) to understand more fully the value of Indigenous poetics.

Poetics is the means by which form and structure transform the referential nature of speech into reflexive and regenerative systems that produce unique responses in listeners and readers. The poetics of “multimodal ensembles” (Kress, *Multimodality* 122) exist in Dene

communities, where ecologically connected sequences are animated by aural and visual poetics that affect audiences across time, space, and linguistic divides. The Dene stories interpreted into print over the last century require re-analyses that incorporate their expressive variation in sound and gesture. But intercultural translation is never merely benign (Battiste and Henderson 2000), even in revitalization projects (Carr and Meek 2013). It has been found that the emergent meanings of multimodal constructions often depend for intersubjective viewpointing on aural and visual iconicity (Dancygier and Sweetser 2012, Sweetser 2008), with highly conventional mimetics substituting one sense for another. However, it may well be that in Dene contexts, the intersubjective expression of animal-human interactions, as with other linguistic expressions, tends rather to deliberate, expressive symbolic variation, even as the wide-spread and long-standing nature of inter-Dene territories and traditions ratifies the monumental intellectual structure of Dene poetics (cf. Kari 2010). The phenomena which constitute poetics are language—but are also body-based, contingent upon social realities, and consistent with ecological and often esoteric truths which guide the speech and actions of contemporary Dene people. The poetics of traditional stories perpetuate themselves: you can tell that a story is good when you feel the urge to re-tell it. *How* it is retold requires further research.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of François Mandeville's story cycle and chart of animals included in cycle

Summary of Mandeville's Story Cycle

The sixteen stories in Mandeville's cycle alternate between what modern Euro-American readers might term mythic time and historical time. Stories one and two concern the discovery first of copper and then of iron, and are myths of the origin of metallurgy. Third in the cycle comes a story about Raven Head, a powerful Dene-Sułiné man who can run and fight faster than anyone else, and his war with Dogrib people, also called Ṯchq̱ Dene, as well as conflict with his own social group. Raven Head's story is divided into three parts. The first part is about Raven Head's clashes with Ṯchq̱ Dene but also with his own sister. The second part of story three is about the escalation of war with Ṯchq̱ Dene, wherein Raven Head's family is killed, with the exception of his brother. At the end of this second part of Raven Head's story, he and his brother canoe north to a caribou crossing on the shores of a large lake and find their family alive again in a kind of afterlife; Mandeville concludes this story by stating that, "If people have done no wrong, when they die / they go to that place where Raven Head / and his younger brother canoed. / This is what they say" (*This* 61). In the third part of the story about Raven Head, his people go to war against Ṯchq̱ Dene without him, and they do not return to their afterlife. The characters in Raven Head's story therefore move into and out of mythic time, and his story seems to me melancholic in tone: the loss in part two of the story that is consoled by reunion in the afterlife again becomes loss in part three: Raven Head's people die twice.

The fourth story in the cycle is about two people who choose to live with caribou, and is mythic. Then comes a fifth story about an ugly boy called Scabby who comes into power while maintaining his humility. Stories six and seven both concern the exploits of Old Axe, a man who

“had no special powers, / but . . . was clever” (93). Using emotional and visual delusions and illusions, he conquers certain groups of Ṯcẖ Dene people. In this story, historical time prevails as it chronicles the recurring conflicts between Dene groups. Story eight returns to mythtime and concerns mythic transformation: a Cannibal is killed many times, but does not disappear, becoming, instead, a vast cloud of mosquitoes.

Ninth in the cycle is the story of a man who learns to communicate and hunt with a bear; after they hibernate together for the winter, the bear teaches the man the right way to kill bears with respect. Contrasting with the mythic ninth story, the tenth story is of two Métis men, one of whom is Mandeville himself. The other is a powerful man called Beaulieu, who infiltrates Ṯcẖ Dene communities and exerts his powers sexually. Eleventh comes a story that, like the third and ninth stories, moves between mythic and historical time. It is about a man who is also a wolf; he alternates his hunting of caribou with moose (the two large game animals of, respectively, the northern forests and the barren lands) before becoming completely human.

Story twelve is about a powerful gambler who cheats, and in doing so, loses his power and dies. The two following stories concern relations between Ṯcẖ Dene and Yellowknife Dene, and again turn upon the waning of powers and death: in the thirteenth and fourteenth stories, a powerful man dies “In the spring when the leaves are grown to a good size” (184). As I noted above, the spring is a significant time for finding power. Perhaps, then, these stories are not entirely about loss, since the powerful man who dies goes, like the Copper Woman in the first story, earthwards.

In the last two stories a “Wise Man” uses his tracking abilities to trick his enemies onto the surface of ice, where they fall through the ice and die in the cold water. In temporal terms, stories fifteen and sixteen are historical in subject matter—they are about warring peoples and an

individual who uses practical knowledge of the environment to survive. The enemies of the Wise Man sink down under the surface of the ice and perish.

Table of Animals Included in Cycle

Table A.1: Animals Included in Mandeville's Story Cycle

Animal	Story	Context	Summary	Commentary per story
caribou	1	guides through ocean (12-25)	Guides	1: guide, trail, meat, transformation
	1	trail through muskeg (22-26)	guides (trail)	
	1	food (25-27)	Meat	
	1	meat looks like copper (26, 28-29)	meat, transformation	
	2	trail as clue to food (32)	trail (meat)	2: trail, meat
	2	food (33)	Meat	
	3.1	no food (43)	meat (lack of meat)	3: lack of meat in before-life; plenitude in after-life
	3.2	Raven Head's and his brother's dead relatives spear caribou "up north / at a caribou crossing" (60)	meat (heaven)	
	3.2	Raven Head and his brother canoe to "the lake with the caribou crossing" to be with their dead relatives, including their mother and father (60); "If people have done no wrong, when they die / they go to that place where Raven Head / and his brother canoed" (61)	trail (heaven)	
	4 (told by Baptiste Forcier; see note Mandeville, <i>This</i> 74)	His Grandmother Raised Him lives with caribou upon being displeased with his people and brings back their tongues for his grandmother (73)	meat (tongue, penetration)	4: tongues (penetration), sharing and cohabitation

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	4	the tongues removed, the caribou all die and the grandmother butchers them and dries the meat (74)	meat (tongue, penetration)	
	4	His Grandmother Raised Him and the grandmother take the meat to his uncles, whom he prefers, and they live well off the meat (74)	meat (sharing, cohabitation)	
	4	since then, His Grandmother Raised Him led the people and they camped with the caribou: "since that time the caribou have lived together with people" (74)	meat (migration, cohabitation)	
	6	Old Axe guides his relatives to invade the Dogribs by suggesting there are lots of caribou and fish in their area (101)	meat (potential cohabitation)	6: motivation for migration into others' territory
	7	Old Axe guides his relatives to invade the Dogribs by suggesting there is a caribou crossing on a large lake and fish in their area (106)	trail (meat, potential cohabitation)	7: motivation for war-making in others' territory
	8	the Cannibal captures a man while hunting in an invisible snare (? 117); the Cannibal's children call the man "his [the Cannibal's] caribou" who is "coming back to life" and escaping (119)	meat (but it is a human who is captured by the Cannibal)	8: a man becomes a caribou becomes a dwarfed quarry for the Cannibal
	10	two Métis, Beaulieu and Mandeville, pretend to have gotten lost hunting caribou since they could not find any tracks where they came from and infiltrate a camp (140)	trail (false)	10: trails and others' territory

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	the old woman/wolf suggests they go up north to look for caribou (158)	meat (hunting of wolves)	11: motivation for wolf (and wolf-human) migration; quarry that must be pursued, eaten, sung for, and cached in a good way
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings how to hunt caribou (158-60)	meat (hunting practices)	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings to eat only half the caribou because they were so hungry (161)	meat (caching)	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings to cache (pile up and bury in snow) the caribou bones in case some other people who are hungry come across it (161)	meat (caching)	
	11	together, the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings teach the four pups to hunt caribou during the winter (169)	meat (hunting practices)	
Raven Head	3.1	tail made of snow (40)--superior fighter	trickster ahead on trail (tail visible)	3.1: the tail of the trickster warrior who goes ahead on the trail
	3.1	tail made of snow (48)--vengeful of gender violations	trickster ahead on trail (tail visible)	
weasel	3.1	weasel tracks where Raven Head has been (44)	these tracks appear and disappear without logical extensions between them	3.1: Raven Head may be a weasel trickster
bear	3.1	trails confusing to Raven Head's people (44-45)	trail (trickery)	3.1: intimidating quarry
	3.1	looks alive but it's dead (45)	fear	
	3.1	food, especially grease (46)	meat	
	6	Old Axe says he sees a bear and pounds on the snares suspending his friends over the eagle's nest to simulate its presence (97-98)	trail (trickery)	6: intimidating potential attacker

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	7	Old Axe screams “like s crazy bear” to trick Dogribs into going out in sabotaged canoes and drowning (115)	fear (trickery)	7: intimidating “berserker” trickster behaviour
	9	a man cannot move forward carrying wood through a forest; the branches seem to tug him backwards; he senses it’s a bear, and a bear appears and confirms this in human language (125)	snarer (but it is of a human)	9: guide to fish and berries; den-mate; teacher of human about how to hunt, butcher, and eat himself in a good way; self-sacrificial
	9	the bear tells the man to listen; they hear rapids; the bear promises not to kill the man and suggests they go fish there (126)	guide	
	9	the bear suggests they eat berries first so they do until autumn comes (127)	guide	
	9	the bear and man eat suckerfish, and then the bear suggests they build a winter house (127)	guide and coinhabitant	
	9	the bear happens upon an old bear den and selects it for their winter house (128)	coinhabitant	
	9	the bear and man hibernate together; three times the bear stirs and three times the man puts a suckerfish tail in his palm (the bear’s or man’s palm?) (128)	coinhabitant	
	9	another man discovers the den; the bear suggests the man make a human handprint in the snow to show the hunters he’s human and proposes to sacrifice himself (129)	sacrifice	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	9	the bear teaches the man how to hunt and butcher himself and all bears with respect--not to place his head on the ground, not to cut his penis with a knife, not laugh at bears (130)	sacrifice and moral guide	
	9	the man relays the bear's teachings to the hunters concerning how to butcher and eat the bear (131)	meat and sacrifice	
	9	a man hibernates with a bear and thus humans learned "what bears do not like" (132)	meat and guide	
raven	3.2	raven skin blanket covers Raven Head while he lies between maggoty parents (52-53)	feather and skin blanket conserves life in death	3.2: iridescent surface (blanket) for trickster to manage threat of contingent death
	3.2	raven skin blanket tricks enemies into seeing him as a vulnerable, cannibalistic child (54-56)	feather and skin blanket deceives enemies by appearing vulnerable	
maggot	3.2	eat Raven Head's parents (52)	sign of rotting corpse	3.2: uneaten bodies
	3.2	Raven Head washes off their excrement in a lake (57, 58)	sign of rotting corpse	
	3.2	crawl over Raven Head's raven skin blanket (52)	sign of rotting corpse	
wolverine	3.2	enemies look like wolverines and threaten Raven Head's brother, who yells at Raven Head to rouse him from lying between their dead parents (53)	fear of attack	3.2: intimidating "berserker" enemies
	6	Old Axe shouts that a wolverine is coming to rouse his enemies, the Dogribs, and then pulls out a shield, bow, and arrows fletched with eagle feathers their wise men had died to collect for him; he kills them all (104)	fear of attack	6: intimidating potential attacker

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
puppy	3.3	unwise fighters without Raven Head's protection are "clubbed like puppies" (67)	vulnerable yet in excess	3.3: prolific and defenceless
rabbit	5	grandmother of a scabby young boy named Scabby makes him clothing out of rabbit skin (75)	skin clothing	5: fur-inwards surface (clothing) and snared food for latent shaman or person of skill (affinity in donning skins?)
	5	an old wise man notices the foot of one child has rabbit hair on it; "He'd seen that once / when a boy stepped down on some wood. / The way he stepped wasn't much / like the way the other children stepped" (79)	sign of Scabby (because of skin clothing)	
	5	old wise man makes rabbit snares from sinew for Scabby to set despite his debilitating scabs (82-83, 84-85)	snare game	
	5	Scabby asks his grandmother to carry him "to where the trail enters the woods" to set the rabbit snares (83)	snare game	
	5	the old wise man has to spend two days walking all around to collect all the rabbits in the snares Scabby set (85)	snare game, meat	
hawk	5	the old wise man's son-in-law, Thunder Maker, notices someone his cheating with his wife; he "brought a hawk to life" and demanded all the men and boys visit him (80)	revenant	5: revenant; perceptive of abnormal beings-- and of someone affiliated with rabbits (prey)
	5	hawk ruffles its feathers upon seeing Scabby; Scabby "motioned down with his hand / for it to calm down" and it stills (81)	wildness tamed by Scabby	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
fish	5	old wise man asks Scabby to set his fishnets and Scabby collects one fish (86)	to be netted	5, 6, 7, 13: stationary and therefore territorial food supply; involves net baskets or traps made of willow that must remain wet
	6	Old Axe guides his relatives to invade the Dogribs by suggesting there are lots of caribou and fish in their area (101)	food (stationary, territorial)	
	7	Old Axe guides his relatives to invade the Dogribs by suggesting there is a caribou crossing on a large lake and fish in their area (106)	food (stationary, territorial)	
	13	the Dogribs abandon their fishing platforms because the Yellowknife light multiple fires in the night; in fleeing downriver, they abandon their territory there (178)	food (stationary, territorial)	
	13	a wise man's people flee from their enemies to a fish lake "where their relatives were staying" (193)	food (stationary, territorial)	
eagle	6	clever Old Axe finds some eagles nesting on some cliffs above rapids in a river (93)	feathers for fletching	6: lure, fletching
	6	he suggests to his Dogrib friends that they need eagle feathers for arrows in case the Yellowknives attack (94)	feathers for fletching	
	6	Old Axe takes two powerful Dogribs to collect eagle feathers (94-95)	feathers for fletching	
	6	Old Axe lowers the two Dogribs into the nest using caribou snares and then sends them to their deaths over the cliff (96-98)	feathers (precarious, trick)	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	6	Old Axe hangs eagle feathers in a birch tree to remember the two Dogribs by (99)	feathers (trickster)	
	6	Old Axe shouts that a wolverine is coming to rouse his enemies, the Dogribs, and then pulls out a shield, bow, and arrows fletched with eagle feathers their wise men had died to collect for him; he kills them all (104)	feathers (trickster)	
mosquito	8	The Cannibal is decapitated; the man burns the skull which was following him; it turns into mosquitoes like a cloud of smoke who bite him (122-23)	revenant, swarm from skull	8: swarm, atomised brain
	8	Mosquitoes were the “stupid” Cannibal’s brain; they were “part of the Cannibal” and that’s why they “like to eat people’s blood” (124)	revenant, swarm from skull (unconscious like stupid Cannibal’s brain)	
mink	10	Beaulieu kills a man by swinging a mink skin at him so that blood gushes from his throat (147)	skin cuts throat (weapon)	10: mink skin sharp enough to slice enemy’s throat
meat	10	the two Métis force people to bring them “meat” (generically, caribou?) from many houses in the camp (144)	supplies and camp violence	10: particular to this story about Beaulieu and Mandeville, two Métis, “meat” is a camp commodity they use to assert control over housing and sexual partners
	10	the two Métis eat up all the meat in a camp they have taken over (153)	supplies and camp violence	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	10	the strong woman's mother accuses the two Métis of making it impossible to find meat, so they stab Beaulieu's wife (the strong woman) multiple times, sever her head, and burn her head and body in a big fire because it keeps moving even after it's been severed (154)	supplies and camp violence	
	11	the wolf pack comes to where people are staying and cannot find meat (172)	supplies and camp violence (wolf raid on human camp)	11: meat is a scarcity prompting wolves to migrate and search a non-wolf species camp
moose	10	the two Métis are very capable, had killed a lot of moose, and had a lot of meat that they brought to a strong woman (152)	high stakes meat	10, 11: high stakes, high yield meat found singly in forest terrain; requires cooperation to hunt and must be shared to consume fully
	10	the two Métis go hunting, kills the strong woman's partner, and Beaulieu "took the woman" (153)	high stakes meat, camp violence	
	10	the two Métis do not replace with moose the meat they have eaten up in the camp they have taken over (153)	high stakes meat, camp violence	
	11	finding no caribou in the barren ground, the old woman/wolf guides Spread Wings to the woods to look for woods caribou or moose (162)	high stakes meat, scarcity	
	11	in the woods the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings find moose tracks; "The old woman said, / 'Grandson, / this is meat'" (162)	tracks are meat	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	Spread Wings is weak from hunger but he manages to catch a moose by the leg tendon; the old woman/wolf comes in to help finish killing the moose (163-64)	high stakes meat, hunting, cooperation	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings because they are so hungry to first drink moose blood, second eat meat (muscle), third eat fat, fourth sing/howl for others, fifth eat their fill (164-65)	high stakes meat, anatomy of ingestion	
	11	the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings then take the four pups south to teach them to hunt moose (170)	high stakes meat, hunting, cooperation	
	11	the four wolf pups kill a moose by biting its throat, leg tendon, and nose, while one distracts it in front of it (171)	high stakes meat, hunting, cooperation	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches her pups to sing and then eat the moose (171)	meat, song	
wolf	11	a man, Spread Wings, "from time to time became a wolf. This is what they say" (157)	transformation	11: wolves are affiliated with a human of power; transformation and renewal; right hunting practices; song
	11	each time Spread Wings transforms into a wolf, he becomes young again (157)	transformation and renewal	
	11	the fourth time Spread Wings becomes a wolf, he tells a story about this becoming (157)	transformation and renewal with narrative account thereof	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	Spread Wings is old and a wolf speaks to him and tells him if he wants to “live longer on the earth” he must “live with us again” (157)	transformation and renewal, wolf woman as guide	
	11	Spread Wings thinks to himself that he does not want to live with the wolves again, and the wolf warns him that he will die if he does not (157)	transformation and renewal, wolf woman as guide	
	11	Spread Wings wants to live “longer on the earth,” so he consents to “become a wolf again” and he “immediately became a wolf” (157-58)	transformation and desire	
	11	when Spread Wings becomes a wolf, he realises the wolf speaking to him is an old woman (158)	transformation and personhood	
	11	the old woman/wolf suggests they go up north to look for caribou (158)	caribou as hunting meat	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings how to hunt caribou (158-60)	caribou as hunting meat	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings to sing/howl before eating to draw other wolves to the food if they need it (160-61)	hunting and sharing	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings to eat only half the caribou because they were so hungry (161)	hunting and anatomy of ingestion	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings to cache (pile up and bury in snow) the caribou bones in case some other people who are hungry come across it (161)	meat (caching)	
	11	finding no caribou in the barren ground, the old woman/wolf guides Spread Wings to the woods to look for woods caribou or moose (162)	high stakes meat, scarcity	
	11	in the woods the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings find moose tracks; "The old woman said, / 'Grandson, / this is meat'" (162)	tracks are meat	
	11	Spread Wings is weak from hunger but he manages to catch a moose by the leg tendon; the old woman/wolf comes in to help finish killing the moose (163-64)	hunting, cooperation	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches Spread Wings because they are so hungry to first drink moose blood, second eat meat (muscle), third eat fat, fourth sing/howl for others, fifth eat their fill (164-65)	high stakes meat, anatomy of ingestion	
	11	in the spring, the old woman/wolf guides Spread Wings back to the barren land to where wolves mate; she mates but he does not (166-67)	guide, reproduction	
	11	the old woman/wolf guides Spread Wing south again; she finds a den and sends him to hunt (168)	guide, hunting	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	the old woman/wolf introduces four pups to Spread Wings (169)	reproduction	
	11	together, the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings teach the four pups to hunt caribou during the winter (169)	reproduction, hunting	
	11	the old woman/wolf and Spread Wings then take the four pups south to teach them to hunt moose (170)	guide, hunting	
	11	the four wolf pups kill a moose by biting its throat, leg tendon, and nose, while one distracts it in front of it (171)	hunting, cooperation	
	11	the old woman/wolf teaches her pups to sing and then eat the moose (171)	meat, song	
	11	the wolf pack comes to where people are staying and cannot find meat (172)	meat (-)	
	11	because the wolf pack becomes weak from hunger, the old woman/wolf tells Spread Wings to go back to live with his relatives and to always leave a little meat for the wolves when he hunts and kills (172)	guide back to humanity	
	11	the old woman/wolf sings for Spread Wings and then sends him back to his relatives; "they all sang for him, / and then Spread Wings left them" (172)	guide back to humanity with song	
	11	Spread Wings encounters a man along a lake and approaches him on four legs (172)	cross-species encounter under guise of wolf	

Animal (cont'd.)	Story (cont'd.)	Context (cont'd.)	Summary (cont'd.)	Commentary per story (cont'd.)
	11	Spread Wings speaks to the man and tells him he is one of his people; although the man is scared he does not shoot his gun (173)	cross-species encounter; circumspect	
	11	the man is sent by Spread Wings back to his home to get clothing; the man obeys him and says nothing to his co-inhabitants (173)	in need of human clothing; circumspect	
	11	Spread Wings puts on the clothing in the woods and comes back to the man as human (173)	human clothing transforms wolf to human	
	11	together, the human man and Spread Wings as a human go "back to the people" and he tells them "about how he had been a wolf"--"That's how he became a person again" (173)	human narrative transforms wolf to human	

Appendix B

Comparison of the contents of Peter Kalifornsky's three published anthologies

The purpose of this index is to compare Kalifornsky's archives—just the published ones. For brevity, I retain only the English titles. I underline those titles which are published only in one book. There are only four titles total not published in the 1991 collection, which stands as a very complete work with the Dena'ina and English. Work remains to be done on comparing the content and on comparing these to the unpublished archives.

Kalifornsky, Peter. *Kahtnuht'ana Qenaga: The Kenai People's Language*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, 1977.

Part I. The Way Those Dena'inas Were

Where We Found the Whale (Polly Creek) Story

Whale Hunter

My Great-Grandfather

Old Dena'ina Beliefs

Names

How the Dena'ina Supported Themselves

How They Lived at Kustatan

Kustatan People

Sealskin Boat

Putting Up Fish

Making Snowshoes

Moose Hunting

Clams

How They Trained Dogs

Steambath and Plant Medicine

They Will All Go

My Friend and I Went Hunting

Part II. Stories

The Story of Gujun

The Little Old Lady and the Brown Bear

A Lesson

Porcupine and Beaver Story

Raven and Camprobber

'Stomach' and 'Legs Spear-like'

Baqtlaghaq the Warrior

Three Men in Search of Truth

The First Dena'ina Lawmaker

'The Big Eater'

Tanaina Weather Report

Dog Story

Part III. Prayers and Songs

The Lord's Prayer

Orthodox Prayer

Potlatch Song of a Lonely Man

Part IV. Dena'ina Language Patterns

K' Sound

H Sound

Calling

Hear

Work

Work for You, Me, Another

Dump and Pour

Pour Into

Packing

Flirting

Part V. Kenai People's Place Names

Kalifornsky, Peter. *K'tl'egh'I Sukdu: Remaining Stories*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native

Language Center, 1984.

About the Old Dena'ina Life

The Dena'ina Clans

Raven Story

Raven and the Half-Human

Imagination

Lynx and Wolverine

Lynx Story

Shame

Supernatural Story I

Supernatural Story II

Supernatural Story III

The Steambath Spirit

The Old Dena'ina Beliefs

Cold Cure

An Old Man's Story

The Potlatch

Potlatch Song of a Lonely Man

How the Land Looks

Kasilof

Disaster Place

The Big Man at Shqit

Bad Clearing

The Russian

My Great-great-grandfather's Story

Nick Sacaloff's Story

How They Boated Around

This Is My Life Story

Where I Trapped

Traveling in California

What I'm Doing

Thought: How It May Be

Dancing

Good Land People

Kalifornsky, Peter. *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu/A Dena'ina Legacy: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky*. Ed. James Kari and Alan Boraas. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, 1991.

Prelude

Polly Creek Story

Education

Chapter 1—Stories of Our Beliefs

The Old Dena'ina Beliefs

About Shamans and the Men With Gashaq

Gashaq and the Man

The Story of the Evil Shaman and Gashaq

A Doctor's Story

The Dreamer and the Doctor

The Mountain People

The Ones Who Skied Down the Mountain

The Young Man Who Pretended to Be a Shaman

Beliefs in Things a Person Can See and in Things a Person Cannot See

More Dena'ina Beliefs

The Steambath Spirit

Supernatural Story I

Supernatural Story II

Supernatural Story III

About a Supernatural Animal

The Gambling Story

Two Gambling Songs

Chapter 2—Animal Stories

Imagination

When the Animals Divided Into Pairs

Raven Story

Raven and the Half-Human

Raven and the Geese

Raven, Camprobber, and Dipper #1

Raven, Camprobber, and Dipper #2

The Rest of the Story

Raven and Camprobber

Porcupine and Beaver

Porcupine and Beaver on the Other Side

Moose and Porcupine

Lynx Story

Lynx and Wolverine

The Boy and the Killer Whale

The Ones Who Turned Into Bears

Dog Story

When the Birds Made Snowshoes

Ptarmigan and Magpie

The Man and the Loon

Golden-Crowned Sparrow

Chapter 3—Lesson Stories

The Mouse Story

The First Dena'ina Lawmaker

Three People in Search of Truth

The Woman Who Was Fasting

Shame

An Old Man's Story

The Boy Who Had No Father

A Lesson

The Boy Who Talked to the Dog

The Boy Whose Words Turned Against Himself

Another Stupid Boy

The Stupid Boy Who Succeeded

The Big Man at Shqit

The Little Old Lady and the Brown Bear

Chapter 4—About the Old Dena'ina Life

About the Old Dena'ina Life

The Dena'ina Clans

The Little Potlatch

How the Dena'ina Supported Themselves

How They Lived at Kustatan

The Spruce-root Fish Snare

Making Snowshoes

Steambath and Plant Medicine

Lowbush Cranberries

A Cold Cure

How They Steamed Wood

How They Trained Dogs

The Sealskin Boat

Two Dena'ina Love Songs

Chapter 5—The Way the People Were

Shihbet' and Beqatl'nałkesa

The One Who Dreamed at Polly Creek

Baqtlaghaq the warrior

The Story of Gujun

My Great-Great-Grandfather's Story

Qadanalchen's Song

About Starvation in My Grandfather's Time

The Russian's Story

About the Kenai Dena'ina, Part 1

About the Kenai Dena'ina, Part II

Big Eater

Disaster Place

Fern Roots

The Man Who Went Away from the Tribe

The Kustatan People – A Hunting Story

Nick Sacaloff's Story

The Great Horned Owl and Sergey

Names

Introduction to the Kustatan BearThe Kustatan BearThe Other Half of the Kustatan Bear

Chapter 6—Place Names of the Kenai People's Country

Good Land People

Directions and Winds

The Whale Hunter

How They Boated Around

Kasilof

Where Someone Shoved a Person Under Water

Bad Clearing

About Susitnu MountainHow the Country Looks

Where I Trapped

Dena'ina Place Names on the Kenai Peninsula

Chapter 7—My Life Story and Recent Events

This is My Life Story

Putting Up Fish

Beaver Trapping

Beluga Hunting

Moose Hunting

My Friend and I Went Hunting

George and I

The 1972 Potlatch

1974 Wildwood Transfer Ceremony

Clams

Letter to Jim Kari

Remarks at Captain Cook Commemorative Lecture Series

Traveling to California

The 1979 Potlatch

What I'm Doing – 1984

Chapter 8—Kenai People's Language patterns

Translations—

The Lord's Prayer (Literal Translation)

An Orthodox Hymn

Prayer for the Dead

A Dena'ina Weather Report

Alaska's Flag

Pledge of Allegiance

Holiday Months and Holidays

Neologisms—

Wildwood Village

Words for Jobs

Engines

Chiefs

Language Lessons, Songs, and Poems—

K' Sound

H Sound

G and GG Sounds

Calling

Hear

Work

Packing

Work for You, Me, Another

Dump and Pour

Pour Into

Ch'k'eljeshi, Dancing

Flirting

You Came to Me

I Wonder

This One is Your Doctor

Thought: How It May Be

The Work of the Mind

He Said

They Will All Go

Potlatch Song of a Lonely Man (all three books)

Appendix C

Names, family relationships, and contexts for contributors to *Wolverine Myths and Visions* and full list of linguistic examples for soundscape

Names, family relationships, and contexts for contributors to *Wolverine Myths and Visions*

In meeting with Patrick Moore, I asked about the names of some of the contributors to the collection. He kindly provided these names along with some information about their families.

I list the English titles only for brevity.

Table C.1: Names of Storytellers in *Wolverine Myths and Visions*

Chapter 1: “Two Sisters”—told by Zamai (Jean-Marie) Talley, father of Elisse Ahnassay; told at school
2: “Wolf and Wolverine’s Revenge”—told by Mitá (Willie) Ahnassay; told at school
3: “Wolverine Steals a Child”—told by Ketlimo (Elisse) Ahnassay; told at her home
4: “The Children Raised on Fat”—told by Logatá (Willie) Denechoan; told at school
5: “Wolverine, Giant Skunk, and Mountain Lion”—told by Elihen (Harry) Dahdona; possibly at home
6: “The Man Who Sought a Song”—told by Ketlimo (Elisse) Ahnassay; at home
7: “Wolverine is Outsmarted”—told by Ehtsée Alexis Sen’antha; possibly at home
8: “Wolverine Steals a Wife”—told by Ehtsée Alexis Sen’antha; possibly at home
9: “The Young Man Who Sought a Wife”—Elihen (Harry) Dahdona; possibly at home
10: “The Young Man Who Received a Vision in Old Age”—Ehtsée Alexis Sen’antha

Table C.1: Names of Storytellers in <i>Wolverine Myths and Visions</i> (cont'd.)
11: “Nógha’s Song”—Ketlimo (Elisse) Ahnassay; at home
12: “Nógha’s Teachings”—Ketlimo (Elisse) Ahnassay; at home
13: “Nógha’s Prophecies”—Ehtsée Alexis Sen’antha; at the Fourth International Native Conference, organized by Harold Cardinal, then band manager, attended by people from many places, including Guatemala, and held in Assumption, AB; translated into English and Cree on the occasion
14: “The Dene Prophets”—Louison Ahkimnatchie; at home
15: “The Death of Nógha”—Ketlimo (Elisse) Ahnassay; at home

Ketlimo was married to Kelitá (Manny) Ahnassay, and her brother-in-law was Willie Ahnassay.

Ketlimo and Kellita had Ketli (Johnny) Ahnassay, John, Peter, Solomon/Selmo, Rosalie, and Charlie, who married Philomene.

Full list of linguistic examples for soundscape in “The Man Who Sought a Song”

1) Background noise and audience responses in the audio recording of the story (what are the external boundaries of the story soundscape)

In this section, I identify some of the performance context as it relates to audience responses and also ambient noise. The soundscape must be inclusive of every sonic detail, even if only occasionally does this kind of noise move from interfering with aural reception to contributing to the emergent narrative meaning of the soundscape. Below, I identify a few moments that seem to do just this.

The story is told by an elder in her 70s or 80s, Elisse Ahnassay, in her home. People are coming and going, but her main interlocutors remain very focused, and even when there are

interruptions and asides, Ahnassay herself remains very focused, picking up her story using a few echoing techniques that I identify below.

The story opens with an address to one of perhaps three male adult interlocutors—Ahnassay says, in the interlinear translation, “like you, song going for” (Moore and Wheelock 155) and “his beard it became black big, (like you that big)” (155). There is also a young child or baby cooing and coughing throughout the story—Sabrina, Ahnassay’s great-granddaughter, whom she was, at that time, raising alone (her husband has passed away from a heart attack). The interlocutors could have been George, Peter, Clifford, and/or Solomon Ahnassay. Patrick Moore was present. All the audience members were fluent in Dene Dháh. This means that the complexities of her performance aesthetics were meant for a knowledgeable audience with at least some shared assumptions about the nature of narrative and a nuanced sensitivity to expressive speech. Her audience, by the standards of myself and of many, was an immersed, avant-garde one.

Elisse Ahnassay told this and most of the other stories she shared all in one sitting per story. This is not the only story about Wolverine that she shares. Moore and George Ahnassay were recording stories from elders to create a book. “The Man Who Sought a Song” was transcribed and translated by community speakers Lorny Metchooyeah and George Ahnassay, along with Moore. As thanks, Moore would take Elisse Ahnassay raspberry picking, set her fish traps, or cut firewood for her. He lived in Dene-Tha territory from 1980-83, teaching school, and had visited in 1976 and 1978 before that.

The sound archive was initially created using magnetic tape and then digitized to compact discs, so there is a constant gentle background hiss. “The Man Who Sought a Song”

recording opens with a pause,¹⁵² and Ahnassay moves straight into the story. Throughout, Ahnassay's listeners occasionally respond with quiet *uh-huhs* and similar sounds of agreement or focus.

Some of the interesting moments in the first part of the story that seem to heighten narrative meaning include the following:

-Sabrina cries at 6.56-7.11, p. 156 of Moore and Wheelock, at the point when Ahnassay says, “mo ké ch'iláa,” “Mother's moccasins ragged,” a contingent but sonically ironic juxtaposition with the larger narrative moment in which the lost hunter regresses back to his childhood in preparation for seeking a song; Ahnassay pauses for a long moment here

-at 8.06-8.40, p. 157,¹⁵³ the repetition of the demonstrative *i, that*, in the phrase “I t'áh i i sóon” (“That because-of that that then he-sucked again”) and of the idea of the lost hunter sucking at his mother's breast (“I t'áh i i sóon na'inhlúnh,” and “I t'áh éhsán, i naint'ó,” “That because-of then, that sucking-again”) is the result of an aside Ahnassay's grand-daughter who enters into the room, Anna or Ann-Marie, and thus is an example of parallelism not for emphasis, or at least not primarily, but as a performance-memory aid to the orator—but these kinds of mnemonic parallelism of course also occur because an important content point is being made

-at 10.01-10.11, p. 158, after “‘Jon, yudi!’ yéhdi, uhshiné yéhdi,” “‘Here, up-here!’ it-said-to-him, stump it-said” at “Nía'íjá,” “He got up,” there is an interjection that is not included in the

¹⁵² CD 45 (Moore 2012), track 2, minute 5.47—which is tape 048, “Elisse Ahnassay, June 1981, Wolverine Stories,” side a.

¹⁵³ N.B.: There is an ellipsis at p. 157, but no pause in oration in the audio recording.

transcribed text from another of the male interlocutors, perhaps a different one than the man with the big black beard, because this speaker's voice is old; this speaker glosses the word *uhshiné* for one of the other interlocutors, saying,

“Chegua, ‘wait’, *uhshiné* means uh, hunt [?],” to which another of the interlocutors says,

“uh, stump,” to which another of the interlocutors says,

“*uhshiné*?” to which the first interlocutor responds,

“yeah”—

and Ahnassay resumes at “I t’áh éhsán i, yéh ndáitthe’e úh sóon ndahtsodadi úh éhsán,” “That because-of then that, there he-fell and then he-came-to [woke] and then”—so she creates another mnemonic parallelism in which the lost hunter falls into a faint upon being addressed by a stump and then wakes up believing that he has found his vision; most interestingly, the deictic causative “I t’áh,” “That because-of,” refers not to the immediately preceding action in the transcription, getting up, or to a vague, discursively unskilled recapitulation of the whole scene but to the interjections about the special word for “stump,” *uhshiné*: it is because of the stump that the lost hunter faints, and he subsequently believes that he has found his medicine power (in this he is terribly mistaken)

-at 13.48, pp. 161-62, there is a dog whining and yipping in the background, just when the fox woman sits beside the lost hunter and just before she has to leave him; this is another example of sonic contingency, but the vocalic canine effect just at this point in the story, like Sabrina crying, adds to the emotional texture of the story

-at 14.27, p. 162, a man interjects unintelligibly just after “Wonlin ts’eláa ehsíin ndebé t’á ndets’in níde’inh i anet’e,” “Something strange that-is your-stomach in-it to-you toward-you that you-are”—this again is an example of sonic contingency, where the unintelligible moment coincides with Wolverine’s circumlocution concerning the pollution inside the lost and dead hunter, pollution that is fox urine marking the meat of the dead hunter’s body in a way that competes with Wolverine’s impending claim on the human man; but the interjection is likely one of emotion, at this intense point in the story

-at 15.14, p. 163, just after “I Ts’iuné,” “That Wolf,” a man interjects with a question about who is present, and orator replies “aan, aan,” which means something like “yes, yes,” and which is not included in the transcription, and then, as is written, adds “Nóghe úh Ts’uné,” “Wolverine and Wolf,” as if to clarify a constant associative relation between the wolverine and wolf species that many listeners would already have understood

Following these moments of the performance soundscape comes an extremely significant moment, Wolverine breathing on the lost hunter, that I discuss below.

To summarize my observations in this section, I note that the soundscape includes moments of ambient, or contingent, noises that somehow, all the same, contribute to the emotional, expressive impacts of the utterances with which these noises overlap. At this time, I cannot explain how this uncanny effect works or why.

Where the performance soundscape includes moments of audience response, the expressive effect is more explicable: Ahnassay has the ability to incorporate these extempore responses into her sequencing of ancient events. In addition to this powerful aesthetic practice of

entextualizing others' voices into her ongoing narrative “text,” I also show that Ahnassay is using parallelism not just to “work out,” as it were, how the story is supposed to go, but as a kind of mnemonic parallelism: this seems to me to be a technique of oral performance that, like oral-formulaic theory, might help to explain how she is able to render such complex events with such composure and power despite all kinds of interruptions.

In the next section, I analyze an example of not just audience soundscaping wherein mnemonic parallelism is deployed, but where synthetic or even chiasmic parallelism¹⁵⁴ is used to emphasize the importance of breath, reference, and animate agency to the construction of the soundscape.

2) Breath as verbalized in the story (what are the external boundaries of the internal boundaries of voice)

This section concerns just one crucial moment in the story as it pertains to the most crucial element in the soundscape. Breath.

Just after “ndadeyoł,” “he-blew-on,” or, more literally, “on-he-blew,” where nda- is the postposition “ahead, future” (Rice, *Grammar* 319)—which implies a form of renewed futurity for the lost hunter, his soundscape revitalized by Wolverine’s quiet breath as well as his audible song.

When Wolverine blows on the lost hunter’s wounds in a magical way, one of the male interlocutors says, “yédeyoł!” which is not included in the transcription, and which I believe means something like either “him[-on]-he-blew” or “he breathed [on] him” or simply—since there is no independent oblique object referring to the one being breathed on to indicate otherwise—“he breathed him” (15.29, Moore and Wheelock 163).

¹⁵⁴ Chiasmic parallelism is a form of poetic repetition in which meaning is echoed but inverted.

I base these latter two possibilities on my analysis of the interlocutor’s verb as: fourth-person direct-object *ye-* (or rather *yé-* with what sounds to me like a high tone that might instead be the result of emotional intonation, hence my inclusion of a rhetorical exclamation mark at the end of the verb phrase) + third-person subject *0* + verb stem *-yol*, “to blow, to breathe.”¹⁵⁵

Given that the agent and patient¹⁵⁶ are ambiguous except through context, I think this moment is an example of synthetic or even chiasmic rather than merely synonymous poetic parallelism. Actually, I think this is an example of *polyphonic* chiasmic parallelism, co-constructed, as it is, between speaker and listener. Further, the construction “*yédeyol*” actually contains three potential polyphonic chiasmic parallels to “*ndadeyol*” in that “*yédeyol*” can mean, in context, that: Wolverine breathed on the lost hunter, that the lost hunter breathed on Wolverine, or that Wolverine and Wolf both breathed on the lost hunter.

The orator then responds, as is written, “*úh, gáa, i ju ayínlá úh sóon,*” “and yes, that also he-did and then”—and here again, as noted above, this is not just a recapitulation of the preceding action but a direct response to the interlocutor, thus:

“*ndadeyol,*”

[“him-on-blew”]

“—*yédeyol!*”

[“he breathed [on] him” or

“they breathed [on] him”]

“*úh, gáa, i ju ayínlá*”

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Navajo *yishshizh*, “I breathe in the spirit of it,” *bizhí---*, “to inhale its spirit, to breathe in its inner being or soul (lit. to breathe in its voice, to inhale its voice” and the related nominal form *bizhí*, “its voice, inner spirit, soul” (“*Yishshiz*” in Young and Morgan 1987).

¹⁵⁶ Agent and patient refer to the roles of initiator and undergoer of verbal constructions. Unlike subject and object, which are determined syntactically and are restricted in meaning to the phrase in which they are embedded, agent and patient are determined semantically, and so they can include noun phrases or other entities whose actions must be inferred through context.

["and yes, that also he-did" or
 "and yes, that also they-did"]

I think an interpretation something like "the lost hunter breathed on Wolverine is a distinctly possible polysemic implication given Ahnassay's word choice of "ju," "also," as if to indicate an action further to the action "ndadeyoł."

So then I might render this exchange as:

"He blew on him."

"—He breathed on Him.

"And yes, that also he did."

—A significant deictic ambiguity of person given the intimate intermingling of song, tongue, urine, saliva, breath, voice, and words—an *origo*¹⁵⁷ composed of a double intersubjectivity, that of the characters in the story and of the interlocutors telling the story. Thus one sees that the soundscape is not a system, per se, so much as a mode of relations that suffuses speech, even noise, with the quality of song, however unintentional the context of performance (there is nothing outside the text becomes there is nothing only outside or only inside the text).

I find this example of breath-in-voice (more-than-breath or more-than-voice?) particularly moving. This moment in the story is, for me, its heart. The tone of voice with which the man who echoes Ahnassay is serious and quiet.

In the next section, I consider further the emotional voicing of the orator.

3) Stammering, repetition, and onomatopoeia (why does the soundscape intensify at certain points in the narrative)

¹⁵⁷ I.e., the pragmatic deictic center.

Starting with a more autonomic example of stammering, there is the moment at 8.06-8.40, “i i sóon” (of Moore and Wheelock 157) where Ahnassay speaks to someone who is not part of the audience; as I note above, Ahnassay uses mnemonic parallelism to reintegrate her words into her narrative. Here the narrative concerns serious transformations in the lost hunter’s status as an adult. He first lies down on his mother’s moccasins, where he is born (156). This might be a form of humiliation, violation of a taboo similar to touching a woman’s belt (with its association with menses and strictures on hunting); or it might evoke the moment when the amniotic sac ruptures and soaks one’s feet and the ground.

The lost hunter then sucks on his mother’s breasts again as he did as an infant. This might be congruent with shamanic practices of sucking to extract a life essence.¹⁵⁸ It proves efficacious, for it turns his black beard lighter, even blonde, and therefore presumably he has become less mature: “mbedonhghácho díjadhi éhsán (ndéét’e),” “his-big-beard blond [light] then (like-you)” (157).¹⁵⁹ It is after this that Ahnassay stammers, as she relates how the lost hunters sucks again, “i i sóon na’inhluh,” “he-sucked-again,” or more literally “that that then he-sucked again”

¹⁵⁸ Cf. a Dane-zaa/Beaver vision-quest story, which comes from the border between north-eastern British Columbia and north-western Alberta, little to the west of Dene-Tha territory. The story is about an animal guide sucking blood from the forehead of a dreaming hunter to open a way up into the earth for the hunter to find the source of moose. The source of moose is a giant-sized Moose who lives under the earth (as with all animal sources for all the animals). Charlie Yahey, one of the last Dane-zaa Dreamers, says of moose salt licks:

Under the springs there is a great big moose, a giant moose. That is why all the moose on this world stay near those places. Before Usakindji [Saya, the cultural hero] made everything right on this world there were giant moose on this world too, but he sent them down to the world beneath this one. Where he sent them down there are now springs coming up from that world still. The moose like it there because they know the giant moose are underneath. There is just like a house under there. (Ridington, *Swan* 61)

In this vision-quest story, told by Mary Pouce-Coupe, sucking blood is cognate with naturally occurring salt licks, where moose congregate such that moose trails converge and form a circle, as the animals lick the salt, thus marking points of their emergence from under the earth.

In the story, a young man converses with a more-than-human person, a big, fat man who is probably a Moose in spirit form, to gain power; then,

The big fat man leaned down
And put his lips to the man’s forehead.

He sucked and drew out blood. (Ridington, *When* 236)

After this exchange, the big fat man leads the young man through a salt lick and under the earth to where giant animals dwell (155).

¹⁵⁹ In reference to another of the interlocutors in the audience.

(157). Contingently or not, this stammer is phonetically mimetic of the repetition at the level of mnemonic parallelism and of the demi-reincarnational act of regressing to one's childhood state.

At 9.40, “*eyi*” (158) Ahnassay pauses and stammers; *eyi* is repeated in the oral but not written version of the story. *Eyi* or ‘*eyi* is a deictic distal demonstrative; as an independent deictic pronoun used for contrastive focus, ‘*eyi* “is used to refer to nonhumans” (Rice, *Grammar* 253), emphasizing that the stump is animate but not necessarily a person. Ahnassay's stammer here seems to be less autonomic and more meditative.

At 10.30, “Mbetá sóon,” “His-father then” (Moore and Wheelock 159) in print is more like “Mbe-mbetá” in the audio version, meaning something more like “His-his father.” In this moment in the story, Ahnassay moves from representing the thoughts of the lost hunter in the form of oratorical direct quotation to representing the father's words in the form of dialogical direct quotation, i.e., a double quotation where Ahnassay quotes the lost hunter quoting his father. Rendering dialogue is a difficult performance act in any language, and in Dene Dháh, construal of perspective in represented speech is governed by the relationship between the subjects and objects of the matrix and embedded verbs, with the matrix or governing verb as the head of the construction but coming at the end of the sentence (see below for more information on this feature of the soundscape). The point here is that, while the English translation skips this phrase, the phrase comes before, not after, the represented speech of the lost hunter's father and may be indicative, in a meta-linguistic expressive way, of the difficulty surrounding the embedding of speech and thought clauses. Intersubjectivity is a struggle.

Then the crucible of the story occurs when the fox people say “Táuts'edóshul édé,” “Cut him open then” (12.29, 160). The phrase is not repeated in the written text, but it is repeated in Ahnassay's oration. Ahnassay says it twice with nearly the same cadence and volume, very

measured and quiet. The emotional, aural effect is understated—this instance of “stammering” (where, after all, is the line between the repetition of emotion and of intention?) is akin to that of the figurative intensification of meaning through litotes. Deep feeling does not have to be loud. (And sometimes it does.)

Similarly to the example of phrase-level stammering in the preceding paragraph, but included in the written text, at 12.48, Ahnassay repeats “ndáts’edeh,” “[inside him/his stomach] him they went [urinated]” (161). This, too, is a crucial moment—the fox people pollute the lost hunter, they mark his meat in a way that challenges Wolverine’s habit of marking meat with urine, and in a very literal, realistic sense, they must hurt the lost hunter since acid in an open wound must burn. At the same time, uric acid is a disinfectant and a preservative—so to extend this rather earthy consideration of the physical implications of this narrative moment, the foxes’ urine would extend the agonizing afterlife in this life of the lost hunter’s body as it lies eviscerated on the trail. Thus “ndáts’edeh, ndáts’edeh,” “they went, they went” extends the moment of this polluting act within the soundscape beyond the temporal bounds of the verb-phrase’s referential function to suggest expressively either the difficulty of accepting the fox people’s act or to emphasize the fact that the fox people urinated copiously on the lost hunter.

The fox woman has many focal moments later in the story, but her presence is important in the first part, too. Around 13.28, Ahnassay pauses, clears her throat, and repeats herself at “Úh k’ihdue ju. K’ihdue ju onlá,” “And jacket too. Jacket also she-made” (161) referring to the clothing that the fox woman makes for the lost and dead hunter and leaves with him when her people move camp. Here it seems to me that an important point about women’s work is being made, for this phrase belongs to a longer list of kinds of clothing that the fox woman makes for the lost hunter. There is also the more metaphysical implication of the transformative work that

animal skins do. The clothing would have been made from animal skins, and donning different skins shifts the origo epistemologically and therefore ontologically in many Indigenous narratives concerning animals (Viveiros de Castro 1998). In this instance, then, the struggle that is discursive intersubjectivity for a cross-species multiperspectivism is a sonic negotiation for an embodied materiality: in other words, Ahnassay labors over an important narrative moment concerning transformative labor. There is also the fact that a woman who makes clothing for man sets her mark on him through her labor and through her distinctive way of embroidering or beading the clothing.

At 14.16, we find the first of two instances of onomatopoeia in this story: Wolverine's footsteps sound as he approaches the lost and dead hunter: "du du du du," a "[pitter patter sound]" (162). Keep in mind that there is snow muffling everything! So Wolverine would be moving quickly, given the short vowel length of the *-u*, and yet tremendously heavily, with a tread that sounds even in snow. That is power.

In between the two onomatopoeic moments, which occur at the most intense moment in the story, Wolverine runs around the lost and dead hunter and sings. Ahnassay repeats this moment through three parallel phrases: "Ée, yedhondetl'eh edhin," "Hey, he-ran-around-him sounds-like," then "Áán, yedhondetl'eh edhin úh ejin," "Yes, he-ran-around-him sounds-like and while-singing," followed by "úh yedhondetl'eh úh éhsán," "and he-ran-around-him and then." This pattern of echoing parallelism has at its heart "ejin" and is the single most important moment in the story. Yet the song is not included. But I think it is residually manifest in the two most immediately adjacent extra-lexical utterances in the soundscape, "du du du du" and, below, "ghans, ghans."

At 14.49, we find the second of the two instances of onomatopoeia in this story, and the contrast with the thunderous footfalls of Wolverine is immense: Wolverine makes a guttural, nasal, sibilant gnawing noise as He cleans the urine from the heart of the hunter: “ghans, ghans” (163). I cannot think of a more evocative extra-lexical evocation of this abject lingual act. Only a trickster-transformer!

Finally, for the purposes of my analysis, at 15.21, Ahnassay stammers, in the oral but not written record, “ye-yechonth’ené” (163) which would be something like, “his-his-ribs.” In this moment, Wolverine has approached, circled, sung to, licked, and interrogated the lost hunter, asking him, “What will you do now?” In this act of healing, Wolverine puts the lost hunter together again from the inside out—or rather, having restored the innermost workings of the lost hunter, Wolverine now knits back together the constitution of the lost hunter’s intermediary structure, his bones, before, in the following lines, spitting on the lost hunter’s skin, the outermost layer of what makes the hunter alive, before breathing on the lost hunter “in a magical way.”

The question of what makes Wolverine’s breath magical is one that I contemplate further in the next section, immediately below, in the context of cadence—expressive intonation versus lexical tone.

4) Intonation and modulation in dialogue (what is the soundscape within the soundscape like)

The main point that I wish to make in this section is that cadence as intonation is magical when it exceeds lexical function or grammatical mood. Like Dene music, which usually begins with high notes and a high degree of intensity and falls low, Wolverine’s voice does the same. So to speak in a magical way, especially when intonation intensifies rather than cancels out tone, is to speak like music.

Cadence perpetuates in a deeply memorable way the basics of meaning in speech even when speech itself is absent. Speech vocables like *mm-hm* evoke, in English, agreement, while vocables like *mm?* evoke, in English, a lazy or mild interrogative intention. In Dene languages, where there is interaction between tone and intonation, when extralinguistic or pragmatically determined prosodic, i.e., intonational, prominence seems to supersede morphological, i.e., lexical, tone in the surface-forms of the melodic contours of phrases, Gary Holton suggests that “tone and intonation compete with each other for the determination of lexical pitch” (267). In other words, where intonation overwrites lexical tone, it is because cadence is more important to conveying meaning than distinctions minimal phonemic pairs.

While he is interested in asking “can we distinguish lexical tone patterns embedded within an intonational contour” (267), I am interested in the opposite question. Holton comments on the “*recoverability*” of lexical tone that:

If an intonation pattern is viewed as a modification of the underlying lexical tone melody, then we can ask to what extent that tone melody is still detectable in the surface pitch realization. . . . To the extent that recoverability is possible, pragmatic meaning (from intonation) does not obscure lexical meaning (from tone). (267)

It seems to me that the reverse of this can also be true: to the extent that extralinguistic recoverability is possible, lexical meaning (of tone) will not (usually) obscure pragmatic meaning—in this section and some of the ones following, the extralinguistic conditions of intonational “melody” that I identify are moments of intensive expression or “prominence.”

Tuttle defines “prominence” in linguistic-prosodic theory as having a “phonological definition but no single phonetic realization” (“Duration” 319)—in other words, prosodic prominence is a matter of phonological but not morphological variation—of variation in

emotional stance or mood but not of syntactic reference. Variation is an important part of a language-centered approach to the literary study of orature as well as an important part of other disciplinary values such as recognizing linguistic diversity in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Phonological variation permits nuances of meaning in oral discourse where rhetorical punctuation¹⁶⁰ is often used in written discourse.

Further to Tuttle's description of phonological prominence as a loose range of connections between definition and realization, she states that "prominence is what characterizes an element which is foregrounded by some system" and that, citing Daniel Jones, foregrounding can be accomplished through "tamber, length, stress, and (if voiced) intonation of the syllabic sound" (Jones qtd. in Tuttle, "Duration" 320)—in her own words, Tuttle states that the "phonetic realization of prominence is often greater relative 'size': length, loudness, or extremeness in some other articulatory or acoustic measure" (320). This attention to comparative (relative) acoustic performativity is relevant to my interest in the construction of the story soundscape as a pragmatics of song as I describe it above.¹⁶¹

Holton identifies four kinds of sentences where intonation and tone interact: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and content interrogative (e.g., who-, what-, where-, when-, why-, how-type questions); and he suggests that intonation and tone are preserved through two means (pitch distinction on the stem and pre-stem tone-spread constraint) in declarative sentences, and through one mean in the remaining three (273).

¹⁶⁰ Rhetorical punctuation is used non-grammatically to express nuances of tone (in the sense of speaker's intention) in writing. Some examples are question marks at the end of declarative sentences? and emoticons. :) Dell Hymes (1974) might call the oral analogue to rhetorical punctuation the "K" in his mnemonic for analyzing the social dimensions of speech acts: S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G, which stands for setting and scene, participants, ends, acts sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre. The "K-ey" is, naturally, the key . . .

¹⁶¹ See where I outline some key conditions for the realization of animal-human communication. Intonation is one place in a story soundscape where the musicality of speech exceeds the referential function to evoke emotion.

What Holton and Tuttle do I wish to reverse: I wish to note instances where intonation can be recovered, not lexical tone. And in another article by Tuttle, she points out a phenomenon in Alaskan-Dene songs that I have noticed in Ahnassay’s story: dialogue, when intense, will start with high and progress to falling intonation—just as in much traditional Indigenous North-American music. Siri Tuttle states, “Lundström also points, in particular, to a falling contour in Alaskan Athabascan songs, particularly dance songs,” adding, “He notes a tendency for repeated tones at the ends of lines or sections” (“Language” 91). I think this pattern of a falling contour plus end-repetition is enacted in Ahnassay’s story-telling style. In this section, I address cadence; see above for some discussion of repetition as well as “stammering.”

The larger points I wish to make here are that: 1) it is important to identify what kind of sentence it is that seems to contain extra-lexical intonation in order to at least nuance a little the likelihood of intentional expressive variation on the part of the storyteller and 2) given that adept speakers of a Dene language are able to infer lexical tone in all four basic sentence types, it seems to me an acceptable experiment, at least, in a poetics, if not precisely a pragmatics, of a story soundscape to identify places where cadence as sometimes expressed as intonation can contribute to the aesthetic artistry of oral narratives even where these moments of emotion are not preserved in textualized orature.

So then, in the audio recording, there is not much change of cadence in the dialogue between parents and son—for example, at 7.20, “Nintéh,” “Go to sleep” (Moore and Wheelock 156), lexical tone seems to override any kind of expressive intonation. The first distinctive—to me—change in cadence is at 10.43, “Teé, uhshiné ndéehjidi i t’áh kii dukandoteh i t’áh eyi dechin chinah níthindeht’on,” “Father, stump I’m-scared that because-of just how-would-he-sleep that because-of that tree base I-laid-my-head-down” (159), at “Teé,” which is transcribed

with a high tone but which is enunciated with a falling intonation in the audio recording; the father's reply is also expressive rather than lexical, with a falling cadence, at 10.59, "Éé, sechuen," "Hey, my son" (159), when the father rebukes the son for his fear. Intonation seems to contradict orthographic marking of lexical tone again at 11.22, where Ahnassay uses an expressive low-to-high or rising form of intonation at "Éé, ts'enida cho," "Hey, where people passed big/many" (159) which is where the lost hunter meets the "denáa," the "small people" who betray him.

Perhaps most interestingly, although marked with high tone, cadence is much higher than other high-tone-initial phrase contours at 14.22, "Séht'in, ni tl'a, wonlin ts'eláa ehsíin," "Like-me, you well, yes, something filth/contamination that is" (162). And at 15.07, in the phrase "ayínlá úh," "he-made and" (163), emphasis on "úh," when Wolverine makes "edulin," "nothing" to be inside the lost and dead hunter—echoing the moment previously when the lost hunter tells his father that he has found "edulin," "nothing," in the bush—no song at all. The nothingness of the lost hunter's first failed vision quest becomes his very substance, then, as he finally succeeds in his worst moment of failure—a paradox that trickster-transformers excel at. This is an example of how Wolverine begins with high notes and a high degree of intensity and falls low, in "Séht'in," "Like-me."

I also want to note the near-repetition of this moment: Ahnassay says, Séht'in, ni tl'a, wonlin ts'eláa ehsíin," "Like-me, you well, yes, something filth/contamination that is" (162) and then in the next moment, she says, "Séht'e ni tl'a, wonlin ts'eláa éhsán anelehí anet'e," "Like-me you well, something filth/contamination then that-you do-you-are" (162). This is a profound moment in the story not only because it clearly states the embodied similarities between Wolverine and the lost hunter—an overlap crucial to the hunter's subsequent transformation—

but also because it includes expressive variation in the evidential particles “*éhsíin*” and “*éhsán*.” This variation is exactly what I analyze in the next section.

In the next section, I explore some of the expressive implications of cadence in terms of phonology and rhythm, focusing on the habitual punctuation of phrases with evidential particles, and addressing some of the reasons why, in the above sentence, Ahnassay says “*éhsíin*” just in that moment rather than the more usual form *éhsán* and why added emphasis on “*úh*” carries expressive force.

5) Rhythmic repetition of and variation in anaphoric evidential particles (what is the orator’s emotive stance toward her soundscape)

Here I start to move from focusing on the soundscape constituted by the recording into how it is constituted by the text; concomitantly, I extend my analysis to the entire story now that I have established an aural bassline for analyzing key moments in the soundscape. As my close reading progresses below, it becomes clear that key narrative moments are often marked by several different, harmonious features of the soundscape.

Repetitions of evidentials typically formulated as *úh sóon* and *éhsán* and variously glossed as “then,” “and then,” “so,” “thus,” “maybe,” or “it must have been” are so extremely common in the story that they help to instill a rhythmic sense of the soundscape. If cadence perpetuates the basics of meaning in speechless speech, rhythm perpetuates the basics of composition in musicless music; that is, when the memory of the music is gone, the rhythm remains.¹⁶² Thus, in combination with the fact that musical deviations contribute to memorable moments in songs, it seems to me that the prosodic effect of variations in the enunciation and

¹⁶² I am grateful to guitar-teacher Chris Russell for this insight. And actually, it was when I began my analysis of this expression of the story that I realized how much more to it than speech there is. Rhythm, then, is one of the first things to come as well as last to go—“Because we know so much.”

combination of these evidentials helps to mark as memorable the moments where the usual forms differ.

Given the prosodic value of evidentials, at least within Ahnassay's style of performance, I think it is more interesting, in relation to the question of expressive ranges within grammar, to look at where phonological and phrasal difference and narrative events might intersect meaningfully, assuming not potentially different meanings for these evidential particles—i.e., not trying to decide if different combinations of these evidentials imply a greater or lesser epistemological claim made by any given narrative statement—but rather tracing the effect of difference as difference—of places where the soundscape changes in the quality of its truth through phonation, the intonational stances and prosodic shifts of the orator, and connecting these shifts with who and what is happening in those moments.

Phonological variation is a complex question in itself. There must be some “collapsing together [of] a wider range of observed forms” since “abstraction like this is necessary to make sense of the variation” (Milroy and Gordon 137). And given the range of glosses for the evidentials in question here, it is obvious that, as with many speech particles, the exact meanings of their expressive variations are difficult to specify and translate. Unlike English, which is usually written according to rigidly standardized phonemic and orthographic conventions, Dene Dháh, in *Wolverine Myths and Visions*, has been transcribed with a high degree of sensitivity to variation as the level of dialects, individual speakers, and unique moments of enunciation by those speakers.

Yet sociolinguistic theory also specifies that where there is a *continuum* of variation at a phonological level, such a “scale [as from] from A to B carries with it the implication that the two variants function as part of a single system and that the social evaluation of the variation

patterns in the same way” (139). While I cannot determine the larger social meaning of variations in the evidentials I analyze here, I can treat their variation as a continuum with potential for, if not “social evaluation,” at least *narrative evaluation*—by cross-referencing moments of phonological difference and phrasal variation with moments of narrative intensity within the total soundscape of the story.

Phonological variation in evidentials unites the emotion of the orator with the truth-content of the words—in literary terms, one might construe phonological variation in evidentials as the variations in tone that, together, compose the mood of a narrative. Thus phonologically-varied evidentials reference the orator and, in textualized orature, the orator’s performance.

Below, then, I list and comment on the expressive meaning of Ahnassay’s deviations from the usual phonological and phrasal articulations of these evidential particles in order to determine where the memorable nature of rhythm combines with the memorable effect of deviations in cadence:

-p. 156 of Moore and Wheelock—father: “‘Úh dóndih úh sóon aht’e éhsín?’” (“‘And what’s-the-matter-with and then I-am maybe?’”)

This is the father’s response to the lost hunter’s statement, “‘Edulin wónlin ínt’ónh,’ éhdi.” (“‘Nothing exists all,’ he said.”) Given the unsympathetic nature of the father’s response, the variation “éhsín” (from the more usual *éhsán*) has a tight vocalic quality to it, evoking a closed-mouth, teeth-gritted kind of response.

-p. 158—regarding the lost hunter: “I t’áh éhsán i, yéh ndáitth’e úh sóon ndahtsodadi úh éhsán” (“That because-of then that, there he-fell and then he-came-to[woke] and then”)

This density of particles evokes an intense moment in the narrative where stump speaks and the lost hunter faints. Indeed, in this passage, there is a great deal of repetition beyond the evidentials, which the high density of evidentials may be echoing as well as mediation. For example, there is the repetition of:

a) of fainting and breath stopped in “Ndáidlo mbeyí ededéhdhe, kón ts’ín ni’íyah ínyá mbeyí ededéhdhe” (“He-fainted-away his-breath stopped, fire toward he-got-up then his-breath stopped”)—note the sequential nesting of fire by breath (“mbeyí,” “kón,” “mbeyí”) and the way that the lost hunter loses his breath, i.e., faints, foreshadowing, through this echoing emphasis, Wolverine’s gift of breath, when he approaches the center of the circle, the fire, which, in terms of Dene sacred directionality, governs memory, community, and seasonal and reincarnational revitalization through Tea Dances (see Beaudry 83)—while the center of the fire governs eternity; and

b) of falling and of the lost hunter getting up/coming to—“Yéh ndáitth’ed úh sóon” “Nía’íjá,” and “I t’áh éhsán i, yéh ndáitth’e úh sóon ndahtsodadi úh éhsán,” (“There he-fell and then,” “He-got-up,” and “That because-of then that, there he-fell an then he-came-to[woke] and then”), which foreshadows, through this echoing emphasis, the lost hunter’s next fall, from which he cannot revive and rise without help.

-p. 159—the lost hunter’s thoughts as represented speech: “‘Teé kaséhdi úh teeh k’ont’uh ot’uh a’adi mbets’onhtl’ah,’ sóon kudi éhsán” (“‘Father he-said-to-me and carefully like-this that’s-how-it-is that’s what-he-meant I’ll-visit-him,’ then he-thought then”)

In this instance, there is “sóon” without *úh* and nesting a verb of thinking with *éhsán*. I have commented above on the challenge of articulating intersubjectivity; the unusual phrasal nesting here emphasizes the tentative effect of this utterance. On p. 159—father: “‘Áán, tl’a, se’e guk’ánita edu inhláhdinh zonh,’ sóon mbetá yéhdi úh éhsán. (“‘Yes, well, really look-for-purpose not one-place only,’ his-father he-said-to-him and then.”), there is a similar effect, with an emphasis on the tentative nature of the father’s represented speech.

-p. 160—lost hunter fed meat and fat by the fox woman: “I ts’éu hie sóon yet’s’in újon éhsán, yegha etthén théht’ee úh sóon yatáthe’on. Tleh ehdah, xónht’i xeda tlehé xónht’i tené, ehdah sóon yenihchu úh éhsán” (“‘That woman one then to-him good then, for-him meat she-cooked and then put-out. Grease too, like-that moose grease like-that hardened/frozen, too then she-gave-him-some and then”)

Here, there is much meat plus grease—the substance and essence of life—but grease is also dangerous, as is shown later in the story when the fox people die with grease frozen around their mouths. There is some kind of mimetic relation between grease and ice. It also makes little sense for fox people to have moose meat. It takes at least two wolves or two human hunters to take down a moose (or perhaps one hunter with one gun, but probably more than one to haul away the meat).

Thus the peril of eating meat is highlighted here with more phrasal variations in the evidentials. Like sex, meat and grease must be modulated by the cultural value of controlled intention, which is expressed through discursive forms of living in a good way.

-p. 161—the fox people urinate inside the lost hunter and then go on living for one month where he is lying: “I mbet’áin zonh ts’inh ndats’edel, úh sóon dódéhthah éhsán, gáa, híe sa ndáts’edeh éhsán” (“That inside-him only out they-were-going, and then quite-a-while-living then, yes, one month they-were-living then”)

This is the low point in the lost hunter’s search for a song. The intensity of this moment is made evident through phrasal variation in evidentials as well as the stammering or echoing effect I analyze above.

-p. 161—the fox woman checks on the lost hunter: “I ts’éu híe sóon yek’ehdiya éhsán” (“That girl one then by-him-she-went then”)

Love and concern, even when someone has died. The fox woman sits with the lost and dead hunter and leaves clothing that she made for him, as emphasized through phrasal evidential variation and through echoing repetition.

-p. 162—the fox woman is sad to leave the lost hunter to follow her camp: “Gáa, gulaa éhsín guk’eh déhya úh sóon héé, mbadzáhdáawónht’e” (“Yes, finished maybe after-them she-went and then hey, she-was-sad”)

This is a wonderful example of phonological variation in evidentials because the same variation, *éhsín*, is used to connote a completely different intensity of feeling. The same issues prevail as my point in the previous paragraph—love and pain go together—but the emotional effect of the father’s heightened, tight vocalic “*éhsín*” on p. 156 that I analyze above has a different emotional impact here—the sense of emotion belongs to the orator, not the character, and it evokes the tightness of pain. Note also that the usual order of evidentials is reversed here: “*éhsín*,” then “*úh sóon*.”

-p. 163—Wolverine to the lost hunter: “*Kont’úh ni dáunleh?’ sóon yéhdí éhsán*” (“*Like-that you what-are-you-going-to-do?’ then he-said-to-him then*”)

More phrasal variation (ordering of the evidentials in an unusual way) marking my favorite moment, “*What will you do now?*”

-p. 165—Wolverine and Wolf to the lost hunter: “*I t’áh i ekoín ts’in uht’ien úht’ien úhtl’a, nódehgáhi úhtl’a édé, i k’éh tíduntl’a,’ sóon giyéhdí éhsán*” (“*That because-of that that-way to martin ran, fisher ran then, that after you-start going,’ then they said to him then*”)

In this moment of phrasal variation, the lost hunter is prompted by Wolverine and Wolf to hunt in a way that leads to hunting powers and to revenge by following other kinds of animals. The ability to follow an animal is the whole point of seeking a song, after all.

-p. 166—the lost hunter meets again with his traitorous host: “Gáa, ketáhtheyá úh sóon, i kólaa yets’ín újon úh sóon” (“Yes, he-came-up-to-them and then, that old-man to-him he-was-nice and-then”)

In this moment of phrasal repetition, the lost hunter finds a member of the camp who betrayed him; this moment of repetition heightens the tension—who will be affected by the lost hunter’s revenge?

-p. 168—the lost hunter cooks some moose meat from Wolf and perhaps Wolverine: “I éhsán ndadéht’ee úh sóon” (“That then he-cooked-again and then”)

In this phrasal reversal of the usual order of the evidentials as *úh sóon* and then *éhsán*, the hunter survives on meat, in a reversal of his former state where he perished *as* meat.

-p. 168—the lost hunter is afraid to go out hunting for grouse: “Sóon ts’ih’áh ehsóon,” kudi sóon, héé, ndejid” (“Then I’ll be discovered then,’ he thought then, hey, he-was-afraid”)

Here is a really interesting phonological variation on *éhsán*, “ehsóon,” which evokes a mouth rounded in horror and vowels extended in a whine of fear. We never forget our wounds even when we heal.

-pp. 168-69—the lost hunter puts on the clothing the fox woman made for him: “I xónht’e on sóon káa, káa, gúlaa i tl’onh seniandétl’ún éhsán, i ts’uu ke yanila éhsán” (“That like-that but then yes, yes, finished after he-got-dressed then, those girl’s moccasins she-gave-to-him then”)

This is really more of a moment of echoing repetition with “káa, káa,” “yes, yes,” as a phonological variation on the more usual *gáa*. But this moment is also marked by echoes of the evidentials. The combined effect suggests an expressive dimension in the use of the phoneme /k/ rather than /g/. The change might be simply allophonic, where conditioning from the phonetic context, the voiced nasal /n/ in “sóon,” makes the voiceless allophone *k*- the easier option. However, the embodied emotional effect might also be a voiceless version of “yes” in order to heighten the erotic drama of the moment with an especially quiet, understated style of enunciation.

-p. 169—the lost hunter caches some grouse: “Dahé újon ayínlá úh éhsán xahniedet’in úh sóon” (“Some well he-did and then he-saved-it and then”)

This phrasal variation marks a special moment in which another form of the lost hunter’s suffering is reversed—the lost hunter is no longer afraid to hunt grouse after he dons the fox woman’s new moccasins. Compare this, too, to the beginning of the story when the lost hunter sleeps on his mother’s old moccasins. Note, too, that the next event in the narrative is the sun rising.

-p. 170—the fox woman camps nearby and reveals herself to the lost hunter: “Héé, eyi ndehtin éhsán i thetin edu yíndidính’a sóon” (“Hey, there she-lay then there she-slept not he-noticed-her/he-paid-attention-to-her then”)

Marked by a phrasal reversal, the fox woman comes closer to the hunter after following him for many days. He wishes to kill her because she is an animal. A few lines later, the fox woman reconciles with the lost hunter and stays: “Ée, ndatsiedéhtlah endádla úh sóon k’ahju éhsán gáa kaa yek’éh at’in” (“Hey, again-snow-drifted lots and then again then still [kaa is unglossed—does it mean “yes”?] after-him she-was”) (170).

-p. 171—the lost hunter realizes that the fox woman is the person who left clothing for him: “Úh sóon, ‘Dene i lonh, ke sek’eh dathehla íin,’ kudi éhsán, kudi éhsán” (“And then, ‘Person that must-be, moccasins on-me she-hung before,’ he-thought then, he-thought then”)

Here is another moment of echoing repetition, this time of a key verb of thinking in combination with an evidential, doubling the emotional marking of this moment in the story through at least three soundscape features, that of stammering/repetition, that of represented speech and thought, and that of rhythmic evidential repetition: “kudi éhsán, kudi éhsán,” “he-thought then, he-thought then.” In this moment of realization that is re-cognition, the lost hunter finally sees the fox woman as a mate. To repeat an earlier insight from Tuttle, this is also a musical end-phrase, where there is “a tendency for repeated tones at the ends of lines or sections” (“Language” 91).

In a sense, this is the moment that they become simply the hunter and the woman. For a only a few lines later, the hunter wakes up to the woman and to so many fish!: “Ts’enidhed úh sóon ts’enidhed éhsán” (“He-woke-up and then he-woke-up”). Here again is another moment of echoing repetition of a key verb in combination, in contrast to the preceding line I analyze in the paragraph above, with phrasal variation in the evidentials.

He wakes up. And he wakes up!

-p. 172—the hunter finally speaks to woman in the form of direct discourse and offers her food: “Siin diáa ghunk’ah éhsín sóon” (“[Question] this-little you-want-to-eat maybe then”)

The phonological variation “éhsín” on the more usual éhsán is special in two ways: first, it evokes emotion, again, as it did with the father and when the woman has to leave the hunter; second, it is an example of an evidential being incorporated into the direct discourse of a character, not the orator.

In this moment, Ahnassay and the hunter overlap in the soundscape in terms of their cadence and epistemic viewpoint, modelling a larger viewpoint phenomenon.

This relation between viewpoint, represented speech, and epistemic strength is the focus on the next section below. In a way, I wish to consider in this next section how the soundwaves of voice amplify or cancel each other out in the soundscape.

6) Epistemic strengths of represented speech and thought (which interlocutors construct the soundscape in what ways)

Truth is a remedy for the sickness of death. Truth, then, is a matter of emotion. For that all narrative speech is intrinsically represented—always remediated from the face-to-face

encounter—even direct quotations—indeed, especially so.¹⁶³ Here I provide an overview of Dene-Dháh grammatical and semantic categories of represented speech and thought in relation to viewpoint and epistemics. In the next section, I look at an example with discussion. The phenomenon of represented speech is, then, crucial to understanding who gets to construct the soundscape in terms of which voices are heard, who speaks with authority and how, who the focal characters are in the story, and how represented speech requires both a deictic center and deictic shifting in order to construe viewpoint and therefore the quality of epistemic assertions—as *de dicto*, *de re*, or *de se*. In other words, what kind of *wodih* are we hearing, what kind of *shin* animates it?

i) Overview of theories of viewpoint and represented speech and thought in a Dene-Dháh context

Communities of conversation are marked grammatically in Dene Dháh through reportative and quotative evidential verbs that reveal, by virtue of their animate-pronominal prefixes and their larger syntactic-semantic boundedness, not only who—animal or human—said what to whom but from whose perspective—animal or human—the utterances are meant to be interpreted. This is epistemics, acquired by shifting ontics. This is the way to acquire wisdom. Mapping Rice’s analysis of evidentiality in Dene-Dháh represented speech onto a fine-grained cognitive-linguistic cline of how viewpoint is derived from represented speech from José Sanders and Gisela Redeker, I show how interlocutors who construct the soundscape also construct its epistemic power.

Rice’s syntactical analysis of discourse verbs is an authoritative analysis of individual speech acts, while Sanders’s and Redeker’s cognitive typology is nuanced by several degrees of epistemic validity. Together, these approaches are useful for closely reading grammar beyond

¹⁶³ I am grateful to Barbara Dancygier for this insight and many others.

simple binaries such as “true” and “untrue”—or knowable and unknowable—or animal or human.

The questions to be asked are: 1) who is responsible for reporting these true stories about animals—i.e., how to construct reportative and quotative evidentials?—and 2) who is listening—i.e., how to construe reportative evidentials for the sake of wisdom? Using Rice’s typology of evidentiality in combination with Sanders’s and Redeker’s cline of epistemic strength in represented speech, I shall explore how, in English and Dene Dháh, viewpoint shifts to generate an epistemic system in which intersubjectivity is a matter of transformation, of human becoming a little bit animal—of becoming the difference between one form of intersubjectivity and another. Becoming wise, fortunately, is up to Wolverine, not me.

Reportative and quotative evidentials—those parts of speech that say who said what to whom—also encode references to and relations between persons. As in English, Dene Dháh allows for direct *and* indirect discourse quotatives and reportatives—in essence, “s/he said” versus “she said he said,” for example. When the interpretive connotations of direct and indirect quotative and reportative evidentials are transcribed from animal-human interlocutors and then transposed onto orator and audience, animals such as Wolverine take us back into the past within the present. In other words, we find ourselves internalizing the viewpoints of those whose viewpoints composed each previous iteration of the story, making something new in us even as we make the story new. After all, a story gets better every time you tell it.

Rice states, “sentences embedded beneath direct discourse-determining verbs are interpreted from the point of view of the subject of the direct discourse verb while those embedded beneath indirect discourse-determining verbs are interpreted from the point of view of the speaker” (1273)—so the viewpoint of represented dialogue overlaps between the embedded

and matrix speakers!—a formation of intersubjectivity or deictic centering and shifting by the art of talking with one another (Sanders and Redeker 290). Thus when discourse reportatives and quotatives are embedded in larger circles of narrative meaning, orators addressing audiences shift their listeners' perspectives from transformative conversations between animals and humans within narratives to the orator as the subject of reportative and quotative verbs and the hearers thereof as interlocutors: so talk changes us (Rice 2001).

In Dene Dháh, syntax reveals semantic content through the nesting of reportative and quotative evidentials—thus the subjects and objects of complement verbs are disambiguated through nested verbs. If verbs of speech are nested syntactically such that the speaker of the matrix verb (the one reporting the direct discourse) uses a direct-discourse verb in combination with a complement verb of *saying*, the interpretation of the sentence, i.e., the viewpoint, is aligned with that of the patient of the verb complement—but the hearer is the patient or object of the matrix verb. Represented speech in Dene- Dháh narratives thus requires a witness for the sake of this *reported yet direct* discourse. A uniquely Dene pragmatic layer of meaning emerges when animals are speaking because animals convey special power in their words.

Thus instances of represented discourse in conversation between humans and animals allow cross-species communities to form that enact transformative renewal through intersubjective grammatical constructions of epistemic power. But what kinds of power? In “The Man Who Sought a Song,” literal human regeneration follows from the figure of the animal. The paradox of this story is that, while it is meant to convey a “physical” event, it is *told* in order to convey a spiritual truth. Thus, animal-human conversation organizes larger concerns surrounding questions of the interpretation—and re-interpretation—of stories. The wisdom that powerful

animals offer humans—in the form of bearing witness through stories—composes an interconnected system of cultural texts in Dene Dháh that are as authoritative as biblical text.

Perspectivization come in four degrees in Sanders and Redeker; they track these degrees using four forms of represented discourse with two forms of “responsibility” for these discursive events and two forms of mental-space structuring. In doing so, Sanders and Redeker propose to broaden the concept of embedded perspective to include all direct, indirect, and free indirect representations of a character’s speech and thought to include a “more subtle type of perspectivization, where a character’s vision is not explicitly presented but is implied by the narrator’s choice of referential descriptions” (293). This idea works well with the fact that human-animal encounters are often recounted as visionary narratives. Sanders and Redeker further state, “we define perspective as follows: *Perspective* is the introduction of a subjective point of view of the presented information to a particular subject (person) in the discourse. A discourse segment is perspectivized if its relevant context of interpretation is a person-bound, embedded space within the narrator’s reality” (293). Personhood I take to mean, for the purposes of this paper, unique species both animal and human.

Thus animals give visions through encounter—through conversation—although the reverse is also true: animals give encounter through visions. An animal’s gifts conduct the human a little into the animal’s powers, the animal’s ways of knowing. Thus if narrative is a form of power, then for an animal to give conversation to a human is to give the gift of embedding the human with whom they converse in the animal’s larger epistemological world. A great hunter might come to think like an animal, but not just on earth—also in the afterlife.

Any time a human speaks with an animal, the words are perspectivized at a discourse level into the animal’s subjectivity. From there, other kinds of transformation follow. For the

human character. And for the human orator and audience. In deictic terms, according to Sanders and Redeker, the narrative reported by the human, with the “description of an event, activity, process, or state” that “implies a deictic center involving space, time, and person” (290) is one with transformative power.

Different kinds of narrative discourse function to convey different degrees of epistemological strength or, as Sanders and Redeker term it, “strength of perspective” (see table below). In linguistic terms, this “strength of perspective” is the obligatory grammatical indication of the type of evidence upon which the statement is based. The ways that truth assertions in discourse are nested, in narrative, is by using a combination of different kinds of quotative evidentials. This nesting leads to a transformation in the degrees of evidentiality—of epistemological certainty *and uncertainty*—for the interlocutors at the level of characters, orator and audience (and even, I suggest, readers and text). This transformation is a form of emergent meaning that can be traced through the transmission of truths across discourse spaces to determine the total narrative space.

In other words, conversation makes the soundscape. The question is conversation of what kinds? In Dene Dháh the answer is two-fold and provided by Rice. Rice states that “many complement-taking verbs in Slave are discourse-determining: the verb determines the point of view from which the complement is interpreted” (*Grammar* 1273). She then divides these verbs into two categories: 1) direct discourse-determining verbs and 2) indirect discourse-determining verbs (1273). It is always crucial to know who the speaker is when interpreting an interpretation.

Rice states that *indirect* discourse verbs include: “verbs of perception, verbs of saying, verbs of knowledge” (1275). In English, direct and indirect discourse verbs are formed through similar verbs in, respectively, imperatives and infinitives with pronouns that are construed with

reference, respectively, to the speaker of the quoted discourse (in Rice’s terminology, the matrix speaker) versus the speaker of the reported discourse (e.g., “He said, ‘Write to me’” versus “He said to write to him”). Oftentimes, indirect discourse is reported in the past tense since the temporal point of reference is that of the speaker of the indirect discourse rather than the speaker of the paraphrased utterance. Thus person, time, and, implicitly, place are involved in distinctions between direct and indirect discourse in English. Yet because indirect discourse is represented by the speaker of the matrix verb, a huge amount of intersubjectivity is required in order to make assertions about the viewpoints of perception and so on.

In Dene Dháh, as in English, the verb complements associated with the verbs of indirect discourse refer to the matrix speaker if the complement verb is in the first person, the matrix hearer if in the second person, and an “other” if in the third person (1275) (see row C of table below). However, other distinctions between direct and indirect forms of discourse are indicated, in Dene Dháh, not through distinctions in mood or tense but through a combination of verb choice (with verbs of perception and of knowledge) and of syntax.

In contrast to verbs that indicate indirect forms of discourse, *direct* discourse verbs include: “thinking or saying” and include, in Slave (here shown in the third-person singular imperfective forms):

ndi, ‘adi, hadi “s/he says” (intransitive)

-edi, -ededi “s/he tells, asks” (transitive)

-gha hadi “s/he asks”

yenjwe “s/he wants, thinks” (intransitive) (Hr, Bl form)

yenjhwe “s/he wants, thinks” (transitive) (Bl form)

hudeli “s/he wants, thinks” (Hr). (1276)

Rice explains that “another factor is involved in determining interpretation of a direct discourse complement: interpretation depends on if the complement reports what was said to or about someone” (1276). In other words, if verbs of speech are nested syntactically such that the speaker of the matrix verb uses a direct-discourse verb in combination with a complement verb of *saying*, the interpretation of the sentence, i.e., the viewpoint, is aligned with that of the patient of the verb complement—but the hearer is the patient or object of the matrix verb, the “hearer from the point of view of the matrix subject” (1277) (see row A of table below). Thus such interlocutors are, in part, present, and, in part, absent—the “you” is not the hearer but another who is at a remove from the speech act. And it seems to me that in a *textualized* oral narrative containing such utterances, there are four interlocutor viewpoints: the speaker, the reporter of the speech (the orator, but then also the transcriber and translator), the listener, and the reader. The key, in Dene Dháh, is that syntax demands a direct experience—a hearer—of any spoken truth.

The reverse is also true if a quotative verb is nested with a reportative verb, so that the speaker of the total utterance uses a direct-discourse verb with a complement verb of *reporting*, in which the complement object does not hear the utterance, then the patient of the complement verb is the same as the agent; as Rice puts it, in this kind of context, the “person being reported about is identical to the subject of the matrix rather than to the object” (1277) (see row B of Table). Thus the deictic center of direct-discourse verbs in combination with complement verbs of reporting (rather than saying) is always only the self of the speaker. Grammatically, an assertion cannot be made about a speech act without the speaker having also been the hearer.

Of course, any language can allow a speaker to generate falsified assertions about another’s words, but, in Dene Dháh, not grammatically. Rice does state that one more form of reportative discourse exists, where the embedded or complement subject is different from the

matrix subject and object: “When the embedded subject is third person, it is interpreted as not being identical to either the matrix subject or the matrix object” (1278) (see row D of table below). She adds further that “such sentences are often ambiguous” because the evidentiality of a three-way truth-claim is unverifiable at the level of the reportative—the patient is neither speaker nor hearer, neither subject nor object. In this kind of context, presence—and thus also intersubjectivity—are a mystery.

In the main, though, with direct and indirect discourse in Dene Dháh, conjecture regarding another’s epistemological claims (however quotidian or spiritual in their importance) carries little authority without qualifiers such as evidentials. At the level of syntax, one cannot express the words of another declaratively without having heard them without having heard them say them. No conversation is unverified by direct experience. Perspective is expressible only through face-to-face exchanges. Presence is self-manifest.

Thus, animal-human conversations as indicated by the grammar are “true”—they are not a fantasy but, rather, an experiential reality. Further, this means—in juxtaposition with the fact that animals, at times, bestow power upon humans in moments of encounter and of conversation—that the presence of animals in discourse is one of agency—of self-manifestation. In telling stories about such animals according to the linguistic requirements of Dene Dháh, these animals mean what they mean (they are not merely allegorical, although perhaps their stories serve that function, too). Animals mean what they say.

The implications of these important ways of constructing and construing viewpoint are that, when verbs of speaking are nested, the “complements report exactly what the subject of the direct discourse verb said to the object” (1277)—*exactly*. This is high-fidelity evidentiality. And there is no reliable alternative. When a verb of reporting is nested in a verb of speaking, the only

evidential truth claims with any degree of certainty that can be made are reflexive. In other words, without quotative exactitude, without word-for-word conversation, there is little ground for making epistemological claims about another—about an object, a patient, an absent hearer. There is, by definition, no truly absent hearer! Either a patient is present to hear an utterance or the patient is oneself—the oneself of the sentence or of the oratorical (and written) event.

Thus viewpoint is always a matter of personal responsibility. And it is also a matter of presence—of being present. After organizing the nuances of conversation and perspective in Dene-Dháh’ syntax below in the form of a chart, I offer some examples of direct and indirect discourse in Dene Dháh from a narrative from Moore and Wheelock, identifying the category under which these utterances fall as well as contrasting the content of human-human with animal-human conversations in order to consider the special nature of animal wisdom.

So, then, evidentiality in Dene Dháh mapped onto epistemology might look something like Table 10.1 from Sanders and Redeker (in green),¹⁶⁴ where “Different types of perspective, their mental space characteristics, and the resulting strength of perspectivization” (295), modified to the table that I present below to include Rice’s analysis of and terms for direct and indirect discourse (inserted in red), in order to reveal who is responsible for what degree of truth or epistemological claim (which I comment on below in blue)—the more intersubjective the perspective or viewpoint at a grammatical level, the stronger the claim. And, potentially, the more hope that I, as a reader out of time and place, outside the culture and the language, might touch just a little on Dene- Dháh truths. The chart, which is focused on narrative, enables me to consider the epistemological implications of animal grammar when expressing syntactically the self-aware perspectives of beings that, together, form a world—the world of the narrative.

¹⁶⁴ Reproduced from their chapter, “Perspective and the Representation of Speech and Thought in Narrative Discourse” (295), in black and green.

Table C.2: Evidentials and Viewpoint

Sanders and Redeker with Rice	Responsibility		Metal-Space Processing		Commentary
Type of Perspective / Type of discourse	for Wording / Speaker	for Content / Hearer	Viewpoint Location / Subject (agent)	Focus Location / Object (patient)	Strength of Perspective / Epistemic intersubjectivity
A. Direct / Direct discourse with verbs of speaking	Subject / Matrix speaker	Subject / Matrix hearer	embedded space / Matrix speaker is subject	embedded space / Complement object	++ / Four interlocutor figures including a witness (three-four people total)
B. free indirect / Direct discourse with verbs of reporting	default: subject / Matrix speaker	Subject / Matrix hearer	default: embedded space / Matrix speaker is subject	embedded space / Matrix speaker is object	+ / Three interlocutors including a witness (two people total)

Type of Perspective / Type of discourse (cont'd.)	for Wording / Speaker (cont'd.)	for Content / Hearer (cont'd.)	Viewpoint Location / Subject (agent) (cont'd.)	Focus Location / Object (patient) (cont'd.)	Strength of Perspective / Epistemic intersubjectivity (cont'd.)
C. Indirect / Indirect discourse	narrator and subject / Matrix speaker	Subject / Matrix hearer	base space and embedded space / Matrix speaker is subject	embedded space / Complement object	- / Two interlocutors and no witness
D. Implicit perspective / Third-person direct discourse	narrator and subject / Matrix speaker	narrator and subject / Matrix hearer	base space and embedded space / - subject	base space and embedded space / - subject	-- / Three interlocutors and no witness

From the chart above, one can see that the first kind of epistemic evidential, that of direct discourse with verbs of speaking, requires a strong alignment of perspectivization between agents and patients and involves three or four people. Conversation, here, now, with you, is ratified across space, time, and personhood through, respectively, the person with whom the speaker spoke, the person with whom the speaker speaks, and the person who hears what *was*

and what *is* said. Perhaps in English an example of how this works can be found in the verb “to witness,” which is double in its meaning—one witnesses and then one witnesses—one experiences and then one relays those experiences—through the same word.

ii) Example and discussion

Here I return to a key moment in “The Man Who Sought a Song” for an example of how the epistemics of animal grammar work. The lost hunter, who is looking for a song, i.e., a vision, is met with bewildering silence even in his sleep and eventually, in wandering the bush, is torn apart by a camp of smallish people (foxes who look human). They then urinate on—essentially desecrate—his remains (Moore and Wheelock 30). Wolverine, the transformer or trickster, accompanied by Wolf, comes upon the young man. The dreamer is restored lingually (by tongue and by word)¹⁶⁵ and with the transfer of breath:

It was getting dark when suddenly—pitter-patter, pitter-patter—came the sound of someone running along quickly nearby! The young man heard this pattering sound as he lay there. At that time Wolverine was a person, and when he came close the young man spoke to him. “Like me, you take in filthy things,” he said. “You are able to put strange things in your stomach.” He heard Wolverine run around him singing. Yes, he ran around him singing; he ran around him. Then suddenly Wolverine was gnawing the frozen urine in the young man’s chest. He licked inside the young man’s stomach, inside his heart. “What will you do now?” Wolverine asked. Then Wolf joined Wolverine and put the young man’s ribs back together. He sealed the wound with his saliva, then blew on the wounds in a magical way. (31)

¹⁶⁵ “Yedazé,” “his spit” in Dene Dháh (Moore and Wheelock 163); cf. “seeh,” “saliva,” and “-seeh,” the verb stem for “spit” (Rice 161)—a word that is one of a set of the oldest in Dene Dháh along with other fundamentally important words like “kó,” “fire,” “tu,” “water” (Rice 162).

And this happens, the orator of the narrative states, because “This was also part of the young man’s vision, that he should learn through suffering” (31).

“What will you do now?” Wolverine asks. In Dene Dháh, the words go: “‘Kont’úh ni dáunleh?’ sóon yéhdi éhsan” (163). The quotative evidential here is a direct discourse verb, “yéhdi,” “he said to him.” Thus where Wolverine says, “‘Kont’úh ni dáunleh?’ sóon yéhdi éhsan,” there are, then, four interlocutor figures, with the position of the matrix speaker being held by two very different species, simultaneously the human orator and Wolverine and Wolf, the trickster-transformer(s). The epistemological viewpoint is that of the matrix *subject*—in this example, Wolverine! There is, by definition, no truly absent hearer. The focus is the lost young man who has died—the object of the complement verb “dáunleh.” Thus it is an additional testimony to the epistemological—and ontological—power of Wolverine that the hunter can hear Wolverine and Wolf speak to him though he is dead. And not only dead but defiled. Indeed, as per the syntactical requirements of a hearer for quoted and reported discourse, the *realness* of Wolverine is so powerful that He is able to make the dead hunter “real” again—alive, again—through the real power of His words. This power is spiritual, but it is also discursive, as it demands interlocutor-witnesses to be grammatically true.

To return to the two key questions for my analysis of this part of the story soundscape, they are: 1) who is responsible for reporting these true stories about animals—i.e., how to construct reportative and quotative evidentials?—and 2) who is listening—i.e., how to construe reportative evidentials for the sake of wisdom? I suggest that the responsibility for the content of this utterance is the matrix hearer(s)—the listener(s) and whoever transcribed it—and whoever reads it—myself and you. In this intersection between human and animal, there is a shift of perspective or viewpoint as one deictic center, that of illocution, shifts to a new center, that of

narration. So then the witness, who is Wolf, is also us—and the transformer, Wolverine, is transposed to the position of the storyteller—the agent of the complement verbs becomes the agent of the matrix verbs according to the syntactical rules of Dene Dháh that prescribe the subject/agent/speaker first be the object/patient/hearer and by virtue of the gift to humans that is animal conversation.

Reporting becomes enacting. It is thus, *in* this story and *through* it, in hearing it, in seeing it—and in talking about it together—that we die and live again. This art of talking with one another is also the art of drawing close enough to one another to perceive one another, to really see and hear one another. Human and more-than-human animals are held apart yet also conjoined through the narrative boundary that is the sound of a story.

In the next section, I consider just what, in Dene Dháh, makes humans and animals people—or not.

7) Pronominal prefixes in verbal constructions that mark the feature of human/animate agent versus unmarked entities or objects (what kind of interlocutors construct the soundscape and when)

In this section, I examine how the feature of animacy, as a non-obligatory feature of some pronominal prefixes to important verbs of sound—speaking, singing, even thinking—is used to make represented speech and thought sound alive—by which I mean, feel as though the utterances in question have agentive lives of their own. This feat is not accomplished just through powerful narrative imagery, which is indeed present, but in the way that agency shifts from deictic centers between narrative interlocutors to deictic centers that include readers and listeners through the referential work of pronominal prefixes

Below, I adapt Hanks's construal of pronouns and deixis to Dene Dháh to show not just how first, second, and third person singular and plural pronouns work to include varying entities, but how the marking of the non-obligatory nominal feature +/- animate charges these intersubjective relations between entities such that ontology itself can shift. In the following, I analyze (construe) and closely read a number of verbs of represented speech and thought in "The Man Who Sought a Song," linking together my work above to consider deictic epistemics in conjunction with animate ontologies further. I then synthesize and discuss these concepts in relation to the Dene theory of the animal, leading from the work of this section into the idea of literary boundedness elsewhere.

i) Pronouns, deixis, and animacy in Dene Dháh

Hanks's method of defining pronouns in a deictic field includes singular speaker, addressee, and other, and plural: speaker plus other, speaker plus addressee (plural), addressee (plural), and other ("Explorations" 200). When modified to include the feature +animate and expanded to include subjects of all verbal actions, both active and passive, this chart looks less like a deictic field of participant-mediated kinds of intersubjectivity and more like a deictic field of affect-modulated intersubjective expressiveness:

Table C.3: Deictic Field Actors Using Hanks and Rice

	Singular			Plural		
“spec. human” (Rice, <i>Grammar</i> 1005)	ts’e	“unspecified human number” (431)	position 7 of verb template plus the pronominal prefixes below	0/ke-/ge-	plural human number	position 7 of verb template plus the pronominal prefixes below
1	h-	animacy for intention	<i>I</i> subj.	íd-	intention, attention, effect	<i>we</i> subj.
2	ne-	animacy for attention	<i>you</i> subj.	ah-	attention, effect	<i>you</i> (dl./pl.) subj.
3	0 [unmarked]	animacy for effect	<i>he/she/it</i> subj.	0 [unmarked]	agency of affect	<i>they</i> subj.

The third-person singular subject is interesting, since while animate *he/she/it* can be grammatically marked as having an effect even if their intention is unknown and whether or not the narrative is focused on them, the non-obligatory marking of agency must still emerge from the narrative: i.e., animate *he/she/it* could not be known as animate without the story—some story—for even if the story is only one sentence long, it still contains a differentially specific

proposition about the conditions of the ontological state of the agent (and perhaps patient) involved. Unlike Hanks's chart where the third person is the Other, when animacy is added to a verbal action, the Other becomes the total emergent viewpoint of the narrative (or proposition)—it necessarily involves two viewpoints no matter what.

The third-person plural subject is even more interesting; as with the animate third-person singular, a narratively articulated epistemology is the only way to designate animacy; but this does not describe fully animate *they*. This is because even when intention and attention might be lacking, animate *they* is also collective: it is two Others acting in unison. But this unified action fulfills the condition of any animate marking, that two viewpoints are necessarily involved no matter what, already, without requiring either a sense of intention or attention—animate *they* is a self-contained ontology that yet affects the action of the verb as experienced from outside that closed deictic center of the plural third-person intersubjectivity. It is like Aristotle's paradox of the Unmoved Mover: it can only be in contradistinction to what it is not—the narrative viewpoint—and yet we cannot know without it referencing us in relation to it.

Animate *they* is at once totally unknowable and totally powerful. Thus the truth of animate effect, for animate *they*, must be re-cast as agentic affect—the conscious, controlled intentions of *they* are manifested from outside and inside the center of *their* viewpoint at the same time. In this deictic shift, the story center changes from one entity to the next, from animal to human, teller to listener, past to present.

ii) Analysis and close reading of verbs of represented speech and thought in “The Man Who Sought a Song”

In this section, I identify all instances of verbs of represented speech and thought in the story. I analyze in detail those verbs that pertain to the question of animacy and pronominal

prefixes and comment more generally on the implications of lexical patterning in relation to the epistemic and ontic power of the characters constructing the soundscape.

The implications of lexical patterning according to character is that the speech and thought of each kind of character is reported with consistently and distinctly different verbs. This indicates that Ahnassay controls with real focus her verbal patterning to convey exactly the emotional difference in quality between “he said” (to whom?) versus “he said to him” (much more focused and direct).

By examining not only the content of speech and thought but also how it is reported by the orator, very distinctive patterns of certain verb-words associated with certain interlocutors become apparent, patterns that mark a hierarchy of power between the interlocutors in the story but also a hierarchy of the importance (focalization) of these interlocutors for listeners and readers. In literary terms, one might construe variations in the verbs of represented speech and thought as referencing the reliability of the narrator(s); but in an oral genre that is news, reference is made not so much to reliability as it is to epistemic ontologies of *how* is it to be a certain person. In other words, verb patterns reveal the nature of the power of the utterances that come from focal characters.

Yéhdi (“s/he/it said to her/him/it”):

>yé-: 4th person singular direct object, non-coreferential with third person subject and indicative of the agency of the subject (Rice, *Grammar* 1011)

>-0-: third person singular subject

>-h-: h-classifier and/or transitive marker?

>-di: stem “said”

This verb is used most commonly with the represented speech of the father: he speaks to the lost hunter, and the lost hunter hears him (155 x 2, 156 x 5, 157 x 3, 159 x 3). Then the stump (158 x 2), until the verb comes to be used with Wolverine (163). After Wolverine yéhdi (the lost hunter), “What will you do now?” (I cannot return to this question often enough, it seems), everything changes. The verb comes to be used in relation to the fox woman (171 x 2, 172 x 2), until, in its final attestation in the story, it is used by the hunter to declare that he is going hunting (173).

p. 155 father

155 father

156 father

156 father

156 father

156 father

156 father

157 father

157 father

157 father

158 stump

158 stump

159 father

159 father

159 father

163 Wolverine

171 fox woman

171 fox woman

172 fox woman

172 fox woman

173 lost hunter (re: meat—and this is the last audible direct quotation in the story)

Éhdi (“s/he/it said”):

In contrast with *yéhdi*, this verb is mostly associated with the lost hunter—he speaks, but to anyone in a marked way (155 x 2, 156, 157 x 2, 159, 173). Note that Wolverine’s onomatopoeia is reported using this verb also (162 x 2; “ts’ín éhdi”)—it is an aural act without a living patient.

155 lost hunter

155 lost hunter

156 lost hunter

157 lost hunter

157 lost hunter

157 father (“mbetá éhdi”)

159 lost hunter

162 Wolverine (“ts’ín éhdi”)

162 Wolverine (“ts’ín éhdi”)

163 Wolverine (“‘ghans, ghans,’ éhdi”)

173 lost hunter

Kudi (“s/he/it wanted/thought”):

This verb is used for represented thought, and as the attestations below show, the focal characters of the story are clearly the hunter and the woman.

158 lost hunter (“wanted”)

159 lost hunter (“thought”)

159 lost hunter

161 fox woman

162 fox woman

162 fox woman

167 lost hunter

167 lost hunter

167 lost hunter

168 lost hunter

168 lost hunter

168 lost hunter

169 lost hunter

170 lost hunter

170 lost hunter

170 lost hunter

170 lost hunter

171 lost hunter

171 lost hunter

171 lost hunter

171 lost hunter

171 lost hunter

173 lost hunter

173 lost hunter

Giyéhdi (“they said to him”):

Gi + yé + 0 + h + di. See below for further analysis of this important verbal distinction.

>gi-: I was thinking that *gi-* is the plural marker *ge-* for the agentive subject in slightly different form from what is cited in Rice, but then I read, in Rice, about *gi-/ki-* as a “portmanteau” of *ye-* (fourth-person singular or plural direct object when the subject is agentive third person, in this case, agentive third person plural) plus *ke-/ge-* (human plural number marker for subjects that are agentive): the “morphemes metathize to *ke-/ge-* plus *ye-* and coalesce to *ki-/gi-*” (Rice, *Grammar* 1014). So then . . .

>yé-: would be either fourth person singular

>0-: subject marker for third-person plural agentive subject

>-h-: ?

>di: verb stem

160 fox people

160 strange visitor (“Dene híe giyéhdi”)

163 Wolf and Wolverine

163 Wolf and Wolverine

164 Wolf and Wolverine

165 Wolf and Wolverine

166 Wolf and Wolverine

167 Wolf and Wolverine

The following verbs occur only infrequently, but I include them to demonstrate the latitude of pronominal prefixes that can diversify the basic functions of represented speech and thought. Kaséhdi (“s/he/it said to me”): p. 159 father to lost hunter; dadi (“s/he/it told [him/her]”): 159 lost hunter (“Mbetá dadi”); wodeh (“s/he/it spoke”): 159 stump, 172 lost hunter (to fox woman), 172 lost hunter (“kíi edu yest’ín wodeh úh”—“he did not speak to her”); adindi (“you said”): 159 father; kádindi (“you say that”): 159 father; kéhdi (“s/he/it said to them”): 160 old fox man; ghedi (“they said”): 161 fox people, 168 “being/animal”; ndáidindhé (“s/he/it was thinking”): 162 fox woman; náidindhé (“s/he/it was thinking”): 162 fox woman; wodi (it sounded): 162 “I dot wodi” (“That pattering sounded”); ndaúdhethh’eni (“something’s sounding”): 162 “Ndaúdhethh’eni edhin ehsán” (“something’s

sounding”); ts’edi (“they [animate] said”): 165 Wolf and Wolverine; kuhdi (“I want”): 169 lost hunter.

In the section below, I analyze the implications of the verb *giyéhdi* for animal grammar.

iii) Synthesis and discussion of a Dene theory of the animal

Here I want to return to a key an example from “The Man Who Sought a Song” of how animate *they* can function as an agentive yet subjectively closed narrative phenomenon. The verb is *giyéhdi*, “they said to him/her.” As I show above, this verb is associated mainly with animals!

A couple of contrastive attestations of this verb. A mysterious, trouble-causing stranger appears in the camp where the lost hunter mistakenly believes he has found a home. It is never stated who, but it is *possibly* Wolverine. The stranger speaks to the fox people. The verb used is “*giyéhdi*,” and is glossed as “He said to them” (Moore and Wheelock 160). Disaster strikes, and the hunter is killed by the little fox people. Later, Wolverine and Wolf restore the dead hunter to life. After that, They instruct him to clothe himself in the animal-made moccasins left by the fox-woman in direct speech. The verb used is “*giyéhdi*,” and is glossed as “they said to him” (163).

The point here, of course, is that while third-person singular and plural subjects are unmarked in Dene Dháh generally, both third-person forms are marked for animacy by way of the patients or objects of the verb, which occur in the fourth person plural and singular with the pronominal prefix *ye-*. This fourth-person object form is used only when the subject is in the third person and is animate. Thus the agency of the subjects is both manifested through the marking of the objects, propositionally, and manifested through the marking of the animate plural pronominal prefix, which can be used for either subjects or objects (Rice, *Grammar* 1005). Thus the agency of these speakers is construed, respectively, by the otherness of verbal patients and of a communicable state of plurality.

In a Dene-Tha view, when these conditions are met by animal interlocutors, it becomes evident that animals are not divided from us because they are mere, inarticulate, perhaps even inarticulable, meat, possessed of very little cognitive or emotional power (and therefore fit simply for the abattoir), but are instead highly *articulate*, and, in this, divided from us—yet in communication with us for the purpose of spiritual as well as physical sustenance, as indicated in the statement, “Animals have special abilities which they depend upon to live, giving us only the powers which they no longer need.”

The gift of the animal in Dene-Dháh narratives is, then, life-giving, life-changing, and, occasionally, life-restoring: at times, in some accounts, animals can “re-articulate” us. In contrast, Euro-American narratives about or by animals—such as *Peter Rabbit* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Watership Down*—function to create wonder rather than to effect ontological transformation. This wonder is more imaginative rather than spiritual, figurative more than referential. It wonderment that either human limits might be surpassed in stories that include both humans and animals, as in *Watership Down*, where rabbits clearly embrace monotheism, or that human limits are universal and to be embraced in stories that are primarily about animals, as in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, where animals are not exactly anthropomorphic, but do enjoy a good cup of tea and some sizzling sausages (from whom?) on a cold winter day. The Dene-Dháh stories I have read inspire imaginative wonder, of course!, and can certainly be read figuratively, perhaps even allegorically, but they are cultural texts—and are also, perhaps, less counter-cultural in their message than, for example, Jack London’s novels.

And yet animals, in Dene-Dháh lexical categories, are not so distinct from humans that they are referred to by utterly separate linguistic means. Rice states that the pronouns *ke-/ge-*, *ku-* and *go-* are used to refer to humans, but that “Human” is “actually a cover term for something

much broader”—it really “represents beings that are considered to be intelligent, to be able to control” and that “This feature can be used for animals when they have the ability to speak and control in human fashion” (1019). Thus many animal words also are formed through the prefix *go-*, where *go-* signifies “animal”—thus, for example, “goweri,” “animals” and “godih,” “large game” (Moore and Wheelock 164). It is not clear to me if *go-* as a nominalizer and *go-* as a pronominal prefix indicating animacy and agency are the same word—they may just be homonyms—which is not to suggest that there is no poetic potential in the homophones.

Rice goes on to add, the “feature [human] [sic] is probably better thought of as a control or agent feature”—such that “When a nonhuman is vested with control by being given the ability to speak,” then this is an indication that “nouns marked by this feature that have volition or will” (1020). In other words, speech is being.

In the next section, I consider how speech and being are mutually bounded through narrative to constitute a soundscape as a story.

8) Narrative boundaries between animals and humans (when are interlocutors heard)

Narrative boundaries define speaker choices concerning the relationship between linguistic and extralinguistic animacy marking. These narrative boundaries are always contemporaneous as well as historical, for, as Hans Reichenbach has shown, there is always the “time of speech, the time at which an event takes place, and Reference Time, the time talked about in a sentence” (see Smith, Perkins, and Fernald 43). Thus the relationship, in any speech act, between the time of the speech and the time of the event to which the speech refers, is the Reference Time—which may look to the past or the future, depending on the temporality of the verbs describing the actions.

But Reference Time, in *wodih*, requires a deictic center that is continually renewed with each performance, and this continual renewal, when juxtaposed with Wolverine's trails backward in time, generates a narrative viewpoint that makes its "viewers"—the listeners, and, I hope, readers, of such stories—older at a rate faster than the aging process of linear time; so that, in essence, Wolverine makes us wise (for age is hoped to lead to wisdom in most non-Euro-American cultures). To put it another way, or to address the same atemporal revitalization effect in relation to song more specifically, Tuttle quotes an elder, Neal Charlie, from Minto, Alaska, as commenting on the pedagogical value of songs in atemporal term:

And I tell you the truth, that every song, they used to teach young people where the song is coming from. They had to explain who it's after, and who made it, and parts of the meaning of it, what the song words in there [sic], the meaning of it. (Charlie qtd. in Tuttle, "Language" 101)

Thus song requires story just as story requires song. You have to go back in time for the song and tell a story to do so, and you can move forward in time once you have a song so that life itself can come to feel like a story—which it is not—but which all people wish it were.

Roman Jakobson offers, in his lucid way, a two-fold or "duplex" structure for the problem of the interpretation of historically based (temporally divided) epistemic claims at a grammatical level. He designates the message as "M" and the code used to express the message as "C." He then describes an elegant structural assessment of ways of integrating the past with the present in a form of "circularity" that is recursive (and therefore, I think, potentially regenerative) and in a form that is "overlapping," or expressions that both utilize and refer to both the message and the code ("Shifters" 130). The first way is through speech that is "M/M," a "message referring to message," i.e., "reported speech," which is "speech within speech, a

message within a message” that is, “at the same time,” a form of “speech about speech, a message about a message” (130). This formulation of “quoted and quasi-quoted speech” (130) as recursive discourse sits in uneasy hermeneutical relation to his other kind of relation between message and code, which he calls “M/C,” or a “message referring to the code”—“autonomous” logic where the utterance functions to define the terms of reference within that utterance; one of Jakobson’s examples of an M/C is “‘Pup’ is a noun which means a young dog” versus “The pup is a winsome animal” (131). The point of Jakobson’s M/C category of speech is that it is self-referential and does not require context in the same way that the M/M category does.

However, when Jakobson states, “Any elucidating interpretation of words and sentences—whether intralingual (circumlocutions, synonyms) or interlingual (translation)—is a message referring to the code” and, as such M/C discourse (and here Jakobson quotes Bloomfield, though without citing him), “is closely related to quotation, the repetition of speech” (131). So then I think the real distinction to be made, here, between M/M and M/C forms of communication, at least as is relevant to animal stories, is not logical autonomy *versus* dependent referentiality but rather hermeneutical embeddedness, i.e., narrative revitalization: both translation and quotation are crucial to interpreting orature and textualized orature that is from and about animals. M/M shifts to M/C in order to re-form a new expression of M/M that looks forward in time to new contexts as it reports on old ones. Such is precisely the nature of wodih.

The ideas of wodih and of Wolverine in combination integrate past and future into the present of the narrative, and this is the temporal dimension of the deictic center to which I refer as the moment of intersubjective encounter, exchange, ecological communion, and epistemological transformation—the deictic center of the story. But since deixis refers to words that can be interpreted correctly only if both interlocutors know the spatial, temporal, and

ontological context of the story—the space, time, and personhood of it—here, now, with you—Jakobson’s system of relationships between message and code, of circularity and overlap, of center and shift, makes evident that space as well as time is folded into the narrative act. Narrative renews itself through sound just as allegory maintains its own internal system of references through its many readings.

In Dene conceptions of the afterlife, the dead may return to their bodies every once in a while if a prayer is offered with deep sincerity. In “Wolverine Steals a Child” (Moore and Wheelock 13-21 and 122-40), the father prays for the resurrection of his son after his son is killed by a monster while ensuring that his son’s dead body is carefully arranged in a whole and respectful way so that it is possible for his son to be brought back to life. In the case of game animals, those animals will be reincarnated if their bones are disposed of respectfully by being kept together in one place, undefiled in “Beliefs in Things a Person and Can see and in Things a Person Cannot See.” Kalifornsky writes, in a way that is instructive in the interpretation of larger Dene teachings concerning animals, that

The Dena’ina, they say, had some beliefs about animals. After they killed and butchered an animal in the woods while hunting or trapping, they would put the bones in one place. In the winter they would cut a hole in the ice and put the animal bones in water. At home in the village, too, they put all the animal bones into the water, either in a lake or in the Inlet, or they would burn them in the fire. They did this so the animals would be in good shape as they returned to the place where the animals are reincarnated. (41)¹⁶⁶

In this way, Wolverine and other trickster/transformer animals lead us to occupy multiply narrative references through distinct cyclicalities of narrative-bounded time, defined by

¹⁶⁶ See Kalifornsky (1991), pp. 40-45 for the full account.

viewpoints moving within and without the bounds of narrative, to share multiple ways of being. Wolverine leads us between the symmetrical bogs and the serpentine rivers of the cosmos to find our way to truth as sustenance, knowledge, community, life. Even if we are dead, we find that we will live. It all depends who is saying what to whom. To put it another way, Florian Coulmas writes, of reported speech—narrativization, in essence: “Utterances can be made the subject of other utterances. . . . Language can be used to refer to language. We can talk about talk” (2). I still wonder if we can sing about music, or to put it more precisely: can we music about music?

Appendix D¹⁶⁷

Interview with Paul Zolbrod

Withdrawn for publication.

¹⁶⁷ I am submitting the interview with Paul Zolbrod in Appendix D to the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* with Dr. Zolbrod's permission and approval.