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Poyser,

Stephen P.

1978

LATENT DIDACTIC FUNCTIONS OF TLINGIT MYTHOLOGY:

A RE-EVALUATION OF RAVEN'S ROLE IN NORTHWEST COAST CULTURE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of

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of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Stephen P. Poyser

July 1978

LATENT DIDACTIC FUNCTIONS OF TLINGIT MYTHOLOGY:

A RE-EVALUATION OF RAVEN'S ROLE IN NORTHWEST COAST CULTURE

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LATENT DIDACTIC FUNCTIONS OF TLINGIT MYTHOLOGY: A RE-EVALUATION OF RAVEN'S ROLE IN NORTHWEST COAST CULTURE

Stephen P. Poyser July 1978 72 pages

Directed by: Robert T. Teske, Lynwood Montell, and Albert J. Petersen, Jr.

Center for Intercultural and Folk Studies

Western Kentucky University

A comparative study was conducted of several variants of the Raven cycle of myths as manifested among the Tlingit Indians of the Northwest Coast. The results of this folkloristic study indicate that the myths serve several didactic functions. In addition to the manifest function of explaining the origin of the present order of the world the myths also serve to provide members of the society with a classificatory system through which they are able to relate to observable phenomena within their environment. The myths also provide institutionalized behavioral alternatives available to the society as manifested by the actions of Raven, the principal character in Tlingit mythology. In the role of Culture Hero, Raven's motives for his actions are altruistic, and in this context are to be emulated, while in the role of Trickster his motives are selfishness and greed and because they are ultimately destructive to society, are not to be condoned.

INTRODUCTION

The notion that much of a people's culture is reflected in their folklore is not a new idea, for a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars have looked to folklore, especially myths, as a means of explaining various aspects of culture.[1] One of the most insightful of these early works was Franz Boas' frequently overlooked study of the Kwakiutl Indians. His study, which was entitled, Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology, appeared as volume twenty-eight in a series of memoirs published by the American Folklore Society.[2] Owing to Boas' methodological orientation the work was primarily a listing of Kwakiutl cultural elements present in their mythology, with no statement as to significance of these elements nor the function they served in the myths. In the decades that followed the publication of Boas' study most anthropologists and folklorists abandoned the study of Native Americans in favor of other exotic peoples whose traditional culture had yet to begin the inevitable decay precipitated by contact with Western civilization. As a result, studies that deal with the American Indian comprise a small minority of the published folkloric works of this more recent

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[1]Richard M. Dorson presents a scholarly account of the basic tenets of several of these early folklorists, collectively referred to as "solar mythologists," in his essay, "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," Journal of American Folklore 68 (1955):393-416.

[2]Franz Boas, Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology. American Folklore Society Memoirs, no. 28. (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co.).

period.

It is an unfortunate fact that most of the folklore materials published to date on the subject of Native Americans consists largely of anthologies of various tribes' narratives that contain few references to the cultures from which they were extracted. As a result there have been few attempts by folklorists to conduct any sort of systematic analysis of these materials. For the most part these early collections have been relegated to obscurity, abandoned by scholars in favor of seemingly more fruitful areas of theoretical concern. It is my contention that a great deal of import must be accorded these narratives, for they were a vital part of the culture of various Native American groups, and as such, can prove to be of great value in promoting a further understanding of the dynamic processes at work in these cultures. Conversely, we may also assert, as has William Bascom, that the folklore of a particular group may only be understood by having a knowledge of the culture of which it is a part.[3] In this light, I will address myself to a study of the mythology of one such group in order to illustrate the fact that we may indeed learn a great deal about the functions myths serve in expressing the overtly manifest aspects of culture, as well as the latent functions which are often not readily apparent.

For example, the various episodes which comprise the Raven cycle of myths among the Tlingit Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America are generally viewed by scholars as serving the manifest function of explaining the origin of various phenomena. While this

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[3]William Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore," Journal of American Folklore 67 (1954):333-349.

interpretation may well be valid, I feel that the inclusion of these episodes within the body of the myth serves another, more important, function--that of presenting institutionalized behavioral alternatives available to the members of the society. In addition, these episodes also impart upon various phenomena a rudimentary classificatory system to which the audience can relate. These points will be further elaborated in the analysis.

I have chosen to examine the mythology of the Tlingit Indians for three reasons: first, I have had a continuing interest in the various aboriginal populations which inhabited this portion of North America from my previous studies in anthropology; second, there is a considerable body of available ethnographic data upon which to base my arguments; and third, the mythology of the Tlingit Indians has been sufficiently recorded to enable me to examine a fair sampling of the range of narrative materials.[4]

We have already mentioned the fact that a basic understanding of the culture is a prerequisite for comprehending the mythology of any people. To this end, the reader will find included within the body of the paper a brief ethnographic description of the Tlingit. I have endeavored to depict Tlingit culture as it appeared about the

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[4]Variants of the myths associated with the Raven cycle were obtained from the following sources and appear in an appendix at the end of this paper: Franz Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, Bureau of American Ethnology, Thirty-first Annual Report (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), pp. 621-622; A. F. Golder, "Tlingit Myths," Journal of American Folklore 20 (1907):290-295; Aurel Krause, The Tlingit Indian: Results of a Trip to the Northwest Coast of America and the Bering Straits (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956), pp. 174-193; and John R. Swanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 39 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), pp. 3-21, 80-154.

turn of the twentieth century, approximately the point in time in which the narratives were collected. Despite the fact that the Tlingit were first contacted by Europeans as early as the eighteenth century, their adamant refusal to become acculturated into Western civilization resulted in the retention of many of the traditional culture elements until just prior to the turn of the twentieth century. This observation is substantiated by the fact that there are few references in the Tlingit narrative texts to Christian theological concepts.

In an attempt to lessen the possibility of obtaining texts which have been influenced by intrusions from European culture I have chosen to examine several variants associated with the Raven cycle of myths. Because of the sacred nature of these myths, we may assume that they are more resistant to outside influences than other secular genres of folklore and, therefore, are more likely to closely approximate those narratives recounted by narrators prior to European contact.

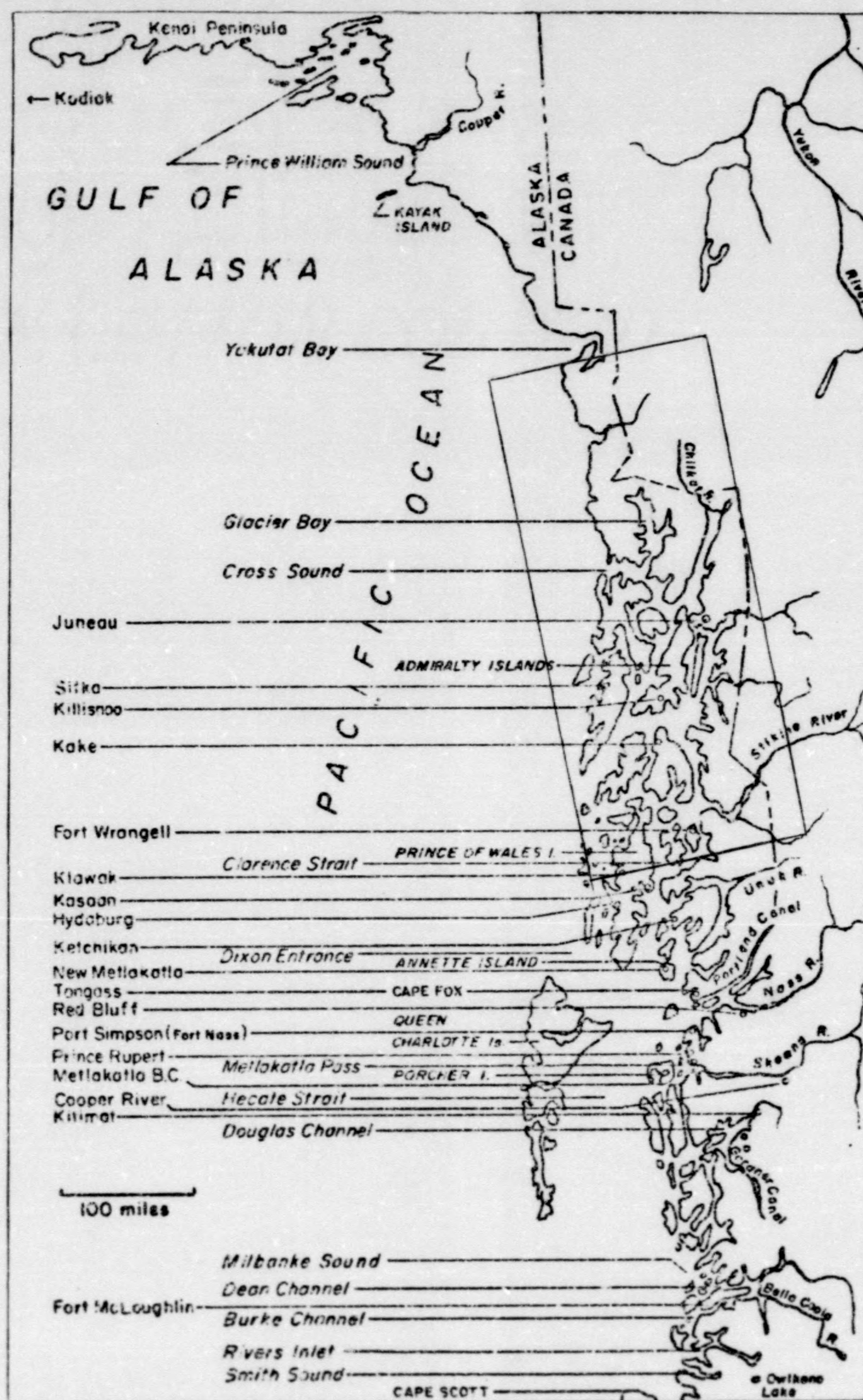
Before beginning a discussion of the Raven cycle as it was manifested among the Tlingit Indians it is necessary to provide some background information on the culture of which these narratives were a part. The following section of this paper is devoted to a brief ethnographic description of the Tlingit as they appeared at the point of European contact.

CHAPTER I

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE TLINGIT

When first contacted by Europeans the Tlingit Indians occupied that area of the eastern coast of Alaska from Yakutat Bay southward to Prince of Wales Island. The northern reaches of this area are characterized by steep, rugged mountains that terminate at the water's edge, and it is only in the more southerly bays and inlets that narrow beaches are found which are suitable for habitation. Just off of the coast of this part of Alaska lie numerous islands, formed when a portion of the coastal range submerged and left only the peaks of the mountains exposed above sea level (see Figure 1).

Climatically the area is characterized by moderate temperatures and heavy rainfall, the latter totaling over one hundred inches a year in many areas. Temperatures range from a high of eighty degrees during the brief summer months to well below zero degrees in the winter. This unusual weather pattern is precipitated by the warm waters of the Japanese Current as it moves southward from the Aleutian Islands, and is responsible for the distinctive vegetative growth that has developed there. Dense forests of cedar, fir, spruce, pine, hemlock and yew cover the mountains along the coast, while the thick mesh of mosses, ferns, and deciduous shrubs that carpet the forest floor makes the interior reaches of the area all but impenetrable during the summer months.



The North Pacific Coast—Northern Localities

Figure 1. The enclosed area indicates the territory occupied by the Tlingit Indians

*map after Phillip Drucker. Cultures of the North Pacific. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965. p. 2.

The primary means of subsistence for the Tlingit was by fishing, both in the coastal waters and in the major rivers of the area. The most popular fish were the various species of salmon, with cod, halibut, herring and smelt being taken in lesser quantities. The eulachon, or candlefish, was much prized for its oil, which was often traded to neighboring inland groups in return for copper, obsidian, and other needed items. Supplementing the above diet were various species of shellfish and numerous types of algaes and seaweeds.[1]

The Tlingit also hunted a variety of animal species that were native to the area including deer, black and grizzly bears, moose, mountain goats and sheep, porcupine, caribou, and rabbits. The Tlingit also utilized the fur from a number of different animals including fox, wolf, otter, mink, beaver, marten, and lynx. Several species of marine animals were hunted for both meat and for skins. These included hair seals, sea otters, and sea lions. Unlike the Haida, their neighbors to the south, the Tlingit did not usually hunt whales, although if a dead carcass drifted ashore it was eagerly butchered for food.[2]

During the warm summer months numerous species of berries native to the area provided a welcome addition to the Tlingit diet. Among the most commonly utilized were the cranberry, salmonberry, serviceberry, huckleberry, soapberry, wild currant, thimbleberry and swampberry.[3]

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[1]Kalervo Oberg, The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), p. 8.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

Although European explorers had been aware of the Tlingit as early as the eighteenth century, it was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that any large-scale contact was made with these peoples. Russian explorers and fur traders often found the Tlingit to be somewhat less than friendly. As one historian noted, the Tlingit were "haughty, aggressive, thieving, and bellicose, especially when they outnumbered the intruders."[4]

Prior to European contact little is known of the Tlingit Indians, save for the fragmentary archaeological record.[5] According to Tlingit traditions they formerly occupied the territory along the lower Skeena River and adjacent coast, but were forced northward by ancestors of the coast Tsimshian. These same traditions were also held by the Haida, the southern neighbors of the Tlingit; however, there is insufficient archaeological evidence to posit a common southerly origin for either of the two groups.[6] Linguistic evidence, on the other hand, argues in favor of such an hypothesis, for both the Tlingit and Haida dialects are related to the Athapascan language family, which is spoken by interior peoples of the Yukon and McKenzie drainages and by a few of the more southerly coastal groups. Based on this evidence alone, Tlingit and Haida accounts of a southern origin for their respective groups may well be correct.

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[4]Wendell H. Oswalt, _This Land Was Theirs: A Study of the North American Indian_ (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 298.

[5]Frederica de Laguna, _The Story of a Tlingit Community_, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 172 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960).

[6]Phillip Drucker, _Cultures of the North Pacific Coast_ (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 103-105.

The Tlingit villages were located in close proximity to coastal fishing water and major freshwater streams--usually in bays and inlets or near the mouths of rivers.[7] Their large cedar planked houses were situated in rows along the beach with the doors facing the water. House construction consisted of four corner posts and plates, with two of the four sides having taller center posts in order to help support the roof beams. The gabled roof and the walls of the house were covered with planking of cedar. The interior walls of the house were lined with sleeping and storage compartments, and the overhead beams were used to store the hunting and fishing equipment, as well as for drying fish. In the larger houses a portion of the floor was excavated to a depth of approximately three feet in order to provide space for a sweatbath and fireplace. The doorway and a smoke hole in the roof provided light and ventilation during the day, and the fireplace provided light at night.[8] Among the northern groups of Tlingit the inside walls of the houses were decorated with panels and screens which depicted the heraldry of the particular lineages. Totem poles, which showed the clan affiliations of the individual households, were often located in front of the houses. During the warm summer months these large, permanent shelters were abandoned in favor of less substantial structures which were erected closer to the fishing and hunting grounds.

The Tlingit were excellent craftsmen. Their artifacts of

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[7]Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs, p. 300.

[8]Aurel Krause, The Tlingit Indians: Results of a Trip to the Northwest Coast of America and the Bering Straits, trans. Erna Gunther (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956), p. 88.

wood, bone and stone were among the best crafted items in all of North America. The largest and most important item manufactured was their fishing canoe, the largest ones holding sixty individuals and measuring over forty feet in length. The process of building such a craft was time consuming and demanded great skill.[9] Prior to the introduction of the steel axe, large red cedars were felled by building fires at their base. The fallen trunks were then scraped and hewn with ground stone adzes. After the canoes had been roughed out the interiors were filled with water, into which heated stones were dropped. This process further softened the wood so that thin strips of wood could be wedged across the gunwales to splay the sides of the vessels.[10] After the final form of the vessels had been set, designs and figures were sometimes painted on the sides and carved on the bows. During the summer months the Tlingit paddled their canoes southward where they traded with neighboring Haida and Tsimshian groups. According to one authority, historical documents show that the Tlingit sometimes traveled as far south as the Puget Sound area of Washington state.[11]

Toward the end of the summer the Tlingit began preparations for the coming winter months. Berries were picked and stored with candlefish oil in airtight boxes. The flesh from large game animals was cut into strips and either sun dried or boiled and stored in oil. Starting in September, large quantities of salmon were taken in weirs in the streams. The heads, entrails, and tails of the fish

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[9]Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs, p. 304.

[10]Ibid., p. 306.

[11]Ibid., p. 307.

were removed and the remaining portion was either dried or smoked. As soon as sufficient quantities of salmon were caught and preserved, the Tlingit left their fishing camps and returned to their villages, where they remained for the winter. During the long winter months there was little outside activity and most of the time was devoted to the repairing of fishing and hunting equipment, storytelling and feasting.[12]

The Indians of the Northwest Coast had an exceedingly complex social organization. Tlingit kinship was based on matrilineal descent from one of two totemically named exogamous kin groups. All Tlingit belonged to either the Tlaiendi, or Raven phratry, or to the Sinkukedi, or Wolf phratry. Among the more northerly groups the Nexadi, or Eagle phratry, replaced the Sinkukedi as one of the two kin groups.[13] Each Tlingit was also a member of a particular clan. Like the phratry, the clan was exogamic, matrilineal and totemic; however, while the phratry was a ceremonial unit, the clan functioned primarily as a political unit.[14] Each local clan division was further divided into a number of house groups, each containing several primary families. These local clan divisions owned all property, including rights to salmon streams, hunting grounds, berry patches, sealing islands, housing sites within the village, important totemic crests and shamanistic spirits.[15]

Their totemic crests were of great importance to the Tlingit

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Drucker, Cultures of the North Pacific Coast, pp. 46-47.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Oberg, Social Economy of the Tlingit, p. 55.

clans. According to tradition the ancestors of each of the clans met spirits in the form of animals from whom they received supernatural powers. Through successive generations these spirits came to be symbolically represented by totemic crests, or heraldry, which adorned houses, canoes, clothing and religious paraphernalia. In addition to its major crest, each clan had one or more emblems of lesser value, symbolizing other spirit helpers. These totemic symbols also may have been correlated with divisions in the social organization of the Tlingit. According to Kalervo Oberg, the phratry totems were considered of primary importance, the function of each being to differentiate one phratry from another, to give unity to its members, and to connect each of these groups with the external world. Into a second category were placed the totems that related to the supernatural experiences of the mythical ancestors of the clan; and finally, into the last category went the house group crests, which were of lesser value.[16]

Within the local kin groups there were essentially two recognized statuses, the nobles and the commoners. There were further gradations within the two statuses so that no two individuals occupied the same rank. An individual's ranking, as well as his membership in the group, was determined by birth; and because of this fact there was little opportunity for upward social mobility for commoners. Despite these differences in status and rank no caste system developed within Tlingit society because all members of the kin group were considered to be blood relatives.[17] Instead, the nobles of the kin

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[16] Ibid., p. 44.

[17] Drucker, Cultures of the North Pacific Coast, pp. 48-49.

group were the heads of the house, and as such represented the household in ceremonial activities and in councils, while the rest of the kin group worked to support this independent economic unit.

The house was the center of social life for the Tlingit, and as such was considered sacred. The names of the houses were totemic, and even the construction or the tearing down of a house was considered a ceremonial activity. Just as the house group was a definite social entity, so did the house serve as its external manifestation in space.[18] Oberg noted that the house was intimately associated with the activities that centered around the men of the household. When the boy was transferred to his uncle's house he was initiated into his social group, learning the ceremonies and sacred symbols that were a part of his life until death. Even then, after the feasting and the ceremonies that attended his funeral were completed, his ashes were placed in a cavity in a house post so that his spirit could join those of the ancestors of his clan.[19]

The religion of the Tlingit may be said to have been a combination of totemism, shamanism and magic. The first of these we have already briefly addressed in this section; however, because of its pervasive influence on Tlingit life, the concept deserves further elaboration.[20] To the Tlingit all things were possessed by a spiritual quality, and according to tradition everything in the

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[18]Oberg, Social Economy of the Tlingit, p. 53.

[19]Ibid., p. 54.

[20]For a detailed discussion of the concept of totemism the reader is directed to an article by Franz Boas, "The Origin of Totemism," American Anthropologist 18 (1916):319-326.

world had one principal and several subordinate spirits. Many of these spirits were guardians, watching over an individual to see that no misfortune befell him. Others were the original ancestors of the various kin groups who had appeared once in the form of an animal and had given mankind a particular power, along with the attendant names, songs, dances, and crests needed to invoke it.[21] Still other spirits were malevolent monsters who could bring death to the unwary. According to Tlingit belief these spirits were a part of everyday life, and only through ritual cleanliness and knowledge of certain ritual acts was one able to deal with them.

Cosmologically, the earth was conceived of as a flat surface and the sky as a vault. The stars, sun, and moon were viewed as abodes of spirits; the northern lights as spirits of the dead playing about; the rainbow as a road by which the souls of the dead passed to the upper world; and shooting stars as embers thrown down by the fires of these spirits.[22] The world was thought to rest on a post made from the foreleg of a beaver, which was guarded by Old-woman-underneath (Hayica'nak!^{u}), who caused the earth to shake when she became hungry.

The Tlingit believed that when an individual died his soul passed to sa'gi qa'wu a'ni (ghosts' home), located on a plane above earth. If a man died by violence he went to ta hit (sleep house) by means of a ladder that led through a hole in the sky. If his

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[21]Drucker, Cultures of the North Pacific Coast, p. 85.

[22]For a full discussion of the cosmology of the Tlingit the reader is directed to John R. Swanton's Social Condition, Beliefs, and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians, (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970), from which the above material is taken.

death was unavenged he could not climb the ladder and drifted by on the wind with the clouds. Those who drowned went to a region below the earth, and offerings sent to them were put into the sea. When somecne bad died, his soul went to Yel qiwaqa'wo (Raven's home).

The Tlingit were especially fearful of land otters, for they felt that their spirits, in the form of land-otter-men (ku'catqa), were capable of stealing people away, depriving them of their senses, and turning them into land-otter-men. According to tradition, when someone was in danger of drowning the land-otter-men would come to them in their canoes and take the person to become one of them.

While not all individuals were able to invoke totemic spirits, a few were particularly adept at manipulating individual spiritual helpers. These persons, called shamans, often were very influential in Tlingit society, and some became quite wealthy and powerful due to their proficiency in practising their art.

Unlike totemism, which was social and integrative, shamanism was individual and disintegrative.[23] The shaman's duties were multitude: because sickness frequently was thought to be caused by witchcraft, it was the task of the shaman to effect a cure for the individual through the invocation of spirits that were more powerful than those of the victim's bewitcher. The standard procedure in curing the patient consisted of dancing around the individual, followed by blowing or sucking, or passing over the affected parts objects which had power to cure the patient of his or her affliction.[24] In addition to curing illnesses the shamans also accompanied tribal members during

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[23]Oberg, Social Economy of the Tlingit, p. 20.

[24]Swanton, Social Condition of the Tlingit, p. 464.

warfare, invoking spiritual guidance in order to aid their respective clansmen.[25] Finally, shamans were also expected to assist in obtaining food and in cases of difficult births.

An individual became a shaman by inheriting the power from his uncle. Thus, when a shaman was nearing death he endeavored to pass on his knowledge, power, and the associated religious paraphenalia to his successor.

It is hoped that the preceding ethnographic description of Tlingit culture will serve to enhance the reader's appreciation of the mythology of the Tlingit Indians. The pages which immediately follow are devoted to a discussion of the Raven myth as it was manifested among the Tlingit.

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[25]Oberg notes in Social Economy of the Tlingit (p. 20) that individual warriors on both sides sometimes would retire while their respective shamans shouted threats against one another, with the more verbose of the two deciding the outcome of the conflict.

CHAPTER II

THE RAVEN MYTHS

A total of three Raven texts are included within this study. The first, which appears immediately following this brief introduction, is included within the body of the paper to serve as an illustrative example; the others, along with a summary by Franz Boas of the introduction to the Raven cycle, are included for purposes of contrast, and appear in appendices at the end of this work.

My decision to include this particular variant as illustrative of the Raven cycle is not arbitrary, for I feel that it best exemplifies the range of narratives found among the Tlingit. Like most of the texts which I examined, the following variant is a composite. That is, the narrator has incorporated into the text a number of different episodes which are common to the Raven cycle in order to provide a highly detailed account of Raven's adventures. In one sense, however, the variant is atypical, for it is of greater length than my other examples, possibly indicating the narrator's desire to incorporate into the narrative a number of episodes which were of particular interest or importance to him.

The reader will notice also that the content and style of each of the variants provided varies by different degrees. This is reflective of the fact that each narrator has chosen to include within his narrative those events which are of interest to him, and to recount each according to his own particular style of narration.

Boas' summary is of particular utility in this regard, for he provides a text which may be compared with the other variants so that one may determine which of the above-mentioned episodes have been included or omitted by the particular narrator in question.

Finally, I have endeavored to obtain texts free from adulterations imposed by some authors who tend to rewrite the narratives which they collect according to Western literary tastes. With the exception of the first text in the appendices, all other narratives were collected by ethnographers who were cognizant of the linguistic structure of the Tlingit dialect and, therefore, were aware of any incongruities with regard to translation.

The variant which immediately follows was recorded by John R. Swanton in Wrangell, Alaska in 1904. Swanton provided little contextual information regarding the circumstances under which the narrative was collected other than the fact that the narrator was a chief of the Raven phratry named Katishan who was one of Swanton's principal informants during his tenure at Wrangell. That which follows is a verbatim transcription from Swanton.

Raven[1]

In olden times only high-caste people knew the story of Raven properly because only they had time to learn it.

At the beginning of things there was no daylight and the world lay in blackness. Then there lived in a house at the head of Nass river a being called Raven-at-the-head-of-Nass (Nas-ca'ki-yel), the principal deity to whom the Tlingit formerly prayed but whom no one had seen; and in his house were all kinds of things including sun, moon, stars, and daylight. He was addressed in prayers as Axcagu'n, or Axkinaye'gi, My Creator, and Wayigena'lxe, Invisible-rich-man. With him were two old men called Old-man-who-foresees-all-troubles-in-the-

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[1]Swanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts, p. 80-89.

world (Adawu'l!-ca'nak!u), and He-who-knows-everything-that-happens (Liu'wat-uwadji'gi-can). Next to Nas-ca'ki-yel, they prayed to the latter of these. Under the earth was a third old person, Old-woman-underneath (Hayi-ca'nak!u), placed under the world by Nas-ca'ki-yel. Nas-ca'ki-yel was unmarried and lived alone with these two old men, and yet he had a daugher, a thing no one is able to explain. Nor do people know what this daughter was. The two old persons took care of her like servants, and especially they always looked into the water before she drank to see that it was perfectly clean.

First of all beings Nas-ca'ki-yel created the Heron (Laq!) as a very wise and very tall man and after him the Raven (Yel), who was also a very good and very wise man at that time.

Raven came into being in this wise. His first mother had many children, but they all died young, and she cried over them continually. According to some, this woman was Nas-ca'ki-yel's sister and it was Nas-ca'ki-yel who was doing this because he did not wish her to have any male children. By and by Heron came to her and said, 'What is it that you are crying about all the time?' She answered, 'I am always losing my children. I cannot bring them up.' Then he said, 'Go down on the beach when the tide is lowest, get a small, smooth stone, and put it into the fire. When it is red hot, swallow it. Do not be afraid.' She said, 'All right.' Then she followed Heron's directions and gave birth to Raven. Therefore Raven's name was really Itca'k!u, the name of a very hard rock, and he was hence called Ta'qlik!-ic (Hammer-father). This is why Raven was so tough and could not easily be killed.

Heron and Raven both became servants to Nas-ca'ki-yel, but he thought more of Raven and made him head man over the world. Then Nas-ca'ki-yel made some people.

All of the beings Nas-ca'ki-yel had created, however, existed in darkness, and this existence lasted for a long time, how long is unknown. But Raven felt very sorry for the few people in darkness and, at last, he said to himself, 'If I were only the son of Nas-ca'ki-yel I could do almost anything.' So he studied what he should do and decided upon a plan. He made himself into a hemlock needle, and floated upon the water Nas-ca'ki-yel's daughter was about to drink. Then she swallowed it and soon after became pregnant.

Although all this was by the will of Nas-ca'ki-yel and although he knew what was the matter with his daughter, yet he asked her how she had gotten into that condition. She said, 'I drank water, and I felt that I had swallowed something in it.' Then Nas-ca'ki-yel instructed them to get moss for his daughter to lie upon, and on that the child was born. They named him Nas-ca'ki-yel also. Then Nas-ca'ki-yel cut a basket in two and used half of it for a cradle, and he said that people would do the same thing in future times, so they have since referred to its use to him.

Nas-ca'ki-yel tried to make human beings out of a rock and out of a leaf at the same time, but the rock was slow while the leaf was very quick. Therefore human beings came from the leaf. Then he showed a leaf to the human beings and said, 'You

see this leaf. You are to be like it. When it falls off the branch and rots there is nothing left of it.' That is why there is death in the world. If men had come from rock there would be no death. Years ago people used to say when they were getting old,'We are unfortunate in not having been made from rock. Being made from a leaf, we must die.'

Nas-ca'ki-yel also said, 'After people die, if they are not witches, and do not lie or steal, there is a good place for them to go to.' Wicked people are to be dogs and such low animals hereafter. The place for good people is above, and, when one comes up there, he is asked,'What were you killed for?' or 'What was your life in the world?' The place he went to was governed by his reply. So people used to say to their children, 'Do not lie. Do not steal. For the maker (Nas-ca'ki-yel) will see you.'

Some time afterward a man died, and Raven, coming into the house, saw him there with his wife and children weeping around him. So he raised the dead man's blanket with both hands, held it over the body, and brought him back to life.

After that both Raven and her husband told this woman that there was no death, but she disbelieved them. Then Raven said to her, 'Lie down and go to sleep.' And, as she slept, she thought she saw a wide trail with many people upon it and all kinds of fierce animals around. Good people had to pass along this trail in order to live again. When she came to the end of the trail there was a great river there, and a canoe came across to her from the other side of it. She entered this and crossed. There some people came to her and said, 'You better go back. We are not in a good place. There is starvation here, we are cold, and we get no water to drink.'

This is why people burn the bodies of the dead and put food into the fire for them to eat. Burning their bodies makes the dead comfortable. If they were not burned their spirits would be cold. This is why they invite all those of the opposite clan as well as the nearest relations of the dead man's wife, seating them together in one place, and burn food in front of them. It is because they think that the dead person gets all of the property destroyed at the feast and all of the food then burned up. It is on account of what Raven showed them that they do so.

Because Nas-ca'ki-yel got it into his mind to wish for daylight in the world, he had wished for a grandchild through whom it might come. Now, therefore, although he knew what answer he would receive, he sent for Liu'wat-uwadjigi-can and questioned him to see whether he would answer right: 'Where did this child come from? Whose is it? Can you tell?' And the other said, 'His eyes look like the eyes of Raven.' That is how he came to get the name Raven.

After a while the baby began to crawl about. His grandfather thought a great deal of him and let him play with everything in the house. Everything in the house was his. The Raven began crying for the moon, until finally they handed it to him and quick as a wink he let it go up into the sky. After he had

obtained everything else, he began to cry for the box in which daylight was stored. He cried, cried, cried for a very long time, until he looked as though he were getting very sick, and finally his grandfather said, 'Bring my child here.' So they handed Raven to his grandfather. Then his grandfather said to him, 'My grandchild, I am giving you the last thing I have in the world.' So they gave it to him.

Then Raven, who was already quite large, walked down along the bank of the Nass river until he heard the noise people were making as they fished along the shore for eulachon in the darkness. All the people in the world then lived at one place at the mouth of the Nass. They had already heard that Nas-ca'ki-yel had something called 'daylight,' which would some day come into the world, and they used to talk about it a great deal. They were afraid of it.

Then Raven shouted to the fishermen, 'Why do you make so much noise? If you make so much noise I will break daylight on you.' Eight canoe loads of people were fishing there. But they answered, 'You are not Nas-ca'ki-yel. How can you have the daylight?' and the noise continued. Then Raven opened the box a little and light shot over the world like lightning. At that they made still more noise. So he opened the box completely and there was daylight everywhere.

When this daylight burst upon the people they were very much frightened, and some ran into the water, some into the woods, Those that had hair seal or fur seal skins for clothing ran into the water and became hair seals and fur seals. Hair seal and fur seal were formerly only the names of the clothing they had. Those who had skins called marten skins, black-bear skins, grizzly-bear skins, etc., ran into the woods and turned into such animals.

Petrel (Ganu'k) was one of the first persons created by Nas-ca'ki-yel. He was keeper of the fresh water, and would let none else touch it. The spring he owned was on a rocky island outside of Kuiu, called Keki'-nu (Fort-far-out), where the well may still be seen. Raven stole a great mouthful of water and dropped it here and there as he went along. This is the origin of the great rivers of the world, the Nass, Skeena, Stikine, Chilikat, and others. He said, 'This thing that I drop here and there will whirl all the time. It will not overflow the world, yet there will be plenty of water.' Before this time Raven is said to have been pure white, but, as he was flying up through the smoke hole with Petrel's water, the later said, 'Spirits, hold down my smoke hole.' So they held him until he was turned black by the smoke.

After this Raven saw a fire far out at sea. Tying a piece of pitchwood to a chicken hawk's bill, he told him to go out to this fire, touch it with the pitchwood, and bring it back. When he had brought it to him Raven put it into the rock and the red cedar saying, 'This is how you are to get your fire, from this rock and this red cedar,' and that is the way they formerly did.

Thus Raven (Yel) went about among the natives of Alaska telling them what to do, but Nas-ca'ki-yel they never saw. Raven

showed all the Tlingit what to do for a living, but he did not get to be such a high person as Nas-ca'ki-yel, and he taught the people much foolishness. At that time the world was full of dangerous animals and fish. Raven also tied up some witches, and so it was through him that the people believed in witchcraft. Then he told the people that some wild animals were to be their friends (i.e., the crest animals) to which they were to talk.

Once he gave a great feast and invited persons to it from other places. He had two slaves after that, named Gidzage't and Gidzanu'q!u. This is why the natives here had slaves. It was on account of his example. There was a man who had no arm, so Raven thought he would be a shaman and cure him. This is how the Tlingit came to have shamans. After there was death he showed them how to dance over the body placed in the middle of the floor.

Raven also taught the people how to make halibut hooks, and went out fishing with them. He had names for the halibut hooks and talked to them before he let them down into the sea. That is why the natives do so now. He also taught them to be very quick when they went fishing or they would catch nothing.

He also made the different kinds of fish traps and taught the people how to use them. He made the small variety and a big trap, shaped like a barrel, for use in the Stikine.

He taught them how to make the seal spear (kat). It has many barbs, and there are different kinds. One is called tsa-caxictdza's. It is provided with some attachment that hits the seal (tsa) upon the head whenever it comes to the surface, driving its head under water until it dies, and that is what the name signifies.

Then he showed them how to make a canoe. This he did on the Queen Charlotte islands. At first the people were afraid to get into it, but he said, 'The canoe is not dangerous. People will seldom get drowned.'

He taught them how to catch a salmon called icqe'n, which requires a different kind of hook from that used for halibut. The place where he taught people how to get different kinds of shellfish is a beach on the Queen Charlotte islands called Raven's beach to this day.

After he was through teaching the people these things, he went under the ocean, and when he came back, taught them that the sea animals are not what we think they are, but are like human beings. First he went to the halibut people. They have a chief who invited him to eat, and had dried devilfish and other kinds of dried fish brought out. He was well liked everywhere he went under the sea because he was a very smart man. After that he went to see the sculpin people, who were very industrious and had all kinds of things in their houses. The killer-whale people seemed to live on hair seal meat, fat, and oil. Their head chief was named Gonaqad't, and even to this day the natives say that the sight of him brings good fortune.

While he was under the ocean he saw some people fishing for halibut, and he tried to tease them by taking hold of their bait. They, however, caught him by the bill and pulled him up as far

as the bottom of their canoe, where he braced himself so that they pulled his bill out. They did not know what this bill was and called it gone't-luwu' (bill-of-something-unknown). Then Raven went from house to house inquiring for his bill until he came to the house of the chief. Upon asking for it there, they handed it to him wrapped in eagle down. Then he put it back into its place and flew off through the smoke hole.

Raven left that town and came to another. There he saw a king salmon jumping about far out at sea. He got it ashore and killed it. Because he was able to do everything, the natives did all that he told them. He was the one who taught all things to the natives, and some of them still follow his teachings. After that he got all kinds of birds for servants. It was through these that people found out he was the Raven.

Once he went to a certain place and told the people to go and fight others. He said, 'You go there and kill them all, and you will have all the things in that town.' This was the beginning of war.

After having been down among the fish teaching them, Raven went among the birds and land animals. He said to the grouse (nukt), 'You are to live in a place where it is wintry, and you will always look out for a place high up so that you can get plenty of breeze.' Then he handed the grouse four white pebbles, telling to swallow them so that they might become his strength. 'You will never starve,' he said, ' so long as you have these four pebbles.' He also said, 'You know that Sealion is your grandchild. You must be generous, get four more pebbles and give them to him.' That is how the sealion came to have four large pebbles. It throws these at hunters, and, if one strikes a person, it kills him. From this story it is known that the grouse and the sealion can understand each other.

Raven said to the ptarmigan: 'You will be the maker of snowshoes. You will know how to travel in snow.' It was from these birds that the Athapascans learned how to make snowshoes, and it was from them that they learned how to put their lacings on.

Next Raven came to the 'wild canary' (s!as!), which he found in the Tlingit country all the year round, and said: 'You will be head among the very small birds. You are not to live on what human beings eat. Keep away from them.'

Then he went to the robin and said: 'You will make the people happy by letting them hear your whistle. You will be a good whistler.'

Then he said to the flicker (kun): 'You will be the head one among the birds next in size. You will not be found in all places. You will be very seldom seen.'

He said to the luga'n, a bird that lives far out on the ocean: 'You will live far out on the ocean on lonely rocks. You will be very seldom seen near shore.'

Then he came to the snipes and said to them: 'You will always go in flocks. You will never go out alone.' Therefore, we always see them in flocks.

He said to the asq!aca'tci, a small bird with greenish-yellow plumage: 'You will always go in flocks. You will always be on

the tops of the trees. That is where your food is.'

To a very small bird called kot!ai', about the size of a butterfly, he said: 'You will be a very respectable bird. You will be seen only to give good luck. People will hear your voice always but never see you.'

Then Raven came to the blue jay and said: 'You will have very fine clothes and be a good talker. People will take patterns (probably 'colors') from your clothes.'

Then he went to a bird called xunkaha' and said: 'You will never be seen unless the north wind is going to blow.' That is what its name signifies.

He came to the crows and said: 'You will make lots of noise. You will be great talkers.' That is why, when you hear one crow, you hear a lot of others right afterward.

He came to a bird called gus!yiadu'l and said to it: 'You will be seen only when the warm weather is coming on. Never come near except when warm weather is coming.'

He came to the hummingbird and said: 'A person will enjoy seeing you. If he sees you once, he will want to see you again.'

He said to the eagle: 'You will be very powerful and above all birds. Your eyesight will be very good. What you want will be very easy for you.' He put talons on the eagle and said that they would be very useful to him.

And so he went on speaking to all the birds.

Then he said to the land otter: 'You will live in the water just as well as on land.' He and the otter were good friends, so they went halibut fishing together. The land otter was a fine fisherman. Finally he said to the land otter: 'You will always have your house on a point where there is plenty of breeze from either size. Whenever a canoe capsizes with people in it you will save them and make them your friends.' The land-otter-man (ku'cta-qa) originated from Raven telling this to the land otter. All Alaskans know about the land-otter-man but very few tell the story of Raven correctly.

If the friends of those who have been taken away by the land otters get them back, they become shamans, therefore it was through the land otters that shamans were first known. Shamans can see one another by means of the land-otter spirits although others cannot.

The first man captured (or 'saved') by the land otters was a Kiksa'di named Kaka'. The land otters kept coming to him in large canoes looking like his mother or his sister or other dear relation, and pretending that they had been looking for him for a long time. But they could not control themselves as well as he, and at such time he would discover who they were and that their canoe was nothing but a skate. Finally, when Kaka' found that he could not see his friends, he thought that he might as well give himself up to the land otters. Then they named him Qowulka', a word in the land otter language now applied to a kind of fishhook which the halibut are thought to like better than all others. Nowadays, when a figure of Qowulka' is made, it is covered with dog skin, because it was by means of a dog skin that he frightened the land otters, and they also hang his apron about with dog bones. The shaman who is possessed

by him dresses in the same manner. From Kaka' the people learned that the land otters affect the minds of those who have been with them for a long time so as to turn them against their own friends. They also learned from him that there are shamans among the land otters, and that the land otters have a language of their own.

For two years Kaka''s friends hunted for him, fasting at the same time and remaining away from their wives. At the end of this period the land otters went to an island about fifty miles from Sitka and took Kaka' with them. The land otter tribe goes to this place every year. Then an old land-otter-woman called to Kaka': 'My nephew, I see that you are worrying about the people at your home. When you get to the place whither we are going place yourself astride of the first log you see lying on the beach and sit there as long as you can.' And her husband said to him: 'Keep your head covered over. Do not look around.' They gave him this direction because they thought, 'If this human being sees all of our ways and learns all of our habits, we shall die.' On the way across the land-otter-people sang a song, really a kind of prayer, of which the words are, 'May we get on the current running to the shore.'

The moment they came to land the land-otter-people disappeared and he did not know what had become of them. They may have run into some den. Then he ran up the sandy beach and sat on the first log he came to, as he had been directed. The instant his body touched it he became unconscious. It was a shaman's spirit that made him so.

By and by Kaka''s friends, who were at that time hunting for fur seals, an occupation that carries one far out to sea, suddenly heard the noise of a shaman's drum and people beating for him with batons. They followed the sound seaward until they saw thousands and thousands of sea birds flying about something floating upon the ocean a mile or two ahead of them. Arrived there they saw that it was a log with Kaka' lying upon it clothed only in a kelp apron. The people were delighted to find even his body, and took it into their canoe. He looked very wild and strange. He did not open his eyes, yet he seemed to know who had possession of him, and without having his lips stir a voice far down in his chest said, 'It is I my masters.' It was a shaman's spirit that said this, and to the present day a shaman's spirit will call the shaman's relations 'my masters.'

The old woman that saved him and told him to sit astride of the log was his spirit and so was her husband. The log was the spirit's canoe. This woman and her husband had been captured by the land otters long before, but Kaka' was so strong-minded a fellow that they felt they could do nothing with him, so they let him go and became his spirits. They could not turn him into a land otter because he did not believe that land otters are stronger than human beings.

After the people had brought Kaka' to a place just around the point from their village, he said, 'Leave me here for a little while.' So most of his relations remained with him, while two went home to tell the people who were there. They were not allowed to keep it from the women. Then they made a house for him

out of devil clubs and he was left there for two days while the people of the town fasted. They believed in these spirits as we now believe in God. Before he was brought home the house and the people in it had to be very clean, because he would not go where there was filth. After they got him home they heard the spirit saying far down within him, 'It is I, Old-land-otter-spirit (Ku'cta-koca'nqo-yek).' This was the name of the old woman who first told him what to do. The next spirit was The-spirit-that-saves (Qosine'xe-yek). He sang inside of him the same song that the land otters sang. It was his spirit's song and has many words to it.

All the birds that assembled around him when he was floating upon the sea were also his spirits. Even the wind and waves that first upset him were his spirits. Everything strange that he had seen at the time when the land otters got possession of him were his spirits. There are always sea birds sitting on a floating log, and from Kaka' people learned that these are shaman's spirits. It is from his experience that all Alaskans--Tlingit, Haida, even Eskimo and Athapascans--believe in the land-otter-men (ku'cta-qa). By means of his spirits Kaka' was able to stand going naked for two years. This story of Kaka' is a true story, and it is from him that the Tlingit believe in shaman's spirits (yek).

After leaving the land otters Raven appeared at Taku. There is a cliff at the mouth of that inlet called Was!as!e' where the North Wind used to live, and Raven stayed there with him. The North Wind was very proud and shone all over with what the Indians thought were icicles. So the Indians never say anything against the North Wind, however long it blows, because it has spirits (i.e., power). Years ago people thought that there were spirits in all the large cliffs upon the islands, and they would pray to those cliffs. They had this feeling toward them because Raven once lived in this cliff with the North Wind.

Raven observed certain regulations very strictly when he was among the rivers he had created. He told people never to mention anything that lives in the sea by its right name while they were there, but to call a seal a rabbit, for instance, and so with the other animals. This was to keep them from meeting with misfortune among the rapids. Formerly the Indians were very strict with their children when they went up the rivers, but nowadays all that has been forgotten.

After this Raven went to Chilkat and entered a sweat house along with the chief of the killer whales who tried to roast him. Raven, however, had a piece of ice near him and every now and then put a part of it into his mouth. Then he would tell the killer whale that he felt chilly and make him feel ashamed. 'If I did not belong to the Ganaxte'di family,' said Raven, 'I could not have stood that sweat house.' For this reason the Ganaxte'di now claim the raven as an emblem and think they have more right to it than anybody else.

It was from Raven that people found out there are Athapascan Indians. He went back into their country. So the Chilkat people to this day make their money by going thither. He also showed the Chilkat people how to take toil, secret storehouses

maintained some distance outside of town, and he taught them how to put salmon into these and keep them frozen there over winter. So the Chilkat people got their name from toil, 'storehouse,' and xat, 'salmon.'

Raven also showed the Chilkat people the first seeds of the Indian tobacco and taught them how to plant it. After it was grown up, he dried it, gathered clam shells, roasted them until they were very soft, and pounded them up with the tobacco. They used to chew this, and it was so good that it is surprising they gave it up. They made a great deal of money at Chilkat by trading with this among the interior Indians, but nowadays it is no longer planted.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

In this particular variant, as is the case with most narratives of the Raven cycle, we are dealing with what may be termed a composite text. That is, the narrative is composed of a number of short segments or episodes which, when combined with one another, comprise the text of that narrative. Because there is no fixed text, no final form that the narrative must take, the narrator is at liberty to develop the course of events in any of a number of different ways. Anything more than a cursory examination of Northwest Coast materials shows that the number of episodes and motifs a narrator may draw upon in order to develop his text is indeed quite large and, as will be shown, partially explains the degree of variation found in the Northwest Coast Raven cycle. In Tsimshian Mythology Franz Boas addresses himself to this fact:

> The great variety of individual incidents that compose the Raven myth from the regions where it has been most fully recorded suggest that there has been a tendency to incorporate in it any tale that would fit into the series of adventures.[1]

In order to illustrate this point we may examine the text that has been provided as an example. The narrative begins with the birth of Raven into what may be termed a proto-world, a pre-existing world which is different than the one of which we are a part.[2] This world

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[1]Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, p. 571.

[2]According to Franz Boas the Northwest Coast peoples distinguished between two types of narratives, tales and myths. The latter were characterized by the fact that they occurred in a period prior to the

is already inhabited by Nas-ca'ki-yel, the Creator; his two servants, Old-man-who-forsees-all-troubles-in the world and He-who-knows-everything-that-happens; Nas-ca'ki-yel's daughter; and his sister, who is Raven's mother. Also, there is Old-woman-underneath, who was placed under the earth by Nas-ca'ki-yel in order to guard the pole that supports the world. The narrator also tells us that Nas-ca'ki-yel has created Heron and a few people; but we learn that these beings exist in total darkness, for daylight is kept in a cedar box in a chief's house at the head of Nass River. Because the world already existed and was inhabited when Raven was born it is incorrect to refer to this narrative as a creation myth. A more appropriate term is transformation or origin myth. The difference between the two is discussed by Stith Thompson in the introduction to Tales of the North American Indians. In it he states:

> Prominent among these [tales] will be found mythological stories dealing with the world before it was in the present state. The primary purpose of such tales is to show the preparation for the present order of affairs. They often treat of demigods or culture heroes. They explain origins of animals, or tribes, or objects, or ceremonies, or the universe itself.[3]

Thus, Raven is introduced into the narrative in the role of a transformer, a Culture Hero. But in order to accomplish his task, to affect this transformation, he must become Nas-ca'ki-yel's son by transforming himself into a hemlock needle and impregnating the Creator's daughter. After having been born Raven continually cries for the various boxes that contain the moon, stars, and the sun.

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present, not because of their religious, ritualistic or explanatory nature. This observation explains the seemingly contradictory nature of Raven's behavior as both Culture Hero and as Trickster. Ibid., p. 565.

[3]Stith Thompson, Tales of the North American Indians (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. xvii.

Nas-ca'ki-yel finally succumbs to his grandson's wishes and gives him all of the boxes to play with. It is in this manner that mankind obtains daylight. Although all of the variants which I consulted contain an account of the origin of daylight, the degree of elaboration of the incident and its placement within the sequence of events in the narrative varies considerably from text to text, suggesting, again, the degree of latitude enjoyed by the narrator in constructing his story. In the variant presented by F. A. Golder the account of the origin of daylight constitutes a major portion of the entire narrative text.[4]

Associated with the origin of daylight is an account of how Raven transforms animals into their present form. After obtaining daylight Raven goes along the shore until he encounters a group of people fishing for eulachon. He asks them why they are making so much noise, and when they impolitely respond with even more noise he "breaks daylight" on them, sending those with seal skin clothes into the water and those with other animal skins into the woods, each becoming the animal whose skin he wears. This account is common to all of the variants which I examined and usually follows immediately after the account of the origin of daylight.

It is interesting to note at this point that the narrator of the variant has chosen to include an account of the origin of death as a part of the Raven cycle. While such an account is not at all uncommon in the mythology of many of the Northwest Coast peoples, one infrequently finds it associated with, or a part of, the Raven

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[4] F. A. Golder, "Tlingit Myths," Journal of American Folklore 20 (1907):290-295.

cycle.[5]

We have previously mentioned that the narrator is free to elaborate on a particular episode, emphasizing those incidents which are of particular interest or importance to both him and the audience. But what of those episodes which he choses not to embellish, and instead provides a mere outline of the events which transpire? We may compare the episode in which Raven tricks Petrel out of fresh water as it appears in the above variant with another which was obtained in 1879 by Aurel Krause, who, in the company of her husband, provided one of the earliest ethnographical accounts of the Tlingit.

> Raven went ashore after falling on the seaweed, but found no water anywhere until he came to the house of an old man, named Petrel. He had water in a small box which he always kept locked and on which he sat. Petrel gave Raven some to drink but not enough, so Raven now employed his wiles to get more water. When Petrel had fallen asleep, he laid dog excrement under his caribou skin blanket and woke him up and said, 'My friend, you are dreaming and you have soiled your bed; go outside and wash it.' Petrel actually followed this advice and Raven drank so much water while Petrel was outside that it rose up into his throat. Then he flew away and sat on a pitchy tree. The angry Petrel gathered pitch wood under the tree and kindled a large fire. Raven, who had been white, became black from the smoke. Then he flew away over all the mountains and spit a little water everywhere. Since that time the brooks and rivers come from the mountains.[6]

Besides the fact that Krause's version is much more similar in style and content to those narratives of European origin with which we are most familiar, there is another more fundamental difference between the two accounts. In Swanton's variant Raven is portrayed as a beneficient being who takes it upon himself to bring

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[5]Franz Boas discusses the concept of the origin of death as it was manifested among various North American Indian groups in an article entitled, "The Origin of Death," Journal of American Folklore 30 (1971):486-491.

[6]Krause, The Tlingit Indians, p. 178.

fresh water to mankind; while in the above variant Raven is portrayed as being gluttonous, and mankind receives water only because Raven's greediness causes him to spill some of it as he flies away from Petrel's abode. This duality in Raven's personality, appearing as both benefactor and as glutton, is characteristic of the trickster figure as it is manifested throughout North American Indian mythology and will be discussed at length in a later section of this paper.[7]

After Raven obtains daylight and fresh water he sees a fire burning far out at sea. In order to obtain this fire Raven decides to tie some pitch wood to a chicken hawk's long bill and send him out to bring back the fire. But while flying back chicken hawk's bill catches fire and by the time he reaches the shore there is little left of it. Thus Raven obtains fire, but at the expense of chicken hawk, who, to this day, still has but a short stub of a bill.[8]

At this point in the narrative the narrator deviates from his earlier practice of recounting the origins of various natural elements and begins a discussion of how the Tlingit obtained their culture and its material manifestations, artifacts. Again we see Raven in the role of a transformer, teaching them how to catch fish, how to make traps, hooks, and spears; however, at this point the narrator provides us with an inkling of the true nature of Raven as the Trickster. He states, "Raven showed all the Tlingit what to do for a living, but he did not get to be such a high person as Nas-ca'ki-yel, and he taught

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[7]The classic study of the trickster figure in North American Indian mythology is Paul Radin's The Trickster. Radin focuses his attentions on the trickster figure as it appears in Winnebago mythology, although he does present a brief summary of Tlingit Raven myths.

[8]Swanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts, p. 11.

the people much foolishness."

The reader will remember that we previously stated that Tlingit religion may be divided into three components, or parts: totemism, shamanism and magic. From the text it appears that the narrator is also cognizant of this tripartite division as he dismisses the origins of all three in a few brief sentences. Correspondingly, he attributes the origin of totemism to the fact that Raven tells people that animals were to be their friends, and that they were to talk to these animals. Witchcraft, or magic, is mentioned as having originated when Raven ties up some witches. And shamanism comes about as a result of Raven's deciding to cure a man with but one arm. Given the importance of religion to the Tlingit, the fact that these three facets of religious conscience are not elaborated upon in much greater detail is extremely curious, and may only be resolved by alluding to Boas' definition of myth as not being characterized by its concern with religious percepts.

At this point the narrator again returns to the episodes which are a part of the Raven cycle. The incident in which Raven loses his beak is common to several of the variants that I obtained, and in order for the reader to understand fully some background information must be supplied. In some variants this particular episode is preceded by an account of Raven's voracious appetite for fat. He tricks some boys into throwing fat at him and greedily consumes his spoils, thus momentarily satisfying his appetite. However, Raven's voracious appetite is an integral part of his characterization as Trickster, and his weakness for the excess continually precipitates trouble for him. In the episode in which Raven loses his beak he

learns that the fishermen are using the much desired fat as their bait. Being a victim of his insatiable appetite Raven decides upon a plan whereby he feels he will be able to successfully steal the fishermen's bait. Unfortunately, Raven's plan fails and he is hooked by the fishermen. In attempting to free himself Raven's beak is pulled off and he is forced to go about in search of it. In the above variant Raven finally finds his beak at the house of a chief where it is forthwith presented to him wrapped in eagle down. In another variant, however, Raven tricks the people into removing the smokehole cover, through which he makes his escape after having duped them into giving him back his beak.[9]

The events which follow the episode of the loss of Raven's beak are quite interesting. The narrator proceeds to list a number of different bird species which are common to that area of the Northwest Coast, and tells how each comes to be named by Raven. This episode is unique to this particular variant, and whether it is normally associated with the Raven cycle is unknown. However, the fact that the narrator chooses to develop this incident in such detail, naming and describing each species of bird, is of some significance and will be discussed in a later section of the paper. However for now it will suffice to say that Raven again has assumed the role of a Transformer, bringing order to this proto-world.

The narrator then tells us of the origin of land otters, and of their subsequent transformation into beings who are much feared by mankind. It appears that the narrator uses the account of the origin of land otters as a transitional device which enables him to then

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[9]Ibid., p. 8.

insert an episode which accounts for the concept of the pervasive role that land-otter-men occupy in Tlingit society. In order to accomplish this task he again weaves into the Raven cycle a narrative which is normally not associated with it. The story of Kaka', the first person to be captured by the land-otter-men, is well known among the Tlingit.[10]

After having recounted the story of Kaka', the narrator once more returns to a description of the origins of other facets of Tlingit culture, including naming taboos, trade with interior Athapascan groups, and the origin of the name of the Chilkat people, and finally, the origin of the use of tobacco.

I have intentionally omitted this latter portion of the narrator's discourse for it deals with incidents which usually are not associated with the Raven cycle, and as a result, have little bearing on this discussion. Instead, I will comment upon the events which have transpired up to this point, and discuss their significance with regard to the analysis of the narrative.

We have shown that the Raven cycle among the Northwest Coast groups does not follow a given sequence of events. Rather, the narrator is free to develop those incidents in the episodes which are of particular interest to him, lessening his emphasis altogether omitting those which are of less consequence to him. The very fact that there is such a degree of latitude in developing the texts seems somewhat contradictory to us, for we are accustomed to the dogmatic religious texts that are associated with Christian theology. Boas

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[10]Examples of this narrative unit appear in the Tlingit texts provided by Swanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts, p. 28, and by Krause, Tlingit Indians, p. 197.

offers us an explanation of this apparent incongruity by stating that the Indians themselves do not view the narratives in the same context as do we. Instead, he argues, they perceive of two distinct types of narratives, myths and legends, with the former being characterized by the fact that they do not treat of the religious, reitualistic, or explanatory aspects of society.[11] On the contrary, they are concerned only with the concept of a proto-world, a world that existed prior to the time in which things were transformed into their present state. On the surface this explanation seems quite acceptable; however, close examination of the text shows that there is indeed a great deal of emphasis on the explanatory aspect in our narrative. The question then becomes one in which we are forced to reconcile this discrepancy.

In an article entitled, "The Explanatory Element in the Folktales of the North American Indians," T. T. Waterman discusses the appearance of explanatory elements in mythology.[12] He argues that the fact that some myths do serve an explanatory function is of secondary importance to that of the story's plot, illustrated by the fact that the narrative itself is often older than the thing it professes to explain. To illustrate his point he refer's to Boas' statement that elaborate myth cycles transcend tribal boundaries, losing old elements and adding new ones as they are disseminated. Therefore, we may encounter an episode which is incongruous with the rest of that narrative. Boas provides us with an example:

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[11]Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, p. 565.

[12]T. T. Waterman, "The Explanatory Element in the Folktales of the North American Indians," Journal of American Folklore 27 (1914): 1-54.

> In another way this point may be brought out in the story of the origin of death, which appears as part of the Raven cycle of the North Pacific coast. Here Raven tries to create man first from stone, then from leaves. Since his attempts to give life to stones was unsuccessful, and man originated from leaves, man dies like leaves. The men thus created were, however, not the only ones in existence, Raven tried to create them only in order to obtain helpers in a particular kind of work in which he was engaged. Nevertheless the generalized explanation of death is attached to this story.[13]

While it is correct to assume that in some instances the explanatory elements may have been incorporated into a pre-existing narrative, to assert that these elements are of secondary importance to the plot is at once debatable. We have already shown that there is no fixed sequence of events in the narrative, the narrator is free to transpose them at will, and frequently does so in the Raven cycle. In the example which appears in this paper the various incidents, or episodes, appear to have been lumped together indiscriminately, with the only unity being a commonality of theme. In Tsimshian Mythology Franz Boas addresses himself to this point:

> The very large number of these incidents, which are scattered through the tales in a most irregular manner, shows clearly that in none of the cycles as recorded is there any prescribed sequence of incidents. The disconnected character of the single adventures makes it very probable that no such regular sequence ever existed.[14]

And later he states:

> I believe this summary of incidents proves clearly that the Raven legend as a whole cannot be considered as a well-organized cycle. So many versions have been recorded, that, if the single incidents which occur--particularly in the Tlingit and Haida series--were old and widely distributed parts of the Raven legend, they would be expected to appear in other forms of the tradition too.[15]

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[13]Franz Boas, "Mythology and Folktales of the North American Indians," Journal of American Folklore 27 (1914):393.

[14]Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, p. 571.

[15]Ibid., p. 582.

In order to fully understand the appearance of these explanatory elements in the narrative text we must first comprehend the figure of Raven as he is manifested in Tlingit mythology. As we have previously stated, Raven appears both as Trickster and as Transformer throughout the culture area. Explanations for the dual nature of Raven have been advanced by several scholars, although few offer a more provocative argument for the appearance of such a phenomenon than does Paul Radin. According to Radin the character Raven has undergone an evolutionary transformation of his own, appearing in his earliest form among the peoples of the Northwest Coast in the guise of a glutton, a buffoon who perpetually falls prey to his baser instincts; and only later does he come to be associated with the concept of the Transformer, or Culture Hero. Radin even goes so far as to provide us with a plot that exemplifies Raven's evolutionary progression:

> In a world that has no beginning and no end, an ageless and Priapus-like protagonist is pictured strutting across the scene, wandering restlessly from place to place, attempting, successfully and unsuccessfull, to gratify his voracious hunger and his uninhibited sexuality. Though he seems to us . . . to have no purpose, at the end of his activities a new figure is revealed to us and a new psychical reorientation and environment have come into being.[16]

Whenever Raven appears in this latter form, Radin continues, he is generally depicted as being either a deity or a being on par with other deities, as is the case with the preceding variant.[17] That the Raven of our variant has yet to become deified is quite apparent when we recall the passage in which our narrator states that he "did not get to be such a high person as Nas-ca'ki-yel, and he taught the people much

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[16]Radin, The Trickster, pp. 167-168.

[17]Ibid., p. 164.

foolishness."[18]

If we accept Radin's assertion that the development of the character of Raven follows an evolutionary sequence then we must assume that the preceding variant is of a somewhat later origin than the other texts that I obtained, for Raven is portrayed as a benefactor who ameliorates mankind's position by securing for him daylight, fire and other necessities, and also by showing him how to procure food and shelter through the invention of weapons and tools. Conversely, the other variants recorded by Swanton and Krause must also be assumed to be older because Raven appears in the role of Trickster, and the transformations which bring about the present state of affairs are indirectly precipitated by Raven's gluttony and are not the result of his altruistic spirit.

Boas also sees a distinction between the characterization of Raven as Trickster with that of his role as Culture Hero. In this regard he states:

> Whenever the desire to benefit mankind is a more marked trait of the cycle, there are generally two distinct persons, one the trickster, the other the culture-hero. Thus the culture-hero of the Pacific coast gives man his arts, and is called 'the one who sets things right.' He is not a trickster, but all his actions have a distinct bearing upon the establishment of modern order.[19]

Therefore, the character Raven that appears in the preceding variant cannot be equated with Trickster, for his motives are ones of altruism and beneficence, the antithesis of the characterization of Trickster. Is he, then, an evolutionary product that develops contemporaneously with the culture of which he is a part? Paul Radin

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[18]Swanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts, p. 83.

[19]Boas, "Mythology and Folktales of Indians," p. 399.

would have us believe so.

> It /the plot/ embodies the vague memories of an archaic and primordial past, where there as yet existed no clearcut differentiation between the divine and the non-divine. For this period Trickster is the symbol. His hunger, his sex, his wandering, these appertain neither to the gods nor to man. They belong to another realm, materially and spiritually. . . ."[20]

We still have not resolved the question of the explanatory elements within the narrative text. Perhaps the answer lies in Raven's motivations. If we follow Radin's logic we see that the character of Raven cannot evolve in nothingness, he must have some sort of vehicle in which to effect his transformation. Radin notes, however, that mankind cannot allow Raven to effect a transformation unless he also is allowed the same opportunity, "and the differentiation and education of the gods becomes as much the education of man as it does that of the gods."[21]

Thus Raven must begin just as does man, a totally instinctual being, concerned only with gratifying his desires at the expense of all else. While this explanation may account for Raven's dual personality, it does not account for the need to include within the narrative explanatory elements which account for the origin of various phenomena, for by Radin's logic the inclusion of these explanations would serve as mere adjuncts which aided in the development of the personality of Raven.

We now turn to an analysis of the contents of the narrative as they reflect certain aspects of Tlingit culture. Again, we reiterate that the entirety of their culture cannot be reflected in a single

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[20]Radin, The Trickster, p. 168.

[21]Ibid., p. 126.

occupies a great deal of time and requires the expenditure of much energy among any group of less technologically advanced peoples. The reader will remember that most of the year's food supply was gathered during the brief summer months, and that only infrequently was food actively searched for during the harsh winter. It stands to reason, then, that there should be, and is, a great deal of emphasis on the tools and techniques utilized in the acquisition of food resources.

The primary means of subsistence for the Tlingit was through fishing, and references to this activity predominate in the literature. Raven is said to have shown the people how to catch salmon, which requires a specialized type of hook called "t'ichra'."[24] The narrator also states that Raven showed the people how to obtain large quantities of salmon by placing various sizes of traps in the freshwater streams where salmon come to spawn. Mention is also made of fishing for halibut--the technique for which requires quick reflexes--perhaps explaining why Raven was hooked when he attempted to steal the fishermen's bait. He also showed the people how to obtain shellfish, another Tlingit staple.

Seals were hunted both for food and for their furs, and Raven is said to have shown the people how to make a spear that has an attachment that drives the seal's head underwater until it drowns.

Canoes were associated with both fishing and hunting. It is said that Raven showed the people how to build them, and that they were not dangerous--people would seldom drown. From this statement we may infer that there was a distinct possibility of drowning while in the canoes, and there was at least some fear of doing so by the

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[24]Krause, _The Tlingit Indians_, p. 247.

people. Krause mentions the fact that some of the canoes were easily capsized in high waves and that the Tlingit were reluctant to take to the high seas in the smaller, less stable crafts.[25] We must also note that the narrator states that Raven showed the people how to make canoes while he was on the Queen Charlotte Islands, suggesting that the Tlingit may have originally learned the art of canoe-building from their more southerly neighbors.

The subjects of birth and death are both discussed in the variant. We learn that when the time came for Nas-ca'ki-yel's daughter to give birth to Raven she was placed on a bed of moss, and that her newborn offspring was placed in a cradle made from a basket cut in two. Oberg comments upon this practice:

> The old way of giving birth was to dig a shallow pit, line it with moss, and drive a wooden stake in the center; the prospective mother would squat in the pit, hold on to the wooden stake, and give birth to the child. The women attending her would stand around chanting, and when the child was born they would cut the umbilical cord with two stone arrow points and fasten the loose end to the woman's big toe until she had freed herself of the placenta. The child was wiped dry with fine clean moss, wrapped in cedar bark, and given to the mother.[26]

Funeral customs are mentioned in the narrative within the context of the origin of death. As we noted in the introduction sickness and death were frequently attributed to acts of witchcraft, although sometimes individuals died during warfare with neighboring groups, or from accidents such as drowning. The narrator tells us that when an individual dies the deceased's wife and her clan, as well as the husband's relatives, participate in the funeral ceremony.

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[25]Ibid., p. 119.

[26]Oberg, Social Economy of the Tlingit, p. 21.

During the ceremony all of the individual's property is destroyed so that he may have use of it in the afterworld. Also, a portion of the food consumed during the contingent ceremonial feast is thrown into the fire in order to appease the ancestors of the deceased. As was earlier noted, the corpse is cremated in a funeral pyre and his ashes are then placed in a cavity in the house group's totem pole. Following the conclusion of the funeral a potlatch is given by the deceased's clan in order to reward those who participate in the ceremony. An account of the funeral of Tlingit chief is provided by Krause.

> At the death of a chief burial takes place with great ceremony, and the more slaves offered to his ghost, the more successful the occasion. When a notable man dies, a funeral pyre is erected with great care and the body placed on it. All friends and relatives attend the ceremony. The leading chiefs are provided with staffs which resemble lances without points, and the faces of almost all attending are painted black. The nearest relatives light the pyre after they have poured oil on it. Then the speaker steps in the center of the assemblage and delivers a eulogy of the deceased. If he was a rich man and had several slaves, some of them with their hands and feet tied are thrown on the pyre and cremated with their master, so that they may serve him in the next world. During the whole ceremony terrible wailing, in which the women distinguish themselves, rends the air.[27]

We have already discussed Tlingit religion in some detail, but the concept of shamanism and its pervasive nature within Tlingit society deserves further elaboration. That the narrator himself recognizes its importance is reflected in the fact that he chooses to include in his version of the Raven cycle an account of the land-otter-men, from who, it is believed, shamans first originated. We must conclude, however, that his account is an intrusion into an earlier

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[27]Krause, The Tlingit Indians, pp. 158-159.

Raven cycle due to the fact that in an earlier episode in the narrative he had already provided for the origin of shamans through Raven's actions in curing a man with one arm. The narrator discusses several attributes of shamans within the context of the narrative, including the fact that they are able to recognize and communicate with one another by means of land-otter spirits and that those shamans who choose to evoke the land otter spirit as their power dress in dog skins because it was in this manner that Kaka' was able to frighten the land otters. The belief that Tlingit shamans have at their disposal a multitude of spiritual helpers is reflected in the idea that Kaka' was said to control the spirits of everything strange he saw while in the presence of the land-otter men. It is interesting to note that when shamans die, their bodies are not cremated because it is believed their corpses dry up instead of decaying like those of ordinary people.[28]

There is little in the way of geographical information available to us from an examination of the narrative. We know that the Creator's name is Nas-ca'ki-yel, and that it literally means "Raven at the head of Nass." In the same incident we also learn that all people once lived at the mouth of Nass River, and that after Raven obtained daylight he walked along the bank of Nass River where he came across some people fishing for eulachon. Petrel, keeper of fresh water, lived on a rocky island outside of Kuiu where he guarded a spring--the reference being to one of a group of small islands south of the Admiralty Isalnds. We also learn of the origins of the Nass, Skeena, Stikine, and Chilkat Rivers from Raven's having spilled

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[28]Swanton, Social Condition of the Tlingit, p. 466.

water after stealing it from Petrel. We already know of the Queen Charlotte Islands, where Raven first showed men how to make canoes. After Raven left the land otters he went to the mouth of the Taku River.[29] From the above references there is little we can say of importance regarding the appearance of these geographical features in the narrative text except to speculate that their inclusion may be related to the desire of the narrator to localize the setting of the story, as is often done with the legend. Their appearance in the text is not sufficient evidence to advance a claim that the variant is unique to Tlingit culture, for the above geographical localities can, and do, appear in neighboring tribes' myths. We may only reiterate that which has been stated in the introduction: the belief by the Tlingit in a more southerly origin for their ancestral home may well be correct given the fact that many of the localities mentioned above are found south of the area they occupied when first contacted by Europeans.

Matters of economic consequence are infrequently mentioned in the narrative. Their absence is curious given the fact that the acquisition of wealth and power are considered to be of primary importance in Tlingit society. There is mention of reciprocal feasts--particularly in the context of funeral ceremonies--and again when Raven decides to invite peoples from other places to a feast that results in the introduction of slavery into the society. But there is no mention of the institutionalized ceremonial potlatch, which is characterized by formal economic exchange as well as by unabated

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[29]Krause, _The Tlingit Indians_, p. 69.

feasting and revelry.[30]

The fact that numerous animal species are of great importance to the Tlingit is amply revealed in the narrative. Not only do the characters transform themselves into animals, and back again, at will, but the animals have also come to symbolize various totemic spirits as well. Nevertheless, we must be cognizant of the fact that while these animals are depicted as crests of the various clans there is no taboo against killing them because they are merely representations of the spiritual entity and not the being itself. Oberg notes that wolves, the crest of the Sinkukedi phratry, are not eaten, but are killed for their furs. Similarly, the eagle and raven are not eaten because of their low grade of flesh, although the down of the former is used for ceremonial purposes.[31]

We previously mentioned that the narrator of our variant has chosen to include in the text a detailed description of various species of birds native to that area of Alaska. Because of this we must ask ourselves what is their significance to the narrative, and to Tlingit society. One explanation that may be posited is the possibility that they are of significance as portents of important events, prognosticators, if you will. Therefore, certain species are associated with changes in weather, seasons, and the like; much as in our own society in which the appearance of the first robin signifies the end of winter and the coming of spring, or the notion that vultures

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[30]For a detailed account of the potlatch as an institution among the Northwest Coast peoples the reader is referred to Drucker's impressive account in _Cultures of the North Pacific_, pp. 55-66.

[31]Oberg, _Social Economy of the Tlingit_, p. 47.

are commonly associated with death. It follows, then, that these birds serve a similar function in both societies. While this interpretation may explain their conceptualization within the Tlingit society it does not elucidate their appearance in the narrative text. There is another, more important, explanation.

This brings us to another facet in the analysis of the narrative text. To what extent does Tlingit mythology serve a didactic function within the context of society? Let us return to the example of the birds for a moment. In listing the various species of birds and their attributes the narrator comments upon several of their characteristics: color, locale of residence, climactic significance, and size. Focusing our attention on this last characteristic, we may state that size, like the rest, is a means of categorizing, or classifying, an entity. In our own society we are continually classifying items according to size, as noted in the way we refer to automobiles: subcompact, compact, mid-size, full-size, and so on. In this same manner the narrator refers to the wild canary as the head of small birds; the flicker is depicted as head of birds next in size; and the eagle, the largest of the birds, is portrayed as being very powerful and above all the rest. Thus, what the narrator has done is to impart upon his examples a rudimentary classificatory system whereby his audience is able to envisage other species of birds and relate to them according to the criteria of size. We may also posit a similar system for the other characteristics mentioned; so that upon seeing a particular species, the individual is immediately able to relate to it according to several criteria. Therefore, the narrator has successfully employed the explanatory aspect of the

narrative as a vehicle through which he was able to develop a model of the Tlingit classificatory system.[32]

Are we able to detect this same type of system operating with regard to other aspects of the narrative? Let us return to a discussion of the figure of Raven as he is manifested in Tlingit mythology. We earlier noted that Raven appears as both the Trickster and the Culture Hero; and that one scholar has suggested that his dual personality is the result of an evolutionary transformation undergone by the figure. Thus, in the earlier variants when Raven steals the fishermen's bait, he cannot help his actions, for he has fallen prey to his own instinctive greed. It is only in the more recent variants of the Raven cycle that he appears as the Culture Hero, and as such, does not succumb to the temptations precipitated by his baser instincts.

This same evolutionary progression advanced by Radin also may be viewed as an enculturation process whereby Raven, as a child, gradually learns through enculturation to become a functioning member of society by suppressing his unbridled urges for the common good of all. Nevertheless, an individual, be he Raven or mortal, does not become a model citizen overnight. He learns through trial and error, being penalized for his transgressions, receiving recompense for more noble behavior. Therefore, when Raven attempts to steal the fishermen's bait and becomes hooked he must suffer punishment for his transgression, and as a result, loses his bill. However, in the role of Culture Hero Raven is an entirely different character; he is

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[32]The theoretical bent for this final section of my analysis was precipitated from ideas advanced by Barre Toelken in his article, "The 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman," Genre 2 (September 1969), pp. 211-235.

a near deity, incapable of irreverant conduct. As a result his portance toward mankind is that of a benefactor, truly a personage to emulate. And we find the vary same idea expressed in the narrative: "Because he was able to do everything, the natives did all that he told them. He was the one who taught all things to the natives, and some of them still follow his teachings."

The problem still remains, nevertheless, that Raven often appears as both Trickster and Culture Hero in the same narrative. Also, because there is no set sequence of events that the narrative must adhere to, Raven may appear as Culture Hero in one episode and as Trickster immediately thereafter. From the above argument it would seem that there should be some sort of logical developmental sequence that the character Raven must follow. In order to reconcile this anomaly we turn to Franz Boas who recorded a probable explanation while quizzing one of his informants on the subject of narrative incidents:

> In answer to my question regarding the order of the other incidents of the tale, he claimed that they were told only to offset the serious parts of the tale, in order to entertain the listeners, and that there was no particular order in which these were told.[33]

If we assume that the didactic function of the narrative is of greatest importance and that the entertainment aspect is subsidiary to it, then we may also offer an explanation for the apparent lack of detail in the text with regard to the content and structure of the various incidents. The primary consideration of the narrator is not with content, for his audience has heard the myths many times before and knows their outcome as well as he, nor is it with structure, for

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[33]Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, p. 582.

the separate incidents may be presented in any order when the narrative is recounted; rather, his intent is to present those elements which are of cultural significance, using the myth as his means of transmission.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding analysis has brought to light a number of very important aspects regarding the study of non-Western folkloric materials. First, the importance of a thorough background in the basic ethnography of the culture being investigated is a prerequisite for attaining even a minimal understanding of the significance of the narratives in question. All too often folklorists are guilty of ascribing their own cultural percepts to data which are a product of an entirely different world view. As a result the researcher frequently arrives at conclusions which are diametrically opposed to those held by the native population. Those of us who are fortunate enough to be able to deal with contemporaneous cultures have a distinct advantage in that we are able to ask our informant for their interpretation of the meaning of a particular item or event in the context in which it was elicited; but even then what has meaning for one informant will sometimes be met with an entirely different interpretation by another.

By learning a minimal amount of information about the group which he is studying the folklorist is able to deal more effectively with the materials he has at hand. This observation is echoed by William Lessa in his discussion of the importance of a basic understanding of the narratives which one is attempting to analyze. To this end, he states that the folklore of the people of Ulithi, "has elements which almost anyone can respond to with interest; but when

a reader lacks adequate comprehension of the many little understandings needed to transform the skeleton of the plot into a live and vibrant story, his appreciation is greatly reduced."[1]

The problem of definitions is indeed a perplexing one. How does one distinguish between that which is a myth and that which is a secular tale? With Indo-European literature the problem is less recondite. We may say, as does Stith Thompson, that a myth deals with the gods and their actions, with creation, and with the general notion of the universe and of the earth.[2] But how does the concept of Trickster fit into this schema? Do we differentiate those texts whose central concerns are the Culture Hero from those that focus upon the character of Trickster? I think not. The problem here seems to lie in the fact that we are again guilty of attempting to pigeonhole various phenomena according to our own myopic criteria. Anyone who has ever had an introductory course in anthropology knows that although we may speak of broad cultural institutions such as kinship, subsistence and politics, the fact is that these terms are mere abstractions in the mind of the researcher, and that if we find close similarities between two divergent cultures with regard to one of the above, it is the exception rather than the rule.

There has been in the past, and continues to be today, some advocacy for defining the various genres of folklore according to native taxonomies. That is, to define the narratives according to cognition. Boas used this approach in dealing with the narratives of

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[1]Lessa, "Discoverer-of-the-Sun," p. 48.

[2]Stith Thompson, "Myths and Folktales," ed. Thomas A. Sebeok Myth: A Symposium (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 173.

the peoples he studied.[3] While in many instances this seems to be the least disagreeable of all approaches we are still faced with the fact that some peoples do not differentiate between myths and legends, as evidenced by the fact that some narratives may be placed into two or more genres depending upon the context in which they are transmitted.[4]

If we take the other extreme, however, and argue that myth does not have the same meaning in any two cultures, then we are none the wiser, for there will be no common ground resulting from the various folkloristic studies upon which to generate new ideas. Instead, we should initiate a practice whereby each researcher precisely defines the concepts with which he is dealing. In this way the semantical differences may be somewhat alleviated. This is not to say that there will no longer by any disagreement among folklorists as to what constitutes a myth, or any other genre of folklore, as anyone knows who has ever had occasion to read Maria Leach's twenty-one definitions of folklore. However, at least we will be cognizant of what the other fellow is referring to and be able to relate to it in those terms.

A second characteristic of Tlingit mythology which is reflected in the variant we examined is the fact that there are distinctive features present with regard to both content and structure. In discussing the latter we noted that there is very little plot development in the narrative. After an initial opening sequence in which Raven becomes the Transformer, or Culture Hero, the remainder of the narrative appears to be merely a series of disjointed episodes that treat of Raven's deeds while in the above-mentioned role. The infrequent dialog found in the text does not function as a plot device which would weld the narrative

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[3]Boas' Tsimshian Mythology, e.g.

[4]Toelken, "Pretty Languages," p. 158.

into a cohesive body. As well, the various episodes have few transitional devices, and movement from one episode to another is frequently abrupt and unexpected. The only sense of commonality comes from the vague general theme of Raven traveling about, bringing order into a world permeated by chaos.

Also noted was the fact that the sequence of events in the narrative is arbitrary, and that they may be transposed at will by the narrator. We do not mean to suggest that these events may be arranged in an illogical manner, however. For example, Raven must become the offspring of the Creator before he can attempt a transformation of things. Also, it would not do for Raven to transform the various species of animals into their present form before having liberated daylight since he is dependent upon the latter in order to effect this transformation. Generally speaking, however, there does not appear to be any definitely ordered sequence that the narrator must adhere to.

We also mentioned the fact that the narrator is at liberty to develop those episodes which are of particular interest to him, while abrogating those of lesser consequence by providing a bare skeletal outline of their contents. In addition, we also noted that he has chosen to include within the text incidents which are not usually associated with the Raven cycle. In this regard the variant is atypical of the other texts which were examined.

The preceding discussion does not mean to imply that there are no definite structural elements present in the Raven cycle. On the contrary, Dundes has admirably shown that structural elements indeed do exist within many North American Indian narratives; and with

this we must concur.[5] However, on the level with which we are dealing, any attempt at a Proppian style of structural analysis will likely produce results whose validity would prove to be tenuous at best, simply because the unique structural features of the narratives associated with the Raven cycle do not lend themselves well to examination by a methodology which is based upon the study of European Marchen, a genre of narratives which are characterized by fully developed plot structures (cf. Levi-Strauss, "The Story of Asdi-Wal").

To what extent the folklore of the Tlingit is an accurate reflection of their culture is difficult to ascertain. Certainly there are numerous references to the more familiar aspects of culture, as was amply pointed out in the analysis; but these are overtly manifest and may be detected by any outsider who has anything more than a passing knowledge of Tlingit society. What of the more subtle nuances of the culture, whose symbolic significance is frequently perceived only by those who are immersed in the culture? This question leads us to the final point I wish to consider in this conclusion.

We have already mentioned the possibility that the narrator's rationale for including a discussion of the various species of birds within the text was not to account for the origin of each; rather, it was to provide a classificatory system whereby his audience could relate to other phenomena. If my hypothesis is correct, then we must advance at least one other function of myth besides those which have already been posited by others--that it "contains practical rules for the guidance of man."[6]

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[5]Alan Dundes, The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales, Folklore Fellows Communications No. 195 (Helsinki, 1964).

[6]Bronislaw Malinowski, "Myth in Primitive Psychology," in Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1954), p. 114.

Therefore, we may submit the notion that when Raven obtains daylight from a chief who keeps it for himself, he does so in an altruistic manner for the common good of all. In this context his actions are to be emulated, for it is with these objectives that all men must act if they are to advance those ideals set forth by society. On the other hand, when Raven attempts to steal the fishermen's bait he is acting out of selfishness and greed. Because of this he must suffer the consequences, for his actions are ultimately disintegrative to society and are not to be condoned. In this light we see that the explanatory elements in the narratives do serve an important function in Tlingit society. They are presented not only as an explanation of the origins of the various phenomena, but act also as vehicles for transmitting to the members of society behavioral ideals which are to be preserved and passed on.

APPENDICES

The following variants of the Raven cycle have been reproduced from the original sources, the author and title of which is noted at the beginning of each text. I have endeavored to present the material in exactly the same form in which it originally appeared, omitting only the author's comments and other insertions not germane to the narrative. In each case, these omissions are indicated by the use of elipses.

APPENDIX A

This variant was presented by A. F. Golder in the Journal of American Folklore. Golder provided no contextual information whatsoever regarding his source or when the text was collected.

El[1]

There was a time, say the followers of El, when there was no light, and all the people lived and moved in darkness. At that time lived a certain man who had a wife and a sister. He loved his wife to such an extent that he would not allow her to do any kind of work; and she spent the day either sitting in the house, or sunning herself on the hillock outside. She had eight little red birds, four on each side of her, who were always near her, and who would instantly leave her if there was any familiarity between her and any man except her husband. Of such a jealous disposition was her husband, that, whenever he went away, he locked her in a chest. Every day he went to the forest, where he made boats and canoes, being very proficient in such work.

His sister, who was called Kitchuginsi (daughter of a seaswallow) had several sons (it is not known by whom); but the jealous uncle, so soon as they reached manhood, destroyed them. Some say that he took them out to sea and drowned them; but others say that he sealed them up in a hollow log. The helpless mother could only weep for her children. One day when she was sitting on the beach, mourning over a son, who disappeared in the usual way, she saw a school of small whales passing by, and one of them coming in closer, stopped and started a conversation with her. When he had learned the cause of her grief, he told her to throw herself into the sea and from the bottom bring up a pebble, swallow it, and wash it down with a little sea-water. So soon as the whale departed, Kitchuginsi went down to the btttom of the sea, fetched up a small pebble, swallowed it, and drank some sea-water. The effect of this extraordinary dose was that she conceived, and in eight months gave birth to a son, whom she considered an ordinary mortal, but he was El. Kitchuginsi, before giving birth to El, hid herself away from her brother in a secret place.

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[1]Golder, "Tlingit Myths," pp. 290-295.

When El began to grow up, his mother made him a bow and arrow and instructed him in the use of them. El liked this kind of exercise, and soon became such an excellent shot that not a bird could fly by him; and from the hummingbirds alone that he killed his mother made herself a parka; and to fully indulge his passion for the chase he made a hunting barrabara. Sitting there one morning in the early dawn, he saw that directly in front of his door sat a large bird resembling a magpie, with a long tail and a long and thin bill, bright and strong as iron. El killed her instantly and carefully skinned her, as is usually done for stuffing, and put the skin on himself. He had no sooner done so when he felt the desire and ability to fly, and immediately flew up, and soared so high and with such a force that his bill pierced into the clouds, and he was held there so strongly that with difficulty he extracted himself. After that he flew back to his barrabara, took off his skin and hid it. At another time and in the same manner he killed duck, and, taking off her skin, put it on his mother, who instantly received the ability to swim.

When El reached full growth, his mother told him of all his uncle's doings. El, so soon as he heard about them, went to his uncle's, and at the time when he is usually at his work. Going into the barrabara, he opened the chest in which his uncle's wife was kept, and debauched her; the birds instantly deserted her. The uncle, returning from his work and seeing all that happened, became extremely angry; but El sat very quietly and did not even move from his place. Then the uncle, calling him outside, seated himself with him in a canoe, and went with him to a place where many sea-monsters gathered; there he threw him into the sea, and thought that he had again got rid of a rival. But El walked on the bottom of the sea till he came to the shore, and reappeared before his uncle.

The uncle, seeing that he could not destroy his nephew in the usual way, said, in his anger: 'Let there be a flood.' The sea began to overflow its banks and rose higher and higher. El put on his magpie skin and flew up into the clouds, and, as before, pierced them with his bill, and hung there suspended until the water, which had covered all the mountains, even reaching so high that his tail and wings were wet, subsided entirely. He then began to descend as lightly as a feather, and thinking, 'Ah, if I could only drop on some good place,' and he dropped there where the sun goes down. But he fell not on land, but into the sea, on the kelp; from there a sea-otter brought him safely away. Others say that he fell on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and taking in his bill chips of the fir-tree, flew away to other islands, and where he dropped the chips there trees grow; and where he did not there they are not.

On coming to land again after the flood, El went towards the east, and in one place finding some dead boys, brought them to life by tickling them in the nose with hair which he had pulled out from a certain woman; in another place he set the sea-gull and heron to quarrel, and in this manner obtained a smelt fish which he afterwards exchanged for a canoe and other things. But of all his adventures and doings, which are so

numerous that it is impossible for one man to know them all, the most remarkable is the way he obtained the light.

At the time when the above-mentioned wonders were worked there was no light on the earth; it was in the possession of a rich and powerful chief, being kept in three small boxes, which he guarded jealously and did not permit any one even to touch them. El, learning this, wished above all things to obtain the light, and he obtained it.

That chief had an only daughter, a virgin, whom he loved dearly, indulged, and tended, even to the extent of carefully examining her food and drink before she used it. There was no other way to obtain the light from the chief except by becoming his grandson, and El concluded to be born of his daughter. To accomplish his end was not difficult for him; since he could assume the shape of any object that he desired,--birds, fish, grass, etc., appearing as crow the oftenest, however. In this case he changed himself into a tiny piece of grass, and stuck to the side of the cup out of which the chief's daughter drank, and when she, after the usual examination, began drinking, it slid down her throat. Small though it was, she felt that she had swallowed something, and she tried hard but unsuccessfully to bring it up. The result of all this was that she conceived; and, when the time came around for her to give birth, the chief ordered to be placed under her sea-otter skins and other valuable things. But the woman could not give birth, although her father and others assisted her in every way. Finally a very old woman took her into the forest, where she made a bed of moss for her under a tree and laid her on it; and just as soon as she lay on it she gave birth to a son.

No one ever suspected that the new-born child was El; the grandfather was delighted with his grandson, and loved him even more than his daughter. One day, after El commenced to understand a little, he set up a loud bawl and no one nor anything could quiet him. No matter what was given him, he threw it away and cried louder than before, and kept reaching out and pointing to the three little boxes which contained the heavenly lights. They could not be given to him without the permission of the chief, and he would not for a long time consent; at last he was obliged to give the boy one of the boxes. He immediately became quiet and happy, and began playing with it. A little later he took it out-of-doors, and, when unobserved, opened it and instantly stars appeared in the sky. Seeing this, the chief regretted the loss of his treasure, but he did not reprove the boy. In the same cunning manner El obtained the second box, in which the moon was kept, and opened it; he even cried for the last and most precious box, containing the sun. The chief would not indulge him any longer; El did not leave off crying and bawling, refused to eat, drink, and consequently became ill. To humor him, the tender grandfather gave him the last box too, and ordered that he be watched and prevented from opening it; but El, so soon as he came outside, changed himself into a crow, flew away with the box, and appeared on the earth.

In passing over one place, El heard human voices, but could see no one; for the sun was not yet. El asked them: 'Who are you; and would you like to have light?' 'You are deceiving us,' they said; 'you are not El, who is the only one that can make light.' To convince the unbelievers, El opened the box, and at once the sun in all his splendor appeared in the sky. At this sight the people scattered themselves in all directions, some to the forests and became beasts, others to the trees and became birds, still others to the waters and became fishes.

There was no fire on the earth, but on an island in the mid-sea. Thither El, dressed in his magpie skin, flew, and snatching a live brand, he hastened back. But the distance was so great that by the time the mainland was reached the brand and half of his bill were nearly consumed. Near the shore he dropped the brand, and the sparks were blown on to the rocks and trees. This explains why fire is found in these substances.

Until El's time there was no fresh water on the mainland and islands, with one exception. On this island, situated not far from Cape Ommaney, was a small well of fresh water guarded by Kanuk, the hero and ancestor of the Wolf tribe of the Tlingit. El (the details will be told later in connection with Kanuk) went over there, and taking in his bill as much water as it would hold, and after suffering racking tortures, flew back to the mainland of America. While flying over the earth, the water dripped on the land; where small drops fell springs and creeks appeared, and the larger drops formed lakes and rivers.

At last El, providing the people with all the necessities, went to his home, Nasshakiel, which is inaccessible both to men and spirits, as is shown from the following. One daring spirit undertook to go over there, and as a punishment had his left side turned to stone; for in flying forward he looked on the left side where El's palace was. The left side of the spirit's mask, which was at the time in possession of the shaman at Chilkat, also became stone.

Kanuk

Kanuk, the hero and ancestor of the Wolf tribe of the Tlingit, is represented as a mysterious and eternal being, older and more powerful than El. Once upon a time Kanuk lived on a treeless island, Tikenum,--sea-fortress,--not far from Cape Ommaney. On that island is a small, square, stone well of fresh water, covered with a stone. Inside the well, on the stone, is a narrow horizontal line of a different color than the rest. This mark dates from the time, and indicates the quantity of water El drank and stole out of the well. The well is known as Kanuk's Well, because formerly, when there was no fresh water elsewhere on the earth, Kanuk kept it in the well and guarded it jealously; he even built a barrabara over it and slept on the cover of the well.

One time Kanuk, while out at sea in his canoe, met El there

in his canoe and asked him, 'Have you been living long in this world?'

'I was born,' said El, 'before the earth was in its present place; and have you been living here long?'

'Since the time when the liver came out from below,' answered Kanuk.

'Yes,' said El, 'you are older than I.'

While continuing their conversation, they went farther and farther from the shore, and Kanuk, thinking it a good time to demonstrate his strength and superiority, took off his hat and put it behind himself; instantly such a thick fog appeared that one, sitting in one end of a canoe, could not see the other end. During that time Kanuk paddled away from his companion. El, unable to see Kanuk, and not knowing which way to go, began to cry to him, 'Achkani, Achkani,' but Kanuk made no answer; he called many times with the same result; finally, El, weeping, implored Kanuk to come to him. Kanuk then coming up to him, said, 'What are you crying about?' Saying this, he put on his hat and the fog raised.

'Nu Achkani (my father-in-law and brother-in-law), you are stronger than I,' said El.

After this Kanuk invited El to go home with him to his island; there they refreshed themselves, and fresh water was one of the many things that El had. It tasted so sweet and good that he could not get enough to satisfy him, and he was too bashful to ask for more. When dinner was over, El commenced to tell about his origin and the history of the world. At first Kanuk listened attentively, then drowsily, and at last fell into a sound sleep in his usual place on the cover of the well. While he was sleeping El quietly placed some dung under and round Kanuk, and then going outside, called, 'Achkani, wake up, look around you; you are, it seems, not well.'

Kanuk woke up and felt around, and believing what El said, ran to the beach to wash himself. In the mean time El pushed the cover off the well, and drank all the water he could, and, changing to a crow, filled his bill with water and started to fly out by way of the chimney, but was mysteriously held back when almost at the top. Kanuk, returning from his wash, made a fire, and began smoking his guest until he turned black. This explains why the crow, who was formerly white, is now black. Finally Kanuk, pitying El, let him go, and he (El) flew away to his earth, and dripped the water on it, as was mentioned before.

APPENDIX B

The following text of the origin of Raven was collected by Aurel Krause on the Chuckchee Peninsula while he was employed as a geographer for the Geographical Society of Bremen between 1878 and 1879. Like most of the other texts that I examined, this particular variant is a composite of a number of different episodes. According to Krause the narrator of these stories was a blind Tlingit named Kaschkoe, who was well known as a storyteller at the Chilkoot trading post. The text presented here is a verbatim transcription from the author's field notes.

Raven[1]

Kitkh-oughin-si, the first inhabitant of the earth, had several children by his sister whom he killed so that mankind would not multiply. His power extended over all inhabitants of earth and he punished them for their misbehavior by a flood. However he could not destroy them all, because they saved themselves in boats on the tops of mountains where one can still see the remains of the boats and the ropes by which they fastened themselves.

The sister of Kit-ka-ositiyi-qa separated herself during the flood from her cruel brother and along a beach met a large and handsome man, who, when he discovered the reason for her flight, made her swallow a small round stone and promised her that she would bear a son whom nobody could kill. The result of this was the birth of Raven. His mother raised him with care, bathing him in the sea every morning and teaching him to shoot birds. Raven first killed a great number of humming-birds and his mother made him a garment of them. Then he killed a large white bird, put on his skin and through his pleasure at having wings developed a burning desire to fly like a bird. At once he lifted himself into the air, but since he could not control his wings and was overcome with weariness, he could make no progress, so he cried ruefully, 'I would have done

[1]Krause, The Tlingit Indians, pp. 177-180.

better to stay with my mother.' As soon as he had said this he found himself back in his house. When he had grown he asked permission of his mother to seek out Kit-ka-ositiyi-qa and punish him for cruelty. He found the dwelling of his uncle, seated himself on the roof and waited until he returned. After he had locked him in the house he called on the waters to rise and drown the evil one while he lifted himself into the air on his wings. He flew for a long time and finally when his strength was exhausted he fell on a stone, injuring himself so that he lay there for a while, unconscious. This is the origin of all sickness of mankind. When he came to he heard a voice that called him, but he saw nobody. Then he gathered all his strength and went to the beach where he noticed some land otters who were playing on the surface of the water. One of them said to him, 'Sit on me and I will take you to the place to which you are being called.' 'But you will drown me,' answered Raven. 'Do not fear, close your eyes, and seat yourself on me.' Raven seated himself on the land otter and soon glimpsed a settlement where there were many people. Here he met his mother and his uncle who had apparently reconciled themselves and here he became acquainted with Raven from whom he received the power to become the tribal ancestor of the Kolushan clans.

. . . Raven went ashore after falling on the seaweed, but found no water anywhere until he came to the house of an old man, named Petrel. He had water in a small box which he always kept locked and on which he sat. Petrel gave Raven some to drink but not enough, so Raven now employed his wiles to get more water. When Petrel had fallen asleep, he laid dog excrement under his caribou skin blanket and woke him up and said, 'My friend, you are dreaming and you have soiled your bed; go outside and wash it.' Petrel actually followed this advice and Raven drank so much water while Petrel was outside that it rose up into his throat. Then he flew away and sat on a pitchy tree. The angry Petrel gathered pitch wood under the tree and kindled a large fire. Raven, who had been white, became black from the smoke. Then he flew away over all the mountains and spit a little water everywhere. Since that time the brooks and rivers come from the mountains. . . .

One day while Petrel was out on the sea in his boat he met Raven and asked him, 'How long have you been in the world?' Raven answered that he was born in the world before the earth existed. 'How long have you lived in the world?' Raven countered. 'Since the time,' answered Petrel, 'when the liver came up from underneath.' 'Then,' said Raven, 'you are older than I am.' While they were talking in this fashion, they were moving away from shore. Petrel, who wanted to show his power and control over Raven, took off his hat and laid it under him. At once so thick a fog spread over the surfact of the water that one sitting in the back of the boat could not see the front. At this time Petrel separated himself from his companion. Raven now began to call to Petrel,'Achkani, Achkani,' which means friend, my friend, but the latter maintained silence. After Raven had called in vain for a long time and did not know in which direction to turn, he finally, in tears, asked his

companion to come to him. Then Petrel approached him and said, 'Why do you cry?' With these words he put his hat on again and at once the fog disappeared. So Raven said, 'Now I see, Achkani, that you are mightier than I.' Thereupon Petrel invited Raven as a guest and they traveled to Tekinu Island where Petrel, among other things, also served Raven some sweet water. The water tasted to good to Raven that although he had quenched his thirst he was ashamed to ask for more. After the meal Raven began to relate his deeds and the whole history of the world. Petrel at first listened with attention but regardless of how interesting Raven's story was, he began to nod and soon fell into a deep sleep on the cover of the well. Then Raven took dog excrement and secretly laid it beside Petrel. He moved away and began to call, 'Achkani, get up and look after yourself, you do not seem to be well.' Petrel woke up and since he believed the word of Raven, he took to the sea and washed himself. Raven hurriedly lifted the cover of the well and drank as much water as he could hold. After he had imbibed and with his mouth still full he changed himself into a raven and flew through the smoke hole. Here he was delayed by something. Then Petrel made a fire to smoke his guest as much as possible and through this Raven and all ravens with him became black, where he had formerly been white. At last Petrel ceased and Raven flew away to earth and let drops of water fall from his mouth on the land, and wherever they fell there are now springs and brooks and where the larger ones fell, seas and rivers originated. . . .

The heavenly bodies were kept by a powerful chief in three boxes which were carefully locked and which no one was allowed to approach. Raven had heard of them and formulated a plan to gain possession of them. The chief had an only daughter whom he loved very much and guarded so carefully that he did not allow her to eat or drink before he had examined the dishes. Raven, who saw that he could only obtain daylight from this chief if he were his grandson, conceived a plan to allow himself to be born by his daughter. It was not difficult for him to carry out this plan since he had the ability to change into any form. So one day he changed himself into a blade of grass and let himself down on the rim of a vessel from which the chief's daughter drank. When she drank, after careful examination of the vessel, he slipped into her throat. She at once realized that she had swallowed something and tried to get it out, but did not succeed. The result was that she became pregnant and when her time came, her father had beaver and other skins spread out for her, but she could not give birth. Finally an old woman led the girl into the woods and after a bed of moss had been prepared she lay down. At once she gave birth to a son whom no one suspected of being Raven. The grandfather rejoiced over the birth of a grandchild and loved him even more than his daughter. When Raven began to gain understanding, he cried so badly one day that nothing would pacify him. Everything, when it was given him, he threw away, and crying harder than before, he pointed to the spot where the three boxes with the heavenly bodies were, but nobody was allowed to give these to him without

the special permission of his grandfather. Finally he consented to give him one of the boxes. At once Raven quieted down when he received the box and began gleefully to play with it, without letting it out of his hands. He went out of the door with the box and when he saw that he was unobserved opened the lid and at once the stars appeared in the sky, leaving the box empty. The grandfather was very sad over the loss of his treasure but did not scold his grandson. Through the same wiles Raven obtained another box in which the moon was hidden. At last he tried to secure the third box, the costliest of them all, which contained the sun. But here the grandfather did not want to give in to the wishes of his grandchild so Raven did not stop crying and whining, refused food and drink and finally became ill, until at length the grandfather gave him the last box with strict orders to take care and not open it. After Raven had gone out of the door he changed himself into a raven or, according to others, into a grown man, and left the place with the box in order to return to earth. At one place he heard the voices of people but could not see them because there was no sun. Then Raven said to them, 'Do you want light?' They answered, 'You deceived us, for you are not Raven who alone can bring us light.' In order to convince the disbelievers, Raven opened the box and at once the sun shone with all its radiance in the heavens. The people on whom it shone ran away in all directions, some to the mountains, others to the forest, some to the water and from them originated the animals, the birds and the fish.

Fire was still on an island in the sea and had not yet come to earth. Raven flew there and after taking a firebrand in his mouth, came back quickly. But the distance was so great that by the time he had returned the firebrand was almost completely consumed and even his beak was half burned off. Raven let the burning coal drop at once on the earth and the scattered sparks fell on stones and wood and that is why fire can be obtained from both of these.

APPENDIX C

The following text is a summary of the introduction to several Tlingit variants of the Raven myth which was compiled by Franz Boas in Tsimshian Mythology. This summary is particularly useful in that it enables the reader to compare the other variants of the Raven cycle presented in this paper, and to note which episodes and incidents are included or omitted by the respective narrators. The reader must bear in mind, however, that no single Tlingit variant collected or published to date includes all of the events in this summary. In addition, this summary is useful in that Boas has incorporated into it variants from obscure or foreign sources which are not readily available to the folklorist.

The Raven Myth[1]

In the beginning there was no daylight in this world. Near the source of Nass River lived Raven At The Head Of Nass River (Nas-ca'ki-yel) with his sister Kitchuginsi and his wife G·ins ha'noa (a Haida name), who spent all her time in the house or on the rocks on the beach. Her husband was very jealous. She was guarded by a number of flickers, which were placed in her armpits, and which would leave her as soon as she looked at a man. When her husband, who was an expert canoe-builder, went out, he put her into a box. He was afraid that his sister's sons might covet his wife, and therefore he killed all of them as soon as they began to grow up. After the last of her sons had been killed, Kitchuginsi went down to the beach to wail. There a wise man advised her to heat a smooth pebble and to swallow it. She followed the advice, and built for herself a hut, in which she lived. After some time she gave birth to a son, who was invulnerable, like stone. His mother made bow and arrows for him, and be began to hunt. First he shot small birds, then larger and

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[1]Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, pp. 621-622.

larger animals. The mother made blankets out of bird skins. Finally he shot a 'heaven-bird' (a white bird with copper beak), and a diver (cax). He skinned the birds, and gave the skin of the diver to his mother. When he put on the skin of the 'heaven-bird,' he was able to fly up to the sky; and when his mother put on that of the diver, she was able to swim like a sea fowl.

Since they were all alone, he asked his mother for her relatives, and she told him that her brother had killed all her sons. Then the boy resolved to take revenge. He went to the house of the chief, his uncle, to whose wife he made love during the chief's absence. At once the birds flew away from her; and thus her husband, upon his return, knew what had happened. He resolved to kill his nephew. He ordered him to fell an obsidian tree, which feat he performed without being hurt. Then he made him crawl into the crack of a split tree which he had felled to make a canoe, knocked out the spreading sticks, so that the tree closed on the boy, who split it my moving his elbows, and carried the two halves home. Then he invited him to hunt devilfish; and while the boy made ready to spear the animal, the uncle made him fall overboard. When the boy returned unharmed, his uncle let water pour out from the top of his hat. The water filled the house. The house of Raven At The Head Of Nass River, however, was the world, and its retaining boards were the mountains. When the water rose in the house, the whole world was being inundated. Mother and son climbed from one retaining-board to another, until the water filled the house and covered the mountains. Then the boy put on the skin of the 'heaven-bird' and flew up until his beak struck the sky, where he remained hanging. His mother put on the diver skin and swam about on the water. After many days the waters began to subside; and when they had receded to half the height of the mountains, the boy pulled out his beak and fell down on a piece of kelp.

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