

THE SPOKEN WORD and the WORK of INTERPRETATION
INTERPRETATION

The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation Dennis Tedlock



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On the Translation of Style in Oral Narrative

Those who have sought to transform the spoken arts of the American Indian into printed texts have attempted to cross linguistic, poetic, and cultural gulfs much larger than those faced by translators who merely move from one Indo-European written tradition to another, but they have had very little to say about translation as such. Franz Boas simply advocated a "faithful rendering of the native tales,"¹ which for him and most of his followers meant what professional translators would call a "crib" or a "trof"—not a true translation into literate English, but rather a running guide to the original text, written in an English that was decidedly awkward and foreign. If "faithful renderings" were faithful to anything, they were faithful to a linguistic position that places so much importance on the differences among languages as to cast suspicion on the very possibility of translation. But it must be understood that Boas and his students were reacting

First published in the *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 114–33. The five introductory paragraphs are new, and so is the epilogue.

1. Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*, p. 451.

against collectors and "retellers" who avoided direct contact with the original languages, instead working from the English of performers or interpreters for whom English was a second language. In such work the poetic qualities lost in the process of transmission were restored through the collector's own inventiveness rather than through an appreciation of native poetics. Here was another form of non-translation, what translators call a "version."

Herbert Spinden, commenting in 1933 on past translators of American Indian verbal art, observed that "as a rule the professional linguists are prosaic: it seems that they pay attention merely to [grammatical] structures and to the denotation of words, neglecting the connotation. It is the old story of botanists not seeing the beauty of flowers."² He sets his own sights neither on the "crib" nor the "version" but on translation itself, proposing "the double standard of fidelity to the original source and artistic quality in the rendering."³ He engaged in the practice of what Dell Hymes would later call "anthropological philology," analyzing previously published native texts in order to retranslate them in a way that would better reflect their original poetic dimensions.⁴

In 1965 Dell Hymes went a step further than Spinden in criticizing the Boasian *cribs*, not only finding them unlovely but also questioning their claim to authenticity, declaring that "it is a mark of naiveté, not objectivity, to identify pristineness with the ethnological translations."⁵ He states the problem of the relationship between linguistics and translation dialectically, writing that "the study of language is too important to be left solely to linguistics . . . , the texts too valuable to be interpreted by any who ignore linguistics."⁶ His own work focuses on the problem of carrying the formal dimension of native poetics over into English, a dimension that often went unnoticed by earlier linguists and ethnologists whose notion of structure left out everything between the level of grammar and that of the plot.

Among all those Americanists who have had something to say about translation, Knud Rasmussen and Washington Matthews appear to be alone in placing their focus squarely on the question of audience. Matthews, in the introduction to one of his Navajo collections, wrote in 1897 that "the tales were told in fluent Navajo, easy of

2. Herbert Spinden, *Songs of the Teva, Preceded by an Essay on American Indian Poetry*, p. 68.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

4. *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 16, 22, 65-68.

5. Dell Hymes, "Some North Pacific Coast Poems: A Problem in Anthropological Philology," p. 334.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

comprehension, and of such literary perfection as to hold the hearer's attention. They should be translated into English of a similar character."⁷ Rasmussen later espoused a similar theory of translation in his Eskimo work, writing that his "endeavor has been to put life and substance into the legends so that in English they read almost as they are apprehended in Eskimo by one who understands that language as his native tongue" (his italics).⁸ But it was Matthews who had the frankness to take stock of a further translation problem that defied solution for those who collected texts through handwritten dictation, noting that a Navajo story "was often embellished with pantomime and vocal modulations which expressed more than mere words, and which the writer is unable to represent."⁹ Here was a problem whose solution awaited the use of recording devices.

In the present essay I trace the history of translation for a single widely published narrative tradition, that of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, beginning a century ago and coming down to the time of my own work with a tape-recorder. In the process I hope to show what has gone wrong in the past and what might be done differently in the future.

The Zuni narratives collected by Frank Hamilton Cushing in the 1880s have always attracted more attention than any others: "The Beginning of Newness" has been anthologized by Margot Astrov and Stith Thompson, "The Poor Turkey Girl" by Thompson and John Greenway, and "The Cock and the Mouse" by Greenway and Alan Dundes.¹⁰ But the apparent attractiveness of Cushing's work is anything but a measure of its reliability as a representation of Zuni literature. "The Beginning of Newness," together with the rest of Cush-

7. Washington Matthews, *Navaho Legends*, p. 53.

8. Knud Rasmussen, *Iglulik and Caribou Eskimo Texts*, p. 7.

9. Matthews, *Navaho Legends*, pp. 53-54.

10. Cushing's translations may be found in Frank Hamilton Cushing, "Zuni Fetiches," pp. 13-19, 21-24; "Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths"; *Zuni Folk Tales*; and *Zuni Breadstuff*, pp. 20-54, 58-124, 270-88, 395-515. Two additional Cushing interpretations were recorded by men who visited him in the field: John G. Bourke, "Diary" (unpublished manuscript in the library of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, 1881), pp. 2565-85; and H. E. C. ten Kate, "A Zuni Folk Tale." "The Beginning of Newness," from "Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths" (pp. 379-81), is reprinted in Margot Astrov, *The Winged Serpent* (pp. 240-42) and in Stith Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians* (pp. 17-19). "The Poor Turkey Girl," from Cushing's *Zuni Folk Tales* (pp. 54-64), is reprinted in Thompson, *Tales* (pp. 225-31), and in John Greenway, *Literature Among the Primitives* (pp. 228-34). "The Cock and the Mouse," from *Zuni Folk Tales* (pp. 411-22), is reprinted in Greenway (pp. 151-58) and in Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (pp. 269-76).

ing's "Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths," has long been a problem for students of Zuni culture. Cushing himself says that these "outlines" are just that and not direct translations,¹¹ but it is his additions to the narratives rather than any deletions which have caused the trouble, for, as Ruth Bunzel has written, the work "contains endless poetic and metaphysical glossing of the basic elements, most of which explainatory matter probably originated in Cushing's own mind."¹² The "metaphysical glossing" referred to includes strong overtones of monotheism (also found in Matilda Cox Stevens's work) which reflect the theoretical preoccupations of nineteenth-century anthropology rather than Zuni belief.

"The Poor Turkey Girl" and "The Cock and the Mouse" are cited by the anthropologists as classic examples of the American Indian adaptation of European tales. Cushing relates the history of "The Cock and the Mouse" as follows: He had told an Italian version of it to some Zuni he had brought to New England; about a year later, back at Zuni, he heard one of these same men tell (in Zuni) a considerably adapted and expanded version which was later published.¹³ Exciting though the Zuni version may be, it is not clear what the original Italian version used by Cushing was like, for, as Dundes has pointed out, the Zuni version contains some distinctly European motifs which are lacking in the Italian version printed beside it in Cushing's book.¹⁴ There are further problems: Cushing necessarily told the story to his Zuni audience in the Zuni language (the three men were monolinguals), and some of the "Zuni" alterations could well have originated with Cushing in the process of the telling. Moreover, as will be seen in detail shortly, Cushing was given to elaborations when rendering Zuni tales in English, and there is no reason to believe he restrained himself in the present case.

Whatever the special problems with "The Beginning of Newness" and "The Cock and the Mouse," the opinion has been widely held that the quality of Cushing's translations is quite good. The novelist Mary Austin is extravagant with her praise, writing that Cushing "is the only American who notably brought to bear on [primitive lore] adequate literary understanding," and that Cushing's is "the best-sustained translation of aboriginal American literature," and, still further, that Cushing made no effort to "popularize" his stories.¹⁵ Mar-

11. Cushing, "Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths," p. 375.
12. Ruth L. Bunzel, "Zuni Origin Myths," p. 547.

13. Cushing, *Zuni Folk Tales*, p. 411.

14. Dundes, *Study of Folklore*, p. 274.

15. Cushing, *Zuni Folk Tales* (1931 ed.), pp. xix-xx, xxvi.

got Astrov, in the introduction to her anthology, lists Cushing as one of those ethnologists who has best met "the two requirements" of the translator: "linguistic fidelity to the original" (short of strictly literal translation) and the communication of the "cultural matrix" of the original.¹⁶ But Dell Hymes has shown how far Astrov has gone wrong in judging the quality of song translations,¹⁷ and in a similar spirit I hope to show here that narrative translations, too, are not always what they seem.

Among the more curious things in Cushing's major collection, *Zuni Folk Tales*, are the oaths used by the characters. Austin cites these as one of the things she admires most and gives "By the delight of death!" as an example;¹⁸ other oaths include "Souls of my ancestors!" "Demons and corpses!" "By the bones of the dead!" "Oh, ye gods!" and "Beloved Powers!"¹⁹ But the Zuni have no such oaths; they never make profane use of words denoting death, souls, ancestors, corpses, "Powers," and gods. They do use a good number of interjections in tales, such as *tisshomathá* (dread), *kriyáthá* (fright, female speaking), and *ya'ana* (disgust, male speaking), but there is not a single one of these interjections which has any denotation other than the emotion it is supposed to express. In this case, then, Cushing's translations do not represent "linguistic fidelity to the original," and, further, they misrepresent the "cultural matrix" of the tales.

Perhaps the most serious difficulty with Cushing's *Zuni Folk Tales* is that he embroiders the tales with devices, lines, and even whole passages which are clearly of his own invention and not mere distortions. Similes are totally lacking in all other translations (and in texts as well), but they abound in Cushing's tales. For example, a young man attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes was "crazed and restless as a spider on hot ashes,"²⁰ and a person outdoors at night saw a "light that was red and grew brighter like the light of a camp fire's red embers when fanned by the wind of the night-time."²¹ These passages may have literary merit in English, but they do not even have literary existence in Zuni.

Another kind of embroidery, not so serious as some of the others, is Cushing's insertion of explanatory material for the benefit of his readers. For example, he begins one tale with a lengthy expla-

16. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 5.

17. Hymes, "Some North Pacific Coast Poems."

18. Cushing, *Zuni Folk Tales* (1931 ed.), p. xxviii.

19. *Ibid.* (either ed.), pp. 134, 182-83.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

nation of the geographical location and appearance of its setting,²² whereas a Zuni narrator would take his audience's knowledge of local geography for granted. In another example, Cushing describes how a suitor ate very little when given a meal at a girl's house (which a Zuni narrator would do) but then adds, "You know it is not well or polite to eat much when you go to see a strange girl,"²³ again a case in which a Zuni narrator would take his audience's knowledge for granted. Of course it is possible that some of this explanatory material was inserted by Zuni narrators for Cushing's own benefit, but whatever its origin, it does misrepresent normal Zuni practice.

The most distressing of all Cushing's inventions are his moralistic passages. As I have shown in detail elsewhere, the didactic content of Zuni tales is usually either implicit or addressed by one tale character to another, and it is never addressed by the narrator directly to his audience.²⁴ But Cushing begins one tale this way: "Listen, ye young ones and youths, and from what I say draw inference. For behold! the youth of our nation in these recent generations have become less sturdy than of old; else what I relate had not happened."²⁵ In some other cases, he points out the moral in the third person, but his tone is still excessively moralistic, as in this example from the end of an Orpheus tale: "But if one should live as long as possible, one should never, in any manner whatsoever, remembering this youth's experience, become enamored of Death."²⁶

It should now be sufficiently clear that Cushing frequently violates the linguistic and cultural requirements which Astrov sets for translators, and that a good deal of what Austin calls "color . . . so delightfully rendered" (including the oaths)²⁷ looks more like Victorian quaintness on close examination.

The work of Matilda Cox Stevens, a contemporary of Cushing, avoids his stylistic embroideries, but her major compendium of narratives in *The Zuni Indians* is not a translation of actual Zuni performances but rather a descriptive summary in her own words.²⁸ Much of the apparent order in these materials is her own. She ignores the possibility of alternate versions and attempts to place each story in a chronological sequence which reflects her own Western preoccupation with history more than actual Zuni practice. Elsewhere in

22. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

24. Dennis Tedlock, *The Ethnography of Tale-Telling at Zuni*, chap. 3.

25. Cushing, *Zuni Folk Tales*, p. 185.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

27. *Ibid.* (1931 ed.), p. xxviii.

28. Matilda Cox Stevens, "The Zuni Indians," pp. 23-61.

the same volume, however, she does present one narrative which (though abbreviated) appears to be a direct translation.²⁹

Beginning in the second decade of the present century, a veritable army of Boasian fieldworkers descended upon Zuni. The first members of this army to publish translations of Zuni narratives were Franz Boas himself, Elsie Clews Parsons, and Edward L. Handy;³⁰ hard on their heels came Ruth L. Bunzel and Ruth Benedict.³¹ Only Parsons and Bunzel published native-language texts, and only Bunzel published texts in any quantity.³²

Members of the Boasian school, at Zuni and elsewhere, typically valued translations that were "direct" or "close" or "literal," published with as few changes as possible from the sort of English used by interpreters or bilingual narrators. Thus Parsons could write, in introducing a collection with which she was particularly pleased, that the tales "interpreted by L— are as close to the original Zuni, I think, as it is possible to get in English narrative,"³³ and when she showed these translations to A. L. Kroeber, who had trained her interpreter, he said, "In reading them, I can hear L— speaking Zuni."³⁴ One can indeed "hear L— speaking Zuni," especially when awkward choices of English words are preserved or when English words are organized according to Zuni grammar, as in these passages: "The straps the man carried wood with, in the other room he would hang up." "This way you were going to do to me," and, incredibly, "Then one of his legs he threw up."³⁵

The literalism in most other translations of Zuni narratives, including those of Boas and Benedict, does not reach the absurd extremes of Parsons. Benedict followed the usual practice of her contemporaries in asking her informants to give "literal" translations, but it was her stated intention to smooth out "their inadequate English" in her published versions.³⁶ She did indeed eliminate obvious grammatical errors, but stylistic inadequacies remain, including a choppy

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-37.

30. Franz Boas, "Tales of Spanish Provenience from Zuni," Elsie Clews Parsons and Franz Boas, *Spanish Tales from Laguna and Zuni*, New Mexico: Elsie Clews Parsons, "Notes on Zuni," pp. 302-27; "Pueblo-Indian Folk-Tales, Probably of Spanish Provenience"; "The Origin Myth of Zuni"; "The Scalp Ceremonial of Zuni," pp. 28-34; "Zuni Tales," Edward L. Handy, "Zuni Tales."

31. Ruth L. Bunzel, "Zuni Origin Myths," "Zuni Kachinas" (narratives are scattered throughout this work), *Zuni Texts*, Ruth Benedict, *Zuni Mythology*.

32. Parsons, "Zuni Tales" (texts are given for only two of these narratives); Bunzel, *Zuni Texts* and "Zuni Origin Myths."

33. Parsons, "Zuni Tales," p. 2.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 2 (quoted by Parsons).

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 30.

36. Benedict, *Zuni Mythology*, vol. 1, p. xxviii.

ness and lack of grammatical complexity common to much of the work of this period. Zuni narrators, like many others, frequently keep a story in motion by combining strings of clauses into long sentences and by joining these sentences with parallelism. But one would never know this from reading Benedict's translation:

Her eyes were almost shut. She was skin and bones. She was too weak to sit up and she scratched herself all the time. He jumped up. He ran to the house of Pekwin's son. His wife was just as old. She had gray hair and was bent double. The two young men were angry. They would not talk to their wives. They drove them away. The two old women went off leaning on their canes. They were too weak to travel. There was no rain. The people were hungry.³⁷

Such a disaster probably results not only from informant English but also from the stops and starts of the dictation process and from a tendency to treat parallelisms as not worth preserving in print. But whatever their sources, Benedict's distortions are not purely the result of dictation. Bunzel's translations, which were based on dictated Zuni rather than dictated English, have a very different character:

They laid the deer down side by side. They laid them down side by side and they made the boy sit down beside them. After they had made him sit down they gave the deer smoke. After they had given them smoke they sprinkled prayer meal on them. After they had sprinkled prayer meal on them the people came in.³⁸

Probably as a result of dictation, the parallelism here (A, AB, BC, CD, DE) is more mechanical than the parallelism in my own tape-recorded Zuni narratives, and the sentence length (as elsewhere in Bunzel's work) fails to reach the extremes possible in uninterrupted narration. Despite these flaws, the text translations of Bunzel display the qualities of oral performance better than any of the other Zuni work of this period.

Aside from their frequent lack of parallelism, the narratives of the Boasian school tend to be condensations of what a performer would tell in a normal, spontaneous situation. A. L. Kroeber, Dorothy Demetracapoulou and Cora DuBois, and Gladys Reichard, all of

37. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

38. Bunzel, *Zuni Texts*, p. 109.

whom recognized this problem in their own collections of American Indian narratives, place most of the blame on the tediousness of dictation and the consequent absence of a responsive native audience.³⁹ Substantiating their view is the fact that the narratives in my own Zuni collection, related in all instances to at least a small native audience and taken down by tape-recorder, average nearly twice the length of the narratives in Benedict's collection.⁴⁰

After the 1930s, collection of American Indian narratives went into a rapid decline. Texts and translations (other than Zuni ones) continued to appear sporadically, but many of these later collections, such as Melville Jacobs's *Clackamas Chinook Texts*,⁴¹ were delayed reports of fieldwork done during the main period of Boasian activity rather than reports of anything new. In the Zuni case, the thirty years which separated the appearance of Benedict's *Zuni Mythology* (in 1935) from the beginning of my own fieldwork saw the publication of only one minor collection of fresh narratives.⁴² Generally instead of fresh materials there appeared analytical treatments of old ones that reflect the two main currents in modern narrative theory: Bert Kaplan sees Zuni myths as possible projections of "the repressed unconscious processes of the id,"⁴³ while Claude Lévi-Strauss finds Zuni myths (among others) exhibiting a logical structure which he believes to be a substratum in all human thought.⁴⁴

While advances may have been made in the analysis of oral narrative content since the 1930s, the art of translation has seen no substantial gains since the turn of the century. The tape-recorder should improve this situation, but its full possibilities have yet to be exploited. It has been a practical and accurate field instrument for only a short time, and the theoretical interests of many of its users (or poten-

39. Alfred L. Kroeber, "A Mohave Historical Epic," p. 133; Dorothy Demetracapoulou and Cora DuBois, "A Study of Wintu Mythology," p. 400; Gladys A. Reichard, *An Analysis of Coeur d'Alene Indian Myths*, p. 5.

40. Dennis Tedlock, *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians*; see also "The Girl and the Protector" in Chapter 2, below, the longest Zuni narrative I have yet published.

41. Melville Jacobs, *Clackamas Chinook Texts*.

42. Anna Russer, "Seven Zuni Folk Tales," After my main period of fieldwork at Zuni (November 1964 through January 1966), the Duke Indian Oral History Project of the University of Utah made a collection of Zuni narratives. At one time the University of New Mexico Press announced the publication of two volumes based on this project, to be edited by C. Gregory Crampton, but in 1972 they published instead, under the authorship of The Zuni People, *The Zunis: Self-Portraits*. See Dennis Tedlock, Review of *The Zunis: Self-Portraits*.

43. Bert Kaplan, "Psychological Themes in Zuni Mythology and Zuni IAT's."

44. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth."

tial users) are centered on "content," which they presume enjoys a certain independence from the fine points of "style" and translation. John L. Fischer, for example, says that in sociopsychological analysis the primary concern "is with the semantics of folktales; with the message or 'tale picture' which can be transmitted by the codes of various languages, or by various equivalent constructions in a single language."⁴⁵ Lévi-Strauss holds a similar view, though his particular analytical interests differ from those of Fischer: "The mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. . . . Its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the *story* which it tells."⁴⁶

Even when a scholar does show interest in the stylistic aspects of narrative traditions, there is no guarantee that he will give much thought to translation. Melville Jacobs, for example, though he promises that his analysis of style or form in Clackamas Chinook narratives "will greatly enhance enjoyment" of that literature, offers translations which are typically Boasian in being "almost literal."⁴⁷ Despite the literal translation, the reader does not experience directly the "terseness" which is supposedly one of the principal characteristics of Clackamas style, for Jacobs has made hundreds of "explanatory" parenthetical insertions to rescue him from that terseness.

In some cases the neglect of translation is doubtless related to a belief that style, or at least the better part of it, is simply untranslatable. Franz Boas and A. L. Kroeber, for example, held that style (or "literary form") was so bound up with the peculiarities of particular languages that it was unlikely to survive translation.⁴⁸ If their view of style is combined with the view that content survives even bad translation, then there is no room at all for an art of translation. It may be that no one scholar has ever held both these views simultaneously in their pure form, but many scholars of the past four generations might as well have done so.

Some collectors of American Indian narratives have taken issue with the narrow linguistic view of style. Demetracapoulou and DuBois even go so far as to say that in the Wintu case, given an interpreter or narrator who is fluent in English, a translation involves no distortion at all.⁴⁹ Jacobs finds in the Clackamas case that all but a very

45. John L. Fischer, "The Sociopsychological Analysis of Folktales," p. 237.

46. Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," p. 430.

47. Melville Jacobs, *The Content and Style of an Oral Literature*, pp. 3, 6.

48. Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*, p. 452. Kroeber, "A Mohave Historical Epic," p. 133.

49. Demetracapoulou and DuBois, "A Study of Wintu Mythology," p. 386.

few features of narrative form are independent of the particularities of Clackamas linguistics,⁵⁰ the implication again being that translation problems should not pose any great difficulty. The Zuni narrative tradition displays more stylistic manipulation in phonology, lexicology, and syntax than Jacobs indicates for the Clackamas, but once more a large part of style lies outside of what is traditionally thought of as linguistics, and I would add that even the linguistic features of Zuni style do not create insurmountable translation problems.

On the phonological level, Zuni narrative style involves only two common distortions of normal patterns, and both of these also occur in everyday speech, although they are more frequent in narrative. One of the distortions involves a combination of stress shift and vowel lengthening: A tale character may start off an ordinary greeting with something like *hom nana*, "My grandfather," with stress on the first syllable of *nana* (as is normal), but if the occasion calls for exceptional formality or seriousness, he will shift the stress and lengthen the final vowel as follows: *hom naná*—It might be hard to get a similar effect by shifting the stress on "grandfather" in translation, but a syntactic shift to "Grandfather of mine" succeeds, I think, in reproducing the original effect of formality.

The other major phonological distortion in Zuni narrative involves a combination of intonation change and vowel lengthening: "Thus they lived on" would ordinarily be intoned as follows, with the lowest pitch at the end:

2 3 1
lesnolh aatega'kya

But the length of time involved may be emphasized by shifting the highest pitch to the final syllable and drawing out the final vowel for as much as two or three seconds:

2 1 3
lesnolh aatega'kya

The same operation may be performed on a verb like *akya*, "he went," to indicate a long distance (but not necessarily a long time). Such forms might be translated as "Thus they lived on and on and on," "He went and went and went," but in Zuni this sort of repetition usually indicates repeated action rather than drawn-out action (or state of being), as in lines like, "And all the people who had come killed the deer, killed the deer, killed the deer." To translate drawn-out Zuni

50. Jacobs, *The Content and Style of an Oral Literature*, pp. 7-8.

verbs as repeated ones would mean collapsing two stylistic devices into one. A more direct translation seems a better solution: "Thus they lived on—," and "He went on—" (in which the *o*'s should be held). This rendition may seem strange on the printed page, but comparable lengthening does occur in spoken English, as in "It's been such a lo—ng time."

There are no grammatical differences between everyday speech and formal narrative in Zuni, except for a greater tendency to construct long sentences in the latter. The following, in strict syntactic terms, is a single sentence (each line break indicates only a slight pause):

Towayulan ahayyuut aach ky'akwap,
he'shoktan aatoshle
aachi
ky'akwap,
iticon'an lhuwal'ap,
pinuawuan lhuwal'ap, ky'ak'iima lhuwal'ap,
lesnalti lhuwalaa ullapmap, taknan kwayilep, taknan kwayilena kwa' ky'ak
'aawina' ma.⁵¹

There is no translation problem here. Given as a single English sentence, this runs as follows:

At Corn Mountain the two Ahayuuta had their home,
 at He'shokta the Aatoshle
 the two of them
 had their home,
 at the Middle Place there were villagers,
 at Winds' Place there were villagers, at Ky'ak'iima there were villagers,
 there were villagers all around going out to gather wood, and when
 they went out to gather wood they did not come home.

This is somewhat cumbersome by the normal standards of written English prose, but such length would not be extraordinary for an oral narrator in English (unless he were reading from a written text) or for a large number of English poets.

Most of the remaining "linguistic" manipulation in Zuni style involves the choice of lexical items or formulaic phrases which would be rare or absent in completely neutral everyday speech. As Stanley Newman has shown, Zuni vocabulary runs along a continuum from

51. From "The Ahayuuta and the Aatoshle," narrated by Andrew Peynetsa. Unpublished tape and manuscript in my possession.

items labeled as slang (*penaki'amme*) to items labeled as sacred (*te-tusu*), with various shadings and a large unnamed neutral category in between.⁵² Anything clearly recognized as slang is systematically excluded from formal narratives, but at least one slightly substandard term is used: *okyattsik'i*, which Zunis translate as "old lady." A hideous old ogress named *aatoshle*, for example, may be referred to irreverently as *aatoshle okyattsik'i*; translating this simply as "Old Lady Aatoshle" preserves the original effect quite well.

Except for esoteric origin stories, Zuni narratives do not include many words or phrases that are clearly sacred, but they do include a fair number of items, mostly archaisms, which fall between the neutral and the truly sacred. Among these items are the formulas used in greeting exchanges. The usual contemporary greeting in Zuni is *kes-shé*, which has the effect of "Hi," and the reply is the same or *tosh iya*, "So you've come." But a tale character, on entering a household other than his own, may say, *Hom aatachhu, hom chawé, ko'na'to lewanan aateyaye?* and someone will reply, *K'ettisisshe, ho'naawan cha'le, tosh iya, s'iimu*. A straightforward translation of this exchange preserves its stilted quality and even a touch of its archaic connotation: "My fathers, my children, how have you been passing the days?" "Happily, our child, so you've come, sit down."

The archaic interjections used by characters in serious tales are difficult to translate. As was mentioned earlier, these are not oaths, but simply give direct expression to emotions. English interjections having only covert religious reference or lacking such reference, such as "Wow!" "My goodness!" and "Dear me!" sound ludicrous in the mouth of a heavy tale character, and those which are archaic in addition sound even worse, "Gadzooks!" "Zounds!" and "I'll be switched!" for example. Probably most of the Zuni interjections in serious contexts should be left untranslated; even at that, most of them would require little explanatory notation, for contexts usually make their meanings fairly clear. When a young man who has just been turned into an eagle because his wife failed to demonstrate her love begins his lament with *huna'hi!* or when a father who has just been told that his son plans to exchange bodies with a bloody dead man replies with *tisshomahai!* the reader is not likely to go far astray in judging the feeling tone of these interjections; at least he will not be likely to think them equivalent to "Gosh!" or "Good grief!"

Not all archaisms are serious—some are used to embellish humorous tales. It is difficult to place these on Newman's slang-sacred

52. Stanley Newman, "Vocabulary Levels: Zuni Sacred and Slang Usage."

continuum. The fact that they are old should make the terms highly valued, but, in fact, they are employed to make a character seem foolishly old-fashioned rather than serious or sacred. They are probably not of slang origin, but hearing these archaic phrases mouthed by foolish characters is somewhat like hearing someone use out-of-date slang. This makes them easier to translate than serious archaisms. A fool named Pelt Kid, who has just gotten married but knows nothing about sex, suddenly remembers his grandmother's instructions and says, in his hoarse voice, *A'ana ha'la! Hom to' kvili yalaa teshunholh hakey'akkya, ha'holh shiwanya kaayip yam shuminnikya kwatoky'anaknanna.*⁵³ The beginning interjection, *a'ana ha'la!* is an archaism rarely heard even in tales, and an archaic term is used for "penis" (*shuminne*, sandwiched and run together with another word in the quotation). The following translation, which takes these archaisms into account, conveys Pelt Kid's ridiculousness well enough: "Golly whizz! You told me to look for two hills, and if it's steamy there I should put my peeny in."

The onomatopoeic words in Zuni narratives may be considered a part of linguistic style, since they are used more frequently in narratives than in everyday speech, though unlike archaisms they are neutral where the slang-sacred continuum is concerned. Context usually makes the reference of onomatopoeic words obvious enough that it is unnecessary to attempt to translate them, as in this passage (again, each line break represents a slight pause):

An saae kuluurun pololo
(low, hoarse voice) *tuu—n teyatip,*
(low, hoarse voice) *uuu—n teyatip,*
an papa wilo'anan pololo, wilo'ati
(low, hoarse voice) *tuu—w teyatikya.*
Sekwat lo'lii pottikya.
Laky'antolh thiton iya.
Uniton ikya, ikyas
*isshakwakwa hish ky'aptom el'ikya.*⁵⁴

His younger brother rolled the thunder
(low, hoarse voice) *tuu—n* it began,
his elder brother rolled the lightning, lightning struck
(low, hoarse voice) *tuu—w* it began.
Now the clouds filled up.
Here comes the rain.

53. From "Pelt Kid and his Grandmother," narrated by Walter Sanchez; full translation in Dennis Tedlock, *Finding the Center*, pp. 191–213.

54. From "The Ahayuta and the Aatoshle."

The rain came, it came
isshakwakwa the water really did come down.

One might render *isshakwakwa* as "it splattered" and the thunder sounds as "boom" or "rumble," but no clarity would be gained and the reader would not have his experience of onomatopoeia enriched by the Zuni words.

While it may be that past translations of Zuni narratives have suffered somewhat from neglect of the "linguistic" features of style discussed above, they have suffered much more from neglect of "oral" or "paralinguistic" features such as voice quality (tone of voice), loudness, and pausing. Boas wrote long ago that "the form of modern prose is largely determined by the fact that it is read, not spoken, while primitive prose is based on the art of oral delivery and is therefore more closely related to modern oratory than to the printed literary style."⁵⁵ He might have added, had he not so easily labeled oral narrative as "prose," that it is also related to that portion of modern poetry in which attention is given to "the art of oral delivery." But Boas and his followers, in translating oral narratives, have treated them as if they were equivalent to written prose short stories, except in cases where the originals were sung or chanted. Jacobs has called for a "dramatic" approach to oral narratives and has made extensive use of dramatic terminology,⁵⁶ but his translations follow the familiar short-story pattern, except for occasional notations of voice quality.

The presence of the tape-recorder has so far failed to wean post-Boasians from the short-story approach. Systematic schemes for the notation of paralinguistic features have been proposed recently,⁵⁷ but such notation is not yet in wide use; and no one seems to have given much thought to preserving these features in translations. Yet such features are, at least in the Zuni case, highly "translatable," and it is possible to represent them without making the result look as formulaic as a symphonic score. The necessary literary conventions have

55. Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*, p. 491; from an article originally published in 1925.

56. Jacobs, *The Content and Style of an Oral Literature*, p. 7. Jacobs was anticipated in his dramatic view of oral narrative by Jeremiah Curtin, who preceded each of his Modoc tales with a list of dramatic personae (*Myths of the Modocs*), and by Herbert Spinden, who presented a section of a Tewa myth in the format of a dramatic script (*Songs of the Tewa*, pp. 89–93, 120n.).

57. George L. Trager, "Paralanguage," Robert E. Pittenger et al., *The First Five Minutes*, pp. 194–206.

been there all along, but they are to be found in drama and poetry rather than in prose. Pausing, as in two of the narrative passages already presented, can be represented by line breaks as in written poetry; unusual loudness can be represented by exclamation points, doubled to represent extreme loudness; and unusual softness, together with unusual voice qualities and various other features, can be noted in parentheses at the left-hand margin, as is commonly done in plays. The straightforwardness of these procedures places minimal barriers in the path of a potential reader.

The control of volume in Zuni narrative can be illustrated by a pastiche of twenty of the loudest (in capital letters) and softest lines from a story of more than five hundred lines; these twenty lines reveal the skeleton of the story, complete with opening and closing formulas and the moments of greatest emotion:

SO' NAHCHI.

The little baby came out.

"Where is the little baby crying?" they said.

He was nursed, the little boy was nursed by the deer.

"I will go to Kachina Village, for he is without clothing, naked."

When she got back to her children they were all sleeping.

"HE SAW A HERD OF DEER.

BUT A LITTLE BOY WAS AMONG THEM."

"PERHAPS WE WILL CATCH HIM."

THEN HIS DEER MOTHER TOLD HIM EVERYTHING.

"THAT IS WHAT SHE DID TO YOU, SHE JUST DROPPED YOU."

The boy became

very unhappy.

AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAD COME KILLED THE DEER,

KILLED THE DEER, KILLED THE DEER.

And his uncle, dismounting,

caught him.

"THAT IS WHAT YOU DID AND YOU ARE MY REAL MOTHER."

He put the quiver on and went out.

There he died.

THIS WAS LIVED LONG AGO. LEE—SEM KONIKYA.⁵⁸

The extremes of loudness and softness overlap in function in that they both draw special attention to a line. The softness of "He was

58. This and all further Zuni narrative quotations are from "The Boy and the Deer," narrated by Andrew Peymetse, a full translation may be found in Tedlock, *Ind-ing the Center*, pp. 1-32.

nursed, the little boy was nursed by the deer" seems more appropriate than a loud rendition, and the line about the killing of the deer seems properly loud, but some other lines could have been rendered either way. "But a little boy was among them," for example.

The manipulation of voice quality in Zuni narration has a diversity I have only begun to explore; only a few examples can be given here. One of the narrators represented in my collection delivers the opening lines of his tales, including formulas and the names of the major characters and the places where they live, with a formality which approaches that of a chant: His stresses are heavier, his enunciation more careful, and his pitch control greater (but not as great as in singing) than they would be in his normal narrating voice. As he moves into the first events of the story, this formality slowly dissolves, over the space of eight or ten lines, until his voice is normal. The only other fully predictable manipulation of voice quality on the part of the same narrator involves the quotation of story characters. The words of the Ahayuuta (twin boys, the war gods), for example, are usually delivered in a high, raspy voice, and most female characters, except where their speeches are long, are given a tense, tight (but not high) voice. Since a male native speaker of English might prefer to render female voices in narratives by raising his pitch, one might "translate" the Zuni "tight" voice into an English "high" one. Neither of these practices is a more objective rendition of the female voice than the other; both represent a selective imitation of the common properties of female speech.⁵⁹

There are many less conventionalized (and less common) uses of voice quality in Zuni narratives, two examples of which will suffice here. When a character is trying to pull some tough blades loose from a yucca plant, the narrator may render "He pulled" with the strain of someone who is trying to speak while holding his breath during great exertion. When a passage involves intense emotion, the narrator may combine the softness mentioned earlier with a break in his voice, as if he felt like weeping. The use of this voice technique is exemplified in the following passage in which a man is killing three deer who are the foster mother and siblings of his nephew:

The third uncle
(softly, voice breaking) dropped his elder sister

59. Tightness, or "squeeze," is more common among women than among men, according to Pittenger et al., *The First Five Minutes*, pp. 202-3.

his elder brother
his mother.

Loudness and voice quality are obviously worth noting, but it seems to me that pausing is foremost among the paralinguistic devices that give shape to Zuni narrative and distinguish it from written prose, and the same could probably be said of many other oral narrative traditions. Igor Stravinsky has said, "I dislike the organ's *legato sostenuto*, . . . the monster never breathes,"⁶⁰ and he could have said the same thing of written prose. The spoken word is never delivered in the gray masses of boxed-in words we call prose; indeed, according to Frieda Goldman-Eisler, as much as half the time spent in delivering spontaneous discourse is devoted to silence,⁶¹ and "pausing is as much a part of the act of speaking as the vocal utterance of words itself."⁶² But of all the past anthropological collectors of so-called prose narratives, only one, Paul Radin, seems to have shown any real sensitivity to pausing. For several passages from Winnebago texts, he marks pauses of three different lengths; he also breaks these passages into lines. Here his intention is unclear: Each line break coincides with a pause, but there are also pauses within lines.⁶³ Unfortunately he preserves neither pause marks nor line breaks in his translations.

In dealing with the pauses in Zuni narratives, I have found it best to divide them into two types: "ordinary" pauses, represented by line breaks, and "long" pauses, represented by double spaces between lines (here marked by a dot •). I initially spotted pauses only by ear, running through the tape of a half-hour narrative several times. An oscillograph of the same tape later revealed that my "ordinary" pauses ran from four-tenths of a second to two seconds, with the average at three-fourths of a second. The longer pauses ran from two to three seconds. Some other listener might come up with slightly different boundaries for ordinary and long pauses than I did, or might want to make more than two distinctions; but any listener, given a reasonably good ear, could probably make fairly consistent notations without the aid of an oscillograph.

Intonation poses no great problems where Zuni pausing is concerned. Except for the special intonational device used to lengthen time or space (discussed earlier) and a few other, rarer deviations,

60. Igor Stravinsky, album notes to *Symphony of Psalms*.
61. Frieda Goldman-Eisler, "Discussion and Further Comments," pp. 118–19.
62. Paul Radin, *The Culture of the Winnebago: As Described by Themselves*, pp. 42–44, structured rather than recorded in the field.

Zuni narrative patterns can be covered by a general rule rather than marked for each line: The boundary between one intonation contour and the next is strongly marked where a change of phrase or sentence corresponds with a pause or where a quote begins, and less strongly marked where a change of phrase or sentence occurs within a line or where a pause occurs within a phrase. This pattern seems close enough to the normal tendencies of an English speaker so as to create no translation problems. As far as the internal details of the contours are concerned, the typical Zuni contour does not happen to be very different from that of a declarative sentence in English.

The following passage, with silences and intonation contours as indicated above, will serve to illustrate most of the properties of pausing in Zuni narrative ("they" in the first line refers to a herd of deer):

Yam telhashi k'uusiina yallitookwin aawamuxa aayemakkyaa. Aayemakna
lesnolh chimkawit iskon aateya tom sunnibap tutunaa potiye.
Aateya kya—koholh linaa
ist
an ihruwal'an
an kyakhholh
imat lhatakky'an aakya. Lhatakky'an 'aana
imat paninaas ist
uhsi lak'ist
uwi'ky'al'anhohh lesna paninaa uhsist lak
k'uushin yallitan uhsi teruuli yallitookwin holh imat ky'albawolh yemakna.
They went back up to their old home on the Prairie Dog Hills. Having
gone up they were living there and coming down only to drink in
the evening.
They lived on—for some time
until
from the village
his uncle
went out hunting. Going out hunting
he came along
down around
Worm Spring and from there he went on toward
the Prairie Dog Hills and came up near the edge of a valley there.

The problems encountered in preserving the original pauses in English are minimal. Occasionally Zuni word order makes the transposi-

tion of lines or parts of lines desirable, but this can usually be done without serious distortion of the effect of the original: In the above passage no transposition seemed advantageous, except that "down" in line 9 of the translation is a partial rendition of *paninas* in line 8 of the text, but elsewhere in the same story a literal rendition would produce lines like "Her clothes / she bundled," and "His kinswoman / he beat," which call for transposition.

Where the length of lines is concerned, it would be difficult and foolish to slavishly follow the exact Zuni syllable counts in translation, but it is possible to at least approximate the original contrasts in line length. The importance of such an approximation may be seen from the fact that the length of lines—or, to look at it in another way, the frequency of pauses—is the major source of apparent variations in the rate at which human speech is delivered. Passages with short lines (many pauses) will seem slow, while those with long lines (few pauses) will seem fast.⁶³ In the above passage, the narrator rapidly tells of the deer herd's residence on the Prairie Dog Hills (lines 1–2), then slows down, with suspenseful effect, as the man goes out hunting (lines 4–9), and finally speeds up again with the excitement of the man's arrival at the Prairie Dog Hills (line 11). Preserving such patterns in narrative pace obviously precludes the insertion of any but the smallest bits of "explanatory" material by the translator: Where the Zuni word *lapappowanne* means "a headdress of macaw tail-feathers worn upright at the back of the head," for example, he will have to settle for something like "macaw headdress" in his translation and leave the rest to a note or a picture, though Cushing might have done otherwise. And where it is frequently unclear which characters are responsible for quotations, as in Clackamas (but not Zuni) narratives, the translator may find it best to place the names of the speakers outside the main left-hand margin, as in a play.

One of the most striking things about the lines in Zuni narrative is that they are not always dependent on the major features of syntax. In the above excerpt some of the pauses do correspond with changes of phrase or sentence, but five of them (the pauses following lines 4, 5, 6, 9, 10) leave the hearer hanging, syntactically speaking, thus adding to the suspense already noted for this passage.⁶⁴ The longer

63. Goldman-Eisler, "Discussion and Further Comments," p. 120; she adds that the rate of syllable articulation (between pauses), by contrast with the rate of pausing, is almost constant. Nevertheless, a deliberate slowing of articulation can be used to confer prominence on selected words; see Tedlock, *Finding the Center*, pp. 199, 200, 208, for examples.

64. One-third of the lines produced by Andrew Peynetsa involves this kind of phrase-splitting, which is twice the proportion of splitting (or "necessary enjambment") reported for Yugoslav epics by Albert Lord (*The Singer of Tales*, p. 54).

pauses in Zuni stories often correspond to sentence boundaries, but in the present excerpt they occur between two phrases of the same sentence (after line 3) and in the midst of a phrase (after line 10). The first of these pauses is a sort of paragraph marker between the affairs of the herd and the hunting expedition of the man; its location within a sentence keeps the listener on the string in much the same way that the placement of a chapter division within an episode (instead of between episodes) keeps the reader of a novel on the string. With the second of these pauses the narrator keeps the listener dangling for a moment and then suddenly lets him know, in the first words of the next line, that the hunter has arrived at the Prairie Dog Hills, where the herd is.

The treatment of oral narrative as dramatic poetry has a number of analytical advantages. Some of the features of oral narrative which have been branded "primitive," on the basis of comparisons with written prose fiction, can now be understood as "poetic" instead. It has been said, for example, that while most of our own prose narrative is highly "realistic," primitive narrative is full of fantasy. A stone moves about like an animal, an animal speaks like a man, a man jumps through a hoop and becomes a coyote. Yet when we encounter gross and unexplained distortions of reality in Yeats, for example, we are apt to call them not "primitive" but "dreamlike" or "mystical" and to regard them as highly poetic.

It is also said that "primitive" narrative, again unlike written prose fiction, seldom describes emotional states. This is true enough, but the comparison with prose misses the point: What oral narrative usually does with emotions is evoke them rather than describe them directly, which is precisely what we have been taught to expect in poetry. In the Zuni case, such descriptions of emotions as do exist are very simple, "The boy became / very unhappy," for example, but evocations are myriad and sometimes quite subtle, as in this passage:

He went out, having been given the quiver, and wandered around.
He was not thinking of killing deer, he just wandered around.
In the evening he came home empty-handed.

According to both the narrator and a member of his audience, these lines clearly indicate (to the Zuni, at least) that the person referred to is depressed, and they regarded this person's death three days later as a sort of suicide, though it was described in the story as an accident.

Another distinguishing feature of "primitive" narrative, according to Boas and many others, is repetition, ranging from the level of

words or phrases to that of whole episodes.⁶⁵ At least one of the kinds of repetition in Zuni narrative is indeed rare in our own prose (and poetry as well), and that is the linking of two sentences or major clauses by the conversion of the final element of one into the initial element of the next, as in these lines (from the last passage quoted in the previous section): "His uncle / went out hunting. Going out hunting / he came along. . . ." But the same device is common in epic poetry, as in this Yugoslav example: "And may God too make us merry, / Make us merry and give us entertainment!"⁶⁶ Unless we want to call epic poetry "primitive," this particular kind of repetition must be properly understood as "oral" and not "primitive," and the same thing goes for the repeated use of stock formulas in both epic poetry (epithets, for example) and Zuni narrative (greeting exchanges, for example).

When it comes to the repetition of whole passages, "primitive" narrative may be compared to epic poetry and also to refrains in songs (from both literate and nonliterate cultures) and in written poetry. Refrains are often varied from one rendition to the next, and the same is true (although in a less structured way) for the repeated passages in Yugoslav epic, as shown by Albert Lord,⁶⁷ and in Zuni narrative. In the following Zuni passage, a boy's foster mother is quoting to him what he must say when he addresses his real mother, who abandoned him as a baby:

My Sun Father
made you pregnant
When you were about to deliver
it was to Nearing Waters
that you went down to wash. You washed at the bank.

But when the boy actually confronts this real mother later in the same story, this is what the narrator has him say:

My Sun Father
made you pregnant.
When he made you pregnant you
sat in there and your belly began to grow large.
Your belly grew large
you

65. Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*, pp. 491-93.
66. Lord, *Singer of Tales*, p. 32.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

you were about to deliver, you had pains in your belly, you were about to give birth to me, you had pains in your belly
you gathered your clothes
and you went down to the bank to wash.

The remaining kinds of repetition in Zuni narrative are of the sort we approvingly call "parallelism" when we find them in our own poetry. A line like "And all the people who had come killed the deer, killed the deer, killed the deer!" cannot honestly be called primitive unless we call Shakespeare primitive when he has Hamlet say, "You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life." And not all the parallelism in Zuni narrative involves simple repetition:

*Tecauiti kolli nahlayaye. Nahlayap
lalholh aksik is'an aksh allu'aye, kxan lleyaa k'ohanna.
Muusilili lleya'kwip an lapappowaye.
Lapappow lesnisi aawanzelap, ten aksiki
otisi
ho'i akshappa.*

In the valley was the herd of deer. In the herd of deer
there was a little boy going around among them, dressed in white.
He had bells on and was wearing a macaw headdress.

He was wearing a macaw headdress and was handsome, surely it
was a boy
a male
a person among them.

What all this means, simply stated, is that (remarkably enough) there was a human being among the deer, but the narrator chooses to explore the fact in half a dozen different ways.

Repetitions and other poetic features of oral narrative have implications even for those who focus on content analysis and choose to ignore "style." The implications for psychological analysis, which is normally based on the content of prose translations, may be illustrated by the following passage, in which a boy has just exposed the woman who secretly abandoned him as a baby (parentheses indicate softer portions):

At that moment his mother
embraced him (embraced him).
His uncle got angry (his uncle got angry).
He beat

his kinswoman
(he beat his kinswoman).

This passage might have appeared in a conventional prose rendition as "At that moment his mother embraced him. His uncle got angry. He beat his kinswoman," thus having lost the nuances and greater intensity given it by the repetition, the changes of loudness, and the frequent pauses.

The complications of poetic style have especially strong implications for those who seek to measure the social and psychological content of narrative by means of word counts. "Killed the deer," repeated three times in a line quoted above, might well have been reduced to a single occurrence in the translations of the past. Moreover, it seems crude to give the same weight to a word like "killed" when it is shouted and when it is rendered flatly. And the indirect expression of emotion, as in the case of the depression and suicide mentioned earlier, would escape a word counter entirely.

Lévi-Strauss and other structuralists operating on an abstract level assume that any translation will do for their purposes, but poetic subtleties have a potential for radically altering surface meanings, irony being an obvious example. The more concrete structural analysis proposed by William Hendricks, on the other hand, does take the "linguistic" aspect of poetics into account, since each basic element in his system consists of a single semantic "function" that may be served by several lower-level "linguistic" (phonological, morphological, or syntactic) elements.⁶⁸ But even Hendricks overlooks "paralinguistic" matters, though it is precisely at the level of semantic function that the arbitrary wall between "linguistics" and "paralinguistics" collapses. In Zuni narrative, for example, the semantic function of marking the start of a quotation may be served by such "linguistic" devices as a sharp intonation change or the words "The deer spoke to her son," but it may also be served by such "paralinguistic" devices as a pause or a change in voice quality.

The treatment of oral narrative as dramatic poetry, then, clearly promises many analytical rewards. It should also be obvious that there are immediate aesthetic rewards. The apparent flatness of many past translations is not a reflection but a distortion of the originals, caused by the dictation process, the notion that content and form are independent, a pervasive deafness to oral qualities, and a fixed notion of the boundary between poetry and prose. Present conditions,

68. William O. Hendricks, "On the Notion 'Beyond the Sentence,'" pp. 32-35.

which combine new recording techniques with a growing sensitivity to verbal art as performed "event" rather than as fixed "object" on the page, promise the removal of previous difficulties. "Event" orientation, together with an intensified appreciation of fantasy, has already led modern poets to recognize a kinship between their own work and the oral art of tribal peoples. As Jerome Rothenberg points out in *Technicians of the Sacred*, both "modern" and tribal poets are concerned with oral performance, both escape the confines of Aristotelian rationalism, both transcend the conventional genre boundaries of written literature, and both sometimes make use of stripped-down forms that require maximal interpolation by audiences.⁶⁹ This last point recalls the Clackamas "terseness" discussed by Jacobs, and I am reminded of the Zuni who asked me, "When I tell these stories do you picture it, or do you just write it down?"

The effort presented here is intended more as an experiment than as the final word on the poetic features of oral narrative and their presentation on the printed page. I hope it will encourage others to make further experiments.

Epilogue

The argument that American Indian spoken narratives are better understood (and translated) as dramatic poetry than as an oral equivalent of written prose fiction may be summarized as follows: The content tends toward the fantastic rather than the prosaic, the emotions of the characters are evoked rather than described, there are patterns of repetition or parallelism ranging from the level of words to that of whole episodes, the narrator's voice shifts constantly in amplitude and tone, and the flow of that voice is paced by pauses that segment its sounds into what I have chosen to call lines. Of all these realities of oral narrative performance, the plainest and grossest is the sheer alternation of sound and silence; the resultant lines often show an independence from intonation, from syntax, and even from boundaries of plot structure. I understand the fundamental sound-shape of a spoken narrative in much the same way that Robert W. Corrigan understood drama when he wrote that "the playwright—and also the translator—cannot really be concerned with 'good prose' or with

69. Jerome Rothenberg, *Technicians of the Sacred*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

'good verse' in the usual sense of those terms. The structure is action, not what is said or how it is said but *when*.⁷⁰ It is above all the *when*, or what dramatists call "timing," that is missing in printed prose.

Since I first proposed my scheme for the transcription and translation of spoken narrative,⁷¹ it has been extended, with welcome variations and refinements, far beyond its original Zuni context. To mention only those experiments that have already been published, pause-determined lines in texts and/or translations have been used by Ronald and Suzanne B. K. Scollon for several northern Athabaskan languages, by Dick Dauenhauer and others for Tlingit, by Barre Toelken and Tacheeni Scott for Navajo, by Kathleen Sands for Papago, and by Tim Knab for Nahuatl.⁷² Entire books showing not only pauses but other dramatic features now include, in addition to my own *Finding the Center*, Allan Burns's *An Epoch of Miracles*, on the Yucatec Maya, and—passing beyond the American Indian sphere—Peter Seitel's *See So That We May See*, on the Haya of Tanzania.⁷³ There have also been applications to English-language folk narratives and sermons, both Afro- and Anglo-American, by Peter Gold, by Daniel Crowley, and by Jeff Titon and Ken George.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, Dell Hymes has shifted his continuing work in anthropological philology from the written texts of songs to those of spoken narratives. He breaks the published prose of dictated texts into lines, verses, and stanzas on the basis of what he calls "measured verse" (as opposed to metrical verse in the sense of syllable or mora or stress counts), finding tendencies to numerical regularities in narratives of Chinookan, Sahaptin, Takelma, and Tonkawa provenience; he has searched for similar patterns in the Zuni story of "Coyote and

70. Robert W. Corrigan, "Translating for Actors," pp. 135–36.

71. The scheme was first described and demonstrated in Tedlock, "Finding the Middle of the Earth," published in 1970.

72. The Athabaskan narratives in question may be found in Ronald Scollon and Suzanne B. K. Scollon, *Linguistic Convergence*, pp. 45–51 (Chipeewyan); Chief Henry of Huala, *The Stories That Chief Henry Told* (Central Koyukon); and Gaither Paul, *Stories for My Grandchildren* (Tanacross). The Tlingit work of Dauenhauer and others appears in Robert Zupoff, *Tax'at: Mosquito and Kudatun Kahidee: The Salmon Box*, and in Susie James, *Sil' Kaa Kaa Kana'at: Glacier Bay History*. For Kathleen Sands's Papago work, see Ted Rios, "The Egg," Barre Toelken and Tacheeni Scott do a Navajo tale in "Poetic Retranslation and the 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman." Tim Knab's work from Nahuatl tales is in "Three Tales from the Sierra de Puebla."

73. Allan Burns, *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya*. Peter Seitel, *See So That We May See: Performances and Interpretations of Traditional Tales from Tanzania*.

74. Peter Gold, "From 'Easter Sunrise Sermon,'" Daniel Crowley, "The Singing Pepper Tree," Jeff Titon, "Son House: Two Narratives," Jeff Titon and Ken George, "Dressed in the Armor of God" and "Testimonies."

Junco," reorganizing a text I had published in a pause-divided format.⁷⁵ His most impressive contribution is to show how initial particles with meanings such as "now" and "then" are widely used to mark off units of the size he reckons as verses and stanzas, but his attempts to break the verses into lines are far less convincing. The lines in question are based on "certain features of syntax," not always the same ones, but "each predication in a text is likely to be a line."⁷⁶ The problem is that when the object of the analyst is to divide verses internally so that their lines will add up to a pattern number, and when there is no metrical scheme (in the strict sense), line-making is wide open to gerrymandering, however clear the larger units—verses and stanzas—may sometimes be.

William Bright, in transcribing and translating a tape-recorded Karok narrative, has attempted to combine Hymes's measured verse analysis with my own attention to pausing, but he reduces pause to the status of a general and open-ended rule to the effect that most Karok lines are "without audible pause" at the end, that lines with verbs of saying may be "with or without" such a pause, that verses do have a pause at the end, and—here is the problem—that "accidental hesitations of speech obscure the pause phenomena that define verses and lines."⁷⁷ Since his published presentation of this narrative follows a line, verse, and stanza scheme constructed after the manner of Hymes and omits the notation of pauses as such, we cannot judge Bright's formulation of this rule of occurrence. Most important, we cannot decide for ourselves whether the "accidental" pauses he refers to might in fact come at dramatic moments in the action or mark the quoted speech of excited characters. These troublesome pauses might obscure what Corrigan called "good verse," but for all we know they might conform to his dictum that in drama, "the structure is action."

What is at stake in the tension between action and verse may be illustrated by comparing just three short passages from Hymes's ver-

75. Dell Hymes, "Particle, Pause and Pattern in American Indian Narrative Verse." I first published the text and translation of "Coyote and Junco" in *Finding the Center* (both editions), pp. 75–85; a thoroughly revised version was given in 1978 in Tedlock, "Coyote and Junco." Hymes consulted only the older version. For more on "measured verse," see his *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*, chaps. 3–6.

76. Hymes, "Particle, Pause and Pattern," p. 7.

77. William Bright, "A Karok Myth in 'Measured Verse': The Translation of a Performance," pp. 118–19. More recently the problem of the relationships among pause, intonation, syntax, and measure has been taken up by Anthony C. Woodbury for Yup'ik Eskimo, by M. Dale Kinkaid for Chehalis, by Joel Sherzer for Kuna, by Ellen Basso for Kalapalo, and by Sally McLendon for Eastern Pomo. As of this writing, their work is still in progress or in press.

sion of "Coyote and Junco" with the lines that were actually delivered by Andrew Peyneta when he first told the story. First some Zuni lines as arranged and punctuated by Hymes in accordance with considerations of syntax and verse:

Taas an temne.

Tenani yanikwaatinani.

Taas aakya:

*lak teshoktaaraan holhi.*⁷⁸

Here, then, are two "verses," each beginning with *taas*, "again," and each consisting of two "lines." The first of these two verses ends what Hymes reckons as a stanza consisting of four verses; the second verse begins a new stanza of four verses. Here is the translation, as arranged by Hymes; his only change from the original wording is to make the translation of *taas* consistent, changing its second occurrence from "and" to "again":

Again she sang for him.

He learned the song.

Again he went on;

he went through a field there.

And now here are the performer's own lines as originally published, divided by pause and punctuated according to intonation:

Taas an temne.

Tenani yanikwaatinani taas aakya.

Lak teshoktaaraan holhi.

We can now see to what extent Hymes has allowed considerations of syntax and verse to overrule those of pause and intonation. In the course of dividing the second of the original lines not only between two verses but between two different stanzas (as noted above), he has legislated a sentence end (marked by a period) in the midst of what was originally a single smooth intonational contour. Further, in constructing the second of his verses, he has reduced the punctuation following its first line from a period to a semicolon and has inserted a period at the end of its second line, where the original contour was

⁷⁸ All the passages quoted here are from Hymes, "Particle, Pause and Pattern," and Tedlock, *Finding the Center*.

left incomplete before a pause. The net result is that he has made the reading eye interpret the final line of the quoted passage as belonging to what precedes it rather than to what follows it, which is not the way the performer had delivered that line to the ears of his audience.

The original translation was presented as follows, except for one change: Conceding to Hymes that *taas* might be translated the same way for both of its occurrences, I have changed the initial "again" of the passage to "and," matching the "and" in the second line:

And she sang for him.

He learned the song and went on.

He went through a field there

These translated lines, like the Zuni ones, follow the action rather than the demands of versification. By this point in the story, Coyote is in a hurry to get back to his children; between learning the song from Junco and then going on (both in the second line), he does not wait for the quadruple boundary between separate sentences, lines, verses, and stanzas that Hymes has constructed for him. The third line, "He went through a field there," belongs to what follows it because the field is where the next surprise awaits Coyote; the next line being, "and broke through a gopher hole." The gopher hole waits to cave in under Coyote—and the audience—just beyond the suspense of a pause that interrupts the intonation of the sentence that began with "He went through a field there"; it does not politely await the stately change of sentence and verse that Hymes interposes.

If the lines as actually delivered follow the action, so they also follow characterization. Junco, who would prefer to mind her own business, speaks in a rather tight voice;⁷⁹ she is put off by Coyote's aggressive questioning. Here is part of an exchange between them, spoken by Andrew Peyneta as two lines separated by a pause lasting a full two seconds (and here indicated by a double space with a dot):

"Kwap to kyataashley'a?" le'. "Mā

teshuk'o taap k'ushuts'i' le'holh anikwap. "Hayi.

The translation runs this way:

"What are you winnowing?" he said. "Well

pigweed and tumbleweed," that's what she told him. "Indeed.

⁷⁹ Tedlock, "Coyote and Junco," p. 171.

Note that although Junco starts her response to Coyote's question right away, she hesitates, quite markedly, before producing the answer. This is now his second direct question, and for her it is already one too many. Once she produces the answer, Coyote begins his own turn right away, just as she did, but where she started off with a vague *mā*, "well," he starts off with a definite *hayi*, "indeed," and it will only take him a short pause (not like hers) to think of yet another question. Hymes rearranges these lines in a stanza of two verses with two lines each (and puts Coyote's "indeed" in his next stanza, not given here):

"What are you winnowing?"

he said.

"Well, pigweed and tumbleweed,"
that's what she told him.

Gone is the immediacy of Zuni conversational turn-taking, and gone is Junco's tense and lengthy hesitation between her "well" and her reluctant answer to Coyote's unwanted question.

Eventually Coyote's aggressive demands become too much for Junco, and her reluctance hardens into refusal. When he keeps forgetting the song she gives him and asks her to teach him a fourth time, she remains silent. He then threatens to bite her if she hasn't sung the song by the time he counts to four. After the count reaches two come the following words, delivered with three completed intonational contours (indicated by periods) but not a single pause:

Kaa' tena'ma. "HAA'I. ALHNAT ho' penuwa," le'.

She didn't sing. "THREE. I'll count ONCE MORE," he said.

Hymes interposes a change of line, verse, and stanza after "She didn't sing" and presents the rest of the original line as a verse of three separate lines:

"Three.

"I'll count once more,"
he said.

The removal of the original capital letters (indicating loudness) may have been a typographical error; in any case the rough-and-ready shapes of action have once again given way to the geometry of versification. When "she didn't sing," Coyote didn't wait for a line, verse,

and stanza break to get back to his countdown, and in the same breath in which he said "THREE" he went right on to remind Junco that there was only one number to go. Coyote is an impatient fellow at best, but by this time he's ready to kill.

What happens, in the passage from the dramatic art of storytelling to the literary art of verse-measuring, is a transformation of the constantly changing sounds and silences of action into regularized typographical patterns that can be comprehended at a single glance by a symmetry-seeking eye. David Antin points to the role of the eye when he questions whether meter plays an important role in the sound of English blank verse, arguing that the printed lines of such verse are best understood not as a "sound structure" but as "a visual framing effect" that "places whatever language is within the frame in a context of 'literature'."⁸⁰ In seeking exhibition space in the galleries of literature, Hymes specifically addresses the jury that requires lines of poetry to show measurement when he argues that his analysis of American Indian narratives "makes it possible, indeed essential, to regard such texts as works of literary art."⁸¹ But I take the word "poetry" to cover much more than "verse," if by verse is meant discourse that scans by meter or by measure; in so doing, I must appeal to juries that are both more arcane and more modern than this one.

In Chaucer's time, poetry included all forms of verbal art; no one defined it as being coterminous with metrical verse until Wordsworth, who confessed that he did so "against my own judgment" (quoted in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Among modern poets, Charles Olson refused even to surrender the term "verse" to metrical discourse, calling for a "projective verse" or "OPEN verse" that would "catch up and put into itself certain laws and possibilities of the breath," even where "this brings us up against syntax." In projective verse, the poet may "indicate how he would want any reader . . . to voice his work," and "FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT" (Olson's capitals).⁸² Olson looked forward to a day when poets would return to subjects of epic and dramatic proportions. His, I think, is a poetics that fits the task of listening to the drama of spoken narratives and translating their poetry into scripts that will play.

80. David Antin, "Notes for an Ultimate Prosody," pp. 176-78.

81. Hymes, "In Vain I Tried to Tell You," p. 332.

82. Charles Olson, *Selected Writings*, pp. 15-26.