

The Poetics of Arapaho Storytelling: From Salvage to Performance

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Introduction: Textualization, Analysis, and Performance

One of the most widely discussed issues for students of Native American anthropology, literature, linguistics, and ethnopoetics has been the question of how to represent verbal narratives on the page. In the past generation, Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock led the way in demonstrating the poetic elements of these narratives, and “poetic” as opposed to prose presentations are now the norm—though this is certainly not uncontested (see Mattina 1987). Among poetic “intersemiotic translations” (Fine 1984: 96), two broad approaches developed, each linked to one of the two figures above. Hymes’ textualizations were often retranscriptions of narratives in now-vanished languages, taken down by the original collector in prose form. These textualizations tended to place great emphasis on the spatial or visual organization of the “text” (Fine 1984:3) on the page. This organization attempted to reveal the underlying formal and narrative patterns that organized the texts. As such, Hymes’ textualizations focused primarily on the grammatical, semantic, and syntactical (the broadly linguistic) aspects of the texts. Lines and verses are typically determined by lexical markers and other features of semantic content. On the other hand, paralinguistic aspects dominated Tedlock’s decisions on textualization. Elements such as pause, tonal contour, and other paralinguistic features stand out in his textualizations of Zuni and Maya verbal performances. Simply put, Hymes focused on “text,” Tedlock on “texture,” to use Alan Dundes’ terms (1964).¹

It is important to recognize, however, that textualizations are not simply intersemiotic translations, but also methods of analysis of verbal

¹ See Fine 1984:61 and Wiget 1987:312 as well.

narratives: they are interpretive acts.² This fact underlies the recent trend within Native American ethnopoetics towards recognizing the complementarity of these two approaches, as well as others.³ Scholars have begun to recognize that textualizations “on the page,” when thought of as specific approaches to a narrative or as analytical tools, can take many different forms, depending on the goals and interests of the particular study. While we may argue over what final form a textualization should take for publication, especially in the commercial press, no one would contest that both linguistic and paralinguistic features (as well as kinesic and others) are present in verbal narratives, and that all contribute to the narratives’ overall organization and reception, for both native listeners and non-native students. In this paper, I would like to apply the two methods mentioned above not as competing forms of textualization, but rather as complementary approaches to analyzing one Native American (Arapaho) text. I will at least initially be much less interested in how one might eventually textualize the narrative (in English translation) than in attempting to analyze the key features of the narrative itself in its original Arapaho.

We will find many surprising differences between the linguistic and paralinguistic organization of the narrative—certainly more so than in many recent studies. Of course, there will also be many areas of overlapping organization. The first goal of this paper is to elucidate as generally as possible the poetics of Arapaho verbal narrative, and to examine the complex interactions between linguistic and paralinguistic features as they contribute to overall structure. I will use first a linguistic approach, oriented towards semantics and syntax, followed by a paralinguistic approach directed towards specifically vocal features. The validity of this method is, incidentally, enhanced by the fact that I originally had access to the narrative only in a textual transcription. I was thus forced to approach it from this standpoint and was able to do so “uncontaminated” by the knowledge of how the narrative was actually performed. I then gained access to an audiotape recording several months later, after the first analysis was completed.

The result of these approaches are the analytical textualizations that appear on the pages of this journal. But the result will also be the revelation of a complex series of rhythms that structure the narrative. Among these will be a quite regular “formal” rhythm, whose basis is primarily linguistic—the regular recurrence of certain markers of line, verse, and so

² See Titon 1995:436-38 on the changing status of “text” and “textualization” in folklore studies.

³ See Krupat 1987:119-20, 124; and Sherzer 1992.

forth. There are also, broadly speaking, rhythms of “narration” and “moral lesson.” These rhythms are produced by features in the narrative that serve to highlight key moments of excitement or tension in the action, or underline the moral implications. As such, these rhythms are much more irregular than the formal rhythm, and, interestingly, they turn out to be much more a function of the paralinguistic features of the narrative than of the linguistic features. Thus there is a general tendency for poetically marked linguistic features to ally with formal rhythms that recur independently of narrative content, while marked paralinguistic features (of volume or speed of delivery, for instance) ally with rhythms related to content. And finally, the places where linguistic and paralinguistic features tend to overlap most strongly are the places where the linguistic features are most strongly content-oriented rather than formal.

Armed with this appreciation of a near-full performance of an Arapaho narrative (following Bauman 1977 and Hymes 1981 on “performance”), I will then focus on a second topic: the relation of Arapaho narratives recorded in the early twentieth century to the narrative examined here and its poetics. The reliability and utility of such older transcribed narratives has been a central question for Native American ethnopoetics in recent times.⁴ I will argue that the earlier Arapaho texts share the same basic oral poetics as my “performance narrative” of the 1980s, but that the poetics found in those earlier texts is “relictual.” Clearly, we have no access to the paralinguistic features of the older narratives, so in that sense they are obviously relictual and incomplete. What is missing from the earlier texts is not just the voice, but everything that is most closely allied to the voice in Arapaho poetics. In particular, the specifically linguistic features most closely tied to narrative and moral rhythm in the 1980s text are precisely those features missing from the earlier transcribed texts. It is primarily the purely formal rhythmic features that remain.

Based on this discovery and on other evidence, I will suggest that the older texts do not represent fully emergent performances.⁵ More importantly, what is lost is the guiding “texture”—linguistic and paralinguistic—of the performance, which is oriented towards meaning and interpretation. I will also suggest that across the continuum of traditional oral poetics certain narrative features are typical only of full performance, while others may be typical or indicative of minimal or perfunctory performance—plot summary, essentially. Thus the “poetics” one discovers

⁴ See especially Hymes 1992 and Clements 1996.

⁵ See Hymes 1981, Fine 1984:61, and Clements 1996 on this term.

in many transcriptions may be so incomplete as to be illusory: a rigidly formal and regular relictual organization may come to dominate in such records. This knowledge will allow us to return, finally, to the twin questions of textualization and performance, which are crucially related.

Part One: A Linguistic Analysis

Background on the narrative

Few Arapaho verbal performances—other than songs—have been recorded and published in the original language. I was thus interested to learn that during the 1980s, a member of the tribe had video- and audio-taped his father recounting traditional Arapaho stories in what approached a full performance setting. In addition, he has since published edited versions of these stories, which include a diplomatic transcription, an edited version with interlinear English translation, and a free English translation. I was able to obtain a copy of these texts and to begin a study of the poetics of Arapaho storytelling. Such performances occur very rarely now, and the storytelling tradition (in Arapaho as opposed to English) is moribund.

The story studied here was told by Paul Moss, who lived on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, in the settlement of Ethete. It was recorded by Alonzo Moss, Sr., who has collaborated on this paper. Alonzo Moss is exceptional among native speakers of Arapaho in that he reads and writes the language well; his edition largely conforms to current linguistic standards.⁶ He is the head of the Northern Arapaho Language and Culture Commission and is recognized throughout the tribe for his traditional knowledge. For the most part, I will rely on his translations in this paper, though I have slightly altered them in order to stay closer to the literal Arapaho in several cases.

The texts were performed either for high school students in Alonzo Moss' Arapaho language classes at the Wyoming Indian High School on the reservation, or else in the tribal offices in Ethete. Neither situation represents a fully developed performance context, though the high school situation approaches it more closely and is the setting for the text I will discuss here. In that case, however, the students were not sufficiently fluent in Arapaho to fully understand Paul Moss' narration (though his son and others present were). Thus the setting, the audience, and the fact that he was

⁶ Moss 1993. Available from: Nii'ei hii koyiho'/Cultural Resources Center, Wyoming Indian Elementary School, Ethete, WY 82520.

being recorded, as well as his awareness that he was under time constraints due to school schedules and tape lengths, may all have mitigated against a fully emergent performance. On the other hand, the narrations were performed for an Arapaho-only audience, and they were performed for a traditional reason—as moral lessons to the students. Thus the aberrations that can be produced by narration for outside linguists or anthropologists were not present.⁷ As a final point of information, Alonzo Moss mentioned that two other unrelated members of the tribe, who along with Paul Moss were among the most knowledgeable traditional Arapaho—and according to Alonzo Moss the only other persons able to tell these stories fully “in the old way”—remarked after hearing or seeing some of the tapes that they were glad to see these stories told the “right way” again, as they were when they were boys listening to the old men tell them.

I will concentrate on one story, entitled “Nii’ehiiho”⁸ or “Eagles.” It tells the tale of a young man who wants to go and take young eagles from the nest in order to use their feathers. He has already done this four times, however (four is the culturally ordained sacred number for the Arapaho), and is warned by the elders not to do so again. He goes anyway, but suffers an accident. He must be rescued by the eagles themselves and then be carried home by an elk in exchange for a promise to the eagles not to engage in such behavior again. As a condition of the rescue, the elk also imposes upon the young man a prohibition against eating a certain part of the carcass of any game. His wife, however, mistakenly puts that part of the carcass into a stew, and he eats it. He realizes that now his mistake is beyond saving, and waits for the eagles, who arrive in the form of thunder clouds and take him away to the sky, where he becomes one with the thunder and lightning. The general moral is that one must respect the elders and their wisdom and not venture beyond the proper bounds of conduct.

The recorded version lasts almost exactly twenty minutes. I do not offer the full text in this article, though it can be obtained from the tribe (see note 6). It was noted down in prose form by Alonzo Moss, and the translation has many elements of so-called “Red English.” However, it can certainly be divided into more precise poetic units. This discovery is hardly new, of course, and here I wish simply to note some of the precise ways in which these structures are marked in Arapaho. I follow Dell Hymes

⁷ Alonzo Moss states that his father did not expect the tapes to be transcribed and had to be convinced by Alonzo to permit this. He did, however, expect them to be preserved.

⁸ Although Arapaho is often written with accent marks on vowels, Moss omits them from his edition, and thus I will do so here.

(1981:9-10, 144) in stressing that these texts are obviously all the product of a single individual, and thus cannot be taken as fully representative of “the” poetics of Arapaho. They are “a” poetics, of one Arapaho man. Nevertheless, in its general features, this narrative seems to follow a general Arapaho pattern. The previously cited remarks of the other (unrelated) storytellers support this assumption. I have since had the opportunity to hear stories told by several individuals on the Wind River Reservation, and their stories largely share the oral poetics exhibited by Paul Moss.

Formal linguistic markers

Arapaho has several key marker words that serve to delineate poetic verses. The most important of these is the word “wohei,” which might be translated as “OK,” “well now,” “right,” “yes.” The word is used in everyday speech as well as in storytelling, but in both cases often serves a primarily phatic function. In the 534 lines of the narrative as I initially divided it based on linguistic criteria, the word occurs in sixty-eight lines, and only rarely with more than ten lines between occurrences. As a further indicator of its function, it always occurs at the beginning of an English sentence in Alonzo Moss’ translation, with just one exception. In fact, at certain points towards the beginning and end of the narrative, it occurs regularly every three to four lines, giving a distinctive rhythm of “plunging into” the body of the narrative and then “tying up” its final events. This is the linguistic feature least allied to narrative or moral content. Two quite similar terms are the verbal prefixes “hee’ih-” (special narrative past tense) and “ne’-” or “he’ne’-” (meaning “then” or “next”). Both are used, but not commonly, in everyday speech; in the narrative, however, they occur with frequencies and distribution roughly similar to “wohei.”

Linguistic markers with both formal and content-centered roles

Other linguistic features are more closely tied to narrative content. One example is “niine’eenó’ [+ noun]” and its reflexes,⁹ which Alonzo Moss translates as “here they are, these [+ noun].” The word serves pragmatically both to highlight the main topic of the narration, and perhaps most

⁹ For the purposes of discussion, I will use the single form “niine’eenó’” in the analysis; however, poetry transcriptions will retain this word’s variations.

commonly to introduce new topics.¹⁰ Note its use many times initially, then its absence in the central part of the narrative as no new referents are introduced, then its heavy use again towards the end as Paul Moss emphasizes the moral message of the narrative. At this latter point it serves not to introduce new topics, but rather to highlight the significance of the topics. The clustering of these particular types of poetic features towards the beginning and end of narratives, with their diminution towards the middle, is a feature that has been noted previously.¹¹

A similar term, “niiyou,” meaning “here it is” or “here they are,” is used in everyday speech when giving or showing something to someone. It serves a similar function as the preceding, though with a slighter emphasis.¹² Its weighted occurrence in the narrative following line 256 corresponds to the climax of the action, when the protagonist accidentally eats the forbidden cut of meat. Here it seems to replace “niine’eenó’.” It highlights and gives immediacy to nouns central to the ongoing action.

Mr. Moss shows great flexibility in using lexically near-equivalent forms to add shades of meaning and emphasis. The pair “niine’eenó’” and “niiyou” is one example. Arapaho, like all Algonquian languages, typically combines many of the features of an English sentence into a single word made up of one or more roots and numerous lexical and grammatical affixes. But one can also separate off many of these affixes and, with the addition of appropriate endings, use them as independent words. The Arapaho adverbs are the most common example. The ending “-ííhi’” is added to the normally affixed form to produce an independent word. In this narrative, Mr. Moss performs the same shift not only on adverbs, but also on affixes indicating tense and mode of the verb (by adding an adjectival ending). Thus he alternates between “hee’ih-” and “hee’ihiini” for primarily emphatic purposes, and likewise between the prefixed form “beet-” (“to desire to do” something) and the independent form “beetoh’uni.” A related example is the complex series of forms “nee’-,” “heenee’-,” “nee’ees-,” and “heenee’ees-,”

¹⁰ See ll. 11, 12, 18, 32, 36, 40, 73, 78, 80, 91, 197, 198, 224, 254, 309, 319, 345, 350, 351, and 400. Despite the fact that the complete text is not available to the reader of this article for reference, I give line numbers so that an appreciation can be had not only of the relative frequency of occurrence of various forms, but also of the ways in which they may be clustered or have a tendency to occur towards the beginning or end of the narrative. A copy of the narrative with lines and line numbers delineated is available from the author.

¹¹ See Kroeber 1997:5 and Ramsey 1997:30.

¹² See ll. 11, 63, 75, 124, 159, 173, 210, 256, 270, 271, 276, 286, 297, 298, 331, 353, 375, 398, 411, 413, 432, and 454.

which can all be translated as “thus,” “then,” or “in this way” when prefixed to a verb. They thus serve the same function as the forms “niine’eenoo” and “niiyou” do with nouns, adding more or less pragmatic weight to each verb.

These features are augmented by combination and repetition. Especially in the case of verbs, different verbal prefixes may be used in consecutive lines with the same verb stem so that grammatical heightening via the various prefixes is augmented by a repetitive, lexical heightening of the verb. The overall effect of these procedures is to produce a strongly “paradigmatic” feel, centering attention on each noun or verb in varying degrees and lessening the “syntagmatic” temporal movement of the narrative. This seems to be the single most important difference between Paul Moss’ performance of this narrative and Arapaho narratives recorded by Dorsey, Kroeber, Michelson, Salzman, and others earlier in the century.¹³

This effect is augmented by the relatively small vocabulary used in any Arapaho narrative. This is not to say that the vocabulary of the language as a whole is small or limited, but simply that within a given single narrative, the vocabulary often seems purposefully restrained, with much repetition of the same root word for the same general concept on multiple occasions, without an effort at inventive lexical variation. There seems to be little effort to substitute synonyms or create metaphors, thus increasing the “incantatory” nature of the narrative as compared to a linear narrative flow.¹⁴ Indeed, where such substitution does occur, it tends to strongly mark the importance of the item, as when Paul Moss gives two different terms for “eagle” in quick succession in the beginning of the narrative.

As an example of the interaction of these features, I will cite the opening nineteen lines of the narrative. All of the forms discussed in the previous paragraphs are italicized. I have added in brackets translations of words that are implied but not present in the original Arapaho. I leave “wohei” untranslated. Roman numerals indicate verses. The character “3” is the standard Arapaho symbol for the sound [θ], as in the initial sound in “three.”

- I. *wohei ceese’*
 teecxo’ heenoo 3owo3nenitee nih’eeneisiine’etiit

¹³ See Dorsey and Kroeber 1997 [1903], Kroeber 1916, and Salzman 1956a and 1956b. Michelson’s materials are in the Smithsonian’s Anthropological Archives mss. 2708.

¹⁴ See Swann and Krupat 1987:252 on the “beat” and “formal sense of expectation” created by limited vocabulary.

- heetee tiiwooheineinihiiniini
nee'eeneesiini hiine'etii3i'
 II. hinono'eino' heenoo 3oowo'
 niitowo'einihi'
nehe'nih'iisiini
 III. kookon hooweeneiteneihiinoo heeyouhuu
 nih'iinestobee'i3i'
niine'eeno' beh'eihoho'
niiyou nuhu'
 IV. *wohei niine'eeno'* nuhu' nii'ehiiho'
 nii'ehiiho' hinee coo'ouu3i'i
 ni'i3eih3i'
 hee'inonoonee nooko3oni3i'
 V. *wohei niine'ehk* nehe' hinen
 he'ih'iinestoobe'
niine'eenino' nuhu' beh'eihoho'
 VI. yein beebeet ne'nii'eii'toowoohu'
- I. *Wohei!* Another [story]
 from long ago when the Indians always lived *like this*,
 before they were rounded up
 and lived *like* they are living now.
- II. Arapahos always remembered
 the proper way.
That's how it used to be.
- III. You just couldn't take anything for yourself for any reason.
 They used to warn their people,
these old men of the tribe.
Here it is [the story].
- IV. *Wohei! Here are these* eagles,
 eagles, those that are way up there.
 That's what they are called.
 You know them—they have white tail feathers.
- V. *Wohei! Here is this* one man.
 He had been warned
 [by] *these* old men of the tribe,
- VI. "You can only take [them] four times."

As can be seen here, the italicized demonstrative forms serve a pragmatic function related to narrative content. However, the content is organized such that the verses themselves are constructed around specific narrative topics. As a result, the demonstratives also contribute to the creation of a fairly steady—and more formal—rhythm from verse to verse, similar to “wohei.” One can in fact define a series of rules for delimiting verses in this narrative: (1) “wohei” begins a new verse; (2) “niine'eeno’,”

“niiyou,” and their reflexes begin new verses (sometimes in combination with “wohei”), except when they are used with a noun acting as object; (3) “nee’ees” and other “thus” forms mark the end of a verse; (4) all lines with grammatical or semantic repetitions and parallelisms in groups of two, three, or five occur within a single verse; (5) in such groupings, shorter lines preceding longer lines mark the beginning of verses, while shorter lines following longer ones mark the end of verses; (6) in the case of dialogue or directly cited speech as opposed to narration, the beginning of multi-line speech also begins a verse; (6a) the end of such speech ends a verse with the following verse often beginning with “nee’ees” and similar forms; (6b) repetition of a given line of dialogue marks the end of the verse containing the first instance of that line. Note that the beginning of all verses is not explicitly marked, but when a verse ending is explicitly marked one takes the next line as the beginning of the next verse.¹⁵ When applied to the text, they produce a quite regular series of verses of four lines on average, with fluctuation to three and five being quite common, and rarer instances of shorter or longer verses.

Irregular “small-scale” rhythmic features

The fairly steady rhythm produced by the interaction of form and content, combined with the more formal linguistic features, certainly contributes to the “incantatory” effect mentioned above. At many places more elaborate series of near-repetitions and parallelisms are inserted into these more regular rhythms, intensifying the sense of incantation. Such parallelism is a dominant feature of the narrative, both serving a pragmatic role related to content emphasis and producing formal rhythms. The rhythms in these cases, however, are often both more intense and more irregular than the earlier one discussed. For example, many consecutive pairs of lines have the form “nominal emphazier + noun; verb” (33-38):

*niine’eenó’ nii’ehiiho’
co’ouu3i’i
wohei niine’ehk nehe’inen
neiheibeetoh’uni cenenoot
niine’eenino nii’ehiiho
hee’inonoot heetooni3i’*

*These eagles
were held in high regard.
Wohei! There was this man
who wanted to take these eagles down.
These eagles
he knew them, where they were.*

¹⁵ These rules could be compared to those in Hymes 1981:150ff.

Another pattern involves the use of the same central root with various grammatical and lexical affixes. An example occurs in lines 69-71, where a key moment of the narrative takes place—the protagonist’s passing beyond the proper rules of restraint:

woow yein nih'iiscenenoot	He has already taken them down four times.
woow heet <i>cebe'eitiit</i>	Now he will go past that—
nii' <i>cebe'eis</i>	do it more—
<i>cebe'eitoot</i>	overdo
nih'isooxuwuheih <i>i3i'</i>	what he was told.

I have arranged the above lines in order to highlight the parallelism. The root “ceb-e’ei,” meaning “go past/beyond,” is used in three consecutive lines, the first time with the suffix “-tii-t” (“he went beyond it [inan. obj.]”). The next line uses the suffix “-s,” which is a shortened form of the morpheme “to go,” thus giving a meaning of “he went beyond.” The final form uses the morpheme “-too-t,” meaning “to do,” thus giving a meaning “he did more/beyond.” Clearly, the larger sense of the three sentences is essentially the same, but the grammatical variation (or “play”) on the same root allows for a form of repetition that avoids exact replication.

In saying that the lines are largely the same, however, one should recognize that there are typically subtle plays of difference in meaning. While most instances of this parallelism are in threes, groups of five occur as well. For example, when the young man realizes that he has violated the prohibition and eaten the particular cut of meat, he begins to prepare for the inevitable visit of the eagles (314-18):

3iwoo <i>hiise'enou'u</i>	You [man’s wife] try to be ready!
heetih' <i>iise'enou3i'</i>	So they [the eagles] will be ready [able to do what they must].
ne' <i>neenounoo</i>	Then I will get ready, too.
heet <i>neenounoo</i>	I will get ready.
heetni <i>iseenoutonou'u</i>	I will get ready for these eagles.

Alonzo Moss explains that each line employs forms of the verb “to prepare/to get ready.” The first two use a form that implies an intransitive state of readiness, of being already ready, while the last three use a root more typically used transitively to indicate the process of getting ready for something or someone. Note also the progression from present to future: “heetih” means “in order to, so that” and carries a forward-looking implication, “ne’-” means “then” and indicates temporal progression, while “heet-” is a prefix placing the verb into future tense. This temporal

progression is matched by a thematic one: as one first is ready, so that things will be ready for the eagles, then one actively gets ready personally and internally, so as to be prepared for an experience, so that one will be ready for the eagles. In each case, the one who is “ready” or the thing that one is “ready for” is slightly different. Twice consecutively, “readiness” moves from the inward—the self—to the outward—ready for others, as outlook moves from present to the future. The larger dynamic between one’s inner states, the events of the surrounding world, and their ultimate inseparability are underlined in this subtle interweaving of grammar and theme.

While these forms of parallelism and repetition are intimately related to key moments of narrative climax or moral emphasis, they also serve to structure verses formally. A related technique of prefixal repetition with verbal variation is often used to “build up” a verse, as in lines 243-45 below, where the prefix “nih-is-” (perfective past) is repeated with three different verbs: each line not only introduces new action, but is longer than the previous one, so that increased information corresponds to an increase in lexical material:

<i>nih’istoot</i>	He did it.
<i>nih’iscee3toot</i>	He did it by accident.
<i>nih’isce’no’eckooht</i>	He went back home again.

Compare lines 28-29:

<i>he’ne’nih’is</i>	That is what,
<i>ne’nih’iisinihii3i’ nuhu’ beh’eihoho’</i>	That is what these old men had said.

An alternate way of doing this and of bringing an end to a verse is a repetition in which the second line is an exact (or near-) replication of only part of the previous line, such that the second line is always shorter. Here are two examples, the first from lines 118-19 and the second from 152-53:¹⁶

heetiini hoowounoneen	We will have pity on you (lengthened form of future prefix)
heetoowouneen	We will have pity on you.
heetnee’inow xonou	(regular form of future prefix) You will know it right away.
heetnee’inow	You will know it.

¹⁶ Cp. also lines 229-30 and 321-22.

In general, the “ascending” technique begins a verse, while the “descending” technique ends it.

Larger-scale rhythms of narration

Near-repetition and parallelism in groups of threes (and fives) is characteristically used at moments of high drama.¹⁷ In passing, it should be noted that this organization of lines in threes and fives is in tension with the Arapaho “sacred number” of four, as noted above. There are other, even larger-scale instances of four (and two) in the narration, such as the overriding structure of two chances for the man before he is condemned. The organization is nevertheless interesting because it conflicts with a tendency that has otherwise been widely noted, especially in less clearly performance-type texts, for both form and content to be organized by twos and fours, or threes and fives, but not both.¹⁸ Thus the narrative reveals a tension or discontinuity between its small-scale formal rhythms and the larger narrative and moral content regarding two chances and limits of four.

These same small-scale (verse-level) rhythms also serve to produce a more general effect, however. We noted above the intensely “incantatory” feel produced by small-scale rhythmic effects. But the opposite effect is also possible. In particular, parallelisms within a verse sometimes serve to give a dynamic motion to certain verses that contrasts with the incantatory stasis of many others. Examples of this procedure are lines 170-72, 174-76, and 199-202 (not cited here), where the future prefix “heet-” + verb is used, with each verb being different, or where the form “nee’-,” meaning “thus,” is followed by a different verb on each line. Thus the same repetitive device that produces near-static incantation in one case (with variations on the same verb) serves to underline and heighten the forward motion of the narrative when combined with several different verbs in rapid succession. The movement from anticipatory repetition to rapid narration is shown in the following passage (314-18):

wohei *hiise’enou’u* hee3eihok
 wohei he’ne’iise’enou’ut
hetnouusi’oo
heetmiiteheibeen

Wohei! “Get ready!” they told him.
 So then he got ready.
 “You must close your eyes,
 we are going to help you.

¹⁷ Other examples include ll. 98-100, 112-14, 121-23, and 143-45.

¹⁸ See Hymes 1992:93; see also pp. 95-105 for exceptions that resemble the present analysis.

heetneekoohun

You are going home.”

Another example, using patterns of five rather than three, occurs at lines 197-202:

wohei niine'een
 ne'iitoxoot niine'een nuhu' woxuuhuu
 ne'iisiitenoot
 ne'teesiseet
 'oh ne'ookoo3eit niixoo
 ne'heesinihii3eit nehe' woxuu

Wohei! Here they are!
 Then he came upon here they are these elk. (new referent)
 Then he caught one and
 then he got on it.
 And then this elk took him home too.
 Then this is what it said to him, this elk.

Additional examples of variations on these techniques could certainly be cited from the text, but the key point here is to show how fine gradations of word variation, repetition, parallelism of structure, and alterations in the length of successive phrases function simultaneously to define poetic verses, to underline and emphasize the importance of certain key moments in the narrative, and to establish an undulating rhythm that alternates between incantation and rapid narrative advance. This larger rhythm then itself serves as part of the narrative's repertoire of emphatic devices.

Part Two: A Paralinguistic Analysis of the Narrative as Vocal Product

At this point we have discovered certain key components of the formal organization of one of Paul Moss' stories, and textualized the story from this perspective. Our analysis and presentation pick up on certain rhythms and alternations in rhythm present in the narration. Certain terms and grammatical structures (such as "wohei") recur with a regularity that is certainly perceived by the listener. "Wohei" in fact serves virtually as a kind of musical marker, like the heavy first beat in 4/4 time. These are the rhythms that Dell Hymes has specialized in picking up.¹⁹ But this is certainly not *the* rhythm of this narration. While "wohei" and forms such as "niine'eeno'" and "niiyou" provide a complex and fairly regularized matrix

¹⁹ See especially Hymes 1981.

for the story, this formal matrix does not often correspond to the most obvious rhythms of pause and volume when one hears the story. The rhythm of the telling is often quite different from the linguistic rhythm that one can see on the page. What we have just been doing has been to take apart a kind of musical score, putting elements in parallel to illustrate clearly the organization that subtends the “song”—the technical harmony of the narrative. Yet this story, like any western musical composition, does not come to the listener in such neatly ordered ways. We do not typically hear just the four-beat pattern of 4/4 time or the clear, regular occurrence of the dominant musical theme. The linear flow, with its dynamics, pauses, variations, and melodic syntagmatics, always partially obscures the harmony.²⁰ It is to these other rhythms we now turn.

Changes in Volume

Volume shifts are common in the narrative and play both formal and content-centered roles. However, their primary functions seem to center on narrative and moral content. Heightened volume serves especially to highlight words key to moral meaning. Words that are emphasized repeatedly include “heenoo” (“customarily,” “in the past”; “always”), “yein” (“four”), “coo’ouute” (“to be high up”—as in the case of the eagles, and the spiritual connotations of the eagles’ ability to fly near the heavens), “ceebeh” (“don’t”—eat the particular part of meat), and “cebe’ein” (“pass beyond,” as in the behavior of the young man). However, heightened volume can also be used to introduce new referents in the narrative, especially with “wohei,” and thus to begin a new verse; in this case, its role is more formal.²¹ But as we noted earlier, there are often overlaps in these categories: Paul Moss tends to situate words of importance to the narrative’s moral content at the beginning of verses, combining features of form and content in the accentuation. Verbal accent works along with “linguistic” accent (for example, “niiyou” and “niine’eenoo”) to pragmatically mark important topics—though not always—and it also functions with these or other linguistic features to mark lines and verses—though not always.²² In general, one could say that increased volume is motivated more by content

²⁰ I am inspired here by Dennis Tedlock’s (1983:6) use of musical imagery to evoke similar internal patterns heard and felt.

²¹ See Wiget 1987:326-27 on formal versus dramatic volume shifts in Hopi.

²² See Tedlock 1972:xxi on a similar situation in Zuni.

than by formal organization. It does not occur regularly enough to serve as a consistent marker of lines, verses, or larger textual divisions, and can in fact turn up throughout any part of a given line or verse (as analyzed linguistically) or between pause intervals. Essentially, modulation of volume has comparatively little to do with purely formal linguistic rhythms, being somewhat more closely allied to “mixed” formal/content-centered linguistic features and most allied to the emphasizing of moral lessons.

Speed of delivery and tonal features

Even more so than the preceding characteristics, the paralinguistic features of speed and tone seem tied primarily to narrative content. Certain individual words are consistently drawn out, most prominently “beebei’on,” which means “far away,” “away over there.” Increases or decreases in the rate of delivery of entire passages seem most closely related to the pace at which events in the narration are presented—speeding up as events “speed up,” for example. This acceleration often corresponds to the linguistic “speeding up” discussed earlier, where the same grammatical prefix may be added to a series of changing verbs, producing a rapid forward momentum in the narrative. The narrator also generally increases the speed of delivery from the beginning to the end of the narrative.

Conversely, acceleration is also characteristic of moments of repetitive incantation at times. In these cases, however, the tone often shifts to a fairly strident quality, with exaggerated accentuation and increased volume. This is distinctive, as when the young man admits to the eagles after they rescue him the first time that “hee’inowoo heestoonoo noontoonoo noontoonoo” (“I know what I have done. I made a mistake. I made a mistake”). Note also the extraordinary degree of alliteration here. In contrast to the rapid quickening of delivery that correlates with linguistic “speeding up,” the tone and volume typically remain neutral.

However, incantatory moments are more typically marked by slower delivery, especially with a falling tone. Thus speed of delivery does correlate fairly well with the small-scale, irregular, linguistic rhythmic effects in the text, and with the larger alternation of incantation and advance. For example, when the Eagles tell the young man early in the story that they will have pity on him, it is said two (not three) times, slowly and also with a very exaggerated falling tone, dropping at least an octave. Here and elsewhere, the most intensive incantatory speeds and tones serve especially

to “clarify the moral values.”²³ As an additional example of this phenomenon, we should note that in the cases where volume increase is most obviously tied to moral emphasis, it is also most closely linked to slow delivery and to pauses before and after the words in question. One instance occurs early in the story when the old men warn the young man that four is the limit. “Yein” (“four”) has a preceding pause and a following pause at least twice the length of the normal pause. It is also spoken slowly and the volume is raised.²⁴

Rhythms and their interactions: a summary

One can separate out—for heuristic purposes—several controlling rhythms in the narrative: (1) a series of repeated or slightly varied linguistic forms, often functioning primarily formally (“wohei”), but at other times in partial conjunction with content (“niine’eenó”), that form the “measures” of the narrative, and recur regularly every three to four lines; (2) a series of more irregular, small-scale linguistic rhythmic features that closely combine formal verse-building with narrative emphasis; (3) a broader alternating linguistic rhythm of incantation and advance, formed by the juxtaposition of the features in (2). This third rhythm is centered more on the moral message of the narrative, as well as on key moments of narrative excitement, though it also works to formally pattern the narrative on a larger scale; (4) a paralinguistic rhythm of volume (and sometimes tonal) shift that is primarily moral but partially formal; (5) a paralinguistic rhythm of delivery speed (and sometimes tonal shift) centered on heightening the immediacy of the actual recounted events of the story. In general, one could speak of a complex interplay between the verbal “artistry” of the narrative, the content-based recounting of events, and the underlining of moral messages implicit in those events. Among the rhythms outlined above, the first overlaps somewhat (less than half the time) with the fourth, but more so when the formal elements such as “wohei” and the semi-formal/semi-content elements such as “niine’eenó” are working together; the second tends to overlap fairly closely with the fifth, and the third and fifth overlap most closely.

But there is finally, and most obviously, the rhythm of the telling itself in its most general form: the pauses between words, lines, and verses; their

²³ See Wiget 1987:328 for similar examples from Hopi.

²⁴ Similar effects occur with “ciibeh-” (“don’t” eat a certain piece of meat—see below).

varying lengths; and their relation to all the other rhythms of the narrative. This rhythm is not concurrent with any of the other rhythms cited above, and is perhaps the most irregular of all. Temporally, the narrative can be divided into lines, with pauses averaging approximately 3/4 of a second between them, and longer verses, with pauses of 1.5 seconds or more between them.²⁵ The lack of homology between linguistic (both formal and content-based) and temporal divisions introduces a further element of complexity into the narrative. Certainly there are overlaps; for example, groups of two and three lines in close parallel or repetitive relation very often occur within the same verbal line. But there are also many pauses even in the middle of grammatical sentences, and temporal pause and linguistically determined verse coincide less than 20% of the time. And while linguistically determined formal verses governed by words such as “wohei” have a fairly regular length, paralinguistically determined verses governed by pauses vary from a single word to several dozen words. In fact, the result is a complex overlay of categories that virtually defy complete analysis.²⁶

Nevertheless, the partial conjunction between temporal pauses and the small-scale, irregular rhythmic effects—where linguistic features of parallelism and repetition and paralinguistic features of volume, tone, and delivery speed most often coincide, and where the emphasis is most clearly on narrative and moral content—appears to me to be significant. The places in the narration where all of the interweaving, complex rhythms come together most clearly are also the most “intense” places in the narration, the places that are fundamental to the elaboration of its deeper meaning and interpretation. I give one example: the episode in which the young man is rescued and then warned by the eagles about eating a certain cut of meat (lines 118-38). Pauses of 1.5 seconds (verse breaks) are indicated by double spacing between lines, pauses of 3/4 second (line breaks) by a new line, and very brief pauses by commas. The line numbers are provided for convenience of reference and do not correspond to those used earlier in the paper. Raised volume is indicated by capital letters.

[extra long two- to three-second pause following preceding content]

²⁵ These pause types correspond closely to those isolated by Dennis Tedlock in Zuni materials (1972:xix).

²⁶ See Sherzer 1987:105, 112, 124; Woodbury 1987:176-77; and Clements 1996:201 for analyses of the way in which the various methods of line-marking can play out against each other, and for the way in which the tensions between the various marking systems can be a contributing artistic device. See also Tedlock 1983:57-61.

1. Heetiini hoowounoneen [slowly, exaggerated falling tone]
 2. heetoowounoneen [slowly, exaggerated falling tone]
 3. wohei nonih, heetnestoobeen niixoo
 4. CEEBEH BII3IH
 5. nuhu'
 6. ceebeh bii3ih
 7. ceebeh bii3ih hi'in
 8. hini'it niyou ni'nii nihii [drawn out] totooyone' neiibi'ni'HOOTE
 9. hi'in nii he'neneen
 10. ceebeh be cee3bii3ih totoos beenhehe' ceebeh'ini
 11. NEE'EESTOONEHK
 12. 'oh BII3nehk noh heetniini nuhu' hee3eihí' heetnee'ee3eihin heetcih
hiise'nouu
 13. heetcihneenoutoneen heetnee'noneen [slower with falling tone on
nee'noneen]
 14. xonou heetnee'noneen [same slower and falling tone]
 15. heetco'onnihe'noneen [same slower and falling tone]
 16. wohei, nee'eesiini. . .
-
1. We will pity you
 2. We will pity you
 3. Wohei this way, we will warn you too
 4. DON'T EAT
 5. This
 6. Don't eat
 7. Don't eat this
 8. That "here it is" [error] weeeeeell on the back where the SINEW is
 9. That, [error] that's it
 10. Don't, friend, dont eat it even a little, don't
 11. IF YOU DO THAT
 12. But [should you] EAT it and you will . . . the way they [eagles] are that's the
way you'll be [too]. You will have to get ready
 13. We will be ready for you, we will know [about] you

14. Right away we will know [about] you

15. We will always know [about you]

16. Wohei, that's how it was ... [the eagles will come and get him if he does this, and he will be turned into an eagle]

Due to the amount of dialogue, this scene does not illustrate particularly well some of the more strictly formal linguistic features such as “hee’ih-” or “niine’eenno.” This shortfall in itself is significant, however, as it reveals how the regular formal rhythm that these features produce is ruptured at this (and other) moments of high drama: maximum performative effects tend to suppress formal rhythms. Line and verse lengths, as defined by pause, are fairly irregular here (with pause seeming to correlate more closely to moral purposes, in fact [3-4, 6-8, 10-12]). However, “wohei” and “niiyou” do both occur (3, 8, 16), and “wohei” does correlate with temporal verse beginnings and endings.

Concerning the dramatic and moral implications of the performance, note the following in particular: the conjunction of volume shift and moral message (4, 8, 11); the conjunction of tonal shift and small-scale effects of linguistic repetition, with the repetition centering on moral message (1-2, 13-15; the falling tone of “pity you” also exactly matches that of “know you,” and the words themselves rhyme, thus producing a larger-scale linguistic and paralinguistic unity); the conjunction between parallel verbs and temporal line (10, 12); and the conjunction of parallel verbs and temporal verse (4-6, 13-15). In all these instances, the dovetailing of linguistic and paralinguistic organization serves to underline key moral messages.

Even here, however, the conjunction is not complete: lines 1-2 are temporally split, though linguistically one would want to put them in the same verse, for example, and other instances of linguistic parallelisms not in the same verse could be pointed out (the “-ehk” subjunctive forms in 11 and 12 for example). In fact, the use of pause for moral effect seems to override the use of pause for the production of rhythmically regular lines and verses in these two cases, and in others as well. Again, rhythms of drama and morality override formal regularities.

Thus even here, where narrative rhythmic organization is perhaps most coherent, there is certainly no absolute coherence. This passage—and this story—lead me to suggest that in fact Arapaho storytelling is not fundamentally ordered by “verses” in the sense that many have claimed for Native American verbal traditions. Rather, the story reveals a tendency towards “nodes” of greater rhythmic coherence that alternate with stretches of lesser coherence. This is not to say that linguistically and

paralinguistically defined and marked verses and lines do not exist in the narrative as one ordering rhythm; they clearly do. Nor am I suggesting that previous studies that have concentrated on these elements of narratives are in any way “wrong.” But I do believe that they are incomplete in that they recognize simply one component of the overall ordering structure of the narratives. Especially in fully realized performances, verse and line will be merely one contributing organizational structure among many. The tendency to see verse as the dominant feature may ultimately derive from its very powerful—and very visual—role in literate poetic traditions, where the realities of sound and bodily motion truly are overridden by the lines on the page.

The nodes, however, are quite complex and operate on several planes: two or three rhythms may cohere to produce smaller-scale nodes (as in 13-15 above), but longer passages may involve intensified coherences between several different rhythms, thus producing more complex nodal phenomena, as in 1-15 above. And we have not even discussed the potential contributions of kinesic rhythms, which would add several potential layers of complexity. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to me to imagine that this is the case with at least some other Native American narrative traditions as well. In such cases, one tempting form of textualization might be in a format alternating prose and verse.²⁷ But whatever the format, we should recognize that not all verbal genres will be characterized by strictly regular formal patterns of line and verse (though some clearly are). Several scholars, especially Joel Sherzer, have noted such “informal” patterns in storytelling traditions as opposed to genres such as prayer, song, or sacred narrative.²⁸ Here “informal” should be understood specifically in terms of a relative decrease in the “structuring” and “predictability” of the narrative, to

²⁷ “Cantefable” in Andrew Wiget’s terms (1987:308).

²⁸ See Sherzer and Woodbury 1987:4; Sherzer 1987:114, 124; Tedlock 1987:154-58 and 1983:3, 50-51; Toelken and Scott 1997:10; and Hymes 1992:112. Certainly one could virtually always find some form of “equivalence” (Hymes 1997:332) between lines in the context of linguistic analysis, I believe. This is one of Dell Hymes’ three fundamental principles regarding the poetic organization of Native American texts. But such equivalences perhaps need to be nuanced in terms of “stronger” and “weaker” equivalences. As the Arapaho passage above illustrates, weak (linguistic) equivalences are often overwhelmed as organizing features by other, often paralinguistic, features. A strict and regular “line and verse” textualization in such cases would seem misleading.

use Judith Irvine's terms.²⁹ Both the linguistic and paralinguistic features of this narrative lack the tighter structure and predictability that one finds in Arapaho songs, for example. But it is ironically the relative malleability of structure and predictability in this genre that Paul Moss exploited performatively in order to produce the "emergence of a focus," to use another of Irvine's terms. Thus in terms of focus—moral message in this case—and in terms of Moss' "invoking of positional identity"—as elder and moral messenger—the performance reaches a high degree of formality not so much despite as *because of* its structural informality. It seems in fact to be far more formal in these latter two senses than older Arapaho transcribed texts, which are, however, far more "formally" organized on the level of structure and predictability, as we will soon see.³⁰

Part Three: Salvaging Texts from the Past

The question of full versus perfunctory performance

All of the rhythms discussed above can be found in the other stories told by Paul Moss as well, and are thus broadly representative of Arapaho oral poetics (bearing in mind as well the judgments expressed by other Arapaho about the "correctness" of Moss' stories). In fact, there is a remarkable general stylistic regularity (as well as complexity) in Moss' stories that suggests both his long practice in this art and also the existence of a controlling cultural poetics. With a knowledge of this poetics, what are we now to make of earlier textualizations of Arapaho stories?

A recent book by William Clements (1996) has reviewed previous efforts at textualization as well as their failures. He takes a position inspired by Dell Hymes, suggesting that one should use everything one has (see Hymes 1992:112). Certainly I would agree that it is foolish to dismiss out of hand sources that are the records of perfunctory performances or inadequate textualizations, but it is important to understand as clearly as possible the exact nature of their limitations. For the sake of comparison, I will cite one

²⁹ See Irvine 1978. She defines "formality" as consisting of four aspects: "increased structuring and predictability," "consistency (of social connotation, for example)," "invoking positional identities," and "emergence of a focus."

³⁰ In the remainder of the paper, I will continue to use "formal" to discuss linguistic features more or less unrelated to "content." I will, however, distinguish between different types of "formality," of which one will be a structural formality that subsumes the formal linguistic features in question.

text whose conditions of collection replicate those of many other Native American texts. The text was collected by Zdenek Salzman in 1950 for expressly linguistic purposes (Salzman 1956a). An acoustic version of it was recorded, but that version involves the storyteller repeating phrases read back to him from a transcription. Thus it has little utility for the purposes of understanding a verbal performance.³¹

Two other factors mitigate against the utility of this text. The first is the fact that Salzman was expressly interested in grammatical features, particularly obsolescent ones, in the recording (personal communication). The informant may well have been aware of this, and such an awareness certainly could have altered the way he told the story (see Sarris 1993:185). Second, Alonzo Moss notes that many of the narratives Salzman recorded contained elements of sexual humor that might prove embarrassing to a traditionally oriented Arapaho—in particular, that having one's name associated with the story in print might embarrass female relatives (the Arapaho had a son-in-law/mother-in-law taboo, and also generally avoided contact between brothers and sisters). These elements were glossed over or treated perfunctorily in the tales since the informants knew that their names would be attached to the texts in print.

It thus seems unlikely that the text in question could be taken as representative of anything approaching a full performance. Given the emphasis placed on performance in current folklore and ethnopoeitic studies, this would seem to represent a major defect in the utility of the text for such studies.³² But the question of a text's status as a true record of performance could be posed for literally hundreds of other texts in Native American languages, and in many cases the answer to this question is far from clear. Is there a way to help make a determination on this question, given what is now known about the characteristics of fully emergent performances? If this earlier Arapaho text is the product of the same general oral poetics as the one that produced Paul Moss' narrative, and if this text is broadly representative of similar perhaps perfunctory performances, then a series of very interesting comparisons could be made between this text and that of

³¹ Nor was it intended to, as Salzman noted in a personal communication, and what follows should not be taken as a criticism of Salzman's work or intentions as a linguist. His invaluable work on Arapaho is the foundation of all future research.

³² See Clements 1996:32-40 for a good discussion of some of the difficulties involved in using "condensed" texts. See also Hymes 1981:79-133 on tellings and reportings versus performances and Tedlock 1983:237 for his comments on this distinction.

Paul Moss' narrative. I will argue that both of these conditions are met, and that such a comparison can be made. Before demonstrating this, however, we need to briefly characterize John Goggles' narrative from Salzman's collection.

A perfunctory performance: the poetics of plot summary

I give below a translation of the entire story, with relevant words in Arapaho as well. In what follows, I maintain the line divisions as they appear in Salzman's text (numbered 1-45), where they largely correspond to sentence divisions. The published translation has been altered by me to more closely correspond to the literal Arapaho. Here then is John Goggles' story "White Man and the Ghost":

1. White Man [traditional trickster figure] and the Ghost
2. White Man was walking around [root "isee": "to go"]
3. They say³³ he went down along the river ["isee"]
4. They say he went a long way ["isee"]
5. They say he couldn't find any place where he could stop for the night
6. They say he was still walking ["isee"] and it was already dark
7. They say he saw a tepee
8. They say it was light inside
9. They say he went to it
10. Where one enters this tepee, they say he stood there
11. A person, they say he was walking around
12. "I'm here," said White Man
13. They say out came a woman
14. "I'm tired, I'm hungry, can I stop here?" said White Man
15. "I don't accept any visitors," she said
16. "But you can come in and stay overnight," said this woman
17. They say in went White Man
18. They say he was fed
19. "Where are you going?" she said
20. "I'm looking for a woman to live with"
21. "I don't want to get married; that's why I'm always alone; you might leave me again," said this woman
22. "I'll stay with you, I'll help you along," said White Man
23. "If you mean it, I'll take you," said this woman
24. "I mean it, I'll marry you," said White Man

³³ "They say" is the translation of the narrative prefix "hee'ih-." "Said" is the translation of "hee3eihok" and related forms.

25. "All right, you can marry me," said this woman
26. "I want to go to sleep soon," said White Man
27. They say they went to bed
28. "Tell me stories, tell me about your life"
29. They say he told her stories, just a few
30. White Man, they say he fell asleep
31. They say he woke up when it was morning
32. They say he looked around; a skeleton they say he saw
33. They say he ran out. They say he was scared. They say he started to run
34. They say some place he stopped
35. They say he heard a person. They say [the person] was walking toward him
36. "White Man, I'm coming after you," said this woman
37. White Man, they say he was scared
38. They say this woman laughed
39. "I fooled you," said this woman
40. They say White Man came to where people lived
41. That's where he slept
42. They say he was watched
43. That's ("nee'ees") the way of this life
44. That's ("ne'") why people get married in the right way
45. That's ("nee'ei'") how this story ends.

Note that the word "wohei" is missing. The forms "niiyou," "niine'eeno'" ("here it is"), and their equivalents are missing. The form "nee'ees" ("thus") and its variants are present only in the conclusion (used twice). The use of parallel verbal repetitions with small variation is virtually missing (it appears once). The various lengthened forms of verbal prefixes are missing. In addition, recognizable grammatical parallelisms of two, three, and five lines are largely missing, with their consequent verse-building patterns (one instance). And of course, none of the verbal/aural rhythms are present either, for obvious reasons. So what is left? What is left is essentially the plot outline of a story that could have potentially been performed.

Given the differences noted here, it might be objected that the poetics of Paul Moss' narrative is finally only one, personal poetic style. If this is the case, then the absence of the features characteristic of his own style should not be taken as an indictment of the text recorded by Salzman. Goggles' text might simply reflect a different poetics, and we would be comparing apples and oranges. I do not believe that is the case, however. Rather, Goggles' text contains enough traces of the poetics outlined in parts one and two above to be able to be seen as a "remnant" of that same poetics—as one endpoint on a continuum of performative elaboration, whose other endpoint is Paul Moss' narrative. I use the term "continuum"

very specifically here: we will see that the variations under consideration between the two texts do not amount to “free variation,” but represent the systematic reduction (in Goggles’ narrative) of the same generalized poetics seen in Moss’ narrative. Goggles’ text is not an alternate style, but a reduction of the same style.

The implication of this claim is that Goggles’ narrative is an example of a perfunctory performance, and furthermore that it is not acceptable to a traditional Arapaho audience as a narrative; thus its poetics (to the extent that we define one for the text) is not “alternative” but “defective” in the sense of incomplete. This is the opinion of Alonzo Moss as well. He does not claim that the text contains no meaning, but rejects it as a valid poetic performance, noting in particular that “there are too many ‘hee’ih’-s in there” and that “nobody [no Arapaho] told stories that way” when he heard them as a child and as a young man.

More generally, Goggles’ text is remarkably short compared to much traditional Arapaho material. All of the narratives of Paul Moss are over ten minutes in length, whereas Goggles’ narrative can be read in two minutes. Even the vast majority of the Arapaho material in Dorsey and Kroeber’s English-language publication, collected via dictation, far exceeds the length of Goggles’ narrative. Alonzo Moss notes that even his father’s twenty-minute narrative of the “Eagles” was shortened and compressed for various reasons, and that he did not have time to fully elaborate all of the story. The value accorded to such lengthy elaborations is a widespread feature of verbal narratives from around the world and among Plains Indian tribes as well. To take simply one representative example, Robert Lowie notes of Crow verbal traditions that “a good raconteur is one who tells the stories not in mere outline but with epic breadth, lingering on interesting details” (1935:110). To give one final example, when I asked Paul Moss’ son to retell the five-line “believe it or not” tale in Salzmänn (3.5), I got a three and one-half-minute version, even though I was the only one present and he was speaking mainly for the tape recorder. What is finally interesting about Goggles’ narrative is what happens when such “epic breadth” is reduced.

Certainly poetic markers remain, including the use of the narrative past tense “they say that/it is said that” (“hee’ih-” prefix); the use of a special “he/she said” verb particular to narrations (“hee3eihok” and its reflexes); the careful alternation of speakers in the central dialogue; the division into thematic sections of roughly equal extent; and the especially long length of the central dialogue section. All of these (essentially formalistic) features are characteristic of Paul Moss’ narrative as well. There is in fact not a single organizing feature or poetic element in Goggles’ text that does not also occur in Moss’ narrative (though, as shown above, there are many in

Moss' narrative that do not occur here). However, forms such as "hee'ih-" or "hee3eihok" do not turn up nearly so regularly in Moss as they do here, where they occur in virtually every line. All of these poetic devices are present in Paul Moss' narration but diluted by intervening material or by "elaboration." This is the essence of Alonzo Moss' observation that there are "too many 'hee'ih's in there."

Based on the observations above, one could in fact elaborate a poetics for this text, as is often done in salvage work. Lines could be defined by the presence of "hee'ih," or "hee3eihok" in the case of dialogue, though this would involve some minor changes in the lines as given above. Sections of alternating dialogue lines might form verses. Alternately, the introduction of new referents might constitute the beginning of new verses in non-dialogue parts of the narrative. Using just these few criteria, one could come up with a more poetic arrangement on the page that would be remarkably regular. The changes in the lines affected by a rule of "hee'ih [+ verb]" = line would also tend to make the various sections of the story of more equal length and even more regular.

In contrast to this regularity, Goggles' story also contains isolated examples of other features characteristic of Paul Moss' narrative. These include the foregrounding of new referents by placing them at the beginning of a sentence (2, 11, 32; recalling Moss' "wohei, here they are, these . . ."); the use of rapid groups of three verbs (14, 33)³⁴; the use of the verse-building pattern of repetition with variation on a single root (2-4); the use of the demonstrative "nee'ees" ("thus") for moral purposes of underlining (43-45)³⁵; and the use of a restricted vocabulary, often in parallel series of responses and actions. Note that in contrast to the poetic devices already mentioned in preceding paragraphs, the ones here are much more common in Paul Moss' narrative. (The relative lack of "wohei" is noted by Alonzo Moss as being particularly striking). In John Goggles' narrative, they can be seen as traces or remnants of a potentially more highly elaborated poetics.

Thus we see in Goggles' story a curious mixture of more intensely used and regularized devices, as if Moss' narrative had been "boiled down" from a more "diluted" and "irregular" form; at the same time, we see

³⁴ The fact that these groups occur in a single line would appear to be an artifact of Goggles' preservation of the aural unity of these triplets in a single sentence without pause, a feature characteristic of Moss' narrative as well.

³⁵ Note that the typical "verse-building" pattern occurs at the beginning of the narrative, while the "verse-ending" use of demonstrative "nee'-" and its variants occurs at the end, as if the narrative demanded the presence of these poetic elements to begin and end, and to signal its status as traditional narrative.

seemingly random traces of the devices that in Moss' narrative constitute some of the main organizing features of that narrative's complex performative intermingling of speed and incantation, accent and pause.

It should be added here that Goggles' other narratives in the Salzman collection, as well as the narratives in Kroeber (1916), follow a very similar pattern in their use of "hee3eihok," "hee'ih-," and other terms.³⁶ Goggles' 1950 style is no more "personal" than Moss' in terms of the poetic repertoire that he employs. His style is just as consistent from story to story, and given his stories' similarity to those of 1900, his style seems just as constrained by a traditional poetics as that of Moss. Given that there are basically no formal or content-based organizing features of the earlier narratives that are not also in Paul Moss' story, it seems reasonable to assume that his narrative reflects a continuation of traditional Arapaho poetics, as members of the tribe have themselves claimed. It also seems reasonable to assume that the lack of unique elements in the earlier narratives means that they do not represent some alternative poetics, but participate in the same general poetics as Moss' later text. The poetics that produced these narratives seems to be the same in all cases, and the pattern of "reduction" that occurs in the shorter narratives, in relation to Moss' longer one, also seems to be always broadly the same. The same features are present each time, and the same features are lost each time.

Performance, narrative drama, and meaning

It is important to notice that the "remnants" in Goggles' text, rather than being purely formal "measure" devices, are used most typically in Moss' story to heighten narrative and moral content. As we saw earlier, the "rhythm" of narration and moral lesson is far more irregular than the formal rhythm of measure and the basic architectural framework. In the virtual absence of the former, Goggles' narrative does show a far clearer formal organization than that of Paul Moss, with far more regularity. On the other hand, it retains only remnants of the narrative and moral emphases that would aid in fully grasping the meaning, and it has also lost the complex musical rhythms that constitute the "art" of verbal performance. Looking at Goggles' narrative after examining that of Moss, it is as if one had a musical composition in which only the first beat of each measure remained (or the

³⁶ Compare Text II in Kroeber, where "hee'ih" is ubiquitous, and Text III, where "he'ne" (= "then," "next" and common in Moss' story) is nearly equally dominant, especially in the latter half.

harmonic chords underlying the missing melody), leaving a narrative dominated by “they say that” and “he/she said” attached to single, rhythmically monotonous verbs. It would seem that the closer a narrative moves towards plot summary and perfunctory performance, the more clearly the formal organization will be revealed and will come to dominate the patterns of the narrative. Conversely, the more a narrative approaches full, authoritative performance, the more the formal “measure” will be obscured by elements emphasizing literal and symbolic content and meaning.³⁷

Of course, though I have been using musical metaphors, our comparison of Moss’ and Goggles’ narratives has to this point been based on purely linguistic features, since Goggles’ text allows us no meaningful access to paralinguistic elements. The “music” of the voice itself is missing. But while Goggles’ narrative lacks the paralinguistics of performance, it also lacks the linguistic features that most closely coincide with paralinguistic ones in Arapaho oral poetics. It is as if the missing paralinguistic elements “took with them” the missing linguistic ones.

Given our findings in parts one and two above, this is not surprising. It is the “meaning” of these stories that is important: Alonzo Moss insisted to me over and over that the meaning must be drawn out and emphasized fully through repetitions, detailed elaborations, and the like (he specifically pointed to “repetition” and “details” as keys to meaning). But the linguistic features of the narrative most attuned to this task are ironically the small-scale rhythmic features and larger-scale alternation of incantation and advance; these elements most disrupt the orderly formal “measure” of “wohei” and “niiyou” and “niine’eenó’.”³⁸ These particular linguistic features are also the ones most closely attuned to paralinguistic features—which are also predominantly oriented towards content and meaning, and which also tend to disrupt the more ordered formal rhythms of the narrative. The linguistic elements that remain in Goggles’ narrative are precisely those that correspond least well to the paralinguistic organization of Arapaho narratives, and that have the least in common with those linguistic features whose emphasis tends to be on narrative and moral content.

What emerges from this analysis is the fundamental connection between performance, aesthetics, and meaning, all three of which can be seen as fully or partially missing from Goggles’ text. It is clear that the

³⁷ See Tedlock 1983:38-39 on the dynamics of dictation and the kinds of shortenings and deletions that occur in this context.

³⁸ See Bauman and Briggs 1990:63 on the connections between parallelism and illocutionary force.

elements that contribute to, and even constitute, the “meaning” of the narrative for Alonzo Moss are precisely the elements most connected to fully emergent performance.³⁹ Thus what many folklorists have in the past characterized as the “aesthetic” component of the performance (as opposed to the “communicative” component) turns out to be the central communicator of meaning. Full “meaning,” from this perspective, comes only through performance. Thus Moss rejects, through his comments, the structuralist tendency to distinguish between aesthetics and communication. Furthermore, he embraces a more radical notion of performance as being the full emergence not of “art” alone but of both art and meaning, which are finally one and the same.⁴⁰ The way in which verbal performance in oral culture is linked to both aesthetics and meaning holds the key to understanding the pattern of reduction seen between Paul Moss’ and John Goggles’ narratives, and also reveals the potential complementarity of linguistic and paralinguistic analyses, provided that one is working with a text that is a record of a truly emergent performance. It also suggests their non-complementarity where this is not the case, as well as their insufficiency as single modes of analysis even where it is the case.

Implications for textualization

Perhaps the most surprising implication of the above analysis is that the “cantefable” or some other “irregular” form is, on one level, truest to the deeper sense of “performance” for informal genres. Richard Bauman has noted that the essence of examining folklore as performance lies in recognizing that its “symbolic forms” are “tools for living” that are “available to actors” to be used in socially transformative ways.⁴¹ The same is true of folklore’s linguistic and paralinguistic forms as well. We noted above that Paul Moss’ narrative was structurally informal in comparison to song, being characterized by nodes of greater or lesser rhythmic coherence.

³⁹ See Bauman and Briggs 1990:63 for a similar argument.

⁴⁰ Note, however, that Moss rejects a fairly widespread postmodern notion of performance as intimately linked to play. Play still contains meaning, he suggests. In this regard, see Randall Hill’s critique (1997:134) of Gerald Vizenor’s notion of performance. See Wiget 1987:314 for a similar argument and *ibid*:317-18 for a similar analysis of Hopi performance.

⁴¹ Bauman and Briggs 1990:177; see also Kapchan 1995:479: “the notion of agency is implicit in performance.”

But it was precisely due to his refusal to be bound by or settle for formality of structure and predictability—by tightly defined patterns of line and verse, for example—that Paul Moss was able to produce a fully emergent performance with its fully realized nodes of individual, social, and moral communicativity. To textualize in the form of cantefable would symbolically capture not only the relative—and shifting—structural informality of Moss’ narrative, but also the ways in which this varying formality/informality reflects the essence of emergent performance in this particular genre. To perform a story is to use the traditional repertoire of Arapaho linguistic and paralinguistic tools in uniquely individual—and, structurally, relatively informal—ways to create narratives and contexts of high social and moral formality that are rich with meaning. Conversely, the ease with which John Goggles’ story can be textualized as regular verse points to that story’s lack of structural informality, and consequently to its lack of the use of language “performatively” as a tool for constructing moments of rich individual and social communication. Performance and nodality are intimately related in informal genres.

All of this must be kept in mind when studying the poetics and meaning of Native American texts. One cannot study what is not there, and it is extremely helpful to be able to surmise exactly what probably is not there, as well as how that absence may distort the form and content of what is there. This study suggests that in the case of many short texts a concern with the subtle texture of the translation may be ultimately futile, since the original may likely be relatively lacking in artistic texture itself.⁴² What one finds is a “poetics” of plot summary, as notable for what is missing as for the organization one finds in the narrative.

This is not to say that there is no value in such textualizations; indeed, as we have seen, they offer important (even if “skeletal”) clues to the more fully elaborated techniques of performance, as well as to the central structure that undergirds the more fully realized narratives. And in a certain sense, a “perfunctory” performance could be thought of as a unique genre or style of its own, with its own particular poetics. But we should not fool ourselves into thinking that such a poetics is “the” typical or representative poetics of a given Native American tradition.

Of course, such a decision about the inadequacies of a text should never be made lightly and hopefully never without comparative evidence from actual performances. Cultural information on the relative structural

⁴² In speaking of “short texts” I expressly exclude those that are the products of inherently short and compacted genres, and that use devices other than nodes of varying structural formality and informality to communicate meanings.

formality or informality of a given genre will be crucial, as well as knowledge about genres that might be intentionally compact and hermetic. I do not wish to understate the ability of even quite short or “plain” Native American texts (including Goggles’ text) to hold far more meaning than English-speaking academics of the early twenty-first century are capable of recapturing. But the ability to recognize situations where paralinguistic texture and its accompanying linguistic guides to meaning are absent seems an important initiative as well, in order to avoid attempts to add or find meanings and artistic expressions that simply are not there. Clements has suggested that one aim of using old texts would be to “tell us something about the narratives’ oral features” as opposed to textualizations based on oral recordings, which seek to “recover or reproduce” the oral itself in the textualization (1996:13). It would seem that many old texts may tell us relatively little about oral features, but they may at least provide us with an overarching organizational framework, if correctly textualized: a framework into which many of the unique features that characterize full performances could have once been inserted. Potentially (and more research is needed on this question), the kinds of poetic characteristics that we located in John Goggles’ narrative, even in the absence of comparative performance data, may serve to index the true status of such texts in relation to an idealized performance. Is there, one would like to know, a “poetics of plot summation” that could be found cross-culturally (or even, more modestly, among Plains Indian traditions)? And between full performance and minimal summary, which features of traditional Arapaho poetics are most “fragile” and drop out most easily as narratives are less elaborated? Likewise, which features are more persistent? We have looked here at only the two extremes of what must be a very complex process, but one that could perhaps be characterized in a somewhat more regular fashion. That information would be even more useful for those working with native language texts.

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