



Salish Myths and Legends

One People's Stories

Edited by M. Terry Thompson & Steven M. Egesdal

Salish Myths and Legends

NATIVE LITERATURES OF THE AMERICAS

Salish Myths and Legends
One People's Stories

Edited by M. Terry Thompson *and* Steven M. Egedal

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Introduction

Salish Myths and Legends: One People's Stories presents selections of literature from a group of culturally diverse people who trace their origins to a common source from long ago—the Proto-Salish of northwest North America. Their narratives reveal recurring motifs and similarities across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which suggest interesting patterns of diffusion through contact and borrowing, or independent retention over millennia. This book draws its subtitle from that common linguistic heritage and those shared elements of oral literature. The twenty-three Salishan languages can be organized as shown in Table 1.¹ This linguistic organization largely reflects the tribal groups' geographical locations, which in turn ultimately reflect history.

Origins and Migrations

The early ancestors of the Salishan people probably settled in a homeland south of the lower part of the Fraser River in southwestern British Columbia, extending southward to the Skagit River and possibly as far south as the Skykomish River, both in northwestern Washington.² Pressure from increasing population, favored by a bountiful food supply, probably caused the Salishan ancestors to expand along the Gulf of Georgia (British Columbia) to the north and Puget Sound (Washington) to the south. That early and rapid expansion fostered the development of regional ways of speaking (i.e., early dialects) within a larger language continuum of Central Salish, as contact among the groups lessened due to geographic barriers and as many of the groups encountered peoples speaking various non-Salishan languages.

A large group left the main body of Central Salish and migrated across the Cascade Mountains into the interior plateau. The languages of that group, the original Interior Salish, eventually developed into seven distinct languages, stretching from parts of south-central British Columbia into eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and then farther into western Montana. Interior

Table 1. The Salishan Language Family

Interior Salish	Lillooet [Li] Shuswap [Sh] Thompson (River Salish) [Th] Columbian [Cl] Okanagan-Colville [Ok] Spokane-Kalispel-Pend d'Oreille(s)- Flathead [Sp, Ka, Pd'O, Fl] Coeur d'Alene [Cr]
Bella Coola [Be]	
Tsamosan	Upper Chehalis [Ch] Cowlitz [Cz] Quinault [Qn] Lower Chehalis [Lo]
Central Coast Salish	Comox [Cx] Pentlatch [Pt] Sechelt [Se] Squamish [Sq] Nooksack [Nk] Halkomelem [Hl] Lushootseed [Ld] Twana [Tw] Straits Salish [St] Klallam [Kl] Northern Straits [NS]
Tillamook [Ti]	

Salish separates into northern and southern branches. The northern branch includes three languages—Shuswap, Lillooet, and Thompson—which spread along the river valleys and lakeshores of south-central British Columbia. The southern branch includes four languages: Okanagan-Colville sweeping southward from south-central British Columbia into Washington; Moses-Columbian in what is now central Washington State; Coeur d’Alene, occupying parts of northern Idaho; and the dialect continuum of Spokane-Kalispel-Pend d’Oreille(s)-Flathead, which extends from eastern Washington through northern Idaho into western Montana.

The ancestors of the Bella Coola became isolated far to the north of the body of Central Salish. That isolation may have been caused by an original migration to a distant village site or through separation by encroaching Wakashan people. Perhaps more likely, however, is an Interior origin for Bella Coola (Kinkade 1990:204–5). That is, the Bella Coola were part of an Interior Salish expansion, with subsequent further separation. Linguistically, Bella Coola is not closer to Central Salish than to Interior Salish. The Bella Coola eventually occupied the shores of the Bella Coola River and the inland waterways into which it empties (North and South Bentick Arm), and the connected Dean Channel and the lower reaches of the Dean and Kimsquit rivers that feed it.

The Bella Coola would have been at the northern end of a continuum, but not necessarily in the “Interior” as Salishanists now use that term (i.e., not on the Plateau). The Bella Coola then migrated to their present location, passing through territory now occupied by the Chilcotin. The Bella Coola migration does not need to have had anything to do with the Interior Salish migration onto the Plateau. It does suggest, however, that the ancestors of the Interior Salish were next downriver (the Fraser) to the Bella Coola, thus accounting for Bella Coola–Interior Salish similarities (see Kinkade 1990:204–05). Some Salishanists oppose Bella Coola to all the rest of the Salishan languages (Central Salish, Tsamosan, Tillamook, and Interior Salish), while others (Aert Kuipers and Stanley Newman) accord Interior Salish a special status vis-à-vis the others (including Bella Coola) (Kuipers 1996a:209–10). Bella Coola also shares certain linguistic characteristics with Interior Salish not shared with Central Salish, such as retention of Proto-Salish velars **x*, **k*, **k’*. (Linguists use the asterisk (*) to indicate an earlier or reconstructed sound or part of a language or distinct language group.) Bella Coola also shows interesting cognate words with Interior Salish, including that for “fisher” (*Martes pennanti*) with distant Coeur d’Alene. Kinkade (1990:205) presents a cogent argument for an Interior origin for Bella Coola.

Probably before the migration of the early Interior Salish, another group moved from the southern part of Central Salish and spread onto the flat woodlands and prairies to the south of Puget Sound in southwestern Washington, eventually expanding toward the open ocean and occupying the Pacific littoral. That group developed four languages known as Tsamosan (also referred to in earlier publications as the Olympic Branch of Coast Salish). The Tsamosan languages included two sets of closely related languages: inland Upper Chehalis and Lower Cowlitz and maritime (downriver/coastal) Lower Chehalis and Quinault.

Yet another group, ancestors of the Tillamook, became isolated from the southern end of the main body of Central Salish and eventually were situated south of the Columbia River on the north Oregon coast. Like the Bella Coola, they established an enclave separated from the main body of Salishan. It is unclear whether the Tillamook migrated across alien territory to reach their present location, or whether an earlier Salishan continuum was broken by Chinookan expansion. Some recent Tillamook speakers have said they heard that the Tillamook migrated by sea from the western coast of the Olympic Peninsula,³ but there is no clear indication of that migration, and the myth included in this volume indicates a long history on the Oregon coast. The Tillamook commanded the north Oregon coast from the mouth of the Nehalem River south to that of the Siletz River. Tillamook is clearly closer to the languages of Central Salish than to those of Tsamosan or Interior Salish.⁴

After the separation of the Interior Salish, Bella Coola, Tsamosan, and Tillamook from the main body of Central Salish, the Central Salish group diversified, ultimately developing into ten languages strung out along the inland waterway. At the southern end of Central Salish were two branches, Twana, along the western shore of Puget Sound; and Lushootseed (or Puget Sound Salish), having several mildly differentiated dialects along the shores of Puget Sound in the Seattle area.

Farther west and north of Twana and Lushootseed lay the closely related Straits Salish languages, with Klallam on the northern shores of the Olympic Peninsula, and the Northern Straits language, an intergrading set of dialects, extending along the southern end of Vancouver Island and the San Juan Islands to the mainland around Bellingham, Washington. The major Northern Straits dialects are: Saanich, Sooke, Songish, and Lummi.

Next, there were the Nooksack, which was south of the long dialect continuum of Halkomelem that stretched from just north of the head of naviga-

tion for the Fraser River at Yale, British Columbia (upriver Halkomelem, including Chilliwack, Hope, and Yale dialects), down to its mouth (Musqueam), and across to the southeastern littoral of Vancouver Island, including the islands of the Gulf of Georgia between (Cowichan and Nanaimo). Just north of the Chilliwack were the Squamish. Finally, the northernmost group of Central Salish included Sechelt, just north of Squamish on the British Columbia mainland; Pentlatch, on the east shore of Vancouver Island north of Halkomelem; and a considerable dialect spread of Comox-Sliammon from Powell River to Bute Inlet on the mainland and from Courtenay to Campbell River on Vancouver Island.

The Salishan Cultural Landscape

The Salishan peoples represent a large, complex language family. One might envision the following snapshot of the Salishan landscape in about A.D. 1800 (L. C. Thompson 1974:981–82). The main body of Salishan lay in Washington and southern British Columbia, extending from the Pacific Coast straight across the Cascade Mountains and the Plateau beyond to the Rocky Mountains in Montana, and into the Plains. The Cascades divided the Salishan people into two culture areas, two distinct ecological areas, and two great language divisions (sixteen Coast Salishan languages to the west and seven Interior Salishan languages to the east). The Coast Salish belonged to the Northwest Coast culture area, ecologically a temperate, productive coastal zone. The Interior Salish belonged to the Plateau culture area, ecologically forested mountain and semidesert.

The Northwest Coast culture area, including Salishan, generally includes the coastline from the panhandle of southeastern Alaska through British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, to the northwestern corner of California (Driver 1961:15). Its aboriginal inhabitants were able seafarers and most notably fishermen. Many were also whalers and hunters of seal, sea lion, and otter. They typically subsisted primarily on fish (especially salmon), were expert woodcrafters living in cedar plank houses, and enjoyed a considerable surplus of the necessities of life. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristics of the area were a great emphasis on the acquisition of material goods to be given away, display on public occasions, emergence of social classes, and the taking and keeping of slaves (including hereditary slavery). One of the Lummi speakers with whom L. C. Thompson worked was a child of slaves (probably Haida), who belonged to the family of another Lummi speaker with whom Thompson worked.

Although most Coast Salish perhaps were not truly ocean-going, their villages often clustered around river mouths opening into the salt water, usually in sheltered bays and inlets, and by extension they also settled at the mouths of creeks emptying into the large rivers. Probably only the Klallam and Quinault were whalers among the Coast Salish. Some of the other groups were happy to “harvest” any whale that happened to wash ashore.

They were quintessential water people, with the canoe a basic element in their lives. Salmon was the staple food, but they also hunted game and fowl, killing with a variety of means. Women gathered plant foods, including roots and bulbs (for example, camas, wapato), berries, and so on; they also gathered a variety of shellfish (clams, cockles, mussels, and oysters). They seem to have been oriented more toward the inland waterways than toward the open ocean, although they used the prolific fruits of the sea extensively. Those people who lived at river mouths on the salt water traded dried fish, clams, mussels, and such, to the groups living farther inland for fruits, roots, and such, which were not so plentiful nearer the ocean.

Property rights and the status associated therewith largely defined the cultural personality of all of the Northwest Coast peoples, including the Salishan. With ownership and title came rank and privilege. Those notions permeated the cultural milieu—from the celebrating of potlatches, to the taking and keeping of slaves, to the performance of myths. Rainy winters were spent in permanent villages, during which potlatches were held to celebrate important events. Through a potlatch, a village headman could affirm his social status by giving away material goods, from which he also expected to reap a substantial economic return, when his donees reciprocated in kind, plus the culturally mandated interest. The potlatch was especially beneficial in reaffirming social and kinship bonds among the different groups. When the Northwest Coast peoples warred on one another, captives were taken as slaves; the slaves, in turn, became property, enhancing the owners’ prestige. Some of this characterization perhaps most closely applies to northern non-Salish peoples of the Northwest Coast. However, to some extent, it fairly describes Salishan groups as well.

Ownership rights covered the tangible and intangible; even some myths could be owned and told only by their owners. That Native perspective on property rights has led, in some groups, to the politicization of the publication of myths and stories by persons other than the perceived owner. Because this knowledge has, in many cases, been lost, along with so much of the other culture, some groups feel that all myths must belong to the tribe and

they refuse to give permission for their publication in any form, by any person, including their own tribal members. That accounts for the absence of some well-known Salishanists among the authors in this volume. They did not want to chance offending the groups where they have studied in the past, or where they are currently studying.

The Plateau culture area was different. It is named after the Columbia Plateau. It embraces most of the Fraser River drainage and the Columbia River drainage and includes parts of British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana. The Plateau culture area lacked the stratified society of the Northwest Coast. Rivers played a key role in the lives of the peoples of the Plateau, perhaps allowing an analogy with the Northwest Coast in that both were oriented toward bodies of water and the fruit they bore. Fish (principally several species of salmon, although fewer than on the coast) and roots were the staple foods over much of the Plateau. A wide variety of game and wild food also was hunted, including buffalo for certain southern Interior Salish.

The Interior Salish lived in a domain of relatively little geographic diversity—forested mountain and semidesert. They occupied the area between the Cascade Range and the Rocky Mountains. The severity of cold winters on the high Plateau and its often semidesert environs forced the Interior Salish to develop different dwellings, clothing, and lifestyles from those of their relatives on the more temperate Northwest Coast. Many groups wintered in villages of semi-subterranean houses (e.g., Thompson *sʔistkn*, lit. “winter-house”),⁵ and they summered in encampments of reed or mat lodges near fishing spots, good hunting, and where berries and roots were plentiful. They tended to be more nomadic than their coastal cousins, as the quest for food often required greater movement to and from gathering places, fishing stations, or hunting grounds. They gathered roots (principally camas and bitter-root), berries, nuts, and lichen, which were prepared or dried and then stored for the winter. Fish and game similarly were dried for winter use. Still other animals, such as beaver, were trapped for their pelts.

Perhaps the Plateau is not a truly distinct culture area, but one showing a mixture of Plains and Northwest Coast cultures. It might be argued that for Salishan people of the eastern fringe (i.e., Flathead), influences from the Plains began to blur somewhat the nature of aboriginal Salishan culture. Importantly, there were routes along which some Plateau people interacted with some Coastal people, and along which stories as well as trade items moved. The Interior Salish typically also had complex kinship systems, more likely

resembling the Proto-Salish system than those of other Salish groups. The Interior Salish kinship systems often show reciprocal terms, differentiation by gender (i.e., different terms depending on the speaker's gender). Reciprocal terms and death replacement terms also figure in the Coast languages. The difference between the two systems generally lies in the Interior being bifurcate collateral, and the Coast being lineal.⁶ Lineal kinship systems do not distinguish between a parent's sibling or a parent's parent, according to the sex of the connecting relative; bifurcate collateral systems do.

There is an episode of one humorous Spokane myth (versions of which occur throughout the Salish groups) reflecting the complexity of a bifurcate collateral system. It involves two young and handsome hunters who approach a village during a rainstorm. The fires are out in all the skin lodges but one, where Toad Woman sits. They attempt to enter her lodge, calling her a number of terms for female kin (father's mother, mother's mother, father's sister, mother's sister, etc.), all of which she rejects. One finally calls her his wife, whereupon she jumps upon his face and fixes herself there. He is ashamed and becomes the Moon, which explains why the moon's surface resembles toadskin.⁷

Other typical elements of both Interior and Coast Salishan culture were: (1) the first fruits rite in the spring, such as the Flathead bitterroot feast, to honor the first plant gathered and assure the orderly fruition of other plants gathered thereafter; or the Tillamook first salmon feast, with ritual return of the bones to the river or to the fire to insure the future runs of salmon; (2) guardian spirit quest at puberty; (3) shamanism (e.g., healing, bewitching, and divining); (4) expert basketry (especially famous were the Thompsons); (5) stick game gambling, wherein one could show the strength of one's spirit power to "hide" the gambling bones or "see" an opponent's bones; and (6) importance of the sweathouse for spiritual health (described by one Pend d'Oreille elder as the "church" of his people). The smokehouse was the Coast Salish analogue to the sweathouse of the Interior.

Imperiled Status of Salishan Languages

Many Salishan languages have no longer been spoken as a means of daily communication for many years (Nooksack, Pentlatch, Tillamook, and Twana). Many languages no longer have any fluent speakers. Most are nearly in that condition. All are at serious risk of vanishing by the middle of this century, despite often valiant efforts to perpetuate them. In fact, it is quite difficult to determine just how many speakers of Salishan languages there are, even

assuming people can agree on what “speaker” means. Kinkade (1992:362) provided rough estimates of the number of speakers of Salishan languages, based on the best estimates of people in a position to know. Sadly, some of those numbers may be unrealistically optimistic. For instance, Kinkade estimated eight hundred speakers of Kalispel-Flathead in 1977. In 2006 there probably were fewer than twenty *fluent* speakers of Kalispel-Flathead. Similarly, Kinkade also reported twenty or fewer fluent speakers of Klallam in 1990; today, that number probably is closer to none.

There are commendable attempts by many Salishan groups to recover or revive languages no longer spoken as a first language. Some groups are attempting to create a new generation of speakers through immersion programs, language classes in the local schools, and sometimes as extracurricular activities drawing on the whole community as participants. Survival will be difficult, however, especially for fledgling language programs in communities under siege by poverty and still living with the legacy of broken treaties and failed government policies. Perhaps best equipped for survival well into the next century are the Salishan groups that have developed a working relationship and mutual respect between Native speakers and Native and non-Native linguists. The editors, having spent considerable time on such projects, are encouraged by the valiant efforts of many groups to recover or perpetuate their languages.

The remaining speakers of Salishan languages almost invariably are elderly, especially on the Coast. Almost without exception, they are bilingual in English, if not living lives dominated by English. For most, using their Native language is a special, even unusual, event isolated from a natural speech community. Indeed, for some it is the linguist with microphone and tape recorder who prompts use of the language. Unfortunately, Salishan languages largely have devolved into something akin to museum artifacts—objects for preservation, not perpetuation—whose linguistic destiny often falls to an “outsider” as caretaker. Speech acts, including the performance of myths (except in English), have become anthropological events, not natural communicative ones.

That reality helps to explain certain selections in this book. Most of the traditional stories were told, written, or recorded on sound equipment, in the original language and then translated into English. This explains the large number of linguists among the authors in this volume. Some selections were originally conceived in English, however, notably the contributions by two Native poets. Their origin in English reflects the loss of the Native medium,

though the poets retain their Native American character and viewpoint, and the poems are authentic contemporary examples of Native American culture.

When possible, the name of the person telling the story has been included here. In some cases of stories told many years ago, when the language was still used actively, the person writing down the story did not give the name of the storyteller. This may have been because the story was widely known and was told and retold by several people, because the teller did not want to be publicly identified, or it may have been simple neglect. We have no way of knowing. So far as we know, none of those storytellers claimed “possession” or “family rights” to these stories. The widespread repetition of major motifs in most of these tales shows the significance of borrowing and transmission from one group to another, so that actual “ownership” of any of these stories is questionable.

Most of the storytellers working with linguists within the past thirty years or more have felt a responsibility for saving their language and their stories for posterity, at a time when most tribal groups had no sure means of safe preservation. Martha Charles John, a Klallam woman who worked extensively with Laurence C. and M. Terry Thompson, was extremely happy that, through her, the Klallam language would be preserved for “young Klallams a hundred years from now.”

Aloysius Charles, a Lummi chief who worked with the Thompsons, William Seaburg, and Elizabeth Bowman (Western Washington State University), was extremely anxious to preserve the locations of the traditional fishing grounds of the Lummi. He had drawn a map of specific areas in the ocean, with their names and descriptions of how the Lummi could ride the tide and ocean currents out to those specific places and then ride back in again.

Annie York, a Lower Thompson woman who worked with the Thompsons, Egesdal, and Andrea Laforet, among others, was most anxious that her language not disappear. She was an expert with the tape recorder, and she insisted on recording stories whenever she remembered one, sometimes recording the same story or song several times when additional bits were recalled.

Hilda Austin, a Central Thompson woman from Lytton, British Columbia, shared her stories with Egesdal and Laforet so that her grandchildren would know them.

All of these elders were very pleased that this information was being preserved in the archives at the University of Washington, where it would al-

ways be available to their people. These are persons known to us, and we have heard similar stories from many of the authors in this volume.

Writing Salishan Languages

Most Salishanists and literate speakers use a special alphabet to write the languages; it is an Americanist adaptation of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Some linguists and some Native groups use so-called practical alphabets. In the following selections, some authors use such practical alphabets. Where possible, we have attempted to translate these alternate alphabets into the Americanist orthography. Each language may have particular characteristics of its own that require writing it somewhat differently from other languages. If symbols for writing each language are chosen from a common set, it is easier for others to understand them. Native Americans from different language backgrounds will have easier access to one another's materials. This is sometimes, however, a political decision.

A more technical examination of some of the characteristics of Salishan languages follows this Introduction.

Mythographic Presentation and Features of Narration

The authors use differing means to put the oral stories on the written page. Some use an ethnopoetic approach (following principally Hymes 1981); they use a verse format, divided into acts, scenes, and so on, to capture something of the performative structure of the oral literature. Other authors use a more familiar prose format. Still other authors use a format to capture something about the performance itself, highlighting characters' lines, to draw attention to the playlike nature of the story, with the raconteur playing narrator and all of the parts. The quality of the oral material generously allows such richness and difference in written interpretation.

Melville Jacobs's (1959) revolutionary study of Clackamas Chinook (Oregon) oral literature sensitized Amerindianists to the notion that Native American oral literature could best be understood as performed art. It was to be seen as something more of the stage than for a book. "Folklorists have tended to treat oral literatures of non-Western peoples as if their subject matter were analogous to novels, short stories, or poetry. I believe that stress upon Chinook literature as a kind of theatre does better justice to its content, designs, and functions. Therefore emphases are upon actors, acts, scenes, epilogues, and the like, rather than on plots, motifs, and episodes" (M. Jacobs 1959:7). For readers used to Western (Euro-American) literature, adjusting to that cultural

paradigm shift is crucial to understanding and then appreciating the selections in this book. Otherwise, the Western reader may find many stories seemingly lacking, sparingly detailed, or perhaps almost artfully unadorned.

Jacobs also introduced the notion that Northwest Amerindian narratives could be described as “terse, staccato, or rapid moving,” and not overly embellished with narrative description. In what he termed “tersely delineated” narratives, narration lines compress expressions of content and are limited to giving only a succinct description of setting, movement in time or space, and characters. Any important feelings or ideas concerning the dramatis personae are conveyed through the mouths of the actors. Jacobs (1960:x) wrote: “A recitalist never once verbalized a motivation, feeling, or mood of the actors of a myth or tale . . . the succinct recitation of actors’ deeds and discourse alone revealed sentiments meant to be expressed and the response meant to be elicited.” Jacobs’s description of such tersely delineated texts fits Salishan oral literature well, but perhaps his comment is not entirely correct. He is largely correct if “verbalization” is understood as commentary by the narrator apart from speech by characters. But nonquoted accounts of what actors felt do occur. Most—but not all—are handled in characters’ speech and thought (silent speech).

Jacobs thus provides readers with an important insight for understanding these stories: Characters’ lines have greater relevancy than narration lines in the “performance” of a narrative. The reader should look to characters’ lines to carry the story. They bear the performative load of the myth. Essential elements of the plot are carried in the characters’ quoted speech. Narration lines, by contrast, ordinarily set the background for the characters’ lines, offering interstitial descriptions of place, person, or passage of time.

Characters’ quoted speech (and their thoughts as silent speech), play a critical role in Salishan traditional narratives. Indeed, the use of direct quoted speech casts the narrative as traditional in style and content. One component of that speech is abnormal, unusual, or stylistic ways of talking by characters. Egesdal (1992) discussed the stylized speech of characters in Thompson River Salish, also referring to material from other Salishan languages and beyond. In Lushootseed (which lost nasal consonants historically), Raven uses nasals and nasalizes vowels; that sort of nasalization characterizes Raven exclusively (Hess 1982:93). In Lushootseed, Rotten Log palatalizes consonants (*s* becomes *š*), and it sometimes changes *t* to *p* (Hess 1982:90, 94). In Thompson River Salish, Coyote has a special suffix =*ólk* added to certain of his words, which marks such speech as his alone. Thompson

River Salish Grizzly Woman has a peculiar lateral and garbled quality to her speech.⁸ Such abnormal bear speech suggests comparisons with the phenomenon covered in Hymes (1979), where he discusses how to talk like a bear in (non-Salishan) Takelma. Thompson River Salish Meadowlark sings her speech to the same melody throughout narratives, again, uniquely her own. Similar examples of affected speech are numerous.

Another salient feature of Salishan narrative is “pattern number.” Pattern number is that culturally “right” number into which persons or things are grouped or occurrences of events “naturally” fall. Pattern number influences both the content and style of Salishan narratives. Examples offer the best explanation. In Flathead or Thompson River Salish, for instance, things or events are patterned into sets or cycles of four. The Flathead culture hero Coyote has four sons. In Thompson River Salish, when Coyote’s son descends from the Skyworld, he stops four times, hitting four barriers. When Coyote encounters (and abuses) maidens during his journeys, there are four of them (usually sisters). If the story of Goldilocks were adapted into Northern Interior Salish, one could expect her to confront four Bears; and she would have four bowls of porridge to try, four chairs to sit in, four beds to test, and some fourth activity to perform four times.

The concept of pattern number extends beyond Salishan narrative. Indeed, pattern number is a natural extension from Salishan culture more generally into the content and style of its oral literature. In Salishan languages where four is the pattern number, it is considered special in terms of how the world and life within it are organized. There are four directions, four seasons, four principal times of day, four primary elements (earth, air/wind, water, and fire), four kinds of animals (classified according to their locomotion: swimming, flying, crawling, and walking), four stages of a man’s life, and so on.

Pattern number also varies across Salishan languages, and even within dialects of the same language. In Northern Lushootseed, the pattern number is four; in Southern Lushootseed, the pattern number is five (Hess 1995:140). In Columbian, the pattern number is five, and Coyote expectedly has five sons. In neighboring Spokane, where the pattern number is four, Coyote has four sons. In Upper Chehalis, where the pattern number is five, there are five Cougar brothers, five daughters of fire, and five baskets of water are given to Bluejay to put out the fires on the five prairies he must cross (in this volume; also see Kinkade 1994:41). In Tillamook, pattern number seems to add another twist based on the gender of the character involved: four for females and five for males (see the South Wind story in this volume).

Pattern number affects the structure of the narratives. Events occur the requisite or expected number of times, which shapes the narrative. Some Salishanists believe that pattern number plays an even greater role in determining the organization of verses, stanzas, scenes, or acts within a narrative (e.g., Kinkade 1983a; 1984; 1987). The narrative structure is marked by linguistic cues: particles, segment lengthening, and morpho-syntax. For those ethnopoetic presenters of Salishan narrative, organization of the narrative is crucial to their interpretation. For them, narratives are measured verse and should be represented on the page as such.

Other Salishanists (e.g., Mattina 1987) have questioned whether such a formalized “ethnopoetic” structure exists. “Not all of North American Indian narrative is verse, any more than all of English literature is dialogue” (Mattina 1987:137). Mattina concludes by arguing against the then pervasive (ethnopoetic) mythographic approaches of Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock: “Let the texts come forth, in whatever typographic arrangement the editor deems appropriate. Given an understanding of the tradition and context of the text, I expect that the worthiest texts will require the least architectural support” (Mattina 1987:143).

Without entering that interesting debate over mythographic presentation, it has been our general experience that Thompson River Salish raconteurs rarely performed a narrative the same way every time. Instead, they varied the content or themes depending on the performative context—the audience and the occasion. A raconteur could expand or abridge certain episodes to fit the particular purpose of the performance or interests of the audience. That variance perhaps was most prominent when a narrative was told first to a non-Native linguist and then later to a Native speaking audience. (Or when the same narrative was told to the same linguist before and after he or she gained some knowledge of the language and culture of the raconteur.)

A version of a story told to a non-Native linguist often would contain explanatory cultural background, which knowledge the raconteur normally could (and would) presuppose the audience to possess. Traditionally, Tillamook listeners “culturally” knew that snails had keen eyesight in the Myth Age. Without that fact being noted during the narrative, they understood that was why, when Bald Eagle lost his eyes, he chose Snail’s eyes as substitutes. Traditionally, every Thompson River Salish person knew that Mole was Coyote’s wife, she worked very hard, and she was a polyglot. Similarly, Flathead listeners would know that Fox was Coyote’s older, wiser, brother—his “partner” in Indian English—and they could expect Fox some-

time in the narrative to bring Coyote back to life after Coyote once again fell victim to his own foolishness. They also knew Fox was a powerful medicine man, and they were familiar with the shamanistic practices Fox would use to revive Coyote. Those respective Salishan audiences would have heard such facts since childhood; they did not need to be reminded of the background. In some narratives, however, those facts might be important, so the raconteur might include them as cues or background information.

For instance, in the story of Nłáíksmtm in this volume, Coyote disguises himself as a medicine man from the Plains, and he pretends to speak a foreign language. Only Mole can understand him. The raconteur explains that she spoke many languages, because she had husbands from many lands. That fact explains why the People consulted Mole, when all others failed to communicate with Coyote, and why Mole could interpret his feigned gibberish.

Humor is another salient feature of Salishan narratives. Indeed, quite often humor is their quintessential feature. The focal point of such humor often is the main character of the narratives, such as Coyote in Interior Salish, Mink or Raven in the Coast Salish, and South Wind in Tillamook. When such leading characters play the role of tricksters or transformers, they often are the victims of their own mischief or foolishness. Coyote on one hand is responsible for imposing order on the world to make it ready for humankind, while on the other hand he seems to run afoul of or break all of the culture's mores. In the same narrative, he can vacillate between trickster and dupe, punishing others for their wrongdoing but also being punished for his own follies. Western readers might find that combined duality of trickster-dupe unfamiliar, if not unsettling. To the Salishan audience, such duality and antics make perfect sense.

Melville Jacobs (1959) pointed out that Coyote's ribald behavior and breaking of cultural taboos had a healthy effect on the Native audience. It acted as a psychological safety valve. For Jacobs, Native American oral literature reflected something deeper about a culture than its everyday practices and concerns. He believed that as a "fantasy screen," oral literature could provide an outlet for the release of fears, anxieties, and tensions brought about by certain strained relationships in tribal culture. Acting as a psychological safety valve, then, oral literature safeguarded against the consequences of emotional turbulence and insured personal and cultural stability. Moreover, in the humorous context of traditional narrative, Coyote actually was reinforcing the very rules of Salishan society he was breaking in the narratives.

Genres of Salishan Oral Literature

Salishan narratives generally are of two types: traditional stories and ordinary or historic stories (often akin to news or historical accounts).⁹ Languages generally have two different words for those types; for example, Thompson River Salish *spték^{wł}* “traditional story” and *spíləxm* “news, information, story”; Flathead *sq^{wllú}(m̄t)* “traditional (or Coyote) story” and *sm̄i?m̄y* “news, story”; Klallam *sx^{wi}?ám* “traditional story,” and *syəcəm* “news, information.” Most of the narratives in this collection are of the traditional type.

What we have written elsewhere concerning Thompson River Salish traditional narrative (*spték^{wł}*) applies more broadly to Salishan traditional narrative: “*Spték^{wł}* perhaps is not so much a time or place as a dimension, another reality, in which elements of the landscape—fauna, flora, and even natural phenomena, such as Thunder and Ice—are anthropomorphized. As ‘real people’ of the *spték^{wł}* stage, legendary dramatis personae act out the quintessence of their personalities, wearing different skins on transformed shapes. Coyote always was Coyote; he just looks more doglike in the here and now” (Egesdal and M. T. Thompson 1994:314–15).

Traditional narratives are set in the Myth Age, before things became like the modern era. A time before the world had been made ready (or perhaps more accurately, put in order) for humankind, and a place where animals were people (and people were animals). But this was no fairyland or fantasy world. There were benevolent grandmothers and beautiful women, to be sure, but there also were kidnapping basket ogresses and maidens with toothed vaginas. It was different—indeed, remarkably odd—but nonetheless real. Hilda Austin, a Thompson River Salish elder, rejected the translation of “myth” for *spték^{wł}*, because, she explained, “myth means it is not true.” For her and numerous other elders with whom we have worked, the events occurring in the *spték^{wł}* “are true.” (Hilda Austin therefore preferred the term “legend” for *spték^{wł}*.)

That insight marks an important distinction between Salishan traditional narrative and Western literature. Salishan traditional stories are not considered to be imaginative fiction, nor are they appreciated as such. A traditional narrative is not intended to be the product of an individual’s creativity. The raconteur (who in more recent times has most frequently been a raconteuse) instead is relating a legendary event, the details of which have been handed down across many generations. Traditional narratives belong to the group, as a sort of collectively held history of the events and beings of the Myth Age.

The raconteur does not own it any more than he can own the language he shares with his audience. Neither the narrative nor the language is a product of individual invention. Creative expression does play a role, however, in how the raconteur interprets the “script” handed down from generation to generation and possessed collectively.

The notion that traditional stories are not the product of creative invention perhaps has a broader significance for Salishan culture, particularly concerning song. In the West, musicians compose songs; it is a product of their creative genius (classically, at most aided by some muse). Western music derives from an internal voice. For the Salish, however, songs are the product of discovery or revelation vis-à-vis creation. As one elder explained, all the songs were created at the beginning of the world, and they must be discovered by the singer or revealed to him or her. That discovery or revelation is facilitated by animals (or one’s other guardian spirit). Much of Salishan music, then, apparently derives from an external calling. The intimate magical nature of Salish song often stopped outsiders from gathering even a modest amount of song. One does not share secrets with strangers, especially powerful ones.

Songs connected people on this side of the world with the other side—the spirit side—typically to effect some change on this side. Songs come from the other side.

Characters in many stories sing songs, reflecting the importance of songs in Salish culture. As in Salish life, songs in Salish stories have a variety of functions. In this volume in Amoss’s “Beaver and Mouse,” for instance, Beaver’s spirit song is used to punish Mouse with flooding after he fails in his attempt to woo her. Short, repetitive, and very effective. In Elmendorf’s “Star Husband,” an old lady, feeling sorry for letting someone kidnap a baby, sings a sad mourning song. When the baby later is found, the old lady helps to celebrate with a happy song. Kinkade’s “Kidnapping the Moon” has a version of the same story where an old woman sings a lullaby.

When South Wind or Coyote’s Son goes to the Skyworld, these are not Salishan analogues to Jack and the Beanstalk. Instead, it is much more like the recounting of the successful Apollo mission to the moon. Indeed, following Neil Armstrong’s “giant leap for mankind,” Thompson River Salish elders commented that Coyote’s Son (Nłáíksmtm) already had accomplished a similar lunar trip some time ago. Coyote’s Son had been there and done that, in the Myth Age.¹⁰ And because the stories are considered to be true, ra-

conteurs are especially sensitive about “getting them right.” Some even will decline to tell traditional narratives because they cannot remember certain parts or details. Others considered it bad luck to tell only part of a traditional narrative. Interestingly, the advent of tape-recording traditional narratives has led to situations in which raconteurs now will “edit” a performance, to add corrective comments or make improvements for the final written text (even in some cases in which the raconteurs are illiterate).

Reverence for Traditional Narrative

There was a reverence for traditional narratives. As one Flathead elder, Joe Cullooyah, shared, “Everything you need to know about life is in the Coyote stories—if you just listen carefully.” That reverence was reflected in several ways.¹¹ It still can be seen clearly with certain tribes, where even today traditional stories will not be told “out of season.” Winter is that special season, defined (at least by some) as the time from the first snowfall (in late autumn) to the first thunderstorm (in early spring). Within at least Interior Salishan, telling traditional stories out of season was thought to bring cold weather. Thompson River Salish elder Louis Phillips explained that if one told traditional stories in the summer, Coyote would pull the foreskin on his penis back, and a mist would come out and cause cold weather. For the Flathead, telling Coyote stories in the summer risked the mauling by a grizzly bear or being attacked by snakes. Similar penalties existed for other Salishan groups. For most groups today, however, the custom of telling traditional stories only in winter is remembered but no longer followed.

The reverence the tellers have for traditional stories can be seen in a dialogue Egesdal had with a Flathead elder, Joe Cullooyah. Egesdal asked Joe (one winter) whatever happened to Coyote. Joe, accustomed to if not amused by such probing, thought about it for a while and then thoughtfully replied: “You believe that Christ is coming back some day, right? Well, Coyote is coming back some day, too.” Christ and Coyote, as kindred entities. The analogical linkage of Coyote and Christ aptly reflects the reverence that Mr. Cullooyah (and his people) had for traditional narratives. From such comments one can infer that Coyote stories are more akin to the whiteman’s biblical truths than to his fairy tales.

When elders speak of “the Coyote stories” or “the stories the old people used to tell,” they mean a collective canon of interconnected narratives, only pieces of which remain. When raconteurs begin a Coyote story, Coyote usually is walking along somewhere. And that is how the story

usually also ends. (Salishan Tricksters and Transformers were perpetual travelers.) Each narrative, therefore, is framed at both ends to connect with other adventures not told at that sitting. The same holds for other Salishan traditional narratives concerning culture heroes, transformers, tricksters, and the like. Thompson River Salish raconteurs frequently added the disclaimer in ending a traditional narrative concerning Coyote (or some other culture hero) that the preceding was only a part of a larger story, and that it was all they could remember of that greater whole. Cycles of Salishan traditional narratives might have taken several lengthy performances, or perhaps a whole winter season, to complete. Thompson River Salish and Flathead/Pend d'Oreille elders have shared childhood memories of Coyote stories that spanned several winter evenings. The Tillamook "South Wind" epic in this volume gives an idea of the geographical progression of such stories.

Importantly, a story was never *THE* story. There might be many versions of it, perhaps inserted into other stories as an incidental bit, or it might be told alone with embellishments from other stories. Sometimes a raconteur would give an abridgement, other times it would be greatly embellished. Variables in the context led to varied performances.

In this volume many of the themes are repeated, but with different characters, different locations, different motivations, and with more or fewer details, as the situation demands. Some of the themes become long involved stories that stand alone, while showing up only as a minor incident in some other long story.

We are pleased to have the unusual opportunity to present two samples of traditional oratory. Since this was often done on special occasions not attended by a person with a tape recorder, there are few recordings of such speeches. One such was recorded by a Thompson chief, in his native language, at the national museum in Canada early in the twentieth century specifically as a sample of oratory, and was probably from a remembered occasion. It was very short because of the limitations of sound recording equipment at that time. The other was a public speech given near the end of the twentieth century. It was given in English, because by that time there were so few speakers of the Colville language. Then there is the ubiquitous speech of Chief Seattle, which is not known to have been recorded at all, but has been quoted (in English) over the years in many versions, styled to fit many different occasions.

The Performative Context

One of the problems with a Western audience understanding, let alone appreciating, Salishan narratives is that often they are decontextualized to the point of being incomprehensible. The narratives seem terse, laconic, and spare, because much if not most presupposed cultural knowledge is missing. That leaves outsiders with a problem grasping the actual themes of the narratives. They just do not get it, because they are not culturally prepared to understand. In preparing this collection for publication, for example, we had such an experience with the Sliammon narrative from Honoré Watanabe. The narrative involves a drowning that occurs during a seal hunt. The force of the narrative was lost on us until Watanabe did additional fieldwork and added an explanation of traditional sealing practice to the introduction of that narrative.

Not all Native speakers tell traditional narratives. Nor do all those who tell traditional narratives tell them equally well. Those may seem like simplistic observations; however, such insights can be missed when the number of true speakers for any given tribe drops into the dozens or less. Sometimes inexperienced or unaware linguists expect all gray-haired Native speakers to be proficient at telling traditional narratives. Of course, that is not the case. It can be fairly said, however, that those who are culture-bearers for a tribe generally tend to be experts on a number of topics, often including traditional narratives. Annie York and Hilda Austin (Thompson River Salish elders with whom both the editors worked) were both expert herbalists and expert raconteurs. They also knew traditional songs and prayers and a wide variety of other cultural information (place names, personal names and genealogy, history, proverbs, customs, practices, fishing areas, and so on).

One setting for traditional narrative was nighttime around a winter fire, the season when nights were especially long. Another setting for the traditional narrative was bedtime stories for children. Several languages have a formulaic reply that children were supposed to say to let the raconteur know that the child still was awake (and even to urge the raconteur to continue). For instance, Thompson River Salish children were to say *ʔéy ʔéy*, or the telling of the narrative would stop. When Lushootseed narratives were told, children similarly were expected to show their attentiveness by uttering a formulaic response: *həmuʔ kayʔ həmuʔ kayʔkawič*; if they did not, they were warned they would become hunchbacked (Hess 1976:178).

Today, most traditional Salishan narratives are not told within the traditional performative context. As mentioned above, the prohibition against tell-

ing outside of winter has been lost or been weakened for most groups. The loss of the languages has reduced the potential audience. And great changes in lifestyle have undermined the opportunities and reasons for telling the stories. Domination by English, in print or on the radio, television, and film, has relegated traditional narratives to staged events, Elders' Day celebrations, or storytelling contests (most occurring during the summer). And sadly, except for such special events, all too often the non-Native linguist's microphone is the primary audience for what remains of traditional narratives.

One notable exception is Vi Taq^wšəblu Hilbert, a Lushootseed elder who became an internationally famous storyteller. She perfected a remarkably satisfying technique of smoothly interweaving Lushootseed sentences and their English translation. She introduces her performance by saying Lushootseed is such a beautiful language that she wants to share it with her audience, but she also wants them to grasp the meaning of the story so she will give them that in English. A number of others have now adopted her technique.

History of Collecting Salishan Oral Literature

Western anthropologists and linguists started collecting Salishan narratives in the late 1800s. Until relatively recently and with a few notable exceptions, almost all of the published materials were in English. The most significant early work was done by Franz Boas personally or at his urging and direction. Boas (1898a, b, c) published myths of the Bella Coola and of the Tillamook, and James Teit (1898; other dates) published material on the Thompson, Lillooet, and Shuswap. The works of those two are set forth in detail in the bibliography. Contemporaneously with Boas and Teit, Charles Hill-Tout (1899, 1900, 1904, 1911) collected Salishan materials in British Columbia (Thompson River Salish, Okanagan, Halkomelem, Squamish, Lillooet, and Seshelt), published in English and reprinted in Maud 1978.

Later, other publications in English included Erna Gunther's (1925) Klallam narratives, Thelma Adamson's (1934) narratives for certain Coast Salish tribes, and Verne Ray's (1933) Sanpoil (Colville-Okanagan) narratives.

Gladys Reichard (1947:57–212) published a comparative study of Salishan narrative, with Coeur d'Alene material, in English. Elizabeth Jacobs (1959) published a collection of Tillamook narratives in English. William Elmendorf (1961) published a collection of Twana and some other Coast Salish narratives in English. (Versions of two of those Twana narratives are included in this collection.) Snyder (1968) published a collection of Lushootseed narratives (his Southern Puget Sound Salish).

Vi Hilbert (1980, 1985) has published several collections of Lushootseed narratives in English. Bouchard and Kennedy (1977, 1979) have published Lillooet and Shuswap narratives in English. Darwin Hanna and Mamie Henry (1995) have published a collection of Nt̓heʔképmx (Thompson River Salish) narratives in English. Portions of some of E. Jacobs's (1959) stories, combined with portions of some of the Edel (1931 ms.) stories, and one of Boas's stories are included in Deur and M. T. Thompson's "South Wind," in this volume.

Linguists and anthropologists have published narratives in several Native languages as papers of the annual International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages (e.g., Kinkade 1986; Egesdal 1991).

There have been some publications of narratives in both the Native language and in English translation. May Mandelbaum Edel (1939) published a Tillamook narrative as a short illustrative text for her Tillamook grammar, and readied a collection of Tillamook narratives for publication (Edel 1931 ms.). Gladys Reichard (1938:694–707) included a short illustrative narrative as part of her Coeur d'Alene grammar. Hans Vogt (1940:80–135) included numerous texts (in the Native language and translated) as part of his Kalispel grammar. Aert H. Kuipers published Squamish narratives (1967:219–42, 1969:19–31), and he also published narratives in Shuswap (1974:91–130). Barbara Efrat's dissertation (1969) included a narrative that is in English here. Barry Carlson (1978:3–14) published a humorous Coyote story in Spokane. Dale Kinkade (1978:15–20) published a Coyote story in Columbian in that same volume. Anthony Mattina (1985) published a long narrative in Colville (Okanagan) and English. L. C. and M. T. Thompson published a Thompson River Salish narrative with their grammar (1992).

Publication of materials, in English translation or the original, almost invariably has lagged far behind collection. Indeed, most narrative material remains in field notebooks, gathering dust on bookshelves or filling boxes in archives. Those materials await proper attention and treatment. The severe exigencies posed by the imperiled state of almost all the languages fairly and frequently has led many researchers to err on the side of gathering more material instead of working thoroughly with material already collected. Collection of narratives in the Native languages continues; however, for most Salishan languages few speakers remain, and even fewer raconteurs exist among them.

For many years there was little interest, or little time, for the Salishan people to concentrate on the preservation of their cultural and linguistic heritage. The elders were very happy to have us (as professional linguists) ask

to preserve their languages for posterity. We heard complaints from elders about “lack of interest” among the younger members of their groups, and we always tried to make soothing comments about their young lives being so busy. When the younger people began to take an interest in preserving the culture and the language, linguists became very supportive, and have spent a great deal of time working with local and areal language programs. The editors have both spent many happy hours working with these languages, their speakers, and their would-be speakers.

What Melville Jacobs (1967:20) said about Pacific Northwest Indian folklores applies at least doubly today: “Therefore, the small oral literature collections that we have remain for us something like ancient Egypt’s Sphinx. That treasure is badly worn and chipped. We can no longer gather information about everything that it signified to the people who lived when it was fashioned. To be sure, we will preserve it, just as we guard Upper Paleolithic cave drawings and paintings about whose roles, when they were made, we can never learn a thing. We will remain burdened with regrets that our non-linguist forbears were not sufficiently civilized to interest themselves in the creativity and values of peoples whose communities were not included in some restricted inventory of ‘great civilizations.’”

Organization of the Collection

Salish Myths and Legends: One People’s Stories presents its material within twelve sections. Those sections are not intended to reflect Native topics, or to correspond to anything akin to Native genres. As stated above, Salishan narrative is bifurcated largely into the traditional and the ordinary or historical. And the material herein includes more than narrative. Instead, we have tried to bring together similar types of oral literature and other material for the reader’s enjoyment. For instance, sometimes the type of leading actor brings narratives under a single heading (e.g., Basket Ogress or Tricksters). In other cases, headings are intended to reflect something of the content of the narrative or overall structure of the narrative (e.g., epics, journeys to other worlds, why things are the way they are, when the animals were people). Still other headings bring together nontraditional narratives and other material, such as historical events, viewing the whiteman as “other,” real life stories, songs, and oratory. The sections are undoubtedly artificial. Many stories represent several of these categories, but they serve to present in some orderly fashion a manuscript that was originally several hundred pages of unorganized material.

Some might question whether *Salish Myths and Legends: One People's Stories* fairly represents what is actually out there in terms of Salishan traditional literature. And that would be a very good question, deserving a good answer. To begin, one must realize that most significant folkloric and ethnographic work with Salishan peoples (and in the Northwest more broadly) since the 1960s has been done by (anthropological) linguists. Many were students of the Salishan troika of Aert H. Kuipers, Laurence C. Thompson, and M. Dale Kinkade. Not surprisingly, they and their students account for much of the material in *Salish Myths and Legends: One People's Stories*.

Those interested in Salishan linguistics and ethnography form a small and tight community—Native and non-Native. When we began this project, it was relatively easy to contact all persons, Native and non-Native alike, who had shown an interest in Salishan oral literature over the last thirty years. Indeed, it was like old home week. As good editors must do, we asked, asked again, and then charmed, coaxed, prodded, searched for current addresses, and otherwise did whatever was necessary to obtain the best and widest representation of Salishan traditional literature available.

We do not attempt to discuss contemporary Salishan literature, written in English. Several Salishan writers are or have been prominent in the renaissance of Native American writing. Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), Duane Niatum (Klallam), D'Arcy McNickle (Flathead), and Mourning Dove [Christine Quintasket] (Colville-Okanagan) are several examples. We list some of their works in the bibliography.¹²

We believe we have accomplished what we set out to do. Every Salishan language but one (Lower Chehalis) is represented in some fashion (twenty-two of the twenty-three languages), and some language groups have selections from more than one dialect represented. That feat is noteworthy for two reasons: first, most Salishan languages are no longer spoken actively; second, delicate political issues often arise concerning just who holds intellectual property rights to traditional Native literatures—the tribe or the individual raconteur. When traditional or non-Native notions of individual ownership or lack of ownership for narratives collide with current Native notions of collective ownership, the conflict can stifle attempts to obtain permission to publish narratives.

In sum, we are confident that this collection fairly reflects what is currently available in terms of Salishan traditional literature. That having been said, much more traditional Salishan material of this type awaits publication. We hope that *Salish Myths and Legends: One People's Stories* will stimulate

reader demand and publisher interest toward salvaging it from notebooks and archives and putting it into print.

Notes

1. See L. C. Thompson 1979:693; Kinkade 1992:360. We acknowledge that there are various spellings of certain tribal names, and that certain groups use Native terms (often not widely known). We use the traditional English names for many of the Salishan tribes or groups, however, in addition to the traditional Salishan names, because these English names will be familiar to the widest readership.

2. See L. C. Thompson 1979:693. Kinkade 1990:197–208, using comparative linguistic data, investigates the Proto-Salish homeland, which he places as south of the lower part of the Fraser River.

3. L. C. Thompson, personal communication.

4. Egesdal and M. T. Thompson 1998.

5. Laforet and York (1981) provide a description and sketch of the Thompson subterranean pit-house.

6. Collateral ascendants are distinguished from lineal ones, and from one another; e.g., mother, mother's sister, and father's sister all have different terms.

7. See Elmendorf 1961:373. In other stories, Frog is Moon's sister or wife and is seen as Frog herself on his face.

8. Egesdal 1992:10n3.

9. M. Dale Kinkade (1994) provides an excellent discussion of the Native literature of the Northwest Coast and Plateau. Dell Hymes (1989) discusses the mythology of the Northwest Coast culture area. Ralph Maud (1982) discusses the history of myth collecting in British Columbia.

10. For a complete rendition of one version of this story, see Thompson and Thompson 1992:199–227.

11. Upper Chehalis audiences could not ask for food during a narrative performance; the performance would end, if that rule was broken (Kinkade 1994:39–40).

12. More generally, there are a number of books that document the history and development of Native American literature. The reader might wish to consult Fleck (1993), K. Kroeber (1981), Krupat (1993), Lerner (1990), Lincoln (1983), Riley (1993), Ruoff (1990a, b), Swann (1983, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2004), Swann and Krupat (1987), Vizenor (1993), and Wiget (1985, 1994).

Language Characteristics

Steven M. Egesdal

Salishan languages have a number of features that make them unusually complex and distinctive.¹ One of the most striking features of Salishan languages is their elaborate consonant inventories.² The following phoneme inventory from Flathead, or *Séliš* (from which the entire language family ultimately derives its name), is fairly representative of Interior Salish:³

ʔ a c č č' e h i (k k') k^w k^w l l' l l' ʎ ʎ' ʎ' ʎ' m m̃ n ñ o p p' q q^w q̣ q̣' s š t t' u
w ẉ x^w x̣ x̣' ỵ ʕ ʕ' ʕ^w ʕ^w

Contrasting with a typically elaborate consonant system is a usually small inventory of vowels. Proto-Salish may be reconstructed with four vowels: *i, *u, *a, *ə.

Salishan languages have a tendency to delete unstressed underlying vowels, often resulting in long and complex consonant clusters. A good example of this is Bella Coola. There is a story about the famous German anthropologist Franz Boas, early in his research in North America, sending an article about this extreme example to a German journal. The article was dismissed as fiction.

Salishan includes certain “oddities,” such as languages with no Native labials (e.g., Klallam and Northern Straits) and languages without nasals (e.g., Lushootseed and Twana).

Salishan languages, like many Amerindian languages, are polysynthetic. They typically show morphologically complex word-forms, which contain a large number of affixes (generally suffixes as opposed to prefixes) to express syntactic relationships and meanings. A Salishan full word contains a root-stem (indicated by a preceding slanted bar [/]), which may be expanded by a variety of grammatical affixes (indicated by a hyphen following the affix for prefixes; preceding the affix for suffixes). Grammatical affixes may show transitivity (relation between agent and patient), voice, aspect, number, degree of control over the action, and other grammatical categories. A number of the grammatical affixes are reduplicative, indicated by a raised

Table 2. Pronunciation Guide

The following symbols from Salishan languages may be found in the selections. The pronunciation of those symbols can be made as follows.

- ^w following a consonant (k^w , q^w , x^w , ɣ^w , ʕ^w) marks lip rounding that accompanies the consonant.
- ʼ following or accompanying an obstruent (for example, p' , t' , $\text{č}'$, k' , q' , $\text{ɬ}'$, t') marks an “ejective consonant,” which is immediately followed by a popping sound made by the forceful expulsion of air at the point of closure (see note 2 below). Following a resonant (l , l' , y' , w') or a nasal (m , n , ŋ), this symbol signals an accompanying glottalic constriction (which can precede or interrupt).¹
- á acute accented vowel (also \acute{e} , \acute{s} , \acute{i} , \acute{o} , \acute{u}) marks the most prominent (or stressed) vowel of a word.
- ? (called “glottal stop”) is similar to the catch in the middle of “unh-unh” (meaning “no”), or “oh-oh!”
- a as in English “father.”
- c is similar to the *ts* sound in English “bats.”
- č is like *c*, described above, with a sharp popping sound. One makes the popping sound by preparing to make a ? (glottal stop), holding it, and then saying *c* simultaneously with the release of the glottal stop. (In linguistic jargon, č is a glottalic ejective, articulated with the glottalic airstream mechanism.)²
- č̣ is like the *ch* in English “church.”
- č' is like č̣ but with the sharp popping sound described for č̣.
- e as in English “bet.”
- ə (called a “schwa”) represents a central vowel sound like that of the last vowel (the *u*) in English “halibut.”
- h as in English “hit.”
- i as in English “beet.”
- k as in English “kick.”
- k' is like *k* in English, but has the same popping sound described for č̣.
- k^w is like the *qu* in English “quick.”
- ḳ^w is like *kw*, but has the same popping sound (i.e., glottalic ejective) described for č̣.
- l as in English “let.”

l'	is like the <i>l</i> in English, with a catch in it.
ɬ	is like the English <i>l</i> but very breathy. One should whisper “please,” holding the <i>l</i> . As the air is released past the sides of the tongue, the sound should then approximate ɬ.
ʔ	is similar to English <i>kl</i> , ³ with the same popping sound i.e., glottalic ejective) described for ɕ. One should place the tongue to say <i>t</i> , keeping it closed against the roof of the mouth. The air should then be released quickly past the sides of the tongue, with a pop.
m	as in English “mom.”
m̥	as in the English <i>m</i> with a catch in it.
n	as in English “nut.”
n̥	as in the English <i>n</i> with a catch in it.
ŋ	is the nasal sound <i>ng</i> as in English “sing.”
o	is like the <i>ou</i> in English “bought.”
p	as in English “pop.”
p̥	as in English <i>p</i> with the same popping sound described for ɕ.
q	represents a <i>k</i> -like consonant produced with the back of the tongue against the uvular region (farther back in the mouth than the <i>k</i>).
q̥	is like <i>k</i> ', except produced with the back of the tongue farther back in the mouth.
q ^w	is like <i>q</i> , produced with the lips rounded.
q̥ ^w	is like <i>k</i> ' ^w , except produced with the back of the tongue farther back in the mouth.
s	as in English “sop.”
ʃ	is like the <i>sh</i> sound in English “she.”
t	as in English “tot.”
t'	is like the <i>t</i> , with same the popping sound described for ɕ.
θ	is like the <i>th</i> sound in English “think.”
u	as in the <i>oo</i> in English “boot.”
w	as in English “wow.”
w̥	is like <i>w</i> , with a catch in it.
x	is like the sound of the <i>ch</i> in German “ich,” a prevelar, but not “ish” or “itch.”
x ^w	is like <i>x</i> , except produced with the lips rounded.
χ	is pronounced farther back in the mouth than <i>x</i> , like the <i>ch</i> in German Bach.
χ ^w	is like <i>χ</i> , except produced with the lips rounded.
ʕ	represents a voiced pharyngeal resonant, which shows varying de-

grees of friction or even trilling, across Interior Salish languages. One makes the sound by constricting or narrowing the pharynx and uttering an “a” sound (described above).

ʔ is like ʃ, by with a type of constriction or catch.

ʔ^w is like ʃ, with rounded lips. One makes this sound by constricting or narrowing the pharynx and uttering an “o” sound (described above).

ʔ^w is like ʃ^w, with a type of constriction or catch.

Notes

1. Some consonants combine more than one diacritical mark: k^ʔ, q^ʔ, x^ʔ, ʔ^w.
2. For the nonlinguist: Imagine that you have a watermelon seed between your lips. Imagine also that you are still six years old and can get away with this. Now, while holding the breath, spit the seed out by contracting the muscles of the throat. That is the glottalic airstream mechanism. Now, while holding your breath, from the *c* (the *ts* as in *bats*) and, still holding the breath, eject the *c* just like you did the melon seed. *Voilà!* You have just pronounced č.
3. The cluster *kl* is used here to describe this sound, because the cluster *tl* does not occur in English; *tl* would be more accurate phonetically.

bullet (•), “copying” all or part of a root (or other part of a word) and affixing it as a prefix, suffix, or infix. Transitive words may contain pretransitive suffixes (e.g., relational, ditransitive, noncontrol), with the obligatory transitive marking, followed by patient and agent marking (in that order). For example, Thompson /zoʔ^w-mí-x-cm-s “he took care of it for me” (underlying //zoʔ^w-mí-xi-t-sem-es// : /strong-RELATIONAL-INDIRECTIVE-TRANSITIVE-IS. PATIENT-3AGENT). In that word, *-t* and *-sem* coalesce and are reduced to a single “portmanteau” morpheme *-cm*.

A Salishan word also may contain one or more lexical suffixes, indicated by a preceding double hyphen (=). An example is Thompson ču•/čúm=ks-e-s “she is sucking on its paw” (underlying //ču•/čúm=ekst-n-t-ø-es// : AFFECTIVE•/suck=hand-DIRECT-TRANSITIVE-3PATIENT-3AGENT). Lexical suffixes are unique to the aboriginal Northwest (found only in the Salishan, Che-makuan, Wakashan families). They are suffixes that carry specific lexical meaning, usually with no directly apparent phonological relationship with their correlate independent word (e.g., Flathead /čélš “hand,” =ečst “hand”; /čw=éčst “he got his hand pricked”). A Salishan language may have more than a hundred lexical suffixes, covering a wide semantic range, such as body parts (e.g., head, foot, mouth), elements of nature (e.g., sky, fire, star, water), various artifacts (e.g., handle, rope, horse, weapon), and some concepts often by metaphorical extension of a lexical suffix’s more basic mean-

ing often with locative prefixes (e.g., Flathead =*épleʔ* “handle” extended to “permission,” or Flathead =*úlex^w* “ground” extended to “bread”).

Salishan languages also show a wide variety of infixes, affixes inserted within the body of an element to which it is added (e.g., Flathead /*k^wúp-i-s* “(s)he pushed it” versus /*k^wú[ʔ]p-i-s* “they pushed it” [or “(s)he pushed them”]; Thompson *s/xénx* “rock” versus *s/xé[•x]ñx* “small rock”). Infixes can impart notions of aspect (e.g., inchoative, repetitive, out-of-control), size (e.g., diminutive, proportional), or quantity and quality (e.g., distributive, augmentative, characteristic, affective).

Stress is distinctive in Salishan, except for Comox and Bella Coola. Interior Salishan languages generally show a complex system of stress assignment, involving strong and weak roots (i.e., stress-salient versus stress-averse), and strong, weak, and variable stress suffixes (lexical and grammatical). That hierarchy likely reflects the earlier pattern for the language family, which languages outside the Interior have not preserved as systematically. After assignment of stress to the word’s prominent vowel, according to that stress hierarchy, the other unstressed vowels usually are deleted (or reduced to schwa), consonants often are deleted or adjusted, and some resonants are vocalized (e.g., *y* to *i*, *w* to *u*, *ʔ* to *a*, *ʔ^w* to *ɔ*; and *n* to *ɛ* [Thompson], *n* and *m* to *ɛ* [Shuswap, eastern dialect], *n* and historically *m* to *i* [Flathead]). Compare two morphologically parallel forms from Flathead, one with a strong root and the other with a weak root: /*k^wú[ʔ]p-i-s* “they pushed it” // /*k^wú[ʔ]p-n-t-ø-es* // /push[PLURAL]-DIRECT-TRANSITIVE-3PATIENT-3AGENT; /*šl-n-t-é[ʔ]* *s*, “they chopped it” // /*šil-n-t-ø-é[ʔ]s* // /chop-DIRECT-TRANSITIVE-3PATIENT-3AGENT[PLURAL]. Those Flathead examples also show that placement of the plural infix [ʔ] is determined by stress: it is inserted directly after the word’s stressed vowel.

A Salishan full word, then, can incorporate numerous semantically discrete ideas; and elaborate, regularly conditioned sound (i.e., morphophonemic) changes often obscure the underlying shape of the word’s root and affixes, as exemplified above. The combination of those word elements (or morphemes) in a single word often is equivalent to a sentence in English.

Salishan grammar is likewise complex. Words are divided into two general types, full words that can appear as predicates, and particles that cannot. Particles supply aspectual, modal, temporal, and existential nuances and deictic and discourse orientation for full words (and their expanded clauses). Salishan languages have been characterized as lacking meaningful distinctions among nouns, verbs, and adjectives.⁴ The familiar, discrete opposi-

tion of those word-class types seems alien for Salishan, where they are, at most, only marginally developed. Clauses usually begin with a full word (or predicate) the only obligatory element in a Salishan sentence. That predicate can be expanded by optional lexical arguments, which elaborate references implicit in the predicate or provide additional information. Those lexical arguments themselves may be predicates, inflected and modified by particles as the main predicate. Expansion of the main predicate by more than one lexical argument per clause is uncommon.

The following are the first lines of a well-known Thompson River Salish legend, “N̓íik’smtm,” fully presented in English elsewhere in this volume. They fairly exemplify the orthographical look and grammatical structure of a Salishan language. The first line is in Thompson, unanalyzed. The second line is analyzed, using the following devices: Stems, the surface representation of roots, are preceded by a slash (/). Prefixes are followed by a hyphen (-), unless they precede a stem directly. A reduplicative prefix, however, is followed by a bullet (•). Two kinds of suffixes are distinguished: grammatical suffixes are preceded by a hyphen (-), or a bullet (•) for reduplicating suffixes, while lexical suffixes are preceded by a double hyphen (=). Infixes are enclosed in square brackets [...], and reduplicating infixes also have a bullet [•...] or [...•] connecting them with the portion of the stem that is copied. Pauses are indicated by the pound/numerical sign (#). The third line is a morpheme-by-morpheme translation,⁵ and the fourth line is a translation into English.

- 1 húm’et̚. x^wuy’ pték^w†etimn † snk’y’ép.
 húm’et̚ # x^wuy’ /pték^w † -e-t-im-n † s-n/k’y’ép #
 ALL.RIGHT FUT /legend-DRV-TR-2POBJ-ISSBJ EP NOM-LCL/Coyote
 All right. I’m going to tell you a legend about Coyote.

- 2 ʔe xeʔ † snk’y’ép tək spték^w†.
 /ʔe xeʔ † s-n/k’y’ép tək s/pték^w† #
 /INT NEARBY EP NOM-LCL/coyote DSCR NOM/legend
 This is the Coyote legend.

- 3 ʔe xeʔ † n̓íik’smtm tək spték^w†.
 /ʔe xeʔ † n̓íik’-s-m-t-m tək s/pték^w† #
 /INT NEARBY EP LCL/squint-CAU-RLT-TR-IDF DSCR NOM/legend
 This is the N̓íik’smtm legend.

- 4 ʔe . . . x ek^wu néʔ † snk'y'ép.
 /ʔe . . . x ek^wu néʔ † s-n/k'y'ép #
 /exist RPRT EST.CTX EP NOM-LCL/Coyote
Coyote was there.
- 5 ʔe sk^wózeʔs te sqây^w.
 /ʔe s/k^wózeʔ-s te s/qây^w #
 /INT NOM/child-3PSV OBL NOM/male
He had a male child.
- 6 ʔe swʔexs téʔ † sk^wóze . . . ʔs
 /ʔe s/wʔex-s téʔ † s/k^wóze . . . ʔ-s
 /INT NOM/exist-3PSV PART EP NOM/child-3PSV
His child was there
- 7 ʕuʔ qəʔmín,
 ʕuʔ /qəʔmín
 PER /old
until he was grown up,
- 8 ʕuʔ pút k ʔesmʔéms.
 ʕuʔ /pút k ʔes/mʔ-ém-s #
 PER /appropriate UNR ST/wife-MDL-3PSV
until he was ready for marriage.
- 9 ʔe ʔsmʔéms † twíw't † snk'y'ép.
 /ʔe ʔs/mʔ-ém-s † /twí[•w']t † s-n/k'y'ép #
 /INT ST/wife-MDL-3PSV EP /young.man[•DIM] EP NOM-LCL/
 coyote
Young Coyote got married.

Notes

1. For excellent descriptions of Salishan languages, see Thompson (1979) and Kinkade (1992b).
2. See Thompson et al. 1993:636.
3. Proto-Salish *k, *k' have become Flathead č, č', respectively; likewise Proto-Salish *x has become Flathead š. Most other Interior Salishan languages have retained these Proto-Salish sounds. Flathead k has been reintroduced in borrowings from French (*likók* “rooster”) or English (*kasalín* “gasoline”), and Flathead k k' have been retained exceptionally in certain onomatopoeic words. Flathead ʃ, ʃ' correspond with r, r' in Spokane, Columbian, Coeur d'Alene, and Okanagan-Colville.

4. See Kinkade 1983; Thompson 1979:669.

5. A number of abbreviations are used for grammatical labels: *AUX* auxiliary, *CAU* causative, *DIM* diminutive, *DRV* directive, *DSCR* descriptive, *EP* established in the past, *EST.CTX* established in context, *FUT* future, *IDF* indefinite subject, *INT* introductory predicate, *LCL* localizer, *MDL* (control) middle, *NEARBY* near speaker and hearer, *NOM* nominalizer, *OBJ* object, *OBL* oblique complement, *P* (used with 1, 2, 3) plural, *PART* particular, *PER* persistent, *PSV* possessive, *RLT* relational, *RPRT* reportive, *S* (used with 1, 2, 3) singular, *SBJ* subject, *ST* stative, *TR* (control) transitive, *UNR* unrealized (Thompson and Thompson 1992:xxii–xxvi).

