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What Does the Fox Say? A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Aesop and the Talking Animal Tradition

by

Esther Joy Ramer

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

Classics

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Indigenous Language Revitalization

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Leslie Kurke, Chair

Professor Mario Telò

Professor Mark Griffith

Professor Beth Piatote

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What Does the Fox Say? A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Aesop and the Talking Animal Tradition  
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## Abstract

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by

Esther Joy Ramer

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

Designated Emphasis in Indigenous Language Revitalization

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Leslie Kurke, Chair

Aesop's fables are sometimes dismissed as stories for children, and not worthy of serious study. This dissertation argues that fables are an important part of understanding cultural world views of animals, and that the relationships between humans and animals depicted in Aesop's fables are question the binary division between humans and animals. Talking animals are not just laughable tales for children, but they provide a method for exploring human identity as one species among many, interacting with other beings in a way that depends upon relationship rather than possession of human speech. I use theoretical approaches from Indigenous Studies and Human-Animal studies, and I use Indigenous animal stories, in particular, those collected by William Jones in the earlier twentieth century and published in his two-volume *Ojibwa Texts*. The Ojibwe stories demonstrate alternative methods of understanding anthropomorphism and the relationship between humans and animals.

In chapter 1, I first look at an Aesopic fable that may have been translated into Ojibwe as a case study for my methods. Next, I look at several famous fables quoted by other Greek authors, and I demonstrate that the talking animals in these accounts can be read as destabilizing the idea of human exceptionalism and human exclusivity in the realm of justice. In chapter 2, I explore human relationships with other animals, specifically with canine species. I focus on Aesopic fables about wolves and the Ojibwe story "Nenabozho and the Wolves" for this investigation. In chapter 3, I look at trickster figures: the fox in Aesop's fables, and Nenabozho and other animals in Ojibwe stories.

This project makes two important contributions to the field. First, it looks at fables for their own sake, arguing that they are more than just allegories of human experience, but that they demonstrate cultural attitudes toward animals and allow human beings to better understand their relationship with other species. Second, this dissertation relies upon Indigenous stories and Indigenous scholars to provide interpretive methods for better understanding of Aesop's fables. This is in contrast to previous scholarship which used Classical mythology to explain Indigenous stories.

I have chosen this interpretive method because I believe that Indigenous stories and methods afford valuable perspectives that are often ignored or forced to fit into Western paradigms. By adopting this cross-cultural methodology, I hope to both open a new method of interpretation and also recognize the value of Indigenous stories and language within the humanities in general.

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# Introduction

Animal fables in the ancient world frequently employ talking animals, in a fictitious representation that is often thought to be more interested in exemplifying human interactions than it is about actual animals.<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I will question whether fable's ubiquitous anthropomorphism is simply an obvious case of Claude Lévi-Strauss's famous formulation, that animals are "good to think (with),"<sup>2</sup> or whether we can learn something about human attitudes toward, and interactions with, animals in the ancient world. I will argue that the anthropomorphism of fables, populated with animals who talk and display human vices, questions the boundaries between human and animal. I will investigate whether this blurring of boundaries allows for the possibility of reimagining who can be a subject, and whether the possession of language is a valid basis for imagining our difference from other species.

The largest corpus of texts ascribed to Aesop is found in the prose Augustana Collection (second or third century CE).<sup>3</sup> Other surviving collections of fables are in verse: the collection of Babrius in Greek (second century CE) and Phaedrus in Latin (first century CE), and the later Latin collection of Avianus (fourth or fifth century CE).<sup>4</sup> In order to limit the scope of this work, I will focus mostly on the Augustana Collection and occasionally refer to fables in verse as comparisons.<sup>5</sup> I will include fables cited in other Greek authors, such as Hesiod, Archilochus, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as in the anonymous *Life of Aesop*. I will look at animal fables specifically rather than the entire collection of fables on other topics—this will limit my scope but still include the majority of fables, as animal fables make up 75% of the Augustana Collection.<sup>6</sup>

Classical scholarship on fables in the early and mid-twentieth century studied the formal features of fables, their folkloric origins, and "source criticism," or *Quellenforschung*.<sup>7</sup> Later twentieth century scholarship focused on cultural studies, multiculturalism, and popular culture, but, as Leslie Kurke states, "this newer surge of interest in the noncanonical and the marginal was often paradoxically shackled to traditional disciplinary subdivisions or as yet unexamined nineteenth-century methodologies and reading strategies."<sup>8</sup> More recent extensive overviews of fables were written by van Djik (1997) and Adrados (1999). Other recent treatments of ancient fable include Zafiropoulos (2001), which looks at the ethical themes of fables, and Holzberg (2002), which deals with the textual tradition and authorship of both the Aesopic fables and the *Life of Aesop*. Kurke (2011) provides the only comprehensive treatment of fables and especially the *Life of Aesop* in relation to other Greek literature. Other treatments of Aesop's fables in Classical scholarship include Papademetriou (1997), Hansen (1998), Dillery (1999), and duBois (2003). While many of these studies look at historicizing questions such as the evolution of the

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<sup>1</sup> Lefkowitz 2014, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Lévi-Strauss 1964, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Perry 1962, 228 n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Kurke 2011, 44; Perry 1965, xlvii-xlviii, lxxx.

<sup>5</sup> Perry 1952, Perry 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Lefkowitz 2014, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Kurke 2011, 26-27; Lefkowitz 2014, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Kurke 2011, 26.

tradition of Aesop as a folk hero, and the political and social implications of the connection between the slave Aesop and this form of popular literature, very little work has been done on the fables as a genre interested in animals for their own sake.<sup>9</sup>

Since the focus of my inquiry will be on the content of the fables themselves, and the tradition is notoriously difficult to date due to its amorphous and anonymous nature, I will not make a historical argument. Instead, I will use comparative methods of literary analysis to investigate the attitudes toward animals represented in the fables, regardless of whether those can be linked to specific historical periods when the tradition may have arisen. I am interested in how Greek philosophy influenced later “Western” traditions of theorizing the human-animal relationship, and I will explore whether animal fables represent a parallel or opposing tradition of knowledge to that philosophical approach.<sup>10</sup> Analogously, Leslie Kurke has convincingly argued that the *Life of Aesop* presents a tradition of popular wisdom in opposition to the elite tradition of philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

In this dissertation, I will look at the specific references to animals in Aesop’s fables and investigate whether these animal stories, which remained popular throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance Europe, show an underlying current of popular knowledge based on interactions with actual animals, which may have contributed to fable’s enduring popularity as a literary form. Since it has already been argued that fables were used in various eras to voice popular resistance to elite aristocratic interests,<sup>12</sup> I hope to expand this idea of an alternative, even subversive, literary tradition, arguing that the relationships depicted in fables represent an alternative perspective on human-animal relationships as well.

I will adopt a methodology for reading Greek animal fables as texts that share many features with animal tales from other cultures and whose interpretation can be enhanced by cross-cultural comparison. The particular culture and language that I have chosen for this comparison is Ojibwe, an Indigenous language from the Great Lakes region of North America. Before I begin this comparison, it is important to acknowledge that these are not completely unrelated fields of inquiry, and that the recording and translation of Indigenous oral stories in the early 20th century and beyond was deeply embedded in an academic tradition influenced by the philological paradigm of Classics. The importance of the field of Classics as an ideological model for the construction of anthropological research methods cannot be overlooked. Since Anthropology as an academic discipline was modeled on Classical Philology, this imitation resulted in an investigation of language and literature that aimed to create a rigorously-defined corpus, a “canon” of texts.<sup>13</sup> In creating this corpus, certain types of knowledge were privileged over others, and viewed as more authentic. In my dissertation, I intend to demonstrate that the categories used to define what counts as knowledge are dependent on arbitrary assumptions that tend to be anthropocentric.

The aim of defining a corpus of texts is found especially in the work of Franz Boas and his students, who attempted to categorize the material they collected in accordance with a set of

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<sup>9</sup> Lefkowitz 2014 is the only exception I have found.

<sup>10</sup> Sahllins 2017 argues for the role of fables in opposition to the dualist philosophy of Descartes during the 17th century in France.

<sup>11</sup> Kurke 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Patterson 1991, Kurke 2011, Crane 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Briggs and Bauman 1999, 499.

preconceived distinctions, while at the same time limiting the discursive authority of the storytellers.<sup>14</sup> By looking to Classics as a model of constructing an authoritative discourse, “Boas fashioned these texts as authoritative remnants of a distanced, bounded, and disappearing world of tradition.”<sup>15</sup> The influence of early modernity and the construction of the modern subject necessitated the identification of a clearly-defined, static “other” on which to conduct research. Linda Tuhawai Smith has written about the influence of Western systems of knowledge (derived from the Classical tradition) on defining the Other as primitive, in contrast with the civilized.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Boas believed that “anthropology was centrally concerned with the collection of texts that documented the languages and traditions of Others and with their systematic comparison, including their comparison to the discursive and cultural forms associated with ‘civilized man.’”<sup>17</sup> In my dissertation I will work to decenter the importance of not only “civilized man,” but more foundationally, discursive subjectivity and the construction of the Other, human exceptionalism, and the concept of Western civilization. I aim to accomplish this by focusing on fables, non-elite texts in Greek literature that were considered a low literary form, distinct from elite genres of poetry and prose, and which provide examples of subversive ideology in popular form, as Leslie Kurke has shown.<sup>18</sup> A comparison with Ojibwe animal stories, which contain many of the same features, will provide new interpretive tools and allow us to disentangle some of what is culturally-specific and at the same time consider the legacy of Classics in informing methods of study in the humanities. I focus on animal stories as a locus of imagining the human condition and human place in the world, and I argue that these texts portray that experience in terms of complex relationships rather than of a binary opposition between human and animal.

One of Franz Boas’ students was the Meskwaki anthropologist William Jones, who received a PhD in Linguistic Anthropology from Columbia University in 1904. As a product of the American educational system, Jones often struggled with reconciling the differing aspects of his identity.<sup>19</sup> Jones’ academic career gave us a body of excellent work, yet he was unable to get an academic position, and instead of being hired for a stable job, he was essentially forced by his superiors to go on a field expedition where he was killed, according to Kiara Vigil, who wrote about the complex implications of his work as an Indigenous anthropologist.<sup>20</sup> Jones is best known for transcribing and translating a series of Ojibwe stories, which were edited and published posthumously in 1917 and 1919 as part of the *Publications of the American Ethnological Society*. His description of the stories he was collecting is given with something less than admiration, yet it is clear that he found much of value for his mentor Boas.<sup>21</sup> Jones’ *Ojibwa Texts* are some of the earliest recorded Ojibwe stories, and thus demonstrate the first

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 511.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 512.

<sup>16</sup> Smith 2012, 68-71.

<sup>17</sup> Briggs and Bauman 1999, 483.

<sup>18</sup> Kurke 2011, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> On Jones as a conflicted agent of American imperialism, see Vigil 2018. According to Rideout, Jones helped to finance his own education by tutoring in Latin and Greek (1912, 30).

<sup>20</sup> Jones wrote while finishing transcribing the *Ojibwa Texts*, “If what I know and what I can do is of any value, I ought by spring to get some sort of position.” This did not happen, and instead, his superiors pressured him into the Philippines expedition (Rideout 1912, 125-26).

<sup>21</sup> He wrote about the *Ojibwa Texts*: “Of course you know this is rather for science than for popular reading, and it is better so; for much of it is naïve and unrestrained, and it wades with childish simplicity through what so-called civilized people term indelicacy” (Rideout 1912, 128).

transcription of the Ojibwe oral storytelling tradition that continues to this day. In a similar way, the Aesopic fables represent the recording of an oral tradition that precedes the written version and even the figure of Aesop himself.<sup>22</sup>

Both Jones' *Ojibwa Texts* and Aesop's fables contain a variety of types of stories, but one of the most common is the type in which animals speak to each other using human language. Since talking animals will be the primary focus of my dissertation, these stories are ideal sources to investigate the questions of subjectivity and displacement of hierarchies and oppositions. By comparing the Ojibwe stories to the Greek ones, I hope to enrich our understanding of animal fables, and in so doing, to also change the relationship between Classics and Indigenous Studies. As Margaret Kovach points out, one of the key ways to include Indigenous knowledge within the academy is to move beyond the "Indigenous exotic," which can be done by "reconceptualizing the relationship with Indigenous communities from that of a studied, exotic 'other' to that of a partnering relationship."<sup>23</sup> By looking at the work of Indigenous scholars and validating Indigenous knowledge, rather than exoticizing it, I hope that this comparison will help to encourage and strengthen interdisciplinary perspectives.

For this comparative literary study, I will follow Chadwick Allen's method of "reading *across*," in which he suggests that global Indigenous literary studies should aim at readings that show togetherness and distinctiveness in Indigenous literatures.<sup>24</sup> In his book, he juxtaposes various Indigenous literary and non-literary works of art, producing expansive rather than limited readings.<sup>25</sup> He interprets Indigenous-language works alongside English-language works, inspired by Carter Revard's essay "Herbs of Healing," an examination of cross-cultural poetic exchanges of contemporary American Indian poems and "classic" English literature, both modern and Old English.<sup>26</sup> In both Allen's and Revard's work, cross-cultural comparison produces an expanded and effective reading.

My cross-cultural comparison will demonstrate both the ways in which these two traditions share features and the ways in which they diverge. I will show how the Ojibwe tradition involves ways of approaching animal speech that result in a less logocentric perspective, and I will also demonstrate how the Greek text, despite its emphasis on speech and reason, nevertheless allows us to read against the grain and look for the blurring of boundaries within this tradition. In other words, I will show how the Ojibwe text is more amenable to a questioning of the human-animal binary, but that the Greek text can also be deconstructed to arrive at a similar reading. The Ojibwe texts provide ample indications of the importance of questioning this species-based boundary, and they provide us with a window into the power of imagined human-animal interaction to demonstrate the embodiedness and vulnerability that we share with other animals.

The work of Ojibwe scholar Gerald Vizenor is crucial to my understanding of both Ojibwe and Greek animal stories. Vizenor critiques structuralist anthropological approaches to Indigenous literature, and suggests that postmodern approaches are better suited to understanding

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<sup>22</sup> Kurke 2011, 14.

<sup>23</sup> Kovach 2009, 170.

<sup>24</sup> Allen 2012.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* xix.

<sup>26</sup> Revard 1998, 161-183.

this form of creative literature.<sup>27</sup> He argues that the common figure of the trickster is not a real person, or a tragic hero, but rather, a semiotic sign in a comic language game.<sup>28</sup> He also argues that anthropomorphic representations of animals are not a misunderstanding of animal consciousness, but that they are essential to creating presence within these imagined worlds.<sup>29</sup> Vizenor's theories will be important to my exploration of talking animals and especially the trickster figure within fables and Ojibwe literature.

Gerald Vizenor provides a methodology for reading Indigenous animal stories as a way of understanding kinship and actual relationships between human beings and animals. By applying his methods, I intend to show that the Greek fables also can be read as an imagining of human relationships with other creatures, and that they show not simply that animals are "good to think with," but that by observing and learning from other species, human interactions and relationships with other species can be reimagined, questioning the validity of the human-animal divide. As the basis of a popular literary tradition, animal fables may show an understanding of embodiedness and shared vulnerability that reaches across species and opposes human exceptionalism.

In addition to these methods from Indigenous Studies, this dissertation will be informed by perspectives from the field of Animal Studies. Alison Suen (2015) calls for reinterpreting the human-animal linguistic divide, using an account of language that stems from our relational capacity, and centers kinship and imagination rather than reason. Cary Wolfe (2009) argues for displacing the human subject rather than attempting to grant subjectivity to animals. The role of language as an "ahuman technicity" that preexists us and constitutes our subjectivity is essential to his argument, and it is the human subjection to language that, he argues, allows us to reimagine the schema of subjectivity that is forced upon us. He calls for fundamentally rethinking knowledge and the knowing subject, and I think that fable may be a good place to attempt this rethinking and to start reframing the place of literature in a "larger universe of communication, response, and exchange" between species.<sup>30</sup> Throughout this study, I identify many instances of this interspecies exchange, and the ways in which it is informed by human inability, in relation to other animals. Rather than viewing other species as lacking language, by inverting the perspective and recognizing the nature of language as a tool, we can see our human use of language as comparable to our use of other tools and prosthetics to make up for our deficiencies in physical abilities. This perspective will be especially important in chapter 2, where I look at the human relationship with canine species in particular.

In Chapter 1, I begin with a case study of the fable of the fox and the crow, a story which appears in both Aesop's fables and Jones's *Ojibwa Texts*. I compare the two versions of this fable and notice the differences in how animal speech is presented. I then look at two fables quoted in other Greek authors: the fable of the hawk and the nightingale, found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and the fable of the eagle and fox, found in the fragments of Archilochus. I show how these fables highlight the ambiguous nature of speech, which Hesiod presents as a characteristic used to divide humans from other animals, but which is implicated in the support of predatory behavior among animals in the fables. The use of speech by the animals in these

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<sup>27</sup> Vizenor 1999, 75.

<sup>28</sup> Vizenor 1990; Vizenor 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Vizenor 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Wolfe 2009, 571.

fables allows us to identify with their perspective and to question the hierarchy of species based on the possession of speech.

In chapter 2, I compare Aesopic fables about wolves with an Ojibwe story about wolves, exploring the role of language in representing interspecies relationships. The Aesopic fables present wolves as inhabiting the margins of human society, unable to engage in meaningful relationships with human beings. In contrast, in the Ojibwe story, the human-like character Nenabozho enters into a relationship in which his inadequacies are highlighted by his interactions with the wolves. I argue that, by listening to the voices of other animals, as Nenabozho does in the Ojibwe story, we can define our relationship to other species in positive ways that acknowledge our own indebtedness and lack, rather than creating a speech-based hierarchy which relegates other species to the lower levels because of their inability to speak human languages.

In chapter 3, I look at the role of the trickster within Aesop's fables and within the Ojibwe tradition. First, I examine Aesopic fables about foxes, where this trickster behavior is most prominent, using those fables to identify many of the defining characteristics of tricksters. Then I briefly look at the history of scholarship on the Ojibwe/Anishinaabe trickster and use Gerald Vizenor's model to read the Ojibwe stories about Nenabozho. Finally, I return to the fox in both Ojibwe and Greek, looking at the conjunction of human speech and the bodily. In each of these stories, I show how the trickster embodies the instability of language and species boundaries.

When quoting Jones' *Ojibwa Texts* directly, I reproduce the outdated English language translation, despite its archaic flavor, and the unique orthography Jones used to transcribe the Ojibwe stories. In some places, I have found that Jones spelled words inconsistently even in stories told by a single narrator, but I have reproduced his text as it appears in the volumes. In my discussion, I use the modern double vowel orthography to transliterate Ojibwe words recorded by Jones; in practice, this means that I have chosen to spell the main character's name as Nenabozho in my discussion (a transliteration into double vowel of Jones' Nānabushu), but many variations exist based on dialect and spelling conventions.<sup>31</sup> In addition, although Jones uses the spelling "Ojibwa" in his title, I use the modern spelling Ojibwe, and I sometimes use the interchangeable name Anishinaabe. When I refer to an Ojibwe word in my discussion, I transliterate it into double vowel orthography following Nichols and Nyholm's *A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> E.g., Nanabozho, Nanabush, Wenabozho, Nanaboozhoo, and many others.

<sup>32</sup> Nichols and Nyholm 1995.

# 1. The Talking Animal

The use of fable as a tool for arguing against powerful oppressors by the oppressed, as exemplified by stories within the *Life of Aesop*, suggests that a fictitious eroding of the border between human and animal can be used as a strategy of opposition to elite institutions and power structures.<sup>1</sup> Due to the explicit fictional character of the genre of fable, does this displacement of the human-animal boundary reinforce logocentrism or question it on a deeper level? If, on the one hand, the fiction of fables may function to reinscribe the power of speech through its dependence on narrative and moral pronouncements, on the other hand, it does so within an imagined world of hierarchies that are very different from those of human society. In this chapter, I will argue that we might conceive of fables as questioning the binary opposition between human and animal and even the concept of hierarchy itself by reenacting and parodying human speech and activities as an interaction among multiple species.

I will look at fables about animal interactions in which narrative power parodies political power, and where the devouring mouth symbolizes the discursive mouth, following the work of Louis Marin.<sup>2</sup> Before diving into the theoretical implications, I will look at the fable of the fox and the crow (Perry 124), the only story very similar to a Greek fable which appears in the Ojibwe stories collected by William Jones, as a case study.<sup>3</sup> The apparent borrowing of this fable allows for a targeted cross-cultural analysis of form, while the content of the fable, where speech and intelligence are central to the narrative, provides an example of the central problem of the talking animal as subject, and the connection between discourse and devouring. This connection is found in other fables, including Hesiod's fable of the hawk and the nightingale, which delineates the realm of justice and excludes those who do not possess speech, but at the same time, contains ruptures where this logocentrism is called into question. After looking at Hesiod's use of the fable to define justice in the human realm, as well as the ambiguities within the fable and its context that destabilize this reading, I will compare two additional versions of the fable and look for the ways in which they support a similar reading and allow us to question the identification of speech as a definitive quality of human beings. I will argue that these two stories, in their own ways, break down the arbitrary divide between creatures who possess speech and those who do not.

## The Fox and the Crow: Who Has a Voice?

I will use the fable of the Fox and the Crow (Perry 124) as a case study. I have selected this story because there appears to be a retelling of this fable in Ojibwe—whether this is the case,

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<sup>1</sup> Kurke 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Marin 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Whether the story arose independently or is an adaptation is not clear, but the two stories are highly resonant and worth comparing in either case.

as Jones' editor, Truman Michelson, thought,<sup>4</sup> or whether the tradition arose independently, a comparison will serve to highlight key differences in the methods of telling animal stories. The Greek version recorded in the *Aesopica* is short.

κόραξ κρέας ἀρπάσας ἐπί τινος δένδρου ἐκάθισεν. ἀλώπηξ δὲ τοῦτον θεασαμένη αὐτὸν καὶ βουλομένη τοῦ κρέως περιγενέσθαι στᾶσα ἐπήνει αὐτὸν ὡς εὐμεγέθη τε καὶ καλόν, λέγουσα καὶ ὡς πρέπει αὐτῷ μάλιστα τῶν ὀρνέων βασιλεύειν, καὶ τοῦτο πάντως ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ φωνὴν εἶχεν. ὁ δὲ παραστήσας αὐτῇ θέλων ὅτι καὶ φωνὴν ἔχει, βαλὼν τὸ κρέας μεγάλη ἐκεκράγει. ἐκείνη δὲ προσδραμοῦσα καὶ τὸ κρέας ἀρπάσασα ἔφη “ὦ κόραξ, καὶ φρένας εἰ εἶχες, οὐδὲν ἂν ἐδέησεν εἰς τὸ πάντων βασιλεύειν.”

πρὸς ἄνδρα ἀνόητον ὁ λόγος εὐκαιρος.

A crow seized some meat and sat down in a tree. A fox observed him and was wishing to have the meat, so she stood nearby and began to praise him, saying that he was very great and beautiful, and that it was fitting for him most of all to be king over the birds, and that this would most certainly happen, if he had a voice. And the crow, because he was wishing to convince her that he in fact had a voice, dropped the meat and croaked loudly. And she ran up, snatched the meat, and said: “O crow, if you also had brains, nothing would stop you from being king over all.”

This story is appropriate for a foolish man.<sup>5</sup>

The Ojibwe story was told to William Jones by John Pinesi in Fort William, Ontario, and is strikingly similar.

Ninguding wâgus paḃāmiba‘tōd ugīnisān wâbōzōn. Mīḃac kī·a·mwād ābi‘ta, ugīnaḃanān ābi‘ta. Minawā kīḃaḃāmiba‘tō, kāwīn mīnawā ugīnisāsīn wâbōzōn. Mī·i·ḃac mi‘kwāḃḃanḃ udāḃḃḃanḃ wâbōzōn ābi‘ta kī·a·sā‘pan.

Ninguding kayā wīn āndēg paḃāmisāt owāḃamān wâbōzōn ḃbinit. Kistciminwāḃḃam tciwīsinit. Cayīgwaḃḃac wāmāḃḃanḃḃigāt owāḃamān wāgucan pīḃciba‘tōnit. Mēḃac ānwāt: “Ha‘wi, ha‘wi, ha‘wi!” Mīḃac kī·u·dā‘pināt kīmāḃcīnāt, mi‘tigunk kīpūni; ā‘pidci pa‘kadāḃan ‘a‘a‘u āndēg.

Wāgucīḃac ugīwāḃamān kī‘pūnīnit āndēgwaḃ. Kī·i·jā imā<sup>n</sup> tīḃickō aḃōzīnit, mēḃac ānāt: “Āndēk, kāḃgā‘t unicicinōn pāzi‘kimān. Ā‘pidci kimino‘kwaḃayā.”

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<sup>4</sup> Michelson's footnote says: “It is plain where this tale comes from, but it is simpler (more naïve) than the usual European versions; in fact, if the narrator had in mind any of the morals usually attached to the European versions, he concealed them absolutely” (Jones 1919, 336-337). Even in the Classical tradition, the moral or epimythion is often considered a later addition to the fable (Perry 1940); if this is correct, then the Ojibwe version is in a sense returning to the original form.

<sup>5</sup> Greek text from Perry 1952, 369. Translation is my own.



Mīḍaḥ mīnawā pā'pit; “‘Ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>!” uzāmidāḥ ki'tāwāni pā'pit; mī·i·'u  
kā·i·jipicigunāt wābōzōn kīḥāngicinūn mi'tc'kamig.  
Wāgucidāḥ ugīnawādinān uwābōzumān; ugīpā'pi·ān āndēgwaḥ, “Hwa<sup>u</sup>, hwa<sup>u</sup>, hwa<sup>u</sup>,  
hwa<sup>u</sup>!” Mīḍaḥ kī·ā·mwāt. Āndēgidāḥ kīnickādizi, ānawi pā'kic pā'pi, “‘Ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>!”  
Mī·i·ḍaḥ nindawa kī·ā·nīḥāsigw·u·t.

Mīsai ä'kōzit.

Once upon a time, while a Fox was running about over the country, he killed a hare. Accordingly, when he had eaten one half of it, he left behind the other half. Again he went running hither and thither, but he did not kill another hare. Whereupon he remembered his cache where he had placed one-half of a hare.

Once when a Crow was also flying about, he saw where there was a hare. Greatly pleased was he, now that he was going to have some food to eat. And just as he was about to eat, he saw a Fox coming along on a run. Whereupon he exclaimed: “Háwi, háwi, háwi, háwi!” And so, taking up the meat, he carried it away; upon a tree he alighted; very hungry at that time was the Crow.

Now, the Fox saw the Crow alight. He went over to the place underneath where the Crow was perched, and he said to him: “Crow, truly beautiful is the garment you have on. Very handsomely are you clad.”

And so when the Crow laughed, “‘Ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>!” too wide did he open his mouth as he laughed; whereupon, when he dropped the hare, it fell to the ground.

So the Fox seized his hare; he laughed at the Crow, “Hwa<sup>u</sup>, hwa<sup>u</sup>, hwa<sup>u</sup>, hwa<sup>u</sup>!” Whereupon he ate the hare. Now, the Crow was angry, even though at the same time he laughed, “‘Ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>, ‘ā<sup>a</sup>!” And so with that he rose and flew away.

That is as far as the story goes.<sup>6</sup>

The modern version of the Greek fable found in La Fontaine's French collection and other contemporary sources varies slightly in describing the crow as holding a piece of cheese, and this can be traced to the verse versions of the fable ascribed to Babrius and Phaedrus in the first century CE.<sup>7</sup> If indeed the Ojibwe version is retelling the Aesopic fable, it is reasonable to expect that it came through the popular French version recorded by La Fontaine,<sup>8</sup> and yet the cheese is nowhere to be seen in the Ojibwe version. Instead, like the Aesopic version, the prized possession is a piece of meat.

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<sup>6</sup> English translation adapted from Jones 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Perry 1965, 96-97 and 206-209.

<sup>8</sup> Jones writes in a letter that the narrator, John Pinesi, was half French (Rideout 1912, 98). For a description of the social context in which stories of different cultures were shared in the Great Lakes region, see Noodin 2018, 278.

Although the basic story is similar, the differences are striking, especially the key difference involving the crow's voice, or lack thereof. The Greek version focuses on the crow's lack of a voice, highlighting the fox's first taunt as ending with the punchline "if you had a voice" (εἰ φωνὴν εἶχεν). In the metrical version written by Babrius, the fox says almost the same thing: "So great a bird you are, yet you are mute and you don't even caw (κρώζεις)." The onomatopoeic word κρώζεις imitates the croaking noise a crow makes, while the fox uses it to deceive, cleverly pretending to deny that the crow can make even this rudimentary noise, in order to trick the crow into opening his mouth to prove that he can indeed caw. In both Greek versions, the verb used for the crow's eventual utterance is κράζω, another onomatopoeic word, but one that can refer to human voices as well as croaking animal sounds.<sup>9</sup> Despite the use of these verbs that evoke the sound a crow makes, the crow's actual utterance is not explicitly recorded, and thus the crow remains without a direct voice.

In the Ojibwe story, in contrast, the sound of the crow's utterance is highlighted. The crow is the first one to speak, exclaiming "Ha'wi, ha'wi, ha'wi!" upon seeing the fox approaching. As in the Greek story, the fox speaks in full sentences, flattering the crow's appearance. After this flattery, the crow laughs, and this sound is represented directly as "'Ā<sup>a</sup>, 'ā<sup>a</sup>, 'ā<sup>a</sup>!" Although the crow does not speak in full sentences, it seems that it shares almost equally in utterances with the fox, as they alternate in speaking or producing sound: first the crow exclaims, then the fox flatters, then the crow laughs, then the fox laughs, and then the crow laughs again.

Although in both stories the fox is the one who speaks cleverly and carries out deception, and the crow responds minimally with crow noises, the difference in the level of agency granted to the crow is striking. The Ojibwe story begins from the perspective of the fox: "*Ningoding waagosh babaamibatood* (Once upon a time a fox was running around)," and then switches to the crow's perspective: "*Ningoding gaye wiin aandeg babaamised* (Once upon a time a crow was also flying around)."<sup>10</sup> The story switches perspective back and forth throughout, giving each character three turns to be in focus. The shifting perspective is highlighted by the linguistic feature of obviation in the Ojibwe language, where the character who is not in focus is placed in a grammatically subordinate case.<sup>11</sup> In each section of the story, the perspective and dialogue originate with either the fox or the crow, in equal divisions.<sup>12</sup> Their feelings, thoughts, and utterances are interlaced as they dialogue back and forth.

In the Greek version, the narrative gives two short sentences from the perspective of the crow, surrounded by the fox's perspective and taunts. There is no shared dialogue, no shared laughter. Instead, the fox denies the crow's ability to speak in order to achieve her desire. The content of the fox's speech is markedly more sinister: you're beautiful, crow, beautiful enough to be a king, but you aren't, because you don't have a voice. At the end of the fable, the fox continues the insult: of course you have a voice, but you don't have a brain. It is clear that the perceived deficiency exploited by the fox is the crow's lack of intelligence, not a lack of voice.

The hierarchy among beings based on reason and speech, so common in Greek literature, is evident here in the fox's statements. Although Aristotle acknowledges that animals have

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<sup>9</sup> LSJ s.v. κράζω.

<sup>10</sup> Transliterated from Jones' orthography into the double vowel orthography.

<sup>11</sup> Valentine 2001, 183.

<sup>12</sup> In the Ojibwe text in Jones' recording, each character receives 9 of the 18 story lines.

φωνή, or voice, (also the word used by the fox in the fable), he denies them λόγος, that is, reason and human speech.<sup>13</sup> In this fable, the fox is ostensibly denying that the crow has φωνή (a voice) in order to demonstrate that, in fact, what he actually lacks is λόγος (reason).<sup>14</sup> This clever word play is all in the interest of gaining food, satisfaction for the appetite, which, according to Plato's tripartite theory of the soul, is the lowest of the three parts of the soul and the furthest away from λόγος.<sup>15</sup> The Greek word used by the fox, φρήν, has a variety of meanings including "the mind, as seat of the mental faculties," but it is clear that the fox is exploiting the crow's lack of reason, or λόγος. Thus the clever fox, the representative of human λόγος in this story, only uses that mental ability in the interest of her bodily appetites.<sup>16</sup> The fox's ambiguous status in this fable suggests that this hierarchy of knowledge is created and maintained in the service of greed, rather than that greed is controlled by the mind. Despite this ambivalence in the fox's use of language, the crow is given no real opportunity for resistance in this story, unlike the crow in the story recorded by Jones.

The Ojibwe story, in contrast, gives the crow the last laugh. Instead of a pompous declaration of superior intelligence on the part of the fox, it simply laughs, and the crow, though angry, responds with laughter. What could be an occasion for deep-seated enmity and insults ends up being laughed off. Without giving an explicit moral, as the Greek fable does, this story provides a model for laughing at one's mistakes and not taking things too seriously. The interaction between the crow and the fox suggests, through comic action, that what is at stake is not a hierarchy of speech and knowledge, but the (laughable) consequences of flattery and egotism.

The mimetic representation of the crow's voice in the Ojibwe story deserves further consideration. Both the exclamation "Ha'wi, ha'wi, ha'wi!" and the repeated laugh "'Ā<sup>a</sup>, 'ā<sup>a</sup>, 'ā<sup>a</sup>, 'ā<sup>a</sup>!" sound like crow calls, yet their sound is different, and they are meant to signify different things. The imitation of animal voices is common in the stories collected by Jones, and I believe it is a significant feature both in terms of mimesis, as humans imitate animal sounds, and in terms of signification, since utterances, even animal sounds, refer to an underlying meaning. The crow's first utterance, "Háwi," suggests being startled or afraid. The second one, "'Ā<sup>a</sup>," we are

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<sup>13</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 1.2.1253a7–18 (translation from Rackham 1932): "For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech (λόγος). The mere voice (φωνή), it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is painful and pleasant and to indicate those sensations to one another), but speech (λόγος) is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city." In other texts, Aristotle does allow animals and especially birds the use of language and the power to signify. For a fuller discussion of Aristotle's position, see Sorabji 1993, 12-16.

<sup>14</sup> The Greek word used by the fox, φρήν, has a variety of meanings including "the mind, as seat of the mental faculties," according to the Liddell-Scott-Jones (LSJ) lexicon. A common verb for "thinking, having sense" is φρονέω, and the related noun, φρόνησις, are derived from φρήν. In the version told by Babrius, the Greek word is νοῦς, a common word for "mind" favored by Aristotle and other Greek philosophers discussing human mental capacity.

<sup>15</sup> On the categories of Greek philosophy and the subsequent Western tradition, and its influence on colonization of Indigenous people, see Smith 2012, 49-52.

<sup>16</sup> The obvious gendering of the Greek fox suggests common beliefs in ancient Greece about the female connection with corporal appetites and other undesirable canine traits (Franco 2014).

told is a laugh. When the fox makes a similar noise, “Hwa,” it is also described as a laugh, as the fox mocks the crow. The Ojibwe story thus portrays animal sounds with a vitality and presence that is not found in the Greek version. By imitating the animal sound, the storyteller creates an imagined world with vivid representation. The sounds of the fox and crow, rendered on Jones’ transcribed page with phonetic symbols, existed during the telling as actual sounds which no doubt recalled to the listener the animal calls which are often heard in rural areas. The crow’s exclamation and the laughs of both crow and fox come to life here, enhancing the story and giving vitality to the imagined world. Crucially, both the crow and the fox are given a voice through the narrator.

While the suggestion that the crow and fox are laughing, and that their utterances refer to an underlying meaning, leaves the door open for accusations of anthropomorphism, this does not mean a naive misunderstanding of animal as human. As Susan Crane points out when discussing fables in Medieval England, “These constructions are sometimes anthropomorphic in that they ignore animal difference, but more often they are anthropomorphic in an exploratory mode that takes man and other beasts to be unsettled categories coming into definition through relationship.”<sup>17</sup> To understand animal species and even human beings in this way, as unsettled categories in the process of being defined, requires a particular type of relationship dependent on being willing to learn from others. Most importantly, it imagines the human as animal, rather than the other way around. By ascribing human emotions to an animal figure, it suggests that perhaps we are not that different from other species after all.

Ojibwe scholar Gerald Vizenor describes the difference between tribal imagination and anthropological invention in this way: “To imagine the world is to be in the world; to invent the world with academic predicaments is to separate human experience from the world.”<sup>18</sup> I am suggesting that the relationships imagined with and among various animal species in Jones’ *Ojibwa Texts* represent a way of being in the world that is not based on dividing up the world into structural oppositions and reconciliations—instead, it depends on determining one’s place in the world through imagination. Like the crow of the Ojibwe story, understanding of one’s own limitations does not necessarily need to be painful. It can be instructive and funny at the same time.

These animal stories demonstrate that imagining our place in the world is a necessary and productive activity, but this cognitive exercise is rare among those who take human exceptionalism as a given.<sup>19</sup> I believe that the “vice” of anthropomorphism is not as negative as some would argue, and that it is in fact an essential part of imagining one’s place in the world and uprooting the vestiges of human exceptionalism from our culture. Vizenor says, “Arguably there are warranted anthropomorphic ascriptions in narratives; literary ascriptions that are figurative and create a creature presence rather than a causal representation of animal consciousness.”<sup>20</sup> Figurative anthropomorphism, despite the critique it sometimes receives, was never an attempt to literally explain animal behavior as if animal consciousness were in every way identical to human experience. Rather, as Vizenor shows, authored animals are an important

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<sup>17</sup> Crane 2013, 169.

<sup>18</sup> Vizenor 1984, 27.

<sup>19</sup> See Haraway 2008, 9-11 on the fantasy of human exceptionalism and the panic involved in attempts to break across the divide.

<sup>20</sup> Vizenor 1995, 661.

trope of human imagination and a way of both creating presence and understanding ourselves.<sup>21</sup> As the perspective of the story switches between the two animals, presence and understanding are forged out of narrative.

Perhaps most importantly, anthropomorphic animals help to dislodge the idea of human exceptionalism and replace it with an understanding of the diversity of living beings. Vizenor explains: “Bestialities, brute consciousness, and other memorable tropes show that the monotheistic separation of animals has never been sincere. That human horizon of authored animals must reveal the diversities of creation in native literature.”<sup>22</sup> Vizenor here proposes the diversity present in native literature as an alternative model to the human-animal binary of Western religion and philosophy. What would happen if we used Vizenor’s model to read the Greek fable?

Re-reading the Aesopic version of the story through Vizenor’s model of authored animals invites us to focus on the “bestialities and brute consciousness.” By this, I believe he is referring to aspects of animal behavior that are considered below humans, and thus bestial, and conversely, consciousness that is brute because it is ascribed to animals, but also brute because it shows us the real nature of human thoughts and desires. As he says, this is in opposition to the model of monotheistic creation, where man names the animals and establishes dominance in language, behavior, and consciousness. Let us return to the Aesopic fable.

A crow seized some meat and sat down in a tree. A fox observed him and was wishing to have the meat, so she stood nearby and began to praise him, saying that he was very great and beautiful, and that it was fitting for him most of all to be king over the birds, and that this would most certainly happen, if he had a voice. And the crow, because he was wishing to convince her that he in fact had a voice, dropped the meat and croaked loudly. And she ran up, snatched the meat, and said: “O crow, if you also had brains, nothing would stop you from being king over all.”

The prominence of human-like desire in this story is striking. The fox wanted to have the meat, and the crow wanted to convince the fox of his vocal ability. Critics of anthropomorphism would write off these statements as foolish, as clearly projecting anthropomorphic desires onto animals. Yet the desires and actions represented here, in particular hunger, pride, insult, and maybe even flattery, can be classified as bestial and part of the lower, animalistic desires. The bestialities and brute consciousness of human nature are here recognized and reinscribed upon other beings, not to suggest that they are like us or we are like them in every way, but to show the artificiality of the categories used to divide in the Western tradition. Although the fox, the master of clever trickery, uses words to question the crow’s possession of a voice, that distinction between fox and crow disappears when the basis of those categories is understood. Vizenor’s insight and the alternative model of the Ojibwe story make it clear that sound, voices, and knowledge, as well as animal desires, are part of the imagined presence of both animals in the story, and there is no valid basis for distinction.

In using this model as a way of reading two narratives from very different cultures, I hope to have demonstrated that animal stories and fables contain the metaphors of existence, the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 678.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 671.

imitation of sound, and a reimagining of the world by means of relationships. At the same time, they also deconstruct the idea of human exceptionalism, especially as it relates to the possession of speech. The Ojibwe story of the fox and the crow provides a vitality of mimesis, while the Greek fable reminds us that the possession of speech is not a form of higher intelligence per se, but that speech is simply a tool that can be used for communication as well as deception, in service of the passions rather than ruling over them. Reading these two narratives alongside each other affords not only a new method of interpretation but also an essential reconsideration of the assumptions about knowledge which inform the collection, preservation, and understanding of texts. By centering an often-overlooked Greek text as the focus of my study and reading it alongside a collection of Ojibwe stories, I intend to show that any claim to both human exceptionalism, and literary exceptionalism on the part of Classics, is misplaced. The alternative perspectives provided in Aesop's fables and emphasized in the Ojibwe stories demonstrate the fallacy of human exceptionalism. By reading these stories together, I intend to celebrate the active survival, or survivance (as Vizenor famously put it), of Indigenous knowledge.<sup>23</sup> The alternative perspective of the Ojibwe stories and the theoretical framework provided by Vizenor will provide a new perspective for the study of ancient Greek texts, disrupting human exceptionalism and coaxing us to look for vitality, relationship, and even laughter in these imagined worlds.

## Discourse and Devouring

Louis Marin quotes La Fontaine's French version of the fable "The Crow and the Fox" as a reenactment of the discourse of flattery. He states that the fiction of the speaking animal "preserves of animality the primitive sanction of all 'social' behavior, to eat or to be eaten, but keeps of man that which characterizes him essentially, language, through which the going beyond of immediate and singular desire in cultural universality is manifested. The speaking animal of fables is thus like *the figure of an origin of language in the devouring of bodies*, and the animal's discourse is the figure of this devouring, the fiction of a clinamen of verbality in orality."<sup>24</sup> He explains that in the fable, "to eat (or be eaten) figures the radical power of discourse," and that "to eat the other is the 'monstrous' fiction of the power to speak to the other." While this fable does not involve the fox explicitly threatening to eat the crow, the voracious nature of the fox's mouth is transmitted in a disguised fashion through her clever flattery. As Marin explains: "The whole discursive tactic of the fox at the foot of the tree and the play of his coups rest in truth on an unsaid that brings us from the speaking animal, man, to the beast, which is also man. After all, the beast began to speak—and with what skill and power—only to bring to light and reveal the place of the body where eating (the power of) and speaking (the power of) are situated undecidedly and indiscernibly, whether it is called mouth, throat, or beak."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> He defines it as: "Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry." (Vizenor 1999, vii). See also Vizenor 2008 and Smith 2012, 146.

<sup>24</sup> Marin 1988, 95, emphasis mine.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 101

This fable situates these powers in the mouth of the speaking fox, in a fictitious reenactment of the fox's desire. In the Greek, the fox's desire for food is transformed into *ainos* by her flattery of the crow: ἀλώπηξ δὲ τοῦτον θεασαμένη καὶ βουλομένη τοῦ κρέως περιγενέσθαι σᾶσα ἐπῆναι αὐτὸν (A fox was watching him and wishing to have the meat, so she stood nearby and praised him). The fox's desire for meat is effected through praise (ἐπαινέω), using speech (αἶνος) to achieve the desired object, and identifying the mouth as the location of both eating meat and speaking. One of the common words for fable is αἶνος, which according to the etymology of ἐπαινέω, is contained within that verb.<sup>26</sup> Thus the fox's use of αἶνος as a tool for praise is paralleled in the etymology of the verb.

In this short fable, the consumption of raw meat and the sophisticated use of language are both placed within the mouth of a single animal character, the fox. Eating raw meat is crucial to the Greek concept of animality, while speech is often thought to be the definitive characteristic of human beings.<sup>27</sup> Yet in the fable, both are attributed to a non-human character in a juxtaposition that suggests that even the power of speech, and the resulting power to flatter and deceive through speech, are qualities that, through their dependence upon the mouth as the locus of power, cannot be separated from the intrinsic animality of the mouth and cannot be used to define human beings as something unique from other species. As Marin concludes: "The fable in its narrative power is the parody of political power in its discursive representations, a parody that, because it is displaced onto the world of animals and the ferocity of its forces, can exhibit humorously the hidden inner springs of the strategies that animate the political world, the world of power in its desire for the absolute."<sup>28</sup> Marin is especially interested in flattery, because of its use for political gain, and this is certainly a common interpretation of the fable. I would like to push the point further and argue that, in addition to showing the mechanisms at work behind human discourse, the fable demonstrates that speech is a communicative tool especially fitted for deception for personal gain and for satisfying appetites in the way the fox did. This juxtaposition of the desire to devour raw meat with the use of clever language questions the hierarchy between bestial behavior and logical human actions. By representing the "animal" nature of speech, the fable blurs the human-animal binary and, by linking discourse and devouring, demonstrates that this logocentric hierarchy is not a valid method of categorization. To further explore this issue, I will now look at the earliest recorded Greek fable, found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

## Hesiod's Hawk and Nightingale: Power and Language

The fable of the hawk and the nightingale, as presented in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, tells a deceptively simple story that has elicited a variety of interpretations.<sup>29</sup> The most common interpretations identify the nightingale with Hesiod and the hawk with the bribe-devouring

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<sup>26</sup> See Nagy 1976.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Detienne 1981, Heath 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Marin 1988, 104.

<sup>29</sup> See van Dijk 1997 (127-34) for a summary of interpretations. Zanker (2009) offers another interpretation based on comparison with a similar Sanskrit fable; in this story, a king is tested when he is asked to judge between a hawk and a dove. Zanker posits a Mesopotamian "Myth of the Testing of the Good King" which might have been the common ancestor of Hesiod's fable and the Sanskrit version. He suggests that the "hawk represents Perses, the nightingale Hesiod, and the absent king the errant arbitrators (βασιλεῖς) in the case between Perses and Hesiod" (23).

kings, and the fable becomes a negative exemplum for the idea of justice which Hesiod is presenting. In this section, I will outline the ways in which the ambiguity of the fable and its context subverts the discourse about power and justice presented in the poem by revealing the animal nature of speech and its symbolic power.

The story begins cryptically, as a fable or riddle<sup>30</sup> addressed to the kings who understand:

Νῦν δ' αἶνον βασιλεῦσιν ἐρέω φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς·  
 ᾧ δ' ἴρηξ προσέειπεν ἀηδόνα ποικιλόδειρον  
 ὕψι μάλ' ἐν νεφέεσσι φέρων ὀνύχεσσι μεμαρπώς·  
 ἦ δ' ἐλεόν, γναμπτοῖσι πεπαρμένη ἀμφ' ὀνύχεσσι,                     205  
 μύρετο· τὴν ὃ γ' ἐπικρατέως πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν·  
 “δαιμονίη, τί λέληκας; ἔχει νύ σε πολλὸν ἀρείων·  
 τῇ δ' εἶς, ἧ σ' ἂν ἐγὼ περ ἄγω καὶ ἀοιδὸν ἐοῦσαν·  
 δεῖπνον δ', αἶ κ' ἐθέλω, ποιήσομαι ἠὲ μεθήσω.  
 ἄφρων δ', ὅς κ' ἐθέλη πρὸς κρείσσονας ἀντιφερίζειν·                     210  
 νίκης τε στέρεται πρὸς τ' αἴσχεσιν ἄλγεα πάσχει.”  
 ὧς ἔφατ' ὠκυπέτης ἴρηξ, τανυσίπτερος ὄρνις.<sup>31</sup>

And now I will tell a fable to kings who themselves too have understanding. This is how the hawk addressed the colorful-necked nightingale, carrying her high up among the clouds, grasping her with its claws, while she wept piteously, pierced by the curved claws; he said to her forcefully, “Silly bird, why are you crying out? One far superior to you is holding you. You are going wherever I shall carry you, even if you are a singer; I shall make you my dinner if I wish, or I shall let you go. Stupid he who would wish to contend against those stronger than he is: for he is deprived of the victory, and suffers pains in addition to his humiliations.” So spoke the swift-flying hawk, the long-winged bird.<sup>32</sup>

The fable seems to promote the idea that “might makes right,” and that it is foolish to resist the violence of the powerful. Most interpretations identify the nightingale with Hesiod and the hawk with the kings, while pointing out the additional correspondence of the nightingale to δίκη and the hawk to ὕβρις.<sup>33</sup> Pucci argues at length in support of this interpretation, noting many ways in which the language of the fable and of the surrounding passages supports it. The key points supporting the identification of the nightingale with Hesiod are the pun on nightingale (ἀηδών) and poet (ἀοιδός) and the nightingale’s explicit identification as an ἀοιδός (208).<sup>34</sup> The kings with their crooked judgments align with the curved talons of the hawk, and the hawk’s accusation that the nightingale is ἄφρων highlight the importance of understanding in this fable addressed to the kings (φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς).<sup>35</sup> The lines just after the fable (217-24) echo the

<sup>30</sup> West (1978, 205) discusses the possible meanings of the term αἶνος.

<sup>31</sup> Text from Solmsen 1970.

<sup>32</sup> Translations of Hesiod adapted from Most 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Pucci 1977, 61-62; Griffith 1983, 60; van Dijk 1997, 129.

<sup>34</sup> Pucci 1977, 62.

<sup>35</sup> Steiner 2012, 6.



language of the struggle between the hawk and the nightingale, but instead of depicting a bloody conflict of predator and prey, these lines portray the mistreatment of a personified Justice as she is dragged along (ἐλκομένης, 220) at the hands of powerful men who devour bribes (ἄνδρες ἄγωσι δωροφάγοι, 220-21). Pucci says: “Such parallel actions should be sufficient proof of the rigorous nature of the analogy: the oppression of the nightingale, of Hesiod, and of Dikê involves the same essential terms—lament/song, defenselessness, suffering and resistance, traveling on the path or road chosen by the ‘other,’ at the will and whim of the ‘other.’”<sup>36</sup> This parallelism suggests that both identifications can be seen together, as a specific, personal interpretation coupled with a general, abstract (albeit personified) one.<sup>37</sup> This leaves us with three sets of oppositions and thus a threefold identification along opposing lines: nightingale/Hesiod/δίκη opposed to hawk/kings/ὑβρις.

These three sets of opposing pairs suggest that the differences between the sides are clear-cut and obvious. Pucci has demonstrated how the conflict of the fable is reduced, in the lines that follow it, to an encounter of *logoi*, where the straight *logos* of δίκη resists the crooked *logos* of ὑβρις.<sup>38</sup> However, this transition from animal violence to a battle of words or ideas is not automatic, but rather, Pucci says, it happens through a process of displacement that provokes ambiguities in the text.<sup>39</sup> Despite these ambiguities, the voice of the nightingale transforms into that of the poet and emerges as a clear representation of one side of a polarity, championing the cause of justice. This voice is evident in the line immediately following the fable, where Hesiod admonishes Perses to listen to δίκη (213):

Ἦ Πέρση, σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης μηδ' ὑβριν ὄφελλε·

As for you, Perses, give heed to justice and do not cultivate violence.

The imperative form ἄκουε, with its reminder of the voice of justice and the parallel cries of the nightingale, suggests that Hesiod places Perses on the opposing side along with the kings and the hawk.

Hesiod's injunction to pursue justice is followed by a description of the personified Justice which closely parallels the description of the nightingale in the fable. But the incentive to give heed to justice seems especially weak in this context, given the uncertain fate of the nightingale and the outrages which the personified Justice suffers in this passage (219-24):

αὐτίκα γὰρ τρέχει Ὀρκος ἅμα σκολιῆσι δίκησιν·  
 τῆς δὲ Δίκης ῥόθος ἐλκομένης ἧ κ' ἄνδρες ἄγωσι 220  
 δωροφάγοι, σκολιῆς δὲ δίκης κρίνωσι θέμιστας·  
 ἢ δ' ἔπεται κλαίουσα πόλιν καὶ ἦθεα λαῶν,  
 ἠέρα ἐσσαμένη, κακὸν ἀνθρώποισι φέρουσα  
 οἷ τέ μιν ἐξελάσῃσι καὶ οὐκ ἰθεῖαν ἔνειμαν.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>37</sup> Van Dijk (1997, 131) also notes that these interpretations do not have to be exclusive.

<sup>38</sup> Pucci 1977, 70-71.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 64.

For at once Oath starts to run along beside crooked judgments, and there is a clamor when Justice is dragged where men, gift-eaters, carry her off and pronounce verdicts with crooked judgments; but she weeping, frequents the city and the people's abodes, clad in mist, bearing evil to the human beings who drive her out and do not deal straight.

In these lines Justice is portrayed as a powerless victim subjected to the wrongs of the people who pronounce crooked judgments. Her powerlessness recalls the nightingale's vain struggle and gives no hint (yet) that Zeus will actually hear her cries. Although Justice is "bearing evil" to the people who harm her, this is analogous to the nightingale struggling against the hawk, and if, as the fable seems to indicate, the nightingale's resistance is fruitless, the parallel efforts of Justice must also be in vain.<sup>40</sup> Zeus's presence is still unmentioned, contributing to a sense of hopelessness about the fate of justice.

If, as we have seen, Justice cries out in vain, what about Hesiod, who has assimilated himself to both the nightingale and Justice? Pucci concludes that the "overall transformation of the nightingale's lament has failed to transform language itself: the metaphors and the personification do not transgress the limits of language, do not transform language into something akin to the 'original' locus of power. Hesiod still sings like the nightingale pierced by the claws of the hawk."<sup>41</sup> Hesiod's voice continues to echo the cries of the wounded nightingale as he mourns the plight of justice and, consequently, his own powerlessness. Pucci concludes that "a faith in the divine Justice that controls the world, coincides, in Hesiod's text, with the acknowledgement of the powerlessness of Dikê."<sup>42</sup> Dike's appeal to the absent Zeus, which for the time being confirms her powerlessness, is perhaps analogous to that of the nightingale, who cries out, but with no one to hear her.<sup>43</sup>

Hesiod's self-fashioning as powerless in this passage disguises his real power, as a self-proclaimed voice of the Muses in the Theogony, and as a poet who at the very beginning of the Works and Days declares his intention to proclaim the truth to Perses (ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μῦθησαίμην, 10) as, in Mark Griffith's terms, "a kind of junior partner to Zeus."<sup>44</sup> Nagy points out how the poem itself takes over the function of the *basileus* to declare what is and is not "thémis 'divine law' by way of his *díkē* 'judgment.'"<sup>45</sup> The poet's official voice, as a mouthpiece of the Muses, is operating to subtly create distinctions and hierarchies in the text, especially in this passage, which begins with the fable (202-12) and ends with its reevaluation (276-85). He constructs a series of oppositions which begins in the anthropomorphic world of the fable and ends with the categorical difference between the human and animal worlds. In doing so, he engages in a contestation over official forms of knowledge common among Greek poets, often involving the use of riddles or fables.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Pucci 1977, 68.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>43</sup> In Zanker's interpretation, the nightingale is appealing to the kings to protect her, but this is by extension an appeal to Zeus, whose immortals are watching the king's actions (2009, 22).

<sup>44</sup> Griffith 1983, 59.

<sup>45</sup> Nagy 1990, 67.

<sup>46</sup> See Griffith 1990 and Kurke 2011.

According to Bourdieu, the role of poet is rich in linguistic capital, because he is in charge of creating the instruments of cultural production (rhetorical devices, genres, legitimate styles, and especially authoritative formations), and he thus acquires “a power over language and thereby over the ordinary users of language.”<sup>47</sup> Hesiod, as a poet invested by the Muses, possesses this power, and indeed, his poetry is filled with the literary figures described by Bourdieu, including the important authoritative formations, and it is composed in the ultimate authoritative style of the time: dactylic hexameter. Thus the poet’s cultural capital equates to a large amount of symbolic power.

The fable of the hawk and the nightingale, where an allegorical Hesiod engages in a fruitless struggle against the *basileis*, perhaps dramatizes this struggle for symbolic power, and especially, what Bourdieu calls “the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly of legitimate naming as the official – i.e. explicit and public – imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world.”<sup>48</sup> Hesiod’s struggle against the kings is better defined as a struggle for social capital rather than a bloody conflict of survival. Looking back, beyond the myth of the races and the myth of Pandora, to *Works and Days* 27-41, Hesiod pits himself against the kings in an opposition of two types of justice—the one he is proposing, which comes from Zeus (36), and that of the kings (39).<sup>49</sup> Hesiod’s quarrel may be with Perses, but he portrays it as a conflict between the judgments proposed by himself and those of the kings. He is claiming to be on the side of Zeus, and thus in a position of symbolic power, achieving what Bourdieu terms a monopoly on legitimate naming.<sup>50</sup> After the fable, he continues to promote his identification with Zeus throughout the lengthy description of justice (225-73) and the two types of cities. His appeal to Zeus suggests that he benefits from the symbolic power of the father, who is “the locus of power and justice.”<sup>51</sup> His association with Zeus supports his claim to symbolic power which frames the fable, but in the story itself, there is no outright appeal to Zeus; rather, Hesiod’s claims are hidden in the nightingale’s wordless cry. But the fable portrays another side to this symbolic struggle, in which the hawk also vies for symbolic power (despite its clear possession of physical power).

In the fable, the hawk attacks the nightingale not only with its talons, but also with its insults, thus engaging in one of the two types of symbolic strategies Bourdieu assigns to agents aiming “to impose their vision of the divisions of the social world and of their position in that world.” Bourdieu locates these two strategies, insult and official naming, at two extremes of a spectrum; the insult is the attempt of an ordinary individual to impose his (or her?) point of view, and the official naming is performed by a delegated agent who is “the holder of the *monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence*.”<sup>52</sup> By allowing the hawk to resort to insult (δαίμωνίη, 207; ἄφρων, 210), the authority of its speech (μῦθον, 206) is weakened, and the symbolic struggle of Hesiod against the kings is once again portrayed as a conflict for official status in a world controlled by Zeus. The hawk’s forceful speech turns out to be nothing more than a power play filled with boasts and insults. Like the fox in the previous fable, the hawk’s taunts are the expression of a

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<sup>47</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 57-58.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>49</sup> Foucault 2014, 45.

<sup>50</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 239.

<sup>51</sup> Pucci 1977, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 239. Italics in original.

desire to devour, and the symbolic power of its words are linked to its physical power to devour the helpless nightingale.

Mordine argues for interpreting the fable alongside the Prometheus story told (in differing versions) in both the Theogony and the Works and Days. He notes: “These two episodes—the punishment of Prometheus and the tale of the hawk and the nightingale—serve as comparanda on the use of power.”<sup>53</sup> This interpretation depends upon seeing the absolute use of power as a divine characteristic, and indeed, the hawk’s power is described in divine terms.<sup>54</sup> An absolute use of power, then, is admissible in a divine context (such as the Prometheus episode of the Theogony) but not in a human context (such as that represented by most readings of the fable). Mordine argues that Hesiod’s self-identification with justice and the nightingale allows him to create “a nexus between himself and Zeus through Δίκη which posits a countervailing and morally superior relationship to Zeus than that which exists between Zeus and the hubristic gift-devouring kings.”<sup>55</sup> While I believe that Mordine’s analysis of the hawk’s absolute power as on par with divine power is correct, the implications of this claim are subverted by Hesiod’s own symbolic power, which is evidenced in part by his “morally superior relationship to Zeus.” As Bourdieu has shown, power relations pervade all social interactions, and in the remainder of this section, I will look at the subtle ways in which the text hints at Hesiod’s symbolic power, creating ambiguities which suggest that perhaps Hesiod’s challenge to the kings’ assumptions about power is not as radical as it may seem at first.

The first ambiguity is found in Hesiod’s self-presentation as a wounded songbird, which is undercut by the language of the fable. One key term in the hawk’s speech obscures the crucial boundary between predator and prey. While it may seem that there could be no mistaking a hawk for a nightingale, in fact, the hawk’s first words to the nightingale (“δαμονίη, τί λέληκας;”) are surprising in this context. The cry of the wounded nightingale is described using the verb λάσκω, a term which evokes the scream of a hawk hunting and seems less appropriate to the quieter cry of a tiny songbird.<sup>56</sup> The same word is in fact used of a predatory hawk in the Iliad (22.139-42):

ἦϋτε κίρκος ὄρεσφιν ἐλαφρότατος πετεηνῶν  
ρήϊδίως οἴμησε μετὰ τρήρωνα πέλειαν,  
ἦ δέ θ’ ὕπαιθα φοβεῖται, ὃ δ’ ἐγγύθεν ὄξυ λεληκῶς  
ταρφέ’ ἐπαῖσσει, ἐλέειν τέ ἐ θυμὸς ἀνώγει·

As a hawk<sup>57</sup> in the mountains, the nimblest of winged things, swoops easily after a timorous dove, and she flees away from him, and he shrieking shrilly from nearby rushes close at her, and his heart orders him to seize her...

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<sup>53</sup> Mordine 2006, 368. In this reading, Mordine identifies the hawk with Zeus and the nightingale with Prometheus, and the fable thus metaphorically completes the Prometheus story by giving Prometheus his deserved punishment.

<sup>54</sup> See West 1978, 208.

<sup>55</sup> Mordine 2006, 371-72.

<sup>56</sup> *LSJ* s.v. λάσκω 1.II.

<sup>57</sup> The term κίρκος refers to a hawk or falcon, according to the *LSJ* s.v. 1.I, which gives the example “ἴρηξ κίρκος (where ἴρηξ is the generic term, κίρκος the specific), *Od.*13.87.”

This passage uses the same perfect tense as Hesiod uses,<sup>58</sup> and the similarity of the forms *λεληκῶς* and *λέληκας* is striking. West notes that “*λάσκω* is a surprising word for the nightingale.”<sup>59</sup> He goes on to suggest that the hawk, rather than the nightingale, may have been shrieking in an earlier version of the fable. Such an adaptation on Hesiod’s part would be significant, but even if no earlier version existed, the word still enacts a conflation of predator and prey mid-fable, by overlaying a voice of violence onto the songbird’s cry. If Hesiod’s justice is predicated upon that of the nightingale, and his voice takes over that of the nightingale, the bird’s uttering of not only pitiful sobs (*ἐλεόν* . . . *μύρετο*, 205-6) but also a raptorial scream suggests that there may be more potential for violence in the story than just the brutality of the hawk’s talons. The word *λάσκω* is also used for human voices, such as that of oracles and the *ololugmos*, forms of speech that are linked with religious activity and other emotionally charged situations, hinting at animal noises as well as powerful incantations.<sup>60</sup> Because of this ambiguity, the voice of the wounded songbird is no longer entirely powerless, but it hints at its own ability to enact violence.

A second ambiguity arises after the fable, when Hesiod ends his speech to Perses and returns to addressing the kings. He has just done a case study of sorts, comparing the just city and the unjust one. Now, after describing the retributive justice of Zeus, Hesiod says (248-49):

Ὡ βασιλῆς, ὑμεῖς δὲ καταφράζεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ  
τήνδε δίκην·

As for you kings, too, ponder this justice yourselves.

Mordine points out that the syntax of this sentence mirrors the previous address to the kings, which occurred at the opening of the fable (202-3)<sup>61</sup>:

Νῦν δ’ αἶνον βασιλεῦσιν ἐρέω φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς·  
ὧδ’ ἴρηξ . . .

And now I will tell a fable to kings who themselves also have understanding.  
Thus the hawk . . .

Mordine notes a series of parallel wording, but most significantly, he points out the parallel position of *τήνδε δίκην* and *ὧδ’ ἴρηξ*, noting that the hawk has been “textually *erased* and supplanted by justice: *δίκη*, a system regulating power relations, is substituted for the *ἴρηξ*, a manifestation of ὕβρις and arbitrary power.”<sup>62</sup> Mordine argues that this *δίκη* is a form of justice that regulates absolute divine power, in opposition to the hawk’s violent abuse of power.

<sup>58</sup> West (1978, 207) states that “the expression of continuous noises by the perfect is Homeric.”

<sup>59</sup> West 1978, 207; Puelma 1972, 93 (n. 33).

<sup>60</sup> *LSJ*, s.v. *λάσκω* III.1 and III.2.

<sup>61</sup> Mordine 2006, 371.

<sup>62</sup> Mordine 2006, 371. Italics in the original.

Hesiod's self-positioning, according to Mordine, allows him to situate proper human behavior in the middle of a spectrum between divine and animal behavior.<sup>63</sup> However, the δίκη to which the demonstrative τήνδε refers seems likely to be the most recent one, that of Zeus against the hubristic polis (τοῖς δὲ δίκην Κρονίδης τεκμαίρεται εὐρύοπα Ζεύς, 239). This version of justice aligns better with Mordine's concept of absolute divine power, which he attributed to the hawk in the fable, than with the regulated form of justice he believes is appropriate for humans, since Zeus dispenses heavenly justice in the form of pestilence, famine, death, and diminishment (242-44). In the lines which follow this address to the kings, Hesiod again warns against the retribution of Zeus (260-69), where justice comes in many forms—the personified Justice, who demands the retribution of Zeus, as well as the justice of the city whose kings make crooked judgments (τήνδε δίκην πόλις ἐντὸς ἔεργει, 269). Thus, it appears that the justice which literally replaces the hawk in the text is neither carefully regulated nor perfectly appropriate to humankind; rather, it oscillates between divine retribution and human (in)justice. And, by virtue of its supplanting the hawk, this justice could be called predatory; it has replaced the hawk, and it has maintained many of the same rapacious attributes.

The hawk's replacement by justice, and the nature of this justice, suggests that the oppositions created by the fable have been overturned. Justice is no longer clearly on the side of good, suffering at the hands of a violent raptor. Instead, a retributive form of justice has supplanted the hawk, assuming its position in the line of the text and perhaps even its position in the world represented by the fable. This form of justice is aligned with the power to harm and the power to devour. On the other hand, the nightingale, as a symbol of Hesiod, has also shown its predatory potential, suggesting that both the songbird and the justice it stands for are something more than victims in this power play. The clearly-structured world of the fable is now a confused medley of different voices and various conceptions of justice competing for attention.

Hesiod's description of Zeus' retributive justice leads into the final part of this section, where Hesiod pronounces the division between human and animal worlds. Once again he is demonstrating his symbolic power, for the function of symbolic power is that of constructing hierarchies; it is a power that constructs reality by its definitions.<sup>64</sup> Hesiod, as a mouthpiece of the Muses' official speech, relies on discourse to create and maintain his vision of the world. Through this discourse, he explains the exclusivity of justice in the world and its results for human beings (274-85):

ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι  
καὶ νυ δίκης ἐπάκουε, βίης δ' ἐπιλήθεο πάμπαν.      275  
τόνδε γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων,  
ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηρσὶ καὶ οἰωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς  
ἔσθειν ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶ μετ' αὐτοῖς·

<sup>63</sup> Mordine 2006, 373: "The section introduced by the αἴνος thus situates the behavior of humankind in opposition to both the divine and the animal worlds. By rejecting a divine *modus operandi* in the human context and by articulating the necessity for *δίκη* in the middle of a narrative which begins with the divine and ends in the rejection of animal behaviour, Hesiod locates human behaviour between the extremes of the absolute use of power in the divine world and the arbitrary violence of the animal world. In the middle realm of humanity, power must be regulated by justice."

<sup>64</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 166.

ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην, ἣ πολλὸν ἀρίστη  
 γίνεται· εἰ γάρ τις κ' ἐθέλη τὰ δίκαι' ἀγορευσαί 280  
 γινώσκων, τῷ μὲν τ' ὄλβον διδοῖ εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς·  
 ὃς δέ κε μαρτυρήσιν ἐκὼν ἐπίορκον ὁμόσσας  
 ψεύσεται, ἐν δὲ Δίκην βλάψας νήκεστον ἀασθῆ,  
 τοῦ δέ τ' ἀμαυροτέρη γενεὴ μετόπισθε λέλειπται·  
 ἀνδρὸς δ' εὐόρκου γενεὴ μετόπισθεν ἀμείνων. 285

Perses, lay these things in your heart and give heed to justice, and put violence entirely out of your mind. This is the law that Cronus' son has established for human beings: that fish and beasts and winged birds eat one another, since justice is not among them; but to human beings he has given justice, which is the best by far. For if someone who recognizes what is just is willing to speak it out publicly, then far-seeing Zeus gives him wealth. But whoever willfully swears a false oath, telling a lie in his testimony, and so hurts Justice and is incurably harmed, in later times his family is left more obscure; whereas the family of the man who keeps his oath is better in later times.

In this passage, Hesiod constructs a crucial link between justice and speech. The possession of speech is necessary for the possession of justice, since Hesiod denies justice to fish, beasts, and birds, all of which lack (human) speech. For human beings, it is not only the possession of speech, but also its employment, which leads to justice. The person who recognizes (γινώσκων, 281) justice must be willing to publicly declare it (ἀγορευσαί, 280). Consequently, the proclamation of just things leads directly to prosperity (ὄλβον, 281). This prosperity is opposed to the poverty of a person's lineage which results from swearing falsely, and conversely, keeping an oath leads to a better lineage (a concept which must involve wealth to some degree, in order to ensure the survival of the family). The individual fortunes promised in this passage are parallel to the flourishing of the just polis, which pronounces straight judgments (δικας ἰθείας, 225-26), and the poverty of the hubristic polis (ὑβρις τε μέμλεε κακῆ, 238). For this evil polis, Zeus marks out justice, but it is a retributive justice filled with violence, as we have already seen.

This reminder of absolute divine power, aligned with those who speak just things, and opposed to those who do not, reinforces the symbolic power of justice. As Hesiod presents it, the possession of justice and the capacity to express it in words are equal to a powerful form of symbolic capital, affirming the most basic of ontological distinctions: that between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom. The exercise of justice leads to additional distinctions between truthful, just humans and unjust humans who forswear themselves, but all humans apparently possess the capacity for justice whether they exercise it or not. Bourdieu defines symbolic capital, or distinction, as “nothing other than capital, of whatever kind, when it is perceived by an agent endowed with categories of perception arising from the incorporation of the structure of its distribution, i.e. when it is known and recognized as self-evident.”<sup>65</sup> That is, symbolic capital (in this case, justice) is defined through capacities of perception that derive from the structure underlying its distribution. In the case of justice, it is the capital possessed by those who are able to perceive it due to their structural difference from others who do not possess it, namely, the capacity of speech and rational thought denied to animals, birds, and fish. In other words,

<sup>65</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 238.

symbolic power creates hierarchies through the incorporation of the very structures to which the hierarchies are then applied. These hierarchies allow the enforcement of symbolic power as they are mapped onto a supposed “natural (human) order.”

Hesiod’s reference to the natural order of humans and animals alludes to the fable introduced earlier, and creates what Kurke calls a “deferred revision of meaning.”<sup>66</sup> The claim that there is no justice in the animal kingdom “revises the fable by undermining or deconstructing the basic premise of fable—the analogy between human and animal behaviors—making the fable into a ‘self-consuming artifact.’”<sup>67</sup> The kings to whom the fable is addressed are those who “possess understanding” (φρονέουσιν καὶ ἀνθρώποις, 202), cementing their difference from animals—or, if they do not understand, their assimilation to the animals of the fable. Hesiod identifies the animals’ consumption of each other as the factor which demonstrates their lack of justice, clearly alluding to the hawk’s threat to consume the nightingale. By doing so, and thereby rejecting the anthropomorphism of the fable, he reinforces the ontological distinctions between humans and animals and reaffirms the symbolic order of the world.<sup>68</sup> But how does the revised fable affirm Hesiod’s vision of the proper expression of justice? Does it simply turn a negative example into a non-applicable example? Or does it hint at the fragile and ambiguous structures that underlie the symbolic order of Hesiod’s world?

Although Hesiod’s presentation of justice (and himself) alternates between powerlessness and power, between the wounded and the vindictive, what remains constant throughout is that he is on the side of justice, as he creates a series of oppositions beginning with predator and prey in the fable, continuing through the mistreatment of the personified Justice and the retribution from Zeus, and ending with the opposition between humans and animals. His symbolic power is clearly affirmed, and its underlying nature can be seen through the subtle glimpses of the injustice and exclusions underlying his vision of the world. The first two sections, the fable and the mistreatment of Justice, demonstrate Hesiod’s struggle to affirm his symbolic power; the last two sections, the retribution of Zeus and the division of the world, show the results of exercising this symbolic power – the creation of hierarchies.<sup>69</sup> But the ambiguities of the text always show how fraught with injustice these hierarchies truly are.

By aligning himself with justice, and attempting to demonstrate the injustice of the *basileis*, Hesiod engages in a symbolic struggle aimed at imposing his own definition of the social world. Both he and the kings were likely part of the social elite of the ancient world, a dominant class in which the struggle is, as Bourdieu explains, “over the hierarchy of the principles of hierarchization.”<sup>70</sup> In Hesiod’s attempt to allegorize justice, he portrays himself as a victim suffering under violent oppression, yet his definition of justice places himself at the top of a hierarchy which admits only one higher power, that of Zeus. His allegorical admission of the kings’ power is subverted by his own possession of symbolic power through his connection to Zeus.<sup>71</sup> The symbolic power of justice is evident in the symbolic structure of the world Hesiod

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<sup>66</sup> Kurke 2011, 403.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 403-4.

<sup>68</sup> Sampson 2012, 473. Hesiod fails to differentiate between consumption of other species (which humans also engage in) and cannibalism, demonstrating that he is lumping all animals together into a category in opposition to humankind.

<sup>69</sup> On Hesiod’s verbal power and superior *sophia* in these later sections, see Steiner 2012, 10.

<sup>70</sup> Bourdieu 1991, 167.

<sup>71</sup> See *Theogony* 93-103 for an example of the parallel authority of kings and singer-poets.



envisions. In this world, justice is aligned with power: the power to speak, the power to devour, and the power to create authoritative discourse. By linking justice to the possession of speech, and showing the hawk as the speaker within the fable, the predatory potential of speech is thinly veiled, and the boundaries between humans and other species, between those who have speech and those who don't, have been blurred. This fable, as a negative example of justice, demonstrates that the categories which delineate just behavior and the possession of speech are not clear binaries, but that what remains is a jumbled muddle of conflicting ideologies.

## Aesop's Hawk and Nightingale

Through its ambiguities, the Hesiodic fable and its context demonstrate the ambiguity inherent in trying to differentiate between powerful and oppressed, between speaker and devourer, showing that even in a text that purports to delineate a clear boundary between humans and other creatures, that border is obfuscated by the overlapping sounds of the two birds. In addition to questioning the hierarchy underlying Hesiod's definition of justice, the fable reminds us that speech can be used for the perpetration of injustice and for personal gain, as in the fable of the fox and the crow. In both of these fables, the locus of power, and the threat of devouring, is given to the character who is stronger. Although the context of Hesiod's use of the fable to illustrate the struggle between *dike* and *hubris* allows for multiple interpretations, there are two other versions of the fable to compare.

In the other Greek version of the fable (Perry 4), the interaction is markedly different:

Ἀηδὼν ἐπὶ τινος ὑψηλῆς δρυὸς καθημένη κατὰ τὸ σῦνηθες ἦδεν. ἰέραξ δὲ αὐτὴν θεασάμενος, ὡς ἠπόρει τροφῆς, ἐπιπτὰς συνέλαβεν. ἡ δὲ μέλλουσα ἀναιρεῖσθαι ἐδέετο αὐτοῦ μεθεῖναι αὐτήν, λέγουσα ὡς οὐχ ἰκανὴ ἐστὶν ἰέρακος γαστέρα αὐτὴ πληρῶσαι· δεῖ δὲ αὐτόν, εἰ τροφῆς ἀπορεῖ, ἐπὶ τὰ μείζονα τῶν ὀρνέων τρέπεσθαι. καὶ ὃς ὑποτυχῶν εἶπεν “ἄλλ’ ἔγωγε ἀπόπληκτος ἂν εἶην, εἰ τὴν ἐν χερσὶν ἐτοίμην βορὰν παρῆς τὰ μηδέπω φαινόμενα διώκοιμι.”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι οὕτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀλόγιστοί εἰσιν, οἱ δι’ ἐλπίδα μειζόνων τὰ ἐν χερσὶν ὄντα προίενται.

A nightingale perched on a high oak and was singing her usual song. A hawk saw her, and because he was hungry, he flew over and grabbed her. When she was about to be killed, she begged the hawk to let her go, saying that she was not enough to fill the hawk's stomach; if he was hungry, he ought to go after larger birds. But he replied, “But I would be a fool if I let go of the food ready in my hands and pursued something I can't see.”

This story shows that in the same way those people are also foolish who give up what they have in their grasp in hope of greater things.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

In this version of the fable, we are told that the nightingale speaks. Gone are the pitiful shrieks, replaced by logical speech. Yet, despite being able to communicate with the hawk via human language, there is no change in the outcome. The hawk in this version is just as determined to make a meal out of the nightingale. Both fables feature the nightingale's poignant struggle, but the last words and the control of the outcome rest with the hawk. Even though this version reports the nightingale's words, it does so with indirect discourse (λέγουσα ὥς), while the hawk's reply is recorded in direct speech. Thus while the nightingale is afforded speech and not just cries, the fable still presents her words less vividly than those of the hawk.

There is also a sixth-century Latin version of the fable with other significant differences (Perry 567):

In nidum luscinae cum sederet accipiter, ut specularetur auritum, parvos in illo invenit pullos. Supervenit luscinia et rogabat illum parcere pullis. Ait accipiter "Faciám quod vis, si mihi bene cantaveris." Et quamvis se praecederet animo, tamen metu pavebat; denique coacta et dolore plena cantavit. Acceptor, qui praedam captaverat, ait "Non bene cantasti;" apprehenditque unum de pullis eius, et devorare coepit. Ex diverso venit auceps, et, calamo silenter levato, acceptorem, contracto viso, in terram deiecit.

Qui aliis insidiantur, timere debent ne capiantur.

When a hawk landed on a nightingale's nest to spy on a rabbit, he found some little nestlings in there. The nightingale came back and asked the hawk to spare her young. The hawk said, "I'll do as you say if you sing well for me." Although she made a show of courage, she was trembling with fear, but finally, because she must, she sang with a heavy heart. The hawk, who had seized his prey, said, "You didn't sing well," seized one of her nestlings and began to devour it. From the other direction came a fowler, and silently raising his wand, he brought the hawk to earth, caught fast in the bird lime.

Those who set ambushes for others must beware of being caught themselves.<sup>73</sup>

In this version, the nightingale's protest leads to the hawk offering her a false hope of saving her children by singing well. Then the hawk's arbitrary pronouncement that she didn't sing well and therefore didn't deserve to save her children unexpectedly leads to a swift resolution in justice being served by an external character, the fowler who catches the hawk in his bird lime. This resolution calls to mind the fable of the eagle and the fox told by Archilochus.<sup>74</sup> But in the nightingale's case, there is no broken pact, only typical predatory behavior from the hawk. The fable's moral is so clearly linked to the ending of the narrative that it seems that both may be late additions to the story.<sup>75</sup> Without this ending, the fable is much closer to the version told by Hesiod, but with the ending twist, the fable walks back the previous suggestion the "might makes right."

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<sup>73</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>74</sup> See the next section.

<sup>75</sup> On the superfluous and anticlimactic nature of *epimythia*, originating from the indexing in a handbook of reference, see Perry 1940.

The fact that the nightingale's song is ineffective suggests that it is a song of mourning, recalling the story of Procne and Philomela and the transformation of one of the sisters (accounts vary on which one) into a nightingale who mourns her dead child.<sup>76</sup> The themes of lost children, powerlessness, silencing, and revenge suggest a connection between these two accounts. In the fable, the nightingale's song does not change the outcome, since the hawk effectively silences the nightingale by declaring her song ineffectual and beginning to devour her offspring. Rather than saving her offspring, the nightingale's song in a sense transcends language, transforming into a signifier of wordless mourning and loss. Like the lament of Philomela (or Procne), the nightingale's song refers to the injustice she has suffered, and the transformation of a lost voice into a different kind of musical voice.

In this version, the nightingale's speech is once again recorded indirectly. Despite being afforded the use of human language, the nightingale's attempt to persuade through speech is precluded by the hawk's demand that she regale him with singing. We thus have three fables with three ways the nightingale attempts to escape: weeping piteously, appealing to the hawk's sense of reason, and being forced to sing her way out. Yet, as I have shown, the hawk's use of direct speech is foregrounded, and the nightingale's words are never given the underscoring of direct discourse. In all three fables, the control of the situation (at least until the end), and the power to both speak and devour, belong to the hawk. In fact, the hawk's words are focused on this devouring. In the *Works and Days*, the hawk threatens to make the nightingale his dinner, while in Perry 4, the hawk refers to the nightingale as βopά, or food, especially that of carnivorous beasts and cannibals.<sup>77</sup> Even when the nightingale speaks, she refers to the hawk's stomach and hunger. Even references to the nightingale's song reinforce the locus of the mouth, the source of her song, in connection with the looming threat of the hawk's curved beak, as a location of danger for the nightingale. This strong link between speech and the bird of prey, in comparison to the varied tactics of the nightingale, undercuts claims that the possession of speech is a defining characteristic of humanlike, civilized behavior.<sup>78</sup> In the interactions between the birds in the fable, the primary use of speech is by the hawk, already in control, to further manipulate the situation to achieve the nightingale's destruction.

Lefkowitz suggests that in Hesiod's fable, animal speech is problematized by showing that the nightingale's humanlike singing is to no avail, and that animals are simply behaving like animals in the fable, as Hesiod goes on to state in the deferred discussion of justice (*WD* 274-80). He notes: "Thus we can observe that the idea of animal speech was already problematized in the fable, where the nightingale attempted to communicate in human terms, but the hawk did not listen—her anthropomorphic utterances are thrown back at her as irrelevant animal noises in the fable itself."<sup>79</sup> The prose version of the fable (Perry 4), where anthropomorphic utterances are increased, seems to show the same inability to alter the outcome by means of speech. However, I have argued that, based on the preponderance of speech being assigned to the hawk, that rather than demonstrating the irrelevance of animal noises, these fables show the fraught nature of speech and its potential for harm, ensuring that speech cannot be the basis for separating humans

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<sup>76</sup> E.g., *Odyssey* 19.518-23.

<sup>77</sup> LSJ s.v. βopά.

<sup>78</sup> Compare the Muses' categorization of shepherds as "mere bellies" in *Theogony* 26. See Svenbro 1976, 50-59 on poets and bellies.

<sup>79</sup> Lefkowitz 2014, 10.

from other animals. Rather, by endowing animals with speech, these fables show that speech is a communicative tool with no special claim to superiority. Like, and perhaps more than, any other form of communication, it can be used to satisfy “animal urges” and is directly linked to a bodily location, the mouth. Because of its embodied nature, and its use to serve the rest of the body, speech cannot be elevated to a higher plane and claimed as a defining human characteristic.

These three versions fit into a category of fables where prey animals try to convince predators not to eat them; another famous example is the fable of the wolf and the lamb (Perry 155 and 159). Lefkowitz argues that these fables show the futility of animal speech, with the rejection of just causes and logical arguments in favor of the brutality of animal instincts.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, Korhonen argues that these particular fables draw attention to the actual animals in the stories, by presenting the point of view of an animal being hunted by a predator, forcing the predator to justify (and occasionally abandon) its engagement in predatory behavior.<sup>81</sup> I would argue that, based on the three versions of the nightingale attempting to escape from the hawk’s predation of herself or her children, that these fables are particularly effective in creating a poignant portrayal of injustice and oppression. While Hesiod’s use of the fable undercuts this message, on its own, the multiple versions of the narrative allow us to imagine the nightingale’s point of view, with each failed attempt to convince the hawk creating its own instantiation of sympathy. This effect is not created per se by the nightingale’s use of human speech, since, in Hesiod’s version, she does not speak, and in the other versions, her speech is provided indirectly. Thus, human speech becomes one feature among many that collectively allow us to imagine the consciousness of the nightingale. At the same time, the hawk’s use of speech demonstrates the multiplicitous nature of language and its potential for deception and violence.

Despite the obvious anthropomorphism of the fable, it does not focus on the nightingale’s humanlike qualities, but on her vulnerability and fear. In these stories, possessing speech is linked to the power to devour, yet it does not equate to invincible power, but is simply one characteristic among many that enable interactions among species, however violent they may be. Through the nightingale’s inability to avoid death for herself or her children, and despite the beauty of her voice, we may sympathize with her and be reminded of our own vulnerability. In this identification with a fragile songbird, and in the hawk’s cruel rejection of logic, we can see allegorical descriptions of human behavior, but also realistic depictions of the interactions between predator and prey, as the nightingale makes every attempt to escape from the hawk’s talons or save her children from destruction.

## The Eagle and the Fox

The fable of the eagle and the fox was told by the Greek iambic poet Archilochus, but only fragments remain of his version.<sup>82</sup> It is believed that Archilochus told this fable as part of his conflict with his political rival and father-in-law Lycambes.<sup>83</sup> Perry provides a full version that appears similar to the surviving fragments from Archilochus (Perry 1), though there are significant variations, as we shall see:

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<sup>80</sup> Lefkowitz 2014, 11-13.

<sup>81</sup> Korhonen 2017, 108-10.

<sup>82</sup> For an overview of the fragments and quotations, see Van Dijk 1997, 138-44.

<sup>83</sup> For recent discussion of the context, see Hawkins 2008, Gagné 2009, and Steiner 2012.

ἀετὸς καὶ ἀλώπηξ φιλίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ποιησάμενοι πλησίον ἑαυτῶν οἰκεῖν διέγνωσαν, βεβαίωσιν φιλίας τὴν συνήθειαν ποιούμενοι. καὶ δὴ ὁ μὲν ἀναβάς ἐπὶ τι περίμηκες δένδρον ἐνεοττοποίησατο· ἡ δὲ εἰσελθοῦσα εἰς τὸν ὑποκείμενον θάμνον ἔτεκεν. ἐξελθούσης δὲ ποτε αὐτῆς ἐπὶ νομὴν ὁ ἀετὸς ἀπορῶν τροφῆς καταπτὰς εἰς τὸν θάμνον καὶ τὰ γεννήματα ἀναρπάσας μετὰ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ νεοττῶν κατεθοινήσατο. ἡ δὲ ἀλώπηξ ἐπανελθοῦσα, ὡς ἔγνω τὸ πραχθέν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τῶ τῶν νεοττῶν θανάτῳ ἐλυπήθη, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ ἀμύνῃ· χερσαία γὰρ οὔσα πτηνὸν διώκειν ἠδυνάτει. διόπερ πόρρωθεν στᾶσα, ὁ μόνον τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν καὶ ἀδυνάτοις ὑπολείπεται, τῷ ἐχθρῷ κατηρᾶτο. συνέβη δὲ αὐτῷ τῆς εἰς τὴν φιλίαν ἀσεβείας οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν δίκην ὑποσχεῖν· θυόντων γάρ τινων αἶγα ἐπ’ ἀγροῦ, καταπτὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ σπλάγγχον ἔμπυρον ἀνήνεγκεν· οὐ κομισθέντος ἐπὶ τὴν καλιάν, σφοδρὸς ἐμπεσῶν ἄνεμος ἐκ λεπτοῦ καὶ παλαιοῦ κάρφους λαμπρὰν φλόγα ἀνῆψε. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καταφλεχθέντες οἱ νεοττοὶ—καὶ γὰρ ἦσαν ἔτι πτῆναι ἀτελεῖς—ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν κατέπεσον. καὶ ἡ ἀλώπηξ προσδραμοῦσα ἐν ὄψει τοῦ ἀετοῦ πάντας αὐτοὺς κατέφαγεν.

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι οἱ φιλίαν παρασπονδοῦντες, κἂν τὴν τῶν ἡδικομένων ἐκφύγωσι κόλασιν, ἀλλ’ οὖν γε τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ τιμωρίαν οὐ διακρούονται.

An eagle and a fox who had made a friendship decided to live close to one another and made their living near each other a pledge of their friendship. The eagle flew up to a very tall tree and had its brood there, while the fox went into a thicket below and gave birth to her young. Once when the fox went to hunt, the eagle, having no food, flew down to the thicket, snatched up the young foxes, and devoured them with its nestlings. When the fox returned and realized what had happened, she was not so grieved at the death of her young as she was concerned with revenge. As a land creature, she could not pursue the winged one and therefore stood and cursed her enemy from a distance, which is the only resort of the weak and powerless. But it turned out that before long the eagle paid the penalty for her violation of the friendship. Some men were making a sacrifice in the country, and the eagle flew down and carried off a piece of burning entrail from the altar. When she brought this to the nest, which was made of old dry twigs, a strong wind caught it and started a burning fire. The nestlings, since they were still unfledged, were burned in the fire and fell to the ground. The fox ran up and ate them all before the eagle’s very eyes.

The fable shows that those who violate friendships do not avert the vengeance of god, even though they may escape punishment by those they have wronged because they are weak.<sup>84</sup>

This version of the fable imagines a pact of friendship between two species both at the top of the food chain in their own ecological niches. The competition that they might have fostered among themselves as predators does not feature in this story; instead, they turn against each other and eat each other’s young. Their relationship is imagined in human terms, and in particular, alludes

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<sup>84</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

to the aspects that Aristotle uses to distinguish man as a “political animal” such as living together in a partnership. Interestingly, human speech is absent from this version of the fable, despite the description of a pact between the two species. The exact terminology focuses on the physical rather than metaphorical side of this pledge: *πλησίον ἑαυτῶν οἰκεῖν διέγνωσαν, βεβαίωσιν φιλίας τὴν συνήθειαν ποιούμενοι* (they decided to live close to one another and made their living near each other a pledge of their friendship). The juxtaposition of *βεβαίωσιν* and *συνήθειαν* demonstrates the unique nature of this relationship. The pledge of their friendship is their living close to one another, their intimacy. There is no sworn oath in this story, as there is in Archilochus, only two animals whose shared life becomes the token of their friendship. The word *συνήθεια*, when it refers to living together, is especially used for animals that herd together.<sup>85</sup> This concrete token of physical proximity stands in contrast to the abstract sworn pact of human friendship, yet even the human bond between Archilochus and Lycambes involved shared food, and their broken oath of friendship was sworn on salt and table (fr. 173).<sup>86</sup> Both of these agreements are more than verbal; they involve physical tokens or the enactment of the friendship through concrete actions.

While most of Archilochus’s version is no longer extant, a few lines remain. Fragment 174 refers to this friendship between fox and eagle:

αἶνός τις ἀνθρώπων ὄδε,  
ὡς ἄρ’ ἀλώπηξ καίετος ζυνεωνήν  
ἔμειξαν.<sup>87</sup>

There is a fable told by human beings as follows, that a fox and an eagle joined in friendship...

This fable is told by human beings, yet the genitive form *ἀνθρώπων* could also mean that it is about human beings, an ambiguity that is fitting for the genre of fable.<sup>88</sup> The verb *ἔμειξαν* suggests an intimate connection between the two, often used of sexual relationships. However, the verb can also be used for adversaries meeting in battle.<sup>89</sup> Thus the potential intimacy of the two also contains hints of hostility. However, their partnership is described as *ζυνεωνή*, or *κοινωνία*, suggesting that they are holding things in common, in a mutually-beneficial relationship.<sup>90</sup>

In fragment 177, the fox apparently calls upon Zeus to avenge her cubs:

ὦ Ζεῦ, πάτερ Ζεῦ, σὸν μὲν οὐρανοῦ κράτος,  
σὺ δ’ ἔργ’ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων ὀρᾶς  
λεωργὰ καθέμιστα, σοὶ δὲ θηρίων

<sup>85</sup> LSJ s.v. *συνήθεια* 1.II.

<sup>86</sup> West 1997, 502. On the relationship between Archilochus and Lycambes, see Hawkins 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Text from West 1980. Translation is my own.

<sup>88</sup> Correa 2007, 104.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>90</sup> LSJ s.v. *κοινωνία*.

ὑβρις τε καὶ δίκη μέλει.<sup>91</sup>

Zeus, Father Zeus, yours is the power in heaven, you oversee men's deeds, reckless and unlawful, and both the violence and justice of beasts are your concern.

The last line of this fragment presents a revision of the Hesiodic idea of justice. In this version, not only does the fox speak, but she explicitly calls on Zeus to avenge her. Her conception of right and wrong, of *hubris* and *dike* is remarkably similar to that of Hesiod. Due to the fragmentary nature of this text, it is hard to reconstruct the ending, but it seems probable that the outcome described in Perry's version, of the burning meat catching the nest on fire, must be Zeus's way of avenging the fox.<sup>92</sup> It seems that the oath, and Zeus *horkios*, the one who avenges oath-breakers, are unique to Archilochus's version of the fable.<sup>93</sup> Like Hesiod, Archilochus as a poet holds the symbolic power of authoritative speech, using the fox's curse as an example for his own invective against Lycambes. Whether this is an addition to the fable on his part, or an alternate version, his reliance upon speech for the oath and curse is significantly different from the version in Perry and shows the symbolic power wielded by poets, here manifested in the curse uttered by Archilochus through the fox in the fable.

Despite the obvious parallels between the fox and eagle's friendship and that of Lycambes and Archilochus, the fable itself can be read as illuminating what Sampson calls "the anthropomorphic facade."<sup>94</sup> He compares this fable to Hesiod's fable of the hawk and nightingale, and states: "Both fables employ an anthropomorphic facade, but in both it is also undermined: the animals and their drama do not simply reflect a human situation, but illuminate it precisely because their situation or perspective is unique."<sup>95</sup> He argues for the transmitted reading of *καθέμιστα* in fr. 177 on philological grounds, and goes on to show how this reading changes the interpretation of the fable.<sup>96</sup> With this reading, the fox is lamenting human actions as reckless and unlawful, and she is not drawing a comparison between human beings and animals. Her unusual attribution of justice to animals is the only case in Archaic Greek literature.<sup>97</sup> This allocation of justice to beasts stands in contrast to the recklessness and lawlessness of human conduct. Sampson points out that the structure of the fragment reinforces a tripartite hierarchy (gods, humans, animals), yet the attributes assigned to each category destabilize that anthropocentric ontology, suggesting that animals are in the middle between gods and humans, and humanity is the lowest order.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Text from West 1980, reading *καθέμιστα* fere testt. from the app. crit. rather than Liebel's emendation *καὶ θεμιστά*. Translation is my own.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Archilochus fr. 180 West.

<sup>93</sup> For Zeus's connection with oaths, see *Iliad* 3.276-80.

<sup>94</sup> Sampson 2012.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 467.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 467-69. He points out that there is no positive adjectival form derived from *θέμις* in Archaic Greek, but the privative *ἀθέμιστος* is used frequently in Homer. He also compares Xenophon's reference to *θεῶν ἀθεμιστία ἔργα* in reference to anthropomorphic imaginations of gods (474-75).

<sup>97</sup> Renehan 1981, 256; West 1997, 505. Renehan dismisses this testimonium "because it occurs in a fable" and is not meant to indicate actual human attitudes about animals. He goes on to suggest that the Greeks' condescending attitude toward animals was what prevented the genre of fable from being fully accepted into the corpus.

<sup>98</sup> Sampson 2012, 471-72.

In this way, the fable provides an opposing perspective on justice to that provided in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where justice is denied to animals.<sup>99</sup> Yet even there, as we have seen, the applicability of the fable to the human situation works only by emphasizing the difference between animal and human behavior, and this difference is undercut by Hesiod's implicit identification with the nightingale and the symbolic power of language and song within the epic poem. In Archilochus's fable, the implications of humanity's lack of *dike* are informed by his quarrel with Lycambes, yet for the fox, who is presumably ignorant of this dispute, this categorical statement about human behavior seems to generally apply to all humans. As Sampson concludes: "Anthropomorphic interpretations of fable may be convenient, but the early fables themselves are more complicated in their juxtaposition of human and animal nature."<sup>100</sup> Fables, and the animals within them, "resist being reduced to simple analogies"<sup>101</sup> and instead allow us to consider thinking from the animal's perspective, thereby leading to questioning assumptions about hierarchies and the nature of speech.

The second-century CE Latin version given by Phaedrus (I.29) shows the fox taking justice into her own hands, first by entreating the eagle, and then by starting the fire that burns up the eagle's chicks:

Quamvis sublimes debent humiles metuere,  
 vindicta docili quia patet sollertiae.  
 Vulpinos catulos aquila quondam sustulit,  
 nidoque posuit pullis escam ut carperent.  
 hanc persecuta mater orare incipit,                    5  
 ne tantum miserae luctum importaret sibi.  
 contempsit illa, tuta quippe ipso loco.  
 vulpes ab ara rapuit ardentem facem,  
 totamque flammis arborem circumdedit,  
 hosti dolorem damno miscens sanguinis.            10  
 aquila, ut periculo mortis eriperet suos,  
 incolumes natos supplex vulpi tradidit.<sup>102</sup>

However high in station men may be, they should, nevertheless, be apprehensive of lowly persons; for shrewdness may learn a lesson and find the way open to revenge.

One day an eagle carried off a fox's cubs and put them in her nest as food for her nestlings to tear up. The mother fox followed her and began to entreat her not to bring so great a grief upon her, a pitiable sufferer. The eagle regarded her with contempt, feeling safe in her high place. The fox then snatched a firebrand from an altar and ringed the tree with fire, mixing a potion of grief for her foe which threatened the loss of her own brood. The eagle, in order to rescue her young from the danger of death, turned suppliant and restored to the fox her young ones unharmed.

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<sup>99</sup> Irwin 1998, 181-82.

<sup>100</sup> Sampson 2012, 475.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Text from Perry 1965 and translation adapted from Perry's.



In this version, no mention is made of any “agreement” or “communion” between the two parents. Nor does the intervention of Zeus or the rule of divine retribution figure in this version, suggesting that the theme of revenge, and of the fox’s love for her pups, is more salient than the belief in divine justice or concern about oath-breakers. By doing away with the divine aspect, the role of Zeus and of retributive *dike* is assumed by the fox. In this version, the language of supplication and the safe return of all the young animals suggests a reenactment of justice and restoration on the part of the animals. Thus, the statement of Archilochus’s fox is reified: both *hubris* and *dike* are part of the animal kingdom, and, in this story, a form of *dike* conquers *hubris*.

This version contains the language of grief and suffering, inviting us to imagine the mother fox’s love for her pups. A similar expression of grief is found in Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon* 48-59, a passage which, like the Archilochean fable, shows Zeus as avenging the wrongs of nonhumans.<sup>103</sup> While the fox’s vengeance may not be believable, her grief can still evoke the understanding that animals too are capable of bonding with their young and feeling grief in their absence. The use of human relationship terms is also striking: *mater* for the fox in the Latin version, and in fragments 175 and 179 of Archilochus, the eagle’s children are called *παῖδες*, an unusual term for animal young.<sup>104</sup> This language, rather than being simple anthropomorphism, allows us to imagine the perspectives of the fox and the eagle, each attempting to feed their young and prioritizing the health of their children over their agreement of friendship.

These three versions of the fable show a different perspective on relationships, one informed by an animal perspective that is imagined differently from the human viewpoint in that it ascribes justice to the animal kingdom and presents nonverbal contracts as an alternative to oaths. While Archilochus may have told this story to support his accusations against Lycambes, the fable itself imagines animal behavior and coexistence as separate from the human sphere, and operating by a set of agreements that are, one may argue, more ordered than typical human behavior. In this way, we can read the fables as not necessarily providing a paradigm for human behavior, but as critiquing human exceptionalism by demonstrating the potential for animals to also create agreements, bond with and grieve for their young, and sustain and restore friendships.

## Conclusion

The three fables examined in this chapter each question the idea of human exceptionalism. The Greek fable of the fox and the crow shows the insidious power of speech when used to deceive and to deny others a voice. Comparison with the Ojibwe version of this fable demonstrates an alternative model of allowing others to speak on their own terms, and reimagining shared experience. The bodily locus of speech, the mouth, is a place of consumption, of devouring other bodies, and this connection is visible in all three fables where predators engage in conversation. The fable of the hawk and nightingale demonstrates that, while Hesiod denies justice to animals and states the superiority of his cause, the ambiguity of the fable and its allegorical implications complicate the attempt to divide categories of beings based on their possession of speech. Likewise, the other versions of this fable highlight the ambivalent

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<sup>103</sup> West 1997, 505. Compare the mother calf’s expression of grief in Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 2.353-66.

<sup>104</sup> West 1997, 504; Gagné 2009, 255. West notes parallels in the Assyrian/Babylonian *Myth of Etana*.

nature of speech, as the nightingale attempts unsuccessfully to negotiate with the hawk. Finally, in the fable of the eagle and fox, as told by Archilochus, an alternative worldview is presented where animals are not viewed as “less-than” for their inability to possess justice. In the corresponding versions of this fable, alternative models of coexistence, based on non-verbal agreements, are presented, and animals are given the capacity to grieve for their young and seek revenge and reconciliation. In each of these fables, rather than simply seeing a representation of human interaction, we have found ways in which the stories invite us to imagine the animal character’s point of view and consider our own positioning regarding speech and the characteristics that we share with other species. In the next chapter I will return to the Ojibwe traditional stories in order to look at multispecies relationships in fables as an interconnectedness based on shared vulnerability, and further question the role of anthropomorphism within these stories.

## 2. Raised by Wolves: Reimagining Relationships

A confused wolf outfitted with an electronic backpack, complete with transmitter, looks dubiously at the members of a wild wolf pack. One of the wild wolves says, “We found her wandering at the edge of the forest. She was raised by scientists.” Warren Miller’s 1993 cartoon for the *New Yorker* encapsulates the ambivalent relationship between humans and wolves.<sup>1</sup> Despite the unavoidable presence of wolves in almost every type of human art and origin story, wolves remain one of humankind’s most hated enemies. In his 1963 book *Never Cry Wolf*, Canadian environmentalist Farley Mowat critiques the reasoning behind government wolf-extermination programs. He says, “We have doomed the wolf not for what it is but for what we deliberately and mistakenly perceive it to be: the mythologized epitome of a savage, ruthless killer—which is, in reality, not more than the reflected image of ourself. We have made it the scapewolf for our own sins.”<sup>2</sup>

The uneasy relationship between human beings and wolves focalizes our apprehension about an animal that can be both implacably savage and easily domesticated. After all, man’s best friend used to be a wolf. This well-known origin story lurks behind every human encounter with a dog, as well as the less frequent but more memorable human-wolf interactions. In their famous description of “becoming-animal,” Deleuze and Guattari present the wolf pack as an image of human interconnectedness, an image that Donna Haraway terms a “call-of-the-wild version.”<sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari lay out three categories that animals can fall into: the individual pet, the genus of animal as represented in myth, and the wild animal that lives in packs. It seems to me that the canine clearly exemplifies this multiplicity. A dog is one of the best examples of the individuated, sentimental pet, yet the wild dog, a wolf, is both a protagonist of divine myths, a “State animal,” and the quintessential animal that lives in a pack. Deleuze and Guattari use the dog/wolf opposition to signal domestic individual vs. wild multiplicities.<sup>4</sup> Haraway considers this opposition “a symptomatic morass for how not to take earthly animals—wild or domestic—seriously.”<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I hope to look at wolves and dogs in a way that both does away with ontological dualism and also takes seriously Haraway’s plea to consider actual, earthly animals in this inquiry. The key to doing this, I will argue, is to consider the story “Nenabozho and the Wolves,” an Ojibwe story with much to say about becoming-wolf in a way that acknowledges both individual differences and rhizomatic multiplicities—a becoming-with, to use Donna Haraway’s term. This becoming-with is one way of describing a mutually-instructive and beneficial relationship, which I believe can be found within this story.

Relationships are key to interpreting fables in the work of Susan Crane, where she draws parallels between fables and other medieval literature in which animal forms of embodied

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<sup>1</sup> This cartoon is reprinted in Haraway 2008, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Mowat 1963, viii.

<sup>3</sup> Haraway 2008, 313 n. 36; Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239-41.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Haraway 2008, 29.

consciousness are represented as parallel to human understanding. Like the medieval literature of Crane's field, Classics also has tended to be gripped by a "humanism that conceives all other animals in opposition to humankind, and hierarchizes that binary opposition so that animals are distributed along a single axis of lack. But medieval works abound in other ways of thinking about animals that need recovering and reconsideration."<sup>6</sup> In this chapter, I will look for these other ways of thinking about animals within ancient Greek fable and use Ojibwe stories as an example of how this way of thinking can be expanded. By viewing difference not as lack, but as a potential for alternate ways of conceptualizing the world and our relationships to other creatures, it becomes possible to deconstruct hierarchies of being and reimagine interspecies relationships.

An understanding of fable's role in portraying human and animal relationships is key to reinterpreting anthropomorphism, which is often dismissed as nothing more than anthropocentrism. In a famous example, Derrida says: "We know the history of fabulization and how it remains an anthropomorphic taming, a moralizing subjection, a domestication. Always a discourse of man, on man, indeed on the animality of man, but for and in man."<sup>7</sup> In order to separate discourse on humanity from discourse on animality, it is necessary to begin by separating the animal from the apologue, as Crane suggests: "Fable presses its beasts into human shapes, but it also troubles the beasts' relation to the apologue, deflecting attention from the human and back toward the pleasure of imagining proximity to other animals."<sup>8</sup> This requires reading fables against the grain, and identifying qualities shared by humans and other beings, such as body, mind, and ethical capacity, that cross species boundaries and problematize the assumption of the unchangeability of species. In doing so, I hope to show that fable can be, in Crane's words, "an exploratory mode that takes man and other beasts to be unsettled categories coming into definition through relationship."<sup>9</sup>

Despite the tendency to read fables as allegories of human relationships, the interactions depicted in both the Ojibwe story and the Greek fables can also be investigated for what they might tell us about cultural attitudes toward animals. Within these perspectives, I will look for moments in the texts that question the hierarchy of species, and I will investigate the assumptions that underlie anthropomorphism within these stories. Fables about wolves and their dog counterparts, species that are opposed in their compatibility with humankind, will be the particular focus of this inquiry.

As Cristiana Franco points out, many Classical scholars have focused on the divisive modes of human-animal relationships, such as sacrifice, hunting, and the monstrous, but the conjunctive elements of interspecies relationships are rarely treated.<sup>10</sup> These conjunctive elements are sometimes found in fable, where we see multiple species interacting with each other

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<sup>6</sup> Crane 2013, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Derrida 2008, 37. However, Derrida goes on to suggest his own reinterpretation: "Rather than developing that fabulous bestiary, I gave myself a horde of animals, within the forest of my own signs and the memoirs of my memory."

<sup>8</sup> Crane 2013, 44.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>10</sup> Franco 2014, 183. For exceptions, see Griffith 2006a and 2006b, on the conjunctive relationships between humans and horses, mules, and donkeys. Williams 2013 provides examples from Aelian, Plutarch, and others of animals falling in love with humans and briefly compares these accounts to Indigenous narratives. See also Smith 2014 and Clark 2000 for examples of conjunctive human-animal relationships.

and communicating via human language, in an exploration of the intricacies of their relationships. In the field of Indigenous Studies, Gerald Vizenor describes tribal imagination as key to effectively being in the world.<sup>11</sup> In this chapter I will explore whether the relationships imagined between humans and canine species in both the Greek fables and Jones' *Ojibwa Texts* represent a way of being in the world that is not based on a disjunctive dividing up the world into structural oppositions and reconciliations, but one that depends on determining one's place in the world through the imagination of conjunctive relationships.

## Aesop's Wolves

I will start by looking at Greek fables of wolves, and especially of dogs and wolves, to investigate the human concerns behind our identification with our pet dogs, and our more hesitant affiliation with the wolf as a wild animal, all of which are exemplified in the relationships depicted in fable. I will first look at the wolf in Greek fable to delineate the cultural attitudes toward wolves that inform these fables, and then explore the ways in which these attitudes and the fables themselves reflect on human conceptions of relationality with other species.

The wolf in Greek literature is often interpreted as a creature of liminal and even improper behavior, being associated with cannibalism, deception, and violent behavior.<sup>12</sup> The wolf functions as a symbol for the tyrant in Plato and occasionally in iambic and lyric poetry.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to the fawning behavior of domestic dogs, the wolf is a declared enemy, who engages in trickery with no remorse.<sup>14</sup> In epic poetry, the wolf is an intelligent but violent creature to which epic heroes are sometimes compared, but it is a collective animal rather than a solitary individual.<sup>15</sup> In particular, the cooperative equality among wolves is emphasized both in Homeric simile and in fables.<sup>16</sup> In the following sections, I will examine how wolves in fable represent and reiterate many of these conceptions.

### The Wolf as Predator

Fables of wolves found in the *Aesopica* depict their stereotypical features, such as cruelty and cunning, yet if we look beneath the surface, there is more to these wolves than simple species types. In almost every fable involving wolves, they are shown as hunting for food. In some cases, this involves a discussion between predator and prey, and in other cases, the focus is on the wolf's unalterably predatory nature. A famous example of the first type is the fable of the wolf and the lamb (Perry 155):

λύκος θεασάμενος ἄρνα ἀπό τινος ποταμοῦ πίνοντα, τοῦτον ἐβουλήθη μετ' εὐλόγου αἰτίας καταθοιμήσασθαι. διόπερ στὰς ἀνωτέρω ἤτιατο αὐτὸν ὡς θολοῦντα τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ

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<sup>11</sup> Vizenor 1984, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Mainoldi 1984; Steiner 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Mainoldi 1984, 193-94; Ramer 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Franco 2014, 132-34.

<sup>15</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 148-50; Redfield 1979, 197-98; Steiner 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Steiner 2015, 336-37.

πίνειν αὐτὸν μὴ ἐῶντα. τοῦ δὲ λέγοντος, ὡς ἄκροισ τοῖς χεῖλεσι πίνει καὶ ἄλλως οὐ δυνατὸν αὐτῷ ἐστῶτι κατωτέρω ἐπάνω ταρασσειν τὸ ὕδωρ, ὁ λύκος ἀποτυχῶν ταύτης τῆς αἰτίας ἔφη “ἀλλὰ πέρυσι τὸν πατέρα μου ἐλοιδόρησας.” εἰπόντος δὲ ἐκείνου μηδ’ ἐπέτειον γεγενῆσθαι ὁ λύκος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτὸν “ἐὰν σὺ ἀπολογιῶν εὐπορῆς, ἐγὼ σε οὐ κατέδομαι;”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ ὅτι οἷς πρόθεσίς ἐστιν ἀδικεῖν, παρ’ αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ δικαία ἀπολογία ἰσχύει.

A wolf saw a lamb drinking from a river and decided to find a plausible reason for making a meal of him. So from where he stood upstream he began to complain that the lamb was muddying the water and not letting him get a drink. When the lamb said that he was no more than touching the water with his lips and that besides, from where he was standing downstream, he couldn’t possibly disturb the water above him, the wolf, failing in this complaint, said, “But last year you made unpleasant remarks about my father.” Then, when the lamb said he wasn’t even a year old, the wolf said to him, “Am I to be cheated out of eating you just because you are so free with your excuses?”

The fable shows that those who are set on doing wrong are not to be deterred even by a just argument.<sup>17</sup>

In this fable, the wolf attempts to use a series of complaints to justify (μετ’ εὐλόγου αἰτίας) his consumption of the lamb; when all of these attempts fail, the wolf is willing to devour the lamb anyway, despite his lack of a reason.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>18</sup> In Perry 452, a Byzantine fable, a wolf also attempts to justify his consumption of another animal through a ridiculous accusation of a crime (Daly 1961, 242-43, emphasis mine):

A wolf met an ass on the road. Though he had the ass unquestionably trapped and intended to make a meal of him, not satisfied with his food and the ass’ plight, he subjected him to trial, too. Taunting the poor wretch, he said, “Don’t worry, I’m not of such an unjust disposition that I would do anything rash to you, knowing that you have not given an accounting of your life. Let us each make mutual confession to the other of the wrongs we have done during our lives. And if mine are worse than yours, you are freed from the fate I have in mind for you and make skip right off scot-free to your pasture. But if it proves that you have outdone me in your wrongdoings, be your own judge as to whether you do not deserve to pay me the penalty of your conviction.” So saying, he began to recount his wrongdoings: mangling so many sheep and goats, carrying off thousands of kids and lambs, throttling oxen, and finally biting the herdsmen themselves or even actually killing them. When the wolf had run over these and more doings of the same sort in a modest and depreciatory tone so that would not—or so he thought—seem to be wrong at all, he gave the ass opportunity to tell of his crimes. But after the ass had searched his soul without being able to recall any blameworthy action—for he could not remember ever having done anything forbidden—finally at a loss, he told of the following incident just as though it were a crime. Once, he said, as he was going along carrying a load for his master—it was green vegetables—“a fly tickled me so I couldn’t stand it; I twisted my neck around to blow it off. As I did this, a leaf that happened to be handing out from the vegetables caught on my teeth, and I chewed it up and swallowed it. But I paid the price for this right on the spot, for my master gave me a good going over with the stick he was carrying. I got such a beating over the back that I threw it all up again.” When the poor fellow had finished this account, the wolf seized on what he had said *as though it were another lamb* and shouted, “What a crime! What an enormous misdeed! And is there still room for you on earth, you sinner, after such a revolting, such a defiling pollution? Oh, the ingratitude you showed your poor master who had sweat over his vegetables, sowing them, forever watering them, weeding

What is the function of speech in this fable, and is it used successfully? Lefkowitz states that “this fable dramatizes animals failing to communicate with one another.”<sup>19</sup> Yet I would argue that on one level the communication has been successful, and the wolf understands what the lamb is saying, but willfully chooses to ignore it. To support his point, Lefkowitz points to the fable of the wolf and the sheep (Perry 159), where an almost identical interchange happens, but this time, because the wolf has eaten his fill, he accepts the sheep’s statements and lets him go.

λύκος τροφῆς κεκορεσμένος, ἐπειδὴ ἐθεάσατο πρόβατον ἐπὶ γῆς βεβλημένον, αἰσθόμενος ὅτι διὰ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φόβον ἐπέτωκε, προσελθὼν παρεθάρσυνεν αὐτό, λέγων ὡς, ἐὰν αὐτῷ τρεῖς λόγους ἀληθεῖς εἶπη, ἀπολύσει αὐτό. <τὸ> δὲ ἀρξάμενον ἔλεγε πρῶτον μὲν μὴ βεβολῆσθαι αὐτῷ περιτυχεῖν, δεύτερον δέ, εἰ ἄρα τοῦτο εἴμαρται, τυφλῷ, τρίτον δέ· “κακοὶ κακῶς ἀπόλοισθε πάντες οἱ λύκοι, ὅτι μηδὲν παθόντες ὑφ’ ἡμῶν κακὸν πολεμεῖτε ἡμᾶς.” καὶ ὁ λύκος ἀποδεξάμενος αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀψευδὲς ἀπέλυσεν αὐτό.

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ ὅτι πολλάκις ἀλήθεια καὶ παρὰ πολεμίους ἰσχύει.

A wolf who had eaten his fill saw a sheep lying on the ground and, realizing that he had fallen there out of fear for the wolf himself, went up and told him not to be afraid, for if he would make three truthful statements, he would let him go. The sheep started off by saying he wished he had not met a wolf; second, if he had to meet one, he wished that it had been a blind one; and third, “I hope all you wolves die a miserable death for waging such cruel war on us although we have never done you any harm.” The wolf accepted his truthfulness and let him go.

The fable shows that the truth often has force even with enemies.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the previous fable, the sheep’s ability to make three true statements, while cleverly denigrating the wolf, results in the wolf’s letting him go. Yet as Lefkowitz points out, it is not the winner of the language game who determines the outcome; rather, it is the wolf’s appetite.<sup>21</sup> While I agree with Lefkowitz that animal instincts trump animal speech in these fables, I believe that these exchanges can also be read against the grain, showing the true nature of speech, and its potential for deception, rather than merely its overpowering by animal instincts.

What is unique in the fable of the wolf and the lamb is that in the situation represented, which could be a plausible scene between these two animals, human speech replaces animal vocalizations and non-vocal communication (in whatever rudimentary form such cross-species

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them, picking them, doing all kinds of toil over them, which were his only hope of livelihood, and then all at once lost his profit on them because of you. For the way he rained blows on you, with all the violence you describe, shows the cruel and mortal wound you had dealt his spirit in eating his vegetables. But apparently justice didn’t feel that the beating was sufficient punishment for that deed, and stored up further punishment for you, since your falling into my clutches when I wasn’t even hunting for you shows the whole thing up very clearly.”

<sup>19</sup> Lefkowitz 2014, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

communication would take). This interjection of human language allows the wolf to make complicated arguments, referring to past events and to his father, yet, as the fable tells us, all this verbal elaboration is solely for the purpose of assuaging his guilt over killing the lamb. Speech is not a tool of communication, but of trickery and evasion. It serves no real function in the plot of the fable, nor does it change the outcome. Thus, it adds a negative dimension to the fable, changing the wolf from a hungry but honest predator into a duplicitous character.<sup>22</sup> The wolf's use of speech is thus completely self-serving, allowing him to attempt to justify his actions, and it functions to reveal rather than hide his duplicitous nature.

The wolf's rapaciousness seems to be a given in fable, and indeed, in all of Greek literature, where wolves are often read as symbols of lawlessness, unscrupulous behavior, and tyranny.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, the wolf's true character is revealed through his speech, but this is not to say that animal instincts prevail over logic. Instead, the nature of speech and its potential to deceive, to endlessly defer, and to bring out the worst in people (and animals) is revealed. As we saw in the fables of the fox and the crow, and the hawk and the nightingale, speech is used in service of animal instincts. Far from being an elevated form of civilized communication, speech is highlighted in its inability to create or maintain relationships, despite its relational nature. The lamb's physical weakness is aligned with the symbolic weakness of his language, which cannot protect him from the wolf's predation. In this fable, the wolf is given direct speech, while the lamb's replies are reported indirectly. This is not to say that the lamb is unskilled in language, because his arguments are logically correct; on the other hand, it is the inability of language itself to overcome brute force and support justice in this fable. Speech is not merely overpowered by animal instincts, however, but it also reveals the wolf's duplicitous character.

In La Fontaine's French version of the fable, the moral of the fable is: "The reason of the strongest is always the best" (1.10). In his remarks on this fable, Louis Marin shows how a story about power is moralized as a discourse of justice, in an interaction between animals, first and foremost, as animals.<sup>24</sup> He says: "The power of the discourse that belongs to the strongest would be nothing other than strength itself, and the latter is not a matter of discourse or reasoning."<sup>25</sup> This point is important because it shows that language does not exist in a vacuum, but is closely intertwined with the body and with other forms of power. The wolf's strength resides within its body, and in particular, in its powerful jaws. This physical power only appears to be challenged by discourse and logic, but in reality, it remains strong. For a brief moment, it seems like the lamb may be spared, because the wolf's attempts at creating a logical reason for his actions are not successful. But the wolf, being stronger than the lamb physically, and having a mouth that has no difficulty ripping the lamb apart, is able to disregard his own logical failure and go ahead with his intended plan.

The wolf's accusations to the lamb, though they may at first seem legitimate, go on to be revealed as baseless allegations whose delivery seems to be a form of taunting the innocent prey animal and reinforcing the wolf's powerful position. Rather than giving the lamb a form of escape by pleading his case, the wolf has no intention of letting his prey escape. When his logical attempts fail to fool the lamb, the veneer of legitimacy falls away, and sheer cruelty is revealed.

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<sup>22</sup> Compare the lion, who does not try to hide his violent nature (e.g., Perry 149).

<sup>23</sup> Mainoldi 1984. See also Ramer 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Marin 1989, 60-68.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.



The wolf enacts the role of cruel predator, giving the lamb a glimpse of hope before dashing those hopes. In doing so, the wolf may lose the language game, only to reveal that it was not a game, but only a cruel trick. Rather than being the lamb's means of defense, the discourse creates a situation of greater wrong, validating the lamb's innocence and the wolf's cruelty. Like the fable of the hawk and nightingale, this fable also seems to suggest that might makes right, yet in doing so, it firmly situates might in the world of language and its appropriation in the service of the body, and by doing so, demonstrates the power of speech to harm and to collaborate with bodily power for greater violence.

### The Wolf as Butcher

In other fables, wolves are shown to be equally cruel and capable of using language to trick other animals. In Perry 153, the fable of the wolves and the sheep, wolves trick a flock of sheep into surrendering their dog guardians, and in Perry 342, the fable of the wolves and the dogs, a similar situation occurs, in which the wolves trick the dogs into surrendering the sheep to them, with the same result. In both of these fables, the wolves present an argument blaming their lack of friendship on a third party (to the sheep, the wolves say it is the dogs' fault, and to the dogs, they blame the human masters). Perry 153 tells the story as follows:

λύκοι ἐπιβουλεύοντες ποιίμνη προβάτων, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἐδύναντο αὐτῶν περιγενέσθαι διὰ τοὺς φυλάσσοντας αὐτὰ κύνας, ἔγνωσαν δεῖν διὰ δόλου τοῦτο πράξαι. καὶ πέμψαντες πρέσβεις ἐξήτουν παρ' αὐτῶν τοὺς κύνας, λέγοντες, ὡς ἐκεῖνοι τῆς ἔχθρας αἰτιοί εἰσι καί, εἰ ἐγχειρίσουσιν αὐτούς, εἰρήνη μεταξὺ αὐτῶν γενήσεται. τὰ δὲ πρόβατα μὴ προῖδόμενα τὸ μέλλον ἐξέδωκαν αὐτούς. καὶ οἱ λύκοι περιγενόμενοι ἐκείνων ῥαδίως τὴν ποιίμνην ἀφύλακτον οὖσαν διέφθειραν.

οὕτω καὶ τῶν πόλεων αἱ τοὺς δημαγωγοὺς ῥαδίως προδιδούσαι λανθάνουσι καὶ αὐταὶ ταχέως πολεμίοις χειρούμεναι.

Some wolves were plotting against a flock of sheep but could not get the better of them because of the dogs who guarded them, and so they decided they would have to do it by trickery. They sent ambassadors and demanded the surrender of the dogs, arguing that the dogs were the cause of the enmity between them and that if they would deliver the dogs into their hands, there would be peace between them. The sheep didn't foresee the result and surrendered the dogs. The wolves easily got the better of the sheep and destroyed the unprotected flock.

So it is with cities which readily abandon their political leaders without realizing that they themselves will soon fall into the hands of their enemies.<sup>26</sup>

In this story, the sheep are fooled by the wolves, their wool pulled over their eyes, so to speak. This fable is the first beast fable told by Aesop himself in the *Life of Aesop* 96-97, where he uses

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<sup>26</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

it to convince the Samians of the political benefits of keeping him as an advisor.<sup>27</sup> The same fable, according to Plutarch, is told by Demosthenes in an attempt to keep the Athenians from surrendering him to Alexander (Plutarch *Demosthenes* 23.5-6).<sup>28</sup> In this passage, Demosthenes refers to Alexander as the “Macedonian lone wolf,” a term that emphasizes his violent and predatory nature, from the perspective of the Athenian *demos*.

I will look beyond the allegorical implications of the fable, at the relationship between the dogs and the wolves depicted here. Wolves and dogs are shown as the worst of enemies, because of the dogs’ allegiance to their human masters and to the flocks they protect. This hostility, I would argue, betrays a human uneasiness about these wild animals who so resemble domestic dogs and yet exhibit all the undesirable behaviors that have been trained and bred out of dogs. The relationship between humans and dogs demonstrates the fragile pacts that underlie all social contracts. Like civil and social practices of the ancient Greeks, food underlies all types of social relationships, and it is believed to be such a contract that led to the first domestication of wolves into dogs.<sup>29</sup> Yet, as Cristiana Franco argues, because dogs cannot be fully assimilated into human culture, and remain other than humans, the dog’s potential betrayal of this contract remains a constant source of anxiety.<sup>30</sup> As Detienne and Svenbro show, even the wolf understands the culinary nature of social contracts, being an expert butcher, in the sense that they kill with their sharp teeth and divide the meat among themselves.<sup>31</sup> The wolf, of course, does not share a culinary contract with human beings, but remains on the outside, threatening to corrupt his canine brother into betraying that contract.

Perry 342 tells this story in detail, emphasizing the tensions between wild wolves and domestic dogs:

ὅτι οἱ τὰς ἑαυτῶν πατρίδας προδιδόντες τοιούτους μισθοὺς λαμβάνουσι.

οἱ λύκοι τοῖς κυσὶν εἶπον “διὰ τί ὅμοιοι ὄντες ἡμῖν ἐν πᾶσιν οὐχ ὁμοφρονεῖτε ἡμῖν ὡς ἀδελφοί; οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑμῶν διαλλάττομεν πλὴν τῆ γνώμη. καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐλευθερία συζῶμεν· ὑμεῖς δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποκύπτοντες καὶ δουλεύοντες πληγὰς παρ’ αὐτῶν ὑπομένετε, καὶ κλοιὰ περιτίθεσθε, καὶ φυλάττετε τὰ πρόβατα. ὅτε δὲ ἐσθίουσι, μόνα τὰ ὀστᾶ ὑμῖν ἐπιρρίπτουσιν. ἀλλ’ ἐὰν πείθησθε, πάντα τὰ ποίμνια ἐκδοτε ἡμῖν καὶ ἔξομεν πάντα κοινὰ εἰς κόρον ἐσθίοντες.” ὑπήκουσαν οὖν πρὸς ταῦτα οἱ κύνες. οἱ δὲ ἔνδον τῶν σπηλαίων εἰσελθόντες πρότερον τοὺς κύνας διέφθειραν.

[The fable shows] that those who betray their own countries receive a fitting recompense.

The wolves said to the dogs, “Why, since you are like us in every way, don’t you show brotherly likemindedness toward us? The only difference between us is one of opinion. We live a life of freedom together, but though you skulk and slave for men, all you get from them is beatings; you get collars put around your necks, and have to guard their

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<sup>27</sup> See Kurke 2011, 144 for discussion.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>29</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 153; Franco 2014, 170.

<sup>30</sup> Franco 2014, 170-71.

<sup>31</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 153.

sheep. But when they eat, all they throw you is the bones. Why don't you listen to us? Turn the flocks over to us; we'll share everything and have all we want to eat." So the dogs did as they said, but as soon as they got into the shelters where the sheep were kept, the dogs were the wolves' first victims.

Here we can see the wolves enumerating the disadvantages experienced by the dogs due to their domestication, using those negatives to convince the dogs to turn over the sheep in order to live in a utopia of freedom. This call of the wild does not end well for the dogs, when it is revealed that the wolves had no intention of sharing with them, and instead were manipulating them for their own benefit.

This fable focuses on the relationship between the wolves and the dogs. The wolves' speech asks for a brotherly likemindedness (ὁμοφρονεῖτε ἡμῖν ὡς ἀδελφοί) and suggests that the differences between the two species is not physical, but mental (involving γνώμη, or opinion).<sup>32</sup> The wolves suggest that the dogs have not entered into a fair contract with humans, but that they are being held as slaves. By insinuating that the dogs don't deserve the oppression they receive at the hands of their human masters, the wolves are able to convince the dogs to abandon their role as guards in order to receive better treatment. The resulting slaughter encapsulates the attitude toward wolves found throughout Greek literature: wolves are vicious predators, butchers, a threat

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<sup>32</sup> In another version, the homogeneity of the wolves is emphasized (Babrius 85, text and translation from Perry 1955).

Κυσὶν ποτ' ἔχθρα καὶ λύκοις συνειστήκει.  
κύνων δ' Ἀχαιοὺς ἠρέθη κυνῶν δῆμῳ  
στρατηγὸς εἶναι. καὶ μάχης ἐπιστήμων  
ἔμελλεν, ἐβράδυνεν. οἱ δ' ἐπηπεύουν,  
εἰ μὴ προὔξει, τὴν μάχην τ' ἐνεργήσει.     5  
"ἀκούσατ'" εἶπεν "οὐ χάριν διατριβῶ,  
τί δ' εὐλαβοῦμαι· χρεὶ δ' αἰεὶ προβουλεύειν.  
τῶν μὲν πολεμίων τὸ γένος ὅν ὄρω πάντων  
ἔν ἐστιν· ἡμῶν δ' ἦλθον οἱ μὲν ἐκ Κρήτης,  
οἱ δ' ἐκ Μολοσσῶν εἰσιν, οἱ δ' Ἀκαρνάνων,     10  
ἄλλοι δὲ Δόλοπες, οἱ δὲ Κύπρον ἢ Θράκην  
αὐχοῦσιν, ἄλλοι δ' ἄλλοθεν—τί μηκύνω;  
τὸ χρώμα δ' ἡμῖν οὐχ ἔν ἐστιν ὡς τούτοις,  
ἄλλ' οἱ μὲν ἡμῶν μέλανες, οἱ δὲ τεφρώδεις,  
ἔνιοι δὲ πυρροὶ καὶ διάργεμοι στήθη,     15  
ἄλλοι δὲ λευκοί. πῶς ἂν οὖν δυνηθεῖην  
εἰς πόλεμον ἄρχειν;" εἶπε "τῶν ἀσυμφώνων  
πρὸς τοὺς ὅμοια πάντ' ἔχοντας ἀλλήλοις;"

Once between the dogs and wolves a state of war arose. An Achaean dog was chosen by the commonwealth of dogs to be their general. He was skilled in battle, but he kept delaying and was slow to act. The others threatened him, if he should fail to lead them forth and get the battle under way. "Hear why it is," he said, "that I delay, why I am cautious. One must always make one's plans beforehand. Our enemies all, so far as I can see, are of one breed; but as for us, some come from Crete, some are Molossians, some Akarnanians, others Dolopes; some of us claim Cyprus as our home, some Thrace, and others are from other countries—why be long? Neither are we all of the same colour, as are these wolves; some of us are black, some ashen-hued, some red with breasts white-spotted, others white. How can I manage troops who are so different from each other in a war against these wolves who are alike in everything?"

to flocks and to dogs, defined by their willingness to eat even their own kind.<sup>33</sup> While in this fable, the wolves tear apart the dogs, their so-called brothers, in other accounts they cannibalize each other. Before looking at cannibalism, I will first look at a fable which describes the wolf as a butcher.

The wolf's natural talent as a butcher is made explicit in several fables.<sup>34</sup> In the fable of the kid and the aulos-playing wolf, the wolf acknowledges his natural calling as a butcher (Perry 97).

ἔριφος ὑστερήσας ἀπὸ ποιίμνης ὑπὸ λύκου κατεδιώκετο. ἐπιστραφεὶς δὲ ὁ ἔριφος λέγει τῷ λύκῳ “πέπεισμαι, λύκε, ὅτι σὸν βρῶμά εἰμι· ἀλλ’ ἵνα μὴ ἀδόξως ἀποθάνω, ἀύλησον, ὅπως ὀρχήσομαι.” ἀυλοῦντος δὲ τοῦ λύκου καὶ ὀρχουμένου τοῦ ἐρίφου, οἱ κύνες ἀκούσαντες ἐδίωκον τὸν λύκον. ἐπιστραφεὶς δὲ ὁ λύκος λέγει τῷ ἐρίφῳ “ταῦτα ἐμοὶ καλῶς γίνεται· ἔδει γάρ με μακελλάριον ὄντα ἀυλητὴν μὴ μιμεῖσθαι.”

οὕτως οἱ παρὰ γνώμην τοῦ καιροῦ τι πράττοντες καὶ ὧν ἐν χερσὶν ἔχουσιν ὑστεροῦνται.

A kid had lagged behind the herd and was pursued by a wolf. The kid turned around and said to the wolf, “I’m sure that I’m to be your dinner, but just so that I won’t die ignominiously, play a tune on your aulos for me to dance to.” While the wolf played and the kid danced, the dogs heard and chased the wolf away. The wolf turned back and said to the kid, “This is what I deserve. A butcher like me shouldn’t try to be an aulos player.”

So people who do something without considering its timeliness miss out on even what they already hold in their hands.<sup>35</sup>

In this fable, the wolf laments attempting to be anything other than the butcher (μακελλάριος) that he is. Detienne and Svenbro point out the many ways in which the wolf is an ideal butcher, particularly because wolves bleed their prey to death, using their sharp jaws as a butcher’s knife, and then divide the meat among themselves.<sup>36</sup> But this fable goes beyond defining the wolf as a butcher and allows us to identify with the character of the kid, who successfully tricks the wolf into posing as an aulete, buying himself some time and securing his escape. Although domestic animals in Aesop’s fables have a mixed track record in avoiding predation by wolves, this kid is able to use his own cunning to buy time, depending ultimately on the relationship with the guard dogs who come to his rescue. Unlike the lamb in Perry 155, the kid successfully saves himself by using language, pretending to be interested in music and dancing but actually buying himself time. Far from being a helpless sitting duck, this young goat takes definitive action and saves his own life. In this way, the fable stands in stark contrast to the typical wolf fable, where the wolf is the one whose cunning determines the fate of the helpless domestic animal.

In the fables in this section, we have seen that wolves in Aesop’s fables are quick to use language to trick other animals, and when they gain the upper hand, they are violent and merciless. Yet, as the fable of the aulete wolf shows, even a defenseless kid can play this

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<sup>33</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989.

<sup>34</sup> In addition to Perry 97, see also Perry 187.

<sup>35</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 153-55.

language game and win freedom. While the wolves of fable typically use language to exploit their tenuous relationships with other animals, because of the slippery nature of language, it can also be used against them. When the wolves succeed in hoodwinking domestic animals, they do so by feigning friendship and pretending to be bound to a social contract that in reality they do not abide by. Thus, they cement their status as outsiders, existing on the outside of the sphere of human life and domestic activities, where they enter only to create destruction. Unable to abide by the culinary contract that dogs take part in, their method of collecting food is savage and implacable. But, as these fables suggest, they actively engage in deception and the creation of false friendships to achieve their goal, and within the world of fable, they exploit the most well-adapted tool for that purpose: human language.

### The Wolf as Cannibal

The wolf's depiction as a master butcher, apportioning the meat, is taken to its logical extreme in the fable of the wolf as lawgiver and the donkey (Perry 348).

ὅτι αὐτοὶ οἱ τοὺς νόμους δικαίως ὀρίζειν δοκοῦντες καὶ ἐν οἷς ὀρίζουσι καὶ δικάζουσιν οὐκ ἐμμένουσιν.

λύκος τῶν λοιπῶν λύκων στρατηγήσας νόμους ἔταξε πᾶσιν ἵνα, εἴ τι ἂν ἕκαστος κυνηγήσῃ, πάντα εἰς μέσον ἄξῃ καὶ μερίδα ἴσην ἐκάστῳ δώσει, ὅπως μὴ οἱ λοιποὶ ἐνδεεῖς ὄντες ἀλλήλους κατεσθίωσιν. ὄνος δὲ παρελθὼν τὴν χαίτην σείσας ἔφη “ἐκ φρενὸς λύκου καλὴ γνώμη· ἀλλὰ πῶς σὺ τὴν χθεσινὴν ἄγραν τῆ κοίτη ἐναπέθου; ἄγε ταύτην εἰς μέσον ἀπομερίσας.” ὁ δὲ ἐλεγχθεὶς τοὺς νόμους ἀνέλυσεν.

The very people who appear to make laws justly do not abide even by their own laws and decisions.

A wolf who was acting as general of the other wolves established laws to the effect that each wolf should bring whatever he caught by hunting into the middle and give an equal share to each so that the others would not be in need and eat each other. But a donkey who was walking by tossed his mane and said, “That’s a noble idea from a wolf’s mind, but how is it that you stored away yesterday’s catch in your lair? Bring that out into the middle and share it.” So the wolf, being exposed, repealed the laws.<sup>37</sup>

This fable demonstrates the wolf's position as an enigma in the political world, capable of wielding his powerful jaws as a sacrificial knife, yet hindered by greed from engaging in *isonomia*, or political equality.<sup>38</sup> The emphasis on equality is represented by the phrase εἰς μέσον (into the middle). Detienne and Svenbro point out the circularity of this social space, where what is shared is in the middle, and “in which the position of each is reciprocal and reversible with respect to a central point.”<sup>39</sup> But, as the donkey astutely observes, the wolf has failed to follow

<sup>37</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>38</sup> See Kurke 2011, 152-53.

<sup>39</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 151; Steiner 2015, 342. See also Detienne 1996, 98-101, and Vernant 1982, 125-28, on the significance of *isonomia* and the center in the Greek *polis*.

his own laws and refuses to engage in equal distribution. The purported reason for the wolf's shared society is to avoid cannibalism, but Detienne and Svenbro point out that the civic structure created in the fable is recalled in a later story about cannibalism.<sup>40</sup>

This story occurs in Aelian's *De Natura Animalium* (7.20), which presents cannibalism as an attested characteristic of wolves:<sup>41</sup>

Ἀγριώτατον δὲ λύκοι. λέγουσι δὲ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ὅτι καὶ ἀλλήλους ἐσθίουσι, καὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ἐκεῖνόν φασιν. ἐς κύκλον ἑαυτοὺς περιαγαγόντες εἶτα μέντοι θέουσιν. ὅταν δὲ τις αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν δρόμον ἰλίγγου σκοτοδινιάσῃ καὶ περιτραπῇ, οἱ λοιποὶ κειμένῳ προσπεσόντες σπαράττουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐσθίουσι. δρῶσι δὲ ἄρα τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀθηρία περιπέσωσι. πρὸς γὰρ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν πάντα λῆρον ἤγηται ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κακοὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀργύριον.

Wolves are exceedingly fierce, and the Egyptians say that they even eat one another, and that the way in which they plot against each other is, they say, as follows. They gather round in a circle and then start to run. And when one of them is overcome with dizziness from running round and round and collapses, the rest fall upon him as he lies, tear him to pieces, and eat him. They do this whenever their hunting is unsuccessful. For with them, provided they do not go hungry, nothing else counts; just as with evil men nothing counts but money.<sup>42</sup>

In this passage, the strange ritual takes place in a circle. What Detienne and Svenbro call the “spectre of forced cannibalism” returns in full force, because the wolves, who are predators, must kill to survive, and when their hunting is unsuccessful, they turn on each other, changing the circular space of civic equality into an arena of deadly competition.<sup>43</sup> The imagery creates an uncanny evocation of the Aesopic wolf's prey placed in the middle, but instead of the lifeless body of a prey animal being divided equally, in this account the wolves fall upon the dizzy and exhausted body of their fellow wolf and tear him to pieces, their surrounding bodies creating a new and uncivilized circle around him as they devour him. The *isonomia* of civic exchange, already exposed by the donkey in the fable as easily subject to corruption, is here reimagined as its savage counterpart, confirming that wolves are dangerous and untrustworthy creatures.

The belief that wolves are willing to eat their own kind epitomizes the depiction of wolves as cruel and heartless predators who do not distinguish between species in choosing their prey. It also enlarges the gulf between wolves and dogs, who are trusted to differentiate between the sheep to protect and the stranger (or wolf) to attack. The wolf as an indiscriminate killer symbolizes fears of humans killing each other and tasting their blood, as evidenced in the legend of Lycaean Zeus told by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*.<sup>44</sup> As an animal that exists in the boundary between political life, on the one hand, and senseless slaughter, on the other, the wolf represents the precarious nature of power and violence in human society. But these stories suggest that,

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<sup>40</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 151.

<sup>41</sup> Compare Plato's story of the legend of Lycaean Zeus, in *Republic* 8.565d-566a.

<sup>42</sup> Text from Scholfield 1958. Translation adapted from Schofield 1958.

<sup>43</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 151.

<sup>44</sup> See Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 156-57.

beyond simply representing the human, the wolf encapsulates fears about what separates human behavior from nonhuman, and in this way, the fear and hatred of wolves exhibited in these stories functions as a foil for these underlying misgivings.

### Taming the Wolf

Four fables tell of shepherds who mistakenly trust wolves. The first one, “The Shepherd and the Wolf Cubs” (Perry 209), explains the consequences of attempting to domesticate wolf cubs:

ποιμὴν εὐρῶν λυκιδεῖς τούτους μετὰ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ἔτρεφεν, οἰόμενος ὅτι τελειωθέντες οὐ μόνον τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πρόβατα φυλάξουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἀρπάζοντες ἑαυτῷ οἴσουσιν. οἱ δὲ ὡς τάχιστα ἐτρέφησαν, ἀδείας τυχόντες πρῶτον αὐτοῦ τὴν ποίμνην διέφθειραν. καὶ ὃς ἀναστενάξας εἶπεν “ἀλλ’ ἔγωγε δίκαια πέπονθα· τί γὰρ τούτους νηπίους ὄντας ἔσφζον, οὓς ἔδει καὶ ηὔξημένους ἀναιρεῖν;”

οὕτως οἱ τοὺς πονηροὺς περισφζόντες λανθάνουσι καθ’ αὐτῶν πρῶτον αὐτοὺς ῥωννύντες.

A shepherd found some wolf cubs and carefully brought them up, thinking that when they were grown, they would not only guard his own sheep but would also steal sheep from others and bring them to him. As soon as they were grown, lacking all fear of punishment, the first thing they did was to destroy the shepherd’s flock. He groaned and said, “I got just what I deserved. Why did I save these wolves when they were young? I ought to have killed them even if they were full-grown.”

So it is that those who spare bad men discover that they are strengthening enemies first against themselves.<sup>45</sup>

This story is strikingly similar to the story of the lion cub in Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon* (716-36), with both involving unsuccessful attempts to domesticate a wild animal.<sup>46</sup> In the *Agamemnon*, the lion cub grows up and displays the character (ἦθος) inherited from its parents. This same hereditary ἦθος compels the wolves raised by the shepherd to fall upon his flock. In the fable, unlike in the *Agamemnon*, the shepherd is not looking for a pet, but rather attempting to raise guard dogs. The similarity between dogs and wolves hints at the potential for wolves to guard sheep, yet, as any shepherd knows, wolves should be suspected because of their traditional role as his worst enemy. This shepherd hopes to harness the wolves’ destructive force to enlarge his flock, but the outcome is the opposite of what he had hoped.

Unlike the trusty guard dog, the wolf is unable to distinguish between animals to be protected and animals to be eaten. Not only will a wolf engage in cannibalism, but it will also carry out indiscriminate slaughter of domestic animals. Cristiana Franco highlights the ability to

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<sup>45</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>46</sup> See Vidal-Naquet 1990 on the intersection of wild and domestic animals, via the themes of hunting and sacrifice, in the *Agamemnon*.

choose prey with discrimination as a key factor separating wolves and dogs, which is lost when dogs become afflicted with the malady the Greeks called *lyssa* and become like wolves:

In other words, the dog's violent energy is normally unleashed with a certain order and control, and it is because of this that man is able to exploit it for his own ends. It is an aggression that distinguishes between the familiar and the foreign, the flock to protect and the predator to attack, the hunter to help and the prey to pursue. But when a dog is afflicted with *lyssa*, its mental clarity wavers and it tends not to make distinctions, becoming hostile to all, a savage wolf. In this sense, a dog differs from a wolf as a sane person from a psychopath. And if to suffer from *lyssa* is to become a wolf, it is clear that the main difference between the dog and its wild brother is located precisely in the sane dog's capacity to exercise judgment in using violent force. Nevertheless, the fact that *lyssa* is a typically canine illness—that the dog is thought to be particularly and constitutionally vulnerable to mental imbalance—shows how thin a line separates its aggression from the wolf's.<sup>47</sup>

Failure to understand this essential difference between dogs and wolves gets many a shepherd into trouble in the fables. It is clear that one of the key characteristics of wolves in Aesop is their lack of trustworthiness, as well as the continual tension between wild wolves and domestic dogs, in particular in relation to the agricultural and domestic sphere.

Perry 234, the fable of the wolf and the shepherd, tells the story of another hapless shepherd who made the same mistake of trusting a wolf:

λύκος ἀκολουθῶν ποιμνῆ προβάτων οὐδὲν ἠδίκηι. ὁ δὲ ποιμὴν κατὰ μὲν ἀρχὰς ἐφυλάττετο αὐτὸν ὡς ἐχθρὸν καὶ δεδοικῶς παρετηρεῖτο. ἐπεὶ δὲ συνεχῶς ἐκεῖνος παρεπόμενος οὐδὲν ἠδίκηι, ἀλλ' οὔτε ἀρχὴν τοῦ ἀρπάζειν ἐνεχειρεῖτο, τηνικαῦτα ἐννοήσας φύλακα μᾶλλον εἶναι αὐτὸν ἢ ἐπίβουλον, ἐπειδὴ χρεῖα τις αὐτὸν κατέλαβεν εἰς ἄστὺ παραγενέσθαι, καταλιπὼν παρ' αὐτῷ τὰ πρόβατα ἀπῆλθεν. καὶ ὃς καιρὸν ἔχειν ὑπολαβὼν τὰ πλείω διέφθειρεν. ὁ δὲ ποιμὴν ἐπανελθὼν καὶ θεασάμενος τὴν ποιμνὴν διεφθαρμένην ἔφη “δίκαια ἐπέπονθα· τί γὰρ λύκῳ πρόβατα ἐπίστευον;”

οὕτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ τοῖς φιλαργύροις καὶ πλεονέκταις τὰς παρακαταθήκας ἐγχειρίζοντες εἰκότως ἀποστεροῦνται.

A wolf kept following a flock of sheep without harming them. At first the shepherd guarded against him as an enemy and kept a fearful eye on him. But when the wolf went right on following without doing any harm and without even trying to steal any sheep, the shepherd began to think of him as a protection rather than a threat, and when he had to go to town, he went off and left the sheep with him. Then the wolf, deciding that his time had come, killed most of the sheep. When the shepherd came back and saw most of his flock killed, he said, “I got what I deserved. Why did I trust my sheep to a wolf?”

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<sup>47</sup> Franco 2014, 29-30.



In this way, when people entrust deposits into the hands of greedy men, they will most likely be robbed.<sup>48</sup>

This fable shows the wolf engaging in deception of the shepherd, pretending to follow the sheep as a guard dog, and waiting until the shepherd leaves to resume his typical behavior. In contrast to the model of the ravaging of an uncontrolled beast, this story demonstrates the wolf's ability to pretend, a characteristic which is sometimes considered to be exclusive to humans. While this is not a scientific account as such, it nevertheless provides evidence of cultural attitudes toward wolves, which not only encompass their fundamental untrustworthiness and inability to be tamed, but also their ability to pretend and cover their tracks, as it were. In fact, the wolf in this story shows a remarkable ability to discriminately choose prey—not in choosing never to attack, as a dog might do, but in choosing the appropriate time to attack.

In Perry 267, the fable of the shepherd and the wolf he raised with his dogs, another shepherd is duped by the deception of a wolf:

ποιμὴν νεογνὸν λύκου σκύμνον εὐρῶν καὶ ἀνελόμενος σὺν τοῖς κυσὶν ἔτρεφεν. ἐπεὶ δ' ἠϋξήθη, εἴ ποτε λύκος πρόβατον ἤρπασε, μετὰ τῶν κυνῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐδίωκε. τῶν δὲ κυνῶν ἔσθ' ὅτε μὴ δυναμένων καταλαβεῖν τὸν λύκον καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ὑποστρεφόντων, ἐκεῖνος ἠκολούθει, μέχρις ἂν τοῦτον καταλάβῃ, οἷα δὴ λύκος, συμμετάσχη τῆς θήρας· εἶτα ὑπέστρεφεν. εἰ δὲ μὴ λύκος ἔξωθεν ἀρπάσειε πρόβατον, αὐτὸς λάθρα θύων ἅμα τοῖς κυσὶν ἐθονεῖτο, ἕως ὃ ποιμὴν στοχασάμενος καὶ συνεῖς τὸ δρώμενον εἰς δένδρον αὐτὸν ἀναρτήσας ἀπέκτεινεν.

ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ ὅτι φύσις πονηρὰ χρηστὸν ἦθος οὐ τρέφει.

A shepherd found a newborn wolf cub and took it home and raised it with his dogs. When the cub grew up, if a wolf carried off a sheep, he would join the dogs in the chase. But once when the dogs couldn't catch the wolf and went home, he kept on pursuing until he caught up and then, being a wolf, he shared in the spoils before returning home. After that if another wolf didn't steal a sheep, he would sacrifice one on the sly and feast on it with the dogs. Finally the shepherd grew suspicious, and when he realized what was happening, he hanged the wolf from a tree.

The fable shows that an evil nature does not produce good character.<sup>49</sup>

This wolf also finds sneaky ways to engage in wolf-like behavior, deceiving the shepherd at least for some time. This behavior occurs in degrees, beginning with joining the dogs in chasing away a wolf, but then abandoning his role as a dog and assuming his true nature as a wolf (οἷα δὴ λύκος, συμμετάσχη τῆς θήρας), convincing the dogs to join him.<sup>50</sup> Like the wolf in the previous fable, this one also engages in deception, slaughtering sheep, here described in sacrificial language, on the sly (λάθρα θύων).

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<sup>48</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>49</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>50</sup> Steiner 2015, 338.

The wolf in this story parodies human sacrificial behavior, sacrificing the sheep (θύων) and feasting on it with the dogs (ἔθουνεῖτο).<sup>51</sup> Like the lion cub in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, the feast that the wolf prepares does not fit within the parameters of proper human sacrifice and feasting, thus cementing the wolf's status as an outsider, unable to share in civilized behavior. The wolf's exclusion from the realm of proper sacrifice stands in contrast to the dog's ability to negotiate a food-based contract with humans.<sup>52</sup>

Despite having no share in human sacrifice or feasting, the wolves in these fables do share in the human trait of pretending. By now it should be clear that one of the key characteristics of wolves in fables is their ability to "cover their tracks," figuratively and literally, as they attempt to erase the evidence of their wild behavior to trick animals into being eaten by them, or to trick humans into trusting them. One final fable shows the confluence of these two themes, as a shepherd decides to use the wolf's trickery for his own benefit (Perry 366, the fable of the shepherd who raised a wolf):

ὄτι οἱ τῆ φύσει δεινοί, ἀρπάζειν καὶ πλεονέκτειν μαθόντες, τοὺς διδάξαντας πολλακίς ἔβλαψαν.

ποιμὴν μικρὸν λύκον εὐρῶν ἐθρέψατο, εἶτα σκύμνον γενόμενον ἐδίδαξεν ἀρπάζειν ἐκ τῶν σύνεγγυς ποιμνίων. ὁ λύκος δὲ διδαχθεὶς ἔφη "ὄρα μὴ πως σὺ ἐθίσας με ἀρπάζειν πολλὰ τῶν σεαυτοῦ προβάτων ζητήσης."

Those who are naturally formidable, when they learn to steal and be greedy, often hurt their teachers.

A shepherd found and nursed a little wolf and as it grew up taught it to steal from the neighboring flocks. When the wolf had learned his lesson, he said, "Watch out, now that you've accustomed me to stealing, that you don't have to seek for many of your own sheep."

The wolf's ability to steal on the sly is co-opted by an enterprising shepherd who sees the potential for expanding his own flocks. In return for this favor, the wolf tells the shepherd to watch out for his own flock, threatening to turn his training back on the shepherd.

This fable enacts a curious reversal of roles. The wolf, the stereotypical thief and predator of sheep, is taught to steal by the shepherd. Instead of simply growing into its natural character, the wolf must be educated. However, the wolf sees through the shepherd's designs and turns the plan back on him, warning him of the dangers of supporting this behavior. Yet the language shows the shepherd's active role in this sheep-stealing plot. "You have accustomed me to stealing," the wolf says (σὺ ἐθίσας με ἀρπάζειν), explicitly placing the blame for the unintended consequences of the shepherd's plan back on him. The shepherd has unleashed a dangerous beast, but one that he himself trained for this very purpose.

The shepherd's training of the wolf demonstrates that the behavior considered most savage and incompatible with human society is actually desirable to some people, if only they

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<sup>51</sup> Franco 2014, 205 n.141.

<sup>52</sup> Franco 2014, 51.

can control it to their own advantage. The wolf possesses natural tools, teeth resembling a butcher's knife, that the shepherd wants to use for his own benefit, yet, because those tools are in the mouth of the wolf, the shepherd cannot control how they are used. Beyond the physical tools, the wolf also possesses other capacities that the shepherd lacks: the ability to move stealthily, feign innocence, and then attack the flock when its protectors are unaware. As the wolf warns, all these skills can be turned against the shepherd, in a betrayal of the shepherd's relationship with the wolf that should come as no surprise to those familiar with the wolf's portrayal in other fables.

The deception carried out by the wolf in this story demonstrates a critical feature of human-animal studies, first articulated by Jacques Derrida, who points out that philosophers have traditionally stated that animals are without language. "Or more precisely unable to respond, to respond with a response that could be precisely and rigorously distinguished from a reaction, the animal is without the right and power to 'respond' and hence without many other things that would be the property of man."<sup>53</sup> This power to respond depends on the ability of the animal to cover its tracks. Derrida continues: "As we shall see, even those who, from Descartes to Lacan, have conceded to the animal some aptitude for signs and for communication have always denied it the power to respond—to pretend, to lie, to cover its tracks or erase its own traces."<sup>54</sup>

The ability to cover one's tracks is a crucial feature because it exemplifies a key component of language that is often denied to animals. This denial is part of a larger tradition of questioning whether animals possess language. Recent attempts to reframe the question have provided clarity by arguing that other animals use many of the same signifying systems as humans do, and that the difference is one of degree, rather than kind.<sup>55</sup> The complicated signifying systems used by various animal species function like human language on a variety of levels, including individual cognition and social networking, but human language retains the complexity of combining phonological and syntactic elements and hierarchical ordering that nonhuman animal communication generally lacks.<sup>56</sup> While human language is indeed more complex than animal communication, the differences between the two can still be described as what Wolfe calls a difference of degree, and the basic elements of human language are found in many species.<sup>57</sup> By thinking in terms of a signifying continuum, we might say that animals possess many of the same capabilities, including the capacity to deceive. While the fables show this ability carried out by means of cunning, stealth, and an imaginary use of human language, the basic assumption is that wolves can and do deceive, and that they are more than capable of

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<sup>53</sup> Derrida 2002, 400.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>55</sup> Wolfe 2003, 79.

<sup>56</sup> Gibson and Tallerman 2011, Snowdon 2018. See also Haraway 2008, 372-73 n.44.

<sup>57</sup> "The studies of animal cognition and behavior presented here provide evidence that some of the building blocks of phonology are present in a wide range of species: many animals can group objects, extract patterns from sensory input, perform sequential tasks, perform searches, engage in copying behaviors, and manipulate sets through concatenation. These capacities did not evolve for phonology, but rather, for other perceptual, cognitive, and motor functions. We find evidence for the abilities that underlie human phonological competence scattered across a wide range of animal species, though no single species besides ours may possess all of these abilities. In this sense, what may be unique to humans is our capacity to interface between these different components." (Samuels, Hauser, and Boeckx 2016, 545).

covering their tracks. Thus, fables demonstrate a cultural attitude toward the deceptive power of wolves that effectively repudiates any suggestion that animals cannot cover their tracks.

In addition to the wolf's potential for betrayal and deception found in the fables in this section, the wolf's agency in resisting domestication at the shepherd's hands in Perry 366 suggests that the wolf wields substantial power in this relationship. Because of his physical prowess, he is valuable to the shepherd, but he is a danger as well. In contrast, dogs are often portrayed as servile and flattering, being unable to stand up for themselves against their oppressors. The wolf's fear of this type of subjugation is illustrated in the fable of the dog in pursuit of the wolf (Perry 407).

κύων καταδιώκων λύκαιναν<sup>58</sup> ἐφρυάττετο τῇ τε τῶν ποδῶν ταχυτῆτι καὶ τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἰσχυρί, καὶ ἐδόκει φεύγειν τὴν λύκαιναν δι' οἰκείαν δῆθεν ἀσθένειαν. στραφεῖσα οὖν ἡ λύκαινα ἔφησε πρὸς τὸν κύνα “οὐ σὲ δέδοικα, ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ σοῦ δεσπότη καταδρομῆν.”

οὗτος δηλοῖ ὡς οὐ δεῖ τινα ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι τῇ τῶν ἐτέρων γενναιότητι.

A dog was chasing a female wolf and was feeling proud of his swift-footedness and his own strength. At the same time he thought that the wolf was running from him because of her own weakness. Then the wolf turned around and said to the dog: “It's not you I'm afraid of; I'm afraid of being run down by your master.”

This fable shows that one should not take credit for good qualities that belong to others.<sup>59</sup>

The wolf expresses her fear in no uncertain terms. She is not afraid of the dog, whom she could probably overcome in a fight, but she is afraid of his master. The power of a human master to subjugate or even kill a wild beast is the source of her trepidation, demonstrating that the relationship between humans and wolves imagined here is fraught with misgivings on both sides.

Showing this relationship from the wolf's perspective allows us to imagine what it might be like to be another creature, with a mind that fears the human. The wolf fears the dog's master because she knows that she will be denied entrance to the relational world that a domestic dog inhabits. Her fears exist because she knows she will never be given a part in that pact between humans and their companion species, because she is a wild outsider. As the previous fables have shown, any such attempt on the part of a human or wolf to replicate the relationship between humans and dogs with a wolf will result in disaster. Either the wolf's behavior will be deemed unacceptable by humankind, or the wolf's abilities will be used nefariously to support illegitimate human behavior. Within Aesop's fables, there is no middle ground that imagines a harmonious coexistence between humans and wolves.

This fraught relationship exemplifies what Alison Suen calls the “poverty of kinship.” She highlights the relational conditions of language, suggesting that denying animals language denies them the capacity for relationship with humans as well. Analyzing the work of Heidegger on animality, she concludes that Heidegger defines language relationally, and that the poverty of

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<sup>58</sup> I have used the reading *λύκαιναν* from codices AV (Perry 1952, 541 app. crit.), as a rare example of female animals in the *Aesopica*.

<sup>59</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

the animal exists because animals have been denied the capacity to relate.<sup>60</sup> In particular, she focuses on Heidegger’s use of the Greek word σύμβολον and the token of friendship indicating that human discourse is bounded by agreement.<sup>61</sup> Heidegger emphasizes the relational aspect of language, which depends on agreement between two parties.<sup>62</sup> By agreement, κατὰ συνθήκην, the *symbolon* which is the condition of the possibility of discourse occurs. The σύμβολον, he says, depends on “being held to one another and simultaneously proving to belong together,” a relationship which, although he denies that it can exist among animals, is exactly the type of relationship depicted within accounts of human-animal companionship.<sup>63</sup> This sense of belonging is rarely afforded to wolves, as we have seen in the fables, despite being frequently offered to their dog relatives. But, as Heidegger says, agreement (being κατὰ συνθήκην) is the condition of the possibility of discourse, and there is no agreement between humans and wolves within the world of Aesop’s fables.

Suen points out that for Heidegger “it is the ability to relate to meaning--and the ability to relate at all—that distinguishes humans from instinctually driven animals.”<sup>64</sup> In her discussion of Heidegger in relation to modern accounts of language acquisition, she concludes that language depends on relationality, not rationality, and that “by denying language to the animal, we are also denying them the capacity to relate. In the end, the ‘poverty’ of animals comes down to a deprivation of kinship.”<sup>65</sup> In the fables we have seen so far, it is clear that wolves are portrayed as having a “poverty of kinship,” existing outside of human affairs and never successfully negotiating an entrance into human society.

Such a deprivation of kinship is illustrated in another fable in which a wolf comments upon the state of human attitudes toward wolves (Perry 190, the fable of the donkey, the crow, and the wolf):

ὄνος ἡλκωμένος τὸν νῶτον ἔν τινι λειμῶνι ἐνέμετο. κόρακος δὲ ἐπικαθίσαντος αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἔλκος κρούοντος, ὁ ὄνος ἀλγῶν ὠγκᾶτό τε καὶ ἐσκίρτα. τοῦ δὲ ὀνηλάτου πόρρωθεν ἐστῶτος καὶ γελῶντος, λύκος παριῶν ἐθεάσατο καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔφη “ἄθλιοι ἡμεῖς, οἱ, κἂν αὐτῷ μόνον ὀφθῶμεν, διωκόμεθα, τούτῳ δὲ καὶ προσγελῶσιν.”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ ὅτι οἱ κακοῦργοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐξ ἀπόπτου δηλοῖ εἰσιν.

A donkey with a sore on his back was pasturing in a meadow. When a crow landed on his back and began pecking at the sore, he brayed and bucked in pain. The donkey’s owner was standing nearby and laughed, but a wolf passing by saw it and said to himself, “We have a miserable life. Whenever they catch sight of us, they chase us away, but they even laugh at this fellow.”

The fable shows that dangerous people can be recognized even from a distance.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Suen 2015, 64-69.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 54-56.

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger 1995, 307-8.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Suen 2015, 63.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>66</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

The donkey in this fable, whose suffering is a source of amusement for the owner, nevertheless seems to be the focus of the wolf's jealousy. Wishing for any kind of relationship, even a negative one, the wolf laments the fact that any person who sees him only chases him away, declining to laugh at him or engage with him in any other way.

The wolf's complaint demonstrates the complete lack of kinship with human beings and the poverty to which this outcast species is relegated.<sup>67</sup> The wolf would settle for even having his discomfort create amusement for humans, if only it meant that they would allow his presence nearby. This disconnect between humans and wolves is emphasized in two other fables. In Perry 404, the fable of the hunter and the wolf, a hunter who uses his dogs to chase down a wolf mocks the wolf from his position of strength supported by the dogs:

άνηρ τις θηρευτής, λύκον θεασάμενος προσβάλλοντα τῇ ποιμνῇ καὶ πλεῖστα τῶν  
προβάτων ὡς δυνατὸν διασπαράττοντα, τοῦτον εὐμηχάνως θηρεύει καὶ τοὺς κύνας αὐτῷ  
ἐπαφίησι, φθεγξάμενος πρὸς αὐτόν “ὦ δεινότατον θηρίον, ποῦ σου ἡ προλαβοῦσα ἰσχὺς,  
ὅτι τοῖς κυσὶν ὄλωσ ἀντιστῆναι οὐκ ἠδυνήθης.”

οὗτος δηλοῖ ὡς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ τέχνῃ καθέστηκε δόκιμος.

A hunter, who saw a wolf attacking a flock and tearing to pieces as many sheep as he could, easily hunted him down and set the dogs on him, shouting as he did so, “You terrible beast, where is your former strength when you are completely unable to make a stand against the dogs?”

This shows that each person is esteemed in their own area of expertise.<sup>68</sup>

The hunter's mocking of the wolf illustrates the two sides of this attitude toward wolves: fear of the wolf (δεινότατον) and its potential for harm, and hatred and disparagement (οὐκ ἠδυνήθης) that accompanies the overpowering of the once-feared creature. This fable suggests that there is no middle ground: either the wolf is greatly feared for the threat he poses to the farmer, or he is mocked for his ineptitude if he loses the fight with humans. This enmity is in contrast to the relatively peaceful, if at times uneasy, coexistence between dogs and humans.

The fable of the plowman and the wolf (Perry 38) features a similar type of disparagement, as a hapless wolf invites a farmer's disdain:

ἀρότης λύσας τὸ ζεύγος ἐπὶ πότον ἀπήγαγε. λύκος δὲ λιμώττων καὶ τροφὴν ζητῶν, ὡς  
περιέτυχε τῷ ἀρότρῳ, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον τὰς τῶν ταύρων ζεύγλας περιέλειχε, λαθῶν δὲ κατὰ  
μικρὸν ἐπειδὴ καθῆκε τὸν αὐχένα, ἀνασπᾶν μὴ δυνάμενος ἐπὶ τὴν ἄρουραν τὸ ἄροτρον  
ἔσυρεν. ὁ δὲ ἀρότης ἐπανελθὼν καὶ θεασάμενος αὐτὸν ἔλεγεν “εἴθε γάρ, ὦ κακὴ κεφαλὴ,  
καταλιπὼν τὰς ἀρπαγὰς καὶ τὸ ἀδικεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ γεωπονεῖν τραπέιης.”

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<sup>67</sup> Wolves as a pack animal of course have complex kinship structures; however, the Aesopic fables do not portray this relationship to other wolves. This is in stark contrast to the kinship among wolves that we will observe in the Ojibwe stories.

<sup>68</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

οὕτως οἱ πονηροὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κἂν χρηστότητα ἐπαγγέλλωνται, διὰ τὸν τρόπον οὐ πιστεύονται.

A plowman unyoked his team and led them to drink. A hungry wolf prowling for food came upon the plow and began to lick at the neckpiece on the yoke. Without realizing it, he gradually put his neck in and, being unable to get out, he went dragging the plow across the field. When the plowman returned and saw this, he said, “You worthless creature! If only you would forget your theft and crime and turn to farming.”

The same is true of wicked people: even when they promise good behavior, because of their character no one believes them.<sup>69</sup>

The wolf’s basic untrustworthiness and uncivilized nature is highlighted here, and the farmer’s response encapsulates a strong disdain for this species (ὃ κακὴ κεφαλή). A hint of frustration remains, as the farmer wishes the wolf would turn to farming, perhaps imagining a future in which he and the wolf could work together in harmony. But the unfulfilled wish is grounded in reality, and in the farmer’s perception of that reality, branding the wolf as engaging in theft and crime (τὰς ἀρπαγὰς καὶ τὸ ἀδικεῖν).

The wolf’s perspective on humankind’s attitude toward wolves can be found in a fable told by Aesop in Plutarch’s *Septem Sapientium Convivium* 13.156a, in the context of discussing Pittacus’s passage of a law prescribing a double penalty for crimes committed when drunk (Perry 453, *The Wolf and the Shepherds*).

Αἴσωπος λόγον εἶπε τοιοῦτον· λύκος ἰδὼν ποιμένας ἐσθίοντας ἐν σκηνῇ πρόβατον, ἐγγυς προσελθὼν “ἡλίκος ἂν ἦν” ἔφη “θόρυβος ὑμῖν, εἰ ἐγὼ τοῦτ’ ἐποίουν.”

Aesop told the following story: “A wolf seeing some shepherds in a shelter eating a sheep, came near to them and said, ‘What an uproar you would make if I were doing that!’”<sup>70</sup>

The wolf points out the double standard which informs the shepherd’s dedication to protecting the flock from wolves. It is not for the sheep’s good so much as to preserve them for his own use. The wolf in this fable sees through this hypocrisy as clearly as he can see the shepherds consuming the sheep, and turning the situation around, allows us to wonder if perhaps he wishes to protect the sheep from the shepherds. In this account, we can see through the wolf’s eyes and understand that the enmity against wolves, both then and now, often stems from livestock breeding and the competition between apex predators like the wolf and husbandry operations.<sup>71</sup> The denial of relationship which I discussed earlier stems from the necessity of preserving the flock for human use alone, precluding any of the sheep being shared willingly with the wolves, and fomenting the distrust which the shepherds have for the wolves.

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<sup>69</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>70</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>71</sup> See Haraway 2008, 101.

In the fable of the wolf and the old woman, the wolf's perspective on this interspecies enmity and lack of relationship is provided, demonstrating the basic inability for cross-species communication between human and wolf (Perry 158):

λύκος λιμώττων περιήει ζητῶν ἑαυτῷ τροφήν. ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο κατὰ τινα ἔπαυλιν, ἀκούσας γραδὸς κλαυθμυριζομένῳ παιδί διαπειλουμένης, ἔαν μὴ παύσῃται βαλεῖν αὐτὸν τῷ λύκῳ, προσέμενεν οἰόμενος ἀληθεύειν αὐτήν. ἐσπέρας δὲ γενομένης, ὡς οὐδὲν τοῖς λόγοις ἀκόλουθον ἐγένετο, ἀπαλλαττόμενος ἔφη προς ἑαυτόν “ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἐπαύλει οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἄλλα μὲν λέγουσιν, ἄλλα δὲ ποιοῦσι.”

οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἀρμόσειεν ἂν πρὸς ἐκείνους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οἱ τοῖς λόγοις ἀκόλουθα τὰ ἔργα οὐκ ἔχουσι.

A hungry wolf was walking around looking for something to eat. When he came to a farmstead where he heard an old woman threatening a crying child that if he didn't stop, she would throw him to the wolf, the wolf waited around believing that she was serious. When evening came, and she didn't do anything she had said, he went away and said to himself, “In this house people say one thing and do another.”

This fable applies to people whose deeds do not match their words.<sup>72</sup>

The wolf in this fable illustrates the result of denying kinship to animals. Capable of understanding the meaning of the words the old woman speaks, the wolf is yet unable to grasp the deception that is taking place. In this way, the wolf is assimilated to the figure of the child, who must also be deceived by the woman's words for the stratagem to work. And like the child, who will eventually grow up and understand that the wolf, at least in this threat, is not real, time passes and the wolf understands that he has been deceived. Yet there is one crucial difference: unlike the child, the wolf remains an outsider, denied entry to the house, overhearing words that

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<sup>72</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961. Babrius 16 (Perry 1965, 26-27) records another version of this fable with a misogynistic ending:

A rustic nurse threatened her infant when he cried: “Be still, lest I throw you to the wolf.” A wolf heard this and, believing that the old woman meant what she said, stayed to enjoy a dinner all but served; until at last the child at evening fell asleep and our hero, hungry and foolishly agape, as the veritable wolf in the proverb, went away, after standing by in attendance on idle hopes. Then the she-wolf who was his wife questioned him, saying: “Why have you come back without bringing anything as you used to do?” And he replied: “What can you expect, when I put my trust in a woman?”

Avianus 1 (Duff and Duff 2006, 682-85) records another version with a similar theme:

Once upon a time when her little boy was crying, a peasant-woman had sworn that if he were not quiet he would be given as a tit-bit for a ravenous wolf. A credulous wolf overheard these words and waited on guard close in front of the cottage doors, cherishing hopes in vain. For the child let a deep sleep come over his weary limbs, and besides deprived the hungry robber thereby of his expectation. The wolf repaired to the lair in his native woods, and his mate, seeing him arrive famished, said, “Why don't you bring back the usual prey? Why are your cheeks wasted and your jaws so drawn and emaciated?” “A mean trick took me in,” he said; “so don't be surprised that I have been hard put to it to skulk pitifully away—with no spoil. What kill, do you ask, could come my way? what prospect could there be, when a scolding nurse befooled me?” Let anyone who believes in a woman's sincerity reflect that to him these words are spoken and that it is he whom this lesson censures.



are not intended for him, and speaking only to himself. In this way, the fable encapsulates the position of the wolf relative to Greek society as demonstrated by these fables.

As this fable shows, the wolf is an outcast from human society. In every interaction between wolves and humans, there is no communication, only deception and conflict. With other species, such as the lamb, the wolf demonstrates an ability to use language for his own benefit, in the service of his ravenous belly.<sup>73</sup> The wolf's use of language within the fables mirrors the relationship present there. With humans, the relationship or lack thereof is characterized by contention and exclusion, and the wolf expresses disappointment at that state of affairs, and typically speaks only to himself. With prey animals, the wolf is in a position of power, and translates his physical power into further violence through deceptive and taunting words. These interactions show that language indeed depends upon relationality, and that its existence is predicated upon the animal's bodily form which produces it and which it supports. In this way, Aesop's fables subvert any attempt to separate language from the bodily and from the animal as a special possession of the human.

I have chosen fables about wolves for this chapter because of their unique relationship to human society. Denied kinship, and not being privy to the functioning of human discourse, the wolf is at best a mythical creature used to scare children, and at worst a vicious predator intent on destroying the farmer's flock. The wolf remains on the outskirts, a wild animal occasionally making forays into human society, but never successfully welcomed into a relationship with humankind. The wolf never engages in productive conversation with humans; usually the wolf speaks to himself, and when he does speak to humans, it is an occasional off the cuff remark, such as the wolf's remarks about the shepherds eating a sheep, and the wolf who warned the shepherd about stealing his sheep. Thus, while the wolf is capable of using language, he does not cultivate relational use of language, nor does the wolf's remarks lead to a change in the outcome. In the fable of the wolf and lamb, the wolf attempts to assuage his moral guilt, but goes ahead with his actions anyway. In other fables, the wolf remarks upon human use of language but does not participate in conversation with humans. The wolf's liminal use of language is thus especially suited to demonstrating the precariousness of language and its dependence upon both bodily power and relationship for its existence and use.

In the next section I will look at the Ojibwe story of Nenabozho and the wolves, as recorded by William Jones, and investigate the similarities and differences in this story's approach to wolves vis-à-vis the Greek fables. Key questions in this comparison will be: what factors define the human-wolf relationship in these parallel but different stories? Where does the animal perspective on the human appear, perhaps unexpectedly, in these accounts? How do Indigenous methods of reading traditional stories inform this account, and can they be applied to Greek fables? In the final section, I will compare a similar story about dogs and wolves told in both Greek and Ojibwe, applying this method of cross-cultural analysis.

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<sup>73</sup> In addition to the fables cited earlier, this same theme continues in Perry 157, the fable of the wolf and the goat (Daly 1961, 150):

A wolf saw a goat browsing on a cliff and, since he couldn't get at her, urged her to come down before she fell, pointing out that the pasture was much better down where he was, for the grass was lush. The goat answered, "That would all be very well if I didn't know that you are not so much interested in inviting me to pasture as you are in your own lack of food."

## Nenabozho and the Wolves

The story of Nenabozho and the Wolves is still told in modern variants that closely resemble the versions recorded by William Jones.<sup>74</sup> In Jones's texts, multiple versions occur, and all are lengthy. For the sake of space, I will include only the first version, told by Waasaagoneshkang, "He-that-leaves-the-Imprint-of-his-Foot-shining-in-the-Snow," of Bois Fort, Minnesota.<sup>75</sup> I am using the text and English translation given by Jones, which follows the Ojibwe quite literally.

### 8. Nānabushu and the Wolves

Mīdāc ningutinigu pāpāmusāt awiya owābāmān, kuniginīn ma·i·gana<sup>ε</sup> īzan.  
Kā·i·cipīpāgimāt, kā·pīciicānit 'i'ī'mā<sup>n</sup> ayāt.

O·ō·widāc kī·i·'kitōwāg īgi<sup>u</sup> ma·i·ganaḡ: "Kāgu pācu' ā'pitci icā'kāgun, kāgo kīwī·i·gowā," ugīnā<sup>ε</sup>. Mīdāc kāgā't nāgāwāsa wāntcigābāwīwāt. Wo·ō·widāc ugī·i·gowān: "Amāntcwīni<sup>u</sup> kītōtamāg ingutci wayābāmināgogun? Kāwīnina indinawāmāsīwānān kitināndāmīna'ku? Pācuginīnigu kitinawāmininim: mīginīnigu 'a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> kōsiwā nīdcikiwā<sup>n</sup>zi." O·ō·dāc ugī·i·nāngōmān īni<sup>u</sup> a'kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngāḡan: "Nītcizazī'kizī," ugī·i·nān. Mīdāc kā·i·nāt īni<sup>u</sup> ugwisīsini īni<sup>u</sup> a'kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngāḡan. "Ānīc nintōcimāg," ugī·i·nā<sup>ε</sup> 'i'ī<sup>u</sup> ma·īngāna<sup>ε</sup>. Wo·ō·widāc ugī·i·nān: "Ānīndi ācāyāg? ugī·i·nān."

"Wo·ō·witi nībinunk kini'tāgābānīg īgi<sup>u</sup> kitōcimāg, mīdāc iiwiti ācāyāng. Mīdāc a'panā iiwiti kī·a·sāntcikuyāngibān ugīmī'kawiāwābānin. Mīdācigu iiwiti ka'kina kāici·a·sāntcikuyāngibān mīdāc iiwiti ānubimi·i·cāyānk."

Ō·ō·dāc ugī·i·nā<sup>ε</sup> 'a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> Nānabucu: "Mī gayā nīn 'i'ī'witi pāmi·i·cāyān, mīsa·i·ī·sān kātānicīwītciwīnāguk," ugīmā<sup>ε</sup>.

Ānīc, mīsa kāgā't cigwa kī·āniwāwītciwāt. Ānīc kāwīn kecīca' utibi·ā·sīn āniwīdcīwāt. Ta'kāsinini pimusāwāt. Mīdāc cigwa unāgucininig, "Mīmāwīni·i·u cigwa tcināntagabācīyānk," i'kitōwāg. Mīdāc kāgā't ānīntakābāciwāt. Kāgā't cigwa umi'kānāwā imā<sup>n</sup> kabāciwāt; ānōtc imā<sup>n</sup> apāgata·a·nunk wāntci·u·nīnāmānit. "Mīsa umā," i'kitōwā<sup>ε</sup>. Cigwa wī'kacimōwāg; cayīgwa mīdāc kā·i·cikicīpāgābawīnit 'i'ī<sup>u</sup> kawicimōnit ānīc mīgu gayā wīn āndōtānk 'i'ī<sup>u</sup> kawicimōnit. O·ō· ugī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a'kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngāḡan: "Miziwā i<sup>u</sup> īgi<sup>u</sup> kitōcimāg i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> cingicimuwāt icikawicimūn kayā; kuntigu kīgī'kāt."

<sup>74</sup> E.g., Murdoch 2020. I have chosen the spelling "Nenabozho" in my discussion, for "Nānabushu" in Jones' transcription, in an attempt to be consistent. However, many alternative spellings exist, including "Wenabozho" and "Nanaboozhoo."

<sup>75</sup> Jones 1917, xvi-xx.

“Äye<sup>ε</sup>, kägä‘t ningikātç.” Änïc mīgu i<sup>u</sup> äcimādwäsininig īni<sup>u</sup> wībitān ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> Nānabucu, ā‘pītcikī‘kātçit. Mīdāç kägä‘t k̄i·cikawicimut i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> nisawicininīt, ō·ō·dāç kī‘kitowān īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·i·ngānān: “Tağa, kīmicōmäiwā awi·i·‘k kibī‘tawacāniwān.”

Mīdāç kägä‘t pīnānowāniwān īni<sup>u</sup> päçig, mīnawā īni<sup>u</sup> päçig; mītugigu k̄auntcinibāt. Kägä‘tsa kīcūngwān. Mīdāç ningutinigu kuskusit, kägä‘tsa ābwāso. Ō·ō·widāç kī·i·‘kitō: “Kägä‘tsa, nintābwäckāgunan īni<sup>u</sup> animowāniuwucañ!” Ningutci k̄i·i·ci·a·‘päçita·u·t, ō·ō·dāç ugīmādwä·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīmaīngānān: “Kägätsa kitimīgāmāg īgi<sup>u</sup> kitōcimāg,” ugī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān.

Änïc wībāgu mīnawā ānigī‘kātçi, ānïc cigwa mīnawā mādwāwäsininig īni<sup>u</sup> wībitān. “Mīmāwīnigu cayīgwa tcigawātçit ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> kīmicōmä·i·wā. Äninta wīni<sup>u</sup> mīnawā awi·ā·siwāg mī·i·‘u kibī‘tawacāniwā?”

Mīdāç kägä‘t ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> päçig k̄i·i·ciinānuwānīt, mīnawā ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> päçig.

Änïc, mīdāç cīgwa tciwābāninig, ānïc cay·ī·gwa wīmādcāwāg mīnawā. Änïc cayīgwa ugī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān: “Mīsa nōngum wunāgwucig tcitāgwicīnāng witi pāmī·i·cāyānk kīcpīn kicī‘kāyānk.”

Mīdāç kägä‘t k̄ānīcimādcāwāt, mīdāç ānupimiba‘tōt Nānabucu. Ningutinigu bāpimusāwāt, “Mīmāwīn cigwa tcigīwīsīniyāngubān,” udigōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·i·ngānān. Mīsa kägä‘t cayīgwa Nānabucu inā: “Tağa, āni·a·‘pītcipōdāwān.”

Mīsa kägä‘t k̄i·u·‘kwā‘kwisitōt, mīdāç nātunāwāt īni<sup>u</sup> utickutā‘kānān.

“Änīn äcīctcīgāyān?” udigōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān. Cigwa kanōnimān īni<sup>u</sup> päçig: “Tağa, kīn, pōtawān,” inīmāwān.

Mīdāç kägä‘t pīmīijāwān i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> kī·u·kwā‘kwisitōt īni<sup>u</sup> mī‘tigōn; cayīgwa äcipācītcikwāskwanutāminīt, pānāgum āmīskwa‘kunānig. “Na’, mīsai i<sup>u</sup> äcīctcīgānk i·i·‘u wāpō‘tawāngin.”

Mīsa’ k̄i·i·ciwīsīniwāt i·i·mā<sup>n</sup>, mīdāç cigwa kī·ā·nimādcāwāt; ānïc wī‘kagwātātāguicīnōg. Kāwīn k̄ānāgā ānugīpāngicīmunit, nāwāntcīc pīmusāwāg. “Änïc, mī·i·‘u päçu‘cīgwa,” utigō<sup>ε</sup>. Mīdāç uskitibi‘kātīni a‘pī wādi‘tamuwāt. Änïc mīdāç i·imā<sup>n</sup> k̄i·i·cīkabāciwāt kī·u·cīkāwāg. Cigwasa nātasāntcīgōwāg. Änïc kayā wīn mīnā aya·ī·, utōpā‘kunīsağ mīnā. Mīnawā wāçāckwātowān mīnā Nānabucu. “Kāgu wīn k̄i·ā·pītcibi‘kāk wābāndāngān; pāmāgu kīgīcāp kīgawābāndān,” kī·i·nā. Mīdāç k̄i·i·nint: “Pāmā kīgīcāp.”

Mīsa äcīnānōntāyagāntānk tcībwāwābāninig. “Tağapīna, ningawābāndān,” kī·i·nāndānk Mīsa kägä‘t k̄i·i·ciwābāndānk, ānīn k̄i·i·cīnānk wāyābāndānk k̄āgwānīsağīmī‘tcā‘kawtīni

‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> mō<sup>n</sup>sunagic! Ānīc cayīgwa kayä wīn kwä‘ki‘tä, ō·o·dac ugī·i·gō<sup>ε</sup>: “Intigōguca tibi‘kunk kīmadwāntcigānāban.”

Cayīgwasa kayāwīn udānumatāsītōn ‘i<sup>ε</sup>·i<sup>u</sup> kayä wīn kāmīnt. Kīyānābitācin ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> tō‘pā‘kunisag, kayä īni<sup>u</sup> wacackwätowān kīyānābitācin. Mīdāc ubā‘pi·i·gon. “Ānīn wāndcitotāman ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> kī·i·cictcigāyan? kāwīn kitāgipapāmāndanzīn ā‘pi‘tcitibi‘kāk, nackādāc āji·i·nīgā·i·tisuyan Kägätsa kāwīn kīni‘tānōntā<sup>n</sup>zī, iwidāc inigā‘tōyan ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> kimisat. Ānīc, wāgunāc wīn kāmīdcit?”

Mīsa intawā āci·a·camigut mīnawā ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup>. Ānīc umisawīnamawān. Mīdāc kā·i·ci·a·camigut, ānīc, mīsa’ kīwīsinit kayä wīn. Ō·ō·dac ugī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān: “Ambāšanō, papāmigusitā” ugi·i·gōn. “Wa·a·wā pājig kitōcīm kigapapanāntawāntcigām, mīgu i<sup>u</sup> pā‘pic mīninān. Kägä‘t umāci·ā·n īni<sup>u</sup> awāsīyan.”

Mīdāc kägä‘t kā·i·cikusiwāt, a‘panā kāmādcānit ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> utōckinawāminwā. Wī‘kāgunā pitcīnag kāmādcāwād. A‘panā ā·i·ci·kawānit ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> utōckinawāmiwā mīdāc ānipapima·a·nāwāt. Mīdāc cigwa ningutingigu ānipima·a·nāwāt, ninguting anī·i·nābiwāt, ugīwābandānāwa upimwäckītwīwinini kā·u·ntcimādcība‘tōnit. Ō·ō·dac ugī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān: “Ānī·a·yāmu<sup>x</sup> kitōcīm ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> u‘pī‘tawacān.”

“Sān!” Ānīn kätotāmān i·i·u mackitīwinic kāniayāyan?” i‘kito ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> Nānabucu. Ō·ō·widāc udigōn ini<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān: “Māmīndagā kīgī·i·nigāmā ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> kitōcīm.” Obimināsi‘kāmīni ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> mackitīwin; āc·i·ōdā‘pināmīnit mīdāc ācibā‘pāwābināmīnit; wābōyān idac ugīta‘kunāmīni.

“Ictā! Pīdōn, nītcizazī‘kizī, ningānipimūntān,” ugī·i·nān.

Mīdāc kägä‘t kā·pījimīnigut mīdāc ānipimōndānk Ānīc, mīsa’ mīnawā kāmīcimādcāwāt. Ningutingigu ānipapimusāwāt utānī·i·gōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīyan; wo·o· udigōn: “Mīsa i<sup>u</sup> īni<sup>u</sup> tci·ō·nītcāniwān pāmīnīcawāwā īgi<sup>u</sup> kidōcimāg. Ānīc, mīsa gägä‘t cigwa ānīgā‘kiāwāt īgi<sup>u</sup> kidōcimāg.”

Ningutingigu kīnībatāgā‘kwīsinīni ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> wībitāni.

“Nağinīn, Nānabucu, mīdugōma ānu·a·nīpimwāwāgwān īni<sup>u</sup> mō<sup>n</sup>sōn. Nānabusu, mīdugōma ānu·a·nīpimwāwāgwān īni<sup>u</sup> mō<sup>n</sup>sōn. Nānabucu, tağā āni·a·yā<sup>u</sup> ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> ubikwa‘k ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> kidōcīm.”

“Sā, bina! Ānīnda kätōtamān ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> ānimwābidic kāniayāyan?”

“Kägätsa kidinīgāmāg īgi<sup>u</sup> kitōcimāg.” Ājībīmi·a·yāmīnit nāni‘kākubītōnit īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānān. Mīdāc ājipawīāpināmīnit, kuniginīn, kägä‘t pikwa‘k ugīta‘kunāmīni!

“Pīdōn, taḡa,” ugī·i·nān.

Mīdāc kǎgǎ‘t kǎ·i·jimīnigut; kǎ·i·jipimiwitōt. Cigwa ninguting ugīwābamāwān cingicininit udōjima<sup>ε</sup>. Kāwīn kaḡagǎ ningutci tcimiskwīwākunagānig. Kuniginīn, Nānabucu kanōnā: “Kāni‘tǎgǎwǎgwan īgi<sup>u</sup> kitōcimāḡ. Mīsa i<sup>u</sup> āndōtamuwāt mā‘kawāwātcin īni<sup>u</sup> mō<sup>n</sup>zōn.” Kāmōtcigisinit īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>sīyan. “‘Ā<sup>u</sup>, ‘ā<sup>u</sup>, Nānabucu, wīkīci‘tōtā i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> kātaciwiyāsikāyank.”

“Wāgunān i·i·<sup>u</sup> kāwiyāsi‘kātamaḡk?”

Mīdāc āgut īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·nḡaḡaḡ: “Kǎgǎtsa kitinigāmāḡ kitōcimāḡ.”

Mīdāc kǎgǎ‘t sībickātc wītcī·ā·t ucigāwāt. Kāwin kaḡagǎ tcimādcicininit, pīnic pānimā kākīcigāwāt pāpīndigāwag. Ānīn kāicināḡk? Cigwa unawi·ā· kayā wīn, ābitagu wīnin ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> wānawi·i·nt. Mīsa pitcīnāḡ tī·mā<sup>n</sup> kīminwāndāḡk. “Mīnḡaḡwāna i<sup>u</sup> tcīwīsiniyān kayā nīn,” kī·ināndam. “Wāndcītaḡu kǎgǎ‘tigunā minu·a·yāḡ.”

## 9. Nānabushu and the Wolves, Continued

Ningutingigu i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> māmō<sup>n</sup>su‘kāwāt, “Āmbāḡaḡōnā, kōsinān ta·a·‘kǎ. Mīḡwāḡtaḡcinā<sup>ε</sup> i<sup>u</sup> ā‘ta pimisā‘kwāt,” ugī·i·nāwān īni<sup>u</sup> osiwān.

Mīdāc kǎgǎ‘t cigwa kīmādcī‘tānit īni<sup>u</sup> ōsiwān. O<sup>ε</sup>ōwidāc udiguwān: “Āmbāḡaḡō, kǎḡu‘ kaḡawābamīci‘kǎḡun wo<sup>ε</sup>o<sup>u</sup> wī·a·‘kāyān. Ayāḡḡwāmīsin, Nānabucu,” udigōn īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·nḡaḡaḡ.

Mīdāc kǎgǎ‘t.

Ānīc Nānabucu u‘kunācīc ācīkackackīwicīnk, mīsa pisindawāwāt, indigunāḡdagu maḡwāḡanā‘pī‘tcigǎ. “Taḡa pīna, nīḡa·ināb,” ināndam Nānabucu. Kǎgǎ‘t āci·a·ḡwasāḡiḡnāḡk ‘i<sup>ε</sup>i<sup>u</sup> u‘kunācīc, cigwa kǎgǎ‘t owābamān na·i·tā i·i·<sup>u</sup> ubigwā‘kugānānīni na·i·tā utōwawīcāḡaḡnātāmīni; kǎḡāḡu mīca‘kīḡābīḡaḡōtāni i·i· usībickanāmōwīnīni. Mīdāc kaḡawābamāt, ningutingigu ācīku‘tigwāḡdāmīnit ā‘pīdcī i·i·mā<sup>n</sup> uckīncīḡunḡk ācīpāḡḡisīnīnīḡ. Paḡāḡu, tcō<sup>n</sup>, tō<sup>n</sup> kānīni‘taḡk. “Cīḡwāḡaḡ, Nānabucu ningwāckwāḡaḡnā·a·mawā!” Mīdāc ā‘kidut ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zī: “Ayāwī‘k kīmicōmā·ī·wā, ta‘kābāwāni‘k!”

Mīdāc kǎgǎ‘t kī‘ta‘kābāwīnīnt, mīdāc kǎ·i·cīmī‘kawīt. Mīdāc kǎ·i·ḡut īni<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīyan: “Nānabucu, kaḡawābamīwāmāḡsaḡ.”

“Kāwīn, kāwīn!”

“Nānabucu, kaḡawābamīwāmāḡsaḡu.”

Ānīc cigwa kigicāp, ānīn āyā‘pītcisigwānig pimidā? Ānīc udācamiguwān kigicāp ‘i‘i‘u uda‘kānini.

Cigwa udinān: “Āmbāšanō, nīn ni‘tām niga·a·‘kā,” udinā<sup>ε</sup>. Mīdāc kīgā‘t a‘kāt. “Ānīc mīgu gayā nīn, kāwīn wī‘kā ninganawābamigōsī ‘i‘i‘u a‘kāyān. Ānīc mīcigwa tcigackackīwicināg.” Ānīc tca·ī·gwa umādcīpīsiganāānān īnī‘u a‘kaṇān. Kīgātsa pimitāwikanagaṭiniwān. Mīgunā ānisīwāganātānk ‘i‘i‘u mini‘k pāmitāwikanagaṭini‘k, cigwa kumāa‘pī pīti‘kwācinōn kackackīwicininit īnī‘u a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ganān. Wāwānigu ugī·u·nābandān ‘i‘i‘u māngikanagaṭinīg u‘kaṇ kā·i·ci·ā·cōganā·a·nk, kā·i·cipaki‘tā·o·wāt īnī‘u a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ganān. Ānīc mīsa‘ ācinīwānawāt. O<sup>ε</sup>ōdāc ugī·i·nā<sup>ε</sup> ‘i‘i‘u utōcima<sup>ε</sup>: “Nackāna ta‘kābāwāni‘k!” ugī·i·nān. Mēdāc kā·i·nāt: “Kaṇawābamīwāmbānisa nītcizāzī‘kisi. Mīsa‘ āci·a·yāyān awīya kānawābamitcin.”

Ānīc mī·i·<sup>u</sup> cigwa kīmi‘kawit wa<sup>ε</sup>a‘<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngān. Wo<sup>ε</sup>ōwidāc ki·i·ito: “Nānabucu nimpaki‘tā·u·‘k,” kī·i·‘kito; “untcitāgu nimpaki‘tā·u·‘k,” kī·i·‘kito wa·a·<sup>u</sup> a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·gān. “Ānīc pāmāsaṇa kayā nīn kīga·a·cāminim.”

Mīdāc kīgā‘t kigicāp. Cigwa ānīc nā īnī‘u uda‘ki‘kōn kanabātc wīgwasāba‘kwāng a‘pī‘tcisigwāni ‘i‘i‘u udōcima<sup>ε</sup>. Ānīc mīsa‘ cigwa kidāmwāwāt īnī‘u umō<sup>n</sup>zumiwān, “Mīmāwīn cigwa tcigusīyang,” utigōn īnī‘u a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīyan. Mīdāc āgut īnī‘u a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīyan: “Pācik kimīnin wa<sup>ε</sup>a‘<sup>u</sup> ningwisīs,” utigōn.”

Ānīc unanā‘kumān. “Mīsādāc īzaṇ i·i·<sup>u</sup> kā·u·ndcimino ayayāyān. Intawā mīgu omā kā·undcīt,” udinān īnī‘u a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zyān.

“Ānīc, mīsaḡu i<sup>u</sup> wābānk tcigusīyang,” utigōn īnī‘u a‘kiwāzīyan.

Ānīc mīsa gāgāt cigwa kusiwāt. “Nāmāguna ayā ‘a<sup>ε</sup>a‘<sup>u</sup> kāwābanicimi‘k,” ugī·i·gōn īnī‘u a‘kiwāzīyan.

Mīdāc kīgā‘t.

## 8. Nānabushu and the Wolves

Now, once on a time as he (Nānabushu) was travelling about, he saw somebody. Lo, they were wolves! After he had called aloud to them, then they came over to where he was.

And this said the wolves: “Go you not so very close, for he wishes to say something to you,” they said of him. Whereupon truly, at some distance away, was where they stood when they spoke to him. Then this they were told: “I should like to know why you act so whenever I happen to see you anywhere. Is it always your idea that I am not your kinsman? Why, I am very closely related to you; now that father of yours is my brother.” And this was the way he told of how he was related to the old Wolf: “He is of my old brother,” he said to them. And this was what he said to the son of the old Wolf: “Why

(you are) my nephews,” he said to the Wolves. And this he said to them: “Whither are you going?” he said to them.

“Off over here last summer your nephews did some killing, and it is thither we are going: for it was always there that we have cached what (my children) have found. Therefore over to the place where we had cached away everything is where we are endeavoring to go.”

And this to them said Nānabushu: “So am I bound for that place too, therefore I will go along with you,” he said to them.

Well, it was true that he then went with them upon their journey. To be sure, he could hardly keep up as he travelled along with them. A cold wind was blowing as they went. And then as evening was coming on, “It is perhaps now time for us to look for a place to camp,” they said. Thereupon they truly went seeking for a place to camp. Very soon they found a place where they were to camp; all about a spot where the wind had full sweep was where they prepared a place to camp. “Here is a place,” they said. At once they made ready to lie down; so after they had (each) circled a spot where they were about to lie, then the same thing did he when he lay down to sleep. This he was told by the old Wolf: “In among where lie your nephews do you lie too; it seems as if you were cold.”

“Yes, indeed I am cold.” Now, then the chatter of Nānabushu’s teeth could be heard, so very cold was he. Thereupon truly, after he had lain down in the midst of where they lay, this then said the old Wolf: “Pray, let your uncle have the top-covering.”

Thereupon truly one of them tossed his tail over him, and the same (did) another; so in that way he went to sleep. Truly, very warm he slept. And now, when once he woke, he truly was in a sweat. So this he said: “Forsooth, but now I am made to sweat by these old dog-tails!” When aside he had flung them, this he heard said to him by the old Wolf: “In truth, very shamefully you use your nephews,” he was told by the old Wolf.

So when in a little while he was again becoming cold, then already again the chatter of his teeth could be heard.

“Without doubt your uncle is already freezing to death. Why do you not again let him have your top-coverings?” Thereupon truly, after one had tossed his tail over him, then another (did) likewise.

Naturally then again he was warmed.

Well, it was now time for the morrow to come, so of course they were already anxious to be off again. So presently he was told by the old Wolf: “It is this evening that we shall arrive at the place for which we are bound, if only we hasten.”

Thereupon truly, as on their way they started, then with effort went Nānabushu running. Now, once as they were walking along, “It surely must be time for us to have eaten,” he was told by the old Wolf. It was true that presently Nānabushu was told: “Pray, go on ahead and have a fire built up.”

Thereupon truly, after he had gathered his wood into a pile, he then sought for his flint.

“What are you doing?” he was asked by the old Wolf. Presently (the old Wolf) addressed one (of his sons): “I say, you kindle the fire,” thus (the son) was told.

Thereupon (the young Wolf) went over to where (Nānabushu) had gathered the wood into a pile; the instant he leaped over (the wood), up then blazed the fire.

“There, that is the way to do when one intends to make a fire.”

And so, after they had eaten there, then presently upon their way they started; for they were trying to arrive there (that day). They did not stop even when the sun went down, right on they kept going. “Well, it is a little way now,” he was told. And it was in the twilight when they arrived there. Now, it was after they had gone into camp there that they built a shelter. Presently they went after (the contents of) the cache. And as for (Nānabushu) himself, he was given a certain thing, some choice firewood was he given. Besides, some fungus was given Nānabushu. “Don’t you look at it during the nighttime; not till in the morning shall you look at it,” he was told. And so this was what he was told: “Not till in the morning.”

And as he grew restless waiting for the morning before it was time to come, “Now, really, I should like to see it,” he (thus) thought. It was true that after he had seen it, what should he behold as he looked at it but an enormously large moose-gut! And now, after he had bitten off a piece, and then after he had looked at it, that moment (from where they say) did they turn about to reach for something; (and) what was he to see but them (in the act of reaching hold of) a wonderfully large moose-gut! So then also turned he in his seat to reach for something, and this he was told: “It truly seemed by the sound you made last night that you had been eating.”

Already now was he too trying to take out the things that had been given to him. The mark of his teeth was on the choice firewood, and on the fungus was the mark of his teeth. Thereupon fun was made of him. “For what reason did you do what you did? You should not have bothered with it during the night, for behold the disappointment you have done yourself! Truthfully are you not good at giving heed, and on that account have you disappointed the craving of your belly. Why, what on earth is he going to eat?”

And so accordingly was he again given that to eat. Now he felt a desire for (what they had). And after he was given food, why, he ate too. And this he was told by the old Wolf: “Pray, let us go travelling about with all our possessions,” he (thus) was told. “Along



with all of these nephews of yours shall you go as you journey about hunting for game, and this gift I make you for all time. Truly, he is good in getting game.”

It was true that when (he and the Wolf) left the camp, already off had gone their companions. Not for a while afterwards did they leave. Ever in the trail of their companions did they keep as they followed along behind. And then occasionally while they continued holding the trail of the others, once in a while as they looked when going along, they beheld the fresh droppings (in places) from which (their companions) started running (again). Now, this he was told by the old Wolf: “As you go, take with you the top-covering of your nephew.”

“Disgusting! What should I do with the yielding filth that I should take it along?” said Nānabushu. And this he was told by the old Wolf: “Miserably pitiful have you made your nephew by saying that.” Then he went to where the fresh dropping was; when he reached (and) took it up, he then gave it a shaking; then a (white) blanket he was holding in his hand.

“(I) declare! Fetch it hither my friend, I will carry it along upon my back,” Nānabushu said to him.

Whereupon truly hither came the other, who then gave it to him, and accordingly then went he on his way carrying it upon his back. Well, so then again were they off on their way. Now once while they were walking along, he was addressed by the old (Wolf). This he was told: “It is a big cow that your nephews are after. Why, it is true that now are your nephews pressing close upon it.”

And presently (he saw) sticking in a tree the tooth (of one of his nephews). “Look, Nānabushu! perhaps here may have been where they shot at a moose, but failed to hit it. Nānabushu, pray, take that arrow of your nephew’s as you go.”

“Pshaw! What am I to do with that old dog-tooth, that I should take it along?”

“Truly, indeed, have you done your nephews a wrong by saying that.” By giving it a twist the old Wolf pulled it out; and when he shook it, lo, an arrow was he truly holding in his hand!

“Fetch it hither, please,” he said to (the old Wolf).

It was true that it was given to him; after which he took it along. Then by and by they saw his nephews lying down. Nowhere at all was there snow on the ground. Behold, Nānabushu was addressed (in these words): “Some game must your nephews have killed. That is the way they act whenever they have found a moose.” Then happy was the old (Wolf). “Come on, Nānabushu! let us make a place where we can prepare the meat.”

“Where in the world is the meat for us to dry?”

Whereupon was he told by the old Wolf: “Truly, indeed, pitiful have you made your nephews by saying that.”

Thereupon truly, much against his will, (Nänabushu) helped them make the lodge. Not at all did he move from where he lay, (which he continued to do) till later on, when they had finished the lodge, (and) one by one they were coming in. What was he now to see? Already was he allotted a share, half of the fat was the share given him. So then was he well pleased over it. “It is certain that I shall eat too,” he thought. “Truly, very excellently are we now living.”

### 9. Nänabushu and the Wolves, *Continued*

Now once, while they were fixing moose-meat there, “Please let our father boil the broken bones for the marrow. Therefore then let him be the only one to do the cooking,” they said of their father.

Thereupon truly began their father upon his work. So this were they told by him: “I beg of you, watch me not while I am at this work of boiling bones for the marrow. Have a care, Nänabushu,” he was told by the old Wolf.

Thereupon truly (such was what happened).

Now as Nänabushu lay wrapped in his old soiled blanket, and as they listened to (their father), it seemed by the sound as if he were gnawing upon a bone. “I say, now, I will take a look,” (thus) thought Nänabushu. Truly, as he quietly lifted his old soiled blanket, he saw him at the very moment when he was biting an ulna, but at just the time when it slipped from his mouth; and nearly to the ground was stringing the (old Wolf’s) saliva. And now, as he was watching him, then of a sudden (the old Wolf) lost his hold (on the bone) in his mouth, (and) straight yonder into (Nänabushu’s) eye it struck. Then nothing but tshon, ton, was the sound he heard. “Oh, to Nänabushu slipped a bone from my mouth!” Whereupon said the old (Wolf): “Attend to your uncle, cool him with water!”

And so they truly cooled him off with water, whereupon he was then revived. Accordingly was he then told by the old (Wolf): “Nänabushu, really you were looking at me.”

“No, no!”

“Nänabushu, really you were looking at me.”

So when (came) the morning, how thick was the grease frozen! So they were fed in the morning upon the grease made by boiling the bones.

Now (Nänabushu) said to them: “Pray, let me have a turn at making grease from bones broken and boiled,” he said to them. Thereupon truly he made some grease. “Now, it is the same with me too, never should I be watched while at work making grease from broken bones. So therefore cover yourselves up.” Now began he upon the work of cracking the bones. Truly very greasy were (the bones). Now, while he sucked the marrow from as many bones as had grease in them, at some distance away, with his head towards (Nänabushu and) rolled up in his blanket, lay the old Wolf. With care he selected a bone of great size which he had split crosswise, (and) with it he hit the old Wolf. So he then killed (the old Wolf). Now this he said to his nephews: “Mercy, cool him off with some water!” he said to them. And this was what he said of him: “My old friend was certainly looking at me. that is the way I behave whenever any one is watching me.” So then presently was the old Wolf revived. And this he said: “By Nänabushu was I struck,” he said; “purposely was I hit by him,” said the old Wolf. “No attempt whatever did I make to watch him,” said the old Wolf. “So not till after a while will I feed you.”

Thereupon truly was it now morning. According to the story, the grease in his kettle was frozen as thick as a sheet of birch-bark covering of the lodge. Now, again he fed his nephews on it. So by the time they had eaten up their moose, “It must be time for us now to move camp,” he was told by the old (Wolf). And so he was told by the old (Wolf): “One of my sons I give to you,” he was told.

Now, (Nänabushu) uttered assent (while the old Wolf spoke). “This, indeed, will be the source from which I shall obtain good sustenance. Accordingly from this place he should go forth (to hunt),” he said to the old (Wolf).

“Well, it is on the morrow that we will move,” he was told by the old (Wolf).

So it was true that then they moved. “I am leaving you one who will keep you supplied with food throughout the winter,” he was told by the old (Wolf).

And it was true.<sup>76</sup>

This lengthy story presents a relationship that differs in many ways from the one found in the Greek fables. The story begins with establishing relationship, as Nenabozho asks why the wolves are running away, saying: “I should like to know why you act so whenever I happen to see you anywhere. Is it always your idea that I am not your kinsman? Why, I am very closely related to you; now that father of yours is my brother.”<sup>77</sup> Once the familial kinship is laid out, and the young wolves are identified as Nenabozho nephews, the story can proceed.

Throughout the account, Nenabozho struggles to keep up with the wolves, to stay warm, to make fire, to find food, and to hunt. In every instance, the wolves demonstrate a remarkable ability to survive, and they share their resources and capabilities with Nenabozho. Rather than

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<sup>76</sup> Jones 1917, 72-89

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 73-75.

imagining the wolves as a species of animal related to the human along an “axis of lack,” as Susan Crane puts it, the distribution of abilities and lack is reversed.<sup>78</sup> Nenabozho is the one who lacks in every category, and the wolves are the ones who provide instruction, resources, and assistance to him.

Nenabozho is hesitant to accept the wolves’ help, and he voices his doubts by criticizing the wolves’ gifts. His criticism shows a misunderstanding and devaluation of the wolves’ capabilities—capabilities which he, as a human, will never possess. First he is cold, and the wolves offer him their tails for warmth. Nenabozho’s response shows his disregard for the wolf tails: “‘Forsooth, but now I am made to sweat by these old dog-tails!; When aside he had flung them, this he heard said to him by the old Wolf: ‘In truth, very shamefully you use your nephews,’ he was told by the old Wolf.’”<sup>79</sup> The old wolf’s response to Nenabozho focuses on the potential harm inherent in human speech. Nenabozho not only struggles to accept the benefit of the wolves’ assistance, but he also reacts by using a pejorative form of the word for dog tails, suggesting both a feeling of disgust and, perhaps, a lowering of the wolves’ status to dogs.

In another version of this story, the human body’s lack of a tail is comically portrayed, as Nānabushu becomes the butt of the wolves’ jokes:

Kāwāsā ni‘tāwusāsī, ānuwītcīwāt ‘i<sup>u</sup> ma·ī·ngāna<sup>ε</sup>. Ājikaṇōnint Nānabucu: “Āmbāsinō, āntōṭamāngigu pimiba‘tōyāng, mī kayā kīn kātōṭamaṇ.”

Tāyāy, kayā wīn tōṭam. Ānīc mīdāc i<sup>u</sup> kāwīn kāgō ‘i<sup>u</sup> osō, mīdāc ‘i<sup>u</sup> wīnaḡ ‘i<sup>u</sup> wāsowāt. Kāwīn kaṇagā nōmaḡ cigwa ṇanimaskawā‘kwatininig.

“Kāgā‘t mīmāwīni i<sup>u</sup> tēnibut kīmicōmānān, maskawā‘kwaṭininig ‘i<sup>u</sup> wīnaḡ. Intawā kīcō‘tōwātā.” Mīdāc ‘a<sup>ε</sup>‘a<sup>u</sup> pājik ma·ī·ngān ubī‘tawajān āciwīwa‘kwāpitcigā‘tānig. A‘pidcigu wasi‘tāwināgusi ānupimiba‘tōd . . .

Ningutingigu uḡaṇōnigōn a‘kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngānaḡ: “Nānabucu, āmbāsaṇō, intawā, kāgu’ usowā‘kān i·i·wā kīnaḡ, osām mācimāḡwaṭ. Intawāgu, ācīctcigāyambaṇ mī·i·<sup>u</sup> icīctcigān ticpimusāyaṇ.”

Not at all was he familiar with (their way of) travelling, as he tried going along with the Wolves. Then was Nānabushu told: “Come, as we do when we run along, so in like manner should you do too.”

Ah, and he did the same. Naturally, there was nothing in the way of a tail, therefore his penis was what he used for a tail. It was but a very little while before it was frozen stiff.

“Surely now without doubt will our uncle die, for that his penis is frozen stiff. Therefore let us warm it for him.” Accordingly, with the top blanket of one of the Wolves was it wrapped about the head. And very awkward was his aspect as he tried in vain to run along . . .

<sup>78</sup> Crane 2013, 169.

<sup>79</sup> Jones 1917, 77.

And once he was told by the old Wolf: “Nānabushu, I beg of you, really, do not use your penis for a tail, for it smells too vile. Therefore, according to the manner you are accustomed (to), so you do when you travel.”<sup>80</sup>

Here we can view the human body from the wolves’ point of view, as humorously lacking a tail, with the penis as a poor substitute, and one that the old wolf finds just as disgusting as those sweaty dog tails had been to Nenabozho previously.

In this story, Nenabozho’s body is depicted in terms of a lack of ability and need for prosthetics, in contrast to the fully-equipped wolf body. The tail is the first example of this contrast, where the human lack of a “top-covering” is emphasized. After Nenabozho’s disparaging remarks about the wolf tails, the wolves present him with his own blanket, but in a way that he again finds unsavory. When they come upon fresh wolf droppings, the old wolf asks him to pick up his nephew’s top covering. Nenabozho is unable to contain his repulsion:

“Disgusting! What should I do with the yielding filth that I should take it along?” said Nenabozho. And this he was told by the old Wolf: “Miserably pitiful have you made your nephew by saying that.” Then he went to where the fresh dropping was; when he reached (and) took it up, he then gave it a shaking; then a (white) blanket he was holding in his hand.<sup>81</sup>

Once again, the old wolf corrects Nenabozho’s words, attempting to regulate human speech and make it less hurtful. The old wolf is Nenabozho’s teacher, as his uncle, instructing him on proper speech, and subverting the notion of humans maintaining exclusive control over language.

Nenabozho continues to disparage the wolves’ assistance, as they offer him firewood and a piece of fungus and tell him not to look at it until morning. In another version of the story, he first looks to see what they are taking out of the cache, and says, “Stop, stop, you rascals! Why, never is this wretched wood to be eaten.” The wolves reply: “Nenabozho, do not say that. Just wait till in the morning, you will have nice food to eat.”<sup>82</sup> Ever a curious transgressor of boundaries, Nenabozho looks at it and sees moose-gut, which he tries to eat. He tries to hide his attempts when the wolves notice him, but his tooth marks remain in the firewood and fungus. “Thereupon fun was made of him . . . ‘Truthfully are you not good at giving heed, and on that account have you disappointed the craving of your belly.’”<sup>83</sup> Nanbozho’s behavior here is contrasted with that of the wolves, who are able to wait until morning to satisfy their hunger. The ravening wolf of the Greek tradition is nowhere to be seen.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 237-41. This story recalls an episode from the Life of Aesop in which Aesop is introduced to his master Xanthus’s maids in *Vita* G 30 (Daly 1961, 46):

The maid said, “Are you the new slave?” Aesop said, “I am.” The maid said, “Where’s your tail?” Aesop looked at the girl and realized that she was making fun of his dog’s head, so he said, “My tail doesn’t grow in the back the way you think, but in the front.”

<sup>81</sup> Jones 1917, 81.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 79-81.

<sup>84</sup> Compare Perry 154 (Daly 1961, 158):

The next episode returns to the idea of the human lack and need for prosthetic technology. Nenabozho sees a wolf tooth stuck in a tree, and the old wolf tells him to pick up his nephew's arrow. "Pshaw! What am I to do with that old dog-tooth, that I should take it along?" he says, and again the old wolf responds:

"Truly, indeed, have you done your nephews a wrong by saying that." By giving it a twist the old Wolf pulled it out; and when he shook it, lo, an arrow was he truly holding in his hand!

"Fetch it hither, please," he said to (the old Wolf).

It was true that it was given to him; after which he took it along.<sup>85</sup>

The wolf's tooth becomes an arrow for Nenabozho's use, as the difference between the wolf's powerful jaws and Nenabozho's need for a tool to kill game becomes obvious. In the Greek tradition, the wolf's jaws are compared to a butcher's knife, and the wolf's belly is like a cauldron.<sup>86</sup> In both cultures, it is clear that the wolf's natural abilities to hunt or butcher are considered superior to that of human beings. The wolf's tooth is the perfect tool for Nenabozho, when he stops disparaging it and accepts this gift.

In another version of the Nenabozho story, when he sees the wolves lying in the snow, and no butchered game nearby, the location of that meat is specified:

Ānīc Nānabucu ānu·ī·nābit, kāwīn awiya owābāmāsīn tcī·ā·binit mō<sup>a</sup>sōn. Ānīc miyā'tagu i<sup>u</sup> umiskwīwāgunāgānik wyābandank. Ā'pidcisa' tatāpisiñīwa<sup>e</sup>. Nānabucu ājimañājitāt, mīdāc imā ā·ī·cāt a·ī·tāg cingicininit īnī<sup>u</sup> pācīk īnī<sup>u</sup> ma·ī·ngāṇaṇ. Wāgunānīwinān upapasiguntciwāpiskawān. "Ātcimātcīsta<sup>a</sup>! mini'k kīgtānawā?"

Tcāngā'kwānowāṇ. "Kāgātsa' kiwāwīsaḡicka<sup>u</sup>, Nānabucu. Kāgu' icictcigā'kān, Nānabucu." Kañōnā Nānabucu: "Pisān ayān. Kīspin mīnawā kāgō wītōṭamaṇ, mī·ī<sup>u</sup> kāwin kīgacāmīgōsī." Ā'tayā, Nānabucu ānigu'k āno'kī. Kāwāna'pī ugīcī'kānāwā 'i<sup>e</sup>i<sup>u</sup> wāṭacimōsu'kāwāt. Ājiganōnāwāt: "Mīsa' i<sup>u</sup> kīgīcī'taiyānk." Papisigwīwa<sup>e</sup> pimi·ī·cāwa<sup>e</sup> i·ī·mā kī·a·'picimōnī'kāwāt. Cigwa pācīk cicigagowāwāṇ, mīgu i<sup>u</sup> pācīg 'i<sup>e</sup>i' usāḡīni ājimiziwāpaṅgisinīnik. Kāgā't māma'kātāndam Nānabucu, kāgā't minwāntam; wāntagu bā'kic ṇaṅaḡamōsiwi, āpī'tciminwāndank 'a<sup>e</sup>a<sup>u</sup> Nānabucu.

Naturally, Nenabozho tried looking about, but to no purpose: he saw nothing of any moose that was there. Now, the only thing he saw was some blood on the snow. Thoroughly sated was each one with food. Then Nenabozho went for some balsam

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A wolf was walking across a field and found some barley, but since he couldn't eat it, he went off and left it. Then he met a horse and let him back to the field, telling him how he had found the barley but hadn't eaten it and had saved it for him because he loved hearing the sound of his teeth. The horse replied, "Yes, friend, but if wolves could eat barley, you wouldn't have preferred your ears over your stomach." The fable shows that people don't believe those who are wicked by nature, even when they profess to be generous.

<sup>85</sup> Jones 1917, 83.

<sup>86</sup> Detienne and Svenbro 1989, 154.

boughs, and the way he went was directly where one of the Wolves lay. What should he do but give him a kick to make him stand up. “For goodness’ sake! have you eaten so much as that?”

Up he raised his head. “Really, you hurt me with your kick, Nenabozho. Don’t you do that again, Nenabozho.” Nenabozho was told: “Be quiet. If you intend doing anything (like that) again, then you will not be fed.” Oh, but Nenabozho labored hard. In a little while they finished working on where they intended to dress the moose. Then they said to him: “Therefore we are ready.” Then up they rose to their feet (and) came over to the place where they had spread out the balsams. Presently one began to vomit, whereupon the whole of one foreleg fell. To be sure, amazed was Nenabozho, really pleased he was; and during all the while he hummed a song, so very pleased was Nenabozho.<sup>87</sup>

This version shows that the wolves have eaten the entire moose, and that they regurgitate the meat when the meat drying rack is ready. At this point, his former doubts and even his disgust at the wolves is replaced with joy, when they give him a share of the meat. Like in the Greek accounts, the wolf is skilled at apportioning meat, but unlike the story of the wolf as governor (Perry 348), these wolves do not attempt to hold back a secret portion for themselves.<sup>88</sup>

Secrecy and deception do play a role when it comes to the marrow, a prized part of the animal and one which recalls, in its emphasis on bones and deception, Prometheus’ trickery of Zeus.<sup>89</sup> The old wolf does not want to be watched while he is boiling bones, but Nenabozho peeks out and sees him chewing on an ulna. The old wolf, in turn, pretends to accidentally lose hold of the bone, which flies from his grasp and strikes Nenabozho. When Nenabozho asks to take a turn, the reverse happens. Nenabozho in this case does not pretend, but selects a bone and strikes the old wolf, who claims to not have made any attempt to watch him. In the third version, the wolf does pretend:

Mēḍaḍ gägä’t Nänabojo māmāḍowāḍḍang u’kaḇaḇ, a’kiwānzidaḍ ma·ī·ngāḇ uḍu·ō·ḇndci kanawāḇamān Nänabucōn āḇḍoḍaminit; mīḍaḍ Nänaboju āji·ō·ḍā’pinaḇ kitci·ō·’kaḇ, mēḍaḍ ājiḇa’ki’tāwāḍ uskīḇnawe ma·ī·ngāḇaḇ, mī ājinisāt. Mēḍaḍ āji·ō·niskāwāt ka’kīna. A’kiwānzi ḍaḍ i’kido: “Äñc wīn pa’ki’tāwāt?”

“Kāwīn nīn pa’kitāwāsī,” i’kido Nänabujo.

“Kägä’t kipaḇi’tāwā, kigīganawāḇamin kuca.”

“Kāwīn,” i’kido Nänabuju. “Kaḇaḇaḍc kīmōḍc<sup>i</sup> ningīkaḇawāḇamigōḇaḇ, mēḍaḍ ki’kutigwāḇamān i we pigwā’kuḇaḇ.”

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<sup>87</sup> Jones 1917, 245-47. In the third version of the story, the fresh appearance of the meat is emphasized: “Thereupon then vomited the youths; exactly like meat that has newly been cut up, such was the appearance of the moose-meat” (Ibid., 385).

<sup>88</sup> Detienne and Svenbro, 150-55.

<sup>89</sup> Hesiod *Theogony* 535-60.

Now, while Nenabozho was making a noise cracking the bones, the old Wolf then slyly took a peep at Nenabozho (to see him) at his work; and now Nenabozho took up a large bone, and then hit a young Wolf, whereupon he killed him. At that they all rose from where they lay. And the old (Wolf) said: “Why did you hit him?”

“I did not hit him,” said Nenabozho.

“Indeed, you did hit him, for I was watching you.’

“Nay,” said Nenabozho. “Perhaps secretly was I observed by him, and that was why from my mouth I slipped my hold on the knobbed ankle-bone.”<sup>90</sup>

In this version, the wolf pretends not to be watching Nenabozho, but then openly admits to his pretending. Whether the wolf is copying Nenabozho’s behavior, attempting to teach a lesson, or just being curious, it is clear that he is capable of pretending and covering his tracks. Any dog owner who has seen their dog pretend to not be watching them eat will understand why Derrida makes light of the distinction between pretending and pretending to pretend, proposed by Lacan.<sup>91</sup>

The reversal of roles between who is working and who is secretly watching suggests that Nenabozho and the wolves are family members negotiating their roles, with the old wolf consistently taking the role of teacher. In the second version, Nenabozho also deliberately kills the old wolf, making no attempt to disguise his actions, and then when he is revived, the old wolf reprimands him. In this version, the wolves are very clear about the unacceptableness of Nenabozho’s behavior:

Ā’pidci kigicāp kīgitu Nānabucu: “Mī’tcatcigwa wī·a·‘kāyān. Kāwīn aṅistcā wī·kā ninganawābāmigō’tci ‘i’i’<sup>u</sup> wā·a·‘kāyānin. Intawā paḍagwīngwācinuk.”

Ānīc, ga’kina ājipaḍagwīngwācinowāt, Nānabucu maḍwāwā·i·gā bīgwa·a·nk īni’<sup>u</sup> u’kaṅaṅ. Ānīc, ā’pici pimiti’kwācinōn īni’<sup>u</sup> a’kiwā<sup>n</sup>zīma·ī·ngāṅaṅ. Wāgunānīwinān uḍanināzi’kawān. Kāmamōt udō’kaṅim, gi’tci·ā·niguk u’kwāgānāning ājiba’ki’tā·o·wāt. Wāntagu gāgā’t mī·i’<sup>u</sup> ājitāyāpitagaṅamāt. Kāgātsa sāgisīwag īgi’<sup>u</sup> wāwōsiwāt. Tawā’! ājita’kābāwānāwāt. Gāgā’t paṅgī kāgō inā mā’kawinit: “Nānabucu, intawā mī·i’<sup>u</sup> ijickwā’tān, usām wītcīwigōyaṅ, aṅōdcigu kiticiwābis.”

“Kāwīn, mānōgu kīwītcīwininim!”

“‘Ā’<sup>u</sup>, Nānabucu, pisān ayāyaṅ kawītcīwigō.”

Wayābaṅaning kaḅāgīcik wīsiniwag. Cigwa wānāgucininig kīgitōwaṅ īni’<sup>u</sup> a’kiwā<sup>n</sup>zī ma·ī·ngāṅaṅ: “Intawāsa wābaṅ kamādcāmin tcigusiyāṅ.”

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<sup>90</sup> Jones 1917, 387-89.

<sup>91</sup> Derrida 2008, 131-35; Derrida 2009, 113.



Ānīc Nānabucu nawātcigu cīngānimā. “Nānabucu, āmbāsa, wābank tcigusiyang.”

Ānīc Nānabucu nawātcigu cīngānimā. “Nānabucu, āmbāsa, wābank kīwipa‘kāwinigō.”

“Kāwīn. Āmbāsanō, ‘a<sup>ə</sup>a<sup>ʰ</sup>’<sup>u</sup> pācīk nintōcim ningawītī·ai·yāwā kīcpin ināndaṃaṃ. Kāwīn wī‘kā kīgō tā·i·ciwābīsisī.”

“Ānīc nā, Nānabucu, kamīnin ‘a<sup>ə</sup>a<sup>ʰ</sup>’<sup>u</sup> ninīdcānis. Kīgī‘kānimin maṇitōwiyaṃ, mi·i<sup>ʰ</sup>·<sup>u</sup> wā·u·ndcimīninān.”

Very early in the morning up spoke Nenabozho: “And now I want to make some grease from the bones. Never for the mere sake of observing am I watched when making grease from bones. Therefore cover up your faces.”

Now, when all covered their faces, Nenabozho could be heard breaking up the bones. Now, in plain view, with his head resting on his side (facing Nenabozho), lay the old Wolf. What should he do but go over to where (the Wolf was). When he had picked up his bone, then with all his might upon the back of his neck he struck him. To be sure, he then laid him out completely with the blow. Really scared were they who were his children. Poor fellow! they then dashed cool water on him. Indeed, a little something was said (to Nenabozho) after (the Wolf) had revived: “Nenabozho, therefore now you had better cease, too much have you been in our company, and you do things you should not.”

“Nay, please let me go with you!”

“Very well, Nenabozho; if you behave, you may go along.”

On the morrow throughout the whole day were they eating. When evening came on, then up spoke the old Wolf: “Therefore to-morrow will we depart to find another place to camp.”

Now, Nenabozho was somewhat disliked. “Nenabozho, come! to-morrow we will part company with you.”

“Nay. Please let me remain with one of my nephews if it be your will. Never will anything (harmful) happen to him.”

“Of course, Nenabozho, I will give you one of my children. I know that you are a manitou, for such is the reason why I give him to you.”<sup>92</sup>

The old wolf pulls no punches, clearly telling Nenabozho his behavior is not acceptable for him to continue living in community with them. He is asked to leave, and as consolation, he is given

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<sup>92</sup> Jones 1917, 248-49.

one of the young wolves as his companion to help him with hunting. In the first version, the old wolf says, “I am leaving you one who will keep you supplied with food throughout the winter.”<sup>93</sup> Although the wolf family parts ways, Nenabozho remains connected, and in the following story, he rescues his wolf nephew from death.<sup>94</sup>

These stories show an interdependence and kinship between Nenabozho and the wolves that emphasizes the wolves’ skills and Nenabozho’s need for help and teaching. Rather than dividing between those who have language and those who do not, this story situates lack on a physical rather than linguistic axis. But it is not an all-or-nothing separation; instead, the wolves provide assistance to Nenabozho. Not only does the old wolf provide food and implements, like the blankets and arrow, but also a quintessential human technology, fire. In another story, Nenabozho steals fire, disguised as a rabbit, bringing it back to his grandmother in his smoldering fur.<sup>95</sup> Yet in these stories, Nenabozho is unable to cook his food, and needs the wolves’ help with that task. In all three versions, the wolves provide fire. In version one, the young wolf leaps over the piled-up wood and kindles it.<sup>96</sup> In the second version, the old wolf does the same.<sup>97</sup> In the third version, the old wolf gives Nenabozho fire as they part ways:

Ninguding ida’c a’kiwānzi ogañōnān Nānabojōn: “Mīsajigwa tcigusīyang. Pēcig kigamīnin kidōcīm, mī a<sup>u</sup> kayā gīn kāwīdciwād dcināndawāndcigāt. Pājig kayā ningawīdcīwā. Kīgamīnin īskudā.” Mēḍac ājipōgidīd a’kiwānzi. “Mī awā a’pis.” Mīnawā kīpōgidi a’kiwānzi. “Mī awe saḡa’tāḡan.” Mīnawā gīpōgidi. “Mī·i·we kī·i·mañ.” Mīnawā gīpōgidi. “Mī awe wīḡwās. Pānimāḡu, kī‘kaḡāciyañ kī·a·‘tōyañ mīsāñ, mī i<sup>u</sup> kādicīpājīdcīḡwāskuniyañ īmā<sup>n</sup> mīsāñ a’tāḡ, mī i<sup>u</sup> kādicī pīskāñāsāḡ īskodā. Kāḡu wīñ anicāḡu kudcitō‘kyāñ.”

Now, once the old (Wolf) spoke to Nenabozho, saying: “It is now about time that we should be moving. One of your nephews will I give to you, and he will be the one for you to accompany when he goes to hunt. One, too, will I accompany. I will give you fire.” Thereupon the old (Wolf) broke wind. “Now, that is a flint.” Again the old (Wolf) broke wind. “Now, that is the punk.” Again he broke wind. “That is kindling.” Again he broke wind. “That is birch-bark. After a while, when you go into camp (and) have gathered the fire-wood, then shall you leap over the place where the wood is, whereupon up will start the blaze. Do not try to do it merely for the sake of doing it.”<sup>98</sup>

In this exchange, the old wolf’s specific instructions follow the humorous account of his creation of the necessary materials. As they part ways, he seems to know that Nenabozho may be tempted to disregard his instructions and not take them seriously, being inclined to play with fire.

As we have seen, each version has a slightly different approach to individual features, but the basic aspects remain the same. In every case, Nenabozho is the least adapted to the

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>94</sup> See appendix.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 7-15. See also Murdoch 2020, 14-21, in which Nenabozho pulls out the tooth of one of the young wolves, and this tooth is the flint that he uses to start the fire.

<sup>96</sup> Jones 1917, 77.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 388-89.

environment, and requires education, the creation of technology, and assistance in order to survive. By portraying the wolves as teachers, who provide him with these tools that are often associated with human technological evolution, the stories demonstrate human dependence on animals for developing these technologies.<sup>99</sup> But beyond that, they also demonstrate our interconnectedness to other creatures, and our need for imagining relationships that do not depend on hierarchies of knowledge and linguistic ability.

The story of Nenabozho and the wolves illustrates perfectly what Deleuze and Guattari described in their account of the rhizome, a non-hierarchical way of becoming part of a multiplicity. In particular, they describe the multiplicity involved in “becoming-wolf” in the following way: “In becoming-wolf, the important thing is the position of the mass, and above all the position of the subject itself in relation to the pack or wolf-multiplicity: how the subject joins or does not join the pack, how far away it stays, how it does or does not hold to the multiplicity.”<sup>100</sup> In this story, Nenabozho begins far away, and gradually infiltrates the wolf family. Yet, because of his rigidity, his disparaging attitude, and his response to being watched by the old wolf, he is unable to remain part of the multiplicity, leading to its fracturing and the eventual death of his nephew the wolf. In this way, the difficulties and possibilities of this type of rhizomatic existence are illustrated. “Lines of flight or of deterritorialization, becoming-wolf, becoming-inhuman, deterritorialized intensities: that is what multiplicity is.”<sup>101</sup>

This multiplicity, however, is criticized by Donna Haraway, who suggests that Deleuze and Guattari have misrepresented and misunderstood real wolves. She agrees with their basic argument that patrilineal thinking, “which sees all the world as a tree of filiations ruled by genealogy and identity, wars with rhizomatic thinking, which is open to nonhierarchical becomings and contagions.”<sup>102</sup> Deleuze and Guattari go on to specify that becoming-animal does not mean a real animal, but that it is still a real becoming, and that it is an alliance, rather than a filiation.<sup>103</sup> Whether Nenabozho really becomes a wolf or not, and whether he is engaged in an alliance with the wolves, rather than a filiation, since the familial terms are clearly defined, may depend upon the person interpreting the story; however, it could be argued that the old wolf is the “exceptional individual” with whom “an alliance must be made in order to become-animal. There may be no such thing as a lone wolf, but there is a leader of the pack, a master of the pack...”<sup>104</sup> Haraway, however, says: “I find little but the two writers’ scorn for all that is mundane and ordinary and the profound absence of curiosity about and respect for and with actual animals.”<sup>105</sup>

It is, I believe, within the story of Nenabozho and the wolves where these differences can be resolved. Nenabozho’s relationship with the wolves represents both a contagious sort of becoming-animal, as he joins the pack and becomes part of a multiplicity, while at the same time expressing respect for actual animals, as the wolves become valuable teachers within the narrative. Aspects of their actual animal behavior are included in the tale, such as the way they turn themselves around before lying down, how they gorge themselves after a kill, and how their

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<sup>99</sup> Compare Lucretius’ account of the development of civilization in *De Rerum Natura* 5.

<sup>100</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 29.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>102</sup> Haraway 2008, 28.

<sup>103</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 138.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>105</sup> Haraway 2008, 27.

furry tails act as a blanket. As Haraway points out, Deleuze and Guattari work so hard “to get beyond the Great Divide between humans and other critters to find the rich multiplicities and topologies of a heterogeneously and noteologically connected world,” despite ultimately coming up short of a real understanding of animals.<sup>106</sup> My argument here is that what Deleuze and Guattari attempted to show in their book is here shown in a practical, memorable way, through the missteps and teachable moments encountered by Nenabozho as he runs alongside the wolves and shares their lives.

The anthropomorphic descriptions of the wolves in this story do not simply recreate wild animals as furry versions of talking humans. The wolves remain wolves, with their fur, their teeth, and their dung, yet they talk to Nenabozho as if they were fellow humans. But portraying the wolves in an expanded ability to communicate with Nenabozho allows us to imagine a co-existence of kinship and learning. What Crane calls “the pleasure of imagining proximity to other animals” is accomplished through anthropomorphic description, using the typical human way of understanding the world, in relation to ourselves, but expanding that knowledge to include interactions with other beings.<sup>107</sup>

Gerald Vizenor interprets the exploits of Nenabozho within a framework of comic discourse, in which the trickster is a communal sign.<sup>108</sup> He argues that these are stories of “survivance,” and that animals provide “a literary connection with creation.”<sup>109</sup> The anthropomorphic representations of animals in narratives are “literary ascriptions that are figurative and create a creature *presence* rather than a causal representation of animal consciousness.”<sup>110</sup> The story of Nenabozho and the wolves portrays a creature presence while also demonstrating a “connection with creation” through the wolf as *odoodeman*, a clan or totem.<sup>111</sup> The wolves are present with Nenabozho and he enters into a relationship with them where he allows himself to be questioned, challenged, laughed at, and helped. In this way the story of Nenabozho and the wolves allows for a “liberation of the mind” and a reimagination of relationships between humans and other creatures.<sup>112</sup> Always critical of anthropological approaches, Vizenor states: “To imagine the world is to be in the world; to invent the world with academic predicaments is to separate human experience from the world.”<sup>113</sup> In this story, the fractured relationship between humans and wolves that we saw in Aesop’s fables is reimagined in a constructive way, allowing for the possibility of character development and learning from other animals, while co-existing in a relationship based on shared needs and experiences.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Crane 2013, 44.

<sup>108</sup> Vizenor 1993, 187.

<sup>109</sup> Vizenor 1998, 123. He defines survivance elsewhere: “Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry.” (Vizenor 1999, vii).

<sup>110</sup> Vizenor 1995, 661. Italics in original.

<sup>111</sup> Vizenor 1998, 123.

<sup>112</sup> Vizenor 1994, 77.

<sup>113</sup> Vizenor 1984, 27.

## Dogs and Wolves: The Pact of Food

In this final section, I return to the fictional encounters between dogs and wolves, in both Aesop's fables and Jones' *Ojibwa Texts*. I focus specifically on those accounts where the domestic animal's lifestyle is discussed. There is one fable in particular, with versions told by Phaedrus and by Babrius, which discusses this topic. Phaedrus 3.7 gives the following tale:

Quam dulcis sit libertas breviter proloquar.  
Cani perpasto macie confectus lupus  
forte occucurrit; dein, salutati invicem  
ut restiterunt, "Unde sic, quaeso, nites?  
aut quo cibo fecisti tantum corporis? 5  
ego, qui sum longe fortior, pereo fame."  
canis simpliciter: "Eadem est condicio tibi,  
praestare domino si par officium potes."  
"Quod?" inquit ille. "Custos ut sis liminis,  
a furibus tuearis et noctu domum. 10  
adfertur ultro panis; de mensa sua 21  
dat ossa dominus; frusta iactat familia, 22  
et quod fastidit quisque pulmentarium. 23  
sic sine labore venter impletur meus." 24  
"Ego vero sum paratus: nunc patior nives 11  
imbresque in silvis asperam vitam trahens.  
quanto est facilius mihi sub tecto vivere,  
et otiosum largo satiari cibo!"  
"Veni ergo mecum." dum procedunt, aspicit 15  
lupus a catena collum detritum cani.  
"Vnde hoc, amice?" "Nil est." "Dic, sodes, tamen."  
"Quia videor acer, alligant me interdium,  
luce ut quiescam, et vigilem nox cum venerit:  
crepusculo solutus qua visum est vagor." 20  
"Age, abire si quo est animus, est licentia?" 25  
"Non plane est" inquit. "Fruere quae laudas, canis;  
regnare nolo, liber ut non sim mihi."

How sweet liberty is I will briefly declare. A wolf, emaciated with hunger, chanced upon a well-fed dog. After greeting each other, they stood still and the wolf said: "How do you look so sleek? What have you been eating to put on so much flesh? I am much stronger than you, and yet I am starving." The dog replied frankly: "The same life will be yours if you can serve a master in an equal way." "What is that?" he asked. "To be the guardian of his threshold and protect his house from thieves at night. They bring food to me without me asking for it; my master gives me bones from his own table; the servants toss out tidbits to me and whatever delicacies they don't like. In this way my belly is replenished with no work." "Well," said the wolf, "I'm ready for that all right; at present I have to endure snow and rain, and it is a hard life that I lead in the woods. How much

easier for me it would be to live under a roof, and at my ease to sate myself with food in abundance.” “Well then, come with me,” said the dog. As they were going along the wolf noticed that the dog’s neck had been worn bare by a chain. “How did this happen, my friend?” “Oh, it’s nothing.” “Tell me, please, just the same.” “Because they think me restless they tie me up in the daytime, to make me be quiet while it is light and keep watch when night comes. At dusk I am unchained and wander about wherever I please.” “But if you want to go away somewhere, are you allowed to?” “Why no, as a matter of fact, I’m not.” “Well, dog, go on enjoying the things you praise; I don’t choose to be a king if I am not free to please myself.”<sup>114</sup>

Babrius 100 tells a similar story:

Λύκῳ συνήντα πιμελῆς κύων λίην.  
 ὁ δ’ αὐτὸν ἐξήταζε, ποῦ τραφεῖς οὕτως  
 μέγας κύων ἐγένετο καὶ λίπους πλήρης.  
 “ἄνθρωπος” εἶπε “δαμιλῆς με σιτεύει.”  
 “ὁ δέ σοι τράχηλος” εἶπε “πῶς ἐλευκώθη;” 5  
 “κλοιῶ τέτριπται σάρκα τῷ σιδηρείῳ,  
 ὃν ὁ τροφεύς μοι περιτέθεικε χαλκεύσας.”  
 λύκος δ’ ἐπ’ αὐτῷ καγχάσας “ἐγὼ τοίνυν  
 χαίρειν κελεύω” φησί “τῆ τρυφῆ ταύτη,  
 δι’ ἣν σίδηρος τὸν ἐμὸν ἀχένα τρίψει.” 10

A dog who was very plump met with a wolf who began to question him: Where was he fed that he had become such a big dog and so well lined with fat? “A rich master feeds me,” said the dog. “But your neck,” asked the wolf, “how came the bare spot on it?” “The flesh has been rubbed by the iron collar which my keeper forged and put upon me.” The wolf laughed at him mockingly and said: “Away with that kind of luxury! It’s not for me at the cost of having my neck rubbed with an iron collar.”<sup>115</sup>

These two fables may be related to a fragment of Archilochus (237 West):<sup>116</sup>

πῶς ἀπέπρησε σκύτα;

How has he caused the scruff of his neck to become inflamed?

This fragment and the two verse fables seem to address the same situation: a wolf who briefly considers adopting the life of a domestic dog, but reconsiders upon seeing the restrictive conditions of that life.<sup>117</sup> I believe these fables are unique in their perspective, using the wolf to

<sup>114</sup> Text and translation from Perry 1965.

<sup>115</sup> Text and translation from Perry 1965.

<sup>116</sup> Text from West 1980. See Van Dijk 1997, 147-48 for discussion.

<sup>117</sup> Chambray 226 records yet another version of the fable:

name the often unexpressed issue of the dog's oppression. Cristiana Franco points out that Greek myths, which discuss the domestication of working animals such as horses and cattle, do not mention the dog's collar. She says: "An eloquent silence, especially since canine cooperation had a myth of origin quite different from those for other domestic animals. There are, in fact, a whole group of stories in which the gods invent or construct not the tools to control and master the dog but the dog itself."<sup>118</sup> She quotes Xenophon *Cynegeticus* 1.1 and *Odyssey* 7.91-94 as examples of the discovery or construction of dogs by the gods, and she argues that the dog is depicted as a tool, but one "alive and endowed with autonomy," that is an "active subject of a social contract."<sup>119</sup>

The dog's willingness to enter the social contract and receive food in payment for work allowed the application of an anthropocentric contractual model to this relationship, but the dark side of this contract is revealed through these fables. Unlike the idealistic image of the creation of guard dogs by Hephaestus in Homer's *Odyssey*, or the gift of hunting dogs to Chiron in Xenophon's *Cynegeticus*, the non-mythical world of fable presents an alternative and opposing tradition.<sup>120</sup> In the world of fable, dogs not only struggle with opposing the clever attacks of wolves against the sheep, or against the dogs themselves, but they also face the brutal realities of chafing collars. Outside of fable, the dog's contract involves performing work and receiving food as payment, but fable offers a glimpse of the sinister reality that dogs' labor was constrained by the use of restraining devices, rather than being freely given in exchange for food. By pointing out this reality, the wolf is voicing the perspective of the oppressed, while at the same time expressing the validity of his own choice not to enter into the same contract.

A similar Ojibwe story reiterates this contrast in attitude between dogs and wolves. Anna Gibbs recorded this story, originally told by Gerry Kingbird. She emphasized that "although this story seems to make fun of animals, its purpose is to respect animals and show the difference between the dog (who is dependent on man) and the wolf (who is closer to nature)."<sup>121</sup>

[1] Wa'awe bezhig chi-aya'aa gii-onjibaa Obaashiing. Awedi, wa'aw bezhig Akiwenzii gii-izhinikaazo. Oгии-nagadaan o'owe ayi'ii gaa-izhi-bi-aadizooked aabiding. Gaawiin niwanenimaasiin. Gaawiin igaye niwanendanzii owe ayi'ii gaa-bi-izhi-aadizooked owe. Gii-aadizooke. Oгии-tazhimaan ma'iingan an miinawaa animoshan. Miish iwidi mewinzha jibwaa-izhi-maajaad nigii- kagwejima owe ji-ozhibii'amaan. "Bizaan binaa ozhibii'an! Ani- ozhibii'igaademagak gakina zhegwa, zhayigwa," ikido. "Mii eta go ezhi-anigikenjigaademagak owe anishinaabemowin owe ezhi- ani-ozhibii'igaademagak," gii-ikido. Miish awedi, nimikwenimaa akiwenzii gaa-nagadang owe gaa-izhi-aadizooked

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Λύκος ἐν κλοιῷ δεδεμένον ὀρῶν μέγιστον κύνα ἤρετο· “Δήσας τίς εἰ ἐξέθρεψε τοῦτον;” Ὁ δὲ ἐφη· “Κυνηγός.” “Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὴ πάθοι λύκος ἐμοὶ φίλος· λιμὸς γὰρ ἢ κλοιοῦ βαρύτερος.”

A wolf, seeing a large dog with a collar on, asked him: "Who put that collar round your neck, and fed you to be like this?" "The hunter," answered the dog. "Then," said the wolf, "may no friend of mine suffer like this; a collar is as grievous as starvation."

<sup>118</sup> Franco 2014, 43.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>120</sup> Franco 2014, 43-44.

<sup>121</sup> Gibbs 2010, 96.

aabiding. Gaawiin niwanenimaasiin Akiwenzii gaa-izhinikaazod. Awe ani- gikenimag bezhig inini.

[2] Ma'iingan babaa-ayaa megwaayaakwaang. Animosh dash ayaa besho waakaa'iganing endaanid anishinaaben. Ma'iingan besho gii-ayaa endaanid anishinaaben. Wiin dash animosh gii-ayaa megwaayaakwaang. Ma'iingan miinawaa animosh gaganoonidiwag.

[3] "Daga giin animosh, omaa bi-izhaan! Bi-ganawenim anishinaabe," ikido ma'iingan.

[4] "Aanish gaye goda," ikido animosh.

[5] Gaawiin booch idash ogii-minwendanziin animosh gii- ayaad megwaayaakwaang. Gii-azhegiwed animosh. Gaa-izhi- meshkwajiiwaad.

[6] "Omaa niin nindoonji-ganawenimaa anishinaabe. Niga-bi- ayaa megwaayaakwaang," ikido ma'iingan.

[7] "Omaa niin niga-onji-ganawenimaa anishinaabe besho owaakaa'iganing," ikido animosh.

[8] Ma'iingan gaa-izhi-inaad animoshan, "Omaa niin niga- onji-ganawenimaa anishinaabe. Omaa niin niga-onji-wiisin megwaayaakwaang. Giin dash gidaa-onji-ganawenimaa anishinaabe besho owaakaa'iganing. Giin dash moo giga-miijin."

This certain elder was from Ponemah. His name was Akiwenzii [old man]. He left this story one time [before passing]. I don't forget him. And I don't forget his telling of this legend. He was a storyteller. He talked about the wolf and the dog. So long ago, before he left, I asked him if I could write it down. "Go ahead and write it! Everything should be written down now," he said. "That's the only way the Indian language will be known, as it's written," he said. So he's the one, I remember that old man who left this telling one time. I don't forget Akiwenzii as he was called. So I have come to know well this certain man.

The wolf is around in the wild. The dog is near the homes of man. The wolf used to be near the Indian. And the dog was in the forest. The wolf and the dog were talking to one another.

"Dog, you come here! Come take care of the Indian," said the wolf.

"All right then," said the dog.

The dog didn't really like being in the woods anyways. The dog went back. They switched places.



“I will take care of the Indian from here. I will be in the forest,” said the wolf.

“I will take care of the Indian from here near his home,” said the dog.

The wolf told the dog “I will take care of the Indians from here. I will get my food from the woods. You will watch over the Indian from nearby his house. And you will be eating shit.”<sup>122</sup>

This story, with its humorous punchline, reveals that even without a collar, the life of a dog may leave something to be desired, at least from the wolf’s perspective. Like the story told by Babrius and Phaedrus, it assumes that the dog has given up some benefit to assume close proximity to humans.

Despite the similarities, a crucial difference is the slave-like conditions found in the Greek and Latin stories. Fables, and especially those told by Phaedrus, represent (to a certain extent, at least) the perspective of the lower class, particularly slaves, in ancient societies.<sup>123</sup> In particular, the hungry but free wolf and the well-fed but enslaved dog may represent the contrast within Greek society of the impoverished free laborer and the domestic slave. By voicing the concerns of slaves and even domestic animals, fables enable a disguised critique of power, similar to what James Scott calls the “weapons of the weak.”<sup>124</sup> The dog’s resignation to its role in the fable told by Babrius and Phaedrus is offset by the wolf’s resistance to the idea. In fables of other domestic animals, stronger forms of resistance such as refusing to perform duties, pilfering, escape, and confrontation show more explicit animal resistance.<sup>125</sup> Both anonymity and disguise are required to successfully resist power by means of what Scott calls “a ‘hidden transcript’ that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant.”<sup>126</sup> Scott links both material and ideological resistance to power, calling both types of insubordination the “infrapolitics of the powerless.”<sup>127</sup> As the product of a society that sanctioned slavery, Aesop’s fables encode both types of resistance, through the words and actions of the animals. While the metaphorical application of the “hidden transcript” suggests that slaves’ voices may be heard obliquely within the tradition, I also believe that animal resistance can be read alongside this transcript, providing a glimpse into the everyday forms of resistance practiced by domesticated animals all over the world.<sup>128</sup>

The Ojibwe story, the product of a society without slavery, does not mention a collar or chain. In this version, the emphasis is on the diet of the animals. In contrast to the Aesopic version, where the dog eats better than the wolf, the dog in Gibbs’ story eats shit. This humorous statement suggests that the wolf may have access to the entire animal it kills, whereas the dog is given scraps and bones, and may resort to eating literal excrement. This idea reinforces the perspective found in the story of Nenabozho and the wolves, where Nenabozho first bristles at the thought of eating what the wolves offer him, but soon adapts to their lifestyle. That story

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<sup>122</sup> Gibbs 2010, 96-99.

<sup>123</sup> Kurke 2011, 10-12. See also Henderson 2001, Patterson 1991, and duBois 2003.

<sup>124</sup> Scott 1985.

<sup>125</sup> Hribal 2007, 103.

<sup>126</sup> Scott 1990, xii.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>128</sup> Hribal 2007.

presented an alternative way of seeing human-animal interaction as dependent upon relationships, recognizing the limits of the human body, and adapting by learning from other species. These stories displace anthropocentrism by their claim that animals are fully equipped to survive and thrive on their own, and that humans find their place by learning from them. In the story of the dog and the wolf, both the dog and the wolf care for the people from their respective locations.

All three stories portray both dogs and wolves as autonomous subjects, capable of choosing what kind of life they want to live. By imagining the thoughts of dogs and wolves, and how they might discuss their respective life circumstances with each other, the stories provide an example of humans speaking for animals, reinscribing the unknowable consciousness of another creature into human terms. Alison Suen suggests recognizing that representation is inevitable in our dealings with animals, and that due to the limitations of communication, the distinction between speaking with and speaking for may collapse.<sup>129</sup> She argues that we should recognize our unique form of speech as a relational capacity, whose condition depends on kinship, not reason.<sup>130</sup> However, she argues that speaking for animals can be a way of elevating our acknowledgement of the relational capacity of animals, and that, although we are describing animal relationships in our own terms, doing so allows us to consider the perspective of other types of beings and how that perspective can inform our interactions with other species.

By considering these perspectives and using the Indigenous stories to reflect on the Greek fables, we can adopt a multivalent view similar to that of the trickster in Gerald Vizenor's theory. Vizenor states that the trickster is "a concordance of narrative voices," a sign of the communal experience, in contrast to modular isolation.<sup>131</sup> By viewing these stories as an account of relationships, both among the human community and with other species, we allow for a fresh interpretation of Aesop's fables. The Ojibwe stories especially demonstrate the displacement of anthropocentrism by focusing on the ways in which animals help, and are even superior to, humans. Their perspective allows us to look at relationship, rather than possession of speech, as a way of defining our existence on a continuum of species. By adopting this cross-cultural perspective, the Ojibwe stories, as well as the Aesopic fables, redefine our understanding of what animals have to say by allowing their voices to be heard.

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<sup>129</sup> Suen 2015, 21-22.

<sup>130</sup> Suen 2015, 3-4.

<sup>131</sup> Vizenor 1990, 284.

### 3. The Trickster

In this chapter I will look at trickster figures in Aesop's fables and the Ojibwe tradition, and explore the function of these figures within their respective worlds. In Jones' *Ojibwa Texts*, Nenabozho functions as a trickster figure, as does Aesop himself in the *Life of Aesop*.<sup>1</sup> Within the Greek fables, the fox is most often cast as the trickster figure, a tradition which continued into the medieval Reynard tales. In contrast to the trickster gods of Greek mythology, Hermes and Prometheus, the Aesopic fox has received very little discussion concerning its trickster role.<sup>2</sup> In Indigenous traditions, various animals, such as the fox, coyote, crow, raccoon, raven, whiskeyjack, and rabbit play the role of trickster, and within the Ojibwe tradition, a rabbit or hare sometimes takes on the trickster role as a refiguration of Nenabozho. In this chapter, I will look at these figures and their multiplicities, exploring varied strands of meaning within these stories as the characters show diverse ways of being in the world. Rather than looking at the trickster as a mediator, or the embodiment of oppositions, I will show how the trickster, who appears as a quintessential human and a quintessential animal, enacts the instability of boundaries and language.<sup>3</sup> By creating shifting meaning and changing relationships with "the other," the trickster may be found engaging in an endless and playful search to understand the world.

Gerald Vizenor's theory of the trickster as a communal figure, opposed to individualism, and as the embodiment of the complexities of discourse, will, I believe, allow for a better interpretation of Ojibwe stories, and the same approach may also be valuable for looking at the trickster animals in the *Aesopica*.<sup>4</sup> How does the trickster, as a "semiotic sign" in a language game, allow a reimagination of humans and other animals in relationship, and in communication with each other?<sup>5</sup> The trickster creates meaning, by doing rather than being, and enacts a creative encounter of liberation.<sup>6</sup> The iterability and changeability of animals within these stories, and especially that of the trickster, provide opportunity to investigate the possibility of multi-species communication, and the ways in which language itself is not an essential human quality, but a changeable semiotic system, which sometimes gets the best of those who interact by means of it. Thus, the trickster enacts the role of language as part of a semiotic system for enabling and subverting interactions among multiple species, while at the same time, the trickster's shifting form questions the human exclusivity of language, demonstrating that language bears a nonhuman trace.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kurke 2011, 53.

<sup>2</sup> On Hermes in particular, see Hyde 1998.

<sup>3</sup> On the trickster and boundaries, see Hyde 1998, 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> Vizenor 1993.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 285-86.

<sup>7</sup> Derrida 1991, 116-117; Wolfe 2009, 571; Armbruster 2013, 27.

## Aesop's Foxes

The fox is one of the most-represented species in ancient fables, where the fox's cleverness is typically used to advance her own agenda.<sup>8</sup> This reputation is not limited to fables, since Aristotle describes the fox as mischievous and wicked.<sup>9</sup> Yet the fox's cunning is often foiled, and the fox herself may be tricked.<sup>10</sup> In this section I will first explore the fox's cleverness as exemplified in several accounts, then turn to the special case of the fox and the hedgehog. I will then look at where the fox's cleverness breaks down, and finally turn to the fox's self-serving nature. In each of these sections, I hope to show, the fox exists as a trickster within Aesopic discourse, both creating elaborate tricks and often being exposed for her own foolishness.

### The Clever Fox

The fox's cunning is a standard feature in fables.<sup>11</sup> The fox often brags about this cleverness, as demonstrated in Perry 12:

ἀλώπηξ καὶ πάρδαλις περὶ κάλλους ἤριζον. τῆς δὲ παρδάλεως παρ' ἕκαστα τὴν τοῦ σώματος ποικιλίαν προβαλλομένης ἡ ἀλώπηξ ὑποτυχοῦσα ἔφη· “καὶ πόσον ἐγὼ σοῦ καλλίων ὑπάρχω, ἤτις οὐ τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν πεποίκιλμαι;”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι τοῦ σωματικοῦ κάλλους ἀμείνων ἐστὶν ὁ τῆς διανοίας κόσμος.

A fox and a leopard were disputing over their beauty. When the leopard kept mentioning her intricately patterned skin over and over, the fox retorted decisively and said, “How much more beautiful I am than you, since it is not my skin that is intricately patterned, but my mind!”

The story shows that the decoration of the mind is better than physical beauty.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The fox is gendered feminine in the Greek language, a factor which may be an accident of linguistic development, but which must be significant for Greek attitudes toward the fox's craftiness.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle *Historia Animalium* 488b20: Καὶ τὰ μὲν πανοῦργα καὶ κακοῦργα, οἷον ἀλώπηξ (Again, some are mischievous and wicked, like the fox).

<sup>10</sup> Zafiroopoulos 2001, 29.

<sup>11</sup> Zafiroopoulos 2001, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961. This fable is mentioned twice in Plutarch. Plutarch *Moralia*, 500c-d (Helmbold 1939, 382-83):

Ἡ μὲν οὖν Αἰσώπειος ἀλώπηξ περὶ ποικιλίας δικαζομένη πρὸς τὴν πάρδαλιν, ὡς ἐκείνη τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν εὐάνθη καὶ κατάστικτον ἐπεδείξατο, τῆς δ' ἦν τὸ ξανθὸν ἀύχμηρον καὶ οὐχ ἡδὺ προσιδεῖν, “ἀλλ' ἐμοῦ τοι τὸ ἐντός,” ἔφη, “σκοπῶν, ὃ δικαστά, ποικιλωτέραν με τῆσδ' ὄψει,” δηλοῦσα τὴν περὶ τὸ ἦθος εὐτροπίαν ἐπὶ πολλὰ ταῖς χρείαις ἀμειβομένην.

The fox in Aesop, disputing at law with the leopard concerning their claims to variety, when the leopard had shown her body with its glossy surface bright and spotted, and the fox's tawny skin was rough and unpleasant to the eye, “But look at me within, sir judge,” said she, “and you will find me fuller far than she of fair variety,” making manifest the versatility of her character which changes to many forms as necessity arises.

This fable is an elaboration of the Greek adjective ποικίλος, translated as multicolored or wrought in various colors.<sup>13</sup> The term can be used both for elaborate iridescent or mottled colors of animals, such as the plumage of the wryneck,<sup>14</sup> a mottled snake,<sup>15</sup> and dappled fawn skins,<sup>16</sup> as well as for abstract qualities of cunning and subtlety.<sup>17</sup> The leopard is of course an excellent example of ποικίλος fur, while the fox exhibits the mental qualities described by ποικίλος. The fox's tricks are thus described by a term that is often used for human art such as music, weaving, and painting.<sup>18</sup> Beyond the color patterns and iridescence implied by this adjective, it is also associated with constant changing and complexity, rather than simplicity.<sup>19</sup> When applied to a person or animal, it indicates a wily, cunning nature. Since the term spans a range of aesthetic and technical categories, its use in the fable allows the clever intertwining of multiple meanings as the fox demonstrates exactly how her mind is intricate and cunning.<sup>20</sup>

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Plutarch *Septem* 155b-c (Babbitt 1928, 398-99):

σύ δ' ἔοικας οὐδὲ τῆς σεαυτοῦ μνημονεύειν ἀλώπεκος. ἐκείνη μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἀγῶνα ποικιλίας καταστᾶσα πρὸς τὴν πάρδαλιν ἤξιον τὰ ἐντὸς αὐτῆς καταμαθεῖν τὸν δικαστὴν, ποικιλιωτέρα γὰρ ἐκεῖθεν φανεῖσθαι.

But you, apparently, do not remember your own fox. For the fox, having entered into a contest with the leopard to determine which was the more ingeniously coloured, insisted it was but fair that the judge should note carefully what was within her, for there she said she should show herself more ingenious.

<sup>13</sup> *LSJ* s.v. ποικίλος.

<sup>14</sup> Pindar *Pythian* 4.214.

<sup>15</sup> Pindar *Pythian* 4.249.

<sup>16</sup> Euripides *Bacchae* 249.

<sup>17</sup> Detienne and Vernant 1978, 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> Mueller 2008, 55-56.

<sup>19</sup> Detienne and Vernant 1978, 18-19.

<sup>20</sup> A similar Latin fable is recorded by Avianus, but without the pun on ποικίλος (Duff and Duff 2006, 744-

45):

Distinctus maculis et pulchro pectore pardus  
inter consimiles ibat in ora feras;  
sed quia nulla graves variarent terga leones,  
protinus his miserum credidit esse genus.  
cetera sordenti damnans animalia vultu                         5  
solus in exemplum nobilitatis erat.  
hunc arguta novo gaudentem vulpis amictu  
corripit et vanas approbat esse notas:  
“vade” ait “et pictae nimium confide iuventae,  
dum mihi consilium pulchrius esse queat,                         10  
miremurque magis quos munera mentis adornant,  
quam qui corporeis enituere bonis.”

A fine-breasted leopard in his dappled glory went to parade himself among the beasts which were his compeers. But because the surly lions had no varied hues upon their back, he straightway formed the belief that theirs was a sorry tribe. Condemning all the other animals as mean-looking, he took himself for the one pattern of noble breed. As he was rejoicing in the garb of youth, a wily vixen chided him and showed the uselessness of his markings. “Go,” said she, “keep your excessive confidence in your gorgeous youthfulness, so long as I can surpass you in fine counsel, and so long as we can admire those adorned by gifts of intellect more than those who shine in bodily charms.”

The fox's intricately patterned mind appears in a fragment of Alcaeus in which the descriptive adjective ποικιλόφρων occurs. While in this fragment the fox is compared to one of Alcaeus's political opponents, the descriptive force of the epithet highlights the fox's craftiness (ὡς ἀλώπα[ρ] ποικ[ι]λόφρων, "a crafty fox" Alcaeus fr. 69 V).<sup>21</sup> From this fragment, it is clear that the adjective is fittingly applied to the fox, and to Alcaeus's rival Pittacus by extension. A similar term, ποικιλομήτης is used as an epithet of Odysseus in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and along with his other epithets, highlights the wily and cunning behavior he engages in.<sup>22</sup> The many twists and turns of Odysseus's life correspond to the fox's ability to suddenly reverse its position, and its embodiment of *metis*, "the power of reversal."<sup>23</sup>

The fox's verbal cleverness is demonstrated in Perry 27, the fable of the fox and the tragic actor's mask.

ἀλώπηξ εἰσελθοῦσα εἰς πλάστου ἐργαστήριον καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ἐνότων διερευνῶσα, ὡς περιέτυχε τραγωδοῦ προσωπεῖω, τοῦτο ἐπάρασα εἶπεν· "οἷα κεφαλὴ ἐγκέφαλον οὐκ ἔχει."

ὁ λόγος εὐκαιρος πρὸς ἄνδρα μεγαλοπρεπῆ μὲν σώματι, κατὰ ψυχὴν δὲ ἀλόγιστον.

A fox went into the workshop of a moulder and, as she was poking her nose into everything, came upon a tragic actor's mask. As she picked it up, she said, "What a head to have no brain inside!"

This fable is fitting for the man who has a magnificent physical appearance but a foolish mind.<sup>24</sup>

In this fable, the fox speaks the punchline, making a pun on κεφαλὴ (head) and ἐγκέφαλον (brain). Her obsession with mental acuity continues in the vein of her bragging to the leopard in Perry 12 about her own cleverness. Her observation demonstrates that she is primarily concerned with brains, and that an impressive appearance is of no value compared to a clever mind. By coming face-to-face with the empty mask, the fox realizes the human potential for deception through multiple methods. Though the fox may not understand theater, she does understand pretense and vanity.

A fable which clearly demonstrates the fox's *metis* and power of reversal is recorded by Babrius. The fable is lengthier than most, and the fox speaks multiple times, amply demonstrating her craftiness and verbal artistry (Babrius 95):

A lion in a rocky glen lay ill, his languid limbs outstretched upon the ground. He had a friendly fox to keep him company, to whom one day he said: "I'm sure you want me to survive? I'm dying of hunger for that deer who makes her home in that wooded thicket

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<sup>21</sup> See Kurke 1991, 252-53 and Kurke 1999, 112-13 for discussions of the context of this fragment.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. *Iliad* 11.482, *Odyssey* 3.163, 13.293. See Detienne and Vernant 1978, 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> Detienne and Vernant 1978, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961. Compare Phaedrus I.7.

underneath the rugged pines.<sup>25</sup> No longer now, alas, have I the strength to chase a deer, but she shall come within my claws, if you'll consent to take her captive with your honeyed words." Off went the crafty one and found her quarry in the wild woodland, prancing about upon the tender grass. She bowed before her first of all, then wished her health, and said she'd come to bring good news. "The lion is my neighbour, as you know," she said. "But now he's very ill and close to death, and so he has been thinking much of late concerning who should rule the beasts when he is gone. 'The boar,' he says, 'is a senseless creature, the bear too sluggish, the leopard too prone to anger, the tiger a braggart who always keeps to himself.' The deer, he reckons, is worthiest of all to rule. 'She has a proud appearance; she lives many years; her horns are fearful to all creeping things and are like the trees with their branches, not such as are the horns of bulls.' Why need I say more? Your election has been ratified and you are destined to rule over the beasts who roam the mountain. When that day comes, my Lady, I pray you'll not forget the fox, who was the first to bring you this good news. That's why I came. But now farewell, dear friend; I hurry off to join the lion, lest he want me for some other service, since he looks to me for counsel in all things. And, methinks, you too should go, my child, if you would heed the advice of an old head. 'Twould well become you to attend to him and cheer him in his woes; for little things have weight with those who are in life's last hours. The souls of the dying are in their eyes." So spoke the crafty one, and the deer's mind was puffed up with conceit by the spell of those false words. She came to the hollow cave of the wild beast, not knowing what was bound to be. Up sprang the lion reckless from his couch and set upon her, but in too great haste; only the tips of his claws slashed the deer's ears. The deer was frightened and dashed forth from the doorway into the midst of the adjacent woods. The crafty one wrung her hands when she saw that her labour had been spent in vain, and the lion groaned and churned his maw, assailed alike by hunger and chagrin. Again he called the crafty one and begged her to devise once more a scheme by which to take the prey. The fox delved deeply in her thoughts and said: "Hard is your bidding to fulfil, but I will serve you nonetheless." Then like a shrewd hound she set out upon the trail, devising tricks and mischief of every kind. She asked each shepherd that she met, had he seen anywhere a bleeding deer in flight? And all who had would point the way and lead her on, until at last she found her game in a shady place recovering her breath after running. There, with the brazen brow and front of Impudence in person, the fox came to a stand. A shudder ran through the deer's back and knees and anger seethed within her heart, as thus she spoke: [ ] "You loathsome beast, this time it won't be good for you, if you come near me or dare to mutter so much as a word. Go, play your tricks on others yet untaught. Choose others to be kings and put them on the throne." But the fox's spirit was not daunted, and with ready words she answered: "So ignoble are you, so full of fear, so suspicious of your friends? The lion meant to give you profitable advice; and, to rouse you from your former lethargy, he merely touched your ear, as a dying father might. His intention was to give you every precept you would need to hold so great a kingdom, once you took it over. But you could not endure even the slight scratch of his enfeebled hand, but tore yourself away by force and so were

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<sup>25</sup> The deer is gendered feminine in this fable, despite references to antlers which are typically (but not always) found on male deer only.

wounded more. And now he is angrier than you. After finding you very untrustworthy and light-headed, he declares that he will set up the wolf as king. Alas, what an evil tyrant he will be! What shall I do? You are responsible to all of us for these ills. Come now, hereafter bear up bravely. Don't be timid and afraid, like a sheep from the flock. I swear to you by all the leaves, and by the springs, as I hope to have you only for my master, that the lion is no enemy of yours, but from good will he makes you queen of all the beasts." Such were the coaxing words by which the fox induced the youthful deer a second time to enter in the house of death. After shutting himself within the utmost reaches of his lair, the lion had, all by himself, a banquet most complete. He gorged the flesh, he sucked the marrow from the bones, devoured the inner parts. Meanwhile the one who brought the game stood by hungering for it; and when by chance the fawn's heart fell apart from the rest, she seized upon it stealthily and ate it. This was the profit that she had as payment for her toil. The lion, checking, counted over each of the inner parts, and only the heart amid them all could not be found. All through his couch he searched, in every corner of his lair. Then said the crafty one, to cover up the truth: "Indeed, she had no heart at all. Don't search in vain. What kind of heart could she or any creature have who came a second time into a lion's den?"<sup>26</sup>

In this fable, the fox is called κερδῶ (the crafty one, or the profiteer, lines 36, 43, 99; cf. 95).<sup>27</sup> Her craftiness plays out in the twists and turns of this story, as she coaxes the frightened deer twice to enter the lion's den. Her powers of persuasion are remarkable and carried out by "weaving all kinds of tricks and mischief" (πλέκουσα τέχνας καὶ πανουργίας πάσας, 52). In addition to this verbal artistry, her desire to gain something from this endeavor is clear. The story puns on the fox's name (κερδῶ) and her profit (κέρδος) obtained by stealing the deer's heart for herself. The deer's heart in this story represents her mental capacity rather than courage, suggesting that she has no intelligence and is gullible rather than courageous.

The fox engages in verbal cleverness, weaving words and relying on deception and multiple meanings to accomplish her goal. She lies to the deer, repeatedly telling her that the lion wants to make her the ruler over the animals and reassuring her that it is safe to enter the lion's den, denying the lion's intentions to do anything but confer rulership on her. Her successful deception of the deer provides evidence that her craftiness is not just useful for making clever statements, but that she is willing to use it against other animals to her advantage. She engages in verbal reversals, saying one thing while concealing her intent under the surface of the words. Her

<sup>26</sup> Translation adapted from Perry 1965, 117-23. Another version of this fable is recorded by Chambry (199).

<sup>27</sup> The fable of the hare and the fox (Perry 333) comments on this name. Text from Perry 1952. Translation is my own.

Ὁ λαγῶδες τῆ ἀλώπεκι· "Ὅντως πολλὰ κερδαίνεις, [ἢ ἔχεις] ὅτι ὄνομά σοι κερδῶ ἐστίν;" ἡ δὲ ἀλώπηξ· "εἰ ἀπιστεῖς," ἔφη, "δεῦρο· ἐγὼ ἐστιῶ σε." ὁ δὲ ἠκολούθει καὶ ἦν ἔνδον οὐδὲν ἢ ὁ λαγῶδες δεῖπνος τῆ ἀλώπεκι. ὁ δὲ λαγῶδες ἔφη· "σὺν κακῷ μέν, ἀλλ' ἔμαθόν σου τὸ ὄνομα πόθεν ἐστὶ, οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ κερδαίνειν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ δολοῦν."

The hare said to the fox, "Do you really get the name of 'the profiteer' because you make so much profit? The fox replied, "If you don't believe it, come on, I will have you for dinner." The hare followed the fox to her den, but the fox had nothing there to eat except for the hare himself. The hare exclaimed, "I have learned to my sorrow that your name does not derive from any kind of profit but from trickery!"



cleverness highlights the deception inherent in language, and the deer's fate exemplifies the danger in trusting in the changeable semiotic system of language.

It is precisely because the deer trusts in language rather than her own senses and her perception of the lion's aggressiveness that she loses her life.<sup>28</sup> The fox convinces her of the primacy of language over bodily perception, and in so doing, convinces her to enter the lion's den a second time. The fox is able to use words so convincingly that the poor deer believes that her perceptions must be mistaken, and she accepts and follows the fox's advice. In this way, the fable shows the danger inherent in language, due to its inherent potential for deception.

In the fable of the fox and the goat in a well, the fox tricks a goat with a plan that appears designed to save both of them, but in reality is intended to allow only the fox to escape (Perry 9).<sup>29</sup>

ἀλώπηξ πεσοῦσα εἰς φρέαρ ἐπάναγκες ἔμενε πρὸς τὴν ἀνάβασιν ἀμηχανοῦσα. τράγος δὲ δίψῃ συνεχόμενος, ὡς ἐγένετο κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ φρέαρ, θεασάμενος αὐτὴν ἐπυνθάνετο εἰ καλὸν εἶη τὸ ὕδωρ. ἡ δὲ τὴν συντυχίαν ἀσμενισαμένη πολὺν ἔπαινον τοῦ ὕδατος κατέτεινε, λέγουσα ὡς χρηστὸν εἶη καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸν καταβῆναι παρήνει. τοῦ δὲ ἀμελετήτως καθαλλομένου διὰ τὸ μόνην ὄρᾶν τότε τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, καὶ ἅμα τῷ τὴν δίψαν σβέσαι μετὰ τῆς ἀλώπεκος σκοποῦντος τὴν ἄνοδον, χρησίμον τι ἢ ἀλώπηξ ἔφη ἐπινενοηκέναι εἰς τὴν ἀμφοτέρων σωτηρίαν· “ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσης τοὺς ἐμπροσθίους πόδας τῷ τοίχῳ προσερείσας ἐγκλῖναι καὶ τὰ κέρατα, ἀναδραμοῦσα αὐτὴ διὰ τοῦ σοῦ νότου καὶ σὲ ἀνασπᾶσω.” τοῦ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν δευτέραν παραίνεσιν ἐτοίμως ὑπηρετήσαντος, ἡ ἀλώπηξ ἀναλλομένη διὰ τῶν σκελῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν νῶτον ἀνέβη καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνου ἐπὶ τὰ κέρατα διερεισαμένη ἐπὶ τὸ στόμα τοῦ φρέατος ἠύρεθη καὶ ἀνελθοῦσα ἀπηλλάττετο. τοῦ δὲ τράγου μεμφομένου αὐτὴν ὡς τὰς ὁμολογίας παραβαίνουσαν, ἡ ἀλώπηξ ἐπιστραφεῖσα εἶπεν “ὦ οὔτος, ἀλλ’ εἰ τοσαύτας φρένας εἶχες ὅσας ἐν τῷ πῶγωνι τρίχας, οὐ πρότερον δὴ καταβεβήκεις πρὶν ἢ τὴν ἄνοδον ἐσκέψω.”

οὔτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοὺς φρονίμους δεῖ πρότερον τὰ τέλη τῶν πραγμάτων σκοπεῖν, εἶθ’ οὔτως αὐτοῖς ἐγχειρεῖν.

A fox fell into a well and had to stay there because she was unable to get out. A thirsty billy goat came to the same well, saw the fox, and asked if the water was good. The fox was delighted with this good fortune and greatly praised the water, saying how good it was and encouraged him to come down also. The goat jumped in without delay, thinking only of his thirst, and when he had quenched his thirst, began searching for a way out along with the fox. The fox said she had a thought of a good idea for saving both of them. “If you will brace your front feet against the wall and bend your horns over against it, I’ll run up your back and pull you up too!” The billy goat readily agreed to the second suggestion, and the fox jumped up through his legs onto his back, stood on his back, and from there, supported by his horns, she reached the mouth of the well and escaped. When the goat complained that she was breaking their agreement, the fox turned around and

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<sup>28</sup> Kurke 2011, 155.

<sup>29</sup> A Latin version is told by Phaedrus (4.9).

said, “My friend, if you had as many brains as you have hairs in your beard, you wouldn’t have gone down there before figuring out how to get out.”

Thus wise people should not undertake anything before they see where it will end up.<sup>30</sup>

This fable shows the fox using trickery to save herself, with no concern for the fate of the goat she tricks.<sup>31</sup> The fox’s witty remarks comment upon the other animal’s lack of brains, as she did in the fable of the crow and the fox (εἰ τοσαύτας φρένας εἶχες ὅσας ἐν τῷ πώγωνι τρίχας; cf. Perry 124, φρένας εἰ εἶχες). As in Perry 124, she uses exaggeration in order to trick the other animal, this time singing the praises of the water in the well much like the fox in Perry 124 flatters the crow. These fables demonstrate that the fox is well-versed in methods of verbal persuasion, and likes to get the last word by offering a witty assessment of the situation. In order to do so, the fox is willing to break agreements, as the billy goat points out (ὡς τὰς ὁμολογίας παραβαίνουσαν). Much like in the fable of the deer without a heart, the fox engages in deception, making false promises which the other animals take at face value, and later reneges on those promises to her own benefit.

The fox uses her verbal and mental powers in order to protect herself in a number of fables. In the fable of the lion, the donkey, and the fox (Perry 149), the fox quickly adjusts to a dangerous situation to protect herself:

λέων καὶ ὄνος καὶ ἀλώπηξ κοινωνίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους σπεισάμενοι ἐξῆλθον εἰς ἄγρην. πολλὴν δὲ <θήραν> αὐτῶν συλλαβόντων ὁ λέων προσέταξε τῷ ὄνῳ διελεῖν αὐτοῖς. τοῦ δὲ τρεῖς μοίρας ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐκλέξασθαι αὐτῷ παραιοῦντος ὁ λέων ἀγανακτήσας [ἀλλόμενος] κατεθροίσασα αὐτὸν καὶ τῇ ἀλώπεκι μερίσαι προσέταξεν. ἡ δὲ πάντα εἰς μίαν μερίδα συναθροίσασα καὶ μικρὰ ἑαυτῇ ὑπολιπομένη παρήνει αὐτῷ ἐλέσθαι. ἐρομένου δὲ αὐτὴν τοῦ λέοντος, [καί] τίς αὐτὴν οὕτω διανέμειν ἐδίδαξεν, ἡ ἀλώπηξ εἶπεν “αἰ τοῦ ὄνου συμφοραί.”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι σωφρονισμὸς γίνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ τῶν πέλας δυστυχήματα.

A lion, a donkey, and a fox reached an agreement with one another and went out to hunt. When they had caught much prey, the lion instructed the donkey to divide it for them. When the donkey divided it in three parts and asked him to choose one, the lion became very angry, devoured the donkey, and then ordered the fox to divide up the shares. She left only a small portion for herself, gathered all the rest into one portion, and urged the lion to take it. When the lion asked the fox who had taught her to divide things that way, she said, “The fate of the donkey.”

The fable shows that people can gain wisdom from their friends' misfortunes.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>31</sup> The fable of the hare in the well and the fox (Perry 408) shows a similar lack of concern for others, as the fox finds a hare trapped in a well and makes the same pronouncement about the other animal’s fate.

<sup>32</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

The fox is confronted with a dangerous situation, in which she quickly adapts and takes action to save her skin. This story demonstrates the fox's quick-wittedness and ability to adapt to the circumstances.

In another related fable, the fable of the old lion and the fox, the fox also avoids being eaten by the lion by making a wise assessment of the environment and the danger posed by the lion (Perry 142):

λέων γηράσας καὶ μὴ δυνάμενος δι' ἀλκῆς ἑαυτῷ τροφήν πορίζειν ἔγνω δεῖν δι' ἐπινοίας τοῦτο πράξει. καὶ δὴ παραγενόμενος εἰς τι σπήλαιον καὶ ἐνταῦθα κατακλιθεὶς προσεποιεῖτο τὸν νοσοῦντα· καὶ οὕτω τὰ παραγενόμενα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν ζῷα συλλαμβάνων κατήσθιε. πολλῶν δὲ θηρίων καταναλωθέντων ἀλώπηξ τὸ τέχνασμα αὐτοῦ συνείσα παρεγένετο, καὶ στᾶσα ἄπωθεν τοῦ σπηλαίου ἐπυνθάνετο αὐτοῦ πῶς ἔχοι. τοῦ δὲ εἰπόντος “κακῶς” καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἐρομένου δι' ἣν οὐκ εἴσεισιν, ἔφη “ἀλλ' ἔγωγε εἰσῆλθον ἄν, εἰ μὴ ἐώρων πολλῶν εἰσιόντων ἵχνη, ἐξιόντος δὲ οὐδενός.”

οὕτως οἱ φρόνιμοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκ τεκμηρίων προορώμενοι τοὺς κινδύνους ἐκφεύγουσιν.

A lion who was getting old and could not obtain food by force decided he would have to do it by wit. So he went into a cave where he laid down and pretended to be sick. When the other animals came to visit him, he would eat them. After many animals were devoured, a fox, who had understood the trick, came along and standing away from the cave asked him how he was. When the lion said he was not doing well and asked why the fox wasn't coming in, she said, “Well I would, if I didn't see so many tracks going in but none coming out.”

Thus wise people foresee danger from the signs and avoid it.<sup>33</sup>

In this story, the fox understands the situation and not only chooses the prudent course of action for herself, but also makes that choice known to the lion in a clever statement. In this account, as in others, the fox's main concern is saving her skin, and she does not demonstrate concern for the fate of other animals, other than to the extent that she can benefit from their fate. The fox's cleverness is, it appears, never used to benefit other animals, but only in the service of her own interests.

The same fable appears in Babrius 103, with additional details and a lengthier conversation between the fox and the lion.

Λέων ἐπ' ἄγρην οὐκέτι σθένων βαίνειν  
(πολλῷ γὰρ ἤδη τῷ χρόνῳ γεγηράκει)  
κοίλης ἔσω σπήλυγγος οἷά τις νούσῳ  
κάμνων ἐβέβλητ' οὐκ ἀληθὲς ἀσθμαίνων,  
φωνὴν βαρεῖαν προσποιητὰ λεπτόνων.  
θηρῶν δ' ἐπ' αὐλὰς ἦλθεν ἄγγελος φήμη,

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<sup>33</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

καὶ πάντες ἤλγουν ὡς λέοντος ἀρρώστου,  
ἐπισκοπήσων δ' εἷς ἕκαστος εἰσήει.  
τούτους ἐφεξῆς λαμβάνων ἀμοχθήτως  
κατήσθιεν, γῆρας δὲ λιπαρὸν ἠϋρήκει. 10  
σοφὴ δ' ἀλώπηξ ὑπενόησε καὶ πόρρω  
σταθεῖσα “βασιλεῦ, πῶς ἔχεις;” ἐπηρώτα.  
κἀκεῖνος εἶπε “χαῖρε, φιλότατη ζώων·  
τί δ' οὐ προσέρχη, μακρόθεν δέ με σκέπτῃ;  
δεῦρο, γλυκεῖα, καί με ποικίλοις μύθοις 15  
παρηγόρησον ἐγγύς ὄντα τῆς μοίρης.”  
“σῶζοιο” φησὶν, “ἦν δ' ἄπειμι, συγγνώσῃ·  
πολλῶν γὰρ ἵχνη θηρίων με κωλύει,  
ὧν ἐξιόντων οὐκ ἔχεις ὃ μοι δείξεις.”  
Μακάριος ὅστις οὐ προλαμβάνει πταίσας,  
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἄλλων συμφοραῖς ἐπαιδεύθῃ.

A lion who was no longer able to hunt, for he had grown old with the passing of many years, laid himself down in a hollow cave as if he were sick and in pain, pretending to gasp, and making his once deep voice seem weak and thin. Rumour came bearing the message to the beasts within their lairs, and all were grieved to learn of the lion's illness. Each came to call on him inside the cave; and he seized them one after the other without trouble and devoured them. He had learned how to make his old age luxurious. A shrewd fox sensed the truth and, taking her stand at a distance, inquired: “How are you, O King?” The lion answered: “Greetings, dearest of creatures. Why don't you come up, instead of looking on from a distance? Come hither, sweet one, console me with talk of every kind, now that I'm so near to death.” “Take care of yourself,” said the fox, “but pardon me, if I leave. I am deterred from entering by the tracks of many beasts, none of which, so far as you can show me, are leading out from the cave.” Fortunate is the one who is not among the first to stumble, but has learned by observing the calamities of others.<sup>34</sup>

These two versions present essentially the same fable, with only the amount of detail varying. In both cases, many animals lose their lives after falling into the trap set by the sick lion, and only the fox is wise enough to see through the ruse and refuse the lion's invitation. The fable is presented (especially in the Babrius version) not as a refusal to follow the crowd, but as a refusal to respond to the lion's invitation into his den. The tracks themselves are not the invitation the fox refuses; rather, they signal to the clever fox that all is not as it seems. Thus, by correctly interpreting the tracks, a non-verbal sign, the fox demonstrates her shrewdness and intelligence in detecting and understanding various types of signs. But as always, she does not use this power to benefit other animals, but simply to save herself.

In a similar fable, the fable of the sick lion, the wolf, and the fox (Perry 258), the fox actively sacrifices another animal's life for her own benefit.

<sup>34</sup> Text and adapted translation from Perry 1955, 130-133.

λέων γηράσας ἐνόσει κατακεκλιμένος ἐν ἄντρῳ. παρήσαν δ' ἐπισκεψόμενα τὸν βασιλέα πλὴν ἀλώπεκος, τᾶλλα τῶν ζώων. ὁ τοίνυν λύκος λαβόμενος εὐκαιρίας κατηγορεῖ παρὰ τῷ λέοντι τῆς ἀλώπεκος, ἅτε δὴ παρ' οὐδὲν τιθεμένης τὸν πάντων αὐτῶν κρατοῦντα, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μηδ' εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν ἀφιγμένης. ἐν τοσοῦτῳ δὲ παρήν καὶ ἡ ἀλώπηξ, καὶ τῶν τελευταίων ἠκροάσατο τοῦ λύκου ῥημάτων. ὁ μὲν οὖν λέων κατ' αὐτῆς ἐβρυχᾶτο. ἡ δ' ἀπολογίας καιρὸν αἰτήσασα, “καὶ τίς,” ἔφη, “τῶν συνελθόντων τοσοῦτον ὠφέλησέν ὅσον ἐγὼ, πανταχόσε περινοστήσασα, καὶ θεραπείαν ὑπὲρ σου παρ' ἰατρῶν ζητήσασα καὶ μαθοῦσα;” τοῦ δὲ λέοντος εὐθὺς τὴν θεραπείαν εἰπεῖν κελεύσαντος ἐκεῖνη φησὶν “εἰ λύκον ζῶντα ἐκδείρας τὴν αὐτοῦ δορὰν θερμὴν ἀμφιέση.” καὶ τοῦ λύκου αὐτίκα νεκροῦ κειμένου, ἡ ἀλώπηξ γελῶσα εἶπεν “οὕτως οὐ χρὴ τὸν δεσπότην πρὸς δυσμένειαν παρακινεῖν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς εὐμένειαν.”

ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ, ὅτι ὁ καθ' ἑτέρου μηχανώμενος καθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν πάγην περιτρέπει.

An old lion lay sick in a cave. All of the animals except the fox came to visit the king. Then the wolf took this opportunity and reported to the lion that the fox disregarded him as ruler of them all and because of this did not come to visit him. The fox arrived at that moment and heard the wolf's final words. The lion roared at her and she asked for a chance to justify herself. She said, “Who of all this assembly has helped you as much as I have, going everywhere for doctors and searching for a cure for you and learning how to cure you?” When the lion ordered her to tell him the cure immediately, she said, “Skin a wolf alive and wrap the warm hide around yourself.” When the wolf lay dead, the fox laughed and said, “Thus one should not inspire the master to enmity but to goodwill.”

The fable shows that the person who plots against another sets a trap for himself.<sup>35</sup>

Although the outcome for the wolf is similar to the fate of the other animals in the previous fable, in this account the fox takes an active role in turning the wolf's accusation back on him, saving herself in the process. We have explored representations of the wolf in Greek fable as a treacherous animal willing to turn upon its own kind. This fable shows that not only is the wolf capable of doing so, but the fox also can do the same thing in return, effectively winning the battle of betrayal. As we will see later, the fox frequently engages in self-preservation and selfish behaviors, using her mental power to ensure a variety of outcomes in her favor.

The fox can sometimes get jealous of the good fortune of other animals. In the fable of the fox and the monkey (Perry 81), the fox tricks the monkey into getting caught in a trap:

ἐν συνόδῳ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων πίθηκος εὐδοκμήσας βασιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐχειροτονήθη. ἀλώπηξ δὲ αὐτῷ φθονήσασα, ὡς ἐθεάσατο ἔν τινι πάγῃ κρέας κείμενον, ἀγαγοῦσα αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα ἔλεγεν, ὡς εὐροῦσα θησαυρὸν, αὐτὴ μὲν οὐκ ἐχρήσατο, γέρας δὲ αὐτῷ τῆς βασιλείας τετήρηκε, καὶ παρήνει αὐτῷ λαμβάνειν. τοῦ δὲ ἀμελήτους ἐπελθόντος καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς πάγης συλληφθέντος, αἰτιωμένου τε τὴν ἀλώπεκα ὡς ἐνεδρεύσασαν αὐτῷ, ἐκεῖνη ἔφη “ὦ πίθηκε, σὺ δὲ τοιαύτην ψυχὴν ἔχων τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων βασιλεύεις;”

<sup>35</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

οὕτως οἱ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀπροσκέπτως ἐπιχειροῦντες πρὸς τῷ δυστυχεῖν καὶ γέλωτα ὀφλισκάνουσιν.

At an assembly of the irrational animals a monkey won their favor and was elected king. But the fox was jealous of him, and when she saw some meat lying in a trap, she led him there and said that she had found a treasure and had not taken it, but guarded it as a kingly prize for him. She urged him to take it, and he went forward without delay and was caught in the trap. When he accused the fox of setting an ambush for him, she said, “My dear monkey, are you, with such a wit, the king of the irrational animals?”

So it is that those who thoughtlessly get involved in public affairs bring upon themselves not only misfortune but also mockery.<sup>36</sup>

The fox is not above using her trickery to get petty revenge on the monkey for his undeserved good fortune. Her jealousy may come from the feeling that she is best fitted to be the king of the animals (as in Perry 107, which I will discuss in the next section). In any case, she does not allow the monkey to experience this role without mocking him.

The final line of the fox’s speech contains an apparent bowdlerization of a fragment of Archilochus (West 187):<sup>37</sup>

τοιγῆνδε δ’ ὃ πίθηκε τὴν πυγὴν ἔχων

Monkey, with a rump like yours

The replacement of *πυγὴν* with *ψυχὴν*, itself an emendation of *τύχην*, focuses on the fox’s obsession with the mind, recalling the fable of the fox and the leopard, where the fox’s mind is described with the term *ψυχή*.<sup>38</sup> It also alludes to the fable of the fox and the crow and the fable of the goat in the well, where the fox denigrates other animals for their lack of *φρόνη* (mind). The version quoted by West with *πυγὴν* focuses on the bodily excess and ugliness of the monkey, in contrast with the fox’s superiority, which is perhaps both mental and physical.

Either reading, I believe, fits with the fox’s typical approach of highlighting her own mental prowess in contrast to either her opponent’s lack of mental prowess, or a correspondingly inferior body part. For example, in the fable of the fox and the leopard, the fox contrasts her mind to the leopard’s skin, with the implication that a *ποικίλος* mind is to be desired over *ποικίλος* skin. In the fable of the fox and the billy goat, the fox contrasts the goat’s lack of brains with his relatively useless abundance of facial hair. In Archilochus’s fragment, the fox may be contrasting her own mental ability to the monkey’s laughable and (presumably, if caught in a trap) protruding rump.<sup>39</sup> Her focus on the bodily may have been too obscene for the fables as

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<sup>36</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>37</sup> Text from West 1980. See van Dijk 1997, 144-47 for discussion and bibliography.

<sup>38</sup> See Perry 1952, 353, app. crit. for manuscript readings.

<sup>39</sup> Van Dijk 1997, 145.

they were gathered into collections, but must certainly have been present in earlier versions, as evidenced by the fragment of Archilochus.

A late Latin fable preserved in Perotti's appendix tells of a similar interaction between the ape and the fox.<sup>40</sup> In this fable, the fox is condescending and refuses to share her tail with the ape:

Vulpem rogabat partem caudae simius,  
contegere honeste posset ut nudas nates;  
cui sic maligna: "Longior fiat licet,  
tamen illam citius per lutum et spinas traham,  
partem tibi quam quamvis parvam impartiar." 5

An ape asked a fox for a part of her tail, so that he might decently cover up his bare buttocks; but the spiteful creature said to him: "Even if my tail should become longer than it is now, still I would sooner trail it through mud and briars than share a part of it with you, however small."<sup>41</sup>

The fox's disparaging refusal to share part of her tail shows her high opinion of herself, in contrast with the ape. She would rather that her tail be soiled with mud and briars than contaminated by association with the ape's body. Her superiority complex extends beyond her mind to those beautiful parts of her body such as her tail, which she is afraid to lose (Perry 17).

The fox's highlighting of her mind and her beauty in contrast to the less clever, more bodily emphasis in her description of other animals positions her at a higher level than other animals, more suitable to be the ruler over the animals. However, in the next two sections, we will see how the fox herself resorts to bodily overpowering of other animals, and is herself subjected to the limits of her own body. In particular, the fox's craftiness is not confined to the verbal domain; instead, she is tricky both verbally and physically.

In addition to the fox's skilled command of language within fable, she also engages in physical reversals and deceptive actions. The fox "holds the secret of reversal," according to Detienne and Vernant, and she embodies this deception, as evidenced by several ancient accounts that focus on the fox's physical flexibility and ability to reverse by flipping over.<sup>42</sup> This ability to turn and reverse position is mentioned by Pindar in *Isthmian* I.4, 45-47, in his praise of the wrestler Melissus:

τόλμα γὰρ εἰκὼς 45  
θυμὸν ἐριβρεμετᾶν θηρῶν λεόντων  
ἐν πόνῳ, μήτιν δ' ἀλώπηξ,  
αἰετοῦ ἅ τ' ἀναπιτναμένα ρόμβον ἴσχει·

<sup>40</sup> On Perotti's appendix, see Perry 1955, xcvi-xcviii.

<sup>41</sup> Text and adapted translation from Perry 1955.

<sup>42</sup> Detienne and Vernant 1978, 36-37.

For in boldness he resembles the spirit of loud-roaring lions in toil, while in cleverness he is a fox, who holds off the swoop of the eagle by falling on her back.<sup>43</sup>

Like the flexible Melissus, who can evade and overcome opponents by feint, the fox can escape predation or attack by the eagle in this way, by flipping over backwards.<sup>44</sup>

The same unusual motion is also described in Aelian *De Natura Animalium* 6.24:

τὰς δὲ ὀπίσθιας ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ θηρεύουσιν οὕτως. ἀποστραφεῖσαι αὐταὶ καὶ ἐς γῆν κύψασαι τὴν κέρκον ἀνατείνουσιν ὥσπερ οὖν τράχηλον ὄρνιθος· αἱ δὲ ἀπατηθεῖσαι προσίασιν ὡς πρὸς ὄρνιν ὁμόφυλον, εἶτα πλησίον γενόμεναι τῆς ἀλώπεκος ἀλίσκονται ῥᾶστα ἐπιστραφεῖσης καὶ ἐπιθεμένης κατὰ τὸ καρτερόν.

And this is the way that foxes hunt bustards in Pontus. They reverse themselves and put their head down on the ground and stick their tail up, like a bird's neck. And the bustards are deceived and approach, supposing it to be some bird of their own kind; then when they come close up, they are easily caught by the fox, which turns upon them and attacks them violently.<sup>45</sup>

This passage claims that foxes “reverse themselves,” turning upside down with their heads on the ground and tails up, fooling bustards into thinking they are seeing another bird. Both this reversal (ἀποστραφεῖσαι) and the way they turn themselves around to attack the bustards (ἐπιστραφεῖσης) indicate a physical reversal that mimics the fox's use of words in fables. The bustards are deceived (ἀπατηθεῖσαι) by the fox's physical reversal and dissimulation, in much the same way as in Aesop the deer and other animals are deceived by the fox's verbal machinations.

### The Fox and the Hedgehog

The fox's usual tricks famously do not work against one animal in the Greek repertoire, the hedgehog. A well-known fragment of Archilochus refers to this apparently proverbial saying (201 West):<sup>46</sup>

πόλλ' οἶδ' ἀλώπηξ, ἀλλ' ἐχῖνος ἐν μέγα.

The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big one.

This fragment was quoted by Zenobius, who says that this proverb is said “of the greatest scoundrels” (ἐπὶ τῶν πανουργοτάτων). The scoundrel, the πανοῦργος who is ready to do anything, echoes the language used by Aristotle in describing foxes.<sup>47</sup> The fox is willing to try

<sup>43</sup> Text from Snell and Maehler 1987. Translation is my own.

<sup>44</sup> See Detienne and Vernant 1978, 51 n.68, for the scholia on the fox's pedagogical value to wrestlers.

<sup>45</sup> Text and adapted translation from Scholfield 1958, 40-41.

<sup>46</sup> Text from West 1980, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle *Historia Animalium* 488b20: Καὶ τὰ μὲν πανοῦργα καὶ κακοῦργα, οἷον ἀλώπηξ (Again, some are mischievous and wicked, like the fox).



many types of tricks to achieve her ends, whereas the hedgehog only needs one trick, because it works. Yet, it seems, there are ways for the crafty fox to out-trick even the hedgehog.

The passage of Aelian quoted above is preceded by one about how a fox catches a hedgehog (*De Natura Animalium* 6.24):

Δολερὸν χρῆμα ἡ ἀλώπηξ. ἐπιβουλεύει γοῦν τοῖς χερσαίοις ἐχίνοις τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον. ὀρθοὺς αὐτοὺς καταγωνίσασθαι ἀδύνατός ἐστι. τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, αἱ ἄκανθαι ἀνείργουσιν αὐτήν. ἡ δὲ ἡσύχως καὶ πεφεισμένως <ἔχουσα> τοῦ ἑαυτῆς στόματος ἀνατρέπει αὐτοὺς καὶ κλίνει ὑπίους, ἀνασχίσασά τε ἐσθίει ῥαδίως τοὺς τέως φοβερούς.

The fox is a crafty creature. For instance, she plots against hedgehogs in the following way. She cannot overcome them by a direct attack, the reason being that their prickles prevent it; and so, gingerly and taking great care for her mouth, she turns them over and lays them on their back and after ripping them open, easily devours those whom until then she dreaded.<sup>48</sup>

The fox uses another reversal, this time by physically inverting the hedgehog's body, turning him upside down to gain access to his soft underbelly. This action mirrors the fox's verbal mastery, and her ability to flip the meaning of words to accomplish her ends. Her tactics consist of overwhelming defenses, whether through tricking a gullible animal with words, tricking a bird by a quick reversal, or figuring out how to avoid the hedgehog's spines.

This is not the only trick she uses against the hedgehog, however, and her other method, recounted by Aelian, is entirely appropriate for a trickster (*De Natura Animalium* 6.64):

Ἡ ἀλώπηξ πονηρὸν ζῷόν ἐστιν, ἔνθεν τοι καὶ κερδαλέην οἱ ποιηταὶ καλεῖν φιλοῦσιν αὐτήν· πονηρὸν δὲ καὶ ὁ χερσαῖος ἐχίνος ἐστι. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἑαυτὸν συνειλήσας κεῖται, θεασάμενος ἤκουσαν τὴν ἀλώπεκα, ἡ δὲ χανεῖν τε καὶ ἐνδακεῖν οὐ δυναμένη, κᾶτα οὖρησεν αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸ στόμα· ὁ δὲ ἀποπνίγεται, τοῦ πνεύματος ἔνδον ἐκ τῆς συνειλήσεως κατεσχημένου καὶ ἐπιρρέοντός οἱ τοῦ προειρημένου, καὶ μέντοι <καὶ> τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον κακὸν κακῆ περιελθοῦσα τὸν ἐχίνον ἡ ἀλώπηξ ἤρηκεν αὐτόν. ἀνωτέρω δὲ θήρα λέλεκται ἄλλη.

The fox is a rascally creature, hence poets are fond of calling it 'crafty.' The hedgehog also is a rascal, for as soon as he sees the fox approaching he rolls himself into a ball and lies still. And the fox, unable to open her jaws and bite him, makes water into his mouth. And the hedgehog is suffocated because his breathing is stopped through being rolled up and because of the aforesaid stream. Moreover the fox having thus tricked the hedgehog, one scoundrel tricking another, catches him. I have earlier described another method of capture.<sup>49</sup>

This passage focuses on the "rascally nature" of both the fox and the hedgehog, in a battle between two scoundrels. Yet once again the fox manages to overcome the hedgehog's defenses,

<sup>48</sup> Text and adapted translation from Scholfield 1958, 40-41.

<sup>49</sup> Text and adapted translation from Scholfield 1958, 88-89.

this time suffocating it by filling its mouth with urine. This unusual trick seems to be the polar opposite of the typical fox in fables, who uses only words and does not resort to lower bodily functions to achieve her ends. Yet in this case, the fox is able to force the hedgehog to unroll and expose its belly, or suffocate. The fox's cleverness is here directly linked with bodily functions, much like the figure of Aesop in the *Life of Aesop* and Nenabozho in the Ojibwe stories.

With this background in mind, we can now turn to the fable of the fox and the hedgehog, told by Aesop to the Samians. This fable is told by Aristotle, and catalogued as Perry 427:

Αἴσωπος δὲ ἐν Σάμῳ συνηγορῶν δημαγωγῶ κρινομένῳ περὶ θανάτου ἔφη ἀλώπεκα διαβαίνουσαν ποταμὸν ἀπωσθῆναι εἰς φάραγγα· οὐ δυναμένην δ' ἐκβῆναι πολὺν χρόνον κακοπαθεῖν, καὶ κυνοραιστὰς πολλοὺς ἔχεσθαι αὐτῆς. ἐχῖνον δὲ πλανώμενον, ὡς εἶδεν αὐτήν, κατοικτεῖραντα ἐρωτᾶν εἰ ἀφέλοι αὐτῆς τοὺς κυνοραιστάς· τὴν δὲ οὐκ ἔαν. ἐρομένου δὲ διὰ τί, φάναι “ὅτι οὗτοι μὲν πλήρεις μου ἤδη εἰσὶν, καὶ ὀλίγον ἔλκουσιν αἷμα· ἐὰν δὲ τούτους ἀφέλῃ, ἕτεροι ἐλθόντες πεινῶντες ἐκπιοῦνταί μου τὸ λοιπὸν αἷμα.”

“ἀτὰρ οὖν καὶ ὑμᾶς,” ἔφη, “ὧ ἄνδρες Σάμιοι, οὗτος μὲν οὐδὲν ἔτι βλάψει· πλούσιος γάρ ἐστιν. ἐὰν δὲ τοῦτον ἀποκτείνητε, ἕτεροι ἥξουσι πένητες, οἱ ὑμῖν ἀναλώσουσι τὰ κοινὰ κλέπτοντες.”

Aesop, when defending at Samos a demagogue who was being tried for his life, related the following anecdote. “A fox, while crossing a river, was driven into a ravine. Being unable to get out, she was for a long time in sore distress, and a number of dog-ticks clung to her skin. A hedgehog, wandering about, saw her and, moved with compassion, asked her if he should remove the ticks. The fox refused and when the hedgehog asked the reason, she answered: ‘They are already full of me and draw little blood; but if you take them away, others will come that are hungry and will drain what blood remains to me.’

You in like manner, O Samians, will suffer no more harm from this man, for he is wealthy; but if you put him to death, others will come who are poor, who will steal and squander your public funds.”<sup>50</sup>

This strange fable appears to show the fox resigned to the evils of the dog ticks and unwilling to accept help. The fable appears to be invented for the occasion, as an allegory about unethical politicians; yet, as I have demonstrated previously, cultural attitudes about actual animals can sometimes be found within these allegorical fables.

In this account, the fox perhaps surprisingly refuses the hedgehog's help and follows up with an unsurprisingly clever reason for her choice. But why does this particular animal appear in this account? Does the hedgehog perhaps have an additional, previously unknown, trick in his repertoire? Or perhaps, after having been previously poked by the hedgehog's spines, the fox is not willing to have this sharp creature in close contact with her skin. The fox, a master of verbal trickery, may suspect that the hedgehog is purely looking out for his own interests, hoping for a tasty treat. After all, insects form the majority of the hedgehog's diet, and this must be a hungry

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<sup>50</sup> Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.20.6-7. Text from Perry 1952; translation adapted from Daly 1961.

hedgehog who is willing to approach a fox so closely. At the very least, having examined other fables about foxes, we should know not to take the fox's statements at face value.

This story shows two clever creatures in competition. The fox and the hedgehog both have tricks, both are selfish, and their interactions are always competitive. The hedgehog sometimes wins and escapes from the fox, and at other times the fox is able to turn him over or force him to unroll by various methods. When the hedgehog is hungry, he finds a food source on the incapacitated fox, but the fox is not willing to allow her competitor to profit from her misfortune. Thus, it seems the hedgehog's plodding wisdom is no match for the fox's quick craftiness on many occasions, and least of all when the unlucky fox does not wish to allow the hedgehog any benefit at her expense.

In light of Aelian's description of the fox's methods for catching hedgehogs, we can see the fierce competition between these two animals. The fragment of Archilochus also depicts these two species in competition, suggesting that the hedgehog is better positioned in this struggle. Yet within this fable, the fox is suspicious of the hedgehog's tricks, and unwilling to allow the hedgehog to profit from her misfortune. While we do not see the fox attempting to catch the hedgehog, we see evidence that these two creatures are not friends. Their fierce competition is mirrored in other fables where the fox interacts with other animals and sometimes gets out-foxed.

### The Crafty One Tricked

The fox's self-professed cleverness reappears on multiple occasions, where she makes witty statements to a variety of other animals. Even Zeus notices this cleverness, in a fable that provides an explanation of the fox's role among the other animals (Perry 107):

Ζεὺς ἀγασάμενος ἀλώπεκος τὸ συνετὸν τῶν φρενῶν καὶ τὸ ποικίλον τὸ βασίλειον αὐτῆς τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων ἐνεχείρισε. βουλόμενος δὲ γινῶναι, εἰ τὴν τύχην μεταλλάξασα μετεβάλετο καὶ τὴν γλισχρότητα, φερομένης αὐτῆς ἐν φορείῳ κάρθαρρον παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν ἀφῆκεν. ἢ δὲ ἀντισχεῖν μὴ δυναμένη, ἐπειδὴ περίπτματο τῷ φορείῳ, ἀναπηδήσασα ἀκόσμως συλλαβεῖν αὐτὸν ἐπειρᾶτο. καὶ ὁ Ζεὺς ἀγανακτήσας κατ' αὐτῆς πάλιν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν τάξιν ἀπεκατέστησεν.

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι οἱ φαῦλοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κἂν τὰ προσχήματα λαμπρότερα ἀναλάβωσι, τὴν γοῦν φύσιν οὐ μετατίθενται.

Zeus, admiring the fox's intelligence and cunning, gave her the kingship over the senseless animals. But, wishing to know whether the fox after her change of fortune had also lost her slipperiness, he set a dung beetle loose in front of her as she rode along in her litter. Being unable to resist when it flew around the litter, the fox jumped up in a most undignified way to try to catch it. Zeus was so angry that he demoted her to her old station.

The fable shows that worthless people, even if they pretend to be more elegant, do not change their nature.<sup>51</sup>

This fable sets up the fox in opposition to the rest of the senseless animals who are deprived of λόγος (τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων). The fox is described as a human king or queen, being transported in a litter. But Zeus plays a trick to see if the fox is truly clever; the word used here for cleverness is γλισχρότης, a rather rare term which means stickiness, slipperiness, or stinginess.<sup>52</sup> In the fable of the fox and the leopard (Perry 12), the intricate patterns of the fox's mind are highlighted, and here, the texture of slipperiness or stickiness becomes the salient feature. These descriptions metaphorically portray the fox's mind as a tangible object with patterns and haptic qualities. But when Zeus tests the fox's cleverness, it seems that this slipperiness is only a surface quality, as Zeus is able to trick the fox into undignified behavior. By means of his own clever trick, Zeus proves that the fox is not as clever as she claims to be.

The fable hints at providing an aetiology for why the fox is not a ruler, in the human sense, using anthropomorphic imagery such as the litter for carrying a king or queen. The language of kingship over dumb animals suggests that the fox was for a time recognized for her intelligence in the way humans are.<sup>53</sup> But Perry 3, the fable of the eagle and the dung beetle, can be read in comparison, showing that Zeus himself acted in a similar way while guarding an eagle's eggs, jumping up in disgust when a dung beetle flies into his face and drops a ball of dung. In this way Zeus destroys the eagle's eggs and accomplishes the dung beetle's revenge on the eagle who refused to accept his supplication on behalf of a hare that the eagle was pursuing.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>52</sup> *LSJ* s.v. γλισχρότης.

<sup>53</sup> It recalls another fable, Perry 311, in which Zeus gives humans the gift of reason, in contrast to the physical abilities given to the other animals; that fable also bears resemblances to the myth of Prometheus in Plato's *Protagoras* 320d-323a.

<sup>54</sup> Perry 3 (text from Perry 1952; translation adapted from Daly 1961):

ἀετὸς λαγῶν ἐδίωκεν. ὁ δὲ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ τῶν βοηθησόντων ὑπάρχων, ὃν μόνον ὁ καιρὸς παρέσχεν, κάνθαρον ἰδὼν τοῦτον ἰκέτευσεν. ὁ δὲ παραθαρσύνας αὐτὸν ὡς ἐγγὺς ἐλθόντα τὸν ἀετὸν ἐθεάσατο, παρεκάλει μὴ ἀπάγειν αὐτοῦ τὸν ἰκέτην. κάκεινος ὑπεριδὼν τὴν σμικρότητα ἐν ὄψει τοῦ κανθάρου τὸν λαγῶν κατεθοιήσατο. ὁ δὲ ἀπ' ἐκείνου μνησικακῶν διετέλει παρατηρούμενος τοῦ ἀετοῦ τὰς καλιὰς καί, εἴ ποτε ἐκεῖνος ἔτικτε, μετάρσιος αἰρόμενος ἐκύλιε τὰ ὡὰ καὶ κατέασσε, μέχρις οὗ πανταχόθεν ἐλαυνόμενος ὁ ἀετὸς ἐπὶ τὸν Δία κατέφυγεν—ἔστι δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ἱερὸς ὁ ὄρνις—καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐδεήθη τόπον αὐτῷ πρὸς νεοττοποίαν ἀσφαλῆ παρασχεῖν. τοῦ δὲ Διὸς ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτοῦ τίκτειν ἐπιτρέψαντος αὐτῷ ὁ κάνθαρος τοῦτο ἔωρακῶς κόπρου σφαῖραν ποιήσας ἀνέπη καὶ γενόμενος κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ Διὸς κόλπους ἐνταῦθα καθῆκεν. ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς ἀποσείσασθαι τὴν κόπρον βουλόμενος, ὡς διανέστη, ἔλαθεν τὰ ὡὰ ἀπορρίψας. ἀπ' ἐκείνου τέ φασι, περὶ ὃν καιρὸν οἱ κάνθαροι γίνονται, τοὺς ἀετοὺς μὴ νεοττεύειν.

ὁ λόγος διδάσκει μηδενὸς καταφρονεῖν λογιζομένους, ὅτι οὐδεὶς οὕτως ἐστὶν ἀδύνατος ὡς προπηλακισθεὶς μὴ δύνασθαι ἑαυτὸν ἐκδικῆσαι.

An eagle was chasing a hare, and because he lacked anyone to help him, the hare, seeing a nearby dung beetle as the only available help, begged the beetle to save him. The dung beetle encouraged the hare, and when he saw the eagle approaching, begged it not to take away his suppliant. The eagle scorned the beetle because of his smallness and made a feast of the hare. The beetle remembered this slight and kept watching the eagle's nest; whenever the eagle laid its eggs, he would fly up, roll the eggs down, and smash them. This went on until the eagle, driven at every turn, sought the protection of Zeus—for the eagle is sacred to Zeus—and begged him to provide a safe place to raise its young. Zeus allowed the eagle to lay its eggs in

In comparison to Zeus's momentary panic and forgetfulness, the fox's obsession with catching the dung beetle seems less foolish. Even Zeus cannot help but jump up at the sight of this creature. In this fable, the littleness (σμικρότητα) of the dung beetle and its ignoble productive activity (*poiesis* of the dung ball) contrasts with the eagle's largeness and connection to Zeus.<sup>55</sup> As such, the dung beetle perhaps represents the lowly genre of fable and Aesop himself.<sup>56</sup> The humble dung beetle exploits Zeus's weakness in this fable, as in the previous fable the beetle creates the conditions for the fox's inner playfulness to come out.

The fox's interaction with the dung beetle shows an important side of the trickster figure. The fox may be smart, but she is not always clever enough to control herself and keep from acting foolishly. This combination of cleverness and laughable behavior is key to what defines a trickster, and Aesop himself, like the fox, exhibits this juxtaposition of the humorous and the clever.<sup>57</sup> In addition to sometimes acting foolishly, the fox can be tricked by other animals, leading to situations in which she does not get the last laugh. In two medieval Latin fables (Perry 562 and 562a), the fox first tricks a partridge (or rooster) by flattery, and then once she catches her prey, she is herself tricked into speaking, at which point the birds escape. Like the fable of the fox and the crow, the fox's tricks may be effective, but in these fables, despite the fox's attempts, the birds get the last laugh. Other animals in fables are not easily convinced by the fox and are able to avoid capture by means of their own tricks (e.g. the cicada in Perry 241).

The fox gets tricked in another fable (Perry 252), in which her attempts to catch a rooster go awry:

κύων καὶ ἀλέκτωρ φιλίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ποιησάμενοι ἐν τῷ ἅμα ὤδευον. τῆς δὲ νυκτὸς καταλαβούσης ἐν τόπῳ ἀλσώδει ἐλθόντων ὁ μὲν ἀλεκτρυὼν ἐπὶ τι δένδρον ἀναβάς ἐν τοῖς κλάδοις ἐκάθισεν. ὁ δὲ κύων κάτωθεν τῆς ραγάδος τοῦ δένδρου ἀφύπνωσε. τῆς δὲ νυκτὸς παρελθούσης καὶ αὐγῆς καταλαβούσης ὁ ἀλέκτωρ κατὰ τὸ σύνηθες μεγάλη ἐκεκράγει. ἀλώπηξ δὲ τούτου ἀκούσασα καὶ βουλομένη αὐτὸν καταθοινήσασθαι, ἐλθοῦσα καὶ στᾶσα κάτωθεν τοῦ δένδρου ἐβόα πρὸς αὐτόν “ἀγαθὸν ὄρνειον εἶ καὶ χρηστὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· κατάβηθι δέ, ὅπως ἄσωμεν τὰς νυκτερινὰς ὠδὰς καὶ συνευφρανθῶμεν ἀμφοτέρω.” ὁ δὲ ἀλέκτωρ ὑπολαβὼν ἔφη αὐτῇ “ἀπελθε, φίλε, κάτωθεν πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τοῦ δένδρου καὶ φώνησον τὸν παραμονάριον, ὅπως κρούσῃ τὸ ξύλον.” τῆς δὲ ἀλώπεκος ἀπελθούσης τοῦ φωνῆσαι αὐτὸν ὁ κύων ἄφρων πηδήσας καὶ τὴν ἀλώπεκα δραξάμενος διεσπάραξεν αὐτήν.

ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ ὅτι οὕτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ φρόνιμοι, ὅποτεν τι κακὸν αὐτοῖς ἐπέλθῃ, ῥαδίως πρὸς αὐτὸ ἀντιπαρατάσσονται.

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his lap. But when the dung beetle saw this, he created a ball of dung, flew up, and dropped it in Zeus' lap. When Zeus wanted to shake the dung off, he got up, forgetting the eggs, and threw them out. Since then they say that the eagle doesn't lay eggs when the dung beetles are around.

The story teaches us not to look down on anyone, because no one is so powerless that he cannot avenge himself when he is mistreated.

<sup>55</sup> See Kurke 2011, 88-89 and Steiner 2012, 29-37.

<sup>56</sup> Aesop may also be represented by the slaughtered hare, though his potential to exact revenge after his death aligns him more with the dung beetle (Van Dijk 1997, 196-97; Steiner 2012, 32).

<sup>57</sup> See Kurke 2011, 225-29 for discussion of a visual pairing of Aesop and a fox on an Attic vase.

A dog and rooster initiated a friendship and went traveling together. When night came, they stopped in a wooded area and the rooster went up in a tree and perched in a branch. The dog went to sleep in a crevice at the base of the tree. When the night passed and dawn came, the rooster crowed loudly as he was accustomed to doing. A fox heard him and wanted to make a meal of him, so she came and stood under the tree and shouted at him, “You’re a good bird and very useful to people. Come down and let’s sing some night songs and enjoy ourselves together.” The rooster retorted decisively, “Friend, go tell the watchman under the tree to unlock the door.” As the fox went to tell him, the dog suddenly sprang out, grabbed the fox, and tore her to pieces.<sup>58</sup>

The fable shows that even wise people, when they meet any trouble, easily hold their ground against it.<sup>59</sup>

This unlucky fox ends up being tricked by the rooster and killed by the rooster’s dog friend. The opening phrase about friendship is identical to that of the fable of the eagle and the fox (Perry 1). Yet in this case, the rooster and the dog maintain their friendship and use it against the fox. The fox, who so often uses words to trick other animals, is this time subjected to the same treatment. In a similar way, even a bramble takes on the role of competitor to the fox in Perry 19, where the bramble scratches the fox and when she complains about this betrayal, the bramble says, “You showed your bad judgement when you decided to catch me, because I am the one who usually catches others.”

The fox’s tricks also go wrong in the fable of the donkey, the fox, and the lion (Perry 191). Here the fox betrays the donkey’s friendship in order to save her life, but the results are not what she expected:

Ὅνος καὶ ἀλώπηξ κοινωνίαν συνθέμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐξῆλθον ἐπὶ ἄγραν. λέοντος δὲ περιτυχόντος αὐτοῖς, ἡ ἀλώπηξ ὄρῳσα τὸν ἐπιρτημένον κίνδυνον προσελθοῦσα τῷ λέοντι ὑπέσχετο παραδώσειν αὐτῷ τὸν ὄνον, ἐὰν αὐτῇ τὸ ἀκίνδυνον ἐπαγγείληται. τοῦ δὲ αὐτὴν ἀπολύσειν φήσαντος, προσαγαγοῦσα τὸν ὄνον εἰς τινα πάγην ἐμπεσεῖν παρεσκεύασε. καὶ ὁ λέων ὄρων ἐκεῖνον φεύγειν μὴ δυνάμενον, πρῶτον τὴν ἀλώπεκα συνέλαβεν, εἴθ' οὕτως ἐπὶ τὸν ὄνον ἐτράπη.

Οὕτως οἱ τοῖς κοινωνοῖς ἐπιβουλεύοντες λανθάνουσι πολλάκις καὶ ἑαυτοὺς συναπολλύντες.

A donkey and a fox made an agreement with each other and went out to hunt. When they met a lion, the fox saw the impending danger, went up to the lion, and offered to betray the donkey to him, if he would promise not to harm her. When he agreed to let her go, she led the donkey to a trap and made him fall in. Then the lion, seeing that the donkey couldn’t escape, first seized the fox and then turned to the donkey.

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<sup>58</sup> The Greek syntax in these lines is strange, but I have followed Daly’s 1961 translation.

<sup>59</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

Thus it is that people who scheme against their colleagues often are destroyed with them.<sup>60</sup>

The fox's cleverness ends up hurting her, as she plots to betray the donkey and ends up hurting herself. In a related fable (Perry 568), a fox attempts to trick a wolf into sharing the spoils of his hunting, and when he refuses, she turns him over to a shepherd who kills him. But then she is caught by some hunters, and admits that her own death is the result of causing another's death. Another fable (Perry 394) presents a fox who serves a lion by pointing out the prey for him to hunt. When the prey is divided, the fox begrudges the lion's larger share and decides to hunt on her own, but when she chases a sheep, she herself is set upon by the hunters. In all three of these stories, the fox meets the same fate that she typically brings upon other animals. Her cleverness is not foolproof, and she is susceptible to being tricked.

The fox can also be tricked in more innocuous ways. The fable of the fox and the crane (Perry 426) provides an example. Plutarch tells this story in *Quaestiones Convivales* I.5 (614e-f), in the context of discussing the sophistic propensity for twisting words and annoying their interlocutors.

οἱ (δὲ) τοιαῦτα προβλήματα καθιέντες οὐδὲν ἂν τῆς Αἰσωπείου γεράνου καὶ ἀλώπεκος ἐπιεικέστεροι πρὸς κοινωνίαν φανεῖεν· ὧν ἡ μὲν ἔτνος τι λιπαρὸν κατὰ λίθου πλατείας καταχεαμένη (τὴν γέρανον ἐδέξατο οὐκ εὐωχουμένην,) ἀλλὰ γελοῖα πάσχουσιν· ἐξέφευγε γὰρ ὑγρότητι τὸ ἔτνος τὴν λεπτότητα τοῦ στόματος αὐτῆς. ἐν μέρει τοίνυν ἡ γέρανος αὐτῇ καταγγείλασα δεῖπνον ἐν λαγυνίδι προὔθηκε λεπτὸν ἐχούση καὶ μακρὸν τράχηλον, ὥστ' αὐτὴν μὲν καθιέναι τὸ στόμα ῥαδίως καὶ ἀπολαύειν, τὴν δ' ἀλώπεκα, μὴ δυναμένην, κομίζεσθαι συμβολὰς πρεπούσας.

Those who propose such problems for discussion would appear to be no more fit for society than the crane and the fox of Aesop. The fox poured some greasy pea soup out on a flat stone and entertained the crane, not with a dinner, but with an embarrassing situation, because the watery soup always slipped out of her thin bill. In turn, the crane announced a dinner for the fox and served it in a jar with a long and narrow neck, so that she could easily insert her bill and enjoy the food, while the fox, unable to put her mouth inside, got a fitting meal.<sup>61</sup>

The fox in this fable receives a taste of her own medicine, as she is placed in a situation of inability to access food due to the structure of her mouth. We have examined the fox's verbal dexterity, and her ability to use words to trick other animals. In this fable, the fox cleverly designs a situation in which her mouth, by virtue of its physical construction, is more useful than the crane's beak. Yet the crane quickly reverses the situation, showing her own cleverness and the fox's failures, both in cleverness (since she does not see through the stratagem) and physical ability (due to her inability to eat from a tall jar). Thus, we can see that the fox is not infallible, and her abilities only extend so far. This fable suggests that, far from being an unchangeable collection of stereotypes, the animals of fable exhibit the individual and fallible nature of real-

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<sup>60</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>61</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

life beings, and that the fox, in particular, is subject to becoming the victim of her own cleverness.

In addition to sometimes falling victim to her own tricks, the fox is also predisposed to laughable foibles. The fox's laughable actions and occasional lack of wisdom are demonstrated in Perry 24, the fable of the fox with the swollen belly:

ἀλώπηξ λιμώττουσα ὡς ἐθεάσατο ἐν τινι δρυὸς κοιλώματι ἄρτους καὶ κρέα ὑπὸ τινων ποιμένων καταλελειμμένα, ταῦτα εἰσελθοῦσα κατέφαγεν. ἐξογκωθεῖσα δὲ τὴν γαστέρα ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἐξελθεῖν, ἐστέναζε καὶ ὠδύρετο. ἑτέρα δὲ ἀλώπηξ τῆδε παριοῦσα ὡς ἤκουσεν αὐτῆς τὸν στεναγμόν, προσελθοῦσα ἐπυνθάνετο τὴν αἰτίαν. μαθοῦσα δὲ τὰ γεγενημένα ἔφη πρὸς αὐτήν· “ἀλλὰ μενετέον σοι ἐνταῦθα, ἕως ἂν τοιαύτη γένη, ὅποια οὔσα εἰσηλθες, καὶ οὕτω ῥαδίως ἐξελεύσῃ.”

ὁ λόγος δηλοῖ, ὅτι τὰ χαλεπὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ὁ χρόνος διαλύει.

A hungry fox spied some bread and meat left in a hollow tree by some shepherds. She crawled in and ate it, but her belly swelled so much that she could not get back out. Another fox came by, and hearing her groaning, came up and asked what was wrong. When she learned what had happened, she told her, “You will have to wait until you become the same size as when you went in, and then you will come out easily.”

The fable shows that time resolves difficulties.<sup>62</sup>

This unlucky fox becomes an object of laughter, as her swollen belly traps her inside the tree until she waits for the effects of her greediness to subside. Her gluttony is a typical feature of tricksters, who tend to lack restraint when dealing with bodily desires. While Aesopic fables generally avoid sexual themes, reserving those for the character of Aesop in the *Life*, the fox's gluttony is here the symbol of the tendency for bodily excess, a characteristic she shares with Aesop himself.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to the interactions between the ape and the fox, where the fox positioned herself as superior to the grotesque bodily features of the ape, in this fable the fox's control over her body is gone.

In addition to bodily excess, the fox is prone to being excessively confident. Perry 232, the fable of the foxes on the Meander River, demonstrates this form of excess:

ποτὲ ἀλώπεκες ἐπὶ τὸν Μαίανδρον ποταμὸν συνηθροίσθησαν, πιεῖν ἐξ αὐτοῦ θέλουσαι. διὰ δὲ τὸ ροιζηδὸν φέρεσθαι τὸ ὕδωρ, ἀλλήλας προτρεπόμεναι οὐκ ἐτόλμων εἰσελθεῖν. μιᾶς δὲ αὐτῶν διεξιούσης ἐπὶ τῷ εὐτελίξειν τὰς λοιπὰς, καὶ δειλίαν καταγελώσης, ἑαυτὴν ὡς γενναιοτέραν προκρίνασα θαρσαλέως εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ ἐπήδησεν. τοῦ δὲ ῥεύματος ταύτην εἰς μέσον κατασύραντος, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν παρὰ τὴν ὄχθην τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐστηκυῖων, πρὸς αὐτὴν εἰπουσῶν “μὴ ἐάσης ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ στραφεῖσα ὑπόδειξον τὴν εἴσοδον, δι’ ἧς ἀκινδύνως δυνησόμεθα πιεῖν,” ἐκείνη ἀπαγομένη ἔλεγεν “ἀπόκρισιν ἔχω εἰς Μίλητον, καὶ ταύτην ἐκεῖσε ἀποκομίσει βούλομαι· ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐπανιέναι με ὑποδείξω ὑμῖν.”

<sup>62</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>63</sup> Kurke 2011, 212-17.



πρὸς τοὺς κατὰ ἀλαζονεῖαν ἑαυτοῖς κίνδυνον ἐπιφέροντας.

Once the foxes gathered beside the Meander River to take a drink, but because the water was roaring so loudly, although they encouraged each other, they did not dare to jump in. Then one of them came forward to disparage the others, laughing at their cowardice, and thinking that she was braver than the others, she jumped boldly into the water. As the current carried her into the middle of the stream, and the others stood on the bank and called to her, “Don’t leave us! Come back and show us how we can drink without danger!” She replied as she was being carried away, “I have a message to take to Miletus, and I want to take it there. When I return, I’ll show you.”

This is for those who put themselves in danger because of their boasting.<sup>64</sup>

This fox is unable to admit defeat, even while being swept away down the river. Her pride does not allow her to admit that she was overconfident, and her boast may well result in her death. Yet, in order to save face with the other foxes, she invents a clever excuse and does not admit that she has put herself in danger.

This overconfidence is not surprising, but the fox is here clearly presented as an individual within a group, with individual decisions that contrast with those of the group. In this fable, we can see that the idea of fixed character is suspect—the fox who performs the trickster role in this fable is contrasted with the rest of the foxes. It is changeability itself which is highlighted. The fox is an individual capable of every type of reversal, susceptible to being tricked, and able to make individual decisions that go against collective wisdom.

As we have seen in the fables in this section, the fox is not above being tricked or laughed at. In fact, I would argue, it is a fundamental feature of the fox that she is not only clever, but also very susceptible to laughable behavior and to being tricked. There is no creature who so closely resembles the human in Aesop’s repertoire as the verbally dexterous, yet vulnerable and ridiculous fox. As a trickster figure, she embodies both laughable gullibility and cleverness, both human and animal, suggesting the instability of boundaries and questioning the idea of human exceptionalism based on language abilities. In addition to her vulnerability to being tricked, the fox is also remarkably selfish. In the following section I will look at several fables in which the fox’s self-serving behavior is highlighted.

### The Selfish Fox

A number of fox fables present the fox as clever in a self-aggrandizing manner. The fox often attempts to manipulate situations to her advantage, or at least to ameliorate harm to herself. In cases where actual harm cannot be avoided, the fox tries to reframe the situation, such as in the fable of the fox and the grapes (Perry 15):

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<sup>64</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

ἀλώπηξ λιμώττουσα ὡς ἐθεάσατο ἀπὸ τινοῦ ἀναδενδράδος βότρυας κρεμαμένους, ἠβουλήθη αὐτῶν περιγενέσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο. ἀπαλλαττομένη δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν εἶπεν “ὄμφακές εἰσιν.”

οὕτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔνιοι τῶν πραγμάτων ἐφικέσθαι μὴ δυνάμενοι δι’ ἀσθένειαν τοὺς καιροὺς αἰτιῶνται.

A hungry fox saw some grapes hanging from a vine, and although she wanted to reach them, she was not able to. She went away and said to herself, “Those grapes are sour.”

Thus some people who are unable to achieve things because of weakness blame their circumstances.<sup>65</sup>

The fox’s reversals apply not only to her trickery of others, her physical dexterity, and her crafty mind, but also to her perception of the circumstances. This phrase “sour grapes” has become synonymous with disparagement of something unattainable, and the fox in this fable has essentially disappeared from the phrase in its modern usage. Yet this story fits in with the pattern of quick reversals that we have observed so far. To be a fox, in these fables, means to be able to change at a moment’s notice. To have a ποικίλος mind means the ability to reconstruct a situation to make it more advantageous. The fox attempts to assuage her frustration by the construction of an alternate reality in which the grapes would no longer benefit her. In a sense, the fox cannot admit defeat unless forced to do so by the circumstances, and in most cases, she will manipulate her perception of the situation rather than admit defeat.

The fox’s tendency to construct an alternate reality extends into the physical world as well, in the fable of the bobtailed fox (Perry 17):

ἀλώπηξ ὑπὸ τινοῦ πάγης τὴν οὐρὰν ἀποκοπεῖσα, ἐπειδὴ δι’ αἰσχύνην ἀβίωτον ἠγεῖτο τὸν βίον ἔχειν, ἔγνω δεῖν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀλώπεκας εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ προσαγαγεῖν, ἵνα τῷ κοινῷ πάθει τὸ ἴδιον ἐλάττωμα συγκρύψει. καὶ δὴ ἀπάσας ἀθροίσασα παρήνει αὐταῖς τὰς οὐρὰς ἀποκόπτειν, λέγουσα ὡς οὐκ ἀπρεπὲς μόνον τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσόν τι αὐταῖς βᾶρος προσήρτηται. τούτων δὲ τις ὑποτυχοῦσα ἔφη “ὦ αὔτη, ἀλλ’ εἰ μὴ σοι τοῦτο συνέφερον, οὐκ ἂν ἡμῖν τοῦτο συνεβούλευσας.”

οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἀρμόττει πρὸς ἐκείνους οἱ τὰς συμβουλίας ποιοῦνται τοῖς πέλας οὐ δι’ εὐνοίαν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἑαυτοῖς συμφέρον.

A fox had her tail cut off by a trap and was so ashamed that she thought life was intolerable. She decided to persuade the other foxes to share her condition so she could hide her deprivation in the common suffering. She called them all together and asked them to cut off their tails, saying that it was not only an unsightly thing, but it was an additional burden to carry. One of the others retorted, “Well friend, if this hadn’t happened to you, you would not have advised this.”

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<sup>65</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

This story is appropriate for those who give advice to those nearby not from goodwill but for their own benefit.<sup>66</sup>

The fox's self-serving nature is foregrounded in this story, where one of the foxes uses a clever statement in an attempt to trick the others. Unsurprisingly, another fox sees through this stratagem and calls out the first fox. The first fox's sense of shame (αἰσχύνην) is key here—her tail has been caught in a trap, and this shame must be more acute because of her fear of what the other foxes will think of her misfortune. As we have seen in other fables, this story also demonstrates that foxes are not flawlessly clever. Sometimes they also get tricked, but when they do, it is a matter of shame for them. Because the fox tends to emphasize her beauty and her mental powers in contrast to the base nature of other animals, as we saw in the fable of the fox and the ape, her misfortune is especially embarrassing. The fables in this section demonstrate that the fox, because of her flexible, shifting body and crafty tricks, functions as a trickster within the Aesopic corpus, focalizing the contradictions of human existence and the instability of human-created binaries and language within a changeable creature.

## The Anishinaabe Trickster

The term “trickster” was first used in an anthropological context by Daniel Brinton, an American anthropologist, in 1885.<sup>67</sup> He applied the term to the Algonquian “chief god,” known as *Nenaboj* in Ojibwe and *Wisakketjak* in Cree, names which Brinton believed meant “cheat,” “deceiver,” or “trickster.”<sup>68</sup> Brinton discounts the connection with the hare, *waabooz*, “the white one” within the Ojibwe variants of the name, depending on a binary opposition between light and darkness to inform his view of the trickster's role. Unsurprisingly, he focuses on *Nenabozho*'s struggle with the great serpent to justify this interpretation, suggesting that the underlying theme is his ongoing struggles with “various powerful entities.”<sup>69</sup> He goes on to state that he “does not conquer his enemies by brute force, nor by superior strength, but by craft and ruses, by transforming himself into unexpected shapes, by cunning and strategy.”<sup>70</sup> Later, he compares *Nenabozho* to *Odysseus* in Greek epic and *Reynard the fox* in Medieval fables. Brinton's ideas were adapted by Franz Boas, who believed that tricksters from many Indigenous American cultures could be divided into benevolent culture hero types and tricksters involved in selfishly-motivated escapades.<sup>71</sup> This early analysis of the Anishinaabe hero shows the influence of Classical literature and fable on interpretations of *Nenabozho*, as well as the prominence of Algonquian trickster figures as a comparison for those in other cultures.<sup>72</sup>

In the mid-twentieth century, Claude Lévi-Strauss proposed that the trickster is a mediating figure, exemplified by scavenging creatures such as coyote and raven. While his schematic analysis of myth raises more questions than it answers, in my opinion, the biggest problem with his analysis is that *waabooz*, the snowshoe hare, is not a scavenging creature, even

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<sup>66</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

<sup>67</sup> Szyjewski 2020, 164.

<sup>68</sup> Brinton 1885, 137.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>71</sup> Boas 1940, 473-74.

<sup>72</sup> Szyjewski 2020, 166.

if Nenabozho himself could be described that way.<sup>73</sup> In Paul Radin's *The Trickster*, he records a translation of Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) stories, divided into the "Trickster Cycle" and the "Hare Cycle."<sup>74</sup> He explains the stories of the Ho-Chunk trickster figure (most of which are almost identical to the Ojibwe versions) in a linear fashion, showing the development of a culture hero, and a transformation from animality to humanity. Both Lévi-Strauss and Radin attempt to fit the trickster stories into clearly defined oppositions and show the amorphous trickster negotiating the space between the two sides, in a metaphor for the development of aspects of human civilization.

Gerald Vizenor provides an Ojibwe perspective on the trickster figure in traditional stories. Unlike the work of Radin and Lévi-Strauss, where the trickster is interpreted as a mythological mediator, Vizenor focuses on the earthly elements and the human representation contained within the trickster. Vizenor writes that the trickster is the interior landscape that is, in Lacanian terms, "behind what discourse says." The trickster is between mind and body, and is imagination, a communal voice in a comic worldview, representing the human as an adaptive animal.<sup>75</sup> He describes the trickster as a "comic holotrope in a postmodern language game that uncovers the distinctions and ironies between narrative voices," comprising the signifier, the signified, and the sign through its multiplicity and harmony.<sup>76</sup> He goes on to describe the way many scholars appropriate the trickster into a modern conception of the individual, used to support the idea of vanishing tribes in structural opposition to bourgeois capitalism. Instead of being a solitary individual, he argues, the trickster is a communal discourse and a way for listeners and readers to imagine their liberation.<sup>77</sup>

For my argument, the important point is the representation of communal (human) discourse in the trickster figure and the creation of new possibilities through the liberating power of imagination. The trickster is thus the quintessential human, an animal that embodies and enacts all the complexities of humanity and human discourse within its changing form. In this section, I will discuss several Nenabozho stories, ending with an account of Nenabozho and the fox. Finally, I will consider Vizenor's approach as a way to help us understand the Greek fables, while emphasizing the many differences in culture and approach between the stories of Nenabozho and the Aesopic stories.

## Nenabozho the Trickster

Part I of William Jones' *Ojibwa Texts* presents the stories of Nenabozho, as told by five Ojibwe storytellers.<sup>78</sup> The volume is arranged in a series which contains some repetitions of the more popular stories. Throughout the series, we can see Nenabozho cleverly tricking animals and people, but more often than not, getting tricked himself and becoming the butt of a joke.

In story 41, Nenabozho and the Mallard, and story 42, Nenabozho and the Woodpecker, told by Waasaagoneshkang, Nenabozho attempts to prepare a meal by imitating the actions of

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<sup>73</sup> Lévi-Strauss 1955, 440. Coyotes too are avid hunters of small animals in addition to being carrion eaters. See Szyjewski 2020, 168 for discussion. Lévi-Strauss describes the "hare-god" as a merging of opposites (1979, 33).

<sup>74</sup> Radin 1972.

<sup>75</sup> Vizenor 1988.

<sup>76</sup> Vizenor 1993, 190-02.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 193-94. Cf. Gates 2014, 64-106.

<sup>78</sup> Jones 1917, xvi-xx.

the mallard and the woodpecker.<sup>79</sup> The mallard's production of food for Nenabozho involves a humorous transformation as the mallard poops into the kettle and it fills up with rice. But when Nenabozho tries to return the favor for the mallard, he is comically unable to do so and eventually incurs his wife's anger for soiling the kettle. In the end, the mallard offers to help and makes a kettle full of rice for Nenabozho and his family. In story 42, the woodpecker makes a kettle of corn by pecking on the wood, adding chunks of his wife's fat for seasoning. The next day, Nenabozho attempts to reciprocate, piercing himself with a piece of metal and using it to peck against the lodgepoles, saying "kwu, kwu, kwu" like the woodpecker. Instead of producing corn, he injures himself and the woodpecker has to intervene to stop him from injuring himself and his wife. In both of these stories, as part of Nenabozho's attempt to imitate the birds, he also imitates their sound. The Ojibwe verb, *inwe*, is used for an animal or bird making its characteristic call. While fables and traditional stories usually show animals speaking human language, in these scenes, Nenabozho reverses the pattern. However, despite his attempts to make the birds' calls, he does not succeed in producing the same miraculous outcomes.

In story 11, *Nenabozho Breaks the Necks of the Dancing Geese*, also told by Waasaagoneshkang, Nenabozho tricks a group of geese into imitating his dance, closing their eyes like he did.<sup>80</sup> He of course opens his eyes and kills them while their eyes are closed. Then he attempts to cook them while sleeping, instructing his buttocks to watch and let him know if anyone is approaching. When his anus speaks to him, warning him of people approaching, he jumps up and looks but sees no one. This happens several times until he becomes angry and scratches his buttocks until they bleed. The next time, his backside is too afraid to warn him, and so says nothing while the people steal his geese. When he wakes up and discovers that the geese are gone, he is even more angry and builds a big fire and stands over it to burn his buttocks. At the end, he scrapes the scabs off on a rock and the scabs become lichens, and the resulting blood colors the red osier dogwood.

While Radin cites this episode (in the Ho-Chunk version) as an example of the trickster becoming an individualized being with a name, in the progression of his development, such an analysis seems to me to be based on predetermined assumptions of a linear progression through a clearly defined cycle, rather than allowing for the multiplicity and confusion of the situations in which Nenabozho continuously finds himself.<sup>81</sup> Nenabozho is here unable to control his body—but not in such a way as one might imagine when compared to a story such as the one of the fox with the swollen belly. Here Nenabozho indulges in sleep, and comically ignores the warnings of his anus that his ducks are being stolen. His anus, granted the power of speech, attempts to communicate with him, but he refuses to listen. Despite his ability to trick the geese, his own anus is more aware than his mind about his surroundings, and because of his disregard of it, he loses his dinner.

Rather than viewing these stories as the hero's development through various stages, as Radin argues, I believe that Gerald Vizenor's explanation is more useful. Using the postmodern interpretation of the sign, Vizenor argues that the trickster embodies both signifier and signified. Interpreting the trickster depends upon a "semiotics that locates *being* in discourse" as "listeners

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<sup>79</sup> See appendix for translations of these stories.

<sup>80</sup> See appendix.

<sup>81</sup> Radin 1972, 134-35.

and readers become the trickster, a sign, and semiotic being in discourse.”<sup>82</sup> The trickster also embodies difference, allowing listeners and readers to “imagine their liberation” as the world is deconstructed through discourse.<sup>83</sup> Far from being “a real person or a tragic metaphor in an isolated monologue,” the trickster is “being, nothingness, and liberation; a loose seam in consciousness; that wild space over and between sounds, words, sentences, and narratives; and, at last, the trickster is comic shit.”<sup>84</sup> Vizenor is especially critical of social science views, such as those about taboos, that “burden the trickster sign, end comic discourse in a language game and demand legitimation.”<sup>85</sup> He points out that anthropologists undertake “an uncertain monologue with science and other anthropologists, but not a discourse with the tribal cultures that were reduced to theories in their studies.”<sup>86</sup> Rather than creating theories of repression, coprophilia, and anality, Vizenor asks us to look at the trickster as a comic sign, humorous in the way that shit is a universal comic sign.

Anthropologist William Bascom said that the Ojibwe, “the only society reported to lack fictional prose narratives—apparently have no folktales.” In response to this, Vizenor notes that Bascom clearly did not actually listen to the stories of Ojibwe people. Vizenor writes of Nenabozho: “in an aural performance the trickster fashions an anthropologist with shit to show that the tribe has ‘fictional prose narratives’ and the comic mind to transform the obvious.”<sup>87</sup>

The trickster’s actions are well summarized by Daniel Heath Justice, who says: “Transformer beings like Nanabush . . . disrupt complacency and order. Often driven by excessive appetites for food, sex, and praise, they break down the established social order, but in so doing also disrupt inequitable power relations, frozen ideologies, and unhealthy traditions. But they remain curious about the People—all peoples, not just the human ones—and recognize the kinship bonds that connect them.”<sup>88</sup> This role is an active one—tricksters are not merely transformed, but they transform and disrupt. They change themselves, and in doing so, they change and disrupt boundaries and structures around them.

In story 31, “The Death of Nenabozho’s Nephew, the Wolf” (the sequel to the story of Nenabozho and the wolves) and the following story 32, “Nenabozho Slays Toad-Woman,” Nenabozho undergoes a series of transformations.<sup>89</sup> Transforming himself into a poplar tree, and then into Toad Woman, he both creates and enacts a fundamental instability of boundaries. His transformation is never completely successful, as his disguise is threatened when he is almost unable to keep from moving as the animals scratch at the tree, and when the toad grandchild sees his human skin through a gap in the toad woman’s skin he was wearing as a disguise. As when Nenabozho imitates the mallard and the woodpecker, his attempts to cross species lines end in humorous disaster. Despite these comical endings, the trickster disrupts and questions the existence of boundaries—of species, of gender, and even the boundaries of his own body.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>88</sup> Justice 2018, 92.

<sup>89</sup> See appendix.

<sup>90</sup> In story 32, the disruption of boundaries extends to the boundaries of earth and water.

In the story of Nenabozho and the Winged Startlers (stories 5 and 24), Nenabozho and the ruffed grouse struggle over the multiple significations of language.<sup>91</sup> The significance of the term “winged startlers” is contested in this humorous episode, where Nenabozho and a mother grouse play tricks on each other. While Nenabozho attempts to show the grouse chicks that their name can have multiple meanings, in the end, his trick is turned against him as the mother grouse enacts her revenge. In typical trickster fashion, the clever prank he devised ends up coming back to bite him.

Nenabozho finds himself both tricking other animals and being tricked in return, making a fool out of himself. As a comic sign, he exemplifies a playful search to understand the world, while at the same time, he demonstrates the changeable boundaries of species and language. His ability to adapt to situations and come up with clever replies shows his changeable nature, as he moves across and beyond species boundaries, and interacts with and imitates the other species he encounters in his travels.

Nenabozho’s actions reimagine human activities within a spectrum of beings and objects who communicate with each other. Nenabozho’s shortcomings are humorously highlighted as he makes a fool of himself in front of his wife, the mallard, the woodpecker, and even his own anus. Rather than mediating between light and darkness, or other opposing natural structures, Nenabozho deconstructs the experience of human beings, not as a superior life form with exceptional communication skills, but as a being that tries and often fails to understand his place in the world. The liberation found here comes about through a recognition of the indeterminate human place in the world, as a being in shifting and unstable relationships with other creatures, with our own foibles and mistakes, as we laugh at Nenabozho’s misfortunes.

### Nenabozho and the Fox

In this section, I will look at an Ojibwe story recorded by Victor Barnouw, told by a man from Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin, and translated into English by his wife.<sup>92</sup> In one story, “Wenebojo Turns His Intestines into Food,” the trickster, spelled Wenebojo in this account, meets with a fox. It begins:

So Wenebojo went along the edge of the frozen river once more. He walked along on the ice, and as he was walking, he heard the sound of a little bell tinkling in the distance. He looked and saw a fox coming toward him. Wenebojo jumped behind a bunch of grass by the riverside, because he liked to listen to the noise that the fox made. As the fox came nearer, he got up from behind the grass to surprise him. He said, “My brother, here you are at last! I’ve been looking all over for you, and now here you are!” Everyone was his brother.

So Wenebojo and the fox carried on a conversation. Wenebojo said, “I saw you last when you were a baby. You wouldn’t remember me. I wish you could make me like the way you are; then I could make that sound. I like to hear that sound.”

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<sup>91</sup> See appendix.

<sup>92</sup> Barnouw 1977. Barnouw gives the couple the pseudonyms Tom and Julia Badger.

The fox said, “Oh, no, I can’t make you like the way I am. They must have made me the way I am. I couldn’t do that.”

But Wenebojo kept on begging and asking him, “Oh please try to make me like the way you are. I’d like to be like you.” He just begged. After a long time, the fox finally said, “I’ll try to do what you ask me to do, but first look for a round stone.” So Wenebojo looked for one. “Brother,” he said, “I can’t find that! I thought you would ask me for something else!” But finally he found a round stone and took it to the fox.

When he gave it to him, the fox said, “Now bend over, with your hind end this way.” Wenebojo did that, and then the fox took a knife and cut his ass-hole out, just cut all around. I don’t know what he did with the round stone, but maybe he tied the ass-hole to the round stone, which hung down behind. I don’t know for sure whether he put that stone there or not; but he must have done something with it. “Now,” said the fox, “now you can go.”

When Wenebojo stood up and made a step forward, it sounded like a lot of bells ringing. Then Wenebojo and the fox left each other. Each went his own way. Wenebojo ran along. He certainly liked the sound of those bells!<sup>93</sup>

Eventually the sound of the bells grows fainter and stops altogether, and Wenebojo turns around to see his guts stretched out behind him. He throws his guts over a tree and names them, identifying them as a type of food.

The interaction between Nenabozho and the fox is particularly interesting because of its focus on sound and Nenabozho’s desire to imitate the fox.<sup>94</sup> As we have seen, it is not unusual for Nenabozho to imitate other animals, and these attempts often end in an undesirable outcome in which he becomes the object of laughter or suffers a worse fate.<sup>95</sup> The establishment of a relationship is the first step. Nenabozho’s first words are “My brother.” As the story tells us, everyone was his brother—his interactions are always informed by and based upon kinship. He speaks to the fox the way an adult might to a child, and then asks the fox to make him like a fox. The fox objects, and finally, with much begging, Nenabozho persuades him to agree to help him. The fox does something with a round stone, attaching it to Nenabozho’s mutilated anus so that he too can make the sound of bells ringing when he walks. He must undergo mutilation and the literal spilling of his guts in order to make the sound of a tinkling bell when he walks, as the fox apparently attaches the stone to his dangling intestines.

Nenabozho’s desire to imitate the fox’s tinkling “voice” requires bodily mutilation. While this story may entail typical trickster antics and humor, it is interesting that for Nenabozho, learning to “become fox” requires leaving behind parts of himself. When he was living with the

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, because Barnouw did not record the Ojibwe version of this story, we cannot see whether the verb used was *madwe*, a verb used for animals making their characteristic sound. This verb features prominently in stories where animal sounds are heard.

<sup>95</sup> In the previous story recorded by Barnouw, Wenebojo becomes a beaver but ends up being killed by some people (1977, 21-22).



wolves, Nenabozho had to adopt parts of the wolf's body as prosthetics to enhance his own inabilities; here, the fox tricks him into losing body parts in order to enable him to make the fox's sound.

This story portrays the human relationship to animals as one of inability and lack on the human side, rather than a lack of language on the part of the animals. The fox effectively fulfills Nenabozho's request to sound like him, and in doing so, demonstrates the bodily lack encoded within the trickster's desires. In order to achieve the desired outcome of sounding like tinkling bells, Nenabozho must undergo the physical instantiation of his own bodily lack. The fox plays with the trickster's gullibility and willingness to undergo this unusual procedure. In going through with it, Nenabozho gets tricked by the fox, but he also achieves his goal of sounding like the fox does as he walks.

As Nenabozho goes along sounding like a tinkling bell, he does not speak. Only when the bell sound stops, and he sees his guts stretched out, does he stop and throw his guts over a tree, giving them a name.

Wenebojo also gave a name to the stuff that he threw over the tree. He called it *anibima-kwét*, which is the name for the elm tree if the stuff is wound around it. Otherwise you call the tree *anib*, if there isn't any stuff on it. Wenebojo said, "This is the name that my aunts will use for it as long as the earth lasts."<sup>96</sup>

Nenabozho here resumes his creative activities and the sound of human speech replaces the sound of the tinkling bells. Yet there are no clear boundaries between the fox's sound and Nenabozho's sound, or between Nenabozho's body and the environment. The boundaries are shifting and changing as quickly as the trickster himself.

This story demonstrates an interaction in which Nenabozho is once again lacking a feature that an animal has, and he attempts to achieve this feature with somewhat disastrous results. Fortunately, because he is a trickster, there is no harm done, and he turns the episode into a creative moment. However, in a similar story, told by J. B. Penesi and recorded by William Jones, "The Fisher and the Raccoon," the Fisher becomes so upset at the raccoon's trickery that he kills him and takes back his entrails to replace his own lost guts:

Ningudingisa' udcīg maḍāpi sāga·i·ganīng uskābānādinini. Mīḍaḍ kāgōn unōndān, "Ṭank, ṭank, ṭank, ṭank!" Inābit awīya owābamān pimipa'tōnīt mē·i·ḍaḍ ānwānit, "Ṭank, ṭank, ṭank, ṭank!" "Īctāyā, nīdcī! Ondās, pījān!"

Mīḍaḍ kījipījānit āsipaṇaṇ. Mēḍaḍ pā·i·nwānit, "Ṭank, ṭank, ṭank, ṭank!"

"Wāgunān 'i·i'ṭu kā·i·nwāg?"

"Kā<sup>a</sup>, ningīpaḡujwā, ningīpaḡujwā nīndī, mēḍaḍ nīnaḡic kīsāḡāpīgiskāḡ! Mīḍaḍ mi'kwam imā ningī·a·sa, mī·i·ḍaḍ awā, 'Ṭank, ṭank, ṭank, ṭank!'" kā·i·nwāwācing. Naḡkā! kayāḡīn 'i·i'ṭu tōḍaṇ!" Mīḍaḍ kīmādcād āsipaṇ.

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<sup>96</sup> Barnouw 1977, 23.

Udcīgidaç ogīpaçucwān udīyaṅ. Paṅgī·i·dāç ugīwī·kupidōn onāçic. Mī·i·dāç äjimādcād, mādcipa‘tot; mī·i·dāç paṅgī nōndāgwādinig “Ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk!” Äckamigo wāsa uḍani‘tān. Ningudingigu kāwin ugaskitōsīn tcimādcād ‘Ṭi‘u ka‘kina unāçec kīmādcāmaçadinig, ka‘kina unāçic. Mēḍaç kā·i·jīpa‘kibi‘tōd, mē·i·dāç kīmādcād. Ogi·a·ndawābamān āsibaṅaṅ, kīnīckādizid. Nigudingidaç ogīnaçickawān āsibaṅaṅ. Mēḍaç ānād: “Kīnīna kāwābaminān sāga·i·gaṅing?”

“Kāwīn,” i‘kido āsipaṅ.

“Kāgā‘t kīnguca!” Mī·i·dāç äjimīgānād. A‘pī·i·dāç gānisāt wāwīp ogīpaçudcīnān. Māgwādec kīgīdānig āsipaṅunāçic, udcīg ugīpīna·ā·n udī·ā·ng. Mīdāç wīn ‘i‘i‘n kā·u·nagijīd ‘a‘a‘u udcīg. Kayāḍaç ugī·a·mwān īni‘ āsibaṅaṅ.

Misa‘ ä‘kōsit.

Now, once on a time a Fisher came out upon a lake that had just frozen with a covering of thin ice. And then he heard the sound of something, “Ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk!” “Oh, (I) say, my friend! Hither, come here!”

Thereupon hither came a Raccoon, and he came with the sound, “Ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk!”

“What is that noise?”

“Oh, I have cut it open, I have cut open my anus, and therefore my entrails have fallen out into exposure! And so I placed a piece of ice there (on the entrails), whereupon I then started to run; and then as I dragged that piece of ice, accordingly, ‘Ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk!’ was the sound it made. Now, come! the same thing do you!” Whereupon away started Raccoon.

And now Fisher cut open his anus. A small part of his entrails he pulled out. Whereupon he started away, he started running; whereat a feeble sound he could hear, “Ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk, ṭaṅk!” Farther he kept hearing it. And presently not was he able to go, for all his entrails began spilling out, all his entrails. And so after he broke (the entrails) off, he accordingly started away. He went hunting for Raccoon, for he was angry. And by and by he met Raccoon. Whereupon he said to him: “Are you the one I saw at the lake?”

“No,” said Raccoon.

“Indeed, you surely are!” Whereupon he fought him. And when he had slain him, quickly he cut him open. And while warm were yet Raccoon’s entrails, Fisher put them inside of his own anus. And this was how Fisher got his entrails back again. And likewise he ate up Raccoon.

That is as far as (the story) goes.<sup>97</sup>

In this version, the specific tinkling sound made by the dangling entrails is recorded. One of the key differences, however, is that Fisher does not ask Raccoon for the opportunity to make that sound the way Nenabozho explicitly asks the fox. On the contrary, the trickster Raccoon simply orders Fisher to do the same thing and he complies. Despite these differences, the story of Fisher and Raccoon represents the animals acting in much the same way as Nenabozho—one is tricked by another one, but in this story, the Fisher who is tricked reciprocates and gets the last laugh.

In the second volume of Jones' *Ojibwa Texts*, many animals interact with each other and with humans, such as Raccoon, Snapping Turtle, Mink, and Lynx. Many of these animals act similarly to Nenabozho, tricking others, being tricked, and being laughed at. For example, in the story "When the Crawfishes Went to War," Raccoon interacts in a similar way as Nenabozho does, pretending to be dead while the crawfishes pinch his anus.<sup>98</sup> In the story "Snapping Turtle Goes to War," Snapping Turtle escapes death by asking not to be thrown into the water, tricking his captors into releasing him.<sup>99</sup>

Like the stories of Aesop in the *Life*, these stories focus on the obscene and bodily functions, in contrast to the Aesopic fables, in which bodily parts such as hair, skin, and stomach often feature, but excretory bodily functions are rarely mentioned. Despite these differences, the Aesopic fables and the Ojibwe stories both highlight the body, especially as it relates to the trickster and the ways in which the trickster's body refuses to be controlled. Nenabozho, the raccoon, and others enact the instability of boundaries through the bodily and especially the obscene. These bodily eruptions transgress and recreate boundaries as Nenabozho and the animals negotiate their relationships with each other and with their own bodies. These stories enable us to see how bodily expansion and excretion are vital to the trickster's changing nature. The fox's expanding stomach in the fable of the fox with the swollen belly (Perry 24) also transgresses boundaries in much the same way, as the fox's gluttony creates a physical expansion that traps her in a small place. Transgression of boundaries is only one of the characteristics of tricksters that are shared in both the Aesopic fables and the Ojibwe stories.

These stories show that the features of the trickster are not exclusive or individualistic, but a shared category of being that represents the "communal sign" proposed by Vizenor.<sup>100</sup> By creating comedy, and enacting the instability of boundaries, these animals and Nenabozho allow us to consider diverse ways of being in the world, imagining the possibilities of liberating relationships among multiple species. The many interactions in which Nenabozho demonstrates his lack of abilities and attempts to become like an animal situate the human and animal relationship along a continuum of differing abilities, rather than proposing a boundary between having and not having language. At the same time, these stories show the inherent instability of language as a changeable semiotic system, where the sign is always open to transformation and interpretation.

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<sup>97</sup> Jones 1919, 125-27.

<sup>98</sup> Jones 1919, 729-36.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-120.

<sup>100</sup> Vizenor 1993, 204.

## Conclusion

To conclude, I will turn to one final episode of Aesop in which the fox comments directly upon human use of language. In Perry 22, the fable of the fox and the woodcutter, the fox expresses her disdain for human deception.

άλώπηξ κυνηγούς φεύγουσα, ὡς ἐθεάσατό τινα δρυτόμον, τοῦτον ἰκέτευσε κατακρύψαι αὐτήν. ὁ δὲ αὐτῇ παρήνεσεν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ καλύβην εἰσελθοῦσαν κρυβῆναι. μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ παραγενομένων τῶν κυνηγῶν καὶ τοῦ δρυτόμου πυνθανομένων εἰ τεθέαται ἀλώπεκα τῆδε παριοῦσαν, ἐκεῖνος τῇ μὲν φωνῇ ἠρνεῖτο ἕωρακέσαι, τῇ δὲ χειρὶ νεύων ἐσήμαιεν ὅπου κατεκρύπτετο. τῶν δὲ οὐχ οἷς ἔνευε προσσχόντων, οἷς δὲ ἔλεγε πιστευσάντων, ἡ ἀλώπηξ ἰδοῦσα αὐτοὺς ἀπαλλαγέντας ἐξελθοῦσα ἀπροσφωνητὶ ἐπορεύετο. μεμφομένου δὲ αὐτὴν τοῦ δρυτόμου, εἶ γε διασωθεῖσα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ διὰ φωνῆς αὐτῷ ἐμαρτύρησεν, ἔφη “ἀλλ' ἔγω γε νῦν χαρίστησα ἄν σοι, εἰ τοῖς λόγοις ὅμοια τὰ ἔργα τῆς χειρὸς [καὶ τοὺς τρόπους] εἶχες.”

τοῦτω τῷ λόγῳ χρήσαιτο ἄν τις πρὸς ἐκείνους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς χρηστὰ μὲν σαφῶς ἐπαγγελλομένους, δι' ἔργων δὲ φαῦλα δρῶντας.

A fox who was fleeing hunters saw a woodcutter and begged him to conceal her. The woodcutter told her to go into his hut and hide. Before long the hunters came along and asked him whether he had seen a fox pass by. The woodcutter said with his voice that he hadn't seen her, but with his hand he pointed to where she was hidden. They paid no attention to his gesture but believed what he said. When the fox saw they were gone, she came out and was leaving without saying anything. When the woodcutter blamed her because she was saved by him but wasn't acknowledging it with her voice, the fox replied, “I would have been grateful if the actions of your hand had agreed with your words.”

This story is useful for people who make a show of doing good but actually behave badly.<sup>101</sup>

This fable creates a dichotomy between voice (φωνή) and other actions by means of the body, in particular, the hands. The fox initially trusts the woodcutter to save her and then is betrayed by his hand gestures, except that the hunters fail to notice his gestures and she is saved. Although purportedly about those who say one thing and do another, the fable also highlights both the fox's surprise at humans attempting to communicate with body language, as well as the breakdown of that communication between the woodcutter and the hunters.

The fox, who as we have seen is a master of bodily twists and turns, as well as of language, seems surprised at the woodcutter's attempt to manipulate the situation and betray her through his gestures. The woodcutter, who apparently intended to betray her, has deceived her with words. Although she is a master of deception, she is nevertheless caught in the woodcutter's ploy. At the same time, the woodcutter's failed attempt to communicate reinforces the potential

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<sup>101</sup> Text from Perry 1952. Translation adapted from Daly 1961.

of speech to be used for deception, as well as the potential for this deception to hurt or disappoint the one who employs it.

We have here multiple layers of deception. The fox asks the woodcutter to deceive the hunters on her behalf, and the woodcutter agrees, hiding from the fox his intention to betray her with gestures. When the hunters come along, the woodcutter tells a lie, saying that he hasn't seen the fox, while attempting to divulge the truth through his gestures. In the end, the gesture fails. The fox's intended deception of the hunters is nearly foiled by the woodcutter's secretive actions, and consequently, the fox feels betrayed and goes off upset at the woodcutter's failed attempt to double cross her.

The fox in this fable understands language's inherent potential for deception. However, she seems surprised at being double crossed by the woodcutter, as if she did not expect that this deception could be turned back on her. Her close brush with death demonstrates the perils of relying on language or any other form of communication. In addition, it shows the tendency for the trickster's reliance on language games and other types of clever tricks to backfire. The trickster thus enacts the slipperiness of language and the multiple significations inherent in the sign, while often being the recipient of the tricks intended for others.

The fox's narrow escape is in contrast to the fate of the Raccoon in the story of Fisher and Raccoon. After Raccoon convinces Fisher to cut open his anus, Fisher becomes angry and searches for Raccoon. When he finds him, he asks if he was the person or animal he saw previously. Although Raccoon says no, Fisher sees through the deception and kills Raccoon anyway. In a similar way, when Nenabozho meets the winged startlers, he disparages them and suggests that there is no possibility for multiple referents for the term. When the mother partridge startles him so he falls off the cliff, he understands that she also is a winged startler and that his tricks can be turned back on himself. On another occasion, when Nenabozho asks his buttocks to stand guard, he refuses to heed their warning, to his own detriment. In each of these cases, endeavors to manipulate or play tricks with language result in a detrimental outcome for the one who makes the attempt.

The trickster, whether fox, raccoon, or Nenabozho, shows us that language is also a tricky thing. By enacting the slippery changeableness of language, the trickster embodies the twists and turns of the changing referent. But this unpredictability gets the trickster in trouble on many occasions, as the tricks planned for others end up harming the trickster. Yet in all of this, the trickster enacts a playful search to understand the world, disrupting boundaries, embodying diverse ways of being, and interacting with other creatures. The shape-shifting, inquisitive nature of tricksters allows them to explore ways of being in the world that are not limited to or bound by the hierarchies of society. As a "semiotic sign in a language game," in Vizenor's words, the trickster reveals the contradictions and slippage inherent in language, while challenging the underlying hierarchies by creating liberation through comic narratives.<sup>102</sup> The trickster, at once both animal and human, yet never truly either one, allows us to understand our role in the world as talking animals, while reimagining our connection to other species. By reimagining the world in this way, we can recognize that talking animals have something to say, and our human experience can be productively imagined as a form of consciousness not so different from that of other animals, thus recognizing a connection among a multiplicity of beings whose comic imperfections inform their relationships with each other.

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<sup>102</sup> Vizenor 1990, 281; Vizenor 1993, 204.

## Conclusion

In this study, I have used two very different traditions of animal stories, Aesop's fables in Greek, and traditional animal stories in Ojibwe, to find new methods of understanding the Greek fables by reading across literatures.<sup>1</sup> I have examined the ways in which texts portray cultural differences, but also the ways in which both sets of texts can be read against the grain to open up interpretive possibilities. In particular, by looking at the conjunctive models of human-animal relationships presented in the Ojibwe texts, I have argued that these models provide an alternative way of interpreting the human-animal relationships found in the Greek texts.

I have argued that the anthropomorphism found in Aesop's fables does not merely demonstrate the human tendency to describe and understand animals in terms of how they resemble humans. More importantly, I have argued, it shows that humans, despite their quirks and extensive use of language, are essentially no different than other animals. By questioning the validity of a binary divide between human and animal, fables open up the possibility of conjunctive interspecies interactions and allow for critical self-reflection on both human foibles and the embodiedness that humans and other animals share.

I looked in my first chapter at fables that question the centrality of speech as a marker of human exceptionalism. In the second chapter, I examined fables about wolves and explored the misgivings embodied within the representation of this liminal species in Aesop, while contrasting this portrayal of the species with the "becoming-with" approach of the Ojibwe stories about Nenabozho and the wolves.<sup>2</sup> In the third chapter, I argued that the fox in Aesop's fables is a trickster figure, and I compared the Aesopic fables about foxes with Ojibwe stories about Nenabozho, as well as several Ojibwe stories about raccoon and fox. I argued that the tricksters in these stories allow us to understand our unique role as talking animals and that the tricksters' boundary-crossing behavior is mirrored in their use of language. While I found it difficult to limit the material by selecting which fables and Ojibwe stories to include, space constraints necessitated leaving out many pertinent Aesopic fables about other animals and many Ojibwe stories with relevant comparisons.

I believe this study is unique in terms of the interdisciplinary methodology I have adopted.<sup>3</sup> While comparisons between Greek texts and other ancient works from the Near East are more common and provide a wealth of material for comparative study, my approach has involved crossing a much greater distance, spatially, culturally, and temporally. By adopting this approach, I have attempted to show the value of looking at Indigenous traditions not only for comparative material, which has been done in the past, but also for interpretive and theoretical models that can be applied to the Greek texts. I believe that this methodology can be useful not only for fables, but also for further work on Classical myths and other ancient stories of humans and animals interacting.

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<sup>1</sup> I am here using the method of "reading *across*" developed by Allen 2012, xi-xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> The term "becoming with" is borrowed from Haraway 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Williams 2013 briefly contrasts Indigenous stories to Greek and Latin accounts, but he does not do an extensive comparison or apply Indigenous scholarly models.

Within the *Aesopica*, there are a large number of fables on humans and domestic animals, where, it seems to me, the idea of conjunctive interspecies relationships, and the potential for animal resistance, could be productively explored. However, all three of my chapters lean heavily upon canine species. This is not just by chance—as Cristiana Franco has extensively argued, the canine is of utmost importance in ancient Greek texts.<sup>4</sup> In many ways, the importance of canine species and the human identification with dogs and their relatives is a global phenomenon not limited to any one culture, ancient or modern. The importance of Coyote in many Indigenous traditions and Nenabozho’s association with the wolves suggests that canine species are closely linked to humans. In Ojibwe literature and culture, both dogs and wolves are significant in their relationships to human beings.<sup>5</sup>

I hope that this study will encourage further work on fables and will increase the adoption of interdisciplinary approaches to Greek and Roman texts. This project has expanded my appreciation for Aesop’s fables and thoroughly convinced me that they are not merely children’s stories (though I certainly loved them as a child), but that they are texts worthy of serious study. In addition to the approaches from Indigenous Studies which I have used, the vast amount of Aesopic material on animals invites critical discussion using approaches from Animal Studies and Ecocriticism.

Dislodging the persistent fallacy of human exceptionalism has been a crucial aspect of this project. I have examined the many ways in which Aesop’s fables can be read against the grain, questioning the validity of the language-based divide between human and animal. In particular, using the methodology described by Gerald Vizenor, I have looked at the Ojibwe stories as ways of understanding kinship between human beings and other animals, and the animal nature of human beings, and I have extended that approach to investigate the presence (or in some cases absence) of those relationships in Aesop’s fables.<sup>6</sup>

It is my hope that this innovative project will provide valuable insight into Aesop’s fables, and will encourage further cross-cultural studies. Much important work is being done on Ojibwe language studies, including the recent volume edited by Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark.<sup>7</sup> While the differences between the two traditions are substantial, I have focused on points where comparison has, I believe, yielded new interpretive possibilities. Aesop’s fables may seem to be nothing more than a collection of fanciful stories about talking animals, but they can be reinterpreted as the attempt of the quintessential talking animals, human beings, to understand their relationship to other beings and their place in the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Franco 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Vizenor 1998, 123-26. See also Vizenor 1995 for a discussion of dogs in contemporary Indigenous literature.

<sup>6</sup> Vizenor 1993, Vizenor 1995, Vizenor 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark 2013.

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# Appendix

## 5. Nānabushu and the Winged Startlers<sup>1</sup>

And now, while he was walking along, he suddenly saw something lying [together] in a heap. "I should like to know if perchance you have a name?" he said to the creatures which he saw. "To be sure," he was told; "this is our name, little winged startlers, such are we called."

"Oh indeed, so that is what you are called!" Whereupon, after he had eased himself upon them, this he then said to them: "This really the only winged startler, this is the only thing," he said to them. Thereupon on his way he started, on his way he went walking. When he came out upon the sea, he saw a very high cliff with steep sides; as he looked, truly far seemed the distance down to where the water was. "With good reason would I leap down if a woman were up for a prize, particularly if she were short from knee to groin. With good reason would I leap down if some one should ask: 'Who will jump down?' With good reason then would I leap down." There on the very brink of the cliff he stood. Now, this happened to him: as he started to jump, he lost his footing.

And so in the mean time (the mother) had come to where her young had been eased upon. "What has happened to you?" she said to her children.

"Why, it was by that old Nānabushu that we were eased upon."

"Something or other must you have said to him."

"Nay," said one moving about there in the slush of the dung. "Truly we were asked, 'What is your name?' we were told. And this was what we said to him, 'Little winged startlers are we called,' we said to him. And this he said: 'Like the deuce (you are) little winged frighteners!' we were told by him; whereupon he squirted at us, after which he went his way."

Then the mother washed them with water; and after she had finished washing them, she then started away. "Confound him!" she said of Nānabushu. And so after she had overtaken him yonder at the cliff, then close by she took a peep at him. Now, this was her thought of him: "I wish that again he would swing his leg."

Now, sure enough, up Nānabushu raised his leg. "For a purpose would I leap if the object of the prize measured one span of the hand from groin to knee."

Thereupon as up flew the ruffed grouse, then (Nānabushu) leaped off the steep cliff. And so after she had alighted there (on the edge), she watched him as we went falling; and then yonder into the water he fell. And so from there she kept watch of him, truly a long while was he gone in the water; a long time was she perched up there. When he came to the surface, straightway at yonder place he cast a look; now this was she told by him: "Of a truth, you are a winged startler," she was told. Thereupon back home went the ruffed grouse; and as for himself he started swimming inshore, after which he then went out of the water. Thereupon again he started on his way.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 41-45.

## 11. Nānabushu Breaks the Necks of the Dancing Geese<sup>2</sup>

And so again he went travelling about over this earth. Now, once while he was walking about, he saw a lake; he saw some creatures moving about there. Wonder who they are!” he thought. And so, when he went over to the place where they were busied, lo, they were geese! “Wonder how I shall do to get at them!” he thought. Presently he discovered what he would do. “I say, this will I tell them,” he thought. ““Please let me make you dance,’ I will say to them,” he thought. And then he ran up from the lake; after he had been off gathering boughs in his old soiled blanket, then out upon the beach he went walking.

“Hey, (there is) Nānabushu yonder! He will not refrain from saying something to you! Swim out into the lake!” the goslings were told.

When Nānabushu saw them, “Wonder why you act so whenever I see you anywhere! Truly hurt am I over my disappointment. Learn what is going on over here from whence I come. Truly, a fine time are they having, in a highly delightful manner are they enjoying themselves over here from whence I come. Oh, my! but what a great time they always have dancing! Hark! Come you hither.”

Now, truly, hither they came. “O my little brothers! a dance have I fetched (to you). Now, these are (all) songs that I have upon my back. So therefore I am going to have you dance. Arrange you there a place where I am to have you dance.”

And so truly out of the water came the goslings, whereupon they now began making a place where they would be made to dance. Now, he taught them how to make it. In time they had it finished,

“Now it is time for you to enter in.” Whereupon they filled (the place) full. In due time he taught them what they should do. “Now, the way that I shall sing is the way that you should do; such is the way you are to act. Now, listen! I will teach you what I shall sing, and that is what you are to do,” he said to the goslings. “You shall pay no heed to me when I become overwrought with excitement, for I shall be leaping to my feet. That is what I shall be doing when I get to feeling good. Now, that is the very way I shall move about in the dance, because I shall be so happy when I am moving about dancing.”

Well, it was now that he began to make the goslings dance. Truly happy he made them when he had them dancing. Well, perhaps now is the time for me to kill them,” he thought. And so he sang:

“A dance on one leg do I fetch, O my little brothers!”

So then truly on one leg danced the goslings. Now happy were they made by him. Now, another time as he started singing, this was the song he sang:

“A dance with the eyes nearly closed do I fetch, O my little brothers!”

Now, that was what the goslings did.

“Now, when in this manner I begin to sing, if one opens one’s eyes to look, then will one become red in the eye,” he said to them. Now he began singing:

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<sup>2</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 101-13.

“A dance with the eyes closed do I fetch, O my little brothers!”

So then truly did the goslings close their eyes (as they danced).  
Now again he changed his song as he sang:

“As many geese as there are of you, swarm you with necks together,  
O my little brothers, O my little brothers!”

Now, that truly was what the goslings did: as expected, they bunched together when they danced.

So it was at this point that he said to them: “Now is the time for me to rise and move about in the dance,” he said to them. And so truly up he rose, whereupon, as he came to them dancing with their necks together, he broke their necks. Now he sang at the same time that he moved among them breaking their necks.

By the doorway was yonder Loon dancing. Truly was he hurt when jostled by some one bumping against him. “What is the matter?” thought the Loon. “I think I had better open my eyes and see,” he thought. It is seemingly probable that he is breaking the necks of these who are dancing,” thought the Loon. When he opened his eyes was in time to see that (Nānabushu) was busily breaking the necks (of the goslings). Here where he was dancing, by one was he hurt when jostled, it was by one that was flopping around. Then out of doors leaped (the Loon). “Perhaps there is just time for me to flee to the water,” he thought. Then with a loud voice cried the Loon: “Look out! by Nānabushu are we being slain!” said the Loon.

“Wretch!” he heard (Nānabushu) say to him as he fled for the water. Now, near was heard the voice (of Nānabushu), whereupon then he tried to reach the place where the water met the land; whereupon he reached the water in his flight, but alas! far away out was it yet shallow. And so he was kicked upon the small of the back, whereupon he got a flat curve in the back by the kick he received. And such was how the Loon came to look that way.

So it was now that Nānabushu desired to cook his goslings. When he made a great fire, he then baked his goslings under (a bed of live-coals). And after he had laid them so that their feet were sticking out, then, “Truly very anxious am I for a long sleep,” said Nānabushu. “Well, I am going to sleep,” he said. Accordingly, then to his bottom he said: “Pray, do you watch for any visitors that might be coming into view round the point,” he said to his bottom.

And so when he went to sleep, he then lay with the bottom projecting upward; for he was selfish of his goslings. Now, by canoe travelling some people (who saw) Nānabushu reclining with the bottom projecting upward. “(There is) Nānabushu yonder. Something perhaps he may have killed,” said the people.

Well, presently the bottom that was watching for him now truly saw some strangers coming into view round the point. “Strangers are coming round the point!” said the bottom.

Up leaped Nānabushu from where he lay, but there was no one for him to see.

“Straightway back have they turned,” said the bottom. And so again he lay with his bottom projecting upward. “Perhaps now he may be asleep,” said the people. “Perhaps he may be asleep,” they said. “Pray, let us again go round the point.” They then went round the point, but again they withdrew.



Now, again he was addressed by his bottom saying: “Strangers are coming round the point.” Whereupon then up rose Nānabushu from where he lay. Again spoke his bottom, saying: “Forthwith out of sight they withdrew,” he was told by his bottom.

“Wretch!” he said to his bottom. Then vigorously he scratched it; and not till he had scratched it so hard that it bled did he then let it alone.

“Surely, not another time would I warn him,” was the thought entertained of him by his bottom.

Then again round the point into view came the people. “He has now gone to sleep,” they said. “Now, then, I say, let us go (and) look. Something surely must he have killed. And then, in truth, when they went ashore, sure enough, there was his fire. Thereupon they robbed him of all his goslings. So, breaking off the legs (of the goslings), they put them sticking out of the place from which they took out the goslings.

Then up woke Nānabushu. “Why, I have overslept! Perhaps overdone must be those goslings of mine. Perhaps I had better look at them.” As one after another he pulled out their little feet, he was pulling them off. “Why, it is true that over-long have my goslings cooked.” Another he tried in vain to pull out, and that too he pulled off. “It is true that too long have my goslings been cooking. And so, when one after another he had taken them all out, then, “Perhaps I may have been robbed,” he thought. So this he said to his bottom: “You shall suffer if I have been robbed,” he said to his bottom. Thereupon he searched about in among the ashes, but not a single one did he find. “Wretch!” he said. “For what reason should he thus treat me, that he should not tell me!” he said. Truly was he angered by his bottom. And so, when he set to gathering firewood, high he stacked the pile. Then he kindled a great fire; and by the time he had the fire going strong, he stood over the fire with legs spread apart. Well, he was thoroughly burned. Simply “Tcī!” was the only sound the bottom made; (he burned) till he was drawn tight, drawn tight at the bottom. So then this he said to his bottom: “Yes, ‘tcī, tcī, tcī!’ is what you say after letting me be robbed of those goslings of mine,” he said to his bottom. He heard it utter a sound. “Perhaps it may now be thoroughly burned,” he thought. And after he had taken his stand away (from the fire), he then tried in vain to go; but he was unable to try to start. “Wonder what may be the matter with me!” he thought. And so he was without strength when he tried to walk. And so his legs were stretched far apart, but he was not able to walk. So this he thought: “I am curious to know what it is that prevents me from being able to walk.” And when he had sought for a place where there was a very steep cliff, then down from the cliff he slid. When he alighted, he looked back (and) saw nothing but the sore of his bottom along where he had slid. And this was what he said: “Oh, lichens shall the people call it as long as the world lasts!”

Then he continued on his way again. Now, while he was walking about, he saw a dense growth of shrub. Now, as he walked through their midst, he then looked behind, and all the way was the shrub reddened. “Oh, red willows shall the people call them till the end of the world! The people, when they smoke, shall use them for a mixture (in their tobacco),” he said.

And so upon his way he then started. And by and by, as he went travelling along, he again went wading through some bushes, but not quite so much were they reddened. “This, indeed, shall the people call them till the end of the world, — wild red willows shall they be called,” he said.

## 24. Nānabushu and the Winged Startlers<sup>3</sup>

Thereupon departed Nānabushu, travelling about; when he was come a certain distance, he saw some young ruffed grouse in a nest, and very full they filled the place in the nest. Nānabushu sat down beside them, very tender was his feeling for them. He counted how many they were; twelve was their number. And then he spoke to them, asking: “By what name are you called?”

Naturally afraid were the little ruffed grouse. Not were they able to speak. One spoke up: “We have no name.”

Nānabushu spoke in an angry way: “How is it possible for you not to have a name? If you do not tell me what you are called, I will club you to death.”

Naturally much did he alarm them; after a long while they said: “Why, Little Frightener<sup>4</sup> is the name we are called.”

“Oh,” Nānabushu said; “that is it!” Then up to his feet rose Nānabushu; standing over them with legs spread apart, he eased himself upon them. (Observing) them suddenly groping about in the slush, Nānabushu addressed them saying, “Yes, you are a little frightener! Phew!” exclaimed Nānabushu, laughing heartily at them. “Correctly inform your mother when she arrives.”

And so upon his way went Nānabushu; when a little way on his journey he was come, immediately a wide view opened out, whither he was bound. “It seems as if out upon a lake I am coming,” he thought. In truth, out upon a lake he came, and there was a very steep precipice. Truly distant was the sight of the water. Really beautiful was it there on the summit. When he had gone over to the very edge of the cliff, then about over the verge Nānabushu swung his leg, saying, “Ah, would that there were a wager, and that a particularly youthful woman were up as the prize, and that she were short from the knee to the groin, and that she were of a very handsome figure! if such could be, I would jump off, if it were said of the woman that whosoever would leap off would be the one to have her for a wife. Actually would I jump off.” And so again he swung his leg out over the cliff. “For a purpose would I leap off.”

And when at yonder place the Ruffed Grouse was come, fetching home to her children some food for them to eat, how was she to find her children! Oh, they were completely submerged in it. “Who has done you the injury?”

“Nānabushu.”

“Were you told something?”

“‘By what are you called?’ he asked. ‘Little Frightener,’ we said to him, and thereupon was when we were eased upon. And when he started away, we were very much laughed at. And we were told: ‘Correctly inform your mother when she arrives.’ And so when he was setting out, he then said: ‘Yes, you are a little frightener!’ we were told.”

Well, the Ruffed Grouse took up one with her mouth and another with her claws; then, flying up, to a lake she carried them to wash them. And when she had made them clean, then the same thing she did to the rest until (she had finished with) the twelve. When she had made all her children clean, and by the time she was done with her work, then she said: “Now, then, I am going to follow up Nānabushu, and I intend doing him a trick too.” When she started, she

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<sup>3</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 186-93.

<sup>4</sup> *kuckungūcīns*, also translated as “winged startler.”

followed his trail. So by and by she came within hearing distance of Nānabushu, who still could be heard talking. Ah, it was precisely at the moment she looked when he was swinging his leg out over (the precipice). The Ruffed Grouse thought: “Would that he might do it again!” Nearer to the place she went. When again he was making ready (to swing his leg), she happened then to fly up; ever so near past his ear she flew, and suddenly Nānabushu heard the sound of “T!”<sup>5</sup>

Well, Nānabushu dodged, but unfortunately over the precipice he fell, going so fast that the wind went whistling past his ears. Ah, when he fell into the water, “Tcam” was the sound of his fall there. Oh, for a great while was he falling through the water. And so when he got to the bottom, all his strength he used in pushing back up to the surface; barely was he able to reach the surface, almost was he on the very point of losing his breath.

Naturally there was the Ruffed Grouse seated watching Nānabushu. When he came to the surface, ah, then up from where he fell he looked, saying: “Well, (that) really is a little frightener.” Oh, how Nānabushu could be heard laughing! “Ruffed Grouse, it was right what you did to me for easing upon your children. Never again will I do so.” And so when out of the water came Nānabushu, then off he started walking about.

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<sup>5</sup> “T!” trill with the lips, imitating the whir of the grouse in flight (Jones’ footnote).

### 31. The Death of Nänabushu's Nephew, the Wolf<sup>6</sup>

Ah, truly pleased was Nänabushu. On the morrow they moved camp. And with one of his nephews he went off in another direction. He was addressed by his nephew saying: "Nänabushu, not far away shall we stop for the night." And so he followed in the tracks of his nephew. Some distance on the way he saw (his nephew) seated in a spot free from snow. "My father, here is a place for us to sleep," Nänabushu was told. After they had finished eating, he made ready to sleep. He then had a nap. And while (the Wolf) was yet sitting up, all of a sudden into weeping burst Nänabushu. Then he waved to him with the hand. "Foh, (I) fancy that he probably is having a bad dream about me," he said of him. When (Nänabushu) had sleep enough, he then woke up. Now, busy at work was the Wolf. "What were you dreaming about, that you should weep?"

"Ah, my nephew, I had a bad dream about you. To-morrow you will pursue a moose. Please don't you delay throwing a stick into the brook, even though you are then in sight of the moose. Now, do try to keep that in mind."

Now the morrow was at hand. In the morning, when (the Wolf) departed to go in pursuit (of game), Nänabushu set out; in the trail of his nephew he followed. Now, by the trail he made, (the Wolf) was stalking the moose. By the way, it was well on towards spring. That was how he trailed up (his nephew), and that was how he could tell by the trail (what) his nephew was doing; (he saw) that (his nephew) had flung a small stick ahead on going down into the dry bed of a little brook; (he saw) where (the Wolf) had come in sight of the moose at the time; and then really with great speed was his nephew going at the time; and then now was the Wolf overtaking (the moose) at where there was a dry bed of a very small brook. But in an unguarded moment, when he tried to take it with a leap, apart spread the brook, and so far out yonder in the middle of the stream he fell. And at once there was ringing in his ears. And then he did not come up to the surface. Well, this was because he had forgotten to throw the little stick (ahead of him).

Nänabushu then came in sight of a river that went flowing by, straight on down to the water he trailed his nephew. "Alas! it is possible that that nephew of mine has drowned." Then on over to the other side he went; everywhere downstream he went, but in vain. And so nowhere saw he a sign of him. With great affliction then wept Nänabushu; whereupon all day long he wandered weeping, as he sought in vain for his nephew. For full ten days he sought, but without result, for he did not find him. Completely now was he starving.

Now, once while down the course of the river he was going, once while he was walking along the shore, he saw a kingfisher perched aloft (and) looking down into the water. What should he do but slip stealthily up to it; nigh up to it he came. In an attempt to grab it he just missed catching it. And the place where the kingfisher was seized at the time was by the tuft on its head. Then he was addressed by the Kingfisher saying: "About the anal gut of his nephew was I going to tell Nänabushu."

"Oh my little brother! what were you going to tell me?"

"Why about your nephew. I was watching for him yonder, where I was looking into the water; he was the one I was watching for. Nänabushu, listen! I will declare to you what happened to him for whom you have a longing. Now, this was what became of your nephew: the chief of the big lynxes has seized your nephew. Now, yonder, where the river flows out into the open, is an island of sand; and it is there the chief of the big lynxes whiles the day away when the sky is

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<sup>6</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 251-61.

clear. When the day is very pleasant, then from the water he proceeds out upon the sandy island. Nānabushu, if you heed what I say, you can behold the skin of your nephew, for flayed was that nephew of yours. Therefore shall you believe me concerning what befell your nephew when you lost him. By many is he guarded. Now, if you harken to what I say to you, then whatsoever you may wish to do to (the chief of the big lynxes), that you may do to him. Therefore a bow do you make. And when you have finished it, you shall next make the arrow which you are to use. I will give you what you shall use for a point (on your arrow).”

Nānabushu was then given one of the claws (of the kingfisher). Then he was addressed: “Nānabushu, that is what you shall use for a point on your arrow. And of all things, it is from flag-reed that you shall obtain your bowstring. And when, Nānabushu, you are ready to shoot him, do not shoot him in the body. Where he casts his shadow is the place for you to shoot him. Do you be careful that you heed my words. Likewise a raft shall you build, and very large shall you make the raft. Oh, if you were only a manitou, then would you be able to get him under your power! A manitou being is the chief of the big lynxes. Now, that is as much as I shall impart to you. Take pains, do not fail to follow my words.”

“Oh, (I) thank (you) for what you have told me! In return, I will make you so that you will be proud of yourself.”

“(I) thank (you), Nānabushu, for what you say.”

And so then Nānabushu set to work painting the Kingfisher. When he was done with him, “Now look at yourself, Kingfisher,” he said to him.

It was true that when he looked at himself, really proud was the Kingfisher.

“And this is the way you shall look till the end of the world,” said Nānabushu. Thereupon Nānabushu started away, down the stream he went. And when a short way he was come, sure enough, he beheld a lake. What should he do but build a raft, and very large he made it. When he had finished it, he then got aboard (and) went over to yonder sandy island. What should he do but go ashore upon yonder sandy beach. Lo, living beings left the signs of their footprints, all kinds of living creatures left the marks of their tracks. Thereupon then back on his raft he went, in a certain place he hid away his float. Thereupon he set to work making his bow and his arrow; he also fixed what he was to have for a point, his claw he used for the point. When all his work was entirely done, by that time it was night. Thereupon, when it was day, Nānabushu spoke, saying: “Now, let there be a calm throughout the whole day, and may there be a very clear sky!” Nānabushu then, in this place but towards the woods, became a poplar. When high the sun was risen, he beheld moving circles upon the water of the lake. First a toad came up to the surface, and then the various manitous, every living being then came forth from the water out upon that island of sand. And as fast as some of them came, they went to sleep.

“Please be careful,” said the Bear. “It surely seems that by Nānabushu are we being observed, thus do I feel. (I am) curious to know what our chief may have to say.”

While Nānabushu was looking, everywhere was there splashing of water. By and by all of a sudden far out upon the water something came up to the surface; behold, (it was the) Big Lynx! Truly big was he, hitherward he looked as he came. He could be heard saying:

“Nānabushu is the one standing yonder, the form of a poplar has he taken.”

And some could be heard saying: “Long since has that poplar been there.”

“No, it is really he who has taken on its form.”

And some said: "He is not so powerful a manitou as to take on such a form. Why, Big Serpent, do you go coil round about him."

Truly hitherward came the Big Serpent. When (Nänabushu) was reached, then did (the Serpent) squeeze him tight. Of course Nänabushu held in his breath. Just as he was about to breathe, then the Serpent thought it a fruitless task. Away he went saying: "A tree that! How is it possible for Nänabushu to become such a thing?"

But the chief did not believe (what the Serpent said). "I say, you, O Bear! go claw him. It surely is Nänabushu."

Then hither came the Great Bear. When (Nänabushu) was reached, he was clawed by it. And in a little while he was let alone, then away started (the Bear). "How is it possible for Nänabushu to become so? — Therefore come you out of the water."

Truly on out of the water it came. In their very midst it lay down to sleep. As Nänabushu was watching it, every once in a while it would lift up its head to look around. "Would that it might fall into deep sleep, and that all its youths might sleep soundly too!"

Sure enough, all went to sleep.

In a while Nänabushu became a human being again. Then he went over to his raft; he poled it along as he went over to where they were asleep. When he went ashore, in among the manitous he stepped as he went along. Presently he came to where the chief was. Squarely in the side he shot him.

No surprise whatever did (the manitou) display. Too bad (for him)! He had yet one other arrow, which he took. And so there, where (the manitou) then was casting a shadow, was where he shot him. Behold, then was (the manitou) startled with surprise. Oh! but there was a mighty rushing of water, and barely did he reach his raft. Thereupon then under water went lake and mountain, one after the other. Oh, afraid was Nänabushu! Then yonder where he was, alighted the Kingfisher by whom he was addressed: "Nänabushu, therefore now have you done injury to them that have been living upon this earth."

Oh, everywhere were they swimming about, beings of every sort! And as the trees were about to disappear under the flood, then was when the water ceased rising. Lo, the water receded, leaving (the earth) as dry as before.

"Well, now," he was told by the Kingfisher, "Nänabushu, you did not kill the chief of the big lynxes!"

## 32. Nānabushu Slays Toad-Woman, the Healer of the Manitous<sup>7</sup>

Thereupon back to its former depth did the water recede. When the water got to where it was before, he accordingly then with care selected a place where he would have his lodge. And so from there he intended yet to seek (for his nephew). And so while wandering about weeping, he once heard somebody going along singing:

“From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sā<sup>n</sup>.  
From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sā<sup>n</sup>.”

Such was the way he heard some one sing while going along. What should he do but go towards the sound of the being. When he came in sight of the being, lo, (he saw that) it was a toad leaping along from place to place. Some bast she bore upon her back, and some rattles she carried bound to her heels. Now, a good deal was the bast she carried on her back when he rushed up to her. On coming up to her, why, she was a very old woman.

“O my grandmother! for what reason are you singing?”

“Oh, a snare is really to be laid for Nānabushu. And this bast which I carry upon my back is the thing to be used for the purpose. It was Nānabushu who really shot the chief of the big lynxes.”

“O my grandmother! pray, why is a snare to be set for Nānabushu?”

“Oh, well! it is for the arrow of Nānabushu, which is now sticking out of (the chief of the big lynxes). From this town yonder do I come. And over there hardly alive is the chief of the big lynxes.”

“O my grandmother! pray, what was that you were singing about?”

“Oh, why, we are ministering to the chief; and this is what I sing when I am attending him:

““From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles.”

“It is so much pleasure I impart when I sing. The song is fine.”

“O my grandmother! at what place do you sit?” In the very middle of the doorway is where I always sit. Now, this is what they have done: a partition divides the space in two equal parts; and so over on the other side lies that chief of ours.”

“And where is it you dwell?”

“Why, yonder at the edge of the forest do I dwell. And very small is that little wigwam of mine. And there are two of my grandchildren, and very tiny are the boys; now, they are the only ones with whom I live.”

“O my grandmother! how was it that (the chief) angered Nānabushu?”

Why, he actually took his nephew away from him. Very fond was Nānabushu of his nephew. It was on that account (the chief) angered him, which was why he was shot (by Nānabushu).”

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<sup>7</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 261-79.

“Now, pray why should he be so treated by the chief of the big lynxes as to be deprived of his nephew by him? By no means a small manitou is he who goes by the name of Nänabushu.”

She lifted her head and looked up at him: “Ah, me! perhaps you are Nänabushu!”

“Nonsense! Not so long as this would you be held in conversation if it were Nänabushu. Long ago would you have been clubbed to death if I were Nänabushu. O my grandmother! do start that song of yours once more! Not exactly yet do I know that song of yours.”

So once more:

“From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.

From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.”

What did Nänabushu do but club her to death. “Well, what a fool this wretched old woman (was) !” Ah! Nänabushu then set to work flaying her, from every part he removed the skin. After he had finished flaying her, very small then Nänabushu made himself. What should he do but get into the toad-skin to wear it, in every respect did he fit into it. Slightly here on the hip he tore it. After he had got into it, then he bound the rattles to his heels, and put the bast upon his back. Ah! as Nänabushu went leaping along, he then began to sing:

“From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.

From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.”

And very loud was the sound of his voice as he went singing. In a while was he come in sight of the town. When he was come at the edge of the forest, sure enough, he saw a small wigwam. “This must be what she spoke of,” he thought. Farther on was a view of the wigwams. Now, ever so loud he sang as he went; he was heard as he went singing along.

One then spoke up: “Yea, now once again comes the sound of our dear grandmother singing. Therefore now again should you invite her to the gathering to smoke.”

Then presently, as he was about to arrive at the little wigwam, but before he got there, out came the boys. “O my grandmother! have you come home?”

“Yes, my grandchildren, I am come home.” When in she entered, then on her lap sat her grandchildren. What should happen to him but to be seen by one of his grandchildren at the place where he had torn open the toad-skin. “O my grandmother! why do you look that way there? Like the skin of a human being is the way you look there.”

“Oh, I wore it through while at work on the bast (to be used for a snare) that is to be laid for Nänabushu.”

As loud as she could she sang. Thereupon truly was she invited to the assembly to smoke. Accordingly then she went. Presently our grandmother was approaching nigh to the wigwam. Oh, in the doorway what should he behold but the skin of his nephew then being used for a flap over the entry-way. And there still were left upon it some of the teeth (of his nephew). Sorrowful Nänabushu! then did tears pour from his eyes. And almost did he weep aloud, especially when opened the flap on his way in. Throughout every part was the space crowded with them who were to heal. By the doorway he sat down. Sure enough, he saw that there was a partition, and it was over beyond he could hear the sound of the chief as he groaned in pain. Already began they



who were to do the healing. Thereupon (the throng) stepped over to the place where they heard the sound of him who was suffering. Of course they were many.

Now the time drew nigh for him also to begin, now he too was about to begin healing. Well, when Nānabushu began, he began wielding the rattles with a swing, very loud he sang:

“From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.  
From the ends of the earth do I come with the sound of my rattles, sa<sup>n</sup>.”

(Thus) he sang. Presently up he rose to his feet when went over to the chief of the big lynxes. Ah, when he went over to sit beside him, square in his side was the arrow sticking out. Accordingly, when he breathed, then to and fro moved the arrow Now with care (Nānabushu) seized the arrow, which he worked back and forth into him. Ah! when Nānabushu sprang to his feet, he thus tore up that toad-skin of his, whereupon they tried in vain to catch him there. “Alas! it was to kill this chief of ours that Nānabushu came.”

And then from its place he tore off his nephew’s skin as he went. Oh, thereupon, as the flood came, as the water rose, then he fled, seeking to find his raft. Oh, at the very moment when he felt he was getting near to it, then already was he going along with only his head out of the water. Presently he came in sight of it, barely did he get to it; and when he got aboard his raft, poor Nānabushu (saw that) now under water were the mountains. Why, for a great while did the water rise. Well, to swim aimlessly about was all that the animal-folk and the beings of the air could do. Now, some that were tiny he tried to put aboard; and those that were big hung to (the raft) by their chins. Yet, for all that, his float was weighed down with its burden. “Therefore never again shall we be upon land,” they thought. “Perhaps it is true that I have done a wrong (which may never be repaired),” he thought. He spoke to the animal-kind, saying: “Pity it is that I forgot (to fetch along) some earth. Would that I might have brought a little! Now, is there no one able to fetch some earth? If you continue passive, then shall we all die. Even so, do you, many as are good at diving, go seek for some earth. Do not all go together, one after the other shall you go.”

Accordingly the Loon was the first to be addressed: “I say, you, do you first go seek for some earth. Take care that you fetch it.”

“Well, I will try,” said the Loon. Lo, a cry the Loon was heard to give: “A, wīwīwī!” Oh, then down he dived into the water. Why, it was a long time before he came back up to the surface of the water. It was a poor dead loon (Nānabushu) then picked up. After Nānabushu had picked him up, he then breathed upon him, whereat back to life he came. Then (Nānabushu) spoke to him, saying: “How now? Did you not come in sight of the earth?” Then was Nānabushu told: “Not even did I come in sight of it, for when (on the way down) did I become insensible.”

Very much afraid became Nānabushu. “Now, you, Beaver, do you (go). Not till you are dead shall you give up. Do not return as long as you are alive.”

Lo, therefore the Beaver too, before (he went), was heard giving forth a cry. Then down dived the Beaver. Alas! as down through the water the Beaver was going, then was when he became unconscious; (it was when) he tried in vain to get sight of the trees that he lost his wits.

And now Nānabushu was keeping watch. Alas! by and by up to the surface he came, and he drew the Beaver up into his canoe. “Ah, what a pity, now that drowned is my little brother!”

And so again, when he had breathed upon him, then accordingly, as before, (the Beaver) came back to life. Then he spoke to him, saying: "How did you fare?"

"Why, just as I was coming into view of the trees, then did I become insensible."

"Well, then, it is certain that now we shall die. Therefore then do all you that are good at diving go hence together. And this is what you shall do, not till you are dead shall you give up."

Behold, naturally, all that were good at diving then dived into the water. Now the Otter thought that he would fetch the earth. So before starting they (all) whooped, then down they dived, (being gone) oh, till they (were drowned and) came floating to the surface. Of as many as went into the water, some became unconscious before they got sight of the earth. And now some were halfway down the trees when they then lost their wits; whereupon not even a small bit of earth did any one fetch. Yea, of a truth, afloat on the water were all those who had tried to dive. When he drew them out of the water, again he breathed upon them, whereupon back to life they all came. And then he asked of them, one after another: "Who was it that got a near view of the earth?"

And the Otter spoke up: "I myself tried to get within easy view of it, but without success."

"And how close?"

"Why I was more than halfway down the trees when I saw the earth."

"I say, once more, Otter."

Whereupon truly down he dived, down into the water he went; and before he was out of breath, then he came in sight of the earth. And the moment that he got within easy reach of it, then he became insensible. Alas! Nānabushu (saw) him come floating on the water. "Oh, therefore certainly now shall we die!" Consequently, just as before, he took (the Otter) up. Breathing upon him, he then asked of him: "How did you fare?"

"Why, it seemed fated for me not to be able to fetch home (some earth)."

Poor Nānabushu! thereupon truly was he scared. Behold, he remembered the Muskrat. "Now you, despite our failure, Muskrat, do you dive into the water."

"Well, anyhow, I will try; but I too shall drown."

"Good, Muskrat, do all you can."

Ay! the Muskrat lifted his tail; then "kwatçak!" was the sound he made as he dived into the water. Ah! as the Muskrat was on his way through the water, he by and by came in sight of the trees. Not so very much out of breath was he for all that. In a while halfway down the trees was he come; and when he got to the earth, he then became insensible. When he took some earth in his mouth, he also took up some in his paws. Then there between his groins he flung his tail and his stiffened penis. Now, while Nānabushu was watching for him, why, by and by (he saw) the poor creature floating on the water (looking) quite (like) a ball that was carried on the flood. Even so Nānabushu reached down and picked him up. Doing it in play, he opened out (the Muskrat's) paws. Why, (the Muskrat) was holding fast to some earth in his clinched paw. Likewise in the other paw, in just the same way, he found him with some earth. There in his groins he sought to find him with it, even more earth he found upon him; and there in his throat too he found him with much more. And so when he breathed upon him, he then came back to life.

When he had dried the earth (he found on the Muskrat), "Therefore now am I about to create the earth." When Nānabushu blew his breath upon it, behold! a small island floated on the

water. Accordingly afterwards the small animal-folk were eager to go out upon it, when he then spoke to them, saying: "Wait! not till it is larger may you go out upon it."

When again he blew his breath upon it, a great island was floating on the water. And so upon the place where he had blown his breath there was much earth, whereupon then began the little animal-kind to feel themselves secure. Once more he began breathing upon the earth. Then he spoke to the swift-flying Bird-Hawk, saying: "Now fly you round about this earth and see how large this earth is."

Sure enough, away went the Bird-Hawk. For some time was he gone, in a while he came home. Then was (Nānabushu) told by him, "Not so very large is (the earth.)"

When again (Nānabushu) breathed upon it, for a long while was he busy breathing upon it. Next he spoke to the Raven, saying: "Now, you, Raven, do you find out how big this earth is."

Truly then away started the Raven. It is not known for certain how many moons the Raven was gone; after a long time he returned. Then he told, saying: "I have not learned how large this earth is, so therefore I came back before I could find out."

So Nānabushu then spoke to the Raven, saying: "Come, so that you may be proud of yourself will I make you. In what manner, then, do you wish to feel pride in yourself?"

"Nānabushu, as it looks on a clear day when the sky is blue, so would I have you make me."

Thereupon truly Nānabushu colored him blue. Now such is the look of the Raven, he was made so by Nānabushu.

## 41. Nänabushu and the Mallard<sup>8</sup>

When the morrow was come, then off he went on a hunt for game, but not a thing did he kill. Continually without result did he hunt; and, in spite of all he could do, nothing did he kill. Thereupon very hungry did he become. Then on the morrow away went Nänabushu, it was to wander from place to place visiting (old friends). Once he came upon the footprints of some people, in whose trail he then followed. When some distance farther on he was come, he saw where they lived. On entering in, (he saw) a man that was seated there, likewise a woman and their children. He was addressed: “Welcome! be seated!” was told Nänabushu.

Then up spoke the man: “What have we to offer the guest (to eat)? Well, anyhow, hang up (a kettle of) water!” he said to the woman.

Truly, then a kettle did the woman hang up. And while the man was seated, up he flew, and was heard to say, “Kwänk, kwänk, kwänk!” (such) was what he uttered. And then yonder upon the cross-pole (above the fire) he alighted, being heard to say, “Kwänk, kwänk!” (such) was the sound he uttered. Oh, how strange that when he muted into the kettle, he was saying, “Come on, pay no heed, but keep it stirring!”

Truly she stirred it. And while she was stirring it, lo, very full of rice was the kettle there; and it was cooked dry. “All right! now take it off the fire.” And then down he flew, alighting. “Now, this is only a way I have whenever I want to eat.” It happened to be a Mallard whom he had come to visit. After the Mallard was seated, “Come, into a vessel do you put it!” he said to the woman, “and very full do you fill it.”

Truly, the woman filled up the bowl.

“All right, Nänabushu, do you eat!”

Nänabushu then began eating. When his desire for food was quite appeased, then he ceased (eating).

“Is that all you are going to eat?”

“And how am I to force (myself) to eat (more)?”

“Nänabushu, therefore then do you take back to them at home the rest of the cooked food. Perhaps to your children do you take it home.”

Nänabushu then spoke, saying: “It is now time for me to go back home.” And so, when no one was looking, in under the mat he pushed his mittens. When he went outside, then near by did he tarry.

And this was what the man said: “Please do not carry to Nänabushu his mittens.”

And so, truly, he did not have them fetched to him. Already was Nänabushu becoming tired of waiting to have them brought to him. Then with a loud voice he called: “I have forgotten my mittens!” He was not harkened to. Then with a louder voice he called. At last, “Well, go take them to him; from afar do you throw him his mittens.”

Presently he saw the boys. “Why, come you up close! And so it is a fact that you are without food. I am not hungry. To-morrow let your father come over exactly at noon.” Thereupon away then went Nänabushu. When he was come at where he lived, truly pleased were his children to have food to eat, so the same with his wife; thoroughly were they satisfied with food. On the morrow he then waited for his guest, he waited for him at noon. Soon he was come. When he was seated, “What have we to feed the guest? Anyway, hang up the kettle.”

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<sup>8</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 317-21.

To be sure, the wife of Nänabushu hung up the (kettle of) water.

“With much wood do you build up the fire, soon let the kettle boil.” Aha! now, while Nänabushu was yet seated, up he sprang, being heard to say: “Kwänk, kwänk, kwänk!” (such) was the sound Nänabushu uttered. It was a great while before Nänabushu was able to mount the cross-pole (over the fire). After he was perched up there on the cross-pole, then with much effort did he grunt in vainly trying to ease himself; he could not do it. But when by and by a lump of solid dung dropped into the kettle, he addressed his wife, saying: “Never mind! but keep it stirring.”

Then said the woman: “Mercy sake, vile dog! you will simply ruin our kettle.” Accordingly, to her feet the woman quickly rose; immediately down she took the kettle; straightway out of doors she went on her way to empty out the water. After she had cleansed their kettle, then back inside came the woman. Nänabushu was still perched upon the cross-pole (over the fire). He was not able by his own efforts to climb down. Then he spoke to his wife, saying: “Not at all am I able, in spite of my own efforts, to climb down.”

Truly very angry was the woman, she was in search of something to use for a club; the woman presently found a stick. While Nänabushu was perched up there, the woman said: “Look and see! for I am going to club him to death who eased himself in the kettle.”

When Nänabushu was about to be struck, then from yonder place he fell; he leaped down when she made as if to hit him.

Alas! without cheer there sat the guest. Very anxious was he to eat. Whereupon he said: “Now, forget everything and hang up your kettle.”

Truly, the woman hung up their kettle; presently it began boiling.

At that moment up flew (the guest) from his place, and was heard saying: “Kwänk, kwänk, kwänk,” (such) was the sound he uttered. Thereupon he alighted yonder on the cross-pole (over the fire) at the same time that he was heard saying: “Kwänk, kwänk,” (such) was the sound he uttered. By him while muting were they addressed: “Never you mind! only do you keep it stirring.”

Thereupon, truly, as they kept it stirring, how wondrously full the rice filled (the kettle), and how dry it cooked!

“Now it is time to take it off (the fire).”

Truly off the fire the woman took it.

And so with disappointment forth from the place went their guest. Whereupon then did Nänabushu (and his family) eat.

## 42. Nānabushu and the Woodpecker<sup>9</sup>

On the morrow he went on another fruitless hunt for game, and it was just his luck not to kill a thing. Another time he set out; but, as ill luck would have it, he did not kill a thing.

At last then up spoke the woman: "Really, you are of no use. It would therefore be much better for you to go on a visit among (your friends); for only by such means shall we obtain food to eat, only in that way shall we live through the winter."

In the morning then departed Nānabushu. When some distance away he was come, a lake he saw. While looking around, he saw somebody walking about on the ice. When he started hitherward, he saw a man. "Pray, let me go with you when you depart for home!" Presently he saw a wigwam; when in the other went, so then (did) he. When he was seated, he saw a woman busily making a bag. After a while she was then spoken to: "Please hang up the kettle."

Truly, the woman arranged (the kettle) so as to hang. When she had finished, then of a sudden he that was seated flew up, a-lighting yonder on the lodge-pole, (and) could be heard saying: "Kwu, kwu, kwu, kwu!" such was his cry. It happened to be the Red-Head that he was visiting. Now, when (the Red-Head) was come at the meeting of the lodge-poles, he then began pecking. And after a while some corn came pouring into the kettle there, whereupon full of it became their kettle. Down he came hopping; and when (he was come), then back again (was he in) human (form).

Well, and so another time was the woman seated, making her sack, when she said: "What shall we put (into the corn) for seasoning, or shall it be just so?"

Lo, he now wiped the blade of his knife. Behold, when he uncovered his wife, plump on her very back he then began slicing her, rather large pieces he sliced off. When he had done with carving her, he then rubbed his spittle over (the place) where he had carved her. And then into their kettle they put the meat to boil. Then their kettle began boiling. Now, after the food was done cooking, then out she dipped it; and in front of Nānabushu, that he might eat, she placed (the meat) and the corn.

Oh, but Nānabushu truly had a pleasant time eating! After he was quite satisfied with food, he accordingly ceased eating. And then again he hid his mittens. "Now I should start back home." Nānabushu was told: "Therefore do you take them home (some food)."

Again, after some distance he was come, out called Nānabushu: "I have forgotten something!" But in vain was he not listened to. Louder still he shouted, till finally, "Well, then do you take to Nānabushu his mittens."

To be sure, the boys took them to him. Now, from afar were they throwing them to him, when he said to them: "My little brothers, up close do you come. You must be hungry. Tomorrow let your father come over, at noon let him come to get some food for you to eat." And so it is said that when Nānabushu was come at where they lived, then the poor things ate again. Thereupon he spoke to his wife, saying: "Now, come and make a bag!" Then was Nānabushu answered by his wife saying: "No doubt but that you have again seen somebody doing something. Oh, how you make me ashamed in your trying always to do everything!"

Nānabushu then spoke up: "Never you mind! just you make the bag."

"Pray, what shall I use to make the bag?" Now, some bast did the woman have, and so with that she began weaving (a bag).

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<sup>9</sup> Translation from Jones 1917, 357-63.

In the mean while waited Nänabushu. When it was noon, then came the man. When he entered within, "Pray, what shall we offer (him) to eat?" Nänabushu sharpened an old piece of metal. After the other had come in, Nänabushu then sprang up. "Kwu, kwu, kwu, kwu!" was the sound he uttered. When he placed the metal into his nose, then up he climbed. Presently he was able to reach the meeting of the lodge-poles. Then he pecked at their lodge-poles. Alas! right straight in for a long way it truly entered. When he dropped, "tcu!" was the sound Nänabushu made.

Poor thing! him the visitor grabbed. However, he then pulled out the metal. And (he saw that Nänabushu) had nevertheless bled a little, (whereupon) he then washed him where he was bloody.

Nänabushu was not becoming conscious when he said, "Never you mind, but make the sack!" he said to his wife.

Now, truly the woman started upon the work of making the sack. Then, when he took up the knife, he began removing her old jacket. When he began carving her at the back, straightway she began to be heard (crying aloud). Very painfully did he hurt her with the knife. "Hush! for this is what I always do whenever I wish to entertain."

Then was he addressed by the guest saying: "Stop! perhaps you will kill your old woman. Therefore fetch hither the knife." When (the visitor) sliced off a piece from the wife of (Nänabushu), he put it into their kettle to boil. Next, flying up to the meeting of lodge-poles, (the visitor) then began to peck. After a while some corn came pouring out, into their kettle it poured. After their kettle was full, then did Nänabushu eat. "Now I am going home."

Whereupon the buttocks of the ruffed grouse (hang aloft).