Trickster and the Village Women: A Psychosymbolic Discourse Analysis of a Lahu Picaresque Story
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Trickster and the Village Women:

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a Lahu picaresque story

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for Alton L. Becker

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ABBREVIATIONS

$x$ is an allofam of; has both a phonological and a semantic relationship to

Adv adverb
AE adverbial expression
AE onomat onomatopoeic adverbial
Bₙ bound nominal morpheme
Bᵥ bound verbal morpheme
AE_stat stative adverbial

Clf classifier
Conj conjunction
Det determiner
Elabₙ elaborate nominal expression
esp. especially
Interj interjection
lit. literally
I. Introduction.

The story that is the subject of this paper was recorded in 1965 in the Christian Black Lahu village of Sha-to-du in northern Thailand. This village, three hours' walk to the east from the Thai town of Ta Ton at the terminus of the Chiang Mai-Farng road, is on the north bank of the River Kok, a stone's throw from the Burmese border. The villagers are all quite recent immigrants from Shan State in Burma, where Lahu have been settled for centuries.

As will immediately be apparent, the story has nothing Christian about it, and must be presumed to go back to the remote past. Several different people tried to tell the story, but got it badly garbled, evidence that it represented a remnant of a moribund cultural tradition. Finally, a man in his thirties announced that he knew the story well, and proceeded to rattle it off in 6 minutes and 30 seconds, with considerable panache. Faintly audible on the tape is the sound of some youngsters in the background, practicing Baptist hymns in four-part harmony.

There matters stood until the spring of 1976, when Alton L. Becker visited Berkeley for a quarter. Becker's own pioneering researches into Burmese and Javanese narrative structure made him curious to examine some of my Lahu texts.  

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1 Lahu is a member of the Central Loloish subgroup of Lolo-Burmese, one of the main divisions of the great Tibeto-Burman family.

2 Several hundred pages of texts from my 1965-6 and 1970 fieldtrips to Lahuland have already been roughly translated, but so far the only ones I have published are a group which illustrate the genre of bilingual jokes (Matisoff 1969).
Together we went over the Trickster story, and Becker opened my eyes to its psychosymbolic dimensions. His insightful comments provided the inspiration for this paper, and to him it is affectionately dedicated.3

The body of this paper consists of four parts (Sections II-V): the verbatim Lahu text,4 with interlinear glosses and form-class designations for each morpheme; an annotated translation; a linguistic analysis in discourse-structural terms; and a psychosymbolic analysis.

Several texts in one or another Loloish language have already been published, so that comparative work on Loloish narrative style and structure is now feasible.5 Interlinear glosses, bothersome as they are for the author, typist, and printer, are essential for close textual analysis.6 Equally necessary is a fluent running translation, neither so literal as to be awkward nor so free as to obscure the structure of the original -- no easy task between languages as profoundly different from each other as Lahu and English.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to warn against jumping to conclusions about Lahu grammar on the basis of English translations. Sentence (2) of the Translation, to take a random example, contains the phrase people were selected and

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3 I am also indebted to several other scholars for their help, including Susan Matisoff, Edward and Bambi Schieffelin, Dan I. Slobin, Amin Sweeney, Gabrielle Yablonsky, and Karl Zimmer.

4 There is one departure from verbatimity, as explained in Note 8 to the Translation. The transcription used is discussed in Chapter I of The Grammar of Lahu (henceforth GL). Hyphenization conventions for polysyllabic words are as described in GL, section 3.31.

5 These languages include Akha (Egerod and Hansson 1974), Nasu (Kao Huan-nien 1958), Ahi (Yllen Chia-hua 1953), Sani (Ma Hsüeh-liang 1951), and Lu-ch'üan (Ma Hsüeh-liang 1948). The anthropologist Anthony R. Walker has published nearly 30 prayers in the archaic Red Lahu liturgical language (see Bibliography for a sample). Texts have also appeared in Moso (e.g. Li Lin-ts'an 1946; Li, Chang, and Ho 1957) and Nakhi (e.g. Rock 1937), two closely related dialects with a fascinating pictographic writing system. (Moso-Nakhi is now considered by most Loloists to lie somewhat outside of Loloish proper.)

6 In this paper, as in Matisoff 1969, I have adopted the practice of giving each word in the text a number on its first occurrence, which it retains in all subsequent occurrences, so that each separate word need only be glossed once. The utility of this tedious process is suggested metaphorically by the cartoon character Foghorn Leghorn, a large bellicose rooster who talks in a Southern accent, and is always losing his plumage in fights. Totally featherless after one such encounter, he astounded his friends by reappearing completely refeathered the next day. "Fo'tunately," he announced proudly, "Ah always numbahs mah feathahs!"
they went off. "Universal grammarians," looking for an example of the "pass-
itive" in an exotic language in order to win some theoretical argument, had bet-
ter be careful. There is no such thing as an active/passive distinction for
Lahu verbs. I used an English passive because no agent NP was expressed in
the Lahu. (The they in they went off is also not expressed in the original.)

This particular story was chosen for detailed analysis both for its
tightly-knit linguistic structure and for the thematic interest of its content.
It was told with elegance and economy, with occasional repetitions to increase
the dramatic effect.\footnote{See especially the incident of the consultation of the Tree-oracle,
in Discourse Units IV-A and IV-B.} The action never flags, and climax is piled on top of
climax (in more ways than one).

It is my hope that the linguistic, psychological, and sheer prurient
interest of this text will foster a greater appreciation of Tibeto-Burman lit-
erature by the general public.
II. Lahu text with interlinear glosses.

1. (N_time) long ago / 2 (P_univ) temporal part. [1+2 'once upon a time'] / 3 (N) Chinese / 4 (P_n) accusative part. [also 8 or hə?] / 5 (N) Lahu people [see 90 yə (N) 'child; son'] / 6 (N) war / 7 (V) shoot; fight / 8 (P_univ) indicative nominalizer [related to 15 'relativizer' and 77 'genitive'] / 9 (Conj) then; thereupon [lit. 'having done thus': cf. 117, 34, 19; see also 9-A (Sentence 20)] / 10 (N_sd) that; that one; a certain one; the one over there / 11 (Num) one; a / 12 (Clf) morning / 13 (P_unf) topicalizing part. [related to 67-A (P_n) 'locative part.'] / 14 (P_v) part. indicating outer-directed motion; away; off to / 15 (P_univ) relativizing part. [related to 8 'indicative nominalizer' and 77 'genitive'] / 16 (N) people; person / 17 (V) select / 18 (P_v) part. showing transportatory motion or outer-directed action / 19 (P_unf) suspensive part. marking its clause as non-final in the sentence [related to 54 (P_univ) 'causal'] / 20 (V) go / 21 (P_quot) quotative part.; marker of reported speech / 22 (N_pr) remote 3rd person pronoun: they; others; somebody else / 23 (N) cooked rice; food; meal / 24 (V) make into packet; wrap up / 25 (P_quot) conditional or temporal part.; when; if / 26 (N_proper) the Trickster (name apparently < Shan) / 27 (Det) that; that one; the aforementioned / 28 (N) kind of tailless chicken without breast feathers [cf. 37] / 29 (Clf) classifier for animals / 30 (N) roadside; on one's route [cf. 127] / 31 (V) eat / 32 (Clf) time (also yə) [11+32+2 'at the time that; when'] / 33 (V) unwrap; reveal / 34 (V) do; make [Clause + ve + te 'do in such a way that Clause'] / 35 (N_pr) 3rd person pronoun: he, him; she, her / 36 (P_quot) part. marking completed action or change of state / 37 (N) chick [gə (N) 'chicken' + M_pfx 'baby'] / 38 (V) jump / 39 (V) emerge; (V_v) out, outwards / 40 (V_adj) be fast; (V_v) rapidly, in a flash / 41 (Interj) oh!; well...; ah! / 42 (N_pr) I; me / 43 (Adv) not / 44 (V_adj) be fitting, proper; (V_v) ought to, should / 45 (P_quot) emphatic part. / 46 you (pl.) / 47 (P_quot) marker of end of quotation [related to 195 (P_univ) 'really, indeed'] /
(6) qhe-te-le ʂu ㇢ yä qō  e çt le ʂ-ghe, pɛ=ʂq-㇢ li thɔ  le, ä-cè-gu khå  le ʂ, 9 22 35 55 14 59 19 49 61 62 19 63 64 19 13
vå=le-qō  ㇢ phè-chi le, ㇢-gā  ㇢ te ve çè. (7) mʊ phqo qhe-te-le .PostMapping, ʐ-ʐ-ʐ-ʐ 65 4 66 19 67 67-A 8 8 21 69 33 9 13 70
qo teʔ=teʔ  ㇢ vå=de-qō  ㇢ va=le-qō  ㇢ gā  ve te yå thå, qhe-te-le PostMapping  yå-mi=ma
25 71 10 72 4 65 4 73 15 11 32 2 9 13 74
ə te ㇢ ga qō ve: "aa, nɔ-hi ԡ-pa ve ԡ-ha-ku q∂ la  k. tå chè  k. m.  10 11 75 48 18 8 41 46 77 77 78 79 80 36 81 82 83 36 81
kɔ=  k. m." (8) qhe-te-le ç-çhe ㇢-pho  yə  ve çè.
84 85 81 9 26 86 87 88 89 14 8 21

61 (N) bumblebee / 62 (V) hook onto; strike with curved instrument / 63 (N) crab / 64 (V) scoop out (as a solid from a liquid) / 65 (N) bamboo-sheath / 66 (V) tie sthg so it hangs suspended ("tie-hang") [cf. 238] / 67 (N) outdoors; area outside / 67-A (P_{a}) locative prt. [related to 13 (P_{unf}) 'topicalizer'] / 68 (V) put down; place onto / 69 (N) sky; weather [69+33 'get dark; night falls'] / 70 (Interj; AE_{onomat}) bzz-bzz / 71 (Interj; AE_{onomat}) noise of scratching / 72 (N) tube of bamboo / 73 (V) scratch / 74 (N) woman / 75 (Clf) classifier for people / 76 (N) a male; (slang) husband / 77 (P_{univ}) genitive marker [related to 8 'indicative nominalizer' and 15 'relativizer' / 78 (N) soul; spirit / 79 (V) return; (V) do again, do back [ʐ q∂ (V) 55] / 80 (P_{v}) benefactive prt. showing action impinges on a non-3rd person [cf. P_{t} (V_{v}) 123] / 81 (P_{uf}) persuasiveprt. / 82 (Adv) negative imperative / 83 (V) stay, be in a place; (V_{v}) continuous or progressive action / 84 (V) be afraid; be frightening / 85 (P_{a}) asseverative prt. / 86 (N) house; home / 87 (P_{univ}) only / 88 (V) pile up; (V_{v}) do in a group / 89 (V) sleep; lie down.

III

(9) qhe-te-le ç-çhe  ok-ve  ş, "aa, ʐa ㇢-qho tå yəʔ. yå qhe  k. la," 9 26 27 13 41 42 86 82 89 90 91 92 93 94
qo ve çè. (10) qhe-te-le  ş, "aa, må  k. çt. lâ-ʔo ve yå," tå qô ve te 48 8 21 9 13 41 43 92 93 59 95 8 56 47 48 15 11
yån thå, yɔ-hi khå le, ç-çhe ㇢-qho  yå yəʔ ve. (11) qhe-te-le  ş, ç-çhe  ok-ve  ş 32 2 96 97 19 26 86 98 89 8 9 13 26 27 13
90 (N) child; son / 91 (N) shit / 92 (V) to shit [related to qō (V) 'expel; deliver'] / 93 (V) insert, go into; (Vp) do so it goes in; do in a thorough, penetrating way / 94 (Pv) action towards center of interest; becoming; entering a new state / 95 (V) guarantee / 96 (Npron) they [35+ -hî 'pluralizer'] / 97 (V) swear; take an oath / 98 (V) get, obtain; (yV) manage to do, get to do; (Vv) able to do / 99 (Clf) group; bunch; party of people / 100 (V) finish, come to an end; (Vv) completed action / 101 (Ntime) after, the time after; (Nspat) behind, the place in back; (N) back (body-part) / 102 (N) fermented soybeans (lit. "shit-beans") / 103 (Adv) thoroughly; with all one's might / 104 (V) crush; mash / 105 (V) crumple into a ball / 106 (Adv) all / 107 (V) be there; have / 108 (Pv) agentic nominalizer; one who V's [106+107+108 'all those who were there'] / 109 (N) rear end; buttocks; anus / 110 (V) to dawn / 111 (V) look at; (Vv) try doing / 112 (Pv) imperative glottal stop / 113 (Ninter) what / 114 (V) pay compensation / 115 (Pv) irreals; future; unrealized, hypothetical, or purposive action / 116 (Puv) prt. marking substance questions (as opposed to yes-or-no questions) / 117 (Adv) thus; in this way / 118 (Puvf) even; also [113+118 'whatever'] / 119 (V) hit upon; get, obtain; want to get / 120 (Puvf) even, also (synonym of 118) [118+120 'whatever'] / 121 (Clause) thereupon, then [same as 9] / 122 (N) wealth; money (lit. "silver and gold") / 123 (V) give; (Vv) marker of 3rd person beneficiary [cf. lâ (Pv) 80] or causative versatile verb.

IV-a

(14) qhe-te-le 5 ê-qhe ò-ve ñ-qhe-le ýâ-mî=ma ô tê mô ê-gô pî ve, 9 13 26 27 49 74 10 11 99 4 48 123 8
"âa, a-yô=qô dê= na e," qô= ve cê. (15) a-yô=qô ò-ve 5 dê= na e te le 41 124 125 126 14 48 8 21 124 27 67-A 125 126 14 34 19
ýâ-mî=ma ô tê mó ë-qhe, ýâ= qô ê-kê 5 qay ci ve cê. (16) ë-qhe chi 74 10 11 99 49 127 128 129 67-A 20 59 8 21 26 51
ýâ= qô thê= qay le, a-yô=qô ë-qhe ê= ì= ê= ci a go 5, ë-thê= phê ýâ-mî=ma dê 127 130 20 19 124 131 132 83 133 25 13 113 74 125
a go 5, qô=qô te a go 5, "à-thê=ma ëy ci tê le, ë-qhe hê", qô= ve cê. 133 25 13 135 34 133 25 13 113 114 123 115 116 26 4 48 8 21
(17) qhe-te-le ḍè-ghè ṭe-ve ṭī, "blind, are with?, they with?", qhe ḡè ve cè. 9 26 27 13 41 114 123 112 114 123 112 117 48 8 21

(18) qhe-te-le tè ḡò ḡò ḡò e. (19) ḍè-ghè chi kà ṭà-mi=ma ḡò=c=c=nd kà=c=kà 9 11 136 79 55 14 26 51 120 74 101 137

"blind, are with?, they with?", "blind, are with?, they with?", qhe ḡè ve cè. 41 26 4 114 123 112 87 48 80 140 117 48 8 21

124 (N) hollow a-yaw tree / 125 (V) beat on; strike / 126 (V) listen to; (Bv) ask a question / 127 (N) road [cf. 30] / 128 (V) be crooked; bent; curved [related to 79] / 129 (Pv) locative nominalizer: the place where / 130 (AEstat) straight; directly / 131 (Nspat) interior; inside / 132 (V) enter / 133 (Pv) prt. of intent, trying out an action; also used in suggestions and mild imperatives / 134 (Nspat) outside surface / 135 (AEonomat) thump, thump! / 136 (Clf) time; occasion [11+136: once again; immediately [cf. 150]] / 137 (Adv) quickly; fast; in a hurry [cf. 143] / 138 (V) run / 139 (V) sit / 140 (Puf) emphatic declarative

IV-b

(20) "qhe-te tè pò ḡò ḡò ṭà-ma ḡè ḡà=m=t=mì," qhe ḡè le, tè pò ḡò ḡò ṭà na le ṭī, 9-A 11 136 79 125 43 141 25 43 142 48 19 11 136 79 125 126 19 13

qhe-chi kà ḡà ḡè ḡò ḡà ṭà chè ā le ṭī, yà-mi=ma tè mò te le, qhe-ḡò ṭà a le, 26 51 13 143 79 132 83 60 19 13 74 11 99 34 19 135 125 133 19

"blind, are with?, they with?", qhe ḡè ve cè. (21) qhe-te-le ṭī, yà-mi=ma ṭè mò 41 144 123 112 144 123 112 117 48 21 9 13 74 10 11 99

qhe-chi kà ḡà ḡè ḡò ṭà chè ā le ṭī, yà-mi=ma ṭè mò te le, qhe-ḡò ṭà a le, 26 51 13 143 79 132 83 60 19 13 74 11 99 34 19 135 125 133 19

"blind, are with?, they with?", qhe ḡè ve cè. (22) qhe-te-le ṭī, yà-mi=ma tè qhà=qhà ve 87 48 80 140 26 146 48 21 9 13 74 11 147 77

qhe-chi tè phò ṭà ve cè. 26 87 88 148 8 21

9-A (Conj) well then; in that case [cf. 9] / 141 (V) be the case [43+141+25: 'if it is not the case that; unless'] / 142 (V) know / 143 (Adv) fast; quick [same as 137] / 144 (N) cunt / 145 (N) rattan strips [for weaving baskets, etc.] / 146 (Pv) vocativ prt. / 147 qhà (N) village: tè qhà=qhà ve 'of the whole village' / 148 (V) fuck.

V

(23) qhe-te-le ṭī ḡò ḡò ṭà mò ḡè ṭà le ṭī=qhe, "blind, are with?, they with?", qhe ḡè ve cè. 9 13 149 11 99 79 94 19 49 41 26 51 117 51 117 34

là ṭī, nà-ḥè mò chè qhà=a=n=ò ḍè-ghè pa ṭà ve," qhe ḡè ṭī ṭà pò ṭà ṭī ḡò ḡò ṭà pa 80 140 46 43 83 101 26 148 80 8 48 19 13 11 136 150 149 11 151
q̚ d̓o la le, c̓-q̚h̓e ʔə g̓aʔ-y̓u le, tiʔ-pə a te le pho e ve c̓e. (24) pho le q̚ d̓o-g̓a-y̓u 79 94 19 26 4 152 19 153 133 34 19 154 14 8 21 154 19 155 152 l̓e-ʔe-ʔe, g̓aʔ mə mi. (25) q̚h̓aʔ-ghe te g̓aʔ-y̓u k̓aʔ mə mi. (26) tə p̓oʔ mə ʔa tə le q̚ 156 157 43 158 159 34 152 120 43 158 11 136 43 98 60 19 79 ə la le, c̓-q̚h̓e chí 5, chi ve 5, pəʔ-g̓e g̓aʔ khāʔ hə lc, qhe te ʔə 5 le 5, q̚ d̓aʔ-y̓u 94 19 26 51 13 51 77 13 160 155 64 161 19 117 34 162 19 13 163 s̓ the-q̚ d̓o q̚ 5 l̓əʔ y̓uʔ tə le, ə ve ə ʔa-tə-kəʔ-y̓u həʔ ni tə le 5, 67-A 164 165 67-A 132 89 60 19 10 77 67-A 166 4 111 60 19 13 "Oo, g̓eʔ-ʔa tə 5 la lc, y̓aʔ-ni lc," qhe ʔoʔ ve c̓e. (27) qhe-te-le y̓uʔ ʔə tan-tə tan 167 168 39 94 45 169 150 117 48 8 21 9 35 4 170 171 pə ve. (28) 5 cə ʔiʔ a go cə. (29) qhe te ʔə 5 le 5, "c̓-q̚h̓e ʔtf lc" də 5 lc, 123 8 23 172 123 133 25 31 117 34 162 19 13 26 87 45 173 19 s̓u tə p̓oʔ ə ə la lc, y̓u lc, dəʔ-pə a te lc, q̚ d̓o pho e. 22 11 136 142 94 19 174 19 125 175 133 34 19 79 154 14 149 (N) husband / 150 (Punf) topicalizing prt. [11+136+150 means either 'straightaway immediately' or 'this time (as opposed to last time)'] / 151 (Clf) group-classifier / 152 (V) chase after; chase in order to seize [cf. 157, 174] / 153 (V) kill / 154 (V) flee; run away / 155 (V) pull, drag; (ʔV) do vigorously / 156 intonational variant of 19 [cf. note 34 of Translation] / 157 (V) chase; drive (as a hunted animal) [cf. 152] / 158 (V) overtake; catch up with / 159 (Adv) how [159...120 'no matter how; however'] / 160 (N) honey ["bee-juice": cf. 61] / 161 (V) dye; daub / 162 (Pv) prt. indicating prerequisite action; inchoative; do first or as a prelude to a following action / 163 (N) cotton-storage building / 164 (N) large storage basket / 165 (M_pfx) unprefixed form of 131: inside / 166 (N) joss-stick temple [building with an altar for burning incense to ʔeʔ-ʔa (cf. 168)] / 167 (Inte: oh! / 168 (N) God; Great Spirit / 169 (N_time) today / 170 (N_deverb) an offering [cf. 115] / 171 (V) make an offering (religious) / 172 (V) feed; give to eat [causative of cə 'eat' (31)] / 173 (V) think / 174 (V) take; seize, grab [cf. 152] / 175 (B_v) to death [125+175: 'beat to death'; 104+175 (sent. 41) 'crush to death']. VI (30) q̚ d̓o g̓aʔ-y̓u lc, əə, tə p̓oʔ lc q̚ d̓o̰=g̓aʔ=q̚ d̓o̰ g̓aʔ-y̓u lc, n̓i q̚ d̓o̰ lc 3, te lc 79 152 19 41 11 136 150 79 157 79 152 19 176 177 19 13 68 ə lc 5, ə̰-phəʔ g̓aʔ-be, n̓i ʔə̰-c̓ the-č te ə̰ pi lc, "ʔaʔ, c̓-q̚h̓e q̚ d̓aʔ-y̓u 162 19 13 178 179 176 34 60 123 19 41 26 181 152 q̚d̓aʔ mə heʔ ə 13. chəʔ kəʔ mə nḭ-ʔgəc kəʔ tə̰ p̓o ə 13, q̚ d̓o̰ cə. (31) qhe te ə lc 182 43 141 36 45 183 184 185 120 39 36 45 48 21 117 34 60 19 5 ə̰ d̓o̰ e cə. 13 55 14 21 176 (N) penis [176+68 'expose the penis to view; pull out one's penis'] / 177 (V) extract through a narrow opening [176+177 'retract the foreskin'] / 178 (N) leaves 179 (V) scratch together and cover with [also g̓aʔ-be (cf. 73)] / 180 (Elab ADV) all stiff and straight [cf. 130] / 181 (M_pfx) trail; tracks; the wake of smn / 182 (N) way; path [either concrete or abstract] / 183 (Ns-d) here / 184 (P_v) locative prt., used esp. with Ns-d's / 185 (N) kind of ground mushroom with red cap.
(32) qêp e qhê-nâ tê pêpê, ê-qhê chi tê pêpê qêp e tê pêpê, qêp yêp yêp ve ëhî 55 14 101 11 136 26 51 11 136 79 55 14 11 136 79 152 8 51
êpê, ê-qhê chi ve 5, êhê-cê 3-pêlê 7 têpê gâpê ve cê. (33) êhê-cê=1êpê 5 têpê 13 26 51 8 13 186 187 188 67-A-8 189 190 8 21
186 188 67-A 189

186 (N) tree / 187 (N) clump / 188 (N) sthg big / 189 (V) climb; ascend / 190 gâ (V) 'arrive at, reach'; (Vê) succeed in doing [gâ-e is a fusion of this verb with e (P) 14; cf. gê-pê 191] / 191 (Vê) prob. an assimilated (even more fused) variant of gê-e, meaning 'vigorous or rapid execution of an action'; alternatively gê-pê may have developed from gê (V adj) 'fast' / 192 (V) chop at; chop down / 193 (Ns) down there / 194 (Pn) locative prt. / 195 (N) river / 196 (Pn) really, indeed [related to cê (P Quot) 'quotation-marker']; VERB+134+195+34: 'try to VERB' / 197 (N) water / 198 (V) swim / 199 (V) die / 200 (Ns) up there / 201 (N) cliff; rock-face / 202 (AE) to smitherens; all smashed up / 203 (V) lean against / 204 (N) cave ("rock-hollow") [cf. 124, 205].

(34) qhe te ëhê le 5, ê-qhê chi ve nêhê-qhê lêpê le 5, ëhê a-më ëhê mëpê 117 34 162 19 13 26 51 77 200 205 132 14 19 13 22 206 155 207
ku ve. (35) qhê-qhe te kâpê mëpê ka më gâ. (36) yêpê ëhê-qhe phê têpê e ve cê -- 93 8 159 34 120 207 93 43 190 35 208 209 210 39 14 8 21
cê 3-qhe chê a le. [(37) qhe te ëhê le 5, va-te te ke a ëhê ve cê.] (38) ëhê-tê jôpêb 211 131 83 60 19 13 117 34 162 19 13 212 34 93 60 8 21 213 214

Êhê-tê cho-cho le, jûpê ka ve cê. / (39) ê-qhê chi 5 qhê qêpê le, ëhê-tê ëhê mëpê le 213 215 19 214 93 8 21 26 51 13 91 254 19 10 213 4 217

pt a le, ndûû-û ëhê le, "âa, ê-qhê chi qhe têpê 3 le 5. ëhê_têpê, qêpê le, va-te 123 133 19 218 219 19 41 26 51 91 39 36 45 199 36 48 19 212
tê a le 5, qêpê e cê. 34 60 19 13 55 14 21

205 (N) hole in the rocks; cave [cf. 204, 165] / 206 (N) fire / 207 (V) blow / 208 (N) shirt / 209 (V) strip off, remove (as clothing) / 210 (V) fan / 211 (Ns) way over there; way in there / 212 (N) falling-log trap / 213 (N) stick [cf. 186] / 214 (V) stab; pierce; poke with sharp object / 215 (V) hack off; chop off [here reduplicated]; 216 (V) expel; send back [91+216 'defecate'; same as 91+92] / 217 (V) smear onto; stick sthg onto / 218 (V) stink [see note 72 to Translation] / 219 (Pn) prt, expressing regret at the state of affairs [perhaps ult related to 162].
(40) qhe-te-le 5, ç-ghec chi á-thâ thâp -- á-thâ-á-yê pô a le, môp pf qha
9 13 26 51 220 4 221 222 133 19 207 123 223
1c-ê-ê, yâ-mî=hâ nî mà më-ê=Ç-nô ca ni gê a le 3, ç-ghec chi á-thâ-á-yê môp
19 224 225 52 226 227 111 228 133 19 13 26 51 221 207
khô kâ e le, "è-ghec ë, nâ-hê=à a-c ë lôp cê a," gôp ve cê. (41) qhe-te-le 3,
229 230 14 19 26 146 231 232 59 133 48 8 21
"3-chi, mà dâp ve te qê-15 lôp 1a-?,?," gôp a le 5, mà dâp ve te qê-15 1ôp la
233 43 234 8 196 235 132 94 112 48 133 19 13 43 234 8 196 235 132 94
le 5, tê-pê ëê cê. (42) qhe-te-le ç-ghec chi ve 5 qêp phô tôp e gêp-e ve
19 13 104 175 219 21 9 26 51 77 13 79 154 34 14 191 8
cê, tê pêp. 21 11 136

220 (N) bamboo jesharp / 221 (Elab) id. [see note 75 to Translation] / 222 (V)
carry [220/221+222: 'take up the jesharp (for courting)'] / 223 (Pv) enlivening
prt. / 224 (N) nubile girl / 225 (Num) two / 226 (Ntime) morning / 227 (V) look
for, seek; (V) go and do / 228 (V) visit; (Vv) do for pleasure, do for the fun
of it / 229 (N) sound; noise; voice / 230 (V) hear / 231 (Npron) the two of us
[1st person dual] / 232 (Adv) a little; polite request-softener / 233 (Demonstrative)
Interj look here!; well now! [cf. 51] / 234 (Vadj) be pretty; be good /
235 (Ntime;Adv) first.

X

(43) te-le-ê te pêp qêp yàp-ya yàp=ya le, yàp-mî ëë cê. (44) yàp-mî ëë
236 11 136 79 152 152 19 157 158 219 21 157 158 219
le 5, 5-qâ qhe-çho 5 phe-tI á le, yàp-ëc pî cê. (45) qhe-qo 5 mëp=phû hê
19 13 237 109 67-A 238 60 19 239 123 21 240 13 241 242
mûp le hâ-pî=de yàp-ëc pî qo, "âlôô, âlôô, âlôô," gôp cê. (46) qhe-te-qo 8ô-bû dé
243 19 244 123 25 245 245 245 48 21 246 247
5 yàp-ëc pî a qo 5 --ëe--ëe-bû=de 5 yàp-ëc yàp-ëc pî a qo 5, "âlôô,
247 67-A 239 123 133 25 13 248 247 67-A 239 123 133 25 13 245
âlôô, âlôô," gôp cê. (47) hâ-pî=de yàp-ëc pî a qo, "qà-câ?, qà-câ?, qà-câ?,
245 245 48 21 244 239 123 133 25 250 250 250
qhe qôp ve cê. (48) qhe-te-le 5 mà ëê.
117 48 8 21 9 13 43 199

236 (Conj) then; thereupon [same as qhe-te-le 9; here pronounced with drawnal
intonation on le] / 237 (N) water-buffalo / 238 (V) tether to; tie to [cf. 66] /
239 (V) drag along; pull roughly ("drag-lead") / 240 (Conj) then; at that point
[same as 246, 9, 9-A] / 241 (N) face / 242 (Mpf) underneath; bottom part /
243 (V) bend downward [242+243: 'turn upside down'] / 244 (N) rocky ground; expance
of rocks / 245 (Interj) ouch!; alas!; oy, oy, oy! / 246 (Conj) then; at that point
[same as 9, 9-A, 240] / 247 (N) grassy ground/ 248 (Interj) er...; uh...; I mean...
[self-correcting syllable] / 249 (V) lead by driving [cf. 157 and 239] / 250 (Interj)
serves you right!; nyah, nyahah!
XI

(49) qē-tō e gā?-e wē ve lē 3, tē pō? lē qē? wā?-yē ve. (50) su wū gā 79 39 14 191 219 8 19 13 11 136 150 79 152 8 22 174 98

wē lē 3, 3-o, 1-kā? cō-iō 3-hō 3 phē-chē tā ve cē. (51) phē-chē tā lē 3, 162 19 13 251 197 252 188 253 67 9 66 30 5 21 66 60 19 13

gē te wē lē, tā-kā=pā tē mō=lo lā cē. (52) gē-te-lē "e=qēhē 3, nō ã-thō-ma 117 34 162 19 254 11 99 188 255 21 9 66 246 256 113


gō? cē, hēp-pā ō tē mō āp. (53) "ā=-hā kā= mē gā, 3=qēhē 3, 48 21 3 10 11 99 4 41 263 120 260 264 26 146 146 48 19 13

"yē tō? a" gō? pē cē ma nē.

174 39 133 48 123 21 265 262

(54) wū tō? pē a lē, tō? gā wē cē. (55) 3=qēhē 3-ve -- gē-te-lē, tā-kā=pā 174 39 123 133 19 39 190 219 21 26 27 9 254

ō ve tē mō 3, 3= fō mō hō gha?= wā? ā ve, tā-kā te lā ve. (56) mē=-śi nā pā 10 77 11 99 13 266 267 266 147 157 60 8 269 3 255 8 257 258 108
dē-dē cē wē lē, phē lē 3, 3= hō 3 cō hō 3-kā? šā mē ve te lē, tō?=chē? 270 271 19 272 19 13 10 253 67 3 252 242 197 259 260 8 34 19 273
cē a lē wē pā 3, tā-kā=pā ō tē mō ve phū ši 3=qēhē 3 gā ve ve cē.

274 133 19 199 100 19 13 254 10 11 99 77 275 276 277 26 26 26 18 8 21

251 (Nsw) way over there [intonational variant of 10] / 252 (N) bridge / 253 (Nspat) underpart; bottom [prefixed form of 242] / 254 (N) merchant; trader / 255 (V) come [related to la (PV) 94] / 256 (Npron) you [singular] / 257 eyes / 258 (V) hurt; be sore / 259 (N) air, breeze, vapor; breath; vital force, spirit, energy / 260 (V) pass air noisily [259+260: 'imbibe the essence'; cf. note 94 to Translation] / 261 (Puf) exclamatory prt. / 262 (Puf) exclamatory prt. / 263 (Npron) we [plural] (cf. 42, 231, 46) / 264 (PV) want; desire [desiderative prt.] / 265 (Puf) exclamatory prt. / 266 (N) mule / 267 (N) horse / 268 (N) elephant / 269 (N) trade / 270 (Nsw) all; the whole group of / 271 (V) happen to be the case [another sense of 44] / 272 (V) tie up [cf. the compounds 66, 238] / 273 (V) cut through [1styll. tō? 'cut' is an unrelated homophone of 39] / 274 (V) fall from a height; (PV) do so sthg falls / 275 (N) things; property / 276 (N) silver / 277 (N) gold [276 and 277 also form a more collocated expression (122) meaning 'wealth (of all kinds)'].

XII

(57) gē-te-lē gō? e lē 3, ā=qāhī qō? gō? e ve te yā thā, "ōo, 3=qēhē, 9 55 14 19 13 86 79 55 14 15 11 32 2 167 26

nā qhā=qē te yā le. yā-hā nō 3= wē tē te kā= nō phuʃi 3 chi ma gā ve 256 159 34 98 116 263 256 4 199 115 34 8 120 256 122 51 278 98 8

qhā=qē te le," gō? lē 3, "āa, 1-kā? šā mē lē gā ve yō-go. nō-hā te ō lā le" 159 34 116 48 19 13 41 197 259 260 19 98 279 46 34 60 80 19
qöč cē. (58) qhe-te-le 5, "'aa, yā-hē kāp hāp gā', qöq 1e 5, te šī vā le 5, 48 21
9 13 41 263 120 119 246 48 19 13 34 280 18 19 13

0 kāp ho lo qhā-jū-1u hē-č 1-mū=qō tē ĝā tē mā pū cē 1e 5, o-ve hā 5
10 184 281 194 282 283 284 11 75 11 52 222 59 19 13 27 242

phē-chī le 5, chā lōp čhe pā qhō-ŋ5, čo 1-kāp qho 5 lōp e ve cē.
66 19 13 16 132 83 100 101 211 197 165 67-A 132 14 8 21

(59) tē pō 1e 1-kāp cú u a le, phē-ŋ5 a-lā cē. (60) qhe-te-le 5, o
11 136 150 197 285 123 133 19 286 287 21
9 13 10

a-pū=qu tē mā mā lōp e le, "čō, čō, čō ni-. šu ši bē dā? ve," qō q a
288 11 52 43 132 14 19 211 211 211 111 112 22 277 289 290 8 48 133

le 5, yō kāp pō 1o le, tā-čhep a le, tē qhāp ma ši e pā le 5,
19 13 35 120 38 132 14 19 273 133 19 11 147 278 199 14 100 19 13

chā tē qhāp ve yā-mī 5 yō tī ĝa ve cē.
16 11 147 77 291 13 35 87 98 8 21

(278) Next as much as; to the amount of / 279 (Puf) emphatic variant of yō 56 / 280 (V) lead to a place [here concatenated with a semantically empty te 'do' (34)]

281 (Pn) variant of locative 5 67-A / 282 (N) forehead-basket / 283 (Next) as big as; the size of [hē is combined here with č, a subordinating prt. that also occurs in other kinds of stative adverbials (cf. 130, 180)] / 284 (N) large-mouthed pickling jug / 285 (V) sink / 286 (V) struggle; writhe; flail around / 287 (Pv) enlivening prt. [1st element related to qha 223] / 288 (N) old codger; gramps [slightly pejorative, reinforced by choice of mā (general classifier) instead of ĝa 75] / 289 (V) contend for; vie / 290 (Pv) mutual or reciprocal action / 291 (N) females; girls; women [near synonym of 74].
III. Annotated translation.

I

(1) Once upon a time the Lahu were fighting a war with the Chinese.1 (2) Well, on a certain morning, the morning for going off to war, people were selected2 and they went off. (3) [But] while the others had made rice-packets3 for themselves, this fellow ṭ-qhê4 had wrapped up a sparse-feathered little chicken5 to take with him, and on the road, when they ate, when it was time to eat, he unwrapped it and made as if to eat his meal. (4) As he unwrapped it and the little chick hopped right out, he said, "Oh, dear, I mustn't go [with you]! You all go [on ahead without me]! As for me, since I've seen this omen,6 I'm going home. I can't possibly fight a war now. See you guys later!"7 (5) And so the others let him go back.8

1 This story, although recorded in Northern Thailand in 1965, dates from the faraway time when the ancestors of these Thailand Lahu were living in close contact with the Chinese. The Chinese by no means always came out ahead in conflicts with the once fierce Loloish tribes of Yunnan, and it was common for some Lolo groups to keep Chinese war-prisoners as slaves. See Lin Yueh-hua, The Lolo of Liang-shan, HRAF Press (1961). Most of the Lahu people still live in China.

2 The Lahu now in Thailand are all quite recent immigrants from Shan State in Burma, where they have been living for centuries as they slowly filtered southward from their ancestral homeland on the Yunnan-Tibet border. It is likely that it was the Shan who did the conscripting of recruits for military service in skirmishes against the Chinese. There are still many more Lahu living in Shan State than in Thailand. (The Shan are a Tai people.)

3 The usual wayfarer's food is a cake of steamed rice wrapped in a banana leaf.

4 This is the Trickster's proper name. (It is sometimes pronounced more like ṭ-qhâi or ṭ-qhàn.) This name is clearly non-Lahu in origin, though its etymology is obscure. ṭ- is a common prefix to Shan men's names. Henceforth we translate ṭ-qhê as 'Trickster.'

5 ṭâ=qû-nî is "a kind of tailless chicken without breast feathers," literally "naked chicken" (qû-nî 'something naked'). It is possible that there is some pun intended here with nî 'penis,' though the nî of qû-nî really means 'red' [see note 52].

6 According to traditional Lahu belief, anything unusual or scary that happens on a journey (e.g. seeing a dead body) is taken as an evil omen, and as a persuasive reason to go back home.

7 The expression qû a ʂâ, literally "I shall go back," is a common Lahu formula for leavetakings.

8 On the tape Sentence 5 appears right after You all go. This was felt to be a clumsy ordering both by the story-teller himself and by other Lahu who listened to the tape, a feeling which is reinforced by the fact that the first clause of the first sentence in Section II recapitulates Sentence 5 in the normal "chaining" way.

II

(6) Then, when they had let him go back, he ripped open a bumblebee's nest,9 scooped out some crabs,10 and tied them so they dangled from a bamboo-sheath,11 and
placed this [all] outside the house [of a certain woman]. (7) Then when night fell and [the bees went] bzz-bzz-bzz and [the crab] went scratching teh-teh against the bamboo-tube — er, bamboo-sheath, 14 Trickster said to the woman, "Aha, the spirits of your husbands 15 have come back to you! Don't stay here any more! It's too scary!"

(8) So they all went troop ing over to the Trickster's house to sleep.

9 pč=γǔ-li 'bumblebees' live in holes in rotting trees, one insect per hole. It is not specified how many bees the Trickster took. He also must have put the bee(s) in some kind of container, though the narrator does not bother to say this.

10 From a body of water nearby. Again the narrator does not say how many crabs were fished out.

11 vā=lē-qō? 'a crinkly covering adhering to the surface of young bamboo plants.' The Trickster selected this material for the noise it would make when scratched.

12 mü phā? ve, lit. "the sky is revealed," is the Lahu idiom for night falling. The idea seems to be that only at night is the sky revealed for what it really is, a blu star-studded expanse. phā? is the same verb as 'unwrap' [Section I].

13 Bees go vē-vē-vē in Lahu, while crabs go tē?-tē? when they scratch.

14 The narrator momentarily misspoke himself, saying first vā=dē-qō 'tube of bamboo' instead of vā=lē-qō?.

15 The Trickster is now talking to all the jittery women of the village, who have evidently all come running out of their houses. He uses the expression nš-hš ʒ-pā 'your (pl.) husbands.' ʒ-pā, lit. 'a male,' is a slightly vulgar or insulting term for 'husband,' since the mot juste is ž-phā.

III

(9) Then that 16 Trickster said, "Oh, come now, don't sleep at my house. Your kids will shit all over everything." (10) So then they swore to him, saying, "Oh, we won't let them shit. We guarantee 17 it!" and they were allowed to sleep at Trickster's house. (11) Then, after the bunch of women fell asleep, the Trickster thoroughly mashed up some shitbeans, 18 squeezed [the paste] into balls, 19 and smeared it on the rear ends of all the children who were there.

(12) When dawn broke he said, "Just look at the way your kids have crapped up my whole house! 20 What will you give me as compensation?" 21 and they said, "Oh, any compensation at all! Whatever you want to take, take!," but when they offered him money he wouldn't take it. (13) No matter what they offered, he wouldn't take it.

16 ŋ-ŋhē ŋ-ve, lit. "that Trickster." The demonstrative ŋ-ve functions as an anaphoric marker in this narrative: 'the Trickster we have been talking about, the Trickster already mentioned.' To avoid heaviness in the English, this is usually simply translated with the definite article, 'the Trickster' [as in Sentence 11]. For the anaphoric use of chi 'this,' see Note 25.

17 The women use the rather high-flown loanword láʔ-ʔe 'guarantee' (cf. Thai rábrčoŋ), which adds to the comic effect.
18 nəʔ-gəʔ, lit. "shit-beans," are fermented soybeans made into paste or cakes and often eaten fried with vegetables and ginger. The name arises from its dark brown color, its consistency, and its pungent odor. This is also called nəʔ-kə, lit. "rotten-beans," which is also the literal meaning of its Burmese name pè-pou? (written Burmese p̤āi-p̤ṳ).

19 chə? 'to crumple up, make into a ball.'

20 qəʔ o kə, lit. "shit into." The verb kə 'insert' is sometimes used as an auxiliary verb to indicate thorough, penetrating action. The phrase 'my whole house' is an attempt to render this idea in English.

21 səj (or əj) 'pay compensation' is another legalistic loanword from Tai (cf. Siamese cāaj 'pay').

IV-a

(14) Then the Trickster said to the bunch of women, "Well, go and beat on the Hollow A-yaw Tree, and listen [to what it tells you]." (15) In order to go beat on that Hollow A-yaw Tree-oracle, he made the women take the long way around. (16) The Trickster himself went by the straight road, and got inside of the Hollow A-yaw, and the women tried beating on the outside, going thump-thump, saying, "What sort of compensation shall we give to Trickster?" (17) And the Trickster said, "Ah, give him compensation, give him compensation!" (18) So they went back home again. (19) The Trickster also ran back after the women as fast as he could, [so he was] sitting in his house [when they got there], and said, "Well, what did it say to you?" and they said, "Well, all it said was, 'Give compensation to Trickster!'"

22 a-yə=qə 'hollow (qə) a-yaw tree.' The a-yə (either Lagerstroemia cylindrica or L. macrocarpa) is one of the four 'master trees' (ʃəʔ=ʃə-mə) of Lahu tradition. It is a very tall, straight tree, believed especially apt to be hit by lightning.

23 The whole complex verbal idea, 'beat on and listen to what it says' is conveyed by the concise two-verb concatenation əʔ na 'beat' + 'listen.' It could equally well be translated 'beat on and ask it [a question],' since the verb na, like Japanese kiku, can mean either 'ask' or 'listen to,' according to context. (When it means 'ask' it usually appears in the compound na-ni.) Instead of repeating 'listen' in the translation of Sentence 15, the phrase is rendered there as 'beat on ... oracle.'

24 yaʔ-gə ɡəʔ kə, lit. "a place where the road curves."

25 ə-gəʔ chi, lit. "this Trickster," here translated 'the Trickster himself' for contrast with the women. The determiner chi 'this' and the demonstrative ə-ve 'that' (see Note 16) are sometimes interchangeable as anaphoric markers, and are usually both translated simply as 'the.' (The narrator tends to alternate them for variety. He used ə-ve in Sentences 14 and 17, but chi in Sentences 16 and 19.)

26 ɡəʔ-ɡə or ɡəʔ-gə?

27 No doubt in a disguised "oracular" voice, though the story-teller made no effort to reproduce this in his narration.
(20) "Well, then," he said, "unless you beat on it once more, you won't know [what to do]," so again they [went to] beat on it and ask it [a question] 28 -- the Trickster had quickly gotten inside of it again -- and the women in a body 29 beat on it, thump-thump, and it said, "Oh, give him cunt, give him cunt!" 30

(21) At this the bunch of women ran back home, and the Trickster also ran back fast, and sitting in his house working this time 31 with strips of rattan he said, "Well, what did it say? What did it tell you?" and they said, "Well, Trickster -- it just said, 'Give him cunt, give him cunt!'"

(22) Whereupon Trickster proceeded to fuck 32 every single woman in the village, one after the other. 33

28 Or 'beat on it and listen [to what it said].' See Note 23.
29 tê mō te Ʌ, lit. "making a group."
30 cha 'cunt, vagina, female pudenda.' The Lahu language has no euphemisms for human sexual organs or excretory functions. cha (or cha-pê?), like nī or nī-qhê? 'cock, penis, male genitalia,' is plain-spoken, neither medical, circumlocutory, nor vulgar.
31 'This time' renders the Lahu auxiliary verb qhê? 'do again, do in turn, do as another in a series of actions.'
32 pâ? 'copulate, have intercourse with, fuck.' See Note 30.
33 yâ-mâ=ma tê qhê?-qhê? ve: the meaning 'every one in the village' is conveyed by the reduplication of qhê? 'village.' The idea 'one after the other' is provided by the auxiliary verb phê? 'perform an action as one of a group; perform several similar actions.' As a main verb, phê? means 'to pile up, make a heap.'

V

(23) Well, when all their husbands came back [from the war], they said, "Oh, Trickster did this and that to us! After you all were gone, Trickster fucked us!," so straightaway, as soon as all the husbands were back, they chased after Trickster trying to kill him, and he ran away. (24) He ran away and they chased him and chased him, 34 but they couldn't catch him. (25) No matter how they chased him they couldn't catch him. (26) Unsuccessful once again, 35 they came back home, while this Trickster, this guy, 36 he scooped out some honey 37 and smeared himself with it, 38 and then 39 he went and lay down inside 40 a storage-basket 41 in a cotton-house, 42 then when they saw him in the joss-stick temple 43 they said, "Oh, the god has appeared to us today!" 44 (27) So they made offerings to him. 45 (28) When they gave him the food he ate it. (29) When he did this, 46 they thought 'It's only the Trickster!,' realizing 47 it all of a sudden, so they grabbed him and tried to beat him to death, but 48 again he ran away.

34 The prolongation of the action is conveyed in the original by an exaggerated drawling intonation on the clause-concatenating particle Ʌ.
35 tē p̂aʔ mâ ʔa tā ʔe: lit. "once again not having gotten him."

36 The story-teller uses a succession of two topic noun-phrases in apposition, both to establish sufficient contrast with the ineffectual actions of the husbands, and to give himself a bit of breathing space before launching into the rapid series of clauses which is to follow in the same sentence.

37 Presumably from a nearby honey-tree. The economy of detail the story-teller permits himself is possible because his whole audience (except the poor recording linguist) had already heard the story many times before.

38 All these English words are necessary to translate the three-verb concatenation, gō 'perform vigorous action' + khâ? 'scoop' + hō 'dye': pē-ʔ̄a gō khâ? hō ʔe, lit. "honey-VIG.ACT.-scoop-daub-MORE TO FOLLOW."

39 Instead of 'and then,' the phrase qhe te ʔa ʔe 3 could be translated 'having done this.' The presence of the verb-particle ʔa 'prerequisite action' makes this expression 'verbier' than the lexicalized concatenative conjunction qhe-te-ʔe which occurs so often in this text. See Linguistic Analysis, Section D.

40 the-gō qho 3 ʔaʔ ʔa tā ʔe: lit. "storage-basket + interior + LOCATIVE + enter + lie down + DURATIVE + MORE-TO-FOLLOW."

41 the-gō or phc-gō 'a huge basket, often taller than a man and several feet in diameter, used for storing paddy or other harvested crops.'

42 ʔa-tāʔ=ʔe "an outbuilding where cotton was stored." The cotton sticking to the honey gave the Trickster a sort of tarred-and-feathered appearance, so that he looked like something 'out of this world.'

43 ʔa-tū=kʔ=ʔe (or ʔa-tū=kʔ or ʔa-tū=ʔe): lit. "incense-burn-place-house," a building where there was an altar for burning incense-sticks. Lahu 'animists' burn incense and candles to honor the supreme supernatural ȳa-ʔa [see Note 44, and the works of anthropologist A.R. Walker], the last syllable of whose name seems to be related to the morpheme ʔa 'joss-stick, incense-stick.' The Pigdin English word joss, meaning 'idol, cult-image,' itself derives ultimately from Portuguese deos 'god.'

44 ȳa-ʔa, here translated 'the god,' is the Great Spirit of Lahu animist religion, conceived of as an incorporeal and abstract being far above the nature spirits (e.g. Mountain-Spirit, Water-Spirit, Rainbow-Spirit, etc.), who are rather stupid and often malevolent. ȳa-ʔa has his own priests, who enjoy higher status in the community than the 'spirit-doctors' who deal with the nə or nature-spirits.

45 tān-tū tān p̂e ve: Lahu has a cognate-object construction here which would be too heavy in literal English translation ("they offered him offerings"). tān is a loan-word from Shan, which in turn borrowed the word from Burmese.

46 A real god is supposed to inhale merely the 'breath' or essence (ʔa, ʔ̄a-ʔa) of a food-offering, so Trickster is revealed as a non-divine being. This incident is reversed symbolically at the end of the story, where Trickster claims to have made his fortune by 'inhaling the air' or 'imbibing the essence' -- thus indirectly proclaiming himself to be a god. See Section XII, below.

47 ʔa la ʔe: lit. "coming to know," i.e. "realizing." The verb-particle la 'enter a state' is related to the full verb là 'come."

48 'But' here translates the concatenative particle ʔe 'MORE-TO-FOLLOW,' which serves to indicate that the preceding clause is not the last in the sentence. It is usually translated 'and,' though occasionally we render it by a different conjunction (so, but, etc.) or by a participial construction. Any number of ʔe may occur in a Lahu sentence or narrative without the hearer experiencing a feeling of repetitiveness. The same is not true of English and, which gives a tedious, babyish quality to a narrative if used between every clause. [See Linguistic Analysis, Section E.]
(30) Again they chased him, and oh, this time as they were chasing and chasing him, he pulled out his penis and skinned back his foreskin, and scratched together some leaves to cover himself, and made his penis all stiff and straight, and they said, "Well, Trickster's trail has petered out now! And here's a red Phalloides mushroom that has sprouted." (31) After this they went home.

49 nǐ qè ve 'retract the foreskin.' qè means 'to extract through a narrow opening (It is also used, e.g. for removing mucus from the nose.)

50 So that only his glans protruded through the covering of leaves. (It is to be noted that our word glans itself is a metaphorical extension of a plant-name, 'acorn'.)

51 The reader will perhaps forgive this pun. The literal meaning of this sentence is "There is no longer any way to chase after Trickster's trail."

52 mù=ní-ýo or mù=ní-ýwe 'a kind of tasty ground mushroom with a red cap (white underneath) that resembles a glans penis.' The second syllable ní means 'red,' but recalls the homophonous (except for tone) syllable ní 'penis.' mù means 'mushroom' and ýo means 'round.' 'Red phalloides' is a feeble attempt to render this phytonym in English.

VII

(32) After they went home, the Trickster went back again too, and this time when they were chasing him, this guy, this Trickster, he managed to climb up into a big clump of trees. (33) When he had gotten to the top of a big tree, at that point, as they chopped away at it, trying to get it to fall into the river down below, he said, "Oh, in my position, if you would only chop so that I fall into the water down there, I'd be able to swim back out and I wouldn't die. [But] if you chop me so I land on that rocky cliff up there, I'd surely be smashed to smithereens! I would die," and so they chopped it in such a way that its fall was broken by the cliff up there, and he managed to escape into a cave in the rocks.

53 The story-teller uses a double topic NP to give himself a second to think. See Note 36.

54 ñǎʔ-cè ʒ-pu=λó: the narrator amends this to ñǎʔ-cè=λó 'a big tree,' when this clause is "chain-repeated" in the next sentence.

55 tâ? gâ-ę or tâ? gêʔ-e, lit. 'climb' + "arrive," i.e. 'get to the top of, climb to the top.' In the Lahu, this clause is an almost verbatim "chain-repetition" of the last clause of the previous sentence, but an exact repetition would be tedious in English: "...he got to the top of a big clump of trees. When he got to the top of a big tree..." This is another example of the truism that one language's cohesive devices may be too 'gummy' for another language. See Note 48.

56 This translates the Lahu 'filler' qhe te le ʒ.

57 This renders nà lè, lit. "as for me," a strongly topicalized first person pronoun. See Note 59.

58 This sentence is translated with conditional auxiliaries, because it sounds somewhat better than the more literal: "If you chop and I fall into the water down there, I'll be able to swim back out and won't die." The only marker of
conditionality in the Lahu is the particle go 'if; when' at the end of the first clause.

59 The verb thu 'chop down' is here construed with a personal direct object, though it is much more usual to have 'tree' as its object. This is preserved in the translation, and in fact reinforces the symbolic psychosexual meaning of the chopping -- i.e. an attempt at castration of the potent by the impotent.

60 nêʔ-kâʔ qay ve 'go smash, get smashed to smithereens.' nêʔ-kâʔ is one of a class of morphemes that forms vivid adverbial expressions with the verb qay 'go,' much like English 'go kaputt,' 'go blooey,' etc. The 'surely' in the translation is motivated by the strongly topicalized nà lê, which appears in this sentence too [see Note 57].

61 nê pê: lit. "lean against" + "give," i.e. 'cause to lean against, cause to be propped up on.'

62 'Managed to escape into' is conveyed by a string of three Lahu verbs: phâ 'flee' + lôʔ 'enter' + gâ-e 'arrive at [one's goal].' The latter morpheme has developed an assimilated fusional variant (gêʔ-e) with a more abstract meaning, 'vigorous execution of an action.' See Note 55.

VIII

(34) Then, when the Trickster had gone into the cave up there, the others blew smoke 63 inside with all their might.64 (35) But try as they would,65 they couldn't get it to blow inside.66 (36) He had taken off his shirt and was fanning it out again67 -- from where he was, inside there.68 [(37) After this, they made a falling-log trap for him to get caught in.69]70 (38) They poked in sticks71 -- they hacked off some sticks and poked them inside. (39) So the Trickster took a shit and smeared it on the sticks, and it sta-a-nk72 like hell, and they said, "Aha, the Trickster's shit is coming out of him now!73 He's dead!," and they set a falling-log trap74 and went back home.

63 à-mî 'fire.' The Lahu says 'blew fire inside,' though this must be translated as 'smoke' for clarity in English. Burning brush at the mouth of a cave is a common method for smoking animals out, or of asphyxiating them so they can be removed after they die.

64 gê mâʔ kâ is a three-verb concatenation meaning literally "drag-blow-insert." gê 'drag' here functions simply to make the verbal action more vivid, and is rendered as 'with all their might.'

65 qhâ-ghe te kâʔ?: lit. "whatever they did.'

66 mâʔ kâ mâ gâ: lit. "blow-insert-not-reach." gâ 'reach, arrive' is a 'potential complement,' here negated by mâ, that expresses the non-successful outcome of the verbal action mâʔ kâ 'blow into.'

67 This sequence of actions is expressed by a concise sequence of three Lahu verbs, qêʔ phâ têʔ?: 'take off' (this is preceded by its object à-pôʔ 'shirt') + 'fan' + 'emerge, do outwards.'

68 This last clause is stuck onto the end of the sentence as an afterthought, and is marked as such by the concatenative particle lê at the end, which normally occurs only in non-final position.

69 va-tê te kâ: lit. "falling-log trap + make + insert." Since the trap was set up outside the cave, kâ does not have its literal meaning 'insert' here, but its
more abstract meaning of 'in such a way that the verbal action penetrates its goal. See Note 20.

70 This whole sentence was uttered prematurely by the narrator, who had forgotten momentarily to recount the episode of the sticks. He supplies the falling-log trap incident in its proper place below, at the end of Sentence 39.

71 Slightly rattled by his error, the story-teller makes a false start in this sentence also, uttering the clause about poking the sticks before the one about hacking them off the trees they came from. He immediately corrects himself. (This story was told at high speed, in 6 minutes and 20 seconds, and it is not surprising that the narrator made a mistake or two. In general it is told extremely well, with great economy of detail, so that the pace never flags.)

72 The verb ṇù 'stink' is pronounced with exaggerated drawled intonation. See Note 34.

73 è-qhê chi qhê tê? ē lâ: qhê tê? 'shit emerges.' The tape is not perfectly clear at this point, and it is possible that it should be transcribed qhê tê 'shit is crushed (out).'

74 va-tê 'falling-log trap': a complicated and delicately contrived kind of trap, which the animal springs by stepping on a board which instantaneously activates a series of rods, the last of which releases a heavy log. The husbands, although they believe Trickster to be dead, leave this trap at the mouth of the cave as a precautionary measure.

IX

(40) After this, the Trickster took up his jewsharp — his jawarp,75 and blew on it with gusto,76 and early the next morning two young girls77 came to have a look,78 and when they heard the sound of the Trickster playing the jawarp, they said, "Yoo-hoo,79 Trickster, please let the two of us come in!"80 (41) Then he said, "Well, then, let the one who is truly uglier come in first," and when the one who was truly uglier came in first, she was crushed to death.81 (42) Thereupon the Trickster managed to escape outside once more.82

75 á-thê 'jewsharp': a pair of supple bamboo strips with thin reeds and notes a fourth apart, which the player blows on while flicking the ends up and down. The two notes are alternated and iterated with considerable rhythmic complexity, and the instrument is used mostly in courtship. The story-teller corrects the simple word á-thê to the more formal compound word á-thê-á-yê (here rendered by the euphemism 'jawarp'). Technically, á-yê refers to a slightly different kind of instrument with strips tuned an octave apart. á-thê-á-yê sometimes means 'jawsharps of both kinds,' but here it is simply a more sonorous synonym of á-thê.

76 'With gusto' translates the emphatic particle qha, as well as the drawled intonation on the following concatenative particle lê.

77 yâ-mâ-hâ 'girl of marriageable age, nubile young woman.' The Trickster had so far confined his relationships to married women.

78 ca ni gê 'come to look for the fun of it.' It is not entirely clear whether the girls came simply out of idle curiosity to view Trickster's 'remains' (before having heard the music), or because they were entranced by the music. The latter interpretation seems more likely.

79 'Yoo-hoo' was chosen to render the Lahu vocative particle ó, since its 'Blondie-and-Dagwood' quality suggests the empty-headedness the girls display.
The girls had evidently learned of Trickster's amatory prowess from their mothers and were eager to see for themselves.

It is hard to understand the girls' docile stupidity here. From our point of view it should have been more effective for Trickster to have said, "Let the prettiest one of you come in first." Then presumably they would have vied for the honor of being first. One can only conclude that the girls were so much under Trickster's spell that they obeyed him literally, making an objective assessment of who was uglier.

The verbal idea is expressed by a string of four verbs: qɔį 'return, do again' + 주세요 'flee' + ʧɔį 'emerge' + Զաե -manage to do successfully' (or Զաէ -e). See Note 62.

X

(43) Then, again they chased and chased him, and [this time] they caught him.83

(44) When they caught him they tied him to the ass of a water-buffalo, and dragged them along.84

(45) Then they bent his face over downwards and dragged him over a piece of rocky ground, and he said "A-Ło, a-Ło, a-Ło!"85

(46) Then they dragged him over some grassy ground -- uh, they drove him and dragged him along over some grassy ground,86 and he said "A-Ło, a-Ło, a-Ło!" (47) And when they dragged him [again] over the rocks they said, "Serves you right, serves you right, serves you right!"87

(48) [But] he didn't die.

83 The verb-particle  partisan is used after the verb �� -mi 'catch by chasing,' in order to convey a nuance of regret. (The narrator here takes Trickster's point of view.)

84 �� -شدد, lit. "drag-lead." Here �� is used in its literal sense of 'drag,' and not merely as an enlivener of the verbal idea [see Note 64]. It is immaterial whether we take the object to be the buffalo or the Trickster, since they are tied together. (No object is expressed in the Lahu.)

85 ąlōo (or ąlōo, or ałōo) is an interjection expressing pain, grief, surprise, etc.

86 The narrator retracts his original clause by means of the "self-correcting" interjection է, here translated as 'uh.'

87 The interjection ��-çaį is used to gloat at somebody's discomfiture. The story-teller emphasizes Trickster's plight so that the audience can fully enjoy it. He won't be kept down for long. This episode, among its other functions in the story, serves to put Trickster's ultimate complete triumph into higher relief.

XI

(49) Again he managed to get out, and once more they chased after him.

(50) Once they had seized hold of him, they tied him so he hung underneath a big bridge over the water, some distance away.88

(51) After they had left him strung up there, at that point,89 a large group of traders90 came along. (52) And they said, "Hey, Trickster!91 What are you doing there under the bridge?",92 and he said -- to that bunch of Chinese93 -- "Since my eyes are sore, my eyes are 'imbibing the essence!'94

(53) "Well, we would like to imbibe it also, Trickster!" they said, and he said, "Let me loose then!" (54) So they let him loose, and he got free.95
(55) So the Trickster—now that group of traders had been driving their mules, horses, and elephants around to the villages, having come to trade them. (56) Since they all happened to have sore eyes, he tied them up, and as they were trying to "imbibe the essence of the water" under there, under the bridge, he cut them down so they fell in and died, and Trickster got away with all their goods, their silver and their gold.

88 'Some distance away' translates the spatial demonstrative pronoun ḥ 'over there' here pronounced with exaggerated intonation to indicate greater distance.

89 This renders the connective filler ḍhe ƚe ḡe ƚe.

90 As we soon find out, these were Chinese travelling merchants. This provides an interesting symmetry with the beginning of the story, where the men are going off to fight the Chinese. Evidently the confrontation with the Chinese operated at many levels in ancestral Lahund.

91 Note that the traders recognize the Trickster without ever having been introduced to him. Trickster is larger than life and known to everybody. He shares this universal recognizability with Wadinkel, the Trickster figure of the Winnebago Indians (Radin 1956/1973).

92 This could equally well be translated 'Why are you under the bridge?', since the usual Lahu way of saying 'why' means literally "doing what?" (a-thō?̄-ma te [ële]).

93 The phrase 'to that bunch of Chinese' is inserted as an afterthought at the end of the Lahu sentence.

94 ḡa më ve, here translated 'imbibing the essence,' is an expression of key symbolic importance in this story. It does not occur in ordinary speech, and is clearly meant to be pregnant with meaning. ḡa means 'air, breeze, vapor; breath; vital force, spirit, energy, incorporeal essence.' The verb më means 'to pass air noisily through the mouth or nose,' as in the following expressions: ḡy=më ve 'hiccup,' ḡy-më ve 'belch,' qa-më ve 'sing,' tí-śi? më ve 'whistle,' há-më ve 'yawn,' há-thi më ve 'sneeze.' See Section XII.

95 The verb-particle ḡe 'regret' (homophonous with another particle of aspectual meaning, something like 'prerequisite action') is used in this clause, as if the narrator were sorry that Trickster got loose. He is here taking the opposite attitude to the one mentioned above [Note 83]. It should be noted that it is often difficult to tell the two ḡe particles apart in connected narrative. [See Linguistic Analysis Section E.]

96 The narrator, who had started to say what the Trickster did next, backtracks in order to give us some more background information on the traders.

97 Due to the long dusty roads they had to travel. Trickster had alertly noticed that their eyes were red.

XII

(57) After this he went back, and when he had returned to his home again they said, "Oh, Trickster, how did you get [all this]? How did it happen that you got so much silver and gold even though we tried to kill you?," and he said, "Well, I just got it by 'imbibing the essence' of the water! Since it was you all who did this for me..."

98 (58) Then they said, "Oh, we'd like to get it too!," so he led them away, making each man carry with him to that place a pickling-tub as big as a
forehead-basket, and he strung them up there underneath [the bridge], and after the people had gotten inside [their tubs] they entered the water. (59) Immediately he made them sink down into the water, and they thrashed around furiously. (60) Then, since there was one old codger who hadn't gone in, he said to him, "There, there, there, look! The others are fighting with each other over the gold!," so he jumped in too, and [Trickster] cut through [the ropes], and after the whole villageful [of men] had died, he got the women of all the people in the village for himself.

98 With this remark the Trickster is indirectly revealing himself to be a god, for only gods can live off the incorporeal essence of things. This is a symbolic inversion of the incident in Section V, where he was found out not to be a god when he ate the substance of the food-offerings in the temple. See Note 46.

99 nɔ-hi te á lâ lɛ: the particle lâ indicates action that benefits a non-third person (in this case 2nd person benefitting 1st person). Trickster is pretending to be grateful to the men for having strung him up under the bridge.

100 i-mû=qō: 'a large-mouthed vessel made of earth, sand, and cement, used for pickling.'

101 qhâ-jū-lu: 'a deep loosely-woven basket used for transporting water-gourds, carried by a strap around the forehead so that the hands are left free.'

102 Instead of the rather flat clause 'they entered the water,' my chief informant (1965-6) suggested the emendation:  
\[
a-yé-yé phê Iɛ, cø ɪ-kâ qho ɔ lɔ? e çi ve çø
\]
'he slowly (a-yé-yé) released (phê) [the ropes] and made (çi) them enter the water.'

103 'Furiously' translates the emphatic verb-particle a-lâ (sometimes pronounced qha-lâ).
IV. Linguistic analysis: cohesive devices and text-building strategies.

To facilitate discussion, the text has been divided into twelve subparts or "discourse units," following the natural breaks in the unfolding of the plot line of the narrative.¹

A. The Quotative Mood

The sentences of the entire text are numbered consecutively from 1 to 60, with the proviso that all utterances within a single turn of quoted dialogue receive the same number. Thus, in (7) we find a string of three grammatically separate sentences within the same turn:

..."âa, nô-hî ò-pâ ve ò-ha-ku qôp lâ ô më. tâ chê ô më. kôp à më." /
"Aha, the spirits of your husbands have come back to you! Don't stay here any more! It's too scary!"

Similarly, some utterances we number as single units contain sentential material from a succession of two different speakers:

(19) ... "âa, à-thô-p̂-ma qôp lâ le, nô-hî àp̂-ma qôp le, "âa, ò-ghê hàp̂-ma qôp tí qôp lâ pû," qhe qôp ve cê. / ... and [Trickster] said, 'Well, what did it say to you?' and they said, 'Well, all it said was Give compensation to Trickster!'²

The story does in fact include a great deal of quoted dialogue (no fewer than 34 turns of reported speech), which contributes greatly to the lively immediacy of the narrative tone. The only verb available in Lahu for marking quoted material is qôp 'say,' which recurs constantly in the text, but so "automatically" and unobtrusively that it conveys no unpleasant feeling of repetitiveness.³ It may precede the quoted material, follow it, or both.

A more general way of indicating that something is reported at second-hand is the "final unrestricted particle" (Puf) cê.⁴ This particle is not limited to reporto-

¹The fourth unit has been subdivided into IV-a and IV-b, since the same motif (the consultation of the tree-oracle) is repeated twice for dramatic effect.

²The second turn in this particular example contains a quote within a quote (the innermost one being underlined).

³It appears, e.g., four times in the passage from (19) just cited. In English also, many good writers and talkers use the verb say exclusively for marking reported speech with no ill effect. Lesser writers (e.g., children's authors who are concerned with building up the kids' vocabulary) have dozens of different verbs of saying in their arsenals: "Why, yes!" he agreed/expostulated/replied/averred/maintained/exclaimed/objected/insisted, etc. etc.

⁴Discussed in sections 2.1, 4.725, 6.32 of Matisoff 1973 (henceforth "GL"). See the List of Abbreviations for "Puf" and all other grammatical terms introduced, and GL for full details.
speech, but may be used to mark any sentence as hearsay:

(2) ... *cho 55 va le qay ve cê. / ... people were selected and they went off
[so the story goes].

In such cases, where reported speech is not involved, cê is usually better left untranslated, since it would be intolerable in English to keep throwing in tags like so the story goes, it is said, we are told that, etc. The liberal use of cê is one of the most striking characteristics of the Lahu story-telling style. It need not be used at the end of every single sentence -- that would be too much -- but about once every two sentences is just right to maintain the proper narrative atmosphere, placing the whole discourse in the realm of storyland. It puts the listener into a "quotative mood," enticing him to a suspension of disbelief. At the same time, it absolves the narrator from responsibility for the fantastic goings-on he recounts.

In the case of actual reported speech, it is usual to close the quote with a combination of the verb qô̂ and the particle cê:

(26) ... "ôô, qô̂-ša tô̂ la ico, yà̂-ni le," qhe qô̂ ve cê. / ... they said,
"Oh, the god has appeared to us today!"

The combined meaning is something like it is said that X said "y"; or the story tells us that X said "y".6

B. Inter-sentential chain-repetition and the manipulation of old/new information

A favorite Tibeto-Burman narrative strategy is to link adjacent sentences to each other by repeating elements of the final clause of the previous sentence in the first clause of the following one.7 Our story provides over 20 examples of these "chain-repetitions," and it is clear that they are the most important cohesive device in the Lahu story-teller's arsenal.

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5 cê occurs 43 times in our text, in the following sentences: 2,4(twice),6,8,9,11,14,15,16,17,19,20,21,22,23,26,30,31,32,33,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,50,51,52,53,54,56,57,58,59,60. If we also give numbers to each individual sentence in the quoted dialogue, the text contains exactly 86 sentences, twice the number in which cê appears.

6 Often, as in this example, the nominalizer ve intervenes between the qô̂ and the cê (cf. also sentences 16,17,19,40,47). Sometimes qô̂ cê is used alone (20,21,30,45,46,52,57).

ve is the most complicated particle in Lahu grammar. Its most important functions are nominalization, relativization, and genitivization, three processes which are closely interconnected in the grammar (cf. Matisoff 1972 and GL passim). In the Lahu text (Part II) the occurrences of ve are numbered 8, 15, or 77 according to the role it is playing in each instance.

7 This discourse feature was already discussed briefly in Matisoff 1969, p. 206.
These repetitions may be classified according to several criteria, including (a) the grammatical nature of the repeated material; (b) the amount and nature of the material intervening between the repetitions of the identical elements; and (c) the point in the narrative where the chaining occurs.

Often the only elements that are repeated belong to the VP's of their respective clauses. In the minimal case, a single verb in the prior clause recurs in the later one:

... tî-pê a te le phô e ve cê. phô le gô-yâ-yù le, gô-mâ mi. [V.23/24] 8 / trying to kill him, and he ran away. He ran away and they chased him, but they couldn't catch him. [phô (V) 'run away, flee']

Sometimes a verb-particle (Pv) or auxiliary verb (VV) 9 is repeated along with the verb-head:

... 1-kâ cô-lô 3-hô 3 phê-chî tâ ve cê. phê-chî tâ le 5 ... tâ-kâ=pî tê mô=lô là cê. [XI.50/51] / ... they tied him so he hung underneath a big bridge over the water. After they had left him strung up there a large group of traders came along. [phê-chî (V) 'tie something so it hangs, string something up' + tâ (Pv) 'perfective or durative action; action that is long-lasting in its effect'] 10

Similarly,

... 3-qâ qhe-qhe 5 phê-tî a le, 3-gô-pê cê. qhe-qo 5 mêt=phû hô mû? le hâ-pê=de 3-gô-pê qo, "âlô, âlô, âlô," gô-cê. [X.44/45] / ... they tied him to the ass of a water-buffalo, and dragged [him] along. Then when they bent his face over downwards and dragged [him] over a piece of rocky ground, he said "A-lo, a-lo, a-lo!" [gô-pê (V) 'drag along' + pê (Vv) 'give; perform action that affects a third person']. 11

Sometimes the repeated portion is more complex grammatically, comprising material from one or more NP's in addition to the verb:

[I.1/2] ... Lâhû-yâ; mä? | bô? ve. qhe te le ... môt? | bôt? e ve tê sô 5 ... / ... the Lahu were fighting a war ... Well, on the morning for going off to war ... [môt? (N) 'war' + bôt? (V) 'shoot, fight'] 12

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8 In these references to the story, roman numerals show the discourse unit, while the two chained sentences are in arabic numerals separated by a slash. Like this example are I.3/4 [with phô (V) 'unwrap'] and III.10/11 [with yû (V) 'sleep'].

9 In this story the only auxiliary verbs which happen to occur in chain repetitions are all "post-head versatiles" (VV). See Matisoff 1973, section 4.33.

10 Like this example are I.4/5 and VI.31/VI.32 [with gô (V) 'return home' + e (Pv) 'motion away'] and X.43/44 [with gô-mi (V) 'catch by chasing' + tô (Pv) 'regrettable event'].

11 Like this example are III.9/10 [with tô (V) + kô (Vv)], VIII.34/35 [with mât (V) + kô (Vv)], and XI.53/54 [with yû (V) + tô (Vv)].

12 By convention we diagram the boundary between two Lahu NP's by a dotted vertical line, and the boundary between the last NP of a clause and its VP by a solid vertical. Like almost all members of the Tibeto-Burman family, Lahu is a verb-final language.
[I.5/II.6] qhe-te-le 5 šu yòq e ci tá ve. qhe-te-le 5 šu yòq e ci 5-qhe ... / And so the others let him go back. Then, when they had let him go back ...

[III.8/9] ... ē-qhe á-qho tì phóq yòq e ve cè ... “āa, nà ē-qho tì yòq ...” , ... they all went troopning over to Trickster's house to sleep ... "Oh, don't sleep at my house ..." [ē-qhe á-qho (NP) 'Trickster's house' or nà ē-qho (NP) 'my house' + yòq (V) 'sleep']

[IV-A.14/15] "āa, a-yo-ąqòqò na e," qòq ve cè. a-yo-ąqòqò ò-ve 5 | dòq na e te le ... / "Well, go and beat on the Hollow A-yaw Tree and listen ..." In order to go beat on that Hollow A-yaw Tree-oracle ... 13

[VII.32/33] ... ë-yò-cè b-pu-làqò łàq ga-e ve cè. ë-yò-cè=łòqò 5 | tòq gòe-e 5 ... he managed to climb up into a big clump of trees. When he had gotten to the top of a big tree ... 14

[VII.33/VIII.34] ... hàqò qho phò 1òq gòe-e ve cè ... nò hàqò 1òq 5 ... and he managed to escape into a cave in the rocks ... When [Trickster] had gone into the cave up there ...

A more complex type of repetition, where a noun and a verb are held constant across two sentences while other material is varied antonymically or contrastively, is found in:

[IV-A.15/16] ... yà-mi=ma ò te mò 5-qhe, yà-yò-qò kò 5 | qay ci ve cè. ē-qhe či yà-yò-qò | théions gau le ... / ... he made the women take the long way around.

The Trickster himself went by the straight road ... [yà-yò-qò (N) 'road' and qay (V) 'go' are repeated, while qòkò 5 and théions are contrasted]

It is worth noting that chain repetition involving both nominal and verbal morphemes seem especially frequent at the boundary between successive discourse units, 1 though too much cannot be made of this in view of the ease with which VP's can constitute clauses all by themselves in Lahu. 16

Another way to classify inter-sentential repetitions is by looking at the material which intervenes between the repeated elements. Often the chaining is direct,

13See Note 23 to the Annotated Translation.
14See Notes 54 and 55 to the Translation.
15I.5/II.6; II.8/III.9; VII.33/VIII.34. It should be remembered that I have set up these discourse-unit boundaries on the basis of the story line, rather than any purely linguistic criteria.
16A trans-unit chain repetition involving only VP's is in VII.31/VII.32 [with qò (V) and e (Pv)].
with nothing coming in between the repetends except perhaps for final particles in the prior sentence and/or an initial conjunctive expression in the following sentence. Sometimes, however, a full NP or even a whole clause may intervene:

\[ I.1/2 \] ... ṭè sā ᷄ ... (temporal NP: 'on a certain morning')

\[ VII.33/VIII.34 \] ... ḍa-hè chi ve ... (subject NP: 'this Trickster')

\[ III.10/11 \] ... ḍa-hè ṭe ve ᷄ yā-mā=ma ṭe mā ... (two subject NP's: 'that Trickster' + 'the bunch of women')

\[ I.3/4 \] ... ᷆ cā ve te ve, yā ḍ ... (final clause of prior sentence: 'and made as if to eat his meal, he did')

\[ VIII.34/35 \] ... ḍa-hè te kā ... (concessive clause: 'but try as they would')

\[ X.44/45 \] ... mē=phā ḍ hā mā lē ... (non-final clause of subsequent sentence: 'they bent his face over downwards and').

Inter-sentential chain repetition, viewed in terms of its function in discourse, is a powerful and flexible device for manipulating the flow of old and new information as a narrative unfolds. This "information" does not reside primarily in the NP's of the sentences. Nouns are clearly subordinate in importance to their verbs in the verb-final Tibeto-Burman languages. The VP is the power center of the Lahu sentence. What moves a Tibeto-Burman narrative along, what gives it its dynamism, is the flash by of verbal events in series.

Let us return to the example of V.23/24:

... ḍ- phā ṭe pa qā ṭe le, ḍa-hè ṭa ṭa-yu ṭe le, ṭi-pē a te le, phā e ve cā. 

Phā le ṭa-yu le, ṭa mā mi. / ... The husbands came back and [they] chased after Trickster, and [they] tried to kill [him], and [he] ran away.

[He] ran away and [they] chased [him], and [they] couldn't catch [him].

The first clause has an overt subject (ḥ-paṭ ṭe pa 'the husbands') and the second clause has an overt object (ḥa-hè ṭa 'Trickster'), but, as the brackets in the translation indicate, the remaining five clauses in this passage have no overt subjects or objects at all, indeed no NP's of any kind. The verbs themselves ('tried to kill, 'ran away, 'chased,' 'couldn't catch') have the power to make it abundantly clear who is doing what to whom, even when the subject and object roles are reversed within the same sentence.

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17 See below, Section D.
18 A good example is I.5/II.6, quoted above. Also V.23/24, VI.31/VII.32, VII.32/33, X.43/44, XI.50/51.
19 A Lahu clause minimally contains a VP (plus zero or more preceding 'associated' NP's). See Matisoff 1973, pp. 39 ff.
20 These two NP's belong to separate underlying clauses, with the predicate of 'women' (yā 'sleep') actually occurring before the predicate of 'Trickster' (ṭe 'made up') in the surface sentence.
21 It would betray a narrow Western outlook to wonder how a 'flow' can 'unfold.' Today's mixed metaphor may be tomorrow's accepted model.
These two sentences are linked as wholes by means of the chain-repetition of the verb *phə* 'run away,' which occurs both in the final clause of #23 and in the initial clause of #24. The 'running away' was new information at its first mention, but immediately becomes old information in the next sentence. The fleeing is a prerequisite to (or presupposed by) the subsequent act of chasing.

Within each individual sentence the series of verbal events are demarcated by the concatenative particle *le,*22 which here occurs at the end of each non-final clause (three times in #23 and twice in #24). *le* serves merely to indicate that its clause is not the last in a series of verbal events within a single sentence. Often it is best translated by 'and':23

'... the husbands returned and [they] chased after Trickster and [they] tried to kill [him] and [he] ran away.'

This quickly becomes tedious in English, however, and it is better to vary one's translation by using participles ('they chased after Trickster trying to kill him') or conjunctions other than and ('they tried to kill him, but he ran away'), etc.24

Since it is grammatically possible to string together *le*-clauses endlessly in a single Lahu sentence, the narrator must decide on the basis of other criteria when it is time to bring a sentence to a close. When the sentence has grown so long and complicated that clarity is threatened, or when the narrative action takes a sharply different turn, or simply because he has run out of breath or needs a second to think about what to say next, the storyteller will end the sentence (often in a burst of final particles). This done, he can then start afresh on a new sentence, using as his jumping-off point a clause containing the same verb he has just used in the tall end of his last sentence. But this time the entire preceding string of verbal action has become old information, presupposed by and prerequisite to what will follow. In languages with inflectional verb morphology, this can be conveyed by a participial or gerundive construction: '... and he ran away. Having run away ...' (The auxiliary verb *have* in English nicely conveys the idea of givenness or old information: 'here we have before us as something given the fact that he ran away.') Verb-final inflectional languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, and Japanese are even closer to Lahu in their

22 Technically speaking, *le* belongs to the syntactic class of particles I call "non-final unrestricted" (P_{unf}'s).

23 When *le* conjoins NP's rather than clauses, 'and' is the only possible translation: Lāhū-yā *le* ḫəʔ-pā 'Lahu and Chinese.'

24 See Note 48 to Annotated Translation. The particle *le* occurs clause-finally over 100 times in our text. In 66 of these cases it appears alone at the end of its clause; in 35 cases it is followed by the topicalizing P_{unf} ʒ, and twice by the latter's variant ʒ-qhe [see below]. This count does not include the many cases where *le* follows the pro-verb te in lexicalized conjunctive clauses [below, Section D].
concatenative techniques. They have overt morphological means of marking clauses as non-final\(^{25}\) (e.g. the -tvā 'gerund' in Sanskrit or the -TE form in Japanese) which correspond exactly in function to the Lahu particle lle, especially insofar as these non-final clauses may be strung together endlessly without stylistic harm -- without seeming tedious or babyish or prolix. There seems to be something in the very nature of verb-final languages which favors multi-clausal sentences. It is as if speakers of such languages are used to delaying their gratification for a long time -- the journey of rounding off a completed sentence is all the sweeter for having been deferred.

C. Static repetitions

In all the cases just discussed, repetition serves to advance the narrative, pushing the hearer along from one event to the next in a dynamic way. Other kinds of repetitions occur in Lahu discourse which serve more 'static' functions: paraphrases or "repairs." In these instances the narrator feels a little more elucidative is necessary, so he repeats what he has just said in fuller form or in slightly different words:

[I.2]  ... ə tē sō ə, mà? bə? e ve tē sō ... / ... on that certain morning, the morning for going off to war ...
[I.3]  ... ə cā thā, ə cā ve tē yā thā ə ... / ... when they ate, when it was time to eat ...
[III.12/13]  ... phu-ši pì kā? mà hə?. ə-tho?-ma pì kā? mà hə?. / ... but when they offered him money he wouldn't take it. No matter what they offered, he wouldn't take it.
[V.24/25]  phə lle əqə-yə lle, əqə? mà mi. qhə-qhe te əqə-yə kə? mà mi. / He ran away and they chased him, but they couldn't catch him. No matter how they chased him they couldn't catch him.
[XII.57]  ... "əo, kə-qhə, nə qhə-qhe te əqə le. ə-hə nə ə? əsə tə te ve kə? nə phu-ši chi ma əqə ve qhə-qhe te le" ... / ... "Oh, Trickster, how did you get all this? How did it happen that you got so much silver and gold even though we tried to kill you?"

Repetitions of this type may be called appositional (as opposed to chaining). They involve referentially synonymous NP's [I.2, I.3] or entire sentences [last three examples] that have identical value on the scale of new vs. old information. Chaining repetition, by contrast, mediates a value-change from new to old.

D. Initial conjunctions: lexicalized conjunctive clauses

At about forty points in our text, we find at the beginning of a sentence (or, less often, at the beginning of a non-initial clause within a sentence) a conjunctive...

\(^{25}\) For these languages we might even say non-finite. But it is better not to use terms like 'finite' and 'non-finite' for analytic languages like Lahu, since they seem more appropriate to inflectional languages. (One speaks of 'non-finite verb forms,' but Lahu verbs are invariant in form.)
expression of the general type qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\), literally 'having done thus' [qhe (Adv) 'thus, in this way' + te (V) 'do' + \(\text{\textdollar}\) (P_{\text{unf}}) 'MORE-TO-FOLLOW']. The verb te is here filling the abstract role of a 'pro-verb,' with the power to refer anaphorically to any preceding verbal event.\(^{26}\)

By its internal structure qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) is a full non-final clause in its own right containing a bona fide verb (modified by an adverb qhe) and a P_{\text{unf}} which connects it to the next clause in its sentence. However, this expression is now lexicalized to the point where it must be translated by some English conjunction like 'then,' 'so,' or 'thereupon.' It would be too "painfully literal" to render it has 'having done thus'!

qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) occurs 11 times in the story [Sentences 2,6,8,9,17,18,27,42,52,55,57]. Even more often (15 times) it is followed by the topicalizing P_{\text{unf}} 5 (see Note 24), forming the expression qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) 5 [Sentences 5,7 (twice),10,11,14,21,22,23,33,40,41,48,58,60]. Once in a while the qhe is omitted, yielding te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) [Sent. 43] or te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) 5 [Sent. 12].\(^{27}\) Alternatively, the particle \(\text{\textdollar}\) may be left out, giving qhe-te [Sent. Instead of \(\text{\textdollar}\) a different P_{\text{unf}} may be used: go 'when; if; topicalizer,' forming expressions like qhe-te-go (3) (lit. "when it was done thus") [Sent. 46]. If go is used the te may be omitted, yielding qhe-go ("when thus") or qhe-go 3 [Sent. 45].

It is also possible to retain all three morphemes of qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\), and also add verb-particle (P_{\text{v}}) after te, either the 'prerequisite action' particle \(\text{\textdollar}\) or the perfective particle \(\hat{\text{\textdollar}}\), forming conjunctive mini-clauses like qhe te \(\text{\textdollar}\) \(\text{\textdollar}\) [Sent. 51], qhe te \(\text{\textdollar}\) \(\text{\textdollar}\) 5 [Sents. 26,29,34,37], and qhe te \(\hat{\text{\textdollar}}\) \(\text{\textdollar}\) 5 [Sent. 31]. In these cases, the te is somewhat verbier than a pro-verb, and we write the expressions without hyphens.

Lahu thus has a wide assortment of conjunctive expressions available for use initial position. These may be varied and alternated with each other so that no tedium results from their constant use.

Just as \(\text{\textdollar}\) is the '... and ... and ... and' which strings together clauses wi in a sentence, qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) and its variants are the 'then ... then ... then' which link sentences to each other in a narrative.

The intonational behavior of these initial conjunctions seems paradoxical at first. Although the presence of a non-final unrestricted particle (\(\text{\textdollar}\) or go) is enough to prove that the conjunctive expressions belong grammatically with the following material in their sentences, intonationally they are often pronounced in the same breath as the end of the preceding sentence, with a noticeable pause before the rest of their 'own' sentence.\(^{28}\)

\(^{26}\) Verbs meaning 'do' are pressed into pro-verbal use in perhaps all languages. The Japanese conjunctive clauses \(\text{\textdollar}\) shite or \(\text{\textdollar}\) suru to 'having done thus; thereupon then' are exactly equivalent in semantic structure to Lahu qhe-te-\(\text{\textdollar}\) and its variant.

\(^{27}\) This is exactly analogous to Japanese suru to, a reduced variant of \(\text{\textdollar}\) suru to, with the adverb \(\text{\textdollar}\) 'thus' omitted.

\(^{28}\) I had never paid any attention to this phenomenon until I relistened to the tape of this story in February 1979.
"... à-thô?-'ma ëay pê tu le, ê-qhê hâ?,' gô' ve cê. ê-qhê ê-te-ê ê-qhê ë-ve 5 ... / ... and said "What sort of compensation shall we give to Trickster?" So the Trickster said ...

This tension between the grammatical and intonational constituency of the conjunctive expressions can be seen to serve an important discourse function. By starting the next sentence in the same breath as the previous one, the narrator succeeds in 'holding the floor': the listeners know that more is to come, and are not at liberty to interrupt. At the same time, the narrator can take a moment to think before going on to frame the rest of his new sentence. Having established that more is to come, he can take his time about continuing.29

E. Particles in Lahu discourse

Lahu has dozens of grammatical particles for showing the syntactic and semantic interrelationships among the parts of a single sentence, between different sentences in a discourse, or between what is said and the speaker's attitude toward what he is saying. The behavior of these particles is a vast and intricate topic, and cannot be gone into systematically here.30

I would just like to make a few points about the dynamics of the Lahu particle in connected discourse.

The most basic particles (ve, ëc, ê, etc.) occur with consistent frequency throughout a discourse. The functions they serve are so vital to the grammar, and so abstract, that it is impossible to build sentences without them. In the case of less basic particles, however, a curious asymmetry of distribution can sometimes be observed. Thus the "psycho-ostensive" verb-particle ëè,31 which indicates that the speaker feels the verbal event he is reporting is regrettable,32 is not used at all in our text for the first 38 sentences. Then it suddenly pops up several times in quick succession [Sents. 39,41,43,44,49,54,56]. This 'clustering effect' does not seem to be due to anything objective in the story-content itself -- the wild and woolly incidents reported in the text are all equally 'regrettable' from the standpoint of conventional morality from start to finish. Rather it is as if once the

29 Lahu has another sentence-introducer with special intonational properties. This is à-ëwê thâ 'once upon a time,' which occurs only at the very beginning of a story, and is usually pronounced with exaggerated drawling intonation. See I.1.

30 For full details the reader is referred to The Grammar of Lahu.

31 By 'psycho-ostensive' I mean 'purporting to indicate the speaker's attitude toward what he is saying.' For an extended analysis of psycho-ostensive formulaic expressions in Yiddish, see Matisoff 1979.

32 This particle is apparently of Tai origin. It is homophonous with another verb-particle ëè of aspectual meaning ('prerequisite action'). See Notes 83 and 95 to the Translation.
story-teller 'activates' the particle it remains subliminally in his consciousness, and he finds himself using it again and again for a while until the 'contagion' subsides.³³

Similarly, the final unrestricted particle mē 'persuasive; urging' is used three times in succession in II.7:

... "âa, nê-hê ë-pâ ve ë-ha-ku qó? lâ ò mē. tâ chè ò mē. kê? à mē." / ... "Aha, the spirits of your husbands have come back to you! Don't stay here any more! It's too scary!"

In IV-A.16, the particle sequence a + qo + ë (roughly equivalent in meaning to the much more frequent lê) suddenly occurs in three successive clauses:

... chè a qo ë ... ëô? a qo ë ... te a qo ë ...

In VI.30, the sequence of ë (Pv) 'completed action' and lê (Puf) 'emphatic' occurs twice in succession:

... "âa, cê-qhè qhâ-ëî ŋà-ë-yù qhâ maka hê? ë lê. chè kà? mû-nî-ëiwe kà? tê? ë lê? / ... "Well, Trickster's trail has pattered out now! And here's a red Phalloïde mushroom that has sprouted!"

Sentences XI.52/53 provide us with a more subtle example of "particle contagion" In #52, Trickster says:

"... mê?-iò šì më ve yù o nê" ... / "... My eyes are imbibing the essence!"

This clause ends with a series of highly colloquial emphatic final particles (yù + ñ + nê), which are here appropriate since they occur in reported speech. However, the following sentence also ends this way:

... "yù tê? a" qô? pê cê ma nê. / ... "Let me loose then," he said!

As the peculiar punctuation in the translation indicates, the narrator has again used two colloquial emphatic particles (ma + nê), but not where they "belong" (i.e. in the quoted clause). He puts them outside the quotation, even after the quotative Puf cê [see Section A above], where he should be talking in his neutral narrator's persona, at a remove from the reported dialogue.

F. Anaphora and topicalization

Lahu has a rich array of particles and particle sequences available for topicalization duty, including ë, ë-qhe, ë-qhe lê, lê, qo, qo ë, tî qo, tî qo lê, etc. Any Lahu NP or clause³⁴ may be topicalized, with a variety of semantic effects. We cannot begin to go into this ramified 'topic' here!

Suffice it to say that the Lahu topicalization apparatus interacts closely with its system of anaphoric demonstratives, and that together they regulate the play of...

³³We have all had the experience of rereading a letter we have just written and being shocked to find that we have used the same word three times in the course of a couple of sentences.

³⁴We have seen [Note 24, above] that ë occurs freely after the particle lê at the end of non-final clauses.
old and new information, foregrounding and backgrounding, definiteness and indefiniteness, in the discourse.

The Lahu demonstrative morphemes chi and δ-ve are usually best translated 'this' and 'that' respectively. When used in connected narrative, however, they may function more or less interchangeably as anaphoric markers and are usually best translated simply as 'the':

[IV-A.14/15] ... "âa, a-yvŠ=qŠ δ∫ na e," qvŠ ve ce. a-yvŠ=qŠ δ-ve Š dŠ na e te Š / ... "Well, go and beat on the Hollow A-yaw Tree and listen," he said. In order to beat on that/the Hollow A-yaw Tree ...

δ-ve is not used here to make a-yvŠ=qŠ definite -- there is only one A-yaw Tree-oracle in any case.

Similarly, the Trickster is introduced on his first mention in the story (I.3) as ê-qhŠ δ-ve Š, literally 'as for that Trickster.' Clearly, δ-ve can have exophoric as well as anaphoric force: 'that Trickster that we all know about already.'

The Trickster is referred to most often in the story with the demonstrative chi, with optional ve and/or topazlizing Š:
ê-qhŠ chi : Sents. 16,19,21,32,39,40 (twice).
ê-qhŠ chi ve : Sent. 34.
ê-qhŠ chi Š : Sents. 20,26,39.
ê-qhŠ chi ve Š : Sents. 26,32,42.

Whenever Trickster is referred to with δ-ve, the topazlizer Š is also used:

One's choices among δ-ve, chi, and the topazlizing particles are dictated by a complex interplay of stylistic and esthetic factors as subtle as those which govern the use of English intonation, and words like the, a, this, that. I submit that no mere formalism can ever do justice to this complexity, in principle.

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35 These two words have different syntactic properties, since δ-ve derives from the spatial demonstrative pronoun δ 'over there' plus ve 'genitive particle' (i.e., 'that' = 'of over there'). See Matisoff 1973, Section 3.5.

36 An apparent exception is Sent. 55, but that involves a false start.
V. Psychosymbolic analysis.

A. Universality of the Trickster figure

In his famous book, *The Trickster: a Study in American Indian Mythology*, the anthropologist Paul Radin flatly declares:

"[The Trickster] is admittedly the oldest of all figures in American Indian mythology, probably in all mythologies." [p. 164]

The psychologists C.G. Jung and Karl Kerényi, in their contributions to Radin's volume [see Bibliography], make it clear that they consider Trickster to be one of the archetypes of the collective unconscious of humanity. He appears all over the world in a thousand guises, sometimes cosmic and supernatural, but often a schlemiel or buffoon, or even an animal.

On the cosmic end of the scale, the Greek god Hermes (patron of thieves as well as of physicians) has a Trickster aspect to his complex personality. In India, Lord Krishna, regarded as the 8th avatar of Vishnu in his divine aspect, is also often portrayed as a powerful but mischievous child, who plays gently erotic tricks on milkmaids, etc.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition we have our very own Trickster in the form of Satan or Mephistopheles. On the other side of the world, in the 8th century Japanese mythological chronicles, Nihongi and Kojiki, the sun-goddess Ama-terasu-ō-mi-kami has a younger brother, Susa-no-ō (須佐之男), who acts in classic Trickster ways.

Mediating between the gods on the one hand and mankind on the other are culture-heroes, who typically exhibit Trickster-like characteristics. Prometheus craftily stole fire from the gods to bestow it upon mankind. Wakdjunkaga, the Trickster of Radin's Winnebago Indians, uses the bruised pieces of his once-gigantic penis, now mostly gnawed up by a chipmunk, in order to create useful crops for human beings:

"Oh, my, of what a wonderful organ he has deprived me! But why do I speak thus? I will make objects out of the pieces for human beings to use." Then he took the end of his penis, the part that has no foreskin, and declared, "This is what human beings will call the lily-of-the-lake" ... Then he took the other pieces declaring in turn: "This the people will call potatoes ... turnips ... artichokes ... ground-beans ... dog-teeth ... sharp-claws ... rice ..." [p. 39]

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1 And again (p. 132), "The similarity of the exploits attributed to ... all trickster-heroes in North America is quite astounding. The only possible inference is that this myth-cycle is an old cultural possession of all the American Indians."

2 Kerényi points out the contrast between wily Hermes and guileless Herakles, who is merely a strongman.

3 One of his notorious pieces of mischief involved "flaying a piebald horse backwards," an act so startling to Amaterasu that she pricks herself in the pudenda with her distaff, and withdraws in terror into her cave, leaving the world in darkness. My thanks for this information to Susan Matison.
As this passage shows, Wakdjunkaga is a schlemiel and buffoon as well as a culture hero — it was very dumb of him to have let the chipmunk gnaw off most of his penis in the first place. 4

The buffoonery becomes more and more salient as we follow our Tricksters down the great chain of being to the strictly human level in world literature and folklore. The cunning Odysseus of Greek epic is a relatively dignified specimen of the breed. 5 More earthy is the medieval Till Eulenspiegel, a north German peasant clown of the 14th century, probably a real person whose practical jokes on clerics and townsfolk were embellished in popular literature. 6 In Renaissance France, the immortal characters of Rabelais (1490-1553) — Gargantua, Pantagruel, Panurge, Frere Jehan des Entomeures — are all Trickster figures, ribald and outrageously larger-than-life. Tricksters are still alive and well in modern Western literature, from highbrow novelists like Thomas Mann 7 to cartoon characters like the Roadrunner and Bugs Bunny (who invariably outwit the Coyote and Elmer Fudd, respectively. ) 8

Moving East of Suez, the Turks and the Persians have laughed for centuries at the exploits of the trickster Nasruddin Hodja. Amin Sweeney describes a very similar character in Malay literature. 9 The anthropologists Edward and Bambi Schieffelin report a classic cosmic-schlemiel type of Trickster among the primitive Kaluli tribe of the Bosavi Highlands, Papua New Guinea. He is called Newelesu, and is regarded as the ancestor of the Kaluli, who ascribe their low status in the world to his cosmic stupidity. 10

Zeroing in on the Lahu geographical area, it is becoming apparent that Trickster figures abound all over northern Southeast Asia as well. Viggo Brun (1976) has pub-

4 "The two-fold function of benefactor and buffoon is the outstanding characteristic of ... trickster heroes ... in aboriginal America." Radin, p. 124.

5 Cf. "tricky" episodes in the Odyssey like the blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus, the passage between Scylla and Charybdis, the escape from the Siren's song, etc.

6 His name, "owl-mirror" in German, was Englished to Howleglas at an early date.

7 See his Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man (1954).

8 Anthropomorphized animal Tricksters are of course to be found in folk traditions all over the world. Reynard the Fox was the foxiest animal in medieval Europe. The North American Indians have Hare (in the East) and Coyote (in the West). The Spider is often cast as a Trickster, probably because of the guile it displays in spinning traps for its prey. Radin reports a Spider Trickster among the Oglala Dakota. Dianancey the Spider is the chief Trickster in Caribbean folklore, and has obvious antecedents in African legend (see Ratratty 1930). The elegant spider "Bug Rogers," in the comic strip Gordo, as well as the bumbling teenage superhero Spiderman, are more recent avatars of this arachnid archetype.

9 Personal communication, February 1979.

10 He is usually contrasted to his brother Dorsali, a "smart Trickster" now often identified as the ancestor of the white man. The name Newelesu is also applied to a huge and spectacularly ugly insect.
lished a long Northern Thai tale called Sug, the Trickster Who Fooled the Monk. The Tibetans have their own Uncle Töng-pa.\(^{11}\) Gabrielle Yablonsky describes a Bhutanese lama-trickster called Dṣug-pa Kun-legs, subject of a book by R.A. Stein [see Bibliography].

A lot of detailed comparative study will be necessary before we can trace the genealogy of the Lahu ē-ḵhê in relation to the Trickster figures of any other Southeast Asian peoples. For now let us just proceed to examine the symbolic structure of our text in more detail, trying to unravel the seemingly disparate motifs that are united in the Lahu Trickster's personality.

B. Symbolic dimensions of the Lahu Trickster

Perhaps a little diagram will help to make things clear. See Figure 1:

**FIGURE 1.**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Transmuter} \\
\text{Creator} \\
\text{Self-duplicator} \\
\text{Perverter} \\
\text{Sorcerer/Illusionist} \\
\text{Destroyer} \\
\text{Sexual Athlete} \\
\text{Winner} \\
\text{Loser} \\
\text{Schlemiel/Buffoon} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[A \quad \text{Associative Relation} \quad B\]
\[A \quad \text{Antonymic Relation} \quad B\]

(1) ē-ḵhê as supernatural: creator and transmuter. The behavior of ē-ḵhê is totally self-serving. What he wants, he takes -- and he wants everything, all the women, all the silver and gold, all the husbands' penes on a platter. He is not constrained by ordinary standards of morality; amoral rather than immoral, beyond human praise or blame. He causes the death of many people -- a girl who was attracted by his music, the Chinese traders, the husbands, the old codger at the end. But he never loses our sympathy. We don't give a damn for the other people in the story. They are two-dimensional cartoon characters, mere foils for Trickster. The traders are greedy an

\(^{11}\) Dṣug-pa. A brief text featuring this character is given in Goldstein 1970, pp. 176-7. See also Rinjing Dorje 1975.
gullible, the wives are stupid and lascivious, the girls are empty-headed, the husbands are impotent cuckolds. ë-ğhê can do what he wants with them and we will laugh. He has the right to destroy precisely because he is the creator himself.12

Like Wakdjunkaga, the Trickster of the Winnebago Indians, who calls everything in creation, animal or vegetable, "younger brother," and whom every creature instantly recognizes without needing to be introduced to him, ë-ğhê is immediately addressed by name by the Chinese traders13 who had presumably never seen him before [Sent. 52].

ë-ğhê in fact controls all of creation. In his own grotesque way, he manipulates the entire animal and vegetable world for his own purposes. He turns a rice-packet into a live chick (I); he transforms some crabs, crabs, and a bamboo-sheath into the spirits of human beings (II); he transmutes fermented soybeans into babyshit (III); he metamorphoses his glans penis into the cap of a mushroom (VI).14

ë-ğhê can even change his own form, revealing his true nature as a supernatur-being. He becomes a tree-oracle (IV-A,8). He smears himself with honey and cotton and receives the people's worship (V).

Using whatever is at hand — snips and snails and puppy-dogs' tails — he into changes life-forms, shuffles up the links in the great chain of being.

It does not matter that ë-ğhê's metamorphoses are illusions, sleight-of-hand, parodies of creation.

(2) ë-ğhê as enantiodromiast: reconciler of opposites and enemy of boundaries.

Let us return for a moment to Susa-no-ō, the Trickster-like god of the Kojiki. We have seen [Note 3 above] that one of his pranks involved playing a piebald horse backwards, an act so perverse it provoked terror. Another of his infamous exploits was to break down the earthen dikes between Amaterasu's rice-fields,15 so that her fields were indiscriminately flooded. These are two typical pieces of Trickster-like behavior: doing the opposite and destroying boundaries.

Satan, the Anti-Christ, the arch-deceiver, can change his form at will. His devotees used to worship him by saying the Mass backwards. He is the perverse one, always doing the opposite of what one expects.16

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12 As Lenin so charmingly put it, "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

13 Unlike Wakdjunkaga, however, ë-ğhê does not fit the profile of a culture hero in this story. There are many different subtypes of Trickster!

14 Amin Sweeney points out a very similar episode in a Malay Trickster story, where a woman pulls and pulls on Trickster's "mushroom" but is unable to pluck it out (in fact it just keeps getting bigger). Eventually she gives up in disgust, complaining loudly about how tough the roots must be.

15 The Lahu call such dikes 5-tê.

16 Goethe has him say, Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint ("I am the spirit who always denies"), Faust, Part I, line 1338.
Wakdjunkaga constantly acts in precisely the opposite ways from what the cultural norms of the Winnebago would require. (E.g. he sleeps with his wife just before going on the warpath, an absolute cultural no-no.\textsuperscript{17})

Our Lahu Trickster also knows no boundaries and plays with opposites.\textsuperscript{18} In one key episode (IV-A,B) he actually succeeds in being in two places at once. When the women return from consulting the tree-oracle they find ě-qhë calmly sitting at home weaving rattan strips, not even breathing hard from the exertion of cloning himself!

Breath or air (Lahu ǿá or ȶ-ǿá) is actually a key image in the story, serving on one level as a metaphor for ě-qhë's elusiveness and ubiquity. He is master of sounds, which are carried on the air. Though imprisoned in a cave, the sound of his jewsharp carries through the air and attracts the girls who will set him free.\textsuperscript{19} In his guise as a god in the joss-stick temple (V), he is presented with food-offerings. Instead of merely inhaling their essence (ȶ-ǿá), as would be expected of a "real" god, he does the opposite and eats the corporeal food itself.\textsuperscript{20} Later, by a brilliant symbolic reversal, he triumphs over the traders (XI) and the husbands (XII) by "imbibing the essence" (ǿá mè ve) of the river-water, revealing himself to be a god after all.

Ě-qhë is in fact an embodiment of enantiodromia, the conversion of things into their opposites.\textsuperscript{21} This strategy pervades the struggles between him and his antagonists, the hapless husbands, on whom he uses "reverse psychology" and what we might call the "boomerang technique" to devastating effect. When cornered up in a tree, ě-qhë convinces the husbands to chop him down so he'll be smashed on the rocks, and won't fall into the water, from where he claims he could swim to safety. Actually he had planned to land on the rocks all the time. He knew that if he wanted A, all he had to do was to say he wanted not-A. He is always one reversal ahead of his out-matched "opponents." Everything the husbands try to do to him backfires or boomerangs. They try to smoke him out of the cave where he has taken refuge -- but ě-qhë is master of the air! He simply fans the smoke back out again (VIII). They set a trap for him at the cave-mouth, but it is somebody else who gets caught in it (IX). They string him up under the bridge (XI), but he succeeds in turning the tables, changing

\textsuperscript{17}See Radin, pp. 4–6. The flouting of cultural norms in folklore has of course a great pedagogical value. By implicitly holding such "opposite" behavior up to ridicule the story-teller is inculcating the proper code of conduct in his listeners.

\textsuperscript{18}From one point of view, transmutations of matter [preceding section] are a denial of boundaries between states of being.

\textsuperscript{19}Ě-qhë also exploits the sounds of bees and crabs for his own purposes (II).

\textsuperscript{20}See Note 46 to the Translation.

\textsuperscript{21}This sonorous Greek root, enantio- 'opposite,' also occurs in the rhetorical term enantiosis, saying the opposite of what is really meant (a fancier name for 'irony'). For some discussion of the close relationship between antonymy and synonymy, see Matisoff 1978, pp. 82–86.
places first with the traders (XI) and finally with the husbands themselves (XII).\footnote{One thinks of the lines from Shakespeare: 
\begin{quote}
"This even-handed justice
To our own lips."
\end{quote}
\textnormal{(Macbeth I.7, lines 10-12)}
On a less exalted level, the boomerang technique is a favorite device in cartoons of the Coyote-and-Roadrunner type. It seems to appeal to that childish sense of justice that lies behind defensive taunts like "Everything bad you say goes right back to you -- nyaah, nyaah!"
\footnote{See Bateson 1972.}}

With the women too, ë-qhê talks out of both sides of his mouth, dazzling them by his simultaneous espousal of opposite positions. He warns them not to let their babies shit in his house -- then he makes it impossible for them to comply by creating the "shit" himself. This is the technique that Gregory Bateson has called the "dou bind,"\footnote{Everyone knows the story about the mother who gave her son two neckties for his birthday. When he appeared wearing one of them at their next meeting she said, "So what's wrong with the other one?"} and in real life it can lead to "schismogenesis" as the victim goes crazy with guilt trying to satisfy two contradictory demands at once.\footnote{This is comparable to, e.g. the pleasure 17th or 18th century audiences would feel at witnessing temporary reversals of master and servant roles in a play of Molière or an opera by Mozart.} To put it somewhat crudely, not only does ë-qhê fuck the women's bodies, he fucks with their minds as well.

(3) ë-qhê as sexual athlete and buffoon. Once in a while ë-qhê gets caught -- let himself get caught, we suspect -- and he is tied to the ass of a water-buffalo (X), or strung up under a bridge (XI). There is a great esthetic pleasure for the listeners in this further reversal -- seeing the tables turned on the table-turner himself. For the moment the Trickster is the butt of the joke, the schlemiel, the buffoon. But everyone knows this cannot go on for long. ë-qhê is no martyr, no loser. No matter what happens he will bounce back, like the cartoon character flattened by a steamroller who pops back out to his normal shape afterwards.

ë-qhê is clearly not a loser, but the big winner. He is the champion, in particular the sex champion, overflowing with appetite and generative power. As such, he is on one level the object of wish-fulfillment fantasies by both the male and female listeners (the men wishing to be just like him and the women wishing they could go to bed with him themselves). The story is in fact full of sexual imagery, so obvious that you don't have to belong to a particular school of psychological analysis to appreciate its significance.

The Hollow A-yaw Tree-oracle and the cave\footnote{Both of these words, ã-\textupscript{y}a=qô and hâ-qhô=qô, contain the morpheme qô 'hollow object.'} are places of powerful refuge for ë-qhê -- about this there seems little womb to dispute. While the hollow of the tree is female, the upright trunk itself is male.\footnote{The ã-\textupscript{y}a tree is known for its height and straightness. See Note 22 to the Translation.} When the women beat on it, the tree-
penis is stimulated to speak to them. ᵅ-ｑʰʰε specifically uses his penis as a weapon of deceit, transforming it into a mushroom (VI). It is as if he hypnotizes the others by his phallic power, and they must suddenly break off the chase and slink home.

In symbolic potency contests with the other men, ᵅ-ｑʰʰε always wins. The husbands try to cut down the tree he's in, an act of castration, but ᵅ-ｑʰʰε escapes into a power-place. The husbands try to stab him to death by poking sticks inside the cave -- a phallic image if there ever was one. To this ᵅ-ｑʰʰε replies by the clownish act of shitting on the sticks, symbolically negating and dismissing their sexuality. (His worst part is better than their best part.)

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The Lahu Trickster, ᵅ-ｑʰʰε, like his counterparts in literature, mythology, and folklore the world over, is a complex figure that can be appreciated on many different levels. It is hard to improve on the formulation of Radin (pp. 168-9):

"The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason, every generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully, but no generation can do without him... And so he became and remained everything to every man -- god, animal, human being, hero, buffoon, he who was before good and evil, denier, affirmer, destroyer and creator. If we laugh at him, he grins at us. What happens to him happens to us."

The image of the Trickster is still very much with us in our own culture. The days of the Watergate "dirty tricks" and Tricky Dick Nixon are still not so far behind us. Could the manifold absurdities of our world be due to the mad caprice of some cosmic Trickster who is experimenting with us?
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